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ASPECTS OF THE HEBREW-YIDDISH POLYSYSTEM *

The relations between Hebrew and Yiddish recently seem to be gaining more than mere recognition as an indispensable parameter for an adequate treatment of either or both of them. We are witnessing the beginnings of a sobering down. Doing work in this field no longer makes one a champion of one ideology or another connected with either Hebrew or Yiddish. It is the realm of research I have in mind, of course, and not old-time or newly born fighters, notably Yiddishist zealots and revanchists, who have nothing for- gotten and nothing learned. With research, reluctance and indifference gradually give way to interest and fascination. Indeed, when mutual quarrels and indignations are put aside, the field lies open for all sorts of interested students. Whatever the reason or the point of departure for studying Hebrew-Yiddish relations, the consequences show themselves to be highly valuable. Not only the historical structure of either Yiddish or Hebrew becomes clearer and seeming riddles get not too complicated answers, but a deep insight into the whole issue of cultural mechanisms in human history is thereby gained. It is the richness, long duration and complexity of the case which makes it, from the point of view of cultural history and the semiotics of culture in general, worth study- ing, even if the phenomena involved per se are of no interest to the student. It is not that the case is in any sense unique. After all, cases of permanent interference and multi-functionality are as old as the world's history, if one takes the Sumerian-Akkadian case to be old enough an illustration. Moreover, Jewish history alone discloses such similar cases, as Hebrew vs. Aramaic, Arabic, Ladino, Italian or Tatic. Yet in none of these do we find that complexity and variety as in the Hebrew-Yiddish case. And, besides, none of these still have such significant bearing for the present day situation as does the Hebrew-Yiddish case.

The fact that two different tongues, generically remote from one another, can function side by side within the same society is by no means peculiar. It is only in recent times, since the emergence of the new national ideas, that such a situation has been looked upon as abnormal. For many modern nations, the idea of a non-unified national language has been untolerable. Thus, the admissibility of dialects in French culture has been utterly restricted, if compared with the German and even with the English case, where, at least in literature, these non-standard varieties have played specific roles. (Not to mention such societies in the modern world where speaking one's local vernacular is positively regarded as a token of one's authentic and integral identity /Norway/). It is fully understandable how these ideas influenced the attitudes towards the role of language in society with the emerging Jewish nationalism in the late 19th century, which indeed ultimately resulted in a total divorce between Hebrew and Yiddish. But it is inconceivable that such approaches, be they justified from the point of view of the welfare of the nation or not, should interfere with analysing history in line with the wrongest possible misconceptions. This is especially so when the situation discussed is not a finalised case of the past. For, although we have been able to observe, during the last fifty years or so, a sort of real unification process in some countries, where the written standard, duly adapted and made flexible has become the standard vernacular as well (Sweden, France, the Netherlands, England and Germany), lately there are strong currents contradicting this development – a partial resurrection, so to speak, of local speeches, often supported by emotional reaction to the too strongly felt centralisation in the modern state. In other words, bearing in mind the cultural situation in many countries, not in the third world, where one expects, as it were, heterogeneous states of affairs, but in industrialised societies which have long been established as nations, such misconceptions, i.e. regarding the abnormality of bi-lingualism, universally prevail.

Putting ideologies aside, what seems to have been most detrimental within the realm of research as regards realities of cultural systems, is the postulate of homogeneity for a system. As is known, for various modern schools of thought, only a unified, homogeneous abstraction of reality could be made compatible with the ideas of structuredness and systemicity. This has helped a lot in developing hypotheses on the structure of systems, but has turned out to be disastrous when believed to be apt

models for describing not only "systems as such" but also "systems in use". As a result, only a reduced section of reality described in terms of the whole has normally been selected to represent the whole. It was only in later Russian Formalism and Prague Structuralism that the idea of synchronically concurrent options within a system was formulated not as a possibility for a system, but as a precondition for the system to maintain itself through change. It is this tradition which lies at the basis of my ongoing efforts through the last years to develop what I label the polysystem theory (Even-Zohar 1979). For the PS theory, heterogeneity is the "normal" state of real systems, without which no regulation and no efficient operation of the available repertory are feasible. As a result, the more developed a society is, the more it tends to develop polysystemic structures, a uni-systemic structure being just a relative idealisation, never observable in any extant human society, remote and "primitive" as it may be. When, as a result of the heterogeneous needs within a system, some specific "need" cannot be satisfied by items available in the home repertory, interference immediately takes place with another system, far or near, to supply it. Of course, the concept of "need" or "pertaining function" is an a-posteriori generalisation, a rule-like explanation for a universal phenomenon, and not an observable "fact", but it must be hypothesised if diverse phenomena are to be adequately explained as governed by the forces operating within culture and not as haphazard occurrences, vaguely defined in our humanistic tradition as "influences". Thus, for the PS theory, the opposition between official and non-official culture is hypothesised as a universal, an invariable rule. The particular conditions, however, under which a specific function is imposed upon certain vehicles (carriers) are variable. When vehicles are more closely available, or when their existence is more evident, the process by which they are turned into vehicles is likely to be, to begin with, more a question of recognition rather than elaboration (though elaboration must be there as well). Such is the case with most societies in which the imposition of official culture on one or another linguistic variety, subsequently turned into standard, is a matter of selection. Thus, High German or Florence Italian, e.g., ultimately became the carriers of high culture, while all the other extant varieties were made non-official. The more established in advance the respective value of the potential carriers, the clearer falls the decision which they are going to be.

Clearly enough, for Jewish communities there has never existed, up to the late 19th century, any doubt as to what language had what status. Hebrew has always been the vehicle for high / canonised / official culture regardless of whether it had a counter-register linguistically related to it or not. The multi-lingual situation of the Middle Ages among the various Jewish communities made the opposition clearly manifested in terms of language to begin with. Moreover, as the functions of high culture, especially in mediaeval society, are rather clearly specified, the use of the various vernaculars could not pose any threat to high culture, although it was probably, for most cases, not willingly looked upon by certain sections of the higher representatives of official culture, the proper elites. Thus, the emergence of Yiddish written texts, which developed from the fulfillment of an auxiliary function -- an aid for understanding the Scriptures for the unlearned ("women and children") -- to a growing separate literary creation, has not been without obstacles. To begin with, it had to be justified by a clear assignation of functions, not accomplishable by Hebrew: writings for those who had no access, or little access, to Hebrew. The label "women and children" employed under this activity gradually became only a justification slogan, as uneducated people of both sexes became consumers of these writings. On the other hand, the growing willingness to supply the popular needs by producing original Yiddish epics clearly took place under the pressure of the spreading consumption of German adventure literature, either in the original or via transliterations, as pointed out by Shmeruk (1978, esp. 33-35).

Yet, whatever additional functions were taken by Yiddish, its position vis-a-vis Hebrew has never changed until very recent times. The language itself, and any writing in it, always had to behave as the non-official stratum within a larger system, with the official stratum occupied by Hebrew and its writings, old or new. The term "official" is even more transparent in this connection than the terms canonised/non-canonised used in historical poetics, as everything which had to have official, juridical status was recognised only when formulated in Hebrew: contracts, testimony in court and other documents. Even when forced to use the vernacular for official writings of the community, the officials-in-charge invented a special register, the peculiar "scribes' language", where abundant Hebrew embeddings evidently were assigned the role of elevating the text to an official status (Weinrich 1958). Moreover, while certain genres were freely admissible into Yiddish when they conformed to the governing norms as

regards popular literature, others had to be canonised first in Hebrew before being allowed to be written down and circulated in Yiddish, although the Hebrew versions were, to begin with, written renderings of the oral Yiddish (Shmeruk 1978, 218: the case of hagiographic narrative). Similarly, even interferences, mainly in the post-German period, were often actualised via the Hebrew (Shmeruk 1975), and not through direct contacts.

Acceptance of this "division of labour" between Hebrew and Yiddish, where Yiddish has been confined to non-official functions, has nothing to do with either the value, respective importance and impact, or systemic growth of either Hebrew or Yiddish. Being non-canonised does not involve being inferior from the artistic point of view, or in linguistic flexibility, wealth of expression or when any other aesthetic criteria are considered. Any reluctance, then, to accept this analysis on such grounds is totally unjustified for this analysis as it is not concerned with aesthetic appreciation. Similarly, no demonstration of the systemic growth of Yiddish writings, comparable to the process of crystallisation of any national "independent" literature, makes any difference for the position it assumed vis-à-vis another system. On the other hand, there is nothing essentialistic in hypothesising that Hebrew and Yiddish virtually constituted one polysystem. Proceeding with functional concepts, they can perfectly well be considered separate (though not isolated) systems, each maintaining contacts with other systems as well as with one another. In its "German" period, for instance, Yiddish -- both language and literature -- was highly modelled after German and is thus clearly definable, for that period, as a "dependent system" vis-à-vis the latter (cf. Even-Zohar, 1978:54-59, "Interference in Dependent Polysystems"). Why not say, for instance, that it is German, and not Hebrew, which then constituted -- if this concept is at all applicable -- a PS with Yiddish? Hebrew, in its turn, quickly evolved during the 19th century by heavily transferring from the Russian, thus maintaining dependency relations with the latter. Why not hypothesise a Russian-Hebrew polysystem? And, as far as Hebrew and Yiddish are concerned, why should they not be defined as "mutually dependent" along the same lines rather than as co-systems in a larger structure? Would this not be more satisfactory, with the advantage of eliminating the polysystemic strait-jacket imposed on two cultural systems, which, however close, eventually separated from one another?

First, although one can observe stratum-like relations of Yiddish vs. German and Hebrew vs. Russian to such an extent that one may say that Yiddish treated German as if it were a member of its own PS, as did Hebrew with Russian, no PS was thus established, as neither Yiddish nor Hebrew played any role for German and Russian, neither directly nor indirectly. Though we could think even of <u>such</u> a structure as a PS, it seems that we would risk too much in blurring the issue. <u>Intersystemic interferences</u>, in this case of the dependent type, seem therefore to be a more applicable concept here. Secondly, it must be stressed that hypothesising polysystemic relations between Yiddish and Hebrew is indeed no strait-jacket. I believe that the cherished formulation about the <u>symbiosis</u> of both, or about them being "one Jewish literature" is both more of a strait-jacket, in spite of the fact that it appeals to Jewish sentiments, and a far less adequate analysis. For when we acknowledge polysystemic relations for two systems which are in principle capable of being independent of each other, we do not maintain they are unified or "fused" together. The only thing we maintain is that, being related to each other in such a way that each <u>functions</u> for the other in a specific way, thereby assuming specific positions (statuses) respectively, it would be both more <u>adequate</u> and <u>convenient</u> to analyse these relations as constituting <u>one</u> multi-stratified whole, rather than taking them as separate wholes tightly linked somehow with one another. For even if the latter formulation is perfectly correct on the level of "general ideas", it is vague in the sense that it cannot become a fruitful working hypothesis, as it does not indicate, nor can one derive from it, questions to be asked in order to gain better insights. The idea of fusion, as understood by the adherents of the concept of "Jewish literature" regardless of tongue and age, is simply incompatible with the concepts of role, position or function. Therefore, beside its a-historical bias, even when to be applied to periods where it seems to be valid, it fails to account either for the general mechanisms characteristic of the situation or for its specifics. For when one speaks of stratification functions, it is not only the <u>principle</u> of hierarchy which is meant, but the <u>specific</u> consequences of such a structure for the <u>procedures</u> taken by the various products within the respective strata (for PS processes as constraints on products cf. Even-Zohar 1979, 294 and note 4, ibid.). Moreover, it is only the PS hypothesis, and not the idea of fusions, which allows respect of the separate, <u>autonomous</u> structure of each system without thus contradicting its <u>heteronomous</u> relations.

What specifically constitutes the polysystemic relations between Hebrew and Yiddish? I believe that in this case we can detect all "classical" features of the PS structure, and shall attempt to describe them in the following.

The major problem of any PS is how to maintain itself and avoid disintegration. As a rule, disintegration is caused, more often than not, by the inability of the system controlling the PS centre to continue fulfilling the socio-cultural functions required. For the canonised culture, then, the main problem is how to avoid losing control of the PS (cf. Even-Zohar 1979:303-305). Thus, even when the canonised culture manages to gain control by perpetuating its established models for quite a long time, when no innovation follows the growing/changing needs within the culture, non-canonised culture eventually succeeds either in penetrating canonised culture and restructuring it, thus bringing change into the whole PS, or, when rejected, establishing a separate PS; otherwise the whole PS falls apart. It is in the interest, then, of canonised culture to absorb new options from non-canonised culture. Whether this is carried out in a smooth way, or through a chain of catastrophes in a rather violent way, it does not change the fact that a PS which maintains itself is, in the long run, one where give-and-take relations between centre and periphery, high and low strata, take place. The transfers, in whatever shape, from non-canonised strata into the canonised make it possible for the latter to prevent petrification of its repertory and to cope with the changing needs of the community to which it belongs and for which it functions. On the other hand, non-canonised culture, when there is a vital centre (i.e. one which generates innovations), benefits from the latter by drawing from it, usually through reduction procedures, new models which have the advantage (from its point of view) of being established enough and therefore acceptable. When the centre, however, gradually petrifies by blocking transfers from the periphery, non-canonised culture is ultimately pushed into a position where it must become the generator for alternatives, and it is therefore from that quarter that innovations come. When one observes the behaviour of Hebrew — both language and literature — through the centuries it was confined to written use alone, one cannot but be impressed by the way it maintained itself, not by sacredness, but by coping with the changing needs. This is not equally true, of course, of all periods, but would be an accurate description of the history of Hebrew in general. It is inconceivable to explain such a phenomenon if one does not take into consideration the function of the Jewish co-system(s) as well as

of the adjacent, non-Jewish systems. It makes no difference, from the point of view
of functional analysis, whether transfers from these other systems have occurred de-
liberately, by "conscious measures", as it were, or through unavoidable infiltration.
The appropriation of high Arabic poetic models and norms, to take one conspicous ex-
ample, which perhaps started in a non-deliberate way, eventually became a highly
conscious elaboration. On the other hand, oblique reflections of the vernaculars, mani-
fested in syntactic constructions, prepositions, tense coordination, sentence rhythm
and lexical calques have, for the greatest part of history, been an outcome of "infiltra-
tions". In either case, however, interference has been made possible, to begin with,
by the state of Hebrew, i.e. the target system, definable as a state of "deficiency",
i.e. lack of means (carriers) for needed functions. Clearly, in such a state, the capa-
city of the system to reject either badly "needed" or "ancillary" features is greatly
weakened. This explains the transfer of features which managed to infiltrate not be-
cause of need, but because in a state of need, a target system becomes generally more
interferable.

The procedures of transfer, and their extent, from Yiddish to Hebrew (and vice
versa) have been different in different periods. However, it seems that at least three
procedures can be stated in general terms for Hebrew: (1) Direct use; (2) Calques
and (3) Interlanguage, usually Aramaic.

(1) Direct use of Yiddish in Hebrew normally occurred, in both formal and literary
texts, when denotational precision was imperative. Thus, Yiddish glosses have been in-
troduced either directly or with auxiliaries, such as the word "called" (ha-niqra or
še-qorin), usually with a not clearly denotated Hebrew lexeme preceding the clearly
denotated Yiddish one. This is, as pointed out by Shmuel Werses (1969: 57-58), a
time-honoured tradition which, being so established, could be manipulated for various
purposes (such as parody and satire) in literary languages of various periods. Of
course, in less formal texts, the embedding of Yiddish within the Hebrew are of much
higher frequency, and possibly serve various purposes, notably, in addition to the need
for denotational precision, register shifts. (This is practically identical with the He-
brew embedding within the Yiddish text, current in the "scribes' language" and else-
where, for opposite functions, however.) Such a use strongly maintained itself for
quite a long time, even after the Hebrew-Yiddish polysystem had fallen apart, in spoken

Hebrew in Palestine. Separate glosses as well as longer chains have been embedded within the Hebrew speech flow by a great majority of Hebrew speakers of Ashkenazi origin, sometimes for denotational precision, but mostly for register shifts. The revived Hebrew, even with quite convinced Hebraists, did not immediately lose its distinct position as a member of a well defined stratified polysystem. It has therefore been continually identified with "a high style", and as such, as "sober" and "dry". Yiddish, on the other hand, continually identified with "a lower spoken style", clearly supplied less bookish ways of expression, and consequently proper means for familiarity and humour. Thus, each time a shift in direction of the familiar register was needed, Yiddish was immediately inserted. Typically enough, as the anti-Yiddish ideology weakened in the 1960s in Israel, Yiddish attained its uttermost recognition for a while in the mass media as a "flexible, rich and folk tongue", particularly when Prime Minister Levy Eshkol was in office. Needless to say that this is no longer the case nowadays with either native speakers generally or officials (with notable marginal exceptions, some of a rather bizarre nature, such as the case of a <u>Sheli</u> party member of the Knesset, whose attempts to perpetuate this behaviour are taken as highly anachronistic and even ridiculous for the generation he represented), but this still can be heard of older people. It is a pity, however, that this last chapter of the Hebrew-Yiddish relations has not been properly investigated.

(2) Transfers by <u>calques</u>, translation borrowings, are the commonest procedure with systems, which, on the one hand, need to appropriate from other systems, but on the other hand, wish to keep their integrity and prevent the possibility of being transformed into a "new language". There is nothing peculiar in the way Hebrew coined <u>calques</u> to Yiddish. But perhaps the range and distribution of such calques, enabled through the pressure of needs and the general conditions of weakening involved under such a state, have been wider than in other known cases. Considering the state of Hebrew, calques can be expected on all levels, which is indeed the case; so much so that, in literary language, some of these features, recognised as so common, could be made to carry secondary (including reverse) functions as well. Similarly, calque features, which might have been mere formal transfers, characteristic of, say, Rabbinical style but with no specific purpose in it, could later be made to carry such functions. I have in mind, as an illustration, the most fascinating case of sentence-

rhythm and intonation, a feature normally neglected by scholars, as, due to the written use of Hebrew, there has been little awareness of its sentence euphony. But it is precisely here, with rhythm and intonation implied by it, that Mendele Mokher Sfarim achieved perhaps his most unique innovation, which has had far-reaching consequences for the whole development of Hebrew literary language since. Mendele introduced rhythmo-intonational patterns into the Hebrew sentence clearly modelled after the Yiddish ones, which made the strongest effect, I believe, of "naturalness" on his readers. Breaking with the puristic norms of the Haskala style, alien to long-time, old habits, this feature probably was the most decisive, though the less explicitly remarked. Even such Hebraists as Alter Druyanov, who vehemently criticised Mendele's style for being "pseudo-Hebrew" (Druyanov 1919, quoted in Even-Zohar 1970: 293-294), did not pay attention to this rhythmo-intonational level, as it was the most deficient in the Hebrew linguistic system. But once this technique was introduced, it successfully settled down in Hebrew prose, notably with such writers as Brenner and Gnessin, to be transferred by the latter to treatment of Russian as well, and perpetuated for another sixty or seventy years in Hebrew translations from the Russian. The significance of this procedure for innovation necessitated by linguo-literary needs cannot be exaggeraged. As Hebrew has naturally tended to employ a body of ready-made expressions taken from sanctioned literary sources, a tendency that reached its extreme with the Haskala period, petrification has been a constant danger. Calques can therefore be regarded as the counter factor of collocation. And, since petrification could be felt mostly in dialogue, at least when realistic norms prevailed in literature, the rhythmo-intonational transfers turned out to be a real breakthrough. One must of course add that these were combined with sophisticated use of other calques as well as Hebrew words which had long been transferred into Yiddish.

It is, of course, not a simple matter to determine to what extent these intonational patterns are univocal transfers from spoken Yiddish, or already stylised and combined with transfers of Russian stylised models. To begin with, the Yiddish Mendele makes use of Russian to such an extent that one can rightfully claim that high Russian penetrated into the emerging Eastern Yiddish as it penetrated the emerging new phase of Hebrew literary language. But, as interference with other Slavic tongues preceded that with High Russian, these sentence intonational patterns potentially existed in Eastern

Yiddish before they had to be imported, as it were, from Russian stylised language.
Whatever the case, however, the main lines of this procedure are clear.

(3) The procedure of using a third language, an interlanguage, has an interesting
stand between the direct use and the calque procedures. It is at the same time neither
one and both of the latter. In order to avoid direct use, yet retain some of the flavour
and specific features of the other system, Aramaic had been employed to render Yiddish,
as well as other non-Hebrew languages. In such a way, Yiddish was on the one hand
incorporated in a more legitimate way, as it were, and yet, there was on the other hand
a clear indication, especially in literary style, that a lower register was being employed.
Though of relatively recent date as a systematic technique (frequent with narrators such
as Gordon, Mendele, Brenner, Gnessin and even Bialik), it was not a frivolous invention,
but deeply rooted in time-honoured tradition. (On Aramaic as provider of diminutive forms
lacking in Hebrew cf. Even-Zohar 1970:297; Shmeruk 1978:57-60 and discussion of the
Aramaic Had Gadya as a translation from Yiddish in connection with diminutives.)

The linguo-literary role of Yiddish for Hebrew in terms of PS relations seems in
principle to be clear, and even partly investigated. This is not quite the case, however,
with features whose nature is not linguistic, though also necessarily expressed by verbal
means. I refer here to such sections of the literary text as thematics and composition.
Have Yiddish texts ever exerted pressure on the canonised Hebrew ones to such an ex-
tent that the latter had to introduce changes in its repertory the way it did with a variety
of linguistic features? There is no satisfactory answer to this question, for what lies
there in front of the observer is precisely the opposite option operating within a PS,
i.e. not interference but blockage and different procedures as a result of differing pro-
cesses. Thus, there are innumerable Hebrew texts made simple in Yiddish to fit a less
sophisticated public, and I guess the opposite was true, too. This is no less conspicuous with
bilingual writers, whether ancient or recent. Writing in each language, not only the
different language as such, but the cultural and literary tradition assigned to each, in-
terfered with textual policies. It is no wonder that the young Shalom Alekhem, to take
one notorious instance, quickly deserted Hebrew, which he mastered at least as well
as many contemporaries, because although there was an emerging option for transfers
from the vernacular which would bring about change, the total narrative model which
fascinated him and its points of appeal must have been unthinkable for him within the

framework of high culture. In spite of the turning point in Hebrew with Mendele and his followers, Shalom Alekhem probably always kept the old, pre-Mendelean image of Hebrew, its nature and position. Although described as the real founder of the institutionalised separate Yiddish literature and the inventor of its home "mythology" (Miron 1973), he never contested the position of Yiddish as the lady's maid. His obsession to get translated into Hebrew cannot be explained but in terms of desire for canonisation. But when having to make up his mind which translator to select for this purpose, he clearly decided in accordance with what he imagined to be the preferred style, which no longer conformed to the new options available to Hebrew. Examining the piece of translation carried out by Brenner (Shalom Alekhem 1972; cf. also Bakon's analysis 1972) of Tevye the Milkman, which is much more compatible with the new options, one asks oneself why this did not appeal to Shalom Alekhem. But these new options, though initiated by Mendele himself, were probably too recent and perhaps a little too "revolutionary" for Shalom Alekhem, while the Berkovich model was perfectly in harmony with old traditions of textual policies. Similarly, even Mendele himself behaved, on other levels of his text, in conformity with the constraints Hebrew, as a canonised system, imposed. The examples provided by Perry (1968, esp. 92-99, and 1978), demonstrating the different repertory of realemes, items of realia (Even-Zohar 1979a), inserted in the Yiddish and Hebrew texts respectively, are highly instructive. It is also highly illuminating in this connection that people like Mendele were much opposed to the contemporary attempts to make Hebrew a spoken vernacular. In spite of dissatisfaction with the prevalent state of affairs, it was the only one which was manageable for them. Making Hebrew a full-fledged language, ultimately detached from Yiddish, was difficult to grasp and threatened to annihilate a century-long "balance of powers". That "women in the market" would speak Hebrew seemd such a catastrophe to Mendele was probably so because this meant turning about social and cultural order, intermixing popular, non-canonised culture, of which he was highly aware and in which he played a deliberate and overt role (starting with his pseudonym), with high, elite culture, which had a different nature, target public and values.

These considerations must then bring us to a realisation that the Hebrew-Yiddish PS must first and foremost be conceived of as a polysystem of culture, "culture" being a semiotic, not aesthetic concept. The behaviour of the languages participating in this

PS, in whatever types of texts, as well as the literatures involved, must therefore be analysed not _sui generis_, but in terms of the overall cultural structure. The Central and later the East European Jewish communities possessed a cultural system which, because of historical conditions, was forced to manage with two, sometimes three languages. Although highly inconvenient, this state also involved some advantages from an ideological point of view, and clearly so from the point of view of the social elite. As we know from other, seemingly less "problematic" cases (such as the French case; cf. Yahalom 1978), in a conservative society the cultural divisions tend to overlap social divisions formally manifested in a series of whatever is available to that culture in terms of material and non-material culture consumption. One should not forget in this connection that in the realm of Hebrew and Yiddish we do not really deal with two homogeneous systems, unified blocks, as it were, stratificationally related. Within each of these systems, there has been internal stratification, too. "Proper Hebrew", for instance, was carefully distinguished, on the phonetic level, from Hebrew as appropriated by Yiddish. In Hebrew, on the other hand, versified prayers conformed to Sephardic pronunciation, though not actualised as such, and the same holds true for _Haskala_ poetry, as demonstrated by Hrushovski (1971). Thus, even Hebrew, at least among its secularised consumers, maintained synchornically concurrent options, mutually opposed as more vs. less canonised. When Bialik introduced Ashkenazi pronunciation into Hebrew poetry, it was no lesser a break with tradition than any transfer from Yiddish. Indeed, this is what is exactly meant by the multi-stratified nature of the polysystem (Even-Zohar 1979). With Yiddish, value-bound use of formal units has also been always present. And, due to the Western-Eastern Yiddish shift, as well as to the respective position in social hierarchy of the dialects, it has been not less variegated and differentiated than Hebrew. Yet it must be stressed time and again, especially in view of so many studies delving in digging-up of "facts", that it has never been the material available but the systemic values this material was capable of carrying which determined its specific behaviour, i.e. its insertability into texts (utterances, discourse, etc.). The fact that under the process of disintegration of the Hebrew-Yiddish PS, cultural images most of all were being confronted ("Language of exile and misery" vs. "Language of bourgeois enemies of the people") is perhaps a degrading, distorting mirror of once positive values, but even as such it reflects the awareness of the people-in-the-culture to the cultural oppositions inherent in the linguistic multiplicity.

Nevertheless, materials, although not constraining their own behaviour, can modify the nature of constraints imposed upon them by the systemic structure into which they enter. Consequently, one should not, of course, overlook the peculiarity of the conditions caused by the bilingual nature of the Hebrew-Yiddish polysystem. Work done on intrasystemic mechanisms does not yet allow the formulation of where exactly the difference lies between "bilingual" and "non-bilingual" cultural polysystems ("uni-lingual" would never be really correct). But it seems that when bilingual, transfers are of a more complicated nature and stratification more resisting to change, though perhaps this is just an induction from the particular case analysed here. As is always the case, many answers are still lacking, but perhaps we have gained some good questions.

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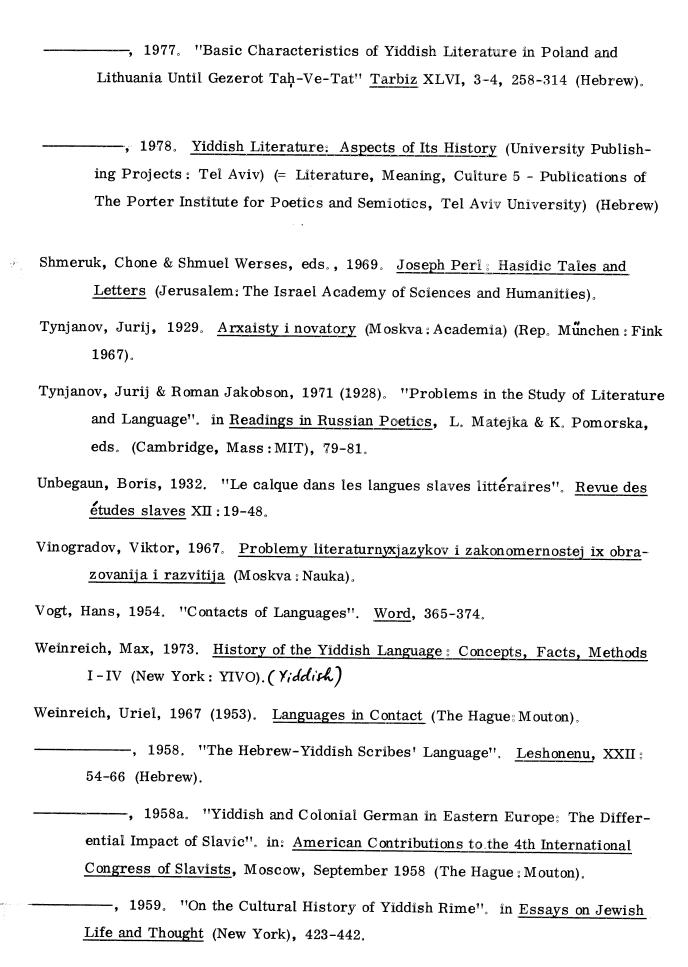langue". <u>Norsk tidskrift for sprogvidenskab</u>, XVI : 241-258.

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