

**Scientific abstract – In-group/Out-group bilingualism: Language development and maintenance among Yiddish-Hebrew speaking children in Israel.**

While the ultra-Orthodox (*Haredi*) community embraces the use of Yiddish in many households, even a child growing in a Yiddish only home uses Hebrew words in various contexts. The proposed research aims to explore psycholinguistic developmental patterns in Yiddish and Hebrew in light of the community's unique sociolinguistic characteristics. Which developmental and socio-linguistic factors impact the acquisition of Yiddish and Hebrew by children in this community? What is the role of language contact and linguistic policies at home or school? Which approach to bilingualism accounts best for language use and maintenance among Yiddish-Hebrew speaking children in Israel? These questions are at the heart of the current proposal.

Yiddish-Hebrew speakers among *Haredim* in Israel, share unique socio-linguistic practices using Yiddish for daily communication, as a boundary between their own *in-group language (IGL) and the out-group language (OGL) Hebrew*, the official language of Israel. The community's view of Yiddish as a key element of their in-group identity enhances social segregation and motivates a separate education system with Yiddish as a means to perpetuate tradition and maintain "social identity through linguistic continuity". Despite the large numbers of children in this community, *research on their language/s development in this contact situation is scarce*, in contrast to studies of other bilingual communities in Israel, where sociolinguistic variables (e.g., language prestige and family language policy) and background variables (e.g., age of onset of bilingualism) were found to impact this process in a rather predicted manner, yielding balanced or Hebrew dominant bilingualism.

**Two main objectives** will be addressed in this study: (1) characterize the psycholinguistic skills of Yiddish-Hebrew bilinguals in terms of various spoken linguistic modules in both languages (phonology, lexicon, morphosyntax, and narrative discourse- expressive and receptive) in order to establish baseline profiles of language development in the context of these communities. (2) identify the sociolinguistic factors contributing to language development and language maintenance, such as, Yiddish-Hebrew language contact in formal/informal settings, characteristics of the Haredi communities investigated, family language policy, and attitudes (affective, behavioral, cognitive) towards the IGL and OGL.

**Preliminary results** support the need for an investigation of an IGL-OGL approach to bilingual development and maintenance. Yiddish-Hebrew speaking children show Yiddish dominant bilingualism, reflecting the support of Yiddish both at home and in school, while Hebrew is acquired "on the go" from external circles. From a psycholinguistic perspective, narrative analyses and parent reports show unique patterns of cross-linguistic influence at lexical and grammatical levels, for example, is differential patterns of codeswitching in narratives, between the two languages and between boys and girls. From a sociolinguistic perspective, father's occupation as opposed to the well documented effect of mother's education, has an impact on OGL use. These preliminary results highlight the theoretical and empirical importance and the need for a first comprehensive corpus of Yiddish-Hebrew child data, setting standards for future studies of typical and atypical language development.