



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

HUGVÍSINDAÐEILD

English Loanwords in the Icelandic Language of the Sea

Particularly in the Jargon of Trawlermen

Ritgerð til M.A.-prófs

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Sverrir Konráðsson

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Hugvísindadeild
Enskuskor**

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Maí 2005

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Preface and acknowledgements

Ships and the sea have always fascinated me. As a young boy I witnessed merchant ships sailing in and out of the Port of Reykjavík and I knew they were coming from countries far away on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. To the young boy, they were tokens of life of adventure and excitement. My father brought me down to the quay and sometimes we went aboard a ship to talk to the watchman. The smell of the harbour was a mixture of exotic scents from the cargoes on the quay, fuel oil, fumes from the engines and fish from the fish factories. Trawlers were a source of excitement too, with their complex gear in disarray on the deck, bobbins on the quay, nets and miscellaneous mysteriously looking tackle and equipment with foreign-sounding names.

It was my destiny many years later to become a deckhand on a merchant ship sailing from the Port of Reykjavík to foreign countries and continents. Later, I became a student at the College of Navigation in Reykjavík and received my master mariner's certificate enabling me to become a mate and master on merchant ships of unlimited tonnage. After graduation, I flew to Ecuador and signed as second mate on a Danish merchant ship on a fixed route between the west coast ports of South America, North America and the Far East. Another dream had come true. I stood my watch on the bridge of a large freighter ploughing the waves of the Pacific Ocean. This was before the time of the global navigation systems. We found our way over the vast oceans by applying celestial navigation and the sextant was the mate's best friend.

After some years as a mate sailing between the continents of the world, I felt I had to fulfil another dream. During my days as a student in higher secondary grammar school, English had been my favourite subject. Therefore, in the autumn of 1984, I registered in the English Department of the University of Iceland. I gained my Bachelor of Arts degree in 1987. During the next two years, I studied for my Master of Arts degree. In 1990, I began to work on my M.A. thesis on English loanwords in the Icelandic language of the sea. One of my teachers, Magnús Fjalldal Ph.D. proposed this subject and told me that little or no work had been done on the numerous English borrowings in the trawling industry. Subsequently, in search of those borrowings, I read a large part of the biographies and autobiographies of Icelandic seamen, a great deal of the published material on nautical issues in Iceland, the complete history of marine salvage and shipwrecks in the 20th century as well as numerous Icelandic sea stories and accounts.

In 1990, I became a translator at the Institute of Lexicography, which had taken on the task of translating a large amount of the European Union legislation for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Few years later, I was employed at the Ministry as a

translator and system operator. My work on the thesis lay dormant during these years but every now and then I read sea stories and non-fiction on the subject of the sea to fulfil an ex sailor's need for experiencing, now in my armchair, the adventurous life of the mariner.

When our two little girls were born in 1997 and 1999, all work on the thesis was interrupted – my wife Dagný and I concentrated on the upbringing. In 2004, Dagný, assisted by Dr. Gauti Kristmannsson my old friend and co-student at the English Department earlier, urged me to resume my work on the old subject of the English loanwords. I decided to heed their call and requested a leave of absence from my present work at the Icelandic Maritime Administration (IMA). I am indebted to my director, Helgi Jóhannesson, and Director General of the IMA Hermann Guðjónsson for their support and for granting me a leave of absence of two months last winter so I could concentrate full-time on finalizing the paper.

Several persons have been most helpful to me during my work on the thesis. My supervisor, Gauti Kristmannsson, was especially inspirational from the outset and optimistic when any doubts rose. I owe him for that. Magnús Fjalldal professor at the English Department urged me to take on this assignment initially and he was extremely helpful during the final stages, for which I am thankful. I would like to thank my colleague at the IMA, Kristján Sveinson mag. art. for his invaluable advice on the subject of history as well as his wise words in general. I would especially like to thank my mentor and friend, Guðjón Ármann Eyjólfsson former principal of the College of Navigation in Reykjavík, who read the first proof of the thesis with enthusiasm and encouraged me all the time, while being one of the group of former trawlermen advising in the process of writing the paper. Many thanks to my friend Ari Guðmundsson B.Sc. naval architect for his encouragement through the years and stimulating discussions on our favourite subject of ships and the sea. Also, I thank his father, Captain Guðmundur Arason for the enthusiastic contributions from his wealth of experience as seaman, first as a trawlerman in his youth and later master of merchant ships flying various flags. Moreover, I want to especially thank Ron Walker M.Sc. Germersheim Germany for proofreading the paper.

Last but not least my sincere thanks are extended to my wife Dagný Þórgnýsdóttir M.A. for her encouraging advice, support and for reading the final proofs and likewise to my two little daughters, Edda Rún and Guðrún Lóa for their patience.

Garðabær
25 May 2005
SK

List of abbreviations

adv.	adverb
Arm.	Armenian
Cat.	Catalan
Catal.	catalogue
cogn.	cognate
Com.	common
comb.	combination(s)
Da.	Danish
dat.	dative
deriv.	derivative
Du.	Dutch
EFris.	East Frisian
Eng.	English
fem.	feminine
Fær.	Faeroese
G.	German
Goth.	Gothic
Gr.	Greek
Hind.	Hindi, Hindustani
Icel.	Icelandic
intr.	intransitive
It.	Italian
L.	Latin
LG.	Low German
masc.	masculine
MDu.	Middle Dutch
ME.	Middle English
med.L.	Medieval Latin
MHG.	Middle High German
MLG.	Middle Low German
mod.Du.	Modern Dutch
mod.F.	Modern French
mod.G.	Modern German
mod.Icel.	Modern Icelandic
mod.Sw.	Modern Swedish

MS.	manuscript
n.	noun
neutr.	neutral
NFris.	North Frisian
Norw.	Norwegian
OE.	Old English
OF.	Old French
OFris.	Old Frisian
OHG.	Old High German
OIr.	Old Irish
ON.	Old Norse
ONF.	Old Northern French
OS.	Old Saxon
OSw.	Old Swedish
OTeut.	Old Teutonic
Pg.	Portuguese
pop.L.	Popular Latin
ppl.	participial
Pr.	Provençal
preh.	prehistoric
prob.	probably
Prov.	Provençal
Pruss.	Prussian
quot.	quotation(s)
Sc.	Scottish
Skr.	Sanskrit
Sp.	Spanish
str.	strong
Sw.	Swedish
Teut.	Teutonic
trans.	transitive
v.	verb
vb.	verb
vbl.	verbal
WFris.	West Frisian
WGer.	West Germanic
wk.	weak
wk. vb.	weak verb

Phonetic notation – list of symbols used in the thesis

1. Symbols for phonemes^{*)}

ɪ as in 'pit' (pɪt)
 ɛ as in 'pet' (pɛt)
 æ as in 'pat' (pæt)
 ʌ as in 'putt' (pʌt)
 ɒ as in 'pot' (pɒt)
 ə as in 'about', 'upper'
 (ə'baʊt), ('ʌpə)

eɪ as in 'bay' (beɪ)
 aɪ as in 'buy' (baɪ)
 ɔɪ as in 'boy' (bɔɪ)
 ɪə as in 'peer' (pɪə)
 ɛə as in 'pear' (pɛə)
 ʊə as in '(pʊə)' poor

iː as in 'pea' (piː)
 t as in 'toe' (təʊ)
 k as in 'cap' (kæp)
 f as in 'fat' (fæt)
 θ as in 'thing' (θɪŋ)
 s as in 'sip' (sɪp)
 ʃ as in 'ship' (ʃɪp)
 h as in 'hat' (hæt)

m as in 'map' (mæp)
 n as in 'nap' (næp)
 ŋ as in 'hang' (hæŋ)

tʃ as in 'chin' (tʃɪn)

iː as in 'key' (kiː)
 ɑː as in 'car' (kɑː(r))
 ɔə as in 'core' (kɔə(r))
 uː as in 'coo' (kuː)
 ɜː as in 'cur' (kɜː(r))

əʊ as in 'go' (gəʊ)
 aʊ as in 'cow' (kaʊ)

b as in 'bee' (biː)
 d as in 'doe' (dəʊ)
 g as in 'gap' (gæp)
 v as in 'vat' (væt)
 ð as in 'this' (ðɪs)
 z as in 'zip' (zɪp)
 ʒ as in 'measure' (meɪʒə)

l as in 'led' (led)
 r as in 'red' (red)
 j as in 'yet' (jet)
 w as in 'wet' (set)

dʒ as in 'gin' (dʒɪn)

2. Stress

' primary stress, as in 'open' ('əʊpən)
 , secondary stress, as in 'ice cream' (aɪs,kriːm)

^{*)} Peter Roach. *English Phonetics and Phonology*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 6-7.

Summary

The thesis is an analysis of 46 English borrowings adopted by Icelandic seamen during the last decade of the 19th century and the first part of the 20th century when trawling was introduced in Iceland and Icelanders learned this revolutionary fishing method from British seamen. These loanwords have become a part of the Icelandic vocabulary of the sea despite attempts by language purists ashore to cleanse it of the English borrowings. According to a survey conducted in connection with the writing of this thesis, most of the terms are still used on board modern stern trawlers and an attempt to coin neologisms for many of the terms proved unsuccessful, as they never gained any popularity among seamen.

By going through the archive of citation slips of the Institute of Lexicography at the University of Iceland and studying written sources on the subject of trawling an attempt was made to determine each term's first occurrence in the written Icelandic language.

A part of the dissertation is an overview of linguistic purism in Iceland and tells the story of an attempt by scholars and governmental officials, who were worried about the influx of a foreign vocabulary into the maritime industries, to cleanse the language by, among other things, forming a terminological committee of academics and professional specialists and compiling lists of acceptable Icelandic terms. Some thoughts are put forward in support of the argument that loanwords have a stimulating effect on the functionality and viability of a language. Finally, the thesis raises the question of whether attempts to cleanse a language of loanwords and foreign influence are likely to affect the language in the long run or not.

Chapter 1

1.0 Introduction

The objective which gave rise to this dissertation was the collection and analysis of a set of English borrowings adopted by Icelandic seamen as a result of British influence during the period just before and after the turn of the 20th century when the industry of trawling was introduced into Iceland. In the coverage of the set of loanwords, I have attempted to point out in what way nautical English, as used in connection with side trawling, has influenced the Icelandic language in that field.

English-oriented terms for trawling gear and various on-board equipment and vessel parts are well rooted in the language and there seems to be an apparent and widespread tendency among trawler seamen to retain the early borrowings in their jargon. Therefore, neologisms coined by academics ashore have not superseded the numerous English loanwords adopted by trawlermen early in the 20th century.

The terms discussed in this thesis have been preserved in the written language though many of them also continue to be used both on board modern trawlers and ashore. They are preserved by word of mouth in the industry, handed down from generation to generation of trawlermen and many of them still survive in the specific language spoken on board trawlers.

The origins of the nautical terms and concepts discussed in this thesis are relatively self-evident. In this respect, it is not necessary to become too involved in tracing the path of entry into Icelandic of the terms and concepts in question since the origin itself is often not disputed. The vehicle of entry is the specific linguistic usage or jargon of the community of British seamen who engaged in trawling in Icelandic waters

around the turn of the 20th century. The period of acquisition is defined as lasting from the late nineties of the 19th century to the early decades of the 20th century. The period of usage extends to the present day. The receiving community consisted of Icelandic trawler seamen who learned the specific technique involved in side trawling and absorbed the linguistic usage on board trawlers and ashore in England and Scotland when they were training for the job.

I have made note of some of the words and phrases which I have found and consider English borrowings, analysed their usage, speculated on their pronunciation in the source and target languages, given examples of usage derived from written sources, translated the examples of Icelandic usage into Icelandic and considered some translation problems of nautical origin involved in the process. Also, I have attempted to determine each term's first occurrence in the written Icelandic language, primarily by going through the archive of citation slips of the Institute of Lexicography of the University of Iceland.¹ I have commented on each entry and attempted to determine any similarities in the acquisition of the terms from the English language and discussed other points relevant to the subject.

In the case of English loanwords in the language of the sea, especially trawling terms, only a few are recorded in the primary reference dictionary, the *Icelandic Etymological Dictionary*, making the task of determining with certainty the language from which the given term was borrowed somewhat difficult at times.

The evidence of the acquisition of the English-oriented trawler terminology is to be found in written sources from the turn of the 20th century and the decades following, mostly in the form of biographical and autobiographical accounts by former side trawler

¹ Hereafter referred to as the archive of citation slips.

skippers and seamen. Those seamen had spent most of their seagoing service time on board these particular vessels absorbing the new technology in the early days of trawling. In my search for loanword candidates I have, during the last 15 years, read most of those biographies and autobiographies, a great deal of the published material on nautical matters in Iceland, the history of marine salvage and shipwrecks in the 20th century as well as numerous Icelandic sea stories and accounts. Also, I went through various other important sources of written usage such as Icelandic newspapers and magazines from the period of acquisition.

In my search for possible English loanword candidates I also studied old drawings and blueprints, mainly general arrangement sheets of side trawlers built after World War II. Most of the terms that were found in these documents were known already. But finding them recorded in the drawings was very important in order to verify their existence in source documents created by the English and Scottish shipyards where the side trawlers were built, on which the English loanwords originated.

One problem associated with the written sources of nautical language is their considerable variety. Authors who wrote some of the biographies of skippers and entrepreneurs in the trawling industry might have been reluctant to use the rich and colourful jargon of the sea unchanged. Therefore, perhaps they tended to purify the spoken language of the seamen. Perhaps a factor in this cleansing of the language was the strict language policy adhered to by Icelandic scholars and officials during the first part of the 20th century and still is to an extent. An example of this is the biography of Hjalti Jónsson or Eldeyjar-Hjalti², the renowned skipper and shipowner, written by

² Guðmundur G. Hagalín. *Saga Eldeyjar-Hjalta*, Vol. II. (Reykjavík: Ísafold, 1939).

Guðmundur G. Hagalín, a beloved author of many popular novels and literary works. The subject, Hjalti Jónsson, had learned trawling in England and became one of the first Icelandic trawler skippers. Very likely, the author has ‘corrected’ any nautical jargon used by Jónsson in his interviews with him. Other authors, especially later on in the century, seem to have made little attempt to do this and used the rough and ready style, which belongs to a people of the sea, to render their work more authentic. Such sources are very valuable to those who want to study English elements in the Icelandic language.

Study of examples of usage from the archive of citation slips, revealed an increased tendency towards the use of loanwords in nautical Icelandic from around the middle of the 20th century onwards but the examples from the first years and decades of the trawling period seem to be fewer. This might be an indication of the early writers’ inclination to linguistic purism in the spirit of this period. This was a period of a struggle of the Icelandic people towards independence from the Danes, which culminated in sovereignty in 1918. The language was considered the primary token of Icelandic nationality and language purists and nationalists highlighted the idea that a pure language was a clear indication of a promising nation.

A necessary part of this thesis is an overview of the history of fisheries in Iceland, especially the introduction of trawling on the Icelandic fishing banks in the last decade of the 19th century and an account on how the new industry affected the economy of Iceland. The overview briefly documents the impact of trawling on the Icelandic fishing industry, and looks at how Icelanders learned the technique of trawling from British fishermen while also acquiring a large number of English loanwords in the

process. The historical coverage is essential in order to put the subject matter of the thesis into context.

Furthermore, a survey was conducted in order to identify which of the relevant words and concepts borrowed from English have survived in modern Icelandic trawling language. Questionnaires were sent by e-mail to two of the largest trawling companies in Iceland and to a group of deckhands, mates and skippers, who had worked on board Icelandic stern trawlers and the old side trawlers, see section 3.3 “Survey on the usage of loan words on board trawlers”.

It is my belief that the English language has had a much more direct effect on Icelandic nautical language than has been assumed thus far. Many of the loanwords that were thought to have entered Icelandic via Danish have undoubtedly been introduced directly from English. As related in Chapter 2, English influence in Iceland dates back as far as 1400 when traders from the British Isles engaged in fierce competition with German merchants to sell and buy goods in Iceland. It is quite likely that in the process Icelanders adopted numerous loanwords from these traders and seamen. However, the loanwords discussed in this thesis are almost exclusively direct borrowings from the English technical vocabulary used on board side trawlers though some interesting examples of indirect loans and English loans introduced via Danish will also be mentioned.

1.1 On loanwords

“I trade both with the Living and the Dead, for the enrichment of our Native Language. We have enough in England to supply our necessity; but if we will have things of

Magnificence and Splendour, we must get them by Commerce” wrote Dryden in his Dedication to his translation of Virgil’s *Aeneid* of 1697.³

The words of Dryden reflect a necessity to borrow elements from other languages, even dead languages like Latin, to enrich the native language but at the same time he proudly states that his mother tongue has sufficient elements in stock to supply the necessity demanded by him and English speakers. A similar thought is reflected in a line from a poem by one of Iceland’s great romantic poets of the late 19th century and early 20th century, Einar Benediktsson: “I understood, that a word in Iceland exists, for everything thought of on Earth”, *Ég skildi, að orð er á Íslandi til um allt, sem er hugsað á jörð*.⁴ This is perhaps an overstatement written by a poet and a romantic nationalist. Probably, Benediktsson meant that it was indeed possible to coin a neologism in the Icelandic tongue for every term that was needed. Surely, he must have known that the Icelandic language, at that time, lacked a vast number of scientific, commercial and cultural language elements, which needed to be coined or borrowed from other languages and naturalised.

All languages have borrowed some elements from other languages. The borrowed words or loanwords are adopted by the speakers and writers of one language and originate from a different language, the source language.

According to the linguist David Crystal, a borrowing is the introduction of a word, or some other linguistic feature, from one language or dialect into another. Vocabulary borrowings are usually called loanwords. In a loan blend, the meaning is

³ Albert C. Baugh; Thomas Cable. *A History of the English Language*, London: Routledge, 1984, 219.

⁴ Sören Sörenson. *Ensk-íslensk orðabók með alfræðilegu ívafi*. (Reykjavík: Örn og Örlygur, 1984), XXVI. From the poem *My Mother* by poet and entrepreneur, Einar Benediktsson, in memory of his mother and in gratitude for her teaching him the mother tongue.

borrowed but only part of the form, such as when English *restaurant* retains a French pronunciation of the final syllable. In loan shifts, the meaning is borrowed but the form is nativized, such as when *restaurant* is given a totally English pronunciation.⁵

There is, however, no literal lending process involved when terms are borrowed between language communities. Therefore, the terms “loan” and “borrowing” are of course only metaphors, according to Kemmer.⁶

As outlined by Fromkin and Rodman, borrowing is an important source of language change over time and loans from other languages are an important source of new words. Most languages are borrowers, and the vocabulary of any language can be divided into native and non-native words. A *native word* is one whose history or etymology can be traced back to the earliest-known stages of the language.⁷

Another type of borrowing is the so-called calque or loan translation. The word loan translation itself, according to Crystal, is a calque originating from the German term *Lehnübersetzung*. A calque is a type of borrowing where the parts or morphemes of the borrowed word are translated item by item into equivalent parts (morphemes) in the new language. An example is the English term *power politics* from German *Machtpolitik*.⁸

The cultural relationship between the receiving language and the donating language is significant. The elements of power, importance and wealth of the two

⁵ David Crystal. *An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Language and Languages*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 54.

⁶ S. Kemmer. *Loanwords: Major Periods of Borrowing in the History of English*, 25 September 2004, <<http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~kemmer>>

⁷ Victoria Fromkin; Robert Rodman. *An Introduction to Language*. (New York: Holt-Saunders, 1983), 292.

⁸ David Crystal. *An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Language and Languages*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 46-47.

language sides play a fundamental role in the borrowing process. The borrowing language represents the technically less developed culture, i.e. it has more to learn from the donating language.

According to Kemmer, linguistic borrowing is a result of a cultural contact between two communities speaking different languages. The borrowing of words can go in both directions between the two language communities in contact. However, an asymmetry often exists in that more words tend to go from one side than the other. The source language community tends to have some advantage of power, prestige and/or wealth, which makes the objects and ideas that it brings desirable and useful to the community of the borrowing language.⁹

A clear example of this kind of asymmetry in the borrowing of is seen in the linguistic relationship between British seamen and Icelandic seamen on the fishing grounds around the turn of the 20th century. In the process of learning the trawling technique, the Icelandic seamen also absorbed a great many English trawling terms, which have since remained in the Icelandic vocabulary as loanwords and calques. It is unlikely that the cultural contact between Britain and Iceland during the decades in which British trawlers were present on the Icelandic fishing grounds, resulted in any Icelandic borrowings to English trawler language. This particular cultural contact was not mutual and underlines the cultural difference. After all, Icelanders learned the technique of trawling from the British and were the receiving side in the process.

⁹ S. Kemmer, *Loanwords: Major Periods of Borrowing in the History of English*, 25 September 2004, <<http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~kemmer>>

The cultural difference between the two nations was great at that time in terms of power, prestige and wealth. In this period, Britain was a major sea power and the British Empire flourishing worldwide. In that sense, we have a clear example of a technically less developed culture borrowing terms from a hegemonic industrial culture.

Increased travel and communication during the 19th century brought about by the railroad, the steamboat and the telegraph had the effect of spreading the influence of Standard English around the world. The growth of science and industry too, lead to the generation of a great number of scientific and technical terms, which continued to proliferate. In every field of pure and applied science, there was an increased need for thousands of new terms. The great majority of these are technical words, familiar only to specialists, but a certain number of them pass into general use and become known to the lay public.¹⁰

There is a fine line between the power statuses of the receiving and the donating languages. There are few modern Icelandic loanwords in English. The most obvious is ‘geyser’ from Icelandic *Geysir*, named after the famous *Geysir*, proper name of a particular hot spring in Iceland; literally ‘gusher’; related to *geysa*, ON. *gøysa*, to gush, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*. If asked, the ordinary speaker of English would perhaps think that the Icelandic verb *rannsaka* was a loanword from English, to ransack, to make a thorough search in or throughout (a place, receptacle, collection of things, etc.) for something (in early use, something stolen, according to the *OED*). The ordinary speaker of English would have to be corrected. The word seems to occur first in English in 1250, according to the *OED*, and the etymological information

¹⁰ Albert C. Baugh; Thomas Cable, 296-297.

clearly points to an ON, or Old Icelandic origin: [ON. *rannsaka* (Sw. *ransaka*, Da. *ransage*), f. *rann* house (= Goth. *razn*, OE. *ærn*) + *-saka*, ablaut-var. of *sékkja* to seek; cf. *saka* to blame, accuse, harm. Guernsey dial. *ransaquer*, Gael. *rannsaich* are from Eng. or ON. ON. *rannsaka* is esp. used in the legal sense of searching a house for stolen goods.] This is a good example of the constant process of mutual borrowing between languages and the fluctuating power status of the receiving and donating languages.

The power status of the Old Norse speaking nations in the middle ages was a dominating one. About 40 words of Old Norse origin were introduced into Old English by the Norsemen, or Vikings, who invaded Britain regularly from the late 8th century on. At first, words pertaining to the sea and warfare were introduced, but shortly after the initial invasions other words used in the social and administrative system in Scandinavia, for example, the word ‘law’ (*lög*), entered the language, as well as the verb form ‘are’ (*eru*) and such widely used words as ‘take’ (*taka*), ‘cut’ (*kúttu*), ‘both’ (*báðir*), ‘ill’ (*illa*), and ‘ugly’ (*ugglegur*).¹¹

In the early period of Middle English, a number of utilitarian words, such as ‘egg’ (*egg*), ‘sky’ (*ský*), ‘sister’ (*systir*), ‘window’ (*vindauga*), and ‘get’ (*geta*), came into the language from Old Norse.¹²

Many English scientific and technical terms are loanwords from other languages, mainly from Latin and Greek. It has been estimated, however, that the present English vocabulary consists of more than 1 million words, including slang and

¹¹ “English Language”. *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2000*. (Microsoft Corporation, 2000 CD-ROM version), accessed 9 April 2005.

¹² “English Language”. *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2000*. (Microsoft Corporation, 2000 CD-ROM version), accessed 9 April 2005.

dialect expressions and scientific and technical terms, many of which only came into use after the middle of the 20th century.

In modern times, words pass from one language to another on a scale that is probably unprecedented, partly because of the enormous number of new inventions that have been made in the 20th century and partly because international communications are now so much more rapid and important. The Internet is one of the vehicles of communication in this respect. The vocabulary of modern science and technology is very largely international.¹³

Ralph Waldo Emerson observed: “The English language has been called a sea, which receives tributaries from every region under heaven.”¹⁴

The English vocabulary is more extensive than that of any other language in the world, although some other languages—Chinese, for example—have a word-building capacity equal to that of English. It is, approximately half Germanic (Old English and Scandinavian) and half Italic or Romance (French and Latin) and extensive, constant borrowing from every major language, especially from Latin, Greek, French, and the Scandinavian languages, and from numerous minor languages, accounts for the great number of words in the English vocabulary.¹⁵

The ability of English to absorb loanwords from almost every language on earth has made it a true international language. But of late, linguistic purists have warned that new words are constantly being coined and usages modified to express new concepts. The vocabulary of the English language is constantly enriched by loanwords and calques, particularly by cross-fertilizations from American English. The English

¹³ “Linguistics.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2005. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, accessed 9 Apr. 2005, <<http://search.eb.com/eb/article?tocId=35113>>.

¹⁴ Quote from Robert McCrum; William Cran; Robert MacNeil. *The Story of English*. (London/Boston: Faber and Faber), 11.

¹⁵ “English Language”. *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2000*. (Microsoft Corporation, 2000 CD-ROM version), accessed 6 April 2005.

language has become the chief international language, mainly because it is capable of infinite possibilities of communication.¹⁶ The international language has perhaps gained this position through power and hegemony.

The question seems to be: Will the almost free absorption of terms from practically every language on the globe undermine the roots of the English language and render it a peculiar mixture or ‘cacophonous’ amalgamation of the world languages? Or will the linguistic purists manage to control or counteract the steady flow of new foreign candidates in the form of borrowings and calques and manage to coin acceptable neologisms of ‘native’ English origin, and render the language stronger in the process? Time alone will tell.

1.2 Linguistic purism

Purism is a school of thought, which sees a language as needing preservation from external processes that might infiltrate it and thus make it change. Purist attitudes are a normal accompaniment to the perception, which each generation represents, that standards of language (as social standards generally) are deteriorating. Purists are conservative in matters of usage, emphasize the importance of prescriptive rules in grammar and pronunciation, and insist on the authority of dictionaries, grammars, and other manuals.¹⁷

This section presents an overview of linguistic purism in Iceland and tells the story of an attempt by scholars and governmental officials, who were worried about the influx of foreign vocabulary into the maritime industries, to purify the language.

¹⁶ “English Language”. *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2000*. (Microsoft Corporation, 2000 CD-ROM version), accessed 7 April 2005.

¹⁷ David Crystal. *An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Language and Languages*. 322.

In line with nationalistic tendencies in the first part of the 20th century when Icelanders continued to fight their campaign for independence from Danish rule, foreign words were not readily accepted into the language. A prominent part of that campaign was the purification of the language by cleansing it of Danishisms and any other foreign words.

In order to familiarize oneself with the meaning of the concept of linguistic purism the usage of which has been somewhat confusing, it is important to compare it with various related concepts, such as language loyalty, language awareness and language preservation. Language loyalty and language awareness seem to be more comprehensive concepts than linguistic purism and language preservation, at least in the sense in which the concepts are used today. Language loyalty also seems to be superseding language awareness as a sort of a principal concept in this field. Language loyalty encompasses both the strengthening of the language and its preservation. The strengthening of the language, *inter alia*, covers the enlargement of the lexis, increased diversity in the mode of expression, strengthening of the linguistic community and reinforcing the belief in the values of the language. Today, the aim of the preservation policy in Iceland is to conserve the cohesion of the native language so that Icelanders will be literate in the Icelandic language of all ages. Language preservation aims, in particular, at the preservation part of language loyalty and the same applies to linguistic purism. In a narrow sense, linguistic purism can be defined as an effort to bring about the eradication of those linguistic elements, which are considered to be weeds in the language, in particular, foreign linguistic usage and the so-called linguistic errors.¹⁸

¹⁸ Kjartan G. Ottósson. *Íslensk málhreinsun*. (Reykjavík: Íslensk málnefnd, 1990), 9.

According to Ottósson, the most urgent task of the linguistic purist policy in former times was the defence against the onslaught of the Danish language influences, a defence, which placed its main emphasis on the purification work. During the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th, the coining of neologisms was more prominent than was the case earlier. However this was also a natural consequence of the greater number, variety and pace of innovations in all sorts of fields, which called for a vast number of new Icelandic words. The main purpose of coining neologisms is to prevent the influx of foreign words into a language; the coining of neologisms therefore can be defined as a kind of preventive measure in of linguistic purism. Linguistic purism can, however, go to extremes and actually weaken the language if, for example, the main emphasis is placed on eradicating loanwords, which could otherwise be used to avoid the repetition of wholly Icelandic words.¹⁹ Here, as often before, the avoidance of excess in either direction has to be emphasised, and the golden mean must be found.

It is believed that Arngrímur Jónsson the Learned (1568-1648), a priest and scholar, was the first man in Iceland to promote linguistic purism with regard to the Icelandic language. However, this policy seems to have gained little ground until after the middle of the 18th century when Eggert Ólafsson (1726-1768), poet and scholar and principal herald of the Enlightenment in Iceland, and the Society of Learning (*Lærdómslistafélagið*) adhered to a policy of correct use of the language in their publications. During the first part of the 19th century the members of the *Fjölnir* society, with Jónas Hallgrímsson (1807-1845), naturalist and one of the most prominent and beloved of Icelandic romantic poets, were in the vanguard in the fight for the

¹⁹ Kjartan G. Ottósson. 10.

purification and embellishment of the Icelandic language. In the 19th century, too, Sveinbjörn Egilsson (1791-1852), scholar, translator and poet, was one of the most eager supporters of linguistic purism in Iceland.²⁰

In the 20th century, many able man made valuable contributions to the coining of neologisms. One of these was Dr. Guðmundur Finnbogason (1873-1944), one of the most versatile and talented scholars in Iceland in the first part of the 20th century, psychologist, professor, rector of the University of Iceland and Chief Librarian of the National Library of Iceland. He was a noted coiner of neologisms, productive writer, and last but not least, translator. By this time, Danish influence on the Icelandic language had declined somewhat but, on the other hand, the onslaught of foreign words, with no equivalents in the language of the general public, was on a steady rise. One of the most important aspects of Dr. Finnbogason's influence on neologisms was undoubtedly his participation in the Civil Engineers' Terminology Committee, founded on 26 March 1919, where he was quite active until 1926. The scope of this terminology committee was quite extensive but one of its main areas of interest was nautical language. Among other things, they concerned themselves with the task of classifying the vocabulary used on board ships and with finding words and phrases for the miscellaneous items related to the application of new technologies in the field of shipbuilding as well as with new technical equipment on board ships.²¹

As the terminology committee was commencing its work, preparations were under way to draft a bill on the safety of ships. To this end, Dr. Finnbogason and

²⁰ Halldór Halldórsson. *Íslensk málrækt: erindi og ritgerðir*. (Reykjavík: Hlaðbúð, 1971), 170.

²¹ *Hugur ræður hálfri sjón*. ed. Jóhann Hauksson. Baldur Jónsson. "Orðasmíð Guðmundar Finnbogasonar." (Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan, 1997), 33-34.

Sigurður Nordal (1886-1974), a literary scholar, philosopher and professor, and co-member of the committee, translated a royal directive, *Directive on the Survey of Ships and Boats and their Safety*²² issued in 1922. The directive was translated from Danish and it was published in the official journal as well as in a special publication. The directive included a list of new terms, in which the neologisms were translated into English and Danish.²³

The rules that were later drafted and adopted in the field of maritime safety, for instance *Rules on the Construction of Wooden Ships*²⁴ of 1947 and *Rules on the Survey of Ships and their Safety*²⁵ of 1953, are, to a large extent, based on the same language policy and vocabulary as is found in the directive from 1922. In the drafting of those acts, an emphasis was also placed on the coinage of neologisms.

Dr. Finnbogason and his followers were eager to defend the Icelandic language from the onslaught of foreign terms and got somewhat ahead of themselves, according to some people, in coining neologisms in the field of seamanship and sailing.

One of the consultants who participated in the terminology committee meetings was Sveinbjörn Egilson (1863-1946), former merchant seaman on board English sailing ships in international trade, the director of the Fisheries Association of Iceland (*Fiskifjélag Íslands*) at that time and editor of *Ægir*, a monthly magazine on fisheries and maritime affairs. However, early on he seems to have disagreed with many of the linguistic points of view of the members of the committee who were eager to find neologisms or to translate most, if not all, of the various terms and phrases used by

²² *Tilskipun um eftirlit með skipum og bátum og öryggi þeirra*. (Reykjavík: Ísafoldarprentsmiðja, 1922).

²³ Baldur Jónsson, 43.

²⁴ *Reglur um smíði tréskipa*. (Reykjavík: Samgöngumálaráðuneytið, 1947).

²⁵ *Reglur um eftirlit með skipum og öryggi þeirra*. (Reykjavík: Samgöngumálaráðuneytið, 1953).

seamen in connection with their work. As a consequence, he decided to resign from the committee and subsequently he engaged in a harsh dispute with Dr. Finnbogason and his followers on the linguistic policy to be adhered to in connection with the complex terminology of seafarers. In short, Sveinbjörn Egilson opposed the coining of neologisms for terms in the field of seamanship and sailing. One of his main arguments against this approach was the danger that could arise if a seaman did not understand orders in a moment of danger. He maintained that such an incident could occur if seamen were not able to understand the neologisms.²⁶ He writes in *Ægir*: “One single neologism, which is misunderstood in a moment of peril, could have the most tragic consequences.”²⁷

Sveinbjörn Egilson did not in any way conceal his forthright opinion that highly educated linguists should not take any part in the coining of neologisms relating to ships and seamen's work. Rather, the men carrying out the work in question should do this. In compliance with his language policy of collecting foreign loanwords, Sveinbjörn Egilson had published a brochure in 1906 named *Leiðarvísir í sjómensku* (sic.) (*Guidance in Seamanship*). Later (in 1925) another work was published, which he named *Handbók fyrir íslenska sjómenn* (*Manual for Icelandic Seamen*). In a preface to the second publication he admits that many people are displeased with the seamen's jargon in the book but since it was meant for seamen only, he had asked a few renowned master mariners and skippers, who shared his views on the subject, for their opinion and help with the vocabulary. He also states that he will stand and fall on his decision on the

²⁶ Halldór Halldórsson, 176-178.

²⁷ Sveinbjörn Egilson, ed. *Ægir*. (Reykjavík, Farmanna- og fiskimannasamband Íslands, 1922), 95, [my translation].

choice of vocabulary contained in the book and that he is willing to explain the content whenever needed.²⁸

Dr. Finnbogason obviously took the opposite point of view regarding seamen's language usage, even though he valued Egilson's contribution to the practical training of Icelandic seamen. In his article, "Seamen's Jargon", published in the daily newspaper *Morgunblaðið* on 12 May 1925, Dr. Finnbogason severely criticises the language used in the *Manual for Seamen*, where he for instance writes:

So deep-rooted is the writer's contempt for the work that has been carried out in recent years to purify the seamen's language, and for the committee, which he himself was once a member of, that he actively avoids using terms already approved by the committee and which have been printed.²⁸

Later in the same article, Dr. Finnbogason writes:

In the name of all those who love the Icelandic tongue I would, therefore, like to ask the author and the board of the Fisheries Association of Iceland to be ashamed of their conduct in this regard. Furthermore, I urge the board of the Fisheries Association to stop selling the book and arrange to have it translated into the Icelandic language before it comes before the eyes of the public again.²⁹

Egilson immediately answered back the following day in an open letter to Dr.

Guðmundur Finnbogason in *Morgunblaðið*:

Do you really think that you can with any success translate the language of seamanship, which is currently used on board ships into Icelandic, when you fail to understand the phrases from the book that you yourself quote?³⁰

Although the fierce debate finally died down, both parties remained unyielding in their positions.

²⁸ Sveinbjörn Egilson. *Handbók fyrir íslenska sjómenn*. (Reykjavík: Prentsmiðjan Gutenberg, 1925), vi-vii.

²⁹ Kjartansson, Jón; Stefánsson, Valtýr eds. *Morgunblaðið*. (Reykjavík: Fjlag, 12 May 1925), 2, [my translation].

³⁰ *Morgunblaðið*, 13 May 1925, 3, [my translation].

The policy of linguistic purism was so deeply rooted in the minds of those who were in a position to prescribe a particular linguistic usage, that more than this argument was needed to undermine it. However, Dr. Sigurður Nordal, who was jointly responsible for the policy of the terminology committee with Dr. Finnbogason, wrote an interesting article in *Lesbók Morgunblaðsins*, based, among other things, on discussions that took place in the wake of a lecture that he had given earlier. In the article, he discusses the main points of the debate between Dr. Guðmundur Finnbogason and Sveinbjörn Egilson and reflects on whether it would be technically possible or even desirable to translate foreign seafarers' vocabularies or jargon into Icelandic. Also, he broadens the discussion and writes:

When the townsfolk began to discuss the matter, more interesting points of view were revealed. A discussion took place on whether foreign words should in principle be adopted in the language, what was the value of a purified language and of coining neologisms, etc. In these discussions it seemed to me that the majority of the people present adhered to the views of those who defended the foreign words and were of the opinion that the Icelandic language was not so clean that it could not receive a few foreign words from the large vehicle called modern culture. The righteousness on behalf of the language was, to a large extent, the captiousness of learned men, particularly linguists, who wanted to “make themselves important” and to impose useless neologisms and obsolete gibberish on the public.³¹

The general debate on the application of neologisms, loanwords and linguistic purity has continued to rumble on ever since Dr. Finnbogason and Egilson engaged in their fierce debate 80 years ago. However, the foreign language of concern is no longer Danish but English, the international lingua franca.

³¹ *Lesbók Morgunblaðsins*. Reykjavík: Fjelag, 5 September 1926), 1-5, [my translation].

In 1951, the Minister of Education of the time, Björn Ólafsson, decided to set up a committee consisting of three scholars and chaired by Alexander Jóhannesson (1888-1965), linguist and rector of the University of Iceland, with the task of collecting technical terms in the various old and new fields of industry and other professional disciplines and coining neologisms if there were none available.³² The committee published four rather small volumes: dictionaries or glossaries with translations, during the period 1953-1956, containing neologisms in various fields: physics, nuclear physics, electronics, chemistry, automobile technology, psychology, logic, biology, genetics, agriculture, seamanship and aviation.

Dr. Halldór Halldórsson, editor of all but the first volume states in his preface to the *Dictionary of Neologisms, Nýyrði III*:

Various loanwords are adopted in the collection whereby we take into consideration whether or not they have gained a foothold in the language and whether they conform to the Icelandic language system. I hope that people will not be startled while reading this collection of neologisms if they run across some old words, sometimes furnished with new meanings, sometimes not, and also loanwords. A policy on the development of the Icelandic language may not be so strictly implemented that the loanword path is closed, although in that respect certain moderation must be maintained.³³

Then Halldórsson continues and defines three ways to increase the vocabulary and semantic resources of the language and to adapt these to the cultural needs of the language. According to him, these three ways are: 1) to coin new words, 2) to furnish old words with new meanings, and 3) to adopt loanwords.

³² Halldór Halldórsson. *Nýyrði*, Vol. II. (Reykjavík: Leiftur, 1954), preface.

³³ Halldór Halldórsson. *Nýyrði*, Vol. III. (Reykjavík: Leiftur, 1955), 3 [my translation].

This approach seems a sensible one with an aim of increasing the lexis and does not reject the option of adopting loanwords if they conform to the Icelandic language system and have become established in the vocabulary. It seems that this policy has been followed ever since within the various terminology committees that have been appointed to date. In this case, the strict approach forged by Dr. Finnbogason and his co-members of the first terminology committees earlier on is not followed.

But has the policy of linguistic purism that has been followed, particularly by some scholars and academics, served to protect the Icelandic language from unfavourable foreign influences? The question will never be fully answered. Although, many Icelandic purists have wanted to preserve the roots of the language and ensure that Icelanders were literate in the sagas and Eddas, they were no isolationists. Scholars like Dr. Guðmundur Finnbogason, had received their academic training abroad, which must have made them aware of the dangers that their mother tongue could confront in the face of the onslaught of foreign language elements. They knew that if nothing was done, one day Danish would be the official language of Iceland and Icelanders would consequently not be able to read the sagas, as had been the fate of the Norwegians. Fortunately, this has been avoided, for the time being at least, and a sensible approach seems to have been chosen to preserve the language against foreign influence.

Chapter 2

2.0 An overview of the history of fishing and trawling operations in Iceland

For centuries Icelanders have utilised the rich fishing grounds around the country. From the time of the settlement, small-scale seasonal fisheries were pursued, parallel with agriculture, on inshore fishing grounds in open boats. The main fishing grounds were located in the southern and western parts of Iceland and the primary fishing season was from February until May each year, when the cod migrated seasonally to the fishing grounds where conditions were better for breeding and spawning. Fishing stations were built on the shores adjacent to the rich fishing grounds and banks where cod and other species were likely to be caught. The fish was caught with handlines (hook and line) or longlines on open rowing boats with up to 12 oars, six on each side. Sails were also used to propel these boats, as most of them had two masts and a bowsprit, but due to fickle winds manual propelling was often the ultimate solution.

During the fishing season the crews of the fishing boats dwelled in stations made of turf and rock by the seaside. The crew members were mainly agricultural workers sent by landowners to the fishing stations to earn money from fishing. In the 11th century, landowners made considerable profits from fishing activities.

In the middle of the fourteenth century, fish products became Iceland's main export, the largest part of which was stockfish and fish oil now instead of the homespun clothing, which had been the main export currency until 1300. One of the reasons for the change from agricultural exports to fish product exports was the increased commerce by German traders of the Hanseatic League in Norway. This opened up a

new route to the fish markets in Europe where the consumption of fish was on the increase. Also, fish oil was increasingly being used for lighting up cities.³⁴

Englishmen began to fish Icelandic fishing grounds around 1400 and engaged in a fierce competition with German traders in Iceland at that time. The English fishermen carried out their fishing operations in decked fishing smacks. At the same time the Danish government tried to counteract their effect by all available means.³⁵

In 1602, the Danish government, established monopoly trade in Iceland, resulting in a ban on German and English fishing operations in the country. This, however, did not apply to the fishing activities themselves. English, German, Dutch, French and Spanish vessels fished in Icelandic waters during the period of the Danish monopoly trade. Icelanders could not engage in any trading with seamen from the aforementioned nations, although this did go on secretly. The foreign fishers were not allowed to establish any form of residence ashore. The Icelandic landed gentry, who had a hard time tolerating the labour force competition, may have influenced this ban.³⁶

It is believed that the number of large rowing boats (up to 12 oars) diminished considerably around the turn of the 18th century. The most probable reason for this was catch failure and cold weather conditions. Due to the catch failure, the operation of large rowing boats was impractical. Also, one-third of the Icelandic population was wiped out in a smallpox epidemic in 1707-1709. Since the large rowing boats needed a large crew

³⁴ Einar Laxness, Vol. III. (Reykjavík: Vaka-Helgafell, 1995), 26, 107.

³⁵ *Íslandssaga*, 27.

³⁶ *Íslandssaga*, 110-113.

it became uneconomical to operate them when fish were scarce and due to the epidemic it was more difficult to man the boats with efficient crews.³⁷

It was not until 1787 when the Danish monopoly was abolished that Icelandic entrepreneurs like Bjarni Sívertsen in Hafnarfjörður began to use decked fishing smacks for fishing on the primary fishing grounds and to build up fish processing facilities ashore, e.g. in Hafnarfjörður. The age of the decked sailing vessels used for fishing is considered to be from the middle of the 18th century until around 1906. This was also the period when foreign operators were increasingly pursuing fishing activities in Iceland. For instance, French fishing smacks were quite numerous in 1864.³⁸

It can be stated that during the age of the decked fishing smacks, mainly after 1870 in the Faxaflói Bay area, a revolution occurred in the industrial structure of Iceland, which increased competition in commerce. In fact, the operation of decked fishing vessels was the prelude to the capitalistic industrial development in Iceland, which dominated the latter part of the first decade of the 20th century.³⁹

Commercial issues were much discussed during the political turmoil that began in the first part of the 19th century, mainly characterised by Icelanders' demands for political independence. Liberalism in trade matters was high on the agenda during this period and it was no wonder that it affected Icelandic political leaders, many of whom resided in Copenhagen. Legislation on freedom in trade entered into force on 1 April

³⁷ Kristján Sveinsson. "Fleytan er of smá, sá guli er utar: um breytingar á bátastærðum 1690-1770." (Reykjavík: *Sagnir*, Vol. 11, 1990), 28-34.

³⁸ Einar Laxness, *Íslandssaga*, Vol. III. (Reykjavík: Vaka-Helgafell, 1995), 26-28.

³⁹ Halldór Bjarnason, „Kýrstaða atvinnuhátta á 19. öld og upphaf nútímans í hagsögu Íslands: Ný sögutúlkun í ljósi nýrrar vitneskju,” lecture given at a humanitarian conference, University of Iceland, Reykjavík, 14 Oct. 2000.

Magnús S. Magnússon. *Iceland in Transition: Labour and Socio-Economic Change Before 1940*, Skrifter utgivna af ekonomisk-historiska föreningen, 45 (Lund: Ekonomisk-historiska föreningen, 1983), 19, 55–6. <http://www.hugvis.hi.is/saekja/hb_erindi.pdf>. Accessed 17 February 2005.

1855. According to the legislation, Icelanders could trade with anyone they liked. Initially, the legislation did not have much effect due to various difficulties in Iceland at that time (hard times and sheep diseases). But later, as the rural areas became more densely populated, commerce increased and became more diverse. Icelandic traders began to direct their business towards Britain and interaction with the British people grew considerably.⁴⁰ During this period a considerable number of loanwords entered the Icelandic language, mainly words concerning trade, goods and fisheries.

2.1 Industrialization

With the onset of industrialization in Iceland, the utilisation of the steam engine was seen as a promising technological break-through in ship propulsion and fishing operations. This was a new and more modern approach than had been known before. Steam power was a significant advance in development, removing many obstacles to progress. Fishing activities on rowing boats and smacks were demanding on the crews who, in addition to the hard labour, had to row large and heavy rowing boats long distances to and from the fishing banks. The crews of the fishing smacks had also to work the rigging of the decked sailing vessels in adverse weather conditions in addition to their fishing duties.

⁴⁰ Björn Þorsteinsson; Bergsteinn Jónsson. *Íslands saga til okkar daga*. (Reykjavík: Sögufélag, 1991), 293.

Small kerosene and petrol engines were introduced in Iceland late in the 19th century and these were used to power various types of boats. In 1902 the first Icelandic rowing boat was equipped with a small engine. Subsequently, there was a substantial increase in the number of such small boats propelled by engines. This innovation would replace the age-old method of harnessing wind power for ship propulsion in the fickle, stormy, and often treacherous weather conditions on the Icelandic fishing grounds. However, open boats and rowing boats were still used in the first part of the 20th century, especially in locations where the new industry of trawling was not a part of the fishing operation pattern. Around 1940, the operation of rowing boats for fishing had almost been phased out.⁴¹

However, as the mechanism on board ships developed further, the utilisation of engine power would serve to relieve the seamen of some of the manual labour, which was a daily part of life at sea.

Around 1870, the age of steamships commenced in the British fishing industry. The first steam-propelled vessels used for fishing, mainly trawling, were old steam tugs, i.e. paddle-wheel boats, which were far from being suitable for fishing operations due to their design. Later steam vessels custom-made for fishing were built and proved quite practical. The age of the steam trawlers had begun.⁴²

One might think that the advent of engine power in the fishing industry would have been welcomed by seamen, especially since hard work was demanded of the fishing vessel personnel, given the harsh weather conditions and heavy currents on the

⁴¹ Guðmundur Jónsson; Magnús S. Magnússon. *Hagskinna: sögulegar hagtölur um Ísland*. (Reykjavík: Hagstofa Íslands, 1997), 310-311.

⁴² Jón Þ. Þór. *Breskir togarar og Íslandsmið 1889-1916*. (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1982), 14.

fishing banks. But the coexistence of men and machine was not always without conflicts and problems and the engines did not do anything to relieve the men of their hard work. The work on board the first trawlers was very hard. The engine power was used to propel the vessel but little more. The large motorized trawlers could engage in fishing operations further out at sea and in worse weather conditions and sea states than earlier ships. The trawlermen were made to slave away and their destiny was really to compete with the steam-powered engine thumping below decks. This was an uneven game and seamen were forced to work day in day out: a situation which led to the adoption of the so-called Act on Watchkeeping in 1921, providing for fishermen on Icelandic trawlers to be entitled to a minimum of 6 hours of rest every 24 hours.⁴³

2.2 Legislation on trawling

There are some conflicting opinions as to when British steam-trawlers first entered Icelandic waters. According to some written sources and official papers the date is 1889, however most Icelandic scholars who have researched the issue have maintained that British trawlers actually commenced their fishing activities in Icelandic waters in 1891.⁴⁴

⁴³ *Stjórnartíðindi fyrir Ísland árið 1921, A-deild*. (Reykjavík: Ísafoldarprentsmiðja h.f., 1921), 176-177.

⁴⁴ Jón Þ. Þór. *Breskir togarar og Íslandsmið 1889-1916*. (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1982) and Heimir Þorleifsson. *Saga íslenskrar togaraútgerðar fram til 1917*. (Reykjavík: Bókaútgáfa Menningarsjóðs, 1974).

From the outset, Icelanders were worried about all fishing activities carried out by foreigners in Icelandic waters. They were aware of the fact that the resources of the sea were not limitless and that they needed to be conserved by the adoption of legislation. At that time a Royal Danish directive was in force in Iceland, dating back to 12 February 1872, providing for a territorial sea of 3 nautical miles from headlands and outer skerries.⁴⁵ In addition, there was a ban on trawler fishing in fjords.

However, some prudent men realised that a special act needed to be adopted on trawling on Icelandic fishing grounds and that sooner or later trawling experiments would need to be carried out. Apparently, these people were afraid that a foreign power would quickly exploit Iceland's marine resources, eliminate the form of fishing already in place and prevent any future domestic development. Therefore, the case was inevitably brought up in Iceland's legislative assembly, the Althingi.

In 1889, the Althingi passed a new law on trawler fishing. The legislation provided for a ban on fishing with bottom trawl within the Icelandic territorial sea of three nautical miles. The ban applied to all vessels, foreign and Icelandic. This happened two years before any English steam trawler was seen fishing on Icelandic fishing grounds and ten years before the first Icelandic trawlers steamed out of Icelandic ports to fish with trawl in Icelandic waters. Icelanders had little knowledge of trawling, something the new Act with its clearly worded definition of "fishing with trawls" in Article 1, makes quite apparent:

...the fishing method of tying heavy iron shackles, iron bars or other very heavy objects to the trawl and dragging it over the bottom by means of sail or steam

⁴⁵ Jón Þ. Þór. *Breskir togarar og Íslandsmið 1889-1916*, 21.

power so that it scrapes the bottom; the Englishmen call this fishing gear a trawl.⁴⁶

2.3 British trawlers in Icelandic waters

It is perhaps not relevant to speculate too much on the date of the first British trawler to shoot the trawl on Icelandic fishing grounds, but it is certain that the summer of 1891 was a turning point in the history of trawling in the region. At that time, the systematic advance of British trawlers into Icelandic waters commenced, an advance that would last a total of 85 years. The trawler *Aquarius* from Grimsby is believed to have shot the first trawl off Ingólfshöfði in the summer of 1891. The next year a fleet of English trawlers steamed in to the Icelandic fishing grounds to the south coast, southeast coast and north along the east coast fjords.⁴⁷ During the first four years of trawling in Icelandic waters the British trawlers operated from Vopnafjörður, one of the eastern fjords, to the Westman Islands off the south coast.⁴⁸ The onslaught of the British trawlers would soon begin on all potential fishing grounds around Iceland.

The first British trawlers are believed to have steamed into Faxaflói Bay in the summer of 1895. Trawling in Faxaflói Bay had a much more dramatic effect on the people there than it would have on those in other parts of the country. Many of the inhabitants who resided on the southern part of the Bay lived from the fisheries alone, whereas in other parts agriculture was also an essential part of people's livelihood.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Heimir Þorleifsson, 10-11, [my translation].

⁴⁷ Jón Þ. Þór. *Breskir togarar og Íslandsmið 1889-1916*, 26-27.

⁴⁸ Jón Þ. Þór. *Breskir togarar og Íslandsmið 1889-1916*, 31.

⁴⁹ Jón Þ. Þór. *Breskir togarar og Íslandsmið 1889-1916*, 36-37.

2.4 Interaction between Icelanders and British trawlermen

In the latter part of the 19th century, the population in the Faxaflói Bay area was becoming increasingly dense. The principal towns where populations were increasing were Reykjavík, Hafnarfjörður, Akranes and Keflavík. People were moving from the rural areas to the capital in search of work. At that time, emigration to Canada and the United States of America was common and more opportunities for work in the Faxaflói Bay area served to counterbalance that trend.

Icelanders had long had a tradition of rowing out into the Faxaflói Bay, with its rich and sheltered fishing and breeding grounds for various fish species close to Reykjavík. They used handlines and nets to fish cod and haddock, as well as halibut and other flatfish. The trawlers fished in shallow water where the flatfish would be found, and because, at that time, they did not have the engine power to trawl in deeper water, they inevitably interfered with the locals' fishing activities and destroyed the fishing gear of the smaller boats. The English trawlermen were on the lookout for species like plaice and halibut to ship back to the fish markets in England. Normally they would throw other fish like cod overboard or give or sell them to the Icelanders, or use them for barter. The Icelandic fishermen would also pick up the floating cod if seen in the water. The local people would call the fish gained from the foreign trawlers *tröllafiskur*. This word is a loan translation, which might be derived from English, "trawler-fish". It is more likely however that the word derives from *trollari*, the Icelandic loanword for "trawler" at that time. Interestingly, the word "*tröllafiskur*" in Icelandic is a

combination of the plural words “*tröll*” and “*fiskur*”, meaning “fish”, perhaps alluding to an ogre in the form of a trawler. In Scandinavian mythology a *tröll* is: “one of a race of supernatural beings formerly conceived of as giants, now, in Denmark and Sweden, as dwarfs or imps, supposed to inhabit caves or subterranean dwellings”.⁵⁰ *Tröllafiskur* might also originate from the difference in size between the giant trawlers and the small rowing boats of the locals. According to Jón Þ. Þór, the fishermen actually used some expressions derived from this when discussing these affairs, i.e. *róa í tröllin*, “row to the trolls” and *fara í tröllaróður*, “go troll-rowing”.⁵¹

Those who accepted fish from the British trawlers were strongly criticised by those who resented the “invasion” of foreigners into their back yard. In their opinion, this was nothing less than poaching, the illegal catching and carrying off of game. Others found it nonsensical not to use the opportunity and take what was available fresh and for free instead of letting the catch get spoiled in the sea. As an exchange for a boatful of cod the locals gave the British seamen a bottle of aquavit or whiskey, if they had any, or other valuables like fresh meat and knitted garments for protection against cold. They knew that the “intruders” would not stop trawling although the local fishermen did not do business with them.⁵²

These interactions between the British trawlers and the Icelanders were fruitful in another way as the Icelandic fishermen who boarded the foreign steam trawlers got the first glimpse of the new technology applied to catching fish. They saw

⁵⁰ OED.

⁵¹ Jón Þ. Þór. *Breskir togarar og Íslandsmið 1889-1916*, 196.

⁵² Guðmundur G. Hagalín. *Saga Eldeyjar-Hjalta*, Vol. II. (Reykjavík: Ísafold, 1939). 47-48.

the modern fishing gear and deck equipment, heard the trawler jargon and were also witnesses to the trawling practices applied on their fishing.

These were resolute men, men like Hjalti Jónsson, also known as Eldeyjar-Hjalti due to his achievement of climbing up the vertical cliffs of the island of Eldey off the southwest coast of Iceland. Eldeyjar-Hjalti later became a skipper himself on fishing smacks and trawlers. He had seen the foreign trawlers scoop up fish on the Icelandic fishing banks in great quantities. He was of the opinion that if trawler fishing was going to destroy the fishing stocks in Icelandic waters then this would happen whether the Icelanders themselves participated or not.⁵³ He became a very successful trawler skipper and co-owner of one of the leading trawling companies in Iceland during the first decade of the 20th century.

The interactions between the local fishermen and the trawlermen in Faxaflói Bay in relation to the “trawlerfish” came to a sudden end in 1903. The reason being that the fish were not as plentiful as before. On 1 July 1903, a new law on the prevention of infectious diseases entered into force. The law provided for a ban on receiving fish from foreign fishing vessels.⁵⁴

2.5 The first Icelandic trawling companies

Icelandic entrepreneurs were quick to see the economic possibilities in the trawling industry. They witnessed the new, fast and efficient method of fishing applied by the

⁵³ Guðmundur G. Hagalín, 104.

⁵⁴ Jón Þ. Þór. *Breskir togarar og Íslandsmið 1889-1916*, 212.

British trawlers out in Faxaflói Bay and elsewhere. From the capital Reykjavík they could see the billowing smoke from the steam trawlers as they dragged their fishing gear to and fro on the local fishing grounds.

In 1896 the Icelandic businessman, entrepreneur and poet Einar Benediktsson had, in a famous article in the periodical magazine *Þjóðólfur*, asked why Icelanders did not themselves use trawls for fishing, this being the most profitable fishing method available.⁵⁵ He proposed that the Althingi pass a law to allow Icelanders to fish within the three-mile territorial limits but prohibiting foreigners from doing the same. A penalty of a considerable fine should be introduced as a deterrent, and the fine be so severe that the companies inflicted by it were bound to go bankrupt.⁵⁶

The first trawling company was founded in Iceland in 1898 with the help of foreign capital. This was the Islandske Handels og Fiskerikompagní (I.H.F.), co-owned by a Danish trader and Icelandic businessmen. The company purchased a new trawler named *Thor*, which was operated from Patreksfjörður in the West Fjords of Iceland. The trawler mainly fished halibut and plaice. For various reasons, the operation of *Thor* was not profitable and the trawler was later sold and used as a marine research vessel.⁵⁷ The ship was later bought to the Westman Islands and became the first Icelandic life saving and coastguard vessel in 1920.⁵⁸

More entrepreneurs brought trawlers to Iceland in order to operate them in the country. One of those was an English fishmonger from Teignmouth, Mr. Pike Ward in

⁵⁵ Einar Benediktsson, "Botnvörpuveiðarnar," *Þjóðólfur*. 16. June 1896: 117-117.

⁵⁶ Jón Þ. Þór. *Ránargull*. (Reykjavík: Skerpla, 1997), 121.

⁵⁷ Heimir Þorleifsson, 32-33.

⁵⁸ Páll Bjarnason. *Björgunarfélag Vestmannaeyja: Tíu ára starf*. (Reykjavík: Ísafoldarprentsmiðja hf., 1931), 29-30.

1899. Mr. Ward had to become a resident of Iceland, at least nominally, in order to fulfil a requirement of local residency, which was part of the new law on trawling operations. The rather small steam trawler purchased by the company was named *Utopia*, perhaps in ironic allusion to a rather utopian scheme — admirable but impracticable in real life.

The *Utopia* headed for the fishing grounds in April and returned with a catch of around 50 tonnes, the first trawler catch to be landed in an Icelandic port for processing. The operation of the *Utopia* was dogged by mishaps and bad luck. For instance, the nets were frequently torn on the lava-covered bottom of Faxaflói Bay and the English engineers were often drunk. There were four Icelanders in the crew of the *Utopia*, the rest were Englishmen. Mr. Ward probably considered his trawling operation in Iceland an experimental affair. It is likely that the result of this experiment was negative since he abolished all trawling activities in September 1899 but continued his fishmongering activities.⁵⁹

Trawling operations increased rapidly during the first decade of the 20th century. The companies that operated the first trawlers in Iceland faced various difficulties. The shore-based facilities were primitive, the local people lacked know-how in the new industry and essential services to the trawlers were slow. The foreign skippers had little knowledge of the local fishing grounds and frequently damaged the trawling gear when fishing on banks where the bottom was rocky, difficult and lava-covered. However, the experience gained in the first year of Icelandic trawling was valuable and much was learned from the first mistakes. Many Icelanders had been hired to work on board the trawlers and learned the new working practices and procedures applied there. Later,

⁵⁹ Heimir Þorleifsson, 34-35.

these men were of great value when Icelanders founded their own trawling companies. Among those were many of the first skippers, engineers, bosuns and deckhands on the first Icelandic trawlers.⁶⁰

One of those Icelandic trawler skippers to-be was Hjalti Jónsson, mentioned earlier, who had founded an Icelandic trawling company in 1907 in co-operation with the entrepreneur Jes Zimsen. Hjalti Jónsson with his partner Þórarinn Olgeirsson went to England to purchase a trawler for the company. In Hull they signed on a trawler bound for the fishing grounds off Iceland. Hjalti Jónsson studied the working procedures on board, primarily the skipper's duties. Olgeirsson worked on deck with the vessel's deckhands and received invaluable training in mending nets and operating the trawling gear. When they came back to England, Olgeirsson went to school and received training in net mending for a period of one month.

In the same year, the newly founded company, Fiskveiðihlutafélag Íslands Ltd. bought the steam trawler *Seagull*, later named *Marz*, and Hjalti Jónsson became the skipper.⁶¹

Sometimes Icelandic operators leased trawlers in England for trawling on Icelandic fishing grounds. The skipper and chief engineer would be British as well as the net man. These men taught the Icelandic seamen how to operate the gear and the routine of shooting and hauling the trawl. They learned how to clear fouled gears, to repair damaged trawl nets, make up new nets and get complete new trawls ready.

⁶⁰ Jón Þ. Þór. *Ránargull*. (Reykjavík: Skerpla, 1997), 123-124.

⁶¹ Guðmundur G. Hagalín. *Saga Eldeyjar-Hjalta*, Vol. II. (Reykjavík: Ísafold, 1939). 114.

Although the use of the bottom trawl was banned in the three-mile territorial sea around Iceland the operation of trawlers was allowed, even by foreigners if they founded a trawling company in Iceland or in Denmark. In the summer of 1899 no less than eight steam trawlers were being operated from Iceland though it was only four the next year. The *Vidalínsútgerðin*, the chief owner of which was British, was the most prominent company around the Faxaflói Bay area. The idea behind operating from Iceland was to utilise the catch better than the foreign trawlers did, by processing the cod in salt and sending the more expensive fish fresh to England. When this did not turn out to be profitable initially the trawling companies gave up.⁶²

The first experiment in operating a steam trawler by Icelanders themselves came in Hafnarfjörður in 1905.⁶³ The crew of the first Icelandic trawler purchased by the company, the *Coot*, was a mixture of Icelanders and Scots. Two of the Icelanders had been deckhands on Scottish trawlers and the chief engineer was an Englishman. The operations were somewhat difficult the first year but later they became profitable. The *Coot* ran aground in 1908 and the company was dissolved soon after.

In the following years numerous trawling companies were founded in Iceland. These were for example: Alliance Ltd. founded in 1906 and the Fiskveiðihlutafélagið Marz Ltd. in 1907. The trawlers operated by these companies began to ship iced fish to England in 1907 for selling on the fish markets.⁶⁴

⁶² Heimir Þorleifsson, 35-36.

⁶³ Helgi Skúli Kjartansson: *Ísland á 20. öld*, (Reykjavík: Sögufélag, 2002), 41.

⁶⁴ Einar Laxness, *Íslandssaga*. Vol. III. (Reykjavík: Vaka-Helgafell, 1995), 31.

In 1910, the Bookles Brothers from Aberdeen in Scotland commenced activities in Hafnarfjörður in Iceland by operating a trawling and fish processing company. The Hellyers Brothers from Hull in England came to Hafnarfjörður in 1924.

2.6 A developing new industry

The trawling industry became a very profitable sector and laid the foundation for bourgeois societal ways in Iceland. Wealth accumulation by the trawler operators and fishing vessel owners, who were the first Icelandic capitalists, was enormous in an Icelandic context at least. The founding of trawling companies, especially in the southwestern part of the country, attracted other industries. Many new jobs were created ashore as well as on board fishing vessels. Nets had to be mended, trawls had to be made, trawling gear maintained ashore and the trawlers and their equipment had to be repaired. As the number of steam trawlers increased, coal supplies had to be readily available in the larger towns with a number of workers at hand to bunker the trawlers when in port. In addition, longshoremen had to be available for landing the catches of trawlers. Furthermore, many new jobs were created in the fish processing companies. It is therefore apparent that the multiplier effect in the wake of the newborn trawler industry in Iceland encouraged growth in the primary and secondary sectors of industry.

In 1920, foreign vessels were prohibited from landing catches in Icelandic ports. The policy of the Icelandic government of promoting all-Icelandic trawling operations would eventually prove successful.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ *Stjórnartíðindi fyrir Ísland árið 1920, A-deild*. (Reykjavík: Ísafoldarprentsmiðja h.f., 1920), 7-8.

Chapter 3

3.0 The Icelandic language of the sea and foreign borrowings

Jargon — Technical terms and expressions used by a group of specialists, which are not known or understood by the speech community as a whole. Every subject has its jargon, which can contribute to economy of communication and precision of thought among those who belong to the group. Objections arise when practitioners use jargon unthinkingly or excessively, in contexts where outsiders feel they have a right to comprehension, such as in relation to medicine, law, and the civil service.⁶⁶

Nautical language is very rich in colourful similes and metaphors, idioms, local coinages and slang. Specific words and expressions, many of which are not used ashore, form a fundamental part of the language used on board ships. This is normal, since all industries have their own special sets of terms and expressions, their technical jargon, and the maritime industry is in no way different in this respect.

In the last part of the 19th century, Icelanders imported specific fishing methods and ships from abroad and with that import came an extensive system of specific terminology. As stated earlier, many of the terms that form the technical terminology of the specific fishing method of trawling entered Icelandic as loanwords from the English language. One of the main reasons for the borrowing of foreign nautical terms was probably the mere lack of Icelandic equivalents for many of the concepts used in this specific industry. The existing general Icelandic nautical terminology consisted of numerous basic concepts and expressions, which had not been superseded by foreign

⁶⁶ David Crystal. *An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Language and Languages*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 200-201.

equivalents. These were terms like: *stýra* (to steer), *kjölur* (keel), *stefni* (stem), *skutur* (stern), *ár* (oar), *borðstokkur* (gunwale/gunnel), *þófta* (thwart) and *sigla* (mast).

The fundamental terminology used on board ships was already at hand and there was no need to borrow new terms for this set of words. The basic terms had been preserved in the written Icelandic language and these had been applied by the first settlers in Iceland and later by a population of farmers who also were fishermen. These seafarers had their own nautical terminology. This basic nautical terminology had been transferred from generation to generation and reflected the shipboard concepts and expressions, which were used while ships and fishing methods gradually developed. Due to the geographical isolation of Iceland, this terminology was fairly well preserved and was insignificantly affected by foreign influence until foreign traders began to visit Iceland on a more regular basis than before. At the beginning of the 15th century, Icelanders witnessed numerous visits by foreign seagoing ships, mainly English, with an outlandish new type of rigging and equipment that had no names in the Icelandic language. No local jargon in this particular area had been developed.

In fact, these ventures by English traders to the northern regions were the first deep-sea voyages of any significance carried out by Englishmen.⁶⁷ Therefore, it can be stated with a fair amount of certainty that those voyages marked the first steps on the way to the foundation of Britain's worldwide sea power.

When Icelanders began to operate decked fishing smacks late in the 19th century there were no words available in the Icelandic language for most of the various new tackle, rigging gear, equipment or for the general maritime concepts used on board

⁶⁷ Björn Þorsteinsson. *Enska öldin í sögu Íslendinga*. (Reykjavík: Mál og menning, 1970), 10.

sailing ships, except terms for the simple rigging used on board the open rowing boats, which were often two-masted and could be sailed. The solution was to use garbled words from Danish and Norwegian. A sample of this jargon can be seen in *Leiðarvísir í sjómensku* (sic.) (Guidance in Seamanship), published in 1906 by Sveinbjörn Egilson, former seaman (see also section 1.2 above on linguistic purism). Egilson says in the preface that an attempt had been made to find Icelandic words on the subject of seamen but the attempt had to be aborted. The writer states:⁶⁸

I know that non-Icelandic words are written here but I have only used the words, which are generally used on board ships. It is a matter of responsibility to change the names of things that are in constant use and whose names are already established; this will lead to misunderstandings, which can contribute to great losses.⁶⁹

A critique on the book was written and published by Dr. Valtýr Guðmundsson, in which he states that he has never witnessed such monstrous jargon in an Icelandic publication.⁷⁰ Dr. Guðmundsson then cites a number of terms from Egilson's publication, many of which are quite hard to comprehend for a person not used to the rigging of sailing ships. In fact, for the Icelandic nowadays the terms are quite exotic; these are long and complex compounds belonging to a trade, which is now mostly obsolete. At the time of Egilson's publication of the *Guidance*, sailing vessels were on the decline and steamships and motorised boats were gradually taking over, both in the field of fishing and shipping. It is, therefore, no wonder that Sveinbjörn Egilson's many nautical terms have not survived.

⁶⁸ Kjartan G. Ottósson. *Íslensk málhreinsun*. (Reykjavík: Íslensk málnefnd, 1990), 111.

⁶⁹ Sveinbjörn Egilson. *Leiðarvísir í sjómensku*. (Reykjavík: D. Østlund, 1906), 4, [my translation].

⁷⁰ *Íslensk málhreinsun*, 111.

This great influx of foreign nautical loanwords in the late 19th and early 20th century in connection with the introduction of decked fishing smacks and later trawling in Iceland can be compared to a similar influx during the introduction of Christianity to Iceland in the 10th century when a large number of religious loanwords entered the language to form concepts and expressions that had not previously existed.

I believe that when the first Icelanders who worked on board English trawlers around the turn of the 20th century became acquainted with the gear on board and the working practices on board they had little choice but to absorb the large vocabulary and the new concepts in English. Certainly, they were no linguists and had no training in forming new words and phrases, in producing neologisms or translating complex terms. However, they could easily form calques, or loan translations, for terms that had Teutonic, Old Norse or Icelandic roots like *togblökk* for towing block, *fótreipi* for footrope, *bakstroffa* for back strop and *belgur* for belly. The first Icelandic trawlermen had little time to think about the complex concepts or objects that did not exist in their own language. It is no wonder that they did what was most obvious: they used the foreign terms that had already been given to the machinery, nets, rigging and trawling gear when there was no obvious solution at hand in the form of a loan translation.

A foreign seaman, for instance an Icelandic, who is a member of a crew of a British trawler where the working language is English will be quick to absorb the new terms, concepts and phrases of the foreign language and will, in fact, quickly begin to 'think in English'. Therefore, it is only logical that the English terms should be used more or less unchanged by such foreigners on board. In fact, when a seaman enters an environment of complex machinery and gear on board a trawler or any other vessel he

must adapt to the terminology already in use, especially if he wants to avoid the risk of accidents or of misunderstanding which part of the gear is being referred to during fishing operations. A wrong reference to a particular piece of gear or tackle during fishing operations, where quick orders are given and equipment and deck machinery moves fast, can easily lead to serious mistakes and accidents involving physical injury or damage to property. Therefore, it is certainly quite a sensible rule to refer to the various equipment and gear on board by the names that have been developed by tradition in the shipboard environment by the seamen themselves.

To give an idea of the complicated terminology and technology used on the deck of a side trawler while trawling, here is a part of a passage in an article on shooting and handling the trawl gear of a beam trawler in the North Atlantic:

To the uninitiated, the activities on the deck of a trawler about to “shoot” the gear, or while hauling back, may create a sense of confusion and appear to be highly unorganized. However, the trained crew of a beam trawler actually affords a splendid example of teamwork. Each man has a job to do and is at his post or station when the time comes to do it. A well rigged boat with one of the modern high speed winches can haul back and set the gear in 40-50 fathoms in about 15-20 minutes when fishing on a good bottom and no tears in the twine require mending.⁷¹

Here is a paragraph on shooting the gear:

In shooting the gear the codend, belly and wings of the net, which all have been stowed along the rail, are thrown over the side, and the vessel is swung in a wide arc while paying out ground cables from the winch. The weighted footrope and the headline with its floats open up the net and permit it to take something like its natural shape. As the stoppers come up into the Kelly eyes in the board straps, the strain on the ground cables is taken by the doors hanging in their

⁷¹ Helgi J. Halldórsson. *Ensk lestrarbók handa sjómönnum*. (Reykjavík: Ísafold, 1980), 61-62.

chains and the warps from the winch become slack. This permits attachment of the Burrows links to the doors, and then a slight strain is taken by the winch, lifting the door slightly and permitting the hanging chain to be unhooked. With the boat still swinging in a wide circle, the doors are then let go by releasing the brakes on the drums. With the trawler steaming ahead, the gear shoots aft and down to the bottom, the doors spreading apart with the forward door well abeam.⁷²

3.1 The trawlerman

One aspect of the investigation of English loanwords in the Icelandic language of the sea in this thesis is a concern with the character of the seamen, especially the trawlermen, in order to try to shed light on the underlying reasons for their usage of their special jargon. Are there reasons, apart from the obvious lack of words to do with trawling in the Icelandic vocabulary of the sea? The contemplation of character offered is based on descriptions, mainly concerned with trawler seamanship, found in the written sources mentioned above, i.e. autobiographies, biographies and even novels. In addition, several former trawlermen were interviewed in order to acquire first-hand information from former crew members of old side trawlers. By this means an attempt was made to shed a more vivid light on the usage of the terminology and jargon, as well as to find answers to more specific usage questions. Furthermore, my own experience as a deckhand and navigating officer on board cargo ships gives rise to some deliberations on the matter, as a similar kind of special terminology and jargon exists in the environment of merchant ships.

⁷² *Ensk lestrarbók handa sjómönnum*, 62-64.

Beside the points discussed above on the necessity of being able to refer to the specialised gear by means of the original existing English terms (to avoid accidents, for example), there are other aspects of this resort to English loanwords and trawler jargon learned from British seamen that are of interest. As outlined in section 1.2 above on linguistic purism, an attempt was made by scholars and governmental officials, who were worried about the influx of a foreign vocabulary into the maritime industries, to cleanse the language by, among other things, forming a terminological committee of academics and professional specialists and compiling lists of acceptable vocabulary. The early trawlermen and old salts like Sveinbjörn Egilson, mentioned above, were a special breed of iron-sides who would obey every order given by the master and chief mate but might perhaps have been reluctant to act upon a formal directive from linguists or the government prescribing a usage of ‘correct’ terms: terms coined by the ‘landlubbers’, for objects and concepts in their own working environment. The futility of the official effort can be illustrated by the example of the prescribed trawling term *sendill* whose use was urged instead of the English loanword *messeindér* or *messaseri* for the special trawling gear or ‘messenger’ in English. The prescribed term never gained any attention or popularity on board trawlers, probably because the English borrowing was deeply rooted in the jargon spoken on board the trawlers. The trawlermen would perhaps also consider it unmanly or ‘sissy’ to use anything other than the term that had always been used. It was perhaps a sign of toughness and masculinity to use the conventional loanwords and jargon terms on board correctly, the jargon spoken by the initiated, tough trawlermen. There was a definite consensus among the trawlermen on the use of the foreign jargon.

It is my experience from the merchant marines, that the usage of the deep-rooted terminology on board was considered a necessary part of being fully initiated into the society of seamen. For instance referring to a bulkhead within the crew accommodation by the word 'wall' would make the novice the laughing stock of the hardened seamen. It would take an apprentice seaman some considerable time to learn all the new and special terms used on board his ship and a necessary part of the process of his mastering good seamanship and the skills of an experienced seaman would be the daily usage and learning of the terminology.

Landsmen often find the brisk and informal language of common seamen difficult to comprehend. Seamen's language is in many ways different from the language spoken ashore, mainly in the usage of highly specialised technical terminology. One of the reasons for this difference is perhaps the remoteness of the seaman's workplace from land. Due to the isolation, their vocabulary has time to develop in a close-knit society of specialists.

Moreover, seamen have often tended to use their idiosyncratic, local genre of vocabulary to underline their special role, perhaps as nautical 'heroes' and masters in the skill of seafaring that only a selected and initiated few could obtain and keep. The same applies to the Icelandic trawlermen. They possessed and perhaps protected the know-how of their trade and tended to enshrine this knowledge in a mystical hue by adopting a special jargon solely used by their lot. Those seamen tended to coin a sort of sub-language of a mystical nature. A specimen of such a language is the English-rooted jargon of the early Icelandic side trawlers. This language is likely to be rather enigmatic for the uninitiated landsman.

The use of words of English origin in the language spoken by Icelandic trawlermen in the early days of the steam trawlers with their highly specialised working environment has an undertone. In the first decades of trawling, each hired trawlerman held on to his job. He could easily earn maybe four times more than the average worker on land and seamen enjoyed a considerable respect among their fellow-citizens as pioneers in a new field of work. The technique applied in this sector was somewhat revolutionary compared to the traditional methods of fishing in Iceland, which had not changed much throughout the ages and had involved limited machinery. In this sense, the ‘modern’ seaman during the early decades of the 20th century enjoyed a similar status to that enjoyed by astronauts or pilots today. Like astronauts today, trawlermen were a rare breed, and as with pilots and astronauts, they too had a specialized jargon and were highly respected:

In the old days, trawlermen were greatly respected. The trawlers were so few and unemployment was widespread. Only the hardest workers and strongest men kept their jobs, men who could stay awake during whole spring fishing seasons, could splice wires, mend nets and could gut fish as long as any codling was on deck. It is said that in those days one could recognise trawlermen from Reykjavík. On ordinary days they would wear white trawl trousers, Victorian sweaters and would roll up their sleeves because their hands were covered with tar up to their elbows. Those were the days of tarred trawls. Those were the years when men got used to keeping cigarettes in their mouths while speaking. The two hands were meant for working - and were hardly enough.⁷³

Young men wanted to sign on a trawler, not just for the high wages but also for the respect, and it was considered great luck to muster on board such a modern, mechanised industrial phenomenon. Young men who were lucky enough to get a job on

⁷³ Jónas Guðmundsson. *Togaramaðurinn Guðmundur Halldór*. (Reykjavík: Hildur, 1982), 50, [my translation].

a trawler were said to be “safe”. But it was a job that was not open to everyone as the shipowners and skippers tended to hire friends or relatives.⁷⁴ Still, for young men there was no better prospect for a prosperous future than to sign on for a job on a trawler. It was the dream of every young man in the trawling ports to become a trawlerman, perhaps not for lifetime but for a period, which would enable him to become financially secure.

In the paragraphs above, I have contemplated the main reasons why the first Icelandic trawlermen borrowed foreign words instead of coining neologisms for the terminology used on board. Some of the reasons are: lack of Icelandic equivalents for the new words; the seamen absorbed the existing terminology on board the British trawlers instead of coining neologisms for them; consensus among seamen to use the foreign terminology when no Icelandic equivalents were available in their existing nautical terminology; wrong reference to a particular gear could lead to accidents; seamen unwilling to succumb to the prescribed terminology coined by linguists; and the correct usage of the trawler jargon is a clear sign of having mastered the various working methods on board, a sign of having been initiated.

⁷⁴ Vilhjálmur Vilhjálmsson. *Í straumkastinu*. (Reykjavík: Setberg, 1963), 94.

3.2 A list of English loanwords, examples of usage and comments

This part of the dissertation contains a set of 46 English loanwords in Icelandic nautical language used on board Icelandic trawlers. The terms were collected from various sources, mostly from written Icelandic language. Each loanword will be dealt with separately with the Icelandic term providing the headword and listed in alphabetical order. The part of speech and gender will be given in parenthesis after the headword. The Icelandic phonetic transcription follows the Icelandic term. The corresponding English term is then cited followed by the phonetic transcription in English. The English phonetic transcription given is the British Received Pronunciation accent (RP) as cited in the *OED*. Following the pronunciation is the etymological specification, which in most instances originates from the *OED*. The keys to the most common abbreviations used in the etymological section are specified in the list of abbreviations on pages v and vi. A definition of the entry follows the etymological specification, originating from a dictionary or reliable written reference source and the sources of the definitions are then cited in a footnote. In several instances no definition from a dictionary or written source was available. In those instances a definition was acquired from a seaman who has first-hand knowledge of the usage of the specific term. An example of usage is then given originating from a reliable written source, for example biographies or autobiographies of former trawlermen or other available and reliable sources. The sources of the examples are cited in a footnote. The examples given in Icelandic are translated into English. Finally, there is a general comment on the headword and any relevant discussion on the term in question.

Each loanword/headword has been looked up in the archive of citation slips in an attempt to ascertain the time of first occurrence in the Icelandic written language.

The following list of terms and expressions is in no way an exhaustive register of the English loanwords used in the field of trawling and adopted by Icelandic trawlermen around the turn of the 20th century. The list only contains examples of the main terms, both those which have adapted well to the Icelandic language and the inflectional system and are, therefore, considered acceptable, and those which are considered less acceptable and sound foreign but are still used. Also, the collection of sources consulted is in no way an exhaustive list. Many words were considered as possible candidates but were omitted primarily because examples of usage were not considered adequate or were not found in reliable written sources. Figure 1 below illustrates the main terms used to describe a trawl.

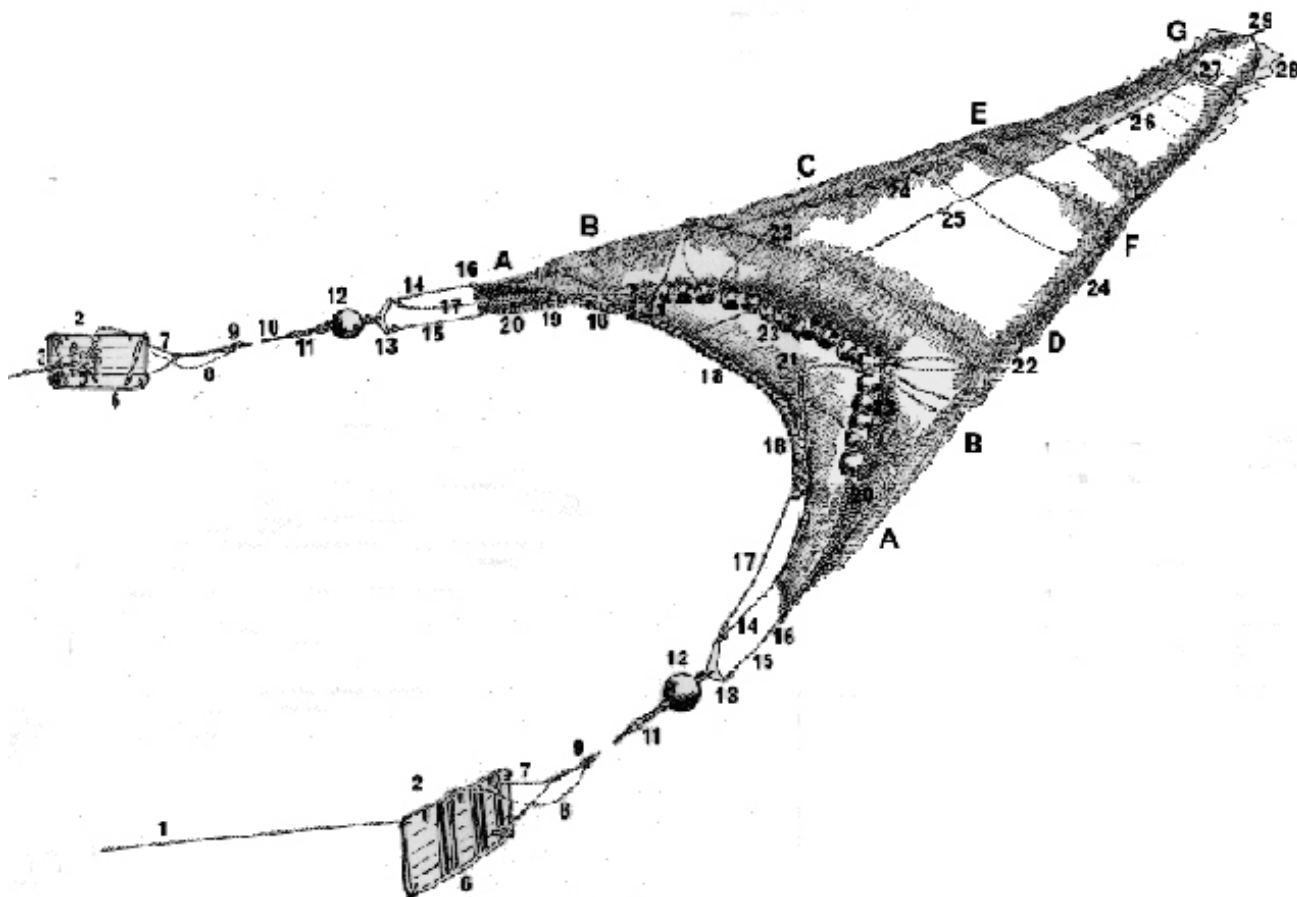


Figure 1. The demersal trawl or bottom trawl⁷⁵

Legend — The relevant Icelandic terms (loanwords, if applicable) in *italics*.

- A. The wings of the trawl (the top and lower wings) — *vængir trollsins*
- B. Square — *skver*
- C. Belly — *belgur*
- D. Lower belly — *neðri belgur*
- E. Lengthener and false lengthener — *lenging*
- F. Lengthener and false lengthener — *lenging*
- G. The codend where the fish were concentrated — *poki*⁷⁶
- 1. Trawl warp connecting the net to the trawler — *togvír*
- 2. The trawl doors that hold the net open in a lateral direction — *hlerar*
- 3. Swivel links — *sigurnaglar*
- 4. G link — *vargakjafstur*
- 5. Triangular mounting brackets — *brakket*
- 6. Steel shoe to prevent sea floor abrasion of the wooden door — *stálskór*

⁷⁵ *The Bosun's Watch*, "The Demersal Trawl", accessed 25 February 2000.
<http://www.fleetwood-trawlers.connectfree.co.uk/trawl.html>

⁷⁶ This was protected from sea floor abrasion by cowhides.

7. Back strop — *bakstroffa*
8. Independent piece — *dauðileggur*
9. Kelly's eye — cf. p. 54.
10. Cable — *grandari*
11. Swivel — *segulnagli/sigurnagli*
12. Dan Leno bobbin — *ross*
13. Butterfly — *klafi*
14. Headline leg — *höfuðlínuleggur*
15. Tow-line leg — *toglínuleggur*
16. Wing line — *gaflína*
17. Quarter rope — *kvaltari; kvartreipi; kvartur*
18. Headrope floats — *höfuðlínuflotholi*⁷⁷
19. Ground rope or footrope — *fótreipi*
20. Rubber wing bobbins — *gaflbobbingar úr gúmmi*⁷⁸
21. Headline becket — *höfuðlínubekkett*
22. Wire bellyline — *belglína úr vír*
23. Iron bobbins — *járnbobbingar*⁷⁹
24. Rope bellyline — *belglína*
25. Poke line — cf. p. 54.
26. Hauling leg
27. Double bag becket⁸⁰
28. Cowhides to prevent the codend from chafing — *nautshúðir*
29. Cod line — *kolllína*.

⁷⁷ Once made from glass and much prized by restaurants as ornaments, these were replaced with aluminium items as fishing depths increased and later plastic floats. Their role was to hold the net open in a vertical direction.

⁷⁸ Often made from rings stamped out of rubber tyres to protect the wing rope.

⁷⁹ These were also made of wood and were threaded onto the footrope to allow the trawl to roll across the seabed. The vibration that these set up would also serve the purpose of frightening the fish into the net.

⁸⁰ Used when the net held too many fish to bring inboard at once.

bakreipi (*n. neut.*) (bækreipi)

bag rope (bægrəʊp)

Etymology: [bag + rope]

bag [Early ME. *bagge*: cf. ON. *baggi* ‘bag, pack, bundle’ (not elsewhere in Teutonic); also OF. *bage*, Pr. *bagua* baggage, med.L. *baga* chest, sack. The Eng. was possibly from the ON.; but the source of this, as well as of the Romanic words, is unknown; the Celtic derivation suggested by Diez is not tenable: Gaelic *bag* is from English. Of connexion with Teutonic **balgi-z*, Goth. *balgs*, OE. *bēlg*, *bælg*, *bælig*, whence belly, bellows, and the cogn. Celtic *bolg*, *balg*, there is no evidence.]

rope [Common Teut.: OE. *ráp* masc., = OFris. *râp* (in *silrâp*; Wfris. *reap*, Efris. *rôp*, but NFris. *riap*:—**rêp*), MDu. and Du. *reep*, MLG. *rêp*, *reep*, *reip* (LG. *rêp*), OHG. and G. *reif*, ON. *reip* neut. (Icel., Fær., Norw. *reip*, Sw. *rep*, †*reep*, Da. *reb*, †*reeb*, *reeff*, etc.), Goth. *raip* (in *skaudaraip* shoe-thong). In the Lex Salica (c 490) the Old Frankish form appears to be Latinized as *reipus* (only in a transferred sense), and from early Teutonic the word passed into Finnish as *raippa* rod, twig.]

Definition: A rope/stay placed fore and aft from the forward mast, attached to the deck by a secure fastening near the bridge aft used to limit the inboard swing of the codend of a trawl when hauling in the catch. Without the bagrope the bag would have swung towards the centre line of the vessel and possibly to the other side with dire consequences.⁸¹

Example 1: Finally, the codend was girdled by the halving becket and dragged clear of the water by the fore gilson. The codend crashed against the bag ropes.⁸²

Example 2: Both derricks are swung out, the washer with its shute fixed in position, and finally the pounds are made up, bag ropes put in position, beackets put near at hand, and needles for mending the trawl are left charged and ready for use – this being the deckhand learner’s special responsibility.⁸³

⁸¹ Interview with Capt. Guðmundur Arason, 2 August 2004.

⁸² William Mitford. *Lovely She Goes*. (London: Sphere Books, 1981), 46.

⁸³ *Lovely She Goes*, 25.

Comment: The term *bakreipi* in Icelandic is probably formed from the term bag rope, a rope used for limiting the inboard swing of the codend, or the “bag”, of a trawl. This is a typical loan translation. The first part of this compound word, “*bak-*”, means back and is a misinterpretation of the English term “bag-” it is, however, in a sense not wrong. The first Icelandic trawlermen, while learning the job, heard the pronunciation of “bag” which is not far from the Icelandic “*bak*” and took it to mean back or back-support for the codend. This coinage by the first trawlermen is, therefore, very understandable. A more fitting neologism would have been “*pokareipi*”, a direct translation of “bagrope”. This is, however, a typical trawling word in that the first Icelandic trawlermen adopted the English term directly as they heard it used and coined an Icelandic version of it. The archive of citation slips holds no examples of usage of *bakreipi*. The noun *bakreipi* has not been recorded in Icelandic dictionaries.

***bakstroffa* (n. fem.)** ('bækstrɒf)

backstrop/back strop ('bækstrɒp)

Etymology: [back + rope]

back [Common Teut.: OE. *bæc* (neuter) is cogn. with OS. *bak*, OFris. *bek*, MDu. *bak*, LG. *bak*, ON. *bak*.—OTeut. **bako-(m)*; not found in Gothic or OHG., and now lost in Du. exc. in derivatives, such as *achterbaks*, *bakboord*. Cf. ridge.]

strop [OE. *strop* (once only) = (M)Du., (M)LG. *strop*, OHG. *strupf* masc. (a derivative of the same meaning is MHG., mod.G. *strüpf* fem., LG. *strippe*: strip *n.*²), prob. a WGer. adoption of L. *struppus*, *stroppus*, strap, band (? a. Gr. *στροφος*), whence OF. *estrope* (mod.F. *estrope*, *étrope*), Pr. *estrop-s*, Cat. *estrop*, Pg. *estropo* rowlock-strap, It. *stroppa* strap, band.]

Definition: A rope or chain fitting at rear of otter board. Part of released trawl gear.⁸⁴ A ring or band of hide or of rope with its ends spliced together, used upon a mast, yard, rope, etc., as a fastening or as a purchase for tackle; esp. a band of rope, iron, or chain fastened round a pulley or block. Chiefly *Naut.* (Cf. strap *n.*)⁸⁵

Icelandic Example: [*Þá flæktist bakstroffan, sem búið var að húkka úr, utan um grandaravírin. Til að forða því að bakstroffan lenti á milli grandarans og skutlokukeflisins reyndi einn skipverjinn að greiða úr, en við það stakkst gaddur úr grandaranum í gúmmivettling á hægri hendi.*]⁸⁶

Translation: Then a backstrop, which had just been unhooked, got tangled around the bridle. To avoid the backstrop getting stuck between the ground cable and the stern gate roller one of the crew members tried to untangle it but in doing so a spike from the ground cable was stuck into his right hand rubber glove.

Comment: The term *bakstroffan* is a loan translation from the English trawler term *backstrop*. The name of this tackle derives from the position of the strop connected at the back of the trawl door (otter trawl) to the ground cable (bridle). There were two backstrops connected at the back of each otter board. Cf. Icel. *stroffa* (n.) — strop (see etymology above). The archive of citation slips holds no examples of usage of *bakstroffan*.

Compounds: *bakstroffuauga*, back strop norman.

⁸⁴ John Garner. *Modern Deep Sea Trawling Gear*. (Farnham: Fishing News Books Ltd, 1988), 89.

⁸⁵ J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, ed. *The Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, Second Edition on CD-ROM, version 3.1, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004.

⁸⁶ *Report of the Marine Accident Investigation Board (MAIB)*, 2004. 22 February 2005
<http://www.mns.is/LesaSkyrslur.php?skyrsla_nr=447&skyrslaPage=54>

bananalinkur (*n. masc*) ('bənɑ:nəlɪŋkʌr)

banana link (bə'nɑ:nəlɪŋk)

Etymology: [banana + link]

banana [a. Pg. or Sp. *banana* (the fruit), *banano* (the tree), given by De Orta (1563) and Pigafetta, as the native name in Guinea (Congo).]

link [a. ON. **hlenk-r* (Icel. *hlekk-r*, OSw. *lænker*, mod.Sw. *länk*, Da. *lænke*):—OTeut. type *hlencan* ; cogn. w. OE. *hlencan* pl., armour, OHG. *lancha* FLANK, loins, bend of the body (MHG. *lanke*), whence MHG. *gelenke* (collective) flexible parts of the body, mod.G. *gelenk* articulation, joint, link.]

Definition: [*Hringhlekkur eins og banani í laginu. Sett upp á framhorni á stóra brakkettinu sem er eins og þríhyrningur framan á miðjum hleranum. Notað til að halda lás á brakketi á sínum stað.*]⁸⁷ *Bananahlekkur*, put on the large bracket to prevent the wire from sliding down. Also named *gleraugu* [glasses].⁸⁸

Translation: Round link like a banana in shape. Attached to the forward corner of the larger triangle-shaped bracket on the front of the trawl door. Used for constraining the bracket shackle in its place.

Example: Ernie told me before, they think there is something alongside the ship and I will tell you what, it was 5 o'clock in the morning when we did that, I clearly remember, because I stopped her, the camera, I saw the bracket shackle, the swivel, even the banana link, and we traced that warp on there to a quarter to a starboard sheave. We knew it was her door.⁸⁹

Comment: The term *bananalinkur* (*bananahlekkur*, *bananajárn*) is probably obsolete by now. It was used to describe a piece of the larger bracket on conventional, earlier

⁸⁷ Interview with Capt. Guðmundur Arason, 7 March 2005.

⁸⁸ According to former trawler skipper Einar Torfason, 15 March 2005.

⁸⁹ Public information regarding the inquiry into the sinking of the fishing vessel Gaul, http://www.fv-gaul.org.uk/transcripts/transcript_day3_150104.pdf, 9 March 2005.

types of otter boards. This is a typical loan translation since the English term *banana link* is directly translated into Icelandic. The term refers to the banana-like shape of the iron on the bracket. The archive of citation slips holds no examples of usage of *bananalinkur*. The word is not recorded in the *Icelandic Dictionary*⁹⁰.

Icelandic synonyms: *Bananajárn* (n. neut.), *bananahlekkur* (n. masc.)

bar (n. neut.) (ba:r)

bar (ba:(r))

Etymology: [ME. *barre*, a. OF. *barre* (= Pr., It., Sp., Pg. *barra*):—late L. *barra* of unknown origin. The Celtic derivation accepted by Diez is now discredited: OIr. *barr* ‘bushy top,’ and its cognates, in no way suit the sense; Welsh *bar* ‘bar’ is from Eng., and Breton *barren* ‘bar’ from Fr. (The development of sense had to a great extent taken place before the word was adopted in English.)]

Definition: An oblong piece of solid material used to support the gallows (styrktarstoð á toggálga).

Icelandic Example: [*Fara varð eftir járnstöng sem kölluð var „bar“. Lá hún úr hvalbaknum og aftur á gálgann og stuðningur var hafður af „vírmanillu“, sem lá þar samhliða, en neðar.*]⁹¹

Translation: One had to scale an iron bar, which was called the “bar”. It extended from the whaleback and aft to the gallows with support from a “wire manilla” which was parallel to the bar but in a lower position.

Comment: It seems that on the side trawlers this part of the gallows was always called a *bar* and also with the suffixed definite article *barið*. This special piece of structure is

⁹⁰ Mörrður Árnason, ed. *Íslensk orðabók*. (Reykjavík: Edda, 1988).

⁹¹ Steinar J. Lúðvíksson. *Þrautgóðir á raunastund* Vol. I. (Reykjavík: Örn og Örlygur, 1969), 12.

obviously not found on board modern stern trawlers and therefore this loanword now only lives in written Icelandic sources.

The compound word *gálgabar*, a loan translation, probably from “gallow’s bar”, was found in a reliable written source.⁹²

The archive of citation slips holds no examples of usage of *bar* in this nautical sense.

bekket (*n. neut.*) ('bɛkkɛt)

becket ('bɛkɪt)

[Etymology unknown. Du. *bogt*, *bocht* ‘bend’ of rope, has been suggested. Falconer *Dict. Marine*, thought it ‘probably a corruption of *bracket*.’]

Definition: 1. A simple contrivance, usually a loop of rope with a knot on one end and eye at the other, but also a large hook, or a wooden bracket, used for confining loose ropes, tackle, ropes, oars, spars, etc. in a convenient place, and also for holding or securing the tacks and sheets of sails, and for similar purposes.⁹³ Lifting/attachment loop, (with or without tail). In one source⁹⁴ there is a paragraph which clearly describes the usage of the becket: The vastly swollen codend was dragged closer to the side of the ship until it was near enough to be encircled by the bag becket and lifted clear of the sea by the fore gilson. This indicates that the becket was used to lift a part of the trawl, i.e.

⁹² Þórunn Valdimarsdóttir. *Af Halamiðum á Hagatorg: Ævisaga Einars Ólafssonar í Lækjarhvammi*. (Reykjavík: Örn og Örlygur, 1986), 144.

⁹³ *OED*.

⁹⁴ *Lovely She Goes*, 142.

the codend, clear of the sea and on board to be emptied into the pounds. The lifting gear was not adequate to bring the catch inboard in one operation. Therefore the bag was divided into two. **2.** Separating bobbins or rope.⁹⁵ Synonym in Icelandic: *ásláttarstroffa*⁹⁶. Synonym in English: becket bobbins.⁹⁷

Example: Both derricks are swung out, the washer with its shute fixed in position, and finally the pounds are made up, bag ropes put in position, becketts put near at hand, and needles for mending the trawl are left charged and ready for use – this being the deckhand learner’s special responsibility.⁹⁸

Comment: This term has two meanings in the context of trawling gear. However, the word has not been recorded in Icelandic dictionaries as a nautical loanword. I asked for the term in the questionnaire that I sent to a group of Icelandic trawler seamen. Only one trawlerman of the twelve who answered the questionnaire recognised the loanword. However, my theory is that the Icelandic word *bugt* could be the nearest nautical term. *Bugt* means ‘bend’ of a rope as specified in the above etymology derived from the OED (Du. *bogt*, *bocht* ‘bend’ of rope) and. The Icelandic Etymological Dictionary suggests that *bugt* ‘bend’ derives from Da. *bugte* ‘bay’ < MLG.

The noun becket has two senses in a nautical trawling context. In addition to the meaning of a rope or loop it has also been found to mean the separating bobbins between the large steel bobbins in the groundrope rig of a trawl. The archive of citation slips holds no examples of usage of the loanword *bekket*.

⁹⁵ *Modern Deep Sea Trawling Gear*, 89.

⁹⁶ Einar Torfason former skipper on side trawlers.

⁹⁷ *Modern Deep Sea Trawling Gear*, 34.

⁹⁸ *Lovely She Goes*, 25 and 142.

belgur (*n. masc.*) ('bɛlgər)

belly ('bɛli)

Etymology: [ME. *bali*, *bely*:—OE. *bæliġ*, *bēliġ*, earlier *bælġ*, *bēlġ* ‘bag, skin, envelope, hull (of beans and peas),’ identical with ON. *belgr* ‘skin, bag,’ OHG. *balg*, MDu. *balch*, Goth. *balgs* ‘bag, sack’...]

Definition: The lower mid section of a trawl net.⁹⁹

Icelandic Example: [*Pokinn með aflanum í er híður inn á talíu í formastrinu, en netið er að öðru leyti dregið inn miðskips og belgurinn snörlaður upp við keishornið.*]¹⁰⁰

Translation: The bag of the trawl containing the catch is hauled aboard with a block in the foremast, but the net is otherwise hauled over the side midships and the belly is heaved in at the quarter of the casing.

Icelandic Example: [*Aðalhlutar vörpunnar, taldir aftan frá eins og varpan liggur í drætti, eru: pokinn, belgurinn, skverinn eða yfirnetið og vængirnir.*]¹⁰¹

Translation: The main parts of the trawl, counted from the rear as it is towed are: the codend, the belly, the square or the over-net and the wings.

Example: The doors came up, followed by the headline. The net had been torn to pieces. The belly, square, and one top wing all floated in ribbons and had been ripped away from the headline from which most of the cans were missing.¹⁰²

Comment: The term *belgur* is a direct loan translation in the context of the specific usage in trawling from the English word “belly”. The term is well known in Germanic languages as in Faroese *bjølgur*, Norw. *belg*, Swe. *bälg* and in Icelandic *belgur*. Therefore, the borrowing must have been quite smooth and the coinage of the Icelandic

⁹⁹ Modern Deep Sea Trawling Gear, 89.

¹⁰⁰ Ásgeir Jakobsson. *Um borð í Sigurði*. (Reykjavík: Ægisútgáfan, 1972), 11-12.

¹⁰¹ Ásgeir Jakobsson. *Kastað í flóanum*. (Reykjavík: Ægisútgáfan, 1966), 225.

¹⁰² *Lovely She Goes*, 58.

term from the English one rather obvious due to the existing word in the language for a similar shape. The archive of citation slips holds some examples of usage in written language from the middle part of the 20th century of the term *belgur*, but only two are nautical senses.

Compounds: *Undirbelgur* – underbelly (syn. *undirbyrði*), *belglína* – belly-line, *belglínulás* – belly-line shackle.

blók (*n. fem.*) (blou:k)

bloke (bləʊk)

Etymology 1: [Origin unknown: Ogilvie compares ‘Gypsy and Hind. *loke* a man.’]¹⁰³

Etymology 2: [Mid-19th century. From Shelta, a secret jargon used by Romany people in Britain and Ireland.]¹⁰⁴

Definition: Man, fellow, chap (informal/derogatory).

Icelandic Example 1: [–*Á hvaða kláfi ert þú nú?* –*Ja, ég tilheyri nú honum Surprise, svaraði maðurinn hálf hissa. –Hvaða blók ertu nú þar? spurði ég.*]¹⁰⁵

Translation: –What’s the name of your present rust bucket? –Well, I belong to *Surprise* [an Icelandic trawler], the man answered rather surprised. –What sort of a bloke are you there? I asked.

Icelandic Example 2: [*Helvítis blókin hefði nú ekki keyrt mig niður á dekkinu. Og um þetta fjasaði hann allan tímann meðan hann var lærbrotinn.*]¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ OED.

¹⁰⁴ Encarta World English Dictionary. (Microsoft Corporation. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. CD-ROM version, 1999), accessed 22 March 2005.

¹⁰⁵ Jónas Guðmundsson. *Togaramaðurinn Guðmundur Halldór*. (Reykjavík: Hildur, 1982), 79

¹⁰⁶ *Togaramaðurinn Guðmundur Halldór*, 150

Translation: The bloody bloke would not have run me down on the deck. And he kept on fussing about this all the time his thighbone was broken.

Comment: There are numerous examples of citations in written language in the archive of citation slips most of which are from the middle part of the 20th century. All the cited examples connote derogatory meanings and inferior class status, mostly in relation with trawler deckhands such as: “...enda var hann bara blók á botnvörpunum Unni.”

Translation: “...of course he was just a bloke on board the demersal trawler *Unnur*”, and “*Þú ert meiri helvítis blókin og eddjótið*”.

Translation: “You are nothing but a bloody bloke and idiot.” Interestingly, the *OED* gives “Bloke: *naval slang*. The ship's commander”, which is quite far away from the sense connoted in the examples given above relating to trawler jargon.

The *Icelandic Dictionary of Slang* cites the term and gives: 1. Subordinate, inferior, underdog. 2. Deckhand, unskilled rating. Furthermore, the *Icelandic Dictionary* gives: rare (general) derogatory term: *bölvuð blókin* (the bloody bloke). Punk, layabout. *Skrifstofublók* (office bloke), subordinate office worker.¹⁰⁷

Icelandic Compounds: *Hásetablók* (deckhand bloke), *lifrarblók*¹⁰⁸, liver bloke, a deckhand of a side trawler responsible for processing the cod liver. It should be noted that the word *lifrarblók* is obsolete now since the liver is not utilised anymore on board trawlers.

¹⁰⁷ *Íslensk orðabók*, 141.

¹⁰⁸ Ásgeir Jakobsson. *Gríms saga trollaraskálds*. (Hafnarfirði: Skuggsjá, 1980), 41.

bobbingur (*n. masc.*) ('bɒbɪŋər)

bobbin ('bɒbɪn)

Etymology: [a. F. *bobine* ‘a quill for a spinning wheele; also a skane or hank of gold or silver thread’ (Cotgr. 1611); origin unknown: see guesses in Littré and Diez.]

Definition: Protection rollers fitted along lower lip of a trawl.¹⁰⁹

Example: The groundwire came inboard with its giant 26-inch bobbins and rubber lancasters, and crashed into its position under the rail.¹¹⁰

Comment: The word does not appear in the *OED* neither in the context of trawling nor as a nautical term. It might be that the nautical term for the rollers fitted along the lower lip of a trawl was coined because of the way they move over the bottom of the sea, i.e. they bounce and bob according to the contours of the seabed and its surface. To support this here is the definition in the *OED* for the intransitive verb bob: Etymology: [Used since the 16th (? 14th) c. Apparently onomatopœic, expressing short jerking or rebounding motion. There is an obvious association with certain senses of bob *n.*¹, esp. those of the ball of a pendulum, plummet, tassel, pendant, all of which ‘bob’ when moved; but it is unclear whether this is original or subsequent. There is also contact with the senses of bob *v.*²] *Intr.* To move up and down like a buoyant body in water, or an elastic body on land; *hence*, to dance; to move to and fro with a similar motion, esp. said of hanging things rebounding from objects lightly struck by them.

An interesting meaning of the English loanword *bobbingur* in Icelandic can be found in the *Icelandic Dictionary of Slang* published in 1982. The dictionary gives: “*bobbingur* (*masc.*) 1. Large steel ball fitted on the footrope, which rolls along the

¹⁰⁹ *Modern Deep Sea Trawling Gear*, 89

¹¹⁰ *Lovely She Goes*, 46.

seabed, ... (cf. English bob). 2. Chiefly plural *bobbingar*: woman's breasts."¹¹¹ The obvious sexual connotation rooted in such usage is not uncommon among seamen working on board deep-sea fishing vessels or other seamen on board cargo ships. The long absence from everyday life ashore and the separation from the opposite sex gives rise to coinages of this kind. Another part of the trawl is the "bosom", which also carries an obvious sexual connotation, and is another English loanword belonging to the complex and colourful trawling gear jargon.

The *Icelandic Dictionary* gives: "1. (Nautical) iron ball or roller (many together) on the underside of a bottom trawl for holding it down, bottom roller (*botnvaltra*). 2. *Bobbingar* (plural) slang: woman's breasts."¹¹² It is worth noting that the above definition from the *Icelandic Dictionary* is not accurate in that the bobbins are not only used for holding the trawl down but also for protection and for lessening the friction between the bottom and the trawl because with heavy bobbins, the trawl gear is able to bounce over obstacles more easily. Note also that the Icelandic neologism *botnvaltra* referred to in the example above is an attempt to coin a new word for the English term bobbin. According to the archive of citation slips, this word first appears in written Icelandic in a dictionary of neologisms published in 1954.¹¹³ The 'new' word is fairly transparent in that it describes the role of the bobbins, i.e. they roll over the bottom. The neologism *botnvaltra* has not gained any popularity in nautical Icelandic language; apparently the loanword *bobbingur* has survived and is still used on board modern

¹¹¹ Mörður Árnason; Svavar Sigmundsson; Örnólfur Thorsson. *Orðabók um slangur, slettur, bannorð og annað utangarðsmál*. (Reykjavík: Svart á hvítu, 1982), 12.

¹¹² *Íslensk orðabók*, 145.

¹¹³ Halldór Halldórsson. *Nýyrði Vol II*. (Reykjavík: Leiftur, 1954), 16.

trawlers and in the trawling industry. The neologism *vörpukefli* (lit. ‘warp roller’) for “bobbin” was found in the nautical magazine *Víkingur* and has apparently not gained popularity by the users of Icelandic nautical language. It is not recorded in the *Icelandic Dictionary*.

brakkett (*n. neut.*)('bræket)

bracket ('brækit)

Etymology: [The earliest form *bragget* appears to be (either directly or through F. *braguet*) adaptation of Sp. *bragueta*, dim. of *braga*:—L. *brāca*, sing. of *brācae* breeches; the form *bracket* is a corruption, perh. influenced by It. *bracheta*, dim. of *braca*:—L. *brāca*.]

The term “bracket” seems to have two meanings in trawler language.

Definition 1: Fittings on otter boards, mainly determining the angle of tow.¹¹⁴

Icelandic Example 1: [*Hringhlekkur eins og banani í laginu. Sett upp á framhorni á stóra brakkettinu sem er eins og þríhyrningur framan á miðjum hleranum. Notað til að halda lás á brakketi á sínum stað.*]¹¹⁵

Translation: Round link like a banana in shape. Attached to the forward corner of the larger triangle-shaped bracket on the front of the otter board. Used for stopping off the bracket shackle.

Definition 2: A kind of a peg or hanger on deck used to tie up or secure trawl parts to.

Icelandic Example 2: [*Framan af stríðinu sigldum við alltaf með netin og bobbingana*

¹¹⁴ *Modern Deep Sea Trawling Gear*, 89.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Capt. Guðmundur Arason, 7 March 2005.

*en til þess að sjórinn rynni betur út af skárum við netin undan og súrruðum þau upp á brakkettið.]*¹¹⁶

Translation: During the first years of the War we always sailed with the nets and bobbins but in order to enable seawater to drain freely from the deck we cut the nets free and secured them on to the bracket.

Comment: The loanword *brakkett* seems to be used solely for a device which could easily be named, e.g. *beisli*, *klafi* or even *hlerahald* (otter board link) as is suggested (or prescribed) in the *Dictionary of Neologisms, Nýyrði II*, published in 1954. This part of the otter board looks and functions very much like a bridle or link to which a wire, rope or chain is connected. These Icelandic words have not gained any popularity among trawlermen perhaps because the term *brakkett* had settled quite well in the language. Apparently there seems to be some reluctance within the community of seamen to adopt neologisms for concepts that have become well-established in spoken language in their field. The term *brakkett* was neither found in the archive of citation slips nor in the *Icelandic Dictionary*.

búlka (v.)(bu:lka:)

bulk (bʌlk)

Etymology: [Of complicated etymology. The coincidence in meaning with ON. **bulki*, Icel. *búlki* ‘heap, cargo of a ship’ (Vigf.), Da. *bulk* lump, clod (cf. mod.Icel. *búlka-st* to be bulky), suggests that the word, though not recorded before 15th c., may (in the senses ‘heap’, ‘cargo’) be of Scandinavian origin. Within a few years of its first appearance,

¹¹⁶ Togarasaga Magnúsar Runólfssonar, 134.

bulk occurs in the senses ‘belly, trunk of the body’, due app. to confusion with *bouk*, which it has entirely superseded in literary English. (Cf. however, the Flemish *bulck* ‘thorax’ in Kilian.) The sense of ‘size’ (branch III) seems to have been evolved chiefly from the notion of ‘body’, though it may be partly due to that of ‘heap’ or ‘cargo’. The form *boak*, used by N. Fairfax 1674 indiscriminately with *bulk* in the sense of ‘magnitude’, is apparently:—ME. *bolc*.]¹¹⁷

[1400–50; late ME *bolke* heap, cargo, hold < ON *bulki* cargo, ship's hold]¹¹⁸

Definition: To secure the trawl on deck at the end of fishing activities when preparing for the voyage home to land the catch. (*Hafa veiðarfæri í búlka* – place the fishing gear in a heap).

Icelandic Example: [*Sendiherrann spurði, hvort unnt væri að leyfa brezkum togurum að fara í landvar án þess að búlka veiðarfærin*].¹¹⁹

Translation: The ambassador asked whether it was possible to permit the British trawlers to seek shelter from storms without securing the fishing gear.

Comment: According to most etymologies the English word “bulk” is of Old Norse origin. This term reminds me of another term used in the maritime industry, i.e. bulk carrier. Some years ago when I was employed at the Translation Centre of Iceland’s Ministry for Foreign Affairs translating European Union legislation I had to translate the nautical term “bulk carrier”. The dictionaries had several solutions to this, e.g. *stórflutningaskip*, *lausaf lutningaskip*, *lausafarmskip* which I did not find adequate. I considered them long and clumsy in usage. By diving into the etymology of the word I found out that “bulk” was a word of Old Norse origin (see etymology above). I remembered the word *búlki* from a poem written by the Reverend and respected poet Matthías Jochumsson (1835-1920), a dramatic account of the death of another poet

¹¹⁷ OED.

¹¹⁸ Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary.

¹¹⁹ Matthías Jóhannessen. *Ólafur Thors: ævi og störf*. Vol. II. (Reykjavík, Almenna bókafélagið, 1981), 254.

and naturalist, Eggert Ólafsson (1726-1768). The poem is an account on Eggert's last hours, when he set out on a voyage across Breiðafjörður Bay with his newly wed wife and her cargo of dowry. Sadly they would both perish along with the crew in a sudden storm out in the middle of the Bay. One line of the poem describes the atmosphere just before they set out for the Bay. The young wife sits on a pile of cargo on deck: "*Á búlkanum situr brúður ung, bleik var hin föla kinn*".¹²⁰ This translates as: "On the cargo heap (bulk) sits the young bride, pale was her chin".

The poet Grímur Thomsen (1820-1896) also wrote a famous poem named *Skúli fôgeti*, an account of a dangerous voyage in a fierce storm, in which the word *búlki* occurs. "*En hinir leggjast í búlka á bæ, þó bænahald sé þeim ei tamast*".¹²¹ This translates as: "But the others they lay down on the heap of cargo (bulk) in prayer, although they were not used to praying".

Both of those examples of usage gave me the idea of coining a neologism based on this old Norse word, i.e. *búlkaskip* for *bulk carrier*, literally meaning a bulk ship or cargo ship. In a way one can say that the old Icelandic term has been reintroduced into modern Icelandic by the formation of a combined word, bulk and ship.

The term *búlkaskip* has been used in a number of European Union directives and in Icelandic maritime legislation as a consequence of this coinage in the Translation Centre. The definition in the *Icelandic Dictionary* is: *haugur*, mound; *dyngja*, heap, *farmhlaði*, cargo stack¹²², which fits well with the meaning behind the word bulk in

¹²⁰ Kristján J. Gunnarsson, ed. *Skólaljóð*. (Reykjavík: Ríkisútgáfa námsbóka [no date]), 95.

¹²¹ Sigurður Nordal. *Íslensk lestrarbók 1750-1930*. (Reykjavík: Bókaverzlun Sigfúsar Eymundssonar, 1947), 142.

¹²² *Íslensk orðabók*, 190.

bulk carrier since such types of ships are mainly used for carrying ore, grain or other unpacked cargo. The ore typically forms heaps in the holds.

Therefore, it is quite interesting to follow the Old Norse term *búlki* which entered Middle English in the 15th century and has been rather dormant in Icelandic until recent years when it entered modern Icelandic as a coinage from English. In a sense it has gone a full circle from Old Norse, into Middle English, into Modern English and finally from there into active use in modern Icelandic.

Two examples of the nautical verb *búlka*, to secure gear or cargo in a safe place, are recorded in the archive of citation slips, from 1968 and 1981. Both examples concern the securing of trawling gear to the bulwarks forming a bulk or a heap.

davíða (*n. fem.*) ('dɑ:vi:ðɑ:)

davit ('dævit, 'dervit)

Etymology: [Formerly also *David*, and app. an application of that Christian name, as in the case of other machines and tools. Cf. F. *davier*, the name of several tools, etc., altered from *daviet* (Rabelais) = *Daviet*, dim. of OF. *Davi* David; the tool was still called *david* by joiners in the 17th c. (Hatzfeld and Darmesteter).]

Definition: Iron or steel (formerly wood) fitting projecting over ship's side for attachment of tackle for hoisting and lowering boat, accommodation ladder, anchor, stores, etc. Sometimes fitted at hatch.¹²³

Icelandic Example: [*Báturinn, sem hékk í davíðunum bakborðsmegin, hafði rifnað að endilöngu og var önnur síðan farin úr honum en hin lafði í annarri „talíunni“.*]¹²⁴

¹²³ *Dictionary of Nautical Words and Terms*, 117.

Translation: The boat, which hung in the port side davits, had been ripped open longwise and the other side was torn out of the boat but the other one hung in one of the falls.

Comment: The ‘accepted’ word for davit in Icelandic is *bátsugla*, i.e. the term which has been used in maritime legislation and in many reliable sources. For example *bátsugla* is used in Icelandic Regulation No. 122/2004 on the Safety of Fishing Vessels of 15 Metres in Length Overall and Over. In older regulations, the term *davíða* has also been used as well as *bátsugla* (sometimes both terms occur in a regulation which has now expired). However, it seems that *davíða* is the term preferred by seamen in general and the word *bátsugla* has never gained popularity.

There are 11 examples of *davíða* in the archive of citation slips all of which are from sources published from 1937–1976. There are 12 examples of the term *bátsugla* in the archive of citation slips from 1926 onwards. Both terms are recorded in the *Icelandic Dictionary*.

dokk (n. fem.)(døk), *dokka* (n. fem.)(døkɑː)

dock (døk)

Etymology: [Found early in 16th c., also in 16th c. Du. *docke*, mod.Du. *dok*. From Du. and Eng. it has passed into other langs., Da. *docke*, Sw. *docka*, mod.G. *dock*, *docke*, mod.F. *dock*, in 1679 *doque*. Ulterior origin uncertain.

¹²⁴ Bárður Jakobsson, ed. *Sjómannablaðið Víkingur*. (Reykjavík: Farmanna- og fiskimannasambandið, 1944), 245.

It has been variously compared with rare Icel. *dökk*, *dökð* pit, pool, Norw. *dokk* hollow, low ground, med.L. *doga* ditch, canal (Du Cange), Gr. *δοχή* receptacle. See Skeat, E. Müller; also Grimm, and Diez s.v. *Doga*.]

Definition: An artificial basin excavated, built round with masonry, and fitted with flood-gates, into which ships are received for purposes of loading and unloading or for repair. *Dry* or *graving dock*, a narrow basin into which a single vessel is received, and from which the water is then pumped or let out, leaving the vessel dry for the purpose of repair. (Sometimes also used for building ships.) *Wet dock*, a large water-tight enclosure in which the water is maintained at the level of high tide, so that vessels remain constantly afloat in it. *Floating dock*, a large floating structure that can be used like a dry dock.¹²⁵

Icelandic Example: [Týri fór á *Belgaum* haustið eftir og týndist í Dokkinni í Hull, fór milli skips og bryggju.]¹²⁶

Translation: Týri signed on the *Belgaum* [an Icelandic trawler] the next autumn and was lost in the Dock of Hull¹²⁷, fell into the water between ship and pier.

Comment: The *Icelandic Etymological Dictionary* gives: “*dokk*, *dokka* fem. (mod. Icel.) *skipakví* (ship dock). Loanword, probably from English dock (same meaning) <Old Du. *docke*, perh. stemming from Lat. *ductia* ‘water duct or pipe’”.

Most of the examples of usage of the loanword *dokk* (dock) in the written sources on trawling consulted, were related to the artificial type basin or fish dock, not the dry dock used for the purpose of repair. In fact, within the fish dock, like the St. Andrew’s Dock in Hull there were special slipways used for repairing trawlers and other fishing vessels.

¹²⁵ *OED*.

¹²⁶ *Togarasaga Magnúsar Runólfssonar*, 93.

¹²⁷ Presumably this is the St. Andrew’s Dock in Hull.

Interestingly, the *OED* etymology states that the word ‘dock’ has been variously compared with the rare Icelandic word *dökk*, pit, pool. The *Icelandic Etymological Dictionary* also mentions the relation to Icelandic *dokk*, trench, fosse, dyke, dike.¹²⁸ Obviously, there is an etymological relationship between English dock and Icelandic *dokka*.

From my days as deckhand and deck officer on board Icelandic cargo ships, I remember the usage: *fara í dokk*, dock the ship for repairs. The expression: *fara í skipakví* was never used. This would have been rather formal and was avoided by merchant seamen except perhaps in formal paperwork such as logbook entries, etc. Probably the same applies to trawlermen and other fishermen. Repairs carried out in docks took place abroad since there were no docks available in Iceland until in the last decade of the 20th century when three floating docks were imported and taken into use. Ship repairs in Iceland were normally carried out on slipways until the advent of docks, or ships were sent abroad.

dönnis (*n. masc.*) ('dʌnɪs)

dunnage ('dʌnɪdʒ)

Etymology: [In 17th c. *dynnage*, *dinnage*: origin unascertained. Cf. Du. *dun*, LG. *dün* thin, *dünne twige* brushwood.]

Definition: Light material, such as brushwood, mats, and the like, stowed among and beneath the cargo of a vessel to keep it from injury by chafing or wet; any lighter or less

¹²⁸ *Íslensk orðsifjabók*, 118.

valuable articles of the cargo used for the same purpose.¹²⁹ According to the *Icelandic Dictionary of Slang* the noun *dönnnes* means waste timber, pieces of wood used under cargo.¹³⁰ Here the word is spelled with an “e” but I am used to spelling it with an “i” when writing it in the logbooks during the time I served as deck officer on board merchant ships.

Comment: The word *dönnis* did not originate in the context of trawling, according to those trawlermen that I have interviewed and those who answered the questionnaire on loanwords sent out to trawlermen. However, this is an interesting word which, to my knowledge, has not been recorded in any reference book or written source but has been used extensively in spoken language on board Icelandic cargo ships. During my years at sea on board Icelandic cargo ships the word *dönnis* was frequently used and was a part of the daily on-board language. It is possible that this word entered the Icelandic language via Danish but there are no indications of that in the sources available. Perhaps the term *dönnis* was first heard in Iceland on board British and American cargo ships during World War II when Icelandic stevedores were unloading and loading cargoes for the armed forces occupying Iceland at that time. Dunnage must have been used a lot for stowing freight on board the merchantmen carrying cargo for the armed forces.

The only example of *dönnis* or *dönnnes* available in a written source consulted comes from the *Icelandic Dictionary of Slang*, as stated above. The archive of citation slips holds no examples of the word and it is not recorded in the *Icelandic Dictionary*.

¹²⁹ *OED*.

¹³⁰ Mörrður Árnason; Svavar Sigmundsson; Örnólfur Thorsson. *Orðabók um slangur, slettur, bannorð og annað utangarðsmál*. (Reykjavík: Svart á hvítu, 1982), 25.

Cf. *lestartimbur*, meaning hold timber.

ferliða ('fərliðə), *ferlaufa* (n. fem.)

fairlead ('fæəlɪd)

Etymology: [fair + lead]

fair [OE. *fægre*, f. *fæger*, fair *a.*]

lead [A Com. Teut. wk. vb. (wanting in Goth.): OE. *lædan* = OFris. *lêda*, OS. *lêdjan* (MDu. *leden*, *leiden*, Du. *leiden*), OHG. (MHG., G.) *leiten*, ON. *leiða* (Sw. *leda*, Da. *lede*):—OTeut. **laidjan*, f. **laidâ* road, journey (see load, lode *ns.*), related to OE. *liðan*, ON. *liða* to go, travel.

The word has always served as the usual rendering of L. *ducere*, and this has in some degree influenced the development of meaning.]

Definition: Fixture that ensures a rope leads in a desired direction. May be of any shape or material. Special fairleads are fitted at bows and sterns of ships for taking mooring ropes. Pierced lengths of wood are used in sailing craft to separate falls of running rigging.¹³¹

Icelandic Example: [*Síðan kom upp efsti hluti trollsins, og við kræktum með haka í svonefndan róp, og settum rópinn í samband við annan róp á dekkinu, og Magnús Frikk brá honum um ferliðu á brúnni og síðan um spilkoppinn.*]¹³²

Translation: Then the uppermost part of the trawl comes up and we hooked on to the so-called quarter rope and connected the rope to another rope on deck, and Magnús

¹³¹ C.W.T. Layton. *Dictionary of Nautical Words and Terms*. (Glasgow: Brown, Son & Ferguson, Ltd., 1967), 145.

¹³² Jónas Árnason. *Sjór og menn*. (Akureyri: Skjaldborg, 1971), 73.

Frikk put it around a fairlead on the wheelhouse and then on the warping head [syn. niggerhead].

Icelandic Example: [*Að rota sig á ferliðu í hverju hali var meira virði í prikabók lífsins en stytting vinnutímans, svefn eða snap. Í bókstaflegum skilningi þá kom vinnan í staðinn fyrir menningu, í staðinn fyrir hugsun, og allt það, sem hefja má manninn.*]¹³³

Translation: To be knocked out when hitting our head on a fairlead each time the trawl was hauled was more valuable in the asset book of life than the shortening of the working hours, sleep or freeloading. As a matter of fact, work replaced culture, replaced thought, and all those things that make the human being sublime.

Comment: *Ferliða* is a strange word in Icelandic, a pure loanword coined directly from fairlead. It has not been found in any Icelandic dictionaries. The archive of citation slips has two examples of nautical usage of the word in written language but I have found several more citations in nautical literature. The word is extensively used on board fishing vessels, especially trawlers. In a sense, the term is onomatopœic in that the first trawlermen to use it tried to imitate the sound that they heard the British fishermen use and coined this peculiar word. This is a compound word made out of *fer-*, square-shaped or four-cornered, which has no relation to the actual tackle, and **liða* which is not found in any Icelandic dictionary as a noun.

¹³³ *Togaramaðurinn Guðmundur Halldór*, 56.

firpláss (*n. neut.*) ('fær,plauʒ)

fire place ('faɪə,pleɪs)

Etymology: [fire + place]

fire [Com. WGer.: OE. *fȳr* str. neut. = OFris. *fiur*, *fior*, OS. *fiur* (Du. *vuur*, Flem. *vier*), OHG. *fiur*, *fûir* (MHG. *viur*, *fiwer*, Ger. *feuer*); the Icel. *fúr-r* str. masc., *fýre* str. neut., fire, and Sw., Da. *fyr*, lighthouse, beacon, may be of German or Eng. origin. The OTeut. **fûir-* (cons. stem) corresponds to Gr. *πύ-ιρ*, *πῦρ*, Umbrian *pir*, Arm. *hūr*, of same meaning; cf. Skr. *pū*, *pāvaka* fire.]

place [ME. *place*, a. F. *place* (11th c.) = Pr. *plassa*, Sp. *plaza*, Pg. *praça*, It. *piazza*, med.L. *placia*:—late L. type **plattia* for classical L. *platea*, broad way, open space, adaptation of Gr. *πλατεία* (sc. *ὁδός*) broad way. The L. word had been already taken into Old Northumbrian in the form *plæce*, *plætse*, rendering L. *platea* of the Vulgate; but the history of the current word begins with the adoption of the F. *place* in sense 2, the mod. use in 1b. being a more recent borrowing from the Romanic langs. From the latter came also MDu. *plaetse*, Du. *plaats*, MHG., Ger. *platz*, MLG. *plas*, LG. *plâts*, *plâtse*, Icel. *pláz* (13th c.), Sw. *plats*, Da. *plads*. Welsh *plâs* is app. from ME. *Place* has superseded OE. *stow* and (largely) *stede*; it answers to F. *lieu*, L. *locus*, as well as to F. *place*, and the senses are thus very numerous and difficult to arrange.]

Definition: A place for a fire, *esp.* the partially enclosed space at the base of the chimney appropriated to the fire; a hearth.

Icelandic Example: [*Íslendingarnir sjá, hvar blámaður stendur niður á firplássinu með slæsinn, langan skörung, sem notaður var til að raka úr eldholinu, og hefur hann slæsinn reiddan til höggs og bíður þannig skipstjórans.*]¹³⁴

Translation: The Icelanders see where a nigger stands down on the fire place with the slice, a long poker, which was used to rake from the furnace, and he has the slice ready for striking and thus awaits the skipper.

cf. *fírar*

Icelandic Example: [*Þeir verða nefnilega annaðhvort að aumingjum eða mönnum, í glímunni við eldana og slæsana niður á firplássi.*]¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Ásgeir Jakobsson. *Hafnarfjarðarjarlinn*. (Reykjavík: Skuggsjá, 1987), 162.

Translation: The fact is that they will either become bums or men in their wrestle with the fires and slices down in the fireplace.

Comment: The word *firpláss* is probably derived from the English term fireplace, although I have not found it in the context of trawling or fishing vessels. I have found the term *fyrplads* in a Danish-English dictionary¹³⁶ (stokehold), which might indicate that the term entered Icelandic from Danish given the Icelandic pronunciation of *firpláss*, i.e. not **firpleis* as would have been a possibility with the assumption that the term is an English borrowing. The latter part of the compound word, *pláss*, place, had, however, already been absorbed into the language and widely used. According to the *Icelandic Etymological Dictionary*, *pláss* is a loanword from MLG. *plätz(e)* (cf. Engl. and Fr. place). The *Dictionary of Neologisms, Nýyrði II* gives *kyndistaður*, literally fire place, for Danish *fyrsted*, which is, however, not found in the *Icelandic Dictionary*, indicating that the neologism *kyndistaður* never gained any popularity. The neologism *glóðhol*, furnace (Danish *fyrkanal*) is recorded in a list of words compiled by the Association of Chartered Engineers in Iceland and annexed to a *Directive on the Survey of Ships and Boats and their Safety* issued in 1922. This list of words was the first attempt by the Icelandic government to harmonise the usage of a specific nautical terminology in its legislation. In fact, the directive was a translation of a Danish directive.

Compounds related to *fir*:- *olíufiring*, oil-firing; *fír*, furnace

¹³⁵ Bárður Jakobsson. *Sjómannablaðið Vikingur*. (Reykjavík, Farmanna- og fiskimannasamband Íslands, 1949), 330.

¹³⁶ Johs. Magnussen; Otto Madsen; Hermann Vinterberg. *Dansk-engelsk ordbog*. (København: Gyldendal, 1944), 101.

Example: Oil-firing replaced coal some time later and she'd been in commission ever since.¹³⁷

Probable translation into trawling Icelandic: [*Oliufiring kom síðar í stað kola og skipið hafði verið í notkun allar götur síðar.*]

Icelandic Example: [*Það var drepð á oliufiringunni og allir fóru strax frá borði en sérfræðingar úr landi gerðu duflið óvirkt.*]¹³⁸

Translation: The oil-firing was extinguished and all hands immediately abandoned the ship but specialists from ashore deactivated the mine.

forǵálgǵi (*n. masc.*) ('fǿrgaʊlgi)

foregallows ('fǿr,gæləʊz)

Etymology: [fore + gallows]

fore [Old English >*forweard*, literally 'in the direction of the front', from *fore*]¹³⁹

gallow [OE. *galga*, *ǵealga* wk. masc. = OFris. *galga*, OS. and OHG. *galgo* (Ger. *galgen*), ON. *galge* (Da. and Sw. *galge*), Goth. *galga*:—OTeut. **galgon-*; perh. cogn. with Lith. *Walga*, Arm. *dzakk* pole.]

Definition: Forward strongback with sheaves, etc. for working trawl gear.¹⁴⁰

Icelandic Example: [*Skútan lenti á okkur um forǵálgann og braut af sér klýfisbómuna, en síðan lenti hún á miðsíðunni með stefnið og virtist flísast úr því, en við það hnykkti*

¹³⁷ *Lovely She Goes*, 11.

¹³⁸ Jón Guðnason, *Brimöldur*, 198.

¹³⁹ *Encarta World English Dictionary*, accessed 30 March 2005.

¹⁴⁰ *Modern Deep Sea Trawling Gear*, 90.

*henni svo til baka, að hún náði ekki að lenda á okkur í þriðja sinn, áður en við sigum framhjá.]*¹⁴¹

Translation: The smack ran into us by the foregallows and broke off her flying jib, but then her stem hit our midship and it seemed to break somewhat, resulting in a backwards motion which meant that it would not hit us the third time before we slid by.

Example: The Badger and Paddy made their way to the foregallows to man the door.¹⁴²

Comment: *Forgálg* is a loan translation from English and fits well into the language and inflectional system although it would perhaps have been more fitting to use the term **framgálg*, lit. forward gallows, since the prefix *for-*, means fore but *fram-* means forward. The terms *fram* (forward) and *aftur* (after) are often used in correlation.

Cf. aftergallows.

fótreipi (*n. neut.*) (fæt'reipɪ)

footrope (füt'rəʊp) (*cf. groundrope*)

Etymology: [foot + rope]

foot [Common Teut.: OE. *fōt* str. masc. (dat. sing. nom. and acc. pl. *fēt*), corresponds to OFris. *fōt*, OS. *fōt*, *fuot*, (Du. *voet*), OHG. *fuol*, (MHG. *vuol*, mod.Ger. *fuss*), ON. *fōtr*, (Sw. *fot*, Da. *fod*), Goth. *fōtus*.]

rope [Common Teut.: OE. *rāp* masc., = OFris. *rāp* (in *silrāp*; WFr. *reap*, EFr. *rōp*, but NFr. *riap*:—**rēp*), MDu. and Du. *reep*, MLG. *rēp*, *reep*, *reip* (LG. *rēp*), OHG. and G. *reif*, ON. *reip* neut. (Icel., Fær., Norw. *reip*, Sw. *rep*, †*reep*, Da. *reb*, †*reeb*, *reeff*, etc.), Goth. *raip* (in *skaudaraip* shoe-thong).]

¹⁴¹ Sigurjón Einarsson. *Sigurjón á Garðari*. (Reykjavík. Skuggsjá, 1969), 139.

¹⁴² *Lovely She Goes*, 42.

Definition: The wire threaded through the bobbins from wing to wing or a rope by which the lower edge of a trawl is kept on the ground.

Icelandic Example: [*Fyrst þegar Englendingarnir komu til veiða hér, notuðu þeir bert fótreiðið, en þegar þeir tóku að stunda Breiðabugta og Vestfjarðamiðin, var ekki að tala um annað en bobbinga.*]¹⁴³

Translation: At first when the Englishmen came to fish here they used the bare footrope, but when they began to fish on the Breiðabugt and the Westfjord fishing grounds bobbins were absolutely essential.

Example: In shooting the gear, the codend, belly and wings of the net, which all have been stowed along the rail, are thrown over the side, and the vessel is swung in a wide arc while paying out ground cables from the winch. The weighted footrope and the headline with its floats open up the net and permit it to take something like its natural shape.¹⁴⁴

Comment: The word *fótreiði* is a loan translation of the English word footrope. The borrowing adjusts well to Icelandic and is well established. There are 14 examples of usage in written language in the archive of citation slips and the oldest one is from 1929. Presumably the first Icelandic trawlersmen did not have any trouble adapting the term footrope to Icelandic by simply transferring the stems to Icelandic, foot became *fót* and rope became *reiði*. The *Dictionary of Neologisms, Nýyrði II*, suggests *stigreipi* for footrope, which has never gained popularity.

Synonym: Groundrope.

¹⁴³ *Tryggva saga Ófeigssonar*, 195.

¹⁴⁴ Helgi J. Halldórsson. *Ensk lestrarbók handa sjómönnum*. (Reykjavík: Ísafoldarprentsmiðja hf., 1954), 62.

Example: To watch him enlarge the bights of bolsh on the groundrope, hung with icicles, was an impressive experience.¹⁴⁵

Icelandic Compound: *fótreipisleggur*, footrope leg.

gils (*n. masc.*) ('gils)

gilson ('gilsən)

[This word has not been found in any dictionary and therefore no etymological information is available.]

It is likely that this part of the deck gear, i.e. the heaving wire used to lift various tackle on the fore deck of a trawler, is named after a person by the name of Gilson (possibly the inventor of the particular technique).

Definition: Heaving wire used for hauling on board and emptying the codend.

Example: Pete and Ron took up station 'midships, port side, ready to control the wires for the yo-yo, fanny and gilson.¹⁴⁶

Icelandic Example: *Ég var eitthvað á undan þeim hinum, og þegar ég er búinn að bæta netið, set ég gilsinn í kvartinn og þá skeður óhappið.*¹⁴⁷

Translation: I was somewhat ahead of the others and when I had mended the net I put the gilson in the quarter and then the accident happened.

Comment: Probably the gilson was only used on board trawlers since it is not found in any of the dictionaries that I looked up. The word was not found in the *OED*. There are

¹⁴⁵ *Lovely She Goes*, 23.

¹⁴⁶ *Lovely She Goes*, 42.

¹⁴⁷ Jónas Guðmundsson. *Togaramaðurinn Guðmundur Halldór*. (Reykjavík: Hildur, 1982), 62.

several examples of the term *gils* in the archive of citation slips, all pertaining to the trawling environment.

The word *gils* fits well into the Icelandic language and inflectional system. The reason may be that the proper male name *Gils* is well known in the language and the trawler term takes on the same inclinations.

Icelandic Compounds and Derivatives: *Hífivírar*, *stóri gils*, *litli gils* (*rónagils* – *litli gilsinn*), *gilsvír*, *gilson wire* and *gilismaður* *gilson man*, the one that operates the *gilson wire*.

grandari (*n. masc.*) (grand'əri)

ground wire, ground cable, (syn. bridle, cable, grand rope, sweeps, spreader sweeps)

(graʊnd'waɪə(r))

Etymology: [ground + wire]

ground [Com. Teut.: OE. *grund* str. masc. = OFris., OS. *grund* (MDu. *gront*, inflected *grond-*, Du. *grond*), OHG. *grunt*, *krint* (MHG. *grunt*, *grund-*, G. *gruna*), Goth. **grundus* (cf. *grundu-waddjus* ground-wall, foundation, *afgrundipa* abyss):—OTeut. **grundu-z*:—pre-Teut. **ghr̥ntú-s*; no cognates outside Teut. are known. The formal equivalent is not found in ON., which has however *grund* fem. (declined like the *-i*-stems), earth, plain, and a cognate type (Teut. **runþo-*:—pre-Teut. *ghr̥nto-*) in *grunn-r*, *gruð-r* masc., bottom, *grunn-r* adj., shallow, *grunn* neut., shoal (Da. *grund* bottom, shallow, Sw. *grund* bottom, foundation, ground).]

wire [OE. *wír*, corresp. to MLG. *wîre* (LG. *wîr*), ON. **vírr* in *víravirki* filigree work, related further to OHG. *wiara* (MHG. *wiere*) finest gold, ornament of this: referred to the base *wi-* of L. *viēre* to plait, weave, etc. (cf. *withe n.*).]

Definition: Sometimes called cables, bridles, sweeps or spreader sweeps, the wires connecting otter boards [trawl doors] to the wing ends.¹⁴⁸ Wire of the same thickness as the warps of varying lengths, for example 15 fathoms, 27 fathoms, etc. Reaches from the shackle to the ross and is intended to sweep the sea bed and frighten fish into the mouth of the trawl.¹⁴⁹

Icelandic Example: [*Vængendunum var lásað í hlerana. Millivírinna eða „grandarinn“, kom ekki fyrr en 1924, sem kunnugt er.*]¹⁵⁰

Translation: The wing ends were shackled to the otter board. The bridle or the ground wire was not introduced until 1924, as is well known.

Example: In shooting the gear the codend, belly and wings of the net, which all have been stowed along the rail, are thrown over the side, and the vessel is swung in a wide arc while paying out ground cables from the winch. The weighted footrope and the headline with its floats open up the net and permit it to take something like its natural shape.¹⁵¹

Comment: The term *grandari* is well established in the trawler jargon and was, according to a reliable source introduced as a part of the trawling gear in 1924. Earlier, the wings of the trawl had been shackled directly to the otter boards or drawl doors. The noun *grand* exists in Icelandic meaning, “peril”, “jeopardy”, “death”, “damage” or “destruction”. It is perhaps fitting since the *grandari* is, as stated above, used to frighten or sweep fish into the mouth of the trawl signifying imminent peril, jeopardy and

¹⁴⁸ *Modern Deep Sea Trawling Gear*, 89.

¹⁴⁹ Former trawler skipper Einar Torfason, 15 March 2005.

¹⁵⁰ *Kastað í Flóanum*, 46.

¹⁵¹ Helgi J. Halldórsson. *Ensk lestrarbók handa sjómönnum*. (Reykjavík: Ísafoldarprentsmiðjan hf., 1954), 62.

ultimate death to the fish. Therefore, semantically, the word *grandari* in Icelandic could mean destroyer. The word takes the masculine Icelandic agent-suffix *-ari* which is common in nouns indicating occupation, e.g. *kafari* (diver), *bakari* (baker), *kennari* (teacher), etc. The agent suffix is often added to verbs to change them into nouns.

hal (hɑ:l), **hol** (hɒl) (*n. neutr.*)

haul (hɔ:l)

Etymology: [A variant spelling of *hale* v.¹, in 16th c. also *hall*; representing a different phonetic development of ME. *hale* (hɑ:l): cf. *small*, beside OE. *smæl*, ME. *smal*, *smale*, Sc. *smale*, *smail*. For the spellings *au*, *aw*, which date only from 17th c., cf. *crawl*.]

Definition: A draught of fish.¹⁵² The quantity of fish taken at one draft of the net, the draft of a fishing net.

Icelandic Example: [*Þá var safnað saman aflanum í einu, tveim, eða kannski þrem holum, og gert svo að.*]¹⁵³

Translation: Then the catch of one, two or maybe three hauls was collected together and processed.

Example: Our first haul of four hours nets us 80 baskets, of mainly cod.¹⁵⁴ When they make good hauls of fish the price immediately drops.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, ed. *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Second Edition on CD-ROM, version 3.1, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004.

¹⁵³ *Togaramaðurinn Guðmundur Halldór*, 66.

¹⁵⁴ *Fish Dock: The Story of St. Andrew's Dock Hull*, 86.

¹⁵⁵ *OED*.

Icelandic Example: [*Tekið var eitt hal og var veiðin sæmileg, svo að ekki þótti ástæða til þess að færa sig að sinni og voru skipverjarnir að búa sig undir að kasta trollinu öðru sinni, er skipstjórinn varð þess var að veðrabrigði voru í nánd.*]¹⁵⁶

Translation: One haul was taken and the catch was fair so there was no reason to attempt elsewhere for the time being and the crew was getting ready to shoot the trawl again when the skipper noticed that there were signs of weather change.

Comment: According to the *Icelandic Etymological Dictionary*, *hal* and the verb *hala* in the context of trawling, i.e. haul, the draught of fish is a recent loanword from English, which is of the same origin as MLG. *halen* and related to OS. *halōn* fetch, move; shout. It has been pointed out by Helgi J. Halldórsson cand. mag. that this term is not acceptable as a loanword since we have another word, *tog* (lit. tow) which could well describe the trawling action. Furthermore, the word *tog* would be of the same family as some words relating to trawling, i.e. *togari* (trawler), *togbotn* (trawl bottom), *togblökk* (towing block).¹⁵⁷ There are 6 examples of the term *hal* in the archive of citation slips.

***höfuðlína* (n. fem.)** (hʰɜ:fəðli:nɑ:)

headline (hɛdlain)

Etymology: [head + line]

¹⁵⁶ *Þrautgóðir á raunastund*, Vol. IV, 32.

¹⁵⁷ Bárður Jakobsson, ed. *Sjómannablaðið Víkingur*. (Reykjavík: Farmanna- og fiskimannasambandið, 1953), 6.

head [Com. Teut.: OE. *hēafod* = OFris. *hâved*, *hâfd*, *hâvd*, *hâd*, OS. *hōZid* (LG. *höved*, *höfd*, MDu. *hōvet(d)*, Du. *hoofd*), OHG. *houbit*, *haubit* (MHG. *haubet*, G. *haupt*), ON. *haufuð*, later *hæfuð* (Sw. *hufvud*, Da. *hoved*), Goth. *haubiþ*:—OTeut. **hauþud-*, *-iðo* (with suffix ablaut)]

line [Two words, ultimately of the same etymology, have coalesced. (1) OE. *line* wk. fem. = MDu. *līne* (mod.Du. *lijn*), OHG. *līna* (MHG. *līne* cord, line, mod.G. *leine* cord), ON. *līna* (Sw. *lina*, Da. *line*); either a native Teut. formation on **līno-* flax, line *n.*¹, or (more probably) an early Teut. adoption of L. *līnea* (see below); (2) ME. *lignē*, *line*, a. F. *lignē* = Pr. *ligna*, Pg. *linha* (Sp. and It. in learned form *linea*):—popular L. **linja* repr. classical L. *līnea* (earlier *līnia*), orig. ‘linen thread’, a subst. use of *līnea* fem. of *līneus* (**līnius*) adj., flaxen, f. *līnum* flax = line *n.*¹; the subst. use of the adj. is due to ellipsis of some fem. n., possibly *fībra* fibre.]

Definition: The rope surrounding the upper lip of a trawl net.¹⁵⁸ The headline fits along the top wings and centre part of the square to form the upper lip of the otter trawl.¹⁵⁹

Icelandic Example: [*Teinninn sem yfirnetið er fest á heitir höfuðlína og eru á henni flotholt eða kúlur til að lyfta henni upp og opna þannig vörpuna á hæðina.*¹⁶⁰]

Translation: The rope to which the square was fastened is named a headline and on it there are floats or cans to lift it up and keep the trawl open upwards.

Example: The belly, square, and one top wing all floated in ribbons and had been ripped away from the headline from which most of the cans were missing.¹⁶¹

Comment: The word *höfuðlína* is a fairly straightforward loan translation and fits well into the language, especially since there are examples both in the *Icelandic Dictionary* and in the archive of citation slips of other usages than from the context of trawling, e.g. *höfuðlína*, main line (base line). By looking at the etymological entry above one can see that both parts of the compound word are direct descendants of Old Norse, i.e. *haufuð* and *lína*. This is an example where there was no need to coin a special word directly from the English headline, e.g. **heddlæn*, **heddlína* or something similar since an

¹⁵⁸ *Modern Deep Sea Trawling Gear*, 90.

¹⁵⁹ *Modern Deep Sea Trawling Gear*, 28.

¹⁶⁰ *Kastað í Flóanum*, 225.

¹⁶¹ *Lovely She Goes*, 58.

Icelandic equivalent was available by simply translating the compound word directly. It can be noted, however, that the loanword *hedd*, (engine head), entered the Icelandic language with the advent of automobiles in Iceland early in the 19th century.

The term *höfuðlína* describes well the function of the tackle, i.e. being the line forming the top or head of the ‘mouth’ of the trawl.

There are 13 examples of usage related to trawling in the archive of citation slips, the oldest of which is from 1933.

Compounds: There are many compound words formed from *höfuðlína*, e.g. *höfuðlínumælir*, transducer, *höfuðlínustroffa*, headline becket and *höfuðlínuleggur*, headline leg, *höfuðlínukúlur*, headline floats.

hvalbakur (*n. masc.*) ('kvɑ:lba:kər)

whaleback ('hweɪlbæk)

Etymology: [whale + back]

whale [OE. *hwæl*, corresp. to OHG., MHG. *wal* (G. *walfisch* whalefish, q.v.), ON. *hvalr* (Sw., Da. *hval*), related to OHG. *wâlira*, *welira*, MHG. *wâlre*, and MHG., G. *wels* (:—**vwalis*) sheath-fish; cf. Pruss. *kalis* sheath-fish.

The present form *whale* represents oblique forms (OE. *hwalas*, etc.); the OE. nom. *hwæl* gave 14th–17th cent. *whall* (cf. *small*, *awl*, †*all*, from *smæl*, *æl*.)]

back [Common Teut.: OE. *bæc* (neuter) is cogn. with OS. *bak*, OFris. *bek*, MDu. *bak*, LG. *bak*, ON. *bak*.—OTeut. **bako*-(*m*); not found in Gothic or OHG., and now lost in Du. except in derivatives, as *achterbaks*, *bakboord*. Cf. ridge.]

Definition: An arched structure over the deck of a steamer at the bow, and often also at the stern, to protect it from damage by a heavy sea, cf. turtle-back and forecastle.

Example: From the whaleback, a command centuries old: ‘Haul taut – and belay the headrope.’¹⁶² A layer of ice builds up on the bridge front, bulwarks, whaleback and mast.¹⁶³

Icelandic Example: [*Skipið verður mjög áþekkt stórum togara, með einu þilfari og hvalbak framan á.*]¹⁶⁴

Translation: The ship will very much resemble a large trawler, with one deck and whaleback forward.

Comment: A loan translation from English or Danish. During my years working on board cargo vessels the term *hvalbakur* was never used. The term *bakki* was used for whaleback or forecastle/foc’sle, or raised section of deck at the bow of a ship. In Icelandic nautical language the term *hvalbakur* was mainly used in the context of fishing vessels. According to the sources on trawlers, whaleback (*hvalbakur*) is generally used for this part of the structure of a side trawler.

Synonyms for whaleback: Forecastle, Icel. *bakki*, *hvalbakur*, *stafnhækkun*.

Derivatives: Whalebacked, shaped like a whale's back; whalebacker, a whaleback steamer.

¹⁶² *Lovely She Goes*, 9.

¹⁶³ Michael Thompson. *Fish Dock: The Story of St. Andrew’s Dock Hull*. (Beverley: Hutton Press, 1989), 87.

¹⁶⁴ *Tímarit Verkfræðingafélags Íslands*. (Reykjavík: Verkfræðingafélag Íslands, 1925), 38.

jektor (*n. masc.*) (jɛktər)

ejector (ɪˈdʒɛktə(r))

Etymology: eject (v.) [adaptation of L. *ēject-āre*, frequently of *ējicēre* to throw out, f. *ē* out + *jacēre* to throw; or directly f. *ēject-* ppl. stem of *ējicēre*. As in many other Eng. vbs. identical in form with L. ppl. stems, the precise formation is somewhat doubtful; the senses are derived partly from *ējicēre*, partly from *ējectāre*.]

Definition: Bilge ejector – a means of removing water from tank tops, holds, etc. Water under pressure is passed through a nozzle, or venturi, the resulting jet entrains the water from the bilges and the mixture is discharged overboard.¹⁶⁵ Synonym: ‘bilge pump’, *austurdæla*, which is powered by the forward movement of the boat.

Icelandic Example: [*Það voru góðir menn, 2. vélstjóri og kyndararnir, og annar þeirra dreif sig ofan í svelginn, sjórinna náði honum upp undir höku, en hann kafaði og tókst að krafla frá kolasallanum. Jektorinn fór aftur að virka og smám saman tókst að dæla burt austrinum.*]¹⁶⁶

Translation: There were good men, the second engineer and the stokers, and one of them hurried down into the bilge well, the sea reached as high as his chin, and he dived and managed to clean the coal dust away. The ejector started working again and little by little they managed to pump the bilge water out.

Comment: The word *jektor* is coined from ‘ejector’. The first vowel is deleted from the Icelandic loanword, because when the Icelandic seamen first heard it they probably did not hear it pronounced with the initial stress and the (ɪ) in (ɪˈdʒɛktər) is hardly heard. However, it is quite possible that this word entered the language through Danish. I have found the term *ejector* in Danish for ‘bilge water pump’. In fact, the Icelandic

¹⁶⁵ *Multilingual Dictionary of Fishing Vessels and Safety on Board*, 314.

¹⁶⁶ *Tryggva saga Ófeigssonar*, 99.

pronunciation of (jæktər) supports that, but no sources have been found to ascertain the origin. The written sources where I have found the usage of the word originated in the trawler environment. According to the *Dictionary of Neologisms, Nýyrði II*, the word *súgandi* was suggested for ejector but it seems that this word has not gained any popularity. According to the *Icelandic Dictionary* the word *súgandi* means: someone/something that sounds loudly, sucking, thundering surf¹⁶⁷.

Icelandic Synonym: *Vatnshrútur*, lit. water ram.¹⁶⁸

keis (*n. masc.*) (keis)

casing ('keisɪŋ), *case* (keis)

Etymology: [a. ONF. *casse*, in central OF. *chasce*, *chasse*, mod.F. *châsse* (= It. *cassa*):—L. *capsa* case, receptacle, f. *cap-Sre* to take, hold.]

Definition: The steel casing, which encloses the space above the engine room by way of the engine room skylight and hatchway. It forms a trunk providing light and ventilation.¹⁶⁹

Icelandic Example: [*Í einni söluferðinni til Grimsby höfðum við þar nokkra viðstöðu meðan gert var við keisinn og skipt um skorstein.*]¹⁷⁰

Translation: In one of the trips to the Grimsby fish market we stayed there for some time while the case was mended and the funnel replaced.

¹⁶⁷ *Íslensk orðabók*, 1519.

¹⁶⁸ Þórgnýr Þórhallsson, former marine engineer.

¹⁶⁹ W.J. Hunter. *Multilingual Dictionary of Fishing Vessels and Safety on Board*. (Oxford and Luxembourg: Fishing News Books, 1992), 124.

¹⁷⁰ *Brimöldur*, 191.

Icelandic Example: [*Hann var að ganga meðfram keisnum, rakst á ferliðu og hlaut ferlegt glóðarauga.*]¹⁷¹

Translation: He was walking along the casing, hit his head on a fairlead and got an awful black eye.

Comment: This word is a borrowing, which probably enters the Icelandic language around the turn of the 20th century during the beginning of the trawling period. There has been no phonological obstacle to the loanword *keis* entering the Icelandic language since the diphthong (ei) is already there, it adapts well to the Icelandic inflectional system and is inclined in the same way as for example *meis*. The word *keis* is recorded in the *Icelandic Dictionary* where it is neither marked as a loanword nor slang¹⁷².

A synonym for *keis* in Icelandic is *vélarreisl* or literally engine superstructure.

kollína (*n. fem.*) (*kollina*)

codline (*kodlain*)

Etymology: [cod + line]

cod [Origin uncertain: the name is known only as English. No notion of connexion with Gr. γάδος (mod. zoological L. *gadus*) is tenable.

One suggestion is that this is the same word as cod *n.*¹, as if = ‘bag-fish’, from its appearance. Wedgwood suggests identity with obs. Flem. *kodde* = *kudse* club, cudgel (Kilian), comparing the analogy of It. *mazzo* beetle, club, mace+also a cod-fish (Florio). But the Flemings are not known to have ever called the fish *kodde*.]

line [Pre-12th century. Directly or via Old French *ligne* from Latin *linea* ‘linen string, line’, a form of *lineus* ‘made of linen’, from *linum* ‘flax, linen’].¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ *Brimöldur*, 90-91.

¹⁷² *Íslensk orðabók*, 761.

¹⁷³ *Encarta World English Dictionary*, accessed 15 March 2005.

Definition: A rope which passes through the meshes of the codend. It is tightened and knotted to hold the catch pending release onboard.¹⁷⁴

Example: The top edges are joined to the narrow end of the bellies, the selvages are laced together and a codline or codend clip is reaved through the lower meshes for securing the section into a bag where the fish are held until released onboard the trawler.¹⁷⁵

Icelandic Example: [*Pokanum er lokað að aftan með svokallaðri kolllínu sem þrædd er í öftustu möskvana, hert er að og bundið fyrir með svokölluðum pokahnút.*¹⁷⁶]

Translation: The end of the codend is closed by means of the so-called codline, which is reaved through the rear meshes, tightened and knotted with the so-called restraining knot or codend knot.

Comment: It is interesting to see how the English pronunciation of codline (kɒdlaɪn) is reflected in the first part of the Icelandic term, i.e. *kolllína*. The *c* changes to *k* in Icelandic since the *c* is not an Icelandic letter. Codl- becomes *koll*. In fact, this is a partial borrowing and folk etymology since *kollur* does not mean cod. *Kollur* in Icelandic means top of the head and therefore the term *kolllína* fits well to describe a line, which is tied around the head of the codend. I am told by trawlermen that while hauling the trawl the first part of it to appear on the surface is often the codend, or more precisely the codline. When the trawl contains a large catch the codend actually springs up to the surface.

¹⁷⁴ *Modern Deep Sea Trawling Gear*, 89.

¹⁷⁵ *Modern Deep Sea Trawling Gear*, 19.

¹⁷⁶ Karl Gunnarsson, Gunnar Jónsson, Ólafur Karvel Pálsson. *Sjávarnytjar við Ísland*. (Reykjavík: Mál og menning, 1998), 65.

The term *kolllína* was not found in the archive of citation slips or in the *Icelandic Dictionary*.

Compounds: *kollinumöskvar*, codline meshes.

krankur (*adj.*) (kra:ŋkɜ:r)

crank (kræŋk)

Etymology: [Of obscure origin, appearing first in the comb. crank-sided, q.v. The early explanations suggest association with the Du. and Fris. *krengd* (of a ship) laid or lying over on its side, pa. pple. of *krengen*, orig. to apply pressure to, push over, specifically to lay or cause (a ship) to fall upon her side, e.g. in careening, also *intr.* to incline or lie on one side, as a ship does when her cargo shifts in the hold. See Dale, and Doornkaat Koolman *Ostfries. Wbch.* Possibly this foreign word was caught up, and confused with the native *crank*.]

Definition: Liable to lean over or capsize: said of a ship when she is built too deep or narrow, or has not sufficient ballast to carry full sail. *Crank by the ground* (see quotes. 1696, 1704).¹⁷⁷ Said of a vessel with small stability, whether due to build or to stowage of cargo.¹⁷⁸ Cf. syn. crank-sided.

Icelandic Example 1: [*Júþiter var skemmtilegt skip, en dálítið krankur á lensi.*]¹⁷⁹

Translation: The *Jupiter* was a fine vessel but rather crank while scudding before the wind.

Icelandic Example 2: [„Þeir eru víst illa blautir þessir togarar,“ sagði gamli maðurinn. „Blautir og krankir.“]¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ OED.

¹⁷⁸ *Dictionary of Nautical Words and Terms*, 110

¹⁷⁹ Ásgeir Jakobsson. *Sagan gleymir engum*. (Hafnarfirði: Skuggsjá, 1989), 108.

¹⁸⁰ Jónas Árnason. *Vetturnótakýrrur*. (Reykjavík: Ægisútgáfan, 1976), 221.

Translation: “They are said to be very wet these trawlers,” the old man said. “Wet and crank.”

Comment: The early side trawlers were often very crank, especially when fully loaded with a catch in the holds, nearly empty bunkers and water tanks. According to an account in a reliable source, *...strangely enough the trawlers, as crank as they were, it was like they did not find their centre of gravity until they heeled over 30-40 degrees. There they stopped as if they were considering the matter and then came to the conclusion that they were obliged to re-right themselves and bring more fish and more pounds sterling to the nation. Most of them tended to heel over in a beam sea, filling the alleyways to leeward and lay for a while under that weight. Other vessels began by filling the alleyway to windward and then heeled to the wave. This crankness was therefore only due to overweight on the boat deck and partially due to the [armament on top of the] wheelhouse and they tended to be crank towards the end of a fishing trip due to understandable reasons [bunkers and freshwater tanks nearly empty but fish holds full of fish and therefore often with a forward trim].*¹⁸¹

It is interesting to note that the Icelandic term *krankur* also means “not well” “sick”, “ill” and therefore the nautical term connoting an unstable vessel, liable to lean over and capsize, suits well as a loanword to describe the condition of a vessel when it is not in a sense quite well in that it is likely to capsize and perhaps “die”.

¹⁸¹ *Gríms saga trolldaskálds*, 52.

kvartur (*n. masc.*) ('kværtər)

quarter ('kwɔ:tə(r))

Etymology: [a. OF. *quarter*, -ier (12th c. in Littré):— L. *quartār-ius* a fourth part (of a measure), f. *quartus* fourth: see *quart n.*² and -er² 2.]

Definition: Areas where top wings join the square.¹⁸² The ‘quarters’ are the two areas where each of the top wing flymesh edges adjoin the square. With conventional trawl nets the quarters are usually subjected to heavy loading due to inadequate shaping, and this is particularly true for such a trawl net as is operated from a side trawler when the gear often has to be ‘shot away’ with uneven strain on the headline.¹⁸³

Icelandic Example: [*Ég var eitthvað á undan þeim hinum, og þegar ég er búinn að bæta netið, set ég gilsinn í kvartinn og þá skeður óhappið.*]¹⁸⁴

Translation: I was somewhat ahead of the others and when I had mended the net I put the gilson in the quarter and then the accident happened.

Icelandic Example: [*Hann hvessti svo skarpt, að skipin hífðu fljótt upp og fóru í landvar. Varpan var það kjaftfull, að róparnir skáru fiskbunkann í vörpuopinu (kvörtunum).*]¹⁸⁵

Translation: The wind blew up so quickly that the ships hastily hauled in their gear and sought shelter near the shore. The trawl was so full that the quarter ropes cut the fish heap in the mouth of the trawl (quarters).

Comment: *Kvartur* is a logical loanword for quarter in the same way as the Danish loanword *korter*, quarter of an hour, which is well established in the language.

¹⁸² *Modern Deep Sea Trawling Gear*, 91.

¹⁸³ *Modern Deep Sea Trawling Gear*, 14.

¹⁸⁴ Jónas Guðmundsson. *Togaramaðurinn Guðmundur Halldór*. (Reykjavík: Hildur, 1982), 62.

¹⁸⁵ *Tryggva saga Ófeigssonar*, 141.

According to the *Icelandic Dictionary*, the noun *kvartur* means complaint. There is no mention of the old loanword, which probably entered nautical Icelandic in the period when Icelanders learned trawling from British seamen on board their trawlers around the turn of the 20th century.

There are two examples of the term *kvartur* in the context of trawling in the archive of citation slips of the Institute of Lexicography.

The noun *kvartur* inflects like the noun *partur* (part), a loanword from MLG. *part*, < OFr. *part* < Lat. *pars* dat. *partem*) and fits well into the inflection system. A related word in Icelandic is the noun *korter*, *kvartér*, *kortél*, quarter of an hour, quarter of an ell (a measure of length) a loanword from Danish *korter*, *kvarter* which entered Icelandic in the 18th century. The word *korter* for the unit of time is widely used in modern Icelandic and has permanently settled in the language. In the same way, *kvartur*, in the nautical sense is probably permanently established in the trawling terminology although it has not found its way into the reference books that I have consulted. The only book where I found the word cited was *Veiðar og veiðarfæri* by Guðni Þorsteinsson where it was marked with quotation marks indicating that the author was a bit hesitant in citing the loanword.

Cf. *kvartreipi*, *kvartróp* – quarter rope.

landterna, landþerna (*n. fem.*) ('lændθərnə)

lantern ('læntən)

Etymology: [adaptation of F. *lanterne*, adaptation of L. *lanterna*, also *lāterna*, believed to be adaptation of Gr. λαμπτήρ (f. λάμπ-ειν to shine, cf. lamp *n.*), with ending after L. *lūcerna*. The form *lanthorn* is probably due to popular etymology, lanterns having formerly been almost always made of horn.]

Definition: The Icelandic meaning is primarily “sidelights”. Casing, with transparent sides, in which a light is carried.

Example: In a vessel of less than 20 m in length the sidelights may be combined in one lantern carried on the fore-and-aft centreline of a vessel.¹⁸⁶

Icelandic example 1: [*Þegar þetta gerðist, þá var kaþbátahernaðurinn í algleymingi og skipin sigldu yfirleitt í convoy, eða skipalestum. Venjulega sigldu þau alveg ljóslost eða með mjög daufar landternur.*]¹⁸⁷

Icelandic example 2: [*Ég sigldi alltaf með landternur og dauft afturljós en ekki topljós.*]¹⁸⁸

Translation: 1. When this happened the submarine warfare was at its peak and the ships generally sailed in convoys. They always sailed without any lights or with very dim sidelights. **2.** I always sailed with lanterns and a dimly lit sternlight but no masthead lights.

Comment: *Landþerna* is an interesting loanword. The first part of the compound word, i.e. *land*, means land and the second part, *þerna*, literally either means stewardess or the bird's name tern. This is an example of folk etymology in that there is a phonetic

¹⁸⁶ *Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972*. London: International Maritime Administration (IMO), 2003), 17.

¹⁸⁷ *Togaramaðurinn Guðmundur Halldór*, 68.

¹⁸⁸ *Brotsjór rís*, 106.

resemblance to the words *land* (land) and *þerna* where an attempt is made to explain the meaning of the word, unfortunately wrongly. Therefore, there is no connection with the original meaning, lamp or light. This word could be an indirect loan through Danish, i.e. *lanterne*, but the *Icelandic Etymological Dictionary* does not record the word *landþerna*. There is one example of a compound word in the archive of citation slips of the Institute of Lexicography, i.e. *landþernuljós*, lantern light.

The *Dictionary of Neologisms, Nýyrði II*, suggests the word *skriðljós* for lantern but I have never heard it used in this way but it is recorded in the *Icelandic Dictionary* with the synonym *skriðbytta* (lantern).

leisa (v.) (leisa:)

lace, lacing (leis)

Etymology: [adaptation of OF. *lacier* (F. *lacer*):—popular L. **laciāre* to ensnare, f. **laciūm*: see lace *n*. Cf. Pr. *lassar*, Sp. *lazar*, Pg. *laçar*, It. *lacciare*.]

Definition: Winding together the selvages of net section.¹⁸⁹ Sewing together net parts, e.g. wings, belly and bag. Also used for temporary mending of torn nets.¹⁹⁰

Icelandic Example: [*Kantarnir voru þræddir saman, það hét að „leisa“ saman netið eins og kallað var.*]¹⁹¹

Translation: The edges were threaded together, which was called to lace the net together.

¹⁸⁹ *Modern Deep Sea Trawling Gear*, 90.

¹⁹⁰ According to former trawler skipper Einar Torfason, 15 March 2005.

¹⁹¹ Togarasaga Magnúsar Runólfssonar, 81.

Icelandic Example: [*Þeir leisuðu afturvænginn, en ég var að taka í glufur í forvængnum og var einn.*]¹⁹²

Translation: They laced the after wing and I was mending holes in the fore wing and was alone.

Example: He could lace the selvages of ewing and bosom without a glance at what he was doing, mask sisal thread into a lint of perfectly matched diamonds and then bate away the meshes with his mind elsewhere.¹⁹³

Comment: The word is found neither in the *Icelandic Dictionary* nor among the citations in the archive of citation slips of the Institute of Lexicography. However, I have found this English loanword in several written sources. Furthermore, according to information gathered from former and current trawlermen, this verb is and has been used widely on board Icelandic trawlers.

leisi (n. neut.) (leisi)

lace (leis)

Etymology: [adaptation of OF. *laz*, *las* (mod.F. *lacs*, with etymologizing spelling), f. popular L. **ladium* (L. *laqueum*) a noose. Cf. It. *laccio*, Sp., Pg. *lazo*.]

Definition: The joints of the upper and lower parts of the trawl.

Icelandic Example 1: [*Sé miðað við síðusauma, eða „leisi“, vængjanna, þá er undirvængurinn 10% lengri en skverinn og yfirvængurinn.*]¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Togaramaðurinn Guðmundur Halldór, 62.

¹⁹³ *Lovely She Goes*, 22.

¹⁹⁴ *Kastað í flóanum*, 226.

Translation: Calculating from the side seams, or the wing laces, the bottom wing is 10% longer than the square and the top wing.

The word *lesslínur* occurs in an advertisement in the nautical magazine *Ægir*, Vol I 1914, which could be an attempt to coin a loanword for lace lines.

Compounds: *Forleis*, (n. neut.) probably “fore lace” judging from the pronunciation of the loanword, *belgleisin*¹⁹⁵ (n. neut.), the belly laces.

Icelandic example 2: [*Ég var á forleisinu, sem kallað er, eða við annan jaðarinn á belgnum.*]¹⁹⁶

Translation: I was at the so-called forelace, by one edge of the belly.

Comment: The example cited above is the only one recorded in the archive of citation slips of the Institute of Lexicography. The loanword is not found in the *Icelandic Dictionary*. As with the verb *leisa* (lace) discussed above, information gathered from former and current trawlermen indicate that the noun *leisi* is and has been used widely on board Icelandic trawlers. According to skipper Eyjólfur Pétursson (on board both side trawlers and stern trawlers), the terms *framleis* og *afturleis* (forward and after lace) were used on board side trawlers but *stjórnborðsleis* and *bakborðsleis* (starboard and port lace) on board stern trawlers.

¹⁹⁵ According to information from trawlerman Ívar Baldursson, Akureyri, 1 April 2005.

¹⁹⁶ *Togaramaðurinn Guðmundur Halldór*, 74.

messeindsér, messaseri, messi (n. masc.) ('mɛsɪndʒər)

messenger ('mɛsɪndʒə(r))

Etymology: [ME. *messenger*, -ier, a. F. *messenger* (OF. also *messagier*), f. *message*: see *message* n. Cf. Pr. *messatgier*, Sp. *mensajero*, Pg. *mensagemeiro*, It. *messaggiero*, -ere. For the insertion of *n* in the b forms, cf. *passenger*, etc.]

Definition: Wire for operating the gear during hauling operations.¹⁹⁷ A 2.5-inch thick wire with a special hook. When the trawl was shot the hook was thrown over the forewarp outboard by the trawlwinch. The hook then slid aft due to the slope of the warp. At the same time the codend man manually gathered up the slack of the messenger through a fairlead located on the bulwark aft of the towing block. After the slack had been gathered up the messenger was quickly hauled back off the winch drum, the hook met and caught the afterwarp and both wires were then led to the open jaws of the towing block.¹⁹⁸

Icelandic Example: *Til að hægt væri að toga urðu forvíninn og afturvíninn að koma saman í blökkinni aftur á skipinu. Varð þá að húkka á forvíninn og var það gert fyrir framan fiskikassana með krók sem festur var á vír sem kallaður var messeindsér. Þegar búið var að hala með handafli af slakanum var lausa enda messeindsérans brugðið á spilkoppinn og vírarnir hífðir saman og að blökkinni.*¹⁹⁹

Translation: Before trawling could commence the fore and afterwarp had to be joined in the jaws of the open towing block aft. The forewarp had to be hooked on, which took place forward of the fish ponds by means of a hook fastened to a wire which was named the messenger. When the slack had been gathered up manually the loose end of the

¹⁹⁷ *Modern Deep Sea Trawling Gear*, 91.

¹⁹⁸ Interview with Capt. Guðmundur Arason, 7 March 2005.

¹⁹⁹ *Togarasaga Magnúsar Runólfssonar*, 73.

messenger was hauled in off the warping head and the warps hauled together towards the towing block.

Example: The foredoorman (Paddy) dragged the messenger from the quarterdeck to the foredeck, climbed over the pound boards and leaned over the starboard rail waiting for the next command. ‘Hook on!’ bellowed the skipper. Paddy hooked the messenger wire on to the forewarp, which was now taut alongside the rail and released it on the command ‘Let go!’²⁰⁰

Comment: The word *messeindsér/messaseri* is a clear case of borrowing, i.e. the source language term is transferred directly and becomes the target language term but with a slight adaptation in spelling. However, the Icelandic pronunciation is almost identical to the English one. A dictionary of nautical terms compiled by Dr. Halldór Halldórsson, *Nýyrði II* (Neologisms Vol. II)²⁰¹, published in 1954, gives *sendill*, *sendivír* (lit. messenger wire) for the term messenger, which is a direct translation. According to Guðjón Ármann Eyjólfsson, former principal of the College of Navigation in Reykjavík, teachers like Helgi J. Halldórsson cand. mag. tried to introduce nautical language neologisms such as *sendill* for messenger to the students of the college but with little or no success. Mr. Eyjólfsson remembers when he was a mate on a trawler one summer that he used the word *sendiboði* for messenger. At first, the men on board laughed at this but later it was frequently used while Mr. Eyjólfsson was on board. However, this seems to be an isolated example and the use of the term *sendiboði* seems to have faded into oblivion. According to skipper Pétur Þorbjörnsson, the only term used for this

²⁰⁰ *Lovely She Goes*, 43.

²⁰¹ Halldór Halldórsson. *Nýyrði*. (Reykjavík: Leiftur, 1954), 24.

tackle was the loanword *messeindsér* and he does not recall that the term *sendill* was ever used. Judging from this, the English oriented terms for trawling gear and various on-board equipment and vessel parts are well rooted in the language and consequently there is an apparent and widespread tendency among trawler seamen to retain the early borrowings in their jargon. Likewise, there seems to be a prevalent reluctance among seamen to adopt neologisms for many of the English terms introduced in the early days of trawling in Iceland.

Compounds: *Messakrókur*, *messengerkrókur*, messenger hook.

pall (*n. neut.*) (pɑ:l)

pawl (pɔ:l)

Etymology: [Derivation uncertain: perhaps = F. *pal* stake, L. *pālus* stake, prop, stay; cf. Du. *pal*; also Welsh *pawl* pole, stake, bar. But the early history of the word in Eng. is unknown.]

Definition: 1. *Naut.* Each of the short stout bars made to engage with the whelps, and prevent a capstan, windlass, or winch from recoiling. In a capstan the pawls are now usually attached to a part of the barrel called the *pawl-head*, and engage with the whelps in a *pawl-rim* attached to the floor or platform on which the capstan works; in a windlass, etc. (formerly also in capstans) the *pawl-rim* forms part of the barrel, and the pawls are attached to the separate *pawl-bitt* or *-post*.²⁰² **2.** A bar pivoted at one end to a

²⁰² *OED*.

support, and engaging at the other with the teeth of a ratchet-wheel or ratchet-bar, so as to hold it in a required position; a lever with a catch for the teeth of a wheel or bar.²⁰³

Comment: The word *pall* for pawl is widely used in nautical Icelandic. The neologism *skreppa* was introduced around 1953²⁰⁴ but to my knowledge has not gained any popularity among seamen probably because *pall* had become deeply nested in the language long before the introduction of the neologism. At the same time, the neologism *skreppuhjól* was introduced for ratchet wheel, the counterpart of the mechanism. It too has failed to gain any popularity in usage among seamen. Cf. also *hömluhjól* (Danish *spærrehjul*, from which the neologism was probably formed), lit. a restricting wheel, a synonym for *skreppuhjól*. The word *pall* (pa:l) adapts well to the Icelandic language and is there to stay. There are two examples of usage in the archive of citation slips. The word *pall* is not recorded in the *Icelandic Etymological Dictionary*.

pentrí, pantrí (*n. neut.*) (pəntri:) (pæntri:)

pantry ('pæntri)

Etymology: [AF. *panetrie* = OF. *paneterie* bread-room, bread-closet (1392 in Godef.), in med.L. *pāna-*, *pānetāria*, *-teria*, It. *panetaria* bread-shop, stall, f. med.L. *pānetārius*, F. *panetier*: see panter.]

²⁰³ *OED*.

²⁰⁴ *Nýyrði*, 16.

Definition: Place for storing food: a small closed space connected to a kitchen, often with a door, in which food and utensils for food preparation can be stored.²⁰⁵ Small compartment just outside the messroom, normally used for storing the night food on board a trawler.²⁰⁶ The Icelandic term used for a similar apartment ashore is *bítibúr*.

Comment: There are no examples of usage available from written sources but according to an interview with a former seaman this was in common usage on board side trawlers during the first and middle part of the 20th century. The reason for using *pantrí*, *pentrí*, might be due to markings above doors on board side trawlers built in England or Scotland, purchased/used by Icelanders. Similar markings were present on board cargo ships where I worked in the seventies and eighties and I especially remember markings for pantries. Although this term is not recorded in dictionaries and has not yet been found in any written sources it is worthwhile mentioning for the record. The Icelandic word for pantry would probably be *borðkrókur* or *býtibúr*.

pond, pont (*n. neut.*) (pɒnd)

pond, pound, deck pond (paʊnd)

Etymology: pound [Not found till near the end of the ME. period:—OE. **pund*, known only in comb. *pund-fold* (in late 12th c. MS.) and early ME. *pundbreche* (Laws of Hen. I) (see pound-breach), and supported by the derivatives (*ȝe-*)*pyndan* to dam up (water) (K. Ælfred), *forpyndan* to exclude, bar (Cynewulf): see pind v. Origin unknown; the stem has not been certainly traced in any continental language. Of this, pond *n.* is an

²⁰⁵ *Encarta World English Dictionary*. (Microsoft Corporation: Bloomsbury Publishing plc., 1999), accessed 14 March 2005.

²⁰⁶ Interview with Capt. Guðmundur Arason, 7 March 2005.

anomalous parallel form; many dialects have *pound* in the sense of *pond*, and the two forms are used indifferently in sense 4b in reference to canals.]

Definition: An enclosure for fish. A compartment for stowing fish on board a fishing-vessel. See quotation 1867²⁰⁷. Fish pond: a temporary storage place on deck used for sorting fish prior to gutting and stowage in the hold. Normally erected with portable divisions, which are held in place by steel sockets attached to the deck.²⁰⁸ In the examples available the term is either spelled pound or pond.

Icelandic Example: [*Kró á milli lúkanna miðskips. Þessi kró var búin til á þann hátt að stillt var upp plönkum á milli styttna á þilfarinu og reynt að hafa þetta eins vatnspétt sem auðið var. Pontið var svo fyllt með sjó. Aðgerðum fiskinum var svo varpað í pontið og þvegin þar, síðan settur niður í lest.*]²⁰⁹

Translation: An enclosure located between the hatches midships. Planks of wood placed between stanchions on the deck made this enclosure and an attempt was made to have the planks as watertight as possible. The pond was filled with seawater. The processed fish was thrown into the pond and washed there before it was put in the fish hold.

Icelandic Example: [*Eftir endilöngu miðju dekkinu á milli lúkanna og beggja megin við þær voru svokölluð pond. Leyst var úr pokanum á móts við miðjupondið og síðan fóru allir í aðgerð nema þeir sem höfðu einhver embætti*].²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ 1867 Smyth *Sailor's Word-bk.*, *Pound*, a lagoon, or space of water, surrounded by reefs and shoals, wherein fish are kept, as at Bermuda (*OED*).

²⁰⁸ *Multilingual Dictionary of Fishing Vessels and Safety on Board*, 471.

²⁰⁹ Interview with Capt. Guðmundur Arason, 7 March 2005.

²¹⁰ *Togarasaga Magnúsar Runólfssonar*, 75

Translation: Along the centre of the deck between the hatches and on either side of them were the so-called ponds. The codend was emptied towards the centre pond and then all hands with no other special responsibilities began the gutting.

Icelandic compound: *Pontuborð* (pound boards), *miðjupond* (centre pond), *pokapont* (codend pond).

Example of pound board (Icelandic *pontuborð*): In comparison, the freshwater tank in the forepeak was bone dry, and the new pound boards were all six inches long.²¹¹

Comment: This seems to be a fairly common term in the context of trawling. The word *pont* has been recorded in the *Icelandic Dictionary*, a compartment on the deck of a fishing vessel used for washing fish, and so has *pontari*, meaning a seaman who washes fish in the pond. Possibly the word originates from the pond which was on board some fishing vessels used for keeping fish alive until the end of the fishing trip. The *Dictionary of Neologisms, Nýyrði II*, has recorded the term *þvottakarl*, literally washer, as an Icelandic translation of pounder. One source²¹² has *pondari*, also with the agent suffix *-ari*. Cf. also *pokapontur*²¹³ and *pokapontið*, the place where the fish were released from the codend.²¹⁴ Another source²¹⁵ has pointed out the derogatory term *apavatn* (monkey lake) for pound when a novice was working there.

²¹¹ *Lovely She Goes*, 13.

²¹² *Togarasaga Magnúsar Runólfssonar*, 76.

²¹³ *Gríms saga trolldaraskálds*, 59.

²¹⁴ Interview with Capt. Guðmundur Arason, 7 March 2005.

²¹⁵ Interview with Capt. Guðmundur Arason, 8 August 2004.

rópur, kvartreipi (*n. masc.*) ('kwærtreipɪ)

quarter rope ('kwɔ:tə(r))

Etymology: [quarter + rope]

quarter [a. OF. *quarter*, -*ier* (12th c. in Littré):— L. *quartār-ius* a fourth part (of a measure), f. *quartus* fourth: see *quart n.*² and -*er*² 2.]

rope [Common Teut.: OE. *ráp* masc., = OFris. *râp* (in *silrâp*; WFr. *reap*, EFr. *rôp*, but NFr. *riap*:—**rêp*), MDu. and Du. *reep*, MLG. *rêp*, *reep*, *reip* (LG. *rêp*), OHG. and G. *reif*, ON. *reip* neut. (Icel., Fær., Norw. *reip*, Sw. *rep*, †*reep*, Da. *reb*, †*reeb*, *reeff*, etc.), Goth. *raip* (in *skaudaraip* shoe-thong). In the Lex Salica (c 490) the Old Frankish form appears to be Latinized as *reipus* (only in a transferred sense), and from early Teutonic the word passed into Finnish as *raippa* rod, twig.]

Definition: The quarter ropes were used to heave in the bobbin rig.²¹⁶

Icelandic example: [*Rópur var langt tóg sem var fest í bússið aftan og fram. Þegar trollið var híft inn á síðuna var híft í rópana að aftan og framan og bússið tekið inn. Bússið var miðbobbingalengjan en þær voru og eru þrjár.*]²¹⁷

Translation: A quarter rope was a long rope, which was fastened to the bosom forward and aft. When the trawl was hauled to the side the quarter ropes were hove in aft and forward and the bosom taken in. The bosom was the centre bobbin rig, of which there were and still are three.

Icelandic Example: [*Síðan kom upp efsti hluti trollsins, og við kræktum með haka í svonefndan róp, og settum rópinn í samband við annan róp á dekkinu, og Magnús Frikk brá honum um ferliðu á brúnni og síðan um spilkoppinn.*]²¹⁸

²¹⁶ According to an interview with former skipper Pétur Þorbjörnsson and skipper Eyjólfur Pétursson, 24 February 2005.

²¹⁷ According to information from trawlerman Ívar Baldursson, Akureyri, 1 April 2005.

²¹⁸ Jónas Árnason. *Sjór og menn*. (Akureyri: Skjaldborg, 1971), 73.

Translation: Then the uppermost part of the trawl came up and we hooked on to the so-called rope and connected the rope to another rope on deck, and Magnús Frikk put it around a fairlead on the wheelhouse and then on the warping head.

Icelandic Example: [*Oft var eins og hann fengi skyndilega hugboð, því að hann átti það til að kalla, okkur hásetunum að óvörum, þegar við höfðum látið út trollið og áttum aðeins eftir að sleppa rópunum: — Látið ekki rópana fara strax, strákar.*]²¹⁹

Translation: Often it was as if he would get a sudden hunch because he would perhaps call to us deckhands unawares, when we had let go the trawl and the quarter ropes were only to be released: — Don't let the quarter ropes go just yet, boys.

Comment: *Rópur* is a clear loanword derived from rope. The English pronunciation is reflected in the spelling of the word. It would have seemed obvious for the first Icelandic trawlermen to just name this special part of the gear *reipi*, but clearly a specific term was needed in order to distinguish it from the complex tackle and to avoid misunderstanding and perhaps accidents in the dangerous environment on the deck of a side trawler. It is noteworthy that the English loanword *rópur* in Icelandic acquires the masculine form instead of the neutral form for the existing word *reipi* (rope).

²¹⁹ *Sagan gleymir engum*, 171.

skællett, skelett, skellett (n. neut.) (skaɪlɛt:) (skɛlɛt:)

skylight ('skaɪlaɪt)

Etymology: [sky + light]

sky [a. ON. *ský* (Icel. *ský*, Norw., Sw., Da. *sky*) neut., cloud (:—original **skiuja*), directly related to OS. *skio* masc., OE. *scéo* (doubtful), and more remotely to OE. *scuwa*, ON. *skugge* shade, shadow, whence *scug n.*¹ See also *skew n.*¹]

light [OE. *leoht* str. neut. (later *lēoht*, Anglian *lēht*, early ME. *līht*) corresponds to OFris. *liacht*, OS. *lioht* (Du. *licht*), OHG. *lioht* (MHG. *lieht*, mod.G. *licht*):—OTeut. **leuhtom*:—pre-Teut. **leuktom* (also **leukotom*, whence Goth. *liuhap*; for the suffix cf. naked *a.*), f. Aryan root **leuk-* to shine, be white. (Not in ON., which has instead a parallel formation on the same root, *liós*:—**leuhs-*.) According to some scholars, the *n.* is the neuter of the adj. **leuhto-* light *a.*²; on this view the primary sense would be ‘that which is bright’.]

Definition: An opening in a roof or ceiling, fitted with glass, for admitting daylight.

Skylight - Glazed opening in deck that allows light to pass to deck below. Glazed covering is usually hinged, to allow air to pass in fine weather.²²⁰

Icelandic Example: [*Ekki mátti sjást ljósglæta á skipi, ekki kveikja í vindlingi í brúnni og ekkert kýrauga mátti vera óbirgt né leggja með því ljósrák og breitt var yfir skællettin yfir vélarúmi.*]²²¹

Translation: You were not allowed to light the slightest light on board a ship, you were not allowed to light a cigarette on the bridge and no side scuttle was left uncovered; not the slightest ray of light was allowed to escape and the skylights over the engine-room were covered.

²²⁰ *Dictionary of Nautical Words and Terms*, 348.

²²¹ *Gríms saga trollaraskálds*, 73.

Icelandic Example: [*Á keisnum, aftan við brúna var lúga eða skælett (eins og það er kallað til sjós). Var lúgan höfð opin öllu jöfnu, til að loftbetra væri í vélarrúminu, nema í illviðrum, þá var skálkað yfir hana, svo sjórinn gengi ekki niður í vélina.*]²²²

Translation: On the engine case, behind the bridge there was a hatch or skylight (as it is called at sea). The hatch was usually kept open to ventilate the engine-room, except during bad weather, when it was covered to prevent sea water from entering the engine room space.

Comment: The nautical loanword *skelett/skælett* meaning a glazed opening in the deck on board a ship, originates from English skylight. The spelling of the word has been adapted to Icelandic where, according to the sources consulted, the first part of the word is either spelled *ske-* or *skæ-* (*skai*), where the latter follows the English pronunciation. The second part of the word is spelled *-lett* and is pronounced (*let:*). At first I considered it possible that the term had entered Icelandic through Danish but according to the *Icelandic Etymological Dictionary* *skellet* is an English loanword and the spelling and pronunciation in fact points to English origin. The word is recorded in Danish dictionaries as *skylight*, i.e. spelled in the same way as in English.

There is only one example of the noun *skelett* recorded in the archive of citation slips. However, I have found several examples in written sources, i.e. biographies of trawlermen. Most of those examples are spelled with an ‘æ’, *skælett*, which indicates English influence, i.e. from the pronunciation (*‘skailart*).

²²² *Togaramaðurinn Guðmundur Halldór*, 53.

The term *hágluggi*, high window is used in the *Directive on the Survey of Ships and Boats and their Safety* of 1922.

skver (*n. masc.*) (skvɛr)

square (skwɛə(r))

Etymology: [adaptation of OF. *esquire* (*esquierre*) and *esquare* (*es-*, *equarre*, also *escuerre*, *equerre*, mod.F. *équerre*):—pop. L. **exquadra* (see *quadra*), whence also It. *squadra*, Pg. *esquadra*, Sp. *escuadra*. Also f. square *a*. The early form *squire* is chiefly employed in senses 1 and 3.]

Definition: The section of netting fitted between the top body and the two top wings so that it partially overhangs the groundrope. It is really this part of the trawl net, that is most important, for it does to a great degree govern the way the rest of the net can be shaped.²²³ The word is defined in the *Icelandic Etymological Dictionary*: “(mod.Ice.) ‘the centre piece of a trawl’. Loanword from English, cf. E. square (same meaning), lit. ‘quadrilateral, cross piece’ < Late Latin *exquadrad*, from *quattour* ‘four’.”

Icelandic Example: *Við vorum búnir að ná inn skvernum og erum að setja snöruna á belginn, þegar sjór ríður á skipið, sem lá flatt fyrir.*²²⁴

Translation: We had managed to get the square inboard and are putting the strop on the belly when a breaking sea hit the vessel, which lay flat in a beam sea.

Comment: The term *skver* is a widely used loanword and often heard among trawlermen. There is only one example of the word in the archive of citation slips of the

²²³ John Garner. *Modern Deep Sea Trawling Gear*. (Farnham: Fishing News Books Ltd, 1988), 14.

²²⁴ Jónas Guðmundsson. *Togaramaðurinn Guðmundur Halldór*. (Reykjavík: Hildur, 1982), 74.

Institute of Lexicography, from a source published in 1985. The word is still used on board modern stern trawlers. The verb *að skvera* is formed from the noun. In the context of trawling it means to expand the square of the trawl when the trawl was shot and also when it was taken in. According to the *Icelandic Dictionary of Slang* the noun *að skvera* is derived from English verb “square”, to fix, prepare; *skvera skip*, to bring a ship to a slipway; *lata trollið skvera sig*, align the trawl to the right trawl heading; *skvera sig af/upp*, get dressed into good clothing, groom oneself; *skvera af*, get something done quickly.

slóa (v.)(sləʊɑː)

slow (sləʊ)

Etymology: [Common Teutonic: OE. *slāw* (:—OTeut. *slaiwaz*), = MDu. and Du. *sleeuw*, *slee*, OS. *sleu* (MLG. and LG. *slê*), OHG. *slêo* (MHG. *slê*, *slêw*-, G. dial *schleh*, *schlehe*), ON. *slær*, *sljár*, *sljór* (Norw. *sljo*, *sljø*, etc.; Sw. *slö*, Da. *sløv*), blunt, dull, etc. The stem is perh. the same as in L. *lævus*, Gr. *λαίος* left.]

Definition: Sailing at slow speed. In bad weather when trawling was not possible it was customary to sail head on into the wind and sea. This was called to slow (*slóa*).²²⁵ To ride out a gale and sail slow speed ahead.²²⁶

Icelandic Example: [*Í miðlungsveðri, brælu eða strekkingi, var slegið afferð, slóað og aftur sett á fullt.*]²²⁷

²²⁵ Interview with Capt. Guðmundur Arason, 7 March 2005.

²²⁶ According to former trawler skipper Einar Torfason, 15 March 2005.

²²⁷ *Brimöldur*, 175.

Translation: In worsening weather, a storm or strong wind the speed of the ship was reduced, engines put on slow and then full speed again.

Icelandic Example: [*Mikill munur var á því, hversu lengi hægt var að halda áfram á togurunum í slæmu veðri; þýzku togararnir gátu haldið fullri ferð, þótt sum Beverley-skipin ensku yrðu að slóa.*]²²⁸

Translation: There was much difference with regard to how long it was possible for the trawlers to make headway in adverse weather; the German trawlers could maintain full speed although the English Beverley ships had to sail slow speed.

Comment: The verb *slóa* is a loanword from English, to slow. It is likely that the verb is coined from the markings on engine room telegraphs, *Slow ahead* on the bridge of trawlers, most of which were built in Britain, and purchased by Icelanders. These markings were not translated into Icelandic, at least not on the second-hand trawlers that were purchased from abroad. This usage is quite understandable since the skippers or mates had the English markings in front of them all the time. In fact, there are examples of similar usage on board the Icelandic whaleboats, which were all purchased from Norway, and had the engine room telegraph markings in Norwegian. Icelandic whalers have told me that it was customary to use the Norwegian terms for speed, ahead and astern, on board the whaleboats in communications between the wheelhouse and engine room.

There are several examples of the verb *slóa* in the archive of citation slips, the oldest one from 1935. The verb *slóa* is cited in the *Icelandic Dictionary* as a nautical term, meaning to sail at reduced speed into the wind and sea, head into the wind and

²²⁸ Sagan gleymir engum, 20.

sea. The *Icelandic Etymological Dictionary*: ‘*slóa* v. (Mod.Icel.) go slowly, at slow speed (of engine-powered ships)’. Loanword from English slow ‘late’ related to ‘*sljór*’, obtuse”.

slæs (slais)

slice (bar) (*n. masc.*) (slais)

Etymology: [adaptation of OF. *eschice*, *eschisse* (mod.F. *éclisse*) splinter, shiver, small piece (of wood, etc.), vbl. n. f. *eschicer*: see slice v.¹]

Definition: A form of fire-shovel; also, an instrument for clearing the bars of a furnace when choked with clinkers.²²⁹

Icelandic Example: [*Peir verða nefnilega annaðhvort að aumingjum eða mönnum, í glímunni við eldana og slæsana niður á firplássi.*]²³⁰

Translation: The fact is that they will either become bums or men in their wrestle with the fires and slices down in the fireplace.

Icelandic Example: [*Íslendingarnir sjá, hvar blámaður stendur niður á firplássinu með slæsinn, langan skörung, sem notaður var til að raka úr eldholinu, og hefur hann slæsinn reiddan til höggs og bíður þannig skipstjórans.*]²³¹

²²⁹ *OED*.

²³⁰ Bárður Jakobsson. *Sjómannablaðið Vikingur*. (Reykjavík: Farmanna- og fiskimannasamband Íslands, 1949), 330.

²³¹ *Hafnarfjarðarjarlinn*, 162.

Translation: The Icelanders see where a nigger stands down on the fireplace with the slice, a long poker, which was used to rake from the furnace, and he has the slice ready for striking and thus awaits the skipper.

Comment: The word *slæs* probably entered the language during the early days of trawling when all the trawlers had steam-engines which burned coal. The slice was a special poker used to clean the bars of the furnace and there was no Icelandic word available for this special instrument. The pronunciation of *slæs* is nearly identical to the English pronunciation, i.e. (slais)_x, which indicates that the word is a direct loanword from English.

English Synonym: Fire rake.

spanni (*n. masc.*) ('spæni)

spanner ('spænə(r))

Etymology: span (v.) [adaptation of G. *spanner* (also *spänner*, Sw. *spännare*), f. *spannen* span v.²] span (n.) [adaptation of Flem., Du., or LG. (also MDu. and MLG.) *spannen*, = OHG. *spannan* (G. *spannen*), OFris. *spanna*, *sponna*, OE. *spannan* to fix or fasten, to join, to draw tight, etc. Cf. also It. *spannare*, from Germanic.]

According to the etymology in the *Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, the word is related to the ON/Icel. word *spönn*, which means, according to the *Icelandic Dictionary*, the distance between the tips of the outstretched thumb and the little finger, middle finger or index finger (long or short *spönn*): [before 900; (n.) ME *spanne*, *sponne*, *spayn*, OE *span(n)*, *spon(n)*; c. G *Spanne*, D *span*, ON *spönn*; (v.) ME *spaynen*, deriv. of the n.]

Definition: A special tool for screwing bolts with square-shaped heads into or out of shackles. The mouth of the spanner is V-shaped with teeth in the upper part.²³²

Icelandic Example: [Í hvalbaknum var t.d. hafður lykill eða járnstöng með tenntum, vaff-laga kjafti sem hægt var að nota til margra hluta. Hann kölluðum við spanna. Yfirleitt var allt nefnt enskum nöfnum á togurum á þessum tíma.]²³³

Translation: In the whaleback we kept, for example, a wrench or an iron bar with a toothed V-shaped mouth, which was useful for many things. We called it a spanner. Commonly, at that time, everything had English names.

Icelandic Example: [*Við þræddum trollvirinn í gegnum bobbingana beggja megin frá spilinu í gegnum pollana og strektum þá upp með lunningunni og þrælhertum með járnkörlum og spanna.*]²³⁴

Translation: We threaded the warp through the bobbins on both sides of the winch, through the fairleads and tensed them up to the bulwark and tightened them further with pinch bars and spanners.

Comment: The word *spanner* is well known and used on board modern trawlers. This is definitely a loanword from English and entered the spoken language at the time when Icelanders were learning trawling from British seamen. The word *spantöng* has been recorded in an Icelandic-Danish dictionary²³⁵, meaning something like spanner pliers but apparently the word has not gained any popularity among seamen.

²³² Interview with Capt. Guðmundur Arason, 7 March 2005.

²³³ Togarasaga Magnúsar Runólfssonar, 61.

²³⁴ Togarasaga Magnúsar Runólfssonar, 134.

²³⁵ Ole Widding; Haraldur Magnússon; Meulengracht Sørensen. *Íslensk-dönsk orðabók*. Reykjavík: Mál og menning, 2001), 690.

steis, steisinn (*n. masc.*) ('steɪʒɪŋ)

staging ('steɪdʒɪŋ)

Etymology: [adaptation of OF. *estage* masc. (mod.F. *étage*) = Pr. *estatge* (also *estatga* fem.), It. *staggio* station, dwelling (*obs.*), support for a net, side of a ladder, etc.:—popular L. **staticum*, f. L. *stāre* to stand (OF. *ester*, Prov. *estar*)...]

Example: The fish hold was broken up by upright partitions and staging laid horizontally, and referred to as shelf pounds. Beneath the staging were the underfoots, and aft were the bulk pounds for the less valuable fish such as coalie, cats and monk.²³⁶

Icelandic Example: [*Ef afli er í steisnum (lestargangi), sem við ber, ef sæmilega hefur fiskazt, komast þessir kassar ekki nema á þilfarið til að byrja með...*]²³⁷

Icelandic Example: [*Við finnum ekki lekann þótt við rifum upp lestalúgurnar, þetta er svo lúmskt, en sjórinn er kominn upp að steis.*]²³⁸

Translation: We do not find the leakage although we tear up the hatch covers, this is so subtle, but the sea-water has reached up to the staging.

Translation: If there are any fish in the staging, which happens if the catch has been good, there is no room for these boxes except temporarily on deck...

Comment: The word *steis* in Icelandic is rather mysterious but I think that this is definitely a loanword derived from the English term staging (see definition above). According to the written Icelandic sources consulted, the term is often used with the affixed article *-ing* giving *steisinn* ('steɪʒɪŋ), which is almost identically pronounced as the English term, i.e. ('steɪdʒɪŋ), strongly indicating that the word is derived from English. According to trawlermen who have been on both side trawlers and stern

²³⁶ *Lovely She Goes*, 144.

²³⁷ Sjómannablaðið Víkingur. (Reykjavík: Farmanna- og fiskimannasambandið, 1963), 16.

²³⁸ Jóhannes Helgi. *Hin hvítu segl: Æviminningar Andrésar Péturssonar Matthíassonar*. (Reykjavík: Setberg, 1962), 144.

trawlers, the staging (*steis*) is now obsolete since modern fishing vessels use fish tubs or boxes and little or no line-ups in holds.²³⁹

Compounds: *Efri steis* (upper staging), *neðri steis* (lower staging)²⁴⁰.

stíma (v.) (sti:mə)

steam (sti:m)

Etymology: steam (v.) [OE. *stéman*, *stýman*:—prehistoric **staumjan*, f. **staum*- steam n.] steam (n.) [OE. *stéam* = WFrís. *steam*, Du. *stoom*:—OTeut. type **staumo*-z, of obscure origin.]

Definition: To move or travel by the agency of steam: a. of a ship or its passengers.²⁴¹

Icelandic Example: [*Það endaði með því að ég var kominn á fulla ferð og stímdi stystu leið til hafnar meðan strákarnir jusu sem ákafast og snerust í kringum dæluna.*]²⁴²

Translation: Finally, I had gained full speed and steamed the shortest route to port while the lads bailed with urgency and reeled around the bilge pump.

Icelandic Example: [- *Stínum á Breiðabugt.*]²⁴³

Translation: - Steaming on Breiðabugt.

Icelandic Example: [*Margar ástæður get legið til þess að skipið hafi ekki svarað. T.d. var mér sagt að skipið hefði stímað í austur af miðunum en vindur var suðaustan-stæður.*]²⁴⁴

²³⁹ According to information from Ívar Baldursson, Akureyri, 1 April 2005.

²⁴⁰ Interview with trawler skipper Eyjólfur Pétursson, 18 February 2005.

²⁴¹ OED.

²⁴² *Togarasaga Magnúsar Runólfssonar*, 135.

²⁴³ *Gríms saga trolleaskálds*, 19.

²⁴⁴ *Þrautgóðir á raunastund*, Vol XIV, 69.

Translation: There could be many reasons for the lack of response from the vessel. For example, I was told that the vessel had steamed in an eastward direction, from the fishing grounds but the wind was southeasterly.

Comment: The verb *stíma* is an English loanword, which according to the *Icelandic Etymological Dictionary*, means to move forward (of engine powered ships or vehicles): *stíma á* ‘collide into, sail into’. The noun *stím* (steam), a trip by steamer²⁴⁵ is frequently used in examples found in the archive of citation slips from the 20th century, i.e. after the introduction of steam power. However, the noun *stím* is also found in Icelandic meaning wrestle, fight, difficulty, bustle, labour, and occurs in written Icelandic sources from the middle part of the 17th century. Seamen on board small boats engaging in single-day fishing trips used the phrases: *að taka landstímið* (to sail the vessel back to land, lit. to take the land steam), *taka útstímið* (sail the vessel towards the fishing grounds, lit. to take the outward steam) and *að taka heimstímið* (to sail the vessel in the direction of the home port, lit. to take the home steam), i.e. being in the wheelhouse and steering the vessel to the fishing grounds or to port.

troll (n. neut.) (trɒl)

trawl (trɔ:l)

Etymology: [Origin and age obscure. If quot. 1481–90 belongs here, *trawelle* might be related to rare MDu. *traghel* drag-net (in *Teuthonista* 1475), referred by Verwijs and Verdam ult. to L. *tragula* drag-net. But the MS. reading is indistinct, and some would read *tramelle* (trammel n.¹ 1).

²⁴⁵ OED.

Apart from quot. 1481–90, the vb. appears earlier than the n., and may be its source, but is no less obscure in origin. The forms *troul*, *trowl* were perh. due to confusion with *trowl*, troll, another fishing term.]

Definition: Fishing gear which is pulled through the water.²⁴⁶

Icelandic Example: [*Forsetinn, en hann var krafítill, og réði ekki við troll á djúpu vatni, sögðu þeir sem á honum voru. Bergur Pálsson sagði til dæmis, að hann hafi ekki ráðið við bobbingatroll.*]²⁴⁷

Translation: The *Forsetinn* [Icelandic trawler], was a little short of power, and could not handle a trawl on deep water, according to the crew members. Bergur Pálsson said, for example, that the trawler could not handle a bobbin trawl.

Example: The trawl began to float away, the headline went over the side. A crescent of air-filled aluminium floats pulled hard against the swell. *Arctic Fox* rolled to a stop and went astern a few revolutions, allowing time for the trawl to spread over the surface of the water before it sank finally and was lost from view.²⁴⁸

Comment: The *Icelandic Etymological Dictionary* gives: *trolla* (trol-la) v. (19th century) ‘fish with bottom trawl’; *troll* (neut.) n. ‘(bottom)trawl trawl’; *trollari* masc. ‘trawler, bottom trawler’. Loanword from e. trawl (n. and v.) ‘*varpa, toga*’ and trawler ‘*togari*’; e. trawl v. is also related to MDu. *traghelen* ‘*draga*’ and *traghel* ‘*dráttarnet*’, possibly from L. *tragula* (same meaning).²⁴⁹ This is one of the words that enter Icelandic in the early days of trawling operations in Iceland, i.e. in the last decade of the 19th century. According to the archive of citation slips the first occurrence of the noun *trollari*, trawler in a written source dates back to 1892²⁵⁰ and the verb *trolla*, to trawl,

²⁴⁶ *Modern Deep Sea Trawling Gear*, 92.

²⁴⁷ *Sagan gleymir engum*, 164.

²⁴⁸ *Lovely She Goes*, 43.

²⁴⁹ Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon. *Íslensk Orðsifjabók*. (Reykjavík: Orðabók Háskólans, 1989), 1062.

²⁵⁰ *Austri* (Seyðisfjörður: 1892), 119.

dates back to 1896. Later there are various spelling forms of the term in different sources, e.g. *trolari*. According to the archive of citation slips, the neologism *botnvarpa*, bottom trawl, first occurs in the Icelandic language in an *Act on a Ban on Fishing with Bottom Trawl*, submitted to the Althingi in 1889. Article 1 provides: Fishing with bottom trawl [*botnvörpu*] is prohibited within Iceland's territorial sea (i.e. the fishing method of tying heavy iron shackles, iron bars or other very heavy objects to the trawl and dragging it over the bottom with sail or steam power so that it scrapes the bottom; the Englishmen call this fishing gear trawl." The term *botnvarpa* is hardly ever used in daily language, but still occurs in the name of the Federation of Icelandic Bottom Trawler Owners, i.e. *Félag íslenskra botnvörpuskipaeigenda*, and in legislation on fisheries.

Compounds: *Trollvinda*, trawl winch; *trolltvinni* trawl twine (see entry below), *trollbuxur*, trawl trousers; *trolldoppa*, *trollstakkur*, trawl oilskins, *trollgarn*, trawl yarn; *trollvír*, trawl wire (warp), *botnvörpuhleri*, trawl door/otter board, *botnvörpulás*, trawl shackle.

trollari (*n. masc.*) ('trɒləri)

trawler ('trɔ:lə(r))

Etymology: [Origin and age obscure. If quot. 1481–90 belongs here, *trawelle* might be related to rare MDu. *traghel* drag-net (in *Teuthonista* 1475), referred by Verwijs and Verdam ult. to L. *tragula* drag-net. But the MS. reading is indistinct, and some would read *tramelle* (trammel *n.*¹ 1).

Apart from quot. 1481–90, the vb. appears earlier than the n., and may be its source, but is no less obscure in origin. The forms *troul*, *trowl* were perh. due to confusion with *trowl*, troll, another fishing term.]

Definition: A vessel which is built to pull a trawl.²⁵¹

Icelandic Example: [*Bíddu svolítið með þessa fyrirætlun. Ég er mjög að hugsa um að ná í trollara, og við skulum fyrst sjá, hvernig það gengur.*]²⁵²

Translation: Wait for a while to make this decision. I am seriously considering purchasing a trawler and we shall first see how that goes.

Icelandic Example: [*Mér kemur í hug einn gamall skipsfélagi minn á trollurum.*]²⁵³

Translation: An old shipmate of mine from the trawlers comes to mind.

Comment: The term *trollari* seems to have been widely used in the written language during the first and middle part of the 20th century, according to the archive of citation slips. When the revolutionary fishing method of trawling was introduced in Iceland, many suggestions for an Icelandic name for the type of vessel emerged. These were for example: *botnverpill*, *botnverpingur*, *botnverplingur*, *botnvörpungur* and *botnvörpu-skip*. The term, which is generally used for “trawler” today is *togari*, from the verb *toga*, to pull. According to the archive of citation slips at the Institute of Lexicography, the oldest example of *togari* in the Icelandic language is from 1913: “*hinar stóru tognætur, sem togarar* („Trawlers“) *nota*”²⁵⁴, which translates as: “the large trawl nets that trawlers use”.

²⁵¹ *Modern Deep Sea Trawling Gear*, 92.

²⁵² Sveinn Sigurðsson. *Sókn á sæ og storð: Æviminningar Þórarins Olgeirssonar*. (Reykjavík: Bókastöð Eimreiðarinnar, 1960), 46.

²⁵³ *Togaramaðurinn Guðmundur Halldór*, 59.

²⁵⁴ *Andvari*. 144.

The word *togari* was coined by the Surgeon General, Dr. Guðmundur Björnsson in the summer of 1910, when he wrote an article in the magazine *Lögrétta*. There, he describes a fishing trip on Faxaflói Bay on the trawler Snorri Sturluson. He discusses the many words that had already been used for the vessels that were used for trawler fishing and the confusion that this entailed. In his article, Dr. Björnsson is of the opinion that the words *botnvörpungur*, bottom trawler, or *botnvörpuskip*, bottom trawling vessel, will probably not be long-lived in the language since they are too long. He maintains that seamen themselves had used the verb *toga* (to trawl) and therefore proposes the usage of the noun *togari* for the vessels. There were some articles written on this subject in the papers and some were of the opinion that the word *togari* resembled the English word tug.²⁵⁵

Compounds: *Trollaramaður*²⁵⁶, trawlerman, *tröllafiskur*²⁵⁷, trawler fish.

tröllafiskur (*n. masc.*) ('trɔlɛfiskər)

trawler fish ('trɔ:lər, fɪʃ)

Etymology: [trawler + fish]

trawler [Origin and age obscure. If quot. 1481–90 belongs here, *trawelle* might be related to rare MDu. *traghel* drag-net (in *Teuthonista* 1475), referred by Verwijs and Verdam ult. to L. *tragula* drag-net. But the MS. reading is indistinct, and some would read *tramelle* (trammel *n.*¹ 1).]

fish [Com. Teut.; OE. *fisc*. str. masc. = OFris. *fisk*, OS. *fisc* (Du. *visch*), OHG. *fisc* (MHG. *visch*, Ger. *fisch*), ON. *fiskr* (Sw. and Da. *fisk*), Goth. *fisks*:—OTeut. **fisko-z*:—pre-Teut. **pisko-s*, cogn. with L. *piscis* and OIr. *iasc* (:—**peiskos*).]

²⁵⁵ Heimir Þorleifsson, 97.

²⁵⁶ *Togaramaðurinn Guðmundur Halldór*, 50.

²⁵⁷ *Kastað í Flóanum*, 94.

Definition: Fish bought or received free from British trawlers fishing in Faxaflói Bay in the early days of trawling.

Example: [Árið 1898 er svo komið, að í blaðafrétt segir að allvel aflist á Sviðinu, en það komi fyrir lítið, þar sem bátaútvegurinn sé kominn í ördeyðu. „Það er þilskipaaflinn og tröllafiskurinn, sem almenningur lifir á.“]²⁵⁸

Translation: By 1898, the point has been reached, according to a newspaper article, when there is a considerable catch to be had in the *Sviðið* fishing ground, but that does not help a bit when the operation of boats is not successful. “The general public lives on the catch of the decked vessels as well as on the trawler fish [*tröllafiskur*].”

Comment: This word is a loan translation, which is derived from English, “trawlerfish”. The word was probably derived from *trollari*, the Icelandic loanword for “trawler” when the new fishing method was being introduced. Interestingly, the word “*tröllafiskur*” in Icelandic is a combination of the plural word *tröll*, any of a race of supernatural beings, sometimes conceived of as giants and sometimes as dwarfs, inhabiting caves or subterranean dwellings²⁵⁹, and “*fiskur*”, meaning “fish”, perhaps alluding to an ogre in the form of a trawler.²⁶⁰ *Tröllafiskur* might also originate from the difference in size between the trawlers (giant-like), and the small rowing boats of the locals.

²⁵⁸ *Kastað í flóanum*, 96.

²⁵⁹ Sol Steinmetz, ed. *Random House Unabridged Electronic Dictionary*. (New York: Random House, 1994).

²⁶⁰ Ásgeir Jakobsson. *Hafnarfjarðarjarlinn; Einars saga Þorgilssonar*. (Reykjavík: Skuggsjá, 1987), 111.

The fishermen actually used some expressions derived from this when discussing these affairs, i.e. *róa í tröllin*, “row to the trolls” and *fara í tröllaróður*, “go troll-rowing”.²⁶¹

[*togvír*] *varpa* (*n. fem.*) (va:ɾpa:)

warp (wɔ:p)

Etyymology: [OE. *wearp* warp in weaving (also used to gloss L. *vīmen* osier-twign), corresponds to OLG. *warf* (MLG. *warf*, *warpe*), OHG. *warf*, *warph*, *waraf* (MHG., early mod.G. *warf*) warp in weaving, ON. *varp* neut., cast of a net, a laying of eggs (Sw. *varp* neut., cast of a net, draught of fish, hauling-rope, masc. warp in weaving, Da. *varp* neut. hauling-rope):—OTeut. **warpo-*, f. root **werp-*: **warp-* to throw: see warp v. Branch IV is prob. a new formation on the verb.]

Definition/English: A towing rope. Steel wire cable 30 mm in diameter extending from port and starboard winch drums, round fairleads, bollards and shackled to doors. Providing the only means by which the complete trawl is towed astern of the vessel.

Definition/Icelandic: Bag-shaped net used to catch fish, trawl.

Icelandic Example: [*Aðalhlutar vörpunnar, taldir aftan frá eins og varpan liggur í drætti, eru: pokinn, belgurinn, skverinn eða yfirnetið og vængirnir.*]²⁶²

Translation: The main parts of the trawl, counted from the rear as it is towed are: the codend, the belly, the square or the over-net and the wings.

Example: The winch started to pay out the warp, both drums turning, each winchman keeping one hand on the brake and one eye on the warp snaking out in front of him –

²⁶¹ Jón Þ. Þór. *Breskir togarar og Íslandsmið 1889-1916*, 196.

²⁶² *Kastað í flóanum*, 225.

watching for the ‘fathom marks’ served through the strands of both warps at 25 or 50 fathom intervals.²⁶³

Comment: The word discussed has different meanings in English and Icelandic. The etymological connection of the word “warp” to Icelandic is interesting. The *Icelandic Etymological Dictionary* cites: *varpa* fem. ‘*nót, pokalaga net; útburður*’; cf. NNo. *varpe* fem. ‘small net, *laxanót*’, *vorpe* ‘*veffargrind*’, Far., *vørpa* fem. ‘*kastslanga, veffargrind*’; < **warpōn*. Thus, it seems that in modern trawling the parts of the fishing gear, the towing warps, derive from the ropes used to connect to throwing nets used for fishing. Therefore, a verb *að varpa* (to throw) in Icelandic forms the noun *varpa*, (trawl) in modern trawling language, meaning the net of the trawl itself as well as its accessories. Interestingly, the noun “warp” in English has thus returned to modern Icelandic as a noun too but with the meaning “trawl”, cf. *botnvarpa* (literarily bottom warp meaning bottom trawl) and the derivative *botnvörpungur* meaning bottom trawler (literarily a bottom *warper). When the trawling term *varpa* was coined in Icelandic from *warp* in English it might be that a misunderstanding occurred as to which part of the gear it applied.

The neologism *vörpustrengur* meaning trawl-warp is found in the *Dictionary of Neologisms, Nýyrði II*, a term, which seems to have been stillborn. The same applies to the neologism *dragstrengur*, also meaning trawl-warp, found in a law banning bottom trawling.²⁶⁴

Compounds: *Botnvarpa, botnvörpuskip, flotvarpa*.

²⁶³ *Lovely She Goes*, 43.

²⁶⁴ *Stjórnartíðindi fyrir Ísland árið 1920, A-deild*. (Reykjavík: Ísafoldarprentsmiðja h.f., 1920), 7-8.

3.3 Survey on the usage of English loanwords on board trawlers

In connection with the writing of this paper, a survey was conducted in order to identify which of the relevant words and concepts borrowed from English early in the 20th century have survived in modern Icelandic trawling language and to gain any relevant information on the usage of a particular set of words on board trawlers today. Questionnaires were sent via e-mail to two of the largest trawling companies in Iceland, Samherji Ltd. in Akureyri and Grandi Ltd. in Reykjavík. The questionnaires were anonymous and, therefore, it is not known from which trawler or trawlers the answered forms originate. The main target group consisted of seamen currently working on board stern trawlers and trawlermen who had previously worked on board stern trawlers and side trawlers. A total of three completed questionnaires were received from stern trawler seamen. Seven completed forms were received from trawlermen who had been sent questionnaires with direct mail. These were both former seamen on side trawlers and seamen who had both worked on board side trawlers and fairly recently on board stern trawlers. Despite the relatively few completed forms (a total of 10) that were received, a distinctive conclusion can be drawn from the information gained.

A single question asked was: “Are the following terms currently used on board your trawler during daily work?” Then a total of 41 terms were listed and the receiver of the form was asked to check one of three possible options: 1 - Yes, 2 - No, 3 - Never heard of. The terms asked for were: *bakstroffá* (back strop), *bananalinkur* (banana link), *bekket* (becket), *beitsing* (baiting), *blokk/blökk* (block), *blók* (bloke), *bobbingur* (bobbin), *brakkett* (bracket), *að búlka* (to bulk [the trawl]), *jektor* (ejector), *fendari* (fender), *dönnis* (dunnage), *ferlaufa/ferliða* (fair lead), *að fixa* (to fix), *forleis* (fore

lace), *forgálg* (fore gallows), *gils* (gilson), *gilsmaður* (gilson man), *gilsvír* (gilson wire), *grandari* (ground wire/rope), *hal* (haul), *heis*, *að hífa* (to heave), *hosiló* (?), *keis* (caser/casing), *kvartur* (quart), *landterna/landþerna* (lantern), *að leisa* (to lace), *leis/leisin* (lace/laces), *messeindsér/messaseri* (messenger), *pantrí* (pantry), *pond/pondið* (pond/pound), *ross* (ross), *rópur* (rope), *ræsa* (rise/raise), *skver* (square), *að skvera* (to square), *að slóa* (to slow), *spanni* (spanner), *steis/steisinn* (staging) and *törnast* (to turn?). Also, the respondent was free to make a comment on each word.

All respondents indicated that the words *bakstroffa* (n.), *blökk* (n.), *bobbingur* (n.), *brakkett* (n.), *fixa* (v.), *gils* (n.), *gilsmaður* (n.), *gilsvír* (n.), *grandari* (n.), *hal* (n.), *heis* (n.), *að hífa* (v.), *landþerna/lanterna* (n.), *að leisa* (v.), *leis/leisin* (n.), *ross* (n.), *að ræsa* (v.), *skver* (n.), *slóa* (v.), *spanni* (n.) and *að törnast* (v.) were still used on board stern trawlers.

Only one seaman was familiar with the word *bekket*. The one who recognized the word gave a correct definition of the word. All but one respondent was familiar with the verb *að búlka* indicating that the term is still used on board stern trawlers. The word *bananalinkur* was not familiar to six of the respondents but the elder side trawler seamen knew it and explained its usage in their comments. One respondent had never heard the term *jektur* and one said that it was not used on board stern trawlers. Another one maintained that the word *hosiló* was not used on board modern trawlers while the remaining nine maintained that it was still used. Two seamen maintained that the term *ferliða* (n.) was not used on board stern trawlers. Two seamen thought that the term *forleis* (n.) was not used on board modern trawlers and one had never heard of it. The remaining seven all knew the word and maintained that it was still used. Three seamen

had never heard of the term *fendari* (fender) and one said that it was not used on board trawlers. The remaining seven maintained that it was used on board trawlers. One of the respondents said that usually the term *stuðpúði* was used instead of *fendari*. It is most likely that the word is more extensively used in connection with merchant vessels. The term *dönnis* (dunnage) was included in the survey in order to find out whether the particular phenomenon was ever used on board trawlers. The result is clear. Only two of the respondents were familiar with the term commenting that it originates in the context of merchant ships. The term *forgálgi* is a part of the old terminology of the side trawlers and was known to all of the respondents and many of them knew that it had been used on board the old trawlers. The term *keis* was familiar to all of the respondents but one said that it was not used on board modern trawlers. In fact, according to some comments the term is used for a part of the construction of the old side trawlers but not the modern ones. All respondents except one recognised the term *kvertur* (quart) indicating that it was still used. All but one respondent were familiar with the term *messeindsér/messaseri* and indicated in their comments that this was a part of the old trawling gear. Some of the respondents who used to sail on the old side trawlers recognised the term *pantrí* but the modern stern trawlermen seem to be unfamiliar with it. One respondent maintained that the term *pond/pondið* was not used on board stern trawlers, while the other 9 did recognise the word and many commented on the word being part of the old side trawler terminology. The term *rópur* was known by all but two respondents (both modern trawler seamen), indicating that it has become obsolete. All respondents were familiar with the verb *að skvera*, but according to many comments made, the term was only used on board side trawlers. All except one seaman recognised the term

steis/steisinn and according to two comments, the term was used on board the old side trawlers.

The answers to the questionnaire sent out to current and former trawlermen reveal that a total of 21 out of 41 terms are still definitely used on board modern trawlers indicating that they continue to live in the spoken Icelandic language of the sea. Although the set of terms contained in the questionnaire is in no way a comprehensive list of the loanwords in the vocabulary of seamen, the above sample of words gives an idea of the number of English borrowings currently used in the daily language on board a modern stern trawler. These terms seem to be well rooted in the seamen's language and attempts to coin neologisms for many of them have seemingly proved unfruitful.

Chapter 4

4.0 Conclusions

As stated in the introduction, the objective of the thesis was to collect and analyse a set of English loanwords adopted by Icelandic seamen as a result of British influence during the last decade of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century, a period when trawling was being introduced into Iceland and Icelanders were learning this revolutionary fishing method from British seamen. These loanwords have influenced the Icelandic language of the sea considerably and despite endeavours by language purists ashore the terms have not been eradicated from the vocabulary of trawlermen and the related users on land. Efforts by scholars to coin and introduce neologisms for the large number of English loanwords adopted during the early trawling era were in vain.

According to a survey conducted in connection with the writing of this paper, most of the terms, with the exception of those rendered obsolete by the transition from side to stern trawling, are still used on board modern stern trawlers.

The origins of the nautical terms and concepts discussed in this thesis are relatively self-evident. The vehicle of entry is the specific linguistic usage or jargon of the community of British seamen who engaged in trawling in Icelandic waters from the last decade of the 19th century up to the early seventies in the 20th century. The receiving community consisted of Icelandic trawlermen who learned the specific technique involved in side trawling and absorbed the vocabulary while they worked on

board trawlers and ashore in England and Scotland during the time of training for the job.

An attempt was made to determine each term's first occurrence in the written Icelandic language, primarily by going through the archive of citation slips and studying written sources on the subject of trawling. These findings are presented in the comments that accompany each entry in section 3.2.

The period of acquisition of the loanwords was defined as from the late eighties of the 19th century to the early decades of the 20th century and the period of usage extends to this date. The evidences of the acquisition of the English-oriented trawler terminology were found in written sources from the late 19th and early and middle part of the 20th century. These mostly consisted of biographical and autobiographical accounts by former side trawler skippers and seamen who had spent most of their seagoing service time on board these particular vessels absorbing the new technology in the early days of trawling. Further important sources for written usage are Icelandic newspapers and magazines from the period of acquisition, from which some interesting samples were acquired, for instance from old advertisements. The advertisements clearly reflect the lack of Icelandic terminology for equipment related to trawling, i.e. trawling gear, and present a strange combination of Icelandic and English terms.

I considered it necessary to include an overview of the history of fisheries in Iceland, especially the introduction of trawling on the country's fishing grounds in the last decade of the 19th century and how the new industry affected the economy of Iceland. The overview describes how the trawling operations, learned from British

seamen, had an enormous effect on the Icelandic fishing industry. The historical coverage is essential in order to put the subject matter of the thesis into context.

One aspect of this investigation of English loanwords in the Icelandic language of the sea was provided by a desire to take a look at the character of the trawlermen, in order to try to shed light on the underlying reasons for the adoption of the jargon. The question of why – apart from the fact of there being an obvious lack of words in the Icelandic vocabulary – it was that they chose to use words originating in English as a part of their terminology is raised. Why did they not try to coin neologisms? In connection with this question, several former trawlermen were interviewed in order to acquire first-hand information from crew members of old side trawlers. This was carried out in an attempt to shed a more vivid light on the usage of the terminology and jargon in question and to answer specific usage questions. The outcome of the communication with the former seamen is presented in the comments on the selected terms presented in section 3.2. The comments of the former seamen were extremely valuable in order to ascertain the meaning of particular terms.

Section 1.2 provides an overview of linguistic purism in Iceland and tells the story of an attempt by scholars and governmental officials, worried about the influx of a foreign vocabulary into the maritime industries, to purify the language by, among other things, forming a terminological committee of academics and professional specialists and compiling lists of acceptable vocabulary. The section also records a fierce debate between a scholar and a seaman on the topic of neologisms versus the use of loanwords in the language of the sea.

Study of examples of usage from the archive of citation slips, revealed an increased tendency towards the use of loanwords in nautical Icelandic from around the middle of the 20th century onwards. Examples from the first years and decades of the trawling period, however seem to be fewer. This might be an indication of the early writers' inclination to linguistic purism in the spirit of this period. During the period in question Icelanders were struggling towards gaining their independence from the Danes, a struggle that culminated in the achievement of sovereignty in 1918. At that time, the language was considered the primary token of Icelandic nationality and purists and nationalists maintained that a pure language was a clear indication of a prosperous and promising nation. This apparent tendency towards a cleansed nautical language in the writings of the first decades of the 20th century is underlined by study of the written sources published from around the middle part of the century when a clear indication of more liberal attitudes towards the use of authentic trawler jargon is noted. This is, for instance, apparent in books written by authors like Ásgeir Jakobsson, Jónas Árnason, Jónas Guðmundsson and Guðjón Friðriksson.

The English-oriented terms for trawling gear and various on-board equipment and vessel parts seem to be deeply rooted in the language and consequently there is an apparent and widespread tendency among trawler seamen to retain the early English borrowings in their jargon. Likewise, there seems to be a prevalent reluctance among seamen to adopt neologisms for many of the English terms introduced in the early days of trawling in Iceland. It might be that the isolation of the working place of the fishing vessels from land and the academic environment is a strong factor as well as a tendency among seamen to reject any prescriptive injunctions from scholars on land. This is well

reflected in the newspaper debate between Dr. Guðmundur Finnbogason, former seaman and director/editor Sveinbjörn Egilson, outlined in section 1.2 on linguistic purism.

Can we note any deterioration in the rich vocabulary of the sea in the 100 years since the first Icelandic trawler, the *Coot*, sailed from port and applied the revolutionary technique of trawling for fish? Apparently the answer is negative. According to my findings, the acquisition of the set of words during the period of learning of the new fishing method, is an isolated event. It took place due to a vacuum in the vocabulary at the period of acquisition – no terms to describe certain new equipment and gear were available in the language.

What are the consequences for the Icelandic language of adopting a set of English loanwords in the language of the sea? In fact, the borrowed elements of a donating language joining the receiving one can be compared to human genes from different ethnic groups pairing together and contributing to a strong individual. I believe that the simile is valid, since, although not a biological process, the borrowing of new elements, which are nonexistent in the vocabulary of the target language, is very likely to contribute to a more functional, flexible and viable language. The adoption of loanwords can then be seen as having a stimulating effect on the functionality and viability of the target language. The ingress of English nautical borrowings into Icelandic has in fact resulted in the reintroduction of some words having Nordic roots into modern Icelandic. A clear example of this is the return of the English term ‘bulk’ as *búlki* into Icelandic after having been dormant for centuries.

However, there is still a certain degree of resistance on behalf of the patrons of some languages against the influx of foreign loanwords despite the evidence of its apparently healthy effect on the functionality of these languages. In such cases, the standard of purity of the borrowing language tends to be judged only in terms of the aesthetic criteria set forth by the purists. The wish for a language ‘free’ of borrowings and ‘topped up’ by a handful of homemade neologisms, many of which will never be used, is then paid for at the cost of sacrificing a more functional language with a relatively free influx of loanwords.

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