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# **HOW THE PORTAL SPOKE**

An Analysis of the Translation of Internet Language in  
the Novel *No One Is Talking About This*

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# ABSTRACT

Heini Salonen: How the Portal Spoke: An Analysis of the Translation of Internet Language in *No One Is Talking About This*

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The internet affects all aspects of modern society, including language. Language influenced by the internet is not only present on social media, but also in other arenas, such as literature. One example of this is the novel *No One Is Talking About This* by Patricia Lockwood, which utilizes conventions of internet language and culture, demonstrating how social media and the internet affect culture and society.

This thesis examines the Finnish translation *Kukaan ei puhu tästä*. Specifically, it analyzes parts of the translation of the novel which can be seen exemplifying internet language. Some of these are references to real internet slang or jokes, and some are fictional and constructed to mimic internet language by using playful language and creating new expressions or spellings. Theoretical information on computer-mediated communication, characteristics of internet language, globalization's effect on language, and colloquial language is introduced and utilized in the analysis.

Although the dataset is relatively small, some similarities in the translated parts can be discerned. Mainly, it seems that the translation aims to maintain the connection to internet culture and language by using playful, creative, and colloquial language, and emphasizing the tone of the language more than maintaining the original semantic content of the source material. The occasionally nonsensical and absurd language of the internet that is used in the novel also perhaps allows this to a greater extent than in many other literary translations.

Some parts of the translation have been left untranslated, and some use playful word choices and spellings. The strategies used by the translator vary, but they all seem to function as connections to conventions of internet language.

Keywords: internet language, internet slang, literary translation, computer-mediated-communication

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# TIIVISTELMÄ

Heini Salonen: How the Portal Spoke: An Analysis of the Translation of Internet Language in *No One Is Talking About This*

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Internetillä on merkittävä vaikutus modernin yhteiskunnan eri osa-alueisiin, kuten esimerkiksi kieleen. Internetin vaikutus kieleen ei ole läsnä ainoastaan sosiaalisessa mediassa, vaan sitä esiintyy myös muualla, kuten esimerkiksi kaunokirjallisuudessa. Yksi esimerkki tästä on Patricia Lockwoodin romaani *No One Is Talking About This*, joka kuvaa internetin vaikutusta nyky-yhteiskuntaan ja kulttuuriin verkkokielen käytäntöjä hyödyntäen.

Tämä tutkielma tutkii romaanin suomenkielistä käännöstä *Kukaan ei puhu tästä*. Erityisesti keskityn niiden kohtien analysointiin, jotka ilmentävät internetille tyypillistä kielenkäyttöä. Osa näistä on viittauksia todellisiin internetissä käytettyihin ilmauksiin ja osa kuvitteellista, leikkimielistä kieltä, joka pyrkii jäljittelemään internetille tyypillistä kielenkäyttöä keksimällä uusia ilmaisuja. Teoreettisena taustana toimivat tietokonevälitteisen kommunikaation, internetin kielenkäyttöön, globalisaation ja puhekieliseen kieleen liittyvät teoriat ja näkökulmat, ja näitä esitellään analyysin tukena.

Vaikka tutkittavan datan määrä on suhteellisen pieni, siitä tehdyt havainnot ovat johdonmukaisia. Pääasiassa on huomattavaa, että käännös pyrkii noudattamaan internetissä käytetyn kielen leikkisää, absurdia ja puhekielistä ilmaisutapaa ja painottaa tätä enemmän kuin alkuperäisen viestin kirjaimellista välittämistä. Alkuperäisessä, englanninkielisessä romaanissa käytetty internetille tyypillinen, ajoittain absurdi ja järjetön kielenkäyttö varmasti mahdollistaa tämän eri tavoin kuin monissa muissa kaunokirjallisuuskäännöksissä.

Osa tekstistä on jätetty kokonaan kääntämättä, luultavasti siksi, että nämä kohdat ovat vahvasti kytköksissä tunnettuun internet kulttuuriin. Monet kohdat ovat käännetty niin, että ne säilyttävät yhteyden internetissä käytettyyn kieleen hyödyntämällä leikkimielisiä ilmaisuja.

Avainsanat: internet kieli, internet slangi, kaunokirjallisuuskäännös, tietokonevälitteinen viestintä

Tämän julkaisun alkuperäisyys on tarkastettu Turnitin Originality Check -ohjelmalla.

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# 1 Introduction

The Internet has influenced language and communication profoundly (Phillip and Tagg 2014, 3). Originating from the online hacker culture of the 1990's and early 2000's, internet language can be characterized as playful and creative (Danet 2001, 26–27). The development of language and communication in the digital age has been studied, and computer-mediated-communication has been an instrumental field of study in this research, as it examines the ways technology affects communication (Thurlow, Lengel, and Tomic 2004, 26). Language influenced by the internet is not only found online, but also in other arenas of communication, media, and even literature.

Patricia Lockwood's 2021 novel *No One Is Talking About This* utilizes social media and the internet as its central environment and uses linguistic tools to create the feeling of this space. As Lily Sherlic (2021) describes the unnamed protagonist of the novel in *Harvard Review*, she is: "(...) known for knowing what's going on in the Internet social world, so much so that she's paid to give talks about how it feels to be very online." This being "very online" is at the core of this novel, and central to its use of linguistic expressions. Lockwood borrows from the vocabulary of social media and creates a language that can be understood by readers who are themselves "very online". For others, this kind of language might be difficult to understand. Nevertheless, it does generate a tone that seems realistic to online culture and language in real life.

In his review of the novel in *The Guardian*, Mark O'Connell (2021) summarizes the novel's pursuit of the tone of realistic internet language poignantly, writing about the author: "If Lockwood is invested in anything here, she is invested in not getting it wrong – in accurately representing a consciousness marinated in the shallow irony (and terrible levity) of the portal". "The portal" refers to the name the protagonist uses for the internet, as she speculates why people online talk the way they do. As an answer, she ponders that perhaps this is because "it was the way the portal spoke" (63). This thesis is not only invested in the way the so-called portal speaks, but also how it affects translation.

The Finnish translation of the book, *Kukaan ei puhu tästä*, has been translated by Einari Aaltonen, and it utilizes different linguistic tools to create a feeling of playfulness and creativity that is characteristic of the internet and social media. The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the

translation of the novel, and specifically focus on the aspects where there are distinctive linguistic features of the kind of language and slang that is used in social media. The analysis of the data uses theoretical information from communication, language, and translation research to contextualize the decisions and strategies made by the translator. Attention is paid to the strategies used by the translator to create a realistic tone of internet language by means of playfulness, absurdity, or creativity. First, a theoretical background is introduced. An analysis of the translation follows, divided into sections of different kinds of translated material. Finally, a discussion of the analysis and concluding thoughts are presented in the final section.

## **2 Online Language and Translation**

### **2.1 Computer-mediated-communication**

Computer-mediated-communication (CMC) is a central concept in internet language research. John Sherblom describes computer-mediated-communication as “communication within a technological medium through which individuals construct social and relational meaning” (2019, 2). This thesis will focus mostly on the aspect of language, though computer-mediated-communication can be studied from many other perspectives as well. The focus of this thesis is also more on the linguistic content and form of language, rather than interpersonal elements, since the studied texts are mostly isolated fictional social media posts, rather than dialogue between characters. In addition, while computer-mediated-communication studies the effect of all kinds of technological media, such as texting, this thesis will focus on social media, since it is the central medium present in the novel.

Thurlow et al. describe communication as dynamic, transactional, multifunctional, and multimodal (2004, 29–30). These can also be used to describe online communication, since, as demonstrated in this thesis, new spellings and words are created in a dynamic manner by internet users, and they function also as references to other parts of internet culture intertextually, as well as use other modes, such as visual content, to create messages. Internet culture and language are not only manifested online, but they also spread to other areas of our life, as the internet is no longer exclusive to the “cyberspace” – a spatial dimension of the internet – but rather extending into offline life as well (Thurlow, Lengel, and Tomic 2004, 43). The internet and its language being such a central theme in a literary fiction novel such as *No*

*One Is Talking About This* can be seen as just one example of the way online and offline are intertwining in modern society, which makes the research on computer-mediated-communication as relevant as ever.

## 2.2 Language, the Internet, and Globalization

As most of the major websites online have originally been created in English (Desjardins 2021, 419), it has also become the language of the internet, and in today's globalized society, people all over the world – including people in Finland – tend to be relatively skilled in English (Hiidenmaa 2003, 100). This expansion in the use of English driven by globalization and the internet also affects other languages locally. Jannis Androutsopoulos explains a part of this process:

In one typical case of late modern linguistic globalization, lexis and discourse markers of English origin are 'borrowed' and structurally integrated into the grammar and the pragmatics of recipient languages up to the point of becoming indecipherable to the original speakers. (2010, 227)

This kind of borrowing, – as well as tension between the local and global languages – can be seen on the internet. The result can be a form of heteroglossia, where different varieties of language are used in the same space, and it can be used to navigate identities and ideologies in the space of the global internet (Androutsopolous 2010, 236). This relates to the idea of “glocalization” – the combination of local and global –, which is prevalent in internet use, as people partaking in computer-mediated-discourse can maintain their local identities while simultaneously borrow from the global elements in a dynamic manner (Koutsogiannis and Mitsikopoulou 2007, 143). The translation of *No One Is Talking About This* occasionally uses a type of hybrid language that has elements of glocalization, combining elements from English to Finnish, while the original novel lacks this dimension due to being written in English, as it takes place in the USA.

The USA is a central originator of a considerable amount of popular internet culture, and Bloch and Lemish (2003, 159–160) use the term “Megaphone effect” to describe how the popularity of cultural items usually becomes globally significant only after they reach popularity in the US. Because the internet is a vital part of modern life, it could also be suggested that the megaphone effect could describe how linguistic elements on social media often originate from the US. This suggests that a lot of the internet language and discourse is affected by American vocabulary and culture, even when the language used is not English.

## 2.3 The Nature of Internet Language: Creativity and Playfulness Online

According to Brenda Danet, playfulness is at the core of language on the internet (2001, 26–27). While the language in *No One Is Talking About This* could be described as more absurd and even cynical at times, playfulness can still be detected in aspects such as the spelling of words and the humorous tone of the language. As internet slang is user-generated and not standardized (Zappavigna 2012, 127), it can often be a space for creativity as well as play. Seargant and Tagg (2014, 28) describe the creative nature of computer-mediated-discourse as follows: “In much digital communication, obscurity and ambiguity are licensed, relevance a matter of choice, and truthfulness at times unnecessary. What matters is amusement, laughter and creative enjoyment (...)”. They further explain how this obscurity and creativity online is visible in the almost poetic nature of emphasizing form over content and playing with words by inventing “funky” ways to spell (35).

The Finnish translation of *No One Is Talking About This* adds another layer to this action of creating of and playing with linguistic elements, as many parts of the translations use creative ways to mimic the internet language of the novel. Mirroring the process of the roles of authors and audiences, as well as consumers and creators, becoming more ambiguous on the internet (Seargant and Tagg 2014, 4), the roles of the author and translator become individually muddled as well, as they create a language that is professionally created but mimics user generated internet content.

## 2.4 Colloquial Language on the Internet and in Translation

Translated Finnish can be regarded as its own variation of Finnish, and one of the things that differentiate Finnish translations from texts that are originally written in Finnish is how they use colloquial language (Nevalainen 2003, 3–4). Colloquial language is relevant in this thesis, not only in the way the Finnish translation uses it, but also because the non-standardized way language online often mimics spoken language (Para 2016,193), making it more colloquial. Susan Herring (1993,14) explains how language online does not strictly fit into a category of written or spoken language but could rather be considered as speech-like writing.

Sampo Nevalainen (2003, 8) demonstrates findings from a corpus study that indicate that colloquial language is used more often in texts originally written in Finnish than in texts that

are translated into Finnish. He suggests that colloquial language in translated Finnish is more often a conscious strategy, whereas writers writing original texts in Finnish use it less as a strategic tool and perhaps more unconsciously. *Kukaan Ei Puhu Tästä* utilizes colloquial language to a great extent, making it notably divergent from the corpus findings mentioned above. Therefore, it can be assumed that the translation uses colloquial language strategically, perhaps to imitate the casual, non-standardized nature of internet language and culture.

### 3 Method and Data

The data for this thesis consists of words and phrases from the novel *No One Is Talking About This*, and its Finnish translation *Kukaan ei puhu tästä*. The novel consists of fragmented depictions of modern life influenced by social media and the internet. The data was collected by choosing parts of the novel that imitate expressions in social media posts, or otherwise have qualities that are linguistically characteristic of internet language, and examining how they are translated. These elements include references to online memes and expressions, abbreviations such as ‘lol’, misspelling of words, and playful or absurd language. The novel contains a significant number of references to various internet memes and jokes. Many of them are descriptions of photos or events that, while describing internet culture, are not linguistically relevant to analyze in this thesis.

The original English expressions and their translated counterparts were organized and divided into different categories based on the features of the translation. These categories are *no translation*, *literal translation*, and *creativity in translation of internet language*. The first two analyze more straightforward translation strategies used, examining parts from data which have either been left untranslated completely, or have been translated literally. The third section examines more complex samples from the data, where the translator has used creative language to translate words, phrases and sentences which are examples of playfulness and absurdity in internet language. The final subsection consists of a short discussion on how vulgar language and cursing are translated. Each category is presented in its own chapter, and some examples from the novel and its translation are given to demonstrate the different types of translation. These are analyzed by utilizing concepts such as colloquial language, conventions of internet language, and glocalization, and discussing how they are present in the translation.

## 4 An Analysis of The Translation of *No One Is Talking About This*

### 4.1 No Translation

#### 4.1.1 Well Known Expressions

While many of the expressions in *No One Is Talking About This* are translated in a creative way, there are also some that have not been translated at all. The untranslated parts have similar characteristics, mainly being internet lingo, or referencing famous memes or slang phrases used on the internet. The abbreviation *Lol* (30) is a famous part of internet lingo, and it has been left untranslated, probably due to it being so widely used and well known. As the novel does not contain other abbreviations used online, it cannot be determined whether all abbreviations would typically be left untranslated. However, it seems highly plausible that in this case the reason for not translating it is due to its prevalence and popularity online.

Another internet reference left untranslated most likely due to its global popularity is the sentence *Charlie bit my finger* (57), which refers to a title of a video that Walker Caplan refers to as being “one of the first viral YouTube videos” in her *Literary Hub* article about memes in *No One Is Talking About This* (2021). There are also many other intertextual references to other internet phenomena in the novel. For example, one of them is mentioning *a girl applying a foundation with a hard-boiled egg* (8), and while this is also an intertextual reference to an existing internet event (Caplan 2021), it has been translated, unlike *Charlie bit my finger*. Therefore, it can be deduced that because *Charlie bit my finger* is the only intertextual internet reference that has been left untranslated, there must be a reason for it. As the original video was posted on YouTube in 2010 and has over 6 million views and has inspired an abundance of other user-generated content about it, it is safe to assume that the readers of *Kukaan ei puhu tästä* who have seen the video only know it by its English title. Therefore, leaving it untranslated is understandable. Additionally, the other intertextual references tend to be descriptive in their nature, and not titles or headlines, which is likely the reason they are translated unlike *Charlie bit my finger*.





One of the expressions that has been left untranslated is not perhaps as widely used or known as *lol* or *Charlie bit my finger* but is still originating from the internet and part of its vocabulary.

*No One Is Talking About This* references a nostalgic part of internet culture with the expression *1776-core* (22). According to Isabel Slone in *The New York Times*, the suffix *-core* is often added onto different words to describe a nostalgic aesthetic, *cottagecore* being one of the most popular of these terms (Slone, 2020). This expression in the novel has also been left untranslated in the Finnish version. As this practice of adding the suffix after certain words is not as old and most likely not as well-known as the two examples above, it might not be as familiar to as many Finnish readers, especially those who do not spend much time on social media. However, reading it untranslated maintains the connection to internet culture and language, since the convention of adding the suffix originates from social media.

One of the aspects of internet culture and language is, as Michele Zappavigna (2012, 152) explains, an element of homophora, meaning that to understand it often requires intertextual knowledge of already existing parts of the culture. In *No One Is Talking About This* this is present as well since its protagonist is deeply connected to internet culture and the world of social media. This could create difficulties in translation, mainly in deciding whether to add additional context or explication to parts of the text that refer to something else. Here, some of the decisions of leaving things untranslated seem obvious; *lol* hardly demands an explanation due to its wide usage. However, even some more obscure expressions, such as *1776-core*, have been left untranslated. This fits the tone and environment of the novel, since it is describing a space that is profoundly rooted in social media and aiming to depict it realistically, and which therefore is not accessible to every single reader.

#### 4.1.2 Playing with Vocabulary, Spelling, and Form

Playful, creative language typical to social media is strongly present in *No One Is Talking About This*, as well as its translation *Kukaan ei puhu tästä*. However, while some of the playful language has been translated in a way that utilizes language creatively, some of it has been left untranslated. Examples of this are presented below.

- (1) W  E  L  L  (92)
- (2) “White culture is when someone’s like *I’m a myoosic man*” (106)  
“valkoinen kulttuuri on sitä, että joku huikkaa *I’m a myoosic man*” (118)
- (3) “... yes binch” (60)  
“... juurikin niin, binch” (70)

Example (1) depicts the way the clapping emoji is used online between words or, as in this case, letters, to emphasize something. The emphasized word here, *well*, is not a word that carries a significant amount of semantic content, which might have been done ironically on purpose. This also means that leaving it untranslated does not have a big impact on delivering the message. This is also the only occasion where emojis are present in the novel, which means that the translation cannot be compared to other similar ones, but it is a good example of how communication online can combine visual elements with textual ones. The most important feature here is the visual impact of the emojis, which have been preserved, and which connect the expression to social media.

Example (2) depicts a fictional social media post, and the untranslated part is seemingly fictional as well, meaning that it does not refer to a real-life post. However, it uses a playful language that utilizes creative misspellings that are characteristic of internet language. This has been left untranslated, even though there are other similar parts of the novel that have used creative ways to translate a misspelling into Finnish. One example of these is the word *sneazing* (14), which has been translated into *oivastus* (23). This practice of translating some parts and not others could exemplify the way language on the internet is a place where global and local languages co-exist in a state of heteroglossia, often in non-standardized way.

Example (3) also refers to a misspelling. While example (2) showed a misspelling invented by the author, this misspelling is actually used on the internet as synonym for the word *bitch* (Caplan, 2021). The translator could have used a colloquial Finnish word that already exists, such as *horo* or *ämmä* – both of which could be translations for the word *bitch* –, but this would not have maintained the convention of misspelling online. Another option could have been to misspell the word in Finnish, as in *oivastus*, but the difference is that *binch* is used in real-life. Therefore, keeping it untranslated, again, acts as a connection to internet culture.

## 4.2 Literal Translation

The number of literal translations in the data seems significant, mainly because that number is surprisingly low. Only two translations could be considered literal translation, and even categorizing them as literal is not exactly straightforward.

*Banned* (40) is a word that appears in the original text in the context of internet use, meaning the act of denying a user access to a certain web site. The Finnish translation of this word

connects this term even more closely to the context of internet use. The word has been translated to *bännättiin* (48). While there could be verbs that align more with standard Finnish, such as *estää*, which would be a literal translation as well, the chosen verb is a word that probably be more likely used on the internet, rather than in other contexts. Because the chosen translated verb is more colloquial, it could be argued that this translation is a purposeful strategy to create a translated variety of Finnish that aligns with the language used on the internet.

Same could be argued for the other literal translation is the translation for the word *toxic* (53). While this is a word that could be used in multiple contexts in different registers, in the novel it is again used on an internet post, and the translation acts as a way to make it seem more like internet lingo. As with *banned*, there are more other synonyms, such as *myrkyllinen*, that align more with standard language and could be used as a translation. However, the chosen translation *toksinen* (62), again acts as way to connect the tone of the language to social media.

Not only are the chosen literal translations words that might be more likely to be used on the internet rather than some other contexts, but both are also loanwords, or words derived from English. As internet is known to be America-centric (Bloch and Lemish 2003, 167), it is understandable that English affects the way other languages are used locally on the internet. Using loanwords originating from English in social media could also be considered an example of glocality, as the words are phonetically similar to English words but still fit the local language. Using these words as opposed to their other synonyms creates a vocabulary that imitates the space of the multilingual, global internet where users navigate between global and local identities. It is also noteworthy that only two words from the collected data could be considered literal translations. This could suggest that because, as stated prior, most of the major websites are created in English (Desjardins 2021, 419), and the language is non-standardized, there is no established translated vocabulary of Finnish for English internet slang.

### **4.3 Creativity in Translations of Internet Language**

As *No One Is Talking About This* is all about social media and how it affects our thinking and actions, language influenced by the internet is also evident on the level of vocabulary. There are many real-life, user-generated internet words and phrases in the novel, as well as fictional ones. Some of them are globally used, and some of them have not been translated, as analyzed above. However, there are also those that have been translated into Finnish.

### 4.3.1 Internet phrases and expressions

One of the translated phrases is *it me* (29), which has been translated into *niin meitsiä* (38). This is a straightforward translation and could even be considered as a literal translation. However, it is not included in the section about literal translations since the original phrase is an internet phrase and grammatically incorrect in standard English, and therefore making a literal translation would be complicated. *It me* is a phrase that is often used by internet users express how they relate to a certain photo, headline, or other piece of content online (Caplan 2021). The semantic content of the translation and source text is therefore roughly the same. While the original phrase exemplifies the playful nature of internet language by using incorrect grammar, the Finnish translation uses colloquial language to create a similar effect.

Another relatively straightforward translation is *aivogalaksi* (120), which is a translation of the term *galaxybrain* (107). This is a term that is used widely online, and it refers to an ironic meme that is used when someone has a complicated thought or an idea (Caplan 2021). The translation has switched the word order in the compound word, creating a word that is similar to the original, but still different. There is no grammatical reason the translator could not have simply used *galaksiaivo*, a literal translation. Nevertheless, because the original word is a part of user-generated internet slang and has no equivalent in standard Finnish, this translation can act as a reminder of the decisions a translator has to make, and how this unique position of translating non-standard user generated language in a professional literature medium can allow for greater creative choices.

Creativity has also been used in the translation of the phrase *a thicc snack* (83), which has been curiously translated into *öljytty öylätti* (92), meaning ‘an oiled wafer’. The English original word is likewise used on the internet in real life. Walker Caplan (2021) explains that “intuitively”, *thicc* means “voluptuous and curvy”, and being/looking like *a snack* means “looking good enough to eat”. It would be possible for the translation to simply utilize the meaning of these slang words and use a phrase such as *a good looking, curvy person*. However, this would completely minimize the creativity, and even absurdity, of internet slang. While the translation is quite different from the original, it maintains the tradition of generating new expressions that is typical to social media. In addition, as the novel can be seen as being about the absurdity of internet culture, and how nothing seems to truly matter online since everything is deeply ironic or nonsensical, using creativity to invent an absurd expression seems to align

more with internet culture than maintaining the semantic content of the original expression, which ultimately carries little significance.

#### 4.3.2 Vulgar language

The sentences where the translations use most creativity and where they differ most from the source material seem to be longer than those analyzed above, and they seem to use more vulgar language. Examples of these sentences are presented below.

- (4) Fuck up my dopamine, Website (15)  
Dopamiiniläpi levälleen, vitun nettisivu (24)
- (5) Thanksgiving titties be poppin (70)  
Uhkeita utareita kiitospäivään (79)
- (6) Sperm it up my hole (66)  
Rojut ränniin (76)
- (7) Jesus was a thot and a hoe (139)  
Jeesus oli järkyttävä tyrkky (152)
- (8) Chuck e cheese can munch a hole in my you know what (5)  
Juustossani on chuck e cheesen mentävä reikä (13)

In some of these examples, it seems that some of the translations tend to use expressions less vulgar than those in the original. This aligns with the corpus study presented by Nevalainen (2003, 18), in which he reports that translated Finnish tends to use curse words which are weaker than those used in literature originally written in Finnish. However, not all the examples exemplify this. Since humor online is mostly translated by fellow social media users (Shifman, Levy and Thelwall 2014, 728), it is difficult to know whether using weaker curse words in translation is a convention that is true online as well as in professional translation.

While the use of colloquial language in *Kukaan ei puhu tästä* differs from the usual conventions of translated Finnish literature – at least according to the corpus study presented by Nevalainen – in the case of cursing the difference does not seem to be as strong. In example (4), a strong expletive is maintained in the translation. However, in example (5), the wording seems to be less explicit, as *titties* is translated to *utareita*, meaning ‘udders’, although this word could also be used to describe breasts. As the sentence in the source material is absurd and nonsensical, it is possible that the words in the translation have been changed to play with language and form by creating alliteration, rather than to make the language more modest. The same could be said of example (6); the translation is perhaps less explicit, but it uses language creatively and creates alliteration. Examples (7) and (8) also have translations that differ from their source material in some way, and it is difficult to deduce whether the slight reduction in the level of vulgarity in

the translated expressions is intentional, or done in order to play with language, as the original sentences can be seen as obscure.

## 5 Discussion and Conclusion

As communication and language on the internet is dynamic in its nature, it can be difficult to study it and write about it, since it can change faster than research can develop (Danet 2001, 42–43). Patricia Lockwood also mentions this in her novel as her protagonist reflects how things she did online a year ago are already beginning to be difficult to explain (90). However, some things seem to be staying the same in the nature of internet language, mainly its playful and non-standardized elements, as these are mentioned in early research on computer-mediated-communication, and they are still present in *No One Is Talking About This*.

This thesis analysed data collected from *No One Is Talking About This* and its Finnish translation *Kukaan ei puhu tästä*. The analysis consisted of translations of words, phrases and sentences that are characteristic of internet language, and focused on examining the way the translations maintained or created a playful and creative tone typical to internet culture. Some of the translations are straightforward and the translator either left them completely untranslated or translated them literally. However, this only applies to a small part of the data. In most cases, the translation utilizes creative ways to create new expressions that are not literal translations of the source material.

The medium of the source material provided a meaningful framework, since the focus was not only on how language is used online, but also how it is mimicked in literary fiction and in its translation. It seems that *No One Is Talking About This* utilizes the playful online language by borrowing from its existing vocabulary, creating new words, and maintaining an obscure tone in its expressions and spelling. *Kukaan ei puhu tästä* does the same thing. However, it does not simply try to translate the source material faithfully, but also create its own vocabulary, and uses colloquial language to maintain the tone of playfulness and obscurity of internet language.

Since the amount of data in this thesis is relatively small, and it only focuses on one translation, no broad conclusions about translation of internet language in literary fiction can be made. That could be an arena for future research, since the number of these types of novels might increase due to the ever-growing influence of technology and the internet in modern society.

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