

## **Yiddish and English in Contact: The Case of Haredi Satmar Yiddish**

Due to the number of its speakers, Haredi Satmar Yiddish is likely to become the most visible variety of Yiddish in the 21st century. It is spoken and written by Satmar Hasidim in and around New York City and numerous other cities and towns around the world.

Ever since the founding of the modern Haredi Satmar movement in the late 1940s in New York City, the Yiddish variety spoken by the Satmar Haredim has been subject to considerable influence from coterritorial English. The extent of the English impact on Haredi Satmar Yiddish is evident in the number of borrowed nouns, verbs, geographical designations, and word-formation patterns in the spoken as well as in the written language.

In my talk, I will address an aspect of Yiddish–English language contact that has not been referred to in published linguistic research. That is the question of the extent to which core features of Eastern European Yiddish have survived into present-day Haredi Satmar Yiddish in America. Most significant in this study is whether the features in question have been able to maintain their position in Haredi Satmar Yiddish despite their absence in English. The absence of a given feature in English will in all likelihood favor alternative Yiddish constructions that have equivalents in English, and will eventually trigger the elimination of the feature in Haredi Satmar Yiddish. Such features include:

- formation of the past tense with the auxiliary *zayn* ‘to be’
- formation of the passive voice with the auxiliary *vern*
- formation of relative clauses with the relative particle *vos* and a resumptive personal pronoun
- consecutive word order
- negative concord.

My survey is based on systematic examination of Haredi Satmar Yiddish texts (novels, newspapers, magazines) published in New York in the last ten to fifteen years and, secondly, recent fieldwork among some of the last speakers of the source dialect of Haredi Satmar Yiddish in Romania. In this case, the language of the latter provides a solid basis for the comparison of European and American Satmar Yiddish.