

GRAMMAR OF THE YIDDISH LANGUAGE

Dovid Katz



Duckworth

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	xiii
Foreword	xv
Introduction	xvii
Abbreviations	xxiii
Alphabet chart	xxiv

1 THE ALPHABET

1.0	Overview	1
1.1	The Yiddish writing system	1
1.2	The Yiddish alphabet	3
1.3	Deletion of redundancies	19
1.4	Coexistence of the two systems	19
1.5	Modern standard orthography	20

2 PHONETICS

2.0	Overview	25
2.1	Vowels and diphthongs	25
2.2	Consonants	29
2.3	Rhythm	34
2.4	Dialect variation	38

3 GREETINGS

3.0	Overview	41
3.1	Time-related greetings	41
3.2	General greetings	43

4 NOUNS

4.0	Overview	47
4.1	Gender	47
4.2	Plurals	53
4.3	Diminutives	63
4.4	Compound nouns	70

5 NOUN PHRASES

5.0	Overview	75
5.1	Case	75
5.2	Indefinite articles	78
5.3	Singular definite articles	78
5.4	Plural definite articles	81
5.5	Singular adjectives	81
5.6	Plural adjectives	85
5.7	Predicate adjectives	85
5.8	Adjectives following the noun	87
5.9	Adjective quantifiers	89

5.10	Comparative adjectives	90
5.11	Superlative adjectives	92
5.12	Special types of adjectives	94
5.13	Diminutives of adjectives	95
5.14	Nouns that inflect for case	97
5.15	Possessives	100

6 PRONOUNS

6.0	Overview	103
6.1	Personal pronouns	103
6.2	Possessive pronouns	108
6.3	Demonstrative pronouns	112
6.4	Partitive pronouns	117

7 VERBS

7.0	Overview	121
7.1	The infinitive	121
7.2	The present participle	122
7.3	The verbal additive	123
7.4	Negation	126
7.5	Present tense	126
7.6	Past tense	131
7.7	Minority past tense	134
7.8	Pluperfect past tense	137

7.9	Future tense	138
7.10	Immediate future tense	139
7.11	Pluperfect future tense	140

8 PREFIXED VERBS

8.0	Overview	141
8.1	Unstressed prefixes	141
8.2	Stressed prefixes	144
8.3	Perfective vs. naked verbs	154

9 ANALYTIC VERBS

9.0	Overview	156
9.1	Specialized analytic verbs	156
9.2	Inherently analytic verbs	172

10 ADVERBS

10.0	Overview	178
10.1	True adverbs	178
10.2	Adverbs from adjectives and nouns	179
10.3	Relic adverbs	181
10.4	Adverbs from prepositional phrases	185
10.5	Diminutives of adverbs	187
10.6	Psychoadverbial inserts	188

11 QUESTIONS

11.0	Overview	195
11.1	Intonation	195
11.2	Inversion	196
11.3	Interrogative plus inversion	197
11.4	Interrogative additives	200

12 NUMBERS

12.0	Overview	201
12.1	Cardinal numbers	201
12.2	Ordinal numbers	204
12.3	Fractions	206
12.4	The alphabetic numbering system	208

13 TIME

13.0	Overview	213
13.1	Life	213
13.2	Time	215
13.3	The calendar	218
13.4	Use of prepositions with expressions of time	220
13.5	The Jewish calendar	221

14 SYNTAX

14.0	Overview	224
14.1	The inflected-verb-second rule	224
14.2	Basic sentence order: noun plus inflected verb	225
14.3	Word placement in basic sentence order	225
14.4	Inverted sentence order: inflected verb plus noun	229
14.5	Word placement in inverted sentence order	237
14.6	Predicatives	241
14.7	Relatives	245
14.8	Reflexive constructions	247
14.9	The double verb construction	249
14.10	Variability of word order	250

15 SEMANTICS

15.0	Overview	252
15.1	'At'	252
15.2	'From'	253
15.3	'Go'	253
15.4	'Know'	253
15.5	'Love'	254
15.6	'Paper'	256
15.7	'Party'	257
15.8	'Question'	257
15.9	'Right'	258
15.10	'Sense'	258

15.11	'Solution'	259
15.12	'Tell'	259
15.13	'The'	259
15.14	'Think'	260
15.15	'Time'	261
15.16	'To'	261
15.17	Jewish vs. general	262

16 PHRASEOLOGY

16.0	Overview	268
16.1	Similes	268
16.2	Rejoinders	270
16.3	Satiric characterizations	271
16.4	Proverbs	273
16.5	Redundant intensifiers	275
16.6	Historical metaphors	275
	Select bibliography	277
	General index	285
	Grammatical index	286
	Index of selected Yiddish items	288

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The author alone assumes responsibility for shortcomings as well as for the opinions inherent in the presentation.

Oxford, February 1987

Dovid Katz

FOREWORD

The *Grammar* was prepared with a dual readership in mind. The first intended users are university students enrolled in Yiddish language courses. Ideally, the qualified teacher will converse extensively in Yiddish from a very early stage of the course while supplying genuine literary texts. Lessons can be chosen as necessary from various sections to suit the requirements of the course. In place of 'fill in the blanks' exercises, it is recommended that students be asked to write original sentences and compositions on the basis of a selected section. The dictionaries recommended for use alongside the *Grammar* are Bergman's at an elementary stage; Weinreich's at a more advanced stage; and Harkavy's at a still more advanced stage at which the student is reading from works of Yiddish literature on his or her own (see 'Dictionaries', p. 277). Reading may be culled from any of a number of anthologies or readers (see 'Anthologies', pp. 278–279), or better still, from original works of modern Yiddish masters selected by the instructor.

The second intended user is the more advanced student or general reader who requires a reference grammar either to help master the language or as a work to be consulted as necessary.

Suggestions for improvements in future editions may be sent to the author at the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies, 45 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LW, England.

INTRODUCTION

Yiddish was created some thousand years ago by a Jewish minority population that had resettled from the ancient Near East to medieval Central Europe. Although it almost never enjoyed official government status, it thrived and was spoken and written by millions over a vast European territory, and gave rise to a substantial literature. Over the past century, Yiddish was carried to many parts of the world by East European Jewish immigrants and their descendants. Discovered only recently by large numbers of West European and American readers, Yiddish literature has assumed an international position, not least in consequence of its portrayals of the specifics of East European Jewish culture and the more universal implications of that culture.

Yiddish was never the language of all world Jewry. It is, rather, the traditional lingua franca of the *Ashkenazim*, the descendants of the makers of the medieval Jewish civilization that arose on Germanic-speaking territories. The name derives from the medieval Jewish term for those territories, *Ashkenaz*. With the early migrations of large numbers of Ashkenazim as far south as Italy, as far north as Holland and as far east as Russia, Yiddish spread over much of Europe, far beyond the Germanic-speaking lands.

Yiddish entails an intricate fusion between its three major components — the Semitic component deriving from the Hebrew and Aramaic of the ancient Near East that the first settlers in Ashkenaz brought with them; the Germanic component from the medieval Germanic lands where Yiddish was born; and, over the last few centuries, a Slavonic component in Eastern Europe. The two

previous Jewish languages, Hebrew and Aramaic, that the first settlers had brought with them, fused with a number of local varieties of medieval German city dialects deriving from the Upper and Central German areas. Statistically speaking, the greatest part of both the vocabulary and the morphological and syntactic machinery of the language is Germanic. Nevertheless, even the Germanic component of Yiddish is not congruous with any one German dialect, while each Yiddish dialect remains systematically relatable to any other Yiddish dialect. To the historical linguist, this is evidence of a Yiddish speech community that interacted with other far-away Yiddish-speaking communities vastly more than with the neighbouring speakers of the local or national non-Jewish languages. Yiddish linguistics focuses on the unique and creative ways in which the disparate parts of Yiddish combine to form a powerfully expressive language. Its major registers feature human sensitivities, logical precision and a sense of humour emphasizing irony and satire.

The origins of Yiddish literature are still somewhat obscure. Traces of written Yiddish go back to the eleventh century. The earliest extensive manuscript bearing an explicit date is from 1382. Appropriately enough, many of the early Yiddish literary manuscripts represent interaction of the ancient but always evolving Jewish culture of the day with selected trends from contemporary Western civilization. One of the favourite early genres is the extensive epic poem. In a number of surviving Yiddish manuscripts, medieval romances such as *King Arthur* are adopted from German models. In many others, however, the European epic is the form applied to such traditional Jewish motifs as the Biblical books of Samuel and Kings. In others still, both European form and content are reworked into a highly original Yiddish masterpiece. The best known example is *Bovo d'Antona* (Bovo of

Antona), written by the great Yiddish poet (and Hebrew and Aramaic grammarian and Yiddish etymologist) Elijah Levita (1469 – c. 1549), better known in Yiddish as Elye Bokher. In this first application of the masterly Italian ottava rima (abababcc) in any Germanic language, Elye Bokher took as his immediate source *Buovo d'Antona*, an Italian romance, which is itself closely related to the English *Beve of Hampton*.

All these works were written in various forms of *Western Yiddish*, the collective name for the Yiddish dialects of Central Europe. With the advent of printing, Yiddish literature was launched for a pan-European market of readers. Largely to this end, writers and publishers consciously evolved a standard written form of Yiddish, based upon the western dialects, that would be intelligible to all readers. This standard, clearly discernible in the 1540s, when Yiddish printing really got off the ground (although a handful of prints are extant from the 1520s and 1530s), survived right up until the beginning of the nineteenth century.

By the late eighteenth century, Western Yiddish, centred in Germany, had begun to decline, largely in consequence of the demise of Western Ashkenazic culture and the linguistic assimilation to German of the Western Ashkenazim who were becoming simply 'German Jews'. In the Slavonic and Baltic lands, by contrast, *Eastern Yiddish* flourished as it never had before, and Eastern Europe remained the heartland of Yiddish until the Holocaust. Following its conscious elevation to a status of sanctity by the mystical Chassidic movement of the eighteenth century, the literary and social functions of the language expanded to suit the needs and wishes of the diversified literary, cultural and political movements of nineteenth-century Jewish Eastern Europe. The *Haskóle* (Haskalah), or enlightenment movement, and the Zionist (and Hebraist), Socialist and Yiddishist movements in all their

colourful variety, made extensive literary use of Yiddish as a means of communicating their philosophies.

By the early nineteenth century, there were clear examples of the emerging new standard language, based upon the eastern dialects. Reformist writers of varying cultural persuasions did away with Western Yiddish archaisms that had long been in disuse, and evolved the modern literary standard that is based on the thriving Yiddish of Eastern Europe. Traditionally, the credit for forging a unified literary language from the dialects of East European Yiddish is assigned to the 'grandfather of Modern Yiddish literature' – Mendele Moykher Sforim (pen name of Sholem-Yankev Abramovitsh, c. 1836 – 1917). His two fellow classicists in the triumvirate of nascent modern Yiddish literature are humorist Sholem Aleichem (Sholem Rabinovitsh, 1859 – 1916) and romanticist Y. L. Peretz (1852 – 1915)

Within the European Jewish community, Yiddish was, up until the modern era, one of three Jewish languages – Hebrew, Aramaic and Yiddish – which complemented each other in a stable interrelating system of intracommunal languages. In addition, of course, all members of the community had knowledge of one or more non-Jewish coterritorial languages. The Yiddishist movement, a child of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Jewish Eastern Europe, has sought consciously to enhance the role of the everyday spoken language of Ashkenazic Jewry. For many years, pro-Yiddish sentiment was severely opposed by both assimilationists who sought to supplant Yiddish with the national languages of the countries in which Jews lived, and the Hebraists, who sought (and in Israel, succeeded) in reviving ancient Hebrew as an everyday spoken language. There are almost infinite combinations of love, hate, jealousy and ambiguous love-hate toward Yiddish. For many centuries, the three Jewish languages of Ashkenaz had lived in























harmony; suddenly, two of them were proclaimed sworn enemies by their adherents. The 'language controversy', as it is usually called, burned most passionately in the waning nineteenth and the early twentieth century. The third Jewish language of Ashkenaz, Aramaic, was spared from conflict because of its lack of widespread active usage. It is the most elite of the three Jewish languages of Ashkenaz, written and studied only by the most educated, the scholars of two great branches of Jewish learning and literature created in it, the Talmud (Jewish law) and Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism).

The modern literary language, known as Standard Yiddish, has drawn upon the resources of all three major East European dialects of Yiddish: Mideastern Yiddish (popularly 'Polish'), Southeastern Yiddish ('Ukrainian') and Northeastern Yiddish ('Lithuanian'). Standard languages generally come into being as a result of sociological and geocultural factors, not via mathematical equations giving everybody an equal share. Standard Yiddish pronunciation is far closer to Northeastern Yiddish, especially as cultivated in its centuries-old cultural capital, Vilna, than to any other dialect. In grammar, the historical sources of the standard are spread rather differently among the dialects, and if anything, the standard is furthest from Northeastern usage. Hence the popular conception that Standard Yiddish is a 'compromise' between Northeastern pronunciation and Southern (i.e. Mideastern and Southeastern) grammar, while a vast oversimplification, is none the less largely accurate.

ABBREVIATIONS

adv.	adverb
cf.	compare
e.g.	for example
esp.	especially
f.	feminine
i.e.	namely; that is
inf.	infinitive
lit.	literally
m.	masculine
M.E.	Mideastern Yiddish ('Polish')
n.	noun
N.E.	Northeastern Yiddish ('Lithuanian')
pej.	pejorative
pl.	plural
sg.	singular
S.	Southern Yiddish (= Mideastern Yiddish plus Southeastern Yiddish)
S.E.	Southeastern Yiddish ('Ukrainian')
trans.	transitive
v.	verb
var.	variant form

ALPHABET CHART

Name	Printed Form	Script Form	Transcription
áləf	א		—
pásekħ áləf	אֲ		[a]
kóməts áləf	אָ		[o]
beyz	ב		[b]
veyz *	בֵּ		[v]
giml	ג		[g]
dáləd	ד		[d]
dáləd záyin shin	דָּשׁן		[j]
hey	ה		[h]
vov	ו		[u]
tsvey vovn	וֹ		[v]
vov yud	וּ		[oy]
záyin	ז		[z]
zayin shin	זָשׁן		[zh]
khes *	ח		[kh]
tes	ט		[t]
tes shin	טָשׁן		[tsh]
yud	י		[y] / [i]
tsvey yudn	יֹ		[ey]
pásəkh tsvey yudn	יָ		[ay]
kof *	כ		[k]
khof	כּ		[kh]

lángər khof **	ך	ⲕⲏ	[kh]
láməd	ל	ⲕⲓ	[l]
məm	מ	ⲕⲓ	[m]
shlósn mēm **	ם	ⲕⲓ	[m]
nun	נ	ⲕⲓ	[n]
lángər nun **	ן	ⲕⲓ	[n]
sáməkh	ס	ⲕⲓ	[s]
áyin	ע	ⲕⲓ	[e] / [ə]
pey	פ	ⲕⲓ	[p]
fey	ף	ⲕⲓ	[f]
lángər fey **	ף	ⲕⲓ	[f]
tsádik	צ	ⲕⲓ	[ts]
lángər tsadik **	ץ	ⲕⲓ	[ts]
kuf	ק	ⲕⲓ	[k]
reysh	ר	ⲕⲓ	[r]
shin	ש	ⲕⲓ	[sh]
sin *	ש	ⲕⲓ	[s]
tof *	ת	ⲕⲓ	[t]
sof *	ת	ⲕⲓ	[s]

* occurs in the traditional system only

** final form of preceding

1 THE ALPHABET

1.0 OVERVIEW

The Yiddish alphabet, written from right to left, is an evolved form of the ancient Semitic alphabet. Two systems of spelling coexist within it. The greatest part of the language is spelled according to the **phonetic system**, which features one-to-one correspondence between letter and sound. The minority Semitic component of Yiddish, deriving from Hebrew and Aramaic, is spelled etymologically according to the **traditional system**. A number of variations may be encountered in Yiddish spelling. The most widely used system is **modern standard orthography**. Other systems are used by certain communities.

1.1 THE YIDDISH WRITING SYSTEM

The Yiddish writing system is a variant of the Hebrew and Aramaic alphabet. Like all Semitic-derived scripts, it is written and read from right to left. Semitic alphabets are originally consonantal. Explicit letters to mark vowel sounds are absent. They are not necessary for native speakers of Semitic languages, where the three-consonant Semitic root itself signifies membership in a family of related words. Skeletal consonantal spellings are therefore perfectly comprehensible. When in the histories of these languages (not infrequently because of their demise as vernaculars and their

perpetuation as liturgical or classical languages), it did become necessary for literary or educational purposes to mark vowels, this was usually accomplished by the addition of a system of diacritic marks (or 'points') below or above the line. The history of the Yiddish alphabet reveals creative reworking of an Eastern cultural phenomenon – the ancient consonantal Semitic alphabet – to match a Western reality – a European language for which the representation of vowels is crucial.

1.1.1 The phonetic system

The phonetic system of Yiddish spelling generally provides a perfect one-to-one correspondence between letter and sound. It is used for the non-Semitic parts of the language, hence for the vast majority of words. It has evolved through many intermediate stages and a few regressions. Over the past thousand years, Yiddish has increasingly made use of those letters that had lost the phonetic consonantal values they once had in Hebrew and Aramaic, especially *álef* (→ §§1.2.2, 1.2.3) and *áyin* (→ §1.2.24) and put them to work as full-fledged vowel letters, instead of introducing sublinear or supralinear points and dots). The two vowel diacritics that are retained *kómets* (= [o]) and *pásakh* (= [a]) are both confined to specific letters (*Ḥ* = [o] → §1.2.3; *Ḥ* = [a] → §1.2.2 and *Ḥ* = [ay] → §1.2.17); hence they too are in effect parts of vowel letters rather than free-floating vowel points that can be affixed at will to any consonant. In short, Yiddish has evolved a Western type alphabetic structure in which both consonants and vowels are marked by letters, while preserving the form and direction of the inherited Semitic alphabet.

1.1.2 The traditional system

The traditional system governs the orthography of the Semitic component within Yiddish, comprising several thousand words, nearly all of which are spelled historically, that is to say, as they are spelled in Hebrew or Aramaic. The correspondence between the traditional system and the vocabulary derived from Semitic would be perfect were it not for a handful of words of Semitic origin that have come to be spelled according to the phonetic system (e.g. טאָזענער 'if; in case') – and an even smaller handful of non-Semitic component words that have realigned themselves to the traditional system (e.g. male forename קלמן [kálmən]). For those who know Hebrew, mastering the traditional system poses no problem. For others, the spelling of each Semitism must be learned along with the word, although certain master patterns will become evident.

1.2 THE YIDDISH ALPHABET

The alphabet (or *álef-beyz* as it is also known, from its name in Yiddish – אַלף־בײַט) derives from the classic twenty-two Semitic letters. The number of symbols in Yiddish is increased by the word-final forms of the five letters that have them (א → word-final אָ, ח → ך, נ → ן, ך → ף, צ → ץ), and the spirant counterparts of four plosives (cf. ב [b] vs. ן [v], כ [k] vs. ך [kh], פ [p] vs. ף [f], ת [t] vs. ך [s]). The number of functions is increased first by the various combinations of letters that Yiddish makes use of to effect complete coverage of the sound system of the language, and secondly by the use of one symbol for more than one function where the true function may be deduced from position in the word. The printed and script forms of each

letter, and its phonetic transcription in Latin characters, are provided. The transcriptions, enclosed in square brackets [], represent a modified version of the transcriptional system of the Yivo Institute for Jewish Research, which was designed for English speakers. Where the transcription differs radically from accepted phonetic transcription, the international phonetic equivalent follows in parenthesis. Yiddish handwriting is frequently characterized by flamboyant strokes above and below the line for the risers and descenders (often extending higher and lower than risers and descenders in English). Where possible, the samples provided illustrate usage in initial, medial and final position.

1.2.1 ן

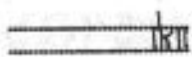
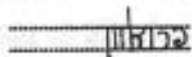
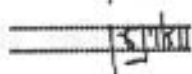
Print: ן Script:  (or )

ן has no phonetic realization. It has two functions.

1.2.1.1 ן to avert ambiguity

ן systematically averts ambiguity by distinguishing consonantal ן (tsvey vovn = [v] → §1.2.10) before and after vocalic ן (vov = [u] → §1.2.9) and before diphthongal ן (vov yud = [oy] → §1.2.11).

SAMPLES OF ן TO AVERT AMBIGUITY

וואו		[vu]	'where'
פּרוּװן		[pruʋn]	'try'
וואוינען		[vóynən]	'live (= dwell)'

1.2.1.2 ן to mark word, syllable and stem onset

ן marks the onset of words, syllables and stems that begin with the vowels

ו (vov = [u] → §1.2.9), וי (vov yud = [oy] → §1.2.11), י (yud = [i] → §1.2.15), װ (tsvey yudn = [ey] → §1.2.16), and װ (pásəkh tsvey yudn = [ay] → §1.2.17).

SAMPLES OF װ TO MARK WORD ONSET

און		[<u>un</u>]	'and'
אוי		[<u>oy</u>]	'Oh!; Oh dear!'
אין		[<u>in</u>]	'in'
אייביק		[<u>éybik</u>]	'forever'
איז		[<u>ayz</u>]	'ice'

SAMPLES OF װ TO MARK SYLLABLE ONSET

אומרוויק		[<u>úmruik</u>]	'restless'
אסאציאירט		[<u>asotsiírt</u>]	'associated'
פֿעאיק		[<u>féik</u>]	'skilful; capable'
קאָנטינוואָם		[<u>kontinúum</u>]	'continuum'

SAMPLES OF װ TO MARK STEM ONSET

פֿאַראַייניקן		[<u>faréynikn</u>]	'unite (v.)'
באַאַינפֿלוסן		[<u>baáynflusn</u>]	'influence (v.)'
ריבאַיזן		[<u>ríbayzn</u>]	'foodgrater'

Note: Word, syllable and stem onset are *not* marked by װ before the vowels א (pásəkh álaf = [a] → §1.2.2), אָ (kóməts álaf = [o] → §1.2.3) or װ (áyin = [e] → §1.2.24), hence:

אַוועק		[<u>avék</u>]	'away'
אָן		[<u>on</u>]	'without'
עסן		[<u>ésn</u>]	'eat'

1.2.2 **pásəkh áləf**

Print: אַ Script: אֿ Realization: [a]

SAMPLES OF אֿ

אַלע		[áɫə]	'all'
זאַך		[zakh]	'thing'
נאַ		[na]	'here!'

1.2.3 **kóməts áləf**

Print: אָ Script: אֹ Realization: [o] (= ɔ)

SAMPLES OF אֹ

אָן		[on]	'without'
וואָס		[vos]	'what'
דאָ		[do]	'here'

1.2.4 **beyz**

Print: בּ Script: בֿ Realization: [b]

SAMPLES OF בֿ

בוים		[boym]	'tree'
אָבער		[óɐr]	'but'
אויב		[oyb]	'if'

1.2.5 **veyz**

Print: װ (/בּ) Script: װֿ Realization: [v]

װ occurs in the traditional system only. In the phonetic system, [v] is

rendered by ן (tsvey vovn = [v] → §1.2.10).

SAMPLES OF ן

בַּבְּלָא	<u> </u> <u> </u> בַּבְּלָא	[bɔvɫ]	'Babylonia'
חֲבֵרָה	<u> </u> <u> </u> חֲבֵרָה	[khévɾə]	'group of friends; crew'
אֲנִי	<u> </u> <u> </u> אֲנִי	[ágəv]	'by the way'

1.2.6 giml

Print: ג. Script: Realization: [g]

SAMPLES OF ג

גוֹט	<u> </u> <u> </u> גוֹט	[gut]	'good'
בִּאגִּיטן	<u> </u> <u> </u> בִּאגִּיטן	[bag(ɪ)sn]	'spill (on top of ...)'
אױג	<u> </u> <u> </u> אױג	[oyg]	'eye'

1.2.7 dálad

Print: ד. Script: Realization: [d]

SAMPLES OF ד

דאָרטן	<u> </u> <u> </u> דאָרטן	[dórtɪn]	'there'
אָדער	<u> </u> <u> </u> אָדער	[ódər]	'or'
באָד	<u> </u> <u> </u> באָד	[bod]	'(Turkish) bath'

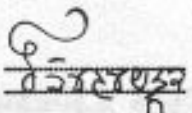
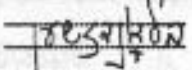
1.2.7.1 dálad záyin shin

Print: ןזש Script: Realization: [j] (= ĵ/dž)

ןזש functions as a single consonant.

SAMPLES OF ןזש


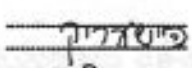
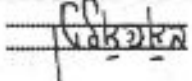
גןזשין	<u> </u> <u> </u> גןזשין	[jɪn]	'gin'
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דזשענעכץ		[jégəkhts]	'tar'
בלאָנדזשען		[blónjən]	'lose one's way'

1.2.8 hey

Print: ה Script:  Realization: [h]

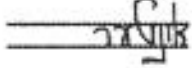
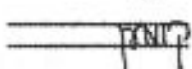
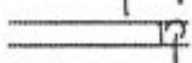
SAMPLES OF ה

הייס		[heys]	'hot'
היישעריק		[héyshərik]	'locust'
באהאַלטן		[baháltɪn]	'hide'


1.2.9 vov

Print: ו Script:  Realization: [u]

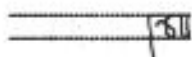
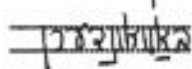
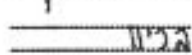
SAMPLES OF ו

אונטער		[úntər]	'under'
קומען		[kúmən]	'come'
קו		[ku]	'cow'

1.2.10 tsvey vovn

Print: װ Script:  Realization: [v]

SAMPLES OF װ

װען		[vɛn]	'when'
באַװאָנדערן		[bayúndern]	'admire'
בריוו		[briv]	'letter'

1.2.11 **vov yud**

Print: ןַ Script: ן Realization: [oy] (= oɨ)

SAMPLES OF ןַ

אויס		[oys]	'finished!; it's all over!'
מויז		[moyz]	'mouse'
שטרױ		[shtrɔy]	'straw'

1.2.12 **záyin**

Print: ז Script: ז Realization: [z]

SAMPLES OF ז

זאַחערױכע		[zavərúkhe]	'blizzard'
באַזוכן		[bazúkhn]	'visit'
גלאַז		[glɔz]	'glass'

1.2.12.1 **záyin shin**

Print: זש Script: זש Realization: [zh] (= ž)

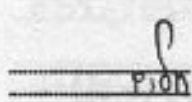
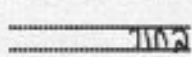
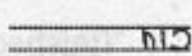
SAMPLES OF זש

זשאַבע		[zhábə]	'frog'
זשאַשנע		[vázhnə]	'impressive; classy'
שאַנטאַזש		[shantázh]	'blackmail'


1.2.13 **khes**

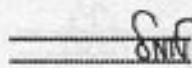
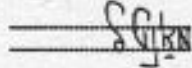
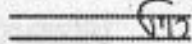
Print: ח Script: ח Realization: [kh] (= x)

ח occurs in the traditional system only. In the phonetic system, [kh] is rendered by 5 (khof → §1.2.19).

		SAMPLES OF ן	
חלום		[kʰóləm]	'dream'
בחור		[bókʰər]	'fellow; bachelor'
כוח		[kóyəkʰ]	'strength'

1.2.14 tes

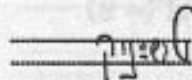
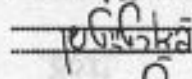
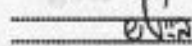
Print: ט Script:  Realization: [t]

		SAMPLES OF ט	
טומל		[tuml]	'noise'
מאַנטל		[mántʌ]	'coat'
רויט		[royt]	'red'

1.2.14.1 tes shin

Print: טש Script:  Realization: [tsh] (= č/tš)

טש functions as a single consonant.

		SAMPLES OF טש	
טשיניק		[tsháynik]	'teakettle'
פֿאַרטייטשן		[fartáytsʰn]	'explain; translate'
בייטש		[baytsh]	'whip'

1.2.15 yud

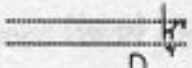
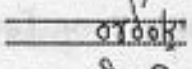
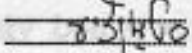
Print: ך Script: 

ך has two realizations.

1.2.15.1 Consonantal ך

ך is consonantal [y] (= j) at the beginning of a syllable.

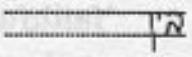

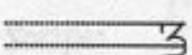
SAMPLES OF CONSONANTAL ױ

יאָ		[yo]	'yes'
יאָסלעס		[yáslæs]	'gums'
סטאַנציע		[stántsyæ]	'station'

1.2.15.2 Vocalic ױ

ױ is vocalic [i] at the middle or end of a syllable.

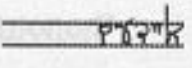
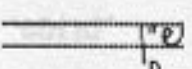
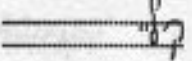
SAMPLES OF VOCALIC ױ

בין		[bɪn]	'bee'
וויכטיק		[vɪkhtɪk]	'important'
זי		[zi]	'she'

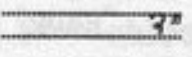
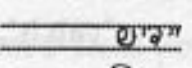
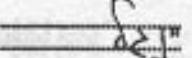
1.2.16 tsvey yudn

Print: ױ Script: ױ Realization: [ey] (= eɪ)

SAMPLES OF ױ

אײדעם		[éydæm]	'son in law'
שײן		[sheyn]	'pretty; beautiful'
קלי		[kley]	'glue'

Note: Diphthong ױ is preceded by ׀ at the start of a word or syllable (→ §1.2.1.2). When two ױs occur at the beginning of a word, syllable, or stem, they represent a sequence of consonantal ױ (= [y] → §1.2.15.1) plus vocalic ױ (= [i] → §1.2.15.2), i.e. [yi], rather than diphthong [ey], hence:

ײד		[yid]	'Jew'
ײדיש		[yɪdɪʃ]	'Yiddish; Jewish'
ײנגל		[yɪngl]	'boy'


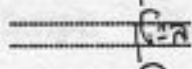
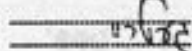
1.2.17 pásəkh tsvey yudn

Print: ץ (/ץ) Script: צֿ Realization: [aj] (= aj)

In many texts, ץ is written ץ, i.e. identically with ץ = [ej] (→ §1.2.16).

Where ץ is not used, the difference must be ascertained via knowledge of the word or checked with a dictionary.

SAMPLES OF ץ

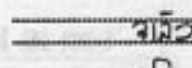
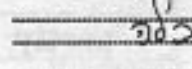
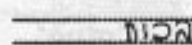
אײזן		[áyzn]	'iron'
בײטן		[báytn]	'change'
נעטרײַ		[gətráy]	'faithful'

1.2.18 kof

Print: כ (/כ) Script: כֿ Realization: [k]

כ occurs in the traditional system only. In the phonetic system, [k] is rendered by ק (kuf → §1.28).

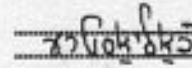
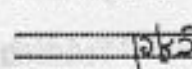
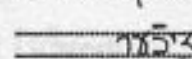
SAMPLES OF כ

כבוד		[kóvəd]	'honour'
כלה		[kála]	'bride'
בכוח		[bəkóyəkʰ]	'capable'

1.2.19 khof

Print: ץ (/כ) Script: כֿ Realization: [kh]

SAMPLES OF ץ

נאַליאַסטריע		[kʰalyástrə]	'gang'
נאַפן		[kʰápm]	'catch'
זיכער		[zíkʰər]	'certain; definite(ly)'

1.2.19.1 **lángər khof**Replaces **օ** in word-final position.Print: **ך** Script: **𐤒** Realization: [kh]SAMPLES OF **ך**

איך		[ikh]	'I'
דאַך		[dakh]	'roof'
וואַך		[vokh]	'week'

1.2.20 **láməd**Print: **ל** Script: **𐤌** Realization: [l]SAMPLES OF **ל**

לאַמפּ		[lomp]	'lamp'
וואַלײַנקע		[váylinkə]	'little while'
טאַל		[to]	'valley'

1.2.21 **mem**Print: **מ** Script: **𐤍** Realization: [m]SAMPLES OF **מ**

מענטש		[mɛntsh]	'person'
טאָמער		[tómər]	'if; in case'
צימער		[tsímər]	'room'

1.2.21.1 **shlósn mem**Replaces **מ** in word-final position.Print: **ם** Script: **𐤏** Realization: [m]

SAMPLES OF ם

בוידעם		[bóyðəm]	'attic'
נאַראָנים		[narónim]	'fools'
שלום		[shóləm]	'peace'

1.2.22 nun

Print: ן Script:

Realization: [n]

SAMPLES OF ן

נוּדניק		[núdnik]	'boring person; pest'
וואַנע		[vánə]	'bath'
שאַנדע		[shándə]	'disgrace'

1.2.22.1 lángər nun

Replaces ן in word-final position.

Print: ן Script:

Realization: [n]

SAMPLES OF ן

מאַן		[man]	'man; husband'
צאַן		[tson]	'tooth'
שפּין		[shpin]	'spider'

1.2.23 sáməkh

Print: ס Script:

Realization: [s]

SAMPLES OF ס

סאַמאָוואַר		[samovár]	'samovar'
ביסן		[báysn]	'bite'
שפּאַס		[shpas]	'fun'

1.2.24 áyin

Print: װ Script: וּ

װ has two realizations.

1.2.24.1 Stressed װ

װ is realized as [e] (= ε) in stressed position.

SAMPLES OF STRESSED װ

עסן		[ésn]	'eat'
נעכטן		[nékhtn]	'yesterday'
זע		[zé]	'(I) see'

1.2.24.2 Unstressed װ

װ is realized as [ə] (= i, ɪ, ə, etc.) in unstressed position. It is sometimes called 'Reduced װ'.

SAMPLES OF UNSTRESSED װ

געזאגט		[gəzókʰt]	'said'
באנען		[bánən]	'trains'
קאפע		[kávə]	'coffee'

1.2.25 pey

Print: ן (/ן) Script: פּ

Realization: [p]

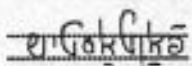
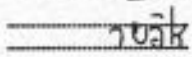
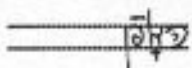
SAMPLES OF ן

פשוט		[póshət]	'simple'
עפל		[épl]	'apple'
טאָפּ		[tóp]	'pot'

1.2.26 fey

Print: פּ (/פּ) Script: פּ Realization: [f]

SAMPLES OF פּ

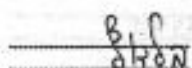
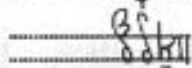
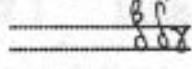
פּאַנטאַסטיש		[fantástish]	'fantastic'
אַפּער		[é[shər]	'maybe'
האַפּן		[hófn]	'hope'

1.2.26.1 lánɡər fey

Print: ף Script: ף Realization: [f]

Replaces פּ in word final position.

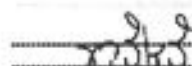
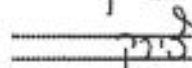
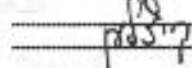
SAMPLES OF ף

בלאָף		[blóf]	'bluff'
וואָלף		[vólf]	'wolf'
עלף		[elf]	'eleven'

1.2.27 tsádik

Print: צ Script: צ Realization: [ts] (= c)

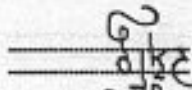
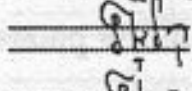

SAMPLES OF צ


צאָצקע		[tsátskə]	'toy'
צירק		[tsirk]	'circus'
קיצלען		[kítslən]	'tickle'

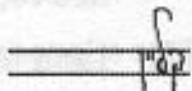
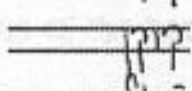

1.2.27.1 lánɡər tsadik


Replaces צ in word final position.

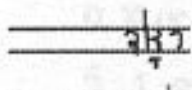
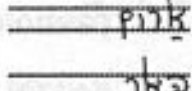
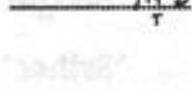
Print: ץ Script: ץ Realization: [ts] (= c)


		SAMPLES OF ק	
נאַנץ		[gants]	'complete'
קלאַץ		[klots]	'beam; clumsy person'
קאַץ		[kats]	'cat'

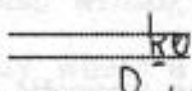
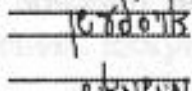
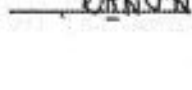
1.2.28 **kuf**
 Print: ק Script:  Realization: [k]

		SAMPLES OF ק	
קליין		[kleyn]	'little'
קוקן		[kukn]	'look'
פֿאָלק		[foik]	'nation'

1.2.29 **reysh**
 Print: ר Script:  Realization: [r] (= r, γ)

		SAMPLES OF ר	
רֶאָד		[ród]	'wheel'
אַרום		[arúm]	'around'
האַר		[hór]	'hair'

1.2.30 **shin**
 Print: ש Script:  Realization: [sh] (= š)

		SAMPLES OF ש	
שאַ		[sha]	'(Please) be quiet!'
אויסלעשן		[óysleshn]	'extinguish'
מישמש		[míshmash]	'hotchpotch'

1.2.31 sin

Print: ש (/ש) Script: ש Realization: [s]

ש (= sin) occurs in the traditional system only. In the phonetic system, [s] is rendered by ס (sámekh → §1.2.23). In some texts, the Hebrew diacritic dot to the upper left of the letter (ש) is employed to distinguish it from ש = [sh] (→ §1.2.30).

SAMPLES OF ש (= sin)

שכירות		[skhírəs]	'wages'
שנאה		[sínə]	'hatred; enmity'
ארץ ישראל		[erəts(y)isr(ə)l]	'Land of Israel'

1.2.32 tof

Print: ת (/ת) Script: ת Realization: [t]

ת occurs in the traditional system only. In the phonetic system, [t] is rendered by ט (tes → §1.2.14).

SAMPLES OF ת

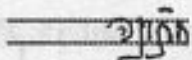
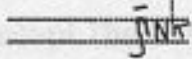
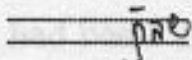
תאוה		[táyvə]	'passion; obsession'
תענוג		[táynəg]	'delight'
אסתר		[éstər]	'Esther'

1.2.33 sof

Print: ס (/ס) Script: ס Realization: [s]

ס occurs in the traditional system only. In the phonetic system, [s] is rendered by ס (sámekh → §1.2.23).

SAMPLES OF ך̄

חַתּוּנָה		[khásənə]	'wedding'
אַמֶּת		[éməs]	'true; truth'
שַׁבָּת		[shábəs]	'Saturday; Sabbath'

1.3 DELETION OF REDUNDANCIES

Note that two or even three traditional system consonants may be phonetically identical in Yiddish (although they were not, of course, in ancient Semitic). The phonetic system, adhering to its principle of one letter for one sound, selects one of the homophonous characters as follows:

Sound	Traditional system	Phonetic system
[k]	כ or ק	ק only
[kh]	ח or ך̄	ך̄ only
[t]	ט or ת	ט only
[s]	ס, ש or ך̄	ס only
[v]	װ, ן, or ך̄	ך̄ only

1.4 COEXISTENCE OF THE TWO SYSTEMS

The (majority) phonetic system and the (minority) traditional system coexist happily in Yiddish writing. The two can be joined in a single word. This occurs frequently where a Semitic component stem is incorporated into a Germanic component morphological pattern, e.g. חלומען [khóləmən] 'dream (v.)', where חלום [khóləm] 'dream (n.)' is verbalized via suffixation of

infinitivizing suffix ן(ע)- [(ə)n]; likewise שכלדיק [séykhidik] 'logical', from שכל [séykh] 'logic; common sense' plus adjectivizing suffix דיק-.

1.5 MODERN STANDARD ORTHOGRAPHY

Modern standard orthography is relatively uniform. The minor variations that are still encountered do not pose a serious problem for the student.

1.5.1 Origins of modern standard orthography

Modern standard orthography was, in its broad outlines, formulated by the pioneer of modern Yiddish studies, Ber Borokhov, in 1913, and modified by the great Yiddish scholar Zalmen Reyzen in 1920. In that year, Reyzen's final version went into effect worldwide and has been followed since by culturally conscious Yiddish writers and publishers, voluntarily, and with none of the legal compulsion that usually accompanies orthographic reform. These and a number of other leading Yiddish scholars of the early twentieth century saw the need to modernize, rationalize and standardize. They believed that the phenomenal growth of Yiddish literature, press and theatre, and the overall expansion of Yiddish culture into many spheres of twentieth-century life would be hampered by inconsistencies and by the useless cumbersome machinery of silent letters that had been incorporated several decades earlier by the Germanizing press of the late nineteenth century. The introduction of modern standard orthography was not universal. Moreover, there is some acceptable variation within modern standard orthography.

1.5.2 Press orthography

The daily Yiddish press, in contrast to literary periodicals and books, did not on the whole accept the orthographic reforms. Many have retained the silent *ls* and *rs* that had been 'imported' from German in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (e.g. זאָגען for זאָגן 'say', יאָר for יאָר 'year'). Some features of press orthography are not Germanisms, but rather features that were not accepted by modern standard orthography. Most notable of these is the continued use of װ rather than װ for [vi] still extensively encountered in newspaper usage, e.g. װײַז for װײַז 'Yiddish', אײַנגל for אײַנגל 'boy'.

1.5.3 Orthodox orthography

The most traditional religious Ashkenazic Jewish communities around the world, primarily (but not exclusively) Chassidic, make use of a system of spelling deriving largely from the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is remarkably similar to press orthography, differing from modern standard orthography most markedly in its retention of silent letters and other features that were, paradoxically, taken from modern literary German by proponents of the anti-traditionalist Enlightenment movement and later by the (even more anti-traditionalist) revolutionary parties. It is ironic that for today's traditional communities, the Germanizing orthography of the late nineteenth century, which emanated from a conscious effort to destroy all that they cherish, is now their symbol of identity in Yiddish spelling, setting them apart from almost all 'secular cultural Yiddishists' who discarded that system in 1920 in favour of modern standard orthography. The lesson for cultural historians lies in the symbolic values which facts assume in a society,

rather than the 'physical derivation' of those facts in history. In Chassidic circles, however, a number of genuine Old Yiddish traits do survive, most notably the use of ײ rather than װ to mark initial and medial unstressed [ə], e.g. גיזאָגט for געזאָגט 'said', the װ for [ə] being one of the features of Germanizing late-nineteenth-century spelling that was retained by modern standard orthography. In pre-World-War-II Poland, the eminent Yiddish scholar Solomon A. Birnbaum perfected a standardized version of Orthodox orthography.

1.5.4 Soviet orthography

Soviet Yiddish scholars embarked on a radical program of orthographic reform shortly after the Russian Revolution in 1917. Most of its features were in widespread use by the mid-1920s.

1.5.4.1 The phonetic system in Soviet orthography

The phonetic system within Soviet spelling eliminates the װ that separates consonantal װ from vocalic װ (→ §1.2.1.1) and the װ marking syllable onset, (→ §1.2.1.2) while retaining it to mark word onset. The confusion resulting from the ambiguous sequences װו (= [vu] or [uv]) and װי (= [ey], [iu] or [yi]) is mitigated by the introduction of two Hebrew diacritics to mark the vocalic use of װ and ײ in ambiguous positions (װ for [u] and ײ for [i]), hence װו for װו 'where', אַטאַצירט for אַטאַצירט 'associated', העברעיִש for העברעיִש 'Hebrew'.

1.5.4.2 The traditional system in Soviet orthography

Soviet spelling eliminates the traditional system altogether, and respells the

entire Semitic component in accordance with its modified phonetic system, e.g. **עפֿשער** for **אפֿשר** [éʃshər] 'perhaps'. The aim of this radical reform was to de-Hebraicize and de-Judaize Yiddish, goals it thought it could help achieve by doing away with the special historical spelling conventions of the traditional system and, indeed, by doing away with the Semitic component itself in Soviet Yiddish. In addition to explicit anti-Hebrew and anti-tradition sentiments expressed by the Soviet reformers of the 1920s, the argument in favour of a unified and phonetically based system for the whole of Yiddish was also frequently put forward, both inside and outside pro-Soviet circles, on logical and practical grounds. Most pre-World War II versions of Soviet spelling also did away with the five word-final forms of letters (e.g. **שפּאַלענע** for **שלום** [shólam] 'peace') although these were generally reintroduced in the early 1960s.

1.5.5 Yivo orthography

A widely taught (but less widely used) variant of modern standard orthography is that of the Yivo Institute for Jewish Research. The Yivo system arose in the 1930s as a compromise between the modern standard orthography of 1920 and the Soviet system (→ §1.5.4). Following Soviet spelling, the Yivo system eliminated the **Ɑ** separating consonantal **ן** from vocalic **ן** (→ §1.2.1.1) and the **Ɑ** marking syllable onset (→ §1.2.1.2); unlike Soviet spelling, Yivo orthography did retain **Ɑ** to mark stem onset (→ §1.2.1.2). It followed the Soviet system in mitigating the resulting confusion by introducing **ױ** for [u] and **ײ** for [i] in a number of positions. Both systems mark the sequence [yi] by **ײ**, hence **שײדי** for **שידי**.

1.5.6 Innovations

The *Grammar* adheres to modern standard orthography. The only innovation is a graphic one. Following the practice that has developed at Oxford in recent years, the *Grammar* reintroduces the historical horizontal bar (known as the *רֹפֶא* [rɔfə], or more informally as the *דענעלע* 'little roof') over the spirants *כּ* (= [kh]) and *ס* (= [s]), bringing them into line with *בּ* (= [v]) and *פּ* (= [f]). Thus all four plosive vs. spirant oppositions (*בּ* [b] vs. *ב* [v]; *כּ* [k] vs. *כ* [kh]; *פּ* [p] vs. *פ* [f]; and *תּ* [t] vs. *ת* [s]) are consistently marked, as was the case in Yiddish from the fourteenth century onwards. From the nineteenth century to the present, a multitude of combinations, none of them internally consistent, has arisen, sometimes using the Hebrew diacritic dot in the middle of the letter to mark the plosive for one, two, three or all of the four plosives, sometimes the horizontal bar to mark the spirant for one or more of the four spirants.

2 PHONETICS

2.0 OVERVIEW

The phonetic structure of Yiddish differs appreciably from that of English, and acquaintance with its major features at the outset is advisable. Despite the differences, the sound pattern of the language can generally be mastered with far greater ease, than, say, that of French, where the base of articulation and the accentuation pattern are vastly more distant from English. Square brackets [] enclose the phonetic transcriptions used in this book (→ §1.2). Where these transcriptions, intended for the English-speaking student, differ substantially from accepted phonetic transcription, the appropriate international phonetic symbol follows in parenthesis (). The sound system of Standard Yiddish is used in the *Grammar*. The major phonetic differences between the dialects lie in the realization of the stressed vowels.

2.1 VOWELS AND DIPHTHONGS

2.1.1 Stressed vowels and diphthongs

The standard language does not distinguish long from short vowels. Stressed vowels are of roughly equal length. They are closer to the peripheral locations of the cardinal vowels in the vocal tract than their counterparts in English.

2.1.1.1 ɤ [a]

ɤ [a] is more peripheral (closer to the far front of the vowel space in the mouth, hence also more tense) than London *ʊ* in 'cut' or New York *o* in 'pot'. Cf. 'Continental a' in French, Dutch and German.

2.1.1.2 ʉ [e] (= ε)

ʉ [e] is more peripheral than English *e* in 'pen'.

2.1.1.3 ɨ [i]

ɨ [i] is higher and more tense than English *i* in 'tin' but it is not lengthened or diphthongized as English *ee* in 'three'.

2.1.1.4 ɤ [o] (= ɔ)

ɤ [o] is higher and more rounded than London *o* in 'lot'; more peripheral, rounded and tense than New York *ʊ* in 'truck'. Cf. 'Continental o'.

2.1.1.5 ɨ [u]

ɨ [u] is more tense and peripheral than English *ʊ* in 'put' but not diphthongized as English *oo* in 'spoon'.

2.1.1.6 ɨ [ay] (= aj)

ɨ [ay] starts at ɤ [a] (→ §2.1.1.1) and ends at offglide [y] (=j). The nucleus of the diphthong is shorter, more front, and more tense than English *i* in 'write'.

2.1.1.7 ɨ [ey] (= ej)

ɨ [ey] starts higher than ʉ [e] (= ε) (→ §2.1.1.2) and ends at offglide [y]

(= j). Cf. English *ai* in 'rain'.

2.1.1.8 וי [oy] (-ɔj)

וי [oy] starts at ו [o] (= ɔ) (→ §2.1.1.4) and ends at offglide y (= j). The nucleus of the diphthong is shorter and more tense than English *oi* in 'foist'.

2.1.2 Reduced vowels

Reduced vowels occur in unstressed reduced syllables where the vowel repertoire is generally reduced. Most frequently, [ə] and [a] occur before the stress of a word, [ə] and [i] after it.

2.1.2.1 Pronunciation

The most frequent graphic representation of reduced vowels in the phonetic system is ו (→ §1.2.24.2). In the traditional system, they most often correspond with ה or נ. Reduced vowels are generally transcribed [ə] in this book, but actual phonetic realization can vary according to a number of factors. Before the stressed syllable of a word, it usually approximates lax [i] (= ɪ), resembling English *i* in 'exotic', e.g. געזאָגט [gizókt] (= gɪzókɪt) 'said'. After the stress it tends toward [i] before certain consonants, especially מ, e.g. בוידעם [bóydɪm] (= bójdɪm) 'attic'. It also tends toward [i] word-finally, e.g. קאַפּע [kávi] (= kávi) 'coffee', חלה [kháli] (= xáli) 'Sabbath bread'. In the final reduced ו of the second diminutive (→ §4.33), it tends toward [ə], hence טישעלע [tishelə/tishalə] (= tíʃələ / tíʃalə) 'very little table'.

2.1.2.2 Shift to [a] before [kh]

Reduced ו may be pronounced [a] before [kh] (ב, ך or ח), e.g. כוח [kóyakh] or [kóyakh] 'strength'.

2.1.2.3 Shift to [a] in the second diminutive

The first reduced *v* in the suffix of the second diminutive, עֵלֶע- (→ §4.3.2) may be pronounced *a*, e.g. בְּיַמְעֵלֶע [béymələ] or [béymalə] 'very little tree'. In the plural of the second diminutive, עֵלְעַךְ-, the second reduced *v* may be rendered [a] by assimilation to the following [kh] (→ §2.1.2.2). Vowel harmony is then applied to the first reduced *v*, and both may be pronounced [a], hence [béymalakh].

2.1.3 Vowels not corresponding with the phonetic system

There is a handful of words, all of them very frequently used items in everyday speech, in which vowel letters do not correspond with their expected phonetic correlates within the phonetic system. Note however that some speakers have come to use 'spelling pronunciations' based on the conventional orthography ([oyf] etc.). Most other instances of incongruence result from assimilations and rhythmic factors. Wherever the usual pronunciation of a word is not self-evident from the spelling, a transcription in square brackets is supplied in the *Grammar*.

אויף 'on; upon; to' (→ §15.16.5)	[af]
אויפֿן 'on the; upon the; to the' (→ §5.3.3.1)	[afn]
אויפֿ- 'up (verbal prefix)' (→ §8.2.2)	[uf]
אים 'him' (→ §§6.1.2.2, 6.1.3.2)	[em]
ביי 'at; by' (→ §15.1)	[ba]
ביים 'at the; by the' (→ §§5.3.3.1, 15.1)	[bam]
קױם 'barely' (→ §10.1)	[kam]
קײן 'to' (→ §15.16.3)	[kin]

2.2 CONSONANTS

2.2.1 Voicing

The consonants [b], [d], [g], [v], [z], and [zh] (= ž) are fully voiced in all positions, including word-finally (except when processed by assimilation → §2.2.2. – §2.2.4), e.g.

שריב 'I write'	[shrayb]
רעד 'I speak'	[réd]
וואג 'weight'	[vog]
איז 'ice'	[ayz]
שאַנטאַזש 'blackmail'	[shantázh]

2.2.2 Devoicing assimilation

Voiced consonants [b], [d], [g], [v], [z], and [zh] (= ž) usually undergo devoicing as follows – [b] → [p]; [d] → [t]; [g] → [k]; [v] → [f]; [z] → [s]; [zh] (= ž) → [sh] (= š) before any of the voiceless consonants [f], [k], [kh], [p], [s], [sh], [t] and [ts]. The devoicing by assimilation of [b] and [d] is the most consistent.

SAMPLES OF CONSONANTS PROCESSED BY DEVOICING ASSIMILATION

שריב [shrayb] 'I write'	→	שרייבסט [shráypst] 'you (familiar) write'
רעד [red] 'I speak'	→	רעדסט [rést] 'you (familiar) speak'
וואג [vog] 'weight'	→	וואַגשול [vókshoi] 'scale'
בריו [briy] 'letter'	→	ברייטרעגער [brí(tregər] 'mailman'
איז [ayz] 'ice'	→	אייזקאסטן [ayskastn] 'ice box'
שאַנטאַזש [shantázh]	→	שאַנטאַזש־שטיק [shantásh shtik]
'blackmail'		'blackmailing tactics'

Devoicing assimilation may occur across word boundaries. Cf. קלוג [klug] 'clever' vs. קלוג קינד א [a klug/kluk kind] 'a clever child'.

2.2.3 Voicing assimilation

Voiceless consonants [f], [k], [kh], [p], [s], [sh], [t] and [ts] may undergo voicing as follows – [f] → [v]; [k] → [g]; [kh] (= x) → [gh] (= γ); [p] → [b]; [s] → [z]; [sh] (= š) → [zh] (= ž); [t] → [d]; [ts] (= c) → [dz] before any of the voiced consonants [b], [g], [d], [v], [z] and [zh] (= ž). Voicing assimilation is less consistent than devoicing assimilation, but it is frequently heard in natural speech. The consonant transcribed [gh] (= γ) is the voiced counterpart of [kh] (= x), which has no independent status in the language. It also serves as one of the possible realizations of ך (→ §2.2.11.1).

SAMPLES OF CONSONANTS PROCESSED BY VOICING ASSIMILATION

אויפֿ- [u] 'up (v. prefix)'	→	אויפֿוועקן [úvvekʰn] 'wake up'
באק [bak] 'cheek'	→	באקבײן [bágbeyn] 'cheekbone'
בוך [bukh] 'book'	→	בוך־געשעפֿט [búghgəsheft] 'bookstore'
קאפֿ [kop] 'head'	→	קאפֿווייטיק [kópveytik] 'headache'
זיס [zis] 'sweet'	→	זיסוואַרג [zízvarg] 'candy products'
רעש [rá(ə)sh] 'noise'	→	רעשדיק [rá(ə)zhdik] 'noisy'
וײַט [vayt] 'far'	→	וײַטזעענדיק [váydzeevdik] 'farsighted'
שוויצן [shvítʂn] 'sweat (v.)'	→	שוויצבאָד [shvídzbod] 'steambath'

Voicing assimilation may occur across word boundaries. Cf. קוש [kush] 'kiss' vs. קוש געבן א [a kúzh gebm] 'give a kiss'.

2.2.4 Chain assimilation

In both devoicing and voicing assimilation, it is the last of a series of

consonants that affects its predecessor either to devoice or to voice. Where three or more consonants occur sequentially, the last may mutate them all. Thus, ערשט [ersht] 'just' followed by געשען [gəshén] 'happened' yields ערשט געשען [érsht gəshén] via chain assimilation. There are a few cases when assimilation is progressive rather than regressive, and a consonant's voicing status affects the following consonant (→ §7.3).

2.2.5 Aspiration

Plosives ב (ב), ד (ד), ג (ג), כ (כ), ק (ק), פ (פ), ט (ט), ת (ת) are never aspirated. To perfect pronunciation, utter each of these in word final position, holding a mirror a short distance from the mouth, until oral discharge is eliminated.

לויב 'praise'	[loyb]
קלייד 'dress (n.)'	[kleyd]
קלוג 'clever'	[klug]
האק 'hatchet'	[hak]
זופ 'sip'	[zup]
נאַכט 'night'	[nakht]

2.2.6 Pronunciation of 5 [kh] (-x)

English speakers unfamiliar with [kh] (h and 5) may begin from its corresponding velar plosive [k] and proceed to spirantize. Cf. *ch* in the German 'ach Laut', Scottish *ch* in 'loch'.

2.2.7 Pronunciation of ל

Many older speakers born in Eastern Europe still distinguish a 'hard' from a

'soft' (= palatalized) ל. The distinction, common in the Slavonic environment, is rapidly losing ground in modern spoken Yiddish. 'Soft l' is heard most often before ך, e.g. קליאַמקע [klyámkə] 'doorknob'.

2.2.8 Syllabic ל [l] (= ֿ)

ל functions as a 'vowel' when it follows a consonant in an unstressed syllable. It is not preceded by a shewa vowel in speech or װ in writing, but carries syllabicity on its own, e.g. גאַמל [gópl] (= gópl) 'fork', לעפל [léfl] (= léfl) 'spoon'.

2.2.9 Syllabic ן [n] (= ן)

ן (or ן) [n] too, can function as a 'vowel' when it follows a consonant in a reduced syllable. It is not preceded by a shewa vowel in speech or װ in writing, but carries syllabicity all on its own.

SAMPLES OF SYLLABIC ן

וואָגן 'wagon'	[vógn]
טאַנצנדיק 'while dancing'	[tántsn̩dik]
מאַכן 'make'	[mákn̩]
מענטשן 'people'	[méntsh̩n̩]

But, unlike ל which is always syllabic when it follows a consonant in a reduced syllable, ן is not syllabic when the preceding consonant is ן [m], ן [n], any stressed vowel or diphthong, or one of the following three sequences: ןג [ng] (= ng), ןק [nk] (= nk), or consonant plus ל [l]. In these cases, a shewa vowel is heard and װ appears.

קוימען 'chimney'	[kóymən]
באַנען 'trains (n.)'	[banən]

עסייען 'essays'	[eséyən]
פֿאַנגען 'capture (v.)'	[fángən]
זינקען 'sink (v.)'	[zínkən]
גאָפּלען 'forks'	[góplən]

Note however that adjectives ending in [ng] and [nk] do exceptionally retain syllabic [n] both in speech and writing, when inflection to an objective case (→ §§5.5.2 – 5.5.4) results in one of the sequences [ng] + [n] or [nk] + [n], e.g. לאַנגן [lángn] 'long', פֿלינקן [flínkn] 'agile'.

2.2.10 Bilabial assimilation

Syllabic נ (or ן) is pronounced [m] rather than [n] via assimilation following bilabials ב [b] and פ [p], e.g. אויסקלייבן 'choose' [óysklaybm], האָבן 'have' [hóbm], ליפּן 'lips' [lípm].

2.2.11 Pronunciation of ר [r]

There are three acceptable realizations of ר.

2.2.11.1 Fricative [r]

Fricative [r] (=ר) is produced at the velum. It is the spirantized counterpart of [g], and the voiced counterpart of [kh]. Most English speakers master this realization most successfully. The target sound may be approached from [g], [k] or [kh] (→ §2.2.6).

2.2.11.2 Lingual [r]

Lingual [r] is produced at the upper gums by tongue vibration.

2.2.11.3 Uvular [r]

Uvular [r] is produced by vibrating the uvula.

2.2.12 Pronunciation of צ [ts] (= c)

Affricate צ [ts] resembles the English sequence *t* + *s* in 'cuts' but it functions as a single sound unit and is consequently pronounced in a shorter timespace than its English counterpart.

2.3 RHYTHM

2.3.1 Syllables

There are four syllable types.

2.3.1.1 High syllables

High syllables have primary stress (marked by ' over the vowel nucleus of the syllable), e.g. [mé] in [pamélaħ] פִּאָמֶלֶךְ 'slowly'. High syllables are loud, long and intoned and can have as their nucleus any of the repertoire of stressed vowels and diphthongs.

2.3.1.2 Low syllables

Low syllables are never stressed, and have a very limited number of vowel nuclei (usually [ə] or [a] before the word stress and [ə] or [i], or syllabic [l] or [n], after it) e.g. [pa] and [laħ] in פִּאָמֶלֶךְ. Low syllables are far less loud than high ones, and they are short and unintoned.

2.3.1.3 Middle syllables

Middle syllables have secondary stress (marked by ` over its vowel nucleus), e.g. [kayt] in [pamélekhkàyt] פִּאָמֶלֶכְחַיִט 'slowness'. In a more detailed treatment, nonprimary stress would be further analyzed into secondary, tertiary etc.

2.3.1.4 Lowered syllables

Like the high syllables from which they derive (→ §2.3.1.1), lowered syllables may have any nucleus vowel. They may have secondary stress (like middle syllables → §2.3.1.3) or none at all (like low syllables → §2.3.1.2). A lowered syllable is a syllable that declines from high to middle or low, or from middle to low in normal continuous speech, in deference to the master rhythmic pattern (→ §2.3.4), e.g. [me] in אֵיךְ בִּין נֶעֱכַטֵן פִּאָמֶלֶכְךָ אַהֵיִמְגַגַּנְגַּעַן [(i)khbin nèkhtn pamèlèkh ahéymgəgəngən] 'I walked home slowly yesterday', although [me] would of course remain high if the speaker wished to emphasize the slowness of the journey.

2.3.2 Word stress

Word stress (usually high in isolation) is bound to the root syllable, which is most frequently the first. No matter how many syllables are added in inflections or derivations, the same syllable, while it may be reduced to secondary stress in consequence of contextual reduction, retains its full vowel and, relationally speaking, retains its stress vis à vis any low syllables, e.g. לֵעֵב [léb] '(I) live', לֵעֵבֵן [lébm] 'life', לֵעֵבֵדִיק [lébədik] 'alive', לֵעֵבֵדִיקֶרְהֵיִט [lèbədikərhéyt] 'while living'. While lowered from high to middle in this last word, [le] always remains stressed vis à vis [bə].

2.3.2.1 Semitic component word stress

In the Semitic component, stress is generally assigned to the penultimate syllable. The consequence is that upon suffixation, stress jumps to the new penultimate syllable, e.g. חֵבֵר [kháver] 'friend' vs. חֲבֵרִים [khavéyrim] 'friends'. The low [ə] of [kháver] emerges as the high [éy] of [khavéyrim].

2.3.3 Word rhythm

The most common word rhythm is a trochee pattern of ' (high) followed by _ (low), e.g. בֵּעֲקֵר [bék_ə] 'baker', אִישׁוֹר [éi_{shə}] 'perhaps', נֹדְנִיק [nú_{nik}] 'boring person; pest; poor conversationalist'. If there is an unstressed syllable before the stress, the amphibrach _ ' _ results, e.g. גַּעְגַּאנְגֵּן [gəgáng_{ən}] 'went', עֲקֻשְׁנוּת [akshó_{nəs}] 'stubbornness', כַּחֲלִיאָטֶרע [khal_{yás_{trə}}] 'gang'. Both types share penultimate stress which is the most common type in the language. Many thousands of Yiddish words were incorporated into the language in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, largely from the lexicon of internationalisms that have permeated Western languages generally. These frequently preserve full vowels in unstressed syllables (e.g. אָרגאַניזאַציע [organizátsyə] 'organization'), iambic stress pattern (e.g. אַטאָם [atóm] 'atom'), or both (e.g. קאַפּאַציטעט [kapatsité] 'capacity; big-shot'). They have, in effect, evolved a new pattern that coexists with the old. In rapid speech, however, some reduction of unstressed syllables to [ə] does occur (e.g. [erəplán] for [eroplán] עראָפּלאַן 'airplane').

2.3.4 The master rhythmic pattern

The master rhythmic pattern entails highs at roughly equal intervals, interlaced with a far greater number of middles, lows and lowereds. The result is a starkly contrasting 'mountain range' pattern, with roughly equidistant peaks. Each rhythmic unit (e.g. phrase, sentence) has one and only one high. Reduction (the lowering of highs to middle or low and of middles to low) is roughly in direct proportion to the rhythmic requirement that stresses be kept equally apart.

2.3.5 Sentence rhythm

Phrases and sentences in everyday speech tend to follow the same metrical structures as words, e.g. אִיךְ וַיֵּיט נִיט 'I don't know', comprising [ikh], [veys] and [nit] is realized as amphibrach [ikh véys nit] in moderate speech, and trochee [khvéys nit], with only two syllables, in more rapid speech. The Yiddish rhythm pattern extends word rhythm over phrases and sentences, so that each sentence, like the word, has a single stressed syllable, which may or may not be surrounded by many reduced syllables (some of which retain some secondary stress). The actual stress pattern can vary depending on message and emphasis. The major constraint is that the high stress be selected from a syllable that can bear word stress when that word is uttered in isolation. Those syllables stressed in isolation will of course lose stress when they are not selected for sentence stress. They are relegated to reduced syllable status in lowness and shortness, but the repertoire of vowels need not be reduced as in a word uttered in isolation. The underlying principle is the presence of a single climactic stress somewhere along the line. Hence

איך ווייס ניט וואָס ער פּלאַפּלט, sequentially [ikh veys nit vos er plapit] can be realized [(i)khvéysnitvoserplàpit] 'I don't know what he's babbling about' or [(i)khvèysnitvoserplápit] 'I don't know what he's *babbling* about'. A series of reduced syllables tends to be packed into the same timespan accorded a single stressed syllable.

2.4 DIALECT VARIATION

There are many differences between the spoken varieties of Yiddish in morphology, lexicon and grammar (e.g. → §§4.1.4, 6.1.4, 7.3.5). The best-known and most salient features distinguishing the three major modern Yiddish dialects are the systems of stressed vowels. The standard language, used throughout the *Grammar*, enjoys nearly perfect one-to-one correspondence between symbol and sound, at least in the phonetic system governing the largest part of the language (→ §2.1.3 for exceptions). It is very close to the stressed vowel system of Northeastern ('Lithuanian') Yiddish. The only major difference is that part of the series of words in the standard language with [oy] has [ej] in Lithuanian; hence וואָויַן [voyn] 'live; dwell' and ווייַן [veyn] 'cry' are both [veyn] in Northeastern Yiddish. The other two dialects, Mideastern ('Polish') and Southeastern ('Ukranian') Yiddish have rather more vowels and therefore exhibit a one-to-two or one-to-three relationship between symbol and sound. The student learning the language as a beginner is best advised to master Standard Yiddish in the first instance, and to investigate dialectal variation at a later stage. The student who has a native dialect, on the other hand, is best advised to adhere to his or her native variety. All the native dialects are nonstandard insofar as none is identical with the standard. None of the dialects are substandard and

use and preservation of genuine dialect is encouraged. The following are the major stressed vowel correspondences of the three dialects. Long vowels are marked by a macron above the vowel letter (ā, ē, ī, ō, ū). Note that the [u] and [ū] realizations for ו in Mideastern and Southeastern dialects occur only in nineteenth- and twentieth-century borrowings. The words themselves entered these dialects long after the sound change [u] → [i] had been completed, and they were therefore unaffected. Assorted consonantal differences may be noted from the examples cited.

Standard	Northeastern	Mideastern	Southeastern
2.4.1 א=[a]	[a]	[a]	[o] or [a]
האנט 'hand'	[hant]	[hant]	[ont]
שוואך 'weak'	[shvakh]	[shvakh]	[shvakh]
2.4.2 ע=[e]	[e]	[e] or [ey]	[e] or [ey / i]
בעט 'bed'	[bet]	[bet]	[bet]
בעטן 'ask'	[betn]	[beytn]	[beytn / bitn]
2.4.3 י=[i]	[i]	[i] or [ī]	[i] or [ī]
ליפ 'lip'	[lip]	[lip]	[lip]
ליב 'love'	[lib]	[līp]	[līb]
2.4.4 אָ=[o]	[o]	[o], [u] or [ū]	[o] or [u]
גאָט 'God'	[got]	[got]	[got]

זאָגן 'say'	[zogn]	[zugn]	[zugn]
פֿאַרן 'ride; go'	[forn]	[furn]	[furn]

2.4.5 וּ=[u]	[u]	[u], [ʊ], [i] or [ɪ]	[u] or [i] or [ɪ]
קולטור 'culture'	[kultúr]	[kultúr]	[kultúr]
זון 'sun'	[zun]	[zin]	[zin]
זון 'son'	[zun]	[zɪn]	[zɪn]

2.4.6 יַ=[ay]	[ay]	[ā]	[a] or [ay]
זײַן 'be'	[zayn]	[zān]	[zan]
כּדאַי 'worthwhile'	[kədáy]	[kədā]	[kədáy]

2.4.7 יֵ=[ey]	[ey]	[ay]	[ey]
שײַן 'beautiful'	[sheyn]	[shayn]	[sheyn]

2.4.8 וַי=[oy]	[ey] or [oy]	[oy] or [ou]	[oy] or [ou / u]
טױב 'deaf'	[teyb]	[toyp]	[toyb]
טױב 'pigeon'	[toyb]	[tɔup]	[toub / tub]

3 GREETINGS

3.0 OVERVIEW

The sampling offered provides time-related and more general greetings. A number of greetings have familiar and formal variants (→ §§6.1.6.1, 7.5.1).

3.1 TIME-RELATED GREETINGS

3.1.1 Morning

גוט מאָרגן! (אַ) [(a)gut mórgn] 'Good morning'.

Response:

אַ גוט יאָר! [agut yór] 'Good morning to you' (lit. 'A good year').

3.1.2 Evening (upon meeting)

גוטן אָבנאָט! (אַ) [(a)gut nóvnt] 'Good evening'.

Response:

גוטן אָבנאָט! (אַ) 'Good evening to you'.

3.1.3 Evening / night (upon parting / going to bed)

אַ גוטע נאַכט! [a gútə nákht] 'Good night'.

Responses:

אַ גוטע נאַכט! 'Good night to you'.

שלאַךך געזונט! 'Sleep well (familiar)'.

שלאַפֿט געזונט! 'Sleep well (formal)'.

זיסע חלומות! [zísə khalóyməs] 'Sweet dreams'.

3.1.4 On Friday (upon parting) or Saturday before sundown (upon meeting or parting)

אַ גוט שבת! [a gut shábəs] 'Have a Good Sabbath'. When used upon parting on Friday, אַ גוט שבת may have the sense of 'Have a good weekend'. A 'secular' alternative, specific to the whole of the weekend, is

אַ גוטן סוף־וואָך! [a gutn sòvvókh] 'Have a good weekend'.

Response:

אַ גוט שבת! 'Good Sabbath / weekend to you'.

3.1.5 On Saturday evening (after sundown)

אַ גוטע וואָך! / גוט־וואָך! [gudvókh / a gútə vókh] 'Have a good week'.

Response:

אַ גוטע וואָך! / גוט־וואָך! 'A good week to you'.

3.1.6 On the eve of a traditional holiday or on the holiday

אַ גוט יום טוב! [(a)gut yóntəf] 'Good holiday'.

Responses:

אַ גוט יום טוב! 'Good holiday to you'.

אַ גוט יום טוב דיר! [(a)gut yóntəf dír] 'Good holiday to you (familiar)'.

אַ גוט יום טוב אַיך! [(a)gut yóntəf áykh] 'Good holiday to you (formal)'.

3.2 GENERAL GREETINGS

3.2.1 Upon meeting

וואָס מאַכסטו? [vos mákhstə?] 'How are you? (familiar)'.

וואָס מאַכט איר? [vos mákhtir?] 'How are you? (formal)'.

וואָס הערט זיך? [vos (h)értsakh? / vos (h)érdzakh?] 'What's new?'.

וואָס הערט זיך עפעס? [vos (h)értsakh épəs? / vos (h)érdzakh épəs?] 'So what's new?'.

וואָס הערט זיך עפעס גוטס? [vos (h)értsakh épəs gúts? / vos (h)érdzakh épəs gúts?] 'What's the good news?'.

וואָס מאַכט אַ ייד? [vos makht a yíd?] 'How are you doing?' (lit. 'How is a Jew?').

Possible Responses:

ברוך השם [borkhashém] 'Fine' (lit. 'Blessed is God').

גאָט צו דאַנקען [gòt tsə dáknən] 'Fine' (lit. 'Thank God').

אַ דאַנק [adánk] '(Fine) thank you'.

גאַנץ גוט [gándz gút] 'Pretty good'.

נישקשה [nishkóshə] 'Not too bad'.

אַזוי [ázóy] 'So so' (with lengthening of both vowels; often accompanied by horizontal wagging of fingers of one or both hands and inclining of head).

ס'קען אַלעמאָל זיין בעסער [skən àləmol zayn bésər] 'Could always be better'.

ס'קען אַלעמאָל זיין ערגער [skən àləmol zayn érgər] 'Could always be worse'.

וואָס זאָל איך מאַכן? [vozi ikh mákhn?] 'What do you expect?' (lit. 'How should I be?').

וואָס מאַכסטו? [vos makhstú?] 'How are *you*? (familiar)'.

וואָס מאַכט איר? [vos makht ír?] 'How are *you*? (formal)'.

3.2.2 Upon shaking hands

עליכֶם שלום [sholəmaléykhəm] 'How do you do?' (lit. 'Peace unto you').

Response:

עליכֶם שלום [aleykhəmsbóləm] 'How do you do?' (lit. 'Unto you peace').

The handshake is usually clenched simultaneous with the stressed syllable of עליכֶם שלום or שלום עליכֶם.

3.2.3 Upon greeting a stranger

פֿון וואָנעט קומסטו? [funvánət kúmstə?] 'Where do you come from?' (familiar)'.

פֿון וואָנעט קומט איר? [funvánət kúmtír?] 'Where do you come from?' (formal)'.

פֿון וואָנעט ביסטו אַ לאַנדסמאַן? [funvánət bista lántsman?] 'Where do you come from?' (especially current in America and other immigration centres).

פֿון וואָנעט זייט איר אַ לאַנדסמאַן? [funvánət zaytir a lántsman?] 'Where do you come from? (formal)' (especially current in America and other immigration centres).

פֿון וואָנעט קומט מען? [funvánət kúmtmən?] 'Where do you come from?' (lit. 'Where does one come from?').

פֿון וואָנעט קומט אַ ייד? [funvánət kumt a yíd?] 'Where do you come from, my friend?' (lit. 'Where does a Jew come from?').

Response:

— פֿון 'from (+ name of place)', e.g. פֿון ניו־יאָרק [fun nuyórk] 'from New

York', פֿון פאַריז [fun paríz] 'from Paris'. If the place name is the name of a city or town, -ער (f. -ערין) may be suffixed to the name of the city to form an agentive noun, e.g. איך בין אַ ניו־יאָרקערין 'I'm a New Yorker (f.)', איך בין אַ פאַריזער 'I'm a Parisian (m.)' (→ §5.12.1).

3.2.4 Asking a stranger his or her name

ווי הייסטו? [vi héystə?] 'What's your name? (familiar)'.

ווי הייסט איר? [vi héystír?] 'What's your name? (formal)' (lit. 'How are you called?').

Response:

— איך הייס — [i]khhéys — 'My name is ...'

3.2.5 Upon answering the telephone

האַלֿע 'Hello'.

Response (when caller is known):

— האַלֿע מאַשע [halò | Kháyim], האַלֿע חיים [halò | Máshə].
[halò | Máshə].

3.2.6 Welcoming in person

ברוך הבא [bor(ə)khabó] 'Welcome! (sg.)' (lit. 'Blessed is the comer').

ברוכים הבאים [brukhimabóim] 'Welcome! (pl.)' (lit. 'Blessed are the comers').

Responses:

ברוך הנמצא [bor(ə)khanímtə] 'Thank you for the welcome (sg.)' (lit. 'Blessed is the one to be found here, i.e. the resident').

ברוכים היום שבים [brukhimayóyshvim] 'Thank you for the welcome (pl.)'
(lit. 'Blessed are the people who stay here, i.e. the residents').

ישר כוחו [(yi)sh(ər)kóyakh] 'Good of you to ask; well said' (lit.
'congratulations' but also traditionally used for 'thank you').

3.2.7 Upon shaking hands

לך טוב ליד [lakh tov lid] 'Goodbye' (lit. 'Goodbye to you').

3.2.7 Upon parting

זיי געזונט! [záy gəzúnt] 'Be Well!; Goodbye' (familiar).

זייט געזונט! [záyt gəzúnt] 'Be Well!; Goodbye' (formal).

כל טוב! [kól túv] 'All the best'.

אַ גוטן [a gútn] 'All the best' (lit. 'A good (...)').

4 NOUNS

4.0 OVERVIEW

Nouns occur in three genders – masculine, feminine and neutral. They usually inflect for pluralization and diminutivization. Diminutives may have the sense of physical smallness. They frequently add subjective emotional nuances, affectionate or pejorative, to the noun. They combine to form compound nouns.

4.1 GENDER

The gender of nouns is historically fixed and must be learned with each noun. It would not, for example, be possible to determine logically that 'table' is masculine (דער טיש), 'notebook' feminine (די העפֿט) and 'country' neutral (דאָס לאַנד). Nevertheless, there are rules and tendencies covering gender assignment for many nouns. The first principle assigns natural masculines to masculine and natural feminines to feminine. The dynamic tendency evident for nouns that exhibit no inherent sex is evident in gender assignment for new words and occasional realignments of old ones. It assigns masculinity to nouns ending in a consonant (e.g. דער אויטאָמאָביל [o(y)tomobíl] 'automobile') and femininity to nouns ending in a vowel (e.g. די טעכנאָלאָגיע [tekhnológyə] 'technology'). There is some acceptable variation in gender within literary Yiddish. A noun's gender should be checked with a dictionary.

4.1.1 Masculinity

Masculinity may be determined semantically, morphologically or derivationally. The masculine definite article is דער (which inflects to דעם in both object cases → §§5.3.2 – 5.3.3).

4.1.1.1 Semantic masculinity

Nouns referring to biological males, and agentives without a feminizing suffix, are masculine. Semantic masculinity overrides morphological and derivational factors.

SAMPLES OF SEMANTIC MASCULINITY

	דער אָקס	ox
	דער גנב [gánəv]	thief
	דער זון	son
	דער זיידע	grandfather
	דער מאַן	man
דער מלך [méləx]	דער קעניג [kéynig]	king

4.1.1.2 Morphological masculinity

Nouns with the following suffixes are generally masculine. An example follows each suffix.

-יזם:	דער ייִדישיזם [yidishízm]	'Yiddishism'
syllabic ל:	דער אַרבל	'sleeve'
syllabic ן:	דער ברֶאָנפֿן [brómfn]	'whiskey'
-עם:	דער פֿאַדעם	'thread'
-ער:	דער זומער	'summer'

4.1.1.3 Masculine agentives

Semantic and morphological masculinity overlap in the case of the masculine

agentivizing suffixes **אַר-**, **יטט-** (stressed), **ניק-**, **ענט-** (stressed), **עך-**, **ער-** and pejorative **וק-** and **אַק(י)-** (both stressed). An example follows each.

אַר- :	דיקטאַטאָר [diktátor] 'dictator'
יטט- :	ייִדישיטט [yidishíst] 'Yiddishist'
ניק- :	נודניק 'bore; pest; poor conversationalist'
ענט- :	פּרעזידענט [prezidént] 'president'
עך- :	מאַלאַדיעץ [malodyéts] 'man who can get things done'
ער- :	לערער 'teacher'
וק- :	שניידערֶוּק [shnaydərú�] 'tailor who is not a nice person'
אַק- :	פאַסקודניאַק [paskudnyák] 'malicious person'

4.1.1.4 Derivational masculinity

Nominalizations of verb stems are masculine, e.g. **דער שטופּ** 'push (n.)' from **שטופּן** [shtúpm] 'push (v.)'. Note that where past participles undergo vowel change (\rightarrow §§7.6.2.2–7.6.2.5), the nominalization frequently derives from the stem of the past participle, e.g. **דער שפּרונג** 'jump (n.)' (cf. **שפּרינגען** 'jump (v.)', past participle **געשפּרונגען**).

4.1.2 Femininity

Femininity may be determined semantically, morphologically or derivationally. The feminine definite article is **די** (which inflects to **דער** in dative \rightarrow §5.3.3).

4.1.2.1 Semantic femininity

Nouns referring to biological females, and agentives with a feminizing suffix, are feminine. Semantic femininity overrides morphological and derivational factors.

SAMPLES OF SEMANTIC FEMININITY

daughter די טאָכטער

grandmother די באַבע

woman די פֿרוי

queen די מלכה [málə]

aunt די מומע

cow די קו

4.1.2.2 Morphological femininity

Nouns that end in one of the following tend to be feminine. The inclusion of ו-, א- and ה- in the list dictates that all nouns ending in an unstressed vowel are feminine, except where in conflict with semantic masculinity, e.g. דער טאָטע 'father'. Note that nouns ending in two of the listed endings, וֹת- and עניש-, may alternatively be neutral (→ §4.1.3). An example follows each.

א-:	די דוגמא [dúgmə] 'example'
ה-:	די כלה [kálə] 'bride'
ה-הייט:	די פֿרייהייט 'freedom'
ונג-:	די שטימונג 'mood'
ור-:	די ליטעראַטור [litəratúr] 'literature'
ות-:	די אַקשָׁנֹס [akshónəs] 'stubbornness'
יק-:	די גראַמאַטיק [gramátik] 'grammar'
ע-:	די קאַפּע 'coffee'
עניש-:	די אַקשָׁנֹס צעמישעניש [tsəmíshənish] 'confused situation'
ענק-:	די קאָנפֿערענץ [konfərənts] 'conference'
עק-:	די ביבליאָטעק [bibl(y)oték] 'library'
ערה-:	די בעקעריי [bekeráy] 'bakery'
קייט-:	די שיינקייט 'beauty'
שאַפֿט-:	די פֿרײַנדשאַפֿט [fráyntshaft] 'friendship'

4.1.2.3 Feminine agentives

Semantic and morphological femininity overlap in feminine agentive suffixes טע- (most frequent feminizer of Semitic component agentives), יצע- and קע-. Some agentives may be feminized with either ין- or קע-, e.g. לערער (דער) 'teacher (m.)' → לערערין (די) = לערערקע (די) 'teacher (f.)'. An example follows each feminine agentive suffix.

טע-:	די גנבֿטע [gánəftə] 'thief (f.)'
יצע-:	די קראַסאַחיצע [krasávitsə] 'beautiful girl / woman'
ין-:	די בעקערין 'baker (f.)'
קע-:	די פּרעזידענטקע [prezidéntkə] 'president (f.)'

4.1.2.4 Derivational femininity

Nominalizations of adjective stems are feminine. Note that where comparative adjectives undergo vowel change (→ §5.10), the nominalization derives from the stem of the comparative, e.g. לַענג די לענגער 'length' (cf. לאַנג 'long', לענגער [léyngər] 'longer'), קעלט די קעלטער 'cold(ness)' (cf. קאַלט 'cold', קעלטער 'colder').

4.1.3 Neutrality

Neutrality may be determined semantically, morphologically or derivationally. The neutral definite article is דאָס (which inflects to דעם in dative → §5.3.3). Neutrality varies in a number of words with the other two genders, most frequently femininity. Where variation does exist in the literary language, the modern trend is away from neutral.

4.1.3.1 Semantic neutrality

Diminutives in ל- and עלע- (→ §§4.3.1 – 4.3.2) are neutral irrespective of the gender of the base form of the noun, hence דאָס טישל 'the little table'

and דאָס טישעלע 'the very little table' from טיש 'the table'; analogously, דאָס געטלע 'the little street' and געטעלע 'the very little street', from גאָס 'the street'. There are two words in which semantic masculinity and femininity conflict rather sharply with the neutrality of diminutives – יינגל 'boy' and מיידל 'girl'. Both sets of variants – דער יינגל and דאָס יינגל, די מיידל and דאָס מיידל are equally acceptable. Historically, יינגל is the diminutive of יונג and מיידל of מויד. Native speakers do not, however, perceive יינגל and מיידל as diminutives in the modern language. The base nouns have become emotionally charged epithets that combine with adjectives in stock phrases, usually to mark indelicacy. They may explicitly be negatively charged, e.g. גרעגער יונג (דער) 'fellow with no manners or concern for other people', אַלטע מויד (די) 'old maid'. They often serve to denote physical strength, and are accompanied by 'spaced out' pronunciation, e.g. אַ געזונטער יונג [à | gə | zún | tər | yúng] '(He's) a healthy (= powerful) fellow!', אַן איזערנע מויד [àn | áy | zər | ə | móyd] '(She's) an iron lady!'.

4.1.3.2 Morphological neutrality

Nouns that begin or end in one of following affixes are generally neutral. Note that nouns suffixed by -ות and -עניש (and occasionally, -עריי), enumerated as feminine (→ §4.1.2.2), may also be neutral. Virtually none of the neutral affixes serves to produce new nouns in the modern language, but all are encountered in stock items.

גע-	<u>דאָס געשלעג</u> [gəshlég] 'fight'
חאָרג-	<u>דאָס רויחאָרג</u> 'raw material'
טום-	<u>דאָס יידנטום</u> 'jewry'
ס-	<u>דאָס שלעכטס</u> 'evil'
עכץ-	<u>שרייבעכץ</u> [shráybəkhts / shráybakhts] 'bad writing'

4.1.3.3 Derivational neutrality

Nominalizations of infinitives are neutral, hence **רױפֿן** 'running (n.)' from **לױפֿן** 'run (v.)', **זינגען** 'singing (n.)' from **זינגען** 'sing (v.)'. Nominalizations of adjectives ending in **ע-** are neutral, hence **אױסערנעוויינטלעך** 'the extraordinary', from **אױסערנעוויינטלעך** 'extraordinary'.

4.1.4 Two genders in dialectal usage

Northeastern Yiddish has only two genders – masculine and feminine. Nouns appearing as neutral in the other dialects and the standard language are assigned either masculinity or femininity. Inanimate objects tend toward feminine (e.g. **די לאַנד** for standard **לאַנד** 'country'). Diminutives have the gender of their base nouns (e.g. **דער טישל** for standard **טיש** 'table', cf. base form **טיש**).

4.2 PLURALS

Plurals, like gender, must be learned with each noun. There are few inviolable rules, but overall patterns can account for the vast majority of nouns in the language. Most capricious are the nouns undergoing vowel change with or without the **ע-** pluralizing ending. A dictionary should be consulted for a noun's plural.

4.2.1 Plural ending **ן(ע)-**

Nouns ending in a consonant or stressed vowel usually pluralize by

suffixation of ך- (or ן- after ה, ג, a stressed vowel or diphthong, נק, נג, or consonant + ל → §2.2.9).

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH ן(ע)-

אַרמִי [arméy] 'army' → אַרמִיִּיען

אַײזן(באַן) 'train' → אַײזן(באַן)ען

בעט 'bed' → בעטן

גאַס 'street' → גאַסן

האָטעל 'hotel' → האָטעלן

מענטש 'person; good human being' → מענטשן

פּראָפּעסאָר [profésor] 'professor' → פּראָפּעסאָרן [profésórn]

שול 'traditional synagogue; school' → שולן

שותפֿות [shútfəs] 'partnership' → שותפֿותן

שעה [sho] 'hour' → שעהן [shóæn] (also spelled שעהען)

4.2.2 Plural ending ט-

The plural ending ט- is frequently pronounced somewhere between [s] and [z]. A number of categories of nouns take ט-.

4.2.2.1 Nouns ending in unstressed ן-

Nouns ending in unstressed ן- usually pluralize by suffixation of ט-. A number of nineteenth-century borrowings from German have plurals in ן-, especially in political terminology, e.g. מאַסע (די) 'mass' → מאַסען '(the) masses'. Some have alternate plurals in ט- and ן(ע)-. The ן(ע)- endings predominate in journalistic and parliamentary styles and usually denote a more abstract sense, e.g. פּראָגע 'question' pluralizes to פּראָגעס 'questions (in the everyday sense)' and פּראָגען 'questions (of major importance, e.g. to society)'. Cf. §15.8.

SAMPLES OF NOUNS ENDING IN UNSTRESSED ו- PLURALIZING WITH ט-

הענטשקע 'glove' → הענטשקעס

קאָפּע 'coffee' → קאָפּעס

קעשענע 'pocket' → קעשענעס

שאַטע 'rag' → שאַטעס

4.2.2.2 Internationalisms ending in an unstressed nonreduced vowel

Internationalisms ending in a vowel that is not stressed but that retains its full vowel colour usually pluralize by suffixation of ט-.

SAMPLES OF INTERNATIONALISMS ENDING IN AN UNSTRESSED

NONREDUCED VOWEL PLURALIZING WITH ט-

אויטאָ 'car' → אויטאָס

עגאָ 'ego' → עגאָס

ראַדיאָ 'radio' → ראַדיאָס

4.2.2.3 Family names

Family names pluralize by suffixation of ט- (or עט- after sibilants ז, שׂז, טש, ס, צ, or שׂש).

SAMPLES OF FAMILY NAMES PLURALIZING WITH ט(ע)-

גאָלדבערג 'Goldberg' → גאָלדבערגס די 'the Goldbergs'

האַדסאָן 'Hudson' → האַדסאָנס די 'the Hudsons'

פּלודערמאַכער 'Pludermacher' → פּלודערמאַכערס די 'the Pludermachers'

ראַבינאָוויטש 'Rabinowitz' → ראַבינאָוויטשעס די 'the Rabinowitzes'

ראַפּאָרט 'Rappaport' → ראַפּאָרטס די 'the Rappaports'

4.2.2.4 Nouns ending in ם- in an unstressed syllable

Nouns ending in ם- in an unstressed final syllable usually pluralize by

suffixation of -ט.

SAMPLES OF NOUNS ENDING IN ט- IN AN UNSTRESSED

FINAL SYLLABLE PLURALIZING WITH ט-

אָקוואַריום 'aquarium' → אָקוואַריוםס
 לחיים [ləkháyim] '(alcoholic) drink' → לחייםס
 שטורעם 'storm' → שטורעםס

4.2.2.5 Nouns ending in ן(ע)- in an unstressed final syllable

Nouns ending in ן- (or ען-) in an unstressed final syllable usually pluralize by suffixation of -ט.

SAMPLES OF NOUNS ENDING IN UNSTRESSED ן(ע)-

PLURALIZING WITH ט-

וואַלקן 'cloud' → וואַלקנס
 קוימענס 'chimney' → קוימענס
 קישנס 'pillow' → קישנס

4.2.2.6 Nonhuman nouns ending in ער-

Nonhuman nouns ending in ער- usually pluralize by suffixation of ט-.

SAMPLES OF NONHUMAN NOUNS ENDING IN

UNSTRESSED ער- PLURALIZING WITH ט-

זומערס 'summer' → זומערס
 טיגערס 'tiger' → טיגערס
 קלויסטערס 'church' → קלויסטערס

4.2.3 Plural ending עט-

The plural ending עט- is frequently pronounced between [əs] and [əz].

4.2.3.1 Slavonic component nouns ending in a consonant

Some nouns, mostly of Slavonic derivation, pluralize by suffixation of **עט**-. There are occasional concomitant vowel changes.

SAMPLES OF SLAVONIC COMPONENT NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH **עט**-

כּוּלִּיגָנָן [khuligán] 'ruffian; hooligan' → כּוּלִּיגָנֶעס [khuligánəs]

טשחאָק [tshvok] 'nail' → טשחעקעס [tshvékəs]

נודניק [núdnik] 'bore; pest; poor conversationalist' → נודניקעס [núdnikəs]

4.2.4 Semitic component plurals

Most Semitic component nouns are pluralized by **ים**- ([im] or [əm]) or **ות**- [əs]. Where suffixation of **ים**- or **ות**- results in a syllable being added, stress shifts to the new penultimate syllable (→ §2.3.2.1). There are frequent vowel changes in pluralization.

4.2.4.1 Semitic component plural in **ים**-

Semitic component nouns ending in a consonant are usually pluralized by suffixation of **ים**- (pronounced [im] or [əm]). A sizable minority of nouns ending in unstressed **ה**- or **ח**-, including virtually all semantically masculine agentives, also pluralize with **ים**-, dropping final **ה**-. A few non-Semitic component nouns regularly pluralize with **ים**-, e.g. דאָקטער '(medical) doctor' → דאָקטוירים [doktóyrim], נאַר 'fool' → נאַרענים [narónim], and פויער 'peasant' → פויערים [póyərím]. Pluralizing **ים**- used with nouns ending in **ער**- or **אָר**- (→ §4.1.1.3) has a sarcastic or pejorative effect, e.g. וואונדער 'miracle' → וואונדעריים [vundéyrim] 'not-so-impressive miracles', פּראָפּעסאָר 'professor' → פּראָפּעסוירים [profəsóyrim] 'not-so-impressive professors'. The normal plurals are וואונדערס (also וואונדערעס), and פּראָפּעסאָרן [profəsórñ].

SAMPLES OF SEMITIC COMPONENT NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH ים-

- גַּנְבִּי [gánəv] 'thief' → גַּנְבִּים [ganóvim / ganóvəm]
 חֵבֵר [khávər] 'friend' → חֵבְרִים [khavéyrim / khavéyrəm]
 שִׁכּוּר [shíkər] 'drunkard' → שִׁכּוּרִים [shikúrim / shikúrəm]
 שֶׁכֵּן [shókhn] 'neighbour' → שֶׁכְּנַיִם [shkhéynim / shkhéynəm]
 רַב [rov] 'rabbi' → רַבָּנִים [rabónim / rabónəm]
 שַׁבָּת [shábəs] 'Saturday; Sabbath' → שַׁבָּתִים [shabósim / shabósəm]
 שׂוֹטֵה [shóytə] 'fool' → שׂוֹטִים [shóytim / shóytəm]
 שׂוֹנֵא [sóynə] 'enemy' → שׂוֹנִים [sónim / sónəm]
 תַּלְמִיד [tálməd] 'student' → תַּלְמִידִים [talmídīm / talmídəm]

4.2.4.2 Semitic component plural in וֹת-

Semitic component nouns ending in unstressed ה- or א- usually pluralize by suffixation of וֹת-, dropping final ה-, and falling together phonetically with phonetic system עס-. A minority of nouns ending in a consonant also pluralize by suffixation of וֹת-.

SAMPLES OF SEMITIC COMPONENT NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH וֹת-

- דַּאֲגָה [dáygə] 'worry' → דַּאֲגוֹת [dáygəs]
 דּוּגְמָה [dúgmə] 'example' → דּוּגְמוֹת [dugmós] (var. דּוּגְמוֹת [dúgməs])
 חִלּוּם [khóləm] 'dream' → חִלּוּמוֹת [khalóyməs]
 חִתּוּנָה [khásənə] 'wedding' → חִתּוּנוֹת [khásənəs]
 חֲתִימָה [khsímə] 'signature' → חֲתִימוֹת [khsíməs]
 טַעְנָה [táyne] 'complaint; point (in discussion)' → טַעְנוֹת [táynes]
 טוֹבָה [tóyvə] 'favour' → טוֹבוֹת [tóyvəs]
 לָשׁוֹן [lóshn] 'language' → לָשׁוֹנוֹת [ləshóynəs]
 מְקוּרָה [mókər] 'source' → מְקוּרוֹת [məkóyrəs] (var. מְקוּרִים [məkóyrim])
 מִשְׁפָּחָה [mishpókə] 'family' → מִשְׁפָּחוֹת [mishpókəs]
 סְבוּרָה [svóra] 'supposition; possibility' → סְבוּרוֹת [svóras]

4.2.5 Plural ending in עך-

The plural ending in עך- ([əkh / akh]) is restricted to nouns ending in syllabic ל-. Where the noun is a diminutive, the composite pluralizing לעך- is obligatory (→ §§4.3.2, 4.3.3) but there are a number of non-diminutive nouns for which both עך- and ען- are acceptable, e.g. שליסל 'key' → שליסלעך or שליסלען.

SAMPLES OF NOUNS ENDING IN ל- PLURALIZING WITH עך-

- אייניקלעך 'grandchild' → אייניקל
 ברידערלעך '(little) brother (lovingly)' → ברידערל
 יינגלעך 'boy' → יינגל
 מיידלעך 'girl' → מיידל
 צעטלעך 'note' → צעטל
 צענטלעך 'tenth' → צענטל
 שוועסטערלעך '(little) sister (lovingly)' → שוועסטערל
 שפיצלעך 'prank; dirty trick' → שפיצל

4.2.6 Plural ending in ער-

Nouns that pluralize by suffixation of ער- do not fit into any morphological categories. They are frequently words that have been in the language since its inception. ער- may pluralize on its own, but it is frequently accompanied by vowel shifts.

4.2.6.1 ער- with no vowel change

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH ער-

- אייער 'egg' → איי
 בילדער 'picture' → בילד
 האַנטעכער 'towel' → האַנטעך
 הונדערטער 'hundred' → הונדערט

4.2.6.2 ער- with א → ע

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH ער- AND א → ע

לענדער 'country; land' → לאַנד

מענער 'man; husband' → מאַן

פלענער 'plan' → פּלאַן

פלעצער 'place' → פּלאַץ

פֿלעשער 'bottle' → פּלאַש

4.2.6.3 ער- with אָ → ע

Although not reflected in the orthography of the traditional system, Semitic component פנימ [pónəm] 'face', is part of the series. It pluralizes to פנימער [pénəmər].

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH ער- AND אָ → ע

נערטנער 'garden' → גאַרטן

לעכער 'hole' → לאַך

רעדער 'wheel' → ראָד

4.2.6.4 ער- with ו → י

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH ער- AND ו → י

ביכער 'book' → בוך

הינער 'hen; chicken' → הון

צינגער 'tongue' → צונג

4.2.6.5 ער- with וי → יי

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH ער- AND וי → יי

בייכער 'stomach' → בויך

הייזער 'house' → הויז

היילער 'mouth' → מויל

4.2.6.6 ער- with various vowels → ם

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH ער- AND VARIOUS SHIFTS TO ם

ביימער 'tree' → ביימער ם

ציין (var. ציין) 'tooth' → ציין ם

4.2.7 Plural by vowel change only

Like nouns pluralizing by suffixation of ער-, those pluralizing by vowel change alone tend to be ancient items in the language.

4.2.7.1 ם → ע

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH ם → ע

הענט 'hand' → הענט ם

ווענט 'wall' → ווענט ם

קעץ 'cat' → קעץ ם

קלעם 'blow (to body / ego / mood)' → קלעם ם

4.2.7.2 ם → ע

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH ם → ע

טעג 'day' → טעג ם

נעמען 'name' → נעמען ם

קעפ 'head' → קעפ ם

שטעט 'city' → שטעט ם

4.2.7.3 ו → י

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH ו → י

ברידער 'brother' → ברידער י

זון 'son' → זין י

פֵּיט 'foot' → פֵּיט

שׂוּךְ 'shoe' → שׂוּךְ

4.2.7.4 וי → יי

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING BY וי → יי

לויז 'louse' → לויז

מױז 'mouse' → מױז

4.2.8 Same form for singular and plural

A number of nouns have plurals identical with the singular form of the noun.

4.2.8.1 Human nouns ending in ער-

Human nouns in ער- usually have no separate plural form. Minority usage does pluralize by ט- for agentives denoting professions, e.g. שניידערס 'tailors' for שניידער, שרייבערס 'writers' for שרייבער. פֵּעטער 'uncle' exceptionally pluralizes by suffixation of ט-, hence פֵּעטערס.

SAMPLES OF HUMAN NOUNS ENDING IN ער- WITH IDENTICAL PLURALS

אַמעריקאַנער 'American' → אַמעריקאַנער

אַרבעטער 'worker' → אַרבעטער

דענעטאַריער 'vegetarian' → דענעטאַריער

טענצער 'dancer' → טענצער

לערער 'teacher' → לערער

ענגלענדער [éynglændər] 'Englishman' → ענגלענדער

קאַנאַדער 'Canadian' → קאַנאַדער

שזעסטער 'sister' → שזעסטער

שניידער 'tailor' → שניידער

שרייבער 'writer' → שרייבער

4.2.8.2 Various nouns with identical plurals

בייגל 'bagel'	→	בייגל
בריוח 'letter'	→	בריוח
פֿינגער 'finger'	→	פֿינגער
פֿיש 'fish'	→	פֿיש
פֿערד 'horse'	→	פֿערד
פֿריינד [fraynt] 'friend'	→	פֿריינד
שטערן 'star'	→	שטערן

4.3 DIMINUTIVES

There is a two-tier system comprising a first diminutive and a second diminutive. In its simplest form, the first diminutive denotes 'smallness' and the second diminutive 'more smallness' or 'tinyness'. Many nouns, however, usually for morphological reasons, have no more than one of the two. The diminutives may evoke emotions and attitudes instead of, or in addition to, size. Some diminutives have lost their diminutive sense and are used as base nouns which 'happen to be' morphologically diminutive. The major diminutives are of neutral gender. Many diminutives undergo the internal vowel shifts $\aleph/\aleph \rightarrow \text{ע}$; $\text{י} \rightarrow \text{י}$; $\text{וי} \rightarrow \text{וי}$, various $\rightarrow \text{וי}$. They are the same shifts applicable in pluralization (\rightarrow §§4.2.6.2 – 4.2.6.6).

4.3.1 Morphology of the first diminutive

The first diminutive is formed by suffixation of syllabic ל - (\rightarrow §2.2.8). Its plural is formed by further suffixation of עך - [əkh / akh], giving plural first diminutive suffix לעך - where ל , at the beginning of a syllable, is not syllabic.

SAMPLES OF DERIVATION OF THE FIRST DIMINUTIVE

- טיש (דער) 'table' → טישל (דאָס) 'little table', pl. טישלעך (די)
 קאץ (די) 'cat' → קעצל (דאָס) 'little cat; kitten', pl. קעצלעך (די)
 בוך (דאָס) 'book' → ביכל (דאָס) 'little book' pl. ביכלעך (די)

4.3.1.1 Nouns ending in ן-

Nouns ending in ן- attract דל- rather than ל, and pluralize by further suffixation of ך-, e.g. שטיין (דער) 'stone' → שטיינדל (דאָס) 'little stone; pebble', pl. שטיינדלעך (די).

4.3.1.2 Nouns ending in ל-

Nouns ending in ל- attract ל(ע)- rather than ל-, and pluralize by further suffixation of ך-, e.g. מויל (דאָס) 'mouth' → מילעכל (דאָס) (or מילכל) 'little mouth', pl. מילעכלעך (די) or מילכלעך (די).

4.3.1.3 Semitic component plurals

Semitic component plurals in ם- are diminutivized by suffixation of ך-, occasionally with accompanying semantic nuances, e.g. חברים [khavéyrim] 'friends' → חברימלעך [khavéyrimlakh] 'shady friends; cronies' (cf. sg. חבר (דער) [khávar] 'friend'); ענינים [inyónim] 'matters' → ענינימלעך [inyónimlakh] 'little matters' (cf. sg. ענין (דער) [ínyən] 'matter').

4.3.1.4 Nouns with no first diminutive

Nouns ending in syllabic ל- (e.g. לעפל (דער) 'spoon'), and nouns stressed two or more syllables from the last (e.g. אָנשיקעניש (די) [ónshikənish] 'nuisance; pain in the neck') cannot attract the first diminutive. Nouns ending in a vowel (e.g. כּמאַרע (די) 'threatening cloud') are incapable of attracting the first diminutive, but personal names occasionally accept it (→ §4.3.7).

4.3.2 Morphology of the second diminutive

The second diminutive is formed by suffixation of עלע- [ələ, alə]. Its plural is formed by further suffixation of ך-. The resulting sequence עלעך- is pronounced [alakh], [aləkh] or [ələkh] (→ §2.1.2.3).

SAMPLES OF THE SECOND DIMINUTIVE

טיש (דער) 'table' → טישעלע (דאָס) 'tiny table', pl. טישעלעך (די)

קאץ (די) 'cat' → קעצעלע (דאָס) 'little kitten', pl. קעצעלעך (די)

בוך (דאָס) 'book' → ביכעלע (דאָס) 'pamphlet', pl. ביכעלעך (די)

4.3.2.1 Nouns ending in ל-

Nouns ending in ל- attract the second diminutive by means of the ל assuming the added role of the ל of second diminutive suffix עלע-, with the two required וs added on either side, e.g. לעפֿל (דער) 'spoon' → לעפֿעלע (דאָס), pl. לעפֿעלעך (די).

4.3.2.2 Nouns ending in an unstressed vowel

Nouns ending in an unstressed vowel (i.e. ו-, ה, or א), attract the second diminutive by means of the unstressed vowel assuming the added role of the first ו of second diminutive suffix עלע-, with the remaining sequence על- suffixed thereafter, e.g. פֿראַגע (די) 'question' → פֿראַגעלע (דאָס) 'little question', pl. פֿראַגעלעך (די); גמרא [gəməra] 'Gemora / Gemara (major part of the Talmud; select reading therefrom; cf. §§7.3.2.1, 15.17.15)' → גמראלע (דאָס) [gəməralə] 'brief reading / lesson of the Talmud', pl. גמראלעך (די) [gəməralakh].

4.3.2.3 Nouns with no second diminutive

Nouns ending in a consonant with stress on a syllable other than the last (e.g. פלימעניק (דער) [pliménik] 'nephew') cannot attract the second diminutive.

Those ending in syllabic ל- are exempted from the restriction, hence (דער) פֿידל 'fiddle' → פֿידעלע (דאָס) 'little fiddle (endearing)'. Nouns ending in syllabic ן- rarely accept the second diminutive. When they do, the ן- is dropped, e.g. שטעקן (דער) 'stick' → שטעקעלע (דאָס) [shtékaɫə] 'little stick'.

4.3.3 Suffix קע- with inanimate nouns

Suffix קע- used with inanimate nouns does not usually form a diminutive noun from a base noun. It is rather used to coin nouns denoting objects that happen to be small, e.g. אַגראַפֿעקע [agráfakə] 'safety pin', קאַסטעטקע [kasétkə] 'cassette tape'. Where base and derived forms do exist, the derived קע- form usually signifies an object distinct from its base noun, e.g. מאַשיןקע (די) (also שרייבמאַשיןקע) 'typewriter' from מאַשין 'machine'. It occasionally invokes a humorous mood, e.g. מאַכאַרַיקע (די) [makharáykə] 'contraption; gizmo'. Unlike other diminutives, those in קע- are feminine. Cf. §4.3.7.1 on קע- with proper names.

4.3.4 Diminutives as new base nouns

While many diminutives represent inflections of their base nouns denoting smallness (first diminutive) or tinytness (second diminutive), many diminutives of both categories have acquired lives of their own by assuming special connotations, e.g. הויז (דאָס) 'house' from הויז (דאָס) 'house', פֿינגערל (דאָס) 'ring' from פֿינגער (דער) 'finger', חנדל (דאָס) [kheyndl] 'flirtatious / coquettish gesture' from חן [kheyn] 'grace; beauty'. In a number of instances, the notion of size is retained as a secondary factor in tandem with the diminutive itself becoming the everyday name for a thing.

e.g. *קעמל* (דער) 'comb', *קעמעלע* (דאָס) 'pocket comb', from *קאָם* (דער) which is now so rare that its use would imply a rather huge comb. In a number of instances, the base form of a noun and a diminutive thereof denote related but distinct objects, e.g. *זיינער* (דער) 'clock (in general); wall clock; pocket watch' vs. *זיינערל* (דאָס) 'wristwatch'.

4.3.5 The second diminutive as sentimentality marker

The second diminutive may mark warmth, affection and sentimentality with nonhuman nouns. In many instances, the first diminutive marks physical reduction in size while the second diminutive invokes affection. For some speakers, the pronunciation of the first *ע* in singular *עלע-* and both *ע*s in plural ending *עלעך-* increasingly approach [a] in direct proportion to increasing sentimentality, hence the frequent sentimental realizations [-alə] and [alakh] (→ §§ 2.1.2.2 – 2.1.2.3).

SAMPLES OF THE SECOND DIMINUTIVE AS SENTIMENTALITY MARKER

הונט (דער) 'dog' → *הינטל* (דאָס) → *הינטעלע* (דאָס)
לאָמפ (דער) 'lamp' → *לעמפל* (דאָס) → *לעמפעלע* (דאָס)
קאָפּ (דער) 'head' → *קעפל* (דאָס) → *קעפעלע* (דאָס)

4.3.6 The first diminutive as pejorative

The first diminutive applied to masculine agentives, especially those denoting professions, is decidedly pejorative. It generally means that the person is either incompetent at his work, not a nice person, or both.

SAMPLES OF THE FIRST DIMINUTIVE AS PEJORATIVE

אָדוואָקאַט (דער) 'lawyer' → *אָדוואָקאַטל* (דאָס) 'small time lawyer'
לערער (דער) 'teacher' → *לערערל* (דאָס) 'bad teacher'

מאַלער (דער) 'artist' → מאַלערל (דאָס) 'very minor artist'

שרײַבער (דער) 'writer' → שרײַבערל (דאָס) 'bad writer; graphomaniac'

4.3.7 Diminutives as love markers

The first, and, especially, the second diminutive can be applied to traditional Jewish proper forenames to denote warmth, affection and love. While most prolific for children's names, diminutive forenames are often retained through life. On the whole, they follow the morphological patterns of diminutives generally (→ §§4.3.2 – 4.3.3.4). Note, however, that $(ע)כּל$ - (→ §4.3.1.2) does not occur with proper names, and that names ending in a vowel may occasionally accept the first diminutive (unlike common nouns which cannot → §4.3.1.4).

SAMPLES OF DIMINUTIVES AS LOVE MARKERS

אַבֿרהאַם [avróm] (m.) → אַבֿרהאַמל [avrém] → אַבֿרהאַמעלע [avrémaɪə]

חיה [xáyə] (f.) → חיהלע [xáyəɪə]

לאה [léyə] (f.) → לאהלע [léyəɪə]

משה [móyshə] (m.) → משהל [móysh] → משהלע [móyshaɪə]

סענדער [sénder] (m.) → סענדערל [sénder]

שמואל [shmúal] (m.) → שמועלע [shmúalə]

שרה [sóra] (f.) → שרהל [sórl] → שרהלע [sóraɪə]

4.3.7.1 Suffix $קע$ - as love marker

As an alternative to the usual $ל$ - and $עלע$ - diminutivizing suffixes, love may be shown by $קע$ - suffixed to proper forenames. The $קע$ - forms occur most extensively in Northeastern Yiddish. For increased endearment, $לע$ - may follow upon $קע$ -, subject to the usual morphological constraints (→ §§4.3.1.4,

4.3.2.4, 4.3.7). The compounded suffix **קעלע-** is usually restricted to children's names and use as a term of endearment in intimate relationships.

SAMPLES OF SUFFIXES **קע-** AND **קעלע-** AS LOVE MARKERS

אַבֿרהם [avróm] (m.) → אַבֿרהמקע [avrémkə] → אַבֿרהמקעלע [avrémkalə]

חיה [kháyə] (f.) → חיהקע [kháykə] → חיהקעלע [kháykalə]

לאה [léyə] (f.) → לאהקע [léykə] → לאהקעלע [léykalə]

משה [móyshə] (m.) → משהקע [móyshkə] → משהלע [móyshkalə]

טענדער [séndər] (m.) → טענדערקע [séndərkə]

שמואל [shmúə] (m.) → שמואלקע [shmúlkə] → שמואלקעלע [shmúlkalə]

סרה [sórə] (f.) → סרהקע [sórkə] → סרהקעלע [sórkalə]

4.3.7.2 Suffixes **יק-** and **טשיק-** as love markers

יק- is most frequent with masculine forenames ending in **ל-**. The masculine forename **איציק** has developed as a popular alternate to the more formal **יצחק** [yítshkɔk], which corresponds with the Biblical 'Isaac'. Its diminutive is **איציקל**. Occasionally, **צע-** (or **טשע-**) may be encountered as a feminine counterpart to **יק-**, e.g. **חנצע** [khánt्सə] or **חנטשע** [khántshə] from **חנה** [khánə]. A variant love marker is **טשיק-**, which may replace the last syllable of the stem of the name, e.g. **אליהו** [eylióhu] → **עלטשיק** [éltshik] (m.), with spelling according to the phonetic system for ease of reading. For increased endearment, **ל-** may follow upon **יק-** or **טשיק-**. The compounded suffixes **יקל-** and **טשיקל-** are usually restricted to children's names and to use as terms of endearment in intimate relationships. **יק-** or **טשיק-** do not generally trigger internal vowel shifts.

SAMPLES OF SUFFIX **יק-** AND **טשיק-** AS LOVE MARKERS

ישראל [yisró(ə)] (m.) → ישראליק [(yi)srólik] → ישראליקל [(yi)srólikl]

שמואל [shmúə] (m.) → שמואליק [shmúlik] → שמואליקל [shmúlikl]

אַבֿרהם [avróm] (m.) → אַבֿרהמטשיק [avrómtshik]

4.4 COMPOUND NOUNS

A compound noun comprises a noun joined together with another word (an adjective, verb stem, or another noun) to function as a single new noun. The first member of the compound (which needn't be a noun) has primary stress. Stress in the second (which must be a noun) is lowered in deference to the compound (→ §§2.3.1.1, 2.3.1.4). Gender and plural are determined by the second. There is considerable variation in the written language as to whether compound nouns are written as one word, as two, or hyphenated. Well established and familiar compounds are written as one word (except where one of the two is spelled according to the traditional system). The dynamic tendency that is developing is implicitly linked with pronunciation. Where a well established compound is pronounced as one word, with no internal phonetic pause, it is written as one word. Less well known compounds, and those created at will, are generally written as two words or hyphenated. The longer the compound, the stronger the inclination to write it as two words. There is a clear (if slow-moving) trend away from hyphenation. In the samples that follow, internal phonetic pause is marked by |.

SAMPLES OF COMPOUND NOUNS

auto mechanic [o(y)tomobíl | məkhànikər] (דער) אויטאָמאָביל מעכאַניקער

university student [universitét | studènt] (דער) אוניווערסיטעט סטודענט

homework [héymarbət] (די) היימאַרבעט

traditional yeshiva student [yəshíʋəbàkħər] (דער) ישיבֿה־בַּחור

teacher training course [lérər | kùrs] (דער) לערער־קורס

great-grandfather [éitərzeydə] (דער) עלטער־זידע

kindergarten [kíndərgortn] (דער) קינדער־גאַרטן

pickpocket [késhənəgànev] (דער) קעשענע־גנבֿ

registration form [registrátsyə | blànk] (דער) רעגיסטראַציע בלאַנק

title page [shárblat] (דער) שער־בלאַט

4.4.1 Compounding ך

Many compounds comprising two nouns have a ך (often pronounced between [s] and [z]) suffixed to the first to mark compounding and ease pronunciation. The ך is not a productive compound-forming suffix anymore. It is usually retained where it exists in stock compounds, but some traditional ך compounds have developed alternate forms without it. Compounding ך is frequent in instances where the first member is אַרבעט 'work', לעבן [lɛbn] 'life', פֿאָלק 'people; folk; nation' or a noun ending in suffix ונג-. The hyphen is usually used in writing, except where the compound is pronounced as a single word, e.g. לאַנדסמאַן [lántsmán] 'compatriot' (lit. 'land man'). Compounding ך is encountered extensively in journalistic prose, and is especially prominent in political and scientific terminology of the twentieth century.

SAMPLES OF COMPOUNDING ך

- development opportunities אַנטוויקלונגס־מעגלעכקייטן (די)
 plan of action (lit. 'work plan') אַרבעטס־פּלאַן (דער)
 ministry of education דערציאונגס־מיניסטעריום (דער)
 question of life or death (lit. 'life question') לעבנס־פּראָגע (די)
 folksong פֿאָלקסליד (דאָס)
 folktale [fóiks | màysə] פֿאָלקס־מעשה (די)

4.4.2 Compounding ן

Many compounds comprising two nouns have a ן suffixed to the first as a compounding marker. It is, generally speaking, no longer productive but is retained where it exists. It is most consistently used in names of trees.

SAMPLES OF COMPOUNDING ן

- pear tree באַרנבוים

weekly newspaper חַמְלֵנְבֿלאַט

orange juice מאַראַנצן-זאַַמט

fig tree פֿיגנבויים

magician (lit. 'maker of tricks') קונצנמאַלער (דער)

4.4.3 The construct state in the Semitic component

Compound nouns in European languages comprise describer (attribute) plus described (head) as evident in the Yiddish compounds cited. Semitic languages, on the other hand, have the construct state with reverse order: described (head) followed by describer (attribute), corresponding with the use of 'of' in European languages. Yiddish preserves a large number of Hebrew and Aramaic constructs as stock phrases. Stress is usually on the second element. Most constructs occur within the Semitic component but there are a few exceptions, e.g. סוף-חאַך (דער) [sɔvʋókʰ] 'weekend'. Constructs are hyphenated or written separately.

SAMPLES OF CONSTRUCTS

waste of (valuable) time [bitl zmán] ביטול-זמן (דער)

traditional rabbinical court [bézdn] בית-דין (דער)

rabbinical court proceeding / trial [din tóyrə] דין-תורה (דער/די)

spinal cord [khut ashédra] חוט-השדרה (דער)

a taste of paradise (said esp. of good food) [tam ganéydn] טעם נן-עדן

eclipse of the sun [likə khámə] ליקוי-חמה (די)

place of rest; refuge [mòkəm mənúkhə] מקום-מנוחה (דער)

devotion, selflessness, self-sacrifice [məsirəs néfəsh] מסירת-נפש (דער/דאָס)

head of a traditional Talmudic academy [rosh yəshívbə] ראש-ישיבה (דער)

wild idea; temporary insanity [ruəkh shtúts] רוח-שטות (דער)

tuition fee [skhar líməd] שכר-לימוד (דער)

4.4.3.1 Productive construct former בעל

בעל [bal] forms a large number of Semitic component constructs within Yiddish. Its plural form is בעלי [bále]. A number of בעל nouns are however pluralized solely by pluralization of the second element (by Semitic component pluralizing suffixes ים- [əm/im] and ות- [əs] and occasionally by phonetic system ס-). בעל is in effect a masculine agentive former, but a few בעל constructions have evolved feminine equivalents. Its force derives from the older sense of 'master of'. It joins naturally only with Semitic component nouns. Constructs formed with בעל may be hyphenated or written separately. Note that the phonetic system is used for באַלעבאָס [baləbós] 'boss; married man; master of the household', and its plural באַלעבאָטיים [baləbátim]. The plural using the traditional system (בעלי-בתים), may also be encountered. Where the singular בעל-הבית is encountered the reference is usually to the learned [baal habáyis], as in Ashkenazic Hebrew, referring strictly to 'master of the household' in traditional contexts. בעל-מצוה [balmítsvə] is a traditional alternate to בר-מצוה [barmítsvə] 'Bar Mitzvah'.

SAMPLES OF CONSTRUCT AGENTIVES WITH בעל

- debtor [balkhóyv] בעל חוב (pl. בעלי חובות [baləkhóyvəs])
 dreamer [balkhalóyməs] בעל חלומות (pl. בעלי חלומות [baləkhhalóyməs])
 master; artisan [balməlóakhəs] בעל מלאכה (pl. בעל מלאכות [balməlóakhəs])
 coachman; simple man [balagóle] בעל עגלה (pl. בעל עגלות)
 man who earns a good living [balparnósə] בעל פרנסה (pl. בעלי פרנסה)
 reader of the Torah in synagogue [balkóyrə] בעל קורא (pl. בעל קוראס)
 kindhearted, merciful person [balrákhmim] בעל רחמים (pl. בעלי רחמים)
 passionate man [baltáyvə(nik)] בעל תאחה(ניק) (pl. בעל תאחה(ניקע)ס)
 passionate woman [baltáyvənitsə] בעל תאחהניצע (pl. בעל תאחהניצעס)
 practical person [baltákhíəs] בעל תכלית (pl. בעלי תכלית [balətákhíəs])
 penitent; returnee to Judaism [baltshúvə] בעל תשובה (pl. בעלי תשובה)

4.4.4 Compound names

Most traditional forenames are double-barrelled. It is important to bear in mind that the second of these is not a 'middle name' or 'middle initial'. The two names are used together as one. Some traditional compound forenames, especially male names deriving from names of animals, comprise the Hebrew and Yiddish for the 'same' name, e.g. דױבֿ-בער [dovbér]. דױבֿ is the Hebrew for Yiddish בער 'bear'. Analogously, אַרײַה-ליב [aryəléyb], lit. 'lion lion', צװײ-הירש [tsvinírsh], lit. 'deer deer' and זאַם-חאַלף [ze(y)vʋólf], lit. 'wolf wolf'. The second of the two compounded names is stressed. The individuals so known formally would be known to their friends and relatives by the diminutives of the second (Yiddish) name alone – ליבּל (or בערקע), בערל (or ליבּקע), חעללחל (or חעלפֿקע) and הערשל (or הירשקע). Cf. §§5.8.1, 5.14.2, 5.15.1.2 on traditional names.

SAMPLES OF MALE COMPOUND NAMES

Arn-Véivl אהרן-חעלחל

Hirshə-Dóvid הירשע-דוד

Yoshə-Bér יאַשע-בער

Moyshə-Kálmən משה-קלמן

Shloymə-Zálmən שלמה-זלמן

SAMPLES OF FEMALE COMPOUND NAMES

Blumə-Díshə בלומע-דישע

Khayə-Sóra חיה-שרה

Mashə-Dvóyrə מאַשע-דבורה

Simə-Léyə סימע-לאה

5 NOUN PHRASES

5.0 OVERVIEW

A noun phrase is a noun alone or with its articles and/or adjectives. Noun phrases occur in three cases (nominative, accusative and dative) determined by the noun phrase's relation to the verb phrase. It is the articles and adjectives within the noun phrase that regularly inflect for case and for gender. With a few easily defined exceptions, Yiddish nouns themselves do not inflect.

5.1 CASE

Case is the situation of the noun phrase relative to the verb phrase. Because the singular noun itself does not usually inflect, its case is evident from its articles and adjectives, which do. While case exists abstractly across the board, its morphological effects are evident only in the singular. In the plural, the definite article is always ך, and the adjective ending always ך-, irrespective of case or gender.

5.1.1 Nominative (subject)

Nominative is the situation of the noun phrase as subject of a sentence. The noun phrase in nominative is not dominated by any verb phrase. It simply

exists, or itself dominates a verb phrase.

SAMPLES OF NOUN PHRASES IN NOMINATIVE

The fellow is here דער בחור [אזאכאס] איז דאָ

The woman is reading די פֿרוי לייענט

The house is pretty דאָס הויז איז שיין

5.1.2 Accusative (verbal object)

Accusative is the situation of the noun phrase as the direct object of a verb.

SAMPLES OF NOUN PHRASES IN ACCUSATIVE

I see the fellow איך זע דעם בחור

I'm photographing the woman איך פֿאָטאָגראַפֿיר די פֿרוי

I'm repairing the house איך פֿאַרריכט דאָס הויז

5.1.3 Dative (prepositional object)

Dative is the situation of the noun phrase as the direct object of any preposition (and hence, frequently, the indirect object of a verb).

SAMPLES OF NOUN PHRASES IN DATIVE

I'm speaking to the fellow איך רעד מיט דעם בחור

I'm running from the girl איך לויף פֿון דער מיידל

I'm looking at the house איך קוק אויף [אז] דעם הויז

5.1.3.1 Dative with understood preposition

A number of verbs, most frequently with a human object, impose dative upon their noun phrase, although no preposition appears. These are instances of the understood preposition. There is no preposition to mediate between verb phrase and noun phrase, but the action of the verb nevertheless does not

'strike' its object directly or physically. The most frequent prepositions left out and understood are **ל** 'to' and **לְפָנָיו** 'for'. Depending on its use in a sentence, one and the same verb may impose accusative or dative (with understood preposition). Cf. e.g. accusative **אֵין קאַליפּאָרניע** 'I'm sending her to California' vs. dative **אַיך אַיר אַ בריח** 'I'm sending her a letter' (understood preposition **ל**); accusative **געפֿינ מיך** 'Find me!' vs. dative **אַ צימער געפֿינ מיך** 'Find me a room' (understood preposition **לְפָנָיו**). On accusative and dative pronouns → §§ 6.1.2 – 6.1.3.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF DATIVE WITH UNDERSTOOD PREPOSITION

I'm writing (to) the fellow **אַיך שרייב דעם בחור**
 I'll tell the woman what I know **אַיך וועל זאָגן דער פֿרוי וואָס איך הייס**

VERBS THAT MAY IMPOSE DATIVE WITHOUT A PREPOSITION

believe (somebody) **גלייבן** [gléybm]

give (something to somebody) **געבן** [gébmb]

tell; recount (to somebody) **דערציילן**

show (to somebody) **חזון**

say; tell **זאָגן**

telephone **טעלעפֿאָנירן**

hint; allude **חזון** [məráməz] זין

answer; reply (to somebody) **ענטפֿערן**

send (to somebody) **שיקן**

write (to somebody) **שרייבן** [shráybm]

5.1.3.2 לערנען and פֿרעגן

פֿרעגן 'ask (a question)' and **לערנען** 'teach' (→ §7.3.2.1) may take accusative, e.g. **פֿרעג זי** 'Ask her (familiar)!' and **לערנט זי** 'Teach her (formal)!'. Both may be replaced by alternate forms with prepositions (that

naturally impose dative) – פֿרעגן מיט [ba] 'ask (of)' and לערנען 'teach', e.g. פֿרעגן בײַ אירן [ba] 'Ask (familiar) her!' and לערנט מיט אירן 'Teach (formal) her!'.

5.2 INDEFINITE ARTICLES

The indefinite article, 'a(n)', which precedes the noun, is always singular. It is אַ with nouns beginning with a consonant, אַן with nouns beginning with a vowel, hence פֿראַגע אַ 'a question' vs. אַן ענטפֿער 'an answer'. The indefinite article does not inflect for case or gender.

5.3 SINGULAR DEFINITE ARTICLES

The singular definite article inflects for the gender (→ §4.1) and case (→ §5.1) of its noun.

5.3.1 Singular definite articles in nominative

The singular definite article 'the' has the following forms in nominative.

masculine:	דער
feminine:	די
neutral:	דאָס

SAMPLES OF SINGULAR DEFINITE ARTICLES IN NOMINATIVE

The student (m.) is here דער סטודענט איז דאָ

The student (f.) is here די סטודענטקע [studéntkə] איז דאָ

The house is pretty דאָס הויז איז שיין

5.3.2 Singular definite articles in accusative:

only masculine inflects

The masculine singular definite article inflects in accusative. Feminine and neutral are identical with their nominative forms.

masculine: דער → דעם

feminine: די

neutral: דאָס

SAMPLES OF SINGULAR DEFINITE ARTICLES IN ACCUSATIVE

I see the student (m.) איך זע דעם סטודענט

I see the student (f.) איך זע די סטודענטקע

I see the house איך זע דאָס הויז

5.3.3 Singular definite articles in dative:

all three inflect

masculine: דער → דעם

feminine: די → דער

neutral: דאָס → דעם

SAMPLES OF SINGULAR DEFINITE ARTICLES IN DATIVE

I'm looking at the student (m.) איך קוק אויף [af] דעם סטודענט

I'm looking at the student (f.) איך קוק אויף דער סטודענטקע

I'm looking at the house איך קוק אויף דעם הויז

5.3.3.1 Contractions of prepositions with דעם

דעם, the masculine and neutral definite article in dative, contracts with a number of prepositions to form a single word. These contracted forms are acceptable in all styles, including the most formal.

אויף דעם [avdem] → אויפֿן [afn] 'on / to the'

אונטער דעם → אונטערן 'under the'

איבער דעם → איבערן 'over the'

אין דעם → אינעם 'in the'

אָן דעם → אָנעם 'without the'

ביי דעם [badem] → ביים [bam] 'at the' (→ §15.1)

ביז דעם → ביזן (N.E. var. ביזל) 'until the'

דורך דעם [du(r)kh] → דורכֿן [du(r)khn] 'through the'

לויט דעם → לויטן 'according to the'

מיט דעם → מיטן 'with the'

נאָך דעם [noghdem] → נאָכֿן 'after the'

פֿאַר דעם → פֿאַרן 'before / for the'

פֿון דעם → פֿונעם 'from / of the'

צוליב דעם → צוליבן [tsulíbm] 'because of the'

צו דעם → צום 'to the'

5.3.3.2 Prepositions without definite articles

The masculine and neutral definite articles may be omitted with the prepositions אין 'in; to', פֿון 'from' and לעבן [lébm] 'near', if no adjective intervenes between the preposition and the noun that is its object. The feminine definite article is usually retained, e.g. דער סטאַנציע [lébm]

'near the station' but it too may be omitted with גאָס (די) 'street' and (די) שטאָט 'city'.

SAMPLES OF אַין, פֿון AND לעבן WITHOUT DEFINITE ARTICLES

Let's meet in the building (= [binyan] דער בנין) אין בנין זיך טרעפֿן

It's not far from the house (= דאָס הויז) פֿון הויז ניט חייט

It's wet in the street (= די גאָס) אין גאָס איז נאַט

5.4 PLURAL DEFINITE ARTICLES

The plural definite article is always די.

SAMPLES OF PLURAL DEFINITE ARTICLES

I see the students (m.) איך זע די סטודענטן

The students (f.) are here די סטודענטקעס זינען דאָ

I'm looking at the houses איך קוק אויף די הייזער

5.5 SINGULAR ADJECTIVES

Singular adjectives inflect for the case and gender of the noun they modify. They are unaffected by articles, except for the neutral indefinite which loses its inflection when used with an indefinite article in nominative and accusative. It optionally loses its inflection in dative.

5.5.1 Singular adjectives in nominative

Endings are װ- in masculine and ן- in feminine and neutral definite. There is no ending in neutral indefinite. Model adjective is גוט 'good'. Definite and

indefinite articles are supplied to illustrate agreement.

masculine definite: דער גוטער

masculine indefinite: א גוטער

feminine definite: די גוטע

feminine indefinite: א גוטע

neutral definite: דאס גוטע

neutral indefinite: א גוט

SAMPLES OF SINGULAR ADJECTIVES IN NOMINATIVE

masculine

The good student (m.) is here דער גוטער סטודענט איז דא

A good student (m.) is here א גוטער סטודענט איז דא

feminine

The good student (f.) is here די גוטע סטודענטקע איז דא

A good student (f.) is here א גוטע סטודענטקע איז דא

neutral

The good house is pretty דאס גוטע הויז איז שיין

A good house is pretty א גוט הויז איז שיין

5.5.2 Singular adjectives in accusative:

only masculine inflects

The masculine ending, -ער, inflects to ך-. Feminine and neutral remain uninflected. Model adjective is גוט 'good'. Definite and indefinite articles are supplied to illustrate agreement.

masculine definite: דער גוטער → דעם גוטן

masculine indefinite: א גוטער → א גוטן

feminine definite: די גוטע

feminine indefinite: א גוטע

neutral definite: דאָס גוטע

neutral indefinite: א גוט

SAMPLES OF SINGULAR ADJECTIVES IN ACCUSATIVE masculine

I see the good student (m.) איך זע דעם גוטן סטודענט

I see a good student (m.) איך זע א גוטן סטודענט

feminine

I see the good student (f.) איך זע די גוטע סטודענטקע

I see a good student (f.) איך זע א גוטע סטודענטקע

neutral

I see the good house איך זע דאָס גוטע הויז

I see a good house איך זע א גוט הויז

5.5.3 Singular adjectives in dative:

all three inflect

All three genders inflect, but inflection is optional for the neutral indefinite. Model adjective is גוט 'good'. Definite and indefinite articles are supplied to illustrate agreement.

masculine definite: דער גוטער → דעם גוטן

masculine indefinite: א גוטער → א גוטן

feminine definite:	<u>די</u> גוטע → דער גוטער
feminine indefinite:	<u>אַ</u> גוטע → אַ גוטער
neutral definite:	<u>דאָס</u> גוטע → דעם גוטן
neutral indefinite:	<u>אַ</u> גוט → (אַ גוטן)

SAMPLES OF SINGULAR ADJECTIVES IN DATIVE
masculine

I'm looking at the good student (m.) איך קוק אויף [af] דעם גוטן סטודענט

I'm looking at a good student (m.) איך קוק אויף אַ גוטן סטודענט

feminine

I'm looking at the good student (f.) איך קוק אויף דער גוטער סטודענטקע

I'm looking at a good student (f.) איך קוק אויף אַ גוטער סטודענטקע

neutral

I'm looking at the good house איך קוק אויף דעם גוטן הויז

I'm looking at a good house איך קוק אויף אַ גוטן הויז

5.5.4 Variants of inflected adjective ending ן-

The masculine and neutral adjective ending ן- has several variants, depending on how the adjective stem ends. Following ה or a stressed vowel or diphthong, it is -ען (e.g. חאַרעם 'warm' → חאַרעמען, בלוי 'blue' → בלויען). Following נ it is -עם (e.g. שיין 'beautiful' → שיינעם). The adjective נײַ 'new' anomalously takes -עם, hence נײַעם. Note that ן- is retained in inflected adjective endings following -נג and -נק. Cf. §2.2.9.

5.5.5 Inflected adjectives in letter formulas

The three alternative salutations are inflecting adjectives. They are טײַערער

(lit. 'dear') and ליבער (lit. 'beloved') for friendly letters, and חשובער [khóshəvər] (lit. 'esteemed; respected') for more formal letters. The most common is טייערער. The -ער ending is used for masculine, the -ע ending for feminine and plural. Preposition מיט 'with' usually launches the closing greeting, e.g. פֿרײַנדשאַפֿט מיט 'with friendship'. Any adjectives in the closing greeting inflect as usual, e.g. מיט פֿרײַנדלעכע גרוסן 'with kind (lit. 'friendly') regards', and its singular counterpart מיט פֿרײַנדלעכן גרוס. Possessive pronouns (→ §6.2.1.1) are used for signing off – דיין 'Your (familiar)' and אייער 'your (formal)'. On dating letters → §13.3.4.

SAMPLES OF ADJECTIVAL SALUTATIONS

Dear Debbie טייערע דעבי

Dear Alex טייערער אלעקס

Dear Colleagues טייערע קאָלעגן

Dear Editor חשובער רעדאַקטאָר

5.6 PLURAL ADJECTIVES

The plural adjective ending is -ע in all cases and genders.

SAMPLES OF PLURAL ADJECTIVES

I'm looking at the good students (m.) איך קוק אויף די גוטע סטודענטן

The good students (f.) are here די גוטע סטודענטקעס זיינען דאָ

I see the good houses איך זע די גוטע הייזער

5.7 PREDICATE ADJECTIVES

Predicate adjectives describe their noun from a greater distance than the

more frequently used attributive adjectives. They follow **איז** 'is' and **זײַנען** 'are' or other verbs of being (e.g. **בלײַבן** 'remain', **שטיין** 'stand'). They occur only in nominative.

5.7.1 Singular predicate adjectives without an article

Singular predicate adjectives without an article are uninflected. The adjective stem appears on its own. Whether the noun has a definite or indefinite article does not affect the predicate adjective. The construction may be used to make a general statement.

SAMPLES OF THE PREDICATE ADJECTIVE WITHOUT AN ARTICLE

- The table is white **דער טיש איז װײַס**
 The story is long **די מעשה איז לאַנג [máysə]**
 The house is new **דאָס הויז איז נײַ**
 A forest is beautiful (= Forests are beautiful) **אַ װאַלד איז שײַן**

5.7.2 Singular predicate adjectives with indefinite article

Predicate adjectives with the indefinite article agree with their nouns as adjectives generally do (→ §5.5) except for the neutral indefinite which attracts suffix **ט**-. They usually modify nouns that themselves have a definite article. Repetition of that definite article with the predicate adjective would endow the construction with comparative force (→ §5.10.2). Model adjective is **גוט** 'good'. Indefinite articles are supplied.

masculine:	אַ גוטער
feminine:	אַ גוטע
neutral:	אַ גוטס

SAMPLES OF PREDICATE ADJECTIVES WITH INDEFINITE ARTICLE

The table is white (/ a white one) דער טיש איז אַ װײַסער

The story is long (/ a long one) די מעשה איז אַ לאַנגע

The house is good (/ a good one) דאָס הויז איז אַ גוטע

5.7.3 Plural predicate adjectives

Plural predicate adjectives may be uninflected. Alternatively, they may have the plural װ- ending which has the force of English 'ones' used to avoid repeating a noun. Plural predicate adjectives tend to have demonstrative force and the definite article preceding their nouns is often best translated 'these' (→ §6.3).

SAMPLES OF PLURAL PREDICATE ADJECTIVES

masculine

The tables are white די טישן זײַנען װײַס

The tables are white ones די טישן זײַנען װײַסע

feminine

The stories are long די מעשיות [máysəs] זײַנען לאַנג

The stories are long ones די מעשיות [máysəs] זײַנען לאַנגע

neutral

The houses are new די הײַזער זײַנען נײַ

The houses are new ones די הײַזער זײַנען נײַע

5.8 ADJECTIVES FOLLOWING THE NOUN

Adjectives may follow the noun with an article intervening (resulting in repetition of the article). They inflect as do normal attributive adjectives (→ §5.5). The construction is particularly prominent in poetry, folktales and

certain narrative styles.

SAMPLES OF USE OF ADJECTIVES FOLLOWING THE NOUN

An old tree stood over here אַ בױם אָן אַלטער איז דאָ געשטאַנען

I saw the old tree איך האָב געזען דעם בױם דעם אַלטן

5.8.1 Adjectives following the noun as proper names

In East European villages, an adjective with definite article describing a person, with definite article, following the name, was on occasion used as a name by which an individual was known, e.g. יאָסל דער רױטער 'Yosl the redhead', שמואל-יאַנקל דער מלמד [shmulyáinkl der mēláməd] 'Shmúel-Yankl the school teacher' (from מלמד 'teacher in a traditional חדר [khéydər] or primary school'). A number of figures from ancient Jewish history, mostly biblical, are known in Yiddish by their traditional Hebrew names following the same pattern, i.e. name plus descriptive title. Cf. §§4.4.4, 5.14.2, 5.15.1.2 on traditional names.

SAMPLES OF TRADITIONAL NAMES FROM ANCIENT JEWISH HISTORY

Adam (lit. 'Adam the First') [òdəm horíshn] אדם הראשון

Abraham (lit. 'Abraham our Father') [avròm ovínu] אברהם אבינו

Moses (lit. 'Moses our Teacher') [mòyshə rabéynu] משה רבינו

Deborah (lit. 'Deborah the Prophetess') [dvòyrə hanəvíə] דבורה הנביאה

Samson (lit. 'Samson the Strong Man') [shimshn hagíber] שמשון הגיבור

David (lit. 'David the King') [dòvid haméyləkh] דוד המלך

Solomon (lit. 'Solomon the King') [shlòymaméyləkh] שלמה המלך

Elijah (lit. 'Elijah the Prophet') [eyliòhu hanóvi] אליהו הנביא

Isaiah (lit. 'Isaiah the Prophet') [yəshàyə hanóvi] ישעיהו הנביא

Jeremiah (lit. 'Jeremiah the Prophet') [yirmiyòhu hanóvi] ירמיהו הנביא

Esther (lit. 'Esther the Queen') [èstər hamáلكə] אסתר המלכה

Haman (lit. 'Haman the Evil Man') [hòmən horóshə] המן הרישע
 Judah the Maccabee [yəhùdə hamakábi] יהודה המכבי

5.9 ADJECTIVE QUANTIFIERS

The major adjective quantifiers are א ביטל 'a little; slightly', גאנץ 'quite; rather; pretty' and זייער 'very'.

5.9.1 א ביטל

א ביטל 'a little; slightly' immediately precedes uninflected predicate adjectives. Before predicate adjectives with the indefinite article, it precedes the indefinite article. Cf §6.4.6 on partitive pronoun א ביטל.

SAMPLES OF ADJECTIVE QUANTIFIER א ביטל

The film is slightly boring דער פֿילם איז א ביטל נודנע

The film is a slightly boring one דער פֿילם איז א ביטל א נודנער

His films are slightly boring זײַנע פֿילמען זײַנען א ביטל נודנע

5.9.2 גאנץ

גאנץ 'quite; rather; pretty' immediately precedes attributive and predicate adjectives. It follows the indefinite article.

SAMPLES OF ADJECTIVE QUANTIFIER גאנץ

They're showing quite a boring film מ'זײַט א גאנץ נודנעם פֿילם

The film is quite boring דער פֿילם איז גאנץ נודנע

The film is quite a boring one דער פֿילם איז א גאנץ נודנער

His films are quite boring זײַנע פֿילמען זײַנען גאנץ נודנע

5.9.3 זייער

זייער [zéyər / zeyr / zer] 'very' immediately precedes attributive and predicate adjectives. When זייער quantifies an attributive adjective with the indefinite article, it may precede or follow the indefinite article (א זייער - א זייער). When it quantifies a predicate adjective with the indefinite article, א זייער is generally used.

SAMPLES OF ADJECTIVE QUANTIFIER זייער

I saw the very boring film איך האָב געזען דעם זייער נודנעם פֿילם

The film is very boring דער פֿילם איז זייער נודנע

His films are very boring זיינע פֿילמען זיינען זייער נודנע

מ'הייזט זייער א נודנעם פֿילם = מ'הייזט א זייער נודנעם פֿילם

They're showing a very boring film

The film is a very boring one דער פֿילם איז זייער א נודנער

5.10 COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVES

The comparative is formed by suffixing ער- to the adjective stem. Normal adjective endings are then suffixed to the ער-. Many comparatives have concomitant vowel changes, frequently א/אָ/וי → ע and ו → י, which must be learned with the relevant adjective. Note the special comparatives גוט 'good' → בעסער 'better', שלעכט 'bad' → ערגער 'worse'. There are four comparative link words corresponding with 'than' – conjunctions ווי and איידער which leave the compared noun phrase that follows them in nominative, and prepositions פֿאַר and פֿון which place it in dative (→ §5.5.3).

SAMPLES OF COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVES

ניו-יאָרק איז גרעסער ווי אַ סך אַנדערע שטעט

New York is larger than many other cities

(cf. גרויס 'large')

די יינגערע שוועסטער איז קליינער פֿאַר דער עלטערער

The younger sister is cleverer than the older one

(cf. 'young' יונג, 'clever' קלוג, 'old' אַלט)

די טייערע פֿאָטאָגראַפֿיעס זיינען שענער אײדער די ביליקע

The expensive photographs are prettier than the cheap ones

(cf. 'pretty' שײן)

מ'קען האָבן מער צוטרוי צו אַ נײַערן אויטאָמאָביל

You can have more faith in a newer car

(cf. 'new' נײַ)

5.10.1 Comparative predicate adjectives

Comparative predicate adjectives are formed by using the definite article after *איז* 'is' or *זיינען* 'are' (or another verb of being). They inflect as subject adjectives generally (→§5.5.1). Comparative affix *-ער-* appears between the comparative stem and the appropriate inflectional ending.

SAMPLES OF COMPARATIVE PREDICATE ADJECTIVES

The old table is the nicer one דער אַלטער טיש איז דער שענערער

The big city is the more beautiful one די גרויסע שטאָט איז די שענערע

The new house is the smaller one דאָס נײַע הויז איז דאָס קלענערע

5.10.2 Predicate base adjectives with comparative force

Repetition of the definite article with any predicate adjective tends to give

the adjective comparative force (in contrast to the indefinite article → §5.7.2). The pattern of inflection follows attributive adjectives (→ §5.5.1).

SAMPLES OF PREDICATE BASE ADJECTIVES WITH COMPARATIVE FORCE

The old table is the nice one דער אַלטער טיש איז דער שיינער

The big city is the beautiful one די גרויסע שטאָט איז די שיינע

The new house is the small one דאָס נייע הויז איז דאָס קליינע

5.11 SUPERLATIVE ADJECTIVES

The superlative is formed by suffixing טט- to the adjective stem. The usual adjective endings are then suffixed to the טט sequence. Superlatives are generally processed by the same א / אָ / וי → ע and ו → י vowel changes as their corresponding comparatives. These vowel changes must be learned along with each of the adjectives affected. Note the special superlatives גוט 'good' → בעסט- 'best', שלעכט 'bad' → ערנסט- [erkst] 'worst'.

SAMPLES OF SUPERLATIVE ADJECTIVES

ניו-יאָרקער זאָגן נאָך אז דער „עמפּייער סטייט בילדינג“

איז דער העכסטער בנין אין דער העלט

New Yorkers still say that the Empire State Building is the tallest building in the world

(cf. הויך 'tall; high')

דאָס איז די לענגסטע מעשה [léynkstə máysə] אין בוך

This is the longest story in the book

(cf. לאַנג 'long')

ער איז דער נאַרישסטער פֿון זיי אַלעמען

He is the most foolish of them all

(cf. נאַריש 'foolish')

זי איז אַזעק צו דער באַליבסטער מומע

She went to her most beloved aunt

(cf. באַליבט 'beloved')

5.11.1 Superlative predicate adjectives

Superlative predicate adjectives are formed by using the definite article after איז 'is' or זיינען 'are'. They inflect as nominative adjectives generally (→ §5.5.1). The superlative affix -סט- appears between the comparative (/superlative) stem and the appropriate inflectional ending. They offer an alternative to attributive superlatives.

SAMPLES OF SUPERLATIVE PREDICATE ADJECTIVES

The old table is the nicest one דער אַלטער טיש איז דער שענסטער

The big city is the most beautiful one די גרויסע שטאָט איז די שענסטע

The new house is the smallest one דאָס נייע הויז איז דאָס קלענסטע

5.11.2 Superlative intensifier טאַמע

The superlative intensifier טאַמע [sámə] 'very (-st)', immediately precedes the superlative. טאַמע does not inflect.

SAMPLES OF SUPERLATIVE INTENSIFIER טאַמע

This is your (familiar) very best idea דאָס איז דיין טאַמע בעסטער איינפֿאַל

You have the most beautiful pictures דו האָסט די טאַמע שענסטע בילדער

They are the very greatest fools זיי זיינען די טאַמע גרעסטע נאַראַנים

5.12 SPECIAL TYPES OF ADJECTIVES

5.12.1 Invariant adjectives

Adjectives formed by suffixation of **ער-** to the names of cities and towns (and occasionally countries) do not inflect. They retain the **ער-** ending in all cases, numbers and genders. Internal modifications of the stem are encountered in the names of some culturally central cities. In addition to their adjectival use, they all double as agentives denoting a person from the named place. As agentives they attract the feminizing suffix **ין-** (→ §§3.2.3, 4.1.2.3).

SAMPLES OF INVARIANT ADJECTIVES

- American **אמעריקאנער**
 of / from Oxford **אָקספֿארדער**
 of / from Warsaw **וואַרשענער** (cf. Warsaw **וואַרשע**)
 of / from Vilna **ווילנער**
 of / from Jerusalem [yərusholáymer] **ירושלימער**
 (cf. Jerusalem [yərusholáyim] **ירושלים**)
 of / from Montreal **מאָנטרעאַלער**
 of / from Melbourne **מעלבאָרנער**
 of / from New York **ניו־יאָרקער**
 Parisian **פאַריזער**
 of / from Cracow **קראַקענער** (cf. Cracow **קראַקע**)
 of / from Tel Aviv [telavíver] **תל־אָבֿיבֿער**

5.12.2 Adjectives from names of substances

Adjectives derived from names of traditionally known substances frequently attract suffix **ערנ-**, to which the appropriate adjective endings are further

suffixed. Note that גַּאֲלָד 'gold' attracts ג- alone, hence גַּאֲלָד־נֶ (→ §5.12.3).

SAMPLES OF ADJECTIVES FROM NAMES OF SUBSTANCES WITH SUFFIX -עֲרַנְ

(of) iron - אִיזְעֲרַנְ (cf. אִיזֵן 'iron')

(of) glass - גַּלְעֲזֲעֲרַנְ (cf. גַּלְאָז 'glass')

wooden - הִילְצֲעֲרַנְ (cf. הָאֶלֶץ 'wood')

(of) copper - קוֹפְעֲרַנְ (cf. קוֹפֵעַר 'copper')

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF ADJECTIVES DERIVED FROM NAMES OF SUBSTANCES

I have two wooden boxes אֵיךְ הָאָב צוּחִי הִילְצֲעֲרַנְעַ קַעֲסִטְלֵךְ

Don't break the glass table צַעֲבֹרֵךְ נִיט דַעַם גַּלְעֲזֲעֲרַנְעַם טִישׁ

5.12.3 ADJECTIVES WITH FINAL SYLLABIC ך-

Adjectives with a base form ending in syllabic ך- (→ §2.2.9) replace the syllabic ך- with גַל- in inflected forms (other than predicate indefinite with ending ם- → §5.7.2), e.g. base form אֶפֶן [ofn] 'open' vs. masculine singular accusative/dative אֶפֶנְעַם [ófənəm], plural אֶפֶנְעַנְעַ [ófənə]; base form גַּאֲלָדֵן [goldn] 'golden' vs. masculine singular accusative/dative גַּאֲלָדֵנְעַם [góldənəm], plural גַּאֲלָדֵנְעַנְעַ [góldənə].

5.13 DIMINUTIVES OF ADJECTIVES

There are two suffixes by which adjectives are diminutivized. One of these, -לְעַךְ, reduces the force of the adjective, and has a number of nuances. The second, -יֵנְקַ, applies affection and sentimentality. Unlike diminutives of nouns (→ §4.3), diminutives of adjectives do not undergo internal vowel shifts.

5.13.1 Adjective diminutive in לעך-

The adjective diminutive in לעך- mitigates the force of the base adjective, and is often used to soften a stark statement or mitigate an insult. It derives from the adverb diminutive in לעך- (→ §10.5). לעך- usually occurs with monosyllabic adjective stems. The diminutivized adjective is pronounced slowly in falsetto. It is often accompanied by a gentle forward and downward thrust of the head and the opened palm of one hand, with optional horizontal vibration of the same hand and its fingers, and a slight smile. Cf. §10.5 on diminutives of adverbs.

SAMPLES OF ADJECTIVE DIMINUTIVE לעך-

- rather difficult; delicate שווערלעך (from שווער 'difficult')
- somewhat chilly; not very cold קאַלטלעך (from קאַלט 'cold')
- somewhat hot הייסלעך (from הייס 'hot')
- somewhat ugly [m'æsɪəkh] מיאוסלעך (from מיאוס [m'æs] 'ugly')

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF ADJECTIVE DIMINUTIVE לעך-

- It's a rather delicate matter ס'איז אַ שווערלעכער ענין
- It's a somewhat chilly day ס'איז אַ קאַלטלעכער טאָג
- It's a somewhat hot day ס'איז אַ הייסלעכער טאָג
- Her boyfriend is not exactly handsome איר חבֿר [khávər] איז מיאוסלעך

5.13.2 Adjective diminutive in ינק-

The adjective diminutive ינק-, to which normal adjective endings are suffixed, marks warmth, affection and sentimentality. Its usage parallels the second diminutive of nouns in עלע- (→ §4.3.5). The adjective אַלט 'old', which is often personified to refer informally and affectionately to an elderly person, takes יטט-, e.g. דער אַלטיטשקער קומט 'The old chap is coming'.

SAMPLES OF ADJECTIVE DIMINUTIVES IN ינק-

white חײטינק (from חײט 'white')

little קליינינק (from קליין 'little')

beautiful שיינינק (from שײן 'beautiful')

5.14 NOUNS THAT INFLECT FOR CASE

A minority of nouns, nearly all of them referring to people, may inflect for one or both of the objective cases. They attract inflectional ending ן- (ען- following ה, ג, a stressed vowel or diphthong, or the sequences נק, נג or consonant plus ל). They fall into two categories: intimate nouns and proper names. Personal pronouns inflect internally rather than by suffixation (→ §§6.1.2 – 6.1.3).

5.14.1 Intimate nouns

The intimate nouns are from family and traditional life.

5.14.1.1 Masculine intimate nouns

Masculine intimate nouns are inflected in both accusative and dative. Note that inflection for יד and מענטש is optional.

טאטע 'father' → טאטן

זיידע 'grandfather' → זיידן

ייד 'Jew; fellow; guy' (→ יידן)

מענטש 'person; fellow; human' (→ מענטשן)

רבי [rébɛ] '(traditional) school teacher; Chassidic rebbe' → רבין [rébm]

SAMPLES OF INFLECTED MASCULINE INTIMATE NOUNS

- Lloyd George knows my father לויד דזשאָרדזש קען דעם טאַטן
 I'm speaking with grandfather איך רעד מיטן זיידן
 Did you see that fellow? האָסט געזען דעם מענטשן?
 Have you been to see the rebbe? ביסט געווען ביים רבין? [bam rébm]

5.14.1.2 Feminine intimate nouns

Feminine intimate nouns are inflected in dative. They optionally inflect in accusative. Inflection of *מומע* is optional even in dative.

- מאַמע 'mother' → מאַמען
 באַבע 'grandmother' → באַבען [bobm]
 מומע 'aunt' (→ מומען)

SAMPLES OF INFLECTED FEMININE INTIMATE NOUNS

- Are you going to (see) mother? גייסט צו דער מאַמען?
 Have you heard from grandmother? האָסט געהערט פֿון דער באַבען?
 I'm writing to my aunt איך שרייב דער מומען

5.14.1.3 Neutral intimate האַרץ

The one surviving neutral inflecting noun is *האַרץ* 'heart' which inflects to *האַרצן* in dative. Inflection signals that *האַרץ* is being used in its metaphoric sense, e.g. *זיך נעמען צום האַרצן* 'take to heart', *אין האַרצן* 'at heart', *שווער אויפֿן האַרצן* [afn] 'depressed' (lit. 'heavy on the heart'), *אַ שטאַך אין האַרצן* 'devastating shock; blow to the ego' (lit. 'stab in the heart'). The absence of inflection in dative signals that 'heart' is being used in a more strictly physical sense, e.g. *דער פּאַציענט ליידט פֿון חייטיק אין האַרץ* 'The patient is suffering heart pain'.

5.14.2 Proper names

A single proper name, whether forename or surname, may inflect for either objective case. Where both names are used, only the surname inflects. **משיח** [məsh(əkh) 'Messiah' is a proper name in Yiddish and therefore inflects to **משיחן** [məsh(əkhɪn]. Analogously, biblical names comprising name plus descriptive title (→ §5.8.1) are treated as single names and it is therefore the descriptive title that inflects, e.g. **אליהו הנביא** [eylióhu hanóvi] 'Elijah the Prophet' → **אליהו הנביאן** [eylióhu hanóvin]. Cf. §§4.4.4, 5.15.1.2 on traditional Yiddish names.

SAMPLES OF INFLECTIONS OF PROPER NAMES

בערל Bérɪ (m.) → **בערלען** [bérlən]

טײַבעלע Táybalə (f.) → **טײַבעלען** [táybalən]

לאה Léyə (f.) → **לאהן** [léyən]

קלמן Káimən (m.) → **קלמנען** [káimənən]

מוסקאָוויטש Móskovitsh → **מוסקאָוויטשן** [móskovitshn]

שלמה רובין Shlóymə Rúbin → **שלמה רובינען** [shlóymə rúbinən]

SAMPLES OF INFLECTIONS OF PROPER NAMES

5.14.2.1 Optionality scale

The degree of optionality in the inflection of proper names depends in large measure upon the familiarity of the name in the language. Traditional names are most frequently inflected, well known modern names often inflected, and strange sounding foreign names (in the subjective view of the speaker or writer) only rarely inflected. Inflection is consciously avoided where confusion could result as to whether the name itself does or does not end in [n]. Thus the Japanese name Tokiko might at first not be inflected (to ensure that the hearer or reader does not mistakenly infer that the name is 'Tokikon'), but upon increasing acquaintance with the name, the rate of inflection could increase proportionately. Use of inflection with names not

rooted in the language is encountered in formal styles as a 'supergrammatical' feature, and in the opinion of some, a pedantic one. In informal styles, inflection of non-traditional names may be used for humorous effect.

SAMPLES OF INFLECTIONS OF NON-TRADITIONAL PROPER NAMES

טשאַק בערין 'Chuck Berry' → טשאַק בערי

לויד דזשאָרדזשן 'Lloyd George' → לויד דזשאָרדזש

נאַדינען 'Nadine' → נאַדיין

ניקסאָנען 'Nixon' → ניקסאָן

5.15 POSSESSIVES

Possession by humans is marked by suffixation of the possessive ending -'s. Possession by nonhumans (institutions, abstract notions, etc.) is generally expressed by the preposition פֿון.

5.15.1 Human possessors

Possession by humans is marked by suffixation of 's- (usually pronounced between [s] and [z]), to the possessor's name (or an agentive noun) e.g. מענדעלעס סטיל 'Mendele's style'. If the possessor has a definite article, the article is inflected for dative (→ §5.1.3), e.g. דעם פֿייערלעשערס טאָכטער 'the fireman's daughter', דער לערעריןס צימער 'the teacher's (f.) room', דעם קינדס צאָצקע 'the child's toy'. The understood preposition is פֿון, denoting relation to the possessor. If the name or agentive ends in one of the sibilants ז, ס, צ, ש, the suffix is עס-, e.g. האָראָוויצעס היטל 'Horowitz's hat', דעם באַלעבאָטעס אַדרעס 'the boss's address'. The older usage of an

apostrophe before possessive ך is still encountered.

5.15.1.1 Intimate nouns as human possessors

Possessives of the masculine intimate nouns טאַטע, זיידע, ייד, מענטש and רבי (→§5.14.1.1) are formed by adding possessive ך to the inflected ן- form of each (טאַטן, זיידן, יידן and רבין). The resulting possessives are דעם טאַטנס, דעם זיידנס, דעם יידנס, דעם מענטשנס and דעם רבינס [rébnz].

5.15.1.2 Possessives as proper names

In traditional Yiddish-speaking communities, people are often known by their forenames followed by the possessive of one of their parents' forenames. Alternatively, the possessive of the agentive of a parent's profession may be used. The construction, which has the force of 'son of' and 'daughter of', is well represented in Yiddish literature, both as pen names of authors and in names of major works. Cf. §§4.4.4, 5.8.1, 5.14.2 on traditional names.

SAMPLES OF POSSESSIVES FORMING PROPER NAMES

יצחק באַשעוויס (בַּת־שֶׁבַעס)

Yítskhok Bashévis 'Isaac son of Bath-Sheba'

(Isaac Bashevis Singer)

מאָטל פֿײַסי דעם חזנס

Motl Péysə-dem-kházns ('Motl son of the Cantor Peysə')

(name of book by Sholem Aleichem)

שלמה ר' חיימס

Shloymə Reb Kháyims ('Solomon son of Chaim')

(name of book by Méndələ Móykhər Sfórim)

5.15.2 Nonhuman possessors

Possession by nonhumans is generally marked by explicit use of the preposition פֿון 'of', e.g. דער גרינדער פֿון דער אָרגאַניזאַציע 'the founder of the organization', דער כאַראַקטער פֿון שטאָט 'the city's character'.

6 PRONOUNS

6.0 OVERVIEW

There are four types of pronouns – personal, possessive, demonstrative and partitive.

6.1 PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Personal pronouns replace a specifically named or understood person or thing. There are seven singular and three plural personal pronouns. Most pronouns inflect for accusative and for dative. For samples of the use of personal pronouns → §§ 7.5.1–7.5.2, 7.6.1.1–7.6.1.2, 7.7.1–7.7.2, 7.9.1–7.9.2.

6.1.1 Pronouns in nominative

6.1.1.1 Singular

I איך

you (familiar) דו

you (formal) איר

he ער

she זי

people; one; we מ' \ מען \ מע

it עס \ סע

6.1.1.2 Plural

we מיר

you איר

they זיי

6.1.2 Pronouns in accusative

6.1.2.1 Singular

me מיך

you (familiar) דיך

you (formal) אײך

him [em] אים

her זי

it עס

6.1.2.2 Plural

us אונדז

you אײך

them זיי

6.1.3 Pronouns in dative

עס \ אים \ עס do not occur in dative.

6.1.3.1 Singular

me מיר

you (familiar) דיך

you (formal) אַיך

him [em] אים

her איר

6.1.3.2 Plural

us אונדז

you אַיך

them זיי

6.1.4 Single objective case in dialectal usage

Minority usage, based upon Northeastern Yiddish, uses the dative forms for both accusative and dative of the singular personal pronouns. Bearing in mind that the plural paradigms are universally identical for both accusative and dative, this usage results in a single objective case for all personal pronouns. Use of the unified objective case, as follows, may be encountered in the literary language.

me מיר

you (familiar) דיך

you (formal) אַיך

him [em] אים

her איר

6.1.5 Morphology of the third person indefinite pronoun

The third person human indefinite may occur in any of three forms before the verb — 'ה (most frequent in Yiddish literature and in contemporary written Yiddish) מען [mən] (most frequent in journalistic style) or מע [mə]

(the favourite of speakers and writers hailing from Southeastern Yiddish speech territory). After the verb, only *מען* occurs. The same pattern is also followed by the third person nonhuman indefinite. It may occur in any of three forms before the verb — 'ט, *עס* [əs] or *זע* [sə], with usage distribution paralleling that of 'ה, *מען* and *זע*, respectively. After the verb, only *עס* occurs.

6.1.6 Semantic features of personal pronouns

6.1.6.1 *דו* (דיך / דייר) and *איך* (אייך)

The second person singular *דו* forms are traditionally used with intimate friends and small children. The technically 'plural' *איך* (cf. French *vous*, German *Sie*) is used as a singular with persons with whom one has a more formal relationship. In Eastern Europe, a child would often address his or her own grandparent with *איך*; a girl and boy in love would be taking a daring step by switching to *דו* before marriage. The division between *דו* and *איך* continues to depend on a number of social variables. Nevertheless, it is clear that except in the most traditional communities, *דו* has steadily encroached upon the semantic territory of *איך* in the course of the last century. This is most marked in the English-speaking world and in Israel, where the coterritorial English and Hebrew lack the distinction, but the trend is evident among younger speakers even in Paris and Montreal, where the distinction is supported by the coterritorial French. The major factor in the degree to which *דו* and *איך* are distinguished by younger people today seems to be the level of 'traditionalness' of a speech community or circle. Among younger Yiddish speakers born and raised in the West, it has become customary in recent years to ask permission upon first acquaintance to dispense with *איך*

and to proceed straight onward to 17. It is, however, important to use אײך with adult members of traditional communities as well as with older generation East-European-born speakers of all cultural persuasions.

6.1.6.2 Use of 'ח

'ח (/ מען / מע) is widely used in Yiddish where English uses 'we', 'people (in general)', 'one', 'you'. It frequently occurs where English uses a passive.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF 'ח

We've already been there מ'איז שוין געווען דאָרטן

People say so מ'זאָגט אַזוי

What do people say about it? וואָס זאָגט מען וועגן דעם? [vozzókt]

One can't say for certain מ'קען ניט זאָגן אויף זיכער [avzíkhər]

The truth is not known דעם אמת [éməs] חייט מען ניט

You're not allowed in there מ'טאָר ניט אַרײַנגיין דאָרטן

6.1.6.3 Use of 'ט

'ט (/ עט / טע) may serve to provide a grammatically necessary subject in a sentence with no 'real' subject. It may also occur where Yiddish requires a subject at the beginning of a phrase to meet the inflected-verb-second rule (→ §14.1). It prefixes the predicatives דאָ איז 'there is' and זײַנען דאָ 'there are' (→ §14.6).

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF 'ט

It could be / Maybe ט'קען זײַן

Maybe not ט'קען זײַן אַז ניט

It's raining in London ט'נייט [zgeyt] אַ רעגן אין לאַנדאָן

Father is coming ט'קומט דער טאָטע

An apple tree is growing in the garden ט'וואַקסט אַן עפלבוים אין גאָרטן

It's fine / Things are good ט'איז גוט [sigút]

6.2 POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

Possessive pronouns occur both before and after the noun. Where possession is clear from context, the definite article is generally used instead of a possessive pronoun (→ §15.13).

6.2.1 Preceding the possessed noun

Possessive pronouns preceding the possessed noun inflect for the number of the possessor and the number of the possession. The gender of the possessor is evident only in the third person singular where there are separate pronouns – זמין 'his' vs. איר 'her'. Possessive pronouns preceding the possessed noun also inflect for gender when the indefinite article is used in a special construction (→ §6.2.1.5).

6.2.1.1 Singular possessor with singular possession

my	מיין
your (familiar)	דיין
your (formal)	איער
his	זיין
her	איר

6.2.1.2 Singular possessor with plural possessions

my	מינע
your (familiar)	דינע
your (formal)	איערע
his	זינע
her	אירע

6.2.1.3 Plural possessors with singular possession

our אונדזער

your אייער

their זייער

6.2.1.4 Plural possessors with plural possessions

our אונדזערע

your אייערע

their זייערע

6.2.1.5 The possessive-indefinite construction

Possessive pronouns preceding the possessed noun inflect for gender and case when the indefinite article occurs with the noun. The construction has the force of 'a — of mine/yours etc.'. It is most frequent with nouns designating humans.

SAMPLES OF USE OF THE POSSESSIVE-INDEFINITE CONSTRUCTION

מינער אַ פֿעטער קומט הינט

An uncle of mine is coming today

מינע אַ חומע קומט הינט אויף דער נאַכט

An aunt of mine is coming this evening

איך זע אונדזערן אַ באַקאַנטן

I see an acquaintance (m.) of ours

6.2.2 Following the possessed noun

Possessive pronouns following the possessed noun may be synonymous with

the simpler forms preceding the noun. Used with the definite article, the construction may have demonstrative force (→ §6.3). Possessive pronouns following the noun inflect for everything – number of the possessor and the possession, gender of the possessor and the possession, and case. The arrow (→) marks the regular changes for both accusative and dative (AD) or, where applicable, for dative (D) only. Sample nouns are שירעם (דער) 'umbrella', זאַך (די) 'thing' and דאַס (הויז) 'house'.

6.2.2.1 First person possessor with single possession

דעם שירעם מינעם (AD) → דער שירעם מינער

דער זאַך מינער (D) → די זאַך מינע

דעם הויז מינעם (D) → דאַס הויז מינס

6.2.2.2 Familiar second person possessor with single possession

דעם שירעם דינעם (AD) → דער שירעם דינער

דער זאַך דינער (D) → די זאַך דינע

דעם הויז דינעם (D) → דאַס הויז דינס

6.2.2.3 Formal second person possessor with single possession

דעם שירעם אינערן (AD) → דער שירעם אינערע

דער זאַך אינערע (D) → די זאַך אינערע

דעם הויז אינערן (D) → דאַס הויז אינערס

6.2.2.4 Third person masculine possessor with single possession

דעם שירעם זינעם (AD) → דער שירעם זינער

דער זאך זינער (D) → די זאך זינע
דעם הויז זינעם (D) → דאָס הויז זינס

6.2.2.5 Third person feminine possessor with single possession

דעם שירעם אידן (AD) → דער שירעם אירער
דער זאך אירער (D) → די זאך אירע
דעם הויז אידן (D) → דאָס הויז אירס

6.2.2.6 Singular possessor with plural possessions

די שירעמס \ זאַפן \ היזער מינע
די שירעמס \ זאַפן \ היזער דינע
די שירעמס \ זאַפן \ היזער אייערע
די שירעמס \ זאַפן \ היזער זינע
די שירעמס \ זאַפן \ היזער אירע

6.2.2.7 First person possessors with single possession

דעם שירעם אונדזערן (AD) → דער שירעם אונדזערעך
דער זאך אונדזערעך (D) → די זאך אונדזערע
דעם הויז אונדזערן (D) → דאָס הויז אונדזערס

6.2.2.8 Second person possessors with single possession

דעם שירעם אייערן (AD) → דער שירעם אייערעך
דער זאך אייערעך (D) → די זאך אייערע
דעם הויז אייערן (D) → דאָס הויז אייערס

6.2.2.9 Third person possessors with singular possession

דעם שירעם זייערן (AD) → דער שירעם זייערעך

דער זאך זייערעב (D) → די זאך זייערע
 דעם הויז זייערן (D) → באַס הויז זייערס

6.2.2.10 Possessors with plural possessions

די שירעמס \ זאַכֶן \ היזער אונדזערע

די שירעמס \ זאַכֶן \ היזער אייערע

די שירעמס \ זאַכֶן \ היזער זייערע

6.3 DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

6.3.1 'this'

Demonstrative 'this' may be expressed by phonetic stress alone, in which case it is implicit in written texts, or explicitly by a demonstrative pronoun.

6.3.1.1 Implicit 'this': stressed definite article

The definite articles (in any of the cases) can double as demonstratives by being stressed. In written texts, demonstrative use of an article is inferred from the context or evident from bold typeface (or spacing out of letters to denote emphasis). Noun phrases used as demonstratives are frequently jumped to the front of a sentence, further strengthening the sense of 'this'/'these' rather than 'the' (→ §§14.4.7, 14.10).

SAMPLES OF IMPLICIT 'THIS'

דעם בחור קען איך

[dém bókhər kénəkh] I know this fellow

cf. [dəm bókhər kénəkh] I know the fellow

די מיידל איז דאָ פֿריער געווען

[dí méydl i(z) do fríær gəvén] This girl was here before

cf. [dəméydl i(z) do fríær gəvén] The girl was here before

דאָס בוך איז לאַנג

[dóz búkh iz láng] This book is long

cf. [dəz búkh iz láng] The book is long

די גאַסן זײַנען שטאַל

[dí gásn zaynən shmól] These streets are narrow

cf. [də gásn zaynən shmól] The streets are narrow

6.3.1.2 Explicit 'this'

There are several demonstrative formulas: אַט and אַט אַט preceding the definite article; אַ alone following it; adjectively inflected דאָזיק- following it. Two or more may be used redundantly in combination for proportionately increasing emphasis. A series of demonstratives for a single noun serves to emphasize identity and is occasionally used for humorous or hostile effect. In the samples provided, demonstrative force may be said to increase with each line.

SAMPLES OF EXPLICIT 'THIS'

(→ §6.3.1.1 FOR TRANSLATIONS)

אַט דעם בחור קען איך

אַט אַ דעם בחור קען איך

דעם אַ בחור קען איך

דעם דאָזיקן בחור קען איך

אַט דעם דאָזיקן בחור קען איך

אַט אַ דעם דאָזיקן בחור קען איך

אָט די מיידל איז דאָ פֿריער געווען
 אָט אַ די מיידל איז דאָ פֿריער געווען
 די אַ מיידל איז דאָ פֿריער געווען
 די דאָזיקע מיידל איז דאָ פֿריער געווען
 אָט די דאָזיקע מיידל איז דאָ פֿריער געווען
 אָט אַ די דאָזיקע מיידל איז דאָ פֿריער געווען

אָט דאָס בוך איז לאַנג
 אָט אַ דאָס בוך איז לאַנג
 דאָס דאָזיקע בוך איז לאַנג
 אָט דאָס דאָזיקע בוך איז לאַנג
 אָט אַ דאָס דאָזיקע בוך איז לאַנג

אָט די גאָסן זײַנען שמאַל
 אָט אַ די גאָסן זײַנען שמאַל
 די אַ גאָסן זײַנען שמאַל
 די דאָזיקע גאָסן זײַנען שמאַל
 אָט די דאָזיקע גאָסן זײַנען שמאַל
 אָט אַ די דאָזיקע גאָסן זײַנען שמאַל

6.3.2 'that'

Stressed definite articles are used in many instances where English has 'that', e.g. וואָס איז דאָס? [vósə dós?] 'What's that?'. Where 'thatness' is however explicitly required, דער אַנדערער, דער צווייטער or יענער are used.

6.3.2.1 דער צווייטער / דער אַנדערער

As an attributive adjective before a noun, דער אַנדערער 'the other / next one' may signify 'thatness' for any noun, but on its own, it substitutes for a

person – 'that one; the other person; the second one; the next one'. As an adjective, אַנדער is anomalous insofar as it declines only with the definite article (e.g. דער אַנדערער מאַן 'the other man', די אַנדערע פֿרוי 'the other woman'); with the indefinite article it is usually left as invariant אַנדער, e.g. אַן אַנדער מאַן 'an other man', אַן אַנדער פֿרוי 'an other woman'. Plural is always אַנדערע. In singular only, דער צווייטער (lit. 'the second one') may be used interchangeably with דער אַנדערער.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF דער אַנדערער AND דער צווייטער

דעם אַדנערן (א דעם צווייטן) דאַרף מען פֿרעגן

We should ask the other man (/ that man)

דער אַנדערער (א דער צווייטער) איז דער עקספּערט

It's the other one who's the expert

די אַנדערע (א די צווייטע) קומט מאָרגן

The other lady is coming tomorrow

די אַנדערע קען איך נאָך ניט

I don't know the others yet

6.3.2.2 יענער

As an attributive adjective before a noun, יענער may signify 'thatness' for any noun, but on its own it substitutes for a person – 'that one; the other person'. The old neutral nominative form in ט- (יענט, also spelled יענץ) is very rare nowadays. When used with a neutral it is increasingly lining up with feminine in nominative and with masculine in accusative and dative (cf. interrogative וועלכער → §11.3.1.1 and relative וועלכער → §14.7). יענער is

frequently (but not necessarily) aggressive or derogatory. When used with the definite article, דער יעניקער, usually aggressive and occasionally humorous, may be substituted for יענער. יענער demonstrates the speaker or writer's wish to project distance between him or herself and the person spoken of by labelling him or her with 'otherness'.

יענער THE USE OF SAMPLES OF

יענער חיים ניט וואָס ער רעדט

That man (lit. 'that one') doesn't know what he's talking about

יענע חיים ניט וואָס זי רעדט

That woman (lit. 'that one') doesn't know what she's talking about

יענעם קען מען ניט געטרויען

That man can't be trusted

דער יעניקער איז שוין חידער דאָ

There he is again!

דער זעלבער / דער זעלביקער 6.3.2.3

As an attributive adjective before a noun, זעלב(יק)- may signify 'sameness' for any noun, but on its own it substitutes for a person – 'the same one; the same person'.

דער זעלביקער THE USE OF SAMPLE OF

דער זעלביקער האָט אַמאָל געהאַלטן אַנדערש

The same man once held a rather different view

6.4 PARTITIVE PRONOUNS

Partitive pronouns provide for a limitation to a single person or a conceptual proportional relation to a perceived group of people, or people in general.

6.4.1 איינע and איינער

איינער 'a/one (person); a man' and איינע 'a woman' inflect for case and gender as adjectives. Cf. §§12.1.1–12.1.1.1 on numerals איין and אינס.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF איינער AND איינע

One (m.) of them was here today איינער איז דאָ היינט געווען

One (f.) of them was here today איינע איז דאָ היינט געווען

You should invite one of them איינעם וואָלטסט געדאַרפֿט פֿאַרבעטן

One says one thing, one says another איינער זאָגט אַזוי, איינער זאָגט אַזוי

6.4.2 עמעצער

עמעצער 'somebody; anybody (positive)' is usually pronounced [éymətsər].

It inflects for case as an adjective. עמעצער is exclusively a pronoun.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF עמעצער

Is anybody here? עמעצער [éymətsər] איז דאָ?

I saw somebody איך האָב עמעצן [éymətsn] געזען

6.4.3 קיינער

קיינער 'nobody; anybody (negative)' inflects for case as an adjective. Where the negative phrase does not already contain the negative particle נישט, קיינער נישט is used, e.g. 'Who's there?' איז דער חער? is answered negatively by קיינער נישט 'Nobody'. קיינער is exclusively a pronoun.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF קיינער

Don't tell anybody זאָלטסט קיינעם ניט דערציילן

I didn't see anybody איך האָב קיינעם ניט געזען

Nobody's here? קיינער איז דאָ ניטאָ?

6.4.4 טייל

טייל 'some (people); part', which takes a plural verb, does not inflect. טייל is also a common noun and an invariant adjective that may refer to inanimate objects.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF טייל

Some say 'yes', some say 'no' טייל זאָגן יאָ טייל זאָגן ניין

Some will agree טייל וועלן מסכים [máskim] זיין

6.4.5 עטלעכע / אַ פּאָר

עטלעכע, or אַ פּאָר 'a few', which take a plural verb, do not inflect. עטלעכע and אַ פּאָר are also common nouns and invariant adjectives that may refer to inanimate objects.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF עטלעכע AND אַ פּאָר

I know only a few of them איך קען נאָר אַ פּאָר פּאָר פּאָר זיי

A few people will come עטלעכע וועלן קומען

6.4.6 אַ ביטל

אַ ביטל 'a small number; a few', which takes a plural verb, does not inflect. When used as a common noun or invariant adjective, אַ ביטל has the sense of 'a little'. Cf. §5.9.1 on adjective quantifier אַ ביטל.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF אַ ביטל

A few people remained אַ ביטל זינען געבליבן

A few people will be unhappy אַ ביטל וועלן זיין אומצופרידן

6.4.7 אַ סך

אַ סך [asákh] 'many', which takes a plural verb, does not inflect. It is also a common noun and invariant adjective that may occur with inanimate objects.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF אַ סך

Many people are still here אַ סך זינען נאָך דאָ

Many have already left אַ סך זינען שוין אַוועק

6.4.8 (די) מערסטע

(די) מערסטע 'most', which takes a plural verb, does not inflect. (די) מערסטע is also a common noun and invariant adjective that may refer to inanimate objects.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF (די) מערסטע

Most people are still here (די) מערסטע זינען נאָך דאָ

Most have already left (די) מערסטע זינען שוין אַוועק

6.4.9 איטלעכער / יעדערער / יעדער איינער

'everyone; everybody', which take a singular verb, inflect for case and gender as adjectives. איטלעכער now occurs mostly in literary styles. They are exclusively pronouns.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF יעדער / יעדערער / יעדער איינער

Everyone knows he's crazy יעדער איינער ווייס אַז ער איז משוגע

I saw every one of them איך האָב געזען יעדן איינעם פֿון זיי

Everyone knows that דאָס חיים יעדערער

Everyone is happy איטלעכער איז צופֿרידן

Everyone has his foibles יעדערער האָט זיינע משוגעתן [məshugásn]

6.4.10 יעדער איינציקער

יעדער איינציקער 'each and every one; every single one', which takes a singular verb, inflects for case and gender as an adjective. It is exclusively a pronoun.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF יעדער איינציקער

I know every single one איך קען יעדן איינציקן

Every single person will come today יעדער איינציקער חעט הינט קומען

We will invite every single one of them מ'זעט פֿאַרבעטן יעדן איינציקן

6.4.11 אַלע

אַלע 'everyone' which takes a plural verb, optionally inflects to אַלעמען in either objective case when serving as a pronoun referring to humans. When substituting for inanimate objects, אַלע is retained uninflected in all cases. Hence האָסט אַלע ביכער? 'Do you have all the books?' may be answered by איך האָב זיי אַלע 'I have them all'.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF אַלע AND אַלעמען

Does everyone know the story? אַלע קענען די מעשה? [máysə]

You told everyone the story? האָסט אַלעמען דערציילט די מעשה?

7 VERBS

7.0 OVERVIEW

The Yiddish verb system combines synthetic and analytic constructions. Synthetic verbs synthesize grammatical information into a single word by inflecting the verb as required. Only the present tense is fully synthetic in Yiddish. Person and number are marked by appropriate endings. The past and future are formed by combining a synthetic helping verb with an uninflected (unchanging) main verb. In the past, the unchanging main verb is the past participle. In the future it is the infinitive. The essential morphology therefore comprises the suffixes of the stem in the present tense and the conjugations of the helping verbs used to form the past and future. Analytic verbs are discussed in §9.

7.1 THE INFINITIVE

The infinitive is the traditional point of reference for any verbal paradigm. The synthetic infinitive is formed by suffixing ן (or ן after ה; ג; נג; ק; a stressed vowel or diphthong; ל following a consonant) to the stem. Preposition צו 'to', unlike its English counterpart, appears only rarely with the infinitive.

SAMPLES OF INFINITIVES

develop אנטװיקלען

say זאָגן

dance טאַנצן

laugh לאַכן

look קוקן

yell שרײַען

7.2 THE PRESENT PARTICIPLE

The present participle is formed by suffixation of *-נדִיק* (or *-ענדִיק* after ה, נ, נג, נק, ל following a consonant, or a stressed vowel) to the stem of the verb. It denotes the ongoingness of the verbal action – ‘while doing / being something; in the course of; during’. Its use frequently corresponds with English *-ing* when so used. Syntactically, *-נדִיק* functions as an adverb (→ §14.4.1).

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF PRESENT PARTICIPLES

איך בין אריין אין צימער האַלטנדיק די ביכער אין האַנט

I entered the room, holding the books in my hand

זיצנדיק אין שענק האָבן מיר געכאַפט אַ שיינע פּאָר לחימס [lɛkháyimz]

Sitting in the pub, we had quite a few drinks

זי איז אַזעק טראַכטנדיק וועגן דעם

She left thinking about it

שמועסנדיק אַ גאַנצע נאַכט האָט מען געפֿונען דעם ענטפֿער

Talking a whole night, the answer was found

שרײַענדיק וועסטו קיין זאַך ניט אויפֿטאַן [úftɔn]

You won't accomplish anything by yelling

7.3 THE VERBAL ADDITIVE: זײך

The verbal additive is זײך. It is only pronounced [zikh] when stressed for contrast. It is normally reduced to [zəkh] or [zakh] and although written separately, it is nearly always pronounced as a suffix of the preceding verb. When the part of the verb preceding זײך ends in one of the voiceless consonants [f], [k], [kh], [p], [s], [sh], [t], [s] – most frequently [t] of the third person singular ending – that voiceless consonant may undergo the usual regressive voiceless assimilation and become voiced in deference to the [z] of זײך (→ §2.2.3), e.g. זײך וואָס הערסט [vos hérdzakh?] 'What's new?; How are you?'. זײך following a verb ending in a voiceless consonant is, however, one of the instances where assimilation may be progressive, leading to the devoicing of the second consonant – the ך of זײך – hence the equally widespread [vos hértsakh?]. זײך follows the present tense verb but usually precedes the past participle in the past tense and the infinitive in the future tense (→ §§7.5, 7.6, 7.9, 14.3.1, 14.3.3.1, 14.5.1, 14.5.3.1).

7.3.1 זײך as an inherent part of the verb

Some verbs are historically accompanied by זײך (literally 'oneself; itself'). In these instances, זײך always occurs with the verb, and is listed with it in dictionaries. Many inherent זײך verbs have different meanings when used on their own, e.g. בעטן 'ask' vs. זײך בעטן 'beg'.

SAMPLES OF VERBS WITH INHERENT זײך

extricate oneself; get out of זײך אַרויסדרייען [aróydzreyən]

interfere; mix in זײך אַרײַנמישן

complain זײך באַמיען טר

be friends (with) זײך חבֿרן [khávərn] (מיט)

make noise זיך טומלען

try זיך סטאַרען

become tied up / entangled זיך פֿאַרמלאַנגטערן

hesitate; be indecisive זיך קווענקלען

7.3.2 זיך as intransitivity and reflexivity marker

זיך may designate intransitivity or a reflexive mood in a verb that is transitive when it appears alone (not to be confused with the grammatical reflexive → §14.8). זיך adds the notion that it is the subject him or herself that is undergoing the action.

SAMPLES OF זיך AS AN INTRANSITIVITY AND REFLEXIVITY MARKER

dress up elegantly זיך אויסטוּצן (cf. טוּצן 'polish' trans. v.)

hide (oneself) זיך באַהאַלטן (cf. באַהאַלטן 'hide' trans. v.)

get washed זיך וואַשן (cf. וואַשן 'wash' trans. v.)

wish for oneself זיך ווּנטשן (cf. ווּנטשן 'wish' trans. v.)

comfort / console oneself זיך טרײַסטן (cf. טרײַסטן 'console' trans. v.)

forgive oneself זיך פֿאַרגעבן (cf. פֿאַרגעבן 'forgive' trans. v.)

7.3.2.1 לערנען זיך and לערנען

לערנען (→ §5.1.3.2) may mean both 'teach' and 'study'. Where the meaning is unclear from context, זיך לערנען may be used for 'study' to avoid ambiguity. זיך לערנען occurs much more frequently in discussions of modern education. In discussion of traditional studies, לערנען appears on its own, e.g. לערנען חומש [khúmash] 'study Khúmash [the Five Books of Moses]', לערנען אַ בלאַט גמרא [gəməróra] 'master a section of the Talmud (lit. learn a leaf (= two sided page) of Talmud)'. Cf. §§ 4.3.2.2, 5.1.3.2, 15.17.15.

7.3.3 זײך as a solitude marker

זײך may be attached at will to a number of verbs to denote solitude, the state of being on one's own, or wishing to be alone, e.g. 'איך גײ 'I am going; walking' vs. ... זײך גײ 'איך 'I am walking along by myself...'. It may have the force of 'minding one's own business' and is commonly used to anticipate an interruption or harassment from another party.

7.3.4 Prepositional constructions with זײך

זײך combines with a number of prepositions to form widely used prepositional phrases. Occasionally, the construction is used creatively. The best known example comes from the literary movement associated with the introspectivist Yiddish literary journal *אין זײך*, launched in New York in 1920. Its name derives from *אין זײך* 'in oneself', hence – introspectivist. The group's adherents are known as the *אינזיכזיסטן* / *inzikhists* / 'introspectivists'.

SAMPLES OF PREPOSITIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS WITH זײך

around oneself; in one's circle / environment *אַרום זײך* [arúm]

at home; in one's own possession; *בײַ זײך* [ba]

with oneself *מיט זײך*

independently; alone *פֿאַר זײך* [fárzakh]

recover; get well *קומען צו זײך*

7.3.5 Inflection of זײך for person in dialectal usage

In Southern Eastern Yiddish (comprising Mideastern and Southeastern Yiddish), verbal additive זײך is generally reserved for the third person only and for the general sense of 'oneself'. The first person singular is *מײך* and the

second person singular **דיך**. Less consistently encountered are **אונדז** for first person plural and **אײך** for second person plural. Cf. e.g. **איך וואש מיך** 'I'm washing myself' for standard **איך וואש זיך**. Use of inflected forms of **זיך** may be encountered in the literary language.

7.4. NEGATION

The negator is **ניט** (N.E.) or **נישט** (S.). It is **קיין** [nit kin / nit ka] with an indefinite noun as object. **נישט** is only stressed when emphasis is required. On its position in the sentence → §§14.3.3, 14.5.3.

7.5. PRESENT TENSE

The present tense is formed by suffixation of the appropriate ending to the stem. There is no ending in the first person singular. Note that the formal second person singular **איר** form is taken from the plural. **זיך** follows the present tense verb. The first person singular is identical with the stem of the verb. The first person plural is usually identical with the infinitive (but cf. §§7.5.3, 14.9).

7.5.1 Present singular endings

first person:	no ending
second person familiar:	סט -
second person formal:	ט -
third person:	ט -

imperative familiar: no ending

imperative formal: ט-

SAMPLE OF PRESENT SINGULAR: זאָגן 'say'

I say איך זאָג

you (familiar) say דו זאָגסט

you (formal) say איר זאָגט

he says ער זאָגט

she says זי זאָגט

it is said / people say / one says מ'זאָגט

say! tell me! (familiar) זאָג

say! tell me! (formal) זאָגטו

7.5.2 Present plural endings

first person: (ע)-ן

second person: ט-

third person: (ע)-ן

imperative: ט-

SAMPLE OF PRESENT PLURAL: זאָגן 'say'

we say מיר זאָגן

you say איר זאָגט

they say זיי זאָגן

say! tell me! זאָגט!

SAMPLE VERBS WITH REGULAR PRESENT

visit באַזוכן

bless (esp. 'say the traditional grace after meals') בענטשן

yearn for; miss בענקען

remember געדענקען

live (= dwell) האוינען

dream [khóləmən] חלומען

dance טאַנצן

think טראַכטן

run לויפֿן

read [léyənən] לייענען

think (= be of the opinion) חיינען

eat עסן

go (by vehicle) פֿאַרן

come קומען

sleep שלאָפֿן

converse שמועסן

7.5.3 Reduced װ in verb endings

There are a few verbs with first and third person plural ending װן- that have infinitives in ן-. The װן- forms are expected with stems ending in a stressed vowel or diphthong (→ §2.2.9). Cf. װן גייען [géyən] 'we / they are going', װן זעען [zéən] 'we / they see', װן שטייען [shtéyən] 'we / they are standing' vs. infinitives גיין 'go', זען 'see', שטיין 'stand'. Note that the װ that appears in verb endings in the expected phonetic contexts should not be confused with the organic װ of stems that happen to end in װ. Where a stem ends in װ, the װ is retained throughout the conjugation, e.g. stem װאָרעם 'snore', infinitive װאָרען, third person װאָרעט ער װ זי 'he/she is snoring'.

7.5.4 Variants in the regular present tense

7.5.4.1 Stem ending in ט in third person singular

Stems ending in ט, conjugated for third person singular (where the present tense ending is also ט), would result in two consecutive t's. Double consonants do not generally occur (although they appear in writing in compounded words to preserve the integrity of both stems, e.g. תִּצְרְרוּן 'call together' from prefix תִּצְר- and infinitive רוּן → §8.1.5). The potential טט sequence that would result in the third person singular of stems ending in ט is averted by obligatory collapse in both speech and writing to a single ט, e.g. אַרְבַּעַט 'she works' (infinitive אַרְבַּעַטן), עַר הַאֲלֵט 'he holds / is holding' (infinitive הַאֲלֵטן), חוֹאֲרֵט 'people are waiting; everybody is waiting' (infinitive חוֹאֲרֵטן).

7.5.4.2 Stem ending in ד in third person singular

Stems ending in ד in third person singular (where the present tense ending is ט), would result in ד followed by ט. The דט sequence is retained in writing, but never pronounced, hence זי רעדט [zi ret] 'she talks / is talking'.

7.5.5 Anomalies

7.5.5.1 No ending in third person singular

The third person singular forms of a number of helping verbs that serve to form analytic verbs (→ §9.1) do not have the usual ט- ending.

דאַרף 'has to; must' (→ §9.1.2)

ווייל 'wants' (→ §9.1.6)

זאָל 'should' (→ §9.1.8)

חור 'must' (→ §9.1.12)

מעג 'may' (→ §9.1.13)

טאָר (ניט) 'may not' (→ §9.1.13)

קען 'can; is able' (→ §9.1.16)

7.5.5.2 Optional ך ending in third person singular

The irregular ן הייטן 'know (something that is not generally studied)' (→ §15.4) may or may not have the usual ך ending in third person singular, hence די הייטט = די הייטט ך 'she knows'.

7.5.6 Imperative additives טאָ and זשע

טאָ [tə; to] immediately precedes the imperative and זשע [zhe] immediately follows it. They can be used independently of each other or they may surround the imperative for increased effect. Both טאָ and זשע invoke affection, love or familiarity to support a suggestion, request or command, often having the force of 'please', 'do please' or 'come on'. טאָ occasionally translates 'then; in that case' in support of the imperative, and usually occurs after the other party has made some remark about the request. Both טאָ and זשע frequently serve to impose guilt upon the listener or reader in support of the request made (→ §11.4 on interrogative additives טאָ and זשע). In less intimate contexts, the non-emotional נוט זיי אַזוי (familiar) or זייט אַזוי נוט (lit. 'Be so good'), may be used for 'please'.

SAMPLES OF IMPERATIVE ADDITIVES טאָ and זשע

Then tell me טאָ זאָג מיר

Come on, please tell me זשע זאָג מיר

Then come on, please tell me (You owe it to me!) טאָ זשע זאָג מיר

7.6 PAST TENSE

7.6.1 Regular past

The regular past is formed by combining the appropriate **present tense** form of helping verb **הָאָבן** [hóbm] 'have' with the **past participle** of the main verb. The regular past participle is formed by prefixing **-נע-** and suffixing **ט** to the stem, giving the template **ט+STEM+נע**. The **-נע-** prefix disappears in the past participles of verbs with unstressed prefixes (→ §8.1), e.g. **מַאָרְשֵׁטִין** 'understand' → past participle **מַאָרְשֵׁטֶאָנען** 'understood'. It also disappears in verbs with stressed suffix **-ירן**, e.g. **אָרְנאַניזירן** [organizírn] 'organize' → past participle **אָרְנאַנאַזירט** 'organized'.

7.6.1.1 Singular present of **הָאָבן**

I have **איך האָב**
 you (familiar) have **דו האָסט**
 you (formal) have **איר האָט**
 he has **ער האָט**
 she has **זי האָט**
 people have / we have / one has **מ'האָט**

SAMPLE SINGULAR PAST USING **הָאָבן**: **זאָגן** 'say'

I (have) said **איך האָב געזאָגט**
 you (familiar) (have) said **דו האָסט געזאָגט**
 you (formal) (have) said **איר האָט געזאָגט**
 he says **ער האָט געזאָגט**
 she says **זי האָט געזאָגט**
 it was said / people said / one said **מ'האָט געזאָגט**

7.6.1.2 Plural present of האָבן

we have [hobm] מיר האָבן

you have איר האָט

they have [hobm] זיי האָבן

SAMPLE PLURAL PAST USING האָבן: זאָגן 'say'

we (have) said מיר האָבן געזאָגט

you (have) said איר האָט געזאָגט

they (have) said זיי האָבן געזאָגט

SAMPLE VERBS WITH REGULAR PAST AND THEIR PAST PARTICIPLES

געברענט → burn ברענען

געגלייבט → believe גלייבן

געחיינט → cry חיינען

געזוכט → look for; search זוכן

געטומלט → make noise טומלען

געלאַכט → laugh לאַכן

גערייניקט → clean (up) רייניקן

געשטערט → bother שטערן

7.6.2 Past participle in (ע)ן-

Some participles are historically of the shape גע+STEM+ען (or גע+STEM+ען if the stem ends in נ, ג, נג, נק, ל following a consonant, or a stressed vowel).

Participles in (ע)ן- are frequently accompanied by internal vowel shift.

7.6.2.1 Participle in (ע)ן with no vowel shifts

געבעטן → 'ask for; request' בעטן

- נעגראָבן → 'dig' גראָבן
 נעהאַלטן → 'hold; be of the opinion' האַלטן
 נעטרעגן → 'wear; carry; be pregnant' טראָגן
 נעוואַשן → 'wash (trans.)' וואַשן
 נעשאַפֿן → 'create' שאַפֿן
 נעשלאָגן → 'hit; strike; beat' שלאָגן

7.6.2.2 Participle in (ען) with י → י

- (ט → ד) אויסנעמיטן → 'avoid' אויסמייַדן
 נעביטן → 'change' בייַטן
 נעביסן → 'bite' בייַסן
 נעווייַזן → 'show' ווייַזן
 [gətríbm] נעטריבן → 'drive; propel; chase' טראַיַבן
 (ט → ד) געליטן → 'suffer' ליידן
 (געלייַגן var.) געלייען → 'lend' לייען
 [gəklíbm] געקליבן → 'collect' קלאַיַבן
 [gəklíbm] געקליבן → 'prepare to; ready oneself' זייַך קלאַיַבן
 [gəríbm] געריבן → 'rub' רייַבן זייַך
 גערייסן → 'tear' רייַסן
 געשחייַגן → 'remain silent' שחייַגן
 געשחייַסן → 'whip' שחייַסן
 (ט → ד) געשניטן → 'cut' שנייַדן
 [gəshríbm] געשריבן → 'write' שרייַבן
 (S. var.) געשרייען → 'yell; scream' שרייען

7.6.2.3 Participle in (ען) with אָ → אָ

- געמאַסטן → 'measure' מעסטן
 געשאַכטן → 'slaughter' שעכטן

געשאַנקען 'give (as a gift)' → שענקען

7.6.2.4 Participle in (ען) with י → ו

געבונדן 'tie (up)' → בינדן

געדדונגען 'infer' → דרינגען

געהונקען 'limp' → הינקען

געוואנטשן 'wish (somebody something)' → ווינטשן

געזונגען 'sing' → זינגען

געזונקען 'sink' → זינקען

געטרונקען 'drink' → טרינקען

געצוואונגען 'force' → צווינגען

געשלונגען 'swallow' → שלינגען

געוואונען 'win' → געווינען

7.6.2.5 Various vowel and consonant changes

זיך געבויגן 'bend down' → זיך בייגן

געברענגט (S. var. געבראַכט) 'bring' → ברענגען

אויפֿגעהויבן [úfgehoybm] 'lift' → אויפֿהייבן [úfheybm]

גענומען 'take' → נעמען

פֿאַרלירן (N.E. var. פֿאַרלוירן) 'lose' → פֿאַרליידן

פֿאַרשטאַנען 'understand' → פֿאַרשטיין

געשאַפֿן (N.E. var. געשאַפֿן) 'swear' → שווערן

7.7 MINORITY PAST TENSE: THE זײַן VERBS

A minority of verbs form their past by combining the appropriate present of זײַן 'be', rather than האָבן 'have' with the past participle (cf. French *être*,

German *sein*). All זײַן verbs have past participles in (ען), usually with vowel shift. All are intransitive.

7.7.1 Singular present of זײַן

I am אין בין

you (familiar) are דו ביסט

you (formal) are איר זײַט (S. var. זענט)

he is ער איז

she is זי איז

we are / people are / one is מ'איז

SAMPLE SINGULAR PAST USING זײַן: שלאַפֿן 'sleep'

I (have) slept אין בין געשלאַפֿן

you (familiar) (have) slept דו ביסט געשלאַפֿן

you (formal) (have) slept איר זײַט געשלאַפֿן

he (has) slept ער איז געשלאַפֿן

she (has) slept זי איז געשלאַפֿן

we/people (have) slept; one slept מ'איז געשלאַפֿן

7.7.2 Plural present of זײַן

we are מיר זײַנען (S. var. זענען)

you are איר זײַט

they are זיי זײַנען (S. var. זענען)

SAMPLE PLURAL PAST USING זײַן: שלאַפֿן 'sleep'

we (have) slept מיר זײַנען געשלאַפֿן

you (have) slept איר זיט געשלאָפֿן

they (have) slept זיי זינגען געשלאָפֿן

7.7.3 Basic זײַן verbs

The basic זײַן verbs generally have to do with motion, motionlessness, states of existence, and the life cycle. Where a זײַן verb acquires a transitive meaning, it automatically joins the more usual האָבן verbs (→ §7.6), e.g. transitive הענגען 'hang (something / somebody)' with האָבן vs. intransitive הענגען 'hang; be hanging' with זײַן.

BASIC VERBS WITH PAST WITH זײַן AND THEIR PAST PARTICIPLES

געבליבן [gəblíbm] 'remain' → [bláybm]

געגאנגען 'go; walk' → גיין

געלונגען 'be successful (in doing something)' → געלינגען

געראָטן 'turn out as planned' → געראָטן

געשען [gəshén] 'happen; occur' → געשען

געהאַנגען (S. var. הענגען) 'hang' → געהאַנגען

געוואָקסן 'grow' → געוואָקסן

געוואָרן 'become' → געוואָרן

געווען 'be' → זײַן

געזעסן 'sit' → זיצן

געלאָפֿן 'run' → לויפֿן

געלעגן 'lie' → ליגן

געפֿאלן 'fall' → פֿאלן

געפֿאַרן 'go (by vehicle)' → פֿאַרן

געפֿלויגן 'fly' → פֿליען

געקומען 'come' → קומען

געקראַפֿן 'climb; crawl' → קריכן

געשטאַרבן 'die' → שטאַרבן

געשטאַנען 'stand' → שטיין

געשלאָפֿן 'sleep' → שלאָפֿן

געשפּרונגען 'jump' → שפּרינגען

7.7.4 Derivative זײַן verbs

Derivative זײַן verbs are prefixed forms of basic זײַן verbs. As is often the case with prefixed verbs (→ §8), they may in the course of centuries wander far from the meanings of the base verbs from which they derive. Derivative זײַן verbs preserve the major grammatical features of the base verbs from which they derive – past with זײַן, past participle in (ען), and intransitivity. One of the זײַן verbs, ווערן 'become' can itself be used to form analytic verbs, all of which automatically form their past tense with זײַן (→ §9.1.7).

SAMPLES OF DERIVATIVE זײַן VERBS

אויסגעגאַנגען [óygzəgəngən] 'die; run out' → אויסגיין [óygzəyjn]

אויסגעשטאַנען 'put up with' → אויסשטיין

אַריינגעפֿאַלן 'commit a blunder; fall in; be deceived' → אַריינגעפֿאַלן

בייגעווען [bəygezəyjn] 'be present' → בייזיין

פֿאַרעקומען 'happen; occur' → פֿאַרקומען

7.8 PLUPERFECT PAST TENSE

The pluperfect past is formed by inserting געהאַט (past participle of האָבן) before the past participle of the main verb. The pluperfect is rarely encountered with זײַן verbs.

SAMPLES OF THE PLUPERFECT PAST

איך האָב איך געהאַט געוואָרנט איר זאָלט ניט גיין

I had warned you (formal) not to go

דאָס האָבן זיי אונדז געהאַט געזאָגט פֿריער

That is what they had told us beforehand

דעם דאָזיקן פֿילם האָבן מיר געהאַט געזען

We had seen that film

7.9 FUTURE TENSE

The future tense is formed by combining the appropriate part of **וועלן** 'will / shall' with the infinitive. The conjugation of **וועלן** is irregular. In normal speech, the appropriate part of **וועלן** used to form the future tense is phonetically reduced as transcribed (→ §§7.9.1 – 7.9.2). Future helping verb **וועלן** should not be confused with **וועלן** 'want' (→ §9.1.6). The infinitives are identical but the present tense conjugations differ markedly.

7.9.1 Singular future with **וועלן**

I will [ikh vel / khvel / ikhl] איך וועל

you (familiar) will [du vest / duəst / dust] דו וועסט

you (formal) will [ir vet / irət / irt] איר וועט

he will [er vet / erət / ert] ער וועט

she will [zi vet / ziat / zit] זי וועט

we will / people will / one will [məvét / mət] מ'וועט

SAMPLE SINGULAR FUTURE: זאָגן 'say'

- I will say איך וועל זאָגן
 you (familiar) will say דו וועסט זאָגן
 you (formal) will say איר וועט זאָגן
 he will say ער וועט זאָגן
 she will say זי וועט זאָגן
 people will say / we will say / one will say מ'וועט זאָגן

7.9.2 Plural future with וועלן

- we will [mir vein / mi:n (N.E.) / mirn (S.)] מיר וועלן
 you will [ir vet / irət / irt] איר וועט
 they will [zey vein / zey:n / zeln / zə:n] זיי וועלן

SAMPLE PLURAL FUTURE: זאָגן 'say'

- we will say מיר וועלן זאָגן
 you (plural/formal singular) will say איר וועט זאָגן
 they will say זיי וועלן זאָגן

7.10 IMMEDIATE FUTURE TENSE

The immediate future is formed by the appropriately conjugated present tense of גיין 'go'. It denotes the intention to carry out the action in the nearer rather than in the more distant future.

SAMPLES OF THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE

- I'm going to buy a book איך גיי קויפֿן אַ בוך
 I'm going to tell him off איר גייט אַרײַנזאָגן [em] אים
 They're going to think about it זיי גייען טראַכטן וועגן דעם

7.11 PLUPERFECT FUTURE TENSE

The pluperfect future is formed by the appropriate part of **וועלן** (→ §§7.9.1 – 7.9.2) plus infinitive **האַבן** plus the past participle of the main verb.

SAMPLES OF THE PLUPERFECT FUTURE

איך וועל איך האָבן געוואָרנט איר זאָלט ניט גיין

I will have warned you (formal) not to go

דאָס וועלן זיי אונדז האָבן געזאָגט פֿריער

That is what they will have told us beforehand

דעם דאָזיקן פֿילם וועלן מיר האָבן געזען

We will have seen that film

8 PREFIXED VERBS

8.0 OVERVIEW

A prefix can provide a verb with a special nuance or a completely new meaning. The modern meanings of many prefixed verbs may be distantly related, or not obviously related at all, to those of their unprefixes base forms. Many prefixes have become so attached to certain verbs that the verb on its own provides an imperfective mood suggesting that the action is somehow incomplete. There are two types of verbal prefixes: unstressed prefixes and stressed prefixes. Stressed prefixes emerge as separate words in the present tense.

8.1 UNSTRESSED PREFIXES

Unstressed prefixes are retained in all tenses. In the past tense, the past participle prefix **-ל** disappears; its function is assumed by the unstressed prefix itself. Some of the six unstressed prefixes do have some general primitive meaning. Use over the centuries has, however, obscured it in many instances. For many, a historical connection may be inferred (e.g. **אָנטידעקן** 'discover' from **אָנט** + **דעקן** 'cover'; cf. English 'dis' + 'cover').

8.1.1 **-אָנט**

General meaning: negation; distancing from; undoing of.

SAMPLES OF -אַנט

אַנטדעקן	[andékn] 'discover' (→ past participle אַנטדעקט)
זיך אַנטזאָגן	[andzág] 'refuse' (→ past participle אַנטזאָגט)
אַנטלאָפֿן חערן	'run away from' (→ past participle געחאָפֿן)
אַנטמוטיקן	'discourage' (→ past participle אַנטמוטיקט)
אַנטשלאָפֿן חערן	'fall asleep' (→ past participle געחאָפֿן)

8.1.2. -באַ

General meaning: transitivity of intransitive verbs; application of one thing to another; thoroughness of action; bringing a state of existence into being.

SAMPLES OF -באַ

באַהאַלטן	'hide' (→ past participle באַהאַלטן)
באַזוכֿן	'visit' (→ past participle באַזוכֿט)
באַליידיקן	'insult' (→ past participle באַליידיקט)
באַמערקן	'notice' (→ past participle באַמערקט)
באַרוואַיקן	'calm (someone) down' (→ past participle באַרוואַיקט)
זיך באַרוואַיקן	'calm (oneself) down' (→ past participle זיך באַרוואַיקט)

8.1.3. -גע-

-גע- is a relic prefix. Most of the stems of the -גע- verbs do not survive as unprefixated verbs.

SAMPLES OF -גע-

געבוירן חערן	(N.E. var. געבאָרן חערן) 'be born' (→ past participle)
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	געבוירן געחאָרן; N.E. var. געחאָרן
געדענקען	[gədeýnkən] 'remember' (→ past participle געדענקט)
געחאָר חערן	(N.E. var. געחאָר חערן) 'find out' (→ past participle געחאָרט)
געחאָר חערן	(N.E. var. געחאָר חערן) 'win' (→ past participle געחאָרט)
געטרויען	'trust' (→ past participle געטרויט)
זיך געזעגענען	'say goodbye (to one another)' (→ past participle זיך געזעגנט)
געפֿינען	'find' (→ past participle געפֿונען)
געשען	[gəshén] 'happen; occur' (→ past participle געשען)

8.1.4 דער- (frequently [da])

General meaning: completeness of action; carrying through of the action to its conclusion.

SAMPLES OF דער-

דערהרגענען	[dahárgənən] 'kill' (→ past participle דערהרגעט)
	[dahárgət]
זיך דערפֿרייען	'rejoice (esp. with the company or presence of another person)' (→ past participle זיך דערפֿרייט)
דערציילן	'tell (a story); recount' (→ past participle דערציילט)
דערקענען	'recognize' (→ past participle דערקענט)
דערשיסן	'shoot (dead)' (→ past participle דערשאָסן)

8.1.5 פֿאַר-

General meaning: completeness of action; initiation of a change in circumstances; debasement of the value or success of the action.

SAMPLES OF פִּאָר-

פִּאַרבעטערן	'improve' (→ past participle פִּאַרבעטערט)
פִּאַרגעסן	'forget' (→ past participle פִּאַרגעסן)
פִּאַרדעכטיקן	'suspect' (→ past participle פִּאַרדעכטיקט)
פִּאַרדרייען	'entangle; mess up' (→ past participle פִּאַרדרייט)
זיך פִּאַרדרייען	'get tied up in' (→ past participle זיך פִּאַרדרייט)
פִּאַרלוירן	'lose' (→ past participle פִּאַרלוירן; N.E. var. פִּאַרלאָרן)
פִּאַרפֿירן	'lead astray; seduce' (→ past participle פִּאַרפֿירט)
פִּאַרשטאַרקן	'strengthen' (→ past participle: פִּאַרשטאַרקט)
פִּאַרשענערן	'make (more) beautiful' (→ past participle: פִּאַרשענערט)

8.1.6 צע-

General meaning: coming apart; spreading out; in all directions; spacing out of the verbal action; total undoing of something.

SAMPLES OF צע-

צעברעכן	'break' (→ past participle צעבראָכן)
צעניטן	'spill all over the place' (→ past participle צענאָטן)
צעטומלען	'confound' (→ past participle צעטומלט)
צעטרענצלען	'squander completely' (→ past participle צעטרענצלט)
צעכאַפּטן	'grab up; buy out' (→ past participle צעכאַפּט)
צעקאַליעטשען	'ruin; cripple' (→ past participle צעקאַליעטשעט)

8.2 STRESSED PREFIXES

Like their unstressed counterparts, stressed prefixes are deeply rooted in the history of the language, and the primitive senses of the prefixes have often been lost. The heavy stress of stressed prefixes relegates the stem to

secondary stress status (→ §§2.3.1.3 – 2.3.1.4). In the present tense, the stressed prefix separates off and appears *after* the verb. In the past tense, -נע is infixed *between* the stressed prefix and the stem to form a one-word past participle. The status of the stressed prefix as a distinct entity is so strong that it often blocks consonant assimilation of voice or voicelessness (→ §2.2.1 – 2.2.4), especially when sentence rhythm provides for heavy wordstress; cf. e.g. heavily stressed [óys gə mátert] 'completely exhausted' vs. less heavily stressed [óyzgəmatərt] 'exhausted' for אויסגעמאטערט (past participle of אויסמאכערן). Model verb is צוזאגן [tsúzogn] 'promise'.

SAMPLE OF CONJUGATION OF STRESSED PREFIX: צוזאָגן

present singular

I promise	[zɔg tsú]	איך זאָג צו
you (familiar) promise	[zɔkst tsú]	דו זאָגסט צו
you (formal) promise	[zɔkt tsú]	איר זאָנט צו
he promises	[zɔkt tsú]	ער זאָנט צו
she promises	[zɔkt tsú]	זי זאָנט צו
it is promised / people promise / one promises	[məzɔkt tsú]	מ'זאָנט צו
Promise! (familiar)	[zɔg tsú]	זאָג צו!
Promise! (formal)	[zɔkt tsú]	זאָנט צו!

present plural

we promise	[zɔgn tsú]	מיר זאָגן צו
you promise	[zɔkt tsú]	איר זאָנט צו
they promise	[zɔgn tsú]	זיי זאָגן צו
Promise!	[zɔkt tsú]	זאָנט צו!

present participle

(while) promising [tsúzognɔndik] צוזאָגנדיק

past singular

- I (have) promised [tsúgəzokt] איך האָב צוגעזאָגט
 you (have) promised (familiar) דו האָסט צוגעזאָגט
 you (have) promised (formal) איר האָט צוגעזאָגט
 he (has) promised ער האָט צוגעזאָגט
 she (has) promised זי האָט צוגעזאָגט
 it was promised / people promised / one promised מ'האָט צוגעזאָגט

past plural

- we (have) promised מיר האָבן צוגעזאָגט
 you (have) promised איר האָט צוגעזאָגט
 they (have) promised זיי האָבן צוגעזאָגט

future singular

- I will promise איך העל צוזאָגן
 you (familiar) will promise דו העסט צוזאָגן
 you (formal) will promise איר העט צוזאָגן
 he will promise ער העט צוזאָגן
 she will promise זי העט צוזאָגן
 they will promise / we will promise / one will promise מ'העט צוזאָגן

future plural

- we will promise מיר העלן צוזאָגן
 you will promise איר העט צוזאָגן
 they will promise זיי העלן צוזאָגן

8.2.1 אויס-

General meaning: completeness of action; lengthiness of the action; undoing of a prior situation; suddenness; outward action.

SAMPLES OF אויס-

אויסהרגענען	[óys hargənən] 'annihilate; wipe out completely' (→ past participle אויסגעהרגעט [óys gə hargət] / [óygzəhargət])
אויסוואשן	'wash (thoroughly)' (→ past participle אויסגעוואשן)
זיך אויסחיינען	'cry one's eyes out' (→ past participle זיך אויסגעחיינט)
אויסזאגן	'reveal' (→ past participle אויסגעזאגט [óygzəzəkt])
אויסלעשן	'extinguish' (→ past participle אויסגעלעשן)
אויסמײדן	'avoid' (→ past participle אויסגעמײדט)
אויסשרײען	'yell suddenly' (→ past participle אויסגעשרײען; S. var. אויסגעשרײגן)

8.2.2 אויפֿ- [úf]

General meaning: completeness of action; Cf. English *up*. Note that the pronunciation [úf] does not reflect the spelling.

SAMPLES OF אויפֿ-

אויפֿהייבן	[úfheybm] 'pick up; lift' (→ past participle אויפֿגעהויבן [úfgəhoybm])
אויפֿחײזן	[úfvayzn] 'demonstrate; document' (→ past participle אויפֿגעחײזן [úfgəvizn])
אויפֿעפֿענען	[úfefənən] 'open up' (→ past participle אויפֿגעפֿענט [úfgəfənt])
אויפֿשטיין	[úfshteyn] 'get up' (→ past participle אויפֿגעשטאנען [úfgəshtanən])

8.2.3 אומ- 1.2.3

General meaning: return to former state.

SAMPLES OF אומ-

- אומברענגען 'systematically / officially kill' (→ past participle אומגעבראַכט; S. var. אומגעברענגט [úmgəbreynkt])
- אומקומען '(systematically/officially) be killed' (→ past participle אומגעקומען)
- אומקערן 'give back; return' (→ past participle אומגעקערט)
- זיך אומקערן 'come back; return' (→ past participle אומגעקערט)

8.2.4 אונטער-

General meaning: under; at the bottom of; secretly; moderately; not quite fully.

SAMPLES OF אונטער-

- אונטערהינקען 'limp; be less than proficient' (→ past participle אונטערגעהונקען)
- זיך אונטערפֿוילן 'be lazy temporarily / for a specific task' (→ past participle זיך אונטערגעפֿוילט)
- אונטעררוקן 'secretly hand over (to)' (→ past participle אונטערגערוקט)
- אונטערשריבן [úntərshraybm] 'sign (one's name)' (→ past participle אונטערגעשריבן [úntərgəshribm])

8.2.5 איבער-

General meaning: completeness of the action; repetition of the action; action through time or space; excessiveness.

SAMPLES OF -איבער

איבערזעצן	'translate' (→ past participle איבערזעצט)
איבערטרייבן	[ʔbɛrtraybm] 'exaggerate' (→ past participle איבערנעטרייבן [ʔbɛrgɛtribm])
איבערלאָפֿן	'have a snack' (→ past participle איבערנעלאָפֿט)
איבערמאַכן	'make over; renew' (→ past participle איבערנעמאַכט)
איבערקוקן	'look over' (→ past participle איבערנעקוקט)

8.2.6 -איין

General meaning: enter a new state; change of situation.

SAMPLES OF -איין

זיך איינגעוויינען	'get used to' (→ past participle זיך איינגעוויינט)
איינחויקלען	'wrap up' (→ past participle איינחויקלט)
זיך איינלעבן	'get used to living (in a place)' (→ past participle זיך איינגעלעבט [áyngələpt])
איינרעדן	'talk into' (→ past participle איינגערעדט [áyngəret])
איינשטימען	'agree' (→ past participle איינגעשטימט)
זיך איינעקשנען	[áynakshənən] 'be stubborn about something' (→ past participle זיך איינגעעקשנט [áyngəakshnt])

8.2.7 -אַן

General meaning: specification of the action.

SAMPLES OF -אַן

אַנדערודלען	'incite (someone's anger against a third party)' (→ past participle אַנגערודלט)
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אָנהייבן	[ónheybm] 'start' (→ past participle אָנגעהויבן [óngəhoybm])
אָנווייזן	'point out' (→ past participle אָנגעווייזן)
אָנטאָפּן	[óntapm] 'touch' (→ past participle אָנגעטאָפּט)
אָנשרייבן	[ónshraybm] 'write' (→ past participle אָנגעשריבן [óngəshribm])

8.2.8 אָפּ-

General meaning: completion of the action. Note that in the past tense, the prefix may be pronounced [óp] or [ó].

SAMPLES OF אָפּ-

אָפּאַרבעטן	'complete a period of work' (→ past participle אָפּגעאַרבעט [ó(p)gəarbət])
אָפּטאָן	'play a trick' (→ past participle אָפּגעטאָן [ó(p)gəton])
אָפּלייגן	'postpone; procrastinate' (→ past participle אָפּגעלייגט [ó(p)gəleykt])
אָפּענדיקן	'finish completely' (→ past participle אָפּגענדיקט [ó(p)gəendikt])
אָפּעסן	'finish eating' (→ past participle אָפּגעעסן [ó(p)gəgesn])

8.2.9 בײַ-

General meaning: by; at.

SAMPLES OF בײַ-

בײַזיין	'attend' (→ past participle בײַגעווען [báygəven])
בײַלייגן	'enclose' (→ past participle בײַגעלייגט [báygəleykt])

- ביקומען 'overcome' (→ past participle **ביקומען**)
 ביישטייערן 'make a contribution' (→ past participle **בייגעשטייערט**)

8.2.10 פֿאַר -

General meaning: anticipate; come before.

SAMPLES OF פֿאַר -

- פֿאַרלייגן 'propose' (→ past participle **פֿאַרגעלייגט** [fórgəloykt])
 פֿאַרשלאָגן 'propose (in more formal/parliamentary style)' (→ past
 participle **פֿאַרגעשלאָגן** [fórgəshlogn])
 פֿאַרשטעלן 'introduce' (→ past participle **פֿאַרגעשטעלט**)
 זיך פֿאַרשטעלן 'imagine; suppose' (→ past participle **פֿאַרגעשטעלט**)
 פֿאַרקומען 'occur' (→ past participle **פֿאַרגעקומען**)

8.2.11 צו -

SAMPLES OF צו -

- זיך צוהערן 'listen to; pay (careful) attention to; obey' (→ past
 participle **צוגעהערט**)
 צוזאָגן 'promise' (→ past participle **צוגעזאָגט** [tsúgəzokt])
 צוטשעפּען(ען) 'add on; affix; attach' (→ past
 participle **צוגעטשעפּעט** [tsúgətshépət])
 זיך צוטשעפּען(ען) 'become attached; become a nuisance/pest (to)' (→ past
 participle **צוגעטשעפּעט**)
 צולויפּן 'run over (to)' (→ past participle **צוגעלאָפּן**)
 צונעמען 'take away' (→ past participle **צוגענומען**)
 זיך צופאַסן 'fit in; conform' (→ past participle **צוגעפאַסט**)
 (זיך) צוקוקן 'watch; observe' (→ past participle **צוגעקוקט**)

8.2.12 Free stressed prefixes

The free stressed prefixes retain much of the historic force of their meanings, and can usually be prefixed at will to verbs. They often mark the direction of movement or action, or some prepositional aspect (e.g. with what or whom). Most can double as adverbs or prepositions on their own. A number of them, however, have entered into fixed combinations with specific verbs, yielding new meanings that cannot always be inferred from the base verb, e.g. דוורכ־קומען [dú(r)khkumən] 'work it out; compromise' (from דוורך 'through' plus קומען 'come'), נאָכ־קרימען 'mimic' (from נאָך 'after' plus קרימען 'make faces'), פֿאַרויסזאָגן [foróyszogn] 'predict' (from פֿאַרויס 'before' plus זאָגן 'say').

FREE STRESSED PREFIXES

through [(a)dú(r)kh] - דוורכ־

(over) there; to there; thither אַהינ־

(over) here; to here; hither אַהער־

away אַוועק־

with מיט־

opposite; vis-à-vis; in reply to אַ(נט)קעגנ־

down אַנידער־

down אַראָפֿ־

out אַרויס־

upward אַרויפֿ־ [arúf]

around אַרומ־

in אַריין־

down אַרונטער־

over אַריבער־

after נאָכ־

past; by פֿאַרבײַ־

פֿאַרויס - before

פֿונאַנדער - apart; in all directions

צוזאַמען - together

צונויפֿ - bring together

SAMPLES OF FREE STRESSED PREFIXES

- אָדורפֿ (א) דורפֿ 'pass through (by vehicle)'
 -אַהינ: אַהינשחיימען 'swim there'; אַהינגיין 'go there'
 -אַהער: אַהערקומען 'come here'
 -אַזעק: אַזעקוואַרפֿן [avéggeyn] 'go away; leave'; אַזעקניין 'throw away'
 -אַ(נט)קעגנ: אַ(נט)קעגנשטעלן 'oppose'; זיך אַנידערזעצן 'sit down'
 -אַנידער: אַנידערזעצן 'sit down'; אַראָפּברענגען 'bring down'; אַראָפּשפּרינגען 'jump down'
 -אַרויס: אַרויסלאָזן 'let out; release'; אַרויסוואַרפֿן 'throw out'
 -אַרויפֿ: אַרויפֿטראָגן [arúftrog] 'carry up'; אַרויפֿקריכן [arúfkrihn] 'climb up'
 -אַרומ: אַרומפֿאַרן 'travel around'; אַרומזוכן 'look around for; search'; אַרומזען 'around'
 -אַרונטער: אַרונטערלאָזן 'let down; lower'; אַרונטערזאָגן 'tell off; scold' (lit. 'tell in'); אַרייַנלאָזן 'let in'
 -אַריבער: אַריבערשפּרינגען 'jump over'; מיטנעמען 'take with'; מיטל־ידן 'suffer together with'
 -נאַפֿ: נאַפֿלויפֿן 'run after'
 -פֿאַרבײַ: פֿאַרבײַפֿאַרן [farbáyforn] 'travel past; pass through'
 -פֿונאַנדער: פֿונאַנדערלויפֿן זיך 'run in all directions; scatter'

פֿאַרויס-	פֿאַרויסלויפֿן 'run in front of'
צוזאַמענ-	צוזאַמענאַרבעטן 'work (well) together'
צונויפ-	צונויפזאַמלען [tsənóy/zamɪən] 'gather together'

8.2.12.1 Free stressed prefixes without main verbs

The free stressed prefixes -אַדורך- (but not its parallel form -דורך-), -אַחעק-, -אַרױפֿ-, -אַרױס-, -אַרױפֿ-, -אַרײַנ-, -אַרונטער, and -אַריבער can be used on their own without a main verb. Their past tense is formed with helping verb זײַן (→ §7.7). Use of free stressed prefixes without a main verb often provides a sentence with increased dynamic force. Some have become established in idiomatic expressions, e.g. ער איז אַראָפּ פֿון זײַנען 'He's off his rocker' (lit. 'gone down from sense'; cf. English 'out of his mind').

SAMPLES OF STRESSED PREFIXES WITHOUT MAIN VERBS

She left yesterday זי איז געכטן אַחעק

He went up the stairs ער איז אַרויף [arú] די טרעפּ

They entered the house זיי זײַנען אַרײַן אין הויז

8.3 PERFECTIVE VS. NAKED VERBS

Many unstressed and stressed prefixes have become so attached to certain verbs as to render the verb on its own rare and somewhat strange sounding to native speakers. In these cases, the prefixed versions have in effect become the present day base forms of the verb, and the unprefixed 'naked' forms are reserved for situations where the action is incomplete or vague. Thus, אָנשרײַבן [ónshraybm] is the usual verb for 'write'. The use of שרײַבן on its own may be reserved for general situations e.g. װאַס שרײַבסטו? [vos shráypstə?] 'What are you writing?' Use of the unprefixed form may also

signify incompleteness of the action, e.g. **אֵין בָּרִיחַ אֶנְעִשְׂרִיבֵן** 'I was writing a letter', which may imply that the letter was somehow not completed. The equivalent of 'I wrote a letter' is **אֵין הָאָב אֶנְנִעֲשְׂרִיבֵן** **אֵין בָּרִיחַ**. Analogously **צוֹקוּמַעַן** is the basic form for 'come (somewhere)', **צוֹנִיִן** for 'go (somewhere)'; **קוּמַעַן** and **גִּיִן** on their own are more general concepts.

9 ANALYTIC VERBS

9.0 OVERVIEW

Unlike synthetic verbs which synthesize the main verb and its person, tense and number into a single word by prefixing or suffixing the stem (→ §7), analytic verbs 'analyze these out' by factoring down to the individual grammatical components, which are maintained by a helping verb. In all analytic verbs, by definition, the main verb is uninflected – neither prefixed nor suffixed nor internally changed in any way, irrespective of person, tense or number. Person, tense and number are rather indicated by the inflection of the appropriate helping verb which accompanies it. Many everyday synthetic verbs are used analytically when the speaker wishes to modify or specify the meaning along the lines of one of the available helping verbs that serve as formers of specialized analytic verbs. Some verbs, on the other hand, are historically analytic. They are the inherently analytic verbs, which do not exist as synthetic verbs. Analytic verbs require no detailed analysis or conjugation because they don't change. It is the helping verbs that inflect, and they tend to be irregular.

9.1 SPECIALIZED ANALYTIC VERBS

9.1.1 Analytic verb former נעבן

נעבן [gébm] 'give a' designates the action, in conceptual terms, as a single (and usually brief) event, rather than an ongoing affair. Its present is formed

with the present tense of irregular געבן as helping verb plus indefinite article אַ plus the stem of the main verb. In the past tense, the participle געגעבן [gəgəbm] usually follows the stem. In the future, the inflected part of futurizing וועלן must precede the אַ plus stem sequence. The infinitive usually follows. Many analytic געבן verbs have alternative forms with טאָן (→ §9.1.9).

9.1.1.1 singular of helping verb געבן 'give'

I give	איך גיב
you (familiar) give	דו גיסט
you (formal) give	איר גיט
he gives	ער גיט
she gives	זי גיט
people give / we give / one gives	מ'גיט
give! (familiar)	גיב!
give! (formal)	גיט!

9.1.1.2 plural of helping verb געבן 'give'

we give	מיר גיבן
you give	איר גיט
they give	זיי גיבן
give!	גיט!

SAMPLE ANALYTIC VERB WITH געבן: 'give a kiss' אַ קיש

present singular

I am giving a kiss	איך גיב אַ קיש
You (familiar) are giving a kiss	דו גיסט אַ קיש
You (formal) are giving a kiss	איר גיט אַ קיש

He is giving a kiss ער גיט אַ קוש

She is giving a kiss זי גיט אַ קוש

One gives a kiss; You should give a kiss מ'גיט אַ קוש

Give a kiss! (familiar) גיב אַ קוש!

Give a kiss! (formal) גיט אַ קוש!

present plural

We are giving a kiss מיר גיבן אַ קוש

You are giving a kiss איר גיט אַ קוש

They are giving a kiss זיי גיבן אַ קוש

Give a kiss! גיט אַ קוש!

past singular

I gave a kiss איך האָב אַ קוש געגעבן

You (familiar) gave a kiss דו האָסט אַ קוש געגעבן

You (formal) gave a kiss איר האָט אַ קוש געגעבן

He gave a kiss ער האָט אַ קוש געגעבן

She gave a kiss זי האָט אַ קוש געגעבן

Everybody kissed; People gave a kiss; We gave a kiss מ'האָט אַ קוש געגעבן

past plural

We gave a kiss מיר האָבן אַ קוש געגעבן

You gave a kiss איר האָט אַ קוש געגעבן

They gave a kiss זיי האָבן אַ קוש געגעבן

future singular

I will give a kiss [khvei akúzh gebm] איך וועל אַ קוש געבן

You (familiar) will give a kiss [dust akúzh gebm] דו וועסט אַ קוש געבן

You (formal) will give a kiss [irət akúzh gebm] איר העט א קוש געבן

He will give a kiss [erət akúzh gebm] ער העט א קוש געבן

She will give a kiss [zit akúzh gebm] זי העט א קוש געבן

We will/People will kiss [mət akúzh gebm] מ'העט א קוש געבן

future plural

We will give a kiss [miln / mirn a kúzh gebm] מיר העלן א קוש געבן

You will give a kiss [irət a kúzh gebm] איר העט א קוש געבן

They will give a kiss [zeln a kúzh gebm] זיי העלן א קוש געבן

SAMPLE ANALYTIC VERBS WITH געבן

promise (lit. 'give a word') א האַרט געבן

advise; give (a piece of) advice אן עצה [éytsə] געבן

cope; manage זיך אן עצה [éytsə] געבן

slap / give a smack א מאַטש געבן

smile / give a smile א שמייל געבן

9.1.2 Analytic verb former דאַרפֿן

דאַרפֿן (usually pronounced [dáfn]) 'must; have to; should; ought to' is used with the infinitive of the main verb. The third person singular has no ט-, hence ער־זי־מ'ס דאַרף.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF דאַרפֿן

I have to go איך דאַרף אַזעק

Why do you have to go? פֿאַרוואָס דאַרפֿסטו גיין?

What do you need it for? [avós dáfstəs?] אויף וואָס דאַרפֿסטו עס

I must tell you the truth איך דאַרף דיר זאָגן דעם אמת [éməs]

We really have to go מ'דאַרף טאַקע גיין

9.1.3 Analytic verb former האלטן אין

האלטן אין 'in the process of; in the middle of; in the midst of' is formed by the appropriate part of האלטן plus preposition אין plus infinitive. It can be applied to any verb that expresses an ongoing action, and often corresponds with English *-ing*.

SAMPLES OF USE OF האלטן אין

She's in the middle of writing a letter זי האלט אין שרייבן אַ ברייף

We're eating now מיר האלטן איצטער אין עסן

9.1.4 Analytic verb former האלטן אין איין

האלטן אין איין 'keep (on); all the time; constantly' is formed by the appropriate part of האלטן plus איין plus infinitive. It can be applied to any verb that expresses an ongoing action.

SAMPLES OF USE OF האלטן אין איין

Why do you keep jumping? פאַרוואָס האַלטסטו אין איין שפּרינגען?

They keep laughing זיי האַלטן אין איין לאַכן

9.1.5 Analytic verb former האָלטן

האָלטן 'would' is formed with either the infinitive or the past participle of the main verb. It is used to express a conditional or contingent mood. The past participle is used most frequently. The infinitive tends to be reserved for a rather more parliamentary style.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF האָלטן

What would *you* (familiar) say? וואָס האָלטסטו [voɪstə] געזאָגן?

And you (familiar) would go? און דו האָלטסט [voɪst] געגאַנגען?

I would deal with it differently איך האָלט אַנדערש געהאַנדלט

I would argue otherwise איך חאָלט טענהן [táynən] אַנדערש
 We would wish to know the truth מיר חאָלטן וועלן חייטן דעם אמת [éməs]

9.1.5.1 Alternative conditional with ווען

A conditional mood may also be formed by conjunction ווען, lit. 'when; if' that also has the sense of 'if it were the case that'. It occurs in this sense in the present tense only, but the present with ווען is frequently used to cover situations in the past. ווען often serves as the if-clause in a sentence in which חאָלטן occurs in the then-clause (→ §§14.4.5 – 14.4.5.1).

SAMPLES OF THE ALTERNATIVE CONDITIONAL WITH ווען

If I were Rothschild... ווען איך בין ראָטשילד

ווען איך הייס דעמאָלט חאָלט היינט געווען אַנדערש

If I had known then, things would be different today

9.1.6 Analytic verb former וועלן

וועלן 'want to' is used with the infinitive of the main verb. Although the infinitive is identical with וועלן 'will (future tense helping verb)' (→ §7.9), the rest of its conjugation differs markedly. The stem vowel of וועלן 'want to' is [ɪ] in the present, [ʌ] in the past and [ɛ] in the infinitive, hence in the future. While the conjugated parts of וועלן 'will' are phonetically reduced in everyday speech, those of וועלן 'want to' are not. Note the contrasting transcriptions of each in the future tense of the sample provided.

SAMPLE OF USE OF וועלן 'WANT TO': MODEL MAIN VERB גיין 'GO'

present singular

I want to go איך וויל גיין

You (familiar) want to go דו ווילסט גיין

You (formal) want to go איר חילט גיין

He wants to go ער חיל גיין

She wants to go זי חיל גיין

People want to go / Everyone wants to go מ'חיל גיין

present plural

We want to go מיר חילן גיין

You want to go איר חילט גיין

They want to go זיי חילן גיין

past singular

I wanted to go [ikhob gəvólt géyn] איר האָב געוואָלט (N.E. var. גיין)

You (familiar) wanted to go [dust gəvólt géyn] דו האָסט געוואָלט גיין

You (formal) wanted to go [irət gəvólt géyn] איר האָט געוואָלט גיין

He wanted to go [erət gəvólt géyn] ער האָט געוואָלט גיין

She wanted to go [ziət gəvólt géyn] זי האָט געוואָלט גיין

People/We wanted to go [mət gəvólt géyn] מ'האָט געוואָלט גיין

past plural

We wanted to go [mir hobm gəvólt géyn] מיר האָבן געוואָלט גיין

You wanted to go [irət gəvólt géyn] איר האָט געוואָלט גיין

They wanted to go [zey hobm gəvólt géyn] זיי האָבן געוואָלט גיין

future singular

I will want to go [ikhI véln géyn] איר וועל וועלן גיין

You (familiar) will want to go [dust véln géyn] דו וועסט וועלן גיין

You (formal) will want to go [irət véln géyn] איר וועט וועלן גיין

He will want to go [erət véln géyn] ער וועט וועלן גיין

She will want to go [ziət véln géyn] זי העט וועלן גיין

People will want to go [mət véln géyn] מ'העט וועלן גיין

future plural

We will want to go [miln / mirn véln géyn] מיר וועלן וועלן גיין

You will want to go [irət véln géyn] איר העט וועלן גיין

They will want to go [zein véln géyn] זיי וועלן וועלן גיין

9.1.7 Analytic verb former ווערן

ווערן 'become; be; get' is used with the past participle of the main verb to form a passive. In the present tense, the appropriately inflected part of ווערן 'become' precedes the verb. In the past and future it usually follows it. ווערן forms its past with זיין (→ §7.7). Note that a few deeply rooted ווערן constructions coexist in the modern language with corresponding synthetic verbs, e.g. ווערן אַנטלויפֿן = אַנטלויפֿן 'run away; escape'. Passives may also be formed using pronoun 'ח' (→ §6.1.6.2). Model verb is אַרײַנגעדרייט ווערן 'become entangled / tied up in something; become involved'.

SAMPLE OF USE OF ווערן:

אַרײַנגעדרייט ווערן 'BECOME INVOLVED'

present singular

I'm becoming involved איך ווער אַרײַנגעדרייט

You (familiar) are becoming involved דו ווערסט אַרײַנגעדרייט

You (formal) are becoming involved איר ווערט אַרײַנגעדרייט

He is becoming involved ער ווערט אַרײַנגעדרייט

She is becoming involved זי ווערט אַרײַנגעדרייט

One becomes involved; It's easy to get entangled! מ'ווערט אַרײַנגעדרייט

Go ahead and become involved! (familiar) *(sarcastic)* ווער אַרײַנגעדרייט!

Go ahead and become involved! (formal) *(sarcastic)* ווערט אַרײַנגעדרייט!

present plural

We're becoming involved מיר ווערן אַרײַנגעדרייט

You're becoming involved איר ווערט אַרײַנגעדרייט

They're becoming involved זיי ווערן אַרײַנגעדרייט

Go ahead and become involved! *(sarcastic)* ווערט אַרײַנגעדרייט!

past singular

I became involved איך בין אַרײַנגעדרייט געוואָרן

You (familiar) became involved דו ביסט אַרײַנגעדרייט געוואָרן

You (formal) became involved איר זינט אַרײַנגעדרייט געוואָרן

He became involved ער איז אַרײַנגעדרייט געוואָרן

She became involved זי איז אַרײַנגעדרייט געוואָרן

People became involved; We became involved מ'איז אַרײַנגעדרייט געוואָרן

past plural

We became involved מיר זינען אַרײַנגעדרייט געוואָרן

You became involved איר זינט אַרײַנגעדרייט געוואָרן

They became involved זיי זינען אַרײַנגעדרייט געוואָרן

future singular

I will become involved איך וועל אַרײַנגעדרייט ווערן

You (familiar) will become involved דו וועסט אַרײַנגעדרייט ווערן

You (formal) will become involved איר וועט אַרײַנגעדרייט ווערן

He will become involved ער וועט אַרײַנגעדרייט ווערן

She will become involved זי וועט אַרײַנגעדרייט ווערן

(I'm warning you,) we'll become involved אַרײַנגעדרייט חערן מ'חעט

future plural

We will become involved מיר וועלן אַרײַנגעדרייט חערן

You will become involved איר וועט אַרײַנגעדרייט חערן

They will become involved זיי וועלן אַרײַנגעדרייט חערן

SAMPLE VERBS WITH חערן

fall asleep אָנטשלאַפֿן חערן

be rescued; be saved געראַטעוועט חערן

be fed up with (plus reflexive → §14.8) [náməs] נמאט חערן

be impressed; admire נאָפּעל [nispólm] חערן

be / become confused צעמישט חערן

9.1.8 Analytic verb former זאָלן

זאָלן 'should; would; ought; let (...); may (...)' is used with the infinitive of the main verb. It occurs far more frequently than English 'should' (which itself frequently corresponds with דאַרפֿן → §9.1.2). In numerous contexts זאָלן corresponds with English use of the infinitive alone. Frequently, זאָלן provides a subjunctive mood. The third person singular has no ט-, hence זאָל 'ער־זי־מ'ט'.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF זאָלן

How should I know? ווון וואָנעט זאָל איך הייסן?

What should we do? [vózl mən tón] וואָס זאָל מען טאָן?

I told him to wait איך האָב אים [khóbm] געזאָגט ער זאָל וואַרטן

Let's have it your way (lit. 'Let it be like this') זאָל זיין אַזוי

Let them yell! זאָלן זיי שרייען!

COMMON EXPRESSIONS WITH זאָלן

זאָל זיין אזוי

Let's have it your way (lit. 'Let it be like this')

זאָל זיין מיט מזל! [mazi]

Best of luck to you! (lit. 'It should be with luck!')

זאָל איך אזוי וויסן פֿון צרות [tsóras]

I have no idea (lit. 'So I should know of troubles')

מ'זאָל זיך נאָר טרעפֿן אויף שמחות [af símkhəs]

Let us meet only on happy occasions (said on sad occasions)

9.1.8.1 זאָלן as an alternative imperative

Second person use of זאָלן (lit. 'you should') is frequently used as an alternative to the grammatical imperative (→ §7.5). Imperative use of זאָלן frequently has a softer tone than the grammatical imperative, implying friendly advice rather than a command. Familiar second person pronoun דו is usually omitted and זאָלסט used on its own. When דו is retained the resulting mood is one of scolding or warning (as harsh or harsher than the grammatical imperative).

SAMPLES OF זאָלן AS AN ALTERNATIVE IMPERATIVE

זאָלסט קומען פֿרי! (familiar) Come early!

דו זאָלסט קומען פֿרי! (familiar) (I'm telling you,) come early!

זאָלסט ניט גיין! (familiar) Don't go!

דו זאָלסט ניט גיין! (I warn you,) don't go!

איר זאָלט זאָגן דעם אמת [éməs] Tell the truth! (formal)

9.1.9 Analytic verb former אַ טאָן

אַ טאָן 'do a' is often interchangeable with אַ געבן (→ §9.1). It too designates the action as a single event, rather than an ongoing affair. Its present is formed with the present tense of irregular אַ טאָן as helping verb plus indefinite article אַ plus stem. In the past, the participle געטאָן [gətón] usually follows the stem. In the future, the inflected part of futurizing וועלן must precede the אַ plus stem sequence, while the infinitive אַ טאָן usually follows. Where both אַ טאָן and אַ געבן are used with the same verb, אַ טאָן tends to have a loftier tone, אַ געבן a more everyday tone. Thus, אַ קוש טאָן alone would be used in מזוזה די [məzúza] (traditional doorpost amulet) when entering or leaving a room'. אַ קוש טאָן with reference to humans may denote a higher level of love than אַ קוש געבן which denotes only the act of kissing. There is also a grammatical difference. אַ געבן takes dative without a preposition (i.e. the understood preposition → §5.1.3.1); אַ טאָן does not. Cf. e.g. אַ קוש טאָן די שוועסטער vs. אַ קוש געבן די שוועסטער 'give one's sister a kiss'. There is no difference for masculine nouns, where both accusative and dative have דעם (→ §§ 5.3.2–5.3.3).

9.1.9.1 present singular of helping verb אַ טאָן

I do / am doing איך טו

you (familiar) do / are doing דו טוטסט

you (formal) do / are doing איר טוט

he does / is doing ער טוט

she does / is doing זי טוט

people do / we do / one does מ'טוט

Do! (familiar) טו!

Do! (formal) טוט!

9.1.9.2 present plural of helping verb טאָן

we do / are doing מיר טוען

you do / are doing איר טוט

they do / are doing זיי טוען

Do! טוט!

SAMPLE OF אַ קוק טאָן: MODEL VERB

present singular

I'm having a look איך טו אַ קוק

You (familiar) are having a look דו טוטסט אַ קוק

You (formal) are having a look איר טוט אַ קוק

He is having a look ער טוט אַ קוק

She is having a look זי טוט אַ קוק

One has a look; You should have a look מ'טוט אַ קוק

Have a look (familiar)! טו אַ קוק!

Have a look (formal)! טוט אַ קוק!

present plural

We are having a look מיר טוען אַ קוק

You are having a look איר טוט אַ קוק

They are having a look זיי טוען אַ קוק

Have a look! טוט אַ קוק!

past singular

I had a look איך האָב אַ קוק געטאָן

You (familiar) had a look דו האָסט אַ קוק געטאָן

You (formal) had a look איר האָט אַ קוק געטאָן

He had a look ער האָט אַ קוק געטאָן

She had a look זי האָט אַ קוק געטאָן

People had a look; We had a look מ'האָט אַ קוק געטאָן

past plural

We had a look מיר האָבן אַ קוק געטאָן

You had a look איר האָט אַ קוק געטאָן

They had a look זיי האָבן אַ קוק געטאָן

future singular

I will have a look איך וועל אַ קוק טאָן [ikhI/khvel akúkton]

You (familiar) will have a look דו וועסט אַ קוק טאָן [du(ə)st akúkton]

You (formal) will have a look איר וועט אַ קוק טאָן [ir(ə)t akúkton]

He will have a look ער וועט אַ קוק טאָן [er(ə)t akúkton]

She will have a look זי וועט אַ קוק טאָן [zi(ə)t akúkton]

We will / People will have a look מ'וועט אַ קוק טאָן [mə(və)t akúkton]

future plural

We will have a look מיר וועלן אַ קוק טאָן [miIn / mirn a kúkton]

You will have a look איר וועט אַ קוק טאָן [ir(ə)t a kúkton]

They will have a look זיי וועלן אַ קוק טאָן [ze(y)In a kúkton]

SAMPLE ANALYTIC VERBS WITH טאָן

say (quickly) אַ זאָג טאָן

think over; have a think אַ טראַכט טאָן

give a laugh אַ לאַך טאָן

ask אַ פֿרעג טאָן [a frékton]

give a scratch אַ קראַץ טאָן

give a jump אַ שפּרונג טאָן

9.1.10 Analytic verb former **לְאַזֵּן**

לְאַזֵּן 'allow; let' is used with the infinitive of the main verb. In inverted word order (→ §§11.2, 14.4), the ט of suffix (ו)טט- is frequently omitted, giving לְאַזְטוּ. Imperative לְאַז followed by objective pronoun מִיךְ obligatorily conflates to לְאַחִיךְ, e.g. לְאַחִיךְ צוּרוּ 'Leave me alone'.

SAMPLES OF USE OF לְאַזֵּן

Let me know (familiar) לְאַז חֵיסֵן

Let me know (formal) לְאַזְט חֵיסֵן

Why don't you (familiar) let them come? פִּאַרוּחֶאַט לְאַזְטוּ זֵי נִיט קומען?

Leave me alone / Stop harassing me (familiar) לְאַז אָפּוּ

Leave me alone / Stop harassing me (formal) לְאַזְט אָפּוּ

9.1.11 Analytic verb former **לְאַמִּיר**

לְאַמִּיר 'let's; let us' is used with the infinitive of the main verb. It is exclusively a first person plural. Note, however, that growing usage has לְאַמִּיר instead of לְאַחִיךְ (→ §9.1.10), e.g. לְאַמִּיר צוּרוּ 'Leave me alone'.

SAMPLES OF USE OF לְאַמִּיר

Come on, let's go (lit. 'Let's go already') לְאַמִּיר שוין גיין

Let's answer ענטפֿערן לְאַמִּיר

Let's not answer נִיט ענטפֿערן לְאַמִּיר

9.1.12 Analytic verb former **מוּזֵן**

מוּזֵן 'must; be compelled to' is used with the infinitive of the main verb. It is often interchangeable with דאַרפֿן (→ §9.1.2) but can denote a stronger sense of necessity. The third person singular has no ט-, hence מוז 'מ'א'ט'.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF מוּזֵן

I really have to go איך מוז טאַקע גיין

We need to have an answer today מיר מוזן הינט האָבן אַן ענטפֿער

9.1.13 Analytic verb former מעגן

מעגן 'may' is used with the infinitive of the main verb. It denotes that permission or moral authority is invoked for the action, rather than mere physical ability (cf. קענען → 9.1.16). Anomalously, the negative of מעגן is the inflected part of טאָרן, always used with נישט, giving נישט טאָרן 'may not'. The third person singular of both has no ט-, hence מעג אים and ער אים טאָר.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF מעגן AND טאָרן נישט

Are we allowed to use the garden? צי מעג מען נוצן דעם גאַרטן?

It's not allowed on weekends טוֹך־האַָך [sɔv vɔkəs] טאָר מען נישט

אָנטאַפֿן [ɔntapm] מעג מען? Is touching allowed?

9.1.14 Analytic verb former נעמען

נעמען 'take to' is used with the infinitive of the main verb. It has the sense of 'about to start; just starting; get down to doing something'. The past participle of נעמען is גענומען. Where the infinitive functions as a noun (→ §4.1.3.3), or a true noun is the thing that is about to be started, the parallel construction נעמען זיך צו is used. It is followed by the definite article (appropriately in dative following צו) plus the noun.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF נעמען AND נעמען זיך צו

I'm about to begin studying music איך נעם שטודירן מוזיק

We prepared to escape מיר האָבן גענומען אַנטלויפֿן

I'm getting down to work איך נעם זיך צו דער אַרבעט

Let's get down to the homework לאָמיר זיך נעמען צו דער היימאַרבעט

9.1.15 Analytic verb former פֿלעגן

פֿלעגן 'used to' is used with the infinitive of the main verb to express the habitual past.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF פֿלעגן

I used to live over there איך פֿלעג דאָרטן וואוינען

We used to see each other often מיר פֿלעגן זיך זען אָפֿט

It used to be different [sflegd zayn ándersh] ס'פֿלעגט זיין אַנדערש

9.1.16 Analytic verb former קענען

קענען (var. קאָנען) 'can' is used with the infinitive of the main verb. The third person singular has no ט-, hence ער/זי/מ'אָס' קען. The conjugation of analytic verb former קענען is identical to that of קענען 'know' (→ §15.4).

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF קענען

Can you do me a favour? [tóyvə] אָ טוֹבֶה? קענסט מיר טאָן אַ

You never can tell [mækénit vísn] מ'קען נישט וויסן

I can't make it today הינט קען איך נישט קומען

9.2 INHERENTLY ANALYTIC VERBS

9.2.1 The inherently analytic verb with האָבן

In the present, the appropriate part of האָבן [hóbm] 'have' (→ §§7.6.1.1 – 7.6.1.2) must precede the main verb. In the past, the inflected part of האָבן also precedes the main verb but the past participle געהאַט may precede or follow the main verb; it usually follows. Analogously, in the future, the

inflected futurizing וועלן (→ §§7.91 – 7.9.2) must precede the main verb but infinitive האָבן may precede or follow the main verb; it usually follows. Note that one of the inherently analytic verbs with האָבן, האָבן פֿאַראַיבּל [faríbl hobm] 'be offended; take something the wrong way' is the source of חרטה ו' beg your pardon (formal)'. Model verb is חרטה האָבן [kharótə hobm] 'change one's mind' (lit. 'have regret / remorse').

SAMPLE ANALYTIC VERB WITH האָבן:

חרטה האָבן 'CHANGE ONE'S MIND'

present singular

I'm changing (/I've changed) my mind איך האָב חרטה

You're changing (/You've changed) your mind דו האָסט חרטה

You're changing (/You've changed) your mind (formal) איר האָט חרטה

He's changing (/He has changed) his mind ער האָט חרטה

She's changing (/She has changed) her mind זי האָט חרטה

People are changing (have changed) their minds מ'האָט חרטה

Change your mind! (familiar) האָב חרטה!

Change your mind! (plural) האָט חרטה!

present plural

We're changing (/We have changed) our minds מיר האָבן חרטה

You're changing (/You've changed) your minds איר האָט חרטה

They're changing (/They have changed) their minds זיי האָבן חרטה

Change your mind! האָט חרטה!

past singular

I changed my mind איך האָב חרטה געהאָט

You (informal) changed your mind דו האָסט חרטה געהאָט

You (formal) changed your mind איר האָט חרטה געהאַט

He changed his mind ער האָט חרטה געהאַט

She changed her mind זי האָט חרטה געהאַט

People changed their minds מ'האַט חרטה געהאַט

past plural

We changed our minds מיר האָבן חרטה געהאַט

You've changed your minds איר האָט חרטה געהאַט

They've changed their minds זיי האָבן חרטה געהאַט

future singular

I'll change my mind איך וועל חרטה האָבן

You (informal) will change your mind דו וועסט חרטה האָבן

You (formal) will change your mind איר וועט חרטה האָבן

He will change his mind ער וועט חרטה האָבן

She will change her mind זי וועט חרטה האָבן

People will change their minds מ'וועט חרטה האָבן

future plural

We will change our minds מיר וועלן חרטה האָבן

You will change your minds איר וועט חרטה האָבן

They will change their minds זיי וועלן חרטה האָבן

SAMPLES OF INHERENTLY ANALYTIC VERBS WITH האָבן

have pleasure [hanóə hobm] הנאה האָבן

be eager; be in the mood [khéyshək hobm] חשק האָבן

get married [khásəne hobm] חתונה האָבן

love, like strongly ליב האָבן (var. האָלט האָבן)

be afraid; fear (with פֿאַר) [móyre hobm] מורא האָבן

hate פֿאַנט האָבן

9.2.2 The inherently analytic verb with זײַן

The analytic verb with זײַן 'be' produces hundreds of verbs. Many are restricted to a traditional learned style, but quite a few have widespread use. In the present tense, the appropriate part of זײַן (→ §§7.7.1 – 7.7.2) must precede the main verb. In the future, וועלן precedes the main verb and infinitive זײַן follows. In the past, the analytic verb with זײַן, alone in the standard language, uses a mixed conjugation comprising the inflected part of האָבן plus the past participle of זײַן (געווען [gəvén]), giving the characteristic 'געווען' conjugation of analytic verbs with זײַן. Model verb is זײַן מסכים [máskəm zayn / máskim zayn] 'agree'.

SAMPLE ANALYTIC VERB WITH זײַן: 'AGREE' מסכים זײַן

present singular

I agree איך בין מסכים

You (familiar) agree דו ביסט מסכים

You (formal) agree איר זײַט מסכים

He agrees ער איז מסכים

She agrees זי איז מסכים

Everybody agrees / We agree מ'איז מסכים

Agree! (familiar) זײַ מסכים!

Agree! (formal) זײַט מסכים!

present plural

We agree מיר זײַנען מסכים

You agree איר זייט מסכים

They agree זיי זיינען מסכים

Agree! זייט מסכים!

past singular

I agreed איך האָב מסכים געווען

You (familiar) agreed דו האָסט מסכים געווען

You (formal) agreed איר האָט מסכים געווען

He agreed ער האָט מסכים געווען

She agreed זי האָט מסכים געווען

Everybody agreed / It was agreed מ'האָט מסכים געווען

past plural

We agreed מיר האָבן מסכים געווען

You agreed איר האָט מסכים געווען

They agreed זיי האָבן מסכים געווען

future singular

I will agree איך וועל מסכים זיין

You (familiar) will agree דו וועסט מסכים זיין

You (formal) will agree איר וועט מסכים זיין

He will agree ער וועט מסכים זיין

She will agree זי וועט מסכים זיין

Everybody will agree / We will agree מ'וועט מסכים זיין

future plural

We will agree מיר וועלן מסכים זיין

You will agree איר וועט מסכים זיין

They will agree זײ וועלן מסכים זײן

SAMPLES OF ANALYTIC VERBS WITH זײן (PAST TENSE WITH האָבן)

suspect	[khóyshəd zayn]	חוּשד זײן
distinguish; differentiate	[máfkhɪn zayn]	מַבְחִין זײן
concede (a point); confess	[móyɔdə zayn]	מִוֹדָה זײן
trouble somebody for a favour	[mátriəkh zayn]	מַטְרִיחַ זײן
take the trouble to do somebody a favour	(און) זײך זײן	מַטְרִיחַ זײן
offer hospitality [= food/drinks]; treat [to]	[məkhábəd zayn]	מַכְבֵּד זײן
continue	[mámshəkh zayn]	מַחְשִׁיךְ זײן
agree	[máskim zayn]	מַסְכִּים זײן
succeed	[mátsliəkh zayn]	מַצְלִיחַ זײן
receive / welcome [guest]	[məkabl pónim zayn]	מַקְבֵּל פִּנִּים זײן
presume / assume	[məsháər zayn]	מַשְׁעֵר זײן (זײך)
sacrifice; give up	[mákriv zayn]	מַקְרִיב זײן

9.2.2.1 Passives of the analytic verb with זײן

A few analytic verbs with זײן have passives using ווערן (→ §9.1.7).

SAMPLES OF ANALYTIC VERBS WITH זײן WITH PASSIVES

מַצִּיל זײן [mátsl]	'rescue'	→	נִיִּצוּל ווערן [nítsl vern]	'be rescued'
מַקְיִים זײן [məkáyəm]	'fulfil'	→	מַקְיִים ווערן [məkúyəm vern]	'be fulfilled'

10 ADVERBS

10.0 OVERVIEW

Adverbs modify, specify or elaborate on verbs or the state and time in which the verb action occurs. Where they occur in the middle of a phrase, adverbs follow the inflected verb. Thus, adverb אַפֿשֶׁר [éfshər] 'perhaps' follows the part of קומען 'come' inflected for third person singular in ער קומט אַפֿשֶׁר 'He may come'. Adverbs usually precede uninflected verbs (i.e., infinitive and past participle), hence ער וועט אַפֿשֶׁר קומען. There are however occasions where the adverb may follow the uninflected verb for emphasis (→ §14.10), e.g. ער וועט קומען אַפֿשֶׁר. Adverbs may generally be used to begin a sentence. There are four major types of adverbs: true adverbs (§10.1); adverbs from adjectives and nouns (§10.2); relic adverbs (§10.3); adverbs from prepositional phrases (§10.4). Some adverbs have diminutives (§10.5). Psychoadverbial inserts are phrases inserted into a sentence that serve to betray the speaker's true emotional disposition toward the object of speech or writing (§10.6).

10.1 TRUE ADVERBS

True adverbs are not derived from any other part of speech. They have no comparative or superlative.

SAMPLES OF TRUE ADVERBS

now איצטער (var. איצט, אַצינד, אַציטערט; nonliterary var. יעצט)

once; someday	אַמאָל [amól]
maybe	אָפּשער [éfsħer]
soon; soon after	באַלד
(deliberately) illogically; necessarily; exclusively	דחוקא [dáka]
then	יעמאָלט, דאָן, דענטסטמאָל, דעמאָלט (var. דעמאָלט (ט))
really; in point of fact	טאַקע
really; in full; no kidding	חחש [máməsh]
suddenly	פּלוצעם, פּלוצלינג (var. פּלוצלונג)
early	פֿרי
earlier	פֿריער
barely; just	קוים [kam]
already	שוין
late	שפעט
later	שפעטער

10.2 ADVERBS FROM ADJECTIVES AND NOUNS

New adverbs arise continually from adjectives and nouns by way of the following productive mechanisms.

10.2.1 Adverbs from adjective stems

Most adjective stems can double as adverbs. Unlike true adverbs, they may attract comparative suffix **ער-** just as adjectives do (→ §5.10).

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS FROM ADJECTIVE STEMS

preferably	בעסטער
well	נאָך בעסטער (better: בעסטער; better still: גוט)

quickly גיך (more quickly: גיכער)

slowly פאָמעלעכער (more slowly: פאָמעלעכער)

calmly רואיק [ru'ik] (more calmly: רואיקער)

quietly שטיל (more quietly: שטילער)

badly שלעכט (worse: ערנער)

10.2.2 Adverbs from adjective stem plus ערהייט-

Adjectives may be adverbialized by suffixation of ערהייט- [ərhéyt] to the adjective stem. Most frequently, the ערהייט- adverbs denote a general state of being rather than modifying a verb as directly as true adverbs (→ §10.1) and adverbs from adjective stems (→ §10.2.1). געזונטערהייט [gəzuntərhéyt] 'in good health' is used with imperatives in the idiomatic sense of 'Enjoy (...)!', e.g. עס געזונטערהייט! 'Eat in good health' (= 'Bon appétit' or 'No need to feel bashful'). געזונטערהייט is also used ironically in the sense of 'Go ahead and (...) (but don't blame me)!', e.g. גי געזונטערהייט! 'Well if you want to go, then go, but don't blame me!'. ערהייט- may also be suffixed to present participles of verbs (→ §7.2), e.g. גייענדיק 'while going' → גייענדיקערהייט [gèyændikərhéyt], שטייענדיק 'while standing' → שטייענדיקערהייט [shtèyændikərhéyt]. The ערהייט- forms are more forceful.

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS WITH SUFFIX ערהייט-

angrily; while in an angry mood [òngəbroygəstərhéyt] אָנגעברוגזטערהייט

carefully; cautiously [òpgəhitərhéyt] אָפּגעהיטערהייט

while / when young [yùngərhéyt] יונגערהייט

while / when wet [nàsərhéyt] נאַטערהייט

without having been invited [nìtfarbetnərhéyt] נישט-פֿאַרבעטנערהייט

while / when ill [krànkərhéyt] קראַנקערהייט

quietly [shtìlərhéyt] שטילערהייט

10.2.3 Adverbs from nouns by suffixation of חַיִּיז-

Nouns may be adverbialized by suffixation of חַיִּיז-. It is often the plural of the noun that serves as the base of the adverb. Frequently, the חַיִּיז- adverbs are partitive, denoting a delimitation of period of time, or a conceptual division into subparts.

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS FROM NOUNS WITH SUFFIX חַיִּיז-

one by one; one at a time [éyntsıgıvayz] איינציקחַיִּיז

before marriage (m.) [bókħərvayz] בחורחַיִּיז

slowly [bıslaghıvayz] ביטלעכחַיִּיז

youthfully (m.); as a boy יינגלחַיִּיז

in great numbers; in droves; massively מאַסנחַיִּיז

before marriage (f.); youthfully (f.); as a girl מיידלחַיִּיז

in pairs; by the couple; two by two פּאַרלעכחַיִּיז

at times צײַטנחַיִּיז

10.3 RELIC ADVERBS

Relic adverbs are not 'relic' because of numerical scarcity. On the contrary, they are amply represented. The classification denotes rather that the relevant prefixes and suffixes are, generally speaking, no longer productive in the modern language. They cannot be used at will to create new adverbs.

10.3.1 Prefix -אַ

In addition to its function as a relic adverbial prefix used with a number of common adverbs, prefix אַ- is used systematically for telling time, e.g. – אַזײַנער 'one o'clock', צוויי אַזײַנער 'two o'clock' etc. (→ §13.2.2).

SAMPLES OF RELIC ADVERBS WITH PREFIX -אַ

- certainly; of course אַוודאי [aváde]
 like this; so אַזוי
 in short אַכילל [akíal] (cf. כלל (דער) 'rule; generalization')
 apparently אַפנים [apónim] (cf. פנים (דאָס) 'face')
 all the more obvious אַפשיטא [apshítə]
 beforehand אַפריער [afríər]
 in short; to sum up; to get right to the point אַקיצור [akítsər]
 for example אַשטייגער (cf. שטייגער (דער) 'manner; kind of')

10.3.2 Prefix -אַה

Prefix -אַה plus superlative adjective plus suffix ן- forms an adverbial superlative. Alternatively, these may be formed via preposition צו (→ §10.4.1).

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS WITH PREFIX -אַה

- most preferably; at (his/her/its) best אַהבעסטן
 most undesirably; at (his/her/its) worst אַהערנסטן
 most beautifully; at (his/her/its) most beautiful אַהשענסטן

10.3.3 Prefix -דער

-דער (often pronounced [da]) combines with a number of prepositions to form an adverb. Prefix -דער is unstressed. The preposition is stressed. A number of the -דער plus preposition adverbs have parallel forms comprising the preposition plus the dative article דעם, which *is* stressed, e.g. דערנאָך [danókh /dernókh] 'afterwards' = נאָך דעם [noghdém]. There are, however, instances where the meanings of the two constructions do not

converge, e.g. דערפאר [dafár/derfár] therefore vs. פֿאַר דעם [far dém] 'before that'.

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS WITH PREFIX דער-

present; nearby; [dabáy/derbáy] דערבײַ

in the vicinity [dálebm/derlébm] דערלעבן

afterwards [danókh/dernokh] נאָך דעם (= [noghdém] דערנאָך

therefore [dafár/derfár] דערפֿאַר

of it; from this; therefrom; hereof [dafún/derfún] פֿון דעם (= דערפֿון

in addition; moreover; on top of everything else [datsú/dertsú] דערצו

on the other hand; against it [dakégn/derkégn] דערקעגן (= קעגן דעם)

10.3.4 Prefix -ב

-ב [bə] occurs naturally only within the Semitic component.

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS WITH PREFIX -ב

somewhat drunk [bəgilúfn] בגילופין

retrospectively; after the fact; it now being too late [bədiévdə] בדיעבד

(if you) forgive me for saying so [bəm(ə)khílə] במחילה

anyway; in any case [bəméylə] במילא

explicitly; specially [bəféyrəsh] בפירוש

publicly; openly [bəfrésyə] בפֿרעהטיא

10.3.5 Prefix -כ

Like -ב, -כ [kə] occurs naturally only within the Semitic component. Most words with prefix -כ are used in a learned style.

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS WITH PREFIX -כ

as agreed [kfihamdúbər] כפֿי־ההדובר

extremely difficult [kəkriəs yám suf] כקריעת ים־סוף

(lit. 'like the parting of the Red Sea')

understood literally [kəpshútoy] כמשוטו

according to plan; in good order [kəshúra] כשורה

10.3.6 Prefix ל-

Like -ב, and ל-, [lə] occurs naturally only within the Semitic component.

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS WITH PREFIX ל-

after the fact; too late [l(ə)akhəramáysə] לאחר־המעשה

at first; in the first instance; initially [ləkhətkhílə] לכתחילה

for example [ləmóshi] למשל

at the present time [ləsáta] לעת־עתה

10.3.7 Suffix ט-

The only systematic use of adverbial suffix ט- is in the numeric adverbs ערשטנס 'firstly', צווייטנס 'secondly' etc. (→ §12.2.2). The remaining surviving items generally have to do with time, space or direction. In some, suffix ט- is optional.

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS WITH SUFFIX ט-

Friday evening (eve of Sabbath) [fráytik tsə nákht(s)] פרייטיק־צונאכט(ס)

Saturday night [shàbəs tsu nákht(s)] שבת־צונאכט(ס)

Saturday night (var.) [sh(a)béysə nakht(s)] שבתע נאכט(ס) (→ §13.3.2.1)

the next day; on the morrow צומאָרנס

on the way [ahínvəks] אַהינװעגס

on the way; en route [untərvégnz] אונטערװעגנס

at least חייניקסטנס

מערסטנס mostly

from far; looking at a distance [fundərváytnz] פֿונדעררחײטנס

on the way back; while returning [tsuríakveg] צוריקהענגט

(to the) left לינקס

(to the) right רעכטס

10.3.8 Suffix ן-

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS WITH SUFFIX ן-

in the near future אין ניכֿן (also spelled אינגיכֿן)

during the week (days) אינדערואַכֿן

last week פֿאַראַכֿטאַג (cf. איבעראַכֿטאַג 'next week')

last year פֿאַראַיאָר (cf. איבעראַיאָר 'next year')

totally; altogether אין גאַנצן (also spelled אינגאַנצן)

truthfully [indərəmən] אין דער אמתֿן (= [afanéməs] און אמתֿ (אויף אמתֿ))

nevertheless [fundéstvegn] פֿונדעסטחעגן

10.4 ADVERBS FROM PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

A prepositional phrase is a preposition plus the noun phrase that is its object. At a higher level than the sum of its parts, a prepositional phrase can function as an adverb in the syntax of the language (→ §14.4.1). Some modern adverbs derive historically from prepositional phrases (e.g. from the classical Hebrew prefixed prepositions -ב, -כ and -ל → §§10.3.4 – 10.3.6; from prepositional phrases with relic suffix ן- → §10.3.8). Many others derive from modern prepositions that double as adverb formers. Prepositional phrases tend to become fully adverbialized when they acquire

'stock phrase' status by regular use.

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS FROM PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

to be spiteful; as a provocation [aftseioákhəs] אויף צו להלעיס

to a certain extent אין א געוויסער מאָס

at home אין דער היים

after that [nogh dém] דעם נאָך (also spelled נאָכדעם)

before that פֿאַר דעם

on one hand פֿון איין זייט

on the other hand פֿון דער אנדערער זייט

from nearby פֿון דער נאָענט

after all נאָך אלעמען

10.4.1 Superlative adverbs from preposition צו

Preposition צו plus definite article דעם (conflating obligatorily to צום) plus adjective with superlative ending סט- plus suffix ן- forms an adverbial superlative. Some adverbial superlatives with צו have alternate forms with the far less frequent אַה- (→ §10.3.2).

SAMPLES OF ADVERBIAL SUPERLATIVES WITH צום

first of all צום אלעם ערשטן

most easily צום גרינגסטן

at least צום היינציקסטן \ הייניקסטן

most difficult of all צום שווערסטן

at the very latest צום שפעטסטן

10.4.2 'For the sake of' constructions from preposition פֿון

Preposition פֿון plus possessive pronoun or proper name plus וועגן

corresponds with 'for the sake / benefit of; as far as ___ is concerned'. Where a possessive pronoun is used, it is suffixed by ט- (optionally עט- for some). Proper names and other human nouns have possessive ט-.

singular

for my sake פֿון מיין(ע)ט חעגן

for your (familiar) sake פֿון דיין(ע)ט חעגן

for your (formal) sake פֿון אייערעט חעגן

for his sake פֿון זיין(ע)ט חעגן

for her sake פֿון איר(ע)ט חעגן

plural

for our sake פֿון אונדזערעט חעגן

for your sake פֿון אייערעט חעגן

for their sake פֿון זייערעט חעגן

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF פֿון — חעגן

זי אַזוי גוט, טו עס פֿון מיין חעגן

Please, do it for my sake

פֿון מיין חעגן קענסטו גיין אַפֿילו [אַפֿילו] חעגן

As far as I'm concerned, you can even go today

לאַמיר בלייבן [בלויבן] פֿון לייזערעט חעגן

Let's stay for Léyzər's sake

10.5 DIMINUTIVES OF ADVERBS

Monosyllabic adverbs may be diminutivized by suffixing לעך- ([lɛkʰ] or [lakh]) to the adverb stem. There are no internal vowel shifts. The

diminutivized adverb is pronounced slowly in falsetto. It is often accompanied by side-to-side movement of the head, horizontal movement of the hands and fingers up to 180°, and a slight smile. Cf. §5.13.1 on diminutives of adjectives.

SAMPLES OF DIMINUTIVES OF ADVERBS

- גיכלעך 'quite fast (but not at top speed!)' (from גיך 'fast')
 פֿריילעך 'sort of early (but not too early!)' (from פֿרי 'early')
 קלוגלעך 'quite cleverly (but not exactly brilliantly!)' (from קלוג 'clever')
 שיינלעך 'quite prettily (but not exactly beautifully!)' (from שיין 'beautiful')
 שפעטלעך 'sort of late (but not too late!)' (from שפעט 'late')

10.6 PSYCHOADVERBIAL INSERTS

Psychoadverbial inserts are parenthetical interpolations in a sentence. They are uttered rapidly with clipped intonation (i.e. surrounded by split-second pauses, marked here by |). They serve to betray to the listener the speaker's attitude toward whatever it is he or she is speaking about. Virtually all can be used as self-contained sentences (i.e. interjections) in reply to a situation described by the interlocutor. Many psychoadverbial inserts may be used ironically. The following list represents a modest sampling.

10.6.1 אין אַ מזלדיקער שעה [inamázidikərshó]

gloss: with my best wishes; all being well (lit. 'in a lucky hour')

attitude: friendly hope for a positive outcome

sample: מיר חעלן רעדן חעגן דעם חעגן דו חעסט אין אַ

מזלדיקער שעה אָנקומען

transcription: [miln/mirn rédn vegn dem az du vest |inamázdikəshó|
ónkumən]

translation: We'll talk about it when you (all being well!) arrive. *or:*
We'll talk about it when you return. Have a good
journey back!

10.6.1.1 Use of **אַ** מזלדיקער שעה as reply

use as reply: — איך פֿאַר דינסטיק I'm leaving on Tuesday.
אַ מזלדיקער שעה! Every success!; Bon voyage!

10.6.1.2 Ironic use of **אַ** מזלדיקער שעה

ironic use: hope for positive outcome of a perceived stupidity

sample: דו ווילסט אַ מזלדיקער שעה אַראָפּשפּרינגען פֿון
דאַך?

transcription: [du vilst |inamázdikəshó| arópshpringən fun dákh?]

translation: Do you want to jump off the roof? Well, have
fun!

10.6.1.3 Ironic use of **אַ** מזלדיקער שעה as reply

use as reply: — איך שפּרינג אַראָפּ פֿון דאַך I'm jumping off the
roof.

אַ מזלדיקער שעה! Well, go ahead! Don't come
crying to me!

10.6.2 אַם ירצה השם [mírtsəshèm / mirtsəshém]

gloss: hopefully (lit. 'if God wills it; God willing')

attitude:	looking forward to something
sample:	איך חעל קומען אם ירצה השם מאָרן
transcription:	[khvel kúməŋ mirtsəshém mórgn]
translation:	I look forward to coming tomorrow.

10.6.2.1 Use of אם ירצה השם as reply

use as reply:	קומסט דאָנערשטיק? You're coming on Thursday?
	אם ירצה השם I certainly hope so; Yes, of course!

10.6.3 במחילה [bim(ə)khhílə]

gloss:	asking you to forgive me (for saying something potentially offensive, embarrassing, vulgar or unkind).
attitude:	aggressive state of mind toward interlocutor
sample:	דיינע קליידער זעען אויס במחילה אַ ביסל לעכערלעך
transcription:	[daynə kléydər zəən óys bəmekhílə a bisl lekherləkh]
translation:	Your clothes, if you forgive me for saying so, do look a bit ridiculous.

10.6.3.1 Ironic use of במחילה

ironic use:	mitigating an insult by apologizing for it in the same sentence
sample:	דו ביסט במחילה אַן אידיאָט
transcription:	[du bist bəmekhílə anidyót]
translation:	Do forgive me for saying so, but you are an idiot.

10.6.4 גאָט צו דאַנקען [gotsədánkən]

gloss:	thank God
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- attitude: happiness at the way something has turned out
 sample: איך בין שוין גאָט=צו=דאַנקען אַדוּרַך דעם עקזאַמען
 transcription: [kʰbɪn shoyn |gotsədánkən| adúrkh dem ekzámən]
 translation: Thank God, I've passed the examination or I'm thrilled
 that I passed the examination

10.6.4.1 Use of גאָט צו דאַנקען as reply

- use as reply: — ט'איז געווען אַ דערפֿאַלג It was a success.
 גאָט צו דאַנקען [gót tsə dánkən] Thank God!

10.6.5 חלילה [kʰoɪlɪə]

- gloss: Heaven forbid; God forbid
 attitude: fear of worst scenario
 sample: קענסט חלילה אַרָאָפֿפֿאַלן
 transcription: [kénst |kʰoɪlɪə| arópfaɪn]
 translation: You may (God forbid) fall down.

10.6.5.1 Use of חלילה as reply

- use as reply: ביסט אויף [af] מיר אין כעס? [ka(ə)s] Are you
 angry with me?
 חלילה Of course not!; God forbid!

10.6.5.2 Ironic use 1 of חלילה

- ironic use 1: 'fear' that something will turn out well
 sample: קום ניט, קענסט חלילה גוט פֿאַברענגען
 transcription: [kúm nit, kénst |kʰoɪlɪə| gut farbréyngən]
 translation: Don't come, you might (God forbid) have a good time.

10.6.5.3 Ironic use 1 of חלילה as reply

use as reply: ער חיל ניט פֿאַרן אויף חאַקאַציע? He doesn't want to go on vacation?
 חלילה! No way!; God forbid!; How stupid of him!

10.6.5.4 Ironic use 2 of חלילה

ironic use 2: satiric denial of something obviously correct
 sample: איך האָב געזאָגט אַז ער איז חלילה אַ ליגנער? [ikho gəzókʰt az er iz |xolifə| a lígnər?]
 transcription: [ikho gəzókʰt az er iz |xolifə| a lígnər?]
 translation: I said that he is (God forbid) a liar.

10.6.5.5 Ironic use 2 of חלילה as reply

use as reply: זיי געפֿעלן דיר ניט, אחת? You don't like them, right?
 חלילה! God forbid. When did I say that?

10.6.6 להבדיל [ləhəvdi]l

gloss: though one shouldn't mention them in the same breath (lit. 'to differentiate [between sacred and profane]', i.e. 'not to say I don't differentiate although I mention them together')

attitude: contempt for one of the two things or persons mentioned

sample: דיין פֿרײַנד און להבדיל זײַן ברודער זעלן זײַן דאָרטן
 transcription: [dayn fraynt un |ləhəvdi| zayn brudər vein zayn dórtn]
 translation: Your friend and his brother (whom I can't stand) will be there.

10.6.6.1 Use of להבדיל as reply

- use as reply: זיין פֿרײַנד און זײַן ברודער וועלן זײַן דאָרטן?
 Will your friend and his brother be there?
 להבדילו!
 Please don't mention them in the same breath.

10.6.7 נעבעך [nébakh]

- gloss: sadly; pitifully; alas.
 attitude: genuine sorrow for an unfortunate person
 sample: דער זיידע איז נעבעך קראַנק
 transcription: [der zéydə iz |nébakh| kránk]
 translation: Grandfather is sadly ill.

10.6.7.1 Use of נעבעך as reply

- use as reply: — דער זיידע איז קראַנק געוואָרן — Grandfather has become ill.
 נעבעך How very sad.

10.6.7.2 Ironic use of נעבעך

- ironic use: feigned sympathy for somebody who is in fact very well off; pointing out caustically that too much is being made of a trifle
 sample: ער האָט נעבעך קיין געלט נישט
 transcription: [erót |nébakh| kin gélt nit]
 translation: (e.g. of a millionaire): He has no money! How very sad!

10.6.7.3 Ironic use of נעבעך as reply

- use as reply: — איך האָב פֿאַרלוירן מיין פּען — I've lost my pen.

נעבערן [néébaakh (*with extra lengthening*)] Big
tragedy! How awful!

10.6.8 פֿאַר קיינעם ניט געדאַכט [farkéynəmni(t)gədəkht]

gloss: it shouldn't happen to anybody

attitude: sorrow or shock over a calamity

sample: מ'האַט אים פֿאַר קיינעם ניט געדאַכט איבערנעפֿאַרן

transcription: [məhətəm |farkéynəmnigədəkht| íbərgəforn]

translation: He was (it shouldn't happen to anybody) run over.

10.6.8.1 Use of פֿאַר קיינעם ניט געדאַכט as reply

use as reply: — זיי זיינען זייער קראַנק They are very ill
פֿאַר קיינעם ניט געדאַכט! How dreadful! Oh my
God!

10.6.9 קיין עין-הרע [kinaynhórə / kinəhórə]

gloss: no evil eye!; not to provoke the attention of 'the evil
eye' by praising the good news too much (cf. 'knock on
wood!')

attitude: gratification or pride concerning good news or an
achievement

sample: די טאָכטער האָט קיין עין-הרע חתונה געהאַט

transcription: [di tókhtər hot |kinaynhórə| khasənə gəhat]

translation: My daughter got married. I'm thrilled.

10.6.9.1 Use of קיין עין-הרע as reply

use as reply: — די טאָכטער האָט חתונה געהאַט
קיין עין-הרע! [kìn àyn hórə] Fantastic!

11 QUESTIONS

11.0 OVERVIEW

Questions can be formed from declarative sentences by change in intonation alone (§11.1). Explicitly structured questions are formed by inversion of subject and predicate (§11.2) or by combining inversion with an interrogative word (§11.3). Interrogative additives serve to add emotional force to questions (§11.4).

11.1 INTONATION

Declarative sentences may be turned into questions by the characteristic rising intonation at the end, marked in written usage by a question mark (?).

SAMPLES OF QUESTIONS VIA INTONATION ALONE

You're coming tomorrow דו קומסט מאָרגן →

Are you coming tomorrow? דו קומסט מאָרגן?

They really know זיי חייסן טאַקע →

Do they really know? זיי חייסן טאַקע?

It's true [éməs] ס'איז אמת →

Is it true? ס'איז אמת?

11.1.1 Sarcastic intonation questions

When a declarative sentence righteously purporting to state a mere fact is 'overquestionized' by invoking a rise-fall intonation pattern, it becomes a

harshly satiric attack.

SAMPLES OF SARCASTIC INTONATION QUESTIONS

He's a doctor ער איז א דאָקטער →

You call him a doctor!? ער איז א דאָקטער?

It's summer in Oxford ס'איז זומער אין אָקספּאָרד →

You call this summer in Oxford? ס'איז זומער אין אָקספּאָרד?

We're experts מיר זײַנען עקספּערטן →

You think we're experts? מיר זײַנען עקספּערטן?

11.1.1.1 Use of דען in sarcastic intonation questions

The use of 'doubtful דען' explicitly marks doubt or satire in sarcastic intonation questions. It is inserted immediately after the inflected verb, e.g. 'You call him a doctor!?' → ער איז דען א דאָקטער?

11.2 INVERSION

Questions may be formed by inversion of subject and predicate. The predicate consists of the inflected verb. Thus, 'You are coming tomorrow?' → דו קומסט מאָרן? 'Are you coming tomorrow?' → קומסטו מאָרן? When inversion results in the sequence of second person familiar verb ending ט- + pronoun דו, the two are obligatorily conflated to ending טו- (or, less formally, to ט-) which is suffixed to the verb. The ending טו- is usually pronounced [stə] or [st], unless stressed for contrast.

SAMPLES OF QUESTIONS BY INVERSION

Are you (formal) telling the truth? [éməs] דעם אמת?

- Are you (familiar) coming home? קומסטו אהיים?
- Do you (familiar) want to see? חילסטו זען?
- Do they really want things to be different? חילן זיי טאקע אנדערש?
- Is the answer known? מ'חיים דעם ענטפער?

11.3 INTERROGATIVE PLUS INVERSION

Interrogatives are explicit 'question words'. They automatically trigger inversion of subject and predicate (→ §§14.4 – 14.5).

11.3.1 Interrogatives

The interrogatives, most of which double as relative pronouns, are on the whole uninflecting.

INTERROGATIVES

- where וואו (→ locative וואוהין 'where to; whither')
- what וואס
- what kind of / what type of וואסער (→ pl. וואסערע)
- what kind of a(n) (often aggressive) וואס פאר אן
- how (אזוי) ווי
- how much / how many וויפיל (-)
- who ווער (→ object [véməŋ] וועמען 'whom')
- whose [vémənz] וועמענס
- when ווען
- for what reason (lit. 'because of what') [makhməzvós] וואס מוחמת
- why וואס פאר וואס (also spelled וואס פאר)
- for whom וואס וועמען

for what reason (lit. 'because of what') [tsəlìbvós] חָאָט צוֹלִיב
is / are; does / do (in a yes or no question) צי

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF INTERROGATIVES

Where are you? [vu bístə?] חָאוּ בִיטטוּ?

Where are we going? / Where shall we go? חָאוּוּיִן גַּיט מען?

What are you thinking? חָאָט טראַכטסטוּ?

What kind of machine is this? חָאָטער מאַשין איז דאָס?

What kind of friend is that? חָאָט פֿאַר אַ פֿרײַנד [fraynt] איז דאָס?

How do you (familiar) do it? [viazóy mákhstə dos?] חָי אַזוי מאַכסטוּ דאָס?

How many books do you (formal) have? חֵיפֿל בִּיכער האָט איר?

Who's coming? חָער קומט?

Whom can you (formal) recommend? חָעמען קענט איר רעקאָמענדירן?

Whose house is this? חָעמענס הויז איז דאָס?

When do we see each other? [vén zétmənzhəkh?] חָען זעט מען זיך?

Why don't you say yes? [farvóz zòkstnit yó?] פֿאַר חָאָט זאָגסטוּ ניט יאָ?

For whom do you work? פֿאַר חָעמען אַרבעטסטוּ?

Why don't they answer? חָאָט ענטפֿערן זיי ניט?

Are you (familiar) coming tomorrow? צי קומסטוּ מאָרגן?

11.3.1.1 Inflecting interrogative חָעלכער

'which' inflects for case, gender and number. The older separate neutral form חָעלכעס can occasionally be encountered in the written language but it is rare in modern usage. Neutral usually aligns with feminine in nominative and with masculine in both objective cases.

חָעלכער in nominative

which (masculine) חָעלכער

which (feminine) חָעלכע

וּעלָעוּ (neutral) which

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF וּעלָעוּ IN NOMINATIVE

וּעלָעוּ מאַנטל איז דאָס? (דער מאַנטל) Which coat

וּעלָעוּ שיף איז דאָס? (די שיף) Which ship

וּעלָעוּ הויז איז דאָס? (דאָס הויז) Which house

וּעלָעוּ in accusative

וּעלָעוּ → וּעלָעוּ (masculine) which

וּעלָעוּ (feminine) which

וּעלָעוּ → וּעלָעוּ (neutral) which

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF וּעלָעוּ IN ACCUSATIVE

וּעלָעוּ מאַנטל זעסטו? Which coat do you see?

וּעלָעוּ שיף זעסטו? Which ship do you see?

וּעלָעוּ הויז זעסטו? Which house do you see?

וּעלָעוּ in dative

וּעלָעוּ → וּעלָעוּ (masculine) which

וּעלָעוּ → וּעלָעוּ (feminine) which

וּעלָעוּ → וּעלָעוּ (neutral) which

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF וּעלָעוּ IN DATIVE

פֿון וּעלָעוּ מאַנטל רעדסטו? Of which coat are you speaking?

מיט וּעלָעוּ שיף קומסטו? On which boat are you coming?

לעבן וּעלָעוּ הויז וועסטו שטיין? Near which house will you stand?

plural

וּעלָעוּ

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF PLURAL **וּעֲלָע**

Which ones do you have in mind? **וּעֲלָע הָאֶסְטוּ אִין זִינְען?**

Which ones are you talking about? **וּעֲלָע רֵעֲדֶסְטוּ?**

11.4 INTERROGATIVE ADDITIVES

The interrogative additives are **וּעֲלָע** and **וּזְשַׁע**. Their use parallels that of imperative additives **וּעֲלָע** and **וּזְשַׁע** (→ §7.5.6). **וּעֲלָע** [tə / to] immediately precedes the interrogative and **וּזְשַׁע** [zhə] immediately follows it. They can be used independently of each other or they may surround the interrogative for increased effect. Like their imperative counterparts, the interrogative additives **וּעֲלָע** and **וּזְשַׁע** may serve to invoke affection, love or familiarity in support of a request or demand for an answer to the question being asked. They may also have the force of 'then; so; in that case'. Interrogative **וּעֲלָע** and **וּזְשַׁע** also add forcefulness, seriousness, and occasionally annoyance, to the question. Their use is most frequent with **וּוּאָס** 'what', **וּפֶאַרְוואָס** 'why' and **וּוּוּ (וּוּוּ)** 'how'. Like their imperative counterparts, they may invoke feelings of guilt in support of the question or request laced with the additive.

SAMPLES OF INTERROGATIVE ADDITIVES **וּעֲלָע** and **וּזְשַׁע**

So why don't you tell me? **וּעֲלָע פֶאַרְוואָס זאָגסטוּ מיר ניט?**

Come on, why don't you tell me? **וּזְשַׁע פֶאַרְוואָס זאָגסטוּ מיר ניט?**

וּעֲלָע פֶאַרְוואָס זאָגסטוּ מיר ניט?

Come on then, why don't you tell me? (You owe it to me!)

12 NUMBERS

12.0 OVERVIEW

Alongside the international number system, used in everyday life, Yiddish retains the traditional Jewish alphabetic numbering system for culture-specific purposes.

12.1 CARDINAL NUMBERS

12.1.1 Basic cardinal numbers

1	אינס
2	צוויי
3	דריי
4	פֿיר
5	פֿינף
6	זעקס
7	זיבן [zibm]
8	אַכט
9	נײַן
10	צען
11	עלף
12	צוועלף
13	דרייצן

14	פֿערצן
15	פֿופֿצן
16	זעכצן
17	זיבעצן
18	אַכצן
19	נײַנצן
20	צוואַנציק
30	דרייסיק
40	פֿערציק
50	פֿופֿציק
60	זעכציק
70	זיבעציק
80	אַכציק
90	נײַנציק
100	הונדערט
1,000	טויזנט
1,000,000	מיליאָן

12.1.1.1 אײן and איינט

אײנט is used for the number 'one' in isolation when counting and in clock time (→ §13.2.2). When used as an attributive adjective, and in double digit combinations (→ §12.1.2.1), אײן occurs, e.g. מאַן אײן 'one man', פֿרוי אײן 'one woman'. אײן does not inflect as an attributive adjective. As a predicative adjective (→ §5.7), אײן inflects for gender, e.g. גאָט איז אײנער 'God is one' (name of the Yiddish variant of a Passover song). In usage parallel to the possessive-indefinite construction (→ §6.2.1.5), אײנער combines with indefinite article (אַן), e.g. אַ מאַן אײנער 'some fellow', אַ פֿרוי אײנער 'some woman'. אײנער with the indefinite article inflects for case and gender, e.g.

אייןער און אנדערע סטודענט און אנדערע. Cf. §6.4.1 on partitive pronoun.

12.1.2 Combined cardinal numbers

12.1.2.1 Double digit combinations

Double digit combinations are ordered upward with conjunction און 'and' (often rendered [n] or [ən] in speech) in between. איין (rather than אינס) is used in combination.

SAMPLES OF DOUBLE DIGIT COMBINATIONS

21	[eynən tsvántsik]	איין און צוואנציק
34	[fīrn dráysik]	פֿיר און דרייסיק
48	[akhtn fértsik]	אַכט און פֿערציק
56	[zeks n fúftsik]	זעקס און פֿופֿציק
67	[zibmən zékhtsik]	זיבן און זעכציק
71	[eynən zibetsik]	איין און זיבעציק
89	[naynən ákhtsik]	נײַן און אַכציק

12.1.2.2 Multiple digit combinations

Multiple digit combinations are ordered downward, as in English, but upwardly ordered double digit combinations within them are retained, e.g. 432 = פֿיר הונדערט צוויי און דרייסיק (lit. 'four hundred two-and-thirty').

SAMPLES OF MULTIPLE DIGIT COMBINATIONS

121	[húndərt eynən tsvántsik]	הונדערט איין און צוואנציק
234	[tsvéy hundərt fīrn dráysik]	צוויי הונדערט פֿיר און דרייסיק
348	[dráy hundərt akhtn fértsik]	דריי הונדערט אַכט און פֿערציק
1,056	[tóyznt zeks n fúftsik]	טויזנט זעקס און פֿופֿציק

טויזנט הונדערט זיבן און זעכציק

1,167 [tóyznt | hundərt zibmən zékhtsik]

צען טויזנט, פֿיר הונדערט איין און זיבעציק

[tsén tóyznt | fír hundərt eynen zíbetsik]

אַכט הונדערט אַכט טויזנט, אַכט הונדערט נַיַן און אַכציק

[ákht hundərt ákht tóyznt | ákht hundərt nàynən ákhtsik]

12.2 ORDINAL NUMBERS

There are special ordinal forms for '1st' to '19th', all ending in ט-, to which usual adjective endings are suffixed. For '20th' to '100th' and in '1000th', a ט appears between the number (which has the same stem as both cardinal and ordinal) and the adjective ending. In higher numbers, it is the very last number in the sequence that determines the suffix – if it is between 20 and 100, or ends in the word 'thousand', ט appears. Note the anomalous ערשט for 'first'.

12.2.1 Basic ordinal numbers

first ערשט

second צווייט

third דריט

fourth פֿערט

fifth פֿינפֿט

sixth זעקסט

seventh זיבעט

אָכט eighth

ניינט ninth

צענט tenth

עלפֿט eleventh

צוועלפֿט twelfth

thirteenth דרייצנט (var. דרייצעט)

fourteenth פֿערצנט (var. פֿערצעט)

fifteenth פֿופֿצנט (var. פֿופֿצעט)

sixteenth זעכצנט (var. זעכצעט)

seventeenth זיבעצנט (var. זיבעצעט)

eighteenth אָכצנט (var. אָכצעט)

nineteenth ניינצנט (var. ניינצעט)

twentieth צוואַנציקסט

thirtieth דרייסיקסט

fortieth פֿערציקסט

fiftieth פֿופֿציקסט

sixtieth זעכציקסט

seventieth זיבעציקסט

eightieth אָכציקסט

ninetieth ניינציקסט

hundredth הונדערטסט

thousandth טויזנטסט

צען טויזנטסט ten thousandth

הונדערט טויזנטסט hundred thousandth

מיליאָנט millionth

SAMPLES OF ORDINAL NUMBERS

Second Avenue צווייטע (א 2טע) עוועניו

on Second Avenue אויף דער צווייטער (א 2טער) עוועניו
 42nd Street צוויי און פֿערציקסטע (א 42סטע) גאָס
 on 42nd Street אויף דער צוויי און פֿערציקסטער (א 42סטער) גאָס
 for the thousandth time צום טויזנטסטן (א 1000סטן) מאָל
 for the ten thousandth time צום צען טויזנטסטן (א 10,000סטן) מאָל
 the first two books די ערשטע צוויי ביכער

12.2.2 Ordinal numbers as adverbs

Points made in discussion may be numbered by adverbializing ordinals by suffixing **נט**-, usually [nz]. Where only two points are being made, Semitic component ראשיית [réyshəs] 'firstly' and שנית [shéynəs] 'secondly' may be substituted for ערשטנס and צווייטנס. If extra emphasis is required, ראשיית כל [réyshəskòl] 'first of all' and והשנית [vəhəshéynəs] 'and secondly' may be used.

firstly [ershtnz] ערשטנס

secondly [tsveytnz] צווייטנס

thirdly [dritnz] דריטנס

fourthly [fertnz] פֿערטנס

fifthly [fiftnz] פֿינפטנס

sixthly [zekstnz] זעקסטנס

12.3 FRACTIONS

Fractions are formed by suffixing **טל**- or **סטל**-, generally along the lines of the ordinals (→ §12.2), to the unsuffixed form of the ordinal number. They are neutral in gender. Simple major-digit fractions with a numerator of one

may alternatively be expressed with suffix חלק [khéylik / khéylək] 'part'. The חלק forms may be used in everyday situations but the טל- forms alone are used in arithmetic. Note the special form העלפֿט (די) 'half (n.)' and its adjective counterpart האַלב. האַלב inflects for case and gender as an attributive adjective. Single digit number plus a half may alternatively be expressed by suffixing האַלבֿן to the ordinal stem of the *following* full number, e.g. דריטהאַלבֿן = two and a half, פֿערטהאַלבֿן = three and a half. Note, however, אַנדערטהאַלבֿן for 'one and a half'.

12.3.1 Major fractions

העלפֿט half

third	דריט־חלק / [drít khèylik]
fourth	פֿערט־חלק / [fért khèylik]
fifth	פֿינפֿט־חלק / [fínft khèylik]
sixth	זעקסט־חלק / [zékst khèylik]
seventh	זיבעט־חלק / [zíbət khèylik]
eighth	אַכט־חלק / [ákht khèylik]
ninth	נײַנט־חלק / [náynt khèylik]
tenth	צענט־חלק / [tsént khèylik]
eleventh	עלפֿט־חלק / [éift khèylik]
twelfth	צוועלפֿט־חלק / [tsvéift khèylik]
thirteenth	דרייצענטל (var. דרייצעטל)
fourteenth	פֿערצענטל (var. פֿערצעטל)
fifteenth	פֿופֿצענטל (var. פֿופֿצעטל)
sixteenth	זעכצענטל (var. זעכצעטל)
seventeenth	זיבעצענטל (var. זיבעצעטל)
eighteenth	אַכצענטל (var. אַכצעטל)

nineteenth ניינצענטל (var. ניינצנטל)
 twentieth צוואַנציקסטל
 hundredth הונדערטסטל (var. הונדערטל) / [húndərt khèylik]
 thousandth טויזנטסטל (var. טויזנטל) / [tóyznt khèylik]
 millionth מיליאָנטסטל / [milyónt khèylik]

SAMPLES OF FRACTIONS

an eighth אָן אַכטל
 one eighth איין אַכטל
 four fifths פֿיר פֿינפטל
 three and a half (פֿערטהאַלבן =) דריי מיט אַ האַלב
 six nineteenth זעקס ניינצענטל
 nine twenty-fifths נין פֿינף = און צוואַנציקסטל

12.4 THE ALPHABETIC NUMBERING SYSTEM

The traditional Jewish numbering system uses the letters of the alphabet. Combined numbers are ordered downward. From 1,000 and upward, the system recycles itself, separating the thousands from the small numbers by an apostrophe and/or by use of larger or bold letters for the thousands).

12.4.1 The basic alphabetic numbers

1	א
2	ב
3	ג
4	ד
5	ה

6	ו
7	ז
8	ח
9	ט
10	י
11	יא
12	יב
13	יג
14	יד
15	טו
16	טז
17	יז
18	יח
19	יט
20	כ
30	ל
40	מ
50	נ
60	ס
70	ע
80	פ
90	צ
100	ק
200	ר
300	ש
400	ת
500	תק
600	תר
700	תש
800	תת

900 תתק

1000 א'

2000 ב'

3000 ג'

4000 ד'

5000 ה'

SAMPLES OF ALPHABETIC NUMBERS

18 יח

28 כח

36 לו

40 ה

77 עז

120 קכ

248 רמח

365 שסה

969 תתקסט

12.4.1.1 Anomalies

The anomalies in the system result from traditional cultural considerations. The combinations 10 (י) + 5 (ה) for 15 and 10 (י) + 6 (ו) would result, when written out, in variants of the sacred name of God. They are therefore subject to the traditional ban on using God's name in vain in an everyday context, even where reference to God is not intended. The combinations 9 (ט) + 6 (ו) and 9 (ט) + 7 (ז) are substituted, giving טו = 15 and טז = 16. Traditional sacred Hebrew and Aramaic books with extensive Jewish letter numbering also avoid combinations with negative overtones, e.g. 304 = דש, (4+300) rather than the expected דש (300+4,) because it spells the word דש [shed] 'evil spirit'.

12.4.2 Supplementary uses of the Jewish alphabet

12.4.2.1 Calendar

The Jewish calendar is outlined in §13.5.

12.4.2.2 Numerology

Traditional Jewish numerology, called גמטריא [gəmətriyə] 'gematria', adds up the numeric values of the letters of Hebrew words and names as a starting point for exegetical or mystical extrapolation. It is a practice prevalent in rabbinic lore and kabbalistic inquiry. Thus, for example, it has been noted in support of the rabbinic adage נִכְנָס יַיִן יֵצֵא סוֹד [nikhnəs yáyin | yòtso sód] 'When wine goes in, a secret comes out', that the words for 'wine' and 'secret' both add up to 70 in gematria (wine = יַיִן = 10+10+50 = 70; secret = סוֹד = 60+6+4 = 70). In a lighter vein, traditional wedding speeches often entertain guests by demonstrating the compatibility and good fortune of the bride and bridegroom via interlocking series of gematrias.

12.4.2.3 Acronyms

Traditional Jewish acronyms are called ראשי-תיבות [roshətéyvəs] '[abbreviations from the] heads [=first letters] of words'. Traditionally, words thus created are marked by the double apostrophe " before their final letter to mark their acronymity, but the apostrophe is frequently omitted for well established acronyms. A number of semantic classes are particularly inclined to acronyms. Great rabbinic figures are often known to Yiddish speakers by their acronyms. Most frequently, the vowel *a* is supplied to create syllables from the initials, except in final syllables ending in a vowel where *o* is supplied. Maimonides is traditionally known as דער רמב"ם [der rámbam] 'the Rambam', the acronym from his full traditional name

רַבְנוּ מֹשֶׁה בֶּן חִימּוֹן *Rabéynu Móyshe ben Máymən*. The great sixteenth-century Ashkenazic codifier Rabbi Moyshe Isserles is known as דַּעַר רַמ"א [der ramó] 'the Ramo' from his initials. The tradition is on occasion continued in modern Yiddish cultural circles. Among the best known examples are leading Yiddish cultural institutions founded in pre-World War II Eastern Europe — יִיִשְׁנֵר חַיטְנִשְׁאַפֿטעלעכער אַיִנסטיטוט [yívo / yivó] (from 'Yiddish Scientific Institute', now the Yivo Institute for Jewish Research in New York), צענטראַלע ייִדישע שול אָרגאַניזאַציע [tsísho] (from 'Central Yiddish School Organization') and ציקאַ צענטראַלע ייִדישע קולטור אָרגאַניזאַציע [tsíko / tsikó] (from 'Central Yiddish Culture Organization'). A number of Jewish names are themselves ראשי תיבות e.g. כ"ץ [kats] 'Katz' from כֹּהֵן צַדִּיק [kóyhən tsédak] 'righteous kohen (descendant of the Biblical priestly caste)'.

13 TIME

13.0 OVERVIEW

Alongside international units of time and the general calendar, Yiddish retains active use of the Jewish calendar and concepts of time associated with it.

13.1 LIFE

13.1.1 Age

עלטער age

חוי אַלט...? how old...?

— יאָר (אַלט) years old —

געבוירטסטאָג (דער) (var. געבוירן-טאָג) birthday

SAMPLES OF AGE

חוי אַלט ביסטו? How old are you (familiar)?

איך בין אַלט צוויי און צוואַנציק יאָר I'm twenty-two years old

13.1.2 Youthfulness

ניי־געבוירן just-born

young יונג (comparative: יינגער; superlative: —)

middle aged מיטליעריק

quite young; youngish יונגלעך

quite old; oldish אַלטלעך

old אַלט (comparative: עלטער; superlative: -עלטסט)

13.1.3 The age cycle

baby [éyfaɪə(kh)] (דאָס) עופֿעלעך

child (דאָס) קינד(ער)

little boy (דאָס) יינגעלעך

little girl (דאָס) מיידעלעך

boy (דער/דאָס) יינגל(עך)

bar-mitsvah boy (i.e. 13 year old) [bókħər(im)] (דער) בר-מצוה בחור(ים)

girl (די/דאָס) מיידל(עך)

young man (also: fellow; bachelor) [bókħər(im)] (דער) בחור(ים)

young woman [bókħərtə(s)] (די) בחורטע(ס)

(rare: מיידל is the usual female correspondent of בחור)

young fellow [yungərmán] (דער) יונגערמאַן

young woman (די) יונגע פֿרוי(ען)

man (דער) מאַן (מענער)

woman (די) פֿרוי (ען)

old man [zókn; skéynim] (דער) זקן(ים)

old woman [skéynə(s)] (די) זקנה (זקנות)

13.1.4 Death

7 days of mourning upon a death [shívə] (די) שבעה

(end of) thirty-day mourning period [shlóyshim] (pl.) (די) שלושים

date of anniversary of a death (דער־די) יאָרצײַט

13.2 TIME

13.2.1 Units of time

second [səkúndə(s)] (די) סעקונדע(ס)

minute [minút(n)] (די) מינוט(ן)

hour [shó(ə)n] (די) שעה(ן)

day טאָג (דער) (pl. טעג)

period of twenty-four hours [məslés(n)] (דער) חמט־לעת(ן)

week (די) וואָכ(ן)

month [khóydesh] (דער) חודש (pl. חדשים [khadóshim])

year(s) (דאָס) יאָר(ן)

decade [yortséndlik(er)] (דער) יאָרצענדליק(ער)

century [yorchúndert(er)] (דער) יאָרהונדערט(ער)

millennium [yortóyznt(er)] (דער) יאָרטויזנט(ער)

13.2.1.1 Plurals of יאָר, שעה, מינוט

When used with a specific number, 'minute', 'hour' and 'year' themselves serve as plural forms, e.g. צען מינוט 'ten minutes', צוויי שעה 'two hours', צוואַנציק יאָר 'twenty years'. When used as conceptual time units with no specific number, the plural in -ן is used, e.g. מינוטן, ניט 'minutes, not hours'; יאָרן לאַנג 'for many years'.

13.2.2 Clock time

Clock time is given without a preposition, e.g. מיר קומען צוויי אַזיינער.

'We're coming at 2 o'clock'. Hours and minutes may be given consecutively – 9:21 is read ג'יין איין און צוואַנציק. Note the alternative forms for expressing half hours: דרייסיק 'thirty' or האַלב נאָך 'half past' after the preceding whole hour, and האַלב (to) 'half (to)' before the following hour, e.g. אַכט דרייסיק = האַלב נאָך אַכט = האַלב ניין = '8:30'.

אָזייגער o'clock

אַ פֿערטל צו a quarter to

אַ פֿערטל נאָך a quarter past

דרייסיק -thirty

האַלב נאָך half past

האַלב half to

SAMPLES OF CLOCK TIME

צוועלף דרייסיק - האַלב נאָך צוועלף - האַלב איינס 12:30

אַ פֿערטל נאָך איינס 1:15

פֿינף און צוואַנציק נאָך דריי 3:25

דריי פֿופֿציק - צען (מינוט) צו פֿיר 3:50

פֿינף אָזייגער 5:00

זיבן פֿינף און פֿערציק - אַ פֿערטל צו אַכט 7:45

אַכט זעקס און צוואַנציק 8.26

13.2.3 Parts of the day

פֿאַרטאָג before dawn

אין דער פֿריי (also spelled אינדערפֿריי) in the morning

נאָך מיטאָג, נאָכמיטאָג, נאָך מיטיק (also spelled נאָכמיטיק) in the afternoon;

פֿאַרנאַכט at dusk; in the early evening

אויף דער נאַכט [avdərnaht] in the evening (→ §13.3.2.1)

in the evening אין אָחנט

at night [banácht] בינאַכט

SAMPLES OF CLOCK TIME AND DAY TIME

4 a.m. פֿאַרטאָג

10 a.m. צען אינדערפֿרי

3 p.m. דריי נאַכמיטיק

אַכט אין אָחנט - אַכט אויף דער נאַכט 8 p.m.

עלף בינאַכט 11 p.m.

13.2.4 Conceptual time sequences

just a second!; in a jiffy! אַ מינוטקעלע [minútkele] / אַ סעקונדע

just one moment אַ מאָמענט [momént]

a little while אַ חילינקע

a while אַ חילע

quite a while אַ היפּשע חילע

13.2.5 Idiomatic time sequences

a long long time ago פֿון כּמעלניצקיס צייטן

(‘of Chmielnitski’s times’, after Bogdan Chmielnitski, who led massacres of
Jews in the Ukraine in 1648 and 1649)

seldom [shmíte] אין אַ שמיטה

(‘once in a sabbatical’ after the Biblical sabbatical at seven-year intervals)

very seldom [yóyvi] אין אַ יובל

(‘once in a jubilee’ after the Biblical jubilee at fifty-year intervals)

very long [gólæs] לַאֲנָג חַי דְּעַר גְּלוּתָא (→ §16.1)

(‘long as the diaspora’ after the two-thousand-year Jewish diaspora)

very short [púrim] בֵּיז פּוּרִים [estærtónæs] פֿון אַסְתֵּר-תַּעֲנִיתָא

(‘from the Fast of Esther to Purim’, i.e. a timespan of one day)

in / until a ripe old age [mæsushélakhs yórn] אִין \ בֵּיז מֵתוֹשְׁלַחַס יָאָרְן

(‘Methuselah’s years’, after Methuselah who lived 969 years; cf. Genesis 5:27)

13.2.6 Relative time concepts

now איצטער (var. איצט, אַצינד, איצטערט; nonliterary var. יעצט)

then; (= ‘at that time’) דעמאָלט (var. דאַמאָלט(ט), דענסטמאָל, דאָן, דענסטמאָל)

before (preposition requiring object) פֿאַר

after (preposition requiring object) נאַך

before, previously (adv.) פֿריער

later (adv.) שפעטער

during [méshek] בַּעֲתָא [b(ə)éys] \ בֵּשַׁעֲתָא [beshás/pshás] / אִין מִשְׁךְ פֿון [méshek]

concurrent with גלײַכצײטיק מיט

at the same time צו (אין) דער זעלבִּיקער צײַט

13.3 THE CALENDAR

13.3.1 Seasons

spring פֿרילינג (דער)

summer זומער (דער)

autumn [harpst] האַרבסט (דער)

winter חײַנטער (דער)

13.3.2 Days

Sunday זונטיק

Monday מאָנטיק

Tuesday דינסטיק

Wednesday מיטוואַך

Thursday דאָנערשטיק

Friday פֿרייטיק

Saturday [shábəs] שבת

13.3.2.1 Friday and Saturday evening

Because the Jewish Sabbath, like all Jewish holidays, begins on the evening preceding the date of the holiday (→ §13.5.3), the preceding day has special cultural and linguistic status. In addition to פֿרייטיק, Friday is also called ערבֿ שבת [èrəv shábəs] 'eve of Sabbath'. The part of Friday afternoon immediately preceding the onset of the Sabbath celebration is known as פֿאַר־שבת [farshábəs]. Friday evening, upon and following the start of the Sabbath, is פֿרייטיק־צו־נאַכט(ס) [fríytsík-tsu-nákh(t)s]. Saturday night, from the end of the Sabbath at sundown and onwards, is known as מוצאי־שבת [motsə shábəs], שבת־צו־נאַכט(ס) [shábəs tsu nákh(t)s] or שבתֿע נאַכט(ס) [sh(a)béysə nakht(s)] 'Saturday night' (→ §10.3.7). The stock-phrase use of preposition צו is unique to these days. On other evenings of the week, דער נאַכט [avdər'nákh(t)] is used, e.g. מיטוואַך אויף דער נאַכט 'Wednesday evening' (→ §13.2.3).

13.3.3 Months

January	יאַנואַר
February	פֿעברואַר
March	מאַרץ (var. מערץ)
April	אַפּריל
May	מאַי (var. spelling: מאַי)
June	יוני
July	יולי
August	אויגוסט
September	סעפטעמבער
October	אָקטאָבער
November	נאָוועמבער
December	דעצעמבער

13.3.4 Dates

Dates are formed with ordinal numbers (\rightarrow §12.2). They are masculine and traditionally given in dative with masculine definite article דעם.

SAMPLES OF DATES

October 3 דעם דריטן אָקטאָבער (= דעם 3טן אָקטאָבער)

April 12 דעם צוועלפן אַפּריל (= דעם 12טן אַפּריל)

January 28 דעם אַכט און צוואַנציקסטן יאַנואַר (= דעם 28סטן יאַנואַר)

13.4 USE OF PREPOSITIONS WITH EXPRESSIONS OF TIME

In many cases where English uses 'at' 'on' or 'for' in expressions of time, there is no preposition at all. Preposition אויף [af] is used in the sense of

intention with respect to a period of time, but no preposition appears in the factual recounting of the period of time. **צוריק מיט** — corresponds with 'ago'; **אין** — **ארום** corresponds with 'in — time'.

SAMPLES OF THE USE AND NON-USE OF PREPOSITIONS

WITH EXPRESSIONS OF TIME

- We'll meet at 4 מיר וועלן זיך טרעפן פֿיר אַזייגער
- I'm coming on the 24th איך קום דעם 24סטן
- I came intending to stay three weeks איך בין געקומען אויף [af] דריי וואָכן
- I stayed three weeks איך בין געבליבן דריי וואָכן
- I saw them ten years ago איך האָב זיי געזען מיט צען יאָר צוריק
- I'll see them again in ten years איך וועל זיי חידער זען אין צען יאָר אַרום

13.5 THE JEWISH CALENDAR

13.5.1 The calendric system

The Jewish lunar calendar makes use of the alphabetic numbering system (→ §12.4). The calendar is calibrated to Biblical history as chronologized in Jewish tradition, and counts from the Biblical creation of the world. That event is placed in Jewish year 1, which corresponds with 3761/3760 BC. Thus, for example, 586 BC coincides with the Jewish years ג'קעו (3,175) and ג'קעו (3,176); 1492 AD coincides with ה'רנב (5,252) and ה'רנג (5,253). To simplify the system for everyday use, the ה' representing 5,000 is deleted where discussion is limited to years after ה' (i.e. AD 1239/1240). The abbreviated forms of years are usually written out using the traditional double apostrophe (") before the final letter. Thus, 1900 is תרס"א / תר"ס ([5,]661

/ [5.]662). To convert any Jewish year after 1240, add 1,240 to the abbreviated Jewish date (i.e. without the ה' = 5,000). If the exact date is known and it falls between the Jewish new year in autumn and 1 January, add 1239 instead. If the exact date is not known, it is customary to add 1240 with the understood caution that the first few months of the Jewish year coincide with the preceding year. Jewish dates generally become 'words' via the insertion of an [a] vowel for years that end in a consonant, and an [o] vowel for years that end in a vowel, e.g. תשמ"ח [tashmákh] = 1987/1988, תשנ"א [tashnó] = 1990/1991. Many names of years are historical concepts, e.g. גזירות ת"ח ות"ט [gzéyrəs tákh vətát] 'the persecutions of [5.]408 and [5.]409', refers to the massacres of Ukranian Jewry in those years. Adding 1240 converts the years to AD 1648 and 1649.

13.5.2 Months

The Jewish lunar year has twelve months. Leap years, which occur seven times within a nineteen-year cycle, have thirteen months. The month added is ואדר [véyodər], also called אדר ב' [òdər béyz].

- תשרי [tíshrə] (September / October)
- חשוון [khéshvən] (October / November)
- כסלו [kíslov] (November / December)
- טבת [téyvəs] (December / January)
- שבט [shvat] (January / February)
- אדר [òdər] (February / March; called אדר א' [òdər álav] in leap years)
- ואדר [véyodər] / אדר ב' [òdər béyz] (in leap years only)
- ניסן [nísən] (March / April)
- אייר [íyər] (April / May)
- סיון [sívn] (May / June)

תמוז [táməz] (June / July)

אב [ov] (July / August)

אלול [éíəl] (August / September)

13.5.3. Dates of the month and of major holidays

Dates of the month are given using the Jewish alphabetic numbering system (→ §12.4). The Jewish day extends from dusk to dusk and the date therefore begins on the previous day in the general calendar. Jewish holidays therefore begin on the evening of the date before their counterparts in the general calendar.

MAJOR JEWISH HOLIDAYS AND THE DATES ON WHICH THEY BEGIN

Holiday	Transcription	Popular English name	Date
ראש השנה	[roshəshónə]	'Jewish New Year'	א' תשרי
יום כיפור	[yomkípər]	'Day of Atonement'	י' תשרי
סוכות	[súkəs]	'Feast of Tabernacles'	ט"ו תשרי
שמחת תורה	[símkhəs tóryrə]	'Simhath Torah'	כ"ג תשרי
חנוכה	[khánəkə]	'Hanukkah'	כ"ה כסלו
ט"ו בשבט	[tu bishvát]	'Tu biShevat'	ט"ו שבט
(חמשה-עשר-)	[kham(i)shósər]		
פורים	[púrim]	'Purim'	י"ד אדר
פסח	[péysakh]	'Passover'	ט"ו ניסן
לג בעמר	[lag bóymər]	'Lag baOmer'	י"ח אייר
שבועות	[shvuós]	'Shavuoth'	ו' סיון
ט"ז בתמוז	[shivósər bətámuz]	'Fast of Tamuz'	ט"ז תמוז
תשעה באב	[tíshəbov]	'Fast of Av'	ט' אב

14 SYNTAX

14.0 OVERVIEW

Yiddish syntax is highly flexible. Because the three cases (→ §5.1) themselves maintain clarity of subject and object, there is scope for extensive variation in word order. Changes in word order empower the speaker and writer to determine nuance and emphasis by transposing many of the parts of a sentence at will with no loss of clarity. The major constraints are the placement of the inflected verb in second position within a sentence, the application in certain conditions of obligatory inversion of subject and predicate, and the position of verbal additive זײך and negator נײט.

14.1 THE INFLECTED-VERB-SECOND RULE

The inflected-verb-second rule stipulates that the inflected verb be placed in second position within a sentence. Inflecting verbs are those that inflect for person and number. In the present tense, the main verb itself inflects (→ §7.5) and is therefore subject to the rule. In the past and future tenses, it is the helping verbs that inflect (הױבן or זײן in the past → §§7.6 – 7.7; וועלן in the future → §7.9). The helping verbs in the past and future tenses must adhere to the inflected-verb-second rule. The main verbs – the past participle in the past and the infinitive in the future – do not inflect and are therefore exempt from the rule.

14.2 BASIC SENTENCE ORDER: NOUN PLUS INFLECTED VERB

The primitive sentence type comprises a noun phrase followed by a verb phrase. Note from the samples provided that the inflected verb adheres to the inflected-verb-second rule in all three tenses. In the present, where the main verb itself inflects, it is simply placed after the subject. In the past, the appropriate part of the past tense helping verb – הָאָבֵן or זֶיִן – is second. In the future, the appropriate part of וְעֵלֶן must be placed second.

SAMPLE SENTENCES IN BASIC SENTENCE ORDER

present

דו ביסט גערעכט

You are right

past

דער טאטע האָט גערעדט מיט זײַן יינגעלע

Father spoke to his little boy

future

די נײַע לערערין װעט אָנקומען מאָנטיק

The new teacher (f.) will arrive on Monday

14.3 WORD PLACEMENT IN BASIC SENTENCE ORDER

14.3.1 זײַך in basic sentence order

If a verb is accompanied by additive זײַך (→ §7.3), זײַך immediately follows

the inflected verb in basic sentence order. The result is that in the past and future of synthetic verbs, and in the present of verbs with stressed prefixes, זיך is sandwiched between the inflected and uninflected verb.

SAMPLES OF זיך IN BASIC SENTENCE ORDER

present

I'm delighted to hear the good news איך פֿרײ זיך מיט די גוטע נױעס

People are pushy in that company מ'שטופט זיך אין יענער פֿירמע

(inf. [shtupm] זיך שטופן 'push oneself; be ambitious; sell oneself')

present of verbs with stressed prefixes

I fit in here איך פֿאַרײנפֿאַסט זיך דאָ אַרײַן (inf. פֿאַרײנפֿאַסטן זיך 'fit in')

Stop bothering me! אָפֿטשטענענען זיך אָמאָ (inf. אָפֿטשטענענען זיך 'stop bothering someone')

past

We said goodbye to each other last year מ'האַט זיך געזעגנט פֿאַרײַקאָרן

They greeted each other on the street זײ האָבן זיך באַגריסט אין גאַס

future

We'll see each other again next year מ'זעט זיך חידער זען איבערײַקאָרן

I will miss you (lit. 'The heart will yearn') דאָס האַרץ זעט זיך פֿאַרבענקען

14.3.2 Object pronouns in basic sentence order

Accusative pronouns (→ §6.1.2) immediately follow the inflected verb. Dative pronouns (→ §6.1.3) follow the preposition of which they are the object.

SAMPLES OF OBJECT PRONOUNS IN BASIC SENTENCE ORDER

present

Our friends can see us אונדזערע חברים [khavéyrim] קענען אונדז זען

He looks at you (familiar) all day ער קוקט אויף דיר אַ גאַנצן טאָג

present of verbs with stressed prefix

They are throwing us out (ארויסווארפן inf.) מ'ווארפט אונדז אַרויס

They're taking everything away from us מ'נעמט פֿון אונדז אַזעק אַלצדינג

past

We were fooled (/cheated) מ'האָט אונדז אָפּגעטראָרט

They spoke to us זיי האָבן מיט אונדז גערעדט

future

We'll see them tomorrow מיר וועלן זיי מאָרגן זען

They won't yell at us זיי וועלן אויף אונדז ניט שרייען

14.3.3 *ניט* in basic sentence order

Negator *ניט* (→ §7.4) occurs somewhere after the inflected verb. In sentences with helping (inflected) and main (uninflected) verbs, *ניט* occurs somewhere between the two. This is applicable for all helping+main verb combinations (past → §§7.6–7.7; future → §7.9; present of verbs with stressed prefixes → §8.2; analytic verbs → §9). The scope for manoeuvre within these constraints allows for considerable variation of sentence emphasis (→ §14.10).

SAMPLES OF **ניט** IN BASIC SENTENCE ORDER

present

I'm not going **איך ניי ניט**

זיי הייסן ניט פֿון זייערע הענט און פֿיס

They don't know what they're talking about (lit. 'They don't know of their hands and feet')

present of verbs with stressed prefix

We're not getting up early **פֿרי [uf] אויף ניט שטייען מיר שטייען** (inf. אויפשטיין)

אויפקוואַרפֿן (inf.) **איך וואַרף ניט אַזעק דעם מאַנטל**

I'm not throwing away the coat

past

I didn't go to Jerusalem **איך בין ניט געפֿאָרן אין ירושלים** [yərusholáyim]

ער האָט זיך ניט געפֿונען **He didn't find himself**

future

We won't go to Montreal **מיר וועלן ניט פֿאָרן אין מאָנטרעאַל**

We won't see each other on Friday **מיר וועלן זיך ניט זען פֿריטיק**

14.3.3.1 **זיך with ניט**

Where verbs have additive **זיך** (→ §7.3), **ניט** always precedes **זיך**. Adverbs may intervene.

SAMPLES OF **ניט WITH זיך**

I don't try **איך באַמי זיך ניט**

I don't try anymore **איך באַמי זיך שוין ניט**

14.3.3.2 נִיט with object pronouns

נִיט follows an object personal pronoun (→ §§6.1.2 – 6.1.3). An adverb may appear between them. In analogous sentences with common or proper nouns, נִיט may precede the noun.

SAMPLES OF נִיט WITH OBJECT PRONOUNS

I don't see him upstairs איך זע אים נִיט אויבן

I don't see him upstairs anymore איך זע אים שוין נִיט אויבן

I don't see the people upstairs איך זע נִיט די מענטשן אויבן

I don't see Záimən upstairs איך זע נִיט זלמנען [záimənən] אויבן

14.3.3.3 נִיט קיין

Where a transitive verb with an indefinite object is negated and נִיט קיין (→ §7.4) is used, קיין [kin / ka] occurs immediately before the noun phrase that is its object. נִיט קיין are often separated by the requirements of נִיט placement.

SAMPLES OF THE POSITION OF נִיט קיין

We don't have any time מיר האָבן נִיט קיין צײַט

They didn't have any money זיי האָבן נִיט געהאַט קיין געלט

You won't have any worries here [dáygəs] וועסט נִיט האָבן דאָ קיין דאגות

Don't tell me any stories דערצייל מיר נִיט קיין מעשיות [máysəs]

14.4 INVERTED SENTENCE ORDER: INFLECTED VERB PLUS NOUN

In inverted sentence order, the inflected verb is jumped forward so that it precedes the subject. The most frequent cause of inversion is the inflected-verb-second rule. Jumping the inflected verb forward places it in second position, in conformity with the rule. In past and future, this generally results

in separation of the helping verb (הָאָבֵן or זִיָּן in the past; חֲעֵלָן in the future) from the main verb (past participle or infinitive). Main verbs, which are not subject to the inflected-verb-second rule, are unaffected by the jump.

14.4.1 Adverbial triggered compulsory inversion

Adverbials comprise adverbs, adverb phrases (phrases launched by an adverb) and prepositional phrases (functioning in effect as adverbs → §10.4). Adverbials at the beginning of a sentence would result in the inflected verb being in third position. This is averted by inversion, which jumps the inflected verb forward to second position. The samples provided illustrate the same sentence in basic sentence order and in inverted order triggered by placement of an adverbial at the beginning of the sentence. Subject and object are underlined; adverbials triggering inversion are **outlined**. The adverbs and prepositional phrases provided have similar meanings.

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS AND ADVERB PHRASES TRIGGERING INVERSION

present

Málkə is coming soon **בְּאַלְד** מַלְכָּה קוֹמַט →
בְּאַלְד קוֹמַט מַלְכָּה

past

We danced late at night **מִיר הָאָבֵן** נֶעֱטְאַנְצַט שְׁפֵעַט אִין דער נאַכְט →
שְׁפֵעַט אִין דער נאַכְט נֶעֱטְאַנְצַט מִיר הָאָבֵן

future

I will certainly go **אִיךְ חֲעֵלָן** אַחוּדְאִי גִיָּן [aváda] →
אַחוּדְאִי חֲעֵלָן אִיךְ גִיָּן

SAMPLES OF PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES TRIGGERING INVERSION

present

Máikə is coming in a little while → מלכה קומט אין א חילינקע
 אין א חילינקע קומט מלכה

past

We danced until late at night → מיר האבן געטאנצט ביז שפעט אין דער נאַכט
 ביז שפעט אין דער נאַכט האבן מיר געטאנצט

future

I will certainly go → איך וועל אויף זיכער [avzíkher] גיין
 אויף זיכער וועל איך גיין

14.4.2 Midsentence adverb-triggered inversion

A sentence need only have a noun phrase and a verb phrase. A written sentence may comprise any number of true sentences tied by link words. Whether or not inversion is triggered in the middle of a sentence depends on the nature of the link word. If the link word is an adverbial, inversion is triggered. If it is a conjunction, there is no inversion. In the samples provided, subject and object are underlined; inversion triggers (adverbs, adverb phrases and prepositional phrases) are **outlined**. Conjunctions, which do not trigger inversion, are in **bold type**.

SAMPLES OF MIDSENTENCE ADVERBIALS TRIGGERING INVERSION

present

I'm coming on Thursday → איך קום דאָנערשטיק

I might be coming on Thursday → קומ איך דאָנערשטיק

past

We went to Europe מיר זינגען געפאָרן אין אייראָפּע →

פֿאָרן זומער זינגען מיר געפאָרן אין אייראָפּע

We went to Europe before the summer

future

She won't go זי וועט ניט גיין [zít / zít / zí vet] →

She probably won't go זי וועט [mistámə] ניט גיין [vetsl / vedzi]

SAMPLES OF MIDSENTENCE CONJUNCTIONS NOT TRIGGERING INVERSION**present**

I'm coming on Thursday איך קום דאָנערשטיק →

I think that I'm coming on Thursday איך מיין אז איך קום דאָנערשטיק

past

We went to Europe מיר זינגען געפאָרן אין אייראָפּע →

דאָס איז געשען ווען מיר זינגען געווען אין אייראָפּע

It happened when we went to Europe

future

She won't go זי וועט ניט גיין →

דבֿורה קען אים ניט פֿאַרטראָגן און זי וועט ניט גיין

Dvórya can't stand him and she won't go

14.4.3 Distinguishing conjunctions from adverbs

By definition, adverbs trigger inversion while conjunctions do not. It is

therefore important to know which link words are adverbs and which are conjunctions. There are hundreds of adverbs in the language used to describe states of time, place, feeling and situation. Adverbs (including adverbial and prepositional phrases) often represent the more complex logical relations (e.g. פֿונדעסטחועגן 'nevertheless', און דער אַנדערער זײט 'on the other hand'). Many conjunctions are the link words that express the basic linking concepts 'and', 'but', 'if', 'or' 'because' and 'that'. Some, however, do express time relations, and some have developed more sophisticated logical connotations. In stock phrases combining an adverb with a conjunction, it is the final word that determines status with respect to triggering inversion. 'ו' 'as' concludes the stock phrase 'באלד ו' 'as soon as'. The entire phrase therefore functions as a conjunction and inversion is blocked (→ §5.10 on conjunctions vs. prepositions with comparative adjectives).

14.4.3.1 Major conjunctions

but אָבער

if אויב

or אָדער

and און

that; when; if אַז

before אײדער (preceding subject; cf. adverb פֿריער)

as soon as באלד ו'

although [hagám] אָנאָם

which / that וואָס

when / if ווען

as / like ווי

if / in case / in the event טאָמער

although אָנאָם

after [nogh dém vi] **נאך דעם ווי** (preceding subject; cf. preposition **נאך**)

notwithstanding that [nit gækùkt av dém vos] **חאט דעם וויף**

but / only **נאך**

rather; it is rather the case that [nor vodén] **נאך וואס דען (= נאך וואס דען)**

14.4.4 Present participle triggered compulsory inversion

Present participles (→ §7.2) trigger inversion. Inversion triggering present participles are **outlined**.

SAMPLES OF PRESENT PARTICIPLES TRIGGERING INVERSION

[ínyən] **נאך וואס דעם וויף** **באטראכט** דעם ענין [khávə] **חאט חוה**

While walking, Khávə thought about the matter

לויט צו דעם וויף **חאט דער אטלעט** **צעקלאמט** א פוס

While running, the athlete injured his foot

14.4.5 If-then clause triggered compulsory inversion

If-then clauses trigger inversion in the then-clause. Inversion is triggered regardless of the type of word beginning the if-clause. Inversion here has the force of English 'then'. Noun phrases and inflected verb are **underlined**, inversion-triggering if-clauses are **outlined**.

SAMPLES OF IF-THEN CLAUSE TRIGGERED INVERSION

We will come to visit you **נאטט צו דיר צו גאסט** → **מיר וועלן קומען צו דיר צו גאסט**

נאטט צו דיר צו גאסט **וועלן מיר קומען צו דיר צו גאסט**

If you invite us, we'll come to visit you

emphasis (→ §14.10) triggers inversion. In the samples provided, inversion-triggering fronted words are **outlined**.

SAMPLES OF OBJECT-FRONTING INVERSION

I really needed *this!* [dóz dafikh nòkh] דָּוָס דאָרף איך נאָך

I have enough *apples* פֿאַל האָב איך גענוג

We didn't need *him* yesterday האָבן מיר נעכטן ניט געדאַרעט

I have too many *problems* already פֿאַרפֿאַרען האָב איך שוין צופֿיל

14.4.8 Stylistic inversion

Unless it is subject to obligatory inversion, the first sentence in a spoken or written text exhibits basic sentence order (noun phrase followed by verb phrase). Follow-on sentences may, however, be inverted to avert monotony. Such inversion often has the additional force of 'so', 'then' or 'and' in a continuous text, serving to provide continuity the way an adverb, prepositional phrase or conjunction might do. In many traditional styles of discourse and narrative, only the first sentence in any paragraph is in basic word order. The rest may be processed by stylistic inversion.

SAMPLES OF STYLISTIC INVERSION

איך בין אַרײַן אין צימער. איז עס געווען פֿינצטער.

I entered the room. It was dark.

איך האָב ניט פֿאַרשטאַנען. האָב איך געלייענט ווייטער.

I didn't understand. So I continued reading.

איך האָב געוואָלט מיט אַיך רעדן. בין איך געקומען.

I wanted to speak with you (formal). So I came.

14.5 WORD PLACEMENT IN INVERTED SENTENCE ORDER

14.5.1 זיך in inverted sentence order

זיך follows the nominative in inverted sentence order if the nominative is a personal pronoun. זיך follows the inflected verb where the nominative is a common or proper noun.

SAMPLES OF זיך IN INVERTED SENTENCE ORDER

present

That is why he is delighted זיך ער פֿרײט
 That is why the boss is delighted זיך דער באַלעבאָט

present of verbs with stressed prefixes

Why do you (familiar) refuse? זיך אָמ? (אָמזאָגן זיך. inf.)
 Why does Esther refuse? זיך אַסתר [éstar] אָמ?

past

They became friends in Peru זיך באַפֿרײַנדט [bafráynt]
 Those two became friends in Peru זיך די צוויי באַפֿרײַנדט

future

We will meet next year זיך טרעפֿן
 The sons will meet next year זיך טרעפֿן די זין

14.5.2 Object pronouns in inverted sentence order

Accusative pronouns (→§6.1.2) immediately follow the subject. Dative

pronouns (→ §6.1.3) follow the preposition of which they are the object, as they do in basic sentence order (→ §14.3.2).

SAMPLES OF OBJECT PRONOUNS IN INVERTED SENTENCE ORDER

present

While listening, he paints you (formal) צוהערנדיק זיך מאַלט ער איך

He looks at you (familiar) all day אָ גאַנצן טאָג קוקט ער אויף דיר

present of verbs with stressed prefix

Why are they throwing us out? פֿאַרוואָס וואָרפֿט מען אונדז אַרויס?

פֿאַרוואָס נעמט מען פֿון אונדז אַוועק אַלצדינג?

Why are they taking everything away from us?

past

We were cheated on Thursday דאָנערשטיק האָט מען אונדז אָנגענאַרט

They spoke to us later שפּעטער האָבן זיי מיט אונדז גערעדט

future

Will we see them tomorrow? צי וועלן מיר זיי מאַרגן זען?

Of course they won't yell at us זיכער וועלן זיי אויף אונדז ניט שרייען

14.5.3 ניט in inverted sentence order

As in basic sentence order (→ §14.3.3), ניט occurs somewhere after the inflected verb, and, in verbs comprising helping plus main verb, somewhere between the two.

SAMPLES OF ניט IN INVERTED WORD ORDER

present

Nevertheless, I'm not going דאָך גיי איך ניט

פֿאַרװאָס זײַ ניט פֿון זײַערע הענט און פֿיס?

Why don't they know what they're doing? (lit. 'Why don't they know of their hands and feet?')

present of verbs with stressed prefix

מאָנטיק שטייען מיר ניט אויף פֿרי We're not getting up early on Monday

דערהײל װאַרף איך ניט אַרויס דעם מאָנטל

In the meantime, I'm not throwing away the coat

past

פֿאַרצײַאָרן בין איך ניט געפֿאַרן אין ירושלים [yərusholáyim]

Last year I didn't go to Jerusalem

future

אויב זײַ קומען העלן מיר ניט פֿאַרן אין מאָנטרעאַל

If they come, we won't go to Montreal

פֿאַרװאָס העלן מיר זיך ניט זען פֿרייטיק?

Why won't we see each other on Friday?

14.5.3.1 with זיך in inverted sentence order

As in basic sentence order (→ §14.3.3.1), זיך always precedes ניט. Adverbs and the subject may appear between them.

SAMPLES OF WITH זיך IN INVERTED SENTENCE ORDER

I don't try now איצט באַמי איך זיך ניט

Now I don't try anymore איצט באַמי איך זיך שוין ניט

Now Shíman doesn't try anymore איצט באַמיט זיך שוין שמעון [shíman] ניט

14.5.3.2 נײַט with personal pronoun as subject in inverted sentence order

Where the subject that has been transposed by inversion is a personal pronoun, נײַט must appear after the pronoun. An adverb may appear between them. Where the subject is a proper or common noun, נײַט may precede the object noun.

SAMPLES OF נײַט WITH SUBJECT NOUNS IN INVERTED SENTENCE ORDER

If you come, he won't come אַז דו קומסט וועט ער נײַט קומען
 אַז דו קומסט וועלן נײַט קומען די מענטשן - וועלן די מענטשן נײַט קומען

If you come, the people won't come

אַז דו קומסט וועט נײַט קומען בראַינדל - וועט בראַינדל נײַט קומען

If you come, Bráyndl won't come

14.5.3.3 נײַט with object pronoun

As in basic sentence order (→ §14.3.3.2), נײַט follows an object personal pronoun. An adverb may appear between them. In analogous sentences with common or proper nouns, נײַט may (and usually does) precede the object noun.

SAMPLES OF נײַט WITH OBJECT NOUNS IN INVERTED SENTENCE ORDER

Today, I don't see him upstairs הינט זע איך אים [em] נײַט אויבן
 Today, I don't see him upstairs anymore הינט זע איך אים שוין נײַט אויבן
 Today, I don't see the people upstairs הינט זע איך נײַט די מענטשן אויבן
 Today, I don't see Zálmən upstairs הינט זע איך נײַט זלמנען [zálmənən] אויבן

14.5.3.4 נײַט קײן in inverted sentence order

As in basic sentence order (→ §14.3.3.3), קײן [kin / ka] occurs immediately before the noun phrase that is its object. נײַט קײן are often separated by the requirements of נײַט placement.

SAMPLES OF THE POSITION OF **ניט קיין** IN INVERTED SENTENCE ORDER

We don't have any time on Sunday זונטיק האָבן מיר ניט קיין צײַט

האַטט מיר ניט דערציילט קיין באַבע-מעשה? [bóbə maysə]

You didn't tell me a tall story?

14.5.3.5 ניט jumped to end during fronting

When a negative sentence undergoes object fronting for emphasis (→ §§14.4.7, 14.10), **ניט** is jumped to the end of the sentence for emphasis.

SAMPLES OF **ניט** IN OBJECT FRONTING INVERSION

I'm not Rothschild ראַטשילד בין איך ניט

She did not kill him דערהרגעט [derhárgət] האָט זי אים ניט

You don't have any sense שכל [séykh] האָטטו ניט

She is no fool קיין נאַר [kinár] איז זי ניט

14.6 PREDICATIVES

14.6.1 Positive predicatives

The positive predicatives are singular **דאָ ס'איז** 'there is', plural **דאָ ס'זײַנען** 'there are'. In the past and future, **דאָ** disappears. It is replaced by past participle **געווען** in the past and the appropriate part of **זײַן** in the future. When applied in the present tense to humans, the predicative can have the sense of 'just arrived'. Where **דאָ** '(over) here' occurs alongside **דאָ ס'איז** or **דאָ ס'זײַנען**, the resulting sequences **דאָ דאָ ס'איז** 'there is (over) here' and **דאָ דאָ ס'זײַנען** 'there are (over) here', are retained.

I don't know [khvéysnit] איך חייט ניט →

[tòmərnít | véysikhnit] שפּאַמפּער נײַט, חייט איך ניט

If not, then I don't know

It's no good [stóygnit] אַ'טױג ניט →

[unazyó | toygəs bəméylo nit] אױן װײַ יאָן טױג עס במילא ניט

And if so (/if yes), it's no good anyway

14.4.5.1 Inversion in the if-clause

Where there is no word (adverb, prepositional phrase or conjunction) to signify the concept 'if' in the if-clause, inversion is invoked in the if-clause. Inversion in the if-clause itself serves to supply the concept 'if'.

SAMPLES OF INVERSION IN THE IF-CLAUSE

[kumdzí | kum kən óykhət] קומט זי, קום איך אויכעט

If she comes, then I'll come too

[vímən géyn | tətómir géyn] חיל מען גיין, טאָן לאָמיר גיין

If we want to go, then let's go

[inkás] גי איך ביסטו אין כעט, גי איך ניט ביסטו אויך אין כעט

If I go, you're angry; If I don't go, you're also angry

14.4.6 Interrogative inversion

Interrogatives trigger inversion (→ §§11.2 – 11.3).

14.4.7 Fronting inversion

Any word that is fronted (brought forward) to the beginning of a sentence for

present singular

there is [sɪdó / sɪzdó] דאָס איז דאָ

SAMPLES OF THE PRESENT SINGULAR PREDICATIVE

There's a theatre in town אַ טעאָאַטער אין שטאָט

Shlóymə is here / Shlóymə has just arrived [sɪdo dɔ] דאָס איז דאָ שלמה

present plural

there are [(s)záynən dó] דאָס זײַנען דאָ

SAMPLES OF THE PRESENT PLURAL PREDICATIVE

There are many students here אַ סך סטודענטן דאָ

Are the guys here yet? [khévra] די חברה? דאָס זײַנען שוין דאָ

past singular

(there / it) was [sɪgəvén / səlz gəvén] איז געווען

SAMPLES OF THE PAST SINGULAR PREDICATIVE

It was a nice day אַ שײַנער טאָג

Was Símə here? איז דאָס געווען סימע?

past plural

there were [(s)záynən gəvén] זײַנען געווען דאָס

SAMPLES OF THE PAST PLURAL PREDICATIVE

There were many robbers אַ סך רויבער [asákh]

Were Símə and Zálmən there? זײַנען געווען סימע און זלמן?

future singular

there will be [sitzáyn / səvet záyn] זיין ס'וועט

SAMPLES OF THE FUTURE SINGULAR PREDICATIVE

It will turn out well זיין גוט ס'וועט

Khánə will be there זיין דאָרטן חנה ס'וועט

future plural

there will be [səln záyn / svein záyn] זיין ס'וועלן

SAMPLES OF THE FUTURE PLURAL PREDICATIVE

There will be students there זיין דאָרטן סטודענטן ס'וועלן

Khánə and Shmúəl will be there זיין דאָרטן חנה און שמואל ס'וועלן

14.6.2 Negative predicatives

In the present tense, the negative predicatives are **ס'איז ניטאָ** (or **נישטאָ**) 'there isn't' and **ס'זיינען ניטאָ** 'there aren't'. In the past – **ס'איז ניט געווען** 'there wasn't' and **ס'זיינען ניט געווען** 'there weren't'. Future forms are **זיין ס'וועט ניט** 'there won't be', plural **זיין ס'וועלן ניט**. In colloquial speech it is common to use the singular forms for both singular and plural. If the negative predicative has an indefinite object, the indefinite article disappears and is replaced by **קײן**. When the object is a personal name, **קײן** is omitted unless the proper name is being treated as a common noun, for identification of a stranger or humorously for a familiar individual (cf. 'Isn't there a Joe around?'). When the object has a definite article, the definite article is retained in the negative and no **קײן** appears, unless the sense of

'any' or 'none at all' is required, in which case קיין replaces the definite article.

present singular

there is no [sinitó / siz nitó / səlz nitó] ס'איז ניטאָן

SAMPLES OF THE PRESENT SINGULAR NEGATIVE PREDICATIVE

There isn't a theatre in town ס'איז ניטאָן קיין טעאַטער אין שטאָט

The theatre doesn't exist any more ס'איז ניטאָן מער דער טעאַטער

Shlóymə is not here / Shlóymə hasn't arrived ס'איז ניטאָן דאָ שלמה

There is no Shloyme here ס'איז ניטאָן דאָ קיין שלמה

present plural

there are no [(s)záynən nitó] ס'זינען ניטאָן

SAMPLES OF THE PRESENT PLURAL NEGATIVE PREDICATIVE

There aren't many students here ס'זינען ניטאָן דאָ קיין סך סטודענטן

Our friends aren't here yet? ס'זינען נאָך ניטאָן די חברים? [khavéyrim]

past singular

there wasn't any [sinigəvén / s(ə)liz nít gəvén] ס'איז ניט געווען

SAMPLES OF THE PAST SINGULAR NEGATIVE PREDICATIVE

It wasn't a nice day ס'איז ניט געווען קיין שיינער טאָג

Wasn't Símə here? ס'איז ניט געווען דאָ סימע?

past plural

there were no [(s)záynən nigəvén / nít gəvén] ס'זינען ניט געווען

SAMPLES OF THE PAST PLURAL NEGATIVE PREDICATIVE

There weren't many robbers ס'זינען ניש געווען קיין סך [kínsákh] רויבער
 Were Síme and Zálmən not there? ס'זינען ניש געווען סימע און זלמן?

future singular

There won't be [sətnitzáyn / səvet nit záyn] ס'וועט ניש זיין

SAMPLES OF THE FUTURE SINGULAR NEGATIVE PREDICATIVE

It won't turn out well ס'וועט ניש זיין גוט
 Kháne won't be there חנה וועט ניש זיין דאָרטן

future plural

there won't be [səln ni(t)záyn / svein nít záyn] ס'וועלן ניש זיין

SAMPLES OF THE FUTURE PLURAL NEGATIVE PREDICATIVE

There won't be any students there ס'וועלן ניש זיין דאָרטן קיין סטודענטן
 Kháne and Shmúəl won't be there ס'וועלן ניש זיין דאָרטן חנה און שמואל

14.7 RELATIVES

Relatives 'who' and 'that/which' replace the subject they refer to. The inflected verb usually follows the relative and is thus maintained in second position within the relative phrase (the subsentence launched by the relative), in conformity with the inflected-verb-second rule. The relatives are uninflecting וואָס and inflecting וועלכער. Its inflection follows the same anomalous pattern of interrogative וועלכער (→ §11.3.1.1). וואָס and וועלכער are frequently but not always interchangeable. While וועלכער occurs in all

three cases, **וואָס** is limited to nominative and accusative. When referring to people, both **וואָס** and **וועלכער** may be replaced in either object case by **וועמען** 'whom', which does not inflect for number or gender.

SAMPLES OF RELATIVES IN NOMINATIVE

דער טיש וואָס וועלכער שטייט דאָ איז אַ שיינער

The table that stands here is a pretty one

די פֿרוי וואָס וועלכע זיצט דאָרטן איז מײַן פּראָפּעסאָרשע [profesórshə]

The woman sitting over there is my professor (f.)

דאָס ליד וואָס וועלכע איז זייער שיין איז צו לאַנג אויף איצטער

The poem, which is very beautiful, is too long for now

די מענטשן וואָס וועלכע קומען זינען מינע גוטע פֿרײַנד

The people who are coming are my good friends

SAMPLES OF RELATIVES IN ACCUSATIVE

דעם טיש וואָס וועלכן איך האָב געקויפֿט איז אַ שיינער

The table I bought is a pretty one

די פֿרוי וואָס וועלכע איך זע דאָרטן איז מײַן פּראָפּעסאָרשע

The woman I see over there is my professor (f.)

דאָס ליד וואָס וועלכע די פּעטעסע האָט אָנגעשריבן איז זייער שיין

The poem, which the poetess wrote is very beautiful

די מענטשן וואָס וועלכע וועמען איך זע זינען מינע גוטע פֿרײַנד

The people whom I see are my good friends

SAMPLES OF RELATIVES IN DATIVE

דער טיש פֿון העלפֿן איך האָב גערעדט שטייט דאָ

The table of which I was speaking is standing over here

די פֿרוי מיט העלפֿער־העמען איך רעד איז מיין פּראָפּעסאָרשע

The woman with whom I am speaking is my professor (f.)

דאָס ליד הענגן העלפֿן דו האָסט געלייענט איז זייער שיין

The poem of which you read is very beautiful

די מענטשן צו העלפֿער־העמען איך גי' זינען מינע גוטע פֿרײַנד

The people to whom I am going are my good friends

14.7.1 וואָס as subordinate phrase launcher

Unlike its English counterpart, relative וואָס can launch a subordinate sentence.

SAMPLES OF וואָס AS A SUBORDINATE PHRASE LAUNCHER

די מענטשן וואָס מיט זיי קען מען ניט רעדן זינען חידער דאָ

The people with whom one cannot communicate (lit. 'the people that with them one cannot talk') are here again

דער דאָקטער וואָס איך קען אים איז הינט אָנגעקומען

The doctor whom I know (lit. 'that I know him') arrived today

14.8 REFLEXIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

Reflexive verbs are formed by putting the subject, usually human, with all its

articles and adjectives into dative (→ §§5.1.3, 5.3.3, 5.5.3). As it happens, the minority of Yiddish nouns that do inflect (→ §5.14) are human designators – intimate nouns (→ §5.14.1), proper names (→ §5.14.2) and personal pronouns (→ §6.1.3). The noun phrase, appropriately inflected for dative, is linked to the verb via the third person singular of זײַן (→ §7.7.1): איז in the present, געווען (זײַנען plural) in the past, and וועט זײַן (plural וועלן) in the future. The literal sense of reflexivity is therefore 'it is / was / will be something to somebody'. Many verbs just happen historically to take the reflexive. They denote states of being or feeling rather than actions per se. A number of reflexives are formed with ווערן 'become' (→ §9.1.7) rather than זײַן. Note that the passively constructed געוועלן ווערן 'like' (→ §15.5.6) takes the reflexive.

SAMPLES OF USE OF THE REFLEXIVE

- I'm o.k.; all is well with me; I've got it good חיר איז גוט
- She's feeling cold איר איז קאלט
- Martin is feeling hot מאַרטינען איז הייס
- Father is feeling cool outside דעם טאָטן איז קיל אין דרויסן
- Grandmother is feeling warm today דער באַבען [מאָמאָ] איז הייסט וואָרעם
- She likes him [er gəfəlt] ער געפֿעלט איר
- She once liked him more אַמאָל איז ער איר מער געפֿעלן געווען
- Blůmka likes Nůsn [nůsn] בלומקען געפֿעלט נתן
- He likes her [zi gəfəltəm] זי געפֿעלט אים
- He once liked her more אַמאָל איז זי אים [em] מער געפֿעלן געווען
- Séndar likes Kháyka סענדערן געפֿעלט חיהקע
- You don't know how good you had it זייסט נישט ווי גוט ס'איז דיר געווען
- It will be difficult for us next year איבערמאָר וועט אונדז זײַן שווער
- Are you getting fed up? [nı́məs] ס'ווערט דיר שוין נחמט?
- Here you'll find it better דאָ וועט דיר בעסער ווערן

14.9 THE DOUBLE VERB CONSTRUCTION

The use of the infinitive followed by the same verb in its appropriately inflected form, with inversion, is a popular device for denoting contrast or habitual activity. For the small minority of verbs where the first person plural differs from the infinitive, the double verb construction follows the first person plural (e.g. *חייטן* rather than *נייטן*, *גיבן* rather than *געבן*).

SAMPLES OF THE DOUBLE VERB CONSTRUCTION

טראַכטן טראַכט ער אָבער אַרבעטן אַרבעט ער ניט

He does think, but he certainly doesn't do any work (lit. 'but work he doesn't')

לאַכן לאַכן מיר אָבער קאָמיש איז עס ניט

We do laugh but it's not funny (lit. 'but funny it's not')

קומען קומט זי יעדע נאַכט אַזייער עלף

She comes every night at eleven o'clock

14.9.1 The discontinued double verb construction

A double verb construction with no follow-on tends to imply dissatisfaction, or to provide implicit criticism or irony, the nature of which is evident from context.

SAMPLES OF THE DISCONTINUED DOUBLE VERB CONSTRUCTION

[*kúmen* | *kúmt er*] ... *קומען קומט ער*

He will most certainly come (but...)

[*lákhn* | *lákhtzi*] ... *לאַכן לאַכט זי*

She certainly is laughing (but...)

14.9.2 The double infinitive construction

An infinitive fronted to the beginning of the sentence for emphasis (→ §§14.4.7, 14.10) may be repeated in an inverted phrase following upon it. The construction has implicit but powerful comparative force.

SAMPLES OF THE REPEATED INFINITIVE

One can certainly laugh (but.....) **לאַצן קען מען לאַצן**
 They will certainly try (but...) **טרוואַחן העלן זיי טרוואַחן**

14.10 VARIABILITY OF WORD ORDER

Subject to the constraints outlined in this chapter, word order can vary dramatically depending both on rhythmic factors and the speaker's wish to lay greater stress on one of the several parts. Most frequently, the part of the sentence brought up to the front marks its semantic prominence. Apart from inflected verbs which are assigned to second position, nearly anything can be brought up to the front. And even inflected verbs may be brought up front to create a dramatic exclamation. The item at the end may also carry greater or greatest stress, depending on intonation (or, in written texts, context). Items in the middle generally have less emphasis.

SAMPLES OF VARIABILITY OF WORD ORDER

I have enough apples **איך האָב גענוג עפּל**
 I have *enough* apples **גענוג עפּל האָב איך**
 I have *enough apples* **גענוג האָב איך עפּל**
 I have enough *apples* **עפּל האָב איך גענוג**
 Do I have enough apples! **האָב איך גענוג עפּל!**

We can't come now **מיר קענען נישט קומען איצטער**
 We can't come *now* **איצטער קענען מיר נישט קומען**

איצטער קומען קענען מיר ניט We can't actually *come now*
 קומען קענען מיר ניט איצטער We can't actually *come now*
 קומען איצטער קענען מיר ניט We *can't* come now
 קענען מיר איצטער ניט קומען! We just *can't* come now!
 קענען מיר ניט קומען איצטער! We just *can't* come *now*!

OVERVIEW 1.1

The notes in this chapter provide a pronunciation with a number of examples. The notes that have no direct equivalent in English.

1.1.1. The first part of the chapter deals with the pronunciation of the letters. The second part deals with the pronunciation of the vowels. The third part deals with the pronunciation of the consonants.

The next important element of the pronunciation is the stress. The stress is placed on the first syllable of a word. The stress is placed on the first syllable of a word. The stress is placed on the first syllable of a word.

1.1.2. The next part of the chapter deals with the pronunciation of the vowels. The vowels are pronounced in a certain way. The vowels are pronounced in a certain way. The vowels are pronounced in a certain way.

1.1.3. The next part of the chapter deals with the pronunciation of the consonants. The consonants are pronounced in a certain way. The consonants are pronounced in a certain way. The consonants are pronounced in a certain way.

15 SEMANTICS

15.0 OVERVIEW

The notes in this chapter provide acquaintance with a number of semantic distinctions that have no direct correlates in English.

15.1 'AT'

The most frequent equivalent of 'at' is **בֵּי** [ba]. **בֵּי** also translates 'from' that ascribes learning something from somebody or studying with or under somebody. **בֵּי** has a number of additional uses which must be mastered case by case. **בֵּי** regularly conflates with the dative definite article **דָּעֵם**, giving **בַּיִם** [bam] (→ §5.3.3.1).

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF **בֵּי**

דָּעֵם הָאֵט ער נעלערנט **בַּיִם** [bam] זיידן

He learned this from his grandfather

מיר הָאָט שטודירט **בֵּי** אַ גרויסן מרְאָשֶׁעסֶטֶר

We studied under a great professor

בֵּי זײַ אײַז אַנדערש

Things are different with them

איך הָאָב געהאוינט **בֵּי** אים [ba em] צוויי יאָר

I lived at his place for two years

בֵּית זֵי אִין דַּעַר הַיִּים אִיז חַוָּרֵעַם

It's warm in their house

בֵּיסט גַעחַען בֵּיט דאָקטער?

Have you been to see the doctor?

15.2 'FROM'

פֿון translates most instances of 'of', hence טייל פֿון דעם 'part of it'; most instances of 'from', hence אַנטלאָפֿן פֿון אַלקאַטראַז 'I escaped from Alcatraz'; 'by' that ascribes authorship, hence אַ נײַ בוך פֿון זעלבֿיקן 'a new book by the same author'.

15.3 'GO'

To walk or to go a conceptually short distance is גיין; to go by vehicle is פֿאַרן. Cf. איך גי אָהײַם 'I'm going home' (on the assumption that home is nearby) vs. איך פֿאַר קײן אויסטראַליע 'I'm going to Australia'.

15.4 'KNOW'

קענען is used for knowledge acquired by study, knowledge of languages, and acquaintanceship with humans or objects. וויסן, on the other hand, is used with reference to more general empirical knowledge of the world and in cases where there is no object (→ §9.1.16 on קענען as an analytic verb

former).

SAMPLES OF קענען vs. וויסן

She knows geometry well זי קען גוט גיאמעטריע

She knows a little Turkish זי קען א ביסל טערקיש

He knows Bob well ער קען באבן גוט

He doesn't know the street very well ער קען ניט די גאס זייער גוט

I don't know איך ווייס ניט

I know how to answer איך ווייס ווי אזוי מ'דארף ענטפערן

Do you know that man's name? צי ווייסט איר ווי ס'הייסט יענער מאן?

15.5 'LOVE'

15.5.1 'Friend'

The neutral terms are פֿרײַנד (usually pronounced and occasionally spelled פֿרײַנט) 'friend (m.)' and פֿרײַנדיגע [fraynd(ə)] 'friend (f.)'. Both refer to platonic friendship. In addition, they may be used disingenuously about a romantic relationship which one is reluctant to divulge. Thus, when a woman says מיין פֿרײַנד she implicitly claims not to be involved romantically with the male friend referred to. Analogously, when a man says מיין פֿרײַנדיגע of a woman, he does so to stress the nonromantic nature of the friendship. To convey the general notion 'friend' of a person of the opposite sex, with no romantic undertones or implicit denials, the predicative possessive pronoun with indefinite article may be used, e.g. ער איז מינער אַ פֿרײַנד 'He is a friend of mine', זי איז מינע אַ פֿרײַנדיגע 'She is a friend of mine' (→

885.7, 6.2.1.5).

15.5.2 'Boyfriend' and 'Girlfriend'

חבֿר [khávar] 'friend (m.)' and חבֿרטע [khávartə] 'friend (f.)' (occasionally חבֿרטאָרן [khávərtorn]) are synonymous with פֿריינד and פֿריינדינע when referring to persons of the same sex. Thus for a woman speaking of her woman friend, פֿריינדינע מיין and מיין חבֿרטע are synonymous, as are פֿריינד מיין and מיין חבֿר to a man. For opposite sexes, however, חבֿר and חבֿרטע have the sense of 'boyfriend' and 'girlfriend' respectively, most unequivocally so when used with possessive pronouns, e.g. איר חבֿר 'her boyfriend', דיין חבֿרטע 'your girlfriend'.

15.5.3 'Going out'

A traditional expression is אַרוםגיין מיט (lit. 'go around with'), e.g. זי גייט זיין אַרומ פֿאַר יאָר [em] 'She's been seeing him for four years'. In English-speaking countries, the anglicism אַרויסגיין מיט [aróytsgeyn] (lit. 'go out with') is very popular. Its near-homophony with אויסגיין [óytsgeyn] 'die' is often exploited in jokes. The most universal phrase in use is simply גיין מיט (lit. 'go with').

15.5.4 'Lover'

'Beloved' or 'lover' is an inflecting nominalized adjective — געליבט, hence געליבטער [galíptər] 'beloved (m.)'; געליבטע [galíptə] 'beloved (f.)'; pl. געליבטע 'lovers'. They are often used in Yiddish where English would

have 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend' although the semantic content of the Yiddish denotes a level of intimacy higher than **חבר** and **חברטע**. There are a number of other terms which may be used for special effects, e.g. **ליבהאָבער** (f. **ליבהאָבערין**) in lighthearted jest (referring also to lovers of or dabblers in the arts); **ליבסטער** (f. **ליבסטע**), technically a superlative meaning 'most beloved', in folkloristic and poetic usage; **ליובאַחניק** (f. **ליובאַחניצע**) and **ליובעניו**, now archaic and used only to make fun of somebody else's relationship.

15.5.5 'Love affair'

ליבען or **ליבען מיט אַן אַנדערן** or **ליבען מיט אַן אַנדערן פּאַרטנער** may be used for 'have a romantic relationship / love affair'.

15.5.6 'Like' and 'love'

'Like' is expressed via a reflexive construction (→ §14.8). Subject 'likee' + **געלעבן** + dative 'liker' combine, e.g. **זי געלעבט אים** 'She likes him', **ער געלעבט איר** 'He likes her'. 'Love' is an analytic verb with **ליב האָבן** (→ §9.2.1), which imposes accusative, e.g. **זי האָט ליב אים** 'She loves him', **ער האָט ליב איר** 'He loves her'. An alternative to **ליב האָבן** is **האַלט ליבן**.

15.6 'PAPER'

A piece of paper is **אַ שטיקל פּאַפּיר** [a shtíkl papír], pl. **פּאַפּירן**. **דער נייעספּאַפּער** (ד"ר) is 'newspaper' (pl. **נייעספּאַפּערן**). **דער רעפּערט** refers to a

learned or academic paper delivered before a conference or symposium (pl. רעפערעטן). A leaf of a book is בלאט; a single page is זייט or זייטל when not prefixing a specific number, e.g. אויף וועלכער זייט איז דאָס? 'On which page is it?'. When a page number is included, only זייט occurs, e.g. אויף זייט 92 'on page 92'. Its abbreviated form is 'p.' but older ז. is still encountered).

15.7 'PARTY'

Traditional Jewish celebrations, most notably weddings, bar-mitvahs, and circumcisions, are called שמחה [símkhəs]. Some speakers expand the range of שמחה to cover a party of any type. Others Yiddishize the Israeli Hebrew חסיבה [məsi'bá] to [məsi'bə], but neither option has gained much ground outside limited circles. A party characterized by the presence of single people and alcohol is a הויליאַנקע [huilyánkə] (pl. הויליאַנקעס). One that gets out of hand is a וואַקאָנאַליע [vakkhanáiyə], lit. 'orgy' but usually used humorously of any 'wildish party'. A traditional and universally acceptable way of expressing the modern notion of 'party' is a prepositional phrase rather than a noun – קומען אויף לחיימס [ləkháyəms] 'come for (alcoholic) drinks'.

15.8 'QUESTION'

A simple question of fact that is swiftly answerable, e.g. 'Which way is Delancey Street?' is most frequently rendered by the analytic געבן טאָן (→ §9.1.9) lit. 'give an ask'. The most universal and middle-of-the-road

question is פֿרַגְנע 'question' (→ §4.2.2.1 on the semantic nuances of variant plural endings of פֿרַגְנע). An intellectually contentious question, implicitly or explicitly challenging a premise or argument, is a קשיא [káshə]. Finally, a traditional Jewish legal question asked of an appropriate (usually rabbinic) authority, most often on a matter requiring a yes or no answer, is a שאלה [sháylə]. Note the popular proverb אַז מ'פֿרענט אַ שאלה איז טרייף [ame frékt a sháylə iz tréyf] lit. 'When one asks a question (of the rabbi as to whether certain food is kosher), the answer is that it is not kosher'. The proverb has the sense of 'If you ask permission the answer will be no (so go ahead and do what you please without asking)'.

15.9 'RIGHT'

For a human to 'be right' is זיין גערעכט or האָבן רעכט, e.g. דו ביסט גערעכט - דו האָסט רעכט 'you are right'. For a thing (e.g. a statement, idea, book) to 'be right' is adjective ריכטיק, e.g. דאָס איז ריכטיק 'that's right'. The noun 'right' is רעכט (רעכט), which has no plural. It is often used as a collective abstract concept, e.g. מענטשלעכע רעכט 'human rights'.

15.10 'SENSE'

'Sense' meaning 'logic' is שכל [séykhi], e.g. אין דעם איז ניטאָ קיין שכל [indém initó kin séykhi] 'There's no sense in it'. 'Sense' meaning 'one of the possible meanings of a word or thing' is זיין, e.g. אין וועלכן זיין חיינטו דאָס? 'In what sense do you mean it?'. Sense as a specific human faculty, or one of the five senses, is חוש [khush] (pl. חושים [khúshim]), e.g. זי האָט אַ גוטן

הומאָר 'She has a good sense of humour'.

15.11 'SOLUTION'

Solution to an intellectual question (e.g. קשיא → §15.8) is a תירוץ [térəts], but note that in everyday use תירוץ may mean 'excuse'. אויסטוועג [óyzveg] may be used for a solution that is a 'way out' of a problem. באַשײד [bashéyd] usually refers to the solution of a riddle or mystery in the world of ideas, and טגולױה [zgúle] (also 'remedy') to the solving of a more practical problem. The most generally applicable term is לײזונג. In popular usage, פאַטענט [patént], lit. 'patent' is used approvingly of a promising or successful solution to a problem.

15.12 'TELL'

זאָגן is the most frequent correlate of 'tell', e.g. זאָג מיך 'Tell me!'. To 'tell (a story)' is דערציילן, e.g. [máysə] דערצייל מיך אַ מעשױה 'Tell me a story'. To 'tell' in the sense of 'convey information' is אײבערנעבן, e.g. קענסטו מיך אײבערנעבן וואָס מ'האָט געזאָגט? 'Can you tell me what was said?'

15.13 'THE'

The definite article substitutes for possessive pronouns (→ §6.2) where possession is known, understood, or can be inferred from context. Thus, in a conversation with someone about his or her father, one would say דער טאַטע

rather than טאָטע חפּין (which is reserved for cases where there might be ambiguity). Analogously, the article is used with inanimate objects, e.g. דער אויטאָמאָביל איז קאַליע געוואָרן 'My car has broken down' where possession is clear.

15.14 'THINK'

טראַכטן is the most general verb for 'think'. It may be modified by unstressed prefixes באַ-, giving באַטראַכטן 'think (about something specific); consider', and דער-, giving דערטראַכטן זיך 'think until a solution is found'. It also attracts stressed prefix צו-, giving צוטראַכטן 'devise; come with (a solution)'. מיינען is to think in the sense of 'be of the opinion' and corresponds with its noun מיינונג (די) 'opinion'. קלערן and רעכענען may overlap with both טראַכטן and מיינען. קלערן has a more ponderous, considered mood about it. אַרײַנקלערן generally has the sense of 'contemplate'. דענקען is rarely encountered in literary Yiddish. In journalistic prose and colloquial use, however, it is frequently used for מיינען.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF VERBS FOR 'THINK'

I think a lot about the problem איך טראַכט אַ סך זענן דער פראָבלעם
 Man thinks and God laughs (proverb) דער מענטש טראַכט און גאָט לאַכט
 Well, what are you thinking about? [nu | vos trákhstə?] נו, וואָס טראַכסטו?

I have to think about it איך דאַרף עס באַטראַכטן

I've come up with an answer איך האָב זיך דערטראַכט צו אַן ענטוואַר

Have you come up with anything? האָסט עמעס צוגעטראַכט?

Well, what do you think? נו, וואָס מיינסטו?

I have a different opinion איך מײַן אַנדערש

I thought about it a lot איך האָב אַ סך געקלערט זען דעם

15.15 'TIME'

צײט (דײ) covers time in the general sense only. The sense of 'occasion; event; occurrence' is מאָל (דײַט), hence לעטצע מאָל (דײַט) '(the) last time'. The equivalent of 'a good time' is the verbal phrase פאַרברענגען גוט [farbréyngən] lit. 'spend the time well'.

15.16 'TO'

The usages covered by English 'to' correspond with a number of prepositions, depending on the nature of the prepositional object.

15.16.1 'To (a person)' - צו

Hence צו דױרען [dvóyren] 'to Dvoyre', צו שלמהן [shlóymən] 'to Shloyme', צו דער מאַמען 'to the teacher', צו דער לערער 'to mother'. צו is frequently omitted where it is the understood preposition in dative. Verbs concerned with human communication usually do not take צו, e.g. איך האָב איר געזאָגט 'I told her', איך האָב געזאָגט דער לערערין 'I told the teacher (f.)'.

15.16.2 'To (a physical object)' - צו

Hence, צו טיש 'to the table', צו בוים 'to the tree', צו בנין [bínyn] 'to the building'.

15.16.3 'To (a geopolitical concept)' - אין [in] or קיין

Hence קיין טאָן פֿאַרנאַציסקען 'to Oxford', אין אָקספֿארד or קיין אָקספֿארד

אין סאַן פאַראַנציסקאָ 'to San Francisco', אין פאַריז or קיין פאַריז 'to Paris'.
 If the place name happens to be a plural, or happens to include the feminine
 definite article די, only אין is used, hence אין די פאַראייניקטע שטאַטן 'to
 the United States', אין דער ליטע 'to Lithuania', אין דער שווייץ 'to
 Switzerland'.

15.16.4 'To (a place that is not a geopolitical concept)' - אין

Hence אין באַנק 'to the bank', אין פאַבריק [fabrɪk] 'to the factory', אין
 וואַלד 'to the forest', אין שטאָט 'to the city'. Cf. §5.3.3.2

15.16.5 'To (an event)' - אויף [af]

Hence אויף דער לחיה [av dər khásənə] 'to the wedding', אויף דער חתונה
 [av dər ləváyə] 'to the funeral', אויף דער זיצונג 'to the meeting', אויף
 קאָנגרעס 'to the congress / conference'.

15.17 JEWISH VS. GENERAL

Yiddish evolved as the language of Ashkenazic Jewish civilization over a
 millennium, coterritorially with the cultures of Christian Europe. The
 language has a huge lexicon for traditional Jewish concepts, institutions and
 realia. All of these survive in full in traditional communities. There are,
 however, large numbers of items that survive both in literal and in
 metaphoric senses, in all varieties of Yiddish. There is also vocabulary to
 cover the civilization of Christian Europe specifically. Since the Westernizing
 movements of the nineteenth century, the language has been enriched by

large numbers of borrowings from German, Russian and the international 'Western repertoire' of secular internationalisms. The result is a two or three tier semantics. The following is a modest sampling.

15.17.1 'Bible'

תנ"ך [tanákh] 'Jewish Bible (i.e. the Old Testament)'

vs.

ביבל [bíbəl] 'Bible (in general)'

15.17.2 'Book'

סֵפֶר [séyfer] (pl. סְפָרִים [sfórim]) 'traditional sacred book'

vs.

בוך [bukh] (pl. בִּיכְעֵר) 'book (in general)'

15.17.3 'Conference'

אסיפה [asífa] (pl. אסיפות [asífəs]) '(traditional) assembly / conference'

vs.

אָסאַמלונג [asáməlonə] (pl. אָסאַמלונגען) 'assembly / conference (in general)'

15.17.4 'Expert'

בקי [bókə] '(be) expert / proficient (in Talmudic studies)'

vs.

מומחה [múmkhə] 'expert / specialist (in anything)'

vs.

עקספערט [ekspért] 'expert (in anything)'

15.17.5 'Fool'

שוטה [shóyta] (pl. שוטים [shóytim]) '(Jewish) fool'

vs.

טיפש [tíפש] (pl. טיפשים [típshim]) '(esp. Jewish) fool'

vs.

נאַר [nar] (pl. נאַרןאַנים [narónim]) '(any) fool'

15.17.6 'Genius'

גאון [gəón] (pl. גאונים [gəóynim]) 'genius (esp. in Talmudic studies)'

vs.

עלוי [əloí] (pl. עלוים [əloím]) 'young genius (esp. in Talmudic studies)'

vs.

געניע [gényə] (pl. געניעס [gényəs]) 'genius (in general)'

15.17.7 'God'

דער רבונ'שעל'עולם [dər rəbóynə shəlólyəm] 'God (viewed traditionally)'

vs.

דער רבונ'דעלמא [dər rəbóynə dəálmə] 'God (viewed traditionally)'

(used in learned style)

vs.

דער אייבערשטער [dər éyberstər] 'God (viewed intimately)'

vs.

טאַטע זיטער (lit. 'Sweet father' → 85.8.1) 'God (viewed very intimately)'

vs.

נֶאֱמַת 'God (as universal concept)'

15.17.8 'Justice'

יוֹשֵׁר [yóyshər] '(traditional sense of) justice (in a specific case)'

vs.

נֶעֱרַעֶלְטִיקַיִט '(modern / universal sense of) justice'

15.17.9 'Pray'

דַּאָוֶחֶנֶן [dávəhən] 'say the traditional Jewish prayers'

vs.

תַּפִּילָה טאַָן [táfə ton] 'pray (in general)'

15.17.10 'Prayer'

תַּפִּילָה [táfə] '(traditional Jewish) prayer'

vs.

געבֶעט [gəbét] 'prayer (in general)'

15.17.11 'Rabbi'

רַב [rov] (pl. רַבָּנִים [rabónim]) 'traditional rabbi'

vs.

רַבִּי [rébə] (pl. רַבֵּיִם [rabéyim]) 'Chassidic rebbe'

vs.

רַאָבִינֶער (pl. - or ס-; f. רַאָבִינֶערִין, pl. ס-) 'modern rabbi'

vs.

רַבֵּי (pl. רַבֵּיִם) 'modern rabbi (in English-speaking countries)'

vs.

גַּלְחָה [gáləħə] (pl. גַּלְחָהִים [galóħim]) 'priest'

vs.

גַּיְטֵלֶעכער (pl. -) 'clergyperson (of any faith)'

15.17.12 'Religious'

מְשַׁרְבֵּט 'observant of traditional Judaism'

vs.

אַרְטֹאָדאָקסִישׁ 'neo-Orthodox; observant of (quasi-)traditional Judaism'

(used especially of 'modern' Orthodox groups)

vs.

רעליגיעז [religyéz] 'religious (in any faith)'

15.17.13 'School'

חדר [khédər] (pl. חדרים [khadórim]) 'traditional primary school'

vs.

שול (עלעמענטאַר-שול) (pl. שולן) 'primary school (in general)'

15.17.14 'Synagogue'

שול (pl. שולן) 'traditional synagogue'

vs.

סינאַגאָגע (pl. סינאַגאָגן or סינאַגאָגעס) 'modern synagogue'

vs.

קלויסטער (pl. ס-ס) '(specific) church'

vs.

קירך (pl. -ן) '(specific) church; the church in general (as an institution)'

vs.

מקום-תפילה [מאמזא] (pl. מקום-תפילות) 'house of prayer (in general)'

15.17.15 'Talmud'

גמרא [gəməra] 'Talmud (looked at from the traditional point of view)'

(technically גמרא refers only to the later Aramaic portions comprising the bulk of the Talmud but in traditional Yiddish usage, the term may refer to the whole of the Talmud → §§4.3.2.2, 7.3.2.1)

vs.

תלמוד [tálmud] 'Talmud (looked at from a modern scientific or secular point of view)'

15.17.16 'Teacher'

מלמד [məlámdim] (pl. מלמדים) 'traditional primary school teacher'

vs.

רבי [rébəs] (pl. רביס) 'traditional school / yeshiva teacher'

vs.

לערער (pl. — or ל-; f. לערערין, pl. ל-ס) 'teacher in general'

16 PHRASEOLOGY

16.0 OVERVIEW

The chapter provides introductory acquaintance with common idiomatic devices and a modest sampling of each. The categories are chosen to exemplify more general underlying strategies of Yiddish phraseology and idiomatic structure.

16.1 SIMILES

Stock similes with 'ווי' 'like; as', are frequently used in both speech and writing. They are drawn from everyday life or from Jewish history.

SAMPLES OF SIMILES

געזונט ווי אן איזן [gezúnt vi an áyzn]

'healthy (/strong) as (a piece of) iron' (= 'very healthy / strong')

ווי גאט אין פאריז [vi gót in paríz]

'as God finds it in Paris' (= 'has it really good')

(var. ווי גאט אין אָדעס)

'as God finds it in Odessa')

טויב ווי די וואנט [tóyb vi dí vánt]

'deaf as the wall' (= 'very deaf')

מיאוס ווי דער טויט [míəs vi der tóyt]

'ugly as death' (= 'very ugly')

נאַט ווי אַ קאַץ [nás vi a káts]

'wet as a cat' (= 'very wet; drenched')

ס'וועט העלפֿן ווי אַ טויטן באַנקעס [svət hèlfn vi a tóytn bánkəs]

'it will help as much as cupping glasses (once used to draw blood to the skin as an alleged cure for numerous maladies) will help a dead person' (= 'hopelessly useless')

פֿאַנט האַבן ווי אַ שפּין [fàynt hobm vi a shpín]

'hate like a spider' (= 'hate intensely')

שיין ווי די העלט [shéyn vi di véit]

'beautiful as the world' (= 'very beautiful')

SAMPLES OF SIMILES FROM JEWISH HISTORY

גרויס ווי עוג מלך הבשן [gróys vi óyg méylekh habóshn]

'tall as Og King of Bashan' (= 'very tall'; cf. Deuteronomy 3:11)

געזונט ווי שמשון הגיביר [gezúnt vi shímshən hagíbir]

'healthy (/strong) as Samson' (= 'very strong'; → §5.8.1)

לאַנג ווי דער גלות [láng vi der gólas]

'long as the Jewish diaspora' (= 'very long'; → §13.2.5)

קלוג ווי שלמה המלך [klúg vi shlòmáméyləkh]

'wise as King Solomon' (= 'very wise'; often satiric; → §5.8.1)

רייך ווי קורח [ráykh vi kóyrakh]

'wealthy as Korah' (cf. Pesahim 119a; Numbers 16; the Yiddish simile refers to the postbiblical legends of Korah's wealth rather than to the biblical account of his rebellion)

שיכור ווי לוט [shíkər vi lót]

'drunk as Lot' (= 'very drunk'; Cf. Genesis 19: 30-35)

שלעמט ווי ירבעם בן נבט [shlékht vi yəróvəm ben nəvót]

'evil as Jeroboam' (= 'very evil'; cf. Kings I 11:26-14:20)

16.2 REJOINDERS

Stock rejoinders are drawn from a variety of sources.

SAMPLES OF REJOINDERS

אדרבא [áðərabə]

'Of course!' (lit. 'to the contrary (I agree!)', i.e. 'Why shouldn't I agree?', hence 'Of course!')

אז די באַבע האָלט געהאַט אַ באַרד האָלט זי געווען אַ זיידע

[adi bóbə volt gehàt a bórd | völdzi gevèn a zéyde]

'Stop saying // all the time!' (lit. 'If grandmother had a beard she would have been a grandfather')

[makh(ə)téysə / mékhə téysə] חהינא תיתיו

'O.K!' (used to indicate agreeableness to a suggestion or proposal)

[a nékhtikər tóg] א נעכטיקער טאָגו

'No way it could be true!' (lit. 'yesterday's day')

[kélbərne hispáyəs] קעלבערנע התפעלות!

'What naive enthusiasm!' (lit. 'enthusiasm of a calf / fool')

[akáshəf a máysə] א קשיא אויף א מעשהו

'Well, anything is possible!' (lit. 'a question on the veracity of a (made-up) story'; used to retract incredulity and concede a point; cf. §15.8 on קשיא)

16.3 SATIRIC CHARACTERIZATIONS

Anything in the language is capable of being turned around via the satiric rise-fall intonation (→ §11.1.1). Still, a number of characterizations have become part of a stock repertoire of ready-to-use epithets. They are often accompanied by raising of the head and eyebrows, and/or shaking of the head and upper part of the body.

SAMPLES OF SATIRIC CHARACTERIZATIONS

[an áynfal] אן אינפאל

'What a stupid idea!' (lit. 'an idea / notion / novel proposal'; has the meaning of 'what a brilliant idea' when uttered loudly with falling intonation)

[andékt amérikə] אנטדעקט אמעריקעו

'Discovered America!' (used to mock a purported 'discovery' or 'innovation')

or the purported 'importance' of the information offered)

[a gróysər knákər] אַ גרױסער קנאַקער

'Big talker!' (lit. 'big knocker'; used to debunk a show-off, big-shot or person who has failed to pull something off)

[zéyər a gútər khávər] זײער אַ גוטער חבֿרו

'Some friend you are (/he is, etc.)!' (lit. 'a very good friend')

[à khókhəm] אַ חכֿם

'What a fool (m.)!' (lit. 'a wise man')

[à khakhéyməstə] אַ חכֿמתֿטע

'What a fool (f.)!' (lit. 'a wise woman')

[à khókhmə] אַ חכֿמה

'What a stupid thing to say!' (lit. '(a piece of) wisdom')

[a náyə maysə] אַ נײַע מעשׂה

'We've heard that one before!' (lit. 'a new story'; used to debunk the alleged novelty of a statement or discovery)

[á fáynər mán] אַ פֿײַנער מאַן

'What a nasty fellow!' (lit. 'a nice guy')

[á kléyn bísalə trógədik] אַ קלײַן ביסעלע טרױגעדיק

'Very slightly pregnant!' (used to reply to an attempted mitigation of a situation that is in fact a yes or no issue)

אין קלייניקייטו [éyn | kléynikayt]

'That's one little thing!' (used to debunk the allegedly minor importance of something and to argue that the point in question is in fact the heart of the matter)

אַ קראַטאַוויין [á krasávits]

'Not a very good looking man/boy!' (lit. 'a handsome man')

אַ קראַטאַוויצעו [á krasávitsə]

'Not a very good looking woman/girl!' (lit. 'a beautiful woman')

16.4 PROVERBS

Proverbs are frequently used in both speech and writing.

SAMPLES OF PROVERBS

אַז מ'דאַרף דעם גנב נעמט מען אים אַראָפּ פֿון דער תליה

[amən dàf dem gánəv | nēmtmən em aróp fun der tífə]

'When the thief is needed, he is taken off the gallows' (i.e. it is permissible to associate with an undesirable person if necessity dictates)

אַז מ'קען ניט שרײַבן זאָגט מען אַז די פֿען איז אַ שלעכטע

[aməkènit shráybtm | zoktmən adi pèn iza shlékhtə]

'People who can't write say the pen is no good'

אַלײן גײט דער שוּטטער באַרוּהעט [aléyn geyt der shùstər bórves]

'The shoemaker goes barefoot himself'

אַמאָל איז די רפואה ערנער פֿון דער מכה

[amòl idi rəfúa | èrgər fun der mákə]

'Sometimes the cure is worse than the malady'

וואו מ'האָט דיך ליב גיי הייניק, וואו מ'האָט דיך ניט ליב גיי אין גאַנצן ניט

[vu məhot dəkh lìb gey véynik | vù məhot dəkh nìt lib gey ingántsn nit]

'Where you are liked, go seldom; where you are not liked do not go at all' (i.e. don't rush to accept invitations)

ווער ס'האָט די מאה האָט די דעה [ver səhòt diméya | hoti déya]

'Wealth is power' (lit. 'whoever has the hundred has the authority')

די מלאכים גייען ניט אַרום אויף דער ערד

[di malókhim gèyən nit arùm af der érd]

'The angels don't walk about on earth' (used to allay disappointment in other people)

אַ נאַר בלייבט אַ נאַר [a nár | bláypt a nár]

'A fool remains a fool'

פֿרעג ניט דעם רופֿא פֿרעג דעם חולה [frègnit dəm róyfa | frèg dəm khóyla]

'Don't ask the doctor, ask the patient'

אַ קללה איז ניט קיין טעלעגראַמע [a klóla | iz nit kin teləgrámə]

'A curse isn't a telegram' (used to allay the anxiety of a victim of verbal abuse)

16.5 REDUNDANT INTENSIFIERS

In addition to adding emphasis, redundant intensifiers convey a rather humorous and happy mood, even in situations where the subject is one of gravity.

SAMPLES OF REDUNDANT INTENSIFIERS

[avèggeyn ingántsn] אַװעקגיין אין גאַנצן
'leave entirely'

[dahàrgənən af tóyt] דערהרגנען אויף טויט
'kill completely' (lit. 'kill to death'; by overuse the phrase has also come to mean 'beat up badly' and can be used to tease lovingly as a facetious threat)

[məshúgə | afn gántsn | kóp] משוגע אויפן גאַנצן קאָפּ
'completely crazy' (lit. 'crazy in the entire head')

[ʔarplóntərt ingántsn] פֿאַרפּלאַנטערט אין גאַנצן
'completely confused; inextricably entangled'

[zikh tsúhern mit béyde óyərən] זיך צוהערן מיט ביידע אויערן
'listen with both ears' (= 'listen attentively')

16.6 HISTORICAL METAPHORS

Historical metaphors are used both as complete sentences on their own, in reaction to a situation described, and as metaphors within a sentence.

SAMPLES OF HISTORICAL METAPHORS

[ʔavs tsóras] אִיבֹם צָרוֹת

'Job's troubles' (= 'grave personal difficulties')

[khóyshəkh mitsráyim] חוֹשֶׁךְ מִצְרַיִם

'the darkness of Egypt (during the Plague of Darkness)' (= 'very dark')

[tám ganéydn] טַעַם גַּן-עֵדֶן

'the taste of the Garden of Eden' (= 'delicious')

[yísroys némen] יֵתְרוֹס נְעֻמָּן

'Jethro's names' (said of a person or place with many names; cf. Rashi's commentary at Exodus 18:1)

[məʔirt shtróy kin mitsráyim] מֵעִירַט שְׂטְרוֹי קִיין מִצְרַיִם

'They're carrying straw to Egypt' (after the Israelites escaped their former slave labour which included carrying straw)
(= 'wasted energy'; cf. 'carrying coals to Newcastle')

[móyshe rabéynuz shtékn] מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּינוֹס שְׂטַעֲקֵן

'the rod of Moses' (said of something apparently miraculous; also to mock something allegedly impressive or to question the authenticity of a feat)

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GENERAL INDEX

- Acronyms 211–212
- Age 213
- Alphabet xxiv–xxv, 1–19,
208–212
- Aramaic xvii–xx
- Calendar 218–223
- Clock 67, 215–216
- Dates 220
- Days 219
- Dialects xxi, 38–40, 53,
105–106, 125–126
- Dictionaries 277, 280
- Folksongs 279–280
- Gematria 211
- Gestures 43, 44, 96, 188, 271
- Grammars 277–278
- Greetings 41–46
- Hebrew xvii–xx, 73
- Idioms 166, 188–194, 217–218,
268–276, 280
- Irony 164, 180, 188–194,
195–196, 249, 271–273
- Jewish history and tradition 42,
74, 88–89, 124, 188–194, 208–
212, 219, 221–223, 262–267,
269–270, 275–276, 282–283
- Jewish holidays 42, 223
- Letter writing 84–85, 220
- Life cycle 213–215
- Love 68–69, 254–256
- Months 220, 222–223
- Numerology 211
- Orthodox usage 21–22, 42,
265–266
- Pejoratives 67–68
- Proverbs 211, 260, 273–274
- Seasons 218–219
- Semantics 252–267
- Sociology xix–xx, 21–23, 105–107,
282
- Soviet usage 22–23
- Time 215–221
- Yiddish books 283
- Yiddish language xvii–xxi,
280–281
- Yiddish literature xvii–xxi, 101,
125, 281–282
- Yiddish names 55, 68–69, 74,
88–89, 99–100, 101
- Yivo 4, 23, 212

GRAMMATICAL INDEX

- Accentuation → Rhythm; Stress
- Accusative 76, 79, 82–83, 104, 199, 246
- Adjectives 81–97
- Adverbs 178–194, 206, 230–233
- Agentives 48–49, 51, 62, 73
- Analytic verbs 156–177
- Aspect → Perfective verbs
- Aspiration 31
- Cardinal numbers 201–204
- Case 75–78; → Nominative; Accusative; Dative
- Comparatives 90–92
- Compound nouns 70–74
- Conditionals 160–161
- Conjunctions 231–234, 268–270
- Consonants 29–34
- Dative 76–77, 79–80, 83–84, 100–101, 104–105, 199–200, 220, 247
- Definite articles 78–81
- Demonstrative pronouns 112–116
- Devoicing assimilation 29–30
- Diminutives 63–69, 95–97, 187–188
- Diphthongs → Vowels
- Double verb construction 249–250
- Feminine gender 49–51
- Fractions 206–208
- Fronting 235–236
- Future tense 138–140
- Gender 47–53
- If-then clauses 234–235
- Immediate future tense 139
- Imperatives 127, 130, 166
- Indefinite articles 78, 86–87
- Infinitive 121–122, 250
- Interjections 188–194, 270–271
- Interrogatives 197–200
- Intonation 195–196
- Inversion of subject and predicate 196–197, 229–241
- Masculine gender 48–49
- Negatives 126, 227–229, 238–241, 243–245
- Neutral gender 51–53
- Nominative 75–76, 78–79, 81–82, 103–104, 198–199, 246
- Nouns 47–74
- Numbers 201–212

- Numerals → Numbers 230–232
 Object pronouns 104–105,
 226–227, 237–238, 240
 Ordinal numbers 204–206
 Partitive pronouns 117–120
 Passives 163–165, 177
 Past participles 131, 132–134
 Past tense 131–138
 Perfective verbs 154–155
 Periphrastic verbs 175–177; →
 Analytic verbs
 Personal pronouns 103–107,
 226–227, 237–238, 240
 Phonetics 25–40, 67, 188,
 195–196
 Pluperfect future tense 140
 Pluperfect past tense 137–138
 Plurals 53–63
 Possessives 100–102, 108–112
 Possessive pronouns 108–112
 Predicate adjectives 85–87,
 91–92
 Predicatives 241–245
 Prefixed verbs 141–155
 Prepositions 80–81, 125, 182–183,
 185–187, 230–232, 220–221,
 230–232, 252–253, 261–262
 Prepositional phrases 185–187,
 Present participle 122, 234
 Present tense 126–130
 Pronouns 103–120, 226–227
 Quantifiers 89–90
 Questions 195–200
 Reduced vowels 27–28
 Reflexives 124, 125–126, 247–248
 Relatives 245–247
 Rhythm 34–38
 Semitic component morphology
 57–58, 64, 68–69, 72–73,
 175–177, 183–184
 Semitic component phonology 36
 Slavonic component morphology
 57
 Spelling 1–24, 28
 Stress 35–36
 Stressed prefixes 144–154
 Subjunctives 165–166
 Subordinate phrases 247
 Superlatives 92–93
 Syntax 224–251
 Unstressed prefixes 141–144
 Verbs 121–177
 Voicing assimilation 30–31
 Vowels 25–28
 Word order → Syntax

INDEX OF SELECTED YIDDISH ITEMS

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>אָנאָס - 141-142</p> <p>אָ סך - 119</p> <p>אָפּ - 150</p> <p>אָראָפּ 152-154</p> <p>באַ - 142</p> <p>בײַ 28, 80, 125, 183, 252-253</p> <p>בײַ - 150-151</p> <p>גאַנץ 89</p> <p>גײן 139, 155, 253</p> <p>גע - 131, 142-143</p> <p>געבן 156-159, 249</p> <p>געזען 136, 241-245</p> <p>געריכט 258</p> <p>דאָס 47, 51-53, 75-76, 78-80</p> <p>82-84</p> <p>דאַרפֿן 159</p> <p>דו \ איר 103, 106-107</p> <p>די 47, 49-51, 75-76, 78-81</p> <p>82-84, 259-260</p> <p>דיין 108-112</p> <p>דיך \ דיר 104-105</p> <p>דעם 76, 79-80, 82-84</p> <p>דער 47-49, 75-76, 78-80</p> <p>82-84, 259-260</p> <p>דער- 143, 182-183</p> | <p>אַ 78, 82-84, 86-87</p> <p>אַ ביטל 89, 118-119</p> <p>אַזעק 152-154</p> <p>אויס- 147</p> <p>אויף 28, 80, 220-221, 262</p> <p>אויפֿ- 28, 147</p> <p>אומ- 148</p> <p>אונדזער 108-112</p> <p>אונטער- 148</p> <p>אַז 233-235, 258</p> <p>אַזוי 43, 197-198, 200</p> <p>אַט (אַ) 113-114</p> <p>איבער- 148-149</p> <p>איטלעכער 119-120</p> <p>אײן \ אײנער \ אײנס 117</p> <p>201-203</p> <p>אײַן- 149</p> <p>אַיער 108-112</p> <p>אין 80-81, 160, 185-186</p> <p>188-189, 220-221, 261-262</p> <p>איר 103, 108-112</p> <p>אַלע 120</p> <p>אַח- 182</p> <p>אַנג- 149</p> <p>אַנדערער 114-115</p> |
|---|--|

- סאָ 200, 130
 סאָן 169-167
 סאָר נײַט 171
 טײל 118
 טײַערער 85-84
 יאָר 215
 יעדער אײנער \ יעדערער 119
 יעדער אײנציקער 119
 יענער 116-115
 לאָזן 170
 לאָמיר 170
 לערנען 124, 78-77
 מ' \ מע \ מען 107-105, 103
 מײן 112-108
 מײך \ מיר 105-104
 מינוט 215
 מוזן 171-170
 מעגן 171
 מערסטע 119
 ן- \ ען 122, 54-53, 33-32
 128
 נײַט 241-238, 229-227, 126
 245-243
 נײַט קײן 240, 229, 126
 נעמען 172-171
 ס' \ סע \ עס 107-103
 ס'איז דאָ 243-241
 סאַמע 93
 האָבן 258, 177-172, 132-131
 האַלטן אין 160
 האַלטן אין אײן 160
 האַרץ 98
 חאו 198-197
 חאוהײן 198-197
 חאַלטן 161-160
 חאַט 257-245, 200, 198-197
 חײ 233, 200, 198-197
 270-268
 חײז 181
 חײסן 254-253, 249, 130
 חעלפער 247-245, 200-198
 חעלן 163-161, 140, 139-138
 חעמען 198-197
 חען 233, 161
 חער 198-197
 חערן 177, 165-163
 זאָגן 259, 169, 127, 77
 זאָלן 166-165
 זײ \ איר 105-104
 זײן 177-175, 137-134, 111-108
 258, 248-247, 245-241
 זײער 90
 זײך 226-225, 126-123
 239, 237, 229-228
 זעלביקער 117-116
 זשע 200, 130

צו 261, 186, 125, 80	עטלעכע 118
צו- 151	עמעצער 117
צווייטער 114-115	ערהייט 180
צע- 144	פאָר 118
קומען 155, 136	פֿאַר 218, 194, 183, 125, 80
קיין 262-261, 240, 229, 126	פֿאַר- 143-144
קיינער 117-118	פֿאַר- 151
קענען 254-253, 172, 125	פֿאַרן 253, 136
ריכטיק 258	פֿון 253, 187-185, 183, 102, 81-80
שעה 215	פֿלעגן 172
שריבן 155-154	פֿרעגן 258-257, 78-77

