

## Cognitive variability among multilinguals: Examining accented speech comprehension and attention allocation

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The wave of Russian-speaking immigration to Israel during the 1990s and 2000s included approximately one million people who faced the challenge of mastering Hebrew as a societal language (L2) and English as a lingua franca (L3). This study aims to investigate the methods of learning English as a third language (L3) among adults with B.A. and M.A. degrees from this immigrant group. Sociocultural, linguistic, and pedagogical approaches were employed in this research, using tools such as interviews, questionnaires, observations, surveys, and case studies. Russian-speaking immigrants consider learning L3 as an integral part of their social and professional adaptation, as English is widely used in business, education, and daily life. It is also crucial in their personal lives, as many have relatives in English-speaking countries and frequently travel worldwide. A significant portion of these immigrants learned English in school and university, where the focus was primarily on writing skills, while speaking skills were neglected, offering few practice opportunities. Some interviewees reported temporarily forgetting their L3 due to the dominance of L2, but later regained their ability to communicate in English. Some immigrants had to learn L3 from scratch. In both cases, Russian-speaking immigrants had extensive and diverse opportunities to acquire it. Many learn or improve their L3 at work in international technology and startup companies, through company courses, or by communicating with colleagues and clients. The Ministry of Absorption and other state institutions organize free or subsidized programs. Additionally, numerous private Israeli and international language schools offer specializations in business or conversational English. Mobile applications and online courses are widely used, allowing learners to study at any time and place. Additionally, social networks provide opportunities for written and spoken communication with friends, while communication with relatives and acquaintances in English-speaking countries further supports language acquisition. To improve speaking skills, online platforms with native speakers or Russian-speaking instructors are commonly used. Some immigrants also participate in language exchanges, teaching their native language (L1) in exchange for assistance with L3. International travel, popular among Israelis, provides excellent opportunities for improving L3. Online resources, media, and various entertainment content also offer opportunities to listen to podcasts, watch news, films, and series in L3 (sometimes with subtitles), and read books from libraries and bookstores. Students used certain similarities between L1 and L3 (alphabet, vowel writing, vocabulary) in the learning process. Respondents noted that their language abilities significantly influenced both the speed and outcomes of their learning process. In conclusion, Russian-speaking immigrants in Israel have a wide range of traditional and modern methods for learning L3, enabling them to choose a personalized language learning strategy based on their environment, motivations, and goals for mastering L3.