10. The Yiddish modal system between Germanic and Slavonic. A case study on the limits of contact induced grammaticalization

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1. Introduction

Yiddish is an independent Germanic language which developed out of a (Middle High) German variety in close contact with Hebrew, Slavonic and to a lesser degree Romance languages. In the present article we would like to describe the Yiddish modal system and address the question of whether it shares typological features with Germanic or with Slavonic systems. As the Yiddish modals have not yet been studied in detail we would first like to give a description which takes both semantic and syntactic features into account. The article is organized as follows. First, we shall briefly discuss state of the art in the research (or current research) on modals in Yiddish and on the Slavonic component. Section 3 describes the category of modals from a cross-linguistic perspective. It demonstrates the essential semantic and morpho-syntactic properties of modals in contrast to lexical items with modal meanings. In section 4 we give a semantic and syntactic description of the modals in Yiddish. The fifth section is dedicated to a comparison with Germanic and Slavonic which takes into account morphological, syntactic and semantic features. Section 6 discusses the role of innovation in language contact and the seventh section summarizes the results and offers some explanations of the findings in terms of language contact theory. We will point out the relevance of innovations for the borrowability of modals.[1]

2. The state of the art

2.1. Modal verbs in Yiddish

The term 'modal' is well established in Germanic linguistics. In every handbook of English or German one finds special chapters about 'modals'

or 'modal verbs' and special studies are also available. In grammars and studies of Yiddish, however, modals have not to date received equal attention. One reason for this may be that the grammaticography of the Yiddish verb is much more concerned with questions of aspect and conjugation classes than verb functions.

Birnbaum's description of the Yiddish verb concentrates on morphology (1979: 260-291), i.e. on conjugation classes, but, interestingly enough, he does not single out auxiliaries as such, although all of them display either irregular conjugation (e.g. *zayn* 'to be') or a defective present paradigm, namely -Ø suffix in 3P.SG (among others, all modals). Some basic information on the contextual usage of those Yiddish modals that can also be used for marking verb mood is given in the corresponding chapter (cf. Birnbaum 1979: 269-271).

Mark (1978, 270-280) is the only grammarian to dedicate a whole chapter of his grammar to auxiliaries. He underlines the difficulties of drawing a clear line between modals and TAM-auxiliaries: *darfn, muzn, megn, (nit) torn, veln, lozn, kenen* are considered as 'classical' modal verbs, yet the auxiliaries *zoln, lozn, voltn, flegn*, used as mood markers, may also be considered modal verbs (cf. Mark 1978: 270).

Jacobs (2005: 216-217) divides the Yiddish modals into a core, to be found in all varieties of Yiddish, and a periphery containing such modals as *kern* 'ought; might; may' to be found only in some varieties. Importantly for our study, Jacobs indicates an "[e]xceptional use of *–t* suffix with a modal [...] in the construction *es vil-t zix* (+ DAT *mir, dir,* etc.) 'I/you/etc. want,' a calque from Slavic" (2005, 216). This may indicate that, despite the Germanic looking surface, Slavonic has exercised some influence on the Yiddish modal system.

As far we can see, the only major work dedicated to Yiddish modals is Eggensperger (1995). The author gives a corpus-based description of the modal *zoln* and the conditional marker *wolt*. His analyses take both the semantic and the syntactic characteristics of these two modals into consideration. Of special interest are the findings concerning the differences in meaning found in main and subordinated clauses. Eggensperger convincingly shows that the different usages of *zoln* can be attributed to the interaction of different morphological and syntactic factors.

2.2. Research on Slavonic elements in Yiddish

Yiddish is considered to be a fused language (cf. Jacobs 2005: 17-22) with German, Slavonic and Hebrew-Aramaic elements as well as a very limited number of Romanisms such as *leyenen* 'to read' and *bentshn* 'to bless'.

The Hebrew-Aramaic element is evident primarily in the lexicon in the sense that Yiddish displays quite a lot of "learned" loanwords and idioms from Hebrew-Aramaic (cf. Eggers 1998: 214-215; Wexler 1991). The average percentage of Hebrew-Aramaic elements in a Yiddish text is 5.38 percent (cf. Mark's results cited in Dyhr and Zint 1988: 31) and varies according to whether the text deals with specifically Jewish issues that involve a large number of loanwords from the ritual language. Another reason for a varying percentage of Hebrew-Aramaic elements is the audience addressed: words from Hebrew-Aramaic may be replaced by Germanic or Slavic elements if the author suspects that the audience is incapable of understanding the Hebrew-Aramaic components. Hebrew-Aramaic exerts some influence on morphology (cf. Krogh 2001: 13-14; Birnbaum 1979: 82-83) for inflection; Jacobs 2005: 197-198; Birnbaum 1979: 84-85 for word formation.) Referring to Thomason's (2001: 70-71) borrowing scale, this implies fairly intensive language contact. One might wonder whether Hebrew-Aramaic did indeed influence the modal system, since Yiddish displays Hebrew-Aramaic modal adverbs such as *efsher* 'maybe, possibly'. However, the Hebrew-Aramaic influence is not as substantial as one might suppose: the inflectional endings borrowed from Hebrew-Aramaic do not replace the inherited ones, but rather coexist with them, forming doublets. The Hebrew-Aramaic lexeme *ponem* 'face' which forms the plural *ponemer* 'faces' with the Germanic inflectional ending –*er* may serve as evidence. The same is also true for modal expressions: *efsher* may be replaced by its doublet *'s iz meglekh az* 'possibly (lit. it is possible that)'. Since no such doublets occur for the Yiddish core modals, an investigation of Hebrew-Aramaic influence on the modal system can be discarded.

Slavonic has left its imprint on Yiddish in several ways. The Slavonic influence is most subtle in the cases where Germanic forms display typically Slavonic functions or usage patterns.[2] Yet there is a wide range of overt Slavonic elements in Yiddish phonology (cf. Birnbaum 1979: 76-78), morphology, syntax and lexicon as well. Due to lack of space, only the most important ones shall be mentioned.

Yiddish morphology adopts a large number of Slavonic word formation affixes (cf. Geller 1994: 95-103; 111-117; Eggers 1998: 306-308), e.g. the

productive suffix -*ev*- is used for verb formation (Pol. *gospodar-ow-ać* / Rus. *gospodstv-ov-at'* 'to rule' → Yid. *balebat-ev-en* 'to rule'), or the suffix –*ink*- for gradation of adjectives (Germ. *dünn* 'thin' → Yid. *dininker* 'thinish'). The inflectional inventory of Yiddish remains stable, although an optional vocative is added to the nominal declension according to the Polish model, cf. Pol. *mamuniu* 'Mummy' → Yid. *mamenyu* 'Mummy' < *mame* 'Mum' (cf. Geller 1994: 102). In the Slavonic languages prefixing of verbs is used to mark aspect; by calquing these prefixes in different ways Yiddish establishes an – at least rudimentary – aspectual system (Geller 1994: 106-108; Eggers 1998: 310-312 and 321-331; Jacobs 2005: 221-222; Birnbaum 1979: 271-273). Ingressive is transmitted with the help of *nemen zikh* + *tsu* + infinitive (lit. 'to take oneself to'), paralleled by Pol. *wziąć się* (lit. 'to take oneself to') and Rus. *brat'sja za* (lit. 'to take oneself to'): *Bald hot zi genumen trakhtn derfun...* 'Soon she started thinking about that...' Semelfactivity, expressed in Slavic with the help of a suffix (Rus. *krik-nu-t'* 'to make a cry'), is rendered with the help of *gebn* / *ton a* + substantive: *gebn* / *ton a skrip* 'to make a creak (lit. to give / do a creak)', *ton a geshrey* 'to make a cry (lit. to do a cry)'. The relative freedom of Yiddish word order may be attributed to Slavonic influence, since word order in the Slavic languages is much freer than in German. Among others, adjectives may be placed after the noun; para- and hypotactic sentences display the same word order (cf. Eggers 1998: 313-318[3]); *gerundivn* – specialized infinite secondary predicates with anterior or simultaneous meaning are also typical of the Slavonic languages (so-called adverbial participles or gerunds). The possibility of quite extant subject and object pro-drop (cf. Jacobs 2005: 261-262) also indicates a similarity with Slavonic.

The percentage of Slavic loanwords and calques in Yiddish cannot be precisely tallied, yet they belong to certain semantic domains: clothing, food, plants and animals, housekeeping, body parts, family etc. (cf. Eggers 1998: 319-321; Geller 1994: 81 and Wexler 1991).

3. Modals as a cross-linguistic category

Because of space limitations, we shall not be able to cover all types of expressions with modal meanings. Therefore, we will concentrate on the category of modals, i.e. on modal elements, which have undergone a grammaticalization process and which express the basic notions of 'necessity' and 'possibility'[4] and show syntactic properties of auxiliaries. Modal

is a gradient category; there are prototypical and peripheral instances. We propose to determine modals by locating them on a grammaticalization chain extending from content words to fully-fledged modal auxiliaries. This approach is compatible with Heine (1993: 70) who defines auxiliaries as "linguistic items covering some range of uses along the Verb-to-T(ense)A(spect)M(odality) chain". An auxiliary "is no longer a fully lexical item, but not yet a grammatical inflection either, and it is likely to exhibit properties that are characteristic of the intermediate stages" between fully lexical items and inflectional forms (Heine 1993: 86). We can define modals in the following way: "A fully-fledged modal is a polyfunctional, morphologically autonomous expression of modality which shows a certain degree of grammaticalization. 'Polyfunctional' is understood as covering a domain within the semantic space of modality. A fully-fledged modal functions as an operator on the predicational and/or the propositional level of the clause." (Hansen and de Haan 2009: 512)

Without giving a full account of the syntactic architecture of modal constructions, we would like to put forward the hypothesis that we are dealing with *raising constructions*. According to most formal analyses, raising predicates are characterized by a mismatch between the number of semantic valence elements and the number of syntactic slots. In the case of Yiddish *muzn*, for example, the semantic frame contains the abstract scenes 'participant external necessity', 'participant internal necessity' and 'probability' with two participants (the modalized situation and the modalizing source resp. the conversational background). On the other hand, *muzn* contributes the valence grid which is understood to represent the corresponding frame in a highly schematized form and which determines the subset of syntactically relevant participants and their semantic roles. From the two conceptual participants of *muzn* only one has the status of a valence slot: the modalized situation, whereas there is no specific slot for the modalizing source – which, however, might be expressed by an adjunct phrase with the meaning 'in view of what I know/ of what is commanded' etc. The peculiarity of modals, but also aspectual and temporal auxiliaries can be seen as their valence grid contains a second syntactic slot which has no correspondence in the semantic frame: this slot is to be filled by the subject of the infinitival verb. In the next step, the lexical construction is to be unified with a so-called *instantiation pattern* which determines the physical realization of the arguments which fill the valence slots and their structural dependencies (Fried and Östman 2004: 57). The syntactic behavior of the string *ikh muz arbetn* is to be accounted for by the unification of the lexical

element *muzn* with a *co-instantiation* pattern which is responsible for the fact that a single syntactic entity instantiates multiple valence elements. Each of them belongs to a different valence (Fried and Östman 2004: 63); i.e. the construct has a surface subject which is not the semantic argument of the modal but which is delivered by the second verbal argument – the infinitival verb. In this sense *muzn* is a predicate with two elements in its valence and the second element is instantiated by an infinitival verb phrase which has its own semantic and syntactic valence element which is instantiated as the surface subject of the construction (for more details see Hansen in print).

Modals are to be located at the 'grammatical periphery' and tend to form a kind of fully analytical paradigm of the verb. Typical modals are polyfunctional in the sense that they express no less than two types of modality. One usually distinguishes dynamic, deontic and epistemic modality. Modals are polyfunctional, while so called modal content words, i.e. words with modal meaning which are not subject to an auxiliarisation process, have only one modal meaning. Let us compare the fully-fledged modal Yiddish *kenen* 'can' with the lexical phrase *bekoyekh zayn* 'to be capable'. The former can express 'capability' (dynamic) (1), 'objective possibility' (dynamic) (2), 'permission' (deontic) (3) and 'perhaps' (epistemic) (4), while the latter is confined to 'capability' (5):[5]

(1) *nor   [di keners]   kenen   beemes opshatsn   dem*
     only   the expert.PL can. PRS.3PL indeed appreciate.INF the
     umfarglaykhlekhn   dergreykh   fun dem
     tremendous.DAT/ACC   accomplishment. DAT/ACC   of the
     verterbukh.
     dictionary.DAT/ACC
     'Only experts can indeed appreciate the tremendous accomplishment of the dictionary.'

(2) *me   ken   es nemen   tsu hilf   kedey*
     you   can. PRS.3SG it take.INF to help   in_order_to
     durkhtsufirn   a neytike   diferentsirung.
     accomplish.INF   a necessary   differentiation
     'One can take it as a help in order to accomplish the necessary differentiation.'

(3) *du kenst   geyn.*
     you can. PRS.2SG go.INF
     'You may go.'

(4) *Es ken   zayn az Peter hot   geharget*
     it can. PRS.3SG be.INF that Peter have.3SG. PTCP.killed. PTCP
     dem man.
     the man.ACC
     'Peter may have killed the man.'

(5) *Di melodye bin   ikh leyder   nisht bekoyekh*
     the melody be. PRS.1SG I   unfortunately not   capable
     tsu transkribirn in a blitsbrivl.
     to transcribe. INF in a e-mail
     'Unfortunately, I am not able to transcribe the melody in an e-mail.'

In our analysis we will exclude lexical elements with modal meaning: adjectives like *mekhuyev* 'obliged', sentence adverbs like *efsher* 'perhaps' or nouns like *meglekhkayt* 'possibility'.

4. Yiddish modals in comparison to Germanic and Slavonic

4.1. The collection of data

As there is no comprehensive work on modals in Yiddish, we had to do some pioneering work. To get an overview of the possibilities for expressing modality in Yiddish, in a first step U. Weinreich's *English-Yiddish Dictionary,* and M. Šapiro's *Russian-Yiddish Dictionary* were checked for translations of English, respectively Russian modals. This data was counterchecked in the reverse direction and completed by Y. Niborski's *Dictionnaire Yiddish-Français.*

In a second step we referred to corpus data to check the usages of the modals from the dictionaries. While writing this article, the Corpus of Modern Yiddish (CMY) is under construction and we seized the opportunity of using its first test version. The CMY is intended as a balanced multi-purpose corpus, i.e. it will cover all text genres and all dialects (i.e. *Litvish (NEY), Poylish (CY)* and *Ukrainish (SEY)*) and varieties of Yiddish (e.g. North American Yiddish), as well as the different orthographies (for a

more detailed description of the CMY cf. Birzer (in prep.). At its current stage the recently released test version of CMY contains roughly 3 million tokens from newspaper texts and eleven belles lettres texts dating from the end of the 19ᵗʰ and the first half of the 20ᵗʰ century: Bergelson David: *In a fargrebter shtot* (1910) (BeFS-1910), Peretz Isaac Leib: *Oyb nisht nokh hekher* (PeOyb), *Der meshugener batlen* (1890) (PeMB-1890), *R' Yoyk-henen gabe* (1890) (PeRY-1890) and *Bontse shvayg* (1890) (PeBS-1890), Bashevis Singer Isaac: *Gimpl tam* (1956) (BaSiGT-1956), Shapiro Lamed: *Gegesene teg* (1931) (ShaGT-1931), Manger Itzik: *Di mayses fun Hershl Zumervint* (1930) (MaMHZ-1930), Sholem-Aleykhem: *Dreyfus in Kas-rilevke* (1903) (ShAlDK-1903), Opatoshu Joseph: *S'eybike khupe-kleyd* (1930) (OpSK-1930) and Rosenfeld Jonas: *Vos hot pasirt mitn altn?* (1930) (RoVHPA-1930).

The data stemming from the CMY was rounded off by internet research covering the style registers: journalistic, scientific, belle lettres and drama for spoken language. Due to the fact that the internet is a low-threshold medium, we came across a high variety of dialectal features on personal websites, which made it necessary to treat examples from such websites with caution.

Furthermore, a questionnaire on Yiddish modal verbs was composed and distributed via the mailing lists Linguist List and Yiddish Forum.[6] Native speakers of Yiddish were asked to translate 18 sentences containing modal verbs from English to Yiddish and to comment on the choice of the corresponding Yiddish modal verb.[7] According to our definition, the class of Yiddish modals comprises *darfn, muzn, megn, nit torn, kenen, zoln,* and at the periphery *kern*. Due to its syntax we have to exclude the verb *veln* 'to want' which usually is considered part of the category 'modale verbn'[8], as it does not form matrix coding constructions, but functions as a control verb.

4.2. Morphology and syntax

Yiddish modals share most morphological features with verbs but show a dedicated paradigm in the present tense which sets them apart from lexical verbs; they have a zero ending in the third person singular which contrasts with the usual ending *–t:*

> *er muz-Ø, er zol-Ø* vs *er shrayb-t, er zog-t*
> he must   he shall   he write-3SG he say-3SG

All Yiddish modals form raising constructions with a subject in the nominative case. The modals show subject agreement with respect to person and number and combine with a 'bare' infinitival verb without the marker *tsu*. Lexical verbs which govern a propositional argument need an infinitive with *tsu*. Cf. the modal *kenen* 'can' with *trakhtn* 'to think about doing sth.'

(6)   *Mir kenen   arbetn.*
      we can.PRS.1PL work.INF
      'We can work.'

(7)   *Perelmutter   trakht   tsu arbetn   oyf der doziker*
      Perelmutter   think.PRS.3SG to   work.INF on   the DEM
      problem.
      problem
      'Perelmutter thinks about working on that problem.'

On the surface modals look like content words, often like verbs, but syntactically they share properties with affixes. As the modal takes over the subject argument of the main verb, it does not influence its selection. The following features show that fully-fledged modals syntactically behave like auxiliaries:

a) modals combine with humane or inanimate subjects:

(8)   *Dos kind darf   blaybn   in der heym.*
      The child must.PRS.3SG remain.INF in the home
      'The child has to remain at home.'

(9)   *Aplikatsyes [...] darfn   onkumen   tsu der fundatsye*
      application.PL   must.PRS.3PL arrive. INF to the foundation
      nit shpeter vi oktober dem 15tn, 1999.
      not later   as October the 15, 1999
      'Applications have to arrive at the foundation not later than October 15, 1999.'

b) modals combine with avalent verbs (e.g. metereological verbs)

(10) *Es volt   gekent   regenen   morgn*
      it   may.SUBJ.3SG   PTCP.can.PTCP   rain.INF   tomorrow
      'It may rain tomorrow.'

c) modal constructions allow passive transformations without change in meaning:[9]

(11) *Der student   darf   iberzetsn   dem   tekst.*
      the student   must.PRS.3SG   translate.INF   the   text
      'The student must translate the text.'

(12) *Der tekst   darf   ibergezetst   vern.*
      the text   must.PRS.3SG   translate.PTCP.PASS   become.INF
      'The text must be translated.'

d) modals do not assign thematic roles to the subject:

(13) *Der   student   muz   iberzetsn   dem   tekst.*
      the   student   must.PRS.3SG   translate.INF   the   text
      'The student must translate the text.' (= agent)

(14) *Ikh muz   ober visn   di   numern   fun*
      I   must.PRS.1SG   but   know.INF   the number.PL   of
      shprikhverter.
      proverb.PL
      'But I need to know the numbers of the proverbs.' (cognizer = experiencer)

These syntactic features are due to the fact that modals have only one argument position which is filled by the main verb in the infinitive. The subject position is filled by the first argument of the main verb.

4.3. Polysemy patterns of modals

Yiddish DARFN is a polyfunctional element with the modal meanings 'objective necessity' and 'obligation'.

(15)   (Context: The door is locked.)
       Pyotr darf   rufn   dem   struzh.
       Pyotr must.PRS.3SG   call.INF   the   porter
       'Peter has to call the porter.'

(16)   *Aplikatsyes* [...] *darfn   onkumen tsu der fundatsye*
       application.PL   must.PRS.3PL   arrive.INF to   the   foundation
       nit shpeter vi oktober dem 15tn, 1999
       not   later   as October the 15, 1999
       'Applications have to arrive at the foundation not later than October
       15, 1999.'

DARFN is not restricted to its use with a non-finite verbal form: it can also
be used as a transitive lexical verb governing a nominal complement in the
meaning 'to need something'.

(17)   *a beheyme darf   esn   shtroy*
       a   cattle   need.3SG eat.INF   straw
       'Cattle need to eat straw' (BaSiGT-1956)

Polysemy pattern of DARFN

1. objective necessity
2. obligation
3. to need sth.

MUZN covers all different types of necessity. First, it has the meaning of
an internal necessity, i.e. a necessity based on the internal needs of the
person referred to by the subject; cf.:

(18)   *Dos vel   zayn   genug   far haynt ikh*
       That want.PRS.3SG   be.INF   enough   for today I
       muz   shlofn   geyn.
       must.PRS.1SG   sleep.INF   go.INF
       'That will be enough for today, I must go to bed.' (Mendele Vol.
       5.252)

Second, we find instances where *muzn* denotes a necessity created by ex-
ternal circumstances or by an obligation.

(19) *Aplikatsyes   muzn   zayn   af yidish   un*
      Application.PL   must.PRS.3PL   be.INF   on Yiddish and
      muzn   bagleyt   vern   durkh a
      must.PRS.3PL   accompany.PTCP.PASS   become.INF by   a
      genoyem budzshet fun nit mer   vi $2000.
      exact   budget   of   not more as $2000
      'Applications must be in Yiddish and must be accompanied by an
      exact budget of not more than $2000.' (Mendele Vol. 9.027)

Apart from that, *muzn* can have an epistemic meaning. In this case, it de-
notes a high degree of certainty and can be paraphrased with a sentence
adverb meaning 'probably'.

(20) *er iz   zikher, az dos muz   zayn   a kholem.*
      he be.3SG sure   that that must.3SG be.INF a dream
      'He is sure this must be a dream' (PeBS-1890)

Polysemy pattern of MUZN

1. participant internal necessity
2. objective necessity
3. obligation
4. high probability

MEGN is used mainly in deontic contexts to express 'permission'. It is
particular frequent in texts dealing with jurisdiction.

(21) *bay di katsovim funem shtetl iz r' itsye‑mordkhe nisht geven*
      among the butchers in the shtetl reb Itsye-Mordkhe was not
      bazunders balibt, vayl yedes mol, vos er fleg paskenen
      particularly popular, because any time, when he used to determine
      a beheyme far treyf,   hot   men   zi
      a cattle as unkosher,   AUX.PRS.3SG   one.PRN she.ACC
      gemegt   farkoyfn nor   tsu a goy
      PTCP.may.PTCP   sell.INF only to   a goy
      'Among the butchers in the shtetl Rabbi Itsye-Mordkhe was not par-
      ticularly popular, because any time, when he used to determine a
      cattle as unkosher, one could sell it only to non-Jewish buyers.'
      (*Forverts* 2008-02-08)

It can also be used in contexts of external objective circumstances enabling the action expressed by the main verb.

(22) *Mir megn   zikh   lernen   fun Leo Tolstoy   dem*
      we may.PRS.1PL   REFL   learn.INF   of Leo Tolstoy   the
      badayt   fun idisher   shtolts
      meaning of Yiddish pride
      'We may learn from Leo Tolstoy what Jewish pride means.' (*Alge-meyner zurnal*, www.algemeyner.com/generic.asp?id=2435)

Megn is also used as a concessive marker in the sense of ,although'.

(23) *Der yid meg   zayn   orem, dokh iz   er*
      The Jew may.PRS.3.SG be.INF poor   yet be.PRS.3SG he
      zeyer raykh, vayl   gaystike oytsres   hot   der
      very rich   because spiritual riches.ACC have.PRS.3SG the
      yid zeyer a sakh.
      Jew very many
      'A Jew may be poor, yet is he nonetheless very rich, because a Jew has many spiritual riches.' (www.milkenarchive.org)

Polysemy pattern of MEGN

1. permission
2. objective possibility
3. concessive

NIT TORN is a negative polarity item; i.e. its use is restricted to negated contexts. The basic meaning is 'prohibition':

(24) *er git   aroys a psak,   az kh'tor   afile ir*
      he give.3SG   out   a sentence   that I'must.1SG even   her
      shvel   nisht ibertretn
      threshold not   cross.INF
      'He pronounced the sentence that I must not cross even the threshold of her home.' (BaSiGT-1956)

In certain contexts, the modal gains a dynamic reading of an 'objective impossibility'; cf.:

(25) *A   shprakh tor*   *dokh nit shteyn   oyf an ort.*
      a   language must_not.PRS.3SG yet   not stand.INF on   a place
      'A language yet cannot stand still at one place.' (Yiddish.haifa.ac.il)

Polysemy pattern of NIT TORN

1. prohibition
2. objective impossibility

KENEN covers all subtypes of possibility: 1. participant internal possibility (ability) as in (26) 2. objective (participant external) possibility (ex. 27) 3. permission (ex. 28) and 4. medium probability (ex. 29):

(26) *zayn   shverer, zeks–pudiker   kerper hot   mer   nit*
      his   heavy   six-puds   body   AUX.3SG more   not
      gekont   ibertrogn di groyse   yesurim
      PTCP.can.PTCP carry.INF the big   suffering
      'His body, weighing six pud, couldn't bear the tremendous suffering any longer.' (BeFS-1910)

(27) *hot   men daytlekh gekont   hern   vi der*
      AUX.3SG one exactly   PTCP.can.PTCP hear.INF we the
      parokhod   dernentert   zikh tsu undzer stantsye
      steamboat approach.3SG REFL to   our   station
      'We could clearly hear the steamboat approaching our station.' (ShaGT-1931)

(28) *nu,   zogt   er, konst   tsurikgeyn aheym.*
      well say.3SG he   can.2SG return.INF home
      'Well, he says, you can go home.' (BaSiGT-1956)

(29) *es ken   zayn, az tsvingen   azoy mit tsvey*
      it can.3SG be.INF that cope.INF thus with two
      shprakhn   volt   geven   tsu shver.
      language.PL COND.3SG PTCP.be.PTCP too   difficult
      'It may be that coping thus with two languages would be too difficult.' (Yiddish Mailing List, issue 5)

Polysemy pattern of KENEN

1. participant internal possibility
2. objective possibility
3. permission
4. medium probability

ZOLN shows a complex polysemy pattern which includes not only modal meanings, but reaches also into the neighboring functional fields of evidentiality and mood. In the following, we will delimit ourselves to a brief outline of the main uses (for more details cf. Eggensperger 1995). We are aware of the fact that *zoln* deserves a much more detailed analysis which ought to focus on the semantic overlap between the notions of necessity, subjunctive, optative and evidentiality. The meaning of *zoln* 1 can be described as a weakened necessity based on someone's uttered expressed wish.

(30) *der gabe hot   im ongezogt,er zol nisht*
     the gabe AUX.3SG   him PTCP.say.PTCP he shall.3SG   not
     lozn   keynem   nekhtikn   in bes-medresh
     let.INF nobody   at.night   in study.hall
     'The charity overseer told him not to let anybody into the study hall at night.' (PeRY-1890)

In specific contexts, *zoln* 1 can come close to an optative reading as in:

(31) *Lang   lebn   zol   yidish!*
     long.ADV live.INF shall.PRS.3.SG   Yiddish
     'May Yiddish live a long life!'

The second meaning can be labelled as evidential; here the speaker indicates that the information conveyed is based on hearsay.

(32) *Zinger zol   hobn   transferirt   hekher a*
     Zinger shall.PRS.3SG   have.INF   transfer.PTCP   higher a
     milyon dolar   tsu a   bank-konte   in   shvayts.
     million dollar   to   a   bank account   in   Switzerland

'Zinger is said to have transferred more than a million dollar to a bank account in Switzerland.' (*zoln* 2)
(*Algemeyner zhurnal*, www.algemeiner.com/generic.asp?id=3223)

As Mark (1978) and Jacobs (2005) state, *zoln* also has the function of a mood marker; i.e. *zoln* 3 is used to create analytical forms of the subjunctive and the optative. *Zoln* 3 is often used in subordinated clauses to indicate the non-assertion of the existence of the state of affairs conveyed. This holds for complement clauses governed by negated verbs of knowing or of non-negated verbs denoting psychological states:

(33) *Ober dokh hobn   zey   nit gevust   mit*
      But   yet   AUX.3PL they   not PTCP.know.PTCP   with
      vos   men zol   im   kenen   helfm. (*zoln* 3)
      what one shall.PRS.3SG him   can.INF   help.INF
      'But yet they didn't know how one would be able to help them.'

A similar function is found after verbs denoting demands:

(34) *betndik ilya ernburg mit   trern   in di   oygn,   er*
      bid.CVB Ilja Ernburg with   tear.PL in the eye.PL he
      zol   untershraybn   dem briv
      shall.PRS.3SG sign.INF   the letter
      'bidding Ilja Ehrenburg with tears in his eyes to sign the letter.'
      (*Algemeyner zhurnal*, www.algemeiner.com/generic.asp?id=3193)

Polysemy pattern of ZOLN

1. weak obligation based on someone's utterance
2. hear say
3. subjunctive

As Jacobs (2005: 216) states, KERN/GEHERN is not found in all varieties of Yiddish. In our elicitation test (see above) it was used by only very few speakers. According to our tentative analysis we can assume an epistemic meaning ('high probability'), as it is listed in the dictionaries:

(35) *Der grester oyftuer   fun nayverter   in yidish*
      The biggest discoverer of   neologisms in Yiddish

> *ker   zayn   Maks Vaynraykh.*
> must.PRS.3SG   be.INF   Max Weinreich
> 'The most important discoverer of new words in Yiddish is probably
> Max Weinreich.' (Mendele vol. 01.023)

There are some usages where one might assume the meaning ,objective
necessity':

(36) (Context: The door is locked.).
      Peter ker   rufn   dem   struzh.
      Peter must.PRS.3SG   call.INF   the   porter
      'Peter has to call the porter.'

(37) *Er   hot   mir   opgeshindn   di   hoyt vi es*
      he   have.3SG   me.DAT   cut_off.PTCP   the skin as it
      geher   tsu zayn.
      belong.PRS.3SG   to   be.INF
      'He skinned me the way it is fashionable.'

kern can also be used as a lexical verb with the meaning 'to belong'.

(38) *Ikh geher   tsu yene vos   fantazirn.*
      I   belong.PRS.1SG   to   those which   dream.PRS.3PL
      'I belong to those that dream.'

Polysemy pattern of KERN/GEHERN

1. high probability
2. objective necessity
3. to belong

5. Yiddish modals between Germanic and Slavonic

5.1. The comparison

In the following chapter, we shall compare the Yiddish modal systems with
their counterparts in selected Germanic and Slavonic languages. We shall
measure the degree of similiarity of the systems by distinguishing the fol-
lowing kinds of aspects of parallels (cf. also Nau this volume):

1. material parallels, regarding sound shape;
2. morphological parallels: dedicated forms;
3. syntactic parallels: encoding of the subject and dedicated morpho-syntactic structures;
4. semantic parallels: patterns of polyfunctionality.

For determining the degree of convergence with Germanic and Slavonic modal systems we have chosen the following procedure. On the one hand, we are going to compare Yiddish with Modern German, Middle High German and for the sake of contrast English and Danish. On the other hand, we take those Slavonic languages into account with which Yiddish speakers in Central and Eastern Europe have been in contact. If we compare Yiddish with the Germanic languages mentioned, we get the following correspondences of etymological cognates:[10]

Table 1. Yiddish modals and their Germanic cognates

Yiddish	Modern German	Middle High German[11]	English	Danish
darfn	*dürfen*	*durfen*	—	*turde*[12]
muzn	*müssen*	*müezen*	*must*	—
megn	*mögen*	*mugen*	*may/might*	*matte*[13]
nit torn	—	*turren*	*dare*	—
kenen	*können*	*kunnen*	*can/could*	*kunne*
zoln	*sollen*	*suln*	*shall/should*	*skulle*
kern	*gehören* (no modal)	—	—	—

From the table it follows that all Yiddish modals have cognates in other Germanic languages. Therefore, we can safely conclude that none of the forms are borrowed from Slavonic, Hebrew or any other language. In our analysis we will focus on the common typological features of the German, Middle High German, Danish and English modal systems. These features shall be contrasted with the systems of Sorbian, Czech, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian. Apart from that, we shall carry out a more fine-grained comparison of selected German and Danish modals. Our comparison includes the elements presented in Table 2. The Middle High German and Modern German data are taken from Bech (1951), Grimm (1854-1954), Fritz/Gloning (1997) and Zifonun et al (1997), the Danish data are

taken from Brandt (1999) and the Slavonic material from Besters-Dilger et al. (2009) and Hansen (2001; 2006).

Table 2. The core modals of the analysed Germanic and Slavonic languages

	POSS	¬ POSS	NEC	¬ NEC
Yiddish	*kenen, megn*	*nit torn*	*darfn, muzn, zoln*	
German	*dürfen, kön-nen, mögen*		*müssen, sollen*	*nicht brauchen*
Middle High German	*kunnen, mugen, turren*		*durfen, müezen suln*	
English	*can/could, may/might*		*must, shall/should need*	
Danish	*kunne*		*måtte, skulle, turde, burde*	
Upper Sorbian	*móc, smĕć*		*dyrbjeć, mĕć*	*njetrjebać*
Lower Sorbian	*móc, smĕś*		*musaś, mĕś, trjebaś, dejaś*	
Czech	*moct, smĕt*		*muset, mít, třeba*	
Polish	*móc , można*		*musieć, mieć, powinien, wypada, na-leży, trzeba*	*nie potrze-bować*
Russian	*moč', možno*	*nel`zja*	*dolžen, sleduet, nado*	
Ukrai-nian	*mohïy, smity, možna*		*musyty, maty, povynen, naležyt', treba, slid*	
Belo-russian	*mjahčy, l'ha, možna*		*music', pavinen*	

5.2. Morphology and Syntax

Yiddish modals show verbal morphology with a dedicated form paradigm like their counterparts in the Germanic languages. This is due to the fact that most Germanic modals are formed from preterite-present stems, whose inflection differs from the present indicative of other (lexical) verbs (cf. Birkmann 1987: 53-55). Yiddish modals differ from lexical verbs in the present tense third person singular. The same is found in English; cf.:

er ken-Ø	vs	er shrayb-t
he can-Ø	vs	he write-s

The present tense paradigm differs from German modals which in addition to the third person show a differentiating marking in the first person singular.

German: *ich kann-Ø*	vs	*ich schreib-e*
Yiddish: *ikh ken-Ø*	vs	*ikh shrayb-Ø*
'I can'		'I write'

The Yiddish paradigm also differs from Danish where the differentiating marking covers all persons and numbers.

jeg/du/han/vi/I/de kan-Ø vs *jeg/du/han/vi/I/de skrive-r*
'I/you(sg)/he/we/you(pl)/they can' vs 'I/you(sg)/he/we/you(pl)/they write'

In contrast to Germanic, the Slavonic modals have no dedicated morpho-syntactic marking; e.g. the Polish modal *musieć* 'must' has the same present tense paradigm like the lexical verb *prosić* 'to ask for'. There are, however, some modals which show very idiosyncratic features like Polish *powinien* whose inflection is characterized by a unique combination of adjectival and verbal features.

As a matter of fact, Germanic is the only language family in Europe where modals have a dedicated morphological form. In this sense, the Slavonic languages represent the usual case and Germanic is typologically idiosyncratic. We can state that the morphology of Yiddish modals exhibits features typical of the Germanic languages.

As mentioned above, all Yiddish modals form matrix-coding constructions with a subject in the Nominative case and combine with 'bare' infinitival verbs without the marker *tsu*. The syntax of the Yiddish modals coincides with their Germanic counterparts which also form personal constructions and govern a 'bare' infinitive.[14]

Table 3. Morphological marking of modals

	dedicated morphological marking
Yiddish	yes
German	yes
Middle High German	yes
English	yes
Danish	yes
Upper Sorbian	no
Lower Sorbian	no
Czech	no
Polish	no
Russian	no
Ukrainian	no
Belorussian	no

(39) Yiddish
Mir kenen arbetn.
we can.PRS.1PL work.INF

(40) Danish
Vi kan arbejde.
we can.PRS.1PL work.INF

(41) English
We can work.

In the syntax we find major differences between the Germanic and Slavonic modal systems. Firstly, the Slavonic languages do not distinguish different types of infinitives like the bare infinitive and the infinitive with *tsu* in Yiddish. Secondly, whereas all Germanic modals go back to lexical verbs which underwent a grammaticalization process, all Slavonic languages except Sorbian have modals of both verbal and non-verbal origin:

– modals of verbal origin: e.g. Polish *móc* 'can'
– modals of adjectival origin: e.g. Polish *powinien* 'should'
– modals of adverbial origin: e.g. Russian *možno* 'one can'

Modals of verbal origin show verbal inflection; i.e. they are marked for person, number, mood and tense (42). In contrast to that, modals of adverbial origin are uninflected and need a tense auxiliary bearing the tense and finite features (43).

(42) Russian
      My možem   rabotat'.
      we can.2PL work.INF
      'We can work'

(43) Russian
      Možno bylo   rabotat'.
      Possible be.PST.3SG work.INF
      'It was possible to work.'

Modals historically going back to adjectives exhibit agreement marking both on the modal and the tense auxiliary, whereas tense and mood is marked exclusively on the auxiliary; e.g.

(44) Russian
      Ivan dolžen   byl   rabotat'.
      Ivan must.SG.M be.PST work.INF
      'Ivan had to work.'

Whereas all Yiddish modals belong to a single construction type (with a subject in the nominative), all Slavonic languages except Sorbian have impersonal constructions in addition to personal ones. Here, the subject is coded either in the dative or as zero. As there is no subject agreement, the modal (complex) has the default ending third person singular neuter.

(45) Polish
      Należało   pracować.
      must.PST.3SG.N work.INF
      'One had to work.'

Table 4. The distribution of verbal and non-verbal modals

	verbal modals	non-verbal modals
Yiddish	*kenen, megn, nit torn, darfn, muzn, zoln*	
German	*dürfen, können, mögen, müssen, sollen, nicht brauchen*	
Middle High German	*kunnen, mugen, durfen, müezen, suln*	
English	*can/could, may/might, must, shall/should, need*	
Danish	*kunne, måtte, skulle, turde, burde*	
Upper Sorbian	*móc, směć, dyrbjeć, měć, njetrjebać*	
Lower Sorbian	*móc, směś, musaś, měś, trjebaś, dejaś*	
Czech	*moct, muset, mít, smět*	*třeba*
Polish	*móc, musieć, mieć, wypada, należy, nie potrzebować*	*powinien, można, trzeba*
Russian	*moč', sleduet*	*možno, nel'zja, nado, dolžen*
Ukrainian	*mohťy, smity, musyty maty, naležyt'*	*možna, povynen, treba, slid*
Belorussian	*mjahčy, music',*	*l'ha, možna, pavinen*

This type of subjectless construction does not exist in Yiddish, because it does not allow empty initial positions in declarative clauses. It demands either an expletive, dummy subject or another constituent occupying the initial position (cf. Jacobs 2005: 223-225).

The syntactic heterogeneity which is typical of most Slavonic languages sharply contrasts with the homogeneous Yiddish modal system which contains exclusively personal constructions. In this respect, Yiddish shows fully converging properties with the Germanic languages. There is also a certain degree of similarity with Sorbian.

Table 5. The distribution of personal and impersonal modal constructions

	personal	impersonal
Yiddish	*kenen, megn, nit torn, darfn, muzn, zoln*	
German	*dürfen, können, mögen, müssen, sollen, nicht brauchen*	
Middle High German	*kunnen, mugen, durfen, müezen, suln*	
English	*can/could, may/might, must, shall/should, need*	
Danish	*kunne, måtte, skal, burde*	
Upper Sorbian	*móc, směć, dyrbjeć, měć, njetrjebać*	
Lower Sorbian	*móc, směš, musaś, měš, trjebaś, dejaś*	
Czech	*moct, muset, mit, smět*	*třeba*
Polish	*móc, musieć, mieć, powinien, nie potrzebować*	*można, wypada, należy, trzeba*
Russian	*moč', dolžen*	*možno, nel'zja, sleduet, nado*
Ukrainian	*mohty, smity, musyty, maty, po-vynen*	*možna, naležyt', treba, slid*
Belorussian	*mjahčy, music', pavinen*	*l'ha, možna*

5.3. Semantics

In this section we are going to compare the basic meanings described in chapter 4.3. with selected Germanic and Slavonic modals. The point of departure will be the question of whether the polysemy patterns coincide or not. The semantic description complies with the notions of modality's semantic map as developed by van der Auwera and Plungian (1998).

As illustrated in chapter 4.3. DARFN has the following three meanings: 1. objective necessity, 2. obligation, 3. 'to need sth.'. From a synchronic point of view it might be surprising that its German cognate *dürfen* is not an expression of necessity, but of possibility. This discrepancy is not due to language contact or any internal processes in Yiddish, but has to be explained by the fact that German *dürfen* changed its semantics. Middle High German *durfen* was a regular expression of necessity, which later in negated contexts changed its meaning into a permission reading.[15] Middle

High German *durfien* also had the meaning 'to need sth.'. The question arises, whether the same polysemy pattern is also found in those Slavonic languages which have been in contact with Yiddish. Indeed, Polish *trzeba* and Russian *nado* show an identical polyfunctionality. It is only in the last few decades that *trzeba* seems to have lost the meaning 'to need sth.' (cf. Hansen 2001: 147 ff).

    We come to the conclusion that the semantics of Yiddish *darfn* shows no similarity with its Modern German cognate, but coincides with Middle High German *durfien*, Russian *nado* and Polish *trzeba* (in archaic usage). The assumption that these Slavonic elements have made possible the persistence of the Middle High German meanings is corroborated by the fact that *darfn* had the permission reading in Western Yiddish texts from the 18th century in contrast to later 'Easternized' texts (Kerler 1999: 49). This would imply that the necessity reading persisted in the Eastern Yiddish varieties.

    Yiddish MUZN is a highly polyfunctional modal which covers all types of necessity: 1. participant internal necessity, 2. objective necessity, 3. obligation, 4. high probability. The same meanings are found with the counterparts in Older and Modern German. They are also evident in the Slavonic equivalents of German loanwords. It is worth noting that six Slavonic languages borrowed *müssen* (Polish *musieć*, Lower Sorbian *musaś*, Czech *muset*, Slovak *musiet'*, Ukrainian *musyty*, Belorussian *music'*).[16]

    MEGN has the following meanings: 1. permission, 2. objective possibility, 3. concessive. Yiddish *megn* differs considerably from its German cognate *mögen* which has neither meaning 1, nor the dynamic meaning 2. *mögen* expresses an epistemic possibility (46), the non-modal meaning 'to like sth.' (47) or it can be used as an optative marker (48):

(46) *Er   mag   krank   sein.*
      he   may.PRS.3SG ill   be.INF
      'Maybe, he's ill.'

(47) *Ich mag   kein   Eis.*
      I   like.PRS.1SG no   ice_cream
      'I don't like ice cream.'

(48) *Möge   Gott dir   verzeihen!*
      OPTATIVE God   you.DAT   forgive.INF
      'May God forgive you!'

The meaning 'concessive', however, does feature in both languages, as the translation (50) of Yiddish (49) shows;

(49)   *Der yid meg zayn orem, dokh iz er zeyer raykh [...]*

(50)   *Der Jude mag   arm   sein,   so ist   er*
        the Jew   may.PRS.3SG poor be.INF so be. PRS.3SG he
        doch   reich [...]
        yet   rich
        'A Jew may be poor, yet is he nonetheless very rich [...]'

The meanings of Yiddish *megn* 1 and 2 existed in Early High German *mögen*; cf. the examples from the 15th and 16th century German which express participant external possibility including permission:

(51)   Luther: *Alle die in der grafschaft zu Peitigo sizent, dieselben mugent wolfarn und zihen in der herren land gen Bayrn* [...] 1435
        'All those that reside in the shire of Peitigo, they can travel and go into the lords' country towards Bavaria.'

(52)   *Sihe, da ist eine stad nahe, darein ich fliehen mag.*
        'Look, there is a town near, wherein I can flee.'

Also the English *may* can denote participant external possibility:

(53)   *To get to the station, you may take bus 60*

(54)   *John may leave now.*

The analysis shows that Yiddish *megn* does differ from its German and English counterparts, but its polysemy pattern is included in the more polyfunctional English cognate. The same meanings were found in earlier periods of German. As the pattern is not evident in the Slavonic languages – there is no modal functioning as a concessive marker – we can conclude that the semantics of *megn* is typical of Germanic modals.

NIT TORN has the meanings 'prohibition' and 'objective impossibility'. An equivalent form does not exist in Modern German. However, in earlier periods of the German language, including Early High German there is evidence of the cognate verb *turren*. It had the meaning 'to dare' and could

take on a prohibition reading in negative contexts (cf. Grimm 1854-1954, Bd. 11). A similar polysemy pattern as with *turren* is found in Modern Danish *turde* which - actually being a cognate of *dürfen* - has also the meanings 'to dare' and in archaic speech 'to be allowed to do' (cf. Brandt 1999).

(55) Danish
  DR tør   ikke   lave   satire mere.
  DR dare   not   do.INF satire more
  'D[anmarks] R[adio] doesn't dare to broadcast any satirical pro-
  grammes any more.'

(56) Danish
  At formen   skyldes   labialisering, tør   anses   for
  that form.ART owe.REFL labialization may see.REFL for
  givet.
  given
  'It may be taken for granted that the form is caused by labialization.'

In contrast to Yiddish *nit torn,* the Middle High German and Danish coun-terparts are not restricted to negated contexts. Among the languages ana-lyzed here, only Russian has a modal with the semantics of *nit torn*: the impersonal *nel'zja.* A possible influence is not excluded because, as Kerler (1999: 49) states, in Easternized texts from the beginning of the 18th cen-tury, *nit torn* replaced *nit darfn* in the meaning 'prohibition'. We come to the conclusion that in Yiddish *nit torn* as a negative polarity item reflects a semantic pattern which does not exist in Germanic languages. We are deal-ing with an independent semantic change that lead to a polysemy pattern identical to the Russian modal *nel'zja.*

Yiddish KENEN does not differ from its German counterpart *können.* It also coincides with the Slavonic cognates of Protoslavonic **mogti.* As the latter belong to the oldest modals in Slavonic we do not have to assume language contact, but independent grammaticalization processes leading to an identical polysemy pattern.

As listed in chapter 4.3. ZOLN has three main usages: 1. weak neces-sity; 2. hearsay and 3. subjunctive. There is a considerable overlap with Early Modern and Modern German *sollen.* The first two meanings are at-tested for the Modern German counterpart *sollen*; cf. the translation of example (32) above.

(57) *Zinger soll mehr als eine Million Dollar auf ein Bank-Konto in der*
      Schweiz transferiert haben.
      'Zinger is said to have transferred more than a million dollar to a
      bank account in Switzerland.'

(58) *Wohin soll ich gehen?*
      'Where am I to go?'

The subjunctive function, however, is not evident in German *sollen*. The
West Slavonic languages borrowed the first two meanings by mapping
them onto a possession verb (e.g. Polish *mieć*). *Mieć* has also developed a
kind of hypothetical use which however does not coincide with the sub-
junctive.

As indicated in Table 1, KERN has no cognates among other Germanic
modals. It is etymologically related to German *gehören* which has the non-
modal meaning 'to belong to'. In the reflexive form governing an infinitive
with *zu, gehören* has a specific deontic meaning relating to etiquette rules.
The construction is impersonal and demands the dummy subject *es*; cf.:

(59) *Es   gehört   sich   nicht   am   Tisch zu singen.*
      It   behove.3SG REFL not   at.the table to sing.INF
      'It is not decent to sing at the table.'

Apart from that, we find the use of personally constructing *gehören* plus
participle passive in spoken varieties of German; this modal passive con-
struction expresses a strong necessity:

(60) *Das Gras [...] war   hoch, es gehörte   gemäht.*[17]
      The grass   be.PST.3SG high it behove.PST.3SG cut.PTCP
      'The grass stood high, it needed cutting.'

A polysemy pattern partially overlapping with German *gehören* is found
with the impersonal Polish modal *należy* which apart from the above-
mentioned meanings can express an objective necessity. Neither German
gehören, nor Polish *należy* can be used in the epistemic sense which is the
main meaning of *kern*. Yiddish *kern/gehern* differs from both modals not
only in its semantics, but also in its syntax, because it forms a personal
construction with an infinitive. This leads to the conclusion that *kern/ ge-*

hern represents an element which can neither be ascribed to the Germanic, nor Slavonic component of Yiddish.

Table 6. Semantic overlap

Yiddish modal	German modal	Slavonic modal
darfn	—	*trzeba* (Pol), *nado* (Rus)
muzn	*müssen*	*musieć* (Pol), *musyty* (Ukr) a.o.
megn	—	—
nit torn	—	*nel'zja* (Rus)
kenen	*können*	*móc* (Pol), *moč'* (Rus) a.o.
zoln	partly *sollen*	partly *mieć* (Pol)

5.5. The results of the contact study

The analysis has shown that the morphology and the syntax of Yiddish modals clearly follow Germanic patterns. In the semantics, however, Yiddish modals show much less convergence with their German and other Germanic counterparts. Many modals are characterized by slightly different patterns of polyfunctionality. In some cases, we are dealing with internal semantic shifts (as with *nit torn*) which might have occurred under Slavonic influence; in other cases Yiddish retains old meanings which were lost in German. Also, we cannot exclude the possibility (from similar patterns) that Slavonic played some role in these cases of semantic persistence (e.g. *darfn*). There is, however, no clear case of meaning transfer from Slavonic. We conclude that the modal system is based on the 'German' derived component of Yiddish and shows the relatively limited impact of Slavonic. These findings need to be reconciled with the fact that there is a strong Slavonic influence on Yiddish lexis and syntax. We put forward the hypothesis that our findings can be explained by purely linguistic predictors of contact-induced change in modal systems, because the social factor 'intensity of contact' would predict a high degree of Slavonic influence.

Before offering a more general explanation for the limited Slavonic influence on the Yiddish modal system we would like to point out that the modals behave like other analytical markers of the Yiddish verb. As a matter of fact, all auxiliaries are of Germanic origin, none are formally borrowed from Slavonic: subjunctive *zoln*, causative *lozn*, conditional *volt*,

passive *vern,* future *veln,* aspectual *flegn, haltn,* and *nemn* and imperative *lomir* (< *lozn*). This shows the strong tendency in Yiddish to use Germanic lexical material in grammaticalization processes (for a survey cf. Reershemius 2007). It goes without saying that in many cases the grammaticalization is functionally copying Slavonic structures, as in the case of the aspectual and conditional auxiliaries ('ordinary contact induced grammaticalization', see below). The question of whether the so called 'hidden standard' influenced the general preference in Yiddish for Germanic based auxiliaries has to be left for future research. The hidden standard is 'the more or less explicit application of criteria derived from N[ew]H[igh]G[erman] linguistic material to determine the acceptability of Yiddish forms for literary usage' (Schaechter 1969: 286).

6. Modal systems in language contact: The role of innovations

First, we shall have a brief look at the state of research on modals in language contact. The known borrowing scales (e.g. Thomason 2001) operate with discrete dichotomies like content words vs. function word and claim that the former are more easily transferred than the latter. Apart from that, it is generally held that nouns are more easily borrowed than verbs. The categories used in the traditional borrowing scales do not take into consideration the hybrid nature of modals: on the one hand they function like grammatical markers of the verb, on the other hand they show the morphology of fully lexical elements. For our study, we can build on the recent general cross-linguistic studies on the 'borrowability' of grammatical elements carried out in the framework of the Manchester Romani Project (Elšík/Matras 2006) and the project 'Grammatical borrowing in Cross-Linguistic Perspective' (Matras and Sakel 2007) and the handbook 'Modals in the languages of Europe' (Hansen and de Haan 2009). Elšík and Matras (2009: 312) claim that 'modality is a domain that is conspicuously susceptible to structural borrowing'. Elšik and Matras (2006) show, that the Romani modal systems are characterized by massive borrowing of matter and pattern from the second languages spoken by Romani speaker. Additional data are compiled in the book Matras and Sakel (2007) which contains descriptions of grammatical borrowing in 27 languages from every continent. Finally, Hansen and de Haan (2009) report of a whole series of material borrowings in this area. From the some fifty languages of Europe (apart from the varieties of Romani) analyzed in the book around

one half has reportedly borrowed at least one modal from another language. Matras (2007: 45) shows that some modal categories are more likely to be borrowed than others. The overall likelihood of modals to be affected by borrowing is expressed by the following simplified hierarchy:

necessity > possibility > volition

Necessity appears at the top of the implicative scale. It is the most frequently borrowed semantic category and possibility and volition are not borrowed unless necessity is borrowed too.[18] The asymmetry correlates with the fact that present-day Romani dialects do not share a common form expressing necessity. This seems to imply that these forms cannot be traced back to Early Romani, but were borrowed from contact languages.

The borrowing scale is corroborated by data from the German-Slavonic contact area. Several studies have shown that German has considerably influenced the modal systems of the West Slavonic languages (Hansen 2001; Besters-Dilger 1997). These languages have borrowed both form-meaning units and meanings exclusively from the field of necessity. Six Slavonic languages have borrowed the German modal verb *müssen* (see above) and one has taken over the modal *dürfen* in the necessity reading.[19] A case of meaning transfer is 'weak necessity based on someone's uttered wish' which was copied from German *sollen* to Polish, Czech, Slovak and Sorbian possession verbs (cf. Weiss 1987 and Hansen 2001; 2004). In these cases we are dealing with a process of what Heine and Kuteva (2003: 533) call 'ordinary contact induced grammaticalization', which involves the following steps: 1) speakers of Slavonic notice that there is a gram for the meaning 'weak necessity based on someone's uttered wish' in German; 2) they develop an equivalent gram using material available in their own language, and 3) they draw on universal strategies of grammaticalization, using a verb of possession in order to develop the gram. All the borrowings from German lead to innovations in the affected modal systems. Diachronic research in Hansen (2000; 2001) has shown that the Slavonic languages originally did not have dedicated modals denoting 'necessity'[20]. In this situation speakers of Slavonic languages came into contact with German and readily borrowed the modal or copied the meaning. In this way, Slavonic speakers gained morpho-syntactic equivalent means of translating German modals into their native language. The modals reached the East Slavonic languages via Polish (cf. Hansen 2000). The results of these con-

tact-induced changes was the addition of new linguistic features. There is
no evidence that old native linguistic features were replaced.

We have also some data concerning the borrowing processes between
closely related languages. As Besters-Dilger (2005) shows, 15th century
Ukrainian almost completely adopted the Polish modal system within a
single century. Here we are able to find cases where a borrowed modal
supplanted an already existing one with an identical meaning. Another case
of the replacement of a native modal by a synonymous borrowing is Rus-
sian *močno* or *moščno* 'one can'. It was replaced by its Polish cognate
možno in the 17th century. As these data show, the borrowability among
closely related languages seems to differ from non-related languages.

If we compare the results of the language contact German > Slavonic
modal system with our findings concerning the contact situation Slavonic >
Yiddish, we may say that these contact situations differ in one important
aspect: Yiddish does not seem to have had these 'functional gaps' in com-
parison to the Slavonic languages; i.e. the Slavonic modal systems had no
specific functional element which could have been transferred to Yiddish
as a new feature. Thus, the difference in the borrowing of modals can be
ascribed to the fact that modals are more easily borrowed if they add a new
feature to the modal system of the receiving language. This seems to hold
for the contact between genetically non-related languages.

7. Conclusion

In this article we have provided an initial outline of the Yiddish modal
system using a cross-linguistic perspective. Modals are defined as gram-
maticalized elements, which express the basic notions of 'necessity' and
'possibility' and show syntactic properties of auxiliaries. We suggest that
modals be identified by locating them on a grammaticalization chain ex-
tending from content words to fully-fledged modal auxiliaries. This system
is characterised by its verbal morphology and a dedicated paradigm of
forms. In addition, we addressed the question of whether this system shows
common features with Germanic and/or with Slavonic modal systems. It
turns out, that despite the strong Slavonic influence on the Yiddish lan-
guage system as a whole, Yiddish modals clearly show morpho-syntactic
features typical of the Germanic languages and no evidence of borrowings
from Slavonic. From a semantic point of view, the system is characterised
by its own specific features setting it apart from both Germanic and Sla-

vonic languages. The semantic space covered by the Yiddish modals shows very few patterns which might go back to neighbouring Slavonic structures. The data leads us to conclude that the Yiddish modal system as a whole has been only marginally influenced by the neighbouring Slavonic languages. These findings can only be explained by recursion to linguistic factors affecting the outcome of contact-induced change. We have put forward the hypothesis that modals are more easily borrowed if they add a new feature to the recipient modal system rather than if they replace one of the recipient language's original features. For a corroboration of this hypothesis we need more studies on the borrowability of modals.

Notes

1. All Yiddish examples needing transliteration have been transliterated with the YIVO system; examples that were already transliterated have remained unchanged.
2. Among others, Eggers (1998: 230-240) describes, how in Polish Eastern Yiddish the usage of the personal pronouns *ir* 'you (2PL)' and *ets* 'you (DUAL)' is modelled on the usage of the personal pronoun *wy* 'you' in Polish dialects: if *wy* is used as an honorific address, the Polish verb takes the 2Pl ending *-cie*, and Yiddish correspondingly uses the pronoun *ir*; if dialectal Polish *wy* is used to address a pair of people, the verb takes the dual ending *-ta*, and Yiddish uses the dual pronoun *ets*, originally a Bavarian feature. Later, the honorific usage of *ir* became replaced by the syntagma *a yid* '(lit.) a Jew', a form of address working after the Polish model of *pan* 'Sir', a noun with pronominal usage when used as a form of address. Consequently, *ir* replaced *ets* as a means of general address to 2Pl.
3. Not every item Eggers labels as syntactic feature must necessarily be regarded as such, for example the forms of the analytical comparatives and superlatives could also be related to morphology.
4. Due to a lack of space, we were not able to discuss the controversial question of whether volition has to be considered part of the semantic space of modality or not. In this article, we excluded verbs of volition.
5. The examples are taken from the mailing list 'Mendele', except ex. (4) which goes back to our questionnaire on LINGUIST List (s. ch. 4.1)
6. LINGUIST List of March 6, 2007 and Yiddish Forum e-mail of March 26, 2007
7. We would like to thank all scholars who have filled in our questionnaire; we are especially grateful to Evita Wiecki and to Yitskhok Niborski for their invaluable comments.
8. Cf. the lists of modal verbs in Mark (1978) and Jacobs (2005).

9. As a matter of fact, these passive constructions are rare.
10. Birkmann (1987) gives an overview of the historical development of all verbs belonging to the class of 'Praeteritopraesentia' in Germanic. However, he does not take Yiddish into account.
11. For the various spellings of the MHG modals cf. Grimm (1854-1954) and Birkmann (1987).
12. In Old High German the verb forms of *thurfan* 'need, require' and *gidurran* 'dare' blend to *turren* (cf. Birkmann 1987: 146-148). In Old Danish, the verb forms of *thorfa/thorva* 'need, require' and *thora* 'dare' also blend, leading to *turde* (cf. Birkmann 1987: 332-334). Therefore we have to assume *turde* as a cognate of both YID *darfn* and *nit torn*.
13. Danish *mâtte* < Old Danish *mughu/mogha* is a cognate only of YID *megn* < OHG *magan / mugan*, but not of YID *muzn* (cf. Birkmann 1987: 155-157 and 328-330).
14. *tsu* corresponds to English *to*, German *zu* and Danish *at*.
15. Cf. Bech (1951), van der Auwera (2001), Grimm (1854-1954, Bd. 2).
16. For more detailed information about the borrowing of German *müssen* into the Slavonic languages cf. Hansen (2000).
17. Example from Zehetner (2005).
18. Cf. also the data from the Latvian dialect Latgalian which has borrowed the two epistemic markers *može* 'maybe' and *muszeń* 'certainly' (see Nau this volume).
19. Upper Sorbian *dyrbjeć*; Old Czech *drbiti* 'must' was replaced by *muset*.
20. The notion of 'necessity' was expressed by lexical elements or by the semantically diffuse 'independent infinitive' – construction (Cf. Hansen 2001; Večerka 1996).

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