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Yiddish among Former Haredim

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Abstract

This article examines the use of and attitudes towards Yiddish among former Haredim. Using an interview- and questionnaire-based study, I demonstrate that Yiddish-speaking former Haredim generally have positive attitudes towards the language and continue to use it on a frequent, and even daily, basis while hoping to pass it on to their children. Furthermore, attitudes towards Yiddish develop from being largely practical when respondents were members of Haredi communities to emotional and ideological after having left. However, in the majority of cases the desire to continue using Yiddish regularly and to pass it on to the next generation is in conflict with the practical realities of finding opportunities to do so under increased pressure from the local majority language and a lack of institutional and community support. Overall, I argue that former Haredim have the power to determine the future life, death, or resurrection of secular Yiddish.

Keywords

ex-Haredim – Yiddish – Hasidic – ex-Hasidim – Hasidim – Haredim – Israel

1 Introduction[1]

1.1 *Background*

Yiddish is the traditional language of Ashkenazi Jewry, spoken in Europe for approximately 1000 years (Birnbaum 1979:56; Jacobs 2005:9–10). At its peak

1 Firstly, I would like to thank those who participated in this study. Their willingness to help and heartfelt comments have given real insight into the experience of former Haredim.

between the two world wars, the number of Yiddish speakers is estimated at between 11 and 13 million speakers (see, e.g., Birnbaum 1924:75; Birnbaum 1979:40–41; Davis 1987:64–65; Jacobs 2005:3). The majority of Ashkenazi Jews in Eastern Europe used Yiddish as a daily language regardless of their level of religious observance.

As a result of the Holocaust, as well as growing pressure to adopt Modern Hebrew as the main Jewish language and a number of other factors, over the course of the 20th century the number of Yiddish speakers worldwide declined, reaching a low of around 1 million speakers at the turn of the century (Campbell & King 2013:1801; Fishman 2007, 2011; Jacobs 2005:3).[2] A significant number of these speakers belonged to the generation that survived the Holocaust and the first generation after it, acquiring the language in childhood but likely not passing it on to their own children. There is also a very small number of secular Yiddishists and learners of the language, but their numbers are spread thinly around the world with no major geographic concentration (Fishman 2009). The majority of these Yiddishists acquire the language as adults and do not use it as a daily language; only a handful attempt to pass it on to their children. Taken together, the evidence suggests that secular Yiddish does not have a clear future; indeed, for the last 150 years researchers, critics, and cultural figures have eulogized the language. Much has been written about the decline, and possibly even death, of Yiddish (Roback 1958:19–21; Birnbaum 1979:42–43). UNESCO even considers Yiddish a "definitely endangered" language (Moseley 2010).

I also thank the members of the Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish project, Zoë Belk, Lily Kahn, Kriszta Eszter Szendrői, and Sonya Yampolskaya, for supporting this work. This research was presented at the Ada Rapoport-Albert Seminar Series, whose audience members gave valuable feedback. Finally, thanks are due to Zoë Belk (again) for her help in editing the manuscript of this work.

2 The decline in the number of speakers can be seen in contemporaneous estimates of speakers. Birnbaum (1979:40–41) estimates that the number of speakers at that time is between 5 and 6 million, although likely closer to 5 million. Davis (1987:64–65) argues a decade later that the number of speakers in his time is around 2 million. Jacobs (2005:3) claims that the number of Yiddish speakers at that time had increased from a previous low (due to the growth of the Yiddish-speaking Haredi community), and then stood around a million speakers. Fishman (2007) estimates that there were then about 1.5 million speakers, but he later (2011) estimates the number of native speakers to be only 650,000, with 200,000 using the language regularly. Note, however, that by 2011 the large majority of Yiddish speakers who survived the Holocaust have already died, while the number of Haredi Yiddish speakers is growing at a very high rate due to their elevated birth rate, so Yiddish can be expected to grow over the coming years.

However, Yiddish did not decline to the same extent in Haredi (highly observant) communities.[3] This is especially true of Hasidic communities, who follow a spiritual approach to Judaism that arose in Eastern Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries. Indeed, in this community the number of Yiddish speakers is actually increasing (Jacobs 2005:3). Today, it is a living, daily language for an estimated 650,000–670,000 speakers worldwide, and the Yiddish-speaking Haredi world produces its own cultural material, including newspapers, pedagogical material, music, literature, theater, and movies.

Increasingly over the last 30 years, some members have been moved to leave the Haredi community in favor of the secular world. Some of these former Haredim are also Yiddish speakers.[4] This article seeks to explore the extent to which former Haredim continue to use the language, as well as their attitudes towards it and its use. I argue that, if there is a future in secular Yiddish, it lies with former Haredim. This work therefore seeks to view the use of Yiddish in secular contexts in a new light and is the first study to examine the use of the language specifically among former Haredim.

1.2 *Existing Research*

The issue of Yiddish use among former Haredim appears to be almost completely unstudied. Questions such as the number of former Haredim who speak Yiddish, ideological drivers of Yiddish use among former Haredim, and sociological descriptions of Yiddish use in this community do not appear to have been the subject of academic research and are also rarely considered outside of academia. Even the community of former Haredim and the process of leaving the Haredi community have only attracted academic research in

3 Haredi communities can be subdivided in a large number of ways, some of which are relevant to the current study. Where such distinctions arise, they will be explained in the text, but note that certain distinctions (e.g., those related to rates of people leaving the Haredi world) do not directly implicate other distinctions (e.g., between Yiddish-speaking and non-Yiddish-speaking groups).

4 A variety of terms is used to refer to former Haredim or the process of leaving the Haredi community. In Hebrew, we find the terms *yetsia beshe'ela* 'leaving with a question,' *chilun* 'becoming secular,' *hitpakrut* 'abandonment,' and *haredim lesheavar* 'former Haredim.' In English, we find the terms "deserter," "former Haredi," "deconversion," "disaffiliate," "secularization," and "off the *derekh* ('way')." In Yiddish, someone who leaves the community can be described as *arop fun veg* 'descended from the way,' *aropforn* 'to travel down,' *gevezener khosid* 'has-been Hasid,' *vern fray* 'to become secular,' and *kayle/kalye vern* 'to become rotten.' Some of these terms are controversial, and some people disagree with giving a single overarching name to a phenomenon that is inherently personal and unique in each case. For the purposes of this article, I use the terms "former Haredim" and "leaving the Haredi community," as they appear to be the most neutral and simple descriptions.

recent years (see references below, as well as works such as Davidman 2014 and Newfield 2020).

Similarly, Yiddish as it is spoken in the Haredi world has only recently become a focus of academic research. Krogh (2012), Assouline (2014), and Sadock & Masor (2018) discuss syncretisms in the Haredi Yiddish case and gender systems. Assouline (2010), Nove (2018), and Belk et al. (forthcoming) discuss developments in the personal pronoun system. Belk, Kahn, & Szendrői (2020, 2022) argue that morphological case and gender are absent in Contemporary Hasidic Yiddish, using data from both current and former members of Haredi communities to demonstrate that the changes they observe hold across the Haredi world.

Among the research that does exist on former Haredim is the work of Horowitz (2018), Weinreb & Blass (2018), and Regev & Gordon (2021), all focusing on former Haredim in Israel. Horowitz primarily focuses on describing the sociology of leaving Haredi communities, Weinreb & Blass propose using population data for Haredi educational institutions to determine changes in the Haredi population in Israel, while Regev & Gordon provide an analysis of the demographics of those who leave in order to understand what can be expected in the future. Abramac (2020) looks at a particular group of former Haredim who grew up in Israel and now live in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. Although the primary focus of her work is not linguistic, she nonetheless discusses the attitudes and practices of this group towards Yiddish usage. Outside Israel, recent works such as Cappell & Lang 2020, Davidman & Greil 2007, and Shaffir 2000 explore the lived experience of those who have left Haredi communities, but do not focus on quantitative analysis of the phenomenon or language use.

There are, nonetheless, significant lacunae in the research on Haredi communities and those who leave them. For example, while Wodziński (2018) provides estimates of the size of Hasidic communities worldwide, this research does not extend to non-Hasidic Haredi communities and does not directly describe how many Hasidim or Haredim speak Yiddish, a crucial first step in understanding how many former Haredim might speak the language. This article will aim to address some of these lacunae.

1.3 *Research Questions*

In this article, I aim to address the question of how many former Haredim speak Yiddish, how many Yiddish speakers leave Haredi communities each year, and what we can expect in terms of future numbers. Additionally, I will explore whether former Haredim continue to use Yiddish and to what extent, as well as the ideological and emotional attitudes of Yiddish-speaking former Haredim towards the language. Finally, I will look at the institutional support

that is available to former Haredim who wish to continue using the language, and whether these speakers are likely to pass Yiddish on to the next generation.

1.4 *Methodology*

The current study consists of two main parts: interview data and an online questionnaire. I conducted interviews with both current and former Haredim raised in major Yiddish-speaking centers worldwide, including New York, Israel, Montreal, Stamford Hill, and Antwerp. These interviews, totalling over 150 hours, provided important background information on the use of Yiddish within the Haredi and former Haredi worlds, as well as attitudes towards Yiddish and its use in these communities. The number of interviewees from each geographic area was roughly in proportion to the size of the Haredi community, with larger numbers of interviewees raised in New York and Israel and smaller numbers in Montreal, Stamford Hill, and Antwerp.

In order to elicit more targeted and more quantifiable data, I designed an in-depth questionnaire which was distributed online. Questions were presented in both Hebrew and English.[5] The questionnaire consisted of three parts: background questions including the respondent's age, Haredi affiliation, geographic background, and age of leaving the Haredi community; questions on Yiddish use before leaving the Haredi community including the language of education, contexts of Yiddish language use, and extent to which the respondent read and wrote in Yiddish; and questions on Yiddish use after leaving the Haredi community, including how recently the respondent last spoke Yiddish, context for Yiddish use today, and familiarity with secular Yiddish culture. Respondents were able to choose from a prepared list of answers and add comments in free text. The full questionnaire is provided in Appendix 1. The questionnaire was distributed through Facebook groups aimed at former Haredim in major Haredi centers worldwide, as well as through my personal connections on a variety of social media. I asked respondents not just to complete the questionnaire, but also to distribute it among their former Haredi contacts. For reasons to be discussed in section 2.3, I made a particular effort to recruit female respondents, as I felt they were likely to be underrepresented in the results.

The questionnaire was completed by 70 people (54 men and 16 women) from a variety of geographic communities, but the majority of respondents

5 I chose not to present the questions in Yiddish, as I knew from personal experience and from interview data that many Yiddish speakers who grew up in Haredi communities are less comfortable reading and writing in Yiddish than Hebrew or English. Additionally, I wanted to represent the wider spectrum of Yiddish speakers, including those who may be less confident in the language. Finally, I did not want the use of Yiddish in the questionnaire to influence answers to questions addressing the emotional impact of the language.

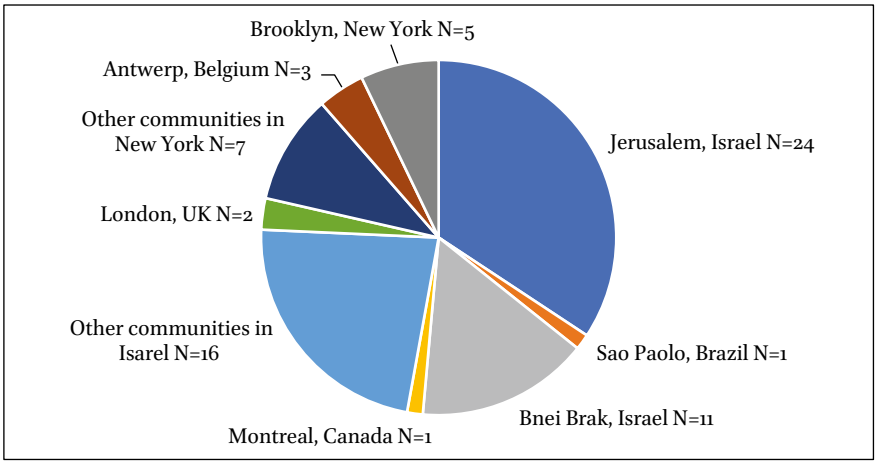

FIGURE 1 Geographic distribution (place of birth) of questionnaire respondents

are based in Israel.[6] The geographic distribution of respondents is represented in Fig. 1. Respondents were between the ages of 19 and 74, but the majority were between the ages of 20 and 35; note that the fact that the majority of respondents were in their 20s and early 30s is in line with research discussed in section 2.2 and particularly the observation that the phenomenon of leaving the Haredi community grew significantly throughout the 1990s.

Respondents represent a wide variety of Yiddish-speaking sects in the Haredi world. There are three main groups of Yiddish-speaking Haredim: Hasidim (which constitute the majority), the Yiddish-speaking Litvish community (also known as *Misnagdim* or *Prushim*), and the Yiddish-speaking Hungarian community (who are neither Hasidic nor Litvish and are also known as *chasem soyfernikes*, although this community is vanishingly small in modern times due to assimilation into Litvish and Hasidic communities). Former Hasidim represent 60 of the 70 respondents, while 9 former Litvish Haredim and one former Hungarian Haredi person also responded; altogether 25 distinct Haredi communities are represented among the respondents. Respondents' Haredi affiliations are summarized in Fig. 2.

6 Note, however, that the geographic distribution of the respondents is not taken to represent the geographic distribution of the former Haredi community. Rather, it was likely skewed by the method of distributing the questionnaire. Similarly, I do not take the gender distribution to be representative.

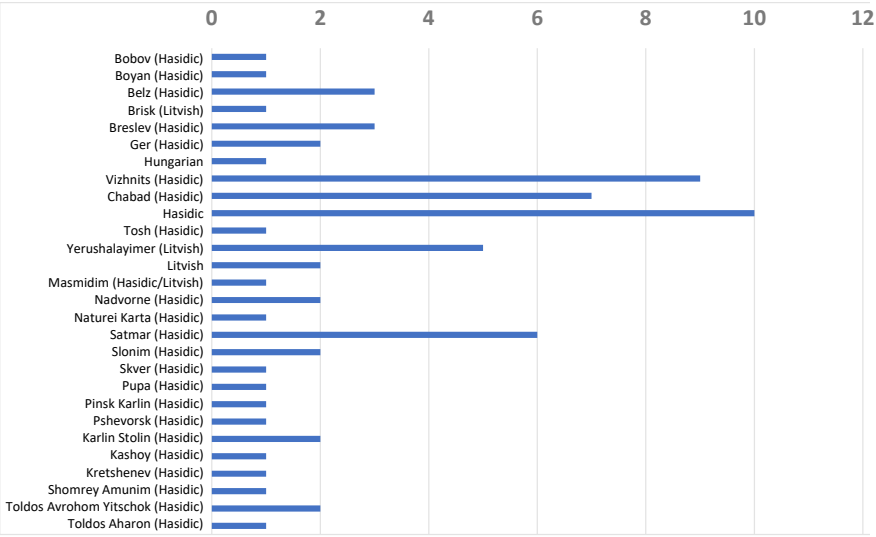

FIGURE 2 Questionnaire respondents' Haredi affiliation

2 Former Haredim: Numbers and Geographic Dispersal

To understand how many Yiddish-speaking Haredim leave the community, we must first understand how many Haredim there are and how many of them speak Yiddish. Only then can we estimate the number of former Haredim who speak Yiddish.

2.1 *How Many Haredim Speak Yiddish?*

The Haredi community can be roughly divided into three denominations: Sephardim (including all communities of non-Ashkenazi origin), Litvish Jews (an Ashkenazic community variously known as *Mitnagdim*, *Prushim*, and Lithuanian), and Hasidim (an Ashkenazic community within a shared spiritual movement).[7] Each denomination can be subdivided into a large number of sects and sub-sects, but these distinctions are too fine-grained for our purposes.

7 It is difficult to estimate the number of Haredim worldwide, as well as proportions of Haredi affiliations. In Israel, Sephardim are estimated to comprise 33% of the Haredi population, while the Litvish community comprises 32%, with Hasidim accounting for 35%. In addition to these denominations, there are also much smaller groups of Haredim, including Hungarian Jews, who were historically distinct from the three groups mentioned above. In the modern era, these smaller groups have largely dispersed and been subsumed under Litvish and Hasidic groups.

To my knowledge, no concrete estimates exist of how many Haredim speak Yiddish. One aim of this article is therefore to provide such an estimate.

As Yiddish is the traditional language of Ashkenazi, rather than Sephardi, Jews, I assume that the vast majority of Sephardi Haredim do not speak Yiddish. The Litvish community historically spoke Yiddish in Europe, and later in North America and Israel. However, interview and questionnaire data from the present study indicate that, in recent decades, their use of Yiddish declined to the extent that in the present day the majority of Litvish Jews do not, and cannot, speak Yiddish. This is in line with the findings of Isaacs (1999). Litvish Jews between the ages of 40 and 60 vary in their knowledge of Yiddish, although men are more likely to have some knowledge of the language than women. The younger generation, however, largely does not use or even understand Yiddish, barring the odd phrase or idiom.

There are a small number of major exceptions to the general pattern among Litvish communities: the *Yerushalayimer* (Jerusalem-based) communities known as *Prushim* or *Briskers*, and some of the followers of the *Chazon Ish* known as *chazon-ishnikers*. In these communities, even young people may speak Yiddish and use it as a daily language. Within the Litvish community, participants in the current study estimate that 40,000–60,000 Litvish Jews speak Yiddish.

Turning to Hasidic groups, Wodziński (2018:192–196) claims that in 2016 there were 129,215 Hasidic families worldwide, equating to around 710,682 people under his assumption of an average of 5.5 children per family.[8] However, this estimate is presumably conservative, as it is based on data from several years earlier. As an example, Wodziński estimates the number of Jews in Israel to be 5.6 million, while official data from the Israeli government for the end of 2016 provides a figure of 6,446,100 (*Lamas* 2018:20–22). We can therefore estimate that the number of Hasidim worldwide at the end of 2016 is somewhat higher than Wodziński's, perhaps somewhere between 700,000 and 850,000. Study respondents indicated that a majority of Hasidic Jews speak Yiddish, although there are a few significant exceptions. Again, these findings are in line with those of Isaacs (1999). Exceptions include the Ger, Slonim, Chabad, and Breslev Hasidic sects, who largely use the majority language of the country in which

8 It is not clear where the assumption of 5.5 children per family comes from. Wodziński notes (2018:fn. 22) that his sources are fieldwork and community phone books, but how these sources relate to the number of children per family is not explained, as phone books usually list only the head of a household. According to the Israeli government, Haredi families have on average 7.1 children (*Lamas* 2018), although that number may include children who have already left the household. My own fieldwork suggests that Hasidic families are on average larger than Litvish families, i.e., presumably more than 7.1 children on average. Regardless, this is a subject deserving of further research.

they are based.[9] The Chabad and Breslev sects both attract a large number of *baalei teshuva*, or newly observant Jews, most of whom have very little knowledge of Yiddish. Of those who trace their membership in these sects back several generations, knowledge and even daily use of Yiddish is much more likely. This is particularly true for men (see, e.g. Fader 2009).

The majority of Hasidic sects, barring those mentioned above, use Yiddish as a daily language. We will first consider the exceptions. According to Wodziński (2018), Ger comprises 11,859 families, or 9.2% of Hasidic families worldwide; Chabad comprises 16,376 families, or 12.7% of Hasidic families worldwide; Breslev comprises 7,096 families, or 5.5% of Hasidic families worldwide; and Slonim comprises 1,388 families, or 1.1% of Hasidic families worldwide. Altogether, these sects comprise 36,719 families or 201,954 Haredim worldwide. We can estimate that at least half of these people do not speak Yiddish at all,[10] totalling approximately 18,000 families or around 100,000 people; this represents 14% of all Hasidim worldwide.[11] The remaining sects use Yiddish to some extent, and almost all members have both active and passive knowledge of the language. We can therefore estimate that around 110,855 families or 609,702 Hasidim speak Yiddish (according to the estimates of Wodziński 2018).

Taking this estimate of Yiddish-speaking Hasidim together with my earlier estimate of Litvish Yiddish speakers, I conclude that between 650,000 and 670,000 Haredim speak Yiddish worldwide.

2.2 *How Many Former Haredim Are There Today, and How Many Are Likely to Leave in the Future?*

Relatively little quantitative research has been conducted on the phenomenon of people leaving highly observant Jewish communities from a historical point of view, and even less on the topic of the wave of people leaving Haredi communities that began in the 1990s and has grown ever since (Regev & Gordon

9 See also Wasserman (2017:28–38), who claims that Ger Hasidim do not speak Yiddish; and Chabad Info (2010) for a Chabad-internal discussion of the current status of Yiddish in Chabad and the history of the Rebbe's attitudes towards the use of Yiddish.

10 This estimate is based on the few sources that describe Yiddish use in the sects in question, particularly Wasserman 2017, as well as interview data from current and former members. These sources indicate that a majority of members do not speak Yiddish, but I take a somewhat more conservative approach.

11 It appears that the majority of those who do not speak Yiddish live in Israel, as the majority of Ger Hasidim live in Israel, and the minority that speak Yiddish largely live outside of Israel. Similarly, the majority of Slonim and Breslev Hasidim are based in Israel. Only in Chabad is the base of the community largely outside of Israel, but there are nonetheless some tens of thousands of Chabad Hasidim in Israel, most of whom do not speak Yiddish. I therefore conclude that the majority of non-Yiddish-speaking Hasidim are based in Israel.

2021:7–10, 20–21, 54–55). The research that looks specifically at numbers of people leaving Haredi communities focuses largely on Israel. For this reason, quantitative discussion of former Haredim in the remainder of this section will be restricted to Israeli communities, but discussion of the attitudes of former Haredim towards Yiddish, as well as their usage of the language, is representative of communities worldwide, as this discussion is based on both interview and questionnaire data.

Early estimates from Hillel and Yotsim leShinuy (two Israeli organizations that help former Haredim) indicate that between 1,000 and 1,300 people leave Haredi communities in Israel each year (Horowitz 2018:36–38). More recently, these organizations assume that around 3,000 people leave such communities each year (Regev & Gordon 2021:7–10). Indeed, the latest research points to a significant increase in the number of people leaving Haredi communities in Israel, beginning in the mid-1960s and increasing in later decades, to the extent that, by 1992, more people were leaving Haredi communities than were joining them as newly observant members (Regev & Gordon 2021:7–10, 20–21, 54–55).[12]

By Regev & Gordon's (2021) estimates, there are currently 53,400 former Haredim between the ages of 20 and 64 living in Israel, of whom 35,000 are between the ages of 20 and 39. The total number of people they expect to leave Haredi communities in the years 2017–2067, if current trends continue, is 420,000. Of these, 40,000 are expected to leave in the decade from 2017–2027, and 55,000 in the next decade.

Regev & Gordon (2021) find that 13.8% of men and 12.8% of women leave Haredi communities. They further distinguish five types of families: Sephardim, Sephardim sending their children to Litvish schools, Hasidim, Litvish, and Chabad. These groups differ in the numbers of people leaving the various communities. Fig. 3 illustrates the percentage of people between the ages of 20 and 64 in 2017 who left their Haredi community, divided by Haredi group and by gender, according to Regev & Gordon (2021).

Regev & Gordon argue that these findings are surprising, because the common assumption until recently was that the rate of men leaving the community is much higher than the rate of women leaving the community.[13] Their

12 Note, however, that due to the high birthrate within Haredi communities their overall numbers continue to grow.

13 This assumption is repeated in Horowitz 2018, where it is estimated that the community of former Haredim is comprised of 60% men and 40% women. In addition, he claims that organizations helping former Haredim also assume a similar distribution of gender in their clientele. Furthermore, my own informants confidently reported that many more men than women leave Haredi communities and often estimate a gender distribution of 70% men and 30% women among former Haredim. This impression is due to informants' personal contacts and experience in the world of former Haredim.

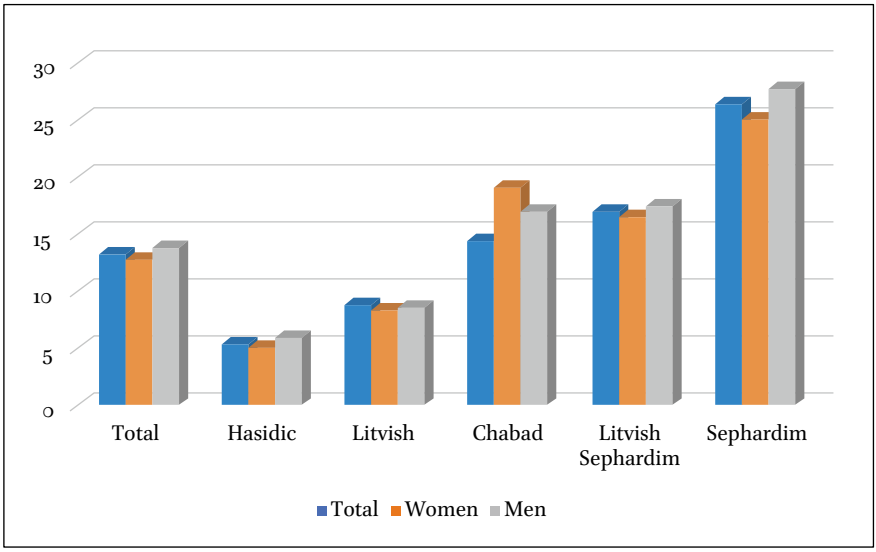

FIGURE 3 Percentage of people aged 20–64 in 2017 who left their Haredi community
DATA FROM REGEV & GORDON 2021

research finds a consistent, but small difference between rates of men and women leaving each of the communities they identify, which suggests that this is not a statistical artifact but a true reflection of numbers leaving Haredi communities even though it varies from the common assumption. They give three possible explanations for these findings. Firstly, men's and women's experiences of leaving Haredi communities may differ in their emotional cost, to the extent that women may be more likely to hide or suppress their former Haredi identity while men may be more open about it. According to this explanation, Regev & Gordon's estimations are correct, and the common perception of the unbalanced gender distribution is not accurate. Secondly, it may be the case that more men do physically leave the community, but that rates of men and women who "ideologically" leave the community (i.e., who stop identifying as Haredi but continue to live in Haredi communities) is similar. In this case, Regev & Gordon's data would capture those who "ideologically" leave Haredi communities, which is a superset of those who physically leave. Thirdly, Regev & Gordon's (2021:22–25) findings relate to people born in 1997 or earlier, but there are indications that the gender distribution is different for people born later. In this case, their numbers are accurate for the years that they cover, but they miss a growing divergence in the gender of people leaving Haredi communities in more recent years. They find that, for this youngest group, 58% of people leaving are men, which is much closer to Horowitz's (2018) finding of 60% of people leaving Haredi communities being men.

The results of the current study show that more men than women answered the questionnaire (with 54 men and 16 women answering, which equates to 77.1% of respondents being male and 22.9% female), even though I made considerable effort to find women to complete the questionnaire.[14] While this discrepancy may be due to some of the factors considered by Regev & Gordon (e.g., that former Haredi women are less likely to engage with their Haredi past) or factors specific to the fact that the questionnaire was distributed over the internet and through Facebook groups, it may also be the case that there is a larger discrepancy in the gender of Hasidim, and specifically Yiddish-speaking Hasidim, who leave their communities. As Regev & Gordon do not report on the language their populations speak, I must leave this question to further research.

2.3 *How Many Former Haredim Are Yiddish Speakers?*

As discussed in section 2.1, Sephardi Haredim do not speak Yiddish. Regev & Gordon (2021) provide estimates of how many former Haredim belonged to each community, as visualized in Fig. 4. Perhaps surprisingly, former Sephardim are overrepresented compared to the number of Sephardim found in the

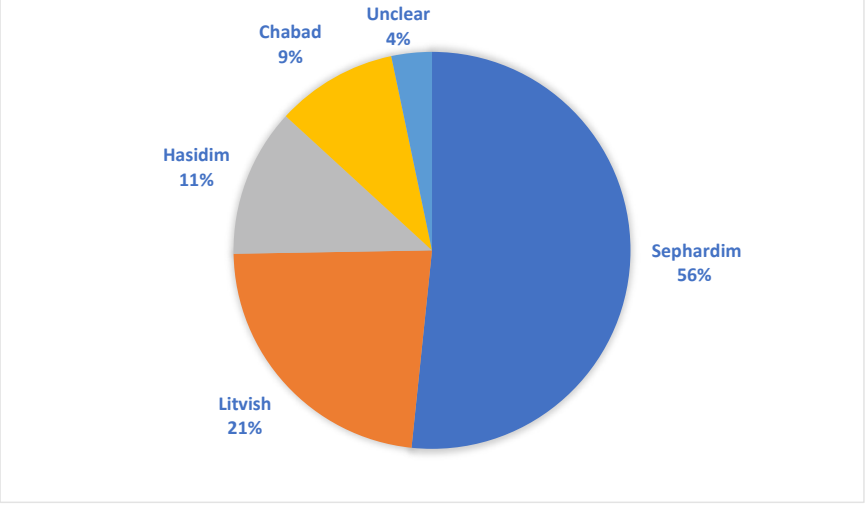

FIGURE 4 Proportion of members of different Haredi groups among the population of former Haredim
DATA FROM REGEV & GORDON 2021

14 These results likely do not reflect the true gender balance of the former Haredi community and also cannot help decide among Regev & Gordon's possible explanations for their findings. However, I report them since they relate to the perception of a gender imbalance among former Haredim.

Haredi community. This suggests that Yiddish speakers will be underrepresented in the former Haredi community.

However, Regev & Gordon do not directly investigate which language(s) each community uses, and no other research on this issue exists. Therefore, we must estimate how many former Haredim speak Yiddish, using the available data. According to the estimates provided in section 2.1, and assuming that the proportion of former Hasidim who do not speak Yiddish is comparable to the proportion of current Hasidim who do not speak Yiddish (i.e., 14%, as calculated in section 2.1), we can estimate that 14% of the Hasidim who leave the Haredi world do not speak Yiddish. As Hasidim leaving the Haredi community comprise 20% of all those who leave Haredi communities, according to the results of Regev & Gordon (2021), we can estimate that 17.2% of former Haredim in Israel are Yiddish-speaking former Hasidim. I further estimate that approximately 5% of Litvish Haredim in Israel speak Yiddish, accounting for a further 1.1% of former Haredim in Israel who speak Yiddish.[15] Altogether, therefore, we estimate that 18.3% of former Haredim in Israel speak Yiddish. Regev & Gordon (2021) estimate that around 3,000 people leave Haredi communities in Israel each year, so by our estimate 18.3% of these, or 549 people, speak Yiddish. Fig. 5 illustrates these proportions. Furthermore, according to Regev & Gordon's (2021) predictions of future trends, in the years 2017–2067,

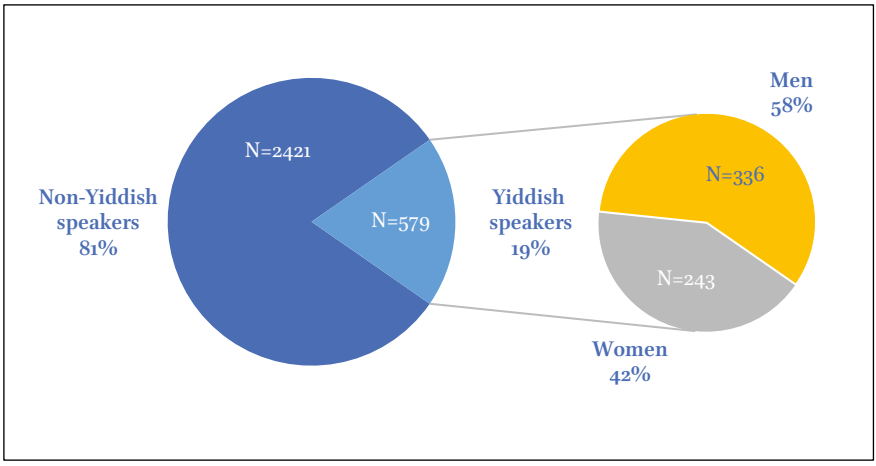

FIGURE 5 Estimated percentage of Yiddish speakers among leavers of Haredi communities each year

15 Assuming around 20,000 Yiddish-speaking Litvish Haredim in Israel, out of a total population of approximately 370,000 Litvish Haredim in Israel. This assumption is derived from estimates by interviewees that there are approximately 40,000–60,000 Yiddish-speaking Litvish Haredim in the world, a majority of whom do not live in Israel.

I estimate that 76,860 of the 420,000 Haredim who are predicted to leave their communities will be Yiddish speakers.

3 Motivation for (Non-)Use of Yiddish after Leaving the Haredi Community

In this section, I analyze the reasons behind using or not using Yiddish after leaving Haredi communities, according to the results of the current study. Analysis of the interview and questionnaire data indicates that these reasons can be divided into four main categories: background reasons, emotional reasons, ideological reasons, and practical reasons. I discuss each of these in turn.

3.1 *Background Reasons*

Interview and questionnaire data make clear that, in order for a former Haredi person to continue to use Yiddish after leaving the community, certain background conditions must be met. As discussed in section 2.2, not all Haredi, or even all Hasidic, communities speak Yiddish, but this alone is not a sufficient condition to predict whether an individual uses Yiddish in their daily life; a number of other factors influence this issue.

Firstly, use of Yiddish is not a black and white issue: there is a spectrum of language use on a number of axes. Core users of Yiddish are those who use the language daily with the majority of their interlocutors and for most purposes.[16] Peripheral users of Yiddish are those who use the language only for study, or for conversing with one or a handful of particular contacts (e.g., a particular family member or friend).[17] Between these extremes are those who use Yiddish regularly or even daily, but also use another language for similar purposes.[18]

16 However, even core users of Yiddish will also use *loshn koydesh* (a variety of Hebrew) in a diglossic relationship with Yiddish.

17 For instance, results of my interviews indicate that some Chabad users of Yiddish will use the language only for studying the Rebbe's writings and speeches, which were originally delivered in Yiddish. Similarly, some Litvish users of Yiddish study Talmud through Yiddish and do not use the language for any other purpose. It is also common for people aged 40–60 to speak Yiddish with one or more of their grandparents, while the rest of their family, including parents, siblings, spouse, and children, do not speak the language. This pattern will change as the last generation of Yiddish speakers in such families dies out. Another pattern is found where a person is raised in Yiddish and continues to use the language to communicate with their parents, but their spouse and children do not speak Yiddish, so most daily interactions are not conducted in the language.

18 For instance, when a person joins a Hasidic community and speaks Yiddish with their spouse and children (often sending the children to a Yiddish-medium school), but

In addition to the effect of an individual's personal contacts and practices on their use of Yiddish, an individual's community also has an effect. Indeed, the same spectrum can be applied to this factor. For example, interview data indicate that Yiddish is the core language in the Satmar Hasidic sect—the typical Satmar Hasid uses Yiddish for almost all daily interactions, including speech, writing, and reading. This is true for both men and women. In a sect such as Slonim or Ger, however, which can be considered sects where Yiddish is a peripheral language, at least half of the members do not use Yiddish at all, while those who do use it primarily as a spoken language, rarely reading it and almost never writing in Yiddish. Furthermore, women in such sects are much less likely than men to use the language, and certainly much less likely than women in Satmar.

Within a given Hasidic sect, a spectrum of Yiddish use also applies. The more modern and open members of a sect use a language other than Yiddish (usually English or Modern Hebrew) in a greater number of their daily interactions and with a larger number of their contacts. More conservative members of a sect use Yiddish for more of their daily interactions.[19]

A fourth spectrum can be found in the use of Yiddish within educational institutions, which is related to but separate from the spectrum of Yiddish use across Hasidic sects. Families do not necessarily choose to send their children to an institution associated with their own sect but will choose an institution based on factors such as educational reputation, ideological alignment, and the language used in teaching. For example, a member of the Slonim sect who does not use Yiddish at home may nonetheless send their child to an institution associated with a sect such as Karlin, where Yiddish is the primary educational medium, in order to strengthen the child's Yiddish. Furthermore, not all communities have their own educational institutions, so members of smaller sects such as Biale will send their children either to institutions associated with larger sects or to one of the institutions catering to all sects (so-called *klal Hasidish* institutions). Core Yiddish-using educational institutions teach all subjects in Yiddish (with the exception of language classes and, in certain jurisdictions, secular studies) and some or all reading and writing are in Yiddish. Additionally, students often speak Yiddish among themselves. Examples of such institutions include those associated with Satmar, Pupa, Skver, and Toldos Aaron around the world. Peripheral Yiddish-using educational institutions are primarily non-Yiddish-medium, but they may offer Yiddish language classes or

continues to speak another language with their parents, siblings, etc., and in shops and other daily interactions.

19 See also Nove's (2021) pioneering research on expressions of Hasidic identity through language use.

have a class that makes use of Yiddish-language materials. Examples include girls' schools in Israel associated with Ger, which offer Yiddish-language classes in an otherwise Hebrew-medium curriculum, or girls' and boys' schools worldwide associated with Chabad, which may offer a class focusing on the Rebbe's sayings and writings (which were delivered in Yiddish) making use of the original language. Between these two extremes are girls' institutions associated with Belz in Israel, or certain boys' *klal Hasidish* high schools in Bnei Brak, Israel, which are in principle Yiddish-medium, but in practice teaching is often delivered in a mix of Yiddish and Modern Hebrew, and reading and writing are conducted primarily in Modern Hebrew. In such schools, students usually speak Modern Hebrew among themselves. Towards the higher end of the Yiddish-usage spectrum are educational institutions associated with sects such as Karlin-Stolin, Bobov, Vizhnits (for boys), and Belz (for boys), which are likely to be Yiddish-medium, and where students will also speak Yiddish among themselves, but reading and writing are more likely to be conducted in another language than in Yiddish.

These four spectrums can be used to predict a person's usage of Yiddish in general, but also whether they will use Yiddish as a daily language after leaving the Haredi community. The questionnaire used in the present study was designed to determine an individual's place on each of these spectrums before and after they left the Haredi community; analysis indicates that leaving the community did not significantly change their position on the spectrums in the majority of cases. For instance, a person who is used to speaking Yiddish with their parents, siblings, and friends before leaving the community is likely to continue to do so with those they keep contact with after leaving.[20] However, those whose Yiddish usage was limited to the classroom or to a particular friend or relative are unlikely to continue using the language after leaving the community as they no longer find themselves in the context(s) in which they previously used Yiddish. One crucial factor seems to be a person's use of Yiddish as a medium for reading and writing before leaving the Haredi community: it appears that this factor is associated with a richer Yiddish vocabulary, which in turn makes Yiddish available as an option in a wider variety of contexts.

This is not to say that position on the Yiddish usage spectrums is strongly related to the likelihood that an individual will prioritize Yiddish usage in the future (for instance, with their future spouse or children); this issue will be discussed in more detail in sections 3.4 and 4. Furthermore, while Haredim

20 One indication of this tendency can be found in answers to the question, "When did you last speak Yiddish?" Former Haredim who are higher on the Yiddish usage spectrum were much more likely to answer "today," indicating that Yiddish is still a daily language for them.

on the highest ends of the Yiddish usage spectrums use Yiddish with most of their daily contacts and in most daily situations, the same is not true of former Haredim. Even core Yiddish users in this group are unlikely to use Yiddish as their main daily language, even when they continue to use it on a daily basis; this situation is primarily due to practical reasons, which will be discussed in section 3.4.

3.2 *Emotional Reasons*

A language is a platform for ideas, thought, culture, and memories. When a person leaves the Haredi community, they become disconnected from their community, their religion, and sometimes even from their family and culture; they are choosing a new path. One might assume that language would be a trigger for memories that an individual would rather forget, or for an identity that they no longer want to identify with, because Yiddish is so strongly associated with Haredi communities. Indeed, some respondents did report that in the first years after leaving the Haredi community, Yiddish was such a trigger for memories and associations they would rather suppress. However, for these respondents, more time often allowed them to change their relationship with Yiddish to one of nostalgia and warm feelings rather than unpleasant memories. Perhaps surprisingly, the majority of respondents reported that Yiddish did not have strong negative connotations.[21] Specifically, 83% of respondents answered that Yiddish does not have negative connotations for them, 7% said that it does, and a further 7% said that it sometimes does and sometimes does not. The final 3% answered that they used to have negative connotations associated with Yiddish but no longer do. These results are summarized in Fig. 6.

In answer to questions about the importance of Yiddish and the connotations that the language has for the respondents, some answers, primarily those indicating that Yiddish is important to the respondent, revealed emotional attachments to the language. For example, one respondent states that Yiddish is "a language that I feel my feelings through," but another says, "[i]t triggers in me only longing for the Rebbe, and a desire to believe in the God of Heaven and Earth. No more than that on either side [i.e., positive or negative]." Reasons for these emotional attachments include the idea that Yiddish triggers nostalgia and pleasant memories, that Yiddish feels warm and *heymish* (comfortable, familiar) to them, and some respondents used words such as "purity" or "enjoyment" as positive emotions connected with Yiddish. One respondent

21 Note that the questionnaire asked specifically about respondents' current attitudes, so most respondents only provided answers relating to their current attitudes. We therefore cannot conclude anything about how most respondents felt about Yiddish between leaving the Haredi community and responding to the questionnaire.

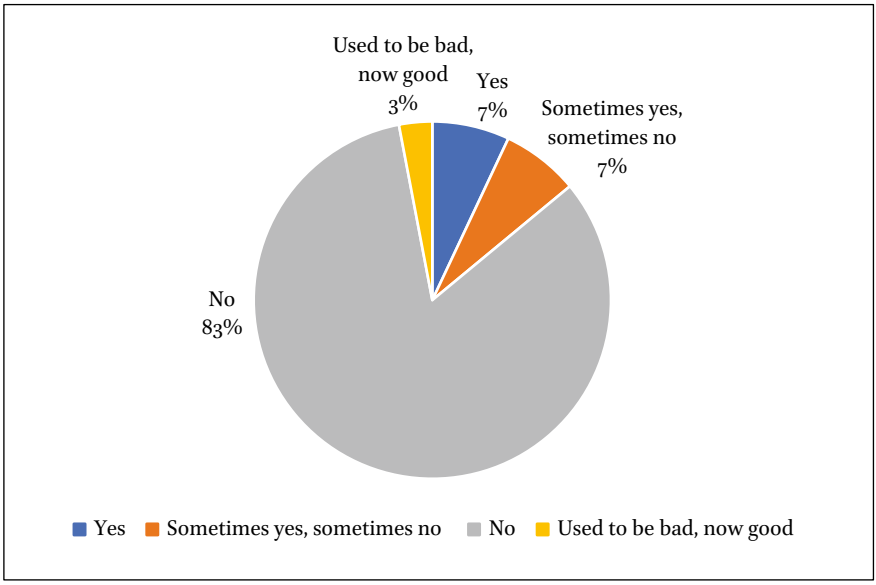

FIGURE 6 Responses to the question "does Yiddish have bad connotations for you?" Note that answers other than "yes" and "no" were provided in free text and are summarized here by the author

states that Yiddish is "a language that I've spoken for a long time; I don't want to lose it," while another states that "Yiddish is the language that I dream in." However, it is noteworthy that two respondents found the "purity" of Yiddish discordant with their lives in the secular world and found it uncomfortable to (in their eyes) desecrate or pollute the language by using it in secular contexts. One respondent had strongly negative feelings about Yiddish, stating that they "hated the language [before leaving] and I don't like the language [today]; I don't feel connected to it in any way. I have very bad connotations with Yiddish." Nonetheless, the majority of emotions reported in the questionnaire were positive.

It is clear from the results of the questionnaire that for the vast majority of respondents, Yiddish has positive connotations.[22] Given the strength of this result, it is difficult to find a correlation between an individual's emotional

22 It is informative to compare and contrast the attitudes to Yiddish among former Haredim revealed in this study with the those of Fader's (2020) "hidden heretics," outwardly observant but inwardly questioning members of Haredi communities. Of course, given that her discussion of Yiddish use focuses on online forums, it is difficult to distinguish between writers who no longer identify as Haredi (and so would be included in this study) and those who are still members of Haredi communities (and are thus the subject of Fader's book).

connection to Yiddish and their likelihood of continuing to use the language after leaving the Haredi community. We can therefore conclude that an individual's current emotional connection to Yiddish is not a major contributing factor to their continued daily use of the language.

3.3 *Ideological Reasons*

Choosing to speak a given language can be seen as an expression of a certain ideology. Haredim have particular ideological reasons for considering Yiddish an important language.[23] It might also be assumed that both those who continue to use Yiddish after leaving the Haredi community and those who decide to stop using the language may have ideological reasons for doing so. For this reason, the questionnaire presented in the current study asked respondents to comment on whether Yiddish was important to them before leaving their Haredi community and why, and whether Yiddish is important to them today and why.

The responses included a wide variety of explanations, but the majority (80%) answered that Yiddish was important to them before leaving their Haredi community. Perhaps surprisingly, these respondents did not cite reasons of ideology or identity to explain why Yiddish was important to them, despite the fact that such ideological reasons are often cited in Haredi discussions of the importance of Yiddish. Rather, these respondents indicated that Yiddish was important to them due to practical reasons (see section 3.4), such as the fact that their entire community spoke Yiddish, that it was a means of communication with family members, that it was the default language of most social interactions, that available reading material was in Yiddish, etc.[24]

When reporting on their current attitudes towards Yiddish, a majority of respondents (again 80%) indicated that Yiddish is important to them after leaving their Haredi community.[25] However, this is not the same 80% of

23 See, for instance, Anonymous 2007 and similar works, which include numerous quotations by respected rabbis describing why it is important to speak Yiddish. See Belk, Benedict, Kahn, & Yampolskaya 2022, especially section 4, for further discussion of the importance of speaking Yiddish in the Haredi world.

24 Note, however, that the nature of the questionnaire (in particular, that it was only administered after an individual had left the Haredi community) does not rule out the possibility that the same people may have provided different, more ideologically based reasons for the importance of Yiddish when they were still members of their Haredi community. In other words, respondents' reports of how they used to perceive Yiddish are inevitably colored by their experiences and outlook as members of a secular culture.

25 Note, however, that the questionnaire results revealed no link between a respondent's current identity (as provided by the respondent in a free-text answer) and their use of or attitude towards Yiddish. For instance, respondents identifying themselves as on the more observant end of the spectrum of former Haredim were neither more nor less likely

respondents who indicated that Yiddish was important to them before leaving the Haredi community: 10% of respondents answered that Yiddish was not important to them when they were Haredi but is after having left, and another 10% indicated that Yiddish was important to them when they were Haredi but no longer is. Additionally, we can observe a noteworthy pattern in the reasons respondents provided for why Yiddish was important to them at these two points in their lives. While the reasons provided for the period when respondents were members of the Haredi community were largely practical, the reasons provided for why Yiddish is important to respondents after having left their Haredi community are largely ideological and emotional. Furthermore, although the percentage of respondents with positive associations with the language after leaving is the same as that before leaving, the positivity expressed in the reasons respondents provide is stronger when discussing their attitudes after having left the community. Trends in respondents' attitudes towards Yiddish before and after leaving the community are summarized in Table 1, which demonstrates that 47.1% of respondents became more positive towards Yiddish, while only 12.9% became more negative. The remaining 40% did not change significantly in their attitudes.

TABLE 1 Respondents' changes in attitudes towards Yiddish before and after leaving their Haredi community

	Number of respondents (N=70)	**Percent of respondents**[26]
Became more positive	**33**	**47.1%**
Was positive; now more positive	24	34.3%
Was negative; now positive	7	10%
Was negative; now less negative	2	2.9%
Became more negative	**9**	**12.9%**
Was positive; now less positive	2	2.9%
Was positive; now negative	7	10%
Was negative; now more negative	0	0
No change in attitude	**28**	**40%**
Was positive; remains positive	23	32.9%
Was negative; remains negative	5	7.1%

to speak Yiddish or to have a positive attitude towards the language than those on the less observant end.

26 Note that, due to rounding, the total may not equal 100%.

Some of the positive ideological reasons reported in the questionnaire for continuing to speak Yiddish include the idea that Yiddish is a culture and therefore important in itself; that Yiddish provides a link to other European and Germanic cultures; that Yiddish provides a link to a specific Jewish, namely Ashkenazic, culture and identity; that continuing to speak Yiddish is a way of fulfilling a duty bestowed by previous generations of Yiddish-speaking Jews; that Yiddish allows for the expression of a secular Jewish identity while still providing a place for familiar Haredi customs; that a lack of knowledge about Yiddish feels like a hole that needs to be filled alongside other gaps in their understanding of the world; that Yiddish is so deeply entwined with their identity that they feel a need to continue using the language; that Yiddish provides a cultural bridge to the important people in their lives that remain members of Haredi communities; and one respondent even reports that, aside from use of Yiddish being an ideology for them, it also provides them with a purpose to their life. For example, one respondent reports that Yiddish is "an important cultural treasure, that I am very proud of [because of] being able to connect with a 1000-year-old culture," while another writes that Yiddish is "my mother tongue, a language that I speak with the very dearest people to me." Several respondents indicate that the preservation of the language is important to them, and one states that "Yiddish is a part of my identity. I think often in Yiddish, I read a lot in Yiddish, I did a Master's degree in Yiddish and I work with Yiddish."

Some of the negative ideological attitudes towards use of Yiddish include the idea that Yiddish is a low language that encourages ignorance in its speakers and that Yiddish is a poor language that consists of curses and a few jokes. One respondent states that "I don't have any interest in maintaining this language, because I'm not a helpless idealist." Another reveals a clear ideology against Yiddish, stating, "the reality is that I grew up on this language and I don't deny it. Another reality is that the majority in this country (Israel) decided to move on and leave this ancient language behind, and speak in a unified language that helps everyone integrate as one country. What use is there in trying to be different?" Some of the respondents who view Yiddish negatively nonetheless find some positive aspects to being able to speak the language, such as that an additional language is always of benefit, while those who view the language positively do not discuss negative aspects of their use of Yiddish. One respondent reports that Yiddish is "even lower than Modern Hebrew, because it shows the conservativity, the ignorance, and the isolation of the community where I grew up," while another says that it is "a very poor language, but it could maybe help to learn German and maybe English too."

Overall, the results of the current study indicate that the majority of respondents feel an ideological positivity towards Yiddish. We observe a wide variety of positive attitudes and reasons for continuing to speak Yiddish and a small

number of negative attitudes repeated among several respondents. Most importantly, we observe that the reasons provided for viewing Yiddish positively before leaving Haredi communities are largely practical, while the positive attitudes after leaving are largely ideological and emotional.

3.4 *Practical Reasons*

The practical reasons for using Yiddish appear to be the main factors determining whether and to what extent an individual will continue speaking Yiddish after leaving the Haredi community and, even more clearly, whether they will pass it on to their children. Even when an individual is ideologically dedicated to preserving their use of Yiddish and has strong positive emotional connections to the language, if practical considerations do not allow them to continue using the language, they likely will not do so. Those who do not continue to speak Yiddish or who report that it is not important for them largely provide practical reasons, rather than the emotional or ideological factors discussed in sections 3.2 and 3.3.

From the results of the current study, it emerges that there are both positive and negative practical factors contributing to an individual's continued use of Yiddish, but there are many more negative than positive factors. Positive practical factors provided by respondents include an individual being very engaged in the world of former Haredim, and therefore meeting and interacting with a large number of Yiddish-speaking former Haredim; and an individual being in contact with a large number of people in the Haredi community that they left (and especially with family members such as parents and grandparents), as this provides both an opportunity and an incentive to continue speaking Yiddish and to pass it on to their children. Additionally, a small number of informants (who nonetheless are likely overrepresented in the current study) indicated that Yiddish was useful for them on a practical level as it formed some component of their current work.[27] For instance, one respondent was engaged in research about Yiddish, another works in a Yiddish-language theater, and a third works as a translator to and from Yiddish.

Negative practical factors provided by respondents include the idea that it is more important to improve their knowledge of the local majority language (usually English or Modern Hebrew) rather than continuing to speak Yiddish, as improved majority language skills will allow them to better integrate into secular society; that when the individual wants to learn an additional language or pass one on to their children, they usually choose a language that is taught

27 Such respondents are likely overrepresented in this study because the community of former Haredim who continue to work in Yiddish is extremely small and tightly knit, and the questionnaire was distributed partly by word of mouth.

in local secular schools (e.g., English or Arabic in Israel, Spanish or Modern Hebrew in the United States) as this is perceived as more useful than Yiddish; that Yiddish is not useful in an individual's life, as it cannot be used in daily interactions such as shopping, conducting business, or even watching TV; that it is difficult to find a romantic partner who also speaks or even understands Yiddish, rendering it nearly impossible to maintain as a main language in the home and to pass on to the next generation; that there is a lack of community support for maintaining Yiddish as a main home language and passing it on to the next generation, as there are almost no Yiddish-medium non-Haredi schools and it is very difficult to find a Yiddish-speaking peer group for one's children; that communication with Yiddish-speaking contacts within the Haredi community usually decreases greatly after an individual leaves, and in numerous cases ceases completely; that some individuals do not like to socialize with other former Haredim due to the psychological associations that they report experiencing in such contexts, reducing even further their pool of Yiddish-speaking contacts; that many former Haredim know very little about secular Yiddish culture and therefore do not consume secular Yiddish media, so that the only Yiddish-medium culture they engage with is limited to Haredi media and often only for nostalgic reasons; and that for many individuals, their level of reading and writing in Yiddish when they were members of Haredi communities was relatively basic, so that their Yiddish lexicon and grammar are limited, particularly in literary, legal, and technical contexts, and their opportunity to use Yiddish in such contexts is also reduced.

The final two reasons deserve further analysis. Firstly, there is a large and growing distance between secular and Haredi Yiddish culture, so that many Haredim are unaware of the existence of secular Yiddish culture and its extent. (Of course, many secular Yiddish speakers are equally unaware of the existence and extent of Haredi Yiddish culture.) The questionnaire in the current study therefore asked whether respondents were aware of secular Yiddish culture and its institutions, as well as whether and which works of secular Yiddish culture (e.g., books, films, plays) an individual had consumed. The results indicate that 44.3% of respondents were entirely unaware of the secular Yiddish world, 14.3% reported that they were somewhat familiar (e.g., they had once seen a book or met a single secular Yiddish speaker), and 41.4% reported that they were familiar with secular Yiddish culture to varying extents. However, when asked about specific secular cultural works that they had consumed, fewer people indicated that they had done so. In the latter case, 51.4% answered that they had never consumed any secular Yiddish culture, 11.4% indicated that they had consumed a very small amount of secular Yiddish culture (e.g., they had heard a few songs or seen a movie clip), and only 37.2% answered

positively that they had consumed secular Yiddish culture. Such respondents often provided a single example of a secular work they were familiar with (e.g., they had once seen a play in the Yiddish theater, had read a book by a particular author, or they sometimes watch secular Yiddish clips on the internet). These responses indicate that these individuals are likely not familiar with the breadth and depth of secular Yiddish culture, and likely do not engage with it on a regular basis.

Secondly, many respondents indicated that even when they were members of Haredi communities, they did not confidently read and write in Yiddish, and rarely made use of these media. Indeed, 17.1% indicated that they had never written anything in Yiddish, while 8.6% indicated that they had never read anything in Yiddish. Of those who responded that they had read Yiddish, several indicated that they only began to do so very late (e.g., after marriage) or that they only read particular works in Yiddish such as the writings and speeches of the Chabad Rebbe. Respondents who had never read or written in Yiddish may even have attended Yiddish-medium schools, as 44.3% indicated that at such institutions they and their fellow pupils did not read or write in Yiddish. A further 12.9% indicated that they had only ever read or written a small amount in Yiddish at school, while 42.9% responded that they had read and written in Yiddish at school. Table 2 summarizes respondents' self-reported age when they began to read and write in Yiddish.

To summarize the discussion of respondents' usage of and attitudes towards Yiddish, the results of the current study indicate that there are two main factors determining whether an individual will continue to speak Yiddish after having left their Haredi community. These factors are the respondents' background (in particular, their position on each of four spectrums of Yiddish usage before having left the Haredi community) and practical factors relating to the opportunities available to them to continue speaking Yiddish after leaving. However, regardless of whether a former Haredi individual continues to use Yiddish, my

TABLE 2 Age when respondents began to read and/or write in Yiddish

Ages	Reading	Writing
≤5	37.1%	17.1%
6–10	30%	42.9%
11–15	17.1%	14.3%
16–20	7.1%	8.6%
Not at all	8.6%	17.1%

findings indicate that the large majority of speakers maintain a positive relationship with the language.[28] Most strikingly, respondents reported that, when they were members of Haredi communities, Yiddish was important to them for a variety of practical reasons, but after leaving, the importance of Yiddish lies in its emotional and ideological impact. A large majority of respondents indicated that their attitude towards Yiddish had only become more positive since leaving their Haredi community.

4 Trends in Yiddish Use among Former Haredim: Present and Future

The former Haredi community has the potential to determine the future of Yiddish in the secular world. In this section, I will explore the extent to which former Haredim continue to use Yiddish, discuss whether institutional support exists for them to continue using Yiddish, and examine respondents' attitudes towards passing on Yiddish to the next generation.

4.1 *Trends in Present Usage*

In order to examine trends in present usage of Yiddish among former Haredim, we must first understand how frequently they use the language. The questionnaire therefore asks when is the last time the respondent spoke Yiddish. Perhaps surprisingly, 41.4% of respondents answered that they had last spoken Yiddish on the same day as completing the questionnaire, while 38% answered that they had done so in the preceding week. A further 12.8% answered that they had last spoken Yiddish in the preceding month, and only 1.4% indicated between 1 and 12 months prior to completing the questionnaire. An additional 4.2% responded that they had last spoken Yiddish over a year before completing the questionnaire, and 1.4% were unsure when the last time they spoke Yiddish was. These results, summarized in Fig. 7, indicate that a large majority (80%) of respondents had spoken Yiddish in the week preceding answering the questionnaire, suggesting that most former Haredim continue to use the language regularly.

In order to determine whether and how much an individual's Yiddish usage had changed since leaving their Haredi community, the questionnaire also asked whether respondents spoke Yiddish with their family and friends before and

28 While Abramac's (2020) primary focus is not on linguistic attitudes and practices, these results largely align with the attitudes she reports among the Shababnik community where she conducted her research.

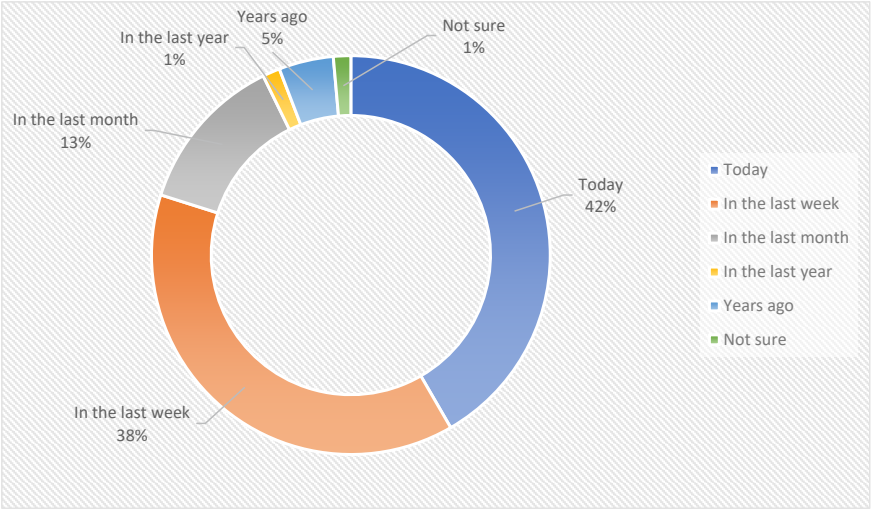

FIGURE 7 Responses to the question "when did you last speak Yiddish?" (N=70)

after leaving the community.[29] Additionally, the questionnaire asked whether respondents speak Yiddish to their friends who are also former Haredim. The responses to these questions are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 demonstrates a relatively stable pattern of Yiddish usage with a respondent's family members, with the exception of the 4.3% of respondents who are no longer in contact with their families. Additionally, we can see that the percentage of respondents who only speak Yiddish with their family members sometimes, or only with certain family members, is approximately 5% higher during the period after leaving the Haredi community. These two factors largely account for the decline in the rate of speaking Yiddish with family members after leaving.

A different pattern emerges for Yiddish usage with Haredi friends. Firstly, a larger percentage of respondents are no longer in contact with their Haredi friends, compared to the proportion that is no longer in contact with their family. Secondly, the decline in usage with Haredi friends after having left the community is much steeper than the decline in usage with Haredi family. There is also a noticeable increase in the proportion of respondents who, after leaving, do not speak Yiddish with their Haredi friends, while this proportion did not change noticeably as it relates to Haredi family.

29 Note that this information was covered by four different questions, which were separated from each other by a number of other questions to avoid interference between closely related items.

TABLE 3 Patterns of Yiddish usage before and after leaving the Haredi community with Haredi friends and family

Did/do you speak Yiddish with ...	Yes	No	Sometimes, or with some people	I am not in contact with them
Haredi family when respondent lived in Haredi community?	61%	19%	20%	N/A
Haredi family after respondent left Haredi community?	48.6%	21.4%	25.7%	4.3%
Haredi friends when respondent lived in Haredi community?	71.4%	14.3%	14.3%	N/A
Haredi friends after respondent left Haredi community?	40%	30%	22.9%	7.1%
Former Haredi friends (only after leaving the Haredi community)?	51.4%	25.7%	22.9%	N/A

However, these results hide a somewhat more nuanced picture of Yiddish usage among Haredim. Interviews conducted as part of the current study indicate that, even for those who remain in Hasidic communities, Yiddish usage is not static throughout their lives. For many Haredi Yiddish speakers, Yiddish is strongly associated with childhood, and as they grow older they are more likely to speak another language, at least with certain contacts. For example, many Haredi Yiddish speakers stop speaking Yiddish with their mothers during their teenage years and switch to speaking the local majority language (which women often use to communicate among themselves). Speaking the local majority language may be seen as more mature, more sophisticated, or more modern and thus serve the persona that a teenager wishes to project with certain friends. In more extreme cases, a person may switch to using only the local majority language with all of their contacts, even while remaining a member of a Haredi community. Thus, a certain amount of attrition in Yiddish usage over time is expected even when an individual remains a member of a Haredi community, and this would also be expected if they leave the community.

Additionally, respondents report that, as local majority languages are usually perceived as more modern or cosmopolitan within Haredi communities, and usage of Yiddish is associated with piety and a strong Haredi identity, some

of the pressure to change the language used among friends may actually come from within the Haredi community, rather than from the former Haredi person's wish to leave Yiddish behind. In many cases, Haredi friends will recognize the former Haredi person's new lifestyle and will assume that means they want to speak a language that suits it, so that over time conversation will increasingly take place in the local majority language rather than in Yiddish. This analysis is reinforced by the fact that half of respondents speak Yiddish with friends who are also former Haredim, as such friends do not necessarily expect leaving the community to equate with ceasing to use Yiddish. It is therefore not necessarily an ideological choice on the part of the former Haredi person to stop speaking Yiddish with their Haredi friends, but such a change may nonetheless come about due to how the languages are perceived in the Haredi community.

4.2 *Institutional Support for Yiddish among Former Haredim*

An important variable when considering the future of a language is the issue of institutional support. Cultural and educational institutions that provide services in a minority language can help ensure that language's survival in the next generation of speakers. Inside Yiddish-speaking Haredi communities, there exist Yiddish-medium educational institutions (aside from institutions that teach Yiddish as an additional language). These exist alongside additional institutions such as synagogues, libraries, and numerous other community support organizations where the main language is Yiddish, as well as community-based newspapers or newsletters, magazines, and even publishing houses, which are considered part of the community's institutions (*moysdes*), a proportion of which publish in Yiddish.[30]

In the secular Yiddish-speaking world, a Yiddish-medium press exists, although it is much less extensive than the Haredi Yiddish-medium press. Nonetheless, it is possible to read Yiddish-language newspapers and magazines, and even some newly published books, that are produced by secular institutions. There is no issue of access to secular Yiddish-language journalism and literature because most secular Yiddish speakers have unfettered access to the internet and so are able to locate material much more easily than Haredim whose internet access is limited or non-existent. However, everyday Yiddish-language news institutions (such as television channels or a daily newspaper reporting on all kinds of national and international news) are severely lacking in the secular world. While access to Yiddish-language media in the secular world could be said to be adequate, Yiddish-medium educational

30 The extent to which such organizations conduct their business in Yiddish largely depends on where the community in which they are based is positioned on the spectrum of Yiddish use (see section 3.1).

institutions (i.e., not providing language education, but general education at any level conducted in Yiddish) are almost non-existent. Furthermore, there are only a small handful of secular community organizations that conduct their daily business in Yiddish. Taken together, this situation means that there are very few places for secular Yiddish speakers to gather informally and build informal community networks.

Former Haredim may seek Yiddish-language community support from two different sources. Firstly, there are organizations that aim specifically to help former Haredim transition into the secular world and provide them with an ongoing community. These organizations exist almost everywhere there is a Haredi community (and thus a community of former Haredim), but in some cases they are not particularly active. Secondly, there are secular institutions dedicated to Yiddish language and culture, but whose primary audience is not former Haredim. I discuss these two groups in turn.

In Israel, there are four support organizations for former Haredim that have permanent offices: Hillel, Yotsim leShinuy, Barata, and Khatser shel Yehudah/Menorah.[31] Hillel is the oldest of the three organizations (founded in 1991) and is primarily maintained by volunteers who are not former Haredim. Their main aim is to provide practical support in terms of education, mental health, financial aid, emergency shelter, and legal advice, but also provide some social events. They have a physical presence in a number of Israeli cities. Yotsim leShinuy is an organization that was developed in the last decade by former Haredim. Their goals and services are similar to those of Hillel, but they additionally focus on researching the phenomenon of leaving the Haredi community as well as fighting for the rights of former Haredim at all levels of government. Barata was also founded in recent years by former Haredim and is primarily a community center and living space. Barata is a popular place for former Haredim to gather informally, much more so than either Hillel or Yotsim leShinuy. Khatser shel Yehudah/Menorah has a similar history and role to Barata, with a focus on connecting former Haredim to the liberal Haredi world. Of the two organizations, Barata tends to attract more Yiddish speakers than Khatser shel Yehudah/Menorah.

In New York, there is one main organization called Footsteps, which provides similar services to Hillel. Additionally, there are two organizations, Chulent and Nitsotsot, that are not aimed primarily at the former Haredi community but, as their aim is to provide a community gathering place, they are popular places for former Haredim to gather.

31 More such organizations exist in Israel, but without permanent locations. I leave these aside here.

In England, two main organizations aim to support former Haredim: Ma'avar and Gesher, while in Montreal Forward plays a similar role. However, these organizations are much smaller and less active than Hillel or Footsteps, and their main services appear to be provided online.

In the current study, the questionnaire asked respondents which meeting places or groups of former Haredim speak Yiddish today, and whether they themselves speak Yiddish there. The responses to this question are summarized in Table 4.

TABLE 4 Organizations and groups where former Haredim speak Yiddish[32]

Organization/ context	**Number of responses indicating Yiddish is spoken there**	**Organization**	**Number of responses indicating Yiddish is spoken there**
With friends (i.e., no specific organization or gathering place)	25	Nitsotsot (New York)	1
There isn't anywhere to speak Yiddish/I don't speak Yiddish anywhere	24	Yung Yidish (Tel Aviv and Jerusalem)	1
Barata (Jerusalem)	18	Ma'avar (London)	0
Hillel (various cities in Israel)	2	Gesher (London)	0
Yotsim leShinuy (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv)	2	Forward (Montreal)	0
With family (i.e., they do not speak Yiddish with friends)	2	Khatser shel Yehudah/Menorah (Jerusalem)	0
Footsteps (New York)	1	Other Yiddish institutions	0
Chulent	1		

32 Note that participants in the study were not balanced geographically, and there is an over-representation of respondents from Israel. It is likely that different results regarding use of Yiddish in particular organizations would be obtained with a more balanced geographic distribution.

These responses indicate that most former Haredim who continue to speak Yiddish do not do so in a particular physical place or organization, or that there is no place for former Haredim to speak Yiddish. As discussed in section 2.4, the majority of former Haredim worldwide (like the majority of Haredim worldwide) do not speak Yiddish, so organizations that aim to support all former Haredim need to be open to all, regardless of the language they speak. It is therefore not a priority for them to privilege use of Yiddish, as non-Yiddish-speaking former Haredim would be excluded. Furthermore, the goal of these organizations is not to foster the upkeep of Jewish or Yiddish culture, but rather to help former Haredim integrate; fostering the continued use of Yiddish clearly does not factor into this aim.

Aside from physical places or organizations, there are a number of communities or neighborhoods on the edges of Haredi centers where former Haredim or those on the fringes of orthodoxy may live. In some cases, these places may provide a transitional living situation for those leaving the Haredi world, and they may also provide an environment where Yiddish is more likely to be spoken, although no participants in the current study mentioned them as such. These neighborhoods include Airmont (outside of Monsey, NY), the outskirts of Crown Heights (Brooklyn), Nachlaot (near Geulah and Meah Shearim, Jerusalem), and Pardes Katz (on the outskirts of Bnei Brak), and they are often seats of organizations aimed at supporting former Haredim.

I turn now to secular Yiddish-language institutions. There are a relatively large number of such institutions, although most of them are academic or semi-academic. In this category I place YIVO in New York, the Yiddish Book Center in Massachusetts, Beys Sholem Aleichem in Tel Aviv, and the Medem Library in Paris. These organizations are primarily libraries, archives, and research centers, rather than centers for the Yiddish-speaking community to gather, although they may offer some such activities. In addition, there are a number of cultural organizations such as Beys Sholem Aleichem in the Bronx, Yung Yidish in Tel Aviv, and the New Yiddish Rep and other theater groups. In the past, there were Yiddish-speaking political organizations such as the Bund and the Arbeter Ring but these have largely either closed or focused their activities on either Yiddish or politics, rather than both. In addition to these organizations, there are a number of Yiddish summer courses, retreats, and festivals, such as Yidish-vokh, Yidish Zumer Weimar, and KlezKanada. Some of these organizations provide activities for children, including the Yiddish Arts and Academics Association of North America, the League for Yiddish, and Yugntruf. However, despite the relatively lively level of secular Yiddish-language programming available in Yiddish centers around the world, none of these organizations makes special efforts to encourage former Haredim to engage in their

activities. This fact is apparent from the responses summarized in Table 4, where only one such organization (Yung Yidish) was mentioned by name, as well as the results discussed in section 3.4, which indicated that a large proportion of respondents were unaware of secular Yiddish culture entirely. While the organizations themselves do not seek to actively recruit members from the former Haredi community, individual former Haredim may find their way to such organizations. For example, several participants in the New York area described themselves in interviews as being active in the New Yiddish Rep, and a growing number of former Haredim write for, and read, the Yiddish-language online newspaper *Forverts*.

There are a number of reasons why former Haredim do not as a rule become involved in these organizations. Firstly, they are not aware of these organizations, and it is not a priority for them to spend time and energy seeking out opportunities to speak Yiddish in the secular world, as discussed in section 3. Secondly, the Yiddish spoken in the Haredi world is markedly different from the Yiddish spoken in the secular world, and especially that spoken by Yiddishists, most notably in its lack of morphological case and gender (see Belk, Kahn, & Szendrői 2020, 2022), but also in a large number of more and less subtle ways such as lexis, phonology, cultural references, etc. Secular Yiddishists are overtly invested in maintaining a "correct" version of the language (Bleaman 2021) and view many distinctive features of Haredi Yiddish as at odds with their preferred variety. One way of maintaining their preferred variety is for secular Yiddishists to correct the Yiddish of their interlocutors (Bleaman 2021), a practice that many former Haredim say they find alienating and, at times, offensive.

4.3 *Yiddish in the Next Generation*

The issue of ensuring the survival of Yiddish in the next generation has been discussed for decades. Numerous authors have asked whether Yiddish is already dead, and whether it can be made to rise again (see, e.g., Roback 1958:43–44, 117–122; Birnbaum 1979:42). The main point of discussion has been that youth do not continue to speak Yiddish, and therefore institutions, newspapers, and publication houses cease to be active because of a lack of audience (e.g., Fishman 2009). Some authors (especially in recent years) may acknowledge that the death of Yiddish is not imminent due to the population of Haredi speakers (e.g., Jacobs 2005:3), but in the next breath they say that Haredim do not consume secular Yiddish culture and therefore this branch of Yiddish culture will die out. The authors then turn to the question of what can be done to make Yiddish attractive to younger speakers and how to encourage newcomers to the language. However, rather than trying to find new speakers, teach

them the language, and encourage them to pass it on to their children, these authors could focus on the population of former Haredim who already speak the language natively and encourage them to continue using Yiddish as a daily language, including with their children.

I believe this to be a crucial issue in the future of secular Yiddish. Three questions in the questionnaire relate to passing the language on to the children of former Haredim. The first question asks whether the respondent speaks or would speak Yiddish to a romantic partner. The second asks whether the respondent would or does speak Yiddish with their children if those children do not grow up in a Haredi community and why. The third question asks whether, all else being equal, the respondent would send their children to a Yiddish-medium secular school. The responses to these questions were in general very positive, but not as positive as the responses to the questions asking about general attitudes towards Yiddish discussed in section 3. These responses are summarized in Table 5.

The most positive response to these questions relates to whether respondents do or would speak Yiddish to their children, where 67.1% indicate that they would. Ten percent fewer respondents indicate that they do or would speak Yiddish with a romantic partner, but this 10% appears to be undecided rather than decided against the proposition. These responses suggest that respondents collectively place a higher importance on passing Yiddish on to their children than on speaking Yiddish with their partner. Additionally, respondents are more definitive on the question of passing Yiddish on to their children than they are on speaking Yiddish with their partner: a lower percentage of respondents in the former case indicate that they are undecided on the matter. It may be the case that respondents find it easier to imagine how they will

TABLE 5 Summary of responses related to passing Yiddish on to the next generation

	Yes	**No**	**Maybe/a little**	**No, but I would like a Yiddish class**
Speak Yiddish to your partner?	57.1%	22.9%	20%	N/A
Speak Yiddish to your children?	67.1%	30%	2.9%	N/A
Send your children to secular Yiddish-medium schools?	42.9%	34.2%	18.6%	4.3%

communicate with their children than to imagine finding a Yiddish-speaking romantic partner.

Respondents are least positive about the prospect of sending their children to a Yiddish-medium secular school but are nonetheless open to the idea. Many of the negative responses to this question indicated that respondents prioritized their children speaking the local majority language of the community where they grow up over Yiddish; that the local majority language is more practical; and that teaching Yiddish purely for nostalgic reasons is neither useful nor appropriate. In contrast to the questions discussed in section 3, here we see practical negative reasons outweighing positive emotional reasons, with the result that these respondents are happy to speak Yiddish with their children but draw a line at sending them to Yiddish-medium schools. On the other hand, the 42.9% of positive responses generally provide ideological justifications. This pattern illustrates the difference between having primarily emotional reasons and primarily ideological reasons to speak Yiddish: those who are motivated by emotion are also swayed by practical considerations, while those who are motivated by ideology will prioritize this ideology above all else.

In free-text comments, one respondent provides three reasons why it is important to them to speak Yiddish with their children: "1) being bilingual is better for brain development, 2) they should have access to our historical couture [sic], and 3) they should be able to communicate with their cousins in their language." Another respondent states that "I want to speak to my children in Yiddish, but it's obvious to me that for them it will be just a weird nostalgic anecdote of their father … If the desire to speak Yiddish will arise [in my children], I will be there." A third says that they will speak to their future children in Yiddish sometimes "because it's my native language and I'm used to it, not on principle." However, some responses were more negative. One respondent answered that opening a Yiddish-medium school would be "a stupid and isolationist move, and for what? This language is passé. If anything, they should have strengthened [the language] when the Israeli state was founded. Today it's not relevant." Another says that they would have reservations about sending their potential future children to Yiddish-medium schools: "I want to open up my kids to the big, wide world. [I'm] not sure I want to live in a specifically Jewish community or send my kids to a Jewish school."

Looking to an idealized version of the future, we might assume that the 42.9% of respondents who are willing to send their children to a secular Yiddish-medium school are representative of the feeling in the Yiddish-speaking former Haredi community as a whole. If so, we could say that 42.9% of the 76,860 Yiddish-speakers expected to leave Haredi communities in Israel in the

next 50 years (according to the estimates provided in section 2.3) are open to Yiddish-medium education for their children. This amounts to 32,973 people in Israel alone who would be willing to send their children to Yiddish-medium secular schools. This number is surprisingly high and would certainly be high enough to support not just one, but dozens of Yiddish-medium schools. With these results, such an investment in the future of secular Yiddish begins to look significantly more feasible.

5 Conclusions

The use of Yiddish among former Haredim has, until this point, been largely ignored by the academic world. It also seems to have evaded the notice of those writers predicting the imminent death of Yiddish. This article has considered the phenomenon both quantitatively and qualitatively, providing discussion about the number of Yiddish-speaking former Haredim as well as describing their use of Yiddish and their ideological and emotional attitudes towards the language.

The central claim of this article is that former Haredim have overwhelmingly positive attitudes towards the use of Yiddish, but they do not continue to use it as a main language due to practical reasons and a lack of support. I have argued that the majority of former Haredim do not speak Yiddish, but that the number of Yiddish-speaking former Haredim is increasing. There appears to be a gender imbalance, with more men than women leaving Haredi communities, but the extent of this imbalance is unclear. The questionnaire data indicate that most Yiddish-speaking former Haredim use Yiddish on a regular basis and use it consistently with particular contacts or in particular contexts, but it is not their main daily language. Approximately 60% of respondents would like to pass Yiddish on to their children who do not grow up in Haredi communities, given the right support, and the number of Yiddish-speaking former Haredim worldwide is large enough to support the existence of secular Yiddish-medium educational institutions. Furthermore, these numbers are only expected to increase and will therefore increase the number of secular Yiddish speakers worldwide, contrary to expectations about the death of the language in the secular world. However, the opportunity to revitalize secular Yiddish could be lost without appropriate support from institutions serving the community of former Haredim and secular Yiddish organizations.

While the current study provides valuable new data on the use of Yiddish among former Haredim, the discussion of the number of speakers was biased

in favor of the Israeli former Haredi community. As such, further research is required to quantify the phenomenon of Yiddish use among former Haredim in other countries. Furthermore, due to conflicting existing data, further research is required to determine whether the perceived gender imbalance in favor of men in the former Haredi community reflects reality, or whether more equal numbers of men and women leave the Haredi world than is commonly assumed.

In order to foster the continuation of Yiddish among former Haredim, I suggest a few practical solutions that could be implemented by organizations that support former Haredim and organizations invested in the future of secular Yiddish. At the most basic level, secular Yiddishists should be aware that their cultural norm of correcting each other's Yiddish usage towards the standard secular variety can be alienating or offensive to former Haredim, who are after all native speakers of a different variety of the language. At the level of programming, secular Yiddish organizations could implement outreach programs, either aimed at introducing Yiddish-speaking former Haredim to secular Yiddish culture or aimed at introducing secular Yiddishists to Haredi Yiddish-language culture, thus fostering communication between Yiddishists and former Haredim and providing an opportunity for former Haredim to lead discussions on aspects of Yiddish culture. Such programs would serve multiple purposes: broadening the Yiddish linguistic repertoire of former Haredim, who often feel their language is lacking in certain lexical areas; injecting secular Yiddish with the energy of Haredi Yiddish, which is constantly developing and evolving both lexically and grammatically; and allowing Yiddish speakers to meet with a broader range of other Yiddish speakers, in order to foster personal relationships and opportunities to use the language more frequently. A further idea, suggested by an anonymous reviewer, would be to establish a kind of Yiddish employment bureau, perhaps run through an organization or organizations supporting former Haredim. This project would provide links between Yiddish-speaking former Haredim and Yiddish-related jobs in the secular world such as translation (e.g., in literary or judicial settings), research or academic positions (e.g., research assistants supporting research on Yiddish or in library services), teachers of Yiddish, and jobs within secular Yiddish organizations. Organizations could also foster formal or informal networks aimed at promoting the use of Yiddish in the next generation, such as regular meetups, parenting groups for those raising their children in Yiddish, and regular Yiddish-medium activity and educational groups for children. Perhaps in the future, these actions could make the prospect of opening secular Yiddish-medium schools more realistic and appealing to Yiddish-speaking parents.

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Appendix: Questionnaire

1	Do you agree that your anonymized data can be stored in the UCL Data Archive for three years after the end of the project, and that this anonymized data will be available to other researchers?	האם את/ה מסכים/ה לאחסון המידע משאלון זה גם לאחר שלוש שנים מתום המחקר (המידע שלך יאוחסן בארכיון המידע של UCL ויהיה זמין למעגל רחב יותר של חוקרים/ות אקדמיים שמעוניינים/ות במידע)?
2	Do you agree to send your answers to this questionnaire through Google Forms?	האם את/ה מסכים/ה שהתשובות שלך ישלחו דרך טופס זה של גוגל?
3	How old are you?	בת/בן כמה את/ה?
4	What is your gender?	מהו השיוך המגדרי?
5	At what age did you start to understand Yiddish?	באיזה גיל התחלת להבין אידיש?
6	At what age did you start speaking Yiddish?	באיזה גיל התחלת לדבר אידיש?
7	At what age did you start reading Yiddish?	באיזה גיל התחלת לקרוא אידיש?
8	At what age did you start writing in Yiddish?	באיזה גיל התחלת לכתוב באידיש?

(*cont.*)

9	What other languages do you speak and at what level?	איזה עוד שפות את/ה הינך דובר/ת ובאיזה רמה?
10	Are your parents both Yiddish speakers?	האם הוריך שניהם דוברי אידיש?
11	Where were you born and where did you grow up?	באיזה עיר נולדת וגדלת?
12	Which community (hasidus) did you belong to?	לאיזה קהילה השתייכת?
13	Did the community speak Yiddish?	האם דיברו בקהילה באידיש?
14	In which institutions did you study and was the language of the lessons at the institution Yiddish?	באיזה מוסדות למדת והאם שפת הלימוד במוסד הייתה אידיש?
15	If you mentioned that you studied at a Yiddish-speaking institution, did you also read and write in Yiddish at the institution?	במידה וציינת שלמדת במוסד הדובר אידיש, האם גם קראו וכתבו באידיש במוסד?
16	When you were Haredi (frum), did you read anything in Yiddish?	בהיותך חרדי/ת האם היית רגיל/ה לקרוא משהו באידיש?
17	When you were Haredi (frum), was Yiddish an important language for you and why?	בהיותך חרדי/ת האם אידיש הייתה שפה חשובה עבורך? מדוע?
18	When you were Haredi (frum), did you speak to your family at home in Yiddish?	בהיותך חרדי/ת האם דיברת עם המשפחה באידיש?
19	When you were Haredi (frum), did you speak to your friends in Yiddish?	בהיותך חרדי/ת האם דיברת עם החברים/ות שלך באידיש?
20	How would you define the Yiddish you speak? Hasidic, Hungarian, Jerusalemite, Polish, etc.	איך היית מגדיר/ה את האידיש שאת/ה דובר/ת? (חסידישע, הונגעריש, ירושלימע, פולישע וכו')
21	At what age did you leave the ultra-Orthodox community?	באיזה גיל יצאת מהקהילה החרדית?
22	What city do you live in today?	באיזה עיר את/ה גר/ה היום?
23	When was the last time you spoke Yiddish?	מתי בפעם אחרונה דיברת אידיש?
24	Is Yiddish important to you today? Why?	האם אידיש חשובה לך היום? הסב(י)ר/י למה.

(*cont.*)

25	A somewhat annoying question, but if you had to choose a label, how would you define yourself today? Religious, traditional, Yiddishist, secular, etc.	שאלה חופרת, אבל אם היית צריכ/ה לבחור את הכי קרוב אליך, איך היית מגדיר/ה את עצמך היום? (דתי/ה, מסורתי/ת, יידישיסט/ית, חילוני/ית וכו')
26	Does Yiddish bring up negative connotations from the past for you?	האם אידיש מעלה לך קונטציות שליליות מהעבר?
27	Are you familiar with the Yiddish-speaking secular world? E.g., theater, literature, academia, etc.	האם את/ה מכיר/ה את העולם החילוני דובר האידיש? (באוניברסיטה, בתיאטרון או שאר מוסדות יידיש)
28	Have you read secular literature or seen a secular play in Yiddish? Detail as much as possible.	האם קראת ספרות חילונית ביידיש או ראית הצגה חילונית באידיש? (פרט/י)
29	Do you speak Yiddish today with your family? If not, then what language do you use with them? Detail as much as possible.	האם את/ה דובר/ת היום יידיש עם משפחתך החרדית? אם לא אז באיזו שפה כן? (פרט/י ככל האפשר)
30	Do you speak Yiddish today with your friends from the past (who are still Haredi)? If not, then what language do you speak with them? Detail as much as possible.	האם את/ה מדבר/ת היום באידיש עם חבירך/חברותיך מהעבר (החרדים)? אם לא אז באיזו שפה כן? (פרט/י ככל האפשר)
31	Do you speak Yiddish today with your non-Haredi friends, who are not former Haredim? If not, then what language do you speak with them? Detail as much as possible.	האם את/ה דובר/ת היום יידיש עם חברותיך/חבירך מההווה שאינם חרדים לשעבר? אם לא אז באיזו שפה כן? (פרט/י ככל האפשר)
32	Do you speak Yiddish today with your former Haredi friends? If not, then in what language do you speak with them? Detail as much as possible.	האם את/ה דובר/ת היום אידיש עם חבירך/חברותיך מההווה—החרדים לשעבר? אם לא אז באיזו שפה כן? (פרט/י ככל האפשר)
33	In what meeting place or group of former Haredim do you speak Yiddish today or do you speak Yiddish there?	האם ובאיזה מקום מפגש או קבוצה של חרדים לשעבר מדברים היום באידיש או את/ה מדבר/ת שם באידיש?

(*cont.*)

34	If you are in a relationship with a former Haredi who speaks Yiddish, or if you will be in the future, or if you have had such a relationship in the past, do/would/did you speak to them in Yiddish?	אם היית או תהיי/תהיה בעתיד בזוגיות עם חרדי/ת לשעבר דובר/ת אידיש, האם תדברו/דיברתם בינכם באידיש?
35	If you have the opportunity, will you speak or teach Yiddish to your children (assuming they do not grow up in a Haredi community)? Why (not)? Or if you have children, do you speak or teach them Yiddish?	במידה ויהיו לך ילדים: אם תהיה לך אפשרות, האם תדבר/י באידיש אל ילדיך?, או תלמד/י את ילדיך (שאינם גדלים במסגרת חרדית (אידיש? פרט/י מדוע (אם יש לך כבר ילדים האם את/ה מדבר/ת או לימדת אותם אידיש? הסבר/י למה.
36	If a secular Yiddish-speaking community is established exactly where you want to live, would you agree to be part of the community and send the children to secular institutions in Yiddish? If not, please explain why. Imagine they will also learn English and Hebrew, but the official language of instruction will be Yiddish.	נסי/ה לדמיין מצב בו נפתחת קהילה חילונית דוברת אידיש בדיוק במקום שאת/ה רוצה לגור בו, האם תסכים/י להיות חלק מהקהילה ולשלוח את הילדים למוסדות חילונים באידיש? פרט/י מדוע (תדמיין/י מקרה שבו ילמדו כמובן גם אנגלית ועברית אבל שפת הלימוד הרשמית תהיה אידיש).
37	If you answered that you do not speak Yiddish today or if you answered that you do not want to continue speaking Yiddish, or if you answered that you do not want to speak to the children in Yiddish, why not? Can you imagine a circumstance that might change your mind about this?	במידה וענית שאת/ה לא מדבר/ת היום אידיש או את/ה לא מעוניין/ת להמשיך לדבר אידיש או את/ה לא רוצה לדבר עם הילדים באידיש ולא פירטת למעלה את הסיבה, נא פרט את הסיבה כאן. והאם יכול להיות מצב בעתיד שזה ישתנה? אם כן פרט/י באיזה מקרה
38	Do you have anything else to add on this topic?	האם יש לך משהו אחר מעניין לומר או להוסיף על הנושא?
39	If you are interested in receiving the results of this study and a link to the lecture, please leave your contact information—email, whatsapp, etc. as you prefer.	אם תהיה/י מעוניין/ת לקבל את תוצאות המחקר ולינק להרצאה העתידית בנושא נא השאירו פרטי קשר: (אימייל, וואצאפ, מה שנוח)

(*cont.*)

40	If you are comfortable doing so, add your name here to help us ensure the validity of the results. Your data will be held anonymously.	אם את/ה מעוניין/ת אפשר למלא שם (זה מוסיף אמינות אך בהחלט לא חובה, בכל מקרה לא יוזכרו שמות בשום פורמט)

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