1.0. Overview.

By any conventional definition of 'creole language', Yiddish is not a creole, not in its genesis and not in its form. For one thing, while there is some disagreement on exactly where the original Yiddish speakers came from (Weinreich 1980 vs. Faber and King 1984), there is no evidence whatsoever that they were from diverse geographic and linguistic backgrounds and there is no evidence whatsoever that there was ever a pidgin stage. On the contrary, Modern Yiddish is clearly descended from Old Yiddish, a highly inflected sister language of Middle High German. In fact, the line between 'Judeo-German', i.e. Middle High German with a 'Jewish accent', and Old Yiddish, a separate language from Middle High German, is often not clear.

At the same time, Yiddish has, since its inception, been a language in contact. In fact, it is safe to assume that the original speakers, no matter where they hailed from, were in a language contact situation before the development of Yiddish insofar as, while they clearly did not hail directly from their original homeland in the Middle East, they had always maintained some degree of Semitic contact wherever they went. Once arrived in Germanic-speaking lands, this Semitic contact remained in varying degrees, as it has to the present. Furthermore, when they began to migrate east several centuries later, new contacts arose with Balto-Slavic, Hungarian, and Romanian, the result of which was Modern (Eastern) Yiddish.

Not surprisingly, the results of these diverse contacts are manifest in Yiddish at virtually every level of linguistic description. While presumably every language has in some way been influenced by some other languages, Yiddish 'wears its history on its sleeve', so to speak, and lends itself remarkably well to studies of contact effects. (I do not believe it is a coincidence that Uriel Weinreich was both a Yiddishist and a theorist on contact phenomena!) Thus it provides a fertile field for investigating what sorts of changes occur in a language in contact.

Parenthetically, it should be noted that Max Weinreich, perhaps for socio-political reasons, perhaps simply because he lacked notions of genetic classification, dubbed Yiddish a 'fusion' language, a notion which survives among most traditional Yiddishists to the present day and which sees Yiddish not as a Germanic language but as a 'fusion' of three 'components', Germanic, Semitic, and Slavic. In a somewhat different vein, Wexler (1991) broke with his fellow 'fusionists' in claiming, on phonological and lexical grounds and with no syntactic evidence, that Yiddish is in fact Slavic, a 'relexified Sorbian'. I do not consider either of these claims serious and will not discuss them further.
In this paper, I shall first sketch what I take to be the motivation for the vast majority of contact effects in Yiddish: not an imperfect competence in the Germanic system on the part of the speakers but a particular semantic or pragmatic intent: to exploit the formal possibilities of Yiddish in order to express in it concepts which were expressed in some different but ‘analogous’ way in the contact languages. Furthermore, there is no reason to think that Yiddish is not unique: quite possibly, the overwhelming majority of cases of language contact phenomena involve importing new meanings to old forms and the borrowing of new forms, at least at the syntactic level, is highly unlikely. Therefore, after giving a brief overview of the types of contact phenomena found, I shall look more closely at a few of these, in an effort to see more clearly what exactly has changed and why the changes may be seen as having had a semantic/pragmatic motivation. Finally, I shall discuss a case where the form may have in fact changed as a result of language contact, but where I believe the contact effect on form is indirect, the direct contact-inspired change being at the semantic level, the formal change being language-internal, following a change in the distribution and frequency of the affected form due to the semantic change.

1.1. Motivation for contact effects in Yiddish.
First, there is the issue of whether the contact effects evident in Yiddish were the result of the Yiddish speakers' imperfect competence in Germanic causing them to misanalyze the Germanic data they heard, or, on the other hand, were the result of their having competence in both (Germanic) Yiddish and some other language and importing items from that other language into Yiddish fully in accordance with the grammar of Yiddish. I believe the second is the case in that, in the vast majority of cases, we must conclude that the Yiddish speakers responsible for the various changes were fully competent Germanic speakers who were simply borrowing items from other languages they knew, all the while maintaining and fitting these items into the Germanic system.

1.2. Overview of contact effects.
While, at first blush, Yiddish appears to show effects of contact at every level of linguistic description, we find that, if we distinguish primary effects, i.e. the cases of direct influence, from secondary effects, internal changes within Yiddish subsequent to these primary effects, the primary effects—the real effects of contact—are in fact restricted in very large part to two levels, lexical and semantic/pragmatic.3 Not coincidentally I believe, these two levels form a natural class: they are the levels at which form-meaning correspondences are specified.4 That is, the lexical level pairs phonological representations of morphemes with lexical meanings; the semantic/pragmatic level pairs syntactic representations of phrases/clauses with discourse understandings.

2.0. Lexical changes due to contact.
Not surprisingly, Yiddish shows massive lexical borrowing. Traditional estimates are that 20% of the vocabulary are Semitic in origin, 20% Slavic, plus a handful of
items from other languages. As would be expected, the borrowings are largely of open class items and abound in the expected domains: e.g. Semitic in religious domains and Slavic in food domains. At the same time, they appear in other domains as well, exemplified in 1a, and also in closed class items, exemplified in 1b:

1. a. Semitic: ponim 'face', gvr 'rich man', meshuge 'crazy', moyre 'fear'...
   Slavic: tate 'papa', khmare 'cloud', modne 'strange', khpn 'grab'...
   b. Semitic: beshas 'while', afile 'even', iz 'so', lemosh 'for example'...
   Slavic: tsi 'whether', abi 'so long as', khotsh 'although', i...i...
   'both...and'...

Furthermore, there is some borrowed bound morphology from Slavic, all derivational and nearly all affective, exemplified in 2a, and one Semitic inflectional suffix, the masculine plural -im, on a handful of Germanic nouns that were presumably reanalyzed as Semitic, shown in 2b:

2. a. -inke adj. diminutive marker (e.g. tayerinke 'dear-dim.') (-nik agentive marker, (e.g. shlimazlnik 'ne'er-do-well'), -atsh pejorative marker (yungatsh 'brat'), -zhe intensifying marker on imperatives and interrogative wh-words (Zayt-zhe nisht kawn nar 'Don't be a fool!', Vuzhe bin ikh? 'Where on earth am I?')
   b. nar/naronim~naroim 'fool', poyer/poyerim 'peasant', doktor/doktoyrim 'doctor', tayvl/tayvolim 'devil', faktor/faktoyrim 'broker'

Interestingly, there is no borrowed inflectional verbal morphology. In fact, the borrowing of verbs is complex and takes several forms. The simplest—and rarest—is the borrowing of a Semitic root plus vocalic pattern or of a Slavic stem as a verb stem, exemplified in 3a. More often, a verbal infix is affixed to a Semitic root plus vocalic pattern or to a Slavic stem to form a verb stem, exemplified in 3b. For Semitic, however, the most common pattern is where a nominal form of the target Semitic verb is borrowed as the complement of a Germanic helping verb, the resulting periphrastic verb having the syntax of Germanic verbs plus separable prefixes, as shown in 3c:

3. a. Semitic: peyger-n 'die (as of animals)', khol-em-en zikh 'dream', shekhtn 'slaughter'...
   Slavic: khp-n 'grab', nudzhe-n 'bother', tulye-n 'cuddle'
   b. Semitic: harg-en-en 'kill'...
   c. Semitic: mekane zayn 'envy', moykhl zayn 'forgive', maskim zayn 'agree', khasene hobn 'marry', moyre hobn 'fear', poter vern 'be rid of'...

Perhaps the most interesting type of lexical borrowing involves the borrowing of features, not of forms. By this I mean the pairing of Germanic closed class items
with the 'analogous' Slavic ones, to be used 'analogously' to the Slavic, e.g. the phenomenon exemplified by the extension of the originally third-person reflexive pronoun to all persons under the influence of the invariant Slavic reflexive pronoun, illustrated in 4a, the pairing of certain Germanic separable verbal prefixes with Slavic aspectual prefixes and used analogously, (Talmy 1982), illustrated in 4b, and the pairing of the Germanic inanimate neuter *wh* -word with the Slavic and used as the factive *that*-complementizer, analogous to Slavic, illustrated in 4c. I shall return to this matching phenomenon below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earlier</th>
<th>Later</th>
<th>Slavic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Ik vash mikh</td>
<td>Ik vash zikh</td>
<td>Russ. Ya st'irayu-s'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'I wash SELF'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. hern 'hear'</td>
<td>hern; on hern zikh</td>
<td>Russ. na-slishat'-s'a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'hear a lot of'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lakhn 'laugh'</td>
<td>Pol. na'smia´c sie one's fill'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. S'iz gut az er kumt.</td>
<td>S'iz gut vos er kumt.</td>
<td>Russ. Khorosho shto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'It's good that he's coming'</td>
<td>on prikhod'it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In sum, there is a great deal of lexical borrowing in Yiddish, which I have divided into two types, the borrowing of a form and the borrowing of a feature. The borrowing of a form is most common among open class words, though it does occur in certain closed class items, including derivational morphology, and in one extremely limited inflectional affix in the nominal paradigm. Verbal inflectional morphology is entirely native in form. In contrast, feature-borrowing appears concentrated in the closed class lexicon and often in paradigmatic material, but here again, when verbal morphology is considered, we find feature-borrowing limited to derivational items.

### 3.0. Putative syntactic changes due to contact.

I shall now turn to some contact effects that have been or could be construed as syntactic. However, as I shall try to show, all can be seen as occurring at the level of discourse/pragmatics, any syntactic change being in fact internal to Yiddish and secondary.

### 3.1. The clearest case: Dos-sentences.

Consider the Yiddish sentence in 5:

5. Dos hot Leyb gezen Erike-n.
   this-neut. has Leonard-masc.nom. seen Erica-fem.acc.
   = 'It's Leonard who saw Erica.'

The *dos*-sentence in 5 is composed entirely of Germanic morphemes; however, so far as I know, it has no obvious analog in any other Germanic language; in fact,
there is no attested correlate even in Old Yiddish, the Yiddish spoken in the Middle Ages by Jews living in German-speaking lands before migrating to the Slavic-speaking lands of Eastern Europe. Now consider the Russian sentence in 6:

6. Eto L’eon’id uv’id’el Er’iku.
   this-neut. Leonard-masc.nom. saw Erica-fem.acc.
   = 'It's Leonard who saw Erica.'

The Russian *eto*-sentence in 6, which has analogs in other Slavic languages, has a great deal in common with the Yiddish sentence in 5: both are simple sentences (i.e. without subordinate clauses), each has an expletive NP in initial position, in both cases the expletive NP is the neuter demonstrative pronoun, and both are translated by the English *it*-cleft. Thus we have what seems to be a case of borrowing—but what exactly has been borrowed? While traditional Yiddishists considered this a case of syntactic borrowing, it is perhaps better described as the borrowing of a discourse function, here originally associated with some Slavic syntactic form and then borrowed into Yiddish, where it becomes associated with some already existing Yiddish syntactic form, distinct from the Slavic syntactic form. To see that the Slavic and Yiddish syntactic forms are in fact distinct, we must consider briefly the syntax of each.

First, let us consider the syntax of the Yiddish *dos*-sentence in 5. Typical of Germanic, Yiddish obeys the Verb-Second Constraint, whereby, in canonical declarative sentences, the finite verb must occupy the second position in the sentence. Thus, if nothing is topicalized, for example, the subject may occur preverbally, as in 7a, but, if something is topicalized, the subject must occur after the finite verb, as seen in 7b,c:

7. a. (Ikh veys az) Leyb hot gezen Eriken.
   (I know that) Leonard has seen Erica
   b. (Ikh veys az) nokhdem hot Leyb gezen Eriken.
   *(Ikh veys az) nokhdem Leyb hot gezen Erica.

Note that Yiddish, unlike other continental Germanic languages but like Icelandic, obeys the Verb-Second Constraint in subordinate as well as main clauses (Santororini 1989, among others).

Second, it is relevant to consider the nature of the position occupied by the expletive NP *dos* in 5 above. Two plausible possibilities are some complementizer position or some ‘Topic’ position. However, when we consider sentences like 8, where the sentence is embedded and follows an overt complementizer, we see that the expletive NP cannot itself be in the complementizer position:

8. Ikh veys az dos hot Leyb gezen Eriken.
   I know that this has Leonard seen Erica
   = 'I know that it's Leonard who saw Erica.'
Thus, we infer a structure roughly on the order of 9 for the sentence in 5:

9. \[[\text{CP} [\text{C} [\text{IP} \text{ dos} [\text{I} \text{ hoti} [\text{VP} \text{ Leyb t_i gezen Eriken}]]]]\]

Turning now to the syntax of the Russian *eto*-sentence in 6, we find two important differences. First, note that the finite verb is indeed in third position. That is, the subject remains in preverbal position as in the canonical variant of 6, shown in 10, which is not surprising, since Russian, unlike Yiddish, is not a Verb-Second language:

10. L’eon’id uv’id’el Er’iku.
    Leonard saw Erica

Similarly, note that the verb would be in third position if something, e.g. an adverb, were topicalized to first position, as in 11:

11. Potom L’eon’id uv’id’el Er’iku.
    then Leonard saw Erica

Second and more surprisingly, if we check the possibility of the *eto*-sentence in 6 in an embedded context, we find that it is ungrammatical, as shown in 12, suggesting that the demonstrative expletive NP *eto* itself occupies the complementizer position:

12. *Ya znayu shto eto L’eon’id uv’id’el Er’iku.
    I know that this Leonard saw Erica
    = 'I know that it’s Leonard that saw Erica.'

Until now, we have considered only focused subjects. However, it turns out that Russian *eto*-sentences may syntactically mark any constituent as focus, not just the subject, as shown in 13:

13. Eto Eri’iku L’eon’id uv’id’el.
    this-neut. Erica-fem.acc. Leonard-masc.nom. saw
    'It’s Erica that Leonard saw.'

In 13, we see that the focused constituent is in fact marked by being topicalized, although of course string-vacuously in the case of focused subjects.

Thus, possible structures for the Russian *eto*-sentence in 6 and 13 are ones along the lines of 14a and 14b, respectively:

14. a. \[[\text{CP} [\text{C} \text{ eto} [\text{CP} L’eon’id \text{i} [\text{C} \emptyset [\text{IP} t_j [\text{I} \text{ uv’id’el}_i [\text{VP} t_j t_i Er’iku_k]]]]]]]]\]
   b. \[[\text{CP} [\text{C} \text{ eto} [\text{CP} Er’iku_k [\text{C} \emptyset [\text{IP} L’eon’id \text{ i} [\text{VP} t_j t_i t_k]]]]]]\]
To return for a moment to Yiddish, we note another syntactic difference here, one that is entirely predictable from the differences between the syntax of the two languages: whereas any constituent may be focused in Russian *eto*-sentences, only the subject may be syntactically focused in Yiddish *dos*-sentences, as shown in 15:12

15. a. *Dos Eriken hot Leyb gezen.
   this Erica has Leonard seen
   b. *Dos hot Eriken Leyb gezen.

This difference between Russian and Yiddish of course follows from the differences in their syntax: since the expletive fills the landing site for topicalized constituents in Yiddish, nothing else may be topicalized, while, in the Russian case, the expletive occupies Comp, leaving the landing site for topicalized constituents free to accommodate them.

I shall now return to the question of what exactly has been borrowed in this case. Clearly, there has been no obvious syntactic borrowing, since the syntax of Yiddish *dos*-sentences is not at all the same as the syntax of Russian *eto*-sentences. At the same time, there were no *dos*-sentences in Yiddish prior to Slavic contact. From where then did they come?

In fact, it turns out that, while *dos*-sentences as such are of recent vintage in Yiddish, their syntax is entirely native to Yiddish and is well-entrenched in Germanic in general. Consider another syntactic form, the Yiddish *es*-sentence, shown in 16, cognate of English *there*-sentences and of the even more similar German *es*-sentences:

16. a. (Ikh veys az) es hot Leyb gezen Eriken.
   (I know that) it has Leonard seen Erica
   'Leonard saw Erica', 'There saw Leonard Erica.'
   b. [CP [C [IP es [I hoti [VP Leyb ti gezen Erica]]]]]

A comparison of the syntactic structure of Yiddish *es*-sentence in 16 with that of Yiddish *dos*-sentence in 5 and 9 shows that the two are structurally identical. The only difference is a lexical one: the lexical realization of the initial expletive NP is the neuter singular personal pronoun in the *es*-sentences, while it is the neuter singular demonstrative pronoun in the *dos*-sentences. Thus, there has in fact been a formal change, but the change was in the lexicon, not in the syntax: *dos* 'this/that' has acquired an expletive feature.13 Thus there has been a lexical borrowing of sorts, the borrowing from Slavic into Yiddish of a lexical feature associated with the lexical item having the sense of the neuter singular demonstrative pronoun.14

Of course, concomitant with—and as the motivation for—this lexical change, there has been a pragmatic change, the borrowing of a discourse function: the discourse function of Slavic *eto*-sentences was borrowed into Yiddish and associated with a
native Yiddish syntactic form, albeit one crucially containing the result of a lexical borrowing. That is, associated with Slavic *eto*-sentences is the discourse function of marking the proposition conveyed as a focus/focus-frame information structure, where the focus-frame represents an open proposition assumed to be known to the hearer and where the focus supplies the (new) instantiation of the variable in that open proposition. In more familiar terms, we have here more or less the discourse function associated with English *it*-clefts (Chomsky 1971, Prince 1978, Horn 1981, Delin 1994, among others), though, *pace* Gundel 1977, not at all their syntactic structure. And this is the discourse function associated with Yiddish *dos*-sentences. This is sketched in 17:

17. **Discourse function of Slavic *eto*-sentences and Yiddish *dos*-sentences:**
   a. Slavic *eto*-sentences and Yiddish *dos*-sentences structure the proposition they represent into a focus and a focus-frame, where the focus-frame is an open proposition and the focus identifies the instantiation of its variable.
   b. In *eto*-sentences, the focus is represented by the topicalized constituent. In *dos*-sentences, the focus is represented by the subject or, for at least some speakers, any other constituent that is prosodically prominent.
   c. The open proposition is marked as being assumed to be already known to the hearer, and the instantiation of its variable is marked as being new to the hearer.

Thus, the Yiddish *dos*-sentence in 5 and the Russian *eto*-sentence in 6 are marked by their form as having the information-structure sketched in 18:

18. **Information-structure for 5 and 6:**
   Focus-frame, known: X saw Erica.
   Focus, new: X = Leonard

One might now ask what sort of discourse function is associated with Yiddish *es*-sentences, the syntactic source for *dos*-sentences. Interestingly, it is unrelated to the discourse function of *dos/eto*-sentences. As I have argued elsewhere (Prince 1988), Yiddish *es*-sentences have the discourse function sketched in 19:

19. **Discourse function of Yiddish *es*-sentences:**
   Yiddish *es*-sentences mark the their subject NP as not representing an entity that is a member of the preceding set of Forward-looking Centers (Grosz, Joshi, and Weinstein 1983, among others), i.e. that has already been evoked in the current discourse-segment.

From this it follows that *es*-sentences but not *dos*-sentences may (and in fact often do) occur with no special prior context, as in 20a, since *es*-sentences, unlike *dos*-sentences, do not mark a focus/focus-frame information-structure, and it also follows that *dos*-sentences but not *es*-sentences may have a pronominal subject, as in
20b, since dos-sentences, unlike es-sentences, may have a subject which has already been evoked in the current discourse segment: 15

20. a. Men redt take in Ginshprik un Reb Todres redt in Berlin un me hert. Ir farshteyt? Es/\#Dos geyt alts azoy geshvint, az me ken gor nit gloybn. (RP:237)
   'You’re talking in Ginshprik and Mr. Todres is talking in Berlin and you hear [him]. You understand? Everything is going so fast/\#It's everything that's going so fast that you just can't believe [it].'

b. Dos/\#Es shlogst du di puter? (GF)
   'It's you that's churning the butter?/\#There churn you the butter.'

In sum, I have tried to show that Yiddish has borrowed from Slavic a discourse function, the structuring of a proposition into a focus and focus-frame functionally equivalent to English it-clefts. In Slavic, this discourse function is associated with a certain syntactic form, one in which an expletive demonstrative NP appears to occupy the complementizer position and in which the focused NP appears to be moved to the 'topic' position; in Yiddish, the same discourse function has come to be associated with a grossly different syntactic form, one in which an expletive demonstrative NP appears to occupy the 'topic' position and where the focused NP presumably remains in situ within the clause, having undergone no special movement. Elsewhere (Prince 1992a), I have sketched a possible account of how speakers in a contact situation 'match up' syntactic forms in the two languages; suffice it to say here that, however it is to be accounted for, such matching occurs and is, I believe, the driving force behind a good deal of contact effects.

3.2. More speculative: [NP NP-NP]
I should now like to turn to a case where I believe there has been semantic borrowing posing as a syntactic one but where the evidence is less clear. Consider 21:

21. a. a sheyne meydl 'a pretty girl', a fayner bokher 'a fine lad', di grine oygn
    'the green eyes'...

b. a meydl a sheyne, a bokher a fayner, di oygn di grine...

Alongside of the expected prenominal adjectives in 21a, Yiddish has postnominal adjectival modification of the form NP-NP, where the second NP is formed from the adjective. The whole NP is intoned as a single constituent, without a pause or break between the two constituent NPs, akin to English Catherine the Great or Nathan the Wise. However, unlike them, it is not limited to having a proper name as the first NP. In all the cases I have found, such postnominal modification is restrictive rather than appositive, though prenominal modification may be either. Not surprisingly, any NP may in fact occur postnominally, whether it is formed from an adjective or not, so long as it can be understood restrictively, as illustrated in 22:
22. eyner a yid 'one [who is] a Jew/guy', a yid a melamed 'a Jew/guy [who is] a teacher', a melamed a kabstn 'a teacher [who is] a pauper', eyner a yid a melamed a kabstn 'one [who is] a Jew/guy [who is] a teacher [who is] a pauper'

So far as I know, this is not found in other Germanic languages. However, note that NPs consisting of [NP NP] are indeed well-formed in Germanic; in addition to the Catherine the Great type, Germanic has so-called appositive genitives, which are grammatical in Yiddish, as shown in 23:

23. a shtik fleysh 'a piece [of] meat', a glezl vaser 'a glass [of] water', der taytsh isho 'the translation [into Yiddish] [of] isho'...

The obvious question is why early Yiddish speakers would have used the syntax of Catherine the Great type NPs or appositive genitives for ordinary restrictive modification of common nouns. One extremely speculative—but entirely plausible—answer might be the influence of Judeo-French, the language that is conventionally taken to be the early Yiddish speakers' native language immediately before settling in German-speaking lands (Weinreich 1980, but see also Faber and King 198416). That is, French has both prenominal and postnominal adjectival modification, with prenominal typically being appositive and postnominal restrictive. Further support for this comes from the fact that certain restrictive adjectives which always occur prenominally in French also do in Yiddish, exemplified in 24:

24. French: l'autre homme vs. *l'homme autre 'the other man, la première fois vs. *la fois premièr 'the first time', la seule personne vs. *la personne seule 'the only person', la vraie histoire 'the real story' vs. l'histoire vraie 'the true story'...

Yiddish: der anderer man vs. ?*der man der anderer 'the other man', dem ershtn mol vs. *dem mol dem ershntn 'the first time', der eyntsiker mentsh vs. *der mentsh der eyntsiker 'the only person', di emese mayse 'the real story' vs. di mayse di emes(dik)e 'the true story'...

Thus I should like to propose the following very speculative story. Perhaps the early Yiddish speakers wished to make the restrictive/appositive modifier distinction they had made in Judeo-French and wished to make it positionally, as they had in Judeo-French. In principle, if all sorts of borrowing are equally possible, they could have simply borrowed the Judeo-French syntax, producing phrases like those in 25:

25. *a meydl sheyne 'a pretty girl', *a bokher fayner 'a fine lad', *di oygn grine 'the green eyes'...

However, some things are much more 'borrowable' than others, with syntax being borrowable only with the greatest difficulty, if at all. What the early Yiddish speakers
may have done instead was to attempt to approximate the positional difference they were seeking by means of a form already grammatical in Germanic, the NP-NP form found in both the Catherine the Great type NPs and also in appositive genitive NPs. Interestingly, that this was a logically possible form for ordinary modified NPs would have been reinforced by their knowledge of Hebrew, which in fact has postnominal modification of the form NP-NP as its normal form of modification, illustrated in 26:

26. a. na'arah yafah 'girl pretty' = 'a pretty girl', 'enayim y eruqot 'eyes green' = 'green eyes'
   b. ha-na'arah ha-yafah 'the-girl the-pretty' = 'the pretty girl', ha-'enayim ha-y eruqot 'the-eyes the-green' = 'the green eyes'

Note that, while the phrases in 26a look like simple bare nouns with a following adjective, in fact it is reasonable to parse them as NP-NP, since the Hebrew indefinite article is null; if the noun phrase is definite, the NP-NP structure is unambiguous, as seen in 26b. Thus it is possible that the early Yiddish speakers, aiming for Romance-type postnominal modification for restrictive adjectives and hearing Catherine the Great type NPs in Germanic and of course not hearing any negative data, assumed that this was a Germanic option for postnominal modification even with common noun NP heads, this conclusion supported by their knowledge that such was the case in Hebrew. Note that the Germanic appositive genitive NP-NP would have simply provided another piece of evidence that Germanic was like both Romance and Hebrew, since Old French and therefore presumably Judeo-French and also Hebrew had appositive genitives of the form NP-NP, as in 27:

27. French: Hôtel Dieu 'house God' = 'house of God'
   Hebrew: bet el 'house God' = 'house of God', kos mayim 'glass water' = 'a glass of water', yom kipur 'day atonement' = 'day of atonement', rosh khodesh 'head month' = 'head of the month [= first day of the month]

3.3. Even more speculative: Es-sentences.
The third case of what I take to be putative syntactic change and actual semantic/pragmatic change involves postposed subjects, illustrated in 28:

28. a. Es iz geshtorbn Truman.
   It died Truman
   = 'Truman died.'
   b. Es derlangt a fal arop a driter rod!
   It serves a fall down a third wheel
   = 'A third wheel suddenly falls off!'
c. Iz eyn mol, iz tsun im gekumen a yid, azoy farnakhtlekh, ven es hohn shoyn gebrent di lompn.
So one time is to him come a guy, so late, when it have already burned the lamps
= 'So once a guy came to him late at night, when the lamps were already lit.'
d. Es iz nit aroysgekumen keyn bilet.
It is not out-come no ticket
= 'No ticket came out.'

Note, canonical word order would have the subject in initial position, so long as nothing else occupies that position, as in 29:

29. a. Truman iz geshtorbn. 'Truman died.'
   b. A driter rod derlangt a fal arop!
      'A third wheel suddenly falls off!'  
   c. Iz eyn mol, iz tsun im gekumen a yid, azoy farnakhtlekh, ven di lompn hohn shoyn gebrent.
      'So once a guy came to him late at night, when the lamps were already lit.'
   d. Keyn bilet iz nit aroysgekumen.
      'No ticket came out.'

A second possibility is for the subject to occupy 'Middle Field', the position immediately following the inflected verb; this is the usual subject position when something has been topicalized in V/2 Germanic languages:

30. a. Plutsim iz Truman geshtorbn.
    Suddenly is Truman died = 'Suddenly Truman died.'
   b. Nokhdem derlangt a driter rod a fal arop!
      After-that serves a third wheel a fall down
      = 'After that third wheel suddenly falls off!'
   c. Iz eyn mol, iz a yid tsun im gekumen, azoy farnakhtlekh, ven dortn hohn shoyn di lompn gebrent.
      So one time is a guy to him come, so late, when there have already the lamps burned
      = 'So once a guy came to him late at night, when the lamps were already lit.'
   d. Avade iz keyn bilet nit aroysgekumen.
      Of course is no ticket not out-come
      = 'Of course no ticket came out.'

As I have argued elsewhere (Prince 1988), while Initial- and Middle-Field subjects are always grammatical, postposed subjects are extremely common when the subject NP does not represent an entity which has been already evoked in the current discourse segment, either because the NP represents a discourse entity that is new in
that segment, as in 28a-c, or because it represents no discourse entity, as in 28d. Note that the type of verb that may have postposed subjects is not limited to existential or presentational. To my knowledge, no other Germanic language has quite this sort of subject-postposing.

The question then arises: where did Yiddish subject-postposing come from? Here I am being even more speculative than before, but I believe that the story may be similar. More specifically, we know that Biblical Hebrew was VSO, with rampant topicalization into initial position of those subjects that were already evoked in the discourse segment (Moshavi, In prep., cf. Shumacher 1980 for an analogous account of Arabic). Furthermore, it is widely known that Old French had rampant subject-postposing under similar discourse conditions, i.e. when the subject was new in the discourse segment. If this was also the case for Judeo-French, the early Yiddish speakers may have wished to convey that a subject was not Discourse-old (Prince 1992b) by having it occur postverbally.

And we have some evidence that they in fact did. As pointed out to me by Beatrice Santorini, many old Yiddish texts begin with or include some Hebrew material, immediately followed by its Yiddish translation, and many are of the form of 31, where the uppercase items are in Hebrew, the rest in Old Yiddish:

31. AMRU KHKHMIM Es hbn gizagit unzri khkhmim in der tseyt ds da iz vardn gibarn abrhm...
   SAID-3pl SAGES It have said our sages in the time that PRT is become born Abraham...
   = 'THE SAGES SAID. Our sages said in the time that Abraham was born...'
   (Magen Abraham (Anon.), 1624, Lublin, p. 2.)

The obvious question here, of course, is why they did not instead choose Middle-Field position for Discourse-new subjects. The answer to that is, I believe, equally obvious, if one looks at the data: Germanic Middle-Field subjects are overwhelmingly Discourse-old and are in fact, at least in the Yiddish data, nearly always pronominal. Thus Middle-Field already had some clear and conflicting function. Furthermore, if the early Yiddish speakers were to have changed that function to marking Discourse-new subjects, they would have had no position for Discourse-old subjects in Topicalized sentences, given that only one constituent may occur preverbally in a V/2 language. Thus Final-Field seems like a good choice for Discourse-new subjects, akin to Semitic and possibly Romance postverbal Discourse-new subjects.

However, now we must ask whether having subjects in Final-Field constitutes a syntactic change in Yiddish. I believe it does not, as I shall now try to show.

First, we know that Germanic objects could be postposed when ‘focused’; we find this in Old English and earlier stages of New High German (Pintzuk 1991 and Kroch, personal communication). And we likewise find this, albeit rarely, in Yiddish,
illustrated in 32, where *finfuntsvantsik kopikes* '25 kopeks' is focal information and is postposed past the postposed subject:

32. Frier hot a kvort bronfn gekost zibn kopikes. Dernokh hot men ayngefirt an aktsiz oyf bronfn, un es hot ongehoybn kostn a kvort bronfn *finfuntsvantsik kopikes*. (RP:50)
   Earlier has a quart booze cost seven kopeks. Later has one introduced a tax on booze, and it has begun cost a quart booze 25 kopeks
   = 'Earlier a quart of booze cost seven kopeks. Later they introduced a tax on booze and a quart of booze began to cost 25 kopeks.'

Second, it has been fairly widely accepted that subjects in languages like Yiddish originate VP-internally (refs...). This means that, aside from case and agreement, they are very much like objects. Given that objects can be postposed and given that case and agreement details can be worked out (which I leave to the syntacticians to describe), Final-Field becomes a possible site for subjects, as well as objects.

3.4. Summary of putative syntactic changes due to contact.
In sum, I have tried to show that language contact can bring about changes that have the superficial appearance of syntactic change but that in fact leave the syntax untouched, the real changes being lexical, semantic, and/or pragmatic. Of course, such a view requires us to make a sharp distinction between the syntax and the other components, a distinction which I take to be justified by how well it serves to explain changes of the sort I have sketched here. It goes without saying that the lion's share of the research, even on the specific phenomena discussed here, remains to be done.

4.0. Internal syntactic change due to contact-induced semantic change?
I shall now turn to a case where a syntactic change has indeed occurred and where I believe it is a result of contact but only very indirectly so, the direct cause being *internal* to the language. More specifically, I shall propose a story in which there are two relevant changes in the language. The first, chronologically, is the result of contact and is *semantic*; this semantic change results in a dramatic drop in the frequency of some (native) form. The drop in frequency then results in a syntactic reanalysis of that form on the part of children acquiring the language, producing the syntactic change. The case involves the pluperfect tense, to which I shall now turn.

4.1. The Old Yiddish pluperfect: the facts.
Old Yiddish, like Middle High German and New High German, formed the pluperfect from the preterite of the auxiliary verb and the past participle of the main (lexical) verb, as illustrated in 33. Note that, also as in German, some verbs were conjugated with *hobn* 'have' while others were conjugated with *zayn* 'be'.

they told him where he was been and how they him in the valley had carried
= 'They told him where he'd been and how they'd carried him into the valley.'

At some point subsequent to this stage but before Modern Yiddish, the preterite was lost, replaced by the present perfect (as in Bavarian German, with which Yiddish shares many features). This produced the expected change in the form of the pluperfect: it came to be formed from the present perfect of the appropriate auxiliary verb plus the past participle of the main verb, as illustrated by the example in 34, grammatical in certain Northeast dialects of Modern Yiddish:

34. Er iz geven geven oyfn barg un zey hobn im gehat getrogn in dem tol.
    He is been been on-the mountain and they have him had carried in the valley = 'He had been on the mountain and they had carried him into the valley.'

Note that this replacement of the preterite, wherever it occurred, by the present perfect preceded Slavic contact; the following example, collected by Beatrice Santorini, is from Western Yiddish, the variety of Yiddish spoken by those Yiddish speakers who never migrated to the east and never had Slavic contact:

35. Tsu Frankfurt hat er gihat eyn veyb ginumen.
    to Frankfurt has he had a woman taken
    'He had taken a wife in Frankfurt.' (Court testimony, Worms, 1642)

4.2. The Modern Yiddish pluperfect: the facts.
In most dialects of Modern Yiddish, we find pluperfects like the following:

36. a. Ongekumen in a shtetl, farforn, vi geveyntlekh, in akhsanye. Un in akhsanye hobn zikh shoyn gehat oyugetklebn a sakh mentshn, mekablonim zayn dem groysn rov. (RP:222)
    Come into a village, lodged, as usual, in inn. And in inn have self already had gathered a lot people, take face be the big rabbi
    'Came into a village, lodged, as usual, in an inn. And in the inn a lot of people had already gathered to welcome the great rabbi.'

   b. Tsvey yidn hobn zikh amol tsekrigt, eyner dem andem gezidlt, biz eyner iz gevorn mole kas un hot aroysgerufn dem andern oyf a duel. Zey hobsn beyde gehat gedint in soldatn, hobn zey gekent shisn. (RP:51)
Two Jews have self a-time fought, one the other cursed, until one is become angry and has out-called the other on a duel. They **have both** **had served** in soldiers, have they could shoot 'Two guys once fought, [each] one cursed the other, until one got angry and challenged the other to a duel. They **had both served** in the army, so they knew how to shoot.'

c. **Iz tsun im a mol gekumen a yid, a meshulekh fun epes a yeshive. Reb Anshl **hot zikh shoyn gehat ongezen** meshulokhim genug, hot er im nit gevolt tsulozn tsu zikh. (RP:76)

Is to him a time come a Jew, a messenger from something a religious-school. Mr. Anshl **has self already had seen** messengers enough, has he him not wanted let to self 'So once a guy came to him, a messenger from some sort of religious school. Mr. Anshl **had already seen** enough messengers, so he didn’t want to let him in to see him.'

37. a. **Iz gehat geshtanen** oyf der same shvel fun shmad. (A. Tseytlin, cited in Mark 1978:281)

   **Is had stood** on the very threshold of conversion [to Christianity]

   'He **had been** very close to converting to Christianity.'

b. Zi **iz nokh nit gehat aroys[gekumen]** fun yener velt. (Y. Opatoshu, cited in Mark 1978:281)

   She **is still not had out[come]** of that world.

   'She had still not gotten out of the other world [beyond the grave].'

c. **S’iz gehat geblibn in im an akshones**" (Y. Bashevis, cited in Mark 1978:281)

   It’s **had stayed** in him a persistence

   = 'A persistence **had remained** in him.'

The examples in 36, all containing *hobn*-verbs, are, superficially at least, just what we would expect. However, those in 37 are quite surprising: although each verb is conjugated with *zayn 'be'* , the first past participle is **gehat 'had'**, not **geven 'been'**. That is, we would expect to find the sentences in 38 instead of those in 37:

38. a. **Iz geven geshtanen**...

   **Is been stood**...

   = '[He] had stood...'

b. Zi **iz nokh nit geven aroys[gekumen]**...

   She is not yet **been** out-come...

   = 'She had not yet gotten out...'

c. **S’iz geven geblibn**...

   It’s **been** stayed...

   = '...had remained...'
In fact, the sentences in 37, where *gehat* 'had' occurs in the pluperfect with *zayn*-verbs as well as with *hobn*-verbs, exemplify most dialects of Yiddish, including the standard dialect. I shall now speculate on how this might have come about.

4.3. A plausible story.
I should now like to suggest a possible scenario where a semantic change in Yiddish resulting from Slavic contact affected the frequency of a form in a significant way; the new frequency would then have yielded a new analysis on the part of children acquiring Yiddish, yielding a syntactic change. If this scenario is correct, it is the closest thing I have seen to a real syntactic change resulting from contact; however, it would have come about indirectly, the only borrowing having taken place being at the semantic level.

4.3.1. Sequence of tenses.
Before proceeding further, however, we must briefly describe another aspect of the Yiddish verbal system, so-called sequence of tenses. Old Yiddish had the expected Germanic system, whereby, for example, a main clause event-time that is prior to the utterance-time is expressed by a past tense (preterite or present perfect), and a subordinate clause event-time that is prior to a main clause event-time which itself is prior to the utterance-time is expressed by the pluperfect. For example, consider again 33, repeated for convenience as 39:

39. zj zjjtn @jm vv@v er vv@r gjvvezn @vn- vvj zj @jn @jn dj gl@n @hn
   gjtr@gn... (Bovo-Bukh (79), 1507, from Smith 1968, Part I, p. 125; Part II, p. 348
   they told him where he was been and how they him in the valley had carried
   = 'They told him where he'd been and how they'd carried him into the valley.'

Here we see that the time of the telling-event in the main clause is prior to the utterance-time and so is expressed by the preterite; the time of the being-state and of the carrying-event of the subordinate clause are both prior to the time of the telling-event and so are expressed by the pluperfect.

After Slavic contact, the semantics of the Yiddish tense system changed: it borrowed the Slavic system whereby the utterance-time remains the reference point for all the events in the sentence, those in subordinate clauses as well as those in main clauses. Thus, the Modern Yiddish equivalent of 39 is 40:

40. Zey hobn im gezogt vu er iz geven un vi zey hobn im getrogn in dem tol.
   They have him told where he is been and how they have him carried in the valley
   = 'They told him where he was and how they carried him into the valley.'
Note that, while the English translation of 40 is ambiguous between the intended (pluperfect) meaning and a meaning where all the events are simultaneous, the Yiddish sentence is unambiguously pluperfect in meaning. To convey the sense of simultaneity, Yiddish would use the present tense in the embedded clauses, as in 41:

41. Zey **hobn** im **gezogt** vu er **iz** un vi zey **trogn** im in dem tol.
They have him told where he is and how they carry him in the valley
\[= 'They told him where he was [at that moment] and how they were carrying him [at that moment] into the valley.'\]

Some examples involving a main clause past tense are presented in 42:

42. a. In a vokh nokh der khasene **hob ikh shoyn derzen**, vosara min klipe ikh **hob gekrogn**. (RP:32) [pluperfect sense = past form]
  'In a week after the wedding have I already seen what-kind-of kind shrew I have gotten'
  \[= 'Within a week after the wedding I saw already what kind of shrew I had gotten.'\]

b. Un er **hot im gezidlt**, vifl es **iz** in im arayn. (RP:192) [past (cotemporaneous) sense = present form]
  'And he has him cursed how-much it is in him in'
  \[= 'And he cursed him, with however much was in him.'\]

c. An oyrekh **iz amol gezesn** ban a balebos un **hot gevart**, biz me **vet derlangen** esn. (RP:48) [future-in-the-past sense = future form]
  'A guest is once sat by a host and has waited, until one will serve food'
  \[= 'A guest once sat at in a host’s house and waited until one would serve food.'\]

4.3.2. Sequence of tenses and the pluperfect.
To return now to the pluperfect, we see that the semantic borrowing of the Slavic system of sequence of tenses produces a change in the distribution of the pluperfect, inter alia. In particular, the pluperfect goes from being fairly common in subordinate clauses to being practically nonexistent in subordinate, having been replaced there by the past tense (i.e. present perfect) when a pluperfect sense is to be expressed. Indeed, virtually the only occurrences of the pluperfect that we find today are, like those of 36 and 37 above, in main clauses, nearly all the exceptions being occurrences in preposed adjunct clauses, as in 43:

43. Az etlekhe vayber **hobn gehat opgeredt**, zogt er tsum yungenman:...
(RP:155)
  'When some women have had PRT-talked, says he to-the young-man...
  \[= 'When some of the women had finished speaking, he says to the young man...']\n
I believe that this change in distribution of the pluperfect following the borrowing of the Slavic-type sequence of tense system is relevant to the change in form of the pluperfect for the following reason: the narrowing of the distribution of the pluperfect entails a drop in its frequency. While I do not have a large corpus on which to do a full-fledged frequency analysis, I can report that, in the Old Yiddish Bovo Bukh (1507), the pluperfect occurs at least once on nearly every page, while, in the Modern Yiddish Royte Pomerantsn, nearly 200 pages long, the pluperfect occurs exactly six times, a drop in frequency of at least 97%.

4.3.3. Syntactic reanalysis of the pluperfect.

Once the above changes have taken place and the frequency of the pluperfect drops from being fairly high to extremely rare, the stage is set for a reanalysis of the syntax of the pluperfect on the part of the new generation of language learners. In particular, I believe they ceased to parse the pluperfect as had earlier generations, where the auxiliary verb is in the past (i.e. in the present perfect form), followed by the past participle of the main verb, as in 44a, and began to parse it as the past (i.e. the present perfect) of the main verb, with what had been the past participle of the auxiliary reanalyzed as some sort of intervening aspectual/temporal particle, as in 44b:

44. a. Zey [[hobn gehat] geredt].
   |_______|
   They [[have had] spoken]
   |______|
   'They had spoken'
b. Zey [[hobn] gehat [geredt]]
   |__________|
   They [[have] PRT [spoken]]
   |__________|
   'They had spoken'

One question that arises, of course, is what gehat is reanalyzed as. Unfortunately, it is not clear what the parse was before reanalysis, much less after, given the lack of precedent in the language for a past participle in a finite clause being part of the auxiliary rather than the verb phrase, and I must therefore leave an explicit syntactic description to further research. What is clear is that there was a syntactic reanalysis along the lines of 44 and that this reanalysis was purely language-internal, although the conditions which set the stage for it may well have resulted from the effects of language contact.

5.0. Conclusion.

In this paper, I have tried to give a sense of the range of contact effects on Yiddish, and I have tried to show that at least the direct contact effects are not distributed evenly or randomly across all linguistic levels. Rather, they cluster at the levels involving meaning: words and derivational affixes are borrowed into the lexicon,
discourse functions associated with contact language syntactic forms are borrowed and come to be associated with native syntactic forms, and meanings associated with contact language tenses are borrowed and come to be associated with native tenses, replacing the native meanings previously associated with those tenses. Formal changes may ensue, but these are secondary and internal to Yiddish. I believe this is not a chance pattern and not peculiar to Yiddish; rather I take it to follow from two things: first, from the motivation for linguistic borrowing—the semantic/pragmatic intent on the part of speakers to express some concepts in one language that are expressed in some 'analogous' way in a contact language—and, second, from some inherent difficulty in altering the formal systems of a language, given that, if this were not the case, the simplest way to achieve such a semantic/pragmatic intent would presumably be simply to borrow the contact language form. Whether this difficulty is due to the modularity of an autonomous syntax or to something else, I do not know, but certainly the independence of form from function seems very clear.
Notes

*This paper owes a great debt to Tonjes Veenstra and Norval Smith for the opportunity they gave me to work on these phenomena and to learn about analogous phenomena in other languages and for their advice, patience, encouragement during my writing of this paper. A special thanks is due Tony Kroch, Beatrice Santorini, and Meyer-Leyb Wolf for all the time and energy they have spent answering my many questions, and I also thank Bernard Katz, Norman Miller, Jerrold Sadock, Mordkhe Schaechter, and Moshe Taube for their help and support. Please address comments/questions/criticism to me at ellen@central.cis.upenn.edu.

1More specifically, Old Yiddish refers to the Yiddish spoken by Jews in German-speaking lands before the 17th century. Western Yiddish refers to the Yiddish spoken after that in German-speaking lands and in Alsace, the Low Countries, and Switzerland. What is generally called simply 'Yiddish' is technically Eastern Yiddish, the Yiddish spoken in Slavic- and Baltic-speaking lands and in Romania. (See Weinreich 1980.)

2Parenthetically, it should be noted that Max Weinreich, perhaps for socio-political reasons, perhaps simply because he lacked notions of genetic classification, dubbed Yiddish a 'fusion' language, a notion which survives among most traditional Yiddishists to the present day and which sees Yiddish not as a Germanic language but as a 'fusion' of three 'components', Germanic, Semitic, and Slavic. In a somewhat different vein, Wexler (1991) broke with his fellow 'fusionists' in claiming, on phonological and lexical grounds and with no syntactic evidence, that Yiddish is in fact Slavic, a 'relexified Sorbian'. I do not consider either of these claims serious and will not discuss them further.

3The phonological level is perhaps a third; it will not be discussed here.

4I should note that I am taking the level of morphology to involve purely formal paradigms, the actual phonological realizations of those paradigms being specified at the lexical level.

5However, see Perlmutter 1986 for compelling arguments that in fact Yiddish masculine plural nouns of Semitic origin were borrowed as unanalyzed wholes and only later were reanalyzed as stem + plural suffix, at which point this plural suffix, now a Yiddish morpheme, was available for combination with other Yiddish noun stems.

6However, the Slavic wh-word complementizer, shto 'that', is in fact used for both factive and nonfactive complements. I know of no account of the Yiddish distinction of factive and nonfactive complementizers.
Gundel 1977 argues that Russian *eto*-sentences are complex. However, her arguments are based on positing totally idiosyncratic syntactic properties of such sentences, e.g. deletion of the complementizer and case-marking of the focused NP with respect to the putatively subordinate verb rather than with respect to the putative matrix (zero) copula. This is clear if an object NP is focused, as in i, where the focused item is accusative and not, as Gundel's account would predict, predicate nominative:

i. Eto Er'iku L'eon'id uv'id'el.
   this Erica-acc. Leonard-nom. saw.
   'It's Erica that Leonard saw.'

The subject may also occur postposed to the end of the VP (Prince 1988); the point here is that it may not occur preverbally if something else does.

In fact, I do not believe that 9 is correct in that I do not believe that the subject forms a constituent with the VP. However, this is not relevant to the present discussion.

One of my informants, with no training in formal syntax, rejected sentences like 12 on the grounds that 'shto and *eto* would have to be in the same place.'

Here and in 9, the exact nature of the syntactic structure is not relevant; what is relevant is that, given the distributional facts, any syntactic theory would have to posit different syntactic structures for Russian *eto*-sentences and Yiddish *dos*-sentences.

In Prince 1992a, I claimed that only subjects may be focused in *dos*-sentences, in accordance with the judgments of my informants. Since then, Moshe Taube has pointed out (p.c.) that, for some speakers at least, any constituent may be focused, the focus marked only prosodically. Furthermore, even in the written language where prosodic cues are absent, the presence of the unfocusable *men 'one'* produces an unambiguous nonsubject focus (Moshe Taube, p.c.), as in i:

i. Dos hot men mame-loshn geredt.
   this has one mother-tongue spoken
   #It's they/one that spoke Yiddish.'
   'It's Yiddish that they/one spoke.'

Thus, it remains the case that, although nonsubjects may be focused in *dos*-sentences, only subjects may be focused *syntactically*.

*Dos* has been glossed as 'this/that' since Yiddish, unlike both German and Slavic, lacks a proximal-distal distinction in demonstrative pronouns.
That what was borrowed was the feature [+expletive] rather than the actual Slavic lexical item *eto* 'this' is not surprising, given the difficulty of borrowing or switching closed class items in language-mixing situations (Weinreich 1952, Joshi 1985, among others).

Note that, in the case of *dos*-sentences, it is the identification of the instantiation that is new, i.e. the equation \( X = [\text{discourse entity}] \). The particular discourse entity in the equation may of course be new or old to the hearer or new or old in the discourse. If it is Hearer-old and salient, it may be represented by a pronoun, as would be expected. In contrast, since *es*-sentences mark that the subject is Hearer-new, it follows that they may not have pronominal subjects.

Note that, if Faber and King 1984 is correct in positing Italy as the immediately preceding homeland of the early Yiddish speakers, the story is not affected as (I believe) Italian is similar to French in all the relevant respects.

Furthermore, Yiddish (like Bavarian German) lost the preterite fairly early, at least for most verbs, replacing it with a compound tense, which would mean that a Middle-Field subject would often be post-Infl but not really postverbal as in Hebrew (or Romance).

I am reproducing Smith 1968's transliteration conventions, in contrast to the YIVO transcription conventions used in the rest of the paper and following which 33 would look something like i, presented here only to make 33 more legible:

i. 

Zi zeytn im vu er var givezn un' vi zi in in di glian hatn getragn.

Just as this paper was about to be sent to the editor, the following headline appeared in the major Yiddish newspaper in the United States:

i. 

Mashinist fun gekrakhter ban **iz gehat adurkhgeform** royte signaln  
*(Forverts, February 16, 1996)*  
Engineer from crashed train **is had through-gone** red signals  
'Engineer on crashed train **had gone through** red lights.'

I thank Walter Golman for pointing this out to me.
References


