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Contemporary Haredi Yiddish Bilingual Pedagogical Materials

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Abstract

This article examines Hebrew- and English-medium pedagogical materials aimed at Haredi learners of Yiddish. Our main findings are 1) the materials are produced by and for the community, which reflects the commonly held Haredi view that knowledge of Yiddish is a key element of in-group identity and therefore must be maintained and taught, 2) the learning materials tend to adopt an inductive approach informed by the traditional Ashkenazic *taytsh* educational model, where forms and structures are absorbed through exposure, rather than a deductive one, which differs from most non-Haredi Yiddish pedagogical resources, 3) some features (e.g., personal pronouns) presented in the materials are more conservative than those typically used in spoken Haredi Yiddish, and there is considerable variation among the different resources vis-à-vis the grammatical elements presented (e.g., noun case and gender, which supports earlier research demonstrating that these features are absent from or in flux in Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish).

Keywords

Hasidic – Haredi – Yiddish – L2 – textbooks

1 Introduction

This article is devoted to bilingual pedagogical materials for learners of Yiddish within the Haredi (i.e., strictly Orthodox) community. Yiddish is a stateless

minority language classified as “definitely endangered” by the UNESCO *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* (Moseley 2010), but it is the main and daily language of a considerable proportion of the world's 700,000–750,000 Haredi (mostly Hasidic)¹ Jews worldwide. There are particularly large concentrations of Haredi Yiddish speakers in the USA, Israel, Belgium, the UK, and Canada. Previous research has shown that Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish (the language of the majority of present-day Yiddish speakers) has undergone widespread recent grammatical change since the Second World War in comparison with the prewar dialects and Standard or YIVO Yiddish used outside of Haredi communities. For example, Belk et al. (2022) have shown that Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish has lost morphological case and gender on full nominals (as opposed to pronouns), while Belk et al. (forthcoming) show significant developments in the pronoun system of Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish. Yiddish in Haredi communities occupies a noteworthy position among minority languages as it is the main vernacular of a highly diglossic society (alongside *loshn koydesh*, i.e., pre-modern Hebrew) that is also characterized by widespread bi- and multilingualism with co-territorial dominant languages.

The pedagogical situation pertaining to Haredi Yiddish is also very different from that of Standard Yiddish, which is the focus of Yiddish instruction in the secular world, with classes for second language learners available worldwide in universities, evening classes, and summer schools, alongside active theater and musical groups in major world centers. There is very little contact between speakers of Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish and Standard Yiddish, and the language communities maintain entirely distinct linguistic and literary cultures. Thus, while there are various pedagogical materials for learners of Standard Yiddish, for ideological reasons these are very rarely used by Haredi learners of Yiddish. This is a reflection of the fact that Haredi Yiddish educators have little or no engagement with non-Haredi Yiddish language specialists, regarding their form of Yiddish as part of a broader secular project which Haredi society rejects (see Fader 2009:91).

Instead, Haredi Jews prefer to produce their own pedagogical materials for learners of Yiddish based within their communities. There is a high degree of multilingualism within Haredi society, as well as a large number of heritage speakers and adult second language learners, leading to a very dynamic language situation and a large interest in producing pedagogical materials for such learners. As most Yiddish learning materials that are commercially available in Haredi bookstores appear to have been developed by members of the speech

1 Hasidism is a Jewish spiritual movement that arose in Eastern Europe at the end of the 18th century and which is based around the figure of a *rebbe* or spiritual leader.

community without influence from outside Yiddish teachers or linguists, they can shed light on the ways in which the language is viewed by the speech community. As such, these materials are a fruitful object of examination because of the insights they can provide into the teaching and learning of Yiddish within Haredi society, as well as more broadly into grassroots pedagogical practices for minority and endangered languages.

In our paper, we have examined a comprehensive selection of Yiddish pedagogical materials produced for L2 learners in the Haredi context and have arrived at three main conclusions. First, analysis of the materials shows that Yiddish is regarded as a core component of in-group identity among Haredi Jews and as such its continued maintenance and adoption by non-speakers is perceived as being of great importance. Second, in contrast to Yiddish pedagogical resources produced outside the Haredi world, the materials in our corpus often reflect an inductive learning approach, whereby forms and structures are designed to be internalized through exposure and practice rather than through explicit, structured explanation. Third, some of the grammatical features introduced in the corpus (e.g., noun case and gender; personal pronouns) are presented in a more archaic or conservative form than that which is usually spoken in Haredi communities, while also exhibiting a high degree of variation in terms of both form and explanation (e.g., the presentation of noun case and gender). This variation is in keeping with earlier research (e.g., Krogh 2012, 2015, 2018; Assouline 2014; Sadock & Masor 2018; Belk et al. 2020, 2022, forthcoming) that such features are in flux or have been lost in spoken Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish.

2 Language Use and Education in Haredi Communities

The Haredi Yiddish speech community is characterized by a high degree of multilingualism and diglossia (Bogoch 1999; Isaacs 1999; Benor 2012; Assouline 2018; Nove 2018a). All speakers have some degree of familiarity with *loshn koy-desh* as this is the language of religious activity and is a high prestige language used in writing. Yiddish is often used as the language of the home and everyday activities within the community, in both speech and writing. Additionally, most speakers have some degree of fluency in the local majority language (Hebrew in Israel; English in the USA and UK; English and to a certain extent French in Canada; French and/or Flemish in Belgium), which is typically used in interactions outside the community, including in medical, legal, and commercial contexts.

Haredi Jews divide themselves into several communities. A primary distinction is made between Ashkenazic Jews (originating in Central and Eastern

Europe) and Sephardic Jews, an umbrella term including descendants of the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492 as well as Mizrahi (Middle Eastern and North African) Jews. Among Ashkenazic Haredim, a distinction is made between Hasidim and non-Hasidim (sometimes called Litvish or yeshivish), with the majority of Yiddish speakers identifying as Hasidic (see Isaacs 1999:12). Non-Hasidim more commonly use the majority language of the country in which they live. Among Yiddish-speaking communities, men typically have more exposure to Yiddish than women as it is the primary language of educational and social settings. Use of the Yiddish language is typically seen as a marker of piety, distinctiveness, in-group identification, and connection to traditional Jewish culture and learning, and is particularly associated with a Hasidic identity (see Isaacs 1999).

Due to its associations with religious and cultural identity, Yiddish is seen as a desirable language to learn for a broad range of Haredim. Many non-Yiddish speakers who grow up in a Haredi community will have some knowledge of Yiddish, although this may be just a few lexical items or idioms. Many will also have some passive knowledge of the language due to contact with a relative, friend, or neighbor who uses the language regularly. However, there are also a number of Jewish people who want to become more observant and see Yiddish as a step in this direction (Benor 2012). Moreover, among certain Hasidic groups, knowledge of Yiddish is seen as a core element of the identity and is therefore essential for in-group belonging; thus newcomers typically invest large amounts of effort into learning the language in order to cement their place in their chosen communities (see Munro in this issue for further discussion of this point). As a result, there are large numbers of both children and adults looking to learn Yiddish from scratch or to improve their pre-existing knowledge.

Children may be educated in Yiddish or in the local majority language, usually in combination with *loshn koydesh*, which is the language of traditional religious texts. Children are typically not explicitly taught about the grammar of *loshn koydesh* but learn texts in the language (particularly prayers and sections of the Torah) by rote. The traditional method of teaching *loshn koydesh* is known as *taytsh*, in which *loshn koydesh* texts are read aloud and translated and interpreted word by word or short phrase by short phrase to a traditional tune (see Abraham 1999:59 for a description of *taytsh* methodology). This bilingual approach expands a child's primary language repertoire alongside their *loshn koydesh* competency. Explicit teaching of grammar has traditionally been seen as in conflict with Haredi educational ideals (see Bogoch 1999:133), and Yiddish grammar has not been taught in Haredi schools until recent decades (see

Abraham-Glinert 1997 for discussion of the absence of grammatical instruction from Hasidic schools in London in the 1990s).

Textbooks are a relatively recent innovation in the Haredi world, especially as regards language pedagogy. The earliest textbooks for teaching Yiddish in Haredi schools appear to have been written in the 1970s, with a growing number produced since then. These textbooks are primarily aimed at girls, as Haredi boys do not traditionally study Yiddish grammar as part of their education (see Mitchell 2002:3180–181 for the UK; Bogoch 1999:129–130 for Israel). As a minority language without state support, materials produced for Haredi learners of Yiddish are grassroots initiatives developed by members of the community to cater to these types of students. Authors of these textbooks do not generally come from a background of linguistic training, though some of them have pedagogical backgrounds as teachers of Yiddish within the Haredi community (typically within the Haredi school system).

3 Research Questions and Aims

Our primary aims are to ascertain which types of bilingual materials for learning Yiddish are available commercially within Haredi communities and to understand the pedagogical approaches and methods they use. Of particular interest is the question of how these materials approach the grammatical developments that Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish has undergone in recent decades. Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish is especially pertinent in this respect because it lacks a standardized register and state infrastructure, has experienced massive recent grammatical change, and its speech community has historically been ideologically opposed to explicit grammatical instruction. Additionally, the materials in our corpus are produced by and for Haredi communities, with little influence from mainstream pedagogical and editorial approaches. We anticipate that these factors will have significant implications for the structure and approach of pedagogical materials for Yiddish.

This article will describe the focus of the materials in our corpus (including which vocabulary, grammatical topics, lexical themes, and cultural topics they emphasize), as well as the methods that are used to present grammatical topics. This will include examination of how traditional and modern approaches to language pedagogy are combined and will consider the question of whether the textbook authors tend to adopt a deductive approach, whereby grammatical topics are introduced, explained, and drilled explicitly and systematically, or an inductive approach, whereby grammatical topics are introduced through

context and learners are expected to absorb them through exposure and use (see Gollin 1998). We will also explore the extent of variation (in terms of orthography and grammatical forms presented) in order to determine whether an accepted standard of the language is emerging and whether the secular Standard form of the language has any influence.

In so doing, we will attempt to assess the ideological positions behind these pedagogical materials, including the questions of how the authors conceive of Haredi Yiddish, the place of Yiddish within the Haredi world, and what authors think is important for learners to acquire. We will also describe the apparent intended audiences of these materials and how the needs of the target audience are reflected within them.

This study contributes to research on Haredi language practices and pedagogy more broadly (e.g., Bogoch 1999; Mitchell 2002–3; Gonshor & Shaffir 2004; Soldat-Jaffe 2010; Kutzik 2018), as well as on recent trends in Yiddish pedagogy more generally (e.g., Wieki 2009; Adler Peckerar 2011; Avineri & Verschik 2017; McGrath 2019), in addition to minority language pedagogy (e.g., de Graaf et al. 2008; Tarsoly & Valijärvi 2020; Valijärvi & Kahn 2022).

4 The Textbooks

In order to conduct an analysis of the pedagogical resources that currently have widespread availability throughout the Haredi world, we developed a corpus consisting of all the published textbooks, phrasebooks, and other learning materials for L2 learners of Yiddish in Haredi settings. To this end, we visited a broad range of bookshops in Jerusalem, Bnei Brak, New York, Montreal, and London, as well as the major online bookshops and Judaica shops catering to a Haredi clientele, and obtained copies of all the materials available in these locales. This process revealed to us that the pedagogical resources for sale are broadly the same in all of these different establishments regardless of geographical location. That is to say, books available for purchase in Jerusalem are also kept in stock in New York, London, etc., place of publication notwithstanding. This is in keeping with the highly international character of Haredi society in general and the concomitant international nature of Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish (Belk et al. 2022), and means that it is impossible to draw conclusions about trends in pedagogical approach or grammatical features of a given textbook based on, e.g., place of publication or place of residence of the author(s). The selection of materials to include in our corpus was informed by the relatively small number of resources available for learners of Yiddish in the Haredi market. This meant that instead of limiting ourselves, for example, only

to textbooks or phrasebooks, which would not have given us a corpus large enough for a meaningful analysis, we opted to include all types of commercially available resources. As our goal was to focus on materials for L2 learners rather than for speakers whose main home language was Yiddish, we excluded from our corpus resources that explicitly stated they were designed for the latter. In some cases, it was not clear whether a given resource was designed mainly for L1 or L2 speakers, so we chose to include materials with instructions in a language other than Yiddish (i.e., Hebrew or English) as opposed to materials written entirely in Yiddish, which we judged more likely to have been composed with fluent speakers in mind.

The selected materials represent a range of approaches to learning Yiddish through the medium of another language (either Hebrew or English) within the Haredi context. The intended audience can often be inferred from information such as the gender of the author, the publication house, the name of the schools for which the material is intended, and sometimes from information in the introduction, e.g., a feminizing suffix on the word for 'teacher' or 'pupil.' However, in some cases, particularly with respect to the textbooks designed for use in schools, it is difficult to determine whether they are designed primarily for L1 or L2 learners. In such cases, there are no specific discussions of this issue, and the contents seem as though they could be relevant for both types of learners of a young age. For example, *Der shlis: a yidish lernbikh* 'The Key: A Yiddish Textbook' and *Ver ken yidish* 'Who Knows Yiddish' contain introductions for teachers and/or learners which outline the intended goals of the volumes, but these do not indicate whether the books are designed for learners who use Yiddish as their main home language, those who are exposed to it primarily in the school setting, or heritage-type speakers who have a more passive knowledge of the language. These introductions are written in Yiddish, including the one directed specifically at students in *Ver ken yidish*, but the book states that it is intended to teach reading and writing, vocabulary, and grammatical rules, which could be relevant for all groups of speakers. We have included these books in the present study because they all have instructions in Hebrew or English, and therefore fall into the category of pedagogical materials for Hasidic Yiddish presented through the medium of another language, even if some of the target audience may use Yiddish as their primary language at home. Thus, the pedagogical materials designed for use in school settings seem generally to be appropriate to the full range of learners of Yiddish, from those who know only a few words or phrases to those who speak the language fluently but want to improve their understanding of Yiddish grammar.

The volumes in our corpus constitute the majority of Yiddish pedagogical materials taught through the medium of another language and available

commercially in Haredi communities. All of the materials are designed for a Haredi, or at least Jewish, readership (and very explicitly assume that non-Jews will not be using them) and as such they are culturally attuned to the requirements of a Haredi audience (see section 10 for further discussion). The books often include either explicit or implicit statements of their suitability for a Haredi market, including mention of the religious authorities involved in their creation. There are six books or book series included in our corpus, each of which is described below.

4.1 *Der shlist: a yidish lernbikhl* ‘The Key: A Yiddish Textbook’ 1–3 (hereafter *Der shlist*)

This is a large-format book series aimed primarily at girls within the formal educational context. The first volume is entirely in Yiddish, while the second volume is in Yiddish except for the glossary, which is Yiddish-Hebrew.² The third volume has instructions in Hebrew. It is difficult to be certain whether the books are designed for pupils with prior knowledge of Yiddish from their home environment because they do not explicitly state whether they are intended for L1, L2, or heritage speakers. We have chosen to include this series in our analysis because the instructions in volume 3 are in Hebrew, and our discussion is based on volume 3 as the first two volumes are very basic in terms of content, focusing on spelling and simple sentences. The series consists largely of exercises of various types (primarily gap-filling) and some short texts organized around the weekly Torah portions. There is a series of cassette recordings that go along with the books, but unfortunately we were not able to access them.

4.2 *The Easy-shmeezy Guide to Yiddish* (hereafter *Easy Shmeezy*)

This is an English-medium phrasebook-style publication that is designed for adult learners of Yiddish. While not expressly stated, it is apparently aimed primarily at men, as the cover pictures a man and the book contains various lexical themes that are relevant only to men, e.g., the yeshiva (Talmudic academy

2 This seems to be Israeli Hebrew, though the authors call it *loshn koydesh*, a Yiddish and Ashkenazic Hebrew term literally meaning ‘the holy language’ which is used with reference to pre-modern Hebrew. Israeli Hebrew is very different in terms of orthography, grammar, and lexis (as well as phonology) from contemporary *loshn koydesh* as used in written form in Haredi communities, which we term Ashkenazic Hebrew (see Kahn & Yampolskaya 2022). Our fieldwork shows that the opposition between *loshn koydesh* and Israeli Hebrew is highly salient for Hasidic community members (Yampolskaya et al. forthcoming). The orthography, grammar, and lexis of the Hebrew component of the second volume of *Der shlist* are consistent with Israeli Hebrew rather than with Ashkenazic Hebrew.

for older boys, boys' high school). The book is organized into five main sections, covering basic greetings, everyday expressions, and some elementary grammar (e.g., pronouns); everyday lexical themes (e.g., clothes, days of the week, etc.); dialogues suitable for everyday scenarios (e.g., shopping, a new student at yeshiva, speaking Yiddish with the kids, etc.); grammatical topics such as definite and indefinite articles, plurals, negation, and verb tenses; and proverbs, songs, stories, and other "real-world" examples of Yiddish. *Easy shmeezy* explicitly aims to teach the grammar of the language as well as its vocabulary, but without grammatical terms "like 'diphthongs,' 'accusative,' and many other wacky words" (p. 6), which may be perceived as intimidating: "Many folk quiver when they hear the 'G word'" (p. 103). The author presents Yiddish as a worthy subject of study because it connects learners to an important part of their heritage (p. i). The book has a supplementary website.

4.3 *Ezra kala li-sfat ha-yidish* 'Easy Help for the Yiddish Language' 1–3 (hereafter *Ezra kala*)

This is an Israeli Hebrew-medium phrasebook-style publication in three volumes. The first volume does not comment on the target audience, but the second volume states that it is intended to be "suitable for all ages" and for both males and females. However, in practice most of the conversational scenarios presented in the books seem to be targeted at adults, and primarily men (with some topics that are specifically for men, e.g., the yeshiva). Volume 1 contains a mix of lexical and grammatical topics, while Volume 2 consists entirely of conversational scenarios and example sentences, with a short three-page grammatical summary at the end of the book which summarizes the rules introduced throughout Volume 1. Volume 3 consists mostly of dialogues and texts, with several chapters at the end of the book providing some additional grammatical rules, as well as an appendix summarizing the grammatical rules introduced throughout the series. The lexical topics introduced in Volume 1 are basic (e.g., family, food, weather, numbers, colors, days of the week, parts of the body, time, clothes), while the content in Volume 2 is more advanced lexical topics or targeted conversational scenarios (e.g., travel, describing people, jewelry shopping, going to restaurants, various ways of forming questions, how to express quantities and frequency, invitations, visiting the doctor, some topics in Jewish history). The topics in Volume 3 all relate to the Jewish holidays and lifecycle. The introduction to the series stresses the fact that it is important to learn Yiddish for cultural reasons, as knowledge of the language helps to preserve the Jewish way of life and strengthen one's religious devotion. The books are accompanied by audio CDs, in which a male voice reads out the vocabulary and dialogues presented in the book.

4.4 *Likkutei sichos* ‘Extracts of Sermons’

This is a glossary (though the author himself describes it as a dictionary) of the *sichos* (speeches and sermons) given by the Seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902–1994). It also includes a grammatical summary. It is unidirectional, organized alphabetically by Yiddish headwords with equivalents in English and Israeli Hebrew. However, only the equivalent that is appropriate to the context in which the Yiddish headword is found in the *sichos* is provided. For example, *druk* ‘press, print (v.); pressure (n.)’ is translated only as ‘print’ (p. 68), and *iz* ‘is (v.); so (conj.)’ is translated only as ‘is’ (p. 16). Furthermore, words are listed according to the precise tokens (as opposed to lexemes or roots) used in the Rebbe’s *sichos*, as also demonstrated by the example of *iz*, which is not listed under its infinitive *zayn*. In this way, the dictionary is designed to be used by anyone (of any age or gender) who speaks English and/or Hebrew, regardless of their level of education or their familiarity with Yiddish or traditional dictionaries. In addition to its dictionary component, the book also has a short (8-page) grammatical appendix covering basic topics such as verb forms, personal pronouns, cardinal and ordinal numerals, time and date vocabulary, as well as a list of common nominal, adjectival, and verbal suffixes.

4.5 *Ver ken yidish* ‘Who Knows Yiddish’

This is an A5-sized book,³ aimed primarily at girls learning or improving their Yiddish within the formal educational context. It begins with an introduction for teachers and another for students, explaining that it is designed to introduce the main “rules and principles” of Yiddish grammar (though the word “grammar” is not explicitly mentioned). The book does not include texts, dialogues, or lexical topics, and as such is possibly suitable for use as a supplementary volume alongside another textbook (though this is not stated explicitly in the teachers’ or students’ introductions), or for use by students whose prior knowledge of spoken Yiddish obviates the need for reading and conversation practice. The instructions are in Hebrew, and commands are issued in both the masculine and feminine form (the semantic gender of the addressee is encoded within the verb in Hebrew), leaving open the possibility that the book might be intended for use by boys as well as girls. The book begins with an introduction to Yiddish orthography and progresses through the language’s main grammatical topics, e.g., nouns, pronouns, verbs, etc. It includes grammatical explanations accompanied by short exercises, mostly gap-filling but also some translation and transformation tasks.

3 A5 is roughly equivalent to half-letter size in North America.

4.6 *Yidishe klängen* ‘Yiddish/Jewish Sounds’

This is a three-volume set of textbooks produced by the *Beys Yankev* network of Haredi girls’ schools. It is intended for use in classrooms under a teacher’s supervision. The series is designed for Hebrew speakers, and the instructions are all in Hebrew. The series contains reading texts introducing new vocabulary and various exercises (gap-filling, identifying antonyms, and translating Yiddish into Hebrew and vice versa). The series introduces grammatical topics but does not usually elucidate them explicitly; instead, it has tables and sentences exemplifying grammatical rules and asks learners to extrapolate the rules based on the sentences. The books have color drawings and charts illustrating various grammatical and lexical topics. Because the books were produced by a girls’ school network, one might expect that the primary intended audience is female; however, the illustrations, example sentences, and text samples are all oriented towards male semantic domains and topics (e.g., ‘a new boy in class,’ studying Talmud); in addition, the Hebrew-language instructions to learners are written using the second-person masculine singular form of the verb (often used as a default form) instead of the second-person feminine singular (which is specifically feminine). These elements suggest that the books may have been designed to be suitable for use in boys’ educational institutions as well as girls.’

5 Orthography

The orthography of the textbooks varies from volume to volume, reflecting the lack of a rigid standard. Most of the books explain the difference between Hebrew and Yiddish orthography (as both are written in the same script, but the Yiddish orthography has different principles than its Hebrew counterpart). The orthography is explained with recourse to students’ understanding of Ashkenazic Hebrew phonology, as opposed to Israeli Hebrew phonology (see Katz 1993 for discussion of Ashkenazic Hebrew phonology). *Ezra kala* explicitly states that certain aspects of Yiddish orthography differ from those of Israeli Hebrew, e.g., that the vowel symbol *komets* (Hebrew *qames*) represents /o/ in Yiddish, whereas it represents /a/ in Israeli Hebrew. In other books, it is accepted as common knowledge that the symbol װ represents /o/, as in Ashkenazic Hebrew, and this is not stated explicitly. With that being said, the orthography is not always consistently employed even within the same volume. For example, in *Ezra kala* the word for ‘book’ is spelled as בוך *bukh* (2:28), whereas elsewhere in the same series it is spelled as בִּיך *bikh* (1:80); this reflects the fact that the word is pronounced as *bikh* by many Hasidic Yiddish speakers.

The orthographic inconsistency in the textbooks resembles their approach to the presentation of grammatical rules, which will be discussed further below.

The books also take a variety of approaches to the use of vowel pointing. Most written Yiddish aimed at adults appears without pointing at all, as is also the case with Hebrew, but Yiddish material aimed at children will usually appear with full pointing, where every vowel is indicated, as again is the case in Hebrew. Standard Yiddish is written with a distinct system of pointing, where only certain vowels are indicated. *Der shlisl* and *Ver ken yidish* are written entirely without pointing, and *Likkutei sichos* only uses pointing where necessary to disambiguate. This suggests that users of these books do not need overt written information about the pronunciation of the words, either because it is not relevant for their purposes (in the case of *Likkutei sichos*) or because they can access this information from a teacher or other source (in the case of *Der shlisl* and *Ver ken yidish*). On the other hand, *Ezra kala* and *Easy shmeezy* are written with near-full pointing, which allows them to be used independently without a teacher.⁴ *Yidishe klängen* presents a middle case, where the first volume is written with full pointing, with the amount of pointing gradually diminishing in the subsequent volumes, allowing students to progress from reading material aimed at children to that aimed at adults.

6 Phonology

Our linguistic fieldwork in Yiddish-speaking Haredi communities has revealed that there are two main vowel profiles of Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish, which speakers distinguish by the labels ‘vos’ and ‘vus’ (referring to the pronunciation of the Yiddish word for ‘what’ in each profile). The ‘vos’ profile is closest to the Standard Yiddish or Northeastern dialect, in which the vowel *komets alef* אָ is pronounced /ɔ/ and *vov* וּ is pronounced /u/. The ‘vus’ profile is closest to the Mideastern (also termed Central) dialect, in which the vowel *komets alef* אָ is pronounced /u/ and *vov* וּ is pronounced /i/, and certain diphthongs undergo a raising chain shift. (See Jacobs 2005:57–89 for a detailed discussion of the phonology of prewar and Standard Yiddish dialects.)

For most of the books, there is no direct evidence of the intended pronunciation of the Yiddish that is taught. For *Ver ken yidish*, *Der shlisl*, *Yidishe klängen*, and *Likkutei sichos*, we were not able to access any audio material. *Ezra kala* is accompanied by audio CDs, where a male voice reads out the phrases

4 *Easy Shmeezy* is unique among these books in that it often makes use of Israeli Hebrew, rather than Ashkenazic Hebrew or Yiddish, pronunciation of certain vowels. Such spelling is not seen as standard but is often found in Israel.

contained in the books. *Easy shmeezy* has both an accompanying website including audio clips, and transliterations of the Yiddish phrases in English, which indicate the intended pronunciation.

The one clue to the intended pronunciation is the Yiddish orthography that is used. For ‘vus’ speakers, there is no difference in pronunciation between the vowels ם /i/ and ן /i/. Thus, if a book provides the spelling בײך ‘book’ instead of or alongside בוך, we can see that the author pronounces the two vowels identically, indicating that they speak ‘vus.’ As the most widely accepted orthography closely resembles the ‘vos’ pronunciation, we do not expect to find obvious indications if the author speaks ‘vos.’⁵

The books without accompanying audio material are consistent in their use of vowels, so it is unclear whether the authors speak ‘vos’ or ‘vus’ or which pronunciation they intend to teach readers. However, the *Ezra kala* books include several examples of ם and ן being used interchangeably, indicating that the author likely speaks ‘vus.’ This is confirmed by the fact that the accompanying audio material clearly uses the ‘vus’ pronunciation. Therefore, it appears that the pronunciation that the authors expect students to acquire is ‘vus,’ which is most commonly associated with Hasidic groups such as Belz, Bobov, Satmar, and Vizhnitz, as opposed to Chabad, Karlin, and Jerusalemite Yiddish speakers, as well as other non-Hasidic Haredim with historical origins in the Northeastern dialect region.

Easy shmeezy presents another noteworthy case. The author claims to have learned Yiddish in Jerusalem, and more specifically in the Hasidic enclave of Meah Shearim, where Yiddish is largely spoken with the ‘vos’ pronunciation. Most of the examples he provides clearly indicate that the ‘vos’ pronunciation is intended, for example the word ברודער ‘brother’ is transliterated as *brúder*. However, other pronunciations also appear in the book, including phrases such as וואו איז מאַה שעריים ‘Where is Meah Shearim?’ which is transliterated as *Vu iz Máyeh Shúrim?*, indicating a mix of ‘vos’ (‘vu’) and ‘vus’ (‘Mayeh Shurim’) pronunciations. We interpret this mix as being the result of the author’s own Yiddish pronunciation, which was picked up as an adult second language learner from a variety of sources.

These findings indicate that Haredi Yiddish lacks a universal written standard (though as Benedict 2021 argues, it seems that the beginnings of such a standard can be observed) and that phonology sometimes plays a role in orthographic choices. Thus, some amount of orthographic variation is accepted

5 In contrast to ‘vus’ speakers, ‘vos’ speakers do not write words with characteristic Northeastern Yiddish pronunciation phonetically; for example, while they pronounce the word אויך *oykh* (Mideastern Yiddish *oukh*) ‘also’ as *eykh*, they do not write it phonetically as ײך.

within the speech community. These results are echoed in our findings relating to grammatical topics, as described in the following sections.

7 Case and Gender

Most historical Yiddish varieties and Standard Yiddish have tripartite case (nominative, accusative, dative) and tripartite gender (masculine, feminine, neuter) systems. The case and gender of a given noun phrase is typically not marked on the noun itself but is apparent from the form of the definite article (*der*, *di*, *dos*, *dem*) and any accompanying attributive adjectives (*-er*, *-e*, *-Ø*, *-m/n*). However, Belk et al. (2020, 2022) have demonstrated that Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish speakers have neither morphological case nor morphological gender (see also Krogh 2012, 2015, 2018; Assouline 2014; and Sadock & Masor 2018). Speakers typically use either /dɛ/, /də/, or /di/ as an invariant definite determiner and the invariant attributive marker /-ɛ/ or /-ə/. In writing, they generally prefer a single written form (often *der* or *di*) or else use a variety of forms regardless of morphological case or gender. Thus, the treatment of morphological case and gender in the books under discussion will provide key insight into the question of how Haredi Yiddish speakers view their own language, as well as the extent of the influence from sources outside the speech community.

7.1 *Definite Articles*

Discussion of case and gender morphology on definite determiners varies in each of the books in this study. In *Der shlisl* vol. 2 and *Likkutei sichos*, a variety of case- and gender-marked definite determiner forms are used, but no explanation is given about when to use which form. *Der shlisl* vol. 2, for example, has sections entitled *Der bukh* ‘the book,’ *Di shafe* ‘the shelf,’ *Dos hoyz* ‘the house,’ *Der boym* ‘the tree,’ and *Dos kleyd* ‘the dress,’ but does not explain the difference among these forms (or expect students to know the difference). *Likkutei sichos* includes entries for *der*, *di*, *dem*, and even *dos*, translating all of them as either a definite determiner or a demonstrative (as is expected given the book’s aims), but perhaps surprisingly does not discuss the different forms in the grammatical section.

On the other hand, both *Easy shmeezy* and *Ezra kala* have explicit rules for when to use different forms of the definite determiner. Towards the end of the book, the author of *Easy shmeezy* writes:

For singular nouns, the word “the” changes according to gender. Der (דער) for masculine, di (די) for feminine and dos (דאס) for neutral ... **Important**

notice: in Yiddish every word has a gender for example [sic], the word “time” is feminine and the word “project” is masculine ... don’t ask me why, dat’s just duh way it is.⁶ But don’t worry about it, because the more you speak the more you’ll get the hang of it. If you’re not sure about the gender of the noun, you can just say “deh,” you’ll sound fine (p. 121).

Here, the author seems to recognize that most of the time speakers of Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish use the form *de* (here *deh*) in place of *der*, *di*, *dos*, or *dem*. This is in keeping with work arguing for an absence of morphological case and gender in spoken Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish—as opposed to the written language, in which the various forms of the definite determiner are still used, though not in the same way as in prewar or Standard Yiddish (Belk et al. 2020, 2022).

Ezra kala gives partial rules for definite determiner forms, stating that *der* is for men and *di* is for women (p. 22). Note that both this rule and the discussion in *Easy shmeezy* ignore the form *dem* and the role that case plays in definite determiner form. No such discussion appears in five of the six books included in this study.

Similarly, in *Ver ken yidish*, rules for the use of *der*, *di*, and *dos* are explicitly provided. The rules state that *Der* and *di* are used for masculine and feminine nouns, respectively (with one example each of an inanimate noun provided), while *dos* is used for diminutives and fractions (*third*, *fourth*, *tenth*, etc.). However, beyond the rule that diminutives end in ‘l,’ no indication is given of how to determine whether an inanimate noun is masculine or feminine. Furthermore, these rules are not always consistently applied: examples appearing later in the textbook include the use of *dos* for non-diminutive nouns (e.g., *dos kind*) and the rule that “dos and di are ‘the’ for feminine” (p. 51). As with *Easy shmeezy* and *Ezra kala*, *Ver ken yidish* does not discuss case on full nominals (as opposed to pronouns or bare nouns).

Despite the explicit rules provided in *Easy shmeezy* and *Ezra kala*, most vocabulary in these books (as in *Der shlisl* and *Likkutei sichos*) is presented without the definite determiner, or any other indicator of the noun’s gender. In *Ezra kala*, some vocabulary lists (including those for family terms and weather terms) are presented with a definite determiner, but others (including body parts, food, drink, fruit, parts of the house) are presented without any indication of the noun’s gender. Notably, vocabulary lists in *Ezra kala* with definite

6 The spelling ‘dat’ and ‘doh’ instead of ‘that’ and ‘the’ may be an attempt to represent in writing the common pronunciation of voiced fricatives as voiced stops by Haredi speakers of English in New York (see Fader 2009:87–117 for discussion of this type of pronunciation, especially 100–101).

determiners sometimes include *dos*, which is not mentioned in the explicit rule. Examples include *der tate* ‘the father,’ *di mame* ‘the mother,’ *dos yingl* ‘the boy,’ and *dos meydl* ‘the girl’ (*Ezra kala* 1:20–22).

Example sentences in *Der shlisl*, *Easy shmeezy*, and *Ezra kala* all include case and gender morphology, as in (1)–(3) below. This includes *dem* forms, even when these were not explained in the grammar sections; this point is illustrated in (1) and (3).

- (1) די שטייבן גוט פאר דעם שניי.
di shtivl zenen gut far dem shney.
 The boots are good for the snow.
Ezra kala 1, p. 51
- (2) מאָטי איז דער בעסטער חזן.
*Motty iz der béster chazn.*⁷
 Motty is the best chazzan.
Easy shmeezy p. 111
- (3) ווי אזוי וועלן די צווילינג באצירן דעם טיש?
vi azoy veln di tsviling batsirn dem tish?
 How are the twins going to decorate the table?
Der shlisl 3, p. 105

Yidische klängen is distinct from the other books included in this study as it includes a much more in-depth discussion and explanation of the rules of morphological case and gender. Strikingly, however, this discussion is found only towards the end of the third book, indicating that knowledge of morphological case and gender is not considered necessary to understand the material covered earlier in the course. Detailed rules are provided for determining when to use which form of the definite articles. These rules differ from those of Standard Yiddish. They may be based on the morphology or phonology of the noun (e.g., “words ending in *-e* take *di*, words ending in *-er* take *der*” [vol. 3, p. 139]; “words deriving from an adjective take *di*” [vol. 3, p. 141]), but in some instances competing rules may apply and in such instances there is no indication of how to determine which rule takes priority. The rules cover both animate and inanimate nouns, and many examples are provided along with a wide variety of exercises for practice. Unique among the books covered in this study, *Yidische klängen* also describes rules for non-nominative cases. While

7 Unless otherwise specified, Romanized examples from *Easy Shmeezy* appear in their original form. All other Romanizations are our own and follow the YIVO Romanization system.

these rules are based on sentential word order (e.g., “*der* becomes *dem* after a verb or a preposition”) and the terms “dative” and “accusative” are not used, the rules are likely general enough for a student to understand how and when to use them. Non-nominative cases are not discussed for feminine or neuter nouns, which is perhaps explicable due to weakening and syncretism of the feminine dative form in many prewar dialects (Wolf 1969:130–139; Weinreich 2007:333–334). The book also acknowledges some optionality in the use of case and gender morphology. For instance, it states that when talking about a child in the general sense, *dos* should be used, whereas when a particular child whose gender is known is under discussion, *der* should be used for a boy and *di* for a girl (p. 144).

These findings seem to underline the absence of morphological case and gender that has been documented in spoken Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish and the associated inconsistency in written use of the determiners (Belk et al. 2020, 2022). In pedagogical material for languages with morphological gender, such as French or Hebrew, new vocabulary is regularly presented alongside appropriate indicators of grammatical gender such as an agreeing article in French, or an explication of regular gender morphology combined with explicit indicators where needed in Hebrew (see, e.g., Demouy & Moys 2006 for French; Lyttleton & Wang 2022 for Hebrew). However, in pedagogical material for Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish, either no explanation of case and gender morphology is provided (as in *Der shlisl* and *Likkutei sichos*) or only an incomplete explanation appears (as in *Easy shmeezy* and *Ezra kala*). It is not possible to learn a comprehensive, uniform morphological case and gender system from these materials. While each book presents at least some rules, these are typically partial (e.g., *der* for men, *di* for women, with no mention of non-nominative forms) and there is very little consistency in the rules provided across the various texts. That is to be expected as spoken Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish does not have case and gender at all, while written Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish reflects a system in flux, where the determiners are used inconsistently between and within different publications and never in a Standard Yiddish-like way (see Belk et al. 2020, 2022).

7.2 *Adjectives*

Easy shmeezy, *Likkutei sichos*, and *Ezra kala* make no mention of case and gender morphology on attributive adjectives, or the fact that even in Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish attributive adjectives are distinguished from predicative adjectives through the use of inflectional morphology. Nevertheless, several examples are given in each book of attributive adjectives bearing morphology that distinguishes them from predicative forms, or from the citation forms provided in sections dedicated to vocabulary learning.

Ver ken yidish explains that adjectives following *der* should be affixed with *-er* and those following *di* should be affixed with *-e*. Despite the fact that the book discusses the definite determiner *dos*, no rule is provided for the attributive adjectival morphology that should accompany it. *Dem* is not discussed in this book, and the adjectival morphology associated with this form is not discussed either.

In *Yidishe klangen*, rules are provided for the attributive morphology associated with the forms *der*, *di*, and *dem*, as well as exercises for practice. However, no mention is made of how to form adjectives associated with *dos*, which is surprising as the book is otherwise relatively thorough in its discussion of case and gender morphology. In Standard and most prewar varieties, attributive adjectives in the neuter gender are the most complicated group as there are distinct definite and indefinite forms, but no mention is made of neuter indefinite adjectival forms.

The lack of discussion of attributive adjectives in most of the books covered by this study is surprising given recent developments in Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish. While morphological case and gender have been lost, the suffix *-e* has been reanalyzed as a marker of attribution in the language, and native speakers use it to distinguish attributive from predicative adjectives very consistently. It is also a relatively simple rule to formulate. We speculate that the absence of in-depth discussion of this topic in most of the books surveyed is due to two main factors: 1) a reluctance in books such as *Easy shmeezy*, *Ezra kala*, and *Likkutei sichos* to discuss grammar in too much detail for fear of intimidating potential students of the language, and 2) a reluctance to acknowledge recent developments in the case and gender system of Hasidic Yiddish, either due to a lack of comprehensive description of these developments in the literature (both pedagogical and academic) or due to a desire to teach something approximating the traditional morphological system which might be perceived as prescriptively correct.

8 Pronouns

8.1 *Personal Pronouns*

Standard Yiddish and most prewar Eastern European dialects have a personal pronoun system with a three-way gender distinction (masculine, feminine, and neuter) in the third person singular and three-way case distinction (nominative, accusative, and dative) in the 1SG and 2SG, a two-way distinction (nominative vs. objective) in the 3MS, 1PL, and 2PL, a different two-way distinction (nominative/accusative vs. dative) in the 3FS, and no distinction at all in the 3PL. There is also a T/V distinction in the second person (familiar

du vs. honorific *ir*). Exceptions to this system consist of some local variations in the Polish, Hungarian, and Ukrainian dialect regions regarding the use of the accusative vs. dative forms with particular verbs (Wolf 1969); in addition, the Lithuanian dialect typically lacks the accusative/dative distinction in the 1SG and 2SG, using the dative forms in accusative contexts as well (Jacobs 2005:184).

The Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish personal pronoun paradigm has undergone a number of innovations vis-à-vis the prewar and Standard system described above, most notably a shift towards greater syncretism so that the singular persons all have a two-way nominative/objective distinction, and the plural persons tend to display no case distinctions. There is also a considerable degree of variation between speakers, and indeed one speaker may use the traditionally dative forms in accusative contexts and vice versa (Assouline 2007; Nove 2018b; Belk et al. forthcoming).

Within this context, it is instructive to examine the treatment of the personal pronouns in our textbook corpus. All of the textbooks examined include a dedicated section on personal pronouns, and their presentation highlights a number of instructive issues with respect to Yiddish pedagogy in the Haredi community.

One issue reflected in the textbooks concerns the treatment of personal pronoun case. In *Der shlisl*, only the nominal forms of the personal pronouns are presented in table form. The objective forms are not presented at all, and learners are not told how to use them. However, the objective forms do appear in the example sentences, without any explanations. This resembles the tendency seen with objective forms of the definite articles discussed in the previous section and underscores the inductive nature of the book: a partial grammatical rule is presented, and learners are expected to use it in conjunction with the additional information presented in the examples and in conversation with speakers to enrich their speaking ability and understanding. The other textbooks provide some objective cases, but in *Likkutei sichos*, *Easy shmeezy*, and *Ver ken yidish*, one set of objective pronouns is presented, for use in both the accusative and dative contexts, while in *Ezra kala* and *Yidishe klängen*, two sets of objective pronouns are presented, one for accusative contexts and another for dative ones. These differences in presentation mean that learners come away with very different understandings of the Yiddish personal pronoun system depending on which textbook they have studied.

The forms of the personal pronouns themselves also differ markedly among the textbooks. For example, *Ezra kala* and *Yidishe klängen* provide two partially different paradigms for the objective pronouns, one for the accusative (consisting of a series beginning with *mikh* 'me' and *dikh* 'you') and another for the dative (beginning with *mir*, *dir*), while *Easy shmeezy*, *Likkutei sichos*, and

Ver ken yidish present a single objective paradigm, with *mir* and *dir* for contexts corresponding to accusative and dative. The 3FS pronoun also exhibits variation from book to book, with some listing the accusative form as *zi* and others listing it as *ir* (which is the same as the dative form). These differences among the textbooks reflect the variation attested in the everyday language of Hasidic Yiddish speakers (Belk et al. forthcoming) and the lack of a standard. In one case, the meaning of a pronoun given in the text differs from those used in any spoken variety: in *Likkutei sichos*, the form *im/em* is glossed as ‘him or her,’ when in fact it only means ‘him,’ and the feminine *ir/zi* does not appear in the table at all. In addition, the textbooks all routinely omit some of the most commonly used personal pronouns of spoken Hasidic Yiddish. For example, they consistently provide the historical 1PL nominative form *mir* ‘we’ and 2PL nominative form *ir* ‘you’ instead of the more frequently employed *undz* ‘we’ and *enk* or *aykh* ‘you’ (which were typically objective only in prewar Yiddish, though *undz* was used in nominative contexts in some varieties of Mideastern Yiddish; see Jacobs 2005:70, 189). This tendency towards conservatism may reflect a concern for the maintenance of written standards which, coupled with the lack of a standard for Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish, has resulted in a presentation which is different from the language as actually spoken today.

These patterns are noteworthy because they mean that a very basic element of the language, i.e., the personal pronoun paradigm, is presented completely differently depending on the textbook selected, and in some cases is very different from the pronominal forms likely to be encountered most often in speech. This is unusual from the perspective of a standardized language and most likely reflects the point that the Yiddish used by Haredi speakers does not have a standard and contains a high degree of variation. The textbook presentation of the paradigms reflects the tension between the desire to present the rules of a standard-like, uniform grammatical system (perhaps based on a historical variety, as we believe may be the situation with morphological case and gender) and teaching the language as it is spoken day-to-day (perhaps through a more inductive approach). These factors are coupled with the lack of a strong grammatical tradition in Haredi Yiddish pedagogical contexts, and a large amount of variety in the spoken language, including in the pronominal paradigm (as discussed in Belk et al. forthcoming).

8.2 Possessive Pronouns

In prewar and Standard Yiddish, the adnominal possessive pronouns have two variants, one with a zero ending which is used with singular nouns of all cases and genders, e.g., *mayn bukh* ‘my book,’ and one ending in *-e* which is used with

plural nouns, e.g., *mayne bikher* 'my books.' In Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish, the singular/plural distinction in the adnominal paradigm has been maintained to a considerable degree, but with more variation than in the prewar varieties of the language (Belk et al. forthcoming).

Among the six textbooks or textbook series in our corpus, different approaches are taken with respect to the presentation of the adnominal possessive pronouns. In *Likkutei sichos*, only the forms with a zero ending, used with singular nouns, appear in the grammatical appendix (p. 145), and there is no mention of the forms used with plural nouns (though some of these are listed in the dictionary without explanation). In another book, *Ezra kala* vol. 3 (p. 96), a single paradigm is provided, and it is not indicated whether this is singular or plural. This paradigm contains a mix of forms for singular nouns and forms for plural nouns, with no discussion of the issue of singular vs. plural agreement. In *Yidische klängen* and *Ver ken yidish*, the singular and plural forms are introduced, but no explanation is given as to the difference between them. In *Yidische klängen*, learners are introduced to the various individual adnominal possessives gradually, and they are interspersed throughout various exercises so that familiarity with the different singular vs. plural combinations can be inferred by practice; only at the end of the final volume in the series, in a review chapter, is the explanation for the difference between singular and plural adnominal possessives given explicitly. (In *Ver ken yidish* no explicit explanation is ever given.) These patterns are in keeping with the generally inductive orientation of the books in the corpus as they do not expressly provide learners with the rules for the formation of the plurals, but these forms can be seen in the example sentences and longer texts that appear in the series.

9 Verbal Morphology and Syntax

The general inductive approach used in the textbooks analyzed in this study is particularly prominent in the sections dealing with the verbal system. This approach, based on the principle of *taytsh*, requires making inductive connections between a source and target language (usually Hebrew and Yiddish, respectively, in this corpus).

This principle is seen throughout the corpus, including, for example, in the trilingual Yiddish–Hebrew–English dictionary *Likkutei sichos*. In this book, verbs are listed not by their infinitive forms, but by individual conjugated forms translated into conjugated Hebrew and English equivalents, as seen in example (4) (from *Likkutei sichos* p. 78).

(4) says/ing	אומר, אומר(ים) <i>'omer, 'omer/'omrim</i>	זאָג, זאָגט, זאָגן <i>zog, zogt, zogn</i>
saying	באומר(ם) <i>be-'omro/'omram</i>	זאָגנדיק <i>zogndik</i>
you say	אתה אומר <i>'ata 'omer</i>	זאָגסטו <i>zogstu</i>

This book is the only trilingual edition in our corpus, giving us insight into the connections Hebrew speakers are expected to make in Yiddish as opposed to those expected of English speakers. In the appendix, two tables are provided showing conjugations of two auxiliary and two basic verbs, one table for Hebrew speakers and the other for English speakers. While the target language, Yiddish, is the same in each case, the significant differences in the way that the grammatical material is presented in these two tables indicates an underlying intention to make the comparison between the source and target language as straightforward as possible, again implicating the *taytsh* principle.

TABLE 1 Excerpt from *Likkutei sichos* demonstrating Yiddish verb conjugations for Hebrew speakers (p. 144)

שרש: זאָגן <i>shoresh: zogn</i> 'root: to say'	שרש: גיין <i>shoresh: geyn</i> 'root: to go'		הפעל <i>hapo'al</i> 'the verb'	זמן <i>zman</i> 'tense'	גוף <i>guf</i> 'person'
האָב געזאָגט <i>hob gezogt</i> 'said'	בין געגאַנגען <i>bin gegangen</i> 'went'	איך <i>ikh</i> 'I'	הלכתי <i>halakhti</i> 'I went'	עבר <i>'avar</i> 'past'	אני <i>'ani</i> 'I'
זאָג <i>zog</i> 'say'	גיין <i>geyn</i> 'go'	איך <i>ikh</i> 'I'	הולך <i>holekh</i> 'go, going'	הווה <i>hove</i> 'present'	
וועל זאָגן <i>vel zogn</i> 'will say'	וועל גיין <i>vel geyn</i> 'will go'	איך <i>ikh</i> 'I'	אלך <i>'elekh</i> 'I will go'	עתיד <i>'atid</i> 'future'	
זאָל זאָגן <i>zol zogn</i> 'should say'	זאָל גיין <i>zol geyn</i> 'should go'	איך <i>ikh</i> 'I'	אלך <i>'elekh</i> 'I will go'	ציווי <i>tsivuy</i> 'imperative'	

TABLE 2 Excerpt from *Likkutei sichos* demonstrating Yiddish verb conjugations for English speakers. The instructions accompanying the table state: “A sentence in past or future tense includes parts 1) 2) & 3)... In present tense omit part 2)” (p. 146)

1) Pronoun		2) Present		2) Past		2) Future		3) Present		3) Past		3) Future	
I	איך <i>ikh</i>	am	בין <i>bin</i>	have	האָב <i>hob</i>	will	וועל <i>vel</i>	say	זאָג <i>zog</i>	said	געזאָגט <i>gezogt</i>	say	זאָגן <i>zogn</i>
you	וּ <i>du</i>	are	ביסט <i>bist</i>	have	האָסט <i>host</i>	will	וועסט <i>vest</i>	say	זאָגסט <i>zogst</i>	said	געזאָגט <i>gezogt</i>	say	זאָגן <i>zogn</i>

As is evident in the examples above, the information provided to Hebrew speakers is different from that provided to English speakers. For Hebrew speakers, verbal conjugations are presented synthetically, with one Hebrew verb form corresponding to a single cell in the table, which itself may include more than one Yiddish word. For English speakers, the same verbal conjugations are presented analytically, with one English word being presented alongside the word performing the same function in Yiddish. (Note that the so-called imperative is missing from the English table.) This approach develops the traditional *taytsh* approach, allowing a student to use the method productively as opposed to being restricted to passive understanding of the text.

Ezra kala takes a similar approach, influenced by the *taytsh* principle. The book is largely based on bilingual lists of words, expressions, and short conversations, with various verbal forms used throughout the books from the very beginning. Added to this inductive style of teaching are several lessons and a grammatical summary, covering a variety of verb tenses and forms. The metalinguistic explanations of verbal grammar are minimalistic, contrasting with implicit correlation and translation which are used as the central tools for language teaching in this series. For example, the verbal conjugation of the present tense is represented by two columns: a list of Hebrew personal pronouns in one and a list of correlating Yiddish verbal endings in the other, with supplementary examples provided for clarification. Here, the Hebrew pronouns indicate the person, number, and gender features of the associated verb forms. A similar, although unexpected, approach is taken in the past and future tenses. These tenses pose a problem for the Hebrew-speaking learner of Yiddish, as in Hebrew they are synthetic while in Yiddish they are analytic. *Ezra kala* presents the past tense in a parallel way to the present: Hebrew pronouns are presented with corresponding Yiddish pronouns and conjugated auxiliary verbs,

TABLE 3 Excerpt from *Ezra kala* demonstrating Yiddish past tense formation (vol. 1, p. 71)

איך האָב / איך בין <i>ikh hob / ikh bin</i> 'I have / I am'	אני (בעבר) <i>'ani (be-'avar)</i> 'I (in the past)'
דו האָסט / דו ביסט <i>du host / du bist</i> 'you have / you are'	אתה/את (בעבר) <i>'ata/'at (be-'avar)</i> 'you (in the past)'

where again the Hebrew pronouns together with the explicit statement of the intended tense indicate the intended person, number, and gender features of the associated verb form.

In all cases, very few explicit rules are provided to clarify, for instance, which auxiliary verb should be used or the form of the past participle. However, each section is accompanied by a number of illustrative examples, suggesting that the learner might inductively interpret the information provided. Concepts such as which past tense auxiliary verb should be used for a given main verb, the syntax of verbal prefixes, reflexive verbs, and irregular verbs are not covered by metalinguistic explanation, in keeping with the largely inductive style of pedagogy in the book.

Similarly to *Likkutei sichos* and *Ezra kala*, *Easy shmeezy* takes a largely inductive approach, where verbal phrases are presented in a variety of tenses and with a range of subjects alongside their English functional equivalents. Towards the end of the book, Section Four presents a more explicit description of grammatical topics seen in earlier sections, focusing largely on verbal forms and syntax. For example, the author provides tables of the two different past tense auxiliary verbs (*hobn* 'to have' and *zayn* 'to be'), alongside a rule to determine when to use which auxiliary: "the first group is made of verbs that use only part of the body, such as writing, speaking and learning [...] The second group is made of verbs that involve the whole body" (pp. 124–127). Note that the same rule can be found in *Likkutei sichos* (p. 144), while *Ezra kala* only provides examples using both auxiliaries, without including a rule for determining which auxiliary to use with a given verb. The usual explanation of this distinction given in secular and scholarly textbooks typically indicates that verbs taking *zayn* are those having to do with motion, states of being, and the lifecycle (see, e.g., Katz 1987:136). The form of the past participle is not explicitly discussed, but a number of examples both of verbs that take *hobn* and those that

take *zayn* are provided. Similarly, the present and future tenses are presented through tables and accompanying examples, with short, explicit descriptions of the rule the author intends to convey. The behavior of irregular verbs, however, is barely addressed. Uniquely in this corpus, *Easy shmeezy* discusses the immediate future tense, e.g., “I’m gonna buy a book, *Ich gey koyfn a buch*, איך גיי קויפן א בוך” (p. 130).

Yidische klängen is a series of textbooks designed for use in the classroom, and it therefore includes a much larger number and range of exercises as compared to *Ezra kala* and *Easy shmeezy*, which are based on a more phrasebook-style approach. It relies largely on translation exercises (both from Hebrew to Yiddish and from Yiddish to Hebrew) in place of overt explanation of grammatical concepts. Verb forms are introduced gradually, and with no metalinguistic explanation of their form or function. However, new vocabulary items are presented alongside their Hebrew equivalents (often in fully conjugated or derived forms), allowing students to make inductive conclusions about these equivalencies. The book covers topics such as verb tenses, negation, modal verbs, and verbal prefixes.

Like *Yidische klängen*, *Der shlisl* is a series of textbooks designed to be used in the classroom. Volume three focuses on verbal morphology and syntax, and provides somewhat more metalinguistic explanation, including grammatical rules and paradigms. However, the past tense is not discussed in this series, with only the present and future tenses covered. In addition, and unusually in our corpus, new verbs are introduced in their infinitive forms. Overall, the approach of this book combines inductive and deductive approaches to Yiddish language pedagogy to a greater extent than the other books in this corpus.

In contrast to the other books in the corpus, *Ver ken yidish* focuses largely on explicit teaching of grammatical rules and concepts. Here, the leading pedagogical principle is deductive rather than inductive. The book generally introduces grammatical concepts and rules explicitly, before providing exercises to practice the relevant concepts. The book covers a variety of verbal forms, including present, past, and future tenses; infinitives; reflexives; and separable prefix verbs. It makes use of grammatical terms such as first, second, and third person, which are often avoided in other books in the corpus, and also discusses rules for verbal syntax and word order in the sentence. This level of grammatical detail is unusual in our corpus and seems to be unusual in Haredi Yiddish teaching materials more generally, as the author claims in the introduction that it fills an important niche in the literature (p. i). Indeed, a more rule-based, deductive grammatical approach represents an innovation in Hasidic Yiddish language pedagogy.

10 Lexical and Cultural Topics

While the primary purpose of these books is to teach the Yiddish language, they are all written by and for Haredi Jews and are steeped in observant Jewish culture. This fact is illustrated in a number of ways. The first and most obvious reflection of Haredi culture within these pedagogical materials is in the vocabulary that is taught. A large number of words relating to religion and *halokhe* (Jewish law) are featured, including *fastn* (to fast), *shtreyml* (a Hasidic fur hat worn on the Sabbath and festivals), and *vashn negl vaser* (the commandment of washing the hands in the morning before getting up). There are also a number of lexical items that have a different meaning in a religious context compared to secular contexts but in the textbooks are presented only in a religious context, including *khevruse*, which can refer to various kinds of groups or study partnerships in the secular world but in Haredi contexts refers specifically to a study partnership in yeshiva; *shul*, which in secular contexts can mean either 'school' or 'synagogue,' but in Haredi contexts can only mean 'synagogue'; or *gartl*, which in secular contexts means 'belt' or 'sash' in general, but in Haredi contexts exclusively refers to a particular type of men's sash that has a specific spiritual significance. There are also terms which are culturally specific to Haredi Jews, including *shabesdige shikh* (shoes appropriate for the Sabbath) and *beketshe* (a coat worn on the Sabbath and festivals made from a particular kind of cloth). *Easy shmeezy* includes a number of typical Yiddish interjections that are presented as pertaining to particular Haredi settings and/or explained by means of Haredi cultural references, including *ooh-ahh* (an expression of being impressed), included under the *Yeshivish* ('Yeshiva-style') section and explained as 'I like it a lot'; '*nu*' (akin to English *well* or *so*), explained as 'It's time to begin the chazzan's repetition'; and *shah!* 'Shhhh!', explained as 'Excuse me sir, can you please be quiet?,' both of which are included in the *Shtibl* ('Local synagogue') section. Finally, certain everyday words are translated in a way that emphasizes their religious importance: in *Easy shmeezy*, the days of the week are presented as זונטיג *zuntig* 'Sunday,' מאָנטיג *montig* 'Monday,' etc. until די הייליג די שבת קודש *di heylige shabes koydesh* 'the holy Shabbos.' The fact that these pedagogical materials are designed by Haredi authors and assume a largely Haredi readership is further underscored by the fact that they do not contain words relating to areas of the body or items of clothing that are considered immodest in Haredi culture (e.g., 'chest,' 'stomach,' 'underwear,' 'swimsuit'), words that could be perceived as insulting (such as 'stupid'), or any discussion of interactions between males and females, which would be considered taboo in Haredi culture. Likewise, there are no words relating to modern Western cultural topics including the internet, television, sports, and so on, which do not form part of Haredi society.

The drawings and overall design of the books also tell of their Haredi background. There are a large number of pictures of sacred and religious objects including *tsitses* (a fringed garment), *mezuze* (a parchment scroll affixed to the doorpost), the Temple in Jerusalem, and Sabbath candles. Additionally, most pictures of people depict men or boys, who are dressed according to Haredi or Hasidic norms including *kipe* (a skullcap), *peyes* (sidelocks), *tsitses*, and beards for men. Where women and girls are depicted, they are dressed modestly, women have their hair covered, they are usually only shown from the shoulders up, and they sometimes lack facial details which depictions of boys have. This style of gender representation is echoed in the text itself. Even where books appear to be explicitly aimed at girls (e.g., they are produced by a girls' school and/or have introductions addressing female students), the content is heavily male-oriented, including descriptions of life in *cheyder* (boys' elementary school) and yeshiva, the use of boys as characters in stories, and stories of male religious figures. These characteristics are in keeping with Haredi culture more broadly, in which male experiences are privileged over female and men are more visible in the public sphere.

Many of the books place a large emphasis on Haredi events and situations, even dedicating whole chapters or several chapters to such topics. These chapters will often include a specialized glossary of vocabulary relating to such situations and mini dialogues illustrating ways to converse about various topics and in different settings including the yeshiva, a *kidesh* (a celebration including snacks and drinks held on Sabbath morning at the synagogue in honor of the birth of a daughter or other happy events), in the study house, an *oyfruf* (a ceremony at the synagogue held in honor of a groom on the Sabbath before his wedding), a *khalake* (the ceremonial first haircut of a three-year-old boy in order to make *peyes*), and chatting while studying religious texts. Indeed, in *Ezra kala* volume 3, 35 out of 40 chapters are dedicated to religious holidays and celebrations. Most examples, poems, stories, or other literary material are overtly religious in nature and stem from stories of *tsadikim* (righteous Jews), songs about the weekly Torah portion, songs and stories about holidays, or other Haredi situations. No such material is overtly secular.

The books also all make their Haredi orientation known in a number of other ways. Authors may thank God in the introduction as a way to show that they, and therefore that their book, hold religion as central to life. They may include an introduction or *haskome* (rabbinical recommendation) from a rabbi or even a *rebbetzin* (the wife of a rabbi) either supporting the book itself or indicating that a religious authority has found it appropriate for use in Haredi contexts. For example, *Der shlisl* includes an introduction indicating that its contents have been checked over and approved by the daughter of the Skulener *rebbe*, demonstrating that such a woman is seen

to have religious authority among the relevant audiences. However, not all of the books include a *haskome*, especially those intended for use outside of school contexts: for example, in the introduction to *Ezra kala* (vol. 1, p. 3) it is stated explicitly that, although many prominent rabbis have examined and approved of the book, no *haskome* is needed because of the type of work it is (i.e., a phrasebook). A number of the books' introductions mention the virtue and sanctity of the Yiddish language, including quotations from a variety of spiritual leaders. These statements indicate that Yiddish has developed a pseudo-holy status (which is in keeping with the findings of Glinert & Shilhav 1991; Fishman 2002; and Reiser 2020 that Yiddish has come to be regarded as a holy language among Haredi Jews over the course of the past century, particularly in the post-Holocaust era; see also Bogoch 1999:125). Likewise, in some of the introductions it is stated that while righteous Jews of earlier generations spoke Yiddish, lending their holiness to the language, it is also a language that unites its speakers from children to old men and women: *mame loshn*, the mother tongue, and a language of pious Jews and of Judaism itself. Yiddish is understood as the language of *tishn* (ceremonial gatherings of Hasidim around their *rebbe*), yeshivas, and synagogues, and it is believed that whoever speaks Yiddish takes on its reverence, way of life, morality, and virtues (a similar view is expressed by Hasidic speakers interviewed in Bleaman 2018:59–61). Thus, the language is perceived as a holy tongue whose mastery will allow Jews to lead better religious lives. Furthermore, Yiddish is seen as a barrier between Jews and other nations, which protects its speakers from inappropriate influences. The fact that such ideas are used to recommend the study of the Yiddish language highlights the very strong Haredi background of these texts and is in line with the findings of Glinert & Shilhav 1991, Isaacs 1999, and Bleaman (2018:58–59) regarding Yiddish as embodying in-group distinctiveness within Haredi culture.

This idea is emphasized by the way that Israeli Hebrew is contrasted with Yiddish in some of the books. It is underlined that Israeli Hebrew is unlike *loshn koydesh* in that *loshn koydesh* is a sacred language, while Israeli Hebrew is profane. Yiddish, a pseudo-holy language, is therefore to be preferred over Israeli Hebrew. Indeed, *Der shlisl* specifies that their glossary is *loshn koydesh* (as opposed to Israeli Hebrew) to Yiddish, and volume 3 includes an example sentence of a group explaining that they live in Israel and do not speak Israeli Hebrew but do speak Yiddish (p. 76).

These factors all contribute to the clear picture that the books in this corpus are written by and for Haredi Jews. The religious vocabulary, imagery, cultural topics, and explicit discussion of the opinions of Haredi spiritual leaders

combine to make it obvious to a Haredi reader that the books are intended for them. This is necessary, as secular or non-overtly religious books would be very unlikely to be used in the Haredi community.

11 Conclusion

Our examination of the main bilingual pedagogical materials for learners of Yiddish within the Haredi context has illustrated a number of key issues relating to the place of Yiddish in the Haredi community and, more specifically, to Yiddish instruction within that community. These can be grouped into three chief findings. The first is that Yiddish is perceived as occupying a special place in multilingual Haredi society and this is assumed to underpin the importance of acquiring the language, though the materials are designed to cater to a wide range of child and adult learners within that society. The second is that the resources tend to reflect the traditional *taytsh* method of study typical of *cheyder* and *yeshiva*, and they therefore prefer an inductive approach to a deductive one. The third is that the materials have a proclivity for conservative grammatical norms and exhibit a substantial degree of variation with respect to forms and explanations. Each of these points will be discussed in more detail below.

11.1 *The Study of Yiddish within Haredi Society*

With respect to the linguistic context of the Haredi community, the materials reflect a multilingual environment, in which Yiddish is just one of many languages (primarily Israeli Hebrew, *loshn koydesh*, and English) that are used concurrently in different contexts and often involve codeswitching. An example of the multilingual nature of the community, and the fact that codeswitching between Yiddish, Israeli Hebrew, *loshn koydesh*, and English is a salient feature of its linguistic repertoire, can be seen in the introduction to *Easy shmeezy*, in which the author states “*Bruchim Habai'm* [Hebrew, sic]—*Welcome to The Easy-Shmeezy Guide to Yiddish. Let me begin by telling you a bissl (a little) [Yiddish] about how this guide came to be and farvos (why) [Yiddish] I wrote it*” (p. 3). While the matrix language of this introductory line is English, it also features Hebrew and Yiddish, and significantly the Hebrew is not translated into English, reflecting an assumption that readers of the book will already be familiar with it, at least at a basic level.

Moreover, the materials highlight the fact that Yiddish occupies a unique place within this multilingual environment. As we have seen, Yiddish is often expressly described in the materials as the most authentic Jewish language

and is perceived as a specific marker of Haredi, particularly Hasidic, identity. Knowledge of Yiddish is regarded as a way of preserving Jewish traditions and remaining distinct from other Jewish and non-Jewish groups. This is in keeping with research by Glinert & Shilhav (1991), Isaacs (1999), Fader (2009), and Bleaman (2018), which has found that Haredi communities regard use of Yiddish as a key element in preserving differences between themselves and others. This is consistent with the longstanding tradition of written Yiddish within Haredi society (as well as among Ashkenazic Jews more broadly), which manifests itself in the important role that reading and writing play in contemporary Haredi culture. The strong determination to nurture the acquisition of Yiddish within the community is underscored by the fact that all of the materials in our corpus are grassroots initiatives developed by community members, without reference to the standard variety of Yiddish taught in academic institutions outside of the Haredi world. The determination to foster Yiddish within the community in pedagogical contexts is also at odds with the traditional Haredi, and especially Hasidic, opposition to the study of Yiddish grammar. The existence of these textbooks reflects a movement away from this ideology (though the pedagogical approach that they tend to employ is still rooted in a tradition that does not prioritize grammatical instruction as the main way of learning language; to be discussed further below).

With respect to pedagogical approaches to Yiddish within the Haredi community, the materials that we have examined indicate that there is a high degree of flexibility in terms of target audience. Many of the books seem to be suitable for a broad audience, as it is often difficult to establish exactly whom they are for. For example, *Ezra kala* points readers towards *Yidishe klängen* if they want to know more, which is noteworthy as the former is a phrasebook that seems to be primarily pitched at an adult audience, while the latter is a textbook that seems primarily designed for use in schools. At the same time, the target audience is clearly only Haredi Jews, with no expectation that non-Jews would want to use them. This reflects the relative growth of, and renewed interest in, Yiddish among Haredim since the 1980s, and concurrently the cultural division between Haredi Jews and the general non-Jewish population in countries such as the United States and United Kingdom, where interaction between the two groups is quite restricted.

Another prominent issue arising from the materials is the assumption that learners have the opportunity to speak Yiddish regularly outside the classroom (in the case of materials designed primarily for use in schools) or self-study context. This assumption is consistent with the fact that the materials are intended for use by learners who are embedded within the Haredi community

and most likely do have access to Yiddish speakers. This is explicitly stated in the books designed for adults: for example, in *Easy shmeezy* the main advice to learners is “Remember, the best way to grasp the language is to speak with Yiddish speaking friends or relatives” (p. 186), while in *Likkutei sichos*, the author notes that “it’s quite a challenge to learn Yiddish from a book, but it is possible. If we are to choose one thing which is the most useful for this purpose, it is to find a friend who speaks Yiddish” (p. 141).⁸ The books designed primarily for use in schools do not explicitly instruct their users to practice with Yiddish speakers, but the expectation that students will use Yiddish outside the classroom can be inferred from the multilingual nature of Haredi society discussed above. The underlying assumption of contact with Yiddish speakers informs the pedagogical approach to a certain degree: authors seem to view their materials as playing something of a complementary role in the learning process alongside practice within the Yiddish-speaking community.

11.2 *Taytsh-inspired Pedagogical Approach*

Our second main finding is that the particular cultural and linguistic context in which the pedagogical materials are designed to be used can be seen in the pedagogical approach that they adopt. While the textbooks and other materials are not, strictly speaking, examples of the traditional *taytsh* educational model employed in the *cheyder*, the influence of this model is nevertheless evident in aspects of their approach. Perhaps the most prominent example of a *taytsh*-inspired pedagogical tool is that seen in *Likkutei sichos*, in which verbal forms are presented not in the infinitive form (as one would typically expect in a textbook or dictionary), but rather in each individual verb form appearing in the Rebbe’s speeches. Another *taytsh*-inspired pedagogical approach can be seen in *Ezra kala*, whereby material is largely presented in the form of a bilingual Yiddish–Israeli Hebrew word and phrase list with only minimal metalinguistic discussion. A third *taytsh*-inspired pedagogical tool widely seen throughout the corpus is the avoidance of grammatical terminology in favor of the provision of functional near-equivalents in the language of instruction: these allow learners to draw their own conclusions about the use of Yiddish grammatical forms without the need for long or potentially complex grammatical explanations.

An aspect of the materials that is closely linked to their use of *taytsh*-inspired pedagogical tools is their preference for inductive methods rather

⁸ Our translation from Hebrew.

than deductive ones. Thus, grammatical forms and functions are most typically introduced without explanation, with learners expected to absorb them through exposure and use. While in some cases forms and functions may be partially explained at a later stage in the materials, this is not a given, and in many cases grammatical explanation does not seem to be considered a particularly crucial element of the learning process. *Ver ken yidish* is an outlier in this respect, as it adopts a specifically analytical, deductive model (though its grammatical presentation is still not comprehensive); the other textbooks are all overwhelmingly inductive in approach. This approach, which relies on the assumption that learners do not need to be given comprehensive grammatical rules but rather will absorb what they need through practice, is reinforced by the above-discussed multilingual environment in which learners are expected to live. The inductive framework not only obviates the need to introduce many specific linguistic terms, which may be perceived as difficult and unnecessary for students (as well as being foreign to the Haredi Yiddish pedagogical tradition, in which explicit grammatical instruction was not a feature and was indeed actively opposed by certain groups), but also helps learners to develop a system of two corresponding lexicons with built-in morphological features, as well as bilingual language awareness, all of which are much needed in a bilingual speech community.

This highly inductive approach to Yiddish pedagogy seen in our corpus differs strikingly from the way in which Yiddish is taught outside of the Haredi world. Standard Yiddish textbooks, designed by non-Haredi Yiddish teachers and intended for use in universities and other secular (or at least non-Haredi) settings, are typically based on a deductive approach with grammatical instruction at the very center (see, e.g., Weinreich 1949; Zucker 1994, 2002; Estraiikh 1996; Kahn 2012; Aptroot & Nath 2016; Vaisman Schulman et al. 2020). There are certain phrasebook-style materials and glossaries of Yiddish (e.g., Kogos 1976; Rosten 2003; Gusoff 2012; Epstein 2018) designed for the secular market which do not teach grammar, but, in contrast to the materials in our corpus, these are largely intended as novelty publications rather than as the starting point for developing fluency in Yiddish. Also in contrast to the Haredi world, secular Yiddish pedagogical materials designed specifically for children are very rare; the only recent publications in this category are Prime-Margules (1997, 2008), which are centered around early lexis and do not cover grammatical topics.

Outside of the Yiddish context, the inductive approach favored in Haredi Yiddish pedagogical settings can be seen in some contemporary materials designed for teaching other minority languages to both adults and children.

For example, there is a strong inductive tradition in the pedagogical materials aimed at adult learners of Welsh, such as the ubiquitous entry-level textbook *Cwrs Mynediad* (Meek 2005); this is rooted in a desire to prioritize functional communication and a concern about alienating students unfamiliar with grammatical concepts (see, e.g., the introduction to Meek 2005). Unsurprisingly, many bilingual pedagogical materials designed specifically to teach minority languages to children adopt an inductive approach as well (see, e.g., Lakota Language Consortium 2004–12 for inductive children's pedagogical materials for Lakota). Similarly, an inductive approach is employed in some majority-language L2 pedagogical materials; for example, the popular and widely used Modern Standard Arabic textbook series *Al Kitaab Arabic Language Programme* (Brustad et al. 2019), which is used in English-medium tertiary institutions around the world, is explicitly designed around an inductive model.

Nevertheless, the similarity in approaches between our corpus and inductive materials used in other minority- and majority-language pedagogical settings may belie a difference in the authors' motivations. In the case of our corpus, the tendency to adopt an inductive approach is likely rooted in the absence of a traditional pedagogical focus on grammar in Haredi society combined with the wholly community-internal, grassroots authorship and production of the volumes. In contrast, many of the inductive pedagogical materials produced for other languages are developed either by or in collaboration with professional linguists who prefer the inductive approach as being more user-friendly and accessible to learners for whom a deductive grammar-based style might be intimidating.

11.3 *Conservative Tendencies and Variation*

A final tendency observable in the materials is the tension between the lack of a prescriptive standard for Hasidic Yiddish and the tendency to present a standard-like literary model based on relatively conservative written sources, rather than reflecting the spoken language. This tension is reflected in the fact that there is a significant difference between spoken Hasidic Yiddish and norms presented in the teaching materials in our corpus: for example, the textbooks do not introduce the range of innovative pronouns used in everyday Hasidic Yiddish speech, such as nominative *undz* and *enk*, but rather present only the more conservative variants *mir* and *ir*, which tend to be used only in writing. Likewise, the materials uniformly avoid introducing the invariable form of the definite article *de*, which is widely used in speech, in favor of the more conservative variants *der/di/dos/dem*, which are now largely restricted

to written contexts in Haredi Yiddish. Conversely, the variation apparent in the spoken language manifests itself in the textbooks in that different books give different accusative forms of certain pronouns (e.g., *mikh* vs. *mir*), which would not be the case for beginner-level pedagogical materials teaching a language with an established standard variety. These findings show that, despite the lack of a standard, the writers of Haredi Yiddish pedagogical materials are aware of the difference between written and spoken Yiddish, and individual authors seek to introduce their own quasi-standard written version in their materials (which may or may not agree with the quasi-standard versions set by other authors).

Our examination of Haredi Yiddish pedagogical materials thus reveals a relatively uniform grassroots approach which is underpinned by traditional concepts of multilingualism, *taytsh*, and inductive learning, while promoting a largely conservative written form of Yiddish that does not generally take into account innovations in the spoken language in the postwar period (but is nonetheless non-trivially distinct from prewar varieties). This pedagogical approach is clearly a product of, and specifically tailored for use in, the Haredi context in which Yiddish is widely used both in speech and writing alongside Israeli Hebrew, *loshn koydesh*, and/or English.

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