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Latvian-English code-switching on social media

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People draw on the languages in their linguistic repertoire, depending on the speech participants' needs and the conversational setting. The English language has gained salience and replaced the Russian language as the most often foreign language to learn at schools after Latvia regaining independence in 1990. Since then, it has been used widely as a lingua franca in various fields, for instance, international diplomacy, science, and education. This has been a fruitful environment for code-switching, as it is claimed that many young people alternate effortlessly between the Latvian language and the English language, which they often use as a means of communication, especially on social media. In order to ascertain the linguistic manifestation of code-switching, a study was conducted by using a descriptive qualitative design. Extra-sentential, inter-sentential, and intra-sentential code-switching was explored on social media. Extra-sentential switching or inserting tag elements from English into Latvian, inter-sentential switching characterized by a switch from Latvian to English outside the sentence or the clause level, and intra-sentential switching or switching from Latvian to English at the clause, phrase, or word level were observed. It was found out that the most frequent linguistic manifestation of code-switching was the insertion of single words. It can be concluded that code-switching reveals the speech participants' sense of their personal and social identities.

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