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## CULTURAL DISCREPANCY WITHIN RUSSIAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITY IN ISRAEL

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*The objective of the present research is to discover and explain a variety of cultural preferences within the Russian-speaking community in Israel. We juxtapose veteran immigrants of the '1990 wave' (including children and teenagers who came with their parents, so called 1.5ers) and representatives of the 'Putin Exodus' who arrived in the country in 2014 – 2018. The divergence in preferences and attitudes was revealed thanks to the discourse, semantic and comparative analysis. The research was conducted on the material of the free association test and blogs of the Russian Israelis. The association test revealed cultural stereotypes of the Russian Israelis who did not write blogs. The '1990s wave' immigrants revealed their deep connection to the Soviet Jewishness and Israeli citizenship regardless of their religious confession. For the 1.5ers, the Russian language lost its special function as the key to the cultural heritage. The '1990 wave' immigrants and 1.5ers experience the Russian language attrition. The representatives of the 1.5 generation prefer to participate in the cultural events in Hebrew; they are involved in the Hebrew cultural context. The representatives of the 'Putin Exodus' consider the State of Israel to be a Western democratic state. They ignore the peculiarities of the Middle East country, do not support 'mestechkovy' culture of the Russian street and disagree to prioritize the Jewish traditions. The cultural discrepancy does not match the divergence between elite and mass culture.*

**Keywords:** *immigration waves, language attrition, immigration trauma, Russian Israelis, blog, free associations*

### 1. Introduction

Modern Israel is considered to be the state where Jewish people from various countries have dreamed to come to since the Middle Ages. In the 12th century, many Jews came to Jerusalem and Palestine following the Sultan Saladin's invitation. The immigrants lived in Palestine alongside local Jews and Arabs who had fought together against the Crusaders. In the 13th – 16th centuries, Christians had been committing religious persecution against Jews in Spain and Portugal thus Jews escaped to Palestine from the Iberian Peninsula. Sizable numbers of Jews immigrated to Palestine at the turn of the 19th – 20th centuries.



Since the State of Israel was established after the Second World War in 1948, it has experienced several waves of immigration. The very existence of the State of Israel changes the motivation of Jews to arrive in the country. Instead of the intention to escape from their prosecutors in previous centuries, Jewish immigrants acquired inspiration to create a homeland in the Holy Land and to generate a new cultural and social identity keeping their old traditions. Immigrants from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (FSU) were among those who had struggled to establish Jewish settlements and towns in the beginning of the XX century and created the State of Israel in 1948.

Russian-speaking immigrants have always participated in social and business activities changing the cultural landscape of Israel. Immigrants from the FSU who still consider Russian as their mother tongue make up more than 15 % of the population of the State of Israel (close to 1,300k (Countrymetrics, 2018)). The immigrants' waves of the previous century reached the pick in 1991 (Lipshitz, 1997, p. 471). In the XXI century, the pick of the waves of the immigrants from the FSU appeared in 2017 when 16,183 FSU immigrants made up 56 % of the total newcomers to Israel (CBS, 2018). This wave began after the Crimea crisis in 2014; thousands of new immigrants have continued to arrive in Israel during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the wave brought opponents of the Putin's policy into Israel, it has been identified as the 'Putin Exodus' (Erofeev, Herbst, 2019). Popular journalists, successful businesspeople, top professionals arrived in the country avoiding the reconstruction of the Soviet Union. At the same time, war refugees from eastern Ukraine arrived in Israel looking for a fresh start in a friendly environment. More than 30,000 immigrants from Ukraine came to Israel between 2014 and 2018 escaping the war in the Donbass region (Sokol and Staff, 2019). In 2021, Israel welcomed approximately 25,000 new immigrants; 30 % of them came from Russia, 12 % – from Ukraine<sup>2</sup>.

The contradictions between the veteran immigrants and the newcomers appeared in various spheres since two groups represented different life standards. The cultural background of newcomers contains depicting massive anti-Putin protests and discussing activity of domestic political opposition in cinematograph and literature. The recent immigrants are mostly indifferent to Jewish culture and therefore are unable to grasp the identity troubles of Russian Israelis (Moshkin, 2019).

The objective of the present research is to clarify the cultural preferences and contradictions of the veteran immigrants of the '1990 wave' and representatives of the 'Putin Exodus' in the aspect of the Russian language attraction and attitudes to Russian and Israeli cultural contexts.

## **2. Related work: Brief Description of the '1990s wave' Immigrants and Representatives of the 'Putin Exodus'**

The peak of the '1990s wave' appeared in 1990–1991, when 333,000 Jews and their family members arrived in Israel from the FSU; two thirds of them originated in Ukraine and the Russian Federation, 13 % emigrated from Cen-

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<sup>2</sup> *Jewish Virtual Library* (a project of AICE). URL: <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/latest-population-statistics-for-israel> (accessed: 12.07.2022).



tral Asia (Tolz, 2016). Therefore, the immigrants spoke different dialects of the Russian language and represented different life standards. The newcomers from the FSU had received a mixed reception from the local Jewish community, thus many of them were forced to take a job below their competence level and education value or acquire new professions to get a fresh start (Lipshitz, 1997). Israeli inhabitants developed a negative stereotype about the FSU immigrants; many supporters of the Jewish traditions considered the new immigrants as pork-eaters, alcoholics, prostitutes, AIDS carriers, mafiosi, etc. (Fialkova, Yelenevskaya, 2007). Nevertheless, the '1990s wave' immigrants participated in social and cultural life; they established new political parties and mass media, opened new schools offering advanced educational programs, created theatres and orchestras. They acquired Hebrew and absorbed the Israeli culture that affected their mother tongue. They showed a possibility to separate Jewish identity from religious practices and customs (Al-Haj, 2002). The Soviet Jewishness represents a particular cultural phenomenon; the FSU immigrants enriched the phenomenon by their own understanding of national loyalty (Gershenson, Shneer, 2011; Galili, 2020).

The '1990 wave' immigrants avoid discussing their traumatic experience of absorbing new social norms and cultural customs. The children who came to the country with their parents in the nineties were identified as the '1.5 generation'; they prefer to maintain their Russian cultural identity along with Israeli culture even after 25 years in the country (Niznik, 2011). In the second decade of 2000s, 1.5ers made a successful attempt to present their reflection of the trauma of absorption in the art, prose and verses written in Hebrew.

The intention to bring troubles of the 'Russian street' into the Hebrew-speaking cultural context shows a discrepancy in the social behavior between 'silent parents and articulate children' (Remennick, 2018). The FSU immigrants kept the Russian language active in their everyday communication. Their Russian contains peculiarities of different dialects so it shows multiple deviations from the norms of the Russian literary language. Moreover, language attrition is obvious in their speech regardless of their command of Hebrew (Baladzhaeva, Laufer, 2016). The 'silent parents' experience narrowing of the Russian lexicon due to limited functions of Russian in the modern global world (Mustajoki et al., 2019). Syntax simplification appears under the influence of the colloquial speech in the 'Russian street' and the impact of the Hebrew speaking environment (Naidich, 2008). Russian is restricted to the needs of life routine. Broadcasting in particular media and publications in Russian journals, newspapers, and websites do not match standards of the literary Russian language; the language of the articles and posts acquired some features of the Russian colloquial speech (Yelenevskaya, 2015).

The recent immigrants' wave was triggered by the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in 2014 and the Crimea crisis (Erofeev, Herbst, 2019). Between 2014 and 2017, 44,959 immigrants from the FSU (42.2 % of the total immigrants at the period) arrived in Israel (CBS, 2018). This wave brings Russian speakers from Ukraine along with Jews and their family members from Russian met-



ropolitan areas. The latter group belongs to the 'Putin Exodus'. Due to their active socialization, the newcomers from Russian metropolitan areas became a perceptible part in the Russian-speaking community. Since the immigrants of the 'Putin Exodus' were pushed to Israel by the political crises, they probably had not been deeply involved in Jewish culture and customs before they arrived in the country (Hanin, 2016). The immigrants prefer to introduce themselves as the 'qualitative Aliyah'. Israeli media commented on disputes between the veteran immigrants and the 'Putin Exodus' emphasizing sharp contradictions between the 'sausage Aliyah' and the 'cheese Aliyah', respectively (Hanin, 2016). These references emphasize the economic background of the contradictions but simplify inconsistencies in immigrants' mentality and life experience. In the second decade of the XXI century, Russian Jews intended to emigrate due to social factors; they aimed to improve the quality of their life considering healthcare and education (Tartakovsky, Patrakov, Nikulina, 2017). The newcomers' cultural and political preferences differ from those of the veteran immigrants since the newcomers had experienced the new live style during a short period of economic liberalization in the Russian open society.

The newcomers brought new global cultural trends opening bookstores, coffee clubs and blogging platforms for Russian Israelis (Rebel, 2016). Their Russian does not have any features of attrition because their arrival in Israel does not interrupt their online and offline involvement in current cultural and political life in Russia (Borisova-Linetskaya, 2019).

Thus, since the nineties, the Russian-speaking community in Israel contains representatives of the various social groups including the upper middle class. Previous waves of immigration were inspired by Zionism, Jewish religious ideology and the Holocaust, while the '1990s wave' immigrants and the 'Putin Exodus' were far from being motivated by religious or Zionist ideas. The immigrants of the '1990s wave' came to Israel mostly because of economic and social reasons, while the 'Putin Exodus' was triggered by political and social reasons. To be precise, the immigrants of the '1990s wave' and the representatives of the 'Putin Exodus' emigrated from different countries (the Soviet Union and Russian Federation, respectively), their cultural preferences partly overlapped, and they speak different idioms of the Russian language.

### 3. Material and Methods

The research was conducted on the material of the free association test and blogs of the Russian Israelis. The test discloses the attitudes and preferences of the Russian-speaking community members, who do not write blogs. The free association test, which was held with native Russian speakers from Russia, allows for receiving impulsive reactions to Russian words that reveal understanding of the semantic connections in the Russian lexicon and links to the Russian cultural context (Ovchinnikova, Yelenevskaya, 2019).

The similarity between the '1990s wave' and 1.5ers was examined in the written free association test held in 2014–2016, at the beginning of the new



immigration wave. The respondents (84 adults) received the stimuli list with 112 Russian words, which matches the part of the stimuli set for the Russian Association Thesaurus<sup>3</sup>. They also filled in the computer questionnaire with multiple-choice questions; the answers contain their personal details (age of immigration; education; occupation; where they speak Russian). Eighty-four respondents produced 9,408 associations (see Table 1).

Table 1

### Quantitative description of association test results

Respondents	Age	
	20 – 35 years old	36+ years old
Less than 10 years in Israel	18	3
More than 10 years in Israel	36	27
Representatives of 1.5 generation	24	0
Total associations	6,048	3,360

Our respondents had emigrated from Russia to Israel before 2010: 63 of them spent more than 10 years in the country, 21 arrived between 2006 and 2010. Seventy-five of the respondents completed at least a Bachelor's degree, 18 of them completed MA or MS degrees. To uncover the difference between adults of the '1990s wave' and 1.5ers, we compared the association sets generated by respondents of two age groups: below / over 36; 54 respondents did not reach the age of 36 at the moment of the test, 30 respondents were over 36. We examined the association sets applying semantic and comparative analysis.

The opinions and attitudes of the Russian Israelis are disclosed in their posts and blogs on social networks and online media. Since social networks belong to particular sources of information, where a blogger's identity is often hidden or mystified, social media posts require a specific research that is beyond the objective of this paper. Blogs and personal stories of newcomers have been published on Israeli websites including Russian TV channels<sup>4</sup>, Tarnbut.ru website, which was accessible during a competition among Russian amateur writers in 2007–2010, and Shakshuka.ru<sup>5</sup>, which functioned from 2015 until 2019 and is still available in web archives.

The sources uncover the opinions, expectations and attitudes of the Russian-speaking immigrants. Shakshuka.ru was delivered in 2015, and in two years became a well-known website among the 'Putin Exodus' representatives. In May 2017, the Russian-speaking community nominated the co-producer and editor of the website Alina Rebel as one of the "persons of the year". Alina Rebel is a Russian journalist who made her Aliya in 2014. Alina's project consolidated the journalists, businesspersons, intellectuals of

<sup>3</sup> *Русский ассоциативный словарь*. URL: <http://www.thesaurus.ru/dict/index.php> (accessed: 29.12.2021).

<sup>4</sup> *9tv*. URL: <https://www.9tv.co.il/category/30> (accessed: 29.03.2022).

<sup>5</sup> *Shakshuka.ru*. Блог по-израильски. URL: <https://shakshuka.ru/> (accessed: 29.03.2022).



the 'Putin Exodus'. We study the target audience, references to the relevant cultural context and events in Russia and Israel by applying discursive and comparative analysis.

#### 4. The Cultural Discrepancy between the '1990s wave' Immigrants and the 1.5 Generation

##### 4.1. *The Explication of the Russian Language Attrition and the Presentation of Russian Culture in the Free Associations*

Analysis of the association sets reveals a distribution of semantic connections in the Russian lexicon of the veteran immigrants and the influence of the Hebrew language and culture on the Russian language attrition. The semantic analysis of the associations shows essential differences between Russian lexicons of immigrants of the '1990s wave' and 1.5ers. Representatives of two groups revealed divergent interpretations of the meaning of the stimuli words and different structures of the semantic connections in their individual lexicons.

In the files of respondents, the Russian language attrition is obvious due to orthographic errors, Latin transliteration of Russian words, Hebrew words or nonce words in respondents' answers. Almost all of the files of 1.5ers contain associations in Hebrew, nonce words and spelling errors in Russian. Almost 65 % of the files include spelling errors. The younger respondents often repeated the same reaction to different stimuli words when they experienced difficulties while recollecting Russian words and choosing a reaction. The repetitive reactions belong to the basic lexicon; they occur in 60 % of the files. The representatives of the 1.5 generation sometimes reacted by the very basic words to five or even more stimuli words (e. g., 'happiness, to love, war, money, people → peace'; 'sick, clever, beautiful, stupid → man'). Producing the same associations on several stimuli words of the given list reveals the narrowing of the respondent's Russian lexicon caused by the limited use of Russian in his / her everyday communication.

One fifth of the association database (20 %) represents connection to the Jewish holidays, Israeli routine and nature. The respondents mentioned events from the recent history of the State of Israel ('Lebanon War', 'IDF', 'Arabs', 'Islam', etc.). All of the respondents, who spent more than 10 years in the country, generated associations from the semantic field 'war'. The representatives of 1.5ers mentioned wars and weapons ('bomb, bullets, battle') almost eight times as frequent as the respondents aged over 35. The representatives of 1.5ers referred to their Israeli routine and experience while reacting to the neutral stimuli words ('village → Druse'; 'to shout → Moroccan woman'). However, their parents associated the Russian stimuli words with their lifestyle in the FSU and Russian culture ('monument → Lenin'; 'war → the sacred'<sup>6</sup>) since Russian is the language of their education and development of the cultural identity.

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<sup>6</sup> The reference to the famous Soviet song of the Second World War.



The stimuli words evoked many associations with cultural artefacts (see Table 2). For those who have spent more than 10 years in Israel, the Russian words represent a key to the Russian culture. The respondents aged below 36 produced more cultural associations than the respondents in their forties and fifties.

Table 2

**Cultural associations of the Russian Israelis  
(percentage to the association set of the certain group)**

Associations	Produced by respondents who spent 10+ years in Israel	Produced by respondents who spent less than 10 years in Israel
Total	7056	2352
Cultural associations, produced by respondents aged below 36	430 (6.09 %)	140 (5.95 %)
Cultural associations, produced by respondents aged over 35	359 (5.09 %)	49 (2.08 %)

In their cultural associations, the respondents mention historical events, art artefacts, folklore and literature. The Russian associations with Israeli culture are of no importance in the mentality of the veteran immigrants. The immigrants of the '1990 wave' associated Russian words with world culture ('man → Renaissance', 'clever → Elsie', 'to keep up → to be running for the Canadian border'<sup>7</sup>). Obviously, associations with Russian culture prevail over various reactions connected to the world culture. The cultural associations of the Russian Israelis of the '1990 wave' correspond to cultural life and activity that they remembered from the FSU in its nineties or official Soviet culture of their childhood ('old → bolshevik', 'good → Mayakovsky', 'stupid → penguin'<sup>8</sup>, 'rich → oligarch').

The associations of 1.5ers reveal connections to Russian folklore, proverbs (e.g. 'forest → wolf'; 'bread → salt'), Russian customs ('grandmother → pelmeni' (meat dumplings)); 'bread → borodinsky'<sup>9</sup>), well-known Soviet verses for children ('uncle → Styopa'). They referred to masterpieces of the Russian literature ('war → and peace') and political slogans ('homeland → mother'), to Russian history ('rich → boyar') and popular Russian crime films ('brother → 2'). Since many of 1.5ers had arrived in Israel in their teens, they are able to remember well-known poems of their childhood. Nevertheless, their parents often continued to educate the children at home reading Russian books and watching Russian films; current Russian pop culture is also wide spread in Israel.

<sup>7</sup> The combination of the stimulus word and its association exactly matches the Bill's speech in the Russian translation of "The Ransom of Red Chief" by O'Henry.

<sup>8</sup> The reference to "The Song of the Stormy Petrel" by Maxim Gorky.

<sup>9</sup> The reference to a particular label, which is popular in Russia and abroad.



Thus, semantic network based on the mother tongue of 1.5ers is adjusted to the Russian-speaking community; they use the language in family conversations to verbalize the popular topics. They brought the Russian customs of their childhood including the Russian classics and the protest culture of the perestroika (the film "Brother-2") to their new homeland. Their current lifestyle is associated with Hebrew; however, they are able to connect the Russian words to the Israeli routine. The well-educated immigrants of the '1990 wave' preserved the quality Russian language as a key to the culture and life experience since their Hebrew is poorer than Russian. In their free association test, the influence of Hebrew was almost unnoticeable.

Thus, the discrepancy is discovered in the degree of language attrition, the sphere of communication in Russian, involvement in current everyday life and social events in Israel.

#### *4.2. The Explication of the Cultural Discrepancy between 'Silent Parents and Articulate Children'*

In the first decade of the 2000s, the Telecommunication Group Cellcom delivered the project Tarbut.ru and announced annual competitions for Russian Israelis<sup>10</sup>. After the competitions of artists and musicians, Russian journalists and amateur writers received the opportunity to publish their poems and short stories on the Tarbut.ru website. Cellcom promised to translate the best 30 works into Hebrew and to publish the book (The Winners of the Tarbut.ru..., 2009). Among the winners of the competition, the '1990 wave' immigrants prevailed over 1.5ers since the latter group had already begun to write in Hebrew in the noughties. The competition of poets and writers attracted a lot of gifted and already well-known authors who belong to immigrants of the '1990 wave' (Mikhail Ziv) and 1.5ers (Alexander Averbukh). The readers had been interested in verses of the well-known poets before their immigration; the poets have continued to follow the traditions of Russian poetry in Israel. While writing in Russian, they use elegant tropes describing a detail that triggers a transformation of the inner world. For instance, Alexander Averbukh, who had arrived in Israel at the age of 16, expresses how an injured soldier perceived the flowing time in the military hospital:

(1) 'часики тикали скоро били / времечка бусинки нанизывали'<sup>11</sup>

Literal translation: clocks were ticking rapidly striking / were stringing small beads of time.

Nevertheless, the Russian-speaking poets and writers usually avoided expressing their traumatic personal immigration experience in their Russian poems and prose.

Later in the second decade of the new century, some of 1.5ers obtained Hebrew-speaking readership since their voices sounded in Hebrew. Alex Rif

<sup>10</sup> *Israelinfo*. Израильский потребитель. URL: <https://potrebitel.israelinfo.co.il/cellular/cellcom/6477> (accessed: 29.03.2022).

<sup>11</sup> *Полутона*. URL: <https://polutona.ru/?show=0723211827> (accessed: 29.03.2022).



and Rita Kogan produced the poetic monologues touching the immigration trauma and the inconsistent identity of the young Russian women who resisted the negative stereotyping by Israelis (Moshkin, 2019).

Alex Rif is a founder and a CEO of The Cultural Brigade. The Brigade aims to bridge divergent traditions of the FSU immigrants and customs of the Israeli society. Alex explains her family immigration trauma through juxtaposing a purchase of an air conditioner on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their Aliya and appearance of a newborn infant. Her appeal to her “air conditioner-brother” refers to the common explanation of the appearance of a new baby that parents pronounce to siblings: a new child is bought in a shop or is brought by a stork. The purchase of the air conditioner, which is required in the tropical climate of Israel, manifests the long way of survival of a typical family of Russian immigrants in the last decade of the XX century. Almost every family of Russian immigrants of the ‘1990 wave’ had been facing the choice: to give their children an opportunity to acquire Israeli culture or to provide the family with a necessary tool for comfortable life. The lyric protagonist who belongs to 1.5ers does not approve her parents’ choice. Alex is also able to put herself in the veteran immigrant’s shoes when describes a reception of a new Russian child in an Israeli kindergarten (Katsman, 2020):

(2) ‘I was already the one / Who explained to him, / In distinct Hebrew words, / That socks and sandals are, / How to put it, ugly...’

On the one hand, the lyric protagonist experiences the personal transformation from the Russian child who lacks socializing to the experienced veteran who undertakes the task of socializing repatriates. On the other hand, the lyric protagonist matches the image of the ‘1990 wave’ representatives as immigrants of the ‘Putin Exodus’ have perceived them. The representatives of the ‘Putin Exodus’ portrayed a typical FSU immigrant of the ‘1990 wave’ as an intrusive person who aggressively defends outmoded stereotypes and values (Rebel, 2016). Alex Rif expressed her comprehension of her parents’ trauma and found a way of her own to involve the ‘1990 wave’ representatives in the current multicultural context of Israel.

Another representative of the Hebrew-writing poets of the 1.5ers, Rita Kogan proclaimed her self-definition<sup>12</sup>:

(3) ‘You’re leftist? Weird. You’re Russian! – Do you have a boyfriend? No? Weird. You’re Russian! – You won’t fuck me? No? But you’re Russian. – You fucked him? Already? Sure, you’re Russian’.

The position of the poets was associated with the activity of the Fishka club in Tel-Aviv (Remennick, Prashizky, 2016). The poets spoke on behalf of their mothers who had silently survived through the horror of the first years in Israel (Remennick, 2018). The recent trend in the Hebrew poetry of the

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<sup>12</sup> *Interactive comment on “Comparison of different droplet measurement techniques in the Braunschweig Icing Wind Tunnel” by Inken Knop et al. doi: 10.5194/amt-2019-494-rc1 (accessed: 29.03.2022).*



Russian Israelis transform the image of the Russian woman into the lost soul suffering from the patriarchal and sexist everyday culture of Israeli men but attempting to pronounce her independence and spiritual freedom.

Thus, the veteran immigrants' attitudes to the Russian language and culture differ from those of 1.5ers since young people are involved in the cultural activity and participate in the Hebrew-speaking cultural processes articulating the special self-portrait of the inhabitant of the 'Russian street'. For 1.5ers, the Russian language lost its peculiar function as the main key to the world cultural heritage.

## 5. The Cultural Discrepancy between the Veteran Immigrants and the Representatives of the 'Putin Exodus'

### 5.1. The Explication of Russian Language Attrition in Creative Writing of the '1990 wave' Immigrants

Russian Israelis have published their blogs on social media and various websites since the noughties. The bloggers write about culture, politics, economics, Jewish customs and traditions; they discuss the relationships of different groups in the 'Russian street' and the contradictions between Russian Israelis and other communities in the country. To obtain a representative sample of the veteran immigrants' writing, we choose their publications on the Tarbut.ru website. Since the website had been created for the competition in 2009, it published selected works representing different genres. The works of Russian amateur writers presented on the Tarbut.ru website allow discovering and analyzing deviations in the Russian language of the '1990 wave' representatives and those of 1.5ers who are fluent in written Russian.

The amateur authors mostly belong to the '1990 wave' immigrants; however, a quarter of the participants represents 1.5ers. The representatives of the latter group arrived in Israel in their teens, thus they had at least almost completed their secondary school classes in the FSU. The prose of the Russian-speaking amateur writers who participated in the competition shows various features of language attrition. In a half of the short stories, essays and blogs published on Tarbut.ru, mistakes and deviations occur in lexical choice, grammar, and style of the prose (we keep the authors' spelling in the quoted texts). The lexical choice in the short stories of the participants reveals the impoverished lexicon as well as distorted semantic connections. The instances of the lexical deviations are shown in the quotes (4), (5), (8–10) from the works of the '1990 wave' amateur writers; the quotes (6), (7) manifest lexical mischoices from the works of their children. The simple general words from the basic lexicon prevail in the writings (see: (4) 'неприятные последствия' (unpleasant consequences) refers to the earthquake and tsunami). The writers err in rare words and neglect connotations (as irony in 'взбрыкнувшая природа' (the kicking up nature)):

(4) 'Жуткое апокалипсическое происшествие в Японии, которое мы смотрим, содрагаясь от неприятных последствий взбрыкнувшей природы.'



Literal translation: The scary apocalyptic (instead of 'apocalyptic') incident in Japan, which we are watching shadding (instead of 'shuddering') from the unpleasant consequences of the kicking up nature.

Nonce words (see: (5) 'словословие' instead of 'многословие') appear in the participants' writings along with erroneous choice of a paronym (see: (6) 'бродящие' instead of 'бродячие'; (13) 'непорядки' instead of 'беспорядки'):

(5) 'Мне жалко времени на беспредметное словословие! Столько много говорите, а результат нулевой!'

Literal translation: I am sorry for the time on pointless verbverbity (instead of 'verbosity')! So much you are talking but the result is null!

(6) 'Я привыкла к тому, что нет бродящих собак.'

Literal translation: I am used to that there are no wandering (instead of 'stray') dogs.

The Russian language attrition brings in distortion of collocations and phraseology. The participants of the Cellcom competition combine similar phraseological units in one phrase (7), omit (8) or substitute (9) words, and insert additional words (10) in phraseological units:

(7) 'У меня чесалось на языке спросить.' ('чесать языком', 'вертеться на языке / на кончике языка').

Literal translation: It was itching on my tongue to ask (the Russian sentence contains combination of two phraseological units: to chew the rag, to be on the tip of the tongue).

(8) 'Ришайон, теудат и главное ришайон рехев все исчезло как корова языком.' (the verb 'слизала' is omitted).

Literal translation: Rishayon ('the driving license' in Hebrew), teudat ('teudat zeut', ID in Hebrew) and the most importantly rishayon rehev ('the car license' in Hebrew) all disappeared like a cow (the verb 'licked' is omitted) by the tongue (the Russian equivalent of 'vanished into the thin air').

(9) 'Ортодоксы висят (instead of 'сидят') на шее трудящихся и правду не найти.'

Literal translation: Orthodox (members of the Orthodox-Judaism community) hang (instead of 'sit') on the neck of workers and the truth cannot be found.

(10) 'Ложка дорога в тарелке к обеду.' (instead of 'дорога к обеду ложка').

Literal translation: The spoon is dear in the plate for dinner (the Russian equivalent of 'slow help is no help').

Grammatical and stylistic deviations are represented by:

- using a serial verb construction instead of the perfective verb with the prefix (11),
- mischoice of the Case (overuse of Genitive: (12)),
- distorted word order (13),
- syntactic constructions from the official style (14),
- overusing passive voice (14) and reflexive verbs (15),
- mischoice of prepositions (16).



(11) 'Начало наступать лето.' (instead of 'лето наступило').

Literal translation: It began to come summer. (instead of 'summer came').

(12) 'Пойду на пенсию, хрен я хоть одного дня работать буду!' (instead of 'один день' (Acc. Sing.).

Literal translation: I will go to retire, hell I at least one day (Gen. Sing.) work will.

(13) 'Он пристал в молодости к группе религиозной в Иерусалиме, делающей непорядки' (instead of 'В молодости он пристал к религиозной группе в Иерусалиме...').

Literal translation: He adhered in his youth to group religious in Jerusalem doing disorders (instead of 'In his youth, he adhered to a religious group in Jerusalem...').

(14) 'Будучи по делам в Штатах у друзей на юге в Мемфисе, был приглашен ими в казино.'

Literal translation: Being on business in the States at friends in the south in Memphis, was invited by them in a casino.

(15) '...просветленно подумалось тогда, но, как всегда, запоздало.'

Literal translation: ...enlightened was thought then, but as always backwardly.

(16) 'Возникает вопрос: с кем жениться?' (instead of 'на ком').

Literal translation: The question arises: with whom to marry? (instead of 'on whom').

Instances of grammatical and stylistic deviations occasionally occur in prose of the '1990 wave' amateur writers (11, 12, 14); however, the grammatical deviations regularly appear along with lexical mistakes in the works of 1.5ers.

Transfer from the Hebrew language is obvious thanks to the Hebraisms (8), postposition of attributes (13), and calques of prepositional constructions (16). Hebraisms are typical of the 1.5ers' writing; the amateur writers often applied calques from Hebrew including constructions 'to do + noun' (see (13): 'делать непорядки' → 'делающей непорядки' (to do disorders → doing disorders)).

In the creative writings of Russian Israelis, attrition of the Russian language appear in syntax simplification, substitutions of conjunctions, prevailing of simple words from the basic lexicon over semantically appropriate lexemes, neglecting connotations, distortion of the phraseology, transfer from Hebrew. They are often unable to choose an appropriate word due to impoverishing of their Russian lexicon. The representatives of 1.5ers experienced the strong impact of the Hebrew language while writing in Russian that is revealed in lexical and grammatical calques, nonce words and Hebraisms.

## *5.2. The Explication of the Cultural Preferences and Attitudes of the 'Putin Exodus'*

The Russian-speaking immigrants, who had arrived in Israel in 2014–2018, are also identified as the 'Aliyah of productive people'. They stepped in the politics and were eager to claim their rights and interests from the



very first days in the country. The blog platform Shakshuka.ru offered them an opportunity to share ideas and impressions with the 'Putin Exodus' community and with Russian speakers all over the world. The co-founder and editor of Shakshuka.ru the Russian journalist Alina Rebel opened her resource for storytelling that might be able to attract a wide Russian readership and to consolidate newcomers' attempts to build Israeli home of their own.

The 'qualitative Aliyah' considered the immigration as a quest (Farkash, 2016). The immigrants investigated local customs from the point of view of a curious and skillful traveler who is aware of a possible traumatic experience. The bloggers discovered the specific means to perform everyday tasks and described their solutions, they told stories about hiking and travelling all over their new homeland, shared receipts of humus and fried eggplants, promoted their business ideas and products, discussed news from Russia and the principles of the Universe. The bloggers protested against the reconstruction of Soviet ideology in Russia and shared their experience with those who would like to understand the challenges of the immigration to Israel.

Putting aside political debates between the newcomers and the veteran immigrants, we observe the discrepancy in their attitude to Russian culture in Israel and to the immigration trauma. The representatives of the 'Putin Exodus' did not concentrate on the trauma since they took a chance to explore the new life keeping in touch with their friends in Russia thanks to computer-mediated communication. The newcomers were involved in cultural and political events in Russia more tightly than in the current political context of the Middle East. The enthusiasm and openness helped them to accept the values of simple life and Levantine patience. Thousands of Russians all over the globe shared their 'osim haim' ('enjoy your life') manifest (Shustikova, 2016). The bloggers acquired the skills to absorb the everyday routine of a worker in an Israeli vegetable store that was extremely far from the familiar routine of a cultural event manager in Moscow (Milgram, 2016). They investigated opportunities to find a job with poor Hebrew but excellent command of the English language combined with IT competencies<sup>13</sup>. They discovered unfamiliar historical details about British soldiers in Palestine under the British Mandate<sup>14</sup> and discussed life stories of Jewish families. Some of the newcomers had learned Hebrew before their Aliya, thus they explained the difficulties of communication with Israelis where silence appears to be an inexcusable error. Fluent Hebrew acquired in Russia did not always provide a smooth conversation with Israelis<sup>15</sup>.

The Israeli culture penetrated into the content on the website in reviews of the Israeli films, which attracted the attention of journalists at the Interna-

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<sup>13</sup> *Работа в Израиле: 11 советов для растерявшихся* // Шакшука.ру. Блог по-израильски. URL: <http://www.shakshuka.ru/rabota-v-izraile/2641> (accessed: 29.03.2022).

<sup>14</sup> *Гарри Поттер похоронен в Рамле*. URL: <http://www.shakshuka.ru/harry-potter-pohoronon-v-ramle/2579> (accessed: 29.03.2022).

<sup>15</sup> *Худшая ошибка на иврите – молчать* // Шакшука.ру. Блог по-израильски. URL: <http://www.shakshuka.ru/hudshaya-oshibka-na-ivrite-molchat/2887> (accessed: 29.03.2022).



tional festivals, and tours of the Russian artists, who claimed their anti-Putin position. The trauma they discussed in the blogs concerned the cold reception they obtained from the representatives of the '1990 wave'. Nevertheless, the representatives of '1990 wave' participated in the Shakshuka.ru project; they shared their success of personal absorption or provided a survey of Israeli life in various spheres.

The objectives and style of the Shakshuka.ru website did not suppose interviewing Israeli politics, activists and celebrities of Israeli culture since the website expressed the viewpoint of the newcomers who were 'blogging in Israel'. Nonetheless, an interview with the prominent leftist politician Yair Lapid was published on the website in February 2019<sup>16</sup> when Lapid was about to clarify the joint political program for the leftist block 'Kachol-ve-Lavan'. The publication revealed the political sympathy of immigrants of the 'Putin Exodus' that showed their closeness to 1.5ers and disagreement with the elderly 'Russian street' inhabitants (Tolchin Immergluck, 2019).

The 'Putin Exodus' and the bloggers of Shakshuka.ru are also associated with misunderstanding of multicultural Israeli discourse and disregard for the current cultural context of the 'Russian street' and 1.5ers (Chipka-ne, 2018). Indeed, the reviews of the cultural events on Shakshuka.ru mainly described the concerts and exhibitions in the context of world and Russian culture ignoring the clubs like Fishka and the activity of the Russian-speaking community. However, stories about 1.5ers were published on the website describing a successful personal experience of overcoming the trauma<sup>17</sup>. While Russian 1.5ers have made attempts to explain the trauma of the '1990 wave' immigrants in Hebrew, the newcomers kept their distance from the simple Russian language, culture and lifestyle of the 'Russian street' sometimes referring to the 'mestechkovy' character of Russian culture in Israel<sup>18</sup>.

The newcomers' point of view reveals the position of the external observer who has no intention to become deeply involved in the Middle East Israeli routine and to comprehend its irreconcilable contradictions. They associate themselves with the leftist intellectuals who support democracy and cultural diversity in the modern global world but avoid any involvement in the troubles of multicultural communities. A prominent journalist from the 'Putin Exodus' refers to the famous Nekrasov's verse about true patriotism clarifying her intention to oppose and criticize any Israeli government in power (Borisova-Linetskaya, 2019). The opposition to those who are in power is an immanent feature of the behavior code of the Russian intelligentsia (Uspensky, 1999, p. 13). The reminiscence about the White Guard emigration (Rebel, 2016) explains the inconsistent self-identification of the representatives of the 'Putin Exodus'. On the one hand, they proclaim democracy, hu-

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<sup>16</sup> Яир Лapid: «Израиль это война хороших идей» // Шакшука.ru. Блог по-израильски. URL: <http://www.shakshuka.ru/lapid/5544> (accessed: 29.03.2022).

<sup>17</sup> «На хрена вы меня сюда привезли?». URL: <http://www.shakshuka.org.il/nahrena-vu-menya-syuda-privezli/> (accessed: 29.03.2022).

<sup>18</sup> Была бы я Герцелем или Бен-Гурионом, назвала бы нашу страну Хахатуль. URL: <http://www.shakshuka.org.il/hahatul/3804> (accessed: 29.03.2022).



manity, tolerance and support of the Israeli multiculturalism; these views do not match the White Guard emigrants' ideology. On the other hand, they preserve their special status in the country by being external observers and preferring to keep distance from the mixed culture and religious traditions of the 'Russian street'.

## 6. Discussion of the Cultural Discrepancy

The culture of the community of Russian Israelis represents a conglomerate of trends and styles that shows the diversity of the 'Russian street' inhabitants. Russian speakers belong to different circles of the Israeli society; they support different political parties, read different magazines and watch different TV channels (Galili, 2020). The theory of co-existence of the elite and mass culture (Lotman, 1993) does not explain the discrepancy in their preferences since Russian Israelis of different immigration waves support elite and mass culture as well. They quote Russian classics, read popular bloggers and enjoy popular shows. However, representatives of the 'qualitative Aliyah' emphasize their belonging to elite culture through the reminiscence of the White Guard and romanticizing their Exodus from Putin's Russia. Representatives of the '1990 wave' show their deep involvement in everyday routine avoiding any attempt to romanticize their immigration. Attrition of the Russian language generates grounds for divergence between the '1990 wave' immigrants and the 'Putin Exodus'. However, many representatives of the '1990 wave' do not show perceptible instances of the Russian language attrition as we concluded based on the analysis of the results of the association test.

Attrition of the Russian language in the amateur writers' texts is very similar to the features of attrition in 1.5ers' spontaneous speech and everyday speech in non-official communication (Yelenevskaya, 2015). The instances of impoverishment of the Russian lexicon in the writings of Russian Israelis partly matches the deviations in the lexical choice in papers of foreign postgraduate students of Russian University (Akhapkina, 2015). Foreign students overuse general words, mix up paronyms, and distort idioms (Akhapkina, 2015). The similarity manifests the transformation of the linguistic competence under the influence of bilingualism when a multilingual speaker lacks particular practice in his / her L1 / L2 due to the restricted use of the language in a specific communicative sphere (Aronin, Maccozet, 2021).

The deviations in grammar and style are often caused by interlanguage interference, therefore the similarities between the Russian Israelis' creative writing and texts of students of Russian as a foreign language require accurate analysis in the aspect of contrastive linguistics. Nevertheless, a set of the common errors and mistakes in grammar includes overusing passive voice; choosing serial verb constructions and simple verbs ('to do', 'to have'); mixing up prepositions; mixing up Cases (overusing Gen). These features show the tendency to develop analytic structures. Thus, the transformation of the syntactic structures and shifting to the basic lexicon do not exclusively specify the Russian Israeli writings and do not strictly correspond to the 'meshtekovy' culture.



Nonetheless, contradictions in the attitudes to the 'Russian street', current Israeli culture and the Israeli identity are revealed in debates among immigrants of the '1990 wave', 1.5ers and the representatives of the 'qualitative Aliyah' (Borisova-Linetskaya, 2019). The cultural discrepancy between immigrants of the '1990 wave' and the representatives of the 'qualitative Aliyah' is caused by their dissimilar backgrounds and the divergence in experiencing Soviet life style. While the '1990s wave' immigrants had escaped from the collapse of the socialist economy, the representatives of the 'Putin Exodus' avoided participating in the reconstruction of the Soviet Union with its restrictions and isolation from the Western world. They do not deeply support Judaism feeling free from any obligations to follow the traditions. Noticeable representatives of the 'Putin Exodus' claimed that their ideas and principles belong to the current global trends in the mentality of the leftist intellectuals (Borisova-Linetskaya, 2019). The representatives of the 'qualitative Aliyah', as they express themselves in their blogs, would like to consider the State of Israel to be a multicultural Western democracy identifying themselves as citizens of the free Western world. On the contrary, the '1990s wave' immigrants reveal a deep connection to the Soviet Jewishness and Israeli citizenship regardless of their religious confession and political sympathies (Al-Haj, 2002). When they support the leftist intellectuals' mentality, they consider the peculiarity of the Jewish state in the Middle East as well as particular features of Arabic states and their life style (Hanin, 2016).

The representatives of the 'qualitative Aliyah' also claim to be closer to 1.5ers than to their parents (Rebel, 2016; Borisova-Linetskaya, 2019). However, 1.5ers articulate the immigration trauma in Hebrew explaining the heritage of the Soviet Jewishness to the Hebrew-speaking cultural community in Israel. The representatives of the 1.5ers generation are aware of the divergence in the Russian speaking community (see (2)) and experienced discrimination (see (3)). They have been injured in the wars during their military service in the IDF and fight against the abuse and hidden discrimination of Russians in their everyday life. The cultural preferences of 1.5ers include current youth culture (Fishka club) and traditions of Russian poetry; they have been translating works of famous Russian poets into Hebrew and creating the intercultural bridge. The 1.5ers are bilingual and bicultural citizens of Israel who represent the peculiar Hebrew-speaking group within the Israeli community.

## 7. Conclusion

The cultural discrepancy within the community of Russian-speaking Israelis reflects the contradiction of two different cultural codes in Russian culture. In the cultural context of the veteran immigrants, Russian culture uses the literary language and colloquial speech; the latter has been transformed under the influence of Hebrew since nineties. The narrow communication sphere where the Russian language is acceptable in Israel leads to attrition of Russian among veteran immigrants. The culture of the 'Russian street' preserves the Russian traditions and absorbs the Jewish customs; the veteran immigrants associate the Russian language with their youth as well as with



the world cultural heritage. Struggling for their identity and claiming their belonging to Israeli culture, the 1.5ers generation intends to penetrate to the cultural context of the country that is why they discuss immigration trauma in Hebrew. The 'qualitative Aliyah' associates the 'proper' Russian Israeli culture with the literary language and behavior code of the 'Russian intelligentsia' that is expressed in the White Guard concept. While accepting some of the Jewish customs, the newcomers perform the quest rejecting the local culture and 'mestechkovy' life style. The discrepancy appears to be the consequence of the complex multicultural landscape of Israel as well as the particular attitude of the newcomers to the Jewish State.

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## КУЛЬТУРНАЯ ДИВЕРГЕНЦИЯ В РУССКОЯЗЫЧНОМ СООБЩЕСТВЕ ИЗРАИЛЯ

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Цель исследования – обнаружить и объяснить различия в культурных предпочтениях русскоязычных израильтян на материале блогов и свободных ассоциаций иммигрантов из стран бывшего СССР. В блогах, опубликованных на платформах конкурса «Тарбут.ру» и сетевого журнала «Шакшука», отражены предпочтения репа-



триантов 1990-х годов и «путинского исхода» 2014–2018 годов. Культурные ассоциации тех, кто не ведет блоги, изучены на материале ассоциативного теста, в котором участвовали в том числе и представители «полуторного» поколения (дети и подростки, приехавшие в Израиль в 1990-е годы вместе с родителями). Для выявления противоречий использован семантический, дискурсивный и сопоставительный анализ. В результате обнаружено, что репатриантов 1990-х отличает глубокая вовлеченность в политическую жизнь Израиля и приверженность еврейским традициям, сохранявшимся в СССР наряду с привычными советскими праздниками (Новый год, День Победы). Для представителей «полуторного» поколения русский язык уже не является ключом к мировой культуре – с мировой классикой они знакомятся в переводе на иврит; они вовлечены в ивритоговорящее культурное сообщество. Представители «путинского исхода» обсуждают Израиль и его культуру с позиций левых интеллектуалов. Они не поддерживают местечковый характер «русской улицы», избегают вовлечения в религиозные традиции. Противоречия обусловлены как спецификой ближневосточного государства, так и различиями в социокультурном опыте. Различия в культурных предпочтениях русскоязычных израильтян не совпадают с разграничением элитарной и массовой культур в рамках национальной культуры.

**Ключевые слова:** эмиграционные волны, языковая аттриция, травма эмиграции, русские израильтяне, блог, свободные ассоциации

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