

**ASPECT, TENSE AND THE LEXICON:  
EXPRESSION OF TIME IN YIDDISH**

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by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Graduate Department of Linguistics  
University of Toronto

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## **Aspect, Tense and the Lexicon: Expression of Time in Yiddish**

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This thesis investigates the nature of Yiddish aspect and tense and proposes a structural account of these expressions of time within a Government and Binding framework. The thesis has two main parts: the first part deals with theoretical issues of the nature of Yiddish aspect and the second with structural representations of aspectual and tense constructions.

The first three chapters focus on what has been the central question of Yiddish aspect: whether there is a Slavic-style grammatical perfective/imperfective opposition in Yiddish. Arguments are presented against the use of perfective/imperfective terminology for the description of Yiddish aspect in general, or for individual aspectual constructions in particular. It is further argued that Yiddish aspectual constructions do not represent grammatical oppositions, where the term 'grammatical' is interpreted to imply obligatoriness or membership in the verbal paradigm. The ramifications of these conclusions for theories of the history of Yiddish and of Yiddish-Slavic language contact are considered.

Chapter Four proposes the term 'bounded' to characterize the aspectual nature of the stem construction and of prefixed verbs; visual representations illustrate the way in which 'boundedness' can account for the co-occurrence of these constructions and for the use of prefixed verbs as a pseudo-pluperfect. Chapter Five is devoted to tense: a semantic analysis is presented within a Reichenbachian model and lexical and syntactic structures are proposed for the future, habitual past, immediate future, past, future perfect and pluperfect constructions. There is a discussion of the status and composition of the verbal paradigm.

The structures of prefixed verbs and the stem construction are presented in Chapter Six. It is argued that aspect, like tense, is expressed lexically in Yiddish. That is, there are no aspectual or tense features active in the syntax and no syntactic structures that reflect tense or aspectual semantics. Issues discussed include the nature of the lexicon and the evidence needed to propose such functional categories as Aspect Phrase and Tense Phrase.

This thesis builds upon earlier work on Yiddish aspect, tense and syntax to bridge the different fields and present a unified account of expression of time in Yiddish.

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## ASPECT, TENSE AND THE LEXICON: EXPRESSION OF TIME IN YIDDISH

### INTRODUCTION

**"di yidishe verbsistem iz an eldorado far der algemeyner lingvistik."  
"The Yiddish verb system is an Eldorado for general linguistics."  
Uriel Weinreich, 1952**

The goal of this thesis is to investigate the nature of Yiddish aspect and tense and propose a structural account of these temporal constructions in a Government and Binding framework. This involves integrating earlier research on Yiddish aspect, tense and syntactic structure, areas which have for the most part been treated in isolation from one another.

Of the topics related to the Yiddish verb system, aspect has generated the most debate. The research on Yiddish aspect spans at least half a century with contributions from such scholars as Aronson (1985), Baviskar (1974), Nath (1988), Schaechter (1951, 1942a, 1952b, 1986), Szulmajster-Celnikier (1986), Taube (1987), U. Weinreich (1952, 1977), and Wexler (1964). The discussion has centered around one main issue, as Rothstein (1990:144) succinctly explains:

... the usual approach has been to examine whether Yiddish does or does not have an aspectual system *like that of the Slavic languages*, i.e. whether the opposition perfective/imperfective is grammatical (+obligatory) in Yiddish.

Because of the centrality of the comparison of Yiddish aspect to aspect in Slavic languages, investigation of this topic necessarily raises questions of language history and language contact.

Much less has been written about Yiddish tense. Kiefer (1994) and Thieroff (1994) analyze the Yiddish tense system in the context of other European and Germanic languages. Descriptions of Yiddish tense constructions are available in the grammars of Birnbaum (1979), Katz (1987), Schaechter (1986), U. Weinreich (1949) and Zucker (1994).

Yiddish syntax has been analyzed within a Government and Binding framework by den Besten and Walraven (1986), Diesing (1990, 1997, 1998), Moorcroft (1995), and Santorini (1994). The focus of discussion has been the analysis of Yiddish as a verb-second language, with analyses of verb movement, functional categories, and case assignment in both matrix and subordinate clauses. Diesing (1998) proposes syntactic structures for the aspectual constructions described here and moves the discussion into a Minimalist framework.

It can be seen that although the Yiddish verb system has the potential to be an Eldorado for general linguistics, it has only been partially mined. The constructions that have been considered to be part of the aspectual system have been explored in some depth, but the research has only begun in investigations of tense and in the relationship of aspect and tense to proposals for syntactic structure.

The thesis has two main parts: the first devoted to an investigation of the nature of Yiddish aspect, the second to proposals for structural representations of tense and aspect constructions. The first three chapters deal with the central question of Yiddish aspect, as described above, whether there is a grammatical



perfective/imperfective opposition in Yiddish. While the various authors use much of the same vocabulary for their research - aspect, perfectivity, completion, grammaticality - they evidently use these terms with different meanings. In order to narrow the discussion I have chosen to focus on two constructions that have played the largest roles in the literature about Yiddish aspect, and have compared the authors on the basis of their stance on the existence of a perfective/imperfective contrast in Yiddish. Even so, the comparison of existing research is challenging: for example, as will be discussed in Chapter 3, Schaechter and U. Weinreich mean different things by their apparently identical claims that all Yiddish verbs are either perfective or imperfective. The question of whether aspect is grammatical in Yiddish also looms large in the literature and so I have grappled with defining criteria for determining whether aspect or a particular aspectual construction should be described as grammatical as opposed to lexical.

Chapters 1 and 2 set the context for this discussion. Chapter 1 presents a detailed description of the two main constructions involved, prefixed verbs and the stem construction. Chapter 2 outlines the analyses of Yiddish aspect previously proposed and sets out the factors that have led to the predominance of the Slavic model in the debate about the nature of Yiddish aspect. In Chapter 3 I argue against the use of perfective/imperfective terminology for the description of the Yiddish verb system in general, and for prefixed verbs and the stem construction in particular. I further argue against claims that any Yiddish aspectual constructions represent grammatical oppositions, where the term 'grammatical' is interpreted to imply obligatoriness or membership in the verbal paradigm. The discussion in these three chapters lies primarily in the field of semantics; however there are also repercussions for language contact and language change with respect to the nature of Slavic influence upon Yiddish and the question of what evidence is needed to propose externally motivated as opposed to internal language change.

The arguments in Chapter 3 reject a perfective/imperfective analysis of Yiddish aspect. Chapter 4 proposes the term 'bounded' to characterize the aspectual nature of the stem construction and of prefixed verbs: the concept of 'boundedness' bridges the spatial and temporal characteristics of these constructions, and can account for their co-occurrence and for the interrelationship of aspectual and tense constructions in Yiddish.

My aim for the second part of the thesis is to incorporate the findings about Yiddish aspect from the previous chapters into a proposal for the syntactic structure of Yiddish. That is, my goal is to integrate the semantic discussions in Chapters 1-3 with syntactic representation. What repercussions, if any, do claims of grammatical as opposed to lexical aspect have for syntactic representation? Can these realms of discussion be bridged? Would a claim of grammatical aspect necessitate the existence of an Aspect Phrase in the syntax? Does a conclusion that aspect is lexical mean that it has no syntactic representation? How are proposals for the Yiddish verbal paradigm related to syntax? Is the paradigm an artifact of the lexicon or the syntax? These are some of the questions that are raised in attempting to bridge the heavily semantic literature on Yiddish aspect with structural representation.

Chapters 5 and 6 integrate the analysis of Yiddish aspect with an analysis of Yiddish tense. A full discussion of Yiddish tense would warrant another dissertation. Enough of tense is discussed here to propose a syntactic representation of Yiddish sentences and to indicate ways in which tense and aspect interact in Yiddish. Chapter 5 sets out semantic and syntactic analyses for the Yiddish tense constructions and

Chapter 6 proposes syntactic structures for the two central aspectual constructions, the stem construction and prefixed verbs.

With respect to structural representation my approach is to look for evidence in Yiddish before proposing the existence of functional categories. That is, I do not assume that Aspect Phrase and Tense Phrase occur universally in all languages, but rather that there must be overt evidence for them. This therefore raises the question of what type of evidence is needed to posit the existence of a functional category. I assume further that temporal meaning can be associated directly with lexical items and does not necessarily require syntactic expression. In Chapters 5 and 6 I argue that both Yiddish tense and aspect are expressed lexically. There are no aspectual or tense features relevant to syntax and no syntactic structures that reflect tense or aspectual semantics.

I believe that it is very important for Yiddish scholarship that repercussions of semantic discussions be related to formal expression; the bridging of the fields of semantics and syntax is key to understanding the language as a whole. This dissertation is a contribution to that ambitious project.

## CHAPTER 1 - YIDDISH ASPECTUAL CONSTRUCTIONS

### 1.1 Introduction

Comrie (1976:5) defines aspects as "different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation." In discussions of Yiddish aspect the two constructions most frequently cited are prefixed verbs, both separable and inseparable, and the stem construction. Prefixed verbs have been the prime focus of the discussion about Yiddish aspect because of their similarity to Slavic prefixed verbs, which are central to the Slavic aspectual system. For example, the aspectual difference between the verbs *bodn* 'to bathe' and *opbodn* 'to finish bathing' is ascribed to the aspectual nature of the prefix *op-*. The prefix is considered aspectual because it does not change the nature of the event of bathing itself but focusses upon one part of the event's temporal structure by indicating that the bathing has come to an end. Like prefixation, the stem construction also contributes aspectual information. The difference between *er kumt arayn* 'he comes in' and the stem construction *er git a kum arayn*, literally 'he gives a come in' meaning 'he comes in suddenly', has to do with the temporal structure of the event. The event of 'coming in' in the simple sentence *er kumt arayn* has some duration, but in the stem construction the duration of the event has shrunk to a point, giving the characteristic of suddenness.

These are not the only constructions that have been mentioned in connection with Yiddish aspect: Birnbaum (1979), for example, lists seven constructions contributing different aspectual meanings; Schaechter (1951), in addition to the stem construction and prefixation, describes suffixation and four other periphrastic constructions as aspectual. However, prefixation and the stem construction stand out as being the constructions most integral to an understanding of Yiddish aspect. This chapter is devoted to a detailed examination of these two constructions: their structure, aspectual meaning and development beyond Germanic models.

Section 1.2 deals with prefixed verbs. Discussions of Yiddish aspect generally treat prefixed verbs as a single class, but morphologically and syntactically they divide into two classes, those with separable and those with inseparable prefixes. The differences between the two types of prefixes are evident in the example sentences in this thesis, and are reflected in the structures proposed for separably and inseparably prefixed verbs in Chapter 6. Section 1.2.1 outlines the differences between separable and inseparable prefixes. Section 1.2.2 gives a detailed treatment of four prefixes that have been identified as contributing aspectual information. For each prefix, I investigate what type of aspectual information is contributed and whether the prefix can be considered to be purely aspectual or to have semantic content as well. The term 'semantic content' is used here to signify any meaning that is not strictly aspectual. Aspectual meaning is interpreted very narrowly, to include information about the temporal structure of the event only, that is, information about the event's beginning, end or duration. Section 1.2.3 presents some claims that have been made for Slavic influence on the aspectual function of specific Yiddish prefixes.

Section 1.3 describes the stem construction, an idiomatic construction that can be compared to the English construction 'give the bushes a trim' or 'give the bottle a shake'. Section 1.3.1 describes the form of the construction and Section 1.3.2 outlines the range of aspectual meanings that are associated with it. The Yiddish stem construction has a surface word order which differentiates it from the standard double object construction; this is discussed in Section 1.3.3. Further, the

Yiddish stem construction is much more productive than its counterparts in English and German and some of the reasons for this are discussed in Section 1.3.4.

## 1.2 Prefixed Verbs

### 1.2.1 Inseparable and Separable Prefixes

The differences in the syntactic behavior of verbs with separable as compared to inseparable prefixes are illustrated in the examples in (1) and (2) below. The prefixes are indicated in bold type.

- (1) Verb with inseparable prefix: *antdekn* 'discover'
- a. *ix **antdek***  
'I discover'
  - b. ***antdek!***  
'discover!'
  - c. *ix hob **antdekt***  
I have discovered  
'I discovered'
  - d. *ix vel **antdekn***  
I will discover  
'I will discover'
  - e. *er hot moyre tsu **antdekn***  
he has fear to discover  
'he is afraid to discover'
- (2) Verb with separable prefix: *araynkumen* 'come in'
- a. *ix kum **arayn***  
'I come in'
  - b. *kum **arayn!***  
'come in!'
  - c. *ix bin **arayngekumen***  
I am in - came  
'I came in'
  - d. *ix vel **araynkumen***  
I will in - come  
'I will come in'
  - e. *er hot moyre **arayntsukumen***  
he has fear in-to-come  
'he is afraid to come in'

The verb *antdekn* 'discover' in (1) has an inseparable prefix. Morphologically the verb is composed of the prefix *ant-* and the verb *dekn* 'to cover'. In general, the meanings of inseparable prefixes are less clear than those of separable prefixes: in this case, the inseparable prefix *ant* has been described as contributing a meaning of "negation, distancing from, undoing of" (Katz 1987). As implied by the

term 'inseparable prefix', the verb and its prefix are inseparable in all syntactic constructions as shown in examples (1a) - (1e) with the present, imperative, past, future and the infinitive with the prefix *tsu-*.

The syntactic behavior of verbs with separable prefixes is illustrated in (2) with the verb *araynkumen*. Morphologically this verb is composed of the adverbial prefix *arayn* 'into' and the verb *kumen* 'to come'. The separable prefix, unlike the inseparable prefix, directly precedes the verb stem only with the bare infinitive, as shown in the future form in (2d). In the present and imperative the prefix follows the verb, as in (2a) and (2b); in the past and *tsu-* infinitive the prefix precedes the verb, but is separated from it by another morpheme: *ge-* in the past, as in (2c) and *tsu-* in (2e). Since in many contexts the separable morpheme does not precede the stem and is not affixed to it, verbs with separable prefixes have been referred to with terms that avoid the word 'prefix': 'verbs with adverbial complements' (Weinreich 1949), 'adverb-linked verbs' (Birnbaum 1979), 'converbs' (Schachter 1986), and 'particle verbs' or 'separable compounds' (den Besten and Walraven 1986). However the term 'separable prefix' will be used here, so that both verbs with separable prefixes and verbs with inseparable prefixes can be readily identified as belonging to a single class, that of 'prefixed verbs', for the purposes of discussing earlier research on Yiddish aspect.

Verbs with separable and inseparable prefixes show different stress patterns as well as different syntactic patterns. Separable prefixes always take primary stress while inseparable prefixes are always unstressed. For this reason Katz (1987) refers to verbs with separable prefixes as 'verbs with stressed prefixes'. The difference in the stress patterns is illustrated in (3) below (from Schachter 1986) which compares a verb with an inseparable prefix, *antloyfn* 'to escape', and a verb with a separable prefix, *aroytsloyn* 'to run out'. Both verbs are derived from the same simple verb *loyn* 'to run'.

(3) Stress patterns of prefixed verbs

	<u>inseparable</u>	<u>separable</u>
bare infinitive:	<i>antlóyfn</i>	<i>aróysloyn</i>
infinitive with <i>tsu-</i> :	<i>tsu antlóyfn</i>	<i>aróystsuloyfn</i>
present (1st person):	<i>ix antlóyf</i>	<i>ix loyf aróys</i>
past participle:	<i>antlófn</i>	<i>aróysgelofn</i>

There are many more separable prefixes than inseparable in Yiddish: the five inseparable prefixes are given in (4) and the 36 separable prefixes in (5) (Birnbaum 1979, Katz 1987, Schachter 1986, Szulmajster-Celnikier 1986, U. Weinreich 1971).

(4) Inseparable Prefixes

<i>ant-</i>	<i>antmutikn</i>	'to discourage'
<i>ba-</i>	<i>bahalt'n</i>	'to hide'
<i>der-</i>	<i>dertseyln</i>	'to tell (a story)'
<i>far-</i>	<i>farbesern</i>	'to improve'
<i>tse-</i>	<i>tsebrexn</i>	'to break'

(5) Separable Prefixes

<i>afer-</i>	'forth'	<i>farbay-</i>	'past, by'
<i>aher-</i>	'here'	<i>for-</i>	'before'
<i>aheym</i>	'homeward'	<i>foroy-</i>	'before'
<i>ahin-</i>	'there'	<i>funander-</i>	'apart'
<i>ahinter</i>	'backward'	<i>iber-</i>	'over'
<i>anider-</i>	'down'	<i>mit-</i>	'with'
<i>antkegn-</i>	'opposite'	<i>nox-</i>	'after'
<i>arayn-</i>	'in'	<i>on-</i>	'against'
<i>ariber-</i>	'across, over'	<i>op-</i>	'up'
<i>arop-</i>	'down'	<i>oyf-</i>	'on'
<i>aroyf-</i>	'upward'	<i>oys-</i>	'out'
<i>aroys-</i>	'out'	<i>tsu-</i>	'to'
<i>arum-</i>	'about, around'	<i>tsunoyf-</i>	'bring together'
<i>arunter</i>	'down'	<i>tsurik-</i>	'back'
<i>avek-</i>	'away'	<i>tsuzamen-</i>	'together'
<i>ayn-</i>	'in'	<i>um-</i>	'around'
<i>bay-</i>	'by, at'	<i>unter-</i>	'under'
<i>durx-</i>	'through'	<i>vider-</i>	'again'

Unlike separable prefixes, inseparable prefixes are not found as independent words in Yiddish; they are less productive than separable prefixes, and, as noted above, the meanings of verbs with inseparable prefixes are in general less predictable than those with separable prefixes.

The ten most common separable prefixes, according to U. Weinreich (1949), are given in (6) below, along with an example of a prefixed verb for each. These prefixes are all found independently as adverbs and they combine freely with verbs for which they appropriately describe the goal.

(6) Most common separable prefixes

<i>arayn</i>	'in'	<i>araynvarfn</i>	'to throw in'
<i>ariber</i>	'across'	<i>aribershpringen</i>	'to jump across'
<i>arop</i>	'down'	<i>aropfaln</i>	'to fall down'
<i>aroyf</i>	'up'	<i>aroyfkukn</i>	'to look up'
<i>aroys</i>	'out'	<i>aroysshikn</i>	'to send out'
<i>arum</i>	'about'	<i>arumform</i>	'to travel about'
<i>arunter</i>	'under'	<i>arunterleygn</i>	'to put underneath'
<i>avek</i>	'away'	<i>avekgeyn</i>	'to go away'
<i>tsurik</i>	'back'	<i>tsurikrufn</i>	'to call back'
<i>tsuzamen</i>	'together'	<i>tsuzamenbrenge</i>	'to bring together'

Birnbaum (1979) argues that the verb and separable prefix are actually two distinct words, a verb and an adverb: he claims that they were joined orthographically in the nineteenth century in imitation of German spelling. There is, however, evidence that the two parts should be treated as one lexical item, as will be discussed in Section 6.2.3 (see also Gold 1994a).

### 1.2.2 Aspectual Prefixes

As noted above, Comrie (1976:5) defines aspects as "different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation." According to this definition, an aspectual prefix is a prefix that provides some information about, or focusses attention upon, some part of the internal temporal structure of the event described by the root verb, without changing the basic meaning of the verb. Although there are potentially several types of information about the internal temporal structure of an event, the Yiddish aspectual prefixes have primarily been associated with information about the completion of an event. Katz (1987) defines the prefixes in (7) in terms relating to the end of an event; his glosses indicate 'completeness of action' or, for (7d) 'completion of the action'. As will be discussed in the following sections 1.2.2.1 and 1.2.2.2, there is a difference in meaning between the superficially similar terms 'completeness' and 'completion': the former is associated with exhaustiveness, the latter simply with coming to an end.

(7) Prefixes with aspectual meaning				
a.	<i>der-</i>	'completeness of action'	<i>shisn</i>	'to shoot'
	<i>dershisn</i>	'shoot (dead)'		
b.	<i>far-</i>	'completeness of action'	<i>dreyen</i>	'twist, turn'
	<i>fardreyen</i>	'entangle, mess up'		
c.	<i>oys-</i>	'completeness of action'	<i>vashn</i>	'wash'
	<i>oysvashn</i>	'wash (thoroughly)'		
d.	<i>op-</i>	'completion of the action'	<i>hargenen</i>	'to kill'
	<i>ophargenen</i>	'annihilate'		
e.	<i>oyf-</i>	'completeness of action'	<i>efenen</i>	'to open'
	<i>oyfefenen</i>	'open up'		

For the first three prefixes, (7a) - (7c), the aspectual meaning given here is one of several listed for the prefix; however for *op-* and *oyf-* this is the only gloss given. Prefixes which contribute aspectual information alone are often described as 'empty' in that they are empty of semantic information. For example, *akern* means 'to plough' and *opakern* means 'to finish ploughing'; the only information contributed by the prefix *op-* in this case is that the event of ploughing is completed. It could then be argued that, at least in this case, *op-* is semantically empty and is a purely aspectual prefix. The question of the existence of semantically empty aspectual prefixes in Yiddish rises again in the debate about whether Yiddish aspect is grammatical as opposed to lexical aspect; this is discussed further in Section 3.4.

U. Weinreich (1977) and Wexler (1964), among others, treat those Yiddish prefixes which indicate completion as perfectivizing, so that Yiddish simple verbs are considered imperfective and the corresponding prefixed verbs, perfective. Weinreich (1977:xxxv) defines a perfective verb as one that "designates completed action." Examples of such perfectivizing prefixes and imperfective/perfective verbal pairs, according to Weinreich's analysis, are shown in (8) below. Weinreich gives the same gloss for both the simple and prefixed forms of each verb, with the added designation *pf.* beside verbs he considers perfective and *imp.* in the entry for the imperfective counterpart. While both simple and prefixed verbs are glossed the same, the prefixed form, being perfective, is understood to indicate completed action.

(8) Yiddish perfectivizing prefixes (U. Weinreich)

<u>prefix</u>	<u>imperfective</u>	<u>perfective</u>	
<i>oys-</i>	<i>shpreytn</i>	<i>oysshpreytn</i>	'spread'
<i>op-</i>	<i>hargenen</i>	<i>ophargenen</i>	'kill'
<i>on-</i>	<i>vayzn</i>	<i>onvayzn</i>	'show'
<i>oyf-</i>	<i>efenen</i>	<i>oyfefenen</i>	'open'
<i>far-</i>	<i>blenden</i>	<i>farblenden</i>	'blind,dazzle'
<i>tse-</i>	<i>terxen</i>	<i>tseterxen</i>	'botch'

Aronson (1985) compiled a list of those prefixes associated with verbs designated perfective in U. Weinreich's dictionary (1977). The prefixes and the number of times each prefix is associated with a perfective verb are given in (9). Although I argue in Chapter 3 against describing Yiddish prefixed verbs as perfective, in the discussion here, Weinreich's designation as perfective is an indicator that the prefix contributes some aspectual information.

(9) Number of citations as perfective

<u>separable</u>		<u>inseparable</u>	
<i>oys-</i>	64	<i>far-</i>	31
<i>op-</i>	40	<i>tse-</i>	18
<i>on-</i>	31	<i>ba-</i>	7
<i>tsu-</i>	20	<i>der-</i>	2
<i>ayn-</i>	18	<i>ant-</i>	1
<i>oyf-</i>	11		
<i>iber-</i>	7		
<i>avek-</i>	4		
<i>durx-</i>	4		
<i>tsunoyf-</i>	2		
<i>unter-</i>	1		
<i>arop-</i>	1		
<i>arum-</i>	1		
<i>arayn-</i>	1		

The list in (9) should not be interpreted to mean that Weinreich considers the prefixes cited above to always have perfective meaning, or that perfectivizing is their major function. For example, of the approximately 220 verbs listed in Weinreich's dictionary with the separable prefix *op-*, only 40 are marked perfective; the others have no indication for aspect. However the above list does indicate which prefixes are frequently associated with aspectual meaning.

There is apparently a formal difference between separable prefixes with aspectual meaning and those without (see Talmy, in press). Listed in (10a) below are five of the most common Yiddish separable prefixes, from those given in (6) above. In (10b) are listed some of the most common separable aspectual prefixes, according to the list in (9) above.



(10) Comparison of aspectual and non-aspectual prefixes

a.	<u>Non-aspectual meaning</u>	b.	<u>Aspectual meaning</u>	
	<i>aroyf</i> - 'out'	<i>oys</i> -	'out'	64
	<i>arop</i> - 'down'	<i>op</i> -	'up'	40
	<i>arayn</i> - 'in'	<i>ayn</i> -	'in'	18
	<i>aroyf</i> - 'up'	<i>oyf</i> -	'on'	11
	<i>ariber</i> - 'across'	<i>iber</i> -	'over'	7

The corresponding prefixes in (10a) and (10b) clearly have the same stems and similar glosses. The prefixes in (10a) all have the prefix *ar*- which indicates movement towards a goal. The aspectual prefixes in (10b) are locative. Thus the aspectual *oyf* means 'on, on top of' whereas the directional *aroyf* means 'upwards', or 'towards the top'; the aspectual *oys* 'out' can be contrasted with the directional *aroyf* which more accurately means 'towards the outside, outwards'.

None of the aspectual prefixes in (10b) are among the most common prefixes listed in (6) above. Two of the adverbial prefixes in (10a), *arayn*- and *arop*-, are among the aspectual prefixes listed in (9) but are cited only once each as compared to 40 citations for *op*- and 18 for *ayn*-. The aspectual use of locative elements is found in English particle verbs, such as *throw out* and *eat up*, which are cognates of the Yiddish separable prefixes. For this reason English particle verbs are found frequently in the glosses of Yiddish aspectual prefixes in the discussion below.

In the following sections I focus on the four prefixes most frequently cited by U. Weinreich (1977) as 'perfective': *oys*- with 64 citations, *op*- with 40, and *on*- and *far*- with 31 each. These four prefixes also stand out for their aspectual meaning and function in the work of authors other than Weinreich. The prefixes *oys*-, *op*- and *far*- are among those listed in (7) above, to which Katz (1987) attributes completive meaning; for *op*- 'completion of the action' is the only gloss that he gives. Katz gives a different gloss to *on*-, 'specification of action'; as with *op*- this is the only gloss provided. In Baviskar (1974) the prefixes *oys*-, *op*- and *on*- are the prefixes most frequently supplied by informants in what are described as perfective contexts. Among these four prefixes are those most frequently described as having undergone Slavic influence, as discussed in Section 1.2.3. Wexler (1964) discusses *far*-, *on*- and *op*- in this context, Baviskar (1974) discusses the Slavic influence on *op*- and Szulmajster-Celniker (1986) the Slavic influence on *far*-.

The discussion below investigates the semantic content of each of these four prefixes. I have primarily relied upon Harkavy (1928) for the meanings of the prefixed verbs. It is difficult to use Weinreich's dictionary to clarify the difference in meaning between a simple verb and its prefixed form: since, as described above, Weinreich groups such verbs as perfective and imperfective pairs, he gives the same English gloss for both forms, with an indication that one is imperfective and the other, perfective. Thus, the gloss for both *opshvenken* and *shvenken* is 'rinse', but the former is marked *pf.* for perfective, and the latter *imp.* for imperfective. Harkavy (1928) has no underlying theory of perfective/imperfective contrasts and thus does not invoke these terms in differentiating between the prefixed and simple forms. He glosses the simple verb *shvenken* as 'rinse' and the prefixed verb *opshvenken* as 'to wash off, clean by rinsing'. Thus the semantic contribution of the prefix can be more readily determined by referring to Harkavy's definitions than by relying upon Weinreich's blanket terms of perfective and imperfective. Harkavy also provides glosses in Hebrew, which can further clarify the meaning of the prefixes.

The four prefixes discussed below are those most frequently cited by Weinreich as perfective; Weinreich associates perfectivity with completed action and does not distinguish between the prefixes in terms of the aspectual information they each contribute. Before using blanket terminology like 'Yiddish aspectually prefixed verbs', it is important to investigate the individual prefixes more carefully. In the following sections each prefix is analyzed with respect to the type of aspectual information it contributes and as to whether it can be considered to be semantically empty. There are (at least) four possibilities for the relationship of these two characteristics:

1. the four prefixes are semantically empty and all contribute the same aspectual information, that of completion;
2. the four prefixes are semantically empty but do not all contribute the same aspectual information;
3. the prefixes are not all semantically empty but all contribute the same aspectual information, that of completion;
4. the prefixes are not all semantically empty and do not all contribute the same aspectual information.

This overview of the more common Yiddish aspectual prefixes will aid in forming generalizations about the nature of Yiddish aspect expressed through verbal prefixation.

#### 1.2.2.1 *oys-*

As indicated in (9) above, the prefix *oys-* has by far the most citations by U. Weinreich (1977) as providing 'perfective' force to a simple verb, half as many again as the next most frequently cited prefix. However, it should be noted that *oys-* is not one of the prefixes for which Katz (1987) gives only an aspectual meaning; the full general meaning for *oys-* is given as "completeness of action; lengthiness of action; undoing of a prior situation; suddenness; outward action" (Katz 1987:147). The prefix *oys-* is not only associated with aspectual meaning, but participates in the non-aspectual derivation of many words, such as *oysgishn* 'to pour out', which can be understood as literally involving outward action.

The prefix *oys-* clearly can carry semantic, that is non-aspectual meaning; the question is whether the aspectual uses of *oys-* also have semantic content or whether they are semantically empty. It is, however, not simple to differentiate between a semantic and a purely aspectual use of the prefix *oys-*. In the example above of *oysgishn* 'to pour out', the prefix *oys-* has a directional meaning in that the liquid is flowing outwards from the vessel. This contrasts with the directionally prefixed verb *ayngishn* 'to pour in'. However, 'to pour out' can also have an exhaustive meaning, implying that all of the liquid is poured and therefore that the pouring is completed. Since *oys-* indicates that the event is completed, it can be considered to contribute an aspectual as well as a semantic meaning here.

The examples in (11) can help to clarify whether aspectual prefixation with *oys-* also carries non-aspectual meaning. Example (11) gives a number of Yiddish verbs prefixed with *oys-* and their glosses, taken from Harkavy (1928). The verbs in

(11a) are those that Weinreich (1977) designates perfective. This means that Weinreich gives the same gloss for both the prefixed and unprefixed verb; for example, both *bodn* and *oysbodn* are glossed 'to bathe'.

(11) Aspectual prefix *oys-*

a. Verbs designated perfective

<i>oysbodn</i>	'to bathe out'	'kol'
<i>oysbakn</i>	'to bake sufficiently/to finish baking'	
<i>oysboyen</i>	'to finish building'	'kol'
<i>oysgrabn</i>	'to dig out'	
<i>oyszeyn</i>	'to see to the end'	
<i>oystrinken</i>	'to drink out'	'kol'

b. Verbs not designated perfective

<i>oysakern</i>	'to plough out/up'	'kol'
<i>oysbetn</i>	'to obtain by pleading'	
<i>oysbletern</i>	'to turn all the leaves (of a book)'	'kol'
<i>oysdreshn</i>	'to thresh out'	'kol'
<i>oysdishen</i>	'to crush all'	'kol'
<i>oysdoyern</i>	'to last to the end'	
<i>oysdertseyln</i>	'to tell to the end'	
<i>oyshern</i>	'to listen to the end'	
<i>oyslebn</i>	'to live to the end'	
<i>oyszufn</i>	'to drink all'	'kol'
<i>oysfarkoyfn</i>	'to sell out'	'kol'
<i>oysflakern</i>	'to flicker out'	
<i>oyskiln</i>	'to cool thoroughly'	
<i>oysmatern</i>	'to tire out'	

The difficulty of distinguishing aspectual from semantic content is complicated by the use of English, a Germanic language, as the language of translation. Like Yiddish, English also uses the particle 'out' in both the directional and exhaustive sense: one can say 'I am going out' to mean that one is literally going out of the house; or one can say 'I'm tired out' to mean one is tired completely. It is helpful to turn to the Hebrew translations of these Yiddish prefixed verbs in Harkavy (1928) to clarify the meaning of the prefix; since Hebrew does not use the same Germanic particles as Yiddish and English, the paired ambiguities of *oys-* and 'out' can be avoided. What is striking in the glosses of verbs prefixed with *oys-* in (11) is the frequency of the particle 'out' in the English glosses, and the frequency of some form of *kol* 'all, everything' in the Hebrew glosses. Thus, for example, where Harkavy (1928) gives the English gloss of *oysakern* as 'to plough out/up', the Hebrew gloss *xarosh kol* 'to plough everything' clarifies the exhaustive meaning of the compound. Similarly, where the English gloss of *oysbadn* 'to bathe out' is somewhat mysterious, the Hebrew *raxots kulo* 'to wash everything' clarifies the meaning of the prefix. The designation 'kol' in (11) indicates those verbs that have a form of *kol* in their Hebrew gloss in Harkavy (1928).

Schaechter (1951) distinguishes four meanings of *oys-* that he describes as aspectual: the cessative, distributive, resultative and sudden/punctual/intensive. From the above examples one could classify *oysboyen* 'to finish building' as cessative, *oysbletern* 'to turn all the leaves (of a book)' as distributive, and *oysbetn* 'to obtain by pleading' as resultative; Schaechter gives *oysflakern* 'to flicker out' as an example of the sudden/punctual/intensive. However, are these truly different

types of aspectual meanings, that is providing different kinds of temporal information or are these different varieties of semantic content? I propose that all of Schaechter's categories share a terminative aspectual meaning, in that they all indicate completed action. 'To finish building' implies that the activity of building is completed, 'to turn all the leaves (of a book)' implies that the turning is completed, 'to obtain by pleading' implies that the pleading is completed and 'to flicker out' implies that the flickering is finished.

Therefore all four of Schaechter's categories have an aspectual meaning that focusses upon the final temporal boundary of the event. I would argue that what distinguishes these four meanings is not that *oys-* contributes different aspectual meaning in each case but that there is the addition of different types of semantic meaning. The verb *oysbletern* 'to turn every page' differs from *bletern* 'to turn pages' in a semantic as well as in an aspectual way. The aspectual information is that the turning of pages is completed. The information that every page was turned is semantic and not aspectual for it primarily concerns the spatial rather than the temporal realm: it describes the effect of the action upon a material object, the book's pages. Similarly the verb *oysbetn* 'to obtain by pleading' differs both aspectually and semantically from *betn* 'to beg, plead'. Aspectually, the prefix *oys-* indicates that the begging has come to an end; the information that a (non-temporal) goal was obtained through pleading is additional semantic not aspectual information.

The sudden meaning attributed to *oysflakern* 'to flicker out' can be considered a different type of aspectual information than completion, but in this case it seems more a result of the meaning of the verb *flakern* 'to flicker' than a contribution of the prefix *oys-*. I therefore conclude that although Schaechter (1951) describes *oys-* as having four different aspectual meanings, there is actually only one aspectual meaning associated with *oys-*, that of completion. The variations observed by Schaechter are more properly described as semantic.

The prefix *oys-* cannot be considered semantically empty. The aspectual meaning of completion is almost always accompanied by a semantic meaning of exhaustiveness. Exhaustiveness is present in such different verbs as *oyshern* 'to listen to the end' *oysfarkoyfn* 'to sell all of the merchandise', and *oyskiln* 'to cool thoroughly'. The meaning of exhaustiveness is different from a purely aspectual meaning of completion or finishing: while 'to sell out' may imply 'to finish selling', 'to finish selling' or 'to complete the act of selling' does not imply 'to sell out'. Thus, the full meaning of the prefix *oys-* includes more information than completion alone. This further information is not aspectual: the event of 'selling out' is not aspectually different from the event of 'finishing selling'; the difference does not have to do with different internal temporal structures. Both 'selling out' and 'finishing selling' involve the aspect of completion of the event; however 'selling out' has the further semantic connotation of exhausting the merchandise. The exhaustive and distributive meanings of *oys-* will be discussed further with respect to the concept of 'measuring out' a bounded temporal event, discussed in Section 4.3.2.

I conclude then that the prefix *oys-* indeed includes the aspectual meaning of completion; however the prefix when used in this sense is not semantically empty, it includes a semantic meaning of exhaustiveness.

#### 1.2.2.2 *op-*

After *oys-*, *op-* is the prefix next most frequently cited by U. Weinreich (1977) as perfective. As noted in (7) above Katz (1987) gives only the gloss 'completion of the action' for *op-*; from this it would appear that this prefix is purely

aspectual and is semantically empty. However the verbs and glosses from Harkavy (1928) in (12) show that the prefix *op-* does not always contribute the same meaning and that this meaning is not always purely aspectual. The verbs in (12a) are some of those verbs designated perfective by Weinreich; those in (12b) are verbs with similar meanings that are either not listed in Weinreich's dictionary or are present but not labelled perfective. The Hebrew glosses are *kala* 'end, come to an end', *gamar* 'finish, complete', *xadol* 'cease, stop' and, as seen in the previous section, *kol* 'all'.

(12) Aspectual prefix *op-*

a. Verbs designated perfective

<i>opbodn</i>	'to finish bathing'	'gamar'
<i>opbrotn</i>	'to finish roasting'	'kala'
<i>opbrexn</i>	'to vomit out; to break off'	
<i>opgishn</i>	'to cast, mold; to pour off'	
<i>opesn</i>	'to finish eating'	'kala'
	'to eat up'	'kol'
<i>oployfn</i>	'to run off'	
<i>opvishn</i>	'to wipe off'	
<i>opshobn</i>	'to shave off, to scrape off'	
<i>opmestn</i>	'to measure'	
<i>opvegn</i>	'to weigh'	

b. Verbs not designated perfective

<i>oparbetn</i>	'to finish one's work'	'gamar'
<i>opbentshn</i>	'to finish saying grace'	<i>gamar</i>
<i>opbakn</i>	'to finish baking'	'gamar/kala'
<i>opdavnen</i>	'to finish praying'	'gamar/kala'
<i>opboyen</i>	'to finish building'	'kala'
<i>opakern</i>	'to finish ploughing'	'kala'
<i>opblitsn</i>	'to cease lightening'	'xadol'
<i>opglien</i>	'to cease glowing'	'xadol'
<i>opdonern</i>	'to cease thundering'	'xadol'
<i>opbayshten</i>	'to brush off'	
<i>opbaysn</i>	'to bite off'	
<i>opblozn</i>	'to blow off'	
<i>opgrablen</i>	'to scratch off'	

The verbs in (12) can be divided into three main groups according to meaning: those translated with 'finish', those translated with 'cease' and those glossed with particle verbs, primarily involving the particle 'off'. Weinreich's designation of perfective is apparently inconsistent: he considers *opshobn* 'to shave off, to scrape off' perfective, but not *opbaysn* 'to bite off'.

The two English glosses 'to finish' and 'to cease' are not synonymous: the verb 'to finish' implies that the activity was completed, whereas 'to cease' indicates only that the activity stopped, without implying that it was completed. This same variation in meaning is also evident with the Hebrew glosses: *kala* 'end, come to an end' and *gamar* 'finish, complete' imply that the activity was completed, and *xadol* 'cease, stop' implies cessation without necessarily involving completion. The difference between verbs glossed with 'finish' and those glossed with 'cease' can be described in two ways. Those verbs glossed with 'finish' have agentive subjects, while those glossed with 'cease' do not. Associated to this trait is the characteristic that verbs glossed with 'finish' can be considered to have an inherent end point, and

the prefix indicates that this end point was reached. Thus, for example, the verb *bentshn* 'to say grace' has an inherent endpoint: one finishes saying grace once the complete grace is said. The verb *opbentshn* then has the gloss 'to finish saying grace'. There is no inherent endpoint, however, with a verb like *glien* 'to glow'; thus *opglien* is glossed in English 'to cease glowing' rather than 'to finish glowing' and the Hebrew gives *xadol*.

The difference between finishing and ceasing is important with respect to the term 'perfective'. As it is defined by Weinreich, it is associated with completed action and not with simple cessation; there are no verbs in (12a), the list of verbs designated perfective by Weinreich, with a gloss of 'ceasing'. It appears that Weinreich only labels as perfective those verbs that can be interpreted as having an inherent end point; for verbs which might be interpreted as non-telic, such as 'to run' or 'to eat', Weinreich gives a gloss with a complement in brackets, thus providing an end point: *oployfen* 'run (a course)'; *opesn* 'eat (a meal)'. However, if *op-* can indeed contribute a meaning either of cessation or of completion, depending upon the verb involved, it appears that the aspectual information contributed by *op-* is better described as termination than as completion. It is not that *op-* provides two different types of aspectual information, completion and cessation, but that the aspectual contribution of *op-* is interpreted as cessation with non-telic verbs. The temporal structure of prefixed verbs given in Section 4.3 accounts for both of these glosses of *op-*; the term 'perfective' does not.

While the prefix contributes a primarily aspectual meaning to the verbs in (12) glossed with 'finish' or 'cease', the verbs that are glossed with the English particle 'off', have a sense of physical separation as well. This physical separation marks the end of the activity described by the verb; since the activity ends when the separation occurs these *op-* verbs have temporal as well as physical implications. For example, when one scratches something off, it implies that the scratching was repeated until the item was removed, and then the scratching ended. Thus the prefix *op-* in verbs like *opgraben* 'to scratch off', *opvishn* 'to wipe off' and *opshobn* 'to shave off, to scrape off' combines the semantic content of separation with the aspectual meaning of completion.

There are two verbs in (12a) that have neither a gloss with 'finishing' nor a gloss with the particle 'off': *opmestn* 'to measure' and *opvegn* 'to weigh'. Both Weinreich and Harkavy give the same English glosses to the prefixed verbs as to the corresponding simple verbs *mestn* and *vegn*. The Hebrew glosses provide no clarification here; they too are the same for both simple and prefixed verbs. Weinreich marks the prefixed verbs perfective, indicating that these verbs have a meaning of completion. However, Harkavy gives no indication in either the English or Hebrew gloss that these verbs are anything other than synonymous. As noted above, Weinreich systematically gives the same gloss for verbs that he considers perfective and imperfective pairs: for example, he glosses both *brotn* and *opbrotn* 'roast', noting that the latter is perfective. Harkavy, in this instance, differentiates between the two verbs by glossing *opbrotn* 'to finish roasting'. Therefore, when Harkavy makes no distinction between the prefixed and unprefixed verb it can be concluded that he considers the verbs to be synonymous.

Does *op-* not contribute any meaning at all to these verbs? The same type of question arises in English when attempting to define the aspectual differences between simple and particle verbs. In this case, the verbs *mestn* and *opmestn* can be compared to the English 'to measure' and 'to measure up (a suit)'; and the verbs *vegn* and *opvegn* can be compared to the English 'to weigh' and 'to weigh up (some apples)'. Some speakers may treat these as synonymous; others may find that the

particle verb has more of a sense of completion. The issue of synonymy of prefixed and simple verbs is taken up in the next two sections.

Whereas Katz gives only one aspectual meaning for *op-*, that of completeness, Schaechter (1951) proposes several other categories of aspectual meaning. He gives the most examples for the 'cessative' category, which would include the verbs glossed as 'finishing' and 'ceasing' in (12) above. The other categories include: the separative situation, as in *opjogn* 'to run off'; the reactive situation, as in *opgebn* 'to give back'; the isolating meaning found in *ophusten* 'to clear one's throat'; the negative effective meaning in *optrogn* 'to wear out'; the positive effective meaning of *opshmuesn* 'to agree upon' and the durative *opshlofn* 'sleep through/away'. The separative situation, discussed above, combines semantic and aspectual meanings. The reactive and negative effective, at least in the examples here, could also be argued to combine semantic content with completive aspect. The positive effective seems to be primarily semantic. The durative and isolating meanings would indeed contribute different types of aspectual meaning than completion or cessation; but the isolating meaning can be reanalyzed as separative and the durative is so rare as to be treated as an idiosyncratic lexical meaning. The prime aspectual meaning associated with Schaechter's examples of *op-* is that of cessation; his other categories involve further semantic content.

The distinction between the aspectual use of the prefixes *op-* and *oys-* is evident in Katz's (1987) definitions of the prefixes, as shown in (7) above: he defines *oys-* as 'completeness of action' as opposed to *op-* 'completion of the action'. The prefix *oys-* combines the aspectual meaning of termination with the semantic content of exhaustiveness giving a meaning of 'completeness' whereas the prefix *op-* can have a purely aspectual meaning of finishing or ceasing, here described as 'completion'. The distinction is illustrated in (13) with the verbs *opbodn* and *oysbodn*.

(13) Comparison of *oys-* and *op-*

<u>Yiddish</u>	<u>Hebrew</u>
<i>opbodn</i> 'to finish bathing'	<i>gamar lirxots</i> 'finish washing'
<i>oysbodn</i> 'to bathe out'	<i>raxots kulo</i> 'to wash everything'

U. Weinreich (1977) designates both *opbodn* and *oysbodn* as perfective counterparts to the simple verb *bodn*; all three verbs are glossed 'to wash'. Harkavy (1928) however differentiates the two: the English glosses contrast 'to finish bathing' with 'to bathe out'. This contrast is clarified with the Hebrew: *opbodn* is glossed with *gamar* 'to finish', while the gloss of *oysbodn* includes *kulo* 'everything'. Therefore *opbodn* has a meaning of simple completion, while *oysbodn* has the exhaustive meaning.

The prefix *op-* can be found both combining aspectual meaning with the semantic content of separation and with the purely aspectual meaning of completion or termination. Evidence that *op-* is very productive with the purely aspectual meaning is found in the large number of entries glossed 'finishing' or 'ceasing' found in Harkavy's dictionary that are not found in Weinreich's. Very productive prefixes do not need to have every instantiation listed in a dictionary. Weinreich doubtless omitted many verbs prefixed with *op-* whose meanings were clearly compositional and therefore comprehensible to any Yiddish speaker, such as *opdavnen* 'to finish praying'. This productive use of *op-* is used in the past as the pseudo-pluperfect, as will be discussed in Section 4.6.3.

### 1.2.2.3 *on-*

Although the prefix *on-* is frequently associated with verbs that Weinreich designates perfective, its aspectual role is much less clear than those of the two prefixes discussed above. The only gloss given for *on-* by Katz (1987:149) is 'specification of action'; unlike the prefixes *oys-* and *op-*, it is not glossed as being associated with completion. The question then arises as to what 'specification of action' means: is it an aspectual or semantic process? If aspectual, is it purely aspectual? Is the aspectual meaning of 'specification' the same as 'completion'?

The examples that Katz gives to illustrate 'specification of action' are shown in (14) below. After each of Katz's prefixed examples are listed the related simple verb and its meaning from Harkavy (1928); there is no simple verb in Harkavy corresponding to *ondrudlen*.

(14)	<i>ondrudlen</i>	'incite (someone's anger against a third party)'		
	<i>onheybn</i>	'start'	<i>heybn</i>	'raise'
	<i>onvayzn</i>	'point out'	<i>vayzn</i>	'show'
	<i>ontapn</i>	'touch'	<i>tapn</i>	'feel, grope'
	<i>onshraybn</i>	'write'	<i>shraybn</i>	'write'

In what way do these examples embody the concept 'specification of action'? One could argue that *onvayzn* 'point out' is more precise, and so more specific than *vayzn* 'show'; and that *ontapn* 'touch' is more restricted, and therefore more specified, than *tapn* 'feel, grope'. Weinreich's (1977) gloss of *onshraybn* 'write (down)', could also be considered more specified than *shraybn* 'write'. But *onheybn* 'start', while likely derived from *heybn* 'raise', is now a thoroughly distinct lexical item, and cannot be considered a specification of the simple verb's meaning. As to *ondrudlen*, neither Weinreich (1977) nor Harkavy (1928) list the verb *drudlen*; the prefixed verb can thus hardly be considered a specification of the simple verb's meaning. Of these five verbs, Weinreich designates only two perfective: *ontapn* 'touch' and *onshraybn* 'write'. These might arguably then have completive aspectual meaning. However, for the verbs in (14) as a group, the prefix *on-* cannot be shown to have any consistent aspectual or semantic meaning.

It is no easier to generalize the semantic or aspectual meaning of *on-* from the prefixed verbs that Weinreich (1977) marks as perfective; ten of the thirty-one are given in (15) below.

(15)	Aspectual prefix <i>on-</i>	
	<i>oneylen</i>	'oil, lubricate'
	<i>onbeynen</i>	'bend'
	<i>onbeyzern zix</i>	'scold'
	<i>ongisn</i>	'pour'
	<i>ondrikn</i>	'press'
	<i>onvarmenen</i>	'warm up, heat'
	<i>onveksn</i>	'wax'
	<i>onzotten</i>	'saddle'
	<i>onzamlen</i>	'gather'
	<i>onzetiken</i>	'satisfy'
	<i>onzetsn</i>	'impose'



Both Harkavy (1928) and Weinreich (1977) give essentially the same glosses for both the prefixed verbs in (15) and their simple, non-prefixed correlates. There are two exceptions: the first is the pair *onzetsn* 'to impose' and *zetsn* 'to seat, place', which like *onheybn* and *heybn* in (14) above function as separate lexical items. The second exception is *onzotlen*; while Harkavy glosses *zotlen* and *onzotlen* both as 'to saddle', Weinreich does not list the simple verb at all. This is inconsistent: since Weinreich labels *onzotlen* as perfective, one would expect him then to designate the simple verb as the imperfective correlate. This suggests that the distinction in meaning between the two forms disappeared and the prefixed verb has come to replace the simple verb. As discussed in the previous section, Weinreich regularly gives the same gloss for verbs that he considers to be perfective and imperfective counterparts; the verb marked perfective is understood as including the notion of completion. However, when Harkavy gives the same gloss for the simple and prefixed verb this indicates synonymy and suggests that the two verbs are in free variation.

Some insight into native speakers' intuitions about the difference in meaning between the simple verb and its prefixed form with *on-* can be found in the responses to question 174-130 in the *Language and Culture Atlas of Ashkenazic Jewry* (see: Nath 1988):

Vi azoy volt ir derklert dem khilek tsvishn "er hot geshribn a briv" un "er hot ongeschribn a briv"? (Oyb nit bakant, pruvn: tseykhenen/riseven a menstshele, ontseykhenen/onriseven a mentshele.)'

'How would you explain the difference between "he has geshribn [written] a letter" and he has ongeschribn a letter"? (If it is not known, try: tseykhenen/riseven [draw] a person, ontseykhenen/onriseven a person.)'

The responses of the 169 informants were coded with five symbols on the map in the Atlas corresponding to the five response types (i) - (v) shown in (16) below (Appendix 2-a). I have calculated the numbers and percentages listed in the columns on the right.

(16) Meaning of simple verb and prefixed verb with <i>on-</i>		number	%
i. synonymous		56	33.0
ii. prefixed verb completive, simple verb incompletive		77	46.0
iii. prefixed verb incompletive, simple verb completive		13	7.5
iv. prefixed verb specific, simple verb not specific		13	7.5
v. prefixed verb not specific, simple verb specific.		10	6.0
Total		169	100%

The highest proportion, just under half of the informants, explained the difference between the simple and prefixed verb in terms of completion, describing the prefixed verb as completive. This supports Weinreich's designation of *onshraybn* as perfective, and his association of perfectivity with completion. There was a small percentage, 7.5%, that also expressed the difference in terms of completion, but surprisingly associated the completed form with the simple verb. Another 7.5% of the respondents gave the meaning suggested by Katz, that of the prefixed verb being specific, while only slightly fewer assigned specificity to the simple verb. One third

of the informants considered the simple verb and the prefixed verb with *on-* to be synonymous. There were no clear trends to attribute these different interpretations to geographical dialect differences.

From the data above, it is clear that not all speakers are aware of aspectual distinctions between prefixed and simple verbs, at least with respect to the verbs suggested in the interviewer's question. The question of whether aspect is obligatorily expressed in Yiddish will be discussed further in Chapter 3. The difficulty in defining the semantic or aspectual role of certain English particles, discussed in the previous section, is also relevant here. The difference between *onzotlen* and *zotlen*, and between *onzamlen* and *zamlen* can be compared to the contrast in English between 'to saddle a horse' and 'to saddle up a horse', and between 'to gather his papers' and 'to gather up his papers'. Some speakers might consider the simple verb and particle verb to be synonymous; others might claim the particle adds a sense of completion to the activity.

There is one clear pattern of meaning discernible in Harkavy's list of verbs beginning with *on-*; as illustrated in (17a) many have the meaning 'to V much'. Schaechter (1951) also emphasizes the accumulative/quantitative meaning of this prefix. A related meaning is illustrated by the verbs, found only in Harkavy, in (17b): 'to V enough'.

- (17) a. Prefix *on-* 'to V much'
- |                      |                              |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>onbakhn</i>       | 'to bake a great deal'       |
| <i>onborghn</i>      | 'to borrow much'             |
| <i>onboyen</i>       | 'to build many houses'       |
| <i>onbideven zix</i> | 'to suffer much'             |
| <i>ondertseyln</i>   | 'to tell much'               |
| <i>ondrukn</i>       | 'to print a great quantity'  |
| <i>onhobn</i>        | 'to bear/give birth to many' |
| <i>onhandlen</i>     | 'to purchase much'           |
| <i>onhakhn</i>       | 'to talk much(slang)'        |
| <i>onheytsn</i>      | 'to heat much'               |
| <i>onveynen zix</i>  | 'to weep much'               |
| <i>onzogn</i>        | 'to tell much'               |
- b. Prefix *on-* 'to V enough'
- |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| <i>onarbetn</i>     | 'to prepare enough' |
| <i>onhakhn</i>      | 'to cut enough'     |
| <i>onhulien zix</i> | 'to reveal enough'  |

This quantitative meaning of the prefix *on-* is not aspectual; it does not relate in any way to the internal temporal structure of the event. While 'baking a great deal' may imply that a certain amount of time was spent baking, it does not specify whether the baking is being viewed as a durative process or a completed event. Weinreich designates none of the verbs in (17a) as perfective, indicating that he views none of them as completive. The association of this quantitative meaning of *on-* with Slavic prefixes is discussed in Section 1.2.3 below.

The aspectual meaning of *on-* is neither as clear nor as consistent as those associated with *op-* or *oys-*. While on the one hand a large number of Yiddish speakers associate *on-* with completive meaning, on the other hand a significant number of speakers treat the prefixed and simple verbs as synonymous. Harkavy gives no aspectual gloss for any of the verbs prefixed in *on-* whereas he was quite

specific for the aspectual meanings of *op-* and *oys-*. In those cases where it is interpreted as contributing completion it is apparently semantically empty, since no further semantic information is associated with it.

#### 1.2.2.4 *far-*

Unlike the three prefixes discussed above, *far-* is an inseparable prefix, and as such it might be expected to have a more opaque meaning than the separable prefixes. However, it patterns very much like *on-* in the type of aspectual and semantic content it exhibits.

Katz (1987:143) gives the following general meaning for *far-*: "completeness of action; initiation of a change in circumstances; debasement of the value or success of the action." With respect to completeness of action, a list of ten of the verbs prefixed with *far-* that Weinreich designates as perfective is given in (18) below.

(18a)	Aspectual prefix <i>far-</i>	
	<i>farblokirn</i>	'block'
	<i>farblendn</i>	'blind, dazzle'
	<i>fardreyen</i>	'turn; garble, twist'
	<i>farzeymen</i>	'hem'
	<i>farzeyen</i>	'sow'
	<i>farkamen</i>	'comb'
	<i>farminern</i>	'diminish'
	<i>farmishn</i>	'mix; concoct, confuse'
	<i>farmern</i>	'multiply'
	<i>farmerezshen</i>	'darn'

Just as with *on-*, a survey of prefixed verbs with *far-* does not readily reveal a consistent aspectual meaning. Both Weinreich and Harkavy give the same glosses for the simple and the prefixed verbs with *far-*. As was noted above, this suggests that Harkavy considers the simple and prefixed verbs to be synonymous, whereas Weinreich ascribes a completive meaning to the prefixed form. Wexler (1964) notes that the verbs *farblaybn* 'to stay (to the end)' and *blaybn* 'to remain' appear to be in free variation.

In an informal survey of several informants I found a contrast of literal and metaphorical meanings in the pairs of simple verbs and verbs prefixed with *far-* in the pairs *dreyen/fardreyen*, *mishn/farmishn*, *blendn/farblendn*. These metaphorical meanings are given as secondary glosses in the dictionary, but for these speakers they were primary. The distinction between simple and prefixed verbs was not understood as aspectual.

The prefix *far-* also has a causative function, in creating verbs from adjectives, so that there are many pairs like *bloy* 'blue' and *farbloyen* 'to make something blue', or *nedixt* 'thick, dense' and *farnedixtern* 'to thicken, condense'. This may have led to the creation of some synonymous simple and prefixed verbs. For example *mer* 'more' could have given rise to the verb *farmern* 'to make more, to multiply' which exists alongside the verb *mern* 'to multiply'; *farmern* did not necessarily arise as the perfective completive correlate to the simple verb.

Schachter (1951:104) includes this causative meaning, which he describes as resultative, as one of six aspectual meanings of the prefix *far-*. As in the case of *farbloyen* 'to make something blue' the causative use of *far-* generally changes an

adjective to a verb. While the process described by the verb 'to make something blue' clearly has an inherent endpoint, the moment when the item turns blue, this does not make the prefixation aspectual. Aspectual prefixes relate a simple verb to its prefixed form; an aspectual prefix specifies in some way the internal temporal structure of the event described by the root verb. The causative prefixation of *far-* does not change the inherent temporal structure of a verb, because it is not affixed to a verb, it is affixed to an adjective. It therefore cannot be considered to be aspectual prefixation in the way that it is defined here.

Similarly, Schaechter's category of 'transgressive' for which he gives the example *farfedern* 'to fill or cover with feathers', should be considered a semantic rather than an aspectual function of prefixation. In this case the prefixed verb has been formed from the noun *feder* 'feather'.

Schaechter's category of 'ingressive' can more readily be described as aspectual. This category is related to Katz's second meaning of *far-* "initiation of a change in circumstances" and can be described as initiative. Some examples of prefixed verbs in *far-* with initiative meaning are given in (19) below.

(19) Initiative meaning of *far-*

<i>farrayxern</i>	'begin to smoke'
<i>farglusten zix</i>	'get a desire for'
<i>farinteresirn zix</i>	'take an interest in'
<i>fartraxtn zix</i>	'sink into thought'

Weinreich (1977) designates one of these, *farinteresirn zix* 'take an interest in', as perfective; this is puzzling given Weinreich's definition of perfective as completive. Schaechter (1986) also designates *farglusten zix* 'get a desire for' and *farrayxern* 'begin to smoke' as perfective; this however is consistent with Schaechter's definition of perfective which includes punctual inchoative forms, as is discussed in section 2.4.1.2.

Schaechter (1951) attributes two other aspectual meanings to *far-*, that of cessative, which includes some of those verbs given in (18) above, and the 'transpassitive' which is unusual for the aspectual prefixes in that it involves duration. Schaechter's example of 'transpassitive' is *zix farzitsn* 'to linger', as in 'the guests lingered until late'; the related simple verb is *zitsn* 'to sit'. As with *opshlofn* this durational meaning of *far-* is so rare that it can be treated as a lexical peculiarity.

The prefix *far-*, then, is primarily associated with two types of aspectual information, completive and initiative. Its use as a completive aspectual marker is closer to that of *on-* than to *op-* and *oys-*, in that linguists and speakers are not unanimous about its completive role. Weinreich, Katz, and Schaechter (1951) all ascribe some cessative meaning to *far-*, but for Harkavy the simple and prefixed verbs are apparently synonymous, and Schaechter (1986) includes no verbs prefixed with *far-* in his chart of completive perfective verbs. The initiative function of *far-* is more clearly attested. These aspectual functions of *far-* are not associated with other semantic information and so *far-* can be considered an empty prefix for these uses. Szulmajster-Celnikier (1986:105) singles out *far-* as the predominant marker of aspect in Yiddish, but this claim is not borne out by the evidence of the four prefixes that are examined here.

### 1.2.2.5 Overview of Aspectual Prefixes

At the introduction to this section four possible patterns of aspectual expression by these four prefixes were proposed:

1. the four prefixes are semantically empty and all contribute the same aspectual information, that of completion;
2. the four prefixes are semantically empty but do not all contribute the same aspectual information;
3. the prefixes are not all semantically empty but all contribute the same aspectual information, that of completion;
4. the prefixes are not all semantically empty and do not all contribute the same aspectual information.

It should be restated that none of these prefixes is truly semantically empty: there is no Yiddish affix whose sole function is to express aspect. The question is whether the prefixes are semantically empty at the times when they function aspectually.

The evidence shows that the fourth pattern best describes the prefixes discussed. The prefixes are not all semantically empty when functioning aspectually: for example, *oys-* carries the semantic content of exhaustiveness. Further they do not all contribute the same aspectual information: although all of the prefixes apparently can contribute completive aspectual information, *far-* has instances of initiative as well as completive meaning. The prefix *op-* is very productive in expressing termination; the prefix *oys-* is productive in expressing completeness, that is, a combination of completion and exhaustiveness. These are only four of the nineteen prefixes to which Weinreich (1977) attributes aspectual properties, but their profile indicates clearly that Yiddish aspectual prefixes do not form a homogenous group. This must be borne in mind when analyzing generalizations about the role of Yiddish prefixes in expressing aspect.

### 1.2.3 Slavic Influence

It has been noted by several authors (Wexler 1964, Baviskar 1974, Szulmajster-Celnikier 1986, Stankiewicz 1993) that although the Yiddish verbal prefixes are of Germanic origin, they have developed an aspectual function beyond that which is found in standard German, and many compound forms have arisen in Yiddish that have no Germanic counterparts. This has primarily been attributed to the influence of Slavic aspectual prefixes. Baviskar (1974) argues that the Yiddish prefix *op-*, originally derived from the German *ab-*, came to be identified with the Polish prefix *od-*. The possibility of such identification is demonstrated in (20): the Yiddish *oprotn* is clearly based upon the German *abraten*; however for Yiddish speakers living in Polish speaking territory, rather than German speaking lands, an identification would be made with the very similar form *odradzac*, and the prefix *op-* would come to be identified with the Polish *od-*.

(20)	German:	<i>abratén</i>	'dissuade'
	Yiddish:	<i>oprotn</i>	'dissuade'
	Polish:	<i>odradzac'</i>	'dissuade'

Baviskar outlines three results of identifying the Yiddish *op-* with the Polish *od-*, as illustrated in (21) - (23). First, the Yiddish prefix *op-* came to replace other Germanic prefixes in Germanic compounds, based on Polish models. This is illustrated in (21), where the German prefix *aus-* which has a Yiddish reflex *oys-* has been replaced with *op-* in Yiddish, apparently based on the model of the Polish word prefixed with *od-*.

(21)	German:	<i>ausruhen</i>	'rest'
	Yiddish:	<i>opruen</i>	'rest'
	Polish:	<i>odpoczac'</i>	'rest'

Secondly, new semantic functions came to be attributed to the Yiddish verbs prefixed in *op-* based on the similar Polish forms. This is illustrated in (22) where the Yiddish compound has the same form as the Germanic compound but the same meaning as the Polish compound in *od-*.

(22)	German:	<i>abdanken</i>	'renounce'
	Yiddish:	<i>opdanken</i>	'thank, reciprocate'
	Polish:	<i>odwdzieczac'</i>	'thank, reciprocate'

Thirdly, new compounds with *op-* were formed in Yiddish that have no German parallels. Baviskar (1974) gives the example in (23). The Yiddish verb *entfern* 'answer' is cognate with the German verb *antworten*. However there is no prefixed form of *antworten* in Standard German that corresponds to the Yiddish *opentfern*; the Yiddish form, Baviskar claims, has been formed on the model of the Polish prefixed verb in *od-*.

(23)	German:	<i>antworten</i>	'answer'
	Yiddish:	<i>opentfern</i>	'respond, retort'
	Polish:	<i>odpowiadac'</i>	'respond'

The claim that *op-* has replaced other Germanic prefixes in Yiddish is supported by a comparison of verbs prefixed in *op-* with their glosses in a Yiddish-German dictionary (Lötzsch 1992). Out of 63 Yiddish verbs prefixed with *op-* that have a cognate German stem, 14 are glossed with simple verbs, 11 are glossed with verbs prefixed with the cognate prefix *ab-*, and the rest, the majority, are glossed with verbs with prefixes other than *ab-*. There are 11 prefixes other than *ab-* in the glosses, including, in descending order of frequency: *ver-*, *zurück-*, *auf-*, *weg-*, *er-*, *beseite-*, *ent-*, and *aus-*. The variety of prefixes in the German glosses supports the claim that the Yiddish prefix *op-* has come to replace many Germanic prefixes besides the cognate *ab-*. However, it is less evident that the expanded function of *op-* is only or primarily a result of Slavic influence. The Yiddish example in (21) *opruen* 'rest' could also be glossed with the English particle verb 'rest up'. The English uses 'up' which is cognate to the Yiddish *op-* rather than 'out' as in '\*rest out' which would be cognate to the German *aus-*. Therefore, the Yiddish use of *op-* in *opruen* has a Germanic correlate in the English form, and is not necessarily the result of Slavic influence. Similarly, the Yiddish verb in (23) *opentfern* 'respond,

retort' could be glossed with the English cognate form 'answer up'; there is no need to propose Slavic influence for this form.

Wexler (1964) also claims that certain Yiddish prefixes came to be identified with Slavic prefixes and then took on some of the Slavic functions. Like Baviskar (1974) he claims that the Yiddish prefix *op-* was identified with a Slavic prefix which he identifies as the Polish prefix *o(d)-*, the Belorussian *ad(a)-*, the Ukrainian *vid(i)-*, and the Russian *ot(o)-*. He further identifies the Yiddish prefix *far-* with the Slavic prefix *za-*, and the Yiddish *on-* with the Slavic *na-*.

It has been recognized that the Germanic prefix *ver-*, which is cognate with the Yiddish *far-*, has some aspectual force, and that there are parallels between Yiddish and German simple and prefixed verbs with aspectual meaning. This is illustrated in (24a) with examples from Szulmajster-Celnikier (1986) and in (24b) with examples from Wexler (1964).

- (24) a. Yiddish: *blien* 'bloom'      *farblien* 'fade'  
           German: *blühen* 'bloom'      *verblühen* 'fade'
- b. Yiddish: *farbeygn* 'to bend (out)'      *farblaybn* 'to remain (to the end)'  
           German: *verbiegen* 'to bend'      *verbleiben* 'to remain, stay'

Although some of the aspectual function of *far-* can be shown to be of Germanic origin, there is evidence that its function has extended on account of Slavic influence. Szulmajster-Celnikier (1986) claims that there are Yiddish verbs that undergo prefixation with *far-* in the same manner as Slavic counterparts prefixed with *za-* and in doing so produce prefixed forms unattested in German. Examples are given in (25).

- (25) Yiddish: *kamen*      *farkamen*      'to comb'  
       Russian: *cesat'*      *zacesat'*      'to comb'
- Yiddish: *xapn*      *farxapn*      'to grab'  
       Russian: *khapc'*      *zakhapac'*      'to grab'

The identification of the Yiddish prefix *far-* with the Slavic *za-* is evident in the prefixed forms of the verb *tshepen* 'to touch', which is itself a Slavic loan. As shown in (26) below, prefixed forms with both the Germanic prefix *far-* and the Slavic loan *za-* are found in Yiddish.

- (26) *tshepen*      'to touch'  
       *fartshepen*      'to provoke, hook'  
       *zatshepen*      'to provoke'

Wexler (1964) claims that some prefixed forms based on Slavic models are accepted by speakers of 'Slavicized' Yiddish but not by speakers of 'non-Slavicized' Yiddish. His arguments are based on the comparison of grammaticality judgments of two 'Slavicized' Yiddish speakers born in the Ukraine, with two 'non-Slavicized' speakers, one born in New York, the other in Galicia (Austria-Hungary). Wexler claims that the 'Slavicized' speakers accepted the prefixed forms in (27), while the 'non-Slavicized' speakers rejected them. These verbs, however, are standard enough that both U. Weinreich (1977) and Harkavy (1928) include them in their dictionaries.

(27)	<i>gletn</i>	<i>fargletn</i>	'to smoothe over, iron down'
	<i>heylikn</i>	<i>farheylikn</i>	'to sanctify, consecrate'
	<i>shilt n</i>	<i>farshilt n</i>	'to curse, damn'

Wexler further claims that the 'Slavicized' Yiddish speakers accepted the prefixed forms with *on-*, modeled on the Slavic prefix *na-* in (28), while the 'non-Slavicized' speakers didn't. Again, as was discussed above in section 1.2.2.3, this lexical function of *on-* is broadly attested in Harkavy (1928).

(28)	Polish:	<i>piec</i>	'to bake'	<i>napiec</i>	'to bake a lot'
	Yiddish:	<i>bakn</i>	'to bake'	<i>onbakn</i>	'to bake a quantity of'
		<i>ganvenen</i>	'to steal'	<i>onganvenen</i>	'to amass by theft'

The discussion above links the Yiddish prefixes *op-*, *far-* and *on-* with Slavic counterparts; Stankiewicz (1993) argues that the Yiddish prefix *oys-* has come to be identified with the Polish prefix *wy-*. Thus, the four Yiddish prefixes identified here as having taken on Slavic functions, *oys-*, *far-*, *op-*, and *on-*, are the same four prefixes most frequently cited as perfective, as discussed in the previous sections. However, despite the apparent parallels, it cannot simply be concluded that Slavic influence on these Yiddish prefixes has resulted in their having a perfective function.

Szulmajster-Celnikier (1986) argues that the aspectual nature of Yiddish prefixes should not be attributed solely to Slavic contact because Yiddish, like other Judeo languages, tends to be conservative and so preserves archaic traits. She claims that Medieval German had aspectual oppositions and that Yiddish, unlike Modern German, has retained these oppositions. Baviskar (1974) also states that older forms of German such as Gothic, Old High German, and Old Saxon had formal verbal aspect. The claim, then, is that the verbal aspect present in older forms of German has been retained in Yiddish and reinforced through contact with Slavic languages that have similar aspectual contrasts. Wexler (1964: 90) claims that, as a result of Slavic influence, earlier Germanic meanings of the prefix *far-*, such as 'utter consumption' or 'reversal', have "faded into perfective force". There is not, however, agreement on the perfectiveness of these verbs. Of the three Yiddish verbs cited as cognates of German aspectually prefixed verbs in (24) above, only *farbeygn* 'to bend (out)' is designated perfective by Weinreich (1977).

Further, it should not be assumed that Slavic influence on Yiddish verbs is always aspectual. Of the verbs demonstrated above to have Slavic parallels, only a minority are considered to show perfective aspect by Weinreich (1977), as illustrated in (29) below.

(29)	a.	Slavic influenced verbs marked perfective	
		<i>opdanken</i>	'thank'
		<i>farkamen</i>	'to comb'
		<i>farshilt n</i>	'to curse, damn'



b.	Slavic influenced verbs not marked perfective	
	<i>oprotn</i>	'dissuade'
	<i>opruen</i>	'rest'
	<i>opentfern</i>	'respond, retort'
	<i>farxapn</i>	'to grab'
	<i>fartshepen</i>	'to provoke, hook'
	<i>fargletn</i>	'to smoothe over, iron down'
	<i>farheylikn</i>	'to sanctify, consecrate'
	<i>onbakn</i>	'to bake a quantity of'

Weinreich's designations of perfectivity are not the only measure of whether or not a prefix has aspectual meaning, however they indicate here that the aspectual nature of these prefixes cannot be assumed. For example, the quantitative meaning of *on-* as in *onbakn* 'to bake a quantity of' in (29b) was argued in section 1.2.2.3 to be semantic only. If a prefix has an aspectual function in a Slavic language it does not necessarily mean that the Yiddish correlate of that prefix has an aspectual function in Yiddish. While it is evident that there has been Slavic influence on the meaning of certain Yiddish prefixes, it is not at all clear what this influence has been on the aspectual function of these prefixes. The model of Slavic aspect and the function of prefixes within that model have been very important to analyses of Yiddish aspect. The Slavic aspectual system is described in Chapter 2; the issue of whether Slavic and Yiddish verbal prefixes play the same aspectual roles is addressed in Chapter 3.

### 1.3 Stem Construction

#### 1.3.1 Form

The stem construction is, after prefixation, the Yiddish construction most frequently discussed with respect to aspect. It is composed of three elements: an inflected form of either the verb *gebn* 'give' or *tun/ton* 'do'; the indefinite determiner *a*; and an invariant verb stem. These three elements are illustrated in the imperative sentences in (30).

- |      |    |                  |    |                 |
|------|----|------------------|----|-----------------|
| (30) | a. | <i>gib a kuk</i> | b. | <i>tu a kuk</i> |
|      |    | give a look      |    | do a look       |
|      |    | 'take a look!'   |    | 'take a look!'  |

The inflected verbs *gib* and *tu* in the examples above are the imperative forms of the verbs *gebn* and *tun*; these two verbs are used interchangeably in the stem construction with no change in meaning. The invariant verb stem in the sentences in (30) is *kuk* from the verb *kukn* 'to look'.

The sentences in (31) and (32) show further examples of the stem construction, with the verb stems derived from a variety of verbs, as shown in the square brackets. In the examples in (31) the verb stems are derived from simple verbs, while the stems in (32) are derived from verbs with separable prefixes and from reflexive verbs.

- (31) a. *umgerixt hot der eydem ir gegeben a patsh* [patshn 'to slap']  
 unexpectedly has the son-in-law her given a slap  
 'the son-in-law unexpectedly slapped her'
- b. *der alter hot gegeben a kush dem eynikl* [kushn 'to kiss']  
 the elder has given a kiss to the grandchild  
 'the elder gave his grandchild a kiss'
- c. *zi hot an efn geton di oygn* [efenen 'to open']  
 she has an open done the eyes  
 'she opened her eyes'
- d. *er hot im a freg gegeben* [fregn 'to ask']  
 he has him an ask given  
 'he asked him'
- e. *flora hot plutsem a gey geton af foroys* [geyn 'to go']  
 Flora has suddenly a go done forward  
 'Flora suddenly marched forward'
- (32) a. *er git a kum arayn* [araynkumen 'to come in']  
 he gives a come in  
 'he comes in suddenly'
- b. *er tu a for avek* [avekfor 'to depart']  
 he does a travel away  
 'he departs at once'
- c. *Fayvl hot zix a heyb gegeben fun zayn benkl* [heybn zix 'to rise']  
 Fayvl has himself a heave given from his chair  
 'Fayvl suddenly got up from his chair'
- d. *hot zix der bal-shem a beyzer geton* [beyzern zix 'to be angry']  
 has himself the Bal-Shem an angry done  
 'then the Bal-Shem got angry'

### 1.3.2 Meaning

The stem construction is known by other names: Schaechter (1986) calls it the 'moment construction', Aronson (1985) the 'semelfactive', and Birnbaum (1979) the 'singulative aspect'. While the name 'stem construction' describes a morphosyntactic property of the construction in that it includes a verb stem, the other names point to its aspectual properties. The terms 'semelfactive' and 'singulative' reflect the characteristic of singularity, the isolation of one single occurrence of the action. The term 'moment construction' focusses more on the brief nature of the event. Diesing (1998) describes the stem construction as perfectivizing and minimizing. The stem construction is also associated with meanings of abruptness, quickness, surprise, and humour. The humour frequently associated with the stem construction is contextual and arises from the abrupt, sudden or diminutive meaning. The stylistic use of the stem construction is discussed briefly in Section 3.3.2.

i. *Aktisolative Aktionsart* - This isolates a single action from a verb that usually implies a series of actions, as shown in (33).

- (37) a. *gib an es op*  
give an eat up  
'finish eating quickly!'
- b. *gib a vash iber*  
give a wash over  
'wash up quickly!'

The term 'aktionsart' recurs frequently in Schaechter's analysis; the various meanings contributed by the stem construction are described as 'aktionsarts' rather than 'aspects'. There has been a good deal of confusion and overlap in the use of these two terms (see Binnick 1991: 139-149). Aktionsart, literally 'kind of action', is generally defined more broadly than aspect and includes nontemporal as well as temporal manners of action, such as intensity. Chatterjee (1988:22) defines aktionsart as "any adverbial alteration of the meaning of a verbal form that adds a nuance while also affecting the punctual vs. linear [temporal] qualities inherent in the unaltered form". Chatterjee's 'added nuances' can be equated to additional semantic information beyond the purely aspectual. Aspect and aktionsart are often distinguished in terms of a 'grammatical versus lexical' opposition, with aspect considered to be a 'grammatical' category, and aktionsart, 'lexical'. For example, Bybee (1985:21) describes aktionsarten as "aspectual distinctions expressed lexically". Definitions of 'grammatical' and 'lexical' expressions of aspect and the question of whether Yiddish aspectual constructions should be considered 'grammatical' or 'lexical' are discussed fully in Chapter 3.

The stem construction is described above as having six aktionsarten. In a later text, Schaechter (1986) divides the stem construction (or 'moment construction') into two main categories, the *eynmoliker tushteyger* 'one-time aktionsart' and the *opgexapter tushteyger* 'instantaneous aktionsart'. The 'one-time aktionsart' is equivalent to the *aktisolative aktionsart* described in (i.) above and illustrated in (31a), (31b) and (33): when a verb that refers to a series of actions is put in the stem construction it is interpreted as a single event. The second category, the 'instantaneous aktionsart' apparently incorporates the five remaining earlier categories. Schaechter illustrates this category with verbs with separable prefixes; in the stem construction the event or activity is interpreted as occurring very quickly, as in (32a), (32b), (37) and (38) below.

- (38) *er fleg zix gebn a tu on* [onten zix 'to dress oneself']  
 he used to self give a pull on  
 'he would get dressed in a jiffy'

The stem construction is considered aspectual because the isolating, inchoative, diminutive and instantaneous meanings of the stem construction all relate to the temporal structure of the verb involved. The meanings of surprise, intensity and humour arise from the dramatic shortening of the duration of the event, but are not in themselves aspectual; they should rather be considered semantic correlates of the aspectual information. It will be argued in Section 4.4 that the proposed temporal structure of the stem construction can account for its different meanings.

The stem construction and the aspectual prefixes do not contribute the same type of aspectual information; this is shown by the fact that aspectually prefixed verbs are frequently found in the stem construction. The sentence in (37a) above shows the aspectually prefixed verb *openen* 'to eat up' in the stem construction. The prefix *op-* adds a sense of exhaustiveness and completion to the simple verb *esn* 'eat' while the stem construction shrinks the duration of the event and so contributes the meaning of haste. The interaction of the stem construction and aspectually prefixed verbs is discussed further in Chapters 3 and 4.

### 1.3.3 Syntax

The word order of the stem construction shows some peculiarities which distinguish it from standard word order. The standard word order for a ditransitive verb is shown in (39a) - (39c) below. In the present tense, the direct object follows the inflected verb, as shown in sentence (39a); in the past, the direct object follows both the inflected verb and the past participle, illustrated in (39b). The second object, when it is a full noun phrase, follows the direct object, as in (39a) and (39b); when it is a pronoun, it immediately follows the inflected verb, as shown in (39c).

- (39) a. *er git a bux dem eynikl*  
 he gives a book the grandchild  
 'he gives the grandchild a book'
- b. *er hot gegeben a bux dem eynikl*  
 he has given a book the grandchild  
 'he gave the grandchild a book'
- c. *er hot im gegeben a bux*  
 he has him given a book  
 'he gave him a book'

It is possible to find apparent stem constructions with this word order, as illustrated in (40). Here the stem *a kush* is in the same position as the direct object in the sentences in (39) above.

- (40) a. *er git a kush dem eynikl*  
 he gives a kiss the grandchild  
 'he gives the grandchild a kiss'
- b. *er hot gegeben a kush dem eynikl*  
 he has given a kiss the grandchild  
 'he gave the grandchild a kiss'

However this is not the preferred word order for the stem construction. As noted by Taube (1987), the unmarked order for the stem construction looks the same as the sentences illustrated above in the present, but in the past, the verb stem precedes the past participle rather than following it. The position of the second object is not remarkable in the stem construction: as in (39) above, when it is a full NP it follows the past participle and as a pronoun it immediately follows the finite verb. This order can be seen in sentences (31c) - (31e), and (32c) - (32d), repeated as (41a) - (41e) below. In each case, the verb stem precedes the past participle, the full NP object follows the past participle, as seen with *di oygn* in (41a), and the pronoun object precedes the stem, as shown with *im* in (41b).

- (41) a. *zi hot an efn geton di oygn*  
 she has an open done the eyes  
 'she opened her eyes'
- b. *er hot im a freg gegeben*  
 he has him an ask given  
 'he asked him'

- c. *flora hot plutsem a gey geton af foroys*  
Flora has suddenly a go done forward  
'Flora suddenly marched forward'
- d. *Fayvl hot zix a heyb gegeben fun zayn benkl*  
Fayvl has himself a heave given from his chair  
'Fayvl suddenly got up from his chair'
- e. *hot zix der bal-shem a beyzer geton*  
has himself the Bal-Shem an angry done  
'then the Bal-Shem got angry'

The implications of this word order for the syntactic structure of the stem construction are discussed in Chapter 6.

#### 1.3.4 Yiddish Innovation

The Yiddish stem construction clearly has developed from a Germanic model. English speakers are familiar with English expressions with a similar construction, such as: 'give the bushes a trim', 'give his face a slap', 'give your mother a kiss', 'give the garden a water', and 'give the pants a press'. The English construction consists of a light verb 'give' followed by two complements: a nominal derived from a transitive verb and preceded by the indefinite article 'a', and a recipient or patient of the action. Baviskar (1974:9) gives the sentence in (42) as an example of the parallel construction in German. As in Yiddish, the construction in German can indicate suddenness, or the single occurrence of an action.

- (42) *er hat mir einen Stoss gegeben*  
he has me a push given  
'he gave me a push'

Baviskar (1974:9) notes that the stem construction is more limited in German than in Yiddish because in German there is no productive morphological process for forming the stems. This is the prime difference between the Yiddish stem construction and the Germanic models, and accounts for the much greater range in use of the Yiddish construction. The English and German models rely on the availability of deverbal nouns to form the stems; Yiddish can productively create stems from almost any verb. Therefore, in a typical Germanic construction, as in the English example 'give the bushes a trim', the element following the indefinite article is a deverbal noun that has independent status as a nominal in the language. This is not necessarily the case in Yiddish: although some verb stems derived from simple verbs have the same form as deverbal nominals, most do not have equivalent nominal forms.

The stems found in sentences (31a), (31b) and (36) repeated below as (43a) - (43c) are examples of stems with equivalent nominal forms.

- (43) a. *umgerixt hot der eydem ir gegeben a patsh* [patshn 'to slap']  
unexpectedly has the son-in-law her given a slap  
'the son-in-law unexpectedly slapped her'

- b. *der alter hot gegeben a kush dem eynikl* [kushn 'to kiss']  
 the elder has given a kiss to the grandchild  
 'the elder gave his grandchild a kiss'
- c. *a kuk ton* [kukn 'to look']  
 a look do  
 'take a little look'

The stems *patsh*, *kush* and *kuk*, derived from the verbs *kukn* 'to look', *patshn* 'to slap', and *kushn* 'to kiss', are all found elsewhere as nouns: *der kuk* 'the look', *der patsh* 'the slap', and *der kush* 'the kiss'. These equivalent forms complicate the analysis of the stem construction, since as nominals they can participate in the double object construction and so display word order, modification by adjectives and diminution characteristic of nominals but not of verb stems (Gold 1994a).

True stems in the Yiddish stem construction are verbal; they are not equivalent to deverbal nouns. The stems derived from the simple verbs in examples (41c) and (41e), *efen*, and *gey*, are not used elsewhere as nominals: \**der efen*, \**der gey*. Nouns related to each of the verbs, *efenen* 'to open', and *geyn* 'to go/walk', do exist, but they are different from the stems: *di efenung* 'the opening', and *der gang* 'the walk'.

Further, as noted by Aronson (1985) none of the stems from verbs with separable prefixes exist elsewhere as nouns. Sentences (32a) and (32b), which contain stems formed from verbs with separable prefixes, are repeated below as (44a) and (44b) with the verb stem underlined.

- (44) a. *er git a kum arayn* [araynkumen 'to come in']  
 he gives a come in  
 'he comes in suddenly'
- b. *er tu a for avek* [avekforn 'to depart']  
 he does a travel away  
 'he departs at once'

The verb stem in these examples is composed of two separate elements, one verbal and one adverbial, each receiving its own stress: *kúm arayn* 'come in', *fór avek* 'travel away'. By contrast, the nouns that are derived from these verbs always place the adverbial element before the verbal element, with a single primary stress on the prefix. For example, in contrast to the verb stem in (32b) *fór avek*, the noun derived from *avekforn* 'to depart' is *der avekfór* 'departure', literally 'away travel'. Thus stems formed from verbs with separable prefixes have very different forms from derived nouns and are not found in any other context as nouns.

The Yiddish stem constructions with separably prefixed verbs can be compared to English light verb constructions with particle verbs. English particle verbs share some properties with Yiddish separably prefixed verbs. The sentences in (45a) indicate that the light verb construction can be formed with the verb 'toss'. However, the sentences in (45b) show that a light verb construction cannot be formed with the English particle verb 'toss away'. In contrast, it was seen above in (44b) that it is grammatical in Yiddish to form the stem construction with the prefixed verb *avekforn* 'to travel away, to depart'. This illustrates a way in which the Yiddish stem construction has extended beyond other Germanic models.

- (45) a. He tossed the salad.      He gave the salad a toss.  
       b. He tossed the salad away.    \*He gave the salad a toss away.

Yiddish is also able to form verb stems from reflexive verbs, as was seen in examples (32c) and (32d), repeated below as (46).

- (46) a. *Fayvl hot zix a heyb gegeben fun zayn benkl* [heybn zix 'to rise']  
       Fayvl has himself a heave given from his chair  
       'Fayvl suddenly got up from his chair'  
       b. *hot zix der bal-shem a beyzer geton* [beyzern zix 'to be angry']  
       has himself the Bal-Shem an angry done  
       'then the Bal-Shem got angry'

Reflexive verbs present a more complicated situation in trying to determine whether the stem is nominal or verbal. Like simple verbs, some reflexive verbs appear to have corresponding deverbal nouns, while others do not. For example, while there is no noun \**der heyb* corresponding to the verb stem from *heyben zix* in (46a), there is a noun *der beyzer* 'anger' like the verb stem derived from *beyzern zix* 'be angry', in (46b).

However, it can be shown that even though the noun *der beyzer* exists, it has not been lexically inserted as an argument of *tun* in (46b) independently of the reflexive pronoun *zix*. If it were, the reflexive pronoun could be replaced with any other noun or pronoun with the meaning that the Bal-Shem caused someone else to be angry. This substitution, however, is not possible.

Further, if *beyzer* were inserted as a stem independently of *zix*, it would have to be derived from a transitive verb 'to anger'. However, there is no transitive verb \**beyzern* 'to anger' from which to derive the verb stem *beyzer*; the verbs *tsebeyzern* or *derbeyzern* must be used in transitive sentences. Thus a stem construction expressing 'to anger' would be formed from one of these two verbs, not from \**beyzern*. Since *beyzer* is the form used in the stem construction, and since it is always accompanied by *zix*, it must be concluded that the stem construction in (45b) is not formed from the noun *der beyzer* and a separate reflexive pronoun *zix* but is based upon the verb stem *beyzer zix* formed from the reflexive verb *beyzern zix*.

The fact that Yiddish can form stems from reflexive verbs and from verbs with separable prefixes supports the claim that Yiddish stems are verbal rather than nominal. The verbal nature of the stems is discussed further in Section 2.3.2.2 with respect to Aronson's (1985) argument that the stem construction is a grammatical as opposed to lexical expression of aspect.

In section 1.2.3 above, data was presented that has been used to argue that use of aspectual prefixes in Yiddish has extended beyond the Germanic model as the result of influence from similar Slavic aspectual prefixes. Some authors claim that the development of the Yiddish stem construction beyond the Germanic model is also due to the influence of Slavic aspect. There are two types of arguments given for this claim. The first rests on the difference between Western and Eastern Yiddish. It has been claimed that there is no parallel development of the stem construction in Western Yiddish, and this is considered evidence enough that the development in Eastern Yiddish resulted from Slavic contact (M. Weinreich 1973, Bihari 1969, Taube 1987). This reasoning is illustrated in the quote in (47).



- (47) "There is no question that the drive to grammaticalize the stem construction came from the Slavic, since no such development ever occurred in Western Yiddish (cf. M. Weinreich 1973, vol.2, 186-87) . . . (Taube 1987:21)

I would argue that this reasoning is faulty: it is not sufficient to show that there has been a different development of a construction in Eastern Yiddish than in Western Yiddish in order to conclude that the difference is a result of Slavic influence. A language can change for internally motivated reasons as well as from external influences and this argument does not consider the possibility of internal language development.

The other argument for Slavic influence rests on the aspectual nature of the stem construction. This argument for Slavic influence is based on the widely held analysis that Slavic languages have a grammatical system of aspect whereas Germanic languages do not. Therefore, the reasoning goes, if an aspectual construction in Yiddish has developed beyond the Germanic model, it must be as a result of the influence of Slavic aspect. Examples of this type of argument are given in (48) and (49) below.

- (48) "It is likely that here [the stem construction] Yiddish was affected by the widespread Slavic category of aspect". (Max Weinreich 1980:33)
- (49) The stem construction, together with other formal means of non-Slavic origin which serve in Yiddish to express aspect, may thus properly be characterized as (M. Weinreich 1973, vol.2, 186-87): "constructed *à la Slav* from German-component material." (Taube 1987:21)

However, it is not at all clear that the Slavic semelfactive has influenced the function of the stem construction. Stankiewicz (1993) claims that there is a semantic parallel between the Yiddish stem construction and Slavic semelfactives. However, Aronson (1985) points out that the Slavic semelfactive construction, formed by nasal infixation, is more limited in its range of meaning and productivity than the Yiddish stem construction. Aronson describes the formation of the Russian semelfactive as infixation of *-nut*' and gives the examples shown in (50).

- (50) Russian semelfactive
- |                 |           |                  |                  |
|-----------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| <i>stucat'</i>  | 'knock'   | <i>stuknut'</i>  | 'give a knock'   |
| <i>svistet'</i> | 'whistle' | <i>svistnut'</i> | 'give a whistle' |

Aronson further points out that the semantics of the Slavic semelfactive is much more restricted than that found in Yiddish in that of the two categories of meaning attributed to the Yiddish stem construction, only the category of 'one-time' aktionsart could be ascribed to the Slavic, as it is limited to multi-phasal verbs. Thus the extension of use and meaning of the Yiddish stem construction could not be attributed to the influence of the Slavic semelfactive since the Yiddish construction has a wider semantic usage than the Slavic.

The morphological process of affixation shown in (47) differs greatly from the multiword stem construction. Ewa Geller (p.c.) claims, however, that there is a formal parallel between the Yiddish stem construction and Polish constructions with the verbs meaning 'to do', 'to make' and 'to catch'. However, according to Geller, the Polish construction is more limited than the Yiddish in that it is restricted to verbs of motion. Therefore, even with a possible Slavic structural model for the

stem construction there is no evidence that the expansion of the Yiddish stem construction is due to Slavic influence. It has been claimed that the stem construction plays a perfectivizing role within Yiddish aspect (U. Weinreich 1977, Schaechter 1986), a role that results from the influence of the Slavic aspectual system. I present arguments against this position in Chapter 3 .

#### 1.4 Summary

This chapter has introduced the two constructions that are central to a discussion of Yiddish aspect: prefixed verbs and the stem construction. With respect to prefixed verbs, there is variation in the type of aspectual information contributed by different prefixes and the consistency with which different prefixes are recognized as attributing aspectual meanings. The prefixes discussed here are most frequently associated with terminative aspect, although the prefix *far-* is also used to express initiative aspect. While there is no Yiddish prefix that has only an aspectual function, the prefix *op-* functions fairly productively to express aspectual terminal meaning; the prefix *oys-*, which also expresses completion fairly productively, has the further semantic meaning of exhaustion of the verb's complement. The prefixes *far-* and *on-* are also associated with completion, but less consistently and with many instances of possible synonymy between simple and prefixed verbs. Some evidence of Slavic influence on the use of certain Yiddish prefixes was presented, although the question was raised as to whether that influence should be described as semantic rather than aspectual.

The morphological and syntactic peculiarities of the Yiddish stem construction were described. The stem construction consistently serves an aspectual function, and this aspectual meaning, that of shrinking an event's duration to a point, is different from the type of aspectual information contributed by verbal prefixes. The stem construction, like prefixed verbs, originates in a Germanic model but has extended beyond that model in productivity and aspectual function. It was argued that this extension of the stem construction should not be attributed to Slavic influence.

## CHAPTER 2 - YIDDISH ASPECT: THE DEBATE

**"Yid.[dish] verbs are either perfective or imperfective."**

**U. Weinreich (1977:xxxv)**

**"[in Yiddish] The basic Slavic opposition, perfective/imperfective (as a grammatical opposition), is totally lacking."**

**Aronson (1985:185)**

### 2.1 Introduction

The debate about the status of the perfective/imperfective contrast in Yiddish has been central to the discussion of Yiddish aspect. The two quotes above illustrate that linguists have come to diametrically opposed conclusions on this issue. As was discussed in the previous chapter, many Yiddish prefixed verbs have been categorized as perfective, and the four prefixes most frequently cited as perfective have been described as having undergone Slavic influence. Claims have also been made that the Yiddish stem construction was influenced by Slavic aspect. In this chapter I will discuss the wider context for the comparison of Yiddish aspect with Slavic aspect. I examine in detail the analyses of Yiddish aspect by various authors, with particular attention to their position on the perfective/imperfective contrast and on whether Yiddish expresses aspect lexically or grammatically.

### 2.2 Slavic Aspect

#### 2.2.1 Predominance of Slavic Model

The predominance of the Slavic-style model of aspectual opposition in analyses of Yiddish has not arisen from linguistic considerations alone. Among the factors that have kept this model central are the history of the study of aspect, the history of Yiddish, the standard analysis of the origin of Yiddish and language nationalism.

##### 2.2.1.1 Linguistic Study of Aspect

The term 'aspect' itself is a translation of the Slavic grammatical term *vid* that came into use in its grammatical sense in the nineteenth century (Binnick 1991:136). The study of Slavic aspect has loomed large in linguistic research, as described in this quote from Holden (1991:359):

**"Few grammatical categories have been studied in as much detail as Slavic, particularly, Russian aspect. Since the beginning of modern linguistics, exceptional scholars in all the theoretical linguistic traditions, both Western and Eastern, have attempted to describe or define the category, and to incorporate it into various models of language."**

Because Slavic aspect has been discussed in such depth, many linguists use the Slavic model of perfective/imperfective contrast as the standard model of

grammatical aspect to which other languages are compared. According to Binnick (1991:136) "Slavic aspect is often taken to be the prototypical exemplar of aspectual systems." It is therefore not surprising that linguists have used the Slavic categories of perfective and imperfective in analyzing aspect in Yiddish. This was also the case with other Germanic languages: Binnick (1991:141) notes that nineteenth century scholars, such as Grimm and Streitberg, used the terms perfective and imperfective to describe the difference between prefixed and simple verbs in German. The history of linguistic thought, then, has led to the use of Slavic aspectual categories as a standard model in analyzing aspect in other languages.

#### **2.2.1.2 Yiddish - Slavic Language Contact**

Yiddish is a Germanic language and, as described above, trends in linguistic theory led to some use of the Slavic aspectual model for analyzing Germanic languages. However, Yiddish has also had extensive contact with Slavic languages and this contact has provided further impetus for analyzing Yiddish aspect according to the Slavic model. There has been a long history of language contact between Yiddish and such Slavic languages as Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, Belorussian and Czech. Of all the Slavic languages, Polish has had the widest influence on Yiddish (Bihari 1969, Birnbaum 1977:76-79).

The exact time and place of the origin of Yiddish are still hotly debated, but it apparently developed in German speaking lands sometime between 1000 and 1200 CE. The precise date and nature of the first contact with Slavic speakers has also not been established but there is general agreement that it was fairly early in the development of Yiddish. Of course, the further east Yiddish originated, the earlier in its development the contact with Slavic languages might have occurred. U. Weinreich (1972 16:795) dates Yiddish-Slavic contact from 1250 CE; similarly, Wexler (1964) claims that Yiddish has been spoken continuously in Slavic territories for approximately 700 years. Bihari (1969) argues that there was a Slavic substratum in Yiddish from its very beginnings and, more recently, Wexler (1991,1998) has claimed that Yiddish is fundamentally a Slavic language, Sorbian, that has relexified with a German lexicon. While few linguists accept the view that Yiddish is fundamentally a Slavic language, the history of migrations supports the claim that the languages have been in contact for at least seven centuries. Barnavi (1992) describes the large waves of immigration from Western into Eastern Europe, which brought German speaking Jews into Slavic lands beginning in the thirteenth century.

The population statistics below give a rough indication of the migrations eastward over the centuries, and the relative sizes of the Jewish populations in German speaking lands compared to Slavic speaking lands. In 1300 the number of Jews in the Holy Roman Empire outnumbered those in Lithuania-Poland by almost 20:1; in 1492, that proportion has shrunk to less than 3:1; by the late nineteenth century the political borders had changed dramatically, but it is clear that the vast majority of Jews now lived in Poland and European Russia, both Slavic speaking lands. These statistics, rough as they are, illustrate the decreasing contact between Yiddish and German, and point to the increased amount of contact with Slavic speakers.

(1)	a.	Jewish Populations (Beinart 1992)	
		1300	1492
		Holy Roman Empire	100,000
		Hungary	5,500
		Lithuania-Poland	5,500
			80,000
			30,000
			30,000
	b.	Jewish Populations (Barnavi 1992)	
			1881
		Western Europe	1,074,000
		Austro-Hungary	1,951,000
		Poland and European Russia	5,111,000

It has been estimated that there were 11 million Yiddish speakers before World War II, the vast majority in Slavic speaking lands (U. Weinreich 1972:789).

The pattern of borrowing from the Slavic languages into Yiddish can be clarified with the interference profile proposed by Thomason and Kaufman (1988), shown in (2) below. This profile illustrates that, cross-linguistically, borrowing interference is found first in the lexicon, then in the morphosyntax and finally in the phonology.

(2) Interference profile of borrowing

lexicon > morphosyntax > phonology

The Slavic influence on Yiddish follows this borrowing pattern. The most interference has been in lexical borrowing: Bihari (1969) estimates that 10-15% of Yiddish vocabulary is of Slavic origin; Joffe (1965) estimates that at least 10,000 Yiddish words are of Slavic origin and sets the Slavic component at 9-11% of the lexicon. In order to estimate the number of Hebrew-origin words in Yiddish, Mark (1954) analyzed three million running words of Yiddish drawn from 60 different groups of sources. To my knowledge, no similar thorough counting of Slavic-origin lexical items has been undertaken and the estimated total would vary somewhat according to the counting system used. Nevertheless, the estimates given here indicate the sizeable number of lexical borrowings from Slavic languages into Yiddish. Slavic borrowings include the kinship terms *bobe* 'grandmother' and *zeyde* 'grandfather'. However, it should be noted that the basic vocabulary of Yiddish remains firmly Germanic: of the 100 word list proposed by Swadesh as the core vocabulary for all languages (see Samarin 1967), only one, *kaylexik* 'round', is of Slavic origin and at most six, given synonyms, are of Hebrew origin (Appendix 1).

The morphological and phonological influences of Slavic languages upon Yiddish are well documented (Thomason and Kaufman 1988:82, Comrie 1981:185, Lötsch 1974). There are a few borrowed productive derivational suffixes, such as the feminine *-ke* and the nominal *-nik*. Other examples of the limited morphosyntactic influence are the use of the Polish yes-no question particle *tsi*, and the extension of the third person reflexive pronoun *zix* to all persons, on the Slavic model. While Thomason and Kaufman combine morphology and syntax into one category, morphosyntax, it is apparent that interference in morphology occurs much more readily than interference in syntax in language contact processes. Thomason and Kaufman (1988:366) suggest that Yiddish may have abandoned verb final word order under Slavic influence; this would be a profound syntactic change if it were due to language contact, but the claim is not substantiated.

The Slavic interference has been slightest in phonology: a new affricate *zh* has been introduced, but it is confined to loanwords. Yiddish, then, follows the pattern shown in the borrowing profile above, in having undergone extensive lexical, limited morphosyntactic and minimal phonological interference.

The observations that Slavic languages have influenced the Yiddish lexicon and morphosyntax allow for claims that there has been Slavic influence on Yiddish aspect as well. As discussed in Chapter 1, since Slavic languages were considered to have a clear grammatical aspectual system, and Germanic languages were assumed to have no grammatical expression of aspect, it was apparently assumed that any systematic aspect in Yiddish could only have arisen as a result of influence from Slavic languages through language contact.

### 2.2.1.3 Fusion Theory

The possibility that Yiddish was influenced by Slavic aspect was supported by the widely accepted model of Yiddish as a 'fusion language' as proposed by M. Weinreich (1980:609): "the fusion character is the hallmark of Yiddish". This model describes Yiddish as a fusion of four distinct language stocks: Germanic, Hebrew-Aramaic, Romance and Slavic. The fusion model gives no principled account of which elements of Yiddish come from which language component, and assumes that the four language roots combine in unpredictable ways to form Yiddish. This view of Yiddish allows researchers to look for any type of language influence in Yiddish without reference to standard language contact theory. Rather than undergoing standard processes of borrowing and shift, as described by Thomason and Kaufman (1988), Yiddish is considered to take part in a unique, undefined process called 'fusion'. The fusion model makes it feasible to propose that Yiddish could have taken its tense system, for example, from its Germanic stock, and its aspectual expression from its Slavic stock. Aronson (1985: 171) specifically refers to the fusion theory in the introduction to his discussion of aspect:

"given the quite widely accepted view that Yiddish represents a 'fusion language'...it is essential that we attempt to determine the contributions of the various components of the language (German, Slavic, Hebrew-Aramaic [sic], Romance) to individual subsystems of the grammar."

The fusion model allows a linguist to suggest the incorporation of any characteristic from any language stock without considering the other influences from that language stock. In standard borrowing theory, as illustrated in the borrowing profile in (2) above, one would not expect to find syntactic influence without accompanying lexical and morphological borrowings; in a fusion theory, any type of borrowing should be possible and syntactic borrowing without lexical borrowing could be proposed. Thus the fusion theory allows for the borrowing of the complete Slavic aspectual system into Yiddish, without consideration of the borrowing patterns as a whole, and allows for broader claims of Slavic influence on Yiddish aspect than would standard borrowing theory.

The fusion theory should be rejected as being too unconstrained a theory of language contact and for setting Yiddish apart as having different processes of development from other languages of the world. I have argued elsewhere (Gold 1994b, to appear) that the Hebrew component in Yiddish can be accounted for through standard borrowing theory and that a fusion model is unwarranted. Standard borrowing theory should also be able to account for any claims of Slavic influence

on Yiddish aspect. A claim that Yiddish has borrowed a system of aspect from Slavic languages, that is, set up a category of expression that did not exist before Slavic language contact, is difficult to reconcile with the type of borrowing patterns otherwise observed in Yiddish. As Thomason and Kaufman observe, (1988:54):

most interference, except in cases of heavy influence, will involve either new means of expressing functional categories already in the receiving language or (for morphology) loss of previously existing categories.

Yiddish does not show the borrowing patterns of heavy influence that might result in borrowing a new functional category rather than simply new expressions of functional categories already present. Rather, Thomason and Kaufman (1988:67) categorize Yiddish in the 'slight borrowing' category, on account of its pattern of heavy lexical borrowing, new phonemes restricted to loanwords and moderate morphosyntactic interference. I argue in Section 3.5 that Slavic influence on Yiddish aspect is a result of extensive lexical borrowing and can be accounted for with standard borrowing theory without recourse to processes of fusion.

#### 2.2.1.4 Language Nationalism

The issue of language nationalism and Yiddish is a complex one. Although scholars claim a history for Yiddish of almost a millenium, as recently as 100 years ago, Yiddish speakers regularly referred to their language as *zhargon* 'jargon' and there survives to this day an attitude that Yiddish is a debased dialect of German. In contrast to this attitude, beginning in the last century, Yiddish speakers began to take pride in the status of Yiddish as a language distinct from German. Uriel Weinreich (1972:796) notes that German literary models had lost their influence over Yiddish literature by the late nineteenth century, corresponding with the rise of the Eastern Yiddish press. The great Yiddish writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as Mendele Moxer Sforim, Sholem Aleichem, and Y.L. Peretz, brought new status to Yiddish as a literary language. This linguistic pride led to the Yiddishist movement of the early twentieth century and found formal expression at the Czernowitz Yiddish Language Conference of 1908 where Yiddish was proclaimed to be a national language of the Jewish people and the political, cultural, and social equal of other languages (Liptzin 1972:1212).

After the horrors of the Second World War, there was even more reason to distance Yiddish from its Germanic roots. One only has to read through issues of the internet newsletter *Mendele*, devoted to discussions of the Yiddish language, to understand the contemporary negative connotations of the term '*daytshmerish*' 'Germanlike': many contemporary Yiddish speakers guard against German vocabulary, spelling or syntax supplanting 'authentic' Yiddish models.

This tendency to emphasize the ways in which Yiddish is distinct from German also contributes to a zeal in seeking non-Germanic grammatical characteristics. The climate of language nationalism and anti-Germanism is thus conducive to claims of Slavic influence on Yiddish aspect.

These four factors, the history of the linguistic study of aspect, the nature of Yiddish-Slavic contact, the fusion model of Yiddish, and linguistic nationalism, have all contributed to promote a Slavic model for Yiddish aspect separate from the evidence of Yiddish verbs themselves. This is not to deny that there is any Slavic influence on Yiddish aspect, but to establish a context in which to evaluate the relevant literature.

### 2.2.2 Slavic Aspect

To clarify the aspectual system to which Yiddish has explicitly and implicitly been compared, I provide here a brief outline of Slavic aspect, based on descriptions found in Dahl (1985) and Binnick (1991) that use Russian examples. Six major features of the aspectual system are listed below: the generalizations are widely agreed upon, but as will be pointed out, there is much debate about the details.

- i. Aspect is an obligatorily marked category of the Slavic verb, meaning that all Slavic verbs are marked for aspect. Dahl (1985:84) qualifies this claim with the quantifier 'most': "Most Russian verbs can be classified as either Perfective or Imperfective."
- ii. Three morphologically related verb forms are involved: a root or simplex form; a prefixed form based on the root; and a suffixed form based on the prefixed verb.
- iii. The simplex or root form is usually, but not always, imperfective. Dahl (1985:84) expresses this qualification with the verb 'tend': "Morphologically nonderived verb stems tend to be Imperfective; there is, however, a sizeable number of exceptions such as *dat* 'give', *lec* 'lie down', which are Perfective." As will be discussed below, some linguists question whether simplex verbs should be considered part of the perfective/imperfective opposition at all.
- iv-a. The perfective verb is usually formed from the simplex stem by prefixation, although there are other devices used including, for example, vowel changes and stress shift. Dahl (1985:84) suggests that prefixed verbs are not always perfective in using the modifier 'normally': "Adding such a prefix to an imperfective simple verb normally makes it perfective."
- iv-b. There are many perfectivizing prefixes; the six most common, according to Binnick, are the ones listed in (3) below. It is not predictable which prefix a verb will use to form the perfective.

(3)	prefix	imperfective	perfective	
	<i>na-</i>	<i>pisat'</i>	<i>napisat'</i>	'to write'
	<i>o-</i>	<i>slepnut'</i>	<i>oslepnut'</i>	'to go blind'
	<i>po-</i>	<i>stroit'</i>	<i>postroit'</i>	'to build'
	<i>pro-</i>	<i>citat'</i>	<i>procitat'</i>	'to read'
	<i>raz-</i>	<i>delit'</i>	<i>razdelit'</i>	'to divide'
	<i>s-</i>	<i>delat'</i>	<i>sdelat'</i>	'to do'

- iv-c. The prefixes originally had some lexical content, which was generally adverbial or prepositional in meaning. The most commonly used prefixes, like those listed in (3) above, are widely considered to have only an aspectual function now, that is, to mark perfective verbs. Some scholars, however, argue that even these prefixes retain at least some



lexical meaning besides the perfectivizing function. Other prefixes do change the lexical meaning of the root. For example, the first root listed in (3), *pisat* 'to write', changes lexical meaning with the prefix *pere-*, giving the perfective verb *perepisat* 'to copy'. In such cases the simplex verb and the prefixed perfective are not considered an aspectual pair.

- v. A corresponding imperfective is formed from perfective prefixed verbs (or from perfective simplex verbs) by the addition of a derivational suffix, most commonly *-va* or *-yva*. For example, the perfective verb *perepisat* 'copy' mentioned in (iv-c) above is the base for the imperfective suffixed form *perepisyvat*. The three verb forms can be compared in the chart in (4) below. The simplex imperfective form is in the first column, the second column shows the perfective verb formed with the prefix *vy-*, and the third column shows the derived imperfective which has added the suffix *-va* to the perfective verb.

(4) Derivation: Perfective/Imperfective

	basic imperfective verb		prefixed perfective verb		derived imperfective verb	
non-Past	<i>l'ju</i>	'I pour'	<i>vy'l'ju</i>	'I will pour'	<i>vylivaju</i>	'I pour'
Past	<i>lil</i>	'I poured'	<i>vy'ilil</i>	'I poured out'	<i>vy'ilival</i>	'I poured out'
Future	<i>budu lit</i>	'I will pour'	—	—	<i>budu vylivat</i>	'I will pour out'

- vi. An important feature of the Slavic aspectual system is the interaction of tense with aspect, as illustrated in charts (4) and (5), from Dahl (1985:85) and Binnick (1991:138) respectively. The chart in (4) illustrates the three verb forms described above; the data in (5) give a clearer indication of the comparative meanings of corresponding perfective and imperfective verbs, as Dahl doesn't clearly differentiate the English glosses of the past perfective and imperfective verbs in (4). As indicated in both charts, the non-past form of an imperfective verb, whether simplex or derived, has present meaning: 'I pour' and 'I pour out' in (4), '(they) think, are thinking' in (5). The non-past form of the perfective verb, however, has a future meaning: 'I will pour out' or, as in (5), '(they) will think'. Dahl (1985:84) qualifies the future interpretation of non-past perfectives with 'normally': "Perfective non-Pasts normally have future time reference." Both charts (4) and (5) also show that imperfective verbs form a periphrastic future with the verb 'to be', such as *budu lit*, *budu vylivat*, and *budut dumat*, whereas perfective verbs are not found in this construction.

### (5) Tense/Aspect

	Imperfective	Perfective
Past	<i>dumali</i> '(we, you, they) thought, were thinking, have thought, have been thinking	<i>podumali</i> '(we, you, they) thought, had thought'
Non-past	<i>dumayut</i> '(they) think, are thinking'	<i>podumayut</i> '(they) will think'
Future	<i>budut dumat'</i> '(they) will think, will be thinking	-----

Not all authors agree with the analysis of Slavic aspect outlined above. For example, Townsend (1984) questions analyzing a perfective such as *vyli* and its derived suffixed form *vylival* in (4) above, as two separate verbs rather than conjugations of a single verb. Aronson (1984), in his analysis of Bulgarian, argues that simplex verbs are outside the grammatical aspect system and are not in an imperfective/perfective relationship to the prefixed verbs. Klein (1995) also points out problems with a simple binary analysis of the relation between simplex and prefixed verbs. He notes that not every verb has a specific aspectual partner; for example, some simplex verbs can have several corresponding prefixed perfective verbs.

I am not arguing that the description of Slavic aspect given here is the only model or the best model, nor am I arguing that Slavic languages have grammatical as opposed to lexical expression of aspect. What is important here is that the model of Slavic aspect described above has formed the context for discussion about Yiddish aspect. Three characteristics have been prominent in comparisons with Yiddish: there is a language pervasive perfective/imperfective opposition; this opposition is obligatory and grammatical; this opposition is based upon the relation between simplex and prefixed verbs.

### 2.3 Germanic Aspect

Dahl (1985:167) claims that "the Germanic languages are in general characterized by the lack of a Perfective:Imperfective distinction." As noted earlier, Szulmajster-Celnikier (1986) and Baviskar (1974) both suggest that the aspectual nature of Yiddish prefixes might have partially resulted from the retention of aspectual oppositions present in earlier forms of German. However, for the most part it has been assumed by those analyzing Yiddish that Germanic languages have no systematic aspectual oppositions. Thus, although Germanic languages do show pairs of related simplex and prefixed verbs, these are not considered to represent a perfective/imperfective opposition. Aspect in Germanic languages is considered to be neither obligatory nor grammatical. Thus, as described with respect to the stem construction, any systematic expression of aspect found in Yiddish is assumed to have resulted from the influence of Slavic languages. As with the analysis of Slavic aspect above, I am making no claims about the nature of aspect in Germanic languages, either in the present or historically, but present these widely held assumptions as a context for understanding the debate about Yiddish aspect.

## 2.4 Writings About Yiddish Aspect

The preceding sections present many reasons for the prominence of the Slavic aspectual model in analyses of Yiddish aspect. In the following section I briefly outline the proposals for Yiddish aspect presented by various authors. In order to provide a basis of comparison for the wide range of approaches to Yiddish aspect I have divided the writings according to their approach to the perfective/imperfective contrast. In Section 2.4.1 are grouped those authors for whom the perfective/imperfective opposition is central; Section 2.4.2 presents those who either argue against the centrality of the perfective/imperfective contrast, or for whom this contrast is peripheral.

### 2.4.1 Central Perfective/Imperfective Opposition

#### 2.4.1.1 Max Weinreich

Max Weinreich was a pre-eminent figure in Yiddish linguistics and his writings have been very important to the field. As discussed above, his model of Yiddish as a fusion language was widely accepted; similarly his claims for the interference of Slavic aspect on Yiddish aspectual constructions have been very influential. Weinreich (1956, 1980) claims that Slavic influence is evident in the relation between Yiddish simple and prefixed verbs and that this is very similar to the perfective/imperfective relation found in Slavic verbs. As mentioned earlier, Weinreich (1980:33) also argues that the extension of the stem construction beyond the Germanic model can be attributed to Slavic language contact: "It is likely that here Yiddish was affected by the widespread Slavic category of aspect". Max Weinreich didn't develop a full theory of perfective/imperfective contrast in Yiddish aspect, but he set the parameters of the discussion of Yiddish aspectual constructions within a Slavic model.

#### 2.4.1.2 Schaechter

Schaechter (1986) classifies verbs as being either perfective or imperfective throughout this intermediate level textbook; this distinction is primarily semantic and only secondarily a formal one. He illustrates the categories of perfective and imperfective with two verbs that are morphologically unrelated, using *gefinen* 'to find' as an example of a perfective verb and *zuxn* 'to search' as an example of an imperfective verb. Schaechter (1986:38) presents the following chart as a guide to distinguishing perfective from imperfective verbs.

#### (6) Features of Perfective and Imperfective Verbs (Schaechter 1986)

	imperfective	perfective
in its development	+	-
completed action	-	+
one-time occurrence	-	+
in the present	+	-
with duration adverbial	+	-

Imperfective verbs, according to Schaechter, can express the development of an event, can be modified by adverbs of duration, and have a truly present meaning. Perfectives, on the other hand, express a completed action or a one-time occurrence, do not show an event in its development and cannot co-occur with durational adverbs. Further, although perfectives are found inflected for present tense, Schaechter argues that their interpretation is never truly present but either immediate past or immediate future, depending upon the context.

Although in discussing the above chart Schaechter describes perfective verbs as specifically showing the end of an action, later in his book (1986:71, 118) he also categorizes as perfective verbs emphasizing the beginning of actions. Examples of this are the verbs *tselaxn zix* 'to burst out laughing', and *derhern* 'to perceive by hearing'.

As described in Section 1.2.2, Schaechter (1986:75) distinguishes between two types of the stem construction or 'moment construction': the *eynmoliker* 'one time' and the *opgexapter tushteyger* 'instantaneous' aktionsarts. Both of these he categorizes as perfective. Schaechter also categorizes almost all prefixed verbs as perfective, not only those that indicate finished action, such as *opesn* 'eat up' and *oysrinken* 'drink up', but also those verbs where the prefixes are clearly directional. This is illustrated in his discussion (1986:107) of the two sentences in (7) below. The sentence in (7a) is formed from the simple verb *geyn* plus a prepositional phrase introduced by the preposition *tsu* 'to'; the sentence in (7b) is based upon the separably prefixed verb *tsugeyn* and is also followed by a prepositional phrase introduced with *tsu* 'to'. Since the separable prefix follows the verb in the imperative, the prefix *tsu-* and the preposition *tsu-* are adjacent. Schaechter describes *geyn* in (7a) as imperfective and *tsugeyn* in (7b) as perfective.

- (7) a. *gey tsum dokter*  
'go to the doctor'
- b. *gey tsu tsu der tir*  
go towards to the door  
'go up to the door'

Schaechter's treatment of *tsugeyn* as perfective points to the difference between Schaechter's and U. Weinreich's (1977) use of this term, discussed in 2.4.1.3 below. Weinreich's definition is finer: he distinguishes verbs with aspectual prefixes from verbs with directional prefixes. Although Weinreich designates twenty verbs prefixed with *tsu-* as perfective, as indicated in the list in example (9) of Chapter 1, *tsugeyn* is not among them. Rather he marks as perfective verbs like *tsugreytn* 'prepare', *tsugreftn* 'graft', *tsuhaltn* 'hold', and *tsuganvenen* 'steal', where the prefix *tsu-* does not primarily indicate directional movement.

Schaechter's use of the terms 'perfective' and 'imperfective' also differs from most of the authors discussed in this chapter in that he applies these terms not only to individual verbs and the stem construction but also to verbal idioms. This is shown in his discussion (1986:138-9) of different expressions of visiting, which he labels dynamic and static, and describes as perfective and imperfective, respectively. Schaechter contrasts expressions like *geyn tsu gast tsu* or *forn oyf a vizit tsu* 'to pay a visit to', which he describes as dynamic and perfective, with *zayn tsu gast bay* or *zayn oyf a vizit bay* 'be a guest at', which he considers static and imperfective. It is clear that he is not simply categorizing the verbs involved: Schaechter treats the simple verb *geyn* in (7a) above as imperfective, but describes the expression *geyn*

*tsu gast tsu* 'to pay a visit to' as perfective even though it is based upon the same verb.

Schachter's conception of the perfective/imperfective contrast does nonetheless focus primarily on individual verbs. This is illustrated in a large chart that Schachter presents (1986:406-415) of approximately 60 imperfective verbs and three possible corresponding perfectives for each verb: *farendikt kayt* 'termination, ending', *ongehoybn kayt* 'initiation, beginning' and *momentalkayt* 'instantaneousness or moment construction', that is, the stem construction. Seven rows from this chart are shown in table (8) below. It is immediately evident from the structure of this chart that Schachter does not expect a one-to-one relation of imperfective to perfective, but sees the possibility of three or more perfectives for each imperfective verb.

(8) Verb Classification (Schachter 1986)

	imperfective	perfective		
		termination	initiation	moment
a.	<i>rayxern, rayxern zix</i> 'smoke'	<i>oysrayxern, oprayxern, derrayxern</i>	<i>farrayxern</i> 'start to smoke'	<i>gebn a rayxer/a rayxer ton</i>
b.	<i>shikn</i> 'send'	<i>avek/op/tsushikn</i> 'send away, send to'	<i>nemen/onheybn shikn</i> 'start to send'	<i>gebn a shik avek/op/tsu</i>
c.	<i>lebn, lebn zix</i> 'live'	<i>oplebn/derlebn</i> 'with/ live through'	<i>geboyrn vern</i> 'be born'	<i>a leb ton</i>
d.	----	----	<i>avekshteln</i> 'place' <i>anidershteln</i> 'set down'	<i>gebn a shtel avek</i>
e.	<i>oyshaltn</i> 'endure, sustain'	-----	-----	-----
f.	<i>redn telefonish</i> 'speak by telephone'	<i>telefoniren</i>	<i>nemen/onheybn redn telefonish</i>	<i>gebn a telefonir op</i>
g.	<i>zayn</i> 'to be'	<i>opzayn</i> 'stay (as long as)'	<i>vern</i> 'become'	-----

Row (a) in table (8) illustrates a verb that has at least one entry in every column and the entries are all morphologically related in predictable ways: the terminative and initiative forms are both derived through prefixation and the moment construction is based upon the simple verb in the first column. A minority of verbs follow this pattern. Some verbs show entries in every column but they do not show the morphological relations found in row (a). In row (b), for example, the initiative form does not arise from prefixation but is formed from a periphrastic expression *nemen* or *onheybn* plus infinitive which means 'to begin' an activity. Schachter uses these expressions in more than a third of the entries for this column, indicating that morphologically derived perfectives meaning initiation of an event are not readily available to every verb. Further, as illustrated in (c) Schachter does not hesitate to use two completely different lexical items in a single entry: here the simplex verb is *lebn* 'to live' and Schachter suggests *geboyrn vern* 'to be born' as its perfective counterpart for initiation of the event. This type of entry provides evidence for the claim, made earlier, that Schachter's approach to the categories of

perfective and imperfective is primarily semantic rather than formal; this claim is discussed further in Chapter 3.

The many blank spaces in the chart indicate that Schaechter does not see the relationship between imperfective and perfective verbs as obligatory. Row (d) shows an entry that has three possible perfectives but no corresponding imperfective. The inverse situation is shown in row (e): here an imperfective is offered, but no corresponding perfectives. The imperfective verb in (e) is unusual in that it is prefixed; elsewhere, Schaechter consistently describes prefixed verbs as perfective. All of the verbs in the imperfective column of Schaechter's large chart are simplex or simplex reflexive except for two, the verb in (e), *oyshaltn* 'endure, sustain' and the expression *redn telefonish* 'speak by telephone' in (f). The verb in (e) is based on the Yiddish simplex *haltn* 'to hold' and has morphological and semantic parallels to the English particle verb 'hold out'. As discussed in Section 1.2.2, English particle verbs are frequently associated with Yiddish aspectual prefixes that have been described as perfective. Although the English verb has implications of completion, in that one 'holds out' until an implied endpoint, Schaechter has apparently considered the durational meaning of 'enduring' to be predominant and has allowed semantic considerations to rank above morphological ones here, therefore categorizing this verb as imperfective rather than perfective on account of its prefixed form.

The verb in (f) is an idiom, meaning literally 'to speak telephonically' that is 'to speak by telephone'. The simple verb *telefonirn* 'to telephone' is given as the first perfective form and the second perfective form is a periphrastic expression with *nemen* or *onheybn*. The moment construction is based upon the prefixed verb *optelefonirn* which is not found elsewhere in the row; *optelefonirn* is formed from the simple verb *telefonirn* plus the aspectual prefix *op-*. Verbs prefixed with *op-*, as discussed in Chapter 1, generally have completive meanings and Schaechter frequently categorizes them as perfective termination forms, as in rows (a), (b), (c), and (e). However, in this entry, it is the simple verb that is in the terminative column and the prefixed verb does not appear outside of the moment construction. Such inconsistencies in the relationship of form and meaning reveal the problems of categorizing Yiddish verbs as perfective and imperfective.

Schaechter has included the verb *zayn* 'to be' in his chart, as illustrated in row (g). It is unusual to consider this verb in terms of perfectivity, and is probably included here because of the existence of the prefixed verb *opzayn* 'to stay (as long as possible), to serve out one's time' which Schaechter treats as the terminative perfective counterpart. Weinreich (1977) does not mark this verb perfective; this is the case for many of Schaechter's perfective verbs. Perfectivity is evidently not so clearly defined a term that these two authors consistently designate the same verbs as perfective. For the perfective initiative form Schaechter suggests the separate lexical item *vern* 'become', which, on the one hand can be argued to indeed mean 'the beginning of being', but on the other hand, has a durational sense not generally associated with perfectives.

In summary, then, for Schaechter all Yiddish verbs can be categorized as either perfective or imperfective according to their meaning. Certain morphological forms tend to be associated with a particular aspect: the stem construction is always perfective; prefixed verbs usually are perfective; simplex verbs are usually imperfective. However, since it is the semantics and not the form that categorizes the verbs, exceptions to these correspondences of form and aspect frequently occur. Thus, for Schaechter, corresponding imperfective and perfective verbs may be related by prefixation, or through periphrastic constructions or may be morphologically

unrelated lexical items. Every imperfective verb has potentially three types of corresponding perfective forms, terminative, initiative and the moment construction, with the possibility of more than one verb of each type. Most perfective verbs have one corresponding imperfective, although we saw in (8d) an instance of perfective verbs with no imperfective counterpart. Therefore, although all verbs are categorized as either perfective or imperfective this does not mean that there is a one-to-one reciprocal relationship between perfective and imperfective verbs. According to Schaechter's analysis, there can be a one to three (or more) relationship between an imperfective verb and its perfective forms, but normally only one imperfective for each perfective verb.

#### 2.4.1.3 Uriel Weinreich

As indicated in the quote opening this chapter, Uriel Weinreich, like Schaechter, believed that all Yiddish verbs could be categorized as perfective or imperfective. His fullest discussion of the perfective/imperfective contrast is found in the 'Guidelines for Use of the Dictionary' (1977:xxxv) quoted below.

Yiddish verbs are either perfective or imperfective. A perfective verb designates completed action. In a large number of cases the perfective counterpart of an imperfective Yiddish verb is formed by adding a complement or a prefix...the Yiddish imperfective equivalent of *dig* is *grobn*; the perfective equivalent is *oysgrobn*. Accordingly *ven er hot gegrobn* means 'while he was digging'; *ven er hot oysgegrobn* 'when he had dug'.

In addition to prefixes and complements for distinguishing perfective and imperfective verbs, Yiddish also makes use of other productive patterns involving auxiliaries. When only an imperfective equivalent is listed in EY [English-Yiddish dictionary], this usually means that there is no complemented or prefixed verb which functions as the perfective counterpart. In such cases momentary actions can be described in Yiddish by the "instantaneous" aspect, expressed by the verbal noun and the auxiliary *ton* or *gebn*. Example:

**groan** v/imp *krextsn*

Single events, e.g. 'he groaned', are described by the instantaneous form: *er hot a krexts geton/gegebn*. Correspondingly, a perfective verb can be given durative meaning by constructing it with the auxiliary *haltn in* plus the infinitive. Example:

**excavate** v/pf *oysgrobn*

'They were excavating it' is rendered by the durative form *zey hobn es gehaltn in oysgrobn*.

Weinreich and Schaechter both claim that all Yiddish verbs can be classified as either perfective or imperfective. However, there are several differences between their proposals. Weinreich's model can be described as morphological compared to Schaechter's more semantic approach. Weinreich sees a direct correspondence between the morphological construction and the aspectual meaning: simple verbs are

imperfective; inseparable and separable prefixes (complements) and the stem construction change imperfective verbs to perfective ; and perfective verbs can be made imperfective through the use of the construction *haltn in*. While such patterns are recognized by Schaechter, for him semantic considerations can override morphological ones. For Weinreich, aspectual pairs are always related morphologically; lexical items unrelated morphologically are never considered aspectual counterparts in the way that they can be for Schaechter.

Weinreich also differs from Schaechter in proposing essentially a one-to-one relationship between imperfective and perfective verbs, at least according to the excerpt above. As explained above, if a prefixed verb is not available to act as the perfective counterpart to a simple verb, the imperfective can be perfectivized through the use of the stem construction. In this way, the one-to-one relationship is maintained. Schaechter, in the chart partially reproduced in (8) above, acknowledges that many verbs have both a prefixed form and a stem construction; the stem construction is not used to perfectivize in the absence of the prefixed verb. Furthermore, Schaechter points out the different semantic contributions of the stem construction and the prefixed verbs; Weinreich implies that the primary function of both prefixation and the stem construction is to contribute perfectivization. As noted in Section 1.3.2, prefixed verbs commonly appear in the stem construction as illustrated in (8b), (8d) and (8f). This indicates that the prime function of the stem construction cannot be to perfectivize imperfective verbs and that the stem construction and prefixation have different aspectual functions. Weinreich's terminology in the above quote suggests as much: although Weinreich describes a perfective verb as designating completed action, he describes the stem construction as the 'instantaneous aspect' which expresses 'momentary actions'; 'momentary actions' are not precisely the same as the 'completed action' that Weinreich associates with perfective prefixed verbs.

Weinreich implies that there is a one-to-one relationship between perfective and imperfective verbs; he claims that in the absence of a corresponding imperfective simple verb for a perfective prefixed verb, an imperfective expression can be formed through the use of *haltn in*. Since Weinreich uses the Yiddish word *oysgrobn* as the exemplar both for the prefixed perfective counterpart to the simple imperfective verb *grobn*, and for the perfective counterpart to the imperfective expression *haltn in oysgrobn*, it might seem that Weinreich is claiming that it is possible for there to be two imperfectives available for every prefixed perfective. However, on closer reading, it can be seen that Weinreich is using *oysgrobn* with two different meanings: as the perfective counterpart to *grobn* it means 'to dig (completed)'; in the expression *haltn in oysgrobn* it is being used in its sense of 'to excavate' and as such is an example of a prefixed verb with a different lexical meaning from the corresponding simple form. Weinreich implies that there is no morphologically related simple verb meaning 'to excavate' and so one can be formed using *haltn in*. Thus a close parallel is being drawn with Slavic aspectual suffixation. As described in Section 2.2.2 above, suffixation is used in Slavic languages to create imperfective verbs from perfective verbs that have undergone a change in meaning during prefixation. Weinreich sets up a parallel then between Slavic and Yiddish aspect: both languages can form perfectives through prefixation, both languages have constructions available to turn perfective prefixed verbs into imperfectives.

There is a problem, however, with considering *haltn in* as only contributing aspectual information. This problem extends to Weinreich's suggestion of using the expression *haltn in* to provide an imperfective counterpart to perfective verbs. As in the discussion of the stem construction above, the *haltn in* construction must



provide more lexical content than simply imperfectivity since it can be used with verbs that Weinreich considers imperfective. For example, Weinreich identifies both the verbs *shraybn* 'to write' and *esn* 'to eat' as imperfective. However, Aronson (1985) provides the example *ix halt in shraybn* 'I am (in the middle of) writing', and Katz (1987) gives the sentences *zi halt in shraybn a briv* 'she's in the middle of writing a letter' and *mir haltn itster in esn* 'we're eating now'. In all three of these examples the expression *haltn in* is followed by a verb classified as imperfective. Therefore *haltn in* cannot have a purely aspectual function, to make perfective verbs imperfective, and so it does not play the same role in Yiddish as aspectual suffixation plays in Slavic languages.

Whereas Schaechter does not compare the Yiddish aspectual system to that of other languages, Weinreich explicitly notes that such aspectual distinctions are not found in German and implies that there has been a move towards the Slavic aspectual distinctions: "A fairly systematic distinction between perfective and imperfective aspect . . . has been developed in a completely un-German direction." (1972:16-791). A comparison between Weinreich's model of Yiddish aspect and the Slavic model is presented in Section 3.3.1.

Given Weinreich's strong statement that all Yiddish verbs are either perfective or imperfective one might expect all verbs to be so designated in his dictionary. However, out of the many thousands of verbs listed only 264 prefixed verbs are designated as perfective, according to the data given in Chapter 1 (9) (Aronson 1985). Either Weinreich was inconsistent in indicating these aspectual categorizations, or else, more likely, there is only a restricted group of verbs that set up clear aspectual pairs. Therefore, although Weinreich claims that all verbs are, in theory, either perfective or imperfective, in practice it appears that only a minority are easily designated.

To summarize, then, Weinreich claims that Yiddish verbs are either perfective or imperfective, and that there is a one-to-one relation between morphologically related perfective and imperfective counterparts.

#### 2.4.1.4 Baviskar

Baviskar (1974) also argues that there is a perfective/imperfective opposition in Yiddish, but differs from Schaechter and Weinreich in considering this opposition to be limited to a subgroup of prefixed verbs. Baviskar's research is based on the responses of three Yiddish speaking informants to a series of sentences with verbal gaps. Baviskar analyzed their choice of simple or prefixed verbs in contexts that would necessitate a particular aspect in Slavic languages. She concludes that there is a perfective/imperfective contrast in Yiddish between simple verbs and those verbs prefixed with *on-*, *oys-*, and *op-*, which she regards as calques of the Polish *na-*, *wy-*, and *od-*. However, Baviskar (1974:29) does not see this opposition as obligatory as in the Slavic languages but as "a tendency rather than an obligation to choose perfective over imperfective verbs in certain contexts." Further, this tendency is not pervasive in the language but limited to the "more highly Slavicized verbs".

The results of this study are discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Generally speaking, the simple verbs were used in contexts that clearly involved duration, while the prefixed verbs were used more frequently in contexts implying completion. This would be expected from the description of the prefixes in the previous chapter. There were other contexts in which the use of Yiddish prefixed verbs was totally at variance with the use of Slavic perfectives. Further, there was

some variation from speaker to speaker in the use of simple and prefixed verbs. The most consistent contrast between the use of the simple verbs and the use of prefixed verbs was between the interrupted past and the (pseudo) pluperfect. Some of the responses are given in (9) - (11) below.

- |      |    |                                  |                            |
|------|----|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (9)  | a. | 'while I was writing my letter'  | <i>geshribn</i>            |
|      | b. | 'when I had written my letter'   | <i>ongeshribn</i>          |
| (10) | a. | 'while Mother was baking a cake' | <i>gebakn</i>              |
|      | b. | 'when Mother had baked a cake'   | <i>opgebakn, oysgebakn</i> |
| (11) | a. | 'while I was cooking the dinner' | <i>gekoxt</i>              |
|      | b. | 'when I had cooked the dinner'   | <i>opgekoxt, oysgekoxt</i> |

The informants were given the English prompts; the column on the right indicates the Yiddish verb that they supplied, in the form of the past participle. All of the (a) sentences have an interrupted past event, and all of the respondents offered a simple verb in this context. All of the (b) sentences have a completed event in the past; this is described as a 'pseudo' pluperfect because, although the English gloss gives the pluperfect, the Yiddish in all cases gives the prefixed verb in the past. As will be described in Section 4.6.2, Yiddish does have a separate pluperfect form which is not being used here.

Baviskar describes the influence of Slavic aspect on Yiddish as a tendency to more precision in the expression of aspect:

We may add that the preference of greater precision, as in Yiddish, over the tolerance of lesser precision, as in German, is undeniably part of the workings of a Slavic-influenced aspectual system. After all, what is the Slavic system if not an institutionalized intolerance of lesser precision? (p.32)

Her description of the Slavic aspectual system may be eccentric, but Baviskar's analysis groups her with those scholars who see Yiddish aspect as occupying a place on a scale between the Germanic and the Slavic aspectual systems. As noted earlier, Baviskar views the character of Yiddish aspect to be a result of Slavic influence upon tendencies to aspectual expression retained from older forms of German.

Baviskar points out that the perfective/imperfective contrast in Yiddish is much more limited than that in the Slavic languages. She claims that this aspectual distinction is not obligatory in Yiddish and that it does not appear throughout the language. In particular there is no syntactic means in Yiddish for distinguishing perfectives from imperfectives, whereas in the Slavic languages they can be distinguished on the basis of their interaction with tense, as illustrated in charts (4) and (5) in Section 2.1.2. Nonetheless, Baviskar argues that the perfective-imperfective opposition does hold among some, but not all, Yiddish prefixed verbs. She proposes a more restricted role for the perfective/imperfective opposition in Yiddish than either Schaechter or Weinreich.

#### 2.4.1.5 Szulmajster-Celnikier

Szulmajster-Celnikier (1986) does not use the terms 'perfective' or 'imperfective' in her discussion of Yiddish verbal aspect. However, she is included

here with the authors for whom the perfective/imperfective contrast is central because she analyzes Yiddish aspect in terms of a binary opposition associated with verbal prefixation. Like Baviskar, she limits her analysis to a subset of verbs with particular prefixes; she focusses on the prefix *far-* which she claims is the most purely aspectual prefix in Yiddish and a calque of the Slavic aspectual prefix *za-*.

Szulmajster-Celnikier describes the relationship between simple and prefixed verbs as 'punctual/linear' rather than imperfective/perfective: simple verbs are punctual and prefixed verbs, linear. This designation seems counter-intuitive. Simple verbs are generally associated with imperfectivity and duration and so, if illustrated on a time line, would be linear and not punctual as Szulmajster-Celnikier describes. Similarly, prefixed verbs are associated with perfectivity and with little or no duration; if illustrated on a time line these verbs would appear as points, that is punctual, not linear. However, Szulmajster-Celnikier apparently uses the term 'linear' in the sense of telic; she explains (1986:97) the term linear as "*la ligne représentant le déroulement intrinsèque du procès*" 'the line representing the intrinsic unfolding of the process.' In this sense the term 'linear' can be associated with perfectivity.

As mentioned earlier, Szulmajster-Celnikier, like Baviskar, views the extension of the aspectual function of Yiddish prefixes to be a result of Slavic influence on tendencies already present from earlier forms of German. Szulmajster-Celnikier regards Yiddish as being in the process of developing true aspectual oppositions. She claims that, unlike Slavic prefixation, none of the Yiddish prefixes are purely aspectual and lexically empty; all Yiddish prefixes can be used derivationally as well as aspectually. This claim is supported by the concluding description of aspectual prefixes in Section 1.2.2.5.

Szulmajster-Celnikier, then, along with Baviskar, considers the aspectual opposition in Yiddish to operate in a restricted way within a small group of prefixed verbs, rather than throughout the whole language.

## 2.4.2 Peripheral Perfective/Imperfective Opposition

### 2.4.2.1 Rothstein

Rothstein's (1990) article is a review of Schaechter's 1951 dissertation, which appeared on microfilm in 1986. His article provides a good overview of the literature on Yiddish aspect to that time and highlights some major issues. Since this is a review, Rothstein does not present his own theory of Yiddish aspect, but he does raise important questions about the underlying assumptions of many analyses of Yiddish aspect.

Rothstein questions whether Yiddish prefixed verbs should be considered perfective at all.

"While the parallel between Yiddish prefixed verbs and Slavic prefixed perfective verbs is suggestive, no convincing argument has been made in the literature for the perfectivity of Yiddish prefixed verbs. Perhaps it would be more accurate to claim that the essential function of Yiddish verbal prefixes is to make atelic verbs telic." (p.145)

The perfectivity of prefixed verbs is essential to the arguments of Schaechter (1986), U. Weinreich (1977) and Baviskar (1974). If Yiddish prefixed verbs are not perfective, the claims collapse both for a morphologically reflected

perfective/imperfective opposition in Yiddish and for the extensive influence of Slavic prefixed verbs on Yiddish aspect.

Rothstein also raises the issue of grammaticality, in particular, what it means to claim that aspect is a grammatical category in a particular language. Rothstein associates grammaticality with obligatoriness and follows Jakobson in claiming that obligatory distinctions in a language are expressed by grammatical means and that non-obligatory distinctions are expressed lexically. In the quote below Rothstein presents four criteria for judging whether aspect is grammatical in a language.

Maslov (1978:24-8) proposed the following four-part criterion for affirming the presence of aspect as a grammatical category in a given language: it must be the case that (1) for a large part (sometimes all) of the verbal lexicon (2) some aspectual meanings (3) are regularly expressed (4) by means of paradigmatically opposed grammatical forms of a single verb. No such general criterion has been applied in discussions of aspect in Yiddish. Instead, the usual approach has been to examine whether Yiddish does or does not have an aspectual system *like that of the Slavic languages*, i.e. whether the opposition perfective/imperfective is grammatical (+obligatory) in Yiddish. (p.144)

As we have seen, the question of whether Yiddish has an aspectual system "like that of the Slavic languages" has indeed been central to the discussion of Yiddish aspect. Many of the factors contributing to the predominance of this issue were presented at the beginning of this chapter. The issues that Rothstein raises, as to whether prefixed verbs are perfective, whether the expression of aspect is obligatory in Yiddish, and whether Yiddish aspect should be considered grammatical by these or other criteria, are further addressed in the next chapter. The challenge to apply Maslov's criteria to a discussion of Yiddish aspect is taken up in Section 3.4.2.

#### 2.4.2.2 Aronson

Aronson (1985) focusses on distinguishing between lexical and grammatical expressions of aspect. As an example of lexical aspect, Aronson gives the contrast between 'eat' and 'consume' in English. This is the same type of contrast that Schaechter presents with the Yiddish *zuxn* 'search' and *gefinen* 'find' described earlier. Aronson includes within the category of lexical expression the subclass of morphological aspectual marking. Here he includes pairs of expressions that include a common morpheme, as in the English 'eat' and 'eat up'. As discussed below, Aronson also categorizes as lexical aspect the equivalent Yiddish prefixed verbs such as *esn* and *opesn*. Aronson does not invoke the concept of obligatoriness which Rothstein introduces for differentiating lexical from grammatical categories.

Aronson (1985:172) describes the grammatical aspectual relationship, which he also calls paradigmatic, as being "one of mutual implication. The existence of one member of the opposition implies the existence of the other." He argues that this is a different relation from the one found in morphological aspect, where the affixed form implies the existence of the base but not vice versa. Examples he gives of grammatical aspect are the English opposition between the simple and progressive form, the French opposition between the *passé composé* and

the *imparfait*, and the Slavic opposition of perfective and derived imperfective suffixed forms.

Aronson gives three reasons for considering prefixation in Yiddish to be lexical rather than grammatical aspect. First, there is the lack of predictability as to which prefix perfectivizes a given simple verb. Second, as was seen in the discussion of Schachter's chart in (8) above, one simplex verb may take more than one perfectivizing prefix. Third, it is difficult to define the members of an aspectual pair. Together, Aronson argues, these characteristics point to a lexical rather than a grammatical expression of aspect. It appears then that, for Aronson, the factors required for aspectual prefixation to be considered grammatical are predictable prefixation, a one-to-one relationship between simple and prefixed verbs, and easily defined aspectual pairs. It should be noted that Aronson (1984) argues that prefixation in Slavic languages is also lexical for essentially the same reasons given here, a claim not universally accepted.

Aronson argues that there are two grammatical aspectual constructions in Yiddish: the stem construction, which he calls the 'semelfactive', and the habitual past *fleg* 'used to', which he refers to as the 'iterative'.

Aronson's argument for the grammatical nature of the stem construction rests on his assumption that if a construction is part of the verbal paradigm then it must be considered grammatical. His argument for the stem construction being part of the verbal paradigm is based on the evidence that the stem is verbal rather than nominal. As discussed earlier in section 1.2.4, the stems formed from separably prefixed verbs and reflexive verbs are not equivalent to derived nominals. Aronson gives the data in (12) which shows the difference between the verb stems and deverbal nouns derived from the same prefixed verbs. Since the stem in the stem construction is different from the deverbal nominal, Aronson argues that the stem must be verbal and so concludes that the whole construction must be part of the verbal paradigm.

(12) Comparison of Verbal Noun and Verb Stem

Verb	Verbal Noun	Semelfactive	
<i>iberkukn</i>	<i>iberkuk</i>	<i>a kuk iber ton</i>	'examine'
<i>avekforn</i>	<i>avekfor</i>	<i>a for avek ton</i>	'depart'
<i>unterzogn</i>	<i>unterzog</i>	<i>a zog unter gebn</i>	'prompt'

The evidence is strong that the stem in the stem construction is verbal, both on the basis of the form of the stem itself, and on its case-assigning properties and influence on the choice of past auxiliary (Taube 1987, Gold 1993, 1994a). With respect to case assignment, if the stem were nominal it would behave as the direct object of the verb *gebn* or *tun* and so would be assigned accusative case. Since the verbs *gebn* and *tun* only assign one accusative case, one would expect that no other argument in the stem construction could be assigned accusative case. However, as pointed out by Taube (1987), the indirect object in the stem construction can also be assigned accusative case, as shown in (13b) and (13c) below.

- (13) a. er hot ir a kush getun  
           he has her (dat) a kiss done  
           'he gave her a kiss'

- b. er hot **zi** a kush getun  
 he has her (accus) a kiss done  
 'he gave her a kiss'
- c. er hot a kitsl geton dos **kind**  
 he has a tickle done the child (accus)  
 'he tickled the child'

Example (13a) shows the indirect object in dative case, as expected if the stem *kush* is assigned accusative. However (13b) shows that this sentence is also grammatical with the recipient in accusative case. Similarly in (13c) the indirect object is in accusative case, not in the dative *dem kind* as would be expected. It appears then that the stem is not receiving case as an argument of the verb *tun*, which indicates that it is not behaving as a nominal argument.

Some evidence of influence on the choice of past auxiliary indicates that the stem has verbal properties. The verbs *gebn* and *tun* are both conjugated with the auxiliary *hobn*. Thus one would expect that auxiliary to always be used with the stem construction. However the auxiliary *zayn* is sometimes found if the stem is derived from a verb conjugated with *zayn*, as in the examples below from Taube (1987).

- (14) a. der porits mit der pritse **hobn** a fal getun af di knis  
 the landowner and his wife have a fall done on their knees  
 'the landowner and his wife fell on their knees'
- b. er iz dernox a fal getun af dem stroyzak  
 he is afterwards a fall done on his straw-bag  
 'he afterwards fell on his straw-bag'

In the sentences in (14) the stem *fal* is derived from the verb *faln* 'to fall', which takes the auxiliary *zayn*. The stem construction in (14a) uses the auxiliary *hobn* as would be expected with the verb *tun*; while the same stem construction uses the auxiliary *zayn* in (14b). Thus it appears that the choice of auxiliary in the stem construction is affected by the nature of the verb stem, again indicating that the stem is not functioning simply as a nominal argument of the verbs *gebn* or *tun*.

Although there is convincing evidence that the stem is verbal, it does not necessarily follow that the stem construction is therefore part of the verbal paradigm of the particular verb involved, as Aronson assumes. I argue against such a view in Section 3.4.1.2.

The habitual past, formed with *fleg*, has not been as central to the discussion of Yiddish aspect as prefixed verbs and the stem construction. It is generally categorized as an aspectual construction although Thieroff (1994) treats it as a tense. The habitual past is formed with *fleg* 'used to' plus the infinitive, as in *ix fleg zogn* 'I used to say'. It is shown inflected for all persons in (15) below.

- (15) Habitual past: 'I used to say, you used to say . . . '

	<u>singular</u>	<u>plural</u>
1	<i>ix fleg zogn</i>	<i>mir flegn zogn</i>
2	<i>du flegst zogn</i>	<i>ir flegt zogn</i>
3	<i>er/zi flegt zogn</i>	<i>zey flegn zogn</i>

Aronson argues that *fleg* should be considered a grammatical expression of aspect because it patterns like other verbs that he considers to be grammatical auxiliaries. He compares *fleg* to the *vel* which, followed by an infinitive, expresses the future, as illustrated in (16). This construction is discussed in fuller detail in Chapter 5.

(16) Future: 'I will say, you will say. . . '

	<u>singular</u>	<u>plural</u>
1	<i>ix vel zogn</i>	<i>mir veln zogn</i>
2	<i>du vest zogn</i>	<i>ir vet zogn</i>
3	<i>er/zi vet zogn</i>	<i>zey veln zogn</i>

Aronson points out that, like *vel*, *fleg* appears in only one construction; it has no other lexical function. He concludes, then, that *fleg* has only a grammatical function and not a lexical one. Aronson also claims that all Yiddish grammatical auxiliaries are 'defective' to some degree in that they lack certain forms such as a past, an infinitive, an imperative, and a participial form. Since *fleg* is similarly defective, Aronson argues that it must also be grammatical. On the basis of these comparisons with verbs that Aronson assumes have grammatical rather than lexical functions, he argues that *fleg* is paradigmatic, and therefore a grammatical expression of aspect. While there are indeed parallels between *fleg* and *vel*, I draw a different conclusion from the comparison and argue in Section 5.4 that both constructions should be considered lexical.

One problem for Aronson's analysis is an apparently inconsistent use of the term 'morphological'. At the beginning of the paper, the term 'morphological' is used to describe a type of lexical aspect:

"Perhaps the most significant subclass of lexical marking of aspectual relations can be called the *morphological* or *morphologized*." (p.171)

However, in the quotes below, Aronson clearly groups 'morphological' along with paradigmatic aspect; he contrasts these with lexical aspect. That is, in these quotes, morphological aspect is considered grammatical.

"The question is, on what level are these [aspectual] relations marked? Are they paradigmatic, i.e., morphological; syntagmatic (syntactic); or lexical, i.e., idiomatic?" (p.175)

"On the basis of our first criterion, then, forms with *fleg* + infinitive will be regarded as a morphological, paradigmatic aspectual form, part of the paradigm of the verb represented in this construction by the infinitive." (p.176)

Thus it seems that the morphology of the prefixed verbs is lexical but the morphology of the stem construction and *fleg* is grammatical. The apparently ambiguous use of the term 'morphological' can be resolved if the morphology of prefixed verbs is considered derivational and so lexical, and the morphology of *fleg* and the stem constructions is considered inflectional and so paradigmatic. However, Aronson does not indicate that he is dealing with two different types of morphology.

The question of lexical versus syntactic aspect arises again in the proposals for the structure of these constructions in Chapter 6.

Despite the confusion in terminology, it is clear that Aronson considers Yiddish prefixation to be a category of lexical aspect and the stem construction and *fleg* to be grammatical. He concludes, as partially quoted at the opening of this chapter:

"[in Yiddish] The basic Slavic opposition, perfective/imperfective (as a grammatical opposition), is totally lacking. The oppositions iterative/non-iterative and semelfactive/non-semelfactive, marginal in Slavic, form here the basic sets of grammatical oppositions of aspect." (p.185)

Aronson breaks out of the mold of analyzing Yiddish on the model of Slavic aspect. He rejects Slavic-style prefixation as central to Yiddish aspect, and rejects the Slavic perfective/imperfective opposition as the central aspectual opposition. Whereas Schaechter (1952) argues that prefixation is a grammatical expression of aspect in Yiddish, Aronson claims it is not. He does not argue against prefixation being perfective, but claims that this perfectivity is lexical and not grammatical. Aronson shifts the debate from whether a Slavic-style perfective/imperfective aspectual opposition exists in Yiddish to a consideration of which Yiddish aspectual constructions are grammatical. He focusses the discussion on two inherently Yiddish constructions, rather than searching for Slavic influence. Despite the change in focus, Aronson keeps the debate within the parameters of binary oppositions, following his claim that grammatical categories must reflect a relationship of mutual implication. The issue of whether mutual implication exists for the stem construction and *fleg* is addressed in the next chapter.

#### 2.4.2.3 Taube

Taube (1987) devotes his article to an in-depth discussion of the stem construction and its grammaticalization in Yiddish. Taube uses the term 'grammaticalization' to mean the process by which the stem construction took on a 'grammatical' function, which was to express instantaneous aspect. According to Taube, this process was accompanied by a reanalysis of the structure of the stem construction: from the earlier structure of a verb and its complement to the present structure of a light verb plus a verb stem. This structure and the extension beyond the Germanic model are described in Sections 1.2.3. and 1.2.4.

Taube's analysis is diachronic; Aronson's (1985) is synchronic. Nonetheless, the result of a diachronic process of grammaticalization is a grammatical construction, and so the two authors' conceptions of what makes a construction grammatical can be compared. For Taube, it is the expression of aspect that makes the stem construction grammatical; the accompanying syntactic changes are secondary. For Aronson it is the inverse: the syntactic evidence is primary, the aspectual secondary. It is the evidence that the stem construction is part of the verbal paradigm that makes it grammatical, not the expression of aspect. For Aronson, the regular expression of aspect is not necessarily grammatical; as discussed above, he categorizes verbal prefixation as a lexical expression of aspect. Aronson also requires that a grammatical category express a binary relationship; in this case, [+/- semelfactive]. Taube does not define a grammatical category through polar relationships. Although he notes that the instantaneous aspect is a sub-



category of perfective aspect in the Slavic languages, he does not discuss the Yiddish construction in terms of a perfective/imperfective contrast or any other binary terms.

As quoted in Section 1.3.4, Taube argues strongly for Slavic influence on the development of the stem construction beyond the Germanic model, citing Max Weinreich's work for support. He also argues that it is under the influence of Slavic grammatical aspect that Yiddish came to have a 'need' to express aspect formally.

"The contact with Slavic, as Max Weinreich put it (1973 vol.2 p.186), not only enriched the lexicon of Yiddish, but also modified its structure. Among other changes, Yiddish has developed a need to express in a systematic formal manner distinctions which were motivated by Slavic grammatical categories." (p.13)

Taube, like Aronson, sets the discussion of aspect in terms of the grammatical nature of particular constructions, rather than whether a Slavic imperfective/perfective opposition is present in Yiddish.

#### 2.4.2.4 Wexler

Wexler (1964) discusses the Slavic influence on the functions of three Yiddish verbal prefixes, as outlined in Section 1.1.3 above. Although he argues that there has been strong Slavic influence on Yiddish prefixation he does not propose that a Slavic style perfective/imperfective opposition exists in Yiddish. Rather, Wexler claims that the only feature that the Yiddish and Slavic aspectual systems have in common is that both languages can express perfective force through prefixation. He argues that there are important criteria which distinguish the Slavic aspectual system from the Yiddish, arguments discussed above in connection with Aronson and Baviskar: Yiddish does not associate imperfective and perfective verbs in pairs; aspectual distinctions are not obligatory in Yiddish; there is no formal interaction of aspect and tense in Yiddish. For these reasons, Wexler concludes:

"I myself wonder if we are justified in speaking of a grammatical category of aspect distinction in Yiddish." (p.91)

Wexler accepts that at least some Yiddish prefixed verbs can be described as perfective. However he doubts whether there is grammatical aspect in Yiddish, at least with respect to prefixed verbs. In this way, his arguments align with those of Aronson (1985), who similarly argues against there being a grammatical perfective/imperfective contrast in Yiddish expressed through verbal prefixation.

#### 2.4.2.5 Birnbaum

Birnbaum (1979:271-273) describes Yiddish as having seven aspectual categories, which I have summarized in (17) below.

(17) a. Perfective

denotes:	the action of the verb is completed
structure:	prefixation
example:	<i>xapn</i> 'grab, seize', <i>tsuxapn</i> 'snatch away' <i>hern</i> 'hear', <i>derhern</i> 'perceive (by hearing)'

- b. Singulative  
denotes: single, momentary action  
structure: stem construction  
example: *ix tu a lax* 'I give a laugh'
- c. Inchoative  
denotes: beginning of event  
structure: *nemen zix* + infinitive  
example: *zey nemen zix loyfn*  
they take self to run  
'they start running'
- d. Iterative  
denotes: repetition/non-interruption of action  
structure: *haltn in eyn* + infinitive  
example: *zey haltn in eyn shraybn*  
they hold in one to write  
'they keep writing'
- e. Habitual  
denotes: habit, activity, occupation  
structure: *tun* 'do' + infinitive  
example: *ix tu shraybn*  
I do to write  
'I write'
- f. Past Habitual  
denotes: action recurring in past  
structure: *fleg* + infinitive  
example: *ix fleg shraybn*  
I used to write  
'I used to write/be writing'
- g. Causative  
denotes: subject causes somebody/thing to perform an action  
structure: *maxn* 'make' + infinitive  
example: *er vet dix maxn zogn a lign*  
he will you(acc) make say a lie  
'he will make you lie'

The constructions which have been discussed to this point as aspectual are all included here: prefixation is described as 'perfective' in (17a), the stem construction as 'singulative' in (17b) and *fleg* as 'past habitual' in (17f). There is some variation in terminology and categorization compared with the other authors. Schaechter (1986) includes the construction *nemen* + infinitive 'to start' as creating perfective 'initiative' verbs as shown in the chart in (8) above; he notes that a variant form of *nemen* is *nemen zix*. Birnbaum categorizes *nemen zix* + infinitive as the 'inchoative' construction in (17c). However, whereas Schaechter also lists prefixed verbs with an inchoative meaning as 'initiative', Birnbaum includes them in the separate category of perfective, (17a), where he gives the example *derhern* 'to

perceive (by hearing). For Birnbaum, categorization by morphology is primary, in contrast to semantic primacy for Schaechter.

Birnbaum and Aronson use the term 'iterative' with different meanings: Aronson uses the term for *fleg*, which Birnbaum calls the 'past habitual'; Birnbaum uses 'iterative' for the construction shown in (17d), which has more of a repetitive meaning. Birnbaum does not include in the above list the construction *haltn in* 'to be in the process of', which is central to U. Weinreich's (1977) description of Yiddish aspect. Birnbaum is more purely descriptive, collecting a number of prominent aspectual constructions; Weinreich is more theory-driven, including those constructions that support the perfective/imperfective analysis.

Birnbaum's definition of aspect is broad enough to include the causative in (17g) which is not normally considered an aspectual construction. As noted above, aspect is generally associated with ways of viewing "the internal temporal constituency of a situation" (Comrie 1976:5). Birnbaum (1979:271) states: "The category of aspect serves to convey, beyond the basic meaning of the verb, the specific way in which an action/process etc. takes place." While "the internal temporal constituency" of the traditional definition would not include the motivation for an action, "the specific way in which an action takes place" could. It was argued in section 1.1.3.4 that the causative function of the prefix *far-* could not be considered aspectual because it was not part of the relationship between two verbs; the prefixation changed an adjective to a verb. Here, however the causative construction in (17g) is formed with a verb, and so, according to Birnbaum's definition, can be considered an aspectual construction.

Similarly, although habituais are commonly considered aspectual constructions, it could be argued that the habitual performance of an action is not related to the *internal* temporal structure of the each individual event but to its external repetition. According to the narrower definition, habituais are therefore not aspectual constructions. However the habitual performance of an action can satisfy Birnbaum's broader definition of "the way in which an action takes place". Birnbaum also goes further than most linguists in including the construction in (17e) as aspectual; while the Yiddish past habitual in widely described as an aspectual construction, what is here termed the 'habitual' is not.

Birnbaum treats the 'perfective' category as one of many types of aspects; he does not treat the perfective/imperfective contrast as central to Yiddish aspect, and in fact, does not use the term 'imperfective' at all. Birnbaum does not apparently consider Yiddish to have a single grammatical system of expressing aspect, but rather a number of constructions that contribute aspectual information. Before listing the constructions in (17) above, he states:

"Although there are in Yiddish no morphological characteristics constituting this category, there seems to be a tendency to aspectual thinking, resulting in the following groups." (p.271)

This "tendency to aspectual thinking" in Yiddish is a sentiment that echoes in many authors' work, an intuition that the expression of aspect has a particular salience in Yiddish even if it does not have full grammatical expression. This seems to be what Baviskar (1974:32) means in terms of Yiddish developing a "preference of greater precision" in expressing aspect, and what Taube (1987:13) means by the Yiddish "need to express" aspectual distinctions formally. Unlike the other authors, Birnbaum does not associate this "tendency to aspectual thinking" with Slavic

influence; he limits his discussion of Slavic contact to lexical borrowings unrelated to aspect.

Birnbaum's approach is somewhat outside the general terms of debate on Yiddish aspect. He does not treat the subject in terms of a perfective/ imperfective contrast; he does not set up other binary oppositions; he does not look for Slavic influence on Yiddish aspect; he does not argue for the grammatical nature of a particular construction. The work is descriptive, and sets out a series of constructions which Birnbaum considers to have aspectual import.

#### 2.4.2.6 Zaretski

Zaretski (1926:195), like Birnbaum, views perfectivity as just one of many different *modifikatsye fun a tuung* 'modifications of an action'. Among the 11 categories that Zaretski lists he includes the five given in (18) below, with 'perfectivity' in (18e).

- (18) Zaretski's 'modifications of an action'
- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| a. <i>onheyb</i> 'beginning'             |                                  |
| <i>lib krign</i>                         | 'get a liking for, come to love' |
| b. <i>sof</i> 'end':                     |                                  |
| <i>opleyenen, derleyenen</i>             | 'finish reading'                 |
| c. <i>gixkeyt</i> 'speed':               |                                  |
| <i>a shprung ton</i>                     | 'jump quickly'                   |
| d. <i>oysshepikeyt</i> 'exhaustiveness': |                                  |
| <i>iberleyenen (dem gantsn bux)</i>      | 'read (the whole book)'          |
| e. <i>perfektivkeyt</i> 'perfectivity':  |                                  |
| <i>lebn/shtarbn</i>                      | 'live/die'                       |
| <i>leyenen/iberleyenen</i>               | 'read /read through'             |

Zaretski does not define *perfektivkeyt*; his examples involve pairs of words which he designates as contrasting *doyerik* 'durative' and *moment-tuung* 'momentary action'. From the examples in (18e) it can be seen that the second member of each pair, *shtarbn* 'die' and *iberleyenen* 'read through' are both associated with the end of the durative event. However Zaretski distinguishes perfectivity (18e) from 'end' (18b) and exhaustiveness (18d), although he apparently did not see these categories as exclusive, since he uses the same verb *iberleyenen* as an example both of the 'exhaustive' construction and of perfectivity.

Like Schachter (1986), Zaretski bases his category of perfectivity upon semantics rather than morphology: he includes the morphologically unrelated pair *lebn/shtarbn* as an example of perfectivity and notes that perfectivity is often, but not always, associated with prefixation. Although Schachter (1986) describes the perfective/ imperfective contrast as being the preeminent aspectual contrast in the language, in his 1951 dissertation Schachter took an approach similar to that of Birnbaum and Zaretski. There he treats the perfective/imperfective contrast as one of many aspectual oppositions functioning in Yiddish, including punctual/linear, cursive/noncursive, and diminutive/attentive.

## 2.5 Summary

The standard analysis of Slavic aspect has been very influential in analyses of Yiddish aspect. Such factors as the history of aspectual studies, the substantial language contact between Yiddish and Slavic languages, the fusion theory of the development of Yiddish and Yiddish language nationalism have contributed to the predominance of the Slavic model. The analyses of Yiddish aspect focus on verb prefixation and the stem construction as well as other periphrastic constructions with aspectual information, in particular the habitual past formed with *fleg*. The approaches taken to Yiddish aspect can be divided into three categories:

### 1. Perfective vs. Imperfective Opposition

The authors taking this approach argue that Yiddish aspect follows the Slavic model of having one basic aspectual opposition, that of perfective versus imperfective. According to U. Weinreich (1977) and Schaechter (1986), all verbs and periphrastic verbal constructions participate in this opposition. Weinreich treats this distinction as a formal one, morphologically based, while Schaechter's approach is more semantically based. Others, such as Baviskar (1974) view the perfective/imperfective contrast as limited to a restricted number of prefixed verbs rather than language pervasive.

### 2. Grammatical vs. Lexical Aspectual Constructions

According to this analysis, there are several aspectual oppositions in Yiddish; those that are grammatical can be differentiated from those that are lexical. The emphasis in this approach is on the opposition of grammatical/lexical rather than perfective/imperfective as in the first approach. Slavic aspect is considered to be expressed grammatically. Aronson (1985) argues that the perfective/imperfective contrast expressed by prefixation is not a grammatical opposition in Yiddish but the oppositions [+/- semelfactive] associated with the stem construction and [+/- iterative] of the past habitual are both grammatical oppositions. Taube (1987) argues that the stem construction has grammaticalized.

### 3. A Variety of Aspectual Constructions

The third approach, as found in Birnbaum (1979) and Zaretski (1926), lists a series of constructions that are considered aspectual. There is no predominance given to any one aspectual opposition and no discussion of lexical versus grammatical aspect. The stem construction, verb prefixation, and habitual past with *fleg*, are simply three among many expressions of aspect; they have no special status.

In the next chapter I evaluate the suitability of the terms perfective and imperfective for Yiddish aspectual constructions, and analyze the claims that specific constructions are grammatical as opposed to lexical.

## CHAPTER 3 PERFECTIVITY AND GRAMMATICALITY

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to a discussion of the issues raised in evaluating the different analyses described in the previous chapter. Sections 3.2 and 3.3 deal with the suitability of the perfective/imperfective terminology for describing Yiddish aspect. I argue that the perfective/imperfective contrast does not provide an adequate description of Yiddish aspect as a whole, whether that contrast is based on semantic or morphological criteria. I then argue that the terms 'perfective' and 'imperfective' should not be used to describe aspectually prefixed verbs as a group, isolated pairs of prefixed and simple verbs, or the stem construction.

Section 3.4 focusses on whether Yiddish aspectual constructions are grammatical, as opposed to lexical, expressions. Different authors have suggested that each of the aspectual constructions discussed - prefixed verbs, the stem construction and the past habitual - are grammatical expressions of aspect. In order to evaluate these claims, it is necessary to investigate issues of obligatoriness, mutual implication and the nature of the Yiddish verbal paradigm. I conclude that aspect in Yiddish is a lexical rather than a grammatical phenomenon, and the final sections of this chapter outline some of the implications of this conclusion. These include implications for Yiddish syntactic structure, for the nature of Slavic influence on Yiddish aspect, and for the fusion theory of Yiddish development.

### 3.2 Perfective/Imperfective as a Language-Pervasive Contrast

#### 3.2.1 Problems with the Morphological Analysis

Both U. Weinreich (1977) and Schaechter (1986) claim that all Yiddish verbs are perfective or imperfective. While for Schaechter this opposition is primarily a semantic one, Weinreich's categorization is morphologically motivated. His system is based upon verb prefixation and is the most closely modelled on the Slavic aspectual system of all the analyses of Yiddish aspect. The main points of the Slavic model (Sl), described earlier in Section 2.1.2, are repeated below with comparisons to Weinreich's analysis for Yiddish (Y) following each point:

- Sl.i. Aspect is an obligatorily marked category of the Slavic verb, meaning that all Slavic verbs are marked for aspect.
- Y.i. All Yiddish verbs are marked for aspect, in that they are either perfective or imperfective.
- Sl ii. Three morphologically related verb forms are involved: a root or simplex form; a prefixed form based on the root; and a suffixed form based on the prefixed verb.
- Y.ii. For the most part, two morphologically related verb forms are involved: a root or simplex form and a prefixed form based on the root. The stem construction and the *haltn in* construction both play smaller roles.

- Sl.iii. The simplex or root form is usually, but not always, imperfective.
- Y.iii. Weinreich apparently assumes that the simplex form is always imperfective, although it is not explicitly claimed.
- Sl.iv-a. The perfective verb is usually formed from the simplex stem by prefixation, although there are other devices used, including, for example, vowel changes and stress shift.
- Y.iv-a. The perfective verb is usually formed from the simplex stem by prefixation; the stem construction can be used when prefixation is not available.
- Sl.iv-b. There are many perfectivizing prefixes. It is not predictable which prefix a verb will use to form the perfective.
- Y.iv-b. There are many perfectivizing prefixes. It is not predictable which prefix a verb will use to form the perfective.
- Sl.iv-c. The prefixes originally had some semantic content, which was generally adverbial or prepositional in meaning. The most commonly used prefixes are widely considered to have only an aspectual function now, that is, to mark perfective verbs.
- Y.iv-c. The prefixes originally had some lexical content, which was generally adverbial in meaning. Since Weinreich gives the same gloss for simple and prefixed verbs that he considers to be aspectual pairs, one can conclude that he considers the perfectivizing prefixes to be semantically empty and to have only an aspectual function, that is, to mark perfective verbs.
- Sl.v. A corresponding imperfective is formed from perfective prefixed verbs (or from perfective simplex verbs) by the addition of a derivational suffix.
- Y.v. A corresponding imperfective is formed from perfective prefixed verbs through the use of the construction *haltn in* + infinitive.
- Sl.vi. There is an interaction between aspect and tense: the non-past form of an imperfective verb has present meaning, while the non-past form of the perfective verb has a future meaning. Imperfective verbs form a periphrastic future whereas perfective verbs are not found in that construction at all.
- Y.vi. There is no formal interaction in Yiddish between aspect and tense.

There are striking similarities between the Slavic aspectual system and the way in which Weinreich analyzes Yiddish aspect. However there are also serious discrepancies that undermine the argument that Yiddish has a language-pervasive aspectual system similar to the Slavic one. The differences between the Yiddish and Slavic systems can be discussed in terms of three issues: first, the aspectual functions of the Yiddish constructions involved; secondly, the obligatoriness of the perfective/imperfective distinction in Yiddish; and thirdly, the interaction of aspect and tense in each language.

### 3.2.1.1 Aspectual Functions

For the purposes of evaluating Weinreich's proposals, I assume for this part of the discussion that the relationship between simple and aspectually prefixed verbs reflects an imperfective/perfective contrast. If not, the parallel between Weinreich's model of Yiddish aspect and the Slavic model immediately collapses. The assumption of this aspectual relationship allows me to focus on the other weaknesses of Weinreich's argument.

Point (iv-c) above refers to the aspectual nature of the perfectivizing prefixes. Weinreich treats these prefixes in Yiddish as semantically empty, emphasizing their aspectual role. However, as was described in Chapter One, it is not at all clear that even the prefixes most frequently designated as perfective are truly semantically empty. This weakens the argument that the main function of these prefixes is perfectivizing; however, since there is some debate as to whether the Slavic prefixes themselves are truly empty, this weakness in the argument is not a fatal flaw.

A bigger problem for Weinreich is his treatment of the stem construction as performing the same perfectivizing function as prefixation, as described in point (iv-a). As was discussed earlier, the stem construction and prefixation do not contribute the same type of temporal information. The strongest evidence for this is the fact that the stem construction can be based on prefixed verbs that Weinreich considers perfective: for example the verb *iberleyenen* which Weinreich glosses as 'read *pf*' is shown in the stem construction *gebn a leyn iber* in Schaechter's (1986:410) chart of perfective and imperfective verbs. Since the verb from which the stem is formed is already perfective, and since Weinreich treats perfective/imperfective as a binary opposition, the primary function of the stem construction cannot in this example be perfectivizing. One cannot make an already perfective verb more perfective.

The proposed parallel illustrated in (v) between productive Slavic suffixation and the Yiddish *haltn in* construction has a similar weakness. The sole function of Slavic suffixation is to imperfectivize perfective verbs; however, this is not the role of *haltn in*. As discussed in Section 2.3.1.3, this construction frequently combines with verbs which Weinreich treats as imperfective, such as *shraybn* 'to write' and *esn* 'to eat', giving sentences like *ix halt in shraybn* 'I am (in the middle of) writing', and *zi halt in shraybn a briv* 'she's (in the middle of) writing a letter'. Using the same argument as that advanced for the stem construction above, if the function of *haltn in* were to make a perfective verb imperfective, it would not be found with imperfective verbs.

As described in point (ii) the Slavic aspectual system is based upon three morphologically related verb forms and the Yiddish model proposed by Weinreich is based on prefixation and two periphrastic constructions, the stem construction and *haltn in*. However I have argued above that the periphrastic constructions do not perform the same aspectual functions as their proposed Slavic counterparts,



suffixation and prefixation. Weinreich's model breaks down, then, because Yiddish has no way of forming perfective counterparts to imperfective verbs that do not have prefixed counterparts, and no way of forming imperfective counterparts to derivationally prefixed perfective verbs.

### 3.2.1.2 Obligatoriness

Point (i) above indicates that aspectual distinctions are considered to be obligatory in Slavic languages; the question then is whether they are obligatory in Yiddish. First, if the distinction were obligatory, one would expect all, or almost all, Yiddish verbs to be easily categorized as either perfective or imperfective. However, this is not the case: as noted earlier, Weinreich designates only a small minority of verbs in his dictionary as either perfective or imperfective. Further, if, as argued above, the stem construction and *haltn in* do not function to create more perfective and imperfective verbal counterparts, then the number of perfective and imperfective verbal expressions in Yiddish is even more limited than Weinreich suggests.

Secondly, if the aspectual distinction were obligatory, one would expect considerable consistency in the use of imperfective and perfective verbs among Yiddish speakers. Bache (1985:9) comments that "... native Russians are perfectly capable of classifying Russian verb forms into two sets according to aspect". If Yiddish has an aspectual system like that of Russian, one might expect native Yiddish speakers to be able to classify verbs according to aspect. However, as described in Section 1.2.2.3, when 169 native Yiddish speakers were asked to explain the difference between *shraybn* and *onshraybn*, less than half the respondents described *onshraybn* as completive, and a third of the respondents believed the words to be synonymous (Nath 1988). If these verbs were indeed the imperfective and perfective forms of 'to write', as Weinreich proposes, then one would expect Yiddish speakers to consistently recognize and identify the difference between the two verb forms.

Baviskar (1974) also investigated the use by native Yiddish speakers of simplex and prefixed verbs, which, like Weinreich, she considers to be imperfective and perfective respectively, and compared this usage to the patterns found in Slavic perfectives and imperfective verbs. As part of the research, Baviskar asked her informants to translate into Yiddish the English sentence "I am grating the cheese". Since this verb expresses duration and is used in the present, one would predict that the informants would use the simple verb *raybn* which Baviskar considers imperfective. However, of the three informants, only one used the simple verb *raybn*. The other two gave prefixed responses: the separably prefixed *onraybn* and the inseparably prefixed *tseraybn*. Weinreich designates both these verbs as perfective.

Again, for the present English sentence 'I am wiping the table' all three informants offered prefixed forms: two gave the verb *opvishn* and one gave *oysvishn*, both of which Weinreich labels perfective. None of the three suggested the simple verb *vishn*. It is not the case that the informants do not have the simple form in their vocabulary: when they were asked for the present participle form corresponding to the English 'wiping the table', two of the informants offered *vishndik* and one offered *opvishndik*. Therefore, at least two of the informants must have *vishn* in their vocabulary in order to be able to form the present participle *vishndik*.

This use of aspectually prefixed verbs as equivalents for the English present progressive and the present participle is very problematic for Weinreich's proposal of a Slavic-style perfective/imperfective contrast. Perfective verbs, according to

Weinreich's definition, designate completed events; they do not have duration and so they do not refer to events going on at the present time. If there were an obligatory perfective/imperfective contrast in Yiddish, one would predict that Yiddish speakers would consistently choose the simple, imperfective verb *raybn* 'grate' or *vishn* 'wipe' for this context.

Baviskar found unexpected use of prefixed forms in the future as well. For the Yiddish translation of 'I'll write him another letter' all three informants accepted prefixed forms: one informant offered *ix vel shraybn* for 'I will write' but when the prefixed form was prompted, accepted that as well; the second offered both *ix vel shraybn* and *ix vel onshraybn*, and the third gave *ix vel onshraybn*. For the sentence 'I'll cook dinner very soon', the first informant used the simple verb *koxn* but when prompted also accepted *opkoxn*; the second supplied *koxn* only, and the third, both *koxn* and *opkoxn*. Again, if the choice of simple or prefixed verb were obligatory, one would expect consistent use between speakers. Further, if the Yiddish obligatory usage paralleled the Slavic patterns one would not expect to find perfective prefixed verbs used in the periphrastic future. As discussed in Section 2.2.2, the present form of Slavic perfective verbs has future meaning and only imperfective Slavic verbs have a periphrastic future form.

From the variety of responses offered for present verbs, future verbs and present participles it seems evident that the choice of prefixed versus simple verbs, at least in these contexts, is not obligatory in Yiddish. These are contexts where there would be a clear differentiation in Slavic languages, since perfective forms are not used in the present, present participle or periphrastic future. One cannot argue either that there is an obligatory usage that varies from speaker to speaker since in many cases a single speaker accepted both prefixed and simple forms. Therefore the evidence from Baviskar's research clearly indicates that the choice of a perfective or imperfective verb in Yiddish cannot be claimed to be obligatory in the same way that it is in Slavic languages.

### 3.2.1.3 Aspect and Tense

The most obvious difference between Weinreich's model and that of Slavic aspect is that indicated in point (vi) above: Slavic perfective and imperfective verbs interact with tense in different ways. This means that for Slavic languages a test can be devised, based on tense, to distinguish perfective from imperfective verbs: if a verb can be used in the future periphrastic construction, then it is not perfective. The perfective/imperfective terminology in Slavic languages reflects the fact that there are two classes of verbs that can be distinguished on the basis of their usage and their interaction with tense. No such consistent pattern exists for Yiddish verbs. With respect to the periphrastic future, it can be seen from Baviskar's research, described above, that Yiddish speakers use both the simple and prefixed forms in the periphrastic future. No similar formal test for Yiddish aspect can be devised because there is no tense construction in Yiddish from which a certain aspectual class of verbs is excluded.

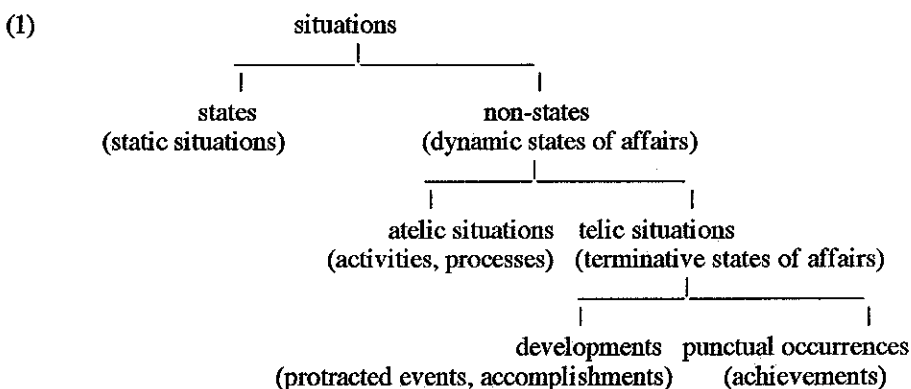
The evidence presented above undermines Weinreich's proposal that a perfective/imperfective opposition, similar to the Slavic model, operates throughout the Yiddish language. The assumption that Yiddish aspectual prefixation creates a perfective/imperfective relationship is discussed in Section 3.3.1 below.

### 3.2.2 Problems with the Semantic Analysis

Schachter's (1951, 1986) analyses of Yiddish aspect are neither purely morphological nor purely semantic. Rothstein (1991) and U. Weinreich (1952) both criticize Schachter's 1951 dissertation and the articles deriving from it (Schachter 1952a, 1952b) for not clearly separating the two approaches. In Schachter's (1986) text, the analysis is more firmly rooted in a semantic base; as discussed earlier, morphological considerations are secondary. Schachter (1986) can be therefore be used to illustrate the problems with a semantically based proposal that Yiddish has a language-pervasive perfective/imperfective contrast.

As described in Section 2.3.1.2, Schachter claims that all Yiddish verbs are either perfective or imperfective and presents *gefinen* 'to find' as an example of a perfective verb and *zuxn* 'to search' as an example of an imperfective verb. Schachter does not see a one-to-one relationship between perfective and imperfective verbs: chart (8) of Chapter 2 illustrates that Schachter lists up to three perfective counterparts for each imperfective verb. Further, although most of Schachter's discussion focusses on individual verbs, he also includes larger verbal expressions in this categorization: for example he contrasts *farn oyf a vizit tsu* 'to pay a visit to/go to visit', which he describes as dynamic and perfective, with *zayn oyf a vizit bay* 'be a guest at', which he considers static and imperfective. Schachter's model then differs greatly from Weinreich's and from the Slavic model outlined in Section 3.2 above: the perfective and imperfective forms are not necessarily morphologically related, there is no one-to-one relation between forms, and larger verbal expressions are included along with individual verbs.

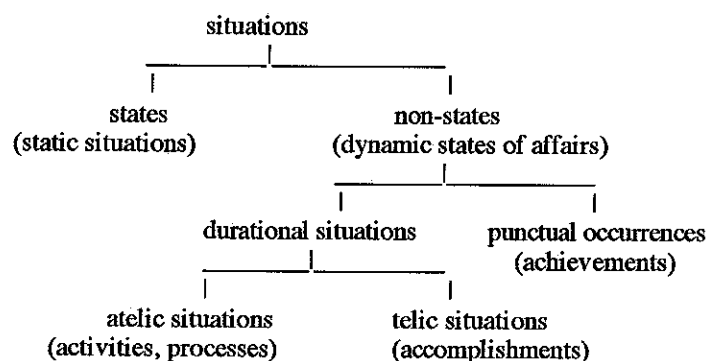
Schachter's use of the terms 'perfective' and 'imperfective' does not describe aspectual verbal behaviour that is specific to Yiddish. His categorizations are more easily understood as an overlay of the terminology of aspectual contrast upon universal semantic categories. This can be illustrated by comparing Schachter's model of Yiddish aspect with the semantic verb classes proposed by Vendler (1957). The chart in (1), from Binnick (1991:180), illustrates a model of situation classification based on Vendler's categories. It incorporates Vendler's categories of states, activities, accomplishments and achievements along with indications of telicity.



Rothstein (1990:145), with reference to Comrie (1976), defines a telic verb as characterizing "a process that leads up to a well-defined terminal point, beyond which the process cannot continue." Bache (1985:14) also notes that "this

dichotomy [telic versus atelic] applies only to processes and activities." In the above chart, however, punctual occurrences are categorized as telic. The chart is modified in (2) to reflect the fact that telicity is a characteristic of durational situations.

(2)



Schaechter's prime example of perfective/imperfective contrast, that of *gefinen* 'to find' and *suchen* 'to search' can be described in Vendler's terms as the contrast between an achievement ('to find') and an activity ('to search'). These verbs differ in semantic content, not in aspect: 'finding' is a different activity from 'searching'; it is not the case that 'finding' is a different way of 'viewing the internal temporal constituency' of 'searching'.

Schaechter's use of the term 'perfective' is essentially equivalent to 'punctual'. This can be seen in Schaechter's chart (1986:38) of the features of perfective and imperfective verbs, repeated in (3) below.

(3) Features of Perfective and Imperfective Verbs (Schaechter 1986)

	imperfective	perfective
in its development	+	-
completed action	-	+
one-time occurrence	-	+
in the present	+	-
with duration adverbial	+	-

Consider the three characteristics for which the perfective verbs are marked [-]: perfective verbs cannot show a situation in its development; they cannot express a situation in the present, and they are not modified by duration adverbials. These traits all point to a punctual occurrence, which, since it has no duration, cannot show a situation in its development, cannot be modified by duration adverbials and cannot be expressed in the present. Vendler (1957:103) claims that achievements in the present are used to express the immediate future or the historic present; this is similar to Schaechter's statement, noted earlier, that perfective verbs in the present are interpreted either as the immediate past or the immediate future. An event interpreted as occurring in the present cannot be punctual, it must have some duration in order to contain within it the utterance time with which the present moment is identified. Therefore the three negatively marked traits in (3) all point to the equivalence of Schaechter's perfectives with punctual verbs and so with Vendler's class of achievements.

The positive features listed for perfective verbs also describe punctual events. The feature 'one-time occurrence' refers specifically to the punctual nature of the stem construction in such expressions as *gebn a kush* 'give a kiss', where the event is considered to be a single kiss rather than a series of kisses. As discussed in Section 1.2.2, the stem construction can have several meanings including suddenness, quickness or diminution, but in every case it can be described as punctual. Punctual events are also 'completed actions', the other positive trait for perfective verbs in (3), since an event that has no duration must necessarily be viewed as completed.

All of the features of imperfective verbs describe a durational situation: the verb shows an event in its development, it can occur in the present, it can occur with duration adverbials, it does not denote a completed action or a one-time (punctual) occurrence. Therefore, according to the chart in (3), Schaechter uses the term 'perfective' to mean punctual and 'imperfective' to mean durational.

Schaechter's (1986:406-15) larger chart of perfective and imperfective verbs indicates the way in which his semantics of perfectivity interact with Yiddish morphology. Several entries are shown in (4) below. The column of imperfective verbs is primarily made up of simple verbs; prefixed verbs motivate the columns of 'termination' and 'initiation', and the 'moment' column is exclusively for the stem construction.

(4)

	imperfective	perfective		
		termination	initiation	moment
a.	<i>veynen</i> 'weep'	<i>opveynen</i> 'cease weeping'	<i>tseveynen zix</i> 'burst out weeping'	<i>gebn a veyn</i> 'weep a little'
b.	<i>zuxn</i> 'search'	<i>gefinen</i> 'find'	<i>nemen/onheybn zuxn</i> 'start to search'	<i>gebn a zux</i> 'search a little'
c.	<i>leyenen</i> 'read'	<i>iberleyenen</i> 'read through'	<i>nemen/onheybn leyenen</i> 'start to read'	<i>gebn a leyn iber</i> 'give a quick read through'
d.	<i>kushn</i> 'kiss'	<i>onkushn zix</i>	<i>tsekushn zix</i> 'kiss each other'	<i>gebn a kush</i> 'give a kiss'
e.	<i>shikn</i> 'send'	<i>avek/tsushikn</i> 'send away, send to'	<i>nemen/onheybn shikn</i> 'start to send'	<i>gebn a shik avek/tsu</i> 'send away/to suddenly'
f.	<i>redn telefonish</i> 'speak on the telephone'	<i>telefoniren</i> 'telephone'	<i>nemen/onheybn redn telefonish</i> 'begin to speak on the telephone'	<i>gebn a telefonir op</i> 'give a quick phone call to'
g.	<i>zayn</i> 'to be'	<i>opzayn</i> 'stay (as long as)'	<i>vern</i> 'become'	-----

It should be noted that the feature 'completed action' from chart (3) is not equivalent to the category 'termination' in chart (4). The nature of the 'termination' expressed in a verb like *opbodn* 'to finish bathing' is not the same as 'completed action'. The verb *opbodn* specifies the termination of the process of bathing. However, a verb does not have to signify the terminal point of a process in order to be considered a completed event. A completed action contrasts with a durational

event and not with an incompleted or unfinished action. For example, *tseveyneen zix* 'to burst out weeping' in row (a) can be considered a completed action although it indicates the initiation of an event. 'To burst out weeping' is a punctual event, it has no duration; therefore it must be viewed as completed. For this reason, events of initiation, like *tseveyneen zix* can be considered perfective by Schaechter's own definition. Verbs that indicate the final moment of an activity are also completed by this same definition, in that they are punctual: the act described by *opveyneen* 'to cease weeping' is punctual as 'to cease' has no duration. Therefore *opveyneen* is perfective by Schaechter's definition because it indicates a completed event, not because it describes the final point of the activity of weeping.

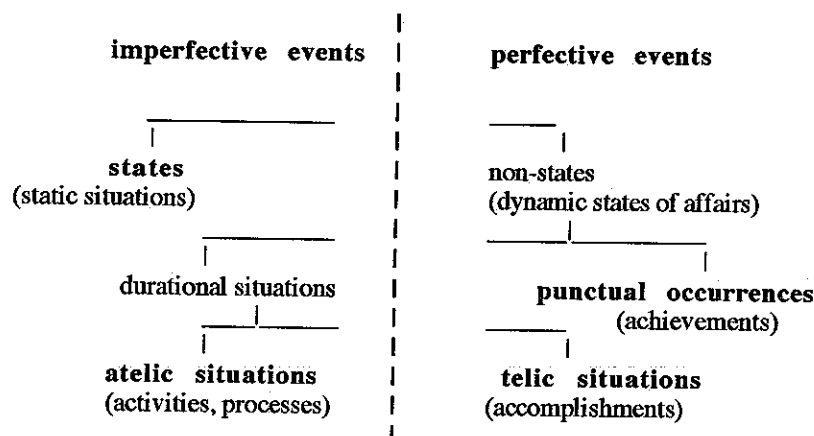
However, although Schaechter specifies that perfective verbs have no duration in chart (3), Schaechter includes durational as well as punctual verbs in his category of 'termination'. The punctual verbs included indicate the final moment of an activity, like *opveyneen* 'to cease weeping' in (4a) and *gefinen* 'to find' in (4b). Schaechter also includes telic verbs that potentially have duration: many of the verbs in the 'termination' column are the telic counterparts of the atelic activities listed as imperfective verbs in the first column. For example *leyenen* 'read' in row (c) is atelic and *iberleyenen* 'read through' is telic in that it sets up a terminal point for the process of reading. Similarly, in row (f) *redn telefonish* 'speak on the telephone' is atelic, while the terminative verb *telefoniren* 'telephone' is telic in the sense that the terminal point is the moment you reach the person you have called. The act of 'telephoning' is not punctual, it can have duration and thus does not satisfy the features set out for perfective verbs in chart (3). It is likely that it was the telic nature of *telefoniren* that led Schaechter to classify it as a perfective verb, although it is a simple verb and most simple verbs are classified as imperfective. The feature of telicity also accounts for the unusual use of a periphrastic phrase *redn telefonish* in the imperfective column; Schaechter consistently puts atelic verbs in this column.

This identification of telic verbs as perfective accounts for Schaechter's categorization of directionally prefixed verbs as perfective. As described in Section 2.3.1.2, Schaechter classifies the verb *geyn* 'to go' as imperfective and *tsugeyn* 'go up to, approach' as perfective. The implied goal of *tsugeyn*, specified in a prepositional complement, provides a terminal point for the process of going.

Schaechter's (1986:138-9) description of dynamic situations as perfective is also inconsistent with the punctual nature of perfective that he sets out in (3). Here he contrasts dynamic expressions like *farn oyf a vizit tsu* 'to pay a visit to/go to visit' with static ones like *zayn oyf a vizit bay* 'be a guest at'. The description of *zayn oyf a vizit bay* 'be a guest at' as imperfective is compatible with his durational features for imperfectives; he never specifies that imperfectives should be processes rather than states, and includes both in his chart excerpted in (4). For example, *zayn* 'to be' in (4g) is a state, whereas *zuxn* 'to search' is a process. However the expression *farn oyf a vizit tsu* 'to pay a visit to/go to visit' can have duration and is telic rather than punctual. Schaechter himself gives an example of this expression in the present tense without any indication that it does not refer to the present. According to his features in (3), perfectives have no true present, so this shouldn't be possible. This indicates again that Schaechter includes both telic and punctual expressions in his category of perfective even though he initially defines perfective verbs as having no duration.

Schaechter's approach thus divides a Vendlerian taxonomy like the one in (2) in half vertically, as illustrated in (5). The final two nodes on the left, states and atelic situations, are considered imperfective; the two nodes on the right, telic situations and punctual occurrences, are categorized as perfective.

(5) Representation of Schaechter's (1986) Analysis



The parallels between Schaechter's analysis of the Yiddish perfective/imperfective contrast and a Vendlerian model of verb categories illustrate that Schaechter's approach is basically a type of universal semantic verbal classification applied to Yiddish examples. Therefore the perfective/imperfective contrast presented by Schaechter as a language-permeating aspectual distinction provides little information about Yiddish aspect in particular but rather shows how universal verbal semantic categories apply to Yiddish. Whether a verb is classified as perfective or imperfective has no other ramifications for the language. Schaechter's claim that every Yiddish verb is either perfective or imperfective is therefore very different from a claim that every Russian verb is either perfective or imperfective. As discussed in the previous section, for a Slavic language this claim indicates that there is an obligatory choice of one form over another and that aspectual classes interact differently with tense. The Yiddish verbs do not form one-to-one perfective/imperfective pairs and the speakers do not make obligatory choices between them. The claim that Schaechter makes for Yiddish verbs has no formal implications, it is a semantic classification only.

Schaechter's two-way division for Yiddish verbs appears theoretically imposed rather than empirically motivated. The four-way division of the Vendlerian model can as easily be applied to Yiddish verbs, and in fact can lead to further insights. For example, Schaechter groups stative and activities together within one category of imperfective verbs. However, if the verbs in Schaechter's large chart, excerpted in (4), were divided into Vendlerian classes, it would become clear that statives are not readily used in the stem construction. The verb *zayn* 'to be' in row (g) has no entry in the moment construction; neither do the stative verbs *visn* 'to know' and *voynen* 'to dwell' in Schaechter's fuller chart from which the examples in (4) are taken.

While I disagree with Schaechter's division of Yiddish verbs into two classes, perfective and imperfective, this categorization does highlight a certain alignment of morphology and semantics. The structure of the chart in (4) reflects an association between simple Yiddish verbs and states and processes, which can be described as temporally unstructured. The chart also reveals that verbs classified as

perfective all involve further morphology, either through prefixation or the inclusion of the verb in a periphrastic construction. Such verbs and constructions are all associated with temporally structuring the event, either by giving the event a boundary in the case of terminative and initiative expressions, or restricting it to a point, as in the case of the stem construction. Proposals for representations of these different temporal structures are presented in Chapter 4.

### **3.3 Perfective/Imperfective for Aspectual Constructions**

In the sections above I argued against the claim that every Yiddish verb can be considered perfective or imperfective and concluded that a perfective/imperfective opposition similar to the Slavic model does not operate throughout the Yiddish language. In the following sections I argue that it is inappropriate to use the term 'perfective' for aspectually prefixed verbs, either as a group or individually, or for the stem construction.

#### **3.3.1 Problems with Prefixed Verbs as Perfective**

##### **3.3.1.1 Prefixed Verbs as a Group**

Baviskar (1974), U. Weinreich (1977), Szulmajster-Celnikier (1986), and Aronson (1985) assume the relationship between simple verbs and aspectually prefixed verbs to be one of imperfective/perfective contrast. Rothstein (1990:145) comments that

While the parallel between Yiddish prefixed verbs and Slavic prefixed perfective verbs is suggestive, no convincing argument has been made in the literature for the perfectivity of Yiddish prefixed verbs.

In this section I present arguments against considering Yiddish prefixed verbs to be perfective.

Aronson assumes that a perfective/imperfective contrast exists among prefixed verbs but argues that it is not a grammatical contrast. As was noted in the Section 2.3.2.2, the criteria he uses for grammaticality are so strict that Slavic prefixation does not qualify as grammatical either. For a grammatical perfective/imperfective opposition, Aronson argues that there should be a strict predictable one-to-one relationship between simple and prefixed verbs. There would therefore be only one perfectivizing prefix for each simple verb, it would be predictable which prefix would attach to a given verb, and aspectual pairs would be easily determined. According to Aronson's criteria then, there is no systematic perfective/imperfective opposition among Yiddish prefixed verbs.

Comrie (1976:94) proposes four criteria for evaluating languages on a scale according to their development of a system of perfective/imperfective opposition through prefixing. These criteria are less strict than Aronson's and are based more on the characteristics of the Slavic expression of aspect than on an idealized grammatical model. On this scale, Comrie ranks English and German as the least developed and Slavonic the most; Yiddish is not considered. The four factors are:



1. the presence of semantically empty perfectivizing prefixes
2. the possibility of forming imperfectives from derived perfectives
3. the correlation of aspect differences and tense
4. the possibility of forming perfective/imperfective pairs for as many verbs as possible

Several of Comrie's criteria were discussed in Section 3.2 above in the comparison of the Slavic aspectual system with Weinreich's language-pervasive model of aspect; here they are considered with respect to prefixed verbs only. According to these criteria, Yiddish would rank low on the scale along with its Germanic relations for the following reasons:

1. only a limited number of prefixes can be considered truly semantically empty;
2. it is not possible to form imperfectives from perfectives without resorting to a periphrastic construction;
3. there is no correlation of aspect difference and tense;
4. a minority of verbs can be considered to form aspectual pairs.

Comrie's scale can be used to illustrate the frequently claimed diachronic effect of Slavic influence on Yiddish prefixed verbs: Yiddish can be considered to have started, along with German, at the low end of the scale and to have moved slightly higher as a result of developing more pairs of verbs linked through prefixes with purely or primarily aspectual meaning. However, the model of scalar values for perfectivization is problematic for a synchronic analysis, for the question arises as to how many of the criteria need be satisfied in order for a language to be considered to have a system of perfective/imperfective opposition. In the case of Yiddish the question is fairly easily answered, since Yiddish fulfills fewer than half of the criteria: of the four criteria proposed by Comrie, Yiddish satisfies only the first and partially the fourth. It can therefore be concluded that Yiddish does not have a system of perfective/imperfective contrast expressed through prefixation.

### **3.3.1.2 Prefixed Verbs Individually**

I argue in the previous section that there is no systematic perfective/imperfective contrast among prefixed verbs as a group; in this section I consider whether it is appropriate to use the terminology of perfective/imperfective contrast for a restricted number of verb pairs. Aronson does not reject this terminology for describing the relationship between simple and prefixed verbs, although he argues that the contrast is not grammatical. Baviskar (1974) proposes that the perfective/imperfective contrast is present only for certain verbs that are 'more Slavicized' than others.

Is there a subset of Yiddish prefixed verbs that show the same behaviour as Slavic perfective verbs? As discussed above in Section 3.2.1.2, Baviskar's (1974)

research shows that Yiddish prefixed verbs are used in contexts where Slavic perfective verbs are not. Nath (1988) also found that the use of prefixed Yiddish verbs could not be correlated to the use of Slavic perfective verbs; he found a closer correlation to factors of emphasis and foreground information.

The biggest difference between Slavic and Yiddish prefixed verbs is in their interaction with tense. Slavic perfective verbs are punctual and incompatible with present or durative meaning. However Yiddish verbs with aspectual prefixes are found in the present and in durative constructions.

For example, the informants in Baviskar's (1974) research proposed prefixed verbs for sentences in the present tense and for present participles, situations that clearly involve duration. The verbs involved had the prefixes most frequently described as aspectual, *op-*, *oys-* and *on-*, and were considered by Baviskar to be perfective.

Instances of verbs in the present prefixed with *op-* can also be found in newspapers, as shown in examples (6a) and (6b).

- (6) a. *shporn zey op fun di kleyne fardinstn*  
 save they up from the small earnings  
 'they save from their small earnings'  
 (forverts 1997b:23)
- b. *peres hot oyf dem geentfert az er shatst op dem meyors kumen*  
*kayn yisroel*  
 peres has on that answered that he appreciates the mayor (to)  
 come to Israel  
 'Peres replied that he appreciated the mayor's visiting Israel'  
 (forverts 1996:24)

Both the prefixed verb *opshporn* 'lay by, save' in (6a) and the verb *opshatsn* 'appreciate' in (6b) are formed from simplex verbs that Weinreich identifies as imperfective. Since they are formed with the common perfectivizing prefix *op-* they should be considered perfective. However both of these verbs are being used in the present tense, indicating duration. Although the English gloss of *shatst op* 'appreciated' is in the past, the Yiddish is in the present and designates an act co-occurring with the past event of 'answering'. The use of the present form in Yiddish for co-occurrence with a past matrix verb will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Schachter (1951:88), in his discussion of aspectual prefixes, gives several examples of verbs prefixed with *op-* that have a durative sense and are accompanied by temporal modifiers. The term 'perfective' cannot account for the examples in (7a) and (7b) if it is restricted to being punctual.

- (7) a. *vi a fish ligt er op gantse shoen untern vaser*  
 like a fish lies he up many hours under water  
 he lies under the water like a fish for many hours'
- b. *leb dir dort op dayne yorn on shum zorg*  
 live you there up your years without any worry  
 'live out your years there without worry'

Let us return to the Yiddish verbs that are the most closely related to Slavic perfectives and therefore present the strongest case for being considered perfective. According to Szulmajster Celnikier (1986) and Wexler (1964), the Yiddish verbs in

(8) below are calques of the corresponding Slavic perfective verbs; there are no such prefixed verbs attested in German.

(8)	a.	Yiddish:	<i>kemen</i>	<i>farkemen</i>	'to comb'
		Russian:	<i>cesat'</i>	<i>zacesat'</i>	'to comb'
	b.	Yiddish:	<i>xapn</i>	<i>farxapn</i>	'to grab'
		Russian:	<i>khapc'</i>	<i>zakhapac'</i>	'to grab'

The Russian verbs *zacesat'* and *zakhapac'* are perfectives, formed by prefixing from the imperfective verbs *cesat'* and *khapc'*; can it therefore be assumed that the Yiddish verbs *farkemen* and *kemen*, and *xapn* and *farxapn* also form perfective/imperfective pairs? I argue that although the English gloss of the Slavic and Yiddish verbs are apparently precisely the same, the words do not really have the same meaning if they do not participate in the grammar of their respective languages in the same way. The evidence presented in Section 3.2.1.2 and immediately above shows that Yiddish prefixed verbs are not used in the same contexts as the Slavic perfectives. As argued in the previous section, the Slavic prefixed verbs are part of a larger system of perfective/imperfective contrast, while the Yiddish prefixed verb does not participate in such a systematic contrast. As Wexler (1964:90) describes:

In brief, what is meant by the imperfective-perfective aspect differentiation in the Slavic languages, is, that most verbs consist of two morphologically distinguished pairs; the action of the imperfective member is characterized by 'extension through time, duration of the action, process', while the action of the perfective member is characterized by 'focusing attention on some point in the action, the beginning, the end, realization of a goal.

This definition indicates clearly that the perfective/imperfective contrast requires that "most verbs consist of two morphologically distinguished pairs". That is, the use of the terms 'perfective' and 'imperfective' has implications beyond the isolated definitions of these two terms. The use of these terms implies a system of contrast of morphologically related verb pairs; a system that, I argued above, does not exist for Yiddish verbs. Therefore, to use the term 'perfective' for Yiddish prefixed verbs would not only require defining it in a different way from its use for Slavic verbs but would require emptying the term of all associations with the systematic aspectual pairing of the Slavic model. I conclude then, that although there has evidently been some influence on Yiddish from Slavic aspectual prefixes, the terms 'perfective' and 'imperfective' should be used neither for Yiddish prefixed verbs as a group, nor for any subset of pairs of prefixed verbs.

### 3.3.2 Problems with the Stem Construction as Perfective

In the sections above I have argued against using the terms 'perfective' and 'imperfective' for describing the aspectual system of Yiddish in general, and for prefixed verbs in particular. The term 'perfective' has also been used to describe the stem construction by Weinreich (1977) and Schaechter (1986). Is it possible to use this term for the stem construction without using it for prefixed verbs? There is one way in which the definition of 'perfectivity' fits the stem construction better than the prefixed verbs, and that is with respect to punctuality. As discussed above, one

problem with describing prefixed verbs as 'perfective' is that examples can be found of prefixed verbs used in the present tense or accompanied by durational modifiers. There are no such problems with the stem construction. Despite the variety of meanings associated with the stem construction, in all cases it can be considered punctual: it is not found with durational modifiers, and, as mentioned earlier, the present form is interpreted as either an immediate past or an immediate future.

There are, however, other problems with considering the stem construction as the perfective member of a Slavic-style perfective/imperfective opposition. One issue is whether the stem construction can be considered to participate in a binary obligatory relationship with the simple verb; that is, whether the choice between the simple verb and the verb in the stem construction is obligatory. The type of research done by Baviskar (1974) provides insight into whether the choice between simple and prefixed Yiddish verbs is obligatory; there is no similar research done for the stem construction. However one indication that the stem construction is not obligatory is that it can be replaced by the simple verb and adverbial modifiers. For example Schaechter (1986:73) explains the meaning of the stem construction in (9a) with the Yiddish gloss based on the verb *kukn* in (9b). Other meanings of the stem construction can be expressed through adverbs such as *gix* 'quickly', *opgexapt* 'hurriedly' and *plutsling* 'suddenly'.

- (9) a. *gebn a kuk*  
give a look  
'glance'
- b. *eyn mol (zeyer kurts) kukn*  
one time (very short) (to) look  
'glance'

I conclude, then, that the stem construction should not be described in terms of an obligatory perfective/imperfective relation with the simple verb. The term 'perfective' should not be used on its own to describe the stem construction, for, as argued above, this term carries implications of a complete aspectual system, including opposition with imperfective verbs, in which the stem construction cannot be considered to participate. Therefore, just as for the prefixed verbs, the term 'perfective' should be rejected for describing the aspectual nature of the stem construction.

There is, however, one advantage of using an umbrella term such as 'perfective' for both Yiddish prefixed verbs and the stem construction: the common term indicates that these constructions have something aspectual in common. In Chapter 4 I discuss in more detail the temporal characteristics shared by these constructions and propose a terminology of 'boundedness' to describe them.

### 3.4 Grammatical vs. Lexical Aspect

In considering the question 'Is aspect in Yiddish grammatical?', the term 'grammatical' is used to describe Yiddish aspect as a whole. As explained in Rothstein (1990), the underlying assumption has been that if aspect in Yiddish is grammatical, it is in the form of a language-pervasive perfective/imperfective contrast. Aronson (1985) expanded the question to a consideration of which individual aspectual constructions are grammatical. Aronson argued that the stem construction and the habitual past are grammatical constructions but the

perfective/imperfective contrast expressed by prefixed verbs is lexical rather than grammatical. This is clearly a different approach to the concept of grammatical aspect: rather than treating Yiddish aspect as a single system that has one overall grammatical aspectual contrast expressed by different constructions, it assumes that a language can have a number of different aspectual contrasts some of which may be grammatical, and others lexical. The following section is in two parts, dealing with the question of the grammaticality first of individual aspectual constructions, and second of Yiddish aspect as a whole. The first section considers the grammaticality of the stem construction and the habitual past, a construction described in Section 2.4.2.2. Aronson is not alone in considering this an aspectual construction; as seen in Section 2.4.2.5, Birnbaum lists the habitual past as one of seven Yiddish aspectual categories. Section 3.5 then looks at several repercussions of the conclusion that aspect in Yiddish is not grammatical.

### 3.4.1 Grammatical Nature of Individual Constructions

Aronson (1985) argues that the stem construction and the past habitual are grammatical expressions of aspect; he describes them as the semelfactive/non-semelfactive and the iterative/non-iterative oppositions. Characteristics of grammatical constructions for Aronson are mutual implication and participation in the verbal paradigm, as noted in Section 2.3.2.2. Therefore, in order to evaluate his claims about the grammatical nature of these Yiddish aspectual constructions it is necessary to investigate whether they participate in relationships of mutual implication and whether they are part of the verbal paradigm. I proposed above that mutual implication implies an obligatory selection between two members of an aspectual pair and argued that neither the stem construction nor prefixed verbs could be considered to be in an obligatory relation of mutual implication with the simple verb. In the following sections I consider the claims for obligatoriness and mutual implication for the past habitual, and the relation of both the stem construction and the past habitual to the verbal paradigm.

#### 3.4.1.1 Stem Construction

According to Aronson (1985), one characteristic of a binary opposition is a relationship of mutual implication. In an obligatory relationship there is automatically mutual implication - the choice of one form implies the rejection of the other. Since, as I have argued above, the stem construction is not an obligatory construction, there is not this type of mutual implication. The stem construction can be considered to imply the simple verb, since any affixed or periphrastic form of the verb necessarily implies the existence of the root verb. Therefore, a stem construction like that in (7a) *gebn a kuk* implies the existence of the verb from which the stem is derived, in this case the simple verb *kukn*. However, in the absence of an obligatory relationship, in what way can a simple verb like *kukn* be considered to imply the existence of the stem construction?

Aronson suggests that mutual implication can arise from co-occurrence in the verbal paradigm: the simple verb implies every form that is part of its verbal paradigm and in turn each of these forms implies the simple verb. Therefore, if the verb stem is part of the verbal paradigm of the simple verb they can be considered to be in a relationship of mutual implication. However, I argue below against an association between membership in the verbal paradigm and grammaticality as

expressed through binary oppositions. See Sections 3.4.1.3 and 5.5.1 for a fuller discussion of the verbal paradigm.

The stem construction can be considered a stylistic variation rather than part of an obligatory opposition; it is encountered more frequently in the writings of authors trying to convey a light informal mood than in more formal writing, such as that found in the sober columns of a newspaper. For example, Itzik Manger's (1976) tales of mischievous angels are peppered with stem constructions whose subtle humour makes them difficult to translate:

- (10) a. *lomir a fli ton*  
let's a fly do  
'let's fly' (p.7)
- b. *pisherls oygn hobn a finkl geton*  
Pisherl's eys have a sparkle done  
'Pisherl's eyes sparkled' (p.41)
- c. *hot pisherl a max geton mit zayne fligl*  
has Pisherl a make done with his wing  
'Pisherl gestured with his wing' (p.44)

The stem construction is not obligatory: one can speak a grammatical, if less vivid, Yiddish without the use of the stem construction.

### 3.4.1.2 Habitual Past

It was argued in the Section 3.3.2 that since the stem construction could be expressed with the simple verb plus adverbial modifiers, it was not an obligatory construction. Bybee (1994:239) proposes a similar test for the habitual: if the simple past is compatible with an habitual adverb then the habitual is not obligatory. Comrie (1976:124) notes that he has not listed the habitual in a table of English aspectual oppositions because the non-habitual does not exclude habitual meaning. The Yiddish past habitual *fleg* has the same meaning and behaves in the same way as the English habitual past 'used to'; like the English, the Yiddish non-habitual, that is the past, does not exclude habitual meaning. This is illustrated by the sentences in (11) about the narrator's mother's white kerchief. The quote in (11a) from I. J. Singer (1946:28) shows the habitual past form *flegt geyn* 'used to go'; this sentence retains a habitual meaning when the habitual past is replaced with the past *iz gegangen* 'went' in (11b).

- (11) a. *zi flegt darin geyn say vinter, say zumer, yedn shabes davenen in vayber-shul*  
she used to in it go whether winter, whether summer, every Sabbath to pray in the women's synagogue  
'she used to wear it to synagogue every Sabbath, whether winter or summer'
- b. *zi iz darin gegangen say vinter, say zumer, yedn shabes davenen in vayber-shul*  
she went in it whether winter, whether summer, every Sabbath to pray in the women's synagogue  
'she wore it to synagogue every Sabbath, whether winter or summer'

Since the habitual past can be expressed with the past plus adverbial modifiers, it cannot be considered an obligatory construction in Yiddish. Since the choice between, in Aronson's terms, the iterative and non-iterative, is not obligatory, they cannot be said to each imply the other. As argued above for the stem construction, a periphrastic construction by definition implies the existence of the base verb, so that the habitual past *fleg iberkukn* 'used to examine' necessarily implies the existence of the verb *iberkukn* 'to examine'. However, the verb *iberkukn* does not imply the existence of *fleg iberkukn*.

Since the use of the past habitual is not obligatory and the habitual is not in a relation of mutual implication with the non-habitual, there is no basis for describing this construction in terms of a binary opposition.

### 3.4.1.3 Verbal Paradigm

As outlined in Section 2.3.2.2, Aronson's (1985) main argument for the grammaticality of the past habitual and the stem construction rests on demonstrating that they are part of the verbal paradigm. No definition is given of a verbal paradigm and the assumption that any member of a verbal paradigm is grammatical is implied but not defended.

I will attempt to construct Aronson's model of a verbal paradigm from the evidence in his article. According to Aronson, every verb is associated with a paradigm which contains an array of related verb forms, such as the past, the future, etc. For a verb like *kukn* 'to look', then, its verbal paradigm might include, among other forms, the present *ix kuk* 'I look', the past *ix hob gekukt*, 'I looked', and the future *ix vel kukn*. Since Aronson argues that the past habitual and stem construction are also part of the verbal paradigm, then *ix fleg kukn* 'I used to look' and *ix gib a kuk* 'I glance' would also be included. If this model is accurate, Aronson's claim of mutual implication for *fleg* and the stem construction can perhaps be related to the paradigmatic structure: each verb could be said to imply every member of its paradigm.

The issue then is how to evaluate whether a particular construction is part of the paradigm of a specific verb. Aronson's argument for the paradigmatic nature of *fleg* is based upon comparisons with other verbs that he considers paradigmatic, such as the future *vel*. Since *fleg* behaves in several ways like *vel* he concludes that it too must be part of the verbal paradigm. However, using the same argument of comparison to *vel*, one could argue that *fleg* has an independent lexical listing and is therefore not part of a verbal paradigm, since in Chapter 5, I argue that the future *vel* has its own lexical listing and is not part of the verbal paradigm.

Aronson is not alone in suggesting that *fleg* is part of the verbal paradigm. Kiefer (1994) lists *fleg* as one of the Yiddish tenses. Although he doesn't explicitly describe it as part of the verbal paradigm, the inclusion of *fleg* with the other tenses implies that it is part of the tense paradigm. Tenses are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Thieroff (1994:41) explicitly categorizes *fleg* as part of the verbal paradigm, and like Aronson, presents it as a binary opposition. This is illustrated in Thieroff's paradigm for the verb *maxn* 'to make', reproduced in (12) below. Thieroff proposes that the past, which he calls the anterior, has two forms, one marked for habitual and one unmarked.

(12) Yiddish: paradigm of *maxn* 'do','make'

anteriority unmarked	posteriority unmarked		posterior	
	indicative		conditional	
	maxt		volt/zol maxn	vet maxn
anterior	habituality unmarked	habitual		
	hot gemaxt	fleg(t) maxn	volt/zol gemaxt	vet hobn gemaxt
anterior 2	hot gehat gemaxt		–	–

Aronson and Thieroff both propose that *fleg* participates in a binary grammatical opposition. I however argue that the evidence presented in 3.4.1.1 that *fleg* is not an obligatory construction is sufficient proof against it forming a grammatical opposition in Yiddish.

Aronson's argument that the stem construction is part of the verbal paradigm rests on evidence that the stem is verbal rather than nominal. The assumption seems to be that a stem construction formed with a nominal stem would be a lexical expression of aspect but a stem construction with a verbal stem must be part of the verbal paradigm. Aronson apparently reasons that if the stem is verbal then it must be part of the verbal paradigm, and if the stem is part of the paradigm then the whole stem construction is also part of the paradigm. Lengthy periphrastic constructions in some languages are considered to be part of the verbal paradigm; for example, the English future perfect progressive construction 'I will have been eating' can be considered to be part of the paradigm of the verb 'eat'. Aronson suggests that the stem constructions *er git a kuk* and *er tu a kuk* 'he takes a look' are part of the paradigms of the verb *kukn* 'to look'. This approach would seem to treat the light verb *gebn* or *ton* as an auxiliary like the verb 'have' in 'I have eaten'. However, Aronson's own arguments for the paradigmatic nature of *fleg* here somewhat undermine his claims for the paradigmatic nature of the stem construction. One of his arguments that *fleg* is grammatical rests on the claim (1985:176) that:

Most Yiddish paradigmatic auxiliaries are to a greater or lesser extent 'defective,' i.e., not all paradigmatic sets of the verb (traditional 'tenses') can be formed with these auxiliaries. . . The auxiliaries of the future, the conditional, the conjunctives and the iterative all lack past tense forms, the infinitive, the imperative, participial forms, etc.

However, unlike the auxiliary verbs described in the quote above, the verbs of the stem construction, *gebn* and *ton*, lack none of these forms, and so, by Aronson's own argument, don't follow the standard pattern of Yiddish grammatical auxiliaries. In Chapter 6 I propose that the verb stem is indeed part of the verbal paradigm, but that this membership in the paradigm confers no particular grammatical as opposed to lexical status. I further argue that the stem construction has a lexical listing separate from that of the stem.

Aronson is not alone in suggesting that the stem construction is grammatical. Taube (1987) argues that the stem construction has grammaticalized, as discussed in 2.3.2.3, therefore implying that it has become a grammatical construction. However, if Taube's use of the term 'grammatical' means 'expressed in



the syntax', one could argue that the stem construction has actually become more 'lexical' and so 'lexicalized' rather than grammaticalized. This is illustrated with the sentences in (13) below. When the stem of the stem construction is a nominal, as is *kush* 'kiss' in sentence (b), it can appear in the same word order as a standard double object construction and follow the past participle, as in sentence (a). However, when the stem is purely verbal, that is the stem construction is 'grammaticalized' according to Taube, the standard stem construction word order is found with the stem preceding the past participle, as in sentence (c).

- (13) a. *er hot gegeben a bux dem eynikl*  
 he has given a book the grandchild  
 'he gave the grandchild a book'
- b. *er hot gegeben a kush dem eynikl*  
 he has given a kiss the grandchild  
 'he gave the grandchild a kiss'
- c. *zi hot an efn geton di oygn*  
 she has an open done the eyes  
 'she opened her eyes'

In sentences (a) and (b) each lexical item in the sentence is inserted directly into the standard Yiddish syntactic structure; however, in sentence (c) I suggest that the meaning and form of the stem construction are lexically listed, so that the words of the stem construction are inserted into the syntax as a group, like any idiom. Therefore, the 'grammaticalized' stem construction has a lexical structure and lexical listing, and the term 'grammaticalization' is not necessarily associated with syntactic structure. I discuss the structure of the stem construction in more detail in Chapter 4.

As argued for the habitual past above, I believe that the evidence presented earlier that the stem construction is not obligatory is sufficient proof that the stem construction is not a grammatical expression of aspect. Aronson's proposal that the stem construction is part of the verbal paradigm is not fully enough developed to be convincing.

I conclude that the stem construction and the habitual past do not have a status separate from that of prefixed verbs; there is no evidence for labelling them 'grammatical' expressions of aspect as opposed to the 'lexical' prefixation. None of these three constructions is obligatory, none are well described by binary oppositions, none are in relations of mutual implication. In Chapter 4 I discuss further the lexical nature of these constructions.

### 3.4.2 Grammatical Nature of Aspect

As mentioned in Section 2.3.2.1, Rothstein(1990:144) noted that no criteria like Maslov's (1978:24-8) had been applied to evaluate whether aspect in Yiddish is a grammatical category. Maslov's four criteria for grammatical aspect require that:

- (1) for a large part (sometimes all) of the verbal lexicon
- (2) some aspectual meanings

- (3) are regularly expressed
- (4) by means of paradigmatically opposed grammatical forms of a single verb.

Maslov's criteria for a grammatical system of aspect are similar to Comrie's criteria for a system of perfective/imperfective opposition through prefixing as described above in Section 3.3.2.1. Both use the Slavic aspectual system as a model. Just as Yiddish prefixed verbs do not satisfy Comrie's criteria for perfective/imperfective contrast, so the aspectual system as a whole does not satisfy Maslov's criteria.

Criteria (2) and (3) are not problematic: we have seen that in Yiddish some aspectual meanings are indeed regularly expressed, whether through prefixation, the stem construction or the habitual past. Criterion (1) is slightly harder to satisfy, particularly for prefixation, as only a minority of verbs seem to have aspectually prefixed counterparts. However, the biggest problem for Yiddish is criterion (4): Yiddish aspect is not expressed by "paradigmatically opposed grammatical forms of a single verb". There are three terms that have to be considered here: 'paradigmatically', 'opposed', and 'grammatical'. I have argued that the aspectual constructions discussed are not grammatical and are not 'opposed forms' in that they are not best expressed as obligatory binary oppositions. I also argue that none of these three constructions should be considered part of the paradigm of a single verb. This means that a prefixed verb like *opesn* 'eat up' and the simple verb *esn* 'eat' are not "opposed forms of single verb"; rather they are two separate lexical items. Similarly, the stem construction *an efn ton* 'open (suddenly)' and the verb *efnen* 'open', and the habitual past *fleg zogn* 'used to say' and the verb *zogn* 'say' are not "opposed forms of a single verb." Therefore Yiddish verbs cannot be considered to be paradigmatic, opposed or grammatical and criterion (4) is not satisfied.

In Section 2.3.2.4 Wexler (1964:91) is quoted as questioning the grammaticality of Yiddish aspect:

"I myself wonder if we are justified in speaking of a grammatical category of aspect distinction in Yiddish." (p.91)

I go beyond questioning to conclude that aspect in Yiddish is not a grammatical category.

### 3.5 Implications

The conclusion here that aspect in Yiddish is not grammatical in the way that it is considered to be in Slavic languages has several implications. Three are discussed below: implications for Yiddish syntactic structure, implications for the nature of Slavic-Yiddish language contact and implications for the fusion theory of the development of Yiddish.

#### 3.5.1 Implications for Syntactic Structure

In order to assess the implications of these conclusions for the syntactic structure of Yiddish it is necessary to establish whether there is any direct relationship between claims for grammaticality of aspectual constructions and

syntactic representation. It is not necessarily the case that a grammatical as opposed to lexical construction corresponds to a syntactic as opposed to lexical representation. One might argue that a language that has a grammatical system of aspect would have this grammaticality reflected in the syntax through the presence of an Aspectual Phrase or other syntactic aspectual features. Conversely, one could claim that an Aspect Phrase should only be present in those languages where aspect can be shown to be grammatical rather than lexical. In the case of Yiddish I will argue in Chapters 5 and 6 that aspect is a lexical phenomenon. The conclusion drawn here that Yiddish aspect is not grammatical is reflected in a syntactic structure with no Aspect Phrase and no aspectual features relevant to the syntax.

### 3.5.2 Implications for Yiddish-Slavic Contact

Several authors have proposed that the grammatical perfective/ imperfective contrast was borrowed from Slavic languages into Yiddish (Schaechter 1952a, 1952b; M. Weinreich 1959; U. Weinreich 1952). I have argued that the perfective/imperfective contrast should not be used to describe specific Yiddish aspectual constructions or Yiddish aspect in general and that neither the individual constructions nor Yiddish aspect as a whole should be considered grammatical. It seems clear then that Yiddish cannot be said to have borrowed the Slavic aspectual system. However, there can be no doubt that there has been Slavic influence on certain Yiddish prefixed verbs. Such influence is evident in the examples given in (8) above of calqued verbs, and in (28) of Chapter One, repeated below as (14a) and (14b) respectively.

- |      |          |                 |               |                   |                         |
|------|----------|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| (14) | a.       | Yiddish:        | <i>kemen</i>  | <i>farkemen</i>   | 'to comb'               |
|      |          | Russian:        | <i>cesat'</i> | <i>zacesat'</i>   | 'to comb'               |
|      |          | Yiddish:        | <i>xapn</i>   | <i>farxapn</i>    | 'to grab'               |
|      |          | Russian:        | <i>khapc'</i> | <i>zakhapac'</i>  | 'to grab'               |
| b.   | Polish:  | <i>piec</i>     | 'to bake'     | <i>napiec</i>     | 'to bake a lot'         |
|      | Yiddish: | <i>bakn</i>     | 'to bake'     | <i>onbakn</i>     | 'to bake a quantity of' |
|      |          | <i>ganvenen</i> | 'to steal'    | <i>onganvenen</i> | 'to amass by theft'     |

The interference of Slavic prefixed verbs on Yiddish verbs should be described as lexical: Yiddish prefixes have borrowed some of the meanings of corresponding Slavic prefixes. In example (14) above, the meaning of 'a large quantity (of the complement)' has been borrowed from the Polish prefix *na* and associated with the Yiddish prefix *on*. In section 1.2.3 it was noted that only a minority of prefixed verbs shown to have undergone Slavic influence were designated perfective by U. Weinreich (1977), indicating that this influence was primarily semantic rather than aspectual. However, even in those cases where the borrowed meaning is clearly aspectual it is a situation of borrowing the meanings of individual prefixes, rather than the borrowing of a full aspectual system of perfective/imperfective contrast.

The borrowing into Yiddish of a grammatical perfective/imperfective aspectual opposition would have meant the expansion of Yiddish grammar to include a new grammatical category. As discussed in Section 2.2.1.3 such a large change is found only in cases of heavy language interference. Yiddish, by contrast, has apparently undergone only slight interference from Slavic languages, interference

characterized by extensive lexical borrowing, minor morphosyntactic interference, and phonological borrowing restricted to foreign loanwords. One would have expected borrowing of an aspectual system to be accompanied by more cases of morphosyntactic interference and further evidence of phonological influence. The lexical borrowing of prefixes associated with aspect is consistent with the observed interference patterns of Slavic languages on Yiddish in a way that syntactic borrowing of a full aspectual system is not. The claim that Slavic influence on Yiddish aspectual expressions is the result of lexical borrowing is consistent with the patterns of language contact described in Thomason and Kaufman (1988).

The conclusions about the nature of Yiddish aspect have implications for the stem construction as well. I argued in Section 1.3.4 that there was no semantic evidence for Slavic influence on the stem construction. There is, however, a possible argument for Slavic aspectual influence that was not discussed. This approach would be to argue that the role of the stem construction expanded in order to fill a perfectivizing function and that this perfectivizing function is motivated by the importation into Yiddish of a Slavic style perfective/imperfective contrast. However, I have argued above that Yiddish has not developed a perfective/imperfective aspectual system and that the stem construction is not a perfectivizing construction. It therefore cannot be proposed that the stem construction expanded in Yiddish as a result of Slavic influence to fulfill a perfectivizing aspectual role. Thus, although the stem construction can be described as an aspectual construction, there is no evidence that the type of aspectual information that it imparts has been influenced by Slavic aspectual expressions. The extension of the stem construction beyond a Germanic model was more likely internally motivated.

### 3.5.3 Implications for the Fusion Theory

It was noted earlier that the fusion model of Yiddish could allow for syntactic borrowing regardless of the patterns of other Slavic-Yiddish contact. It is not necessary, however, to resort to an undefined process of 'fusion' to account for the Slavic influence on Yiddish aspectual prefixes; the standard model of language contact, as described by Thomason and Kaufman (1988), can account fully for the Slavic-Yiddish contact. It appears that there is no need for a theory of fusion to describe the way in which Yiddish has incorporated features from other languages: just as its contact with Hebrew can be described easily within the standard interference model (Gold 1994b, 1997b), so its interaction with Slavic languages follows the regular language contact patterns observed in a great variety of the world's languages.

### 3.6 Summary

I have argued that the claim that all Yiddish verbs are either perfective or imperfective cannot be upheld. There is no perfective/imperfective opposition in Yiddish, either throughout the language in general or within individual constructions. I have further argued against using the terms 'perfective' and 'imperfective' for describing prefixed verbs or the stem construction.

With respect to the question of whether aspect in Yiddish is grammatical or lexical, I have concluded that aspectual expression in Yiddish is solely lexical. There are therefore no aspectual features such as

[+/-semelfactive] active in the syntax. The implications for language contact is that the influence of Slavic aspect on Yiddish has been through the borrowing of individual lexical items, not through the importation of a grammatical system of aspect.

The stem construction and prefixed verbs have been the focus of much discussion because they play an important role in conveying aspectual information. In Chapter Four I propose an analysis to capture their common role in Yiddish without using the Slavic terminology of perfective/ imperfective contrast.

## CHAPTER 4 - BOUNDEDNESS AND TEMPORAL STRUCTURE

### 4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I argued that the term 'perfective' is not appropriate for describing either Yiddish prefixed verbs or the stem construction. In this chapter I propose that the term 'bounded' be used to describe the aspectual properties of prefixed verbs and the stem construction. Bybee et al (1994:53) actually define perfectivity as boundedness: "perfectives signal that the situation is viewed as bounded temporally." Arguably, if the term 'perfective' is defined in this way it could be used to describe Yiddish prefixed verbs and the stem construction. However, as discussed in Chapter 3, the term 'perfective' has too many other associations to warrant such a narrow definition and it is better to use a different term for Yiddish aspectual constructions. In Section 4.2 I discuss several options in terminology for describing the temporal qualities of prefixed verbs and the stem construction and present reasons why the term 'bounded' best fulfills this role. In Sections 4.3 and 4.4 I describe the different ways in which these constructions are bounded, using visual representations as aids. Section 4.5 briefly outlines those Yiddish aspectual constructions which can be described as unbounded and Section 4.6 describes the way in which bounded aspectual constructions interact with tense in Yiddish.

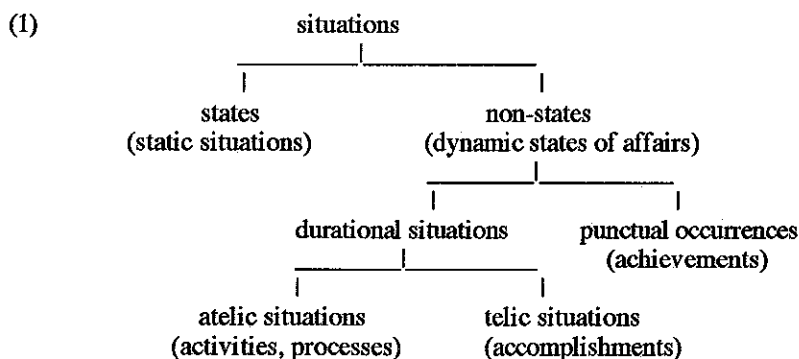
### 4.2 Alternate Terminology

Schachter (1986) and U. Weinreich (1977) categorize both the stem construction and prefixed verbs as 'perfective'. Any terminology proposed to describe the aspectual properties of Yiddish verbs should capture the insight that these two constructions share some aspectual characteristic. With respect to prefixed verbs Rothstein [1990:145] suggests that the term 'telic' might be preferable to 'perfective':

"Perhaps it would be more accurate to claim that the essential function of Yiddish verbal prefixes is to make atelic verbs telic."

Comrie (1976:46) uses the term 'telicity' for describing German prefixed verbs; he gives the verbs *essen* 'to eat' and *aufessen* 'eat up' as an example of how German derives telic verbs from atelic verbs morphologically. As discussed in Section 3.2.2, the terms 'atelic' and 'telic' can be used to describe many Yiddish verbs related through prefixation, such as the verbs cognate to Comrie's German examples, *esn* 'to eat' and *opesn* 'to eat up'. The term 'telicity' has also been used to describe some prefixed Slavic verbs: Maslov (1978:17) describes prefixed verbs in Lithuanian and Latvian as having marked telicity.

The problem with using the term 'telic' for characterizing the function of Yiddish verbal prefixes is that telicity is commonly defined as applying to durational situations. As noted in Section 3.2.2, Rothstein defines a telic verb as characterizing "a *process* that leads up to a well-defined terminal point, beyond which the *process* cannot continue" (my emphasis). Comrie (1976:44) explicitly identifies the term 'telic situation' with Vendler's term 'accomplishment'. The chart of Vendlerian categories introduced in the previous chapter and reproduced below in (1) illustrates the equivalence of telic situations and accomplishments.



Yiddish prefixed verbs, however, are not limited to accomplishments; as discussed in the previous chapter, many of the prefixed verbs are punctual occurrences and Schachter (1985) specifically describes prefixed verbs he considers perfective as punctual. Therefore, the term 'telic' is not suitable for describing Yiddish prefixed verbs because it only applies to a subset of these verbs, those with duration. Further, since the stem construction contributes punctual meaning, the term 'telic' cannot extend to describe the stem construction as well as prefixed verbs.

There are, however, several terms available that can include both accomplishments and achievements; among these are 'terminative', 'bounded', and 'delimited'.

Breu (1994) introduces the term 'terminative' in his classification of verbs according to their boundary characteristics. He describes two types of terminative verbs (1994:26): verbs with 'gradually terminative' meaning and verbs with 'totally terminative' meaning. Both types of verbs have inherent final boundaries. However, verbs with 'gradually terminative' meanings have duration and while the end result is usually attained, the process can be interrupted. As examples of gradually terminate verbs, Breu gives 'write something' and 'drown'. For 'totally terminative' verbs, the endpoint "is unchangeably determined as soon as the state of affairs has begun, without any possibility of interrupting it"; examples are 'find', 'explode' and 'reach'. Breu notes (1994:41) that his categories of 'gradually terminative' and 'totally terminative' correspond to Vendler's accomplishments and achievements. Therefore, the term 'terminative' could be used to describe both durative and punctual Yiddish prefixed verbs and the punctual stem construction.

The problem with using the term 'terminative' is similar to that discussed in section 3.2.2 with respect to the term 'completed'. These terms lead to some confusion between the stage of the activity described by the root verb and the event itself denoted by the prefixed verb. This can be illustrated again with the example of *tseveyenen zix* 'to burst out weeping'. The activity described by the root verb *veyenen* is weeping. The prefixed verb *tseveyenen zix* refers to the beginning stage of weeping; when one 'bursts out weeping' the implication is that this is the beginning of a continued process of weeping. For this reason Schachter (1986) classifies *tseveyenen zix* as 'initiative'. However the actual event of the prefixed verb is 'bursting out'; that event is punctual, just like the verb 'explode' and so, in Breu's terms, it is 'totally terminative'. By definition, then, the term 'terminative' covers accomplishments and achievements and so would be adequate to describe Yiddish prefixed verbs and the stem construction. However, I believe it would be unnecessarily confusing to use the term 'terminative' to describe a class of prefixed

verbs which include both inchoative verbs referring to the initiation of an activity, such as *tseveynen zix*, and verbs indicating the end of an activity, like *opveynen* 'to cease weeping'.

Jackendoff's (1990) term 'bounded' and Tenny's (1994) term 'delimited' are very similar in meaning and therefore both account well for the Yiddish facts. Jackendoff (1990:215) notes that "accomplishments and achievements are bounded Events"; Tenny (1994:5) states "accomplishments and achievements are delimited; statives and activities are non-delimited." Tenny further notes (1994:5) that her delimited/non-delimited distinction is equivalent to Jackendoff's bounded/non-bounded distinction. Tenny and Jackendoff use similar tests for distinguishing the two types of verbs, delimited/non-delimited or bounded/nonbounded. They both test the boundedness of sentences with two temporal adverbial phrases: Jackendoff (1990:28) uses 'for hours' and 'until noon'; Tenny uses (1994:6) 'in an hour' and 'for an hour'. Both recognize that this type of test doesn't work well with bounded/delimited instantaneous events.

Jackendoff and Tenny also each develop their theories in ways that bring insight to Yiddish aspectual expression. In particular they both extend their analyses beyond temporal meanings to include bounding/delimiting of NPs and of space. Jackendoff (1990:31) proposes that "there is a common feature system that deals with boundedness and individuation, cutting across Things, Events and Paths." With respect to 'Things', Jackendoff (1990:29) notes "It has often been observed that the bounded/unbounded distinction is strongly parallel to the count/mass distinction in NPs." Similarly, Tenny (1994:25) states "The parallels between the count/mass distinction for nominals and the aspectual delimited/non-delimited distinction are well-known." This association between verbal aspect and different noun phrases is relevant to the function of the determiner *a* that is found before the verb stem in the stem construction. This issue is discussed further in Section 4.4.3.

Both authors discuss the association between verbal aspect and space. Jackendoff (1990:30) describes 'bounded' and 'unbounded Paths' and Tenny (1994:25) claims that "Spatial and temporal delimitedness are parallel in many respects." This relationship between the temporal and the spatial is relevant to a full analysis of Yiddish prefixes, and is discussed further in Section 4.3.2.

I argued in the previous chapter that Yiddish aspect should not be described in terms of a binary perfective/imperfective opposition. Both terms 'bounded' and 'delimited' have the advantage, unlike the term 'perfective', of having no associations with a system of grammatical binary oppositions. While there exist verbs that are bounded and others that are unbounded, or verbs that are delimited and others that are non-delimited, there is no implication that these verbs form pairs that are in a one-to-one relationship or that there is an obligatory choice between them.

The terms 'delimited' and 'bounded' thus share many characteristics that are valuable for describing Yiddish aspectual constructions, and I draw upon both Jackendoff's and Tenny's insights in the following discussion. I have chosen to use the term 'bounded' for two reasons, one related to the definition of the terms and the second with the possibility of stacking meanings.

Tenny (1994:4) defines a delimited event as "an event having a distinct, definite and inherent endpoint in time." Just as with the term 'terminative' above, this definition which stresses the 'endpoint in time' is somewhat problematic for that small group of Yiddish prefixed verbs associated with the beginning of an activity. Further, while the stem construction is punctual and so has an inherent endpoint, it does not have the same associations with the end of an event as a verb like *opboudn* 'to finish bathing'. It is therefore preferable to have a term that sets temporal limits



to an event without specifying the end or the termination. The term 'bounded' can be used in this way. Jackendoff does not specifically define the term 'bounded' and so it can be used here for the different Yiddish constructions without obviously violating Jackendoff's intended usage. The term 'bounded' can be used for both accomplishments and achievements, for achievements that mark the initial or final limit of an activity, and for the semelfactive stem construction.

The term 'bounded' is also felicitous in that it allows the stacking of meanings: that is, since it allows the possibility of setting boundaries of different kinds, it is then possible for two constructions to bound the same event in different ways in the same sentence. The term 'delimited' cannot be used in this way. Tenny (1994:79) proposes 'The Single Delimiting Constraint' which specifies that in a single sentence "the event described by a verb may ... be delimited only once."

The concept of 'bounded' can therefore account for the interaction of prefixation with the stem construction in a way that the term 'perfective' could not. As discussed in the previous chapter, U. Weinreich (1977) and Schachter (1986) categorize both prefixed verbs and the stem construction as 'perfective'. Since 'perfective' is a binary feature, it is a problem for their analyses that prefixed verbs are frequently found as bases for the stem construction. This is illustrated in chart (2) below from Schachter (1986): the prefixed verbs *avekshikn* and *iberleyenen* in the 'termination' column, form the verb stems for the stem constructions *gebn a shik avek* and *gebn a leyn iber* in the 'moment' column. According to Weinreich's and Schachter's analyses, it should not be possible for a perfective verb to become more perfective.

(2)

	imperfective	perfective		
		termination	initiation	moment
a.	<i>shikn</i> 'send'	<i>avek/op/tsushikn</i> 'send away, send to'	<i>nemen/onheybn</i> <i>shikn</i> 'begin to send'	<i>gebn a shik</i> <i>avek/op/tsu</i> 'send away abruptly'
b.	<i>leyenen</i> 'read'	<i>iberleyenen</i> 'read through'	<i>nemen/onheybn</i> <i>leyenen</i> 'start to read'	<i>gebn a leyn iber</i> 'give a quick read through'

However, if prefixation and the stem construction are understood to bound the verb in different ways, the interaction of the two constructions is analyzable; this is discussed in more detail in Section 4.4.2.

The term 'bounded' can capture the insights of Schachter (1986) and U. Weinreich (1977) that the stem construction and prefixed verbs share a common aspectual trait that they labelled 'perfective' and is here described as 'boundedness'. What Schachter labels 'perfective' and 'imperfective' in chart (2) above, is better described as 'bounded' and 'unbounded'; there is then no implication of a grammatical binary opposition.

### 4.3 Prefixed Verbs as Bounded

#### 4.3.1 Temporally Bounded

A bounded event is one that is temporally limited. In this section I show the different ways in which prefixed verbs bound an event. The representations illustrate both initiative and terminative bounding including accomplishments and achievements.

A prefixed verb with a meaning of achievement is illustrated in (3) below. The temporal structure of the simple verb *veynen* 'to weep' is represented by a horizontal line in (3a). The prefixed verb *opveynen* 'to cease weeping' bounds the activity of weeping. This bounding is represented by a vertical boundary at the right edge of a horizontal line, as illustrated in (3b). The event of 'ceasing to weep' is a punctual event; it is an achievement with no duration. This event is represented by the vertical line which is understood as having no width and therefore no duration. The horizontal line is shown as broken in (3b) to indicate that the activity of weeping is not part of the event of 'ceasing', although it necessarily precedes it. Dowty (1977) argues that achievements, like accomplishments, should be interpreted as intervals rather than as points in time; I, however, follow the categorization of achievements as punctual events, as illustrated in (1) above.

- (3) a. *veynen* 'to weep' \_\_\_\_\_  
b. *opveynen* 'to cease weeping' \_\_\_\_\_ |

A prefixed verb with an accomplishment meaning is illustrated in (4). Like *opveynen* 'to cease weeping' illustrated in (3b), the prefixed verb *iberleyenen* 'to read through' is bounded on the right with a horizontal line, indicating a temporal boundary at the end of an activity. However the horizontal line is solid rather than broken, to indicate that the verb *iberleyenen* has duration and includes the process of reading.

- (4) a. *leyenen* 'to read' \_\_\_\_\_  
b. *iberleyenen* 'to read through' \_\_\_\_\_ |

The main effect of Yiddish aspectual prefixation is to bound an occurrence at the end. All four of the most frequent aspectual prefixes discussed in Chapter One have meanings associated with termination. The predominance of the terminative meaning of prefixation is also evident in Schachter's (1986:406-414) chart of imperfective and perfective verbs where at least one terminative prefixed form is almost always provided but the initiative prefixed form is lacking in the majority of entries and is represented by a periphrastic expression such as *nemen/onheybn shikn* 'begin to send'. Nonetheless, the role of Yiddish prefixes in temporally bounding an event at its beginning should be accounted for.

The temporal bounding for the prefixed verb *tse laxn zix* 'to burst out laughing' is illustrated in (5). Again, the activity of *laxn* 'to laugh' is shown as a horizontal line in (5a), and the temporal bounding is indicated with a vertical line, in this case at the left edge of the horizontal line. The verb *tse laxn zix* is an achievement; the event of 'bursting out' is punctual, and so the activity of 'laughing' that follows the 'bursting out' is indicated with a broken horizontal line.

- (5) a. *laxn* 'to laugh' \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. *tselaxn zix* 'to burst out laughing' | \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

The process of prefixation sets up a boundary at the beginning or end of an activity. The description of Yiddish prefixed verbs as bounded is supported by Tenny's analysis of Russian prefixes and English particles. Tenny (1994:141) describes Russian verbal prefixes as marking delimitedness directly and English verb particles as enforcing delimitedness, the main difference, according to Tenny, being that delimitedness has been 'grammaticalized' in Russian. Yiddish verbal prefixes have a form and temporal function similar to that of English particles and of certain Slavic prefixes and can also be described as marking and enforcing delimitedness, or in the terminology used here, boundedness.

#### 4.3.2 Measuring Out

Tenny introduces the concept of 'measuring out' which relates the semantics of delimitedness (or boundedness, here) and the syntax of argument structure. According to Tenny (1994:10) "measuring out' refers to the role played by the argument in marking the temporal terminus of the event." She further specifies (1994:15) that "Measuring-Out contains two ingredients: a measuring scale associated with an argument, and a temporal bound or delimitedness." What is relevant here is the relationship of the concept of 'measuring out' to the semantics of Yiddish prefixed verbs.

Tenny (1994:36) describes English verb particles as having two main functions related to the measuring out role of the verb's argument. First they enforce a delimited measured out reading and secondly they force an interpretation that the argument is completely 'consumed'. As an example of an argument being completely consumed, Tenny (1994:37) gives 'eat the apple up' which forces an interpretation of the apple being completely consumed, and "the end of the event coinciding with the end of the apple." This concept of the argument of a particle verb acting as a measuring scale for the temporal structure of the verb clarifies the semantic overtones of the Yiddish aspectual prefixes discussed in Chapter One.

In Section 1.1.2.2 it was noted that U. Weinreich (1977) gives a gloss for several verbs prefixed in *op-* with a complement in brackets, such as *oployfen* 'run (a course); or *opesn* 'eat (a meal)'. The theory of measuring-out explains that an internal argument is necessary for prefixed verbs to force the bounded reading and to 'measure out' the event so that the temporal terminus coincides with the exhaustion of the argument. Therefore the internal arguments of the verbs *oployfen* and *opesn*, that is, 'the course' and 'the meal', are required to measure out the events of their respective verbs.

It appears that the different Yiddish prefixes involve different types of measuring. The prefix *oys*, for example, discussed in Section 1.1.2.1 has a sense of exhaustiveness not found with the other temporal prefixes, in that the event is measured out by as complete a set of affected items as possible. An example of this meaning is found in *oysbletern* 'to turn all the leaves of a book', which is a prefixed form of the verb *bletern* 'to turn the leaves of a book'. Here, the event *oysbletern* is measured out by every page in the book. Similarly *oysfarkoyfn* 'to sell out' is measured out by the selling of every piece of merchandise. Therefore, the concept of

'measuring out' is an excellent tool for describing the relationship of the internal argument to the most frequently found aspectual prefix, *oys-*.

Tenny's analysis of the function of English particles is also applicable to some uses of the prefix *on-*. For example, the difference between *shraybn a briv* and *onshraybn a briv*, both meaning 'to write a letter' can be attributed to the prefix *on-* forcing a bounded reading and forcing the temporal boundary of the event to coincide with the completion of the letter. Thus, for many speakers, as described in Section 1.1.1.3, *onshraybn a briv* implies that the letter is completed, whereas *shraybn a briv* does not have that implication.

Not all Yiddish aspectual prefixes can be accounted for in this way. In particular, many prefixed verbs are intransitive and cannot be said to be measured out by the internal argument. Some verbs prefixed in *op-* meaning 'to cease' or 'to finish' do not require direct objects. One can say simply *er hot opgedavnt* 'he finished praying' or *zi hot opgebodnt* 'she finished bathing' without an object. Similarly, the verbs prefixed in *on-* with the meaning 'to Verb much' do not require internal arguments. Some examples are *onbakhn* 'to bake a great deal', *onborghn* 'to borrow much' and *onboyen* 'to build many houses'. In these cases the prefix can be considered to measure out the event without the presence of an explicit internal argument. For example the prefixation of the verb *boyen* 'to build' with *on-* gives *onboyen* 'to build many houses'; the event is measured out by the completion of many houses, but no overt internal argument 'houses' is present. The question of the relationship of the semantics of 'measuring out' to the syntactic structure of prefixed verbs is discussed in Section 6.5.

#### 4.3.3 Spatially Bounded

As noted above, both Tenny and Jackendoff apply their terminology to spatial as well as to temporal limits. Jackendoff (1990:30) describes prepositional phrases such as 'to the house' as 'bounded paths'. The term 'spatially bounded' can be used to describe the great number of Yiddish prefixed verbs that have primarily directional meaning. According to Wexler (1964) there are about 25 verbal prefixes in Yiddish; as we have seen, only a small number of them are specifically aspectual. The term 'bounded' can be used to characterize a directionally prefixed verb like *tsugeyen* 'to walk up to' or *aroyftrogn* 'to carry up' where the prefix sets the physical boundary of the movement. The theory of measuring out can again link the spatial and the temporal: in the case of *aroyftrogn*, the event of 'carrying' ends when the goal 'up' is reached. The temporal boundary and the physical goal are simultaneously achieved, and it is the goal or path specified by the prefix that measures out the event. As discussed earlier in Section 2.4.1.2, Schaechter (1985) describes both temporally and directionally prefixed verbs as 'perfective'; the term 'bounded' more comfortably includes both types of prefixation.

#### 4.4 Stem Construction as Bounded

##### 4.4.1 Temporally Bounded

As discussed in Section 1.2.2, Schaechter (1986) divides the stem construction into two main categories according to meaning: stem constructions that contribute an instantaneous meaning and those that contribute an isolating or one-time meaning. The sentences in (6) are examples of stem constructions with instantaneous meaning. Sentence (6a) shows the simple verb *efenen* 'to open' in the

past; the stem construction in (6b) imparts the meaning that the eyes were opened quickly or abruptly. The sentences in (7) illustrates the isolating meaning of the stem construction: the sentence in (7a), formed from the simple verb *kratsn* 'to scratch', implies that the child gave the dog a series of scratches, while the stem construction in (7b) isolates one action of scratching from the series.

- (6) a. *zi hot geefent di oygn*  
 she has opened the eyes  
 'she opened her eyes'
- b. *zi hot an efn geton di oygn*  
 she has an open done the eyes  
 'she opened her eyes (quickly)'
- (7) a. *dos kind hot gekratst dem hunt*  
 the child has scratched the dog  
 'the child scratched the dog'
- b. *dos kind hot a krats geton dem hunt*  
 the child has a scratch done the dog  
 'the child gave the dog a scratch'

I propose that the stem construction imparts the same bounded structure to all verbs; the different interpretations of the stem construction result from the semantic nature of the verbs involved. In each case, I propose that the stem construction reduces the event described by the verb to an instant. The bounding of the stem construction is different from the type of bounding found with prefixation, for there is no focus on the initial or final boundary of the event. That is, the stem construction *a krats ton* 'to give a scratch' is not the same as 'to finish scratching', which could be expressed by the hypothetical prefixed form *opkratsn*. Similarly, the stem construction in (6b) *an efn ton* 'to open abruptly' does not have the same meaning as 'to open completely' which could be expressed by the hypothetical prefixed form *oysefenen*. These hypothetical prefixed forms would be represented, like the verbs in (3b) and (4b), with a boundary on the right, at the termination of the activity. The event expressed by the stem construction can be described as 'complete' as opposed to 'completed'; the focus is not that an activity is completed, as with, for example, verbs prefixed with *op-*, but that the complete event, from beginning to end, has taken place in an instant. The stem construction limits the event to a short duration but does not emphasize a specific boundary.


For this reason I propose a different representation for the bounding of the stem construction than that proposed for prefixed verbs. This is illustrated with the verb *kukn* 'look' in (8) below.

- (8) a. *kukn* 'look' \_\_\_\_\_
- b. *a kuk gebn* 'take a look, glance' [ . ]

The verb *kukn* is not bounded; there is no inherent initial or final boundary and it has duration of unspecified length, as represented with a horizontal line in (8a). The stem construction in (8b) *a kuk gebn* 'take a look, glance' shrinks the process of looking in (8a) to an instant. The boundedness of the activity is represented by

brackets, which set off the 'looking' as having a beginning and an end. Vertical lines are not used for the bounding here as that would indicate an unwarranted focus on the initial and final boundaries. The unbounded verb in (8a) is represented by a line; reduction of the duration to a moment by the stem construction is represented by a point, since a line is made up of a series of points.

The stem construction *a kuk gebn* in (8b) would be classified as having the instantaneous meaning. The isolating or 'one-time' meaning of the stem construction arises when the verb involved implies a series of episodes. This is illustrated with the verb *kratsn* 'to scratch', as in the sentences in (7) above. The verb *kratsn* is represented in (9a) by several horizontal lines indicating a series of individual scratches of unspecified duration together making up one activity of scratching. The corresponding stem construction is shown in (9b).

- (9) a. *kratsn* 'scratch' 
- b. *a krats ton* 'give a scratch' [ . ]

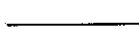
As described above, the stem construction shrinks the duration of the activity described by the verb to an instant. While the act of 'scratching' as in (9a) can involve scratches of varying duration, the stem construction *a krats ton* 'give a scratch' implies a scratch of very short duration. Since the simple verb here is made up of a series of episodes, and since the stem construction reduces the event to one instant, it appears that the stem construction *a krats ton* 'give a scratch' selects out one of these episodes of scratching, giving the isolating interpretation. However the stem construction is contributing the same type of temporal structure in (9) as in (8); the different interpretations are a result of the different verbs involved. Therefore, although the stem constructions illustrated in (8b) and (9b) have been described as two different meanings of the stem construction, the instantaneous and the isolating, it is clear that the stem construction is consistent in the temporal structure that it imparts.

#### 4.4.2 Stacking

The different types of bounding involved with the stem construction and prefixing allows for the 'stacking' of the two constructions in the same sentence. Some examples of prefixed verbs used as stems in the stem construction are given in (11) below.

- (11) a. *er git a kum arayn* [araynkumen 'to come in']  
           he gives a come in  
           'he comes in suddenly'
- b. *er tu a for avek* [avekfor 'to depart']  
      he does a travel away  
      'he departs at once'
- c. *gib an es op* [opesn 'to eat up']  
     give an eat up  
     'finish eating quickly!'

The stacking of the two types of bounding can be illustrated with the stem construction in (11c) *an es op gebn* 'eat up quickly'. The prefixed verb *opesn* 'eat up' is an accomplishment and its temporal representation, shown in (12a) below is like that described in (4b) above. The stem construction reduces the duration of the event to a moment as represented in (12b): the horizontal line of the process has essentially shrunk to a point, leaving the final boundary as a single vertical line. For terminally bounded events the reduction of the duration of the event by the stem construction results in there being essentially no time between the initiation of the event and the final boundary.

- (12) a. *opesn* 'eat up'   
 b. *an es op gebn* 'eat up quickly' [ ]

There is a contrast between the meanings given to simple verbs by the stem construction and the meanings given to their prefixed forms. Schachter (1986:406-414) consistently marks stem constructions based on simple verbs as 'playful' while marking stem constructions based on their prefixed forms as 'hurried'.

- (13) a. *gebn a daven* (playful) (*davenen* 'to pray')  
*gebn a daven op* (hurried)  
 b. *gebn a shrayb* (playful) (*shraybn* 'to write')  
*gebn a shrayb on* (hurried)  
 c. *a leyen ton* (playful) (*leyenen* 'to read')  
*gebn a leyen iber* (hurried)

This contrast can be accounted for with reference to the visual representations of the stem construction above. As noted in Section 1.2.2, Schachter claims that verbs with separable prefixes in the stem construction are always interpreted as instantaneous; in the examples in (13) above, he describes them as *opgexapt* 'hurried'. These 'hurried' or 'instantaneous' interpretations result from the bounded nature of the verbs involved: *opdavenen* 'to finish praying', *onshraybn* 'to write down', and *opzingen* 'to finish singing'. As illustrated in (12b), for bounded verbs the stem construction gives the meaning that the terminal bound follows immediately upon, or is simultaneous with, the beginning of the event.

For unbounded verbs the focus is not that the final boundary has been reached quickly, but that the whole event from beginning to end has lasted a very short time, as illustrated by the bracketed point in (8b). A playful tone can arise because a process that normally take a certain amount of time if done properly, such as praying or writing, has occurred in an extremely short time: no sooner has he started praying than he's finished. This playful meaning is associated with the diminutive sense that Schachter (1951) describes as inherent in some stem constructions and that Diesing (1998:126) associates with stem constructions formed with simple verbs, which she categorizes as atelic.

#### 4.4.3 Quantified Verb Stem

As described above, the stem construction isolates an instant of an event. The indefinite determiner *a* which obligatorily precedes the verb stem in Yiddish plays an important role in creating the aspectual meaning. I suggest that it is the

determiner that functions to singularize the verb stem just as it can mark an NP as singular.

Tenny and Jackendoff note the parallelism between the bounding of verbs and the bounding of count nouns; their observations were quoted in Section 4.2 above. In particular Tenny (1989:7) describes how a count noun in the internal argument serves to bound the verb where a mass noun does not. "There is a class of verbs which translate count-ness of the internal argument into delimitedness of the event." This means that when the internal argument is a count noun, the event is bounded, and when it is a mass noun, the event is not bounded. Tenny gives the example in (14) below: the count noun of the internal argument in (14a) bounds the event of drinking, whereas the mass noun 'beer' in (14b) does not.

- (14) a. Charles drank *a mug of beer*.  
b. Charles drank beer.

This generalization cannot be directly applied to the stem construction because the verb stem that follows the determiner is verbal, not nominal, as discussed in Section 2.4.2.2 (Aronson 1985; Gold 1993, 1994a). Therefore the stem in a construction like that in (15) is verbal and cannot be considered a count noun even though it is preceded by the indefinite determiner *a*. Nonetheless the indefinite determiner *a* can be considered to singularize the verb stem in a way parallel to the singularization of a count noun.

- (15) *er hot im a freg gegeben*  
he has him an ask given  
'he asked him'

Wierzbicka (1982) examines similar English constructions of the form 'have a X', such as 'have a bite' and 'have a swim'. As in the analysis here of the Yiddish stem construction, Wierzbicka also treats the element following the indefinite determiner as a verb stem, not as a deverbal noun. She describes the role of 'a' in this construction as "delimiting and singularizing" the activity specified by the verb stem. This same description can be applied to the Yiddish *a* in the stem construction, in that it bounds and 'singularizes' the verb stem.

The proposal that a determiner can quantify a verbal element is supported by the work of Dolinina (1993), who argues that verbal quantity is a universal grammatical category. She claims that verbs are quantified in the same way that nouns are, and draws on Wierzbicka's work for such examples as 'to have a drink'.

In section 4.3.2 it was described how the internal argument of a prefixed verb, and in some cases, the prefix itself, serves to measure out the bounded event. In the stem construction it appears that it is the indefinite article that measures out and bounds the event described by the verb stem.

#### 4.5 Unbounded Constructions

I have proposed above that the stem construction and aspectually prefixed verbs share the characteristic of boundedness and that simple verbs are generally unbounded. How should other constructions introduced earlier as aspectual be categorized? U. Weinreich (1977) attributes an important aspectual role to the construction *haltn in* plus infinitive which he describes as durative. The example he gives is repeated in (16) below.



- (16)    *zey hobn es gehaltn in oysgrobn*  
          they have it held    in excavate  
          'they were excavating it'

A verb in this construction, which can also be translated as 'to be in the process of', is not bounded. The habitual past of *fleg* plus infinitive can also be described as unbounded as can the construction which Birnbaum (1979) describes as (present) habitual formed from *tun* plus infinitive. These two constructions are illustrated in (17).

- (17)    a.        *ix fleg shraybn*  
                  I used    to write  
                  'I used to write/be writing'
- b.        *ix tu shraybn*  
                  I    do    to write  
                  'I write'

Breu (1994:30) claims that the habitual "has no other function than to transform actions into states". Jackendoff (1990) and Cowper (1997) also analyze the habitual as a state, in that it sets out traits that are characteristic of the subject NP. Since a state is not bounded, neither the present nor the past habitual can be considered to bound an event.

The past habitual does limit the event in the sense that the state it describes no longer pertains. Comrie (1976:28) notes that the English habitual 'used to' implies 'and no longer'; this is equally true for the Yiddish *fleg*, which implies that the habitual nature of the activity comes to an end before the moment of speech. However, this setting a state in the past is not the same as bounding the action expressed by the verb itself; the boundedness is inherent to the verb. For example, 'used to have red hair', 'used to drink two cups of coffee', and 'used to arrive at ten' all are bounded differently and have different temporal structures, that of states, accomplishments and achievements. However, they are all constrained to have occurred before the moment of speech. The habitual past, alone among the aspectual constructions discussed here, is deictic, and its function as a tense is discussed in Section 5.4.2.1.

#### 4.6 Relationship of Bounded Constructions to Tense

Temporally bounded prefixed verbs apparently have a tense as well as an aspectual function in what has been referred to above as the pseudo-pluperfect (Section 2.4.1.4). That is, temporally bounded prefixed verbs in the past are glossed with the English pluperfect form. The discussion below accounts for this use of prefixed verbs: Sections 4.6.1 and 4.6.2 describe the Yiddish past and pluperfect constructions respectively, and then the pseudo-pluperfect is analyzed in Section 4.6.3.

##### 4.6.1 Yiddish Past

The Yiddish past is composed of an inflected form of *hobn* or *zayn*, plus the past participle. The majority of verbs form their past with *hobn*; *zayn* is used for a small set of intransitive verbs of "motion, motionlessness, states of existence, and

the life cycle" (Katz 1987:136); its use is not predictable. Examples of the past formed with *hobn* and *zayn* are given in (18a) and (18b) respectively.

- (18) a. Past: 'I said, you said ....'
- |   |                         |                        |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | <i>ix hob gezogt</i>    | <i>mir hobn gezogt</i> |
| 2 | <i>du host gezogt</i>   | <i>ir hot gezogt</i>   |
| 3 | <i>er/zi hot gezogt</i> | <i>zey hobn gezogt</i> |
- b. Past: 'I went, you went...'
- |   |                          |                            |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | <i>ix bin gegangen</i>   | <i>mir zaynen gegangen</i> |
| 2 | <i>du bist gegangen</i>  | <i>ir zayt gegangen</i>    |
| 3 | <i>er/zi iz gegangen</i> | <i>zey zaynen gegangen</i> |

Morphologically, the Yiddish past resembles a perfect tense in other Germanic languages, as illustrated in (19) below.

- (19) Yiddish past: *ix hob gezogt*  
 English perfect: I have said  
 German perfect: *Ich habe gesagt*

Despite its resemblance and historical relationship to these perfect forms, the Yiddish past does not carry perfect meaning. It is most often translated by the English simple past, as illustrated in the sentences in (20) below.

- (20) a. *yoysef hot geentfert rixtik*  
 Yoysef has answered right  
 'Yoysef answered correctly' (Weinreich 1971:85)
- b. *moyshen hot sheyn geshribn*  
 moyshen has beautiful written  
 'Moyshen wrote beautifully' (ibid.)
- c. *mayn vater iz geshtorbn, bin ix avekgefoyn kayn amerike*  
 my father is died, am I away-travelled to America  
 'my father died, so I left for America' (ibid. 122)

There is no simple past in Yiddish, only the periphrastic construction illustrated in (18). Yiddish is not the only Germanic language in which the simple past has been lost and the perfect form has taken on a more general function of expressing the past. Dahl (1985:167) notes that Yiddish shares this characteristic with Afrikaans and some Southern German dialects. Comrie (1976:53) also describes this process:

... in some (especially Southern) varieties of German, the so-called Perfect has extended its sphere to take over the Simple Past, i.e. it has in fact become the only Past Tense, quite irrespective of aspect.

Like the Germanic languages that Comrie describes, Yiddish can be said to have only one past "quite irrespective of aspect." Thus, where English can express different aspectual meanings through the simple past, the past progressive and the past perfect constructions, Yiddish must rely upon other types of verbal and adverbial constructions. The sentences in (21) illustrate that the Yiddish past can be glossed

with the English past progressive and simple past as in *hot gekoxt* and *iz aropgefaln* in (21a), or with the English pluperfect as in *hot tseshnitn* in (21b).

- (21) a. *ven zi hot gekoxt vetshere, iz bay ir aropgefaln a meser*  
 when she has cooked dinner, is by her away-fallen a knife  
 'While she was cooking dinner she dropped a knife.'
- b. *ven er hot tseshnitn dos broyt, iz im aroysgefaln dos meser fun hant*  
 when he has cut the bread, is to him out-fallen the knife from hand  
 'After he had cut the bread he dropped the knife.'

The verb *hot tseshnitn* 'had cut' in sentence (21b) is an example of the pseudo-pluperfect, the use of the past form of a prefixed verb to express pluperfect meaning; this is discussed further in Section 4.6.3 below.

#### 4.6.2 Pluperfect

The designation 'pluperfect' is somewhat inappropriate, as there are no perfect constructions in Yiddish. Thieroff (1994) labels this construction 'Anterior 2', as compared to 'Anterior 1' for the past construction. However, formally and semantically this tense construction resembles the pluperfect in other Germanic languages and so the term is commonly used. Like other Germanic pluperfects it includes the past form of the verb 'have' plus a past participle and it locates the event prior to a reference time in the past.

The structure of the pluperfect is most simply described as the past construction plus the invariant past participle of *hobn* 'have', *gehat*, which precedes the past participle. The pluperfect in (22b) can be compared with the past in (22a); the only difference is the presence of *gehat*.

- (22) a. Past: 'I said, you said ....'
- |   |                         |                        |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | <i>ix hob gezogt</i>    | <i>mir hobn gezogt</i> |
| 2 | <i>du host gezogt</i>   | <i>ir hot gezogt</i>   |
| 3 | <i>er/zi hot gezogt</i> | <i>zey hobn gezogt</i> |
- b. Pluperfect: 'I had said, you had said...'
- |   |                                      |                                     |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | <i>ix hob <b>gehat</b> gezogt</i>    | <i>mir hobn <b>gehat</b> gezogt</i> |
| 2 | <i>du host <b>gehat</b> gezogt</i>   | <i>ir hot <b>gehat</b> gezogt</i>   |
| 3 | <i>er/zi hot <b>gehat</b> gezogt</i> | <i>zey hobn <b>gehat</b> gezogt</i> |

Similarly, for verbs conjugated with *zayn*, the pluperfect is formed by the insertion of *gehat* before the past participle as illustrated in (23).

- (23) a. Past: 'I went, you went...'
- |   |                          |                            |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | <i>ix bin gegangen</i>   | <i>mir zaynen gegangen</i> |
| 2 | <i>du bist gegangen</i>  | <i>ir zayt gegangen</i>    |
| 3 | <i>er/zi iz gegangen</i> | <i>zey zaynen gegangen</i> |
- b. Pluperfect: 'I had gone, you had gone...'
- |   |                                       |   |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | <i>ix bin <b>gehat</b> gegangen</i>   | <i>mir zaynen <b>gehat</b> gegangen</i> |
| 2 | <i>du bist <b>gehat</b> gegangen</i>  | <i>ir zayt <b>gehat</b> gegangen</i>    |
| 3 | <i>er/zi iz <b>gehat</b> gegangen</i> | <i>zey zaynen <b>gehat</b> gegangen</i> |

The invariance of *gehat* is evident in the following sentences: it is found both when the auxiliary of the verb is *hobn*, as in (24a) and (24b), and when the auxiliary is *zayn* as in (24c).

- (24) a. *er hot derbay gehat bashuldikt an islamisha grupe in hobn durxgefirt dem atentat*  
 he has at that had accused an Islamic group in (to) have carried out the assassination attempt  
 'he had accused an Islamic group of having carried out the assassination attempt' (forverts 1997a:1)
- b. *der tate hot zix gehat umgekert fun minxe-mariv*  
 the father has self had returned from minxe-mariv  
 'my father had returned from evening prayers' (I.B.Singer 1979:123)
- c. *di eltern zenen gehat geshtorbn*  
 the parents are had died  
 'his parents had died' (I.B.Singer 1979:348)

The formation of the Yiddish pluperfect is different from the corresponding form in German. There the pluperfect construction is formed with the simple past of each auxiliary, *haben* and *sein*, as illustrated in (25a) and (25b) respectively. In (25a) the pluperfect includes *hatte*, the past form of the auxiliary *hat*, which is found in the corresponding past sentence. In (25b), *war* is found in the pluperfect, which is the past form of *ist* shown in the corresponding past sentence.

- (25) a. past: *er hat gesungen*  
 'he has sung'  
 pluperfect: *er hatte gesungen*  
 'he had sung'
- b. past: *er ist gekommen*  
 'he has come'  
 pluperfect: *er war gekommen*  
 'he had come'

If the Yiddish pluperfect were formed on the same pattern, one would expect the past form of *hobn* with verbs that take the auxiliary *hobn* and the past form of *zayn* for verbs that select *zayn*, as illustrated in (26).

- (26) a. past: *ix hob gezogt*  
 'I said'  
 pluperfect: *ix hob gehat gezogt*  
 'I had said'
- b. past: *ix bin gegangen*  
 'I went'  
 pluperfect: *\*ix bin geven gegangen*  
*ix bin gehat gegangen*  
 'I had gone'

Since there is no simple past in Yiddish, the parallel construction to the German involves the periphrastic past of the auxiliary. The parallel with German holds for the sentences in (26a): the past form of *hob*, *hob gehat*, is found in the corresponding pluperfect in (26a). However, this pattern gives an ungrammatical form for the verbs with the auxiliary *zayn* as shown by the starred form in (26b): the past form of *bin* is *bin geven*, but this is ungrammatical in the pluperfect. The correct form, as shown, has *bin gehat* preceding the past participle. Therefore, the past participle *gehat* is found with all pluperfect forms.

Yiddish forms closer to the Germanic model have been documented, as noted in Kiefer (1988:146) and shown in (27). However, the construction with invariant *gehat* is most commonly found; a proposal for its syntactic structure is given in Section 5.4.5.

- (27) *er iz geven gekumen/ geblibn/ gefloygn/ geshtorbn*  
 he is been come/stayed/flew/died  
 'he had come/stayed/flown/died'

The temporal interpretation of the pluperfect can be described through the use of Reichenbachian terms. Reichenbach (1947) represents tenses as the relationships between three temporally ordered points, S, R, and E. The event time is designated by E and R indicates a reference point. S is the moment of speech, the deictic element that anchors the temporal interpretation. The relationships between the elements S, R and E can be represented by lines and commas (Hornstein 1990). A comma separates two contemporaneous elements and a line separates two elements that are separated in time. The element to the right of a line is interpreted as occurring later than the element on the left of the line. The representation of the Yiddish tense forms is discussed in detail in Chapter 5, as is the default nature of the Yiddish present. They are illustrated in (28) below; for simple tenses R is most commonly coincident with the moment of speech S.

- (28) (default) present                      E, R, S  
 past    E \_\_ R, S  
 future    R, S \_\_ E

In the representation of the pluperfect, the reference point R is not coincident with S. As illustrated in (29), in the pluperfect the event E occurs before the reference point R which is in the past, that is, it occurs before S.

- (29) pluperfect                                      E \_\_ R \_\_ S

The difference in temporal meaning between the Yiddish past and pluperfect is illustrated in (30).

- (30) a. *ix hob gezogt* 'I said'                                      E \_\_ R, S  
 b. *ix hob gehat gezogt* 'I had said'                                      E \_\_ R \_\_ S

I propose that it is the function of the invariant *gehat* to shift the event before a reference point R which is prior to S. In this way *gehat* functions as an adverbial element that sets the temporal context for the sentence (Gold 1998a). The

grammatical role of *gehat* and the syntactic structure proposed for the pluperfect are discussed in Section 5.4.5.

#### 4.6.3 Pseudo-Pluperfect

As discussed above, sentences with aspectually prefixed verbs in the past are frequently translated with the English pluperfect; this use is called the pseudo-pluperfect. An example can be found in U. Weinreich's 'Guidelines for Use of the Dictionary' (1977:xxxv) excerpted in section 2.3.1.3 above; the relevant portion is repeated below:

... the Yiddish imperfective equivalent of **dig** is *grob'n*; the perfective equivalent is *oysgrob'n*. Accordingly *ven er hot gegrob'n* means 'while he was digging'; *ven er hot oysgegrob'n* 'when he had dug'.

Putting aside Weinreich's terminology of perfective and imperfective, it can be seen that the phrase with the prefixed verb *oysgrob'n* is translated with the English pluperfect. As described in the previous section, Yiddish has a pluperfect form, but it is rarely used, possibly because of the availability of prefixation to express an equivalent meaning. Prince (1996) suggests that the infrequent use of the pluperfect form is a result of the loss in Eastern Yiddish of a Germanic sequence of tense system which requires the use of a pluperfect form. Sequence of tense is discussed further in Section 5.4.1.

In discussing Weinreich's sentence *ven er hot oysgegrob'n* 'when he had dug' from the quote above, Baviskar (1974:8) points out the differences between the Yiddish and the parallel Standard German form, illustrated in (31a) and (31b) respectively.

- |      |    |          |  |
|------|----|----------|--|
| (31) | a. | Yiddish: | <i>ven er hot oysgegrob'n</i><br>'when he had dug (up)'    |
|      | b. | German:  | <i>wie er ausgegraben hat</i><br>'while he was digging up' |

Although the German phrase in (31b) also involves a prefixed verb in the past, unlike the Yiddish in (31a) it does not have a pluperfect meaning. According to Baviskar, the pluperfect German form, illustrated in (32) must be used to attain a pluperfect reading.

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| (32) | <i>wie er ausgegraben hatte</i><br>'when he had dug up' |
|------|---|

The German pluperfect is formed from the past participle and the simple past of the auxiliary *haben*; as described above, Yiddish lacks a simple past and so has no direct equivalent form to this German pluperfect.

U. Weinreich (1952:102) contrasts the meaning of simple and prefixed verbs in the past with the sentences shown earlier in (21b) and repeated below in (33b). In comparing the sentences in (33), Weinreich argues that it is the prefixed verb *tseshnaydn* (past participle *tseshnitn*) that contributes the ordering of events in (33b).

- (33) a. *ven zi hot gekoxt vetshere, iz bay ir aropgefaIn a meser*  
 when she has cooked supper, is by her away-fallen a knife  
 'while she was cooking supper she dropped a knife'
- b. *ven er hot tseshnitn dos broyt, iz im aroysgefaIn dos meser fun hant*  
 when he has cut the bread, is to him out-fallen the knife from hand  
 'after he had cut the bread he dropped the knife'

The bounding nature of the prefixed verbs can account for the event ordering observed. The prefix *tse-* of the verb *tseshnaydn* 'cut' bounds the event of cutting terminally, so that the dropping of the knife must follow the cutting. The verb *koxn* 'cook' on the other hand is not bounded and so the dropping of the knife is interpreted as having occurred during the cooking. The type of temporal event ordering that is usually associated with tense is here a natural consequence of the aspectual structure of the verbs.

Baviskar (1974:34) gives the following example in (34) from the Yiddish author Sholem Aleichem (1970:178). Here also the prefixed verbs *hobn opgedavnt* and *hot opgezogt* are translated into English with the pluperfect to indicate that the events of 'saying Minhah' and 'saying Kaddish' occur before the event of 'telling'.

- (34) *vi bald mir hobn opgedavnt minkhe un er hot opgezogt dem kadish, hot er . . . unz [sic] gezogt, az mir konen geyn.*  
 'as soon as we had said Minhah and he had said Kaddish, he . . .  
 told us we could go'

The widespread use of aspectual prefixation as a pseudo-pluperfect is evident in the responses to Question 035 030 from the *Language and Culture Atlas of Ashkenazic Jewry* (see Nath 1988:49). This question required the respondents to translate the Hebrew sentence given in (35) into Yiddish. Hebrew has no equivalent to prefixed verbs or to pluperfect structures and so the Hebrew sentence cannot be considered to prompt the responses.

- (35) *'Akharey shehayeled heki, hu nirga'*  
 'After the boy (had) vomited, he calmed down.'

The map of the 386 responses compares the distribution of replies with the simple verb *brexn* 'vomit' to replies with a prefixed verb such as *oysbrexn* 'vomit out' or *opbrexn* 'vomit up' (Appendix 2-b). None of the respondents used a pluperfect rather than a past construction. Prefixed verbs outnumber simple verbs throughout the mapped area; a count of the symbols indicates 57% prefixed to 43% simple verbs. More than half the respondents, then, used the prefixed verb to express a prior event. In the research cited in Section 1.2.2.3 above, less than half the respondents characterized an aspectually prefixed verb as completive. It appears that the event ordering function of prefixed verbs is more widely recognized than the bounding function alone.

Similarly for the informants in Baviskar's (1974) research, the most consistent use of prefixed verbs was for the pseudo-pluperfect. As described in Section 3.2.1.2 there was variation in the choice of simple or prefixed forms for

sentences in the present, for present participles and for the future; the usage did not correspond to that expected from verbs following a perfective/imperfective Slavic model. However, as outlined in Section 2.4.1.4, there were consistent results from all informants on the use of simple verbs for interrupted past and prefixed verbs for the pseudo-pluperfect. The data, repeated below in (36), indicate which Yiddish verbs were suggested for the English prompt sentences. These responses again illustrate that the ordering of events in the past is an important role for prefixed verbs.

- |      |    |                                  |                              |
|------|----|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| (36) | a. | 'while I was writing my letter'  | <i>geshribn</i>              |
|      |    | 'when I had written my letter'   | <i>ongeshribn</i>            |
|      | b. | 'while Mother was baking a cake' | <i>gebakn</i>                |
|      |    | 'when Mother had baked a cake'   | <i>opgebakn, oysgebakn</i>   |
|      | c. | 'while I was cooking the dinner' | <i>gekoxht</i>               |
|      |    | 'when I had cooked the dinner'   | <i>opgekoxht, oysgekoxht</i> |

The Yiddish prefixes found in the responses to the English pluperfect prompts in (36) are *on-*, *op-*, and *oys-*, which are three of the four aspectual prefixes discussed in Chapter 1. The prefix *op-*, which has the primary meaning of 'to finish Ving', is particularly productive in the pseudo-pluperfect construction.

The temporal effect of the boundedness of *tseshmaydn* can be expressed in Reichenbachian terms. The role of the prefixes of verbs in the past can be compared to that of the adverbial *gehat* in the pluperfect. Like *gehat*, the prefix of the verb in the past sets the event E prior to a reference point R which is itself prior to S. A Reichenbachian representation does not show the internal structure of an event and so does not usually reflect aspectual information; however, the bounding of the prefix sets up a relationship of E to R and can therefore be represented by this schema. In (37a) the event of baking expressed by the verb *bakn* 'to bake' is in the past, that is, prior to S, moment of speech. In (37b), the terminal bound set by the prefix *op* in the verb *opbakn* is interpreted as the reference R before which the process of baking occurred.

- |      |    |   |             |
|------|----|---|-------------|
| (37) | a. | <i>ven ix hob gebakt</i> 'while I was baking' | E __ R, S   |
|      | b. | <i>ven ix hob opgebakt</i> 'when I had baked' | E __ R __ S |

The way in which the terminal bound functions as the reference R is illustrated in (38) and (39). As described in Section 4.3.1 an unbounded verb like *bakn* 'to bake' can be represented by a horizontal line as in (38a). The bounded prefixed verb *opbakn* 'to finish baking' is represented by a broken horizontal line and a vertical line. The event of 'finishing baking' is a punctual event; it is necessarily preceded by the process of baking.

- |      |    |               |                    |       |
|------|----|---------------|--------------------|-------|
| (38) | a. | <i>bakn</i>   | 'to bake'          | _____ |
|      | b. | <i>opbakn</i> | 'to finish baking' | ----- |

In the pseudo-pluperfect, rather than interpreting the event as the punctual moment of finishing baking, the process of baking is considered to be the event and the bound that signifies the end of the baking acts as a temporal reference point. The interaction of the aspectual and tense schemas is illustrated in (39). In (39a) the



higher line shows the relationship of E, R, S in the past, and the lower line illustrates the aspectual structure of *opbakn*, which is the same as that shown above in (38b). Together they illustrate that the event of 'finishing baking' occurs in the past. The interpretation of this verb as the pseudo-pluperfect is illustrated in (39b). The final boundary of the verb in (39a) is analyzed as the reference point R, setting up the pluperfect relationship of E \_\_ R \_\_ S. The event is interpreted as that of 'baking', with the same aspectual structure as illustrated in (38a).

- (39) a. past E \_\_ R, S  
*hot opgebakt* 'finished baking' \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ |  
 b. pluperfect E \_\_ R \_\_ S  
*hot opgebakt* 'had baked' \_\_\_\_\_

The parallels are clear between the pseudo-pluperfect semantic structure and that of the pluperfect. Both derive an E \_\_ R \_\_ S relationship from a past E \_\_ R, S structure, as illustrated in (40), which repeats the pluperfect structure from (30b) and the pseudo-pluperfect structure from (37b). As will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, in each case the element that sets the event prior to the reference point, that is *gehat* in the pluperfect and the aspectual prefix in the pseudo-pluperfect, can be analyzed as adverbial.

- (40) a. pluperfect:  
*ix hob gehat gezogt* 'I had said' E \_\_ R \_\_ S  
 b. pseudo-pluperfect:  
*ven ix hob opgebakt* 'when I had baked' E \_\_ R \_\_ S

Townsend (1984:294), in his discussion of Slavic aspect, claims that as verbal prefixes become more abstract, they take on a tense function and "aspect withers". While it is unclear whether the Yiddish prefixes have become more abstract or that their aspectual function has declined, his claim does support the proposal here that Yiddish verbal prefixes in the past perform a tense as well as an aspectual role. Bybee et al (1994:54) and Comrie (1976) both note a connection between perfective constructions and the past. Although I have argued that the Yiddish aspectual constructions should not be described as perfective, it is the bounding function rather than the label that is relevant here. Constructions which signal that an event is bounded are well suited to refer to situations that occurred in the past, since past events are at least bounded by having ended before the moment of speech. In forming the pseudo-pluperfect, Yiddish prefixed verbs play an important role in signalling events that are bounded with respect to a reference point in the past.

#### 4.7 Summary

In this chapter I propose that the term 'bounded' be used to characterize both Yiddish prefixed verbs and the stem construction. The analysis that both of these constructions bound the verb captures the observation by earlier writers that prefixed verbs and the stem construction perform similar functions in Yiddish. However, the term 'bounded' is flexible enough to allow for different kinds of bounding so that the co-occurrence of the prefixed verbs with the stem construction in the same sentence

can be accounted for. At the same time, a concept of bounding can describe the function of Yiddish prefixed verbs in general, in that they bound the verb either temporally or spatially.

It has been observed that an important role of aspectually prefixed Yiddish verbs is in forming the pseudo-pluperfect. The interaction of the Yiddish bounded prefixed verbs with tense is different than the interaction of Slavic perfective prefixed verbs with tense as described in Section 2.2.2. Slavic perfective verbs are punctual and cannot be used in the present nor can they form a present participle; these verbs do not form a periphrastic future but the present form of a perfective verb is interpreted as future. The Yiddish aspectually prefixed verb is bounded; as described in Section 3.2.1.2 (Baviskar 1974) these verbs can be used in the present and to form present participles; they can also form the periphrastic future. It is in the past that Yiddish prefixed verbs interact with tense, in forming the pseudo-pluperfect.

This pseudo-pluperfect function of prefixed verbs has repercussions for theories of Yiddish language change. The extension of the use of aspectually prefixed verbs in Yiddish beyond the Germanic model has been widely attributed to the influence of the Slavic aspectual system. However, it has been shown that Yiddish prefixed verbs do not function at all consistently like Slavic aspectually prefixed verbs but do function consistently in expressing the pseudo-pluperfect. I propose that it is necessary to consider language-internal factors in accounting for the extension of Yiddish aspectual constructions. As noted above, unlike English and modern German, Yiddish lacks a simple past and perfect forms; Comrie's (1976:53) description of this characteristic is repeated below:

... in some (especially Southern) varieties of German, the so-called Perfect has extended its sphere to take over the Simple Past, i.e. it has in fact become the only Past Tense, quite irrespective of aspect.

Comrie notes, then, that in languages like Yiddish, there is only one past tense, 'quite irrespective of aspect'. The possibility must be considered that the aspectual constructions in Yiddish extended beyond those found in other Germanic languages for language-internal reasons, that is to fill the gap in aspectual differentiation that came about as a result of the loss of the simple past. This extension of the role of prefixed verbs and the stem construction may have caused Yiddish to come to share certain characteristics with Slavic aspect. For example, Yiddish, like the Slavic languages, provides a productive process of prefixation for indicating the final boundary of an event. However the Yiddish prefixation can be described as the extension of a Germanic model of aspect rather than the incorporation into Yiddish of a Slavic model. Further, the extension of the stem construction can also be viewed in this way; while it doesn't clearly show a parallel to a tense construction in the way that the use of prefixed verbs in the past sets up a parallel with the pluperfect construction, it can be seen as a means to establish the short duration of an event, and to set up aspectual contrasts in the past where there are none contributed by past tense constructions.

## CHAPTER 5 - TENSE

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous four chapters have focussed upon the semantics of Yiddish aspect. With this chapter the focus shifts to syntax and the ways in which Yiddish temporal constructions are represented syntactically.

Comrie (1985:9) defines tense as the "grammaticalised expression of location in time". Tense is deictic, as Comrie (1985:14) further explains:

A system which relates entities to a reference point is termed a deictic system, and we can therefore say that tense is deictic. (By contrast, aspect is non-deictic, since discussion of the internal temporal constituency of the situation is quite independent of its relation to any other time point.)

Theoretically, tense and aspect are separate systems: tense locates the event with respect to some anchor in real time while aspect is concerned with the internal structure of the event, not its relation to an external reference point. In theory, the aspectual nature of the event, whether it is bounded or not, is irrelevant to tense; and the tense of an event, its relation to the moment of speech or other time anchor, is irrelevant to aspect. However, since both tense and aspect are primarily expressed through the verb, it is not surprising that there are points of contact between the two systems. As noted earlier, the habitual past, for example, combines both tense and aspect information. As well, those prefixed verbs which function as pseudo-pluperfects illustrate that aspectual boundedness can function in a deictic manner.

This chapter is devoted to an analysis of Yiddish tense constructions, their meaning and structure. Several of the questions addressed with respect to aspect in the previous chapters, such as grammatical versus lexical expressions, obligatoriness, and the nature of verbal paradigms, are here addressed with regard to tense.

### 5.2 Yiddish Tense Constructions

There has been little debate as to which Yiddish constructions constitute tenses nor as to what criteria should be used to distinguish tenses from other temporal constructions. The largest number of Yiddish constructions designated as tenses is found in Kiefer (1994:147), who includes all seven of the constructions given in (1) - (7) below. Katz (1987) lists six tenses, omitting the habitual past. As discussed earlier, the habitual past is generally treated as an aspect rather than as a tense. Further, only Katz (1987) and Kiefer (1994) categorize the immediate future, shown in (7), as a tense. Aside from the habitual past and immediate future, there are the present, past, future, pluperfect and future perfect; it is these five that Birnbaum (1979) presents as the Yiddish tenses. The pluperfect and future perfect constructions, however, are rarely used and Zucker (1994) and Weinreich (1949) give only the present, past and future in their introductory texts. Thus, the basic Yiddish tenses have been treated as ranging in number from three to seven.

- (1) Present: "I say, you say . . ."
- |   | <u>singular</u>   | <u>plural</u>   |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | <i>ix zog</i>     | <i>mir zogn</i> |
| 2 | <i>du zogst</i>   | <i>ir zogt</i>  |
| 3 | <i>er/zi zogt</i> | <i>zey zogn</i> |
- (2) a. Past: "I said, you said ...."
- |   |                         |                        |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | <i>ix hob gezogt</i>    | <i>mir hobn gezogt</i> |
| 2 | <i>du host gezogt</i>   | <i>ir hot gezogt</i>   |
| 3 | <i>er/zi hot gezogt</i> | <i>zey hobn gezogt</i> |
- b. Past: "I went, you went..."
- |   |                          |                            |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | <i>ix bin gegangen</i>   | <i>mir zaynen gegangen</i> |
| 2 | <i>du bist gegangen</i>  | <i>ir zayt gegangen</i>    |
| 3 | <i>er/zi iz gegangen</i> | <i>zey zaynen gegangen</i> |
- (3) Future: "I will say, you will say...."
- |   |                       |                      |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | <i>ix vel zogn</i>    | <i>mir veln zogn</i> |
| 2 | <i>du vest zogn</i>   | <i>ir vet zogn</i>   |
| 3 | <i>er/zi vet zogn</i> | <i>zey veln zogn</i> |
- (4) Pluperfect: "I had said, you had said..."
- |   |                               |                              |
|---|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | <i>ix hob gehat gezogt</i>    | <i>mir hobn gehat gezogt</i> |
| 2 | <i>du host gehat gezogt</i>   | <i>ir hot gehat gezogt</i>   |
| 3 | <i>er/zi hot gehat gezogt</i> | <i>zey hobn gehat gezogt</i> |
- (5) Future Perfect: "I will have said, you will have said..."
- |   |                              |                             |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | <i>ix vel hobn gezogt</i>    | <i>mir veln hobn gezogt</i> |
| 2 | <i>du vest hobn gezogt</i>   | <i>ir vet hobn gezogt</i>   |
| 3 | <i>er/zi vet hobn gezogt</i> | <i>zey veln hobn gezogt</i> |
- (6) Habitual Past: "I used to say, you used to say..."
- |   |                         |                       |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | <i>ix fleg zogn</i>     | <i>mir flegn zogn</i> |
| 2 | <i>du flegst zogn</i>   | <i>ir flegt zogn</i>  |
| 3 | <i>er/zi flegt zogn</i> | <i>zey flegn zogn</i> |
- (7) Immediate Future: "I am going to say, you are going to say..."
- |   |                        |                      |
|---|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | <i>ix gey zogn</i>     | <i>mir geyn zogn</i> |
| 2 | <i>du geyst zogn</i>   | <i>ir gezt zogn</i>  |
| 3 | <i>er/zi gezt zogn</i> | <i>zey geyn zogn</i> |

The bold lettering indicates that all of the verbs, in every temporal construction, inflect for number and person; these inflections are given in (8) below. An exception is the auxiliary *iz* in (2b), which doesn't show the third person singular inflection.

- (8) Person and number agreement morphemes
- |   | <u>singular</u> | <u>plural</u> |
|---|-----------------|---------------|
| 1 | <i>ø</i>        | <i>-n</i>     |
| 2 | <i>-st</i>      | <i>-t</i>     |
| 3 | <i>-t</i>       | <i>-n</i>     |

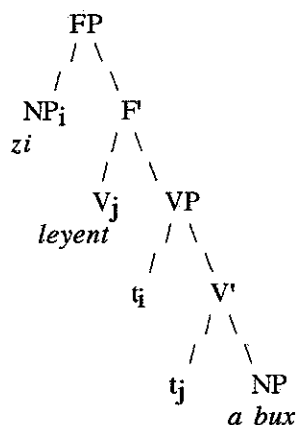
These inflections do not encode any particular tense; they are found in every tense construction. Only in the present are they affixed directly to the main verb, here *zogn* 'to say'. Every other tense construction is periphrastic, composed minimally of an auxiliary verb which shows the inflection for agreement and a nonfinite form of the main verb, either the past participle or the infinitive. The status of the verbs described here as 'auxiliary' is discussed more fully below.

Since the inflections on the finite verb are for person and number agreement only, it is clear that tense in Yiddish is not expressed morphologically on the finite verb. The tense information is contributed by different elements in different constructions. Past meaning is expressed by the past participial inflection on the verb stem, as shown in (2); future meaning is encoded in the auxiliary *vel*, shown in (3); and present meaning, as in (1), is not expressed overtly at all, but is a default interpretation.

### 5.3 Syntax of the Yiddish Sentence

The proposed structure of a simple Yiddish sentence in the present is illustrated in (9) below. This sentence illustrates the neutral SVO word order (Diesing 1990). The subject *zi* is VP internal and moves to the specifier position of FP, Finite Phrase. Yiddish is a strictly V2 language; if another element moves up to Spec FP, the subject remains in situ in the VP. The verb, however, always moves out of VP to F.

(9) *zi leyent a bux* 'she is reading a book'



Four characteristics of this structure are discussed briefly below: the VP-internal subject; the raising of V to a functional head above VP; the proposal for only one functional projection above VP; and the labelling of this projection 'Finite Phrase'.

A VP-internal subject has become standard in generative syntax and VP-internal subjects are widely used in the syntax of Germanic languages. The VP-internal subject readily accounts for the word order in V2 languages, in particular the fact that the subject immediately follows the verb when an element other than the subject is sentence-initial. In analyses of Yiddish the VP-internal subject is found in Diesing (1990, 1997), Santorini (1994), and Moorcroft (1995).

Movement of the inflected verb out of the VP to a higher functional phrase is now widely accepted. In Germanic syntax, verb movement accounts well for verb-second phenomena. Such verb movement has been proposed for Yiddish syntax, in particular in conjunction with VP-internal subjects by those writers mentioned above, as well as in den Besten & Walraven (1986). It will be seen in Chapter 6 that movement of the verb out of VP readily accounts for the variations of word order found in the stem construction and with separably prefixed verbs.

Most analyses of Yiddish which use functional projections have indicated that there is only one between VP and CP, that being IP. Pollock (1989) proposed to split INFL into two functional projections, TP and AgrP, and Diesing (1997) uses both a TP and an Agr<sub>O</sub>P in her analyses of several Germanic languages including Yiddish. However, overt movement in Yiddish does not necessitate the existence of two functional categories. Diesing's analysis of object shift in Scandinavian languages requires movement of the object to Agr<sub>O</sub>; however she argues that object shift does not occur in Yiddish but rather object scrambling, which apparently does not involve the Agr<sub>O</sub> position. I use here a syntactic structure that reflects overt movement only, and so propose a single functional head above VP for Yiddish.

The proposal to have only one functional phrase above VP is also consistent with Chomsky's recent work. After lengthy consideration of both AgrP and TP within his tree structures, Chomsky (1995:377-78) settles on a single functional projection between VP and CP, TP:

Note that this carries us back to something like the analysis that was conventional before Pollock's 1989 highly productive split-I theory, though now considerably revised and in quite a different setting ... of the functional categories we have considered, only T, C, and D remain.

Besides the question of whether there are separate AgrP and TP projections in Yiddish, there is the question of whether there is an Aspect Phrase. Diesing (1998) proposes an AspP specifically to account for the structure of the stem construction and apparently present in Yiddish only with the stem construction. The question of the existence of an AspP is returned to in Section 6.3 where I present arguments against its presence in Yiddish.

Given that there is only one projection between VP and CP, the issue remains as to how it should be labelled. Chomsky calls his single projection Tense Phrase, but the only feature that he consistently associates with the head T is [+/-finite]. Although Chomsky occasionally refers to this feature as [+/-tense], it is clear that he is referring to finiteness and not to a feature associated with a particular tense such as [+/-past]. Chomsky does allow that other properties might be associated with this head:

Thus, T is [+/-finite], with further subdivisions and implications about event structure and perhaps other properties. (p.240)

However, there is no further elaboration on what these subdivisions or other properties might be.

As to linguists dealing specifically with Yiddish, den Besten and Walraven (1986), Diesing (1990), and Santorini (1994), use the label IP; Moorcroft (1995) uses FP for Finite Phrase. It can be argued that the name is irrelevant and that any

term could be used to identify this projection. However, the label 'Tense Phrase' carries an implication that it is associated with features pertaining specifically to tense, and the term 'IP' implies association with features pertaining to both agreement and tense. As was discussed above, the verb that moves to the head of this functional projection in Yiddish, that is, the finite verb, shows inflection for person and number agreement but not for tense. Since, the functional head above VP is associated with finiteness but not with specific tense information, I will follow Moorcroft in labelling this projection Finite Phrase rather than Tense Phrase.

#### 5.4 Structure and Use of Tense Constructions

In the following sections I briefly outline the way in which the different tense expressions are realized in the syntactic structure proposed in Section 5.3. I also describe the different ways in which these constructions are used and their semantic representations in a Reichenbachian format.

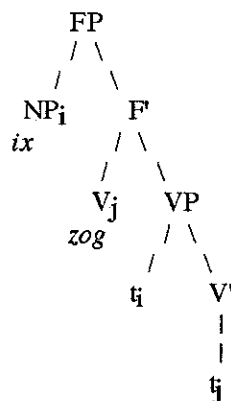
##### 5.4.1 Default Present

The construction that is referred to as the 'present tense' is not marked for tense at all; it is composed of the verb stem plus inflection for person and number, as in *mir zogn* 'we say' from (1) above. If the presence of the verb *vel* can be said to encode the future, as in *mir veln zogn* 'we will say', and the past participle can be said to encode the past, as in *mir hobn gezogt* 'we said', then the present lacks any such markers. The present is the default interpretation of a finite verb when no other tense information is provided.

A default present is not unique to Yiddish: Bybee and Dahl (1989:55) found the present unmarked in the majority of languages that they studied and noted that "present tenses were in general treated as 'default' members of categories". Thieroff (1994) treats the semantic category of present, in all languages, as unmarked, in that it is unmarked for anterior (past) and unmarked for posterior (future); this categorization is not related to the actual morphology of any particular language. Yiddish therefore aligns the morphologically unmarked verb form with the semantically unmarked present.

The structure of the default construction is that given in Section 5.3 above, shown here in (10) with the verb *zogn* 'to say'.

(10) *ix zog* 'I say'



The default construction is most commonly used to express an event that coincides with the moment of speech; however it can be used for certain past and future situations as well. The use of the default form for the historic present and the near future is similar to the use of these constructions in English; however the use of the default form in complement clauses and for states beginning in the past and continuing into the present differs from English usage.

The use of the Yiddish default construction can be illustrated with Reichenbachian representation. As described in Section 4.6.2, the simple present can be represented as [E, R, S], indicating that the event, the reference time and the moment of speech all coincide. In most cases, R is coincident with S, the moment of speech, but the Yiddish default construction is also found for events that do not coincide with the moment of speech. As discussed below, the Yiddish default construction can more simply be represented as [E,R], that is, the event being coincident with the reference time R with the relationship to S not specified.

As in English, the default construction is commonly used for the historical present, that is for situations that have already occurred but are narrated as though they are unfolding in the present. The example in (11) is from Chaim Grade (1955:37), a memoir of the events of one Yom Kippur day; both of the verbs *efnt* and *shpringt* are in the unmarked inflected form, here used for the historical present.

- (11) *zi efnt di tir un di kats shpringt af ir aroyf*  
 she opens the door and the cat jumps on her upwards  
 'she opened the door and the cat jumped up on her'

Just as the present moment, now, constantly moves forward, so the reference time R in the historical present moves forward, so that each succeeding event, the 'opening' and then the 'jumping', is coincident with R. The representation of the historical present is shown in (12); the default construction reflects the alignment [E,R].

- (12) E,R \_ S

The default construction can also be used for events occurring in the near future of which the speaker is confident as shown in (13).

- (13) a. *itsl/in a minut/in gixn...for ix aheym*  
 now/in a minute/before long...journey I homewards  
 'I am going home now/in a minute/before long'
- b. *vi ix bin a yid, di naye vox batsol ix ayx dem xoyv*  
 as I am a Jew, the new week pay I you the debt  
 'As I am a Jew, I will pay you the debt next week'
- (U. Kiefer 1994:137)

A similar usage is found in English; Binnick (1991:121) cites Jespersen's (1924:260) description of the context in which the present form can be used for future meaning:

when the sentence contains a precise indication of time in the form of a subjunct and when the distance in time from the present moment is not very great: I dine with my uncle to-night.



The constraints for the use of the English present for future meaning are quite complex (see Prince 1982) and the Yiddish facts may not be precisely the same. However, a representation of the near future can be proposed without fully delineating the contexts in which it is used. In the examples in (13), the reference time R is set in the future, following S, by the adverbials, such as *in a minut* 'in a minute' in (13a) and *di naye vox* 'next week' in (13b). The events of 'journeying' in (13a) and 'paying' in (13b) are concurrent with the future reference points, E, R, and so the default construction can be used. The representation of the near future is shown in (14).

(14) S — E,R

The default construction is also found in complement clauses for situations that are concurrent with the reference time set by the matrix clause. This usage is different from the English sequence of tenses as is evident from the glosses of the examples in (15) below. The matrix verb in (15a) *hob gezen* is in the past form and is glossed with the English past 'saw'. The verb in the complement clause *vil* is in the default form; this indicates that the time of 'wanting' is concurrent with the past event of 'seeing' and is glossed in English with the past form 'wanted'.

- (15) a. *ix hob gezen az der tate vil mit mir reydn*  
 I have seen that the father wants with me (to) talk  
 'I saw that my father wanted to talk to me'  
 (I.B.Singer 1979:x)
- b. *er hot nit gevust tsi ix bin in der heym*  
 he did not know whether I am in the home  
 'he did not know whether I was at home'  
 (U. Weinreich 1949:272)

The temporal interpretation of the verbs in the sentences in (15) is illustrated in (16) below.

(16) 
$$\begin{array}{c} E_1 \text{ — } R_1, S \\ | \\ E_2, R_2 \end{array}$$

Consider sentence (15b) to be represented by (16). The sentence has a single moment of speech S, and two situations, each with its own reference time.  $E_1$  refers to the matrix clause *hot nit gevust* 'did not know'. This state obtained in the past, the verb is in the past form, and, as will be discussed in Section 5.4.3 below, this is represented by  $E \text{ — } R$ . In (16)  $E_1$  is shown as prior to the reference point  $R_1$ , which is coincident with S. On the lower line,  $E_2$  refers to the complement clause *bin in der heym* 'am at home'; the time of 'being at home'  $E_2$  is coincident with the time of '(not) knowing',  $E_1$ . The matrix clause sets the reference time of the complement clause  $R_2$  and since  $E_2$  is coincident with  $R_2$  it is expressed with the default form.

As illustrated in the sentences in (15), English and Yiddish treat differently the sequence of tenses in matrix and complementary clauses. In these constructions Yiddish shows strong parallels to Slavic usage. If English is considered to represent a Germanic model of sequence of tense, it would appear that Yiddish has moved from a Germanic style sequence of tense to a Slavic model. However, there is some

debate as to whether German has the same sequence of tense as English and whether Yiddish ever had the English model of sequence of tense. Neugroschel (1996) argues that spoken German follows the Slavic model of sequence of tense, not the English. The question as to whether Yiddish has moved towards the Slavic model requires further research into diachronic changes in Yiddish usage.

The default construction is also used for states that begin in the past and continue into the present, as illustrated in (17a) and (17b) below (U. Weinreich 1949:141).

- (17) a. *vi lang bistu shoy'n do*  
how long are you already here  
'How long have you been here?'
- b. *ix bin do fun next'n on*  
I am here from yesterday on  
'I have been here since yesterday'

This meaning is expressed in English with the present perfect or present perfect progressive. Yiddish has no perfect construction: although the past, as illustrated in (2) above, resembles the English perfect in form, it is not associated with the same meaning. This type of sentence expresses the duration of the state. Duration, or other aspectual information, is not readily indicated with Reichenbach's symbols and the two relationships of coincidence and precedence. In this case E represents the state of 'being here' and includes the moment of speech, which is also the reference time. Thus, it can be represented as [E,R,S]. The adverbial *fun next'n on* 'from yesterday on' does not affect the relationship of E, R and S, but sets the initial boundary of the state.

To summarize, the present time is not overtly marked on Yiddish verbs. The forms usually described as the present tense, as in (1) above, are marked for person and number only and are described here as the default construction with respect to tense. These forms can be associated with the past and future times as well as with the present. A present tense verb is represented in Reichenbachian terms as [E, R, S], with the event, reference time and moment of speech all coincident. I have shown above that the interpretation of the Yiddish default construction is not always coincident with the moment of speech, and so should not be represented as [E,R,S] but as E coincident with R, that is [E, R]. The relationship of R to S is set by context and adverbial expressions. The reference time R can be shifted into the past, as with the historical present, or into the future, as seen with the near future. If, as is very common, R is not shifted through context or adverbials, then it is interpreted as coincident with S, the moment of speech. The present time interpretation of the Yiddish inflected verb can therefore be described as the default interpretation of the Yiddish default construction.

#### 5.4.2 Future

As illustrated in (3) above, the future is formed from the verb *vel* plus an infinitive. Its meaning can be represented as [R \_\_ E], the event following the reference point whose default interpretation is coincident with the moment of speech. In complement clauses like the one given in (18) below, the reference point can be other than the moment of speech.

- (18) a. *der rav hot nisht gegloybt az er vet es ton*  
 the Rabbi has not believed that he will it do  
 'the Rabbi didn't believe that he would do it'

The verb in the matrix clause *hot gegloybt*, is in the past form, and the verb of the complement clause *vet ton* is in the future construction. The temporal interpretation of this sentence is illustrated in (19).

- (19) 
$$\begin{array}{c} E_1 \text{ --- } R_1, S \\ | \\ R_2 \text{ --- } E_2 \end{array}$$

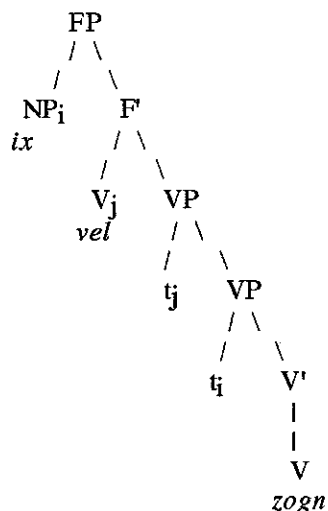
There is a single moment of speech, S, for the sentence. The situation  $E_1$  of the matrix clause, *hot nisht gegloybt* 'didn't believe' is past with respect to the moment of speech. This is shown in the top line of (19), with  $E_1$  preceding  $R_1$ , which coincides with S. The reference time of the complement clause  $R_2$  is set by  $E_1$ . The future construction of the verb in the complement clause *vet es ton* 'will do it' sets up the relationship [ $R_2 \text{ --- } E_2$ ], and so the event of 'doing' is interpreted as following the state of 'not believing'.

Aronson's (1984:176) claims that:

It is universally agreed that a construction such as *ikh vel shraybn* 'I shall write' forms part of the paradigm of the verb *shraybn*.

Indeed, Thieroff (1994:41) includes *vel* in his paradigm of the verb *maxn* 'make, do'. I, however, suggest that, contrary to 'universal' opinion, *vel* is not part of the verbal paradigm of every Yiddish verb, but is listed separately as a verb with its own lexical entry of semantic and structural specifications. This entry would specify that *vel* contributes a future meaning that can be represented as [ $R \text{ --- } E$ ], and that *vel* selects an infinitival complement. The way in which *vel* is incorporated into the basic Yiddish syntactic structure is illustrated in (20) below. I assume that *vel* does not assign a theta-role; the subject originates in the lowest VP where it is assigned a theta-role by the infinitive, here *zogn*. The finite verb *vel* moves up to Spec FP, in the same way as the verb in the default construction in (10); the lower VP is infinitival and the verb *zogn* remains in situ.

- (20) b. *ix vel zogn* 'I will say'



Birnbaum (1979:266) includes *vel* in his list of auxiliary verbs and in Section 5.2 above I described periphrastic tense constructions as being composed of an auxiliary finite verb and a nonfinite main verb. What is the status of an auxiliary verb in the grammar of Yiddish? As described above, the auxiliary verb carries the person and number inflection but the main semantic meaning is carried by the nonfinite verb. In the case of *vel*, this means that *vel* is inflected for person and number and carries the meaning of future, but the activity to occur in the future is expressed by the main verb. The only structural representation of this division between auxiliary and main verb is that it is the main verb that assigns the theta role to the subject. However, the function of auxiliary is not necessarily associated with inclusion in the verbal paradigm. If the verbal paradigm is that information contained within the individual lexical listing of a specific verb, I propose that some auxiliary verbs, such as *vel*, are not part of the verbal paradigm whereas others, such as *zayn* in the past construction, are. If one assumes, in interests of economy, that forms are listed in the lexicon as few times as possible, then it is more economical for *vel* to have its own lexical listing than to be included in the listing of each individual verb as part of its paradigm.

The structure proposed for *vel*, as shown in (20), is not unique. Yiddish differs from English in that there are a large number of verbs in Yiddish followed directly by an infinitival complement rather than by an infinitive marked with the preposition *tsu* 'to'. Among Katz's (1987) 'analytic verbs', which he describes as being composed of an inflected 'helping' verb and an invariant main verb, are fourteen that select an infinitival VP. These are listed in (21) below.

(21)	<i>darfn</i>	'must, have to, should, ought to'
	<i>flegn</i>	'used to'
	<i>haltn in</i>	'in the process of'
	<i>haltn in ayn</i>	'keep on'
	<i>kenen</i>	'can'
	<i>lomir</i>	'let us'
	<i>lozn</i>	'allow, let'
	<i>megn</i>	'may'
	<i>muzn</i>	'must'
	<i>nemen</i>	'take to'
	<i>nit torn</i>	'may not'
	<i>ton a</i>	'do a'
	<i>veln</i>	'want to'
	<i>zoln</i>	'should, would, ought'

Uriel Weinreich (1949:328) also lists verbs followed directly by the infinitive: he gives the nine verbs shown below in (22a) plus the three in (22b) that can optionally be followed directly by the infinitive or take the intervening *tsu* 'to'. The stars indicate verbs found in both lists; together there are twenty-one verbs here other than *vel* that select an infinitival complement.

(22)	a.	<i>darfn*</i>	'required'
		<i>heysn</i>	'order'
		<i>helpn</i>	'help'
		<i>lernen zix</i>	'learn'
		<i>muzn*</i>	'must'
		<i>megn*</i>	'may'
		<i>nit torn*</i>	'not allowed'
		<i>endikn</i>	'end'
		<i>kenen*</i>	'can'
	b.	<i>pruvn</i>	'try'
		<i>oyfhern</i>	'stop'
		<i>onheybn</i>	'start'

Verbs followed directly by an infinitive don't appear to form a single natural class. The verbs given in (21) and (22) above can be roughly divided into two groups: 'modal-like' verbs, and 'lexical content' verbs. Schaechter (1986:8) defines a modal auxiliary as "a verb denoting possibility, probability, desirability, permission, prohibition." However, he does not list the verbs that he considers to belong to this group. Verbs like *darfn* 'required', *muzn* 'must', *megn* 'may', *nit torn* 'not allowed' would seem to fall into this category; whereas verbs like *helpn* 'help', *lernen zix* 'learn' and *endikn* 'end', more clearly belong to the 'lexical content' category.

The English future *will* can be considered to belong to a class of modal verbs which show similar syntactic characteristics: they are followed directly by an infinitive without an intervening 'to', they can invert in yes/no questions, they have no past participial form. English modal verbs have therefore been ascribed a different syntactic status from other English verbs, for example originating in INFL rather than in VP.

The evidence for a syntactic class of modal verbs in Yiddish is much less strong. Yiddish verbs with modal meaning, such as *darf* 'requires', *meg* 'may', is

allowed', and *muz* 'must', are followed directly by the infinitive, but then so are several verbs without modal meaning. All Yiddish verbs invert, not only verbs with modal meanings, and Yiddish verbs with modal meaning have a past form, unlike their English counterparts. The Yiddish future *vel* differs from other Yiddish verbs with modal meaning in that it lacks a past form; further, while many Yiddish modal-like verbs lack the agreement inflection *-t* for the third person singular, the future shows inflection in the third person singular *vet*. These verbs share the trait of auxiliary verbs, in that the theta role is assigned to the subject by the main verb. However, there is apparently no reason to attribute a separate syntactic status to verbs with modal meaning in Yiddish.

#### 5.4.2.1 Habitual Past

As discussed earlier, several authors treat *fleg* as primarily aspectual (Aronson 1985; Schaechter 1951; Birnbaum 1979); however Kiefer (1994:144) claims that *fleg*'s role has changed over time and that while historically it had an aspectual function, it now functions as a tense. The habitual past is a construction which inherently includes both an aspectual meaning, as described in Chapter 4, and a tense meaning. The variations in the name of this construction reflects its double role: 'past habitual' emphasizes the aspectual meaning and implies that it contrasts with an habitual in another tense; 'habitual past' focusses on the tense meaning and implies that it contrasts with other forms of the past.

Although *fleg* has a past meaning, it has a present form. By this I mean that the verb is inflected for number and person only, as found with the default present construction; the past participle which normally marks the Yiddish past is absent. The form of the habitual past in (23a) can be compared with that of the past in (23b).

- |      |    |                |                                     |                        |
|------|----|----------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| (23) | a. | Habitual Past: | 'I used to say, you used to say...' |                        |
|      |    | 1              | <i>ix fleg zogn</i>                 | <i>mir flegn zogn</i>  |
|      |    | 2              | <i>du flegst zogn</i>               | <i>ir flegt zogn</i>   |
|      |    | 3              | <i>er/zi flegt zogn</i>             | <i>zey flegn zogn</i>  |
|      | b. | Past:          | 'I said, you said ....'             |                        |
|      |    | 1              | <i>ix hob gezogt</i>                | <i>mir hobn gezogt</i> |
|      |    | 2              | <i>du host gezogt</i>               | <i>ir hot gezogt</i>   |
|      |    | 3              | <i>er/zi hot gezogt</i>             | <i>zey hobn gezogt</i> |

Birnbaum (1979) and Max Weinreich (1973:12) both cite past participial forms of *flegn*, as shown in (24). Birnbaum treats this form as a dialect variation, claiming that it is found in central Yiddish, and observes that even there it is less commonly used than the form in (23a) in speech and is rarely found in written texts.

- (24) *er/zi hot geflegt tsu geyn*  
 he/she has used to (to) go  
 'he/she used to go'

The construction with the past participle of *fleg* in (24) does not, however, contrast in meaning with the inflected form in (23a). There is no habitual present based on the verb *fleg*, although, as described in Section 2.3.2.5, Birnbaum (1979) claims that there is a habitual present formed with the verb *tun*. The *fleg* construction always has past meaning.

There is some variation in the third person singular form reported for *flegn*. Schaechter (1986:241) explains that the form *er flegt* as shown in (23b) above, is found in spoken north Yiddish, while the uninflected form *er/zi fleg* is found in spoken southeast Yiddish. He claims that the inflected form is found more frequently in written Yiddish. Katz (1987) and Weinreich (1949) give only the inflected form, Birnbaum (1979) gives only the uninflected and Kiefer (1994:144) describes the inflection as optional. The uninflected form identifies *fleg* with the group of modal-like verbs in Yiddish, such as *meg* 'may', *zol* 'should', *muz* 'must' that do not inflect for third person singular, as described in the previous section. Examples of these verbs are given in (25a) (Katz 1987:129) and (25b).

- (25) a. *zi ken/ meg/ muz/ zol zogn*  
           she can/ may/ must/ should (to) say  
           'she can/ may/ must/ should say'
- b. *darf* 'has to'  
     *ken* 'can'  
     *meg* 'may'  
     *muz* 'must'  
     *tor (nit)* 'may not'  
     *vil* 'wants'  
     *zol* 'should'

Birnbaum (1979:263) gives a list similar to that in (25b), as shown in (26a). He categorizes these verbs as 'preterite present' noting their lack of final inflection in the third person singular. Birnbaum states that "to this group may be added" the two verbs listed in (26b); however there is no explanation as to whether these two verbs should also be considered part of the 'preterite present' or what membership in this class implies.

- (26) a. *darf* 'requires'  
           *meg* 'may, is allowed'  
           *muz* 'must'  
           *tor nisht* 'is not allowed'  
           *toyg* 'is of use'  
           *vil* 'wants to'  
           *zol* 'shall, should'
- b. *fleg* 'used to' + inf  
     *ker* 'belongs, ought to'

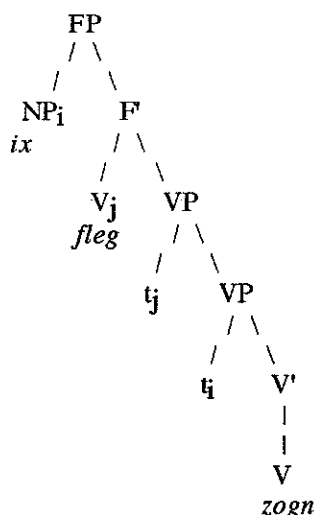
The lists in (17b) and (26a) are similar but not identical. As discussed in the previous section, there are problems with treating Yiddish verbs with modal meaning as a distinct class. It is also problematic to classify *flegn* as part of this category of modal-like verbs. While in some dialects the third person singular of *flegn* lacks the final *-t*, like the modal-like verbs, in most usages *flegn* lacks the past participle, which distinguishes it from the modal-like verbs and groups it with the future *vel*.

I argued in Section 3.4.1.2 that *flegn* is not part of the verbal paradigm but has its own lexical listing. I noted there that Thieroff (1994:41) and Aronson (1985) both treat *flegn* as part of the paradigm of individual verbs. Aronson assumes that the future *vel* is part of the verbal paradigm and argues on the basis of the

similarities between *flegn* and *vel* that *flegn* must be part of the paradigm too. I however use the same similarities to argue the converse: since, as I propose in the previous section, *vel* has its own lexical listing and is not part of the verbal paradigm, then *flegn* too should be treated as a lexically listed verb. Its lexical listing would include the meaning of habitual occurrence in the past and specify the selection of an infinitival complement.

The structure of a sentence with *flegn* is identical to that proposed for the future *vel* in (20) above, as illustrated in (27).

(27) *ix fleg zogn* 'I used to say'



#### 5.4.2.2 Immediate Future

Like the future with *vel* and the habitual past with *fleg*, the immediate future, given in (7) above, is composed of an inflected verb, *geyn*, followed by an infinitival complement, as illustrated in (28).

(28)	future:	<i>ix vel zogn</i>	'I will say'
	habitual past:	<i>ix fleg zogn</i>	'I used to say'
	immediate future:	<i>ix gey zogn</i>	'I am going to say'

Unlike *veln* and *fleg*, however, the inflected verb *geyn* has another lexical role. It is a common verb of motion, and as such has both finite and nonfinite forms and is frequently used without an infinitival complement, as in (29).

(29)	<i>zi geyt aheym</i>	'she is going home'
	<i>zi iz gegangen aheym</i>	'she went home'
	<i>zi vel geyn aheym</i>	'she will go home'

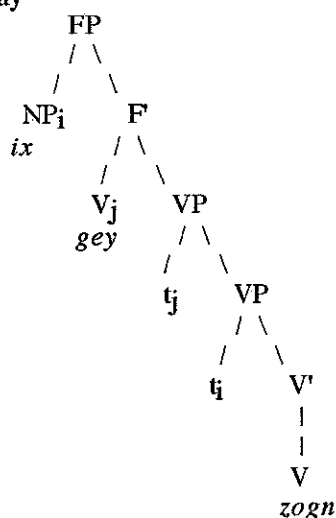
As well, *geyn* followed by an infinitival complement is not limited to the immediate future interpretation. In the sentence in (30) this construction is used in the past and has the literal meaning of having travelled in order to buy new clothes.



- (30) *ix bin gegangen koyfn naye kleyder*  
 I am gone (to) buy new clothes  
 'I went to buy new clothes' (Zucker 1994:153)

I know of no author who asserts that the immediate future is part of the verbal paradigm. As noted above, only Katz (1987) and Kiefer (1994) treat the immediate future as a tense. I propose that, like *vel* and *flegn*, *geyn* is a lexically listed verb that selects an infinitival VP for its temporal meaning, as illustrated in (31) below. The spatial, directional meaning of the verb *geyn* 'to go' has generalized to apply to the temporal realm. This type of association of temporal with spatial meaning was also seen in Chapter 1 with those prefixes that have locative as well as aspectual meaning. While the directional and temporal meanings are clearly related, I propose that there are two lexical listings for the verb 'to go' with separate thematic structures. The verb *geyn* used for the immediate future does not assign the role of theme to its subject in the way that the spatial verb *geyn* does. As with the future *vel* and habitual past *flegn*, in the immediate future the subject's theta-role is assigned by the nonfinite verb in the lowest VP.

- (31) *ix gey zogn* 'I am going to say'



### 5.4.3 Past

#### 5.4.3.1 Meaning

The Yiddish past is formed of the past participle and the verb *hobn* or *zayn*, as described in Section 4.6.1 and illustrated in (2) above. The regular past participle is formed through affixation of the prefix *ge-* and the suffix *-t* or *-(e)n* to the verb stem. The prefix *ge-* is omitted if the first syllable of the verb stem is unstressed, as in inseparably prefixed verbs, and suffixation in *-(e)n* is frequently accompanied by changes to the vowel of the verb stem. As discussed earlier, the use of the auxiliary *zayn* is not totally predictable; similarly there are many irregular participial forms. Therefore, while the auxiliary *hobn* and the past participle form with affixes *ge-* and *-t* can be considered default, many verbs

must specify in their lexical listing the form of their past participle and/or that they take the auxiliary *zayn*.

The past can be represented as [E \_\_ R], the event preceding the reference point whose default interpretation is coincident with the moment of speech. The reference point can be other than the moment of speech, as in the complement clauses in (32) below.

- (32) a. *er hot nit gevust tsi ix bin geven in der heym*  
 he did not know whether I was in the home  
 'he did not know if I had been at home'
- b. *zi hot gezogt az zi hot nit farshstanen*  
 she has said as she has not understood  
 'she said that she had not understood' (Weinreich 1949:328)

In sentence (32a), both the event in the matrix clause, E<sub>1</sub>, *hot nit gevust* 'didn't know' and the event in the complement clause, E<sub>2</sub>, *bin geven in der heym* 'was at home' are in the past form and so both are represented by the relationship [E \_\_ R] in (33) below.

- (33)
- $$\begin{array}{c} E_1 \text{ __ } R_1, S \\ | \\ E_2 \text{ __ } R_2 \end{array}$$

There is a single S, moment of speech, for the sentence. The event of the matrix clause E<sub>1</sub> sets the reference point R<sub>2</sub> for the complement clause. The event in the complement clause E<sub>2</sub> is therefore interpreted as occurring prior to E<sub>1</sub> and is glossed with the English pluperfect. Similarly in (32b) the subordinate event *hot nit farshstanen* 'did not understand' is interpreted as occurring before the matrix event *hot gezogt* 'said', and is glossed with the English pluperfect as 'had understood'. There is no need for the Yiddish pluperfect in subordinate clauses of this type; as noted earlier, the rarity of the Yiddish pluperfect has been linked to the lack of a Germanic style sequence of tense system (Prince 1996).

The past is a periphrastic construction like the habitual past and the future. As discussed above, I propose that *fleg* and *veln* are listed as separate lexical items with the meanings habitual past and future respectively, and each specifies that they select an infinitival complement. In the sentence *ix vel zogn* 'I will say', the future meaning is in *vel*, not in the infinitival *zogn*. Similarly in the sentence *ix fleg zogn* 'I used to say', the temporal meaning of past resides in *fleg* and not in the infinitival *zogn*. If the past followed the same pattern as the future and habitual past it would mean that the past meaning would reside in the verb that is inflected for agreement, that is in *hobn* or *zayn*. This is not the case. The verbs *hobn* and *zayn* are not always associated with a past temporal relationship and are commonly used in all tenses with the meanings 'to have' and 'to be'. It is the nonfinite element in the past construction, the past participle, that carries the past meaning. The past participle retains this past meaning in other uses, such as adjectival and passive constructions, where it is not accompanied by *hobn* or *zayn*. This is illustrated in (34) below.

- (34) a. *ix ver gehaylt*  
 I become healed  
 'I am healed'

- b. *ix vel gehaylt vern*  
I will healed become  
'I will be healed'
- c. *a tsebroxn top*  
'a broken pot'
- d. *der top iz tsebroxn*  
'the pot is broken'

The Yiddish passive is formed from the verb *vern* 'become' and the past participle. While the passive can be used in every tense, in each case it means that the event signified by the past participle took place prior to the time established by the inflected verb. Thus, in (34a), the default construction gives a present reading that 'I am healed' as of the moment of speech; the past participle indicates that the healing has already occurred. The past participle performs the same function in the future form in (34b); it indicates that the healing will have occurred by the future time referred to by *vel*. The adjectival use of the past participle as in (34c) and (34d) also indicates that the event specified by the participle took place in the past; in this case, the event of breaking has already occurred. Therefore, the meaning of past can be said to reside in the nonfinite past participle of the past construction, not in the inflected auxiliary.

The conditional construction formed with *voltn* presents a problem with associating past meaning with the past participle. According to Thieroff's (1994) verb paradigm given in Section 3.4.1.2, there is a contrast between a present conditional *volt maxn* 'would make' formed with the infinitive and a past conditional *volt gemaxt* 'would have made' formed with the past participle. This contrast would reflect the claim that the past participle is associated with past meaning. However there is much evidence that the two forms are used in free variation and that the conditional with the past participle is not necessarily associated with past meaning. This is illustrated in (35), where the past participles *geton* and *gehat* are selected by the verb *volstu* 'would you' but do not necessarily have past meaning.

- (35) *vos volstu geton, az du volst gehat a milion dolar*  
what would-you did if you would had a million dollars  
'What would you do if you had a million dollars?'  
(Weinreich 1949:253)

Weinreich (1949:253) and Birnbaum (1979:270) give only the construction *voltn* plus participle for the conditional, which Birnbaum labels the 'present conditional'. The alternation of using the past participle or infinitive following *voltn* is apparently not a regional or social dialect variation. Evidence for this is the appearance of both constructions in a single passage by a single author, as in the excerpt in (36) from a poem by A. Sutzkever (1975). Both the past participles *bazolt* 'paid' and *gevorn* 'became' and the infinitives *filn* 'to feel' and *zayn* 'to be' are found following the conditional *voltn*, as indicated by the bold lettering. There does not seem to be any temporal difference in their meaning. The word for word gloss is given in (36a), the rhymed translation that accompanies the poem is given in (36b). While the interpretation of the poem is somewhat obscure, the use of both infinitive and past participle following the conditional *voltn* is clear.

- (36) a. *di zalts volt nit filn ir tem un zi volt*  
the salt would not to feel its taste and she would
- far zaltselex zibn an otser bazolt*  
for saltcellars seven a fortune paid
- un s'lixt volt gevorn in kneytshn un krank*  
and the light would became in wrinkles and sick
- ven s'volt nit a shotn im zayn a getrank*  
if it would not a shade to him (to) be a drink
- b. 'When the salt's lost its savor, will it pay through the nose  
for seven salt shakers, set out in nice rows?'  
  
'And the light! Would it wrinkle and burst  
if a shade didn't trouble to water its thirst?'

The association of past form with irrealis meaning is found in English too, as indicated in the gloss of (35) above 'if you **had** a million dollars'. The meaning is present, referring to the possibility of having a million dollars in one's possession at this moment, but the form of the English verb 'had' is past. The use of the past form for irrealis meaning in Yiddish cannot be accounted for here, but for the other constructions discussed above the past participle is consistently associated with past meaning.

Past infinitives are formed from the infinitive *hobn* 'to have' plus the past participle. The Yiddish simple infinitive can function as a nominal, as illustrated in the sentences in (37) below (U. Weinreich 1971:252). In (37a) the infinitive functions as the subject of the sentence, while in (37b) it is the object of the preposition *fun* 'from'.

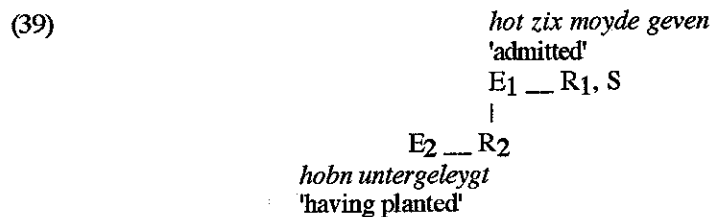
- (37) a. *reyxern iz farvert*  
(to) smoke is prohibited  
'smoking is prohibited'
- b. *er halt nit fun zingen lider*  
he holds not from singing songs  
'he doesn't approve of singing songs'

Like the infinitives in (37), past infinitives can also have a nominative function as illustrated in (38) below.

- (38) a. *an ortodoksisher yid hot zix moyde geven in hobn*  
*untergeleygt a bombe in a konservativer shul*  
an orthodox Jew has self admitted been in (to) have  
**planted** a bomb in a conservative synagogue  
'an orthodox Jew admitted to **having planted** a bomb in a  
conservative synagogue' (forverts 1997a:1)

- b. *er hot derbay gehat bashuldikt an islamishe grupe in hobn  
durxgefirt dem atentat*  
he has at that had accused an Islamic group in (to) have  
**carried out** the assassination attempt  
'he had accused an Islamic group of **having carried out** the  
assassination attempt' (ibid.)

Past infinitives apparently set up the same [E \_\_ R] relationship in nominal constructions as past constructions do in verbal clauses, as was shown in (33) above. In the sentences in (38) above, the past infinitive sets up the relationship [E \_\_ R], with the reference point set by the event of the main verb. The relationship between the past infinitive and the past verb in sentence (38a) is illustrated in (39). Both the event of the main verb *hot zix moyde geven* 'admitted' and the event of the past infinitive *hobn untergeleygt* 'having planted' are in the past and are represented by [E \_\_ R]. The event of admitting, E<sub>1</sub>, sets the reference point, R<sub>2</sub>, for the event of planting. Therefore, E<sub>2</sub>, the planting of the bomb, is interpreted as having occurred before E<sub>1</sub>, the admission.

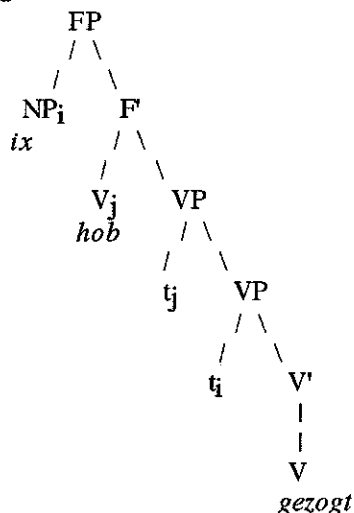


The past infinitive is always formed with the infinitive *hobn*, whether the past participle normally conjugates with *hobn* or with *zayn* (Schachter 1986:327). This invariance is discussed further with regard to the future perfect in the Section 5.4.4 below.

#### 5.4.3.2 Form

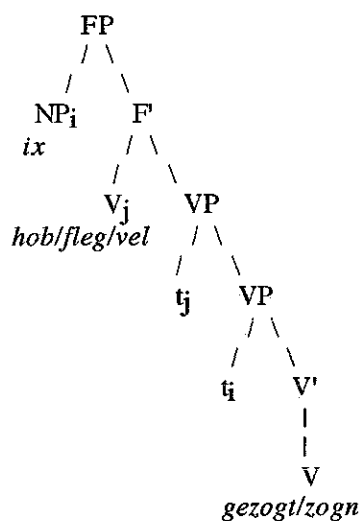
The structure proposed for a simple sentence in the past is shown in (40) below: the subject and the higher verb *hobn* move to Spec FP and F, and the past participle remains in the lower VP.

(40) *ix hob gezogt* 'I said'



The sentences in the past, habitual past and future show essentially the same syntactic structure, as illustrated in (41) below; they vary only in that the nonfinite element is a participle in the past construction while it is an infinitive for the habitual past and the future.

(41) *ix hob gezogt / ix fleg zogn / ix vel zogn*  
'I said/ I used to say/ I will say'



Why should the syntactic structure be the same for these three different temporal constructions? The reason is that tense in Yiddish is not syntactic, it is lexical. This means that these three tense constructions all have the same syntactic structure because the different tense meanings reside within the lexicon. For the future, the future meaning is in the lexical listing of *vel*; similarly, for the habitual

past, the past meaning is in the lexical listing of *fleg*. The past meaning, however, resides within the past participle which is part of the individual verb's paradigm; nonpredictable forms are in the listings of the individual verbs. While *fleg*, *vel*, *hobn* and *zayn* can all be considered to be auxiliaries, *hobn* and *zayn* can be considered 'pure' auxiliaries in that they function only as carriers for agreement morphemes and contribute no temporal or other semantic information.

#### 5.4.4 Future Perfect

The future perfect, like the future, is formed from the verb *vel* plus an infinitival complement. However, where the future takes a simple infinitive, as in *ix vel zogn* 'I will say', the future perfect is formed from *vel* plus a past infinitive as illustrated in the sentences in (42).

- (42) a. *ix vel hobn gezogt*  
I will (to) have said  
'I will have said'
- b. *ven zi vet onkumen, veln zey zix shoyn hobn genumen*  
*tsu der arbet*  
when she will arrive, will they themselves already have taken  
to the work  
'when she arrives they will already have started in to work'

The term 'future perfect' is widely used but inaccurate as there is no distinction in Yiddish between perfect and simple tenses, as noted in Section 4.6.2. Kiefer (1994), for example, calls this construction 'Future II', and Birnbaum (1979) refers to it as the 'future past tense'. It might more precisely be called the 'past in the future' as it sets the event in a past relationship with respect to the reference point, [E \_\_ R], and the reference point in a future relationship with the moment of speech, [S \_\_ R]. Binnick (1991:112) notes that there are three possible arrangements of S, E and R in the future perfect, as given in (43).

- (43) (a) S \_\_ E \_\_ R  
(b) S, E \_\_ R  
(c) E \_\_ S \_\_ R

While the event in a future perfect construction is often interpreted as occurring after the moment of speech, as in (43a), it is possible for the event to be contemporaneous with S, as in (43b) or to precede it, as in (43c). Using sentence (42b) as an example, the structure in (43a) illustrates the interpretation that the people have not yet started to work; (43b) indicates that they are starting to work as we speak; and (43c) indicates that they have already started to work. In each case, it is true that the people will have started to work before she arrives.

What is consistent in these three interpretations is the relationship of E prior to R. As described in the previous section, the past meaning is associated with the past participle and the past infinitive sets up the [E \_\_ R] relationship.

The verb *hobn* is always found in the past infinitive of the future perfect, whether the verb normally conjugates with *hobn* or *zayn*. This is illustrated in the examples in (44) below. The verb *zogn* 'to say' (past participle *gezogt*) is

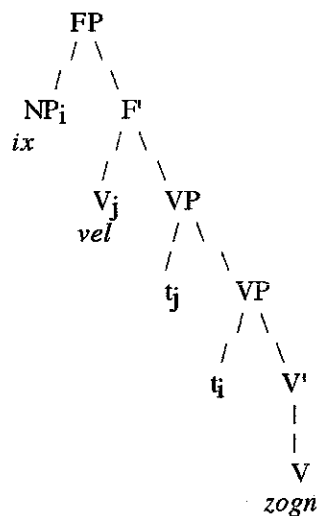
conjugated with *hobn* in the past, as shown in (44a) and *hobn* is found, as would be expected, in the future perfect in (44c). The verb *geyn* 'to go' (past participle *gegangen*) takes the auxiliary *zayn* in the past, as shown in (44b). However, the future perfect of *geyn* is formed with *hobn* as shown in (44d) and not with *zayn* as indicated by the starred example in (44e).

- (44) (a) *ix hob gezogt*  
I have said  
'I said'
- (b) *ix bin gegangen*  
I am gone  
'I went'
- (c) *ix vel hobn gezogt*  
'I will have said'
- (d) *ix vel hobn gegangen*  
'I will have gone'
- (e) \**ix vel zayn gegangen*  
'I will be gone'

As discussed earlier, *hobn* can be considered the default auxiliary of the past participle. The invariant form of *hobn* in the future perfect and the past infinitive regardless of the verb involved suggests that the nonfinite verb always takes the default auxiliary and *zayn* is triggered only when the verb is finite (A. Johns, p. c.).

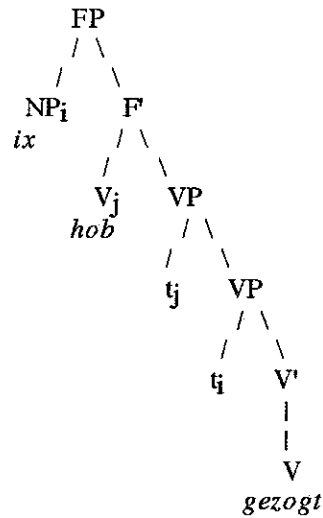
The structure of the future perfect is illustrated in (45c); it can be compared to the future, shown in (45a). In each construction the verb *vel* selects an infinitival complement; in (45a) it is a simple infinitive while the complement in (45c) is a past infinitive. The structure for a sentence in the past is repeated in (45b); the past infinitive has the same double VP structure as the past without verb movement, as can be seen in (45c).

- (45) a. future: *ix vel zogn* 'I will say'

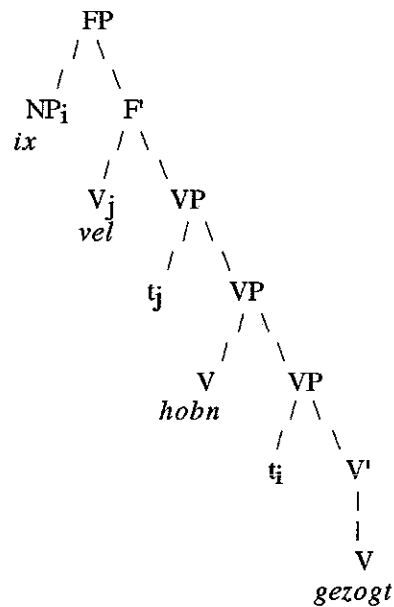




- b. past: *ix hob gezogt* 'I said'



- c. future perfect: *ix vel hobn gezogt* 'I will have said'



#### 5.4.5 Pluperfect

The form and temporal structure of the pluperfect was discussed earlier in Section 4.6.2. The surface word order of the future perfect and the pluperfect are quite similar, as can be seen in comparing the sentences in (46).

- (46) a. future perfect: *ix vel hobn gezogt* 'I will have said'  
 b. pluperfect: *ix hob gehat gezogt* 'I had said'

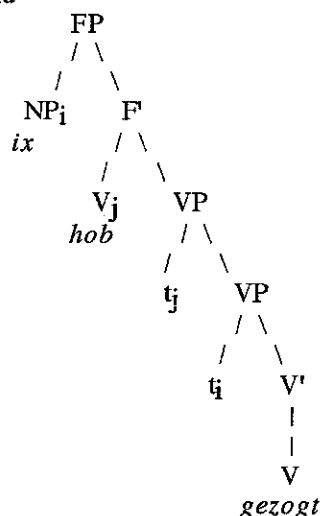
Each construction has three parts: an inflected verb, a nonfinite form of *hobn* 'to have' and a past participle. Although superficially similar, I propose that the structures of the pluperfect and of the future perfect are different. The structure of the future perfect is that of the verb *vel* plus a past infinitive, while the pluperfect is formed by the adjunction of the invariant *gehat* to the past, which is itself composed of an auxiliary and a past participle.

As described above, the past participle sets up a relationship of [E \_\_ R]; in the past form, R is generally interpreted as coincident with the moment of speech as illustrated in (47a). When the invariant *gehat*, itself a past form, is inserted into the past construction, it sets the reference point R prior to the moment of speech. This can be represented as shown in (47c): the past relation [E \_\_ R] of *gehat* acts to shift the reference point of (47a) prior to the moment of speech.

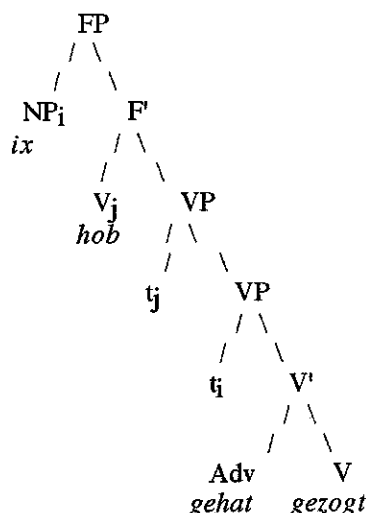
- (47) a. past: *ix hob gezogt* 'I said' E \_\_ R, S  
 b. *gehat* E \_\_ R  
 c. pluperfect: *ix hob gehat gezogt* 'I had said'  
 E \_\_ R(E \_\_ R)S --> E \_\_ R \_\_ S

The proposed structure for the pluperfect, as shown in (48b), is that of the past construction, repeated in (48a), with the invariant *gehat* within the lower VP.

- (48) a. past: *ix hob gezogt* 'I said'



b. pluperfect: *ix hob gehat gezogt* 'I had said'



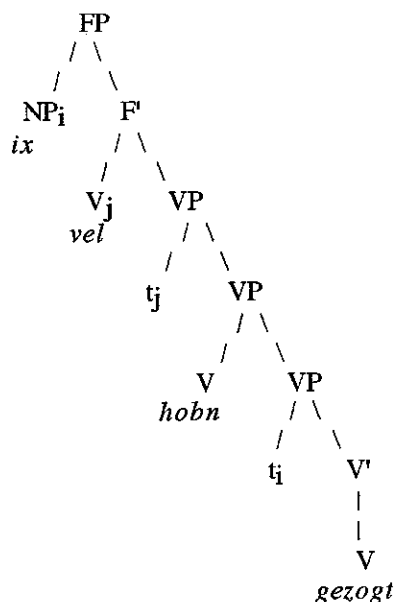
The invariant *gehat* is labelled an adverb in the above structure; Prince (1997) also treats *gehat* as a temporal adverb. This invariant element has the same form as the past participle of the verb *hobn* 'to have' which is treated as verbal when it functions as the main verb of a sentence. However, in this context it retains no verbal characteristics, such as case assignment or inflection for agreement, but rather functions like a temporal adverb in setting the temporal context of the sentence. It was proposed above that temporal adverbs can shift the reference point R in other situations. For example R is set in the near future relative to S in the examples in (49).

- (49) a. *itsl/ in a minut/ in gixn... for ix aheym*  
           now/ in a minute/ before long...journey I homewards  
           'I am going home now/ in a minute/ before long'
- b. S \_\_ E,R

The invariant *gehat* similarly functions to set the reference point R prior to the moment of speech, giving a temporal pluperfect structure of E \_\_ R \_\_ S as shown above in (47). This function of setting the temporal reference point can be described as adverbial and *gehat* therefore treated as an adverb. The adverbial nature of *gehat* is discussed further in Section 6.2.4.

The structure of the pluperfect in (48b) is different, then, from the structure given for the future perfect in (45c) above, repeated below as (50). In the future perfect the nonfinite *hobn* is treated as a verbal element projecting its own VP, while in the pluperfect the nonfinite *gehat* is an adverbial within the lowest VP.

- (50) future perfect: *ix vel hobn gezogt* 'I will have said'



The invariant *hobn* does not play the same temporal role in the future perfect that *gehat* plays in the past. The role of *hobn* is verbal; it is to satisfy *veln*'s selection of an infinitival complement. It is the past participle of the main verb, *gezogt* in example (50), that contributes the temporal relation E \_\_ R within the future perfect.

## 5.5 Grammatical vs. Lexical Tense

I have argued above that Yiddish tense is lexical as opposed to syntactic, in that features of tense are not relevant to the syntax and that tense information resides in specific lexical listings. I therefore contrast the terms 'lexical' and 'syntactic'. However, as discussed with respect to aspect in Chapter 3, the term 'lexical' is frequently contrasted with the term 'grammatical'. As quoted at the beginning of this chapter, Comrie (1985:9) defines tense as the "grammaticalised expression of location in time"; he contrasts this with expressions of time that are 'lexicalised'. Using Comrie's definitions, which, if any, of the Yiddish constructions can be considered 'grammaticalised'?

Comrie (1985:10) describes the distinction between grammaticalization and lexicalization in terms of two parameters, obligatory expression and morphological boundedness:

The clearest instances of grammaticalisation satisfy both these criteria (they are obligatory and morphologically bound), the clearest instances of lexicalisation satisfy neither.

Comrie uses the English past/non-past opposition, as in 'John ran' versus 'John runs' as an example of "a clear instance of a grammaticalised opposition."

It has been seen that all of the Yiddish tense expressions, except for the default present, are periphrastic; the only morphologically bound forms found in all tense constructions are inflections for agreement, not for tense. The past can possibly be considered morphologically bound, in that the past participle is formed through affixation to the verb stem. However, there are no tense forms in Yiddish that contrast with respect to morphological inflection as do, for example, the English present and simple past. Since, according to Comrie, the clearest instances of grammaticalised tense are both morphologically bound and obligatory, the fact that Yiddish tenses are not morphologically bound already removes them from that category of "clear instances of grammaticalisation".

Evaluating the parameter of obligatory expression is more complex. As expressed in this quote from Bybee and Dahl (1989:64), obligatoriness is most easily determined where there is a set of morphologically bound forms, or in their terminology, inflectional grams:

One of the defining properties of inflectional grams is their membership in obligatory sets. Here obligatory means that the presence of one member of the set is required by the grammatical context.

However, as described above, Yiddish tense is not morphologically bound and so there is no set of inflectional morphemes from which an obligatory choice can be made. As Bybee and Dahl (1989:64) note, it is difficult to evaluate the obligatoriness of periphrastic expressions.

The concept of obligatoriness was discussed in Chapter 3 with respect to the grammatical versus lexical nature of the Yiddish aspectual constructions. It was argued in Section 3.4.1.1 that a construction is not considered obligatory if it can be replaced with another construction with essentially no change in meaning. Therefore it was argued that the habitual past is not an obligatory construction because habitual meaning can also be expressed with the non-habitual past. By the same argument, the immediate future with *geyn* would not be considered obligatory since immediate future meaning can be expressed with the default construction or with the future *vel*. Similarly, it can be argued that the future with *vel* is not obligatory because future meaning can be expressed through the default construction with adverbial modifiers, or with the immediate future with *geyn*.

The default construction must be used to express the simultaneous relationship [E,R]; in this sense it is obligatory. However, it is problematic whether a default construction with no overt morphology can be considered an obligatory expression. On the one hand, it is obligatory in that no other construction can express a simultaneous temporal relationship; on the other hand it is not an expression at all but rather the basic verbal construction of the language. Further, if following Comrie's example of the English past/non-past contrast, all grammaticalized tenses exist as pairs of morphological oppositions, then there is no bound form with which the Yiddish default present can contrast.

Comrie (1985:11) claims that the concepts most commonly grammaticalised as tenses in languages of the world are the present, past and future. The Yiddish future and present present problems in terms of establishing their obligatoriness. The Yiddish past is somewhat less problematic. It can be argued that the past is obligatory since events in the past must be expressed with the past construction; there is no other possibility of periphrasis. As described above, the past can also be analyzed as having bound morphology. Therefore, of the Yiddish temporal constructions, the past comes closest to satisfying the two criteria of

bound morphology and obligatoriness for being considered a grammaticalized location of time, that is, a tense. The question of grammaticalized opposition remains: while the Yiddish past can perhaps be considered to contrast with the default present semantically, there is no temporal construction with which it contrasts morphologically.

While I have described all of the Yiddish tense constructions as lexical as opposed to syntactic, according to Comrie's criteria it is possible to describe the Yiddish past construction as grammaticalized as opposed to lexicalized. Since the Yiddish past can be described as lexical in one analysis and grammaticalized in another it is evident that there is not a perfect parallelism of terminology between the contrasts syntactic-lexical and grammaticalized-lexicalized. Just as the terms 'lexical' in 'syntactic-lexical' and 'grammaticalized-lexicalized' do not align, so the term 'grammaticalized' in the second opposition does not necessarily align with 'syntactic' in the first. In the case of the Yiddish past, while one might consider this a grammaticalized as opposed to lexicalized tense, this does not imply that there are past features active in the syntax.

In the discussion above, the term 'lexical' is used in two different ways: in opposition to 'syntactic' and in opposition to 'grammaticalized'. The term lexical has been used in a third way in this thesis and in other semantic literature, that is, in opposition to 'functional' or 'grammatical'. In this sense the term 'lexical' is equivalent to the term 'semantic' as used in Chapter 1, where it was contrasted with the term 'aspectual'. In Chapter 1, a prefix that provided only temporal information without changing the basic meaning of a word was described as 'semantically empty'. Other authors use the phrase 'lexically empty' with the same meaning, using 'lexical' to indicate referential meaning. In Section 5.4.2 the term 'lexical' was used with this meaning, in contrasting 'modal-like' verbs like *muzn* 'must' with 'lexical content' words like *helfn* 'to help'. In this usage, the term 'lexical' is used to describe words with substantive semantic content, like 'dog'; whereas 'grammatical' is used to describe words that function in the grammar without such semantic content and 'grammaticalized' describes words that have moved from a primarily 'lexical' function to a 'grammatical' function.

According to Comrie's parameters of grammaticalized temporal expressions, neither the future with *vel* nor the immediate future with *geyn* would be considered grammaticalized tenses. However, using the term 'grammaticalized' in the sense of functional as opposed to semantic content, then the future *vel* apparently has a grammaticalised status that the immediate future with *geyn* lacks. The verb *vel* is limited in meaning and form. It has only a temporal function, to express the future; it likely originated as a form of *veln* 'to want', but now is morphologically 'deficient' in that it has no infinitive or past participle. The verb *geyn* on the other hand is complete morphologically and not specialized in meaning. It has both the directional meaning, to move through space, as well as the parallel temporal interpretation, to move through time; it also has a complete verbal paradigm. The future *vel* can therefore be considered a grammaticalised form in the sense of its temporal function although it is not a grammaticalized tense in Comrie's terms. Again, however, the term 'grammaticalized' here has no repercussions for the syntax; the contrast 'lexical (referential)' versus 'grammatical (functional)' does not necessarily correspond to the contrast 'lexical' versus 'syntactic'. While the future *vel* may be described as grammaticalized, it is still lexical in that it does not have tense features that are relevant to the syntax.

I use the term lexical to mean, simply, pertaining to the lexicon and contrast it with 'syntactic', pertaining to the syntax. The lexicon contains many

regular 'grammatical' presyntactic processes, such as derivational and inflectional morphology, that occur prior to lexical insertion into the syntax. I discuss the relationship of verbal paradigms to lexical listings in the next Section and I explore the nature of the lexicon further in Chapter 6.

### 5.5.1 Verbal Paradigm

In Chapter 3 the concept of obligatoriness was associated with the question of the nature of verbal paradigms. Aronson (1985) associates membership in the verbal paradigm with categorization as a grammatical as opposed to a lexical expression, as discussed in Section 3.4.1.2. There has been little discussion of the nature of the Yiddish verbal paradigm; Aronson's paradigm evidently includes the stem construction and habitual past. Thieroff (1994:41) is alone in clearly setting out his concept of the Yiddish verbal paradigm. His paradigm was presented in example (12) in Section 3.4.1.2; it is repeated below as (51).

(51) Yiddish: paradigm of *maxn* 'do','make'

anteriority unmarked	posteriority unmarked		posterior	
	indicative	conditional		
	maxt		volt/zol maxn	vet maxn
anterior	habituality unmarked	habitual		
	hot gemaxt	fleg(t) maxn	volt/zol gemaxt	vet hobn gemaxt
anterior 2	hot gehat gemaxt		–	–

Thieroff's paradigm includes eight different constructions which are equivalent to those described here as the default present, the past, the future, the pluperfect, the future perfect, the habitual past plus a present and a past conditional. What is the status of such a paradigm in the grammar of the language? I have proposed that a verb's paradigm includes just those forms that are included in its lexical listing. By this definition the Yiddish verbal paradigm would therefore be much smaller than that proposed in (51), for it need consist of the stem, infinitive and past participle only. For many regular verbs these forms are predictable and need not be individually listed. Those verbs that take *zayn* as a past auxiliary rather than the default *hobn* would also have this information in their lexical listing. I propose that all of the other constructions, such as those formed with *fleg*, *veln*, *zoln* and *voln*, would have their own lexical listings, and would not be part of the paradigm of each verb in the language.

Aronson argues that membership in the verbal paradigm implies syntactic expression through the opposition of features. That is, the membership of the habitual past in the paradigm implies that there are features [+/- habitual] active in the syntax. Thieroff also suggests, as shown in (51) above, that there is a contrast in the past between the habitual form and the form unmarked for habituality. I argued in Section 3.5 against the existence of aspectual features such as [+/- habitual] in the syntax, and I argued above that there are no tense features such as [+/-past] relevant to the syntax. While I do not propose that the past habitual is part of the verbal paradigm I do propose that the past participle is part of the verbal paradigm. However, I suggest that there is no necessary association between membership in the verbal paradigm and syntactic expression of features. That is, it

is not sufficient for the past participle to be a member of the verbal paradigm (as defined here) for there to be [+/- past] features active in the syntax. The meanings of the different elements - stem, infinitive, past participle - in a paradigm may or may not be expressed by binary features, but there is no evidence that such features have consequences for the syntactic structure.

## 5.6 Summary

In this chapter I have proposed structures for a number of Yiddish tense constructions. I have argued that the Yiddish present is a default construction; that the meaning of past is carried by the past participle, which is part of the verbal paradigm of each verb, while the meanings of future and habitual past each reside within a single listed word, *vel* and *flegn* respectively. I have proposed different syntactic structures for the superficially similar future perfect and pluperfect. I have argued that Yiddish tense is a lexical rather than a syntactic expression in that features of tense are irrelevant to the syntactic structure and tense meanings derive from lexically listed information.

I have further concluded that the verb paradigm has no status as an independent entity but is simply the set of those verb forms necessarily listed in the lexical entry for each verb. For Yiddish the verbal paradigm is very small, consisting of the verb stem, the past participle and infinitive; where these are regular and predictable, they need not be listed. Membership in the verbal paradigm, as described here, does not imply any particular relationship to the syntax.

I have discussed the uses of the terms 'grammatical' and 'lexical', and have shown that there is no necessary correlation between designation as 'grammatical' and syntactic expression. According to Comrie's parameters Yiddish has at most one 'grammaticalized' tense, the past; however, if the term is used to mean that a form has a specialized function within the grammar, then the future *vel* and habitual past *flegn* can also be considered to be 'grammaticalized.'

The syntactic structures proposed in this chapter do not include a tense phrase. The question remains as to what empirical evidence is needed to claim that tense is expressed in the syntax rather than in the lexicon. I have argued above that the Yiddish past, like the English past, can be considered to be obligatory. Although English has both a simple past and a participial past, and Yiddish has only a participial past, the proposals for representing tense in English can be compared to those for Yiddish. There have been proposals that English past tense morphemes are associated with the head of TP (see, for example, Stowell, 1993, Cowper 1997). However, Cowper (to appear) proposes that there is no separate TP for English but that tense information is nonetheless expressed in the syntax by means of a unary feature 'precedence' associated with INFL. I suggest that the semantic information of precedence, or past, is associated with the lexical items that are selected for insertion in the syntax and not with separate features within the syntax. This raises a theoretical question concerning the process of interpretation. Must tense information that originates in the lexicon be associated with syntactic features in order to be interpreted? This is a question that must be left for future research; I have assumed that such lexical information can be interpreted directly without further syntactic mediation. A similar question arises in the next chapter with respect to aspect, as to what empirical evidence is needed to propose an aspectual phrase or aspectual features within the syntax rather than associated with specific lexical items within the lexicon.



## CHAPTER 6 - STRUCTURE OF ASPECTUAL CONSTRUCTIONS

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to a discussion of the morphosyntactic structures of the two central aspectual constructions: prefixed verbs and the stem construction. None of the authors discussed in Chapter 2, who theorize about the nature of aspect in Yiddish, present syntactic structures or suggest what implications their proposals might have for syntax. One can therefore only speculate on what the relationships between claims of grammatical aspectual oppositions and actual syntactic structure might be. What, for example, would be the implications for the syntax if there were a language-pervasive perfective/imperfective contrast? One might predict that features of

[+/- perfective] on the verb would be relevant to the syntax. Perhaps such features would motivate movement to the head of a functional category, Aspect Phrase. Diesing (1998) is one author who specifically deals with the relationship between a Yiddish aspectual construction and syntax. She proposes an Aspect Phrase for the stem construction but not for aspectually prefixed verbs; these proposals are discussed in more detail in Section 6.3.1.

I argued in Chapter 5 that, with respect to tense, the term 'grammatical' does not necessarily imply 'syntactic'. Aronson (1985), however, does describe grammatical aspectual constructions as being syntactic as opposed to lexical. Therefore, for Aronson, the syntactic structure of these constructions would likely include the features of [+/- semelfactive] and [+/- iterative].

In Chapters 3 and 4 I argued against the existence of the oppositions [+/- perfective], [+/- semelfactive] and [+/- iterative] and so according to my approach these features are not present in the Yiddish lexicon or syntax. I proposed that Yiddish aspect is better described in terms of boundedness; however I do not suggest that there is a feature of boundedness that is relevant to the syntax. Just as I argued in Chapter 5 that tense features are irrelevant to Yiddish syntax, so I base the structures proposed in this chapter on the assumption that there are no aspectual features relevant to the syntax.

The structures proposed below for the stem construction and separable prefixed verbs share the property of head-adjunction. I argue that the adjunction occurs in the lexicon with the structure visible to the syntax. This raises questions about the nature of the lexicon which are addressed in Section 6.2.1. This shared structural characteristic also raises the question as to whether this type of adjoined structure reflects a shared semantic characteristic, that of aspectual boundedness. This question is discussed in Section 6.4.

### 6.2 Prefixed Verbs

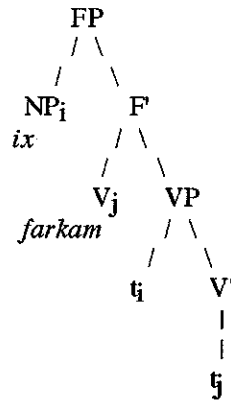
I have treated prefixed verbs as a single class with respect to their aspectual properties. However, as described in Chapter 1, inseparably and separably prefixed verbs present different word orders. I will argue that both inseparably and separably prefixed verbs are formed in the lexicon prior to lexical insertion in the syntax. While this is an uncontroversial proposal for inseparably prefixed verbs, for separably prefixed verbs the proposal requires a theory of the lexicon that allows lexical structure to be visible to the syntax. As far as possible, I have used verbs

with the prefixes discussed in Chapter 1 for the examples in the following discussion.

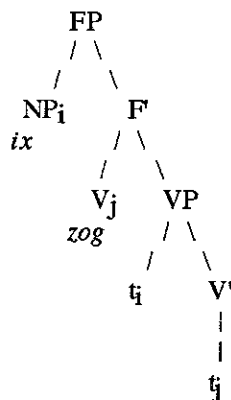
### 6.2.1 Inseparably Prefixed Verbs

Verbs with inseparable prefixes behave syntactically in the same way as simple verbs. This is illustrated in (1) below, where the syntax of the sentence with the aspectually prefixed verb *farkamen* 'comb (back)' in (1a) is the same as that shown for *zogn* 'say' in (1b).

- (1) a. *ix farkam* 'I comb (back)'



- b. *ix zog* 'I say'



In the previous chapter I proposed that the lexicon includes derivational and inflectional morphology and that lexical items are inserted into the syntax before any syntactic operations. The derivational process that forms inseparably prefixed verbs therefore occurs within the lexicon. The morphological composition of inseparably prefixed verbs is irrelevant to the syntax; as illustrated in (1) above, they are indistinguishable syntactically from morphologically simple words. Inseparably prefixed verbs can display non-compositional meaning and undergo further derivational morphology. These characteristics further point to inseparably prefixed verbs being formed in the lexicon prior to syntactic insertion.

It is widely accepted that multimorphemic words with noncompositional meaning are listed in the lexicon (Lieber 1988, DiSciullo and Williams 1987). As noted in Section 1.2.1 inseparably prefixed verbs frequently do not have predictable meaning. The examples in (2) illustrate two inseparably prefixed verbs, formed through the prefixation of *far-*, which do not have compositional meaning.

- |     |    |                  |                         |
|-----|----|------------------|-------------------------|
| (2) | a. | <i>brenge</i>    | 'to bring'              |
|     |    | <i>farbrenge</i> | 'to spend (time/money)' |
|     | b. | <i>hern</i>      | 'to hear'               |
|     |    | <i>farhern</i>   | 'to examine'            |

Inseparably prefixed verbs commonly undergo further derivational morphology; the examples below show nominalization processes. These are the same regular processes that operate upon morphologically simple verbs; there is no evidence that these derivations should be treated other than as regular derivational morphology within the morphological component of the lexicon.

The examples in (3) show deverbal nominals formed through affixation of *-er*. As in English, the suffix *-er* is regularly added to Yiddish simple verbs to indicate an agent, as shown in (3a) - (3c). Examples (3d) and (3e) show this nominalization process with inseparably prefixed verbs.

- |     |    |                       |                               |
|-----|----|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| (3) | a. | <i>paykle</i>         | 'to drum'                     |
|     |    | <i>der paykler</i>    | 'the drummer'                 |
|     | b. | <i>davenen</i>        | 'pray'                        |
|     |    | <i>der davenen</i>    | 'the praying one'             |
|     | c. | <i>shraybn</i>        | 'write'                       |
|     |    | <i>der shrayber</i>   | 'the writer'                  |
|     | d. | <i>farbrenge</i>      | 'to spend (time/money)'       |
|     |    | <i>der farbrenger</i> | 'the spendthrift, squanderer' |
|     | e. | <i>farhern</i>        | 'to examine'                  |
|     |    | <i>der farherer</i>   | 'the examiner'                |

Similarly, the suffix *-ung* forms a deverbal noun indicating the result of an action. As illustrated below, just as the noun *di firung* 'conduct' is derived from the simple verb *firn* 'to conduct' in (4a), deverbal nouns are derived from the inseparably prefixed verbs in (4b) and (4c).

- |     |    |                       |                       |
|-----|----|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| (4) | a. | <i>firn</i>           | 'to guide, conduct'   |
|     |    | <i>di firung</i>      | 'the conduct, habit'  |
|     | b. | <i>farbreyn</i>       | 'spread, extend'      |
|     |    | <i>di farbreitung</i> | 'the spreading'       |
|     | c. | <i>farbindn</i>       | 'to tie, bind'        |
|     |    | <i>di farbindung</i>  | 'the connection, tie' |

The evidence here points to inseparably prefixed verbs being formed in the lexicon prior to lexical insertion. In the following section I use this same evidence to argue that separably prefixed verbs are also formed in the lexicon.

### 6.2.2 Structure Proposed for Separably Prefixed Verbs

As described in Section 1.2.1 verbs with separable prefixes show different syntactic patterns than do inseparably prefixed verbs. The differences in word order are evident in comparing the sentences in (5) showing the inseparably prefixed verb *farkam* 'comb (back)' with those in (6) that are formed from the separably prefixed verb *opesn* 'eat up'.

- |     |    |  |     |    |   |
|-----|----|--|-----|----|---|
| (5) | a. | <i>ix farkam</i><br>'I comb (back)'  | (6) | a. | <i>ix es op</i><br>'I eat up'   |
|     | b. | <i>ix hob farkamt</i><br>I have combed (back)<br>'I combed (back)'                             |     | b. | <i>ix hob opgegesn</i><br>I have up-ate<br>'I ate up'                             |
|     | c. | <i>er hot moyre tsufarkamen</i><br>he has fear to comb (back)<br>'he is afraid to comb (back)' |     | c. | <i>er hot moyre optsuesn</i><br>he has fear up-to-eat<br>'he is afraid to eat up' |
|     | d. | <i>farkam!</i><br>'comb (back)'  |     | d. | <i>es op!</i><br>'eat up!'  |
|     | e. | <i>ix vel farkamen</i><br>I will comb (back)<br>'I will comb (back)'                           |     | e. | <i>ix vel opesn</i><br>I will up-eat<br>'I will eat up'                           |

The inseparable prefix is always affixed directly to the root verb; however the separable prefix is found both following the root and preceding it. The verb and separable prefix can therefore not enter the syntax as a single indivisible unit in the way that verbs with inseparable prefixes do; otherwise the root and prefix would never surface separately. The same type of idiosyncratic word order is found with the stem construction, as described in Section 1.3.3. I propose that these word orders result from a lexical structure that is visible to the syntax.

The observed variations of position of the separable prefix can be accounted for by verb movement out of an adjoined structure (Diesing 1990, Gold 1994a). Head-adjunction has been proposed to account for a variety of data: Travis (1984) proposes head-adjunction for licensing adverbs; Johnson (1991) proposes head-adjunction for English particle verbs; Neelman and Weerman (1993) propose head-adjunction for Dutch particle verbs; and Ghomeshi and Massam (1992) propose head-adjunction for noun incorporation in Persian.

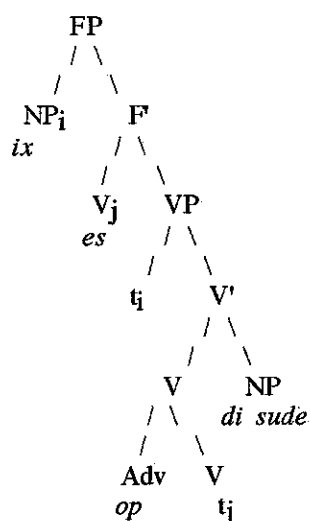
The proposed adjoined structure is illustrated in (7) below with the verb *opesn* 'to eat up'. The prefix is labelled as an adverb since the majority of separable prefixes are identical in form to independently occurring adverbs.



The tree in (8) illustrates the way in which the head adjoined structure interacts with the syntax in the sentence *ix es op* 'I eat up'. The finite verb *es* moves up to F while the adjoined prefix remains in situ in the VP. Thus the prefix

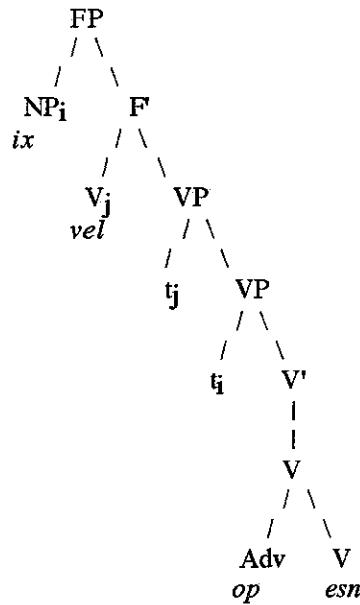
*op* follows the verb in the surface order. The same movement of the inflected verb accounts for the ordering in the imperative sentence in (6d).

(8) *ix es op di sude* 'I eat up the meal'

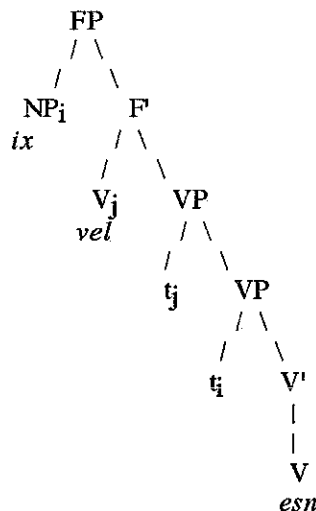


In sentences where the verb stem is nonfinite, as in (6b), (6c), and (6e), the prefix and stem remain in their original adjoined positions and so surface with the prefix preceding the stem. This is illustrated with the future sentence (6e) *ix vel opesn* 'I will eat up' in structure (9a) below. This structure can be compared to the structure of a future sentence with a simple verb in (9b): in both sentences the finite verb *vel* moves to F and the infinitive, with or without an adjoined prefix, remains in the lower VP.

- (9) a. *ix vel opesn* 'I will eat up'



- b. *ix vel esn* 'I will eat'



The head-adjoined structure of separably prefixed verbs accounts for the ordering facts: the prefix follows the root verb in the present and imperative because the inflected verb has moved, whereas it remains in its adjoined position preceding the root verb in the past, future and other constructions where the verb is nonfinite. The Yiddish verb with separable prefix is similar to the English and Dutch particle verb. Johnson (1991), and Keyser and Roeper (1992) propose a structure for English particle verbs similar to the one described here; Neeleman and Weerman (1993) do so for Dutch. Travis (1988) proposes licensing all adverbs through head adjunction.

Diesing (1998) proposes a different structure for separably prefixed verbs. She argues that the underlying order is verb-prefix and that the surface order observed in (9a) above is a result of the prefix incorporating into the verb, while the order in (9b) is a result of the verb subsequently exorporating. This proposal is based upon the problematic ordering verb-prefix found in verb stems and is discussed more fully in Section 6.3.2 with respect to the interaction of separably prefixed verbs with the stem construction. An underlying order of verb-prefix raises problems both for the participation of separably prefixed verbs in further derivation and for observed stress patterns, as discussed in Sections 6.2.3.2 and 6.2.3.3 below.

### 6.2.3 Arguments for Lexical Structure

The structure in (8) above indicates that the adjoined structure must be in place before verb movement in order to account for the observed word order. The question is whether this adjunction takes place at insertion, after insertion following syntactic movement or in the lexicon before insertion. Several types of evidence are presented below to support the claim that the adjunction occurs in the lexicon before insertion. This means that prefixation with separable prefixes is a derivational process that occurs in the lexicon, just like prefixation with inseparable prefixes. The difference between the two types of prefixation is that the adjoined structure of the separable prefixes remains visible to the syntax, whereas the morphological structure of the inseparable prefixes is not visible to the syntax. The evidence presented for the lexical derivation of separably prefixed verbs is based upon non-compositional meaning, the behaviour of prefixed verbs in derivational morphology and stress patterns.

#### 6.2.3.1 Non-Compositional Meaning

The meaning of Yiddish prefixed verbs is not always a clear combination of the meaning of the prefix with the meaning of the root verb. For example, the verb *oyfhern* 'to stop', is composed of *oyf* 'on' and *hern* 'to hear'; its meaning is not compositional. Sentences with *oyfhern* are given in (10). Even those prefixes discussed in Chapter 1 as most commonly contributing aspectual meaning are found in non-compositional compounds. The sentences in (11) below illustrate the separably prefixed verb *onheybn* 'start' whose meaning is not predictable from the combination of the aspectually associated prefix *on-* and the verb *heybn* 'raise': 'to start' is not a bounded meaning of 'to raise'.

- (10) a. *her oyf tsu redn*  
'stop talking!'
- b. *zi vet oyfhern tsu redn.*  
'she will stop talking'
- (11) a. *di kinder heybn on tsu zingen*  
'the children start to sing'
- b. *zey hobn ongeheybt tsu zingen*  
'they started to sing'

If one assumes that lexical items with unpredictable meaning are listed in the lexicon and that the lexicon is a presyntactic entity, then the lack of consistent

compositional meaning for prefixed verbs indicates that such verbs must be lexically listed as a single item.

### 6.2.3.2 Derivational Morphology

Further evidence of the lexical nature of the adjoined structure of prefix and verb is found in the way in which the verb and separable prefix behave as a root for other morphological constructions. As described in Section 6.2.1 above, formation of a deverbal nominal through suffixation of *-er* or *-ung* is a regular Yiddish derivational process; there is no reason to propose that these derivations occur in the syntax rather than in the lexicon. The examples in (12) show separably prefixed verbs forming the bases for nominals in *-er* in the same way as did simple verbs and verbs with inseparable prefixes in (3) above. Similarly, the examples in (13) show separably prefixed verbs nominalized with *-ung* as was shown in (4) above for simple verbs and inseparably prefixed verbs.

- |      |    |                       |                           |
|------|----|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| (12) | a. | <i>brenge</i>         | 'bring'                   |
|      |    | <i>oysbrenge</i>      | 'squander'                |
|      |    | <i>der oysbrenger</i> | 'the spendthrift'         |
|      | b. | <i>tsien</i>          | 'pull'                    |
|      |    | <i>optsien</i>        | 'draw aside; play truant' |
|      |    | <i>der optsier</i>    | 'the truant'              |
|      | c. | <i>rufn</i>           | 'call'                    |
|      |    | <i>oysrufn</i>        | 'call out'                |
|      |    | <i>der oysrufer</i>   | 'the crier'               |
| (13) | a. | <i>moln</i>           | 'paint'                   |
|      |    | <i>opmoln</i>         | 'paint (an object)'       |
|      |    | <i>di opmolung</i>    | 'the representation'      |
|      | b. | <i>haltn</i>          | 'hold'                    |
|      |    | <i>ophaltn</i>        | 'stop, detain, refrain'   |
|      |    | <i>di ophaltung</i>   | 'the abstention'          |

U. Weinreich (1977) indicates that the verbs *moln* and *opmoln* in (13a) are aspectually related, describing *opmoln* as the perfective counterpart of *moln*. This strengthens the argument that aspectual prefixation as well as non-aspectual prefixation occurs in the lexicon; if one assumes that suffixation of *-ung* is a process within the lexicon, then *opmoln* must be formed lexically in order to participate in this lexical suffixation.

Neeleman and Weerman (1993) use similar morphological evidence to argue that Dutch particle verbs, the equivalent of Yiddish verbs with separable prefixes, are adjoined in the (lexical) morphology and not in the syntax. They argue that there is no reason to propose that such regular derivations take place in the syntax. The examples in (12) and (13) above provide strong evidence that the verb and its separable prefix are available in the morphological component as a single verb, in the order prefix-verb, and undergo morphological processes within the lexicon in the same way as morphologically simple verbs. A proposal that the order prefix-verb is a result of syntactic incorporation is problematic, since it then requires that further derivational processes like those described here be syntactic as well. The prefixes cannot be considered to have incorporated syntactically into lexically derived nouns;



this would require, for example in (13a), the prefixation of *op-* onto a noun *molung* which does not exist.

### 6.2.3.3 Stress Patterns

Birnbaum (1979) suggests that separably prefixed verbs are actually two separate words, an adverb and a verb, joined for orthographic reasons only. However, the stress patterns of verbs with separable prefixes, although different from those of verbs with inseparable prefixes, indicate that these compounds function as a single word. Compare the stress on the verb with a separable prefix in (8a) with the same verb preceded by the adverb *nextn* 'yesterday' in (8b).

- (14) a. *ix hob ópgegèsn*  
I have up-eaten  
'I ate up'
- b. *ix hob néxtn gegésn*  
I have yesterday eaten  
'I ate yesterday'
- c. *ix és óp*  
'I eat up'
- d. *ix gib an és óp*  
I give an eat up  
'I eat up quickly'

Both *nextn* and *op-* take primary stress. However, in (14a) *op-* is clearly in a compound with the following past participle, as it takes the only primary stress in the word. The past participle in (14b), on the other hand, also exhibits primary stress. This indicates that *nextn* and *gegésn* are two separate words, whereas *op-* and *gegésn* are stressed as a single word. Where the prefix follows the verb, as in (14c) and (14d), the stress pattern is like that for two separate words.

The stress pattern seen in (14a) is the same as that found on regular lexical compounds. As illustrated in (15) below, compounds of two Yiddish words normally show main stress on the first component and a faint secondary stress on the second, as was seen with the verb with a preceding separable prefix in (14a).

- |      |                            |   |                            |   |                                       |
|------|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| (15) | <i>xásene</i><br>'wedding' | + | <i>kleyd</i><br>'dress'    | = | <i>xáseneklèyd</i><br>'wedding dress' |
|      | <i>shul</i><br>'school'    | + | <i>yóntev</i><br>'holiday' | = | <i>shúlyòntev</i><br>'school holiday' |
|      | <i>tog</i><br>'day'        | + | <i>shul</i><br>'school'    | = | <i>tógshùl</i><br>'dayschool'         |

If it is assumed that regular compounding, such as that in (15), takes place in the lexicon, and that word level stress is assigned before lexical insertion, then the stress patterns of separably prefixed verbs suggest that they are formed in the lexicon prior to insertion in the syntax.

This stress assignment pattern is problematic for Diesing's (1998) proposal that the underlying lexical order for verbs with separable prefixes is verb first. If the

underlying order for the verb *opesn* were indeed *esn - op* one would expect the stem *es op* in (14d) to have the stress assignment *és òp* like the compounds in (15) and the infinitive *ópèsn*. However each element in the stem *es op* takes primary stress, just like the separate lexical items shown in (14b). The stem shows the same stress pattern found in sentence (14c) where the prefix follows the verb as a result of the syntactic movement shown in (8) above.

The stress evidence therefore indicates that the order prefix-verb is the underlying order of the lexical listing, being stressed like other lexical compounds, whereas the order verb-prefix is a result of movement and each element is subsequently stressed as a separate word.

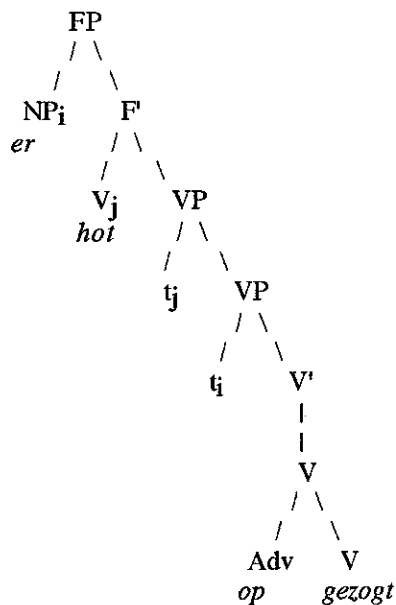
#### 6.2.4 Similarities: Pseudo-Pluperfect and Pluperfect

I discussed the semantic similarity between the pluperfect and the pseudo-pluperfect formed with separably prefixed verbs in Chapter 4; this is illustrated in sentence (16) below where the separably prefixed verbs in the past *hobn opgedavnt* and *hot opgezogt* are glossed with the English pluperfect 'had said'.

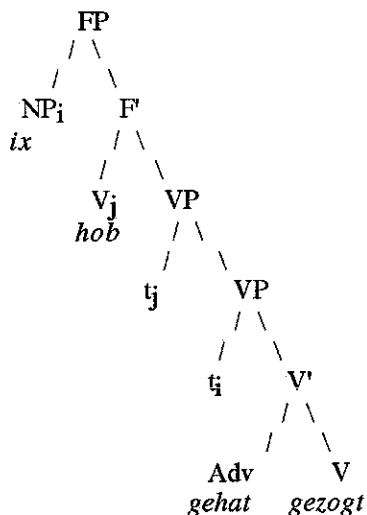
- (16) *vi bald mir hobn opgedavnt minkhe un er hot opgezogt dem kadish, hot er . . . unz [sic] gezogt, az mir konen geyn.*  
 as soon we have up-prayed Minhah and he has up-said the  
 Kaddish, has he . . . us said, that we can go  
 'as soon as we had said Minhah and he had said Kaddish, he . .  
 told us we could go'

These two constructions also show structural similarities. The structure proposed for the pseudo-pluperfect, that is, the past with a separably prefixed verb, is shown in (17a) with the verb *opzogn* 'to finish saying'. The structure of the pluperfect was introduced in Section 5.4.5 ; it is shown here in (17b) with the simple verb *zogn* 'to say' .

- (17) a. pseudo-pluperfect: *er hot opgezogt* 'he had said'



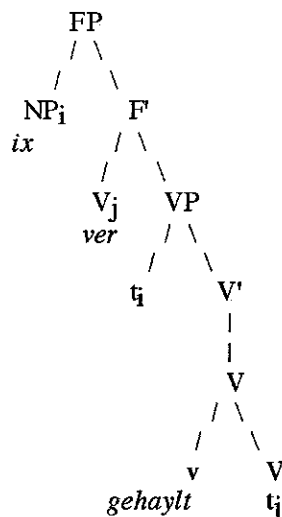
- b. pluperfect: *ix hob gehat gezogt* 'I had said'



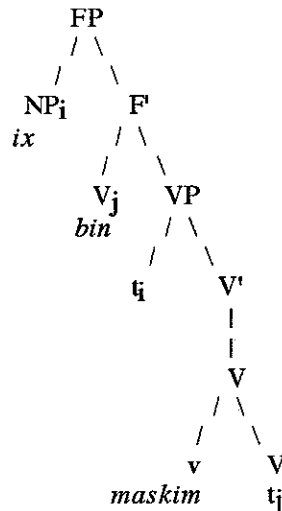
Both of the structures in (17) have adverbial elements in the lower VP; the difference is that the separable prefix in (17a) is adjoined directly to the verb, while the adverbial *gehat* is joined to V'. The proposal that *gehat* functions in the pluperfect as an adverb is strengthened by its semantic and structural similarities to the separable prefixes in the pseudo-pluperfect which are also adverbial. As discussed in Section 4.6, both of these elements function in the past to create a semantic relationship that can be represented as E \_\_ R \_\_ S.

The head-adjoined structure found in the pseudo-pluperfect has been suggested for the pluperfect by Prince (1997) who also treats *gehat* as a temporal adverb. Prince cites claims by Yudel Mark and Chaim Goldwasser that the pluperfect cannot be formed with passives or with Hebraic periphrastic constructions and proposes that an adjoined structure can account for this incompatibility. Head-adjoined structures have been suggested for both of these constructions (Gold 1994a), as illustrated in (18) below. The passive construction, as described in Section 5.4.3, is formed from the verb *vern* 'to become' and the past participle. The Hebraic periphrastic construction is formed from the adjunction of a Hebrew-origin participle to one of several Yiddish verbs, commonly *zayn* 'to be', *vern* 'to become' or *hobn* 'to have'; in (18b) the participle *maskim* 'agreed' is adjoined to *zayn* 'to be'. Both of these constructions show the same word order anomalies as verbs with separable prefixes, which are accounted for by the head-adjoined structures shown in (18). In these structures the invariant participles are categorized as 'v', while the head of VP is shown as 'V'.

(18) a. passive: *ix ver gehaylt* 'I am healed'

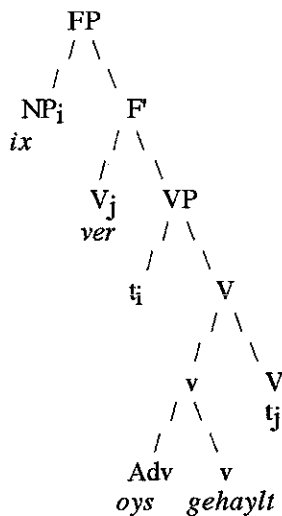


- b. Hebraic periphrastic construction: *ix bin maskim* 'I agree'



Prince's argument apparently rests on the assumption that an adjoined construction cannot be further adjoined. However, the structure in (19) illustrates that an aspectually prefixed verb can be found in the passive: the prefix is adjoined to the past participle and this adjoined structure is adjoined to the inflected verb.

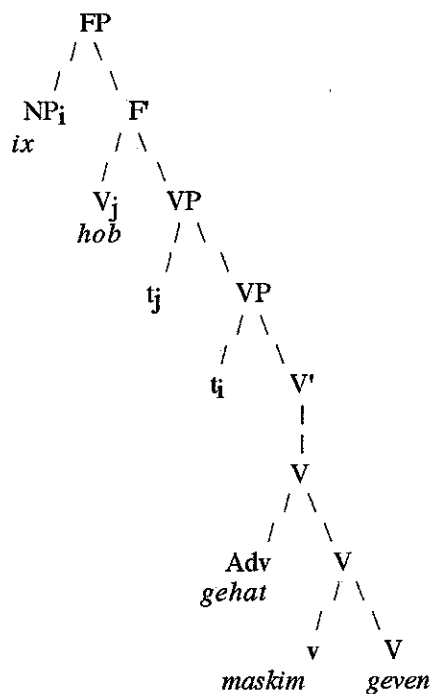
- (19) double adjunction:  
*ix ver oysgehaylt* 'I am completely healed/healed up'



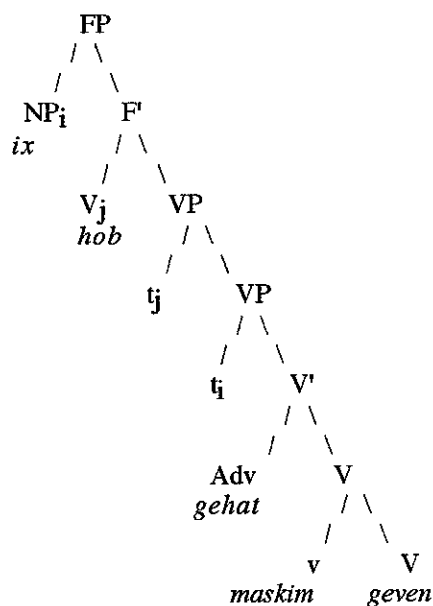
In the same way, it would be feasible structurally for a passive or Hebraic periphrastic construction to be part of an adjoined pluperfect construction, as illustrated in (20a). Here, the Hebraic participle *maskim* is adjoined to the verb *geven* (the past participle of *zayn* 'to be'), to which complex the adverbial *gehat* is adjoined. Therefore, if indeed periphrastic and passive constructions are not found in

the pluperfect, it is not on account of the pluperfect having a head adjoined structure, for (20a) illustrates that these structures are compatible. The pluperfect with *gehat* adjoined to the verb in (20a) can be compared to the structure which I propose for the pluperfect in (20b) with *gehat* adjoined to the VP.

- (20) a. Pluperfect with head-adjoined *gehat*  
*ix hob gehat maskim geven* 'I had agreed'



- b. Pluperfect with independent *gehat*  
*ix hob gehat maskim geven* 'I had agreed'

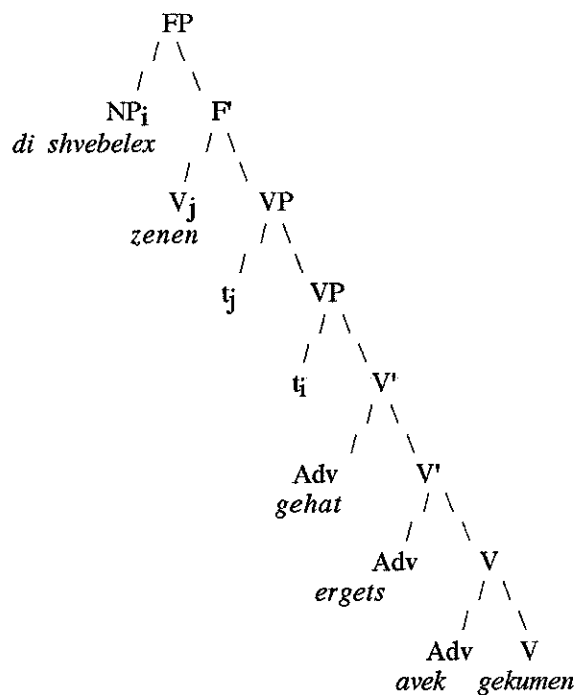


The fact that other adverbs can intervene between *gehat* and the past participle provides evidence that the structure in (20b) is preferable to that in (20a). In sentence (21) the adverb *ergets* 'somewhere' is found between *gehat* and the past participle.

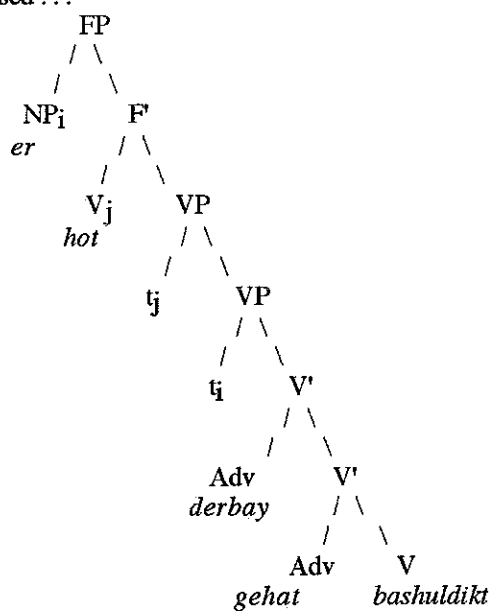
- (21) *di shvebelex zenen gehat ergets avekgekumen*  
 the matches are had somewhere disappeared  
 'the matches had disappeared somewhere' (I. B. Singer, 1979: 343)

Generally, words do not intervene between head-adjoined elements if there has been no movement and there is no reason to propose that *gehat* has moved in this sentence. I therefore conclude that *gehat* is not head-adjoined to the past participle and that the structure illustrated in (20a) should be rejected. The structure proposed for sentence (21) is that given in (22a); both *gehat* and *ergets* are represented as adverbs within the lower VP. The structure in (22b) illustrates such adverbs in reverse order: here *gehat* follows the adverb *derbay* 'thereby'.

- (22) a. *di shvebelex zenen gehat ergets avekgekumen*  
 the matches are had somewhere disappeared  
 'the matches had disappeared somewhere'



- b. *er hot derbay gehat bashuldikt ...*  
 he has thereby had accused ...  
 'he had thereby accused ...'





It can be seen that the pluperfect and pseudo-pluperfect formed with separably prefixed verbs share semantic meaning and structure in that an adverbial element sets the reference point for the event in the past. However the structures are not identical: the adverbial prefix is adjoined directly to the verb in separably prefixed verbs, whereas the adverbial *gehat* is not in a head-adjoined construction.

### 6.3 The Stem Construction

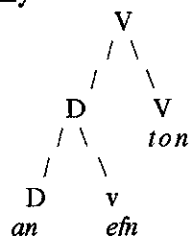
#### 6.3.1 Proposed Structure

The stem construction, like verbs with separable prefixes, shows a word order different from that considered standard, as discussed in Section 1.3.3. These differences are illustrated by a comparison of the sentences in (23) with those in (24). The standard Yiddish word order for a double object construction, as shown in (23a) - (23c), has the NP complement follow the inflected verb in the present, the past participle in the past and the infinitive in the future. The verb stem in the stem construction is not found in the same position as the NP complement in the sentences in (23). Although, like the NP complement, the verb stem follows the inflected verb in the present, as in (24a), it precedes the past participle and the infinitive in the past and future respectively, as illustrated in (24b) and (24c).

- (23) a. *er git a bux dem eynikl*  
he gives a book the grandchild  
'he gives his grandchild a book'
- b. *er hot gegeben a bux dem eynikl*  
he has given a book the grandchild  
'he gave his grandchild a book'
- c. *er vet gebn a bux dem eynikl*  
he will give a book the grandchild  
'he will give his grandchild a book'
- (24) a. *zi tu an efn di oygn*  
she does an open the eyes  
'she opens her eyes (suddenly)'
- b. *zi hot an efn geton di oygn*  
she has an open done the eyes  
'she opened her eyes (suddenly)'
- c. *zi vet an efn ton di oygn*  
she will an open do the eyes  
'she will open her eyes (suddenly)'

These ordering facts are similar to those described for verbs with separable prefixes in Section 6.2.2, and a similar adjoined structure is proposed to account for them, as illustrated in (25) below (Gold 1993, 1994a).

- (25) *an efn ton* 'to open suddenly'



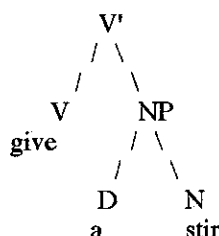
This model proposes two adjunctions. The first is the adjunction of the indefinite determiner *a* to the verb stem. As discussed in Section 4.4.3 the indefinite determiner functions to singularize the verb to which it is adjoined; it is in essentially the same semantic and structural relation to the verb stem as it would be to a noun phrase. The determiner and verb stem together form a unit which I will refer to as the D-stem; the D-stem is adjoined to the verb *gebn* or *ton*. In (25) above, the D-stem *an efn* 'an open' is adjoined to the verb *ton* 'to do'. The upper case V differentiates the verb *ton* which can undergo inflection from the verb stem *efn*, marked with a lower case v.

The adjunction of *an efn* to *ton* is visible to the syntax, as is shown in (28); the adjunction of *an* to *efn* is not. As Moorcroft (1995) points out, the phrase in (26) from Taube (1987) is problematic for this account, since the adjective *shtarkn* apparently intervenes between the two adjoined elements *a* and *zifts*. However, this phrase can be analyzed as a verb and direct object rather than a stem construction; the stem *zifts* 'sigh' is found elsewhere as a nominal and can be considered to be the complement of *tun* rather than adjoined to it. If *zifts* is the direct object of *tun*, there is no problem with it being modified by an adjective as the adjective is not then separating two adjoined elements. The word order in (26) of object before past participle is not the standard order found in Yiddish, but can be accounted for by a process of scrambling (Diesing 1997).

- (26) *un hot a shtarkn zifts geton*  
and has a strong sigh done  
'and gave a strong sigh'

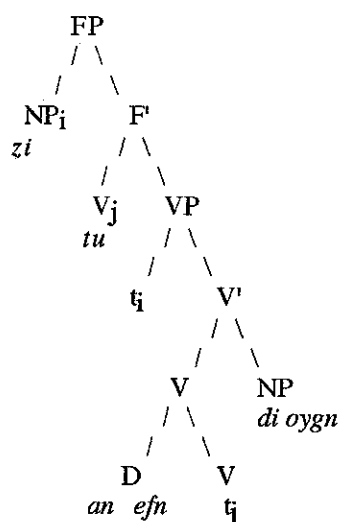
Kearns (1989) proposes a structure for the English construction 'give NP an X' such as in 'give the pot a stir' that is similar to the one proposed here for the stem construction as illustrated in (27). She argues that this is not a double object construction but a construction of light verb and stem that form a constituent at D-structure.

- (27)

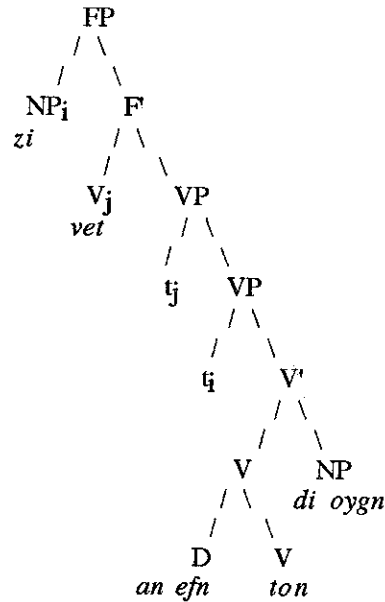


The way in which the structure proposed in (25) interacts with the syntax is illustrated in (28a) and (28b). The movement of the inflected verb in (28a) results in the D-stem *an efn* following the light verb *tu*. In (28b) the infinitive *ton* remains in the adjoined construction and so surfaces preceded by the D-stem. The structure in (28b) also accounts for the word order found with stem constructions in the past, as in sentence (24b) *zi hot an efn geton di oygn*. Here the nonfinite participle *geton* remains in situ and so follows the D-stem *an efn*. Since the adjoined structure of D to v is not visible to the syntax it is not indicated in the structures of (28); the D-stem is represented by D. The internal structure of the D-stem is discussed further in Section 6.3.2.

- (28) a. *zi tu an efn di oygn* 'she opens her eyes (suddenly)'



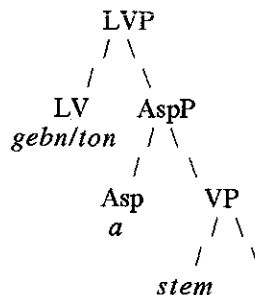
- b. *zi vet an efn ton di oygn* 'she will open her eyes (suddenly)'



I propose that, like the verbs with separable prefixes, the stem construction has a structure that is formed in the lexicon and is visible to the syntax. The argument of compositionality can be appealed to here: the meaning of the stem construction is not predictable from the combined meanings of its parts. As discussed in Section 3.4.1.3, it can be considered to be an idiom whose meaning is lexically listed, and which has a place open to be filled by any appropriate verb stem.

Diesing (1998) proposes a very different syntactic structure for the stem construction. She proposes a structure with three maximal projections as compared to the single one I have proposed. According to Diesing, the verb stem is the head of its own VP, the indefinite determiner *a* heads an Aspectual Phrase and the light verb *gebn/ton* heads a Light Verb Phrase, as illustrated in (29) below.

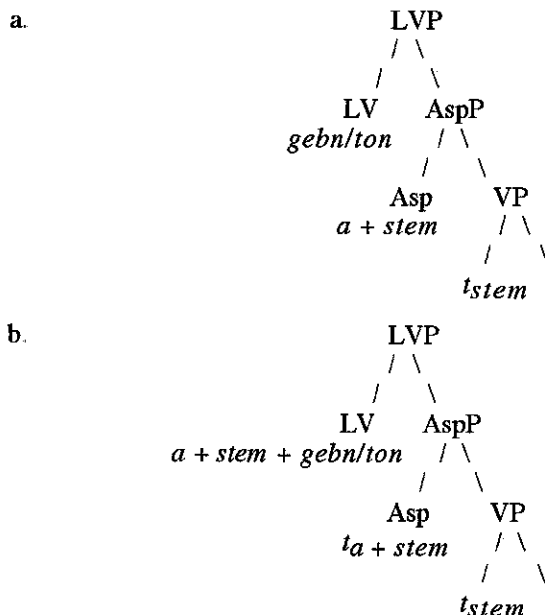
- (29) Diesing (1998) Proposed Structure for Stem Construction



With this analysis, the syntactic structure involves two incorporations: first, the stem adjoins to Asp, and second, the *a* + stem complex adjoins to the light

verb complex, as illustrated in (30). In sentences where the light verb is inflected, it exorporates and raises to a higher projection.

(30) Diesing (1998) Proposed Incorporation



The structure proposed by Diesing has many characteristics to recommend it. It reflects the aspectual nature of the stem construction through the presence of an Aspect Phrase. In the head of the Aspect Phrase is the indefinite determiner *a*, which has been described in Section 4.4.3 above as playing an important aspectual role in singularizing the verb stem. Having the verb stem head its own VP can account for certain case assignment and auxiliary choice facts, discussed in Section 2.4.2.2, which otherwise require a less direct process of feature percolation. Further, the proposal of a Light Verb Phrase is consistent with current syntactic theory (Chomsky 1995). However this structure also raises several questions:

One question involves surface word order: why does the incorporation of stem into Asp give the order [*a* + stem], that is, adjunction on the left, when the incorporation of Asp into LV gives the order [[*a* + stem] + LV], adjunction on the right? If incorporation were a consistent process one would expect the same ordering to result in both cases.

A second question involves the use of Aspect Phrase in Yiddish. I have argued above that the aspectual constructions in Yiddish are lexical rather than syntactic, and so do not propose the use of an Aspect Phrase. However, if one is proposing an AspP to reflect aspectual semantics, why should it be associated only with the stem construction? As discussed throughout this thesis, the stem construction has consistently been associated with prefixed verbs in theoretical discussions of Yiddish aspect. Diesing proposes a process of incorporation to account for the ordering of separably prefixed verbs but does not suggest the involvement of an Aspect Phrase in that incorporation. From a semantic basis, one might expect that if prefixed verbs and the stem construction similarly bound the

verb, as Diesing suggests, then they would both involve the presence of an Aspect Phrase.

One could use the arguments introduced by Aronson (1985) that prefixation is a lexical expression of aspect, and the stem construction is grammatical and therefore requires an Aspect Phrase as a syntactic expression of aspect. However, Diesing does not present this type of argumentation to support her use of AspP for the stem construction and not for prefixed verbs. The stem construction has three elements, the light verb, the indefinite determiner and a verb stem; a theory of syntactic incorporation requires three heads and the Aspect Phrase provides this head. There is therefore structural motivation for the presence of AspP for the stem construction that is not there for the bi-partite prefixed verbs. However I suggest that there should be consistent semantic motivation as well as structural motivation for the proposal of a functional head.

Further, Diesing suggests that a bounded aspectual interpretation can be attained without the presence of an Aspectual Phrase. As described in Section 1.3.4 there exist nominal stem constructions which show word order, modification by adjectives and diminutive formation characteristic of nouns but not of verb stems. These nominal constructions can be syntactically represented as a standard double object construction (Gold 1994a), and Diesing likewise proposes a verb plus NP structure for them. According to Diesing's analysis these constructions do not require an AspP as there is no incorporation of a verb stem into Asp as in (30a); rather the determiner and nominal stem are in a standard NP relationship. Nonetheless these nominal stem constructions have a semelfactive interpretation. Thus the presence or absence of the Aspect Phrase does not reflect the presence or absence of aspectual meaning for Diesing but rather reflects proposed syntactic movement. Since aspectual meaning is not consistently associated with the Aspect Phrase, I question whether this functional projection, used only for incorporation in verbal stem constructions, should have another name.

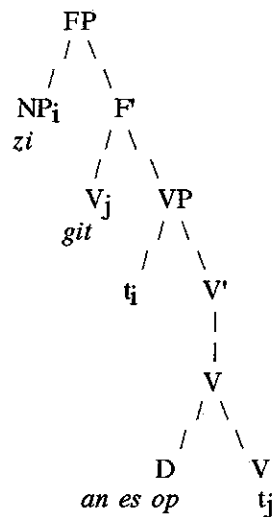
The final question arising out of Diesing's proposals is whether incorporation as found in the stem construction should be treated as lexical or syntactic. Hale and Keyser (1993) treat incorporation as a lexical process with structure visible to the syntax; I have also chosen to treat the adjunction of verb stem to determiner and D-stem to verb as lexical processes. The decision rests upon one's theory of the lexicon, as discussed in Section 6.4 below. Lexical adjunction has an advantage of simplicity over syntactic incorporation: there is no need for a process of excorporation to account for verb movement to FP.

I propose that the stem construction is a construction with its own lexical listing and lexical structure that is inserted as a unit into the syntactic structure. Its aspectual meaning is part of its lexical listing and has no other syntactic representation.

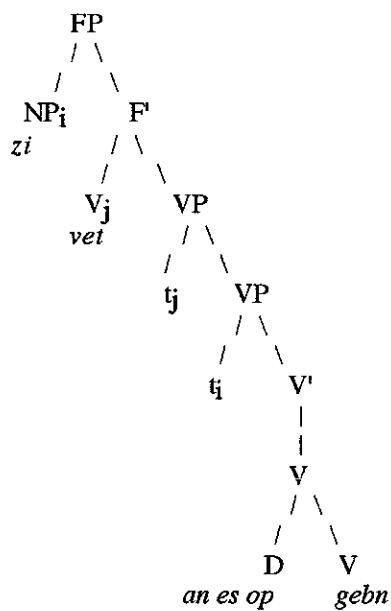
### **6.3.2 Stacking: Prefixed Verbs and Stem Construction**

As discussed in Section 4.4.2 separably prefixed verbs can appear in the stem construction because the two constructions bound the event in different ways. The structure of this stacked construction is illustrated in (31a) and (31b) for the present and future forms respectively; as in the previous section the structure of the D-stem, which is not visible to the syntax, is not indicated on these trees.

- (31) a. *zi git an es op* 'she eats up quickly'

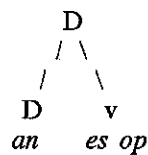


- b. *zi vet an es op gebn* 'she will eat up quickly'



The structure one would predict for the D-stem is shown in (32): adjoined to the indefinite determiner is *es op*, the verb stem of the separably prefixed verb *opesn*.

(32)



However, the order of the adverbial and verbal elements in the verb stem is problematic and suggests that the D-stem may have a more complex structure. The stems found in the stem construction that are related to morphologically simple verbs or verbs with inseparable prefixes have the same form as the stem that is the basis for further morphology, as illustrated in (33). Thus, in (33a), the element *efen* is the root for the simple verb *efenen*, for the derived noun *di efenung*, and the stem construction *zi tu an efen di oygn*. The inseparably prefixed *dershrek* plays the same role in the examples in (33b).

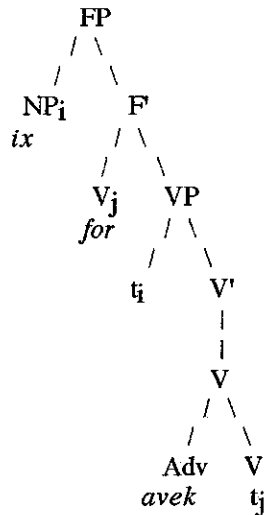
- (33) a. *efenen* 'to open'  
*di efenung* 'the opening'  
*zi tu an efen di oygn* 'she opens her eyes (suddenly)'
- b. *dershrekn* 'to frighten'  
*dos dershrekenish* 'the fright'  
*gebn zix a dershrek* 'give oneself a fright'

However, the stems in the stem construction formed from separably prefixed verbs do not follow this pattern, as shown in (34). In the simple verb *avekforn* and the derived noun *der avekfor*, the adverbial element *avek* 'away' precedes the verb root *for* 'travel'. However, in the stem construction the adverbial element follows the verb root.

- (34) *avekforn* 'to depart'  
*der avekfor* 'the departure'  
*er tu a for avek* 'he departs at once'

I argued above that separably prefixed verbs are formed in the lexicon with the adverbial element adjoined to and preceding the verb; the reverse order of adverbial element following the verb has been accounted for by syntactic verb movement, as illustrated in (35).

- (35) *ix for avek* 'I depart (lit. travel away)'



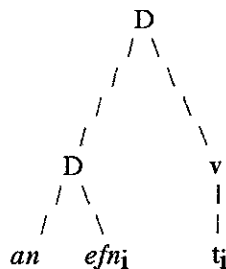


How then can one account for the order of the elements in the stem construction in (34) *a for avek*? As discussed in Section 6.2.2, Diesing (1998) accounts for the ordering in the verb stem by proposing that the underlying form of separably prefixed verbs is verb-adverb, and that the reverse order is a result of incorporation. With this approach the problem is then to explain why incorporation is blocked when separably prefixed verbs are in the stem construction. Diesing appeals to an aspectual explanation: incorporation in separably prefixed verbs in some way licences the bounded aspectual meaning; the raising to Asp serves the same function in the stem construction. Thus prefixed verbs in the stem construction are licenced through raising to Asp and the usual incorporation of prefix to verb is blocked.

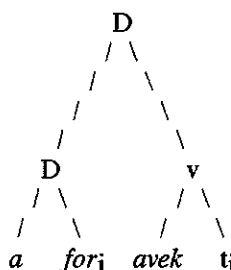
Whether the underlying form chosen is verb-prefix as Diesing (1998) proposes, or prefix-verb, as I argue, the order verb-prefix of the stem is difficult to account for. Diesing's argument rests on a theory of aspectual licencing; however, as discussed below in Section 6.5, there is no evidence that aspectual expression in Yiddish has syntactic correlates. Although both the stem construction and prefixed verbs can be described as bounded, they each bound the verb in a different way and there is no reason to propose that this boundedness should be licenced in the same way. Further, the similarity between the stem construction and separably prefixed verbs is limited to those verbs that are aspectually prefixed. Not all separably prefixed verbs are aspectually bounded; as discussed earlier the majority are directionally bounded and while that implies a temporal boundedness as well there is no reason to think that these would be licenced in the same way as aspectually prefixed verbs and as the stem construction. Further there are separably prefixed verbs, such as discussed in Section 1.2.2.3 which cannot be described as bounded. Verbs such as *onbakhn* 'to bake a great deal' and *onhandlen* 'to purchase much' quantify the verb but do not necessarily bound it temporally. It would be difficult to account for incorporation of an underlying verb-prefix order of these verbs on the basis of aspectual bounding. These problems with incorporation as well as the stress facts discussed in Section 6.2.3.3 argue against verb-prefix being the underlying lexical form of separably prefixed verbs.

However, there remains the problem of accounting for the order of separably prefixed verbs in verb stems. As discussed in Section 6.2.3.3 the stress facts point to movement having taken place. This points to an incorporation process occurring within the lexicon with all verb stems, as illustrated in (36).

(36) a.



b.



The incorporation process is not evident in morphologically simple verbs, as in (36a), but with separably prefixed verbs the prefix is stranded, as in (36b). The incorporation process is similar to that proposed by Diesing (1998) and illustrated in (30a) but occurs at the lexical rather than the syntactic level; further it is only the verbal element that incorporates into the determiner, not the adverbial prefix. This movement mirrors the type of verb movement found with syntactic inflection, when the adverb is also stranded, and shows the same type of stress pattern.

#### 6.4 Nature of the Lexicon

The analyses presented here of separably prefixed verbs and the stem construction require that some structure in the lexicon be visible to the syntax. The proposal that lexical structure is visible to the syntax contradicts the Lexicalist Hypothesis (Lieber 1988:151; Lapointe 1980:8):

Generalized Lexicalist Hypothesis:

No syntactic rule can refer to elements of morphological structure.

Nonetheless, the evidence of noncompositionality leads to the conclusion that separably prefixed verbs and the stem construction are lexically listed, while the surface word order indicates that their lexical structure is visible to the syntax.

I have proposed that the stem construction is a lexically listed phrasal construction with an empty position to be filled by a verb stem at the point of lexical insertion: *gebn/ton a \_\_\_\_\_*. This analysis is supported by Hale and Keyser (1993:96) who propose that phrasal syntactic structures are part of the lexical listings of many verbs:

In reality, all verbs are to some extent phrasal idioms, that is, syntactic structures that must be learned as the conventional "names" for various dynamic events. . . In many languages a large percentage of verbal lexical items are *overtly* phrasal (e.g., Igbo, Nwachukwu 1987); in others a healthy inventory of "light verb" constructions represents the class of overtly phrasal lexical entries (e.g., Japanese, Grimshaw and Mester 1988; English, Kearns 1988); and in still others (e.g., the Tanoan languages, including Jemez, Tewa, and the Tiwa languages), the verbal lexicon contains an extraordinary number of entries whose morphological make-up is overtly the result of incorporation.

Hale and Keyser describe Japanese and English light verb constructions as "overtly phrasal lexical entries". Since, as I have pointed out earlier, the Yiddish

stem construction is very similar to the Japanese and English light verb constructions, it can be concluded that the Yiddish stem construction can also be classified as an "overtly phrasal" lexical entry. Hale and Keyser also allow that such phrasal idioms can contain an empty position to be filled lexically at D-structure, just as I have suggested for the Yiddish stem construction.

The proposal that constructions have a meaning separate from the sum of their parts is consistent with the work done on Construction Grammar by Goldberg (1995); however in Goldberg's approach there is no strict division between the lexicon and syntax, whereas I am working within a model that clearly separates the two.

According to the analysis presented here, both separably and inseparably prefixed verbs are formed in the lexicon, but the structure of separably prefixed verbs remains visible to the syntax whereas the structure of inseparably prefixed verbs apparently does not. How can this difference be accounted for? Separable prefixes have the status of independent words; inseparable prefixes do not. It is possible that it is not that the structure of inseparably prefixed verbs is opaque to the syntax, but that the nature of the inseparable prefixes does not allow them to be stranded by syntactic processes in the same way as separable prefixes, being independent words, can be. Alternatively, inseparable and separable prefixes may form different types of compounds: inseparable prefixes form morphological bonds that are opaque to syntax, whereas the adverbial separable prefixes form bonds that are syntactically visible.

## 6.5 Syntax-Semantics Interface

I have argued that Yiddish aspectual constructions are not expressed in the syntax through the presence of an Aspect Phrase or aspectual features. There is the question as to whether boundedness in Yiddish is associated with any particular structural relation. Tenny (1989,1994) argues for a direct relationship between aspectual meaning and syntactic structure. She proposes the Aspectual Interface Hypothesis (AIH) to supplant Baker's Universal Theta Assignment Hypothesis (Tenny 1989:2). Both hypotheses are given below:

**Universal Theta Assignment Hypothesis (UTAH):** Identical thematic relationships between items are represented by identical structural relationships between those items at the level of D-structure.

**Aspectual Interface Hypothesis (AIH):** The mapping between thematic structure and syntactic argument structure is governed by aspectual properties. A universal aspectual structure associated with internal (direct), external and oblique arguments in syntactic structure constrains the kind of event participants that can occupy these positions. Only the aspectual part of thematic structure is visible to the syntax.

Tenny (1994:10) further argues that the direct internal argument plays an integral role in bounding an event and that this bounding function is always performed by this argument.

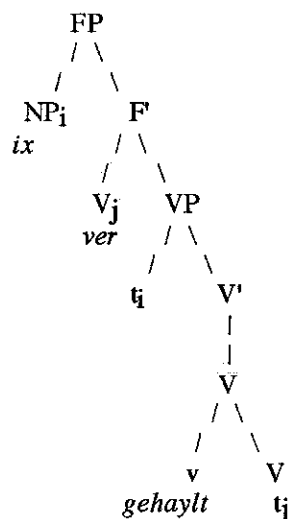
Among a verb's various arguments, *only* the direct internal argument can 'measure out the event' to which the verb refers, where 'measuring out' refers to the role played by the argument in marking the temporal terminus of the event.

Tenny's and Baker's hypotheses focus on the thematic and aspectual functions of NP arguments. Tenny's proposal for the role of the direct internal argument involves an NP bounding the event described by the verb. For the Yiddish aspectual constructions discussed here, non-nominal elements play an integral bounding role. In the case of prefixation, it is an adverbial element, the prefix, which forces a bounded reading of the event: in some cases the internal argument measures out this reading, as in *opesn an epl* 'eat up an apple'; in others there is no NP argument present and it is apparently the prefix itself that measures out the event, as in *onbakn* 'to bake a great deal'. For the stem construction it is the determiner that measures out the event expressed by the verb stem. If one accepts the underlying premise of UTAH and AIH that similar aspectual functions are represented by similar syntactic structures, then this could apply to non-nominal elements as well as to NP arguments.

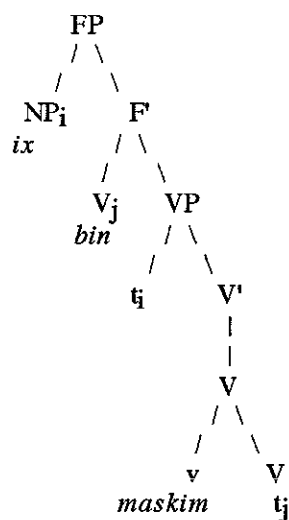
The proposal is an attractive one. Both the stem construction and separably prefixed verbs have head-adjoined structures and both of these constructions provide a type of boundedness to an event. Unbounded constructions, like the habitual past, were not proposed to have head-adjoined structures. It might appear that the syntactic structure of adjunction to a verb reflects the aspectual function of bounding, and that aspectual bounding is expressed structurally through head-adjunction. However, the evidence does not support this conclusion. First, it was shown above with the pluperfect and pseudo-pluperfect constructions that similar aspectual functions do not have similar syntactic structure. Both the pluperfect and pseudo-pluperfect can express similar temporal relations, but I argued that while the pseudo-pluperfect has a head-adjoined structure, the pluperfect does not.

Further, the converse, that a head-adjoined structure expresses a bounded event, is also problematic for Yiddish. As described above, there are Yiddish constructions other than separably prefixed verbs and the stem construction that have been proposed to have head-adjoined structures. These are the passive construction and the Hebraic periphrastic construction, whose structures were given in (18) above, repeated below as (37).

- (37) a. passive: *ix ver gehaylt* 'I am healed'



- b. Hebraic periphrastic construction: *ix bin maskim* 'I agree'



The passive is difficult to evaluate in terms of boundedness: to say *ix ver gehaylt* 'I am healed' (lit: I become healed) implies that the event of healing is finished and so a type of boundedness is inherent in the passive. However, this type of boundedness arises from the past feature of the participle rather than from the passive construction. I have argued elsewhere (Gold 1994a) that the Yiddish passive is adjectival and so, on the one hand, while the event of healing is bounded, the whole sentence describes a state, a healed condition which is not bounded.

Some examples of periphrastic constructions with Hebrew-origin participles are given in (38) below. It can be seen that there is no necessary relation between these constructions and boundedness; in fact, some of the verbs have clearly

unbounded meanings such as *mamshex zayn* 'to continue', *xoyshed zayn*, 'to suspect' and *maskim zayn* 'to agree'.

(38)	<i>xoyshed zayn</i>	'to suspect'
	<i>mamshex zayn</i>	'to continue'
	<i>mexabed zayn</i>	'to offer hospitality'
	<i>makriv zayn</i>	'to give up, sacrifice'
	<i>mevaker xoyle zayn</i>	'to visit a sick person'
	<i>megaresh zayn</i>	'to banish'
	<i>maskim zayn</i>	'to agree'

Therefore, the head-adjoined structures in Yiddish are not necessarily associated with bounded meaning. Ghomeshi and Massam (1992) found that head-adjoined verbal constructions in Persian consistently had unbounded readings. I conclude then that the adjoined position is a common way of incorporating further semantic information into the verb but is not necessarily related to a bounded rather than unbounded aspectual reading.

## 6.6 Summary

In this chapter structures are presented for the two bounding aspectual constructions: separably prefixed verbs and the stem construction. I have proposed that separably prefixed verbs have an adjoined lexical structure in the order prefix-verb that is visible to the syntax. The stem construction is formed through two processes: a lexical incorporation of the verb stem into the indefinite determiner and the lexical adjunction of this complex to the light verb. The incorporation process is not visible to the syntax; the adjunction, like that of separably prefixed verbs, is.

The structures proposed do not include an Aspect Phrase and no aspectual features are considered to be active in the syntax. Aspectual meaning, like tense, can be described as lexical rather than syntactic in Yiddish. Tense and aspect in Yiddish do not have different structural expression: in this chapter the structural parallels between the pluperfect, generally considered a tense, and the aspectual pseudo-pluperfect have been described. Further, although both the stem construction and prefixed verbs are bounding constructions and both have head-adjoined structures, it was argued that there is no necessary relationship between an adjoined structure and aspectual meaning.

## CONCLUSION

As I described in the Introduction, a central issue for the discussion of Yiddish aspect has been

whether Yiddish does or does not have an aspectual system *like that of the Slavic languages*, i.e. whether the opposition perfective/imperfective is grammatical (+obligatory) in Yiddish. (Rothstein 1990:144)

I have argued in this thesis that, despite several similarities, Yiddish does not have an aspectual system like that of the Slavic languages and does not have a grammatical, obligatory perfective/imperfective opposition. I have further argued that the use of perfective-imperfective terminology is inappropriate for Yiddish aspectual constructions and have proposed that aspectually prefixed verbs and the stem construction are better described as bounded rather than as perfective.

I have concluded that aspectual contrasts in Yiddish are not grammatical, whether these contrasts are described as perfective-imperfective, semelfactive-nonsemelfactive or habitual-nonhabitual. There is no differentiation in Yiddish between aspectual constructions that are grammatical and aspectual constructions that are lexical - they are all lexical. If Yiddish indeed has a "tendency to aspectual thinking" (Birnbaum 1979:271) it is not expressed through grammatical aspectual oppositions but through productive lexical means that establish boundedness,

The semantic contrast of lexical versus grammatical carries over into structural terms in that I have argued that these aspectual constructions can also be described as lexical as opposed to syntactic. By this I mean that there are no aspectual features active in the syntax and no Aspectual Phrase in Yiddish. The structures proposed for the stem construction and separably prefixed verbs reflect these conclusions.

My analysis of Yiddish tense has led me to similar conclusions about the nature of Yiddish tense, in that it can be described as lexical rather than syntactic. I have argued that there is no Tense Phrase and that there are no tense features relevant to the syntax. Yiddish has no morphological inflections for tense; there are no verb forms that bear tense as well as person and number inflections. What is interpreted as the present is a default interpretation of the verb inflected for person and number in the absence of other temporal information. I have proposed that the verb *vel* which contributes future meaning has its own lexical listing, as does the habitual past *flegn*. The past, which can involve unpredictable forms of auxiliary and past participle, is the only tense construction which should be considered part of the listing of every verb. The collection of those unpredictable verb forms that are in an individual verb's lexical listing make up the verbal paradigm.

While aspectual and tense constructions generally impart different types of meaning there is some overlap between Yiddish aspect and Yiddish tense. In particular, aspectually prefixed verbs perform a tense as well as an aspectual function in forming the pseudo-pluperfect. The similarity in temporal function between the rarely used Yiddish pluperfect and the pseudo-pluperfect point to a similar semantic function of the invariant *gehat* of the former and the adverbial prefix of the latter. However, I found no evidence that specific aspectual meaning can be associated with any specific syntactic structure in Yiddish.

The structures proposed for separably prefixed verbs and for the stem constructions require that processes of incorporation and adjunction occur in the

lexicon and that adjoined structures be visible to the syntax. Other researchers have treated such processes as purely syntactic. The boundary between lexicon and syntax is not easily drawn and the question remains as to how to evaluate whether certain structural relationships are lexical or syntactic.

This thesis begins to address the question of how semantic information should be represented in the syntax. For example, what evidence is needed to propose the existence of functional heads in the syntax representing the semantic categories of Aspect and Tense? My approach is conservative: in the absence of strong syntactic evidence for the existence of these heads, I have concluded that such information is lexical only. This is clearly a language specific approach; one could perhaps argue on the basis of evidence from other languages that such functional projections are universal. However Yiddish provides no evidence for the universal existence of these heads.

My proposals about the nature of Yiddish aspect and tense have repercussions for theories of Yiddish language contact and language change. The extension of the use of aspectually prefixed verbs in Yiddish beyond the Germanic model has been widely attributed to the influence of the Slavic aspectual system. However the findings that Yiddish prefixed verbs do not function at all consistently like Slavic aspectually prefixed verbs leads to a reconsideration of this attribution. I propose that it is necessary to consider language internal factors in accounting for the extension of Yiddish aspectual constructions. Unlike English and modern German, Yiddish lacks a simple past and perfect forms; Comrie's (1976:53) description of this characteristic is repeated below:

... in some (especially Southern) varieties of German, the so-called Perfect has extended its sphere to take over the Simple Past, i.e. it has in fact become the only Past Tense, quite irrespective of aspect.

Since in Yiddish, there is only one past tense, 'quite irrespective of aspect', I suggest that the aspectual constructions in Yiddish extended beyond those found in other Germanic languages to fill the gap in aspectual differentiation that came about as a result of the loss of the simple past. The function of Yiddish prefixed verbs as a pseudo-pluperfect provides evidence for the overlap of tense and aspectual function.

The similarities between the Slavic and Yiddish expressions of aspect are a result of the borrowing of individual lexical items, not the wholesale importation of a grammatical aspectual system. This conclusion underlines the necessity of treating Yiddish as a language that undergoes standard processes of language interference. Yiddish is not an exceptional language that arbitrarily incorporates different grammatical elements from different language stocks; it should not be described as a 'fusion language'.

This dissertation continues the work of mining the Eldorado of the Yiddish verb system. It is not only built upon earlier work on Yiddish aspect, tense and syntax but has endeavored to bridge the different fields. There is much left to explore.



## Appendix 1

### Core Concepts in Yiddish - Swadesh's 100 Word List

As noted in Section 2.2.1.2 the core vocabulary of Yiddish is overwhelmingly Germanic. Of the 100 core concepts only one is expressed by a word of Slavic origin and at most six by words of Hebraic origin. The list was compiled using U. Weinreich (1977).

G - Germanic origin

H - Hebraic origin

Sl - Slavic origin

1	I	<i>ix</i>	G
2	thou	<i>du</i>	G
3	we	<i>mir</i>	G
4	this	<i>der/dos</i>	G
5	that	<i>yener/der</i>	G
6	who?	<i>ver</i>	G
7	what?	<i>vos</i>	G
8	not	<i>nist</i>	G
9	all	<i>ale</i>	G
10	many	<i>fil</i>	G
11	one	<i>eyn</i>	G
12	two	<i>tsvey</i>	G
13	big	<i>groys</i>	G
14	long	<i>lang</i>	G
15	small	<i>kleyen</i>	G
16	woman	<i>di froy</i>	G
17	man	<i>der mentsh/ ben odem</i>	G/H
18	person	<i>di perzon</i>	G
19	fish	<i>der fis</i>	G
20	bird	<i>der foygl</i>	G
21	dog	<i>der hunt/der keylev</i>	G/H
22	louse	<i>di loyz</i>	G
23	tree	<i>der boym</i>	G
24	seed	<i>der zoymen/di zrie</i>	G/H
25	leaf	<i>der blat</i>	G
26	root	<i>der vortsel</i>	G
27	bark	<i>di kore</i>	G
28	skin	<i>di hoyt</i>	G
29	flesh	<i>dos fleys</i>	G
30	blood	<i>dos blut</i>	G
31	bone	<i>der beyn</i>	G
32	grease	<i>dos fets</i>	G
33	egg	<i>dos ey</i>	G
34	horn	<i>der horn</i>	G
35	tail	<i>der ek</i>	G
36	feather	<i>di feder</i>	G

37	hair	<i>di hor</i>	G
38	head	<i>der kop</i>	G
39	ear	<i>der oyer</i>	G
40	eye	<i>dos oyg</i>	G
41	nose	<i>di noz</i>	G
42	mouth	<i>dos moyl</i>	G
43	tooth	<i>der tson</i>	G
44	tongue	<i>di tsung</i>	G
45	finger nail	<i>der nogl</i>	G
46	foot	<i>der fus</i>	G
47	knee	<i>der kni</i>	G
48	hand	<i>di hant</i>	G
49	belly	<i>der boix</i>	G
50	neck	<i>der kark/dos genik</i>	G
51	breasts	<i>di Brust/di buzem</i>	G
52	heart	<i>dos harts</i>	G
53	liver	<i>di laber</i>	G
54	drink	<i>trinken</i>	G
55	eat	<i>esn</i>	G
56	bite	<i>baysn</i>	G
57	see	<i>zen</i>	G
58	hear	<i>hern</i>	G
59	know	<i>visn</i>	G
60	sleep	<i>shlofn</i>	G
61	die	<i>shtarbn/ nifter vern</i>	G/H
62	kill	<i>teytn /hargenen</i>	G/H
63	swim	<i>shvimen</i>	G
64	fly	<i>flien</i>	G
65	walk	<i>geyn</i>	G
66	come	<i>kumen</i>	G
67	lie	<i>lign</i>	G
68	sit	<i>zitsn</i>	G
69	stand	<i>shteyn</i>	G
70	give	<i>gebn</i>	G
71	say	<i>zogn</i>	G
72	sun	<i>di zun</i>	G
73	moon	<i>di levone</i>	H
74	star	<i>der shtern</i>	G
75	water	<i>dos vaser</i>	G
76	rain	<i>der regn</i>	G
77	stone	<i>der shteyn</i>	G
78	sand	<i>dos zamd</i>	G
79	earth	<i>di erd</i>	G
80	cloud	<i>der vokl</i>	G
81	smoke	<i>der royx</i>	G
82	fire	<i>der fayer</i>	G
83	ash	<i>dos as</i>	G

84	burn	<i>brenen</i>	G
85	path	<i>dos vegl</i>	G
86	mountain	<i>der barg</i>	G
87	red	<i>royt</i>	G
88	green	<i>grin</i>	G
89	yellow	<i>gel</i>	G
90	white	<i>vays</i>	G
91	black	<i>shvarts</i>	G
92	night	<i>di naxt</i>	G
93	hot	<i>heys</i>	G
94	cold	<i>kalt</i>	G
95	full	<i>ful</i>	G
96	new	<i>nay</i>	G
97	good	<i>gut</i>	G
98	round	<i>kaylexik</i>	S1
99	dry	<i>truken</i>	G
100	name	<i>der nomen</i>	G

## Appendix 2

The maps on the following pages from Nath (1988) were used to calculate statistics presented in the body of the dissertation. Nath mapped responses collected for the Language and Culture Atlas of Ashkenazic Jewry, Columbia University, New York.

### Appendix 2 - a: Meaning of Simple Verb and Verb Prefixed with *on-*

The statistics comparing the interpretation of a simple and prefixed verb with *on-*, given in Section 1.2.2.3, were calculated from this map which illustrates the responses to the following question:

*Vi azoy volt ir derklert dem khilek tsvishn "er hot geshribn a briv" un "er hot ongeshribn a briv"? (Oyb nit bakant, pruvn: tseykhenen/riseven a menstshele, ontseykhenen/onriseven a menstshele.)'*

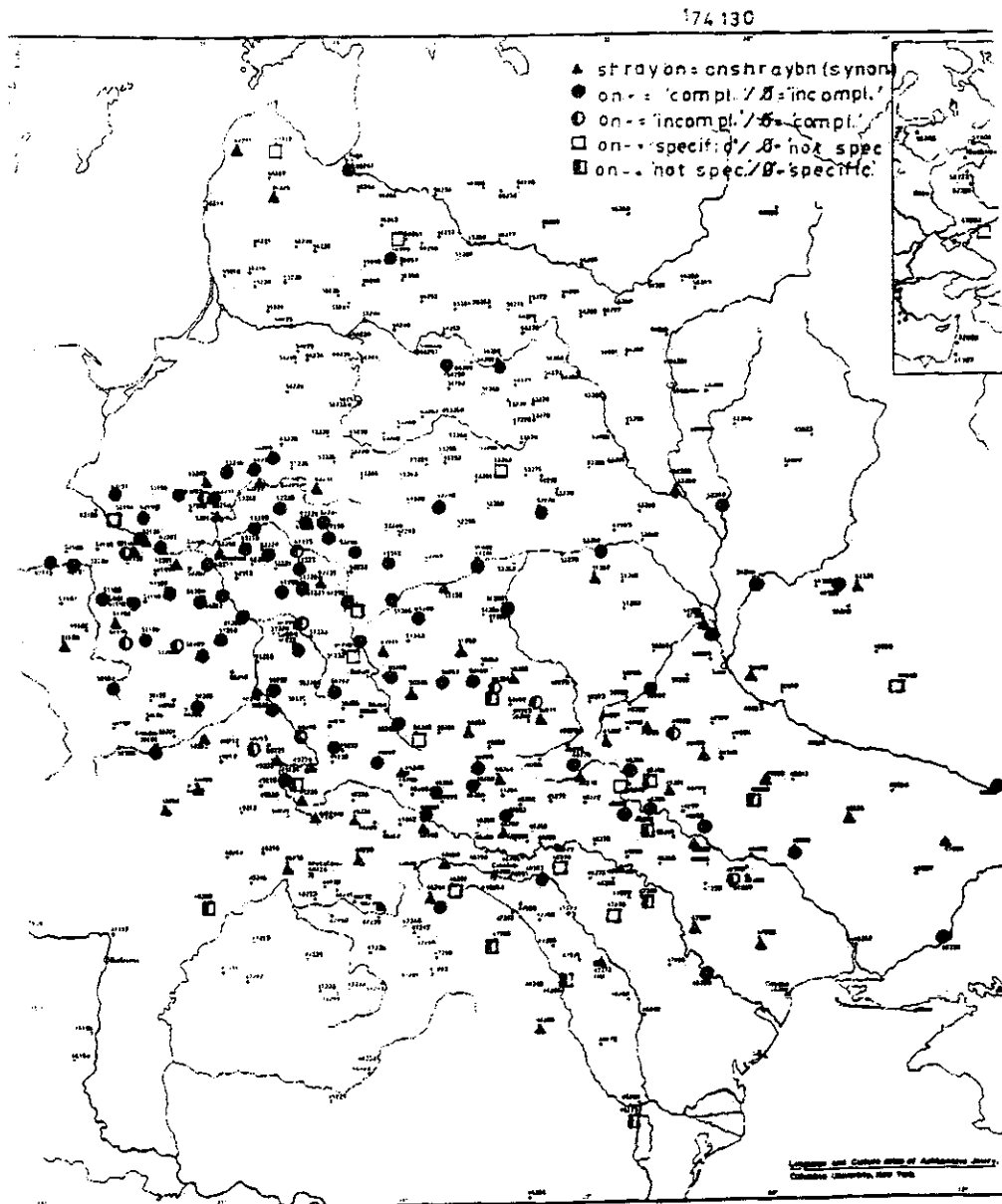
*'How would you explain the difference between "he has geshribn [written] a letter" and he has ongeshribn a letter"? (If it is not known, try: tseykhenen/riseven [draw] a person, ontseykhenen/onriseven a person.)'*

### Appendix 2 - b: Use of Prefixed Verb for Pseudo-Pluperfect

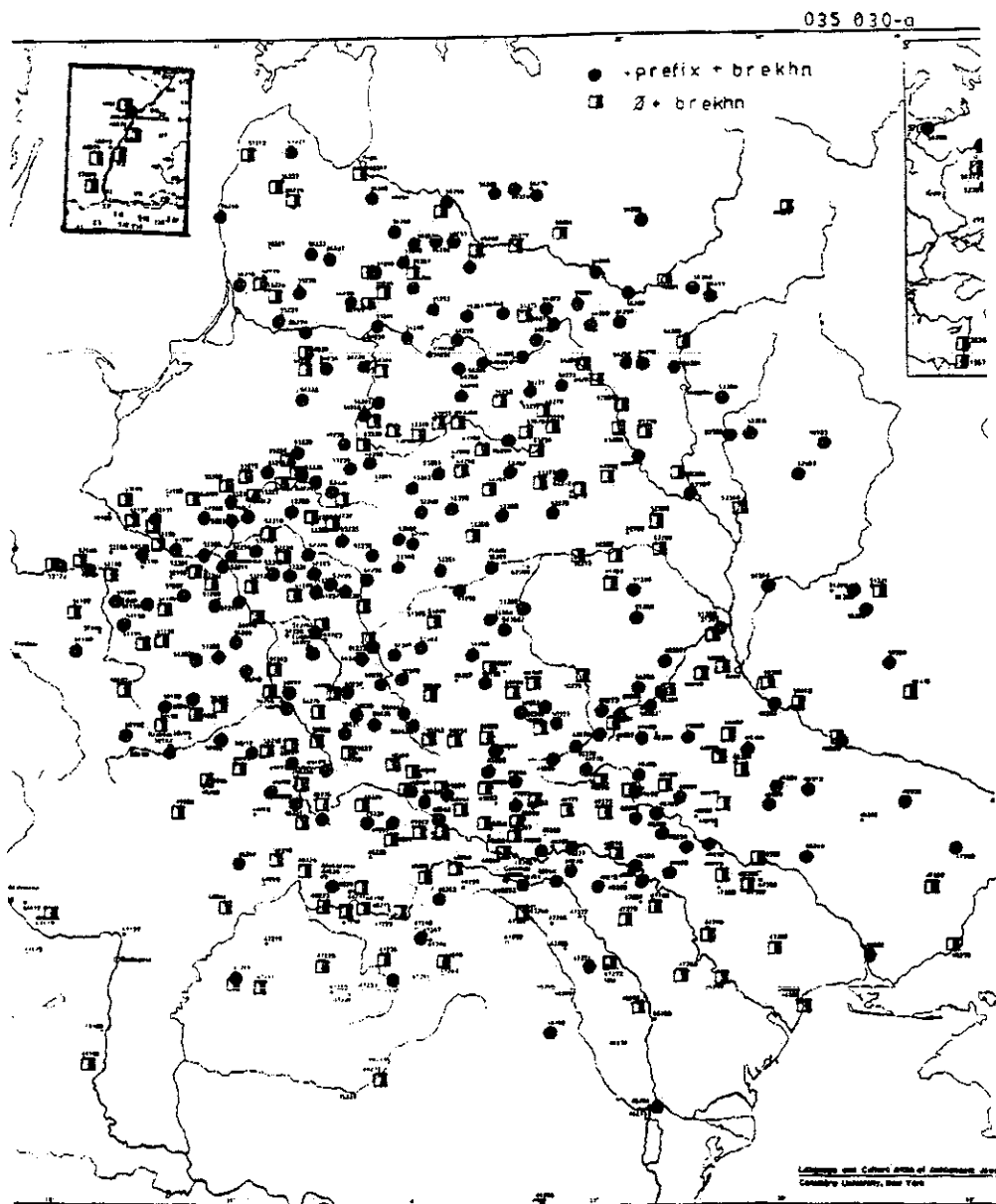
The statistics discussed in Section 4.6.3 were calculated from this map showing the distribution of responses giving the simple verb *brekhn* 'to vomit' or prefixed forms of the verb. The question required the respondents to translate the following Hebrew sentence into Yiddish:

*'Akharey shehayeled heki, hu nirga'*  
*'After the boy (had) vomited, he calmed down.'*

Appendix 2 - a



Appendix 2 - b



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