Migration and Acculturation: Identity and Bilingual Orientations of Immigrant Students from the Former Soviet Union and Ethiopia in Israel

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Abstract

Acculturation experiences of different migrant groups have been shown to vary as a function of such factors as their strength and status in the host society (Giles and Johnson, 1987) and the magnitude and character of their cultural divergence from the dominant host group, as manifested, for example, in racial, religious and cultural differences (Schwartz et al., 2006).

Although the waves of immigration from the FSU and Ethiopia coincided temporally, Russian immigrants to Israel constituted a strong group demographically and their pride in their ethnic culture is apparent (Kheimets and Epstein, 2001), while the immigrants from Ethiopia constitute a small community with limited economic and socio-cultural resources.

A theoretically-based model was used as a template to create 'fitted' models best describing the contributory impact of identity on language orientation for diverse ethnic communities within the broader theoretical framework of the migration process (Golan-Cook and Olshtain, 2011).

The models derived through Structural Equations Modeling (SEM) for each of these immigrant groups in two independent studies are described in this chapter, allowing us to examine similarities and differences between the acculturation processes of students from these two ethnic communities in Israel.

Introduction

Migration, involving cultural transition and inter-cultural encounters between different ethnic groups in a new, host environment, is believed to result in a process of acculturation, involving cultural change and adaptation at both the group and individual levels (Gibson, 2001). Traditionally, this process was seen as linear, essentially leading to assimilation and to the disappearance of the culture of origin (Nguyen et al., 1999). Later conceptualizations of social scientists allowed for cultural pluralism - preservation of cultural heritage, alongside adaptation to mainstream society - by defining the acculturation process in terms of two parallel dimensions: (a) adoption of the ideals, values and behaviors of the receiving culture and (b) retention of the ideals, values and behaviors of the source culture (Berry, 1997; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind and Vedder, 2001).

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For the individual migrant, acculturation involves an intra-personal process of reconstructing cultural identities (Horenczyk, 2000) as well as finding a comfortable bilingual "balance" between the maintenance of the ethnic language - L1 and acquisition of the locally dominant language - L2 (Olshtain and Kotik, 2000). These processes occur within the broader socio-political context of the host society (Bourhis et al., 1997), which has a major role to play in the emergence of renewed language and cultural identity orientations (Ferdman and Horenczyk, 2000).

Several demographic and social factors are widely believed to impact the acculturation process in the broader context of migration. First, **age at migration and tenure in the receiving society** are two migration-related variables which are believed to be associated with the reconstruction of socio-cultural identity (Liebkind, 1993; Liebkind et al., 2004), as well as with the processes of L2 acquisition and L1 maintenance (Hoffman, 1985; Mushi, 2002; Seville-Troike, 2000). Ethnic identification is seen to decline as a function of length of residence in the host society, as national identity is strengthened (Jasinskaya–Lahiti and Liebkind, 2000; Liebkind, 1993; Liebkind et al., 2004), while early exposure to the dominant, national culture is expected to both expedite and strengthen the development of the receiving culture identity at the expense of ethnic identity. In the area of language acculturation, early onset of the second language learning process is known to yield greater levels of acquired language proficiency in the long run - apparently at the expense of literate ability in the first language, which may not be consolidated prior to immigration (Olshtain, 1998).

Migrants' perceptions of intergroup relations within their socio-cultural context are also believed to be central to identity formation and to the establishment of language attitudes and behaviors. The construct of 'Ethnolinguistic Vitality' (EV), defined in terms of demographic strength (population, birth rate and geographical concentration), institutional support (media recognition and representation in education and government) and social status (economic, political and linguistic prestige), is used to assess 'language group status' in the social milieu. The "objective" vitality of the group (EV) is believed to impact the ability of a group to survive as a viable entity (Giles and Johnson, 1987, Allard and Landry, 1992). As such, immigrant communities with low EV are hypothesized to be more likely to assimilate into the host culture and adopt the host language at the cost of shedding their indigenous background, while immigrant communities with high EV are hypothesized to be able to more easily preserve their native, ethnic language and culture.

However, it is the individual's perception of the group's vitality (subjective ethnolinguistic vitality - SEV) which is believed by social scientists to be most pertinent to individual acculturation. In

the words of the great American pragmatist philosopher William James: "whatever proves subjectively expedient in the way of our thinking is 'true' in the absolute and unrestricted sense of the word, whether it corresponds to any objective state of things outside of our thought or not." (ibd. 1911: 231). It is suggested here that the objective vitality of the group, its status and social and economical resources may color individuals' perceptions of the group, thus impacting the acculturation patterns of both individual members and that of the group as a whole.

Giles and Johnson's (1981, 1987) **Ethnolinguistic Identity Model** maintains that the more positive one's perceptions of group vitality (subjective ethnolinguistic vitality), the stronger one's identification with the group, leading to more favorable attitudes towards the group's language and to its greater use. Gardner's (1985) **Language Motivation Model** provides a theoretical explanation for the latter part of this process, as it is posited that language attitudes impact motivational orientations, subsequently affecting language proficiency and its use. As such, it is expected that language favorability will strengthen motivational orientations, consequently improving language proficiency and increasing the frequency of language use (Olshtain and Kotik, 2000).

It is, however, the construct of **social-cultural identity** which is seen to have a pivotal, mediating role as a determinant of language attitudes and behaviors. Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) posits that in any interaction, individuals will choose to represent themselves in the language that will best enhance their social identity (Giles, Taylor and Bourhis, 1973), "converging" towards or "diverging" away from the ethnic or dominant language as a means of displaying group affiliation. Language attitudes and orientations have also been seen to reflect personal dispositions towards either ethnic solidarity or conformity to mainstream society (Baker, 1992). Generally, feelings of affinity towards a language and an 'integrative' orientation underlying L1 maintenance or L2 acquisition have been conceptually linked with a sense of affiliation and identification with a particular language group and its culture- beyond the 'instrumental' (functional) benefits of knowing that language (Baker, 1992; Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Stavans and Goldzweig, 2008).

Identity and Language Orientations in the Process of Acculturation: A Theoretical Model
The literature outlined above served as a basis for the design of a theoretical model, which defines the expected causal flow of the various elements impacting the reconstruction of identity and language in the context of migration (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Identity and Language Orientations: Proposed Theoretical Model
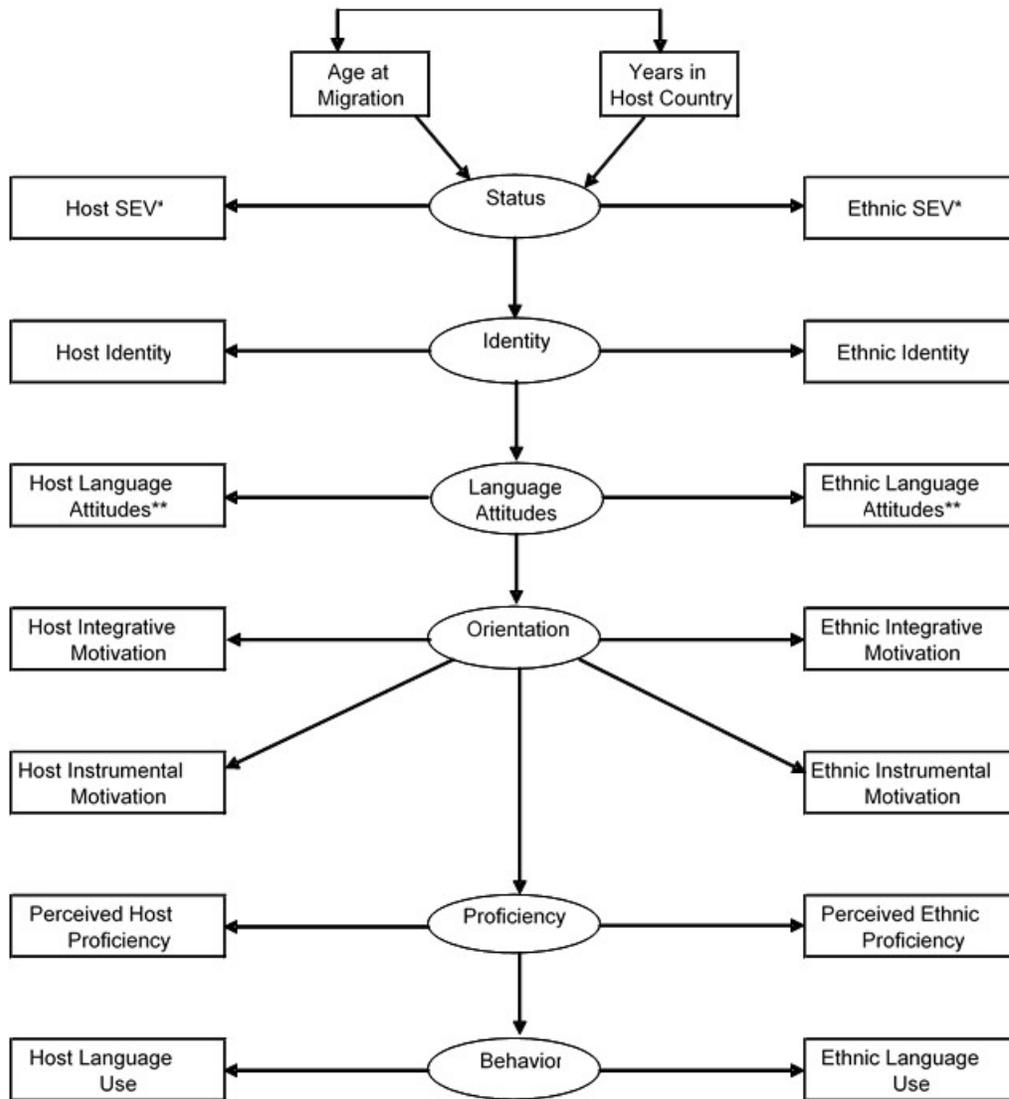
*   SEV = subjective ethnolinguistic vitality
** Attitudes include language favorability and accommodation (convergence)

For the purpose of this research, *identity* was defined in terms of social group affiliation/ identification as well as the behavioral endorsement of the group's cultural practices and norms (Phinney, 1992). *Language orientations* included: *language attitudes and motivational orientations*

(Baker, 1992; Giles, Taylor and Bourhis, 1973; Gardner and Lambert, 1972); *perception of language proficiency;* and *language use* in diverse contexts.

The explanatory flow of the model is based on the premise that pre-existing conditions, such as demographic factors (age at migration) serve as antecedents to ideologies, attitudes and perceptions, which consequently impact behavior (Cassessoves and Sankoff, 2003). The interrelations between attitudes and perceptions are hypothesized on the basis of the theoretical and empirical literature, presented above. As such, age at migration is proposed as an antecedent of migrants' perceptions of group status (vitality), which in accordance with Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory, impacts group identity. The latter, in turn, contributes to the favorability of language attitudes, which are believed to affect motivational orientations, leading to language proficiency (Gardner, 1985) and consequently, greater language use. Finally, our model adheres to the theoretical position that acculturation occurs bi-dimensionally, along two parallel trajectories- acculturation with respect to the culture of origin, alongside acculturation with respect to the host culture (Phinney, Horenczyk., Liebkind and Vidder, 2001). As such, each acculturation path is related to independently.

Two Communities in a Single Host Context

Israeli society, known for its role as host to a diversity of immigrants from across the globe, has evolved over time as a multicultural, multilingual society, where both migrants and hosts face the ongoing challenges of cultural transition and immersion. Two immigrant communities that arrived in Israel in two coinciding waves of migration were targeted for comparison: Young immigrants from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) and from Ethiopia. These two ethnic groups differ greatly in terms of both their group vitality in Israeli society and their relative cultural distance from the host community. They were studied independently, using identical research designs and instruments. Our goal was to model the relationship between emerging socio-cultural identity and reported bilingual orientations of the different immigrant populations in the same context of acculturation, wherein an assessment was made of the relative impact of age at migration, length of residence in Israel, and perceptions of language group status on evolving identity and language orientations. This chapter compares the models emerging for each of these migrant communities, allowing us to highlight the universal, as well as the divergent facets that define the process of acculturation.

Immigrants from the FSU and Ethiopia in Israel

Immigrants from the FSU constitute a "high vitality" group demographically, with over one million arrivals by the end of the 1990s, making up approximately 17% of the Jewish population in Israel (Della Pergola and Toltz, 2003; Leshem, 2005). For the most part, "push" factors (such as economic and social incentives) were the primary drive behind this wave of migration, as Israel constituted an alternative to life in the deteriorating, post-communist society (Niznik, 2003; Remennick, 2003).

The Russian language is highly visible on the Israeli 'linguistic landscape' and is salient in public spaces (Ben- Rafael et al., 2006), a marker of the relative power and status of a community in the host context (Landry and Bourhis, 1997). It is also well represented in government institutions and the media (Spolsky, 1997), and community members are highly visible in Israeli culture and politics (Leshem, 2005). In Russia Jews were avid consumers as well as creators of Russian culture, and their attachment to and pride in Russian culture and language is immense (Kheimets and Epstein, 2001) - a pattern which seems to have been replicated in the host context.

Acculturation patterns of FSU immigrants were found to be characteristically additive: Russian identity and core linguistic and cultural patterns remained firmly intact even when the national, host identity and language were adopted (Ben- Rafael et al., 2006; Remennick, 2009). Although L2 acquisition is perceived as important for both occupational success and social integration, members of this group generally prefer to speak Russian with their co-ethnics, even when their bilingual abilities are strong. Moreover, the Russian language is assigned 'symbolic' value as the language in which immigrants can realize their 'self,' express emotions and feel totally at ease (Yelenevskaya and Fialkova, 2003).

Maintenance of the Russian language is also manifested in patterns of media consumption (Adoni and Cohen, 2003), even among immigrants who arrived at a very young age or were born in Israel (Niznik, 2011).The connection to the Russian language and culture is reinforced through the use of Russian-language websites, allowing for interpersonal interactions with co-ethnic peers, locally and abroad (Elias and Lemish, 2009).

The Ethiopian community in Israel, on the other hand, may be considered a "low vitality group". It constitutes a small community (some 80,000 members) which arrived with limited economic and/or socio-cultural resources and extreme cultural differences distinguishing it from the receiving society. The Ethiopian culture is primarily oral in nature and immigrants from that country have, for the most part, limited written literacy in their mother-tongue, Amharic (Anteby, 1994). This language it is not noticeably visible in the Israeli linguistic landscape and in the media and institutional

representation of this immigrant community and its participation in Israeli culture, the media and public institutions are also limited (Dobiner, 2012).

This group of immigrants is considered, however, to be ideologically driven - perceiving their migration as a return to the "promised land" - and studies show that while ethnic culture is maintained, the need to be similar to everyone else is a driving force behind an integrative approach to acculturation and adoption of the dominant, national culture (Shabtay, 1995). Although mother tongue maintenance is valued, acquisition of the dominant language (Hebrew) is prompted by both strong instrumental orientations (the need to succeed in the new environment), as well as integrative attitudes. As opposed to the scenario described above with regard to immigrants from the FSU, the acquisition of Hebrew by immigrants from Ethiopia allows for status gains not afforded by their mother tongue. The tendency to relinquish L1 maintenance in the home upon school entrance reflects the overall tendency of parents to disengage from their children's educational needs at that critical point in time (Stavans et al., 2009).This tendency discourages continued ethnic language maintenance, ensuring the dominance of Hebrew as the language of choice, alongside diminishing the importance of Amharic in the eyes of the young migrants and the second generation of co-ethnics born in Israel.

Research Methodology

1. *Participant*s:

The research targeted immigrant students from the FSU and Ethiopia enrolled at several Israeli universities and colleges.

Immigrants from the FSU: The sample included 152 immigrant students from the former Soviet Union, enrolled in six major Israeli universities. 46.4% were males and 53.6% females, ranging in age from 18 -36 (M=23.3, SD=2.71). 42% emigrated from Russia, 29% from the Ukraine and the rest from other republics of the FSU, such as Latvia and Moldavia. Immigrants' age at the time of arrival ranged from 5-28 years (M=14.1, SD= 4.56), while their tenure in Israel ranged from 3-17 years (M=9.14, SD= 3.68). Participants varied greatly in terms of their years of schooling abroad (between 0-16 years, M= 7.49, SD= 3.91), but almost all reported speaking Russian at home (98.7%). The vast majority of respondents (75.5%) defined themselves as "secular Jews", 9.9% as "traditional", 0.7% as religious, and the remaining 13.9% noted that they were "atheists", half Jewish, or not Jewish by rabbinical definition.

Immigrants from Ethiopia: The sample included 121 students of Ethiopian origin enrolled at six university and college campuses where large groups of students of this ethnic group are enrolled. Male respondents constituted a minority of the sample (33%). The average age of participants was 24.5 years (the overall range was between 20 and 35, with 99% in their 20s), and 90% had been in the country between 19 and 22 years, corresponding with the waves of mass immigration from Ethiopia. Two groups emerged based on age of arrival in Israel, those who were Israeli born or had arrived in Israel under the age of 6, and those who arrived later.[2] 61% fit into this younger group (including 16% born in Israel) and 39% in the old group. Analyses were completed to examine whether there were any significant differences between the two groups, but the unified results were sufficiently similar to allow us to combine the younger and older group. In terms of religious affiliation, 37% defined themselves as "orthodox" and 43% as "conservative". The number of secular students was particularly low (18%) compared to the national average of 48% within the general population (CBS, 2010). Regarding their schooling, 97% of the respondents indicated that they had studied at least 12 years in Israel. 50% of the respondents did not study in Ethiopia at all, while only 12% studied for more than 5 years in that country.

2. Research Instrument:

Survey questionnaires were developed in Hebrew and translated into Russian and Amharic. Respondents were given the option of which language to complete the survey. This self-report questionnaire comprised several sections of closed-ended questions and scales designed to measure variables outlined in our theoretical model.

Factors were measured based on the average scores for a list of questions for each section of the questionnaire. The significance of each factor was checked using Cronbach Alpha coefficients, all of which ranged between 0.74 and 0.96 for the sample of students from the FSU and between 0.72 and 0.93 for the sample of students of Ethiopian origin. Hence, all of the questions used to measure each factor were sufficiently cohesive concepts.

(1) Background information includes such variables as age, gender, length of stay in Israel, age at the time of immigration, years of schooling abroad and religious orientations.

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[2] This cut-off point was chosen based on the position that native language proficiency is only achieved at the age of 5 (Seville-Troike, 2000)

(2) **Perceived Ethnolinguistic vitality** was measured on the basis of two components – a) group and language **status**, and b) **representation** in political, economic and cultural institutions. *Subjective ethnolinguistic vitality (SEV)* measures perceptions about the status of both their own ethnic, immigrant group (Russian/Ethiopian) as well as the host, Israeli group. This measure was based on Kraemer's revised version (1990) of the standard SEV questionnaire developed by Bourhis et al. (1981). Two of the conventionally defined components - institutional support and socials status of both language and group - were rated for each language group and an overall SEV score (ranging from 1 -10) was derived by computing an average score for each group.

(3) *Ethnic and Host (Israeli) identity* scales were partially based on those used by Ben-Shalom (2002). **Identity** was defined in terms of social group affiliation/ identification as well as behavioral endorsement of the group's cultural practices and norms (Phinney, 1992)**.** Respondents rated the compatibility of statements which reflect various attitude, feelings and behaviors associated with 'group and cultural affiliation' (e.g. "I am proud to be Israeli" I am proud to be Russian /Ethiopian"; "I adhere to traditions and customs which were practiced abroad", "I adhere to Israeli traditions and customs"). Mean scores (ranging from 1-4) were computed for each identity scale, higher scores indicating greater group affiliation.

(4) **Language orientations** were composed of a) **language attitudes,** including language favorability, motivational orientations (Gardner and Lambert, 1972) and attitudes regarding language accommodation (Giles et al., 1973); and b) **perception of language proficiency;** and c) **language use** in diverse contexts.

i. **Language favorability** measures assessed respondents' attitudes to issues such as the importance of L1 maintenance and L2 acquisition for the present as well as future generations, and affective tendencies towards native and acquired languages. A mean language favorability score (ranging from 1-4) was computed for each language across items, higher scores indicating greater favorability toward the language.

*ii. **Motivational orientations with respect to first language (L1) maintenance and second language (L2) acquisition**.* This measure was based on Gardner and Lambert's 1972 classification of instrumental and integrative motivations underlying language acquisition and maintenance. *Instrumental and integrative orientations towards L1 maintenance* were assessed as they reflect the importance participants place on L1 maintenance in "preserving cultural ties and the ability of future generations to communicate with family and friends in Israel and abroad", and on "strengthening children's feelings of belonging to the L1- language group", respectively. *Instrumental and integrative orientations* regarding L2 acquisition were rated on the basis of respondents' perceptions of the role of Hebrew language proficiency in "strengthening their status in Israeli society" and "securing their sense of belonging to Israeli society", respectively.

*iii. **Accommodation attitudes*** with regards to L1 and L2 were defined on the basis of Giles et al.'s (1973) Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) and were measured by the responses of participants to statements reflecting 'convergent' (accommodating) attitudes towards L1 and L2 use:

Agreement with the statement "Amharic/Russian speakers should not speak L1in the company of native Hebrew speakers" was rated as convergence to L2, while disagreement with the declaration "I prefer to speak in Hebrew – even when conversing with fellow immigrants from the country of origin", was interpreted as an accommodative tendency towards the ethnic language and its speakers.

*iv. **Overall language attitude*** measures were computed for L1 and L2 by averaging, respectively, scores for L1-related and L2-related statements depicting the attitudes described above, higher scores reflecting a more favorable "general" attitude towards that particular language.

v. ***Perceived Hebrew and Ethnic language proficiency*** measures respondents' self – ratings on "can do" scales covering diverse language skills in the oral, reading and writing domains (Clark, 1981). Perceived proficiency was computed by averaging individual item scores (ranging from '1' can do with difficulty - '5' can do easily), higher scores reflecting higher self-ratings of overall language proficiency.

vi. ***Ethnic (L1) and dominant, host (L2) language use*** in diverse social contexts and situations was determined on the basis of informants' reports of language use when conversing with different interlocutors (e.g. parents, siblings, fellow immigrants) about diverse subjects (e.g., family, politics) or while performing various activities (e.g. reading, watching television, or leisure activities). Responses were recorded on a scale ranging from 1-4. Mean scores were computed for each language scale, across items, higher scores reflecting greater frequency of language use.

3. *Procedure*

Research participants were randomly approached on campuses by fellow, immigrant students (of Russian or Ethiopian origin) and asked to complete a survey questionnaire in the language of their choice (the ethnic language or Hebrew).

4. *Data Analysis*

For each of the immigrant communities studied, a series of models- including the proposed model and several intermediary, revised models- were tested for fit using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), a procedure commonly used in model-building. Regressions performed on the data, resulted in several' fit indicators' for each model analyzed, as well as standardized estimates of regression coefficients for each path. A final model which best represents each of the populations investigated was arrived at, and will be presented in the following section.

Results

Two Communities, Two Models

In both of our studies the research began with the Theoretical Model outlined above (See figure 1, above). This was our hypothetical starting point and as expected, this model did not statistically converge for either of the populations examined. Subsequently, a model of "good fit" was derived for students from the former FSU (Golan-Cook and Olshtain, 2011). This involved creating a single 'attitude' component from the highly correlated variables of language attitudes and motivational orientations and removing the variable of SEV, as it lowered the "fit" of the model, suggesting that immigrants' perceptions of ethnolinguistic vitality (SEV) for both immigrant and host groups did not play a meaningful role in determining acculturation patterns. This model, which emerged from the

study of FSU immigrants, later served as a base model for the study of students of Ethiopian origin (see figure 2).

In each study several variables warranted the creation of "integrated scales" to replace the original scales, as 'ethnic' and 'national' measures for those variables were significantly correlated (p<.05). In the case of the study of students from the FSU, 'identity' and 'language use' scales were integrated into a single scale, while only 'language use' was transformed in the model for students of Ethiopian origin. In the latter, ethnic and national identity (ID) scales remained separate, as Israeli and Ethiopian identities had different effects on language attitudes and use.

Further model fit alterations were made in order to reach a final model of "good fit" for the sample of ethnic Ethiopian respondents (see figure 3). As can be seen, a large part of the model relating to the dimension of acculturation to the "new", was removed, as there was little variance found between respondents in terms of their adoption of Israeli culture and language, which tended to be prevalent. On the other hand, variance was found between respondents with respect to their tendencies to maintain their ethnic identity and language, and while several paths representing connections between these variables were found to be insignificant their inclusion in the model improved its fit.

Similarity and Diversity in Acculturation Patterns of students of Russian and Ethiopian origin in Israeli Host Context

Looking simultaneously at both models, most striking is the difference between the two in terms of the symmetry between the two acculturation dimensions being studied: acculturation with respect to the "old" (ethnic) and "new" (host). The variance between respondents in the FSU group is found for both dimensions of acculturation, and as such, both dimensions are relevant to the overall process. In the case of migrants of Ethiopian origin, however, the variance between respondents was found largely for the dimension of ethnic acculturation- thus, the best-fitting model relates, for the most part, only to this

Figure 2: The FSU Model
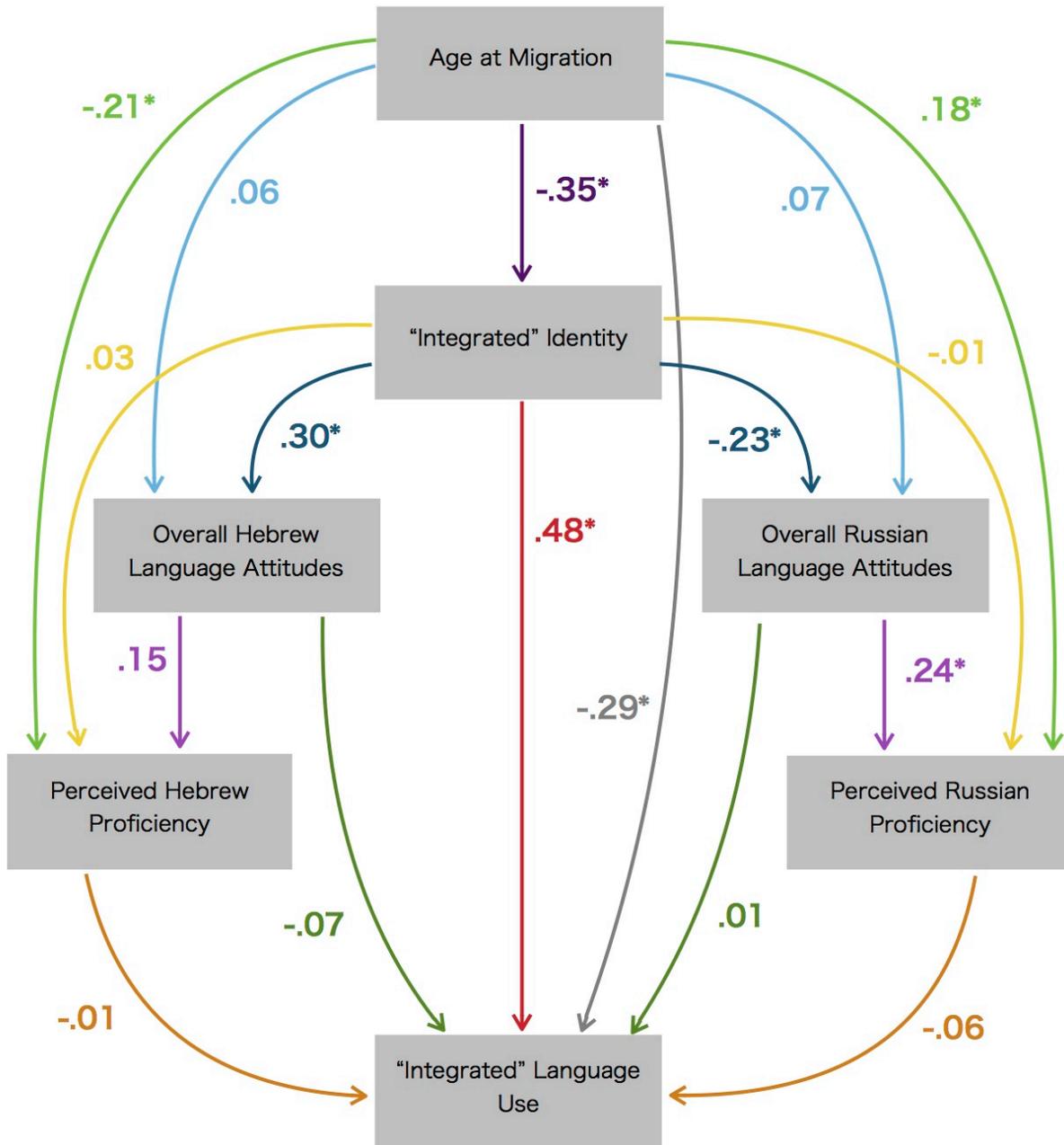
Model Fit Statistics: $X^2=3.478$, DF=4, NFI=.977, RMSEA=.000

Figure 3: The Ethiopian Model
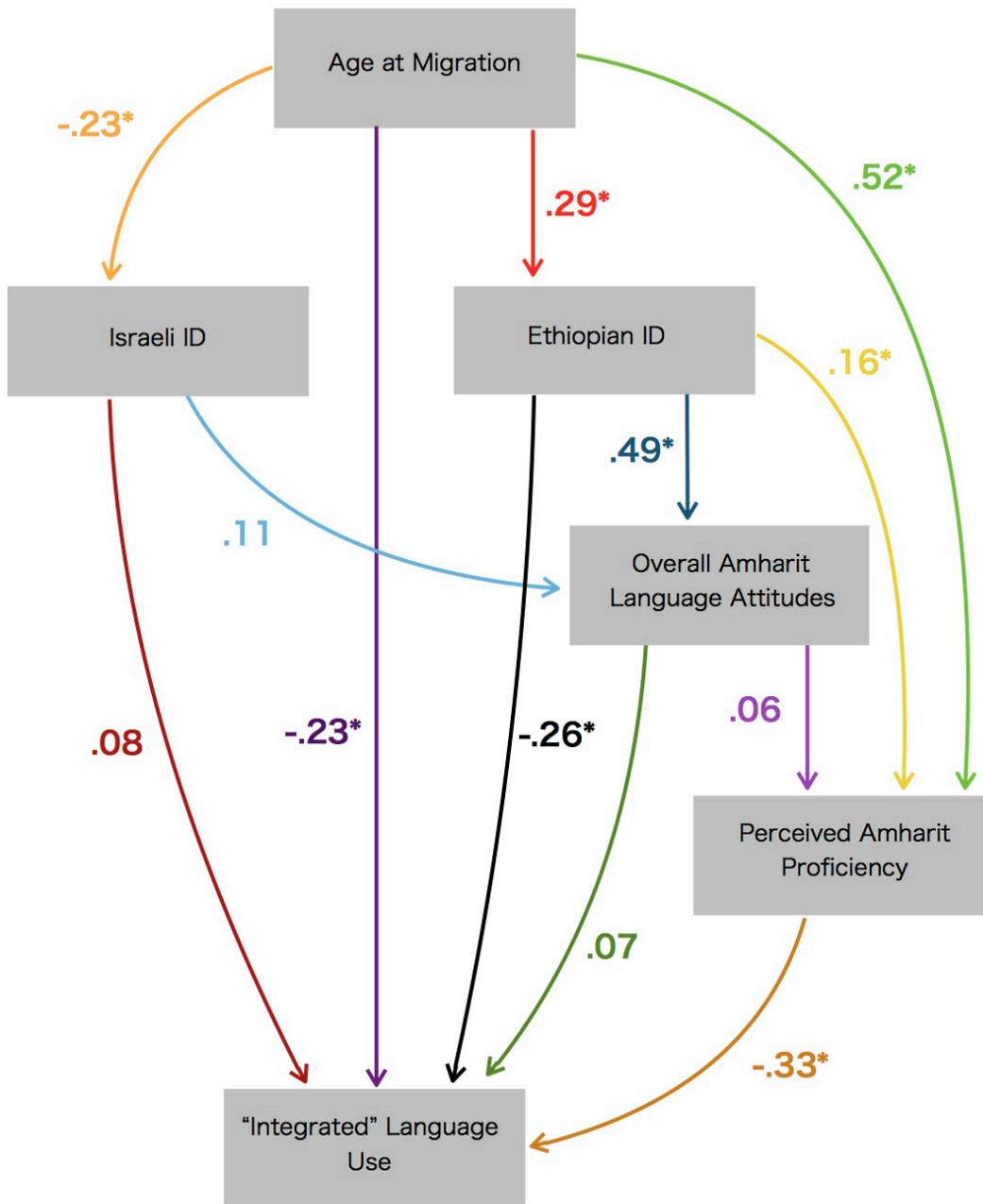
Model Fit Statistics: X^2=3.2, DF=3, NFI=.983, RMSEA=.022

dimension. It would seem that while immigrants from the FSU tend to find a balance between the "old" and the "new" (some favoring the "new", others the "old"), migrants of Ethiopian origin, show strong tendencies to adopt the "new" identity and language, while the variance between them lies in their readiness to maintain their ethnic origins. Below, figures 1 and 2 present the final models for immigrant students from the FSU and Ethiopia, respectively, outlining the relations of identity and language orientations in the context of migration. Significant paths (p<.05) are marked with an asterisk.

Further comparison between the models reveals the following:

- In **both models, the impact of age of arrival is pervasive: on identity reconstruction, language proficiency and language use.** In the FSU model, 'age at migration' is a direct and significant predictor of identity tendencies (β = -0.35, p = .000), of perceptions of both Russian and Hebrew language proficiency (β = 0.18, p = 0.029 and β = -0.21, p = 0.013, respectively) and especially of frequency of native and acquired language use (β = 0.48, p = 0.000).   In the Ethiopian study, 'age at migration' is a significant predictor of identity reconstruction, having a significant positive (β=.29, p=.000) and significant negative effect (β =-.23, p=.000) on Ethiopian and Israeli identity, respectively. Likewise age has a very strong positive effect (β=.52, p=.000) on Amharic language proficiency, and a negative effect (β = -.23, p=.006) on language use. To summarize, the older a respondent was upon arrival in host country, the more likely he or she identifies with the ethnic group (and less with the dominant group), and the greater his/her proficiency in Amharic language and preference for ethnic language use. Interestingly, for both immigrant communities, 'age at migration' is not a significant predictor of language attitudes.

- **The role of identity as a determinant of language orientations:** In the FSU model, identity is seen as a strong, direct contributor to language behaviour/use (β = 0.48, p = .000). To a more moderate degree, this variable is also a significant predictor of language attitudes with regard to both native and host languages (β = -0.23, p = 0.006 and β = 0.30, p = 0.000, respectively). As such, greater readiness of migrants to endorse the host culture and identity is reflected in more positive attitudes towards the Hebrew language (alongside less favourable attitudes towards Russian) and the more frequent their use of Hebrew. In the case of Ethiopian migrants, it is the readiness to maintain their ethnic identity which plays a major role in

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determining ethnic attitudes (β= 0.49, p=.000), abilities (β=.16, p=0.49) and language use (β = - 0.26, p=0.001). In contradiction to the model for FSU students, however, the role played by Israeli identity in predicting parallel national attitudes, abilities and language use is minor, and irrelevant.

- **The role of language attitudes as determinants of language proficiency and use:** The role of language attitudes in the acculturation process is less central than theoretically expected. In both models, language attitudes are largely featured as a "latent" rather than a contributing factor: they are significantly affected by cultural identity, but do not themselves impact other variables, with one exception – In the case of students from the FSU, positive Russian language attitudes strengthened migrants' perceptions of proficiency in their native language (β = 0.24, p = 0.003). Accordingly, for both communities, language attitudes do not necessarily mediate between cultural identity and reported language use.

- **Reported Ethnic and Hebrew language competence as a determinant of language use: In** the case of students from the FSU (for whom proficiency in both ethnic and dominant host languages was reportedly high) language competence did not seem to contribute to language preferences. In the case of migrants of Ethiopian origin, however, limited proficiency in the ethnic language precluded its use, especially for those born in Israel, or those arriving in the country prior to the age of five.

Beyond the "Best-Fit" Model: The Role of Subjective Ethnolinguistic Vitality in Acculturation

One of the more interesting findings of our study of students from the FSU was the inconsequential role played by SEV in the acculturation process. In order to re-examine this variable's role in the model derived for students of Ethiopian origin, this construct was reincorporated into the latter. Although this did not emerge as the "best-fitting" model, there are some interesting findings which may shed light on our examination of these two groups, which differ so greatly in terms of their objective vitality.

Subjective perceptions of Amharic SEV had significant positive correlations with Ethiopian ID (p<.001) and directly influenced the frequency of ethnic language use. As such, this model, unlike that for FSU students, is in keeping with the general theoretical flow posited by Giles and Johnson's Ethnolinguistic Identity Model, where ethnic identity increases as a function of perceptions of ethnic

vitality, consequently increasing the use of the ethnic language. As previously reported, the mediating role of language attitudes in this equation remains questionable.

Conclusion

The contribution of the current chapter to migration and acculturation research is both theoretical and practical in nature. It constitutes an attempt to provide a global overview of the relative contributions of identity and other social and migration-related variables in shaping migrants' evolving bilingual orientations, while simultaneously relating to the independent effects of the different variables on each other. Comparative studies of diverse migrant groups in a single host context provide a basis for theoretical model building and refinement by allowing us to highlight the universal trends of the acculturation process, all the while shedding light on unique acculturation experiences of different ethnic groups in a similar social environment. These findings may serve as a basis for intervention and policy making in issues of migration, education, the social sciences, and other fields.

More specifically, the current comparison of two immigrant groups to Israel, located on opposite poles of the ethnolinguistic vitality continuum- the high-vitality Russian immigrant community and the low-vitality Ethiopian community- allows us to examine the effect of group vitality on the acculturation process. Our findings show that while the various components of our theoretical model generally have similar patterns of impact on one another for both immigrant groups, the principal difference between them lies in immigrants' abilities to balance between the two dimensions of acculturation - maintaining the "old" and "adopting the new" – a process which is partially impacted by the demographic, institutional and social strength of the group in the dominant society.

For both immigrant groups, the impact of age of arrival on identity reconstruction, language proficiency and language use is pervasive, thus supporting the explanatory path outlined in our theoretical model. Interestingly, the role of language attitudes in the acculturation process is less central than theoretically expected. In both models, language attitudes are largely featured as a "latent" rather than a contributing factor: they are significantly affected by cultural identity, but do not themselves necessarily impact language proficiency and language use. This is in keeping with previously reported research which found no evidence to confirm the posited causal relationship between language attitudes and behavior (e.g., Casesnoves, Ferrer and Sankoff, 2003; Kraemer, 1990; Taft and Bodi, 1980) and supports the theoretical position that language attitudes do not necessarily mediate between cultural identity and reported language use.

In the case of students from the FSU, age at migration has a direct impact on both the readiness of migrants to endorse the host culture and identity and maintain their ethnic roots, which subsequently impacts the relative favorability of their attitudes to both the ethnic and national languages, as well as the relative frequency of their use of each. This finding is in keeping with our proposed model, which posits the bi- dimensionality of the process: parallel acculturation with respect to both the "old" and the "new". In the study of migrants of Ethiopian origin, age at migration had a similar impact on identity reconstruction. However, the subsequent influence of identity on language orientations lies only within the sphere of ethnic language maintenance: the greater the sense of affiliation with the Ethiopian group, the greater one's proficiency in the Amharic language and one's preference for ethnic language use.

Our findings regarding the consistent relationship between ethnic identity and ethnic language maintenance in both FSU and Ethiopian immigrant groups are in keeping with the results of a meta-analysis performed on eighteen published studies of immigrant groups in different host contexts (Guanglun, 2014). This study found an overall, moderate positive association between ethnic identity and ethnic language proficiency. However, the parallel association between the emerging 'national' component of reconstructed identity and dominant language in the present study was found only for FSU migrants, a finding which may be explained, in part, by the 'language environment' in which each group finds itself. This language environment is one indicator of the larger social context, in which individual language choices are made and acted upon (Giles and Johnson, 1987) and it is believed to be determined by such factors as the 'discourse opportunities' in public as well as private domains (Allard and Landry, 1992; Taft and Bodi, 1980) and parents' attitudes with regard to L1 maintenance and its encouragement (Phinney et al, 2001; Liebkind et al, 2004; Schwartz, 2008).

It is suggested that for a demographically strong group whose members tend to view themselves as autonomous rather than subordinate members of the host society, creating a language environment which ensures discourse opportunities is feasible. As previously stated, the proportion of native Russian speakers in Israel and the pervasive presence of the Russian language in the media as well as in public spaces allows for L1 maintenance and frequent use of Russian in day-to-day life, in a broad set of public circumstances. This, in addition to Russian pride in the culture and parental encouragement of Russian language maintenance, allows for free expression of either national (host) or ethnic identity in the choice of either national or ethnic language use.

In contrast, in the case of migrants of Ethiopian origin, the low ethnolinguistic status of the group and its language greatly reduces the opportunities for ethnic language use - especially in public areas - and exposure to the language in the media is minimal. The use of Amharic is also largely restricted to the oral sphere, as reading and writing proficiency in this language is not prevalent amongst members of this community. Moreover, as previously noted, the use of Amharic is also not encouraged by parents after entry into the school system. As such, the consistently high frequency of Hebrew language use for all migrants of Ethiopian origin, regardless of emerging identity and feelings of group allegiances, is not surprising and suggests that in this case, identity is not necessarily a mediating factor in determining Hebrew language proficiency and its use.

Another area in which some differences were found in acculturation patterns of the two ethnic groups studied was that of the role played by perceptions of ethnic group vitality. Our findings show that amongst the members of the low vitality Ethiopian community those who perceived their group status in a more positive light developed a heightened sense of ethnic group affiliation, as posited in Giles and Johnson's Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory (1987). This pattern, which was not found for the high vitality immigrants from the FSU, may reflect the tendency of some individuals belonging to low status minorities to enhance their group status as a means of enhancing their own positive feelings towards their group membership (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). This phenomenon has been previously reported in the literature (e.g., Kraemer, Olshtain and Badir, 1994).

To summarize, our comparison of acculturation patterns of two very different communities in terms of their status in the host environment revealed several similarities, which point to some seemingly universal aspects of the process, alongside several differences, which seem to be partially associated with the difference in status held by the two groups in Israeli society. The instruments and methodologies developed and refined within the framework of these studies may serve as a basis for future comparative studies, isolating other variables which may impact acculturation patterns of different groups in a single context, or alternatively, the acculturation of members of a particular ethnic group, facing the challenges of acculturation in diverse host environments.

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