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Adaptations of Hebrew Script

BENJAMIN HARY

Jewish "languages" or ethnolects

It is probably impossible to offer a purely linguistic definition of a Jewish "language," as it is difficult to find many common linguistic criteria that can apply to Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Spanish, and Yiddish, for example. Consequently, a sociolinguistic definition with a more suitable term, such as *ethnolect*, is in order. An ethnolect is an independent linguistic entity with its own history and development that refers to a language or a variety and is used by a distinct language community. A Jewish ethnolect, then, is a spoken and/or written form serving for the most part the Jewish population of a specific area. Our knowledge of Jewish ethnolects is inadequate, as in many cases scholars began to investigate them when it was too late and only a handful of speakers were still using them; in worse cases, some of these ethnolects had already disappeared.

Jewish ethnolects share many characteristics: they incorporate Hebrew and Aramaic elements, not restricted to the sphere of cultural vocabulary but also found throughout the lexicon as well as in phonology, morphology, and syntax. They have developed distinct spoken forms as well as unique ways of translating sacred Hebrew texts verbatim (Hary 1995) into the various Jewish ethnolects. The most obvious external characteristic of Jewish ethnolects, however, is the consistent use, in their written forms, of Hebrew characters (SECTION 46). Very frequently, Jews adopted the spelling conventions of Talmudic orthography, employing the final forms of Hebrew letters and sometimes adding vowel signs using existing consonants and/or symbols. Thus, the Hebrew script symbolizes the Jewish nature of the ethnolect. It is not uncommon to use script as a religious identification for a language, as with the Arabic script of Persian and Urdu, for example, which symbolizes the Muslim nature of the languages.

Jewish ethnolects developed in the diaspora from local languages and were used in both their written and spoken forms by Jews within the Jewish community. They developed as one result of a migration, the dispersion of the Jews throughout Asia and Europe during the early centuries of the Common Era (Birnbaum 1971: 68). The creation of these ethnolects began as a way of assimilation into the non-Jewish environment but later came to be a hallmark of "continuing Jewish consciousness and identity" (Ben-Sasson 1971: 771). That is, the initial adoption of a local language was

an attempt to assimilate into the surrounding environment and to speak like the local inhabitants; but later, in order to become a symbol of Jewish identity and an actual obstacle to assimilation, the language established itself as Jewish with its Hebrew script and Hebrew and Aramaic linguistic elements.

Jewish languages are numerous, and the list reflects Jewish history and geography. Beside Hebrew, the primary Jewish language (although see Ornan 1985), Jewish forms of Aramaic began to develop even before the beginning of the Common Era. Before the end of the Second Temple period, Hellenistic Jews began to employ the Greek Koiné in its Jewish form — Yevanic, which many centuries later became known in the Balkans as Judeo-Greek. After the seventh century, when Islam began to spread across the Middle East and North Africa, Judeo-Arabic began to develop, and Jews from Spain to Iraq adopted forms of this ethnolect. In North Africa, Judeo-Berber emerged; and in Iran, Judeo-Persian. On the other side of the Jewish world, Latin produced six different ethnolects: Judeo-Italian (Italkian) in Italy; Judeo-Provençal (Shuadit) in southern France, and Judeo-French (Zarphatic) more to the north; Judeo-Catalan in the eastern part of the Iberian Peninsula, and Judeo-Portuguese in the western part; and Judeo-Spanish (Ladino, Jidyó, Judezmo) in between. After the expulsion of the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula toward the end of the fifteenth century, Judeo-Spanish spread to the east through the Balkans, Turkey, and Palestine, and to the south throughout North Africa. Yiddish originated in the tenth century among central European Jews and spread to eastern Europe and, centuries later, to the Americas, South Africa, Australia, and Palestine. Before the Holocaust, three quarters of world Jewry spoke Yiddish. In the east, Kurdish Jews use Judeo-Neo-Aramaic, Judeo-Arabic dialects, as well as Kurdish with mixed Hebrew, Turkish, and Arabic elements. In Central Asia Judeo-Tajik is employed, Judeo-Tat (of the Iranian family) is used by Jews in Daghestan in the eastern Caucasus, and Judeo-Georgian is used by Jews in Georgia in the southern Caucasus. Judeo-Crimchak (of the Turkic family) is employed by Crimean Jews, both Rabbanites and Karaites.

Of these languages, Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Spanish, and Yiddish have had the largest impact on Jewish culture and civilization since the dispersion of the Jews. Among these, Judeo-Arabic holds a significant place: it has the longest recorded history of the three, from pre-Islamic times to the present; additionally, it spans the widest geographical area, from Spain to Yemen and Iraq, and “it was the medium of expression for one of the foremost periods of Jewish cultural and intellectual creativity” (Stillman 1988:3–4). Judeo-Arabic is thus here the primary example of the use of the Hebrew script; Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish are treated as well.

Judeo-Arabic

Judeo-Arabic is an ethnolect which has been spoken and written in various forms by Jews throughout the Arabic-speaking world; its literature is concerned for the most part with Jewish topics and is written by Jewish authors for Jewish readers. Judeo-

TABLE 61.1: *Judeo-Arabic/Arabic Consonant Correspondences*

Arabic	Judeo-Arabic	Phonetic Value
ا	א	[Ø, ʔ]
ب	ב	[b]
ت	ת, ת̄	[t]
ث	ת, ת̄, ת̄	[t, θ]
ج	ג, ג̄	[g, ʒ]
ح	ח	[ħ]
خ	כ/ך, כ/ך̄	[x]
د	ד	[d]
ذ	ד, ד̄	[d, ð]
ر	ר	[r]
ز	ז	[z]
س	ס	[s]
ش	ש	[ʃ]
ص	צ/ץ, ס	[s]
ض	צ/ץ, ד	[d, z]
ط	ט	[t]
ظ	ט, צ/ץ, ד	[d, z]
ع	ע	[ʕ]
غ	ג, ג̄, ר	[ɣ]
ف	פ, פ̄	[f]
ق	ק, ק̄	[q]
ك	כ/ך	[k]
ل	ל	[l]
م	מ/ם	[m]
ن	נ/ן	[n]
ه	ה	[h]
ه̄	ת, ה, ה̄	[t, h]
و	ו, ו̄	[w]
ي	י, י̄	[j]

TABLE 61.2: *Vowel Representation*

[i] Ø, sometimes ʔ	[i:] usually ʔ	[u] Ø, frequently ʔ	[u:] usually ʔ
[e] Ø, sometimes ʔ	[e:] usually ʔ	[o] Ø, frequently ʔ	[o:] usually ʔ
[a] Ø	[ā] usually א		

Arabic has had a long history, with a dramatic change occurring around the fifteenth century C.E., when the Jewish world severed its contact with the Muslim world and its Arabic language and culture. This was especially true in North Africa and less so in Yemen, where strong contact was maintained for some time. To refine and more accurately describe the history of Judeo-Arabic, I periodize it as follows: Pre-Islamic, Early (8th/9th–10th centuries), Classical (10th–15th centuries), Later (15th–19th centuries), and Modern Judeo-Arabic (20th century). This scheme, however, should not distract us from the major change that occurred in the fifteenth century: the first three periods constitute Medieval Judeo-Arabic; the latter two, Late.

Three script usages can be identified for Judeo-Arabic: “Phonetic,” “Arabicized,” and “Hebraized.” Of the three, Arabicized orthography has had the greatest influence. In general terms, TABLE 61.1 represents the transcription of Judeo-Arabic consonants irrespective of the three orthographic traditions. The final varieties of Hebrew letters (shown to the right of the slant) are used in word-final position. The vowels are represented as in TABLE 61.2. (Note that most Judeo-Arabic manuscripts are written in Rashi letters, whereas printed editions use square Hebrew as well as Rashi script.)

Arabicized orthography

Arabicized orthography, for the most part uniform, is based on imitation of the spelling of Classical Arabic (SECTION 50, which see for the technical terms used below); and since there are fewer Hebrew characters than Judeo-Arabic phonemes, Arabicized orthography very often uses diacritic points that copy those of the Arabic letters. This is the case for $\text{צ } d$, $\text{ז } z$, $\text{ד } d$, $\text{ה } h/t$, $\text{ח } \text{t}$, $\text{ג } g$, $\text{ק } q$, and $\text{פ } f$ (although this could be interpreted as belonging with the following set). Sometimes a phonetic principle is used, as in the case of $\text{צ } x$, $\text{ג } g$, and occasionally $\text{ח } \text{t}$ —allophones of צ , ג , and ח respectively.

The conventions of Talmudic spelling, influential in most orthographies of Jewish ethnolsects, are represented in Arabicized orthography in a slight tendency to mark short [u] with $\text{ו } w$ and in rendering (especially geminated) consonantal [w] and [y] with $\text{וו } ww$ and $\text{יי } yy$ respectively. As a whole, however, Arabicized orthography is primarily based on the spelling of Classical Arabic: the long vowels are marked with vowel letters; the definite article ($\text{'}al$) is always written morphophonemically, regardless of its pronunciation—even when the ' is not pronounced and the l is assimilated to the following consonant, the definite article is written $\text{ל' } l'$. The same holds true for 'alif waṣla , and sometimes even for 'alif fāṣila as well as keeping the distinction between $\text{'alif maqṣūra biṣūratī l-'}alif$ and $\text{'alif maqṣūra biṣūratī l-yā'}$. Even short vowels, *tašdīd*, and the *madda*, when marked, are sometimes written with the Arabic signs over the Hebrew characters. This orthography is typical of Classical Judeo-Arabic, but is also used during Early Judeo-Arabic, and to a lesser degree, during Later and Modern Judeo-Arabic.

Phonetic orthography

Phonetic orthography, on the other hand, is used only during Early Judeo-Arabic. It is based on phonetic principles, free from the influence of Classical Arabic orthography. Moreover, Blau and Hopkins (1987: 124) claim, “There is no orthographical feature [in this tradition] which has to be explained as an imitation of literary Arabic spelling habits.” The main characteristic of (broad) Phonetic orthography are as follows.

- (i) Marking d and z with $\text{ד } d$, as it represents the closest phoneme in Hebrew to the pronunciation of $\text{ض } z$ and $\text{ظ } z$ (e.g. $\text{קבד } qbd$ [qabaḏa] ‘he received’, cf. $\text{قبض } qbd$; $\text{הפדך } hpdk$ [hafīzaka] ‘may He preserve you’, cf. $\text{حفظك } hpzk$, *ibid.*, 133).
- (ii) Marking the definite article phonetically, not morphophonemically as in Arabicized orthography (e.g. $\text{בילקמח } bylqmḥ$ [bilqamḥ] ‘with the grain’, cf. $\text{بالقمح } b'lyqmḥ$; $\text{ארחים } 'arḥim$ [arraḥim] ‘the Merciful’, cf. $\text{الرحيم } 'l-rḥym$; $\text{בתמן } btmn$ [bittaman] ‘with the price’, cf. $\text{بالتمن } b'ltmn$, *ibid.*, 147–48).
- (iii) Use of *plene* ‘full’ and ‘defective’ writing phonetically. E.g., both short [u] and [i] are frequently marked with $\text{ו } w$ and $\text{י } y$ respectively, contrary to Classical Arabic usage; ‘defective’ writing of medial \bar{a} (i.e. without an equivalent of Classical 'alif); and the spelling of $\text{'alif maqṣūra biṣūratī l-yā'}$ with א .

Both Phonetic and Arabicized orthographies were used side by side in Early Judeo-Arabic. Scribes who were educated in Classical Arabic used Arabicized orthography, and those who were not used Phonetic. This, of course, explains the fact that almost no literary texts were written in Phonetic orthography (Blau and Hopkins 1984: 26–27). The possibility exists, though, that even scribes who were educated in Classical Arabic, and knew the principles of Arabicized orthography, may have still used Phonetic orthography when attempting to reach a readership among the lower strata of the Jewish population who did not know Classical Arabic and had mastered only the Hebrew script, as was traditionally the case with Jews.

During the tenth century, Phonetic orthography vanished rapidly and was replaced by Arabicized. Blau and Hopkins attribute this sudden disappearance to the publication of Sa'adya Gaon's *tafsīr* ‘translation/commentary’ of the Pentateuch. Sa'adya (882–942) was educated in Classical Arabic and subsequently used Arabicized orthography. Since his work was widely distributed and prestigious among all the Jewish communities in the Arab world, it opened the way for Arabicized orthography to be adopted by Judeo-Arabic scribes. From then on, the orthography of Sa'adya's translation of the Pentateuch, which happened to be Arabicized orthography, became the model for Judeo-Arabic. The scribes did not need to be further educated in Classical Arabic or even to be familiar with its orthography; they only needed to be familiar with Sa'adya's work in order to use Arabicized orthography.

Hebraized orthography

After the fifteenth century, during the period of Later Judeo-Arabic, another script type began to develop, best termed *Hebraized*. During this period, Hebraized orthography existed alongside Arabicized orthography; it is characterized by three main features.

(i) Hebrew/Aramaic influence on spelling. E.g., *ʿalif maqṣūra biṣūratī l-yāʿ* was not spelled with *y* as was the case in Arabicized orthography. Rather, it was spelled with *h* in imitation of Hebrew orthography (e.g. נודעה *nwwh* [nawwa] ‘intended’, cf. נודע *nw*; אלושרה *ʿlbwšrh* [ilbuʃra] ‘the good news’, cf. אלושר *ʿlbšr*; Hary 1992: 87–88); or with *ʾ*, as influenced by the orthography of the Babylonian Talmud (for example, נודעה *nw* ‘intended’, cf. נודעה *ysm* ‘you will give us’, cf. נודעה *ysm*, ibid. 88). Moreover, final *ʿalif* was often spelled with *h* (e.g. אנה *ʿnh* [ʔana] ‘I’, cf. אנה *ʿnh* [ʔana] ‘you will give us’, cf. נתת *ʿnt*, ibid.) in imitation of standard Hebrew orthography; and feminine nouns were spelled with a final *ʾ*, possibly a reflection of the Babylonian Talmud, which used this kind of spelling in both Hebrew and Aramaic (e.g. קלעה *ql* [qalʕa] ‘citadel’, cf. قلعة *ql* [qalʕa] ‘citadel’, cf. قهوة *qhww* [ʔahwa] ‘coffee’, cf. قهوة *qhww*; ibid. 89–90).

(ii) Closer phonetic representation. For example, the use of *plene* writing to represent short vowels phonetically; marking consonantal *w* and *y* with *ww* and *yy* respectively; marking *ʿalif mamdūda* according to its phonetic representation (*-a*) with *h* or *ʾ*; occasional phonetic spelling of the definite article (e.g. אנאס *n* [inna:s] ‘the people’, cf. الناس *n* [nās]; פלררף *f* [firri:f] ‘in the country’, cf. في الريف *f* [firri:f], ibid. 92–93); occasionally marking *d* with *ḏ* for phonetic reasons (e.g. בעד *b* [baʕd] ‘some’, cf. بعض *b* [baʕs]; דאק *d* [da:q] ‘was annoyed’, cf. دق *d* [da:q], ibid. 94); frequently spelling the enclitic conjunction *fe-* ‘and’ as a separate word *ʿfi*, probably to indicate the pronunciation; and frequently writing the accusative *tanwin* with *n* (e.g. חטן *hzn* [hazz^{an}] ‘pleasure’, cf. חטן *hzn* [hazz^{an}] ‘pleasure’, cf. خوف *xwf*, ibid. 297).

(iii) The continued influence of Arabicized orthography.

In sum, Hebraized orthography differs from the Phonetic and Arabicized orthographies in different ways. Whereas the influence of Classical Arabic orthography is not seen in Phonetic orthography, it is one element of Hebraized, albeit via Arabicized. Hebraized differs as well from Arabicized orthography in that it shows greater phonetic representation, and spelling conventions of Hebrew and Talmudic orthography. In other words, the tradition of Hebraized orthography is based neither on the orthographic model of Classical Arabic exclusively, as with Arabicized, nor on phonetic considerations exclusively, as with Phonetic. In some ways, Hebraized orthography is a combination of Phonetic and Arabicized.

SAMPLE OF LATER JUDEO-ARABIC



FIGURE 66. Cairo Genizah Ms. T-S Ar 30.113, recto

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←פלאמא סמנו מנשה ואפרים
myrf'w hšnm w'ms 'mlf←

כלאם אכודום פרתו פרה אן
n' hrf whrf mwhwk' m'lk

פלאמא צבח אל נהאר גלס יוספ
fswy slg r'hnl' hbs' m'lf

עלא אל כורסי תום אקצא אל
l' 'sq' mw[ysrwk l' 'l'

אשגאל ואמר באחצאר א
' r'qh'b m'w l'gš'

אכואתו פחצרו בין ידיה פקאל
l'qf hydy nyb wrd'hf wt'wk'

להום יוספ מא פעלתו פי
yf wt'f 'm fswy mwhl

קצייח אכוכום אלדי ענד
dn' ydl' mwkwk' tyydq

אכוכום קאל להו יאודה יאמ
m'y hdw'y whl l'q mwkwb'

מולאנא אל מלך אן נחן לך
kl n' n' klm l' n' lwm

עביד אן שית
tyš n' dyb'

1. *Normalization:* f'lama sim'u menaše wiefrayim kalām
2. *Transcription:* fə-lama simf-u menafe wī-efrajim kala:m
3. *Gloss:* and-when heard-they Menashe and-Efrayim words.of

1. axūhom farahū farḥan ʿazīm f'lama šibih
2. axu:-חמ farah-u farḥ-an ʕazi:m f'-lama šibih
3. brother-their rejoiced-they happiness-ACC great and-when began

1. ʾInahār jalas yūsuf ʿala lkursi tumma aqša il
2. ʕn-naha:r dʕalas yu:suf ʕala l-kursi ʕumma aqša il
3. the-daytime sat Joseph on the-chair afterward went.deep the

1. ašgāl wiʿamar biʾiḥdār a ixwāto f-ḥuḏru bēn
2. aʕya:l wi-ʔamar bi-ʔiḥda:r ʕ ixwa:t-כ fə-ḥuḏr-u be:n
3. concerns and-ordered in-bringing brothers-his and-came-they between

1. yadēh f'āl lahom yūsuf ma fa'alto fi 'adīyyet
 2. yade:-h fə-ʔa:l la-həm ju:suf ma faʕal-tə fi ʔadījjet
 3. hands-his and-said to-them Joseph what did-you in problem.of

1. axūkom illazi 'and axūhom 'āl lahu ye'uda ya m
 2. axu:-kəm illazi ʕand axu:-həm ʕa:l la-hu jəʔuda ya m
 3. brother-your who with brother-your said to-him Judah Oh, ...

1. mawlāna ilmalik inna naḥnu lak 'abīd in ʕīt
 2. mawla:-na il-malik inna naḥnu la-k ʕabi:d in fi:-t
 3. master-our the-king indeed we to-you slaves if wanted-you

'And when Menashe and Ephraim heard their brother's words, they became very glad. And when the morning came, Joseph sat on the chair, went into deep thoughts and ordered to bring his brothers to come in front of him. Joseph then said to them, "What did you do regarding your brother who is with your father?" Judah answered to him, "Oh, master, we are truly slaves to you, and if you wish, ..."

—Egypt, ca. 1600 C.E.; from the literature on Joseph and His Brothers.

Judeo-Spanish (Ladino)

Judeo-Spanish is also written in Hebrew characters, although there are texts written in the Latin alphabet. TABLE 61.3 indicates the Judeo-Spanish phonetic equivalents of the Hebrew letters used in standard Judeo-Spanish spelling. The final varieties of letters are used in the same way as in Judeo-Arabic and Yiddish at the end of words. The following Hebrew letters are used in Judeo-Spanish, but usually limited to Hebrew words: כ [k], ע Ø, צ [s], and ת [t].

In different Judeo-Spanish manuscripts, the letters that are here followed by an apostrophe (׳ for [v], for example) may exhibit other diacritics, such as a line above the letter װ, a supralinear *segol* װ, or even װ.

TABLE 61.3: Judeo-Spanish

Letter	Value	Letter	Value	Letter	Value
א	[Ø, a]	ז	[z]	נ	[n]
ב	[b]	ח	[ç]	ני	[ɲ]
ב׳	[v]	ח׳	[ç, ʒ]	ס	[s]
ג	[g]	ט	[t]	פ	[p]
ג׳	[ʝ, ɸ, f, ʒ]	י׳	[j]	פ׳	[f]
ד	[d, ð]	ל	[l]	ק	[k]
ה	[a]	ל׳	[ʎ]	ר	[r]
ו	[v]	מ	[m]	ש	[s, ʃ]

Yiddish

HOWARD I. ARONSON

Yiddish is first attested in glosses to Hebrew manuscripts dating from the twelfth century. The first printed work in Yiddish is dated 1534. Like all Jewish languages, modern Yiddish uses the square Hebrew script. Yiddish has never had the official status of being a language of state (the so-called "Jewish Autonomous Oblast" in Soviet Birobidzhan can hardly be viewed as an exception). Consequently there has never been a generally accepted central authority that could legislate a normative orthographic system; this has resulted in wide variation. All the orthographic systems are, however, basically alphabetic and can be viewed as either historically based or, preferably, interdialectal. (There is also no single normative orthoepy; native speakers generally speak in one of the three major dialects of the language.) Variation in the systems of orthography is shown in FIGURE 67.

These variations are largely correlated with different religious and political groups, with *phonemic* spelling of Hebrew and Aramaic words being typical of Soviet Yiddish as well as of non-Soviet Yiddish in the usage of radical left-wing organizations. *Pseudo-etymological* spelling is today found in some ultra-Orthodox Yiddish usage. The overwhelming majority of Yiddish publications today combine the traditional spelling of Hebrew and Aramaic words with the interdialectal morphophonemic spelling; these we call *standard* systems.

Standard orthographies

The overwhelming majority of modern Yiddish publications combine the traditional spelling of most Hebrew and Aramaic words with the interdialectal morphophonemic spelling of words of non-Semitic origin. There are many sub-varieties of this orthography. Perhaps the most widely used in literary works today is the so-called YIVO orthography proclaimed by the *אינסטיטוט פֿאַר אַ פֿאַרשטאַנדענע ייִדישע וויסנשאַפֿטלעכע ערשטע ייִדישע ייִדישער וויסנשאַפֿטלעכער אינסטיטוט* (ײִרוואָ) *Yidisher visnshaflekhler institut (YIVO)* 'Yiddish Scientific Institute' and the *ענטראָלע ייִדישע*

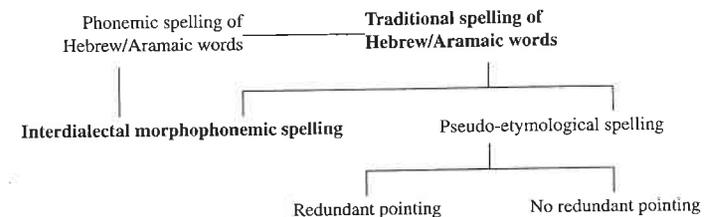


FIGURE 67. Yiddish orthographic systems (most common components of standard systems in bold)

TABLE 61.4: *The Yiddish Alphabet*

Letter ^a	Name	Value ^b	YIVO ^c	Other	Notes ^d
א	(shtumer) alef	–	– (ʔ)		silent; occurs initially before <i>i, u, ey, ay, oy</i>
אָ	pasekh alef	[a]	a	אָ	*
אַ	komets alef	[ɔ]	o		*
ב	beys	[b]	b	בּ	
בֿ	veys	[v]	v (b)	בֿ	only in Semitic words; never word-initial
ג	giml	[g]	g		
ד	daled	[d]	d		
ה	hey	[h]	h		
ו	vov	[u]	u (w)		
וֿ	melupm vov	[u]	u	וֿ	*; occurs after וּ v; occurs before ײ y
וו	tsvey vovn	[v]	v		*
ױ	vov-yud	[ɔj]	oy		*
ז	zayen	[z]	z		
זש	zayen-shin	[ʒ]	zh		*
ח	khes	[x]	kh (h)		only in Semitic words
ט	tes	[t]	t (t)		
טש	tes-shin	[ʃ]	tsh		*
י	yud	[j]	y		before or after vowel
		[i]	i		between consonants
		[-]	y		after <i>t, d, s, z, l, n</i> and before a vowel indicates the palatals in words of Slavic origin
יֿ	khirik yud	[ɪ]	i	יֿ	*; occurs after initial ײ y; occurs after vowels
ײ	tsvey yudn	[ej]	ey		*
ײַ	pasekh tsvey yudn	[aj]	ay	ײַ	*
כ	kof	[k]	k	כּ	only in Semitic words
כּ, ך	khof, lange khof	[x]	kh (k)		
ל	lamed	[l, l, ʎ]	l		
מ, ם	mem, shlos mem	[m]	m		
נ, ן	nun, lange nun	[n]	n		
ס	samekh	[s]	s		
ע	ayin	[e]	e (ʕ)		unstressed = [ɛ] or [ɪ], depending on dialect
פ	pey	[p]	p		
פּ, ף	fey, lange fey	[f]	f (p)	פּ	
צ, ץ	tsadek, lange tsadek	[ts]	ts (s)		
ק	kuf	[k]	k (q)		
ר	reysh	[ʀ]	r		
ש	shin	[ʃ]	sh (š)		
שׂ	sin	[s]	s (ś)	שׂ	only in Semitic words
ת	tof	[t]	t	תּ	only in Semitic words
תּ	sof	[s]	s (t)		only in Semitic words; never word-initial

a. A letter after a comma is the final form.

b. The values given do not necessarily apply to words of Semitic origin, which follow a distinct set of rules.

c. YIVO transliteration; the Hebrew transliteration of the letter is shown in parentheses.

d. An asterisk indicates that the letter/digraph is not treated by YIVO as a separate item for alphabetization.

שול־ארגאניזאציע (צישע) *Tsentrale yidishe shul-organizatsye (TslShO)* 'Central Yiddish School Organization' in Poland on September 1, 1936, and first published in 1937 in Vilno under the title *Takones fun yidishn oysleyg* 'Rules of Yiddish orthography'. In what follows, the YIVO system is described along with the major deviations from it in the more commonly used standard systems. TABLE 61.4 gives the traditional order of the Yiddish alphabet.

Variant orthographies

Most words of Semitic origin (Hebrew and Aramaic) are spelled in the traditional way in most Yiddish orthographies, e.g., אמת *meṭ* ['emes] 'truth', מלך *mlk* ['mejlex] 'king', סך-הכל *sk-hkl* [s(ɛ)'xakl] 'total'. However, Soviet Yiddish authors and many pro-Soviet radical organizations spelled such words according to the phonemic principle: 'obsolete' religion; cf. Hary 1990: 79, 1992: 112–13 on orthographic manifestation of competing political, religious, or cultural preference). As a consequence, the letters that occur only in words of Semitic origin (בּ *b*, ח *h*, כּ *k*, שׂ *ś*, תּ *t*, פּ *p*) were not found there. In earlier Soviet Yiddish, the final letters ך *kh*, ם *m*, ן *n*, ף *f*, ץ *ts* were replaced by the non-final letters: כּ *k*, מ *m*, נ *n*, פּ *p*, צ *ts*. In 1961 the final letters were reintroduced into most Soviet Yiddish (with the main exception of publications from Birobidzhan).

Yiddish orthography in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries showed a tendency to reproduce as literally as possible German orthography. We shall call such spelling *pseudo-etymological* (TABLE 61.5). In the same period certain texts contained, in addition to the regular vowel letters of Yiddish (א *a*, אָ *a*, ו *u*, י *i*, ע *e*; ײ *ey*, ױ *oy*, ײַ *oy*), the Hebrew vowel points below the consonant: in what follows, (a) is a text with redundant vowel pointing and (b) is the corresponding YIVO orthography (words in italics are from Hebrew).

די ונס האָבן אַ בטחון אויף גאָט וועלן זײ זײן אזוי ווי דער באַרג ציון (a)

די וואָס האָבן אַ בטחון אויף גאָט וועלן זײ זײן אזוי ווי דער באַרג ציון (b)

Di vos hobn a *bitokhn* oyf Got veln zey zayn azoy vi der barg *Tsien*.

'They that have confidence in God, they will be just like (the) Mount Sinai.'

Such orthography was found in secular works in the nineteenth century; today, when found, it tends to be in works published by ultra-Orthodox groups.

TABLE 61.5: *Pseudo-etymological vs. Morphophonemic Spelling*

German	Pseudo-etymological	Pronunciation	Morphophonemic	Gloss
T(h)ür	טוּר	thur	טיר	tir 'door'
Jude	יוד	yud	ייד	yid 'Jew'
sehr	זעהר	zehr	זײער	zeyer 'very'
ver-	פֿער-	fer-	פֿאַר-	far- (verbal prefix)
ab-	אַב-	ab-	אָפּ-	op- (verbal prefix)

TABLE 61.6: *Dialect Variation in Vowel Realization*

Letter	YIVO	Northeast	Central	South
אַ	[a]	[a]	[a]	[a]
אָ	[ɔ]	[ɔ]	[u, u:/ɔ, ɔ]	[u/ɔ]
י	[i]	[i]	[i, i:]	[i]
ו	[u]	[u]	[i, i:/u, u:]	[i/u]
ע	[ɛ]	[ɛ]	[ɛ/ej]	[ɛ/ej]
יי	[ej]	[ej]	[a:]	[a]
יי	[aj]	[aj]	[a:(j)]	[ej]
וי	[ɔj]	[ej/ɔj]	[ɔj, ɔ:j, ɔw]	[ɔj, ɔw, u]

Vowel representation

As indicated above, YIVO orthography does not reflect the phonology of any of the three major dialects of Yiddish, though it closely approximates that of Northeast Yiddish. Dialect differences are found mainly in the vocalic system. TABLE 61.6 gives the most common values of the vowel letters in the YIVO norm and in the three major dialects.

Of the Yiddish vowel letters, only א *a*, אָ *o*, and ע *e* can occur word-initially, as in אַלט *alt* 'old', אָרעם *orem* 'poor', עסן *esn* 'eat'. The remaining vowel letters cannot occur at the very beginning of a word, but must, in this position, be preceded by the letter א, the so-called *shtumer* (*r*) *alef* 'silent alef'. Note that the *shtumer alef* has no marking below the line; this differentiates it from the vowels א *a* and אָ *o*. In initial position the remaining vowels have the forms אי *i*, איי *ey*, איי *ay*, אוי *oy*, או *u*, as in איך *ikh* 'I', איין *eyn* 'one', איזן *ayzn* 'iron', אויג *oyg* 'eye', אונטער *unter* 'under'. As a rule, when a word beginning with one of these vowels is preceded by a prefix, the *shtumer alef* remains, e.g., אייביק [ˈejbɪk] 'eternal', פֿאַראייביקן [fərˈejbɪkən] 'immortalize'.

Consonant representation

The spelling of words of non-Semitic origin generally does not indicate such phonologically conditioned alternations as voice assimilation, assimilation of nasals, simplification of C,C₁ clusters, etc.; e.g., ליב *ikh lib* [ˈlɪb] 'I love' in the north, [ˈlɪp] in the south, and ליבסט *du libst* [ˈdu ˈlɪpst] 'to have', אָנפּאַקן *onpahn* [ˈɔnpakn] 'cram'; אָפּפּרען *opputsn* [ˈɔpʊtsn] 'polish'.

Palatal *ry*, *dy*, *sy*, *zy*, and *ny* (occurring almost exclusively in words of Slavic origin) are marked by טי, די, סי, זי, ני before vowels; palatal *ly* before vowels is marked by לי in words of Slavic origin, but is generally unmarked in words of Western European origin. Syllable-final palatals are not marked. Examples: טיאָך *tyókh* 'throb', דיגעכץ *dyégekhts* 'tar', גאָטיניו *gótinyu* 'God (dim.)', ליולקע *lyúl'ke* '(tobacco) pipe', לינאָלי *linol'ey* 'linoleum'.

The orthography does not indicate stress, which is distinctive.

TABLE 61.7: *Differences between YIVO and Other Orthographies*

	YIVO	Non-YIVO	Transliteration	Gloss
(a)	ווה	וואו	vu	'where'
	וונדער	וואונדער	vunder	'wonder'
	געוואסט	געוואסט	gevust	'known'
(b)	נאַיוו	נאַיוו	naiv	'naive'
	רויך	רויך	ruik	'calm'
(c)	ייִד	איד	yid ^a	'Jew'
	יינגל	אינגל	yingl ^a	'boy'
(d)	שיין	שיין	sheyn	'beautiful'
	שיין	שיין	shayn	'glow'
	וויין	וויין	veyn	'(I) cry'
	וויין	וויין	vayn	'wine'
	ניין	ניין	neyn	'no'
	ניין	ניין	nayn	'nine'
(e)	כיבוד	כיבוד	kibed	'tribute'
	תּרבות	תּרבות	tarbes	'politeness'
(f)	שמחה	שמחה	simkhe	'party'
	שעה	שעה	sho	'hour'
(g)	בבל	בבל	bovl	'Babylonia'
	פּאַר	פּאַר	for	'(I) travel'
	פּאַר	פּאַר	por	'pair'
(h)	געגנבעט	געגנבעט	ge-ganv-et	'stolen'
(i)	משהס	משהס	Moyshe-s	'Moses'
	זעלרעס	זעלרעס	Zelde-s	'Zelda's'

a. In some dialects these words are pronounced [ɪd], [ɪngt].

Special spellings

TABLE 61.7 exemplifies a number of spelling differences between YIVO and other systems. (a) Sequences of *v+u* are spelled with the letter ו for [u] in YIVO spelling, while other orthographies generally have a *shtumer alef* before the ו. (b) After a vowel YIVO uses the letter ײ to indicate [ɪ], while most other systems again use a *shtumer alef* here. (c) The letter ײ is also used after initial ײ to mark the initial sequence [jɪ]; most other systems use the sequence אײ.

Other differences between YIVO and other systems include: (d) lack of distinction between ײ *ay* and ײ *ey*; (e) in many publications, absence of the *dagesh* (dot) distinguishing כ [k] from כ [x] and ת [t] from ת [s]; frequently, lack (f) of the dot distinguishing ש [s] from ש [ʃ] in YIVO spelling, and (g) of the *rafe* (bar above a letter) that serves to distinguish ך [v] from כ [b] and, in addition to the *dagesh*, to distinguish ך [ʃ] from ך [p]. (h) Non-YIVO systems tend to separate non-Semitic affixes from Semitic roots by means of apostrophes. Similarly, (i) the possessive *s* is often separated from the noun, as in English, by an apostrophe.

SAMPLE OF YIDDISH

The transliteration here deviates from the YIVO system in two respects: words of Semitic origin are transliterated according to Hebrew transliteration (italicized), with the YIVO transliteration in line 2; and the *shumer alef* is indicated by a hyphen. (In the right-to-left transliterations, the equivalents that are digraphs are underlined merely for clarity.)

נאך דער תונה פון גרשמן מיט נחמהען האט זיך דאס פארפאלק
klofrop sod *khiz* toh *nehmhn* tim *nemšrg* nuf *hnh* red *khon*←

געלעבט שטיל און באשיידן. צו דער ריכטיקער צייט איז נחמה געלעגן
ngeleg hmhn zi- tyats rekit*kh*ir red *u*s .ndyeshab nu- litsh tbeleg

געוואָרן, געהאַט אַ יינגעלע און דער ברית איז פאַרגעקומען כדת משה
hšm *tdk* nemukegrof zi- *lyrb* red nu- elegniy a taheg ,nroveg

ישראל. די שטיל געבענטשטע ליבע האט זיך אַרויסגעריסן פון דער
red nuf nsiregsyora *khiz* toh ebil etshtnebeg *litsh* id .l'rsyww

פֿרום-צניעותדיקער געצוימטקייט און האט געאַנקערט אן דער פֿרייד
dyerf red ni- treknaeg toh nu- tyektmyoisseg rekid*l* 'nyš-murf

פֿון זייער בשותפותדיקן יינגעלע מענדעלע--אזוי האָבן זיי אים אַ
a mi- yez nboh yoza —elednem elegniy nkid*fwšwšb* reyez nuf

נאָמען געגעבן. די עלטערן פֿון ביידע צדדים, סײַ פֿון קאַצק
kstok nuf yas ,mydds edyeb nuf nretle id nbegeg nemon

און סײַ פֿון כעלעם, האָבן געהאַט פֿון זיי נחת.
thn yez nuf taheg nboh ,mele*kh* nuf yas nu-

1. Transliteration: nokh der *hnh* fun *gršmen* mit *nhmhen*
2. Normalization: nokh der khasene fun Gershemen mit Nekhomen
3. Transcription: נכח der 'xasene funj ger'semen mit ne'xomen
4. Gloss: after the marriage of Gershom.DAT with Nekhame.DAT

1. hot zikh dos porfolk gelebt shtil -un basheydn. tsu der
2. hot zikh dos porfolk gelebt shtil un basheydn. tsu der
3. 'hotsex dos por'folk ge'lept *ftl* un ba'fejdn tsu der
4. has REFL the married.couple lived quiet and modest to the

1. rikhtiker tsayt -iz *nhmh* gelegn gevorn, gehat a yingele -un der
2. rikhtiker tsayt iz Nekhome gelegn gevorn, gehat a yingele un der
3. 'rixtiker 'tsajt iz ne'xome ge'legg ge'vorn ge'hat a 'jnggele un der
4. correct time is Nekhame gave.birth had a boy and the

1. *bryl* -iz forgekumen *kd* *msh* wysr 'l
2. bris iz forgekumen kedas Moyshe ve-Yisroel
3. 'bris is 'farge'kumen ke-'das 'mojše ve-jis'roel
4. ritual.circumcision is occurred according.to-law.of Moses and-Israel

1. di shtil gebentshte libe hot zikh aroysgerisn fun der frum-
2. di shtil gebentshte libe hot zikh aroysgerisn fun der frum-
3. d*l* 'ftl ge'bentste 'libe 'hotsex a'rojze'risn fun der 'frum-
4. the quietly blessed love has REFL wrested from the pious-

1. *šny* 'dikere getsoymtkeyt -un hot geankert -in der freyd fun
2. tsniesdiker getsoymtkeyt un hot geankert in der freyd fun
3. 'tsniesdiker ge'tsojmtkejt un (h)ot ge'ankert in der 'frejt fun
4. virtuous.DAT restraint and has anchored in the joy from

1. zeyer *bšwšwšdikn* yingele mendele— azoy hobn zey -im a
2. zeyer beshutfesdikn yingele mendele— azoy hobn zey im a
3. 'zejer be'futfesdikn 'jnggele 'mendele a'zoy 'hobm 'zej im a
4. their joint boy Mendele so they.have they him a

1. nomen gegeben. di eltern fun beyde *šddym*, say fun kotsk
2. nomen gegeben. di eltern fun beyde tsdodim, say fun kotsk
3. 'nomen ge'gebm d*l* 'e'et-*n* fun 'bejde 'tsdodim 'saj fun 'kotsk
4. name given the parent-s from both side-s both from Kotsk

1. -un say fun khelem, hobn gehat fun zey *nh*.
2. un say fun khelem, hobn gehat fun zey nakhes.
3. un 'saj fun 'xe'em 'hobm ge'hat fun 'zej 'naxes
4. and both from Khelem have had from they pleasure

'After the marriage of Gershom and Nekhome, the married couple lived quietly and modestly. At the proper time Nekhame gave birth, had a boy, and the ritual circumcision occurred according to the law of Moses and Israel. A quietly blessed love arose from their pious and virtuous restraint and became anchored in the joy of their common boy Mendele—so they had named him. Their parents on both sides, both from Kotsk and from Khelem (two Polish towns), had pleasure from them.'

—Erlikh 1977: 49.

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Adaptations of Arabic Script

ALAN S. KAYE

The Arabic writing system (SECTION 50) has been and is used to write many non-Semitic languages. It is now, after the Roman alphabet, the most used segmental script in the world. The Arabic alphabet or abjad (see SECTION 1) is employed today to write the literary variety of Arabic (Classical or Modern Standard); but Maltese, historically a form of Arabic, is written in the Roman alphabet (SECTION 59, page 686). Arabic has also been written in Syriac script (Karshuni or Garshuni, SECTION 47), and Middle Arabic—the Judeo-Arabic and Christian Arabic dialects—has a long literary tradition written in Hebrew and Arabic script respectively (see SECTION 61). There is also a continuing trend of writing colloquial Arabic dialects, particularly Egyptian, in Arabic script: cartoons, plays, advertisements, etc.

Among the more important non-Semitic languages using Arabic script are: the Berber languages of North Africa, except Tuareg with Tifinigh (SECTION 5, "The Berber Scripts" on page 112); the Iranian languages Persian, Pashto, Kurdish, and Balochi; Indo-Aryan Urdu (see SECTION 65), Sindhi, and Kashmiri; Dravidian Moplah (a dialect of Malayalam); and Austronesian Sulu, Malagasy, and Malay. For the Turkic and Caucasian languages using Arabic script—besides Osmanli (Ottoman) Turkish from about 1300 C.E. to 1928, and (along with Hebrew script) the literary language Karaite (Diringer 1968, 1:439–40)—see TABLE 67.1 on page 782. In some republics of the former Soviet Union, Arabic script is now once more competing with Cyrillic for writing Turkic and Iranian languages (SECTION 67). Thus the Arabic script has become much more widespread than the Arabic language itself.

Spread of Arabic script

With the spread of Islam from Spain to Indonesia and much of Africa—and along with it the Holy Qur'ān, which according to custom and tradition must be studied in the original Arabic along with the faithful's Classical Arabic prayers—there soon developed a powerful influence of both the Arabic language and its script on the new converts. Under the first three caliphs, Islam reached Damascus (633), Jerusalem (637), Cairo (641), and Persia (646). Under the Umayyads (661–750), who ruled in Damascus, the Maghreb and Andalusia were added to the Empire (e.g. Tunis, 699). In 750, the Umayyads fell to the Abbasids (750–1258), whose capital was Baghdad. During the rule of the Ottomans (1412–1918) and of the Safavids of Persia (1500–