

## Code alternation and insertion in the computer-mediated communication of Russian speakers living in Italy and Estonia

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In this paper, I analyse cases of code alternation (CA) and insertion in the computer-mediated communication (CMC) of Russian speakers settled in two different sociolinguistic environments, Italy and Estonia. Russian speakers in Italy form a post-soviet conglomerate of immigrants (Perotto 2010) mainly represented by females well integrated into Italian society (Nikolaeva 2014). In turn, Russian speakers of Estonia are considered representatives of the metropolis in the colony, who conceptualized their moving to Estonia during the Soviet era as internal migration (Verschik 2016: 190).

CA is defined as a true switch with two languages occurring separately (Muysken 1997: 361) and is generally opposed to insertion, where lexical items are embedded from one language to another (*ibid.*). Even though the distinction between CA and insertion is not always clear in the CMC of Russian speakers living in Italy and Estonia, some tendencies can be spotted. In the Italian material, insertions occur for indicating local realities as well as for demonstrating speakers' language abilities and their relationships with the Italian society (Dezi 2018). CA is more sporadic and reports mainly content from documents, usage guidelines and translations (*ibid.*). In the CMC of Russian speakers in Estonia, insertions refer to local realities, while CA is often used in expressive contexts intertwined with reported speech (Dezi 2019) and *fictive quotes* (cf. Pascual & Sandler 2015).

In my analysis, I implement the usage-based approach (Backus 2015), focusing on the pragmatic and social meanings of CA and insertions. The data consists of comments from forums and Facebook groups (30000 tokens for the Italian material, 14000 for the Estonian). I argue that the difference in the occurrence of CA and insertion between the two groups depends on sociolinguistic factors, such as the type of community, the motivation to learn the language and integrate into the local society.

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