

לקט

יִיִדִישֶׁע שטודיעס היינט

Jiddistik heute

Yiddish Studies Today

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Der vorliegende Sammelband *לקט* eröffnet eine neue Reihe wissenschaftlicher Studien zur Jiddistik sowie philologischer Editionen und Studienausgaben jiddischer Literatur. Jiddisch, Englisch und Deutsch stehen als Publikationssprachen gleichberechtigt nebeneinander.

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יִיִּדיש װײַסגאַבעס און פֿאַרשונג

Jiddistik Edition & Forschung

Yiddish Editions & Research

Herausgegeben von Marion Aptroot, Efrat Gal-Ed,
Roland Gruschka und Simon Neuberger

Band 1

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Yidish: oysgabes un forshung
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Moshe Taube

On the Relative Marker *Vos* and Yiddish Postmodifiers

Introduction

The distribution of the interrogative pronoun *vos* ('what') in Yiddish has considerably expanded under the influence of the co-territorial Slavic languages, and the form has spread into several new environments and acquired a number of additional functions not attested in German. These include the use of *vos* as an invariant relative marker¹ and as a complementizer, or subordinating conjunction.² Here I would like to present a few other functions of *vos* within the noun phrase which, to my knowledge, the grammars of Yiddish do not treat at all,³ although they are well attested in the literature of the 19th and 20th centuries as well as in the spoken language.⁴ Before going into the details of these innovations, let us start with a brief survey of the constituent structure of the Yiddish noun phrase.

The Noun Phrase in Yiddish

Like the constituent languages of two of its three major components, Germanic and Slavic, Yiddish is an AN language, i.e., the default constituent structure of the noun phrase is: DET Adj Noun, with the attributive adjective preceding its head, e. g., *a geler hunt* 'a yellow dog,' and *der geler hunt* 'the yellow dog.' Adjectives that follow their head noun, obligatorily preceded by the appropriate DET, e. g. *a hunt a geler* vs. *der hunt der geler*,⁵ are considered "separate NPs in apposition."⁶ Modifiers other than adjectives may appear after the head. In the postmodifier

1 This type is marginally attested in German with neuter nouns as heads (see Behaghel 1928: 726).

2 See Krogh 2001: 46–50; Jacobs 2005: 188, 232–238 and literature cited there.

3 Zaretski (1926: 172) is the only one to mention one of these functions, *vos* + prepositional phrase, supported by a single example.

4 Here I draw upon my knowledge as a native speaker.

5 The Semitic determinant of Yiddish has the order NA. Definiteness is marked both on the head and the adjective.

6 Jacobs 2005: 242.

position we encounter relative clauses with both finite and non-finite verb forms, adverbs, and prepositional phrases.

Noun Phrases containing *vos* + postmodifier may occur in various syntactic positions in the clause, including subject, predicate and complement. The types of postmodifiers introduced by *vos* (other than relative clauses) are:

A. *vos* + Past Participle

Unlike full-fledged relative clauses introduced by *vos*, which will not be treated here since they are amply discussed in grammars and in special studies,⁷ the present type, in which *vos* introduces as modifier a reduced clause consisting of a past participle without a finite verb-form, is not mentioned anywhere in the linguistic literature. The introductory *vos* in this type is obligatory and cannot be deleted, just as it is indelible with a full-fledged relative clause.⁸

The first two examples come from the rather florid prose of the poet Avrom Sutzkever (1913–2010):

- (1)
YENE PARSHOYNEN VOS okersht NELEM GEVORN kon ikh
 those persons what just now vanished become-PPP know I
 nit.
 not
 ‘Those persons who’ve just vanished I don’t know.’
 (Sutzkever 1989: 132)

The past participle attested here derives from the periphrastic verb *nelem vern*, with Hebrew-origin invariant *nelem* ‘vanished’ and German-origin auxiliary *vern* ‘become.’ A full-fledged relative clause would require a 3PL form of the auxiliary *zayn* ‘be’ in the present tense: *vos ZAYNEN okersht nelem gevorn*.

- (2)
UN tsvishn alte briv (tsvishn zey a briv geshribn
 and among old letters among them a letter written
oyf KORE VOS AROPGESHUNDN fun a beryoze-boym...)
 on bark what skinned-PPP from a birch-tree
hot oyfgetsaplt a beygele papir mit gel-grin-fyoletove
 has startled a sheet-DIM paper with yellow-green-violet

7 E. g. Lowenstamm 1977, Prince 1989, Diesing 1990.

8 Pace Jacobs 2005: 238, quoting Lowenstamm 1977: 214. The constructed examples given there, *der man ø ikh ze* ‘the man (whom) I see’ and *der bokher ø ikh ze* ‘the lad that I see,’ are nothing but plain anglicisms, not attested and unacceptable in Yiddish.

ayngeziglte plyames
 in-sealed stains
 ‘and among old letters (among them a letter written on bark
 skinned from a birch-tree...) startled a small sheet of paper with
 yellow-green-violet stains’
 (Sutzkever 1989: 126)

The past participle here derives from the complex verb *arop-shindn* ‘skin off’ (lit. ‘skin down’). A full-fledged relative clause would require a 3sg form of the auxiliary *zayn* ‘be’ in the present tense: *vos IZ arop-geshundn fun a beryoze-boym*.

The intimate affinity of this type with relative subordination is clearly visible in the following example from Sholem Aleichem’s (Sholem Rabinovitch, 1859–1916) *Tevye the Milkman*, where the NP with *vos* is part of the predicate.

(3)
 ikh bin, dakht mir, DER EYGENER TEVYE, zog ikh, VOS GEVEN, nisht
 I am thinks me-D the same Tevye say I what been not
 geminert a hor.
 reduced a hair
 ‘I am, it seems to me, the same Tevye, I say, as before, not a hair
 missing.’
 (Sholem Aleichem 1927: 106)

The next example comes from the autobiography of Sholem Aleichem titled *Funem yarid* (From the Fair).

(4)
du vest makhn a shtarb, veln kumen mentshn, vos meynen, az
 you will-sg make a die will-3PL come people what think as
zey kenen dikh un veysn dikh, un veln oystrakhtn ZAKHN,
 they know thee and wit thee and will-PL invent things
vos nit GESHTOYGN, nit GEFLOYGN.
 what not risen-PPP not flown-PPP
 ‘Should you die suddenly, there will come people who think they
 know you and will invent things that are completely untrue.’
 (Sholem Aleichem 1937c: 17)

This sentence relates the argument raised by the author in trying to convince himself to write his autobiography. The two negated PPPs ‘neither risen nor flown’ (although the regular form of the first in Yiddish

is *geshtign*), deriving respectively from the verbs *shtaygn* ‘rise’ and *flien* ‘fly,’ form a fixed collocation with the meaning ‘completely untrue.’

A similar example, with the same collocation truncated, is attested in Mendele Moykher-Sforim’s (Sholem-Yankev Abramovitsh, 1835–1917) novel *Fishke der Krumer*, first published in 1868.

(5)
dort vert oykh zeyer oft geshlosn AZELKHE MINEY,
 there becomes too very often concluded such-PL kinds-of
SHIDUKHIM vos nisht geshtoygn.
 matches what not risen-PPP
 ‘There, too, such kinds of unlikely marriages are very often arranged.’
 (Mendele Moykher-Sforim 1953: 37)

B. *vos* + Adverb

A second group of postmodifiers consists of adverbs. The introductory *vos* may sometimes, in noun phrases denoting ‘the same N as ADV,’ alternate with the conjunction *vi* ‘as’ (ex. 8). When the noun phrase denotes ‘the N of ADV,’ *vos* may alternate with the preposition *fun* ‘of’ (ex. 10).

(6)
vehasheynt, bin ikh dokh epes haynt, mit gots hilf,
 and secondly am I obviously somehow today with God’s help
nit der Tevye, vos AMOL, kon ikh dokh shoynt greykhn tsum
 not the Tevye what once can I obviously already reach to+the
shenstn shidekh afile in Yehupets, – ha, vi zogt ir?
 nicest match even in Yehupets eh how say you
 ‘And secondly, I’m today, am I not, with God’s help, not the same
 Tevye as I once was, so I can attain the best match, even in Yehupets,
 right? What do you think?’
 (Sholem Aleichem 1937a: 67)

(7)
ikh hoyb oyf di oygn, ikh tu a kuk – Khave!... di eygene Khave, vos
 I lift up the eyes I do a look Khave the same Khave what
FRIER, nisht geminert a hor, afile di malbushim nisht ibergebitn!...
 earlier not reduced a hair even the clothes not changed
 ‘I lift my eyes up, I take a look – Khave!... the same Khave as before,
 not a hair missing, hasn’t even changed her clothes!...’
 (Sholem Aleichem 1937a: 136f)

(8)
nishto di mentshn vos amol, gor nisht dos merkhets vi frier.
 not+here the people what once at all not the bathhouse as earlier
 ‘Gone are the people of old, it is not at all the same bathhouse as
 before.’
 (Mendele Moykher-Sforim 1953: 34)

(9)
s’iz geven a gemlokhete “in di hayzer arumgeyn,” gor nisht der
 it’s been an artificial in the houses going-around at all not the
tam vos an andersh mol.
 taste what an other time
 ‘It was a sham kind of “going begging,” not at all the same feeling as
 on other occasions.’
 (Mendele Moykher-Sforim 1953: 84)

(10)
un ikh dermon mikh on yener Beylke fun amol un ikh farglaykh zi
 and I recall me on that-F Beylke of once and I compare her
mit der Beylke, vos atsind, un es tut mir hartsedik bang.
 with the Beylke what now and it does me heartily regret
 ‘And I recall the Beylke of old and compare her with the Beylke of
 today, and I feel deep regret.’
 (Sholem Aleichem 1937a: 180)

It is remarkable that *vos* here is interchangeable with the possessive carried by the preposition *fun*, both marking attribution.⁹

Demonstrative adverbs, such as *do* ‘here’ and *dortn* ‘there,’ when serving as postmodifiers, may appear without introductory *vos*. All examples come from Mendele’s first novel *Dos kleyne mentshele* (1864).

(11)
ALE DO in shtub hobn zikh lib gehat, hobn gehat gute
 all here in house have REFL love had have had good
hofenungen oyf shpeter,
 hopes on later
un mit der hofenung gelebt dervayl zeyer gliklekh.
 and with this hope lived meanwhile very happily
 ‘Everyone here at home loved each other, had good hopes for the
 future, and with that hope lived very happily meanwhile.’
 (Mendele Moykher-Sforim 1913: 148)

9 For the history of the term and its equivalents see Goldenberg 1998: 46f.

(12)

di hakhnoses fun DI KLEYTN DORT un a teyl protsent funem
 the revenues from the shops there and a part percent from+the
kapital, vos ikh loz iber oyf oylomes, zoln geyn oyf
 capital what I leave over on endowment shall go on to
oystsuhaltn di beyde shuln.
 maintain the both synagogues
 ‘The revenues of the shops there and some percentage of the capital
 that I leave as an endowment shall be used to sustain the two syna-
 gogues.’
 (Mendele Moykher-Sforim 1913: 129)

(13)

Leyzer iz geven farrekhnt in Bezlyudev far eynem fun di beste
 Leyzer is been considered in Bezludyev for one from the best
shnayder, vos neyen nokh zhurnaln, UN DER ARENDAR DORT iz geven
 tailors what sew after journals and the lease holder there is been
eyner fun di greste negidim,
 one from the greatest rich-PL
 ‘In Bezludyev Leyzer was considered one of the best tailors, those
 who sew from magazine patterns, and the tenant farmer there was
 one of the wealthiest men.’
 (Mendele Moykher-Sforim 1913: 33f)

(14)

di VAYBER DORT in der vaybersher shul hobn zikh shtark
 the women there in the womens’ synagogue have REFL strong
dershrokn un in eyn otem geton a geshrey: oy, es brent!...
 scared and in one breath done a shout oy it burns
 ‘The women there in the women’s section of the synagogue were
 very frightened and shouted in one voice: “Oy, fire!...”’
 (Mendele Moykher-Sforim 1913: 40)

C. vos + Prepositional Phrase

Prepositional phrases (without *vos*) regularly serve as postmodi-
 fiers in Yiddish, as they do in German (as well as in Slavic languages
 and Hebrew). For example, *Deryid fun Bavl* ‘The Jew from Babylon’ (ti-
 tle of a story by Isaac Bashevis Singer), *A mentsh fun Buenos-ayres* ‘A
 Man from Buenos Aires’ (title of a story by Sholem Aleichem), *Di froy*
mitn ponim fun a tsveyter ‘The Woman with the Face of Another’ (title
 of a story by Avrom Sutzkever). Beside these, however, we also have
 equivalent PPs preceded by *vos*, which raises two questions: 1. Is there a

functional or semantic difference between the two? and 2. What are the rules of distribution of the two patterns?

In order to examine these questions, let us look at the following pairs of examples:

(15)

– *vifl, meynt ir, veln mir do khapn? – fregt a vaybl a rabetine*
 how much think you will we here catch asks a woman a freckly

BAY A [sic!] ANDERN VAYBL MIT A FOYGELSH PONIM, UN BEYDE

by an other woman with a bird-ADJ face and both

KATSHEN GESHMAK.

roll heartily

– *ikh rekhn tsu fertelekh, – entfert ir DOS ANDERE VAYBL VOS*

I reckon to quarters answers her the other woman what

MIT'N FOYGELSH PONIM.

with+the bird-ADJ face

– *far vos nit tsu halbe kerblekh? – zogt dos ershte vaybl, di rabetine.*

for what not to half-PL rubles says the first woman the freckly

– *meshuge vet zi vern? tseteyln nayn kerblekh? – zogt YENE*

crazy will she become distribute nine rubles says that-F

VOS MIT'N FOYGELSH PONIM.

what with+the bird+ADJ face

– *far vos nit? krank iz zi? – zogt di rabetine.*

for what not sick is she says the freckly

– *loz zi zayn krank far mir un far ale yidn! – zogt DI VOS*

let she be sick for me-D and for all Jews says this-F what

MIT'N FOYGELSH PONIM un tselakht zikh.

with+the bird-ADJ face and laughs REFL

“How much, d’you figure, will we get?” a young freckly woman asks another woman with a birdlike face, and both go on rolling [the dough] with gusto.

“I reckon a quarter each,” replies the other young woman with the birdlike face.

“Why not half a ruble each?” says the first woman, the freckly one.

“Do you think she’ll go mad? Mete out nine rubles?” says the one with the birdlike face.

“Why not? Is she too sick to afford it?” says the freckly one.

“May she be sick for me and for all Jews!” says the one with the birdlike face and bursts out laughing.’

(Sholem Aleichem 1937f: 78)

(16)

tsum ershtn mol oyf zayn lebn hot undzer held derzen azoy fil

to+the first time on his life has our hero glimpsed so many

mentshn in shvartse frakn mit groyse portfel'n. ... ale loyfn mit
 people in black tail-coats with large briefcases all run with
portfel'n, der aher, der ahin, vi di meshugoim. eynem, A MAN
 briefcases this hither that thither as the madmen one-ACC a man
on a shvartsn frak, nor MIT A GROYSN GELN PORTFEL un mit
 without a black tailcoat but with a large yellow briefcase and with
zeyer a simpatish ponim, hot er gevagt optsushteln un a freg ton:
 very a pleasant face has he dared to-stop and an ask do
"vu iz do kupernik?" hot er bakumen funem man an entfer:
 where is here Kupernik? has he received from+the man an answer
"tsu vos darft ir kupernikn?"
 to what need you Kupernik

[...] *er derzet DEM MAN, VOS MITN GELN PORTFEL.*

he spots the man what with+the yellow briefcase
 'For the first time in his life did our hero see so many people in black
 tail coats with large briefcases. Everyone is running with a briefcase,
 one in this direction, one in the other, like madmen. One guy, with-
 out a black tailcoat, but with a large yellow briefcase, he did dare to
 stop and ask: "Where is Kupernik here?" and got from the man the
 answer: "What do you need Kupernik for?"

[...] He spots the man with the yellow briefcase.'

(Sholem Aleichem 1937d: 247)

(17)

epes eyner A PORITSL MIT BLOYE BRILN krint ir iber un zogt
 some one a dandy with blue glasses grimaces over her and says
ir nokh mitn eygenem nign: Mot! Mot!...

her after with+the same melody Motl Motl

er tsit zikh oys, vi lang er iz, un ruft zikh on TSUM PORITSL,
 he draws REFL out as long he is and calls REFL on to+the dandy

VOS MIT DI BLOYE BRILN

what with+the blue glasses

'Some dandy with blue glasses mimics her and repeats after her with
 the same melody: „Motl, Motl!...“ He stretches to his full length and
 answers the dandy with the blue glasses'

(Sholem Aleichem 1937b: 171)

In all these pairs we encounter first a PP as postmodifier in an indefinite noun phrase, followed by a second occurrence of the same PP, this time in a definite NP. The rule to be derived from these examples is:

The head noun and the PP agree in definiteness: the head of the PP is indefinite when the head of the whole NP is indefinite, and definite when the head of the whole NP is definite.

The possible variants are thus the following:

*a yid (*vos) mit a (/ *der) bord* ‘a Jew with a beard’ – ‘a bearded Jew,’
*der yid vos / ø mit der (/ *a) bord* ‘the Jew with the beard’ – ‘the
 bearded Jew.’

The relativizing *vos* introducing the PP may thus appear only in a definite NP. We will, however, see further on that its appearance is optional.

We observe an apparent deviation from the definiteness alignment principle in cases where the head is an indefinite pronoun modified by a definite PP with the preposition *fun* ‘from,’ which in Yiddish has also assumed the partitive function previously carried by the obsolete genitive, e. g., *eyner fun di negidim* ‘one of the rich.’ This deviation is apparent only since the NP as a whole is indefinite. In such cases, however, a further modifying PP, indefinite, in agreement with its head, may be introduced by *vos*. Thus in Mendele’s first novel we find the two following examples:

(18)
 – *far vayber sforim!* – *tut a shmeykhl EYNER FUN DI NEGIDIM, vos*
 for women books does a smile one from the rich-PL what
mit a farkrimte esik-zoyere tsure.
 with a slanted vinegar-sour face
 “‘Holy books for women!’ smiles one of the rich, the one with a sour
 face like vinegar.’
 (Mendele Moykher-Sforim 1910: 76)

(19)
 – *nishkoshe, reb Fayvish, s’iz far aykh, meyn ikh, nokh oykh genug*
 not-hard R. Fayvish it is for you think I still also enough
ibergeblibn – treyst im mit a biter shmeykhele EYNER FUN DI
 remained comforts him with a bitter smile one from the
NEGIDIM, vos mit A farkrimte, esik-zoyere tsure.
 rich-PL what with a slanted vinegar sour face
 “‘Take it easy, R. Fayvish, there remains, I think, enough for you too,’
 one of the rich, the one with a sour face like vinegar, comforts him.’
 (Mendele Moykher-Sforim 1910: 81)

The presence of *vos* before a definite PP, as has been said, is permissible, not obligatory. Thus, comparing the two great classics, Sholem Aleichem and Mendele, we observe that the former is consistent in preceding definite PPs with *vos*, whereas the latter is not. This could reflect dialectal differences. Compare the following examples:

Sholem Aleichem:

(20)

*“ot-o YENER, zogt zi, vos MITN HEMDL, der iz gor a tatns a kind;
here that says she what with-the shirt this is all a dad’s a child
er hot, zogt zi, avekgevorf’n raykhe tate-mame in Yehupets,
he has says she thrown-away rich-PL dad-mom in Yehupets
vil nisht nemen bay zey keyn tsebrokhenem groshn.”
wants not take by them NEG-ART. broken-ACC penny
‘That one over there, she says, the one with the shirt, is, would you
believe it, a child of a good family, has left his parents and does not
want to take from them even a broken penny.’*

(Sholem Aleichem 1937a: 109)

As against Mendele:

Indefinite PP:

(21)

*trog’t der ruekh on a YUNGE ORLTE, a mekhoyeres, MIT A TEPL
brings the devil on a young gentile-F a ugly-F with a pot
PILINITSES, dos beste lakette mayns.
strawberries the best treat mine-NEUT
‘Then the devil brings on a young gentile woman, a beauty, with a
pot of strawberries, my favorite treat.’*

(Mendele Moykher-Sforim 1953: 19)

Definite PP without vos:

(22)

*YENE MIT DEM TEPL pilinitses, gib ikh a blik, iz shoyn nishto,
that with-the-D pot strawberries give I a look is already not-here
vi oysgetriknt gevorn.
as drained become
‘The one with the pot of strawberries, I notice, is gone, as if evaporat-
ed.’*

(Mendele Moykher-Sforim 1953: 20)

Indefinite PP:

(23)

*in shtub dreyt zikh arum a dike, a breyte, A HOREPASHNE MOYD MIT
in house turns REFL around a fat a broad a toiling maiden with*

A POR BAKN vi di pampeshkes; oyfn kop zeyer veynik hor un
 a pair cheeks as the doughnuts on-the head very little hair and
tsvey kleyne tsepelekh fun hintn.
 two small pigtales from behind
 ‘In the house there hangs around a fat, broad, toiling maiden with a
 pair of cheeks like doughnuts; very little hair on her head and two
 small pigtales in the back.’
 (Mendele Moykher-Sforim 1953: 54)

Definite PP without vos:

(24)
dervayl rukt zikh arayn YENE BREYTE MOYD MIT DI
 meanwhile slides REFL into that-F broad maiden with the
PAMPESHKES, oysgeputst shabesdik, un zetst zikh oykh tsum tish.
 doughnuts dressed up festive and seats REFL also to+the table
 ‘Meanwhile that young broad maiden with the doughnuts, all
 dressed up festively, slides in too and sits down at the table.’
 (Mendele Moykher-Sforim 1953: 54)

The distinction of definiteness cuts across that of attribution / predication. Thus a prepositional phrase following an indefinite DET is not necessarily attributive. Compare the following pair of examples:

(25)
ikh hoyb on gut ayntsukukn zikh in di tsvey nefashes: nekeyves;
 I heave on good look-into REFL in the two creatures females
EYNE AN ELTERE MIT A ZAYDN TIKHL oyfn kop, di andere
 one-F an older with a silken kerchief on+the head the other-F
A YINGERE MIT A PARIK.
 a younger-F with a wig
 ‘I start having a good look at the two persons: females, one of them
 older, with a silk headscarf, the other a younger one with a wig.’
 (Sholem Aleichem 1937a: 21)

Here the PP stands in apposition to a predicative ADJP and is to be considered predicative as well.

A few pages afterwards, the same PP appears as modifier following a definite DET head, with definiteness marked on the preposition. Here again we encounter the optional preceding vos:

(26)

ruft zikh on tsu mir di gvirte, YENE VOS MITN
 calls REFL on to me-D the rich-woman that-F what with+the
 ZAYDN TIKHL: ...
 silken kerchief
 'Then the rich woman, the one with the silk headscarf, says to me in
 reply: ...'

D. vos + quotation

A special variety of postmodifier introduced by vos consists of a quotation integrated into the NP. This seems to be an innovative pattern in Yiddish, since, unlike the examples of the previous paragraphs, which have equivalents in Slavic,¹⁰ to the best of my knowledge it is not attested in the co-territorial Slavic languages. Nor was I able to find equivalents in other, unrelated languages.

Compare the following pair of examples, in which the first carries the quotation proper as an independent utterance, ergo as a predicate, whereas the second has it embedded as a modifier into a NP.

(27)

nisht gut tsu zayn A BEN-YOKHID, a tsiteriger bay tate-mame. "FUN not good to be a son only a trembling by dad-mom from ZIBN EYNER GEBLIBN". do – nisht shtey, dort – nisht gey. dos – nisht es, seven one left here not stand there not go. this not eat yens – nisht trink. that not drink
 'It's not good to be an only child, trembled over by Mom and Dad. "From seven one remained" [so they always say]. Don't stand here, don't go there. Don't eat this, don't drink that.'
 (Sholem Aleichem 1937e: 119)

(28)

nisht gut tsu zayn a ben yokhid, a tsiteriger, VOS FUN ZIBN EYNER not good to be a son only a trembling what from seven one GEBLIBN. remained
 'It's not good to be an only child, an over-protected one, the only one left of seven.'
 (Sholem Aleichem 1937e: 120)

¹⁰ See below, fn. 11.

In the following pair of examples, the first carries the quotation as part of the predicate, whereas the second has it embedded as an attributive modifier into a NP.

(29)
er hot gekoyft a bukh far a rubl. DOS BUKH HEYST "FAR A RUBL
 he has bought a book for a ruble the book is-called for a ruble
HUNDERT!" er zitst un lernit im oyfyoysnvenik.
 hundred he sits and learns it on outside
 'He has bought a book for a ruble. The book is called *For a Ruble a*
Hundred Rubles! He sits and learns it by heart.'
 (Sholem Aleichem 1937b: 107)

(30)
az dos fesl iz gevorn ongefilt hekher halb, hot mayn bruder elye
 as the barrel is become filled-up higher half has my brother Elye
a zog geton: "genug!" un hot zikh genumen TSUM BUKH, VOS "FAR A
 a say done enough and has REFL taken to+the book what for a
RUBL – HUNDERT."
 ruble hundred
 'When the barrel was over half filled-up, my brother Elye said:
 "Enough!" and turned to consult the book called *For a Ruble – a*
Hundred Rubles.'
 (Sholem Aleichem 1937b: 109)

To sum up, the examples show the degree of grammaticalization of the interrogative pronoun *vos* in Yiddish, which by far exceeds what we find in German. Some of these developments are clearly related to the influence of the Slavic co-territorial languages,¹¹ but there is also

¹¹ Thus, modifiers consisting of PPs are introduced by *co* 'what' in Polish, *що* *schcho* 'what' in Ukrainian, and *што* *shto* 'what' in Belorussian. Here are some samples adduced from the Internet:

Polish:

Szopka świąteczna, czyli życzenia dla tych, CO NA szczycie

'Christmas nativity scene, or wishes for those at the top'

http://www.wiadomosci24.pl/artykul/szopka_swiateczna_czyli_zyczenia_dla_tych_co_na_szczycie_53264.html

Po tym poszliśmy do mesy oficerskiej i wznieśliśmy toast za panią porucznik i za tych, CO NA morzu!

'After that we went to the Officers' Mess and raised a toast to Mrs. Lieutenant and to those (who are) at sea!'

<http://kobiety-kobietom.com/opowiadania/art.php?art=762>

an important amount of originality in Yiddish, enlarging its range of functions and turning *vos* into a ‘universal’ marker of attributive status, equivalent to the status of *az* as ‘universal’ complementizer,¹² the kind of originality that makes the study of Yiddish grammar so attractive and rewarding to linguists.

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– 1937d: *Funem yarid*. Tsveyter teyl. In: *Ale verk*. Vol. 16. New York: Morgn-frayhayt.

Ukrainian:

Убито директора черкаського ринку, що на вул. Седова

‘Director of Circassian Market on Sedov Street Murdered’

<http://pres-centr.ck.ua/forum3/viewtopic.php?t=954>

Їх привезли із села Новосілки, що у Золочівському районі.

‘They were brought from the village Novosilky in the Zolochiv region.’

http://ukrainainkognita.org.ua/Ukr/Istoryko-kultur/zolochiv&zamok/zamok_ukr.htm

Belorussian:

Сёння, 28 жніўня, у кнігарні «Кніжныя крыніцы», што на вул. Бузкавай 2 у Львове, адкрылася фотавыстава «Знішчаныя і забытыя львоўскія кнігарні».

‘Today, August 28, [a photo exhibition “Destroyed and Forgotten Lviv Bookstores”—either: “the photo exhibition...” or “a photo exhibition, ‘Destroyed and Forgotten Lviv Bookstores,’”] opened at the bookstore «Book Sources» at 21, Buzkov Street, Lviv.’

<http://89.161.195.80/node/3662>

Хоць прырода амаль тая самая, што ў Літве, [...] ёсьць у Беларусі атракцыі, нязнаныя постсацыялістычным смаркачам.

‘Although the nature is almost the same as in Lithuania, [...] there are in Belarus attractions unknown to the post-Socialist snotty-nosed upstarts.’

<http://89.161.195.80/hachu-na-narach>

¹² Cf. Mark 1978: 93–95.

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