UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Heritage Language Socialization Practices

in Secular Yiddish Educational Contexts:

The Creation of a Metalinguistic Community

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Applied Linguistics

by

Netta Rose Avineri

2012

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Heritage Language Socialization Practices in Secular Yiddish Educational Contexts:

The Creation of a Metalinguistic Community

by

Netta Rose Avineri

Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor Charles Goodwin, Chair

This dissertation develops a theoretical and empirical framework for the model of metalinguistic community, a community of positioned social actors engaged primarily in discourse about language and cultural symbols tied to language. Building upon the notions of speech community (Duranti, 1997; Gumperz, 1968; Morgan, 2006), linguistic community (Silverstein, 1998), local community (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006), and discourse community (Watts, 1999), *metalinguistic community* provides a novel practice-based (Bourdieu, 1991) framework for diverse participants who experience a strong connection to a language and its speakers but may lack familiarity with them due to historical, personal, and/or communal circumstances. This research identifies five dimensions of metalinguistic community: socialization into language ideologies is a priority over socialization into language competence and use, conflation of language and culture, age and corresponding knowledge as highly salient features, use and discussion of the code are primarily pedagogical, and use of code in specific interactional and textual contexts (e.g., greeting/closings, assessments, response cries, lexical items related to religion and culture, mock language).

As a case study of metalinguistic community, this dissertation provides an in-depth ethnographic analysis of contemporary secular engagement with Yiddish language and culture in the United States. The project is based upon nearly three years of fieldwork in Southern California, Northern California, and New York in over 170 language classes, programs, lectures, and cultural events, resulting in more than one hundred hours of video- and audio-recorded interactional and interview data. It has also investigated literature, print media, and online sources related to Yiddish in secular milieus. In order to capture the diversity of actors and contexts through time and space, the study examines meta-Yiddish literature in historical context, conflicted stance (DuBois, 2007; Goodwin, 2007; Jaffe, 2009) toward linguistic alternatives as socialization practice, Yiddish "endangerment" as interactional reality and discursive strategy, a person-centered ethnographic approach (Hollan, 2001) to Yiddish as a heritage language, and epistemic ecologies in intergenerational contexts. This project explores the multiple ways that metalinguistic community members engage in "nostalgia socialization" into an imagined nationhood (Anderson, 1983) of the Jewish diaspora, demonstrating the central role of language as identity maker and marker within multilingual contexts.

The dissertation of Netta Rose Avineri is approved.

Paul V. Kroskrity

Elinor Ochs

John Heritage

Olga Kagan

Sarah Bunin Benor

Charles Goodwin, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2012

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father (*olev hasholem*), who taught me early on how to be

*a meshugene vos ruft funem dakh. A sheynem dank tatele.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Throughout my graduate program and the dissertation writing process, I have learned an incredible amount about interaction and the social world. During this time, I have also discovered a great deal about both myself and my place in that world. None of this would have been possible without the amazing support system I have around me. First, I would like to thank my family. Eema, your unconditional love has provided me with support at every stage of my journey, and your generosity of spirit in all you do offer me with a model for how to live a fulfilled life. Your thoughtful engagement with the academic topics I am interested in coupled with your willingness to explore with me the ways they are deeply personal have helped shape my professional path.

Tamar, your endless love, encouragement, drive, and (occasional) silliness are constant sources of inspiration and joy. I am so lucky to have you as my sister. Savtah, your storytelling abilities keep me rooted in the past as I look toward the future; I can always depend on you to share knowledge about Jewish history while providing loving support along the way. Oren and Eitan, as older brothers you always provide the perfect balance of humor and seriousness, just like Abba taught us. Orly and Yoram, your unique perspectives on the world give me a sense of connection to the past coupled with creative possibilities for the future. Auntie Judy and cousin Aaron, I am always touched by your genuine and ongoing interest in my life and all that I do. Eduardo, you encouraged me long ago to begin down this path, and now your loving words both reassure me and give me perspective on the essential things in life. I am so fortunate to be supported by my wonderful family and friends both near and far, especially as I transition into a new life stage.

I cannot possibly do justice to the ongoing support of all of my committee members. Chuck, you have encouraged me throughout the program to find my passions and my voice, which have helped me to define my research trajectory. Your keen insights on the collaborative nature of interaction have shaped my view of the world around me, and your guidance and mentorship during

the dissertation process were absolutely invaluable. Paul, ever since my undergraduate years in Anthropology your presence has been calming and encouraging. It is from you that I have learned the art of building relationships with community members over time; for that and much more I am truly grateful. Ellie, your incredible wealth of knowledge and deep engagement with my research have been truly influential in molding my perspectives on ethnography, narrative, and socialization. John, your exceptional ability to listen and attend deeply to the intricate details of my work and your constant encouragement as I have moved through each of stage of the program have been invariable sources of strength. Olga, your research and hands-on experience with diverse heritage language populations has offered me a broader perspective on the complex profiles and needs of these students and their teachers. And Sarah, your in-depth knowledge of Jewish languages and other fields, coupled with your encouragement from the first moments I shared my nascent ideas, have been significant forces in shaping my project.

I would also like to thank all of the organizations, community members, teachers, and students whom I observed, worked with, and learned from. Miriam Koral in particular has been a longtime guiding force in my exploration of Yiddish. My department and its professors have been a never-ending source of support, both in finances and in spirit. I have also been fortunate to be surrounded by colleagues from whom I constantly learn. Working for diverse departments as an instructor, the Center for Jewish Studies, and the Graduate Writing Center have all shaped my professional ethos and future goals.

Lastly, none of this would have been possible without the generous support provided by the Distinguished Teaching Assistant Award Dissertation Year Fellowship, UC Regents Fellowship, CJS Ross Fellowships, Humanities Division Mellon Pre-Dissertation Award, Graduate Division Fellowships, NYU/YIVO Language, Literature, & Culture Program Scholarship, UCLA/Mellon Program in Holocaust in American and World Culture Fellowship, and Cota-Robles Fellowship.

# VITA

| | |
|---|---|
| 2001 | B.A., Anthropology; Minor, French<br>University of California, Los Angeles<br>Los Angeles, CA |
| 2006 | Teaching Assistant<br>Department of Sociology<br>University of California, Los Angeles |
| 2006-2011 | ESL Teaching Assistant/Associate/Fellow<br>Departments of Applied Linguistics and Writing Programs<br>University of California, Los Angeles |
| 2006-2012 | Consultant<br>Graduate Writing Center<br>University of California, Los Angeles |
| 2007 | M.A., Applied Linguistics and TESL<br>University of California, Los Angeles<br>Los Angeles, CA |
| 2007-2009 | Coordinator<br>OID's Test of Oral Proficiency Program<br>University of California, Los Angeles |
| 2007-2011 | Eugene V. Cota Robles Fellowship<br>Graduate Division<br>University of California, Los Angeles |
| 2008-2011 | Teaching Assistant/Associate/Fellow<br>Department of Applied Linguistics<br>University of California, Los Angeles |
| 2008-2012 | Civic Engagement Fellow<br>Center for Jewish Studies<br>University of California, Los Angeles |
| 2009 | Teaching Assistant<br>Department of Anthropology<br>University of California, Los Angeles |
| 2009-2010 | Vice President of Academic Affairs<br>Graduate Students Association<br>University of California, Los Angeles |
| 2010 | K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders Award Recipient<br>American Association of Colleges and Universities |

| | |
|---|---|
| 2010 | Graduate<br>Uriel Weinreich Yiddish Language, Literature, & Culture Program<br>YIVO/New York University |
| 2011 | Teaching Assistant Consultant<br>Department of Applied Linguistics<br>University of California, Los Angeles |
| 2011-2012 | Distinguished Teaching Assistant Award Diss. Year Fellowship<br>Academic Senate and Office of Instructional Development<br>University of California, Los Angeles |
| 2011-2012 | Adjunct Faculty Member<br>Linguistics and Anthropology<br>California State University, Long Beach |
| 2012 | ESL Teaching Assistant Consultant<br>Writing Programs<br>University of California, Los Angeles |

## PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Avineri, N. (2010). The interactive organization of 'insight': Clinical interviews with frontotemporal dementia patients. In A. Mates, L. Mikesell, & M. Smith (Eds.), *Language, interaction and frontotemporal dementia: Reverse engineering the social mind* (pp. 115-138). London, UK: Equinox Publishers.

Avineri, N., Hardacre, B., Londe, Z., Majidpour, M., Mason Carris, L., & So, Y., (2011). Language Assessment as a System: Best Practices, Stakeholders, Models, and Testimonials. In O. Anya, N. Avineri, L. Mason Carris, & V. Valencia (Eds.), Social Issues in Applied Linguistics: Linguistic Diversity in Classrooms and Beyond. [Special Issue]. *Issues in Applied Linguistics, 18*, 251-265.

Anya, O., Avineri, N., Mason Carris, L., & Valencia, V. (2011). Language, Identities, and Accents: Perspectives from the 2010 Linguistic Diversity Conference. Introduction to O. Anya, N. Avineri, L. Mason Carris, & V. Valencia (Eds.), Social Issues in Applied Linguistics: Linguistic Diversity in Classrooms and Beyond. [Special Issue]. *Issues in Applied Linguistics, 18*, 157-169.

Avineri, N. (November, 2011). *"Not really nostalgia because I didn't have it the first time": Socialization into age-specific language ideologies within the Yiddish metalinguistic community.* Paper presented at the American Anthropological Association Conference. Montreal, CA.

Avineri, N. (March, 2012). *Yiddish endangerment as interactional reality and discursive strategy: An examination of language socialization practices within the Yiddish metalinguistic community.* Paper presented at the American Association for Applied Linguistics Conference. Boston, MA.

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

I saw very clearly
How the quiet, cultivated Yiddish
Was Dying on her lips
…
My dear mother, my wise mouth,
My own mother-tongue,
Which developed so gently for me
In the whispering twilights of Lublin.
My mother-tongue, with her waxy face
And pain-frightened, Half-closed eyes –
This too I must recall.
(Jacob Glatstein, written in 1967, published in 1993, p. 286)

And I -- but I have such a hard time retaining the vocabulary, it's sort of like my brain is Jell-O that's already set, I'm trying to push in the fruit.
(Ruby, older adult "third year beginner" Yiddish learner's interview, January 13, 2011)

```
01    Adam:        Sholem Aleichem!
                   Hello!

02    Audience:    Aleichem Sholem!
                   Hello!

03    Adam:        Zeyer gut!
                   Very good!
```

(start of Yiddishkayt 'Khanike in Santa Monica' event "Rexite on the Radio: Life From the Golden Age of New York's Yiddish Broadcasts", December 13, 2009)

## 1.1    Metalinguistic Community: A Model

Secular engagement with Yiddish in the United States is by and large characterized by an ardent orientation to the language rather than competence in it. This principal focus on socialization into language ideologies challenges traditional definitions of language communities, heritage languages, and endangered languages. To capture the unique phenomena associated with a language and communities that have continuously encountered loss and fragmentation, this research proposes the analytic model of *metalinguistic community*. *Metalinguistic community* provides a model for

communities of positioned social actors engaged primarily in discourse *about* language and cultural symbols tied to language. It builds upon the notions of speech community (Duranti, 1997; Gumperz, 1968; Morgan, 2006), linguistic community (Silverstein, 1998), local community (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006), discourse community (Watts, 1999), and postvernacularity (Shandler, 2008) to provide a novel practice-based (Bourdieu, 1991) framework examining interactions and ideologies in diverse language contexts. The model is especially fitting for participants who experience a strong connection to a language and its speakers but may lack familiarity with them, due to historical, communal, and/or personal circumstances. The primary emphasis within a metalinguistic community is *nostalgia socialization*, a public attention to and affective appreciation of the past as a way to understand one's place in the present.

In situations of destruction and displacement, metalinguistic communities provide a unique and inclusive environment in which members can demonstrate their collective moral orientation to valuing linguistic and cultural knowledge. The language frequently becomes an object of contemplation as opposed to something that one uses, constructed as deeply linked to the community's cultural heritage. Inherent in this enterprise is an ethno-expansion of the notion of 'metalinguistic', to include not only references to linguistic structure and use but to experiential connections to a language's history and that of its speakers (e.g., food, music, dance, and drama). Metalinguistic community practices are therefore identity-building and nostalgic activities focused on attempts at affiliation and identification across temporal and spatial divides. This phenomenological (e.g., Duranti, 2009) engagement with the language therefore provides members with opportunities to publicly perform their moral relationships to others from the past and present.

## 1.2    Language, Metalanguage, and Community

### 1.2.1    Language and Community

The model of a metalinguistic community complements previous concepts of speech community (Duranti, 1997; Gumperz, 1968; Morgan, 2006), linguistic community (Silverstein, 1998), discourse community (Watts, 1999), local community (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006), and postvernacularity (Shandler, 2008) (discussed in chapter 2). Though originally defined by Gumperz (1968, p. 43) as "any human aggregate characterized by regular and frequent interaction by means of a shared body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language usage", speech community has been more recently conceptualized as "the product of the communicative activities engaged in by a given group of people" (Duranti, 1997, p. 83). In addition, Morgan (2006, p. 16) demonstrates how "speech community represents the location of a group in society and its relationship to power…[which] is important to understand how social actors move within and between their speech communities". Dorian (1982) has also considered variation within speech communities, introducing terms such as low-proficiency "semi-speaker" and "near passive bilinguals". What is distinct about a metalinguistic community is that positioned social actors reflexively consider the code as a symbol of individual identity and group membership.

There are previous notions of communities surrounding language that highlight shared ideologies.  Silverstein (1998, p. 407) makes a distinction between speech community and linguistic community, noting "the speech community is the context of emergence, sustenance, and transformation of distinct local language communities". He defines linguistic community as "groups of people by degree evidencing allegiance to norms of denotational…language usage" (Silverstein 1998, 407). Friedman (2009) notes,

> What unites a linguistic community is not a set of language practices but a set of language
> ideologies that define what counts as legitimate language. In the modern nation-state, this

language is the national language(s) that has been standardized and legitimated through

institutionalization in government, media, and education. (p. 2)

The metalinguistic community is also distinct from the notion of a linguistic community, for the

actors in a metalinguistic community may or may not simultaneously be learning to use the language.

The members of a metalinguistic community are also engaged in a socialization process into

language ideologies, but these ideologies may or may not focus on legitimate language usage and

instead focus primarily on participants' metalinguistic practices.

In his discussion of language policies in Spain, Del Valle (2007, p. 256 – 7) emphasizes the

"common set of metalinguistic practices" that produce a "highly choreographed discourse of verbal

hygiene that defines and hopes to control the nature of Spanish". He (Del Valle, 2007) demonstrates

that the discourse's internal consistency and frequency in institutions resonates with the notion of

a discourse community: a set of individuals who can be interpreted as constituting a

community on the basis of the ways in which their oral or written discourse practices reveal

common interests, goals and beliefs, i.e., on the degree of institutionalization that their

discourse displays' (Watts, 1999, p. 43)" (p. 247).

In some respects, Watts' concept of a discourse community is similar to that of a metalinguistic

community in its focus on commonly-held beliefs that are expressed through fairly standardized

discourse. However, in a metalinguistic community, social actors (not policymakers or politicians)

are consistently negotiating their positions vis-à-vis one another and the focal code. In this way, the

notion of a metalinguistic community takes a practice- and activity-based approach to socialization

into and maintenance of 'endangered' language communities.

In their discussion of endangered languages and language revitalization efforts, Grenoble

and Whaley employ the term "local community", "that group of people who have some claim on a

local language, either because of historical-cultural connections to it, ethnic connections to it, or an

ability to speak it" (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006, p. 16). In many respects, this is a useful corollary to the metalinguistic community in the sense that a group of people has "some claim" on a language. However, in the contexts to which Grenoble & Whaley refer the communities exist within a fairly small geographic area, and the participants can generally all come in contact with one another. However, the metalinguistic community model includes diverse participants across geographic borders. Frequently, these communities are imagined (Anderson, 1983) at both the face-to-face and trans-regional levels, and may be united by a common historical context and/or set of ideologies. Spitulnik's (1996 p. 95) discussion of "the mass mediation of communities" and the centrality of texts is especially relevant here. Metalinguistic communities frequently to depend on texts as a mode through which identities are created and maintained, and demonstrates the diverse roles of texts language situations with few speakers.

### 1.2.2   Metalanguage

Lucy (1993, p. 1) notes "a methodological grounding of scholarly practice must begin with a careful examination of everyday metalinguistic activities". In much of his work, the focus is on metapragmatics. Yet, in the metalinguistic community, metalanguage is focused on the language as a symbol. In recent years, a number of sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology scholars have been exploring metalanguage as a central tool for the construction of identity and community. Jaworski, Coupland, & Galasinski (2004, p. 3) discuss the centrality of metalanguage to sociolinguistics, stating "it is in the interplay between usage and social evaluation that much of the social 'work' of language – including pressures towards social integration and division, and the policing of social boundaries generally – is done". While researchers assume knowledge of a language to produce metalanguage, in the metalinguistic community members with varying levels of linguistic and cultural competence comment in a different code about the code that is the focus of the discussion.

## 1.3    Language Socialization

Language socialization research (Duranti, Ochs, & Schieffelin 2012; Garrett & Baquedano-Lopez, 2002; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986) has focused on "socialization to use language and socialization through the use of language". (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, 163).
Ochs and Schieffelin (1984) emphasize that

> the process of acquiring language is deeply affected by the process of becoming a competent member of a society [and] the process of becoming a competent members of society is realized to a large extent through language, by acquiring knowledge of its functions, social distribution, and interpretations in and across socially defined situations, i.e., through exchanges of language in particular social situations. (p. 264)

The language socialization approach is longitudinal, ethnographic, and cross-cultural in nature (Garrett & Baquedano-Lopez (2002, p. 341), and underscores the notion that individuals are active contributors to the socialization process (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p. 165). Central to this approach is an examination of members' socialization into *habitus* (Bourdieu 1991) through practices they engage in while interacting with others.

As Schieffelin & Ochs (1986, p. 163) highlight, "the interest [in language socialization practices] is not limited to the role of language in integrating children into society, but is open to investigating language socialization throughout the human lifespan across a range of social experiences and contexts". Schieffelin & Ochs (1986, p. 163) encouraged the expansion of the paradigm beyond the realm of children to investigate practices of other novices across the lifespan. Though there has been a substantial amount of language socialization research that has focused on children as learners, either within family contexts or in classrooms (cf. Baquedano-Lopez, 1998; Fader, 2009; Friedman, 2006; He, 2001; Lo, 2004; Moore 2004) there has been little on adults. Recent exceptions include Ohta's (2001) analysis of second language acquisition among Japanese

learners, Duff's (2010) study of language socialization into academic discourse communities and Roberts's (2010) examination of language socialization in the workplace. The present research seeks to build upon what has previously been examined in order to build a picture of language socialization practices of learners at multiple life stages. The metalinguistic community's focus on intergenerational learning, therefore including focal participants who are young adults, adults, and older adults, means that that the participants already have a primary code(s) that they can use to discuss the focal code.

In addition, this research is unique in that it considers the classroom or other educational contexts (e.g., written discourse, festivals) to be the primary (and frequently only) sites of heritage language socialization for these participants. The fact that print materials and festivals can also be considered educational contexts relates to dimension 4 described above, use of Yiddish is primarily pedagogical. Though a primary goal of language socialization research is the linking of micro-level practices with broader cultural and social phenemona, "an ongoing challenge to language socialization studies…has been how to embed the analysis of micro-level interactions within broader political processes" (Fader 2009, p. 6). Therefore, this research focuses on bridging both micro- and macro-oriented perspectives in order to provide a complex and holistic view of the Yiddish metalinguistic community in practice within these crucial educational contexts.

## 1.4    Language Ideologies

Language ideologies, a "mediating link between social structures and forms of talk" (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994, p. 55), are centrally relevant to the metalinguistic community model. This research considers how the positioned social actors in the 20th and 21st century Yiddish metalinguistic community implicitly and explicitly express their ideologies about the language and cultural symbols tied to it. Spitulnik (1998) highlights,

Language ideologies and processes of language valuation are never just about language (Kulick, 1998; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994, pp. 55-56). Language ideologies are, among many other things, about the construction and legitimation of power, the production of social relations of sameness and difference, and the creation of cultural stereotypes about types of speakers and social groups. (p. 164)

Though members of a metalinguistic community may not have proficiency in the code, there are still multiple ideologies circulated (frequently in another code) regarding language use (or non-use) in the past versus the present, by certain groups and not others, and by specific individuals within the broader community. Gal (1998, p. 321) emphasizes the centrality of "signifying practices" in this positioning of both social groups and subjects.

Language ideologies research focuses on participants' discursive consciousness and practical consciousness (Giddens, 1984). What is striking is that in a metalinguistic community the categories of practical consciousness and discursive consciousness have different qualities than those found in speech communities made up of participants who all have some command of the code. Since many of the participants lack linguistic competence but may know about the relevant community, history, or geography, practical consciousness does not manifest itself in the code use but instead in displays of metalinguistic knowledge. Discursive consciousness frequently focuses on past use of the code, though speakers are able to demonstrate their ability to use the code at strategic moments (e.g., greetings, in pedagogical contexts, in small groups with other speakers).

Kroskrity (2004, p. 501) notes that language ideologies have five layers of significance: 1) group or individual interests, 2) multiplicity of ideologies, 3) awareness of speakers, 4) mediating functions of ideologies, and 5) role of language ideology in identity construction. These layers of significance manifest themselves in various ways within a metalinguistic community. Kroskrity (2004, p. 501) underscores, "language ideologies represent the perception of language and discourse

that is constructed in the interest of a specific social or cultural group" and "language ideologies are profitably conceived as multiple". Within metalinguistic communities, several language ideologies are constructed and circulated through discourse about a code and its corresponding history, activities, and community. Members demonstrate a range of "degrees of awareness of local language ideologies" (Kroskrity, 2004, p. 505). Particular members of metalinguistic communities are able to comment metapragmatically upon language use, while most may only provide broader statements about community, geography, and or/ history. Furthermore, language ideologies determine which aspects of the language get special cultural attention and which do not (cf. Schieffelin & Doucet, 1998).

Irvine & Gal (2000) note "three semiotically based dimensions underlying much language-ideological reasoning [are] iconization, fractal recursivity, and erasure". Iconization is a "transformation of the sign relationship between linguistic features (or varieties) and the social images with which they are linked" (p. 37). Fractal recursivity is "the projection of an opposition, salient at some level of relationship, onto some other level" (p. 37). Erasure is "the process in which ideology, in simplifying the sociolinguistic field, renders some person or activities (or sociolinguistic phenomena) invisible" (37). These three processes are pervasive in metalinguistic communities, since frequently members are socialized into language ideologies but not necessarily language use.

Throughout the dissertation, it becomes evident that diverse community members are socialized into a *diasporic language ideology*, focused on a language's complexity as a symbol for its speakers' mobile history. This is an example of iconization, in which discrete linguistic elements are viewed as representations of broader historical, social, and historical forces. For example, as discussed in chapter 5, instructors introduce various Yiddish source languages to students as one mode of socializing them into this ideological perspective of the diaspora. Furthermore, the objective and constructed oppositions between secular and religious communities play out in the

9

realm of grammatical discussions (e.g., discussion of articles like *dos* and *a*). This exemplifies fractal recursivity, in which an opposition at the level of community gets projected onto the level of language structure.

Erasure involves selective discussion of certain linguistic features and/or linguistic and cultural groups and elision of others. Within the Yiddish metalinguistic community many participants build bridges to whichever communities might fit their present purposes, in many cases those in the past who lived in other geographical locations. Isaacs (2009), a professor of Yiddish, has noted that issues can arise for a language when "an us language becomes a them language." Within metalinguistic communities, the code is variably constructed as "us" or "them" depending on present participants, interactional contingencies, and discourse content. In this way, erasure plays differential roles over the course of a discussion, e-mail, poem, or other message.

This variable construction of community/ies relates to the use of language ideologies in creating and representing social and cultural identities (Kroskrity, 2004, p. 509). In his discussion of imagined communities, Anderson (1983, p. 13) notes that "nationality, or as one might prefer to put it in view of that word's multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artifacts of a particular kind". As he states, "communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (p. 15). Though Anderson's work in some sense assumes a fairly homogenous community, his work provides a useful framework for examining both micro- and macro-level processes at work in metalinguistic communities.

### 1.4.1   United States Language Ideologies

In order to understand the phenomenon of a metalinguistic community both at the diachronic and synchronic levels it is necessary to consider how it interacts with current prevailing United States language ideologies, including monolingualism, personalism (Hill, 2000), referentialism (Hill, 2000), and standardism. First, one can consider the dominant ideology of monolingualism and

the ways that bi- and multilingualism have traditionally been looked down upon (cf. Dorian, 1998 'onerous' bilingualism, used by many nation-states to discourage competence in multiple codes and, by extension, communities). In addition, as described by Hill (2000) within the American context there is an ideology of personalism, in which speakers are seen as 'autonomous, individual authors' (McElhinny, 2001, p. 73), and referentialism, in which it is assumed that one's meaning is 'contained in reference' (McElhinny, 2001, p. 73).

Related to the ideology of monolingualism is Silverstein (1996)'s discussion of "monoglot standard", an ideology of one nation-state with one homogenous language. This notion is pervasive in the United States, which in general dismisses multilingualism. This ideology has had an effect on generations of Yiddish-speaking immigrants and their children, who have seen that even partial assimilation frequently involves dismissing one's heritage language. In addition, the standardist view of Yiddish, in which many participants believe there is a standard to which speakers should adhere, can cause striking interactions to occur. As discussed in detail in chapter 6, many participants within secular Yiddish educational contexts either dismiss or distance themselves from the Yiddish of contemporary Hasidic Orthodox communities, demonstrating ideologies about what is the dispreferred, frequently unseen *other* in the present versus the preferred (also unseen though deeply felt) *self* one may feel when discussing the past.

## 1.5    Yiddish: Case Study of a Metalinguistic Community

As a case study of the model of metalinguistic community, this ethnographic multi-methods dissertation focuses on secular engagement with Yiddish across time and space. It employs participant-observation, multimodal discourse analysis of multiple sites, narrative analysis of person-centered interviews, and textual analysis of literature and print and online media to examine historical and contemporary socialization practices within the Yiddish metalinguistic community in the United States. The research considers how members learn the community's central approaches

using language, talking about language, and connecting language to culture, which has been described as language socialization (Duranti, Ochs, & Schieffelin, 2012). The project also focuses on individuals' and community's cultural connections to the language within diverse dominant language environments, what has been referred to as 'heritage language', and the relative health of the language, which has been referred to as 'language vitality' and/or 'language endangerment'.

This research explores the intersections and boundaries between "heritage" and "endangered" languages. Heritage language has been defined as "an immigrant, indigenous, or ancestral language that a speaker has a personal relevance and desire to (re)connect with (Cummins, 2005; Fishman, 2001; Wiley, 2001)" (He, 2010, p. 66). There is a dearth of research on specific efforts related to revitalization-type activities, which go beyond a Fishman (1991a) notion of simply reversing language shift to focus on the spectrum of practices in which community members engage as they seek in the present to combat circumstances in the past (for an exception see Kroskrity, 2009a). Through a multi-sited approach to this imagined community this study therefore fills an ethnographic niche regarding heritage language and language revitalization/maintenance efforts.

Yiddish (meaning "Jewish" in Yiddish) has been spoken by Ashkenazic (Western, Central, and Eastern European) Jews since the 11th century. Davis (1987, p. 159) notes "The Yiddish of Eastern Europe has a basic Germanic structure, and predominantly Germanic vocabulary with a high input of Slavic and Hebrew and Aramaic words and is written in the Hebrew script". Due to a variety of events during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the number of Yiddish speakers within the secular Jewish community has greatly diminished.

These events include the Holocaust, during which six million Jews perished; the migration to and partial assimilation of large numbers of Jews in the United States, Israel, South America, and other countries; and the state of Israel's choice of Hebrew over Yiddish or other Jewish languages as the official language of the nation. On the other hand, at present numerous Haredi (ultra-Orthodox)

Hasidic communities utilize Yiddish as one of their daily languages. Yiddish is currently estimated to have 200,000 - 500,000 speakers who use it as a daily language and approximately 2 million who have some language ability worldwide (S. B. Benor, personal communication, November 16, 2010). In these ways, the uses, meanings, and speakers of Yiddish within secular and religious Jewish communities have significantly shifted throughout the past century. Considering these issues of displacement and change over time, Yiddish therefore provides a useful case study for the model of metalinguistic community.

### 1.5.1    The Model of 'Metalinguistic Community': Dimensions and Examples

Based upon in-depth research on the case of Yiddish, the five dimensions for the model of metalinguistic community have been identified: socialization into language ideologies is a priority over socialization into language competence and use, conflation of language and culture, age and corresponding knowledge highly salient features, use and discussion of the code are primarily pedagogical, and use of code in specific interactional and textual contexts (e.g., greeting/closings, assessments, response cries, lexical items related to religion and culture, mock language). These dimensions will be revisited in the conclusion, to provide a perspective on their spectral nature within other communities. Many of the examples below are from email publicity widely disseminated to even peripheral members of the metalinguistic community, not only those who choose to commit their time to ongoing classes or even one-time weekend events.

In 2011, Jewish community members in Southern California came together to organize a festival focused on Yiddish culture and language. The 2011 Orange County Yiddish Festival publicity flyer stated "You don't have to know Yiddish to love Yiddish." This statement highlights the affective connection to the language as opposed to language competence to encourage increased membership in this inclusive metalinguistic community. This is an example of dimension 1, *socialization into language ideologies is a priority over socialization into language competence and use*. This

dimension is central to the model of metalinguistic community due to its inclusion of many members who may not have proficiency in the language.

The California Institute for Yiddish Culture and Language, a Southern-California based organization, offer monthly programs on a variety of topics. In 2012, they organized a "Yiddish dance" event called "Affair of the Heart: Feet-On Demonstration Lecture of the Freylekh, Sher, Patsh-Tants, Broyges-Tants". The email flyer stated "If you're feeling a little tongue-tied about Yiddish but would like to express your admiration for it in a different way – here's your chance! Join us…to learn and experience the ins-and-outs of some of the best Yiddish dances". Once again, the importance of language competence is lessened in an effort to encourage participation, in this case in "Yiddish dance". "Yiddish" becomes an adjective meant to denote cultural forms attached to the language community as opposed to a noun identifying the language alone.

Yiddish is used also used as an adjective in Northern California organization KlezCalifornia's October 10, 2011 email announcement highlighting their celebration and promotion of "Yiddish culture – our golden heritage of language, arts and customs developed over 1,000 years of Jewish community life across Eastern Europe". In both of these cases, and in many others, language and culture become conflated in order to ensure maximal participation among metalinguistic community members. In addition, in the August 27, 2009 email publicity for Folks-Grupe, "a three-month fellowship for young adults dedicated to all aspects of Yiddish culture," Southern California organization Yiddishkayt encourages participation by writing "Become fluent in the culture of your ancestors". Here again, the boundaries between language and culture become blurred in practices supporting membership in the Yiddish metalinguistic community. These three organizations' email communication approaches therefore exemplify dimension 2, *conflation of language and culture*.

In 2010, I attended the International Association of Yiddish Clubs conference in Northern California. When I arrived at the conference hotel an older adult conference attendee asked, "You're

not here for the conference, are you?" After I told him that, in fact, I was there for the conference he replied, "I love you!" That someone my age was interested in Yiddish language and culture was highly valued. This stance is pervasive within secular Yiddish educational activities, especially those that include older adults. On the other hand, the cultural and linguistic knowledge base of older adults is deeply treasured by other community members. In situations of fragmentation and loss, disruptions in intergenerational knowledge transmission are particularly prevalent. Practices like those described above therefore provide examples of dimension 3, *age and corresponding knowledge as highly salient features*.

At the beginning of this introduction there is an example in which a greeting sequence becomes an Initiation-Reply-Evaluation sequence (Mehan, 1979). Audience members producing the second pair part (*Aleichem Sholem*) demonstrate their competence by switching the order of the lexical items in the first pair part (*Sholem Aleichem*). Their ability to process a correct second pair part becomes an opportunity for assessment by the producer of the first pair part. His assessment in the third turn (*Zeyer gut!*) transforms the sequence into an Initiation-Reply-Evaluation sequence (Mehan, 1979), used most often in educational contexts. This moves those participants into pedagogical roles, in which the language becomes an object to be assessed as opposed to one that is simply used to greet one another. This is an example of dimension 4, *use and discussion of the code are primarily pedagogical*.

Below are a number of examples of dimension 5, *use of code in specific interactional and textual contexts (e.g., greeting/closings, assessments, response cries, lexical items related to religion and culture, mock language)*. Yiddish organizations' email publicity is generally in English with select Yiddish words, only some of which are translated for the audience. In many cases, these selective translations teach readers Yiddish they did not previously know. For example, in Yiddishkayt's email newsletter in English on September 26, 2008, titled "Happy New Year Happy News" the executive director ends

his letter with "On behalf of everyone at Yiddishkayt, *leshone toyve*!" ("On behalf of everyone at Yiddishkayt, *Happy New Year*!"). Here, the language is used to invoke the Jewish calendar. The language is not translated in this case because the spelling and pronunciation of *leshone toyve* is quite close to the much more widely used Hebrew phrase *l'Shana Tova*. In their December 22, 2009 email newsletter in English, titled "Where Will Yiddish Be in 2025?", the author ends with "Here's to year fifteen and *biz hundert un tsvantsik* (to a hundred and twenty!)". The director invokes a well-known phrase in American Jewish culture, but translates it from the Yiddish for those who do not understand.

Similarly, the Yiddish Book Center (www.yiddishbookcenter.org) located in Amherst, Massachusetts, which "works to rescue Yiddish and other modern Jewish books and open up their content to the world", uses selected Yiddish words in their email newsletters. For example, a December 15, 2011 donation thank you letter in English begins with "*A sheynem dank* – thank you – for renewing your membership with a generous gift of X". The letter ends with "We couldn't do any of this without your support and for that, we are deeply grateful. *A hartsikn dank* -- my heartfelt thanks!". These Yiddish lexical items, framing the beginning and end of the text, provide a flavor of the language and bracket the text as a metalinguistic appreciation of the language (see Ahlers, 2006 for discussion of 'framing discourse' through native language use). Their translation into English demonstrates sensitivity to recipient design, providing the meaning of the words for those who appreciate the language through their monetary gifts but may not have competence in the language itself. An advertisement sent out on March 15, 2012 for an upcoming program about Yiddish writer Chaim Grade, ends with the closing "*Mit vareme grusn*" (without a translation). *Mit vareme grusn* means "with warm regards"/sincerely. It is possible that no translation is provided since its placement at the end of the text evidently constructs it as a closing.

In addition to these textual examples there are numerous cases within primarily English interactional contexts where Yiddish is used in selective ways. For example, in a UCLA Yiddish Language and Culture through Film class meeting on April 29, 2010, the instructor was describing Yiddish writer Sholem Aleichem's use of lexical items derived from a variety of source languages. During this description, a student sneezed, to which the instructor responded "*Tse gezint*" (without translation). "*Tse gezint.*" means "be well"/bless you. No translation was provided for the primarily non-Yiddish-speaking students in the course, as it was obvious what the words were in response to. It is striking to note this use of these lexical items within a primarily English-speaking milieu.

Furthermore, during the second quarter of a first-year Yiddish university class, the instructor would speak primarily in English. However, on January 14, 2010 (and many other days), she would say "*Yo. Farshteyt?*" (with no translation). "*Yo. Farshteyt?*" means "Yes. Do you understand?" These small verbal tastes of the language give the overall interactions a flavor of Yiddish, even when the vast majority of the time the language spoken is English. These examples in both email publicity and interactional contexts demonstrate dimension, 5 *the code is used in specific interactional and textual contexts (e.g., greeting/closings, assessments, response cries, lexical items related to religion and culture, mock language).*

### 1.5.2   An Exploration of the Yiddish Metalinguistic Community

To capture the inherent variability in a metalinguistic community, this project considers the Yiddish case from multiple points of view in terms of time, space, individual, and community. Metalinguistic community members struggle to recapture something that has been lost; therefore, the dimension of time at both the historical and individual levels is central. In chapters 4, 7, and 8 the analysis focuses on individuals' modes for coping with changing circumstances by choosing to engage with language and heritage. Chapter 4 analyzes historical and contemporary literature in which authors struggle in situations outside of their control, and attempt to use language as an anchor to provide stability. Through narrative analysis of in-depth interviews with nine learners and

teachers, chapter 7 provides a perspective on diverse ideologies toward Yiddish based on one's age and relative proximity to historical circumstances that have affected the language's vitality. Building upon these themes of age and history, in chapter 8 the focus moves to Deborah, a middle-aged Yiddish learner, who explores her shifting affiliations to the 'heritage' language and culture throughout her own life cycle.

In historical situations in which individuals and communities are uprooted and/or destroyed, there can be a great deal of variation in language structure and language ideologies. This can create contestation and tension regarding the "correct" version of the language, in some cases privileging individuals' first-hand experiences and in others those standards set by language authorities. Chapter 5 therefore employs multimodal discourse analysis within contemporary Yiddish classroom contexts, textual analysis of modern-day media, and narrative analysis of interviews to examine conflicted stances toward linguistic alternatives. These conflicted stances contribute to members' socialization into a *diasporic language ideology*, focused on a language's complexity as a symbol for its speakers' mobile history. In addition, as the building of communities ubiquitously entails the inclusion and exclusion of individuals and groups, chapter 6 focuses on secular versus Hasidic Orthodox use of Yiddish in the contemporary world. Though large numbers of Hasidic Orthodox Jews speak the language daily, within the secular community it is experienced and constructed as endangered.

Lastly, in their efforts to recover identity and experience, metalinguistic community members depend greatly on intergenerational knowledge transfer. In some cases, this can mean elders teaching youth and in others it could include middle-aged learners (perhaps exposed to information in study-based contexts) teaching elders. This dependence on 'experts' is the motivation for chapter 9, which considers the ways that knowledge, authority, and authenticity are publicly constructed in environments focused on Yiddish. Overall, this research analyzes public language practices that can

create communities in the present, enabling members to respond to fragmenting episodes in the past.

# CHAPTER 2

## YIDDISH LANGUAGE PAST AND PRESENT

### 2.1 Yiddish as a Jewish Language

Throughout their history, Jews around the world have spoken distinctly from their non-Jewish neighbors (cf. Peltz, 2010). In some cases, this distinction has come in the form of an entirely different language, such as Yiddish and Ladino (for a discussion see Benor, 2009), and in other cases these differences have manifested themselves in less marked ways. Jews have therefore spoken Jewish languages as part of a larger multilingual repertoire (cf. Fishman, 1981) and it has served diverse functions in intragroup communication (Peltz, 2010). Though Fishman (1985) traditionally focused on the phonological, morphosyntactic, lexical, and orthographic features that distinguish Jewish languages from those used in non-Jewish sociocultural networks, more recently Benor (2008, p. 1062) has considered a Jewish language as "a distinctively Jewish repertoire rather than a separate system". Some traditional examples of Jewish languages include Hebrew, Yiddish, Ladino (cf. Kushner Bishop, 2004), Judeo-Arabic, and Judeo-Provencal. More recently, scholars have broadened this list to include Yeshivish (cf. Weiser's 1985 *Frumspeak: The First Dictionary of Yeshivish*), Hasidic English (cf. Fader, 2009), Jewish English (cf. Benor, 2009), and English (cf. Fishman, 1985; Levitt, www.secularjewishculture.org). As Peltz (2010) maintains,

> Although modernity generally ushered in a period of decline for the use of Jewish languages in the world, there was no way that one hundred years ago anyone could have predicted the fate of Jewish languages and their speakers…the story of Jewish languages is far from over. (p. 15)

### 2.2 Yiddish from a Historical Perspective

Yiddish (meaning "Jewish" in Yiddish) has been spoken by Ashkenazic (Western, Central, and Eastern European) Jews since the 11$^{th}$ century. Fishman (1991a, p. 81) highlights, "The earliest

beginnings of Yiddish date back to roughly the 11$^{th}$ century from the point of view of time, and to the middle Rhine basin, from the point of view of geography". Fishman (1991a, p. 82) notes that Yiddish arose for three primary reasons:

1. Jews lived in sufficient social and psychological proximity to their non-Jewish neighbors – notwithstanding all the differences and circumstances that separated them – to attain familiarity with the language current in their environment.

2. However, Jews settling in the Rhine region brought with them certain pre-Germanic speech habits (phonetic, lexic, and syntactic) that immediately rendered their German somewhat different from that of their non-Jewish neighbors.

3. Finally, Jews also brought with them certain religious cultural habits that were either not encodable in the language of the non-Jewish environment, or were not as unambiguously or felicitously encodable in that language.

Since Yiddish has moved with Jews to areas across the world, including Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, North and South America, and Israel. As a result, the Yiddish language itself has incorporated both lexical and grammatical aspects of a variety of languages in the regions mentioned above. For example, Davis (1987, p. 159) notes that "the Yiddish of Eastern Europe has a basic Germanic structure, and predominantly Germanic vocabulary with a high input of Slavic and Hebrew and Aramaic words and is written in the Hebrew script". Historically, Yiddish served multiple purposes for Ashkenazic populations, including vernacular, literature, educational, theater, political purposes (Fishman, 1991a; Jacobs, 2005). Though used in a number of contexts, Yiddish was generally derided as a "jargon" and overshadowed by Hebrew. It was seen as a "debased dialect of German rather than a language in itself, and it was only referred to as Judeo-German" (Davis 1987, p. 159).

Between 1880 and 1914, Eastern European immigrants in the United States used Yiddish widely. Both language-development and language-retention efforts were intensive and organized (Fishman, 1991a, p. 90). However beginning in 1914, the number of Yiddish speakers in the United States declined due to decreased immigration of Eastern Europe and partial assimilation of immigrants into American life (Fishman, 1991a, p. 95).

During the beginning stages of nation-building in Israel during the nineteenth century, Hebrew was chosen over Yiddish. As Spolsky & Shohamy (1999) note,

> a new and revolutionary feature entered with the arrival of a different kind of Jewish Immigrant, ideological Jewish nationalists committed to the revival of language and identity. Jewish nationalism in the latter part of the nineteenth Century took two distinct paths: a nonterritorial cultural nationalism that chose standardized and secularized Yiddish as its language (Birnbaum, 1979; Fishman, 1980; Weinreich, 1980), and a territorialist socialist movement that aimed to develop a "new Hebrew man," speaking Hebrew in the newly redeemed land (Harshav, 1993). The battle between the two ideologies and languages was fought in Europe (Fishman, 1991b; 1991c) and in Palestine (Pilowsky, 1985), with Hebrew the victor in Palestine (Fishman & Fishman, 1978). (p. 97)

At the time, ardent Yiddishists (Yiddish language activists) made the argument that Yiddish was the primary language used by so many Jews at home and had already been elevated into a literary language (Berdichevsky, 2004, p. 18). However, the argument that Yiddish was a *mame loshn* (mother tongue) to so many and should therefore be chosen as the language of the nation was not convincing enough, and Hebrew won this battle. Isaacs (1998, p. 86) demonstrates that in Israel today "the perpetuation and preservation of Yiddish is a marginal item of nostalgic value, though it is gaining in respectability".

## 2.3    Yiddish in the Contemporary World

In 1939 on the eve of the second World War, out of approximately 17 million total Jews there were an estimated 10 – 12 million who spoke Yiddish. In contemporary society, the number of Yiddish speakers is estimated at approximately 2 million, evidence of the dramatic decline in Yiddish usage in a short period (Davis, 1987, p. 159).  Scholars including Bronner (2001), David Fishman (2005), Joshua Fishman (1965, 1981a, 1981b, 1987, 1991a, 1991c), Goldsmith (1987), Harshav (1990), Katz (2004), Peltz (1998), and Safadi (2000) have considered the evolving roles of Yiddish in pre-Holocaust, post-Holocaust, and contemporary Jewish communities. They discuss the function of Yiddish as it has shifted from serving as a unifying vernacular and literary language for Jews across geographic borders to its contemporary roles as one of the daily languages used within many Hasidic Orthodox Jewish communities, a tool for Jewish Studies scholars, and both "a medium and a message"[1] for Yiddishists. As Safadi (2000, p. 263) notes, "many of the people who strive to maintain Yiddish, notably secular Jews, do not function in a speech community. The daily routines of these Yiddish speakers are managed in English (or other mainstream languages in non-English speaking countries)". However, more recently there has been a resurgence of interest in this heritage language among the secular Jewish population.

In his book entitled *Adventures in Yiddishland*, Jeffrey Shandler (2008) provides evidence for the fact that Yiddish is now in a "postvernacular mode", meaning that

> in semiotic terms, the language's primary level of signification – that is, its instrumental value as a vehicle for communicating information, opinions, feelings, ideas – is narrowing in scope. At the same time its secondary, or meta-level of signification – the symbolic value invested in the language apart from the semantic value of any given utterance in it – is expanding. (p. 4)

---

[1] "Yiddish is Our Medium and Our Message" is the slogan on a poster at a 1960's Workmen's Circle event in New York. Ironically, the poster itself is in English. A picture of the poster and Workmen's Circle event participants can be found in Shandler, 2008, p. 5.

Shandler provides a comprehensive perspective of postvernacular Yiddish by centering on "key activities that span the full spectrum of modern Yiddish culture" (2008, p. 27), including Yiddish pedagogy, translation, performing Yiddish, materializing the language, and theorizing Yiddish. Shandler's research provides an extremely useful framework for conceptualizing the contemporary state of Yiddish. However, it considers the language itself to be the focal unit of analysis, whereas the present research project considers the communities centering on Yiddish to be the focal unit. In this way, it takes a practice- and activity-based approach to the complex discursive practices that participants engage in during Yiddish classes and cultural events themselves, many of which are made up of "self-imagined marginal communities" (J. Dauber, personal communication, June 23, 2009).

Within the contemporary context, secular engagement with Yiddish takes a number of different forms. First, there are a variety of Yiddish language and culture institutes, most of which are held during the summer and primarily geared towards graduate students and scholars who need Yiddish for their research projects. Some examples are the YIVO/NYU Uriel Weinreich Program in Yiddish Language, Literature, and Culture (New York), Vilnius Yiddish Institute (Vilnius, Poland), and the Goldreich Family Institute for Yiddish Language, Literature, and Culture at Tel Aviv University (Tel Aviv, Israel). Around the country there are also Yiddish classes and clubs for individuals at different life stages and with varying levels of previous language knowledge.

In addition, there are numerous Jewish cultural organizations focused primarily on Yiddish language and culture (e.g., Yiddishkayt in Los Angeles, KlezCalifornia in Northern California, *Yugntruf*/Youth for Yiddish in New York) that organize cultural events, programs, and festivals for their communities. Most of these groups are primarily conducted in English and other languages, with the notable exceptions of advanced Yiddish classes and *Yugntruf*/Youth for Yiddish. There are also international multi-day festivals focused on Yiddish language, culture, and music, such as

KlezKamp in New York; the Jewish Culture Festival in Krakow, Poland; and the Ashkenaz Festival in Montreal, Canada. Also, as Shandler (2008, p. 156) discusses, Yiddish is frequently incorporated into what he terms "semiotic souvenirs", "objects inscribed with Jewish words or even with individual letters of the *alefbeys*…an important component of traditional Jewish material culture". There are therefore a variety of ways that members of the secular community engage with Yiddish in the present-day world.

### 2.3.1   Contemporary Secular Yiddish Education

There has been a long tradition of secular engagement with Yiddish in classrooms in the United States, beginning at the turn of the twentieth century. Peltz (2010, p. 145) notes that beginning in 1910, reaching their enrollment peak in 1930, and receding in the 1980s, secular Yiddish language schools in the United States were focused on "the continuity of secular Jewish identity on the American soil" among Eastern European immigrants' children and their descendants. Within the modern context, Yiddish is spoken in fewer and fewer secular Jewish homes, while classroom and educational contexts have become primary sites of secular engagement with Yiddish. Shandler's (2008, p. 61) discussion of Yiddish language pedagogy highlights changing conceptions about the methods of and reasons for language learning. This study therefore provides an essential perspective through its focus on interactions within Yiddish educational contexts.

Secular Yiddish courses can be found at universities (beginning, intermediate, and advanced language and culture courses), Jewish community centers and continuing education settings (e.g., conversation groups, *leyenkrayzn*/reading circles, *shraybkrayzn*/writing circles), *Arbeter Ring*/Workmen's Circle facilities, and a select number of Jewish high schools. As Berger (2010) states,

> Twenty years ago there were four American universities with Yiddish programs: the Jewish
> Theological Seminary, Harvard, Columbia, and UCLA. Now there are more than a dozen.

25

From Michigan to Maryland, from Chicago to Santa Cruz, students are learning about

Yiddish literature and culture. (para. 1)

In 2006, the Modern Language Association stated that 969 students enrolled in Yiddish university courses nationally (Berger, 2010, para. 4), approximately one tenth of the number studying Hebrew. There are no statistics for individuals taking Yiddish courses in community and continuing education centers, but the number of these learners is not high. In addition, one can find some contexts in which Hasidic children are learning Yiddish in schools in Great Britain (Glinert, 1999), Canada (Fishman Gonshor & Shaffir, 2004), and New York (Fader, 2009).

The vast majority of students studying in university Yiddish classes in the United States are Jewish, though their levels of religiosity vary greatly. Yet, some non-Jewish students take Yiddish courses, which one Yiddish instructor hypothesizes is simply due to their "general interest in a unusual and rich folk language as opposed to something that they feel they own" (Lauren, February 18, 2010) . It is therefore especially relevant to examine the ways that both "heritage"- and non-"heritage" learners interact within Yiddish educational settings. Interestingly, Geller (2006, p. 219) notes that in Poland the teaching of Yiddish is almost exclusively to students of non-Jewish origin; these students see the language as "the essential key to a civilization which has borne on his or her soil…and is today…oriented towards the past than the future of Yiddish" (Geller, 2006, p. 219). As demonstrated throughout this dissertation, this focus on *nostalgia socialization* holds for Yiddish courses in the United States as well.

Scholars and practitioners have highlighted the lack of consistency in contemporary secular Yiddish instruction, both in terms of teacher training and curricular materials. J. Shandler (personal communication, July 15, 2010) notes that Yiddish teachers are somewhat unique in that they rely on "an independent sense of mission" for wanting to teach Yiddish. Historically, Yiddish teachers' primary qualification to teach has been their native knowledge of the language Though this is rare in

26

contemporary contexts, when teachers are native speakers their "genuine Yiddish pronunciation and idiomaticity" are "appreciated and exploited" (Geller, 2006, p. 217). In his discussion of the current state of Yiddish language teaching in America, Berger (2010) notes

> there are no formal standards or central certifying authority for Yiddish teachers. Little formal training in Yiddish language instruction has been available since 1987, when the Yiddish Teachers' Seminar (a graduate-level institution in New York) shut down. Thus consistency is lacking, as well as consensus about what kind of language should be taught: an academic literary Yiddish spoken by a few thousand today and necessary for the study of Yiddish literature, or a "Chasidic Yiddish"? (para. 5)

In their study of Yiddish teaching in a Hasidic school and a secular Jewish School in Canada, Fishman Gonshor & Shaffir (2004, p. 173) note that "desperately short of modern pedagogical materials, these institutions rely heavily on the commitment and enthusiasm of their teachers and the belief that exposing young people to this culture will encourage further learning and commitment to Yiddish and Jewish continuity". Geller (2006, p. 212) even asks whether it is "possible to outline a more or less unified Yiddish teaching policy that can address the diversity of needs and ends". There is little uniformity across Yiddish educational contexts and teachers frequently improvise in terms of what will be covered in class.

J. Shandler (personal communication, July 15, 2010) highlights that in general Yiddish classes are less "textbook-heavy" and teachers "hybridize…customize, tweak, and collage" materials. In secular Yiddish classrooms, textbooks used include *College Yiddish*, first published in 1949 by Yiddish linguist Uriel Weinreich, and *Yiddish: An Introduction to the Language, Literature, and Culture* by Sheva Zucker. In his preface to the first edition of Weinreich's textbook, Jakobson (1949/2006) writes

Under conditions of diaspora, a rigorously unified standard is even a much more vital premise for the being and development of a cultural language than it is in a closely knit speech community[…]The first tool for[…]mastery is a textbook of grammar. (pp. 9-10)

Geller (2006, p. 215) states, *College Yiddish*

was published only [a] few years after the Holocaust[…][and] tried to combine two very important but perhaps incompatible goals at the same time. The major and urgent goal was to spread a unified linguistic standard to the remaining native Yiddish speakers…At the same time Uriel Weinreich's textbook tried to depict and preserve the Yiddish world that was irreversible [sic] gone.

Zucker's two textbooks (1994, 2002) "introduce students to the spoken language rather than textbookese" and "introduce students to literature at a very early stage" (Zucker, 1994, p. xi). For further discussion of the Weinreich and Zucker textbooks, and future plans for Yiddish materials development see Adler Peckerar, 2011.

In considering both the textbooks and other materials (e.g., folksongs, poetry, literature) that are utilized in Yiddish classes, one recognizes that teachers and students are consistently faced with the issue of "which Yiddish" to teach and learn. These issues of correctness, norms, and acceptability surface throughout classroom interactions (discussed in detail in chapter 5). Geller (2006, p. 217) underscores the "dangerous level of abstract rivalry" between new standards and old original texts. This wide range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, ideologies, older and more contemporary materials, and Yiddish standards calls for a detailed investigation of interactional practices within Yiddish educational contexts, which the present study provides.

Frequently, students in summer intensive Yiddish programs use Yiddish when they return to research and read Yiddish materials. Yet, it is unclear whether students in other secular contexts use the language and/or talk about the language in another code once they leave the learning

environment. Students' only Yiddish speech community may be the classroom itself. Geller (2006, p. 220) considers "that a vital language consists of three important elements: the speech community, the language system…and the conceptual environment". She regards the YIVO-Yiddish Standard to be the language system, the speech community to be comprised of Yiddish speakers in the USA, and the conceptual environment to be "Yiddishland" in Poland. In this way, "the necessary cohesion was broken…there are no more links between those elements that consist a vital language" (p. 220). This study examines the potential links between these elements and how students and teachers in the United States discursively construct their identification with Yiddish in diverse contexts.

## 2.4    Conclusions

A temporal and spatial perspective on Yiddish as a specific case of a Jewish language provides essential background for understanding contemporary secular engagement with the language in the United States. Within modern contexts, there are a number of metalinguistic communities that overlap to varying extents. These include 1) older adults, primarily immigrants and children of immigrants, some of whom use Yiddish in conversation, 2) adults interested in Yiddish language and culture, 3) younger students learning Yiddish in classrooms, and 4) individuals of varying ages seeking to maintain Yiddish as a living language. In order to capture the diversity of actors in various contexts engaging with the language, a multi-methods approach is required (discussed in the following chapter).

# CHAPTER 3

# METHODS

## 3.1    Introduction

This study is part of a small but growing body of literature that emphasizes the *practices* of communities focused on a language, highlighting members, as opposed to centering on notions of a language abstracted away from its communities. It therefore provides a unique perspective on the purposes to which a language is put and the actions communities take in relation to their language, illuminating what serve as ideological and political resources in making both selves and social groups. Across diverse contexts within the Yiddish metalinguistic community, this analysis has centered on heritage language socialization practices (Brinton, Kagan, & Bauckus, 2008; Campbell & Christian, 2001; Campbell & Rosenthal, 2000; Duff 2010; Fishman, 2001; Friedman, 2009; Friedman, 2010; He, 2001; He, 2008; He, 2010; Krashen, Tse, & McQuillan, 1998; Peyton, Ranard, & McGinnis, 2001; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Schieffelin & Ochs 2012; Tse, 1997), endangered language pedagogy (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006; Hinton, 2011; Hinton & Hale, 2001), classroom discourse analysis (Cazden, 2001; Mehan, 1979; Mehan, 1985), and language ideologies (McGroarty, 2010; Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity, 1998; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994).

In its approach to diverse times and spaces, this study spanned almost three years and incorporated methodologies at the macro- and micro-levels, including ethnography, participant-observation, video- and audio-recording, person-centered interviews (Hollan, 2001), fieldnotes, conversation analytic transcription, narrative analysis (Ochs & Capps, 2001), discourse analysis, and textual analysis. Ethnography and discourse analysis can be fruitfully combined such that each approach informs the other in capturing the complexity of communities' social worlds. To examine the socialization practices involved in creating and maintaining a metalinguistic community, it has been necessary to investigate a number of settings that capture secular engagement with Yiddish.

Through its focus on multiple individuals in these diverse settings, this study provides a holistic, comprehensive picture of their histories, choices, and experiences over time.

## 1.2     Secular vs. Religious Communities

An examination of secular engagement with Yiddish in the United States sheds an important light on the ways that communities construct themselves in new settings (see Shandler, 2008). It also provides a novel perspective on the relevance of language in the lives of individuals who view themselves as culturally, as opposed to religiously, Jewish. However, considering the integral nature of religious symbols and practices in the history of Yiddish and its speakers, this study also reveals the complexities of discrete categories like 'secular' or 'religious' as they apply both to communities and to languages themselves.

Anderson (1983, p. 21) emphasizes the consistent, intimate connection between religious communities and sacred languages, something that can be seen in the Yiddish case as well. Though Yiddish has been associated with Jewish communities it has generally not been considered a 'sacred' language used for canonical texts in the ways that Hebrew has been. However, one might consider Yiddish to be 'sacred' in a different sense (cf. Myhill, 2004). Yiddish is used to honor memory and memorialize; in this sense, the mundane becomes sacred through a focus on everyday texts and activities. In his discussion of Yiddish as a holy language, Fishman (2002) notes,

> Holiness not only varies along a historical continuum (hitherto non-holy languages having holiness bestowed upon them and, in the opposite direction, once-holy languages being secularized and desanctified), but holiness can be a matter of degree and of startlingly different imagery in different social circles that are contemporary. (p. 125)

He then considers its holiness in terms of both a time (pre- and post-Holocaust) and a social contrast (secular and Orthodox/ultra-Orthodox). He writes "a distinctly secular claim to sanctity for Yiddish is based upon its association with Jewish suffering, their long struggle for freedom and

dignity and, finally, the Holocaust" (2002, p. 138). Fishman's discussion therefore highlights the difficulty of creating clear dichotomies between secular and religious languages and communities.

Within "secular" Yiddish educational contexts there are students and teachers with varying degrees of observance and religious background. For example, in one of the university-level classes that was the focus of this study, there were both secular Jews and a religious Jew, in addition to students who were not Jewish. Interestingly, within this "secular" educational context the observant student was consistently turned to for questions of spiritual practice and terminology that emerged during the reading of Yiddish texts, which provided for the other students unique perspectives on Yiddish language and Jewish cultural issues more generally.

In addition, this study provides an important perspective on notions of 'heritage' and 'endangerment' in the lives of secular communities. Through its methodological approach and focal communities this research illuminates how 'heritage' itself is an ideology to which individuals selectively orient. In addition, for many members of the secular community Yiddish is experienced and constructed as an "endangered" language, though in many Hasidic Orthodox communities children (Fader, 2009) and other newcomers (Benor, 2012) are socialized into vernacular usage of the language. This in-depth research across multiple contexts provides an important counterpoint to these ethnographic studies in the service of providing a comprehensive picture of the ways that different communities engage with and construct the 'same' language.

## 1.3    Geographical Contexts

The primary focus of this research is in the United States in order to represent contemporary Jewish linguistic practices in a nation to which large numbers of Jews have immigrated during the last century. In his comprehensive survey of Judaism in America, Blau (1976, p. 46) highlights that immigrants between 1880 and 1914 brought their "own semisacred language, Yiddish", which was used in daily communication, print publications, theater, religious school education, and synagogue

preaching. Over time, the secular population's use of the language in these diverse domains has dwindled; however, engagement with the language currently takes a variety of interesting forms. Raphael (2003, p. 1) estimates that there are approximately six million Jews in the United States. This comprises approximately one half of the current worldwide Jewish population. In its focus on the United States, this research provides a novel perspective on Yiddish pedagogy that complements studies conducted in Europe (Geller, 2006) and in Israel (Tannenbaum & Abugov, 2010).

Raphael (2003, p. 1) notes, "Jews live overwhelmingly in the suburbs of the largest American cities, and (secondarily) in those same cities." This study has therefore focused on three metropolitan areas in the United States, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco, each with varying numbers of Jewish community members. In 2011, New York was estimated to have approximately 1.4 million Jews, about one third of the United States population (Dashefsky, DellaPergola, & Sheskin, 2011, p. 23). The United States city with the second largest number of Jews is Los Angeles, estimated to have approximately 520,000 Jews (p. 23). San Francisco is the fourth largest Jewish city, after New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, with approximately 228,000 Jews (p. 43). In some sense, New York self-selects as a site for Jewish cultural study since it has been a historical center for Jewish immigrants over time. Los Angeles, and California more specifically, have existed in the imagination of Jews since the early part of the 20th century. San Francisco provides an interesting contrast case since it is a relatively minor center and is qualitatively different from the other two geographical regions. It is also remarkable in its proximity to but constructed distinction from Southern California cities like Los Angeles.

Kahn & Dollinger (2003, p. 1) note that in the late nineteenth century "For many Jews, California became the Promised Land" and "Jewish immigrants to California took advantage of its physical environment, ethnic diversity, and cultural distinctiveness to fashion a form of Judaism unique in the American experience". As Vorspan & Gartner (1970, p. v) emphasize in *History of the*

33

*Jews of Los Angeles*, "In America's widening social and economic frontiers, the lure of the West has remained a potent force". More specifically, historically Los Angeles has been one of the main centers of Jewish life in the nation. As Yiddish poet Katzengoy wrote in his poem *Kvaytlakh* (Little Notes) in 1925 (Vorspan & Gartner 1970, p. 117):

Far-

From the narrow New York streets, Chicago clouds, Pittsburgh smoke – Los Angeles!

You are intoxicated by the smell of orange blossoms, blinded by the towering mountains, refreshed by the straight proud palms…

Moore (1994, p. 275) emphasizes the fact that Los Angeles (and Miami) can be seen as the "offspring" of Jewish New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Boston, among other smaller cities. In 1970, Los Angeles represented America's second largest Jewish center, having surpassed the communities of Philadelphia and Chicago in the United States and Buenos Aires, Paris, and London globally (Vorspan & Gartner 1970, p. v). Los Angeles was one of the primary destinations for immigrants leaving Europe and New York in the early part of the 20th century. As Shevitz (2003, p. 65) states, Judaism thrived in Los Angeles: "For Southern California's propensity for reinvention can invigorate as well as sap Judaism; it can boost Jewish creativity as well as undermine traditional behavior". In addition, scholars of American Jewish history have focused on educating their "colleagues about how [the California Jewish experience] contradicts many assumptions born of the New York City experience" (p. 65).

Los Angeles has been home to numerous Holocaust survivors, their children, and their children's children. In 1997, there were approximately 14,000 Holocaust survivors living in Los Angeles and 71,000 children of survivors (Berman North American Jewish Data Bank, p. 15). Los Angeles has drawn Jewish immigrants who do not have Yiddish as an ancestral language, including large numbers of Sephardi and Mizrachi Jews (e.g., Ottoman Ladino speakers, North African Judeo-

Arabic speakers, and Iranian Farsi speakers). However, Yiddish remains the majority ancestral language for Los Angeles Jews (p. 15). A focus on Los Angeles therefore provides a unique perspective on large American Yiddish speech communities over the past one hundred years.

Moore (1981) emphasizes that as early as 1900 New York City has been central to the American Jewish experience. She goes on to note that

> By 1914 there was no doubt that the pulse of New York Jewish life decisively influenced all American Jews…Since the beginning of the twentieth century, roughly half of all American Jews have lived in New York City. Indeed, they constitute the largest concentration of Jews in history. (p. 4)

New York also has a unique profile from the perspective of the contemporary Yiddish metalinguistic community, for the city's subway system and overall accessibility allow secular Jews interested in Yiddish to experience the Yiddish within religious Hasidic communities in Brooklyn (e.g., Borough Park, Crown Heights, New Square) quite easily. There are also a number of organizations focused on Yiddish language and culture that are based in New York, including YIVO, *Yugntruf*/Youth for Yiddish, *Arbeter Ring*/Workmen's Circle, and League for Yiddish. In these ways, New York serves as an exceptional microcosm in which to examine secular engagement with Yiddish alongside that of Hasidic Orthodox communities.

Lastly, this study's inclusion of secular engagement with Yiddish in San Francisco and the Bay Area provides material that complements that found in the larger centers of Jewish life in Los Angeles and New York. First, it offers another community on the West Coast, which is qualitatively different from yet similar to Los Angeles. This community has a unique profile in that they have had fewer Holocaust survivors and Jewish immigrants than the other two settings but they have a fairly large (and growing) community interested in Yiddish language and culture. Their experiential

distance from survivors and large centers of Jewish immigration plays a role in how they construct themselves and their communities.

The analysis of three primary geographical centers of contemporary Jewish life in the United States is one step towards better understanding the American Yiddish metalinguistic community. The detailed analysis of practices within each geographical context has allowed for an examination of each for its unique dimensions, in addition to possible generalizations one may make about practices across contexts.

## 1.4 Multiple Sites

Considering the diverse actors in different contexts who choose to engage with Yiddish, this study has examined a variety of sites in Los Angeles, Northern California, and New York. These have included over 170 Yiddish language classes, programs, lectures, and cultural events, in addition to literature, print media, and online sources. Between April 2009 and March 2012, data collection included participant-observation and approximately one hundred hours of video- and audio-recorded interactional data integrating sixty-five participants. I also conducted ten person-centered interviews to capture the teachers' and students' own descriptions about their motivations and interest in Yiddish language and culture.

The majority of the data collection was conducted in Southern California, especially in UCLA Yiddish language courses, the UCLA "Yiddish Culture through Film" class, Yiddishkayt cultural events and Folks-Grupe sessions, CIYCL and LAYCC cultural events, and Workmen's Circle/*Arbeter Ring* SoCal District evening beginning Yiddish language courses. I attended one festival and one conference in Northern California, both in 2010. During the summer of 2010 I spent approximately six weeks in New York, during which I collected data in the YIVO/NYU Uriel Weinreich Yiddish language classes and culture lectures. I attended fewer lectures or events at the other sites listed.

Individuals of varying ages, familiarity with Yiddish language and culture, and commitment to Yiddishist causes participated in these diverse sites, organizations, and online media forums. For example, primarily older adult Yiddishists participated in Los Angeles Yiddish Culture Club events (before it merged with the California Institute for Yiddish Culture and Language). Those committed to causes related to Yiddish (some of whom consider themselves to be Yiddishists) of varying ages are involved in *Forverts*, International Association for Yiddish Clubs, League for Yiddish, *Leyenkrayz*, and Mendele. Younger people maintaining Yiddish as a living language are involved in *Yugntruf*/Youth for Yiddish. Primary adults and older adults with a general interest in Yiddish language and culture attended the American Jewish University class and event, California Institute for Yiddish Culture and Language events, the KlezCalifornia festival, Orange County Yiddish Festival, Sholem Community lecture and event, Temple Menorah Rosenberg Cultural Center lecture, Workmen's Circle Yiddish classes and event, Yiddish Book Center, and Yiddishkayt events. Lastly, younger students enrolled in UCLA language and film courses, the YIVO program, and the Yiddishkayt Folks-Grupe. These sites are therefore populated by a variety of individuals along a spectrum of interest in and commitment to Yiddish language and culture.

Below is a list of the interactional data sites and organizations where I engaged in participant/observation, audio-recording, and/or video-recording, organized by geographical area and in chronological order. The number of events/classes/sessions I attended for each site/organization is in parentheses. A description of the sites and organizations can be found in the next section, "Data Sites and Organizations: Descriptions".

### 3.4.1 Data Sites and Organizations: List and Frequency

### 3.4.1.1. Southern California Sites

1. Yiddishkayt Folks-Grupe meetings April – June 2009 (7), November 2009 – January 2010 (6)

2. UCLA First Year Yiddish language courses May 2009 (1), October 2009 – June 2010 (32)

3. *Leyenkrayz* ("Reading Circle") August 2009, December 2010 – March 2011 (6)

4. California Institute for Yiddish Culture and Language (CIYCL) and Los Angeles Yiddish Culture Club (LAYCC) cultural events August 2009 – May 2011 (10)

5. American Jewish University "Bubbe Myses: A History of the Yiddish Language" class in November 2009, "Celebrating Sutzkever" event in January 2011 (2)

6. The Workmen's Circle/*Arbeter Ring* SoCal District evening beginning Yiddish language courses December 2009 – June 2010 (13)

7. Yiddishkayt cultural events (e.g., concerts, films) December 2009 – August 2011 (6)

8. Sinai Temple Annual Jewish Book Month Breakfast featuring *Songs for the Butcher's Daughter* author Peter Manseau, December 2009 (1)

9. UCLA Second Year Yiddish language courses January – March 2010 (7), January – March 2011 (8)

10. Sholem Community lecture "Discovering the Yiddish Empire" January 2010, "A Flame That Keeps Burning: Marking the Centennial of the Triangle Factory Fire" event March 2011 (2)

11. UCLA "Yiddish Culture through Film" class April - June 2010 (9)

12. Orange County Yiddish Festival in September 2011[2] (1)

13. Temple Menorah Rosenberg Cultural Center "Yiddish and Your Heritage: Exploring Your Personal Connections to the Language and Culture" lecture in March 2012[3] (1)

**3.4.1.2 Northern California Sites**

1. KlezCalifornia Yiddish Culture Festival in February 2010 (1)

2. International Association of Yiddish Clubs Thirteenth Conference "Yiddish Around the World" in April 2010 (1)

---

[2] I was a presenter at this festival.
[3] I was a presenter for this group.

### 3.4.1.3 New York Sites

1. YIVO/NYU Uriel Weinreich Program Yiddish language classes June – August 2010 (28 grammar classes, 28 literature classes, 16 conversation/reading classes)

2. YIVO/NYU Uriel Weinreich Program lectures June - July 2010 (19)

3. *Forverts*/Yiddish Forward Official Launching of the "Forverts Video Channel" in July 2010 (1)

4. League for Yiddish WWGD? [What Would Glatshteyn Do?] An Evening of Yiddish Poetry program in August 2010 (1)

5. The Workmen's Circle/*Arbeter Ring* Jewish Music Free & Out of Doors concert in August 2010 (1)

In addition, in March 2012 I visited the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts. Within the contemporary context, the Yiddish metalinguistic community includes a number of far-reaching digital and media engagements with Yiddish in addition to the face-to-face interactional contexts included above. These textual examples are sent to even peripheral members of the metalinguistic community, not only those who choose to enroll in classes or attend cultural events. Some examples of written media that are all or mostly in English include *Arbeter Ring*/Workmen's Circle online newsletters; Jewish Daily Forward newspaper; mainstream media articles about Yiddish; *Mendele* (an online email listserv to which subscribers send questions about Yiddish language and culture); Yiddish Book Center's magazine *Pakn Treger* (Book Peddler), online newsletter, and website; and Yiddishkayt's website, Facebook page, and online newsletter. Examples of written media that are bilingual or just Yiddish are *Afn Shvel*, League for Yiddish's magazine; International Association for Yiddish Club's *Der Bay* newsletter and website; *Forverts* newspaper; Yiddish Word-of-the-Week website, Facebook page, and e-mail announcements; and *Yugntruf*/Youth for Yiddish's website, Facebook page, and e-mail announcements. I conducted

textual analysis of these sources in order to augment the claims based on interactional, interview, and other historical text-based data.

### 3.4.2 Data Sites and Organizations: Descriptions

The list below provides detailed information about each of the sites included in this study, taken from their online or print materials in which they describe their missions and goals.

### 3.4.2.1 Southern California Sites

**Yiddishkayt Folks-Grupe:** "a three-month fellowship for young adults dedicated to all aspects of Yiddish culture. **The _Folks-Grupe_ (literally: People's Group)** hopes to bridge the disconnect between generations, fostering a general knowledge of Yiddish for the next generation" ("Completely new Yiddish experience", 2009). The program existed in 2009 and 2010.

**Sinai Temple:** "a conservative congregation founded in 1906. We are committed to the land and people of Israel, to the serious study of ancient and modern Jewish learning, and to the beautiful music and spiritual richness of prayer. In our diverse community, we have several different kinds of worship services, with our main sanctuary attracting an average of one-thousand people on Shabbat mornings. We are a congregation of spiritual seekers, loving tradition, embracing modernity, animated by the Jewish mission of improving the world" (www.sinaitemple.org/about_us).

**UCLA beginning Yiddish language courses:** "Introduction to grammar; instruction in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills" (www.registrar.ucla.edu/schedule/schedulehome.aspx). In the second quarter class, "students continue their introduction to Yiddish through an enhancement of conversational, reading and writing skills, learning popular folk and theater songs, viewing a classic Yiddish film, and attending at least one local Yiddish cultural event" (Yiddish 101B course syllabus). Yiddish courses at UCLA began to be taught approximately thirty-five to forty years ago.

_Leyenkrayz_ **("Reading Circle")** is a group of fluent and advanced Yiddish speakers who meet regularly to read and discuss Yiddish literature.

**The California Institute for Yiddish Culture & Language (CIYCL):** "Since 1999 we have been challenging the fog of lost memory and ignorance about Yiddish culture. We work against the tide that separates most Jews alive today from their own remarkable heritage and that has put Yiddish at risk of expiring. We cherish and illuminate a vast legacy - a heritage which cannot be replicated. We are a spark of historical memory for the local and broader Jewish community, one that reaches beyond the normative Holocaust or Israel-related endeavors to keep alive the heart-and-soul culture that fed our people during a 1000-year long and vital period of our history. Our motto is 'preservation through innovation'" (http://yiddishinstitute.org/).

**The Los Angeles Yiddish Culture Club (LAYCC)**, "established in 1926 by Eastern European immigrants, was a non-partisan organization whose major objective was to promote Yiddish and Yiddish Culture among its members and friends. The Club conducted weekly meetings that included lectures about Yiddish writers and their works and contemporary issues as they relate to Jewish life in America. It was the most important Yiddish cultural organization on the West Coast during its existence. The Club's journal, "*Khesbn*" ("Reckoning" or "Accounting"), was founded in 1946, and published its last (150th) issue in 2008" (print material from LAYCC archives). The Club met in various locations and most recently at the Institute of Jewish Education, located at 8339 W. 3rd Street, LA CA 90048. After the passing of its president Lilke Majzner in 2009, the Club was taken over by CIYCL.

**American Jewish University:** "a thriving center of Jewish resources and talent built upon the mission of Jewish Learning, Culture, Ethics, Leadership and Peoplehood…one of the largest and most innovative Jewish institutions in the country" (www.ajula.edu). I attended a class called "Bubbe Myses: A History of the Yiddish Language" through the Whizin Center for Continuing Education ("one of the largest adult education programs in the nation") and an event called "Celebrating

Sutzkever" through the Sigi Ziering Institute ("exploring the ethical and religious implications of the Holocaust") (www.ajula.edu).

**The Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring SoCal District:** "Our first branch was established in 1908, the Workmen's Circle has a proud history in Southern California. A history of celebrating the traditions of Eastern European Jewry, a history of social activism — our forebears founded the City of Hope Medical Center! — and a history of creating a community for our members. So we were in 1908, and so we are today. With a unique slate of programs, classes, and events such as our A Shenere Velt Gallery, our Yiddish cultural programs and library, our Social Action Committee and much more, the Workmen's Circle is a vibrant, dynamic part of the Southern California community" (www.circlesocal.org).

**The Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring SoCal District beginning Yiddish courses:** Join Arbeter Ring and learn some Mameloshn – it's about time! Learn the alef-bais (Yiddish alphabet), vocabulary and the basics of Yiddish language – for those with little or no background" (www.circlesocal.org/yiddishclasses.html). Yakob Basner, a native Yiddish-speaking Holocaust survivor who was born in Riga, Latvia in 1927, teaches the Monday evening courses.

**Yiddishkayt:** "**the premier Yiddish cultural and educational center** in Los Angeles dedicated to the study of Yiddish language, culture and history and to connecting generations old and new with their cultural heritage. With groundbreaking language education and cultural programs, inventive partnerships, large-scale events, and innovative online communications, **Yiddishkayt promotes and celebrates Yiddish as a profound pathway to Jewish identity.** Since its inception in 1995, Yiddishkayt has embraced the multicultural richness of Los Angeles to strengthen consciousness — and foster the growth—of all things Yiddish and that reflect Yiddish's contemporary legacy. By

focusing not only on the traditions but the creativity of Yiddish culture, **Yiddishkayt charts a new way for Yiddish to evolve and adapt in the twenty-first century**" (http://yiddishkayt.org).

**UCLA Second Year Yiddish language courses**: "Students have an opportunity to explore in depth the great literary and theatrical legacy of one of the most unique, richest, and endangered languages on earth" (Yiddish 102B course syllabus).

**Sholem Community:** "a secular Jewish community that offers a Sunday School, a parent-toddler group, seminars, activities for adults and young adults, and observances of Jewish holidays" (www.sholem.org). I attended a lecture entitled "Discovering the Yiddish Empire" and an event called "A Flame That Keeps Burning: Marking the Centennial of the Triangle Factory Fire".

**UCLA "Yiddish Culture through Film" class**: "This class introduces students to Yiddish language and culture, using classic Yiddish films and documentaries as integral tools for accessing the culture associated with this heritage language. Whereas Yiddish is traditionally taught at UCLA as primarily a language with a limited exposure to the associated culture, in this class culture is the focal point. As language study, this class provides students mastery of a new alphabet and very basic reading and conversational skills. Since films depict actual or authentically recreated scenes of everyday (pre-Holocaust) shtetl and urban life, as well as life cycle rituals, they serve as rare windows into the culture…These films also represent the most accessible way available to us today to hear Yiddish spoken in a fluent, natural manner" (www.registrar.ucla.edu/schedule/schedulehome.aspx).

**2011 Orange County Yiddish Festival:** "a new Program formed to promote Yiddish and Yiddishkeit awareness in Orange County. This Program will be open to all, Jews and non-Jews, young and old, who wish to learn about and preserve the diverse historical Jewish culture and the dynamics of Yiddishkeit. The Program will provide classes, lectures, and entertainment and is

supported by various community organizations to encourage inter-cultural educational activities. The goal of the Program is to enlighten the younger Jewish generation of their heritage, and how it has been incorporated into the spirit of America" (www.ocyiddish.org).

**Temple Menorah Rosenberg Cultural Center:** "dedicated to continuous intellectual, spiritual and physical well-being through one's adult life. At no point on this continuum should one neglect to challenge oneself or to make new discoveries about one's passions. The Rosenberg Cultural Center strives to facilitate this process through cognitive and spiritual stimulation, physical activity and multi-generational interactions with the Temple Menorah community and the larger Jewish community. Stressing opportunities for social interaction, relevant speakers of Jewish interest and classes that both challenge and entertain, the Center provides seniors with a conduit to continued self discovery" (http://templemenorah.org/community/rcc.html). I gave a lecture entitled "Yiddish and Your Heritage: Exploring Your Personal Connections to the Language and Culture".

### 3.4.2.2 Northern California Sites

**KlezCalifornia:** "founded in 2003 to celebrate klezmer music and Yiddish culture in the San Francisco Bay Area. Our focus is on the cultural heritage of Eastern European Jewry, as embodied in its music, literature, and the arts. KlezCalifornia events enable people of all ages to engage actively and intensely with Yiddish culture — participating, not just watching others perform (www.klezcalifornia.org).

**International Association for Yiddish Clubs (IAYC):** Their mission is to "provide a global perspective and network for Yiddish groups – large or small, exchange educational and cultural materials, and experience a sense of unity while striving to keep our language, literature, and culture alive and well into the new millennium" (www.derbay.org/millbrae/aims.htm). As of March 12, 2012, IAYC had ninety-four member clubs, representing the United States (eighty-six), Canada

(five), Israel (one), South Africa (one), and Spain (one) (www.derbay.org/clubs.html). Of the twenty-six states in the United States with member clubs, the five states with the highest number of clubs are California (seventeen), New York (eleven), Florida (nine), Illinois (eight), and New Jersey (six). IAYC's first conference was in 1993. I attended the conference in 2010 in Millbrae, California. Their website and newsletter is *Der Bay*, "The Bridge to World-Wide Yiddish" (www.derbay.org).

### 3.4.2.3 New York Sites

**The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research:** "founded in Vilna, Poland, in 1925 and relocated to New York City in 1940. Our mission is to preserve, study and teach the cultural history of Jewish life throughout Eastern Europe and Russia. Our educational and public outreach programs concentrate on all aspects of this 1000-year history and its continuing influence in America. YIVO's archival collections and library constitute the single greatest resource for such study in the world, including approximately 24 million letters, manuscripts, photographs, films, sound recordings, art works, and artifacts; as well as the largest collection of Yiddish-language materials in the world" (www.yivoinstitute.org).

**The Uriel Weinreich Program in Yiddish Language, Literature, and Culture:** is a program that has existed since 1968 that "offers peerless instruction in the Yiddish language and an in-depth exploration of the literature and culture of East European/American Jewry. Its core is an intensive language course (9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Monday through Friday) at one of four levels, designed to develop proficiency in speaking, reading and writing, as well as cultural literacy, in a concentrated period of time" (www.yivoinstitute.org/courses/urielw_fr.htm).

*Forverts*/**Jewish Daily Forward:** "The Forward is a legendary name in American journalism and a revered institution in American Jewish life. Launched as a Yiddish-language daily newspaper on April 22, 1897, the Forward entered the din of New York's immigrant press as a defender of trade

45

unionism and moderate, democratic socialism…By the early 1930s the Forward had become one of America's premier metropolitan dailies, with a nationwide circulation topping 275,000 and influence that reached around the world and into the Oval Office… In 1983 the paper cut back to a weekly publishing schedule and launched an English-language supplement…In 1990 the Forward Association, the newspaper's non-profit holding company, made the bold decision to remake the English-language Forward as an independent, high-profile weekly newspaper committed to covering the Jewish world with the same crusading journalistic spirit as Cahan's Jewish Daily Forward…" I attended one event, during which they launched their new website. (http://forward.com).

**The League for Yiddish, Inc.:** "founded in 1979 by prominent Yiddish linguist and professor Dr. Mordkhe Schaechter in order to provide organizational support for the modernization, standardization and use of the Yiddish language in all spheres of daily life. With devoted members on six continents, the League for Yiddish is one of the few organizations in today's Yiddish cultural and linguistic world that conducts its activities almost entirely in *mame-loshn*. The goals of the League for Yiddish are 1) to encourage people to speak Yiddish in their everyday life; to enhance the prestige of Yiddish as a living language, both within and outside the Yiddish-speaking community; and to promote the modernization of Yiddish (http://leagueforyiddish.org).

**The Workmen's Circle/*Arbeter Ring*:** "fosters Jewish identity and participation in Jewish life through Jewish, especially Yiddish, culture and education, friendship, and the pursuit of social and economic justice…Over the past century, we at the Workmen's Circle have undergone significant changes in outlook and program, but have remained passionately committed to the principles at the living core of our organization: Jewish community, the promotion of an enlightened Jewish culture, and social justice." (www.circle.org/). I attended one of their concerts, during which Yiddish songs were sung.

### 3.4.3 Additional Organizations and Online Sites: Descriptions

**Mendele:** "a moderated mailing list dedicated to the lively exchange of views, information, news and just about anything else related to the Yiddish language and Yiddish literature. It is open to all and subscriptions are free. It is not intended for the discussion of Judaism or Jewish culture in general. Mendele, which began circulating among a handful of academics on May 15, 1991, now has about 1700 subscribers, on every continent but Antarctica" (http://mendele.commons.yale.edu/wp/)

**Yiddish Book Center:** "works to rescue Yiddish and other modern Jewish books and open up their content to the world." *Pakn Treger*, their English-language magazine, "carries on the tradition of the original pakn tregers, who traveled from shtetl to shtetl in Eastern Europe bringing books and news of the outside world (www.yiddishbookcenter.org).

*Yugntruf*/**Youth for Yiddish:** "*Yugntruf* ("call to youth" in Yiddish) cultivates the active use of the Yiddish language among today's youth here and abroad by creating opportunities for Yiddish learning and immersion, and by providing resources and support for Yiddish speakers and families within an expansive social network (http://yugntruf.org).

**Yiddish Word of the Week:** "Spreading the love for Mame-Loshn, one vort at a time" http://yiddishwordoftheweek.tumblr.com/).

### 3.5    Data Analysis

The data analysis process was multi-faceted and included video- and audio-recordings (Clayman & Gill, 2004), discourse analytic transcription (Bucholtz, 2000; Jefferson, 1984; Ochs, 1979), discourse and conversation analysis (Schegloff, 2007; Atkinson & Heritage 1984, Drew & Heritage, 1992; ten Have, 2007), examination of fieldnotes, narrative analysis of interview themes (Ochs & Capps, 2001), and textual analysis.

With this study's focus on interactions in multiple settings, video- and audio-recordings were a central component of the data collection process. As Clayman & Gill (2004, p. 590) note, in conversation analysis "observation is always directed toward conduct as it has been preserved in audio and video recordings, and this facilitates a highly disciplined mode of analysis marked by standards of evidence and analytic precision that are distinctive". In the vast majority of settings participants were willing to be video-recorded; however, in some they preferred to be audio-recorded.

The transcription conventions developed by Jefferson (1984) are utilized in the interactional data, which incorporate attention to details including pause length, overlaps, intonation, and volume (Appendix A). Where possible, these transcripts also capture multimodal actions, including gaze direction, gesture, and/or embodied movement. These transcription conventions incorporate what specific individuals are saying in addition to the ways that sequences are constructed across speakers. In addition, in many cases pause lengths, overlaps, intonation, and volume are extremely relevant for the ongoing action and the speakers. The representation of these elements in the transcriptions, though not always analyzed in detail, provides the reader with access to this analytically relevant information.

Transcription of interview data does not incorporate all of these elements, for in general interactions between the interviewer and interviewee have not been included in the dissertation. For the interviews, the content of a speaker's utterance was the primary focus. YIVO Stanard Yiddish transliteration (www.yivoinstitute.org/yiddish/alefbeys_fr.htm) has been employed so that those familiar with Yiddish are able to access my data and analysis (Appendix B).

As Schegloff (2007, p. 1) notes, "one of the most fundamental organizations of practice for talk-in-interaction is the organization of turn-taking". Atkinson & Heritage (1984, p. 5) also highlight, "for conversation analysts…it is sequences and turns, rather than isolated sentences or

utterances, that have become the primary units of analysis". Discourse analysis has therefore focused on turns, turn constructional units, sequences, and preference structure (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984), in addition to embodied behavior, which provides additional perspectives on unique interactional practices within institutional contexts such as classrooms (cf. Cazden, 2001; Friedman, 2009; He, 2001; Lo, 2004; Mehan, 1979; Mehan, 1985) and other educational events. As Drew & Heritage (1992, p. 22) note, 1) Institutional talk is goal oriented in institutionally relevant ways; 2) It often involves 'special and particular constraints' on 'allowable contributions to the business at hand'; and 3) It may be 'associated with inferential frameworks and procedures that are peculiar to specific institutional contexts' (discussed in ten Have, 2007, p. 177).

In addition to considering general turn-taking practices relevant to discourse and conversation analysis research, this analysis has focused on specific discursive phenomena including question/response sequences (Boyd & Heritage, 2006; Clayman & Heritage, 2002), recipient design (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974, p. 272), formulations (Duranti, 1994; Schegloff, 1972), person reference (Enfield & Stivers, 2007; Sacks & Schegloff, 1979), epistemics (Goodwin, 2007; Heritage and Raymond, in press), and repair sequences (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). As Boyd & Heritage (2006, pp. 154 - 163) discuss, question design both conveys and solicits information. They also note that questions set agendas, embody presuppositions, and incorporate preferences. Questions can set topic agendas; they foreground certain issues as topics of inquiry. They can also set action agendas by asking a recipient to give substantial information, clarify, and justify. A response is a general category that includes answers. Clayman & Heritage (2002, p. 242) define an answer as "an action that addresses the agenda of topics and tasks posed by a previous question".

Recipient design is defined as "a multitude of respects in which the talk by a party in a conversation is constructed or designed in ways which display an orientation and sensitivity to the particular other(s) who are the co-participants" (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974, p. 272). They

highlight the close relationship between recipient design and word selection (e.g., formulations), topic selection, sequence order, and the start and end of conversations. Schegloff (1972) states,

> If one looks to the places in conversation where an object (including persons) or activity is identified (or as I shall call it 'formulated'), then one can notice that there is a set of alternative formulations for each such object or activity, all the formulations being, in some sense, correct (e.g. each allowing under some circumstance 'retrieval' of the same referent). (p. 80)

Also, as Duranti (1994, pp. 4-5) highlights,

> reality is routinely negotiated by participants in an interaction and that 'facts' are constituted differently according to the points of view of the actors involved, the norms evoked, and the processes activated within specific institutional settings…it holds that in institutional as well as in mundane settings various versions of reality are proposed, sustained, or challenged precisely by the language that describes and sustains them and that such negotiations are not irrelevant linguistic games but potentially important social acts. (pp. 4-5)

The list above provides some of the interactional practices to which this analysis of interactional data has been attentive.

Complementing the discourse and conversation analysis techniques used for Yiddish educational contexts and digital/media engagements with Yiddish, the study focused on examining fieldnotes and using narrative analysis to examine interview transcripts. Ochs & Capps (2001, p. 2) highlight that "personal narrative is a way of using language or another symbolic system to imbue life events with a temporal and logical order, to demystify them and establish coherence across past, present, and as yet unrealized experience". Narrative analysis allows for the identification of emerging themes and patterns both within the same individuals' interviews over time and across individuals in the research project as a whole. This combination of ethnography, conversation and

discourse analytic techniques, and narrative analysis that bridge macro- and micro- approaches helps to provide a comprehensive picture of secular engagement with Yiddish.

**My Positionality**

In order to situate this research more fully, it is essential that I reflect upon my own positionality within the contexts that are the focus of this research. I have thought in detail about the ways that my own history, choices, and experiences have shaped my interest in and approach to this topic. First of all, I have considered whether or not I am engaged in "native" ethnography. Some of the issues related to outsider/insider status are raised by Fader (2009, pp. 17 - 21) as she examines "Jewish difference: epistemology and methodology" and by Zentella in her discussion of community members as researchers (Zentella, 1994). I am culturally Jewish, though not religiously-oriented, and the research settings are generally Jewish in nature. However, there have been moments during which I felt like an outsider and others during which I felt like an insider.

In any Jewish setting, there are times when I feel discomfort because I have not participated in the activities within mainstream religious institutions that many of my American Jewish peers have. For example, I did not attend Hebrew school; I rarely went to synagogue as a child; and I was not involved in Jewish organizations in high school (or for the most part in college). In addition, though I was born in Israel we moved to the United States when I was two years old and I have not returned there since. Therefore, there are certain domains of knowledge and experience that I do not share with other Jewish community members. However, for me engagement with Yiddish has provided an alternative form of involvement in the Jewish community.

In addition, over the course of my research in the multiple, overlapping Yiddish metalinguistic communities, my identity as an outsider or an insider shifted both over time and through space. For example, there were times when I felt like an outsider at Los Angeles Yiddish Culture Club events, for Yiddish was used as the primary language of communication among native

Yiddish-speaking adults and I was the youngest by decades. Also, in some cases, I was both a student in a given class and an observer. Even in some classes in which others might have seen me primarily as an observer I was frequently also learning the language myself. For example, some students asked me language-related questions because I think they perceived me as more fluent than I was, and I did not always have the answers. Furthermore, at the beginning stages of my research, my proficiency in Yiddish was primarily receptive and I was reluctant to speak the language and admit that I was doing research on its speakers. However, over time as I became more familiar with various community members and with the language itself, I became more relaxed in my own status as a member of the metalinguistic community.

There are personal reasons why I chose this research trajectory. My father was born in Iasi, Romania in 1926 and spoke Yiddish among numerous other languages. I therefore heard some Yiddish words and expressions while I was growing up. He passed away in 1996, when I was seventeen years old. His use of and connection to the language shaped my interest in the language and the worlds it symbolizes. And, in many ways, this entire research endeavor grew out of my attempt to understand him and grasp his life story after he passed away.

My initial contact with the broader Los Angeles Yiddish cultural community began approximately ten years ago, while I was working on my undergraduate honors thesis. In that project, I met weekly with approximately ten Yiddish-speaking women at a Jewish senior center, audio-recording the conversations. In addition, at the time I participated in Workmen's Circle Yiddish choirs, community Yiddish classes, and private Yiddish tutoring with the UCLA Yiddish lecturer.

The present dissertation project grew out of my reconnection with the Los Angeles Yiddish cultural community, first by attending and volunteering at community events and then getting back in touch with my former Yiddish teacher, at first to discuss an intergenerational Yiddish language

partnership program I was developing. Lastly, I participated in the pilot version of the community organization Yiddishkayt's Folks Grupe program, the fellowship program described above that is focused on increasing Yiddish cultural literacy in young adults. It was during this time that I decided upon my present dissertation topic. My relationships with parts of this community were thus already strong before I had decided upon this as my research trajectory. In addition, I have made connections with various other community members and organizations throughout the research process.

In addition, my own proficiency in and comfort with the Yiddish language has shifted over the course of my project. As mentioned above, I grew up hearing some Yiddish phrases and expressions because of my father's proficiency in the language. I also took private Yiddish lessons during my undergraduate years. However, I did not feel very comfortable in the language nor did I speak it with anyone outside of the women with whom I met for my undergraduate research project. While collecting data for my dissertation, I have both participated in and observed a large number of beginning- and intermediate-level Yiddish courses. My ongoing exposure to the language in the courses I observed and my active use of the language in courses in which I was enrolled (e.g., at YIVO in summer 2010) greatly improved my language ability. It also provided me with increased confidence when talking about my research with native speakers and others in the Yiddish metalinguistic community. However, even after all of this I do not use the language as a vernacular in any mundane interactions.

I believe that my previous relationships with individuals within my research contexts have allowed me to easily gain access to settings and participants for my research project. In addition, this means that there are interactions in these settings that I participated in before deciding upon my research topic, which pushed me to view this as a viable research project and frequently inform my

analysis of other pieces of data. My role and relationships with others also changed over the course of my data collection process.

As Duranti (1994) and Mendoza-Denton (2008) discuss, interests, projects, and positioning can evolve over the course of engagement with field site and participants. Duranti (1994, p. 1) highlights the fact that "during this experience, [his] professional orientation changed in rather dramatic ways". Also, Mendoza-Denton (2008, p. 48) writes that "no ethnographer is a blank notepad just as no linguist is a tape recorder" and highlights that background, social class, and subjective and affective reactions to those around her can affect her "ethnographic interpretation". Over the course of the study, my relationships with the participants have shifted over time. In addition, I have discovered that my understandings of my own history (and present) have deepened through being exposed to members of these ever-evolving communities.

# CHAPTER 4

# FOUNDATIONS OF YIDDISH METALINGUISTIC COMMUNITIES IN
# WORLD WAR II AND POST-WAR LITERATURE

## 4.1    Introduction

In order to provide a historical foundation for contemporary Yiddish metalinguistic communities, this chapter provides an analysis of literature and texts about Yiddish both during and after World War II. Many authors wrote meta-Yiddish literature during World War II as a revolt against the fate of Yiddish and the Jewish people, while meta-Yiddish literature written afterwards expresses nostalgia of a Yiddish past that was cut short and sorrow about a future that many believe will never be. Within contemporary Yiddish educational contexts, one can see the overwhelming use of English against the backdrop of complex language ideologies and epistemic ecologies. Though a meta-level engagement with Yiddish has remained the constant, one of the elements that has shifted over time are the contexts in which Yiddish has played a role, which has in turn shaped the languages used to talk about Yiddish (e.g., Yiddish itself, English, Hebrew). In addition, in all cases, ideologies about Yiddish and its relation to other aspects of identity have been multiple, shifting, and at times conflicting.

Through an examination of Yiddish metalinguistic communities, beginning with an analysis of (meta-) Yiddish literature in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, it becomes evident that the Yiddish-engaged community has frequently been occupied with metalinguistic concerns. As Shandler (2008, p. 177) highlights, "the trope of Yiddish as a dead or dying language is not new, of course. It has only been reiterated in the wake of the Holocaust; it has been voiced since the turn of the twentieth century". An analysis of texts written during and after World War II, including YIKOR: Yiddish Cultural Organization, Diary of an Anonymous Boy, Katznelson's Vittel Diary, Avrom Sutzkever's "Farewell" and "Yiddish Poet", and Jacob Glatstein's "I Keep Recalling",

demonstrates speakers and writers of Yiddish were consistently engaged in and anxious about its survival. Over time, involvement in Yiddish as an enterprise has frequently been coupled with an anxiety about its state (J. Cammy, personal communication, November 20, 2009). These authors wrote poetry and diaries primarily in Yiddish about Yiddish (with the exception of Katznelson, who also wrote in Hebrew about Yiddish). In addition, the 2008 English novel *Songs for the Butcher's Daughter* by Peter Manseau provides a novel perspective on engagement with the topic of Yiddish. Both its content and the circumstances under which it was written demonstrate a certain level of continuity with previous genres, in that this piece also uses language to talk about language. The difference now is that since it is intended for wider audiences, it is not written in Yiddish and instead is in English.

In the case of literature written before and during the war, the authors consistently asserted the centrality of Yiddish to Jewish culture and its survival. Yiddish signified more than a language; it became a stand-in for Jewish family, community, and culture as a whole. One can find that similar tropes regarding Yiddish were used both during the war and after the Holocaust. In more recent times, Hadda (1999, p. 98) writes, "the loss of the language is particularly intense because its speakers perished catastrophically and unnaturally. The continued vitality of Yiddish commemorates the dead and constitutes a small victory over the huge and hideous injustice of history". Golda Meir expressed similar sentiments in her 1970 "Address at the Dedication of the Leivick House" in Israel (Meir, 1973):

> […]We must not forget the injustices done to us by our enemies, and we must guard against doing injustice to our own past. The spirit of the murdered millions lives in Yiddish culture. We dare not commit the offense of not having provided our youth with a consciousness of deep attachment to those millions and to the great cultural treasures they created. The spirit of those Jews must continue to live.

Roskies (1989, p. 3) states, "through their literature of destruction, Jews perceive the cyclical nature of violence and find some measure of comfort in the repeatability of the unprecedented". One can simply read *Lamentations* in the Old Testament to find evidence for the fact that the Jewish tradition has consistently used language to mourn Jewish communities' destruction. In addition, the state of Jews in a constant diaspora is a theme that emerges since the time of the Old Testament. Some research has demonstrated that the Old Testament itself was written while Jews were in exile. In addition, as Boadt (1984) contends,

> in the century after the exile, there were at least two major centers of Jewish life outside of Palestine itself…It would never again be possible to identify God's covenant and promise just with the land of Israel, or religious practice just in terms of loyalty to the temple in Jerusalem. A newer and more personal side of faith that looked beyond temple, kingship, and land, and that touched everyone at home or in exile, was needed. (p. 386)

In this way, one can see how Jewish identity has traditionally been constructed through texts from a distance while in diaspora. This theme continuously emerges in both 20th and 21st century meta-Yiddish literature. This literature has played different symbolic roles for both the authors and the audiences.

One piece of evidence that demonstrates the Jewish community's internal conflict regarding the centrality and role of Yiddish is evidenced by the Jewish historian Lucy Davidowicz's realizations during her time in Vilna in the 1930's. She writes (Davidowicz, 2008):

> I would never have predicted that in Vilna, the citadel of Yiddish, I would come to realize that Yiddish was an insufficient basis on which to maintain one's Jewish identity, that it could not ensure Jewish continuity. Reluctantly and unwelcomingly I accepted the conclusion. It didn't mean that I wanted things to be that way. It didn't mean that I loved

Yiddish any the less. Sometimes I felt I was watching the end of a world I had come to love.

(p. 100)

Davidowicz's assertions reveal the contested and ambivalent nature of the diverse Jewish community's stance toward Yiddish. Davidowicz's metalanguage regarding Yiddish reveals a conclusion she came to slowly and unwittingly regarding the future of the language and the culture that it represented. Her revelations are similar to many within present-day communities as well.

## 4.2    YIKOR and Yiddish Community Building

One example of a dedicated wartime effort focused on Yiddish cultural maintenance was the creation of YIKOR, the Yiddish Culture Organization in the Warsaw Ghetto (1940 – 1942), which was designed as a way to build a community around "the Jew, his culture and the Yiddish language" (Wasser, 1986, p. 442). YIKOR was first created "in order to introduce knowledge of Yiddish to the masses of employees in the Jewish social institutions" (p. 442). Wasser highlights that

without finding meaning in Yiddish cultural work no one will join the movement for Yiddish language: and it will remain a sideshow apart from Jewish life. Language, by itself, is a tie, but for erecting an edifice of culture, elements for constructing a building are necessary. (p. 443).

Therefore, YIKOR focused on "Public Performances", "Youth", "Children", and "Culture for all". Of special note in the section on "Culture for All" is the fact that signs stating "'We Speak Yiddish' were hung in all institutions, giving expression to the active, positive attitude toward our language" (Wasser, 1986, p. 444)[4].

This wartime example of metalanguage regarding Yiddish is remarkable, for it was both a public proclamation of and an imperative regarding the community's language usage. In addition, as Wasser himself states, such statements indexed an "active, positive attitude toward our" language. The need to publicly assert this stance, however, challenges the notion that this attitude was

---

[4] These signs in Yiddish are in contrast to the Workmen's Circle signs ironically stating in English that "Yiddish is Our Medium and Our Message", discussed in chapter 2.

widespread throughout the community. YIKOR's attempts to unify its members around the common cause of Yiddish are similar to many present-day organizations' modes of publicity, in which they encourage readers to join together in support of the language.

**4.3     Vittel Diary and The Diary of an Anonymous Boy: Personal Proclamations**

Vittel Diary by Yitzhak Katznelson and the Diary of an Anonymous Boy are two examples of wartime diaries in which the authors were also engaged with the topic of Yiddish. Both Katznelson and the anonymous boy articulated a strong connection to Yiddish as the language of the Jewish people, directed outward in the case of Katznelson and reflected more personally by the anonymous boy. Katznelson wrote the diary in Hebrew during six months of his time at the Vittel internment camp in eastern France. In one striking section written in 1943, he expresses his strong opinions regarding the type of Yiddish that was being taught at the *Weltschule*, the secular schools of the time. He writes (Katznelson, 1964):

> In these Weltschule they made a treacherous attack on Yiddish…These schools extracted from Yiddish all its vitality, all its sap…This Yiddish of the Weltschule! It was an emaciated, wizened, empty Yiddish that lacked marrow. It was Yiddish without Shalom Aleichem; a Bible without Rashi. (p. 19)

In this excerpt, Katznelson articulates an ideology regarding the variety of Yiddish that should be taught to children. He felt strongly that it is not enough that Yiddish is taught but that Yiddish pedagogy should reflect the strength of the language and its people. Interestingly, hese stances and ideologies are comparable to those expressed by various modern Yiddish instructors during class discussions about linguistic alternatives (as discussed in chapter 5).

The Diary of an Anonymous Boy was written in Hebrew, Yiddish, Polish, and English in 1944 in the Lodz Ghetto. The author describes the horrors of daily life in the ghetto, moving

between personal stories and more general statements about the fate of his community. In one striking entry (June 12, 1944), the boy writes (Zapruder, 2002)

> after fantasizing of writing in various languages I return to my own language, to Yiddish, our charming mother tongue, because only in Yiddish can I hope to express my true inner self, directly and without contriving. I am ashamed when I think how I have neglected the Yiddish language until now. Like it or not, it is my language, and that of my fathers and my grandfathers, grandmothers and mothers. So I must and will love Yiddish – because it is my language. (pp. 371-372)

In this short entry, the author asserts three times that Yiddish is "my (own) language". He also writes that it is "our charming mother tongue", echoing the trope in YIKOR, that Yiddish is "our language". In addition to underscoring the ownership and connection he feels towards the language, he express his belief that the only way he can directly articulate his true feelings is through Yiddish. However, augmenting the boy's expression of his love for the language is a demonstration of the boy's internal conflicts. The shame he experiences regarding his neglect of the Yiddish language causes him to feel an obligation to maintain the language.

At the time, this was a language that was frequently associated with both a stigma and a lack of identification with a national "high culture". He recognizes that the language connects him to his family and community heritage, but shows some ambivalence towards that ("Like it or not, it is my language, and that of my fathers and my grandfathers, grandmothers and mothers.") Therefore, he must in a sense convince himself ("So I must and will love Yiddish") to maintain a language that is in many ways being attacked from both the inside and the outside. What is especially noteworthy is that he does not talk about reasons for language choice in any other entry or language. This striking and poignant use of metalanguage therefore demonstrates the symbolic value of Yiddish and the conflicts associated with it for this boy during the dire circumstances in the ghetto. It also resonates

with the experiences of many present-day learners, who feel a simultaneous distance from and desire to embrace Yiddish as a mode of engaging with generations of their ancestors.

## 4.4 Sutzkever and Glatstein: Language, Family, and Community in Wartime and Post-War Poetry

The interweaving of language and family can also be found in the poetry of Avrom Sutzkever and Jacob Glatstein, each writing in diverse times and places. In section III of Avrom Sutzkever's Yiddish poem "Farewell", written in the Vilna Ghetto and Narotsh Forests in 1943 – 1944, he writes:

[…]And dear to me as never before is your Yiddish –

The flickering wick

Of an orphaned Eternal Candle

For only in *mama-loshn* did a tiny baby cry:

*Father*,

Of all the words in the world, I lack one: *Mama!*

(Sutzkever, 1991, p. 179)

Here, Sutzkever brings forth the image of an eternal flame to signify the dying of Yiddish. In addition, he employs the imagery of family, mother, and child as used by the anonymous boy, and by Glatstein (as seen below). Fire can also be seen in his 1948 poem entitled "Yiddish", in which Sutzkever writes that to respond to the fact that his language "will go down" he will go to the Wailing Wall [in Israel] and open his mouth "and like a lion garbed in fiery scarlet, [he] shall swallow the language as it sets. And wake all the generations with [his] roar!" (Sutzkever, p. 214).

In both poems, he expresses his sadness at the loss of the Yiddish language. In his wartime writing, Sutzkever foregrounds his own family and the affection he feels toward the language. However, in this post-war poem he highlights his rage at the fate of Yiddish, which he directs

outward at the broader community. This connection to generations is similar to that felt by contemporary Yiddish learners as well, who are consistently engaged in capturing what has been lost.

Jacob Glatstein, writing in America during World War II and afterwards, also expresses a sense of mourning for Yiddish in his collection of Yiddish poetry entitled "I Keep Recalling". Using tropes and imagery similar to other authors, Glatstein expresses nostalgia for a language and a people that are already disappearing. In the poem "I Keep Recalling" composed in 1967, he writes (Glatstein, 1993):

> I saw very clearly
>
> How the quiet, cultivated Yiddish
>
> Was Dying on her lips
>
> […]
>
> My dear mother, my wise mouth,
>
> My own mother-tongue,
>
> Which developed so gently for me
>
> In the whispering twilights of Lublin.
>
> My mother-tongue, with her waxy face
>
> And pain-frightened, Half-closed eyes –
>
> This too I must recall. (p. 286)

In this excerpt of the poem, Glatstein shows the interconnectedness of losing his mother and his mother-tongue, using a similar construction to the anonymous boy with "my own mother-tongue". By interweaving family and language, Glatstein expresses the closeness he feels and the intense loss he has experienced on both fronts. In both Glatstein's and Sutzkever's poetry, one sees evidence for a deep connection to the language and what it signifies in terms of family and community as a whole. Through their metalinguistic poetry in Yiddish about Yiddish, they were able to

communicate these sentiments to an audience at that time and to future audiences (both in Yiddish and in translation).

## 4.5   *Songs For the Butcher's Daughter*: **A Contemporary Metalinguistic Novel**

The 2008 English novel *Songs for the Butcher's Daughter* provides a unique picture of the changing global and linguistic realities in which Yiddish has been found. This could be considered a contemporary metalinguistic novel, for it tells the interwoven stories of two men touched by Yiddish. The first is Itsik Malpesh, a fictional Yiddish poet (based upon the renowned Yiddish poet Jacob Glatstein) who grew up in Kishinev, Moldova and moved to Odessa and finally America. The second is Malpesh's non-Jewish translator (based upon Manseau himself), who learned Yiddish primarily through his work at the Jewish Cultural Organization, a book warehouse in Massachusetts (based upon the Yiddish Book Center).

Through Malpesh's story, the author Manseau creates a picture of the shifting roles of Yiddish throughout the previous century. As Malpesh moves from Kishinev to Odessa to America, the reader witnesses how Yiddish shifts in its role within the constellation of languages Malpesh speaks and is exposed to within these different contexts. In the Translator's Notes, the translator is able to express both his discovery of Yiddish in the books of the Jewish Cultural Organization and the complex and "intimate act" (Manseau, 2008, p. 46) of translating Malpesh's memoir into a language the American masses can understand. In telling both of these stories, Manseau creates a magnificent metalinguistic piece that comments upon the shifting roles of Yiddish while by its very existence serves as evidence of Yiddish's new roles within contemporary American Jewish culture. Within the novel, Manseau highlights a number of key themes, including language as homeland, the changing roles of Yiddish, and cultural and linguistic appropriation. Through his complex treatment of each of these topics, Manseau invites the reader to consider how Yiddish has fit into the various

communities of which it has been a part throughout the past century and the ways that Jews' ideologies about the language have shifted over time.

### 4.5.1 Language as Homeland

As Czeslow Milosz, Polish poet of Lithuanian origin born in 1911, writes, "Language is the only homeland" (Klepfisz, 1990, p. 228). Throughout his life, Itsik Malpesh struggles to feel at home in the various contexts in which he finds himself. As Malpesh moves from Kishinev to Odessa and finally to America, the one constant force in his life is his creation and consumption of language. As the translator writes, Malpesh "lived in a world more shaped by books than by his physical environment" (Manseau, 2008, p. 176). As a young boy, Malpesh secretly gives pennies to his friend Chaim so that he can learn Russian and understand the books of a community different from his own. During his long and difficult journey from Kishinev to Odessa, he tries (unsuccessfully) to distract himself by writing poetry: *Words, will you be my bread/when my pack carries stone?/Songs, will you be my bed/when the bitter day is done?*. In this way, he consistently attempts to find solace and comfort in words.

When Malpesh arrives in Odessa, he begins working for an inn owner and printer named Minkovsky. When he first begins to work for Minkovsky, Malpesh feels as though he "had forgotten two languages at one, both the language of [his] home and that of [his] religious education" (Manseau, 2008, p.157). Ultimately, however, he finds both a home and a family among the letters and his new community. Before sending Malpesh off to America with the Yiddish printing blocks, Minkovsky asserts that Shmolnik (the Yiddishist) and Zinnenoff (the Hebraist) both know that "the Jewish future, like the Jewish past, can only be found through words. Not nations. Certainly not land." He therefore commands Itsik: "Make words your homeland, Itsik. Make them your lover as well" (p. 169). Minkovsky asks Itsik if he would like to accompany the Yiddish printing blocks he is planning to send to Knobloch; though Itsik refuses, Minkovsky ultimately forces him to do this.

Itsik remembers that in his drunken state Minkovsky told him "We are nowhere at home except in our *alef-beys*. Every place we find ourselves is temporary. But our *words* – can you still hear me, Itsik? – our *letters*, these are borders that cannot be breached" (p. 172). Itsik takes this message to heart upon his arrival in America. But, what he soon realizes is that the significance of the Yiddish letters he knows so intimately is undergoing great changes within the American Jewish community of which he is becoming a member.

### 4.5.2 Shifting Roles of Yiddish

One of the reasons that Itsik never feels fully at home in any context is that he finds himself in a constantly shifting constellation of languages. He attempts to establish some consistency and predictability by holding onto Yiddish in all of these contexts. Through Itsik's personal story, Manseau is able to create a vivid picture of how Yiddish and other languages have changed in their roles, meanings, and significance in the broader Jewish community over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As Chaim instructs the young Malpesh, "without context we understand nothing". This is especially true for Yiddish, as its significance has changed in large part to its changing contexts. Over the course of Itsik's life, one sees how Yiddish moves from being the language of his home to the instrument of his poetry to a language that is embraced and then in large part rejected in America. Through the voices of various characters in the novel, Manseau also paints a picture of the fierce battles about language choice that waged both in America and Israel earlier in the twentieth century.

Through the characters of Shmolnik and Zinnenoff, the regular inn-goers in Odessa, Manseau articulates the historical struggles between Yiddish and Hebrew. Using a well-known Yiddish phrase Shmolnik asks Malpesh, "How can you dance at two weddings with only one ass to shake?", beseeching him to choose between Yiddish and Hebrew. Itsik is not convinced he has to choose, since throughout his life he had successfully used Yiddish at home and Hebrew in the

synagogue. Throughout their verbal duels, Shmolnik and Zinnenoff articulate the familiar arguments for and against Yiddish and Hebrew during the "language war" earlier in the twentieth century. Wisse (1997) writes,

> in that war, the choice of language stood for much more profound differences: between those who believed that Jews would flourish in the modern world as a secular minority among the nations, and those who believed there was no longer any alternative to Jewish national sovereignty in one homeland. (p. 34)

At one point, Zinnenoff exclaims, "*Ivri, daber ivrit! Hebrews, speak Hebrew!*". In response, Shmolnik cries "Living Jews should speak a living language!". Zinnenoff's statement is a well-known Hebrew expression that was used in the language war in the earliest stages of Israeli nation building.

What is interesting to note is that Shmolnik's response about "a living language" is referring to Yiddish, since to contemporary readers this juxtaposition seems to be more a case of irony than an expression of reality. When Zinnenoff attempts to break up the verbal battle, Zinnenoff shouts that he should know better than anyone that "it is for our children we fight – for the future" (Manseau, 2008, p.143). This focus on children as the future of language- and nation-building echoes the rhetoric found in YIKOR, with its work attempting to instill Yiddish cultural values in children and youth. As they continue their battle of words, Zinnenoff derides Yiddish poetry as "ladies' literature, grandmother stories. Nothing for serious men!", to which Shmolnik replies "And you write hieroglyphs. A dead language of dead words for dead readers buried in the sand." (p. 144). Zinnenoff articulates the viewpoint of Yiddish as a symbol of femininity and weakness (cf. Seidman, 1997), while Shmolnik again highlights the fact that Hebrew is a dead language for people who are blind to reality. Through the heated verbal duels between Zinnenoff and Shmolnik, the reader is able to get a taste of the bitter feuds that existed within the Jewish community regarding their future as embodied in language choice.

While still in Odessa, Malpesh's conversations with Minkovsky regarding the future in America articulate yet another viewpoint on the role of language in a changing world. As Minkovsky says, "Yiddish newspapers! Every Jew off the boat reads the Yiddish paper to find out how to become an American!" (Manseau, 2008, p. 168). This statement represents the hope that many felt regarding not only the future of the Jewish people in America but the future of the Yiddish language as well. Once Malpesh finally arrives in America, he is convinced that Yiddish will not only survive but will flourish: "There was no doubt that here Yiddish would thrive. And so too might its poetry, which by then had become my passion, my reason for living" (p. 181). This hope is echoed in the optimistic words of the character Knobloch, the publisher of *Naye Yidishe Tsukunft* (The New Yiddish Future), who commands Malpesh to "Look around! This is the future of Yiddish in America!" (p. 216). As readers now, we are in the unique position of being able to recognize both how characters like Malpesh and Knobloch could have truly felt that way at that time, in addition to recognizing how this hope regarding the survival of Yiddish words, publishing, and readers in the new American context was ultimately unrealistic.

In Malpesh's forced migration from Odessa to America, the ocean played a central role as a symbol of what can be both lost and found. The wooden box of Yiddish printing blocks that served as Malpesh's makeshift home during his journey from Europe to America drowned: "They floated eastward in loose formation, like a defiant Yiddish armada on its way out to sea. Tiny. Absurd. Unsinkable" (Manseau, 2008, p. 188). In their journey over and ultimate loss in the ocean, the Yiddish printing blocks symbolize what the community lost in its migration from the Old World to the New. As Shveig, the non-Jewish translator, later says to Malpesh, "The ocean, it seems, is the greatest translator of all. What else could turn Jewish children into American men?" (p. 303). These symbols are echoed in Irena Klepfisz's poem "Fradel Shtok" (1990, p. 228):

> Think of it: *heym* and *home* the meaning
>
> the same     of course     exactly
>
> but the shift    in vowel     was the ocean
>
> in which I drowned.

Through the movement of one vowel Klepfisz feels as though she has drowned, like the Yiddish printing blocks have in Manseau's novel. This vowel shift symbolizes what can be lost in translation, and the nostalgia-oriented grief associated with this loss. The ocean is also a central symbol in Almi's meta-Yiddish poem "Yidish" (1930, p. 59):

> An empire of scattered, beautifully blossoming islands
>
> Is Yiddish Culture
>
> Its playful brooks and rivers
>
> Cutting through the greatest oceans
>
> Of peoples and cultures
>
> And its tongue – the beautiful, tender, mellifluous Yiddish
>
> Resounding proudly in the chorus of tongues

For all of these authors, the role of the ocean in both dividing and bringing together various cultures is central, as it served as a symbol of moving from Europe to America.

The character of Chaim encourages Itsik to embrace this "chorus of tongues", both in Kishinev and Odessa. Russian and English seem to be just beyond Itsik's grasp, but Chaim endeavors to make them accessible to him. This began in Kishinev, where Chaim showed a young Itsik the wonders of Russian and Russian literature for a penny a day. It continued upon Itsik's arrival in America, where Chaim encouraged Itsik to abandon Yiddish for English: "The last thing you need to be doing is writing in Yiddish. English! English is the key to success in America" (Manseau, 2008, p. 218). Chaim gives voice to the sentiments of many immigrants to America, who

believed that English was necessary for survival in the New World. Chaim saw Yiddish as a ghetto, and he therefore implored Itsik, "Get out of Yiddish as fast as you can…It's a ghetto as much as the Jewish Quarter in Kishinev was a ghetto. It may not have walls you can see, but believe me: everyone else can" (p. 219).

He then announces to all of his workers: "From now on, we speak only English here all right?". This proclamation to the workers is quite similar to the signs posted in buildings in the Warsaw Ghetto as discussed in the piece about YIKOR. However, the fundamental difference is that in the ghettos, workers were encouraged to speak Yiddish and here in America they were forced to switch from Yiddish to English instead. Malpesh realizes how important it was for Chaim to leave Yiddish as a symbol of the Old World, recognizing that doing this is in fact "an existential necessity" (p. 220). Yet, it seems that Malpesh is not quite ready to make the existential shift as Chaim had.

The rhetoric known to contemporary readers, of Yiddish as a dying, threatened language, is expressed in the voices of a number of characters towards the end of the novel. One interesting example is Sasha's statement that "Hebrew names roll more easily off the tongue. Yiddish for me is a language of long ago" (Manseau, 2008, p. 267). She, like Malpesh, grew up in the Jewish Quarter of Kishinev; but she then moved to Israel. Therefore, the significance of Yiddish and Hebrew in her life has shifted, which is reflected in her preference for calling Itsik Isaac instead. She articulates the sentiments of many Jews of that generation: "You must understand that in Israel there is a genuine fear of Yiddish. It is as though they believe the language itself had something to do with our endless misfortune in the old home" (p. 271). Malpesh realizes that "The Yiddish market was not steaming toward a bright future, it was a sinking ship" (p. 297). The most salient expression of this sentiment comes from Knobloch, who writes of Yiddish: "It's dead. Looks like I misread the tea leaves. Turns out Yiddish is not the future for Jews in America" (p. 343). This quote is especially striking because

of its echoing of Knobloch's previous statements that Yiddish was the future for Jews in America. His unfortunate realization is painful for both Malpesh and himself.

What Malpesh does appreciate, however, is that it may be possible for him to live on in translation. As Knobloch conveys to Malpesh, "Everyone wants to read what they don't know how to read!" (Manseau, 2008, p. 298). Malpesh tells Sasha that "To be a Yiddish writer published in English…that will be the key to someone's success. Why shouldn't it be me?" (p. 305). Malpesh realizes that in translation he could be what he never had the opportunity to become when writing Yiddish poetry for Yiddish-speaking audiences alone, coming to realize "that we were a translated people" (p. 300). This realization marks a new chapter in the story of Yiddish in America. Ozick, in "Envy, or Yiddish in America", treats the complex ideologies surrounding translation from Yiddish to English in America through the ongoing rivalry between the fictional Yiddish poets Edelshtein and Ostrover. Ozick (1971) writes:

> Ostrover's glory was exactly in this: that he required translators. Though he wrote only in Yiddish, his fame was American, national, international. They considered him a "modern." Ostrover was free of the prison of Yiddish! Out, out – he had burst out, he was in the world of reality. (p. 47)

However, Edelshtein, the less popular Yiddish writer who struggles to find a translator, writes: "Yiddish, I call on you to choose! Yiddish! Choose death or death. Which is to say death through forgetting or death through translation" (Manseau, 2008, p. 74). In his view, translation does not signify freedom but death.

In his Translator's Notes at the end of the novel, Manseau is able to masterfully illustrate how these historical realities affect contemporary Jewish sentiments. When the translator talks with Malpesh about Clara's great-grandmother's letter, Malpesh asks, "What is Yiddish today but a language of great-grandmothers?" (Manseau, 2008, pp. 232 – 233). Such a statement is especially

70

poignant when as readers we are able to see what a painful journey Malpesh traveled in order to come to that realization. His sentiment is underscored by the ultimate destruction of Knobloch's Yiddish books, symbolizing the end of an age and a people. By reading Malpesh's entire life story, one gains a clear picture of the evolution of language (Yiddish, Hebrew, or English) as a symbol of past, present, and future within Jewish communities. By expressing the various language ideologies through the voices of different characters, Manseau invites the reader to grasp how individuals and communities made sense of the constantly shifting linguistic realities they both created and lived within.

### 4.5.3   Cultural and Linguistic Appropriation

The story told in *Songs for the Butcher's Daughter* and the novel itself are also remarkable in their treatment of the issues of cultural and linguistic appropriation. As Manseau himself described in December 2009 in his talk at Sinai Temple's National Jewish Book Month Breakfast, his book tested "the limits of what it means to be a member of a community". He noted that through his work at the Yiddish Book Center he had become "an insider in a culture that was not his own".  In fact, many older Jews whom he met when collecting their Yiddish books for the organization believed he was Jewish, and it was in fact difficult for him to even say in Yiddish that he was not. Organizations like YIKOR, poets and authors in the ghettos, and post-war writers like Sutzkever all sought to establish pride for and interest in the Yiddish language within Jewish communities. But, what is striking in *Songs for the Butcher's Daughter* is the recurring notion that individuals who are not part of the Jewish community could speak Yiddish.

Malpesh highlights this seeming contradiction during his travels to Odessa (Manseau, 2008):

> Until that moment the possibility that the tongue of our people could be separated from the
> covenant we had with God had never occurred to me….Certainly they [Russian merchants]
> understood a few words of our language, and without doubt most Jews knew their language

71

fluently, but all concerned acted as if it was in their best interest to keep a linguistic distance, believing mingled words could be as polluting as mingled blood. (p. 112)

Malpesh expresses the inherent distrust of non-Jewish speakers of Yiddish in response to Dov, a non-Jew, speaking Yiddish: "Again he spoke in Yiddish. How could our mothers' tongue continue to betray us?". The notion of betrayal is a recurrent theme, for Malpesh asserts to Knobloch that translation by a non-Jew is a betrayal of Yiddish (p. 310). Malpesh also assumes that the non-Jewish translator could only know Yiddish because he is a missionary, like the missionaries he was told about upon his arrival to America.

However, in fact, the translator assures Malpesh that he "learned the language to become something new" (Manseau, 2008, p. 335) (just as Malpesh did in learning Russian as a child and English later in life). Manseau's treatment of these issues is a comment upon the novel itself, since he is himself a Catholic who wrote a novel about the Jewish experience. The reader is thus challenged to consider issues of authenticity and ownership over a Jewish narrative. As the non-Jewish translator tells the reader,

> Regardless of the context, it would seem that whenever a non-Jew and a Jew speak Yiddish, the stakes are high from the first word to the last. Lines of linguistic, ethnic, and religious identity have been crossed, and thus an expectation is created that other boundaries may be broken: families will be challenged, authority will be defied, sometimes blood will be spilled. (p. 332)

Contemporary anthropological research on mock languages, such as mock Spanish (Hill, 1998), mock Ebonics (Ronkin & Karn, 1999), and mock ESL (Talmy, 2009), underscore the notion that many times linguistic appropriation can result in racializing and racist discourse. Therefore, it is remarkable that Manseau has been able to not only tell a Jewish narrative but also tell it in such a way that it has been largely accepted within the American Jewish community. The fact that *Songs for*

*the Butcher's Daughter*, a novel written by a Catholic, is not only accepted but lauded within the American Jewish community is evidence that the Yiddish metalinguistic community is growing and changing in contemporary times, demonstrating a large-scale acceptance of a new linguistic and metalinguistic reality.

## 4.6    Wartime and Post-War Creation of Metalinguistic Communities

Through an analysis of wartime, post-war, and contemporary texts written about Yiddish and its role within Jewish communities, one can recognize that there is a thread of continuity in the midst of change and movement. No matter what role Yiddish has played within a constellation of languages across different contexts, members of various Jewish communities throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have formed a metalinguistic community: a community that talks about, comments upon, and questions the role of language in their lives. While this thread has been continuous over time, what has shifted are the languages being discussed and the languages being used within these communities. In addition, throughout time diverse metalinguistic communities have held multiple and sometimes contradictory ideologies about the Yiddish language. Furthermore, one can explore how these writers who have found themselves in distinct times and places, such as the Jewish author of a wartime diary and a non-Jewish contemporary novel author comprise similar or different metalinguistic communities.

Interestingly, many of the themes discussed throughout the literature analyzed in this chapter resonate with the foci in other chapters. For example, the members of YIKOR were exposed to publicity that espoused the importance of Yiddish, which challenged them to take an active role in ensuring the language's survival. These public organizations attempted to gather groups of people around a common cause, in a similar way to many of the organizations considered in chapters 5 – 9. In the Vittel Diary, Katznelson expresses his negative stance toward certain forms of Yiddish

pedagogy and Yiddish language. This is comparable to the conflicted stances teachers and students display toward linguistic alternatives in interactions and interviews, as discussed in chapter 5.

In addition, the personal proclamations of the authors are analogous to person-centered interviews of Yiddish learners and teachers, all of whom are seeking to discover their ongoing relationships to the language and what it symbolizes for them. For example, the Anonymous Boy demonstrates both affective and intergenerational motivations to connect with his ancestors through his love for Yiddish. In contemporary times, festival participants are encouraged to "love Yiddish" even if they do not speak it, and many learners express their affection for the language during their interviews. Sutzkever and Glatstein similarly discuss their intergenerational motivation to sustain Yiddish, in response to ruptures in intergenerational transmission (examined in chapter 9).

Furthermore, many of the themes throughout Manseau's book resonate with the experiences of modern metalinguistic community members. For example, as evidenced in interviews with children and grandchildren of immigrants, many have experienced a stark shift in the roles of Yiddish in their own lives and those of previous generations. In addition, the issues of cultural and linguistic appropriation continuously surface during current classroom interactions, as "heritage" and non-"heritage" students interact regularly in and about a language from which many feel a great sense of distance.

One primary question in present-day society is whether these members believe they are "mourning in English the death of Yiddish", as the fictional poet Edelshtein did (Ozick, 1971, p. 43). Over the course of the last century, contemporary metalinguistic communities that focus on Yiddish have shifted to include an ever-widening group of speakers, semi-speakers, non-speakers, Jews, and non-Jews engaging in a diverse range of practices. As will become evident in the analysis of contemporary Yiddish educational contexts, these communities are continuing a tradition of metalinguistic engagement with Yiddish. In so doing, they are both creatively mourning a Jewish

past while attempting, just as their predecessors did throughout previous generations, to invent a modern Jewish future.

## CHAPTER 5

## CONFLICTED STANCE TOWARD LINGUISTIC ALTERNATIVES
## AS SOCIALIZATION PRACTICE

"…whereas on balance, it was good that I came in and I learned it [Yiddish] more easily coming in and having the…German Hebrew background…there were times when -- and it was a significant amount of challenge that was added to the process of learning, because I had alternate, alternate sets of information that were affecting what I was coming up with."
-Mark, older adult Yiddish learner's interview

### 5.1 Introduction

One of the central dimensions of the Yiddish metalinguistic community is that socialization into language ideologies is a priority over socialization into language competence and use. This chapter analyzes one widespread heritage language socialization practice focused on language ideologies, conflicted stance (DuBois, 2007; Goodwin, 2007; Jaffe, 2009) toward linguistic alternatives. These linguistic alternatives include lexical, phonological, and morphological options from standard and non-standard Yiddish varieties, in addition to those based upon Yiddish source languages including Hebrew, German, and Slavic languages. Conflicted stance practices are public demonstrations of ideologies toward language sources and standards that reveal tensions between versions of the language.

For example, languages are differentially constructed as "resources" or "rivals" as a mode of publicly displaying individuals' language ideologies. Frequently, lexical, phonological, and morphological options are opportunities for teachers to socialize students into the history of the Jewish diaspora. Stance, and by extension, ideologies, are expressed explicitly in the form of 'metadiscourses' (Silverstein, 1998, p. 136), implicitly in the modes through which a given linguistic alternative is introduced, and/or in an embodied fashion through the use of one's body, gaze, and gesture to comment upon linguistic alternatives. Schieffelin & Doucet (1998, p. 286) emphasize the integral role of language ideologies in determining which linguistic features, including phonology, lexicon, and style, are selected for "cultural attention" and "social marking". Building upon

Goodwin's (1994) notion of "professional vision," this analysis reveals the ways that members' perceptions of linguistic structure are consistently shaped by their individual histories and those of their communities.

In her survey of language socialization research and nationalism, Friedman (2010, p. 193) notes that classrooms can be "sites for socializing novices into political identities associated with membership in a national or transnational community". The difference in the case of Yiddish, however, is that the "nation" is in fact an imagined one and one without borders. Metalinguistic community members are socialized into an imagined nationhood of the Jewish diaspora, a timeless Jewish nation without the boundaries of an actual nation-state. Through socialization into a *diasporic language ideology*, focused on a language's complexity as a symbol for its speakers' mobile history, languages themselves are mobilized as objects in the ongoing projects of constructing both past and present communities.

DuBois (2007, p. 173) defines stance as a means "through which social actors simultaneously evaluate objects, position subjects (themselves and others), and align with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field". Within contemporary educational contexts, stance displays are pervasive as lexical, phonological, and morphological options are presented, used, discussed, supported, and/or derided by the participants. This chapter examines three components: 1) introduction of source languages, 2) construction of resources and rivals, and 3) socialization into standard vs. non-standard varieties. In order to examine these central socialization practices one must have an understanding of the history of Yiddish source languages and standard vs. non-standard varieties.

## 5.2    Yiddish as Language Collector

The effects of other languages on the structure, lexicon, and grammar of Yiddish has been widely documented and discussed. There are three dominant theories on the origin of Yiddish,

espoused by Weinreich, Katz, and Wexler. The first, and most widely-accepted, is Weinreich's (1980) theory that Yiddish developed as a fusion language created by speakers of Judeo-French and Judeo-Italian who migrated to the German Rhineland area around the $9^{th}$ century. They came into contact with Slavic languages and incorporated Semitic vocabulary from the texts with which they were familiar. The second theory, promoted by Katz (2004), states that in Europe

> the confrontation of Semitic with the utterly different Germanic was a big bang. Two wholly different language families, Semitic and Germanic, were joined in an everlasting union that came to be called Yiddish. The fusion formula of Yiddish, uniting in one language two diverse linguistic families, has remained remarkably stable over time and space, and has even been an effective template for later add-ons from other linguistic families. (p. 24)

The third theory, which has been highly controversial, is that of Wexler (cf. 1991; 1993). He claims that proto-Yiddish developed from Judeo-Sorbian, was used in bilingual Germano-Slavic lands, and had Judeo-Slavic and Judeo-Greek influences. He emphasizes that Jews shifted toward German "because of the germanization of those territories in which they lived" (Safadi, 2000, p. 14). His theories emphasize the fact that influences from Slavic languages can be seen in a variety of Yiddish language features. All three of these theories, though different their views regarding the language's origin, are all consistent in demonstrating the mixture of various source languages with Yiddish.

In addition to these linguists who have focused on the sociolinguistic forms and elements of the language there are scholars who focus on how its hybrid nature is a symbol of Jews' history as lived through the language (cf. Harshav, 1990). For example, in her discussion of Yiddish as a contact language, Prince (2001, p. 263) writes that "While presumably every language has in some way been influenced by some other languages, Yiddish 'wears its history on its sleeve', so to speak, and lends itself remarkably well to studies of contact effects". Katz (2004) echoes these ideologies by noting

the genesis of Yiddish is a key event in Jewish history that gave rise to a new European

culture. It produced a living linguistic organism that developed continuously from that initial

meeting of people from the Near East with language and people in Europe. (p. 29)

Furthermore, in a December 8, 2010 Jerusalem Post article about Yiddish in Israel entitled "Yiddish

is Alive and Well in the Hebrew City", Joanna Paraszczuk writes

Jews have spoken Yiddish for 1,000 years, starting in the 10th century, when they settled in

Germany's Rhineland. As they migrated East, Yiddish traveled with them and – like a

snowball picking up debris from its path – collected words and syntax from wherever its

speakers settled. In fact, the history of this incredible language – its ancient roots, its

cosmopolitan vocabulary, its cultural richness, its near-extinction and yet refusal to give up –

is in many ways the story of the Jewish people themselves. (para. 10-11)

This heightened metalinguistic awareness about the elements that make up the language, and the

ways that this is then taken as a symbol of Jewish historical complexity, seems to have survived to

this day. Within Yiddish language and culture classrooms, instructors not only highlight the source

languages that have contributed to Yiddish but they also display differential stance toward those

languages, including Hebrew-Aramaic, German, and Slavic languages.

### 5.2.1   Historical Perspectives on Yiddish, Hebrew, and Aramaic

Hebrew and Aramaic are frequently considered a unified component. Katz (2004, p. 45)

highlights the 'internal Jewish trilingualism' of early Ashkenazi settlers. These included "Hebrew

(traditionally called *loshn-koydesh*, the "language of holiness")[5], Aramaic (called *aramish* or *targum-loshn*,

"translation language" from the classic translations of the Bible into Aramaic), and Yiddish

(traditionally called *loshn Ashkenaz*, the "language of Ashkenaz" or *leshoyneynu* "our language" in

rabbinic texts"). During the *haskala* ('Englightenment' era), Yiddish speakers were encouraged to

---

5 *Loshn-koydesh* is also used to describe Hebrew and Aramaic combined (S. B. Benor, personal communication, May 17, 2012).

abandon their language in favor of standard German; however, the advocates of modernization (*maskilim*) encouraged the use of Yiddish for communication to the masses (Safadi, 2000, p. 18). This push, coupled with the increased use of Yiddish in the then-developing Hasidic movement, provided a foundation for modern Yiddish literature (cf. Goldsmith, 1987).

Frequently though not always, words related to Jewish history (primarily in Hebrew-Aramaic) that moved into Yiddish were those that had "a special Jewish meaning" (Katz 2004, p. 28). As Abley (2003, p. 204) notes, "at least one in every ten Yiddish words derives from Aramaic and Hebrew. Their importance may exceed their number. 'Without Hebrew,' (historian) Lucy Dawidowicz once wrote, 'Yiddish appears dull and listless…The Hebrew words wore top hats. They have dignity, style, tradition, elegance. These qualities they bring into Yiddish". Dawidowicz's explicit positive stance toward Hebraic words within Yiddish is just one example of metalinguistic stance toward Yiddish source languages.

In the 19th century Yiddish and Hebrew began to be associated with different political groups, namely Yiddish with socialism and Hebrew with Zionism. Katz (2004, p. 310) states, "Zionism set out to create a new Jew who would resemble the ancient Israelites far more than modern European Jews". This eventually resulted in the Israeli state's choice of Hebrew as the official language of the nation. These historical relationships between Hebrew-Aramaic and Yiddish continue to have an effect on the content (the "what") in contemporary Yiddish classrooms and the stances towards that content (the "how").

### 5.2.3   Historical Perspectives on Yiddish and German

Fishman (1985, p. 6) notes, "Yiddish was often viewed as lacking in autonomy (and therefore not only a dialect but a "corrupt" German) when it did not lack vitality". In the past, many Yiddish speakers and scholars felt strongly that there should not be too many *daytshmerisms* (German-based words) in Yiddish. Schaechter (1981) notes that in the second half of the nineteenth century

the advocates of *daytshmerish*, who regarded Yiddish as 'corrupt German', showed preference for those Yiddish forms for which a German cognate could be ascertained. In grammar, the adherence to the 'authentic German language' was explicitly recommended with important normative consequences. However, even at its peak, the *daytshmerish* tendency did not go unchallenged[…]Gradually, the tide subsided reaching its lowest ebb in contemporary Yiddish. Indeed, the present linguistic climate may be described as anti-*daytshmerish*. (p. 671)

Peltz (2003) focuses on the relationships between Yiddish and *daytshmerish*, and their relationship with written vs. spoken forms of the language:

In contemporary times, the stylistic differentiation of written and spoken Yiddish remained. Written Yiddish often leaned toward *daytshmerish* ("the cultivation of new High German as a standard"), a development of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In *daytshmerish*, we are not dealing with the stylistic flavouring of the Germanic component, but with borrowing from a modern language which is derived from a stock language of Yiddish and which carries cultural prestige. The position of the twentieth century planners was generally *vos vayter fun daytsh* ('as far from German as possible'). The rationale was to assert the autonomy of Yiddish and to allow for the expression of the historical Germanic component only. (p. 444)

These sources provide a glimpse into the complex and sometimes fraught relationship between German and Yiddish throughout history, one that is quite different from that among Yiddish, Hebrew, and Aramaic discussed above.

## 5.3    Introducing Source Languages

One of the first steps in the socialization process into a diasporic language ideology is instructors' introduction of Yiddish source languages to a given class. I argue that by taking the opportunity to provide Yiddish source languages, explaining the sources of various Yiddish words,

and therefore marking them as coming from another language (as opposed to simply considering them to all now be a part of Yiddish) the instructor highlights the unique nature of Yiddish and Jews' history as lived in and through the language.

In many respects, this is similar to what Needham (2003) found in her study of Khmer literacy practices in Long Beach, California classrooms. She noted that vocabulary words served two functions:

> first, they served as practical examples of words using the characters of the lesson and, second, they provided a way to access domains of Cambodian culture…[they] became points of departure from the primary frame of learning to read and write, into a discussion of cultural activities and values. (p. 38)

In this way, lexical items within these contexts provided opportunities to socialize students into the relevant stances and practices within that community. Similarly, linguistic elements, and the stances associated with them, provide Yiddish instructors with occasions to socialize students into language ideologies associated with the metalinguistic community.

## 5.4    Resources and Rivals

Instructors do not simply introduce source languages as the foundations of Yiddish linguistic features. These presentations are infused with ideologies about these sources, which through stance manifest themselves in these languages' differential construction as either resources or rivals. Resources are languages whose features are constructed as useful models for Yiddish language acquisition. Rivals are languages whose features are constructed as interfering with Yiddish language acquisition.

For example, instructors frequently draw upon students' previous linguistic knowledge of Hebrew as a resource for acquiring Yiddish. In terms of lexicon and semantics Hebrew is a resource for many students who have previously attended Hebrew school; however, in terms of

pronunciation and spelling Hebrew some students found the language to be a rival within the Yiddish language classroom as some characters of the Jewish alphabet are pronounced differently in Yiddish as opposed to Hebrew. Frequently, German source words that could potentially be considered both resources and rivals are much of the time dismissed either explicitly or through implicit stance display practices. However, in one case, a non-"heritage" student actually constructed German as a resource in relation to a German-speaking student in the class (discussed in example 5.15). This chapter provides numerous examples of practices across contexts in which languages are constructed and/or experienced as resources or rivals.

## 5.5     Standard vs. Non-Standard Varieties

Instructors frequently provide students with multiple options for Yiddish linguistic elements, some of which are standard forms and some that are not. Schaechter (1981, p. 671) writes, "By Standard Yiddish (StY) is generally meant the literary language that conforms to the orthographic, grammatical, and stylistic norms prescribed by modern reference manuals". The books used in most contemporary Yiddish classes utilize standard Yiddish, established by the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and presented in Weinreich (1968). The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research was founded in Vilna, Poland, in 1925 and relocated to New York City in 1940. In 1936, YIVO helped to "standardize Yiddish spelling by establishing rules for Yiddish orthography" (www.yivoinstitute.org). Shaechter (1995) notes that YIVO standard Yiddish is closest to the NEY (Northern, Northeastern, or Lithuanian Yiddish) vowel system, from the dialect *litvish* 'Lithuanian'.

However, since technically there are very few "native speakers" of the YIVO standard, instructors learned a different variety growing up in homes in Europe, America, Latin America, or Australia. As the following examples will demonstrate, when introducing new Yiddish lexical items, one of the instructors engages in a complex matrix of stance displays toward the YIVO standard as opposed to the variety she learned as a child. For example, when introducing a lexical item in

standard Yiddish, she notes that she "happens to dislike [it] very much", a clear illustration of her stance toward the standard form.

In classrooms for other (more vital) languages, an instructor might say that a word is currently used more or less in different countries or regions. However, in Yiddish language classrooms, the instructors do not have a contemporary region to which they generally refer. Though they could refer to Orthodox Hasidic communities' current usage of the language, they generally do not, which is discussed in detail in chapter 6. Therefore, teachers frequently make a distinction between what they personally learned and the YIVO standard, even though ostensibly the YIVO standard is what the students are expected to learn. This chapter will therefore provide further examples of the standard versus non-standard practices across contexts.

## 5.6    Introducing Source Languages: Examples

As mentioned above, the first step in socializing students into a diasporic language ideology is introducing the source languages of Yiddish. Interestingly, on the second day of the second quarter of a first year Yiddish university class, when the class had to move classrooms, the students noted that of course a Yiddish class would have to be moved all the time. It seems that they had already been socialized into this diasporic language ideology, as they equated the class's mobile experience with Jews' mobile history more generally.

Socialization into this diasporic language ideology can also be seen in materials on public display at the National Yiddish Book Center, such as that in Figure 5.1 (below). In this material, meant for a wide audience, the various components that make up Yiddish are highlighted, as is their combination "into a distinctly Jewish voice". In addition, the Center's attendees are exposed to what Yiddish "was" but also (in bold) an emphatic acknowledgment of where Yiddish is spoken "even today". As will be discussed in the examples below, many of these aspects of the diasporic language

ideology, including highlighting a language's elements and focusing on past versus present uses, are discussed in classroom interactions as well.

**Example 5.1: Figure 5.1 "A Distinctly Jewish Voice"**



ייִדיש YIDDISH

Yiddish, or "Jewish," was the spoken language of roughly three-quarters of the world's Jews for the past thousand years. A Germanic language written in the Hebrew alphabet, **it combines words from Hebrew, Aramaic, German, French, Italian, Polish, Byelorussian, Ukrainian and other languages** into a distinctly Jewish voice. EVEN TODAY YIDDISH IS SPOKEN IN VIRTUALLY EVERY CORNER OF THE GLOBE.

**Example 5.2: "So from the German from the Russian from the Hebrew from the Polish."**

Example 5.2, below, is taken from a university-level class entitled Yiddish Language and Culture through Film. The students have diverse backgrounds in terms of their familiarity with Yiddish language, Jewish culture, and European history. In the course the students watch Yiddish films with English subtitles; they then discuss the material in English and learn some Yiddish vocabulary as related to the film's content. In this example the instructor (Lauren) is providing background information on the film they will be watching that day, *Fiddler on the Roof.* The film is based on the fictional memoir *Tevye and His Daughters*, by Sholem Aleichem. The teacher describes Sholem Aleichem as the greatest Yiddish humorist, and then discusses the language he used in his stories.

**Example 5.2**

**Lauren (instructor), unidentified student (student), Albert (student)**

```
01 LAU: His language was very very rich in Yiddish. (0.2) So (.)
02      that meant sometimes that he would string together different
```

85

```
03        sources (.) of Yiddish language. So what are those. What
04        would be the different sources. ((moving left hand across
05        body in short movements))
06 ( ): (Different) dialects.
07 LAU: Not dialects [but]
08 UNK:              [But] like different ethnic groups.
09 LAU: Different origins of the language. ((left hand points to
10        student in the back of room))
11 ALB: German Russian (.) Hebrew.
12 LAU: Exactly. ((points to fingers)) And uh and Polish whatever
13        yeah? So from the German from the Russian from the Hebrew
14        from the Polish. (  ) And each one has a slightly different
15        nuance. And he would often yknow string them together uh
16        his language was was very rich with Hebraisms (0.2) uh
17        words from (  ) Hebrew. From what we call Yeshivish yknow
18        all referring back to
19 ( ): ((sneezes))
20 LAU: um [to this    ]
21 ( ):    [((sneezes))]
22 LAU: Tse gezinthehe.
22        To your health/Bless you.
```

In this example, the teacher takes the time to delineate all of the different source languages of Yiddish through the construction of a list (Jefferson, 1990). Her embodied actions, including both moving her left hand across her body and pointing to her fingers to symbolize a list, elaborate on the verbal components of the list creation. In addition, her repetitive syntax at lines 13 and 14 ("from the X language") underscores the variety of source languages from which Aleichem was able to draw in his Yiddish writing. At line 14, she also expresses the ideology of each language having something unique to contribute to Yiddish. This example therefore demonstrates one of the ways that novices in the Yiddish metalinguistic community are socialized into a diasporic language ideology, through the delineation of various source languages that symbolize Jews' movement to and settlement in diverse areas of the world.

**Example 5.3: "Is this a Hebrew sentence?"**

Example 5.3 provides another useful perspective on the ways that Yiddish is discursively constructed within secular educational contexts. Folks-Grupe, from which this example is drawn, is a Yiddish language and culture fellowship developed by the Southern California-based Yiddish

cultural organization Yiddishkayt. The program is designed to "foster Yiddish cultural literacy among young adults" and is advertised as a way to "reclaim your roots". Sessions focused on the history of Yiddish, personal connections to Yiddish culture, music, theater, food, film, and poetry. In addition, there was frequently some language instruction related to session themes.

"Experts" on these topics were invited to speak to the group of participants. This session centered on the history of the Yiddish language and a language "expert" (Rachel) was brought in to present on this topic. In this example, the group is discussing a six-word Yiddish sentence that the instructor told them included four Hebrew words and two German ones (*Der orl iz meyvin kol dibur* - The uncircumcised one (non-Jew) understands every word). Here one can see the ways that an audience of almost entirely non-Yiddish speaking young adults is socialized through the introduction of Yiddish source languages.

**Example 5.3**

**Rachel ("expert"), Leah (participant)**

```
01 RAC: So this is- is this a Hebrew sentence?
02      (0.4)
03 RAC: There's four Hebrew words in there.
04 LEA: ((shakes head))
05 RAC: Why not Leah?
06 LEA: Grammatically.
07      (0.2)
08 RAC: ((nods head)) Grammatically. It's not that's right 'cause
09      grammatically-
10 LEA: (The) subject (verb  )
11 RAC: Yeah. Exactly. And it's it- it just uses Hebrew words but
12      grammatically it's German ((raises right hand toward Leah))
13      (0.2)
14 RAC: Exactly. So (.) can you imagine saying this kinda thing in
15      English?
16      (2.5)
```

In this excerpt, the expert publicly ensures that the participants recognize Hebrew and German as source languages for Yiddish lexicon and grammar, through the utterance at lines 11-12 "it just uses Hebrew words but grammatically it's German". The instructor also engages in the morally infused

practice of highlighting the complexity of Yiddish since it draws upon other languages' lexicon and grammar, socializing them therefore into a diasporic language ideology.

## 5.7    Resources and Rivals: Examples

### 5.7.1   Hebrew as Resource: Examples

In addition to instructors who introduce Yiddish source languages to their students, some also engage in stance practices that implicitly and explicitly demonstrate their ideologies toward these languages. One example is constructing Hebrew as a resource, illustrated by examples 5.3 (classroom interaction) and 5.4 (an interview with a Yiddish learner).

**Example 5.4: "But but in Yiddish it's es."**

In example 5.4, taken from the third term of a first-year UCLA Yiddish language course, a student, Lisa, reads a portion of a poem in Yiddish and a discussion in English follows. Lisa mispronounces the word *oytsres* (treasures) while she is reading four lines of the poem *Ergets Vayt* (Somewhere Far), by the poet H. Leivick. After discussing the meaning of the poem leading up to this word, the student acknowledges that it is a Hebraic word. The instructor then writes the word in Hebrew letters and English transliteration on the board. The instructor explains how to pronounce the Hebraic word *oytsres* and returns to the board to write and underline the pronunciation of the Yiddish plural in English ("es"). In Hebrew, these same letters would instead be pronounced "ot". In contrast to the previous example, the teacher and student engage in somewhat neutral stance display practices while discussing the Hebraic word and the pronunciation of Hebraic words more generally, therefore constructing it as a resource. Here it will become evident how Hebrew is metalinguistically constructed as a resource.

**Example 5.4**

**Lauren (teacher), Rebecca (student), Lisa (student)**

```
01 REB: Ergets tif ergets tif.
02 LAU: ((clears throat))
```

88

```
03 REB: In der erd ayn ge::: knotene, (0.3) eh vartn otseros
04 LAU: Oytsres.
05 REB: [Oytsres.]
06 LAU: [Oytsres?]
07 REB: Af un:: unts? (0.5) Vartn otseros: (0.2) farshotene.
08 LAU: Mm hm. So. ((clears throat)) What does it mean ergets tif?
09 LIS: What's a tif.
10 REB: Like deep [er:  ]
11 LAU:            [Deep.] Deep. (0.5) Somewhere: deep? Somewhere deep
12      yeah? (.) In der erd ayngeknoten ((moves right hand as if
13      grabbing something)) Hm. What's ayngekno[ten. ]
14 REB:                                        [I- I ] looked it up.
15      I couldn't find it (     )
16 LAU: ((nods head)) Tsk. Uh: so ayngeknoten is is like knea:ded
17      into=
17 REB: [Oh.]
18 LAU: [=Or] knotted into the (0.2) earth?
19      (1.5)
20 LAU: Ayngeknoten yoh in der erd? (1.5) Vartn oytsres. Vos minen
21      oytsres?
22 REB: Like lands? Lands?
23 LAU: Neyn. ((shakes head))
24 REB: Countries?
25 LAU: Neyn.
26 REB: Oh treasure treasures.
27 LAU: Trea:sures. (0.6) An oytser oytser ((gets up to write on
28      the board))
28      Oyt[ser.  ]
29 REB:    [It's a] Hebraic word.
30 LAU: Uh huh? ((writes der oytser in Hebrew letters and the English
31      transliteration of oytser on the board))
32 LAU: Oytser? Oytser. (1.0) Means treasure. Oytser. (0.8) You can
33      say that about anything like you would in English yeah iz a-
34      er iz a (.) er iz an oytser fun a mentsch right he's a
35      treasure of a person right. Oytser. When you have the vov sof
36      ((writes these letters in the air as she speaks)) at the end
37      (0.4) it's always pronounced in Yiddish es. Es. ((draws a
38      horizontal line in the air with her left pointer finger)) So
39      oytz (.) eres (0.6) you see? In the plural, ((gets up to write
40      on the board)) the plural of this (.) is (0.4) ((writes plural
41      ending in Hebrew letters on the board)) you add that. But in
42      in Yiddish (.) it's (.) es. ((writes es on the board))
43      (2.0)
44      So that's just a little (.) uh (0.2) help in remembering how
45      to pronounce thehh Hebraic some of the Hebraic words okay? Vov
46      sof is es.
```

As discussed previously, some students have a background in Modern Hebrew, which

pronounces those two characters of the Jewish alphabet as "ot". After some discussion of the

meaning of words leading up to *oytser*, the instructor asks what it means at lines 20 - 21. After some guesses at the word's meaning, at line 29 Rebecca acknowledges that it is a Hebraic word; she therefore provides metalinguistic information to explain her difficulty in pronouncing the word earlier. At lines 32-46, the instructor then provides the word meaning, uses it in an English expression, writes it in both Hebrew letters and English transliteration, and writes "es" on the board. In this way, she uses the student's error and subsequent acknowledgment of the lexical item's source language as an opportunity to demonstrate a more general (in some sense formulaic) rule for reading Hebraic words in Yiddish. The instructor therefore constructs Hebrew as a resource and one that must simply be *transformed* in order to be understood in Yiddish.

**Example 5.5: "I mean in Yiddish we speak Hebrew origin words"**

Example 5.5 demonstrates the ways that Hebrew is viewed by some Yiddish learners. In her interview Lindsay, a non-Jewish graduate student taking Yiddish courses, discussed Hebrew origin words in Yiddish.

**Example 5.5**

> And like we were saying before, I mean in Yiddish we speak Hebrew origin words and what is that doing here, you know and, sort of, how about rootedness in holy collective choosiness of blends and beliefs…in these new and interesting forms that's gives them this power that only comes from some inherent relationship to God, but isn't about the relationship to God, if that makes sense. I find it to be totally interesting to how that identity is built and it becomes just as powerful and motivating and inspiring in a context that has nothing to do with the Synagogue or Rabbi's…(Lindsay, January 10, 2011)

Here one can see the ways Lindsay has been socialized into an ideology that views Hebrew as both a resource and a source of holiness within Yiddish, similar to what Lucy Dawidowicz said years earlier. She also notes how identity is connected to these Hebrew origin words, and how this relationship between the "holy" words and classroom students gets constructed in alternative Jewish contexts.

90

### 5.7.2 Hebrew as Rival: Examples

**Example 5.6: The Murder and Suicide of Yiddish**

In the above examples, during discussion of specific linguistic elements the Hebrew component of Yiddish is constructed as a resource upon which Yiddish learners can depend within secular educational contexts. However, Modern Hebrew as a whole is constructed as a rival when providing historical information about Yiddish more generally. For example, in one of the pilot Folks-Grupe sessions, an "expert" discussed what he described as both the murder of Yiddish (i.e., the Holocaust in Europe) and its suicide (i.e., Israel's choice of Hebrew).

**Example 5.7: Figure 5.2: "Is Yiddish hard to learn?"**

The differences in the ways Hebrew and Yiddish are written and read also provides another fertile ground for ideologies, this time about the ease or difficulty of learning each language. For example, in another announcement at the Yiddish Book Center (Figure 5.2), "Is Yiddish hard to learn?", they highlight the logical, phonetic nature of Yiddish spelling and the fact that "there's rarely any guesswork" (except for Hebrew or Aramaic origin words). They set up a contrast with Hebrew, "where vowels are only implied" and demonstrate an orientation toward Yiddish as easier to learn than Hebrew, which should encourage more Center-goers to choose to learn the language.



**Is Yiddish hard to learn?**

**Not really.** Yiddish grammar is relatively simple. And unlike Hebrew, where vowels are only implied (or else indicated with tiny dots and dashes under each consonant), in Yiddish what you see is what you get. The word *kats,* for example, meaning cat, is spelled ץ א ק; the vowel א (pasakh alef, pronounced "ah") is explicit and right where it belongs, in the middle of the word. Except for words of Hebrew or Aramaic origin, Yiddish spelling is phonetic; there's rarely any guesswork. (It's definitely easier than learning English, where the same sound can be spelled three different ways and exceptions are often the rule!)

**Examples 5.8 – 5.10: Students' Experiences Using Hebraic Words in Yiddish**

Hebrew and the pervasiveness of Hebrew origin words in Yiddish also affects individuals' personal ideologies about the ease or difficulty of learning Yiddish, as evidenced in a number of interviews. This is the case for students both with and without previous familiarity with Hebrew.

**Example 5.8: "The biggest trouble I've had with the Yiddish has been the Hebrew words"**

**Esther: interviewee, Lily: interviewer**

EST: No. As a matter of fact the biggest trouble I've had with the Yiddish has been the Hebrew words. You can't -- you know Yiddish is phonetic so I can get along in it, I can't with the Hebrew, I don't know how to read it, I don't know how to sound it out, I don't know what it's like.

LIL: Yeah when they take the vowels out.

EST: Yeah, and the letters, we don't use half a dozens of those letters, except for Hebrew words, which we're supposed to memorize, which forget it, best of luck.

(December 9, 2010)

**Example 5.9: "I mean forget meaning, like it's hard to figure out what that one sounds like."**

So in Yiddish what I found to be the case, whenever Yiddish authors want to sound sophisticated or to scold the Yiddish public for only knowing Yiddish and for not knowing Hebrew, shame on you, you should learn Hebrew, they start first throwing off the usual balance, which our professor described as 70% German, 20% French[6] and 10% Slavic. And adding in as much Hebraic origin words as they possibly can and those suckers are impossible, if you have no idea to figure out the spelling, to figure out what they are saying, how they are pronounced, when you're looking at them by spelling, because there is like no vowels, and when you don't know what the word is supposed to even be, I mean forget meaning, like it's hard to figure out what that one sounds like. (Sean, December 15, 2010)

---

[6] Yiddish is not 20% French. However, the student may have misremembered hearing something like "about 20 words".

**Example 5.10: "It poses a little bit of the challenge at first."**

And it's a little, what the word I'm looking for, a little -- it poses a little bit of the challenge at first. And also some of the pronunciations there -- the result of vowels being put together in ways that don't happen in Hebrew, and it can be a little, the word I am looking for, not fine, not disconcerted but a little challenging or something. (Mark, December 10, 2010)

Neither Esther nor Sean had previous experience with Hebrew before learning Yiddish. This meant that reading, pronouncing, and spelling Hebraic words became very difficult for them. Interestingly, his previous experience with Hebrew also created some difficulties for Mark, especially in terms of pronunciation. These students' practical experiences have shaped their ideologies of Hebrew as a rival in their language learning.

### 5.7.3   German as Rival: Examples

Within Yiddish classrooms, sites of memorializing Holocaust survivors, instructors and students regularly encounter German, the language of the perpetrators. As a result, conflicted stance practices and ideologies toward German and students who already speak German frequently emerge. Though Yiddish is a Germanic language, Yiddish and German have a variety of differences in syntax, morphology, and phonology. Therefore, German speakers sometimes find themselves confused because they must learn multiple transformations in order to proficiently use Yiddish.

**Example 5.11: "We have to beat the German out of you."**

For example, on January 5, 2010 in the second quarter of a first-year UCLA Yiddish course, during a discussion about the sentence *Der man iz grois* (The man is big) on the previous quarter's final exam, Lauren asked a student how it is in German because "that might have messed [you] up". She then went on to say, "We have to beat the German out of them. Come on help me" (while banging on the table). In other examples, the instructor would say things like "we've got your German creeping in" and "That's it! Blame the Germans for all our grammatical problems". In all of

these cases, students' familiarity with German became opportunities for the teacher to socialize the class into a German as rival ideology. At the YIVO/NYU program there were students in the advanced course who noted that one of the main things they learned was that they could not depend on their German to learn Yiddish, yet another example of the pervasive circulation of this ideology across contexts.

**Example 5.12:** *Ubermorgn/Ibermorgn*

During the same lesson as that described above, one of the students who has previously studied German said *ubermorgn* instead of *ibermorgn* (day after tomorrow). In response, the instructor again said "we have to beat the German out of you too" (fieldnotes, January 5, 2010). This explicit and negative stance display toward German, framed in both cases as something "we" have to do for 1 student, are quite different from that toward Hebrew. In the *ubermorgn/ibermorgn* case, for example, the instructor could have used a similar tactic to the *es/ot* issue in Hebrew (e.g., explaining the difference on the board, using one example to provide a template for other cases). However, in this case, she did not focus on German as a resource and instead focused on it as a rival only. The language's structure is therefore seen in a selective way shaped by social and political processes. She may therefore be deploying the language as an object to implicitly combat historical circumstances.

**Example 5.13: "It shouldn't have been a German word, it was supposed to be the Yiddish word."**

As described during his interview one of the students in this class also experienced German as a rival, since he previously knew how to speak that language and had to engage in various transformations in order to proficiently use Yiddish.

> So there would -- I felt for a while that the knowledge of the languages that I brought
> especially Hebrew to some extent, to some extent German as well. And oh by the way I
> used to sometimes -- when answering a question in class, I would come up with a
> German word, I just, but it isn't the German word, it was -- it shouldn't have been a

94

German word, it was supposed to be the Yiddish word. And that happened to me multiple times during the year on the spur of the movement, when asked, raising my hand or being asked to answer a question, I would come out with a German word.

(Mark, December 10, 2010)[7]

**Example 5.14: "So Good Luck Herr Judisch Wort Von Der Woche"**

In addition to classroom settings the ideology of German as a rival gets expressed in written data as well.  Yiddish Word of the Week is an email list that sends out Yiddish words with their definitions, pronunciation, synonyms, etymology, derivatives, phrases, expressions, use in Jewish religious life, and use in sentences. Interestingly, pictures of Orthodox community members that in some way connect with the lexical items generally accompany the posts. In a posting on March 18, 2011, the authors sent out two words, *kinig/kenig* (a king) and *tash* (a pocket, bag). Below is the first part of the posting about *tash*:

Tash - טאש \TASH\ Noun \ Masculine/Feminine \ Pl. Tashn:

A pocket, pocketbook, bag, pouch, purse, satchel.

Pronunciation: Click here to hear a native Yiddish speaker use this word in conversation.

Synonyms: *baytl* (בייטל), *keshene* (קעשענע), *tayster* (טייסטער), *zekl* (זעקל).

Note: Weinreich, in his dictionary, seems to very much prefer *keshene* (from Polish "kieszen") to *tash* for "pocket," while Harkavy tends to the opposite extreme.

German equivalents: der Beutel, der Koffer, der Sack, die Tasche.

Etymology: The word derives from Middle High German "tasche," from Old High German "taska, tasca, zaska," ultimately from Proto-Germanic *tasko*. Not too much is known about the origins of this root, but cognates include Estonian "tasku," Finnish "tasku," and, oddly enough (see Kluge), Italian "tasca."

Note: As far as I can tell, this word bears no relation to the verb *tashn* (טאשן) - to shuffle cards.

---

[7] This older adult student was enrolled in the class through a UCLA program called "Senior Scholars" (http://www.semel.ucla.edu/longevity/senior-scholars-program)

Usually, the posts are sent out the list members with their email addresses in blind carbon copy ("bcc"). However, this post had been accidentally sent out to the list with all email addresses showing. Interestingly, on that date one of the subscribers wrote the following to the author, and all of the other list members were able to see it as well:

I am afraid I will be unsubscribing after this post. There is just too much German etymology and not enough Yiddish. If you could at least put the German etymology at the end. So good luck Herr Judisch Wort von der Woche[8].

This response provides a clear example of the ideology of German as a rival, and the vestiges of the anti-daytshmerish sentiment of earlier centuries of Yiddish speakers and planners.

### 5.7.4 German as Resource: Examples

As demonstrated above, the ideology of German as a rival to Yiddish has both historical and present-day resonances. However, within contemporary Yiddish classrooms there are frequently diverse groups of students with a variety of backgrounds who may hold different ideologies about German in relation to Yiddish.

**Example 5.15: "At least you got the German helping you."**

For example, in example 5.15 below, one of the non-Jewish non-German speaking students in a first-year UCLA Yiddish class espouses an ideology of German as a rival. Interestingly, he highlights that the language can be considered a rival for another non-Jewish, though German-speaking, student in the class. Before the excerpt below, the class had been discussing Jewish foods and their similarities to Eastern European food more generally. An older Jewish student (Mark) enrolled in the class through the UCLA Senior Scholars program provided an extensive explanation of why many Jews eat Chinese food, directed primarily at one of the non-Jewish students (a graduate student who also speaks German). This non-Jewish student then asked the teacher to remind him

---

[8]*Herr Judisch Wort von der Woche* means Mr. Jewish Word of the Week in German.

what the word for non-Jew is in Yiddish. Another non-Jewish student, of Indian descent, then reminds that student that he is not the only non-Jew in the class:

**Example 5.15**

**Lauren (instructor), Brett (student), Mark (student), Josh (student), Rajit (student)**

```
01 BRE: Wha wha what'd you call me again? 'Cause I'm the I'm like the
02      th- no:n Je:w bo:y in class [what's my name again] ((turns and
03      points to his left))

04 LAU:                              [Wh- wh- wh- what  ] Anyone
05      remember?

06 MAR: It's uh:

07 JOS: Sheygets.
07 JOS: Non-Jew.

08 BRE: [Sheygets.] ((pointing to Josh))
08 BRE: [Non-Jew.]

09 LAU: [Sheygets.]
09 LAU: [Non-Jew. ]

10 RAJ: (Right.) That's me too buddy.

11 BRE: Oh yeah.

12 ALL: ((Laughter))

13 MAR: Not so fast.

14 ALL: ((Laughter))

15 BRE: (So it's like) ((raises index finger)) there's one in this class.
16       There's one.

13 ALL: ((Laughter))

14 RAJ: At least you got the German helping you.

15 BRE: Yeah. Yeah.

16 ALL: ((Laughter))

17 LAU: It's shkotsn  shkotsn (in) plural.
17 LAU:      non-Jews non-Jews

18 All: ((Laughter))
```

97

```
19 LAU: We have shkotsn.
19 LAU:         non-Jews

20 MAR: Shkotsn.
20 MAR: Non-Jews.

21 LAU: Shkotsnhehe. Umm.
21 LAU: Non-Jewshehe.

22 ALL: ((Laughter))

23 MAR: Mir habn- mir hobn tsvey shkotsn.
23 MAR: We have-  we  have two   non-Jews.

24 ALL: ((Laughter))

25 LAU: Right. Tsvey shkotsn. Yeah. Yoh.
25 LAU:        Two   non-Jews.
```

In this example, the non-Jewish student of Indian descent (Rajit) positions one of the other non-Jewish students as more of an insider with Yiddish *because* of that student's knowledge of German. Interestingly, this discussion then becomes a grammar lesson through the instructor's challenging the students to recall the Yiddish lexical item for 'non-Jew' with "Anyone remember?" at lines 04-05. Once they acknowledge that there are two non-Jews in the class she can then explain how to form the plural for this lexical item '*shkotsn*'. And Mark pushes himself to create a complete sentence using this new term with "*Mir habn- mir hobn tsvey shkotsn*". Interestingly, Mark stated in Example 5.13 above how German words come out when he means to use Yiddish words. His use of '*habn*' instead of '*hobn*' in this sentence is one such example.

This example provides a unique perspective on a non-Jewish student's perception of himself in relation to the rest of the class and to those who speak German, in addition to demonstrating the interweaving of negotiations of 'heritage' status with grammar lessons in this setting. This issue of 'heritage' vs. 'non-heritage' identities also emerged during other classroom discussions. In addition, it surfaced implicitly when instructors demonstrated recipient design in directing extended explanations of Jewish terms, customs, and rituals to non-Jewish students in classes. Interestingly,

however, it did not appear among students making claims about Jewish students without Yiddish-speaking ancestry.

**5.8     Standard vs. Non-Standard Yiddish Varieties: Examples**

**Example 5.16: "How would you say cousin?"**

In the first example focusing on standard vs. non-standard Yiddish forms, taken from the second quarter of a first-year Yiddish language course, the teacher is engaged in drawing a detailed family tree for the students. For many of these students, the classroom is the only context in which they get exposure to the language. Incidentally, the fact that the teacher is presenting a detailed family tree (beginning with words for mother and father) is interesting in how it may compare to other heritage language situations in which learners would already have a strong grasp of family terminology from exposure to the language at home. During this discussion, one of the students asks how to say cousin, after which follows a metalinguistic presentation regarding two options for how to say the lexical item, "kuzine" and "shvester kind".

**Example 5.16**

**Lauren (instructor), Brett (student), Abbey (student), unidentified student 1 (student), unidentified student 2 (student), unidentified student 3 (student)**

```
01 ABB: Question.
02 LAU: Yoh.
03 ABB: How would you say cousin.
04      (0.3)
05 LAU: Good question? ((reaches out right arm and points at student,
06      smiles, brings right hand down))
07 ALL: ((Laughter))
08 LAU: We left that one out. [Cousin.] ((swings right arm)) Okay.
09 BRE:                       [Kuzine.]
10 LAU: Yeah that's one easy way I like that one. ((points to student
11      with left hand))
12 ALL: ((Laughter))
13 LAU: Uh [di di ] kuzine=
14 UN1:    [kuzina]
15 UN2: °kuzin.
16 LAU: =or kuzin. (0.1) Der kuzin di kuzine. (.) ~But, there's
17      another way,~ ((scrunches face)) (.) which is in ((brings left
```

```
18       hand down)) standard Yiddish which I hapt- I happen to (.)
19       dislike ((shakes head)) very much.
20 ABB: Hmh.
21       (0.3) ((Tea takes eraser with left hand, erases something on
22       board))
23 LAU: But it's there.
24 BRE: Can you write up ku-zin-ehh [or kuzin?]
25 LAU:                            [Yoh. Yoh ][yoh yoh.        ]
26       ((brings hand up to write on board))
27 UN3:                                       [Can you spell it.]
```

The instructor's turn at line 05, "Good question?", projects that a complex response will come next. At line 09, Brett provides one alternative for the lexical item cousin, "kuzine". In response at lines 10 and 11, the teacher provides an explicit positive assessment of this alternative with "that's one easy way I like that one" while pointing to the student. However, she provides an elaborate preface and negative stance display before her eventual presentation of the second option from YIVO standard Yiddish (also provided in their book), '*shvester kind*' (not included in the transcript above). Her utterance is in some sense overbuilt through its use of "dislike very much". This stance display, provided before the lexical item itself, frames the students' eventual reception of it. The sequence therefore moves from the student providing one lexical alternative to the instructor assessing the lexical alternative (and elaborating with additional grammatical information) to the instructor's stance display to the instructor providing the second lexical alternative.

Though based on the curriculum and course book YIVO standard Yiddish is what is being taught in this class, the teacher's negative stance toward the standard communicates a different message. Frequently, teachers' personal experiences with the language are in direct conflict with what is supposed to be taught in class. I found this to be the case in multiple classes with different teachers, both in Los Angeles and New York. Therefore, teachers may engage in subtle practices that could undermine the acquisition of standard language forms while socializing the students into an appreciation of Yiddish varieties that came before any standard was established by YIVO.

**Example 5.17: "In this class"**

Frequently, this instructor would highlight the difference between the language variety she grew up with and the YIVO standard. For example, on January 5, 2010, she discussed the differences in words and meaning for lunch and dinner depending on the region. She then said that "in this class" *mitog* means lunch, even though "for us it was lunch and dinner" in her house growing up. Through her explicit discussion of lexical alternatives she implicitly socializes the students into 1) an appreciation of the complexity of Yiddishes in past communities and 2) a preference for members' real-life experiences over the canon that is promoted in textbooks. Practices like this, in which a distinction is made between what students must learn for the class as opposed to how some people used the language, are therefore another method through which students are socialized into specific language ideologies about Yiddish varieties.

**Example 5.18: "What we now call standard Yiddish was pretty much what was taught."**

Example 5.18, the full transcript and analysis of which is in chapter 9 (example 9.4), is taken from another Folks-Grupe session during which a number of individuals participate in a discussion about Yiddish dialects and accents. This includes Feivel ("The Man of His Word"), David (the music "expert"), Adam (the head of the organization who created the Folks-Grupe program), Lindsay (a graduate student participant who is studying Jewish labor unions), three other participants (Michelle, Hilary, and Jacob), and Murray (a visitor who is heavily involved in the Yiddishist movement).

Before this part of the discussion, David had talked about the fact that frequently Jews who immigrated to different areas simply became "Judeo versions of wherever we live". He notes, though, that two of the great exceptions to this are Yiddish culture and Ladino culture. A bit later, Feivel begins talking about the complexity of Yiddish culture, specifically focusing on different groups of Yiddish speakers throughout history (the Galitsianers and the Litvaks). The discussion

then moves to geography, labor practices, movies, and finally dialects. During the discussion of

different Yiddish dialects, Lindsay wondered why stage actors did not use standard or "proper"

Yiddish.

**Example 5.18: Lindsay (participant), David ("expert"), Feivel ("expert"), Adam (observer),**

**Owen (organizer), unidentified participant 1 (participant)**

```
070 LIN: Why didn't they: why didn't they take the standard and make
071      sort of stage actors ((low voice and right hand out))
072      spea:king proper: Yiddish.
073 DAV: ['Cause ] there was no standard.
074 FEI: [(      )]
075 FEI: [Right.] And no academy.
076 ADA: [(     )]
077 LIN: Oh right so we're talking pr[e: ]
078 OWE:                              [pre] YIVO.
079 LIN: Pre YIVO okay.
080 FEI: Right.
081 DAV: And even the YIVO stand- (   ) (0.3) let no one believe here
082      that the majority of Yiddish speakers ever accepted and
083      especially today (.) since most of them are Has- Hasidim
084      (0.2) accept YIVO Yiddish as any kind of standard. [I mean]
085 FEI:                                                    [Right.]=
086 LIN: =Right.=
087 FEI: =Right.
088 DAV: We're yknow we're not so: different than than Switzerland
089      which in Switzerland they had a lo:ng (f   ) a long way (.)
090      further in standardizing a kind of yknow ((quotes in air))
091      Swiss German.
092 FEI: Uh- Western-
093 DAV: There's there was no-
094 LIN: I was just (thinking of) the British example so [like] the=
095 UN1:                                                 [(  )]
096      =old BBC guys woulda been like ((higher voice)) very very
097      hoigh British [teeth] clenchy
098 DAV:               [Yes. ]
099 FEI: Right.
100 DAV: (      )
101 FEI: It still tends to be mostly.
102 DAV: But YI- YIVO the- YIVO (.) standard is not [I mean   ] the=
103 LIN:                                            [the ideal]
104      =only places it's become yknow r- really accepted is a:s a
105      standard is yheknow=
106 FEI: =In academia.
107 DAV: I- In academia right er at the YIVO
108 FEI: Uh:m=
109 DAV: =And in academia. And there were a couple of other attempts
110      [I mean  ]
```

```
111 FEI: [Well and]
112 DAV: In Toronto
113 FEI: I:n uh:
114 DAV: [(  )]
115 FEI: [(  )]
116 DAV: (  )
117 FEI: In the secular Yiddish schools (.) it tend(.)ed (.) because
118      of the origin of most of the teachers what we now call
119      standard Yiddish was pretty much what was taught.
120      (0.3)
```

In this example, the "experts" provide both the histories and the ideologies associated with YIVO standard Yiddish. Interestingly, at lines 081 – 084 David highlights the fact that even though the standard was officially established "the majority of Yiddish speakers" did not accept it "as any kind of standard". These ideological differences among those who adhere to the YIVO standard and those who do not, including the Orthodox Hasidic Jews (as David describes), emerges frequently during classroom discussions. In this case, the experts are invested in socializing the Folks-Grupe participants, the majority of whom do not speak any Yiddish, into specific ideologies about standard vs. non-standard Yiddish varieties.

## 5.9    Conclusions

In conclusion, this analysis provides a unique perspective on central socialization practices within the context of a metalinguistic community constructed around an "endangered" "heritage" language. Through a sequential analysis of conflicted stance toward lexical and phonological alternatives within secular Yiddish educational contexts, instructors and students engage in a complex process of socialization into an imagined nationhood of the Jewish diaspora. In analyzing conflicted stance practices toward source languages, standard varieties, and non-standard varieties, it becomes evident how languages themselves can be mobilized as objects in the ongoing projects of constructing both past and present communities. Furthermore, building upon Goodwin's (1994) notion of "professional vision," it also reveals the ways that members' perceptions of linguistic structure are consistently shaped by their individual histories and those of their communities.

103

# CHAPTER 6

## YIDDISH "ENDANGERMENT" AS
## INTERACTIONAL REALITY AND DISCURSIVE STRATEGY

"So I really wanted to honor them and hear their voices, and it's just really heartbreaking that in a few years there won't be any native speakers left and we will all speak like…like the flat American academic accents which is so different."
-Deborah, May 11, 2010

### 6.1    A Paradox

Is it possible for a language to be "endangered" when in certain communities its number of speakers is increasing? This seeming paradox frames the following discussion of Yiddish in the contemporary world, embodied on the one hand by growing numbers of Yiddish speakers within Orthodox Hasidic communities (as discussed for example in (Assouline, forthcoming; Barriere, 2010; Fader, 2009; Tannenbaum & Abugov, 2010) and on the other hand by the ongoing maintenance of Yiddish as an 'endangered' language within secular educational contexts. As Shandler (2008, p. 177) highlights, "More often than not, contemporary Yiddish culture is assessed – even by some of its champions – according to the widespread notion that the language is moribund".

Yiddish is currently estimated to have 200,000 - 500,000 speakers who use it as a daily language and approximately 2 million who have some language ability worldwide (S. B. Benor, personal communication, November 16, 2010). Considering these numbers and the stark differences in engagement with Yiddish within these two communities, Yiddish is unique in the 'endangered' language landscape, in contrast to other languages that may fit more squarely into current endangered language paradigms. This chapter considers the multiple ways that for members of the secular Yiddish metalinguistic community the language's endangered status is both an interactional reality and a discursive strategy.

For many metalinguistic community members, Yiddish is experienced as an "endangered" language, as evidenced by many of their comments during their person-centered interviews. In this way, Yiddish is phenomenologically endangered for these community members by virtue of the lack of exposure many members have to the language. This differs from objectivist metrics of language endangerment in privileging members' experiences with the language. In addition, there are multiple ways that Yiddish is discursively maintained as endangered within these contexts, discussed in detail below.

If one considers the complexities of the current state of Yiddish, it becomes necessary to consider a spectrum of language vitality and endangerment based not on numbers of speakers but on language practices. This practice-based model of language endangerment takes as its unit of analysis the communities (not the language) and allows for a deeper consideration of multifaceted situations such as that of Yiddish. In addition, it becomes necessary to acknowledge Yiddish endangerment as context-bound, depending on the contexts and participants engaged with the language at any given time. This approach to the notion of endangerment is focused therefore on both practices and contexts. In addition to complementing research on heritage languages that are endangered in their diasporas, this study builds upon much of the valuable recent research on language death and endangerment more broadly (discussed in detail below).

## 6.2    Data Corpus

In addition to interview and interactional data this chapter examines print and online media focused on Yiddish (e.g., *New York Times*, *Jewish Daily Forward*, and Jewish online publications). Contemporary media engagement with Yiddish, which takes a number of forms, is critical to examine. Spitulnik (1996, p. 95) highlights the complexities of examining communities whose boundaries are not finite, as in the case of "the mass mediation of communities that are large, shifting, and somewhat intangible, like those that extend across cities, regions, and nations". She

underscores Anderson's (1983) notion of imagined communities and the fact that his "insights into the mass mediation of communal identity are important because they point out how community and belonging are indexically constructed through texts" (1996, p. 97). In the case of the Yiddish metalinguistic community, these texts include print and online media, literature, and contemporary textbooks. The centrality of texts and members' engagement with them provide a unique perspective on the notion of Yiddish "endangerment", for in many cases participants are primarily interacting with texts as opposed to other Yiddish speakers.

**6.3     Defining Language Vitality and Language Endangerment**

In their discussion of language revitalization efforts, Grenoble & Whaley (2006, p. 4) discussion includes UNESCO's (2003) document "Language vitality and endangerment", which provides nine factors that must be considered in assessing a language's vitality:

Factor 1: Intergenerational language transmission
Factor 2: Absolute number of speakers
Factor 3: Proportion of speakers within the total population
Factor 4: Trends in existing language domains
Factor 5: Response to new domains and media
Factor 6: Materials for language education and literacy
Factor 7: Governmental and institutional language policies, including official status and use
Factor 8: Community members' attitudes toward their own language
Factor 9: Amount and quality of documentation

Within the secular context, all of the factors except perhaps for factor 9 above would point to Yiddish language endangerment. In addition, in terms of factor 5 there is quite a bit of material on Yiddish currently on the internet (cf. Sadan, 2011). However, if one considers Hasidic Orthodox communities as well, the vast majority of the factors above would point to language vitality. This relates to Krauss's (2007, p. 2) discussion of the fact that Yiddish is "perhaps the most famously 'dying' language" versus the fact that it is "safe" in Hasidic communities. The following table provides his framework for language vitality, focused on the generations of speakers.

106

**Table 6.1     Suggested Framework or Schema for Classifying Languages according to Degree of Vitality** (modified from Krauss, 2007, p. 1[9])

| 'Safe' | A+ | |
|--------|-----|---|
| Stable | A | All speak, children and up |
| Instable; Eroded | A- | Some children speak; all children speak in some places |
| Definitively endangered | B | Spoken only by parental generation and up |
| Severely endangered | C | Spoken only by grandparental generation and up |
| Critically endangered | D | Spoken only by very few, of great-grandparental generation |
| Extinct | E | No speakers |

A to D: Endangered
A- to D: In decline

If one considers the secular Yiddish context, the situation is most likely captured by category D. However, within Hasidic communities, the situation is more like A+, 'safe'. As the insufficiency of these frameworks demonstrates, Yiddish both does and does not fit into a traditional 'endangered' language paradigm, which necessitates a novel framework for examining its complexities. The notion of 'discourses of endangerment', discussed in detail in Duchene & Heller's (2008) volume, provides a useful framework in this regard.

**6.4     Endangered Languages and Endangered Language Communities**

In their discussion of language death, Nettle & Romaine (2000) highlight that they have used the terms

"death" and "extinction" in relation to languages just as a biologist would in talking about species…Insofar as language can be said to exist at all, its locus must be in the minds of the people who use it. In another sense, however, language might be regarded as an activity, a system of communication between human beings. A language…can only exist where there is

---

[9] The original table had the designations in the following order: A+, A-, A. A corresponded to 'instable; eroded' and A- corresponded to 'stable'. I have switched the letters A and A- so that the designations are in the order A+, A, A-. Lastly, I changed the descriptions below the table to correspond to the correct letters (A and A-).

a community to speak and transmit it…When languages lose their speakers, they die. (p. 5)

Recent linguistic anthropological and historical research has focused on the issues of language death (e.g., Crystal 2000, Dorian 1989, Harrison 2007, Nettle & Romaine 2000), language life and death (Hagege, 2009), endangered languages (Abley, 2003; D. Bradley & M. Bradley, 2002; Dalby, 2003; Evans, 2010; Harrison, Rood, and Dwyer, 2008; Robins & Uhlenbeck, 1991), and language revitalization efforts (Fishman, 1991; Grenoble & Whaley, 2006). All of these scholarly works emphasize the importance of languages to the diversity and richness of our world and the tragedy involved in losing languages, their speakers, and communities.

Wurm (1991, pp. 2 – 13) notes that there are a number of reasons for the dying and disappearance of languages including: death of all speakers, changes in the ecology of languages, culture contact and clash, economic influence, cultural influence, and political influence and conquest. In the case of Yiddish, especially within secular contexts, many of the above elements have had a lasting effect on the language and its speakers (e.g., death of speakers, changes in the ecology of languages). Similarly, scholars of language endangerment and revitalization Grenoble & Whaley (2006, p. 17) discuss four types of language attrition: sudden, radical, gradual, and bottom-to-top.

Using this typology, the Holocaust would be an example of sudden attrition, when a language is abruptly diminished due to the sudden loss of its speakers as the result of disease, warfare, or other causes. Assimilation and its effects on language choices that did not include Yiddish is an example of two types of attrition. The first is radical attrition, in which speakers wish not to be identified with their ethnic group. The second is gradual attrition, referring to the relatively slow loss of a language due to language shift away from the heritage language to a language of wider communication. In these ways, Yiddish has experienced a number of events that have contributed to a loss of speakers. However, Yiddish is also unique in that there are currently Hasidic Orthodox

Jewish communities in different parts of the world who speak Yiddish as one of their daily languages, for many Hasidic Jews immigrated from Europe after World War II and have largely sustained the language within their groups since that time.

In this way, Yiddish both does and does not fit into existing paradigms of language vitality and endangerment. In addition, this research focuses on the complexities of *interactions* within the Yiddish metalinguistic community, complementing much of the existing literature focused more explicitly on the language itself as the focal element. Perspectives like Wurm's use an imagery of languages living and dying, which gives those languages a life and death apart from their speakers. This research, on the other hand, examines how specific communities construct Yiddish through language practices and how these practices fit into those communities' interests and needs.

**6.5     Yiddish Endangerment as Interactional Reality**

Across multiple contexts metalinguistic community members engage in a range of practices valuing a language that many are not able to speak. In this way, the 'endangered' status of the focal language within a metalinguistic community is essential to understanding the varied practices used within in. For members of the Yiddish metalinguistic community, the language's endangered status is in many respects a reality. For example, for many Yiddish students the classroom is one of the if not the only language community to which they have been exposed. Students frequently do not have others with whom to practice the language. Also, many of them recognize that older generations of Jews who spoke the language primarily in Europe or America are passing away and did not teach the language to their children or grandchildren.

In person-centered interviews with metalinguistic community members of various generations, participants highlighted their lack of exposure to the language in their youth. In my primary focus on Yiddish learners, however, I did not interview older individuals who are native speakers of Yiddish and still use it. The interviews I conducted provide the unique perspectives of

participants themselves, offering a window into the participants' ideologies about more self-conscious practices and thus complementing much of the interactional data in the rest of this chapter. By including the words of participants, this research therefore moves toward a dialogical anthropology (Tedlock, 1983) in which both the members and the researcher can be articulate in the same work. As the following examples will demonstrate, members themselves are continuously reflexive, reflective, and analytical about their own lives and experiences. This push toward privileging natives' voices can also be seen in (Basso, 1990)'s chapters 'Stalking with Stories': Names, Places, and Moral Narratives among the Western Apache and 'Speaking with Names': Language and Landscape among the Western Apache.

Older adults Esther, Mark, Rita, and Ruby all noted that previous generations in their families either did not speak Yiddish at all, spoke very little, or spoke very little to them. This contributed to Yiddish endangerment becoming an interactional reality for all of them.

> A very secular home. My grandmother spoke Yiddish, but there was no one to talk to, so I didn't get very much of that, and that's it. (Esther, December 9, 2010)

> My father had a decided accent, but, but he really became a fluent -- totally fluent English speaker. However, the two of them on occasion would use Yiddish in talking to one another and -- and not just for when they didn't want kids to understand[10], but when -- just part of growing up as first, living as first generation as immigrants, not first generation, but as immigrants they would use that language. And so I -- I used to hear a fair amount of Yiddish, it wasn't talked all that after, but I used to hear a fair amount of it. (Mark, December 10, 2010)

> My parents were American born and my mother's parents, my grandparents on my mother's side were also American born, knew Yiddish phrases, but my grandmother

---

[10] "My parents used Yiddish *az di kinder zoln nisht farshteyn* (so the children wouldn't understand)" is a common trope among second- and third-generation Jewish immigrants (S. B. Benor, May 18, 2012, personal communication).

110

spoke German. But on the other side I never knew my grandfather, but my grandmother spoke Yiddish. And I've heard say, we spent a lot -- I spent a lot of time with her as a child and it was literary Yiddish and it was mainly insulting and angry Yiddish. But also secrets that was supposed to go on above my head, and I kind of very early figured things out, so and like it and I was glad, it was like our secret language that I could be privy to if I wanted to, I could tune in and out of it. My father is still alive, he is almost 90 and at this point I speak more Yiddish than he does. (Rita, December 22, 2010)

So, I heard very little Yiddish growing up. My mother would speak it with her mother, but there was no encouragement for us to learn it at all. [It was when Ruby took over the teaching of a Jewish literature class that she became interested in Yiddish.] (Ruby, January 13, 2011)

Deborah, a middle-aged Yiddish learner, noted her lack of exposure to the language in her youth, and her entry into the world through Holocaust literature (discussed in further detail in chapter 8). Texts were also central to how she began dating her current husband, for they were both originally part of a Yiddish reading group. Lauren, a middle-aged Yiddish teacher and director of a Yiddish cultural organization, stated that she learned the language at home as a child, which was quite unique for a secular household during that time period. In this way, Yiddish endangerment was not an interactional reality for Lauren, which has allowed her to create contexts for the living language through her career.

Well, I remember, I think the first Yiddish I ever heard was my father saying, Oy, oy, shiker iz a goy (*Oy oy a non-Jew is drunk*), which he used to announce whenever he saw a drunk on the streets in Chicago. And I am trying to think if that's all he ever said, very possibly that was it…So when did I hear it? Not much, just words in English language, until I started reading Holocaust literature and I started going *shul* (temple) hopping… (Deborah, May, 11, 2010)

111

(*Describing the time before she began dating her current husband*) He was shy, he was pretty shy, but it was here at the house that we were --and we were reading a lot of Yiddish.

(Deborah, April 27, 2010)

Yiddish was the only language spoken at home between my parents and I. So it is the first language I ever learned and so, English became the second language, when I was three, three and a half or four and then Hebrew after that from school. So I spoke Yiddish my entire life with my parents. (Lauren, February 18, 2010)

Undergraduate and graduate student learners provided implicit and explicit evidence for their lack of exposure to the language before they learned it in classroom settings. Sean, an undergraduate Yiddish learner, in describing a class project for which he needed to research a Yiddish author, talked in detail about his difficulty in accessing information in the language.

First of all for anybody who is never like dealt with Hebrew or Yiddish writing before, the transliteration is extremely confusing because of all the different ways that names can be translated. And it took like two days to figure out how they were spelling this name in the [university] library to find his books. And for me being not very organization - for me being an organizationally challenged person that was extra confusing. But during the course of the project where I think it really kind of testing my Yiddish ability or my Yiddish lack of ability, we were -- we had to bring in also copies of the actual works that in Yiddish, and so I took a little peek at each of those, try to read a little bit and there were two words that stood out. (Sean, December 15, 2010)

Sean's interview highlights his lack of experience with the language in non-classroom settings such as the home, and his first introduction to novel alphabets and orthography once he took a Yiddish class.

112

Lastly, Sarah, a graduate student learner, discussed her first contact with Yiddish during an intensive immersion-like summer program. The striking imagery she uses highlights her previous lack of exposure to the language, and the intense experience of Yiddish as a living language across contexts during the program.

> So, I went that summer to the YIVO program at NYU. And that was my first Yiddish learning experience, and felt completely drowned in Yiddish for that six weeks, intense. (Sarah, December 10, 2010).

The sentiment Sarah expresses here was quite common for many students in the YIVO program, which I took part in summer 2010. This is one example of the ways that Yiddish endangerment is context-bound, for in those six weeks participants experience and use the language in ways they never have before (and, for many, may never have again).

These interviews from learners of various generations emphasize students' lack of exposure to and experience with Yiddish in their youth and outside of the classroom context. This underscores the widely-held ideology that Yiddish is an 'endangered' language. But, these learners' experiences are quite different from individuals within Yiddish-speaking Hasidic Orthodox communities, in which Yiddish use is found across home, educational, and religious contexts. The next section, focused on how Yiddish is discursively maintained as endangered within secular Yiddish educational contexts, provides additional complexity to the sociocultural picture of Yiddish in the contemporary world.

## 6.6    Yiddish Endangerment as Discursive Strategy

Duchene & Heller (2008) emphasize the notion that languages in very different vitality and/or endangerment circumstances, including English, Spanish, Catalan, and French can be examined through "discourses of endangerment". They "have taken the position that discourses of language endangerment are fundamentally discourses about other kinds of threats which take place,

113

for specific reasons, on the terrain of language" (p. 4). In addition to the interactional realities associated with Yiddish endangerment in the metalinguistic community, as discussed above, this section considers the ways that maintaining Yiddish as an endangered language may be a discursive strategy within secular Yiddish educational contexts.

For example, many contemporary Yiddish instructors primarily use pre-war and post-war texts such as poetry, literature, and songs in their lessons. A number of instructors also focus primarily on receptive skills such as reading and listening, prioritizing these over students' active use of productive language skills such as writing and speaking. In addition, some instructors within secular contexts primarily focus on uses of Yiddish in the past and not in the present, demonstrated by their frequent use of the past tense and not the present when describing Yiddish-speaking communities. In addition to a temporal focus on the past they also emphasize its use in certain spaces -- within diasporic European Jewish communities as opposed to contemporary American communities.

They therefore subtly elide and/or deride the contemporary Yiddish of Hasidic Orthodox speakers due to grammatical and/or ideological differences in its use. This elision and derision may come from ideologies that locate authentic and authoritative Yiddish speakers in the past as opposed to the present. Bakhtin (1981) described this privileging of an older, idealized form of the language spoken by distant ancestors as the "authoritative word":

> The authoritative word demands that we acknowledge it, that we make it our own; it binds us quite independent of any power it might have to persuade us internally; we encounter it with its authority already fused to it. The authoritative word is located in a distanced zone, organically connected with a past that is felt to be hierarchically higher. It is, so to speak, the word of the fathers. Its authority was already acknowledged in the past. It is a prior discourse. (p. 342)

114

However, as Basso (1988) in the case of place names, Kroskrity (2009b) in the case of Tewa narratives, and Kroskrity (2012) demonstrate, this authoritative influence of past speakers is consistently recontextualized and re-interpreted by actors in the present. In all of the above-mentioned ways, the notion of Yiddish as an endangered language within secular contexts may actually be a strategy in order to sustain interest in the language.

Outside of the classroom, in both Jewish-oriented and mainstream media, Yiddish is frequently described in relation to words like "living", "alive?", "dying", "not dead", and "revival". In this way, it is possible that the invocation of Yiddish as an endangered language within secular contexts may be a strategy to sustain interest in the language. Shandler (2008) emphasizes,

> that the trope of Yiddish as dying or dead has endured for over a century despite sweeping changes in the fortunes of the language, positive as well as negative, makes it clear that this notion has become an autonomous cultural phenomenon; like a specter, it has taken on a 'life' of its own. (p. 182)

### 6.6.1 Boundaries between a Metalinguistic Community and a Speech Community

Over the course of my fieldwork, I heard a number of statements by metalinguistic community members about the Hasidic Orthodox community's use of Yiddish. In some cases, the individuals were constructing the other without very much contact with them. In addition, there is a sense among non-Haredim (non-ultra-Orthodox Jews) that Haredim (ultra-Orthodox Jews) are Jewish but not part of mainstream Jewish communities (S. B. Benor, personal communication, May 18, 2012). For example, one individual stated that some Hasidic Jews believe that Yiddishists (Yiddish activists), members of what is here called the Yiddish metalinguistic community, are engaging in idol worship. Another instructor talked about popular English books such as *Just Say Nu* and *Born to Kvetch* by the author Michael Wex, and said that the books were not credible because much of the information came from his experiences in a Hasidic household. This same instructor,

who provided a sheet with Yiddish language poetry terms and grammatical rules for nouns and definite articles for a Folks-Grupe session, noted at the bottom of the sheet that "Today's *khsidim* – Hassidim-tend to ignore these rules" (November 18, 2009).

At a conference presentation another Yiddish instructor in New York said that his students went to a Hasidic community to practice Yiddish but the Hasidic Jews were not interested in helping the students practice. Also, a fellow student in the six-week Yiddish language intensive program in New York made the distinction that Hasidic Jews "*trachtn in Yidish ober nisht vegn Yidish*" (think in Yiddish but not about Yiddish), which relates directly to Shandler's (2008) notion of postvernacularity. Also, during one conversation class in New York, we spent over an hour discussing the Hasidic versus secular use of Yiddish and then analyzed a contemporary Hasidic Yiddish text focusing on its non-standard forms and grammatical errors, to be discussed in detail in example 6.3 below. In these ways, metalinguistic community members consistently discounted Orthodox Hasidic communities' use of Yiddish in a variety of ways.

**Example 6.1: "Often it's diluted with English or- or Hebrew but not always"**

During an interview with Lauren, a middle-aged Yiddish instructor, I asked her what the state of Yiddish would look like in her ideal world fifty years from now. Within her answer she mentions the use of Yiddish within the Orthodox community. However, what is striking is her ideology of linguistic purism when she discusses this community's Yiddish being "diluted with English or Hebrew". This seems to be a fairly common ideology regarding the Yiddish within the Hasidic Orthodox community, as other examples will demonstrate. Though Yiddish has historically taken on and incorporated aspects of the languages around it, as it is continuing to do in America and Israel, many within the secular Yiddish-speaking world do not view these historical trends and current trends as the same phenomenon.

116

**Example 6.1**

**Lily (interviewer), Lauren (interviewee)**

LIL:   In an ideal world for you - let's say fifty years from now - what would the state of Yiddish look like - if it were like fantasy, ideal?

LAU:   What we haven't talked about - what I haven't talked about of course is the obvious yknow elephant in the room, which is the Orthodox community, where you have upwards of a million people speaking - many of them, not all of them, many of them - speaking Yiddish in a natural way. The kids are learning it in a natural way. Often it's diluted with English or- or- Hebrew but not always. They- they have a pretty good grasp of it. They even have a journal in it. They have kids' books written in it. Mystery novels and so on and so on.

Lauren exhibits an appreciation of the fact that there are great numbers of speakers in these communities, and highlights that they are using it in "a natural way". This is an implicit contrast to those students whom she teaches in classroom settings, who are all *choosing* to engage with and learn the language. In addition, her response acknowledges the community's texts, which demonstrate its use in a wide range of contexts. Interestingly, she specifically notes "kids' books", which would be in stark contrast with the *Yiddish for Babies* book discussed in detail in example 6.6.

**Example 6.2: "Grammatical Wrinkle"**

In example 6.2, taken from the second quarter of a UCLA first-year Yiddish class, the teacher and students had just been engaged in a fairly lengthy discussion of the grammatical distinction between *dos* (neuter the) and *a* (indefinite article) and adjective agreement. Many of the students were having difficulty with this concept. The instructor then moved to a discussion of the approach the Orthodox take for *dos* and *a*.

**Example 6.2**

**Lauren (instructor), Abbey (student), Sarah (student), Josh (student), Brett (student), Mark (student)**

```
01 LAU: As I said, not that this is gonna help you forhh theh
02      mohmehhnth but (0.2) um the great respected linguistuh Dovid
03      Katz who once guest taughtuh one of my classes here when he
04      was in town uh w- he- he went over this for the class. And he
05      said ((points to board)) this is gonna disappear. (0.2) This
06      distinction is gonna disappear. (0.5) In in inuh in Yiddish
07      but for now it's here.
08      (0.2)
09 ABB: What.
10 LAU: [It's gonna disappear.   ]
10 SAR: [As the language evolves?]
11 LAU: As as the language evolves. Cause cause the Orthodox don't use
12      it they don't bother with it.
13 ABB: Oh das or a?
14 LAU: Yeah. The distinction in in in modifying the adjective (0.2)
15      the distinction in modifying the adjective where you leave
16      the adjective ending blank (.) for neuter nouns (0.2) that are
17      indefinite,
18 ABB: Yeah.
19 JOS: It's just gonna become a.
20 BRE: It doesn't really serve any purpose. That's why I would just
21      (     )
22 LAU: It's just one of these wrinkles. It's just one of these (.)
23      grammatical wrinkles but we just need to know it. Like I know
24      I- I- it's been drummed enough into my head that a *sheyn meydl*
25      (pretty woman) is the only thing that sounds right. And I can't
26      sta:nd it when someone says a sheyne meydl.=
27 BRE: Huh.
28 LAU: Even though that's all that's probably the way you've all
29      heard it right? Those of you who've heard it.
30 ABB: Yeah.
31 LAU: But it's a sheyn meydl. And you- and it's it's it's in the
32      literature. I mean the the guys that wrote the women that
33      wrote heh Yiddish literature knew this rule. Uhm: ((nods
34      head)) yoh. But it's it's it's disappearing from speech. (.)
35      Where it is spoken.
35 MAR: They knew this rule but still violated it [or they wrote it]
36
37 LAU:                                           [No no no no no. ]
38 MAR: =correctly.
39 LAU: They wrote it correctly. Yeah.
40 ABB: So do the Orthodox write it correctly and just speak it wrong
41      or-
42 LAU: No. They uh I (0.2) yknow I haven't looked lately at their
43      their um they're uh getting better. Their journals are getting
44      better grammatically. They used to really not care.
```

```
45 ABB: Heh?
46 LAU: No. It just wasn't important. Grammar wasn't- It's kind of the
47      way Yiddish was when it was (.) modernizing. Yknow everyone
48      wrote in their own dialect in their own way if the dialect
49      had,- Some dialects don't even have dos. The Vilna dialect
50      doesn't have dos. Doesn't have neuter nouns. They're either
51      masculine or feminine. (0.2) So:uh a Vilna writer would only
52      write yknow with masculine feminine nouns. Then the language
53      became standardized it was taught in schools formally? And
54      people learned it correctly yknow learned it in a way that
55      everyone accepted. (0.3) So you have to realize that meant all
56      over the world. Right all over Eastern Europe and America
57      South Africa Mexico everywhere. Right.
```

In this example, the class moves from a grammatical issue to a discussion of the Orthodox and the teacher moves it back to past Yiddish usage. A student then moves the discussion back to contemporary Orthodox usage and the teacher again moves it back to past Yiddish usage. This shift from a grammatical issue to extended metalinguistic discussions of past usage of the language is a fairly common pattern within this and other Yiddish classrooms. At line 47, Lauren uses contrastive stress on the word "Yiddish", which makes it seem that what they had been discussing until point (Orthodox Hasidic Yiddish) is not in fact Yiddish. A similar ideological move occurs in example 6.3, taken from the Yiddish conversation class of a summer language intensive program. In addition, at line 34 "disappearing from speech" seems to provide Orthodox grammar as evidence that the language is changing in such a way that it will never look the same as the "correct" Yiddish spoken in previous centuries. Lastly, the instructor's discussion of the Orthodox not "bothering" with grammatical distinctions highlights an ideology that standard Yiddish has a grammar whereas Orthodox Hasidic Yiddish does not, held by many members of the metalinguistic community and expressed implicitly and explicitly in interviews and interactions.

## Example 6.3: "*Dos iz klal Yiddish (0.2) fun Williamsburg.*" ("This is standard Yiddish (0.2) from Williamsburg.")

Example 6.3 comes from an intermediate Yiddish conversation class during the YIVO summer language intensive program, toward the end of the summer program. At the beginning of

this class session, a number of the students began spontaneously discussing the secular and the

Orthodox Hasidic Yiddish communities. They focused on the differences in usage and ideologies

between the two groups, and one student shared his hypothesis that over time the two different

communities' Yiddish varieties would become so different that they would become mutually

unintelligible. This same student also expressed his feeling that the Yiddish of the Orthodox Hasidic

community is *beser* (better) and *interesanter* (more interesting) <u>to him</u> than that of the secular

community. After this lengthy discussion, the instructor began one of the planned parts of his

lesson, in which he presented an Orthodox Hasidic text in Yiddish. The text was an announcement

about procedures for hurricane evacuation. The teacher and students then analyzed the Yiddish used

in the announcement.

**Example 6.3a:**
**Itsik (instructor), Lily (student), Gustav (student), Yana (student), Julia (student)**

```
01 GUS: Dos is beser Yidishhehehehe?
01 GUS: This is better Yiddishhehehehe?

02 LIL: (hehe)

03 ITS: Un dos yoh.    Mir veln nisht redn vegn dem.
03 ITS: And this yeah. We won't talk about this.

04 LIL: (hehehehehe)

05 GUS: (hehehehehe)

06 LIL: Interesanter.
06 LIL: More interesting.

07 ITS: Dos iz klal Yiddish (0.2) fun Williamsburg.     Hehe=
07 ITS: This is standard Yiddish (0.2) from Williamsburg. Hehe=

08      =efsher.
08      perhaps.

((One student reads part of the text out loud. She and the other
students laugh after various lexical items that she reads.))

08 ITS: Dos. Ikh farshtey huricayne evacuatsie zoner trefer.
08 ITS: This. I understand hurricane evacuation zone finder.
```

120

```
09 YAN: Trefer is uh mit vos men gefine- gefin- gefint
09 YAN: Finder is uh with what one find- find- finds

10 ITS: Yoh.
10 ITS: Yes.

11 YAN: Yoh.
11 YAN: Yes.

12 ITS: Azoy meynt men doh. Mmhm. Ober me ken zen az dos
12 ITS: That's what is meant here. Mmhm. But one can see that this

13      iz ibergezetst fun anglish.
13      is translated from English.

14 YAN: Yoh. Un (vos/dos)
14 YAN: Yes. And (what/this)

15 ITS: A hurricane evacuation zone finder.

16 JUL: Vi tracker?
16 JUL: Like tracker?

17 ITS: Tracker. Tracker. Hm.

18 ( ): (  )

19 ITS: Tracker. Mmm. Tracker neyn. Dos iz a zone dos iz nit
19 ITS: Tracker. Mmm. Tracker no. This is a zone this is not

20      tracker. Dos iz a zone vos existirt shoyn in shtot.
20      tracker. This is a zone that exists already in the city.
```

At lines 01 – 06, once the students read the text they engage in play around the issue of whether it is in fact "better" or "more interesting" than the standard Yiddish they are learning in class. At line 07, the instructor plays with this by saying "This is standard Yiddish" and pausing before adding the increment "from Williamsburg". It is possible that he highlights "standard Yiddish" here because they frequently discussed the standard in class lessons. Williamsburg is an area of Brooklyn that is heavily populated by Yiddish-speaking Orthodox Hasidic Jews.

Once the student reads the first part of the text, the instructor expresses his ideology about the Yiddish variety in it through the juxtapostion of "I understand" at line 08 and "but" at line 12, thus marking the variety as relying on translation from English. The use of the contrastive "but" at

121

line 12 demonstrates that though the language is comprehensible it is not a true Yiddish variety. At line 15, he delivers the full translation of the phrase in English in order to establish the ease of translating it word-for-word, something which might be more difficult in the standard Yiddish they are learning in class. After this, Itsik also notes that the Yiddish version of "caught in a hurricane" in the text *iz a bisl anglish* (is a little English). By marking these phrases as translated from or a little English he displays his stance toward this (living) variety of Yiddish as something less than pure. This ideology is again expressed in example 6.3b, shortly after the completion of the discussion in example 6.3a.

**Example 6.3b**

```
01 ITS: Yeder mentsh vos darf zikh aroys tsutsien zikh tsubarikhtn
01 ITS: Every person that has to    (         )      report

02      bay an evacuatzie tzenter. Dos iz fun anglish. Zikh
02      to an evacuation center. This is from English. Zikh

03      tsubarikhtn (hot) nisht ken zen in klal Yiddish.
03      tsubarikhtn (has) can't be in standard Yiddish.

04 YAN: Vos meynt dos?
04 YAN: What does it mean?

05 ITS: To [report ] to.

06 YAN:    [Uh huh.]

07 ITS: Dos meynt  (    )
07 ITS: That means (    )

08 YAN: Meldn meldn zikh.
08 YAN: Report Report to.

09 ITS: Yoh. Meldn zikh. Genoy. Azoy volt me gezogt in
09 ITS: Yeah. Report to. Exactly. That is how one would say it in

10      Yiddish.
10      Yiddish.
```

Here again, the instructor marks a specific construction as coming "from English" and notes that it cannot be in standard English. Yana asks for a translation of the verb, which the instructor

provides in English ("to report to"). Yana then offers the standard Yiddish version of that same verb. This translation exercise privileges the standard Yiddish form while implicitly deriding the version from the Hasidic Orthodox text. Itsik then implicitly expresses his ideology that the Hasidic Orthodox language is not Yiddish but that standard Yiddish is by stating that *meldn zikh* is how one would say it in Yiddish.

After the students have finished reading the text out loud, the instructor asks the students what they notice about the language, other than the English. After Lily jokes that it is *interesanter (more interesting)*, another (Gal, who had hardly spoken until that point during the class) said that it is *shreklekh* (terrible) and *a catastrophe fun a shprakh* (a catastrophe of a language). He cited the fact that it is translated from English, has no grammar, and has no vocabulary. Gustav questions why the words and phrases from English are worse than those in Polish that were in the older literature they are reading for their other courses. Gal then reminds the class that Gustav loves Williamsburg, and that all of the Orthodox Hasidic newspapers use different languages from one another. He is thus attempting to prove that their language is without rules, and ends by saying that the language is *a vits* (a joke). S then discusses how it is ironic that the language in this text, that of native speakers, sounds to her like the language she used when she was a beginner learning Yiddish as a non-native speaker. Later in the discussion Itsik, cites the fact that the same word, cyclone, is written in three different ways in the same text. He then uses the same term *shreklekh* (terrible) to describe the language, since it seems to lack a standard even in the same text.

This example provides clear evidence from classroom interactions that the Yiddish of the Orthodox Hasidic community is problematized and questioned due to its perceived lack of rules, grammar, and vocabulary and its reliance on English. Through interactions like these the metalinguistic community members are from a distance constructing a vision of the Orthodox

Hasidic Yiddish-speaking community. In so doing, they are able to hold onto the notion of secular, standard Yiddish (which they sometimes refer to as just "Yiddish") as an endangered language.

**Example 6.4: "*Redt Yidish mit ayer Kompyuter*" ("Speak Yiddish with your Computer")**

The last example demonstrating the boundaries between the metalinguistic community and the speech community focuses on a Yiddish instructor's strategic invocation of Hasidic Yiddish as proof that the language is alive, providing an interesting counterpoint to the previous examples. In discussions with this instructor at a Yiddish Culture Festival in Palo Alto in 2010, I had told him that I was interested in the Yiddish language revitalization movement. Incidentally, this is a way to describe my research that I no longer use, for I have found that ideologies related to the language's vitality and endangerment can be highly charged. In response he told me that he's not revitalizing; he's just continuing. Then, at his workshop later that day he stated that he used to teach English and other subjects and was reborn as a Yiddish instructor, but not revitalized. During this workshop he stated that the "idea that it has disappeared is wrong. Bullshit".

He then strategically invoked the proliferation of Yiddish on the internet within Hasidic Orthodox communities in order to demonstrate the language's linguistic vitality. He went on to say that he "can't believe how much life Yiddish is showing" and encouraged the participants to "Yiddish [their] life up a little bit". In these ways, the notion of endangerment and his active refusal of this framed and were integrated into the materials he presented to the workshop participants. One example can be seen in the handout "*Redt Yidish mit ayer Kompyuter*" (Speak Yiddish With Your Computer"), with detailed vocabulary for a decidedly 21st century adaptation. Matched with his explicit denial of Yiddish endangerment his inclusion of these materials is an implicit rejection of the notion that Yiddish is dying. In this way, the battle between Yiddish's endangered vs. living status plays itself out in classroom dynamics themselves.

Interestingly, the expansion of an endangered language into media, the internet, and new domains is frequently used as an indicator of a language's overall vitality (as seen for example in factor 5 of UNESCO's 2003 document discussed above, see also Eisenlohr, 2004; Hinton, 2002 for discussions of language revitalization and new technologies). For example, Hale (2001) describes the use of the Australian aboriginal language Warlpiri in a local magazine, *Junga Yimi* (The True Word). In his discussion of the "manipulation of language ideologies" in Shoshoni communities, Loether (2009) highlights the importance of young learners using the language in a variety of domains, which has led to the publication of a bilingual poetry collection (Edmo, 2002). Bortnick (2001) describes the first year and a half of Ladinokomunita, the "first and only Judeo-Spanish correspondence list on the internet" (p. 3), and its "tremendous impact, not in reviving Judeo-Spanish for it was not dead, but certainly in awakening it from its sleep, invigorating it, and bringing its beauty and richness to the attention of the world" (p. 11).

As evidenced by these examples, the internet as an example of new media can serve its own metric in terms of language vitality and endangerment. When Yiddish is used on the internet within Hasidic Orthodox communities it is a mode of communication. However, within these communities there are controversies about internet use, for members have diverse ideologies about modern inventions. On the other hand, within the metalinguistic community the selective use of Yiddish on the internet (generally in English-medium websites) is primarily a mode to valorize the language and counteract notions that it is "endangered" (cf. Sadan, 2011 for a discussion of practical vs. symbolic uses of Yiddish on the internet). These distinctive approaches to the language's use in new domains are one demonstration of these two communities' diverse use of and ideologies toward the language.

### 6.6.2 (Counter)-Discourses about Yiddish Vitality and Endangerment

### Example 6.5 Titles of Articles about Yiddish in Jewish and Mainstream Media

The online and text-based Yiddish metalinguistic community is more far-reaching than the contexts of classrooms or festivals, as individuals with even a passing interest in Yiddish language and culture are exposed to these materials. Over the course of my fieldwork, a fairly large collection of English articles about Yiddish in both Jewish and mainstream media emerged. These articles primarily focused on theater, music, festivals, Yiddish classes, and Yiddish literature, and their titles are listed below.

**New York Times**
"A Yiddish Revival, with New York Leading the Way" (Chan, October 17, 2007)
"Yiddish Resurfaces as City's 2$^{nd}$ Political Language" (Roberts, July 20, 2009)
"No Need to Kvetch, Yiddish Lives On in Catskills" (Berger, November 25, 2010)
"Reviving a Yiddish Group with Memories and Music" (Sullivan, December 4, 2010)

**Jewish Daily Forward**
"Youngish, Yiddish, and Staging a Revival" (Shapiro, July 3, 2009)
"The 'Revival' is Over, Let's Talk Continuity" (Kafrissen, June 25, 2010)
"The Mameloshn is Still a Mother Tongue" (Newman, June 25, 2010)

**Other Online Publications**
"'Shvitz' and Other Things Yiddish Make a Comeback" (Nussbaum Cohen, July 18, 1997)
"Yiddish is Dead, Long Live Yiddish" (Spiro, September 16, 2009)
"Yiddish Theater: Keeping the Language Alive" (Fine, August 3, 2010)
 "Yiddish is Alive and Well in the Hebrew City" (Paraszczuk, October 8, 2010)
 "Yiddish Club Reignites Passion for *Mame-Loshn* at Yeshiva University" (February 25, 2011)

A number of titles use a Yiddish word (e.g., kvetch, mameloshn, shvitz). In the case of kvetch (complain) and shvitz (sweat) these are words used in English and therefore not requiring translations. Mameloshn means 'mother tongue' and refers to Yiddish itself. These titles therefore provide further examples of dimension 5 discussed in the introduction, in which Yiddish is used selectively within the Yiddish metalinguistic community. More importantly, in many of these articles,

one can find the overwhelming use of words including "revival", "lives", and "alive" in their titles below).

The use of lexical items related to language vitality indicate a counter-discourse about Yiddish as dead or dying, and an effort on the part of the authors to offset dominant discourses about the language's endangerment. However, their overwhelming use in conjunction with Yiddish also serves to call attention to the question of the language's vitality, which may in fact undermine their attempts to push away from the notion of language endangerment. In fact, languages that exhibit objective levels of language vitality are not generally discussed metalinguistically in these ways, and do not have words like "revival", "lives", and "alive" consistently correlated with them. It seems that such lexical items only accompany those languages that have been established in other contexts as "endangered".

**Example 6.6: "The Pitselech Are Reviving Yiddish"**

In one of the articles published November 13, 2009 in the Jewish Daily Forward, "The Pitselech Are Reviving Yiddish" by Devra Ferst, the author discusses a new book called *Yiddish for Babies: A Language Primer for Your Little Pitsel*. What is interesting about the book itself is that it is evidently meant for secular audiences. During fieldwork in New York in 2010, one weekend I went with a group of other Yiddish students to Eichler's Religious Articles Books and Gift, a bookstore in Borough Park, Brooklyn. Borough Park is an area of Brooklyn that is heavily populated by Hasidic Yiddish-speaking communities.

In addition to religiously oriented texts in Hebrew and English, this bookstore had hundreds of books in Yiddish for Hasidic children. The bookstore is one of approximately fifteen primarily for the Hasidic population in a radius of less than two miles; these include Beigeleisen J.S. Books and Religious Articles, Seforim ('books' in Hebrew) World, and Mishor Publishing. A book like *Yiddish for Babies*, written almost entirely in English, therefore demonstrates the fairly large

127

disconnect between the two communities. One can also notice in the article itself that the author provides italicizations and translations of only some words (*alter kochers*, *geshrei*, *ongepotchket*) but not others (bubbe, nu, shayna meidel), demonstrating her belief that Jewish readers as the target audience would be familiar with some words that have become common in English usage (cf. Benor, 2011; Benor & Cohen, 2011).

The article itself and responses to it on the Jewish Daily Forward website demonstrate many of the conflicting ideologies surrounding Yiddish endangerment.

**Example 6.6**

Oy *gevalt*, Yiddish is dying. It's listed in the Encyclopedia of The World's Endangered Languages, which means that an entire generation is at risk of not knowing such phrases as nosh, *shmear, pitsel* and *shayna maidel*. Indeed, where would we be as a people without some good bagels and *shmear*? Unless *bubbes, zaidies* and *alter kochers* (grumpy old men) keep teaching us Yiddish words, they might be lost to the *dreck* (garbage) forever.

Leave it to Grammy Award-winning art director and graphic designer Janet Perr to help bring Yiddish back into vogue, first with the quirky book "Yiddish for Dogs," and now with her new book, "Yiddish for Babies: A Language Primer for Your Little Pitsel." The picture book teaches 29 Yiddish words with entertaining pictures of babies in various states of "Yiddish": playing with a dreidel, letting out a *geshrei* (scream) and looking *ongepotchket* (gaudy) decked out with excessive amounts of jewelry.

The book's aim is to help babies understand their parents when they start yelling things like, "Stop kvetching, dinner will be ready soon," which the book reads next to a mother with a hot pot in her hand.

The book also teaches babies to look and act just like their *bubbe* in Boca. "*Nu*? Did you hear we're having a playdate later?" one baby says to another on an outdated flamingo-colored rotary phone. "Yay," the other baby responds, through a key-lime phone.

But the book is not just for babies. One of the last pages teaches parents the phrase *yiddisher kop* (smart person). So they can kvell: "Baby's on her way to Harvard. She's a real *yiddisher kop.*"

This article espouses an ideology that Yiddish is endangered but an ironic view that books like this will help save it. Throughout the article, the author intersperses Yiddish words, some with translations and others without. Her discourse creates a distance with those focused on the death of Yiddish, by making light of the language's fate and focusing on its humorous aspects. In addition to the article itself, one can read the online responses to it from a variety of Yiddish metalinguistic community members in the United States (below).

### F.H. (Friday, November 6, 2009)

Gevald! This book and others like it would be the final nail in the coffin of Yiddish, if mameloshn weren't alive and kicking strongly enough to knock the stuffings out of such travesties!

a shande un a kharpe fun an amhoritste! feh!

### S.Z. (Saturday, November 7, 2009)

Travesty, schmavetsy. If it's yiddish, it's OK by me! And I know I speak for the others in our yiddish club: Sura Leah, Rochel Chana, Dasha Riva, Golda, Shifra, Masha, Malka, and Leyaleh!

### R.H. (Tuesday, November 17, 2009)

Is anyone else getting tired of Yiddish being presented as a funny little language, or rather jargon? Yiddish means a lot more than peppering one's English with (poorly spelled) Yiddish expressions for funny effect. It represents centuries of Ashkenazi culture and a rich literary tradition, not only comedy.

### Y. (Tuesday, November 17, 2009)

Yiddish is not an endangered language. The haredi community maintains a distinct Jewish society, speaking its own language. It is not dying out. For the non-haredi Jews, Yiddish is no

longer their language. It's finished, and all these newspaper headlines using the term "revival" are simply misleading and untrue. "Revival" means that people who did not speak Yiddish as a native language are now raising Yiddish-speaking children. That is not happening. One's real language is the language of one's society - not merely the language of one's parents. There is no Yiddish-speaking society. The American Jews are English-speakers, because they are part of the larger American society - not a distinct society like the (Yiddish-speaking) haredim or the (Hebrew-speaking) Israeli Jews. Yiddish is for American Jews a hobby (a Yiddish weekend, a Yiddish play, a Yiddish book of jokes) or an academic pursuit. A revival of Yiddish would mean a shift in identity. It would mean the end of an American identity and the re-adoption of another identity. It would mean the undoing of a century of assimilation. Since Jewish identity is of secondary importance to most American Jews, Yiddish will remain merely a hobby (and in the next generation, there will be some other hobby).

## I. (Friday, November 20, 2009)

A revival of Yiddish would mean a shift in identity. It would mean the end of an American identity and the re-adoption of another identity. It would mean the undoing of a century of assimilation." Y., I must take exception to your cut-and-dried concepts of identity and assimilation. Actually, a revival of Yiddish would represent a great benefit to the American Jewish identity, because that is in fact where most of us come from. America is a pluralistic society. In my family we are observant, but by no means haredim. I, my wife and three young children speak Yiddish every day. Not just a few cutesy expressions, but real, fluent Yiddish. About 90% of our communication with the children is in Yiddish. It is neither a hobby nor an academic pursuit, it's our family language. My wife and I are American born, we speak English well (in fact we both have advanced degrees in English literature), but the twins learned their English in school. In no way does this mean the end of an American identity, but for us it is a more interesting and integral identity. When you say "It would mean the undoing of a century of assimilation," I find this a fairly meaningless abstraction. Both my grandfathers came to the US approximately a

century ago. I knew both of them (my grandmothers both died young), as well as many other relatives of their generation. I also knew my parents and those of their generation -- I had lots of aunts, uncles and cousins. Both the assimilation or resistance to assimilation are quite palpable in our experience, not some vague force totally beyond our control. Nor do I regard assimilation as totally negative, we are American and that means a great deal to us. Lets better call it acculturation. So Jewish identity can evolve and still have continuity, because our family histories are at the core of of our Jewish identities. Admittedly all this takes some effort, and I don't claim it's a mass movement, but we are by no means alone in the USA (or Europe, or Australia) in raising our children in Yiddish.

F.H.'s post, like many Yiddish organizations' emails, is bracketed by Yiddish at the beginning and the end. He begins his post with the untranslated Yiddish word *Gevald*, which is the standard spelling of *Gevalt* (used in the original article in combination with *Oy*). (*Oy*) *gevald* means Heaven forbid. His embedded correction (Jefferson, 1987) and lack of translation to English immediately demonstrate his authority on the language. His contradictory post adamantly states on the one hand that Yiddish is vital and on the other that books like these would be the end of the language. In addition, he imbues the language, which he endearingly refers to as mameloshn (without a translation), with agency and active abilities. He is offended by the book author's use of post-vernacular Yiddish surrounded by English words, which he seems to believe is not truly Yiddish. Lastly, he ends with a common Yiddish phrase *A shande un a kharpe fun an amhoritste. Feh!*, which means a shame and a disgrace from a heretic. Ick! In so doing, he continues to demonstrate his expertise while simultaneously displaying his negative stance toward the book's contents.

Unlike F.H., S.Z. believes that any type of Yiddish usage, even that in the book, is acceptable and admirable. She adds further authenticity to her comments by listing the Yiddish/Jewish names of the women in her Yiddish club. In addition, her use of the reduplicative "schm" provides an

131

additional Yiddish flavor to an otherwise English post. R.H.'s ideology focuses on the fact that Yiddish is not just funny but is much deeper than that since it symbolizes generations of Ashkenazi history culture. Interestingly, this resonates with some of the sentiments I heard among other metalinguistic community members, who were frustrated that many Jews and non-Jews have fetishized Yiddish into a humorous language only. She also mentions poor spelling, which demonstrates an orientation toward standard forms of the language that are not frequently found in general usage.

Unlike the article or the other responses, Y. acknowledges the Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) community's usage of Yiddish to demonstrate that the language is not endangered. He also complicates the notion of a secular Yiddishism, since he is reading the Jewish Daily Forward and is participating in the metalinguistic community though he is not secular. His post focuses on the identity politics involved in Yiddish usage, and the ways that it has served and continues to serve as a mode to distinguish Jews from non-Jews and from other Jews. He highlights the contradictions involved in using words like "revival" and shows the many ways that Yiddish is a hobby for many American Jews (see chapter 7 for further discussion of Yiddish as a hobby). This post therefore underscores the intricate relationship between identity and language use across diverse groups.

Finally, I. responds directly to Y.'s post, taking a negative stance toward much of what Y. had said. I. (who is not a member of a Hasidic community) states that he speaks Yiddish at home with his children as their "family language". He highlights that he is not alone in this effort, emphasizing the ways that Yiddish can and should be part of many American Jews' conceptualizations of their identities. These five responses provide a sketch of the complexities and ambiguities involved with the notion of Yiddish vitality and endangerment in contemporary United States society.

## 6.7 Conclusions

As discussed in the previous examples, the case of Yiddish does not fit neatly into existing endangered language paradigms since there are distinct communities engaging with Yiddish in very different ways. In order to examine secular engagement with Yiddish it has therefore become necessary to consider practice-based approaches to language vitality and endangerment to complement the objectivist checklists and factors described above. Through a detailed examination of both interactional realities and discursive strategies the issue of endangerment can itself be understood as an ideology to which members may or may not orient. Furthermore, for the Yiddish metalinguistic community members themselves one can consider the context-bound nature of endangerment as one way to understand their experiences with and interest in the language as its meanings shift in the 21$^{\text{st}}$ century.

# CHAPTER 7

## A PERSON-CENTERED APPROACH TO YIDDISH AS A HERITAGE LANGUAGE

The Hebrew words you have to memorize those, so with an aging memory that's difficult.
-Esther, older adult "third year beginner" Yiddish learner

"Using the label *heritage* itself has been challenged by many and has been regarded as extremely negative - even offensive – by some and counterproductive by others" (Van Deusen-Scholl (2003, p. 216)

### 7.1    Introduction

This chapter analyzes person-centered interviews to examine Yiddish learners' and teachers' complex relationships with the heritage language, underscoring the role of narrative in creating selves and communities (Johnstone, 1996; Johnstone, 2001; Ochs & Capps, 2001; Zigon, 2008). In so doing, it seeks to broaden current approaches to heritage languages and place secular engagement with Yiddish into the ongoing conversation about heritage language learners' motivations and goals in language learning. It examines the choices and discoveries associated with Yiddish language learning in addition to the age-specific language ideologies, Yiddish as a hobby, affective-laden symbol, and tool. It demonstrates the ways that language learning motivations are continuously shaped by language ideologies. Chapter 8 examines in more depth some of the threads discussed here by analyzing in detail five person-centered interviews with Yiddish heritage learner Deborah. The detailed examination of these participants' interviews provides a valuable complement to the discourse analytic-based investigation of interactions across multiple contexts.

Between February 2009 and January 2011 I conducted person-centered ethnographic interviews with ten Yiddish learners and teachers who participated in Yiddish classes within university and/or community-based contexts. The interviewees included one undergraduate student, two graduate students, a middle-aged student, a middle-aged teacher, and five older adult learners. They range in age between twenty-one and seventy-seven. All of the interviewees, except for one, identified themselves as culturally and/or religiously Jewish. Those who identify themselves as

culturally Jewish see themselves as part of the cultural group of Jews and may engage in Jewish traditions, holidays, and rituals. They also may identify themselves in contrast to those who are more religiously observant. Those who identify themselves as religiously Jewish participate in these as well, and also see their daily lives as informed by Jewish texts and traditions.

In the majority of the interviews the participants noted their previous experience, or in many cases lack thereof, with Yiddish language and culture and Yiddish source languages. They then described the choice(s) they made later in life to (re)connect with Yiddish by taking a course, either through a university program or through a community-based organization. Many of them also noted the process of discovery they experienced during the Yiddish courses, in which they learned unexpected information about themselves, their families, and Jewish culture more broadly. Interestingly, very few of them have continued any sustained engagement with the language after taking Yiddish courses. In this way, their involvement with the Yiddish metalinguistic community has been temporally bound.

This chapter's primary focus is an examination of the common ideologies among Yiddish learners of diverse generations as well as distinctive age-specific ideologies associated with the language and the language learning process. These differences were primarily based on age and also generation from immigration/Yiddish proficiency. All generations share an ideology of the language as an affect-laden symbol, feeling a sense of distance from an 'authentic' version of the language and its native speakers. However, this ideology manifested itself most acutely in the middle-aged and older adult community members. The younger generation shares an ideology of Yiddish language as a tool, and the older generation shares an ideology of Yiddish language as a hobby. In addition to discussing the age-specific ideologies about the language itself, this chapter also focuses on older adults' ideologies about their age as a barrier to the language learning process.

**7.2 Heritage Languages**

**7.2.1 Heritage Languages in the Contemporary World**

Brinton, Kagan, & Bauckus (2008) emphasize the importance of theoretical and empirical efforts to grasp heritage learner realities and needs. Similarly, Valdes (2005) and Montrul (2010) recognize the specific profiles of heritage language learners as a "different breed" in order to best serve them within pedagogical settings. They challenge researchers and practitioners to acknowledge the presence of and providing a strong pedagogical toolkit for heritage learners, a relatively new category of language learner that has emerged due to high levels of immigration to the United States in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Unfortunately, the working definitions used in much of the research on heritage language learner populations presume some prior linguistic knowledge on the part of the students. In the case of Yiddish, however, this is frequently not the case. In general, the trend has been that over time Yiddish proficiency in the United States has been decreasing (Cohen & Benor, 2009, p. 2). This resonates with Carreira & Kagan's (2011, p. 42) assertion that "beyond the third generation, few HL learners retain a functional command of their language (Fishman, 1991d; Silva-Corvalan, 2003: Veltman, 2000)". Students may feel a connection to the language because their grandparents spoke it or their family was originally from Eastern Europe. But, due to its 'endangered'-like status within secular contexts, students have rarely heard the language spoken in their homes or in other settings. But, many have heard Yiddish loanwords in English beyond those used in general American English (cf. Benor, 2011; Benor & Cohen, 2011). Therefore, this research begins with a broader heritage language definition for Yiddish and a social constructivist approach to this research, in order to best capture the realities for learners in Yiddish classrooms.

**7.2.2 Defining Heritage Languages**

Heritage language scholars are engaged in an ongoing debate about the most appropriate

definitions of "heritage language" and "heritage language learners". Polinsky & Kagan's (2007) broad versus narrow definitions provide a useful typology. The broad definition, "emphasizes possible links between cultural heritage and linguistic heritage" (p. 369) while the narrow definition corresponds to Valdes's (2000) conception of heritage speakers as "individuals raised in homes where a language other than English is spoken and who are to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language" (Polinsky & Kagan, 2007, p. 369). As an example of this broad definition of heritage language and complementing the work of other scholars including Valdes (2001), Carreira (2004), and G. Cho, K. Cho, & Tse (1997, p. 106), He (2010, p. 66) writes that "in North America, the term *heritage language* has been used to refer to an immigrant, indigenous, or ancestral language that a speaker has a personal relevance and desire to (re)connect with (Cummins, 2005; Fishman, 2001; Wiley, 2001)".

He's (2010) definition is especially relevant for individuals of various ages within the Yiddish metalinguistic community. For example, undergraduate and graduate students in university-level Yiddish courses may not have heard Yiddish spoken at home when they were younger, but the language may have a "personal relevance" and the learners experience a "desire to (re)connect with" the language. Older adults in (for example, evening) Yiddish classes may have heard Yiddish spoken at home when they were children and may therefore fit into more traditional definitions of heritage language learners, discussed below. However, this fairly broad definition, in contrast with those focused more explicitly on language proficiency in specific domains, would apply to them as well. Therefore, this definition resonates with the experiences of several generations of Yiddish language learners in the contemporary United States.

### 7.2.3 A Social Constructivist Approach to Heritage Languages

This chapter and the dissertation as a whole consider heritage language learning from a social constructivist perspective, a view that "sees sociocultural dimensions such as identities, attitudes, and

motivation as accomplishments (outcomes) of linguistically encoded acts and stances" (He, 2010, p. 72). This approach first considers what it means to know an HL (He, 2010)

> not merely to command the phonetic, lexical, and syntactic forms in both speech and writing, but also to understand or embrace a set of continually evolving norms, preferences and expectations relating linguistic structures to multifaceted, dynamic contexts (Polinsky & Kagan 2007). (p. 73)

It also examines how the heritage culture relates to the HL, focusing on the ways that acquisition of linguistic forms occur in conjunction with socialization into appropriate modes of comportment. Lastly, it considers what constitutes evidence of learning, such as culturally meaningful practices across contexts, both in formal settings such as classrooms and in informal settings such as homes and in communities.

A social constructivist approach also considers participants' own roles as agents in socializing themselves and others within communities of practice (Lave & Wegner, 1991; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1992). In their discussion of situating learning in communities of practice, Lave and Wegner (1991, p. 29) note "learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community" Hutchins (1995, p. 289) conceives of learning as "adaptive reorganization in a complex system". It is essential to consider these perspectives on situated learning within communities of practice in this examination of heritage language socialization within the Yiddish metalinguistic community.

### 7.2.4 Heritage Language Socialization

As discussed in the dissertation introduction, the language socialization paradigm focuses on "socialization to use language and socialization through the use of language" (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, 163). Ochs & Schieffelin (1984, p. 264). Recent research within heritage language contexts

138

(e.g., He 2001, Friedman 2010, Lo 2004, Park 2008) has been informed by the language socialization framework and therefore considers some of the social and pragmatic functions of discourse within the heritage language classroom. For example, He (2001) investigated a "preference for ambiguity" within two Chinese heritage language classrooms, using a "linguistic-anthropological and conversation-analytic perspective that aims to synthesize cognitive and sociocultural approaches by considering language development as largely originating in social interaction and shaped by cultural and social processes" (He 2010, p. 75). In addition, Lo (2004) examined the ways that "evidential marking in Korean interaction is a social act through which interlocutors morally evaluate others" in a Korean heritage language school. As He (2010, p. 77) highlights, researchers "need to attend to the sociocultural complexity of HL development". Therefore, the present research considers both heritage language socialization and person-centered ethnographic approaches to be most fitting.

### 7.2.5   Heritage Language Research Methodologies

In terms of methods, these approaches move beyond information gained through large sample surveys, proficiency testing, self-reports, and even linguistic autobiographies. Few studies have provided a "sociocultural picture, life, and habitat of a particular heritage language" (A. W. He, personal communication, July 20, 2010) (for exceptions see He, 2001; Lo, 2004; Friedman, 2006). This project is therefore unique in its focus on specific interactional practices and in-depth interviews within heritage language learning contexts.

In their case study of Korean-American heritage language use based upon surveys that included "biographical, language ability, and attitude questions", Cho, Cho, & Tse (1997, p. 106) conclude that "respondents have both family- and career-related reasons for developing their HL, including the desire to improve communication with parents and relatives, to develop closer associations with the Korean-American community, and to expand career options". This study focused primarily on responses to two questions, one asking the respondent to explain why they are

139

interested in learning Korean and the second that asked them "to recount their experiences in interactions with other Koreans as they related to the respondent's own Korean language ability" (Cho, Cho, & Tse, 1997, p. 107). Though the results of this study are remarkable, the study design and the survey's structure and questions do not allow for a fuller, broader picture of the language learner's life experiences. As discussed by He (2010, pp. 68 – 70), other studies (e.g., Gibbons & Ramirez, 2004; Jia, 2008; Kondo-Brown 2005) use methods such as closed- and open-ended questions, grammaticality judgment tasks, self-assessments, and proficiency tests to assess heritage language learners' abilities. Such approaches in many senses presume fairly straightforward decision-making processes and life trajectories. However, both social constructivist and person-centered ethnographic approaches provide a more complete and complex view of heritage language teaching and learning matched more closely to individuals' real-life experiences.

## 7.3 A Person-Centered Ethnographic Approach to Heritage Languages

In addition to considering heritage language learning within educational settings from a social constructivist point of view, this research incorporates a person-centered ethnographic approach (Hollan 2001) to heritage language research. As Levy & Hollan (1998, p. 333) emphasize, person-centered interviewing can provide a concrete method to "clarify theoretically and empirically the nature of the relations in various communities – and various *kinds* of communities – between individual members of the community and their historical and current sociocultural and material contexts". Kleinman & Kleinman (1991, p. 277) emphasize that for experience-near (emic) ethnographic approaches "a central orienting question…should be to interpret what is at stake for particular participants in particular situations". They also highlight that "experience may, on theoretical grounds, be thought of as the intersubjective medium of social transactions in local moral worlds" (p. 277).

Furthermore, Wikan (1990, p. 16) emphasizes, "We need accounts of real persons engrossed in real life situations to enable us to begin to grasp what are people's compelling concerns". Zigon (2008, 146) defines narrative as "those stories persons tell one another (or themselves) in order to create and maintain meaning and order in one's (or a community's) life". Narratives complement what researchers may find within interactional contexts, allowing participants themselves to describe their own histories and present.

The person-centered approach therefore provides a concrete method to examine individuals' lived experiences as they may relate to language learning. It foregrounds the learner's experience as opposed to beginning with pre-determined cultural constructs or learner profiles, in an effort to grasp the multi-faceted motivational factors involved in heritage language learning. The present research therefore examines the ways that Yiddish may or may not fit into the current heritage language learning paradigm, through a focus on the variety of personal, emotional, and cultural connections Yiddish learners and teachers have to the language. In this way, it expands the current understandings of heritage language and heritage language learners to include a wide variety of (sometimes disparate) personal and cultural meanings attached to learning the language and becoming part of the heritage community.

As Talmy (2010, p. 128) highlights, researchers should engage in "greater reflexivity about the interview methods that qualitative applied linguists use in their studies, the status ascribed to interview data, and how those data are analyzed and represented". Linguistic anthropologists have long been interested in the ways that interviews and their distinctive metacommunicative patterns can complement data collected through other established methods such as participant-observation and recordings (cf. Briggs, 1984; DeFina & Perrino 2011). The present data analysis highlights the usefulness of an approach informed by person-centered interviews.

Consistent with the person-centered interviewing approach, I began most of the interviews by saying something like "Tell me about your life.". In this way, the participants were able to express their own meanings, perspectives, and understandings about their lives in general and their relationships with Yiddish. This approach provides unique and valuable information about motivation to teach and learn the Yiddish language. The interviews I conducted complemented the interactional data collected in other contexts, therefore providing a broader picture of participants' lives and the phenomena that are the focus of this dissertation. Unlike other studies that rely exclusively on either interviews or on interaction as the sole sources for language ideologies, this study includes both so that they may inform one another. In this way, we can better grasp what the participants know, do not know, and are attending to in their interactions with others.

## 7.4    Language Learning Motivations

Hinton (2011, p. 309) provides a comprehensive summary of the primary program goals, learner motives, expected future relationship of the learner to the language, possible influence on the language being learned, and considerations for teaching for foreign languages, majority languages, heritage languages, and endangered languages see. In this study, the interviewees' motivations to (re)connect with Yiddish can be categorized broadly into instrumental, integrative, affective, and intergenerational motivations. Gardner & Lambert (1959, 1972) and Gardner's (2001) research on instrumental and integrative motivations for second language learning focuses on the practical reasons for learning a language (instrumental) and the desire to become part of the target language community (integrative).

I have added affective and intergenerational motivations to this list because many of the Yiddish learners noted a strong emotional component in their drive to learn the language, in addition to a strong determination to connect with their families and previous (though frequently not future) generations of Jews. For many learners, though not all, these affective and

142

intergenerational motivations intersected. Intergenerational motivation could be primarily seen as a motivation to actually speak with one's living ancestors who know Yiddish. However, it can also be an imagined intergenerational link, in which participants seek to connect with past, lost generations (whether or not they are those of their own families) through reading texts, watching plays, or learning music. For some graduate students, for example, they may have an intergenerational motivation but not necessarily an affective one.

Dornyei (2005) and Dornyei & Ushioda's (2009) more recent examination of language learning motivations focuses on the L2 Self, including the Ideal L2 Self, Ought to L2 Self, and L2 Learning Experience. Though this framework seems to capture some of the complexity in more traditional L2 learning contexts, it is not as useful for this set of interviewees since they are members of a metalinguistic community primarily focused on the language as a symbol (and not as a tool). The following sections provide some examples of interviewees' past experience with the Yiddish language as a backdrop for their ideologies about and motivations to learn the language. The next chapter focuses on Deborah, a Yiddish learner in her fifties, as a case study of a Yiddish heritage learner.

**Community Members' Experiences with Yiddish: Past, Present, and Future**

In considering the extent to which learners see their engagement with the language as a mode of integrating into communities, it is important to analyze how much previous experience they had with the Yiddish language. Many of the interviewees highlighted their (lack of) previous experience with both Yiddish language and culture, in addition to Yiddish source languages (including Hebrew and German). In all of the cases analyzed here, learners noted their limited exposure to Yiddish and their subsequent choice to engage with it later in life. Throughout their language learning experiences, students discovered a great deal, which in many cases connected back to situations and contexts they remembered from their pasts.

143

One older adult learner, Mark, emphasized that his parents occasionally used Yiddish with one another and therefore he heard it quite a bit when he was growing up. This was extremely common for many second-generation children of Yiddish-speaking immigrants:

> The two of them [parents] would on occasion use Yiddish in talking to one another. And not just when they didn't want the kids to understand…just part of growing up living as first generation as immigrants. They would use that language. And so I used to hear a fair amount of Yiddish it wasn't talked all the time but I heard a fair amount. I learned Hebrew…so I became pretty fluent in Hebrew and still retain some of that fluency not quite enough. All this- and of course my life continued to be- my language continued to be informed by Yiddish. It's hard not to I mean as a Jew especially in a big city with a big Jewish population and being active in Jewish thing I kept on getting my language informed in one way or another by Yiddish. And decided I wanted to make a more formal approach to its learning. And so that's what um caused me last year to make that choice.
> (Mark, December 10, 2010)

This learner highlights his previous (primarily receptive and indirect) exposure to Yiddish, in addition to his active use of Hebrew, and then moves to a description of the decision and choice involved in engaging with Yiddish learning later in life.

Another older adult learner, Ruby, noted that she did not hear very much Yiddish growing up, and that they were not encouraged to learn the language. When she decided to learn Yiddish later in life she also started learning how to read the Hebrew characters, which she did not know how to do previously:

> My parents were both Jewish but highly assimilated. I heard very little Yiddish growing up. My mother would speak it with her mother but there was <u>no</u> encouragement for us to learn it at all. In my father's family they did not speak Yiddish, they were Hungarian Jews. There was very little Jewish background in our home…No Hebrew, not a word. Went to

144

> Sunday school but it was a joke. No bat mitzvah. Started learning Hebrew when I learned
>
> Yiddish. But somehow it clicked I don't know why. I love writing it I just find it so much
>
> fun. I'm getting better. (Ruby, January 13, 2011)

Here again one can see the very indirect connection this learner had to the Yiddish language, and her later choice to learn it in a more formal setting. For her, Yiddish is a hobby that is "so much fun". It gives her pleasure and very little stress, and she enjoys the challenge.

Sean, the undergraduate student interviewee, discussed the fact that he had Yiddish-speaking ancestors and in fact a family member who was a famous poet, which provides an interesting perspective on his status as a "heritage" language learner. He highlighted his previous exposure to German in high school as a primary motivation for taking Yiddish at the university: "I'd taken German in high school…I knew Yiddish was in large part Germanic…I didn't know the percentages at the time….I figured that Yiddish would probably be a little easier than German" (Sean, December 15, 2010). It is unclear why he believed that Yiddish would be easier than German, other than perhaps an implicit assumption that it had fewer formal features or grammar to learn. He also noted, "You hear Yiddish phrases in Hollywood movies – schmuck and whatnot. It's a great language to curse in so that's another reason to take Yiddish". His previous exposure to Yiddish was therefore not in the home but through English-medium media in which Yiddish was sprinkled.

These three interviewees, of varying ages and previous exposure to Yiddish and its source languages, provide a valuable perspective on students' motivations for choosing to learn the language later in life. For many of them their earlier Yiddish contact, or lack thereof, helped to shape the processes of discovery they experienced while in the classes themselves.

## 7.6 Age-Specific Language Ideologies

As mentioned previously, language learners' motivations are shaped by their ideologies. Throughout the person-centered interviews, it became evident that individuals' age and relationship to generation of immigration molded their views about the language and its role in their lives.

### 7.6.1 Yiddish as Hobby

One ideology about Yiddish that was common among many of the older adult learners was that of Yiddish language as hobby. During their interviews, a number of these learners noted their distant, indirect, and frequently receptive exposure to the language in their earlier years, through parents, grandparents and other relatives. They frequently highlighted their lack of interest in the language and Jewish religion and culture more generally in their youth, and an increased interest in their later years. Interestingly, for some older adults their interest in Yiddish is coupled with a newfound curiosity about Jewishness more generally. This is in contrast to some younger people, who see Yiddish culture as a means of alternative engagement with Jewishness separate from religious life and Jewish establishment institutions. Below are two examples of these older adult learners' discussions of their choices to learn Yiddish:

> I retired in 2000. And one of the things I always wanted to do was to learn Yiddish. I was exposed to it as a child bu- and I find it familiar as I'm learning it that things are kind of falling into place I'm sure better than absolute beginners and my husband speaks German…I get a little out-of-class practice. (Rita, December 22, 2010)
>
> I retired three years ago and was looking around for something to keep my mind active and put some structure in my life. I thought about taking French, Spanish, and then I hit on the idea of Yiddish. Wouldn't that be fun? So that's what I did. (Esther, December 9, 2010)

The experiences of Rita and Esther, in addition to other older adult Yiddish learners, highlight the fact that age and stage of life is one factor that organizes the Yiddish metalinguistic community. In

146

both of these cases, the interviewees note that Yiddish was something they chose to engage with after their retirement. In the first case, the interviewee notes that learning Yiddish was something she 'always wanted to do', demonstrating her sustained affective link with the language. The second interviewee 'hit on the idea of Yiddish', expressing her sense of distance from the language and desire to reconnect to it later in life. All of the older adult learners noted that Yiddish was a fun, enjoyable way to keep their minds active while learning something to which they felt a mysterious connection.

### 7.6.2   Yiddish as Affect-Laden Symbol

Frequently, both the middle-aged and older-adult Yiddish metalinguistic community members noted the affective connections they had to the language and culture. This was, however, not as prevalent among the undergraduate and graduate student interviewees. Interestingly, many of them again highlight the processes of choice and discovery involved in engagement with Yiddish. The following quotes provide examples of these emotional relationships to the language:

I don't know if I chose Yiddish as much as it chose me. (Lauren, February 18, 2010)

> And it [intensive Yiddish program] changed my life because for the course of the five days or something so five six days I like rediscovered Yiddish in a very meaningful way and fell in love with it. I fell in love with the literature. Even though I had been exposed to it in different ways all my life, including Yiddish theater and many aspects of Yiddish culturally because my parents- it was my parents' milieu. I hadn't really grasped how extraordinarily rich this culture was. And the other- so I got a whole new respect for it as well as a- an awareness of the joy that people get when they start making a little bit of an effort to know more about it. (Lauren, February 18, 2010)

In both of these quotes from Lauren, the issue of agency is especially striking. Using the passive voice she notes that she 'had been exposed' to Yiddish and she then moves to discuss how

important it is for people to make an effort in order to know more about the language. In the second quote, she acknowledges the great power Yiddish has had in drawing her in to learn more.

> as soon as I heard Yiddish I went oh, that's what I like. It's not the German, it's Yiddish…I don't whether…it's - like whether I heard my grandmother 'cause I think a lot of times what people are drawn to are things from their childhood because they felt safe then and so hearing it or experiencing it now give you that s- that feeling of safety like that you don't have anymore when you're an adult. (Deborah, April 27, 2010)

In her discussion of safety and childhood Deborah voices a fairly common theme, that of a "naturalized familiarity" (Kroskrity, personal communication, May 4, 2012) with the language; it was part of one's childhood and therefore indexes a soothing familiarity. Deborah is uncertain about what exactly has drawn her to study Yiddish at this stage of her life, and also in passive voice notes 'what people are drawn to'. This uncertainty and lack of agency is in fact pervasive among many of the interviews.

My parents traveled on their Yiddish…I don't want that universality to be lost. (Ruth, December 2010)

Ruth sees her engagement with Yiddish as a way to combat the historical circumstances that have affected the language, also relating her experience to that of her parents (similar to Lauren). Unlike her parents (only one generation ago), she does not feel that she can use the language in her own travels. By choosing to learn the language she believes she is doing her small part to slow down its demise. For these middle-aged and older adult learners, engaging with Yiddish provides a mode to engage affectively with previous generations and to take an active role in learning about all that the language symbolizes for them both personally and historically.

### 7.6.3 Yiddish as Tool

Interestingly, though the younger learners did not discuss affective motivations as much as the older learners did, they did frequently highlight the instrumental aspects of learning the Yiddish

148

language. In this way, they primarily adhered to an ideology of Yiddish as tool. For example, one graduate student Yiddish learner noted that in order to study Jewish labor unions learning Yiddish meant that she could "walk the walk", while the other realized that she "[had] to learn Yiddish" in order to be a Jewish historian:

> I wasn't going to be able to poke around without the Yiddish. It just became very clear that I was going to be missing huge pieces of this [Jewish labor union] story without the Yiddish…if you're gonna talk about this all the time you gotta walk the walk and started taking Yiddish with Lauren um did a Yiddish Folks Group fellowship um with some other sorta kids my age - I'm 29 - who were interested in Yiddish and wanted to know more about the sort of social cultural world of Yiddish. (Lindsay, January 10, 2011)

> I realized what language were the survivors of the Holocaust speaking and might be narrating their own stories in and it was Yiddish…it was difficult for me to make that transition. Become a Jewish historian and have that background in Eastern Europe. And it makes me a better Jewish historian I think. And I have to learn Yiddish. And so I went that summer to the YIVO program at NYU. And it was my first Yiddish learning experience. And felt completely drowned in Yiddish for that six weeks. It's intense. So that was how I came to study Yiddish. And I had a colleague in the history department who told me that when I started studying Yiddish it would open up new worlds for me. (Sarah, December 10, 2010)

In both of these cases, the learners take on a somewhat detached stance from the objects of their study, seeing Yiddish as a means to increased credibility within scholarly circles.

Overall, it is striking to note the generational divide between middle-aged and older adult learners, who primarily had some form of receptive exposure to Yiddish in their younger years and chose to (re)connect with the language later in life due primarily to affective motivations, and

149

younger learners, who primarily see learning the language as a practical element of one's academic career focused on studying previous Jewish communities.

## 7.7.    Ideologies about Age and Language Learning

In addition to the specific language ideologies associated with each group of learners there was an interesting meta-age awareness among all of the adult learners, which they discussed frequently in relation to their difficulty with learning the language. In some ways, this could be interpreted as a new version of the critical period hypothesis, in which the older the learners got the more and more *critical* they were of their ability to learn languages! More broadly, I believe that this is related to a notion that when something is in danger members of a community become increasingly 'meta' about it. This is what I have found within the Yiddish metalinguistic community (and other 'endangered' language communities), in which the more individuals sense that the language is in danger the more it becomes a topic of conversation. As the older adults increase in age they may feel that they themselves are in 'danger', which is why they age became a common topic both among themselves and with me as the interviewer.

I here provide a few examples of these discussions of age as related to language learning. Some of the primary themes are that learning and retaining the language are more difficult because of their age, that learning keeps one young, and that learning the language is much easier for the younger generation. These interviews provide an important complement to some of the interactional data, in addition to demonstrating dimension 3 (age and corresponding knowledge as highly salient features).

> I'm not as a old as the older members of the class, but I'm not as young as the younger members of the class, and so I'm part of this huge boomer generation that's holding on -- it's kind of like we're in the old age of youth. And I just think that learning keeps you young. It's exhilarating to me. (Rita, December 22, 2010)

150

I really had no Jewish education and I just thought it would be fun, because the language sounded fun to me, to take Yiddish and that's why I signed up. Oh I love it, we all love it. The problem is that we're all of a certain age so none of us can remember very much, we learn vocabulary but we can't retain unfortunately. But we're getting better and we can speak a little and read little and write a little, so we actually have progressed, we adore our instructor, and none of us are expecting to get PhD's in the subject of anything, so we just kind of poke along and have a good time of it. We actually have a study group that meets in the summer and we'll go to each other's homes and we'll go through the lesson a little bit, we like it, it's just fun. We do it for the fun and we enjoy it. (Esther, December 9, 2010)

Well, I feel that I certainly would be better able to interpret, and I mean interpret in a broad sense, interpret any Yiddish expressions which were expressions in anyway in arts, literature and anything, I would be better able to interpret them and put them into necessary framework for their interpretation. I feel I'd be much more faster with that than I was when I started. On the other hand could I seek to have a Yiddish conversation with a person, who really spoke fluent Yiddish and think that I could succeed in that? I don't think so. I don't think so. If I were 55 years younger when I studied French in college, I studied that for a year, I would probably think I could transfer that knowledge, but it gets tougher -- it gets tougher, to transfer that knowledge into being able to carry on a meaningful conversation. Now at my age I feel that, I probably would not be able to make that transfer. (Mark, December 10, 2010)

So, I sometimes get a little discouraged and think geez maybe I'm just way too old, but then I think I'm enjoying it and so what – so if I never get proficient the world is not going to come crashing, right. (Ruby, January 13, 2011)

Because we didn't feel ready to go to the second, we would want to take the first one but it was exactly the same as the one we had, where he has really moved on with us, and

151

so the new people coming in sort of had to catch up which they did very nicely because they are young. They learned as we say they learned in three weeks when it took us a year or more and because -- well Rita is in her early 60s I think. And Esty and and I are in our 70s. and I are in our late 70s, we're both 77. So it's nice that there is young people that are staying with the class, and we enjoyed that very much, this couple that got married, this younger couple, and then there is a fellow who looks like he is a and he knows Hebrew, so he is in there and Lila Logan she is very nice. So I think Lila is closer to our age maybe. It's a wonderful group of people, and I really just did enjoy it, as I said, I wish it were more often. (Ruby, January 13, 2011)

Though some of the younger learners also noted the difficulties they had in learning the language due to a variety of reasons, they did not mention that their age had something to do with it. For example, the undergraduate student Sean noted that "It's amazing how long it can take to write a single sentence in a foreign language when you are not familiar with it" (December 15, 2010) and Sarah, one of the graduate student learners, noted "And as I prepare myself to read or listen to things by native speakers, their grammar use is quite intense as native speakers tend to do…And I don't feel I'm necessarily prepared to take those on" (December 10, 2010). For these younger learners, a meta-age awareness was not present as it was in the older generation.

## 7.8    Conclusions

Language learning motivations are shaped by individuals' language ideologies. Therefore, a given person can exhibit multiple and shifting motivations for learning a language. Due to learners' diverse histories and reasons for learning Yiddish, this chapter has considered each individual from a person-centered perspective. This approach has allowed complexities to emerge, which would not have been possible through other methods. Through the person-centered examination of Yiddish learners, this chapter illuminates age-specific language ideologies within the Yiddish metalinguistic community. These range from conceptualizing Yiddish as a hobby to an affect-laden symbol to a

tool. In this way, the language serves distinctive functions in the lives of these different generations of learners.

Many of the older adults also expressed ideologies about their age and language learning, which evidenced a heightened meta-age awareness. This is related to dimension 3 discussed in the introduction, age and corresponding knowledge are highly salient. None of these learners had passed or planned to pass the language on to future generations; instead, they primarily saw their engagement with the language as a mode to establish an intergenerational link to the past. This intensified meta-age awareness may in fact be an artifact of their anxieties that they are the older adults but they do not have the knowledge to pass down to generations to come. However, they all had strongly-held ideologies about the value of the language, something to which they have been continuously socialized during diverse interactions within the Yiddish metalinguistic community.

Lastly, this chapter has demonstrated how "heritage" is itself an ideology to which members may or may not orient, based on their individual experiences, choices, and discoveries over time. Though academics may apply the term to language learning cases like these, some individuals use the term while others do not. For example, in their short bios, some Folks-Grupe participants noted the importance of the fellowship in helping them to connect to "their own cultural heritage", "language that is my heritage", and "Jewish heritage". While perhaps some of the learners interviewed here see themselves as having some form of a Yiddish heritage, they also simultaneously feel a great sense of distance from even their own family histories as they relate to the language. This approach-avoidance aspect of the language learning process therefore shapes interactions in the classroom. On the one hand, they feel a great responsibility to learn about their collective past; on the other hand, once they learn more they realize how much they already do not know.

In some cases, this results in a learner's increased fascination in the language and culture. And in others, a given learner may become disillusioned at how much there is to comprehend

153

coupled with a constant sense of moral obligation to pass down the language, which may cause them to retreat from their "heritage" status. The next chapter provides a holistic picture of one middle-aged learner (Deborah), who was interviewed five times to capture her shifting motivations, ideologies, and actions related to Yiddish over her life cycle.

# CHAPTER 8

## "NOT REALLY NOSTALGIA BECAUSE I DIDN'T HAVE IT THE FIRST TIME":
## A CASE STUDY OF DEBORAH, A YIDDISH HERITAGE LEARNER

### 8.1    Introduction

As a case study for the complex and sometimes shifting connections members of the Yiddish metalinguistic community have to the language, an analysis of five person-centered interviews with Deborah, a Yiddish student in her fifties, are presented here. Deborah's story of her personal connection to the language and culture is complex, multi-faceted, and dynamic. Her relationship with the language and community were informed by experiences both in childhood and adulthood, and deepened over time due to a number of events. In her discussions about her family, cultural and religious background, linguistic background and proficiency, body image, and community, it becomes evident that the language has now become a multi-layered symbol of cultural heritage, community, and acceptance in Deborah's life. Many of the themes she highlights resonate with those of other interviewees presented in chapter 7, to be explored further in the conclusion.

In addition to illuminating the interviewee's life story the person-centered interviewing process sheds light on me as the interviewer in addition to the relationship between interviewer and interviewee. My identity as a Yiddish learner and (young) researcher who has been interested in the Los Angeles-based Yiddish community of course had an effect on what Deborah shared and how she shared it. One example of this, which I describe in detail below, is her consistent sensitivity to recipient design during the interviews themselves.

Deborah was born in Chicago, grew up in Evanston, Illinois, and has lived in Iowa, North Carolina, and Boston, Massachusetts. She moved to Los Angeles thirty-five years ago to work in the entertainment industry, and has lived here ever since. I conducted five person-centered interviews with Deborah between April and June 2010. Over the course of the interviews we talked about a number of central issues in her life, including her family, work life, traveling, weight, cultural and

religious background, and identity. We have known one another for approximately three years through our involvement in the Los Angeles Yiddish cultural scene, which facilitated an easy interviewing process throughout those months.

During the person-centered interviewing process, I learned a great deal about Deborah as both an individual and as one instantiation of a number of cultural constructs. As mentioned above, I had met Deborah within a certain context. But, I did not want that context to define the content or process of the interviews. In utilizing the person-centered approach, I wanted to ensure that Deborah had a genuine opportunity to express and explore the meanings in her own life. She therefore discussed a number of issues that at first may not have seemed relevant or related to my primary research interest of Yiddish as an endangered heritage language. However, what is striking is that through her exploration of these other issues I did in fact learn a great deal about her connection to the Yiddish language and community, much of which I may not have learned had I not used the person-centered interviewing approach. For example, I discovered that Deborah's body image and self-confidence associated with her appearance is in many ways intimately connected to her involvement within the Yiddish-speaking community.

During the first few interviews I wanted to be sure that she had an opportunity to define the meanings in her own life and I therefore did not explicitly bring up the topic of Yiddish until the fourth interview. However, as I looked later at the five interviews, I realize that a number of relevant issues began to come up even in the first interview. This chapter highlights the multiple components of Deborah's connection to Yiddish language, culture, and community through an examination of the following throughout different life stages: family life, cultural and religious background, linguistic background and proficiency, body image, and the role of community. What is especially interesting is that many of these issues are discussed in diverse ways over the course of all of the interviews. Therefore, the discussion of each category will in fact be integrated throughout the various sections.

156

As discussed previously, frequently heritage language research is accomplished through the distribution of large sample surveys, proficiency testing, self-reports, and linguistic autobiographies in order to construct learner profiles. The present research instead seeks to augment the sociocultural perspective on classroom discourse practices through a person-centered approach to heritage language teachers and learners. A person-centered approach to heritage language research foregrounds the learner's overall life experiences as opposed to beginning with pre-determined cultural constructs or learner profiles. In Deborah's case, the story of her *personal* connection to the language and culture is complex, multi-faceted, and dynamic.

## 8.2    Family Life

During our first interview, Deborah talked quite a bit about her family background. She discussed her father, mother, three brothers, grandmother, and nanny (Nursy). What is especially interesting in this first discussion of her family is the distance she seems to have felt both from Judaism and from the European, Yiddish-speaking culture of her grandmother.

> It was the fifties yknow. It was a very assimilated culture…It was a very Christian town. And um- But my father he had a very strong Jewish identity. But he was a golfer an avid golfer so we didn't go to synagogue at all. Maybe high holidays when my grandmother was living - my grandmother was an immigrant. And she spoke Yiddish but yknow she died when I was maybe pre-teen. So I have no re- I have no memory of that culture other than the fact that she had an accent and always smelled like onions. Yknow she always was eating these exotic f- herring and onions on glass plates. She kept kosher in our home. She kept her own kosher food. Her food was always shiny yknow it was always slick on the top so I always kinda yknow. So I had three brothers and my mother was a brilliant woman but quit when she got married…(April 13, 2010)

In the above excerpt, Deborah highlights the broader cultural context in which she grew up, in terms of religion, culture, and time period. It is also interesting to note that she has "no memory of

157

that culture" except for the food that her grandmother ate. These themes of lack of memory and food continue to surface throughout the other interviews as well. The way she describes her grandmother keeping kosher indicates that the rest of her family did not, which is one symbol that demonstrates their level of religiosity. The contrast between her grandmother's way of life and her family's also reveals some of the differences between first-generation immigrants' lives and those of their children and families.

Deborah continued to talk about her family, describing in great detail how close she was to one of her brothers (Robert), who passed away at age 53 in 1996. She noted that "we were like identical twins separated by 8 years…if you looked at us from the back we had the same body". She highlighted that he "enabled (her) to have a life" through convincing her father that she should be able to do certain things like take German instead of French in high school or go to parties she would not normally be allowed to go to. Deborah felt extremely lucky to have a brother with whom she had such a close relationship. This also meant that she felt a great and tragic loss when he passed away.

> I always felt sorry for people that didn't have a relationship with a brother like that because - it was like throughout my life like when I would screw up like if I screwed up at work…and I just remember I could hardly sleep but I thought well no matter what happens I just have to remember Robert loves me yknow. This is the one thing that isn't going to change no matter how badly I just messed up…This may be very humiliating and embarrassing but I have that person that loves me no matter what and I can count on him and so he was he was really really important to me. (April 13, 2010)

Deborah then shared the fact that her brother passed away of a brain tumor. She then noted that her husband Murray's brother also died of a brain tumor and that her husband himself had a brain tumor that he ultimately recovered from. She believes that this shared experience in their pasts was one of the things that brought them together. (She also notes in a later interview that it was

158

interesting that neither one of them had been married once they met later in life and the fact that both of them had taken care of their relatives and in a sense put their lives on hold. This seemed to be another thing that brought them together.) Within this first interview Deborah had an opportunity to talk about her family on her terms, highlighting certain things and eliding others. Though I did not realize it at the time, a number of the issues she raised during this first interview encounter were revisited and expanded upon in other interviews. In addition, interestingly many of these issues had a direct relationship to her choosing to study Yiddish later in life.

As I was interested in finding out about how she and Murray met, I asked her about this during our second interview. I have met and interacted with Murray before because he is also part of the Yiddish community. But, I had sometimes wondered if they had met at an event/class or if they were already together beforehand and then one brought the other to the events. In this way, person-centered interviewing allowed me to gain personal accounts about what had previously been an exclusively public display of their relationship within a certain context. As Wikan (1990, p. 17) has noted, "we should follow people *across* domains to discover what are the meaningful connections *they* perceive and the distinctions that *they* draw". Interestingly, her description of how they met also became the first time that she talked in detail about how she entered the Yiddish cultural community in Los Angeles approximately twelve years ago.

> We've actually probably have been to several events at the same time but we didn't meet. I know one for sure which was a Yiddish film called The Divan. Did you ever see it? [No.]…They had a fundraiser for her [the filmmaker] and that's when I met Adam Mosley the first time and Murray was definitely there but I didn't meet him…I met Lauren Baylor the first year of the Institute the Winter Institute when it was two weeks. It was great the Doubletree in Santa Monica and that was just the greatest. And Leslie – Leslie I still have the phone number Leslie was my teacher. (April 27, 2010)

Deborah continues to talk about how she met a "sweet, little" man at the Institute who was once the treasurer of the Los Angeles Yiddish Culture Club. He invited her to come to the Culture Club, and Deborah notes that "it was a little scary yknow going there" since there was a rule about not speaking English. During the second or third year of the Institute, she was asked to be on the California Institute for Yiddish Culture and Language's Board of Directors and in the Yiddish play that would be performed at the Institute that year. Judith, a former director of high school theater, was directing the play *Mentshn* (Men) by Sholem Aleichem. In high school, Deborah had been heavily involved in drama. After studying hard, she was able to memorize the lines and give the "false impression" that she could speak Yiddish better than she actually could. As a result, Judith invited her to a meeting of the *Leyenkrayz* ("reading circle"), a fairly exclusive reading group attended by advanced speakers and readers of Yiddish. She noted that in many ways this was "like social promotion". It was at the meetings of the *Leyenkrayz* that she truly had an opportunity to meet and get to know Murray.

Deborah and Murray began talking after the *Leyenkrayz* meetings and Judith helped them along because he was fairly shy. Deborah describes having wanted Murray to "make his move" for a long time before it actually happened:

> We were- It was here at the house that we were- and we were doing reading a lot of Yiddish and so and so we were looking up…we were hanging over a Weinreich [a famous Yiddish-English dictionary] yknow naturally and I think I put my hand on his shoulder and it was like yknow just like the slightest contact and he whipped around and kissed me. And it was like woooh Gohhhd because we had been like ohmygod it had been like six weeks maybe of talking and talking and talking and walk me to the car and nothing. I'm going oh god is this guy ever going to make a move?! Yknow so over Weinreich he made his move. (April 27, 2010)

160

Deborah also notes that she and Murray have a point/counterpoint, for he is Galitsianer (from Austria-Hungary) and she can be considered Litvak (from Lithuania or Russia). This distinction has manifested itself historically in different accents, foods, and ways of life. In the present day, this distinction is not as salient but members of the Yiddish community discuss it when relevant. In relation to the Galitsianer/Litvak distinction for Deborah and Murray she said, "I think we're more Litvak…the only place I've ever heard is Courland and that's very Riga [Latvia]…and that's really the only place that's been named. I only have one family tree one branch and that's my mother's mother". Here again, Deborah demonstrates a lack of knowledge regarding her cultural background (evidenced in part by her use of the epistemically downgraded "I think"). This partial knowledge about her cultural heritage is an ongoing theme throughout a number of interviews.

Deborah specifically highlights the fact that their wedding, which occurred somewhat late in both of their lives, was in fact for the Holocaust survivors that are part of the Yiddish community:

> I don't know I feel like we had our wedding for- for the survivors. I feel like we had the wedding for Rivke [the then president of the Los Angeles Yiddish Culture Club, a Holocaust survivor]. And we had the wedding so that we could- so that we could have it when we could part of this community. And it would really- the witnessing was really about yknow making this promise in front of this community and choosing this community of Yiddishists [Yiddish activists] and making it yknow it was an incredible Yiddish wedding. The *ketubah* [marriage contract] was in Yiddish and everything was Yiddish. And it was- it was just uh so so great. (April 27, 2010)

This community is made up primarily of older adult Holocaust survivors and others originally from Europe. It is quite striking that this community, which served as a witness to her wedding ceremony is one that Deborah felt only a marginal connection to in her younger years. Furthermore, it is interesting that Deborah consistently interweaves information about her family and her cultural

background. Through her description of all that led up to her and Murray getting married, one can get a true sense of her gradual integration within the Los Angeles Yiddish community.

Through her "Yiddish marriage" to Murray (using "Yiddish" as an adjective) she was in some sense able to claim a cultural heritage that had seemed foreign and strange to her years before. She actually recalled in another interview that she had been dating a wonderful non-Jewish guy that she met at Overeaters Anonymous later in life and the negative feelings she had when he would say "Jew". She didn't like that he "didn't give us the 'ish'" (May 11, 2010). Based upon this, she realized that she was not going to marry him. In this way, one can see that even though Deborah felt some distance from her Jewish background there were certain instincts she had about the person she wanted to spend her life with (as evidenced by her use of the collective "us" and not simply "me" above). This interwoven nature of family, cultural heritage, and Yiddish is maintained as she recounts the principal reason for becoming connected to Yiddish fourteen years ago.

> And there was something so magical about the whole Jewish thing was really yknow really powerful. Yknow how I got to the whole Yiddish thing was really when my brother got brain cancer. Because when he died and the year before he died I was so sad that the only thing I could read was Holocaust literature. It was the only thing that was sadder than my life yknow and and and yet it was really kind of the same pain. So I kind of like yknow it's like s- it's like um sometimes when I'm really depressed I get my legs waxed because it fucking hurts so much I can't do it when I'm in a good mood but I'm already in pain. So do whatever do your worst. How much more- how much worse could I feel?...So I just started reading Holocaust – tons of Holocaust biographies and autobiographies and some fiction even and then I started shul [synagogue]-hopping. (April 27, 2010)

Deborah's deeply felt tragic loss proves to be the reason for her access to a world that in many respects felt quite new to her. She has built relationships with many of the community members over the years. Over time, this new community has become like a family, supporting her through her

162

wedding, providing opportunities for her to be a support to others, and even noticing when her weight fluctuates.

What is interesting is that Deborah provided a different framework for her connection to Yiddish when I asked her during the fourth interview to talk with me about her "relationship with Yiddish". When I asked her this question, she first talked about her father and grandmother. She recounted, "I remember I think the first Yiddish [I] ever heard was yknow my father saying *oy oy shiker iz a goy* [oy oy the non-Jew is a drunk], which he used to announce whenever he saw a drunk on the street in Chicago" (May 11, 2010). She then attempts to remember if there was anything else he ever said, only recalling a story of his using it as a common language at a hotel during his time in Europe in the 1960's. But, she did not remember any use at home when she was a child.

In relation to her grandmother, she said "I'm sure [she] was fluent…I assume that she was fluent in German too so I don't really know what her differentiation is and then um so when did I ever hear any? Not much yknow (just words) in English language until I started reading Holocaust literature and started going shul [synagogue]-hopping…". Once she read Holocaust literature in English she began to be opened up to a world that she could access more directly by learning Yiddish. Her choice to connect with the established Jewish community by going to different synagogues also opened her both to Jewishness more generally and to Yiddish (used by one particular cantor who had previously been in the Yiddish theater).

One can see the uncertainty Deborah expresses about her family's connection to Yiddish (evidenced through her use of epistemically downgraded items including "I assume" and "I don't really know"). In many ways, Deborah's experience is consistent with that found in research focused on "cross-generational language shift within immigrant groups…[which] has been well documented, "primarily through the use of large sample surveys and proficiency testing" (Tse, 2001, p. 678). Deborah's distinctive presentations of information related to Yiddish is fascinating, for one can

163

compare her responses to questions focused more explicitly on Yiddish as opposed to those questions related to family more generally, during which the topic of Yiddish emerges more organically. In this way, one can appreciate the varied perspectives on the "same" event in an interviewee's past that person-centered interviewing allows.

## 8.3 Cultural and Religious Background

As demonstrated in the previous section, Deborah's descriptions of her grandmother, brother, and husband frequently uncovered a web of information about her cultural heritage and identity. In one interview for example, she portrayed her grandmother as having blue eyes and having "those real Germanic rolls – strange rolls on top of her head". Similar to her use of the word "exotic" used when depicting the food her grandmother ate, she here uses the word "strange" to describe the rolls on top of her head (referring to hair buns). Here again, then, one can see the distance Deborah has felt (and may still feel) from her grandmother and the culture that she seems to have embodied.

During the fourth interview, Deborah also described the distance she felt from the Jewish religion and culture as she grew up, saying "she didn't have a Jewish identity as a kid and not as an adult" (May 11, 2010). As discussed above, she grew up in a Christian town in the 1950s. She primarily had non-Jewish friends. Her negative reactions to Hebrew school and synagogue in particular in many ways embody what the heritage language researcher Tse (1998a; 1998b) has termed "ethnic ambivalence/evasion (EAE), which occurs primarily in childhood and adolescence, [and] is associated with generally negative feelings toward the ethnic group" (Tse, 2000, p. 186). Tse (2000, p. 187) notes that EAE is "characterised by Phinney's model [of adolescent and adult ethnic identity formation] as 'a lack of interest in or concern with ethnicity', or where 'views of ethnicity [are] based on opinion of others' (Phinney, 1990).

Other researchers have described this stage more specifically as a period of active distancing from or rejection of the ethnic culture, while preference is shown for the dominant culture and attempts are made to join that group (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1983; Cross, 1978; Kim, 1981)…this stage can be viewed as a continuum, which on one end is a lack of interest in the ethnic culture and, on the other, active rejection of the ethnic heritage". Deborah actively rejected her ethnic/religious heritage, which she discusses in relation to her beginning to take Yiddish classes as an adult:

> I took a class at U. of J. [University of Judaism, now American Jewish University]. I'm really not sure why but it was very difficult for me 'cause I didn't have any Hebrew. And 'cause I had fought bitterly to avoid going to Hebrew school. I had gotten to- downgrade to just Sabbath school so that I was confirmed at fifteen. That was really a farce. I was very um- yknow I was very hostile to the synagogue when I was a teen. Mostly 'cause I was like the drama major and this was taking away my time from yknow Saturday morning. I never did my homework so I was always in trouble and- and homework always seemed to me to be the same that same- that same chapter the Maccabees…I don't know it was just so boring I could not bear it. I couldn't do it. I think that was the first time I thought well maybe I'll die before tomorrow so why would I why bother yknow. Maybe tomorrow will never come…so I was really hostile to - and that was a conservative synagogue and I was really hostile and I used to hide in the bathroom as we all marched down to services…so I kind of got kicked out. I called them all hypocrites. I had a big scene in the class and stomped out…I don't know what my problem was except that I was just so alienated and none of my friends really were Jewish. (May 11, 2010)

She went on to describe that she had spent a lot of time in the church with her nanny Nursy and she wondered why everyone did not just become Unitarians since "everybody hates Jews". She thought that perhaps she would be okay since she could "pass" and concluded that she truly did not have

any "patience for the whole religious issue". When she discovered the language later in life, she found that this ethnic ambivalence/evasion in her youth made it especially difficult for her to learn the Hebrew characters she would need to read Yiddish. Here again, it is striking to note that Deborah shared information about her previous connection (or lack thereof) to her religious, cultural and linguistic heritage spontaneously through a discussion of her relationship with Yiddish. It also highlights the fairly complex associations individuals can have in both their past and present.

In the second interview, Deborah also describes the fact that in her teens she attempted to reconnect with some aspects of her cultural background, specifically her German heritage. She began to ask her father questions like "Did we have any family in Europe?" and "Did we lose anyone in the Holocaust?" (April 27, 2010). She recalls feeling that World War II and the Holocaust seemed like an extremely long time before and that she did not understand why her father would still become angry and yell when she would ask these questions. He also would not have a German car, which did not make sense to Deborah at the time. Deborah then recalls a period when she "wanted to reclaim [her] German heritage". Here, she repeats something she mentioned in her first interview when simply describing her grandmother's appearance, the fact that her grandmother had blue eyes.

> They're not going to take that away from me. I'm German too yknow. My grandmother had blue eyes. We were German - first and Jewish second and just 'cause *they* say you're Jewish well screw you I'm a German as much of a German as you are…I was a Yeke I'm sure. So I really was a militant German-phile…I really thought German w- I went to all the German movies and German music and German music from the thirties and I was into all this German stuff. And then it's like it's kind of like as soon as I heard Yiddish we- oh! That's what I like. It's not the German - it's Yiddish. And I kinda realized and I don't know whether it's like - whether I heard my grandmother…(April 27, 2010)

166

Throughout this part of the interview and in others, Deborah focuses on her grandmother as a symbol of her cultural heritage but does not actually remember very many specific details about her. Deborah goes on to describe how her nephew Joel, the son of her brother Robert, is a "Germanphile", having married a German girl and living in Germany now. She wonders whether he got this from her or if it was simply "spontaneous Germanation". Deborah's interest in her past and subsequent revelation that Yiddish and not German was the true symbol of her cultural heritage truly highlights the dynamic and changing meanings language, culture, and family background can have throughout individuals' lives.

The shifting nature of cultural meanings is also highlighted in her second interview (after her description of reading Holocaust literature when her brother passed away), during which Deborah explains her journey of discovery when she went "shul [synagogue]-hopping" later in life. In the fourth interview she stated her belief that she "decided that [she] wanted to be a Jew" (May 11, 2010). This part of the interview in many ways demonstrates the complex and shifting processes involved in any life decision and the fact that choices do not always proceed in a linear fashion. In her adult life, Deborah realized that she "wanted to be one more Jew, not one less Jew" (April 27, 2010), a trope that she repeated multiple times in multiple interviews. She felt that she had "such a crappy Jewish upbringing other than the fact that we were taught we were better than everybody else". She finally realized that she was "already like one less Jew" and that she had done this all by herself; she then decided that she would do something about this.

While trying out different synagogues, she was exposed to a specific cantor who had previously been in the Yiddish theater. She finally realized that

> really kind of the Yiddish part was much more and that I could be I could be a secular
> Jew. I c- there was this whole rich culture that I could worship instead of having to worship

167

Yahweh or something yknow…it gave me my Jewish identity…and so it was- it was kind of

eye-opening". (April 27, 2010)

In recognizing that she could be a Communist, a Jewish laborer, a Feminist, and anything else she wanted to be in addition to being Jewish, she had an epiphany about her Jewish identity. She finally began to embrace and relate to her Jewish cultural heritage, and this was directly related to her newfound ability to not be religious but secular. The Yiddish language and community provided a cultural context in which she could feel completely comfortable.

Lastly, in her discussion of the languages she has learned (discussed in further detail in the section below) foregrounded the complex family dynamic regarding immigration and assimilation. She describes having grown up speaking English and remembering that her mother always said "Don't be a greenhorn." (May 11, 2010). "Greenhorn" is a somewhat derogatory term for a newly arrived immigrant. She also recalls her father being part of a number of Jewish businessmen clubs and the fact that "we definitely only ran in Jewish circles". Though she discusses the fact that two of her brothers marrying non-Jews was from her father's perspective a "terrible, terrible tragedy", she also remembers that it was not that important if her friends were Jewish. In addition, she recalled in another interview that "being in synagogue made her mom want to jump out of her skin" (April 27, 2010). These varied comments demonstrate a complex ideological picture as she grew up based on her parents' different ideas of immigration, culture, identity, and Judaism, which in turn affected both Deborah's cultural identity and her eventual connection to Yiddish language and community.

## 8.4    Linguistic Background and Proficiency

Another significant component of Deborah's life is her linguistic background and proficiency. The languages she has learned and her abilities in them consistently surfaced in multiple interviews. In the second interview, she said that she has "never been good at languages" (April 27, 2010) and in the fourth interview she noted that she was "not a disciplined student" (May 11, 2010). She

168

specifically discussed having not really learned Hebrew in school, beginning to learn French, dropping it and then returning to it after flunking German, and choosing a Bachelor of Science degree in college primarily so that she would not have to take more language classes. She also described her lack of certain abilities in Yiddish:

> Yknow I still I still have comprehension issues because yknow even though I have a- have a fairly large vocabulary I really have a- I just have never had the breakthrough of um I don't know reading the sentence and getting the meaning besides translating the words…there's some breakthrough. I've- I've never been good at languages. I flunked German in high school and that's pretty much tells the tale…I never took Hebrew so between the two flunking German and never studying Hebrew I don't know why I think I'm- but I love yknow I love it [Yiddish]. (April 27, 2010)

In this and other interviews, Deborah consistently downplayed her linguistic abilities. In another interview, she highlighted her "big syntax problems" and the fact that she is still unable to get "the grammatical picture". In another part of the interview, she also describes that it was scary at first to go to the Culture Club meetings since there was the rule about not speaking English. She felt that she was "at a distinct disadvantage". This provided a strong contrast to her choice to learn and continue learning Yiddish in her adult life. Deborah attempts to make sense of her choosing to learn a language later in life when she had so many difficulties learning languages (and in fact avoided them) when she was younger:

> The fact that I wanted to learn Yiddish is really the folly of- yknow 'cause I had no aptitude for learning a language…and when I translate into Yiddish I translate English into Yiddish yknow. I tend towards Yiddish word order- English word order…even to even to stubbornly wanting to translate English idioms because I'm s- I'm speaking Yiddish to English-speaking people so they would understand

> what I mean yknow. I certainly don't know the Polish expressions for these
> things…it's I don't know if it's toy Yiddish or what. (May 11, 2010)

In this way, Deborah demonstrated the ways that her proficiency in English and her lack of proficiency in both German and Hebrew have all served as obstacles during her process of learning Yiddish. In the fourth interview, she also discussed the lack of a strong education in English grammar when she was growing up. She also highlighted the struggle associated with learning a language later in life when one does not have the opportunity to hear it spoken very often.

What truly becomes significant is that despite all of these difficulties Deborah has continued to be committed to learning Yiddish. She learned in multiple classes, traveled to summer Yiddish institutes and festivals, and practices every other week during the *Leyenkrayz*. This demonstrates *integrativeness* in language learning, which Gardner (2001, p. 5) defines as "a genuine interest in learning the second language in order to come closer to the other language community". Deborah consistently highlighted her desire to be part of the Los Angeles Yiddish-speaking community. This intense motivation to learn the language became the driving force behind her continuing to learn and seems to have superseded the fact that the language learning process has at times been extremely difficult for her.

## 8.5    Body Image

In addition to Deborah's family life, cultural and religious heritage, and linguistic background and proficiency, body image has proven to be a dominant theme throughout her life. At the beginning of our fifth and last interview, I asked her if there was anything she would like to talk about that she had not yet had a chance to discuss. Her response was:

> I think the one thing I haven't talked about the most is my weight because it's played
> such a huge part of it's it's like the glu- the lens that I s- that I've seen the whole world
> through yknow. (June 1, 2010)

170

She went on to describe how Nursy would take her to have dinner in the afternoons after school before she would have dinner at home with her family and would also hide food for her in secret hiding places. She saw this as the beginning of her difficult relationship with food:

> That was just the beginning of really bad patterns of disassociating hunger with eating. And eating for pleasure eating for power and eating for yknow secret- that secret fun and um- having some control over something in a household where I had no control. Being the youngest, fought with the anger- angry father…over-controlling everything. So I kinda see the roots of it yknow it's a long time ago. (June 1, 2010)

She also discusses her friendships with other overweight women and the numerous diets she has been on that have worked at first but ultimately failed. For example, in discussing her weight in relation to her wedding, also during the fifth interview, Deborah regretfully expresses the fact that she "didn't want to be a fat bride but [she] was". Her problematic relationship with her weight throughout her life proved to be an issue that weaved in and out of her explicit discussions of other issues. She also brought up topics related to self-confidence during her high school years, describing in detail a very close relationship she had with a theater teacher. She described it as "only good – only good for me…[he] probably did give me more self-esteem". This dependence on others for confidence seems to have been a common theme for Deborah as she struggled with her weight in those years as well.

What is especially remarkable is the fact that the theme of weight frequently arose during her discussions of Yiddish. For example, the fact that her wedding was in front of the group of survivors meant that they were able to see her increased weight on that day. In addition, during the fourth interview as she described going to the 2-week Yiddish Institute she highlights a monumental breakthrough related to her weight:

> The thing that happened to me at that- at the Institute that year was- it was soo luxurious. Every cla- every session they would deliver pitchers of ice water and crystal and these

171

> goblets yknow restaurant goblets. It was so nice that I drank all this water and I kinda kicked diet soda. And I kinda started this whole this- this one of my last successful diets which was successful up to about four years ago. So it was about a five year successful yknow. And that was a- a beginning of a huge change. Just everything changed. I mean I lost I lost a hundred and seventy pounds, of which I gained back like a hundred and fifty or a hundred and forty. And I've done that so many times this was just the last time. This was just the most I'd ever lost…and my friend used to joke and the more Yiddish I knew the more weight I lost yknow it was like a direct proportion. (May 11, 2010)

This extremely close correlation between Deborah's body image and her relationship with Yiddish is fascinating for a number of reasons. One's success in losing weight is not generally connected to one's language learning success. However, as Hollan (2001) has noted, person-centered ethnography should be attentive to what people say, what people do, and what people embody. One's physical appearance truly shapes one's subjectivities; therefore, it is critical to examine this coupled with understandings of other aspects of individuals' identities. What is striking is that current conceptualizations of heritage language learning do not include issues such as body image as possible motivating factors. A person-centered approach allows the researcher to can gain insight into the connections individuals may make between seemingly disparate aspects of their lives.

Deborah also introduces her weight in relation to performing in the play *Mentshn* soon after entering the Yiddish community:

> I think because I did the play and of course I got to memorize the lines. And I was I was at my low weight…always taking my temperature my weight temperature. I was at my low weight then very glamorous and people thought I could speak Yiddish kind of better than I could 'cause I was obviously fluent 'cause I was acting in Yiddish. (April 27, 2010)

172

In other interviews Deborah described always being comfortable in "a support role", seen below in her description of her relationship with her high school sweetheart. It is therefore somewhat striking that in the Yiddish play she chose to be one of the performers in front of a large group.

> When I was going with him it wasn't so much that I was going to be an actress. I was kind of training to be an actor's wife…I would be the hostess of the salon and he could be the actor. And I think that's really kind of that's the fifties. My fifties upbringing made me want - most comfortable in the support role. Not not the leadership role. I'm really not comfortable in the leadership role I just wanna be like the woman behind the man or behind Rivke or yknow somebody…or Lauren…I like to help and I like to be the strong back and make it all possible but to be the face of the yknow…I think that's just a leftover of growing up in the fifties…I was audio yknow audio is like support to the video it's not the star of the television show. (April 27, 2010)

It seems that her comfort in front of this group was due at least in part to her confidence in her appearance at that time. This confidence in both her appearance and her Yiddish ultimately led to her being asked to be in the *Leyenkrayz*, which she described (as noted above) as "social promotion". It seems that Deborah perceives an intimate connection between her weight and her relationship with the Yiddish-speaking community. She therefore felt some shame and embarrassment when she had gained most of the weight back before she got married.

**8.6    The Role of Community**

Based upon the information she shared throughout the interviews, it seems that Deborah's attraction to, connection with, and increased involvement in the Yiddish-speaking community was a result of a number of events and experiences throughout her life. She believes it may have begun in her childhood:

> I don't whether…it's like whether I heard my grandmother 'cause I think a lot of times what people are drawn to are things from their childhood because they felt safe then and so

173

> hearing it or experiencing it now give you that s- that feeling of safety like that you don't have anymore when you're an adult. (April 27, 2010)

This echoes the sentiment she expressed in relation to traveling, for she highlighted then that she frequently travels to places she has been before because "it's all so new I needed a little familiarity". The safety she feels when within the Yiddish-speaking community was also foregrounded when after describing her "Yiddish wedding" she talked about how difficult it will be to "lose this generation" of Yiddish speakers.

> It's really it's really going to be hard to lose this generation. Yknow I mean I grew up in nursing homes 'cause my Nursy when I was five and started going to school she got a job supervisor of- of a nursing home so whenever my parents were a- on vacation or out of town I would always skip school and go with Nursy to the nursing home. And feed the old ladies and be th- hang out so I loved- I kinda grew up around old people. And I think that that also makes me really comfortable at the Culture Club yknow it made me feel just like that childhood thing. It was kind of like where where I was where I started…so it was kind of a nice thing. And I just hate that yknow you're supposed to have younger friends so that they outlive you yknow and when you have older friends you just have to keep saying goodbye. It's- it's going to very hard. (April 27, 2010)

Deborah has realized the complex connections she feels to the members of the Yiddish-speaking community due to her own childhood experiences and in fact wonders "what Yiddish will be like when there are no native speakers". She does, however, contrast her own experience with Yiddish with Murray's, saying that "for him it's also reassuring because it's the sounds of his parents…I can go there and then I can leave. For him it's still in his head".

Frequently, she also described in detail her emotional connections to various individuals throughout her life. This too is related in many ways to her experiences now within the Yiddish community. As described above, Deborah felt an intense love for her brother Robert, which after

174

his death ultimately led to her discovering Yiddish. In her discussions of her childhood, she also described the fact that people who loved her, including her parents, brothers, grandmother, and Nursy, constantly surrounded her. She highlighted the fact that through Nursy's caring treatment of and dedication to Deborah's family meant that she would be taken care from then on:

> So in my father's eyes this was all it took…once you served the family it's like yknow now you are taken care of…now sh- you have proven your value. You have- you have you've proven your loyalty. You were there when- and now she's got it made. Nothing was ever- she would never- she would always have a home. She was in. And I adored her and she adored me. (April 13, 2010)

The centrality of undying support and love seems to be a defining feature of her role within the Yiddish community as well. In fact, when I described to Deborah some of the themes I was thinking about including in my writing, I mentioned her desire to be a support to others. She confirmed this assessment, stating that she has always wanted to be a support to Yiddish and not just a lover of it. In addition, Deborah feels a connection to the community because she has the opportunity "to feel young again", which she also discussed during the fourth interview:

> And maybe it was that chance to feel young again, because they are so old, I get to be the kid, which is not the norm. Part of the appeal also was that I really wanted to know this generation. I mean I think that having lost my parents made me attracted to them- to that generation…and um maybe it was that chance to feel young again 'cause they're soo old. I get to be- I get to be the kid which is not yknow the norm…honor them and hear their voices. And it's just really heartbreaking…(May 11, 2010)

This desire to feel young may also be related to the issues discussed in the above section, focused on body image and confidence. Within the older adult Yiddish community, Deborah actually has the opportunity to be recognized for her youth and beauty in ways that may not otherwise be possible in other contexts. She in fact discusses during the fifth interview feeling invisible in the broader

175

community when she is heavier. The Yiddish community therefore provides a context of acceptance and love for Deborah in her adult life.

Lastly, Deborah also recognized her need for a smaller community within the broader context of Los Angeles:

> I think yknow we're all it's this huge community and we need sub-groups. And so I really- I think maybe as um I don't know television it's not really my sub-group yknow there's no culture. It's only just work. Outside of work I would only participate if I were like in the rat race of like trying to I don't know the Hollywood rat race which has never appealed to me. So I really feel that this is that- that cultural group that I- that I need to- to uh keep me give me- give me the illusion that I'm living in a smaller community than I am. And- And Murray was a really big part of that…He- he was very nost- he missed Yiddish. His parents were gone. He missed not hearing it and not being able to speak it. (May 11, 2010)

Here, it is interesting to note that Deborah generalizes to a broader statement about community whereas frequently other statements were more focused on her specific experience. She is also able to recognize the deep personal relationship Murray has with the language, culture, and people, which also helps to keep her connected to the community.

**8.7    Conclusions**

Over the course of the five interviews with Deborah, I learned a great deal about her life story and the intricate meanings she attaches to various experiences, individuals, and communities. We had an opportunity to talk about her family, school, work, gender, romantic relationships, cultural and linguistic heritage, and a number of other issues. Deborah described different life stages (including childhood, teen years, and adulthood) and her shifting identity and understandings of herself over the course of those years. For example, she recognizes that she may be attracted to the Yiddish community because it reminds of her childhood in various ways and therefore makes her

176

feel safe. Debraoh is surrounded by a community that she takes care of and that takes care of her. She also was able to meet her husband within this context, which provides an even deeper emotional connection to it. Her discussion of all of these experiences demonstrates the non-linear and sometimes contradictory conceptualizations one may have of one's life.

This process provides an opportunity to reflect upon the ways that person-centered interviewing can shed much needed light on the complexity of individuals' lives and identities and, more specifically those of heritage language learners. As Ewing (2006, p. 93) notes, identity is "an act of taking up a position vis-à-vis available social positionings and cultural understandings, which can be thought of as an array of intertextual allusions that constitute a discourse in the Foucaldian sense, thereby emphasizing the fluidity of meaning construction". Seemingly disparate experiences can have ripple effects in a variety of domains over the course of one's life. By allowing Deborah to determine her own interpretations of life events, one is able to see which issues arose multiple times and how they were each framed. As demonstrated above, frequently the same issues came up but in different ways depending on the original question and where the interview was headed at that point.

As mentioned above, during the interview process itself, one can notice the subtle ways that Deborah perceived my knowledge base and me. For example, she frequently used recognitional person reference forms (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979; Enfield & Stivers, 2007) such as *Adam Mosley* (the director of a Yiddish cultural organization in Los Angeles), *Marion Herbst* (a Yiddish teacher and book author), and *Molly Picon* (a famous Yiddish woman actor). She could also discuss specific aspects of the Jewish and Yiddish community, such as the Galitsianer/Litvak distinction, without needing to explain what this meant. In this way, she was consistently sensitive to *recipient design*. Her ability to recognize what I as a fellow member of the Yiddish metalinguistic community might already know evidenced her subjective understanding of my knowledge base and thus what we might have in common, which shaped the interview process in other ways as well. It will also be

177

interesting to see how our friendship may or many not shift after the interviews. When I went to dinner with her, Murray, and some others after a Sunday afternoon Yiddish cultural event she began to tell me a personal story and actually said "I don't know why I feel like I want to tell you more personal stories". I can therefore see how our relationship has shifted and deepened in many ways over the course of this project.

The person-centered interview process has provided a novel framework for conceptualizing *heritage language* and *heritage language learner*. In the case of Deborah and other learners, it quickly becomes evident that there is a complex web of interconnected reasons that might explain one's connection to the Yiddish metalinguistic community. However, surveys or other instruments would not necessarily capture this complexity. As Carreira (2004) notes,

> where HLL2s are concerned, our review of issues of contexts, identity, etc. suggests that the foundations of language teaching and learning must rest on the learner's personal connections to the HL. In particular, pedagogical practices must focus on a) validating the learner's prerogative to define him/herself in terms of their language and culture of ancestry no matter how remote or insignificant the connection to this ancestry may seem to native speakers of the HL or to anyone else, and b) facilitating the learner's search for identity vis-à-vis the HL/HC. (p. 8)

The notion that individuals' language and culture of ancestry are the primary issues to focus on within heritage language populations is centrally relevant. In addition, one can use information about students' personal connections to the heritage language in order to inform pedagogical approaches in any given educational context.

The themes that Deborah discusses, including her family, cultural, and religious background; linguistic background and proficiency; and community also resonate with many of those discussed by other interviewees. For example, many of the learners see their engagement with the language as

178

a way to connect to their own specific ancestry and previous generations of Jews more generally. Though Deborah is somewhat unique in her high level of involvement within the Los Angeles Yiddish cultural communities, some of the other interviewees also noted how they have become members of new, accepting communities through their engagement with Yiddish. For example, a number of the older adult "third-year beginner" learners who take a class at Workmen's Circle have become very close friends; they all look forward every week to a post-class cup of soup at a local restaurant. In addition, similar to Deborah, some of the learners see their interest in Yiddish as an alternative to more religious- or- synagogue-oriented forms of Jewish engagement.

As Sapir (1932, p. 515) emphasizes, "the true locus of culture is in the interactions of specific individuals and, on the subjective side, in the world of meanings which each one of these individuals may unconsciously abstract for himself from his participation in these interactions". The person-centered ethnographic approach and the present analysis suggest that researchers will discover much more by venturing beyond a simple notion of "language and culture of ancestry" to recognize heritage language learners' intersubjectivity and agency across both time and diverse contexts.

# CHAPTER 9

## EPISTEMIC ECOLOGIES IN INTERGENERATIONAL CONTEXTS

"The fate of Yiddish in America is usually described as a crisis of language. Since the vast majority of Yiddish-speaking Jewish immigrants did not pass the language on to their children and grandchildren, there developed an unfortunate breach in the transmission of culture between one generation and the next. This left a heritage without its heirs and heirs without access to their heritage".
-Wisse, 2008, p. 1

### 9.1 Introduction

The ruptures in intergenerational transmission that are inherent in this metalinguistic community create a heightened dependence on others for information. Public displays of knowledge in educational contexts are therefore a fruitful site to examine how diverse histories, experiences, and ideologies shape interactions. The Yiddish metalinguistic community makes up an epistemic ecology in which members calibrate their utterances and reactions based upon their distinctive backgrounds in addition to constantly shifting interactional contingencies. Throughout these interactions, members socialize one another into the relevant knowledge, categories, and distinctions within this community.

This chapter examines in detail the epistemic stance practices within the Yiddish metalinguistic community, considering how authority and authenticity are discursively constructed and negotiated in public environments. As discussed in chapter 5, DuBois (2007, 173) defines stance as a means "through which social actors simultaneously evaluate objects, position subjects (themselves and others), and align with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field". The epistemic stance practices have been divided into two categories based upon the participant's epistemic access (Heritage, 2012) to relevant knowledge, study-based epistemic stance and experience-based epistemic stance. Study-based epistemic stance is knowledge based upon study, research, and material resources, whereas experience-based epistemic stance is

knowledge based upon one's own history and experiences. This may also include vicarious experience, such as hearing narratives from family members.

As the following examples will demonstrate, these two categories of epistemic stance are displayed in practices including assessments, extreme case formulations, third party invocations, self-initiated or other-initated co-tellership, and linguistic competence. All of these practices become modes through which participants demonstrate their epistemic dominance or sublimation. They also are opportunities for participants to assert independent access and/or better access to knowledge. In the case of those participants who demonstrate experience-based epistemic stance, they are living the lives of experts. Participants frequently take the opportunity to either correct or add what a previous participant has said. In these ways, the members (whether they are locally constructed as experts, visitors, teachers, or students) position themselves in terms of stance within specific interactional contexts.

Throughout the following examples, there is a consistent tension between study-based and experience-based stance. However, the common goal of valuing Yiddish language and culture becomes superordinate above any seeming disagreements about specific facts or details. These competitions about metalinguistic knowledge are therefore mollified by the overarching enterprise of appreciating Yiddish language and culture.

## 9.2    Intergenerational Transmission in Heritage and Endangered Language Contexts

Heritage and endangered languages are by definition minority languages in competition with dominant languages that are taught in schools and other institutions. Therefore, it becomes critical for heritage languages to be socialized through intergenerational transmission within families and communities. He (2008) notes that there is a wealth of heritage language research that focuses on heritage language

as a resource for developing specific, multiple, and fluid discourse patterns, cultural values, identities, and communities. Furthermore, Campbell & Christian (2003, p. 1) highlight the fact that heritage languages (HLs)[…]grow through transfer of language knowledge from one generation to the next within communities and families. This 'intergenerational transmission' of HLs is crucial to the vitality of heritage language communities. (p. 1)

Researchers including Hinton (1997), Hinton (2003), Hinton & Hale (2001), Meek (2007), and Park (2008) have investigated the intergenerational nature of heritage and endangered language communities, in which older speakers are frequently charged with passing on valuable linguistic and cultural information to younger community members.

Hinton's master-apprentice model (1997), in which older speakers and younger learners meet regularly over an extended period of time, has been one fairly successful model for language revitalization. Park (2008) examined the multigenerational transmission of language ideologies in Korean American families, providing a concrete example of the ways that heritage language ideologies may be transferred across generations.

Meek (2007) considers some of the ideological issues surrounding the language Kaska among youth and elders within a Northern Athaspascan Community in Canada, highlighting that

while elders retained their status as intellectual authorities responsible for passing their knowledge on to younger community members, their knowledge became limited to practices conceptualized as 'traditionally Kaska,' of which language was an integral part. As a result, the acquisition of Kaska became subject to the same social practices that organized other forms of 'traditional indigenous' or specialized knowledge such that speaking Kaska became the domain of elders (p. 23)

Interestingly, Meek's research also emphasizes the integral role of the Canadian government in this re-ideologization process, in which only specific cultural activities have become the sole domain of

elder experts. This "expert" status has been officially recognized by the nation-state, creating a class of specialized elite. Similarly, this chapter considers the ways that within the Yiddish metalinguistic community diverse ideologies get passed down from generation to generation through specific socialization practices.

As Grenoble & Whaley (2006, p. 177) note in relation to language revitalization, "disagreements in language ownership and authenticity can create unfortunate rifts in communities and destabilize revitalization efforts". They also note that in many cases there are "clearly identifiable language 'experts'" (2006, p. 177) within these communities, and in cases where there are disagreements among the experts it is best to seek out early resolutions. The authors also highlight the fact that community members frequently evaluate one another's abilities; evidence of this can be found in research as early as Bloomfield (1927) among the Menomini Indians of Wisconsin (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006, p. 165).

In this literature the emphasis is primarily on individuals evaluating one another's linguistic competence; however, in the examples that follow the participants are frequently evaluating one another's *metalinguistic* competence about Yiddish language and culture. Over the course of contemporary Yiddish programs and cultural events, the diverse participants, some of whom have been designated as "experts", engage in a number of public, interactional practices for displaying epistemic stance in relation to domains of knowledge including language, community, geography, and food. In addition, it becomes evident that "disagreements" are generally subordinated in the service of the larger goals of valuing Yiddish language and culture.

## 9.3    Epistemics and Authority

### 9.3.1    Epistemic Ecologies

Whereas in speech communities it may be possible for epistemic stance to be demonstrated through linguistic and pragmatic proficiency, in a metalinguistic community it becomes necessary to

183

engage in different types of epistemic stance practices focused on metalinguistic, historical, and cultural knowledge. These practices are continuously rooted in larger social and cultural contexts, and can be transformed depending on the settings within which they exist. Goodwin (to appear) states that

> specific actions are both organized within, and help to create and sustain socially organized ways of knowing, seeing, and acting upon the world, what I call epistemic ecologies. These encompass not only categorizations of the world and relevant events, but also the bodies and relevant knowledge of others, organized through unfolding action in just the ways that create and sustain the distinctive activities that make up the inhabited lifeworld of a community.
>
> (p. 1)

In many ways, the notion of epistemic ecologies coalesces with the concept of distributed cognition discussed by Hutchins (1995, p. xiii), in which he states that "the emphasis on finding and describing 'knowledge structures' that are somewhere 'inside' the individual encourages us to overlook the fact that human cognition is always situated in a complex sociocultural world and cannot be unaffected by it". In this way, epistemic stance, "positioning participants so that they can appropriately experience, properly perceive, grasp and understand relevant features of the events they are engaged in" (Goodwin, 2007, p. 70), are consistently being negotiated, taken up, and/or rejected by multiple actors within complex interactional contexts. In this way, epistemic stance positions both speakers and recipients.

The notion of epistemic ecologies is especially useful for understanding the interactional practices within the Yiddish metalinguistic community. Many of the interactions within this community are multiparty, which necessitates fine-tune calibration of epistemic stance displays based upon the participants present in any given context. The metaphor of ecology foregrounds the diversity inherent in these interactions, in addition to the ways that a change in one part of the

184

ecology can have lingering effects in other parts of that ecology. Within the epistemic ecologies there are the individuals' epistemic stance, status, and access, discussed in detail in the section below.

### 9.3.2    Epistemic Stance, Status, and Access

The present analysis focuses on interactional practices and sources of epistemic stance (Goodwin, 2007; Karkkainen, 2003; Krettenauer, 2004; Teller, 2004). It builds upon seminal research on epistemics and authority in linguistic anthropology, conversation analysis, and linguistics (Aikhenvald, 2011; Gal & Woolard, 2001; Goodwin, 1979; Heritage, 2012; Heritage & Raymond, in press; Hill & Irvine, 1992; Irvine, 1989; Labov & Fanshel, 1977; Ohta, 1991; Pomerantz, 1980; Pomerantz, 1984b). In his discussion of "epistemics in action", Heritage (2012) writes

> In 1977, Labov and Fanshel famously distinguished between A-events (known to A, but not to B) and B-events (known to B, but not to A) […] Pomerantz (1980) differentiated between Type 1 knowables which subject-actors have rights and obligations to know from first-hand experience, and Type 2 knowables which are known by report, hearsay, inference, etc. (p. 4)

He therefore considers "relative epistemic access to a domain or territory of information as stratified between interactants such that they occupy different positions on an epistemic gradient…The epistemic status of each person, relative to others, will of course tend to vary from domain to domain, as well as over time, and can be altered from moment to moment as a result of specific interactional contributions" (Heritage, 2012, p. 5). In addition, Goodwin (1979) recognizes the varied epistemic positions that recipients can assume in relation to others' discursive practices, for example through his discussion of both knowing and unknowing recipients in interaction. Within the complex epistemic ecologies of Yiddish educational contexts, participants continuously calibrate their utterances and reactions based upon their own histories and ideologies in addition to constantly shifting interactional contingencies.

185

### 9.3.3 Evidence in Interaction

Complementing previous work in conversation analysis focused on epistemics is linguistic anthropological research that considers the cultural components of providing evidence for one's claims. As Hill & Irvine (1992, p. 4) note in their introduction to *Responsibility and Evidence in Oral Discourse*, "to focus on 'evidence' takes the traditional anthropological interest in culturally situated knowledge and casts it in the framework of social action, exploring how claims to knowledge (or ignorance) are made, and how such claims might be used. Attention to evidence shows clearly that culturally situated knowledge is not a matter of clearly differentiated states, of 'knowing' or 'not knowing,' but is complex in its dimensions, and highly variable in the range of potential dimensions which may be relevant in interaction".

In her discussion of language and political economy, Irvine (1989, p. 258) notes, for example, that "most often, we are probably relying not just on a single testimonial statement, but on a chain of authentication, a historical sequence by which the expert's attestation – and the label (expression) that conventionally goes along with it – is relayed to other people". Irvine's notion of a 'chain of authentication', which foregrounds the layered nature of knowledge in interaction, is centrally relevant to this chapter's focus on epistemic ecologies within an "endangered" "heritage" language context. This also highlights the somewhat routine practice of using language experts, either professional or vernacular, in judgments or evaluations by those who cannot claim such expertise. During interactions, "experts" and other community members display their knowledge through a range of epistemic stance practices.

### 9.4 Principal Epistemic Stance Practices

In this analysis, the following principal epistemic stance practices used within the Yiddish metalinguistic community have been identified:

1. Assessments (Goodwin, 1986b; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1992; Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Pomerantz, 1984a)

2. Self-initiated or other-initiated co-tellership

3. Linguistic competence

4. Extreme Case Formulations (Pomerantz, 1986)

5. Third Party Invocations

Whereas the first three practices may be based on either experience-based or study-based epistemic access, practices 4 and 5 are unique to those with experience-based epistemic access.

### 9.5 "Reclaiming Your Roots" in Yiddishkayt's Folks-Grupe

As discussed previously, there are a number of settings in which members of the Yiddish metalinguistic community discuss and negotiate various forms of Yiddish culture. One example is "Folks-Grupe" created by the Southern California-based Yiddish cultural organization Yiddishkayt, designed to "foster Yiddish cultural literacy among young adults" and publicized as an opportunity to "reclaim your roots". The pilot version of the program consisted of seven sessions, focused on the history of Yiddish, language, music, theater, food, humor, and personal connections to Yiddish culture. For four of these sessions (history of Yiddish, language, music, and theater), experts were brought in to present and discuss the topics with the participants. The sessions were held at different participants' homes over the course of a three-month period.

The full version of the program consisted of eight sessions, focused on many of the same topics in addition to film and poetry. These were primarily held at the Institute of Jewish Education building in Los Angeles, which has traditionally been an important site for Yiddish language and education since large numbers of Jews immigrated to Los Angeles at the beginning of the 20th century. The program publicity in their August 27, 2009 Yidbits email announcement "Announcing a completely new Yiddish experience" included the following:

Your grandparents spoke Yiddish so your parents wouldn't know what they were saying. Your parents may have uttered a phrase (or curse) here or there, but they never read you a classic Yiddish story or taught you a song, told you the difference between a *litvak* and a *galitsyaner*, or taught you a hundred ways to make kugl. **It's time to break the cycle**... (para. 5-6)

During almost all of the Folks-Grupe sessions, Feivel would provide some language instruction relevant to that day's topics for the participants in the program. Feivel is heavily involved in the Los Angeles Yiddish cultural scene, and serves as the Vortsman ("Man of His Word") for Yiddishkayt's online newsletter. He is a native speaker of Yiddish who went to secular Yiddish schools as a child in New York; he is the Education Director for a local secular school and is a freelance Yiddish interpreter and translator. During both the pilot and full versions of the Folks-Grupe program, there were cases when more than one "expert" was present. In addition, during both versions, there were cases when only the Folks-Grupe participants (and no "experts") were present. This chapter examines the epistemic stance (Goodwin, 2007, p. 70) practices participants and "experts" engage in within the epistemic ecologies (Goodwin, to appear) of the program's context.

During the sessions, the participants and "experts" discuss language usage, community membership, and language ideologies within rich interactional frameworks. These contexts therefore provide valuable perspectives on the specific interactional contingencies and public displays of knowledge within this epistemic ecology. In the first four examples, someone other than the "expert" is involved in displaying his/her epistemic stance within the broader epistemic ecology. In the last example, only pilot Folks-Grupe participants are present. Throughout these interactions, one can see an epistemic stance continuum, in which participants' epistemic stance display practices and sources vary widely based upon interactional contingencies and individuals' experiences, histories,

and ideologies. Here then, different social actors consistently demonstrate their epistemic stance in relation to those being displayed by others.

As Goodwin (1986a, p. 311) has noted, "differential access to specific domains of discourse not only places a speaker in the position of addressing a heterogeneous audience, but also provides an arena within which participants can test, negotiate and establish their competence and standing vis-à-vis each other". Over the course of these events, participants consistently shift between the roles of speakers and listeners. In this way, the events provide a rich interactional landscape for negotiating epistemic stance among multi-generational participants with diverse histories, linguistic knowledge, and ideologies. One can also recognize how younger members are apprenticed into relevant knowledge within the Yiddish metalinguistic community.

## 9.6 Epistemic Stance about Jewish Communities

Within the Yiddish metalinguistic community, members can reasonably demonstrate some epistemic stance in a number of domains. However, there are some spheres about which the majority of participants can display epistemic stance more readily. One such domain is the Jewish community and aspects of its history. This is in contrast to other subjects, such as specific details or features of Yiddish history and language, about which fewer members can display epistemic stance.

**Example 9.1 "Not Markers of Jewishness"**

In example 9.1, it becomes evident that agreements and disagreements are carefully calibrated in practices designed to display epistemic stance regarding the Jewish community and experience. This example is taken from the Folks-Grupe's "music" session in which a music expert (David) comes to speak. David is an ethnomusicologist who has conducted a great deal of historical research on a variety of musical genres all over the world. He is also a talented well-known musician who has collaborated with a number of musicians and groups throughout his career, including

189

klezmer and folk musicians. During his discussion, David begins to talk about how music, dance, and language are relevant cultural symbols for other cultures but not for Jews:

**Example 9.1**

**David ("expert"), Adam (organization founder)**

```
01 DAV: I mean music and dance (0.3) ((snaps and throws hands out))
02      that kind of stuff that everybody else. and language the kind
03      of stuff that everybody else gets are not yknow they're not
04      markers of Jewishness to uh:
05 ADA: to lots of people.
06 DAV: to lots of Jews ((points to A)) or (a)specially not in new
07      situations.
08      (0.4)
09 DAV: Jews who have been (.) transplanted.
10      (2.0)
11 DAV: I rest my case.
```

In this example, David is in a delicate position because he is making general claims about Jews to an audience made up primarily of Jews. At lines 03-04, he refers to music, dance, and language, stating "they're not markers of Jewishness to uh:". This broad statement is then specified at line 05 ("to lots of people."), in which Adam completes David's utterance. They thus produce a collaboratively constructed utterance (Lerner, 1991). As it turns out, Adam's collaborative completion is too broad, and is replaced at line 06 with greater specificity, which is then further narrowed at lines 06-07 and 09. Whereas "lots of people" might seem truistic David's focus is on what Jews treat as markers of Jewishness in other Jews.

Though in some cases a turn like line 05 may be seen as an affiliative move, in this case Adam's specification of the referent implicitly disagrees with the previous broad claim about markers of Jewishness. Whereas in other examples that will be discussed this same practice may be used to add complexity to an already existing picture of Yiddish and other languages, here it is used to narrow the referent. At line 06, David then repeats almost all of what Adam said and replaces the last word as a way to specify the referent even further, engaging in a form of format tying (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987). Format tying is frequently used in environments of disagreement. We see this

here, though in this case it is also used in a ratifying position and as a way for David to reclaim the floor. Here, then, David asserts his own rights as a speaker to complete his own turns.

```
06 DAV: to lots of Jews ((points to A)) or (a)specially not in new
07      situations.
08      (0.4)
09 DAV: Jews who have been (.) transplanted.
10      (2.0)
11 DAV: I rest my case.
```

David acknowledges the original source of the information through his pointing gesture to A at line 06 (above). He then continues the process of referent specification by adding onto the reformulation "lots of Jews" with "or (a)specially not in new situations" (lines 06-07). In so doing, he provides yet another alternative for understanding his original point about markers of Jewishness. After a 0.4 second pause, he then identifies an even smaller group of people, "Jews who have been (.) transplanted" (line 09). This utterance shifts the formulation in two ways: 1) David has changed the present tense (they're not markers of Jewishness) to the present perfect, which highlights specific historical situations in which this has been the case, and 2) He has shifted from Jews "in new situations" to Jews "who have been transplanted". This highlights the traditional lack of agency Jews have had when moving to new places in the past; in other words, forces over which they have had no control have transplanted them.

At line 10, there is a 2.0 second pause, during which no other participant offers an assessment, an agreement, or a disagreement. David takes this silence as evidence for the fact that he has finally produced a formulation with which everyone can agree. He therefore produces "I rest my case." at line 11, which orients to the lack of pick up at line 10. He invokes legal language to provide a summative statement that moves the conversation to a close. As other examples will demonstrate, summative statements are one way that a participant can display his/her superior epistemic stance. This example therefore highlights a practice in which participants build consensus regarding a specific formulation (Schegloff, 1972). This case involves format tying, referent specification, and

tense shifts until other participants do not dispute the formulation. This is a more common practice in interactions in which general statements about the Jewish community (or other topics about which many participants could claim some epistemic stance) play a prominent role, since in these cases there may be a number of "experts" who could speak about relevant issues.

## 9.7    Epistemic Stance about Language, Community, and Geography

In the following three examples, the participants and "experts" engage in discussions about Yiddish language usage, dialects, and accents. In all three cases, a discussion *about* the language moves to a discussion about the Yiddish-speaking community, geography, and or cultural objects (e.g., films). What becomes evident is that the diverse participants have varying epistemic access to the domains that are discussed. Throughout these examples, the participants are engaging in socialization into "professional vision" (Goodwin, 1994) through their exposure to relevant distinctions within this metalinguistic community.

### Example 9.2: "Hasidic World"

Example 9.2 is a quintessential case within a metalinguistic community, through its extended talk around/about language. The first sixteen lines of this example were example 5.2 in chapter 5. On the day from which example 9.2 is taken, the members of the pilot Folks-Grupe had the opportunity to meet with two experts for a "double" session. The first expert is David, described in relation to example 9.1 above. He came to speak with the participants about Eastern European Jewish music. The second expert (Rachel) is a professor whose research focuses on Jewish languages; she came to speak about the history of the Yiddish language and teach them some Yiddish. The following example is taken from the language lesson. The music expert chose to stay for this lesson, and he is therefore also present. The language expert had just presented the participants with a Yiddish sentence mostly made up of words of Hebrew origin. She then asked the rhetorical question at line 01, "So this is- is this a Hebrew sentence?". Though there are other

192

participants present, Leah is the primary participant interacting with Rachel and David in this

example.

**Example 9.2**

**Rachel ("expert"), David ("expert"), Leah (participant)**

```
01 RAC: So this is- is this a Hebrew sentence?
02      (0.4)
03 RAC: There's four Hebrew words in there.
04 LEA: ((shakes head))
05 RAC: Why not Leah?
06 LEA: Grammatically.
07      (0.2)
08 RAC: ((nods head)) Grammatically. It's not that's right 'cause
09      grammatically-
10 LEA: (The) subject (   )
11 RAC: Yeah. Exactly. And it's it- it just uses Hebrew words but
12      grammatically it's German ((raises right hand towards Leah))
13      (0.2)
14 RAC: Exactly. So (.) can you imagine saying this kinda thing in
15      English?
16      (2.5)
17 DAV: ((raises right hand slightly))
18 RAC: Good. Yeah. How wou- how might you say it in English?
19      [(3.0)                                          ]
20 DAV: [((displays of thinking, clicks pen twice))]
21      ((laughter))
22 DAV: Di sheygets khaps everything.yknow
23      (0.2)
24 DAV: [Uh:: ((clicks pen))]
25 RAC: [((nods head))      ]
26 RAC: Khaps everything [yeah ]
27 DAV:                  [khaps] everything. Di sheygets khaps
28      everything.
29 RAC: Yeah, you can say that. Or you can even use these- these very
30      words ~you could say~ (0.2) um well you wouldn't say orel
31      'cause that's not a (0.2) word that English speakers would
32      understand but you could say um yknow the goy meyvens
33      everything. Er [meyvens meyvens meyv]ens every: every vort or
34      something like that=
35 DAV:                [right right right   ]
36 RAC: =[((looks to DAV)) ] so you could use kind of a mixture of
37      Hebrew=
38 DAV: [((shakes head))]
39 RAC: =and Yiddish words within an English ((raises right hand))
40      structure.
41      Okay. So you see how [it's ]
42 DAV:                      [which] is how the Hasidic world. Many
43      people speak.
```

```
44 RAC: Yeah.
45 DAV: Both in this context and (    ) ((bows head, motions right
46      hand to RAC))
47 RAC: Absolutely. Um- I didn't I didn't bring in my um (.) Yeshivish
48      book but there's certainly uh-ih- there's this dictionary
49      called Frumspeak the First Dictionary of Yeshivish and it has
50      lots ((motions right hand to David)) of examples of (0.2)
51      sentences that are English grammatically but are
52      unintelligible to speakers of English who don't know any
53      Yiddish or Hebrew or Aramaic. Like for example they have the
54      Gettysburg address translated into Yeshivish so it's uh
55      something like this mit an erekh a yoivel and a half ago,
56      ((Laughter))
57 RAC: Yeah so it keeps going on like that.
```

In the above example, the participants engage in a number of practices focused on a negotiation of their epistemic stance. These include initiated self- and other-initiated co-tellership and linguistic competence. At lines 01 through 05 the teacher establishes an IRE sequence (Mehan, 1979); through her use of test/known answer questions, she establishes her epistemic primacy within this interactional context. From lines 1 through 16, Rachel is consistently in the position of initiating sequences through questions and producing assessments such as "Exactly", while Leah is in the position of responding to questions posed by Rachel.

```
01 RAC: So this is- is this a Hebrew sentence?
02      (0.4)
03 RAC: There's four Hebrew words in there.
04 LEA: ((shakes head))
05 RAC: Why not Leah?
06 LEA: Grammatically.
07      (0.2)
08 RAC: ((nods head)) Grammatically. It's not that's right 'cause
09      grammatically-
10 LEA: (The) subject (   )
11 RAC: Yeah. Exactly. And it's it- it just uses Hebrew words but
12      grammatically it's German ((raises right hand towards Leah))
13      (0.2)
14 RAC: Exactly. So (.) can you imagine saying this kinda thing in
15      English?
16      (2.5)
```

At lines 14-15 (above), Rachel produces a question that could be understood in two ways: 1) as an exploratory question about the possibility of saying "this kinda thing" in English and 2) a

194

request designed to elicit the novice participants' expression of such an utterance. In using the formulation "this kinda thing" as opposed to "this" she foregrounds the hypothetical nature of the question since she does not seem to be asking for an actual translation of this specific utterance. However, David (the music expert) responds to the initiation that had been addressed to the group of novice participants, having understood it as a request to produce an English version of the previously discussed utterance.

```
17 DAV: ((raises right hand slightly))
18 RAC: Good. Yeah. How wou- how might you say it in English?
19      [(3.0)                                         ]
20 DAV: [((displays of thinking, clicks pen twice))]
21      ((laughter))
22 DAV: Di sheygets khaps everything.yknow
23      (0.2)
24 DAV: [Uh:: ((clicks pen))]
25 RAC: [((nods head))      ]
26 RAC: Khaps everything [yeah ]
27 DAV:                  [khaps] everything. Di sheygets khaps
28      everything.
```

Rachel initiates self-repair (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977) at line 18 (from "would" to "might") in addition to moving from "this kinda thing" to "it". The use of the word "it" builds upon David's understanding of the request, by specifying that the utterance should now be translated. In addition, the self-initiated repair from "would" to "might" shifts the request from an example of how the speaker himself would normally say such an utterance, thereby assuming that he/she generally says it in such a way, to an example of how the speaker might say it if it were to be employed in general usage. At line 22 ("Di sheygets khaps everything.yknow"), David attempts to produce the correct hypothetical utterance, but this receives no uptake from Rachel at line 23. David begins to try again at line 24, as evidenced by the hesitation marker "Uh::", and finally completes the utterance at lines 27-28.

Rachel ratifies his utterance at line 25 through embodied action (nodding her head) and at line 29 with the implicit assessment "Yeah, you can say that.". Through doing confirmation, she

195

claims ownership over this knowledge. She demonstrates her position as the one who possesses epistemic authority and the ability to assess others (even other "experts"). Though she does assess David's utterance as a candidate version of the English, she then goes on to provide her own version using the words from the original Yiddish.

```
29 RAC: Yeah, you can say that. Or you can even use these- these very
30      words ~you could say~ (0.2) um well you wouldn't say orel
31      'cause that's not a (0.2) word that English speakers would
32      understand but you could say um yknow the goy meyvens
33      everything. Er [meyvens meyvens meyv]ens every: every vort or
34       something like that=
35 DAV:                [right right right   ]
```

At line 35, David then produces a three-time repetition of "right", a lexical item that is dedicated to the action of confirmation itself. This is an example of what Stivers (2004, p. 261) referred to as a "multiple saying", which has five features. They (a) involve a full unit of talk being said multiple times, (b) are said by the same speaker, (c) have a similar segmental character, (d) happen immediately in succession, and (e) are done under a single intonation contour (p. 261). Through his production of "right right right", David is able to both confirm the previous version as a possible rendering in English and reclaim a position of epistemic authority in the face of his candidate version being replaced by Rachel's alternative version. In so doing, at the very least he claims to independently know what R had said at lines 32-33 (without having learned it from her turn). This resistant turn is therefore a combination of both epistemic status and stance, in some sense saying simultaneously "I get it." and "I know it.".

At lines 36-40 ("so you could use kind of a mixture of Hebrew and Yiddish words within an English structure"), Rachel looks to David for corroboration during her general explanation for the specific case she had just provided. At line 41, Rachel begins to produce another utterance that would provide a summative statement of the previous explanation ("Okay. So you see how it's").

```
36 RAC: =[(((looks to DAV)) ] so you could use kind of a mixture of
37      Hebrew=
```

```
38 DAV: [((shakes head))]
39 RAC: =and Yiddish words within an English ((raises right hand))
40      structure.
41      Okay. So you see how [it's ]
42 DAV:                     [which] is how the Hasidic world. Many
43      people speak.
```

At line 40, Rachel has completed her utterance and the sequence and begins to move on to a

summative statement at line 41 ("Okay. So you see how it's"). However, at line 42 David is able to

produce a *which*-prefaced utterance that could follow her utterance at line 40. David's turn, an

increment, is an example of self-initiated co-tellership used to assert his/her epistemic stance. His

increment skip ties back before the two TCU's Rachel utters at line 41. In this way, the designated

expert (Rachel) is able to demonstrate her epistemic stance, but David is also able to demonstrate his

independent access as a supplement to the previous turn, therefore exhibiting that he knows too. In

his turn, he moves the discussion from hypothetical constructions (e.g., "can you imagine", "how

could-might you say this") to the contemporary Hasidic (Orthodox Jewish) world and the way they

presently use Jewish English. In his shift from the hypothetical to the real realm, he is also able to

demonstrate his knowledge of a different Yiddish-related domain. This example resonates with the

material that is discussed in chapter 6, as it demonstrates the invocation of the current Hasidic

community as a way to establish contemporary Yiddish vitality.

```
44 RAC: Yeah.
45 DAV: Both in this context and (    ) ((bows head, motions right
46      hand to RAC))
47 RAC: Absolutely. Um- I didn't I didn't bring in my um (.) Yeshivish
48      book but there's certainly uh-ih- there's this dictionary
49      called Frumspeak the First Dictionary of Yeshivish and it has
50      lots ((motions right hand to M)) of examples of (0.2)
51      sentences that are English grammatically but are
52      unintelligible to speakers of English who don't know any
53      Yiddish or Hebrew or Aramaic. Like for example they have the
54      Gettysburg address translated into Yeshivish so it's uh
55      something like this mit an erekh a yoivel and a half ago,
56      ((Laughter))
57 RAC: Yeah so it keeps going on like that.
```

Rachel's assessments at lines 44 and 47 ("Yeah." and "Absolutely.") above also demonstrate her epistemic stance within this domain. By demonstrating at lines 47-48 that she herself owns Chaim Weiser's *Frumspeak: The First Dictionary of Yeshivish* (Jewish English used in yeshivas, ultra-Orthodox educational settings, by ultra-Orthodox Jews who are not Hasidic) through the use of the personal pronoun "my", she claims authority over this domain as well. She continues to claim this authority by explaining to the participants what is included in the dictionary, even providing a Yeshivish translation of the first line of a quintessentially American object (the Gettysburg Address). In this way, she self-initiates co-tellership and demonstrates her linguistic competence.

In example 9.2, it becomes evident that there is a complex and fine-tuned organization of epistemic stance negotiation in this context. Whereas the interactional roles may be fairly circumscribed when one expert presents to a group of participants, the epistemic stance practices shift in complexity once there are multiple "experts" with varying levels and domains of knowledge. Here, one sees that the two experts engage in practices including self-initiated co-tellership and linguistic competence as ways to assert their epistemic stance.

**Example 9.3**

In the next example (Example 9.3), taken from the same session as example 9.1, a number of individuals participate in a discussion about Yiddish dialects and accents. This includes Feivel ("The Man of His Word"), David (the music "expert"), Adam (the head of the organization who created the Folks-Grupe program), Lindsay (a graduate student participant who is studying Jewish labor unions), three other participants (Michelle, Hilary, and Jacob), and Murray (a visitor who is heavily involved in the Yiddishist movement). Before this part of the discussion, David had talked about the fact that frequently the languages and cultures of Jews who immigrated to different areas simply became "Judeo versions of wherever we live". He notes, though, that two of the great exceptions to this are Yiddish culture and Ladino culture.

198

A bit later, Feivel begins talking about the complexity of Yiddish culture, specifically focusing on different groups of Yiddish speakers throughout history (the Galitsianers and the Litvaks). What is striking is that a discussion that begins with a focus on different Yiddish-speaking groups becomes a discussion about geography, labor practices, and finally movies. This is a quintessential example, then, of the practices involved in creating a metalinguistic community, for even discussions primarily focused on language and speakers eventually move onto cultural issues more generally. In this example, the primary ways that epistemic stance negotiation takes place are through self-initiated co-tellership, invocation of third parties, and assessments.

**Example 9.3**

**Feivel ("expert"), David ("expert), Lindsay (participant), Adam (organization founder),**

**Michelle (participant), Hilary (participant), Jacob (participant), Murray (observer)**

```
01 FEI: Now we've been talking about ((moves right hand in circle
02      close to D)) (1.5) Yiddish culture as a ((puts hands together
03      into a circle)) single whole. (2.2) Eighty years ago (0.2) I
04      don't know why I'm fixated on eighty these days huh Eighty
05      years ago [uh:
06 DAV:           [(    ) tsvansik]
06                [        twenty  ]
07 FEI: The first- the first question would be: even with among two
08      newly introduced Yiddish speakers (0.5) would be (0.2) what
09      are you a Galitsianer or a Litvak?
10      [(1.5)    ]
11 DAV: [((nods))]
12 FEI: Someone whose roots are in Galicia or in Lithuania,
13      (0.5)
14 FEI: A:nd (0.4) a hundred years ago the idea of intermarriage (0.5)
15      between these two was ~even though it happened~ was still
16      cause for some (.) whispering around the chuppah.
17      (2.0)
18 DAV: Like my parents for example.
19 FEI: Yes.=
20 DAV: =By the way ((raises right pointer finger towards FEI)) the-
21      the- the Galitsianer Litvak thing in many ways was saying do
22      you come from Austria-Hungary or do you come from Russia.=
23 FEI: =Right. Well.
24 LIN: It was [also  ] a labor practice designed to divide Jewish=
25 FEI:        [Right.]
26      =workers. So it was not exactly something that was organic.
27 DAV: [Right.]
```

28 FEI: [Right.]
29 LIN: It was partially sort of constructed.
30 FEI: Uh::m
31 ADA: Well maybe it wasn't something-
32 MIC: °You're so awesome.°
33 HIL: She knows everything?
34 MIC: She's so awesome. ((*left hand points at LIN, looks at ADA*))
35 ADA: It didn't have to be a labor practice that was designed to
36      divide workers. [It    ] could be something that was in the
37                                                     [culture]=
38 LIN:               [Right.]                          [organic]
39      =that the:n they picked upon. labor contractors used to
40 ADA: I don't think they that-
41 LIN: They didn't invent [it. ]
42 DAV:                     [They] didn't invent it.
43 ADA: They didn't invent it.
44 LIN: But they [helped perpetuate  ] those kinds of ethnic (    )
45 ADA:          [They- they used it.]
46 JAC: Now- now what do you mean by labor practice? Like- like
47 LIN: The way they would recruit workers in particular shops is that
48      they would send out a labor contractor and he would [ask those
49      kind of=
50 FEI:                                                      [((*nods*))
51 LIN: =questions] um: partially because some people actually
52 FEI: ((*nods*))  ]
53 LIN: believed that people were more inclined to be better at a
54      certain job than others based on ideas of sort of social
55      Darwinism but essentially it was a way to build upon natural
56      kinship networks and develop a workforce that was tied to one
57      another.
58 FEI: A:nd and if the ethnicity or the interethnicity of the
59      workforce was the same as that uh- as that of the boss (.)
60      there might be less tendency=
61 LIN: =Right.=
62 FEI: =for the work[force] to recognize that they had different=
63 LIN:              [(    )]
64 FEI: =interests than those of the boss.
65 LIN: So the same way that they used sort of Irish workers as scabs
66      when the Italians were on strike they would use Galitsianers-
67      Galitsianers as scabs when the Litvaks were on strike and vice
68      versa and sort of played them against each other like that.
69 MUR: There was a Yiddish movie made about that. Uncle
70      [Moses.        ]
71 LIN: [hiring moment]
72 ADA: Uncle Moses.
73 DAV: Yeah.
74 FEI: Yeah.
75 LIN: Exactly. Exactly.
76 DAV: One of the best Yiddish films. And by the way one of the best
77      dance (.) scenes (.) of traditional [Yiddish dance.    ]
78 MUR:                                      [The wedding scene.]

```
79 LIN: I love that there's music in that thing too hehehe.
80      (0.5)
81 DAV: Anyway
82 FEI: So: (      )
83 ADA: Heh vat were you saying?
84 LIN: (Sorry.)
```

Feivel begins this section of the session by introducing the complexity of "Yiddish culture"

(lines 01-03) (below). As Raymond (2010) has discussed, when one makes unmitigated first

assertions of states of affairs, one is demonstrating one's unmarked claim to epistemic ownership of

those statements (also see Fox, 2001 for a discussion of "zero-marked evidentiality"). Therefore,

through the sheer manner of his turns' production Feivel becomes authoritative within this context.

He focuses on the traditional distinctions between Galitsianers and Litvaks, which highlights the fact

that the Yiddish-speaking world was both large and complex enough to have such social divisions.

In many ways, this distinction becomes an emblem for the Yiddish speech community of the past.

```
01 FEI: Now we've been talking about ((moves right hand in circle
02      close to D)) (1.5) Yiddish culture as a ((puts hands together
03      into a circle)) single whole. (2.2) Eighty years ago (0.2) I
04      don't know why I'm fixated on eighty these days huh Eighty
05      years ago [uh:
06 DAV:          [(    ) tsvansik]
06                [       twenty  ]
07 FEI: The first- the first question would be: even with among two
08      newly introduced Yiddish speakers (0.5) would be (0.2) what
09      are you a Galitsianer or a Litvak?
10      [(1.5)    ]
11 DAV: [((nods))]
12 FEI: Someone whose roots are in Galicia or in Lithuania,
13      (0.5)
14 FEI: A:nd (0.4) a hundred years ago the idea of intermarriage (0.5)
15      between these two was ~even though it happened~ was still
16      cause for some (.) whispering around the chuppah.
17      (2.0)
18 DAV: Like my parents for example.
19 FEI: Yes.=
20 DAV: =By the way ((raises right pointer finger towards H)) the-
21      the- the Galitsianer Litvak thing in many ways was saying do
22      you come from Austria-Hungary or do you come from Russia.=
23 FEI: =Right. Well.
```

His use of the terms "Galitsianer" and "Litvak" at line 09 presupposes a level of knowledge on the part of the participants, which he in a sense corrects for through the utterance at line 12 that serves as an appositive, "someone whose roots are in Galicia or in Lithuania". One fairly pervasive experience-based epistemic stance practice, invoking third parties, can be found at line 18, "Like my parents for example." This also exemplifies a more general epistemic practice, that of providing a specific example of a general phenomenon. Here, David demonstrates his epistemic stance on the Galitsianer/Litvak (G/L) distinction based upon his personal experience and that of his parents. In this way, he is able to make his parents characters in the current talk. Though he is not the primary speaker during this section, he has now shown his independent, first-hand access over this domain as well. This is in contrast to Feivel's knowledge, for which we do not have a basis. As stated above, Feivel has demonstrated his authority simply by the unmitigated declarations he is capable of making about these topics.

Though the definition provided by Feivel at line 12 may have been sufficient, at lines 20 – 22 David provides another version of the definition of Galitsianer and Litvak based upon more current geographic terms with which the participants would most likely be familiar (Austria-Hungary, Russia). While other displays of epistemic stance are frequently designed as continuing the previous speaker's utterance in some way, this explanation is designed as an aside through its preface of "by the way". This practice sets the new information apart from the previously completed sequence while simultaneously adding to it, for it comes after the previous sequence has come to a close. In providing this explanation David demonstrates his sensitivity to recipient design, "an orientation and sensitivity to the particular other(s) who are the coparticipants" (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974, p. 727). In so doing, he also displays his knowledge within the domain of geography. Feivel ratifies this statement, doing confirmation of David's historical intervention with "Right."; he then intends to continue with "Well." (line 23).

```
24 LIN: It was [also  ] a labor practice designed to divide Jewish=
25 FEI:      [Right.]
26      =workers. So it was not exactly something that was organic.
27 DAV: [Right.]
28 FEI: [Right.]
29 LIN: It was partially sort of constructed.
30 FEI: Uh::m
31 ADA: Well maybe it wasn't something-
32 MIC: °You're so awesome.°
33 HIL: She knows everything?
34 MIC: She's so awesome. ((left hand points at LIN, looks at ADA))
35 ADA: It didn't have to be a labor practice that was designed to
36      divide workers. [It    ] could be something that was in the
37                                                      [culture]=
38 LIN:                 [Right.]                        [organic]
39      =that the:n they picked upon. labor contractors used to
```

However, Lindsay then produces an utterance (line 24) that adds layers of complexity to the G/L distinction: "It was also a labor practice designed to divide Jewish workers". This unmitigated utterance, which includes "also", is designed as the next item in a list. It demonstrates independent, study-based access to this knowledge, and is not dependent on another person's corroboration. Though this is also an example of a speaker self-initiating co-tellership in order to display her epistemic stance, the construction of this turn contrasts with the previous two examples' use of this practice. Whereas in those examples the speakers designed their turns to continue what the previous speaker had said, here Lindsay claims the floor through the posthoc construction of a previously unconstructed list, to which she is now adding an element.

There are a number of reactions to Lindsay's demonstration of study-based epistemic stance here. First of all, Adam responds at line 31 with a counter to her version of how this distinction was used by labor contractors ("Well maybe it wasn't something-"). Through the use of "well" and the hedge "maybe" it is designed as a dispreferred response (Pomerantz, 1984a), more specifically, a disagreement. Whereas Adam responds to the content of what Lindsay has said, two of the other Folks-Grupe participants produce positive assessments of the epistemic stance itself produced by Michelle and Hilary ("You're so awesome.", "She knows everything?", "She's so awesome."). This is

a striking example of the use of assessments, for in this case they do not relate to the content of what was said and instead relate to the epistemic stance itself. Adam then continues his implicit assessment of the information Lindsay shared, at lines 35 – 37. Adam's turns at line 36-37, though mitigated through his use of "could", is one way that he is able to defend Jewish culture. His utterances maintain that the Galitsianer/Litvak was not simply the invention of bosses interested in exploiting workers but instead was an authentic distinction among Yiddish-speaking immigrants of the time.

```
40 ADA: I don't think they that-
41 LIN: They didn't invent [it. ]
42 DAV:                [They] didn't invent it.
43 ADA: They didn't invent it.
44 LIN: But they [helped perpetuate  ] those kinds of ethnic (     )
45 ADA:          [They- they used it.]
```

At lines 40-45, one can see how Lindsay, David, and Adam then come to consensus on a specific formulation, similar to the sequence discussed in example 9.1. At line 40, Adam begins to produce an epistemically downgraded position on the matter, evidenced through his use of "I don't think". Lindsay builds upon what was previously discussed to produce her utterance at line 41. This is repeated verbatim by both David at line 42 and Adam at line 43. Through her self-initiated co-tellership at line 44 Lindsay is then able to augment this thrice-repeated assertion and simultaneously demonstrate her epistemic stance through the use of a *but*-prefaced utterance.

```
46 JAC: Now- now what do you mean by labor practice? Like- like
47 LIN: The way they would recruit workers in particular shops is that
48      they would send out a labor contractor and he would [ask those
49      kind of=
50 FEI:                                                     [((nods))
51 LIN: =questions] um: partially because some people actually
52 FEI: ((nods))  ]
53 LIN: believed that people were more inclined to be better at a
54      certain job than others based on ideas of sort of social
55      Darwinism but essentially it was a way to build upon natural
56      kinship networks and develop a workforce that was tied to one
57      another.
58 FEI: A:nd and if the ethnicity or the interethnicity of the
59      workforce was the same as that uh- as that of the boss (.)
```

```
60      there might be less tendency=
61 LIN: =Right.=
62 FEI: =for the work[force] to recognize that they had different=
63 LIN:            [(    )]
64 FEI: =interests than those of the boss.
65 LIN: So the same way that they used sort of Irish workers as scabs
66      when the Italians were on strike they would use Galitsianers-
67      Galitsianers as scabs when the Litvaks were on strike and vice
68      versa and sort of played them against each other like that.
```

At line 46, Jacob (one of the Folks-Grupe participants) begins a new sequence by asking a question ("Now- now what do you mean by labor practice? Like- like"). In so doing he engages in the practice of other-initiated co-tellership. Lindsay then has an opportunity to demonstrate her epistemic stance by explaining what she meant by "labor practice" and how labor contractors strategically used the G/L distinction. At line 58, Feivel self-initiates his co-tellership through his use of an *and*-prefaced utterance, offering it as a continuation of the previous turns. At line 65, Lindsay reclaims the floor with a *so*-prefaced utterance, producing a summative statement and ending the current sequence. Here then, one can see how epistemic stance bounces from one participant to another in a finely-tuned interwoven organization of epistemic stance practices.

```
69 MUR: There was a Yiddish movie made about that. Uncle
70      [Moses.         ]
71 LIN: [hiring moment]
72 ADA: Uncle Moses.
73 DAV: Yeah.
74 FEI: Yeah.
75 LIN: Exactly. Exactly.
76 DAV: One of the best Yiddish films. And by the way one of the best
77      dance (.) scenes (.) of traditional [Yiddish dance.    ]
78 MUR:                                      [The wedding scene.]
79 LIN: I love that there's music in that thing too hehehe.
80      (0.5)
81 DAV: Anyway
82 FEI: So: (      )
83 ADA: Heh vat were you saying?
84 LIN: (Sorry.)
```

Finally, Murray (an observer during the session) displays his independent access regarding a famous Yiddish movie in which a labor-focused scene was included, through the design of his turn as an unmitigated assertion. Adam's turn at line 72, in which he provides the name of the movie

205

with downward intonation, is a confirmation of Murray's turn. A number of the other "experts" ratify this, through repetition of the film's name and receipt tokens ("Yeah.", "Exactly."). For example, Lindsay provides a multiple saying at line 75 ("Exactly. Exactly.") that confirms the previous turns. At line 76, however, David uses an extreme case formulation ("One of the best Yiddish films. And by the way one of the best dance scenes of traditional Yiddish dance.") to demonstrate his epistemic stance. His use of "by the way" constructs the information as a new though related topic; in so doing, he switches the discussion into his area of expertise. Through his use of the construction "one of the", David demonstrates his knowledge of multiple Yiddish films and dance scenes. His use of the lexical item "traditional" serves a similar purpose, in that it displays his authority on different forms of Yiddish dance.

**Example 9.4 "And David Can Tell Me Where That Is"**

In the last example exemplifying epistemic stance about language, community, and geography (example 9.4), Feivel continues discussing the different dialects shown above in example 9.3 and their use in the Yiddish theater. Throughout this discussion, the participants express current and past language ideologies regarding standard Yiddish and other varieties, engaging throughout in a number of epistemic stance practices.

**Example 9.4**

**Feivel ("expert"), Lindsay (participant), David ("expert"), Michelle (participant), Jacob (participant), Owen (program organizer), Adam (organization founder), unidentified participant 1 (participant), unidentified participant 2 (participant)**

```
001 FEI: So one of the (0.4) distinguishing factors (0.3) uh:m between
002      the va:rious (0.2) dialects (0.3) uh- or accents in
003      Yiddishlahnd (0.4) uh:m (0.2) waere the pronunciation of
004      vowels.
005      (0.5)
006 LIN: ((nodding))
007 FEI: and as (0.2) Yiddish theater developed (0.2) and this is true
008      of (0.2) most of theater in most languages where there are a
```

```
009      variation of accents (0.3) uh it became necessary to
010      sta:ndardize the stage (0.2) accent.
011      (0.5)
012 FEI: In the United States it's the mid-Atlantic.
013      (0.3)
014 FEI: To the point that uh:m (0.5) the only time you hear on stage
015      TV radio on the screen (.) the only time you hear a (0.4)
016      distinct specific (0.2) accent (0.3) is when the cha:racter
017      (0.2) requires it. (0.2) The Sou:ther:n draw:l. (0.3) Uh::
018      the: Boston (0.2) uh: (0.6)
019 DAV: Oh you mean like the [in the yah: ]
020 FEI:                      [In the yah:d] In the yah:d yeah. Uh:
021      but a plain ordinary person speaks plain ordinary mid-
022      Atlantic English. on stage.
023 MIC: I always thought (    ) from California.
024 FEI: Pardon.
025 MIC: I thought (     )
026 JAC: I thought it was midwestern English actually.
027 MIC: I thought it was in California that was the most standard
028      accent.
029 DAV: Bas- uh- it used to be bra- for newscasters I mean it- it
030      used to be Cincinatti.
031 FEI: Huhhuh.
032 DAV: But I mean it's: yeah I mean bu- but the thing is that's in
033      the same way dis the same dis is the same (0.3) thing is true
034      in Britain and the BBC it's like the- there's much- there's
035      much more variance=
036 FEI: =Right.=
037 DAV: =variation no:w in who's permitted [to  ] speak the way they=
038 FEI:                                    [yes.]
039      =do.
040 FEI: U:hm and so o:n in the Yiddish stage and that expands ((waves
041      arms out)) to all kinds of performance (so the) rea:ding
042      poetry er singing (0.2) uh:m (0.2) a: specific standard was
043      accepted as being:what everyone would speak unless the
044      character required a distinct accent and that was the Voliner
045      from the area of Volin ((begins turning head towards D)) and
046      David can tell me where that is.
047 DAV: It's basically northern northwestern Ukraine. (0.2) And why
048      ((reaches out left hand towards Feivel)) why why was that
049      accent chosen. Shall I tell you [(next).]
050 FEI:                                 [My     ] guess would be that
051      uh: the:uh: founder of the Yiddish theater had something to
052      do with it?
053 DAV: No.
054 FEI: No.
055 DAV: No. Because it was- it was essentially i- it had elements of:
056      (.) Litvak northern Yiddish and a:nd Southern Yiddish
057      basically everyd- or the way everybody else talked.
058 FEI: Yeah.
059 DAV: So [that's]
060 FEI:    [It was] a compromise.
```

```
061 DAV: It was it was a sort of compromise (not) that there would be-
062      parts of it would be comprehensible to everybody.
063 FEI: And it is: uh: (0.2) not (0.2) standard (.) Yiddish. Standard
064      Yiddish is much more (.) heavily influenced by the Lithuanian
065      (.) dialect.
066 DAV: Although [distinguished from (    )]
067 LIN:          [Was the (    )           ] purpose to sound like
068      folksy or something?
069 FEI: Pardon.
070 LIN: Why didn't they: why didn't they take the standard and make
071      sort of stage actors ((low voice and right hand out))
072      spea:king proper: Yiddish.
073 DAV: ['Cause ] there was no standard.
074 FEI: [(    )]
075 FEI: [Right.] And no academy.
076 ADA: [(    )]
077 LIN: Oh right so we're talking pr[e: ]
078 OWE:                             [pre] YIVO.
079 LIN: Pre YIVO okay.
080 FEI: Right.
081 DAV: And even the YIVO stand- (  ) (0.3) let no one believe here
082      that the majority of Yiddish speakers ever accepted and
083      especially today (.) since most of them are Has- Hasidim
084      (0.2) accept YIVO Yiddish as any kind of standard. [I mean]
085 FEI:                                                    [Right.]=
086 LIN: =Right.=
087 FEI: =Right.
088 DAV: We're yknow we're not so: different than than Switzerland
089      which in Switzerland they had a lo:ng (f  ) a long way (.)
090      further in standardizing a kind of yknow ((quotes in air))
091      Swiss German.
092 FEI: Uh- Western-
093 DAV: There's there was no-
094 LIN: I was just (thinking of) the British example so [like] the=
095 UN1:                                                 [(  )]
096      =old BBC guys woulda been like ((higher voice)) very very
097      hoigh British [teeth] clenchy
098 DAV:               [Yes. ]
099 FEI: Right.
100 DAV: (    )
101 FEI: It still tends to be mostly.
102 DAV: But YI- YIVO the- YIVO (.) standard is not [I mean   ] the=
103 LIN:                                            [the ideal]
104      =only places it's become yknow r- really accepted is a:s a
105      standard is yheknow=
106 FEI: =In academia.
107 DAV: I- In academia right er at the YIVO
108 FEI: Uh:m=
109 DAV: =And in academia. And there were a couple of other attempts
110      [I mean  ]
111 FEI: [Well and]
112 DAV: In Toronto
```

```
113 FEI: I:n uh:
114 DAV: [(   )]
115 FEI: [(   )]
116 DAV: (   )
117 FEI: In the secular Yiddish schools (.) it tend(.)ed (.) because
118      of the origin of most of the teachers what we now call
119      standard Yiddish was pretty much what was taught.
120      (0.3)
121 FEI: Uh:m to give you an idea of how important this dialect is,
122      (0.3) I do:uh telephone interpretation (0.3) uh: one of the
123      frequent clients (.) for this telephone
124      [interpreting company  ]
125 DAV: [(wanna use) my phone? ]
126 FEI: Huhuh. One of the frequentuh clients for this telephone
127      interpreting company uh is Onstar.
128      (0.4)
129      And I once had a call (0.2) to Onstar from someone in
130      Montreal who as soon as I spoke one sentence translating what
131      Onstar was saying in my central standard Lithuanian Yiddish
132      (0.4) he said (0.2) I don't wanna talk to you.
133 ALL: ((Laughter))
134 ADA: I'd rather die here in this accident than talk to you?
135 FEI: I tried- I tried to switch the accent a little but it didn't
136      help I don't wanna talk to you I told Onstar and the guy hung
137      up.
138 ALL: ((Laughter))
139 FEI: Sure enough ten minutes later the phone rang again there was
140      no other Yiddish interpreter available and he hung up again.
141 ALL: ((Laughter))
142 UN2: Really?
143 FEI: Yeah. So: youknow language and accent and dialect are pretty:
144      strong stuff.
```

At the beginning of this example, Feivel introduces the pronunciation distinctions between different Yiddish dialects and introduces the idea that the stage accent therefore needed to be standardized. Similar to the previous example, his unmitigated assertion constructs him as an authority with independent access to this information.

```
001 FEI: So one of the (0.4) distinguishing factors (0.3) uh:m between
002      the va:rious (0.2) dialects (0.3) uh- or accents in
003      Yiddishlahnd (0.4) uh:m (0.2) waere the pronunciation of
004      vowels.
005      (0.5)
006 LIN: ((nodding))
007 FEI: and as (0.2) Yiddish theater developed (0.2) and this is true
008      of (0.2) most of theater in most languages where there are a
009      variation of accents (0.3) uh it became necessary to
010      sta:ndardize the stage (0.2) accent.
```

209

```
011       (0.5)
012 FEI: In the United States it's the mid-Atlantic.
013       (0.3)
014 FEI: To the point that uh:m (0.5) the only time you hear on stage
015       TV radio on the screen (.) the only time you hear a (0.4)
016       distinct specific (0.2) accent (0.3) is when the cha:racter
017       (0.2) requires it. (0.2) The Sou:ther:n draw:l. (0.3) Uh::
018       the: Boston (0.2) uh: (0.6)
019 DAV: Oh you mean like the [in the yah: ]
020 FEI:                      [In the yah:d] In the yah:d yeah. Uh:
021       but a plain ordinary person speaks plain ordinary mid-
022       Atlantic English. on stage.
023 MIC: I always thought (     ) from California.
024 FEI: Pardon.
025 MIC: I thought (     )
026 JAC: I thought it was midwestern English actually.
027 MIC: I thought it was in California that was the most standard
028       accent.
029 DAV: Bas- uh- it used to be bra- for newscasters I mean it- it
030       used to be Cincinatti.
031 FEI: Huhhuh.
032 DAV: But I mean it's: yeah I mean bu- but the thing is that's in
033       the same way dis the same dis is the same (0.3) thing is true
034       in Britain and the BBC it's like the- there's much- there's
035       much more variance=
036 FEI: =Right.=
037 DAV: =variation no:w in who's permitted [to  ] speak the way they=
038 FEI:                                    [yes.]
039       =do.
```

From lines 001-019, Feivel is the primary speaker. The only exception to this is David's question at line 017, in which he provides an example of what Feivel is describing ("Oh you mean like in the in the yah:"). At lines 022, 023, and 024 two of the participants express their uncertainty regarding what Feivel has shared with them. Their utterances all begin with "I thought", and seem to place Feivel in the position to either confirm or disconfirm their assumptions. However, these turns are more argumentative than that; they are more assertive than mere questions. Interestingly, these moments of potential disagreement are mitigated through the participants' use of past tense and downgraded epistemics. At lines 025-027 and 030-032, David (not Feivel) actually provides the information in response to these participant's questions. In this way, one can begin to see a blurring of the boundaries between primary and secondary "experts" during this session.

```
040 FEI: U:hm and so o:n in the Yiddish stage and that expands ((waves
041      arms out)) to all kinds of performance (so the) rea:ding
042      poetry er singing (0.2) uh:m (0.2) a: specific standard was
043      accepted as being:what everyone would speak unless the
044      character required a distinct accent and that was the Voliner
045      from the area of Volin ((begins turning head towards D)) and
046      David can tell me where that is.
047 DAV: It's basically northern northwestern Ukraine. (0.2) And why
048      ((reaches out left hand towards Feivel)) why why was that
049      accent chosen. Shall I tell you [(next).]
050 FEI:                                 [My    ] guess would be that
051      uh: the:uh: founder of the Yiddish theater had something to
052      do with it?
053 DAV: No.
054 FEI: No.
055 DAV: No. Because it was- it was essentially i- it had elements of:
056      (.) Litvak northern Yiddish and a:nd Southern Yiddish
057      basically everyd- or the way everybody else talked.
058 FEI: Yeah.
059 DAV: So [that's]
060 FEI:    [It was] a compromise.
061 DAV: It was it was a sort of compromise (not) that there would be-
062      parts of it would be comprehensible to everybody.
063 FEI: And it is: uh: (0.2) not (0.2) standard (.) Yiddish. Standard
064      Yiddish is much more (.) heavily influenced by the Lithuanian
065      (.) dialect.
066 DAV: Although [distinguished from (     )]
```

A shift in participation framework (Goodwin and Goodwin, 2004) occurs with Feivel's change in gaze direction towards David after his production of "Voliner from the area of Volin" (lines 044-045). Feivel then engages in the practice of other-initated co-tellership, for he offers the floor to David ("and David can tell me where that is"). His utterance is designed as continuing from what he had been saying previously. What is striking is that he says "tell me" and not "tell us". In this way, he is asking for David's assistance in telling his already constructed account, as opposed to asking him to tell the entire audience. He thus constructs David not as a *co-teller* but as an *assistant* in imparting the relevant information. This relates to Goodwin's (1979, p. 97) research focused on designing talk for both knowing and unknowing recipients, in which he demonstrates that a sentence "can be shaped and reformed in the process of its utterance. In face-to-face interaction it can be affected by such matters as the direction of glances (which indicate attention to the speaker

by the recipient) and the relationship of the parties to each other". David provides the requested information at line 047 (It's basically northern northwestern Ukraine). It is possible that Feivel chose to request this geographical information from David because he had provided information about Galicia and Lithuania earlier in the same session (example 9.3). Whereas in cases in which participants self-initate co-tellership they are claiming epistemic status in this case epistemic status has been thrust upon David.

From lines 047-066, a novel participation framework emerges, in which David and Feivel become co-tellers. At lines 047-049, David turns the tables on Feivel by asking him a question while reaching out his left hand towards him. At line 049 David also seems to be asking Feivel for permission to provide this information ("Shall I tell you next."). Feivel is unable to demonstrate his knowledge of this information, as evidenced by beginning with "My guess would be" (line 050). David is then in the position to assess the accuracy of Feivel's guess, which he does at lines 053 and 055.

At lines 055 – 057, David explains what Feivel was unable to, and Feivel is then in the position of providing a receipt token ("Yeah.") and then a summative statement ("It was a compromise.") in response. Feivel's turns are designed to show understanding of, and thereby acknowledgment and acceptance of David's explanation. At line 061, David uses format tying to produce a slightly modified version of Feivel's previous utterances ("It was a sort of compromise."). At lines 063-065, both Feivel's and David's subsequent utterances are consistently designed as continuing from the previous speaker's utterances, using the prefaces "and" and "although". Here then, one can see the very delicate balance being maintained among the various "experts" and their displays of epistemic stance over certain domains of knowledge. The very nature of the epistemic ecology has therefore shifted based on participants' public sequential and interactional practices.

```
067 LIN:        [Was the (     )            ] purpose to sound like
068     folksy or something?
```

```
069 FEI: Pardon.
070 LIN: Why didn't they: why didn't they take the standard and make
071      sort of stage actors ((low voice and right hand out))
072      spea:king proper: Yiddish.
073 DAV: ['Cause ] there was no standard.
074 FEI: [(     )]
075 FEI: [Right.] And no academy.
076 ADA: [(    )]
077 LIN: Oh right so we're talking pr[e: ]
078 OWE:                             [pre] YIVO.
079 LIN: Pre YIVO okay.
080 FEI: Right.
```

At lines 067 – 068 and 070 – 072, Lindsay asks questions about the reasoning behind the choice of the Voliner accent for the stage. She does not seem to be addressing either David or Feivel specifically, and both David and Feivel respond in overlap at lines 073 and 074 respectively. David produces most of his utterance outside of overlap with Feivel, and in response Feivel produces a receipt token ("Right."), adding to it with the and-prefaced utterance ("And no academy."). Owen, the Folks-Grupe organizer, provides a point of reference at line 078 with which Lindsay would be familiar (pre YIVO). As described in the introduction, YIVO is the Yiddish Research Center established in Poland and then brought to America, which established a Yiddish standard used primarily in classrooms as opposed to in informal settings.

```
081 DAV: And even the YIVO stand- (   ) (0.3) let no one believe here
082      that the majority of Yiddish speakers ever accepted and
083      especially today (.) since most of them are Has- Hasidim
084      (0.2) accept YIVO Yiddish as any kind of standard. [I mean]
085 FEI:                                                    [Right.]=
086 LIN: =Right.=
087 FEI: =Right.
088 DAV: We're yknow we're not so: different than than Switzerland
089      which in Switzerland they had a lo:ng (f   ) a long way (.)
090      further in standardizing a kind of yknow ((quotes in air))
091      Swiss German.
092 FEI: Uh- Western-
093 DAV: There's there was no-
094 LIN: I was just (thinking of) the British example so [like] the=
095 UN1:                                                 [(  )]
096      =old BBC guys woulda been like ((higher voice)) very very
097      hoigh British [teeth] clenchy
098 DAV:              [Yes. ]
099 FEI: Right.
```

```
100 DAV: (      )
101 FEI: It still tends to be mostly.
102 DAV: But YI- YIVO the- YIVO (.) standard is not [I mean   ] the=
103 LIN:                                          [the ideal]
104      =only places it's become yknow r- really accepted is a:s a
105      standard is yheknow=
106 FEI: =In academia.
107 DAV: I- In academia right er at the YIVO
108 FEI: Uh:m=
109 DAV: =And in academia. And there were a couple of other attempts
110      [I mean  ]
111 FEI: [Well and]
112 DAV: In Toronto
```

At lines 081-084, 088-091, 102, and 104-105, David is the primary speaker who provides the relevant information to the participants. In these utterances, he demonstrates his knowledge about Hasidim (a group of Yiddish-speaking Orthodox Jews), standard Yiddish usage in academia and not in other settings, and similar examples to the Yiddish case (e.g., Swiss German in Switzerland). Here again, Feivel is primarily in the role of recipient, as evidenced by his use of the receipt token "Right." at lines 085, 087, and 099. Then, at line 106 he provides an increment ("in academia") for the last part of an utterance that David begins at lines 102 and 104-105. David provides confirmation of Feivel's additive turn with his turns at lines 107 and 109 that repeat "in academia".

```
117 FEI: In the secular Yiddish schools (.) it tend(.)ed (.) because
118      of the origin of most of the teachers what we now call
119      standard Yiddish was pretty much what was taught.
120      (0.3)
121 FEI: Uh:m to give you an idea of how important this dialect is,
122      (0.3) I do:uh telephone interpretation (0.3) uh: one of the
123      frequent clients (.) for this telephone
124      [interpreting company  ]
125 DAV: [(wanna use) my phone? ]
126 FEI: Huhuh. One of the frequentuh clients for this telephone
127      interpreting company uh is Onstar.
128      (0.4)
129      And I once had a call (0.2) to Onstar from someone in
130      Montreal who as soon as I spoke one sentence translating what
131      Onstar was saying in my central standard Lithuanian Yiddish
132      (0.4) he said (0.2) I don't wanna talk to you.
133 ALL: ((Laughter))
134 ADA: I'd rather die here in this accident than talk to you?
135 FEI: I tried- I tried to switch the accent a little but it didn't
136      help I don't wanna talk to you I told Onstar and the guy hung
```

```
137       up.
138 ALL: ((Laughter))
139 FEI: Sure enough ten minutes later the phone rang again there was
140       no other Yiddish interpreter available and he hung up again.
141 ALL: ((Laughter))
142 UN2: Really?
143 FEI: Yeah. So: youknow language and accent and dialect are pretty:
144       strong stuff.
```

However, at line 117, Feivel reclaims the floor by discussing his experience in secular Yiddish schools. In this way, he injects himself as a character in the ongoing story. As mentioned above, Feivel attended secular Yiddish schools in New York as a child, and is currently the education director of a secular school in Los Angeles. Therefore, in contrast to David's primarily study-based epistemic stance, Feivel is able to establish his experience-based epistemic stance in various ways.

He continues his demonstration of experience-based epistemic stance through his discussion of engaging in Yiddish telephone interpretation (beginning at line 121). This example highlights the importance of a certain Yiddish dialect to the person for whom he was interpreting. Montreal has a large Hasidic community and it is quite possible that the individual who called is part of this community, which might explain their unwillingness to accept Feivel's Yiddish dialect and accent. Just as many of the examples in chapter 6 demonstrate, this anecdote provides evidence for the general lack of contact between Hasidic Yiddish-speaking communities and secular metalinguistic community members. Through sharing this story in which he played a central role, Feivel is able to regain the floor and demonstrate his (superior?) epistemic stance of Yiddish dialects in action, finally producing the summative statement "So: youknow language and accent and dialect are pretty: strong stuff.". In this way, Feivel is able to effectively reclaim epistemic authority in this context, primarily through his use of experience-based epistemic stance practices.

## 9.8    Epistemic Stance about Food

**Example 9.5 "I've Never Had Kreplakh Either."**

Example 9.5 is taken from the food session of the Folks-Grupe pilot program. This session was held at one of the participants' apartments, and included cooking and discussions of various recipes. What is interesting about this example is that there is no "expert" who was brought in to discuss food. Though the organizer of the program brought some materials to read and recipes to cook, in general the participants in this epistemic ecology negotiated their epistemic stances without an opportunity to learn from any "experts". In this case, then, the participants use different forms of study-based and experience-based epistemic stance practices than those used in the previous examples.

**Example 9.5**

**Owen (program organizer), Lily (participant), Ruth (participant), Aaron (participant)**

```
01 OWE: And so you can boil kreplakh=
02 LIL: =Mmhm.=
03 RUT: =Mmhm.
04 OWE: You can serve them in soup. Um or you can also fry them.
05 RUT: Mmhm.
06 OWE: Which I've never have you (as you anybody has?) ((puts right
07      hand out))
08 RUT: Mmhm.
09 LIL: No.
10 RUT: That's how my (   )¹¹ did.
11 OWE: Really?
12 AAR: I don't think I've ever had kreplak (.) ever.
13 OWE: I've never had kreplakh [either ].
14 LIL:                          [I don't] think I haven't either.
15 RUT: Ohmygod [they ]'re the best things in the whole [wide world ].
16 LIL:         [Yeah.]
17 OWE:                                              [And they're]
18      they're farmer's cheese? [Cheese blintz, er]
19 RUT:                          [No. No she ma:de ] she made them
20      with um: beef.
21 OWE: Okay.
22 RUT: [And it was just like] with Rosh Hashanah every time.
23 OWE: [Mm: did she serve    ]
```

---

[11] Though I was not able to hear which kinship term Ruth uses here I did ask her about this later. She said that her great aunt, who really felt more like a grandmother to her, is the one who used to make kreplakh.

```
24 OWE: Did she serve gravy with it?
25 RUT: No:.
26 OWE: Okay.
27      (0.4)
28 RUT: (They taste like wontons.)
29 OWE: [Okay. So so ei:ther        ]
30 AAR: [Yeah like mushroom dumplings.]
31 RUT: Yeah so what's the history.
32 OWE: ((reading from sheet)) Here's the- here's the history it's
33      similar to a wonton it was brought either by the khazars to
34      Polish lands
35      (0.2)
36 RUT: Mmhm.
37 OWE: Jews from the east or by Jewish trading in China (0.2) where
38      Jews learned to make uh: yknow wontons there.
```

In this example, Owen begins by describing the different ways that kreplakh, small filled dumplings, can be made (boiled, served in soup, fried). However, he demonstrates his lack of experience-based epistemic stance at line 06 ("which I've never have you (as you anybody has?)"). Ruth demonstrates her indirect epistemic stance at line 10 through her invocation of a third party who cooked the dish. What is especially interesting here is that at lines 12 – 14, the other three participants (Aaron, Owen, and Lily) display their lack of experience-based epistemic stance. Ruth then responds with an extreme case formulation ("Ohmygod they're the best things in the whole wide world."), used to demonstrate her relative upgraded epistemic stance over this knowledge domain. She then has an opportunity to foreground her secondhand knowledge of the fillings, when they are served, what they are served with, and what they taste like.

Both Ruth and Aaron (at lines 28 and 30 respectively) engage in a form of recipient design, in that they compare a currently discussed item to something with which the participants are familiar (e.g., wontons, dumplings). Though Ruth is able to display her experience-based epistemic stance throughout the example, at line 31 she asks Owen to provide the history of the kreplakh. He is only able to do this using research material he has brought with him, thereby demonstrating a form of study-based epistemic stance at lines 32-37. He is perceived as the "expert" because he has these materials; during this presentation of the history, Owen has the opportunity to engage in practices

217

similar to the "experts" discussed in the previous examples. For example, at line 33 he talks about "the khazars"; he then uses an appositive at line 37 ("Jews from the east") to define the term for the recipients who may not know it. This is similar to the practices Feivel and David engaged in when defining Galitsianers and Litvaks' corresponding geographic areas in example 9.3.

Later during this same session, the participants engage in a discussion about another food, kugl (a noodle casserole). In this case as well, the participants use outside resources (e.g., a book about Jewish cooking) to research relevant information about the food. In addition, two of the participants invoke third parties, one of whom is an author who writes about Yiddish and another who is a professor of Yiddish language. In this setting, then, participants without a pre-designated "expert" engage in different types of practices focused primarily on study-based epistemic stance with occasional, frequently indirect, displays of experience-based epistemic stance.

## 9.9    Conclusions

This analysis provides a novel perspective on the ways that community members display epistemic stance in intergenerational contexts. In addition, it reveals how epistemic stance and child and adult language socialization are interconnected. First of all, Feivel's experience-based epistemic stance practices demonstrate how he was socialized into the metalinguistic community as a child, while David and Rachel's primarily study-based epistemic stance provides evidence for their having been socialized into the community later in their adult lives. Furthermore, Owen (a young adult) is able to position himself as an expert due to study-based resources and his local identity as the organizer of the group. Lastly, the participants in the group itself are able to display their identities as novices through non-expert epistemic stance (e.g., asking and answering questions, praise for others' epistemic stance). In these ways, individuals' histories and local identities shape their interactions within the metalinguistic community as they socialize one another through public knowledge displays.

Below is a summary of examples of the principal epistemic stance practices used within the Yiddish metalinguistic community of the Folks-Grupe. 'EB' stands for experience-based epistemic stance, knowledge based upon one's own history and experiences. 'SB' stands for study-based epistemic stance, knowledge based upon study, research, and material resources. Whereas assessments, self- or other-initiated co-tellership can all be used to demonstrate experience-based and study-based epistemic stance, extreme case formulations and third party invocations display experience-based epistemic stance only.

**Assessments (EB & SB):**

```
She's so awesome.
Yeah, you can say that.
```

**Self- Or Other-Initiated Co-Tellership (EB & SB):**

```
and David can tell me where that is.
[which] is the way how the Hasidic world. Many people speak actually.
```

**Linguistic Competence (EB & SB):**

```
Di sheygets khaps everything.yknow
```

**Extreme Case Formulations (Pomerantz 1986) (EB):**

```
One of the best Yiddish films. And by the way one of the best dance (.)
scenes (.) of traditional [Yiddish dance.]
Ohmygod [they ]'re the best things in the whole [wide world ].
```

**Third Party Invocations (EB):**

```
Like my parents for example.
That's how my (   ) did. [great aunt]
```

Through an examination of the previously discussed examples, it becomes evident that participants with different histories, experiences, and ideologies use a variety of epistemic stance practices within these epistemic ecologies. The primary practices used differ based upon the topics discussed (e.g., the Jewish community; language, community, and geography; and food), participants'

knowledge bases, and interactional contingencies of the epistemic ecologies themselves. This chapter provides detailed analysis of one element (epistemic stance) that makes up the Yiddish metalinguistic community, in an effort to provide a framework for understanding both the case of Yiddish and the broader phenomenon of metalinguistic communities as a whole. In investigating the specific practices that participants engage in when interacting with others, one can see which types of epistemic stance are currently valued in this community.

The participants have a variety of modes of involvement available to them, including demonstrating independent access, superiority, experience-based epistemic stance, and study-based epistemic stance. They can therefore engage in numerous practices, all of which have gradations, during their interactions within this epistemic ecology. One example is to produce a first-position declarative to start a sequence, which demonstrates one's claims to know. Another example is self-initiated co-tellership, in which a participant can exhibit his/her independent access to knowledge about the topic. In some cases, these practices are designed to complement what has come before them and in others they are meant to replace them.

Throughout these interactions, participants are learning the relevant, fine-grained distinctions within this metalinguistic community. In this way, significant knowledge is highlighted through complex interactional practices within an epistemic ecology. This ecology provides a discursive space in which participants constantly negotiate their shifting identities. Signs such as the Galitsianer/Litvak distinction, third parties as characters in current talk, and current religious communities are manipulated within a framework of cooperative semiosis (Goodwin, 2011, p. 189). These signs are used and mobilized over the course of the interactions as tools for demonstrating authenticity, authority, and epistemic stance. As mentioned above, frequently disagreements are delicately managed in favor of the overriding enterprise of valuing Yiddish language and culture. Through these interactions, these situated social actors construct a vision of the past, appropriating

220

it in order to build a current world. Within contemporary Yiddish educational contexts, participants demonstrate their ongoing commitment to maintain and honor the Yiddish language and culture. In so doing, they mobilize a variety of epistemic and ideological resources in order to publicly take moral stances within the constantly evolving Yiddish metalinguistic community.

# CHAPTER 10

## CONCLUSION

### 10.1  Revisiting Metalinguistic Community and the Yiddish Case

This dissertation has analyzed a community of diverse actors with different histories in separated, fragmented sites who nevertheless constitute themselves through a unified focus on a specific language, one they may lack competence in but nostalgically memorialize. The language is oriented to and constituted through a range of metalinguistic practices and alignments. It is a community whose primary activities are metalinguistic and metapragmatics as opposed to language practices employed by users of the language (in contrast to Hasidic Orthodox communities), made up of members who recruit the language in the service of constructing meaning about their lives. This project therefore reveals how building and recovering identities, especially in situations of loss and fragmentation, entails endless choices, ambiguities, and discoveries. The model of metalinguistic community provides a way to both conceptualize and empirically investigate a fundamental class of linguistic and social phenomena.  This notion has opened up productive areas for future research, which would explore the dimensions of the metalinguistic community model in the lived experiences of communities across the globe. These spheres of research include "endangered" languages, "heritage" languages, and, more generally, situations of fragmentation including immigration and diaspora.

Through their diverse public practices including attempting to learn the language, using greetings, and making specific efforts to encounter survivors and teachers, Yiddish metalinguistic community members demonstrate their commitment to a language and, by extension, cultural symbols tied to it. It is especially striking how the community is comprised of members with varied interests and agendas, including older 'experts' who experienced first-hand the events that others seek to memorialize, 'experts' who engage in study to capture the lives of those in the past, novelists

attempting to come to terms with one of the most defining moments in human history, middle-aged learners whose affiliation with the language has shifted over the course of their life cycles, older adults who view the language as one of many post-retirement activities, students who need the language for their scholarship, and dancers and musicians attending events focused on appreciating "Yiddish culture". Most often, individuals *choose* to engage in the metalinguistic community, which creates islands of experience that only tenuously form archipelagos during a classroom session, a weekend event, or even an email message. In this way, the metalinguistic community is a type of voluntary group, which permeates participants' understandings of their membership. However, in some cases, they also naturalize their membership through birthright and heritage. The community is therefore extraordinarily complex and only unified by its diverse members' sustained focus on the language, which emerges in different forms based on local contexts, participants, and goals.

### 10.1.1 Language, Experience, and Time

Due to the inherent variation of a metalinguistic community, the complexities of *experience* and *time* have emerged as central elements that define public practices focused on the language. First, many metalinguistic community members are either directly or indirectly engaged in attempts to access the experiences of Holocaust survivors. Participants listen to lectures at Yiddish cultural events; scholars analyze relevant history and literature; and older adults read poetry written during the Holocaust. In contexts where Yiddish is invoked and memorialized, experience and its inherent variability continually produce boundaries between those with certain experiences and those without, boundaries that are continuously managed and crossed by the individual and the group.

One demonstration of the centrality of time is Deborah's continuous process of discovering herself and her identities over the course of her life cycle, emphasizing the variation inherent even in one individual's experiences (see chapter 8). When wartime and post-war authors found themselves in situations that challenged the basic notions of humanity they saw the persistence of Yiddish as

223

both the medium and subject of their writing as a way to combat those difficult circumstances (see chapter 4). Their experiences created conflicts and paradoxes, which they sought to make sense of through valuing, interrogating, and reworking the past. Over time, salient ruptures in shared experience and intergenerational transmission have created a heightened dependence on experts and mentors of a very special kind. These ordinary people, some of whom are Holocaust survivors and others with different forms of experience-based epistemic stance, have become exceptional as they share some of the mundane experiences that shaped their lives. In educational contexts, these experts publicly socialize novices into the relevant distinctions within this social group, using study-based practices to make up for the novices' lack of experience-based understandings (see chapter 9).

In Yiddish classrooms, previous collective experiences and teachers' and students' individual experiences shape their perception of linguistic structure in the present (see chapter 5). Discussions about specific linguistic elements, including lexicon, grammar, and phonology, become sites of conflicted stance for both students and teachers. In Yiddish classrooms that both implicitly and explicitly memorialize the victims of the Holocaust, students and teachers consistently encounter German, the language of the perpetrators, within the grammatical organization of Yiddish itself. These moments can create tensions that must be managed on a moment-to-moment basis. These ideologically-charged moments lead to a selective vision of the Yiddish structure one is attempting to appropriate, in which key features of its organization undergo a process of erasure and are actively ignored.

In addition, the canon created by academics can paradoxically marginalize the positions and spaces inhabited by native speakers, through the establishment of certain grammatical forms as the norm. Variation between a given teacher's experience and the texts at hand highlight the competing versions and sources of the language, creating opportunities to socialize participants into a *diasporic language ideology*. Individuals' histories therefore give those in the classroom a highly selective

perception of its present structure. Modes of seeing, or "professional vision" (Goodwin, 1994), are thus shaped by social and political processes. A diasporic language ideology focuses on linguistic structure as an iconic symbol of Jews' mobile history. It is related to an "endangered" language ideology, for it focuses on the ways that historical circumstances and forces beyond a community's control have shaped the fate of a language. These ideologies are central to the metalinguistic community, for many of its members combat historical circumstances that were outside of past groups' control by engaging in their own agentive choices to learn the language in new diasporic communities.

Furthermore, time in many different forms is fundamental to the organization of the Yiddish metalinguistic community, and to the metalinguistic community model more generally. The centrality of time extends from events that occur in momentary encounters, to changing phenomena that encompass a life span, to the historical positioning of a metalinguistic community toward the events, language, culture, and people they are memorializing. Many members' engagement with Yiddish is a morally charged endeavor to capture lost time and grasp lives that were cut short. In this way, Yiddish events and classrooms are temporary memorials erected by present-day participants.

The possibilities for particular metalinguistic ways of engaging with the language, its people, and their experiences will vanish in the near future when the last survivors disappear. 'Experts', many of whom are themselves removed from the direct experiences of survivors, apprentice newcomers of varying ages into historical awareness (see chapter 9). They endeavor to impart enduring knowledge of bygone phases in the social group's lifespan in order to combat the fading memory of elders in the community. In addition, these activities memorialize the daily activities of ordinary people, in contrast to privileging only the language and actions of widely recognized sages or heroes. They build living monuments to Yiddish speakers by centering on everyday activities

(such as cooking) as worthy of reverence and respect, thereby transforming the mundane into the sacred.

Furthermore, participants' age throughout their own life cycle determines the prism through which they view the world, due in large part to their encounters with historically-relevant past events. Their modes and depth of engagement with the language are shaped by age-specific ideologies, including perceiving Yiddish as a hobby, an affective-laden symbol, or a tool (see chapter 7). It is also shaped over time by individuals' histories, as they continuously attempt to come to terms with who they are over the course of their lives. As a mode to fight against the inevitable aging and death of themselves and their communities, authors have attempted to create timeless representations of past worlds through their writing (see chapter 4).

One can extend the metaphor of age to the Yiddish language itself, which can be considered in terms of 'vitality' and 'health' (see chapter 6). Though historical events and personal choices may have damaged the language's vitality over time, many Hasidic Orthodox communities currently use it as a daily language. The 'age' of Yiddish therefore becomes relative – measured not in numerical but in experiential terms.

### 10.1.2 "Heritage" and "Endangerment" as Ideologies

In diverse interactions, lived histories, and built texts within the Yiddish metalinguistic community, there is a selective orientation to the concepts of 'heritage' and 'endangerment'. In both cases, community members' categories problematize those of academics, demonstrating a boundary between objectivist descriptions and phenomenological ones. "Endangered" and "heritage" are therefore not simply labels that researchers map onto given communities but instead are used for specific purposes and contested within communities themselves.

An alignment with the notion of Yiddish as a "heritage" language depends upon a number of factors including one's family's history, the communities of which one has (chosen to be) a part,

226

and one's educational experiences. Each individual determines if a language could be considered 'heritage' for him/her; it is not a monolithic category that can simply be applied to a given person or community. Many of the learners and teachers simultaneously feel a great sense of distance from and a moral call to engage with the Yiddish language and its speakers' history. But, they are frequently wavering between these two alignments in any given context or situation.

In addition, many of them are aware of prevailing ideologies within the broader Jewish community, including a focus on Israel and its national language, Hebrew. They therefore realize that their choice to engage with Yiddish is a radical one that may defy values to which they have been exposed in the past and which strongly shape Judaism in the contemporary world. Interestingly, some of them see Yiddish as an alternative to mainstream forms of religiosity such as those in institutions like synagogues or religious schools. This is ironic, however, given the language's ongoing vitality in the "most" religious areas of Jewish life in contemporary society. Furthermore, once they begin the process of learning the language they recognize the fundamental links it has to the language of those who perpetrated the Holocaust. This can create situations of tension and inquiry, which may shape a given participant's adherence to an ideology of Yiddish being a 'heritage' language for them.

Additionally, 'endangerment' is an ideology to which members may or may not orient. As their interviews express, metalinguistic community members experience a *phenomenological endangerment* regarding Yiddish since they have by and large lacked opportunities to be exposed to and use the language. In addition, as evidenced by media, popular books, interviews, and classroom interactions, the notion that Yiddish is endangered is discursively constructed. Frequently, this comes in the form of either implicitly or explicitly distinguishing/distancing from contemporary Hasidic Orthodox Yiddish. In this way, metalinguistic community members frequently build temporal and spatial bridges to past Yiddish speakers in Europe as opposed to current Yiddish speakers in the United

227

States, which is yet another *nostalgia socialization* practice. This selective adherence to the ideology of 'endangerment' emphasizes the fact that a metalinguistic community is always defined in terms of social actors, each of whom has their own unique histories and connections with the community.

## 10.2    Reconsidering Metalinguistic Community Dimensions

In expanding the model of metalinguistic community beyond the Yiddish case it becomes necessary to reconsider the five dimensions introduced in the introduction. The first dimension, socialization into language ideologies is a priority over socialization into language competence and use, is pervasive across contexts in the Yiddish metalinguistic community. This is the case for situations in which the Yiddish language is the pedagogical focus (e.g., language classrooms) and events in which the Yiddish language is only loosely the focus (e.g., a 'Yiddish dance' event). What teachers and experts seem to be primarily interested in is younger participants' socialization into ideologies about the language and its speakers' history. In some cases, they use the language itself or elements in the language as the vehicles for this socialization process. In other cases, a discussion of the food past Yiddish speakers used to eat or the dances they used to do could be the medium for teaching these ideologies. However, it is essential to recognize that the balance between these two goals could shift in any given situation.

For example, within Yiddish language classrooms the ostensible goal is in fact language learning and teaching, even if the reality is that language ideologies frequently become the focus and in the end are what endure for the participants. Interestingly, this dimension may be a fairly pervasive one in diasporic contexts. In fact, in the case of Armenian diaspora communities some young members are socialized so deeply into the importance of and responsibility to learn the language that it actually prevents some of them from learning it for fear that they will speak it incorrectly (S. Karapetian, personal communication, January 31, 2012). This balance, between

228

language ideologies and language competence, is therefore significant to examine when considering other possible metalinguistic communities.

The second dimension, language and culture as conflated, is especially prevalent in media and publicity within the Yiddish metalinguistic community. This may be a maximally inclusive way to invite new members into the community, even if they do not have proficiency in the language itself. In contexts in which there are fewer and fewer speakers of the language it may become necessary for metalinguistic community members to broaden the scope of what counts as the focus of the community. Therefore, it becomes more common to see phrases like "Yiddish dance" and "Yiddish culture" and for participants to feel that they are engaging in some way with their ancestral Yiddish-speaking past through singing songs, reading poetry, and/or engaging in everyday rituals. This conflation of language and culture is therefore another fruitful dimension to explore in considering other metalinguistic communities.

The third dimension, age and corresponding knowledge become highly salient, is a striking one to examine both for the specific case of Yiddish and the possible broader implications within other communities. Within Yiddish language classrooms and events, older adults frequently comment upon the presence of younger participants as something remarkable and positive; in this way, their participation as learners is valorized. When young people choose to engage in the language and culture it is almost always considered an encouraging sign of the language's future vitality. This valorization of youth may be an indication of a broader language ideology in the United States that values youth (J. Irvine, personal communication, November 16, 2011; P. V. Kroskrity, personal communication, May 4, 2012). In addition, it may be heightened in cases of rupture and/or immigration. However, their use of the language is not always seen as a source of legitimate or authoritative Yiddish. Older speakers, and even long deceased speakers, are actually viewed as the

229

source of authority. Younger speakers then place themselves in a "chain of authentication" (Irvine, 1989) that connects to this authoritative past.

Moreover, elders' experiences are highly valued during intergenerational interactions with younger members of the community. One can imagine other situations in which elders and their deep knowledge of the language are what is intensely valued and young members' ability to engage only metalinguistically or in tokenistic ways would be looked down upon. In all of these cases, the issues of age and corresponding knowledge are relevant issues to be attentive to, but the specifics in any given community would have to be examined in detail.

The fourth dimension, use and discussion of focal code are primarily pedagogical, may seem self-evident in light of this dissertation's primary focus on educational contexts. In addition, within language classrooms more generally there is a great deal of metalinguistic discussion of a given focal code in order to explain the rules, grammar, and history associated with the language. However, what is striking within the Yiddish metalinguistic community is that even in contexts that are not expressly pedagogical, like cultural events, frequently the language is presented as something to be taught. This seems to be a defining dimension of a metalinguistic community since there are fewer and fewer native speakers and therefore when the language is used it is being taught to those who do not yet know very much of it. It would seem that this focus on teaching would be salient in other metalinguistic and/or diasporic communities as well.

The fifth dimension, use of focal code in specific interactional and textual contexts (e.g., greetings/closings, assessments, response cries, mock language, lexical items related to religion and culture), provides a complement to the fourth dimension by focusing on the ways that the language is used within contexts where another language is dominantIn the case of the Yiddish metalinguistic community, many of these uses of the language serve to frame a given event, activity, or text as

focused in some way on Yiddish even if the vast majority of that event, activity, or text is being conducted in English.

For example, when a Yiddish cultural organization begins and ends an English donation thank you letter with a Yiddish greeting and closing they bracket the letter for the reader as a text that values Yiddish. Ahlers, 2006) states that the use of native language at the beginning and the end of a speech event increases the language's cultural capital in what she terms a "Native discourse space", providing an interesting cross-cultural comparison (albeit also one in a United States context that undermines bilingual adaptations). Similarly, when the instructor of a Yiddish language class provides metalinguistic information about Yiddish in English but assesses students' language use in Yiddish this practice brackets that lesson as one that values Yiddish. However, in other language communities, it is possible that these would not be the (only) ways that the focal code would be used across contexts in which another language is dominant.

## 10.3    Metalinguistic Community: Comparison Cases

In the contemporary globalizing world in which historical, political, and social forces shape the life cycles of languages the pervasiveness of what may be called "metalinguistic communities" is an unfortunate reality. There are numerous situations in which the speakers of a given community are threatened, which in turn threatens the vitality of that community's language. In these situations the metalinguistic community model may be potentially useful; however, it is always essential to consider the unique elements within specific ethnographic contexts in order to see what those communities are doing with their linguistic and cultural resources.

Below are a few possible examples of communities that may fall on the 'metalinguistic community' spectrum, including the Corsican, Miami, Apache, Gaelic, and Judeo-Spanish communities. Jaffe (2007) examines discourses of endangerment within the ethnographic context of

Corsica. She highlights the highly complex and constantly shifting nature of endangered language communities, noting

> People are not unified around what will count as authentic communicative practice, or who belongs to the 'speech community'. A homogenous view of the endangered speech community is also unable to contend with the local politics of such debates, which are always conducted by situated social actors with particular interests and agendas (social, political, economic and so forth). (p. 69)

Jaffe (2007) highlights participants' own ideologies about the complexity of "endangered speech communities". She therefore espouses a "practice rather than form-based" approach, one that

> would take into account the multiple ways in which particular linguistic forms acquire social and political meanings in particular historical and cultural contexts…they also include efforts that have no discernible measurable outcomes on language competence, that will never produce anything more than 'semi-speakers' of various kinds, or may support the use of the language only in limited or ritual contexts…The language in these cases is a focal element in cultural activity, but that activity is not oriented towards its full communicative use. Rather, select or partial uses of an endangered language become one of the ways that people signal their shared participation and shared cultural orientations in activities or events that invoke and may strengthen cultural identification. (pp. 70 – 71)

Jaffe's practice-based approach to endangered language communities and their specific socialization and interactional practices resonates with the approach to the Yiddish metalinguistic community. She highlights the use of a language as a "focal element" and its use as both as a symbol and a code in the service of collective alignments towards a culture and a community.

As Leonard (2008, p. 24) describes about the formerly "sleeping" language of *myaamia*, language shift to English occurred due to a number of factors including "the forced division of the

Miami community in 1846 and English-only practices in the federal Indian boarding school system".

The "last" native speaker passed away in the 1960's. However, community members now engage in language teacher-training programs, "cultural immersion camps for Miami youth", and "some (classroom-style) classes" (p. 25) as part of their language reclamation efforts. Leonard (2011) also describes the ways that the Miami community's modern language practices challenge dominant discourses about the success or failure of language revitalization efforts. Endangered language communities like this seem to exhibit some of the central five dimensions.

Nevins' (2004), in her rich ethnography, examines debates about a local Apache language program. She highlights that "conflicts between standards of communicative competence associated with 'expert' and local rhetorics, respectively, and the social and political relationships entailed by each, are key to understanding [these] controversies" (p. 270). Nevins' discussion also touches on many of the central issues in the Yiddish metalinguistic community, including the public negotiation of expertise, the interactional realities within pedagogical contexts, and diverse (and sometimes conflicting) language ideologies.

McEwan-Fujita's (2010, p. 27) interviews of adult learners of Gaelic in Scotland revealed language ideologies regarding Gaelic-English sociolinguistic boundaries and negative affect toward Gaelic speech countered by their exposure to "'sociolinguistic mentors' who socialized them into a more inclusive vision of Gaelic speaking laden with positive affect". This researcher's focus on adult learners, the role of experts, and the integral component of affect in members' conflicted stance toward a language also resonate with many of the themes described within the Yiddish metalinguistic community.

Kushner Bishop (2001), in her discussion of a week-long Judeo-Spanish intensive course followed by monthly day-long seminars, describes participants' shifting ideologies about the language:

For many students, the issue of shame was a recurring theme when discussing the role of

Judeo-Spanish in their childhood. Yet when discussing its current role in their lives, the

sentiment was one of nostalgia, as many of them had turned to Judeo-Spanish as their only

remaining link to the past. Nostalgia was not always viewed positively within the Judeo-

Spanish maintenance movement, however[…] (pp. 23-24)

The issue of nostalgia in Judeo-Spanish, another Jewish language, resonates with the nostalgia

socialization focus of the Yiddish metalinguistic community. In both cases, older adults choose to

reconnect with a language for which they may have felt either shame or ambivalence earlier in their

lives; these issues of choice and shifting ideologies over the life cycle may also serve to be a

productive area for possible comparisons across contexts.

In addition, there are members of the Arizona Tewa, a diasporic group, who view the Tewa

of those who stayed within the influence of the Spanish colonial program (Tewa-speaking pueblos

along the Rio Grande in New Mexico: San Juan, San Ildefonso, Santa Clara, Nambe, and Pojoaque)

as contaminated by Spanish because of the greater (though still very limited) use of Spanish

loanwords (P. V. Kroskrity, personal communication, May 23, 2012). Kroskrity (2009b, p. 43) notes

"the combined ideologies of indigenous purism and language as historical product both contribute

to an additional project of constructing the Arizona Tewa language as an icon of their ethnic

identity". These ideologies and practices quite similar to those described in chapter 6, in which the

Yiddish of contemporary Hasidic Orthodox speakers is derided due to influence from English, in

favor of the language of European ancestors. This community therefore provides another potential

point of comparison for the Yiddish metalinguistic community.

In addition to those communities described above, in which one can identify both members'

phenomenological endangerment and an objective level of language endangerment, there are those

cases in which members choose to construct a language as endangered. As Duchene and Heller

(2007, p. 4) note, "discourses of language endangerment are fundamentally discourses about other kinds of threats which take place, for specific reasons, on the terrain of language". For example, Pujolar (2007, p. 121) describes the competition between Catalan and Spanish in Spain and the ways that Catalan nationalism is intimately tied to national ideologies about the language. In this case study, the battle is waged between two national languages; however, in the case of secular versus Hasidic Yiddishes neither is a national language. Interestingly, though, in both cases similar practices, stances, and ideologies emerge.

In Milani's (2007, 192) discussion of the Swedish-English language debate, he notes that there is a "tension between centrifugal voices of multilingualism and multiculturalism which push towards the recognition of a multiplicity of languages and cultures in Sweden and centripetal voices of social cohesion which aim at the achievement not only of a civic/political, but also of a symbolic/cultural unity". Here then one can see the sometimes conflicting ideologies that surface in discussions of language endangerment, whether they occur in national spheres or within local contexts.

## 10.4    Metalinguistic Community: Re-envisioning Ties Between Language and Community

The metalinguistic community is by definition portable – it can emerge and collapse in but an hour or an afternoon - and yet it extends across national boundaries and endures in mutable form for generations. It materializes on a Sunday afternoon in a synagogue re-purposed for a one-day "Yiddish culture" festival or in an old building in which young adults in their 20's and 30's convene every other Wednesday to hear 'experts' share history and literature as they are surrounded by timeworn Yiddish books. It exists Monday evenings when older adults meet to learn from and get their weekly homework corrected by a native Yiddish-speaking Holocaust survivor, whose version of the language differs from the collaged written materials he was able to share with them. And it appears in one's inbox, encouraging its recipient in English and a few Yiddish words to attend these

235

ongoing classes and one-time events or, at least, contribute monetarily to facilitate these experiences for others. One's membership in the metalinguistic community is not an exclusive identity but is part of a repertoire of identity (Kroskrity, 1993, p. 177). Importantly, it is instead one that participants can adopt situationally in a way that does not threaten one's national identity.

The metalinguistic community model therefore includes and integrates diverse actors focused on a language, and their myriad (though sometimes temporary) motivations in engaging with the code. At the forefront of these efforts is building the identities of its members as those who publicly honor the language, even if they do not necessarily have full competence in it. Through its incorporation of numerous means of participating in the language, a metalinguistic community is highly inclusive. By expanding the notion of what ties language with community, the metalinguistic community model represents the genuine and diverse uses to which a language can be put as social groups are transformed over time.

# APPENDIX A

## TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

The transcription notation system employed for interactional data excerpts is an adaptation of Gail Jefferson's work (see Atkinson & Heritage (Eds.), 1984, pp. ix-xvi).

| | |
|---|---|
| . | The period indicates a falling, or final, intonation contour, not necessarily the end of a sentence. |
| ? | A question mark indicates rising intonation, not necessarily a question. |
| , | The comma indicates 'continuing' intonation, not necessarily a clause boundary. |
| ]<br>] | Brackets indicate onset of overlap in talk. |
| ::: | Colons indicate stretching of the preceding sound proportional to the number of colons. |
| - | A hyphen after a word or part of a word indicates a cut-off or self-interruption. |
| <u>word</u> | Underlining indicates some form of stress or emphasis on the underlined item. |
| hhh/.hhh | H's indicate audible outbreaths, possibly laughter. The more h's, the longer the aspiration. Aspirations with periods indicate audible inbreaths (e.g., .hhh). H's within parentheses (e.g., ye(hh)s) mark within-speech aspirations, possibly laughter. |
| WOrd | Upper case indicates loudness. |
| ° ° | The degree signs indicate segments of talk that are markedly quiet or soft. |
| > < | The combination of 'more than' and 'less than' symbols indicates that the segments of talk between them are compressed or rushed. |
| <> | In the reverse order, they indicate that a stretch of talk is markedly slower. |
| = | An equals sign indicates no break or delay between the words thereby connected. |
| (.) | A period in parentheses indicates a brief pause. |
| (1.2) | Numbers in parentheses indicate silence in tenths of a second. |
| (word) | When all or part of an utterance is in parentheses, this indicates uncertainty on the transcriber's part. |
| ((action)) | Double parentheses enclose descriptions of conduct. |

## YIVO STANDARD YIDDISH TRANSLITERATION[12]

### Vowels and Diphthongs

| LETTER NAME | APPROX. SOUND EQUIVALENT | ROMANIZED (TRANSCRIBED) AS |
|---|---|---|
| shtumer alef | (silent) | |
| pasekh alef | a as in father | a in gas 'street' |
| komets alef | o as in sort | o in yorn 'years' |
| | u as in hut | o in hot 'has' |
| vov | u as in put | u in un 'and' |
| | oo as in goo (syllable-final) | u in du 'you' |
| yud | [Between i as in fit and ee as in feet] | i in tish 'table' |
| | [closer to feet] | i in zi 'she' |
| tsvey yudn (2 yuds) | ey as in grey | ey in eynikl 'grandchild' |
| pasekh tsvey yudn | y as in sky | ay in fayer 'fire' |
| vov yud | oy as in boy | oy in moyl 'mouth' |
| ayen | e as in end | e in entfer 'answer' |

12 "Development of Yiddish over the ages" (www.jewishgen.org)

## Consonants and Consonant Clusters

| LETTER NAME | APPROX. SOUND EQUIVALENT | ROMANIZED (TRANSCRIBED) AS |
|---|---|---|
| beys or beyz | b as in ball | b in brem 'eyebrow' |
| [veys or veyz] | v as in heavy | [H] v in mazl-tov 'congratulations' |
| tsvey vovn (2 vovs) | v as in heavy | v in vursht 'salami' |
| giml | g as in give | g in gornisht 'nothing' |
| daled | d as in done | d in dorf 'village' |
| hey | h as in hot | h in hungerik 'hungry' |
| zayen | z as in zebra | z in zumer 'summer' |
| [khes] | ch as in German "achtung" | [H] kh in bokher 'young man' |
| khof | " | kh in khapn 'to catch' |
| tes | t as in time | t in tuml 'noise' |
| [tof] | " | [H] t in toyre 'Torah' |
| yud (before a vowel) | y as in yet | y in yagdes 'berries' |
| [kof] | k as in kill | [H] k in kosher 'kosher' |
| kuf | " | k in kamf 'struggle' |
| lamed | l as in lake | l in luft 'air' |
| mem | m as in mark | m in mentsh 'person' |
| nun | n as in neck | n in nudnik 'bore' |
| samekh | s as in self | s in samet 'velvet' |
| [sin] | " | [H] s in soyne 'enemy' |
| [sof] | " | [H] s in toes 'error' |
| pey | p as in pack | p in ponim 'face' |
| fey | f as in fence | f in frish 'fresh' |
| tsadek | ts as in fruits | ts in nayntsik 'ninety' |
| reysh | r as in French "rue"* | r in royt 'red'/td> |
| shin | sh as in show | sh in shande 'shame' |
| zayen shin | s as in measure | zh in zhuk 'beetle' |
| daled zayen shin | j as in jump | dzh in dzhez 'jazz' |
| tes shin | ch as in chair | tsh in kvetshn 'to squeeze' |

# REFERENCES

Abley, M. (2003). *Spoken here: Travels among threatened languages.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Adler Peckerar, R. J. (2011). Yiddish as a vernacular language: Teaching a language in obsolescence. *Language Learning Journal, 39*, 237-246.

Ahlers, J. C. (2006). Framing discourse: Creating community through native language use. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, 16*, 58-75.

Aikhenvald, A. Y. (2011). The grammaticalization of evidentiality. In H. Narrog and B. Heine (Eds.), *Oxford handbook in linguistics* (pp. 605-613). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Almi, A. (1930). Yidish. In S. Erdberg (Ed.), *Far Yidish: A zamlbukh* [For Yiddish: A collection]. New York.

American Jewish university. (2012). Retrieved May 28, 2012 from www.ajula.edu/

Anderson, B. R. (1983). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism.* London: Verso.

Anonymous Boy, Lodz Ghetto. (2002). Diary. In A. Zapruder (Ed.), *Salvaged pages: Young writers' diaries of the holocaust* (pp. 361-395). Yale: Yale University Press.

Assouline, D. (forthcoming). Verbs of Hebrew origin in Israeli Haredi Yiddish. In R. B. Shahar and G. Toury (Eds.), *Hebrew: A living language* [*Ha-ivrit safa haya*] *V*. Tel Aviv University: Hakibutz Hameukhad and The Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics.

Atkinson, J. M., & Heritage, J. (1984). *Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Atkinson, D. R., Morten, G., & Sue, D. W. (1983). Proposed Minority Identity Development Model. In D. R. Atkinson, G. Morten, and D. W. Sue (Eds.), *Counseling American minorities: A cross-cultural perspective* (pp. 35-52). Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown.

Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (C. Emerson and M. Holquist, Trans.). M. Holquist (Ed.). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Barriere, I. (2010). The vitality of Yiddish among Hasidic infants and toddlers in a low SES preschool in Brooklyn. In W. Moskovich (Ed.), *Yiddish – a Jewish national language at 100. Proceedings of Czernowitz Yiddish language 2008 international centenary conference, Jerusalem-Kyiv, 22*, 170-196.

Baquedano-Lopez, S. P. (1998). *Language socialization of Mexican children in a Los Angeles Catholic parish.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.

Basso, K. H. (1988). "Speaking with names": Language and landscape among the Western Apache. *Cultural Anthropology, 3*, 99-130.

Basso, K. H. (1990). *Western Apache language and culture: Essays in linguistic anthropology*. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press.

Benor, S. B. (2008). Towards a new understanding of Jewish language in the twenty-first century. *Religion Compass, 2*, 1062-1080.

Benor, S. B. (2009). Do American Jews speak a "Jewish language"? A model of Jewish linguistic distinctiveness. *The Jewish Quarterly Review, 99*, 230-269.

Benor, S. B. (2011). *Mensch*, *bentsh*, and *balagan*: Variation in the American Jewish linguistic repertoire. *Language & Communication, 31*, 141-154.

Benor, S. B. & Cohen, S. M. (2011). Talking Jewish: The ethnic English of American Jews. In E. Lederhendler (Ed.). *Ethnicity and beyond: Theories and dilemmas of Jewish group demarcation. Studies in Contemporary Jewry, 25* (pp. 62-78). Institute of Contemporary Jewry and Oxford University Press.

Benor, S. B., November 16, 2010. Personal communication.

Benor, S.B., May 17, 2012. Personal communication.

Benor, S. B., May 18, 2012. Personal communication.

Benor, S. B. (2012). *Becoming Frum: How newcomers learn the language and culture of Orthodox Judaism*. Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Berdichevsky, N. (2004). *Nations, language, and citizenship*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers.

Berger, J. (2010, November 25). No need to kvetch, Yiddish lives on in Catskills. *The New York Times*. Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/26/arts/26klezmer. html

Berger, Z. S. (2010, September 7). The popular language that few bother to learn [Msg 6]. Message posted to mendele@mailman.yale.edu, archived at http://mendele.commons.yale.edu/wp/

Birnbaum, S. A. (1979). *Yiddish: A survey and a grammar*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Blau, J. L. (1976). *Judaism in America: From curiosity to third faith*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Bloomfield, L. (1927). *Literate and illiterate speech. American Speech, 2*, 432-439.

Bourdieu, P. (1991. *Language as symbolic power*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Original work published in 1980).

Bradley, D., & Bradley, M. (2002). *Language endangerment and language maintenance*. New York: Routledge Curzon.

Briggs, C. L. (1984). Learning how to ask: Native metacommunicative competence and the incompetence of fieldworkers. *Language in Society, 13*, 1-28.

Brinton, D. M., Kagan, O., & Bauckus, S. (2008). *Heritage language education: A new field emerging*. New York: Routledge.

Bronner, S. J. (2001). From *landsmanshaften* to *vinkln*: Mediating community among Yiddish speakers in America. *Jewish History, 15*, 131-148.

Boadt, L. (1984). *Reading the old testament: An introduction*. New York: Paulist Press.

Bortnick, R. A. (2001). The internet and Judeo-Spanish: Impact and implications of a virtual community. In H. Pomeroy & M. Alpert (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Twelfth British Conference on Judeo-Spanish Studies* (pp. 4-11). Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands.

Boyd, E., & Heritage, J. (2006). Taking the patient's medical history: Questioning during comprehensive history taking. In J. Heritage & D. Maynard (Eds.), *Communication in medical care: Interactions between primary care physicians and patients* (pp. 151-184). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Bucholtz, M. (2000). The politics of transcription. *Journal of Pragmatics, 32*, 1439-1465.

Cammy, J., November 20, 2009. Personal communication.

Campbell, R. N., & Christian, D. (2003). Directions in research: intergenerational transmission of heritage languages. *Heritage Language Journal, 1*. Retrieved May 18, 2012 from http://hlj.ucla.edu/

Campbell, R. N., & Rosenthal, J. W. (2000). Heritage languages. In J.W. Rosenthal (Ed.), *Handbook of undergraduate second language education* (pp. 165-184). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Carreira, M. (2004). Seeking explanatory adequacy: A dual approach to understanding the term heritage language learner. *Heritage Language Journal, 2*. Retrieved from http://hlj.ucla.edu/on May 18, 2012.

Carreira, M., & Kagan, O. (2011). The results of the national heritage language survey: Implications for teaching, curriculum design, and professional development. *Foreign Language Annals, 44*, 40-64.

Cazden, C. B. (2001). *Classroom discourse: The language of learning and teaching*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Chan, S. (2007, October 17). A Yiddish revival with New York leading the way. *The New York Times*. Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/10/17/a-yiddish-revival-with-new-york-leading-the-way/

Cho, G., Cho, K., & Tse, L. (1997). Why ethnic minorities want to develop their heritage language: The case of Korean-Americans. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 10*, 106-112.

Clayman, S., & Gill, V. T. (2004). Conversation analysis. In M. Hardy & A. Bryman (Eds.), *Handbook of data analysis* (pp. 589-606). London: Sage Publications.

Clayman, S., & Heritage, J. (2002). *The news interview: Journalists and public figures on the air.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, S. M. & Benor, S. B. (2009, October). *Survey of American Jewish language and identity.* Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR). Retrieved May 28, 2012 from www.bjpa.org/Publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=3874

Cross, W. (1978). The Thomas and Cross models of psychological nigrescence: A literature review. *Journal of Black psychology, 4*, 13-31.

Crystal, D. (2000). *Language death.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Cummins, J. (2005). A proposal for action: Strategies for recognizing HL competence as a learning resource within the mainstream classroom. *Modern Language Journal, 89*, 585-592.

Dalby, A. (2003). *Language in Danger: the loss of linguistic diversity and the threat to our future.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Dashefsky, A., DellaPergola, S. & Sheskin, I. (2011). *Jewish Population in the United States, 2011.* Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://www.jewishdatabank.org/Reports/Jewish_Population_in_the_United_States_2011.pdf

Dauber, J., June 23, 2009. Personal communication.

Davidowicz, L. S. (2008). *From that place and time: a memoir, 1938 – 1947.* Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Davis, B. (1987). Yiddish and the Jewish Identity. *History Workshop Journal, 23*, 159-164.

De Fina, A. & Perrino, S. (Eds.) (2011). Narratives in interviews, interviews in narrative studies [Special issue]. *Language in Society, 40.*

Del Valle, J. (2007). Embracing diversity for the sake of unity: Linguistic hegemony and the pursuit of total Spanish. In A. Duchene & M. Heller (Eds.), *Discourses of endangerment: ideology and interest in the defence of languages* (pp. 242-267). London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Development of Yiddish over the ages. (2012). Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/givennames/yidyivo.htm

Dorian, N. C. (1982). Defining the speech community to include its working margins. In S. Romaine (Ed.), *Sociolinguistic variation in speech communities* (pp. 25-33). London: Edward Arnold.

Dorian, N. C. (Ed.) (1989). *Investigating obsolescence: Studies in language contraction and death.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Dorian, N. (1998). Western language ideologies and small language prospects. In L.A. Grenoble & L.J. Whaley (Eds.), *Endangered languages: Current issues and future prospects* (pp. 3-21). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Dornyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Dornyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (Eds.) (2009). *Motivation, language identity and the l2 self.* Multilingual Matters.

Drew, P., & Heritage, J. (Eds.). (1992.) *Talk at work: interaction in institutional settings.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Duchene, A., & Heller, M. (Eds.) (2008). *Discourses of endangerment: ideology and interest in the defence of languages.* London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

DuBois, J. (2007). The stance triangle. In R. Englebretson (Ed.), *Stancetaking in discourse: subjectivity, evaluation, interaction* (pp. 139-182). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Duff, P. (2010). Language socialization into academic discourse communities. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 30*, 169-192.

Duranti, A. (1994). *From grammar to politics: Linguistic anthropology in a Western Samoan village.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Duranti, A. (1997). *Linguistic Anthropology.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Duranti, A. (2009). The Relevance of Husserl's Theory to Language Socialization. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, 19*, 205-226.

Duranti, A., Ochs, E., & Schieffelin, B. B. (2012). *The Handbook of Language Socialization.* Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Eckert, P. & McConnell-Ginet, S. (1992). Think practically and look locally: Language and gender as community-based Practice. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 21*, 461-490.

Edmo, R. S. (2002). *Spirit Rider: A collection of contemporary poetry in the Shoshoni language.* Pocatello: Idaho State University Press.

Eisenlohr, P. (2004). Language revitalization and new technologies: Cultures of electronic mediation and the refiguring of communities. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 33*, 21-45.

Enfield, N. J. & Stivers, T. (2007). *Person reference in interaction: Linguistic, cultural, and social perspectives.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Evans, N. (2010). *Dying words: Endangered languages and what they have to tell us.* Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Ewing, K. P. (2006). Revealing and concealing: Interpersonal dynamics and the negotiation of identity in the interview. *Ethos 34*, 89-122.

Fader, A. (2009). *Mitzvah girls: Bringing up the next generation of Hasidic Jews in Brooklyn.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ferst, D. (2009, November 4). The pitselech are reviving Yiddish. *The Jewish Daily Forward.* Retrieved May 19, 2012, from http://forward.com/issues/2009-11-13/

Fine, J. C. (2010, August 3). Yiddish theater: Keeping the language alive. *The Epoch Times.* Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/arts-entertainment/yiddish-theater-der-mikado-gilbert-sullivan-40295.html

Fishman, D. E. (2005). *The rise of modern Yiddish culture.* Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Fishman, J. A. (1965). *Yiddish in America: Sociolinguistic description and analysis.* Bloomington, IN: Research Center in Anthropology, Patton House, Indiana University.

Fishman, J. A. (1980). Attracting a following to high-culture functions for a language of everyday life: the role of the Tshernovits Conference in the 'rise of Yiddish'. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 24*, 43-73.

Fishman, J. A. (Ed.) (1981a). The Sociology of Jewish Languages [Special issue]. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 30.

Fishman, J. A. (Ed.) (1981b). *Never say die!: A thousand years of Yiddish in Jewish life and letters.* The Hague: Mouton Publishers.

Fishman, J. A. (1985). The sociology of Jewish languages from a general sociolinguistic point of view. In J. A. Fishman (Ed.), *Readings in the sociology of Jewish languages* (pp. 3-21). Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill.

Fishman, J. A. (1987). *Ideology, society, & language: The odyssey of Nathan Birnbaum*. Ann Arbor, MI: Karoma Publishers, Inc.

Fishman, J. A. (1991a). *Reversing language shift: Theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages*. Clevedon, UK: Multlingual Matters Ltd.

Fishman, J. A. (1991b) The Hebraist response to the Tschernovits conference. In A.S. Kave (Ed.), *Semitic Studies in honor of Wolf Leslau on the occasion of his eighty-fifth birthday* (pp. 437-448). Wiesbaden, Germany: The Harrassowitz Publishing House.

Fishman, J. A. (1991c). *Yiddish: turning to life*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Fishman, J. A (1991d). *Language and ethnicity*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Fishman, J. A. (2001). 300-Plus years of heritage language education in the United States. In J. K. Peyton, D. A. Ranard, and S. McGinnis (Eds.), *Heritage languages in America: Preserving a national resource* (pp. 81-97). McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Fishman, J.A. (2002). The Holiness of Yiddish: Who Says Yiddish is Holy and Why? *Language Policy, 1*, 123-141.

Fishman, J. A. & Fishman, D. E. (1978). Yiddish in Israel: A case study of efforts to revise a monocentric language policy. In J. A. Fishman (Ed.) *Advances in the study of societal multilingualism* (pp. 185-262). The Hague: Mouton De Gruyter.

Fishman Gonshor, A. & Shaffir, W. (2004). Commitment to a language: Teaching Yiddish in a Hasidic and a secular Jewish school. In J. Sherman (Ed.), *Yiddish after the Holocaust* (pp. 149-178). Oxford, UK: Boulevard Books.

Fox, B. (2001). Evidentiality: Authority, responsibility, and entitlement in English conversation. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, 11*, 167-192.

Friedman, D. (2006). (Re)imagining the Nation: Language socialization in Ukrainian classrooms. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.

Friedman, D. (2009). Speaking correctly: Error correction as a language socialization practice in a Ukrainian classroom. *Applied Linguistics, 31*, 346-367.

Friedman, D. (2010). Becoming national: Classroom language socialization and political identities in the age of globalization. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 30*, 193-210.

Gal, S. (1998). Multiplicity and contention among language ideologies: A commentary. In B. B. Schieffelin, K. A. Woolard, & P. V. Kroskrity (Eds.), *Language ideologies: practice and theory* (pp. 317-332). New York: Oxford University Press.

Gal, S. & Woolard, K. (2001). *Languages and publics: The making of authority*. Manchester, UK: St. Jerome Publishing.

Gardner, R. C. (2001). Integrative motivation and second language acquisition. In Z. Dornyei & R. Schmidt (Eds.), *Motivation and second language acquisition* (pp. 1-19). Honolulu, HI: National Foreign Language Resource Center.

Gardner, R. C. & Lambert, W. E. (1959). Motivational variables in second language acquisition. *Canadian journal of psychology, 13*, 266-272.

Gardner, R.C. & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Garrett, P. B. & Baquedano-Lopez, P. (2002). Language socialization: Reproduction and continuity, transformation and change. *Annual review of anthropology, 31*, 339-361.

Geller, E. (2006). Yiddish for academic purposes: The polish perspective. *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów* [*Jewish History Quarterly*]*, 2*, 212-221.

Gibbons, J. & Ramirez, R. (2004). *Maintaining a minority language: A case study of Hispanic teenagers.* Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Glatstein, J. (1993). *I keep recalling: the Holocaust poems of Jacob Glatstein* (B. Zumoff, Trans.). Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing House.

Glinert, L. (1999). We never changed our language: attitudes to Yiddish acquisition among Hasidic educators in Britain. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 138*, 31-52.

Goldsmith, E. S. (1987). *Modern Yiddish culture: The story of the Yiddish language movement.* New York: Shapolsky Publishers.

Goodwin, C. (1979). The interactive construction of a sentence in natural conversation. In G. Psathas (Ed.), *Everyday language: Studies in ethnomethodology* (pp. 97-121). New York: Irvington Publishers.

Goodwin, C. (1986a). Audience diversity, participation, and interpretation. *Text, 6,* 283-316.

Goodwin, C. (1986b). Between and within: Alternative treatments of continuers and assessments. *Human Studies, 9,* 205-217.

Goodwin, C. (1994). Professional vision. *American Anthropologist, 96*, 606-633.

Goodwin, C. (2007). Participation, stance and affect in the organization of activities. *Discourse & Society, 18*, 53-73.

Goodwin, C. (2011). Contextures of action. In J. Streeck, C. Goodwin, & C. LeBaron (Eds.), *Embodied interaction: Language and body in the material world* (pp. 182-193). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Goodwin, C. (to appear). Combining various resources to build both co-operative action and diverse,situated knowledge. In A. Depperman (Ed.), *Multimodal Interaction* [Special issue] *Journal of Pragmatics.*

Goodwin, C. & Goodwin, M. H. (1987). Concurrent operations on talk: Notes on the interactive organization of assessments. *IPrA Papers in Pragmatics, 1*, 1-52.

Goodwin, C. & Goodwin, M. H. (1992). Assessment and the construction of context. In A. Duranti & C. Goodwin (Eds.), *Rethinking context: Language as an interactive phenomenon* (pp. 147-190). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Goodwin, C. & Goodwin, M. H. (2004). Participation. In A. Duranti (Ed.), *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology* (pp. 222-243). Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell.

Grenoble, L. A. & Whaley, L. J. (2006). *Saving languages: An introduction to language revitalization.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Gumperz, J. J. (1968). The speech community. In D.L. Sills (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (pp. 381-386). New York: Macmillan.

Hadda, J. (1999). Yiddish in contemporary American culture. In G. Estraikh & M. Krutikov (Eds.), *Yiddish in the contemporary world: Papers of the first Mendel Friedman international conference on Yiddish* (pp. 93-105). Legenda.

Hagege, C. (2009). *On the death and life of languages.* (J. Gladding, Trans.). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Hale, K. (2001). Strict locality in local language media: An Australian example. In L. Hinton and K. Hale (Eds.), *The green book of language revitalization in practice.* San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Harrison, K. D. (2007). *When languages die: The extinction of the world's languages and the erosion of human knowledge.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Harrison, K. D., Rood, D. S., & Dwyer, A. (Eds.) (2008). *Lessons from documented endangered languages.* Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Harshav, B. (1990). *The meaning of Yiddish.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Harshav, B. (1993). *Language in time of revolution.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

He, A. W. (2001). The language of ambiguity: Practices in Chinese heritage language classes. *Discourse Studies, 3*, 75-96.

He, A. W. (2008). Heritage language learning and socialization. In P. A. Duff & N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education. 2ⁿᵈ ed., Volume 8 Language socialization* (pp. 201-213).

He, A. W. (2010). The heart of heritage: Sociocultural dimensions of heritage language learning. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 30*, 66-82.

He, A. W., July 20, 2010. Personal communication.

Heritage, J. (2012). Epistemics in action: Action formation and territories of knowledge. *Research on Language and Social Interaction, 45*, 1-29.

Heritage, J. & Raymond, G. (2005). The terms of agreement: Indexing epistemic authority and subordination in assessment sequences. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 68*, 15-38.

Heritage, J. & Raymond, G. (in press). Navigating epistemic landscapes: Acquiescence, agency and resistance in response to polar questions. In J-P De Ruiter (Ed.), *Questions: Formal, functional and interactional perspectives*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Hill, J. H. (1998). Language, race, and White public space. *American anthropologist, 100*, 680-689.

Hill, J. H. (2000). "Read my article": Ideological complexity and the overdetermination of promising in American presidential politics. In P. V. Kroskrity (Ed.), *Regimes of language: ideologies, polities, and identities* (pp. 259-292). Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.

Hill, J. H. & Irvine, J. T. (Eds.) (1992). *Responsibility and evidence in oral discourse*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Hinton, L. (1997). Survival of endangered languages: The California master-apprentice program. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 123*, 177-191.

Hinton, L. (2002). *How to keep your language alive: A common-sense approach to one-on-one language learning*. Berkeley, CA: Heyday.

Hinton, L. (2003). Language revitalization. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 23*, 44-57.

Hinton, L. (2011). Language revitalization and language pedagogy: new teaching and learning strategies. *Language and Education, 25*, 307-318.

Hinton, L. & Hale, K. L. (2001). *The green book of language revitalization in practice*. London, UK: Emerald Group Publishing.

Hollan, D. (2001). Developments in person-centered ethnography. In C. C. Moore & H. F. Mathews (Eds.), *The psychology of cultural experience* (pp. 48-67). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Hutchins, E. (1995). *Cognition in the wild*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Irvine, J. T. (1989). When talk isn't cheap: Language and political economy. *American Ethnologist, 16*, 248-267.

Irvine, J. T. & Gal, S. (2000). Language ideology and linguistic differentiation. In P. V. Kroskrity (Ed.), *Regimes of language* (pp. 35-83). Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.

Irvine, J. T., November 16, 2011. Personal communication.

Isaacs, M. (1998). Yiddish in Orthodox communities of Jerusalem. In D. Kerler (Ed.), *The politics of Yiddish: Studies in language, literature & society* (pp. 85-96). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Jacobs, N. G. (2005). *Yiddish: A linguistic introduction*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Jaffe, A. (2007). Discourses of endangerment: Contexts and consequences of essentializing discourses. In A. Duchene & M. Heller (Eds.), *Discourses of endangerment: ideology and interest in the defence of languages* (pp. 57-75). London, UK: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Jaffe, A. (Ed.) (2009). *Stance: Sociolinguistic perspectives*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Jakobson, R. (1949/2006). Preface to the first edition [1949]. In U. Weinreich's *College Yiddish: An introduction to the Yiddish language and to Jewish life and culture.* New York: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

Jane & Terry Semel Institute for Neuroscience & Human Behavior (2012). *Senior Scholars Program at Longevity Center.* Retrieved May 28, 2012 at http://www.semel.ucla.edu/longevity/senior-scholars-program

Jaworski, A., Coupland, N. & Galaskinski , D. (Eds.) (2004). *Metalanguage: Social and ideological perspectives.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Jefferson, G. (1984). Transcription Notation. In J. M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Structures of social action* (pp. ix-xvi). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Jefferson, G. (1987). On exposed and embedded correction in conversation. In G. Button & J. R. E. Lee (Eds.), *Talk and social organization.* Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Jefferson, G. (1990). List-construction as a task and resource. In G. Psathas (Ed.) *Interaction competence* (pp. 63-92). Washington, D. C.: International Institute for Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis & University Press of America.

Jia, G. (2008). Heritage language development, maintenance, and attrition among recent Chinese immigrants in New York City. In A. W. He & Y. Xiao (Eds.), *Chinese as a heritage language: fostering rooted world citizenry* (pp. 189-203). Honolulu, HI: National Foreign Language Resource Center/University of Hawaii Press.

Johnstone, B. (1996). *The linguistic individual: Self-expression in language and linguistics.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Johnstone, B. (2001). Discourse Analysis and Narrative. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen, & H. Hamilton (Eds.), *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (pp. 635-649). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Kahn, A. F. & Dollinger, M. (2003). The Other Side. In A. F. Kahn (Ed.), *California Jews* (pp. 1-16). Lebanon, NH: Brandeis University Press.

Kafrissen, R. (2010, June 25). The 'Revival' is over, let's talk continuity. *The Jewish Daily Forward*. Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://forward.com/articles/128814/the-revival-is-over-let-s-talk-continuity/

Karapetian, S., January 31, 2012. Personal communication.

Karkkainen, E. (2003). *Epistemic stance in English conversation: A description of its interactional functions, with a focus on I think.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Katz, D. *Words on fire: The unfinished story of Yiddish.* New York: Basic Books.

Katznelson, I. (1964). *Vittel Diary* (M. Cohen, Trans.). Ghetto Fighters' House.

Kim, J. (1981). Processes of Asian American identity development: A study of Japanese American women's perceptions of their struggle to achieve positive identities as American of Asian ancestry. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Kleinman, A. & Kleinman, J. (1991). Sufferings and its professional transformation: Toward an ethnography of interpersonal experience. *Culture, Medicine, & Psychiatry, 15*, 275-301.

Klepfisz, I. (1990). *A few words in the mother tongue.* Portland, OR: The Eighth Mountain Press.

KlezCalifornia. (2012). Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://www.klezcalifornia.org

Kondo-Brown, K. (2005). Differences in language skills: Heritage language learner subgroups and foreign language learners. *The Modern Language Journal, 89*, 563-581.

Krashen, S. D., Tse, L., & McQuillan, J. (1998). *Heritage language development.* Culver City, CA: Language Education Associates.

Krauss, M. (2007). Classification and terminology for degrees of language endangerment. In M. Brenzinger (Ed.), *Language diversity endangered.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Krettenauer, T. (2004). Metaethnical cognition and epistemic reasoning development in adolescence. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 28*, 461-470.

Kroskrity, P. V. (1993). *Language, history, and identity: Ethnolinguistic studies of the Arizona Tewa.* Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.

Kroskrity, P. V. (2004). Language ideologies. In A. Duranti (Ed.), *A companion to linguistic anthropology* (pp. 496-517). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Kroskrity, P. V. (2009a). Embodying the reversal of language shift: Agency, incorporation and language ideological change in the Western Mono community of Central California. In P. V. Kroskrity and M. Fields (Eds.), *Native American language ideologies: Beliefs, practices, and struggles in Indian Country* (pp. 190-210). Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.

Kroskrity, P. V. (2009b). Narrative reproductions: Ideologies of storytelling, authoritative words, and generic regimentation in the village of Tewa. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, 19*, 40-56.

Kroskrity, P. V., May 4, 2012, Personal communication.

Kroskrity, P. V., May 23, 2012, Personal communication.

Kulick, D. (1998). Anger, Gender, Language Shift, and the Politics of Revelation in a Papua New Guinean Village. In B. B. Schieffelin, K. A. Woolard, and P. V. Kroskrity (Eds.), *Language ideologies: Practice and theory* (pp. 87-102). New York: Oxford University Press.

Kushner Bishop, J. (2001). From shame to nostalgia: Shifting language ideologies in the Judeo-Spanish maintenance movement. In H. Pomeroy & M. Alpert (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Twelfth British Conference on Judeo-Spanish Studies* (pp. 23-32). Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands.

Kushner Bishop, J. (2004). *More than a language, a travel agency: Ideology and performance in the Israeli Judeo-Spanish revitalization movement.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.

Kutner, P. (2008). Aims and purposes of the IAYC. *Der Bay.* Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://www.derbay.org/millbrae/aims.htm

Kutner, P. (2012). Der Bay. *Der Bay.* Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://www.derbay.org

Kutner, P. (2012). Yiddish Clubs: Members of the IAYC. *Der Bay.* Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http:// www.derbay.org/clubs.html

Labov, W. & Fanshel, D. (1977). *Therapeutic discourse: Psychotherapy as conversation.* New York: Academic Press.

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

League for Yiddish. (2012). Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://leagueforyiddish.org

Leonard, W. Y. (2008). When is an "extinct language" not extinct? Miami, a formerly sleeping language. In K. A. King, N. Schilling-Estes, L. Fogle, J. J. Lou, & B. Soukup (Eds.), *Sustaining linguistic diversity: Endangered and minority languages and language varieties* (pp. 23-34). Washington, D. C., Georgetown University Press.

Leonard, W. Y. (2011). Challenging "extinction" through modern Miami language practices. *American Indian culture and research journal, 35*, 135-160.

Lerner, G. (1991). On the syntax of sentences-in-progress. *Language in Society, 20*, 441-458.

Levitt, L. (n.d.) English as a Jewish language. Retrieved from http://www.secularjewishculture.org/ english_jewish_language.html

Levy, R. I. & Hollan, D. (1998). Person-centered interviewing and observation in anthropology. In H. R. Bernard (Ed.), *Handbook of methods in cultural anthropology* (pp. 333-364). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Lo, A. (2004). Evidentiality and morality in a Korean heritage language school. *Pragmatics, 14*, 235-256.

Loether, C. (2009). Language revitalization and the manipulation of language ideologies: A Shoshoni case study. In P. V. Kroskrity and M. C. Fields (Eds.), *Native American language ideologies: Beliefs, practices, and struggles in Indian Country* (pp. 238-254). Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.

Lucy, J. A. (Ed.) (1993). *Reflexive language: Reported speech and metapragmatics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Mandel L. Berman Institute North American Jewish Data Bank. (1997). *Los Angeles Jewish Population Survey '97*. Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://www.jewishdatabank.org/Archive/C-CA-Los_Angeles-1997-Report.pdf

Manseau, P. (2008). *Songs for the butcher's daughter*. New York: Free Press.

McElhinny, B. (2001). See no evil, speak no evil: White police officers' talk about race and affirmative action. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, 11*, 65-78.

McEwan-Fujita, E. (2010). Ideology, affect, and socialization in language shift and revitalization: The experiences of adults learning Gaelic in the Western Isles of Scotland. *Language in Society, 39*, 27-64.

McGroarty, M. (2010). The political matrix of linguistic ideologies. In B. Spolsky and F. M. Hult (Eds.) *The handbook of educational linguistics*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Meek, B. A. (2007). Respecting the language of elders: Ideological shift and linguistic discontinuity in a Northern Athapascan Community. *Journal of linguistic anthropology, 17*, 23-43.

Mehan, H. (1979). *Learning lessons: Social organization in the classroom*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Mehan, H. (1985). The structure of classroom discourse. In T. A. van Dijk (Ed.), *Handbook of discourse analysis vol. 3* (pp. 119-131). London: Academic Press.

Meir, G. (1973). Address at the Dedication of the Leivick House in Israel, May 14, 1970. *Yiddish: A Quarterly Journal, 1*.

Mendoza-Denton, N. (2008). *Homegirls: Language and Cultural Practice Among Latina Youth Gangs*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Milani, T. M. (2007). Voices of endangerment: A language ideological debate on the Swedish language. In A. Duchene & M. Heller (Eds.), *Discourses of endangerment: ideology and interest in the defence of languages* (pp. 169-196). London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Montrul, S. (2010). Current issues in heritage language acquisition. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 30*, 3-23.

Moore, D. D. (1981). *At home in America: Second generation New York Jews*. Columbia, NY: Columbia University Press.

Moore, D. D. (1994). *To the golden cities: Pursuing the American Jewish dream in Miami and L.A.* New York: Free Press.

Moore, L. (2004). *Learning languages by heart: Second language socialization in a Fulbe community*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.

Morgan, M. (2006). Speech community. In A. Duranti (Ed.), *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology* (pp. 3-22). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Myhill, J. (2004). *Language in Jewish societies: Towards a new understanding*. Multilingual Matters.

Needham, S. (2003). This is active learning: Theories of language, learning, and social relations in the transmission of Khmer literacy. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 34*, 27-49.

Nettle, D. & Romaine, S. (2000). *Vanishing voices: The extinction of the world's languages*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Nevins, M. E. (2004). Learning to listen: Confronting two meanings of language loss in the contemporary White Mountain Apache speech community. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, 14*, 269-288.

Newman, Z. K. (2010, June 25). The mameloshn is still a mother tongue. *The Jewish Daily Forward*. Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://forward.com/articles/128813/the-mameloshn-is-still-a-mother-tongue/

Nussbaum Cohen, D. (1997, July 18). 'Shvitz' and other things Yiddish makes a comeback. *j. the Jewish news weekly of Northern California*. Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/6161/-shvitz-and-other-things-yiddish-make-a-comeback

Ochs, E. (1979). Transcription as theory. In E. Ochs & B. B. Schieffelin (Eds.) *Developmental pragmatics*. New York: Academic Press, Inc.

Ochs, E. & Capps, L. (2001). Living narrative: Creating lives in everyday storytelling. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ochs, E. & Schieffelin, B. B. (1984). Language acquisition and socialization: Three developmental stories and their implications. In R. A. Shweder & R. A. LeVine (Eds.), *Culture theory: Essays on mind, self, and emotion* (pp. 276-320). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Ohta, A. S. (1991). Evidence and politeness in Japanese. *Issues in Applied Linguistics, 2*, 211-238.

Ohta, A. S. (2001). Second language acquisition processes in the classroom: Learning Japanese. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: Mahwah, NJ.

Orange County Yiddish. (2012). Retrieved May 28, 2012 from www://ocyiddish.org

Ozick, C. (1971). Envy, or Yiddish in America. *The pagan rabbi and other stories* (pp. 41-100). New York: Alfred A. Knopf Publishers.

Paraszczuk, J. (2010, October 8). Yiddish is alive and well in the Hebrew city. *The Jerusalem Post.* Retrieved May 18, 2012 from http://www.jpost.com/Magazine/Features/Article.aspx?id= 190558

Park, E. (2008). Intergenerational transmission of cultural values in Korean American families: An analysis of the verb suffix *–ta*. *Heritage Language Journal, 6*. Retrieved May 18, 2012 from http://hlj.ucla.edu/

Peltz, R. (1998). *From immigrant to ethnic culture: American Yiddish in South Philadelphia.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Peltz, R. (2003). Yiddish: A language without an army regulates itself. In A. Deumert & W. Vandenbussche (Eds.), *Germanic standardizations: past to present* (pp. 435-457). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Peltz, R. (2010). Diasporic languages: The Jewish world. In J. A. Fishman & O. Garcia (Eds.) *Handbook of language and ethnic identity* (pp. 135-152). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Perr, J. (2009). *Yiddish for babies: A language primer for your little pitsel.* New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Peyton, J. K., Ranard, D. A., & S. McGinnis (Eds.) (2001). *Heritage languages in America: Preserving a national resource.* McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Phinney, J. S. (1990). Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults: Review of research. *Psychological Bulletin, 108*, 499-514.

Pilowsky, A. L. (1985). Yiddish alongside the revival of Hebrew: public polemics on the status of Yiddish in Eretz Israel, 1907-1929. In J. A. Fishman (Ed.) *Readings in the sociology of Jewish languages* (pp. 104-124). Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill.

Polinsky, M. & Kagan, O. (2007). Heritage langages: In the 'wild' and in the classroom. *Languages and Linguistics Compass, 1*, 368-395.

Pomerantz, A. (1980). Telling my side: "Limited access" as a "fishing" device. *Sociological Inquiry, 50*, 186-198.

Pomerantz, A. (1984a). Agreeing and disagreeing with assessments: some features of preferred/dispreferred turn shapes. In J. M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Structures of social action* (pp. 57-101). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Pomerantz, A. (1984b). Giving a source or basis: The practice in conversation of telling "how I know". *Journal of pragmatics, 8*, 607–625.

Pomerantz, A. (1986). Extreme case formulations: A way of legitimizing claims. *Human Studies, 9*, 219-229.

Pujolar, J. (2007). The future of Catalan: Language endangerment and nationalist discourses in Catalonia. In A. Duchene & M. Heller (Eds.), *Discourses of endangerment: ideology and interest in the defence of languages* (pp. 121-148). London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Price, J. (2012). *Mendele* forum for Yiddish language and literature. Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://mendele.commons.yale.edu/wp/

Prince, E. (2001). Yiddish as a contact language. In N. Smith & T. Veenstra (Eds.), *Creolization and contact* (pp. 263-290). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Raphael, M. L. (2003). *Judaism in America*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Raymond, G. (2010). Grammar and social relations: Alternative forms of yes/no-type initiating actions in health visitor interactions. In A. F. Freed & S. Ehrlich (Eds.), *"Why Do You Ask?": The function of questions in institutional discourse* (pp. 87-107). New York: Oxford University Press.

Roberts, C. (2010). Language socialization in the workplace. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 30*, 211-227.

Roberts, S. (2009, July 20). Yiddish resurfaces as city's 2nd political language. *The New York Times*. Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/21/nyregion/21yiddish.html

Robins, R. H. & Uhlenbeck, E. M. (1991). *Endangered languages*. Oxford, UK: Berg Publishers Limited.

Ronkin, M. & Karn, H. E. (1999). Mock Ebonics: Linguistic racism in parodies of Ebonics on the internet. *Journal of Sociolinguistics, 3*, 360-380.

Roskies, D. (Ed.) (1989). *The literature of destruction: Jewish responses to catastrophe*. Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society.

Sacks, H. & Schegloff, E. A. (1979). Two preferences in the organization of reference to persons in conversation and their interaction. In G. Psathas (Ed.), *Everyday language: studies in ethnomethodology* (pp. 15-21). New York: Irvington Publishers.

Sacks, H., Schegloff, E. A., & Jefferson, G. (1974). A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language, 50*, 696-735.

Sadan, T. (2011). Yiddish on the internet. *Language & Communication, 31*, 99-106.

Safadi, M. H. (2000). *Yiddish: Its survival in an English-dominant environment.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.

Sapir, E. (1932). Cultural anthropology and psychiatry. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 27*, 229-242.

Schaechter, M. (1981). The 'hidden standard': A study of competing influences in standardization. In J. A. Fishman (Ed.), *Never Say Die* (pp. 671-698). The Hague, The Netherlands: Mouton Publishers.

Schaechter, M. (1995). *Yiddish II: An intermediate and advanced textbook.* New York: League for Yiddish.

Schegloff, E. A. (1972). Notes on a conversational practice: Formulating place. In D. N. Sudnow (Ed.), *Studies in social interaction* (pp. 75-119). New York: Free Press.

Schegloff, E. A. (2007). *Sequences organization in interaction: A primer in conversation analysis volume 1.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Schegloff, E. A., Jefferson, G. & Sacks, H. (1977). The preference for self-correction in the organization of conversation. *Language, 53*, 361-382.

Schieffelin, B. B. & Ochs, E. (1986). Language socialization. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 15*, 163-191.

Schieffelin, B. B. & Doucet, R. C. (1998). The "real" Haitian Creole: Ideology, metalinguistics, and orthographic choice. In B. B. Schieffelin, K. A. Woolard, & P. V. Kroskrity (Eds.), *Language ideologies: Practice and theory* (pp. 285-316). New York: Oxford University Press.

Schieffelin, B. B., Woolard, K. A., & Kroskrity, P. V. (Eds.) (1998). *Language ideologies: Practice and theory.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Seidman, N. (1997). *A marriage made in heaven: The sexual politics of Hebrew and Yiddish.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Shandler, J. (2008). *Adventures in Yiddishland: Postvernacular language & culture.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Shandler, J., July 15, 2010. Personal communication.

Shapiro, H. (2009, July 3). Youngish, Yiddish, and staging a revival. *The Jewish Daily Forward.* Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://forward.com/articles/108424/youngish-yiddish-and-staging-a-revival/

Shevitz, A. H. (2003). Jewish space and place in Venice. In A. F. Kahn (Ed.), *California Jews* (pp. 65-76). Lebanon, NH: Brandeis University Press.

Sholem Community. (2012). Retrieved May 28, 2012 from www.sholem.org

Silva-Corvalan, C. (2003). Linguistic competence of reduced input in bilingual first language acquisition. In S. Montrul & F. Ordonez (Eds.), *Linguistic theory and language development in Hispanic languages* (pp. 375-397). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla.

Silverstein, M. (1996). Monoglot 'standard' in America: Standardization and metaphors of linguistic hegemony. In D. Brenneis & R. H. S. Macaulay (Eds.), *The matrix of language: contemporary linguistic anthropology* (pp. 284-306). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Silverstein, M. (1998). Contemporary transformations of local linguistic communities. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 27*, 401-426.

Sinai Temple. (2012). Retrieved May 28, 2012 from www.sinaitemple.org

Spiro, J. (2009, September 16), Yiddish is dead, long live Yiddish. *New Voices: National Jewish Student Magazine.* Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://www.newvoices.org/community?id=0017

Spitulnik, D. (1996). The social circulation of media discourse and the mediation of communities. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, 6*, 161-187.

Spitulnik, D. (1998). Mediating unity and diversity: The production of language ideologies in Zambian broadcasting. In B. B. Schieffelin, K. A. Woolard, & P. V. Kroskrity (Eds.), *Language ideologies: Practice and theory* (pp. 163-188). New York: Oxford University Press.

Spolsky, B. & Shohamy, E. (1999). Language in Israeli society and education. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 137*, 93-114.

Stivers, T. (2004). No no no and other types of multiple sayings in social interaction. *Human Communication Research, 30*, 260-293.

Sullivan, J. G. (2010, December 4). Reviving a Yiddish group with memories and music. *The New York Times.* Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/05/nyregion/05neediest.html

Sutzkever, A. (1991). *A. Sutzkever: Selected poetry and prose.* B. Harshav & B. Harshav (Eds.), Berkeley: University of California Press.

Talmy, S. (2009). Forever FOB?: Resisting and reproducing the other in high school ESL. In A. Reyes & A. Lo (Eds.), *Beyond yellow English: Toward a linguistic anthropology of Asian Pacific America* (pp. 347-365). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Talmy, S. (2010). Qualitative interviews in applied linguistics: From research instrument to social practice. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 30*, 128-148.

Tannenbaum, M. & Abugov, N. (2010). The legacy of the linguistic fence: Linguistic patterns among ultra-Orthodox Jewish girls. *Heritage Language Journal, 7*. Retrieved May 18, 2012 from http://hlj.ucla.edu/

Tedlock, D. (1983). *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation.* Philadelphia, PA: The University of Pennsylvania Press.

Teller, P. (2004). Discussion – what is a stance? *Philosophical Studies, 121*, 159-170.

Temple Menorah Rosenberg Cultural Center. (2012). Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://templemenorah.org/community/rcc.html

ten Have, P. (2007). *Doing conversation analysis: A practical guide.* London: Sage Publications.

The California institute for Yiddish Culture and Language: A new CIYCL. (2012). Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://yiddishinstitute.org

The Jewish Daily Forward. (2012). Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://forward.com

The Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring. (2012). Retrieved May 28, 2012 from www.circlesocal.org

The Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring SoCal District. (2012). Retrieved May 28, 2012 from www. circlesocal.org/

The National Museum of Language (Producer). (2009). *Discourses in dying languages: My story with Yiddish.* Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://www.languagemuseum.org/podcasts/yiddish/ yiddish_nml/

Tse, L. (1997). *Ethnic identity development and the role of the heritage language.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California.

Tse, L. (1998a). Ethnic identity formation and its implications for heritage language development. In S. Krashen, L. Tse, and J. McQuillan (Eds.) *Heritage language development* (pp. 15-29). Culver City, CA: Language Education Associates.

Tse, L. (1998b) Seeing themselves through borrowed eyes: Asian Americans in ethnic ambivalence/ evasion. *Multicultural Review, 7*, 28-34

Tse, L. (2000). The effects of ethnic identity formation on bilingual maintenance and development: An analysis of Asian American narratives. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 3*, 185-200.

Tse, L. (2001). Resisting and reversing language shift: Heritage-language resilience among U.S. native biliterates. *Harvard Educational Review, 71*, 676-708.

UCLA registrar's office schedule of classes. (2012). Retrieved May 28, 2012 from www.registrar. ucla.edu/schedule/schedulehome.aspx

UNESCO. (2003). *Language vitality and endangerment.* Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://www. unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/00120-EN.pdf

Valdes, G. (2000). The teaching of heritage languages: An introduction for Slavic-teaching professionals. In O. Kagan & B. Rifkin (Eds.), *The learning and teaching of Slavic languages and cultures* (pp. 375-403). Bloomington, IN: Slavica.

Valdes, G. (2001). Heritage language students: Profiles and possibilities. In J. K. Peyton, D. A. Ranard,& S. McGinnis (Eds.), *Heritage languages in America: Preserving a national resource* (pp. 37-80). McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Valdes, G. (2005). Bilingualism, heritage language learners, and SLA research: Opportunities lost or seized? *The Modern Language Journal, 89*, 410-426.

Van Deusen-Scholl, N. (2003). Toward a definition of heritage language: Sociopolitical and pedagogical considerations. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education, 2*, 211-230.

Veltman, C. (2000). The American linguistic mosaic: Understanding language shift in the United States. In S. L. Mckay & S. C. Wong (Eds.), *New immigrants in the United States* (pp. 58-93). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Vorspan, M. & Gartner, L. P. (1970). *History of the Jews of Los Angeles.* San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library.

Wasser, H. (1986). Yiddish culture organization YIKOR. In J. Kermish (Ed.), *To live with honor and die with honor* (pp. 442-445). Yad Vashem Publications.

Watts, R. J. (1999). The social construction of standard English: Grammar writers as a 'discourse community'. In T. Bex & R. J. Watts (Eds.), *Standard English: The widening debate* (pp. 40-68). London: Routledge.

Weinreich, M. (1980). *History of the Yiddish language.* (J. A. Fishman & S. Noble, Trans.) Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Weinreich, U. (1949/2006). *College Yiddish: An introduction to the Yiddish language and to Jewish life and culture.* New York: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

Weinreich, U. (1968). *Modern English-Yiddish Yiddish-English Dictionary*. New York: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

Weiser, C. M. (1985). *Frumspeak: The first dictionary of Yeshivish*. Jason Aronson, Inc.

Wexler, P. (1991). Yiddish – the fifteenth Slavic language. A study of partial language shift from Judeo-Sorbian to German. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 91*, 9-150.

Wexler, P. (1993). *The Ashkenazic Jews: A Slavo-turkic people in search of a Jewish identity*. Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers.

Wikan, U. (1990). *Managing turbulent hearts*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wiley, T. (2001). On defining heritage languages and their speakers. In J. K. Peyton, D. A. Ranard, & S. McGinnis (Eds.), *Heritage languages in America: Preserving a national resource* (pp. 29-36). McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Wisse, R. R. (1997, November). Yiddish: Past, Present, Imperfect. *Commentary Magazine*, 32-39.

Wisse, R. R. (2008). Ups and downs of Yiddish in America. In E. S. Shapiro (Ed.), *Yiddish in America: Essays on Yiddish culture in the golden land* (pp. 1-22). Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press.

Woolard, K. A. & Schieffelin, B. B. (1994). Language ideology. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 23*, 55-82.

Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring SoCal District (2012). Jewish cultural life: Yiddish classes at der arbeter ring. Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://circlesocal.org/yiddishclasses.html

Wurm, S. A. (1991). Language death and disappearance: Causes and circumstances. In R. H. Robins & E. M. Uhlenbeck (Eds.), *Endangered languages* (pp. 1-18). Oxford, UK: Berg Publishers Limited.

Yiddish Book Center. (2012). Retrieved May 28, 2012 from www.yiddishbookcenter.org

Yiddishkayt. (2012). Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://yiddishkayt.org

Yiddish makes a comeback (2011, February 25). *YU News*. Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://blogs.yu.edu/news/2011/02/25/yiddish-makes-a-comeback

Yiddish Word of the Week. (2012). Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://yiddishwordoftheweek.tumblr.com.

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. (2012). Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://www.yivoinstitute.org

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. (2012). *A Timeline of YIVO's History*. Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://www.yivoinstitute.org/aboutyivo/history_fr.htm

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (2012). Courses: Uriel Weinreich program in Yiddish language, literature & culture. Retrieved from http://www.yivoinstitute.org/courses/urielw_fr.htm

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (2012). What is Yiddish?: *Alef-beys* (Yiddish alphabet) & transliteration chart. Retrieved from http://www.yivoinstitute.org/alefbeys_fr/htm

*Yugntruf*/Youth for Yiddish. (2012). Retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://yugntruf.org

Zentella, A. (1997). *Growing up bilingual.* Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Zigon, J. (2008). *Morality: An anthropological perspective.* Oxford, UK: Berg Publishers Limited.

Zucker, S. (1994). *Yiddish: An introduction to the language, literature & culture. A textbook for beginners, vol. 1*. New York: The Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring.

Zucker, S. (2002). *Yiddish: An introduction to the language, literature & culture volume II. A textbook for intermediate students*. New York: The Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring.