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**Expression of emotions in multilingual teenagers: Circassian students as a test case**

### **Abstract**

The question of the emotive expression multilingual speakers who live and operate in more than one cultural and linguistic environment has lately been in the center of scholarly attention, due to a widespread international mobility of populations and to the fact that the existence of national, cultural and linguistic minorities within a different national, cultural and linguistic majority has become a global reality. In spite of this fact it seems that apart from a few important attempts there is a general lack of an integrative theory concerning the influence of the oral mother tongue (first language) on the written performance of native oral language speakers and on the written emotive expression of native oral language speakers in the other languages available to them.

This work examined the emotive expression of Israeli multilingual adolescents. 86 short narratives the examinees created the stimuli being a picture story, 47 of which were written in Hebrew and 39 in Circassian in Hebrew letters. 22 additional texts written by Hebrew native speaking adolescents created by the same procedure were analyzed and used for cross-group comparison.

The study at hand assumed that a gap would be found in vocabulary richness and variety between the examinees writing in Circassian and those writing in Hebrew, and between them and the Hebrew speakers. It was assumed that a positive correlation would be found between their attitude to the expression of emotions and the actual performance, that the Circassian examinees would demonstrate meta-linguistic awareness upon explaining their linguistic choices and that they would relate to their linguistic reality as to a given - a natural fact.

Both quantitative and qualitative tools were used to process the findings some of which were especially constructed for the present research.

The findings support the assumption about differences between the emotive expression in the oral native tongue and the emotive expression in Hebrew, yet the Circassian speakers displayed a performance similar to the Hebrew speakers when writing in Hebrew. No positive correlation between the examinees' attitude towards expressing emotions and their actual performance was found. As was expected, the multilingual Circassian speakers displayed meta-linguistic awareness with regard to their lexical choices, morphology of the language and the process of the translation. The assumptions about the Circassian examinees' conception of their heritage language as a constitutive element of their identity, their viewing the language as

serving other functions such as intermediation, explanation, solidarity and that of keeping the national legacy alive were supported by the informants' reports.