

**Code Switching by Students of English in Finland and Their Attitudes  
Towards It**

Bachelor's Thesis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Englannin kielen kasvavalla merkityksellä ja laajalla levinneisyydellä on ollut vaikutusta niin koko maailmaan kuin myös Suomeen ja valloilla olevaan kielitilanteeseen Suomessa. Englantia kuulee nykypäivänä usein ja monissa eri paikoissa ja tilanteissa, millä on mahdollisesti ollut myös vaikutusta siihen, miten suomalaiset puhuvat nykyään. Koodinvaihtoa on tutkittu aiemmin eri näkökulmista, vaikkakin suuri osa tutkimuksista on keskittynyt muun muassa kaksikielisten ihmisten ja perheiden kielivalintojen tarkasteluun. Koodinvaihto ilmiönä on kuitenkin havaittavissa myös Suomessa ja suomenkielisten puheessa.</p> <p>Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan suomalaisen yliopiston englanninkielen opiskelijoiden koodinvaihtoon liittyviä piirteitä kuten koodinvaihdon määrää sekä siihen käytettäviä kieliä. Lisäksi tutkimuksessa selvitetään, millaisia asenteita ja mielipiteitä opiskelijoilla on ilmiötä kohtaan. Aineisto tutkimukseen kerättiin haastattelujen avulla: tutkimukseen osallistui kolme englanninkielen opiskelijaa, jolle esitettiin kysymyksiä liittyen koodinvaihdon tapoihin ja asenteisiin. Aineisto analysoitiin laadullisen sisältöanalyysin keinoin.</p> <p>Tulosten mukaan nämä tutkimukseen osallistuneet opiskelijat kokivat kaikki havaitsevansa koodinvaihtoa puheessaan. Koodinvaihdon dominoiva kieli oli kaikilla englanti, ja muita koodinvaihtoon käytettyjä kieliä olivat mm. suomi, ruotsi, espanja, ranska ja korea, vaikkakin näitä kieliä käytettiin selkeästi vähemmän kuin englantia. Lisäksi tulosten mukaan opiskelijoiden asenne koodinvaihtoa kohtaan oli positiivinen. Vaikka koodinvaihtoon liitettiin sekä hyviä että huonoja puolia, opiskelijat suhtautuivat kaikki ilmiöön myönteisesti.</p> <p>Vaikka koodinvaihtoa on tutkittukin paljon jo aikaisemminkin, suomalaisten ihmisten ja erityisesti suomalaisten kielenoppijoiden koodinvaihdosta tai englannin käytöstä ei vielä ole paljon tarkkaa tietoa. Tämä tutkimus voikin siis toimia pohjana tuleville tutkimuksille aiheeseen liittyen.</p>	
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the English language has become increasingly important globally, and it has also strengthened its status as the lingua franca. In addition to spreading around the world, it has also affected Finland and its situation regarding languages (Leppänen and Nikula 2008). One can constantly hear English almost everywhere: on television and social media, in advertisements, in books and news articles and spoken by people from different countries. Since English can be heard and seen so commonly in everyday situations, it is no wonder that it might have also affected for example the way Finnish people speak nowadays.

Code switching has been a phenomenon for decades, and many studies have been conducted on the topic. Code switching is interesting for many reasons. Although the phenomenon has been studied quite broadly in the past, many of the researchers have focused on bilinguals, especially bilingual children whose language and code switching has been affected by the fact that in their home environment, they constantly hear more than just one language. As examples of such studies are the ones conducted by Alfonzetti (1998) and Gardner-Chloros (2009). In these studies, for instance, the code switching of people who spoke different dialects was examined. Code switching in Finland has also been studied. Many of these studies have been conducted on the topic of, for example, social media and digital games, such as the one by Piirainen-Marsh (2008) where she examined the code switching of participants who were playing a digital game. However, the perspective of language students and their code switching has not been covered widely in the previous studies. In addition, more information about the phenomenon in Finland can be revealed with the help of this study.

Thus, the aim of this thesis is to examine the code switching of English students in Finland. Since language students use different languages in addition to their native language on a daily basis, supposedly it could be possible that they tend to mix languages while speaking. The attitudes towards this phenomenon will also be studied. It seems that especially on social media, people might have different opinions on code switching. If language students have a habit of mixing languages, the opinions of other people might also influence their thoughts on the topic.

Firstly, some of the previous research, including the ones presented in this chapter, are examined more closely. Secondly, the means of data collection and method for analysing the data are explained along with giving more information on the participants of this study. Lastly, the data is analysed, and the results are presented in the fourth section of this thesis followed by a concluding chapter.

## 2 BACKGROUND

In the following chapter, some of the previous research conducted on code switching and English in Finland relevant to this thesis are presented. Firstly, different definitions for code switching are gathered and reviewed, and after that, the previous studies related to code switching globally and, more precisely, in Finland are examined more closely.

### 2.1 Defining code switching

The concept of “code switching” might sound unfamiliar for many who have never come across the notion. However, the subject is likely to be familiar not just to linguists but to many other people from all walks of life as well. People might often “switch codes” without knowing what the phenomenon is actually called.

During these past decades, code switching has had multiple definitions that vary with each other. Originally, code switching occurred as a term in the early 1950s (Auer 1998: 59). Consequently, specific trends that dominated the research of linguistics decades ago, such as examining bilinguals and their habit of speech, have had an effect on the formation of the term (Alvarez-Cáccamo 1998: 64). Although the term itself might be borrowed, in this view, the new term would refer to distinct “cognitive codes” that are stored in people’s minds to make processing of two different forms possible. Thus, the term does not actually refer to a change of languages in speech (Auer 1998: 59-60).

As Alvarez-Cáccamo (1998: 62) also states it, the term “code switching” has gained many different definitions after it occurred the first time in the 1950s. Since multiple studies have been conducted on the topic, it is understandable that the term has varying definitions. Some of these definitions are simple, and some are more complicated. An example of a simpler definition is the one that Poplack (2015: 1) provides in her article: code switching “refers to the mixing of two or more languages in discourse”. However, as Poplack (2015) also states, this is the broadest sense of the term. Altarriba and Basnight-Brown (2009: 3) also add that code switching is actually switching languages “while maintaining functional and pragmatic clarity”. These definitions might give some information about the notion of code switching, but some aspects might still be left undefined.

Heller (1988) suggests that code switching is actually an alternative for a choice that should otherwise be made. Usually one would have to choose which language to use but code switching allows a person to express their thoughts without having to make a choice between two different languages. Code switching also offers a chance to help the voice of the speaker “to claim new roles, new rights and obligations” (Heller 1988: 93).

Code switching typically occurs in an environment where two or more languages are in a frequent use. According to Gardner-Chloros (2009), the phenomenon has an effect on people who are constantly surrounded by different languages and dialects. Code switching is specifically the switching of two or more languages or “linguistic varieties” within one conversation or one sentence, and it occurs in the speech of bilingual people (Gardner-Chloros 2009: 4). With this definition, there is the problem of defining “bilingual”. *Oxford Dictionaries* defines “bilingual” as “speaking two languages fluently”, so based on this definition, anyone who has a good command of two languages can actually switch codes. Then again, *Merriam-Webster*’s second definition for “bilingual” is “using or able to use two languages especially with equal fluency”. In this case, the person would have to be equally fluent in both languages to be called a bilingual and thus to be able to switch codes.

Nilep (2006) also offers a definition for “code switching” in his article. Code switching does not occur only in the speech of bilinguals but also language learners. The phenomenon is a “cognitive linguistic ability” that occurs in a situation where the people involved are using at least two languages, for example in a classroom or a learning situation (Nilep 2006: 1). This definition does not exclude the people who are not capable of speaking two different languages fluently, and based on this definition, anyone who is a language learner is able to switch codes in their speech.

The definitions presented by Poplack (2015) and Altarriba and Basnight-Brown (2009) are the ones that are used to define code switching in this particular study. Since in this thesis code switching is studied from the perspective of speech, it is natural to use Poplack’s (2015: 1) definition which emphasizes the notion of discourse in related to code switching. In addition, Altarriba and Basnight Brown (2009: 3) emphasize functional and pragmatic clarity, which is also a significant part of switching codes in speech, so that the speaker can actually be understood by the other people present in the conversation.

## **2.2 Previous research on code switching**

Code switching has been studied from multiple different perspectives. In his paper, Nilep (2006) presents different ways that code switching has been studied in the field of sociolinguistics. One example of a theory is Myers-Scotton’s Markedness model. In a multilingual community, every language has its own social roles, and these roles are called rights-and-obligations. Thus, when someone is speaking a certain language in the community, by using this language, they also choose the role they represent. The speakers in the community are likely to share the information on the social meanings of the languages or codes (Nilep 2006: 11). According to Nilep (2006), Myers-Scotton’s Markedness model is one of the most influential theories regarding code switching motivations.

Many studies that have previously been conducted on code switching have concentrated on bilinguals. For example, Alfonzetti (1998) has studied the code switching of Italians who use both Italian and a Sicilian dialect in their speech. In this case, the code switching might happen, for instance, because the participant takes the other person's language competence into account by switching codes, or the speaker might be trying to correct themselves by using the right code instead of the wrong one (Alfonzetti 1998: 327-332). When the direction of the code switching does not make a difference, the reasons for switching codes could be, for example, self-repair, storytelling purposes or a topic change (Alfonzetti 1998: 332-363). In addition to these examples of code switching occurring in bilinguals' speech, Gardner-Chloros (2009) presents examples of code switching situations where the participants speak either two different languages or dialects. In this chapter, the notions of "we-code" and "they-code" are used to describe the code switching of bilinguals. According to Gumberz (1982, cited in Gardner-Chloros 2009: 56), a person's minority language is the "we-code" which is usually used informally in a group's internal communication. On the contrary, when a person is talking more formally outside the group by using their majority language, they are using the "they-code". However, these two different codes are commonly used in the same conversational situation (Gardner-Chloros 2009: 57). Gardner-Chloros (2009) presents an example where a person fluent in Punjabi and English uses an English word "culture" when speaking in Punjabi which emphasizes the threat that the Punjabi culture is facing in Britain.

In Finland, code switching has been studied, for instance, in the field of education. Nikula (2008) studied code switching and English language use in a classroom where English was not the target of learning, but the students use English as their main language while studying. During the lessons, the students code switch when they are speaking in Finnish, but they might also use Finnish tags while speaking English. The reason for code switching could be, for example, changing the subject to a topic that does not concern the learning situation (Nikula 2008). Another reason might also be the fact that the students are creating their own language that differentiates them as a group (Hinnenkamp 2003, cited in Nikula 2008: 57).

Piirainen-Marsh (2008), on the other hand, studied the code switching of 10-14-year-old boys while they were playing the "Final Fantasy X" digital game. In these situations where the language of the game is English, it might be natural to use English tags taken from the game while speaking Finnish. According to Piirainen-Marsh (2008), the boys switched codes, for instance, when they were moving from one action to another. For example, before starting the game, the boys negotiate with each other in Finnish, but when they move on to play the game which is in English, they start to switch codes. In this example, the boys move from negotiations to starting the game by using code switching

(Piiirainen-Marsh 2008: 149-151). In addition, the players' role changes in the game might also be differentiated with code switching. For example, the boys change the role of the active player by using an English request. (Piiirainen-Marsh 2008: 153-154).

One more example of a yet another situation where code switching occurred, is in a radio show commentary. Muhonen (2008) examined the code switching of different radio show hosts working on the radio programs of the radio channel YleX. The joint use of Finnish and English occurs, for example, when the radio hosts talk about music, and the code switching is seen as a way of having fun and playing with the two different languages (2008: 176).

### **2.3 The status of English in Finland**

As English has become the lingua franca in today's multilingual world, it has also strengthened its status in Finland as well. However, at the same time some people are worried of what could happen to the language that was spoken in the country before English started to spread. According to Leppänen and Nikula (2008: 9-10), people might see English as a threat that could destroy the original language, in this case Finnish, or have a negative effect on the country's culture. Other worries include the increasing dominance of the American culture to gain more power over other cultures, and the inequality between the ones who are able to speak languages and the ones who are not. In addition, the people are scared that English will replace Finnish in certain fields, for example in education. Nevertheless, people have also noticed positive effects regarding the spreading of the English language, such as contributing understanding considering international affairs, and also making working in certain fields, for example in politics, easier (Leppänen and Nikula 2008: 10).

According to Leppänen and Nikula (2008), before English was a relatively distant language for Finns, since it was mainly used when communicating with foreign people. In today's Finland however, the status of English is rather different as it is used in various situations and even in situations where it would not be required. Thus, the society in Finland has become increasingly multilingual over the years (Leppänen and Nikula 2008: 16). Finns use English in different circumstances: sometimes it is chosen as the language for communicating, but sometimes it is used alongside the native language (Leppänen and Nikula 2008: 22). However, according to Leppänen and Nikula (2008: 10), there is still not much current information on how and for what purposes Finns actually use English.



### 3 PRESENT STUDY

In this chapter, the aim of the research in addition to the research questions of this thesis are presented. This section is followed by information on how the data for this study was collected, and background information on the participants. Lastly, the method of analysis is presented.

#### 3.1 Research aims and questions

The aim of this study is to find out, how much code switching occurs in the everyday lives of English students in a Finnish university. However, the participants' code switching is not monitored during the interviews, but the results are based on the students' own views. Additionally, the languages used for code switching will be examined. Not only does this study aim at finding out the amount of code switching, but also where and in which situations the code switching occurs, and what languages are used for switching codes. Since English students often study other languages in addition to English, the students will be asked about their dominant languages in code switching. The examining will focus on these questions:

- (1) To what extent does code switching occur in the speech of the students as indicated by the students themselves?
- (2) What languages are used for code switching, and what is the dominant language as indicated by the students?

The second part of the study focuses on examining the students' attitudes towards code switching. The students will be asked if they see code switching more as a positive or a negative phenomenon, and if the general opinion has an effect on their own thinking. Therefore, these following questions will be studied:

- (3) What kind of attitudes do the participants have towards code switching? Are they more positive or negative?

#### 3.2 Data collection

The method of collecting data for this research was interviews. In more detail, the interviews were semi-structured. In a semi-structured interview, the questions are closed-respond questions, but there can also be a chance for the interviewer to pose open-ended questions to understand the answers better and to discover more aspects related to the participants' thoughts on the topic (*Interviews* 2010). The aim was to give the interviewees an opportunity to elaborate and explain their answers when it was necessary. However, the aim of the interviews was not to be solely a conversation between the interviewer and the participants. Nevertheless, it was considered that the answers of the participants

might raise more questions on the subject. In this situation, the tone of the interview was more conversational. The interviews were then recorded and later transcribed.

### **3.3 Participants**

For this study, three people were chosen as participants. The names of the participants were pseudonymised for this study. It was made sure that all of the participants had studied in a university a different amount of time to make sure to include experiences from different levels of English studies. The participants were chosen based on the field they study in and the languages they use, since it was mandatory that the participants in this research study English. Therefore, the participants were all university language students, and they had English either as their major or minor. For this study, a participant who does not study English as their major was included to find out if their answers differ from the answers of the other participants that are, in fact, English majors. When finding out the participants' dominant language considering code switching, it was interesting to discover if the fact that English was their minor influenced their choice of language in a situation where code switching occurred. However, two out of the three interviewees studied English as their major.

It was also preferable that these students had studied other languages in addition to English. This is usually the case, since all the participants are Finnish, and they are obliged to study Swedish in all school levels, including the tertiary level. All of the participants had actually studied at least five languages which gave them options when it came to code switching and what language to use for code switching. This way it was possible to discover if other languages in addition to English have affected the participants' views on code switching.

Since this study includes experiences and opinions of only three different students, the results do not necessarily represent the opinions of English students in general.

### **3.4 Method of analysis**

In this research, the method for analysing the data is qualitative content analysis. Since there is only a small number of interviews and not many participants, it was natural to analyse the data in a qualitative manner. In a content analysis, the issues discussed in the interviews can be divided into separate themes (Julien 2012). Thus, in this study, the questions were divided into three themes according to their focus: general questions, personal experiences with code switching, and opinions and attitudes towards code switching. These sections were then analysed while considering the themes that the questions and answers represent. However, these themes sometimes have joint topics that occur in different themes. This was also considered when analysing the data. In addition, one of

the aims was to detect similarities and differences between the answers and to analyse the data based on these joint factors and the ones that were not shared between the participants.

## 4 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the results of the study are presented followed by an analysis of the interviews. This chapter is divided into three smaller sections. In the first section, information on the participants' language background and habits is provided. In the second section, participants' experiences with code switching are presented and analysed, and in the third section, the main focus is on the attitudes that the participants have towards code switching and examining them more closely.

### **4.1 General information on participants' language background**

All of the participants study languages on a tertiary level. They all have Finnish as their native language, and they study English either as their major or minor: Nelly and Tom are English majors, whereas Minnie studies Swedish as her major. All participants have studied at least four languages during their years in school: all of them speak Finnish, English, Swedish and Spanish, at least to some extent. Including these languages, Nelly has also studied French and German. Minnie, then again, speaks French, Russian and Icelandic, and she is also able to understand and read Korean. The third participant Tom has also studied German along with the four languages that were shared with all participants. All of them use Finnish and English daily. In addition, Nelly and Minnie face Swedish nearly on a daily basis for example on social media. Minnie also added Korean to the list of languages she faces daily.

After this, the participants described their habits related to languages more precisely. First of all, the answers to the question on which language the participants use to write notes or assignments for classes were rather similar for all of them: they all stated that they use the language which is more logical in that particular situation. If the class is in Finnish, the notes are usually made in Finnish, and if the class is held in English, the notes are also in English. However, Nelly added that she might often write notes in English during her Spanish classes, since the two languages seem to be connected in her head. Additionally, Nelly and Minnie stated that they still might use a different language than the language of the class for writing down some more difficult words that might be harder for them to comprehend. When asked about the languages used for entertainment purposes, all of the participants mention English as one of their main languages. Minnie, however, stated that for her Korean is the most dominant language when it comes to entertainment. With Nelly and Tom, Spanish is also occasionally used for entertainment purposes. Lastly, all participants use mainly Finnish for communicating with friends and family. Also, all of them either currently have or have had friends who speak either English or Swedish with whom they communicate either in English or in Swedish, whichever is the easiest option in that particular situation.

In the light of the definitions for code switching given in the background chapter, these three participants, in fact, could indeed be prone to code switching. This is due to the fact that they spend a great deal of their time in a multilingual environment, either physically or virtually. As Gardner-Chloros (2009) states, people who are constantly surrounded by multiple languages are affected by this phenomenon, and since all of the participants use and hear different languages daily, this might also affect the way they speak and mix languages in their speech. In addition, all of the three participants are language learners as they study or have studied multiple languages during their years in school. Thus, since Nilep (2006) defines code switching as a phenomenon that often occurs in a language learning situation, the participants might face these situations even on a daily basis.

#### **4.2 Personal experiences with code switching**

Code switching might often happen without noticing, since it can be a very normal part of everyday speech for many Finns nowadays. However, in this section the participants were asked to think and describe their habits and experiences related to code switching. Sometimes it might be difficult to differentiate, what is actually code switching and what is not. Some words that are originated from English are a relatively normal part of the Finnish language and especially the modern slang today, thus it might be hard to think that a certain word or expression is actually code switching. However, since the definitions of Poplack (2015), and Altarriba and Basnight-Brown (2009) are considered the most relevant ones regarding this thesis, they might help to better understand, what is code switching and what might not be. Nevertheless, differentiating what is code switching in today's multilingual world can be quite challenging at times.

All of the participants said they switch codes at least to some extent. Minnie immediately stated that she switches codes frequently, especially when speaking Finnish. She mentioned that she especially uses words related to linguistic theories for code switching, because she has originally learned the words either in English or Swedish. She also added that while speaking of other topics, she might use English words and phrases when speaking Finnish. Nelly stated that she switches codes quite often, especially if one would compare her speech to someone else's who is not a language student. Here it could be assumed that according to Nelly, language students might switch codes more often than people who do not study languages. Nelly also said that she has started to pay more attention to her code switching habits during the last few years and in which company she does it the most. This is understandable, since presumably it is more likely that a language student pays more attention to phenomena related to linguistics and languages compared to a person who is not as interested in the topic. Tom was more unsure of his code switching habits at first, but, nevertheless, he answered that

he also switches codes rather often. Tom thought that it is not always easy to differentiate what is actually code switching.

According to Tom, he uses many loan words in his speech. He stated that he frequently uses English words such as “random” when speaking in Finnish, since many of this sort of words do not have a good translation in Finnish. Tom adds that he could use some Finnish translations to these words in an ironic sense. As most used words or phrases for code switching, Nelly mentioned phrases such as “oh my gosh”, “oh my God” and English curse words. The two example phrases that Nelly mentioned can be heard quite often in the speech of Finnish people today, since these phrases seem to have become as normal as their Finnish counterparts. Regarding curse words, it might be that, cursing does not feel as strong in a language that is not one’s native language which could make it easier to use curse words in a foreign language. Minnie mentioned words related to academics and different theories, and words she wants to emphasize as her most used words or phrases for code switching. Tom stated that the question is hard to answer, since he does not really pay attention to the words that he uses for code switching. However, he mentioned words that do not have a good Finnish translation and certain academic or theory-related words. Minnie and Tom have both learned theoretical words in a foreign language during their academic studies. Thus, it is easier for them to use some of these words in a foreign language than to translate them in Finnish.

When asked about the point when the participants started to switch codes, the answers varied. Tom said that he has mixed languages in his speech as long as he can remember. He also gave the word “random” as an example and explained how he had learned it as a child:

Excerpt 1. Mä opin sen varmaan siitä, että meni jollain autolla pienenä, ja sitte siinä oli sillee, että ku paino siitä random niiku CD-soittimesta, nii sä et tavallaan ajatellu ees, että se ois englantia. Sä aattelit vaan, et okei random tarkoittaa vaan sitä, et se vaihtaa niitä randomilla, nii se on tavallaan se juttu, et se ei välttämättä ees tunnu eri kieleltä. (Tom)

(I probably learned it when we drove by car as a child, and then when you pressed “random” on a CD player, so then you didn’t even think that it is English, but you just thought that ‘okay, “random” just means that it changes it randomly’, so that’s the thing that it doesn’t even feel like a different language.)

It can be quite common that children learn this sort of words and not even think that they are actually in a different language, especially when a foreign word appears in the middle of familiar Finnish words. Minnie also gave an example from the time she was in primary school. She reckoned that her code switching begun during her years in primary school when she used phrases such as “so what”. Nelly, however, stated that she started to consciously switch codes during secondary school even though she might have been switching codes already earlier in her younger years.

Next the participants were asked more information on the company or the group in which they switch codes the most and the least. Nelly mentioned earlier in the interview that she has been starting to pay more attention to the company in which she switches codes as she indicates in Excerpt 2.

Excerpt 2. Mä oon ite nyt varsinki viimesen parin vuoden aikana kiinnittäny enemmän huomiota siihen, että kenen seurassa mä oon, et just jos mä oon kieltenopiskelijoiden seurassa, nii sit tuntuu, et sinne voi heittää enemmän enkuks jotain sanoja ja sanontoja. (Nelly)

(Especially during the past couple of years, I have paid more attention to the company I'm in, so if I'm with other language students, it feels like I can throw in more English words and expressions.)

Nelly also mentioned that she switches codes in the company of her brother, since he is also a skilled English speaker. Tom stated that his code switching happens mostly in a company that does it, too. As an example, Tom mentioned his international working environment. Minnie explained that her code switching does not necessarily depend on her company, but she mentioned her friends and her mom as examples of a company in which she switches codes. All of the participants stated that the amount and the quality of their code switching does vary depending on their company. Nelly and Minnie both said that this is the case especially when they use Swedish. Nelly explained that since the attitude towards Swedish is not always positive among Finns, she might sometimes avoid using Swedish when speaking in Finnish. In addition, Minnie said that even though it is compulsory to study Swedish in Finland, the level of understanding might not be high enough for some to understand Swedish. All the participants stated that they would not necessarily switch codes in a very formal situation where both sides speak Finnish. Nelly explained that if she would like to look competent, code switching would not be an ideal thing to do, since having to rely on another language could make a person seem incompetent. All the participant also mentioned that they would not switch codes if the other person's language level is not high enough.

Excerpt 3. Mun jotku kaverit, niil ei oo englannin taso kovin hyvä, et niillä on ollu oppimisvaikeuksii englannissa, nii sit mä sillon vältän käyttämästä englanninkielisii sanoj, koska mä en haluu asettaa toista siihen tilanteeseen, et sen tarttis olla hämmentyny tai kysyy et mitä mä tarkotin. (Nelly)

(Some of my friends, their level of English isn't very good, and they have had learning difficulties in English, so then I avoid using English words, because I don't want to put the other person in a position where they need to be confused or ask what I meant.)

As stated in Excerpt 3, Nelly does not want her conversation partner to feel uncomfortable which is why she avoids switching codes as a way to be polite. Thus, Nelly is taking her interlocutor's language competence into account. In an example provided by Alfonzetti (1998: 327-328), a person speaking in a different dialect than their interlocutor, starts to mix Italian words within their speech. This makes

following the conversation easier for the interlocutor who understands Italian better. Even though in the example presented by Alfonzetti (1998) switching codes is the key part when it comes to both parts being able to understand the conversation, in Nelly's situation it is in fact on the contrary: Nelly decreases the amount of her code switching so that the other person in the conversation does not have to feel confused. A similar situation occurs when using Swedish words in the middle of a Finnish sentence, as Minnie described earlier. Regarding code switching, taking the interlocutor's language competence into account is important in order to maintain clarity and intelligibility in the conversation. Tom additionally mentioned his English-speaking working environment as an example of a group in which he would not necessarily switch codes. However, he adds that he might use Finnish as a cipher if there is another Finn in the group. Based on these answers, the amount and the quality of the students' code switching varies depending on the company or the conversation partner. According to all of the participants, English is the most used language for code switching. Other languages used are for example Swedish, Spanish and Korean but to a much smaller extent.

Excerpt 4. Korean kielessä on niin paljon sellasia yksittäisiä sanoja ja käsitteitä, joille ei oo vastinetta muissa kielissä, nii sit niitä on pakko tavallaan käyttää. (Minnie)

(In the Korean language, there are so many single words and concepts that don't have an equivalent in other languages so then they sort of must be used.)

In Excerpt 4, Minnie described a situation in which code switching might happen quite easily. Languages usually have some distinct words or phrases that cannot be perfectly translated. In these situations, it might be easier for the speaker to switch codes than to explain a word in detail in another language. Tom thought that even though he could switch codes for example with Spanish words, he avoids doing it because it makes him feel "pretentious". However, he added that he might sometimes use, for example, a phrase in French that he has heard from another person even though he does not speak French himself.

The last topic related to participants' personal experiences with code switching is whether people are able to understand them if they use another language besides English for code switching. Tom stated that he "reads the room" so he knows if he is able to use another language in his speech and if the other people in the conversation understand him. Nelly answered similarly: she for example only uses Swedish if she knows that the other person has also studied Swedish. Minnie also added that with Swedish she might sometimes face situations where the other person does not completely understand what she means.



When dealing with code switching, context is an issue that has to be taken into account. Many of the code switching habits that the participants have are somehow related to context or the situation where the code switching is occurring. For example, when choosing a language for code switching, one has to observe the conditions in that particular situation. Everybody might not be able to understand a certain language which is why the words taken from that language cannot be used in the conversation. Nelly and Minnie both talked about using Swedish for switching codes: not everyone in today's Finland can actually understand the language even though it is compulsory for everybody to study it in Finland. In addition, people's attitudes towards the Swedish language can vary quite plenty which also affects the speaker's choice of choosing the language. As in the example provided by Piirainen-Marsh (2008), where the participants chose the language to use depending on which was easier in that context, the same can be noticed from the answers of the participants of this study. For example, when writing notes or assignments for university courses, the participants choose the language that is the most logical choice in that situation.

#### **4.3 Attitudes towards code switching**

Since for example social media has increased its popularity in recent years, and Finland has also become more and more multicultural, it is possible that this has affected Finns' code switching and the way Finns mix languages. There is also the question about how Finns generally view code switching, and what kind of attitudes they have towards the phenomenon. First of all, according to Minnie, code switching has, in fact, increased in today's Finland. According to her, the main reasons for this are simply globalization and social media. Nelly also thought that social media might have increased the amount of code switching. As an example, she mentioned some phrases or expressions which have started to spread for example from Twitter, a social network platform. However, Tom stated that even though code switching might have increased, he has not really noticed it much in practice. He then explained that he does in a way live in an international "bubble" which might make it hard to notice code switching among Finnish people. This might be the case for other language students as well: since language students usually face more than one language daily and they often have international connections, it might be difficult to observe the phenomenon of code switching from another perspective.

None of the participants thought that the general opinion on code switching is negative, but rather more neutral. According to Nelly, the general opinion on code switching in Finland is rather neutral, since many people switch codes on a daily basis. However, she has seen some criticism related to English students' code switching on Jodel, an app where people can write anonymous posts and comments on a local feed. According to Nelly, English students were criticised on mixing languages

in their speech which might seem arrogant or pretentious to some. Nelly also added that some people might see code switching as a way to destroy the Finnish language. The same concerns were mentioned by Leppänen and Nikula (2008). In their chapter, Leppänen and Nikula (2008: 9) provide examples from online forums and internet publications where people clearly express their concerns regarding the increase of the English language and how it has already affected the Finnish language. People are scared of losing the Finnish language in certain fields which is why they might be afraid of the spreading and increasing popularity of English (Leppänen and Nikula 2008: 10).

Nonetheless, Nelly thought the general opinion is quite neutral regardless of these criticisms. Minnie thought that people generally view code switching as neutral, since people might not actually pay attention to it that much. Neither Nelly nor Minnie have had any particular feedback on their code switching, whereas Tom said he has faced some feedback on his code switching habits (see Excerpt 5).

Excerpt 5. “Kivoja anglismeja” on ehkä enimmäkseen semmonen, et joku sanoo tai ”käytit jotain anglismia”. (Tom)

(“Nice anglicisms’ is probably mostly something that someone says or “you used some anglicism”).

Tom added that he has not really heard any feedback on his code switching recently, and he mostly spends time in a company where his code switching is not noted.

When spoken of the participants’ own opinions on code switching, all of them viewed it as a positive thing. Nelly stated that even though there are situations where she might avoid switching codes, it is still a positive thing, since it can improve language learning, for example. She also added that it might bring a feeling of togetherness in a group and also strengthen the group dynamics. The same was mentioned by Hinnenkamp (2003, cited in Nikula 2008: 57): code switching can be a way for a group to differentiate them from others, and this way the group in a way creates its own language that makes them different from everyone else. Minnie stated that code switching is definitely a positive thing, since it makes communication easier and better, and it also enhances linguistic competence. Tom also viewed code switching as a positive phenomenon, since with the help of switching codes, expressions can be made more descriptive and accurate, and then the speech also flows easier and faster without interruptions. As a negative side, Nelly mentioned that the Finnish language might be in danger to be slowly forgotten (see Excerpt 6).

Excerpt 6. Jos niiku kaikki vaan heittelee englanninkielisiä sanoja jo oikeesti joku monta sataa vuotta koko ajan suomen kieleen, nii eihän sitä tiiä, että paljonko se muuttuu tai sillee, että ehkä siinä pitää jonkin verran mieltä kans sitä kielen suojelupuolta. (Nelly)

(Like if everyone just keeps throwing in English words even about hundreds of years all the time to the Finnish language, no one knows how much it will change or so on, so maybe one also has to think about protecting the language.)

In addition, Tom said that a negative side could also be losing competence and forgetting words in one's native language. Nevertheless, the participants' overall attitude towards code switching is mainly positive.

## 5 CONCLUSION

Based on the interviews for this study and the participants' answers, new information regarding the code switching of English students in Finland was found. Firstly, one of the aims of this study was to discover more information about the amount of code switching that occurs in the speech of these three English students. It appeared that even though the amount might vary between the participants, all of them seem to switch codes relatively often. Even though it might have been difficult for the participants to estimate the amount of their own code switching, all of their answers conveyed that code switching does occur in their speech in various situations. However, the amount of code switching might vary depending on the situation, since in certain conditions the participants thought that it might not be appropriate or sensible to use words from a different language.

With the second research question, I aimed at finding out which languages are used for switching codes, and, additionally, what is the dominant language when it comes to code switching. Even though the dominant language was English with all the participants, multiple other languages were also mentioned. For two participants, Swedish was used for code switching in addition to English. Languages such as Spanish, French and Korean were also mentioned. Of course, Finnish is also used in code switching situations since one of the participants mentioned that Finnish could actually work as a cipher between Finns in an English-speaking community. Choosing the language for code switching does not always depend on the competence of this particular language, since the participants might choose a language that they do not speak fluently, or even a language that they have never actually studied. However, English, a language that the participants used daily in addition to their native language, was the most dominant language considering code switching.

The second part of the study dealt with issues regarding the attitudes that the students have towards code switching. With the last research question in particular, I strived to find out more detailed information on how the participants view code switching as a phenomenon. The participants' answers were consistent: code switching is viewed as a positive phenomenon. Multiple pros were mentioned: enhancing language skills, bringing the feeling of belonging in a group, improving the quality of a conversation and so on. Cons were also mentioned, such as threatening the Finnish language and forgetting words in one's own native language. Even though some of the participants might have faced criticism regarding their code switching, they definitely view it as a positive thing.

All in all, code switching does occur in the speech of these English students with English being the dominant language regardless of their major or the languages they have studied, and the attitude towards code switching is rather positive. However, in this study the opinions and experiences were

gathered from three English students which means the results of this study cannot be viewed as a general opinion among all English students. Although code switching has been studied from various different perspectives, there might not be enough information on how and to what extent code switching occurs in the speech of Finnish-speaking people. Especially the code switching of language students and language learners could be studied even further.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Interview questions in Finnish

#### Yleiset kysymykset

1. Mitä opiskelet pääaineenasi? Onko sinulla sivuaineita, ja jos on, mitä?
2. Mikä on äidinkielesi, ja mitä muita kieliä puhut?
3. Mitä kieliä käytät päivittäin?
  - 3.1 Mitä kieliä käytät kurssimuistiinpanojen tai -tehtävien tekemiseen?
  - 3.2 Mitä kieliä käytät viihteestä nauttimiseen? (TV, Internet jne.)
  - 3.3 Mitä kieliä käytät kommunikoidessasi ystäväsi ja perheesi kanssa? (kasvokkain, netissä jne.)

#### Kokemuksia koodinvaihdosta

4. Sekoitatko usein kieliä puheessasi?
  - 4.1 Jos sekoitat, mitkä ovat joitakin useimmiten koodinvaihtoon käyttämiäsi sanoja?
5. Oletko aina sekoittanut kieliä puheessasi? Jos et, milloin tämä alkoi?
6. Missä seurassa sekoitat kieliä puheessasi eniten?
  - 6.1 Vaihtelee koodinvaihdon määrä tai laatu riippuen seurastasi? (Kanssaopiskelijat, eri alalla olevat kaverit, perhe...)
  - 6.2 Missä seurassa et sekoittaisi kieliä puheessasi?
7. Mitä kieltä käytät eniten koodinvaihtoon?
8. Käytätkö joitain muita kieliä koodinvaihtoon? Jos käytät, mitä muita kieliä?
9. Jos käytät koodinvaihtoon muuta kieltä kuin englantia, ymmärtävätkö ihmiset sinua?

#### Mielipiteet ja asenteet koodinvaihtoa kohtaan

10. Onko koodinvaihto mielestäsi lisääntynyt kielten opiskelijoiden keskuudessa viime vuosien aikana?
11. Onko koodinvaihto mielestäsi lisääntynyt muiden ihmisten kuin kielten opiskelijoiden keskuudessa lähivuosina?
  - 11.1 Jos on, mikä on mielestäsi syy tähän?



12. Oletko koskaan saanut palautetta koodinvaihdostasi? Jos olet, oliko palaute positiivista, negatiivista vai neutraalia?
  - 12.1 Jos palaute oli negatiivista, onko se vaikuttanut koodinvaihtotapoihisi tai -mielipiteisiisi?
13. Onko yleinen mielipide koodinvaihdosta enemmän positiivinen, negatiivinen vai neutraali?
14. Mitkä ovat omat mielipiteesi koodinvaihdosta? Ovatko ne positiivisia, negatiivia vai neutraaleja?
15. Mitkä ovat koodinvaihdon edut ja haitat, jos niitä on?

## **Appendix 2: Interview questions in English**

### General questions

1. What do you study as your major? Do you have any minors and if so, what?
2. What is your native language, and what other languages do you speak?
3. What languages do you use daily?
  - 3.1 What languages do you use for course notes or assignments?
  - 3.2 What languages do you use for entertainment purposes? (TV, Internet etc.)
  - 3.3 What languages do you use when communicating with your friends and/or family? (face-to-face, online etc.)

### Personal Experiences with Code Switching

4. Do you mix languages in your speech?
  - 4.1 If so, what are some of the most common words you use for code switching?
5. If you mix languages in your speech, have you always done that? If not, when did it start?
6. In which company do you mix languages in your speech the most?
  - 5.1 Does the amount or quality of the code switching vary depending on your company? (Fellow students, friends who are not in the same field, family...)
  - 5.2 In which company would you not mix languages in your speech?
7. What language do you use the most for code switching?
8. Do you use any other languages for code switching? If so, what other languages?
9. If you use any other language than English for code switching, are people able to understand you?

## Opinions and Attitudes Towards Code Switching

10. In your opinion, has the amount of code switching increased among language students during these past years?
11. In your opinion, has the amount of code switching increased among other people apart from language students during these past years?
  - 11.1 If so, what do you think is the reason for this?
12. Have you ever received feedback on your code switching? If so, was the feedback positive, negative or neutral?
  - 12.1 If the feedback was negative, has it affected your code switching habits or opinions?
13. Is the general opinion on code switching more positive, negative or neutral?
14. What are your own opinions towards code switching? Are they positive, negative or neutral?
15. What are the pros and cons of code switching, if there are any?