

**UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ**

**BILINGUAL PRACTICES IN AN ONLINE COMMUNITY:**

**Code-switching and language mixing in community and identity  
construction at [www.godspeed.fi](http://www.godspeed.fi)**

**A Pro Gradu Thesis in English**

**by**

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BILINGUAL PRACTICES IN AN ONLINE COMMUNITY: Code-switching and language mixing in community and identity construction at [www.godspeed.fi](http://www.godspeed.fi)

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Nuorten harrastusten ja elämäntyylien globalistumisen myötä tutkimus kielen vaihtelun ilmiöistä Suomessa on tarpeellista. Tässä tutkielmassa tarkastellaan suomen ja englannin kieleen liittyviä kaksikielisiä käytänteitä suomalaisten nuorten ylläpitämällä keskustelufoorumilla, joka toimii osana internetsivustoa [www.godspeed.fi](http://www.godspeed.fi). Nuoret muodostavat verkkoyhteisön, joka koostuu kristityistä extremelajien harrastajista. Tarkoituksena on tutkia suomen ja englannin kielen välisen koodinvaihdon ja kielten sekoittamisen funktioita verkkoyhteisön ja elämäntyyllisten identiteettien rakentamisen keinoina. Tutkielma kuuluu osana Suomen Akatemian sekä Helsingin ja Jyväskylän yliopistojen rahoittamaan Englannin kielen vaihtelun, kontaktien ja muutoksen huippututkimusyksikköön (VARIENG).

Tutkielma on luonteeltaan sosiolingvistinen ja tutkimusaineistoa lähestyttiin diskurssianalyysin keinoin. Aineisto koostuu keskustelufoorumien viestiketjuista, jotka on koottu ajalta elokuu 2006 - toukokuu 2007. Vuorovaikutuksen pääkielenä käytetään suomea, mutta suurimmassa osassa viestiketjuista esiintyy englanninkielisiä elementtejä. Koodinvaihtoa ja kielten sekoittamista tutkittiin kahdella analyysin tasolla. Ensimmäisellä tasolla tarkasteltiin yhteisön jäsenten välistä kaksikielistä kommunikaatiota interaktiivisessa verkkotoiminnassa. Eri toimintojen tavoitteet liittyivät yhteisöllisyyden rakentamiseen. Toisella tasolla tarkasteltiin laajempia elämäntyyliin liittyviä diskursseja, joiden sisällä rakennettiin sekä yksilöllisiä että sosiaalisia identiteettejä englannin kielen avulla. Diskurssit liittyivät kristillisyyteen, extremeurheiluun ja nuorisokulttuuriin. Ne näyttäytyivät myös hybrideinä ja ilmensivät monimuotoisia nuoren kristityn extremelajien harrastajan identiteettejä.

Tutkimus osoitti, että tässä verkkoyhteisössä suomalaiset nuoret käyttävät englannin kieltä luovalla tavalla kielellisenä ja kommunikatiivisena resurssina. Koodinvaihto saa merkityksensä tietyissä vuorovaikutustilanteissa ja konteksteissa paikallisesti, kuten erilaisissa tervehdyksissä, toivotuksissa, anteeksipyyntöissä, huudahduksissa, iskulauseissa ja lopetussanoissa. Sitä käytetään myös raamatunjakeiden ja lauluryrikoiden siteeraamiseen. Kielten sekoittaminen taas on merkityksellistä kokonaisuutena ja sitä käytetään tyyllillisenä keinona extremelajien erityissanastossa sekä musiikillisessa ja teknologisessa terminologiassa. Molempia kielen vaihtelun ilmiöitä esiintyi kummallakin analyysin tasolla. Yleisesti ottaen koodinvaihdossa noudatettiin englannin kielen morfologiaa ja ortografiaa, kun taas kielten sekoittamisessa englannin sanoja mukautettiin suomen kieleen käyttäjien omien tarkoitusten mukaisesti.

Asiasanat: bilingual practices, online community, identity, discourse analysis

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalisation, people can interact, share their thoughts and experiences with each other in electronic environments. Hence, maintaining social networks, communities and subcultures is possible through connections to the Internet. As a case in point, Internet discussion forums provide a place for encountering other like-minded people, communicating and finally setting up online communities. One online community, including young Finnish people who share a Christian worldview and a keen interest in extreme sports, is in the focus of this study. The community can be described as hybrid in many ways. First of all, the members combine seemingly two very different domains in their lives: sports and their personal faith. Second, they meet each other both in an Internet discussion forum and in 'real life' get-togethers. Finally, their ways of communicating comprise very creative use of bilingual practices: in addition to Finnish, their mother tongue, they use English as a communicative resource for various purposes.

In present-day Finland, the uses of English are diverse: the global trends of English have effectively spread in many professional and social fields. The role of the English language is evident within educational, media and business settings as well as in recreational activities (Leppänen and Nikula 2007). Although English does not have the status of an official language in Finland, it is increasingly used for communication in the national sphere. For example, some Finnish companies, such as Nokia, use English for their internal communication (Pahta 2004: 37). Moreover, English has had a particularly strong impact on the language use of young Finnish people, giving rise to new, inventive ways of using the language alongside Finnish. In general terms, young Finns have a good command of English since nearly everyone studies it as their first foreign language in school. However, English is not learned exclusively in school but in other social spheres as well, within recreational groups sharing common interests, for instance. The young can also easily have an access to English via television, the Internet and electronic games.

Characteristic ways of using language in in-group situations are often used to express group membership. Young people generally have various social and cultural

connections which provide them with ‘globally available resources’ (Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulou 2003: 2-3). These resources can then be exploited and recontextualised at the local level of young people’s mutual interaction. Similarly, the English language that young Finns have in their linguistic repertoire draws on different global, subcultural and identity-related meanings. The language is used in emblematic and creative ways both in reference to certain subcultures and in order to express various aspects of young people’s particular ways of being, their values and interests (Leppänen 2007: 150, Preisler 1999: 247). For example, code-switching, an alternating use of two languages, may be used for expressing certain social identities or shared ideologies within a community (Auer 2005: 404). A distinctive way of speaking can also help to express one’s origins. Thus, individual members’ speech is affected by their social or cultural backgrounds. Variation in speech is particularly clear in informal settings and furthermore, “well represented in discussion groups on the Internet”. (Crystal 2004: 144-145.)

On the whole, computer-mediated communication (CMC) provides various possibilities for interaction and the particular electronic environments have an effect on the ways in which meanings and identities are created and recreated by linguistic variation. Thus, CMC can be seen as a site for socio-cultural practice with various global and local manifestations and contexts, which have to be taken into account when observing and analysing detailed communicative events in electronic environments. (Georgakopoulou 2006: 554-555.) Furthermore, studying the uses of English in non-Anglophone contexts is meaningful in terms of their impact on the spread of the English language in general (Leppänen and Nikula 2007).

In this study, my aim is to examine the bilingual practices involving the use of code-switching and language mixing from Finnish to English in the interaction of an Internet discussion forum participants at [www.godspeed.fi](http://www.godspeed.fi). The discussion forum is Finland-based and it is meant for Christians interested in extreme sports. The group can be considered as forming an online community and I intend to pay attention to the specific social and cultural aspects of the interaction within this online community. I analyse the ways in which the forum members use English as a meaningful communicative resource in interactive online activities for constructing their community. In addition, I examine the ways in which individual and social

identities are constructed within lifestyle discourses of Christianity, extreme sports and youth culture. Hence, the bilingual practices are examined from two perspectives including first, the construction of community and second, the construction of identities.

The study is part of the English in Finland project of VARIENG, the Research Unit for Variation, Contacts and Change in English, funded in the national Centres of Excellences program by the Academy of Finland for 2006-2011. It is a shared project by the University of Helsinki and the University of Jyväskylä. (VARIENG 2007.) In line with VARIENG's research interests, this study is motivated by the evidently significant role of English in Finland: it is relevant to study the meanings and functions of English since the language is an important communicative resource in various social contexts in Finland and within youth groups in particular. By paying attention to one group of young Finns, I am able to examine the bilingual interaction, lifestyles and expressions of social identities within this specific community. The study is carried out from a sociolinguistic and discourse-analytic perspective at the intersection of language alternation phenomena, youth cultures, extreme sports and Christianity, computer-mediated communication and the uses of English in Finnish contexts. All of these fields can be associated with the phenomenon of globalisation which, in this study, manifests itself in various forms within the community of Christians interested in extreme sports.

The structure of the thesis is as follows: Chapters 2-5 deal with the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter 2 discusses the uses of English in Finnish society and especially among young people. Chapter 3 examines bilingual practices, most importantly definitions and theories of code-switching and other language alternation phenomena. Aspects of lifestyles and identities in youth cultures are examined in chapter 4, the emphasis being on the specific cultures concerning this study: Christianity and extreme sports. Also the discourse-analytic view to studying identities is presented. The more field-specific framework of computer-mediated discourse analysis is defined in chapter 5, paying attention to online communities, in particular. Chapter 6 presents the research design of the study. Chapter 7 consists of the analysis of the data. Finally, the findings are discussed, the evaluation of the study presented and conclusions drawn in chapter 8.



## 2 ENGLISH IN FINLAND

In this chapter, the role of English in Finland is discussed in relation to education, media and especially youth groups whose members might have various social and cultural motifs for using the language.

The widespread use of English in Finland is linked with the development of English into global language. In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century English had only about five million speakers. Gradually, English has moved from the use of predominantly one nation to the status of a world language. At the same time, it has become a property of all its users. (Moore and Varantola 2005: 134.) This development is closely related to the rise of the British Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and thereafter, to “the rise of the US in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a superpower that has spread the English language alongside its economic, technological and cultural influence” (Graddol 2000: 8). In order to reach such a status, a language has to be adopted by countries where it is not used as a mother tongue. The language often establishes a special role among particular communities in these countries. (Crystal 2004: 4.) Finland can be considered a model example of a country where a language other than the native languages has gained a special status. Besides Finnish, English is the most widely known language in Finland with the proportion of 60% of Finns knowing the language. It is followed by Swedish, the second national language of Finland, which is known by 38% of Finns. (Eurobarometer 2005: 4.)

In essence, ability to use more than one language is called bilingualism or multilingualism. The different languages, or codes, may be used in differing settings and for multiple purposes. For example, one language might be spoken at home, another used for workplace communication, etc. Bi- or multilingual people do not necessarily have equal skills in all the languages in their linguistic repertoire, yet switching from one language to another is natural. (Wardhaugh 2006: 96.)

In Finland, English has generally been regarded as having a status of a foreign language which is not used by Finns for their mutual communication. Thus, as far as English is concerned, the notion of bilingual interaction has not been applicable to

Finnish contexts. However, at present most Finns encounter English regularly through the media, education or working life. (Leppänen 2007: 149.) To some extent, these areas in the Finnish society operate with the two languages and therefore certain people involved in them could be defined as bilinguals. In addition to Finnish, English has become a linguistic resource in these people's everyday lives.

Education plays a major role in the English language proficiency of Finnish people. Crystal's (2004: 4) description of a situation where "a language can be made a priority in a country's foreign-language teaching, even though this language has no official status" is well applicable to Finland. Due to the current educational system, young Finnish people have good skills in English as well as in the other foreign languages. In comparison to the situation at the beginning of the 1970s, the English proficiency of 14-year-old Finnish pupils has recognisably improved by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Latomaa and Nuolijärvi 2005: 190).

Most pupils begin to study their first foreign language (A1 language) in the third grade. Within the nine-year comprehensive school education, it is, however, possible to start even earlier. (Taavitsainen and Pahta 2003: 6.) After the ninth grade, most Finns continue to either upper secondary education or vocational education, in which studying A1 language continues another three years. As shown in Table 1, many Finnish pupils study English as their first foreign language. Both in grades 7-9 and in upper secondary education, the percentage is more than 99. The lower percentage in grades 1-6 is explained by the fact that studying the foreign language does not usually start until the third grade. All in all, the average young Finn has studied English for ten years when graduating from an upper secondary or a vocational school.

Table 1. Proportion of pupils studying English (Tilastokeskus 2005a, 2005b, 2005c)

Grades 1-6 (comprehensive school)	Grades 7-9 (comprehensive school)	Upper secondary education
68.8	99.2	99.7

In addition to school environment, English is learned in informal contexts, too. For example, the English language is visible and audible in television and cinema. TV-

programmes and films are shown with Finnish subtitles and therefore the original voices are not dubbed. In all likelihood, this policy has helped many Finns to learn English in their leisure time. Advertisements in certain sectors also make use of the English language. Moore and Varantola (2005: 135) suggest that this follows from the 'glamorous foreign factor': it is believed that the use of English makes the advertised products or their producers look more attractive and this way, the products are assumed to sell better. In coining new company or product names, English is sometimes used very inventively, other times the new words might elicit unintentional associations. Finnish hair salons provide examples of both successful company names in English, HairStory being a case in point, and more or less ambiguous names, such as Head Makers (Moore and Varantola: *ibid.*).

Many professional fields embrace the use of English jargon, information technology (IT) in particular. This may be the result of global connections of IT companies, and in any case the use of IT English "has created an information-age class or generation distinction, which is evident in Finland" (Moore and Varantola 2005: 137). Young and educated Finns are therefore distinguished from the older generation due to their language and computer skills. It has been estimated that in the future English will continue to affect the language of special fields in the Finnish society. The effects will be seen especially in the fields of science and technology. (Nuolijärvi 2005: 297.) In addition, English is widely used in the field of professional sports (Chesterman 2005: 118-119). Thus, sports cultures in Finland reflecting international contexts may use English for their own purposes. This point becomes apparent in this study as English is drawn on in the specific professional jargon of extreme sports.

Furthermore, young people are considered to have positive attitudes towards the use of English in general. As stated by Taavitsainen and Pahta (2003: 5), English has a significant role in Finland especially in youth culture and pop music, and code-switching is often encountered in youth language. As young Finns' social life may be connected to wider cultural contexts, they are able to use English within their local Finnish settings. The young might adopt feasible English words or phrases and mix them with Finnish, for instance. Moreover, the young do not use only established jargon or formulaic expressions but they creatively exploit the possibilities of the two

languages. Androutsopoulos (2006b: 541), who studied diasporic Internet sites and discussion forums, states in relation to the uses of non-native English that

rather than drawing on undifferentiated 'global English', forum users selectively appropriate social styles of English from the global flow of media discourse. In this respect, they converge with wider youth cultural practices---

However, this does not mean that the relevance of young Finns' mother tongue would be fading. The two languages available to the Finnish youth are exploited as meaningful resources with which they can "negotiate their meanings and identities and a sense of belonging". (Leppänen 2007: 166-167). Similarly, Preisler's (1999: 247) notion called 'English from below', used in a context of a country where English is not a national language, refers to the uses of English that "symbolise subcultural identity or affiliation, and peer group solidarity". Leppänen and Nikula (2007) point out that English in Finland is not used for indexing ethnicity as in most bilingual settings, but for communicative purposes in local settings related to recreational activities of particular groups, for instance.

### **3 BILINGUAL PRACTICES**

The view of languages as bounded linguistic systems related to whole, bounded communities has been increasingly questioned in bilingualism research (Heller 2007: 11). Instead, the focus is on a set of bilingual practices which draw on various linguistic resources. These resources have generally been classified into distinct linguistic systems. However, people use and make sense of diverse linguistic resources under specific social situations which set limits but also enable the production of new practices. (Heller 2007: 15.) In this chapter, language alternation phenomena and ways of studying them are discussed. Bilingual speakers are seen to draw on various linguistic resources in different contexts of use. Bilingualism is also discussed in relation to social identities. Finally, earlier research concerning language alternation in electronic environments is presented.

#### **3.1 Code-switching**

A significant language contact phenomenon in bilingualism research is code-switching, often defined as “the alternative use by bilinguals of two or more languages in the same conversation” (Milroy and Muysken 1995: 7). Research on code-switching has been carried out since the 1950s, although it did not start quite as expansively as the studies on borrowing, interference and bilingualism in general. Code-switching was not at first recognised as a relevant language phenomenon but seen as “deficient knowledge of language, a grammarless mixture of two codes” (Milroy and Muysken 1995: 9). Code-switching studies expanded in the 1970s and started to develop into a field of research in its own right. In addition, they began to focus on stable bilingual communities. (Milroy and Muysken 1995: 8-9, Kovačs 2001: 62.)

Today, research on code-switching has grown into two directions covering sociolinguistic and structural approaches. Sociolinguistic research includes finding out the discourse functions of code-switching in interaction. Structural studies, for their part, have been carried out from the viewpoint of grammar, paying attention to

morphological and syntactical restrictions in particular. Nonetheless, structural and sociolinguistic approaches do not contradict but complement each other: sociolinguists may build on the findings on the structural features of code-switching when examining why and how bilinguals switch code. (Boztepe 2003: 3.)

In their influential sociolinguistic research, Blom and Gumperz (1972) recognised two different kinds of code-switching: situational and metaphorical. This distinction sought to explain the ways in which bilingual speakers draw on linguistic resources across domain boundaries (Heller 2007: 12). The definition of situational code-switching refers to switches according to the social context. The participants use one code in one situation and another in a different situation. Metaphorical code-switching, on the other hand, occurs when particular kinds of topics are discussed. Participants of a conversation may conform to the social norms of a certain communicative event, thus expressing their relationship and communicating meanings by switching code. (Blom and Gumperz 1972: 424-425, Gumperz 1982: 60-61.)

Furthermore, it has been emphasised that “code-switching is essentially a conversation activity” and has to be analysed in its conversational context (Li Wei 2005a: 276). Within the framework of code-alternation in conversation introduced and developed by Auer (1995: 123, 1999) the context of interaction and the sequential order of utterances are taken into account when interpreting meanings. Code-alternation is treated as a contextualisation cue. Gumperz (1982: 131, emphasis original) defines contextualisation cues as “the means by which speakers signal and listeners interpret what the activity is, how semantic content is to be understood and *how* each sentence relates to what precedes or follows”. Contextualisation cues differ from lexical items in that they do not have a referential or decontextualised meaning (Auer 1995: 123). Consequently, the use of contextualisation cues needs to be studied in the dynamic process of an ongoing interaction in which meanings are conveyed.

Some conversational activities and aspects of context have been identified in which speakers typically code-switch. The list is not an all-embracing one but it offers examples of the situations where code-switching might occur. These include, among

others, speech genre, speech act, mood, topic, participants' roles and relationships, and modality. (Auer 1995: 123.)

### **3.1.1 Code-switching vs. borrowing**

The distinction between code-switching and borrowing has been theorised a lot. The reason for this, according to Gardner-Chloros (1995: 73), is the fact that most bilingual interaction involves instances of both code-switching and borrowing. In addition, single-word switching might easily be mixed with borrowing. This leads to the conclusion that the difference between code-switching and borrowing is by no means straightforward, and there has been a debate over whether it is even necessary to distinguish between the two phenomena. Gumperz (1982: 66) draws the distinction between them and says that the borrowed elements are treated as part of the borrowing language since they adapt to its morphology and syntax. Code-switching, in contrast, “relies on the meaningful juxtaposition of what speakers must consciously or subconsciously process as strings formed according to the internal rules of *two distinct grammatical systems*” (Gumperz 1982: 66, emphasis original).

However, there are differing views. Lauttamus (1991: 43) sees that code-switching and borrowing are “two opposite poles on a (structural) linguistic continuum”. Myers-Scotton (1993: 163) also argues that they belong to same developmental continuum and are therefore related phenomena. She says that code-switched and borrowed forms are produced much in the same way. However, borrowed elements become an established part of the mental lexicon of the receiving language and therefore a speaker has in-built knowledge of the word. The most dependable way to distinguish between code-switched and borrowed forms is to rely on their frequency of occurrence and not base the distinction on the level of phonological, morphological or syntactic integration (Myers-Scotton 1993: 163-165). Additionally, single-word insertional and multiple-word alternational elements can be seen as two different forms of code-switching, and there is no need to define them as separate processes (Boztepe 2003: 6).

Boztepe (2003: 8) points out that “there are more similarities than differences between the two concepts”. Thus, he does not regard the distinction as the primary concern in code-switching research, especially when wanting to understand code-switching as a social and cultural phenomenon.

### **3.1.2 Continuum of language alternation phenomena**

The abundance of research in the field of bilingualism has enabled Auer (1999) to develop a dynamic typology for studying language alternation phenomena. The typological approach is illustrated with a continuum including three cases of language alternation. The cases are code-switching (CS), language mixing (LM) and fused lects (FLs). Code-switching establishes the pragmatic pole and fused lects define the grammatical pole of the continuum. This means that code-switching can be used creatively as a linguistic resource whereas fused lects comprise structural regularities. Language mixing is placed between the two poles. Auer (1999) investigated the transitions from CS to LM and from LM to FLs. He argues that language use in bilingual communities develops from CS via LM to FLs. However, this is not an inevitable progress; the use of language may stabilise in any point of the continuum. (Auer 1999: 329.)

Auer (1999: 309-312) defines those instances of language alternation as code-switching which are locally meaningful to the participants of an interaction. The speakers orient towards one language at a time and therefore it is possible to recognise the code used at one particular moment. Code-switching can have a discourse-related or participant-related function, thus indexing an aspect of the sociolinguistic situation or a feature of the speaker, e.g. his or her language preference. Discourse-related switching is about contextualising linguistic activities and therefore, it is a way of creating interactional meanings. Furthermore, by using different codes participants can signal a change in footing and thus orient towards the codes as symbols of ‘otherness’.

In addition to alternational code-switching, there is also an insertional type of switching in which “a content word (noun, verb, rarely adjective/adverb) is inserted



into a surrounding passage in the other language” (Auer 1999: 314). Insertional code-switching functions in the same way as the alternational type in consideration of its local, interactional meaning. The speakers orient towards the separate codes by attaching an interactional meaning to them. Additionally, insertions can be either integrated in terms of morphology and syntax or they may preserve their grammatical form. The communicative function of insertions remains the same regardless of whether the switch is integrated or not. (Auer *ibid.*)

Language mixing differs from code-switching in that it is meaningful as whole or as a recurrent pattern. When language mixing occurs it is difficult to recognise which one of the alternating languages is the ultimate language of interaction. Language mixing cannot be interpreted in terms of a change of footing, nor to be seen as an expression of a speaker’s language preferences. Hence, the continuous juxtaposition of languages does not have a local meaning and it cannot be interpreted as code-switching.<sup>1</sup> (Auer 1999: 310, 314-315.) Language mixing, too, includes an insertional type even though the distinction between alternational and insertional is sometimes difficult to establish. Insertions are not restricted to involving single lexical words, such as verbs or nouns, but they may comprise noun phrases or mere stems as well. (Auer 1999: 315-317.)

The meaning of language mixing might be of a social kind, indicating a group identity. According to Auer (1999: 318) this can be interpreted by, for example, the folk names of the language varieties exploiting language mixing. In addition, people’s strong attitudes, positive or negative, towards language mixing can be considered as an indication of the identity-related function of the phenomenon.

The notion of fused lects refers to a grammatical amalgamation of two language varieties or languages. In consequence, fused lects differ from language mixing expressly at the level of grammar. As the ‘function-form relationships’ become stabilised, the linguistic variation that is involved in language mixing does not occur in fused lects. This, in turn, means simplification of the structures. However, new

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<sup>1</sup> Also in his earlier research, Auer (1998:15-16) distinguished code-mixing from code-switching and described it as containing “numerous and frequent cases of alternation between two languages” which cannot be interpreted as having discourse-related or participant-related functions.

structures may emerge as a result of combining elements from two languages or varieties. (Auer 1999: 321.)

### **3.2 Bilingual practices as a means of expressing social identities**

Bilingual speakers have an access to a multiplicity of linguistic resources for the negotiation of identity. They can draw on the forms of two languages or their hybrid forms. Additionally, they can move within more than one cultural framework, make interpretations and position themselves and others to the activities in which they are engaged. When analysing social identities, one needs to pay attention to how, when and why certain individuals are seen as belonging to particular groups. (Bailey 2007: 257-258.)

Gumperz (1982) has introduced the distinction between ‘we/they-code’ where one language is used for expressing in-group solidarity (‘we-code’) and another language is reserved for out-group interaction (‘they-code’). Often, the distinction has been applied to a bilingual community where the language of the ethnic minority is seen to serve the function of a ‘we-code’ and the majority’s language in the society is considered as a ‘they-code’ (Sebba and Wootton 1998: 262). This relationship between a particular language and an extralinguistic context is by no means a definitive but rather a symbolic one (Gumperz 1982: 66). After all, language, identity and community are all complex phenomena and should be treated accordingly.

A researcher cannot assume one-to-one relationship between a social identity and a particular style or language. Sebba and Wootton (1998) recognised this in their study of London English - Jamaican English code-switching. They report as follows:

Social identities are made manifest through *talk*, not just through the actual language or ‘code’ used but also through the content and context. The language or languages of an utterance may be relevant to the social identity evoked --- or may not be. (Sebba and Wootton 1998: 284, emphasis original.)

Hence, when carrying out sociolinguistic research one has to take into account the social context of a particular interactive event and topics discussed. It has been

pointed out that instead of analysing correlation between social structures and linguistic variables, sociolinguistic research on code-switching has begun to focus on “interactional exchanges in which a sociolinguistic style --- is employed to claim/ascribe membership in a particular group” (Auer 2005: 404).

This view becomes evident in ‘identities in talk’ approach by Antaki and Widdicombe (1998: 2), who see that identity is actively constructed in interaction; group membership might be ascribed, rejected, displayed or ignored within discourse. Identities are therefore constructed as a goal in itself or for reaching some other purposes. Antaki and Widdicombe (1998: 3) present principles for analysing identity. The principles are derived from the conversation analytic framework and they involve some important notions about identity. For instance, Antaki and Widdicombe (1998: 3-6) see that identity can be viewed as a category with a range of related characteristics, that the participants make specific identities relevant in certain interactive events, and that the importance of an identity lies in its significance in the interaction.

Auer (2005: 405) suggests that a starting point for a study that aims at revealing social identities has to be carried out against the hypothesis that language alternation functions solely as a contextualisation cue in discourse. Thus, one has to presume that the participants orient themselves to the interaction in a given situation, make interpretations of it and juxtapose the two languages for contextualising their interaction. Li Wei (2005b: 382) points out that it is the analyst’s task to “demonstrate how such things as identity, attitude and relationship are presented, understood, accepted, rejected, or changed in the process of interaction”. An option for demonstrating these is to analyse identities from a performance perspective (Bauman 2000, Blommaert 2005, see chapter 4.4).

### **3.3 Bilingual practices in computer-mediated communication**

Bi- or multilingual language use occurs in various forms in different electronic computer-mediated sites: in edited web pages including everything from news to entertainment, and in discussion groups and chat-rooms which are contributed by

users (Androutsopoulos 2006b: 524). The functions of bilingual language use in computer-mediated communication have not been extensively researched but bilingual practices are undoubtedly used for achieving communicative goals in the virtual world, too. Herring (2001: 622) remarks that users' social realities are involved in computer-mediated discourse, despite the communication taking place through 'impersonal' machines. For example, discourse topic and activity type (e.g. greeting, exchange of information, 'flaming') are sources of linguistic variation. Variation is therefore socially motivated and the purpose of the communication plays a significant role in shaping the ways in which language is used. Language alternation, in addition to various other linguistic and symbolic means, can be viewed as a significant resource for the construction of communities and identities in electronic environments.

In relation to studying language alternation in electronic environments, Lam (2004) provides one example. She analysed how code-switching between English and romanised Cantonese was used to index social alignments and cultural assumptions of the participants in an Internet chat room, and the role of code-switching in building a collective ethnic identity. Two Chinese students living in the US constructed "ethnic identifications with other young people of Chinese descent around the world" through new ways of using English in electronic environment (Lam 2004: 59).

Siebenhaar (2006) studied language variation in Swiss IRC channels by using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The codes in focus in his research were standard German and Swiss-German dialects. He found out that chatters tend to use code-switching "at the edge of an interaction sequence", that is in opening and closing moves, especially salutations and greetings were expressed in dialect (Siebenhaar 2006: 499). He remarks that computer-mediated communication may have an effect on language change both on the level of vocabulary and the language variety chosen. Moreover, it is suggested that users in IRC negotiate the functions of either standard or dialect varieties. (Siebenhaar 2006: 501-502.)

According to Androutsopoulos (2006b: 522) "there is ample evidence --- that computer-mediated discourse is a site for interactionally meaningful use of language

alternation, even in the absence of established offline relationships”. In a study of multilingual, German-based diaspora websites, Androutsopoulos (2006b: 540-542) found out that the uses of migrant languages were different in edited sections of the websites and discussion forums. For commercial reasons, users’ home languages were used only in emblematic ways in the edited sections whereas discussion forums included code-switching between German and home languages. In addition, non-native English was used throughout the websites.

All in all, it is evident that bilingual practices do not exist in isolation but they emerge from broader cultural settings, also in electronic environments. Thus, these settings should be taken into account in the analysis of bilingual language use in CMC. This way, the macro-level phenomena can be illustrated when applying micro-level methods to CMC data (Herring 2004: 338).

## **4 LIFESTYLES AND IDENTITIES IN YOUTH CULTURES**

Young people are active in producing cultural practices: they express themselves with music, dance, videos, writings, etc. They are therefore interested in style, aesthetics of one's body and the subcultural symbols with which one can express desired identities. (Fornäs 1998: 256.) The notions of culture and youth, and their expressions in lifestyles will be elaborated in this chapter. In addition, Christianity and extreme sports, the two specific cultures or lifestyles of this study are described. They form the socio-cultural, macro-level contexts of communication and sites for construction of identities of the participants in the Internet discussion forum. Christianity and extreme sports, in addition to the more general youth culture, represent also the broader discourses that shape language use at local levels. (Maybin 2000: 197.) Hence, the discourse-analytic approach to study identities within these broader discourses is presented at the end of this chapter.

### **4.1 Creating cultural and lifestyle-related meanings**

The term 'culture' can be defined as one aspect in human interaction that is about creating meanings with symbols. Symbols are used for production of styles and communicative actions. They intermediate shared meanings and associations between individuals. However, although culture includes shared knowledge, values, codes and experiences, these do not have to be shared by every single member of a particular culture. In other words, what are essentially shared, are not solitary thoughts but the general linguistic codes with which one's thoughts are expressed. Thus, the relationship between culture and communication is extremely close and therefore, one could view culture as communication of symbolic forms and meanings. (Fornäs 1998: 167-171.)

Present youth studies emphasise cultural aspects in the definition of youth. This implies that young people's widely diverse cultural experiences and their means of expressing them have to be paid attention to. It is not enough to base the construction of 'youth' solely on age or social institutions, such as school. (Androutsopoulos and

Georgakopoulou 2003: 2.) One way of studying the social category of ‘youth’ is to examine the communicative and semiotic resources with which youth is constructed and negotiated in discourse. (Leppänen 2007: 151).

According to theories of youth styles, the styles are seen as actively constructed in the processes of ‘stylisation’. These processes could be described by the term ‘lifestyles’ including expressive and aesthetic choices of individuals in youth groups (Auer and Dirim 2003: 243). Moreover, lifestyles represent a feature of collective emotion in a specific era and in a specific society. According to Maffesoli (1995: 61-71) aesthetic style in post-modern world can be seen to cover social life in its entirety, embracing musical, sporting, commercial and religious forms of life. It is about being together in the present without primarily searching for goals to be attained in the future. Moreover, one’s position is defined first and foremost in relation to the other. Such things as pursuit of enjoyment, appreciation of spare time and emphasis on the quality of life are valuable only to the degree they are in favour of social behaviour. The various elements of social life interact and lead on to a new hybrid form of balance that is dynamic, haphazard and yet constantly unstable. This neo-tribalism consists of “wandering mass-tribes” which can be characterised by “fluidity, occasional gatherings and dispersal” (Maffesoli 1996: 76).

Giddens (1996: 80-81) remarks that an individual has to make lifestyle choices on a daily basis. He characterises the term ‘lifestyle’ as follows:

Lifestyle is not a term which has much applicability to traditional cultures, because it implies choice within a plurality of possible options, and is ‘adopted’ rather than ‘handed down’. Lifestyles are routinised practices, the routines incorporated into habits of dress, eating, modes of acting and favoured milieux for encountering others; but the routines followed are reflexively open to change in the light of mobile nature of self-identity. (Giddens 1996: 81.)

Being a representative of e.g. extreme sports culture can be seen as including various lifestyle choices expressed by many subcultural symbols (Rinehart and Sydnor 2003: 3). Young people interested in extreme sports supposedly adopt certain style of dress, acting, special equipment and places for carrying out their lifestyle activities. The activities can take place also outside of physical context. Giddens (1996: 84) suggests in reference to electronic media that “mediated social situations construct new communalities”.

Additionally, as Kristiansen (2003: 281-282) points out in reference to Giddens (1996), linguistic form could also be added to the routinised practices of one's lifestyle. On the one hand, people decide on how to speak in certain settings and, on the other hand, they make perceptions and interpretations of others' use of language. Eventually, this causes ways of speaking to evolve into everyday practices which contribute to one's identity (Giddens 1996: 81). Moreover, one social group can distinguish itself from other social groups by means of its language (Crystal 2004: 22). Hence, language is a powerful means of claiming membership in a particular social group and engaging with a lifestyle that one wishes to adopt.

#### **4.2 Christianity and religious language**

As a religion, Christianity is extremely widespread including many churches and congregations. Nevertheless, the religion can be divided into three principal traditions: Protestantism, Roman Catholicism and Greek and Russian Orthodoxy. Protestants represent 44 % of all Christians, albeit Protestant Christianity is divided geographically, culturally, theologically and also ecclesiastically. Instead, Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christianity represent more uniform traditions. (Hillerbrand 2006: 410.) The majority of the population in Finland belong to Lutheran church which, among many others, represents a Protestant tradition.

To a great extent, Christianity is based on the scriptures which have been collected to the Bible. The Old Testament corresponds to the holy book of Judaism, and it also forms the first part of the Bible with its 39 books. The second part is called the New Testament and it consists of 27 books. The inclusion of the Jewish scriptures, i.e. the Old Testament, into the Christian scriptures is relevant since based on the gospels of the New Testament Jesus valued the Jewish scriptures and perceived them as having an authoritative position. (Fudge 2006: 753-754.) The key contents of the Bible and the Christian faith are summed up in Catechism, to which the doctrine of the Lutheran church is written down. The core of the catechism is based on the Ten Commandments, the confession and the Lord's Prayer which are common to Christians from different churches. (Katekismus 2000.)



In theological terms, Protestants see “the Bible as sole authority for life and faith” and thus, the church and its traditions do not possess normative authority (Hillerbrand 2006: 412). Also according to Protestant theology, humans can be reconciled with God, who is personal, moral and craves for a response from the people who he has created. This way, people can be saved merely by God’s grace, which they can accept only by faith. (Hillerbrand *ibid.*, Hick 1992: 11.)

In this study, the Christian frame of reference is formed according to the Christian ideology represented by the members of the community in question. The young Finnish Christians interested in extreme sports put their personal faith in Jesus Christ as the son of God and see themselves as his disciples. They also ground their faith on the Bible as the word of God. (Godspeed Finland 2007a, 2007b.) Christianity is also visible in their Internet discussion forum in which they talk about religious topics, among others.

When studying religious language use, it is essential to outline the particular communicative situation (Suojanen 1975: 252-253). Religious language can be defined as a system which is spoken, read, written or interpreted in a situation concerning topics that participants of a particular social group perceive as sacred or religious. It is also pointed out that mastering the shared language code gives a sense of belonging to a community: it strengthens the group’s solidarity. (Suojanen 1975: 231.) Lappalainen (2004: 263) remarks that language can be perceived as religious regardless of the topic or the situation. Thus, religious language can be used in everyday contexts but in that case, it is often interpreted as ironical or humorous.

A personal commitment to a Christian worldview and its effect on one’s language use was one of the viewpoints studied by Lappalainen (2004). She examined the functions of linguistic variation between the standard Finnish language and the local, spoken language variety of the metropolitan area of Helsinki within a network of young Finnish Christians. Lappalainen (2004: 219) considered, among other things, whether the young people’s language use was characteristic of this particular network, Christian spheres or their age group in general. One part of the research data consisted of recordings from youth gatherings and services for all members of their local church. According to Lappalainen (2004: 278-280, 347), linguistic

variation between the two Finnish varieties occurred in the religious context not only between different situations but also within them. The young Christians resorted to the standard Finnish language when praying or citing the Bible, whereas the spoken language variety was used in the rest of the talk in the same situation. Although the young used phrases and collocations derived from the Bible, the use of religious language was relatively scarce. This became evident by the comparison to the speech of the church's pastor. Lappalainen (2004: 279) considered the distinction to be due to their age and the fact that most of the young had grown up in a Christian home. It is probable that they knowingly avoid using too religious language, which is typical of older generations, thus wanting to create their own ways of speaking.

### **4.3 Extreme sports culture**

Extreme sports culture represents the other social context in this study. It can be defined as follows: "Extreme sports is the generic label used for sports that in some way go beyond – in endurance, testing the limits, or danger – traditional sports" (Levinson 1996: 305). This definition encapsulates the essence of extreme sports, in concrete and abstract terms. People involved in extreme sports seek to surpass their limits through new experiences in recreational activities. Hence, these activities involve continuous risk-taking and exposure to danger. (Levinson *ibid.*)

Extreme sports include skysurfing, sport climbing, inline skating, BMX dirt biking, bungee jumping, extreme skiing, eco-challenge etc. Often they are closely related to, or extensions of, 'older' extreme sports activities, such as skateboarding, surfing or rock climbing. (Levinson 1996: 305, Rinehart and Sydnor 2003: 2) However, the distinction between these sports is not always considered as clear-cut, at least not in the community of Christians interested in extreme sports who include both skateboarding and surfing in their extreme sports activities.

People interested in extreme sports can be found all over the world and therefore, the phenomenon is a global one. The First Extreme games, held in 1995, in Newport, Rhode Island, had participants from 25 nations. Nevertheless, most of the extreme sports enthusiasts come from Western countries and the sports are often associated

with young people and especially young men in their twenties. (Levinson 1996: 308.) Moreover, “extreme sports are also mostly ‘white’, ‘wealthy’, and exclusionary” (Rinehart and Sydnor 2003: 10).

Specific cultures, communities and lifestyles can build up around extreme sports activities. Harinen et al. (2006: 10) describe surfing, skateboarding and snowboarding as relatively new sports cultures that have certain features in common. Enthusiasts in these sports demand creativity since the movements are not highly standardised and tricks are constantly being developed. There has been a change from traditional sports fields into the experiential space that is found in streets, squares and other open area. However, skateboarding, for instance, should not be seen as a mere physical exercise since young people associate many social and cultural meanings to it with the help of clothing, self-made music and videos. Hip-hop culture and rap music as its manifestation are often associated with skaters, even though the skaters themselves do not ascribe to one particular style of music. (Harinen et al. 2006: 21-24, 34.)

Indeed, these sports are favoured especially by young people who actively form communities within them. They can also be seen to reflect international youth cultures, since music and electronic communication in particular are essential to the creation and maintenance of the communities. The Internet, e-mail and mobile phones serve as a means of communication, while specific style of speaking helps to distinguish e.g. skaters from other groups. (Harinen et al. 2006: 10, 24.) This way, they can construct identities related to their shared lifestyles. In the study of Harinen et al. (2006: 63-64) Finnish skaters emphasised their own style of speaking as something outsiders cannot understand and judging from the examples it seems to include the use of English, too. Likewise, Hasanen (2001: 82-84) found out in her pro gradu thesis that snow boarders in Finland have shared appearance, experiences and language and therefore, they can be said to share features of a common lifestyle.

#### **4.4 Discourse-analytic approach to construction of identities**

Examining identities within a certain community or a lifestyle requires defining the concept of identity. According to Fornäs (1998: 279) identities are multiple, fragmented and dynamic. They are expressions of subject positions and are produced in the processes of identification and differentiation. In addition to individual identity, there are social identities which involve groups, subject positions, relationships between individuals and societal norms. Identities can vary during one's life span and according to different situations since "different perspectives, positions and ways of talking --- may be adopted in different contexts" (Pietikäinen and Dufva 2006: 212).

The performance perspective to identity accentuates that identity cannot be reliably viewed as a fixed aspect of certain social groups. Instead, one has to perform identities so as to make them prominent in social terms. (Blommaert 2005: 205.) Performing of identities can be done by linguistic resources in social situations. Thus, identities emerge out of "repertoires of identificational and affiliational resources" and are presented to others (Bauman 2000:1). Undoubtedly, identities also have to be recognised by others and therefore, social categorisation, i.e. othering, is done by other people with the help of linguistic and semiotic resources. The resources available have an effect on the kinds of recognisable identities that can be constructed. Nevertheless, all linguistic and semiotic resources can be employed for constructing identities, and in highly adaptable ways, too. (Blommaert 2005: 205-209.) Language alternation, for instance, could be viewed as a linguistic resource used for constructing identities (see chapter 3.2).

Hall (1999: 251) points out that identities are constructed within discourses. Indeed, according to discursive approach to identities, discourse is seen as providing the means with which identities are constructed and negotiated. Furthermore, ideologies of language and identity affect the ways in which linguistic resources are used to index identities and evaluate other people's use of those resources. (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004: 14.) After all, the purpose of language is not only to communicate information but also to serve the function of enacting social activities and social identities in local settings. Language is then used for presenting a certain perspective

with certain implications, and it functions as a means of connecting people within cultures and social groups. (Gee 2006: 1-5.)

Discourse analysis is the study of language-in-use, and it represents a theory and a method for studying language and its effects. The discourse analysis in any given study emerges from the approach to discourse adopted by the researcher. (Gee 2006: 1-5.) For instance, functional linguistics, having its roots in sociology and anthropology, views discourse as a form of social action analysed in relation to a specific context (Luukka 2000: 137, 143).

Two lines of thought are identified within the functional approach: the interactional and the constructivist approach (Luukka 2000: 154). As far as the interactional approach is concerned, the use of language is dialogic in nature and meanings are negotiated by the participants in the interaction. The interactive situations are therefore seen as varied, unique and requiring interpretation from the participants. (Luukka 2000: 148-149.) The constructivist approach concerns, in addition to the interactive situation, more widely the context of communication, namely the communities in which languages are being used. Members of a community have similar values, beliefs and ways of action, which in turn, lead to shared norms and ways of speaking. The knowledge about discourse practices is learned in the interactive situations and it relates both to the contents and the form: the members of a community know what to talk about and how to talk about it. (Luukka 2000: 151.)

Gee (2006) uses the term Discourse with a capital D. It is defined broadly to include not only stretches of language but also “one’s body, clothes, gestures, actions, interactions, symbols, tools, technologies (be they guns or graphs), values, attitudes, beliefs, and emotions” (Gee 2006: 7). These should be expressed in a right way and at the right places and times so that social activities and identities can be performed. Blommaert (2005: 3) also considers discourse as containing “all forms of meaningful semiotic human activity seen in connection with social, cultural, and historical patterns and developments of use”. Thus, the way in which semiotic means become meaningful is studied against those wider patterns of use.

Discourses can also intermingle with each other and thus, create new hybrids. The hybrids are a mixture of discourses having some properties of their own. Moreover, one discourse can involve many identities. (Gee 2006: 30-34.) As youth groups are considered to be significant in cultural terms, they can be easily associated with new and innovative hybrid discourses. They can combine discourses of 'being a devoted Christian' to 'being an active extreme sports athlete' into one hybrid discourse, as it is occasionally done by the online community members in this study. At the same time, several identities can be performed within a single discourse.

## 5 ANALYSING COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) constitutes a broad interdisciplinary field. This chapter includes perspectives to the characteristics of CMC, computer-mediated discourse analysis (CMDA) and earlier research concerning language use in electronic environments. In addition, the definition of an ‘online community’ and the criteria for identifying and evaluating online communities are discussed. The role of literacy in online communities and the literacy activities relating to this study are also taken into consideration. Finally, a faceted classification scheme for computer-mediated discourse (CMD) by Herring (2007) is examined in relation to a discussion forum as a type of online community.

### 5.1 Characteristics of computer-mediated communication

According to Herring (2001: 612), CMC is mostly text-based, “typed on a computer keyboard and read as a text on a computer screen”, and it appears in several forms, such as e-mail, discussion forums and real-time chat. Computer networks are generally seen as a medium of communication that possesses features different from speech and writing. At the same time, computer-mediated language is sometimes regarded as a mixture of spoken and written, granted that not even these two notions can be considered as uncomplicated. (Herring 2001: 614.)

The relationship between speech and writing has been presented as a continuum (Baron 2001: 21-22). According to the continuum view<sup>2</sup>, the distinction between the use of spoken and written language is not clear-cut. In the actual language use, the traditional characteristics of written and spoken language tend to blend. Baron (ibid.) gives an example of a spoken proclamation which may have qualities generally associated with writing, whereas a handwritten note might be best described by speech-like qualities. One can adopt a similar approach when considering speech and writing mediated by technology. Hence, Baron (2001: 22) places word-processors,

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<sup>2</sup> The view has been suggested already by Tannen (1982) who describes the relationship between oral and literate discourse as a continuum. Tannen (1982: 3) points out that the strategies of oral and literate tradition are “intertwined with each other” and used in various situations.

telephones, videophones and teleconferencing on the same continuum with writing at the one end and face-to-face speech at the other end.

Georgakopoulou (2006: 549) too, sees “spoken and written at best two ends of a continuum that cuts across social practices rather than well definable poles of a dichotomy”. Moreover, in consideration of CMC, Georgakopoulou (2006: 550) suggests focusing on the distinction between mediated and face-to-face discourses instead that of speaking and writing. In consequence, it is possible to concentrate more on the relevant features in CMC research, such as “physical co-presence and embodiment, sharing (or not) of an immediate context, synchronicity (or not) of the interaction” (Georgakopoulou 2006: 550).

Defining the characteristics of the medium is important in order to understand the nature of computer-mediated language and language use (Herring 2001: 612). In synchronous CMC participants must be logged on at the same time in order to communicate. For example, in a real-time chat messages are visible as they are sent and get replaced along with new messages on the computer screen. As regards asynchronous media, they do not require simultaneous participation, but the messages are stored and can be read at a later time. E-mail and discussion forums provide an example of asynchronous communication. (Herring 2001: 614-615.)

In addition, one can communicate through networked computers simultaneously with more than one person at a time. A spectrum of CMC pays attention to the relationship between the sender and the recipient: CMC may range from postings targeted to large anonymous audience to one-to-many or one-to-one dialogues between identified interlocutors. The spectrum includes a finished product, e.g. an electronic journal, at the one end and an ongoing process at the other end. (Baron 2001: 158.)

Other features of the system which may have an effect on language use in virtual environments include other available communication channels besides text, such as audio- and video material, and static or animated graphics. Also the ways in which messages are visually presented or how long they remain on the system affect user’s online behaviour. (Herring 2007: 15-16.)



## 5.2 Computer-mediated discourse analysis

The study of computer-mediated discourse is a specialised field of research that focuses on language use in electronic environments and utilises methods of discourse analysis in a broad sense. Hence, computer-mediated discourse analysis approach involves research on online communication which takes place mainly by means of verbal interaction. In addition, CMDA takes into account the social practice in electronic environments which are naturally different from the physical contexts of communication. Since the interaction leaves a textual mark, researchers are able to study macro-level phenomena with micro-level methods. (Herring 2001: 612, 2004: 338-339, 2004: 342.)

The methods of analysis derive from the studies of both spoken and written data and are adapted to computer-mediated discourse (Herring 2007: 4). Herring (2004: 342) draws attention to two assumptions about discourse that are found in linguistic discourse analysis. The first assumption is that one can find recurrent patterns in discourse. A researcher's task is to identify and demonstrate the existence of discourse patterns which might not be evident to the participants of the interaction. Thus, these patterns are recognisable through a researcher's systematic observation. The second assumption is that speakers make choices in discourse. These choices emerge mainly from cognitive and social causes. Discourse analysis therefore covers both linguistic and non-linguistic phenomena. Herring (2004: 343) adds to the above-mentioned two assumptions a third one that specifically concerns communication in online environments, phrasing it as follows: "computer-mediated discourse may be, but is not inevitably, shaped by the technological features of computer-mediated communication systems".

With regard to CMC research, there has been and there still is a growing interest in CMC among researchers of different fields as the access to the Internet is becoming more and more globally available. Tusting, Ivanič and Wilson (2000: 218) point out that electronic literacy, although existing materially as a hard disk, can be accessed by any computer with a connection to the Internet. Researchers have concentrated, for example, on the language use of various online interest groups. The focus of

research has been on the groups' "communal affiliations, social and cultural beliefs, identities, and relations of power" (Lam 2004: 47).

Tepper (1997) studied an activity called 'trolling' in a newsgroup. Trolling is about posting a message including provocative or erroneous information to the newsgroup in order to get angry responses for the message. The goal of the provocative message is ultimately to be an insider joke. It is a way of establishing subcultural boundaries for a certain group in a virtual world. However, Tepper (1997: 45) points out that creating the boundaries is not always straightforward:

"--- there must be some way of distinguishing between these posters to the group who are actually 'in' the group and those who are still 'outside' it, and all this must be accomplished through asynchronous textual production, with none of the verbal or visual cues that are so crucial to traditional notions of subcultural formation."

Richardson and Lewis (2000: 253) studied hip-hop culture on the Internet and they remarked that the web eliminates the identity-related acting, walking and often the users' appearance, too. What remains then, is 'talk' as represented in writing. The 'talk' might take different forms in the use of literacy practices.

Also de Pourbaix (2000: 125) focused on the literacy practices in a virtual space, namely in an electronic newsgroup. She adopted the social theory of literacy (Barton and Hamilton 2000) and preferred the definition of literacy as "practices which emerge and change over time and with context" over "a set of taught skills" (de Pourbaix 2000: 129). She studied discourse practices in a newly formed electronic community. The members of this community, foreign students at a Canadian university, moved from externally prescribed language requirements as their goal of communication to their own discourse practices. The students considered the new discourse practices appropriate for the context and their community needs. (de Pourbaix 2000: 145.) Also Baym (1995: 154-155) discusses innovative practices in CMC, for example, user name and signature files. Signatures according to de Pourbaix (2000: 134) may show identification with specific communities including personal information, information on overlapping or other communities.

### 5.2.1 Creation of an online community

The issue of the existence of online communities on the Internet has been contested. An online community has been described as a poor substitute for a 'real life' community, or even as harming traditional, local communities (Thurlow, Lengel and Tomic 2005: 110-111). In addition, online groups have been said to represent monocultural capitalism, marginalised access, or mere communication (see Lockard 1997; Stratton 1997). However, Thurlow et al. (2005: 111-112) challenge the idea by asking whether, instead of destroying the notion of community, CMC could actually maintain and create communities. That is to say, online communities might not be communities in the traditional sense of sharing one particular location, but they are communities in the sense of uniting people who share common interests and a sense of belonging. Social interaction can be viewed as "a requirement for the existence of community" and it has been assumed that interacting in e.g. newsgroups or chat rooms meets the requirement for social interaction, even though they do not share the same physical location of interaction (Cherny 1999: 248).

Baym (1995: 141) points out that people, who take part in online communities, are also members of national and international offline cultures. They have adapted certain communicative styles and social practices before entering the virtual space. It is therefore essential to take into account the external contexts in interpreting interaction in online environments. Baym (1995: 142) refers to her own study of soap opera fan communities when saying that an external (offline) subculture provides "resources and practices with which participants organise their talk". Thurlow et al. (2005: 114) develop the same idea and obscure the line between online and offline communities by saying:

Not only does this mean that online communities are shaped by the extent of their embeddedness in the 'real world', it also means that online communities are often simply offline communities which have come online. In other words, these are supposedly 'traditional' communities which are exploring new ways for their members to be in community with each other. The distinction between online and offline communities is not so neat after all and you are more likely to find hybrid examples than anything else.

As far as the analysis of online communities is concerned, Herring (2001: 620) acknowledges that the Internet provides "a rich source of data for the study of

discourse and social practice.” Also Jones (1997) argues that online communities are to be analysed in terms of sociological phenomena and not only in terms of a chain of CMC messages. It can therefore be assumed that discourse in virtual space reflects the complexities of interaction and social relations offline.

Nonetheless, researchers have raised the question of how to define an online community. Not any group of people interacting through networked computers can be called an online community (Herring 2004: 338-339). Thus, Herring (2004: 355-357) presents six sets of criteria (adapted from various researchers) for identification and evaluation of an online community. These include

- 1) active, self-sustaining participation; a core of regular participants
- 2) shared history, purpose, culture, norms and values
- 3) solidarity, support, reciprocity
- 4) criticism, conflict, means of conflict resolution
- 5) self-awareness of group as an entity distinct from other groups
- 6) emergence of roles, hierarchy, governance, rituals

Baym (1995) too, has written down a list of factors to which one should pay attention when evaluating the emergence of community in an electronic environment. The list (cited from Thurlow et al. 2005: 114) involves

- 1) external contexts, e.g. are community members already work colleagues or individuals participating from home and who’ve never met?
- 2) temporal structure, e.g. is the CMC synchronous or asynchronous?
- 3) system infrastructure, e.g. are members completely anonymous?
- 4) group purposes, e.g. what are the aims of the group? how closely are they having to, or wanting to, work together towards some goal or other?
- 5) participant characteristics, e.g. are members all men or all women or a mixture of both?

Baym’s list is suitable when evaluating an online community from the perspective of structural characteristics, whereas the list presented by Herring is more applicable to evaluating the communication between online community members.

Baym (1995: 150) emphasises that the emergence of social organisation is a dynamic process. Participants themselves produce ways of communicating in order to create social meanings. Often these practices are not predictable by researchers. Baym (1995: 151) further points out that people who are involved in CMC do not consider the medium as a constraint. Instead, they invent new creative ways of exploiting the possibilities provided by CMC and construct forms of expression, relationships, identities and behavioural norms. In consequence, new communities are created.

### **5.2.2 Role of literacy in online communities**

At present, various semiotic systems are available in CMC. However, in many electronic sites communication is for the most part mediated by literacy (Tusting et al. 2000: 218). In addition, CMC may involve different literacy events which are defined as activities in which literacy has a certain role. Normally, they include a written text and possibly talk around the text. (Barton and Hamilton 2000: 8.) Literacy events take place at the local level of interaction. They are, nevertheless, also linked to broader cultural settings and discourses. It has been suggested that

language interactions around texts --- serve to induct the individual into the discourses of wider social structures, which have specific consequences for people's positioning in relation to particular kinds of knowledge, their social relationships and their sense of identity (Maybin 2000:205).

In this study, the role of literacy becomes relevant in terms of the particular literacy events within the community of Christians interested in extreme sports, which include attaching extracts from the Bible and from the lyrics of their favourite songs to the discussion forum messages. The community members also provide links to other websites involving different kinds of online texts, such as product descriptions, photographs and electronic magazines.

According to Barton and Hamilton's (2000: 7) social theory of literacy, literacy practices are seen to include not only the observable interactions with texts but also "values, attitudes, feelings and social relationships". Literacy practices unite people: they are viewed to exist within groups or communities rather than in individual ways

of being. Hence, one is interested in the ways people use texts and how they perceive the activities they are involved in. (Barton and Hamilton 2000: 8-9.)

At the concrete level of writing, users in electronic environments constantly develop new ways of expressing themselves, their identities and social relationships. Often features similar to spoken genres, such as spontaneity of expression are involved in CMC (Sebba 2003: 165). This spontaneity could be defined with the help of the notion of 'orality' including "rapid message exchange, informality, and representations of prosody" (Herring (2007: 2). Orality can be seen as an important resource in youth vernacular literacy since it might be an evidence of "shared background knowledge in mediated interaction" and thus, function as an indicator of a sense of community (Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulou 2003: 13).

Indeed, the language/spelling variation in CMC is often deliberate and creative; it is by no means to be taken as simplified communication. Instead, through variation one may represent auditory information or facial and gestural expressions, as in emoticons, that lack from standard writing. These ways of writing carry social cues and consequently, they are used for representing social reality in CMC. (Herring 2001: 617, 623.) Sebba (2003: 168) concludes that by adapting the legitimated norms, writers in computer-mediated environments "can convey a social meaning through form as well as content". E-mail, for example, is sometimes left unedited assuming it does not have to fulfil formal purposes (Herring 2001: 618, Sebba 2003: 165). However, one has to bear in mind that not all types of CMC are similar, nor are their norms for discourse alike (Herring 2007: 7-8).

### **5.2.3 Classifying computer-mediated discourse**

Defining the different types of CMD is related not only to characterising the technological features but also to "the social and cultural practices that have arisen around their use" (Herring 2007: 3). Facets of CMC that may have effect on the ways of discourse in online environments have been presented by Herring (2007). She introduces a faceted classification scheme for CMD that is meant to make CMC data selection and analysis easier. According to her definition, facets are categories of an

influence type and they are realised by values which can be binary, scalar or a list of items (Herring 2007: 10, 12).

There are two basic types of influence on CMD caused by medium (technological) factors and situation (social) factors. Both the medium and situation factors are included in the scheme since it is assumed that they have an effect on communication and contribute to variation in CMC contexts. The faceted classification scheme is not dependent on ‘technologically-defined CMC subtypes’ but offers a flexible system for identifying both established and emergent discourse types (Herring 2007: 3-4).

Table 2. Situation factors in faceted classification scheme for computer-mediated discourse (Herring 2007: 18-19)

S1	Participation structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-many</li> <li>▪ Public/private</li> <li>▪ Degree of anonymity/pseudonymity</li> <li>▪ Group size; number of active participants</li> <li>▪ Amount, rate, and balance of participation</li> </ul>
S2	Participant characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Demographics: gender, age, occupation, etc.</li> <li>▪ Proficiency: with language/computers/CMC</li> <li>▪ Experience: with addressee/group/topic</li> <li>▪ Role/status: in “real life” ; of online personae</li> <li>▪ Pre-existing sociocultural knowledge and interactional norms</li> <li>▪ Attitudes, beliefs, ideologies, and motivations</li> </ul>
S3	Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Of group, e.g., professional, social, fantasy/roleplaying, aesthetic, experimental</li> <li>▪ Goal of interaction, e.g., get information, negotiate consensus, develop professional/social relationships, impress/entertain others, have fun</li> </ul>
S4	Topic or theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Of group, e.g., politics, linguistics, feminism, soap operas, sex, science fiction, South Asian culture, medieval times, pub</li> <li>▪ Of exchanges, e.g., the war in Iraq, pro-drop languages, the project budget, gay sex, vacation plans, personal information about participants, meta-discourse about CMC</li> </ul>
S5	Tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Serious/playful</li> <li>▪ Formal/casual</li> <li>▪ Contentious/friendly</li> <li>▪ Cooperative/sarcastic, etc.</li> </ul>
S6	Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ E.g., debate, job announcement, information exchange, phatic exchange, problem solving, exchange of insults, joking exchange, game, theatrical performance, flirtation, virtual sex</li> </ul>
S7	Norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Of organization</li> <li>▪ Of social appropriateness</li> <li>▪ Of language</li> </ul>
S8	Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Language, language variety</li> <li>▪ Font/writing system</li> </ul>

The situation factors presented in Table 2 above can be applied also to discussion forums, as has been done in this study. Discussion forums build up around computer-mediated discourse and they may represent a form of online community. They can be defined as dynamic web pages modified by users who post messages to the site. Discussion forums are generally publicly available and the posts can be read by any visiting, non-registered user in addition to registered users of the forum. (Hinrichs 2006: 25.)

The participation structure (S1) in discussion forums represents public, many-to-many interaction. Participants are not usually required to reveal much about their 'real life' characteristics (S2). Registered participants are usually identified by a self-selected user name (Hinrichs 2006: 25).

The purpose (S3) of CMD can be defined according to either the group's aims or an individual's personal goals of interaction (Herring 2007: 20). The overall interaction in discussion forums is realised in the form of message threads which contain "posts and reply posts devoted to the same question or sub-topic" (Hinrichs 2006: 26). Forums differ by the types of topics (S4) that they address. Hinrichs (ibid.) states that the topics are determined by the moderators of the website or alternatively, by users who may also be given a possibility to name new topics according to their needs. Tone (S5) of the messages under certain topics is evoked by "the manner or spirit in which discursive acts are performed" (Herring 2007: 21); the use of emoticons contributes to the tone of CMD, too (Baym 1995: 152).

Activities (S6) show what is going on in the message threads and analysing linguistic practices helps to recognise the variety of activities in online interaction. Online communities also establish the code (S8), that is, the language variety which is being used for carrying out the activities. (Herring 2007: 20, 21-22.) Norms (S7), i.e. conventional practices of the group are related to the group's purposes for existence (Herring 2001: 622; Baym 1995: 160). Indeed, Baym (1995: 161) emphasises that "the creation of forms of expressive communication, identity, relationships, and norms through communicative practice in computer-mediated groups is pivotal to the process of creating a community".



### 5.3 Online ethnography

The notions of an online community and computer-mediated discourse can be examined by the methods of online ethnography. According to Androutsopoulos (2006a: 423-424) there are principally two different ways to draw on online ethnography. In relation to the first approach, the methods include “systematic observation of chosen sites of online discourse” and additional communication with members of the online group (Androutsopoulos 2006a: 424). This way, it is possible to conclude whether the group can be described as an online community. For example, the criteria presented by Herring (2004) can be used for evaluating an online community. Within the second approach, online ethnography can be combined with offline ethnography including “face-to-face interviews, door-to-door surveys and the observation of Internet use in offline social spaces” (Androutsopoulos 2006a: 424).

With regard to participation in the researched Internet sites, a researcher may engage in the interaction and thus, become a member of the community. For example, Cherny (1999: 3, 301) participated actively in the conversations with the members of the online chat system which she examined. She also informed the other members of the community on her research intentions in her character description, among other things. On the other hand, online ethnography does not need to include participation, which gives an opportunity to study the computer-mediated activities without intervention (Georgakopoulou 2006: 551). Occasionally, a researcher may need to post questions in order to elicit necessary information, as in ‘guerrilla ethnography’ used by Yang (2003).

Yang (2003: 471) reports to have adopted a role of online guerrilla ethnographer when doing research on Chinese cultural sites on the Internet. A guerrilla ethnographer has to be open-minded towards the diversity and fluidity of the Internet. It is essential to familiarise oneself with the information provided on the sites by exploring their contents and links, downloading data, thinking about ‘the larger picture’, and once more, exploring the sites. The method may be accompanied with survey data, for instance.

## **6 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The purpose of this study is to examine bilingual practices within the interaction of young Finns in an Internet discussion forum, explicitly among Christians interested in extreme sports. In the case of this study, the notion of bilingual practices involves the uses of insertional code-switching and language mixing from Finnish to English. The use of English is evident in the Finland-based Internet discussion forum at [www.godspeed.fi](http://www.godspeed.fi). The language alternation phenomena are seen as resources for communication, as well as community and identity construction. The practices are approached from two different perspectives: first, from the perspective of an online community and second, from the perspective of identities constructed within lifestyle discourses. Firstly, this chapter discusses the research questions which are formulated on the basis of the purpose of the study. Secondly, the data is presented and finally, the methods for carrying out the analysis are established.

### **6.1 Research questions**

In order to examine bilingual practices including code-switching and language mixing from Finnish to English in the discussion forum, I aim to answer the following three research questions. The presupposition for formulating the research questions was that English is used in this particular Internet discussion forum. The first question is:

- 1) What are the functions of code-switching and language mixing from Finnish to English in the Finland-based Internet discussion forum at [www.godspeed.fi](http://www.godspeed.fi)?

Answering the first research question is carried out with the help of the two following questions. Thus, the second research question is:

- 2) What kind of communicative or shared meanings do the uses of code-switching and language mixing from Finnish to English serve?

In order to answer the second question, communication between the online community members is studied in interactive online activities. Answering this question provides information on the ways in which the bilingual communication serves to construct the online community of Christians interested in extreme sports.

In addition, in order to find out the identity-related uses of bilingual practices, a third research question is needed:

- 3) How are code-switching and language mixing from Finnish to English used for constructing identities?

Answers for this question are searched by identifying lifestyle discourses that are relevant within the interaction of the forum participants. It is important to take lifestyles into account since they are relevant in terms of one's identity (Giddens 1996). Individual and social identities are seen as performed and recognised by others within the discourses. Analysing the forum members' identities provides information on the ways in which they see themselves and others as representatives of this particular group of young Finnish people.

All in all, answering the research questions moves from the examination of local interactive events, i.e. online activities, to the study of broader identity related lifestyle and cultural discourses.

## **6.2 Data**

The data come from a Finnish Internet discussion forum meant for Christians interested in extreme sports; they have organised themselves as a corporation called Godspeed Finland. The forum is part of the website found at [www.godspeed.fi](http://www.godspeed.fi). The layout of the website's front page is depicted in Figure 1 below. The website consists of different sections, the discussion forum being one of them. Other sections provide information on different sports, events, services and the people involved. As most new media sites, the website at [www.godspeed.fi](http://www.godspeed.fi) is essentially dynamic in nature. For instance, the content of the pages is constantly updated, e.g. the current matters

advertised on the front page under the heading ‘Whats [sic] up’ are regularly updated. Similarly, the banner on the right upper corner changes at regular intervals. The layout of the page therefore continually varies.



Figure 1. The front page of www.godspeed.fi

During the period of observing and collecting the data (August 2006 - May 2007), the discussion forum consisted of 4 main sections and 19 subsections. The forum's starting page, which includes these sections, is depicted in Figure 2 below. Generally speaking, the structure of the starting page is relatively stable but it may sometimes be adapted according to the popularity of the message threads. For example, the section 'Whats up' was raised at the top of the page, presumably since it was clearly the most popular section of the forum with its subsection called *Tapahtumat, sessiot, missä tapahtuu ja mitä* 'Events, sessions, what is going on and where'. At the bottom of the forum's starting page, there are subsections for each individual extreme sport.

New sections can be created according to the users' requests and suggestions. All in all, the organisation of the forum guides the discussions and affects the topics dealt within the subsections.

**godspeed.fi**  
Ride hard, live forever

Ohje Haku Käyttäjälista Käyttäjryhmät Rekisteröidy  
Käyttäjätiedot Kirjautu sisään tarkistaaksesi yksityiset viestit Kirjautu sisään

www.godspeed.fi

Kellonaika on nyt To Tam 17, 2008 2:59 pm  
godspeed.fi Foorumin päävalikko

Foorumi		Aiheet	Viestejä
<b>Whats up?</b>			
	<b>Tapahtumat, sessiot, missä tapahtuu ja mitä</b> Tietoa ja keskustelua tapahtumista Moderaattori <a href="#">GS Admin</a>	78	374
	<b>Osto- ja myyntipalsta</b> Harrastusvälineet yms. lajeihin liittyvä kaupankäynti Moderaattori <a href="#">GS Admin</a>	11	34
<b>Yleistä keskustelua</b>			
	<b>Yleisinfo</b> Moderaattori <a href="#">GS Admin</a>	4	6
	<b>Vapaa sana</b> Moderaattori <a href="#">GS Admin</a>	17	127
<b>Usko</b>			
	<b>Raamatunpaikat</b> Tärkeiksi muodostuneita raamatunpaikkoja matkan varrelta Moderaattori <a href="#">GS Admin</a>	15	27
	<b>Usko ja extreme- ja vauhtilajit</b> Keskustelua uskosta suhteessa Godspeedin edustamien lajien harrastamiseen. Moderaattori <a href="#">GS Admin</a>	3	11
	<b>Opetusta netissä</b> Sanaa koneeseen ja muuta hyödyllistä Moderaattori <a href="#">GS Admin</a>	8	18
<b>Lajikohtainen keskustelu</b>			
	<b>Kaikkiin lajeihin liittyvä keskustelu</b> Keskustelua ja tiedotuksia kaikkiin lajeihin liittyen Moderaattori <a href="#">GS Admin</a>	8	51
	<b>Lumilautailu, laskettelu, telemark</b> Talviset laskulajit Moderaattori <a href="#">GS Admin</a>	13	56
	<b>MX/FMX/Enduro</b> Moderaattori <a href="#">GS Admin</a>	3	5
	<b>XC/trail/freeride/DH/dirt/BMX</b> Fillarilajit Moderaattori <a href="#">GS Admin</a>	4	35
	<b>Rullalautailu</b> Moderaattori <a href="#">GS Admin</a>	5	24
	<b>Moottorikelkkailu</b> Moderaattori <a href="#">GS Admin</a>	0	0
	<b>Kiipeily, boulderointi</b> Kiipeilylajit Moderaattori <a href="#">GS Admin</a>	14	51
	<b>Wake, vesihiihto, polvilautailu</b> Vesilajit Moderaattori <a href="#">GS Admin</a>	3	6
	<b>Surffaus</b> Moderaattori <a href="#">GS Admin</a>	3	6
	<b>Leijasurffaus</b> Moderaattori <a href="#">GS Admin</a>	3	12
	<b>Parkour</b> Moderaattori <a href="#">GS Admin</a>	2	23
	<b>Muut lajit</b> Keskustelua muista lajeista Moderaattori <a href="#">GS Admin</a>	8	89

Figure 2. The starting page of the Internet discussion forum at www.godspeed.fi

Ultimately, the forum represents asynchronous, multiparticipant computer-mediated communication. It is publicly available and therefore, viewing the messages does not require registration (Hinrichs 2006: 25). The main language of the postings is Finnish

but English and sometimes other languages, such as German, Swedish or Italian are used by the participants, too. Additionally, the use of English is visible on the website in general. For example, the name and the slogan of the website are in English. Some of the participants' user names, signatures and mottos are also in English. The English language is therefore continuously present and the participants use it creatively in their interaction and identity-work.

Despite the possibility of the Internet uniting people from different language backgrounds, the participants of the discussion forum in this study are necessarily restricted to Finnish speaking people. Finnish is evidently the main language of communication. Nevertheless, the communication is not limited only to Finnish settings and the participants often refer to international contexts by offering links to foreign videos that are connected to their shared sport activities, for instance. It is also common to discuss songs and link music videos to the forum. In most cases, the songs and videos are related to Anglo-American contexts. English can therefore be seen as a global language to which the members might ascribe a certain ownership through their (international) extreme sports activities and the global religion of Christianity.

Baym's (1995) five online community factors presented in chapter 5.2.1 can be used to evaluate the characteristics of the online community of Christians interested in extreme sports. Also some of the factors in Herring's (2007) faceted classification scheme for CMD presented in chapter 5.2.3 cover the same issues. Firstly, as far as the external contexts are concerned, the community has existed before setting up the virtual space. Thus, most of the community members have met, and keep meeting each other offline. Naturally, the Internet helps to maintain the communication between the members living in different parts of Finland while they cannot meet face to face. By using a discussion forum as a medium for communication, the community enables newcomers to join in, too. The community of Christians interested in extreme sports therefore seems to form a tight network but it is also willing to take new members. Secondly, as regards the temporal structure, the communication is asynchronous. Thirdly, the system's infrastructure is based on transparency so that none of the active community members is totally anonymous. The members can give as much information as they like on themselves in their

personal profiles and in this case, many of them have decided to introduce themselves by their real names in addition to using the user names, or 'nicks'. Fourthly, the group's purposes, according to their website, are to unite Christians who are interested in extreme sports, encourage them in their faith and thus, spread the gospel to people involved in these sports (Godspeed Finland 2007b). Finally, as far as the participant characteristics are concerned, the members of the community are mostly men but there are women too. The total number of registered members was 100 at the end of the period during which the discussion forum was examined. Given this evaluation of the structural characteristics, I have regarded the group of young Finnish Christians interested in extreme sports as an online community.

In order to collect data for this study, each of the discussion forum sections was regularly browsed through and the message threads including the use of English were saved. At first, these message threads were manually saved as complete web pages. As this proved to be a cumbersome task, the entire forum was eventually saved by a website copier software (HTTrack 2008). This was possible since the scope of the discussion forum was not too extensive.

Since English insertions occurred in the majority of the threads in the discussion forum, all message threads from the period of August 2006 - May 2007 were selected as the data. These included 154 message threads in total. Of these, 39 'threads' included only the introductory messages and thus, they were not evolved into message threads in the true sense of the word. They were, however, included in the data as they were considered as potential message threads. On the whole, English insertions occurred in 132 threads, representing 86% of the total amount. Out of the 132 threads, 33 message threads were selected for a detailed qualitative analysis. These threads were selected since the English-language occurrences were frequent in them, together they represented the four main sections of the forum and on the whole, the amount was considered as suitable with the aim of answering the research questions. The 33 threads included 27 participants in total. Table 3 below illustrates the distribution of the message threads according to the four main sections of the discussion forum.

Table 3. Distribution of the message threads according to the four main sections of the discussion forum at [www.godspeed.fi](http://www.godspeed.fi) (Aug 2006 - May 2007)

Discussion forum section	Number of message threads in the data	Number of message threads analysed in detail
Whats up?	54	12
Yleistä keskustelua [General discussion]	21	6
Usko [Faith]	24	7
Lajikohtainen keskustelu [Sport-specific discussion]	55	8
Total number of the message threads	154	33

### 6.3 Methods of analysis

The study is qualitative and sociolinguistic in nature. It takes a multimethod approach that combines studies from the fields of bilingualism, computer-mediated communication and discourse analysis. Online ethnography was used as the method of observing and collecting the data. According to Hinrichs (2006: 3), “naturally occurring, informal CMC” data needs to be analysed by qualitative, ethnographic methods. Also Androutsopoulos (2006a: 423) points out that, assuming CMC research aims to examine online communities and computer-mediated discourse from a sociolinguistic perspective, it is essential to use the methods of online ethnography (see chapter 5.3).

In the context of the present study, applying online ethnography meant finding out about both the extreme sports and Christian cultures that the forum members are involved in. It was essential to pay attention to the particular kind of language, words and phrases as well as the expert knowledge associated with the lifestyles of the community. In terms of participation, I have not taken part in the conversations in the discussion forum and I am not a member of the community. I chose not to participate since I did not want to affect the interaction and the language practices in the forum. After collecting the data, I communicated with the discussion forum administrator about my study.



While online ethnography enables paying attention to the characteristics of the context in an online environment, there is no ready-made theory for studying language alternation in computer-mediated interaction, as Hinrichs (2006: 30) has noted. However, theory and method of any research always go together (Gee 2006: 6). I have therefore used the sequential approach to code-alternation (see Auer 1995, 1998, 2005 and Li Wei 1998, 2005) and Auer's (1999) dynamic typology for language alternation phenomena in particular, as a framework for analysing bilingual practices in the discussion forum (see chapters 3.1 and 3.1.2).

Similarly to Androutsopoulos (2006: 527), who studied code-switching in discussion forums, I regarded the message threads in the forum as equivalent of conversation events in face-to-face interaction and considered them as the basic units of my analysis. Alternatively, I could have analysed the use of English in separate messages but such an approach would have eliminated the possibility of analysing interaction between the community members. In consequence, I studied all the message threads in my data one at a time. I examined in a more detailed manner the ones which included the use of English and analysed the interaction based on the sequential order of the messages. This way, I was able to take into account the context in which switching to English occurred "within the interactional episode" (Auer 1998: 3).

Based on Auer's (1999) typology, I identified two language alternation phenomena in my data. First, there were instances of insertional code-switching from Finnish to English. These instances can be described as locally meaningful and contextualising specific aspects of the interactive situation. Thus, the switches create meanings in interaction. Code-switching can be either discourse-related or participant-related. (Auer 1999: 309-312.) Second, there were instances of insertional language mixing from Finnish to English which did not have a clear discourse function but represented a style of its own. Hybrid style can, for instance, be interpreted as indicating participants' social and cultural identities (Leppänen 2007: 160). All in all, both of the language alternation phenomena often occurred within a single message thread and hence, few of the examples from my data represented a pure case of one or other of the two.

The insertional type of code-switching or language mixing implies that the established language-of-interaction is easily recognisable. In addition, the return after a switch back into this language is highly predictable. (Auer 1999: 313-314.) The main language-of-interaction in my data is clearly Finnish. Consequently, both code-switching and language mixing in this study represent insertions. The English insertions include mainly words, phrases and sometimes also complete sentences. As far as single words are concerned, I did not focus on the distinction between code-switching and borrowing but rather adopted the view according to which the phenomena are seen as related. According to Auer (1999: 314), the insertions can be grammatically integrated or non-integrated. Hence, a word that is grammatically integrated does not have to be a loanword. In terms of spelling, I have paid attention to the accommodation of orthographic practices regarding the spelling of words which originate in English and are possibly mixed with Finnish or modified to illustrate the pronunciation of particular words or phrases, for instance.

Taking the electronic environment into account when analysing the functions of bilingual practices in the discussion forum, I used the methods of computer-mediated discourse analysis (see chapter 5.2). The analysis was carried out with the help of the situation factors found in Herring's (2007) faceted classification scheme for computer-mediated discourse. In applying the scheme, a researcher is to assign values to the categories or 'facets' based on his or her data, and to select the appropriate values for further analysis. The categories can also be applied selectively, and a researcher is free to choose only those categories that are relevant to the analysis of the data in question. I applied the scheme in a way that enabled me to analyse the communication between the community members and the construction of their individual and social identities, thus search answers for the research questions.

In terms of discourse analysis more generally, I adopted the functional approach and made use of the notions found both in the interactional and the constructivist perspectives (Luukka 2000). I viewed the term 'discourse' similarly to Gee's (2006: 26-34) notion of 'capital D' Discourses, involving language and all the other aspects of a particular situation, such as the participants' shared expert knowledge, ways of speaking and performing social identities. All in all, identifying oneself and being recognised as a member of a socially meaningful group can be analysed by studying

discourses (see chapter 4.4). I did not view identity as a permanent social category but as a dynamic and changing concept which includes taking up different positions and perspectives within discourses. That is to say that I adopted the performance perspective to identities. The performing of identities is carried out with the help of the linguistic and semiotic resources available for the participants of interaction. (Bailey 2007: 257, Blommaert 2005: 207, Pietikäinen and Dufva 2006: 212, Fornäs 1998: 279.)

## 7 FUNCTIONS OF CODE-SWITCHING AND LANGUAGE MIXING

I carried out the analysis concerning the uses of code-switching and language mixing from Finnish to English at two levels, which included the level of communication between the community members and the level of identity construction within the specific lifestyle discourses. The detailed qualitative analysis of the message threads is presented in this chapter.

At the first level, I focused on computer-mediated communication between young Finnish Christians in their discussion forum dedicated to extreme sports and the Christian faith. When applying Herring's (2007) faceted classification scheme for CMD, situation factor 6 (S6), representing 'activity', proved to be the most relevant category in consideration of the organisation and analysis of the bilingual communication between the online community members. Herring (2007: 20) defines computer-mediated activities as "discursive means of pursuing interactional goals", and gives examples which include e.g. debate, job announcement, information exchange, phatic exchange, problem solving, exchange of insults, joking exchange or game (Herring 2007: 18).

Based on the message threads that included the use of English alongside Finnish, I identified five different types of interactive online activities in my data and analysed the goals that the participants pursued through them. While performing the activities the members of the community use English for their mutual communication and thus, create meanings in interaction. In the analysis of the online activities, I took into account Herring's (2004: 355-357) criteria for the evaluation of communication between online community members (see chapter 5.2.1). In addition, I paid attention to the other situation factors presented in Herring's (2007) scheme for CMD as far as they were relevant in the description and analysis of computer-mediated activities.

At the second level, I viewed the message threads including the use of English from a broader viewpoint recognising the discourses related to the forum participants' lifestyles within which their individual and social identities were performed, negotiated, recognised and thus, constructed with the help of bilingual practices. I

found situation factor 4 representing ‘topic or theme’ in Herring’s (2007) scheme for CMD relevant in terms of identifying the discourses. Thus, first I examined the message threads in my data and identified the topics with which the use of English was most often associated. Second, I concluded the discourses based on these topics and the perspectives adapted to them. Finally, I viewed how the participants of the forum positioned themselves or others as individuals or as a group within these lifestyle discourses, thus constructing identities. (Pietikäinen and Dufva 2006, see also Maybin 2000: 205.)

My analysis of the message threads collected from the forum at [www.godspeed.fi](http://www.godspeed.fi) is presented as follows: I have numbered the messages according to their order of appearance in the message thread in question. In most cases, all consecutive messages in a thread or in a section of a thread were relevant in terms of the topic, but sometimes only certain messages are included in the examples. After the number of a message, I have indicated the speaker in each extract by a letter (A, B, C, etc.) and thus, user names are not visible. Additionally, I have erased any names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses mentioned in the messages but preserved the names of the participants’ places of domicile, or when Finnish towns and municipalities or other countries are otherwise mentioned in the message threads. For practical reasons, I have not preserved the original spacing since in some cases, there were a lot of empty space between the lines and some of the messages were therefore quite long. Otherwise, no changes were made in terms of orthography or punctuation. When I have omitted some irrelevant parts of the messages, I have indicated it with an explanation in square brackets.

I have highlighted code-switching and language mixing by italics. If a compound word consisted of one English word and one Finnish word, I have italicised them both since they belong to the same semantic entity. I have italicised also names of organisations, brands or bands, etc. that are in English. In my analysis, I have not necessarily paid attention to every English word apparent in the message threads, but taken into account the most relevant parts. In relation to graphics, i.e. the ‘smiley faces’, I have not taken their visual aspect into consideration, but only mentioned their ample use in terms of the tone of a message thread, for instance.

## 7.1 Construction of community in online activities

The discussion forum at [www.godspeed.fi](http://www.godspeed.fi) is used for interaction between Christians interested in extreme sports. In general, the key idea of discussion forums is the exchange of information, opinions and feelings. Hence, forums are meant to be interactive. Even though some of the messages in the particular discussion forum at [www.godspeed.fi](http://www.godspeed.fi) are meant only as informative, the members tend to comment most of the messages posted to the forum. In the following sections, examples from my data organised in five online activities are presented. The activities were determined by examining the nature of the message threads which included the use of English. The activities are ‘getting to know each other’, ‘informing on upcoming events’, ‘describing past events’, ‘sharing information and expert knowledge’, and ‘sharing experiences, feelings and visions’. Due to the local nature of the activities, they can be identified in relation to the forum sections where they typically occur. In general, every one of these activities seemed to be related to expressing communal affiliations in online interaction.

### 7.1.1 Getting to know each other

One of the online activities in which the forum participants use code-switching and language mixing is when getting to know each other. It represents an activity that is essential for constructing any community. When the forum had been recently founded in August 2006, the young started to find out who had logged on to the forum and which sports they each represented. Message threads including this particular activity come from two of the forum’s main sections, which are *Yleistä keskustelua* ‘General discussion’ and *Lajikohtainen keskustelu* ‘Sport-specific discussion’. Within this activity, the members use English in discourse-related interaction, such as greetings or apologies as well as when describing themselves and their sports.

Example 1 illustrates a message thread that gives an opportunity to the participants of the online community to present themselves and to get to know each other. The

thread exemplifies a style of insertional language mixing within this community or online communities more broadly. There is also a short discourse-related code-switch from Finnish to English in form of a greeting.

### Example 1<sup>3</sup>

- 1 A Tänne vois jokainen (tietenkin vapaaehtoisesti) foorumille *loggautunut* pistää pienen infon itsestään.. Sais *nicit* vähän kasvoja, ja oppis tuntemaan porukkaa ja harrastuksia ym.. Itsestäni: Olen [name], tykkään Pepsi Max:ista ja vähän kaikesta harrastamisesta. Parhaimmillani olen painolastina veneessä, tulee isompaa aaltoa. 😊  
(enemmän infoa tuolta *godspeedin* pääsivulta, kohdasta henkilöt)
- 11 B Jep eli [name] oon ikää 21 vuotta. Tampereelta. Opiskelen media juttuja Virroilla, mut ens vuoden käytän viisaammin eli suuntaan Australiaan ja rupeen *gospeltravelleriks* 😊  
Talvisin suksilla suihin noita mäkiä alas ja kesällä *wakeilen* ja rullailen.. joo ja henkilöt kohassa mustakin pari sanaa viä lisää.
- 16 C [name]hei! GB:n mukana enimmäkseen riakkunu, lukiolainen ja satakunta. Lumilaudan ja *waken* omistan, mutta pääasiassa aika menee noitte isojen nelijalkasten käsittelyssä. Toivottavast pääsis GS:nki porukoihin tutustuu ja *keimeihi* messii kunnol 😊 *GodBless!*

The thread above appeared in the ‘General discussion’ section of the forum and therefore it is intended for all the forum members regardless of the sport they represent. Indeed in the first message, A asks ‘everyone who has logged on to the forum’ (*jokainen foorumille loggautunut*) to tell others something about themselves so that their user names, ‘nicks’ (*nicit*) would become familiar. The technological terminology that A uses (*loggautunut, nicit*) springs from English but it is integrated into Finnish morphology. Generally speaking, this kind of language mixing can be seen as a prevailing practice in Finnish IT jargon which is characterised by an abundant use of words originating in English (Pahta and Nurmi 2004: 131). The use of English IT jargon is noticeable in this particular forum but it is in no way typical of only this community.

Drawing on the values of this specific community becomes evident in B’s message which is the 11<sup>th</sup> post to the message thread. She introduces herself and expresses her intention to ‘become a gospeltraveller’ (*rupeen gospeltravelleriks*). She does not explain the meaning of the word, but leaves the interpretation to the readers. However, it is not an established term, and it might be even invented by user B. In any event, English has been exploited in combining the words ‘gospel’ and ‘traveller’ in order to create this compound. Obviously, user B refers to a Christian

<sup>3</sup> For English translation of the examples, see Appendix 1

way of life which in all likelihood is familiar to other members of the community, too. Specifically, the term is probably associated with the notion of spreading the gospel to the world (*The Holy Bible*, 28 Matthew 19). In the same sentence B mentions going abroad, to Australia, which supports this interpretation.

All instances of language mixing in this message thread are adapted to Finnish morphology by the addition of inflected endings. Additionally, the orthography of the word *keimeihi* ‘in to games’ is adapted to Finnish spelling system, which is characterised by almost one-to-one correspondence between sounds and letters. In the Finnish language, the consonant sound ‘g’ occurs mainly in words of foreign origin. Consequently, user C has replaced the consonant graph ‘g’ at the beginning of the word with the graph ‘k’ which represents a common consonant sound in both standard and spoken Finnish. (Hakulinen et al. 2004: 38-43.) The final ‘s’ has also been omitted and replaced by the Finnish ending. This kind of modification of the English-origin word in writing reflects an informal, colloquial way of using language. At the same time, the modification may illustrate appropriating this particular word to the young’s own context of communication.

In addition, *keimeihi* probably indicates a broader conception of the community’s activities as a whole. Jarva and Nurmi (2006: 128) define ‘keimit’ also as a party; hence the word has a fairly broad meaning among young Finnish people. On the other hand, the terms *wakeilen* ‘I wakeboard’ and *waken* ‘a wake’ in both B’s and C’s messages point to the specific activities of the individual members of the community. These terms have been formed from English although there are Finnish equivalents for a wakeboard and wakeboarding.

Right at the end of the last message, user C has attached a greeting *GodBless!* in English. The greeting illustrates an instance of discourse-related insertional code-switch in original English spelling. Additionally, it conveys a friendly tone and attitude towards the other members of the forum in this introductory message thread. The greeting obviously belongs to religious language use and hence, it is an intimate way of addressing others in the community.



In sum, the purpose of the interaction is clearly meant to make others aware that there are people who are united by their similar worldview and an interest in extreme sports activities. Moreover, by initiating this type of a message thread, A suggests that anonymity is not the norm in the forum, even though he mentions on the first line of his message that informing others about oneself is voluntary. Generally, norms of a group tend to evolve over time and they are also closely related to the purpose of an online community (Herring 2001: 622). Anonymity as a norm would not meet this community's purpose, which involves developing the network of Christians in the field of extreme sports (Godspeed Finland 2007b).

In example 2, the message thread is also about getting to know people, this time within a certain field of sport, i.e. biking. Here again, the insertions represent mostly language mixing and involve one code-switch that functions as an apology.

#### Example 2

- 1 A Kaikki fillaristit tänne vaan viestiä. Saadaan tietää ketä on ja missä. Aloitan- [name] Jyväskylästä. Ajan Kaikkee alamäestä *bmxään*.
- 2 B täällä ollaan eli, [name] ja Rovaniemeltä ajan *bmx.llä*
- 3 C Terve! No mutta, tuoltahan puuttu se *cross country*. Mehtässä tykkään polkea. Lihasvoimalla, mutta lujaa! Nimi oli [name] ja Helsingistä lähdin soitteleen.
- 4 D Niinpä puuttuikin, *sorry*. Ylläpito kuittaa - *XC* on mukana menossa.
- 5 E Oulussa ja maastopyöräilen, koska seikkailu-urheilukisoissa sellaistaikin taitoa tarvitsee. En tiedä olisinko pyöräilystä kiinnostunut muuten. Tarkoitus olisi kuitenkin tuossakin kehittyä. Jos muita oululaisia, ottakaa yhteyttä vapaasti niin lähdetään maastoon.

Example 2 includes the first five messages of a message thread that was meant for bikers so that they could get to know each other. The participants use English abbreviations when referring to biking sports. Users A and B refer to bicycle motocross with 'bmx', and D points to cross country cycling with the English abbreviation *XC* in his reply to C. The abbreviation 'bmx' has been integrated into Finnish morphology and it has been inflected both in A's and B's messages (*bmxään* 'to bmx' and *bmx.llä* 'with bmx'). The other two instances of language mixing (*XC* and *cross country*) occur in unintegrated forms. There does not seem to be a need to specify the meaning of the abbreviations since they obviously are comprehensible to the intended audience, those familiar with biking. Thus, the goal of this exchange is to communicate and build relationships between bikers in the forum.

Towards the end of the thread, there is an interesting conversational exchange. User C mentions that the list of different biking sports in the forum menu does not include cross country cycling, but he is not directly addressing anyone. Nevertheless, the administrator of the forum, D, replies to C and gives his apology in English by saying *sorry* after briefly acknowledging the situation in Finnish. This instance of discourse-related code-switching preserves its uninflected English form. Giving an apology contributes to the desire to co-operate and not to disrupt the emergent unity of the bikers. Perhaps using English in an apology does not have such a grave connotation attached to it. *Sorry* may be an optional way of admitting one's negligence, which still serves the function of an apology and at the same time, preserves the positive and playful tone of the conversation. All in all, using 'sorry' is highly generalised in the spoken Finnish language: it seems to be an alternative way of apologising in addition to the Finnish equivalent 'anteeksi'.

Next message thread in example 3 was similarly initiated to discover the people who share an interest in a specific sport, this time rollerblading or 'aggressive skating' (Eisenberg 2003: 23). The message thread includes many instances of language mixing and also a longer phrase that can be defined as a discourse-related switch from Finnish to English.

### Example 3

- 1 A 🤔 ONX muit kikka *blädääjiä* talos? mä oon yx niist...mul on *posse* nimeltään [name] me ollaan vähän niinku löyhäst vedämäs...eli tulee ketä milloinkin ehtii ja jaksaa... 😊  
[continues the message by offering several links to different rollerblading sites and videos]
- 2 B Moro liityin ny tännekki 😊
- 3 A Jee...ollos tervetullos messiin! 🤔 *Tsekkasitko* rainat? Ootko viel *tsekannu* PUMPIN uusimman numeron? [link] ...ja eiku vaan pumppailee... 😊
- 4 A [link] ...NONNII...siin on *flabaijjeri*...KAIKKI messiin! 🤔 Ja *äpeningin* siivut: [link] ...JENGII MESCHIIN!!! 🤔
- 5 A Eipä oo suosituin *topic* tää! 🤔 *No well to those who care: Äänestä swift2foot paita:* [link] [continues the message with six more links to T-shirts]

In his introductory message, A wants to know if there are other people who rollerblade in addition to him. He starts with a direct and informal question: 'are there other trick bladers in the house?' (*ONX muit kikka blädääjiä talos?*). User B posts a message to the thread and very briefly informs that he has joined this forum,

probably indicating that he is interested in rollerblading. In the next message, A welcomes B and encourages him to visit the links that he has provided.

The thread is characterised by an abundant use of language mixing: A has inserted English-origin words, such as, *blädääjiä* '(roller)bladers', *posse*, *Tsekkasitko* 'did you check out', *Ootko tsekannu* 'have you checked out' and *äpeningin* 'happening'. He has integrated the orthography of the English words into Finnish and in some cases otherwise modified the words, too. This creates an image of a personal style of writing. As an example, the word 'blädääjä' originates in the English equivalent but has gone through substantial orthographic changes in the language use of this young Finnish rollerblader or rollerbladers in Finland more widely. For instance, both the vowel graphs of the original word have been replaced by the Scandinavian vowel graph 'ä'. Another example comes from the verb 'check out' which has been integrated into Finnish by, for instance, replacing 'ch' with another cluster of consonant graphs 'ts'. On the whole, the orthography of the verb has been considerably modified to correspond to the Finnish pronunciation and morphology. All in all, A uses very colloquial language throughout his messages. It might be an indication of his style of speaking and writing in general, including an integration of Finnish and English. However, some of the instances, such as the verb 'tsekata', occur in various Finnish contexts and not only in this discussion forum.

Within the first five messages, B is the only person who has expressed his interest in the topic of the message thread even though A has repeatedly encouraged everyone to join in. User A pays attention to this in the fifth message by stating: 'this doesn't seem to be the most favoured topic!' (*Eipä oo suosituin topic tää!*) using the word *topic* in English, which is commonly used when referring to message threads in discussion forums. He continues with an English phrase addressing the message *to those who care*. This is clearly a discourse-related switch that indicates a change or reorientation of the intended audience of his message. He might use English for emphasising his impression that there does not seem to be many who are interested in the same sport as he. At the same time, he underlines the fact that the message thread really is destined to those interested in rollerblading.

In a discussion forum one could expect others to respond to the posted messages according to the interactive nature of forums in general. As a matter of fact, participation is the first criterion in Herring's (2004: 355-357) evaluation of an online community. Of course, more than one participant is needed for an interaction and thus, A's discontented feelings are understandable. By making the drawback of low participation salient both in Finnish and in English, and still persisting on linking new material to the forum, A actually attracts new participants to the message thread. Messages 6-9, which I have not attached to the example, are written by three different users who share their comments on the skating videos that A has linked to his previous messages.

Example 4, the last example describing the activity of 'getting to know each other' includes finding out people who would be interested in going for road trips during the following summer. Mostly, it includes instances of language mixing but code-switching appears in one occasion as well.

#### Example 4

- 1 A Niin minua kiinnostaisi tietää että onko ihmisiä jotka jaksaisivat lähteä tekemään jonkinmoista lenkkiä suomenmaalla taikka ulkomailla *skeden* tai pyörän kanssa. Itse olen jo 18 täyttänyt ja omistan oman autonkin, joka on tosin melko pienehkö. Sillä pystyisi pieni porukka tekemään jo matkaa jonkin viikonlopun.
- 2 B *Jes*, luulis löytyvän innokkaita, nimittäin niin paljo on ollu puhetta *roadtrippien* järkkäämisestä ja puhetta on kuullu jo useamman suusta 😊 Kun oma *skedepastorimme* [name] kotiutuu Venäjältä heinäkuussa niin siinä on yks innokas *roadtrippaaja*.. miehellä taisi viimeisin visio olla linja-auton ostaminen, sit *pimp my ridet* ja kärry asianmukaiseen kuntoon 😊 Itellä on loppuvuodeks suunta tällä tietoa vähän muu ku suomi joten jää *trippailut* vähii, mut kattellaa miten hommat kehitty. [continues the post by mentioning potential opportunities for missionary work abroad]
- 3 C [quote from the heading: *Skedeejille/Bmx-jannuille*] Mihin *blädääjät* jäi listoilt??
- 4 A Onko niitäkin O\_o Tervetuloa mukaan vaan jos reissua saadaan aikaseksi 😊

The exchange exemplifies a style of language mixing that involves vocabulary adapted from English to this Finnish context. After user A has enquired about the community members' interest in road trips during the summer and let them know that he owns a car, B assures that there are many who would be interested in the idea. Judging from B's response, the activity of 'road tripping' is familiar to him and to many others who belong to this community. First of all, B starts his message with the interjection representing an instance of code-switching *Jes* 'yes' which contextualises the beginning of the message with a positive and enthusiastic tone.

Additionally, he uses language mixing in which English has been integrated into Finnish, such as, *roadtrippien* ‘road trips’, *skedepastorimme* ‘our skateboarding pastor’, *roadtrippaaja* ‘road tripper’ and *trippailut* ‘trips’ to describe the activity of doing road trips and the people involved in it. All of these terms have endings formed according to Finnish morphology. The term *skede* ‘skateboard’ or ‘skateboarding’ has gone through more considerable changes in the language use of Finnish skateboarders. For instance, the word has been notably reduced and the consonant graph ‘t’ has been replaced with ‘d’.

The playful tone of B’s message is manifested in his presentation of the skateboarding pastor’s vision about buying and fixing up a bus. He uses the expression ‘pimp my ride’, originally a name of a television programme, with the final -t of the Finnish plural (*pimp my ridet*) as an analogy with the process of modifying one’s vehicle. Obviously, this adds a humorous element to the interaction. It seems that road trips are generally considered as a relaxed activity. The expression illustrates user B’s creativity in using the two languages for playful interaction.

In the third message, C joins in and asks why rollerbladers (*blädääjät*) are not included in the target group of the thread. By this turn, he challenges the balance of the communication within the community and the playful tone of the previous message. User A manages the arising conflict in an astute manner by giving a humorous comment concerning the existence of rollerbladers and finally welcoming C to join in. This leads on to an exchange between A and C, in which they discuss the primacy of having fun over one’s skills. The ensuing exchange between the two members is analysed in example 27.

In sum, the four example message threads involved in the activity of ‘getting to know each other’ have shown the willingness of the online community members to cooperate and build unity within the community, at least in the early stage of their communication. The interactional goals pursued through this activity seemed to be achieved. They are successful in getting to know each other and the sports that they represent without lessening their individual styles of expression and still managing the situations that might disrupt their unity. The members use English as a resource for describing themselves or the community activities. English is also used for

humorous comments and in keeping up a positive tone in their interaction. The use of English could be described for the most part as insertional language mixing in which the terms are almost invariably integrated into the Finnish language. Nevertheless, there are some discourse-related instances of insertional code-switching as well.

### 7.1.2 Informing on upcoming events

The online activity of ‘informing on upcoming events’ is remarkably common in the discussion forum. This activity is typical of the forum section *Whats up?* and especially its subsection *Tapahtumat, sessiot, missä tapahtuu ja mitä* ‘Events, sessions, what is going on and where’. The members organise meetings around Finland: this way they have a chance to meet each other face to face. Thus, the forum participants form also an offline community. They use the forum for advertising these meetings, and often the message threads including information about upcoming events are constructed by several participants. The message threads are therefore interactive in nature, even though their content would be basically informative. The tone of the messages is often encouraging and cheerful. In comparison to the previous activity, here the participants use more discourse-related switches in order to organise their communication. Language mixing still occurs in the messages, too.

Example 5 includes information of a competition in one of the slopes in Finland. Four participants share their enthusiastic feelings about the upcoming event.

#### Example 5

- 1 A [information about an upcoming event]
- 2 A Kisat alkaa hyvissä ajoin sunnuntiaamuna elikkä 7:lta. Porukkaa tulossa jo toistakymmentä kaveria ja mukaan mahtuu vielä... Odotukset on taas korkealla viikonlopun suhteen 😊
- 3 B *Jes, siijyy Jämsänkoskella soon.* Ompa hyvä tapa korkata alkava vuosi GS:n toiminnassa.
- 4 C *Jou jou jeessöör,* [reference to C’s user name] *in da huuuuud mään. Rispekt aiiiii!* Elikkäs mörkörölli pomppii kumihevosenä paikalle. 🇫🇮
- 5 D *jesss,* hyvä vkloppu tulooooos 😊
- 6 A *Jes, fiilikset* vaan nousee viikonlopua ajatellen. Valmistelut hyvässä vauhdissa ja väkeä alkaa tippua paikalle. Tänään tehtiin juttua Himoslehteen kanssa meidän toiminnoista. Lehti ilmestyy just sopivasti ennen Himoksen leiriä, joten Himoksen laskukansa pääsee heti *livenä* näkemään, että mitä tää juttu oikein on...
- 7 A [compliments to the participants after the event]

The extract highlights some of the typical features of the use of English in the discussion forum. There is a sequence that includes both code-switching and language mixing in consecutive messages. The terms or phrases appear in integrated forms. At the beginning of the message thread, user A gives general information about an upcoming event in two following messages.

User B attaches a greeting or a wish to see everyone and comments on the event by switching between Finnish and English. His greeting can be interpreted as discourse-related, concerning the particular upcoming event. In terms of orthography, he uses first an English phrase spelled according to the approximate Finnish pronunciation, *siiyy* ‘see you’, and then he spells an English word according to the standard spelling, *soon*. If he had used the same logic as earlier, he would have spelled *soon* as ‘suun’. Between these more or less English words, the speaker places a perfectly Finnish word, *Jämsänkoscella* ‘in Jämsänkoski’, with reference to a place where they have planned meeting each other. Considering the language structure, there is a lot of variation in terms of vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation. One may think that B does not make a great difference between Finnish and English since in this type of conversation, the both languages seem to be equally available resources for him.

The following post by C is a response to both B’s post and to the more general message by A. The message is heavily characterised by the use of code-switching. The English terms and phrases are integrated into Finnish pronunciation. His first phrase *Jou jou jeessöör*, [reference to C’s user name] *in da huuuuud mään*. ‘Yo yo yes sir, [reference to C’s user name] in da hood man’ is best understood in a discourse-related sense, despite its stylistic character. Examining the phrase together with the Finnish sentence at the end of his turn, it can be interpreted as contextualising his announcement of participation to the upcoming event. In a sense, C clarifies the meaning of the first phrases in Finnish granted that the Finnish sentence is extremely colloquial, too. The phrase in the middle *Rispekt aiiiiiii!* ‘Respect ay!’ represents also code-switching but this time it can be interpreted as participant-related: together with the previous phrases it expresses something about user C’s preference and competence for this type of language use. Indeed, while letting the others know about his participation, C alludes to hip-hop culture with his English phrases. He might ascribe to hip-hop culture on a personal level, which is

indicated by the individual way of using the phrases. He does not adhere to slogans in a streetwise manner, but mixes originally a formal English way of address *jeessöör* 'yes sir' with authentic hip-hop phrases that in turn, generates a humorous effect.

A message such as the one posted by C does not seem to cause any confusion among the other participants of the interaction even though it is stylised by the use of two languages and references to another subculture. The sense of community is thus built through the common understanding of the ways of communication, often including humour and playfulness. The common understanding becomes evident in D's post following C's message. User D makes her contribution to the interaction by expressing her positive emotions and expectations concerning the weekend: *jesss, hyvä vkloppu tulooooos* 'yes great weekend on the way'. The following message by user A starts in a similar way: *Jes, fiilikset vaan nousee viikonlopua ajatellen* 'yes feelings are rising all along towards the weekend'.

Generally, the word *jes* or *jess* 'yes' seems to be an established way of starting a message and thus organising the discourse within the communication of the online community. In this particular thread it is used by three different speakers. Moore and Varantola (2005: 142) remark that integrated English words, such as 'jess' and 'jees', have established an affirmative sense in Finnish, too. Using *jes* may be a way of emphasising one's emotions and the content of the message immediately at the beginning of the post. All in all, the participants seem to co-operatively construct an interesting image of the upcoming event with the use of English, at the same time highlighting their unity and inviting anyone to join in.

In example 6, the exchange involves four participants talking about an upcoming event and expressing their positive feelings with regard to meeting each other. The example includes mainly instances of code-switching.

#### Example 6

- 13 A Täältä oltais Oulusta *skedepastorin* kanssa tulossa, auto täynnä uunituoreita GS-vaatteita. Osastolle ois ainaki pari mustaa GS-paneeliverhoa ja pöytäliina. *Ai sii jyy wen we ket teer. Piis-aut.*
- 14 B Meikä varaa sit äijäkoot! Siis alkaen *xl*.



- 15 C *jes sain kyydin tuolt jykyllän srkunnan kanssa ku oli peruutuspaikka. varmaan nukkumapaikkaki järjestyy sielt. nähdään mestoilla*
- 16 D *siellä siis tapaa paljon sakkia...cool! pitää kattella mihin aikaan sitä kerkee perjantaina ku tota matkaa riittää vähän ajettavaks. mut ilmestytään jossain vaiheessa! see ya 😊*

At the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> message of this thread, user A attaches two English phrases: *Ai sii jyy wen we ket teer. Piis-aut.* ‘I see you when we get there. Peace-out.’ Both phrases are spelled according to Finnish pronunciation, hence being extremely informal in their orthography. They can be described as instances of discourse-related code-switching. They are clearly local, deriving their meaning from the content of this particular message thread. The first phrase serves the function of a greeting, including a wish to see the others as soon as they themselves arrive. The second phrase contextualises the end of the message with goodbyes. It also has an association with a certain (hip-hop) style.

Users B and C both announce that they will participate in the event, even though B’s message informs about his coming very indirectly. The importance of communicating and discussing the upcoming events on the discussion forum is highlighted in D’s message at the end of this extract. By letting everyone know about the community’s activities, the participants have an opportunity to find out in advance who is going to take part in the events that are advertised in the forum. User D’s notion *siellä siis tapaa paljon sakkia...cool!* ‘so there’s a chance to meet a lot of people...cool!’ demonstrates the fact that he is genuinely glad to know that there will be people with whom he has interacted beforehand. He expresses his feelings through an English interjection *cool!* which is commonly used among young Finnish people, sometimes even in its finnicised form ‘kuul(i)’ (Jarva and Nurmi 2006: 160). User D also gives an English greeting, *see ya*, together with a smiley face, which contextualise the end of his message.

Attachment of an advert and its elaboration is visible in example 7. The initiator of the thread advertises a conference for Christians in which the community will take part as a corporation. The exchange includes the use of language mixing and code-switching.

## Example 7

- 1 A GS on järjestämässä Helsingin jäähellissa Näky -konferenssin ( [link] ) aikana toimintaa junioreille Ermojen (TV7:lla pyörivä lasten seikkailuohjelma, [link]) kanssa. Paikalla on myös *Godspeedin* ja *Gospel Boardersien* toiminnan esittelyä sekä myytävänä vaatteita ja kristillisiä *extremeleffoja*. Tule mukaan talkoisiin tai muuten vaan tapaamaan porukkaa! Talkoista kiinnostuneet ottakaa yhteyttä [email address] tai [phone number]
- 2 B *Jes, mukaan vaan! Godspeed needs you.* Taidan napata *slacklinen* mukaan niin pääsee halukkaat notkumaan narulla 😊
- 3 A Homma lähti käyntiin jo tiistaina yöllisillä *skedesessareilla* Elielin aukion ISOLLA *vertillä*. Mukana [name], [name], [name], [name] sekä muuta *possea*. Hyvää settiä ja aina vaan paranee. Tule itse *tsekkaamaan* paikalle, missä keskiviikon jatkot!

In this example, A gives information on the upcoming event in a detailed manner by attaching links to websites that offer further information. He encourages everyone to join in the voluntary work or simply to come and meet other members of the community. He uses language mixing as far as the names of the Finnish Christian extreme sports corporations are concerned. He also refers to specific items on sale during the event, including *extreme leffoja* ‘extreme films’, which are associated with the character and activities of this community.

User B in post 2 emphasises the content of A’s message. He appeals directly to other members of the community by introducing a code-switched phrase, *Godspeed needs you*, from Finnish to English in the middle of his message. The phrase functions as an appeal and its meaning is interpretable in this particular context as an emphasis on the previous message. Thus, he invokes a sense of responsibility by presenting the event as a shared business of all the members who take part in the activities of the community. The use of code-switching in this discourse function might diffuse the presented demand. This way, the tone of the message remains cheerful. Originally, the positive tone is illustrated at the beginning of B’s message as he starts with an exuberant interjection: *Jes, mukaan vaan!* ‘Yes, come along!’, and after the English sequence, ends with a mention of a possibility of practicing one’s skills on a slackline. On the whole, he presents the event as relaxed. This impression is confirmed in A’s second message in which he describes what they have already been doing. He uses vocabulary that draws on language mixing where the words appear in integrated forms, such as *skedesessareilla* ‘skateboarding sessions’, *vertillä* ‘vert (ramp)’, *possea* ‘posse’ and *tsekkaamaan* ‘check out’. The informality of this

message together with a welcome to come along and participate emphasises the relaxed nature of the event.

The message thread in example 8 is also intended for giving information on an upcoming event. This time, feelings of annoyance are expressed because of an obstacle to participation. Code-switching is, again, used in a discourse-related function.

#### Example 8

- 1 A *Godspeed* on mukana skeden sm-kisoissa kisoissa 25.-27.8.2006 vanhalla jäähallilla Helsingissä. Porukkaa on tulossa paikalle perjantaina, tervetuloa mukaan! Lisää tietoja *Godspeedin* liikkeistä kisojen aikana saa [name and telephone number].
- 2 B Just tänä viikonloppunako senkin piti olla. Äh. Allekirjoittanut menee vetämään Rauman poikki ja pinoon veljen kanssa, mutta *have fun ya all there!*

In example 8, user B announces that he cannot participate in the skateboarding championship of Finland advertised by A. In his message, A explicitly communicates that *Godspeed*, the corporation, is going to participate in the event. User B regrets that he cannot be there but gives his greetings, *have fun ya all there!*, in English to everyone else taking part in the event. This code-switched sentence is written in colloquial English and it is placed in the end of B's message. The informality indicates a close relationship to other members of the community, hence functioning as a means of expressing a communal affiliation. Although B cannot participate himself in the event, it seems that he wants to give his contribution to the common action of the group, if only wishing them to have fun.

In addition to the meetings organised in the context of some 'official' events, the participants of the forum meet each other casually according to their own timetables. In example 9, the members plan a meeting in a Finnish town and once again, express their enthusiasm of seeing each other. This time, the use of English exemplifies for the most part a style of language mixing.

#### Example 9

- 1 A Terve, Ensi viikonloppuna olisi tapaaminen Rauma/ Pori suunnalla. Vielä ei ole sata varma kumpi on lopullinen tapaamispaikka, mutta siitä tulee vielä varmistus. Yleistä hengailua ja *extremeä*..... Kaikki mukaan!  
Ilmotelkaa [name] s.postilla tai soittakaa. Joo messiin vaan 😊 [b]

- 2 B jaaaa jos tapaaminen raumalla, niin porista saa kyytiä kyllä raumal, jos sinne helpompi tulla. kaikki meesiin vaan, hakeen vähä uutta tulta 😊
- 3 C Sinne siis, *extreme godsonit ja tyttäret* kokoontuu ja viralliset *biitsipartyt* sitte kai Yyteris, kai siellä on surffikelit vielä ihan kunnossa? No joo, Pori/Rauma akselilla nähdään!
- 4 B *JES!* pileet siis Raumalla. (ol niingon gotonas.) me odotetaan jo teitä täällä ihan innolla!! raumalle uutta tulta ja PALJON tilattu!! 🇺🇸suunniteltiin et käydään pistää vähä nuorteniltaa uusiks.  
kyytejä, majapaikkaa jne jne saa numerosta [phone number]/[name]. 🇺🇸

In example 9 above, the participants are, again, jointly carrying out an activity of informing on an upcoming event. User A encourages everyone to join in the event and describes it as including some ‘extreme action’ (*extremeä*). The expression illustrates a case of insertional language mixing and it is inflected according to Finnish morphology. Undoubtedly, it is meaningful among the forum members in making a reference to their specific extreme sports activities or perhaps more broadly, to being together with the members of this community.

In post 2, which is written entirely in Finnish, user B shares practical information on transportation. Also she encourages everyone to participate and to ‘get some new fire’, a phrase that could be read as getting inspiration for the Christian life. Thus, she for her part evokes the Christian point of view of their community activities. At this point, after the two initial posts, both of the aspects which are characteristic of the community have been elicited within the communication between the community members.

Furthermore, user C elaborates the topic by combining the two aspects and does it through a wordplay involving a creative use of language mixing that illustrates the participants’ character as a group. He makes a reference to the participants of the upcoming event by an English-Finnish phrase *extreme godsonit ja tyttäret* ‘extreme sons and daughters of God’. The phrase can be interpreted as a wordplay echoing the name of a popular television series of a Finnish extreme group called ‘Extreme Duudsonit’. The members of the group perform all sorts of reckless stunts and make videos of them. Their name, having a connotation of ‘extreme dudes’, is rephrased according to Finnish morphology. The pronunciation of the words ‘duudsonit’ and ‘godsonit’ is very similar and thus, easily related. The wordplay is comprehensible first and foremost to people who are familiar with Finnish culture and therefore, are

most likely to recognise the allusion. In other contexts, the phrase might strike as confusing since the English term ‘godson’ has an essentially differing meaning from the term ‘son of god’. In this very specific context of communication, in the discussion forum meant for Christians interested in extreme sports in Finland, the phrase has a significant meaning as expressing communal affiliations through language mixing among this community. All this is done by giving the group a humorous, intertextual and verbally inventive name with the help of two languages.

In sum, the activity of ‘informing on upcoming events’ is probably the most common way of communicating in the forum. Various goals are pursued through it. Thus, the activity does not consist only of informative postings to the forum but the members make also communal affiliations perceptible. They maintain a cheerful tone throughout the messages and as a result, succeed to manage their interpersonal relationships while giving information on upcoming events. While communicating, the participants use code-switching and language mixing for evoking various kinds of feelings. Positive feelings are often expressed when knowing that there is an opportunity to meet other members of the community. In addition, other feelings, such as those relating to responsibility, are also evoked.

The members use most often insertional code-switching from Finnish to English in discourse-related function in greetings, interjections or when otherwise wanting to give emphasis to their message. Using code-switching in participant-related function is also manifested within this activity: it might reveal an individual preference and competence for certain style of communication. Language mixing is used mostly in relation to specific vocabulary which emphasise the special character of the group.

### **7.1.3 Describing past events**

After the face-to-face meetings have taken place, the online community members tend to post messages to the forum and describe the past events. Thus, this activity often occurs within the same message threads as the previous activity of ‘informing on upcoming events’. This way, they continue to deal with the same topic by sharing thoughts and feelings that the past event evoked in them. In most cases, the

expressed feelings are positive and meant to strengthen the community's togetherness. Writing about the past events also gives information on the community's activities and what has taken place during their gatherings to the members that could not participate or to anyone reading the forum.

Example 10 demonstrates how four of the forum participants discuss and share their feelings concerning an event in which they participated in Estonia. The exchange can be characterised as involving language mixing and a couple of discourse-related switches.

#### Example 10

- 1 A Tsau,  
*Gospelboardersin ja Godspeedin* yhteistyönä vedetty *wakeboard-roadtrip* Eestiin *Resistance Squadin* ([link]) vieraiksi on siis takana ja paluu Suomeen tapahtui monta kokemusta rikkaampana. Kiitos kaikille osallistujille, oli melkoisen mahtavaa viettää viikonloppu estooniassa kanssanne, vaikka mukana oli surua ja säätämistäkin.  
 [a summary of an accident that had upset an Estonian family]  
*Äksönin* puolesta reissu oli mahtava. Homma alkoi taistelulla aikaa vastaan kun pari asiaa jäi hoidettavaksi auton ollessa matkalla laivaan. Käytössä oli muutama skeittalauta ja puoli tuntia aikaa. Matkaan, Veli Hopea! Kotoisen pääkaupunkimme kaduilla todistettiin vähintäänkin *dogtown-aiheista sidewalksurffausta* pitkin Espaa, Aleksanterinkatua ja mm. "läpikulku kielletty" -rahtialuetta (joka oli ihan vahinko.. 🤔). Homma jatkui sitten vähemmän paheksuttavissa merkeissä Eestin wakejärvellä, *skedeparkissa* ja lukuisissa *slacklinesessioissa*. *Just great!*  
 Tarkoituksena on kasailla *saitille videoklippä* reissusta ja kuvagalleriakin on tulossa, *so check back later!*
- 2 B Eesti reissun jälkipuintia..  
 Voisin katsoa myös omat kuvani kohta läpi, josko sain mitään siedettäviä kuvia napattua ja laittaa niitä ehkä eteenpäin.. Siunausta viikkoon! [reference to B's user name]
- 3 C Hubutitiheijjaa.. Tässä pikkuhiljaa toivutaan *släp...* *Släklainin* uudesta temppuskaalasta 🤔 Mutta ei kovin moni osaa tehdä *double sack-smack:kia*.. Toivottavasti. Kiitos hjyvstä reissusta. Oli hubaa.
- 4 D Sen verran hyvät muistot mestoista ja porukasta jäi, että seuraavaakin reissua suunnittelee jo mielellään. Ajankohta olisi 29.9.-1.10.-06 ja paikka Tallinna, jolloin kaverit järjestävät siellä suuren Pöörde Punkt (*Turning Point*) tapahtuman, johon meitäkin on kutsuttu mukaan.

User A starts the message thread by describing the past event which took place in Estonia. His message includes single-word insertions and some longer phrases in English. The message contains plenty of vocabulary that is connected to carrying out extreme sports activities. For example, A uses expressions such as *wakeboard-roadtrip*, *äksönin* 'action', *dogtown-aiheista sidewalksurffausta* 'dogtown related sidewalk surfing', *slacklinesessioissa* 'in slackline sessions' in his message. In all likelihood, this kind of language mixing is comprehensible and meaningful to the other members of the community.

The meaning of some of the expressions in this interaction is formed from the more global concepts related to the extreme sports activities. ‘Dogtown skateboarding’, for instance, is a concept that alludes to “an aggressive approach to skateboarding” which is “synonymous with hardcore skateboarding” (Dogtown skateboards 2007). Apparently, A refers to dogtown skateboarding since according to his words they were in a hurry, and for him (and presumably for his audience, too) it is a convenient concept to use when describing the nature of their action. In a way, he introduces the term, which he has adopted from elsewhere, into the local context of communication of their online community. Furthermore, he paraphrases the activity of skateboarding through language mixing as *sidewalksurffausta* ‘sidewalk surfing’.

In addition, the term ‘action’ carries various meanings in the context of this community. In the example above, the word is phrased according to Finnish pronunciation and the final ‘i’ has been added to the word, as in *äksönin puolesta* ‘as far as the action is concerned’. It is a general concept used when referring to the overall (planned or unplanned) activities of the group. The action does not necessarily have to be connected to extreme sports activities. It seems that when something worth reporting to others takes place, it can be called action or ‘äksöni’, for that matter.

The exclamations in English, *Just great!* and *so check back later!*, are written according to standard English spelling and they contextualise the endings of A’s conversational turns, thus representing insertional code-switching. Both the exclamations have a positive connotation attached to them. *Just great!* is meant as a comment on the community’s activities during the road trip. *So check back later!* addresses readers more directly and invites them to visit in the discussion forum again to view video clips or photos from the road trip. User B responds to A’s message by saying that she will also browse through her photos and possibly forward them to the forum.

In the following message, C contributes to the thread by relating his feelings after the event. He playfully challenges the other forum members by arguing that ‘not many can do the double-sack-smack’ (*ei kovin moni osaa tehdä double sack-smack:kia*). This message contains both an English term where the Finnish inflectional ending is

attached to the stem, *double sack-smack:kia*, and an example of spelling a term according to Finnish pronunciation, *Släklainin*. C's message is also an indication of orality, or the spontaneous features in CMC since the misspelling (*släp... Släklainin*) has not been erased but only repaired after the false start as it is often done in speech. The users do not have norms for writing the English words related to extreme sports and setting up the norms does not seem to be in their interests. They presumably choose to write the foreign words in a way that feels the most convenient for them and is nevertheless comprehensible to the others. In the last message, D in a way sums up the whole message thread by saying that the trip was so successful that they are already planning a new trip to Estonia to an event in which they have been invited to participate.

Example 11 includes a description of a past motocross event. It includes a few instances of insertional language mixing. There are also two discourse-related instances of code-switching.

#### Example 11

- 3 A Kiitos vielä kerran keuruun pojille kunnon opasteista ja puitteista! Vaikka en itse edes kokeillut mopoja niin oli hieno nähdä miten sitä *crossia* oikein viedään 😊 *Ilta sessiotkin* oli taivaan Isän siunaamat, sauna oli kuuma, vesi kylmää ja [name] paistamat letut olivat todella hyviä 😊 Kiitos!
- 4 B *Jes!* Mahtava juttu oli muuten että paikalla ollut naisväki pääsi päristelemään kans kun kalusto sen mahdollisti, oli aika tyytyväisiä ilmeitä 😊 lisää näitä. Jatkopaikka tarjoiluineen oli justiiinsa *perfect* ja [name] leffateatterin yöllinen *extremeleffojen* katselmus kruunas homman. Kiitos hyvästä *sessiosta*.
- 5 C Joo oli kyllä siisti päivä ja ehkä jopa ylitti mun odotuksetkin. Reilut 20 ihmistä paikalla on aika tosi hyvä aloitus moottoripuolen jutuille. Innolla jäädään odottamaan seuraavia juttuja...
- 6 C Ja jatkoa on tulossa... Pohjanmaan pojat suunnitelevat jo seuraavaa *crossipuolen* tapahtumaa ensi syyskuulle Seinäjoen kulmille. Ei ihme, että hyvät tapahtumat herättävät lisää kiinnostusta...

Three participants discuss the past event, give their compliments to the organisers of the event and express their enthusiasm for participating in similar events in the future. User A has inserted two terms which illustrate language mixing: *crossia* 'cross' and *Ilta sessiotkin* 'also the evening sessions'. The first term refers to the specific activity of motocrossing whereas the second term is more general expression describing their evening activities. Also user B thanks for the session (*Kiitos hyvästä sessiosta*) at the end of his message. One can conclude that he refers to the whole event with this term since he describes both the motocross and evening activities



before giving his compliments for the session. All in all, the members of the community often use the words ‘session’ or ‘sessions’ for diverse purposes.

The interjection at the beginning of B’s message *Jes!* ‘yes!’ illustrates an instance of discourse-related code-switching. It contextualises the beginning of his message and gives a positive image of his emotions concerning the past event. Indeed, B describes the event as successful and uses code-switching again in the following sentence: *Jatkopaikka tarjoiluineen oli justinsa perfect* ‘the place along with the catering was just perfect’. The use of the English word gives emphasis to his evaluative comment of the place where they continued their get-together. The overall tone of his message is very positive.

Example 12 includes a description of an event where code-switching is drawn upon. The members report how they felt about a farewell party organised for their mutual friend. In addition to the appraisal of the party, the members use the forum for wishing bon voyage to their friend who is leaving abroad. Thus, code-switching is used in a discourse-related function.

#### Example 12

- 1 A [information on a farewell party]  
 2 A Oli muuten hyvät juhlat. Grillattavaa riitti niin paljon kun jaksoi syödä, ilmapiiri oli mukava ja noin 10 kaveria paikalla. Illan kohokohta oli kun saatiin siunata [name] matkaan kirkolla oman porukan ja koko seurakunnan voimin.  
*Godspeed [name]! We are waiting for you...*  
 3 B Täältä myös terveisiä.. Pidä ittes kunnossa, ja Jeesus mielessä. Äläkä syö liikaa lihaa siellä..  
 4 C *Jes!* Oli hyvät läksärit, mahtavat sapuskat ja hyvä meininki. Tervemenoa Michiganin mies, *keep on keeping on!*  
 5 D Olipa mahtavat juhlat nuo [name] läksiäiset! Illan koho kohta oli todellakin sen kun saatiin siunata [name] kirkossa:) Mut pianhan me taas nähdään! *Godspeed my friend*

The overall activity that is being performed in the message thread is firstly, to give information on the farewell party (the first post written entirely in Finnish) and secondly, comment on the party and address their friend who is leaving abroad. In three posts out of five code-switching from Finnish to English is used for saying words of goodbye to a friend. Interestingly, English is used mainly when addressing the friend who is leaving and who does not even participate in this message thread. The use of English might to some extent relate to the fact that he is leaving to a country where English is used as the language of communication. In a way, they

could be indexing his leaving also by concretely switching to English. By these English phrases they wish him bon voyage and let him understand that he is welcome back to their community, as A in his second post puts it: *We are waiting for you*. It can be interpreted that he is speaking for the whole community by the use of the pronoun ‘we’.

Example 13 shows how feelings are described and communicated to the other users in the forum after an event has taken place. The writer uses both Finnish and English to convey his message in forms of language mixing and code-switching.

### Example 13

5 A       Ka-blam! Mistä tietää että oli hyvä leiri? Varmaan siitä ettei olis halunnu sen loppuvan ja jäi aika kova ikävä sitä *fiilistä* mikä valtas alaa koko ajan lisää.. *Ouluconnection* kiittää ja kumartaa, koska taivaan Isä on hyvä. Me oommeerjoja, me oommeerjoja, se koettelee hermoja..  
*Ride on cowboys & girls!*

In this message, A describes his feelings after a camp they have just spent together. He uses the word *fiilistä* derived from the English equivalent ‘feeling’. This word illustrates an instance of language mixing and it occurs frequently in Finnish youth language, the non-inflected form being ‘fiilis’. Jarva and Nurmi (2006: 51) define ‘fiilis’ as an atmosphere or a mood. It might be that young Finns see the word suitable for describing their experiences in a comprehensive way. In fact, the Finnish language does not have a completely corresponding term that would comprise the various aspects of the word derived from English. In the example, A does not specify his good feeling to any certain emotion and therefore the term ‘fiilis’ could be seen to represent a wide-ranging impression.

User A gives his compliments for the feeling that overwhelmed him, to all the participants and to God as well. The message reveals something about the unity of this community. For instance, A says how he would not have wanted the camp to end and that he misses the feeling that he felt there. At the end of his message, he switches from Finnish to English by attaching an exclamation *Ride on cowboys & girls!* Its meaning can be interpreted from the preceding part of A’s message where he shares his feeling. The exclamation refers to the forum participants and suggests that they form a united group which has a common goal of advancing as a

community. User A also explicitly pays attention to the fact that there are both male and female members in the community. After A's message, three other participants express their positive feelings concerning the time spent together.

In sum, the members of the community maintain their communication after the events. Thus, they pursue interactional goals also through this activity. The members usually share their happy feelings about the past events, thus the tone of the messages is almost always positive. However, messages including critique appear as well, but they are quite rare. Describing the past events is also a means for informing those who could not participate in the action that took place. The messages within this activity include both discourse-related code-switching and language mixing. Code-switching includes greetings, interjections, exclamations and concluding remarks. Language mixing is most often associated with extreme sport terminology.

#### 7.1.4 Sharing information and expert knowledge

The members of the community often encounter specialised jargon connected to a wide range of different extreme sports. It is not self-evident that everyone is familiar with every single sport, their equipment and the special terminology. The members also introduce new sports to the forum and share information about them. Additionally, they discuss themes that relate to carrying out extreme sports, such as music. The message threads including the activity of 'sharing information and expert knowledge' come first and foremost from the different subsections included in the section *Lajikohtainen keskustelu* 'Sport-specific discussion'. The exchanges that exemplify this activity illustrate the use of language mixing for creating a style. Example 14 illustrates sharing of knowledge concerning Christian rap music.

#### Example 14

- 11 A [quote: Mutta jos jollakulla olis infoo hyvistä kristillisistä räppiscenen edustajista, otetaan ilolla vastaan.]  
 ^rölli,jolla on metsässä tölli...okkkeei...ihan tosissaan...Tos löytyy muutamaa:  
 [link] *Down loudaa* enempi uskis räp miksuja...jos oons ura alkaa olla kohta puoleen  
 voitelu tällästen etsimises...se on cool...KUNNIA Jumalalle!  
 Ku kirjaudut (ILMATTEEKES sisään) tuolt voit muutamia tunteja *doun loudata* uskis  
 räbätystä: [link] 😊 *Jep* eiku *down loudaa*...eikä *diggaa* ERITYISESTI: [four links]

- Ihan vaan muutamia mainitakseni... On kuule sen verran hyvää ettei tarvi olla pahoillaan et,se on uskovaa... 😊
- 12 A Tää on ihan SIKA HYVÄ RÄPPI *mixtape: BrighterDaysMixtape* [link] MUISTUTAN et jos DLäät,se on MIX TAPE,eli DJn setti,yhteen *mixattuja* biisej,eli jos nauhoitat *gäppien* kaa,biisien välis tulee katkos,vaikka niin ei pitäis olla...eli äänitä ilman *gäppejä!* 😊

Post 11 by user A is a reply to an earlier message by another user who was interested in getting information about the ‘representatives of Christian rap scene’ (*kristillisitä* [sic] *räppiscenen edustajista*). The use of the word *räppiscenen* exemplifies language mixing where the terms have been, at least partly, integrated into Finnish. User A wants to share his knowledge on Christian rap music and the places where to get it on the Internet. Before sharing the actual information, he playfully refers to a Finnish children’s song. The change in the tone of the message is indicated with an integrated code-switch *okkkeeii...ihan tosissaan* ‘okay...seriously’.

On the whole, A uses a vocabulary that is strongly influenced by English. For the most part, it illustrates continuous language mixing which might reflect user A’s individual speaking style. Despite the heavy use of language mixing, the main language of communication seems to be Finnish. Virtually all the words originating in English are integrated into Finnish. However, user A is not consistent in his use of the English terms. There is variation such as *down/down loudaa* ‘download’. First the English spelling of *down* is preserved and then the word is spelled according to the approximate Finnish pronunciation. Similarly, the variation is visible in the use of the terms *räp miksuja* and *räbätystä* both referring to (mixed) rap music. The orthography of these terms has been notably changed. For example, as regards *räbätystä*, A has decided to replace the consonant graph ‘p’ with ‘b’ and otherwise modify the word to fit it better into the Finnish language. This can be seen as a proof of a very creative language use.

In his following post, A reminds others about the meaning of a *mix tape*. Especially interesting is his way of first using the English-origin term *gäppien/gäppejä* ‘gaps’ and then explaining it in Finnish: *jos nauhoitat gäppien kaa, biisien välis tulee katkos,vaikka niin ei pitäis olla* ‘if you record with gaps, there will be a break between the songs although it shouldn’t be like that’. Surely he could have used a

Finnish equivalent for the word ‘gap’ but he preferred a mixed form with a Finnish explanation.

Example 15 involves an exchange between two community members concerning places for carrying out their sport activities. The exchange is characterised by the use of language mixing.

#### Example 15

- 6 A [name] hei, millasii *spotteja* Rollossa on? tään ite sen yhen *parkin* mis on se puolikas *bowl ja spine setti*. käytiin siel viime kesänä
- 7 B Joo täällä on *streetti spottien*, lisäksi pari *dirttiä* ja ei ne *streetti spotit* täällä oo mitenkää *uber urbaaneja*..

In this informative exchange, first, user A asks from B about the places for bicycle motocrossing (BMX) in B’s home town and second, B gives his response. In the first message, there are instances of insertional language mixing, such as *spotteja* ‘spots’, *parkin* ‘park’, *puolikas bowl ja spine setti* ‘half bowl and spine set’. In his response, user B maintains the use of extreme sports jargon and combines English and Finnish while using the sports terminology. The fact that the participants maintain this sort of professional language presumably reflects their professionalism in the field of their shared interest, that of BMX. One has to be familiar with the sport in order to understand and apply its terminology appropriately.

Additionally, there is one word of German. In this exchange, B uses the word *uber* together with the adjective *urbaaneja* ‘urban’. My impression is that at present, the word *uber* can be characterised as fairly common in Finnish youth language. In this case, the two words start with the same syllable and therefore create a harmonious tone. This instance of language mixing refers to the plural noun *streetti spotit*. Both of these phrases, *streetti spotit* and *uber urbaaneja*, have to be understood in the context of extreme sports in order to capture their intended meaning. Street spots in BMX terminology refer to bicycling in the street and creatively exploiting the urban environment to perform tricks (BBC Sport Academy 2007). User B evaluates the street spots in his home town as *ei mitenkää uber urbaaneja* ‘not particularly uber urban’, apparently saying that they are not particularly suitable for their needs.

Obviously, the exchange is meaningful first and foremost to the participants of the communicative event.

Example 16 illustrates a case of extensive language mixing. The extract shows how the members of the community generously share their expert knowledge with each other. Some code-switching strategies are used, too.

#### Example 16

- 52 A Heeeee! Minkälaiset jalanjatkeet vois tuolta *Swift2Footista* kannattaisi ostaa? Ja miten, pystyykö noilla kuinka sitten esim. kaupungilla huvinvuoksi rullailla? Auttakkee kaverio mäjjes! 😊
- 53 B [quote: Heeeee!] No heeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeiiiiiiiiiiiiii sullekin! 😊  
 [quote: Minkälaiset jalanjatkeet vois tuolta *Swift2Footista* kannattaisi ostaa?]  
 Itse voin kertoa et mikä tahansa mikä jalkaan,tyyliin ja lompakkoon sopii,niin kannattaa...ka toi kauppa ei myy schaissea! REMZit [link to the product] on monen mielest parhaat...mut myös kalleimmat...  
 Mut kyl halvemmallakin pääsee... Itse valitsisin jos hommaisoin nyt uudet *blädät*: USD UFS Throne Dominik Sagona *bootin* eli kenkä osan: [link to the product]  
 Jotkut *anti rocker freimit* kuten noi: KIZER Type "M" Chino Frame [link to the product] (*mätsäis* aika kivast väreihin)  
*UNDERCOVER* Leonov Renkaat [link to the product]  
 ...siin olis mun *kompliitti...smuutti* ja valkoinen...hyvä *souli iso rokkis* tila...hyvä...  
 Mut itse tiiät parhaiten mitkä on *coo*...myös myyjä [name] kyl osaa neuvoo...tää ei kato oo "kesport" ("*we sell everything*") myymälä!  
 [quote: Ja miten, pystyykö noilla kuinka sitten esim. kaupungilla huvinvuoksi rullailla?]  
 Sanotaan näin et kyl voit *chilli rullail* kaupungil.Varmaan poljet nopeempaa kun *mostly skedeejät*. Mut jos poljet *rec(reational)* rullaavien kavereiden kaa,jäät kyl harmittavan paljon jälkeen...ei nää oo niin nopeet ku perus rullaimet. Mut voit kyl muutenki rullailla...  
 Mut *rec rullaimil* ET VOI *grindata*...et sinäänsä temppu rullat on *only do it all skate!*  
 😊  
 [quote: Auttakkee kaverio mäjjes! 😊] Alamäes vauhti kiihtyy! 😊

This is a short excerpt from a long message thread concerning inline skating or rollerblading. User A asks the others about the type of skates one should buy from an online store called *Swift2Foot*. User B offers his knowledge and opinions to A. Because of the forum's quoting possibilities, B has been able to organise his message by attaching A's questions or comments before his answers.

In his elaborate message, B highly recommends the aforementioned online store and describes it by the following sentence: *tää ei kato oo "kesport" ("we sell everything") myymälä!* 'See, this isn't a "kesport" ("we sell everything") store!'. Interestingly, he has attached the voice of 'kesport', the more ordinary sports shop, in English for contrasting different ways of doing business. By the phrase "*we sell*

*everything*”, B obviously refers to shops’ principal aim of selling their products instead of showing a genuine interest towards a customer’s needs. The phrase can thus be interpreted as discourse-related code-switching and a strategy for conveying meanings to the other participants of this communicative context.

As far as the use of extreme sports vocabulary is concerned, B uses plenty of words that derive from English and are in most cases integrated into Finnish, such as *blädät* ‘blades’, *bootin* ‘boot’, *anti rocker freimit* ‘anti rocker frames’, *chilli rullail* ‘chill skate’, *rec(reational)* rullaavien kavereiden ‘rec(reational) skaters’, *grindata* ‘grind’. These terms include mostly nouns and verbs, and they illustrate a style of language mixing. The use of language mixing regarding adjectives is visible when B describes the skates that he prefers. These include words such as *kompliitti* ‘complete’, *smuutti* ‘smooth’ and *coo...* ‘coo[l]’. Additionally, he describes certain types of skates by the following sentence: ‘so as such, the trick skates are only do it all skate! (*et sinäänsä temppu rullat on only do it all skate!*). He seems to want to convey some ideas in English rather than in Finnish: in fact, *do it all skate* can be described as a fixed expression or a slogan within inline skating. Thus, the use of this English slogan can be interpreted as participant-related code-switching in this context indicating user A’s preference for English as far as his professionalism in extreme sports is concerned.

Example 17 illustrates the way in which the participants share specific expert knowledge and introduce new sports to the other members of the community. Again, an abundant use of language mixing is apparent. Discourse-related instances of code-switching are visible, too.

#### Example 17

- 1 A Juuh eli *skiboarding* pohjautuu *Inline luisteluun/temppu luisteluun/ lumilautailuun/newschool hiihtoon* eli *Twintip sukset* pienemmässä koossa koko pyörii 75cm-120cm siteet ovat slalom lumilautojen, normaalit monot käyvät useimpiin.. ja siteethän eivät irtoa jos kaadut mutta on myös normaaleja ``pitkiä siteitä`` mutta aukeamattomissa siteissä loukkaantumis riski on 90 prosenttia jos yrität jotain esim:*halfbackflip-to-neckroll ja mega-muna-misty-7-to-headlandingiä*..muuten mukavin laji mitä tiedän välineet ovat melko kalliitta mutta ei se mitään jos rahaa on liikaa ja siis *snowbleidaus* ei todellakaan ole sama asia *skiboardit* ovat *50/50 tip to tail* ja *snowbleidit* ovat enempi norm laskuksia pienemmöt. Muutamia linkkejä ja videoita----- [three links] ja laitan pian lisää matskua. ADMIN LAITAPPA LAJEIHIN. 😊

- 2 B *Well...snow blädäys* vois mun suhteet näyttää HIPPASEN kummalta...kun oon iso *doude*...olis vähän koomisen näköistä jos meikä vedelis pikkasil suksil...sen takia mielummin hommaisain *twin tip skimbat*... 😊  
[quote: "ADMIN LAITAPPA LAJEIHIN 😊"]  
^olis taitannut betremmin sopia tonne talvi lajejen puolelle *enivei*... 😊
- 3 A Ei muuten näytä hassulta jos on esim 120cm *skiboardit* 120cm sopii 165-175cm 😊niin ja muuten *nu school sukset* on miun mielest huonommat ku koko ajan ne sauvat kädessä ja niil o vaikeempi kääntyä mut ehk niil pysyy paremmin pystys ja ei jalka katkee nii helposti. 😊
- 4 B No,se on mielipide...mullakin toi sauva kysymys on suurin...jeh...suurin *whatsoever*...koska oon tätä nykyään sen verran *blädääjä*,et sauvat ei oo kuul! 😊
- 5 C Hmm.. *bleidaukselta* toi musta näyttää... ikävä kyllä =( Kai toi pieni pituuden lisäys pikkasen vakauttaa menoa, mutta ainakin kuvien ja videoiden *trikit* näyttää juurikin *bleidaukselta* ja se on pahan näköstä ainakin mun silmääni.  
Mistä moinen nimi, *skiboard*? "Board" aika kaukana.
- 6 A Juup eli *skiboardit* tuli ennen snoukkaa mitä mä oon luku. ja *skiboardit* on 50/50 tässä *snowbleidien* ja *skiboardien* ero [link] katoppa toi. huomaat et *skiboardeissa* on 4x4 siteet eli 4 reikää tasan keskellä kun taas ''*lelu bleideissä*'' on 8 reikää ja siteet ei oo keskellä eikä *bleidit* oo *twintipit*. *Skiboardit* ovat kuin 2 pientä lumilautaa kummassakin jalassa ja niillä pystyy *carvata* kunnolla.. tosin suomalaiset eivät tiedä tästä uniikista lajista kovin paljoa. Lue lisää [link]
- 7 A niin ja *skiBOARD* tulee siitä että *skiboardit* ovat leveitä keskeltä päästä ja *tailista*. Eli rutkasti leveämpiä kun *bleidit*.

The initiator of the thread teaches the others rather verbosely about skiboarding, an extreme sport that in his opinion is less known among Finns. He uses English in order to name different sports. For example, the compound words *inline luistelu* 'inline skating' and *new school hiihto* 'newschool skiing' consist of one part in English and the other in Finnish. *Skiboarding* is written in English without adaptations, whereas *snowbleidaus* 'snow blading' is partly adapted according to Finnish pronunciation and morphology. Similarly, A uses English for describing equipment and tricks. At the end of his first post to this thread, A attaches three links and asks for the administrator to create a new section for skiboarding within the sports in the discussion forum. However, skiboarding is not added to the list of different sports, but it remains as a single message thread under the subsection *Muut lajit* 'Other sports'.

The expert knowledge shared by A is not unquestionably accepted, but on the contrary, objected to by users B and C. Herring (2004: 355-356) suggests that criticism, conflict and conflict resolution are, among others, features based on which one can identify an online community. Hence, by presenting arguments and counterarguments constructively, the users build their community. In post 2, B remarks that *snow blädäys* 'snowblading' (he uses this term even though A



specifically emphasised that snowblading and skiboarding are not the same) would not be a suitable sport for him because of his size: *kun oon iso doude* ‘since I’m a big dude’. User A presents his differing view to which B in post 4 answers by stating in Finnish that it is a matter of opinion. This way, B shows that he has no intention to quarrel but to exchange, sometimes differing, opinions.

In post 5, C questions the difference between skiboarding and snowblading since, as he reports, ‘the tricks look just like blading’ (*trikit näyttää juurikin bleidaukselta*). In addition, he wonders about the name *skiboard* since presumably the word ‘board’ does not correspond to his image of a sport where one wears two separate skis. User A takes these comments into account and answers to C by first, linking a photo that shows the difference between skiboards and snowblades, and second, verbally explaining the different qualities of the equipment. In post 7, user A comments on the use of the word ‘board’ in skiboarding, once again, by using language mixing strategies.

All in all, the exchange between A, B and C seems to exemplify a constructive presentation of arguments, which might add to their knowledge about different sports. While having the conversation, the participants use insertional language mixing. They name sports, tricks, equipment and also describe the concepts in English. Instances of discourse-related code-switching appear, too. For example, user B employs words, such as *Well, enivei* ‘anyway’ and *whatsoever*. These are used to contextualise the beginning of his response and the parenthetical remark in post 2, and also the compensatory remark in post 4.

For the most part, the examples within the activity of ‘sharing information and expert knowledge’ include language mixing. The special terminology is used to achieve their communicative goal, i.e. building their shared expertise. Forum participants use frequently professional jargon that is related to their sports or other themes associated with their sports, such as music. Furthermore, the English-origin terms are generally integrated into Finnish. Sometimes the members of the community give outsiders a possibility to familiarise themselves with the various sports and their jargon by attaching links, for instance. Alternatively, they might use the jargon to

communicate meanings with the representatives of the same sports, in which case the messages might be more or less incomprehensible to outsiders.

### 7.1.5 Sharing experiences, feelings and visions

The community members sometimes share very private feelings with each other. Often their profound feelings or experiences are connected to Christian values and ideas. They refer to extreme sports contexts as well. The activity of ‘sharing experiences, feelings and visions’ occurs in all of the four main sections of the forum. Obviously, the forum as a whole is a convenient place for sharing their private thoughts with other like-minded people. The following examples illustrating this activity include both discourse-related code-switching and language mixing. Example 18 illustrates how one forum participant shares his feelings related to faith and extreme sports.

#### Example 18

- 1 A      Avaiillaas tänne juttua, eli minkälaisilla tavoilla teillä lajeissa näkyy tai "tuntuu" usko, tuleeko omaa lajia harrastaessa mietittyä uskonasioita vai täytyykö ajatukset jollain ihan muulla, vai tyhjeneeks pää kokonaan? [describing the experiences]  
 Monesti näit juttui pitää itsestäänselvyyksinä, sitä lähtee mäkeen ja laskee, tekee juttuja ja nauttii, mut sit kun hommiin lähtee kiitollisin mielin ja antaa kunnian Jumalalle, niin juttuihin tulee ihan toisenlainen iloisuus ja syvyys, niinku *next level* tai jotain. *Commit your riding to the Lord, yeah!*  
 Onks ollu samanlaisii *fiiliksiä* omis lajeissa vai oonks mä vaan höperö?
- 3 B      [comments on A's experiences]  
 [quote: Monesti näit juttui pitää itsestäänselvyyksinä, sitä lähtee mäkeen ja laskee, tekee juttuja ja nauttii, ]  
 ^säälä vaan joskus tälleinki tapahtuu...*I am just a human!*  
 [quote: mut sit kun hommiin lähtee kiitollisin mielin ja antaa kunnian Jumalalle, niin juttuihin tulee ihan toisenlainen iloisuus ja syvyys, niinku *next level* tai jotain. *Commit your riding to the Lord, yeah!*]  
 ^*WORD!!!*  
 [final comments and greetings]

The extract includes both code-switching and language mixing. User A has inserted English elements, *next level* and *fiiliksiä* ‘feelings’, which can be described as language mixing. They do not have a local meaning within the interaction, but they function as alternative ways of describing one’s thoughts. The rest of the English elements in the two posts can be described as discourse-related code-switching since they contextualise the ends of the users’ turns.

According to the interactive nature of discussion forums, user A asks how the others ‘perceive or “feel” faith’ while performing the extreme sports activities (*minkälaisilla tavoilla teillä lajeissa näkyy tai “tuntuu” usko*). He also wonders whether the others feel the same way as he (*Onks ollu samanlaisii fiiliksiä*). Interestingly, he has marked the verb ‘feel’ by quotation marks in Finnish (“*tuntuu*”) while using the originally English word *fiiliksiä* (‘feelings’) as unmarked. The word ‘fiilis’ has been more or less established at least in Finnish youth language. It might be a convenient term to use since it does not have a fully corresponding word in Finnish. The Finnish alternative ‘tunteet’ corresponds more to ‘emotions’ in English. The use of this term was analysed also in example 13.

Additionally, A inserts an English element in his post in describing his feelings, saying that the cheerfulness caused by engaging in the sports goes *next level* when one is grateful and gives glory to God. Towards the end of his message, A switches code and captures his experience in the exclamation *Commit your riding to the Lord, yeah!* which originates from the slogan of Eternal Riders, an international group of Christians in the field of extreme sports. The exclamation emphasises the content of his post. User B quotes some of A’s phrases and uses English in his response, too. He says it is a pity that one sometimes takes things for granted, but then justifies it by switching to English: *I am just a human!* At the end of his message, B shows his strong agreement with A’s message through the unique interjection *WORD!!!*

Example 19 describes an inventive way of using insertional language mixing when sharing one’s plans or visions.

#### Example 19

- 1 A [description of the plan to spread the gospel to people interested in extreme sports]  
Palavasti kiinnostuneita on nyt muutamia ns. katulajien parista ja hommaa on pohdittu mm. ensi kesän *roadtrippien* merkeissä, esim. kotimaisten *skedeparkkien* ja *biitsien* kiertäminen *grill & chill & Jesus tyylillä* olisi yksi käytännön tapa viedä evankeliumia mestoille harrastajien omalla kielellä. Tätäkin on käytännössä kokeiltu jo ja siitä rohkaistuneena on hyvä jatkaa. Lisäksi laskukausi on alkamassa ja tuleva talvi tarjoaa hyvän mahdollisuuden viedä sanomaa lumille.  
Herättääkö *fiiliksiä*? Pistä *meilä* tai kirjoitele tänne.
- 2 B Iskuryhmä on tosi hieno idea 🤔

User A shares his vision about the following summer’s plans for the community. He says that they have been planning to ‘visit skate parks and beaches with a grill &

chill & Jesus style’ (*skedeparkkien ja biitsien kiertäminen grill & chill & Jesus tyylillä*). Thus, he uses language mixing for describing the nature of their planned action, combining relaxed social activity and the ideas of Christianity. User A makes a unique choice of words (*grill & chill & Jesus*) which have been combined as if a slogan for marketing the ideas that the community represents.

The names for the places are given in integrated forms. The spelling of *Biitsien* imitates the pronunciation of the word with a Finnish case ending ‘i’. *Skedeparkkien* includes a considerable variation from ‘skate’ to ‘skede’ and an attachment of ‘park’ with a duplication of ‘k’ and a Finnish case ending ‘i’. In addition, both of the words have been inflected according to Finnish morphology. Furthermore, A inquires the other community members’ opinions about the plan. Once again, the word *fiiliksiä* (‘feelings’) is used (see also examples 13 and 18). This time the word is used for enquiring one’s attitude to certain ideas: ‘Does this invoke any feelings?’ (*Herättääkö fiiliksiä?*). User A receives one answer to his post where B comments on the suggested plan as a great idea.

Example 20 illustrates the negotiation of some of the terms used in the communication between the forum users and shows how they share their dreams with other members of the community. The example illustrates insertional language mixing.

#### Example 20

- 1 A Mulla olis kolme reissuhaavetta ens vuoden alkupuolelle.  
 1.Jos viettäis helmikuun rukoillen, purjelaudaillen, *kiteillen*, ehkäpä jopa surffaillen (epätodennäköistä) El Medanossa Teneriffalla.  
 2. Ja sit maaliskuun viettäis jossain joko Suomen pohjoisessa hiihtokeskuksessa tai alpeilla ylistäen, rukoillen ja lasketellen.  
 3. Sit pisteenä I:n päälle vois tehdä viikon *extreme haikkaus reissun* vaikkapa Kilpisjärvelle.  
 [further description of the trips]
- 2 B Eli kiinnostuin kaikista mutta kaiketi mahdollisuuksin piiriin voisi kuulua se piste iin päällä eli reissu esim kilpisjärvelle. Mietin että mitä *Extreme haikkailu* pitää sisällään? Onkosiihen sisällytetty jotain *x-meininkiä* vai onko sinne lähtiät vaan niin äärimmäisiä?
- 3 A *Extreme haikkaus reissu* pitää ainakin mun mielestä sisällään rinteiden nousuja ilman hissiä 😊 Ja ehkä nukkumista ulkona... En ole koskaan ollut *haikkaamassa* pohjoisessa niin en tiedä miten siellä kannattais majoittua. Joku eräkämppähän olis ihan luksusta!

User A presents his dreams for excursions of the following year. First, he would like to go to Tenerife to pray, windsurf, kiteboard or surf. Second, he would like to spend

time either in north of Finland or in the Alps worshipping, praying and skiing. Third, he might do an ‘extreme hiking trip’ (*extreme haikkaus reissun*) to Kilpisjärvi. The first two dreams explicitly incorporate Christianity and extreme sports activities.

User B expresses his interest in all the trips presented by A, but acknowledges that the third trip would be in the realms of possibility. He further inquires about the meaning of ‘extreme hiking’ (*extreme haikkailu*). Interestingly, he has modified the term *extreme haikkaus reissu* ‘extreme hiking trip’ used by A into *extreme haikkailu* ‘extreme hiking’. Hence, the English word is modified into two possible forms in Finnish. It seems that the participants have no difficulties in adapting practicable English words in Finnish according to their communicative needs.

By his question, B reveals that the concepts used in the interaction between the community members are not all unambiguous in terms of their meaning. User B evidently wants to know what in A’s opinion is included in extreme hiking. He draws on the concept of extreme sports when asking whether the trip includes ‘x-action’ (*x-meininkiä*), which could be interpreted as referring to serious extreme sports activities. He continues his question by asking: ‘or are the goers just so extreme?’ (*vai onko sinne lähtiät vaan niin äärimmäisiä?*). This seems to indicate a playful tone of the message since the Finnish translation of extreme, ‘*äärimäinen*’, and its equation with extreme sports is rare. This humorous comment might also soften B’s request for clarification of the term ‘extreme hiking’. After all, the word ‘extreme’ represents one of the fundamental concepts used in this community. Jousmäki (2006: 56-57) points out that the use of ‘extreme’ is becoming more and more general in Finnish, and it is not used only within sports terminology but in other contexts, too.

In post 3, A answers to B and gives his own definition of ‘extreme hiking trip’ (*extreme haikkaus reissu*), thus adhering to his original term. Nevertheless, he uses the concept yet in another form, spelling the term as *haikkaamassa* ‘hiking’. Various representations of the same term indicate an emergence of a group of semantically related expressions.

In sum, while performing the activity of ‘sharing experiences, feelings and visions’ the participants share their thoughts and at the same time, negotiate meanings of

words, for instance. Of course, realisation of plans or dreams demands a common understanding of the concepts. Since the community members are involved in new and inventive sports, they have to compare their thoughts in order to come up with shared meanings. The interactional goal of this activity is closely related to the ultimate purpose of the community. The ideas of Christianity are therefore strongly present and connected to carrying out extreme sports activities.

## **7.2 Construction of identities within lifestyle discourses**

At the second level of my analysis, I concentrate on three lifestyle discourses which are relevant for the construction of identities by the community members. Often code-switching and language mixing have a central role in this kind of identity-work. In fact, it has been shown that language use in virtual environments “is related to the construction of social beliefs, cultural representations, and collective identities” (Lam 2004: 48). Some of these constructions conform to the prevailing discourses of society; others might be more confrontational aiming to create diversity. Thus, this level of analysis offers a different perspective to the data of this study by presenting the identities of the group and paying attention to broader social and cultural backgrounds of the topics discussed.

Based on the topics of each message thread including the use of English and the perspectives the forum participants adopted to the topics, I identified three different discourses in the forum and paid attention to the participants’ positioning to these discourses both as individuals and as a group. By drawing on the specific discourses of the community with the help of code-switching and language mixing, the members perform their individual and social identities. Thus, the three discourses present different identity aspects and together they all contribute to the construction of identities. It has been pointed out that instead of studying identity aspects separately “it seems more productive to investigate co-constructions and co-articulations of positions in discourse” (Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulou 2003: 1). The identities that are performed in discourses may also be in hybrid forms (Gee 2006: 30). The discourses presented in the following sections are named ‘discourse of Christianity’, ‘extreme sports discourse’ and ‘youth culture discourse’. To a

certain degree, the discourses manifest themselves throughout the discussion forum since the participants continuously draw on their identity aspects in the communicative situations. However, each of the three lifestyle discourses exemplifies a particular main section of the forum.

### 7.2.1 Discourse of Christianity

English is used in the forum as a resource for evoking ideas and values related to Christian ideology. In particular, the forum section *Usko* 'Faith' is reserved for discussing topics related to the Christian way of life. Literacy, with a focus on the Bible, helps to build the discourse of Christianity. Literacy events include situations in which the participants are actively involved in interaction around written texts (Barton and Hamilton 2000: 8). In a typical literacy event, a forum participant uses the Bible as a reference and attaches a certain verse both in Finnish and in English to his or her post. Through these passages from the Bible, the participants define themselves as Christians. Attaching the citations in two languages might be due to the fact that the young Finnish Christians have necessary language skills to read the Bible in English, and that many Christians like to compare different versions of the book in order to find out the meaning of a certain passage, for example. The following extracts include also an example where the content of the posts in the message thread is in Finnish and English has been used for organising the discourse. Short interjections and longer comments in English appear in the messages, too.

In example 21, user A has cited the Bible in order to present the Christian views found in the particular verse as relevant in his life. In fact, the message thread comes from a section of the forum that was reserved for attaching significant Bible verses.

#### Example 21

- 1 A "Hän parantaa ne, joiden mieli on murtunut, hän sitoo heidän haavansa."  
*"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."*  
 Iski meitsiin *like a ton of bricks*. *Eternalridersien* mallistossa on muuten makee paita  
*"Broken"* viittauksella tuohon psalmiin, *tsek aut*: [link]
- 2 B *Amen!* Sanoihan Jeesuskin kun fariseukset ihmetteli et minkä takia Hän hengailee  
 syntisten ja publikaanien kanssa että; Eivät terveet tarvitse parantajaa vaan sairaat.  
 Markus 2:17

The topic of these messages is based on a passage from the book of psalm 147, verse 3. Thus, the exchange illustrates a literacy event in which users A and B discuss how God helps those who are “*Broken*”. The exchange includes instances of code-switching from Finnish to English: the Bible verse is written first in Finnish and then repeated in English. The English verse comes from New International Version (*The Holy Bible*, NIV 1984). Attaching the verse in two languages in his message indicates that user A orients towards Finnish and English as separate codes. At the same time, he treats them both as meaningful codes to the other the participants in the forum. This becomes evident also in his following sentence where he, with the help of code-switching, comments on the effect that the verse had on him. He combines Finnish with an idiomatic English expression: *Iski meitsiin like a ton of bricks* ‘It hit me like a ton of bricks’. In this way, he also subscribes to the message of the Bible verse on a personal level, perhaps indicating that he might associate himself with those who are broken.

User A further elaborates the English verse by referring to a t-shirt that has the label “*Broken*” printed on it. This way, linking the verse also in English becomes increasingly relevant. The t-shirt is a part of a collection by Eternalriders, an international extreme sports community. Thus, user A also makes a reference to another group of people in the field of extreme sports who, above all, share similar ideology with them. In a sense, A indicates that outside their community, there are people who find this Bible verse, the Bible as a whole and the Christian faith relevant as regards to their lifestyles. He also attaches a link to the t-shirt collection of Eternalriders by using a colloquial discourse-related instance of code-switching *tsek aut* which invites the other forum members to visit the link.

Judging by the message posted by user B, the Bible verse that A attached is meaningful to him, too. He agrees with A by saying *Amen!* according to English orthography of the word. This interjection contextualises the beginning of his message and is an indication of the use of religious language. User B elaborates the meaning of the psalm and refers to another Bible verse phrasing it in his own words, saying that it is the sick, that is to say the broken ones, who need a healer. Together these two participants perform and construct a certain kind of Christian identity, positioning Christians as people who can be broken-hearted. All in all, it seems that



young Finnish Christians draw on the Bible to make meanings, use English as a resource for communicating their ideas and identities as Christians.

In example 22, there is also a Bible verse written in Finnish and followed by an English version of the verse. The English version comes from New International Version (*The Holy Bible*, NIV 1984). The use of English represents code-switching but there are two instances of insertional language mixing as well.

### Example 22

- 1 A Aivan mahtava kohta, kertoo nimenomaan kaiken olennaisen.  
 5) Emmehän me julista sanomaa itsestämme vaan Jeesuksesta Kristuksesta: Jeesus on Herra, ja hän on lähettänyt meidät palvelemaan teitä. 6) Jumala, joka sanoi: "Tulkoon pimeyteen valo", valaisi itse meidän sydämemme. Näin Jumalan kirkkaus, joka säteilee Kristuksen kasvoilta, opitaan tuntemaan, ja se levittää valoaan. 7) Tämä aarre on meillä saviastioissa, jotta nähtäisiin tuon valtavan voiman olevan peräisin Jumalasta eikä meistä itsestämme. 😊 Me olemme kaikin tavoin ahtaalla mutta emme umpikujassa, neuvottomia mutta emme toivottomia, 9) vainottuja mutta emme hylättyjä, maahan lyötyjä mutta emme tuhottuja. 10) Me kannamme aina ruumiissamme Jeesuksen kuolemaa, jotta myös Jeesuksen elämä tulisi meidän ruumiissamme näkyviin.  
 5) *For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6) For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," [a]made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. 7) But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 😊 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9) persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 10) We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.*
- 2 A Jaha, tulkitsi sitten näköjään nuo merkit hymiöiks. No, eihän se mitään meinaa. Raamatun sana on kyllä sen verran *coolia*, että aivan syystä...
- 3 B Todellakin!!!  
 Kuvaan niin hyvin *Godspeedin* alkuvaiheita. On ollu niin paljon vaikeuksia ja vastoinkäymisiä, että välillä on meinannut itseltäkin usko kadota näihin juttuihin, mutta Jumala ei oo antanu periks ja homma menee edelleen eteenpäin. Olosuhteista huolimatta!

The Bible verse in post 1 concerns the difficulties in a Christian's life. At the beginning of his message, user A comments on the verse in Finnish and describes it as an absolutely impressive verse. The passage comes from 2 Corinthians 4, verses 5-10, which user A has indicated in the heading of his post. Similarly to the previous example, attaching the Bible verse in two languages represents code-switching from Finnish to English. User A does not give reasons for attaching the English version but he might want to emphasise the message of the verse with English or he sees the English version somehow making the message clearer.

In post 2, user A comments on the Bible in general as a result of the smiley faces which appeared in his initial post. Apparently, the forum settings interpreted number eight followed by a parenthesis as a 'smiley'. User A accepts the use of smileys in his post since 'the word of the Bible is so cool' (*Raamatun sana on kyllä sen verran coolia*). He describes the Bible, the holy book of Christians, by the English insertion *coolia* which is related to youth language in general. Hence, he evaluates the Bible as significant concerning his life as a Christian and the lifestyle of the whole community. Indeed, user B confirms the significance of the Bible to this community as he states how well this verse describes the difficulties the corporation had in its initial stage. However, he emphasises that this group has stayed together.

Example 23 provides another example of using code-switching and linking different translations of the Bible. The user has first attached the verse according to the Finnish Bible version published in 1933/1938, then the newer Finnish version from year 1992 and finally two different English versions, from Amplified Bible and The Message. He has indicated this at the beginning of each version in his message. The verses are from Philippians 2, verses 12-13. The use of English in this post illustrates code-switching.

### Example 23

- 1 A 33/38:  
 12 Siis, rakkaani, samoin kuin aina olette olleet kuuliaisat, niin ahkeroinen, ei ainoastaan niinkuin silloin, kun minä olin teidän tykönänne, vaan paljoa enemmän nyt, kun olen poissa, pelolla ja vavistuksella, että pelastuisitte; 13 sillä Jumala on se, joka teissä vaikuttaa sekä tahtomisen että tekemisen, että hänen hyvä tahtonsa tapahtuisi.  
 92:  
 12 Siksi, rakkaat ystävät, niin kuin olette aina totelleet minua, kun olen ollut luonanne, totelkaa vielä enemmän nyt, kun olen poissa: tehkää peläten ja vavisten työtä pelastuaksenne. [1. Piet. 1:17] 13 Jumala saa teissä aikaan sen, että tahdotte tehdä ja myös teette niin kuin on hänen hyvä tarkoituksensa.  
*amplified:*  
*12Therefore, my dear ones, as you have always obeyed [my suggestions], so now, not only [with the enthusiasm you would show] in my presence but much more because I am absent, work out (cultivate, carry out to the goal, and fully complete) your own salvation with reverence and awe and trembling (self-distrust, [a]with serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation, timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ). 13[Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while [b]effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and [c]delight.*  
*the message:*  
*12-13What I'm getting at, friends, is that you should simply keep on doing what you've done from the beginning. When I was living among you, you lived in responsive obedience. Now that I'm separated from you, keep it up. Better yet, redouble your*

*efforts. Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God. That energy is God's energy, an energy deep within you, God himself willing and working at what will give him the most pleasure.*

+++++

Enempi englanniks voitte käännellä tota (tms.) paikkaa: [link to a site with different Bible versions] 😊 -BLESSAUSTA KAIKILLE-

The topic of the Bible verse concerns a Christian way of life. Reading and studying different versions of the Bible is presumably important for user A. It seems that attaching the different versions in two languages functions as a way of introducing more than one viewpoint to the same passage. In a sense, they are all different codes and whenever user A has attached a new version to his post, he has switched code. Thus, English alongside Finnish functions as a meaningful resource for studying the Bible and making its relevance visible concerning the Christian way of life.

At the end of his message, A recommends viewing different English translations of the Bible and gives a link to a site where one can find various Bible versions. Apparently, the participants exploit the possibilities of the virtual environment also in terms of Christianity, by sharing links to websites that relate to the Bible, for instance. Finally, A wishes God's blessing to everyone by modifying the English expression and says: *BLESSAUSTA KAIKILLE* 'GOD BLESS YOU ALL'. The phrase represents an instance of discourse-related code-switching in form of a greeting. The use of this greeting illustrates the construction of a shared Christian identity among the forum members: user A positions himself and the readers of this message as Christians to whom this kind of greeting is meaningful. This seems to be a unique way of using English in the context of Christianity since the expression is not an established as a greeting in the community, not at least in the discussion forum messages.

In example 24, one participant refers to a Bible verse and phrases it in his own words in Finnish. Another participant elaborates the meaning of the verse, refers to a similar verse from elsewhere in the Bible and finally attaches the Bible verse cited by the first participant in its entirety. However, the participants refer to the Bible in Finnish at all times and the use of English is reserved for organising their discourse. Thus, code-switching occurs in discourse-related function.

## Example 24

- 1 A Elikkä uskoisin, että aika moni tietää mitä on parkour? *Anyway* itse olen uskova lajin edustaja ja siksi tämä Raamatunkohta on kolahtanu 😊 Joka menee suunnilleen näin: "Jumalan avulla hyppään muurien yli..."
- 2 B *Amen!* Psalmista 18:30 löytyy ja 2. Samuelin kirja 22 kans.. "Sinä, Herra, sytytät minun lamppuni, sinä, Jumala, tuot pimeyteeni valon. Sinun avullasi minä ryntään yli vallien, Jumalani avulla minä hyppään muurien yli. Jumalan ohjeet ovat täydelliset, Herran sana on kirkas ja puhdas. Kuin kilpi hän suojaa niitä, jotka hakevat hänestä turvaa." Psalmi 18:28-30 *Jeah*.

This extract presents a combination of discourses: it involves a reference both to the extreme sports discourse and to the discourse of Christianity. In post 1, user A refers to an extreme sport called parkour. He presumes that others know what it means and indicates that it is not the actual topic of his message by an English insertion *anyway*. In a way, he changes the topic but implies that knowing the sport is important in grasping the meaning of the Bible verse that he refers to. Parkour, the sport that he represents, involves using a city environment creatively for moving from one place to another. People training parkour do jumps over high walls, for instance. User A refers to this activity when he cites the verse *Jumalan avulla hyppään muurien yli* 'with my God I can jump over a wall' (*The Holy Bible*, New Life version 1969). The Bible is thus drawn on when creating a profound meaning for carrying out one's sport. At the same time, A positions himself first and foremost as a Christian who is interested in parkour.

In B's message *Amen!* is used for showing a personal agreement with the previous post. It also contextualises the beginning of the post. User B elaborates A's message by mentioning another book of the Bible and quoting a longer extract from the psalm that A already cited. This way, he for his part performs an extreme sports person's identity within the discourse of Christianity. He also stresses the message of the verse in English with *Jeah* which in its turn contextualises the end of his post.

Example 25 differs from the previous examples within the discourse of Christianity since it does not include citations from the Bible. However, the Christian discourse is otherwise drawn on and also this time, combined with the extreme sports discourse. The message has been posted to the forum during the members' excursion to Estonia. It involves both language mixing and discourse-related instances of code-switching in forms of a greeting and a postscript in English.

## Example 25

- 3 A [description of an excursion]  
 Täällä on nyt sitte pistetty *ständiä* pystyyn ja luotu kontakteja ym.. Kohta lähdetään paikalliselle *skedeparkille* vetään omaa *X-treme workshoppia* ja evankelioimaan *bossea*. Notta sellasta tällä kertaa..  
*Peace out, Finland.*  
*Ps. Death is not welcome here kicks ass! Seriously!*

The main topic of this message is to describe the community members' activities while they are visiting Estonia. However, the message is best characterised by references to the fundamental concepts of Christianity and the ways in which the community's Christian lifestyle becomes elicited in the post.

The use of insertional language mixing is evident in A's message while he describes their action. For example, the sentence *lähdetään paikalliselle skedeparkille vetään omaa X-tremeworkshoppia ja evankelioimaan bossea* 'we are going to the local skate park to organise our own X-treme workshop and to evangelise the posse' positions the group both as people interested in extreme sports and as Christians. This is done by combining the activities of 'X-treme workshop' and the practice of evangelising. As a whole, this combination presumably includes performing extreme sports activities, welcoming outsiders to participate and sharing thoughts on Christianity with those who are not familiar with the Christian faith.

In addition, the word *bosse* is derived from the English word 'posse', which is commonly used in Finnish hip-hop and rap lyrics, for instance (Leppänen 2007: 159). In this case, the word is modified by replacing consonant graph 'p' with 'b'. It might be a case of back-formation including the false assumption that the word is originally written with 'b' in English. On the other hand, it may be an indication of the fact that for a Finnish person, the difference between these consonants is not great. Hence, it might be used for styling the word into a more refined layout. In an informal context, this sort of variation seems possible and gives a hint of personal touch to the use of the word 'posse'. All in all, user A innovatively combines terminology from the fields of extreme sports, Christianity and hip-hop.

In his greeting *Peace out, Finland*, user A addresses other members of the community in Finland and at the same time signals that he is writing from abroad.

Once again, the greeting can be connected to hip-hop culture. Additionally, A's postscript *Death is not welcome here kicks ass! Seriously!* functions as a way of ending the message and it is probably connected to promoting Christian ideology. In Christianity, life and death as well as light and darkness are often contrasted. The basis of Christianity, the faith in Jesus Christ as the conqueror of death, is the reference point to the use of these opposite terms (see Hick 1992: 61). In order to emphasise his views and perhaps distinguishing the tone of the last phrase from that of the rest of the message, A adds the English adverb *Seriously!* Hence, he treats the Christian faith as a substantial matter in his own life and probably that of the whole community as he uses English to position himself and the others as defenders of Christianity.

Example 26 is the last example in this section and it includes a Bible passage in Finnish and a code-switched utterance in English in the midst of the commentary part at the end of the message.

#### Example 26

- 1 A Sillä vaikka minä olen riippumaton kaikista, olen tehnyt itseni kaikkien palvelijaksi, voittaakseni niin monta kuin suinkin. ja olen ollu juutalaisille ikäänkuin juutalainen, voittaakseni juutalaisia; lain alaisille ikäänkuin lain alainen, vaikka itse en ole lain alainen, voittaakseni lain alaiset; ilman lakia oleville ikäänkuin olisin ilman lakia - vaikka en ole ilman Jumalan lakia, vaan olen Kristuksen laissa - voittaakseni ne, jotka ovat ilman lakia; heikoille minä olen ollut heikko, voittaakseni heikot; kaikille minä olen ollut kaikkea, pelastaakseni edes muutamia.  
Miten me..  
Lumilautailijoille lumilautailija, skeittaajille skeittaaja, autoilijoille autoilija, motoristina motoristeille... *It's our mission.* Voittaaksemme Herralle edes muutamia.

In this extract, user A summarises the ultimate purpose of the members of the community. He quotes the Bible and applies its message to their lives as Christians interested in extreme sports. He cites Apostle Paul's words (1 Corinthians 9, verses 19-22) in Finnish. The last phrase summarises the passage: 'I have become like every person so in every way I might lead some to Christ' (*The Holy Bible*, New Life Version 1984). According to A, anyone of them can be 'a snowboarder to snowboarders, a skater to skaters' (*Lumilautailijoille lumilautailija, skeittaajille skeittaaja*) etc. that is "to find common ground with everyone" as New Living Translation (*The Holy Bible*, New Living Translation 1996) puts it.

The instance of discourse-related code-switching *It's our mission* clearly evokes the Christian ideology of spreading the gospel. The word *mission* has a specific meaning in relation to “the activities of a group of Christians who have been sent to a place to teach people about Christianity” (Collins Cobuild English dictionary for advanced learners 2001: 988). The phrase serves as an encouragement, addressing all the members in the community by the possessive pronoun ‘our’. Thus, user A puts the cited Bible verse into context of their social identities and lifestyles, to concern everyone in the community. Evidently, he wants to share his vision with the other like-minded people and depict it as their shared mission of spreading the gospel among those people who are interested in the same sports as they are.

All in all, the message threads describing the ‘discourse of Christianity’ draw on the Bible as a resource for sharing ideas and justifying their lifestyles above all as Christians. Hence, literacy seems to play an important role in the community practices, reflecting the significance of the Bible for the forum members. English functions as a resource for quoting various versions of the Bible verses, commenting on the verses or other Christian ideas and organising discourse in general. The quotes from the Bible are in most cases authentic; sometimes the users have phrased ideas derived from the Bible in their own words. In addition, English is used for specifically pointing out the meanings of the Bible in one’s life and for performing one’s identity as a Christian with an interest in extreme sports. The members of the community position themselves both as individuals and as a group within the Christian aspect of their shared lifestyle.

### **7.2.2 Extreme sports discourse**

The participants of the forum often concentrate on talking about extreme sports, which involves the use of specific, professional vocabulary. This is done especially in the forum section *Lajikohtainen keskustelu* ‘Sport-specific discussion’. Using English, in most cases integrated into Finnish in terms of orthography and morphology, seems to be an established way of naming the forum members’ shared activities, equipment and tricks. This was seen already in examples 15-17 in

particular. Hence, the words that they use carry meanings especially in the context of extreme sports.

It has been pointed out that “the meanings of words are also integrally linked to and vary across different social and cultural groups” (Gee 2006: 53). Consequently, certain words have their own specialised meaning among Christians interested in extreme sports. The forum members can express different interrelated meanings through their professional jargon. On the one hand, English may give a unique character for the actions taken by this particular group. On the other hand, it might evoke global connections to international communities of extreme sports and similar activities performed in them.

Example 27 comes from the same message thread as did example 4. The thread was originally meant mainly for skateboarders or BMX riders. User A protests against this definition and asks why rollerbladers are not included in the intended audience of the message thread. This leads on to an exchange between users A and B. The extract is characterised mainly by language mixing.

#### Example 27

- 3 A [quote from the heading: Skedeejille/Bmx-jannuille] Mihin *blädääjät* jäi listoilt??
- 4 B Onko niitäkin O\_o Tervetuloa mukaan vaan jos reissua saadaan aikaseksi 😊
- 5 A Niinku näet meitä on...ainakin täs yx...ainoostaan en oo taitava...mut Rakastan Jeesusta, ja tykkään *blädätä* ja kehittyä omal tahdillani!
- 6 B Heh ja mun *skedeys taidot* on melko olemattomat myös mutta tärkeintähän onkin hauskanpito ollu koko lajissa alunperin.
- 7 A NO TODELLAKIN! 😡 Vaikka esim. *snoukkauski* on muuttunut tsillein...et HUH... Ku alotin jengi kyseli: "osaatsä metodin?" ...ei enään... nykyään ne kyseläe et kuin paljon sä *spinnaat*... 😊 Mun vastaus: "EN *SPINNAA*...oon REHELLISEN *old school*"...like that... *Old school* myös meinaa sitä etten talvella vaivaudu menee serenaan vetää jää rännis olevaa isoint kikkeriä vesi satees... oon siihen LIIAN vanha ja LIIAN mukavuuden haluinen...  
Mut *RISPEKTIT* skideille jotka vetää kaikkea ilmas kun ilmas tai sit *reilil*... 😊
- 8 B *Jeh*. Todellakin näin. Jännää on se että lempitemppuihin *skedellä* sisältyy *bonelessit* yms *oldskool tempu* vaikken niiden kulta aikaan ole edes kuullutkaan vielä *skedeyksestä*. Ne vaan on niin kivoja ja siistejä... 😊 Tekniikkapuoli on sentääs kehittynyt jo jotenkuten ja nyt saan jopa *360flipin* hyvinä päivinä \*oooooh\*.

The topic of the discussion is the primacy of having fun over one's skills in various extreme sports, such as rollerblading, skateboarding and snowboarding. The participants also talk about their preferred tricks and their approach to extreme sports in general. In the fifth message of the thread, A alludes both to the Christian and the



extreme athlete's aspects of his identity and in a way, justifies his participation in the extreme sports forum meant for Christians by stating: 'only that I'm not skilled...but I love Jesus, and I like to rollerblade' (*ainoostaan en oo taitava...mut Rakastan Jeesusta, ja tykkään blädätä*). All in all, he seems to value one's personal faith and attitude to rollerblading more than the technical skills. While the first part of his sentence is in Finnish, an instance of language mixing is inserted in the part where he describes himself as a rollerblader. In post 6, user B adheres to the extreme sports aspect and says how his *skedeys taidot* 'skateboarding skills' are almost non-existent, thus also drawing on insertional language mixing when describing himself as a skater. This leads to a serious discussion of their characters as extreme sports people.

The discussion between users A and B focuses especially on the notion of 'old school' in reference to a specific approach to extreme sports. In the seventh message, user A defines it with the help of language mixing as follows: *EN SPINNAA...oon rehellisen old school ...like that...* 'I don't spin... I'm truthfully old school ...like that...'. As he quotes and describes himself as a snowboarder, he demonstrates how English is an integral part of his way of speaking and also his identity. In addition, he elaborates the meaning of the term 'old school' by saying that he does not bother to do risky tricks during the winter time but wants to give his 'respects' (*RISPEKTIT*) to those young people who do anything in any kind of weather. Thus, he recognises other people as creditable representatives of extreme sports even though he positions himself differently, preferring other modes of conduct. The notion of 'respect' is central in hip-hop discourse and therefore, he makes a reference to hip-hop culture as well (see Berns and Schlobinski 2003: 201). Generally speaking, hip-hop terminology is often referred to by participants in this forum. It has been recognised that hip-hop is connected to many extreme sports, skateboarding for instance (see Harinen et al. 2006: 34).

For the most part, the extract is characterised by abundant use of insertional language mixing in the form of extreme sports terminology. Hence, extreme sports discourse is evoked by the use of English and identities related to this lifestyle become elicited within it. There are nouns, such as *blädääjät* 'bladers', *skedeys taidot* 'skateboarding skills', *snoukkauski* 'snowboarding', *oldskool tempu* 'old school tricks', *bonelessit* 'bonelesses', *360flipin* 'a 360 flip', *skedeyksestä* 'about skateboarding', *skedellä*

‘with the skateboard’, *reilil* ‘in the rail’, *old school*, and verbs, such as *blädätä* ‘to blade’ and *spinnaat* ‘you spin’. The sports terminology is almost always integrated into Finnish, which seems to be a normal practice in the discussion forum. This way, the users adapt the terminology to their own purposes. In this example, the users present their identities and position themselves as people interested in various kinds of extreme sports, as rollerbladers, skateboarders and snowboarders, but who are nevertheless united by a similar attitude to performing these identities.

Example 28 concerns more specifically the relation of sport equipment to an individual’s identity and character as a rollerblader. Language mixing for creating a personal style is evident in user A’s message. There is also an instance of code-switching representing an apology.

#### Example 28

- 33 A [quote from B: ZUups tootaa mun tarkoitus olis hommata rullat ennen kesää pitää ny katto miten edistyy ja laita sit infoo ku se rastila juttu on selevä.....]  
 juu...askel kerrallaan VALLATAAN MAAILMA... 😊  
 (sorri kuuntelen *uskis räbää*...pakko vähän paukuttaa!!!)  
 [quote from B: [link] Tollaset kiinnostais mua, mitäs mielt sä oot? 😊]  
 Joo,ihan kohtis *beisik blädät*,varma valinta! 😊 Toikin on aika hyvä valinta: [link]  
 ...ainoastaan niiden kaa kantsis hommaa *rokkis(=grindi) freimit...tai rokkis pyörät...*  
 keskelle...koska *rokkis juttu* on *must* jos tykkää *grindailla*,jos ilmat on se oma juttu  
*mostly* sit kyl *8 down* on paras...mä oon ollu ilma tyyppej,mut nykyään tykkään  
*rokkisia* treenata! 😊 [link] [link] Noi thronet on mun mielest kovempi sana...niis on  
 paremmat *grindplatet* mun mielest... 😊  
 Mut se on mielepide...sun kantsii käydä testailemas *swiftis blädiä*...ja testailla mikä  
*fiilistää* parhaalle! 😊 (itse en kyl enään "*soft boottia*" hommaa,ihan *old school* muovi  
 runkoa...tuttuu varmaa...ja eikä turhan lepsua mun jalas! 🙄)

The example is taken from a long message thread concerning rollerblading. This stretch of talk is dedicated to advising another participant in his purchase of new rollerblades. Post 33 of the thread is thus addressed directly to user B, whose comments have been quoted in A’s message and who has explicitly asked for A’s opinion about a pair of skates that he would be interested in. Apparently, user A is appreciated and recognised as a proficient rollerblader since his opinion is worth asking before making a decision of a purchase.

User A starts his message by first quoting B and then citing a Christian rap song. He apologises in an informal way saying *sorri*, which represents an adapted form of the

English phrase ‘I’m sorry’. User A says that he cited the song because he is listening to ‘Christian rap music’ (*uskis räbää*) but acknowledges that topics related to Christianity are not dealt with here. However, he highlights the Christian aspect of his identity in the context of talking about sports equipment. This combination of discourses in one message indicates how the different aspects on one’s identity are not separate but form an entity and that user A brings his whole identity to this exchange. Once again, language mixing is drawn on while referring to expressions of an identity, this time music. Moreover, the word ‘rap’ has evolved into *räbää* which has apparently resulted from the process of making the word one’s own.

As A moves on to answering B’s question, he indicates it by again attaching a quote from B’s message. User A takes up the position of a professional extreme sports person, which user B already ascribed to him. He uses extensively the professional jargon of rollerblading. In his opinion, the skates in question are *beisik blädät* ‘basic blades’ thus describing them with an integrated form of language mixing. He elaborates his statement by adding in Finnish that they are ‘a sure choice’. User A also gives B a link to an alternative pair of skates that he thinks would be a good choice, too. Furthermore, he informs B on the kind of accessories one needs depending on the skates and one’s skating preferences. He describes vividly what sort of ‘frames’ (*freimit*) one should purchase according to one’s style of skating, thus evoking different identities within the extreme sports discourse.

In a very informative and detailed manner, A uses English for naming the products and for describing their purpose of use as well. For example, the use of language mixing is versatile in the following sentence: *rokkis juttu on must jos tykkää grindailla, jos ilmat on se oma juttu mostly sit kyl 8 down on paras* ‘the rocker thing is a must if you like to grind, if air is your own thing mostly then 8 down is the best’. The sentence also describes well how ones’ rollerblading identity affects the kind of equipment one should possess. Furthermore, A indicates how this identity is not stable but can change in the course of time. He describes how he used to be an ‘air-rollerblading kind of guy’ but nowadays he likes to ‘train the rockers’ (*rokkiksia treenata*). He encourages also B to go and test the skates which he calls *swiftis blädiä* ‘swift blades’ so that he can test which ones ‘feel’ (*fiilistää*) the best. Thus, he does

not expect B to adopt the kind of identity or approach to rollerblading that he prefers but instead, he describes different ways of performing a rollerblader's identity.

In sum, user A's message evokes the extreme sports discourse and identities associated with it, as they are filled with the professional jargon derived from English. Of course, one needs to be familiar with this specific sport and the special vocabulary in order to benefit from the knowledge provided in A's message. As the message was not addressed but one particular person, it consolidated the shared lifestyle and identities of the two forum users as extreme sports people.

Example 29 differs from the previous one since it is clearly targeted for a larger audience. It provides a general picture of the community's sports and the members' lifestyle. Their identities are not explicitly referred to but illustrated in the relaxed approach to sporting activities. Language mixing is manifested in the example.

#### Example 29

2 A      Moi! Oulun Värtössä viikottaiset *slackline sessiot* alkaneet taas 😊 Eilen korkattu *släkkikausi* lupaa taas hubaa koko kesäksi. Tervetuloa tutustumaan lajin saloihin ja valmistautumaan alkavaan kiipeily/*skede/wake/surffi/whatever* kauteen tasapainotreenailun ja letkeän musiikin merkeissä. Jatkoille voi siirtyä kätevästi kokkailemaan ja vaikkapa *tsekkailemaan xtremelifen* leffoja [link to films provided by xtremelife]

This extract illustrates how different sports come together in the discussion forum and how physical exercising is often related to various other activities, thus forming shared lifestyles. The message is addressed to whole of the community: A welcomes everyone to come and familiarise themselves with an activity called slackline sessions. He uses first the term *slackline sessiot* 'slackline sessions' and then a related concept that he spells in a more informal way as *släkkikausi* 'slackline season'. In both instances of language mixing, integrated forms are used.

According to the message, the term *slackline sessiot* comprises various activities such as the actual balancing on a rope called slackline, listening to music, cooking and watching extreme films. In addition, user A associates practising on a slackline to preparing oneself for the future sporting season. He therefore evokes a certain kind of approach to sports and social identities which are performed by the engagement to

the various activities. Shared activities and the preparation for the sporting season are described as relaxed, which is an indication of a relaxed lifestyle on the whole.

The sporting season is referred to by listing different sports associated with the community in the following manner: *kiipeily/skede/wake/surffi/whatever kauteen* ‘climbing/skateboarding/wakeboarding/surfing/whatever season’. In other words, he lists four sports by their names that appear either in Finnish or in integrated forms. He also adds an English word *whatever* to describe all the other sports that one can take an interest in. It may also refer to the adaptable nature of the community in general. All in all, the members of this community have to be very approving towards the other members and their different sports. The approving attitude is highlighted in the common activities and the particular identities constructed within the lifestyle often by means of language mixing.

Also example 30 concerns the activity called slackline sessions. This time, more competitive approach to slackline sessions is adapted. Again, language mixing is evident in the message thread but there are a couple of discourse-related instances of code-switching, too.

### Example 30

- 1 A Tere-moro-hei!  
Helsingissä luvassa *slackline-sessioita* otsikon mukaisesti!  
Eli allekirjoittaneella on 20m tuota *über-mukavaa* nauhaa muine oheistarvikkeineen.  
Nyt kun lumet (ne viimeisetkin pikku kasat) ovat sulaneet ja puistoissa nurmikko alkaa kuivumaan, niin virittelen *slackkia* aina silloin tällöin Helsingin keskustan tuntumassa.  
Paikkana usein kaivopuisto. Eli jos kiinnostuneita löytyy, ottakaa yhteyttä ja sovitaan aika koska mennään tasapainoilemaan. [phone number and email address]  
"Ei se vaikeeta ole, se vaan tuntuu siltä jos sitä ei tee!"
- 2 B *Yo bro!* Tästä kehkeytyy selvästi *slackline-kisa* pohjoisen ja etelän kesken. Reeniä reeniä. Vedetään raja Jyväskylään ja *Jkl posse* kuuluu pohjoiseen! 🤪siellä on huhujen mukaan *kreisejä släkkäreitä* liikkeellä.. *slackline dyneeman* puutteessa on paikalliset varaosaliikkeet jo ostettu tyhjiksi hinaus- ja kiristysliinoista ja tulokset ovat ällistyttäviä. Hehee, mutta vakavasti. Haaste on heitetty.
- 3 C Jaajaa.. Ja kokkolan *posse* (minä) paljastaa salaisuuden.. Koodisana: Talviharjoittelua!!!  
(ei ole harrastettu, mutta mahikset siihen kyl oli 🤪) *Westcoast, kiiping it riil jou??*

Initially, user A encourages others to join him in the local park in Helsinki to practise on a slackline. He describes slackline, the equipment, as ‘über-nice rope’ (*über-mukavaa nauhaa*), thus using an affective foreign word ‘über’ to emphasise his depiction. Post 2 by B starts with a greeting *Yo bro!* which illustrates an instance of

discourse-related code-switching. It also refers to hip-hop culture. User B suggests a competition between northern and southern Finland. He names people in a Finnish town as *Jkl posse* and further characterises them as *kreisejä släkkäreitä* ‘crazy slackliners’ ascribing certain kinds of, probably exaggerated, identities to other members of the community. To accentuate his message, B elaborates on the ascribed identities in a humorous tone and describes how supposedly all the stores in this town have been bought out of rope ‘in lack of slackline dyneema<sup>4</sup>’ (*slackline dyneeman puutteessa*). In a way, he combines two seemingly unrelated concepts to form this expression to meet his own communicative purpose. He ends his message by literally indicating that he was joking but wants his challenge to be taken seriously as he says: ‘Ha ha, but seriously. You have been challenged.’ (*Hehee, mutta vakavasti. Haaste on heitetty.*).

The challenge is accepted by user C in post 3 and he humorously refers to himself as *kokkolan posse* according to another Finnish town, and as a response to B’s characterisation of *Jkl posse*. The message is altogether very humorous. User C describes how he had a possibility to practise during the winter but did not do it. He maintains the hip-hop discourse initiated by B as he attaches the following phrase *Westcoast, kiiping it riil jou??* ‘Westcoast, keeping it real yo??’. The phrase can be characterised as a more or less fixed slogan within hip-hop discourse. It contextualises the end of user C’s message and makes another humorous, even ironic, reference to the seriousness of the competition. User C might also refer to the actual geographical location of his home town by the use of the slogan.

On the whole, in this extract the participants construct their own and other community members’ identities by positioning themselves and others in relation to their home towns and devotion to slacklining. Hip-hop culture is also referred to within the discourse of extreme sports. Both Finnish and English are drawn on in the exchange and the identity work is done by the means of insertional language mixing, in particular. Additionally, humorous tone is perceptible throughout the messages.

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<sup>4</sup> Dyneema® is a product of DSM Dyneema, characterised as the world’s strongest fiber™ (DSM dyneema® 2008).

Example 31 is a follow-up to the message thread in the previous example. This time, participants discuss the proper way of using a slackline. At the same time, they negotiate and construct identities within the sport of slacklining. Both code-switching and language mixing become manifested in the message.

### Example 31

- 7 A Nyt pitää nostaa kissa pöydälle, nimittäin tuohon haasteeseen liittyen.  
Kuinka kireällä *släkin* pitää olla, ollakseen hyväksyty, tai kuinka löysällä sen pitää olla. Itse oon opeteltu kireällä versiolla, ja taas oulun porukka haukkuu sen pystyyn sanoen löysän olevan parempi. 🤔😏
- 8 B Kireet köydet kuuluu sirkukseen 😊 *this is slacklining!*  
*Slack* ['slæk] löysä, höllä, löyhä, *a slack rope* = höllä köysi  
Alla selviää *släkille* sopiva kilpailukireys - Oulu treenaa! Millon skabat 😊? Kesäkuun lopussa *north-westcoast släkkiitiimi* siirtyy korkeanpaikan harjoitusleirille Etelä-Afrikan Kapkaupunkiin ja siellä menee ainakin joulukuuhun asti.. Toinen ongelma on että osa kisailijoista on Siperiassa heinäkuulle asti... Onkohan edessä sittenkin talvihenkiset joulukisat suomessa, tai sit pidetään kutsukisat afrikan auringossa joulukuussa 😊  
[two photographs]

The exchange illustrates a negotiation of identities within an extreme sports discourse by the means of language mixing and code-switching. User A brings up the subject of the appropriate method of using a slackline. He reports to have practised with a tight rope. He also says that this method has been criticised by others.

User B responds to A by announcing in Finnish that tight ropes belong to a circus, and then switching into English with an exclamation: *this is slacklining!* The use of the two languages contextualises a contrast between the two methods of using the equipment. Interestingly, English is reserved for emphasising the proper method for carrying out the group's shared activity, thus it is selected as a 'we-code'. In addition, user B uses translation in order to make his point clear. He gives the Finnish translation of an English adjective *Slack* and a model noun phrase *a slack rope*. Presumably, he has copied the translation from a dictionary entry for a 'slack' since information about pronunciation is provided, too. Additionally, in order to illustrate his perspective further, B has attached two photographs which depict the activity of practising on a slackline. Along with the reference to the photographs, B reminds others about the competition. Thus, user B characterises the essence of *slacklining* through the English exclamation and the translations and at the same time, identifies himself as a representative of the particular approach to the sport. His

identity position is strengthened also in the two photographs which illustrate practising on a slack rope.

Despite the confrontational content of the message, the tone remains light and cheerful, which is indicated by the use of emoticons, or ‘smileys’, and a playful incorporation of professional athlete discourse in his message. He talks about training camp and competitors, for instance. Furthermore, he describes the team to which he belongs with language mixing as *north-westcoast släkkitiimi* ‘a north-westcoast slack team’. This way, English is again used for identifying oneself as a member of a particular extreme sports group.

In sum, the message threads illustrating the ‘extreme sports discourse’ involve mainly language mixing which is used for creating a certain style to perform identities. The use of English is apparent in extreme sports jargon both at the local and the global level of discourse. For example, hip-hop culture is a broader social context to which the participants continuously refer to. At the same time, they disengage the concepts from their original contexts and adapt them according to their communicative purposes at the local level. The participants position themselves within the different levels and evoke identities which describe their relationship and approach to extreme sports. In some cases, identities of an extreme sports person and a Christian are evoked as inseparable.

### **7.2.3 Youth culture discourse**

Young people often refer to the music styles that best describe their ways of being. In the discussion forum examined in this study, the participants discuss music frequently. Another area that the young are at ease with is electronic media. They seem to find it natural to offer links to other Internet sites and then discuss the contents of the links in their discussion forum. Hence, online literacy skills are needed when one wants to enter into discourse taking place in electronic environments. Topics related to youth culture are dealt with in the section *Yleistä keskustelua* ‘General discussion’, in particular.



Example 32 highlights the importance of electronic media in young people's lives. They see that video material, for instance, is a good way of presenting the group to others who might be interested in their activities. The thread represents language mixing mainly in relation to the technological terminology. There is also a discourse-related interjection at the beginning of post 2.

### Example 32

- 1 A Onko sivuille tulossa jossain vaiheessa videoo jostakin lajista tai jotain yleisvideoo?  
 2 B *Jes*, videomateriaalia on kuvattu parista *sessiosta* ja kuvataan vielä lisää, homma on työn alla mut parhaillaan resurssien ja ajan puute on vielä esteenä.  
*Edittipöydän* ääree ja nettiin matskua saadaan varmaan syksyn kuluessa. Ekana tehdään *trailer-tyyppinen* esittelyvideo *Godspeedistä* ja katotaan muita *proggiksia* eteepäin sen jälkeen.

In post 1, user A asks about a video on specific sports or a more general video concerning the community. This seems justified as far as extreme sports communities are concerned. Rinehart and Sydnor (2003: 5) point out that many extreme athletes watch self-made videos in order to learn necessary skills and new tricks. User B reports in post 2 that their plan is to publish a 'trailer kind of presentation video of Godspeed' (*trailer-tyyppinen esittelyvideo Godspeedistä*). Making this type of video material would undeniably construct their identities as extreme sports people. It may be assumed that references to the Christian aspects of their identities would be included in the video, too.

Example 33 characterises the way in which the young operate in the electronic network: they offer links within their own website for viewing pictures from their various activities. At the same time, their online literacy skills enable them to engage in constructing identities. Moreover, language mixing is used as a means for performing the identities. Discourse-related code-switching appears in the beginning of posts 2, 3 and 4 and represents responses or interjections.

### Example 33

- 1 A Noniin, nyt saatiin styrkempi nettipalvelin ja saadaan kuvallista evidenssiäkin esiin enemmän. Katkokset nettisivujen toiminnassa pitäis olla kans historiaa uudistuksen myötä. *Roadtripiltä* Eestistä [link] Keuruun *MX-meetingistä* [link]  
 Lisää materiaalia luvassa uusien reissujen myötä!  
 2 B *Jees..* Saako noille vielä jonkun pysyvän linkin tonne *nettisaitin* listaan? Toki sitte ku kerkeää.. 😊

- 3 A *Jes! Ja asennetta työpöydälle saa uunituoreilla Godspeedin taustakuvilla.*  
Valitse resoluutiosi ja homma *rokkaa* [link] 😊
- 4 B *Wouuu... Kuka on tuo "so handsome dudah" tuossa videokameran kanssa??* 😊
- 5 A No en kyllä tiää, joku hämärä jätkä siihen juos eteen. Joku [B's user name] tai sellanen.

The topic of the initial post is to offer links to photographs from trips and meetings that the community members have had. User A starts by stating that they have now a more powerful server available and that it helps them to link photographs to the website. He states in reference to photographs that at present they are at present able to show more visual material and thus, he pays attention to the fact that a discussion forum is basically a text-based media.

User B responds to A by stating *Jees* 'yes' at the beginning of his message. He also enquires whether it is possible to create a link for the photographs 'to the list on the (inter)net site' (*nettisaitin listaan*). He refers very casually to this programming operation, which indicates the young people's easiness with electronic environment. Being a Finnish online literate person is manifested in integrating the technical terms into the Finnish language. For example, an 'internet site' has been modified into 'nettisaitti' in the language use of young Finnish people. Moreover, the easiness with electronic environment is captured in the phrase in post 3, *Valitse resoluutiosi ja homma rokkaa* 'Pick your resolution and things rock', where user A provides a link to a desktop background provided by the corporation. There are no directions for dealing with desktop backgrounds but online literacy skills are taken for granted.

User B is arguably included in the photograph in the desktop background and he comments on this with the phrase: *Wouuu... Kuka on tuo "so handsome dudah" tuossa videokameran kanssa??* 'Wow... Who's that "so handsome dudah" there with the camcorder?'. He describes himself with the expression "so handsome dudah". The phrase appears quite idiomatic since a 'handsome dude' is a widely encountered pair of words<sup>5</sup> within (Anglo-American) youth culture. User B seems to feel comfortable with using English when building an image of himself. Moreover, he has modified the word 'dude' into 'dudah' which is even more colloquial. He has also placed it between quotation marks, perhaps attaching a little self-irony to the

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<sup>5</sup> Google search gave 45 800 results for the phrase "handsome dude" (31 January 2008).

phrase. Thus, there is playfulness in the tone of his message, which is expressed through language mixing.

The topic in example 34 is similar to the one in the previous example. Again, the participants discuss linking the photographs that have been taken during their past events. This time, however, online literacy skills are not taken for granted. All in all, the message thread can be described as more practical and informative than the previous one.

#### Example 34

- 1 A Eli tässä on tähänastisista tapahtumista kootut kuvagalleriat.  
Keuruun *MX-meetti*: [link] Eesti *roadtrip*: [link] GB- Warth: [link]  
Tähän *topicciin* saa pistää linkin jos on tehnyt omia gallerioita/ *upannut* jonnekin kuvia tapahtumista/ lajeista. Pistäkää linkki ja kertokaa toki selkeesti että mistä ja millon *fotot* on otettu.
- 2 B Onhan niitä kuvia monesta muustakin reissusta?. Kenellä niitä kuvia on ja kuka osaa ja jaksaa ne laittaa nettiin? itselläni ei ole kuvia eikä taitoja joten mun on helppo antaa käskyjä;D

Language mixing is illustrated in the technological terminology. In post 1, user A employs words, such as *topicciin* ‘to this topic’, *upannut* ‘uploaded’ and *fotot* ‘photos’ in reference to linking one’s own photographs to this particular message thread. Once again, the words have been integrated into Finnish.

In post 2, user B pays attention to the scarcity of links in the previous post, saying that photographs have been taken from many other trips, too. He refers to online literacy skills and acknowledges that he does not possess the photographs or the skills to upload them. Hence, he positions himself as not knowledgeable about the required IT procedures.

Example 35 illustrates how the young people in this discussion forum provide links to other Internet sites and discuss their contents. The topic of their exchange is to link videos to the message thread and give their evaluations on them. Once again, online literacy skills are needed. For the most part, the extract includes language mixing representing technological terminology and extreme sports jargon.

## Example 35

- 1 A [link]
- 2 B Hehe. Boten Anna on *irkissä* ollut pitkään enää WANHA:n arvoinen, mutta on se vaan aikamoinen ralli. :-D  
Täs muuten vähä vähemmän turhaa videomatskua AOC - Mitä sä teet, kuka tunnistaa mistä kappaleesta *biitti*? 😊 Loistavasti kyllä pojat vetää asiaa! Mutta olettekos kuulleet [name](eli meikästä)? Sit vielä lopuks kevyt *motocrossituokio* Travis Pastranan double backflipin muodossa. Mike Metzger ja hitusen *backflippia* siellä missä muut ovat vain haaveilleet edes suorasta ylihypystä -> Tsek It Out!!<-
- 3 A Mut ootko sä nähny sen DotA- videon? Se on vähän uudempi..
- 4 B Dotanhan sulle alunperin *mesessä* laitoin, siitä linkistä naputtelit ittes tonne boten annaan. 😊
- 5 A Nyt viilaillaan.. Nojoo.. Wanhaaa.. Sbohohhooooohooooooo.. Äh. mun mielestä se että kuin vanhaa mikäki linkki sisältää, on suoraan verrannollinen siihen kuin paljon aikaa käyttää "*nolifettämiseen*" *irssissä*.. 😊

Initially, user A named the message thread as ‘pointless videos and photos’ and linked a popular music video called ‘Boten Anna’ to his post. The video has nothing to do with either extreme sports or Christianity but it describes a love story between a man and a computer program, an IRC bot called Anna. Thus, the topic is clearly associated with youth culture discourse in general.

In post 2, user B comments on the video linked by A as old. Evaluating something as old is a common practice in any discussion forum or an IRC channel, to which B clearly refers in his comment: ‘Boten Anna has long been only worth OLD in irc’ (*Boten Anna on irkissä ollut pitkään enää WANHA:n arvoinen*). After evaluating the video, B shapes the character of the message thread to correspond better the community members’ shared lifestyle. He links a Christian music video and a couple of international motocross videos to the thread and assesses them as ‘not so pointless video material’ (*vähä vähemmän turhaa videomatskua*). A reference to the second extreme sports video is contextualised with a code-switched slogan *Tsek It Out* which at the same time functions as a link to the video.

Nevertheless, user A persists in dealing with more popular themes by mentioning another popular music video and suggesting that it should be a little newer one. User B points out that in fact it was he who gave him the link to that particular video in MS messenger. At this point, as he does not get the desired response, A reacts to B’s message by stating: ‘I think that how old material any link contains, is directly

proportional to how much time one spends “to have nolife” in irssi<sup>6</sup> (*mun mielestä se että kuin vanhaa mikäki linkki sisältää, on suoraan verrannollinen siihen kuin paljon aikaa käyttää "nolifettämiseen" irssissä*). Thus, he makes assumptions about B’s behaviour in electronic environments and at the same time positions him as a person who spends time ‘to have nolife’ “*nolifettämiseen*”. The term ‘nolife’ is sometimes used among Finnish youth to indicate the people who spend a lot of their spare time in front of a computer screen playing games or surfing on the Internet. Using the English expression in this context encapsulates the meaning of A’s comment that recognises B as belonging to a particular social category.

The message thread in example 36 concerns the importance of music and especially their lyrics to young Finns. The extract includes code-switching in relation to attaching song titles and lyrics in English. In this context, music lyrics are seen as significant especially in relation to being a Christian. The initiator of the thread says how some lyrics that describe the glory of God inspire him greatly. He would like to hear how ‘the lyrics speak’ to the other participants of the forum.

### Example 36

- 1 A Itseäni inspiroi suuresti muutaman bändin lyriikat, jotka kertoo suoraan ja/tai kauniisti Jumalan suuruudesta. Mietin, että olis hienoa kuulla kanssa mitkä lyriikat teille puhuu kaikista parhaiten. Suurimmat suosikkini tulevat *Jars of Clayn* biisien joukosta. Aivan mahtava bändi ja ehkä mielestäni se paras. Kauniit ja lyyriset lyriikat, saavat rauhoittumaan hektistenkin päivien ja *sessioiden* jälkeen.  
*Worlds apart*: [lyrics of the song]
- 2 B Kertokaa ja jakakaa mielipiteitänne. Mikä puhuttelee teitä eniten sanoitusten puolesta? Itsellä puhuu monikin biisi omia ajatuksia julki.. Ensimmäisinä tulee mieleen *ImmortalSoulssin SnowSoul*.. Myös *connectionpossen* kompromisseja iskee aika hyvin. äh. pitää pistää sanat ku ehtii ettiä. Mutta noita biisejä on todella paljon.
- 3 C sanat on hyvät ja biisi aivan loistava. tulee hyvä mieli kun ajattelee että mua ei oo unohdettu. 😊  
*Blindside- When I remember* [lyrics of the song]
- 4 D Tää biisi on ollu mulle aika kova:  
*Underoath Moving For The Sake Of Motion* [lyrics of the song]
- 5 E *Dogwoodin Never die* biisi on sanoitukseltaan lyhyesti ja ytimekkäästi tykittyä punkkia, toimii ku junan vessa. *Refined extremeleffan* taustalta bongasin ja jäi kyl soimaan päähän. *Live fast, die slow, stand back, let go!*  
[lyrics of the song]
- 8 B Eräs biisi räjäytti tajunnan. Kävelin kirpeessä pakkaskelissä ulkona kun yhtäkkiä luureista läjähtää korville sanat: *This is my church, this is where i heel my hurts. Tonight, God is a DJ.*  
Toi avas mulle paljon asioita taas.. Kyllä sitä puhutellaan ihmeellisillä tavoilla.

<sup>6</sup> Irssi is an IRC client program for UNIX systems (Irssi 2008).

All of the thread's eight participants refer to songs that are in English and four of them have attached the English song lyrics to their posts. It is evident that these English-language songs are meaningful to the young people: they seem to take up identity positions by means of the lyrics. The participants comment in Finnish on how they have perceived the lyrics. For example, user B says in his message: 'For me, many songs express the thoughts that I've been thinking of' (*Itsellä puhuu monikin biisi omia ajatuksia julki*). Also user C seems to perceive the lyrics of one particular song, *Blindside - When I remember*, meaningful to her as she says: 'I feel good when I think that I haven't been forgotten' (*tulee hyvä mieli kun ajattelee että mua ei oo unohdettu*). In this respect, the extract illustrates also a topic/comment structure as a conversational category for code-switching (Auer 1995: 120).

In addition to feelings aroused by music, the participants relate the circumstances where they have encountered or listened to certain songs. User E reports to have heard a song in a film and B says that one particular song blew his mind while he was walking outside and listening to music from the headphones that he was wearing. He describes how the lyrics *This is my church, this is where i heel my hurts Tonight, God is a DJ* opened up many things for him. He felt that he had been spoken to by the song. All of the participants refer to Christian songs and thus, seem to feel that especially Christian songs express the core of their identities.

In example 37 demonstrates how music is also connected to expressing the forum members' identities related to extreme sports. The participants discuss the relation of one's preferred music styles to carrying out extreme sports activities. Language mixing is evident throughout the extract.

#### Example 37

- 1 A Onko sul jotain musa tyyliä (tai bändiä) minkä kuuntelu aiheuttaa et tekee mieli lähtee "vetää"? Mul: CORE saa aikaan haluu lähtee snoukkaan, ja RAP/ACID JAZZ aiheuttaa mussa haluu lähtee blädään... 😊 Entä te?
- 2 B Menee aika laidasta laitaa musiikkimaun kanssa, fiiliksen ja lajin mukaan, mut sanotaaks että *Godspeed Radio* summaa aika hyvin omaa musiikkimakua 😊 *Tune in at* [link] Siihen ku lisäälee vielä vähä raskaampaa settiä kauniilla kurkkuäänellä tyyliin *Demonhunter, 7-10 Split, Haste the Day* niin on pärjää rinteet ja rinteet ulkopuolella. *Purevolumesta* löytyy, [three links]  
*Slacklinen* kans pitää sit olla jotain *funkympaa* kamaa tai hyvää *surffimusaa* 😊

- 3 C kyllä sä oot vaan nii vaativa ton musan kanssa.. 😊 Itte tulee kuunneltua joko hyvää räpäytystä tai metallia.. Tai niitten sekotusta.. Mm. *demonhunneria*... Mutta jos jollakulla olis infoo hyvistä kristillisistä räppiscenen edustajista, otetaan ilolla vastaan.
- 4 D *Demon Hunter*, oikein 😊 Itte oon aika moniruokanen. Kaikenlainen menee jossain määrin. Rankempaa kuuntelen ehkä eniten. Hyviä räpsenen edustajia on oot saattunu kuullakkin esim. näin kotimaisia AOC ja *J-Posse* ulkomaalaisia Manafest, *Flame*, KJ-52, TobyMac (räppii ja rokkii)
- 5 E Lisään yhden ulkomaiseen räpsenen edustajiin. - Grits  
Sit pari *Rock bändiä* enemmän minun makuun - *12 Stones - Kids in The Way*  
- *Subseven* Ja lopuksi kevyttä "Mies ja kitara" settiä - Shawn Mcdonald

User A starts the discussion by asking whether the other participants have any particular music styles that makes them want to go in for sports. He himself explains that *CORE* makes him want to go snowboarding (*snoukkaan*) and *RAP/ACID JAZZ* rollerblading (*blädään*). Thus, both the music styles and sports are defined through language mixing. Once again, English, a global language, is used for depicting something that the young perceive as their own: their preferred music styles and their recreational activities.

In post 2, user B for his part says that his taste on music varies ‘according to the feeling and the sport’ (*fiiliksen ja lajin mukaan*). He also wants to share places for listening to music on the Internet and provides a link to *Godspeed Radio* contextualising it with an English slogan, *Tune in at*. This slogan represents the only instance of code-switching in the example. User B exploits hyperlinking possibilities in order to provide additional information of his preferences. He also refers to bands whose music, in his opinion, one can listen to both on a slope and elsewhere. Further, he provides three links for listening songs by the aforementioned bands in ‘Purevolume’, a site for sharing music. In conclusion, he says that ‘with slackline you need to have some funkier stuff or good surf music’ (*Slacklinen kans pitää sit olla jotain funkympaa kamaa tai hyvää surffimusaa*). Through this detailed analysis of his preferred music and sports, user B constructs his identity as a Christian and as an online literate person interested in music and extreme sports. Moreover, he presents himself in the forum by means of bilingualism, using language mixing and code-switching in his message.

User C pays attention to B’s analysis by stating: ‘oh you’re so demanding with the music’ (*kyllä sä oot vaan nii vaativa ton musan kanssa*). Nevertheless, he himself lists a couple of music styles which he prefers and mentions one band by name. In

addition, users D and E list their favourite bands. The message thread continues also after E's post. Many of the forum participants wanted to express their preferred bands or music styles often through language mixing and thus, they positioned themselves within the youth culture discourse. An interesting example comes from the English music term 'rap' or 'rap scene' which in these young people's messages is manifested in various forms, such as, *räpäytystä*, *räppiscenen*, *räpsenen* and *räppii*. In all of these cases, the term is integrated into Finnish.

In sum, performing and constructing identities within youth culture discourse illustrates the importance of music and electronic media in young people's lives. The young have good knowledge of online literacy practices and are therefore able to exploit the possibilities provided by the globally networked computers. They refer to international contexts by providing links to songs and music videos on the Internet. Subsequently, they create local literacy events by discussing the content of the links in their discussion forum which functions in an evidently Finnish context. Being an online literate person is in most cases taken for granted within discourse taking place in an electronic environment.

Often the names and lyrics of the songs and the technical terminology are in English. Consequently, the messages are characterised by insertional language mixing. To the young people participating in this discussion forum, music lyrics seem meaningful in relation to Christian values, on the one hand, and in terms of invoking feelings when going in for sports, on the other. Hence, topics relating to the two dominant discourses in the forum, those of Christianity and extreme sports, are manifested also within youth culture discourse. This shows that boundaries between different discourses are not clear-cut and the discussion topics might be manifested in hybrid forms. The young position themselves and others in intricate ways as young Christians ascribing to the lifestyle of extreme sports.



## **8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The uses of English in the Finnish society provided the general framework for carrying out this study. Other themes included theories of language alternation phenomena, youth cultures, lifestyles and computer-mediated communication. I aimed at combining these themes in studying bilingual practices in the interaction between members of a group of young Finnish people. The group members, united by their shared interest in extreme sports and Christianity, interacted in an electronic discussion forum on the Internet. Consequently, they formed an online community with their own purposes, norms, values, ways of using language and expressing their identities. In this chapter, a summary of the findings is presented first separately as regards the two levels of analysis and then jointly in a combined perspective to the data. Evaluation of the study is also given and finally, concluding remarks are drawn.

### **8.1 Summary of the findings**

I approached the functions of code-switching and language mixing within the community of young Finnish Christians interested in extreme sports from a sociolinguistic and discourse analytic perspective. The data came from an Internet discussion forum at [www.godspeed.fi](http://www.godspeed.fi) where the members of this particular community can communicate with each other. Message threads concerning a specific topic or topics served as the basic units of my analysis. Two levels complementary to each other were included in the analysis: the level of communication between the community members and that of identity construction. First, I identified interactive online activities enacted in the discussion forum according to Herring's (2007) faceted classification scheme for computer-mediated discourse. Within these activities, the members of the forum constructed their community by the means of code-switching and language mixing from Finnish to English. Second, I identified three lifestyle discourses within this particular community and the ways in which individual and social identities were constructed within the discourses, again by the means of code-switching and language mixing. Thus, both of the language alternation phenomena evident in this study functioned at the two levels of the

analysis. Furthermore, both code-switching and language mixing represented insertions.

At the first level of analysis, code-switching and language mixing functioned primarily as resources for expressing communal affiliations. This became evident especially in the instances of insertional code-switching from Finnish to English, where the insertions were used in specific ways for organising discourse, such as in greetings, good wishes, apologies, interjections, exclamations, slogans and closing words. These kinds of switches served to orient one's message to a certain audience, emphasise the content of one's posting, express emotions, and change the topic or the tone. Thus, code-switching was used as contextualising certain aspects of the communicative situation. The participants seemed to effectively derive meanings from the switches from Finnish to English in the ongoing interaction within the local online activities. These findings are similar to findings in many code-switching studies carried out in terms of face-to-face speech events. Indeed, Androutsopoulos (2006b: 533) points out that some of the code-switching patterns apply also to code-switching studies carried out in electronic environments.

Also participant-related code-switching occurred in the messages, but to a much lesser degree. It indexed an individual and personal way of drawing on the resources provided by the two languages. In the few cases in which participant-related code-switching appeared at the first level of analysis, it was used as a means of creating a humorous atmosphere and contributing to one's professionalism in extreme sports by the means of English.

When considering the instances of code-switching, English spelling was followed in general, but there were exceptions, too. Some of the greetings and short interjections, for instance, were integrated into Finnish. Variation often expressed creativity and intimacy within the community members.

The instances of insertional language mixing represented a style without a specific local meaning (Auer 1999: 315). Language mixing appeared in terms of extreme sports jargon, technological terminology and music terminology. In terms of extreme sports jargon, the participants drew on English when naming their community

activities, places, tricks and equipment related to their sports. Hence, the inserted words were most often nouns. Verbs appeared to a certain extent, too. Instances of language mixing were almost always integrated into Finnish spelling or morphology. The participants seemed to adapt the words in order to fit the language for their individual or communal needs. In addition, they sometimes negotiated the meanings of the concepts they used. This proves that they appropriated the words and special terminology for their own communicative purposes, to create shared meanings within this particular community.

When analysing the online activities, the meanings of code-switching and language mixing were in most cases related to the construction of the online community. This construction was carried out together in interaction. Through the five online activities, the members of the community got to know each other and the sports they represented, informed on upcoming offline events and described them afterwards. They also shared expert knowledge and one's feelings and visions with other members of the community. The five activities were placed in different parts within the main sections of the discussion forum. For example, the activity of 'describing past events' occurred very clearly in the section *Whats up?*, whereas the activity of 'sharing experiences, feelings and visions' occurred in all of the four main sections of the forum. Moreover, the activities were somewhat different in terms of the language alternation phenomena. For example, 'informing on upcoming events' included more instances of code-switching than those of language mixing. This is explained by the ample use of English-language greetings and good wishes concerning the expected get-togethers. On the other hand, 'sharing information and expert knowledge' was characterised by the use of language mixing in the form of extreme sports jargon. All in all, aspects of the particular activity in question were elicited by means of code-switching and language mixing.

For evaluating the aspects of communication in the community construction, I applied Herring's (2004) criteria for identification of an online community. Applying the criteria during the analysis strengthened my preliminary definition formed according to Baym's (1995) online community factors. It can therefore be said that the discussion forum members formed an online community. They participated actively in the discussions in the forum, showed solidarity and supported each other

in their similar views. The purpose of the group, reflecting their Christian values, was clear from the beginning of the community's emergence and it was also explicitly written down on their web page. The norms for communication seemed to evolve over time. A devoted, even passionate, way of interaction led the participants sometimes to criticise each other's viewpoints concerning certain sports, for instance.

In general terms, the forum participants seemed to have a high motivation for co-operation. A friendly attitude towards the other members was communicated through English-language greetings or interjections. The overall tone of the messages was often humorous and playful. It seemed to be a way of consolidating the community's togetherness. Humour was also used in situations in which the friendly tone of the discussion was threatened. More specifically, English appeared to be an important resource for creating and maintaining the humorous tone and the good atmosphere. Also apologies were almost always expressed through discourse-related code-switching.

One can assume that the English-language apology 'sorry' has become a general way of apologising within the communication between Finnish people from all age groups. Moore and Varantola (2005: 142) suggest that 'sorry', among other English expressions, fills "a real gap in Finnish". For the young people in this study, saying 'sorry' functioned as a subtle and informal way of presenting an apology in the middle of a Finnish-language interaction. Other English expressions in my data which have become general in the Finnish language were 'tsekata', 'filis' and 'jes' or 'jees'. These expressions were in this study used for the purposes of this particular community in creating meanings in interaction, but they are copiously used in other contexts, too.

The second level of my analysis represented a broader and more comprehensive view to the interaction between the online community members. The analysis included studying the ways in which the members constructed their individual or social identities and indicated expert knowledge through the bilingual practices of code-switching and language mixing. I identified three different discourses within which the identities were performed, negotiated and ascribed. The discourses were 'discourse of Christianity', 'extreme sports discourse' and 'youth culture discourse'.

Also the broader social and cultural structures behind these discourses were acknowledged and paid attention to.

Many of the instances of code-switching or language mixing were used to evoke either Christian ideology or the lifestyle within the extreme sports culture. It is noteworthy that the extreme sports in particular have their roots in North America (Harinen et al. 2006: 13). Similarly, American evangelical Protestantism, “the dominant religious tradition in American history” (Beyer 1994: 115) may have had effects on the lives of some Finnish Christians. Leppänen (2007: 150) notes that “western and Anglo-American cultures and ways of life” have contributed to Finnish society. Hence, globalisation becomes evident in these specific walks of life, in addition to the global range of the English language. Also the popular youth culture, having spread worldwide and embracing music and electronic media, is very influential regarding young people’s lives. Often, the music young people listen to, films they watch and the clothes they wear reveal a lot about their identities. (Ratia and Suhr 2004: 140.) Hence, the forum members participated in global activities in many ways, presenting and positioning themselves and others by drawing on to bilingual practices.

The discourse of Christianity was clearly characterised by discourse-related code-switching in form of English Bible verses. This way, the participants created online literacy events including references to the Bible. Often, the same verses were cited both in Finnish and in English. Additionally, different versions of the Finnish and the English Bible were referred to. This might be an indication of these young people’s routinised literacy practice of reading different versions of the Bible in order to grasp the meaning of a particular passage. Since the English language is a resource that they make use of in their everyday lives anyway, they might just as well consult the English versions when studying the Bible. In consequence, the code-switching strategies with regard to the preference of citing the Bible in two languages could have been interpreted as participant-related in addition to the discourse-related interpretation. The cited verses from the Bible were perceived as meaningful in relation to one’s own life experiences. The identities that were performed within the discourse of Christianity included positioning a Christian person as someone who can be broken-hearted or have difficulties in his or her life. The forum members also

presented themselves as familiar with the Bible and having evangelising as their mission in life. Telling others the gospel was related to the members' extreme sports activities. In addition, the verses were sometimes applied directly to expressing one's identity as a representative of a specific extreme sport.

The extreme sports discourse manifested itself in the ample use of language mixing in relation to extreme sports jargon. There were a few instances of discourse-related code-switching. In addition to indicating professional expertise through language mixing, English was drawn on when making references to hip-hop culture with certain greetings or slogans. Identities were constructed in relation to the individual sports or different approaches within the sports. For example, the forum members evoked the 'old school' approach in relation to various extreme sports, presented several possible identities within rollerblading, positioned themselves within these different identities and negotiated the true approach to slacklining. Of course, the different identities within the extreme sports discourse have many similarities viewed from a distance. However, as Blommaert (2005: 207) points out, identity categories become the more nuanced the more closely they are looked at. On the whole, the extreme sports discourse appeared as notably bilingual: alongside Finnish, English is seen as a suitable resource for the purposes of communicating expert knowledge. This has been demonstrated also by Leppänen and Nikula (2007).

Youth culture discourse involved the use of both language mixing and code-switching. Language mixing was employed in terms of technological terminology, extreme sports jargon and music terminology. Code-switching became evident concerning the song lyrics, which were attached in English to the postings. Music seems to be very important in young people's lives in general, and the discussion forum participants wanted to share lyrics that they perceived as meaningful. Most of the lyrics were in English; yet they carried various personal and ideological meanings for the forum participants. The young did not translate the English lyrics but often elaborated their meaning in Finnish, or the ways in which they had perceived the message of a particular song. This way, bilingual literacy events were created in which identities were performed with the help of song lyrics. Furthermore, the importance of computer technologies for presentation of oneself was highlighted within the youth culture discourse in general. The young positioned themselves as

online literate individuals and linked photographs of their past events, shared links to other websites and planned making a presentation video of the community. Moreover, some typical CMC practices were referred to as undesirable. 'Nolifettäjä', for instance, was presented as undesired identity in this particular forum. Computer expertise was appreciated as far as it was used as a tool for sharing material, not as a means for downplaying others.

All in all, there were differences with regard to the ways in which the two language alternation phenomena were associated with the lifestyle discourses. Code-switching and language mixing were creatively used for constructing various identities: sometimes the emphasis was on bilingual literacy practices in which discourse-related code-switching occurred, other times special terminology was drawn on in order to negotiate expertise with the help of language mixing. Moreover, although the discourses could be situated in certain forum sections, they often manifested themselves in hybrid forms. The discourses of Christianity and extreme sports were quite often connected to each other, as the young saw themselves both as devoted Christians and enthusiastic extreme sports people. Additionally, they presented themselves as Christians who are spoken to by a certain song and as extreme sports people who associate a particular kind of music with certain extreme sports. This indicates how the discourses of Christianity and extreme sports were merged into the more general youth culture discourse and as a result, created hybrid lifestyle discourses.

Viewing the two levels of analysis together gives perspectives to the construction of an online community, discourses and identities at the same time. In terms of shared expertise, the activity of 'sharing information and expert knowledge' at the first level of analysis was a prominent illustration of the extreme sports discourse. In addition, the online activity of 'sharing experiences, feelings and visions' was clearly associated with the discourse of Christianity. The members of the discussion forum shared their views and feelings concerning their personal faith and in consequence, constructed their community. Christianity combines easily with a sense of community since the Bible stresses the unity of all Christians. The members of the community of Christians interested in extreme sports highlight this unity themselves by quoting the following Bible verse on their website (Godspeed Finland 2007b):

“For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body” (*The Holy Bible*, NIV, 1 Corinthians 12: 13). In a sense, there is an international community of Christians, who are united by their faith. Beyer (1994: 4) describes “a situation in which the revitalization of religion is a way of asserting a particular (group) identity” in global settings, even though globalisation has caused religious groups, among other social groups, to marginalise. In fact, being a marginal group both among Christians and people involved in extreme sports has been a moving force in developing the network of Christians interested in extreme sports in Finland (Godspeed Finland 2007a).

Gee (2006: 29) points out that recognition of discourses by others has great importance to people when defining “who they are and what they are doing”. Expressing identities related to both the extreme sports and Christianity in the discussion forum revealed the hybrid essence of the community and made the identities relevant to the participants themselves and visible to others as well. The forum participants creatively drew on both of these lifestyle discourses while carrying out their community activities online, at the same time communicating something of their identities and recognising the identities of others. Some of the English greetings, interjections or slogans clearly highlighted the members’ Christian identities within a message thread concerning their sport activities, for instance. Additionally, the expression and recognition of identities became evident within the activity of ‘getting to know each other’ in particular. The members introduced themselves from their individual points of view and in most cases, according to the norms and values of the community.

Finally, the link between the different social contexts in this study is manifested in the adoption of a certain perspective to the lifestyle that is typically associated with youth cultures. The members of this particular community have chosen to interact with a friendly tone in their discussion forum even if they would not know each other. Hence, they seem to strive for building their community in a constructive manner and perhaps according to the Christian ethics. They also welcome new members to join their community. This way, they have created their own way of communicating which differs from alternative ways of conduct in electronic environments, such as flaming or trolling (see Tepper 1997).



## 8.2 Evaluation

Language alternation in online environments has not been extensively studied. Thus, the topic of my study included many challenges in methodological terms. Using online ethnography as the method of observing and collecting the data was necessary in terms of understanding the broader cultural backgrounds that the forum represented. However, online ethnography could have been accompanied with observing the community's offline activities, which would have given more comprehensive understanding of the community's character and the community members' lifestyles. This would have also been a more open way of carrying out ethnographic research concerning a specific community.

Using material from the Internet as research data is problematic in the sense that many electronic sites, including numerous discussion forums, are publicly available, but their participants may perceive the site as restricted and meant only for the members of the community in question. Thus, a researcher has to consider the sensitiveness of the data and the ways in which the data are used. (Kuula 2006: 185.) I chose to inform the administrator of the discussion forum about my study and present the data so as not to reveal any names, user names, phone numbers or email addresses. However, if it had been possible, asking permission from each of the individual members of the community would have been the best solution in terms of openness.

Computer-mediated communication usually has many features similar to spoken language, which was also true in the messages posted to the discussion forum at [www.godspeed.fi](http://www.godspeed.fi). This had to be kept in mind while describing the words and phrases which resembled more a spoken than a written form of language. In addition, examining the communication as a whole required a framework that would meet my aims in finding out about language alternation phenomena, online communities and identities. Similarly to Hinrichs (2006), who studied code-switching in email messages and discussion forums and approached his data from a heuristic perspective, I decided to combine methods of discourse analysis that would be appropriate for analysing data collected from a discussion forum.

Herring's (2007) scheme provided a useful framework for studying interaction in electronic environments. The faceted classification scheme pays attention to both technological and social effects in computer-mediated discourse. The scheme proved to be suitable for this type of sociolinguistic and discourse-analytic research as it was possible to use the categories selectively according to one's own purposes. When analysing my data and considering the message threads which included the use of code-switching and language mixing, a category called 'activity' seemed the most practicable in terms of the interactive nature of the messages posted to the forum. It became evident that the members interact in order to achieve some communicative purposes when involved in activities online. Thus, I chose to organise the first level of my analysis according to the activities that the members carried out in the message threads which included the use of language alternation phenomena. The activities were identified first and foremost in consideration of the communication between the forum members. If one wanted to analyse this forum from another point of view, identifying other activities would be possible as well.

In addition to the category of 'activity', I took the other categories under the social, or situation, factors into account in the analysis. Especially useful were the categories of 'tone' of the messages, 'norms' of the group and 'code' of interaction when describing the activities. Other categories, such as 'participation structure', 'participant characteristics' and 'purpose' of the community were practicable when evaluating the data together with Baym's (1995) online community factors. On their grounds, I was able to refer to the particular community under study as an online community.

The category of 'topic or theme' of exchanges was practical in recognising the lifestyle discourses. It helped in examining the message threads including the use of English from the point of view of discourses. However, in addition to the CMDA scheme, more theoretical background on discourse analysis was needed. I therefore used Gee's (2006) and Blommaert's (2005) notions about discourses and the construction of identities within them. In addition, the performance perspective (Blommaert 2005: 209, Bauman 2000) helped to conceptualise how all linguistic resources can be used to perform identities.

For analysing code-switching and language mixing in the message threads, I used Auer's (1999) dynamic typology for language alternation phenomena. The typology is placed within the framework of conversational code-switching and originally meant for studying spoken interaction. However, I applied the categories of the typology to data gathered from an electronic environment. According to Auer (1999: 314), discourse-related switches are locally meaningful and understandable especially in the context of interaction. Despite the fact that my data came from an electronic environment representing an asynchronous mode of communication, I considered the discussion forum messages primarily as interactive. Thus, the local meanings could be inferred from the messages as they were analysed in the context of communication. The typology proved to be useful also for this type of data, although a more suitable framework, which would take into account the various aspects of written texts, for analysing written code-switching is needed (Sebba 2007).

### **8.3 Conclusion**

This study has provided information on the uses and relevance of English in the lives of young Finnish people. It has introduced the viewpoint of the young who share an interest in extreme sports and find the Christian way of life meaningful to them. English is, alongside Finnish, an important resource in terms of communication, community and identity construction among this group. Bilingual practices are used in creative ways, which is often typical of youth language (Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulou 2003). In addition to the various global and cultural texts that young Finns find stimulating in general, they may see the English-language Bible as a meaningful source of inspiration in their lives, also in terms of a lifestyle connected to extreme sports. Thus, the members of the community simultaneously draw on practices from various cultures and lifestyles and use bilingual practices for expressing their identities both locally and globally. As a result, hybrid and innovative discourses are created. All in all, it seems that using English among these young Finnish people is accepted almost as self-evident since the forum participants did not pay attention to the use of different languages in the forum.

In order to gain deeper understanding of the identities that the participants constructed in the discussion forum, one could complement the electronic data with interviews. They could provide further perspectives to the discourses within which the participants' hybrid and multiple identities become manifested. The emergent discourse or discourses concerning Christianity and extreme sports for instance, could then be compared to other, perhaps more traditional, discourse models within a church.

In addition, analysing the different participant roles in this online community, or similar online communities could be a subject of further research. Emergence of roles and hierarchy are also part of the criteria presented by Herring (2004) for evaluating an online community. In this community, the individual roles might relate to sharing expert knowledge, promoting Christian ideology or discourse and sharing practical information. English might have different functions when considering separate participant roles in electronic environments. Electronic sites are interesting also in terms of their multimodality. In addition to written text, the members of this community often communicated with the help of photographs and videos linked to the website and the discussion forum. Thus, studying websites as a whole would give further information on the ways in which lifestyles are represented. Quantitative approaches could also be applied to a number of electronic sites to find out the prevalence of English in Finland-based online communication, for instance. All in all, research relating to online communities seems important as they are becoming more and more significant in terms of people's social life (Herring 2004: 338).

To conclude, the role of English in Finland or other non-Anglophone contexts is worth studying since knowing English seems to be increasingly valuable not only in professional or educational settings but also in gaining membership in groups which are involved in recreational activities. Participating in the activities, offline or online, cannot be described merely as a hobby but as a comprehensive, sometimes even global, lifestyle which seems to include the accomplished uses of bilingual practices.

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## APPENDIX 1: EXAMPLE MESSAGE THREADS IN ENGLISH

### Example 1

- 1 A Everyone who has logged on to the forum could (voluntary of course) give some information on themselves.. So the nicks would have faces and one could get to know people and their interests etc.. About myself: I'm [name], I like Pepsi Max and all sorts of recreational activities. I'm in my best when being a baggage in a boat, so there will be bigger waves. 😊 (more info from the godspeed main page, in the section 'people')
- 11 B Yep so I'm [name] age 21 years. From Tampere. I study media stuff in Virrat, but I'm going to spend my next year more wisely so I'll head for Australia and become a gospeltraveller 😊 In the winter time I ski down the hills and in the summer time I wakeboard and rollerblade.. yeah and more about me too in the section 'people'.
- 16 C [name]hi! Spent time mostly with GB, a senior highschool student and south-western Finland. I own a snowboard and a wake, but I spend my time mainly with those big quadrupeds. I hope I would have a chance to get to know GS people and get really in to games 😊 GodBless!

### Example 2

- 1 A All bikers post messages in here. So we'll get to know who and where they are. I'll start- [name] from Jyväskylä. I ride everything from downhill to bmx.
- 2 B here I am, [name] and from Rovaniemi I ride bmx.
- 3 C Hello! well now, cross country is missing from there. I like to ride in a forest. By muscular strength, but fast! The name was [name] and I come from Helsinki.
- 4 D So it was missing, sorry. Administration acknowledges – XC is in.
- 5 E In Oulu and I mountain bike, because one needs such a skill in adventure sports competitions. I don't know if I would otherwise be interested in biking. The purpose is to become better in that too. If there are other people from Oulu, you are welcome to contact me, so we can head for the outdoors.

### Example 3

- 1 A 😊 ARE THERE other trick bladers in the house? I'm one of them...I have a posse called [name] we are sort of casually in action...so there's whoever and whenever they have time and they feel like it... 😊  
[continues the message by offering several links to different rollerblading sites and videos]
- 2 B Hi I joined here too 😊
- 3 A Yei...thou art welcome! 😊 Did you check out the videos? Have you checked out the latest issue of PUMP? [link] ...and there you go for pumping... 😊
- 4 A [link] ...OKAY...there's the advertisement...EVERYONE come along! 😊 And the site of the happening: [link] ... PEOPLE COME ALONG!!! 😊
- 5 A This doesn't seem to be the most favoured topic!! 😊 Well well to those who care: Vote for the swift2foot shirt: [link] [continues the message with six more links to T-shirts]

### Example 4

- 1 A So I would be interested to know if there are people who would be bothered to go for some kind of a trip around Finland or abroad with skateboards or bikes. As far as I'm concerned I'm already 18 years old and I own a car, although it is quite small. A small group could travel by it for some weekend.
- 2 B Yes, I think there would be enthusiasts, since we've talked a lot about organising road trips and I have heard that talk from several people already 😊 When our own skateboarding pastor [name] comes home from Russia in July, there you have one

enthusiastic road tripper.. I think that his latest vision was buying a bus, then pimp my ride and the wheels into a proper shape 😊 I'm myself heading for somewhere else than Finland for the rest of the year so I won't be doing many road trips, but we'll see how it will go.

- 3 C [continues the post by mentioning potential opportunities for missionary work abroad]  
[quote from the heading: For Skateboarders/Bmx-guys] Why roller bladers were left out of the list??
- 4 A Are there those too O\_o You are welcome to come along if we manage to organise a trip 😊

### Example 5

- 1 A [information about an upcoming event]
- 2 A The competition starts early on Sunday morning, which means at 7 am. Over ten people are going to be there and there is still room for more... Expectations are high regarding the weekend 😊
- 3 B Yes, see you in Jämsänkoski soon. An excellent way to start the upcoming year within GS action.
- 4 C Yo yo yes sir, [reference to C's user name] in da hood man. Respect ay! So this troll is going to bounce there like a rubber horse [a reference to a popular Finnish song]. 🇹🇼
- 5 D yes, great weekend on the way 😊
- 6 A yes feelings are rising all along towards the weekend. Preparations are going well and people are starting to show up. Today we did a story on a Himos magazine about our activities. The magazine will come out conveniently just before the camp in Himos, so that skiers in Himos will immediately have a chance to see what this is all about...
- 7 A [compliments to the participants after the event]

### Example 6

- 1 A We are coming from Oulu with the skateboarding pastor, a car full of brand new GS clothes. We have at least a couple of GS panel curtains and a tablecloth for the spot. I see you when we get there. Peace out.
- 2 B I will book the men sizes! That means from xl onwards.
- 3 C yes I'm coming with people from the Jyväskylä church, they had a cancellation. I suppose a place to doss will arrange. See you there
- 4 D so there's a chance to meet a lot of people...cool! I'll have to see in what time I'm able to make it on Friday since there are some kilometres to drive. but I'll be there at some point! see ya 😊

### Example 7

- 1 A GS is going to arrange activities for children during a Näky conference in the Helsinki ice stadium ([link]) with Ermot (a children's adventure programme in TV7 [link]). There is also presentation of the action of Godspeed and Gospel Boarders and clothes and Christian extreme films on sale. Join the voluntary work or just come and meet the people! Those interested in voluntary work please contact [email address] or [phone number]
- 2 B Yes, come along! Godspeed needs you. I think I'll take a slackline with me so the eager ones can wobble on a rope 😊
- 3 A The things got started already on Tuesday with nocturnal skateboarding sessions on the BIG vert ramp at the Eliel square. [name], [name], [name], [name] and other posse were there. Things were going great and it's getting better. Come along and check it out for yourself where the afterparty on Wednesday is going to be!

## Example 8

- 1 A Godspeed is going to take part in the skateboarding championship of Finland 25.-27.8.2006 in the old ice stadium in Helsinki. People are going to be there on Friday, you're welcome to come along! You can get more information on Godspeed action during the competition from [name and telephone number].
- 2 B Aah, why it had to be on this weekend. I'm going to Rauma with my brother, but have fun ya all there!

## Example 9

- 1 A Hi, There will be a meeting next weekend somewhere in Rauma or Pori. It's not yet one hundred percent sure which one is the eventual meeting place, but we'll let you know. Hanging out and extreme.... Everyone come along! Let [name] know by email or call. Yeah come along 😊 [b]
- 2 B Oh if there is a meeting in rauma, then you can have a lift from pori to rauma, if it is easier to come there. everyone come along, to get some new fire 😊
- 3 C So we're going there, extreme sons and daughters of God are coming together and I guess the official beach party will be in Yyteri, I suppose the surfing weather is still all right? Well okay, see you somewhere in Pori/Rauma!
- 4 B YES! Now the party is in Rauma. (make yourself at home [written in Rauma dialect]) we are enthusiastically looking forward to see you !! we've ordered new fire for rauma and a lot!! 🍷 we have planned to go and revolutionise the youth gathering. lifts, accommodation etc etc from number [phone number]/[name]. 😊

## Example 10

- 1 A Ciao, so the wakeboard road trip to Estonia over to Resistance Squad ([link]) realised by Gospelboarders and Godspeed is behind and we returned to Finland many experiences richer. Thanks for all the participants, it was great to spend a weekend in Estonia with you, although there was some trouble and grief. [a summary of an accident that had upset an Estonian family] As far as the action is concerned the trip was great. Things began with a battle against time as a few errands were to be taken care of while the car was heading for the ship. We had a couple of skateboards and half an hour. Hi-yo Silver away! Our domestic capital witnessed dogtown related sidewalk surfing at the very least, along the Esplanade, the Alexander street and among others a cargo area with "no trespassing" (which was an accident.. 😊). Things went on in less condemnable action at the wake lake in Estonia, a skateboard park and in innumerable slackline sessions. Just great! We are going to collect video clips from the trip on the site and there'll be a photo gallery too, so check back later!
- 2 B Aftermath of the Estonia trip.. I could also look through my photos if there are any decent pictures and forward them.. God bless your upcoming week! [reference to B's user name]
- 3 C Hubutitiheijjaa.. I'm recovering from the new tricks on a slackline 😊 But there are not many who can do the double sack-smack.. I hope. Thank you for the great trip. It was fun.
- 4 D We had such good memories of the place and the people that we're happy to plan the next trip. The time would be 29.9.-1.10.-06 and the place Tallinn, when the guys are organising a big Pöörde Punkt (Turning Point) event, which we have also been invited to.

## Example 11

- 3 A My compliments again to the guys in Keuruu for the good directions and settings! Even though I didn't myself try out the motor-bikes, it was great to see how you handle the cross 😊 Also the evening sessions were blessed by the heavenly Father, the sauna was hot, water cold and the pancakes by [name] were really good 😊 Thank you!
- 4 B Yes! It was great that the womanfolk there had also a chance to drive as the equipment enabled it, there were quite happy faces 😊 more of these. The place along with the catering was just perfect and the nocturnal watching of extreme films in [name]'s film theater crowned the day. Thank you for the good session.
- 5 C Yes it was a cool day and maybe even surpassed my expectations. The fact that more than 20 people showed up is a really good start for the motor sports. We are looking forward to the following events...
- 6 C And there is a follow-up coming... The guys in the southern Ostrobothnia are planning the next cross event for the next September somewhere around Seinäjoki. No wonder that good events arouse more interest...

## Example 12

- 1 A [information on a farewell party]
- 2 A It was a great party. There was as much to grill as one could eat, atmosphere was nice and around 10 friends showed up. The highlight of the evening was the moment when we had the opportunity to bless [name] on his way at the church with our own gang and with the whole congregation.  
Godspeed [name]! We are waiting for you...
- 3 B Greetings from here too.. Take care of yourself, and keep Jesus on mind. Don't eat too much meat there.. 😊
- 4 C Yes! It was a good farewell party, great food and a good feeling. Goodbye Michigan man, keep on keeping on!
- 5 D Oh it was a great party those [name] farewell party! It was absolutely the highlight of the evening when we got the opportunity to bless [name] at the church:) But soon we'll see each other again! Godspeed my friend

## Example 13

- 1 A Ka-blam! How can you tell that we had a good camp? Probably by the fact that you didn't want it to end and you miss the feeling that overwhelmed more and more all along.. Ouluconnection gives thanks with a bow, since our heavenly Father is good. We're Ermot, we're Ermot, it's hard on the nerves... [the phrase rhymes in Finnish] Ride on cowboys & girls!

## Example 14

- 11 A [quote: But if someone has information on good representatives of the Christian rap scene, I will be happy to receive the information.]  
^a troll, who has a hut in a forest [a reference to a Finnish children's song]...okay...seriously...There are a few:  
[link] Down load more mixed Christian rap songs... I'm beginning to have a career/anointment with searching for these...it's cool...GLORY to God!  
When you register (FOR FREE) you can down load a few hours of Christian rap music:  
[link] 😊 Yep go down loading... and not digging ESPECIALLY: [four links] to name but a few... It's such good music that you don't have to be sorry that it's Christian... 😊
- 12 A This is a WAY GOOD RAP mixtape: BrighterDaysMixtape [link]  
I REMIND YOU that if you down load, it is a MIX TAPE, that is a set of songs mixed by a DJ, so if you record with gaps, there will be a break between the songs although it shouldn't be like that...so record without gaps! 😊



## Example 15

- 6 A [name] hey, what kind of spots there are in Rollo? I know that one park where's the half bowl and the spine set. we visited the place last summer
- 7 B Yeah in addition to the street spots there are a couple of dirt tracks here and those street spots are not particularly uber urban..

## Example 16

- 52 A Heey! What kind of footwear you should buy from the Swift2Foot? And how about, can you skate with those e.g. in the town for fun? Please someone give me a hand! 😊
- 53 B [quote: Heey!] Well heeeeeeeeeeeeeeyyyyyyy to you too! 😊  
[quote: What kind of footwear you should buy from the Swift2Foot?]  
I can tell you that whichever fits for your feet, style and wallet is worth buying...see that store doesn't sell scheisse! many think that REMZs [link to the product] are the best...but also the most expensive...  
But there are cheaper ones too... If I purchased new roller blades I would pick: USD UFS Throne Dominik Sagona boot that is the shoe: [link to the product]  
Some of the anti rocker frames such as: KIZER Type "M" Chino Frame [link to the product] (it would match the colours quite nicely)  
UNDERCOVER Leonov wheels [link to the product]  
...there would be my complete..smooth and white...good soul plate big rocker space...good...  
But you know yourself the best which are coo...also [name] the salesperson gives advice... see, this isn't a "kesport" ("we sell everything") store!  
[quote: And how about, can you skate with those e.g. in the town for fun?]  
Let's say that you can chill skate in the town. You'll probably go faster than the skateboarders mostly. But if you skate with rec(reational) skaters,you'll be annoyingly left behind...these are not as fast as basic skates. But there are other ways to skate too...  
But with rec skates you CANNOT grind... so as such, the trick skates are only do it all skate! 😊  
[quote: Please someone give me a hand! 😊] You will get off the ground! 😊

## Example 17

- 1 A Yeah so skiboarding is based on Inline skating/ trick skating/ snowboarding/ new school skiing which means Twintip skis in a smaller size the size is around 75cm-120cm bindings come from slalom snowboards, normal boots fit for most.. and the bindings won't get off if you fall but there are also normal "long bindings" but in non-release bindings the risk to be injured is 90 per cent if you try something like:halfbackflip-to-neckroll and mega-muna-misty-7-to-headlanding.. otherwise it is the nicest sports that I know the equipment are pretty expensive but it doesn't matter if you have too much money and really, snow blading is not the same skiboards are 50/50 tip to tail and snowblades are smaller than normal slalom skis. A few links and videos----- [three links] and I'll soon link more material. ADMIN ADD THIS TO THE SPORTS. 😊
- 2 B Well...snow blading could in my case look a BIT strange...since I'm a big dude...it would be amusing if I rode with short skis...that's why I'd rather have twin tip skis... 😊  
[quote: "ADMIN ADD THIS TO THE SPORTS 😊"]  
^I guess it would have fitted better in the winter sports anyway... 😊
- 3 A No it doesn't look funny if you have e.g. 120cm skiboards 120cm fits for 165-175cm 😊  
yeah and I think that new school skis are worse since you have sticks on your hand all the time and it's harder to turn with those but maybe it's easier to keep your balance and you won't break your leg so easily. 😊
- 4 B Well, it's an opinion...for me too the stick issue is the biggest...yeah...the biggest whatsoever...since I'm nowadays that much a blader so that sticks are not cool! 😊
- 5 C Hmm.. it does look like blading to me... unfortunately =( I guess the increase in length gives stability, but at least the tricks in the pictures and videos look just like blading and it looks bad at least to me.

- Where does the name come from, skiboard? "Board" seems far-fetched.
- 6 A Yep so skiboards came before the snowboard from what I've read. and skiboards are 50/50 here is the difference between snowblades and skiboards [link] check that out. You'll see that skiboards have 4x4 bindings which means that there are 4 holes exactly in the middle whereas in "toy blades" there are 8 holes and the bindings aren't in the middle and the blades aren't twintips. Skiboards are like 2 small snowboards in both feet and you can carve properly with them.. though Finns don't know much about this unique sports. Read more [link]
- 7 A yeah and the skiBOARD derives from the fact that skiboards are wide at the middle, the tip and the tail. So much wider than blades.

### Example 18

- 1 A Let's open up some discussion here, in what kind of ways you perceive or "feel" faith, do you think about issues related to faith when you do your sports or is your mind filled with something else, or does your head empty entirely? [describing the experiences]  
Often you take these things for granted, you head for slopes and ride, do stuff and enjoy, but when you start out with a gratitude and give glory to God, there is just a different kind of pleasure and depth in the things you do, like a next level or something. Commit your riding to the Lord, yeah!  
Have you had the same kind of feelings within your sports or am I just silly?
- 2 B [comments on A's experiences]  
[quote: Often you take these things for granted, you head for slopes and ride, do stuff and enjoy]  
^it's a pity, sometimes this happens...I am just a human!  
[quote: but when start out with a gratitude and give glory to God, there is just a different kind of pleasure and depth in the things you do, like a next level or something. Commit your riding to the Lord, yeah!]  
^WORD!!!  
[final comments and greetings]

### Example 19

- 1 A [description of the plan to spread the gospel to people interested in extreme sports]  
There are a few from so called street sports who are passionately interested and we have thought about this regarding the next summer's road trips e.g. visiting skate parks and beaches with a grill & chill & Jesus style would be one practical way of spreading the gospel to places with the kind of language that those interested in sports understand. We've already tried this out and as encouraged from the experience it's good to go on. In addition, ski season is about to start and the upcoming winter offers a good possibility to spread the word to the slopes.  
Does this evoke any feelings? Mail or post here.
- 2 B The hit squad is a really good idea 😊

### Example 20

- 1 A I have hopes for three trips at the beginning of the next year.  
1. I could spend February praying, windsurfing, kiteboarding, maybe even surfing (unlikely) in El Medano, Tenerife.  
2. And then I could spend March in a ski resort either somewhere in the north of Finland or in the Alps worshipping, praying and skiing.  
3. The icing on the cake would be a week-long extreme hiking trip to Kilpisjärvi, for instance.  
[further description of the trips]
- 2 B I became interested in all of those but I guess in the realms of possibility would be the icing on the cake i.e. the trip to Kilpisjärvi for example. I wondered about what is included in an Extreme hiking trip? Does it include some x-action or are the goes just so extreme?

- 3 A Extreme hiking trip at least in my opinion includes climbing up the slopes without a lift 😊 And maybe sleeping outdoors... I've never been to hiking in the north so I don't know what the best way to accommodate is. Some sort of cottage would be a real luxury!

### Example 21

- 1 A [The passage is first cited in Finnish and then in English]  
"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."  
It hit me like a ton of bricks. By the way there's a cool shirt "Broken" in the collection of Eternalriders with a reference to that psalm, check it out: [\[link\]](#)
- 2 B Amen! And it was Jesus who said when the Pharisees wondered why He hung out with sinners and publicans that; Those who are healthy don't need a doctor. Sick people do.  
Mark 2:17

### Example 22

- 1 A An absolutely impressive verse, it says explicitly all that is essential.  
[The passage is first cited in Finnish and then in English]  
5) For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6) For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," [a]made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. 7) But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 😊 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9) persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 10) We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.
- 2 A Oh, it interpreted those characters as smileys. Well, it doesn't matter. The word of the Bible is so cool that there was every reason to...
- 3 B Absolutely!!!  
It describes so well the early stage of Godspeed. We've had so many difficulties and setbacks that at times I've almost lost my faith in these things, but God has not given up and things still move on. Regardless of the circumstances!

### Example 23

- 1 A [There are two Finnish versions and two English versions of the same passage] amplified:  
12Therefore, my dear ones, as you have always obeyed [my suggestions], so now, not only [with the enthusiasm you would show] in my presence but much more because I am absent, work out (cultivate, carry out to the goal, and fully complete) your own salvation with reverence and awe and trembling (self-distrust, [a]with serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation, timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ). 13[Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while [b]effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and [c]delight.  
the message:  
12-13What I'm getting at, friends, is that you should simply keep on doing what you've done from the beginning. When I was living among you, you lived in responsive obedience. Now that I'm separated from you, keep it up. Better yet, redouble your efforts. Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God. That energy is God's energy, an energy deep within you, God himself willing and working at what will give him the most pleasure.  
++++  
You can translate this passage (among others) in English: [\[link to a site with different Bible versions\]](#) 😊  
-GOD BLESS YOU ALL-

## Example 24

- 1 A So I'd think that many of you know what parkour is? Anyway I'm a Christian representative of the sport and therefore this Bible passage has struck me 😊 It goes something like this:  
"with my God I can jump over a wall..."
- 2 B Amen! It can be found in the Psalm 18:30 and also from 2 Samuel 22..  
"Lord, you keep the lamp of my life burning brightly. You are my God. You bring light into my darkness. With your help I can attack a troop of soldiers. With the help of my God I can climb over a wall. God's way is perfect. The word of the Lord doesn't have any flaws. He is like a shield to all who go to him for safety." Psalm 18:28-30 Yeah.

## Example 25

- 3 A [description of an excursion]  
So we've set up a stand and created contacts here etc.. Soon we're going to the local skate park to organise our own X-treme workshop and to evangelise the posse. So that's all for now..  
Peace out, Finland.  
Ps. Death is not welcome here kicks ass! Seriously!

## Example 26

- 1 A No man has any hold on me, but I have made myself a workman owned by all. I do this so I might lead more people to Christ. I became as a Jew to the Jews so I might lead them to Christ. There are some who live by obeying the Jewish Law. I became as one who lives by obeying the Jewish Law so I might lead them to Christ. There are some who live by not obeying the Jewish law. I became as one who lives by not obeying the Jewish law so I might lead them to Christ. This does not mean that I do not obey God's Law. I obey the teachings of Christ. Some are weak. I have become weak so I might lead them to Christ. I have become like every person so in every way I might lead some to Christ.  
What about us..  
A snowboarder to snowboarders, a skater to skaters, a motorist to motorists, a motorcyclist to motorcyclists... It's our mission. To lead at least some to the Lord.

## Example 27

- 3 A [quote from the heading: For Skateboarders/Bmx-guys] Why roller bladers were left out of the list??
- 4 B Are there those too O\_o You are welcome to come along if we manage to organise a trip 😊
- 5 A As you see there are...at least one right here... only that I'm not skilled...but I love Jesus, and I like to roller blade and improve my skills at my own pace!
- 6 B Heh and my skateboarding skills are almost non-existent but anyhow, having fun has been the most important thing in this sport from the start.
- 7 A WELL SURE ENOUGH! 😊 Although snowboarding for instance has changed like... whoa...  
When I started people used to ask me: "do you know the method?" ...not anymore... nowadays they ask how much do you spin... 😊 My answer to them: "I DON'T SPIN... I am truthfully old school"...like that... Old school also means that I don't bother to go to Serena in winter time to slide down the biggest icy jumping hill in the rain... I am TOO old and TOO eager for convenience...  
But my RESPECTS to the kids who ride anything in any kind of weather or in the rail... 😊
- 8 B Yeah. That's true. It's funny how my favourite tricks with the skateboard include bonelesses and other old school tricks even though I had heard nothing about

skateboarding in their golden age. They are just so nice and cool... 🤔 My technique has fortunately developed to some extent and now I can do a 360 flip in a good day \*wow\*.

### Example 28

- 33 A [quote from B: oops well I intend to purchase blades before the summer, I'll have to see how things come along and please inform me when the rastila thing is settled..] yeah... step by step WE ARE TAKING OVER THE WORLD... 🤔 (sorry I'm listening to Christian rap music... I have to shout a little!!!) [quote from B: [link] I'd be interested in those, what do you think ? 🤔] Yeah, those are basic blades, a sure choice! 🤔 This too would be a good choice: [link] ...only that with those you should buy rocker (=grind) frames... or rocker wheels... in the middle... since the rocker thing is a must if you like to grind, if air is your own thing mostly then 8 down is the best... earlier I was an air rollerblading kind of guy, but nowadays I like to train the rockers! 🤔 [link] [link] Those thrones are better I think... they have better grindplates in my opinion... 😊 But it's an opinion... you should go and try out swift blades... and try out which ones feel the best! 😊 (I myself won't buy "soft boot" anymore, just old school plastic shoes... familiar and reliable... and not too loose in my foot! 🤔)

### Example 29

- 1 A Hi! The weekly slackline sessions have begun again in Värttö, Oulu 🤔 The slackline season that started yesterday is going to bring fun for the whole summer. Welcome to get to know the secrets of the sport and getting ready for the upcoming climbing/skate/wake/surfing/whatever season in terms of balance training and laid-back music. You can move on to the after party to cook and check out the films by xtremelife for instance [link to films provided by xtremelife]

### Example 30

- 1 A Hello-hello-hello!  
Slackline sessions in Helsinki as advertised in the heading!  
So I've got 20m this über-nice rope with other supplementary equipment. Now that snow (also the last piles of it) has melted and the lawn has begun to dry up in the parks, I'm training on a slackline every now and then in the centre of Helsinki. Often in kaivopuisto park. So if you're interested, contact me and we'll fix a time for balancing. [phone number and email address]  
"It is not difficult, it only feels that way if you don't practise!"
- 2 B Yo bro! This will grow into a slackline competition between the north and the south. Training, training. Let's draw the line at Jyväskylä and Jkl posse belongs to the north! 🤔 I hear that there are crazy slackliners there.. in lack of the slackline dyneema the local spare parts stores have been bought out of tow ropes and the results are amazing. Ha ha, but seriously. You have been challenged.
- 3 C Al right.. And Kokkola posse (me) reveals a secret.. Code word: Winter practice!!! (haven't done any, but there was a possibility for doing it 🤔) Westcoast, keeping it real yo??

### Example 31

- 1 A Now I have to raise the subject, related to that challenge.  
How tight a slack needs to be in order to be accepted, or how loose it needs to be. I've been practising on a tight one, and the people from Oulu tell it off by saying that the loose one is better. 🤔 🤔
- 2 B Tight ropes belong to a circus 🤔 this is slacklining!

Slack ['slæk] [Finnish translations for the word], a slack rope = [a Finnish translation for the phrase]

Below you can find the appropriate tightness for a slack – Oulu is training! When is the competition 😊? At the end of June the north-westcoast slack team is moving to a height training camp to Cape town, South Africa and that will take at least until December.. Another problem is that some of the competitors are in Siberia until July... Do we have a wintry Christmas competition in Finland after all, or then we'll have a guest competition under the African sun in December. 😊

### Example 32

- 1 A Is there a video of some specific sports or more general video coming to the website at any point?
- 2 B Yes, some video material has been filmed from a few sessions and we'll continue to film more, we're working on it but just now the lack of resources and time hinders us. At the editing table and we'll get the material to the Internet probably during the autumn. First, we're going to do a trailer kind of presentation video of Godspeed and we'll going to think about the other projects after that.

### Example 33

- 1 A Okay, now we've got a more powerful Internet server and we can show more visual evidence. Breaks in the Internet site's functionality should be history along with the reform. From the road trip in Estonia [link] From the MX meeting in Keuruu [link] More material on the way along with the new trips!
- 2 B Yes.. Can you make some kind of a permanent link to the list on the Internet site? Of course when you have time.. 😊
- 3 A Yes! Attitude to your desktop with the brand new desktop backgrounds by Godspeed. Pick your resolution and things rock [link] 😊
- 4 B Wow... Who's that "so handsome dudah" there with the camcorder?? 😊
- 5 A Well I don't know, some weird guy run in the way. Someone called [B's user name] or something like that.

### Example 34

- 1 A So here are the photogalleries gathered from the events so far.  
From the MX meeting in Keuruu: [link] road trip in Estonia: [link] GB- Warth: [link]  
You can add a link to this topic if you have done your own galleries/ uploaded photographs of the events/ sports somewhere. Give a link and please, report clearly from where and when the photographs have been taken.
- 2 B Surely there are photos from many other trips too?. Who has the photos and knows how and has time to put them on the Internet? I myself don't have photos or skills so it's easy for me to give orders;D

### Example 35

- 1 A [link]
- 2 B Ha ha. Boten Anna has long been only worth OLD in irc, but sure it is quite a song. :-D Here's some not so pointless video material [AOC – Mitä sä teet](#) [What do you do], who can recognise which song the beat comes from? 😊 Amazingly the guys perform! But have you heard of [\[name\]\(that is me\)?](#) Finally a light motocross moment with [Travis Pastrana's double backflip](#). Mike Metzger and a hint of backflip in a place where others have only dreamt of a straightforward jump -> [Check It Out!!](#)<-
- 3 A But have you seen the video by DotA? It's a bit newer..
- 4 B It was the link to Dota that I originally gave you in MS messenger, you then clicked your way into boten anna. 😊

- 5 A Now you're showing off.. Okay.. Old.. Sbohohhooooohooooooo.. Blah. I think that how old material any link contains, is directly proportional to how much time one spends "to have nolife" in irssi.. 😞

### Example 36

- 1 A I'm inspired greatly by the lyrics of some bands, which tell you about God's greatness in a direct and/or beautiful way. I was wondering that it would be great to hear what lyrics speak to you the best. My biggest favourites come from the songs by Jars of Clay. An absolutely amazing band and maybe the best in my opinion. Beautiful and lyrical lyrics, makes me calm down after hectic days and sessions.  
Worlds apart: [lyrics of the song]
- 2 B Please share your opinions. What speaks to you the most in terms of the lyrics?  
For me, many songs express the thoughts that I've been thinking of.. The first one that comes to my mind is SnowSoul by ImmortalSouls.. Also Compromises by Connection posse hits me well. blah. I have to attach the lyrics as soon as I have time to search for them. But there are a lot of those songs.
- 3 C The lyrics are good and the song is absolutely great. I feel good when I think that I haven't been forgotten. 😊  
Blindside- When I remember [lyrics of the song]
- 4 D This song has been a pretty amazing for me:  
Underoath Moving For The Sake Of Motion [lyrics of the song]
- 5 E Never die by Dogwood is in brief beating punk by its lyrics, it works like a toilet in a train. I spotted it from an extreme film called Refined and I didn't get it out of my head.  
Live fast, die slow, stand back, let go!  
[lyrics of the song]
- 8 B A song blew my mind. I was walking outside in a frosty weather when suddenly I heard these lyrics from my headphones: This is my church, this is where i heel my hurts. Tonight, God is a DJ. It opened up many things for me.. You get spoken to in curious ways.

### Example 37

- 1 A Do you have a music style (or a band) that makes you want to go out for sports? In my case: CORE makes me want to go for snowboarding and RAP/ACID JAZZ makes me want to go for rollerblading... 😊 What about you?
- 2 B My musical taste goes from side to side, according to the feeling and the sport, but let's say that Godspeed Radio sums up pretty well my taste for music 😊 Tune in at [link]  
When you add to that a bit heavier stuff with a beautiful growling sound à la Demonhunter, 7-10 Split, Haste the Day you'll get on both on a slope and elsewhere.  
You can find these in Purevolume, [three links]  
With a slackline you need to have some funkier stuff or good surf music 😊
- 3 C oh you're so demanding with the music.. 😊 I myself listen to either good rap music or metal.. Or then their mixture.. demonhunter among others... But if someone has information on good representatives of the Christian rap scene, I will be happy to receive the information.
- 4 D Demon Hunter, that's right 😊 I myself have a taste for all sort of music. All kind of stuff is alright to some extent. I listen to heavier music maybe the most. Good representatives of the rap scene are, you may have heard of them, for example the domestic AOC and J-Posse the foreign Manafest, Flame, KJ-52, TobyMac (rap and rock)
- 5 E I add one to the representatives of foreign rap scene. - Grits  
Then a couple of Rock bands more to my liking - 12 Stones - Kids in The Way - Subseven And finally, a light "Man and a guitar" set - Shawn Mcdonald