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Icelandic-English code-switching among young people on social media

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Abstract

This study is based on the analysis of code-switching (CS) between Icelandic and English in status updates, wall comments and Messenger conversations of Icelandic secondary school students on Facebook. Surprisingly, in light of the current concerns about the rapidly growing use of English in the Icelandic speech community, the average proportion of English in the total vocabulary is only 3%. CS is more common in closed personal chats than in the open environment of status updates and wall posts. However, the proportion of English vocabulary ranges from 0.16% in a private conversation about homework up to 30.47% in a playful chat about popular culture. The primary functions of CS are lexical need, emphasis, interjection, playfulness and promoting relationships. The two most determinant factors regarding the application of CS are the linguistic environment and the topic in question.

Keywords

code-switching, computer-mediated communication, social media, youth language, conversational function of code-switching

Islandzko-angielskie przełączanie kodów językowych wśród młodych ludzi w mediach społecznościowych

Abstrakt

Niniejsze badanie opiera się na analizie przełączania kodów językowych (CS) między islandzkim a angielskim w aktualizacjach statusów, postach na tablicy i rozmowach na Messengerze wśród islandzkich uczniów szkół średnich na Facebooku. Zaskakującym wynikiem, biorąc pod uwagę aktualne obawy związane z gwałtownym wzrostem użycia języka angielskiego w islandzkiej społeczności językowej, jest fakt, że udział słownictwa angielskiego w ogólnym zasobie słownictwa wynosi zaledwie 3%. Zmiana kodu językowego jest bardziej powszechna w zamkniętych, osobistych czatach niż w otwar-tym środowisku tzn. aktualizacja statusów i posty na tablicy. Proporcja słownictwa równi się znacznie, od 0,16% w prywatnych rozmowach dotyczących prac domowych, do 30,47% w swobodnym dialogu na temat popkultury. Kluczowe funkcje zmiany kodu obejmują potrzeby leksykalne, podkreślenia, wtrącenia, żartobliwość oraz budowanie relacji. Dwoma najważniejszymi czynnikami decydującymi o wykorzystaniu zmiany językowej są kontekst językowy oraz tematyka rozmowy.

Słowa kluczowe

język młodzieży, komunikacja za pośrednictwem komputera, konwersacyjna funkcja zmiany językowej, media społecznościowe, przełączanie kodu językowego

1. Introduction

This article aims at investigating the digital language contact between Icelandic and English as it appears in computer-mediated communication (CMC) among students in secondary schools in Iceland. More specifically, the main concern will be to investigate the interplay between Icelandic and English as it appears in status updates, comments and personal messages from upper secondary school students on the social medium

Facebook. Code-switching in a broad sense is of special interest here; that is, when English is used to communicate words, phrases, sentences and even longer utterances in a linguistic environment where Icelandic is otherwise the main language. This is interesting in an Icelandic context as research has revealed that children and youths consider it important to attain skills in the formal use of Icelandic, mainly with regard to schooling and ambitions in Icelandic society, whereas English has considerably stronger associations with exciting prospects abroad and pleasant relaxation, such as computer games, TV programmes and pop music (Íslensk málnefnd 2020, Jónsson and Angantýsson 2018, Sigurjónsdóttir and Rögnvaldsson 2018). At the same time, the popularity of Icelandic as a school subject has dwindled while that of English, which is the first foreign language taught in Icelandic schools, is on the rise (Sigþórsson, Pétursdóttir and Jónsdóttir 2014).

In more general terms increased globalisation, rapid technological advances and an ever-increasing use of English in most aspects of modern life in Iceland, has undermined the previously undisputed status of the Icelandic language as quite central to the national psyche (see, e.g. Hilmarsson-Dunn and Kristinsson 2010, and Sigurjónsdóttir and Rögnvaldsson 2018). One recent manifestation of this is the lively debate in the Facebook group *Málspjallið* (The language chat), which is hosted by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson, a former professor of Icelandic at the University of Iceland. A recurrent theme on this page in the summer of 2023 was the perceived dominance of English in the Icelandic tourism industry, where there appears to be a growing tendency to use English as either the first or the only language on signs, advertisements, menus etc., much to the annoyance of certain members of the group. This example is indicative of a larger picture that is chararcterized by the high presence of English in Iceland, in particular in terms of informal receptive English. This in turn appears to have led to a high level of confidence among Icelanders in their English skills even though the basis for this confidence may be somewhat questionable as

their actual usage of spoken and written English on an everyday basis may not be as extensive as they believe it to be (Arnbjörnsdóttir 2018).

There has been an awareness of this development for some time, as witnessed, e.g. by the official Icelandic Language Policy which was instigated by the Icelandic Parliament in 2009 and primarily emphasizes the threat posed by English and the need for Icelanders to be able to use Icelandic in all aspects of society and everyday life (*Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti* 2009), and, all in all, the perceived purity of the Icelandic language has been somewhat tarnished lately, however unrealistic such an image of purity may be to begin with (cf. Langer and Nesse 2012).

Although the past few decades have seen considerable discussion and writing on the impact of English on the Icelandic language community (Guðmundsdóttir et al. 2019–2020), this has had but little or no effect to stimulate organised research into Icelanders' potential code switching into English. Furthermore, as far as we know, no studies have been conducted in an Icelandic context on code-switching in electronic communication and/or in the social media. Therefore, this article is for the most part heading towards unexplored Icelandic territory.

The research is based on documentary evidence from 92 upper secondary students who gave access to status updates and comments on their Facebook pages during a period of three weeks. Besides, 30 of those students provided the researchers with copies of their conversation threads after obtaining permission from relevant respondents. The main objective of this article is to determine the extent of participants' code-switching, its role in their communication and the situations in which it is most likely to occur. On this basis the following research questions emerge:

A. How frequent is the use of words, phrases and longer utterances from English?

B. What function does code-switching have in the discourse/ chats?
C. Under which circumstances is the code-switching most common and which appear to be the main underlying reasons (subject, chats/peer discussions; open/closed venue)?
D. To what extent are there indications of English being used as a primary language along with or even in place of Icelandic?

From a wider theoretical perspective, our results challenge the predominant frameworks for categorizing the functions of code-switching (see, e.g. Gumperz 1982, Hoffman 2014, Saville-Troike 2003). Thus, we propose an analysis that is both flexible enough to allow for overlap between functions rather than trying to pinpoint a single functional category for each instance of code-switching, and nuanced enough to incorporate subcategories of some of the previously established functions.

The organisation of the article is as follows: The second section lays the foundation for the discussion while the third section outlines data collection and research methodology. The fourth section presents the conclusions of the research and in the final section these are summarised and placed in the context of previous studies.

2. Theoretical background and demarcation

The first attempts at defining code-switching were presented by pioneers such as Gumperz (1982), Myers-Scotton (2000) and Poplack (2000), based on their research in the 1970s and 80s, and the concept is now generally thought to refer to circumstances where two or more languages (or two or more varieties of the same language) are used within one and the same conversation. Initially, spoken language was the main concern in this context, but in recent years the written form has also been investigated, especially after the advent of computer-mediated communication (CMC) which often may be regarded as a kind of conversation, in spite of being in written form, which

of course excludes the possibility of phonetic assimilation (see Backus (2003) for further discussion of insertion patterns in code-switching).

Any closer definitions of code-switching have proved to be more elusive, in particular regarding its actual extent and where the boundaries between its different levels lie (cf. Gardner-Chloros 2009). People appear to agree that it is a case of code-switching to change over from one language to another in whole sentences or longer units, and separate phrases or expressions can also include code-switching. But the going gets tougher when it comes to individual words. Besides, the permitted degree of adaptation from the embedded language to the matrix language (cf. Myers-Scotton 1993) varies as to how far the sound system, inflections or sentence structure can be affected and still remain within the definition of code-switching. Thus, Poplack (2000) is of the opinion that the word *mogueen* derived from English "mug" (= "attack, rob") cannot be regarded as code-switching in the Spanish sentence *Es possible que te mogueen* (= "they could attack/rob you") since this word has been adjusted to Spanish as regards sentence structure, inflection and phonology. On the other hand, the word "heavy-duty" in the sentence *Las palabras heavy-duty, bien grandes, se me han olvidado* would be classified as code-switching, since it shows no sign of adaptation to the Spanish system of phonology or inflection, although its use is not in accordance with conventional word order in English. Similar distinctions can be found in Haspelmath (2009), who also claims that concepts that are frequently expressed by a word from another language should be regarded as loanwords while concepts that show great variability are to be viewed as switches. At the same time, however, he points out that the line between loanwords and single-word code-switches is not clear cut and this indeterminacy has in some cases led to certain intermediate paths having been chosen where single words and other slang terms and borrowings from the embedded language inserted into the matrix language, with or without adaptation, have been cate-

gorised as a certain variety of code-switching, frequently under the term code-mixing (Fasold 1984).

In this article, the leitmotif is to adhere to a fairly broad definition and thus categorise as code-switching both cases identified here as indisputable members of that category, as well as others commonly referred to as code-mixing. The main reason for this method is that one of the aims of the research outlined here is to add fragments to the general portrayal we already have of the extent of the usage of English in an Icelandic context. Nevertheless, certain restrictions will always be needed and in this regard the following factors were mainly relevant.

Firstly, in many instances we had to determine when words of English origin were to be included in, or excluded from, the code-switching category. It is hard to draw a sharp dividing line in this regard and in various instances our conclusions are doubtless debatable. We have, for instance, decided to exclude from code-switching several words from our database which are clearly of foreign origin and have no obvious counterparts in Icelandic, as they are now generally regarded as part of everyday Icelandic based on decades of use and have, for the most part, if not wholly, assimilated themselves to the grammatical and phonological system of Icelandic. In this category are, for example, various words relating to music and entertainment such as *djamm*, *kokteill*, *fönk* and *rokk*, as well as various types of cuisine and food items, for example *pizza*, *lasagna*, *frómas*, *naan*(-bread), *túrmerik* and *snakk*. Similarly, due to lack of comparable terms in Icelandic, a number of English names of computer games, TV series, popular songs etc., were also excluded from the category of code-switching and the same applies to named trade marks in English such as *Nike* and *Converse*(-shoes). The remainder is composed of a diverse assemblage of words such as *reddí*, *plís* and *fuck/fucking/fuckanum* which generally have existed in Icelandic for some length of time and been adapted to a considerable degree and are therefore doubtful members of the code-switching category. It is noted here, nevertheless, that those words have obvious Icelandic

parallels (*reddí* = *tilbúin*/*n*, *plís* = *gerðu það*/*vinsamlegast*, *fuck* = *andskotinn*/*helvíti*/…) and thus users have a choice, although in many cases they are no doubt mostly unaware of other options, and on this basis these words are included in our analysis.

Secondly, we decided to disregard so-called hashtags which serve the function of a key to a discussion on a certain theme or issue on the social media. To be sure, participants use both English and Icelandic hashtags, but each hashtag only provides access to one language, thus excluding the option of code-switching.

Finally, participants' English-speaking friends occasionally respond to their status updates by adding a question or some other feedback to comments relevant to the updates, resulting in a subsequent conversation in English. It is a well-known phenomenon from code-switching research that participants switch from one dialect or language to another when called for by circumstances – as for example the addition of a new participant. But usually this applies in a situation where both (or all) participants in the conversation or communication in question have at least some skill in the use of the relevant languages or dialects; that is, the participants have a choice as to which language or dialect they use. A comparable option does not exist on the Facebook threads under consideration; if the conversation is to proceed the owner of the Facebook page has to switch over to English as there are no indications that the participants' English-speaking friends speak any Icelandic. Thus, we are of the opinion that the use of English in this context, despite constituting a switch from the use of Iceland in the original status update, cannot be classified as code-switching from Icelandic to English per se.

The perspective in this article is sociolinguistic rather than formal, i.e. our emphasis is on analysing the role of code-switching in human communication in order to gain an impression of the role played by English in the exchanges of social media participants. The origin of the above-mentioned

role perspective is often traced to research by Blom and Gumperz, dealing with code-switching between a literary form of Norwegian, known as bokmal, on the one hand, and the local dialect of the inhabitants of Hemnesberget, a village in northern Norway, on the other. Based on their research, Blom and Gumpers divided code-switching into two main classes; that is, situational code-switching, relating to the fact that code-switching tends to arise as the conversational situation changes, for example when a new participant enters the conversation (cf. discussion above), or a new topic is introduced, or, on the other hand, metaphorical code-switching which occurs when a current speaker switches from one language to another to illustrate his attitude, emphasise a point, contribute a touch of humour or cite the words of another person (Blom and Gumperz 2000).

This basic classification has for the most part endured the passing of time, although being developed further, both by Gumperz (1982) himself and others (see, e.g. Hoffmann 2014; Saville-Troike 2003), so that the role of code-switching has now been subdivided into further branches. Some of those, such as added emphasis and citing others, have already been mentioned. Nevertheless, further contextual variations have been identified; for example, code-switching often appears to be used to further explain certain messages, to emphasise the relationship with the person one is talking to, or when a speaker cannot find a word or phrase in the first language to communicate effectively. In our analysis we will develop a three-fold sub-categorization of instances of this last kind, i.e. where lexical need sparks the use of English. We are aware that what we regard as pure lexical need (Lexical need A, see section 3) is by some researchers (Myers-Scotton 1993) viewed as instant borrowing rather than code-switching, As explained above, however, we here adhere to an open definition of code-switching in order to get as broad an overview as possible of the extent of the usage of English in an Icelandic context. It has also been pointed out that code-switching does not always serve a de-

finitive purpose, but may apparently occur in a random manner, perhaps being sparked by certain words or circumstances relating to the context of an utterance, leading to subconscious associations of ideas which activate the code-switching (Riehl 2005).

As was perhaps to be expected, the code-switching classification is to some extent determined by linguistic circumstances, some of which have been looked into in this context such as the relationship between salesmen and customers (Long and Ting 2014, Pan 2000), teachers and students (Cahyani, de Courcy and Barnett 2018, Greggio and Gil 2007) as well as technical discussions, for example in relation to computers (Riney 1998). Furthermore, in recent years communication in an electronic environment, especially on social media has attracted increasing attention. In most cases, English is the language most frequently switched to, as most social media are based on an English-speaking back-ground and English is widely used as a kind of "lingua franca" of our times (Kowner and Rosenhouse 2008) although various languages have served the function of a matrix language such as Danish and Lithuanian (Jakelienė 2018), Nepalese (Sharma 2012), Chinese, Malay (Ting and Yeo 2019) and Filipino (Capa-ras and Gustilo 2017).

The conclusions of these observations, generally indicate that despite a certain inherent distinction between oral and electronic communication the roles played by code-switching is for the most part identical or comparable in both types of transmission (Androutsopoulos 2011), although there are some indications that code-switching is not particularly frequent in electronic interchanges (Ting and Yeo 2019).

3. Methods, data and analysis

The data being processed here was collected within the framework of a larger research project which was meant to provide insight into the image Icelandic upper secondary school

students create of themselves on Facebook. One aspect of this image is young people's language use on status updates and comments on their Facebook pages and in the messages they exchange through Messenger, the chatline attached to Facebook. Here the focus is on youth language use in those interchanges and the language switching that occurs.

In order to collect data two upper secondary schools were contacted in spring 2015, on the one hand a school offering traditional academic education, and on the other, a school offering both academic studies and a variety of vocational courses. This was done to ensure a maximum breadth in the student population. Permission was obtained to visit the schools during term-time and briefly visit lessons in classes and study groups in order to introduce the project and ask interested students to participate. Those who volunteered, subsequently received an introductory letter and signed a declaration of their informed consent. Special care was taken to ensure that the students originated from as many study paths or programmes as possible in order to ensure a certain level of diversity. Otherwise, however, their background was not taken into special consideration, apart from the fact that only students who had attained the age of majority were approached; that is, 18 years of age. By those means a total of 92 student par-ticipants were obtained; 48 students from one of the two schools and 44 from the other, and the gender division was the same; that is, 48 girls and 44 boys.

For the purpose of data collection, a special Facebook page was prepared in the name of the project and when the students had agreed to participate a friend request was submitted to them from this page. Subsequently, when the friend request had been accepted, all of the students' status updates and comments were monitored and recorded for three weeks. During this three-week period the students published a total of 474 status updates, or an average of 5.15 and 321 comments, or an average

of 3.491. It should be made clear, however, that the students' level of activity varied significantly. Thus, a total of 19 students wrote no status updates during the period in question while the two most active students, published, on the one hand, 23 and, on the other, 39 such entries. By far the largest number of students, however, or 56, published one to ten updates. It ought to be mentioned, furthermore, that the level of activity was to some extent gender-based; girls published an average of 6.23 updates during the period in question whereas boys published 3.98 – a pattern for the most part repeated in the comments section. The two most active students (not the same two as those who were most active in status updates) wrote, on the one hand, 28 and on the other, 44 comments while 32 students wrote no comment at all. 50 students wrote from one to ten comments. There is also a gender difference in this regard as the girls wrote on average 4.71 comments, compared to the boys' 2.16. The students' status updates consist of 5,983 words and they make up a total of 4,084 words. It should be noted that the students' activity, whether it is in terms of its amount or content, can of course have been affected by their awareness of their status updates and comments being observed. However, there are no clear indications of this in the collected material and when the students taking part in focus group interviews that were carried out, and will be discussed in greater detail below, were asked whether they had in any way changed their Facebook behaviour due to them being observed they all said that they had simply forgotten all about this after the first two or three days.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, Messenger exchanges between students were also investigated. Those messages are not directly displayed on students' Facebook pages so they had to be specifically asked to send the researchers samples of those pages. No special instructions were issued with regard to the nature and content of those messages, which may

[1] Comments were only collected from the participants' own Facebook pages, i.e. they are comments that they made to their own status updates or made in response to comments made by their Facebook friends.

be regarded as roughly comparable to written chats. Rather, it was left to the students themselves to determine what they wanted the researchers to see, if they were at all prepared to contribute materials of this kind. Care was taken, however, to instruct them to gain permission from their fellow chatters to release the material and they were also asked to remove the names of the chat friends concerned. A total of 30 students submitted examples of this type of writing, consisting of fragments of highly varying length from longer chats they had with their friends or schoolmates. The shortest specimen is only 78 words and the longest one is 3,580 words. Altogether those chat samples make up a total of 17,408 words, averaging a length of about 580 words. The topics of conversation also differ significantly from one sample to another, ranging from school assignments to pleasures and partying. It is also fairly common to wander from one topic to another within the same thread of conversation.

As a follow-up, after the completion of fundamental data processing, focus group interviews were conducted for the purpose of further elucidating some aspects of the data which were thought to be particularly noteworthy. In each of the two schools, one interview was conducted, involving a total of six participants at a time who had all contributed materials during earlier stages of data collection. Each of the two groups had equal gender balance. In those interviews, questions did not deal with code-switching per se; the focus was rather on the students' general language performance, including the use of English and their awareness thereof.

Anonymity was ensured in the registration of all data. Thus, each participant was allocated a personal code when registered and all names of fellow communicators and other individuals were removed. It was also attempted, as far as possible, to remove other registered information which could lead to the identification of specific individuals. It is worth emphasising that this data, gathered in spring 2015, is not exactly up to date, especially in the context of an ever-changing electronic environ-

ment. Nevertheless, no significant changes have occurred in the organisation of status updates and comments, neither with regard to Facebook nor the Messenger software, during the above-mentioned period. Thus, the conclusions presented here should give a fairly clear picture of current Facebook exchanges, as well as providing opportunities for comparison with newer data.

In the data analysis, all code-switching, as defined within the framework of this article (cf. discussion in Section 2) was classified on the basis of the role or purpose it seemed to serve on each occasion. In this classification, previous research in this field was taken into account such as that by Gumperz (1982) outlined above, although the main emphasis was on research by Caparas and Gustilo (2017) focusing on code-switching by Filipino students on Facebook. Their classification, in turn, is based on the works of Hoffmann (2014) and Saville-Troike (2003). Caparas and Gustilo examined 200 status updates and 100 wall posts from 50 Facebook accounts with regard to multilingual code-switching between English, Filipino and regional languages in the Philippines. In their analysis, they identified 16 different functions or motives for code-switching. The most common of these were lexical need, clarification of content and emphasis. Given the resemblance between Caparas and Gustilo's study and the work presented here, as regards the nature of the data, this was judged to be a natural point of departure. Most of the functional categories they identified were also found in our data. However, some adjustments had to be made due to the nature of examples gathered in this research, and a few categories were either added or removed depending on the character of specific examples. Thus, a specific category of captions is added here; that is, texts accompanying pictures or links which the language user in question includes in a status update. It is of course questionable whether this can be regarded as a function per se, but it nonetheless seemed clear to us that using English rather than Iceandic in this context served a certain purpose as a "frame-setter" for the message delivered

by the pictures or links. Besides this, we decided to divide the category "lexical need" into three subgroups as there were some inherent differences in the way this lack emerged.

We are aware that there is little general consensus on what the functional categories of code-switching are, or how they can be either grouped together or divided further into sub-categories. Furthermore, all definitions of these categories tend to be somewhat fuzzy and the lines between e.g. motivations of code-switching, such as lexical need and playfulness, and situations where code-switching is likely to occur, such as in interjections, are less than clear. However, as Almoaily (2023) points out it is seemingly impossible to avoid listing these functions in some way to be able to understand the reasons for code-switching in various contexts.

To this discussion it should be added that research working with categories of this kind mostly appears to assume that each instance of code-switching can only fall into one functional category. In our analysis, on the other hand, we were convinced that code-switching could serve more than one function at a time. Thus, even though each example given in Table 1 below represents only one category, several of them find their way into one or even more further categories, as further outlined in the next section. Finally, we were left with the following functional categories.

Table 1

Function categories of code switching

Function	Explanation	Example
Emphasis	Switched to English in order to emphasise a special part of utterance.	Ja get ekki **fucking** beðið [Yeah can't **fucking** wait]
Interjection	English is used in an interjection; that is, to swear or express strong surprise, shock, joy etc.	**omg** þarf að segja þer [Nafn] systir er ÓLÉTT [**omg** need to tell you [Name] sis is PREGNANT]

Repetition	English is used to repeat the content of an utterance, or part thereof, in order to emphasise or explain its message.	algjörlega top maður **top notch entertainer entertains his entertainment is a way of life** [an absolute top guy **top notch entertainer entertains his entertainment is a way of life**]
English for attention	English is used to support or ensure that a certain comment attracts a recipient's attention to the desired degree.	Hver í **fuckanum** er þetta? [Who the **fuck** is that?]
Playfulness	English is used for a dramatic and/or playful purpose.	…reyndar eins og allir tónlistarmenn fæddir eftir 92' kyndilberar klámkynslóðarinnar **but first let me take a geiri** [… actually like all other musicians born after ´92 torchbearers of the porn generation **but first let me take a geiri**]
Group identity	English is used to express warmth or otherwise emphasise a direct connection between communicators.	Frábær mynd! Takk elsku besta blóm! **Love you baby!** Sé þig á morgun [Great picture! Thanks my dearest flower! **Love**

		you baby! See you tomorrow]
Softening/ strengthening	English is used either to reduce or emphasise the strength of a statement, instruction, wish etc.	…ef það eru athugasemdir um þáttinn þá **plís** gagnrýnið hann… […if there comments on the program then **please** criticize it…]
Message demarcation	English is used to further explain the content of preceding utterance(s).	Þetta er alltaf fyndið! **Never gets old**. [This is always funny! **Never gets old**.]
Specific topic	Specific topics can call for a switch from English to Icelandic, especially with reference to a previous discussion.	**Hoopin with the lil one!** (basketball reference)
Lexical need A	Pure need: A specialised topic, for example relating to computer games or pop culture calls for the use of English.	… þá er þetta fínt á **next-gen** vélunum […then this is great on the **next-gen** machines]
Lexical need B	Convenience/informality: English is used to avoid a longer and more complicated form of expression in Icelandic or to reduce the formality or stiffness of what is being said.	Mögulega besta **combo** sem hefur komið saman [Possibly the greatest **combo** ever]
Lexical need C	Coincidence: English (usually single words or phrases) is inserted into the discussion in a haphazard manner,	hvað ertu lengi að **withdrawa** pening frá 365? [how long does it take you to

	apparently because the word or phrase in question is, for some reason, quicker to turn up in the language user's mind on a particular occasion.	**withdraw** money from 365?]
Adressee specification	English is used to directly address an interlocutor, whether this be in a chat between two individuals or to single out one or more persons in a more open communication (in status updates or comments).	heyyyyy **love**
Quotation	A direct citation from known sayings, expressions or proverbs or a specific subject that exists in the students' conversational environment, for example study materials, sources, pop music texts etc.	Veit einhver hvað **"nymphal gills"** eru á íslensku? [Does anyone know what **"nymphal gills"** is in Icelandic?]
Caption	English is used, in part or whole of a text accompanying pictures or links the language user shares in a status update.	**dis gurl is my bestie**

It should be kept in mind that a classification of this kind will aways be subjective to a significant degree and that borderlines between categories can be somewhat flexible as is probably noted above. As already mentioned, the data was not gathered with code-switching as a specific objective in mind. Thus,

questions on these have, for example, not been specifically asked in focus group interviews although it would have been useful to have access to the perspective of the participants as to the functions of their code-switching. However, the authors attempted to counterbalance this situation as far as possible by each author first classifying the functions separately and then jointly revising the result, focusing on controversial issues that arose.

4. Results: The functions and extent of code-switching

This section contains the conclusions of the research. First, a statistical overview of the extent of English usage in our database will be presented, followed by a general survey of the way code-switching is divided into the categories described in the previous section. Then, in Sections 4.2.1–4.2.3 examples will be shown, accompanied by a discussion of the way code-switching appears within each of the three relevant types of text; that is, status updates, comments and messages or chats in order to provide as inclusive an impression of young people's Facebook communication as this brief article allows. This threefold division of the database is adhered to as far as possible in all subsequent coverage, since the distinctive character of the three text types will probably lead to differences between them regarding the extent and function of code-switching.

4.1. Extent of English usage

Table 2 provides an overview of the use of English in the database as a whole; that is, the number and ratio of words we classify as mixing and switching in status updates, comment threads and chats. Each English word is counted independently, whether it stands on its own or within a phrase or sentence in English.

Table 2
The use of English in different text categories

Text categories	Number of instances (words)	Total number of words	Ratio of English
Status updates	127	5,983	2.12%
Comments	115	4,084	2.82%
Chats	589	17,408	3.38%

It may come as a surprise that the ratio of English is generally rather low, or 3.02% on average. The lowest use of English, just over 2%, is found in general status updates on the so-called Facebook wall which all the friends of the user in question can see. Comments on status updates and subsequent discussions are also visible to all friends, but in those cases remarks are more likely to be directed to only one or few recipients. The language of the comments has significantly more English insertions than the status updates, or just under 3%. In chats between two friends the ratio of English approaches 3.5%. It can be assumed that the status updates are the most formal language environment, then the comments and, finally, chats. Those total figures agree well with the idea that speakers are generally more likely to switch to English under informal circumstances (Hilmisdóttir 2018). This, then, can be further confirmed in the focus group interviews. When student interviewees were asked how conscious they were of their language use when writing on Facebook, they responded that if they shared something on Facebook; that is, in a status update, they tried to keep everything "grammatically correct, google all spelling and so on" and that they only used English when joking, or for fun, "bara í djóki". But as the group receiving the messages became more closed, the lines between languages and their use became more blurred; "in the private chats one almost feels free to shift suddenly from one language to another and I can use Icelandic, English and German as best fits in with the flow of ideas."

But the averages listed above do not tell the whole story. If we focus on the chats, we find, for example, that in some of them English is hardly used at all, down to 0.16% in a chat on a home assignment (3 words of a total of 1,875). On the other hand, the ratio of English climbs to its greatest height, 30.47%, in a somewhat high-spirited chat between two boys. In other chats the ratio is closer to the average. In this connection, the chat topic also matters, as will be dealt with in more detail below.

4.2. The function of code-switching

Let us, then, turn to the functions of the code-switching. Table 3 shows a survey of a total of 15 different functions of English usage in status updates, comments and chats (ratios over 15 in bold). It is worth keeping in mind that the same example could receive more than one analysis, as referred to before. It should also be mentioned that here the number column refers to the number of instances of code-switching within each function category; each instance may represent from a single word up to phrases, sentences or even longer units.

When surveying the totals of individual categories (vertical) we note that English is often used in combination with pictures in status updates but this function does not appear in the other categories. The main reason for this is probably to be found in the focus group interviews where it is revealed that students hardly ever write “plain status updates” but usually combine these with pictures or links, together with a brief caption which quite often contains some English as in the “djók” above.

Table 3
Function of code switching in different text categories

Function	Status updates		Comments		Chats	
	No	Ratio	No	Ratio	No	Ratio
Emphasis	4	3.45%	17	16.50%	56	12.81%
Interjection	7	6.03%	24	23.30%	37	8.47%
Repetition	2	1.72%	3	2.91%	7	1.60%
English for attention	7	6.03%	3	2.91%	9	2.06%
Playfulness	17	14.66%	3	2.91%	64	14.65%
Group identity	4	3.45%	27	26.21%	7	1.60%
Strengthening/ softening	1	0.86%	2	1.94%	27	6.18%
Message demarcation	6	5.17%	3	2.91%	8	1.83%
Specific topic	3	2.59%	0	0	8	1.83%
Lexical need A	15	12.93%	11	10.68%	73	16.70%
Lexical need B	13	11.20%	5	4.85%	49	11.21%
Lexical need C	4	3.45%	1	0.97%	61	13.96%
Addressee specification	0	0%	2	1.94%	5	1.14%
Quotation	4	3.45%	2	1.94%	26	5.95%
Caption	29	25.00%	0	0%	0	0%

Lexical need A (absolute need) and B (convenience/informality) is also common in status updates, as is playfulness. In comments, a high proportion of group identity is noteworthy; most of those instances, however, relate to a specific language user's frequent use of English on one and the same comment thread (responses to birthday greetings). Other conspicuous functions in the comments section are interjection, emphasis and lexical need A (absolute need). In chats, lexical need A (absolute need) and B (convenience/informality) commonly occur and the same applies to interjections and lexical need C (coincidence). When

looking at individual functions (horizontal), this particularly applies to repetition, addressee specification and a particular topic, but quotations, strengthening/softening, English for attention and message demarcation are also rather infrequent functions.

Next, we come to the overlapping of functions. In the status updates, the function of caption most commonly overlapped with lexical need and playfulness. In the comments, the main overlaps were between group identity and interjections, on the one hand, and lexical need and playfulness on the other. Playfulness and lexical need were also conspicuous in chats and those two functions were likely to coincide.

4.2.1. Status updates

As may be gathered from Table 2 above, this text category comprised a total of 5,983 words and the ratio of English was 2.12% (127 words). English was commonly used in captions (29 instances), often in association with playfulness or lexical need A (absolute need) and B (convenience/informality). Among other functions are interjections (7 instances), English for attention (7 instances) and message demarcation (6 instances). Other interpretations occurred four times or fewer.

Table 4 illustrates a number of instances in status updates, where the functions emphasis, interjection, English for attention, playfulness and group identity have a prominent role, although other functions also occur (for further details see below). Three out of six examples are also captions.

In example (1) the English phrase is used as an independent element referring to a link where the participant in question urges his friends to take part in a quiz about himself. Example (2) clearly demonstrates how English emerges as an interjection; in this case, a playful exclamation to express the pleasure of a weekend holiday. Example (3) is a caption in the form of a repeated phrase which further highlights the indolent mood of the picture accompanying the caption.

Table 4
Examples of the use of English in status updates:
Emphasis, interjection, repetition, English for attention,
playfulness, group identity

Text	Function
(1) Go for it!	Emphasis
(2) Helgarfrí öðru nafni vinnutörn. **Here I come!** [Weekend holiday otherwise known as work spree. Here I come!]	Interjection Playfulness
(3) Sunday, lazy Sunday	Repetition Caption
(4) Ég bíð og bíð eftir að þetta lag komi út. Ég jafnvel býð í það að það komi út. Fyrir mér er þetta kapphlaup hvort komi út á undan, ný plata Heimir Rappari eða Messierfönkið hans Kött Grá Pje… Undirritaður er **self-hyping** grimmt. Spennufallið verður massíft þegar útgáfuhjólin byrja að snúast [I keep waiting for this tune to be published. I am even ready to make a bid for it. To me it is a race which record comes first Heimir Rappari or the Messierfunk by Kött Grá Pje. The undersigned is massively self-hyping. The anticlimax will be massive when the wheels of production start to turn].	English for attention Lexical need B (convenience/informality)
(5) Kynþokkafyllsti maður islands fundinn! **Like if he is hot** [Iceland's sexiest man found! Like if he's hot]	Playfulness Caption
(6) **dis gurl is my bestie**	Group identity Caption

In (4) "self-hyping" appears to be used to ensure that the comment receives the intended attention, without adding any particular emphasis, but also springs from the lack of a corresponding word in Icelandic. In (5) the language user publishes a picture of his (newly awakened) friend and uses the caption to

underline a certain clowning or tomfoolery. Thus, the use of English serves the function of fun and playfulness, cf. the introductory discussion on English being linked to entertainment and leisure. Example (6), then, clearly illustrates how English is often used to express affection, but at the same time, to create a certain distance, perhaps to avoid an impression of sentimentality. Although examples (1) and (4) are not classified as captions in Table 4 they can be understood as being of that origin since they are used to refer to a link.

Table 5 presents examples of English usage with the function of strengthening/softening, message demarcation and specific topic. One of five instances also serves as a caption and, as before, other functions also occur.

Table 5

Examples of English usage in status updates:
Strengthening/softening, message demarcation, specific topic

Text	Function
(7) Þátturinn á morgun verður jafn sexý og þessi mynd. Keyrslan verður frá kl 16:00-18:00 á fimmtudag en ekki föstudag vegna mikilla anna. 98,9 stillið inn kæru vinir og ef það eru athugasemdir um þáttinn þá **plís** gagnrýnið hann. Við elskum gagnrýni. [Tomorrow's programme is going to be as sexy as this film. It is going to be run between 16:00 and 18:00 on Thursday, but not Friday because they are so busy. 98.9 tund in dear friends and if there are comments on the programme, please criticise it. We love being criticised.]	Strengthening/ softening Lexical need B (convenience/ informality)
(8) Þetta lýsir líklega best hversu mikil lofthræðsla mín er þegar pabbi henti mér í eitthvað xtream trampólin tæki á [land, ár] þar sem flestir hoppa tæpa 20 metra uppi loftið, ég lét mér duga sirka 2m. Pabbi gerði þó heiðarlega tilraun til þess að slá á lofthræðsluna með að öskra alskonar orðum sem lýstu vonsvikni hans. **Golden moment**	Message demarcation Caption

[It probably best demonstrates my fear of heights when my dad threw me into some xtream trampolene monster in (country, year) where most people jump twenty metres, but I thought approx. 2m was enough. My dad really tried to help me get over my fear by shouting all kinds of words to express his disappointment. Golden moment]	
(9) Hoopin with the lil one! #bball #basket #lil-bro @NN	Specific topic Group identity
(10) Veit einhver hvað **"nymphal gills"** eru á íslensku? [Does anyone know what "nymhpal gills" are in Icelandic?]	Quotation Lexical need A (absolute need) (asking for help)

In example (7) English is apparently seen as stronger thus highlighting the urgency of the wish, but at the same time freeing the language user from being formal or affected. As is mentioned in section 2 above, it is questionable whether *plís* should be regarded as an instance of code-switching rather than borrowing. However, we believe that the choice and use of *plís* here serves a particular purpose which would not have been fulfilled by the corresponding Icelandic option (*vinsamlegast/ endilega*). In (8) we see an example of how a short English phrase is used to underline the meaning or content of a longer text in Icelandic. Example (9) illustrates how the participant concerned seems to find it more natural to talk about basketball in English, and is, in this instance, probably indirectly referring to a discussion relating to the NBA in USA. Example (10) contains a direct reference to the text the participant is using and his use of quotation marks shows that he is aware of the citation.

4.2.2. Comments

As indicated in Section 4.1, this text category comprised a total of 4,084 words, the ratio of English being 2.82% (115 words). The most common functions of English usage were group identity (26 instances), interjection (24 instances), emphasis (17 instances) and lexical need A (absolute need) (11 instances) and lexical need B (convenience/informality) (5 instances). Other interpretations occurred three times or fewer. Most examples of group identity happened to originate from the same participant who, when thanking friends for birthday greetings, seemed to favour the English phrase ”Love you”.

Table 6 presents several instances of English usage in comments where the functions emphasis, interjection, repetition, English for attention, playfulness, and group identity are most prominent, although other roles are also represented.

Table 6

Examples of English usage in comments: Emphasis, interjection, repetition, English for attention, playfulness, group identity

Text	Function
(11) **Lots of hate** <3 nei úps **love** [Lots of hate <3 no oops love]	Emphasis Group identity
(12) Mjög svo fallegar myndir! **Four for you, [Nafn]. You go, [Nafn]** [Very nice photos! Four for you, (Name). You go, (Name)]	Repetition Emphasis Group identity
(13) Okey **wtf** [Nafn], ertu að skoða gamlar myndir af mér ? hahha [Okey wtf (Name) are you looking at old pictures of me? hahha]	Interjection
(14) Held að ég hafi reddað þessu, tók kortið og batteríið og hann er allavega til friðs núna, og hleðst. **Thank god!** Hef virkilega ekki efni á því að laga þennan, hvað þá kaupa nýjan 😉 [I think I sorted it out, removed the card and the battery and it is at least behaving itself now and charging. Thank god! I cannot afford to	Interjection

have this one fixed let alone buy a new one]	
(15) þyngri en E-63 ?? **doubt it** [heavier than E-63??doubt it]	English for attention
(16) Jébb **keep up the good work** [Nafn] [Yes keep up the good work (Name)]	Playfulness
(17) Frábær mynd! Takk elsku besta blóm! **Love you baby!** Sé þig á morgun [Excellent picture! Thank you my darling flower! Love you baby! See you tomorrow]	Group identity Emphasis Interjection

Here the functions are the same as in Table 4 except for the absence of status updates with captions. Example (11) shows, similarly to (6) above, how English is used to strengthen group identity and simultaneously maintain a certain emotional distance. In (12) English is used to reiterate an earlier message and encourage the recipient to go on. In (13) and (14) we note how an English interjection is used to express astonishment and relief. In (15) it is of course perfectly possible to say "Ég efast um það" or something to that effect in Icelandic, but English appears to be used to highlight the doubt. Example (16) comprises the ironic closure of a conversation where the speaker makes good-natured fun of his counterpart, referring to an incident where the latter had not performed particularly well. Example (17) conveys one of several comments from the same participant, expressing warmth and gratitude without being excessively emotional, cf. discussion above. There are also indications that the older the recipients and closer to her, the more likely she is to use Icelandic to express similar feelings. This is interesting in light of Dewaele's (2008) study which showed that the sentence "I love you" carries greater emotional weight in people's first language. Here it appears that while English is used to underline the "love" that connects the participant and her peers, the Icelandic version is reserved for older members of her family, where the affective feelings may be stronger.

Table 7 presents examples of English usage having the functions of strengthening/softening, message demarcation, addressee specification, quotation and lexical need A (absolute need), B (convenience/informality), C (coincidence).

Table 7

Examples of English usage in comments: Strengthening/softening, message demarcation, address, quotation and lexical need (A, B, C)

Text	Function
(18) Hehe. **Sorrymemmig. Random add** [Hehe. Sorryaboutme. Random add]	Softening (apology) Lexical need A (absolute need (explanation)
(19) Þetta er alltaf fyndið! **Never gets old.** [This is always funny. Never gets old.]	Message demarcation
(20) **Wow wow** þvílíkt teymi! Væri ekkert á móti því að skola einum niður með þér **king** [Nafn]! En takk fyrir kallinn minn![What a team! I would be happy to have a drink with you, king (Name)! But thank you, my dear chap!]	Addressee specification Group identity
(21) Þegar ég las „[Nafn] **added a photo of you**" ta stressaðist eg þvilikt upp hvað þá þeat þær eru 5!! Haha en takk fyrir elsku uppahalds kallinn minn [When I read "(Name) added a photo of you" I became really stressed up because then there are 5 of them!! But thank you, my dear favourite chap]	Quotation
(22) Ég skil þig algjörlega, Clapton **touchið** virkar [I completely understand you, the Clapton touch works]	Lexical need A (absolute need)
(23) OH hversu mikið sakna ég þín? Takk elsku besta [Nafn] mín! Við tökum bráðlega gott **chill** og þetta lag! Elska þig af öllu hjarta [Oh, how much I miss you! Thank you my darling, (Name)! We´ll soon have a good chill and	Lexical need B (convenience/ informality)

this tune! Love you with all my heart]	
(24) HAHAH mogulega bestu **moment** lifs mins að liggja uppi rummi með þer a hotel [Nafn] og hlægja yfir þessu meistaraverki! Takk fyrir elsku kallinn minn [Perhaps the best moments of my life to lie in bed with you at a hotel (Name) and laugh at this masterpiece! Thank you my dear chap]	Lexical need C (coincidence) English for attention Playfulness

In example (18) "sorry" is used to apologise, perhaps because it is less "serious" than saying *afsakaðu* or *fyrirgefðu* (I beg your pardon, excuse me), in much the same way as plís in example (7) above fulfills a purpose that its immediate Icelandic options would not. In (19) it is clear that the language user is defining how funny the topic is, by a kind of reiteration. Example (20) shows how the language user employs an English form of address to single out a recipient on the comment thread in question. In (21) a quotation is used in much the same way as in (10) above, where the language user is referring to an example in front of him which he flags with quotation marks, thus emphasising that the text in question cannot be translated. In example (22), as in (18), (Facebook-reference), English appears to be used as it is well-nigh impossible to find an Icelandic synonym as a replacement. In (23) words such as *slökun* or *afslöppun* [relaxation, unwinding] would be used in more formal varities of Icelandic, but "chill" appears to emphasise this informal relationship between the two language users. In example (24) one could easily imagine a comparable Icelandic word, but "moment" appears to be closest at hand at that instant. Here we could keep in mind the discussion in Section 2 to the effect that code-switching does not always have a clear purpose, but can also occur somewhat haphazardly.

4.2.3. Chat

As stated in Section 4.1 this text category was by far the largest, or 17,408 words and the ratio of English was 3.38% (589 words). The most common functions of English usage were, in this order: lexical need A (absolute need) (73 instances), playfulness (64 instances), lexical need C (coincidence) (61 instances), emphasis (56 instances), lexical need B (convenience/informality) (49 instances), interjection (37 instances), strengthening/softening (27 instances) quotation (26 instances). Other interpretations occurred nine times or fewer.

Let us first look at lexical need A (absolute need), B (convenience/informality), C (coincidence) since those functions were highly prominent in the chats. Table 8 presents examples of this kind.

Table 8

Examples of English usage in chats (A, B, C)

Text	Function
(25) **saveaðu storyið** þitt og sendu mér það [save your story and send it to me]	Lexical need A (absolute need)
(26) er hægt að **signa** sig inn á sinn **account** og **downloada** leik aftur… I aðra tölvu [is it possible to sign in on your account and download a game again … In another computer]	Lexical need A (absolute need)
(27) Ok bara **beil** á finnlandi þá, við erum búin að eyða allt of miklu púðri í þetta nú þegar [Ok let's bail on Finland then, we have spent far too much time on this already]	Lexical need B (convenience/ informality)
(28) Endilega að spyrja svo við eigum ca. Svör yfir hversu mörg pláss við eigum fyrir **local** folk [By all means ask so we can get a fair idea as to how many places we have for local people]	Lexical need B (convenience/ informality)

(29) tók smá **powernap** fyrir leikinn [I had a little power nap before the game]	Lexical need C (coincidence)
(30) hvað ertu lengi að **withdrawa** pening frá 365? [How long does it take you to withdraw money from 365?]	Lexical need C (coincidence)

(25) and (26) reveal clear examples of English words being used in a specific context, in this instance a discussion involving computers and computer games where the basic environment is English and probably the language user really feels awkward communicating on this matter in Icelandic. In examples (27) and (28) we see how single English words replace a more complex or formal delivery in Icelandic. Finally, (29)–(30) exemplify English as somehow being the easiest option in that particular context without any obvious reason. This is comparable to what we saw in (24) above. As a whole, those examples of lexical need when chatting are of particular interest in light of earlier cited words of the students in the focus group interviews that in this context they "take the liberty of jumping from one language to another", depending on which words or phrases are most applicable. This "jumping" can no doubt be traced to the informal environment of a real-time conversation with resultant speed, and the fact that in these conversations the addressee is known to the sender and that the two are likely to share common ground in terms of knowledge of English, which in turn facilitates the use of certain English forms.

Table 9

Examples of English usage in chats: emphasis, interjection, English for attention, playfulness, group identity

Text	Function
(31) ja get ekki **fucking** beðið [yeh, cannot fucking wait]	Emphasis
(32) **omg** þarf að segja þer hahahaha [Nafn] systir er ÓLÉTT [omg must tell you hahaha-haha my sister (Name) is PREGNANT]	Interjection

(33) hver í **fuckanum** er þetta? [who the fuck is this?]	Interjection English for attention
(34) hæ samningaviðræður kl. 13 á föstudaginn and **i'm going on a date tomorrow night** ^^ víj [hi negotiations at 13.00 on Friday and i'm going on a date tomorrow night ^^ víj]	Playfulness
(35) **wanna do nothing?**	Playfulness
(36) já **baby**...svo þarf ég gað geta allt aftur í splinger cell hehe [Yes baby … then I'll have to do everything again in "splinger" (sic!) cell hehe]	Group identity

In (31) "fucking" is obviously added for emphasis. The sentential position of the word is also characteristic of "Englishness", so to speak, since an Icelandic word of a similar meaning, such as "*fjandakornið*", would have to occur immediately after the personal verb. In (32) and (33) instances of interjection occur, emphasising excitement and enthusiasm, on the one hand, and consternation, on the other, where the English word appears to be used for added effect although it has certainly been assimilated to Icelandic. In (34) news of a prospective date is obviously being communicated in a humorous vein, cf. the circumflexes ^^ and the interjection víj. Example (35) is part of a longer conversation where Icelandic could easily be used, but English appears to be used to communicate fun and playfulness where two friends are chatting. Í (36) "já baby" appears to have a similar function as in (17); that is, to express friendliness without excessive formality.

5. Summary and conclusion

It would seem appropriate to finalise this study of code-switching among Icelandic youths on Facebook by summing up the main conclusions and, at the same time, answering the

research questions on which the work was based. Our first question (A) focused on the frequency of code-switching from Icelandic to English in our database and when surveying the results as a whole the answer to this question is probably the most noteworthy. At least, in light of constantly growing English usage in Iceland it turned out as somewhat of an eye-opener to the authors of this article to discover that English constitutes only 2-3.5% of the total vocabulary used by the young people – numbers which can hardly be considered of particular concern in the context of the precarious position of Icelandic with regard to English. This, however, should not have come as a special surprise with a view to above-mentioned conclusions from abroad (cf. Section 2) which indicate that electronic communication is by no means an inevitable source of code-switching (Ting and Yeo 2019). Simultaneously, the conclusions provide a fairly clear answer to our final question (D): To what extent are there indications of English being used as a primary language along with or even in place of Icelandic? In a nutshell, few if any indications are revealed of such circumstances. On the contrary, the overall picture drawn from the evidence suggests that in the social media language of the youths concerned English serves the function of a kind of seasoning, adding flavour to a dish which in every other respect is made of Icelandic ingredients.

As may be expected, however, overall traits and averages do not tell the whole story and there are clear indications that circumstances and conversation topics to some extent influence the nature and extent of code-switching, on each occasion, cf. our question (C) on this subject. Thus, code-switching is least likely to occur in the young people's status updates, show up somewhat more frequently in comments and, finally, peak in the chat environment. A direct cause of this hierarchy is probably that while the status updates are open and, in the young people's opinion require a relative formal style, cf. their statements in the focus group interviews, the chat usually occurs between two individuals where certain inhibitions are

abandoned. The comments, then, occupy an intermediate position. The impact of the conversation topic may be judged by the fact that English plays a considerably larger part when the topic is rather specific, often with an English background, such as computers, technology and current popular culture. In several places we note how circumstances and chat topics are interwoven in various ways, cf. on the one hand two girls chatting about schoolwork home assignments where the use of English is minimal and, on the other, a playful and mischievous chat, a third of which is in English, where two boys talk mostly about music or films and tell tales of their friends and schoolmates. On the whole, those results also demonstrate that it is of highly doubtful value to talk about the way Icelandic is spoken in an electronic environment and the potential impact of English thereon, on the premise that this is only one environment. As demonstrated here, an electronic environment is just as diverse whether it be spoken or, more traditionally, written and the manifestation of the language used is to a large extent determined, here as elsewhere, by the formality and/or openness of the communicative environment on each occasion, the number and identity of respondents, the topic of discussion etc.

The function of code-switching in the young people's writings was a central issue in our investigation, cf., question B. Our conclusions indicate that code-switching is generally most likely to occur in the context of interjections, added emphasis, playfulness or dramatic display, the formation of relationships or preservation of group unity when the young people lack Icelandic words. In our data we observed a need for a more fine-grained analysis of this lexical need than has been applied in previous work of a similar kind. English also tends to occur in texts students write to support or explain pictures or links they publish in status updates. This is also reflected in research abroad which reveals highly comparable functional organisation of code-switching in an electronic environment where functions in many respects resemble those noted in code-switching in spoken language (Androutsopoulos 2011).

The overall ambience of the functions we identified in many respects also highlights what was said above about English as a spice adding flavour to an otherwise Icelandic dish. Usually this is a case of a rather superficial addition to the Icelandic core, in the form of interjections, emphatic words – or expressions, playfulness or phrases lacking an Icelandic counterpart, at least momentarily. In many instances the definition of code-switching may be traced to a fairly broad portrayal of that particular concept. According to a narrower depiction, several of these would probably be regarded as a form of borrowing or slang.

As indicated above, this research embarked on to a mostly unploughed field in an Icelandic context. Consequently, several questions remain unanswered, whether these relate to following up conclusions presented here which may appear of most interest or exploring those aspects of young people's code-switching between Icelandic and English in an electronic environment which we have chosen not to focus on for the time being. It would seem appropriate here to encourage further studies of this topic, especially with regard to aspects which may be considered to limit the value of the research outlined here. It would be of interest, for example, to conduct interviews with participants with a strong focus on their code-switching and their attitudes to it; it would also be helpful to collect more recent data than used here, perhaps including other social media, apart from Facebook, which are widely used among young people. In light of the constantly increasing profusion of electronic communication, regardless of users' age it would of course be appropriate to widen the coverage; thus, also including code-switching by grownups in this same environment to investigate whether, and if so, how they "jump from one language to another".

Note

A previous version of this work was published in Icelandic in 2021 (Friðriksson and Angantýsson 2021, https://ritid.hi.is/index.php/ritid/article/view/154/142). Since then we have revised the paper thoroughly and adopted it for an international readership.

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