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**THE VARIETY OF RUSSIAN AS A HERITAGE LANGUAGE IN ISRAEL:
HEBREW-INDUCED CHANGES AT THE ABSTRACT LEVEL**

Статья начинается с обзорного анализа языковой ситуации в Израиле и языковой политики в израильском образовании. Лингвистический анализ языкового репертуара русскоязычных семей базируется на теории контактной лингвистики (Майер-Скоттон, 2002). Он выявляет глубокие различия между речью взрослых иммигрантов и языком их детей: хотя в обоих случаях происходит взаимодействие русского и иврита, сама природа этого взаимодействия глубоко различна. Основное внимание уделяется анализу вариации русского языка, сложившейся в результате взаимодействия русского и иврита в речи детей, принадлежащих второму поколению русскоязычных репатриантов в Израиле. В потоке естественной речи двуязычных детей гораздо легче выделить явные переключения с русского на иврит, чем проследить скрытые влияния иврита на характерные лексико-семантические, морфологические и синтаксические конструкции. В заключение рассматриваются результаты лингвистического анализа в педагогическом аспекте: разрабатывая практические методы сохранения русского языка в иммигрантской семье, необходимо принимать во внимание тонкие лингвистические особенности детской двуязычной речи.

1. Theoretical introduction

1.1. Sociolinguistic background

Immigrants from the former Soviet Union make up the largest immigrant group in Israel today, totaling one million people. The influx of immigrants from the former Soviet Union in the 1990s occurred against the background of a general decline in Hebrew monolingual nation-building ideology (Glinert 1995). This massive immigration wave was one of the major factors that pressured Israeli society towards multilingualism; challenged the 'melting pot' policy towards ethnic minority groups as well as the dominance of Hebrew as a realization of monolingual ideology in Israel (Spolsky & Shohamy 1999). Russian-speaking immigrants in Israel form part of a transnational Russian-speaking Diaspora, sustained by the continuous interactions of groups with the homeland and with each other (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006).

The evidence of flourishing cultural life, media, politics, government services and business in Russian has been ample during the last two decades. However, the perspectives of the long-term Russian maintenance are still in question and depend on sustaining stable intergenerational transmission of Russian to the second generation of immigrants. The immigrants' efforts to preserve their language have resulted in building the system of educational institutions. Russian-mediated schools for extra-curriculum lessons, private kindergartens and day-care centers are available in practically all the big cities and smaller towns in Israel. The most prominent ones include "Mapat", "IGUM [Association of immigrant teachers]", "Mofet", "Shiton", "Leket", "Impulse", "Radost [Joy]", "Kidma", and others. According to Shamay, Platova, and Horowitz (2009), these private educational settings have adopted a complementary model, i.e. they complement the existing official educational system. These schools employ well-educated experienced Russian-speaking immigrant teachers, who could not find their place in the state school system. It is noteworthy that the Russian language and literature are extremely important but not the only subjects that are taught in these private schools. They

also cater to the immigrants' elite educational standards in teaching mathematics, science, logic, English, and arts. Most of these schools usually have no state support and experience severe financial problems, while their existence often depends on the teachers' enthusiasm and ideological commitment to the maintenance of Russian as a heritage language in Israel.

Israeli state schools also assign a certain value to teaching Russian. According to Shohamy (2007), the first comprehensive language educational policy was introduced in Israel. It was entitled "Three Plus", whereby all schools are required to teach three languages. In the Jewish sector of population, Hebrew is the medium of instruction and Arabic is to be taught in grades 7–9; in the Arab sector, Arabic is the language of instruction and Hebrew is taught as the second language; and English is taught as a "first foreign language" for both groups. The "plus" refers to the strong encouragement to teach additional languages, such as Russian and French, in schools where there are a sufficient number of students interested in taking these courses. Starting from 1999, there is an option to study Russian for the matriculation certificate in Israel.

Beyond any doubt, state policy of encouraging students to learn Russian in schools and including Russian into the list of optional subjects for matriculation exams is a major contribution to strengthening the positions of Russian in immigrant families, yet, if the process of intergenerational transmission is severely destroyed in a particular family, the child will simply miss this excellent chance to master his or her heritage language and get extra points in her matriculation certificate. Besides, the Russian teachers in the state schools often have a vulnerable position: the existence of Russian courses may depend on the number of students interested in taking matriculation exams in Russian, attitudes of the school administration and budget distribution. Finally, this official recognition of the Russian language by the Israeli school system happened almost ten years after the big immigration wave had started. Thus, the most valuable linguistic potential had been already lost or threatened. Shohamy (2007) states that the children of immigrants from the former Soviet Union follow a pattern of losing Russian and adopting an Israeli/Jewish pattern of "Hebrew only" plus English.

With this general sociolinguistic perspective as a background, the level of Russian maintenance in each particular family may range from a total loss of Russian in the second generation to its high maintenance at the level of the secure intergenerational transmission and daily use in the family. Multiple factors that go beyond the scope of this article may determine the children's proficiency in Russian: family language policy and ideology, place of residence in Israel, educational level, number of children, involvement of grandparents and so on. Any case of successful maintenance of Russian in a particular family implies some ideological commitment, explicit active everyday efforts and skillful strategies while the natural social and psychological tendencies drive immigrant families towards a complete shift to the dominant language (Kopeliovich 2011). The present research gives an insight into the linguistic properties of the children's speech in Russian deeply influenced by Hebrew.

1.2. Contact Linguistics: theoretical premises

Remennick (2003) labels the language spoken by the Russian-speaking group in Israel as HebRush pointing to the fact that lexical items from Russian and Hebrew are intermixed in their ostensibly Russian speech.¹ In her sociological study, she focuses on the socio-psychological significance of HebRush as a transitional stage from Russian monolingualism to complete shift from Russian to Hebrew. The present sociolinguistic study, however, takes an additional perspective. It aims at penetrating the structural characteristic of this HebRush language and looks for appropriate theoretical tools for linguistic analysis. Not only surface codeswitching patterns but also signs of deeper grammatical interference of the two languages are to be attended. Naiditch (Найдич 2004) discusses linguistic properties of the Hebrew-

¹ It is a widespread custom to define contact languages both among layman speakers ('Ivrus' = 'ivrit' + 'russkiy') and in the scientific literature: Franbereu = Francais + Hebreu (Ben-Rafael, 2001)

influenced contact variety of Russian used by adult immigrants for whom Russian is the dominant language. Naiditch reveals sophisticated linguistic mechanisms responsible for skillful integration of Hebrew lexical items into the Russian grammatical frame. However, bilingual children belonging to the second generation of immigrants predominantly sustain Hebrew as their dominant language and, therefore, their variety of Russian differs considerably from the one deeply analyzed and described by Naiditch. Benmamoun, Montrul and Polinsky (2010) draw the attention of linguists to the intriguing world of heritage speakers, whose first language does not reach native-like attainment in adulthood.

In order to pinpoint and analyze this difference, the theoretical framework of the present research incorporates Contact Linguistic theory elaborated by Myers-Scotton:

[When two or more varieties come together within a single bilingual constituent] the participating languages do not participate equally; ...one language is more structurally dominant. This language receives the label of Matrix Language in the Matrix Language-Embedded Language hierarchy, and the term 'Matrix Language' is also used to refer to the morphosyntactic frame of the bilingual [utterance] as well (Myers-Scotton 2002: 109–110).

Based on this Matrix Language (ML) vs. Embedded Language (EL) distinction, Myers-Scotton distinguishes between *classic* and *composite* codeswitching:

1. *Classic codeswitching*. ... there are surface-level morphemes from both participating languages. Grammatical structure is derived from only one of the participating languages; this is the source language of the Matrix Language...
2. *Composite codeswitching*. ...there are both surface-level morphemes from both participating languages and also abstract grammatical structure from both languages. That is composite codeswitching entails the presence of convergence. This means there is a composite Matrix Language as the grammatical frame...
3. *Convergence*. ... all the surface level morphemes come from one language. The source of bilingualism is abstract grammatical structure from more than one language. Again, there is a composite Matrix Language... (Myers-Scotton 2002: 297)

The present article describes intergenerational discourse in bilingual immigrant households within this framework. Then, it focuses on the properties of the complex Hebrew-Russian Matrix frame of the children's variety of Russian and explores Hebrew-induced changes that take place at the abstract (grammatical) level. The children's variety of Russian is also characterized by surface code-switching patterns (actual integration of Hebrew words and phrases) and by abstract changes that result from insufficient acquisition of Russian rather than from contacts with the Hebrew grammar. These changes go beyond the scope of the present article and are presented in Kopeliovich (2009).

2. Research methodology

2.1. Participants

The subject of the present research is a Russian-speaking immigrant community distinguished by an intriguingly complex multicultural ideology combining their readiness to integrate into the dominant Hebrew-speaking society and their particularly strong commitment to preserving the original culture and language. The core of this community was formed in the Moscow in 1980s in the course of the Jewish underground struggle against the Soviet Communist regime that prohibited learning Hebrew and observing Jewish religious practices. In 1987–1990, the members of the community were allowed to leave the collapsing communist empire; they settled in one neighborhood in a small town near Jerusalem. At that stage, the struggle for Hebrew was over, while the problems of Russian maintenance and intergenerational transmission emerged.

27 families (with 14–16 years of residence in Israel and 3–8 children in each family) participated in the research. In total, 72 children and young adults (ranging in age from 5 to 23)

belonging to the second generation of Russian-speaking immigrants were studied. It is noteworthy that in most of the families older children were brought from Russia at the age of 1 to 8 (32 out of 72) while their younger siblings were born in Israel (40 out of 72). This enticing complexity of sociolinguistic and demographic features made the community particularly interesting for an in-depth qualitative research.

2.2. Methods

Ethnographic observations in the community were conducted for seven years at least twice a week for 1 to 3 hours during family dinners, synagogue services, after-school activities, community gatherings, trips and so on. Detailed notes were taken immediately after speech events; more than 200 entries were registered. Multiple informal spontaneous discussions, often initiated by the participants constituted another valuable source of ethnographic data. Twenty informal interviews and play sessions (1–3 hours) with children and adolescents of different ages were recorded on tape in order to obtain and analyze selected samples of their bilingual speech and have a deeper insight into their inner world. Most of the examples used in the present article are taken from tape-recorded interviews, since tape-recorded speech represents the most reliable source of accurate linguistic data, however, the ethnographic observations and the parents' reports constitute background data supporting the findings.

3. Results

3.1. Contact-linguistic perspective on child-parent communication

The ethnographic research within the community under study reveals that four contact Hebrew-Russian varieties rather than one are used in everyday practice. These findings are related to the basic distinction “**the adults' Russian vs. the children's Hebrew**” discussed in the previous sections. The application of Myers-Scotton's framework helps to specify the structural linguistic differences between the four contact varieties.

Table 1

Four contact varieties involved in child-parent communication:
analysis based on Contact Linguistic framework (Myers-Scotton 2002)

	‘Ostensible’ Hebrew	‘Ostensible’ Russian
Adults	(1) <u>L2 convergence at the abstract level:</u> ML=Hebrew+Russian	(2) <u>Classic codeswitching:</u> ML=Russian; EL=multiple well-integrated Hebrew elements related to Israeli public life, education, etc.
Children	(3) <u>Classic codeswitching:</u> ML= standard Hebrew; no contact-induced changes at the abstract level observed in the adult speech; EL=rare inclusion of Russian bare nouns related to household, food and early childhood	(4) <u>Composite codeswitching:</u> ML=Russian+Hebrew; multiple contact-induced changes at all the levels of abstract structure EL=Hebrew singly-occurring forms, islands, bare forms, codeswitching above the CP level.

First, when the adults speak Hebrew they demonstrate convergence to Russian grammar even though they rarely insert Russian lexical items. Second, in their Hebrew speech the children occasionally insert single Russian nouns; the Hebrew morphosyntax, nevertheless, remains absolutely intact. Third, when the adults speak Russian, the morpho-syntax generally remains isomorphic to standard homeland Russian (despite some minor signs of first language attri-

tion). Yet, their Russian contains a large number of Hebrew lexical items related to public life in Israel, Judaism, their children's everyday practices and so on, similar to other contact languages of immigrants worldwide (Найдич 2004). Fourth, when the children speak Russian their utterances frequently demonstrate convergence to Hebrew grammar and extensive codeswitching to Hebrew including full word collocations and long sentences.

To sum up, all the four varieties are, in fact, HebRush, i.e. they combine Hebrew and Russian elements; however, their structural properties are quite distinct. Certainly, the exact proportion of Hebrew and Russian features in each of the four linguistic varieties may significantly vary from speaker to speaker and from situation to situation. Yet, the major basic structural properties defined in the present schematic classification reflect the extremely complex linguistic reality in which the process of the intergenerational transmission of the heritage language takes place.

3.2. Focus on the children's variety of Russian

Myers-Scotton (2002) argues that in bilingual speech, any level of abstract grammatical structure may be split and recombined with parts of the same level coming from another language. In her Abstract Level Model, Myers-Scotton identifies three levels; the present discussion follows this classification:

- Lexical-conceptual structure (semantic and pragmatic information)
- Morphological realization patterns (surface realizations of grammatical structure)
- Predicate-argument structure (the mapping of thematic structure onto syntactic relations).

Myers-Scotton also hypothesizes that the lexical-conceptual level is most susceptible to modification in contact phenomena and the predicate-argument one is the least susceptible.

Several selected examples illustrating such abstract changes are presented below while a more detailed study of multiple Hebrew-influenced deviations in the children's speech are discussed in Kopeliovich (2009).

3.2.1. Recombination of the lexical-conceptual structure

The speech of the children gives numerous examples of Russian content morphemes showing changes in their semantic fields. For example, the semantic field of the Russian verb *znat'* ('know') in example (1) has changed in the direction of the Hebrew verb *lada'at* ('know'). The Hebrew counterpart denotes both intellectual knowledge and physical capacity or skills, whereas the Russian one is limited only to intellectual knowledge in contrast to the verbs *moch* and *umet'* (can, be able to – Russ.). Yet, the participants neutralize this distinction and use the verb *znat'* in both the meanings.

(1) * Ya	znala	normal'no	napisat'
1s/NOM	know-1s/PAST, fem, sl	properly	write down
Standard Russian:			
Ya	mogla	khorosho	napisat'
1s/NOM	can-1s/PAST, fem, sl	well	write down
or:			
Ya	umela	khorosho	pisat'
1s/NOM	be proficient-1s/PAST, fem, sl	well	write
'I could write well' (Esther K., tape-recorded interview)			

This modification of the lexical-conceptual structure of the verb *znat'* is so widespread among the participants, that it has become one of a profiling features in the adults' attempts to characterize or imitate the typical utterances of their children.

Other multiple instances of convergence at this level are more spontaneous and individual, yet the mechanism of their formation is similar. In example (2), the lexical-conceptual structure of the Hebrew expression *lifoakh lo tik* (literally: 'open to him a file'; meaning 'to insti-

tute proceedings against him’) influences the choice of words in Russian. The Hebrew noun *tik* denotes both ‘bag’ and ‘file’, while Russian differentiates between the two meanings: *sumka* (‘bag’) and *papka* or *delo* (‘file’). Fighting with his younger sister, Danik D. (10, born in Israel) replaces the expected Russian noun *delo* (here ‘criminal case’) by the noun *sumka* (‘shopping bag’) in the identical expression *otkrit’/ zavesti (ugolovnoe) delo* (literally: open/initiate a (criminal) case).

- (2) * Na tebya možno bilo bi otkrit’ **sumk-u** v *mishtar-e*²
 On you /ACC,2sl be possible/SUBJ open/INF bag/ACC in police (Hebr.)/PREP

Standard Russian:

Na tebya možno bilo bi otkrit’ **delo** v politzi-i
 On you /ACC,2sl be possible/SUBJ open/INF case/ACC in police/PREP

‘One might institute proceeding against you in the police’
 (December, 2003; the D. parents’ report).

3.2.2. Convergence at the level of morphological realization patterns

Morphological realization patterns include the extent to which grammatical relations are encoded in surface structure and the form that encoding takes (Myers-Scotton 2002: 200).

The data collected from the speakers under study show diverse changes in their Russian morphological realization patterns under the influence of their Hebrew counterparts. The present section suggests a typology of the most common changes.

Modification of the Russian case-marking system

Russian nouns change according to the six cases. Each case requires diverse case inflections not only in singular and plural, but also in three distinct types of declension (related to gender and some other characteristics). In addition, there is a big group of nouns that do not belong to any of the three types of declension and require irregular case inflections. Personal pronouns also have special case inflections in each of the six cases. Adjectives and some types of pronouns, numerals and conjunctions that must agree with their head noun in number, gender and case also take a wide range of diverse case inflections (see Pulkina 1990).

In contrast, the same case relations in Hebrew are manifested through corresponding prepositions only; Hebrew nouns and other parts of speech do not require any case inflections. As a result of these structural differences, the rich Russian case system arguably presents a special difficulty to the young Hebrew-dominant participants in the present study similarly to the five English-Russian bilingual children of Russian-speaking immigrants in America described in Schmitt (2001). Yet, in both cases, the data reveal modification and reduction of the Russian case system rather than its complete loss.

1. The most common change in the case system of the variety of Russian formed under the influence of Hebrew is the replacement of different cases by the Nominative forms. Examples (3a-b) illustrate the common use of the Nominative rather than the expected Genitive case with such words as *mnogo* (many), *malo* (few) and *net, netu* (there is no).

- (3a) * Est’ mnogo lud-i vokrug
 there are many people/NOM, pl. around

Standard Russian:

Vokrug mnogo lud-ei
 Around many people/GEN, pl.

‘There are many people around’ (Pnina K., tape-recorded interview)

- (3b) * Netu pravd-a ucheniya
 NEG truth/NOM, sl learning

² Note the classical code-switching instance often combined with changes in the Matrix Frame.

Standard Russian:

?Net pravd-i ucheniya
NEG truth/GEN, sl learning³

or:

Net pravd-i v takoy uchebe
NEG truth/GEN, sl in this sort of study

‘There is no truth in this sort of learning’ (Ester K, tape-recorded interview)

The children often produce non-target-like forms as they substitute Nominative case for other oblique cases in spite of the target-like choice of prepositions, as examples (4a-b) illustrate.

(4a) * Ona bila v kak-oy klassØ?
She was in what/ NOM, ms, sl grade/NOM, ms, sl

Standard Russian:

V kak-om klass-e ona bila?
in what/ PREPcase ms, sl grade/PREPcase, ms, sl she was

‘In what grade did she study?’ (Ester K, tape-recorded interview)

(4b)* Sin pokhozh na pap-a, a dochka – na mam-a
Son similar on/prep father/NOM but daughter on/ prep mother/NOM

Standard Russian:

Sin pokhozh na pap-u, a dochka – na mam-u
Son similar on/ prep father/ACC but daughter on/ prep mother/ACC

‘The son resembles his father, while the daughter [resembles] her mother’
(Tirtza T., ethnographic observation; March, 2004)

In other words, examples (3-4) show that the children under study demonstrate a tendency to lose the inflectional system in favor of some more analytic means of expressing case relations existing in Hebrew. Whereas examples of such recombination in the case system are multiple both in the tape-recorded corpus and in the ethnographic notes, a total loss of case marking is extremely rare. In fact, only one clear-cut example of completely missing case markers was registered in the course of an ethnographic observation after 8-year-old Rachmiel T., a boy with a very low proficiency in Russian, the seventh and the youngest son to the T. family.

(5) Rachmiel asks his two-year-old guest to come up to her father named Dima:

Rachmiel:

* Idi Ø pap-a! * Idi Ø Dim-a!
Go/IMPER,sl father/NOM Go/IMPER,sl Dima (name)/NOM

Standard Russian:

Idi k pap-e! Idi k Dim-e!
Go/IMPER,sl to/prep father/DAT Go/IMPER,sl to/prep Dima (name)/DAT

‘Go to [your] father! Go to Dima!’

Dima (adult):

Idi k pap-e! (‘Go to [your] father!’)
Go/IMPER,sl to/prep father/DAT

[The adult produces the correct form while emphasizing the correct preposition and inflection]

Rachmiel:

* Idi k pap-a! (‘Go to [your] father!’)
Go/IMPER,sl to/prep father/NOM

(April, 2004; ethnographic observations in the playground)

The boy’s reaction to the adult’s correction is very important: he retains the preposition while the noun inflection is still missing, similar to examples (4a-b), where oblique cases are replaced by the Nominative and the preposition is the only analytical means of expressing the case relations. Thus, by correcting himself the boy approaches the variety of Russian spoken

³ This choice of a noun seems quite awkward, though acceptable, in the standard Russian

by his peers rather than standard Russian.

In a sense, this replacement of different oblique cases of a noun by the Nominative is a profiling feature of the children's variety of Russian easily noticed even by the non-linguistically-trained parents in their interviews. In her article for Russian speaking parents in Israel, Vlasova-Kuritz (Власова-Куриц 2004), a practicing Russian teacher, offers to view sentences similar to (4a-b) as a simple mini-test for identifying children in need of special methods for learning Russian based on "Russian as a Foreign Language" methodology.

2. Another type of modification of the Russian case system has a more complex mechanism. Arguably, the change starts at the lexical-conceptual level when the choice of prepositions indicates convergence to Hebrew. Then, the non-target-like preposition assigns its case to the noun or pronoun in the prepositional phrase, and the resulting case form often does not coincide with the target one. Consider examples (5a-b):

- (5a) **Na** **n-ego** smeyalis'!
 On/prep him/ **ACC** laugh/ PAST, pl
Standard Russian:
Nad **n-im** smeyalis'!
 about/ prep him/ **INSTR** laugh/PAST, pl
 'They laughed at him!'
 (Danik K., tape-recorded interview)
- (5b) **Na** **shkol-u** eto⁴ luchshe govorit' na ivrit-e
 On/ prep school/**ACC** it better speak/INF on Hebrew/PREP case
Standard Russian:
O shkol-e Ø luchshe govorit' na ivrit-e
 about/ prep school/**PREPcase** better speak/INF on Hebrew/PREP case
or:
Pro shkol-u Ø luchshe govorit' na ivrit-e
 about/ prep school/**ACC** better speak/INF on Hebrew/PREP case
 'It is better to speak about the school in Hebrew'
 (Ester K., tape-recorded interview)

Examples (5a-b) illustrate the frequent lexical convergence of several Russian prepositions marking the role of topic to the Hebrew preposition *al* denoting both the location of an object *lashevet al ha-kise* ('to sit on the chair') and the topic *ledaber al beit-ha-sefer* ('to speak about the school') or *litzkhok al mishehu* ('laugh at somebody').⁵ In (6a-b) the speakers have in mind the lexical-conceptual structure of the Hebrew preposition *al* ('on') when they use the Russian locative preposition *na* ('above', 'on') in the expressions that denote such mental activities as talking or laughing about something and require the use of the appropriate prepositions *o*, *pro* ('about') or *nad* (here 'about'). In example (5a), the non-target-like preposition *na* assigns the non-target accusative case to the pronoun. Thus, the changes in the lexical conceptual structure trigger the ones at the level of morphological-realization pattern. In (5b), however, it is possible to argue that the convergence ends up at the lexical-conceptual level since one of the standard Russian equivalents allows the preposition *pro* (*shkol-u/ Acc*) that also assigns the target accusative case to the noun. Thus, in (5b) the child produces a subtle blending of the target case inflection and the non-target preposition calqued on the Hebrew verb complex *ledaber al-* ('to speak about...').

In conclusion, the Russian case marking is the most common locus for morphological changes in the immigrant children's language. The case system is restructured and reduced rather than completely lost as some students of contact linguistics point out (Myers-Scotton 2002; Schmitt 2001; Bolonyai 1998). Just a few examples (3-5) were selected from the multiple instances of the case system modifications in order to sketch and illustrate the major directions of its convergence to Hebrew. Retaining, replacing and dropping the Russian case in-

⁴ See the sub-section "Overt use of the pronoun *eto*" on the decline in the use of pro-drop parameter.

⁵ Adapted from Even-Shoshan (1993, Vol. 3: 1130; 979)

flections by Hebrew dominant children born to Russian-speaking households in Israel requires a further in-depth study since it is one of the most prominent profiling features of their Hebrew-Russian contact variety. It may be of special interest to compare systematically the present results with the study of Russian-speaking children in America and their transformation of the particularly rich Russian case system under the influence of English (Schmitt 2001) as well as with other studies of modifications of case systems in bilingual speech worldwide (Bolonyai 1998).

Decline in the use of the pro-drop parameter

The children's speech gives a very strong impression of overuse of the Russian demonstrative pronoun *eto* (this, it). Most such cases clearly demonstrate convergence to Hebrew at the level of morphological realization patterns related to the pro-drop parameter. Glinert (1989: 63) reports on the use of the antecedent pronoun *ze* ('it' as in 'it is important') as a 'dummy subject' for sentences where the subject clause is delayed till after the predicate and he emphasizes that this use is common in colloquial and casual rather than literary Hebrew. In example (6), the boy calques on such Hebrew colloquial expressions as *ze lo nir'e la she* ... ('it does not seem to her that...') and *ze khashuv*... ('it is important to...'). In Russian, the pro-word *eto* must be dropped in the corresponding constructions. Consider the composite sentence in example (6), where the pronouns *eto* are not dropped twice in both the clauses.

- (6a) **Eto** ochen' ne kazetsya ey,
 it (subject) very NEG seem/PRES her/DAT
Standard Russian:
 Ø Ey sovsem ne kazhetsya,
 Her/DAT at all NEG seem
- chto vsey sem'-yoy **eto** vazhno znat' eshe i russkiy⁶
 that all/INSTR family/INSTR it (subject) important know also and Russian
Standard Russian:
 chto vsey sem'-ye Ø vazhno znat' eshe i russkiy
 that all/DAT family/DAT important know also and Russian
 'It does not seem to her at all that it is important for all the family to know Russian as well'
 (Baruch K, tape-recorded interview)

This widespread feature of the children's variety produces a strong impression of foreignness in the Russian-speaking adults of the community. At the early stages of the present research prior to any systematic analysis of speech samples, I coined a humorous term that characterizes the community children's speech in Russian as 'the *eto*-language'. The adult participants willingly accepted this definition and found it particularly amusing, since it reflects precisely their impression and emphasizes the significance of this feature among the ones distinguishing the children's variety of Russian.

In addition to the widespread overt use of the pronoun *eto*, there are other cases demonstrating decline in the use of the pro-drop parameter patterned under the influence of Hebrew.

- (6b) [russkie] stikhi oni bolee takie tochnie
 [Russian] verses/ pl they /3rd p, pl. more so precise

⁶ In addition, example (11) demonstrates other modifications at the level of morphological-realization patterns (replacement of dative by instrumental case on the word *sem'ya* ('family') and Hebrew-influenced word order in the main clause) as well as neutralization of the distinction between the words *ochen'* ('very') and *sovsem* ('at all') at the level of the lexical-conceptual structure.

Standard Russian:

[russkie] stikhi Ø bolee tochnie
[Russian] verses/ pl more precise

‘[Russian] verses are more precise’
(Chana K., tape-recorded interview)

Hebrew colloquial style allows placing a corresponding 3rd person pronoun as liaison between a subject and a predicate expressed by an adjective or a noun, that is a grave violation of Russian grammatical rules as in (6b). Decline in the use of the pro-drop parameter may often occur in combination with other changes.

Reduction of the Russian conjunction system: multi-level convergence to Hebrew

The modification of the complex Russian conjunction system may involve changes at different levels: modification of the case system, decline in the use of the pro-drop parameter as well as recombination of the lexical-conceptual structure of conjunctions.

In standard Russian, conjunctions introducing subordinate clauses can be case-marked in agreement with the noun or pronoun they define, while in Hebrew case-marking on conjunctions is impossible. The Hebrew-Russian bilingual children avoid case marking on the conjunction, like in (7):

(7) * Eto yazik, Ø kotor-iy ti s n-im rodilsya
It (is) language/ms, sl which/NOM, ms,sl you with it/INSTR, ms, sl was born

Standard Russian:

Eto yazik, s kotor-im ti Ø Ø rodilsya
It (is) language/ms, sl with which/ INSTR, ms,sl you was born

‘It’s the language that you were born with’
(Baruch K., tape-recorded interview)

Replacement of the case-marked conjunction by the one in the nominative case in (7) makes it necessary to find an alternative way to express the missing case relations and causes the incorrect overt use of the pronoun ‘s nim’ (‘with it’/INSTR). In standard Russian, however, the pronoun in the subordinate clause should be dropped when it is co-indexed with the subject or object of the main clause and the case relations are expressed through the case-marked conjunction. This complex pattern demonstrates convergence to the Hebrew constructions with relative clauses (that relate to nouns adding information about them) with *she-* or *asher*, described by Glinert (1989: 362–363):

Such relative pronouns [acting as indirect object or as adverbial] are rarely omitted – this would leave a ‘dangling’ preposition almost unheard of in Hebrew. Nor can the preposition usually be omitted:

ele ha-rishumim she-histakalt **bahem** (IND. OBJ.)
these [are] the prints that you looked **at them**

*ele ha-rishumim she-histakalt (**be**)
these [are] the prints that you looked (**at**)

ha-boker she-**bo** (ADVERBIAL) higati
the morning that on it I arrived

*ha-boker she-higati bo
the morning that I arrived on

Another common modification of the Russian conjunction system starts at the lexical-conceptual level when the difference between multiple Russian conjunctions with all the nuances of their meaning is swept away by their convergence to the Hebrew conjunction *she-*

(‘that’); its Russian counterpart *chto* (‘that’) takes over and replaces such conjunctions as *kto* (‘who’), *gde* (‘where’), *kogda* (‘when’), *chtobi* (‘in order to’, ‘so that’), *kotor-iy* or *kak-oy* (‘which’) and so on. In example (8) Gideon K. explains how they play ‘bay-blades’ (a sort of whipping-tops), and this piece of speech gives a lively impression of the convergence processes that lead to condensing diverse Russian conjunctions into the single conjunction *chto* (‘that’).

- (8) **Gideon:** a.*Nikto ne khochet **chto** on padal
 Nobody NEG wants that it/he fall down/PAST
St. Russ: Nikto ne khochet padat’
 Nobody NEG wants fall down/INF
 ‘Nobody wants to fall down.’
- b.*On khochet **chto** drugoy upal
 He wants that the other fall down
St. Russ: On khochet **chtobi** drugoy upal
 He wants so that (~aim) the other fall down
 ‘He wants the other to fall down’.
- Interviewer:** i kto viigrivaet? (‘And who wins?’)
Gideon: c.*Kto **chto** delaet bolee khorosho! Kto **chto**...[unfinished]
 Who that does more well Who that...
St. R.: Tot, kto delaet luchshe! Tot, kto...
 That one, who does better That one, who...
 ‘The one who does it better! The one who is... [unfinished]’.
- d.*Ili *esh* tak-oy mest-o **chto** na nego oni delayut...
 or there’s(Heb.) such place that on it/ACC they do/PRES
St. R.: Ili est’ takaya ploschadka **na kotor-oy** Ø
 or there’s such platform/fm on which/ PREPcase, fm
 odin drug-ogo... tak... tolknul
 one the other like this push/PAST
St. R.: odin drug-ogo vot tak tolkaet
 one the other like this push/PRES
 ‘Or there is such a platform where one pushes the other like this’ [shows with his hands]
- Interviewer:** togda on proigraet? (‘Will he lose then?’)
Gideon: e. Ne. *Kto **chto** a on... *Kto **chto** esche...
 No. Who that but he Who that again
 f.*Kto **chto** upal tozhe proigraet
 Who that fall down/PAST also lose/FUTURE
St. R.: Tot, **kto** upadet, tozhe proigraet
 That one who fall down/FUTURE also lose/FUTURE
 ‘No! The one that... but... the one who again...The one that falls down will lose!’
 (April, 2002; tape-recorded informal conversation with Gideon K., 8-year-old, born in Israel)

This small excerpt from Gideon’s description was frequently used in the interviews with the adults to prompt a discussion of their children’s speech in Russian since it invariably produces a humorous effect on native Russian speakers. Indeed, the replacement of all the eight diverse conjunctions in 8 (a-f) by *chto* sounds amusing, especially when this replacement brings about some deeper changes at the level of morphological-realization patterns discussed earlier in the chapter. In (8d) it triggers decline in the use of the pro-drop parameter played under the same scenario as in (7). Examples (8 c, e, f) are calqued on the Hebrew construction *mi she nofel menatzeakh* (literally: ‘who that falls down wins’; meaning ‘it is the partner who falls down that wins’); they contain the string of words *kto chto* (‘who that’) absolutely senseless and inappropriate in Russian. Examples (8 c, e, f) also illustrate how the conjunction *chto* replaces

the combination *tot* ('that one')... *kto* ('who') in which the first element belongs to the main clause and performs a certain syntactic function (subject). The present corpus shows an almost complete loss of such two-element Russian constructions as *tam* ('there') ...*gde* ('where'), *o tom* ('about the one')... *kto* ('who') and many others in which the first necessary element functions as an adverbial modifier or an indirect object in the main clause and the second element is a conjunction introducing the subordinate clause. Thus, the replacement of these two-element constructions by *chto* causes changes of morphological-realization patterns not only in the subordinate clause but also in the main one.

In conclusion, the reduction of the Russian conjunction system starts at the lexical conceptual level where the distinctions between multiple Russian conjunctions with their subtle shades of meaning are neutralized; and this process may cause a number of changes at the level of morphological-realization patterns. As a result of this multilevel convergence, compound sentences in the children's variety of Russian sound so awkward and foreign to the Russian-speaking adults that they find the excerpt (8) extremely amusing although they might find it difficult to specify what exactly makes them laugh.

Another source of bilingual jokes and comic parodies related to changes in the use of conjunctions is the Russian conjunction *esli* ('if') used under the influence of its Hebrew counterpart *im* :

- (9) Ya ne znayu **esli** eto udobno
 I NEG know **if** it convenient
Standard Russian:
 Ya ne znayu udobno **li** eto
 I NEG know convenient particle(SUBJ) it
 'I don't know whether it is convenient'
 (Esther K., tape-recorded interview)

The modification in (9) starts with the use of the conjunction *esli* under the influence of the Hebrew phrase *lo yodea im ze noakh* ('don't know **if** it is convenient') and influences the whole grammatical structure of the Russian subordinate clause that is supposed to be in the subjunctive mood expressed by the special particle *li*. It is noteworthy that according to ethnographic observations, structures like (9) are the main type of rare modifications at the level of morphological-realization patterns observed in the contact variety of Russian spoken by the community adults who retain the Russian grammatical frame practically intact and the influence of Hebrew there is limited to codeswitching at the surface level (see table 1).

3.2.3. Rare modifications at the level of predicate-argument structure

Myers-Scotton (2002) defines three abstract structural levels (lexical-conceptual level, morphological-realization patterns and predicate-argument structure) and makes a hypothesis that the predicate-argument structure is the least affected one in various contact phenomena. The ethnographic and tape-recorded data collected from the Hebrew-Russian bilingual children under study confirm this hypothesis since very few instances of convergence at this level were registered. The only pattern occurring several times in tape-recorded interviews and in ethnographic notes is the use of the verb *govorit* ('speak') with the name of a language.

- (10a)*Oni ne govoryat **Ø** drug-oy yazik**Ø** (DIRECT OBJ)
 They NEG speak other/ACC, sl, ms language/ACC
Standard Russian:
 Oni ne govoryat **na** drug-om yazik-e (INDIRECT OBJ)
 They NEG speak on other/PREPcase, sl, ms. language/PREPcase
 'They don't speak any other language'
 (Gideon K., tape-recorded interview)

(10b)*Ona govorit doma Ø angliysk-iy (DIRECT OBJ)
 She speak/PRES at home English/ACC

Standard Russian:

Ona govorit doma na angliysk-om (INDIRECT OBJ)
 She speak/PRES at home on English/PREPCASE

‘She speaks English at home’
 (Gideon K., tape-recorded interview)

In standard Russian, the verb in such constructions does not subcategorize for a direct object and assigns prepositional case with the preposition *na* to the noun (indirect object). Yet, in examples (10a-b) as well as in some similar ones with the names of other languages, the predicate-argument structure is projected by Hebrew and accusative case is mapped onto the role of Theme/Patient (direct object). At the level of morphological-realization pattern, the preposition *na* and the appropriate case-marking inflection are missing.

One more interesting example of contact-induced changes in the predicate-argument structure of the Matrix frame is related to the sphere of phraseology. In (11), the girl has in mind the school-slang Hebrew expression ‘*ani agid otakh le-safta*’ (literally: ‘I will tell you (direct object) to Grandma’, meaning ‘I will complain to Grandma about your behavior’). In the predicate-argument structure of the Russian verb *skazat* ‘(tell)’, the indirect object with the preposition *pro* ‘(about)’ maps on the role of the subject of an utterance. (Apart from the Hebrew slang expression discussed here, the Hebrew verb *lehagid* ‘(tell)’ has a similar predicate-argument structure).

(11) *Ya skazhu Ø tebya babul-e!
 I tell/FUT you/ACC-direct obj. Grandma/ DAT

Standard Russian:

Ya (ras)skazhu pro tebya babul-e!
 I tell/FUT about you/ACC-indirect obj. Grandma/ DAT

[pause]

Vsyo! Ya idu Ø tebya govorit’
 Enough! I go you/ACC-direct obj. say/INF

Standard Russian:

Vsyo! Ya idu pro tebya (?)govorit’⁷
 Enough! I go about you/ACC-indirect obj. say/INF

‘I will complain to Grandma about you! [pause] Enough! I am going to complain!’

(Dana X. to her younger sister; 2001, ethnographic observations in a swimming pool).

In conclusion, the present corpus of Hebrew-Russian bilingual data gives very little evidence of the recombination of the predicate-argument structure in comparison to the lexical conceptual and morphological-realization levels. These findings support Myers-Scotton’s hypothesis that the degree of flexibility in abstract structure varies across the three levels and the predicate-argument structure is the least susceptible to alternations. Indeed, whereas the previous section on morphological-realization patterns gives a typology of frequent changes, the present one analyzes single instances of recombination at the level of predicate-argument structure. Besides, examples of restructuring the Matrix frame at the predicate-argument level (10-11) have a mixed or arguable nature and may be also attributed to the speakers’ insensitivity to fine morphological distinction or viewed as phraseological calques.

⁷ The choice of verb seems awkward yet acceptable in colloquial speech and indicates a minor degree of convergence to Hebrew at the lexical-conceptual level. In standard Russian, the use of the verb complex ‘*zhalovat’ sya na* + indirect obj.’ in these sentences is preferable.

4. Conclusions

To sum up, the present article gave insight into the contact-induced abstract changes that characterize the speech of children belonging to the second-generation of Russian-speaking immigrants in Israel. They are less visible and more difficult for analysis than overt (surface) codeswitching patterns that imply inclusion of Hebrew items in the Russian speech. Sometimes, contact-induced changes may involve simultaneous processes at different abstract levels of the Matrix frame, as, for example, in the reduction of the Russian conjunction system. Myers-Scotton (2002) and Schmitt (2001) also give ample examples of changes involving several abstract levels. On the basis of the present research, it is hypothesized that these processes at different levels do not only happen simultaneously but may also form a cause-result chain, that is, for example, a reconfiguration of the lexical-semantic structure of the Russian conjunction triggers changes in the structure of the compound sentence. Similarly, changes in the lexical-conceptual structure of a preposition may influence case assignment. The verification of this hypothesis is open for further research in the field of bilingual processing.

The composite Matrix Frame of the variety of Russian spoken by Hebrew-Russian bilingual children in the target community demonstrates convergence to Hebrew at the three abstract levels. Modifications at the *lexical-conceptual* level are the most visible signs of convergence to Hebrew. Splitting and recombination of the Matrix frame at the level of *morphological-realization patterns* result in diverse structural outcomes. The article suggests their typology. Modifications of the *predicate-argument* structure are quite rare and usually have an unclear or mixed nature, namely, they may be also interpreted as changes at the other two abstract levels sometimes. At all the three levels, the complex Russian morphology plays an important role in restructuring the Matrix Frame. Discrepancies between the Hebrew and Russian grammars result in particularly interesting structural outcomes in the composite Hebrew-Russian Matrix frame.

It is this complex of features characterizing the composite Hebrew-Russian Matrix frame that causes Russia-speaking adults to view the children's Russian as 'hebraized', 'broken' or even 'impure'. Although they find it difficult to single out or define its specific structural properties in linguistic terms, they can easily recollect an illustrative sentence from their children's speech that demonstrates one or more abstract-level changes discussed in the present article. The linguistic analysis shows particularly delicate and sophisticated nature of the bilingual child's performance in the family heritage language.

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