

# Isaac L. Bleaman's Abstract

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### *Social Dimensions of Variation in Yiddish: Historical Perspectives and New Insights*

Yiddish contributed significantly to the development of sociolinguistics and language contact, particularly through the pioneering work of Uriel Weinreich and Joshua Fishman. However, very little quantitative variationist research has been conducted on either contemporary or historical varieties of the language. In this talk, I will present my findings on the social significance of variation in New York-based communities that are committed to language maintenance in Yiddish.

The results show how differences in communities' maintenance practices and ideologies (e.g., whether to prioritize language dominance; whether to standardize the language) have contributed to inter-community differences in the quantitative patterning of two variables: voice onset time and number agreement. At the end of the talk, I will preview the resources available in the Corpus of Spoken Yiddish in Europe (CSYE), which is now being developed through a National Science Foundation CAREER grant. Among other applications in research and language revitalization, the CSYE will provide the data necessary to address questions related to the social meaning of variation and the direction of language change in the pre-Holocaust period.