Chapter 14

Reflexive constructions in Yiddish

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The chapter describes the reflexive construction in Yiddish – a Germanic language that existed alongside Slavic languages and therefore underwent significant change through Slavic influence. The Yiddish reflexive marker *zikh* is used to express coreference in autopathic, oblique and adpossessive domains, and is often paired with the focus particle *aleyn*; however, *aleyn* cannot be used in functions that go beyond coreference. The pronoun *zikh* was lexicalized into many idiomatic constructions; when regular, those functions include an array of middle, passive and impersonal meanings. It is claimed that contact with Slavic languages might have played a role in developing these two forms and functions.

1 Introduction

Yiddish, the language of Ashkenazi Jews, belongs to the Indo-European language family, and within it, to the Germanic group. Its closest relative is German, as both languages originate from Middle High German. Besides this genetic relation, Standard German continued to influence Yiddish, especially its written practices, in various times and genres. Hebrew and Aramaic, the languages of Jewish sacred texts, also had significant influence on Yiddish. As Jews migrated eastward, their language started absorbing features of Slavic languages on multiple levels. As a result, Yiddish was divided in two sublanguages: Western Yiddish, which was spoken in Western Europe (Germany, Netherlands, France), was mostly no longer in use by the end of the 18th century, though some speakers were found even in the mid-20th century (Katz 2014). What is now commonly understood under the label "Yiddish" is known in linguistic circles as Eastern Yiddish. Its major dialects include Central Yiddish, once spoken on the territory of modern Poland,

Hungary and Western Ukraine (historical Galicia), Southeastern Yiddish, once spoken on the territory of Ukraine, Romania and Moldova; and finally, Northeastern Yiddish, spoken in the historical district of Lite (now Lithuania, Belarus, northern Ukraine), as shown in Figure 1. The differences between dialects involve vowel shifts and lexical variation along with grammatical innovations.

Figure 1: Map of Yiddish dialects, based on Katz (2014)

The Jewish emigration and the Holocaust resulted in Yiddish being found in North and South Americas, England, Australia, Israel rather than in the area where it was originally spoken. Yiddish is spoken primarily by ultra-religious communities, but there are also heritage speakers. The language has a literary standard, developed in the 19th century. It is based on both Northeastern and Southeastern Yiddish and used in fiction and secular press, and this is the language that will be mainly addressed in this paper. Yiddish uses Hebrew letters and has several orthographic traditions. The standard one was introduced by YIVO (Institute for Jewish Research) in the 1930s and is accompanied with standard transliteration that will be used in this paper.[1] Regarding the position of

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[1]A simple overview is available on the organization's website: https://www.yivo.org/Yiddish-Alphabet.

the verb in the clause, Yiddish, as a Germanic language, is V2. Pro-drop is possible under certain circumstances. In general, Yiddish word order is highly influenced by Slavic languages with flexible word order that can express topic and focus. In Yiddish the verb agrees with its subject, case marking distinguishes S/A (nominative case) and P (accusative case). Thus, Yiddish is a morphologically accusative language. Yiddish has three genders: masculine, feminine and neutral (Northeastern Yiddish has only masculine and feminine). While all singular nouns fall into either one of these gender categories, plural nouns do not distinguish gender. Gender, together with definiteness, plays an important role for the noun-adjective agreement pattern. There are four cases in Yiddish: nominative, genitive, dative, and accusative. The only nouns that have case suffixes are proper names and a short list of animate nouns.[2] For other nouns the case is expressed in the form of definite articles. Yiddish indefinite nouns can occur with an indeclinable indefinite article 'a/an' in singular but they do not have any article when they are in plural. Definite nouns are preceded by a definite article that agrees in gender and expresses the case in singular. In plural it has the indeclinable form *di*. The basic word order within NPs is determiner-attribute-noun, adjectives can also appear in postposition, as shown in (1–2).[3,4] Fleischer (2009) analyses these cases as nominalizations. Possessive pronouns (see §2) can appear in postposition too.

(1) a. *a   sheyn   meydl*
        INDF beautiful girl
        'a beautiful girl' (Jacobs et al. 1994: 408)

     b. *a   meydl a   sheyn-e*
        INDF girl   INDF beautiful-F.SG
        'a beautiful girl' (Jacobs et al. 1994: 408)

(2) *dos   land   dos   farboten-e*
     DEF.N country DEF.N forbidden-N.SG
     'the forbidden country' (Weinreich 1958: 382)

This was an overview of the sociolinguistic situation and language structure, necessary for an understanding of the language. The data was collected with the questionnaire by Janic & Haspelmath (2023 [this volume]) and the organization

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[2]Zero case suffixes on nouns and articles will be omitted in the glosses as well as the case suffixes on locative groups (all prepositions always require dative).

[3]Examples (4–39) have been glossed by the author; glosses for (1–3) adjusted to the same standards.

[4]"More solemn than *dos farbótene land*." (Weinreich 1958: 382).

of the present chapter follows its structure. It consists of the following sections: §2 is a description of Yiddish pronouns, §3 discusses the distinctions based on semantic groups of verbs, §4 addresses coreference between various semantic roles, §5 is on contrast between exact and inclusive coreference, §6 is on long-distance coreference. Finally, §7 briefly summarizes the functions of non-coreferent uses of the reflexive pronoun.

2 Pronouns and their basic uses

Yiddish has a rich system of pronouns, including personal, possessive, reflexive, demonstrative, interrogative, relative and indefinite. In this paper, I will only focus on personal, possessive, and reflexive. Personal pronouns differentiate three cases: nominative, dative and accusative, as in Table 1.[5] In Northeastern Yiddish, the distinction between oblique cases collapsed in favor of historical dative forms.

Table 1: Personal pronouns in Yiddish

	1SG.M	2SG.M	3SG.M	3SG.F	3SG.N	1PL	2PL	3PL
NOM	*ikh*	*du*	*er*	*zi*	*es*	*mir*	*ir*	*zey*
DAT	*mir*	*dir*	*im*	*ir*	*im*	*undz*	*aykh*	*zey*
ACC	*mikh/mir*	*dikh/dir*	*im*	*zi*	*es*	*undz*	*aykh*	*zey*

Yiddish has two different possessive constructions with pronominal possessors. One construction has the pronoun in preposition and another one is with the pronoun in postposition. The one with the pronoun in preposition, as in (3), is morphologically simple: it only distinguishes person and number, while the one in postposition, as in (4), demonstrates also gender and case agreement.

(3)   a.   *mayn   bruder*
         POSS.1SG brother
         'my brother'

      b.   *a   bruder   mayn-er*
         INDF brother POSS.1SG-M.NOM
         'a brother of mine' (Weinreich 1958: 589)

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[5]In the dative case, the variants *mikh/dikh* is standard, *mir/dir* is dialectal.

All possessive pronouns are listed below in Table 2. In contrast to the neighboring languages, such as Russian or Polish, there is no reflexive possessive pronoun.

Table 2: Yiddish reflexive pronoun and personal pronoun categories

	Preposition		Postposition			
	Singular object	Plural object	Singular object			Plural object
1SG	*mayn*	*mayne*	*mayner*	*mayne*	*mayns*	*mayne*
2SG	*dayn*	*dayne*	*dayner*	*dayne*	*dayns*	*dayne*
3SG.M	*zayn*	*zayne*	*zayner*	*zayne*	*zayns*	*zayne*
3SG.F	*ir*	*ire*	*irer*	*ire*	*irs*	*ire*
3SG.N	*zayn*	*zayne*	*zayner*	*zayne*	*zayns*	*zayne*
1PL	*undzer*	*undzere*	*undzerer*	*undzere*	*undzers*	*undzere*
2PL	*ayer*	*ayere*	*ayerer*	*ayere*	*ayers*	*ayere*
3PL	*zeyer*	*zeyere*	*zeyere*	*zeyerer*	*zeyers*	*zeyere*

The reflexive pronoun *zikh* does not distinguish between number or gender. It is defective in case: it does not have the nominative. Besides that, its form in the dative and accusative is the same, which is not the case for other pronouns at least in Standard Yiddish, as demonstrated in Table 3, which contrasts the reflexive pronoun *zikh* with a personal pronoun *ikh*. It is important to note that both personal and possessive pronouns function as clitics. Just like the negation and certain adverbs with "weak semantic baggage" (Jacobs et al. 1994: 169), they must appear between the two parts of an analytic verb form, unlike NPs, which cannot take that position.

Table 3: Yiddish reflexive pronoun and personal pronoun categories

	Reflexive	Personal pronoun 1SG.M
NOM	-	*ikh*
DAT	*zikh*	*mikh*
ACC	*zikh*	*mir*

In Standard Yiddish the reflexive pronoun is used in all persons, however, in one dialect, Central Yiddish, personal pronouns are used in 1st and 2nd person

instead, as shown in Table 4. Example (4)[6] further illustrates this point. A personal pronoun rather than the reflexive pronoun *zikh* is used in it, as the author speaks Central Yiddish.

Table 4: Personal pronouns in Yiddish

Reflexive verb meaning 'wash oneself'	Standard Yiddish reflexive uses	Central Yiddish reflexive uses	Cf. personal pronouns
PRS.1SG	*ikh vash zikh*	*ikh vash mikh*	*mikh*
PRS.2SG	*du vashst zikh*	*du vashst zikh*	*dikh*
PRS.3SG (M/F/N)	*er/zi/es vasht zikh*	*er/zi/es vasht zikh*	*im/zi/es*
PRS.1PL	*mir vashn zikh*	*mir vashn undz*	*undz*
PRS.2PL	*ir vasht zikh*	*ir vasht aykh*	*aykh*
PRS.1PL	*zey vashn zikh*	*zey vashn zikh*	*zey*

(4) *her   shoyn oyf un gey   dikh   beser vash-n*
    stop.IMP already up and go.IMP.SG 2SG.ACC better wash-INF
    'Stop already, better go take a bath.' (CMY, R' Yoykhenen gabe. Perets Yitskhok-Leyb)

Now that the formal properties of the reflexive pronoun have been discussed, its basic uses can be analyzed. The pronoun has two main meanings, as demonstrated in (5): regular coreference between subject and object as well as reciprocal one.

(5) *zey hob-n   zikh lib*
    3PL have-PRS.3PL REFL nice
    'They love each other./They love themselves.'

Examples in (6–9) illustrate some more cases of coreference between the object and the subject.

(6) *ikh hob   zikh (?aleyn) gezen in a   shpigl*
    1SG AUX.1SG SELF FOC   see.PST in INDF mirror
    'I saw myself in the mirror.'

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[6]The examples with sources are taken from Corpus of Modern Yiddish (CMY): http://web-corpora.net/YNC/search/ and Yiddish Book Center's Full-Text Search (YBC): https://ocr.yiddishbookcenter.org/ The rest of examples have been elicited.

(7) a. *mayn   khaver hot   faynt zikh aleyn*
         POSS.1SG friend AUX.3SG hate SELF FOC

   b. ? *mayn   khaver hot   zikh faynt*
          POSS.1SG friend AUX.3SG SELF hate
          'My friend hates himself.'

(8) a. *zi   hot   ge-loyb-t   zikh aleyn*
         3SG.F AUX.PRS.3SG PST-praise-PST SELF FOC

   b. *zi   hot   zikh ge-loyb-t*
        3SG.F AUX.PRS.3SG SELF PST-praise-PST
        'She praised herself.'

(9) *di   narish-e   tokhter koyle-t   zikh aleyn on*
     DEF.F stupid-NOM.F.SG daughter slaughter-PRS.3SG SELF FOC without
     a   meser
     INDF knife
     'The stupid daughter is killing herself without a knife.' (CMY, Nokhem
     Shtif)

As the examples above show, in some cases the reflexive particle is accompanied by the focus particle *aleyn* (literally meaning 'alone').[7] A typical use of *zikh aleyn* is illustrated in (10). *Aleyn* is used here as a contrastive particle, because the use of this form alone to co-refer subject and object argument would be unusual.

(10) *zey hob-n   zikh aleyn ge-shik-t   a   postkartl*
     3PL AUX-3PL SELF FOC   PST-send-PST INDF postcard
     'They sent a postcard to themselves (out of all).'

However, *zikh aleyn* spreads over all domains of coreference, while *zikh* without *aleyn* is reserved for non-referential contexts, as in (§7). One speaker even produced (11) in order to explain this phenomenon. The verb *zikh leygn* 'lie down' cannot be used with *zikh aleyn*, because the reflexive pronoun is grammaticalized to be a decausative marker.[8]

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[7]The verb 'to hate' in Yiddish is a two-word expression. The reason why word order in (7a) and (7b) differs is because *zikh* is a clitic but *zikh aleyn* as a unit is too heavy to be in a clitic position – this is explained in greater detail in §4.

[8]The decausative function is also often referred to as anticausative. While the former term refers to the the non-agentive nature of the situation, the latter focuses on the spontaneity of the change.

(11) a. *dos   yingl leyg-t   zikh in bet*
          DEF.N boy   put-PRS.3SG SELF in bed

      b. * *dos   yingl leyg-t   zikh aleyn in bet*
          DEF.N boy   put-PRS.3SG SELF FOC   in bed
          'The boy goes to bed.'

It is clear that the choice *zikh* vs. *zikh aleyn* depends on multiple factors that have never been clearly described. I will elaborate on their distribution in §3 and §4.

3 Contrast between specific types of verbs

3.1 Introverted-extroverted

According to Haiman (1985: 803), transitive verbs that allow a human object fall into two groups: introverted (like 'wash', 'shave', 'dress', 'defend oneself') and extroverted (like 'kill', 'kick', 'hate', 'criticize'). In Yiddish, introverted verbs are usually used with *zikh*, while extroverted ones are used with *zikh aleyn*, whereas *zikh* is grammatical but less preferable, as shown in (12–13). Moreover, the default interpretation of (12b) would rather be antipassive (see §7). I elaborate on the use of *zikh* vs. *zikh aleyn* with different semantic roles in §4.

(12) a. *der   hunt hot   zikh gevashn*
          DEF.M dog AUX.PRS.3SG SELF wash.PST

      b. ? *der   hunt hot   zikh aleyn gevashn*
          DEF.M dog AUX.PRS.3SG SELF FOC   wash.PST
          'The dog was washing himself.'

(13) a. *der   hunt hot   zikh aleyn gebisn*
          DEF.M dog AUX.PRS.3SG SELF FOC   bite.PST

      b. ? *der   hunt hot   zikh gebisn*
          DEF.M dog AUX.PRS.3SG SELF bite.PST
          'The dog bit itself.'

3.2 Body-part vs. whole body

Both body-part and full body actions are expressed with a reflexive pronoun, as in (14). If the body part is expressed, it is modified just by a definite article rather than possessive pronoun, as in (15). The perfectifizing/binding particle *op*

is used in the sentence with the transitive verb. *Aleyn* is usually not used in these contexts, as the actions are introverted.

(14) *er   hot   zikh ge-gol-t*
      3SG.M AUX.PRS.3SG SELF PST-shave-PST
      'He shaved.'

(15) *er   hot   zikh op-gegol-t   di   hor*
      3SG.M AUX.PRS.3SG SELF off-shave-PST DEF.PL hair
      'He shaved his hair.'

4 Coreference of the agent argument with various semantic roles

This section first discusses how the coreference with different semantic roles is encoded in Yiddish – in autopathic, oblique and adpossessive domains, according to Haspelmath (2023 [this volume]).

4.1 Coreference of the subject with various semantic roles

Interestingly, the type of the verbs and the semantic role of the argument the subject is coreferent with is another factor contributing to the choice of pronoun form – just the personal pronoun *zikh* or *zikh aleyn*. I first consider the coreference between the subject and the possessor and locative. Then I discuss the coreference of the subject with the recipient and beneficiary, taking into account syntactic changes this coreference entails.

As Yiddish reflexive pronoun *zikh* does not have a reflexive possessive pronoun, regular possessive pronouns are used instead. This is illustrated by (16), where the possessor is coreferent to the subject, which is encoded by a 3rd person singular feminine pronoun *zi*. The possessor is the encoded by 3rd person singular possessive pronoun *ir* (the example has two occurrences of it).

(16) *zi   hot   hastik tsu-ge.halt.n ir   tash lebn*
      3SG.F AUX.PRS.3SG hastily PFV-hold.PST POSS.3SG.F bag next_to
      ir   buzem
      POSS.3SG.F.ACC chest
      'She hastily squeezed her bag close to her chest.'

It is also possible to express coreference using the word *eygener* 'own', used more frequently with a possessive pronoun rather than on its own.[9] A range of ways to express that is shown in (17).

(17) a. *shikl leyen-t   zayn   bukh*
       Shikl read-PRS.3SG POSS.3SG.N.ACC book
       'Shikl_i is reading his_i book.'

   b. *shikl leyen-t   zayn   eygen bukh*
       Shikl read-PRS.3SG POSS.3SG.N.ACC own   book
       'Shikl_i is reading his_i book.'

   c. ? *shikl leyen-t   an eygen   bukh*
        Shikl read-PRS.3SG a POSS.3SG.N.ACC book
        'Shikl_i is reading his_i book.'

   d. *shikl leyen-t   dos eygen-e   bukh*
       Shikl read-PRS.3SG DEF.N own-N.ACC book
       'Shikl_i is reading his_i book.'

As for locative contexts, the reflexive pronoun is usually used, though the use of personal pronouns would be an option for some dialects. Indeed, contexts like (18b) occur, in addition to standard Yiddish (18a).

(18) a. *zi   hot   gezen   a   shlang lebn zikh*
       3SG.F AUX.PRS.3SG see.PST INDF snake near SELF
       'She_i saw a snake near her_i.'

   b. *zi   hot   gezen   a   shlang lebn ir*
       3SG.F AUX.PRS.3SG see.PST INDF snake near 3SG.F.DAT
       'She_i saw a snake near her_j.'/'?She_i saw a snake near her_i.'

Moving to the agent-beneficiary and agent-recipient coreference, it is important to briefly discuss the word order with pronouns, their status as clitics and use of prepositions vs. bare datives. In (19b), like in (7), the dative reflexive pronoun *zikh* appears between the two parts of an analytic verb form (the auxiliary and the past participle), while *zikh aleyn* is too heavy to be a clitic. Alternatively, *zikh aleyn* is used with the preposition *far* 'for' instead of bare dative and therefore follows the participle in (19a), (20), and (21).

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[9]For the question of contrast between object and nominal adpossessor, the distinction might also be expressed by word order: postposition vs. preposition of the possessive pronoun.

In corresponding non-coreferent examples personal pronouns would be used. Besides that, there is variation between the use of bare dative and prepositional constructions. *Zikh*, as a clitic, is more frequently used with the former, and *zikh aleyn* with the latter.

(19) a. *zi   hot   ge-koyf-t   a   bukh far zikh (aleyn)*
      3SG.F AUX.PRS.3SG PST-buy-PST INDF book for SELF FOC

   b. *zi   hot   zikh ge-koyf-t   a   bukh*
      3SG.F AUX.PRS.3SG SELF PST-buy-PST INDF book

     'She bought a book for herself.'

(20) *der   bokher hot   ge-kokh-t   vetchere far zikh (aleyn)*
    DEF.M boy   AUX.PRS.3SG PST-cook-PST dinner   for SELF FOC

    'The boy cooked a dinner for himself.'

(21) *zey hob-n   ge-boy-t   a hoyz   far zikh (aleyn)*
    3PL AUX-PRS.3PL PST-build-PST a house for SELF FOC

    'They built a house for themselves.'

The use of *aleyn* is optional for the expression of coreference of agent with the beneficiary, as just shown in (19–21), expressing self-benefactive meaning. Its use is almost obligatory, though, for the expression of coreference of the agent with the recipient, as in (22–24). In corresponding non-coreferent examples personal pronouns would be used.

(22) *er   hot   ge-red-t   tsu zikh aleyn*
    3SG.M AUX.PRS.3SG PST-buy-PST to   SELF FOC

    'He talked to himself.'

(23) *zey hobn   ge-shik-t   a   postkartl tsu zikh aleyn*
    3PL AUX.PRS.3PL PST-send-PST INDF postcard to   SELF FOC

    'They sent a postcard to themselves.'

(24) *dos   meydl hot   zikh aleyn ge-geb-n   a matone*
    DEF.N girl   AUX.PRS.3SG SELF FOC   PST-give-PST a present

    'The girl gave herself a present.'

4.2 Coreference between non-subject arguments

In sentences with coreference between non-subject arguments, such as in (25), *zikh aleyn* is used. The use of bare *zikh* would rather indicate the coreference with the subject. Thus in (25) it would be interpreted as coreference with 'the women' – the women would be teaching him about themselves.

(25) *barni makh-t   a   randevu   mit dray froy-en   in zayn*
      Barni make-PRS.3SG INDF rendez-vous with 3   woman-PL in POSS.3SG
      muter-s   shtub yede_eyne fun zey lern-t   im
      mother-POSS home each   of 3PL teach-PRS.3SG 3SG.M.ACC
      epes   vegn zikh aleyn
      something about SELF FOC
      'Barni has a date with three women in his mother's house, each of them
      teaches him something about himself.' (CMY, Forverts)

5 Contrast between exact and inclusive coreference

In sentences, where the coreference is inclusive, *zikh aleyn* is preferred, consider
(26c) as opposed to (26a–26b). This can be explained by means of contrastive
nature of the context in (26c) (cf. §3).

(26) a. *zi   hot   lib zikh aleyn*
          3SG.F have.PRS.3SG nice SELF FOC
          'She likes herself.'

      b. ? *zi   hot   zikh lib*
          3SG.F have.PRS.3SG SELF nice
          'She likes herself.'

      c. *zi   hot   lib zikh aleyn un ander-e*
          3SG.F AUX.PRS.3SG nice SELF FOC   and other-PL
          'She likes herself and others.'

6 Long-distance coreference

There is no special means for the long-distance domain, that is, to express corefer-
ence between arguments going beyond the minimal clause, as illustrated in (27).

(27) *zi   hot   ge-trakht az   zi   hot   genug gelt*
      3SG.F AUX.PRS.3SG PST-think COMP 3SG.F have.PRS.3SG enough money
      'She$_i$ thought she$_{i/j}$ has enough money.'

7 Reflexive verbs and other constructions

This chapter discusses all uses of the reflexive pronoun that go beyond corefer-
ence. §7.1 gives an overview of all uses, while sections §7.2–§7.4 focus on regular

correspondences between reflexive and non-reflexive verbs that are illustrated by pairs of examples.

7.1 Types of reflexive verbs with the form *zikh*

A reflexive verb is an umbrella term for any verb used with a reflexive pronoun, regardless of its meaning. These are three types: one type, the regular one, contains the verbs that always have active counterparts, and there is no difference in core lexical meaning (i.e. *vashn* 'wash' vs. *zikh vashn* 'wash (oneself)'). The second one does have active counterparts, but the lexical meaning is different (i.e. *masker zayn* 'cite, mention' – *zikh masker zayn* 'appear before Hasidic rebe'). Finally, the third type includes deponents. This is the case when the reflexive verb does not have a non-reflexive counterpart (*dakhtn zikh* 'seem' - **dakhtn*).

All these groups contain loanwords from Slavic and Hebrew/Aramaic. In the case of Slavic loanwords, Yiddish can calque the corresponding construction with a reflexive form in the source language (i.e. *staren zikh* 'try hard' - **staren*; Rus. *starat's'a* 'try hard', where non-reflexive **starat'* does not exist). Sometimes the loanword is non-reflexive, but a reflexive counterpart for this non-reflexive expression is formed within the Yiddish language under the influence of Slavic patterns: *moyde zayn* 'admit, confess (tr.)' vs. *zikh moyde zayn* 'admit, confess' (with a preposition or a clause), cf. Rus *priznat'* – *priznat'-s'a* with the same meaning. The Hebrew/Aramaic constructions are significantly different structurally, as they are constructions made of Semitic present participles introduced by an auxiliary verb (*moyde* is a participle and *zayn* is infinitive of the verb 'be'). Only regular pairs and types of the semantic relation within these pairs are described in the rest of this section. These include both words of Germanic origin and loanwords.

7.2 Middle function

Following Kemmer (1993), we distinguish between the reflexive function, which connects the subject and object that are coreferent but constitute two different entities, and the middle function, which portrays the subject and the object as one inseparable entity. The middle function of the reflexive marker in Yiddish has a rich array of subfunctions. The examples below illustrate grooming verbs (28), coreference only with some body parts, such as the head in (29) and change of body posture (30).

(28) *in_ergets ver-t   nisht dermont,   az   me*
     nowhere AUX.PRS.3SG NEG mention.PASS.PRS.3SG that IMPERS
     hot   zi   gevashn, ge-reynik-t,   un zikher nisht ongeton
     AUX.PRS.3SG 3SG.F.ACC wash.PST PST-clean-PST and sure   not dress.PST
     vays-e   kleyder   un ge-shik-t   in kheyder
     white-PL clothes.ACC and PST-send-PST in school
     'It's not mentioned anywhere that they gave her a bath, cleaned her, and
     for sure not dressed her up in white clothes and sent to school.' (CMY,
     Forverts)

(29)   a. *ba-tog tut er   nisht oys di   kroyn*
          by-day take 3SG.M NEG off DEF.F.ACC crown
          'During the day he does not take off his crown.' (CMY, Itsik Manger)

      b. *er   hot   ge-halt-n   in oys-ton   zikh*
          3SG.M AUX.PRS.3SG PST-AUX-PST in off-take.CONT REFL
          'He continued to undress.' (YBC, Mendele Mocher Sforim)

(30)   a. *zi   hot   ongehoybn zey   oyftsuheybn*
          3SG.F AUX.PRS.3SG start.PST   3PL.ACC raise.INF
          'Then she started to pick them <goldfish> up.' (CMY, Lewis Carroll,
          trans. Adina Bar-El)

      b. *bekheyn hot   zikh alis oyfgehoybn*
          then   AUX.PRS.3SG REFL Alice raise.PST
          'Then Alice rose up.' (CMY, Lewis Carroll, trans. Adina Bar-El)

    The decausative function "excludes participation of a volitional agent in the
concept of the situation" (Paducheva 2003: 173), which differentiates it from the
passive. The function is presented in (31b), while (32b) illustrates involuntary
movement of a person which is another type of a spontaneous action. In (33b)
the reflexive verb describes the quality of an object rather than the result of an
action.

(31)   a. *varenka iz   in hut un mitn   shirm   in di*
          Varenka AUX.PRS.3SG in hat and with.DEF.M umbrella in DEF.PL
          hent   gezesn bam   tish un bakukt di   pruzhine,
          hand.PL sit.PST at.DEF.M table and look.PST DEF.F.ACC spring
          velkh-e kiti hot   tsebrokhn
          COMP-F Kitty AUX.PRS.3SG break.PST

'Varenka, wearing a hat, with an umbrella in her hands, was sitting at the table, looking as the spring that Kitty broke.' (YBC, Leo Tolstoy, trans. Shlomo Sheynberg)

b. *di   karete vet   zikh glaykh,   vi   ir   vet*
DEF.F carriage AUX.3SG REFL immediately when you.2PL AUX.3SG
aroysforn   fun der   shtot, tsebrekhn
get_out.FUT from DEF.F city   break.FUT
'Once you leave the city, the carriage will break down.' (YBC, Fyodor Dostoyevski, trans. Ts. Sarin)

(32) a. *avrom   ovinu   hot   im   vi an alt-n*
Abraham forefather AUX.PRS.3SG 3SG.M.DAT like INDF old-ACC
kamerad di   hant geshoklt
comrade DEF.F.ACC hand shake.PST
'Abraham the forefather shook his hand like an old friend.' (CMY, Yitskhok-Leyb Perets)

b. *do hot   zikh di   dremlmoyz geshoklt*
here AUX.PRS.3SG REFL DEF.F.NOM dormouse   shake.PST
'Here the dormouse started shaking.' (CMY, Lewis Carroll, trans. Adina Bar-El)

Examples (33–35) illustrate emotion middles, in the terminology of Kemmer (1993).

(33) a. *un eyn kuzminer   balebos shrek-t   dem*
and one from_Kuzmin landlord frighten-PRS.3SG DEF.M.ACC
tsveyt-n
second-ACC
'And one landlord from Kuzmin intimidates the other.' (CMY, Sholem Ash)

b. *der   protses shrek-t   mikh nisht*
DEF.M process frighten-PRS.3SG 1SG.ACC NEG
'The process does not scare me.' (CMY, Yitskhok-Leyb Perets)

(34) a. *er   shrek-t   zikh far der   zun*
3SG.M frighten-PRS.3SG REFL for DEF.F sun
'He is afraid of the sun.' (CMY, Z. Stivenson)

b. *shrek   zikh nisht, Binyomen!*
frighten.IMP.SG REFL NEG   Binyomen
'Don't be afraid, Binyomen!' (YBC, Mendele Mocher Sforim)

(35) a. *ot   iz   der   hoz ongekumen tsu der   tir,   un*
here AUX.PRS.3SG DEF.M hare up.come.PST to DEF.F door and

hot   ge-pruv-t   zi   tsu efen-en
AUX.PRS.3SG PST-try-PST 3SG.F.ACC to open-INF

'So the Rabbit came up to the door and tried to open it.' (CMY, Lewis
Carroll, trans. Adina Bar-El)

b. *ober vayl   di   tir   hot   zikh ge-efn-t   arayn, un*
but because DEF.F door AUX.PRS.3SG REFL PST.open.PST inside and

alise-s   elnboyg iz   geven shtark tsugedrikt tsu der
Alice-POSS elbow   AUX.PRS.3SG be.PST strong press.PST to DEF.F

tir, iz   der   dozik-er pruv   nit matsliyekh geven
door AUX.PRS.3SG DEF.M this-M   attempt NEG succeed   AUX.PST

'But because the door was opening inside, and Alice's elbow was
pressed to the door, the attempt was not successful.' (CMY, Lewis
Carroll, trans. Adina Bar-El)

7.3 Passive and impersonal functions

Passive as a category in Yiddish is problematic (see Nath 2009 – there is a construction formed by the verb *vern* 'to become' and past participle, but it is very formal and rarely used. The use of the reflexive pronoun as a passive marker, as in (36b),[10] as opposed to the regular impersonal construction, as in (36a), is characteristic of Soviet Yiddish, which was under Russian influence.

(36) a. *me   farkoyf-t   dos   bukh in ot der   krom*
IMPERS sell-PRS.3SG DEF.N book in this DEF.F shop

'The book is (being) sold in this store.' (Nath 2009: 184)

b. *dos   bukh farkoyf-t   zikh in ot der   krom*
DEF.N book sell-PRS.3SG REFL in this DEF.F shop

'The book is (being) sold in this store.' (Nath 2009: 184)

As opposed to the passive one, the impersonal function is typical of Yiddish, especially with certain verbs of communication, as in (37b). The impersonal subject pronoun *es* is used when it is in first position in the clause but is omitted if any other constituent is fronted.

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[10]While some researchers would put this function under the same label with decausative examples, their syntactic derivation is different. Geniušienė (1987: 17) provides reasoning based on the difference of semantic roles ("subjective" and "objective" reflexive verbs in her terminology).

(37) a. *der   mekhaber red-t   mikoyekh dem   targum-loshn*
    DEF.M author   speak-PRS.3SG about   DEF.N Aramaic
    'The author speaks about Aramaic.' (CMY, Forverts)

  b. *in bukh red-t   zikh fun   a   sakh shlekhts oykh*
    in book speak-PRS.3SG REFL from INDF lot   bad.NMLZ too
    'The book is also about many bad things.' (CMY, Nokhem Shtif)

7.4 Antipassive function

The pronoun *zikh* can also participate in valency changing operations. Yiddish antipassives, similar to Slavic ones, are usually formed from verbs expressing antagonistic action, be it physical or speech-related, as in (38–39).

(38) a. *un er   shel-t,   shel-t   zey alemen mit der*
    and 3SG.M curse-PRS.3SG curse-PRS.3SG 3PL all.ACC with DEF.F
    toykhekhe!
    curses
    'And he curses, curse they all with series of calamities!' (CMY,
    Sholem Aleichem)

  b. *dos   vayb   shelt   zikh*
    DEF.N woman curse.PRS.3SG REFL
    'The woman curses.' (CMY, Sholem Aleichem)

(39) a. *un ven   du varf-st   im   zakh-n   vet*
    and when 2SG throw-PRS.2SG 3SG.M.DAT thing-PL.ACC AUX.PRS.3SG
    er   zey tsurik-breng-en
    3SG.M 3PL back-bring-FUT
    'And when you throw him things, he would bring them back.' (CMY,
    Lewis Carroll, trans. Adina Bar-El)

  b. *er,   nosn   shloyme, varf-t   zikh mit gelt*
    3SG.M Nathan Shlomo   throw-PRS.3SG REFL with money
    'He, Nathan Shlomo, splashes out money.' (CMY, Katle Kanye)

8 Conclusions

In this chapter two variants of the reflexive pronoun *zikh* have been addressed – *zikh* and *zikh aleyn*. Their distribution according to different factors has been analyzed. The following factors were shown to come into play to determine the

choice: extroverted vs. introverted verbs, different semantic roles of the antecedent, and coreferent vs. non-coreferent uses. The choice between reflexive and personal pronouns is also influenced by the semantic roles of the antecedent. In her book on middle voice, Kemmer (1993) classifies languages based on their reflexive and middle markers. The first distinction is whether middle and reflexive markers have the same form. Sometimes their forms are not the same but related diachronically – this is known as the two-form cognate system. The shorter of these two forms is called "light" and the longer is called "heavy". This kind of system is manifested in Slavic languages, for example in Polish (cf. Janic (2023 [this volume])). A similar observation holds for Yiddish. The language has a light form *zikh* and a heavy form *zikh aleyn.* At first glance, *zikh aleyn* is yet another contrastive construction that functions like its German and Slavic counterpart (cf. *sich selbst* in German, *sam seb'ja* in Russian), but *zikh aleyn* is used in a variety of referential contexts, not only contrastive ones. The Slavic languages that Yiddish was in contact with have a clear distinction between the pronoun expressing reference and the clitic verb markers. This fact might have contributed to the development of the *zikh aleyn* cluster, grammaticalized to replace the former bare pronoun *zikh.* Finally, bare *zikh* has an array of non-coreferent meanings that are similar to those found in Polish and Russian, which proposes areal influence in this aspect as well.

9 Acknowledgments

Abbreviations

This chapter follows the Leipzig Glossing Rules (Comrie et al. 2008). Additional abbreviations used are:

CONT continuative aspect
IMPERS impersonal

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