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### Multilingualism and mixed-mode communication

*Sociolinguistic insights into the German-Namibian diaspora*

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#### Publication date

2023

[Link to publication](#)

#### Citation for published version (APA):

Radke, H. (2023). *Multilingualism and mixed-mode communication: Sociolinguistic insights into the German-Namibian diaspora*. [Thesis, fully internal, Universiteit van Amsterdam].

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## Chapter 6 | Multilingualism, gender and (referential) multimodality

### Abstract

This chapter investigates the role of gender in a multimodal and multilingual (multimulti) environment through the example of the German-Namibian diaspora in Germany. It investigates the proportion of Afrikaans and English items among male and female users in mixed-mode and single-mode groups. Mixed-mode groups exist in both computer-mediated communication (CMC) and face-to-face communication (FTF) whereas single-mode groups only exist in CMC. The results show that Afrikaans and English contribute differently to German-Namibian CMC and that communication in mixed-mode groups prompts the use of multilingual brocatives, a subset of vocatives usually associated with male speech. They often accompany referential claims between the FTF and CMC mode. These claims serve to develop an extended definition of the concept of referential multimodality.

### 6.1 Introduction

One of the most striking principles quantitative linguistic research has unveiled is the Gender Effect. The term indicates that “in stable sociolinguistic stratification, men tend to use more non-standard forms than women do”, although they are “the innovators in linguistic change” (Peersman et al. 2016; cf. also Labov 1990). Scientific discussion about the effect has been long and extensive, starting in the 1960s with the rise of variationist sociolinguistics (Tagliamonte 2012: 32; cf. also Peersman et al. 2016: 2) and more recently with a focus on gender as an identity marker (Smakman and Heinrich 2017: 1ff). However, little research has been done on the Gender Effect within multimodal and multilingual (multimulti) environments. How do men and women deploy their multilingual repertoires among different modes? Does the type of communicative mode have an effect on the gender-related use of borrowings in multilingual settings? And if so, what are their underlying pragmatic and sociolinguistic functions? This chapter tackles these questions by investigating multilingual practices among the German-Namibian diaspora in Germany.<sup>63</sup> Their

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<sup>63</sup> Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, people of German descent have settled in present-day Namibia (at that time German South-West Africa) creating a group of German-speaking inborn citizens of Namibia. Today there is a constant influx of German-speaking Namibians coming to Germany for study or work. Some of them settle while others stay for a couple of years before going back to Namibia.

main linguistic repertoire includes German, Afrikaans, English and *Namdeutsch*, a non-standard variety of German that has evolved through language contact in Namibia and draws on borrowings and structures from Afrikaans and English as donor languages (Kellermeier-Rehbein 2016: 228; cf. also for the linguistic characteristics of German in Namibia Böhm 2003; Dück 2018; Kellermeier-Rehbein 2015; Nöckler 1963; Pütz 1991; Wiese et al. 2014; 2017; Wiese and Bracke 2021; Zimmer in press; 2019). While English enjoys a high degree of overt prestige in Namibian society, Afrikaans is ascribed a high degree of covert prestige (Stell and Groenewald 2016: 1138).

The scope of this study is two-fold: first, it investigates the proportion of Afrikaans and English items among male and female users in mixed-mode and single-mode groups. Mixed-mode groups exist in both computer-mediated communication (CMC) and face-to-face communication (FTF) whereas single-mode groups only exist in CMC. Hence, members of the latter mode do not have the opportunity to meet and interact as a group in FTF. The mixed-mode group analyzed in this paper is called *NAMSA* and exists as both a Facebook group and an annual FTF event. The single-mode group is called *Namibianer in Deutschland* (NiD) and only exists in CMC. Both groups focus on the German-Namibian diaspora in Germany. Two hypotheses were tested based on these data: the first hypothesis states that Afrikaans and English contribute differently to German-Namibian CMC. Afrikaans is expected to often occur in the form of semantic single-word insertions and short chunks, especially among male users in the mixed-mode group. English is predicted to be used on the phrasal level, i.e., in code-switching or English-only comments, especially in the single-mode group. These patterns would reflect the history of language contact in Namibia. Afrikaans and German have been in contact for over 120 years – long enough for (expressive) borrowings to become part of a German-Namibian variety. In addition, the hypothesis addresses the contemporary linguistic landscape of Namibia. Alternating between English and a given L1 has become a common practice since Namibian independence in 1990 (Stell 2014: 233).

In a second step, the analysis investigates vocatives borrowed from Afrikaans and English (hereafter referred to as *brocatives* in reference to the male familiarizer *bro*<sup>64</sup>) (Urichuk and Loureiro-Rodriguez 2019). The second hypothesis states that communication in mixed-mode groups prompts the use of multilingual brocatives. Therefore, male and female users deploy a higher degree of other-language brocatives compared to users of single-mode groups. One reason can be that

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<sup>64</sup> Urichuk and Loureiro-Rodriguez referred to brocatives as “nominal vocatives that have been traditionally associated with male speakers and addressees” and added that they “may also occur in male-to-female and in female-to-female dyads” (2019, 356). However, they exclusively subsume male vocatives such as “man, dude, bro” under brocatives (id.). Female vocatives such as “sister” or “sis” would therefore not be considered brocatives and constitute a separate group.

members of mixed-mode groups potentially develop a high degree of group cohesiveness. The Gender Effect is expected to remain intact in both mixed-mode groups and single-mode groups, from which follows the prediction that males use more code-switching (CS) than females as an expression of non-standard language.

To capture the interaction between FTF and CMC, this chapter draws on the notion of referential multimodality and proposes an extension of its current definition. Sachs-Hombach and Thon (2019: 185) defined this term as “the communication of different referential claims”. We propose to focus on the discursive perspective and define referential multimodality as the use of one or more claims referring to a mode different to the mode in which the claims occur (see Section 6.5.1). Hence, one form of referential multimodality are direct and indirect quotes published in CMC and originating from an earlier FTF conversation or vice versa. As a consequence, referential multimodality occurs frequently in CMC with a high degree of group cohesion as individuals refer to prior or future shared FTF events in CMC and vice versa. Referential multimodality is tackled from a culture-inclusive perspective. In doing so, it contrasts traditional research on multimodality that “leaves aside aspects of a culture which are of supreme importance for an understanding of that culture” (Maxwell 2015: 359).

The chapter uses a mixed-methods approach combining multiple regression analysis with a discursive perspective on brocatives. The multiple regression is used to investigate the proportion of Afrikaans and English items in relation to items of German origin. In doing so, it unveils whether the variables mode, gender and word type, i.e., content and function words, have an effect on the use of non-German language practices. The findings are complemented with a semantic analysis of the most frequently used words of non-German origin in German-Namibian CMC. The qualitative part of this study concerns the discursive function of brocatives. It accounts for the critique that quantitative approaches tend to “treat gender as an established given and treatable as one of several categories” (Smakman and Heinrich 2017: 1ff) and, therefore, shifts the focus to the performative side of gender in a multimulti environment. Using a combination of Conversation and Discourse Analysis, this chapter aims to show how members of the German-Namibian diaspora in Germany constitute and express stances towards one another by the multimulti use of brocatives. They are then analyzed as transmodal social emblems to index FTF events through language use in CMC. This intra-group approach extends the inter-group approach on German-Namibian CMC, focusing on the pragmatic functions of multilingual practices among in-group members to create and maintain an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.4.3).

The structure of the chapter is as follows: Section 6.2 outlines the methodology and the dataset. Section 6.3 adds some theoretical remarks on gender as a variable (6.3.1) and the concepts of code-switching and nonce borrowing (6.3.2). Section 6.4 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis and the tendencies within

multilingual practices. Note that this section is divided into four parts: 6.4.1 focusses on the interplay between mode, gender and word type while 6.4.2 presents a typology of multilingual strategies in German-Namibian CMC. 6.4.3 takes on a semantic perspective on the most frequently used words in English and Afrikaans. The findings are complemented in 6.4.4 with a presentation of a frequency analysis of non-German brocatives. In 6.5.1, we develop the expanded definition of referential multimodality before analyzing the discursive use of brocatives in 6.5.2. Section 6.6 draws an overall conclusion and adds points for discussion.

## 6.2 Methodology

The data originate from the Facebook groups ‘NAMSA’ and ‘Namibianer in Deutschland’ (NiD), each group comprising more than 1,300 members<sup>65</sup> and covering German-Namibian CMC from 2011 – 2018. The data were collected using the *Web Scraper* program and inserted into a spreadsheet. The resulting corpus covers all comments and posts and contains 89,425 words, of which 59,089 originate from male users and 30,336 were written by female users, as can be seen in Table 6.1. Note that the table contains all non-German words, including those in Afrikaans-only and English-only comments, to cover the full range of multilingual practices.

Table 6.1: Corpus based on German-Namibian CMC

Token frequency	absolute		relative	
	m	f	m	f
Total	<b>59,089</b>	<b>30,336</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
English	5,514	3710	9.3%	12.2%
Afrikaans	1,403	372	2.4%	1.2%
Sum (Afr + Eng)	6,917	4,082	11.7%	13.5%

Table 6.1 shows that the absolute amount of English-based tokens outnumbers Afrikaans-based tokens among both male and female users.<sup>66</sup> This observation is in line with Bracke’s findings (2021: 121) indicating that English is the preferred

<sup>65</sup> as of July 2021. In 2018, each group included about 1,200 members.

<sup>66</sup> The list includes a number of set expressions and cultural-specific terms such as *droëwors* (‘dry sausage’, a typical South African snack) or *sundowner* (an alcoholic drink taken at sunset). For English-based tokens of this kind the following numbers apply: 137 tokens (male users) and 59 tokens (female users). For Afrikaans the numbers are: 128 tokens (male) and 42 tokens (female).

language and Afrikaans only comes second.<sup>67</sup> Looking at the relative number of each language across gender as a proportion of all utterances, it turns out that male users tend to use Afrikaans-based tokens about twice as often as female users (2.4% versus 1.2%).<sup>68</sup> In contrast, female users tend to use more English-based tokens than male users (12.2% versus 9.3%).<sup>69</sup> Given the high amount of English-based tokens overall, the relative amount of non-German tokens is higher among female users than among male users (13.5% versus 11.7%)<sup>70</sup>. Therefore, Sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 investigate the nature of English practices and compare them to the use of Afrikaans tokens. Note that Table 6.1 contains all multilingual practices in German-Namibian CMC, including comments in English-only and Afrikaans-only. This includes the relative frequencies of English words on the phrasal level, i.e., code-switching and English-only comments.

This study uses a triangulated approach combining quantitative and qualitative research on a subset of loanwords, i.e., vocatives borrowed from Afrikaans and English. In doing so, it complements Bracke's holistic approach of analyzing the entire set of transferred lexical items.<sup>71</sup> The CMC-based corpus covers sociodemographic data such as usernames, gender, place of birth and place of living. The age variable is not among them since the data presented in Table 6.1 originate mostly from young people.<sup>72</sup> Another excluded variable is social class. The reason is of practical nature: the method used in this paper does not allow us to draw comprehensive conclusions

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<sup>67</sup> However, Zimmer's data suggests the opposite and indicates that Afrikaans is the most dominant language across all age groups. Zimmer assumed that this result may be "an artefact of the design" as the data are based on translations from Wenker sentences into Namdeutsch (Zimmer in press; cf. Bracke 2021: 121). Therefore, participants might have been more aware of the task and may have produced a stylized version of Namdeutsch using Afrikaans as a prominent salient feature maker (Zimmer in press; cf. Bracke 2021: 121). A high frequency of Afrikaans loanwords also applies to the stylized version of Namdeutsch used in the newspaper *Allgemeine Zeitung* (see Chapter 3, Section 3.8 and especially Table 3.4).

<sup>68</sup> This difference is statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). Fisher's Exact Test on the website <https://www.langsrud.com/fisher.htm> was used for this analysis.

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<sup>71</sup> Note that Bracke used the spoken data of the *DNam* corpus for his research while we draw on a corpus based on CMC data. Therefore, a direct comparison without referring to the differences in methodological design is not advisable. Still, the results complement each other nicely as Bracke's study gives insight into transferred lexical items in free conversation while this study sheds more light on a subset of these items, i.e., transferred vocatives, in a different mode, i.e., CMC (see Zimmer et al. 2020).

<sup>72</sup> Bracke hinted at an interesting pattern: in his data, young girls behave like adult men while boys behave like women when applying transferred lexical items (Bracke 2021: 113; 120).

on class as it only collects metadata that are publicly accessible.<sup>73</sup> It is worth noting that social class can have an effect on salience or markedness, e.g., Labov (1990: 224) showed that upward mobility restrains the use of nonstandard forms.<sup>74</sup> Since the corpus only covers a very short period, a profound shift in social class is not expected. The same expectation applies to the school variable in the German-Namibian context. According to Bracke, it does not account for significant gender differences (Bracke 2021: 120).

Table 6.2: Illustration of the wordlists and their position within the variable matrix

	Afrikaans		English	
	m	f	m	f
mixed-mode	word list 1	word list 2	word list 3	word list 4
single-mode	word list 5	word list 6	word list 7	word list 8

All names were anonymized for the analysis. The linguistic output was manually annotated resulting in a frequency list of words of English and Afrikaans origins which occur in each of the two Facebook groups. The words were graphematically harmonized and lemmatized. This method allows us to treat all inflected forms of a given word as a single item. Both lists were linked to the gender variable making it possible to tackle gender-related language use in both the mixed-mode group NAMSAs and the single-mode group NiDs. This method led to the setup of eight wordlists, each containing its own triptych of variables on the intersection between gender, multilingualism and multimodality. The annotated wordlists illustrated in Table 6.2 can be combined, compared or analyzed separately. They served as the empirical foundation for the findings presented in the sections to follow.

## 6.3 Theoretical remarks

### 6.3.1 Gender as a variable

This chapter is about gender-related practices in a multimulti environment. Therefore, we want to start off with a few theoretical remarks on gender as this

<sup>73</sup> Some users indicated their profession but the data is too incomplete to draw comprehensive conclusions.

<sup>74</sup> Since gender is not the only defining variable for linguistic variation, it is also worthwhile to look beyond. In doing so, Bracke pointed to substantial intra-group differences between male and female speakers of Namdeutsch (2021: 120). He concluded that “researchers should not only look at aggregated totals but also at the individual behavior of all speakers” (2021: 122). This is a desideratum which cannot be addressed in the current study due to methodological reasons.

concept is strongly reflected in the scientific debate on the dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative research designs. While quantitative studies have repeatedly unveiled and described the Gender Effect as “the clearest and most consistent one [...] of all the sociolinguistic principles” (Tagliamonte 2012: 32; cf. also Peersman et al. 2016: 2; Smakman and Heinrich 2017: 1ff), qualitative researchers have criticised this numeric approach for “viewing gender as a fixed social category” and rather opt to theorize it “as a dynamic, performative social construct” (Gormley 2015: 256). The mixed-methods approach used in this study incorporates both views. In doing so, on the one hand it provides insight into general tendencies from the multimulti perspective on gender-related language practices. On the other hand, it sheds more light on how borrowings and code-switching are used to construct meaning and identity through discourse. Therefore, it is important to define the notion of gender.

[...] we suggest operationalising gender as consisting of several aspects, which can be divided into the four main facets of: (a) physiological/bodily aspects (sex); (b) gender identity or self-defined gender; (c) legal gender; and (d) social gender in terms of norm-related behaviours and gender expressions (the American Psychological Association refers to this aspect as ‘sex role’; (APA 2015).

(Lindqvist, Sendén, and Renström 2020: 5)

Section 6.5 focusses on (d) and redefines this perspective as *digital gender roles* referring to the performative side of gender within the social media context. Section 6.4 is based on self-reported gender information that users have made public on Facebook. The social media platform offers three categories: *männlich* (‘male’), *weiblich* (‘female’) and *divers* (‘diverse’). None of the users in the corpus registered themselves as *divers*. However, it is still possible that some users identify as such but chose not to indicate it. This could be for the reason that they did not wish to semipublicly announce their personal gender identity on social media and deliberately chose one of the binary options. Revealing a non-binary gender identity on a social network like Facebook would possibly have a profound impact on the user’s private life, as the German-Namibian community is a relatively small community with close-knit networks of transnational dimensions. It is possible that all gender variables used for quantitative analysis equal the gender identity of the respective user, but it is not for certain. Since the self-reported gender information is linked to both the user profiles on Facebook and their linguistic output, it is worthwhile taking it into consideration.



### 6.3.2 Code-Switching and Nonce Borrowing

Namibia-specific practices among German Namibians have mostly been shaped by Afrikaans and English. To determine the status of these items, we distinguish three categories: loanwords, nonce borrowings and code-switching. Scholars widely agree on the definition and nature of loanwords (Bracke 2021: 99). They “have become part of a recipient language’s lexicon [...], are integrated into its grammatical system, and [...] are also used by monolingual speakers in the community” (Bracke 2021: 99). However, if a single other-language item is not integrated, the question of how to classify it becomes more difficult. Some scholars have introduced the notion of single-word code-switching (CS) to describe these items that are less frequently used (Poplack, Sankoff, and Miller 1988; Poplack 2004; 2018; cf. also Bracke 2021: 99). The term CS refers to “the ‘juxtaposition’ of two or more languages” (Bracke 2021: 99) and implies that both linguistic systems are activated in the mind of the speaker. This is certainly true for multi-word CS but has been questioned for single-word CS.

Even if all single unintegrated other-language items were referred to as CS, they are arguably different from multi-word CS in some ways. In terms of psycholinguistic activation, a longer sequence [of Afrikaans or English] likely leads to a stronger activation of the other language, while German would stay most activated during short sequences. (Bracke 2021: 100)

We follow this argument and classify unintegrated other-language items as a form of ad-hoc borrowing, i.e., nonce borrowing. They combine typical features of loanwords and multi-word CS.

Like its established counterpart, the nonce borrowing tends to involve lone lexical items, generally major-class content words, and to assume the morphological, syntactic, and optionally, phonological identity of the recipient language. Like CS, on the other hand, particular nonce borrowings are neither recurrent nor widespread, and nonce borrowing necessarily requires a certain level of bilingual competence.

(Poplack 2004, 590; cf. Bracke 2021, 100)

## 6.4 Results

### 6.4.1 Mode, word type and gender

How do multilingual practices manifest in German-Namibian CMC? Are they subject to gender-specific and mode-specific effects? To answer these questions, we conducted a multiple regression analysis including three independent variables:

mode, word type, and gender – all of which were operationalized as binary categories. The word type variable consists of function words (FW) and content words (CW). Content words comprise the following lexical categories, i.e., nouns, verbs (except auxiliary and modal verbs), adverbs, demonstrative pronouns, negatives and question words, whereas mode includes NAMSA (as a mixed-mode group) and NiD (as a single-mode group). The gender variable covers male users (M) and female users (F). The independent variables were combined and used to calculate the Odds Ratio of the dependent language variable, i.e., the chance of whether a token originates from German or another language, i.e., Afrikaans or English (non-German). Established loanwords such as “internet” were counted as German unless they were part of a multi-word phrase in English as such cases would clearly indicate a cognitive activation of English in the mind of the writer. In cases of doubt, the German-language dictionary Duden ([www.duden.de](http://www.duden.de)) served as a reference to determine the loanword status.<sup>75</sup> The proportion of FW and CW in German is based on a sample from either mode corpus. Table 6.3 illustrates the dependent variables, the word count for German- and non-German tokens as well as their proportion relative to the remaining word count (% non-German).

Table 6.3: *Inclination towards Non-German language practices*

<i>Mode</i>	<i>Word Type</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>German word count</i>	<i>non-German word count</i>	<i>% non-German</i>
NAMSA	FW	M	6802	454	6%
NAMSA	CW	M	9394	1645	15%
NAMSA	FW	F	2251	248	10%
NAMSA	CW	F	3109	421	12%
NiD	FW	M	17268	1737	9%
NiD	CW	M	18708	3081	14%
NiD	FW	F	10029	1590	14%
NiD	CW	F	10865	1823	14%

Table 6.3 shows that non-German practices (i.e., Afrikaans and English) are deployed more often in the single-mode (NiD) than in the mixed-mode (NAMSA); namely 13% NiD vs. 11% NAMSA. The chance for them to be used in the single-mode group is 1.14 times bigger than in the mixed-mode group (Odds Ratio; the results from the

<sup>75</sup> Note that the corpus contains data covering a period from 2011 to 2018. Words that entered the Duden after the year of 2018 were still counted. This applies to the word “nice”. It was only added to the Duden in 2020, see <https://www.dw.com/de/der-duden-modernisiert-sich-und-mistet-aus/a-54559347> (03 October 2021).

multiple logistic regression can be found in Appendix A). Non-German practices are more likely to contain content words (Odds Ratio: 1.51) and they are more likely to occur among female users (Odds Ratio: 1.17). These findings contradict the first hypothesis that males use more CS as an expression of non-standard language. Hence, it is important to determine what the use of non-German items actually means. Is there a homogenous way to use them or can we define gender-specific practices in German-Namibian CMC? To answer this question, we split the non-German category into an Afrikaans and English category and analyzed both in two separate steps. In doing so, we obtain a more fine-grained picture of the dynamics between multilingual practices and multimodality.

Table 6.4 shows that English-based practices occur more often in the single-mode group NiD (11%) than in the mixed-mode group NAMSA (8%). The chance for English to occur in the single-mode group is 1.41 times bigger than in the mixed-mode group. English practices have a slightly higher chance to contain more content words than function words (Odds Ratio: 1.28) and they are more frequently used by female users than by male users (Odds Ratio: 1.31).<sup>76</sup> These findings comply with the results shown in Table 6.3. The results are plausible since the majority of the non-German word count contains English words (88%, see Table 6.1 for an overview of the overall distribution between Afrikaans- and English-based tokens) and, therefore, the patterns of the English words dominate the overall figures.

Table 6.4: *Inclination towards English-based practices*

<i>Mode</i>	<i>Word Type</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>non-English word count</i>	<i>English word count</i>	<i>% non-English</i>
NAMSA	FW	M	6,900	356	5%
NAMSA	CW	M	9,997	1,042	9%
NAMSA	FW	F	2,281	218	9%
NAMSA	CW	F	3,189	341	10%
NiD	FW	M	17,378	1,627	9%
NiD	CW	M	19,300	2,489	11%
NiD	FW	F	10,101	1,518	13%
NiD	CW	F	11,055	1,633	13%

<sup>76</sup> The difference is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 453.0312$ ;  $p < .0001$ \*\*\*).

Table 6.5: Inclination towards Afrikaans-based practices

Mode	Word Type	Gender	non-Afrikaans word count	Afrikaans word count	% non-Afrikaans
NAMSA	FW	M	7,158	98	1%
NAMSA	CW	M	10,436	603	5%
NAMSA	FW	F	2,469	30	1%
NAMSA	CW	F	3,450	80	2%
NiD	FW	M	18,895	110	1%
NiD	CW	M	21,197	592	3%
NiD	FW	F	11,547	72	1%
NiD	CW	F	12,498	190	1%

Table 6.5 shows that Afrikaans-based practices only constitute a small proportion of the overall word count with ratios ranging between 1% and 5% across all categories. In contrast to English, Afrikaans occurs more often in NAMSA (3%) than in NiD (1%). The chance for Afrikaans to occur in the mixed mode is 2.01 times higher than in the single mode. Furthermore, Afrikaans-based practices are more likely to contain content words than function words. With an Odds Ratio of 3.78, this chance is clearly above average and will be further discussed in 6.4.2. In general, one can say that Afrikaans often comes in the form of a single-word insertion or a short chunk. Alternation on the phrasal level is less common. Furthermore, Afrikaans is more likely to be used by male users (Odds Ratio: 1.76).<sup>77</sup>

#### 6.4.2 Two types of multilingual practices

Table 6.4 and Table 6.5 suggest that there are two types of multilingual practices in German-Namibian CMC. One type is Afrikaans-based and includes a relative overrepresentation of content words while the other type is English-based and includes a more balanced, relative representation between content words and function words. This is illustrated in Table 6.6.

<sup>77</sup> The difference is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 954.0916$ ;  $p < .0001^{***}$ ). The following websites were used: [vassarstats.net](http://vassarstats.net) (Correlation & Regression > Basic multiple regression) and <https://statpages.info/logistic.html> (19 October 2021).

*Table 6.6: Proportion of function words given gender and language*

	German	Afrikaans	English
male users	45%	14%	36%
female users	45%	27%	47%

For German, it is assumed (based on a sample from the full dataset) that a running text consists of 45% of FWs. The English profile of female users comes very close to this level (47%), followed by the English profile of male users (36%). It can, therefore, be concluded that English relatively often occurs on the multi-word level in the form of inter- and intra-sentential code-switching. In contrast, Afrikaans behaves differently: function words occur less frequently among female users (27%) and even less among male users (14%) stressing the relative overrepresentation of Afrikaans CWs. This result confirms the finding that Afrikaans occurs relatively often in the form of semantic nonce borrowings, loanwords and chunks. The two types of multilingual practices become even more apparent when adding the mode variable to the analysis. Table 6.7 shows the results by outlining the relative representations between CWs and FWs across language and mode.<sup>78</sup>

In relative numbers, Table 6.7 shows that English CWs and FWs are overrepresented among female users in single-mode group NiD (+27% and +25%) while Afrikaans CWs are strongly overrepresented among male users in NAMSA (+175%). Apparently, communicating in an informal mixed-mode group triggers a frequent use of CWs among male users when using Afrikaans. This effect also exists among male users in the single-mode group. However, it is less clearly pronounced (+37%). In contrast to Afrikaans, English FWs and CWs are more balanced among male users, in particular in NiD, although less so than among female users.

The finding is in line with Stell's observation who stated, "that language alternation between English into L1s or into L2 Afrikaans can occur in every in-group's usage" (Stell 2014: 233). This may be because English is the sole official language of Namibia and thus enjoys a high degree of overt prestige (cf. Stell and Groenewald 2016: 1129). Stell referred to English as "'n onmisbare hoë-status taal in die Namibiese samelewing [...] en as sodanig word sy oorwig in die openbare lewe en in die opvoedkundige sisteem meestal as legitiem beskou [...]" ("an indispensable

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<sup>78</sup> The following calculation was applied: first, we calculated the expected frequencies for English and Afrikaans based on the observed frequencies in Table 6.4 and Table 6.5. Next, we subtracted each expected frequency from the related observed frequency for all categories. Then, we divided the results by their related expected frequencies to obtain the relative representations for English and Afrikaans.

Table 6.7: Representations of English and Afrikaans relative to their subcorpus

Mode	W-Type	Gender	non-English <sup>79</sup>	English	non-Afrikaans <sup>80</sup>	Afrikaans
NAMSA	FW	M	6%	-52%	1%	-32%
NAMSA	CW	M	1%	-8%	-4%	175%
NAMSA	FW	F	2%	-15%	1%	-40%
NAMSA	CW	F	1%	-6%	0%	14%
NiD	FW	M	2%	-17%	1%	-71%
NiD	CW	M	-1%	11%	-1%	37%
NiD	FW	F	-3%	27%	1%	-69%
NiD	CW	F	-3%	25%	0%	-25%

high-status language in Namibian society [...] and as such its predominance in public life and in the educational system is mostly considered legitimate' (2016: 1183). Therefore, switching between English and other languages on the sentence or phrase level has become a common practice in Namibian society. This practice is reflected in German-Namibian CMC. On the other hand, English has been enjoying its sole status only since Namibia became independent in 1990 whereas the history of Afrikaans being in close contact with German dates back until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This tradition would explain the findings illustrated in Table 6.7 as it has apparently led to several Afrikaans words becoming an inherent part of German-Namibian (in)formal language use (cf. Wiese and Bracke 2021). The continuing use of Afrikaans borrowings is further prompted by its status as a language of covert prestige which exceeds the degree of covert prestige that English has (Stell and Groenewald 2016: 1138). Notwithstanding the fact that the data used for this study is selective, community-specific and mode-filtered, it confirms the patterns of a more general language usage within Namibian society. Therefore, it reflects the complex interplay between (the history of) language contact and prestige and their impact on the emergence of multilingual language practices.

<sup>79</sup> All Afrikaans and German tokens

<sup>80</sup> All English and German tokens

### 6.4.3 Semantics and gender in multilingual word choice

This section shifts the focus to the semantic perspective on multilingual practices in German-Namibian CMC. In what respect do male and female users cover different semantic fields and to what extent do they differ? To tackle these questions, we discuss the 11 most frequently used words originating from Afrikaans and English (henceforward referred to as keywords). The keywords for each language are presented in gender-specific lists: one containing word choices by male users (m-list) and the other by female users (f-list). Based on the findings in 6.4.2, it is expected that most Afrikaans keywords are CWs while most English keywords are predicted to be FWs. This is because language practices on the phrasal level inevitably prompt the use of highly frequent FWs such as articles, pronouns and prepositions. For this reason, both gender lists for English are expected to resemble each other to a great extent since they are predicted to be part of the morphosyntactic frame of English sentence construction rather than to be part of gender-specific word choices. In contrast, the top-11 lists for Afrikaans<sup>81</sup> are expected to show gender-specific variation at the semantic level.

Section 6.4.3.1 discusses the top-11 lists for Afrikaans while 6.4.3.2 moves on to investigate English. Note that in absolute numbers, Afrikaans is always outnumbered by English across all categories since 88% of the non-German word count is of English origin. However, over- and under-representations for each language do occur in relation to the language-specific word count. Therefore, tendencies in Afrikaans will be discussed in relation to the overall Afrikaans word count while tendencies in English will be discussed in relation to the overall English word count. Ambiguous words that belong to more than just one language were manually annotated to make sure they were counted for the right language.

#### 6.4.3.1 Afrikaans

Table 6.8 presents the Afrikaans keywords in the m-list and the f-list. It indicates the absolute and the relative token frequency in relation to the overall, gender-specific word count for Afrikaans. Words occurring in both lists are marked in grey. The analysis shows that five out of eleven keywords co-occur. Gender-specific words in the m-list are *oukie/s* ('dude'), *plek* ('place', 'venue'), *jerre/jerre* (interjection) and *gees* ('mood', 'spirit'). With the exception of *plek*<sup>82</sup>, they clearly denote strategies to

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<sup>81</sup> The frequency figures for the numbers 9, 10 and 11 on the ranking were the same in the f-list.

<sup>82</sup> *Plek* is often used to discuss and organize possible venues for the annual NAMSA event.

Table 6.8: Afrikaans keywords among male and female users

<i>m-list (Afrikaans tokens = 1,403)</i>				<i>f-list (Afrikaans tokens = 372)</i>			
Afrikaans	translation	tokens	prop. all Afr.	Afrikaans	translation	tokens	prop. all Afr.
oukie/s	dude/s	117	8.3%	biltong	dried meat	31	8.3%
net	just	84	6.0%	lekker	delicious, nice	24	6.5%
biltong	dried meat	79	5.6%	net	just	15	4.0%
mooi	beautiful	73	5.2%	dankie	thanks	8	2.2%
bikkie	(a) bit	50	3.6%	kak	shit	7	1.9%
lekker	delicious, nice	48	3.4%	mooi	beautiful	7	1.9%
plek	place	35	2.5%	ek	I	7	1.9%
kak	shit	32	2.3%	die	the	7	1.9%
jerre/jirre	interjection	28	2.0%	ons	we, us, our	6	1.6%
mos	particle	25	1.8%	in	in	6	1.6%
gees	mood, spirit	19	1.4%	bikkie	a bit	6	1.6%



create social relationships with the recipients(s) of the message. These strategies contrast gender-specific strategies in the f-list such as *dankie* ('thanks') and *ons* ('we', 'us', 'our').<sup>83</sup> Note that *ons* is one of four FWs occurring in the f-list (along with *ek*, *die* and *in*) while the m-list does not contain a single function word.<sup>84</sup> Thus, the top-11 lists include a fair amount of gender-specific variation with respect to word types.

There are also differences in frequency: the four most frequently used keywords in the m-list come with a relative frequency of more than 5.0% in relation to all Afrikaans words used by male users (*oukie/s*: 8.3%, *net*: 6.0%, *biltong*: 5.6%, *mooi*: 5.2%) whereas the f-list only contains two such keywords, that is *biltong* (8.3%) and *lekker* (6.5%). *Biltong* is a culture-specific term denoting a form of dried meat commonly produced in Southern Africa. *Lekker* is an expressive adjective/adverb that can be translated as 'delicious', 'nice', 'fun' or 'good' in a general sense. By using *lekker*, the writer thus indicates a positive attitude towards the object described. All other Afrikaans keywords in the f-list come with a relative proportion well under 5.0%. This observation further supports the analysis that male users tend to use isolated Afrikaans loanwords more often than female users, whereas female users exhibit relatively more language shifts on the phrasal level than male users on the fewer occasions that they actually use Afrikaans at all (see 6.4.1 and 6.4.2).<sup>85</sup>

There are also interesting similarities between the m-list and the f-list. With the exception of *biltong*, all co-occurring words can be categorized into two groups: intensifiers and expressives, e.g., *lekker* ('delicious', 'pleasant', 'nice'), *mooi* ('beautiful', 'nice'), *kak* ('shit') and qualifiers, e.g., *net* ('just', 'only') and *bikkie* ('a bit', 'a little'). This is interesting as both sets of words are degree modifiers with a complementary discourse function: qualifiers decrease the effect of another word or phrase whereas intensifiers emphasize the modified items. Therefore, users use them to provide clues about their personal stance and to give an idea of how the recipient should think about a given topic according to the speaker's view. This seems to be an important discourse function of Namibia-specific lexical items in CMC, as illustrated in (38). Lexical items originating from Afrikaans are marked in bold; lexical items from English are underlined.

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<sup>83</sup> The question of gender-specificity will be further discussed in Section 6.4.4 through the example of vocatives.

<sup>84</sup> One could argue that *mos* is a candidate for a FW. Even if that were the case, *mos* is clearly of a different nature than *ek*, *die*, *ons* and *in*: it is a facultative part of a sentence and serves to stress the head of its phrase while *ek*, *die*, *ons* and *in* represent obligatory clauses and are of a more grammatical nature than *mos*.

<sup>85</sup> Note that this effect only applies to keywords analyzed from a broad corpus linguistic approach. Intra-group differences exist and range from users that use little to no keywords to users who regularly use them (cf. Bracke 2021: 113ff).

- (38) Thanx **oukies**, das war ne **lekkre** Party. Beste Location, **mooi** organisiert, und der **Gees**...den kann man auf den Fotos sehen!  
 ‘Thanks oukies, it was a great party. Best location, well organized and such a good spirit... you can see it on the photos!’

(38) shows that the words *lekker* (‘nice’, ‘delicious’, here: ‘great’), *mooi* (‘beautiful’, here: ‘well’) index the user’s positive stance towards the event in question. They are part of both top-11 lists. *Gees* (‘mood’, ‘spirit’, here ‘vibe’) and *oukie* (‘dudes’, ‘guys’) only occur in the m-list. The latter serves as a brocative to address fellow group members<sup>86</sup> and is by far the most frequently used Afrikaans word among male users. However, with an absolute token frequency of only four, it is not even among the top keywords in the f-list.

#### 6.4.3.2 English

The most frequently used words in English are almost exclusively FWs and co-occur in both lists to a great extent, as illustrated in Table 6.9. This result is in stark contrast to Afrikaans. English keywords thus represent parts of the morphosyntactic frame used by male and female users in German-Namibian CMC to construct phrases.

The level of similarity is striking: eight out of eleven keywords appear in both gender-specific lists. The three words that only occur in the m-list are ‘it’, ‘yes’ and ‘please’. However, ‘it’ also enjoys a high frequency among female users, occupying rank 12 (36 occurrences). This is not too different from the m-list where it stands at rank 8 (73 occurrences). The remaining two words with a gender-specific frequency are ‘yes’ and ‘please’. Both are CWs that have a clear semantic value. They show gaps between the gender lists: ‘please’ occupies rank 11 in the m-list (58 occurrences) while ranking 23 in the f-list (16 occurrences) and ‘yes’ occupies rank 9 in the m-list (71 occurrences) while ranking 30<sup>th</sup> in the f-list (9 occurrences). This finding is plausible as ‘yes’ is a content word. Therefore, it has a clear semantic value and is often used as an interjection. Occasionally it comes in the form of a tautology *yes-ja* (‘yes-yes’). This chunk is a typical term used by EES, a German-Namibian rapper who is known for using a stylized version of *Namdeutsch*. Hence, *yes-ja* is an example of gender-specific word choice inspired by pop culture.

The f-list also contains one CW, i.e., ‘have’, and its ranks are subject to a noticeable gap, too. ‘Have’ ranks 11<sup>th</sup> in the f-list (37 occurrences) while occupying rank 26 in the m-list (26 occurrences). This is unlike the two FWs that only occur in the f-list top 11, i.e., ‘you’ and ‘I’. As expected, they occupy similar ranks in the m-list.

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<sup>86</sup> In other contexts it can also be used as a reference (see Radke 2021b).

Table 6.9: The eleven most frequently used English words in German-Namibian CMC

<i>m-list (English tokens = 5,514)</i>			<i>f-list (English tokens = 3,710)</i>		
<i>English</i>	<i>tokens</i>	<i>Prop. (all Eng.)</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>tokens</i>	<i>prop. (all Eng.)</i>
and	213	3.86%	the	162	4.37%
the	187	3.39%	be	146	3.94%
be	136	2.47%	to	120	3.23%
to	100	1.81%	and	80	2.16%
for	99	1.80%	a	79	2.13%
a	97	1.76%	for	77	2.08%
in	75	1.36%	of	72	1.94%
it	73	1.32%	you	56	1.51%
yes	71	1.29%	I	54	1.46%
of	61	1.11%	in	51	1.37%
please	58	1.05%	have	37	1.00%

‘You’ ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in the f-list (56 occurrences) while occupying rank 12 in the m-list (51 occurrences) and ‘I’ stands at rank 9 in the f-list (54 occurrences) while ranking 15<sup>th</sup> in the m-list (45 occurrences). In sum, variation in the top-11 list of English largely represents the morphosyntactic frame to construct sentences while the top-11 list of Afrikaans rather indicates a combination of overlapping semantic categories and gender-specific word choices.

#### 6.4.4 Non-German Brocatives

This section focusses on the use of other-language brocatives, that is a subset of vocatives such as *bra* and *bro* (English: ‘brother’), *dude* (English: ‘dude’) and *man* (Afrikaans/English/German: ‘man’). *Oukie* is the most frequently used brocative in German-Namibian CMC with a token frequency of 117 and no other brocative appears in the lists in Table 6.9. It is predominantly used by male users implying a pronounced Gender Effect. It is expected that the use of brocatives in mixed-mode groups is higher than in single-mode groups. As a reason one may consider that brocatives – a fairly informal form of vocatives – are triggered by personal contact, which is part of the mixed-mode interaction but not (necessarily) of the single-mode interaction. Figure 6.1 shows the numbers of all brocatives for both NAMSAs (mixed-mode) and NiDs (single-mode) in relative frequencies per 1,000 words.

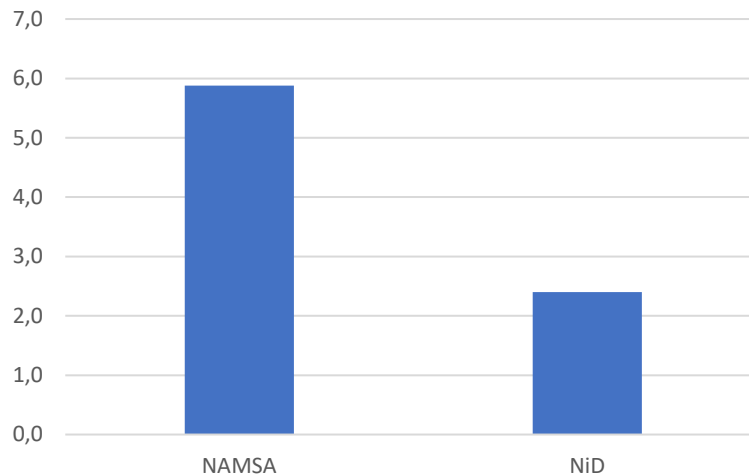


Figure 6.1: other-language brocatives per 1,000 words

Figure 6.1 shows that there is indeed a mode-related effect: German-Namibian users deploy a higher relative amount of other-language brocatives in mixed-mode group NAMSA than they do in single-mode group NiD.<sup>87</sup> How can these dynamics be explained? We argue that a mixed-mode environment provides more opportunities for its members to strengthen social bonds as they meet in both FTF and CMC. This combination potentially leads to a higher degree of cohesiveness (see Chapter 5) and triggers the use of informal other-language brocatives. We will argue that especially male users use these items to index camaraderie and express their stances towards one another (Section 6.5 and 6.6). Therefore, we apply a discursive approach and introduce the notion of referential multimodality to analyze brocatives in German-Namibian conversation.

## 6.5 Multimodal multilingualism and gender construction

What epistemological gain does a discursive perspective on German-Namibian CMC provide? The answer to this question lies in the inherent nature of discourse in itself. As Fairclough and Wodak phrased it: “discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially shaped: it constitutes situations, objective knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people” (Hülse 1999, 5). Hülse then added the following observation:

<sup>87</sup> The absolute numbers are 143 for NAMSA and 159 for NiD. The NAMSA corpus has an overall word count of 24,324 while the NiD corpus contains 65,101 words. Hence, the following calculation was applied: NAMSA:  $(143/24,324) * 1,000$  and NiD:  $(159/65,101) * 1,000$ .

By talking or writing people act, because what they do has consequences: They verbally create situations (and institutions and social structures), which are the basis of further verbal and non-verbal action. Thus the relationship between discourse and situations is one of mutual constitution, or as Fairclough and Wodak would have it: dialectical.”

(Hülse 1999, 6).

CMC further accelerates dialectical processes as it manifests a form of communication which is per se independent of time and place. It thus allows for translocalized networked communication and provides a platform for the widespread exposure of multilingual practices and referential multimodality – a term we will set out in 6.5.1.

### 6.5.1 Referential multimodality

Sachs-Hombach and Thon defined referential multimodality as “the communication of different referential claims” and mentioned it as one of the key concepts necessary to investigate “if we are to go beyond existing conceptualizations [of multimodality]” (2019: 185). While Thon (2019) applied referential multimodality to multimodal documentaries and post/documentaries, we aim to extend this notion to human interaction in mixed-mode versus single-mode groups – the first referring to individuals who communicate as a group in both face-to-face settings (FTF) and computer-mediated communication (CMC) and the latter referring to groups that only exist as such either in CMC or FTF. Thereby, we extend the notion of referential multimodality and define it as the use of one or more claims referring to a mode different to the mode in which the claims occur. Hence, multimodality is not defined by the nature of the data (e.g., data combining auditive and visual features) but rather by the references emerging from discourse and the social structure of the community. The most explicit form of referential multimodality in this definition are direct and indirect quotes published in CMC and originating from an earlier FTF conversation or vice versa. Although communicative asynchrony is not a necessary condition for referential multimodality, it is likely to occur since social media provide various tools for delayed communication. The individual is required to recall an event from the past or anticipate a future event and refer to it. These references can be of an explicit or implicit nature and are often followed by cross-modal commentary when occurring in social media, as illustrated in Excerpt 6.1 – Excerpt 6.3. Again, lexical items originating from Afrikaans are marked in bold; lexical items from English are underlined. Referential claims are written in italics.

In Excerpt 6.1, Anja refers to an FTF event during which she had lost her Namibian flag. Mark replies to her inquiry by applying referential multimodality: he first indirectly quotes one of his earlier statements from FTF (“I told her it’s not mine”). Next, he adds new information (“Tom can maybe send it to you”). This way, he extends the oral conversation that earlier took place in FTF by using CMC.

Excerpt 6.1

Anja: Ich suche pls meine namflag [...] ihr hattet die **mos** zuletzt  
 'I am looking for my Namibian flag, please. You guys were the last ones to have it.'

Mark: Hab ihr gesagt *das das nicht meine ist...* Kann Tom **miskin** dir schicken.  
 'I told her *it's not mine...* Tom can maybe send it to you.'

Excerpt 6.2

Marie: Wir haben alles mit der Wasserwacht besprochen, die supporten das Leute mit Schlauchbooten auf der Amper fahren, und ihr werdet genau so safe sein wie auf einem See

'We've discussed everything with the water rescue service. They allow *people to sail with a dinghy on the Amper river* and you will be as safe as if you were on a lake.'

Excerpt 6.3

Chris: Hey guys, I found an Irish Pub who offers public viewing for die Bokke 2mr moring. lemand keen to watch? Located in NRW! [...] Cheers Chris

Chris: A few oukies are here 😊

His original statement crossed modes to be commented on in a different mode than it was uttered in the first place. Mark combines his multimodal practice with a multilingual word choice. He uses the Afrikaans modifier *miskin* (Afrikaans 'miskien' for 'maybe') to answer Anja's multimulti inquiry. Switching from German into Afrikaans emphasizes the fact that his declaration expresses a piece of personal advice without claiming the unconditional truth. Note that this piece of advice would still be pragmatically and grammatically accurate if it stood on its own without the preceding indirect speech. In that case, Mark's comment would not contain any referential multimodality as all the information would have originated from CMC only. However, Mark apparently felt the need to briefly quote and position himself since Anja's search for her flag had already prompted prior FTF conversation. This strategy avoids misunderstandings and provides for a smooth transition from earlier FTF conversation to his current CMC advice. Referential multimodality can therefore be inferred to organize information on the one hand and to express politeness on the other hand. After all, a polite reply is a clearly structured reply. It is essential for frictionless communication. It follows that referential multimodality can occur among members of cohesive mixed-mode groups who inherently have a need to comment on FTF speech in CMC and vice versa. The same applies to Excerpt 6.2 in which Marie summarizes an FTF conversation that she has had with the water rescue service. She therefore uses the English borrowing *supporten* ('to support') to indicate

that the water rescue service agreed to her plan. Since their support is crucial, she uses an English borrowing to stress this main message. The English borrowing is part of the multimodal claim and therefore combines referential multimodality with internal multilingual practices. This is in contrast to Excerpt 6.1 in which the multilingual practice is part of a subsequent, monomodal comment and can therefore be classified as external with regard to the multimodal claim. Excerpt 6.3 illustrates an example of both internal and external multilingual practices combined with implicit referential multimodality. It is implicit because the multimodal claim just refers to a concrete communicative setting in FTF (“A few oukies are here”) without explicitly quoting what is being said. Still, the claim implies FTF conversation since the gathering has a social character. Excerpt 6.1 – Excerpt 6.3 show a text-based form of referential multimodality combined with multilingual practices. The borrowings are produced in CMC. (39) and Figure 6.2 illustrate how borrowings can travel between modes, e.g., from FTF to CMC, and constitute an integral part of referential, multimodal claims through the combined use of text and photo:

(39) Namsa war **lekker!** Thanks für das organisen und den **gees**  
 ‘Namsa was great. Thanks for organizing and for the good spirit.’

Figure 6.2 shows a self-made destination board intended to help and entertain NAMSA participants. As they set up the sign, NAMSA members considered what words to write on it. *Gees* (‘good spirit’) is part of their social emblematic repertoire (see Section 6.5.2) and so they decided to set it as one of the destination words. The board itself is thus a written artefact of a verbal conversation. It was then photographed, uploaded to a social media platform and therefore transferred from FTF into CMC mode. The user then mirrored the word choice in (39) by using *gees* again in her post to thank the organizers. Note that the referential claim in the post is implicit as the communicative setting is implied without directly quoting any statement. Section 6.5.2 will analyze the use of multilingual *brocatives* combined with referential multimodality. The conversation is taken from CMC and refers to a future FTF event.



Figure 6.2: An other-language item travelling between modes

### 6.5.2 Brocatives between FTF and CMC

This Section analyzes the discursive role of four brocatives in German-Namibian CMC, i.e., *bra* and *bro* (English: ‘brother’), *dude* (English: ‘dude’) and *man* (Afrikaans/English/German: ‘man’). In contrast to *oukie*, which often indexes an in-group-out-group distinction (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.4.3), these nominal male familiarizers mainly index in-group-related stances in German-Namibian CMC. Kiesling argued that at least one of these brocatives, that is *dude*, “encodes the speaker’s stance to his or her current addressee(s)” (2004: 281). In particular, it “indexes a stance of cool solidarity, a stance which is especially valuable to young men as they navigate cultural discourses of young masculinity, which simultaneously demand masculine solidarity<sup>88</sup>, strict heterosexuality and nonconformity” (2004: 281). Hereinafter, we will argue that this observation, in the context of German-Namibian CMC, does not only hold true for the use of *dude* but also applies to other multilingual brocatives such as *bra*, *bro* and *man*. Furthermore, we will argue that they are not just pure discourse markers to structure information within a given conversation but instead fulfill a wide range of pragmatic functions associated with camaraderie, masculinity and friendship to construct and maintain digital gender roles.

Excerpt 6.4 serves as an example. It shows how an illocution on a practical question evolves into a discourse shaped by nominal male familiarizers, i.e., brocatives. These familiarizers are enregistered, social emblems symbolizing language use and social behavior during the annual NAMSA meeting in FTF. Therefore, the discourse contains implicit, referential multimodality as the users involved anticipate a future NAMSA event in an FTF setting and mediate their thoughts through CMC. They use brocatives to create a male and Namibia-specific discourse of friendship/camaraderie and mediate an image of NAMSA as an informal in-group event.

The function of other-language brocatives is three-fold: they index masculine solidarity and mitigate hierarchical speech through playful language use. Furthermore, their repetitive occurrence in CMC mediates the idea of NAMSA as an FTF event. Brocatives are therefore enregistered as a social emblem which indexes NAMSA for community members. In Excerpt 6.4, we will explain the functions of brocatives in more detail by using Conversation Analysis and Speech Act Theory. All brocatives, irrespective of their donor language, are marked in bold.

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<sup>88</sup> Kiesling pointed out that masculine solidarity is not to be confused with heterosexism as it “implies closeness with other men, while heterosexism entails nonintimacy with other men”. At the same time, this closeness is characterized by a “casual stance that keeps some distance (thus satisfying heterosexism). [...] Masculine solidarity and heterosexism thus delimit a narrow range of ratified, dominant, and hegemonic relationships [...]” (2004, S. 283).



## Excerpt 6.4

- |   |        |   |   |
|---|--------|---|---|
| 1 | Charly | Yes <b>alle</b> . Fährt jemand am Freitag aus Köln und hat maybe noch platz für einen?? | Hi to <b>everyone</b> . Does anyone depart from Cologne on Friday and has a free spot left for someone? |
| 2 | Hans   | samstag könnt ich dir anbieten <b>bra</b> am erst so Abends den dreh                    | I could offer you (a lift on) Saturday, <b>bra</b> , around the evening.                                |
| 3 | Sven   | <b>Bra</b> Hans, du willst mir nicht gerade sagen du kommst erst Samstag Abend oder???  | <b>Bra</b> Hans, you're not telling me that you'll only arrive on Saturday night, are you?              |
| 4 | Charly | thanks Hans, aber wie gesagt ich gehe schon Freitag                                     | Thanks Hans, just as I said I'll already go on Friday.  |
| 5 | Hans   | Ja kein kak <b>bra</b> I geh erst samstag. .. Sven ich kom dann ja                      | Yes no kidding, <b>bra</b> . I'm only coming on Saturday. Sven, I'll be there, no worries.              |
| 6 | Sven   | Neeee <b>Dude</b> , ich hab gedacht wir trinken frühstücksbierchen?!?!                  | Nooo <b>dude</b> , I thought we'd be drinking a beer for breakfast together.                            |
| 7 | Tom    | Sven ich werd mit dor eins trinken und warten   | Sven, I will drink one (a beer) and wait with you.  |
| 8 | Sven   | Haha, net so  | Haha, alright   |
| 9 | Charly | kak <b>man</b> , frühstücks brandy!!!!  | great <b>man</b> , brandy for breakfast   |

Charly starts off a new conversation by addressing the community as a whole. He therefore uses a gender-neutral vocative consisting of the English-German collocation *Yes alle* ('hi to everybody'). He then continues with an indirect speech act with which he intends to find transportation on Friday. Hans is the first user to respond. He offers Charly help him out and adds that he will only drive on Saturday. At the same time, he introduces the gender-specific vocative *bra* (from English 'brother') to address Charly. Subsequently, Sven takes the turn through self-selection. He echoes Hans' use of the gender-specific vocative *bra* to denote a similar relationship to Charly as Hans did in his prior comment. However, this time, *bra* introduces a shift of conversational focus leaving out Charly's initial question and instead highlighting the fact that Hans will only join the group on Saturday instead

of Friday. Subsequently, the gender-specific vocative is echoed by various users throughout the whole conversation as it reoccurs in three different forms: *bra*, *dude* and *man*. Such a repetitive pattern serves as a social practice to reinforce the notion of friendship, brotherhood and camaraderie. At the same time, it emphasizes a range of illocutionary acts within the conversation: it stresses surprise and disappointment (turn 3), underlines confirmation (turn 5), casts doubt (turn 6) and emphasizes joy (turn 9). In addition, Kiesling argued that one of these vocatives, that is *dude*, serves as a *confrontational stance attenuator*. He defined this term as follows:

Dude is often used when the speaker is taking a confrontational or a “one-up” stance to the addressee. Through its indexing of solidarity, dude can attenuate or ameliorate the confrontation, signaling that the competitive or hierarchical component of the utterance is not serious. [...] In the terms of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, this use is as a positive politeness strategy in situations of negative face threat.”

(Kiesling 2004: 292)

One such potential confrontation is prompted by Sven who expresses disappointment about the late arrival of Hans (turn 6). Due to the lack of contextual clues such as gestures or intonation in written CMC, his question-framed illocution could very well be inferred as a sign of anger, especially since it includes several exclamation and question marks. However, Sven introduces his comment by using the vocative phrase *Neeee Dude* (‘Nooo, dude’) which indexes that his comment is not meant to be taken seriously. In addition, he uses the diminutive *-chen* in *Frühstücksbierchen* (lit.: ‘a ‘small’ beer for breakfast’) as a pragmatic sign to mitigate his confrontational stance. Kiesling argued that such “representations suggest that dude’s first-order indexicality is one of cool solidarity [...]” (Kiesling 2004: 289).

However, Sven does not only use *dude* to attenuate confrontational speech but also applies the same function to *bra* (turn 3). In fact, this turn bears an even higher potential to be inferred as confrontational speech as it interrupts the three-part interchange between Charly and Hans (turn 1, 2 and 4) through self-selection. At the same time, it directly addresses Hans, shifts the focus to his absence on Friday, lacks any downtoners and ends with the question tag *oder?* (‘, are you?’) followed by three question marks. This way of framing a question accelerates its illocutionary force directed towards Hans to elicit confirmation or affirmation. Here, *bra* is the only sign that Sven’s confrontational stance is not meant to be taken seriously and thus turns his speech act into a playful way of addressing Hans. For this reason, it is in line with Kiesling’s definition of *dude* as a confrontational stance attenuator. Therefore, it reduces the need to use smileys and other contextual clues usually used to make up for the lack of gestures, intonation, and pauses in written CMC. Not surprisingly, Hans responds to Sven’s question and a whole conversation around the

late arrival of Hans unfolds (turns 5-9). Sven's confrontational stance (turn 3), ameliorated by *bra*, thus serves as the thematic initiator for the discourse to follow. It is centered around the supposedly non-serious sentiment that Hans somewhat neglects the group due to his late arrival, which clashes with the idea of solidarity. A face-saving solution is offered by Tom who joins the conversation through self-selection (turn 7). He suggests having a beer with Sven. So the both of them can wait for Hans to arrive. Not only does his speech act offer a solution to which everyone can agree, but it also bears a clear sign of masculine solidarity in itself. Hence, there is no need for Tom to use an additional familiarizer to address Sven. He, therefore, simply uses the addressee's name to introduce his comment (turn 7). Sven and Charly agree (turn 8-9). In a last turn, Charly uses the vocative phrase *kak man* ('shit man') to emphasize joy. By combining the vocative with a swear word, he also signals that he and his conversation partners are close enough to apply non-conforming language use and set social conventions aside. What does this conversation stand for? First, the conversation constructs social identities and relationships: a couple of young men cooperating with each other. They use CMC to anticipate their future meeting in FTF. Their multimodal circle of friendship serves as the thriving force for the conversation to continue. The fact that familiarizers reoccur like a ping-pong discloses the bonds between the users and mediates them to a presumed audience through CMC – even if this audience does not actively participate in the conversation itself. The group in which Excerpt 6.4 was posted has 1,355 members (as of 19 November 2020). Thus, the audience ranges from close friends to users they may have never met. Therefore, the repetitive pattern of familiarizers symbolizes: "when we meet face-to-face, we are having fun." Although the conversation took place right before NAMSA, it offers a glimpse into the sort of conversations and discourses that do take place during the FTF event. Therefore, it is enregistered as a social emblem which indexes NAMSA. With other words: male users constitute and enregister the idea of NAMSA to a broader audience through the discursive resemiotization of multilingual brocatives from face-to-face to CMC mode anticipating future FTF events. The CMC-based discourse becomes constitutive for future NAMSA events in FTF. At the same time, it has been shaped by former NAMSA events. It thus manifests the inherent dialectical relationship between discourse and culture through referential multimodality, or as Hülse put it: "[their] society and culture are constituted by discourse, but at the same time, they constitute discourse" (1999: 6). The mutual effect of referential multimodality becomes even stronger the more often a certain discourse (re)occurs and the more people it reaches. Therefore, it is important to note that emblematic conversations like Excerpt 6.4 are productive among male users and frequently occur in German-Namibian CMC. Excerpt 6.5, Excerpt 6.6, and Excerpt 6.7 illustrate the use of brocatives through *bra*: Excerpt 6.5 shows *bra* in its function as confrontational stance attenuator. Raik uses it at the end of his claim to mitigate the risk of being perceived as hierarchical as he

claims that there is no excuse for Frans not to join their event. *Bra* indexes a non-serious stance here and keeps the conversation on a playful level. Apart from Excerpt 6.5, the use of *bra* or other familiarizers as confrontational stance attenuator is rare. Instead, familiarizers are rather used to index friendship and camaraderie, such as in Excerpt 6.6 and Excerpt 6.7. In both cases, the initial speech act is greeted with a through and through positive response. This finding is in line with the no-public-dispute norm observed and reported during face-to-face meetings of NAMSA (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.2).

*Excerpt 6.5*

Frans	Wie viele Leute sind den angemeldet dieses Jahr?	How many people have registered for this year (so far)?
Raik	mehr als letztes Jahr um die Zeit [...] Wird auf jeden Fall ne dicke Party. Ich seh da kein excuse dass du nicht kommst <b>bra</b>	More than last year at this time [...]. Anyway, [it] will be an awesome party. I don't see any excuse why you won't join, bra.

*Excerpt 6.6*

Frank	Eskalation 🗨️	Escalation
Raik	Jerre ich föhl dein Gees bis nach Hamburg <b>bra</b>	Wow, I can feel your spirit even here in Hamburg, <b>bra</b>

*Excerpt 6.7*

Nick	[...] this new restaurant which is opening soon in Munich	[...] this new restaurant which is opening soon in Munich
Paul	ata <b>bra</b> ou lass kappen, dalla mir deine nummer in meine inbox 😊 [...]	<b>bra ou</b> , let's do it, leave me your number in my inbox [...]
Paul	<b>bra ou</b> lass freitag dahin gehn??	<b>Bra ou</b> , let's go there on Friday??

The thematic focus and the use of familiarizers mediate the user's stances, relationships and set the tone in which communication happens. They therefore create an in-group and an out-group. Individuals who prefer other ways of speech, will be less likely to join the group. Their repetitive linguistic practices thus serve to maintain the in-group-related communicative habits through self-selection, as illustrated by Figure 6.3.

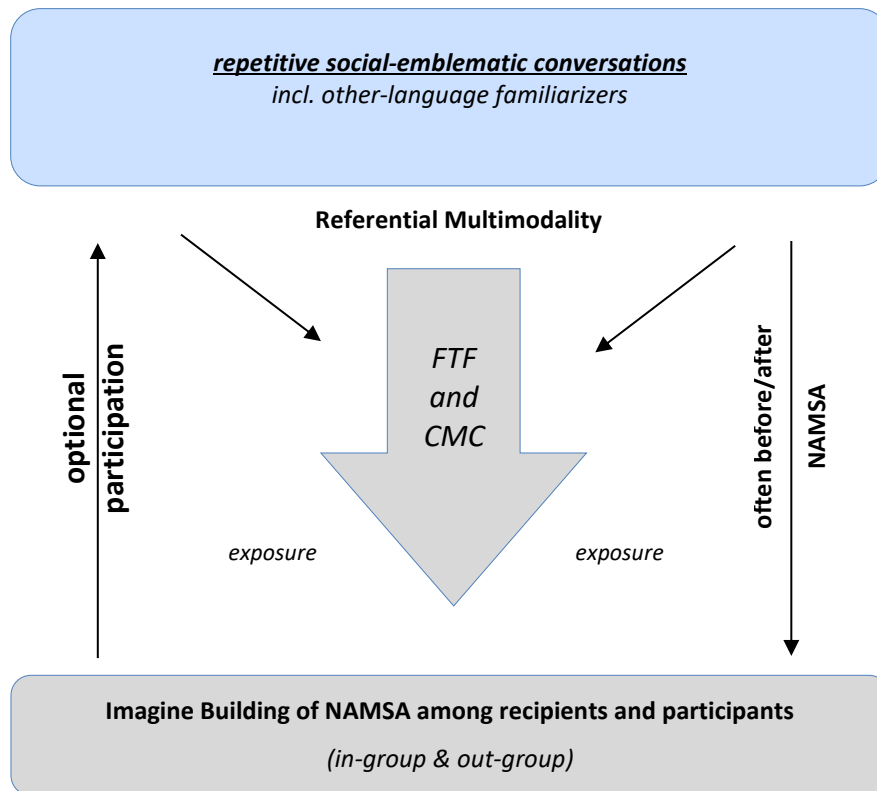


Figure 6.3: The reinforcement cycle of social emblems in German-Namibian CMC.

By contrast, repetitive patterns of camaraderie reinforcement strategies are less frequent among female users in German-Namibian CMC.<sup>89</sup> However, they are not completely absent and are particularly used in combination with referential multimodality, as (40) - (42) illustrate.

- (40) Alexa                      matching shirt saves the day . Strength , **buddy!** X
- (41) Anja:                      Kak **ou...**du hast die ganzen abend getragen  
    ‘Shit man... you carried it for the whole night’
- (42) Ina:                        Hallo **Nam Boys & Girls** Wollt mal fragen ob welche von  
    Euch in Berlin verbreitet sind ? (-: Warme Gruesse [...]  
    ‘Hallo Nam Boys & Girls. Just wanted to ask if any of you  
    stay in Berlin? Warm greetings [...]

<sup>89</sup> Note that this finding only applies to CMC-based speech. It does not automatically apply to communication that takes place in FTF settings.

(40) shows the use of a brocative in a female-to-male dyad (F-M dyad). Alexa sympathizes with her conversation partner who got involved in a car accident and has just posted a photo of his broken car. By coincidence, his shirt color matches the color of his car. Alexa seeks to support him by calling him *buddy*. In (41), Anja is looking for her Namibian flag (see also Excerpt 6.1). She uses a referential claim by referring to a prior comment of a friend who claims that he does not know where the flag is. In addition, she uses the swear word *kak* ('shit') as an intensifier. The vocative *ou* (non-diminutive form of *oukie*) serves as a confrontational stance attenuator. This practice is similar to the way her fellow male users use *bra* in Excerpt 6.4 (turn 6) and Excerpt 6.5. (42) shows how Ina addresses the community as a whole. Therefore, she uses the English expression *Boys & Girls* as a collective vocative. By adding the adjective *NAM* to it, she refers to the common Namibian roots of her fellow users. In addition, brocatives entail other functions. Excerpt 6.8 shows how a brocative can be used as an interpersonal and cognitive discourse marker to avoid ambiguity in a F-M triad. Again, referential multimodality is implicitly expressed by the anticipation of a future FTF event.

*Excerpt 6.8*

Inge	Sehr gut !! NAMSA kommt nächstes Jahr doch 2x vor habe ich gehört!! 😊.....	Very well. NAMSA is going to take place twice next years, I've heard.
Mark	stimmt.	True.
Paul	? 😊	? 😊
Inge	Okies !!!! das war ein Joke - hint.	Oukies! That was a joke – hint.

Inge initializes the conversation and jokingly claims that the NAMSA event, which is usually held annually, will take place twice next year. She thus uses an implicit form of referential multimodality. Mark reacts and agrees but Paul is seemingly confused. To avoid any possible misunderstanding, Inge addresses both users by calling them *okies* (*oukies*) and adding four exclamation marks. The function of this word is twofold: she uses it as an interpersonal marker to catch the attention of her conversation partners and as a cognitive marker to reveal information about her thought processes. This way, she signals a realignment of the information flow. She explicitly states that her claim was not meant to be taken seriously and ends her comment with the meta statement 'hint'. These examples indicate how female users use multilingual brocatives to bond with fellow male users and structure and realign discourse in mixed-mode communication. The strategies are similar to those of male users and usually occur in F-M dyads. It is still noteworthy that German-Namibian CMC remains to be predominantly shaped by male users. A fact that is reflected in NAMSA's female-to-male ratio of roughly 30/70.

## 6.6 Discussion and conclusion

This chapter showed that a multimulti approach to traditional variables opens up new perspectives for sociolinguistic research. How do men and women deploy their multilingual repertoire among different modes? This question took center stage and was discussed through the example of the German-Namibian diaspora. Therefore, we applied a mixed-methods approach combining multiple regression analysis with discourse and conversation analysis. The goal of this paper was twofold: first, to present a picture of how FTF and CMC interact by means of referential multimodality and second, to shed more light on interaction with multilingual practices.

The quantitative part of this paper analyzed the functions of Afrikaans and English in German-Namibian CMC. Both serve as donor languages for isolated lexical borrowings as well as for code-switching/mixing. However, the findings suggest that there are two types of multilingual practices in German-Namibian CMC: one type is Afrikaans-based and includes a strong overrepresentation of content words in relation to all Afrikaans words (especially among male users in NAMSA) while the other type is English-based and includes a more balanced, relative representation between content words and function words (especially among women in NiD). This means that users tend to use English on a phrasal level, i.e., in inter- and intra-sentential code-switching, while Afrikaans rather occurs in semantic single-word constructions, expressive insertions and short chunks. The findings relate to the word count of the given language and are therefore relative. In absolute terms, English outnumbers Afrikaans across all categories as it makes up 88% of all non-German lexical items, which make up 12% of the entire corpus.

Based on these findings, the analysis in 6.4.3 confirmed that the majority of the most frequently used words in Afrikaans (top 11) are content words showing gender-specific variation on the semantic level while the majority of English keywords are function words being part of the morphosyntactic frame of English sentence construction. Therefore, English top-11 words show less gender-specific variation. These tendencies are in line with the history of language contact in Namibia where Afrikaans and German have been in contact for over 120 years – long enough for (expressive) borrowings to become part of a Namibian variety of German. English is also more often used than Afrikaans – a finding that is in line with Bracke's results (Bracke 2021: 120). Note that there were different research designs: while Bracke analyzed data that were intended to include *Namdeutsch*, i.e., a German non-standard variety shaped by Afrikaans and English, this paper includes all kinds of multilingual practices that occur in German-Namibian CMC. Monolingual comments in English are among them.

Section 6.4.4 shifted the focus to Afrikaans and English brocatives in German-Namibian CMC. It was hypothesized that communication in mixed-mode groups prompt the use of multilingual brocatives. Therefore, male and female users deploy

a higher degree of other-language brocatives compared to users of single-mode groups. A mixed-mode group seems to provide more opportunities for its members to strengthen social bonds as they meet in both FTF and CMC. This combination potentially leads to a higher degree of cohesiveness and triggers the use of informal other-language brocatives to express referential multimodality. Brocatives are strongly overrepresented among male users. Therefore, they can be considered a form of gender-specific language practice (cf. Urichuk and Loureiro-Rodriguez 2019). Section 6.5.2 moved on to illustrate how male and female users apply their multilingual repertoire in CMC while referring to past and future FTF events. It could be shown that brocatives in German-Namibian CMC are enregistered as a social emblem which indexes NAMSAs as an FTF event – a fact that is stressed by referential claims from CMC to (future) NAMSAs in FTF. These practices create a dialectical circle and reinforce the interplay between referential multimodality and multilingual practices.

Putting more spotlight on the referentiality of multimodal practices enables researchers to analyze data that is considered monomodal from the traditional perspective on multimodality. The data used for this chapter is exclusively CMC- and text-based. A traditional approach would have overlooked the various referential claims that members of the community use to mediate between CMC and FTF speech. Here, the notion of multimodality is not defined by the nature of the data (e.g., data combining auditive and visual features) but rather by the references emerging from discourse and the social structure of the community. The questions to be answered by future research are twofold: on the theoretical level it seems useful to define the boundaries of this notion. Referential multimodality in its explicit form (e.g., by quoting speech that originates from a different mode) does not seem to be too difficult to determine. The implicit form, however, poses more of a challenge. As Excerpt 6.3 shows, we made the choice to include examples that implicitly imply social interaction and speech in a mode other than the claim is issued in. In many of these cases, one could only assume that actual speech takes place. How implicit may a claim be to still count as part of referential multimodality? We can anticipate opinions opting for a stricter approach to this question. That is why defining the boundaries on the implicitness of referential multimodality remains a key task for future research, in our view.

On a more empirical level, it would be useful to analyze how the interplay between referential multimodality and multilingual practices unfolds in single-mode groups. By definition, single-mode groups only exist in one of the modes. Hence, their members have limited shared experiences in the other mode. How is referential multimodality applied under these circumstances, e.g., in CMC-only groups? It seems plausible that individual members know each other in FTF and would use referential claims in a similar way in which they occur in mixed-mode groups. However, what is the overall nature of referred FTF events in CMC-only groups? Are they more of a



general nature so they still account for most of the group members? Would that mean that multilingual practices are rather external with regard to referential, multimodal claims? These questions could be the basis for follow-up research on the empirical level which, at the same time, would provide an opportunity to discuss the boundaries on the implicit side of this notion.

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This chapter has been published as:

Radke, Henning. 2022. "Urban language practices online? Multilingualism among German-Namibians in computer-mediated communication." In *Postmodern individuals in urban communicative settings*, edited by Dick Smakman, Jiří Nekvapil, and Kapitolina Fedorova, 30-48. London: Routledge.

The version presented here has been adopted to overall standards and terminology included in the other chapters of the dissertation.