

## **Contact-induced language change in a former imperial language: the case of Estonia's Russian**

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The paper addresses the current impact of Estonian, a former subordinate language, on Russian, a former dominant (imperial) language. A strong oppositional identity among ethnic Estonians contributed to minimalization of Russian impact (no changes in Estonian morphosyntax, phonology, etc). In the post-Soviet context, due a rapid bilingualisation among a certain segment of Russian-speaking population and the lack of oppositional identity, this group of speakers has acquired a more diffused character (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985), and non-monolingual varieties of Russian are prevailing. Estonia's Russian exhibits increasing Estonian influence in lexicon (code-switching/global copying), morphosyntax (bilingual constructions, word order, argument structure), and discourse pragmatics. A comparative perspective on contacts of Russian in the post-Soviet space is much needed in order to determine the scope and the character of changes, e.g., whether Russian influence continues and whether there the impact of former subordinate languages on Russian is limited to the lexicon or not.

### References:

Le Page, R. and Tabouret-Keller, A. (1985). *Acts of Identity: Creole Based Approach to Language and Ethnicity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Verschik, A. (2010) Contacts of Russian in the post-Soviet space. *Applied Linguistics Review* 1. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 85-127.