



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Hugvísindasvið

**English Use at the Six Social Service
Centers in Reykjavík**

English as the Lingua Franca of Social Services in Reykjavik

B.A. Essay

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May 2012

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Abstract

English has become a global language and the number of users of English who are not native speakers has exceeded the numbers of native speakers. While studies show that Scandinavians are proficient users of English very little is known about how much English the average Icelander encounters on a daily basis. English has become a lingua franca in many companies and private and public institutions in Iceland where it may primarily be used among non-native speakers. Previous research done at the University of Iceland suggests that Icelandic users of English may overestimate their English proficiency, and as exposure to English is largely confined to reading and listening, proficiency may be much higher in receptive language skills than productive skills causing difficulty when professionals are called to use English in communication. Research is being done on Icelandic companies and institutions and this thesis examines the six social service centers in Reykjavik. The role of these centers is to inform, assist and serve all those living in Reykjavik. Can the staff speak, read and write English as the demands of their job dictate? How do they view their own proficiency and how often do they actually use English? To answer these questions, an electronic survey was sent to the 198 employees currently working for the Reykjavik Division of Welfare and located at the six social service centers scattered around Reykjavik. The results were similar to the results of previous studies in Iceland as the respondents over-estimated their English proficiency since their usage is mostly receptive and they do not actually produce English on a daily basis.

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1. Introduction

Data about the way Icelanders use English, how often and in what situations they actually use the language is currently being collected in Iceland. While still in the early stages, the findings of the researchers at the University of Iceland suggest that English holds a unique place in Iceland. English in Iceland is somewhere between that of English as a foreign language and English as a second language (Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2007).

Globally English has become a lingua franca, or language of communication, and the numbers of users of English who are not native speakers have exceeded the numbers of native speakers. The reasons that English has become a global language are varied but mainly due to the colonialism of Britain and the fact that the English speaking United States have taken the lead in global finance, science and academics, media, entertainment and information technology (Crystal, 2003).

Kachru (1985) defines the speakers of English in 3 concentric circles. The inside and smallest circle being those who speak English as a mother tongue in its natural environment, the outer circle where English is spoken as a second language and where the language has developed special status. The third circle, the expanding circle, is where English is taught as a foreign language. Academia is in disagreement as to where the lines separating the outer circle from the expanding circle are drawn. According to Arnbjörnsdóttir (2007), the lines between the outer circle and expanding circle may be more fluid than the model suggests and that Iceland may be shifting from a position in the expanding circle towards the outer circle.

English is now considered the lingua franca of international business, academics, science, commerce and mass media. The results of a recent survey about the English skills of the world's non-native speakers, report that Scandinavian countries are amongst the most capable users of the language in the outer and expanding circles (EF-EPI, 2011). In Iceland researchers have learned that English is widely used at Icelandic universities and is taught in early compulsory school as a second language (Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir and Hafdís Ingvarsdóttir and Hafdís Ingvarsdóttir and Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2010).

In my work as an immigrant counselor for the city of Reykjavik, a board member of Iceland's Immigration Council, chairperson of W.O.M.E.N. in Iceland, and founder of the Mother Tongue Teaching Association, I have often witnessed English being used as a lingua franca. I myself have also used the language as a means of common communication. Because of my work as a counselor I have always been interested in language's role in communication. The daily responsibilities of my job include giving immigrants information and advice regarding their rights and obligations in Icelandic society and basically fostering integration. I speak English on a daily basis with immigrants who are from a broad range of non-native English speaking countries. They are from both the outer and expanding circles. But when Professor Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir discussed English as a lingua franca in class, and told us that 90% of all the materials of instruction at the University of Iceland were in English, I realized that researching English language use at social services was important and necessary.

English has become a lingua franca in many companies and private and public institutions in Iceland, where it may primarily be used among non-native speakers. Some companies have made Icelandic their company language. There was no evidence on the human resources webpage of the city of Reykjavik regarding any language policy, and at the time of this research none of the positions advertised for positions in social services specified anything regarding English language proficiency. Previous research suggests that Icelandic users of English may overestimate their English proficiency (Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir and Hafdís Ingvarsdóttir 2010, Hafdís Ingvarsdóttir and Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir 2010, Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2011) and as exposure to English is largely confined to reading and listening, proficiency may be much higher in receptive language than productive language causing difficulty when professionals are called to use English in communication (Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2011).

The aim of my research project and this thesis is to examine the use of English at the city of Reykjavik's social service centers. According to the city's website the six service centers in Reykjavik are to inform, assist and serve all those living in Reykjavik. The service centers employ social workers, service representatives, home service workers, school advisors, and psychologists to name a few. As professionals they most likely read professional journals in English, and attend conferences and meetings abroad. They may participate in international studies and programs and apply for EU

grants. According to Arnbjörnsdóttir (2009) if they received tertiary education in Iceland they may have had to read a great deal of educational material in English. And, according to recent figures from the cities own Division of Welfare they have to serve and inform a population that is made up of 8.8% immigrants (Fjölmenningarsetur, 2012). If English is a lingua franca it is important to study the level of proficiency and the amount and nature of actual use of English in Iceland and more exactly, in this case, at social services in Reykjavik. The main research questions that this study seeks to answer are the following. Can the staff speak, read and write English as the demands of their job dictate? How do they view their own proficiency and how often do they actually use English? My hypothesis is that the staff working at social services in Reykjavik overestimates their proficiency, as they do not use the language productively often, and that English is not a lingua franca at social services in Reykjavik.

My research is part of an on-going research project currently being done at the University of Iceland. The study is being conducted by scholars, and graduate students at the School of Humanities and the School of Education and is supported by RANNÍS. They have already surveyed over 800 people in various businesses and organizations.

To collect the answers needed to the research questions, an electronic survey was sent to the 198 employees currently working at the six social service centers in Reykjavik. The survey consisted of 43 questions. The first 40 were the same questions that the project's researchers have already used. The last three questions were added to collect additional data about the ways in which the employees coped with English usage specific to their work. Or more importantly did they use English to communicate with clients of foreign origin, or did they use translators and interpreters.

Participants were asked to rate their English proficiency in skill areas such as reading, writing, speaking and listening, in various situations that they would have to use the language in during work and home activities. They were also asked about the actual frequency of English language usage for various activities. This was done to ascertain the basis for their self-evaluation of their English proficiency. Then there were the obligatory questions about their sex, age and linguistic and educational background and where, if anywhere, they sought help through help tools such as dictionaries and interpretation services.

2. Review of the Literature

2.1 Global English

The English language has spread all over the world and is now a global language. David Crystal says that there are approximately 2 billion speakers of English in the world today. Only between 300-500 million of those speak English speak it as a first language. This means that many more users of English are native speakers of other languages than those who speak it natively. English is the language that is most taught as a second language and foreign language for a vast array of purposes all over the world (Crystal, 2003). It is the language of international business, commerce and banking, multimedia and entertainment, just to name a few. It is the language that gives access to education and information in most non-English speaking countries, including Iceland.

2.2 How does a language become global?

A language can become a global language due to many different forces. It is a native language in many populous countries such as the US, Britain and Australia. It can also become an official language via political decision or policy changes, for instance in ex-British colonies in Asia and Africa where English has become one of the official language. Crystal states that (2003), "English is now the language most widely taught as a foreign language – in over 100 countries, ...– and in most of these countries it is emerging as the chief foreign language to be encountered in schools, often displacing another language in the process" (p. 5). In Iceland Danish held a special place of importance because of historical reasons. For more than a century Danish was the first foreign language taught to schoolchildren. In a controversial policy change in 1999 Danish was displaced by English as the first foreign language taught to schoolchildren (Hilmarsson-Dunne, 2006). According to the National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools, English teaching begins in the 4th grade, or when children are nine years old. Danish, still considered an important language necessary to connect Iceland with the rest of Scandinavia, is taught as a second foreign language and teaching begins in the 7th grade. So primary school children now learn English for 3

years longer than they learn Danish (Lefever, 2008). According to Crystal English is replacing other foreign languages traditionally taught in education systems around the world, and this true for most of Eastern Europe where English replaced Russian after the fall of the Soviet Union.

The first or earliest notable events causing English to spread globally occurred in the late sixteenth century. The language left the British Isles with British explorers eager to increase opportunities for trade and commerce by finding raw goods and commodities, and to find and claim new land for the British crown. The next centuries saw the British crown and its language spread all over the world. In the 1600's the slave and sugar trade began in the Caribbean. In 1770 James Cook discovered Australia and then New Zealand. By 1900 the population of Australia was nearly four million and the majority of them were from the British Isles. British involvement in South Africa began in 1795 with British control starting in 1806. The first formal settlement policy was set in motion in 1820. By 1822 5,000 British citizens were given land in the Eastern Cape and English was made the official language. Almost 500,000 settlers arrived during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. English was the language of law, education and public life. In India the British East India Company set up shop in 1612 and the British crown ruled India from 1765 until their independence in 1947. British colonialism continued and spread to other countries in Africa and also Asia in places such Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore. In these places, though to varying extent, English became the language of administration and education. Extremely important to the spread of English was the British colonization of North America (Crystal, 2003).

In 1607 after the arrival of British colonists to Jamestown, Virginia the language began to spread to the new world. Over time more and more colonists arrived and they began to spread out all over the continent. Eventually spreading out and settling what is today the U.S.A and Canada. In 1603 there were between 5-7 million speakers of English, who for the most part lived in the British Isles. By 1952 there were 250 million speakers of English and they were mostly North Americans (Crystal, 2003).

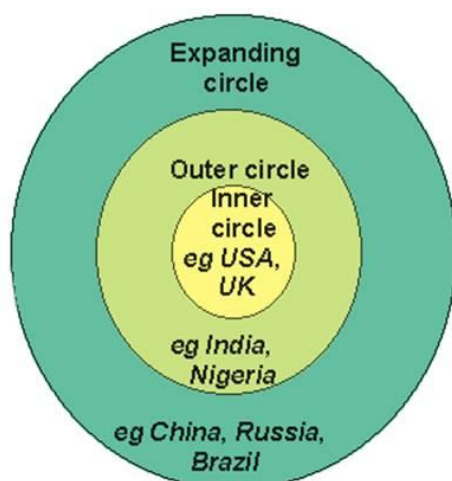
Some say that English is a global language today because it was in the right place at the right time. For instance it is the language spoken by a country controlling much of the world's money. The United States of America was a leader in economic globalization, and other countries were quick to follow. Trade and commerce

deregulations, and advances in information technology made it possible and financially desirable to design a product locally, produce it in another country and then to market and sell it all over the world. In order to grow a business like this having a language that everyone could use to communicate was helpful and English became that language (Crystal, 2003).

2.3 Kachru's Concentric Circles

When discussing global English it is very helpful to describe it in terms of Kachru's model of the three concentric circles of English. In order to better explain the way English spread throughout the world, and the status of English in the world, Kachru designed this model of English of the different Englishes.

Table 1 Kachru's Model of the Three Concentric Circles of English



Kachru designed the model in order to illustrate the different functions English serves in the world. The three circles are the inner circle, the outer circle and the expanding circle.

The inner circle contains countries where English is the native language, or first language, such as in the U.K. and the U.S.A and also Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. In these countries English is the native language (ENL) and therefore has a place of importance. It is the only language spoken in official and government situations, and the first language taught to children. Historically these are the countries that began the spread of English. The UK and the US colonized large parts of the world,

took over trade, formed governments and taught the native populations in these lands to read, to speak and to write in English (Kachru, 1985). According to Crystal there are approximately 320-380 million speakers of English in the inner circle (2003).

The outer circle, which includes countries where English is not the native tongue, but is important for historical reasons and plays a part in the nation's institutions, either as an official language or otherwise. The outer circle includes countries that were colonies of the U.K and the U.S.A. in Asia and Africa, such as Nigeria, Ghana, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Malaysia and India. In outer circle countries, English is not the mother tongue or first language learned, but is usually taught and used as a second language (ESL), and holds a place of special importance. English often serves as a lingua franca (ELF) in these countries. It is one of many official languages and is the language that various ethnic and tribal groups, who speak different languages, use to speak to each other, and to the government (Kachru, 1985). In 2003 Crystal estimated that there are between 300-500 million speakers of English in the outer circle.

In the expanding circle English has no special historical significance and no official status and is used and taught as a foreign language (EFL), although this status may be changing in many countries (Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir 2007). The number of speakers and their various stages of learning and proficiency is the hardest to estimate but this is where English is seeing the most growth (Pennycook, 2001). Crystal believes that there may be anywhere from 500 million to a billion speakers of English in the expanding circle (Crystal, 2003). China, Russia, Egypt and Denmark fit into Kachru's original description of the three concentric circles; and by the same formula, Iceland belongs in the expanding circle (Kachru, 1985, Hafdís Ingvarsdóttir and Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir 2010).

2.4. ESL, EFL, ENL -whose language is it?

Pennycook defines ESL as an intranational language and EFL as international. Traditionally where English is a second language it is used for people from the same country who do not have the same mother tongue to speak to each other. An example would be Nigeria or Ghana. Where English is taught as a foreign language it is used as an international means of communication, such as in Scandinavia (Pennycook, 2001).

Randolph Quirk differentiates English in the expanding circle as being used for external purposes, or contact with other countries where English is also spoken as a foreign language. English in the outer circle is used for internal purposes (Quirk, 1985).

The terms ESL and EFL actually do not give us any information about the users' actual abilities to use the language in various different settings. It is no longer possible to assume that people from an ESL country, such as the Philippines, are more fluent or correct than those from an EFL country such as the Netherlands or in Scandinavian countries (Crystal, 2003). A good illustration of this is clear in the results of a study done by EF-EPI in 2011. The company, Education First's- English Proficiency Index test was carried out in 44 countries on 2.3 million adults. India, a country in the outer circle with history as a British colony and where English has official status placed only #30 on the list. Norway, where English has no official status, has no historical importance and is taught as a foreign language, was number one on the list (EF-EPI, 2011).

The terms native English speaker (ENL), speaker of English as a second language (ESL) and speakers of English as a foreign language (EFL) are the terms used when discussing English language use around the world. There is a strong tendency for people to consider the native varieties of English as the correct variety, native varieties being the English that is spoken in the inner circle. The very term native in itself says that people who speak ESL and EFL are non-native speakers and therefore do not speak English as well as native speakers. The fact is that while people may disagree as to what correct or proper English is there are many varieties of English in the world. When we look at the Englishes being used in the world it is no longer possible to talk about correctness. There are so many standard and non-standard varieties of English being used all over the world and often on a daily basis, in all sorts of circumstances and situations (Kachru & Nelson, 2001).

The notion of what proficiency is has been questioned. Many of the daily users of English have low proficiency but use the language as a tool of communication, so it is not possible to define English speakers in terms of how well they speak, or how often they use the English. Kachru and Nelson point out that it is not uncommon to hear professors in American colleges complaining that their ENL students "can't write, have limited vocabularies, and have no sense of idiom" (2001).

If proficiency is no longer an indicator as to whether a speaker is an EFL, ESL or ENL user, is Kachru's model a good way to describe who uses what type of English where? Kachru and Nelson state that instead of looking at who may lay claims to the language it is more helpful to look at the relationship between the variety of English spoken and the way in which it functions. What is important to consider is the range and depth of English language usage. Range being where, or in what circumstances the language is used. For instance where in society do speakers use English? It may be used at school, in the media, when dealing with the government or in business. Depth refers to the volume that it is used. In other words do people only use it in one situation, or do they move in and out of the language as they go through their day, perhaps mixing the languages together sometimes? People may read English texts for school, read English trade magazines, listen to English music, and use English as a means of communication between other non-native English speakers. If so English is part of society. It is no longer possible to talk about one people, one culture, one language (Kachru & Nelson, 2001).

Even Kachru himself reminds us that languages are always changing, that they have life cycles and it is not unheard of for a language to come in and out of style or power. Their status, especially in multi-lingual communities is not permanent. So for instance a language can move from the outer circle to the expanding circle or visa-versa with changes in national language policies (Kachru & Nelson, 2001). English in the expanding circle has achieved status as an international language, but it is still important to remember that the boundaries between the outer circle and the expanding can also change according to political situations, the economy, and attitudes. This change has been visible in Iceland where once Danish had more importance than English, but a decade ago neither one of them were taught as early as English is today (Kachru, 1985).

Global English, international English, ESL and EFL are abstract terms and most attempts to put varieties of English into these categories are generalizing at best, as the skill and frequency of English used in the outer and expanding circles is extremely diverse (Kachru, 1986).

2.5 English as a lingua franca

English is being used around the world as a tool of communication. The people using English to communicate with each other are from diverse countries, cultures and language backgrounds. For the most part, but not exclusively, they are not speakers of English as a native language, but are speakers of English as a foreign language or as a lingua franca when they speak to native speakers of other languages (Jenkins, 2007). Examples of this are German tourists ordering coffee at a coffee house in downtown Reykjavik, Icelandic tourists checking into a hotel in Barcelona, or Polish migrant workers inquiring about available jobs at a community job center in Oslo. Other examples are professionals at academic and business meetings, and students getting to know each other at Europe's universities (Jenkins, 2007).

"English is now spoken by more people as a first, second or foreign language than any other language and is recognized by more countries as a desirable lingua franca than any other language" (Crystal, 2001, p.54). According to Crystal one out of every four users of English are native speakers. So $\frac{3}{4}$ of those who use English in the world are not native speakers of English. These numbers point to the fact that non-native speakers are speaking the English, which is most widely spoken throughout the world. If so many people are using English, sometimes on a daily basis, as a means of communication it means that English is being shaped, or affected, by those users. The English norms of the inner circle are no longer as important, as user's goals are for communication and understanding (Seidlhofer, 2005). Kilickaya summed it up nicely, "English is currently seen as the best option for communication among people from different language backgrounds, thereby being labeled as English as an international language or English as a lingua franca (2009, p.37).

The numerous non-native speakers who use it to communicate with other non-native speakers every day are thus affecting English. Jenkins, who questions the relevance of ENL norms, criticizes Crystal for ignoring English as a lingua franca, (ELF) in his book *English as a Global Language*. Crystal acknowledges that while traditional inner circle countries still hold a top place in the hierarchy of language correctness, and to a large extent still dictates teaching methods and goals of language teaching, that this place of power is undergoing change. However Crystal uses the term global language, which Jenkins finds to mono-centric. Crystal thinks that ELF is too new and

hasn't been studied enough yet. Jenkins disagrees and argues that ELF as a real phenomenon. ELF research is still in its early stages compared to what we know about English in the inner and outer circle. But there has been much work done on recording and documenting ELF, linguists are generating hypothesis and pedagogues are developing curricula (Jenkins, 2007).

Barbara Seidlhofer's VOICE, the Vienna Oxford International Corpus of English is a computer corpus of ELF. Seidlhofer and other researchers have recorded and transcribed interactions between ELF speakers, and are noting that ELF does have its own unique features (Jenkins, 2007). Again, research is only in early days but there seems to be a core of ELF pronunciation features that are crucial for intelligibility. Jenkins and Seidlhofer believe that if communication is the main reason for learning English that it should be possible to develop a curricula for teaching English, to be used as a lingua franca that is not based on British or American English standards (Jenkins & Seidlhofer, 2001).

There is also the corpus of English as a Lingua Franca in Academic settings- ELFA and the corpus of South-East Asian ELF. These corpora make it possible for researchers to study ELF as it develops all over the world, both at various social and linguistic levels, and also in various domains (Jenkins, 2009).

According to Jenkins ELF has 5 main characteristics. They are:

1. Countries in the expanding circles use English to communicate with each other.
2. ELF is an alternative to EFL rather than a replacement.
3. It has linguistic innovations of its own.
4. It is common that strategies involve code switching and accommodation.
5. User proficiency spans the whole spectrum from very low to near native proficiency.

The results of studying ELF have shown that there are differences between ELF and EFL which Crystal calls global English. ELF is developing its own characteristics and its own lexico-grammatical features; features that purists would see as poor English, but which ELF users use to communicate effectively with each other. There is no place

for these features in this essay but an example would be confusing the relative pronouns who and which, which does not hamper communication yet is considered poor grammar (Jenkins, 2009). The issue still remains that accessing education and information related to one's profession requires a high level of English proficiency and most academic and professional texts are written for native speakers.

2.6 English in Iceland

English is becoming more important in the Scandinavian countries. Access to higher (tertiary) education has become more dependent on English skills. But there are pitfalls associated with this language transition. Phillipson (1992) discusses this process as one of displacement as opposed to replacement. Replacement is when a language takes over and becomes the language used in specific domains. As in Ghana where educated parents tend to speak English at home to their children. Phillipson suggests that this is occurring in Scandinavia, and therefore Iceland, as displacement. In displacement English takes over in language domains, such as in education, entertainment or computer use. It is not possible to say there has been total displacement in Iceland but there are areas where it is occurring such as in academia (Phillipson, 1992). Pennycook even goes so far as to ask if English is becoming the "gatekeeper" to higher education, a better job or even a desired social position (1992, p.81)

In an Icelandic study led by Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir it is clear that English is becoming a lingua franca in Icelandic universities. The results of her research done for the 2007-2008 school year showed that 10% of all the courses taught at the University of Iceland are taught in English (Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2009). According the Reykjavik University website they have professors from 26 countries teaching 40 courses in English each semester. During this same period Birna and Hulda Kristín Jónsdóttir also looked into how much of the course materials and texts used at university level in Iceland were in English. The results of the research were that over 90% of all the course materials used in Icelandic universities were in English. While the majority of classes overall are still taught in Icelandic the amount of courses using English as a language of instruction are increasing (Hafþís Ingvarsdóttir & Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2010).

Hafdís Ingvarsdóttir and Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir surveyed both university teachers and students about their use of English and their preparation and proficiency. In Icelandic universities despite the increased in English language instruction most courses are still taught in Icelandic. However, 90% of the course materials are in English. This means that students and teachers are using both languages at the same time. Students listen to lectures in Icelandic, read in English, do homework assignments, and write essays in Icelandic. Teachers must lecture on materials written in English and are faced with increasing pressure to publish articles and research in English. This is called *simultaneous parallel code* use (Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir and Hafdís Ingvarsdóttir 2010). Their survey asked if students and teachers were coping successfully with using two languages at the same time, if students were prepared for working with university level academic texts in English and how teachers assisted their students negotiating between languages.

For the first part of their survey was done in 2009 and was sent to all instructors at the University of Iceland. Results showed that teachers have; in general, no major concerns with working with two languages, and that they use various methods of assisting their students understand the materials being used. While the teachers rated their overall perceived proficiency as either good or very good when asked about writing in English the results were different. 18.1% rated their academic writing skills as not good or poor (Hafdís Ingvarsdóttir and Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2010)

The second part of their survey at the University of Iceland was sent to registered students. Their aim was to find out how students coped with *simultaneous parallel code* use, their own perceptions of their English abilities and if they thought they were prepared to deal with English texts when they entered university. While most of the students who participated believed that they were well prepared to read texts in English when they began university and did not anticipate any language challenges the results differed vastly from the results of the instructors' survey. When asked 70% of the students thought that they were well prepared but when probed, they admitted to doing a lot of work to access the English text, and 44% admitted that having to read English texts increased their workload (Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir and Hafdís Ingvarsdóttir, 2010).

What is interesting about these results were of all the disciplines studied, two of the stood out. Students from the Education and Social Sciences admitted having the most difficulty dealing with English reading materials. One third of the respondents answered that having to read course material in English makes the learning process more difficult for them (Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir and Hafdís Ingvarsdóttir, 2010).

The results of these surveys confirmed that Icelanders might tend to overestimate their English skills. As was discussed in a previous chapter, countries that are ESL, or in the outer circle, and EFL, in the expanding circle, may sometimes have blurred borders. The usual setting for EFL would be that students learn in their own native language environment, and are only exposed to English in the classroom during English lessons. In ESL the students learns the language in the target culture. This may not be the case in Iceland. The reality lies somewhere between both realms (Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2011).

Icelanders are exposed to English on a daily basis. They are exposed to English via radio, English loans words in the media (for instance *gordjöss* and *kúl*), on television, in the cinema and on the Internet. In Iceland televisions show and movies are not dubbed, but sub-titled, and Icelanders are used to watching or listening to Hollywood movies and television series in English. Add to that the fact that the media often reports increases, and/or steady rates of Icelanders traveling abroad, an increase in tourism to Iceland, and during the last decade there has been an increase in immigration to Iceland.

Earlier in the essay it was stated that Icelanders begin learning English in 4th grade, and must learn in it until secondary school. They will most likely have to read English texts in tertiary school and they are exposed to English every day via pop-culture and the public sphere. Birna proposes that for these reasons English in Iceland is closer to ESL than EFL. However, Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir's study reminds us, and the results of her research show that Icelanders do tend to overestimate their language skills. This is because they are frequent listeners and have receptive skills. They have a good grasp of colloquial speech. The research team therefore questions if Iceland is doing enough to prepare students to read academic texts and to produce written and spoken English in academic settings. Of course these same questions may also be

asked regarding the job market. Do Icelanders have sufficient English skills to function in today's increasingly global, English saturated employment market?

In 2011, as part of the RANNÍS study of the status of English, The Social Science Research Institute of the University of Iceland surveyed 740 randomly chosen Icelanders about their exposure and use of English. The results showed that the respondents used English often, with 43% reporting that they read English on a daily basis. It was clear that their usage was receptive and not productive. This further backed up the view that Icelanders tend to over estimate their proficiency, and that if usage of the language is for the most part only receptive it is not possible to classify English in Iceland as ESL. But neither is it EFL but may be between the two. Or perhaps a new language context is being created in Iceland and perhaps all of Scandinavia at the national level (Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2011).

2.7 ELF in the workplace

In an increasingly global 21st century world, the role of language skills are becoming more important. Globalization of academic knowledge and trade means that we see more English used as a lingua franca in universities and in the business and government sector. Plurilingualism is now considered very important to international corporations of all sorts and sizes, governments, and various policy-making institutions such as the EU. While English is currently emerging as the language experiencing the most growth, and considered the power language, there are a few other languages that are considered powerful in the global labor market. These languages are Spanish, Chinese/Mandarin, Hindi, Arabic and Japanese (TIRF, 2009). Studies show that in today's difficult economy language skills play an important role in the success of corporations wishing to grow internationally. Conversational, reading and writing skills in English are considered key, not only to corporate success, but for individuals wishing to reach the top of their career ladders and to having an edge in the current job market (Crystal, 1997) Results of research done in 2009 by The International Research Foundation for English Language Education show that employees working in international companies located in non-English speaking countries who possess English language skills receive higher wages and have more opportunities for advancement than employees who do not possess English skills.

Today many international corporations have developed a policy regarding corporate language issues and are adopting English as a corporate lingua franca. Making English a corporate language is done for various reasons. For reasons of internal communications with offices located all over the globe, for increasing trade and potential clients and, broad reaching advertisement campaigns to name a few. Careful consideration must be made when making the decision to use a corporate lingua franca because if the lingua franca is used to overcome language diversity and communication problems their staff must have proficient language skills. This has opened up a whole new area of research in analyzing the characteristics of English used in business and assessing and developing English taught for specific purposes (ESP) and workplace language lessons (Hendriks, 2007).

When making decisions about dealing with language diversity, businesses often choose to perform a linguistic audit and/or a needs analysis survey on aspects of the various ways the company communicates and operates. This can be done objectively from the point of view of the company or subjectively from the point of view of the employees. It is important to map out what language needs to be used in the daily functioning of the company, and also how the employees perceive using the language to perform their duties (Hendriks, 2007).

Companies often use a combination of two strategies when coping with foreign business associates, namely standardization and adaption. Adaption means using English as a corporate lingua franca. Standardizing means using the native language of the associate, such as hiring employees to deal with those associates or accounts, or using interpreters and translators (Hendriks, 2007).

Doing a needs analysis survey or a linguistic audit not only increases the body of information that researchers are collecting about English as a lingua franca but it can be a helpful and important way for companies to evaluate if their staff use English and how they cope with the demands of using English. It is important that before companies formulate or adopt policy regarding a corporate lingua franca that they collect this information (Hendriks, 2007).

Currently there is a survey being conducted in Icelandic businesses and organizations. Over 600 participants have already concluded the survey. Hulda Kristín Jónsdóttir, who is working on her PhD thesis at the University of Iceland, is currently doing the on-

going research (2013). My contribution to the research is to survey social welfare services in Reykjavik. Do employees use English on a regular basis and if so are they actually producing the language in spoken and written forms? Do their English skills meet the needs of their position and do they also over estimate their proficiency?

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Questions

In order to further what we know about English usage in Iceland, researchers are surveying various institutions, businesses and schools in Iceland. As a student of English and social work at the University of Iceland, and an immigrant counselor working for the city of Reykjavik I was interested in finding out when, why and how much English is being spoken at Social Services in Reykjavik. The general research questions and sub-questions are:

The main research question is:

- How do participants rate their English proficiency and to what extent are they able to perform the tasks required of them at work?

The sub questions are:

- How do participants rate their level of proficiency in English?
- How much English do the participants actually use at work and at home?
- Is their English ability such that they can perform the tasks that they are required to perform at work?
- Is there an overestimation of English proficiency and if so, why might that be?

The questions may be classified into four general themes:

1. Background information
2. Frequency of English usage in various tasks and events
3. Self-assessment of English proficiency
4. Help tools if any that are being used when using English.

3.2 The Survey

My project was a basic, applied research project and I used the same questionnaire that has already been used in a larger and on-going research project currently being done at the University of Iceland (Hulda Kristín Jónsdóttir 2013). The larger study is being done by scholars and graduate students at the School of Humanities and the School of Education and is supported by RANNÍS – The Icelandic Centre for Research. The research director is Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir. The Icelandic name

of the research project is *Enska sem lingua franca á Íslandi? Staða Enskunnar og breytt málumhverfi* (e. English as a Lingua Franca in Iceland? The Status of English in a Changing Linguistic Environment).

Researchers have already surveyed just fewer than 800 people in Iceland from various businesses and organizations (Hulda Kristín Jónsdóttir 2013). For this reason it was important to use the same questionnaire to ensure reliability.

The survey or questionnaire that was used is a structured survey. In a structured survey each participant receives the exact same questions, in the exact same order and has the same response choices. The type of research is descriptive quantitative. In this type of research the goal is to collect numerical data or the relationship between one thing and another. In this case the relationship between the manner and frequency of English use, and participants' self-assessment of their English language skills.

The questionnaire consisted of 43 closed-ended questions. The first 40 questions were from the original survey, and with permission from the research director, 3 questions were added at the very end of the questionnaire that were considered important. An on-line survey service called Survey Monkey was used. The style was a matrix, rating type survey. The research is descriptive and quantitative. The questions may be grouped according to the following subthemes. The first group contained background information. Other questions asked were the amount of education that the participants had completed, how many semesters of English they completed, if they ever lived in an English speaking country, sex, mother-tongue and also regarding their English exposure or usage outside of work. For instance if they watched English speaking television shows.

Three questions were added to the end of the original survey that addressed areas specific to service for immigrants. They asked about the use of English interpreters during interviews and if the employees used professional translators to translate documents, texts or letters. Also asked was if respondents used professional interpreters or if they used family members, children or friends of clients to interpret during interviews. Question # 27 was a blank question as on the copy of the survey received from the project supervisor # 27 was a repeat of the question before it.

Permission was granted to make 27 a blank and respondents were instructed to skip this blank question and to go on to the next one

The goal of these additional questions was to find out if the staff working at these social service centers used assistance when conducting and advising clients who did not speak Icelandic and perhaps spoke English. The author considered this information important as in recent years there has been an increase in the amounts of immigrants living in Iceland and also an increase in the amount of immigrants using social services. It has also been brought to the attention of the Directors of the Icelandic Human Rights Office, the Reykjavik Human Rights Office, and key professionals working with immigrants in the system that there has been an increase in using children to interpret.

Participants were asked to rate their English proficiency in skill areas such as reading, writing, speaking and listening, in various situations that they would have to use the language in during work and home activities. They were also asked about the actual frequency of English language usage for various activities, questions about their linguistic background and education and where if anywhere they sought help such as dictionaries and interpretation services.

1. General background information about the participants
 - a. What age group do you belong to?
 - b. What is your gender?

1.1 Linguistic background

It was important to find out if the participants spoke Icelandic as a first language, what language they spoke at home and if they ever lived in an English speaking country.

- a. What is your first language?
- b. What is your nationality?
- c. Have you ever lived in an English speaking country?

1.2 Education background

How much formal education had the participants completed in English and what level of education they had completed overall?

- a. How many years of university have you completed?
- b. How many years of secondary school did you complete?
- c. What is the highest level of English that you took at secondary school?
- d. When did you start learning English at school?

2. Frequency and situation of English use

Frequency was considered very important, for instance how often do the participants actually use English, and where are they using it? What were participants using as a basis for their self-evaluation of their proficiency? For instance were they using it at home to watch TV and to listen to music or in a professional capacity at work? Participants had to choose one of the following for each situation- never, once a month, twice a month, every week, every day.

- a. How often do you write emails, formal letters, presentations, reports, memos, grant applications and articles for professional journals?
- b. How often do you speak English in the following situations? Academic situations, meetings at work, meetings for study, telephone calls, conversations, and interviews with clients.
- c. How often do you listen to the following in English? Academic lectures, meetings at work, conversations, phone calls, TV and movies, radio, song lyrics.

3. Help Tools

Participants were asked if they used help tools such as English dictionaries, on-line dictionaries, spellcheckers, textbooks, computer templates, Google, on-line translation programs, family and friends or other devices. They were also asked if they used interpretation and translations services. For each option they had to choose either, never, almost never, sometimes, often or very often.

4. Self-assessment

Participants were asked to rate their own English abilities in various usage situations, if they thought they possessed adequate skills for the job, and if

English skills were a prerequisite for being hired. For the self-assessment skills questions they had to choose one of the following for each option-strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, not applicable.

- a. How would you rate your English speaking abilities?
- b. Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements: I am capable of reading the following in English at work.
Documents, reports, emails, formal letters, grant applications, professional journals, and presentations

3.3 Participants

The participants were employees of the City of Reykjavik's Division of Welfare. They work at the division's six community social service centers in the city. The staff working at these centers cover a range of professions such as social workers, psychologists, counselors, career and guidance counselors, practical nurses, developmental therapists and teachers' advisors to name a few. The staff also consists of many other non-professionals such as service representatives and office managers.

At the these six service centers residents of Reykjavik may apply for various different social welfare services such as, financial support, rent benefits, social housing, home help services, counseling with a social worker, and school psychologists, to name a few. When residents apply for service they must submit proof that they are eligible for them. This proof is done via various documents, such as pay-slips and tax forms but is also, and to a very great extent, dependent on the exchange of information about the social situation that applicants need help with. In other words applicants have to explain in detail what they need help with and why the need help.

Just fewer than 10% of the cities population are immigrants. In this sense the term immigrants means those who moved here and do not yet have Icelandic citizenship. If the amount of people of foreign origin who have Icelandic citizenship is added to that the percent the figure goes up. These groups of non-native Icelanders have varying skills in Icelandic as a second language and often need the services of an interpreter when discussing social matters at social services. Some of them use English as a means of communication. According to an unpublished report done by the Multicultural and Information Center the six largest populations of immigrants in

Iceland, in order of size are, from Poland, Lithuania, Germany, Denmark, Latvia, and the Philippines. Except for the Philippines, Iceland's largest population of immigrants are from countries where English is in the expanding circle. This research does not uncover if they do in fact speak English or what their proficiency is, but if they do speak English, for instance when they seek service from social services in Reykjavik, they are speaking it as non-native speakers. According to what I read about global English immigrants speaking to Icelandic staff at social services in English is a good mini example of the way the expanding world uses English as a lingua franca.

For this reason I considered it important to survey how much English the staff at social services uses and if they thought they were proficient enough to use the language as the job demands.

The mailing list of all employees that have an email at the 6 service centers includes approximately 320 individuals. According to the personnel manager there were 198 people on the payroll, and who actually received the survey, on March 1st. Of the 198 that received the email requesting them to take the survey, 74 or 37.4% responded.

3.4 Analysis

This kind of survey is either done from a user perspective, or that of the employee. The analysis is both objective in that it checks the frequency of English use and subjective and takes into account perceived difficulties. It is important to remember that the survey does not necessarily report the reality of the participants' actual usage, in what circumstances English is used or how often. Nor does it actually rate their actual English proficiency but only their perceived abilities.

One of the goals of the survey was to find out if there was any connection between self-assessment and frequency of use. For instance, did the participants answer that they believed that they were fairly good in all areas of English? That they could read, listen, speak, and write various types of texts that were needed for work, but also answered that they only actually did any of these tasks very infrequently? A straightforward frequency analysis was done with the help of survey monkey. Calculating correlations and other more complex relationships was beyond the scope of this BA thesis.

3.5 Procedure

Before sending out the survey it was necessary to obtain permission to send the questionnaire. Permission was granted via email and a letter sent by the Project director of the Research and Service Assessment of Reykjavik's Division of Welfare. The director was sent a request for permission to carry out the survey, a research proposal and a copy of the questions that were to be sent out. She was also asked if she had any comments or suggestions regarding the questions. The director had no comments but stated that notification and permission from the Data Protection Authority in Iceland (Persónuvernd) must be submitted to her before beginning the research. According to the information on their website, and the laws of data control and personal information in Iceland no permit was necessary. The relevant data protection law is article 2, paragraph 4 of Act no. 77/2000. They do however have an electronic form that researchers can fill out and send in reporting the type of research to be done, and that the researcher promises to adhere to the rules regarding personal information and will respect the anonymity and privacy of the participants. After filling out the electronic form and sending it in, applicants received a confirmation that the information was sent. The author received a letter from The Data Protection Authority in Iceland confirming that the notification was received. The notification number for this survey is nr. S5654/2012. A copy of this notification was forwarded to the Project director of the Research and Service Assessment of Reykjavik's Division of Welfare.

The questionnaire, written in English, was sent via an email list that was accessible to the author as an employee of the city of Reykjavik. The recipients received an email containing the link to the electronic survey (on Survey Monkey, and open access program), a brief description of the project and a request to participate in the survey by opening the link and answering the questions. Three reminders encouraging recipients to participate in the survey were sent out. The questionnaire was available on the website for three weeks.

The participants had to open the website, choose the survey and complete the questionnaire. They had to answer each question before continuing on to other

questions. When finished answering they choose send survey and received confirmation that they had completed the survey.

It is important to state that while the author was able to access the names of those employees who received the questionnaire there is no way for her to know who completed the survey and who did not. On the *Survey Monkey* website it only possible to see how many recipients have responded and not the names or emails of individual participants. Nor is it possible to trace which of the six service centers had the highest participation.

Having said that the email to employees asking them to please participate in the survey was sent from the authors email as an employee of the City of Reykjavik and therefore people could respond or answer this request email. Reykjavik is essentially a small city and it is not uncommon that employees know each other. A few participants responded to the email with the request to participate and the two reminders that were sent out. Responses included notices that they had completed the survey, they asked questions regarding the English terms, and they pointed out questions that had inadequate response choices. For instance that in certain questions a not applicable choice was necessary. After seeking advice from the research supervisor it was decided to add not applicable to some of the questions. To keep as much reliability as possible the choice was added at the end, after all the other choices. One employer sent an email asking why the questionnaire was in English and stated that she and the others around here did not possess the English skills necessary to complete the survey.

It is interesting to consider these responses and the author wonders if they are indicative of the type of institution being surveyed in this research project. The email stating that certain employees did not have the skills to complete the test in itself speaks volumes regarding the English proficiency of the target group. It does, however, suggest that the respondents were to some extent self selected as only the ones confident in their English actually responded. This poses further questions about the employees' English skills that will be discussed in the discussion section below.

4. Results

4.1 Background Information

Of the respondents, 87.8% were female and 12.2% were male. They were between the ages of 18 and 65 years of age. The largest age group, 32.4%, were between 25-35 years of age, 18.9 were between 36-45, and 24.3% were 46-55 years of age. This is seen in tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2. Question #40 - What is your gender?

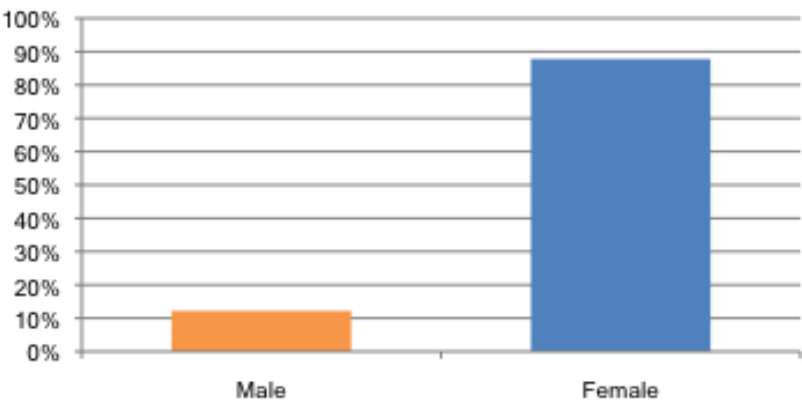
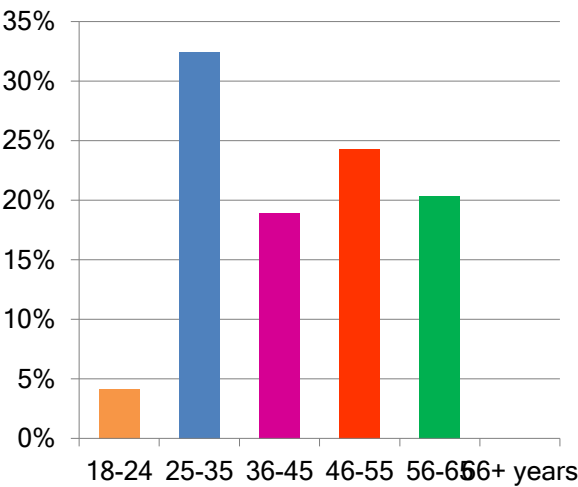


Table 3. Question # 1 - What age group do you belong to?



4.2 Linguistic Background

Regarding linguistic background, 67 of the 198 respondents were born in Iceland with Icelandic as their first language, while 69 respondents had an Icelandic linguistic background, but 68 said Icelandic was the main language spoken at home. Only two respondents were from English speaking countries, and five were from non-English speaking backgrounds. This is seen in tables 4, 5, 6, & 7.

Table 4. Question # 39 - In which country were you born?

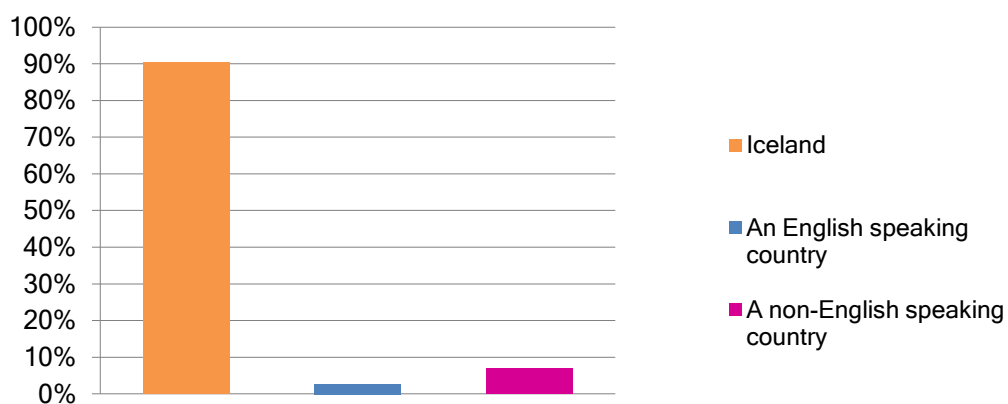


Table 5. Question # 38 - What is your first language

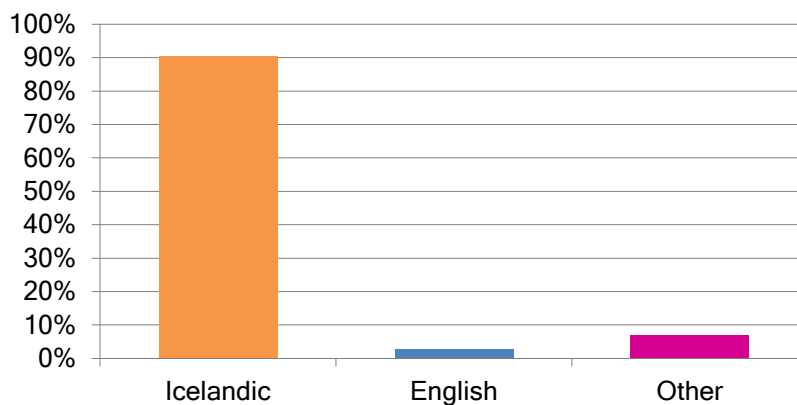


Table 6. Question # 37 - What is your linguistic background?

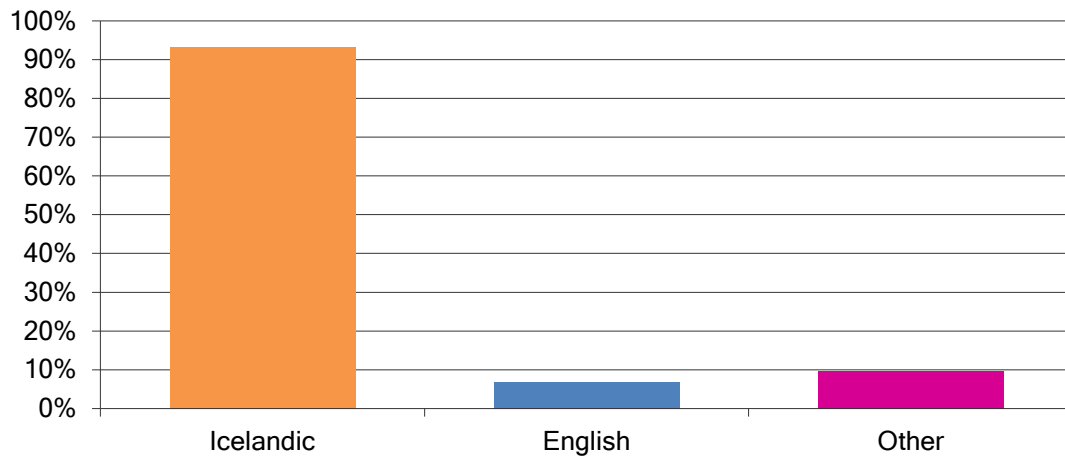
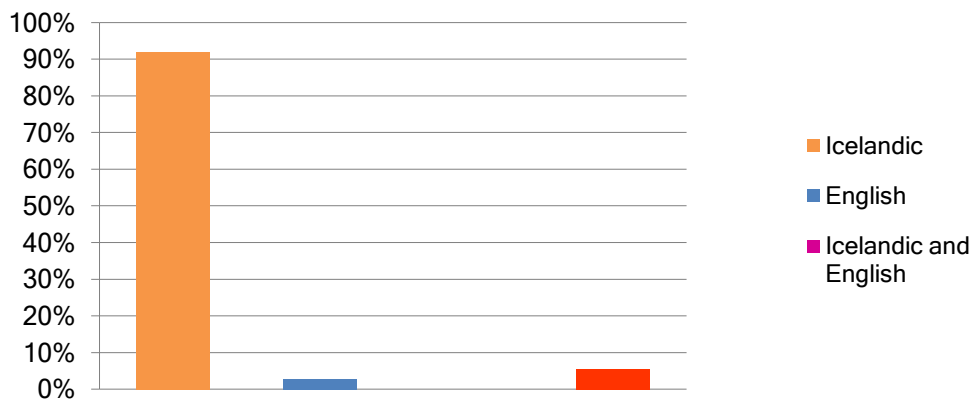


Table 7. Question # 36 - What was the main language spoken in your childhood home?



The majority of the respondents, or 63.5% have never lived in an English speaking country. Only 23 % of those who reported living in an English speaking country only lived there for 0-3 months, the largest answer being 9 respondents for 18+ years. 25.7% were 20 or over when living in an English speaking country and 6.8% were between 0-5 years old and 35.1% answered that they spoke English while living in an English speaking country. Asked how old they were when they were able to use English 29.7% answered between 6-9 years of age. Seen in tables 8-12 below.

Table 8. Question # 32 - Have you ever lived in an English speaking country?

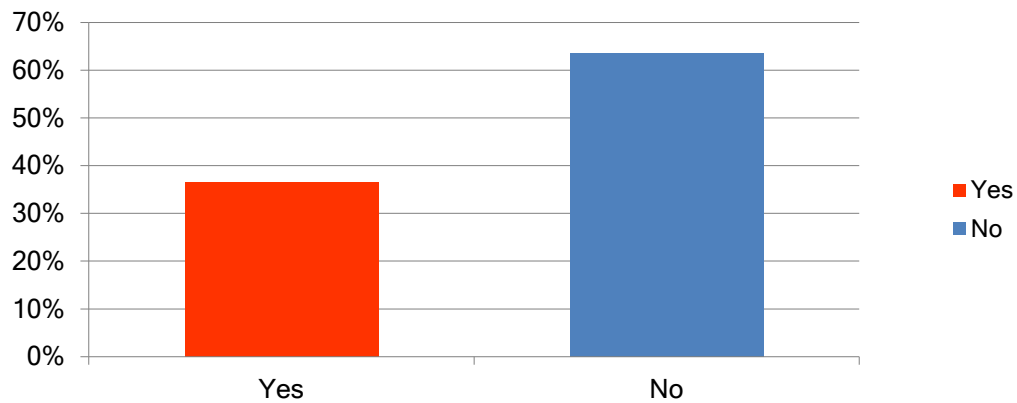


Table 9. Question # 29 - How old were you when you lived in an English speaking country? You may choose more than one answer.

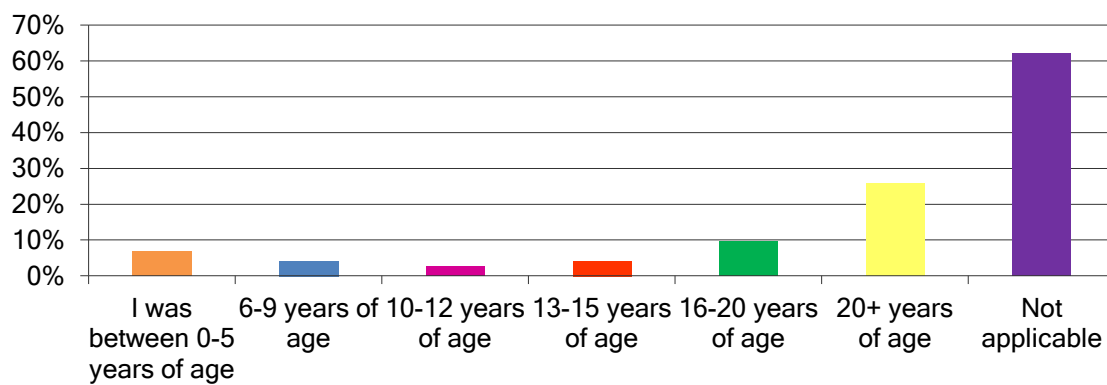


Table 10 . Question # 30 - For how long did you live in an English speaking country?

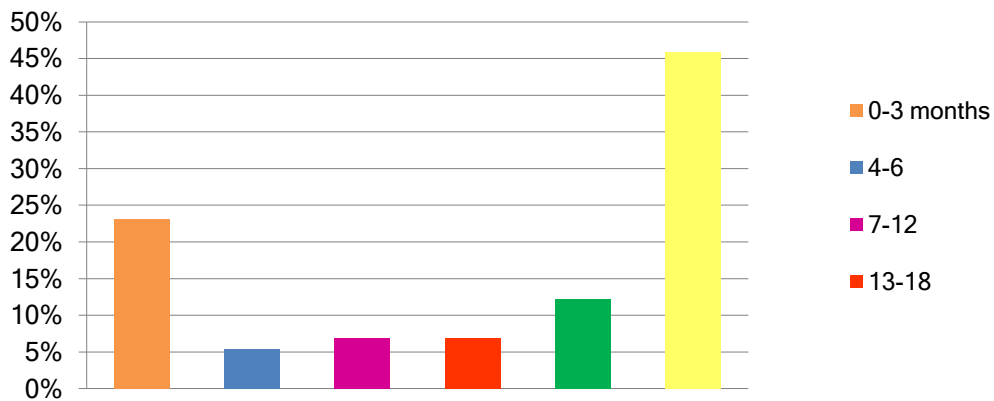


Table 11. Question # 31 - Did you communicate mostly in English while living in the English speaking country?

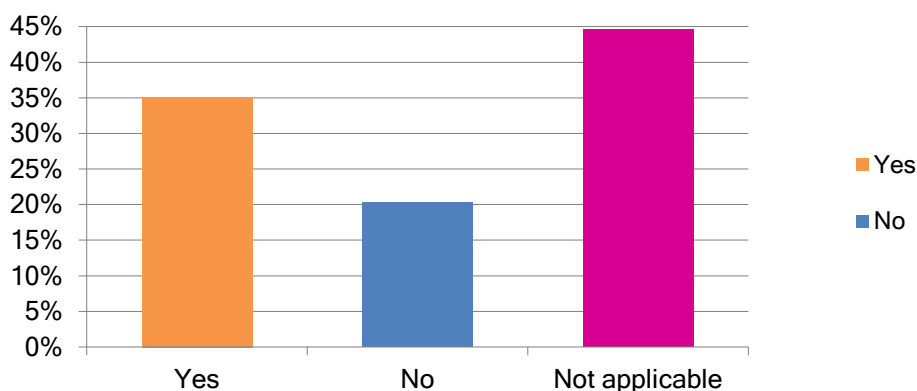
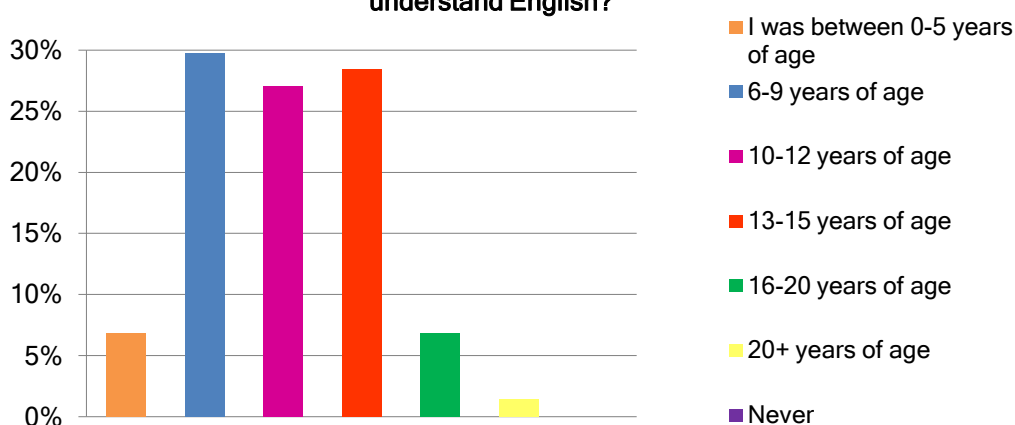


Table 12. Question # 33 - At what age were you first able to use or understand English?



4.3 Education background

Asked about when they started learning English in school 60.8% answered that they began when they were between 10 and 13 years of age and 27% between 13 to 15 years of age, as seen in table 13. When asked how much English they learned at secondary school, 24 respondents reported learning for 8 semesters and 18 said they had studied for 6 semesters, and 4 answered never, which means that they learned for longer than 8 semesters. The majority of the respondents, or 90.5% completed secondary school and had university degrees. There was one PhD, 52.7% had an

M.A./M.Sc/MBA, and 24 of them had a B.A./B.Sc. Only one of them answered that they were dyslexic. Seen below in tables 13-17.

Table 13. Question 34 - When did you start learning English at school?

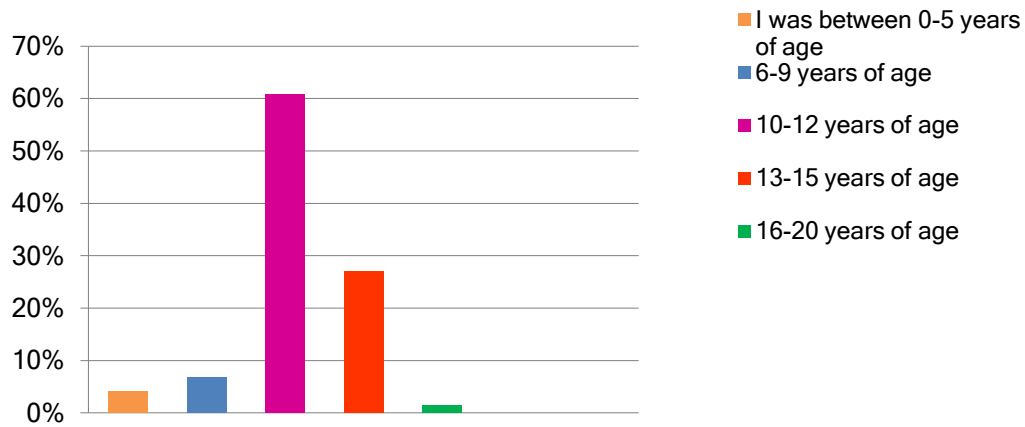


Table 14. Question # 28 - What is the highest level in ENGLISH that you took at secondary school (menntaskóli)? Please choose one.

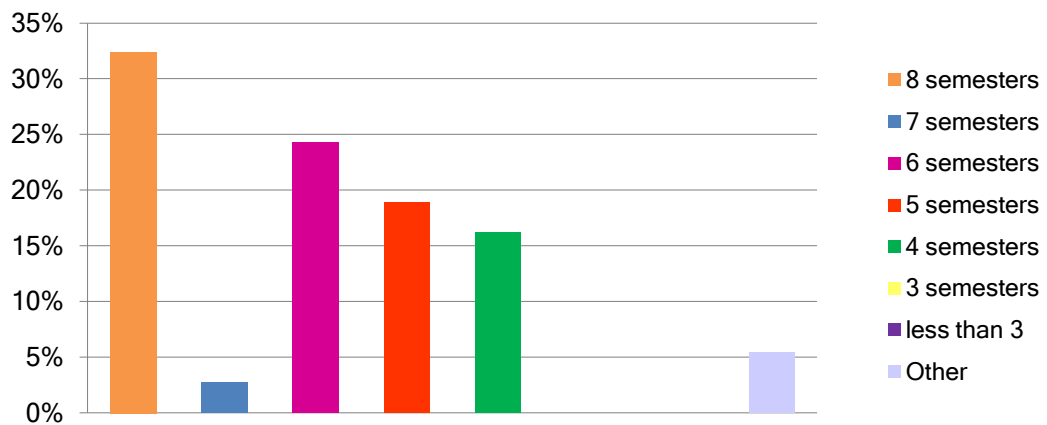


Table 15. Question # 26 - How many years did you complete in secondary (menntaskóli) or technical school (iðnnám)?



Table 16. Question # 25 - How many years of university have you completed?

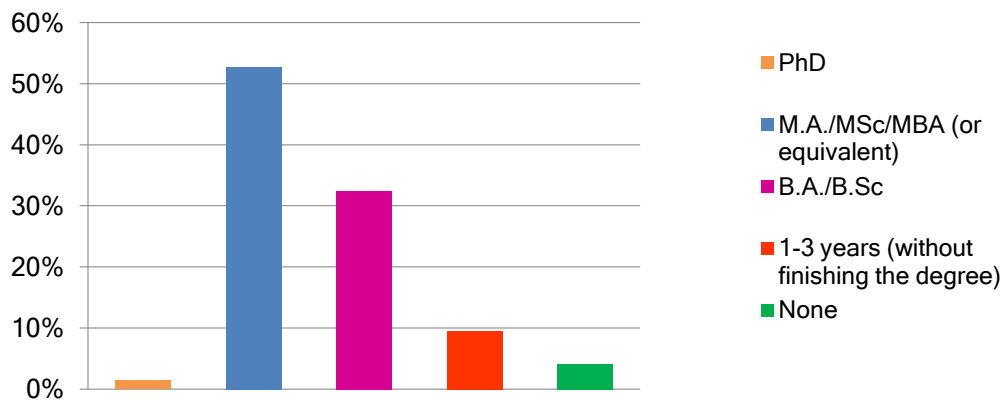
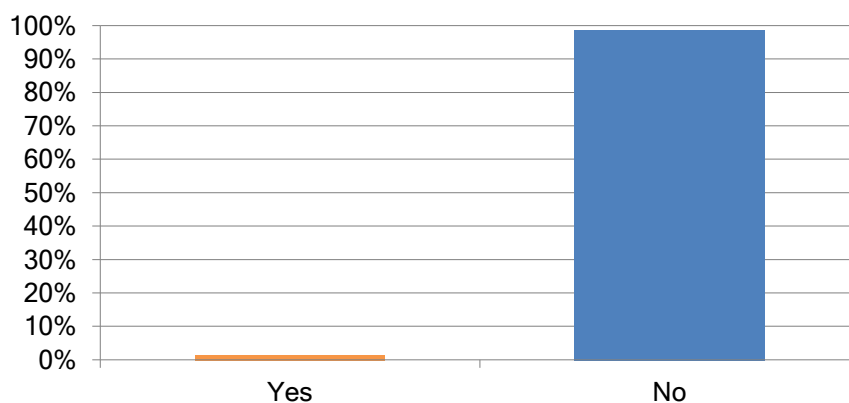


Table 17. Question # 35 - Are you dyslexic?



As can be seen in the above background information, as expected, the majority of the respondents are Icelandic females who were born and raised with Icelandic as

their first or native language, they have completed secondary school and all but 11 of them hold university degrees. The next sections deal with receptive skills, namely listening and reading proficiency and then lastly productive skills, writing and speaking.

4.4 Listening Proficiency

The respondents were asked to rate their listening skills in general and at work. They were given a list of various listening tasks and asked to answer on a scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree, or not applicable. They were also asked to answer questions regarding how often they actually listened to English.

The results, as seen below in tables 18-21 were that 50% agreed they were confident listening to non-Icelanders speak English at work, and 43.2% strongly agreed. The answers were not very different for listening to English spoken at work by Icelanders, with 46% strongly agreeing and 42% agreeing. Two respondents answered not applicable to listening to English spoken by Icelanders. Asked if they were capable of listening to English at work, the answers were that 48.6% agreed and 44.6% strongly agreed that they were capable of listening to English during telephone calls, 47.3% agreed they were capable at meetings, and 47.3% at seminars. Only four of 74 respondents answered that they disagreed they were capable of listening to English at work during telephone calls. They were also asked to rate their listening skills in general and 55.4% strongly agreed they were able to listen to English when watching TV and movies, and 52.7% strongly agreed for listening to song lyrics. 55.4% agreed they were able to listen at work meetings, and 56.8% agreed they could listen telephone calls.

Regarding frequency 70.3% answered they never listen to English at meetings for work, and 35.1% answered once a month for telephone calls. Responses for every day listening were 63.5% for listening to song lyrics and 60.8% for TV and movies. Most of the respondents consider themselves to be able to listen and understand English but they do not actually listen very often at work and most of their listening is for entertainment.

Table 18. Question # 2 - How would you rate your listening abilities in ENGLISH? I am able to LISTEN to the following in ENGLISH.

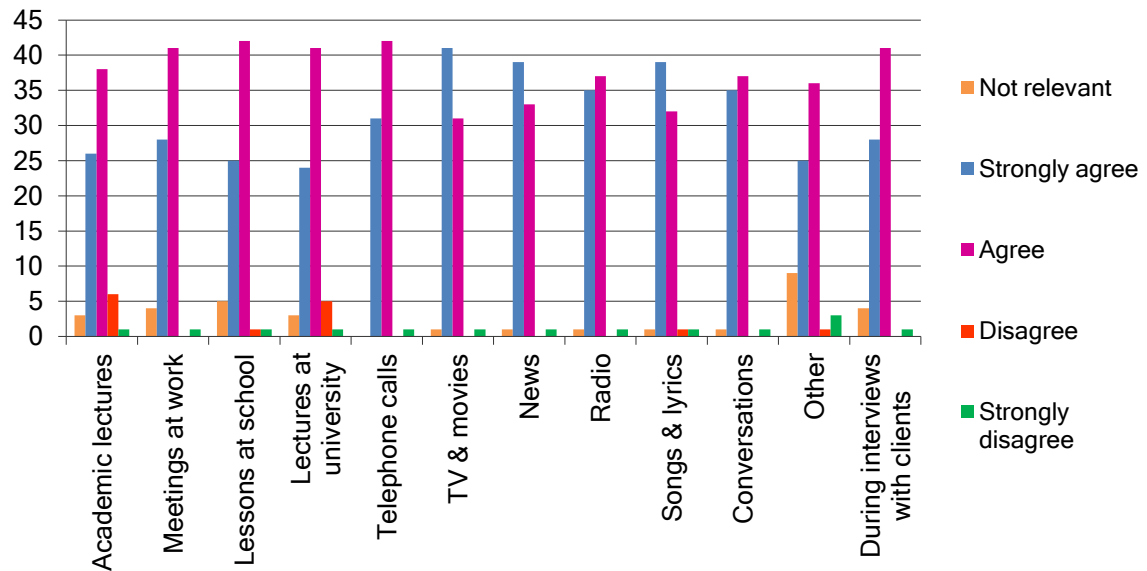


Table 19. Question # 5- Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements: I am capable of LISTENING to ENGLISH at work during:

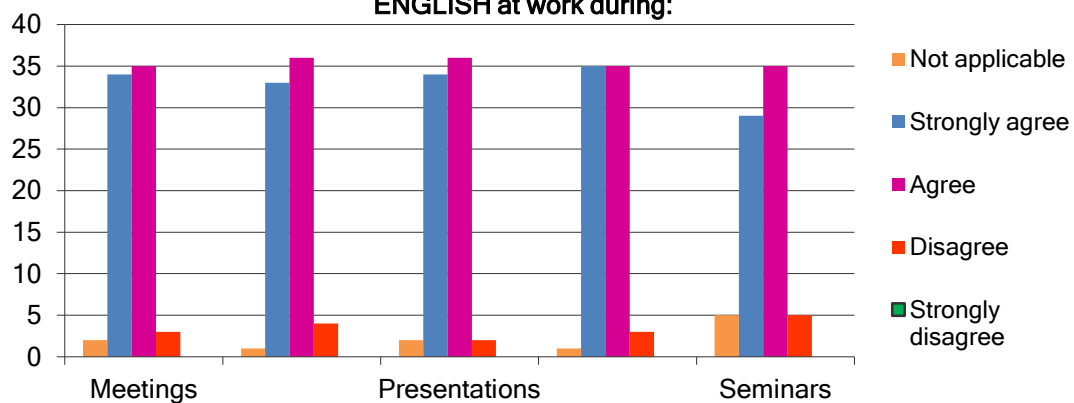


Table 20. Question # 22 - How would you rate your listening abilities in ENGLISH? I am able to LISTEN to the following in ENGLISH.

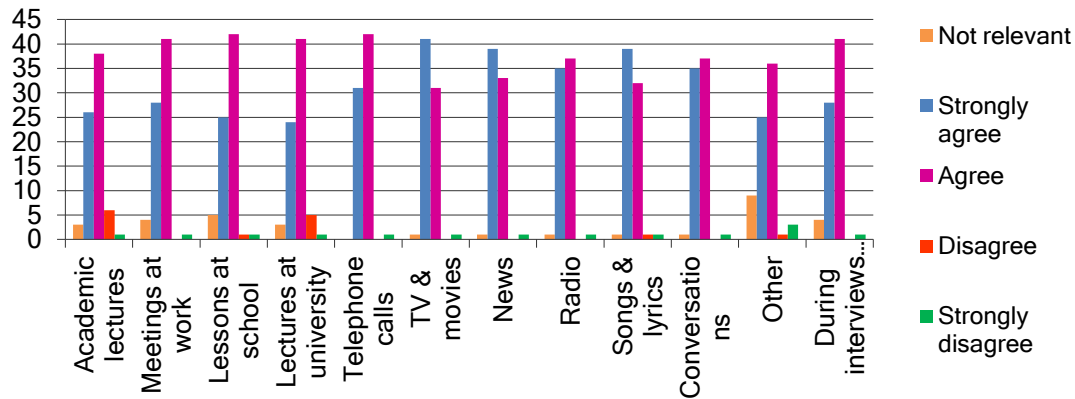
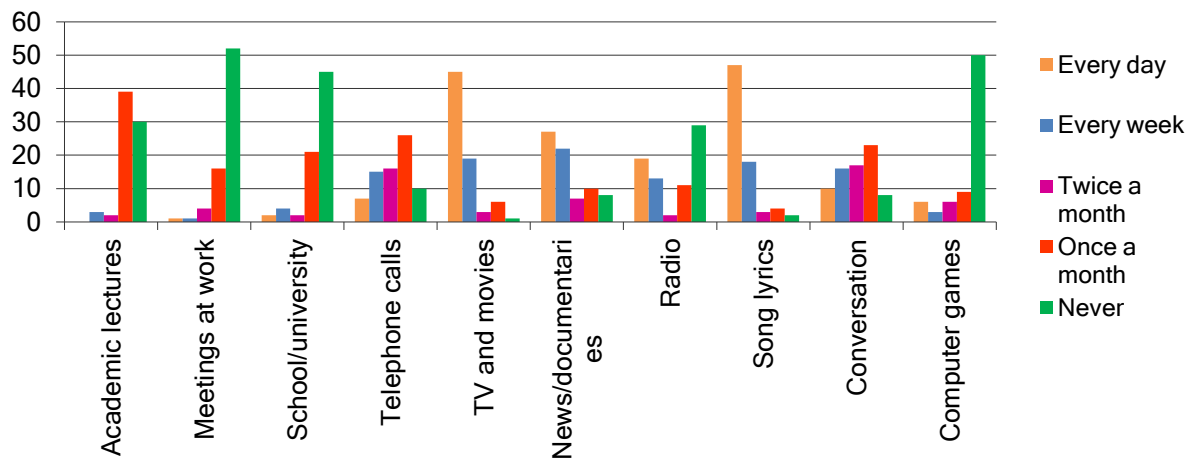


Table 21. Question # 16 - How often do you LISTEN to the following in ENGLISH? I listen to the following in ENGLISH:



4.5 Reading Proficiency

The majority answered that they strongly agreed they were capable of reading English for all of the work related situations listed with the lowest, 50%, answering they could read grant applications and professional journals and 62.2% strongly agreeing they read emails and 56.8% for memos. Only 2.2% answered they strongly

disagreed they were able to read professional journals. Regarding reading skills in general 55.4% answered they strongly agreed they were able to read books and novels, 52% newspapers and 50% texts for work, and 48.6% agreed they were able to read texts for work. However, when asked about frequency of usage, 41.9% answered that they only read texts for work once a month and 17.6% never read them and 28.4% read academic texts once a month. The highest percentage for weekly usage was 25.7% for books/novels and academic texts. These results are seen in tables 22, 23 and 24 below.

Table 22. Question # 4 - Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements: I am capable of READING the following in ENGLISH at work:

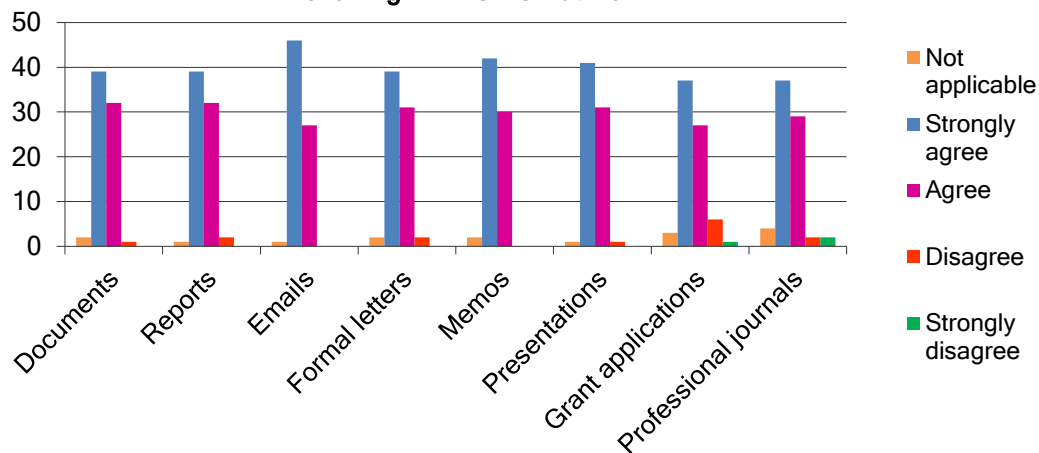


Table 23. Question 24 - How would you rate your READING abilities in ENGLISH? I am able to READ the following in ENGLISH:

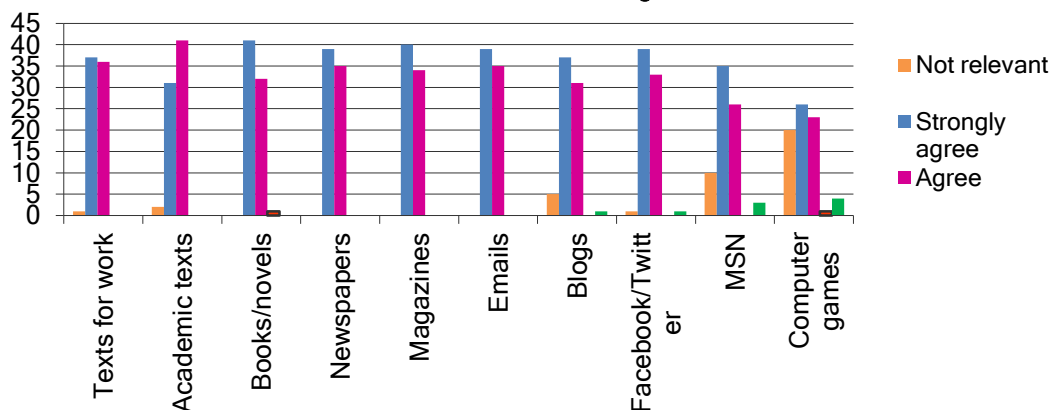
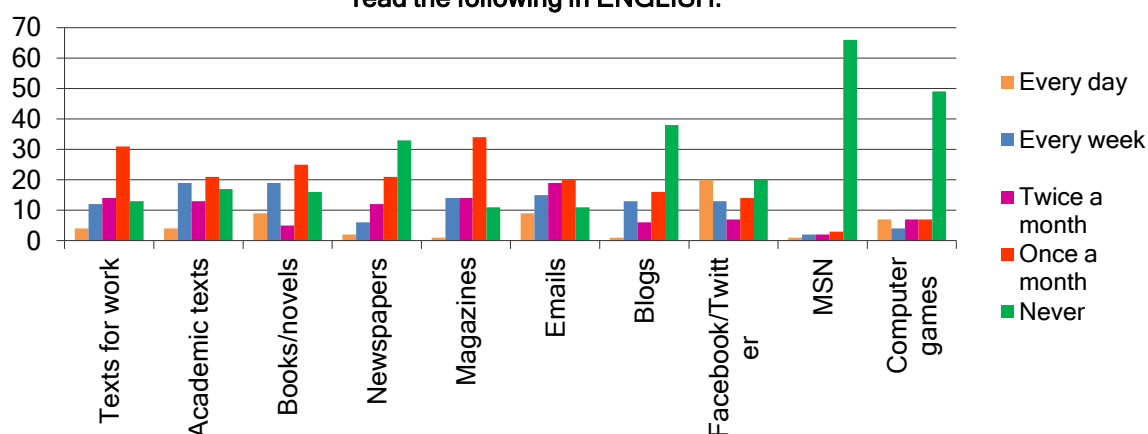


Table 24. Question # 18- How often do you READ the following in ENGLISH? I read the following in ENGLISH:



4.6 Writing Proficiency

The results for the questions on respondents' level of writing skills in general were that 68.9% answered that they agreed they were able to write e-mails, 28.4% strongly agreed. Asked if they could write texts for work 60.8% responded they agreed they were able write texts for work, but 23% disagreed that they were able to write creative texts, and 28.4% disagreed they could write academic tests. However when asked specifically about writing emails for work fewer, or 54.1% agreed, and 35.1% strongly agreed they were able. Asked about how often they write emails 47.3% responded that they only write emails once a month, 51.4 % never write texts for work, 83.8% never write academic texts, and 90.5% never write creative texts. The highest response for writing in English on a daily basis was only 5 out of 74 for *Facebook*. Interestingly 32.4%, and 12.2% agreed and strongly agreed that they were capable of writing articles for professional journals, but 83.8% never write academic texts. Also interesting is that 35.1% answer that they are capable of writing grant applications, which takes very specialized skills but the largest majority say they never write these kind of texts. These results are seen in tables 25, 26, and 27 below.

Table 25. Question # 23 - How would you rate your WRITING abilities in ENGLISH? I am able to WRITE the following in ENGLISH.

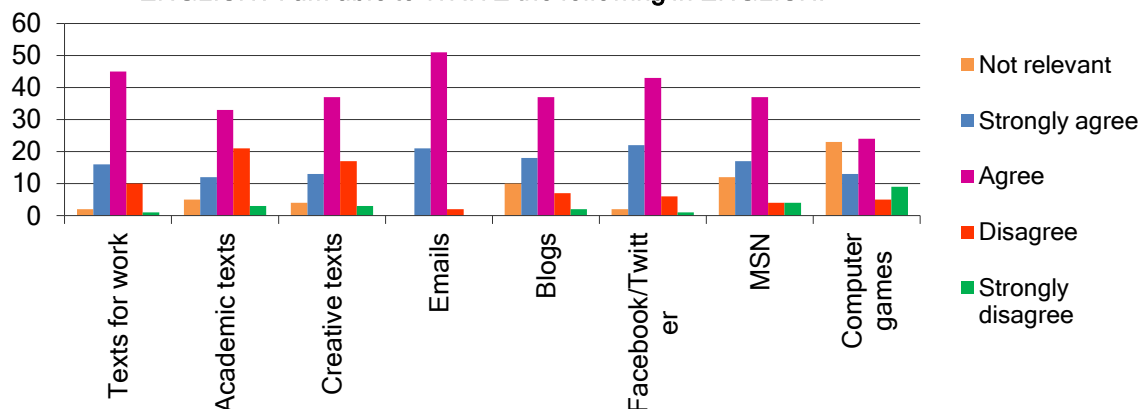


Table 26. Question # 7- Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements: I am capable of WRITING the following in ENGLISH at work:

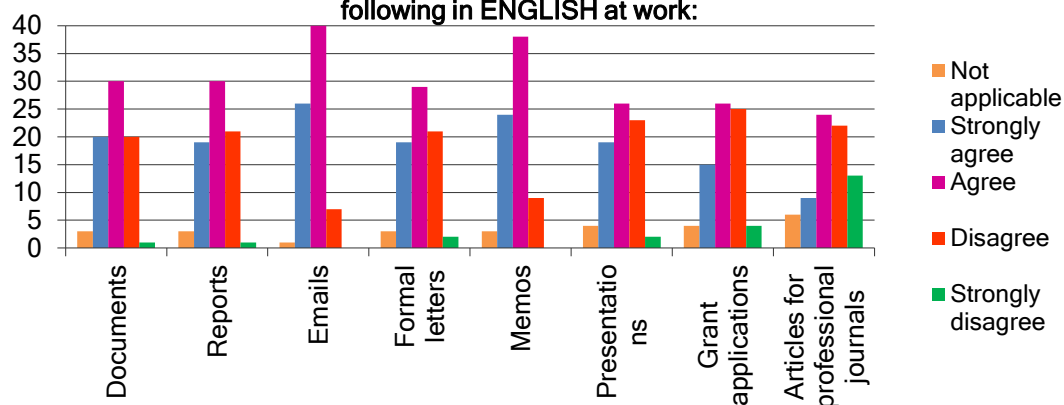
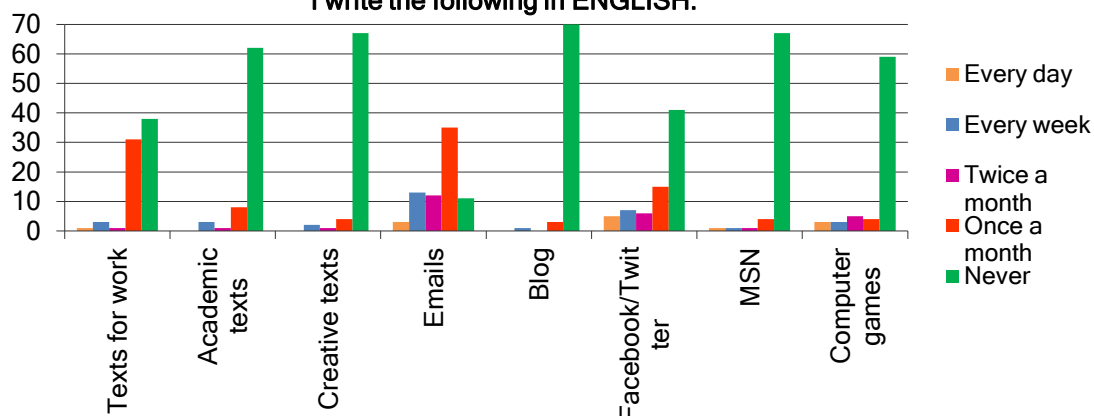


Table 27. Question # 17 - How often do WRITE the following in ENGLISH? I write the following in ENGLISH:



4.7 Speaking Proficiency

As with listening, respondents were asked if they are more confident speaking English at work to other Icelanders or to non-Icelanders but the results were very different. Many more responded that they disagreed they were confident speaking to both, with 32.4% disagreeing they felt confident speaking to non-Icelanders and 30% saying they disagreed that they felt confident. The respondents were asked to assess their speaking proficiency in general and specifically at work. Responses were the same for telephone calls and conversations with 71.6% agreeing they were able and 27% strongly agreeing. The general answer for meetings at work was 62.2% agreed and 23% strongly agreed they were capable. In academic situations 47.3% agreed they were capable of speaking English. Asked about speaking situations at work, 59.5% agree they are capable of speaking English for conversations, 56.8% agreed for telephone calls and 31.1% strongly agreed they were capable of speaking for telephone calls. The responses for frequency however were that 64,9% never speak English in academic situations and 58.1% never speak English at meetings for work. The highest answer for speaking English for telephone calls was that 32.4% use it once a month. Not surprisingly 75.7% never speak English for study meetings, however 18.9% or 14 respondents speak English for study meetings once a month.

Table 28. Question # 3 - Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements: I feel confident SPEAKING ENGLISH at work:



Table 29. Question # 21 - How would you rate your ENGLISH speaking abilities? I am able to SPEAK ENGLISH in:

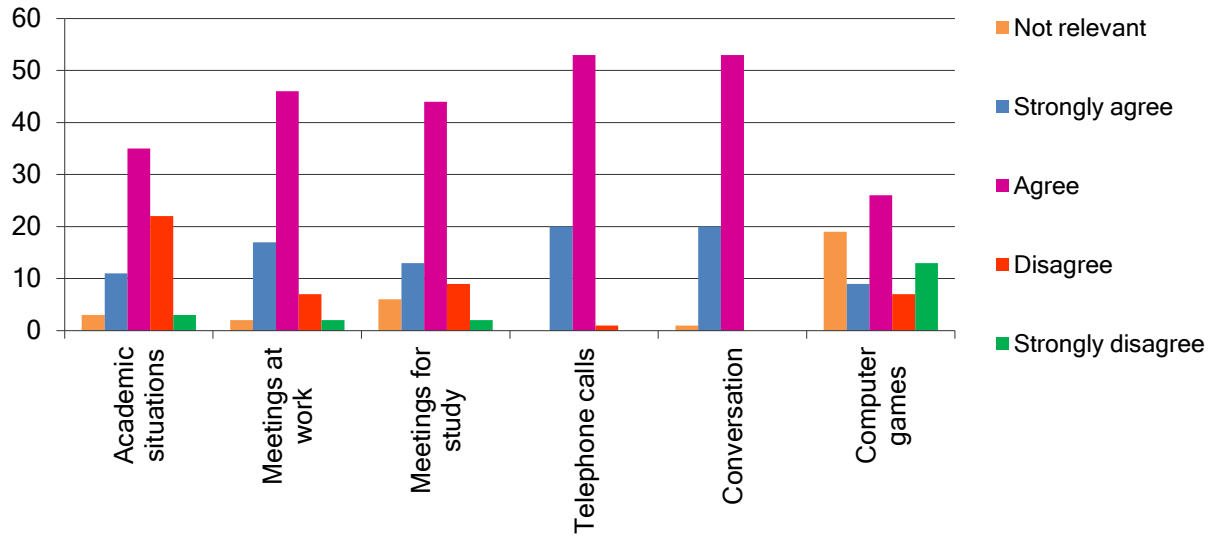


Table 30. Question # 6 - Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements: I am capable of SPEAKING ENGLISH at work during:

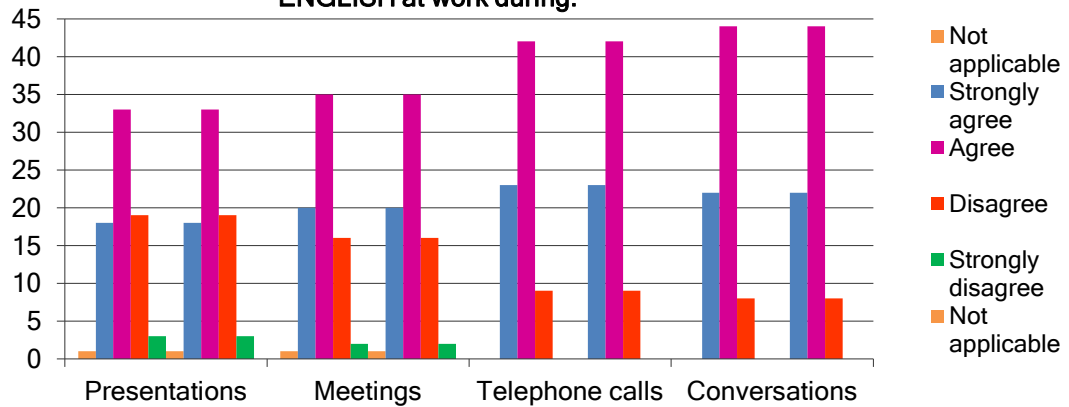
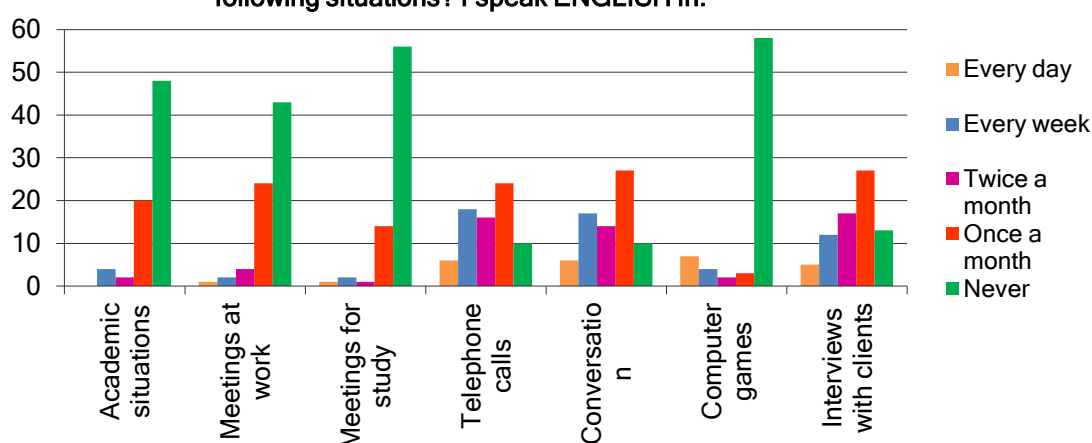


Table 31. question # 15 - How often do you SPEAK ENGLISH in the following situations? I speak ENGLISH in:



4.8 English Use in General and Assessing Other Icelanders

The respondents were asked a non-specific question about how often they use English on average ranging from never to every day. Only 35.1% said they used English on average of every day, 37.8% every week and only 1.4% never uses English. Asked about how much they need to use English in their daily lives 64.9% said they needed English daily for computer use, 51.4% for watching TV and movies while only 28.4% said they needed to use English daily for work. Asked how often they use English at work in various situations 87.5% said they never use English to write reports or presentations, and 47.3% only write emails once a month. Regarding speaking on the telephone 29.7% answered they use English once a month. It is interesting to compare this with the answer about frequency of speaking English on the phone in table 31, where 32.4% answered they speak English on the phone once a month. The response for rating the English skills of Icelanders on a scale from very bad to very good were that nobody answered very bad. Most of the answers fell into the average and good range with 54.1% answering their work colleagues and Icelanders in general were average while 45.9% answered their friends were good and 52.7% saying that children were also good. Asked to rate themselves 41.9% answered average and 36.5% answered good. These results are in tables 32-35 below.

Table 32. Question # 19 - How often do you use English on average?

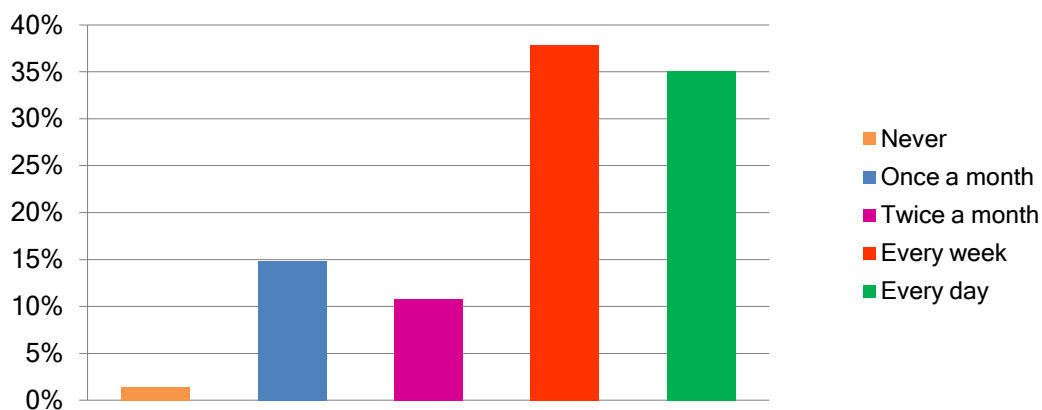


Table 33. Question 13 - How much do you need to use ENGLISH in your daily life? I need ENGLISH for:

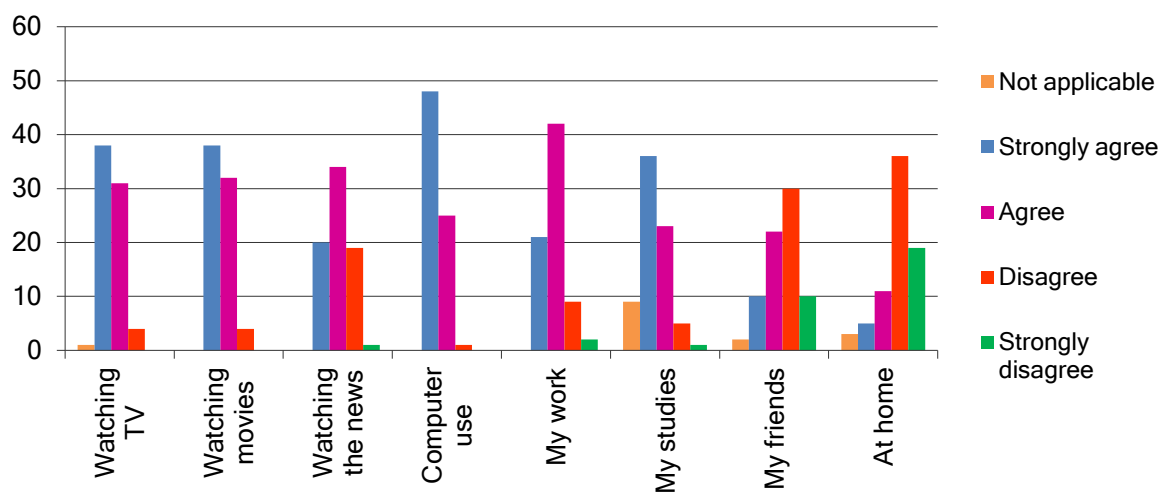


Table 34. Question # 8 - How often do you use ENGLISH at work in the following manner?

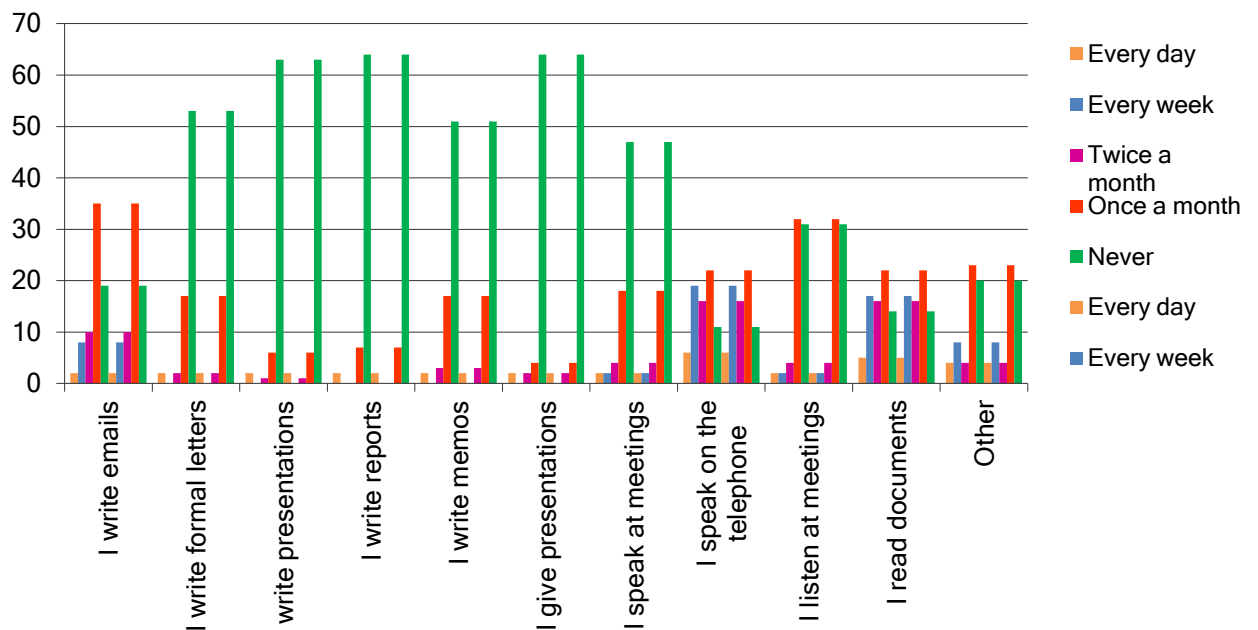
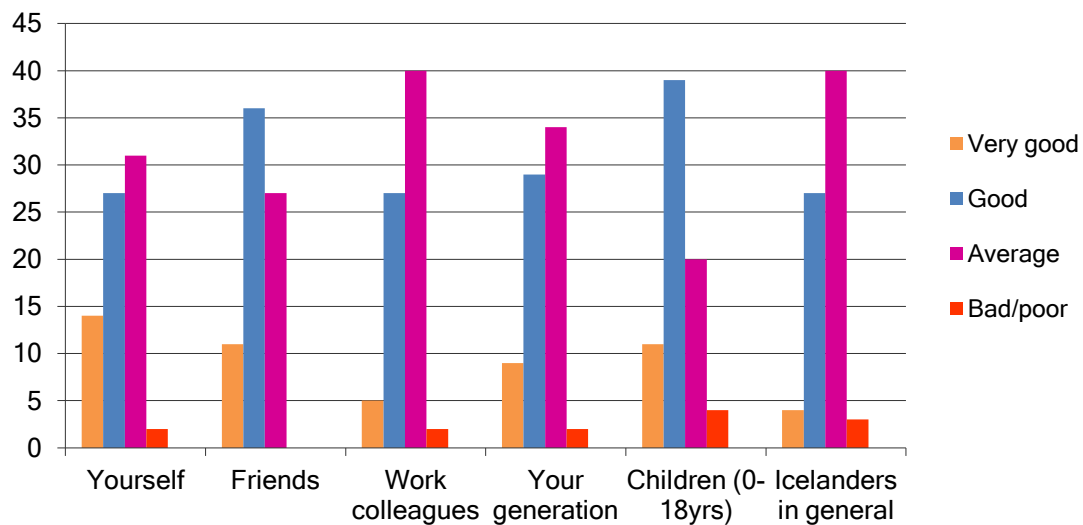


Table 35. Question # 20 - How do you rate the ENGLISH skills of Icelanders on a scale from "very bad - very good"?



4.9 Required English proficiency

The respondents were asked if English skills were required when they applied for their job and, what skills were expected and if they feel they have the English proficiency needed for the job. Thirty-two out of 74 or 43.2% answered that basic

English language skills were needed for the position when the applied and 54.1% say that English language skills are expected for their current position. Asked how they rated their English skills when the applied, 55.4% said good, 14.9% said basic and 10.8% answered excellent. They were also asked if not that they were actually doing the job how the felt about their English skills. Most or 83.8% answered that there English skills are the same at they thought they were. Considering that so many answered in table 34 that they never use English at work, it is interesting that 64 out of 74 respondents answered that basic to excellent English skills are expected for their positions. See tables 36-39 below.

Table 36. Question # 9 - In your current job, what ENGLISH skills are expected?

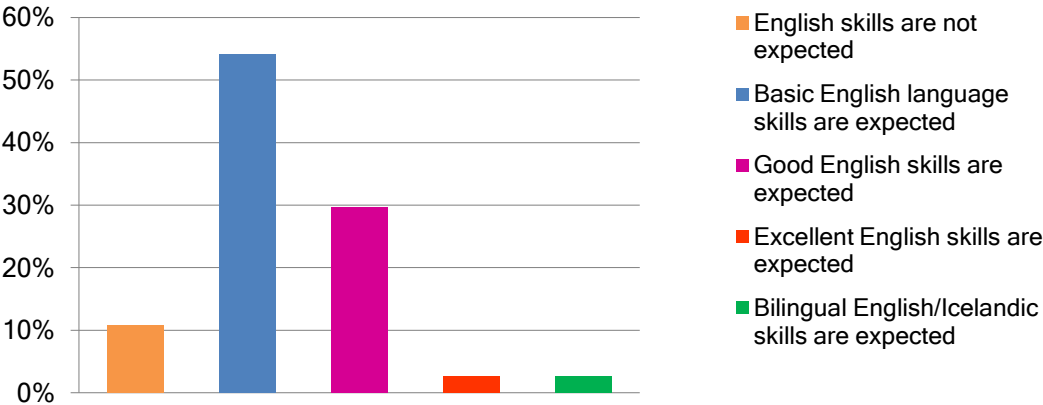


Table 37. Question # 10 - Now that you are actually doing your current job - how do you feel about your ENGLISH skills?

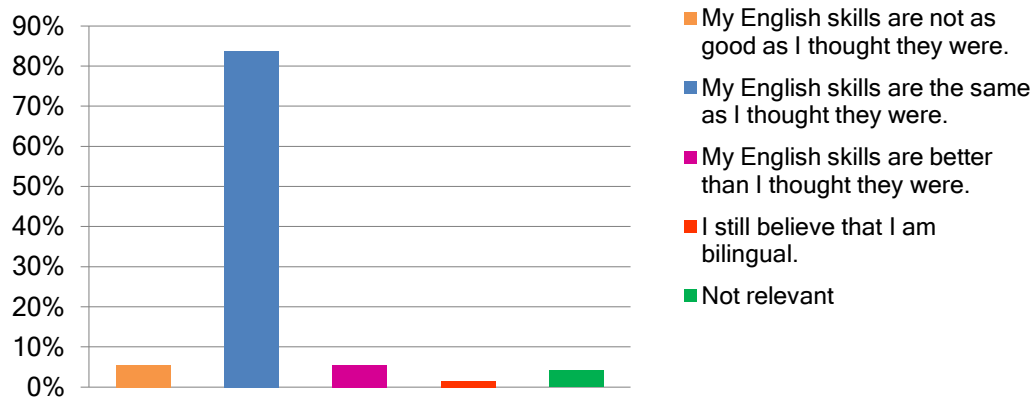


Table 38. Question # 11 - When you applied for you current job, how did you rate your ENGLISH skills

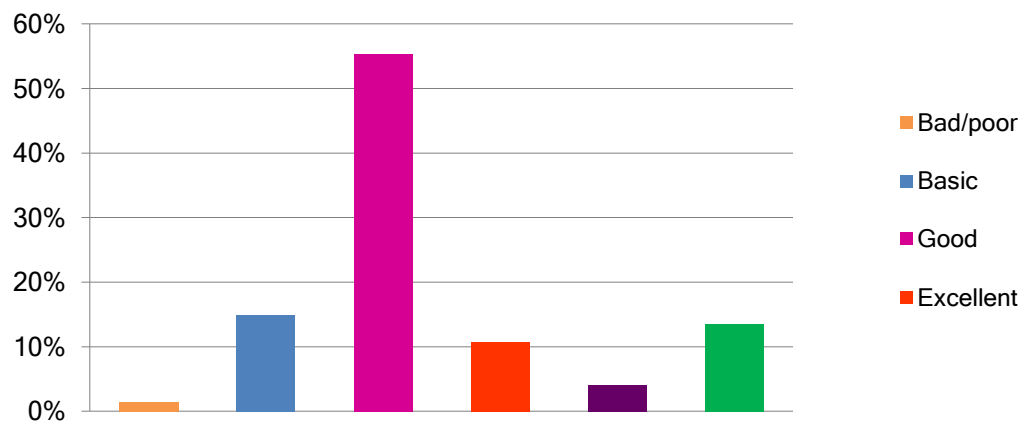
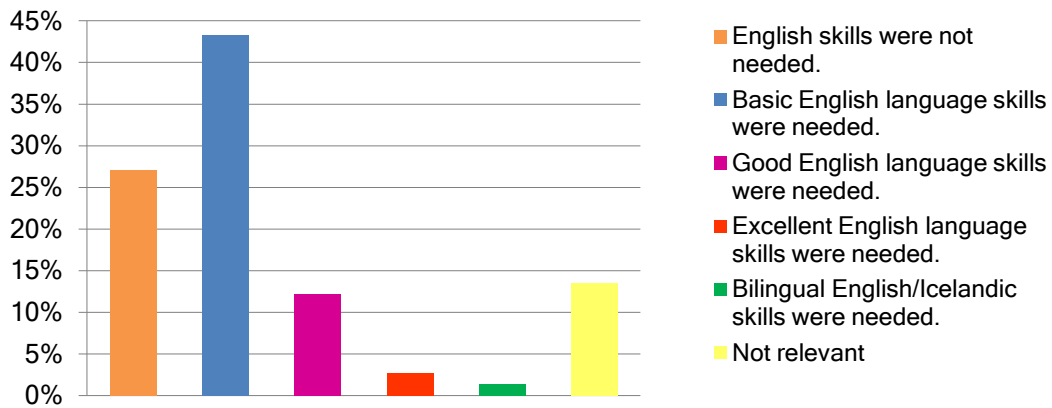


Table 39. Question # 12 - When you applied for your current job, what ENGLISH skills were needed?



4.10 Use of Help Tools and other Coping Methods

Only 8 or 10.8% answered that they use spell check very often, and 50% said they sometimes used dictionaries. Only one respondent uses an English-speaking interpreter every week, while 83.8% reported that they never use an interpreter, 10.8% answered that they use a clients family member or friend to interpret into English one a month. 90.5% said that they never have documents translated. These results are seen below in tables 40-42.

Table 40. Question 14 - How often do you use the following “help tools” to help you with ENGLISH?

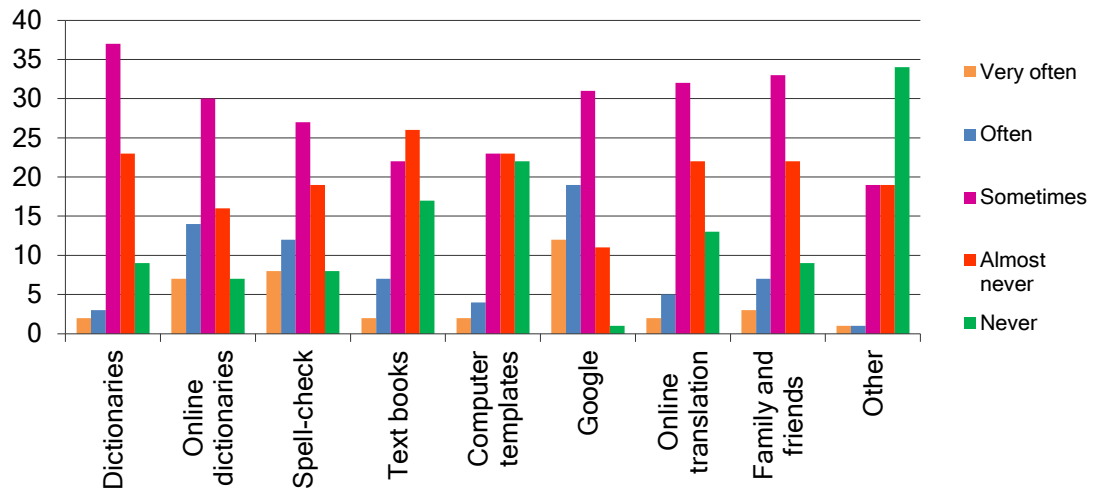


Table 41. Question # 41 - How often do you use an English speaking interpreter?

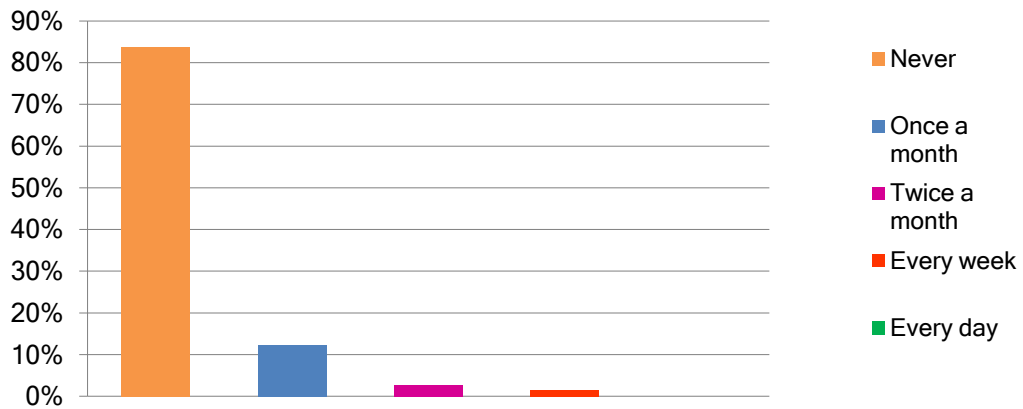


Table 42. Question # 42 - How often do you use a client's family member or friend to interpret into English?

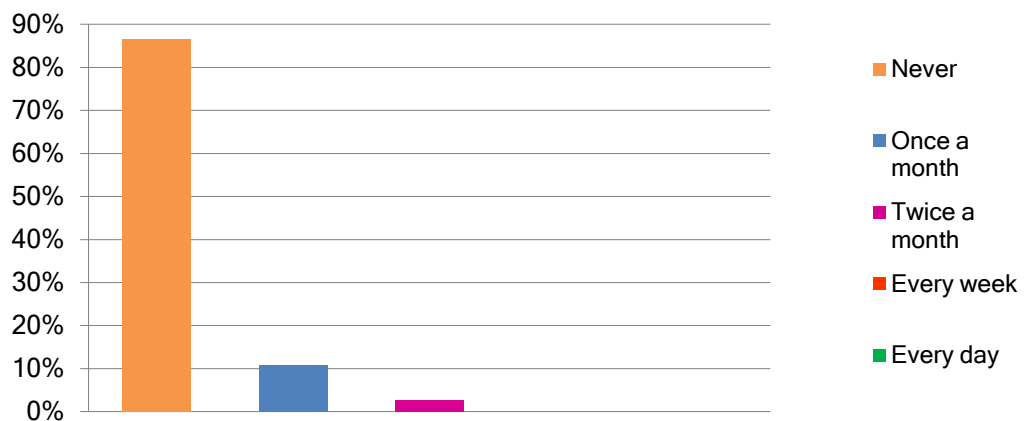
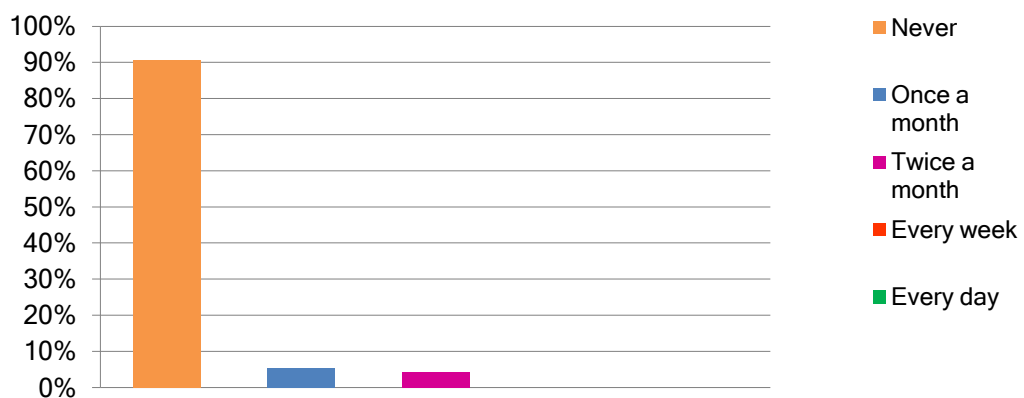


Table 43. Question # 43 - How often do you seek the services of a translation service to translate documents into English?



The next chapter will discuss the implications of these results.

5. Discussion

The goal of this research was to collect data about the way employees in the six Social Services Centers of the City of Reykjavík use English and is a part of a larger on-going study being conducted at the University of Iceland.

5.1 Background Information

The respondents were generally women with only 9 respondents out of 74 being male. The largest age group was between the ages of 25-35 years old. They were Icelanders born and raised in Iceland, and had Icelandic as their native language. They began to learn English in primary school and continued to learn in secondary school. The majority or 90.5% completed secondary school and 64 out of 74 had university degrees.

5.2 Listening Proficiency and Frequency

They are confident listening to English as the majority answered they agreed and strongly agreed that they were listening to English at work spoken both by other Icelanders and non-Icelanders. When asked if they were capable of listening to English for various tasks at work the majority answered that they agreed or strongly agreed. For example 48.6% agreed, and 44.6% strongly agreed they are capable of listening to English during telephone calls, and 55.4% said they agreed they were capable of listening to English at work meetings. However when asked about frequency of these same tasks the responses were different. The results were that they are not actually listening very often as 70.3% said they never listen to English at work meetings, and the highest answer for telephone calls was that 35.1% only listened to English telephone calls once a month. When looked at listening to English for entertainment reasons the answers were different as 60.8% listen to English TV and movies every day, and 63.5% listen to English song lyrics. So they consider themselves capable, confident listeners but actually only listen to English for entertainment purposes.

5.3 Reading Proficiency and Frequency

The results for questions about reading skills were similar to that of listening, with the majority agreeing and strongly agreeing that they were capable of reading English for work. Between 50-62.2% answered they strongly agreed they were capable

of reading all the work related texts listed and 36.5-43.2% answering they agreed they were capable. The answers for reading texts in general were similar. Responses about frequency showed that the respondents do not read English as often as they listen. To compare 63.5% respondents listened to music every day but the highest daily frequency answer was 27% for reading English on *Facebook*. The highest response for reading texts at work was 41.9% read once a month.

The results of the receptive skills of reading and listening to English brings up the question if the respondents are actually doing these tasks often enough to back-up their self-assessment of these skills.

5.4 Writing Proficiency and Frequency

In addition to receptive skills the respondents were also asked how often they produced the language. Asked to rate their abilities in writing English in general 60.8% agreed they were able to write texts for work, 68.9% agreed they could write emails and 58.1% agreed they were able to write in English on *Facebook*. Only one respondent of 74 strongly disagreed to be able to write texts for work. Asked specifically about writing texts at work 54.8% agreed they were capable of writing emails, 51.4% agreed they were capable of writing memos, and 40.5% are capable of writing documents and reports. Again, however, they don't actually do any of these tasks often even though they consider themselves capable. The answers for never were very high with 90.5% answering they never write creative texts, 83.8% never write academic texts, 55.4% never write on *Facebook*, and 51.4% never write texts for work. After never the next highest responses were that 41.9% and 47.3% respectively wrote texts for work and emails only once a month. Interesting the *Facebook* answers are similar, in that nearly the same amount say they are able to write English on *Facebook* as the ones who never actually do it. There is a discrepancy between what texts they say that they can write for work and how much they actually write. 33 of 94 answered they were capable of writing articles for professional journals but 62 of them said they never write academic texts.

5.4 Speaking Proficiency and Frequency

The respondents were asked again if in general they were confident speaking English at work with Icelanders and non-Icelanders. Compared to the responses to the

same question about listening the respondents were not as confident in general more respondents disagreed with 32.4% disagreeing they were confident speaking English to non-Icelanders and 29.7% saying they disagreed they were confident speaking English to Icelanders. Fewer or 24.3% agreed they were confident speaking to Icelanders compared to 31.1% who agreed they were confident speaking to non-Icelanders. As with the other skills the majority of the respondents agreed that they were capable of speaking English in general with 62.2% for meetings for work, 71.6% for telephone calls, and conversations in English. However 22 of 74 respondents did disagree they were able to speak English in academic situations. Regarding specific questions about being capable to speak English at work in various situations the majority agreed and strongly agreed they were capable. 56.8% said they were capable of speaking English during work-related telephone calls. Once again the results suggested that they are not however using the skills they say they are capable of as 75.7% never speak English for study meetings, 64.9% never use English in study situations, and 58.1% never speak English for meetings at work. Although 56.8% answered they were capable of speaking English on the phone, the highest answer for frequency was only 32.4% do it once a month.

5.5 English Use in General and Assessing Others

It is interesting to compare the general question about how much respondents need to use English in their daily lives with the responses for the actual frequency of usage both for productive and receptive skills at work, as the responses do not support each other. Compared to the amount who answered that they either never use English or only use it once a month for various work related tasks, 56.8% answered they agreed they needed to use English daily for work and 28.4% said they strongly disagreed. There is no clear answer that presents itself in this survey but may suggest that the respondents believe that English is very important and most likely do not realize how little they actually use it at work on a daily basis. Asked to rate the skills of Icelanders and themselves on a scale from very bad to very good the majority answered that Icelanders were average to good with 41.9% answering they themselves were average.

5.6 Required English Proficiency at Work

The respondents were asked what English skills were necessary and expected for their positions when applying and now that they were actually doing the job. Most or 54.1% answered that basic English skills are expected on the job and 29.7% said that good skills were expected and only 10.8% answered that English skills were not expected. However, asked what English skills were needed when they applied 27% answered English skills were not needed. Asked how they rated their English skills when they applied for the position 55.4% rated themselves as good, 14.9% as basic and 10.8% as excellent. They were also asked how they felt about their skills now that they were actually doing the job and the majority by far or 83.8% responded that their skills are the same as they thought they were. So some felt English skills were not expected for the job but were in fact needed, and yet many say they never use English on the job. Finally, while this essay contains no formal policy regarding English language proficiency from the Welfare Division of the City of Reykjavik, the job ads website for the City of Reykjavik was regularly checked and there were no jobs advertised that required English skills for employment.

5.7 Use of Help Tools and Other Coping Methods

It was considered important to ask what tools the respondents used when they need help with English. Asked how often the participants used a list of various help tools such as dictionaries, *Google*, spell-check and asking others most of the responses by far fell into the sometimes column with the majority using dictionaries and *Google*, spell-check and dictionaries. Regarding using interpreters 12.2% said they use and interpreter once a month and 10.8% said they use the family member of a client to interpret once a month. The results illustrating that there are members of the staff that use family and friend to interpret was disturbing. Using non-professionals and interested parties to interpret is considered bad practice at social services and it would be interesting and beneficial to look further into this issue. It also would have been interesting to ask specifically if staff is using children 18 years of age and under to interpret.

When immigrants and non-native speakers of Icelandic apply for services the exchange of information is exceedingly important. The information received may have a direct effect on the social well being of the applicant and therefore an effect on society. It would be interesting to research the amount of understanding or misunderstanding transpires when immigrants seek information and apply for services. It is my experience that there are many misunderstandings and miscommunications that occur.

The results of the survey are very similar to what researchers in Iceland already uncovered. Icelanders tend to over-estimate their English language proficiency. When asked the majority of the respondents answered that they agreed they were capable of using English in various situations of use; situations such as reading novels, listening to music and watching TV and movies. Many also agreed that they were able to use English on the job to read emails, reports and professional journals, to talk on the phone and to write emails. Fewer reported that they were able to write articles for professional journals and grant applications or to give presentations in English.

However, the results were different when asked about language production. When probed about how much they actually use English to speak in various work and home related activities the answers did not back up the confidence in their proficiency. Can somebody be proficient at something if they never use it? If the staff never writes or speaks English perhaps their proficiency isn't as good as they thought.

Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir's theory is that Icelanders receive so much English on a daily basis via music, entertainment, mass media, computers and pop-culture that they are good at understanding English. This daily exposure plus the fact that Icelanders learn English from an early age means that they perceive themselves as proficient in English, However they are not as good at producing the language as they think, and in fact they seldom produce the language. The results of this survey support this theory.

6. Conclusion

The goal of this research project was to add to existing data about English language usage in Iceland. Researchers at the University of Iceland have surveyed the staff and student body at Iceland's universities, a cross-sectional sample of Icelandic society, compulsory school students, and various different Icelandic companies and organizations. Researchers across Europe and Scandinavia are also collecting data about the use of English as a lingua franca. My contribution to the research was to survey social welfare services in Reykjavik and to seek answers to the following questions. Do employees use English on a regular basis and if so are they actually producing the language in spoken and written forms? Do their English skills meet the needs of their position and do they also over estimate their proficiency?

There were a few noticeable weak areas in the survey and some respondents sent me an email pointing them out. Some of the questions had inadequate response choices. For instance in certain questions a not applicable choice was necessary. After seeking advice from the research supervisor it was decided to add not applicable to some of the questions. To keep as much reliability as possible the choice was added at the end, after all the other choices. Another weakness was that some of the questions were out of order. For instance the question asking if respondents ever lived abroad was after the question about how old respondents were when they lived abroad. I received two emails asking why the questionnaire was in English and that they, and the others around them, did not possess the English skills necessary to complete the survey.

It is interesting to consider these emails about the language of the survey and the author wonders if they are indicative of the type of institution being surveyed in this research project. As the response rate was not very high, only 37.4%, which means that it may not be possible to legitimize the results. It is very possible that only the people who possess any English skills at all responded. It is worth considering having an Icelandic edition of the test and perhaps the response rate would have been higher if this survey was in Icelandic. Another explanation for the low participation may simply be matter of time. They may be too busy at work to spend time on answering a questionnaire.

When researchers map out English language use in the outer and expanding circles one of the things they look at is to whom the users are speaking. While reading is important, the use of English as a spoken language is very important. A lingua franca is a common language of communication, and we communicate with each other on a daily basis, in everyday life, using spoken language. This means that researchers are interested in finding out if non-native users are speaking English with native speakers, to each other, or with other non-native speakers. Results show that the largest numbers of those using English as a lingua franca are people from the expanding circle speaking to each other.

In order to discover if English is indeed a lingua franca in Iceland it is necessary to research how often Icelanders use English, in what situations they use the language, and if they are producing the language or just receiving the language. This research, while only surveying a small sample will add to the existing body of research and proves the hypothesis that English is not a lingua franca at social services in Reykjavik. It also backs up previous theories that Icelanders tend to overestimate their English proficiency. This overestimation is mostly likely caused by the overwhelming amount of English that Icelanders come in contact with on a daily basis. It is my hope that researchers of the larger project use this survey in their studies and that more detailed work is done with this data.

The city of Reykjavik is one of the largest employers in Reykjavik and it would be interesting to survey the staff working at other departments and divisions.

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Appendixes

PDF of the questions

Letter of permission from the svið

Notice from persónuvernd



Reykjavíkurborg
Velferðarsvið

Barbara J. Kristvinsson
BA nemi í ensku
Deild erlendra tungumála, bókmennta og málvísinda
Hugvínindasvið Háskóla Íslands

Leyfisbréf fyrir rannsókn á English Proficiency and Performance in the Social Service Sector in Reykjavík.

Hér með er þér veitt umbeðið leyfi fyrir vísindarannsókn þinni „**English Proficiency and Performance in the Social Service Sector in Reykjavík**“. Leyfið er bundið við að þú leggir rafrænanan nafnlausan og spurningalista fyrir faglært starfsfólk á sex þjónustumiðstöðvum Velferðarsviðs Reykjavíkurborgar.

Reykjavík 21.02.2012

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Reykjavík 16. mars 2012
Tilvísun: S5654/2012/ AT/--

Hér með staðfestist að Persónuvernd hefur móttengið tilkynningu í yðar nafni um vinnslu persónuupplýsinga. Tilkynningin er nr. S5654/2012 og fylgir afrit hennar hjálagt.

Allar tilkynningar sem berast Persónuvernd birtast sjálfkrafa á heimasíðu stofnunarinnar. Tekið skal fram að með móttöku og birtingu tilkynninga hefur engin afstaða verið tekin af hálfu Persónuverndar til efnis þeirra.

Virðingarfyllst,


Alma Tryggvadóttir
lögfræðingur

Hjál.: - Tilkynning nr. S5654/2012 um vinnslu persónuupplýsinga.

***1. What age group do you belong to?**

- ☐ 18-24
☐ 25-35
☐ 36-45
☐ 46-55
☐ 56-65
☐ 66+ years

***2. Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements: I feel confident LISTENING to ENGLISH at work:**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
Spoken by non-Icelanders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spoken by Icelanders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***3. Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements: I feel confident SPEAKING ENGLISH at work:**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
To non-Icelanders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To Icelanders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***4. Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements: I am capable of READING the following in ENGLISH at work:**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
Documents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formal letters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Memos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Presentations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grant applications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional journals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***5. Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements: I am capable of LISTENING to ENGLISH at work during:**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
Meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Telephone calls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Presentations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conversations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seminars	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*** 6. Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements: I am capable of SPEAKING ENGLISH at work during:**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
Presentations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Telephone calls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conversations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*** 7. Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements: I am capable of WRITING the following in ENGLISH at work:**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
Documents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formal letters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Memos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Presentations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grant applications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
articles for professional journals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*** 8. How often do you use ENGLISH at work in the following manner?**

	Never	Once a month	Twice a month	Every week	Every day
I write emails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I write formal letters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I write presentations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I write reports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I write memos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I give presentations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I speak at meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I speak on the telephone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I listen at meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I read documents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*** 9. In your current job, what ENGLISH skills are expected?**

- ☐ English skills are not expected
- ☐ Basic English language skills are expected
- ☐ Good English skills are expected
- ☐ Excellent English skills are expected
- ☐ Bilingual English/Icelandic skills are expected

*** 10. Now that you are actually doing your current job – how do you feel about your ENGLISH skills?**

- ☐ My English skills are not as good as I thought they were.
- ☐ My English skills are the same as I thought they were.
- ☐ My English skills are better than I thought they were.
- ☐ I still believe that I am bilingual.
- ☐ Not relevant

*** 11. When you applied for you current job, how did you rate your ENGLISH skills**

- ☐ Bad/poor
- ☐ Basic
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Bilingual
- ☐ Not relevant

*** 12. When you applied for your current job, what ENGLISH skills were needed?**

- ☐ English skills were not needed.
- ☐ Basic English language skills were needed.
- ☐ Good English language skills were needed.
- ☐ Excellent English language skills were needed.
- ☐ Bilingual English/Icelandic skills were needed.
- ☐ Not relevant

*** 13. How much do you need to use ENGLISH in your daily life? I need ENGLISH for:**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
Watching TV	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching movies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching the news	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Computer use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*** 14. How often do you use the following “help tools” to help you with ENGLISH?**

	Never	Almost never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Dictionaries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online dictionaries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spell-check	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Text books	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Computer templates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Google	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online translation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family and friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*** 15. How often do you SPEAK ENGLISH in the following situations? I speak ENGLISH in:**

	Never	Once a month	Twice a month	Every week	Every day
Academic situations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meetings at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meetings for study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Telephone calls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conversation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Computer games	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interviews with clients	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*** 16. How often do you LISTEN to the following in ENGLISH? I listen to the following in ENGLISH:**

	Never	Once a month	Twice a month	Every week	Every day
Academic lectures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meetings at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School/university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Telephone calls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TV and movies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
News/documentaries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Radio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Song lyrics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conversation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Computer games	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*** 17. How often do WRITE the following in ENGLISH? I write the following in ENGLISH:**

	Never	Once a month	Twice a month	Every week	Every day
Texts for work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic texts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creative texts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Blog	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook/Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
MSN	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Computer games	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*** 18. How often do you READ the following in ENGLISH? I read the following in ENGLISH:**

	Never	Once a month	Twice a month	Every week	Every day
Texts for work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic texts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Books/novels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newspapers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Magazines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Blogs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook/Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
MSN	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Computer games	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*** 19. How often do you use English on average?**

- ☐ Never
☐ Once a month
☐ Twice a month
☐ Every week
☐ Every day

*** 20. How do you rate the ENGLISH skills of Icelanders on a scale from “very bad – very good”?**

	Very bad/poor	Bad/poor	Average	Good	Very good
Yourself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your generation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Children (0-18yrs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Icelanders in general	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***21. How would you rate your ENGLISH speaking abilities? I am able to SPEAK ENGLISH in:**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not relevant
Academic situations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meetings at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meetings for study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Telephone calls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conversation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Computer games	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***22. How would you rate your listening abilities in ENGLISH? I am able to LISTEN to the following in ENGLISH.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not relevant
Academic lectures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meetings at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lessons at school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lectures at university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Telephone calls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TV & movies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
News	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Radio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Songs & lyrics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conversations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
During interviews with clients	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***23. How would you rate your WRITING abilities in ENGLISH? I am able to WRITE the following in ENGLISH.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not relevant
Texts for work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic texts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creative texts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Blogs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook/Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
MSN	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Computer games	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***24. How would you rate your READING abilities in ENGLISH? I am able to READ the following in ENGLISH:**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not relevant
Texts for work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic texts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Books/novels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newspapers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Magazines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Blogs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook/Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
MSN	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Computer games	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***25. How many years of university have you completed?**

- ☐ PhD
- ☐ M.A./MSc/MBA (or equivalent)
- ☐ B.A./B.Sc
- ☐ 1-3 years (without finishing the degree)
- ☐ None

***26. How many years did you complete in secondary (menntaskóli) or technical school (iðnám)?**

- ☐ None
- ☐ Stúdentspróf (or equivalent)
- ☐ 3 years
- ☐ 2 years
- ☐ 1 year
- ☐ Less than one year

27. Go to the next question.

***28. What is the highest level in ENGLISH that you took at secondary school (menntaskóli)? Please choose one.**

- ☐ 8 semesters
- ☐ 7 semesters
- ☐ 6 semesters
- ☐ 5 semesters
- ☐ 4 semesters
- ☐ 3 semesters
- ☐ less than 3
- ☐ Other

***29. How old were you when you lived in an English speaking country? You may choose more than one answer.**

- ☐ I was between 0-5 years of age
- ☐ 6-9 years of age
- ☐ 10-12 years of age
- ☐ 13-15 years of age
- ☐ 16-20 years of age
- ☐ 20+ years of age
- ☐ Not applicable

***30. For how long did you live in an English speaking country?**

- ☐ 0-3 months
- ☐ 4-6
- ☐ 7-12
- ☐ 13-18
- ☐ 18+
- ☐ Not applicable

***31. Did you communicate mostly in English while living in the English speaking country?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

***32. Have you ever lived in an English speaking country?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

***33. At what age were you first able to use or understand English?**

- ☐ I was between 0-5 years of age
- ☐ 6-9 years of age
- ☐ 10-12 years of age
- ☐ 13-15 years of age
- ☐ 16-20 years of age
- ☐ 20+ years of age
- ☐ Never

***34. When did you start learning English at school?**

- ☐ I was between 0-5 years of age
- ☐ 6-9 years of age
- ☐ 10-12 years of age
- ☐ 13-15 years of age
- ☐ 16-20 years of age
- ☐ 20+ years of age
- ☐ Never

***35. Are you dyslexic?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

***36. What was the main language spoken in your childhood home?**

- ☐ Icelandic
- ☐ English
- ☐ Icelandic and English
- ☐ Other

***37. What is your linguistic background?**

- ☐ Icelandic
- ☐ English
- ☐ Other

***38. What is your first language**

- ☐ Icelandic
- ☐ English
- ☐ Other

***39. In which country were you born?**

- ☐ Iceland
- ☐ An English speaking country
- ☐ A non-English speaking country

***40. What is your gender?**

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

***41. How often do you use an English speaking interpreter?**

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Twice a month
- ☐ Every week
- ☐ Every day

***42. How often do you use a client's family member or friend to interpret into English?**

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Twice a month
- ☐ Every week
- ☐ Every day

***43. How often do you seek the services of a translation service to translate documents into English?**

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Twice a month
- ☐ Every week
- ☐ Every day

