"You Call This English?!?!"

An Anthropological Study of Conversational Style in Jewish Children's Literature

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...knowledge of a language is phenomenologically distinct from other types of
historical or scientific knowledge. It is more lasting, an enduring awareness, which
indelibly scorches the psyche.

The gift of a unique linguistic identity, for a Jew awash in secular pluralism, can be
of immeasurable value.

(Michael Gross 1990: p 34)

Introduction

According to the semantic approach, meaning resides in the structure of
linguistic forms. In the view from pragmatics, meaning derives from context. If
one were to conceive of language as a beam of light, a study of semantic meaning
would involve an examination of the particles or waves of which the beam consists.
Meaning would be internal to the beam. However, much can be learned about the
light from studying its projection onto a screen, that is, by considering its context.
In this paper I will explore the assumptions underlying these two approaches in
linguistics, and then discuss previous research on the relationship between language
and cultural context in the case of Jewish English spoken by New York Jews.

Then, in an attempt to both extend the sociolinguistic paradigm, and further
illustrate the limits of formal linguistics, I turn to Jewish children's literature to see
whether the findings of previous research are borne out in written language.
Written language is treated as a layer that is removed from culture. The distinction
made between spoken and written language is informed by the philosophical
assumptions underlying traditional approaches to language.
Further, the forms of Jewish English may be traced to the influence of Yiddish. Within a framework which considers the relation of form to social meaning, linguistic continuity between Yiddish and English reflects a cultural continuity. I will explore the possibility of a broader cultural continuity, first by discussing the social significance of Hebrew, and finally by discussing Jewish values more generally. Thus, this research will broaden the scope of what is meant by language by focusing on the pragmatic aspects of Jewish language.

Jewish Intralinguistics: the sociological study of Jewish Languages

First, the study of Jewish languages must be understood as a part of a discipline known as "Jewish Intralinguistics." (Gold 1981: p6) The description of Jewish English is an important goal in Jewish Intralinguistics, as it is believed that such a description will shed light on the question of what linguistic features constitute a Jewish Language. The implication of this aim is that Jewish English is studied not so much as a dialect of English as Jewish language. According to Joshua Fishman, a Jewish Language exists "...wherever a Jewish community, initially coming from elsewhere, begins to use the local co-territorial...language and...(in view of its prior speech-and-writing habits and in view of its unique Jewish traditional objects, behaviors and values) alters that co-territorial language." (Fishman 1981: p6) To apply this definition to the study of Jewish English, Jewish Intralinguistics aims to describe the speech of Jews of Yiddish-speaking ancestry in terms of the influence of Yiddish.

Moreover, Jewish Languages are described from a sociological perspective.
They are compared in order to gain an understanding of the sociolinguistic dimension of Jewish people as a group. "Jewish Intralinguistics...is based on a sociocultural classification, pertaining to characteristics of people and not of their language." (Gold, 1981. p31) This comment implies a dichotomization of language and people which is indicative of a particular framework in linguistics in general. Such a dichotomization is at odds with a pragmatic analysis of language, in which one studies the social or interpersonal function of language.

**Concepts of language and their relation to linguistics: an argument for social meaning**

In order to analyze pragmatic meaning, one must situate oneself within the appropriate philosophical framework. According to Frank Smith, one's thinking about language is motivated by one of two metaphors. He contrasts the notion of language as a conduit of information with the idea that the function of language is to aid in the creation of worlds. His argument is that the former view is inappropriate. Information is useful only when it can be interpreted. In order to interpret information, the mind utilizes a "theory of the world". (Smith 1985: p195-7) Smith illustrates his point with the example that the meaning of the word "fire" depends not on any information inherent in the form, but on the contextual knowledge which the hearer employs in the process of interpretation. (Smith 1985: p204)

David Bleich expands Smith's metaphors in terms of the emphasis they place on the social aspects of language. "...students are taught to treat their language as a
ool, as if it were not already ineradicably bound up with their individual histories as social beings, as if it can be cut and shaped into an all-purpose conduit of 'thought'". Since, according to Kuhn, the theories that are taught in textbooks reflect the current paradigm (Kuhn 1962: p137), Bleich's comment may be seen as reflective of his attitude toward what would be called the "traditional" paradigm. Bleich argues that traditionally, language is regarded as asocial. According to Bleich, this view ignores the collective or social basis of language. (Bleich 1988: p16) Instead it exalts the individualistic nature of language, claiming that language can be understood apart from the context of social function.

Bleich goes on to discuss further development in thought about the nature of language. He describes the notion that language is best understood as a game in which meaning derives from socially established rules of use. Bleich calls this view "the masculine retreat" because it attempts to include social function in its concept of language, but does not quite succeed in overcoming the force of the traditional (so-called "masculine") paradigm. The metaphor of language as a game focuses on intertextuality at the expense of the "historicity of reading communities". (Bleich, p23) In other words, language is typically seen as existing outside of people, rather than as a part of them; thus, people are not believed to have a subjective role in determining the social function of language. This view emphasizes the relationship between people--the "language game"--as opposed to people as relators--the players.

Both the traditional view and the so-called masculine retreat consider language solely in terms of its informational content, though in the latter
framework information is regarded as socially constituted. "Uses of language that give attitudes, opinions, feelings, generalizations, guesses, and doubts--commonplace, socially interactive behavior--are understood to interfere with the basic need for "clear information". (Bleich, p13) In formulating his concept of language based on "intersubjectivity", Bleich advocates an integration of form with social context in the creation of worlds. Individual and community simultaneously constitute one another. (Bleich, p84)

Bleich's support of a view of language which stresses social meaning amounts to a criticism of the Chomskyan framework in linguistics. A salient feature of this framework is the distinction between competence and performance. Competence and performance are outgrowths of the two views for language described above. (Bleich, p63) Supposedly, the fundamental structures of language will be understood once linguistic competence is adequately described. The primacy of individual competence makes social elements, which are considered part of performance, seem mysterious. (Bleich, p69) The underlying assumptions Chomskyan linguistics seems incompatible with Bleich's inclusion of social meaning.

However, what of Chomsky's defense? Chomsky insists that the study of linguistic structure apart from communicative function does not preclude the study of communicative function. (Chomsky 1975: p56) One may fault Chomsky for overvaluing linguistic structure, thereby implying that language can ultimately and completely be described by linguistic formalisms. But it is another matter entirely to argue that language structure cannot be described without recourse to social
function. Moreover, even if one describes structure independently of function, one can still describe function partially in terms of how language structures are used, thus retaining a connection between the two levels without reducing one to the other. Dore suggests that the grammar may constrain, but does not determine, the kinds of social acts that can be performed by a given utterance." (Dore 1977: p245)

Bleich's sentiments about traditional linguistics are echoed loudly in the work of Lakoff and Johnson. They describe explicitly the effect of the metaphor of "Western objectivism" on the study of language. "Chomsky's use of the term 'competence' as opposed to 'performance' is an attempt to define certain aspects of language as the only legitimate objects...excluding all matters of...language use." (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: p205) Meaning is disembodied from anything people do. (Lakoff and Johnson, p199) Lakoff and Johnson's theory about metaphor is antithetical to "Western Objectivism". They argue that metaphor is a primary mechanism of understanding, and creating new realities. Consequently, for Lakoff and Johnson meaning is not inherent in language, but rather is constructed by people. (Lakoff and Johnson, p196)

**Development in pragmatics: the study of how language is used to convey social meaning**

From the starting point that meaning is socially constructed, there are two directions in which one could go. One approach would involve an examination of how referential meaning is constituted by people's beliefs, rather than grounded in
objective reality. For reasons noted by Bleich, this approach does not take a radical
deuearture from the traditional concept of language in that it does not portray people
as subjective.

The approach that will become the focus of this paper is concerned with social
meaning in the non-referential sense. The antidote to the traditional emphasis on
referential meaning can be found in pragmatics. Austin discusses how one "does
things with words", implying social interaction or context. He distinguishes
between "constatives" and "performatives". "Constative" refers to those sentences
which state a fact and which may be judged true or false. A "performativa queue a
sentence, the very uttering of which, is constitutes the performance of action. For
example, the sentence I promise to write you a letter. is a performative because in
uttering it, the promise is performed. (Austin 1962: p3-5)

That is, the promise has the potential to be performed. Certain conditions,
called felicity conditions, must be met in order for the performance of the act to be
proper or "happy". Thus a performative is judged either felicitous or infelicitous
depending on whether its felicity conditions are met. (Austin, p14) For instance, a
performative is infelicitous if it is insincere. If a person utters I promise... but is
insincere, then no promise is actually made.

The ramifications of contextual approaches to language are exemplified by
the process of translation. According to Nir, "the more a translation is
contextualized in terms of culture and situation, the greater is the challenge for the
translator to build functionally relevant features of the situation into the meaning of
the target language text." (Nir 1984: p87?) Such a translation would characterize
the contextual approach, which I have been contrasting to the traditional structural approach in the previous paragraphs.

For example, the translation of a police officer's request for a driver to move her car is riddled with the question of what aspects of the request ought to be translated. According to Blum-Kulka an American police officer will prefer to use an indirect request ("It's a no stopping zone, sir") whereas an Israeli police officer would use language directly ("Move your car!"). Nir asserts that "...the transfer of the speech act rather than the mere verbal utterance, will be more credible." (Nir, p86). A translation of the entire speech act rather than just the form of the utterance reflects the much broader conception of language outlined above in terms of including contextual meaning.

Thus the approach described above, compared with Chomsky's approach, does indeed focus on different aspects of language. It prioritizes the social nature of language, and would be favored by Bleich and Smith. In fact, Silverstein asserts that the main function of language is its pragmatic role in human behavior. (Silverstein 1977: p119) Consequently, "the linguistic analysis is never complete until we can describe the relationship of linguistic form to total meaning." (Silverstein 1977: p123) At least in certain cases, an utterance can only be understood with respect to social context. (Silverstein 1977: p124)

models of politeness in conversation

Tannen's research on politeness in conversational style illustrates the importance of work in pragmatics for understanding the nature of language. In the
framework of Fraser and Nolen, to be polite is to follow the rules of a conversational contract. (Fraser and Nolen 1981: p 96). The conversational contract limits what is the appropriate form and content of a linguistic interaction. The usefulness of such a general definition of politeness is that it allows for the culture-specific elaboration of politeness.

According to Tannen's presentation of Robin Lakoff's Rules of Politeness or Rapport, in which politeness phenomena may be accounted for by three principles, each of which, when utilized, results in a certain pragmatic effect. They are as follows: (1) Don't impose, which conveys distance; (2) Give options, which conveys deference; (3) Be friendly, which conveys camaraderie. (Tannen 1984: p11) Thus we have a framework in which to evaluate language in terms of its performative aspect. When one speaks, one does something with language regarding the interaction, for instance effecting either distance or closeness between the interlocuters.

Lakoff's later interpretation is that these principles exist on a continuum between "message content" and "involvement" (Tannen 1984: p13) Elsewhere, Tannen drives home this point, arguing that language differs along the dimension of "relative focus on personal involvement", and further that the more focus on personal involvement, the more contextual language is. (Tannen 1983: p124) This equivalence is paradoxical in that it suggests that language at the opposite end of the politeness continuum is asocial. In other words, distance is an acultural strategy found in decontextualized language.

Tannen's characterization of social distance reflects stubborn traces of the
traditional view of language. The traditional paradigm has led her to be inclined to view the nature of language at the "distance" end of the continuum as primarily referential. Silverstein's writing contains a forceful reminder that reference is not something inherent in language. Instead reference is a kind of linguistic performance and therefore socially constructed. (Silverstein 1976: p18)

Grice's formulation of conversational implicature illustrates the dual nature of (some) language as both referential and social. His conversational contract is based on the notion that language conveys information, not social meaning. For instance, one of his conversational maxims is "Do not say what you believe to be false." This maxim is typical in its emphasis on truth and information. Although it is not the only possible kind of language contract, Grice's model demonstrates how language that could be described as informational or referential, is grounded in social function. Lakoff's interpretation that in the Gricean style only message content is important (Tannen 1984: p13) overlooks the pragmatic nature of referential language.

In order to understand Lakoff in a way that is consistent with Silverstein, we must not assume that all pragmatic meaning takes the form of "interpersonal involvement". We must recognize the fundamental level, in which all (not only high-involvement) linguistic interaction is pragmatic. Distance cannot be distinguished from deference/camaraderie on the basis of the relative importance of message or referentiality versus interpersonal involvement, except on a superficial level. (However, this is not to say that the distinction does not exist.)

To further understand how referentiality is a social function, one could
examine scientific language, since scientific language is not typically thought of as
having any social meaning whatsoever. Research demonstrating the social nature of
scientific language has been done, but a review of this literature is beyond the scope
of this paper.

Moreover, the distance-deference-camaraderie continuum implies that
derferential politeness is more like referential language than camaraderie-based
politeness is. Intuitively, deferential strategies are not more message-oriented than
camaraderie strategies. Both deference and camaraderie are "meta-message"
oriented. Deference is a meta-message different from camaraderie, but still it is a
meta-message.

Katriel's study of politeness in Hebrew emphasizes the fact that deference is
really just as much a meta-message as camaraderie. Katriel interprets ritualized
directness in language as a signal of *communitas* which refers to a state of world in
which social status becomes irrelevant. *Societas* corresponds to a deference-based
politeness. Deference is called into play when intelocuters deal with one another as
"others" or abstract social categories rather than people per se. (Kochman 1984:
p205) Such is the meta-message of deference.

Thus the distance-deference-camaraderie continuum begins to fall apart. The
solution lies in a separation of the referentiality continuum from the interpersonal
involvement continuum. There are really two continuums: message to
metamessage (in which the variable is degree of referentiality), and deference to
camaraderie (in which the variable is *kind* of meta-message).
According to Tannen, then, Jewish English (at least that spoken by New Yorkers) places a high focus on a camaraderie metamessage. She suggests that "...the stereotype of the 'pushy New York Jew' may result in part from discourse conventions practiced by some native New Yorkers of East European descent."

(Tannen 1981: p133) In accordance with the aim of Jewish Intralinguistics to broadly characterize Jewish language, and for the sake of simplicity, I will use the more general term Jewish English to refer to the speech of New York Jews. However it remains to be seen whether the features observed by Tannen are applicable to the speech of all American Jews, since her research does not examine the effect of region on language difference. If it were found that the speech of Jews who are not from New York differs significantly, then it would be inaccurate to refer to New York Jewish English as Jewish English. However even if Tannen's results are not generalizable, perhaps they are a step in the direction of describing what it is that is common to all versions of Jewish English (though this would not justify the use of Jewish English to refer only to one version of it).

With this qualification in mind, we turn now to the features of Jewish English. The very linguistic conventions that are positively valued in Jewish English conversational style, are viewed negatively in standard English conversational style. Devices which impede communication in standard English, enhance it in JE, and vice-versa. (Tannen 1984: p78) Tannen's goal is to demonstrate that speakers of Jewish English use linguistic devices which effect camaraderie by means of a meta-message which says "we are close enough not to
have to use deferential language with each other." She supports her argument with a variety of features, including (but not limited to) "machine-gun questions", humor, the use of ethnic language, overlap, and story-telling.

Jewish English conversational style is characterized by an abundance of informational questions put to the hearer, machine-gun style, that is, rapidly and at fast pace. Among speakers whose communicative competence includes this style, this linguistic device has the effect of diminishing the distance between interlocuters. (Tannen 1984: p64)

Further, machine-gun questions often involve the use of "reduced" syntax. Tannen contrasts the Jewish English utterance *When you were how old?* with the standard form *How old were you?* The former achieves camaraderie in the Jewish English politeness system, but to a speaker who does not share this system the same utterance might signal boredom. (Tannen 1984: p66)

Second, Tannen found that speakers of "New York Jewish" background made great use of ironic humor as a conversational strategy. (Tannen 1984: p130) She defines ironic utterance as an utterance which is not meant literally; thus its function is to enrich interpersonal involvement.

Though Tannen found little evidence of it, humor can also take the form of sarcasm, as illustrated by the phenomenon of responding with sarcastic questions such as "You call him a doctor?" and "You think we're experts?". This kind of response is particularly meaningful as a linguistic manifestation of the camaraderie-based politeness strategy, in that unlike the machine-gun questions described by Tannen, they are not intended to elicit information from the hearer.
Their sole purpose is to provide a way for the speaker to ridicule, thereby effecting a lack of distance between interlocuters.

The following dialogue, quoted from The Power of Yiddish Thinking, exemplifies both of the above conversational devices.

"Does your husband remember your anniversary?"
"Does my husband remember to zip his pants in the morning?"
"What did he give you last year?"
"What does a stone give to a bird?"
"Didn't you ask for a mink coat?"
"Is G-d a furrier?"
"Well, doesn't he ever bring you gifts?"
"Does Cary Grant call me for weekends on the Riviera?" (Marcus 1971: p38-9)

This example combines machine-gun questions and humor, to achieve the conversational effect of camaraderie in a game of "conversational ping-pong" (xx, pxx) in which the ball is relayed "faster than would be expected". (Tannen 1984: p66)

Another "high involvement strategy" described by Tannen involves using ethnically marked language. For example, Tannen analyzes one passage in which a speaker responds by uttering "oy, oy", an expression that is clearly ethnically marked, and explicitly related to Yiddish. (Tannen 1984: p85) The use of Yiddish has social meaning in that it functions as indexes of camaraderie in the context of conversation.

A fourth conversational device consists of overlap. Tannen observes that in Jewish English conversational style, speakers' turns often overlap. She interprets this phenomenon to mean that in the signalling system of Jewish English, overlap indicates enthusiasm. (Tannen 1984: p60) In contrast, in the standard signalling system, overlap indicates lack of patience. (Tannen 1984: p78)
Finally, story-telling is an integral part of Jewish English conversational style. (Tannen 1984: p100) Tannen's informants of "New York Jewish" ethnic background told personal stories in order to illustrate a point, in "story-rounds" in which the others in the conversation did not participate. Analysis of the devices employed within the story narrative would be useful and interesting but is beyond the limits of this paper.

Evidence from cross-cultural miscommunication supports the idea that there is such a thing as Jewish English Conversational style. Tannen observes a systematic misjudgment of intention across cultures. She found that the interlocuters of similar ethnic background (i.e. "New York Jewish") would interpret linguistic behavior differently from interlocuters who did not share that background. (Tannen, 1984, p26) For example, to one person, machine-gun questions were a signal of enthusiasm, but to another, an imposition.

Moreover, miscommunication can be described in terms of pragmatic theory. An utterance that is intended to effect camaraderie, but fails to do so, could be considered infelicitous. Infelicitous interactions are analogous to ungrammatical sentences. "Episodes in which conversational cooperation breaks down can be seen as starred sequences..." (Tannen, 1984, p39) Analysis of such episodes reveals an "interactional grammar" which relates utterance to conversational effect.

Further evidence for Jewish English conversational style

Ideally, says Tannen, conversational style is linked with other arenas of behavior. (Tannen 1984: p9) There is evidence that the principle of camaraderie
transcends linguistic behavior. Several researchers have studied Jewish public worship in terms of the model of conversational analysis. In the framework developed by Spolsky and Walters, a turn consists of "the right to speak (aloud) addressing G-d". In addition, the service may be described as "conversation shared between two main speakers", the leader and the congregation, who take turns addressing G-d. (Spolsky and Walters 1985: p58-9) Spolsky and Walters employ Edelsky's reconception of the notion of "floor" in their classification of worship styles. She proposes that there are two kinds of floors: single, in which one person at a time has the floor, and multiple, in which two or more people share the floor. Accordingly, the two proposed styles of worship utilize "a single grammar containing two contrasting typicality preferences". (Spolsky and Walters, p61) In the first typicality condition, a single floor is preferred, alternating between the leader and congregation. In the second, a multiple floor is preferred. A single floor is typical of Oriental and Western European worship, and a multiple floor is typical of Eastern European Jews. (Spolsky and Walters, p60)

The Eastern European multiple floor style is characterized by overlap and latch; that is, either the congregation and leader's turns partially co-occur, or if they are separate there is no pause between them. Moreover, not only does the congregation as a whole pray somewhat independently, but the individual members set their own pace as well. (Spolsky and Walters, p58)

Thus, analogous to the seemingly chaotic nature of New York Jewish conversational style, worship style appears disorganized, yet analysis reveals underlying order. In other words, multiple floor style is not sloppily performed
single floor style. Rather, it is a style unto itself, just as New York Jewish conversational style has a structure of its own. "If we find a great deal of regularity in a discourse type that speakers produce, we must assume that they are doing something well. It is our job as analysts to discover what it is that speakers are actually doing, rather than assuming that they are doing something else badly." (Linde 1977: p109)

However, despite Spolsky and Walters' acknowledgement that multiple floor is a legitimate style, their interpretation reflects their single-floor bias. According to Spolsky and Walters' interpretation, both the conversational style and the worship style are manifestations of one ideology: "...the right of individuals who know what is going on to take the floor without regard for others' rights to turns." (Spolsky and Walters, p64) Accounting for multiple floor by referring to a disregard for other's rights to turns indicates Spolsky and Walters' belief that multiple floor is achieved by disregarding the rules of single floor.

In light of Tannen's work, this interpretation is incorrect. Tannen, as discussed above, views overlap and latching as part of a turn-taking strategy that is associated with camaraderie. Spolsky and Walters ignore this ramification. Participants in multiple floor style do not disregard others' rights to turns. Rather they have a different notion of "turn", i.e. that it is shared, which is characteristic of the camaraderie strategy of politeness. In conversation and in worship, speakers of Jewish English are not simply misapplying the principle of deferential politeness; rather, they are correctly applying a camaraderie-based model of politeness. By describing the strategy in terms of disregarding others' rights to turns, Spolsky and
Walters imply individualism rather than camaraderie. In general, though, their research supports Tannen's findings, if only indirectly.

**motivation for studying written language: pragmatic meaning in written language**

The presence of the features described by Tannen in written language would provide strong support for the existence of Jewish English, in addition to forcing us to view written language differently. The Western view of written language reflects the belief that language and culture are separable. Written language is thought to be at the "content" end of Lakoff's continuum between "content" and "involvement".

To return to Nir's example of the translation of film, Nir supposes that cultural context is more important when translating a film than when translating written language. (Nir 1984: p?) This judgement is guided by the traditional notion that written language is asocial. Similarly, Wallace's proposal that students be permitted to read books which are written in Standard English, out loud in their own dialect reflects her ignorance of pragmatic differences. (Wallace 1986: p157) According to Wallace, reading in a given dialect merely entails phonetic and lexical change, and consequently ignores the possibility that a given speech act—for instance, sarcasm—runs counter to the cultural values held by speakers of that dialect.

However, written language need not be referential. Tannen notes that some kinds of written language are more like conversation than others are. In other
words reference is not an inherent part of written language. (Tannen 1983: p129) (Even language that is less like conversation is socially defined as such. "Content" or reference should not be confused with lack of pragmatic dimension, as discussed above.) Consequently, "...one cannot 'teach' literacy as if it can be acquired on top of any community and family background a child happens to have." (Bleich 1988, p76) Because of the connection between language and other fundamental aspects of culture, it is impossible to extract language from its cultural context.

How, then, does pragmatic meaning function in written language? Written language must be or "recontextualized" in order to be intelligible. (Shuman 1986: p192) A piece cannot be completely understood without reference to the whole. (Tannen 1984: p35) Written language must recreate the whole by means of recontextualization.

Recontextualization is only possible for the reader who already has a context to supply, for instance in order to read with proper intonation. A reader whose conversational style matches that presented in the dialogue, is able to evaluate the language in terms of social meaning. Without such knowledge, the dialogue is not credible.

The notion of recontextualizability suggests that mainstream conversational style in children's literature has the potential to diminish the strength of minority conversational styles. If a young reader's communicative competence includes both styles (say Jewish and mainstream) then whichever style they are exposed to will be the one which is reinforced. Thus children's literature could play a crucial role in language development.
evidence for Jewish English conversational style from Jewish children's literature

The first thing one notices about the language used in Jewish children's literature is that if not read with the proper context in mind, the language makes no sense. If the reader does not have this context in mind, then the language is interpreted literally—and literally, it does not make sense. In line with the preceding discussion, the language must be recontextualized. In this section I will discuss particular conversational devices, some of which were observed by Tannen, and others which are consistent with her interpretation of them.

ethnic language

One linguistic device found in the children's literature is the use of ethnically marked language involving Yiddish and Hebrew words or expressions. There was a wide range of ways in which such foreign words were codified, each with varying degrees of success with regard to achieving the effect of camaraderie. The word was either translated or not; they were italicized, written in boldface, or neither.

For example, in the following passage, the school principal, Rabbi Miller, is delivering an end-of-year speech to the kids. He says, from Summer Adventure (in Olomeinu)

"...the task of reminding each other to study and to practice what you've learned—that job will be your own. I wish you hatslacha (success) boys. May Hashem be with you!"

In the text, the word that the author believes to be unfamiliar to the reader, is translated smack in the middle of Rabbi Miller's speech.

Though no empirical research has been done, it is reasonable to wonder
whether the inclusion of a parenthetical translation would diminish the
"camaraderie" effect discussed by Tannen, thereby detracting from the credibility
of the dialogue. "Camaraderie" requires the application of high involvement
strategies. Indeed, the use of an unfamiliar word could create distance.

However, the question arises as to whether the one interprets the translation
as part of the Rabbi's speech or as part of the author's dialogue with the readers. In
other words, it is not obvious at all from the story whether the Rabbi is translating
the word for his audience, or the author is translating it for the reader. If the
former is the case, then it is clear that the translation decreases the level of
camaraderie between the Rabbi and the children. If, on the other hand, the latter is
the case, then it is not certain what the effect of translation is. Even if the reader
regards the translation as addressed to him or her, the presence of the translation
might make it difficult to interpret an ethnically marked lexical choice as a
camaraderie device.

story-telling

The books contained quite a few instances of story-telling. The purpose of
such story-telling is to enhance the meta-message of interpersonal involvement. If
all that mattered were referential meaning, the "point" of the story could have been
stated as a fact instead. Research has been done on how conversational devices work
within stories to increase the level of personal involvement, but narrative is a topic
in itself, for further study. Examples of story-telling may be found in Appendix 1.
sarcastic humor

Many of the books studied contained sarcastic humor in the form of questions. Sarcasm seemed to be a way of signalling friendly involvement, since sarcastic speech acts tended to occur with friends, family, or even pets.

from *Mrs. Moskowitz and the Sabbath Candles*
"You call this a home, Fred?"
[Mrs. Moskowitz to her pet cat, Fred]

On the other hand, sarcasm, if engaged in excessively, is marked. Uncle Dave, in the following example, is considered annoying by one of the main characters in the story.

from *The Return of Morris Schumsky*
"Children who elope deprive their parents of one of life's greatest joys."
"You call this joy?"
[Uncle Dave to Aunt Alice]

"...Our lives were very uncertain then."
"You think your lives were uncertain?"
[Uncle Dave to Grandma]

The books are not completely void of language that is judged "polite" by virtue of deference.

from *Hanukka Cat*
He stopped and knocked at a friendly looking red house. One old man and six cats answered the door.
"Would you like a kitten?" asked Lenny.
"Do I look like I'd like a kitten?"
He tried a sleepy, shuttered yellow house next.
"No thank you. With three canaries and a parakeet, I certainly don't need a cat."

It is interesting to note that the sarcastic response "Do I look like I'd like a kitten?" is associated with a "friendly-looking red house.", whereas the non-sarcastic response is associated with a "sleepy, shuttered yellow house". These associations are rich with meaning. The description of the first house conveys a sense of
camaraderie, and the description of the second house conveys distance—the sense that people are closed off from one another.

machine-gun questions

There was some evidence of machine-gun questions. For example:

from Mazel and Shlimazel
"Something good may still happen," suggested Mazel.
"When?"
"Soon."
"How?"

However, some of their essential features, such as pitch, rate, and overlap are difficult to express in writing.

directness

Tannen mentions directness in association with the preference for personal topics in Jewish English conversation. However the issue of direct versus indirect language is much broader than topic. In a variety of speech acts, the use of direct language signals social closeness. In the following examples, the women's direct utterances were not interpreted as offensive or rude, as they might be if the context were not a Jewish English speech event.

from Potato Pancakes All Around
"Tell us how you made it."
[women to peddler, asking for recipe]

"I say a crust of bread is better."
"Ridiculous," said Grandma Yetta.
"That's crazy," said Grandma Sophie.

In the next passage, the interlocuters lived in the same house, but did not speak to each other much. Thus the author might have been trying to make a point of using
language to show distance between them. This suggests that speakers of Jewish English do use linguistic devices to indicate distance, but the preferred strategy is that of camaraderie.

from *Shabbes treats that grow*
"Good Afternoon," Mrs Karpnick said politely. "Is it possible that I could come and spend Shabbos with you this evening?"

Mrs. Schwartz smile. "Of course," she said. "That would be our pleasure. Please do come in."

Below is an example of a direct and indirect version of a request.

from *The Carp in the Bathtub*
"Why, Leah, Harry," she said in surprise. "I'm very glad to see you. Won't you come in? Why are you carrying that basket?"

[and later]
We carried our bucket to Mrs. Ginsberg's front room. "May I ask what you have there?" she said politely.

psycho-ostensives

Another linguistic device whose main function is the expression of the speaker's personal opinion, and consequently is a strategy of camaraderie, is the psycho-adverbial insert. For example, "We'll talk about when you (all being well!) return." (Katz, 1987, p188) There were some examples of these in the children's books.

from *Gittel and the Thieves*
"Is it a fire?"
"Or, Heaven Forbid, a gang of thieves?"

from *The Return of Morris Schumsky*
"Morris Schumsky, husband of Ida, father of Ellen and Dave, grandfather of Rebecca and Isaac--maybe even someday, G-d willing, great grandfather--this Morris Schumsky promises to be on time."

Thus, the language contains quite a bit of the features observed by Tannen in her discussion of Jewish English. However some features, including overlap, latching, and intonation do not lend themselves to written representation. The fact
that written language is incapable of capturing all aspects of Jewish conversational style does not detract from its credibility, as long as the writer provides sufficient cues for the reader to be able to recontextualize. It would be interesting to compare how people of different ages and ethnic background read Jewish English out loud.

Finally, a humorous anecdote illustrates the importance of recontextualizability.

Mrs. Abram Kolnik in Kiev sent a telegram to her husband in Zhitomir:
SAYS TO OPERATE OPERATE

Soon Mr. Kolnik sent a wire back to Kiev:
SAYS TO OPERATE OPERATE
The poor man was at once arrested by the secret police--on suspicion of treason to the state by sending coded information.

After the customary beating of the prisoner, the G-P-U--nik in charge demanded: "If you don't decode those messages it's off to the Gulag for you!"

Quavered Abram Kolnik: "Who knows from codes: I'll read you the telegrams. My wife went to Kiev to consult a surgeon. So she consulted him. So she wired me his opinion--and a question:
SAYS TO OPERATE! OPERATE?
So I thought it over, and I figured she has to go through with it. So I wired her:
SAYS TO OPERATE? OPERATE!

(Rosten 1982, p185)

Recontextualization is prevented by the lack of punctuation in the telegrams.

Yiddish Influence on English

The camaraderie-based politeness strategy employed by speakers of Jewish English results from the interaction between Yiddish and English.

"The scope of language transfer may at times extend far beyond the familiar nuts and bolts of syntax, morphology and phonology as such...the language learner cannot help but transfer into his use of English certain of the more deep-seated culture bound communicative competencies which he has acquired in his native
language or languages." (Pride 1982: p5)

The model of politeness found in Jewish English may be traced to the influence of Yiddish on English. Sarcastic questions have a direct counterpart in Yiddish, according to Dovid Katz's description of Yiddish grammar. In Yiddish, it is common to indicate sarcasm by asking questions with a rise-fall intonation pattern. Moreover, such questions may be lexically marked for sarcasm by the insertion of a marker directly following the inflected verb. (Katz 1987: p196)

In addition, psycho-adverbials are a central feature of Yiddish, which would explain why Jewish English also contains many such insertions. (Katz 1987: p188. Mattison 1979)

Continuity

By reviewing the literature and examining data from children's literature, I have tried to demonstrate that Jewish English is a robust phenomenon. I will now examine the possibility of continuity across Jewish languages. Katriel's work suggests a similarity between Jewish English and Hebrew. She describes the dugri speech mode, which consists of sincere, direct speech. It is a form of rudeness if a person speaks indirectly when dugri speech would be appropriate. When the word dugri is uttered, it creates a context in which it is polite to speak directly. (The word is only needed to establish such a context when the interlocuters are unfamiliar with one another.) She quotes an Israeli's expression of his disdain for "...twisting the forms of speech for the purpose of showing respect." (Katriel, 1986)
In other words, pragmatic meaning—politeness—in Hebrew could be said to center around the demonstration of sincerity and *communitas* through direct speech. The preferred conversational strategy of Hebrew speakers seems to be camaraderie or involvement, though it is realized differently compared to Jewish English and Yiddish. The relationship of *communitas* to camaraderie has already been pointed out above. The connection between camaraderie and sincerity is highlighted by a comparison of *dugri* speech in Hebrew, and the meaning of the word *dugri* in Arabic. In Arabic, *dugri* means truth. In Hebrew, the salient feature of *dugri* speech is not its truth value (i.e. its referential content). Instead it is a particular way of speaking, one which emphasizes a meta-message of interpersonal involvement.

Research in the realm of the non-verbal indicates a common theme as manifested in the relationships among people and that between people and G-d in Judaism. Roshwald illustrates this relationship with biblical examples; for example, the Hebrew at Mt. Sinai questioned Moses' authority. Also, he interprets halaha or "Jewish law" as mediating a partnership between G-d and humans; that is, a "high involvement" relationship. (Roshwald, 1978) According to Schifflin, the teachings of Judaism and conversational style do reflect common values, but she does not explain how the two might be related. (Schiffrin 1984: p332) The idea of a unifying cultural theme is intriguing, but speculative. Detailed research needs to be done so as not to become blind to cultural diversity.

**Conclusion**

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Thus, the aim of Jewish Intralinguistics is contextualized within the framework of sociolinguistic research on pragmatic aspects of conversation. Analysis of the language in Jewish children's literature, within the theoretical framework of pragmatics, shows that there are pervasive differences in Jewish English, which can be explained only by appeal to non-referential functions. Knowledge of cultural difference is the reward of resisting the call of "Western objectivism" to reduce language to its referential meaning.

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APPENDIX 1

Examples of story-telling

from *The Return of Morris Schumsky*

"When we came to this country, your Grandpa wanted to invite the whole city to your mommas's wedding."

"He practically did," Mom added. "Every evening over dinner he would say, 'Oh, by the way. I hope you don't mind but I asked Ben Rothstein to drop in on our little celebration,' or Sylvia Goldbaum, or Saul Himmelfarb--whomever he happened to meet that day on the street. I didn't know half the people at my own wedding."

from *Hanukkah of Uncle Otto*

"...I only saw my cousin once a year, at Hanukkah. He lived far away. I remember he and I would be very mischievous sometimes."

"Like me," said Joshua as he filed a copper tube.

"Ah! Worse! Once we took apart an old clock and made dreidels from some of the big gears on their pivots. We didn't know that the clock was still working, was still good. We painted little colored dots on the gears and as we spun them, the dots became circles, one inside the other, blue, green, red, yellow. The next think I knew, my father was standing there looking at us very sternly. The clock was wrecked. My mother tried to convince him that we had made something just as beautiful and important as the clock. Suddenly I had an idea. I started to spin the clock-dreidels on the table top to show him. And what do you think? After a little while, my father tried spinning one too. When it jumped off the table, he laughed out loud. Soon, everybody was spinning them, seeing who could make them spin the longest...Yes...yes...We were happy in those old days. But then I grew up. Time passed. And Hitler came with his speeches, his storm troopers, his hate. We were afraid to put a menorah in the window anymore. And soon after that, the real horrors began...Well, well...enough. Enough stories for today..."
APPENDIX 2

Jewish children's literature used in this project

The Animated Menorah: Travels on a Space Dreidel, by Ephraim Sidon
Before Shabbat Begins, by Floreva G. Cohen
The Best of K'tonton, by Sadie Rose Weilerstein
The Best of Olomeinu: Book Four, compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Frucher
The Carp in the Bathtub, by Barbara Cohen
The Castle on Hester Street, by Linda Heller
The Chanukah Tree, by Eric A. Kimmee
The Children of Chelm, by David A. Adler
Farfel the Cat that Left Egypt, by Norman Geller
First Fast, by Barbara Cohen
Gittel and the Bell, by Roberta Goldshlag Cooks
Hanukkah Cat, by Chaya Burstein
The Hanukkah of Great-Uncle Otto, by Myron Levoy
Joseph Who Loved the Sabbath, by Marilyn Hirsch
The Keeping Quilt, by Patricia Polacco
The Little Leaf, by Chana Shafstein
Malke's Secret Recipe: A Chanukah Tale, David A. Adler
Mazel and Schlimazel, by Isaac Bashevis Singer
Mrs. Moskowitz and the Sabbath Candlesticks, by Amy Schwartz
The Narrowest Bar Mitzvay, by Steven Schnur
Potato Pancakes All Around: A Hanukkah Tale, by Marilyn Hirsch
The Return of Morris Schumsky, by Steven Schnur
The Secret of Sabbath Fish, by Ben Aronin
The Secret Spinner, by Rav Gedalia
Shabbos Treats That Grew,?
Tali's Slippers, Tova's Shoes, by Yaffa Ganz
Tell Me a Mitzi, by Lore Segal
What Happened to Crazy Yosel, by Mayer Bendet

Guides to Jewish Children's Literature

Jewish Literature for Children: A Teaching Guide

A Comprehensive Guide to Children's Literature with a Jewish Theme
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