

RUSSIAN-ESTONIAN CONTACTS AND MECHANISMS OF INTERFERENCE

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Abstract. The article describes how various mechanisms of interference proposed by Thomason function in Russian-Estonian contact situation in present-day Estonia. In addition to code-switching, borrowing and L1 transfer Thomason considers code alternation, passive knowledge, “negotiation” and deliberate change as mechanisms of interference. The sociolinguistic situation in Estonia has radically changed since late 1980s, so that more and more Russian-speakers use Estonian. Passive knowledge of Estonian, alongside with various “negotiation” strategies and deliberate change are to be investigated in depth because these mechanisms are likely to bring about changes in the local variety of Russian and, possibly, in Estonian as well.

1. Introduction

The restoration of Estonia’s independence in 1991 and radical changes in everyday life as well as in language policy have definitely influenced all languages spoken in Estonia. A general (but not a comprehensive) description of Estonia’s sociolinguistic situation is available in a special issue of IJSL (Hennoste 1999). However, to a great extent the sociolinguistic situation of Estonia’s minorities remains uninvestigated. Of all minority languages mostly Russian has attracted scholarly attention for obvious reasons: Russian-speakers, or Russophones, constitute the second largest language community in the country. However, it seems that in terms of research, Estonian sociologists are clearly ahead of sociolinguists. It would be reasonable for Estonian sociologists and sociolinguists to work side by side.

The present article¹ has two purposes: to demonstrate how various mechanisms of interference described by Thomason (1997, 2001) function in Russian-Estonian contacts and to consider recent changes in the Russian spoken in Estonia. During the period 2000–2002 I started collecting instances of code-switching, various

¹ This article is a modified version of my previously published study in Estonian (Verschik 2001a).

types of borrowing and interference. The examples to be discussed originate from several sources: Russian-language TV shows on Estonian TV, the speech of Russian-speaking students of Tartu University Narva College, everyday communication in stores, markets in Tallinn and Narva, etc. The data were further analysed in the light of mechanisms proposed in Thomason (1997).

2. Russian-Estonian language contacts research

Most of the literature on Russian-Estonian language contacts deals mainly with lexical borrowings from Russian in various Estonian dialects (Must 2000), as well as with the impact of Estonian on Russian dialects spoken around the lake Peipus (Xeĵter 1970, for most recent list of relevant publications see Burdakova & Burdakova 2000). Some scholars of Russian linguistics are currently focusing on changes in the local variety of Russian, both in speech and writing (Külmoja 1999, Kjul'moja 2000; Kostandi 2000). However, the discourse of the above-mentioned papers has nothing to do with the present-day contact linguistics.²

Works on Estonian-Russian/Russian-Estonian bilingualism are still few in number (see in particular Viikberg 1989 on Estonian in Siberia and Verschik 1993 on Estonian in Narva, a town on Estonian-Russian border, that during the years of Soviet domination has become almost completely Russian-speaking). Models and theories discussed in contact linguistics literature worldwide are seldom applied to Russian-Estonian contact data. At the same time, these data remain unknown to a wider scholarly audience abroad.

Mere attestation of lexical borrowings from Estonian cannot be sufficient for the investigation of Russian-Estonian bilingualism and of changes occurring in contemporary Estonian and Russian spoken in Estonia. Such an investigation would gain from application of contemporary contact linguistics achievements. Extra-linguistic factors are of crucial importance here. As Thomason and Kaufman (1988) have shown, these factors are decisive for the outcome of contact-situation and it is impossible to predict the results solely on the basis of the structure of both languages in contact. According to Thomason and Kaufman's model, a clear distinction has to be made between language maintenance and language shift, since the outcome of the contact situation is different.

To prove the importance of Thomason and Kaufman's claim, let us turn to the situation in Estonia. The number of Russophones has not dramatically changed between the last Soviet census of 1989 and the most recent Estonian census of

² In some cases scholars even fail to identify code-switching. For instance, Xeĵter (1970) does not mention code-switching at all and considers all relevant cases among lexical borrowing. However, utterances like *aianduses xoroši den'gi polučal* 'in the gardening farm (he) received a good salary' are apparently instances of code-switching because Estonian noun *aianduses* 'in (the) gardening farm' preserves Inessive case marker *-s*. Burdakova and Burdakova (2000:23) argue with Xeĵter that such instances should not be viewed as borrowings for aforementioned reasons, but, nevertheless, fail to identify the phenomenon, labeling it as 'foreign-language insertions'.

2000 (the figures are 474,834 and 403,925 respectively, see Estonian Statistics Office data on <http://www.stat.ee/index.aw/section=6550>). Yet various contact phenomena in linguistic behaviour/output of Russophones, including lexical borrowing from Estonian, code-switching and some others, are rather recent. Clearly, this fact cannot be explained by structural features of the two languages, neither by the size of the respective speech communities, but rather by recent changes in the status of the languages.

Second, Russian-Estonian contacts could be productively viewed within the framework of sociolinguistic periods proposed by Hennoste (1997) for Estonian. Sociolinguistic periodisation is based on the observation that sociolinguistic situations in a given society change in time, whereas each situation is characterised by different varieties with different functions, spoken by different social groups. Hennoste (1997:46) suggests that in the case of Estonian a sociolinguistic period can be distinguished and described on the basis of the following factors: main language(s) in Estonian society at a given time (Estonian, Russian, German); other important languages in a given period (Estonian, German, Russian, Latin, Swedish); registers of Estonian (religious/secular, oral/written, official/non-official); dialects (territorial varieties, urban/rural varieties); users of all above-mentioned varieties. For the latter a distinction is made between Estonian used by Germans and Estonian used by Estonians.

Thus, Hennoste reasonably incorporates multilingualism into his model. It would be logical to add Estonian spoken by Russians to the description of the present sociolinguistic period (starting from the end of 1980s).

3. Estonia's Russophones

Among all peoples inhabiting Estonia, Russians are the most heterogeneous community. A tiny group of Russians from Pskov and Novgorod settled on the northern bank of the lake Peipus in the 16th century. Part of them converted to Protestantism and assimilated linguistically into the Estonian majority. Later in the 17th–18th centuries the Old Believers found their refuge from persecutions in Russia on the western bank of the lake Peipus, on Estonian soil. After Estonia's incorporation into the Russian Empire in the 18th century there emerged an urban Russian population. According to the census of 1897, Russians constituted 4.5 % of Estonia's population. After the revolution of 1917 Estonia became a home for some 20,000 Russian refugees. Together with the latter group the number of Russians was 91,109 in 1922 (Issakov 1999:525–539).

After the occupation and annexation of Estonia by the Soviet Union the culture of the indigenous Russian minority was destroyed. At the same time, Soviet national policy covertly encouraged migration of people, mostly Russians, from other parts of the Soviet Union. The newcomers had almost nothing in common with the indigenous Russian minority (Issakov 1999:533). However, the Soviet policy of Russification did not achieve its goals in Estonia. Despite the critical demographic situation, the authorities failed to undermine the prestige of Estonian

among Estonians and to replace the language by Russian in such an important sphere as (higher) education. There are numerous reasons that explain the failure: first, a vivid memory of political independence and of Estonian as the official national language successfully functioning in all domains, second, the preservation of Estonian-language educational system from kindergarten up to the university level and thorough corpus planning (on the Soviet language policy in Estonia see Raun 1985, Rannut 1994).

The outcome of Russification policy was, in fact, a voluntary segregation and polarisation of the two language communities that led separate lives. The group of Soviet-time migrants included also people of non-Russian ethnical background assimilated into (Soviet) Russian culture, which is the reason why a vague term “Russian-speakers”, or “Russophones” is frequently used (for a detailed analysis of the term see Diachkov 1992).

The demographic situation is not homogenous throughout the whole Estonian territory. There are predominantly Russian-speaking North East, predominantly Estonian-speaking Western, Central and Southern Estonia, and the capital Tallinn where the size of the two speech communities is approximately the same.

After Estonia had re-gained its independence in 1991 the sociolinguistic situation changed: from now on Estonian was again the official language and Russian-speakers became a minority group just like any other (Finns, Jews, Tartars, etc.). At least a working command of Estonian is required now in the state sector. Teachers of Estonian as the second language are being trained in several universities. Estonian is a compulsory subject in all non-Estonian schools.

The internal diversity within the Russian-language community allows to expect variations in Estonian language skills, degree of contacts with Estonian, and in identity (indigenous group vs. newcomers, self-identification with Estonia, Russia or USSR etc). Unfortunately, except varieties of Russian spoken near the lake Peipus, the language of Russians prior to the Soviet occupation has not been investigated and a lot of valuable data is lost (Issakov 2001).

4. Thomason’s model: mechanisms of interference

In her paper on mechanisms of interference Thomason (1997:181) claims that along with code-switching (resulting in borrowing) and learner’s transfer in the second language acquisition other mechanisms exist. These are: code alternation (use of two languages in different settings); passive knowledge of another dialect or language; “negotiation”, or accommodation (adjustment of a speaker’s grammar and/or lexicon to make it similar to that of interlocutor); changes brought about by conscious decisions of speakers. The following section describes how these mechanisms function in Russian-Estonian contacts. In her recent work, Thomason (2001:148–149) added yet another mechanism, that of bilingual L1 acquisition. However, instances of simultaneous acquisition of Russian and Estonian in early years are rare compared to the cases of acquisition of Estonian as L2 by adults,

and there is little, if any, data of that language acquisition type. For these reasons bilingual L1 acquisition is not considered below.

It is the comprehensive approach to language contact phenomena that makes Thomason's model valuable and promising. It appears that models based on single mechanisms give only a limited picture of a particular language contact situation.

4.1. Code-switching

Although code-switching/borrowing and its various aspects have been widely discussed, there is little agreement among scholars concerning these matters. The abundance of approaches, models, interpretations etc. leads to a reasonable question, "... whether code-switching researchers are exploring different parts of the same elephant or different elephants or different species altogether?" (Pfaff 1997:340). Further we are going to focus on two aspects: first, distinction between code-switching and borrowing and, second, various constraints on code-switching.

We agree with Thomason (1997:190–191) and Lauttamus (1991:44–45) that it is impossible to draw a clear boundary between code-switching and borrowing. Both scholars propose a continuum between the two. In some cases where no morphological integration is required it is hardly possible to distinguish between borrowing of a single word and one-word switch. Consider the following example where an Estonian-language item (bold) is incorporated into a Russian sentence:

(1)

<u>Ty</u>	<u>uže</u>	lipik	<u>nakleila?</u>
you 2P SG	already	label MASC ACC SG	stick PAST 2P SG FEM
'have you already stuck the label on?'			

The Estonian-language item **lipik** 'label, sticker' can be interpreted in the terms of Russian morphology as a masculine substantive with zero ending (2nd declension class), such as stol 'table', venik 'brush' etc. Inanimate nouns belonging to the 2nd declension class have identical forms for singular Nominative and Accusative (with zero ending) and, thus, require no morphological integration. It is therefore hard to decide which phenomenon we are dealing with in this particular utterance. Frequent code-switching can potentially lead to borrowing, but it remains somewhat unclear what "frequent use" means (Thomason 1997:191).

Phonological integration does not necessarily indicate whether an item is a switch or a borrowing. Within a single language there are frequent examples of different degree of phonological integration: consider Estonian kool 'school' < Low German skôle, and Estonian klaas 'glass' < German Glas, the former without and the latter with the preservation of the initial cluster. The shift of stress to the first syllable in relatively recent internationalisms in Estonian is a sign of integration (prótsess 'process', prótsent 'percent'), however, some older established borrowings have not undergone the shift of stress: colloquial Estonian tavái 'come on, let's do it' (interjection) < Russian davái 'ibid.'. The verb kyjknut's'a 'to go crazy, to finish, to end' < Estonian kõik 'all, everything' is an established borrowing in the local Russian slang (Külmoja 1999:523), despite the combination kyj-

which is not possible in Russian. The verb is completely assimilated into Russian morphology and has a full paradigm: tut vsë i kyjknulos ‘and that’s how it all ended’; ty čto, kyjknulsja? ‘are you completely crazy?’ etc.

As for more or less established borrowings, Estonian verb stems can also be borrowed. Russian verb-formation from Estonian stems is possible by adding suffixes, sometimes by both prefixes and suffixes (Külmoja 2000). Russian prefixes are used for perfective aspect formation; the use of prefixes is a sign of full adaptation into Russian: Estonian maksma ‘to pay’, consonant stem maks- > Russian maksovat ‘to pay’ (imperfect) > zamaksovat, otmaksovat ‘to pay (perfective)’. It seems that this lexical item has already spread outside Estonia: a hero in a popular Russian detective film series taking place in St. Petersburg says to his partner: hočeš’, čto by sdelka sostojalas’ – maksaj ‘if you want to close the deal, pay’ (ORTV, 03.04.2001).

In our view, Russian-Estonian material offers yet another support to the proposal of continuum between code-switching and borrowing. Although different structurally and typologically, both languages have rich declension and conjugation systems. While dealing with a foreign lexical item, it is important to make clear whether this item has been registered in a few forms only or whether a full paradigm has been attested. For instance, I have often encountered the sentence pošli sëmat ‘let’s go to eat’, whereas sëmat < Estonian sööma ‘to eat’ (infinitive). Theoretically, the verb could be used in all forms, but I have never heard forms of the verb other than infinitive. Does this mean that one has simply failed to register other forms of an established borrowing, or perhaps this item should be placed within the code-switching/borrowing continuum? I am inclined to vote for the latter option.

Another argument in favour of continuum is the treatment of Estonian-language nouns incorporated into Russian utterances as so-called indeclinable nouns. In Russian this noun class includes many internationalisms and some established loans such as intervju ‘interview’, metro ‘metro’, kafe ‘café’, pal’to ‘overcoat’, bjuro ‘bureau’. Nouns belonging to this class do not take inflection. Therefore, it is impossible to tell whether the following utterance contains a borrowing or a switching:

(2) ETV, Sputnik, 06.05.2001
konkurs organizovan... sovместno s linnaalitsus
 competition organized together with municipality
 ‘the competition has been organized in cooperation with the municipality’

In Russian the preposition s ‘with’ requires the Instrumental case. However, as indeclinable nouns do not take inflection, no morphological integration is needed. At the same time, the Estonian item linnaalitsus ‘municipality’ can be often heard in the speech of local Russians and, thus, it is not just an occasional one-time use. My data contain other examples where, at least theoretically, an Estonian noun can be re-interpreted in the terms of Russian grammar (gender and declension class assignment) and, therefore, morphological integration would be possible but,

nevertheless, it does not occur. Clearly, one should also consider variation: some speakers tend to morphologically integrate Estonian items into their Russian utterances and some do not. Inconsistency in integration confirms Thomason's assumption that a firm boundary between code-switching and borrowing cannot be drawn and, in appropriate social circumstances, any code-switching can become a borrowing.

The second problematic aspect of code-switching concerns various constraints proposed in the relevant literature. A lot of counter-evidence to constraints has been reported, therefore, many scholars are not inclined to believe in any absolute constraints. In appropriate social circumstances any linguistic feature can be transferred from any language to any other language (Thomason 1997:182; for references to case-studies on violation of constraints see Thomason and Kaufman 1988, Romaine 1995).

In a paper on Estonian in Siberia Viikberg (1989) states rather cautiously that he can provide neither examples nor counter-examples to free-morpheme constraint and equivalence constraint, the reason being that Russian-Estonian code-switching has not been studied in depth. In addition to these two constraints, it has been stated that code-switching cannot take place between a subject pronoun and a verb (references in Grosjean 1982:327).

Although we still do not have evidence of the free-morpheme constraint violation in Estonian-Russian code-switching, such evidence has been produced, for instance, in case studies on English-German and Maori-English code-switching (Eliasson 1990, Romaine 1995:165 ff.). As for violation of the equivalence constraint, examples have been described in papers on Estonian-Russian and Yiddish-Estonian code-switching (Verschik 1993 and Verschik 2000 respectively). Russian and Estonian often have conflicting word-order patterns; nevertheless, the following sample shows that switches are possible in such case. In Estonian, the word-order pattern is Subst Gen + Subst Nom: kinnistu müük 'real estate sale' (kinnistu 'real estate', müük 'sale'), whereas in Russian the word order is the reverse (Subst Nom + Subst Gen): prodaža nedvižimosti (prodaža 'sale', nedvižimost' 'real estate').

(3) ETV, Subjektiv, 16.01.2001

<u>priexala</u>	<u>vesti</u>	<u>dela</u>	<u>o</u>	<u>prodaže</u>	<u>kinnistu</u>
came SG FEM	conduct INF	business ACC	on	sale FEM SG	real estate

'she came in order to arrange the sale of her real estate'

Apart from the two aforementioned constraints, several other models and constraints have been proposed in the last two decades, such as Government Constraint Theory (GCT) (Muysken, DiSciullo and Sing 1986, see discussion in Muysken 1995), and Matrix Language Frame model (MLF) (Myers-Scotton 1993). A detailed and well-argued overview of these and some other theories can be found in Sarhimaa's book on Karelian-Russian language alternation (Sarhimaa 1999:123–148). Below I shall briefly discuss GCT and MLF in the light of my data.

GCT claims that code-switching is only possible between elements that are not related by government. Halmari (1997, quoted from Sarhimaa 1999:135–137) suggests that, although GCT generally holds for Finnish-American English code-switching data, it does not explain variation between speakers/speech communities. Let us consider two examples taken from Halmari (1997, quoted from Sarhimaa 1999:136).

- (4) *Minä siivosin **the building**
 I clean Past 1SG the building
 ‘I cleaned the building’

In the terms of GCT this switch would be impossible because *siivosin* ‘cleaned’ governs the object *the building*. However, the switching is permitted if the governed element carries the same language index as its governor (in our case $-n$, Genitive-Accusative marker), in other words:

- (5) Minä siivosin buildingin
 I clean Past 1SG building GenAcc
 ‘I cleaned the building’

Sarhimaa (1999:136) assumes that, according to Halmari’s data, the morphology tends to be preserved if one of the languages has a highly developed inflectional morphology (Finnish).

Russian-Estonian code-switching data suggest that GC can be violated and, unlike in Finnish-American English examples, the switched element does not carry the same language index as its governor. That is to say that switches like (4) are in fact possible:

- (6) U nego net **tunnistus**
 At him Gen no certificate
 ‘He has no certificate’

In Russian, the negative particle *net* governs a noun in Genitive. In theory, Estonian *tunnistus* ‘certificate’ can be successfully reinterpreted in the terms of Russian noun morphology (masculine, 2nd declension) and morphologically integrated, i.e. receive the appropriate Genitive marker $-a$. Unlike in Halmari’s example, this is not the case. It remains to be seen whether morphological typology of the languages involved plays any role in Russian-Estonian examples of GCT violation.

MLF model rests on the notions of Matrix Language (ML) and Embedded Language (EL), and of content versus system morphemes. System morphemes include quantifiers, inflectional morphology, possessive adjectives etc., while content morphemes are nouns, verbs, and descriptive adjectives (Myers-Scotton 1993:6–7, 99–101). The division of labour between ML and EL is asymmetrical: ML sets the morphosyntactic frame for code-switched utterances, whereas EL provides exclusively content morphemes. MLF model does not allow for EL system morphemes to appear. The model allows EL ‘islands’, i.e. EL insertions that consist only from EL morphemes and are organized according to EL grammar.

Apparently, MLF model has its limitations, for instance, when code-switching is very frequent and it is not clear how ML should be determined. Another instance where distinction between ML and EL is blurred in switching between closely related languages or between a creole/pidgin and its lexifier. Various examples of such blurred sights are described in Romaine (2000:149–152); for switching between closely related languages, Ingrian Finnish and Estonian, see Savijärvi (1998).

Also, counterevidence to constraints set in MLF model is being frequently reported. Franceschini (1998:58–59) shows that in code-switching between the Lombard dialect and Standard Italian system morphemes from EL can appear, which contradicts Myers-Scotton theory. A similar example comes from Estonian-Russian data:

- (6) vaata, et sa ne kortsuta
 look that you SG not crease
 ‘be careful not to crease’

The negative particle, a system morpheme, is taken from Russian, while the remaining items are Estonian.

It has to be emphasized that all constraints and models described above do not account for double marking and for combined (compromise) forms that are impossible in each separate monolingual grammar but possible in code-switching.

Double marking occurs frequently in Russian-Finnish code-switching (Leinonen 1994:230). Even if the sociolinguistic setting (that of first-wave Russian immigrants in Finland) described by Leinonen is very different from that of the Russophones in Estonia, the pair of languages is of a particular interest in our case since Estonian is close to Finnish. Double marking happens mostly where Russian has a prepositional phrase and Finnish has a noun with a local case marker. Thus, location is marked both by the Russian preposition and the Finnish Adessive case:

- (7) na hyllyllä stoit
 on shelf Adess SG stands
 ‘stands on the shelf’

I have not encountered switches of the kind between Russian and Estonian. Nevertheless, Russian-Finnish data suggest that these are possible. Combined (compromise) forms inconsistent with both monolingual grammars are present both in Russian-Finnish and Russian-Estonian switches:

- (8) i ne ne pyydät mummolta yhtään
 and not not ask 2SG grandmother Abessive any
 ‘and you don’t ask any from grandmother’ (Leinonen 1994:225)
- (9) éto ne huvitab
 this not interests 3SG
 ‘this does not interest (me)’

It is the negative form of the finite verb that is relevant in (8) and (9). In Russian the negative particle ne is added to the affirmative form: interesujet 'interests': ne interesujet 'does not interest'. However, in Finnish and Estonian the rule is different. In the present tense the negative particle is added to the stem of the verb (in Finnish the negative particle takes on a person marker, in Estonian it remains unchanged). Thus, Finnish pyytää 'to ask' gives pyydä-t 'you ask' (2SG) and et pyydä 'you (SG) do not ask'; Estonian huvitama 'to interest' gives huvita-b 'interests' (3SG) and ei huvita 'does not interest'. In (8) and (9) we have the Russian negation particle combined with Finnish/Estonian personal verb form (and not the stem), which is a compromise between Russian and Finnish/Estonian grammar.

To summarise the discussion of constraints, I would agree with Thomason (1997) and Romaine (2000:160) that constraints proposed so far are not universal. It is not clear whether constraints are dependent on a particular pair of languages. Constraints are usually formulated on the basis of monolingual (standard) varieties and do not account for double marking and compromise forms. Romaine (2000:160) suggests that such forms might serve as an evidence of the so-called third grammar. I assume that an approach viewing pragmatic aspects of code-switching in conversation, developed by Auer (1998) could be useful in future research of Russian-Estonian code-switching. Is there any code-switching when Russians communicate with each other? If yes, is this code-switching different from that in Russian-to-Estonian interaction? What does language choice negotiation look like? Hopefully, application of Auer's methods would help to shed some light on these questions.

Code-switching and borrowing have a lot of functions, and filling in a lexical gap is just one of them. Thomason (1997:183) emphasizes the significance of linguistic creativity both in individuals and in speech communities. It is natural that a speaker wishes to make his/her speech colourful and expressive, and code-switching seems to be a perfect device. Thus, an utterance with a switch in a Russian-language talk show on Estonian TV helps to attract the attention of the audience:

(10) ETV, Sputnik, 06.04.2001

<u>ilusad</u>	<u>naised</u>	<u>byli</u>	<u>v</u>	<u>programme</u>	<u>Sputnik</u>
beautiful PL NOM	women PL NOM	were	in	show	Sputnik

'beautiful women have performed in Sputnik show'

Some lexical items recently borrowed from Estonian are replacing (or have already replaced) respective Russian items. Thus, local Russian kilekot < Estonian kilekott 'plastic bag' has become common to such extent that many Russian-speakers with a poor command of Estonian do not realise the foreignness of this item. A student of mine told me about a local Russian woman who tried to use kilekot while being in Russia. Needless to say that she failed to communicate the meaning.

The last decade was a time of deep social and cultural changes in Estonia: a great number of new terms and concepts have entered everyday life. Thus, one cannot exclude a possibility that a new term or concept is borrowed from Estonian from the very beginning, and local Russian-speakers do not even know a possible Russian equivalent. Estonian *kile* '(transparent) film, plastic, transparency' and *löömik* 'transparent film, transparency' have given (local) Russian *kile* and *ljumik* (both meaning 'transparency'). Other examples of the kind can be easily found, for instance, *kjaibemaks* < *käibemaks* 'sales tax', *ajnepunkt* < *ainepunkt* 'credit point', *haigekassa* < *haigekassa* 'medical insurance fund'. These terms are widely used by local Russian-speakers without knowledge of "normal" Russian equivalents. Terms for new concepts borrowed from Estonian in the described manner belong to non-basic vocabulary, although in some cases it is hard to draw a line between basic and non-basic vocabulary.

4.2. Code alternation

According to Thomason (1997:195), code alternation is a type of bilingual behaviour, in which both languages are used by the same speakers, but in different settings. Thus, code alternation does not involve code-switching. This particular mechanism is usually ignored in Russian-Estonian contact studies because it is lexical borrowing (and occasionally code-switching) that the majority of researchers are looking for. A recent sociological study on young Russians (Vihalemm, in press) demonstrates that young Russians with some command of Estonian try to avoid code-switching and prefer to keep the two languages apart, thus using Russian with Russians and Estonian with Estonians exclusively. The study mentions a case of a 14-year-old Juri who usually invites both Estonians and Russians to his birthday party, but only those Russians who can converse in Estonian. Otherwise, he says, it will be hard to communicate. Vihalemm emphasizes that code-switching is rare among this particular group.

However, this claim has at least two important implications. First, how reliable are self-reported descriptions of one's linguistic behaviour? For instance, while doing my research on Jewish multilingualism in Estonia, my informants often declared that they do not code-switch, yet I heard them code-switching more than once (Verschik 2001b). No doubt that scholars who have closely observed multilingual speech for a longer period will have experienced the same. Second, if the respondents in Vihalemm's study really code-switch only infrequently, then the situation is exactly that of code alternation: there is a strict division of functions and domains where each language is used. For instance, Russian is used at home and with some friends, while Estonian is used at school/university, at work and in official situations.³

Code alternation as a type of linguistic behaviour can prevail in some socio-linguistic situations, yet it would be wrong to claim that code alternation excludes

³ Certainly there can be variation in division, for instance, Estonian with some friends and Russian with others, etc.

code-switching altogether. A bilingual does not speak in the same way to a monolingual and to another bilingual (Grosjean 1982:308, Viikberg 1989:308 ff.). First, a slip of the tongue can occur when speaking to a monolingual. Second, let us imagine two bilinguals whose preferred strategy is code alternation, speaking to each other.

Such bilinguals would speak Russian at home. Their work or studies are typically within the domain of Estonian. But what language would they speak while discussing work-related issues? It is widely known that a certain topic can trigger code-switching. Consider the following situation: A and B are saleswomen in a local store. They are Russian-speakers with some command of Estonian. Although they live and work in Lasnamäe, a part of Tallinn with predominantly Russian-speaking population, they use Estonian with some customers and must occasionally deal with documents in Estonian. C is a customer, Estonian-Russian balanced bilingual. However, that fact is not known to A and B, since C usually chooses to speak Estonian in that store.

(11)

A (to B): Ty uže lipik nakleila?

'have you already stuck the label on?'

C: **Tere, palun üks sidrun.**

'hello, one lemon, please'

B: **Palun. Valige ise.** (to A) Takije **sidruny**, chto ljudjam pokazat' stydno.

'here you are, pick one yourself'. (to A) '(these are) such lemons it is a shame to show them to people'.

Here we have an example of bilinguals talking to (assumed) monolingual and to each other. The second utterance by B is in Russian but it contains an Estonian lexical item *sidrun* 'lemon' morphologically integrated into Russian (Nominative plural marker *-y*). It is probable that such cases of interference (borrowing/code-switching) can pass unnoticed for the speakers.

According to Thomason (1997:196), the results of interference due to code-switching and those due code alternation are probably identical (borrowing); at least, there is no evidence to claim the opposite. The distinction between the two is hard to make: theoretically, code alternation without code-switching is possible only when a bilingual never talks to other bilinguals. However, the latter is hard to prove unless in some very clear cases. Thus, code alternation can be a preferred strategy for some speakers but this fact does not automatically rule out code-switching.

4.3. Interference

Interference in its classical meaning (transfer of L1 features into L2) is considered by Thomason (1997:200) as a second language acquisition strategy. To the best of my knowledge, there are no systematic studies on interlanguage and fossilised Estonian of Russian-speakers. The description of possible interference phenomena is beyond the limits of the current article. A detailed overview of

phonological interference from Russian into Estonian has been recently presented by Rannut (2000). I shall name only main features of morphological and lexical interference from Russian. Note, however, that L1 structural features cannot account for all deviations in a learner's version of L2.

First, the choice of object case (Nominative, Genitive, Partitive) in Estonian depends on a variety of factors, such as the type of the verb, number of the object noun, mood, voice, etc. In Russian the object case is Accusative in affirmative sentences and Genitive in negative ones. Second, Estonian has two infinitives, while Russian has only one. Third, there are considerable differences in government rules. Interference occurs as well in lexicon and semantics due to discrepancies between structures of meaning in the two languages. As a rule, Russian has a greater tendency towards polysemy than Estonian. A speaker assumes that the meaning structure of a given Estonian word is identical to that of its Russian counterpart and, therefore, broadens the meaning of the Estonian word. Consider Russian znat 'to know' and corresponding Estonian lexical items teadma 'to know (a fact)', oskama 'to know how (to speak a language, etc.)', tundma 'to be familiar, to know (a person, a subject)'.

Interference in the opposite direction (from L2 to L1, or, in our case, from Estonian into Russian) should not be ignored. The learners of L2 (Estonian), even fossilized ones, tend to produce utterances that deviate from L1 (Russian) rules. Thus, a new norm different from two separately viewed monolingual norms is likely to emerge. Examples of interference in L1 will be considered in the next section.

It has to be stressed that a sufficiently large group of imperfect learners can influence the target language under appropriate sociolinguistic circumstances. Such cases have been described in various contacts studies, for instance Finno-Ugric substratum in Slavic languages, Finnic substratum in Baltic languages (see discussion and extensive bibliography in Thomason and Kaufman 1988:238–251), Yiddish substratum in some varieties of New York English (Fishman 1985, Gold 1985), to name just a few. It is clear that at least some Russian-speakers will eventually shift to Estonian and the possible transfer of their L1 features might, in the future, affect Estonian as a whole. This scenario deserves to be studied further.

4.4. *Passive familiarity*

A speaker who does not use L2 actively but is exposed to it regularly may adopt L2 features into his/her L1 (Thomason 1997:198–199). The result can be similar to interference from L2 into L1 described in the previous section. Unfortunately, this mechanism of interference often remains unnoticed.

This particular mechanism of interference is to be seriously considered in Russian-Estonian contact study, since the number of Russophones having at least a passive command of Estonian has significantly increased since the late 1980s, whereas the number of those without any knowledge of Estonian has decreased during the last decade (Vihalemm, in press). Identification of this type of interference meets certain difficulties, because without knowledge of a particular

speaker's linguistic background it is difficult to tell whether changes in his/her Russian are due to passive familiarity with Estonian or he/she is able to speak Estonian to a certain extent. The examples discussed further in this section originate from Russian-language TV programs and from conversations in supermarkets. In all these cases I assume that participants are at least passively familiar with Estonian.

The impact of passive knowledge can be observed in the following cases: compound nouns, word order, government and occasional word-by-word translation from Estonian.

Estonian has a strong tendency for forming compound words. In Estonian composition along with derivation is the most productive way of word formation. It is especially relevant for noun formation (Erelt et al. 1995:407, 411). If a compound noun consists of two noun stems, then the modifier (in Nominative or in Genitive) is before the head: laudlina 'tablecloth' (laud 'table' Nom + lina 'cloth' Nom), raamatukapp 'bookcase' (raamatu 'book' Gen + kapp 'case' Nom), raamatukogu 'library' (raamatu 'book' Gen + kogu 'collection' Nom), säästuarve 'savings account' (säästu 'saving' Gen + arve 'account'). This word formation type is considerably more productive in Estonian than in Russian. Composition enables brief and clear expression; one compound word in Estonian often corresponds to several words in Russian.

If an Estonian compound noun has an internationalism at least as one component, it is likely to be directly transferred into Russian in spite of possible conflicting word order in NP (Estonian Gen + Nom and Russian Nom + Gen). Consider the following:

(12) ETV, Press-klub, 09.04.2001

Čto-to my o nĕm davnen'ko ne slyšali, za isključenijem KGB-skandala
'we have not heard from him for a long time except for the KGB scandal', cf. Estonian KGB-skandaal. This is the case where the idea cannot be rendered in Russian with one word. It would require a longer NP, for instance skandala, svjazannogo s KGB 'scandal that has to do with KGB'.

Passive knowledge of Estonian sometimes leads to an unusual word order in NP. As mentioned above, in Estonian a modifier in Genitive precedes its head in Nominative, while in Russian the word order is the opposite or an adjective corresponds to Estonian modifier. If a modifier is a proper name, a toponyme, or designates a brand, Estonian pattern is often transferred into Russian. In stores and markets of Tallinn one can frequently hear a Russian-speaking customer address a Russian-speaking salesperson in the following manner:

(13) Dajte mne odin Toolse xleb

'give me one Toolse bread', cf. Estonian Toolse leib 'Toolse bread', where Toolse is a toponyme that has become a brand name. In Russian a natural word order would be the opposite: xleb Toolse 'bread (Nom) + Toolse (Gen)'. Apparently this kind of transfer is not limited to oral communication: similar cases have been attested in local Russian-language press (Kostandi 2000: 192).

The following example demonstrates the transfer of Estonian government rules. Estonian verb käima 'to go, to walk' requires Inessive (where?), whereas its Russian equivalent xodit' 'to go, to walk' requires Accusative (where to?).⁴ An error typical of Russians learning Estonian would be the use of Illative (where to?) instead of Inessive. However, the situation in (14) is exactly the opposite: in Russian the Prepositional case (where?) is used instead of the expected Accusative according to Estonian model. The utterance was produced by a Russian-speaking female teenager:

(14) ETV, Tretij sektor, 22.10.2001

Tri s polovinoj goda xožu tam

'I've been going there for three and a half years', cf. Estonian käin seal (where?) kolm ja pool aastat and Russian tri s polovinoi goda xožu tuda (where to?).

The following example will demonstrate a word-by-word translation of an Estonian compound verb. In this case the speaker is known to have a passive command of Estonian. Estonian compound verbs can correspond to prefixed verbs in Russian: cf. Estonian üle minema 'to cross', Russian perejti 'ibid.' and Estonian ära minema 'to go away', Russian ujti 'ibid.'. But this is not an absolute rule. Subtle differences in meaning can be rendered in Russian by lexical means, i.e., verbs derived from different stems: cf. Estonian jätma 'to leave', Russian ostavit' 'ibid.' and kõrvale jätma 'to ignore', literally 'to leave aside', Russian ignorirovat' 'ibid.'. The speaker transfers an Estonian compound verb into Russian and even preserves Estonian government rules (as in the previous example):

(15) ETV, Četyre vremeni goda, 16.01.2001

I rebënka ostavili v storonu

'and the child was ignored (left aside)', cf. Estonian ja laps jäeti kõrvale and Russian

i rebënka ignorirovali with the same meaning.

Thus, a passive knowledge of Estonian already affects the Russian of Russian-speakers and can possibly bring about even more serious changes in the local variety of Russian in the future.

As Thomason (2001:142) points out, there is a lack of extensive evidence about the scope of this mechanism. In my view, it is not entirely clear how passive knowledge can be defined in practical terms. Even a highly educated native speaker has a mere passive knowledge of certain language resources. How passive is "passive"? Does it mean that an individual cannot produce a single grammatical utterance in L2 and his/her competence is only limited to understanding? Or such an individual can tell a grammatical utterance from an ungrammatical one in spite of his/her incapability of producing anything in L2? Another practical problem is distinguishing between passive familiarity and L2 interference in L1 that occurs

⁴ In Russian xodit' + Prepositional (where?) is also possible but the meaning is then different ('to go around, to wander')

with fluent speakers. Suppose one registers a sentence like (15). The author/speaker in the talk show has frequently told she could not speak Estonian. But if there is no information about the speaker's background and degree of competence in L2, how can one safely ascribe interference to passive familiarity?

According to Thomason (2001:142), interference resulting from passive familiarity is akin to borrowing (and not shift-induced) interference. By definition, this mechanism rules out the possibility of code-switching and code alternation. It may be added that, assumingly, interference resulting from passive familiarity can be at least in theory connected with "negotiation" (see the following section).

4.5. "Negotiation"

The term does not imply conscious discussion of language use, but rather an adjustment of one's speech to what is perceived "as the pattern of another language" (Thomason 1997:199). Fluent bilingualism is not the case here; speakers of two languages have just an idea about each other's language.

There are several strategies in communication between Russians and Estonians. It is well known that Estonians are still not used to hearing non-natives speak their language with an accent, mistakes, etc (before 1991 very few non-Estonians had a command of the Estonian language). One possibility would be to choose either participant's language: until recently it used to be Russian in most cases, but now there are more Russians who are able to speak some Estonian and language choice is not always predictable. Those who are fluent in Estonian do not need "negotiation". Another strategy is at least to start a conversation in Estonian, thus demonstrating respect and solidarity (Vihalemm, in press).

In addition to the possibilities of a language choice described in the previous paragraph there is one more communicative strategy that, to the best of my knowledge, has remained unnoticed in Russian-Estonian contact studies. This can be considered as "negotiation". A Russian-speaker considers his/her Estonian to be too poor, yet he/she does not wish to converse in plain Russian. In that case his/her speech is organized as follows: most of the nouns, numerals, discourse markers and other words essential for understanding in a particular interaction are in Estonian (not integrated morphologically), while the rest, mostly verbs, are in Russian. The partner would reply in the same manner or in Estonian. I heard the sample (10) in late 1980s in Tartu, which means that the strategy is not new.

(16) A woman selling newspapers:

Vsë pravil' no, vy mne viis, a ja vam predlagaju tagasi

'everything is correct, you (give) me five and I am offering you the change', cf. Estonian viis 'five' and tagasi 'change'.

(17) Kohtla-Järve, Virumaa College library, 2001

Hästi, vy poprobujte v Tehnikaülikool, tam tože est' raamatupood, raamatukogu, obratites' v komplekteerimisosakond

'fine, try University of Technology, they also have a bookstore, a library, contact the collection department', cf. Estonian hästi 'fine', Tehnikaülikool 'University of

Technology', raamatupood 'bookstore', raamatukogu 'library', komplekteerimis-osakond 'collection department'.

The sociolinguistic situation, the number of active speakers of Estonian, the degree of familiarity with the language vary regionally (see section 3). "Negotiation" (in this particular case a possibility of partial relexification should be checked) is more likely to be attested in North Eastern Estonia where Russian-speaking population prevails and Estonian is seldom heard. It is possible that the mechanism of "negotiation" can develop into a separate variety/register and be successfully used in the region.

Thomason (2001:146) sees a connection between "negotiation" and other mechanisms: code alternation, interference in SLA, and change by deliberate decision. It is also possible that "negotiation" could be linked to passive familiarity. Consider a speaker with a passive knowledge of L2 who has no other option but speaking L1 with others. While communicating in L1 with native speakers of L2 who have some ability to converse in L1, this speaker may wish to show respect/solidarity by deliberately introducing his/her passive knowledge of L2 structures into his/her version of L1. Also, on a conversational level code-switching may be connected with "negotiation" (see Auer 1998).

4.6. Change by deliberate decision

A deliberate, conscious change is the least investigated mechanism. Changes can be caused by the prestige of a foreign-language pronunciation or by a necessity to create a new identity. According to Thomason (1996a, 1997:202), this is how Mednyj Aleut came into being. Frequent code-switching cannot account for the wholesale transfer of Russian finite verb system, while all other native grammatical morphemes remained intact. Rather, a new language was needed to express the new group identity of Russian-Aleut mixed population.

There is a certain connection between a deliberate change and "negotiation". "Negotiation" is a compromise of a sort. If a compromise is not sporadic but systematic (for instance, a speaker decides always to use Estonian government rules with certain verbs), then it can become a prerequisite of conscious changes.

The following dialogue occurred in Russian between A, a TV reporter (Estonian) and B, a witness (Russian). Consider the use of Russian verb stavit 'to put (vertically), to place':

(18) TV 3, Politseinädal, 05.04.2001

A: I mnogo ljudi stavjat sjuda den'gi? 'do people put here a lot of money?' (about naïve people who are encouraged by rascals to put some money into a "magic" book that would protect them from an evil eye).

B: Stavjat 'they put'.

A, being an Estonian, makes a typical mistake using the Russian verb stavit 'to put (vertically)' that has a more narrow meaning than Estonian panema 'to put, to lay, to place'. However, B does not correct him or does not use the appropriate

verb *klast* 'to lay'. Instead, she repeats the verb proposed by A, thereby accepting it and the Estonian model of its use. If Russian-speakers would systematically accept the choice of the verb and start using it in the same manner as Estonians do, this could cause the approximation of the local Russian to Estonian.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The last instance leads us to the question of identity. A new emerging identity of Estonia's Russians is a matter widely discussed in press and by scholars (Fiškina 2000, Issakov 1999). In fact, many Russian-speakers actually recognize their emerging difference from Russia's Russians and claim that, while visiting Russia, the distinct character of their speech, manners, behaviour etc is felt by the locals. As far as regional differences are concerned, it is hard to believe that socio-cultural preferences and the type of identity (integration, acculturation, assimilation, segregation etc) would be the same, for instance, in 95 percent Russian-speaking Narva and in predominantly Estonian-speaking Tartu.

Nevertheless, it is clear that certain changes in the identity of Russophones have occurred during the past decade: they are not "just Russians", but Estonia's Russians. Issakov (1999:538–539) believes that there is a similarity between immigrants from Russia in 1920s–1930s and the present-day Russophones. This claim should be treated with caution: in Hennoste's terms (Hennoste 1997:60–62, 64–66) we deal with different sociolinguistic periods. The first period of independence is characterized mainly in the following way: 1) decrease of bilingualism among Estonians and increase of that among minorities and 2) a strict normativisation of literary Estonian, along with a negative attitude towards regional dialects and non-standard varieties. The present period (starting from late 1980s) again witnesses the growing prestige and importance of Estonian, but otherwise the situation is quite different. First, the demographic balance is not the same. In 1934 Estonians constituted 88 % of the population, in 1990 the figure was 61.45 % and in 1999 it was 64.98 % (Veidemann 1999:143). Second, multilingualism among Estonians is not decreasing, but rather, it is changing: knowledge of English (and of Finnish, in Tallinn) becomes more and more common. Third, unlike in 1920s–1930s, the society is tolerant toward non-standard varieties. These circumstances imply that the new identity of Russians emerges in a socio-cultural setting different from that of the first period of independence.

Some changes in the local variety of Russian have been attested in Russian-language newspapers. These include foreign (Estonian-influenced) word-order patterns and choice of verb aspect deviant from that of standard Russian. Headings in Russia's newspapers tend to be arbitrary, while heading in Estonia's Russian-language press avoid arbitrariness and, therefore, follow Estonian (or, more precisely, Western) pattern (Kostandi 2000:189 ff.).

A new identity can result in a formation of a new contact variety different from the two varieties involved. Various instances and typologies of contact varieties have been discussed (to name just several, see Thomason 1996b:1, Croft 2000:

196–228). In our case different outcomes are possible. A massive imperfect acquisition of Estonian might influence the Estonian of Estonians (the scenario is much feared by language purists). “Negotiation” can potentially result in a new *lingua franca*. Here one can draw some parallels with *Halbdeutsch*, a variety of Baltic German that emerged in the 19th c. as a result of imperfect learning by Estonians with little education (see Lehiste 1965, Ariste 1981). Such a development is more likely to take place in regions with Russian-speaking majority. In other regions and among younger speakers code-switching and code alternation, possibly bringing about subsequent changes in L1 (Russian), would be preferable mechanisms of interference. Deliberate changes as a manifestation of solidarity and respect do not seem to depend on regional characteristics. Also, it remains to be seen how different interference mechanisms are connected with each other.

It should be stressed that most of the mechanisms proposed by Thomason and described in this article have started functioning only recently. It is unlikely that until recently these mechanisms, especially code-switching and change by deliberate decision, have played any significant role in Russophones’ linguistic behaviour. The reasons are to be sought, of course, in the changed sociolinguistic situation and new status of the languages involved.

Finally, as Thomason (1997:182–183, 204) claims, especially in connection with deliberate change, any L1 feature can be transferred to any L2 and we should pay more attention to linguistic creativity both on the part of individual speakers and on the part of linguistic communities.

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