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## **FEATURES AND PROSPECTS OF ISRAEL'S RUSSIAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITY'S DEVELOPMENT**

The article covers the current condition of the Russian-speaking community of Israel, analyzes the latest trends of its development and evaluates its future prospects. In the research have been used: the classic model of “ethnolinguistic vitality”, which has approved itself in considering language-cultural groups, and the transnational approach, that gives more complete understanding of nature of the Russian-Jewish Diaspora in general and the “Russian” community of Israel in particular. While the present trends preserve, the “Russian” community of Israel is doomed to gradual decline of its activity and the following death. However, under a possible actualization of the transnational character, “Russians” in Israel, as a group, have chances to maintain own positions and even strengthen them.

**Keywords:** Russian-speaking community of Israel, Great Aliyah, ethnolinguistic vitality, transnational Diaspora.

### **Introduction**

More than a quarter of a century has passed since the beginning of “the Great Aliyah” – the massive wave of immigration of Soviet Jews and non-Jewish members of their families to Israel. It vastly influenced on the domestic and the foreign policy of the State of Israel, as well as on the policy of the countries of their origin, and, in general, international economic and cultural contacts. Since then, “Russians” are the subject of close attention of scientists, both in Israel and abroad, and the attempts to distinguish features and to evaluate prospects of development of the Russian-speaking community of Israel are undertaken with a notable frequency.

Among the researches, devoted to various aspects of this problem, should be noted the scientific works of such specialists as Larisa Naidich, Marina Niznik, Larissa Remennik, Eugene Tartakovsky, Theodore Friedgut and Vladimir (Zeev) Khanin. The researches, affecting this issue, one way or another, seems to be enough thorough. They operate an impressive array of factual data, however heterogeneous, and their conclusions are quite reasonable and self-consistent. But, at the same time, they are too far from using the universal model, actively proposed and used by both sociolinguistics and ethno-sociology.

So, in this study, we shall apply the model of “ethno-linguistic vitality”, proposed in the late 1970-s by the scientists Howard Giles, Richard Borges and Donald Taylor. The main goal is to distinguish features and to pick out prospects of development of the Russian-speaking community of Israel. Despite criticism, sometimes fair, the classic model has approved itself in exploring ethno-cultural groups, the basic element of which is language. The model stated that the stronger vitality of ethno-linguistic groups implies the more successful struggle to maintain their own collective identity, as well as the more successful support of their own native language in various social spheres. In contrast, ethno-linguistic groups with weak vitality are losing both the unique collective identity and the native language over time.

### **The model of “ethno-linguistic vitality”**

The model uses three groups of factors, specifically: demographic, status and institutional support factors. They significantly affect the vitality of ethno-cultural groups in a multilingual society.

Demographic factors include: absolute and relative number of speakers of the particular language and the corresponding culture in the country, birth and death rates, immigration and emigration marks of the community, occurrence of “mixed marriages” and practice of getting married with representatives of the other ethno-linguistic groups, rootedness of the community, and finally, absolute and relative concentration of the ethno-linguistic group on the local level.

Under status factors are considered: economic status of the ethno-linguistic group, its social and socio-historical status, and, finally, symbolic status of the language, within and outside the community.

Economic status is one of the most important factors of the ethno-linguistic group's vitality. It is determined by the degree of control, that the group takes over the local economy, as well as over own economic activity.

Social status is closely connected with economic status and, probably, is one of the most important factors as well. It is determined by the self-respect, that the ethno-linguistic group feels (often this estimate is close to the one, which is given by the other groups).

Socio-historical status is determined by historical narrative that formed its basis. Historical examples of struggle, as collective actors, can be used as mobilizing symbols: they can inspire and unite the members of the same ethno-linguistic group. For some groups, the past, at the moment, offers several mobilizing symbols, while for others – the past can offer only demobilizing symbols, which forced them to forget or to hide own language identity.

Symbolic status of the language, which is native for the ethno-linguistic group, is determined by the prestige, both inside and outside the boundaries of the language society's network: the advantages of one can be counterbalanced by the disadvantages of another. However, a minority, whose language is more prestigious in the world than the dominant group's is, will have stronger vitality than a minority, whose language is less prestigious.

Another set of factors, which significantly affect the vitality of the language and the community's as well, refers to institutional support they have. In many ways, the future of the ethno-linguistic group is determined by the extent to which its language and its members, officially and informally (as pressure groups), are represented in various institutions of the country. These domains of use include media, national parliament, state's departments and services, armed forces and religious institutions. In addition, the use of the language on the labor market and for promotion, both in public and in private sectors of economy, is quite important. However, the level of representation of its language and its members in the system of primary, secondary and higher education has a decisive impact on the vitality of the ethno-linguistic group<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Demographic factors**

Formation of the Russian-speaking community of Israel became possible as the result of modern migration processes. At the very beginning, the "Russian" origin was an attribute of the mainstream of Israeli society, but, in the last decades, immigrants from the USSR/CIS act as the largest, after "the native Israelis", sub-ethnic group with its own cultural baggage, system of socio-economic values and politico-ideological orientations<sup>2</sup>.

Thus, according to the sociological poll, conducted in May 2015, by the order of the Institute for Study of Russian Israel, 81% of those, who have come to Israel from the former Soviet Union, identified themselves with the Russian-Israeli community, while even slightly more – 83% – were sure that this community exists<sup>3</sup>. And, although this subculture is far from being homogeneous and does not cover all the immigrants from the USSR/CIS, some of whom could be found outside its borders, the very existence of an autonomous "Russian" community helps the Russian-speaking repatriates to aware own social weight and, as the result, to promote own interests more effective<sup>4</sup>. At the same time, the diversity of the "Russian" immigration to Israel, to a large extent, is determined by the circumstances of the departure of "Russians" from the USSR/CIS, as well as by the conditions of their arrival in Israel, that have had different features in different historical periods<sup>5</sup>.

Jewish population of pre-war Palestine, despite its predominantly Eastern European roots, has been largely integrated into a single ideological and political organism, that became the founder of the majority of Israeli social and civilization codes, as well as the pioneer of original Hebrew culture, that designed "to melt" the diversity of Jewish communities of the country<sup>6 7</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Giles, H., Bourhis, R.Y., Taylor, D.M. (1977). Towards a Theory of Language in Ethnic Group Relations. *Language, Ethnicity and Inter-group Relations*. (p. 307-343), New York: Academic Press.

<sup>2</sup> Ханин, В. (2014). "Третий Израиль": русскоязычная община и политические процессы в еврейском государстве в начале XXI века. Институт Ближнего Востока. Москва, 7-10.

<sup>3</sup> Денкер, Я. (2015). Результаты опроса: вот кто мы такие. *IzRus*. <<http://izrus.co.il/obshina/article/2015-05-29/27826.html>>

<sup>4</sup> Ханин, В. (2014). "Третий Израиль": русскоязычная община и политические процессы в еврейском государстве в начале XXI века. Институт Ближнего Востока. Москва, 46.

<sup>5</sup> Фридгут, Т. (2007). Влияние иммигрантов из СССР/СНГ на израильскую идентичность. «Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета. М.: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 66-68.

<sup>6</sup> Карасова, Т.А. (2009). *Политическая история Израиля: Блок Ликуд: прошлое и настоящее*. М.: Наталис: Ин-т востоковедения РАН, 275.

<sup>7</sup> Ханин, В. (2014). "Третий Израиль": русскоязычная община и политические процессы в еврейском государстве в начале XXI века. Институт Ближнего Востока. Москва, 7-10.

The same has happened with the first (1955-1967) and partly with the second (1968-1989) mass waves of post-war emigration from the USSR, that is quite clear, when, at least, three key-factors are analyzed: the quantity, the quality and the intensity of the “Russian” immigration to Israel<sup>1</sup>. For more than 30 years, only about 200,000 Soviet Jews, mostly “westerners” and “traditionalists”, have arrived in Israel. They focused on a quick integration into Israeli society, on mastering Hebrew and the dominant culture, which has been created on its basis. Thus, the norm of those years was the departure of “the new immigrants” from their “Russian” roots, coupled with enough intense “israelization”, or, in other words, assimilation<sup>2 3</sup>.

The situation has been changed with the beginning of the third, the most massive and the most intensive wave of immigration of Soviet Jews and their families to Israel, mainly from the interior of the USSR, and, first of all, Russian and Ukrainian cities<sup>4</sup>. During a quarter of a century, as the result of “the Great Aliyah”, which has been started in autumn of 1989, more than a million people have arrived in Israel. Taking into account the birth rate, the death rate and the index of re-emigration from the country, it is equal to one million of new residents as for the present time<sup>5 6</sup>. At the same time, only from October 1989 to December 1992, about 400,000 former Soviet citizens have repatriated to Israel. Apparently, that had the greatest impact on formation of an independent “Russian” policy in Israel<sup>7 8</sup>.

In a short term, «it turned out to be too much Russian-speaking immigrants to absorb in Israel completely». Especially, since the host society has actually refused the dominant in past ideology of “melting pot” in favor of multiculturalism. Israeli government has recently begun to be guided by the principles of “minimal state”, including the issue of immigrants’ adaptation<sup>9 10</sup>.

The policy of “direct absorption” has replaced previously accepted practice of direct state participation in solving basic housing, professional and cultural integration problems of the returnees. The new policy has implied an almost immediate entrance into free labor and housing markets, with getting an access to “the basket” of financial and integration services, which could be used by the returnees at their own discretion<sup>11</sup>.

However, not only the external conjuncture and the quantitative indicators of “the Great Aliyah” were contributed to the crystallization of the Russian-speaking community of Israel, but also the qualitative characteristics, that had an impact on it in a significant way<sup>12</sup>.

According to an almost liberal Israeli “Law of Return”, that, among other things, does not impose any age restrictions on the immigrants, in early 1990-s in Israel «has been reproduced the age structure of the former Soviet Jewry, with the predominance of middle-aged and elderly immigrants», whose

<sup>1</sup> Фридгут, Т. (2007). Влияние иммигрантов из СССР/СНГ на израильскую идентичность. *«Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 68-69.

<sup>2</sup> Карасова, Т.А. (2009). *Политическая история Израиля: Блок Ликуд: прошлое и настоящее*. Москва: Наталис: Ин-т востоковедения РАН, 275.

<sup>3</sup> Фридгут, Т. (2007). Влияние иммигрантов из СССР/СНГ на израильскую идентичность. *«Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 68-69.

<sup>4</sup> Фридгут, Т. (2007). Влияние иммигрантов из СССР/СНГ на израильскую идентичность. *«Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 69-71.

<sup>5</sup> Ханин, В. (2010). “Эмигранты”, “сепаратисты” и “почвенники”: к новому витку дискуссии о роли русско-еврейской общины в Израиле. *Институт Ближнего Востока*. <<http://www.iimes.ru/?p=11487>>

<sup>6</sup> Ханин, В. (2014). “Третий Израиль”: русскоязычная община и политические процессы в еврейском государстве в начале XXI века. *Институт Ближнего Востока*. Москва, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Фридгут, Т. (2007). Влияние иммигрантов из СССР/СНГ на израильскую идентичность. *«Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 69-72.

<sup>8</sup> Ханин, В. (2014). “Третий Израиль”: русскоязычная община и политические процессы в еврейском государстве в начале XXI века. *Институт Ближнего Востока*. Москва, 11-14.

<sup>9</sup> Русский язык в Израиле – при смерти или всё ещё жив? (2008). *Русский мир*. <<http://www.russkiymir.ru/publications/85022/>>

<sup>10</sup> Фридгут, Т. (2007). Влияние иммигрантов из СССР/СНГ на израильскую идентичность. *«Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 69.

<sup>11</sup> Ханин, В. (2014). “Третий Израиль”: русскоязычная община и политические процессы в еврейском государстве в начале XXI века. *Институт Ближнего Востока*. Москва, 25.

<sup>12</sup> Фридгут, Т. (2007). Влияние иммигрантов из СССР/СНГ на израильскую идентичность. *«Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 69-71.

integration potential was much weaker and, on the contrary, the desire to preserve the former ethno-cultural identity was much stronger<sup>1</sup>.

“The new immigrants” have maintained a high level of education and culture, typical for the previous waves of the “Russian” immigration. But, primarily, due to extremely high percentage of ethnically mixed marriages among them, and their almost complete disconnection to Judaism, the newcomers seemed to be less Jewish<sup>2</sup>. More than a third of them were not “hereditary” Jews from the point of view of the Orthodox Rabbinate (and hence the State of Israel), or did not have any Jewish roots at all<sup>3</sup>. At the same time, more than 90% of them were secular. Unlike the majority of Israelis, they view Jewry as an ethno-national community or a kind of cultural and historical phenomenon, practically not including a religious component in own definition of Jewry<sup>4 5</sup>.

The immigrants from the USSR/CIS, for the most part, were neither convinced Zionists, nor traditional Jews. They decided to repatriate to Israel, mainly for pragmatic, not ideological reasons<sup>6 7</sup>. The factors, that attracted them to Israel, were significantly weaker than the factors, which pushed them out of the USSR/CIS. A lot of “Russians”, trying to escape from their homeland, which turned out to be in a system crisis, aimed to move to the United State, however, with the beginning of “the Great Aliyah”, the American government stopped granting a refugee status to Soviet Jews, so, since then, they could move to the US only on general grounds<sup>8</sup>.

In this sense, psychological character of the previous waves of post-war “Russian” immigration to Israel was completely different. Nevertheless, the reception of one million new Russian-speaking immigrants and socio-cultural environment, they have created, became a factor of “reverse russification”, which has affected some of the old-timers. As the result, according to some approximate estimates, about 35-40 thousands of “the Aliyah of the 70-s” returnees, are today, in fact, a part of the Russian-speaking community of the country. Although most of them are better socially and economically integrated into Israeli society and do not consider themselves as “Russians”, under certain conditions they support the community’s institutions, which were created by “Russians”, and endorse their cultural and political initiatives as well<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, the public figures, which came to Israel with the second wave of post-war “Russian” immigration, took the community’s leadership, that was necessary for dialogue with Israeli cultural and political establishment<sup>10</sup>.

The Russian-speaking community of the country is characterized by the certain territorial localization. It is the most important condition for formation and preservation of the “Russian” subculture in Israeli society. Thus, a significant part of “the new immigrants” is concentrated in a few Israeli cities. They are represented by quite large communities (from 40 thousands to more than 60 thousands of people). “Russians” make up more than a fifth of the population in 30 cities, including Ashdod, Bat Yam, Ashkelon, Kiryat Yam, Arad, Ma’alot-Tarshiha, Sderot and Katzrin, where their proportion exceeds a third, and Natrat-Ilit and Ariel, where their proportion is already over 40%. Moreover, the repatriates from the

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<sup>1</sup> Ременник Л. (2007). Транснациональные тенденции в жизни русскоязычной общины Израиля. *«Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 427.

<sup>2</sup> Фридгут, Т. (2007). Влияние иммигрантов из СССР/СНГ на израильскую идентичность. *«Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 69-71.

<sup>3</sup> Hartman, D. (2008). The Tribes of Israel: Jewish Identities in the Jewish State. *HAVRUTA – A Journal of Jewish Conversation*, 2, 24-25.

<sup>4</sup> Ременник Л. (2007). Транснациональные тенденции в жизни русскоязычной общины Израиля. *«Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 427.

<sup>5</sup> Фридгут, Т. (2007). Влияние иммигрантов из СССР/СНГ на израильскую идентичность. *«Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 79.

<sup>6</sup> Ременник Л. (2007). Транснациональные тенденции в жизни русскоязычной общины Израиля. *«Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 428.

<sup>7</sup> Niznik, M. (2005). Searching for a New Identity: The Acculturation of Russian-born Adolescents in Israel. *Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium on Bilingualism*. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press, 1703.

<sup>8</sup> Фридгут, Т. (2007). Влияние иммигрантов из СССР/СНГ на израильскую идентичность. *«Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 71.

<sup>9</sup> Ханин, В. (2014). *“Третий Израиль”: русскоязычная община и политические процессы в еврейском государстве в начале XXI века*. Институт Ближнего Востока. Москва, 9-10.

<sup>10</sup> Фридгут, Т. (2007). Влияние иммигрантов из СССР/СНГ на израильскую идентичность. *«Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 69-72.

former USSR prefer to settle not only in the certain cities, but in the same neighborhoods and the same districts of these settlements. In turn, the high concentration of “Russians” creates psychologically comfortable conditions for preserving and reproducing social standards of behavior, which are common for “the new immigrants”. According to the research, that took place in 2008, by the order of Israeli Center for Local Authorities, the main criterion for the residence’s selection, by the repatriates from the former USSR, often was «the closeness to relatives and friends».

It is noteworthy that, according to another research, that took place in 2006, on the initiative of Joint-Israel, the will to live in “the immigrant areas” is even more expressed among the “Russian” youth of 18-29 years old than among their compatriots from the elder age groups. In many aspects, it is connected to the nature and the efficiency of intra-community’s social networks. The research of civil identity of Russian-speaking Israelis in 2011 shows, that 71% of the “Russian” young people get together “often” or “very often” with their friends from the former USSR, against, respectively, 58% of the middle-aged, 56% of the advanced middle age and 46% of the old-aged. And this is despite the fact that, according to the research, only for 57% of Russian-speaking Israelis, aged 18-29 years old, not less than four of five closest friends are the immigrants from the former USSR, while this is true for 70% of the 30-44-year-olds, 85% of the 45-60-year-olds and 83% of the “Russian” immigrants over 60<sup>1</sup>.

In regard to romantic or, especially, family relations, that overcome the borders of the “Russian” community, they remain to be infrequent even among the young people, sharply decreasing and reaching a minimum in the eldest group<sup>2 3</sup>. Moreover, it is important that even representatives of so-called “one and a half generation” of the immigrants, who have arrived in Israel under the age of 13 and were actively involved in social relations with representatives of the other ethno-cultural groups of Israeli-Jewish society, prefer, as possible partners, members of their own community<sup>4 5</sup>.

Thus, a significant number of Russian-speakers in Israel, both absolute and relative, and, in particular, in the Jewish sector, the deviance of inter-marriage relations, the high concentration of “Russians”, in absolute and relative terms, in certain areas of Israel, namely, on its geographical periphery, – all this, to some extent, help “the new immigrants” to preserve own collective identity. In turn, the low birth rate and the high death rate, the significantly decreased immigration rate and the high emigration rate, which are observed among “the new immigrants”, especially in comparison to the other ethno-cultural groups of Israeli society, the rootless of “Russians” in Israel, who are, primarily, Soviet and post-Soviet Jews and members of their families, – on the contrary, reduce the vitality of Russian language and Russian culture in the country.

### Status factors

The beginning of “the Great Aliyah” coincided with Israel’s transition from an industrial to a post-industrial society. This process had both – the positive and the negative sides<sup>6</sup>. Its main advantage was the growth of the national economy and the standard of living in Israel that were used by “the new immigrants”, in particular, as the consumers of goods and services<sup>7 8</sup>. Its main disadvantage was the relative self-sufficiency of Israel in providing specialists for the national economy<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ханин, В. (2014). “Третий Израиль”: русскоязычная община и политические процессы в еврейском государстве в начале XXI века. Институт Ближнего Востока. Москва, 23-28.

<sup>2</sup> Всего шесть процентов русских готовы жить с израильянами. (2004). Интересные новости. <<http://www.lenta.co.il/page/20041228011428>>

<sup>3</sup> Найдич, Л. (2005). Новая алия сохраняет русский. *Отечественные записки*. <<http://www.strana-oz.ru/2005/2/povaya-aliya-sohranyaet-russkiy>>

<sup>4</sup> Всего шесть процентов русских готовы жить с израильянами (2004). *Интересные новости*. <<http://www.lenta.co.il/page/20041228011428>>

<sup>5</sup> Niznik, M. (2005). Searching for a New Identity: The Acculturation of Russian-born Adolescents in Israel. *Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium on Bilingualism*. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press, 1704, 1717

<sup>6</sup> Дубсон, Б.И. (2013). *Богатство и бедность в Израиле: Израильское общество в XXI веке*. Москва: Книжный дом «ЛИБРОКОМ», 267.

<sup>7</sup> Дубсон, Б.И. (2013). *Богатство и бедность в Израиле: Израильское общество в XXI веке*. Москва: Книжный дом «ЛИБРОКОМ», 267.

<sup>8</sup> Ханин, В. (2014). “Третий Израиль”: русскоязычная община и политические процессы в еврейском государстве в начале XXI века. Институт Ближнего Востока. Москва, 72-73.

<sup>9</sup> Дубсон, Б.И. (2013). *Богатство и бедность в Израиле: Израильское общество в XXI веке*. Москва: Книжный дом «ЛИБРОКОМ», 267.

Already in early 1990-s, Israeli qualified labor market was oversupplied. Only in first 2-3 years of “the Great Aliyah” in Israel have arrived more former Soviet engineers, doctors, musicians and other specialists, than was, at that time, their Israeli counterparts, and, in principle, could the local labor market “digest”<sup>1</sup>. In this sense, the second wave of post-war immigration from the USSR was much more fortunate – the opportunities for specialists’ employment in those years were much more favorable<sup>2</sup>.

«Thus, qualified specialists turned up to be in overabundance, and many immigrants soon had to give up their hope to restore former [professional] status. It was worsened by the fact, that they usually lacked technical and social skills, required on Israeli [labor] market (knowledge of English, computer skills, ability to “sell themselves” competing with others). They even had difficulty in preparing and sending out professional resumes in Hebrew. Although the immigrants has actively participated in retraining programs and has attended state language courses, this helped only a few – the youngest and the most dynamic. As the result, a significant part of professional potential, which was brought by the repatriates, remained to be unclaimed. In this sense, the mass immigration from the USSR/CIS could be marked as “brain drain” that turned out to be excessive, useless in Israel»<sup>3</sup>.

Professional adaptation of the other categories of “the new immigrants” also did not become very successful<sup>4</sup>. “The new immigrants” were dissatisfied with the low financing of their absorption. It caused many of them, at the initial stage of their integration, to feel themselves unexpected and unwanted guests in the country. The resources, they received from the state, were even insufficient to ensure, at least, minimal material needs. As the result, many Russian-speakers were forced to enter Israeli labor market inexcusably early – in a few weeks, or even days after they arrived in the country. In this case, as a rule, they stopped intensive study of Hebrew and could not apply for a well-paid job that requires good language skills<sup>5</sup>. In particular, this concerns the sphere of simple mental work, for which the ability to write quickly and competently in Hebrew is one of the basic professional requirements<sup>6</sup>. Over the years, many “Russians” have mastered spoken Hebrew relatively well, however, it is still difficult for them to read and write in Hebrew<sup>7</sup>. Therefore, they can’t successfully compete on this “field” with the old-timers<sup>8</sup>.

As the result, despite the fact that about 60% of “Russians”, who arrived in Israel in 1990-s, have got higher education and professional experience before arrival in the country, most of them had to earn money by semi-skilled or unskilled labor, often in services sector<sup>9</sup>. Although, gradually, economic indicators of the newcomers and the old-timers are equalized (in particular, such indicators as unemployment and average wages), objectively, and most importantly, in the opinion of the majority of Russian-speaking Israelis, they still have to do work that do not correspond with their knowledge and experience<sup>10 11</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Ременник, Л. (2007). Транснациональные тенденции в жизни русскоязычной общины Израиля. *«Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 430.

<sup>2</sup> Дубсон, Б.И. (2013). *Богатство и бедность в Израиле: Израильское общество в XXI веке*. Москва: Книжный дом «ЛИБРОКОМ», 267.

<sup>3</sup> Ременник, Л. (2007). Транснациональные тенденции в жизни русскоязычной общины Израиля. *«Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 431.

<sup>4</sup> Ременник, Л. (2007). Транснациональные тенденции в жизни русскоязычной общины Израиля. *«Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 430.

<sup>5</sup> Тартаковский, Е. (2008). Социально-психологический анализ иммиграционной политики Израиля и её влияние на абсорбцию последней Алии из СНГ. *Диаспоры*, 1, 265-266, 269.

<sup>6</sup> Дубсон, Б.И. (2013). *Богатство и бедность в Израиле: Израильское общество в XXI веке*. Москва: Книжный дом «ЛИБРОКОМ», 316.

<sup>7</sup> Тартаковский, Е. (2008). Социально-психологический анализ иммиграционной политики Израиля и её влияние на абсорбцию последней Алии из СНГ. *Диаспоры*, 1, 267.

<sup>8</sup> Дубсон, Б.И. (2013). *Богатство и бедность в Израиле: Израильское общество в XXI веке*. Москва: Книжный дом «ЛИБРОКОМ», 316.

<sup>9</sup> Ременник Л. (2007). Транснациональные тенденции в жизни русскоязычной общины Израиля. *«Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 430-431.

<sup>10</sup> Ременник Л. (2007). Транснациональные тенденции в жизни русскоязычной общины Израиля. *«Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 431.

<sup>11</sup> Тартаковский, Е. (2008). Социально-психологический анализ иммиграционной политики Израиля и её влияние на абсорбцию последней Алии из СНГ. *Диаспоры*, 1, 270-271.

Russian language and, based on it, Russian-Soviet culture are the most important community-forming factor for the immigrants from the USSR/CIS. Russian language still, to some extent, unites the absolute majority of the immigrants from the former Soviet Union. They have come to Israel from various regions of the huge country, different in their development and way of life<sup>1</sup>. Not only Ashkenazim, but also Mountain, Georgian and Central Asian Jews, who, in course of time, however, less identify themselves with the “Russian” community of Israel and increasingly – with the other communities of “Eastern” Jews<sup>2 3</sup>.

In almost whole Soviet Union, most of urban residents, qualified specialists and civil servants used predominantly Russian language in everyday and professional communication. To these categories of people can be attributed a sizable part of Soviet Jews. 95% of them, according to the results of the last Soviet population census (1989), called Russian language their mother tongue. Moreover, a significant part of the Jewry of the USSR took an active part in creation of Russian-Soviet culture. As musicians, writers, poets, publicists, playwrights and actors, they firmly connected Jewry with Russian cultural tradition<sup>4</sup>. As recognized by the authors of the concept of “Russian Israel” – a kind of manifesto of “one and a half generation” of “Russian” Israelis: «The richest culture [of “Russian” Jewry]... finally set under the influence of the culture of the last decades of the Soviet Union, in creation of which Jews played particularly prominent role»<sup>5</sup>.

As for the young immigrants, who have recently arrived in the country, and “one and a half generation” of Russian-speaking Israelis, who have repatriated in preschool and early school age, very few of them have a good command of normative Russian language. In addition to the length of stay in Israel, the language competence is affected by many factors, including the country of origin and familiarity with various aspects of Russian culture. Thus, a lot of the young immigrants have come to Israel from Ukraine, where after the proclamation of independence, studying of Russian language and literature in educational system is steadily declining. So, for most of them, Russian language is no longer native, in full sense of the word<sup>6</sup>. At the same time, a significant part of the repatriated youth still recognize Russian language as an important element of own cultural heritage<sup>7</sup>.

Along with English and French, Russian is an international language in fields of science, culture, business and communication, however, in Israel its status, formal and factual, is much more modest<sup>8 9</sup>. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics’ data, published in January 2013, Russian language is considered as native by 15% of Israeli citizens over the age of 20. This is somewhat less than a number of those, who consider Hebrew as native (49%), and almost as many as those, who consider Arabic as their mother tongue (18%)<sup>10</sup>. Nevertheless, Russian language in Israel, unlike Hebrew and Arabic, does not have any official status<sup>11</sup>. Despite Knesset deputies have proposed to recognize Russian as “productive language” along with English and Arabic for several times, these attempts have failed, considering that recognition

<sup>1</sup> Ременник Л. (2007). Транснациональные тенденции в жизни русскоязычной общины Израиля. «Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 428.

<sup>2</sup> Ременник Л. (2007). Транснациональные тенденции в жизни русскоязычной общины Израиля. «Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 428.

<sup>3</sup> Русский переулочок на израильской улице (2014). *Хадашот*. <<http://hadashot.kiev.ua/content/russkiy-pereulok-na-izraelskoy-ulice>>

<sup>4</sup> Ременник Л. (2007). Транснациональные тенденции в жизни русскоязычной общины Израиля. «Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 428.

<sup>5</sup> Концепция «Русского Израиля». (2015). *NewResume*. <<http://newrezume.org/news/2015-06-20-9557>>

<sup>6</sup> Русский язык в Израиле – при смерти или всё ещё жив? (2008). *Русский мир*. <<http://www.russkiymir.ru/publications/85022/>>

<sup>7</sup> Денкер, Я. (2015). Результаты опроса: вот кто мы такие. *IzRus*. <<http://izrus.co.il/obshina/article/2015-05-29/27826.html>>

<sup>8</sup> Прибегин, И.С. (2014). Статус иврита и арабского языка в современном Израиле: сравнительный анализ. *Вісник Одеського національного університету*, 19, 1(20), 118-123.

<sup>9</sup> Giles, H., Bourhis, R.Y., Taylor, D.M. (1977). Towards a Theory of Language in Ethnic Group Relations. *Language, Ethnicity and Inter-group Relations*. New York: Academic Press, 311-312.

<sup>10</sup> Druckman, Y. (2013). CBS: 27% of Israelis struggle with Hebrew. *Ynetnews*. <<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4335235,00.html>>

<sup>11</sup> Иврит не выучен, русскому поднимут статус (2008). *IzRus*. <<http://izrus.co.il/obshina/article/2008-07-12/1282.html>>

of Hebrew as the sole and the only legitimate language of the country is the basis of the Zionist ideology<sup>1 2</sup>. And yet, the “Russian” community of Israel, from time to time, declares its disagreement with one-sidedness of this approach. In fact, it questioned the basic principle of Hebrew monolingualism. “Russians” does not reject Hebrew and the culture, based on it, but, at the same time, they aim their own cultural and linguistic rights to be recognized<sup>4</sup>.

Thus, the comparably low economic and social status of the “Russian” community of Israel, as well as rather modest status of Russian language on the national level, have a demoralizing effect on the group and do not contribute to its preservation in future. In turn, the solidity of socio-historical status of “Russians” and still high status of Russian language in the world – on the contrary, increase chances of Russian language and the culture, based on it, for further steady existence in Israel.

#### Factors of institutional support

At different stages of Israel’s history, the language ideology had different impact on the society’s language practice. However, the definition and the perception of Israel as the single-nation Jewish state have been invariably expressed in its monolingual ideology, which, among other things, has been characterized by institutional disregard to a multicultural reality. While Israel is historically and indeed now a poly-lingual state, strength of the monolingual ideology, used for the revitalization of Hebrew, leads to a significant narrowing of the spheres of application of the other languages. This monolingual ideology presumes the only language – Hebrew in all public spheres, and, of course, excludes endowing the same status for any other language, including Russian<sup>5</sup>. In this light, the certain “tolerance” of the organizations, which are responsible for the absorption, to the use of Russian language by “the new repatriates”, in dealing with the state authorities, in the labor relations and by the media, seems to be a temporary condescension<sup>6 7</sup>.

In the aforementioned research (2011) was shown, that those “Russians”, who use at work exclusively or mainly the language of the country of origin, accounts 5.2% and 10.1%, but in the group of 18-29-age only 1.8% and 3.6%, respectively<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, it appears probable, that a significant number of respondents, who answered that way, is involved in community’s business, which serves foremost the immigrants from the former USSR<sup>9 10</sup>. In comparison, in the interfamily communication of “Russians” there is almost an antipodal situation: only 2.6% and 9.6% use Hebrew at home, although there are more among the repatriated youth – 5.7% and 20%, respectively<sup>11</sup>.

According to the research, conducted by the Institute for Study of Russian Israel, almost half of those, who have come from the former Soviet Union, believe that there are special career and professional barriers for “Russians” and their ambitions are blocked by so-called “glass ceiling”<sup>12</sup>. First of all, this

<sup>1</sup> Иврит не выучен, русскому поднимут статус (2008). *IzRus*. <<http://izrus.co.il/obshina/article/2008-07-12/1282.html>>

<sup>2</sup> Найдич, Л. (2005). Новая алия сохраняет русский. *Отечественные записки*. <<http://www.strana-oz.ru/2005/2/novaya-aliya-sohranyaet-russkiy>>

<sup>3</sup> Хеймец, Н., Копелиович, Ш., Эпштейн, А.Д. (2002). Языковая политика и дилеммы идентичности в Израиле. *Общество и политика современного Израиля*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 54.

<sup>4</sup> Хеймец, Н., Копелиович, Ш., Эпштейн, А.Д. (2002). Языковая политика и дилеммы идентичности в Израиле. *Общество и политика современного Израиля*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 62-63.

<sup>5</sup> Прибегин, И.С. (2014). Статус иврита и арабского языка в современном Израиле: сравнительный анализ. *Вісник Одеського національного університету*, 19, 1(20), 118-123.

<sup>6</sup> Прибегин, И.С. (2014). Статус иврита и арабского языка в современном Израиле: сравнительный анализ. *Вісник Одеського національного університету*, 19, 1(20), 118-123.

<sup>7</sup> Ханин, В. (2014). “Третий Израиль”: русскоязычная община и политические процессы в еврейском государстве в начале XXI века. Институт Ближнего Востока. Москва, 31.

<sup>8</sup> Ханин, В. (2014). “Третий Израиль”: русскоязычная община и политические процессы в еврейском государстве в начале XXI века. Институт Ближнего Востока. Москва, 28-29.

<sup>9</sup> Ременник Л. (2007). Транснациональные тенденции в жизни русскоязычной общины Израиля. «Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 433.

<sup>10</sup> Ханин, В. (2014). “Третий Израиль”: русскоязычная община и политические процессы в еврейском государстве в начале XXI века. Институт Ближнего Востока. Москва, 28-29.

<sup>11</sup> Ханин, В. (2014). “Третий Израиль”: русскоязычная община и политические процессы в еврейском государстве в начале XXI века. Институт Ближнего Востока. Москва, 28-29.

<sup>12</sup> Денкер, Я. (2015). Результаты опроса: вот кто мы такие. *IzRus*. <<http://izrus.co.il/obshina/article/2015-05-29/27826.html>>



problem is typical for the repatriates of middle and young age, the majority of whom are involved in Israeli labor market, both in private and, in particular, in public sectors<sup>1</sup>. In such areas as administration, large corporate business, academic science, national media, where “aliens” are not freely admitted, a number of “the new immigrants” is still quite small<sup>2</sup>. Even though today the percentage of “Russians” in the state departments is about 10% (slightly less than their fraction in the population of the country), their percentage outside the spheres of the medicine and the administration is extremely low. For example, Russian-speakers constitute only 4.1% of the engineers, 0.9 of the social workers, 0.4 of the economists and 0.2% of the lawyers in the state departments<sup>3</sup>.

The widespread opinion says that in Israel, «if you are “Russian”... your progress on career ladder may stop at the most unexpected moment... even if you do not speak a word in Russian, but something in your look or name gives out the “Russian” roots»<sup>4</sup>. Especially, in the spheres, which are, to some extent, controlled by “the post-socialist” establishment of “the First Israel”<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, reducing to spend resources on breaking “glass ceiling”, a lot of immigrants from the former USSR rushed into the areas where they could apply their talents and energy more successful<sup>6</sup>.

As the result, “Russian” Israelis are disproportionately employed in non-monopolized and globalized sectors of post-industrial economy (such as high-tech), small and medium business, open education system, alternative, especially electronic media<sup>7 8</sup>. “Russians” are disproportionately well-represented in so-called “new settlement movement”, that personified the ideal of the national-religious camp, and in Israeli army, especially in its combat troops<sup>9</sup>. Although there are no “Russians” in the military elite yet, they will probably appear there soon<sup>10</sup>. «At the same time, they are practically not represented in the highest echelons of power, primarily political... and Russian parties, parliamentarians and members of government have a low impact on the situation»<sup>11</sup>. There is a disproportionately small representation of Russian-speaking Israelis, practically at all levels and in all branches of power. Moreover, for all the years that “the Great Aliyah” existed on political arena of Israel, “Russians”, for many reasons, were not able to develop own affective institutions of political lobbying, even though “the new immigrants” have realized own potential power and electoral demand long time ago<sup>12</sup>.

In 1990-1997, in Israeli public schools of the Jewish sector existed the program for studying Russian language as the mother tongue (at the request of pupils and their parents), but from 1997-1998 Russian language in Israel is taught as the second foreign language, competing with French and Arabic, which are also important for Israelis<sup>13</sup>. In accordance to “the New Language Policy”, adopted in 1996 by the Ministry

<sup>1</sup> Бардач-Ялов, Э. (2015). Быть «русским» в Израиле просто невыгодно. *РеЛевант*. <<http://relevantinfo.co.il/быть-русским-в-израиле-просто-невыго/>>

<sup>2</sup> Русский переулк на израильской улице (2014). *Хадашот*. <<http://hadashot.kiev.ua/content/russkiy-pereulok-na-izraillskoj-ulice>>

<sup>3</sup> Бардач-Ялов, Э. (2015). Быть «русским» в Израиле просто невыгодно. *РеЛевант*. <<http://relevantinfo.co.il/быть-русским-в-израиле-просто-невыго/>>

<sup>4</sup> Бардач-Ялов, Э. (2015). Быть «русским» в Израиле просто невыгодно. *РеЛевант*. <<http://relevantinfo.co.il/быть-русским-в-израиле-просто-невыго/>>

<sup>5</sup> Ханин, В. (2014). “Третий Израиль”: русскоязычная община и политические процессы в еврейском государстве в начале XXI века. Институт Ближнего Востока. Москва, 11.

<sup>6</sup> Русский переулк на израильской улице (2014). *Хадашот*. <<http://hadashot.kiev.ua/content/russkiy-pereulok-na-izraillskoj-ulice>>

<sup>7</sup> Русский переулк на израильской улице (2014). *Хадашот*. <<http://hadashot.kiev.ua/content/russkiy-pereulok-na-izraillskoj-ulice>>

<sup>8</sup> Ханин, В. (2014). “Третий Израиль”: русскоязычная община и политические процессы в еврейском государстве в начале XXI века. Институт Ближнего Востока. Москва, 11.

<sup>9</sup> Чернин, В. (2010). *Ближневосточный фронт. Израильское поселенчество: история и современность*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим; Ин-т Ближнего Востока, 197-205, 224-227.

<sup>10</sup> Русский переулк на израильской улице (2014). *Хадашот*. <<http://hadashot.kiev.ua/content/russkiy-pereulok-na-izraillskoj-ulice>>

<sup>11</sup> Сатановский, Е. (2009). Русские евреи – варианты будущего. *Евроазиатский еврейский конгресс*. <<http://eajc.org/page18/news14008.html>>

<sup>12</sup> Ханин, В. (2014). “Третий Израиль”: русскоязычная община и политические процессы в еврейском государстве в начале XXI века. Институт Ближнего Востока. Москва, 48-77.

<sup>13</sup> Найдич, Л. (2005). Новая алия сохраняет русский. *Отечественные записки*. <<http://www.strana-oz.ru/2005/2/novaya-aliya-sohranyaet-russkiy/>>

of Education, the program of studying Russian, as the second foreign language, spreads into both secondary and high school of the Jewish sector<sup>1</sup>. The lessons start in the 7<sup>th</sup> form and finish in the last, 12<sup>th</sup> form, but sometimes, if educational program is shortened, even earlier<sup>2</sup>. The unstable status of Russian language in Israel's education system is complemented by the instability of the teacher's position. The teachers of Russian are the last in line to be employed and the first – to be dismissed<sup>3</sup>. In Israel also exists other possibilities of studying Russian language, for instance, in the system of physical and mathematical schools "Mofet", where the majority of teachers came to Israel from the former Soviet Union. In addition, in various Israeli cities, from time to time, appear (and disappear) all sorts of Russian clubs and workshops, and some extra classes of Russian language and literature are held<sup>4</sup>.

Thus, "Russians" in Israel get a significant support on the way to complete integration from the numerous community institutions. Institutional support from Israeli state and public sectors is most visible at the army, at the school, and at the departments, which are responsible for the immigration and the absorption of "the new immigrants". Nevertheless, organizations, which, to some extent, are controlled by "the post-socialist" establishment of the "the First Israel", are still hard-to-reach and almost useless for Russian-speaking Israelis.

### Conclusion

Analyzing three groups of factors, namely: demographic (medium), status (below-average) and institutional support (below-average) – could be made a conclusion that ethno-linguistic vitality of "Russians" in Israel is, in total, lower than average.

However, the set of variables, proposed by Giles, Bourhis and Taylor, does not pretend to be complete, and the model itself has a limited prognostic potential. Firstly, it obviously does not include macro-shifts that often drop out of consideration and could radically change ethno-linguistic situation in the world and, in particular, in the country<sup>5</sup>. In our case, the condition of such "tectonic shifts" could be seen in intensification of globalization tendencies, which are capable, under certain circumstances, to reanimate and to strengthen the transnational image of the Russian-Jewish Diaspora in general, and the "Russian" community of Israel in particular.

Social and cultural isolation of "Russians" in Israel, to a large extent, is facilitated by general processes of globalization and, first of all, the development of communications that greatly simplifies private, financial and professional contacts with the other "islands" of the Russian-Jewish Diaspora and the country of the immigrants' origin. A lot of "Russians" in Israel have friends and relatives, not only in post-Soviet countries, but also in the United States, Canada, Germany, and in other western states. The close ties with them, to the greatest extent, have formed the transnational Russian-Jewish community<sup>6</sup>. The relative availability of air flights, telephone and Internet communications, satellite and cable television, Russian-language print media and radio have also strengthened the transnational consciousness of "Russians". It allows them «to participate emotionally, intellectually, and sometimes factually in lives of two or more countries»<sup>7</sup>. The numerous tours and concerts of the Russian-language theatrical and musical groups and performers, film festivals and exhibitions in the countries, where exists a large Russian-speaking Diaspora, – all this contributes to the preservation of the global Russian-Jewish cultural environment.

A significant role in the formation of the transnational Russian-speaking Jewish area also played the positive attitude towards it in some of the post-Soviet states, the governments of which, in the main, are

<sup>1</sup> Низник, М. (2007). Преподавание русского языка в Израиле – попытка разрушить стереотипы. *«Русское» лицо Израиля: Черты социального портрета*. Москва: Мосты культуры; Иерусалим: Гешарим, 408-409.

<sup>2</sup> Найдич, Л. (2005). Новая алия сохраняет русский. *Отечественные записки*. <<http://www.strana-oz.ru/2005/2/novaya-aliya-sohranyayet-russkiy>>

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keen to widen and deepen the contacts with the former compatriots<sup>1</sup>. «Citizenship and political participation cease to be tied to a single territory, because some countries of exodus leave under the emigrants the citizenships' rights, the right to participate in elections and the right to organize political movements»<sup>2</sup>. A lot of “Russians” have retained or restored the citizenship of one of the post-Soviet states, more often Russian or Ukrainian, which gives them the opportunity, for example, to make use of Russian or Ukrainian right to vote. Many emigrants also own a real estate in the country of their origin, work there, or have a job in the foreign offices of the companies from the CIS<sup>3</sup>.

In Israeli context, the development of the transnational relations not only weakens the dependence of the Russian-speaking community from the host society, but also facilitates, to a certain extent, to its cultural isolation from it. In turn, the growth of the cultural isolation from Israeli society, increase the vitality of the Russian-speaking community of the country.

Thus, while the present trends preserve, the “Russian” community of Israel is doomed to the gradual decline of its activity and the following death. However, under certain circumstances, for example, a noticeable actualization of the transnational character of the Russian-Jewish Diaspora and, in particular, the Russian-speaking community of the country, “Russians” in Israel, as a group, have chances to maintain own positions and even strengthen them.

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