

ENGLISH SHMENGLISH: YIDDISH BORROWINGS INTO CANADIAN ENGLISH

Elaine Gold
University of Toronto

1. Introduction

Yiddish origin words have been used in English since the early twentieth century. However, over the past few years I was puzzled by an apparent increase in their use in Toronto newspapers. I noticed these words in headlines, on the editorial page, and in columns evidently written by non-Jews as well as by Jews. These borrowings do not appear in italics, nor are they set off by quotation marks; rather they are presented as standard, if informal, words of Canadian English. The following examples all appeared in *The Globe & Mail*. On the front page of the Style section, two-inch high letters proclaim "SCHLUMP CHIC" (12/1/02). An editorial cartoon relies on the punning of *schnook* with *chinook* (29/01/02). The headline of a short article asks "Schmooze of death?" (02/02/02); another headline refers to an American election with "Oh, what a tangled schmozzle they weave" (13/12/00). Columnist Heather Mallick contrasts Robert Downey Jr. with a "regular non-movie-star schmuck" (06/12/00) and Joanne Kates comments "I could switch boats five times and they would schlep for me" (08/12/01).

These were not the only Yiddish origin words that I saw, nor were they necessarily the most frequently used; however I chose to investigate the six words cited above - *schlump*, *schnook*, *schmooze*, *schmozzle*, *schmuck*, *schlep* - which all begin with the non-English onset cluster [ʃ] plus nasal or [l]. My goals were to discover (a) whether there had indeed been an increase in the use of these words in Canadian newspapers; (b) whether it could be shown that a similar increase had occurred in speech; and (c) how such an increase could be accounted for.

This paper is divided into four main sections. The first investigates Yiddish borrowings used in written Canadian English: I provide evidence of the increased use of these Yiddish borrowings in the Canadian press in the late 1990's and establish the relative frequency of these borrowings in the press and on the internet. The second section examines the use of Yiddish borrowings in oral Canadian English. Citing evidence from a survey, I argue that oral use shows the same patterns found in the written language. In the third section, I use dictionary listings to trace diachronic change in the acceptability of these words in Canadian English and argue that some observed semantic changes can be attributed to the presence of the onset *schm-*. The fourth and final section of the paper discusses

the models of language contact and diffusion needed to account for the observed increase in use of these borrowings so many decades after the decline of Yiddish-English bilingualism .

2. Yiddish borrowings in written Canadian English

2.1. Evidence of increased use of Yiddish borrowings in the press

In order to verify whether there had indeed been an increase of these words in the press I tabulated the number of occurrences of these words, checking that these were indeed word uses and not names. For example, there is a prominent Canadian theatre designer with the last name *Schmuck*, and a writer for the Halifax Daily News has used the byline *Sensible Shmooze*.

The following table shows the number of occurrences of the six words in The Toronto Star over the years 1994 to 1999. For each word I have shown annual occurrences and totals for the three-year periods 1994-96 and 1997-99. It became clear in my research that the German-like spelling of the onset *sch-* is much preferred to the more straightforward transliteration *sh-*; the numbers in all of the tables include both spellings.

Table 1 Annual and 3-year Total Occurrences - The Toronto Star

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
<i>shmooze</i>	13	11	20	34	39	32
	44			105		
<i>schlep</i>	2	7	7	5	9	5
	16			19		
<i>schmuck</i>	2	4	1	5	8	2
	7			15		
<i>schnook</i>	1	2	2	4	3	4
	5			11		
<i>schmozzle</i>	3	1	0	4	3	1
	4			8		
<i>schlump</i>	0	2	0	0	1	0
	2			1		

The figures above support my impression that there has been an increase in the use of these words. For all the words except *schlump*, the three year period 1997-99 has more citations than the preceding three year period. It is not a strictly regular increase: for several words there is a peak in 1998. The numbers are not high, so that even the most frequently used word, *shmooze*, appears less than once a week. *Schmooze* has shown the most increase and is by far the most frequently

used word: in the years 1997-99 it is more than five times as frequent as the next word *schlep*.

Table 2 shows that the increase in the use of *schmooze* is found in other newspapers and in different parts of the country. The Globe and Mail, which positions itself as a national paper rather than a Toronto paper, shows very similar numbers to The Toronto Star. While the numbers are fewer in Ottawa and Edmonton, the papers there show a similar increase over the decade.

Table 2 Annual and 3-year Total Occurrences of *schmooze*

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
The Toronto Star	13	11	20	34	39	32
	44			105		
Globe and Mail	21	21	26	38	34	35
	68			107		
Ottawa Citizen	10	13	12	16	19	26
	35			61		
Edmonton Journal	10	9	10	17	14	11
	29			42		

It is difficult to obtain data for years earlier than 1994. Table 3 shows the number of occurrences of *schmooze* for the Globe and Mail and for the CBCA group (Canadian Business and Current Affairs) from 1992 to 2000. The table shows a marked increase from the early to the mid '90s, indicating that the increase is a phenomenon of that decade.

Table 3 Annual and 2-year Total Occurrences of *schmooze*

Globe & Mail	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
	15	29	21	21	26	38	34	35	34
CBCA	1990-91	1992-93	1994-95		1996-97		1998-99		
	1	15	30		51		83		

2.2. Relative frequency of borrowings -evidence from the internet

The relative frequency of use of the six words in the newspapers was supported by an informal search of the internet, using Google to search for the individual words and restricting the search to .ca sites. The number of sites given for each word is shown in Table 4. Again the *sch-* spelling of the onset greatly outnumbered the *sh-* spelling, by a factor of at least seven. For comparison, I have also listed the number of citations in the Toronto Star for the three-year period 1997-99. The six words appear in the same relative frequency on the internet as they do in the newspaper. The writings on the internet are for the most part less

formal than those found in newspapers and reflect oral speech more closely. The fact that internet use shows the same relative frequencies as the newspapers supports the proposal that newspaper use reflects oral use.

Table 4 Relative Frequencies of words: Internet Search and Toronto Star

	Google Search 21/04/02	The Toronto Star 1997-99
<i>schmooze</i>	1349	105
<i>schlep</i>	146	19
<i>schmuck</i>	64	15
<i>schnook</i>	36	11
<i>schmozzle</i>	19	8
<i>schlump</i>	5	1

3. Yiddish borrowings in oral Canadian English

In order to gain insight into the relative frequency of these words in the oral speech of Canadians I surveyed a class of 22 students enrolled in my Canadian English course at the University of Toronto. For each of the six words, they were asked the following three questions:

- a. Have you heard or seen this word before? yes no
- b. What does this word mean?
- c. Have you ever used this word? yes no

Of the 19 questionnaires summarized in Table 5, 17 respondents had English as their first language, and the other two had been in Canada for more than 13 years. Their responses can be taken as a capsule sample of Toronto speech. The first and second columns show the responses to questions (a) and (c). The third column indicates whether I judged the definition offered as 'correct', that is, reasonably close to the borrowed word's meaning. Dictionary definitions are discussed in Section 4 and listed in Table 7.

Table 5 Student Survey Results

	recognize	use	'correct' definition
<i>schmuck</i>	19	15	18
<i>schmooze</i>	17	11	14
<i>schlep</i>	15	9	13
<i>schnook</i>	6	2	2
<i>schlump</i>	5	2	2
<i>schmozzle</i>	2	1	1

The results of this survey of oral use parallel the results observed in written Canadian English: the three most frequently recognized and used words are *schmuck*, *schmooze* and *schlep*, and the three less frequently recognized and used are *schnook*, *schlump* and *schmozzle*. The survey gives a slightly different order of frequency than the written forms in Tables 3 and 4. First, *schmuck* has more instances of recognition and use than does *schmooze*, and second, *schlump* was recognized and used more than *schmozzle*. Given the derogatory and somewhat obscene nature of *schmuck* it is not surprising that its frequent oral use would not be reflected in print. Rosten (1968:356) writes: "Never utter *shmuck* lightly or in the presence of women and children. ... I never heard any elders, certainly not my father or mother, use *shmuck*, which was regarded as so vulgar as to be taboo."

The ordering of *schlump* and *schmozzle* here may be misleading, for neither word is well known to this group of respondents. Only two of the five who recognized *scchlump* knew what it meant, (two thought it was a variant of 'slump') and only one person knew the correct meaning for *schmozzle*.

One puzzling result was that older speakers were more familiar with these words than younger speakers. If the use of these words is indeed increasing, one would expect the increase to be among younger speakers, since language innovation usually begins with the youth. Further, since these words are classified as slang or informal speech, one would expect young speakers to be more familiar with them. Of the 19 respondents, five were over 30. All of these speakers (100%) knew the meanings of the three most frequently used words (*schmuck*, *schmooze*, *schlep*) while only eight (58%) of the younger speakers knew all three. As for the three less frequently used words (*schnook*, *schlump*, *schmozzle*) only one speaker knew the meaning of all three, and that person was over 30. This apparent paradox of older speakers being more familiar with these borrowings than younger speakers will be returned to in Section 5.

4. Evidence from dictionary entries

4.1. Listings in contemporary Canadian dictionaries

In order to discover whether these words have recognized status in Canadian English, I consulted *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary* (1998), and *The Gage Canadian Dictionary* (1997). As indicated in Table 6, neither dictionary lists all six words, nor do they list the same words. However, taken together, the two dictionaries list all six, and they overlap on the three most frequently used words as discussed above. How well do these Canadian dictionaries reflect oral use? Clearly they are not using the same guidelines for inclusion of informal language and slang, or both dictionaries would list the same words. We can conclude that

the three words listed in both dictionaries are indeed used more in Canadian English than the other three, and that all six have some currency in the contemporary language.

Table 6 Listings in Recent Canadian Dictionaries

Oxford	<i>schlep</i>	<i>schlump</i>	<i>schmooze</i>		<i>schmuck</i>	
Gage	<i>schlep</i>		<i>schmooze</i>	<i>schmozzle</i>	<i>schmuck</i>	<i>schnook</i>

The entries from the two dictionaries (slightly abbreviated) are given in Table 7, with the first four from *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary* and the last two from *The Gage Canadian Dictionary*. The four words listed in *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary* all have clear Yiddish origins. The two words listed only in *The Gage Canadian Dictionary*, *schmozzle* and *schnook*, can be described as Yiddish-like rather than Yiddish in origin. *Schmozzle* is shortened from *schemozzle* which is apparently a variant of the Yiddish *shlemozzle* 'unlucky person'; it has undergone semantic change from the original. The origin of *schnook* is less clear. It has been argued that it is a euphemism for *schmuck* (Pyles 1954:157); Mencken (1948:757) claims it is not Yiddish in origin but German, from *schnucke* 'small sheep' indicating that a *schnook* is a sheep-like person

Table 7 Dictionary Definitions

schmooze (also shmooze)	<i>informal</i> v. 1. <i>int.</i> talk, chat, esp. at a social function, network. 2. <i>tr.</i> talk to (a person, esp. an important or influential one) (<i>he's upstairs schmoozing the director</i>). n. conversation esp. at a social function. [Yiddish <i>schmuesn</i> talk, converse, chat]
schlep (also schlepp , shlep)	<i>informal</i> v. 1. <i>tr</i> carry (esp. something burdensome), drag. 2. <i>int</i> go or work tediously or effortfully. n. <i>N. Amer.</i> 1. a tedious journey, a trek 2. an inept or stupid person. [Yiddish <i>shlepn</i> from German <i>schleppen</i> 'drag']
schmuck (also shmuck)	n. <i>N.Amer slang</i> an objectionable or contemptible person; idiot. [Yiddish <i>shmok</i> 'penis']
schlump (also shlump)	n. <i>N.Amer slang.</i> a slow or slovenly person; a slob, a fool [apparently related to Yiddish <i>shlumperdik</i> 'dowdy' and German <i>Schlumpe</i> 'slattern']
schmozzle	n. <i>slang.</i> a messy or complicated business [<Yiddish].
schnook (also shnook)	n. <i>slang.</i> a dull or stupid person; an easy target. [origin unknown]

4.2. Tracing language change: listings in earlier Canadian dictionaries

Can usage of these words be shown to have increased through changes in dictionary listings? The Gage series of Canadian dictionaries provides an opportunity for comparison. The 1997 edition is a major revision of the 1983

dictionary which itself was a revision of the 1979, 1978 and 1967 editions. As shown in Table 8 below, the 1997 edition lists five of the six words, the 1983 dictionary lists two of these, and the 1967 Gage Senior Dictionary, a dictionary aimed at high school students, lists none of the five found in the 1997 edition. While one would not expect a vulgarism like *schmuck* to be included in a high school dictionary, the others are not offensive and could have been included; that edition does list other Yiddish origin words beginning with *sch-*, such as *schlemiel* and *schmo*. The changes within the Gage series between 1967 and 1997 suggest that the frequency and acceptability of these words in Canadian English did indeed increase over the thirty intervening years.

Table 8 Yiddish Borrowings Listed in Gage Canadian Dictionaries

1997	<i>schlep</i>		<i>schmooze</i>	<i>schmozzle</i>	<i>schmuck</i>	<i>schnook</i>
1983	<i>schlep</i>					<i>schnook</i>
1967						

4.3. History of Yiddish borrowings in English: first citations

In attempting to trace the diffusion of these words in Canadian English it would be helpful to pinpoint their first entry into the language. However, dictionary making in Canada is a fairly recent development and so it is difficult to trace early Canadian citations. The *Oxford English Dictionary* can give some insight into the entry of these words into the English language, although not necessarily into Canadian English. Table 9 shows the first citation for each of the six words.

**Table 9: First Citations
Oxford English Dictionary 2nd Edition (online)**

	First Citation	Order of Student Use
<i>schmuck</i>	1892	<i>schmuck</i>
<i>schmooze</i>	1897 verb 1939 noun	<i>schmooze</i>
<i>schmozzle</i>	1899	<i>schlep</i>
<i>schlep</i>	1922 verb 1939 noun	<i>schnook</i>
<i>schnook</i>	1943	<i>schlump</i>
<i>schlump</i>	[1952 (Steinmetz)]	<i>schmozzle</i>

Of the six words discussed here, *schmuck* appeared earliest in print in English. This early date is surprising given the obscene associations of the word; the next citation listed is more than fifty years later, 1945. *Schmooze* appeared as a verb in 1897 in *The New York Times* and as a noun in 1939. *Schmozzle* also has a fairly long pedigree: the OED dates it to 1899 as East End (London) slang, as a variant of *shemozzle*. The OED gives James Joyce's *Ulysses* of 1922 as the first occurrence of the verb *schlep*. The noun *schlep* meaning 'poor slob' is described as U.S. usage and dated 1939. *Schnook* is first cited in 1943. *Schlump* is not listed in the OED; Steinmetz (1986) gives the earliest recorded date of *schlump* 'sloppy person' as 1952.

The column to the right of Table 9 compares the relative use of each word according to the student survey, with the order of first citation. It can be seen that, in general, the rate of student use varies directly with the age of the word. The exception is *schmozzle* which is older than its low rate of current usage might suggest. This can perhaps be accounted for by the fact that *schmozzle* is specifically identified as British slang: it is possible that its introduction to North America was much later than the date given.

The other five words suggest that present day recognition is related to the length of time the word has been in English. This presents a puzzle for the standard S-curve language diffusion model. The three most frequently used words were introduced over 100 years ago, so one would not expect a steep increase in the late 1990's. Such an increase with an S diffusion pattern would imply an extremely slow initial spread on the lower curve, lasting 90 years, before the word had enough momentum to begin the rapid diffusion illustrated by the steep slope in the middle of the S. Such a pattern of diffusion is extremely unlikely and an alternative pattern is proposed in Section 5.

4.4. Semantic change

In tracing the oral use of these borrowed words, it becomes clear that the two most frequently used, *schmooze* and *schmuck* have undergone some semantic change since their first introduction.

The original meaning of *schmooze* can be found in Rosten's description (1968:356): "a friendly, gossipy, prolonged, heart-to-heart talk - or, to have such a talk. . . . I have never encountered a word that conveys "heart-to-heart chit-chat" as warmly as does *shmooz*." Thirty years later the Canadian Oxford Dictionary (1998) gives the definition shown in Table 7: the warm chat of the earlier definition has been replaced with a socializing function, often with a sense of deliberate conniving. The new meanings are reflected in the definitions offered in the student surveys, which frequently include the words "socialize" and "network".

The negative connotations of the current meaning are illustrated in such student definitions as "suck up to" and "manipulate". This new meaning is illustrated in the following quote from Margaret Wentz (Globe and Mail 27/9/01), "Brian Tobin and Allan Rock and the rest, gladhanded and schmoozed their way through the crowd." This political interaction is a far remove from warm heart-to-heart chit-chat.

While *schmooze* can be said to have lost some of its innocence, *shmuck*, on the other hand, has shifted, if not towards innocence, at least away from the obscene. In Yiddish it is the word for 'penis', and as an insult, is considered so vulgar that it is not listed in either of the standard Yiddish dictionaries, Weinreich (1977) or Harkavy (1928). As noted above, in Rosten's time it would not have been used in front of women, never mind in a family newspaper.

The Canadian Oxford Dictionary (1998) does not categorize *shmuck* as obscene and offers the definition 'idiot'. This is also the definition suggested most frequently by the students; others were 'moron' 'jerk' and 'light insult'. Only one student gave a synonym close to its original Yiddish meaning: 'prick'. An illustration of the way many speakers use it now, oblivious of its vulgar connotations, is found in this excerpt from a movie review by J. Anderson (Globe and Mail 22/12/01), "'basically, he's a schmuck' referring to a 'nice, hardworking and recently divorced dad." No one familiar with the original Yiddish meaning of the word, and the meaning that initially came into English with it, would describe a *shmuck* as 'nice'.

It is not surprising that the two words that show the most semantic change are the two that have been in English the longest time and are the most frequently used. The longer words are in the language, the more they are used, the more likely they will undergo semantic shift.

I propose, however, that there is another factor at work in facilitating semantic change in these words, a factor that can be described as phonological-semantic. Phonaesthesia is the association of meaning with certain sounds. I propose that the meanings associated with the onset *schm-* of these two words has affected their interpretation in English.

The mocking reduplicative prefix *shm-* is itself borrowed from Yiddish. The belittling, ironic function of this prefix in Yiddish was described by Prilutzki [1924], and he gives the examples of *gelt-shmelt* 'money-shmoney' and *libe-shmibe-fibe-feh!* 'love-shmove ...' from Yiddish writings of the 1880's. This prefix was borrowed into English and was widespread in the eastern U.S. by the early 1950's (Spitzer 1952). English speakers interpret words beginning with *schm-* as being funny or ironic, whether or not the words have such connotations in Yiddish. For this reason I suggest that *schmooze* took on the ironic, distancing associations of *shm-*. There is a further phonaesthesia affect of the rhyme with the English

word 'ooze' which was not in the original Yiddish word, which ended in [s] not [z]. In the quote from Wente above, one can imagine Tobin and Rock 'oozing' through the crowd, as well as *schmoozing*.

With respect to *schmuck*, I suggest that the ironic associations of the onset undercut the original vulgarity and violence of the word. A vehement obscenity has shifted to a 'light insult'. The meanings of *schmuck* and *shnook* are apparently merging: *shnook* would be more apt in the movie review quoted above.

The phonological changes in the word *schmozzle* -- from *schlemozzle* through *schemozzle* -- may also have resulted from phonaesthesia, the changes encouraged by speakers' familiarity with the reduplicative onset *shm-*.

On the one hand, the onset *shm-* may have contributed to the spread of these words into Canadian English, through associations with irony and humour. On the other hand, words with these onsets are recognizably foreign to English, and as such will probably never move completely into standard Canadian English beyond the informal level.

5. Models of language contact and diffusion

There is an apparent paradox in the increase in use of Yiddish origin words in the 1990's, decades after the peak of Yiddish-English bilingualism in North America, and with virtually no contemporary Yiddish-English contact.

Other scholars have commented on this puzzle. In 1989 Bluestein wrote (p.xx): "Curiously...the presence of Yiddish is being felt more pervasively in American culture than ever before, not only in literature but also in the mass media." Lewandowski (1997:43) comments: "Paradoxical as it may seem, the language shift from Yiddish to English was, in fact, conducive to the influence of Yiddish on American English." As early as 1933 Roback presciently stated: "If American Jews were to give up Yiddish, English would be flooded by Yiddishisms" (Feinsilver 1970:295).

On reflection, however, it turns out that the situation of increased use of borrowings is not the paradox it appears, and is not a problem for traditional language contact theory. As was seen in Table 9, all of the borrowings entered into the English language more than 50 years ago, some over 100 years ago, at a time when there was substantial Yiddish-English contact and many Yiddish-English bilinguals. The question, then, is not how these words entered the English language, but why their use increased in the last decade of the 20th century.

The use of Yiddish origin words has different cultural associations inside and outside of the Jewish community and to some extent, different reasons can account for the increased use in each group. Within the Jewish community, Yiddish words carry cultural resonances and are often used to express group solidarity. These

words do not have the same cultural associations for the larger, non-Jewish English-speaking population in Canada, who are often unaware of the Yiddish origin of these words.

During the 1990's there was a renewed interest in Yiddish culture within the Jewish community. This has been reflected in the rise in the number and popularity of Klezmer bands over the past ten years in North American and in Europe, who play traditional Yiddish music and sing Yiddish lyrics. Similarly, there has been an increase in the number of academic programs in Yiddish, in the popularity of Yiddish clubs and classes, and in the popularity of festivals of Yiddish culture like Toronto's Ashkenaz. With the passing of the generation with Yiddish as their first language, there is now a sense of loss and a search for roots in the Yiddish culture of Eastern Europe. There is enough distance from the Holocaust now for many Jews to be able to look at the Yiddish culture that existed in Europe before the community's destruction in the Second World War.

What accounts for the increase in the use of these words outside of the Jewish community in the late C20? Apparently the use of Yiddish borrowings has become an in-group marker for urban chic. The use of these words in the press, advertising, and entertainment, on television and in the movies, through such comics as Woody Allen and Jerry Seinfeld, have led to their increased popularity. The ironic associations of the onset *shm-* fits with the contemporary popularity of ironic humour.

The Jewish and non-Jewish communities are not isolated from one another in Canada, and the spread of these words involves interaction between the two communities and between the different social factors involved. The use of Yiddish-origin words in Canadian English also reflects the acceptance the Jewish community experiences in Canada, for there is no stigma attached to using words with Jewish associations.

One puzzle remains. Most of these words enter the language as slang, and slang is generally spread through young speakers. However, my survey indicates that older speakers are more familiar with these borrowings than young speakers. What model of spread can account both for the recent increase in use and for the fact that older speakers are more familiar with these words?

Language innovations are generally described as following an S-curve pattern. Yet not all innovations successfully spread throughout the population. MacKearacher (2001) proposed that unsuccessful innovations follow an arc pattern, rather than an S-curve, in that their use increases to a certain level and then falls off. I propose that this rising and falling arc is a good representation of slang words which come into use for a short period, spread through some of the population and then fall out of use. This arc pattern would reflect the trajectory of a Yiddish borrowing like *schlump* which showed no increase in the press in the

1990's, but would still be known to some older speakers. This would account for the fact that such words are given some prominence in newspaper articles even though young people are unfamiliar with their meanings, since journalists as a group are older than university students as a group,

The arc pattern would similarly be followed by a word like *schmozzle*, which came into English over 100 years ago, increased in use for a while, and then began to fall out of use. However, there is some evidence that this word's use increased in the 1990's, indicating that social factors have contributed to a new upswing in its use.

The frequently used words, like *schmooze* and *schmuck*, had been following the S-curve pattern of a successful innovation since their introduction. Before 1990 they had begun leveling off at the top of the curve, below 100% usage. Even successful slang is not used by all speakers. However in the 1990's these words received new impetus from social factors and began to trace a second increasing slope. Although these words experienced a resurgence in use in the 1990's they were not newly introduced so, again, one would not expect young speakers to necessarily be more familiar with these terms than older speakers.

6. Conclusions

This paper investigates a small group of Yiddish-origin words: *schmooze*, *schmuck*, *schlep*, *schmook*, *schmozzle*, and *schlump*. All but the last show an increase in use in The Toronto Star over the 1990's. The most frequently used word, *schmooze*, shows a particularly large increase in the late '90s and this increase is found in newspapers across the country. Evidence from the internet, dictionaries and a student survey supports the claim that the three most frequently used words, *schmooze*, *schmuck* and *schlep*, are well integrated into Canadian English.

Two frequently used words, *schmooze* and *schmuck*, have undergone semantic shift over the past century and I have argued that this shift can be attributed to their onset *schm-* which carries humorous, ironic overtones for English speakers.

The increase in use of Yiddish-origin words in the 1990's cannot be accounted for with a standard S-curve pattern of diffusion. Social factors within both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities must be considered in accounting for this spread. I have argued that these social factors,, including renewed interest in Yiddish culture in general, have given a new impetus to word diffusion S-curves or arcs that had previously leveled out or were declining.

This paper is a first step in the analysis of the use of Yiddish origin words in Canadian English, How well are Yiddish borrowings integrated into Canadian English? Consider this quote from the *Nunavut Hansard* (23/11/2001), "his gift of

gab, his schmooze-king abilities." Evidently, this word is not limited to southern, urban milieus but has spread to the far North of Canada.

References

- Avis, W.S. et al, eds. 1967. *Dictionary of Canadian English: Senior Dictionary*. Toronto : W.J. Gage Ltd.
- Avis, Walter S. et al eds. 1983. *Gage Canadian Dictionary*. Toronto: Gage Publishing.
- Barber, Katherine. 1998. *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Bluestein, Gene. 1989 (1998 2nd edition). *Anglish/Yinglish: Yiddish in American Life and Literature*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Coleman, Julie. 1997. Phonaesthesia and Other Forms of Word Play. in R. Hickey and S. Puppel eds. *Language History and Linguistic Modelling: A Festschrift for Jacek Fisiak on his 60th Birthday. vol I. Language History*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 3-12.
- Dodds de Wolf, Gaelen et al. 1997. *Gage Canadian Dictionary*. Toronto: Gage.
- Feinsilver Lillian M. 1961. 'On Yiddish Shm-', *American Speech*, 36, 302-3.
- Feinsilver, Lillian M. 1962. 'Yiddish Idioms in American English', *American Speech*, 37, 200-206.
- Feinsilver, L.M. 1970. *The Taste of Yiddish*. New York: Thomas Yoseloff Ltd.
- Green, Jonathon. 1993. *Slang Down the Ages: The Historical Development of Slang*. London: Kyle Cathie Ltd.
- Harkavy, Alexander. 1928. reprinted 1988. *Yiddish-English-Hebrew Dictionary*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Lewandowski, Marcia. 1997. 'The Socio-Cultural role of Jewish Contributions to American Slang', *Lingua Posnaniensis*, 39, 39-49.
- MacKeracher, Mary S. 2001. 'Reconsidering the Standard Temporal Model of Language Change'.
CLA conference paper.
- Mencken, H.L. 1948. *The American Language*. Supplement II. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Ornstein-Galicia, Jacob L. 1992. 'Affective Borrowing from Yiddish in Colloquial American English', *Meta*, 37-3, 450-464.
- Prilutzki, N. 1924. 'Mocking Expressions', *Yidishe Filologye*, 1, 33-45.
- Pyles, Thomas. 1954. *Words and Ways of American English*. Andrew Melrose Ltd, London..
- Rosten, Leo. 1968. *The Joys of Yiddish*. New York : McGraw-Hill,.
- Sornig, Karl. 1981. *Lexical Innovation: A Study of Slang, Colloquialisms and Casual Speech*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins,.
- Spitzer, Leo. 1952. 'Confusion Schmooshun', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 51, 226-33.
- Steinmetz, Sol. 1986. *Yiddish and English: A Century of Yiddish in America*. Alabama: University of Alabama Press.
- Weinreich, Uriel. 1953. *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*. The Hague: The Mouton & Co.
- Weinreich, Uriel. 1977. *Modern English-Yiddish Yiddish-English Dictionary*. New York: Schocken Books.