

**Title:** The Speakers' Evolving Attitudes towards Israeli Russian: A Sociolinguistic Analysis  
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This paper examines the evolving sociolinguistic situation of spoken Israeli Russian, which incorporates significant Hebrew lexical and grammatical elements into the Russian matrix.

However, the speakers themselves often maintain a negative attitude towards their spoken Israeli Russian. This creates ongoing tensions, which I will examine using my own fieldwork data, as well as Israeli Russian newspaper material from the 1990s and 2000s, in the construction of linguistic and Jewish-Israeli identities by these immigrants.

Following the early Zionist ideal of Israelis as Hebrew speakers, the new *olim* ('ascendants/repatriants') are encouraged and often pressured to integrate into Israeli society by learning and adopting Hebrew. However, many Russian-speaking immigrants of the Great Wave (1986–2000) were reluctant to accept Hebrew as the language of power and prestige (on diglossic situations, see Schiffman 2001). Largely unmotivated by Zionism, many Russian-Israelis maintained a feeling of cultural superiority over what they perceived as Levantine Israelis (Fialkova and Yelenevskaya 2007). For these immigrants, Russian retains a powerful symbolic meaning as a language of culture more prestigious than Hebrew; these attitudes are crucial for the construction of Russian-Israelis' communal identity.

However, at the same time as standard Russian remains a powerful symbol for Russian Israelis, their spoken Russian often differs significantly from the speakers' own perceptions of the Russian language standard. Spoken Israeli Russian often integrates Hebrew lexical and grammatical elements into the Russian matrix (e.g., *kupil [eto] na takhan-e merkazit* 'I bought [this] at the central bus station; from Heb. *takhana merkazit*); examples of code-switching and code-mixing are also frequent, e.g., *Nu ma tam kara u tebya v universitete?* 'so what there happened to you at the university?'). I argue that spoken Israeli Russian (and the speakers' attitudes towards it) in many ways patterns after Fishman's discussion (1981) of how new diasporic Jewish languages evolve.

Fialkova, Larisa and Maria N. Yelenevskaya. 2007. *Ex-Soviets in Israel: From Personal Narratives to a Group Portrait*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Fishman, Joshua A. 1981. "The Sociology of Jewish Languages from the Perspective of the General Sociology of Language: A Preliminary Formulation." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 30: 5–18.

Schiffman, Harold F. 1997. "Diglossia as a Sociolinguistic Situation." In Coulmas, Florian, ed., *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell.