

DU ER AMAZING:  
Multilingualism as a resource for  
celebrity practice on Isac Elliot's Twitter

Master's Thesis  
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# JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Sosiaalisen median myötä suhte fanien ja fanituksen kohteiden, ”julkisten” välillä on muuttunut. Sosiaalisen median myötä kuka tahansa voi ottaa yhteyttä julkisuuden henkilöihin sekä osoittaa faniuttaan internetissä. Julkisuuden henkilöt puolestaan voivat kontrolloida omaa julkisuuskuvaansa sekä ylläpitää fanikuntaansa sosiaalisen median kautta käyttäen apunaan erilaisia strategioita. Onkin mielenkiintoista tarkastella, millaisia kielivalintoja tehdään, kun julkisuuden henkilö kohtaa eri äidinkieliä puhuvia fanejaan sosiaalisessa mediassa.</p> <p>Tutkielmassa tarkastellaan suomalaisen poptähden Isac Elliotin monikielistä viestintää Twitterissä julkisuuden harjoittamisen resurssina. Tutkielman aineisto koostuu 182 tviitistä tai tviittiketjusta, joissa on sekä Isac Elliotin ja hänen faniensa, <i>elliotteerien</i>, tviittejä. Aineisto jaettiin viiteen eri kategoriaan niissä esiintyvien toimintojen mukaan, minkä jälkeen aineistoa tarkasteltiin laadullisen diskurssianalyysin menetelmin ottaen huomioon sen kielellisen monimuotoisuuden, kontekstin sekä monikielisyyden funktiot ja merkitykset. Analyysissä käytettiin apuna sekä monikielisyyden että ns. julkimotutkimuksen teorioita.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen perusteella Isac Elliot tyypillisesti käyttää Twitteriä ylläpitääkseen fanikuntaansa sekä mainostaakseen musiikkiaan ja muita tuotteitaan. Laulaja lisäksi korostaa Twitterissä statustaan julkisuuden henkilönä, kertoo omasta itsestään sekä kampanjoi hyväntekeväisyyden puolesta. Tviitit on useimmiten kirjoitettu englanniksi, mutta etenkin faneille kohdistetuissa vastaustviiteissä mukana on myös suomen-, ruotsin- ja norjankielisiä elementtejä. Myös visuaaliset elementit, kuten emojiit ja kuvat ovat hyvin yleisiä. Kaikille faneille osoitetut tviitit ovat useimmiten englanninkielisiä. Aineisto viittaa siihen, että Isac Elliot ja hänen faninsa käyttävät englantia lingua franca -tyyppisesti, vaikka heillä olisi jopa yhteinen äidinkieli, mutta myös monikieliset ja visuaaliset elementit ovat yleisiä apukeinoja yhteisen kommunikointitavan luomisessa. Isac Elliot myös toisinaan mukailee kielenkäyttöään fanin käyttämän kielen perusteella. Kaiken kaikkiaan englannilla on suuri merkitys faniyhteisön kielenkäytölle, mihin viittaa se, että suomen-, ruotsin- ja norjankieliset tviitit sisältävät usein koodinvaihtoa englantiin.</p>	
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Social media have transformed the way we view celebrities; most celebrities use the same social media sites as their fans and other people, interacting and publishing content. The Internet allows us to reach out to celebrities from across the globe – reversely, it allows celebrities to reach out to fans from anywhere in the world. In situations when the fan and the celebrity may not share the same first language, questions about which languages and linguistic resources are used and in which ways are bound to emerge. So far, the multilingual language phenomena involved in the social media use of celebrities has been unknown territory in linguistic research. This thesis attempts to map that territory in the form of a case study on the multilingual use of Twitter by the Finnish pop star Isac Elliot and it is positioned at the intersection of the study of multilingualism in computer-mediated communication and celebrity studies.

What makes the Twitter account of Isac Elliot’s an exceptionally interesting topic to study is his active participation on social media. He uses social media platforms such as Twitter daily to promote his work, interact with his fans and share details about himself. In this regard, Isac Elliot navigates fluently in the current media landscape which, as Marwick and boyd (2011: 139–140) note, has shifted from a highly controlled and regulated type of “celebrity management” to one that requires celebrities to acknowledge and interact with fans actively.

In addition to Isac Elliot’s active way of using social media as a celebrity, the way the singer uses different languages in his tweets further makes his Twitter practices an interesting topic to study from the linguistic point of view. As the Finnish singer sings in English and his music has also generated interest abroad, he has a solid fan base not only in Finland, but also across the globe. Perhaps for this reason, his Twitter account is multilingual: he tweets in English, Swedish, Finnish and Norwegian. What is interesting is, on one hand, the extensive use of English in his tweets, and, on the other hand, the deployment of multilingual resources. For instance, when Isac Elliot tweets about a small meet-and-greet in a record shop in Finland, he tweets in English. However, when he interacts with his fans daily on social media, he often uses a range

of diverse linguistic resources – including different languages, stylistic choices and visual means – in doing so.

This thesis is structured so that the background theories and concepts relevant to this study are explained in Chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 2 focuses on the linguistic study of multilingual practices and language choice on social media. In Chapter 3, the topic of celebrities on social media is explored. After the theoretical framework has been introduced, the set-up of the present study is presented in Chapter 4, followed by the analysis in Chapter 5. Finally, the findings of this study are discussed in Chapter 6.

## 2 LANGUAGE CHOICE AND CODE-SWITCHING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

English has traditionally been regarded as the lingua franca of the Internet. Early research in computer-mediated communication (CMC) mainly regarded English as the universal language of Internet users (Lee and Barton 2011: 42) and, consequently, as Danet and Herring (2007: 5) point out, the study of computer-mediated communication was mainly concerned solely about the English language in computer-mediated contexts. In more depth, in the early days of the study of CMC, the focus of linguistic research online mainly paid attention to the features of English language in online contexts. This includes patterns typical to online texts such as the presence of acronyms, emoticons and stylized spelling (Crystal 2006, Zappavigna 2012). However, widespread new technologies and especially the emergence of social media sites has arguably created a new dimension of study for the study of multilingualism. As a matter of fact, the majority of Internet users speak a language other than English as a first language (Internet World Stats 2016), and these languages are also being used online either separate from English or alongside it. During the 2000's, research on other languages and multilingualism in online communication began to emerge and some researchers of CMC have recently begun to focus on aspects of multilingualism in their studies instead of researching merely English-based data (e.g. Danet and Herring 2007: 5, Lee and Barton 2011: 39). Findings by these scholars suggest that the Internet is, in fact, increasingly multilingual.

The focus of this chapter is on language alternation phenomena in computer-mediated contexts and social media. These phenomena include language choice – i.e. the issue of which language or linguistic variety a multilingual person uses in different settings – and code-switching – i.e. the alternation between two or more languages in conversation. The issue of language choice and code-switching has attracted attention both in the study of spoken and written contexts. Current theories on this topic are based primarily on spoken interaction. Due to a lack of theory on how multilingualism manifests itself in written contexts, researchers have applied the existing theories to multilingual phenomena in written texts. However, so far many of these theories have



proved to be applicable to online contexts (e.g. Androutsopoulos 2007), which is why they are also used in this study.

As the multilingual data for this study were collected from a public social media platform, the topic of multilingualism in computer-mediated communication is central to this study. Isac Elliot tweets in English, Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish and thus it is interesting to explore in which settings each language or their linguistic variety is used and whether their use bears any meaning. While English seems to be used in a way that suggests it is the *lingua franca* of communication, his uses of Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish demonstrate a more complex nature of multilingualism.

This section aims to describe phenomena of language choice and code-switching in social media contexts. First, some main theorizations of language choice and code-switching are described. In Section 2.2, previous research on multilingualism on social media is discussed. Finally, as language choice and code-switching have also been discovered to be very closely related to issues of identity, the relationship between identity construction and language use on social media will be discussed in Section 2.3.

## **2.1 Language choice and code-switching**

In defining how multilinguals make use of their linguistic resources in practice, Li (2000: 16) has described the decision-making process of a multilingual person's language choice and patterns of code-switching in a schematic view (Figure 1). According to the scheme, a bilingual's language choice depends on the audience. When speaking to a monolingual person, the bilingual chooses either L1 or L2 depending on which language the two persons have in common, whereas when speaking to a person with whom the bilingual shares more than one language, he or she can either use L1 or L2. Furthermore, switching between L1 and L2 and vice versa is possible, as both speakers are competent in both L1 and L2.

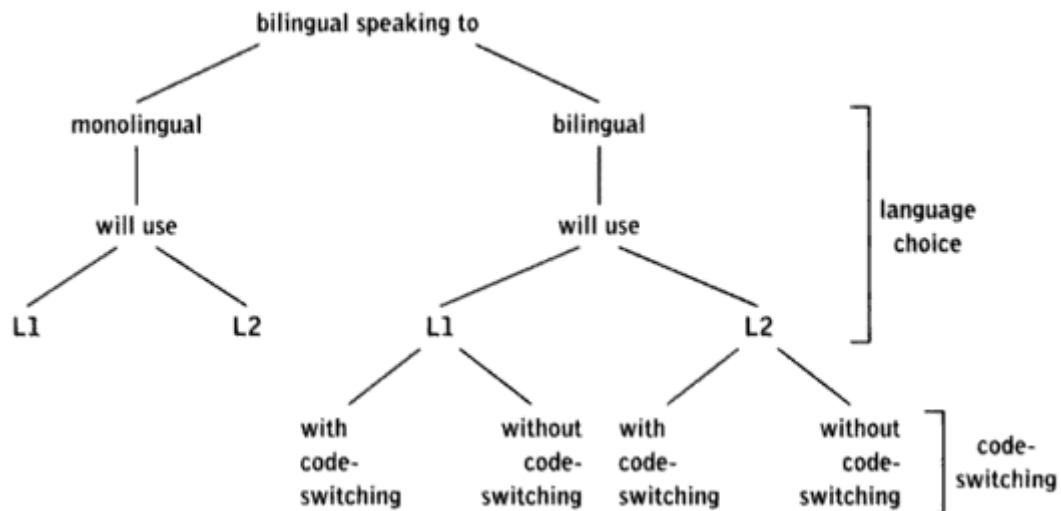


Figure 1: The decision-making process of language choice and code-switching (Li 2000: 16, adapted from Grosjean 1982: 129)

While Li's scheme of the language-choice illustrates the complex nature of the options a multilingual person has in communication, it is not sufficient in describing all phenomena occurring in the language use of multilingual individuals. In some occasions, it is not possible to distinguish between the main language of communication – in other words, whether code-switching – i.e. the use of more than one language or variety of language in the same conversation (Myers-Scotton 2006: 239) – from L1 to L2 or from L2 to L1 happening. For this reason, Auer (1999) has proposed the dynamic typology of bilingual speech, which places language alternation phenomena along a three-point continuum. On one end of the continuum is *code-switching*, which means locally meaningful events of juxtaposition between two languages. It can be further divided into *discourse-related* code-switching, the purpose of which is to convey meanings, and *participant-related* code-switching, which deals with the personal preferences and competences of the participants in the communication. On the other end of the continuum are *fused lects*, in which languages are merged in a structured way due to, for example, a lack of suitable expressions in the other language. Between code-switching and fused lects is *language mixing*, which describes the mixing of two or more languages in a way which makes it impossible to distinguish the primary code of communication. In language mixing, the nature of using two or more languages is insertional.

The definition of the term *code-switching* is subject to confusion, because not every researcher uses the term in the same sense (Boztepe 2003: 4). Generally, code-switching is understood as the alternation between two or more semiotic codes within the same conversation (Auer 1998: 1, Milroy and Muysken 1995: 7). The term has also been used to signify the grammatical functions of different languages in conversation. For example, Gumperz (1982: 59) regards code-switching as the “juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems of subsystems”. Other scholars, such as Milroy and Muysken (1995) and Myers-Scotton (2006), however, argue that the term code-switching covers all multilingual behavior during the same conversation regardless of its grammatical function, distinguishing between *intra-sentential* (within the sentence) and *inter-sentential* code-switching (between sentences). Furthermore, some definitions, such as that of Auer (1998), differentiate between code-mixing and code-switching, which loosely correspond to intra-sentential and inter-sentential definitions.

Auer (1995) discusses the motivations for language use of bilinguals and argues that in studying multilingual speech, “the language chosen for one speech activity must be seen against the background of language choice in the preceding utterance” (1995: 199). This means that language choice is fundamentally a conversational activity and requires a sequential approach due to the conversational meanings of code alternation. This notion is significant and interesting in relation to the present study: when investigating both Isac Elliot’s replies to the fans as well as the fans’ prompts, it becomes clear that the preceding utterance has an effect on the language choice of the singer. In some occasions, the language of the reply is the same as the language of the prompt; however, in other occasions, the singer replies in English regardless of the language of the prompt.

Although the grounding theories on code alternation and language choice were originally based on spoken interaction, they also have been widely adapted to the study of written contexts. In the recent years, the study of multilingual phenomena in computer-mediated contexts has earned attention among the academia. This topic will be discussed next.

## 2.2 Deploying multilingual resources on social media

As Sebba (2017: xiii) points out, multilingualism online is “much more than just the use of two or more languages”. The Internet enables both “traditional” multilingual practices preceding the digital age and newly emerged practices – such as machine translators – that allow even monolinguals to communicate with people with whom they do not share a language. Online environments offer a medium for language learning, as well as a significant resource for the construction of identities. (Sebba 2017: xiii.) Not only is drawing from multilingual resources a matter of how language is used, but it is also a way for multilinguals to create different meanings.

The issue of language choice online is concerned with the ways in which linguistic resources are available to participants in online communication and the processes of negotiating a mutual language or code (Lee 2017: 23, Danet and Herring 2007: 23). According to Lee (2017), language choice is more concerned with the linguistic resources of online participants and how they are used, whereas code-switching is understood as a discursive strategy in interaction. Social media platforms give its users a considerable amount of power to decide which language to use when publishing content: they can participate either in a monolingual or multilingual way depending on their linguistic resources and what they want to achieve with them (Lee and Barton 2011).

Drawing from Auer’s (1999) typology, in her discourse-analytic and sociolinguistic study on youth language on bilingual new media in Finland, Leppänen (2007: 152–153) distinguishes between three types of linguistically hybrid phenomena online. Firstly, in *insertional code-switching*, one language can be identified as the main language of interaction. However, the interaction includes locally significant, discursive insertions in another language normally consisting of individual words or phrases which may or may not be morphologically and phonologically integrated into the matrix language. Secondly, *insertional language mixing* refers to the occurrences of language such as integrated or non-integrated lexical or phrasal elements in the grammatical frame of the matrix language. Here, language mixing refers to the deployment of multilingual resources as an overall stylistic strategy. In this sense,

language mixing differs from code-switching, which is a discourse-related phenomenon. Thirdly, in some cases the discourse does not have a dominant language due to the alternation of two (or more) languages. These instances of *alternational code-switching* indicate that the producer and his or her recipient are proficient in both languages and the discourse could take place in either language.

*Mixed style* refers to a distinct style that makes use of resources of more than one language (Leppänen 2011: 236). It can be simply the result of the utilization of code-switching strategies, but it can also “involve a more integrated alternation of language resources” (Leppänen 2011: 236). For instance, English elements can be incorporated as parts of a Finnish fan fiction text by adding a Finnish case marker to a word that originates from English (Leppänen 2011: 240). In this respect, writers do not operate using separable languages, but in a single style in a heteroglossic way. This means that by drawing from their diverse linguistic resources, writers create their own, indexical way of using language.

The discursive functions of multilingual forms of language, such as code-switching, in online communication range from one context to another. Studies have shown that in online communication, code-switching can function as, for example, an indicator from moving from one discourse type to another in fan fiction texts (Leppänen 2011). In his review on the study of code-switching in CMC, Androutsopoulos (2013: 681) identifies eight discursive functions of code-switching in CMC:

- a) *switching for formulaic discourse purposes, including greetings, farewells, and good wishes;*
- b) *switching in order to perform culturally-specific genres such as poetry or joketelling;*
- c) *switching to convey reported speech (as opposed to the writer's own speech);*
- d) *switching with repetition of an utterance for emphatic purposes;*
- e) *switching to index one particular addressee, to respond to language choices by preceding contributions, or to challenge other participants' language choices;*
- f) *switching to contextualize a shift of topic or perspective, to distinguish between facts and opinion, information and affect, and so on;*
- g) *switching to mark what is being said as jocular or serious, and to mitigate potential face-threatening acts, for example through humorous CS in a dispreferred response or a request;*
- h) *switching to or from the interlocutor's code to index consent or dissent, agreement and conflict, alignment and distancing, and so on. (Androutsopoulos 2013: 681).*

Based on Auer's (1995, 1998) sequential patterns of language choice, Androutsopoulos (2007) studied language choice in German-based diasporic web

forums and identified the choice of language online as being affected by both preference-related and discourse-related reasons. Some forum members prefer to use their home language, while in most discussions German is the predominant language of conversation. However, Androutsopoulos also discovered that the topic of conversation also affects the language of conversation: German was preferred in topics concerning science and community, as well as in general discussion topics, whereas the users' home language was more common in the Entertainment and Culture sections of the forum. All in all, the sociolinguistic and cultural backgrounds, their attitudes and experiences, i.e. what Lee (2017: 34) calls the situated language ecology of users, and the content of the message shaped the users' language choice. These findings suggest that language choice online is contextual in nature.

One of the studies focusing on language choice in individual published messages is Lee and Barton's (2011) study on the construction of glocal identities on the photo-sharing site Flickr. Rather than investigating code-switching in the communication between two or more social media users, Lee and Barton studied the choice of language in the profiles and comments as well as photo titles, descriptions and tags of multilingual Flickr users. Lee and Barton's findings indicate a somewhat similar pattern to language choice online as those of Androutsopoulos (2007): when a photo is about a general interest, the users tend to use English in their descriptions and tags whereas more local topics are often given a description in the local language. However, while the choice of language is related to the content of the publication, what is more important here is the imagined audience of the publication. In the case of multilingual Flickr users, the use of English suggests that the photo is targeted to international audiences, whereas by using a local language, users aim to reach local audiences. What can be seen here is the significance of situated and topical factors in the process of language choice.

The importance of audience and a social media user's sensitivity to language and style choices has also been noted in previous research. Pavalanathan and Eisenstein (2015) studied style-switching in tweets geolocated in the United States and discovered that the smaller the participants' target audience is, the more nonstandard lexical variables are used. Findings by Nguyen, Trieschnigg and Cornips (2015) on the use of

the Dutch and two minority languages in the Netherlands on Twitter suggest that Twitter users tend to choose their code based on two things. Firstly, the previous choices in the communication affect the choice of language. Secondly, Twitter users tend to accommodate to his or her audience by choosing a suitable language to use with each participant. Furthermore, Seargeant, Tagg and Ngampramuan (2012) investigated Thai-English social network interactions on Facebook and found out that participants in Facebook discussions also tended to accommodate to their audience. This was evident in their addressivity strategies, which both controlled their language choice and helped them direct semi-public messages to a particular audience.

The participants' understanding of who their audience is, however, poses a challenge. When having a conversation over the phone, as well as sending a private message to someone on the web, we usually have accurate knowledge of who we are directing our message to. However, social media challenges our notions of audience – in a public space such as Twitter, virtually anyone can read our profiles and postings. Due to this issue, Marwick and boyd (2010: 115) argue that when publishing content online, Internet users imagine who their audience is in order to tackle the issue of addressivity in online environments. This *imagined audience* of a tweet may be entirely different from the actual audience who reads the tweet (Marwick and boyd 2010: 115).

While the concept of imagined audience has generated critique due to its unsuitability to semi-public social media such as Facebook (Androutsopoulos 2014, Hinrichs 2016), it is very useful in describing platforms on which the broadcaster has less power in controlling the audience of his or her publications. The concept of imagined audience helps us explain why users may switch between languages online on public social media platforms such as Twitter. Going back to Lee and Barton's (2011) study on language choice on Flickr – which is a social media platform on which a user's postings are public to everyone no matter whether they are logged in members of the website or not –, it is evident that the imagined audience affects the users' languages choice. According to their findings, users usually select their language based on the primary language of their targeted audience. In order to reach a wider, more unknown and global audience, Flickr members tend to use English due to its status as a lingua franca. English, thus, helps the user maximize his or her audience.

With those users who share the multilingual participant's first language or who they know in real life (and with whom they communicate in their mutual first language), users are more likely to choose their first language. The findings of Lee and Barton (2011) are extremely interesting when studying the multilingual social media use of Isac Elliot, as well: will the language choices made by the young singer reflect local and global target audience and content of the tweet, or is his language choice due to stylistic preferences?

Previous research on multilingualism online introduced in this section suggests that there is no fixed pattern based on which people choose their language online: people online may use one single resource in one situation and mix them in another. Instead, as Lee (2017: 34–35) points out, online participants make use of the *perceived affordances* of the linguistic resources available to them, weighing their options based on the situation. As a result, participants in communication online constantly take into consideration a number of ecological factors when choosing a language. Some of these factors, as has been suggested in the studies discussed above, include the situated language ecology of individual users, target audience, content of post and technological possibilities and constraints.

In the present study, multilingual language use online is regarded as a fluid phenomenon, as suggested by both Auer (1999) and Leppänen (2007, 2011). This approach is beneficial to the present study, as the language phenomena on Isac Elliot's Twitter page both include what Myers-Scotton (2006) calls inter-sentential and intra-sentential code-switching. Furthermore, as the audience and content of the post as factors determining language choice are investigated, a sequential approach to multilingual phenomena is essential. Next, these phenomena are discussed in the light of social identities.



### 2.3 Construction of identities on social media through language use

The phenomenon of diverse language strategies is closely related to issues of identity. By harnessing multilingual resources in a meaningful way, participants in communication online can produce a particular kind of “self” online. When describing their findings on the language choice of Chinese and Spanish-speaking users of the photo-sharing site Flickr, Barton and Lee summarize the relationship between language choice and identity construction as follows: “Multilingual Flickr participants choose their language not only according to who they *are*, but who they *want to be* to others” (2013: 57, emphasis added). These choices depend on the situation and are, as a result, complex, fluid and multi-faceted (Barton and Lee 2013: 68).

Using heteroglossic language, which is a result of selecting and utilizing resources from more than one language or linguistic style (Leppänen 2011: 236), is often one of the ways in which an individual may construct his or her identity in online communication. Heteroglossia was first introduced by Bakhtin (1981: 291) as language that “represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth”. In Bakhtin’s notion, languages do not exclude each other, but are intersected – in this sense, features of language such as code-switching and mixed style are a feature of heteroglossia.

In studying linguistic and generic hybridity in web writing by Finnish Internet users, Leppänen (2011: 243–244) discovered that the deployment of a heteroglossic variety that mixes English elements with Finnish in fan fiction texts is used as an index of writer identity. For example, by using discursive heteroglossia and a specific gaming-related terminology that all members of the fan fiction community can understand, the writer of a fan fiction text can represent himself or herself as an expert and a full member of the gamer community. Writing in a linguistically mixed style can also be used to construct ironic representations of a particular social group, thus distancing himself or herself from that group of people. All in all, mixed linguistic repertoires are a significant marker of group membership and dismembership.

The use of multilingualism also highlights the heterogeneity of Internet culture. By performing online activities in a multilingual way, participants in online communication can challenge the status of English as the lingua franca of the Web. Instead, the Internet can be regarded as a globalized, diversified and dynamic community (Lee and Barton 2011: 55). By employing multilingual resources, social media users can negotiate their membership in the virtual community as global or local members (Lee and Barton 2011: 56). Isac Elliot may, for example, display his identity as a musical artist in terms of his relation to Finnish or American artists. However, local membership is often laced with culturally hybrid translocal elements connecting the global and local (Kytölä 2016).

To conclude, while the surrounding context and the pragmatics of communication affect processes of language alternation on social media, the issue of language choice is also intertwined with complex processes of identification and group membership. In this chapter's review of the previous research into language choice and code-switching on social media, it becomes evident that so far there has been a lack of linguistic studies on social media that focuses on the multilingual practices of celebrities despite their strong presence online. Thus, it is very interesting to study whether similar patterns of language choice, language mixing and code-switching emerge in situations in which social media is used as a means for promoting a young celebrity's career. For these purposes, it is essential to turn to theories on celebrities. In the next section, the practices involved with performing celebrity on Twitter is introduced.

### 3 CELEBRITIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

In order to study celebrity practice on social media, it is essential to first turn to previous research in the field of celebrity studies for two reasons. Firstly, defining the concept of celebrity has proved challenging, so it is necessary to review them. Secondly, I argue that some existing theories on celebrity are particularly applicable in the field of linguistic studies, which is why they are used in the present study. As a result, this chapter is dedicated to an introduction on the topic of celebrity and how it has been approached in previous research. In the beginning half of this chapter, definitions of the concept celebrity are discussed, especially when they may tell us something about the present-day celebrity in the era of social media. The remainder of the chapter introduces the theory of celebrity as practice as well as discusses previous research drawing from the theory.

#### 3.1 What is celebrity?

In popular talk, celebrity has mostly been viewed as a binary phenomenon: a person either is or is not a celebrity (Marwick and boyd 2011: 140). This view suggests that celebrities possess a set of distinct, innate features and that there is a line between the “famous” and the “ordinary”. However, scholars regard the phenomenon of celebrity as a more complex one, which is highlighted by the fact that there is no universally accepted definition of the concept. The definitions of celebrity can, nevertheless, be divided into three dimensions: celebrity as *discourse*, i.e. a representation, celebrity as a *commodity* that is produced with the means of celebrity discourse through promotion, publicity and media industries, and celebrity as a fluid *cultural formation* with a social function (Turner 2004: 9). In other words, celebrity can be regarded as constructed, produced, and consumed.

According to the well-known definition by Boorstin, a celebrity is a “person who is well-known for their well-knownness” (1961: 58, cited in Turner 2004: 5). This emphasizes the importance of the state of being a celebrity instead of the celebrity’s so-called “road to fame”. Instead of their achievements, Boorstin argues, celebrities develop their fame by differentiating their personality from those of their competitors.

This suits the environment of television talent shows well: for instance, in the television show *The X Factor*, being a talented singer is often not enough to win the competition. Instead, in many cases, the contestants win over their audience by creating a likeable and appealing persona.

The emergence of new technologies and social media has challenged the traditional view of celebrity – it has both changed how celebrities in the traditional sense practice celebrity as well as created new types of celebrities. Social media has shifted the focus of performing celebrity from a top-down, controlled model of management to one that encourages celebrities to interact with and “be there” for their fans (Marwick and boyd 2011: 139–140). In this regard, social media have enabled celebrities to brand themselves in new ways, and, for example, helped them accentuate and promote their own public persona.

As the number of social media users has increased, new forms of celebrity have begun to develop. One of these is *micro-celebrity*, which was coined by Senft (2008) to describe the process of celebrification of Youtube stars, bloggers and other prominent users of social media. This concept refers to the way in which people are boosting their popularity online using the affordances of modern technology: video, blogs and social media. Who a micro-celebrity is is negotiated with his or her audience – there is no micro-celebrity without the people who care about what he or she does online. A micro-celebrity is connected to his or her audience and often even regards them as his or her family or friends. The audience, in turn, relates to the micro-celebrity. (Senft 2008: 25–26.)

Utilizing the concept of micro-celebrity, Page (2012) researched the concept of micro-celebrity in her study on the role of hashtags in constructing a “branded self” on Twitter. Based on the frequency and discursive contexts of hashtags by both people and corporations who might use Twitter as means for self-branding, she argues that practices of self-branding exist on a continuum. Corporations and celebrity practitioners most often used self-branding hashtags, but, at the same time, “ordinary” Twitter members who aim to make their professional identity searchable are adapting this strategy of self-branding. What is interesting about Page’s (2012) findings is that while the theory of celebrity practice, which will be discussed in more detail in the next

section, suggests a “bottom-up” adaptation of social media practices from micro-celebrity to celebrity, for self-branding the direction of the process is the opposite. However, the general nature of the use of hashtags as promotional performance resembles that of micro-celebrity in that both celebrities and “ordinary” people alike utilize them.

For this study, the concept of micro-celebrity is central. Along with technology, the relationship between fans and the celebrity has been transformed, creating new discursive practices between performers and their audiences. The way Isac Elliot actively uses social media to connect with his fans indicates that he successfully utilizes practices of micro-celebrity in maneuvering on Twitter as a celebrity. The strategies for practicing celebrity, which resemble those of practicing micro-celebrity, are discussed in the next section.

### **3.2 Celebrity practice on Twitter**

This study is built on the notion of *celebrity as practice*, which is introduced by Marwick and boyd (2011) in their study on the tweets of famous people on Twitter. Rather than a set of innate characteristics, they regard celebrity as an organic and fluctuating *performative practice*, which consists of several different aspects such as processes of the maintenance of fan base and performed intimacy on social media. In this respect, celebrity is placed on a continuum – instead of a line that divides people who are not celebrities from people who are, Marwick and boyd (2011: 140) argue that celebrity is something that is *done* through circulated strategies and practices. Thus, instead of talking about *celebrities*, they have comprised the term *celebrity practitioner* in order to highlight the performative nature of the phenomenon.

On social media, Marwick and boyd (2011: 143–144) argue, celebrity practitioners are constantly navigating complex identity performances with the help of other social media users. In online social environments such as Twitter in which fans, famous people and intermediaries such as gossip columnists all co-exist, processes of self-presentation become complicated. Whereas traditionally gossip columns and tabloid magazines’ endeavor to reveal the celebrity’s “authentic” self is juxtaposed with the

famous person's public persona, social media outlets such as Twitter remove the barrier between the famous and "ordinary". Instead, on social media, the audience has straight access to what is either an "authentic" self or a "performed" celebrity, which is exactly what Dyer (1998) argues makes celebrities fascinating.

Marwick and boyd's (2011: 143-144) approach to celebrity practice draws on Goffman's (1959) traditional view on social life's division into the *frontstage* and *backstage* areas, which can be understood in terms of place and content. This concept can be understood through a metaphor of a restaurant environment. Frontstage performance takes place at a restaurant's floor, for example, when an employee must interact in front of an "audience" of employers and customers. More candid talk between employers, however, composes the backstage area. In a similar way, on social media, the backstage can be understood as the revelation of intimate details about one's life, whereas the actions in line with the "professional self" can be seen as frontstage performance.

In contrast with practices of micro-celebrity, celebrity practitioners view all of their followers as fans (Marwick and boyd 2011: 144). This is in contrast with the way Twitter users who do not use Twitter as a means to pursuit aims may think of their followers as friends or family (Marwick and boyd 2010) and reinforces unequal power differentials between the celebrity practitioner and his or her followers. At the same time, Twitter moves the relationship between the fan and the celebrity beyond a parasocial one, i.e. an imagined, one-sided relationship with a media figure to one in which a fan communicates with the celebrity as if he or she was a friend, with Twitter offering the possibility of interaction. The fan's actions indicate that the celebrity will respond to the prompts, but the fan may never actually receive a reply.

Marwick and boyd (2011: 144) highlight that there is no singular way in which celebrity is practiced; instead, celebrity practice consists of a set of various techniques. These techniques (*public recognition and fan maintenance, affiliation, intimacy, and authenticity and sincerity*) resemble those performed in micro-celebrity (Marwick and boyd 2011: 140) and may be adopted differently by different practitioners. Different strategies of celebrity practice will be introduced next.

Celebrity practitioners often use *public recognition* of fans to maintain their popularity online (Marwick and boyd 2011: 145), which on Twitter is done by utilizing the *reply* feature (explained in Section 4.2.2.). Receiving a reply from a celebrity practitioner may act as a status symbol in the fan community. Public recognition also encourages fans to send tweets to celebrity practitioners by rewarding the fans with replies (Usher 2014). In addition to feeding the fan's want for recognition, through using the reply feature, celebrity practitioners are able to manage their popularity by suggesting that they are available, connected and popular while simultaneously controlling which tweets to answer. Public recognition may also be negative – for example, some celebrities may respond to hateful messages – and be directed to other celebrity practitioners.

*Affiliation* is understood as the process through which celebrity practitioners publicly connect themselves to fans (Marwick and boyd 2011: 147). This can be done by using language, words, cultural symbols and conventions that resemble those used by the fans or link the celebrity practitioner and the fans in some way. For instance, the use of inclusive pronouns or Isac Elliot's use of the term *Elliotteers* when referring to his fans are forms of affiliation. In addition to this, Marwick and boyd (2011: 147) mention links and retweets as affiliative uses of cultural markers and symbols on Twitter.

According to Marwick and boyd, (2011: 147), celebrity practitioners also use Twitter to create a sense of *intimacy* and familiarity between themselves and their followers. In essence, performed intimacy is created by providing the audience with a glimpse of the inner life of the celebrity practitioner. On social media, intimacy can be created in various ways: for instance, by posting personal pictures and videos, addressing circulating rumors, and sharing personal information. It can also be manifested by replying to fans' messages. These performances of closeness help the celebrity practitioner in creating a sense of the "real" person behind the celebrity. This means offering the fans access to exclusive information and a glimpse into the backstage of the celebrity's life.

Performed intimacy on Twitter is closely related to the practices of *authenticity* and *sincerity*. While fans aspire to see who the celebrity "really" is, they also want to ensure

that the person writing the tweets really is who they claim to be, instead of an imposter or a member of a PR team (Marwick and boyd 2011: 149). Authenticity on Twitter can be evaluated through different signals; for instance, voicing personal opinions in tweets signals greater authenticity than neutral publicity messages. Sincerity, on the other hand, has to do with conveying an honest, genuine image in line with the celebrity's authentic self.

Social media also offers a platform of *self-promotion* for celebrity figures. Traditionally, fans might have gained information about their idols from magazines, tabloids and gossip columns. Traditional press interviews create a structured environment for a celebrity to reveal information about him or herself. However, on different social media platforms such as Twitter, the celebrities themselves manage their publicity by adapting traditional modes of celebrity gossip to the current age. For instance, Usher (2014) argues that the interaction between celebrities and their fans is influenced by the thematic and linguistic modes of intercommunication established in the traditional press interview. While structured interviews force the celebrity to give control to the journalist who writes an article about him or her, social media allows the celebrity to remain in control of what is published. As Usher (2014: 314) mentions, this can be done through pre-organized chats, for example, and helps celebrities promote themselves for commercial ends.

While the theory of celebrity as practice has generated interest in the academia both in the form of articles (e.g. Page 2012) and theses (e.g. Myrskog 2014), issues of linguistic diversity has so far been ignored in relation to celebrities despite the large number of celebrities - and their fans - who primarily navigate on social media using a second language. For this reason, I argue that diverse linguistic strategies are a central resource for practicing celebrity on social media and should, in fact, be studied. In Isac Elliot's case, not only does he use English as the primary means of communication on Twitter, but Finnish, Norwegian and his first language, Swedish, are also present on the site. As a result, it is interesting to study how specifically these languages are used in Isac Elliot's Twitter and whether the functions of different languages differ from each other in terms of celebrity practice.



## 4 SET-UP OF THE STUDY

### 4.1 Aim and research questions

The aim of this study is to examine how the Finnish pop artist Isac Elliot uses multilingualism as a resource for celebrity practice. This study helps in deepening our understanding of the concept of celebrity in the modern, technology-focused world by investigating the patterns of practicing celebrity online from the linguistic perspective. Along with increased access to and popularity of social media, the study of multilingualism has, in the recent years, extended to the study of computer-mediated communication. However, the subjects of this type of research have primarily been tight-knit communities or communities of practice such as science fiction or football fandoms and ethnic groups. Even though this research is extremely valuable and was vital for the conduction of the present study, there is simultaneously a lack of studies concerning the widely influential demographic of celebrities. This study aims to fill this gap in research.

The main research question of this study are as follows:

How does Isac Elliot use multilingualism as a resource for celebrity practice on Twitter?

The main research question was created to crystallize the core aim of the study. However, as an investigation of multilingualism as a resource for celebrity practice requires a multi-faceted analysis of the tweets, three supplementary research questions were formed:

- What languages, or, more specifically, linguistic forms and patterns associated with different languages are present in his tweets?
- In what kind of contexts are these languages and linguistic choices used?
- What functions or meanings does the use of different languages and linguistic choices have?

This enables a detailed description of Isac Elliot's multilingual behavior on Twitter – in order to study the patterns of Isac Elliot's Twitter use as a public figure, it is essential to apply both insights provided by (socio)linguistic theory and the theory of celebrity practice. This is done by studying both the linguistic features of Isac Elliot's Twitter practice itself as well as the contexts, functions and meanings that are associated with these different linguistic patterns.

## 4.2 Data

This section introduces the data of this study. First, this section briefly presents the Finnish pop artist Isac Elliot. Second, a short summary of Twitter and its main functions are given. Finally, in Section 4.2.3, the data of this study, which consists of a set of tweets published by Isac Elliot and some of his followers, is introduced.

### 4.2.1 Isac Elliot

Isac Elliot (born in 2000) is a Finnish pop artist. He started his singing career at the age of six in the boy choir *Cantores Minores*, after which he starred in musicals at *Svenska Teatern* in Helsinki. Unlike many popular young Finnish pop artists who sing in the dominant language of Finland, Finnish, Isac Elliot sings primarily in English, perhaps because of his aspiration to conquer the international markets. So far, the singer has released two albums, *Wake Up World* in 2013 and *Follow Me* in 2014, and an extended play *A Little More* in 2016. (Nordlund 2016). Despite singing mainly in English, in 2017, the singer collaborated with the Finnish rap artist Mikael Gabriel and the duo released a joint extended play *Mikael Gabriel × Isac Elliot*, which marked the first time Isac Elliot sang in Finnish on record. (Rautio 2017).

Since the beginning of his career, Isac Elliot has updated social media actively and spends time interacting with his fans from all over the world daily. For instance, on Twitter, he tweets several times a day and most of the tweets he publishes are replies to tweets by his followers. He takes advantage of several different social media platforms: he is on the social media sites Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram and has even launched his own smart phone application. On Instagram has more

followers than any other Finn. (Jokelainen 2014). In April 2017, Isac Elliot had nearly 84 thousand followers on Twitter, which makes him one of the most followed Finnish people on Twitter. He follows 3,700 people on the site, many of which are fans. He is thus a good example of a celebrity whose public image is, for a great extent, created through an active presence on social media and who conveys an image of himself as someone who is present and easy to reach. However, some have noted that Isac Elliot mainly keeps his private and public life separate (Rautio 2017).

In addition to having a large fan base in Finland, Isac Elliot has also gained solid popularity in Scandinavia, other European countries such as Spain, and the United States. Many of the singer's fans, who call themselves *Elliotteers*, use social media actively to interact with him. In the same way as Isac Elliot himself, who speaks Swedish as his first language as well as is fluent in both Finnish and English (Lehtomurto 2013), his fandom is also very multilingual. Even amongst the Finnish fan community on Twitter, different languages are used, as the Swedish-speaking fans in Finland, who share their first language with Isac Elliot, naturally often use Swedish when interacting with him on different social media. Based on a general glance of the singer's tweets, fans interacting with him on Twitter consist mainly of teenagers roughly the same age as him.

#### **4.2.2 Introducing Twitter**

Twitter is a microblogging service and a social media platform, which enables the publication of short messages maximum of 140 characters of text. In January 2018, it had 330 million active users (Statista 2018) It combines elements from both social networking sites and blogs, allowing users to publish their own content and follow other users without the necessity to interact and reciprocate (boyd, Golder and Lotan 2010: 2). Users can either set their account public, allowing everyone see their tweets, or private, i.e. allowing only certain users to follow, interact with and see their published tweets.

In addition to allowing users to publish updates to their followers, Twitter offers several functions for their users to increase their site's usability and communication

between followers. With the *reply* function, which can be used by writing a username preceded by the sign '@' in a tweet, Twitter users can mention and reply to other Twitter users. This allows direct interaction between two Twitter users. When a username is used at beginning of a tweet, only the mentioned user and those following both the publisher of the tweet and the mentioned user see the tweet on their Twitter feed. However, all replies made by an individual Twitter user are visible on his or her personal Twitter page.

With the *retweet* function, users can “retweet” tweets published by other users, i.e. distribute them on their own Twitter page and share them with their own followers. According to a study by boyd, Golder and Lotan (2010: 6), Twitter users use the retweet function for pursuing several different goals. These goals include amplifying or spreading tweets to new audiences, entertaining specific audiences, commenting on a tweet by retweeting and adding a new comment, publicly agreeing with an opinion, displaying friendship and loyalty, and gaining followers or reciprocity from more prominent Twitter users.

Users can also tag their tweets with keywords by using the #hashtag function. This way, users are able to search and view tweets containing certain keywords. The most used #hashtags appear as *trending topics*. In addition to the purpose of making the tweet visible in searches, hashtags have also been argued to have a conversational meaning (Scott 2015), and they may be used to create humorous and playful meanings, for example (Zappavigna 2012: 92).

In addition to replying, retweeting and using hashtags, Twitter users can send direct messages to their followers. This enables private communication between two followers. Furthermore, the *like* function allows users, for example, to display their positive reaction to a tweet by another Twitter user or save a tweet for later scrutiny by pressing the heart symbol. The like function is, however, not discussed in the analysis for this study.

### 4.2.3 Description of data

In order to study the patterns of multilingualism in celebrity practice it was essential to focus on celebrities who use their public social media accounts in a multilingual way. As Isac Elliot is a Swedish-speaking Finnish ('suomenruotsalainen' in Finnish, 'finlandssvensk' in Swedish) artist who – in addition to being popular in Finland – aims for an international career, his Twitter feed proved to be an excellent data sample. Based on a general examination, his tweets demonstrated multilingual and heteroglossic language use that mixes different languages and styles. Furthermore, Isac Elliot's frequent use of Twitter – by April 2017, he has published over 30 thousand tweets in total, and at times tweets over 200 times weekly – both highlights the importance of social media for the singer's celebrity image and enabled the collection of a large and representative data sample.

The data for this study were collected after an examination of Isac Elliot's Twitter behavior during a period of six months. Two data collection periods were chosen, both spanning one week. Because Isac Elliot generally tweets multiple times daily, the time span of two weeks proved to be representative enough of the singer's Twitter behavior. This is due to the fact that while the topic of his self-authored tweets varies from one week to another, e.g. from tweeting about recording new music in the studio to posting updates about shows, the initial activities performed in the tweets remained similar. Furthermore, Isac Elliot actively replies to fans in addition to tweeting about his career and life throughout the six-month period.

Because the aim of this study was to examine Isac Elliot's activities as a celebrity on Twitter, all of the public content on his Twitter feed was relevant for the study. As a result, the data consist of self-authored public tweets by Isac Elliot, retweets (i.e. sharing to one's followers a tweet another Twitter user has published), and replies to other Twitter users. In order to gain an insight into the context of the tweets, replies by Isac Elliot are accompanied by the tweet it replies to. Despite the tweets published by fans are publicly available, the fans were given pseudonyms in the analysis, as their usernames often displayed their full name. In addition, pictures and videos by fans were also omitted from the examples and were given brief, general descriptions

instead. However, public figures, such as Isac Elliot's colleagues, were not given pseudonyms.

The first batch of data was published between 3 and 9 October 2016. The first week of data totals 104 analytic units. An analytic unit either refers to a tweet by Isac Elliot or a set consisting of a fan's tweet and Isac Elliot's reply. On average, during this seven-day period Isac Elliot tweeted 19 times a day, which is strikingly more often compared to many other celebrities on Twitter. In the tweets collected from this week, replies to fans were frequent. Isac Elliot's recently published single with the Scandinavian DJ duo Tungevaag & Raaban was mentioned in several tweets. Meeting fans and the Finnish singer Saara Aalto's journey on the singing competition *X Factor UK* were other common topics in the tweets.

The second week of data consists of Isac Elliot's Twitter activity between 13 and 19 March 2017 with 78 analytic units in total. While the number of tweets during this week was fewer than during the first week of data, the average of daily tweets is still 11. This week was chosen based on what was going on in Isac Elliot's life at the time: the earlier set of tweets were published right after the publication of a new song, whereas the later set was published during a time when held concerts in Norway as a part of a campaign *Vinterlyd* to raise awareness of cancer. Since both promoting records and touring are important aspects of the career of a recording artist, by choosing this week I was able to provide a more representative data sample.

The second week of data differed from the first one in the types of the tweets. The majority of the tweets during the first week were replies to fans, whereas the tweets published during the second week were mainly standard tweets. These tweets were appreciative tweets to Norwegian fans, updates about the tour and descriptions of what was happening in Isac Elliot's life at the time. Still, about one third of the tweets published during this week were replies.

Table 1: Distribution of the different types of tweets in the overall data

Type of tweet	Number of tweets
Standard tweet	79
Reply	78
Retweet	25
All	182

In total, the data for this study consist of 182 analytic units. The main language of the tweets is English. However, other languages are also present: Isac Elliot and his fans also use Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian elements in their tweets. There are also some tweets that consist of images and *emojis*, small images and symbols that can be used in electronic communication to convey meanings without using words (Merriam-Webster 2018). As can be seen in Table 1, the majority of Isac Elliot's tweets are either standard tweets or replies to other Twitter users as there were 79 standard tweets and 78 replies in the data. The remaining 25 tweets were retweets of the singers own, fans' and media representatives' tweets.

Often, when discussing the matter of celebrities on social media raises questions about the authenticity of the online identity of the celebrity. I argue that the majority of the tweets are authored by the singer himself. For example, the tweets occasionally have misspellings and grammatical errors, which can be regarded as *signals of authenticity* (Marwick and boyd 2011: 149). However, I also argue that whether the person authoring the tweets really is Isac Elliot does not matter for this study, as social media accounts are always a staged performance of the self. The purpose of this study is not to discover whether Isac Elliot's tweets are an authentic representation of who he "truly" is, but to investigate the patterns of his Twitter use as a celebrity and public figure.

### 4.3 Methods of analysis

As the aim of this study is to investigate *how* Isac Elliot uses different languages as a resource for his celebrity practice on Twitter, this study mainly utilizes qualitative methods of analysis. Using a qualitative method helps provide a detailed description of the singer's Twitter activities – both the most typical features as well as the less frequent, but striking ones. However, in order to provide a general description of Isac Elliot's multilingual celebrity practice in the overall data, some quantitative information is also provided in the form of tables indicating the percentages of the occurrences of different types of activities appearing in the data.

Previous research on the linguistics of the use of Twitter indicate that in order to provide a more in-depth description of how Twitter is used, it is beneficial to combine different methods of analysis. Ravy (2016), for instance, applied grounded theory to discourse analysis in her study of the author Salman Rushdie's Twitter feed. This way, she was able to examine the discursive patterns in relation to the author's literary and political views and the overall trends in his Twitter behavior. Myrskog (2014) used a similar type of method in his thesis on the celebrity practice of the singer Lady Gaga on Twitter.

The present study applied the methods of analysis used by Ravy (2016) and Myrskog (2014). The data were analyzed with methods of discourse analysis, which aims to describe language as practice tied to its context and thus helped me answer my research questions. Firstly, the data were divided into five categories by applying Herring's (2007) methodological framework for studying computer-mediated discourse. This framework will be explained in the next section. After this, the categories were systematically analyzed in regard to their language and style, and the different functions and meanings of the linguistic features of the data were investigated by using methods of discourse analysis. Here, Marwick and boyd's (2011) theory of celebrity practice was applied. These steps taken in analyzing the categorized data in terms of language, style, functions and meanings will be explained more closely in Section 4.3.2.



### 4.3.1 Categorizing the data

Because the data for this study consisted of nearly 200 tweets containing 140 characters or less, a detailed analysis of each piece of the data would have been challenging. To solve this problem, Herring's (2007: 20) suggestions for analyzing computer-mediated discourse were applied. Based on her scheme of situational factors in online discourse, the data were categorized based on the situational category named *activity*. This category refers to "discursive means of pursuing interactional goals" such as debate, information exchange and flirting (Herring 2007: 19-20), and was thus used in this study to analyze celebrity practice.

Based on the main activity of each tweet, the data were divided into five categories: *Fan maintenance*, *Self-promotion*, *Emphasizing celebrity status*, *Revealing Isac Lundén* and *Advancing charitable causes*. These categories are loosely based on Marwick and boyd's (2011) strategies of celebrity practice on Twitter and Usher's (2014) notions of tweeting as means for self-promotion for celebrities. The naming for the categories followed Myrskog's (2014) clear thematic grouping of tweets in his thesis on Lady Gaga's celebrity practice on Twitter. However, due to differences between Lady Gaga and Isac Elliot's Twitter behavior, the categories by Myrskog were modified and extended.

Many tweets in the data could be categorized into more than one category. For instance, a retweet of a fan's tweet in which the fan encourages others to listen to Isac Elliot's new single can be understood both as a way to maintain a fan base and to promote consumable goods. As the categories were later on analyzed from a discourse analytic point of view, categorizing the tweets to all of the categories that fit each analytic unit suited the purposes of this study the best. By choosing only the main, most visible activity in each sample of data, some essential findings may have been omitted from the results.

### 4.3.2 Discourse analysis of the tweets

As the aim of this study was to describe how multilingualism functions as a resource for Isac Elliot to practice celebrity, a discourse analytic approach, i.e. the study of language in use (Gee and Handford 2012: 1) was essential. Therefore, after the classification of the data, discourse analytic methods were used to analyze a selection of both typical and exceptional tweets in the five categories. By analyzing both typical and exceptional tweets, it was possible to provide as extensive outlook on multilingual resources used by Isac Elliot in his celebrity practice as possible. The analysis of the tweets included a systematic analysis of the linguistic features present in and the context of the data, as well as the functions they served and the meanings they gave rise to.

The first step of the analysis consisted of an investigation of the different languages, linguistic forms and patterns in the data, as suggested in the first supplementary research question. First, the main language of each tweet was identified. In those tweets in which more than one language was used, Auer's (1999) typology of language alternation in spoken contexts and Leppänen's (2007) categorization of hybrid language forms to identify the multilingual phenomena in the data were applied. This way, instances of code-switching, language mixing and those instances in which there was no dominant language present in the tweet such as emojis and emoticons were taken into account. In addition to these linguistic elements, the register and style in the categories were analyzed.

After the selected examples were analyzed in the light of its linguistic content, I paid attention to the context of the tweets. In the context of Twitter, this meant paying attention to the type of the tweet and its intended or imagined audience. In cases of replies to other Twitter users, I looked at the language of the tweet to which Isac Elliot replied. By doing this, I was able to analyze whether the recipient of the tweet and his or her linguistic choices affected of were in line with the singer's language use in any way.

Finally, the functions and meanings of the different languages present in the data were investigated, as indicated by the third supplementary research question. As the

aim of this study was to investigate how multilingual resources are incorporated as a part of Isac Elliot's practices of celebrity on Twitter, I applied the strategies of celebrity practice introduced by Marwick and boyd (2011). Here, concepts of public recognition, affiliation, intimacy and authenticity, all of which are explained in Section 3.2, were central to this part of the analysis. Furthermore, the concept of heteroglossia, introduced in Section 2.3, was significant when discussing the results.

## 5 ISAC ELLIOT'S MULTILINGUAL CELEBRITY PRACTICE

This study of the multilingual elements in Isac Elliot's celebrity practice consists of two phases, as it helps answering the research questions. First, the tweets were categorized into five different categories, each representing a type of celebrity practice. Second, these categories were analyzed with methods of discourse analysis. The meant that the languages and linguistic elements of the tweets were investigated. After this, the linguistic features were analyzed in the light of the context of the different tweets. Finally, the functions and meanings generated in the tweets were inspected. The detailed qualitative analysis is presented in this chapter.

This chapter is divided into five sections, each of which deals with an individual category based on the type of celebrity practice present in the tweets. At the beginning of each section, a general description of the category is given. After an overview of the set of tweets in question, both typical and striking examples from the category are introduced and analyzed according to the methods described in Section 4.3. In the analysis, for those tweets that include elements in a language other than English, an English translation is provided.

Table 2 below describes the distribution of the 182 tweets into the five categories of celebrity practice explored in this study. Many of the tweets were labeled into more than one category, as individual tweets often served more than one function.

Table 2: Isac Elliot's celebrity practice

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Number of tweets</b>	<b>Portion of all tweets</b>
Fan maintenance	134	74 %
Self-promotion	90	49 %
Emphasizing celebrity status	27	15 %
Revealing Isac Lundén	29	16 %
Advancing charitable causes	6	3 %

As can be seen from Table 2, fan maintenance is the most commonly manifested type of celebrity practice on Isac Elliot's Twitter, with nearly three quarters of the tweets serving the purpose of fan maintenance. Roughly a half of the 182 tweets belong to the category *Self-promotion*, which makes this category the second most frequent category. The next two categories, *Emphasizing celebrity status* and *Revealing Isac Lundén* appear nearly as frequently in the data; however, their proportion with relation to the first two categories is considerably smaller, with percentages of 15 and 16. The least frequent function of celebrity practice in Isac Elliot's Twitter is *Advancing charitable causes*. The activity of doing charity work was present in six tweets, which totals to 3 per cent of the data. Next, we look at the most common strategy of celebrity practice in Isac Elliot's tweets, fan maintenance.

## 5.1 Fan maintenance

The category *Fan maintenance* includes tweets that display acknowledgement of fans by Isac Elliot in some way. These tweets encourage fans to interact with Isac Elliot on social media, such as "follow sprees" – during which he begins to follow several of his followers and retweets tweets published by his fans – or display direct interaction between the Isac Elliot and his fans such as replies. Moreover, tweets in which the singer aims to create a sense of community by using affiliative strategies such as the pronoun *you* or the noun *guys* were also included in this category. This category was based on the concept of public recognition as a way for celebrity practitioners to "perform connection and availability, give back to loyal followers and manage their popularity" (Marwick and boyd 2011: 145) by awarding fans with replies and retweets. It is also important to remember that, simultaneously, the celebrity is able to control which tweets to answer.

Isac Elliot uses Twitter to maintain his fan base actively. Out of the 182 samples of data, fan maintenance was present in 136. With 74 per cent of the data demonstrating fan maintenance, this type of celebrity practice is the singer's most frequent type of activity on Twitter. Based on the data of this study, three typical strategies of fan maintenance arise from Isac Elliot's celebrity practice. Firstly, he interacts with

individual fans by replying to their tweets and retweeting their tweets. Secondly, he uses affiliative strategies to acknowledge his local audiences across the globe. Thirdly, he uses linguistic resources that create a sense of community among the *Elliotteers*. Some tweets utilized more than one strategy of fan maintenance. For example, the singer would reply to a fan's tweet by complimenting the fans from the individual fan's home country. The distribution of tweets into the three categories is illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3: Isac Elliot's fan maintenance strategies

<b>Strategy of fan maintenance</b>	<b>Number of tweets</b>	<b>Percentage of fan maintenance</b>
Public recognition of individual fans	90	67 %
Acknowledging local audiences	52	39 %
Creating a sense of community	9	7 %

As can be seen in Table 3, public recognition of individual fans is the most common fan maintenance strategy in Isac Elliot's tweets. This sub-category of tweets includes replies to fans' tweets as well as those retweets that were originally authored by an individual fan and it equals to one 67 per cent of Isac Elliot's fan maintenance. The practice of acknowledging local audiences was the second most frequent strategy of fan maintenance, with a total of 39 per cent of tweets referencing fans in a specific location in a positive manner. The least frequent strategy of fan maintenance utilized by Isac Elliot is the process creating a sense of community, with only 7 per cent of the tweets fitting this sub-category. However, this sub-category presents some very interesting examples of fan maintenance, which is why it is discussed in close detail in Section 5.1.3. In the next three sections, I will discuss these three types of fan maintenance in more detail. Each type of activity will be discussed and presented with illustrative examples from the data.

### 5.1.1 Public recognition of individual fans

Public recognition of fans is one of the strategies through which celebrities maintain their popularity on Twitter. Isac Elliot interacts actively with his fans by replying to their tweets and retweeting tweets published by them. By retweeting a fan's tweet, the tweet is distributed to thousands of people following Isac Elliot, thus providing the fan with prestige. Moreover, by replying to fans' tweets, Isac Elliot is able to create an image of himself as a caring figure who is interested in his fans. Simultaneously, the fan whose tweet is replied to feels connected to his idol. The next two examples are very illustrative instances of Isac Elliot's fan maintenance:

#### Example (1)

@Ellioteer1<sup>1</sup> @IsacElliot ikke mul on synttäriiiiiit 🍰🍰🍰🍰  
 '@IsacElliot ikke I have a  
 birthdayyyyyyy 🍰🍰🍰🍰'<sup>2</sup>  
 @IsacElliot @Ellioteer1 happy BD 🍰📧❤

#### Example (2)

@Ellioteer2 @IsacElliot kan du snart svara meg?  
 '@IsacElliot can you answer me soon?'  
 @IsacElliot @Ellioteer2 hey you ❤

Examples (1) and (2) illustrate two typical examples of public recognition of fans in Isac Elliot's Twitter practice. It is rather common for the singer's fans to tweet to him on their birthday and ask him to write them a birthday greeting, as is the case in Example (1). In this exchange of tweets, @Ellioteer1 writes to Isac telling him that it is his or her birthday, to which Isac Elliot answers with a casual *happy BD* 🍰📧❤. In

<sup>1</sup> The fans' Twitter usernames are pseudonyms and follow the pattern @Ellioteer1, @Ellioteer2, @Ellioteer3, and so on. Overlap between the pseudonyms and real usernames is coincidental.

<sup>2</sup> I have added English translations of the examples consisting of elements in languages other than English. The translations are placed after each tweet with multilingual elements in single quotation marks.

Example (2), on the other hand, Isac answers to @Elliotter2's prompt by merely saying a quick hello.

From the linguistic point of view, Examples (1) and (2) are interesting examples of heteroglossia, i.e. the mixing of diverse linguistic resources indexing socio-ideological meanings. In her tweet to Isac Elliot in Example (1), @Elliotter1 uses Finnish. Her style is casual: he or she calls Isac by his nickname *Ikke*, lengthens the last vowel in the word *synttärit* (casual Finnish for 'birthday') and uses four emojis of party hats at the end of the tweet. Isac Elliot, in turn, answers to @Elliotter1 in English and uses three emojis (party hat, cake slice and a red heart). Like the fan in Example (1), he uses a similar type of casual style, which is indicated by the use of the acronym *BD* for *birthday* and emojis. This indicates a warm, friendly relationship between the singer and his fan. In Example (2), a fan again writes to Isac in another language than English, in this case Norwegian, to which the singer replies in English and uses an emoji. The alternational code-switching in these examples suggests that English is the in-code language of the fan community: based on only the tweets by @Elliotter1 and @Elliotter2, Isac Elliot has no way of knowing whether the fans understand his reply or not. Instead, he *assumes* that they do. As Bakhtin (1981) suggests, heteroglossic language use is intertwined with socio-ideological groups; in Examples (1) and (2), this shows in the way in which the language of interaction is not merely Norwegian, Finnish and English, but a single communicative style in which resources from English can be incorporated into a discourse in another language. Furthermore, even assumingly universally understood multimodal features – emojis – are used in this in-code in a uniform way, which further emphasizes the casual register of the in-code. This heteroglossic language use hints that the *Elliotters* and Isac Elliot himself are regarded as a uniform group by its members; they share the same resources of code-switching between different languages and use the same kinds of linguistic styles.

Examples (1) and (2) are also excellent examples of how replies from celebrities can function, as Usher (2014) proposes, as rewards from the celebrity to the fan for showing affection towards the celebrity. Both exchanges of tweets are short and the fans receive no second reply should they reply to the singer's tweet. For instance, in Example (2), @Elliotter2 asks Isac if he can answer to her tweet soon, which may indicate that the



fan desires to have a conversation with the singer. Isac answers with *hey you* ❤️, after which he stops replying. Here, Isac Elliot's kind and intimate reply is not a demonstration of a deeper mode of communication. Instead, the tweet clearly acts as a reward to the fan for displaying a positive connection with Isac. Receiving any reply from Isac appears to be a very meaningful event for the fans, as the reply may gain instant positive reactions, such as retweets, likes and replies from the fan's followers and act as a status symbol in the fan community (Marwick and boyd 2011).

Moreover, both Example (1) and Example (2) draw attention to the power differentials between the celebrity and the fan. Despite the high number of birthday wishes and other replies to fans in the data, Isac Elliot is able to choose who to reply to. Many tweets sent to Isac Elliot by fans informing the singer of his or her birthday are ignored or unnoticed by the singer each day. Isac Elliot also follows thousands of fans on Twitter. Because of this, he is more likely to notice tweets by these fans compared to those Twitter users who are not followed by the singer. For example, during the data collection period, one *Ellioter* received one reply and a retweet from Isac Elliot and another received three replies from Isac Elliot. On Twitter, celebrities have a considerably large amount of power to both control their relationship between their fans and followers, as well as affect their fan's status in the fan community.

Next, in her tweet in Example (3), @Ellioter3, a Norwegian fan, thanks Isac Elliot for the opportunity to meet him. Publishing a photograph of oneself and Isac Elliot is in itself a boost for a fan's status in the *Ellioter* community. However, the significance of the meeting is further emphasized when Isac Elliot replies to the tweet as well as retweets @Ellioter3's original tweet:

**Example (3)**

@Ellioter3 [Photograph of @Ellioter3 and Isac Elliot]  
 @IsacElliot Tusen takk for den beste dagen i mitt liv♡Love  
 you♡♡♡#isacelliot #kreftforeningen #Vinterlyd  
 '@IsacElliot A thousand thanks for the best day  
 of my life♡Love you♡♡♡#isacelliot  
 #kreftforeningen #Vinterlyd'  
 @IsacElliot @Ellioter3 DU ER AMAZING♡♡  
 '@Ellioter3 YOU ARE AMAZING♡♡'

Here, both @Ellioter3 and Isac Elliot use a mixture of Norwegian and English, @Ellioter3 using an insertional code-switch to English in the phrase *Love you*, and Isac Elliot inserting the adjective *amazing* into the frame of Norwegian in his response. Both Twitter users also use the “red heart” emoji several times – this emoji is, in fact, very often used by Isac Elliot in his tweets –, which suggests a warm and caring relationship between the singer and the fan. The use of emojis in general contribute to the creation of a casual style for the tweets. Moreover, Isac Elliot’s use of capital letters in his response further adds up to the casual style and creates an image of availability. In this typical example of interaction between Isac Elliot and his fan, the use of mixed language as well switching to English after a prompt in another language suggests that using English is a stylistic choice marking their in-groupness. Like in Examples (1) and (2) discussed earlier, it appears that both Isac Elliot and @Ellioter3 are proficient in both languages used in the tweets. Here, Norwegian and Swedish could well be used in this interaction – instead, English is incorporated as a part of Isac Elliot and his fans’ in-code.

While Isac Elliot’s public recognition of fans typically consists of quick replies which have little conversational or informational meaning, another feature of public recognition also emerges from the data. In some exchanges of tweets, Isac answers to fans’ direct questions about new songs or practical issues concerning events. Example (4) below is an instance of Isac Elliot informing fans of an event which is coming up:

**Example (4)**

@Ellioteer4 @IsacElliot Kauan toi Forumin nimmarijako tilaisuus tai se kestää? 😊 😊

'@IsacElliot How long will the signing event or whatever at Forum last? 😊😊'

@IsacElliot @Ellioteer4 varmaan 1h

'@Ellioteer4 probably 1h'

Example (4) took place in October 2016, when Isac Elliot was campaigning for a charity campaign *Tyttöjen puolella* ("on the girls' side") organized by Plan Finland. The campaign included events such as fund-raisers and meet-and-greets. Profits of merchandise sales were also donated to the campaign. In the exchange in Example (4), a Finnish fan, @Ellioteer4, asks Isac about the duration of a signing event at a major shopping center in Helsinki. The purpose of the event was to raise awareness of the campaign. @Ellioteer4's question is in Finnish and two smiling emojis (blushing smile and tears of joy) are used, perhaps to mitigate the direct question. Isac Elliot accommodates to @Ellioteer4's language by answering in Finnish. While Isac Elliot mainly tweets in English when he informs fans of local events – for example, see Examples (14) and (28), which will be discussed later – and he often replies to fans using English regardless of the language of the fan's prompt, this exchange takes place entirely in Finnish. This may be due to the more private and direct nature of the exchange in Example (4). As a direct reply to @Ellioteer4, the audience of the tweet is quite clear, as only @Ellioteer4 and his or her followers will see the tweet in their Twitter feeds. Because the reply contains specific information about the signing event and because @Ellioteer4's question is in Finnish, by using the language of the prompt Isac Elliot also ensures that he or she understands the answer. Thus, Finnish functions as a way to direct the tweet specifically to @Ellioteer4, or to a Finnish audience in general.

In addition to Examples (3) and (4) displaying positive public recognition of fans, these interactions also demonstrate the locality of fan activities. First, in Example (3), Isac Elliot uses Norwegian when replying to a Norwegian fan. Second, in Example (4),

the information presented in the tweets is closely related to a specific place. This is indicated by both the use of Finnish and location-specific vocabulary. Isac Elliot's practices of acknowledging local audiences as a form of fan maintenance will be explored more closely in the next section.

### 5.1.2 Acknowledging local audiences

In addition to sending public replies to his fans, Isac Elliot maintains his fan base on Twitter by acknowledging local audiences in his tweets. While Marwick and Boyd (2011) do not specifically name addressing local audiences as a form of affiliation, which they regard as a common strategy of celebrity practice, I argue that locality is meaningful for fan maintenance in Isac Elliot's celebrity practice.

Acknowledging local audiences was a common type of affiliative celebrity practice during the second week of data in March 2017. During this time, Isac Elliot was touring across Norway. The singer mentioned Norwegian towns in several tweets, as well as replied to several tweets by Norwegian fans. The exchanges of tweets illustrated in Example (5) is a typical instance of Isac Elliot mentioning specific locations during a tour:

#### Example (5)

@IsacElliot	[Photograph of an airport, taken from the cabin of an airplane] Thank you Trondheim ❤️🙏 I will miss you guys 😭 #tromsø next --->
@Ellioter5	i hope you had a great time here! 😊
@IsacElliot	@Ellioter5 loved every minute ❤️🙏

In this example, Isac Elliot thanks his fans in Trondheim, as well as mentions that he is now traveling to the town of Tromsø for his next performance. The tweet is in English and the singer uses affiliative, emotional language (*I will miss you guys*) as well as emotional emojis displaying a red heart, a prayer and a crying face. In her tweet,

@Ellioter5, who is a fan from Trondheim, wishes Isac enjoyed his time in the Norwegian town. The fan answers in English and like Isac Elliot, uses emojis (two hearts and a smile).

Isac Elliot's reply to @Ellioter5 in Example 5 can be understood both as public recognition of @Ellioter5 and as public recognition of all of his fans who attended his concert in Trondheim. While Norwegian fans and Isac Elliot would also have the Norwegian language – Norwegian and Swedish, which is Isac Elliot's first language, are very similar – in common, Isac Elliot and the fan whose tweet he replies to have both decided to use English in these tweets. Here, the use of English suggests the role of the language as a lingua franca in the community. Moreover, the use of English suggests that while Isac Elliot directly speaks to his Norwegian audience here, another purpose of the tweet may be to inform fans all over the world of his current whereabouts, making the target audience not only Norwegian fans but *all* of his fans. As a result, local and global spheres are mixed.

In Isac Elliot's celebrity practice, activities of acknowledging local audiences and publicly recognizing individual fans are often intertwined. This was already seen in Example (5), but it is even more highlighted in Example (6). In this exchange, Isac Elliot, while replying publicly to a fan, also mentions the fan's home country:

### Example (6)

@FiltrNO	#NEWMUSIC #ZaraLarsson #IsacElliot #Tungevaag&Raaban on HOT RIGHT NOW! [Link to a Spotify playlist which features the song <i>Beast</i> ]
@Ellioter6	@FiltrNO @IsacElliot Loving Beast 😏❤️
@IsacElliot	@Ellioter6 @FiltrNO go Spain ❤️👍

Here, Isac Elliot replies to @Ellioter6's tweet in which @Ellioter6 tells Isac that he or she loves the new song, *Beast*, on which the singer features. @Ellioter6's tweet is originally a reply to Spotify's playlist service Filtr's tweet. Both Twitter users use English and emojis (@Ellioter6 uses emojis of a smirking face and two hearts and Isac Elliot uses emojis of a red heart and a "thumbs up") in their tweets. Instead of merely

sending a reply to the individual fan and referring to him or her by his or her name or the pronoun *you*, the singer salutes the fan's home country (which is visible on his or her profile's description). This makes the fans – or at least those who see the reply to @Elliot6's tweet on their Twitter feeds – in Spain feel special and perhaps even give them hope that the singer will tour in their country in the future.

In addition to affiliating with fans in different locations, Isac Elliot addresses local audiences while also supporting his own local identities, which creates intimacy between him and those fans who share the same background. In Examples (7) and (8), Isac Elliot emphasizes his identity as a Finn. First, Example (7) was posted at the time when the Finnish singer Saara Aalto – who is a well-known personality to Finns from the televised talent show *Talent Suomi*, singing competition *The Voice of Finland* and the Finnish national finals of the *Eurovision Song Contest* – was competing in the singing competition *The X Factor UK*. Saara Aalto's success in the competition was a big media phenomenon in the fall of 2016. In this tweet, Isac Elliot publicly displays his support for Saara in a very positive manner, as indicated by his lexical choices *proud*, *crazy big* and *amazing* and the use of the heart and the Finnish flag emojis:

### Example (7)

@IsacElliot            Getting ready to watch @saaraaalto at @TheXFactor Be  
proud now Finland 🇫🇮❤️ This is crazy big. Amazing!

Second, In Example (8), Isac Elliot mentions the Norwegian town Tromsø – where he was located at the time. However, he also refers to a cultural symbol meaningful for Finnish audiences specifically: *Matti*, who is the main character in the web comic *Finnish Nightmares*. Matti is described as a stereotypical Finn, who is introverted and values personal space and politeness (Finnish Nightmares 2017). In 2017, the Finnish-Norwegian Cultural Institute launched a campaign to spread awareness of Finnish culture in Norway to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Finnish independence, which included adding pictures of a cardboard Matti in various situations and publishing pictures about this on Instagram (Finsk-norsk kulturinstitutt 2017). Isac

Elliot also actively participated in the campaign during his tour in Norway. In Example (8), the singer addresses both Finnish and Norwegian audiences:

**Example (8)**

@IsacElliot            [Photograph of a cardboard figure of Matti]  
                                  the fan mad [sic] #mattipåtur feeling happy in Tromsø

The main language of Examples (7) and (8) is English – even though their content may not be entirely clear to audiences who are not located in Finland or Norway. Example (8) includes a brief code-switch into Norwegian (or Swedish) in the form of a hashtag #*mattipåtur* ('Matti on tour'). Example (7) – despite containing affiliative cultural symbols in the form of using the Finnish flag emoji followed by the “red heart” emoji and referring to the local celebrity Saara Aalto – also emphasizes Isac Elliot’s Finnish identity and celebrates the singer’s home country.

Even though Isac Elliot typically uses the strategy of acknowledging audiences in a very inclusive way by publishing tweets in English, local knowledge is at times needed to understand the context of the tweets, as is the case with Example (8). Extremely specific local knowledge is also needed in order to understand what Example (9) is about:

**Example (9)**

@IsacElliot            Gonna be down in a bit💕

Tweet (9) differs from the earlier examples in this category in that it is directed to a very specific audience and its meaning most likely escapes those who do not know its context. This tweet was published in the morning of Isac Elliot’s performance in Tromsø, and it was followed by a picture of the cardboard Matti on a hotel bed. This indicates that Isac was about to leave his hotel room and informs the fans waiting outside the hotel that they may see him soon. As a result, the meaning of the tweet may be unclear to those fans who are not outside the hotel. Although it is exceptional for Isac Elliot’s Twitter behavior, publishing this type of tweets is typical of some

celebrities. For instance, it was discovered by Myrskog (2014: 45) that Lady Gaga typically uses a strategy of “real-time fan maintenance” when she tweets, for example, about sending fast food to fans waiting outside the hotels she is staying in during tours. The motivation for this may be *impression management*, which is a concept coined by Goffman (1959) to describe processes of maintaining and constructing preferred images of themselves in social interaction. By conveying an image of themselves as a caring and unselfish figure may create a positive impression of the celebrity and thus act as fan maintenance. In this respect, it makes sense that the language of the tweet is a language shared by most of the fans, whereas tweeting in Norwegian would result in explicitly directing the tweet to only Norwegian-speaking fans and excluding all of the others.

What is interesting about the tweets in which Isac Elliot addresses local audiences is that despite their local nature, their main language is English. Linguistic heterogeneity is present in the form of brief code-switches, such as the use of the hashtag *#mattipåtur* in Example (8) and code-switching to a local language by writing country-specific words in the local language instead of English (e.g. *Sverige* instead of *Sweden*). While language alternation in replies in which Isac Elliot uses public acknowledgment of individual fans is frequent, tweets in which Isac Elliot addresses local audiences are much more unified in terms of language. This may be due to the differences in the types of tweets and the addressees in these two categories. Many replies to fans are more directed to the individual fan, which gives more space for language alternation, whereas standard tweets are also visible to the singer’s wider, global audience as they show on the Twitter feeds of all of his followers. In standard tweets, the use of English thus functions as a strategic choice to avoid those fans who are not able to understand a “local” language such as Finnish from feeling excluded. Next, more practices through which Isac Elliot enhances a sense of community will be explored.



### 5.1.3 Creating a sense of community

Finally, Isac Elliot maintains his fan base by creating a sense of community among all fans. He does this by using affiliative strategies which, contrary to those in the former section which affiliates the singer with a smaller group of fans, act as unifiers for the whole fan community regardless of the fans' location or cultural background. While creating affiliation with fans is the least frequent strategy of fan maintenance on Isac Elliot's Twitter, there are some very interesting and striking examples of how the singer acts towards creating a sense of community on his Twitter and uses multilingual resources in doing so. As we can see next, Isac Elliot uses inclusive pronouns and words to refer to his fans, uses intimate language and symbols, and credits the fan community's efforts, all of which builds a sense of community:

#### Example (10)

@IsacElliot

Ok guys! BEAST has been in the same (good) spots on the Spotify lists for many days. Should we move it up a bit 🙏❤️  
[Link to the song *Beast* on the music streaming service Spotify]

In this tweet, Isac Elliot does all of the aforementioned. Firstly, he uses the casual and intimate noun *guys* to refer to his fans, which indicates that the singer regards his followers as friends. Moreover, he later uses the pronoun *we* when he urges the fans to listen to his song on Spotify – a digital music streaming service which pays royalties to artists based on the number of plays for their songs –, which implies that he and the fans belong to the same community and that he is doing the same things as the fans are. Secondly, he uses the “prayer” and “red heart” emojis. Thirdly, he acknowledges that he is pleased with the fans' efforts to stream the song on Spotify, which has resulted in his steady performance on the music service's top charts: *BEAST has been in the same (good) spots*. All in all, the tweet acts as a way to credit and give back to all of his fans. Again, the tweet is in English, which an indicator of the role of the language as the lingua franca of the community that Isac Elliot assumes his followers to

understand. In this sense, English is a somewhat “neutral” choice with which to thank the fans, as a more linguistically heterogeneous linguistic choice may result in some fans feeling left out. However, in addition to functioning as a way to maintain the singer’s popularity, this tweet also serves the purpose of self-promotion – a type of celebrity practice which will be discussed later on – as Isac Elliot also encourages his fans to listen to the song even more.

The exchanges between Isac Elliot and his fans rarely comprise more than one tweet by Isac Elliot. Examples (11) and (12), however, display a very interesting exchange from March 2017 between Isac Elliot and several fans. In these examples, Isac Elliot is searching for a picture he has of his backup dancer and friend Lasse Lipponen, who is a familiar figure to the fans from the singer’s social media postings especially on Snapchat and Instagram:

### Example (11)

@IsacElliot           Who can send me the pic of Lasse I posted in ig in the summer! U remember? 🤔

@Ellioteer7            @IsacElliot hvilken?? Hahh sååå maaange  
                                  ‘@IsacElliot which one?? Hahh sooo maaany’

@IsacElliot            @Ellioteer7 the one I posted of only lasse XD the close up Xd

@Ellioteer8            [Photograph of Lasse]  
                                  @IsacElliot versego??  
                                  ‘@IsacElliot here you go??’

@IsacElliot            @Ellioteer8 from the same day!

### Example (12)

@IsacElliot            It's not on my ig anymore 🤔

@Ellioteer9            I think I have it Where should I send it?? 🤔🤔

@IsacElliot            @Ellioteer9 just here Xd [sic]

In these examples, the language alternates between English and Norwegian. Here, Isac writes only in English, as does @Ellioteer9, while fans @Ellioteer7 and @Ellioteer8

tweet in Norwegian – in fact, the interaction does not have a dominant language. The participants use a casual register, which is evident in @Ellioter7's lengthened vowels in the words *så* and *mange*, @Ellioter8's use of the form *versego* instead of *værsågod* ('you're welcome') and all of the three fans' use of more than one punctuation mark. Likewise, Isac Elliot's register is casual. This can be seen by his use of abbreviations and acronyms *pic* for 'picture', *ig* for 'Instagram' and *U* for 'you' and the use of the "tears of joy" emoji and the emoticon Xd [sic] referring to loud laughter. All in all, the register of both Isac Elliot and the fans is very casual and friendly.

Even though Isac Elliot's register is typically very friendly and warm, the interaction between the singer and the fans is rather exceptional as it creates an uncommonly close sense of groupness between the participants. In the tweets discussed earlier in Section 5.1.1 where Isac Elliot wishes a happy birthday to fans or greets them using the *reply* function, the relationship between the singer and the fan remains distant. However, the exchanges of tweets in Examples (11) and (12) demonstrate quite a different dimension between Isac Elliot and his fans: in these exchanges of tweets, the distance between him and the fans to whom he replies is minimized. In addition to the casual use of language, the feeling of intimacy is accentuated by the topic of the tweet: the singer asks the fans directly to send him a specific picture, *the close up from the same day*, which he knows fans may have saved on their phone. What this means is that his fans get to participate and do a personal favor for their idol. Searching for the lost picture is a shared, fun adventure for the fan community and Isac. This is accentuated by Isac Elliot's amused tweet *It's not on my ig anymore* 🤔 and his use of amused emoticons and emojis, which indicate to the extraordinariness of the situation. However, as personal as this exchange may be, the power difference between Isac and the fans remains intact. While the fans get to help Isac as a community, he is also powerful enough to tell his fans what to do rather explicitly, for example when he tells @Ellioter9 where to post the photo (*just here Xd* [sic]). On the one hand, Isac Elliot uses language which creates an image of him and @Ellioter9 and the other fans participating in the interaction as close friends. On the other hand, he never gives reasons for why he needs to picture other than because it is gone from his Instagram

account, which at the same time distinguishes between the nature of the relationships he has with Lasse from the relationship he has with his fans.

Isac Elliot's fan maintenance through creating a sense of community is mainly done in English. Using a global language helps him minimize the distance between the members of his large, heterogeneous group of fans, while using cultural symbols only understandable to specific groups may result in some people feeling left out. Perhaps this is why Isac Elliot switches to English when replying to @Ellioter7 and @Ellioter8's tweets written in Norwegian. However, some cultural words appear that may only be understood by Isac Elliot's fans. These include references to specific songs and pictures posted on other social media outlets, for example Instagram, months ago. These in-code choices, along with other shared linguistic choices such as the use of acronyms of the names of social media sites, help create a sense of community among Isac Elliot's Twitter followers.

This section dealt with Isac Elliot's use of different fan maintenance strategies as a part of his multilingual celebrity practice on Twitter. As with the findings by Myrskog (2014), who discovered that fan maintenance was the main objective of Lady Gaga's celebrity practice on Twitter, fan maintenance is also unquestionably the most frequent type of celebrity practice for Isac Elliot on Twitter. Isac Elliot maintains his fan base by granting public recognition to individual fans, addressing local audiences in his tweets and creating a sense of community through language use. All in all, in Isac Elliot's fan maintenance on Twitter, English is used as the lingua franca of communication, as in most cases, the singer assumes that English is a shared resource of the fan community. This is indicated by the singer's use of English as the language of his standard tweets, as well as his pattern of replying in English to fans' tweets written in Finnish and Norwegian. Using casual English featuring abbreviations, emojis and emoticons is common for both fans and the singer, which suggests a mutual in-code type of language use.

However, it is evident that fan maintenance often deals with the celebrity's career. While activities of fan maintenance may, first and foremost, help the celebrity gain new fans, maintain the interest of long-time fans and strengthen all fans' affection towards the celebrity, retweeting fans' tweets in which they encourage other to listen

to newly released songs also serves another purpose: promoting the singer's career. In the next section, the ways in which Isac Elliot uses Twitter as means for self-promotion while utilizing diverse linguistic resources will be discussed.

## 5.2 Self-promotion

While interacting with other people and maintaining a fan base on social media is one of the main features of modern celebrity practice, celebrities also use social media to make themselves and their products known to wide audiences. Promoting their music, gigs and merchandise on social media is also immensely important to artists. While Marwick and boyd (2011) omit self-promotion from their theory of celebrity practice, this category is also included in both Ravy (2016) and Myrskog's (2014) studies due to its significance in the data for their individual studies. Self-promotion also appeared to be prominent in Isac Elliot's Twitter practice, and because of this, a category that includes Isac Elliot's self-promoting activities was added.

The category of self-promotion includes tweets that promote Isac Elliot's career in one way or another. This means tweets in which the singer's music, shows, upcoming appearances or merchandise are mentioned in order to encourage fans to buy the singer's consumable products. The tweets in this category are often distributed to all followers, i.e. they are standard tweets and retweets. However, replies to followers in which Isac Elliot encourages the fan to spread information about upcoming events or thanks a fan for endorsing the streaming of his songs on Spotify by telling his or her friends to listen to his new song were also included in this category.

In total, there are 90 analytic units in the data which fulfill the purpose of self-promoting, which makes this activity the second most frequent in Isac Elliot's Twitter use. Prior to the analysis, these 90 tweets or exchanges of tweets were further divided into two categories. These subcategories highlight two different types of self-promotion present in the tweets: sharing information about products and events, and self-promotion combined with fan maintenance. The strategy of sharing information about products and events is used 25 times in the data, whereas fan-maintaining

activities serve the function of self-promotion in 75 tweets. Next, Isac Elliot's use of spreading information about his music, merchandise and events is discussed.

### 5.2.1 Sharing information about products and events

Sharing information about products and both upcoming and past events is a typical way of self-promotion on Isac Elliot's Twitter. Most tweets in this category are self-authored standard tweets by Isac Elliot, which means that they are visible to all of his followers. However, there are also some replies to other Twitter users' tweets in this category, as is the case with Example (4), which featured a fan asking Isac Elliot about the duration of a signing in a shopping center and which was discussed earlier in Section 5.1.1.

Tweet (13) is a representative example of Isac Elliot's use of Twitter as self-promotion:

#### Example (13)

@IsacElliot      A small clip for you 😘  
 [Link to a Facebook video of a live performance by Isac Elliot]

The link in the tweet directs to a video on Isac Elliot's official Facebook page. The video is a teaser of Isac Elliot's acoustic live show at a major Finnish popular music station YleX. Due to the limited number of characters allowed in a single tweet, more information about the video itself is given in the Facebook publication.

Tweet (13) is a standard tweet. The tweet is in English, which widens its audience. In general, the register of the tweet is very warm and friendly: the text (*a small clip for you*) and the "kiss" emoji both suggest that Isac Elliot makes his music for the fans' enjoyment. This conveys an image of the singer as someone caring for all of his fans. The tweet functions as a way of sharing Isac Elliot's musical content to his fans. What is interesting is that the tweet has no tags or keywords that would boost the visibility of the tweet, which makes the tweet even more intimate and targeted to especially the singer's fans who follow him on Twitter. In the next example of self-promotion,

however, another type of information sharing, closely related to fans in a certain location, is present:

**Example (14)**

@IsacElliot      The buzz in Trondheim is ON! Tonight will be crazy! See you  
at 18.00❤️

Tweet (14) demonstrates Isac Elliot's pursuit to promote his concert in Trondheim which will begin a couple of hours later. This tweet is a standard tweet. It includes the "red heart" emoji typical for Isac Elliot and it is written entirely in English; however, this time the *you* in the tweet does not include all fans as is often the case in Isac Elliot's tweets which enforce the sense of community among the fans. Instead, here, Isac Elliot creates a connection between him and his Norwegian fans. In the beginning of the tweet, the singer mentions the location he is currently in (*Trondheim*), as well as describes the upcoming show as *buzz*, thus hyping the show. He also directly refers to the time the event begins, reminding fans near and in Trondheim of when the concert is about to begin. While Isac Elliot addresses a Norwegian audience in this tweet, he writes it in English despite having knowledge in the Norwegian language. Two points can be made here. Firstly, even though Isac Elliot uses local languages to create affiliation (as was seen in Section 5.1), it is evident that English functions as the lingua franca of interaction between Isac Elliot and the *Ellioter* community. Secondly, while the fans who attend his concert in Trondheim are addressed in this tweet, Isac Elliot also wishes to spread awareness of what he is doing at the moment and create an image of himself as a successful artist.

### 5.2.2 Using fan maintaining strategies as self-promotion

Another typical form of self-promotion practiced by Isac Elliot on Twitter is replying to and retweeting those fans' tweets which encourage other fans to consume the singer's products and attend his concerts and performances. In other words, Isac Elliot uses different types of fan maintaining activities not only to acknowledge his fans but

also to simultaneously boost his own career and sales. In total, there are a total of 75 tweets which simultaneously demonstrate both fan maintaining and self-promoting activities in the data. Many of the tweets in this sub-category are replies to fans' tweets. In addition to this, however, Isac Elliot often incorporates other fan maintaining strategies, such as affiliative linguistic features which help create a sense of community in promoting his career, as is the case with Example (10) discussed in Section 5.1.3.

In Example (15), @Ellioteer10 asks Isac Elliot for a favor, as he or she wishes to travel to meet the singer at the same signing event which prompted @Ellioteer4's question to Isac in Example (4). The dialogue is mainly in Finnish, but both @Ellioteer10 and Isac Elliot use brief English insertions at the end of their tweets:

### Example (15)

- @Ellioteer10      Tää on tärkeetä! Sun on pakko sanoo äidille että mun pitää päästä sinne Forumiin, koska en oo nähny sua vielä koskaan f2f 😊 @IsacElliot
- 'This is important! You must tell mom that I need to get to come to Forum because I've never seen you f2f 😊 @IsacElliot'
- @IsacElliot      @Ellioteer10 etkö 🤔❤️ nyt on pakko 🙏 äiti please
- '@Ellioteer10 you haven't 🤔❤️ now you've got to 🙏 🙏 mom please'

In addition to serving as an illustrative instance of fan maintenance, this example can also be interpreted as a self-promoting activity by Isac Elliot. In his or her tweet, @Ellioteer10 asks Isac Elliot to appeal to his or her mother so that the fan could meet the singer. While @Ellioteer10 certainly hopes that he or she will be able to meet the singer at the upcoming event, the underlying purpose of the tweet may be to also receive a reply from Isac, as there is no guarantee that Isac Elliot will be able to win over @Ellioteer10's mother. Isac Elliot could very well ignore this tweet, but he decides to answer it by first expressing his amazement at the fact that @Ellioteer10 has never met or seen Isac Elliot perform before his surprise in both linguistic (*you haven't*) and



visual means (an emoji of a flushed face) – perhaps suggesting that doing those things is typical fan behavior. He then continues by asking the mother to allow @Ellioter10 to meet him this time at the signing event at the shopping center Forum in Helsinki. He does this by using the emoji of praying hands, and code-switching from Finnish to English in *äiti please* – mimicking @Ellioter10's insertional, discursive code-switch (f2f) and the use of the emoji of a saddened face. In addition to adding more humility to the request, code-switching to English here also contributes to the impression of a casual, youthful style for Isac Elliot. Here, the insertion *please* can either be understood as discursive or stylistic choice. In Finnish, the English phrase is often used in vernacular requests as Finnish lacks the expression for the phrase *please*, which suggests that the code-switch serves a discursive function. However, as hedging in a request can be done in other ways in Finnish, the choice is a stylistic one. The mixed language use which draws from Finnish, English and multimodal resources for stylistic and discursive reasons are used by both Isac Elliot and @Ellioter10, which creates a connection between them. Furthermore, rather than merely mixing one language with another, as Bakhtin (1981) originally suggested, mutually diverse, heteroglossic language use such as the one used by Isac Elliot and the fan here actually forms a shared, in-group language.

In the next example, Isac Elliot uses fan maintaining strategies to promote his new song:

### Example (16)

@IsacElliot [Screenshot of the song *Beast* playing on the music service Spotify]  
 RT @Ellioter11: Everyone!! Listen 'Beast' couple times [sic] before you go to sleep! We need to get it back to top 10💕!  
 @IsacElliot #ellioteerpower #TRIsacbeast

Example (16) is a retweet of @Ellioter11's – who is a fan from Finland – tweet in which he or she urges others to listen to the new song, *Beast*, on Spotify. Retweeting and replying to this kind of tweets is a very typical self-promoting activity for Isac Elliot in

the data. As with most retweets of fans' tweets that encourage other fans to listen to Isac Elliot's songs on Spotify, the tweet by @Ellioter11 is in English and again features an emoji, this time a heart with an arrow. Furthermore, the tweet by @Ellioter11 focuses extensively on the communal side of being a fan, which is emphasized by the use of inclusive pronouns and nouns (*everyone, we need to get it back to top 10, #ellioteerpower*). The original tweet by @Ellioter11 most likely reached only his or her followers and those Twitter users browsing the hashtag #ellioteerpower or searching for Isac Elliot or the keyword *Ellioter* on Twitter. However, by retweeting the tweet, Isac Elliot shares the tweet to thousands of other Twitter users. While doing this, he is also certainly boosting his career by suggesting that listening to his song – even for the sole purpose of improving its standing on a chart – is preferable behavior that indexes being a member of the *Ellioter* community.

In addition to the use of English in promoting Isac Elliot's music, English is also present in the promotion of Isac Elliot's merchandise, which is visible in the following example:

### Example (17)

@Ellioter12	[Photograph of @Ellioter12 wearing Isac Elliot's merchandise T-shirt]
	@IsacElliot My #beast t-shirt came today, and I LOVE IT 😍
	It's so cozy and nice 🤗
@IsacElliot	@Ellioter12 looks amazables 🙌👏❤️

In Example (17), @Ellioter12 sends a picture of herself wearing Isac Elliot's merchandise T-shirt and comments on the piece of clothing in a positive way through both the fan's linguistic choices – using the phrase *I love it* in capital letters and the adjectives *cozy* and *nice* when referring to the shirt – and her use of an emoji of heart eyes and a smiling face with its arms open. Isac Elliot answers using a similar upbeat tone and answers in English. He also uses positive emojis, the “OK hand” and the red heart. Moreover, Isac Elliot's language use is playful and affiliative, as he has replaced the word *amazing* with the variation *amazables*. Again, Isac Elliot's friendly and

youthful style, which is very similar to his fans' language use, conveys an image of himself as a friend rather than a distant idol. What can be seen here is Isac Elliot rewarding a fan for tweeting him and being a fan while simultaneously promoting his consumable products by using affiliative fan maintaining strategies.

All in all, as opposed to the self-promotion done through standard tweets that are distributed to all of Isac Elliot's followers, Isac Elliot's use of fan maintaining strategies as self-promotion often features heterogenous linguistic patterns. When Isac Elliot retweets a fan's tweet, it is typically in English. However, Isac Elliot's replies are usually in the same language as the tweet to which he replies to. The use of playful language and the use of emojis by both Isac Elliot and the fans create affiliation between the fan and the idol, which may in consequent benefit Isac Elliot's purposes of self-promotion.

Section 5.2 dealt with Isac Elliot's self-promoting practices. Isac Elliot uses Twitter to spread information about his music and other consumable products to his followers, such as sharing links to video recordings of live performances and conveying information about upcoming performances. In addition, Isac Elliot's promotion of his own products and career is typically linked with maintaining his fan base, as 75 of the 90 tweets in the category *Self-promotion* were also categorized into the category *Fan maintenance*. This suggests that not only is fan maintenance used to communicate with the fans and create a sense of community, but also instrumentally to help boost Isac Elliot's career. In general, self-promotion through standard tweets is done in English, no matter where the concert about which the singer tweets about is held. As with the findings of the category of fan maintenance, Isac Elliot's self-promoting activities further indicate that the use of English is the main language of communication in the fan community and that multilingual elements are used for both discursive and stylistic reasons. Furthermore, Isac Elliot hopes to describe his life to all of his followers instead of to local audiences only.

### 5.3 Emphasizing celebrity status

This category includes those tweets in the data that emphasize Isac Elliot's celebrity status and describe his pop star life. This category is divided into two subcategories, , both describing a way for Isac Elliot to make his celebrity status visible: tweets which highlight the celebrity's access to VIP treatment and tweets which mention the celebrity's colleagues or friends. The difference between the tweets in the category *Emphasizing celebrity status* and the tweets in the category *Self-promotion* described in the earlier section is that the tweets in the former category emphasize the display of *backstage access* (Marwick and boyd 2011) whereas those in the latter focus on promoting the celebrity as a product, as suggested by Page (2012).

In total, 27 tweets in the data emphasize Isac Elliot's celebrity status. It is thus significantly smaller than the previous two categories. Most tweets in this category are standard tweets. Only one of the tweets in this category was a reply to another person's tweet and there were three retweets, all of which were retweets of the singer's own tweets that were published earlier. In this section, tweets in which Isac Elliot describes his life as a celebrity will be discussed first. After this, the tweets which display a public connection between Isac Elliot and his friends and colleagues are analyzed.

#### 5.3.1 Emphasizing celebrity life

The first group of tweets in which Isac Elliot's life as a celebrity is emphasized focuses on the singer's life as a celebrity. These tweets display the "glamorous" side of being a celebrity, making visible the difference between celebrities and "ordinary" people. The next tweet is an illustrative example of a tweet by Isac Elliot in which the singer describes his extraordinary life:

##### Example (18)

@IsacElliot

[Photograph of Isac Elliot's new television]

New MEGA TV. How will I ever get anything done now?

Tweet (18) is an excellent example of a tweet categorized into *Emphasizing celebrity status*. The image is taken from Isac Elliot's studio – a commodity that is only available to recording artists. Furthermore, the text in English tells the reader that the singer has a new *MEGA TV*, again a luxury. The use of the adverb *mega* typed in capital letters further emphasizes the extraordinariness of the product. However, after what may be taken as boasting about his new television, Isac Elliot also says *How will I get anything done now?*, which at the same time hints to the luxury of the large size of the television and his identity as an ordinary teenage boy who likes to play video games. As a result, this tweet is also categorized into *Revealing Isac Lundén*. While emphasizing celebrity's status can be regarded as a signifier of the uneven dynamics between the celebrity and his or her fans (Marwick and boyd 2011: 146), it appears that when publishing content about his glamorous life, Isac Elliot simultaneously aims to appear humble and mitigate his celebrity status.

Example (19) is another tweet in which Isac Elliot highlights his status as a celebrity:

### Example (19)

@IsacElliot            We are haning [sic] out at my place with a lot of friends.  
                                   Wanna see when you hang out and blast BEAST. Post on  
                                   INSTA using #isacelliot

In this tweet published in English, Isac Elliot prompts his followers to post content on the photo and video sharing social media site Instagram and tag their publications with the hashtag *#isacelliot*, consequently boosting the hashtag and promoting himself. However, he mentions that he is *haning out* [sic] *with a lot of friends*, which emphasizes his popularity. While Isac Elliot reveals no further information about the friends with whom he is spending time, the tweet offers some access to the pop star's life. The tweet demonstrates the difference between the status of a celebrity versus that of an "ordinary" person: a celebrity can influence his fans to post content on social media, while a request by a "regular" social media user may remain unnoticed and ignored. In the same way as in Example (12) discussed in Section 5.1.3., Isac Elliot uses an imperative form to request his fans what to do: *post on INSTA*. He also gives no other

reason for fans to post content than because he and his friends want them to. Here, the possibility of Isac Elliot seeing a fan's photo activates his fans to post content allows him to manage his popularity and helps him gain visibility on Instagram.

Example (19) illustrates Isac Elliot mentioning his unidentified friends in a tweet. However, there are several instances in the data in which Isac Elliot mentions his friends and colleagues by their name in his tweets. This type of public recognition of other people will be discussed in the next section.

### **5.3.2 Public recognition of friends and colleagues**

In addition to replying to fans, Isac Elliot also interacts with his friends and colleagues on Twitter. Publicly replying to a fan's tweet helps celebrities manage their popularity, create an impression of themselves as connected to their followers and affiliate with their fans and followers. However, mentioning friends and colleagues in tweets functions more as a display of a personal relationship with another person, which goes beyond performing accessibility and availability online. Marwick and boyd (2011: 151) describe celebrities' practices of interacting with other famous people on Twitter as "revealing performances of what appear to be intimate interactions". Not only are fans allowed a sense of an insider access into the celebrities' life through the display of positive relationships between celebrities, but public recognition of friends and other celebrities is also a reminder of the power differences between the celebrity and the fan. This is due to the difference between the level of intimacy expressed towards fans and those who the celebrity regards more as peers.

Out of the 182 analytic units, Isac Elliot mentions friends and colleagues in 13. Even though public recognition of friends and colleagues is present in only 7 per cent of Isac Elliot's tweets, most tweets belonging to this category are standard tweets in English, which widens the audience of publications. Tweets (20) and (21) are typical and illustrative examples of tweets in which the singer mentions his colleagues:

**Example (20)**

@IsacElliot Check out my bro @LipponenLasse and his new video 🍻🔥👉👉👉 Killed it👉🔥 [Link to Lasse Lipponen's YouTube video]

**Example (21)**

@IsacElliot My good friend @jessicajarrell put out her video to Come Closer! Looks amazing. Check it out here: [Link to Jessica Jarrell's YouTube video]

Tweet (20) is a promotion of Lasse Lipponen's – Isac Elliot's back-up dancer who was also mentioned in Example (11) discussed in Section 5.1.3 – dance video, whereas in Example (21) Isac shares a link a new music video by Jessica Jarrell's, who is an American pop and RnB artist Isac Elliot toured with in the United States in 2016. Both artists thus have professional ties with Isac Elliot.

The linguistic features of Examples (20) and (21) are very similar. Both tweets are in English, which maximizes the audience of the tweets based on the language's lingua franca status in the fan community. Both tweets also share the same positive register: in Example (20), the use of the "fist bump", "OK hand" and several "fire" emojis as well as the use of the phrase *killed it* creates a very supportive and excited tone for the tweet, whereas in Example (21), Jessica Jarrell's music video *looks amazing*.

What is interesting about these two tweets is Isac Elliot's alignment with both Lasse Lipponen and Jessica Jarrell. Isac Elliot has worked with both artists – however, he refers to Lasse as his *bro* and Jessica as his *good friend*. This is similar to Marwick and boyd's (2011: 145) findings on the American singer Mariah Carey's public alignment with her friend on Twitter: Isac Elliot endorses his colleagues' endeavors while simultaneously demonstrating insiderness between him, Lasse Lipponen and Jessica Jarrell. As a result, as Marwick and boyd (2011: 145) suggest, the average fan and the people who Isac Elliot knows "in real life" are distinguished from each other. As a matter of fact, Jessica Jarrell gains one of the only "follow-up" replies from Isac Elliot in the data to her retweet of Isac's tweet (21), which further emphasizes the difference

between his fans and peers. All of this is done in English, despite the language of interaction between the singer and his friends may be something else.

Even though Isac Elliot's public recognition of friends and colleagues typically displays an intimate relationship between him and the people he mentions in his tweets, sometimes the singer's positioning towards other celebrities resemble those of an average fan. This is the case with this supportive message for Saara Aalto (who was introduced in Section 5.1.2) and her competing in the singing competition *X Factor UK*:

**Example (22a)**

@IsacElliot            SAARA!!! Those notes were UNREAL! I am so happy for  
you! @saaraaalto

Based on Isac Elliot's earlier tweets not included in the data for this study, Saara Aalto and Isac Elliot did not participate in any public correspondence prior to Saara Aalto's fame in *X Factor UK*, despite her already being a known persona in Finland. Instead, Isac Elliot appears to be truly interested in Saara's journey in the competition – he tweeted several times about *X Factor UK* when it was airing, which strongly suggests that he was watching the show on television – and shows what appears to be genuine support towards the other artist. He does this in English, despite both musicians' proficiency in Finnish. Saara Aalto replied to Isac Elliot's tweet the next day:

**Example (22b)**

@Saaraaalto            [Retweet of Example (22a)]  
Thank you Isac!!!! 😍😍❤️ Last night was scary but I did it..  
😊 Wish me luck for The next weekend 🤍🎉

Here, Saara Aalto expresses her gratitude towards Isac Elliot in an extremely positive and intimate manner: she uses several emojis ("heart eyes", a red heart, a grinning and sweaty face, a glowing heart and a party hat throwing confetti) and several exclamation points. As Marwick and boyd (2011: 145) point out, positive public recognition is typical of celebrities' public acknowledgement of peers. Furthermore,



the level of intimacy in Saara Aalto's tweet indicates that she regards Isac Elliot as a peer instead of an ordinary fan. In addition to the choice of emojis, intimacy is also evident in the length of and the level of description in her tweet: after thanking Isac Elliot for his support, she continues to describe her feelings at the live show the previous evening. The interaction between Isac Elliot and Saara Aalto is thus an excellent demonstration of the display of positive public recognition between celebrities. Even though both singers speak Finnish and the use of Finnish would increase the intimacy of the tweet, the conversation is held in English. This may be due to both musician's personal preference to use English and their orientation towards international music scene as opposed to the Finnish one. However, the use of English can also be understood as an emphasis to the staged nature of the public interaction, which is manifested in the extremely positive way the two singers are eager to voluntarily promote and direct attention to each other. This way, both celebrities gain from providing a sense of insider access for their followers.

In this section, tweets emphasizing Isac Elliot's celebrity status were discussed. Despite only 15 per cent of the data belonging to this category, the tweets in this category are similar to Marwick and boyd's (2011: 145) notions of celebrities' habit of mentioning peers, friends and colleagues on social media with the exception that Isac Elliot avoids displaying negative connections to other celebrities. First, Isac Elliot uses Twitter to describe his day-to-day life, highlighting his VIP life and popularity. Second, Isac Elliot mentions and replies to his "real life" friends publicly in a positive manner, which Marwick and boyd (2011) mention as a typical form of celebrity practice. Based on the previous categories discussed above, it is evident that English, stylized with casual spelling and emojis, is the main language of Isac Elliot's tweets, and this category is no exception. However, as opposed to the categories *Fan maintenance* and *Self-promotion*, the category of tweets emphasizing Isac Elliot's celebrity status includes few multilingual elements. Moreover, intimate public recognition of friends and colleagues is staged in English despite another shared language between the participants in the interaction. This may be due to the type of the tweets: as the tweets in this category are mainly standard tweets and there is no interaction with fans, the tweets are composed in English. While the category *Fan*

*maintenance*, for example, focuses heavily on creating rapport with an individual fan, tweets highlighting celebrity status concentrate more on Isac Elliot's public image. Next, another type of celebrity practice is discussed.

#### 5.4 Revealing Isac Lundén

This category includes tweets which display the singer's private persona. This category was adopted from Myrskog (2014). He based this category on existing celebrity theories by Holmes and Redmond (2007) and Dyer (1998), which suggest that the public is essentially yearning to reveal the "real" persona of a celebrity, and Marwick and boyd's (2011) notion of the backstage access provided by celebrities' tweets. This category includes tweets that in one way or another show that Isac Elliot is an "ordinary" person. By showing that he is "just as everyone else", Isac Elliot is able to affiliate with his fans.

In his study on Lady Gaga's Twitter behavior, Myrskog (2014) discovered that while the amount of the tweets displaying Lady Gaga's "ordinariness" was rather small, these tweets were significant in creating an image of the musician as an approachable and open figure. The data for the present study suggest similar characteristics for Isac Elliot's celebrity practice. In total, 16 percent of the data displays Isac Elliot's private persona. However, while this dimension of celebrity practice may not be very emphasized on his Twitter account, it may be more prominent on his other social media platforms such as Snapchat. The tweets in this category are most often standard tweets written in English, like the short tweet in Example (23):

##### Example (23)

@IsacElliot      School work....

In Example (23), Isac Elliot writes about having to do homework. The tweet was published in March 2017 when the singer was touring in Norway. Unlike the majority of Isac Elliot's tweets, this tweet does not contain any emojis. Instead, the tweet ends with three periods. Although the tweet itself is short, the ellipsis adds to the meaning of the tweet in a similar way that emojis convey feelings in the singer's other tweets –

here, the periods suggest that doing homework is somewhat tedious. The tweet may help in creating a connection between Isac Elliot and his fans, as many of his followers may relate to his feelings about homework. Furthermore, in this tweet, he steps out of his role as a celebrity and reveals something from his personal life by reminding his followers that in addition to being a famous singer, he is also a 16-year-old high school student. This tweet helps in minimizing the distance between Isac Elliot and his fans by creating a connection between them.

Isac Elliot also foregrounds his own personality in self-promoting tweets, which can be seen in the following two examples. In the first tweet, the singer posts a link to a picture published on the official Instagram account of the Norwegian confectionery factory Nidar taken during Isac Elliot's visit to the factory:

**Example (24)**

@IsacElliot      Even more then [sic] the Smash chocolate you have to love the hats 🤩 [Link to an Instagram post about Isac Elliot's visit to a confectionery factory in Norway]

The Instagram publication, to which Isac Elliot links to in his tweet, is a collage of three photos where Isac Elliot poses next to boxes of Nidar's product. By sharing the link to the picture, Isac Elliot not only promotes Nidar and its product, the name of which he also mentions in own tweet, but also his own appearance at the factory. However, instead of plainly endorsing the product, he draws attention to the hairnets the visitors were wearing while visiting the factory. He ends the tweet with his characteristic "tears of joy" emoji, indicating that his remark is a playful joke. The humorous style in this tweet, which shows that the singer does not take himself too seriously, helps the fans make sense of who Isac Elliot is. Simultaneously, he is promoting his career and sponsors. As the singer's audience consists mostly of teenagers, a humorous style that brings the singer's personality forward is perhaps more effective in creating positive reactions from his followers compared to a more serious approach to promoting the product.

In Example (25), Isac Elliot again adds his personal touch to a self-promoting tweet by adding an unrelated picture to it:

**Example (25)**

@IsacElliot [Photograph of a television, presented in Figure 2]  
 SWEEDEEN!!! 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 Climbing, climbing!  
 [Link to the song *Beast* on Spotify] I am watching this just  
 because... 🤪

Based on its topic and the initial activity of indirectly promoting fans in a specific location to play Isac Elliot's songs on Spotify, the beginning of this tweet is very similar to Example (10) discussed in Section 5.1.3 as well as numerous other tweets posted during the period of data collection. The attached picture in the tweet (Figure 2), instead of being the typical screenshot of a Spotify chart or a link to the song on the streaming service (as was the case in Example (10)), is of a television on which the Swedish television show *Köksmästarna* ('masters of kitchen', a Swedish version of the popular kitchen reality television show *Top Chef*) is airing.



Figure 2: Isac Elliot's photo of *Köksmästarna*

By posting this picture, Isac Elliot again reveals another side to him: he shows his fans what he is doing at that particular moment, thus providing his followers backstage access to the singer's personal life. Furthermore, attaching the picture along with an explanation for posting the picture (*I am watching this just because...* 🤪) creates a very humorous and playful tone. As in many other tweets, he uses the "red heart" and "tears of joy" emojis again, as well as those of a party hat and the "OK" hand. Like his joke about hairnets in Example (24), this tweet is attributing to a genuine, sincere image of Isac Elliot who is laid-back and likes to joke around. Like Lady Gaga's tweets about her "ordinariness" on Twitter creates an image of herself as someone who is easy to approach and relate to (Myrskog 2014: 75), Isac Elliot does the same through joking and tweeting about topics which are relatable to his audience.

What is also interesting about Example (25) is Isac Elliot's sensitivity to his audience. The tweet mentions the song *Beast* and how it is rising the charts in Sweden. The text written by Isac Elliot in the tweet is in English, but the text in the photo he has posted is in Swedish. Even though the Swedish text is not understood by those fans who do not understand Swedish, the format of the television show is known in many parts of the world. Those familiar with the show might recognize the formatting logo, as well as the clothes the people in the television show are wearing, and understand what the photo is about. On the other hand, the photo also demonstrates a subtle appeal to his Swedish audience: when Isac Elliot shows his followers that he watches the Swedish version of the television show, he affiliates with his Swedish fans and shows that he connects with them culturally. Overall, what is on display here is an appeal to both global and local audiences.

Linguistically, the category of tweets revealing Isac Elliot's "real" persona resembles that of tweets emphasizing his celebrity status, as all of the tweets in the data in which Isac Elliot reveals his private self are in English. Only minor switches in other languages are present, such as the Swedish element in Example (25). This may be due to the singer's personal preferences or it may be an indicator of the lingua franca status of English on Twitter and in the popular music industry. In order to appear genuine and sincere and provide access to fans, celebrities have to make sure they are understood by more than just a local or nation-wide audience addressed in Example

(25). As an artist whose career is oriented to international markets, Isac Elliot aims provide access to his persona to everybody by using a language shared by as wide an audience as possible. Next, the analysis moves on to the smallest category emerging from the data, *Advancing charitable causes*.

## 5.5 Advancing charitable causes

This category includes tweets in which Isac Elliot promotes charitable campaigns. This is the smallest category in the data, as there are only six tweets in this category. One of the functions in these tweets is not only to promote Isac Elliot's consumable products or highlight his celebrity status, for example, but rather to utilize the celebrity status to pursue a charitable cause. The tweets in this category are standard tweets, replies and retweets, and their main language varies from English to Finnish and Norwegian.

In Example (26), Isac Elliot tweets about the charity campaign *Tyttöjen puolella* ('on the girls' side'), which was already mentioned in Section 5.1.1:

### Example (26)

@IsacElliot

[Photograph of a television, presented in Figure 3]

Everybody should know 💔 #tyttöjenpuolella

'Everybody should know 💔 #onthegirlsside'

Like in most standard tweets published by Isac Elliot, Example (8) is written in English. However, there is a brief code-switch into Finnish in the form of the hashtag *#tyttöjenpuolella*. Here, the function of code-switching is to connect the tweet to the campaign and give a context for the tweet. Furthermore, the context of the tweet is also clarified with the accompanying photo of a television displaying information about the conditions of women in Pakistan (Figure 2) Typical to Isac Elliot, he uses an emoji in the tweet, this time of a broken heart.

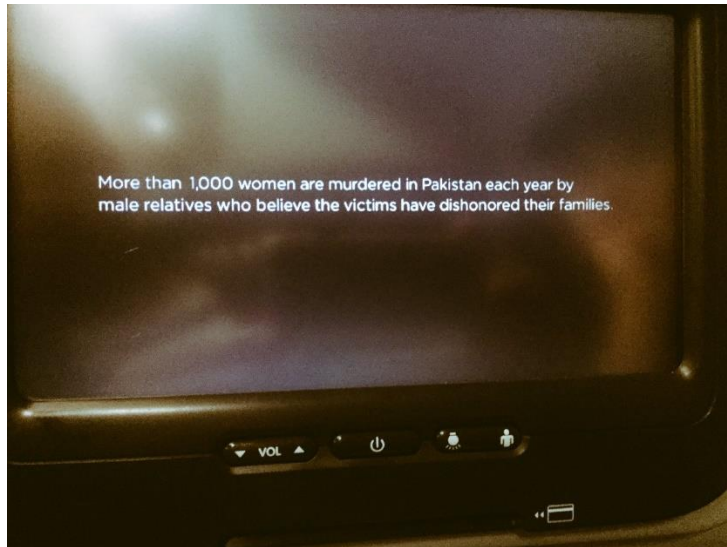


Figure 3: Isac Elliot's photo about a charity campaign: *More than 1,000 women are murdered in Pakistan each year by male relatives who believe the victims have dishonored their families.*

The topic of Example (26) diverts from Isac Elliot's usual tweeting habits, as most of his tweets are about interacting with fans and promoting the consumable aspect of his persona, which can be regarded as light topics. However, in Example (26), Isac Elliot directs attention to a more serious matter. Celebrities often campaign for different charities, and these practices can be regarded as image management – by focusing on social issues, Isac Elliot's is able to extend his image beyond that of a teenage idol to that of a serious advocate.

While voicing opinions and displaying one's activism is widely present in the tweeting of some celebrities (e.g. Myrskog 2014), Isac Elliot appears to mostly drive charitable causes in a more indirect way, as can be seen in Example (27):

#### Example (27)

@IsacElliot

[Photograph of an airport]

TRONDHEIM♥ So nice to be back. Let's get the crazy on tonight at torvet and support a good cause

This tweet was published when Isac Elliot had just arrived in Trondheim for the last show on the *Vinterlyd* tour in Norway and it is a combination of several different

activities of celebrity practice. The singer affiliates with his Norwegian audience by mentioning how it is *nice to be back* and uses the red heart emoji to promote his upcoming show in the city of Trondheim. He also mentions the charitable side of the tour, which indicates that not only does the singer hope to see his fans come to the show for his music, but that he also aims at awareness-raising. However, his reference to *Vinterlyd* is quite subtle, as the campaign is not mentioned by its name in the form of a hashtag, for example, but is referred to as *a good cause* instead. While those fans who follow Isac Elliot's career actively know the campaign that is being referred to in the tweet, those who follow his Twitter less rigorously might not recognize the context. This suggests that Isac Elliot assumes that his fans know what is going on in his life at any specific moment, perhaps even endorsing fans to follow his every move. Overall, omitting a direct reference to the specific charity can be regarded as a feature of the in-code of the fan community, as it distinguishes between those inside the fan community from those outside it. What can be seen here is, again, a form of image management and fan maintenance.

Isac Elliot also advances charitable causes when using the strategy of public recognition of individual fans to maintain his fan base, as is the case in Example (28):

### Example (28)

@IsacElliot

RT @Elliotteer13:

[Video of @Elliotteer13 with his or her mother]

@IsacElliot mama lupes lahjottaa, oletko prouddd 🤔🤔😊

'RT @Elliotteer13: @IsacElliot mama promised to donate, are you prouddd 🤔🤔😊'

Example (28) is a retweet of @Elliotteer13's tweet in which the fan tells Isac that his or her mother promised to donate for the campaign *Tyttöjen puolella*. Contrary to the earlier two examples of advancing charitable causes present in Isac Elliot's Twitter, the main language of the tweet by @Elliotteer13 is Finnish. However, he or she fluently mixes Finnish and English resources in the tweet by adding English words (*mama*, *proud*) for stylistic reasons. The fan's use of two additional D's at the end of the



adjective proud as well as the use of emojis (a winking face sticking its tongue out, a smile and a face without mouth) is very typical for the data. As opposed to Examples (26) and (27), which are both standard tweets in English and thus visible in the Twitter feeds of all of those Twitter users who follow him, the main language of the retweet of @Elliotter13's tweet in Example (28) is Finnish, even though Isac Elliot shares the tweet to all of his followers. This may be an indication of Isac Elliot's approval of the message of the tweet – by retweeting a fan's tweet about donating, the act of donating is brought into a very positive light – despite its language not being English. Here, the intended audience of the tweet is his Finnish fans, who he wishes to donate for the campaign, whereas in Example (26), Isac Elliot also spreads awareness of a general issue instead of directly mentioning donating money.

The activity of advancing charitable causes includes diverse linguistic features – however, the data sample of this category was very small, so generalizations about this category cannot be made in a straightforward way. While most tweets in this category are written in English, some retweets and standard tweets by Isac Elliot include elements in Finnish, for example. This may be due to the topic of the tweet, as charity campaigns are often based in certain localities. Through the choice of language, Isac Elliot is able to control the audience of the tweet, and thus even encourage certain type of behavior to different audience – for example, to endorse donating to a charity. On the other hand, language choice may also be a part of Isac Elliot's image management, as using a lingua franca spreads his message to even wider an audience.

Chapter 5 dealt with the five most prominent and typical types of celebrity practice emerging from Isac Elliot's Twitter and their multilingual features. This included practices of fan maintenance, self-promotion, emphasizing celebrity status, revealing Isac Lundén and advancing charitable causes. In the next and final chapter, this study will be discussed on a more general level.

## 6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the use of multilingualism as a resource for celebrity practice on the pop artist Isac Elliot's Twitter. In this qualitative study, the data of 182 tweets or exchanges of tweets by Isac Elliot and his fans were first categorized into five categories (*Fan maintenance, Self-promotion, Emphasizing celebrity status, Revealing Isac Lundén* and *Advancing charitable causes*). Some of the categories describe the most typical features of celebrity practice in the data, while others depict some striking and interesting, but less frequent practices. After the categorization, the categories were analyzed with methods of discourse analysis. When examining the use of multilingual resources as a means for practicing celebrity, discourse analytic methods meant analyzing the different languages, linguistic forms and patterns present in the tweets, as well as the contexts, functions and meanings of these languages and linguistic choices in relation to his Twitter use as celebrity practice, a concept developed by Marwick and boyd (2011).

The data of this study demonstrated a diverse use of linguistic features drawing from English, Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish and visual modes of communication, Isac Elliot uses Twitter to maintain his fan base and promote his music and other products. The singer does this by replying to fans via public replies, referencing local audiences and strengthening the sense of community among the *Elliotteers*. Isac Elliot also uses Twitter to emphasize his celebrity status, to reveal information about himself as an "ordinary" person and to advance charitable causes. However, these three activities were considerably less frequent than the former two.

In the data, English is used in as the lingua franca of the community. This finding suggests a similar pattern to language choice online discovered by Androutsopoulos (2007) and Lee and Barton (2011). Isac Elliot often uses English when the topic of the tweet was in one way or another important to all of Isac Elliot's followers, for example tweets belonging to the category *Self-promotion*. Other languages are typically present in tweets in which Isac Elliot replies to fans or aims to target the tweet at a specific, local audience, as was the case when he was touring in Norway. Even in cases when a language other than English is the main base language of the tweet, multilingualism

is very often present in the form of stylistic code-switches to English. Isac Elliot and the fans whose tweets he responds to draw from versatile linguistic resources in their Twitter practices, which suggests that English and other languages are used as a heteroglossic in-code between Isac Elliot and his fans. In other words, they communicate in a single style that manifests belonging to the community. Furthermore, visual resources are also common for the data, as emojis are frequently used by both Isac Elliot and the fans. All in all, the community appears to share the same linguistic style, even though the language itself (English, Finnish, Swedish or Norwegian) used may differ from one situation to another.

This study further emphasizes Marwick and boyd's (2011) claim that fan maintaining activities, such as public recognition of fans, help celebrities manage their popularity. It is evident that communicating with fans on Twitter is an essential part of Isac Elliot's music career, and fan maintenance is the most prominent type of celebrity practice. The singer uses fan maintaining activities to affiliate with individual *Ellioters* and, essentially, to make him or her buy the product. Based on his linguistic and stylistic choices, he seems to be sensitive to his audience, who are, based on a general glance at his followers, mostly females in their teens and pre-teens - i.e. roughly the same age as him or slightly younger. This is visible in how the singer's language use on Twitter often reflects that of the tweets he is replying to: for example, both the fans and Isac Elliot use an extensive amount of emojis and code-switch between English and other languages. These findings are in line with previous research conducted in the field of language choice, code-switching and style-shifting online. The use of similar linguistic patterns creates affiliation and helps in building a connection with the fans. Marwick and boyd (2011: 147) describe this as a creation of "linguistic ties". Even though English arguably acts as the language of interaction, the impact of sharing similar linguistic resources with one's idol and him or her speaking one's first language certainly may help in feeling connected with a celebrity. The use of linguistic resources adopted by teenagers may also separate Isac Elliot from other celebrity practitioners as he appears to be similar to his fans.

Isac Elliot also seems to be doing exactly what his teen fans, who grew up using technology and social media, expect from their idol. He appears to be available: he

interacts with the fans daily, supports them and makes them feel special. Some fans even received more than one reply from their idol during the data collection periods of this study, which consist of only a fraction of Isac Elliot's tweets. Moreover, the majority of Isac's fans on Twitter possibly never receive a reply from the singer. In fact, instead of being available, social media allows Isac Elliot, and celebrities in general, to create an *impression* of availability. However, the possibility of one day being noticed by their idol and even getting a reply from him keeps things interesting for the fans. Based on the data, many of the replies are authored using, or code-switching to, a fan's native, "local" language, which might hold emotional value to him or her and by mixing in widely understood elements in the form of the lingua franca English and visual emojis. While replying to fans' tweets holds meaning to the individual fans as it can be regarded as a reward from the celebrity (Usher 2014), it also benefits the celebrity in maintaining his or her popularity online - in this sense, a celebrity is dependent on keeping his audiences satisfied not only in the field of what he or she essential does "in real life", but also on social media. This brings us back to Senft's (2008) notions of micro-celebrities and necessity to interest their audiences and Marwick and boyd's (2011) notions of how practices of micro-celebrity have been gradually adopted by celebrities.

While Marwick and boyd (2011) mainly discuss different strategies of celebrity practice as separate units, based on Isac Elliot's celebrity practice it becomes evident that the different modes of practicing celebrity on social media are intertwined. For instance, a reply to a fan's tweet can both function as fan maintenance and as self-promotion. Not only acknowledging an individual fan has great meaning to the fan, but replying to certain types of tweets, e.g. tweets that shows a picture of a fan wearing their newly purchased merchandise shirt, also indexes to preferable types of fan behavior. Celebrity practice on Twitter not only helps a celebrity to connect with other people, but also to boost their career.

As Marwick and boyd (2011) point out, the ways of practicing celebrity vary from one celebrity to another. Compared to some Twitter users who are known for confronting and even publicly embarrassing other Twitter users (Marwick and boyd 2011: 146), Isac Elliot focuses to emphasize positive emotions in his tweets. Through

his linguistic choices, Isac Elliot strengthens the sense of community on Twitter by using inclusive language, as well as by choosing to write standard tweets – i.e. tweets that are distributed to all of his followers – in English even if the topic of the tweet is only meaningful for his followers in a certain locality and could be written in Finnish or Norwegian, for example. He takes no negative stances towards other Twitter users and uses positive emojis, such as the “red heart” and “smile” emojis that he uses frequently. It seems that both friendly and controversial social media strategies may prove successful for celebrities.

Even though using English in the majority of tweets indicates to efforts to enforce feelings of belonging to the *Elliotter* fan community and thus to maintain the singer’s fan base, Isac Elliot’s use of a widely understood language in his tweets can also be understood as a way to enforce his status as a celebrity. Displaying a relationship with his friends and colleagues – who are also well-known personalities – in public, and doing it in English, the singer creates an image of himself as popular and makes sure that as many Twitter users are able to understand as possible. Staging conversations with other celebrities also fits Isac Elliot’s friendly Twitter image.

Marwick and boyd’s (2011) comment that not all celebrity practitioners use social media in the same way is also highlighted in the topics of tweets as well as the way different social media are used. For instance, Myrskog (2014), in his thesis on the celebrity practice of Lady Gaga on Twitter, discovered that revealing the “real” person behind the celebrity was a typical strategy of celebrity practice for Lady Gaga. Contrary to Myrskog findings on Lady Gaga’s tweets, providing backstage access to the fans was much less significant in Isac Elliot’s Twitter practices. Instead, Isac Elliot uses Twitter as a platform for direct interaction with fans, often in a multilingual way and it appears that he focuses less on displaying his personal life in his tweets. It appears that on Twitter, his strategy is more concerned with conveying an image of the singer as a friendly, loving and caring figure, whereas his day-to-day life and personality is more on display on his other social media outlets, such as Snapchat and Instagram. For instance, on the photo sharing social media platform Instagram, Isac Elliot frequently uses *stories* – a feature which allows showcasing pictures or short videos for a duration of 24 hours, after which the content disappears – to show what

he is doing with his friends. After following the singer on other platforms for even a short period of time, it becomes evident that while Twitter provides a very interesting platform for examining celebrity practice, studying other social media platforms in addition to Twitter might have resulted in a more comprehensive case study of how a celebrity might construct his or her social media persona across different social media platforms and how the use of multilingualism may vary between these different platforms.

Previous research on multilingualism online has mainly focused on either communication between friends or the language use in fandoms, whereas the present study focused on the multilingual language use of a celebrity and its relation to his fan base. This study aimed to bring the study of the celebrity and the fans together by inspecting the use of shared multilingual resources by a celebrity and his fans on Twitter. After this study, we have a broader understanding of the ways in which celebrities connect with their fans by using linguistic strategies.

However, even though this study also utilized the fan's prompts to which Isac Elliot answers, the focus is still on the way celebrity is practices; the interaction between the two sides could be studied even more closely. Furthermore, by merely analyzing tweets it is difficult to account for the underlying motivations behind the uses of multilingual resources or evaluate the impact of interacting with a celebrity in one's first language compared to English. Instead, gathering data of both the celebrity's and the fans' individual thoughts on their linguistic choices is also essential for linguistic research.

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