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## Multiple Questions In And About Yiddish

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1. Multiple Questions: A First Glance

As outlined above, multiple questions in Southeastern Yiddish can take multiple forms. The first option consists of fronting of a single *wh*-phrase:

- (1) a. *ver vet vuhin geyn mit aykch?*  
who will where go with you?  
‘Who will go where with you?’
- b. *ver hot vos gekoyft?*  
who has what bought  
‘Who bought what?’
- c. *ver geyt vuhin?*  
who goes where  
‘Who is going where?’

One fact worth noting here is that object *wh*-in-situ appears to the left of the main verb, despite the fact that the normal VP order is VO. While I will not deal with this fact in detail here, a possible explanation lies in the fact that Yiddish has a preverbal focus position (Diesing 1997), which can (and even must) host in-situ *wh*.

The second question strategy involves multiple fronting of the *wh*-phrases:<sup>2</sup>

- (2) a. *ver vuhin vet geyn mit aykch?*  
who where will go with you  
‘Who will go where with you?’
  - b. *ver vos hot gekoyft?*  
who what has bought  
‘Who bought what?’
  - c. *ver vuhin geyt?*  
who where goes  
‘Who is going where?’
- (Zaretski 1929)

To the best of my knowledge, in these examples the two orders are synonymous. Thus, it appears that the multiple fronting possibility is truly optional; neither option is associated with any special meaning. In particular, the *wh*-in-situ in the single fronting cases need not be D-linked (in the sense of Pesetsky

<sup>2</sup> Hoge (2000) reports three dialect variants with respect to multiple fronting:

- 1. multiple fronting is possible, but not obligatory in both direct and indirect questions.
  - 2. multiple fronting is only possible in indirect questions
  - 3. multiple fronting is not possible at all
- The speakers I have worked with have been mainly of type 1, one consultant was of type 2.

Multiple Questions In And About Yiddish<sup>1</sup>

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Multiple questions in Yiddish can be formed by fronting either a single *wh*-phrase, or by multiple fronting, in which all the *wh*-phrases are fronted (Hoge 2000). The two types of questions are semantically identical, but differ in their syntactic behavior. Multiple fronting questions show superiority effects, while their single fronting counterparts do not. There are some surprising restrictions on multiple fronting in Yiddish: “inherently D-linked” *Wh*-phrases (such as “which N”, “whose N”) and adverbial adjuncts (such as “why” and “how”) are only grammatical in single-fronting questions; they cannot occur in multiple fronting constructions. In this paper I derive both of these properties of multiple fronting questions from a requirement that movement to a [+multiple] C-Spec in Yiddish must be from an argument position. Finally, I discuss how Reinhart’s (1998) theory of *wh*-in-situ can be applied to Yiddish.

1. Introduction

Yiddish stands out among the Germanic languages in that it allows two options for multiple questions: multiple fronting (as in Slavic languages like Bulgarian) and single fronting (as in English and German). These two strategies for question formation do differ in their syntactic properties, most notably with regard to the “Superiority Effect”. In this paper I argue that the syntactic contrast between the two types of questions are explainable under a somewhat different view of superiority than is usually assumed in the literature. On the semantic side of the fence, the two forms of multiple questions may also provide evidence against LF movement of *wh*-phrases, and thereby lend support to an analysis along the lines Reinhart’s (1998) treatment of *wh*-in-situ using choice functions.

This paper began as data collected in the process of writing Diesing (1990). In writing that paper I ultimately set the matter of multiple questions aside, where it remained until I read Kerstin Hoge’s dissertation (Hoge 2000), which contained data which confirmed the data I had collected years earlier, and persuaded me it was time to take another look. In addition to Kerstin Hoge (who not only wrote a dissertation with a chapter on Yiddish multiple questions, but has since corresponded with me about data and analysis), I’d like to thank Chris Collins and Zoltán Gendler Szabó for helpful discussion and suggestions. Thanks are also due to Lisa Matthewson, Angelika Krautzer and the other organizers of the SULA conference, as well as to the conference audience for their reactions and comments. I’d also like to express my gratitude to my consultants Aaron Lerner, Rose Rosen, and Harry Zuckerman (sadly, all now deceased) for all the help they gave me fourteen years ago. Finally, this paper represents work that is very much “in progress”, and as such certainly raises more questions than it answers - stay tuned!

1987). This observation contrasts with what has been claimed for multiple fronting languages like Bulgarian (Pesetsky 2000), in which the in-situ option is restricted to D-linked wh-phrases.

The following examples demonstrate that multiple fronting also occurs in embedded questions:

- (3) a. hot zi ni(sh)t gekent farshteyn [ver es shlogt zikh mit vemen]  
has she not been-able understand who EXP hits self with whom
- b. hot zi ni(sh)t gekent farshteyn [ver mit vemen es shlogt zikh]  
has she not been-able understand who with whom EXP hits self  
“(So) she couldn’t understand who was fighting with whom.”  
(Jacobs et. al. 1994, p. 414)
- c. Lomir geyn, ver vuhin es geyt.  
let’s go who where EXP goes  
“Let’s go where(ever) who(ever) is going.”  
(Zaretski, 1929)

The expletive is required when the subject is extracted in an embedded question, leaving a gap in the subject position (Birbaum 1978, Travis 1984, Diesing 1990). It does not appear if a non-subject has been topicalized:

- (4) zi iz gekumen zen [ver frier vet kontshen]  
she is come see who earlier will finish  
“She has come to see who would finish earlier.”  
(Diesing 1990, p. 50)

The appearance of the expletive in these cases shows that the multiply-fronted wh-phrases are not adjoined to IP, as Rudin (1988) has argued for Polish, but rather are higher up, at CP level, as in Bulgarian. Consistent with this conclusion, the fronted wh-phrases form a unit which can’t be broken up (i.e. by a parenthetical), a property which it shares with Bulgarian:

- (5) \*ver, nokh dayn meynung, vuhin vet geyn?  
who after your opinion where will go

Thus, it is clear that Yiddish does genuinely display a form of multiple fronting as an option in multiple questions. There are cases where the multiple fronting is not possible, and before proceeding to the discussion of superiority effects in Yiddish multiple questions, in the next section I present these constraints on multiple fronting.

## 2. What Fronts, What Doesn’t

Not all wh-phrases can appear in multiple fronting constructions in Yiddish. As noted by Hoge (2000) “inherently D-linked” Wh-phrases (such as “which N”, “whose N”, as discussed in Comorovski 1996) are only grammatical in single-fronting questions:

- (6) a. voser farshlog hot ver kritikiert?  
which proposal has who criticized  
“Who criticized which proposal?”

(Hoge 2000, p. 216)

- b. \*voser farshlog hot kritikiert?  
who which proposal has criticized

- c. \*voser farshlog ver hot kritikiert?  
which proposal who has criticized

- (7) a. vemens hitl hot ver avekgeganvet?  
whose hat has who away-stolen  
“Who stole whose cap?”

- b. \*ver vemens hitl hot avekgeganvet?  
who whose hat has away-stolen

- c. \*vemens hitl ver hot avekgeganvet?  
whose hat who has away-stolen

At first blush, this may not seem so terribly surprising, since in some multiple fronting languages there is at least a preference for leaving D-linked wh-phrases in-situ (Pesetsky 1987, fn. 32). But these examples (in Polish and Romanian) all involve two D-linked wh-phrases. As far as I know, the Yiddish restriction is the only such case which applies to a single D-linked wh-phrase.<sup>3</sup>

A second restriction on multiple fronting involves adjuncts. Certain adjuncts – namely “why” and “how” – cannot front in a multiple fronting question, but do front in single fronting constructions (with blatant disregard for superiority).<sup>4</sup>

- (8) a. vi azoy hot ver gezungen?  
how has who sung  
“Who sang how?”

<sup>3</sup> At the SULA conference Irene Heim raised the question of whether this is in fact an effect of D-linking, or whether perhaps “heaviness” may in fact be at stake. Testing heavier wh-phrases which are not clearly D-linked yields somewhat unclear results: multiple fronting constructions containing wh-phrases such as *vifl bikhter* “how many books” were accepted by some speakers, while wh-phrases such as *vos far bikhter* “what kind of books” were less acceptable. Interestingly, one speaker had the exact opposite judgments. In any case, the clearest cases of ungrammaticality are those involving D-linked wh-phrases.

<sup>4</sup> This may also be true of Bulgarian (see Rudin 1988, fn. 21), though there is contradictory evidence on this point (see e.g. Bošković 1998, Grewendorf 2001, fn. 4).

Likewise, no superiority effects are seen in interactions between object wh-phrases with wh-adverbials.

- (11) a. vos hot Maks vi azoy/farvos geshpilt?  
 what has Max how/why played (Hoge 2000)  
 b. vi azoy/farvos hot Maks vos geshpilt?  
 how/why has Max what played  
 "How/why did Max play what?"

Nor does a superiority effect arise in multiple questions involving a subject wh-phrase and a wh-adverbial:

- (12) a. ver hot vi azoy/farvos geshpilt pyane?  
 who has how/why played piano  
 b. vi azoy/farvos hot ver geshpilt pyane?  
 how/why has who played piano  
 "Who played the piano how/why?"

This absence of superiority effects is not limited to the cases which might be reduced to ECP effects. No "pure" superiority effects are seen either.

- (13) a. vemen hot der lerer f vos geheysn leyenen?  
 whom has the teacher what ordered read  
 b. vos hot der lerer vemen geheysn leyenen f?  
 what has the teacher whom ordered read  
 "Who did the teacher tell to read what?"

Questions involving multiple fronting show an entirely different pattern. Namely, superiority effects do arise with multiple fronting. Again, multiple fronting in Yiddish appears to behave like Bulgarian in this respect.<sup>5</sup> Thus, we see that while the subject wh-phrase can precede the direct object wh-phrase in the initial cluster of wh-phrases, the reverse order is strongly ungrammatical:

- (14) a. ver vos hot gekoyft?  
 who what has bought  
 "Who bought what?"

<sup>5</sup> Yiddish wh-movement does obey islands, unlike Bulgarian. This means that Yiddish doesn't fit neatly into Rudin's (1988) typology. While this classification of multiple fronting languages has served as a guide for a number of researchers (such as Richards 1997), Yiddish is not the only multiple fronting language with a poor fit - see for example Golden (1995) on Slovene.

- b. ver hot vi azoy gezungen?  
 who has how sung  
 "Who sang how?"

- c. \*ver vi azoy hot gezungen?  
 who how has sung  
 d. \*vi azoy ver hot gezungen?  
 how who has sung

- (9) a. farvos hot ver ongekungen der mamen?  
 why has who called the mother  
 "Who called the mother why?"

- b. ver hot farvos ongekungen der mamen?  
 who has why called the mother?  
 "Who called the mother why?"

- c. \*ver farvos hot ongekungen der mamen?  
 who why has called the mother

- d. \*farvos ver hot ongekungen der mamen?  
 why who has called the mother

This fact does appear rather surprising, since the adjuncts "why" and "how" resist being left in-situ in multiple questions in certain other languages, such as English (see Reinhart 1998, Hornstein 1995, among others). This fact will be discussed further below in Section 6.

### 3. More On Superiority

The two types of multiple questions show rather different behavior with respect to superiority. Multiple questions formed by fronting a single wh-phrase do not show superiority effects, patterning in this regard like German (Haider 1986). Extracting a subject over an object is grammatical (as is the reverse pattern):

- (10) a. ver hot vos gekoyft?  
 who has what bought  
 b. vos hot ver gekoyft?  
 what has who bought  
 "Who bought what?"

- (16) a. vemen vos hot Maks gegebn?  
 whom what has Max given  
 "What did Max give (to) whom?"  
 b. \*vos vemen hot Maks gegebn?  
 what whom has Max given

Summarizing the data presented so far, Yiddish has both single and multiple wh-fronting in both main and embedded clauses. The appearance of a subject expletive in embedded questions involving subject extractions makes it clear that the multiply fronted wh-phrases are in SpecCP - or at least some position higher than topics. Multiple fronting is also restricted in that not all wh-phrases are able to appear in multiple fronting questions. Specifically, the wh-adverbials *vi azoy* "how" and *farvos* "why" and inherently D-linked wh-phrases cannot occur in multiple-fronting constructions. Multiple fronting questions are also distinguished syntactically from single fronting questions in that they show superiority effects, while single fronting questions do not. Finally, it is important to note that D-linking does not override superiority in multiple fronting constructions (as it has been shown to do in other languages, see Pesetsky 1987), since D-linked wh-phrases are not even allowed in these cases.

4. Superiority Syntax

In this section I attempt to explain the peculiar behavior with respect to superiority displayed by Yiddish multiple questions. The data presented in the previous section poses a number of puzzles, which I will address in turn. The first of these is: Why does Yiddish show superiority effects only with multiple fronting? In tackling this question, I will assume without argument that superiority effects in wh-questions are a manifestation of the "Attract Closest" condition (Chomsky 1995) which applies to phrasal movement more generally.<sup>7</sup>

- (17) Attract Closest:  $\alpha$  can attract K only if there is no legitimate operation Move  $\beta$  targeting K, where  $\beta$  is closer to K.

As far as the specific mechanics of multiple fronting (and multiple specifiers more generally) are concerned, I follow Richards (1997) in deriving multiple-fronting through a "tucking-in" operation. For example, in a multiple question involving a subject wh-phrase, the subject wh-phrase is the one closest to CP, therefore, as required by Attract Closest, it moves first. The remaining wh-phrase(s) move afterwards and "tuck-in" under the first-moved wh-phrase, leaving the subject wh-phrase highest in the tree.<sup>8</sup> Applied to the Yiddish example, the "Attract Closest" approach appears

<sup>7</sup>Conversations with Chris Collins were instrumental in shaping my thoughts regarding this section.

<sup>8</sup>This is not to suggest that this matter is entirely uncontroversial. See for example Hornstein (1995), Reinhart (1998), Hoge (2000) and Grewendorf (2001) for consideration of alternative accounts of superiority.

<sup>9</sup>Richards also notes a "Minimal Compliance" effect with superiority, in that superiority only needs to be satisfied by the first wh-phrase moved. Subsequent wh-phrases may move in any order. Testing

- b. \*vos ver hot gekoyft?  
 what who has bought  
 c. ikh veys nit ver vos es hot gekoyft.  
 I know not who what ES has bought.  
 "I don't know who bought what."  
 d. \*ikh veys nit ver es hot gekoyft.  
 I know not what who ES has bought.

Similar effects are seen in questions involving a subject and an indirect object, regardless of whether the indirect object was marked simply with the dative case (a-b examples), or with a preposition (c-d examples):

- (15) a. vemen hot gegebn khanike-gelt?  
 who whom has given Hanukkah-money  
 "Who gave whom Hanukkah money?" (Hoge 2000)  
 b. \*vemen ver hot gegebn khanike-gelt?  
 whom who has given Hanukkah-money  
 c. ver tsu vemen hot geshikt leshonetoyves?  
 who to whom has sent Rosh Hashanah cards  
 "Who sent Rosh Hashanah cards to whom?"  
 d. \*tsu vemen ver hot geshikt leshonetoyves?  
 to whom who has sent Rosh Hashanah cards

Finally, questioning of double objects shows that the indirect object is superior to the direct object.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> In double object constructions where a prepositional indirect object appears, the reverse pattern appears, the direct object is superior to the indirect object:

- (i) a. vos tsu vemen hot Maks geshikt?  
 what to whom has Max sent  
 "What did Max send to whom?"  
 b. \*tsu vemen vos hot Maks geshikt?  
 to whom what has Max sent

- (20) a. \*vos ver hot gekoyft?  
 what who has bought  
 b. \*[<sub>CP</sub> vos<sub>i</sub> ver<sub>j</sub> hot [<sub>i t<sub>j</sub></sub> gekoyft]]

This derivation clearly has to be ruled out, else we would see no superiority effect. If we compare the two derivations globally (comparing the cost of the two derivations side-by-side), it's easy to see that there is a sense in which the "bad" derivation is less economical - it takes more steps. But global economy metrics are notoriously problematic in that they carry a very high computational cost (see Collins 1997 for more detailed arguments against global economy). In any case this attempt at explanation still doesn't tell us why the same measure of economy wouldn't apply to the single-fronting cases.

This then is the real problem: What mechanism will allow scrambling in the single fronting cases, but not in the multiple fronting derivations? On the way to answering this question, I will first consider the issue of what it is that enables multiple fronting in Yiddish in the first place. Here the literature on multiple fronting (and multiple specifiers in general) offers a number of options. One class of explanations utilizes the idea that CPs come in multiple "flavors". In this case Yiddish would be seen as choosing between two types of CPs: one with the feature [+multiple specifiers] and the other bearing the feature [-multiple specifiers] (cf. Richards 1997 and Pesetsky 2000). A second type of explanation follows the work of Luigi Rizzi (for example, Grohmann 2000). Along these lines, we could suppose that the "fine structure" of the Yiddish periphery contains two inflectional heads, one which allows multiple specifiers and the other which doesn't (cf. Rizzi 1997 TopP and FocP). I won't attempt to motivate a systematic choice between these two approaches, and will simply pursue the [+/- multiple specifiers] strategy.

Spelled out in somewhat more detail, Yiddish freely chooses between [+/- multiple] CPs. The choice of a [-multiple] CP allows multiple instances of phrasal movement. This enables multiple fronting of wh-phrases. The [-multiple] CP allows only one wh-phrase to move. The remaining in-situ phrases will check features by either feature movement (as in Chomsky 1995, Chapter 4) or Agree (Chomsky 2000). So far this is just a minor modification of proposals made by David Pesetsky (2000) to account for multiple fronting in Slavic. To derive the Yiddish superiority facts, I add in one additional constraint on [+multiple] CPs:

- (21) In Yiddish, movement to a [+multiple] CP must originate from an A-position.

This constraint has the effect of blocking A-bar scrambling before multiple-wh-movement, thereby "enforcing" superiority. Since [-multiple] CPs are not subject to this constraint, pre-wh-movement scrambling can occur in these cases, yielding the apparent superiority violations.<sup>10</sup> This constraint has an additional desirable effect in that it also prevents adjuncts from participating in multiple fronting constructions, thereby solving the third puzzle which arises in Yiddish multiple fronting constructions,

<sup>10</sup>Essential to this line of explanation is that the focus movement mentioned in Section 1 not be a case of A-bar movement. More research is needed here, but this movement is in fact quite restricted (only one phrase can occupy this focus position), and does not appear to display any of the traditional properties of A-bar movement (see Diesing 1997 for further discussion).

to derive the superiority effect in the multiple fronting cases, but there is still the problem of why superiority effects are not seen with single fronting.

One previous solution to the absence of superiority effects (applied for example, to languages such as German), is to allow the wh-phrases to undergo scrambling prior to wh-movement (perhaps adjoining to VP, or landing in the specifier of an inflectional head, here indicated as ?P), and then move the wh-phrases (or features, in a single-fronting language). Such an account is found in Richards (1997, p. 90 ff.). The scrambling has the effect of bringing a "lower" wh-phrase closer to CP prior to wh-movement, in effect reordering the superiority relations, or even voiding them by rendering the scrambled phrases "equidistant" (but see Hoge 2000 for criticisms of this approach). Since Yiddish does allow scrambling, a solution of this sort might well work for Yiddish single fronting:

- (18) a. vos hot ver gekoyft?  
 what has who bought  
 "What did who buy?"  
 b. [<sub>CP</sub> vos<sub>i</sub> hot [<sub>CP</sub> t<sub>j</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> ver t<sub>j</sub> gekoyft]]

Note that this strategy takes advantage of the fact that scrambling in Yiddish itself does not show superiority effects (Diesing 1997). The end result is that scrambling moves the object wh-phrase to a position where it is now "superior" to the subject wh-phrase, which allows subsequent wh-movement to proceed without a "real" superiority violation. In other words, superiority gets preempted by scrambling.

But it is clear that this proposal is not without problems when applied to the Yiddish facts. The difficulty is that in the multiple fronting cases, we have to block the pre-wh-movement scrambling somehow, so that the superiority effects will surface. One possibility is that there might be some notion of derivational economy that can achieve this. A comparison of two candidate derivations will illustrate how this might work. Consider first the derivation which yields a grammatical result:

- (19) a. ver vos hot gekoyft?  
 who what has bought  
 "Who bought what?"  
 b. [<sub>CP</sub> ver<sub>i</sub> vos<sub>j</sub> hot [<sub>i t<sub>j</sub></sub> gekoyft]]

In this case no scrambling occurs before the wh-phrases are moved to CP; no extraneous operations take place.

Now, the derivation of the illicit order via scrambling would look like this:

-----  
 This effect requires multiple questions involving at least three wh-phrases, and my consultants tended not to like multiple questions with more than two wh-phrases, so I have not been able to determine whether this effect is seen in Yiddish wh-movement.

which is why adjuncts can't appear in multiple fronting constructions. The answer is simply that they don't appear in A-positions, and therefore are not eligible for multiple fronting, given the constraint in (21).

Taking a somewhat more speculative turn, it is possible that the constraint in (21) may also provide an answer to the question of why D-linked wh-phrases cannot participate in multiple fronting constructions. It is known that [+specific] NPs in Yiddish must scramble out of the VP (Diesing 1997). This scrambling has properties of A-bar-movement. If this constraint also applies to D-linked wh-phrases (which have been claimed to be in some sense [+specific], see Kiss 1993 and Comorovski 1996), then the fact that they move to an A-bar position before wh-movement takes place, makes it impossible for them to subsequently move to a [+multiple] C-Spec, given the constraint in (21). It remains to be shown that the "specificity" seen in D-linked wh-phrases is in fact associated with the same sort of scrambling behavior attested in [+specific] non-question noun phrases (as Irene Heim pointed out at the SULA conference, this seems somewhat at odds with the idea of wh-phrases being in focus), so I will leave this at the purely conjectural level.

Here, in a nutshell, is the account of the Yiddish superiority facts. Yiddish allows both [+multiple] and [-multiple] C-Specs. The [+/- multiple] feature has been argued to be the locus of cross-linguistic variation in superiority behavior (Pesetsky 2000). Yiddish displays the option of being able to choose freely between the two types of CP specifiers. Yiddish also allows scrambling of noun phrases; this scrambling (which happens prior to wh-movement) is what enables single fronting wh-questions to apparently evade the effects of superiority. This option is not available in the multiple fronting cases because the [+multiple] CP specifier is subject to an additional restriction in that movement to a [+multiple] C-Spec must be from an A-position, while movement to a [-multiple] C-Spec is unrestricted. This asymmetry between the two types of specifiers in Yiddish is what produces the asymmetric superiority effects.

A consequence of this analysis is that it raises the possibility of a rather different view of superiority in Yiddish multiple-fronting questions. What we see here is that the "superiority effect" seen in these cases appears to boil down to a requirement that the fronted wh-phrases and the A-positions have to be isomorphic - a constraint that is something quite different from the structurally-based "Attract Closest" accounts of superiority. A number of possibilities arise here. The first is that perhaps all superiority effects are simply due to an "A-position isomorphism constraint", which imposes a stricter condition on multiple fronting (resulting in the banning of adjuncts and D-linked wh-phrases). Another is that the constraint on multiple fronting in Yiddish is merely a "pseudo-superiority effect" resulting from the A-position isomorphism constraint, but that "true superiority" (as seen in English multiple questions) does arise from the structural effects of Attract Closest. Yiddish is presumably also subject to the strictures of Attract Closest, but in single-fronting questions this is masked by the intervention of scrambling. Choosing between these possibilities will clearly require further work.

## 6. What Does The Yiddish LF Look Like?

In this section I consider the question of the semantic interpretation of multiple questions in light of the syntactic discussion above. Multiple wh-fronting languages have frequently been described as "wearing their LF on their sleeves" (see for example Kiss 1986, 1992), in that the overt syntax produces what presumably is structurally equivalent to the LF of a single fronting language (with the implication that these languages undergo some form of corresponding multiple-fronting at LF, see

Pesetsky 2000 for an overview of the possibilities). If this view of the relationship between multiple fronting and single fronting languages is correct, Yiddish expresses both options: the flaunting of LF with overt multiple fronting, and the more abstract and concealed LF seen in single fronting. But are Yiddish multiple-fronting questions simply "LF laid bare"? In other words, do the single fronting multiple questions in Yiddish undergo a subsequent LF fronting of the in-situ wh-phrases? If this were all that needed to be said, we wouldn't expect any difference in superiority effects between the multiple and single fronting options - the latter ought to show superiority effects at LF. While it has been observed that LF movement is immune to islands, I know of no such claim regarding superiority at LF; indeed, the observation that superiority effects are seen at LF is one of the traditional arguments for LF movement. Thus, we must conclude (contra Kiss 1986, 1992, among others) that multiple fronting in Yiddish is not simply "visible LF movement", as the two types of multiple questions have different (syntactic) properties. In the case of Yiddish, oddly enough, multiple fronting might even be construed as an argument against the LF movement of wh-in-situ, since the two options for question formation do not show sufficient syntactic parallels.

I turn now to the matter of what the implications are for the interpretation of multiple questions. The discussion above implies that the existence of the two syntactic strategies for multiple questions means that Yiddish must construct two possible types of LFs for wh-questions. One way of doing this would be to follow ideas in Reinhart (1998) concerning the interpretation of wh-in-situ. Before outlining the picture for Yiddish, I will briefly review the relevant features of Reinhart's results. Reinhart starts from the minimalist viewpoint, assuming that LF movement of in situ wh-phrases is in fact ruled out by economy (that is, generalized pied-piping occurs only when it is "audible" in the output, Chomsky 1995, p. 265). The end result is that syntactic wh-in-situ must also be interpreted in situ in some fashion. Thus, in an example involving two wh-phrases in a single fronting language like English, the scope of the in situ wh-phrase must be assigned without movement, either by some sort of "absorption" process (Chomsky 1995, Chapter 3) or a version of "unselective binding" (Pesetsky 1987).<sup>11</sup> Reinhart illustrates the in situ interpretation as follows:

(22) a. Who bought which book.

b. for which  $\langle x, y \rangle$ , x bought y and book y (Reinhart 1998, (9))

What is essential to note here is that the restriction on the variable y remains unmoved, and is bound by the existential quantifier nonetheless. Reinhart argues that this leads to a serious problem of interpretation in sentences such as:

(23) Who will be offended if we invite which philosopher?

In this case, the unmoved wh-phrase occurs in an *if*-clause. Reinhart gives the resulting logical form as:

<sup>11</sup> References to unselective binding in this context often compare it to the interpretation procedure in Heim (1982). Presumably what it meant here is Heim's analysis in her Chapter 2, but this is substantially different from what Pesetsky and others seem to mean by "unselective binding" in that LF movement (in the form of the NP-Prefixing operation) is crucially involved.

longer in an argument position and cannot serve as an argument of the form *f(person)*, unless it is reconstructed. The moved *wh*-phrase is simply interpreted as an existential quantifier, resulting in a heterogeneous interpretation for multiple questions - the two *wh*-phrases are interpreted by different mechanisms.

Turning back to Yiddish, the interpretation of the multiple fronting questions turns out to be quite straightforward. Since all of the *wh*-phrases do in fact front in the syntax, they can be simply interpreted "as is", as quantifiers. There is no LF movement necessary, and since no restrictions are left in situ, Reinhart's Donald Duck problem doesn't arise.

- (26) a. *ver vos hot gekoyft?*  
who what has bought  
What did who buy?
- b. for which  $\langle x, y \rangle$ , (person (*x*) and thing (*y*)), (*x* bought *y*)
- c.  $\{ \exists x \exists y (\text{person}(x) \text{ and } \text{thing}(y)) \ \& \ P = \lambda (x \text{ bought } y) \ \& \ \text{true}(P) \}$

In the case of the multiple questions involving syntactic fronting of a single *wh*-phrase, the moved *wh*-phrase is interpreted as an existential quantifier, as in the English examples. The remaining *wh*-in-situ is interpreted with a choice function, in the manner outlined by Reinhart. Here again there is no LF movement. Consequently there is also no worry about the superiority effect arising at LF either. Thus, for both of the possible forms of a double question, both orders receive a well-formed interpretation:

- (27) a. *vos hot ver gekoyft?*  
what has who bought  
"What did who buy?"
- b. for which  $\langle x, f \rangle$ , ((thing(*x*)) and (*f*(person) bought *x*))
- c.  $\{ \exists x \langle x, f \rangle, (\text{CH}(f) \text{ and } \text{thing}(x)) \ \& \ P = \lambda (f(\text{person}) \text{ bought } x) \ \& \ \text{true}(P) \}$
- (28) a. *ver hot vos gekoyft?*  
who has what bought  
"Who bought what?"
- b. for which  $\langle x, f \rangle$ , (person(*x*)) and (*x* bought *f*(thing))
- c.  $\{ \exists f \langle x, f \rangle, (\text{CH}(f) \text{ and } \text{person}(x)) \ \& \ P = \lambda (x \text{ bought } f(\text{thing})) \ \& \ \text{true}(P) \}$

Thus, *wh*-movement can be reduced to something motivated on purely syntactic grounds, since phrasal movement is not required for a well-formed interpretation. This is an idea that has been proposed by Chomsky (1995), in which *wh*-movement serves to mark a construction as interrogative - in other words, it has purely a clause-typing function. As pointed out by Stechow (1996), this may

- (24) a. for which  $\langle x, y \rangle$ , if we invite *y* and *y* is a philosopher, then *x* will be offended.
- b.  $\{ \exists x \exists y \langle x, y \rangle \ \& \ P = \lambda (x \text{ will be offended}) \ \& \ \text{true}(P) \}$
- c. Lucie will be offended if we invite Donald Duck. (Reinhart 1998, (16))

The representation given by in situ interpretation is given in (24 a), and (24 b) gives the semantics of the question in terms of a set of propositions denoting the true answers to the question, along the lines of Karttunen (1977). Given this, (24c) ought to be one of the possible answers to (23), "since if Donald Duck is not a philosopher, it must be true of him that if he was a philosopher and we invited him, Lucie would be offended" (Reinhart 1998, p. 37). The source of the problem is the fact that the restriction for the variable *y* is in the antecedent clause of an implication; therefore, anything that is not a philosopher can be a value for *y*. This is clearly not what the question in (23) really means. I will henceforth refer to this problem as "the Donald Duck problem".<sup>12</sup>

As a solution to the problem of how to assign wide scope to *wh*-phrases which otherwise appear to remain in situ, Reinhart employs existential quantification over choice functions. A choice function is simply a function which applies to a non-empty set and yields an arbitrary member of that set. Applied to the example above, this strategy yields:<sup>13</sup>

- (25) a. Who will be offended if we invite which philosopher?
- b. for which  $\langle x, f \rangle$ , if we invite *f*(philosopher), *x* will be offended.
- c.  $\{ \exists x \langle x, f \rangle, (\text{CH}(f) \ \& \ P = \lambda (x \text{ will be offended})) \ \& \ \text{true}(P) \}$

Here the in-situ *wh*-phrase is interpreted as a choice function applied to the set of philosophers. The function variable *f* can be existentially bound from arbitrarily far away, and thus is able to be given wide scope. Since the choice function applies only to the set of philosophers (which presumably does not include Donald Duck), the Donald Duck problem does not arise, despite the fact that the restriction occurs in an *if*-clause.<sup>14</sup>

Note that the *wh*-phrase that has moved is not interpreted as a choice function. Reinhart claims that the moved *wh*-phrase in fact cannot take the form of a choice function, since it is no

<sup>12</sup>Note that this argument depends on an analysis of the conditional as material implication.

<sup>13</sup>As Reinhart notes, things are a bit more complicated than this, since the extensionality of the choice functions must be insured. See Reinhart (1998) section 2.3.2.

<sup>14</sup>A potential problem for a choice function analysis of questions pointed out to me by Zoltán Gendler Szabó is that not all question answers are chosen individuals:

Q: Which boy will read which book?

A: Max will read any book on puffs.

This may not be an insoluble problem, since there is the possibility of intensional choice functions; see Stechow (1996), who discusses a similar example raised by Irene Heim in her 1994 lecture notes (I have not myself seen the Heim notes).



in fact be one of the strongest argument for the use of choice functions in *wh*-questions, in that they make this view of *wh*-movement semantically viable.

There are still a number of loose ends in the area of interpretation. One of these concerns the behavior of adjuncts. Recall that in Yiddish the adjuncts "how" and "why" cannot appear in multiple fronting constructions, but can quite legitimately occur in single fronting questions, even remaining in situ:

(29) a. *vi azoy hot ver gezungen?*  
how has who sung  
"Who sang how?"

b. *ver hot vi azoy gezungen?*  
who has how sung  
"Who sang how?"

c. \**ver vi azoy hot gezungen?*  
who how has sung

d. \**vi azoy ver hot gezungen?*  
how who has sung

(30) a. *farvos hot ver ongekungen der mamen?*  
why has who called the mother  
"Who called the mother why?"

b. *ver hot farvos ongekungen der mamen?*  
who has why called the mother?  
"Who called the mother why?"

c. \**ver farvos hot ongekungen der mamen?*  
who why has called the mother

d. \**farvos ver hot ongekungen der mamen?*  
why who has called the mother

The examples in (29b) and (30b) show that it is quite possible for *wh*-adverbials to remain in situ. This, however, is not the case in English:

(31) a. \*Who fainted when you behaved how?  
b. \*Who sneezed why?

In an account which does not make use of LF movement, these facts cannot be reduced to the ECP (as in Huang 1982), and they do not clearly reduce to the classic structural notion of superiority, since the moved subject *wh*-phrase is in fact superior to the in-situ adjunct. Reinhart

notes that this problem in English is limited to purely adverbial *wh*-phrases - replacing *how* with (*m*) *what way* gives a grammatical result:

(32) Who fainted when you behaved in what way?

Reinhart explains the English judgments by appealing to the idea that *wh*-adjuncts are semantically different from *wh*-NPs in that they do not denote functions ranging over a set of individuals, but instead denote functions ranging over higher-order entities (following ideas in Szabolcsi and Zwarts 1993). Reinhart claims that if this is the case, the *wh*-adjuncts cannot be interpreted as choice functions, which select an individual from a set, not some higher-order entity. In short, the denotation of *wh*-adverbials is not suitable for a choice function interpretation (see Hornstein 1995 p.147 ff. for a comparable proposal). Thus, *wh*-adjuncts are interpretable only in Spec,CP. In (32), the adjunct is in fact an NP, so it can be interpreted in situ.

Taking a closer look at this explanation of the English facts, one question that might be raised is whether the NP-adjuncts themselves actually denote sets of individuals, or whether they too might range over higher order entities. In other words, it is not clear to me that the contrast between (31a) and (32) is in fact due to a semantic difference between the two in situ *wh*-phrases, or whether the difference is simply the syntactic difference between NP and adverb. Taking the view that it is actually a syntactic contrast points the way to an alternative explanation: the restriction might simply derive from the fact that the choice function interpretation is limited to argument positions.<sup>15</sup> In other words, adjuncts are prohibited from having a choice function interpretation in English in the same way that the choice function interpretation is blocked for moved *wh*-phrases, the prerequisite of being in an argument position is not met.

The Yiddish facts raise a more significant problem in that Yiddish *wh*-adverbials not only can remain in situ, but also cannot be multiply fronted (to receive a quantificational interpretation). Thus, it must be the case that they can receive a choice function interpretation. If the choice function interpretation is restricted semantically in the manner that Reinhart suggests, this is totally unexpected.<sup>16</sup> Taking the syntactic approach to restricting choice functions would require that Yiddish does not require that choice functions be in argument positions. In other words, the restriction would be allowed to vary parametrically from language to language. As such, the restriction would amount to an "interface condition" (a condition on translating the syntactic representation into an interpretation) which would be arguably more in the spirit of the Minimalist Program than a semantic parameter which would allow adjuncts in Yiddish to denote a different sort of semantic entity than in English.

<sup>15</sup>This would lead to the rather interesting result that choice functions are restricted in English in the same way that multiple fronting is in Yiddish! Further research is obviously needed to determine whether this is more than coincidence.

<sup>16</sup>Yiddish is not the only language that raises this particular problem; as is well known, German also allows adverbial adjunct *wh*-phrases to remain in situ. There is also considerable cross-linguistic variation in the behavior of the different types of adjuncts, the contrast between French and English in the syntactic behavior of "how"/*comment* being an example (Rizzi 1990) - *comment* can remain in situ, but "how" cannot.

Obviously, many questions remain to be answered, but the issues raised by the interpretation of multiple questions in Yiddish point to the need to look more closely at what constraints need to be formulated in regard to the deployment of choice functions in natural language semantics. Choice functions are an attractive, but extremely powerful tool. Investigations of their application to the interpretation of indefinites has yielded a range of possible approaches, from the relatively unrestricted use seen in Winter (1997) and Reinhart (1997), to the more constrained theories of Kratzer (1998) and Matthewson (1999) (the latter based on the crosslinguistically rather unusual behavior of indefinites in *St'at' inecets*).<sup>17</sup> It is reasonable to suppose that choice functions in questions may need to be constrained as well, perhaps with interesting cross-linguistic implications.

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<sup>17</sup>Another sort of question that remains to be investigated is the fact that (as far as I know) there are no anaphoric instances of choice functions.

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