CODE-SWITCHING AND L2 STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY: 
BILINGUALISM AS AN ENRICHING RESOURCE

Anastassia Zabrodskaja 
Tallinn University, Estonia

Abstract

This paper discusses pedagogical and conversational functions of Estonian-Russian code-switching (henceforth CS) in the university classroom setting. Based on the data from university classroom bilingual interactions, this study will contribute to the current discussion of CS in the classroom and fill an important gap in existing research, as well as to the understanding of its conversational roles.

The students and the teacher in this study are speakers of Russian as L1 and of Estonian as L2. However, the former have a more limited knowledge of the Estonian language. Thus, the interactions are characterized by varying levels of Estonian mastery by the participants. A switch to L1, whether initiated by the teacher or the student, aims to increase the efficacy of information conveyance. Short switches help to bridge a gap in the discourse. The results show that during lectures or seminars students use Russian as the language with which they feel most comfortable and in which they enjoy greater competence.

Key words: classroom discourse, code-switching, Estonian, Russian, SLA.

Introduction

This paper addresses the issue of Estonian-Russian CS in the university classroom and the ways in which the alternate use of codes is related to learning and teaching processes. The study is based on in-class observations, together with field notes and recordings, as well as in-group interviews.

Analyzing bilingual pedagogical practices in an academic sphere, the paper shows how oral Estonian-Russian CS can be used in the classroom to help students overcome communication problems.

The theoretical background summarizes SLA research on CS in the classroom. Fieldwork, methodology and data are outlined after the introduction, where I bring forward research questions and describe the participants. The third part of the paper looks into CS as a teaching and learning strategy. The roles and functions of the Russian language as L1 and Estonian as L2 are explored in the fourth section of the paper.

The current study was carried out during lectures on linguistics, meant as an

---

1 The current research is part of the project „Uus eesti keele ja kakskeelse õppe süsteem Tallinna Ülikoolis“ [= New Estonian and Bilingual Educational System in Tallinn University].
An introductory overview of traditional and contemporary fields of the study of linguistics, points of contact with other disciplines and possibilities for the application of the results of linguistic research. The goal of this subject was to give Russian-speaking students background knowledge both in Russian and Estonian. Learning of the content in both languages has a positive impact on memorizing the content and contributes to the development of students’ skills in the academic registers of the L1 and the L2 (see the special issue of *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 2007: 10 (5) – dedicated to the research on content and language integrated learning). According to Jacobson (1990), the concurrent use of languages is particularly effective for math instruction.

This paper shows how two languages are implemented within the framework of the bilingual method being used by the teacher. Thus, the students become proficient in Estonian, which then allows them to learn academic content through Estonian, and concurrently develop their Russian academic language.

The participants of this research are students of the Slavic Department (studying Russian philology or Russian as a Foreign Language). The teacher is working in the Department of Estonian Philology, but both the teacher and the students are speakers of Russian as L1. This predisposes the use of Russian to informal situations and of Estonian to formal situations.

**CS and education**

Cook (2001: 105-106) discusses the relationship between CS and language teaching. He states that for many students the ability to go from one language to another is highly desirable; there is not much point in being multi-competent if you are restricted by the demands of a single language.

As Cook (2001: 106) clearly states, teachers should remember:

a) The classroom is often a natural CS situation.

b) There is nothing wrong or peculiar about CS.

c) Principles exist for CS in the classroom.

Bilingual teachers use two languages to transfer academic content (Creese, 2005: 2-5 and references therein; Langman, *et al.* 2005; Moschkovich, 2000, 2005).

Within the context of lessons, the teachers switch between the languages in two ways:

(a) intentionally (e.g. for direct translation etc.),
(b) unintentionally.

Teachers may decide on the spot when L1 should be used and when a switching to L2 is appropriate in order to enable comprehension and meaningful student involvement (Cook, 2001). More often, however, teachers are unaware of the fact that they are switching; i.e., switches are made unconsciously (Mattson & Burenhult, 1999; Ovando & Collier, 1985; Tikunoff, 1985).

Both spontaneous and purposeful CS or language alternation as studied by
Tikunoff (1985) and Valdés-Fallis (1978) or as proposed by Jacobson (1981) focuses on the bilingual teachers’ use of language during classroom lessons. An exception to unconscious CS or translation is the New Concurrent Approach (NCA) described by Jacobson (1981). NCA focuses on purposeful and systematic alternation of languages by bilingual teachers within the context of teaching a lesson.

Jacobson (1981) has proposed and tested a model which incorporates the use of CS in the teaching of academic subjects. There are pros and cons to the application of the concurrent approach that recommends using two or more languages in the same context. The NCA advocated here resulted from a desire to bring together the child’s two languages in a way that would further the child’s language development and, at the same time, lead to satisfactory academic performance. In Jacobson’s research, the following issues are addressed: (1) the extent to which the child’s native language must be developed for success in learning a second language; (2) the extent to which the home language should be used in school; (3) the extent to which first language maintenance in the primary grades would not interfere with the transition to L2 in post-primary education; (4) the extent to which the use of both languages would lead to an understanding of the bilingual functioning of some sectors of our society; and (5) the extent to which school subjects could be learned through two languages. These issues are discussed in terms of the curriculum, the social situation within the classroom, the content of the lesson, and various aspects of staff development and teacher training (Jacobson 1981).

According to the NCA approach, the teacher is allowed to switch languages at certain key points (Cole 1998; Holmes 1992: 275; Mattson & Burenhult 1999: 61; Sert 2005).

Jacobson (1990: 5) states that the two languages of a bilingual program can be separated on the basis of four criteria: topic, person, time and place. In the NCA classroom, CS is structured in terms of four criteria:

1. Both languages are to be used in equally allotted amounts of time.
2. The teaching of content is not to be interrupted.
3. The decision to switch between the two languages is in response to a consciously identified cue.
4. The switch must relate to a specific learning objective (Jacobson, 1983 a: 120).

Analyzing bilingual data, Simon (2001: 327) points out that, in classroom interaction, the code choice is very frequently closely associated with a type of task or activity for methodological reasons (native language for grammatical explanations, cultural information and sometimes instructions about what to do). Jacobson (1983 b: 146) has continually stressed that the success of the NCA depends on balanced language use.

Cook (2001) claims that SLA pedagogy does not provide any reason for avoiding L1 in the classroom. According to him, it may be used systematically:

Note that this separation means that the NCA seems to favor language choice and intersentential CS, not insertional CS. The question of what if the community norms is the other way round, remains beyond of the scope of this study.
1. as a way into the meaning of the second language;
2. as a short cut in explaining tasks;
3. as a way of explaining grammar;
4. as a way of demonstrating the classroom is a real L2 situation, not a fake monolingual situation (Cook, 2001: 157).

Here, it must be emphasized that this study does not deal with the teaching of Estonian as L2 *per se*. The course *Introduction to Linguistics* was taught through the medium of the second language, Estonian. Thus, Russian-speaking students should have gained language competence in a particular academic domain and not in social communication (see on *Content and Language Integrated Learning* Davison & Williams, 2001; Met, 1998 and Special Issue of IJEB, 2007).

The functions of a second language in the classroom represent a special case of SLA inquiry. If a teacher rejects a student’s mother tongue, (s)he probably communicates the rejection of the person. In rejecting what a learner wishes to change (or wishes to add), a teacher is probably throwing away the chance to exact meaningful change. By accepting a learner’s classroom language strategy, a teacher maximizes the opportunity for positive results (Cole, 1998; Cook, 2001; Sert, 2005).

The fact that L2 speaker might play with language is hardly accepted among teachers, because the general image of learner’s language is that of a lack of proficiency. Arnfast’s and Jørgensen’s (2003) research has shown that CS appears as a skill used in early attempts of playing with the languages involved in conversation. In sociolinguistic studies the dominating opinion is that if the bilingual speaker knows that the interlocutor shares the same language, CS is likely to take place for different functions (Appel & Muysken, 1992: 118–120; Auer, 1995: 120; Baker, 2006: 111-113; Grosjean, 1982: 152). But not every bilingual speaker engages in CS, so the question can be raised to what extent students should be forced to use it. Moreover, speakers are continually creating new ways of drawing on code contrast as a communicative resource. Adopting a framework based on Auer’s (1984, 1995, 1998) conversation analysis, Liebscher and Dailey–O’Cain (2005) analyzed learner’s CS between L1 and L2 in an advanced foreign language classroom. Following Lave’s and Wengler’s (1991) approach of social learning, they consider the classroom to be a community of practice. Liebscher and Dailey–O’Cain conclude that allowing students to code-switch in ways that resemble uses in non-classroom bilingual interaction, therefore, not only gives them the opportunity to become more comfortable with the L2 but also gives them free rein to experiment with using two languages, like the bilinguals they hope to be someday (Liebscher and Dailey-O’Cain, 2005: 245).

**Data collection**

The particular domain chosen for investigation here relates to the university: Russian-speaking students learning academic subjects in Estonian. The group of students met once a week. As the class was intended for the Russian-speaking students, whose proficiency in Estonian is very low, additional seminars after the lectures were also held.
The research was carried out during 2006/2007 academic year in Tallinn University among Russian-speaking students. This fieldwork was most intense in the months September to January 2007. I report on the findings of a survey of 30 hours of spontaneous activity recorded in the university in 2007.

Data-collection includes:
1. Gathering various pieces of student work and curriculum material;
2. Keeping a field diary;
3. Audio-recording lectures and seminars (approx. 45 hours);
4. Conducting interviews discussing university, local life and language use with Russian-speaking students and replaying audio-recordings of particular interactions to elicit retrospective commentary from the participants on what had been happening, said and done.

In my research I followed Wertheim’s (2003) ideas, which can be summarized as follows: no speech should be dismissed as unnatural. The fieldworker should try to gain access to as many styles and registers as possible by using her or his unique social status [the status of the teacher in my case – Anastassia Zabrodskaja]. Varying one’s recording methodology can increase access to various styles and reduce the salience of the “unnatural” audience role of the unknown yet ratified end-listener.

As a teacher, I could record whole lectures and seminars, and as a legitimate observer I had an access to the casual speech behavior of the students. In building relations between “the use and functions of CS in authentic contexts” and “the use and functions of CS in L2 university classroom”, it was kept in mind that a L2 content classroom is a social group; therefore a phenomenon related to the naturally occurring daily discourse of any social group has the potential to be applicable and valid for any L2 classroom.

Research questions

With regard to Auer’s (1990) statement concerning the researchers’ futility in compiling a comprehensive inventory of the functions of CS, Martin-Jones (2000: 3) suggests that the aim of studies in this area should provide detailed accounts of the specific interactional practices that have evolved in particular classroom settings in particular cultural and historical contexts.

Considering the above-mentioned points, the following issues will be addressed through the analysis of data: How do Russian-speaking students and a teacher use CS in university during the lecture that is held in Estonian?

Participants

During the autumn semester, the students were studying the course on traditional and contemporary fields of study in linguistics. The teacher is a proficient speaker of Estonian while the majority of students are not very fluent in the language. It is clear
that there is a very real potential for CS to occur as the teacher and her students are aware of the linguistic resources available to them despite constraints.

There were 40 students at the beginning of the semester, and 35 at the end. All of them had studied Estonian for about eleven or twelve years at Russian-medium schools, and their average age at the beginning of their university studies was between 19 and 20. To ensure the anonymity of the informants, their personalities are coded. Thus, the abbreviation 1987N/F/T/RR/1 shows that we deal with a female student (F) who was born in 1987 in Narva (N), and currently lives in Tallinn (T), both her mother tongue (R) and home language (R) is Russian. The last digit is used if there are two or more informants with the same background data.

At the time when the data was collected the participants were first-year, first semester students. As stated above, the language of instruction at the university is Estonian. The students study Russian philology and Russian as a Foreign Language. That is why some subjects in their curricula are taught in Russian.

Use of Estonian-Russian CS during the lecture

One of the most central discussions made in particular research is the extent to which Russian, the students’ native language, is used in the university with Estonian as the language of instruction. The NCA is applied to an adult setting. The main goal of using CS is to enable the instructor to conduct the course in the target language even if the L2 proficiency of students is low. CS addresses a perpetual problem: the tension between the desire of the teacher to use the Estonian language exclusively and the need of the Russian-speaking students to understand as much as possible of what is being taught. The basic principle of CS utilization in classroom teaching is that the teacher speaks Estonian and code-switches into Russian, in order to illustrate those parts which remain unclear.

Let us consider excerpt 1, which allows systematic CS controlled by the teacher. (Hereafter the Estonian part of the transcription is in italics and Russian part is given in bold italics. In the translation, Russian items are in CAPITALS.)

Excerpt 1

**Teacher:** Milliste eesti keele häälikute hääldamine valmistab raskusi vene keele kõnelejatele? (!) Miks?
‘For Russian-speakers, what Estonian sounds are difficult to pronounce? (!) Why?’

1987T/F/T/RR/5: Eesti keele häälikud ä, ö, ü valmistuvad raskusi vene keele kõnelejatele, sest nad puuduvad vene tähestikus.
‘The Estonian vowels ä, ö, ü are difficult to pronounce, because there are no such vowels in the Russian alphabet’

**Teacher:** Milline eesti keele häälik on keeruline soome keele kõnelejatele?
‘What Estonian sound is difficult for Finnish-speakers?’
987T/F/T/RR/5: Arvan, et see on häällik õ (1 sec.) , sest see on eesti keele tähendus aga puudub soome keele tähendus.

‘I think that this is the vowel õ (1 sec.), because it is in the Estonian alphabet, but not in Finnish’

Teacher:

Mis häälikut on rasked Sinu jaoks?

‘What sounds are difficult for you [to pronounce]?’

1987T/F/T/RR/5: Minu jaoks on raske hääldada raskeid eesti keelseid sõnu, kus on ... (sec.) ... dlînnyje zvuki ... (sec.) ... kaks või enam sama häälikut korraga.

‘For me it is difficult to pronounce difficult Estonian words, where … (sec.) … LONG SOUNDS … (sec.) … two or more sounds at once’

Teacher:

Kas sõnad pika vokaaliga on Sulle rasked? Aga miks?

‘Are words with long sounds are difficult for you? Why so?’

1987T/F/T/RR/5: Nâiteks sõna “lääne mere-soome”. Mõnikord ma ütlen kiiresti seda sõna, see vist juhtub sellepärast, et loen ... (sec.) ... (\) nevnimatel’no ... (sec.) ... mitte tâhelepanelikut.

‘For example, the word “läänemeresooome” ‘Finnic’. Sometimes I pronounce this word quickly, this happens, because I read … (sec.) … (\) NOT ATTENTIVELY … (sec.) … carelessly’

Teacher:

Ahaa! Loed hooletult. (smiles)

‘Ah, you read carelessly’ (smiles)

1987T/F/T/RR/5: Loen hooletult.

‘[I] read carelessly’

It is interesting to note that the student translates the Russian adverb ne + vnimatel’no ‘CARELESSLY’ (literally ‘NOT ATTENTIVELY’) into Estonian component by component (mitte + tâhelepanelikut ‘NOT ATTENTIVELY’). In Standard Estonian, the equivalent in Russian ne-vnimatel’no (literally ‘NOT ATTENTIVELY’) is an adverb of state hoole-tu-Lt (care + negative affix + adverbial suffix). It could be suggested that with the means of pauses, Estonian-Russian CS, and the translated Estonian word, she signals her need for help. The teacher prompts the right answer and the speaker accepts it by repeating.

During Introduction to Linguistics both the content and Estonian as L2 had to be taught in a context of authentic holistic learning. The main emphasis was on the teaching of the academic subject, while teaching of the Estonian language was a secondary goal. To enable both, the teacher may switch to Russian when revising the difficult material that has already been given in Estonian. The second and third excerpts are given below. The teacher is explaining the definition of synonyms:
Anastassia Zabrodskaja

Excerpt 2


‘Synonyms are different words with similar or identical (/) meanings: for example (!) ilus – kaunis ‘beautiful’. Absolute synonyms are identical in every aspect of the meaning so that they can be used interchangeably. The context does not change. The example is as following: (!) ligidal – lähedal ‘nearby’. Relative synonyms do not replace each other in the text. Otherwise the idea of the text changes. The meaning of those synonyms is not tantamount; compare (!) väike – kääbus- ‘small’.

The starting point is that CS occurs in the middle of the turn when the speaker and the listeners know the same two languages. That is why the teacher repeats in Russian:

Excerpt 3


The teacher might ask:

Excerpt 4

Teacher: Mis on sõna vernyj (-) eestikeelsed vastsed?
‘What are Estonian equivalents of Russian FAITHFUL (-)’

Both languages are being developed concurrently since essential vocabulary and concepts are reiterated. As a result, the students learn that Estonian terms are täissünoniüümid ‘absolute synonyms’ and osasünoniüümid ‘relative synonyms’, while the Russian terms are smyslovye sinonimy ‘ABSOLUTE SYNONYMS’ and semantiko-stilisticheskie sinonimy ‘RELATIVE SYNONYMS’. Thus, students are able to understand the topic in two languages. In addition, the teacher uses each of the languages for approximately the same amounts of time, thereby promoting the message that both languages have equal status in the university classroom.

According to Trudgill (2000:105), speakers switch to manipulate, influence or define the situation as they wish and to convey nuances of meaning and personal intention. Drawing upon this quotation, it may be suggested that Estonian-Russian CS can be used for self expression and is a way of modifying language for the sake of personal intentions. Using L1, the teacher tries to reassure her student in excerpt 5:

Excerpt 5

Teacher: Pole vaja nii palju muretseda hinde pärast. (<<) F (>>) – étó ne samoje strašnoje v žizni. Usu mind! (smiles)
‘There is no need to worry about the mark. (<<) F (>>) IS NOT THE WORST THING IN THE WORLD. Believe me!’ (smiles)

Use of L1 elevates the effect from the teacher’s commendation in excerpt 6:

Excerpt 6

Teacher: Sa oled väga tubli! (!) Molodec!
‘You are very good [student]! (!) WELL DONE!’

Estonian-Russian CS also carries effective functions that serve for expression of emotions. One of the students is cheating on the test. Willing to stress the dissoluteness of his action, the teacher uses L1 in excerpt 7:

Excerpt 7

Teacher: Niimoodi ei käituta ülikoolis! (1 sec.) Saad sa sellest aru? See on ebaaus! (/) Neporjadočno!
‘This is no way to behave at the university! (1 sec.) Do you understand? This is not permissible! (/) NOT PERMISSIBLE!’.

The Estonian and Russian expressions of emotions occurring side by side suggest that the switch into L1 is somehow meaningful for the speaker.

In CS, the teacher tries to seek oral feedback from the students: Kas te saate
‘Do you understand?’, *On teil küsimusi?* ‘Do you have questions?’, *Kas ma pean kordama?* ‘Shall I repeat?’ In almost all cases the responses of the students to such questions consist of one word: *jah* (aha, ja) ‘yes’ or *ei* (ee) ‘no’. Sometimes it was *čjo?* ‘WHAT?’ [Colloquial usage of the Russian interrogative pronoun *čto* ‘WHAT’]. By requiring and obtaining such feedback, the teacher learns if the students have understood what had been said (and thus she can repeat and clarify words, expressions, and concepts where necessary).

The teacher’s use of CS makes it relatively easy for the students themselves to begin utilizing CS. By introducing CS into her speech, the teacher provides a model of how “code-switched” situations work, which implicitly may encourage the students to engage in CS themselves. Moreover, in addition to modeling proper CS contexts, it is necessary for the teacher to explain overtly the reason for using CS. Then the students know how and where to code-switch through the model set by the teacher. It should be noted that among schoolteachers of the Estonian language the attitudes towards CS are very negative. They do not allow their pupils to code-switch (see Zabrodskaja 2006). Some students sometimes do not really know how to code-switch. Such situations point to the legitimacy of using CS during formal learning – an activity loaded with authority and power. The students being powerless would probably not engage in CS without a ‘permit’. So, what they learn is a sociolinguistic function in a specific setting, not the structure and morphosyntax CS itself (see Gumperz, 1982).

The teacher has the power to switch to Estonian (by the authority vested in her), thereby demonstrating a linguistic norm to live up to. Thus, the teacher can encourage students to switch codes when the latter attempt to initiate conversations with her (before, during, and after the class) about such subjects as the course material, testing procedures, and personal concerns related to the course, excuses, etc. If students try to use Russian only, the teacher, rather than allowing them to do so, encourages them to use Estonian, as seen in excerpt 8:

**Excerpt 8**

1987T/F/T/RR/3:  *A čto nada doma so stat’joj delat’?* ‘WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO WITH THE ARTICLE AT HOME?’

Teacher:  *Teil tuleb koostada mõistekaart.* (smiles) ‘You have to draw the cluster’ (smiles)

1987T/F/T/RR/3:  *Kas keeltest?* ‘Of languages?’

Teacher:  *Ikka keelkondadest.* ‘Of language families’

1987T/F/T/RR/3:  *Ma ei oska.* ‘I can not [do it] ()’

Teacher:  *Jelena aitab sind.* ‘Jelena will help you’

[The students begin to speak Russian with each other but their concerns over the homework have not been mollified].
According to Bourdieu (1977: 648), language is not only an instrument of communication or even knowledge, but also an instrument of power. A person speaks not only to be understood but also to be believed, obeyed, respected, or distinguished. Norton (2000) introduces Bourdieu’s (1977) concept of investment, which signals the instrumental nature of motivation to learn the target language. The learners expect to receive a return on the investment in L2 that will give them access to previously unattainable resources: “If learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital” (Norton, 2000: 10). If on another occasion a student continues to resist the use of CS and sticks to monolingual Russian, the teacher relents, but she makes it clear that she will expect more use of the target language (in code-switched forms as well) in future discussions with her.

Excerpt 9

1987T/F/T/RR/3: *Ja ne ponimaju, a čto (<<) v centre?*  
‘I DO NOT UNDERSTAND, WHAT IS (<<) IN THE CENTRE [of it]?’
Teacher: *Võtmesõnad.*  
‘The key-notions’

1987T/F/T/RR/3: *A kak samu ideekaartu delat’?* ((capriciously))  
‘HOW TO DO the cluster?’ ((capriciously))
Teacher: *Ma näitan teile (!) seminarī ajal.*  
‘I will show you during the (!) seminar’

1987T/F/T/RR/3: *A čto, (<<) vse stat’i ispol’zovat’?*  
‘But (<<) should I use all the papers?’
Teacher: *Jah!*  
‘Yes!’

[Mobile phone rings and 1987T/F/T/RR/3 begins to speak with somebody in Russian]

What compels the student to switch to the native language again? Why does she not even try to formulate a question in the Estonian language? One may be tempted to explain the switch in terms of the non-native speaker lacking the necessary linguistic resources to formulate an adequate sentence. This point of view would be identical with the deficit view of bilingualism reported by Rampton (2001), in which bilingual learners are regarded as underachieving speakers of the majority language. But there is another point which should be taken into consideration. The student knows that the teacher is, like all individuals in the classroom, a Russian-speaker, and this has a temporary boundary-leveling effect as it does in spontaneous switching in everyday communication. The Russian language is used here as the student’s language of competence. As the teacher and the student share the same language, Russian seems to be more intimate and close for the latter. The students are first and foremost language users (or, to use the term by Dabelsteen & Jørgensen, 2004: *languagers*).

If a student wants to use CS in a one-to-one discussion with the teacher but
Anastassia Zabrodskaja

simply cannot find the necessary words, the teacher encourages her to write the sentences or questions on a piece of paper. Rather than responding immediately to that utterance, she draws the student’s attention to the sentence, or helps her find Estonian words and waits when the student asks the question in target language. For example, the student says:

Excerpt 10

1987T/F/T/RR/4: Ja vsjo ravno ne ponimaju, çto takuje (v) fraasid. Poçemu éto nümisõnafraas, a éto omadussõnafraas?

‘I STILL DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT THE (v) phrases ARE. WHY IS IT noun-phrase AND THIS IS adjective-phrase?’

The teacher may then feign non-comprehension, saying: “Mida?” ‘What?’ in Estonian. The student exhibited an air of disgust, but the teacher hands her a pencil and scrap of paper and says: “Kirjuta!” ‘Write!’ The student writes her question in Estonian:

Excerpt 11

1987T/F/T/RR/4: Ma ei saa aru, mis on fraas. Miks see on nümisõnafraas, see on omadussõnafraas?

‘I do not understand what a phrase is. Why is this noun-phrase and this is adjective-phrase?’

The teacher begins to explain in Estonian. What has the teacher done? She has responded to the student, although it has probably taken her longer to do so than she wished. But more importantly, she has made an attempt to teach the student that (1) Estonian is for real communication with a teacher, outside the lecture also, not just for the lecture; (2) by thinking about what they have previously learned, students can indeed construct meaningful utterances in the Estonian language. But the following threat must be taken into consideration. The teacher has also demonstrated that focus on form precedes focus on content, which in an informal student-teacher conversation may have a demotivating effect.

This section has discussed CS as part of teaching methodology. The excerpts showed that the teacher’s use of Estonian-Russian CS is not always performed consciously. Data analysis show that in a class where a subject is being taught to Russian-speaking students in Estonian, the teacher can switch to Russian, when:

1) The concepts are very important (excerpts 2–4);
2) The students are getting distracted (excerpt 5);
3) The students should be praised (excerpt 6);
4) The students should be told off (excerpt 7).
Functions 2–4 are also typical of CS in everyday interaction during the lecture held in the Estonian language. During the lecture, students use Russian as their language of competence (excerpt 1). The Estonian language seems to be cognitively linked with official situations, while the Russian language appears to enjoy a more intimate status.

Conclusion

In the bilingual university classroom setting the communication between the teacher and her students occurs in intricate and highly routinized sequences of interaction. CS is used by the teacher in order to create solidarity and a spirit of mutual understanding with the students. If CS can be unacceptable for students in the beginning and the students may fear that CS would hinder their L2 communication ability, then an example set by the teacher may help them to abandon their fear of or negative attitude towards bilingual speech/alternate use of several languages and to become better communicators. It still needs to be explored to what extent a teacher can use Russian and Estonian during the lecture. The major question about using CS in the university setting is whether CS helps to develop a better proficiency in L2 and to master the content in L2. Research findings in this study point to the benefits of involving students’ mother tongue. Students can improve their academic performance when using both languages during the same class.

Transcription conventions

**verbal communication line**

| ()              | unclear                  |
| (1 sec.)       | pause of 1 second or less than 1 second |
| (sec.)         | pause of more than 1 second          |
| (smiles)       | naming a verbal activity            |
| ((laughs))     | aspects of the utterance, such as whispers, laughter, coughing etc. are indicated with double parentheses |

[Aga miks]     overlapping talk

**intonation line**

| !              | stress                        |
| -              | lengthened                    |
| /              | rising intonation             |
| \              | falling intonation            |
| v              | doubling                      |
| ^              | shortened                     |
| >>             | lower voice                   |
| <<             | rising voice                  |
References


