



“Gruß aus Saksa”:
Multilingual practices
in a German expatriate
online community
in Finland

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Abstract This article investigates forms and functions of multilingual practices among German-speaking expatriates in Finland in an online community. It focuses on Finnish codeswitches in otherwise German forum messages in a material that consists of 179 discussion threads with a total of 616 Finnish codeswitches. The structural analysis of the Finnish codeswitches revealed that most of the Finnish codeswitches were intrasentential switches – most often common and proper nouns. Switches of other parts of speech such as verbs and adjectives occurred significantly less often. Almost half of the Finnish nouns were orthographically adapted into German through capitalisation of the initial letter. The functional analysis showed that codeswitches referring to Finnish culture and society were common. Other central functions included metalinguistic commentary, slips of the tongue, greetings and closings, reported speech, and reiteration. The forum members largely relied on their shared knowledge of Finnish and Finland, and only some codeswitches were translated into German. The findings of this study indicate that these Finnish codeswitches are an expression of the multicultural and multilingual lives and identities of the forum members. Codeswitching to Finnish serves both as a means of communicating their shared Finnish experience and as a signal of membership in the online community.

Keywords German, Finnish, codeswitching, online communities, expatriate communities, computer-mediated communication

1. Introduction¹

Two recent German-language handbooks, *Handbuch der deutschen Sprachminderheiten in Mittel- und Osteuropa* (2008) and *Handbuch der deutschen Sprachminderheiten in Übersee* (2018), provide a comprehensive overview of research on German-speaking minorities and their language use in Central

¹ This article is based on Henna Kortelainen’s German-language master’s thesis (2020, University of Turku). The theoretical framework, analysis and interpretation of the results have been further developed and revised for this article.

and Eastern Europe as well as outside Europe. Northern Europe, where the German-speaking minority is admittedly much smaller and its migration history is different, remains outside the scope of these handbooks. In the current article, the focus is on precisely this area, on the German-speaking minority in Finland and on its multilingual practices in an online discussion forum.

The Internet with its various platforms provides a fruitful environment for the investigation of multilingual practices in different communities – including codeswitching practices in online migrant communities (e.g. Androutsopoulos 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Androutsopoulos & Hinnenkamp 2001; Paolillo 1996, 2011; Frick 2010). Investigation of these multilingual practices has the potential to shed light on how the members of the community employ their multilingual resources to convey social meanings, signal their membership in the community and construct identity through multilingual means. It also has the potential to reveal aspects of the linguistic situation in that community offline, such as an ongoing language shift.

The goal of this article is to describe the codeswitching practices of German-speaking expatriates, i.e. their alternating use of German and Finnish in the online discussion forum *Deutsche in Finnland* (‘Germans in Finland’), which is a networking platform for German-speaking migrants in Finland. The central research questions are, on the one hand, how Finnish elements are structurally embedded into an otherwise German syntactic frame in this online forum and on the other hand, what communicative functions the embedded Finnish codeswitches serve in the forum discussions. The analysis shows that the Finnish language is an important common resource through which the forum members convey their “Finnish” experiences drawing on their expected shared knowledge. Simultaneously, codeswitching functions as a way for the members to create a group identity as Germans in Finland and to negotiate and display their membership in the online community. Our viewpoint is new as previous research on German-speaking migrants in Finland and their codeswitching practices has mainly concerned other aspects.

This article is structured as follows: Section 2 situates our study in the broader framework of research on Finnish-German cultural encounters. Section 3 introduces the key theoretical aspects of codeswitching and core findings of previous research that are relevant for our analysis. Section 4 presents the data and the method. In Section 5 we analyse the forms, structural

integration and the communicative functions of the Finnish codeswitches. The final Section 6 summarizes the findings and discusses their implications about multilingual practices in the German-speaking expatriate community.

2. Previous studies on German-Finnish cultural encounters

The cultural, economic, and scientific contacts between the German-speaking areas in Central Europe and the area corresponding to today's Finland are ancient and range from the Middle Ages to the present (see e.g. Saarinen 2006; Bentlin 2008: 35–45; Tuomi-Nikula 2008; Hietala 2017: 9–44). German-speaking migrants are one of the oldest language minorities in Finland, and the German language was taken into account as early as in the first language statistics published in the second half of the 19th century in Finland (see e.g. *Suomen virallinen tilasto* 1874). In previous studies, this south-to-north mobility has mainly been approached from the point of view of economically and culturally influential agents with an origin in the German-speaking area of Central Europe. Their influence at different times in history and in different contexts in Finland form one major line of previous research (see e.g. Tigerstedt 1940, 1952; Haggrén 1998; Tertti 1983; Schweizer 1991, 1993; von Witzleben 2009; Piilahti 2012; Ijäs 2015; Wolff 2020). The multilingual practices of these actors and the language contact between speakers of different languages have been studied in the history of the former Finnish city of Wyborg in particular (see e.g. Tandefelt 2002; Einonen 2013). Another key research area is the aftermath of Finnish-German co-operation during World War II. This research has, for example, touched upon the coexistence of the Finnish civilian population and German soldiers in northern Finland (see e.g. Junila 2000; Westerlund 2011; Kujamäki 2017).

In comparison to the historical perspectives mentioned above, contemporary mobility from the German-speaking area to Finland has been examined more rarely. Until the 1980s, mobility from Finland was more frequent than reverse migration, but since the 1990s, the volume of migration to Finland has changed. This increase, which is reflected in various statistics, applies to mobility from the German-speaking area to Finland as well. According to current statistics, in 1990, a total of 1,992 German, Swiss and Austrian citizens resided in Finland; in 2020 there were 5,549. Together, they formed the 14th largest group of foreign nationalities in Finland in 2020 (Statistics

Finland 1990–2020a)². Current language statistics show, in turn, that there were 2,427 German speakers in 1990 in Finland. In 2020, their number was 6,841. In 2020, German was Finland’s 17th most frequently spoken language (Statistics Finland 1990–2020b)³.

The study of contemporary migrants from the German-speaking area to Finland has touched upon their cultural assimilation, the everyday intercultural encounters between Finns and Germans, and the maintenance of the German heritage language in Finland (see e.g. Hulkkonen 1997; Pöyhönen 2012; Tommila 2015; Luokkanen 2018). Worth mentioning as well are the edited works by Niedling (2006), Hiekkalahti (2007) and Schirrmann/Richter-Vapaatalo (2014), which document the biographies and migration histories of individuals with Austrian, German and Swiss background in Finland. These previous works provide various insights into the multicultural lives of contemporary German-speaking migrants in Finland. In the current article, we focus on the linguistic side of these intercultural encounters.

Our linguistic approach contributes to the broader framework of German-Finnish cultural encounters, which have been investigated from multiple perspectives. These include, among others, research on intercultural differences in business communication (see e.g. Tiittula 1993; Müntzel/Tiittula 1995) and in everyday life (Tuomi-Nikula 1989). In addition, previous studies have touched upon the representation of both the German-language culture in Finland (see e.g. Maijala’s 2006 study on German-language textbooks) and Finland in Germany (e.g. Sorvisto-Santoro 2019 on the image of Finland in

2 The COVID-19 pandemic affected the stay of foreign citizens in Finland. In 2019, there were 6,841 Austrian, German and Swiss citizens in Finland, which is almost 1,300 more than in 2020.

3 In 2020, there were approx. 5.5 million inhabitants in Finland. In the language statistics for 2020, which entail 161 named languages, languages more common than German were (in this order): Finnish, Swedish, Russian, Estonian, Arabic, English, Somali, Kurdish, Persian/Farsi, Chinese, Albanian, Vietnamese, Thai, Turkish, Spanish and “other languages”. “Other languages” is a label for a heterogeneous group of languages reported by speakers that are not included in the ISO 639-1 standard used by the statistics (for their analysis, see Karlsson 2017: 80). It is possible for a person to report only one language in the statistics. In the case of multilingual speakers, this method hides languages and does not provide a comprehensive account of the languages of the population (see also Latomaa 2012).

German-language media). One key area of research is German-Finnish literature exchange (e.g. Laukkanen/Parry eds. 2014; Körkkö 2017), the study of which includes the investigation of translations, translation history, translators and other influential literary agents (e.g. Kujamäki 1998, 2013; Lassila 2007; Tiittula 2013; Järventausta et al. eds. 2015). The linguistic effects of German-Finnish cultural contacts have been examined in etymological research in particular (e.g. Koivulehto 1999; Keinistö 2002; Bentlin 2008; Fonsén 2011). Another line of linguistic inquiry concerns the changing status of German as a foreign language and its learning and teaching in Finland (see e.g. Hyvärinen 2011; Keinistö 2014). In addition, there is research on the use of German as a lingua franca by Finnish scientists of different disciplines (Prinz/Korhonen eds. 2011; Ylönen 2015; Ylönen/Heimonen 2017; for the possible influence of German on Finnish academic genre conventions see Szurawitzki 2011). In the opposite direction, the study of Finnish migrants in the German-speaking areas in Central Europe has focused e.g. on patterns of migration (Ruokonen-Engler 2012), assimilation (Tuomi-Nikula 1989), L1 attrition (Baier 2007), language contact (Siitonen/Tuomi-Nikula 2003) and Finnish-language instruction (Imppola 2020; see also the articles in Järventausta/Pantermöller 2013).

3. Theoretical underpinnings: codeswitching

Codeswitching can be defined as “the use of more than one language in the course of a single communicative episode” (Heller 1988: 1). The term can also be used to refer to the alternate use of different varieties of the same language (see e.g. Gardner-Chloros 2009: 4; Lappalainen 2009). The term has received slightly differing definitions over the course of time with researchers distinguishing between structurally and functionally different multilingual practices. For example, some researchers make a distinction between switching between sentences (codeswitching) and switching within a sentence (code-mixing) (e.g. Sridhar/Sridhar 1980). As for functional differentiation, Auer (1999) reserves the term codeswitching for such alternate use of codes in which individual switches carry communicative meaning. However, despite the different definitions and competing terms that have arisen, codeswitching is still the most commonly used term to refer to the alternating use of dif-

ferent languages. In this article, we use codeswitching as an umbrella term for a variety of German-Finnish multilingual practices in the Internet forum *Deutsche in Finnland* regardless of form or function.

In codeswitching research, one major branch has focused on the syntactic properties and grammatical integration of elements in codeswitched discourse. Intersentential switching refers to codeswitching between sentences or clauses (Myers-Scotton 1993: 3–4; Romaine 1995: 122–123) while intrasentential codeswitching means switching within sentence or clause boundaries. The dominant language in codeswitched discourse is commonly known as the matrix language (Myers-Scotton 1993: 3). In intrasentential codeswitching, the matrix language – in our case German – provides the morphosyntactic frame into which elements from the other language, the embedded language, are inserted.

Of particular interest in structural considerations are intrasentential switches. While in intersentential switching the codes remain structurally separate, intrasentential switching involves the grammars of the two languages coming into contact. This raises the question of structural integration of the multilingual elements. In the case of the German language, this involves, for example, inflection, the formation of plurals as well as the question of gender assignment for nouns of foreign origin (e.g. Eisenberg 2011; Havermeier 2015, 2016). Furthermore, when the language of the inserted nouns does not have articles (as is the case for Finnish), the question of article use also arises.

In addition to structural integration, another key focus has been on the functions of codeswitching. Whereas sociolinguistically oriented theories aim to explain codeswitching by the social roles of and the symbolic value attached to the codes (Gumperz 1982; Myers-Scotton 1988), interactional and conversation-analytical approaches highlight the relevance of a situated analysis of codeswitches with regard to their sequential position within the discourse and the explanation of what interactional purpose they serve at that particular point in the discourse (Auer 1984; Wei 1998). The analysis in this study relies on both the microlevel and the macrolevel functions of the codes: the Finnish codeswitches are on the one hand analysed with regard to their position within forum messages and on the other hand with regard to Finnish as the language of the host country for the forum members.

Codeswitching has been shown widely to serve as a communicative resource for people to accomplish different communicative goals. Switching that carries interactional meaning has been termed *metaphorical* – or alternatively *conversational* – codeswitching by Gumperz (1982: 60–61) as opposed to *situational* codeswitching, where the language choice is conditioned by conversation-external factors such as setting, participants, and activity type. According to Gumperz, codeswitching functions as a *contextualization cue* through which interlocutors contextualize their actions in a communicative exchange. As a contextualization cue, codeswitching functions in a similar way as for example posture, intonation, tone of voice, or gestures to provide signals to other interlocutors regarding how the speaker intends what they say and how they wish their message to be understood (Gumperz 1982: 131; Auer 1995: 123). By switching to another code, the speaker can signal realignment and reposition themselves towards the other interlocutor or towards what is being said (e.g. Zentella 1997: 93–95). The different discourse functions identified in previous research include quotation/reported speech, reiteration, addressee specification, message qualification, and personalization vs. objectivisation signalling, for example, the speaker’s distance or proximity towards the contents of the utterance, as listed in Gumperz’s (1982: 75–84) original taxonomy.

In codeswitching research, the distinction between single-word code-switches and borrowed lexical items inevitably arises. Some of the Finnish items in our analysis may have even become conventionalized in the use by the German-speaking community in Finland. This can be assumed in the case of cultural borrowings (Myers-Scotton 1993), i.e. items referring to objects and concepts specific to the Finnish culture without equivalents in German. Lexical items denoting objects and concepts linked to culture and society have the tendency of becoming conventionalized as actual loanwords in the migrant community (Riehl 2016: 30). In Backus’s (2010) approach, the continuum between codeswitching and lexical borrowing is described in an illustrative way as a continuum between synchronic embedding and diachronic change. In our study, the data would not be sufficient for us to distinguish between established and non-established Finnish lexical items, and we would need other types of data to differentiate between codeswitched Finnish items and conventionalized, established ones in the German expatriate

community in Finland. In previous research on codeswitching, carrying communicative meaning has been assumed to be a quality of longer codeswitches while the communicative value of single-word codeswitches has often been downplayed (Backus 2015). However, single-word switches – as well as borrowings – can and do convey stylistic and pragmatic effects that would be inexpressible by monolingual means (Backus 2015; Onysko/Winter-Froemel 2011). Regardless of whether the Finnish items are codeswitches or established cultural borrowings in the community, they are, in the context of this article, instances of German-Finnish multilingual practices and informative of German-Finnish cultural contact.

Codeswitching is also associated with identity presentation. This is often discussed in terms of *we-code* and *they-code*, terms introduced by Gumperz (1982). *We-code* is “the ethnically specific, minority language” which is “associated with in-group and informal activities” (Gumperz 1982: 66), while *they-code* is the language of the majority and is used in more formal, out-group interactions. However, the status of codes as *we-code* and *they-code* does not automatically remain stable (Sebba/Wootton 1998). Bailey (2007) states that identities and identity associations of codes – rather than being necessarily predetermined – are constructed in the course of an interaction. In a communicative exchange, different identities can be emphasized at different points of the same interaction. Consequently, the same code can assume the role of a *we-code* or a *they-code* in different contexts and even in the same interaction depending on the code’s indexical values at different points of the interaction (see also Sebba/Wootton 1998). There is no one-to-one match between specific codeswitching functions and identity presentation but the interpretation of an individual switch as an enactment of identity is rather done on the basis of the entire discourse and its larger context.

Studies on codeswitching have investigated how linguistic resources are exploited to construct and negotiate identities and to signal membership (e.g. De Fina 2007; Leppänen et al. 2009; Leppänen 2012; Peuronen 2017) in different communities of practice (Eckert/McConnell-Ginet 1992). A community of practice can be characterized as a group with mutual engagement of participants, a joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire of resources for negotiation of meaning (Wenger 1998: 73). For example, De Fina (2007) shows how the Italian language is used in an Italian Briscola club of first-, second-, and

third-generation Italian immigrants in the US to express Italianness and Italian ethnicity. The associations of the Italian language with Italian ethnicity and traditions are used as a common frame of reference and backdrop for the interpretation of the symbolic value of the use of Italian. According to De Fina, Italian occurs particularly in words and expressions for Italian cuisine, the Briscola game and, for example, greetings. In some other communities, such as Finnish fan communities investigated by Leppänen (2012), a mixed, heteroglossic writing style is the group norm, and the community members use it in their forum posts to show identification with the community.

Overall, multilingualism and codeswitching have been examined in migrant settings in a considerable amount of contact-linguistic research. In the German context, previous studies on migrants’ multilingual practices describe, for example, Turkish-German codeswitching in terms of its discourse functions (Cindark 2013), its functions and use in identity construction (Kallmeyer/Keim 2003; Banaz 2002) and variation in codeswitching patterns (Treffers-Daller 1997). In addition, German migrant communities’ multilingual practices have been addressed in the Eastern European context by Földes (2002, 2006), Knipf-Komlósi (2011) and Riehl (2019). Siitonen and Tuomi-Nikula’s (2003) overview, in turn, summarizes research on the code-switching practices of Finnish expatriates settled in the German-speaking countries. The use of German elements in the Finnish matrix frame forms one central topic of this research. An important study, published after Siitonen/Tuomi-Nikula (2003), is Baier’s (2007) investigation of the attrition of Finnish migrants’ L1, a process in which German-language codeswitching plays a significant role.

In the opposite direction, Martin (1973) goes into the multilingual practices of German migrants in Finland. His study is to our knowledge the only comprehensive previous study on the codeswitching of German migrants in Finland. By interviewing almost 60 individuals (born in 1881–1936 and settled in Finland in the 1920s and 1930s) who had lived in Finland for 15–20 years at the time of the study, Martin studies the grammatical influence of Finnish in spoken German interaction and the use of Finnish loanwords and codeswitches by German expatriates. Toivonen (2017), in turn, investigates the functions of German-Finnish codeswitching in bilingual German-Finnish families living in Finland. Her analysis is, however, based on the subjective

reports of the respondents on their language use, not on authentic spoken data. Thematically completely different approaches are studies investigating German-Finnish codeswitching in the foreign-language classroom in Finland (Munukka 2006; Grasz 2012).

The traditional focus of codeswitching research has been on spontaneous spoken interaction. However, migrant communities’ written multilingual practices have also been investigated. This research involves different modes of computer-mediated communication (= CMC) such as diasporic web forums, e-mails, Facebook and WhatsApp. Research on multilingualism and codeswitching in online spaces of migrant communities in Germany include investigations of, for example, Persian and Greek diasporic web forums (Androutsopoulos 2006b); Indian, Persian, Greek, Asian, Moroccan, Turkish, and Russian diasporic websites (Androutsopoulos 2006a, 2007); Turkish and Greek chats on IRC (Androutsopoulos/Hinnenkamp 2001); and Arabic-German WhatsApp communication (König 2021). These online practices can be informative of several aspects of language use in the expatriate community. The virtual online space can create a platform that enables the use of the minority language in the first place (Ivkovic/Lotherington 2009; Moshnikov 2016), and the preference for the heritage language in the online forum can reveal a tendency towards language maintenance. Conversely, preference for the language of the host country can be indicative of language shift in the community (Paolillo 1996).

It is unclear to what extent codeswitching practices in the spoken and the written medium are similar and to what extent they potentially differ. Written communication does have some significant differences in comparison with spoken interaction such as more time to plan and the possibility to edit. In CMC, codeswitching has been observed to be affected by technical aspects as well as features of the different modes of CMC such as synchronicity (Barasa 2016; San 2009). For example, according to Barasa (2016: 64–66) space limitations on CMC messages can lead the writer to codeswitch for a shorter word or phrase in the other language. Therefore, written online codeswitching practices cannot be directly generalized as representing practices offline.

3. Data and method

The present study describes the multilingual practices of German-speaking expatriates in the Internet forum *Deutsche in Finnland* (‘Germans in Finland’) (saksalaiset.fi). *Deutsche in Finnland* is an online platform that enables community members to share information and experiences, ask for advice or help, or discuss different topics which are often related to Finland, such as living and travelling in Finland or the Finnish language. The forum has approximately 2500 registered users (September 2021), which indicates that the forum is an important communication platform for German speakers in Finland (see the statistics in Section 1). Table 1 presents an overview of the data collected.

Table 1. Overview of the collected data.

Internet forum	Data collection date	Publication date of the analysed posts	Number of usernames of the analysed posts	Collected discussion threads	Number of Finnish codeswitches
<i>Deutsche in Finnland</i> saksalaiset.fi	February 1–4, 2018	2006–2018	222	179	616

Obviously, it is possible that some of the forum members are German speakers living in other countries than Finland or that some members are second-language speakers of German with, for example, Finnish as their native language. However, our comprehensive analysis of the messages, their contents and linguistic properties allows us to conclude that the majority of the messages are composed by German-speaking expatriates.

In this research, we focus on the public part of the forum where the messages are publicly accessible and available. Therefore, no research permission was required from either the community members themselves or administrators to use the messages as research material. In the examples to be cited in this study, we have anonymized the forum members by omitting their usernames. The examples provided in Section 4 to illustrate German-Finnish codeswitching practices are selected so that they are neutral in tone, not offensive, and that they do not embarrass anyone.

The forum is divided into ten topic categories⁴:

- 1) *Allgemeines* (‘General’)
- 2) *Leben und Alltag in Finnland* (‘Living and everyday life in Finland’)
- 3) *Kinder und Familie* (‘Children and family’)
- 4) *Umzug und unterwegs von und nach Finnland*
(‘Moving and on the way to and from Finland’)
- 5) *Finnische Sprache* (‘Finnish language’)
- 6) *Kunst und Kultur* (‘Arts and culture’)
- 7) *Knödel, Kalakukko und Koskenkorva* (‘Culinary corner’)
- 8) *Natur und Tierwelt* (‘Nature and wildlife’)
- 9) *Tipps für Trips innerhalb Finnland* (‘Tips for trips within Finland’)
- 10) *Sport und Freizeit* (‘Sport and free time’).

The material was collected in the time period 1st–4th February 2018. The first 19 discussion threads from each above-mentioned topic category were collected – with the exception of *Kunst und Kultur* (‘Arts and culture’), which only contained eight discussion threads. In instances where an individual thread contained several pages of messages, up to four pages were collected. The number of discussion threads collected was altogether 179. The oldest forum posts in these discussion threads are from the year 2006, but most discussion threads date to the years 2010–2018. The messages are from 222 different usernames. Some of the usernames contributed more actively to the discussions while others only posted one or two messages.

The discussion threads were copied and saved as Word files, after which they were read through and manually searched for codeswitches into Finnish. The Finnish codeswitches were copied and saved into Excel files together with an extract of their surrounding textual context for analysis. Altogether 616 codeswitches into Finnish were found in the material. The codeswitches were analysed in the light of the findings of previous research with regard to both their structural and functional properties.

⁴ The discussion categories and the corresponding links to each category can be found at: <http://saksalaiset.fi/forum/index.php?sid=294e5d121b3a78ecfb1a24ad46e9c86c>.

As our focus is on multilingual practices in the forum discussions, other multilingual elements external to the discussion threads were excluded from the analysed data. These multilingual elements include, for example, usernames and life mottos in the users’ profile information. This type of presence of several languages in a web page contributes to the overall multilingualism of the website but is not codeswitching per se – at least according to the definition adopted here. Excluded from the analysis are also instances where the codeswitch is part of a quoted post, i.e. a user has quoted another user’s text in which codeswitching occurs. This prevents us from analysing duplicate instances of the same codeswitch.

4. Results and findings

4.1. Structural embedding of the Finnish codeswitches

The structural analysis of the Finnish codeswitches enables an overview of how German and Finnish are mixed in the forum messages. Table 2 summarizes the key properties of the Finnish switches.

Table 2. Overview of the structural properties of the Finnish codeswitches.

	Σ	%
Intrasentential codeswitches	506	82
Intersentential codeswitches	35	6
Metalinguistic commentaries	75	12
Total	616	100

Table 2 shows that in the forum *Deutsche in Finnland*, German-Finnish code-switching involves predominantly intrasentential insertions of Finnish words and phrases into German sentences. Out of the 616 switches, only 6% were intersentential switches to Finnish involving complete Finnish sentences. The intersentential codeswitches were mostly quotations that were either excerpts of reported speech or text passages directly copy-pasted from other websites. The share of the third category, metalinguistic commentaries, was 12%. These switches are treated as a distinct category as they are

morphosyntactically independent and do not thus provide information on the structural properties of German-Finnish codeswitching. We will return to them in Section 4.2.

Table 3 highlights the patterns of the dominating intrasentential code-switching type. In the following discussion, we give examples for each category.

Table 3. Patterns of intrasentential codeswitching.

	Σ	%
Single common nouns	319	63
Proper nouns	87	17.2
Noun phrases	22	4.4
Interjections	21	4.2
Bilingual German-Finnish compounds	15	3
Single adjectives (14) and adjective phrases (1)	15	3
Verbs	5	1
Others	22	4.4
Total	506	100

4.1.1. Single common nouns

Table 3 shows that single nouns clearly dominate (63% of all intrasentential switches). Single nouns are often culture-specific items such as *mämmi* (‘Finnish Easter pudding’) referring to objects and concepts specific to Finnish culture (for more examples see 4.2). The use of Finnish single nouns (as well as proper nouns, see below) in German sentences is facilitated by the fact that they may be accompanied by German articles and pronouns expressing grammatical relations. There is thus no need to inflect Finnish single nouns in German sentences (as compared to adjectives and verbs, see below) (see also Martin 1973: 56). In the following discussion, we analyse the ways in which Finnish single nouns are integrated orthographically (capitalization of nouns) and grammatically (gender, including the use of articles, and plural) into German sentences.

Written interaction in informal online forums in the digital space is often characterized by dialogic and colloquial features typical of oral communication. The continuum between conventional orality and literacy was described in the 1980s and 1990s by Koch & Oesterreicher (see e.g. 1985, 1994) in an influential model, which has been further developed in current approaches to interaction in digital media (see e.g. Storrer 2013; Dürscheid 2021). In the Internet forum investigated in this article, the “typed dialogues” (Dürscheid/Brommer 2009) display some conventional features of oral interaction, and as it is typical for informal digital communication (Dürscheid/Brommer 2009), the norms of conventional written language, including orthographic rules, are not always strictly followed. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to analyse the orthography of the Finnish codeswitches because the German and Finnish norms differ: In Finnish, only sentence-initial words and proper nouns are usually capitalized whereas in German, due to a historical development from a pragmatic function to a grammatical feature (see e.g. Nerius 2000), a capital letter marks the noun part of speech regardless of its position in the sentence. In other words, both proper and common nouns are capitalized in German. The members of the Internet forum *Deutsche in Finnland* thus have two different norms to choose from: the model of the matrix German and the model of the Finnish-language embedded items.

Altogether 276 Finnish single nouns could be analysed in terms of capitalization because sentence-initial nouns were left out. The results show rather equal “competition” between the norms: in 148 instances, the Finnish noun was capitalized while in 128 instances it was written with a lower-case letter. Similar variation in the navigation between the different orthographic norms of two languages has been attested in written codeswitching of other language pairs, e.g. between Russian and German (Yudytzka 2016). In multilingual communities in general, the orthographic conventions of the languages in contact have been found to influence each other (Schroeder 2007).

A further cross-linguistic difference relates to the assignment of gender indicated by articles and other grammatical devices in German; Finnish nouns, by contrast, lack both gender and articles. The investigation of the gender assignment of Finnish nouns shows that they often follow the general rule of semantic analogy (see e.g. Wegener 1995): they receive the gender of the equivalent German word. For example, in our data the semantically related nouns

letku (‘hose’) and *putki* (‘tube’) were treated differently; the former appeared in the masculine gender and the latter in the neuter gender because the German counterparts are masculine (*der Schlauch* ‘hose’) and neuter (*das Rohr* ‘tube’) respectively. Variation does, however, exist (see also Fuller/Lehnert 2000). In our data this applies, for example, to the word *viili* (‘sour milk’), the gender of which varied between masculine, neuter and feminine. Similar variation was also observed in Martin’s (1973) study on spoken data. According to him, this variation can be explained – at least in some instances such as *viili* – by the absence of a suitable German equivalent for the Finnish lexical item, which leads to indecisiveness about the “correct” gender⁵.

In addition to gender, the integration of Finnish single nouns in German sentences sometimes involved plural marking. When studying the use of English-language items in Finnish sentences uttered by Finnish migrants living in the US, Halmari (1997) observed variation in the plural marking of English nouns: sometimes the Finnish plural ending is used (*neighborit* ‘neighbors’), sometimes the English plural suffix is retained (*librarians*), and sometimes a bilingual double marking occurs (*mountainseille* ‘to mountains’). In Martin’s study on oral data (1973), Finnish plural nouns most commonly received no plural ending. In a few instances, the plural was formed with the German plural ending -s or with a Finnish plural ending. Similar variation occurs in our data, in which, however, only 16 Finnish nouns were in plural. In three cases, the noun received the German plural ending -s (*Mökkis* ‘summer cottages’). In one instance, the plural noun occurred without any plural ending (*K-kauppa* ‘K-markets’). In the rest of the instances, the nouns received Finnish plural marking, for example *Suomalaiset* (‘Finns’):

5 In the reverse direction, when German codeswitches are embedded in Finnish sentences, their gender characteristics disappear because it is not possible to express gender in the Finnish matrix language. Rakkolainen (2002) showed in her analysis on German codeswitches and loanwords embedded in Finnish that single German nouns conformed to the Finnish matrix through absence of gender assignment and articles. Siitonen and Tuomi-Nikula (2003) emphasize, however, that German nouns may be accompanied by the numeral *yksi* ‘one’ and demonstrative pronouns. These items have started to display features of grammaticalized indefinite and definite articles (see e.g. Nordlund et al. 2013).

1. Deine Aussage, dass evtl. nur ca. 5500 *Suomalaiset* wissen was sie da tun, vermutlich sehr zutreffend sei.
 [Your statement that maybe only about 5500 *Suomalaiset* know what they are doing there is probably very accurate.]⁶

The gender assignment, use of articles, and plural marking of nouns are all features which may show differences between spontaneous oral data (such as Martin’s 1973 study) and written data (such as this study); unlike in spontaneous speech, in written communication the writer has the opportunity to reflect on and edit their linguistic choices before posting the message. More data is obviously needed for a more thorough analysis.

4.1.2. Proper nouns

Proper nouns, which may be single nouns or noun phrases, were isolated in a separate group because they differ from common nouns: Proper names are expressions which are often transferred unchanged from one language to another (see e.g. Raukko 2017). After single nouns, proper names formed the second largest category in our data (17.2%). They included names of referents typical for the Finnish society in which the forum members live (for examples see Table 3 below).

An interesting group among the proper names were exonyms. They are toponyms such as *Saksa* (‘Germany’), i.e. special geographical names used by people outside that place:

2. Gab’s nicht in *Saksa* mal eine – leider nicht ernst gemeinte – Diskussion, ob nicht doch ein ”Internetführerschein” eingerichtet werden soll und der für Menschen die Online gehen wollen verpflichtend sei.
 [Wasn't there a – unfortunately not serious – discussion in *Saksa* as to whether an “Internet driver’s license” should be set up and which is mandatory for people who want to go on-line.]

⁶ In the examples, italics (added by us) highlight the Finnish codeswitches both in the original and in the English translations.

In contrast to other proper nouns such as *Helsingin Sanomat* (name of a newspaper), which do not have direct German equivalents, exonyms do have equivalents. The use of a Finnish exonym in a German sentence instead of the German toponym *Deutschland* ‘Germany’ is a signal that Finnish is – alongside the matrix language German – considered a common resource, the other we-code of the group.

4.1.3. Noun phrases, interjections, bilingual compounds, adjectives, and verbs

In contrast to single nouns and proper names, all other categories were less common in our data. The integration of syntactically complex noun phrases in German sentences was marginal. Their share was only 4.2%. This group includes, for example, terms referring to specific structures of Finnish society (*sairausvakuutuksen sairaanhoitomaksu* ‘health insurance contribution for medical care’).

The group of interjections was also small, in total 4.2%. In addition to interjections *per se*, i.e. the representatives of the part of speech of interjections (e.g. *kip-pis* ‘cheers’), the group also covers syntactically more complex but structurally fixed routine expressions such as the exclamation *voi kauhea* (‘how terrible’).

Bilingual compounds, the following category in Table 2, refer to hybrid German-Finnish compound nouns, i.e. constructions in which one part comes from Finnish and the other one from German, for example *Mökkiurlaub* (‘mökki holiday’), *Ruskawanderung* (‘ruska hike’) and *Juhannuswoche* (‘Juhannus week’)⁷. This type of codeswitching was not very common either (3%). In each instance, the Finnish part of the compound was a culture-specific item referring to Finnish culture.

Constituting 3% of intrasentential codeswitches, single adjectives and adjective phrases also formed a marginal group of Finnish codeswitches. The result corresponds to Martin’s (1973) study on spoken data, where adjectives were also rare. According to Martin (1973: 56), German inflection makes it difficult to embed Finnish adjectives in German sentences. In his data, Finnish adjectives appeared in syntactic environments where they did not need

7 *mökki*= cottage, *juhannus* = Midsummer, *ruska* = autumn colours.

to be inflected, as predicatives and adverbials, but not as attributes. In our data, the circumstances are the same. Example (11) in Section 4.2. illustrates a case where inflection was not needed.

The category of verbs was even smaller, only 1%. This result is also in line with Martin's (1973) study. A direct transfer of Finnish verbs is difficult, as it is difficult to add German inflectional suffixes to Finnish verbs (see example (7) below).

4.1.4. Others

The final category “others” in Table 2 consists of other sentence-internal switches (4.4%) which did not fall into the above-mentioned parts of speech or phrase types. This category is an internally heterogeneous category consisting of, for example, syntactically different quotations which were integrated as such into the German sentences, such as *tahdotko sinä* (‘do you’) in (3).

3. Die Pastorin hat uns nach dem obligatorischen “*Tahdotko sinä...?*” (Antwort “*Tahdon*”) gefragt, ob wir auch ein freiwilliges Heiratsversprechen hinzufügen wollen, so eins zum Nachsprechen.
 [The pastor asked us after the obligatory “*do you...*” (the answer “*I do*”) if we want to add a voluntary wedding vow, one that is repeated.]

4.2. Functional analysis

In this section, we examine the functions of the Finnish codeswitches. In this analysis, which complements the structural picture of codeswitches outlined above, the codeswitches are analysed in terms of both their reference point and the function they served in the particular context. Since the functions of codeswitching tend to co-occur and intertwine, a systematic quantitative analysis has not been carried out in the functional analysis. For this reason, the quantitative estimations are based on rough tendencies observable in the data. With regard to their functions, the Finnish codeswitches correspond to the functions of codeswitching in general (see e.g. Gumperz 1982): cultural switches; quotations; greetings; reiteration; linguistic errors, slips of the tongue, and puns; and metalinguistic commentary are the central functions in our data.

Table 4 contains information on the distribution of the codeswitches across the discussion categories of the forum. The most codeswitches were found in the discussion category *Finnische Sprache* (‘Finnish language’). The categories *Knödel, Kalakukko und Koskenkorva* (‘Culinary corner’) and *Leben und Alltag in Finnland* (‘Living and everyday life in Finland’) are other topics that “attracted” more codeswitching than the other topics. We return to these categories in the discussion below.

Table 4. Distribution of the codeswitches across the forum’s predefined discussion categories.

Discussion category	Σ	%
<i>Finnische Sprache</i> (‘Finnish language’)	229	37.2
<i>Knödel, Kalakukko und Koskenkorva</i> (‘Culinary corner’)	155	25.2
<i>Leben und Alltag in Finnland</i> (‘Living and everyday life in Finland’)	78	12.7
<i>Sport und Freizeit</i> (‘Sport and free time’)	45	7.3
<i>Natur und Tierwelt</i> (‘Nature and wildlife’)	33	5.4
<i>Tipps für Trips innerhalb Finnland</i> (‘Tips for trips within Finland’)	25	4.1
<i>Allgemeines</i> (‘General’)	22	3.6
<i>Umzug und unterwegs von und nach Finnland</i> (‘Moving and on the way to and from Finland’)	15	2.4
<i>Kinder und Familie</i> (‘Children and family’)	12	2
<i>Kunst und Kultur</i> (‘Arts and culture’)	2	0.3
Total	616	100

4.2.1. Cultural switches

A great share of the Finnish codeswitches was culture-related. Items in this functional category belong to the structural categories of single nouns, proper nouns, bilingual compounds, and noun phrases discussed in Section 4.1. above. Cultural codeswitches are culture-specific lexical items denoting objects and concepts specific to the Finnish culture, traditions, and society or otherwise having associations with Finland and Finnish culture. The dominance of culture-specific items in German-Finnish codeswitching is

consistent with the types of Finnish items reported by German speakers in Toivonen’s study (2017). Although some Finnish items categorized as cultural, such as *lukio* (‘high school’), are not particular to Finland only, their Finnish referents nevertheless differ clearly from the referents of the corresponding German-language items. These culture-specific codeswitches can be viewed as cues that contextualize the referent as Finnish, convey its link to Finnish culture or society, and express its Finnishness. For example, the use of *asumistuki* (‘housing benefit’) associates the benefit with the Finnish social security system with, for example, its specific criteria for receiving the benefit, the institution granting the benefit etc. To illustrate with another example, using the Finnish word *juhannus* for Midsummer immediately brings to mind how the holiday is traditionally celebrated in Finland. The use of certain culture-specific items can also be assumed to be motivated by the German speakers’ frequent exposure to and use of these terms in their everyday life in Finland, such as *katsastus* (‘car inspection’) or *vero* (‘tax’). In Table 5, a selected set of examples illustrates the different thematic categories that the Finnish cultural codeswitches represent.

Table 5. Selected examples for cultural codeswitches.

Thematic category	Examples
Proper names	<i>Helsingin Sanomat</i> (name of a newspaper), <i>Suomenlinna</i> (name of an island close to Helsinki), <i>Vain Elämää</i> (name of a TV program), <i>Stadi</i> (colloquial name for Helsinki), <i>Energia Areena</i> (name of a multifunctional indoor arena in Vantaa), <i>Itäkeskus</i> (name of a shopping centre in Helsinki), <i>Veikkaus</i> (name of a Finnish gaming company), <i>Suomi</i> (‘Finland’).
Finnish cuisine (food, drinks, delicacies)	<i>mämmi</i> (Finnish Easter pudding), <i>salmiakki</i> (salty liquorice), <i>viili</i> (soured whole milk), <i>piimä</i> (buttermilk), <i>koskenkorva</i> (Finnish vodka brand), <i>Geisha-konvehti</i> (chocolate brand), <i>kermaviili</i> (Finnish sour cream), <i>jogurtti</i> (yogurt)
Finnish society and social system	<i>Kela</i> (the social insurance institution of Finland), <i>verohallinto</i> (the Finnish tax administration), <i>lukio</i> (high school), <i>terveyskeskus</i> (health centre), <i>työterveys</i> (occupational health services), <i>sairauskassa</i> (health insurance fund), <i>asumistuki</i> (housing benefit), <i>kannustinloukku</i> (incentive trap), <i>henkilökortti</i> (identity card), <i>vero</i> (tax), <i>katsastus</i> (car inspection), <i>muskari</i> (music playschool), <i>matkakortti</i> (travel card), <i>vauvakahvila</i> (baby café), <i>perhekahvila</i> (family café)
Finnish traditions and customs	<i>mökki</i> (summer cottage), <i>juhannus</i> (Midsummer), <i>pikkujoulu</i> (pre-Christmas party)
Finland’s nature	<i>pohjavesialue</i> (groundwater area), <i>silkkiuikku</i> (great crested grebe), <i>siika</i> (common whitefish), <i>ympäristölupa</i> (environmental permit), <i>vesisuojaus</i> (water protection), <i>metsäpalovaroitus</i> (forest fire warning)

The largest thematic categories were “Proper names”, “Finnish cuisine”, and “Society and social system”. These thematic categories are not identical with but correspond largely to the distribution of the codeswitches across the forum’s topic categories. Some codeswitches such as *Suomi* (‘Finland’) and *mökki* (‘summer cottage’) occur in several topic categories.

In Table 5, the culture-specific proper names refer to objects, institutions, organisations, shops, newspapers, magazines, books, and places (etc.) that exist as such only in Finnish culture and society. The referents of the switches for food items and beverages belong to Finnish cuisine or are otherwise typically consumed as part of the Finnish diet. Switches related to “Finnish society and social system” refer to institutions, offices, social security, school sys-

tem, and health care – or otherwise to everyday life in Finland in general. The other thematic categories, “Finnish traditions and customs” and “Finland’s nature” were also common but clearly smaller categories in the data.

As the forum *Deutsche in Finnland* was created for information exchange about issues related to Finland, it is not surprising to find multiple culture-related switches. The use of culture-related Finnish words and expressions embedded in German is indicative of people’s exposure to and contact with Finnish culture. The cultural codeswitches reflect experience with Finnish culture and, judging by the several different types of cultural switches, with a variety of different aspects of Finnish culture.

Most cultural switches are not translated or otherwise explained in German. This is the case for example in (4). This can be viewed as an indication of Finnish being treated as a *we-code* for the participants of the forum: the writers expect knowledge of both the Finnish language and Finnish culture from the other forum members and can rely on this shared knowledge when conveying cultural meanings.

4. Tipp: wenn man ausgerechnet in der *Juhannuswoche* ein *Mökki* mieten will, besser rechtzeitig bei den deutschen Anbietern nachschauen (z.B. Interchalet). Diese haben den gleichen Preis für jede Woche des Sommers. Die *Juhannuswoche* ist dort ein Schnäppchen. [Tip: if you want to rent a *Mökki* during *Juhannus* week of all times, it is better to check with the German providers in good time {e.g. Interchalet}. These have the same price for every week of summer. *Juhannus* week is a bargain there.]

The few cultural switches which are translated are more specialised terms and their meanings are not assumed to be known by all the forum members:

5. Das Thema “*Kannustinloukku*”, also Motivationsfalle, war ja auch bei den letzten Parlamentswahlen wieder ein Thema, so wie schon acht Jahre zuvor. [The topic of “*Kannustinloukku*”, that is, motivation trap, was a topic again in the most recent parliamentary elections, just as it was eight years earlier.]

Overall, of the 616 Finnish codeswitches, 119 were accompanied by a German translation or explanation. Most of these translations or explanations (96) occurred in messages posted in the discussion category “*Finnische Sprache*” (‘Finnish language’). They appeared either in metalinguistic commentary or in explanation of linguistic errors (see below). Several strategies were employed to convey the meanings of the Finnish codeswitches in German: the translation could be either literal or slightly altered repetition of the Finnish expression; some translations followed the codeswitch in brackets, quotation marks or were surrounded by commas. The German translation was sometimes accompanied by explanatory metalinguistic expressions such as *also* (‘that is’, see [5] above), *auf Deutsch* (‘in German’), or *mit anderen Worten* (‘in other words’). Explanations of the Finnish items were in some cases also provided in a glossary at the end of the forum message.

4.2.2. Quotations

Codeswitching has been found to be very common when a speaker or a writer reports another spoken or written source (e.g. Gumperz 1982). In quotations, codeswitching serves as a contextualization cue marking “voices” in conversation or in writing (e.g. Frick/Riionheimo 2013). At the same time, codeswitching preserves the language of the original utterance. In our data, the quotations were of two types: a) copy-pasted quotations and b) reported speech. The former involved text extracts copied from other websites. In CMC, codeswitching practices are shaped by features and tools provided by computational technologies (e.g. Barasa 2016). Copy-pasted quotations illustrated in (6) below can be viewed as such CMC-specific codeswitching:

6. Sairauskassa ist nicht auf Gewinn ausgerichtet, Versicherungen wohl: *Kassan voittoa tavoittelemattomuus ja yhteisvastuullisuus takaavat hyvän korvaustason pienellä jäsenmaksulla.* <http://www.vakuutuskassat.fi/index.php/> ... aineisto-4 In diesem Sinne wird also auch zukünftig die Versorgung fairer sein, als bei Versicherungen, die lieber nicht zahlen wollen.

[A sick fund is not oriented towards profit but insurances: *The non-profit nature and joint liability of the sick fund guarantee good compensation with a small membership fee.* <http://www.vakuutuskassat.fi/index.php/> ... aineisto-4 In this way future care will be fairer than with insurances that would rather not pay.]

Reported speech encompasses quotations of speech and writing produced either by the writer themselves or another person at an earlier point in time. In reported speech, codeswitching can serve to retain the original language of the utterance (Álvarez-Cáccamo 1996; Lantto/Kolehmainen 2017). In our data, several of the instances of reported speech occurred in explanations of slips of the tongue, where the quoted utterance contained the linguistic error, i.e. the linguistic error was illustrated by using the quotation. This supports the analysis that willingness to retain the original language of the utterance was what motivated the switch to Finnish in these quotations. Example (7) contains an instance where the writer quotes what they themselves wrote in a text message. The quote further illustrates a typo that had happened to the writer: instead of *työskennellä* (‘to work’), they had written *teeskennellä* (‘to pretend’).

7. Am Freitagmorgen entschied ich mich kurzfristig einen etätyö-Tag (Arbeit von zu Hause) einzulegen, insbesondere da mein Chef dies auch tat. So eilte ich morgens in Büro und holte den Laptop nach Hause. Unterwegs schrieb ich meinem Chef ein SMS: “*Infoksi että hain äsken läppärin toimistolta voidaakseni teeskennellä etänä.*” Anstatt *työskennellä* (arbeiten) hatte ich versehentlich *teeskennellä* (vorgeben, vortäuschen, sich verstellen) benutzt, was mir glücklicherweise noch nach dem Versand auffiel. Hinterher schickte ich ein “Työskennellä siis...”

[On Friday morning, I decided to work from home on short notice, especially because my boss also did the same. So I hurried to the office in the morning and fetched the laptop. On my way I wrote an SMS to my boss: “*For your information, I just fetched the laptop from the office in order to pretend from a distance.*” Instead of “to work” I accidentally used “to pretend” which I luckily noticed after sending the message. Afterwards I sent “I mean to work...”]

4.2.3. Greetings and related formulaic expressions

Discourse formulae such as greetings, farewells and other well-wishes are typical sites of codeswitching (e.g. Androutsopoulos 2006a; Paolillo 1996). This is also the case in our data. Greetings are frequently occurring basic expressions in a language and they are likely to be learned first when one moves to new linguistic surroundings. In the forum discussions, codeswitching to Finnish was common in greetings both in the beginning and at the end of a comment. The use of Finnish greetings and closings in the forum messages signals a shared Finnish experience between the author and the forum members. In addition to one-word expressions such as *moi* (‘hi’), *hei* (‘hi’), and *terveiset* (‘regards’, see [8]), the category of greetings includes diverse other formulaic multi-word expressions such as *hei kaikille* (‘hi everybody’), *terveysiä Saksasta* (‘greetings from Germany’) and *kiitos paljon avustasi* (‘many thanks for your help’), the forms of which are more or less fixed:

8. Ich dachte mir, ich teile diese Information mit euch, und hoffe, es hilft euch genauso super wie mir! Viel Spaß und Erfolg! *Terveiset* [name].
[I figured I would share this information with you, and hope it helps you as much as it does me! Have fun and good luck! *Regards* {name}]

4.2.4. Reiterations

Finnish codeswitches also occur in reiterations, i.e. in direct or somewhat modified repetitions of a message first expressed in German. Reiteration is a common function of codeswitching, which serves to emphasize, clarify, or elaborate on the message or its parts (Gumperz 1982). In our data, the Finnish reiterations of German items are clarifying codeswitches that specify the concept that is being referred to. (For the reverse, German translations of Finnish codeswitches, see the Section 4.2.1. *Cultural switches* above.) In (9), the Finnish term *verohallinto* (‘tax administration’) clarifies the reference and specifies the institution as a Finnish one. In (10), in turn, the discussion relates to the properties of the Finnish language; by providing the Finnish equivalent for the German term *Wortstamm* (‘word stem’), the writer makes available a concept that the forum members are probably familiar with from their Finnish language courses.

9. Ab 1.1.2017 ist für die Einfuhrsteuer das Finanzamt (*verohallinto*) vero.fi zuständig.
 [From 1 January 2017 onwards, the tax office {*verohallinto*} vero.fi is responsible for the import tax.]
10. Bei Verben geht es bzgl. der letzten Silbe immer um den Wortstamm (*vartalo*).
 [When it comes to verbs, the last syllable is always the root of the word {*vartalo*}.]

In addition to the clarification of single terms, there were also longer repetitive codeswitches in Finnish, which belong to the group of intersentential codeswitching (see Table 1). They included, for example, an invitation to an event targeted at members of German-Finnish families. After the German-language invitation, the invitation was repeated in its entirety in Finnish. Such reiterations are situationally motivated and aim to take into account the varying German proficiency of the forum members and their family members.

4.2.5. Linguistic errors, slips of the tongue and puns

As Finnish is likely to be a foreign language for most forum members, linguistic errors, slips of the tongue, and puns form one of the key discussion topics in the forum. In these discussions, in which the forum members share their experiences with the Finnish language with others, the Finnish codeswitches play an important role as they are often the starting point for the whole story. Example (11) illustrates a typo that has given rise to an unintended funny meaning. At the same time, (11) exemplifies a rare instance in which the code-switch involves an uninflected Finnish adjective (see 4.1. above). German translations clarify the meaning of the adjectives:

11. Ich wollte schreiben, dass die Sache *tärkeä* (wichtig) ist. Stattdessen habe ich das Ö erwischt und ein *törkeä* draus gemacht. Meine Angelegenheit war dann unverschämt und unanständig!

[I wanted to write that the thing is *tärkeä* {important}. Instead, I hit the Ö and made a *törkeä* out of it. My business was then outrageous and indecent!]

Example (12), in turn, illustrates an intentional creation of a pun in a bilingual context. The starting point of the pun are two Finnish words that sound the same: *porukat*, a colloquial word for ‘parents’ and *porkkanat* ‘carrots’, the latter of which has started to replace the former in the writer’s in-group interactions:

12. Ein schon langjähriger Insiderwitz: mein Freund schrieb einmal per SMS von seinen “*porukat*”. Ich habe das Wort nicht im Wörterbuch gefunden, vermutete aber, dass es sich um seine Eltern (seine Gruppe) handelt. Spasseshalber antwortete ich mit “*sun porkkanat???*” und seitdem heißen sämtliche Eltern im Freundeskreis nur noch “*Mohrrüben*”...

[A long-time inside joke: my friend once wrote by SMS about his “*porukat*”. I couldn't find the word in the dictionary, but I suspected it was his parents {his group}. Just for fun I replied with “*sun porkkanat???*” and since then all parents in our circle of friends are only called “*carrots*”...]

(12) illustrates that the German translation can occur separately from the Finnish codeswitch and follow at a later point in the text. The translation for “*porukat*” is provided later in brackets after *seine Eltern* (‘his parents’) where *seine Gruppe* (‘his group’) refers to “*porukat*”. (Basically, *seine Eltern* would alone suffice but *seine Gruppe* conveys the more literal meaning of the word *porukat*). Similarly, the meaning of the second codeswitch *sun porkkanat* (‘your carrots’) comes later in the same sentence, where *Mohrrüben* (‘carrots’) – somewhat indirectly – reveals the meaning of *porkkanat*. In this example, the reiteration can be seen to have a twofold function: in addition to being an important part of the narrative, it can also be interpreted to have a facilitative function, ensuring understanding among forum members with more modest Finnish skills.

In addition to stories related to typos and puns, some Finnish codeswitches were different types of slips of the tongue. They involved the mixing up of similar-sounding words (*uskollinen* ‘faithful’ instead of *uskonnollinen* ‘religious’, *humalainen* ‘a drunk’ instead of *kimalainen* ‘bumble-bee’, *hirvimatto* ‘moose mat’ instead of *hiirimatto* ‘mouse mat’) and the creative formation of novel portmanteau words (*metsähäntäpeura* ‘forest-tailed deer’ < *metsäpeura* ‘Finnish forest reindeer’ + *valkohäntäpeura* ‘white-tailed deer’).

4.2.6. Metalinguistic commentaries

Metalinguistic commentaries were relatively frequent and accounted for 12% of all codeswitches. They involved discussions on Finnish lexical items and their meanings as well as Finnish grammatical rules. Codeswitches in metalinguistic commentaries were separated as a distinct category in the structural analysis because they were mostly morphosyntactically unintegrated and separate and not syntactically dependent on other sentence constituents. Thus, they are not really informative of the structural properties of German-Finnish codeswitching. In many instances, the Finnish items occurred in their uninflected forms. In example (13), the consonant gradation of Finnish words is exemplified with the Finnish word *katu* (‘street’) which is inflected in its different forms to illustrate consonant gradation in practice.

13. Die Konsonanten k, p und t unterliegen in der Deklination wie der Konjugation finnischer Wörter einem Stufenwechsel. Sie kommen in einer „starken“ und einer „schwachen“ Stufe vor. Die starke Stufe steht in offenen, also auf einen Vokal endenden, Silben (z. B. *katu* „die Straße“) sowie vor langen Vokalen und Diphthongen (z. B. *katuun* „in die Straße“). Sonst steht die schwache Stufe (z. B. *kadun* „der Straße“). [The consonants k, p, and t are subject to consonant gradation in declination as well as conjugation of Finnish words. They appear in strong and weak grades. The strong grade stands in open syllables, that is syllables ending in a vowel {e.g. *katu* “the street”} as well as in front of long vowels and diphthongs {e.g. *katuun* “into the street”}. Otherwise the weak grade is chosen {e.g. *kadun* “of the street”}.]

Most of the metalinguistic commentaries were part of the forum’s discussion category “Finnische Sprache” (‘Finnish language’), and they accordingly occurred in discussions on the properties of Finnish language, for example on Finnish lexical items and their meaning, grammatical issues, and other linguistic features. As noted by Halmari (1997), metalinguistic commentaries automatically involve codeswitching to the other language. In fact, discussing language structures or word meanings would be quite cumbersome without illustrative examples from the language under discussion.

5. Conclusion

This article investigated the forms and functions of German-Finnish multilingual practices in the online community *Deutsche in Finland*, an online discussion forum for German-speaking expatriates in Finland. The main language of communication in the forum is German, into which many elements from the Finnish language, the language of the host country, are embedded.

The structural analysis showed that the embedding of Finnish items is congruent with the properties of German-Finnish codeswitching identified in the previous comprehensive study by Martin (1973) on spoken data. Like in his study, German-Finnish codeswitching was predominantly intrasentential in our data and mostly involved insertions of Finnish single and proper nouns into German syntax. Embedding nouns is easy because they do not need to be inflected. The integration of other parts of speech that require inflection is in turn more difficult and occurred less frequently in the data. The grammatical role of the Finnish nouns was signalled by German articles, the syntactic position of the items, and other means. The gender assigned to the Finnish noun tended to be the same as that of the equivalent German noun although in some instances variation in the gender assignment was observable. This was the case when the noun referring to a Finnish cultural phenomenon lacked a clear German equivalent.

However, as our data represent the written medium, our results also complement previous German-Finnish codeswitching studies based on spoken data. The orthographic analysis of the Finnish codeswitches revealed that the writers orient towards two norms: in almost half of the cases, the first

letter of the embedded Finnish noun was capitalized following the German orthography while in the other half the Finnish noun retained the Finnish orthographic convention and was written with an initial lower-case letter. In addition, the written computer-mediated communication created special new possibilities for codeswitching. These included Finnish text passages directly copy-pasted from other websites.

The functional analysis, in turn, showed that the functions of the Finnish codeswitches correspond to the typical codeswitching functions identified in previous research. They included quotations, reiterations, greetings and other formulaic expressions. Worth mentioning are also codeswitches that referred to Finnish culture and society. These switches occurred frequently in the data. This result may be due to the nature of the online forum from which the data was collected, but it is also compatible with other migrant communities in which the use of “cultural borrowings” (Myers-Scotton 1993) is common (Riehl 2016). The prevalence of culture-related codeswitches is also congruent with the findings of a previous study dealing with German-Finnish multilingual practices (Toivonen 2017). In our data, it was also observable that while the use of Finnish cultural items was sometimes motivated by the genuine lack of a German equivalent, they also sometimes functioned as contextualization cues and defined an object or a concept as Finnish. In addition to cultural switches, codeswitching was common in metalinguistic commentaries and stories about linguistic errors in Finnish. This shared experience of learning Finnish as a foreign language was a source of humour among the forum members when discussing slips of the tongue. Furthermore, the common functions of codeswitching – switches related to culture and society as well as metalinguistic commentaries and linguistic errors – can be observed to be somewhat reflected in the distribution of the Finnish codeswitches across discussion categories. This shows a certain degree of dependency between the topic of discussion and the use of Finnish (see e.g. Androutsopoulos 2007).

An important result of our study relates to the ways in which Finnish, the language of the new host country, is utilized as a we-code among the forum members. In this respect, our study differs from previous studies on migrant communities in which it is the minority’s heritage language which serves as a we-code signalling in-group identity (see. e.g. Paolillo 1996; De Fina 2007;

Androutsopoulos 2006a). Finnish is a common resource from which the members of the expatriate community draw in order to share their common “Finnish” experience, play with the language, and tell language-related stories that both educate and entertain other forum members. The Finnish language is used as a referential cue to Finland and the Finnish culture, and the Finnish codeswitched items are assumed to be understood by the other forum members. Finnish proper nouns, other culture-related items, greetings, closings, and other formulaic expressions together with toponyms such as *Saksa*, ‘Germany’, are expressions that create we-ness among the forum members. The we-code value of Finnish is also reflected in the fact that cultural switches were not translated or explained in the data. When translations did appear, they mostly concerned metalinguistic commentaries and narratives about the Finnish language, in which both the Finnish codeswitch and its translation played an important role.

The we-code value of Finnish relates our results to studies on different communities of practice in which codeswitching is an important part of the community’s communicative style (see e.g. De Fina 2007; Leppänen 2012; Peuronen 2017). In the context of the investigated Finland-themed forum, the use of Finnish as a common communicative resource can be interpreted to function as a tool of creating a sense of an in-group identity. Through the Finnish codeswitches, which carry the expectation of shared multicultural and multilingual experience, the forum members both seek common ground with the other members and negotiate and signal their membership in the online community of German expatriates in Finland. In this analysis, we cannot – and we do not intend to – interpret what the codeswitching practices reveal about individual members’ real-life identities.

In this article, the multilingual practices of the German-speaking expatriates were investigated in the written medium. The question arises whether the written codeswitching practices reflect the community’s multilingual practices in spoken communication and to what extent they can be generalized to represent offline multilingual practices. To answer this question, comparative studies between the spoken and written medium in the community would be required. Furthermore, like for example San (2009) and Barasa (2016) show, CMC and its specific technologies affect codeswitching practices online. The copy-pasted quotations in our study were one exam-

ple of this influence. However, our findings account for the German-Finnish multilingual practices in this particular online community. In order to map potential recurring tendencies as well as possible differing features in online codeswitching practices in the German-Finnish context, the multilingual practices of German-speaking expatriates in Finland would be worth studying on different online media platforms in the future. 

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