THE CHALLENGES OF DIASPORA MIGRATION

The Challenges of Diaspora Migration

Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Israel and Germany

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Chapter 3

Language Proficiency and Social Identity in Russian-Hebrew and Russian-German Preschool Children

Joel Walters, Sharon Armon-Lotem, Carmit Altman, Nathalie Topaj, and Natalia Gagarina

Immigrant parents who are dominant in a minority language generally speak to their second generation children in their native language, while their children tend to respond in the language of the host society. This well-documented phenomenon usually leads to relatively rapid transition (language shift) over a single generation. It can also contribute to the development of multiple identities (e.g., Alba, 1999; Cameron, 2004; Portes and Schauffler, 1994; Weinreich and Saunderson, 2003), identities which are maintained or shift through early and later childhood and adolescence. This chapter explores the interface of language acquisition/proficiency and immigrant identity in Russian-Hebrew and Russian-German preschool children. Beyond cross-language and cross-national comparisons of native speakers of Russian in two national contexts, we attempt to get at some of the complexities of identity in preschool children and their relationship to language proficiency.

Both language and identity are viewed here as complex and dynamic. The two constructs are modular in the sense that they function without reference to each other, but they also interact, with language reflecting different identities. Linguistic structure is traditionally divided into phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and lexicon, but investigation of language also includes more speaker-based phenomena such as proficiency, and attitudes. The identity construct includes personal as well as social identity, with a particular focus here on ethnolinguistic identity (Walters, 2005).

In the language domain, we focus on language proficiency as assessed by standardized tests for acceptance and placement of preschool children in educational programs which test expressive and receptive language abilities; for identity, we are concerned with ethnicity, ethnolinguistic identity, social preferences, and attitudes to speakers and languages, none of which are explicitly used as gatekeepers in schools, but all of which influence policy decisions in subtle and not so subtle ways.

As a construct, social identity has its origins in personality psychology (Erickson, 1968; Mead, 1964), in social psychology (Tajfel, 1982), and in

sociology (Goffman, 1959). Uni-dimensional views of identity, based on classical variables such as social class, gender, ethnicity, nationality, territory, religion, family, and occupation have given way to more dynamic approaches, which allow for multiple, fluid identities.

A context-based, multiple identities approach is taken here to reflect what Bourdieu (1991) called *champs* (Fr.), i.e., macro-sociological contexts such as demography, kinship and culture. These contexts are embodied in the demographic patterns of the migrant preschool child's neighborhood and school population, in the presence of grandparents as caretakers, and in electronic media. Traditional sociological variables – socio-economic status (SES), class, occupation, nationality, gender, religion, and ethnicity – cut across these macro-categories. Weigert, Teitge and Teitge (1986) offer a five-way distinction among ego, individual, group, organization, and societal levels of identity. The multidimensional and flexible character of ethnic identity is prominent in this literature (Alba, 1990; Waters, 1990).

Identity is viewed as a bridge from the social context to the child's first language maintenance and second language acquisition and use. Parent's educational level, occupation, and SES are elements of economic identity. Nationality, ethnicity, and religion constitute political identity. Birth order, gender, and family relationships are relevant to one's family identity, while preschool, social activities, and media contact contribute to cultural identity. Processes such as migration, urbanization, secularization, and integration/alienation are also reflected in the migrant's composite identity, and its influence on the child's socialization patterns.

The present exploration of preschool social identity cannot examine a child's identities through choices of nationality, profession, family and social relations, and religious affiliation. We can, however, look at children's different identities, and at transitions linked to language development. We do so in two ways, one via responses to quasi-experimental questions and tasks and another through actual language behavior, in terms of proficiency in Russian vs. German/Hebrew and reported language use. We also look at parents' perceptions of children's language proficiency, use and attitudes. In this way we attempt to gain access to the child's identities and the effects of parents' social integration.

Language-identity relations have been widely investigated with tasks adapted from social psychology and sociolinguistics (Allard and Landry, 1994; Bourhis and Landry, 2008; Lambert, 1990; Sachdev, Arnold, and de Dios Yapita, 2006; Taylor, Meynard, and Rheault, 1977). Yet, preschool children are not represented in this literature, in part because of the notion that social identity develops later and in part because the methods of choice in this field, questionnaire and survey methods, are not appropriate for very young children.

Social identity is conceptualized here as a complex of (1) ethnic and ethnolinguistic identity, (2) social preferences, and (3) attitudes to speakers and languages. The ethnic/ethno-linguistic construct is centered on collective identity; social preferences focus on relational or interpersonal identity; and attitudes are an indirect way of getting at both collective and interpersonal identity (see Brewer and Chen, 2007; Roccas and Brewer, 2002 for the theoretical basis here).

Research Focus

The main question concerns the extent to which Language Proficiency is related to ethnolinguistic identity, social preferences for bilingual speakers of the target languages, and attitudes to speakers of different ethnic groups and their languages. The central hypothesis is that increased proficiency and language use together with interaction with speakers of the host language will be accompanied by a transition in social identity. That transition might take the form of assimilation from home language monolingualism to target language dominance. Alternatively, it may proceed from dominance in the home language to bilingualism. The former transition is expected to reflect a more unidimensional form of identity, while the latter would be evidence for multiple identities. Of primary interest is which components of identity are most related to language proficiency.

Method

Participants

Data from 65 Russian-German and 58 Russian-Hebrew bilingual children ages 4-7 and their parents were gathered. Children participated in a series of 30 to 45 minute sessions involving a standardized language test and three measures of social identity. Parents participated in sociolinguistic interviews which elicited data about their perceptions of their child's ethnolinguistic identity, social preferences and attitudes. In order to arrive at comparable samples, children with non-Russian-speaking parents, those at risk for language impairment, and those from non-middle class SES were excluded from the present analysis. The two samples were very similar for age, gender, birth order, and length of exposure to the target language in preschool (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Basic demographic information

	Germany (N=65)	Israel (N=58)
Age	M=65.78, range 47-86 mo	M=70.06, range 53-81mo
Gender	33 male, 32 female	26 male, 32 female
Birth order	35 firstborn, 30 later born	26 firstborn, 32 later born
L2 exposure	M=37mo, range 13-65mo	M=36mo, range 9-68mo

Linguistic Measures and Tasks

Standardized measures of language ability in German and Hebrew, normed on native-born monolingual children, were administered. These instruments are

the gold standard in educational settings for determining the expectations of the host societies for children of a particular age. Thus, use of these instruments was motivated by policies which use language tests as gatekeepers to certain school programs, and in the worst cases, to label children as 'language impaired.' The Hebrew Language Test (Goralnik, 1995) includes subtests for vocabulary, sentence repetition, comprehension, production, pronunciation, and storytelling. The German Screening SSV (Grimm, 2003) has two subtests: non-word repetition, and sentence repetition.

Ethnolinguistic self-labeling/Ratings of ethnolinguistic labels Two sets of questions were developed. Children were asked: a) "Who are you?" and were given the following response options: Russian, Israeli, Jewish, new immigrant in Israel, and Russian, German, Jewish, immigrant, and Russian-German in Germany; b) to rate on a 10-point scale how much they agreed, liked, and wanted to be Russian, Israeli/German when they grew up. Parents were asked a parallel set of questions about their children in order to elicit perceptions of their children's identities.

Social preferences were elicited from children via person perception narratives describing monolingual and bilingual 'friends' at a birthday party and on a desert island. Children were asked to rate how much they wanted to be with monolingual and bilingual children. Ratings were elicited for monolingual, dominant bilingual, and fully bilingual social partners in narratives like the following:

> A boy/girl invited you to come to his/her birthday party today. At the party there will be children who speak [a) Russian/ Hebrew/German only; b) very good Russian and very poor Hebrew/German; c) both languages very well; d) very good Hebrew/German and very poor Russian]. How much would you like to go to this party?

Findings

Children – Language, Identity and Preferences

Language proficiency In terms of second language proficiency, approximately one third of the children in both national cohorts performed below the monolingual norm (more than 1 SD below the mean) on standardized tests of German and Hebrew (21/65 children in Germany and 22/58 children in Israel).

Ethnolinguistic identity labels and ratings In response to the question "Who are you?", German immigrant children overwhelmingly preferred the Bicultural/ Russian-German label over unicultural Russian or German labels, regardless of language proficiency (65 percent and 80 percent of lower and higher proficiency children, respectively). In Israel, higher proficiency children preferred the Israeli

label (65 percent), while lower proficiency children showed a slight advantage for the Bicultural label (41 percent). A distinctive feature of the German group is the presence of 'ethnic Germans' (*Aussiedler*) or migrants of German origin who grew up in Russia and immigrated to Germany under privileged resettlement programs. German immigrant children were generally unfamiliar with the *Aussiedler* label and thus did not offer this in the labeling task. In the rating task, they preferred the Russian-German category.

Table 3.2 Percentage of low and high proficiency children who preferred Russian, German/Israeli and bicultural labels

Research Setting	Germany		Israel	
Ethnic Label	Low Prof	High Prof	Low Prof	High Prof
Russian	.30	.11	.35	.26
German/Israeli	.05	.09	.24	.65
Bicultural	.65	.80	.41	.09

Table 3.2 shows clear transitions in identity, with major differences between the two proficiency groups. Low proficiency children in both groups show roughly the same percentage of children identifying themselves as Russian (30 percent and 35 percent). With the increase in proficiency, children in Germany strongly prefer Bicultural identity (80 percent); in Israel, they prefer Israeli identity (65 percent).

In the ethnolinguistic rating tasks, however, results showed stronger preference for German identity labels among higher proficiency children across all three rating tasks ("I am…; I like being…; When I grow up, I want to be…). In the Israeli cohort, Israeli identity was preferred by the higher proficiency group but only for future identity ("When I grow up, I want to be Israeli").

These data show the importance of assessing language proficiency in the investigation of identity. They also show that the growth in language proficiency is accompanied by a transition in identity.

Children's social preferences In the person perception tasks all children, regardless of language ability and regardless of situation (birthday party/desert island), preferred interaction with balanced bilinguals. Beyond this generalization, for the German cohort, children with lower L2 proficiency preferred to invite Russian-speaking monolinguals, while children with higher L2 proficiency preferred to invite German-speaking children to their birthday parties. For the Israeli group, both lower and higher language ability groups showed a slight (but non-significant) preference for Hebrew only and Hebrew dominant 'friends' in the desert island situation, but no clear preference for either language group in the birthday party situation.

Summary The following parallels were documented for the two national cohorts. For language proficiency, a third of the children in each group did not reach age-matched monolingual norms on standardized measures. For ethnolinguistic identity, children in Germany tended to prefer bicultural identity and children in Israel preferred Israeli identity. And for social preferences, both groups preferred to interact with bilingual children.

Important differences were revealed here by looking at the relationship between identity and language proficiency. Low proficiency children in both groups preferred a Bicultural identity label, but high proficiency children in Germany manifested an even stronger Bicultural identity, while Israeli preschoolers strongly preferred Israeli identity. These transitions show that a shift in language proficiency is accompanied by a shift in identity. Bicultural identity attracted 80 percent of the high proficiency children in the German cohort, but only 9 percent of those in the Israeli cohort. This proficiency-identity relationship also finds support in the German cohort, where lower proficiency children preferred to socialize with L1/Russian-speaking monolinguals, while higher proficiency children preferred to interact with German-speaking children. For the Israeli cohort, no shift was evident, since both lower and higher ability groups preferred Hebrew only and Hebrew dominant 'friends' in the desert island situation.

In order to help clarify the findings here, we interviewed parents about their children's language proficiency, ethnolinguistic identity, social preferences, and attitudes.

Parent Perceptions of Children's Identity

Individual interviews conducted with parents of the children in the study lasted 90 minutes, and included a semi-structured spontaneous conversation/sociolinguistic interview, a sociolinguistic network task, and five sociolinguistic scales, completed together with the interviewer. The sociolinguistic interview addressed the following topics: information about the child's language acquisition history, family composition (siblings, grandparents), languages spoken and language policy at home, major transition periods (e.g. from home to preschool, from L1 to L2), friends and peers, and everyday activities.

Ethnic and ethnolinguistic identity Parents responded to an ethnic labeling task ("Who is your child?)", and three ethnolinguistic rating tasks parallel to the tasks conducted with their children.

Ethnic labeling task: "Who is your child?" Fifty percent of Israeli parents labeled their child Israeli/Israeli-oriented (e.g. 'a Russian/Russian-speaking Israeli', 'an Israeli of Russian origin'). Only 17 percent labeled their children Russian, and 9 percent called their child Bicultural. In contrast, more German parents labeled their children Russian (23 percent) or Bicultural (16 percent) than German (9 percent).

Many parents in both countries said that they did not discuss the identity issue with their children, as they did not consider it problematic. In addition, no parents reported their child to be ashamed of their Russian origin or to have experienced any discomfort in this regard. One child's mother even recalled how during a party in the girl's Hebrew-speaking preschool, her daughter together with other Russian-speaking children refused to sing a popular Russian song "Solnechnyj Krug" (The Sun Circle) in a Hebrew translation and insisted on singing it in Russian.

Many parents in both countries reported that their children viewed bilingualism as an advantage. In this vein, an Israeli mother recalled that her daughter introduced herself as follows: 'Hello, my name is Sh. I speak three languages: English, Russian, and Hebrew – you can choose whichever is better for you." Describing trips to Russia, parents from both groups reported encounters with monolingual Russian speaking peers, and the children's surprise that they did not understand German/Hebrew.

Other parents feel that their children have become more German/Israeli oriented. One mother recalled how a recently immigrated child came up to her son and spoke to him in Russian, to which her son (himself in his first year of Hebrew preschool) replied: "Don't speak Russian to me because I am an Israeli and I speak only Hebrew". Parents' sense of the transition to being Israeli/German is evident in Vi30's mother's remark that when on a visit to Russia, her daughter was identified as a foreigner not by having a distinct accent (since her Russian was accentless) but by being more "relaxed" and loud in public. This, her mother joked, was an indication of her daughter's shift to becoming Israeli.

Ethnolinguistic rating tasks Parents rated: 1. "My child is Russian/German /Israeli. How much do you agree?" 2. "How much does your child like being Russian/German/ Israeli?" 3. "How much do you want your child to grow up to be Russian/German/Israeli?"

For the first task ("My child is…"), a notable difference emerged in Israeli and German parents' ratings of their children's identity. More than half of the Israeli parents viewed their children as Israeli or Israeli-oriented (56 percent) or as Bicultural (31 percent). In contrast, German parents most often attributed Russian identity (31 percent) to their children. Recalling that two thirds of the families in Germany were ethnic Germans, it is not surprising that the Bicultural label 'Russian-German' was preferred (41 percent) over unicultural labels (Russian, German).

For the second task ("How much does your child like being Russian/German/ Israeli?", group differences again emerged. For the Israeli cohort, only 8 percent reported that their children "like being Russian/Russian-oriented." In contrast, 42 percent reported their children to "like being Israeli or Israeli-oriented," and 37 percent reported them to "like being Bicultural." In the German group, however, more parents reported their children to "like being Russian/Russian-oriented" (26 percent) than being German/German-oriented (11 percent).

For the third task ("How much do you want your child to grow up to be Russian/German /Israeli?"), more than half of the Israeli parents want their children to grow up Israeli/Israeli-oriented (59 percent) rather than Russian (8 percent). Among German parents, preferences are split relatively equally between Bicultural (34 percent) and German/German-oriented identity (36 percent).

In order to get a clearer picture of the differences between the German and Israeli cohorts, parents' ratings were collapsed into Russian, Bicultural or German/Israeli identities and compared across the three ethnolinguistic rating tasks. In Israel, most immigrant parents see their children as Israeli or Bicultural rather than Russian. They feel their children 'like' being viewed as Israeli and Bicultural, with somewhat stronger preferences for Israeli identity. With regard to future identity, most parents think their children will prefer to be more bicultural than mono-cultural (either Israeli or Russian) when they grow up. In contrast, more immigrant parents in Germany perceive their children as Russian than Bicultural or German. Furthermore, although they feel that their children are not necessarily comfortable with being German, they believe that they would like to be seen as German (and Bicultural) rather than Russian in the future.

Overall, the findings for parents' ethnolinguistic labeling and ratings show stronger preference for Israeli/Bicultural identity in the Israeli cohort, and for Russian/Bicultural identity identity in the German cohort across all three rating tasks. Most parents in both countries, however, think that their children would like to be more integrated into the mainstream society, with greater preference for Israeli identity in Israel and for German and Bicultural identities, equally, in Germany.

Social preferences Parents' perceptions of their child's social preferences were assessed via the child's relationships with peers, siblings and grandparents as well as by personal names. Data were elicited with a sociolinguistic network task in which parents were asked to name the child's social contacts and indicate the languages spoken with each person and the degree of his/her connection with that person. Analyses of sociolinguistic networks of German and Israeli children yielded different patterns for the two groups.

Peers In Israel, it was found that, as Hebrew proficiency increases, almost all interaction among Russian-speaking bilingual children is done in Hebrew. However, this language pattern does not presuppose a switch in children's choice of friends. Many parents reported their children to opt for friends from Russian speaking immigrant families, and about the same number have friends from both Russian- and Hebrew-speaking families. Parents relate their children's choice of Russian friends to similarity in upbringing or mentality rather than to sociolinguistic factors (language maintenance), as evidenced by the fact that even Russian friends tend to interact in Hebrew. A similar pattern was observed for the German cohort. An additional factor responsible for children's choice of friends in Germany is the enclaved neighbourhood they live in.

Siblings In Israel, having older siblings was found to contribute to the child's identity. Of the 25 children who spoke Hebrew with older siblings, 12 were classified by parents as Israeli, 11 as Bicultural and only 2 as Russian. In Germany, findings were similar (but not as clear cut due to the small amount of data available on this issue). Of the 12 children who had German-dominant older siblings, eight were classified as German/Russian-German, two as Bicultural and two as Russian. Thus, communication with older German-/Hebrew-dominant siblings leads to a consistent transition to L2 language dominance and a shift in identity.

Grandparents In Israel, the involvement of Russian-speaking grandmothers (as primary care-takers and/or living with the nuclear family) was not found to be a major influence on Russian identity. Of the 46 children whose Russian-speaking grandmothers were actively involved in their upbringing, 15 were classified as Israeli and were highly proficient in Hebrew, 23 as Bicultural and only eight as Russian.

In Germany, the situation is markedly different. Only five Russian-speaking grandmothers were reported to be actively involved with their grandchildren. Since most mothers in the German group did not work outside the home, grandparents' assistance was not required.

Naming Naming patterns also revealed differences in integrative identity among the two countries. While children in Germany were predominantly called by international names (e.g. Anna, Katherina/Katrin, Maria, Andreas, Paul, Alexander), the majority of children in the Israeli cohort were given Israeli names (Ofir, Eitan, Yael).

Summary Similar patterns emerged for both national cohorts, with identity choices trumping language choices. Parents reported equal numbers of friendships with children from Russian immigrant homes and host-country homes, but the languages of interaction were overwhelmingly German and Hebrew. Older siblings dominant in German/Hebrew also contributed to identity transitions, and to labeling of children as German/Israeli or Bicultural rather than Russian. Due to different residential and child-rearing patterns, the role of grandparents was more meaningful in Israel than in Germany. In Israel grandmothers were primary caretakers in almost two thirds of the families, and the children in these families were identified more as Bicultural and Russian than in the Israeli group as a whole. By contrast, German immigrant children were by and large raised by non-working mothers, and grandparents did not play much of a role. Finally, naming patterns also influenced children's identity choices, with parents in Israel giving Israeli names and immigrant parents in Germany predominantly giving Russian names.

Language attitudes Attitudes to languages were elicited a) by asking: "Which language does your child (like/not like) to speak most?", and b) by rating "How much does your child like to speak Russian and German/Hebrew?"

Language attitudes (direct questioning) Almost identical patterns emerged in Germany and Israel for parents' responses to the question "Which language does your child like most?" Both groups overwhelmingly chose the target language (German/Hebrew) as the preferred language of their children (44 percent and 49 percent, respectively). The others were divided equally between preferences for Russian, and equal preference for both languages.

Language attitudes (rating task) "How much does your child like Russian/German/Hebrew?" Findings for the two groups were similar: parents in both Germany and Israel rated their children as liking both languages equally (47 percent and 48 percent respectively), or as liking German/Hebrew most (41 percent for German and 48 percent for Hebrew), with much less preference for Russian, especially among the Israeli children. Unlike the direct question task above, the rating task produced greater preference for 'both Russian and German/Hebrew' and less preference for Russian in both groups.

Language proficiency and language attitudes Parents rated their child's language proficiency in both L1 and L2 ("How well does your child speak Russian/German/Hebrew?"). These ratings were compared with their perceptions of the children's language preferences. Results for both groups, in particular for the German cohort, showed high correlations of parents' assessment of proficiency and preferences, suggesting that parent's perception of language attitudes may be influenced by or even derived from their estimation of their child's proficiency in that language. And yet, parents' perceptions of the child's proficiency were not always accurate. For example, two Israeli mothers who estimated their children's Russian proficiency as very low and claimed that they never heard them speak Russian, assumed their children had forgotten all their Russian. They were surprised to learn from the interviewer that their children scored high on Russian proficiency tests and were happy to hold a conversation and tell a story in Russian.

Comparison of Parents' and Children's Findings

Ethnolinguistic labels For the children in the German cohort, Russian was the preferred label for both parents and children (31 percent and 36 percent, respectively). For the children in the Israeli cohort, the Israeli label was chosen most frequently by the parents (56 percent), while the Russian label was chosen more by their children (44 percent), followed by Israeli (34 percent) and Bicultural (22 percent). The strongest differences between parents' and children's choices of ethnolinguistic labels were found for Russian identity labels in the Israeli data (44 percent of children vs. 13 percent of parents), and for the Bicultural/Russian-German label in the German data (13 percent for children, 41 percent for parents).

On the whole, then, when choosing ethnolinguistic labels, Israeli parents viewed their children as more Israeli/Israeli-oriented and Bicultural than their children did. German parents, on the other hand, considered their children to

be Russian more often than German or Bicultural, while their children showed relatively equal preference for each of the three identity labels.

Children's Russian identity can be seen in the following examples. One Israeli child enjoyed translating for her non-Russian speaking father. By doing so, she sensed her (linguistic) superiority; in her mother's words, she even "considers herself to be of a higher caste", making excuses for her father's lack of competence in front of their Russian speaking friends: "Our Daddy doesn't know Russian, just a little, so I will translate". Another child (Germany) bragged: "I'm a RUSSIAN hero, I'm a RUSSIAN soldier, when are we going back to Russia?"

Ethnolinguistic ratings The three rating tasks ("I am Russian/German/Israeli; I like being Russian/German/Israeli; When I grow up, I want to be Russian/German/Israeli") showed a somewhat different picture from the ethnolinguistic labeling task. In the German cohort, children expressed relatively equal preference for all identities. Parents, on the other hand, considered their children to be more Russian than German or Bicultural. In the Israeli cohort, parents viewed their children as more Israeli/Israeli-oriented and Bicultural than their children did.

Overall, then, most parents in both countries would like their children to be more integrated into the mainstream society, with more preference for Israeli identity in Israel and for Bicultural identity in Germany.

Social preferences and social interaction: peers, siblings, grandparents, names Peer interaction among preschool immigrant children was found to be almost universally in the target languages, German and Hebrew. This held for interaction with other immigrant children and host society children alike. Thus, whether peer relationships were carried out on the preschool playground or in the homes, the language of interaction is a strong assimilating factor. Language shift was bolstered by older siblings who spoke the target language. The same identity shift toward the host culture was reflected in the Hebrew first names given to the children in Israel, which contrasted with a tendency to maintain Russian names in Germany. One of the only factors pushing toward Russian language maintenance was the presence of Russian-speaking grandparents in the home, either as caretakers or actually living with the nuclear family. But this was true only in Israel.

Language attitudes Overall, there was a strong preference for two languages and the societal language over Russian. This was true for parents as well as children and for both national cohorts. One difference between parents' and children's attitudes concerned Russian, with children showing more positive attitudes to Russian than their parents thought they had (again true for both cohorts). Specifically, very few parents stated that their children prefer Russian (12 percent and 4 percent, for German and Israeli parents, respectively), while their children had a more positive attitude to Russian (41 percent and 31 percent, for German and Israeli children, respectively).

These attitude data, however, were not always an accurate reflection of children's language behavior, as illustrated by some of their comments during the parent interviews. Vi56 (Israel), assessed as Russian-dominant, was present at the interview with his mother and frequently intervened in the conversation in Russian. When asked directly, he blurted out, "ani sone russkyi" (Heb., I hate Russian). An Israeli child awaiting enrollment in a Hebrew-speaking kindergarten, stated in Hebrew, "nim'as li miharusit, ba li ivrit" (I'm fed up with Russian, I want Hebrew). A similar statement came from a child (in Germany) who was asked something in Russian during her parent's interview. The girl ran to the bathroom, put water in her mouth and came out pointing that she could not speak because her mouth was full (*nabrat' v rot vody* lit., 'put water mouth' 'to keep quiet'). A contrasting incident came from a child in Germany who spoke limited Russian, codeswitched a great deal, but was very interested in the Russian sessions, trying to learn from them and improve his oral proficiency.

Summary and Discussion

The present research cast a wide net, examining language proficiency, ethnolinguistic identity, social preferences, and attitudes in preschool immigrant children and their parents in two national cohorts. Substantively, the most important finding is that language shift is accompanied by shifts in identity, which differ in Germany and Israel. Methodologically, two features of the study are innovative: inclusion of a range of behavioural measures of language performance, and a comparison of child and parent data. All of these issues lead to a number of policy recommendations.

Language proficiency and ethnolinguistic identity The children in this study began with the same home language (Russian) and were of comparable ages and length of exposure to the second language (German/Hebrew). A full third of the children in each cohort did not reach norm on standardized tests of the second language, despite a minimum of two years of exposure.

Yet, two thirds of the children performed within the monolingual norm; this implies that there are certain factors which may lead to more rapid achievement in L2 language acquisition. Both German and Hebrew are high on all three of Giles, Bourhis and Taylor's (1977) ethnolinguistic vitality measures (status, demography, and institutional support). Both languages are prestigious within their national entities. Demographically, German is spoken by more than 120 million people worldwide, Hebrew by 8 million, and despite large minority language populations, 20 percent in Germany (Haspelmath, 2011) and 50 percent in Israel (Spolsky and Shohamy, 1999), within their national borders, German and Hebrew enjoy demographic hegemony. Finally, institutional support for both languages is similar in both countries, ranging from dominance to near exclusivity in government, education, healthcare, banking and the media. Thus, linguistic vitality factors all lead strongly to language shift.

Our findings for ethnolinguistic identity show the importance of looking at language proficiency data. Taking low proficiency children as a starting point, we see that for both countries, relatively equal numbers of children prefer Russian (30-35 percent) or Bicultural (41-65 percent) ethnolinguistic labels. For high proficiency children, however, Bicultural identity was overwhelmingly preferred in Germany (80 percent) and Israeli identity was preferred in Israel (65 percent). Thus, language proficiency serves as an important measure of transition, changes in language showing parallels to shifts in identity.

Social interaction, identity, language use and language proficiency The proficiency-identity relationship also found expression in the person perception task, where lower proficiency children in Germany preferred to socialize with Russian-speakers and higher proficiency children preferred German speakers. In Israel both proficiency groups preferred to socialize with Hebrew speakers.

However, these differences are overridden by the fact that most children in both groups prefer to socialize with bilinguals (like themselves) and to interact in the societal language. Parents' interview data confirmed that the dominant language of interaction is German/Hebrew, but parents claimed that their children preferred Russian-speaking friends (who are bilingual).

This disjunct between language use and social preference shows that while language and identity may be mutually influential, the causal direction cannot be inferred from the present data (and may not be empirically testable). In any case, the two constructs have independent trajectories. More specifically, successful and even less than successful L2 acquisition (i.e. among low proficiency children) leads to German/Hebrew social interaction, but this language shift does not necessarily yield a parallel shift in ethnolinguistic identity, choice of friends, and attitudes, where Bicultural identity, and bilingual friends and attitudes were preferred.

Findings about *siblings, grandmothers and personal names* differ qualitatively from those just discussed. First, unlike language proficiency, ethnolinguistic identity, social preferences, and attitudes, they are 'external' to the child, part of his/her social context.

Siblings and grandmothers are both important features of the 'home' domain (Fishman, 1972). Grandmothers unequivocally represent L1 language and culture. Older siblings are the preschool child's bridge to the new culture; in addition to the societal language, they bring home socialization patterns, and cultural mores. A personal name, even though it originates in the home, is the child's calling card for 'presentation of self.' It reflects parental aspirations for the child's identity, on the one hand, and serves as a powerful identity marker in all social contacts with wider society. It instantly elicits attitudes and beliefs from children and adults in the host society. Names in Germany reflected both ties to the children's Russian origins and aspirations for social integration; those in Israel were indicative of identity shift, or at least aspirations for social integration. All of these features serve as the basis for contrasts between the home and the preschool, between L1 and L2, between the in-group and the out-group.

German-Israeli cohort differences Across a variety of methods, differences emerged between the two national groups. Preschool children from Russian-speaking homes in Germany present with Bicultural identity, whereas children of comparable age and language proficiency in Israel show a clear shift to Israeli identity. Several explanations for this difference are offered. First, it is possible that the host societies differ in the welcome they extend to new immigrants, both in terms of government services and opportunities for social interaction with members of the host society. Another difference relates to the assimilationist or "melting pot" approach to immigration in Israel. Along with an emphasis of the Israeli preschool curriculum on national and Jewish holidays, this fosters an identity shift. The German curriculum stresses academic achievements with holidays and nationalism taking a secondary role. Furthermore, the mothers of preschool children in Israel work outside the home, since the host society does not pay them to stay at home. This facilitates cultural and linguistic integration in ways it does not in Germany. Thus, even though social preferences and social interaction with peers, siblings and grandparents show contrasting influences (peers and siblings favouring integration into the host culture and grandmothers inducing Russian identity), the overall trend is toward identity shift for both cohorts, but sharper for immigrant children in Israel than for those in Germany.

Ethnolinguistic identities and naming practices support these cohort differences. Two thirds of the parents were of ethnic German origin and enjoyed advantages of this status in Germany. International names, appropriate in Russian as well as German, are reflections of bicultural identity. For the Israeli cohort, the parents were Jews in Russia; they became Israelis in Israel, both situations reflecting mono-cultural identity. Israeli/Hebrew names are, thus, indicative of a sharper shift in identity.

Theoretically, the shift in identity as well as the differences between the two groups can be accounted for in terms of 'context' and its use in both sociolinguistics and child development.

Context is relevant as an explanation for shifts in identity as well as national cohort differences. It accounts for many of the parent-child differences reported in this study. In terms of identity, context includes national demographic, economic, political, cultural, and institutional influences/patterns, as well as, social interactional influences. Immigrant identity is derived from feelings of being part of a language/cultural minority group and the size, residential pattern (enclaved or not), economic mobility, and cultural salience of that group contributes to the individual's identity.

These wider contextual factors are expressed in social interaction between immigrants and majority culture individuals, leading to social comparison and changes in identity. Social identity in adult immigrants is seen as an integral of societal and interpersonal factors. The shift from ethnic German identity in Russia to *Russland-Deutsche/Aussiedler* identity in Germany can be viewed as maintenance of Bicultural identity. The shift from Russian-Jewish identity to Israeli identity can be interpreted a shift from an ostracized small minority identity to a large and influential majority.

Among the factors which may account for these national group differences are:

a. Societal heterogeneity of the host country: Immigrants to Israel become one of many very different Israelis, the great majority of whom have immigrant backgrounds, making immigration part of Israeli identity, whereas group permeability may be difficult in a more demographically homogeneous Germany, where immigration is less a part of the national ethnic or discourse.
b. Motivations for migration: These were not examined here, but see Dittmar, Spolsky, and Walters et al. (1998) for a comparative study of Russian immigrants to Germany and Israel.
c. Integration into the work force: Two working parents are the norm in Israel, whereas many mothers in the German group stay at home. Moreover, the majority of the parents in Israel integrated into skilled and professional occupations, while in Germany the majority of parents were employed in skilled and semiskilled occupations.
d. Residential patterns: Even though enclaved options exist in Israel, the children in this study came from more integrated communities, while children in Germany came from families who tended to settle near other immigrants.

These sources of differences are relevant to the larger social context, and contribute to the formation of collective identity. None, however, is directly relevant to preschool children, whose socialization and language acquisition is more of a function of interpersonal relationships with parents, siblings, and peers. These relationships are the core of interactional sociolinguistics, defined initially by the question "Who speaks which language to whom, in what setting, and for what purpose?" (Fishman, 1965).

Interpretation of the data here on social preferences, and the varied contributions of grandparents, siblings, and naming practices was informed by Harris's (1995, 2009) "Group Socialization Theory," which argues cogently for peers, not parents, as the primary socialization agents and the crucial importance of context/situational effects, especially those acquired outside the home, as an explanation for differences among siblings and the development of the child's personality. While the contribution of parents and grandparents in the form of language input is indisputable, their influence on the child's identity is less robust. In terms of our cohort differences in child-rearing patterns are reflected in the children's identity. A more parent/family-centered pattern in Germany where a few of our mothers worked outside the home supports Russian identity, whereas a more peer-oriented child-rearing pattern in Israel may lead to more assimilatory identities.

Policy implications. The most important policy implication follows from the sheer complexity of the constructs addressed in this study. Language proficiency was investigated by standardized measures involving assessment of morphosyntax, vocabulary and narrative abilities using norms for monolingual children. These

measures are used to assess language minority children in both countries, inter alia, as criteria for selection and enrolment in competitive schools. They are also used for diagnosis of communication disorders and placement in special education programs. In both countries bilingual children are potentially 'overdiagnosed' as language impaired, and subsequently overrepresented in special education programs, due to similarities between diagnostic indicators in monolinguals with impairment and patterns of errors in typically developing bilinguals. The findings that more than a third of the bilinguals do not reach monolingual norms even after two years of exposure calls into question the use of monolingual screening tools for this population. Interpretation of the results of such tools must take into consideration contextual factors as shown above.

Furthermore, understanding the relative and combined influence of context, identity, and language at such a young age facilitates decision making at the transition from preschool to school. This study of language and social identity in early childhood reveals the importance of the context in understanding transition and assimilation patterns even at this young age and for integrating this information into the decision making process. Increased awareness of the difference in child rearing patterns and the degree of integration in the work force may assist in identifying indicators of adjustment and maladjustment in social integration, and can help inform policymakers who make educational decisions regarding acceptance and placement of children in school programs.

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