

# ***MORPHOLOGICAL INTEGRATION OF ESTONIAN LEXICAL ELEMENTS IN A FINNISH LANGUAGE BASE DURING THE FIRST YEARS OF IMMIGRATION***

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## ***Abstract:***

*The aim of this paper is to examine code-switching in mainly Finnish language email data collected from 11 students during their first three years of residence in Estonia. The research focuses on the morphological integration of intrasentential switches to Estonian in the Finnish language base - i.e. the inflection of the switched items with either Estonian or Finnish suffixes. In order to find out how and why this integration changes, it is analysed against time (length of stay) and the speakers' language backgrounds (childhood bilingual vs. monolingual). The conclusion is drawn that during the three-year study period the amount of morphologically integrated switches decreases as a growing number of switches maintain the grammatical features of the "donor" language. The order in which Estonian case endings emerge is shown to be similar to their order of frequency in texts written by speakers of Estonian as a second language. A connection is also drawn between the emergence of non-integrated switches and their function as contextualisation cues. A further result of the study is that a background of childhood bilingualism seems to favour morphological non-integration of intrasentential switches.*

**Keywords:** *Codeswitching; Nonce borrowing; E-mails; Finno-Ugric languages; Language contact.*