Háskóli Íslands

Hugvísindasvið

Enskuskor

English Proficiency of Icelandic and Immigrant Children

Ritgerð til M.Paed.-prófs

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Abstract

The student population in Iceland is becoming culturally and linguistically more diverse. The goal of this study was to find out whether there is a discrepancy in English proficiency between Icelandic and immigrant learners; if so, what the possible reasons for it are; and whether teachers use the same or different strategies with the two groups of students. The data were gathered by means of surveys of two groups of subjects, students and teachers. The first group consisted of sixteen Icelandic and fifteen immigrant English language learners from the tenth grade in two primary schools in Reykjavik. The second group included twenty-five teachers of English. The findings indicate that there is a discrepancy in English proficiency between Icelandic and immigrant learners. The results also suggest that the majority of the teachers who responded do not receive specific assistance in teaching English as a foreign language to immigrant learners, and therefore more than half of them use the same teaching strategies for both groups of students.

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1. Introduction

According to the Icelandic National Curriculum Guide (2004), education is one of the main pillars of democracy, culture and general prosperity. The Constitution of the Republic of Iceland states that everyone should enjoy human rights irrespective of sex, religion, national origin, race, color, and social or other status, including the right to receive an education.

According to Byram (2008),

> Three fundamental functions of all national education systems and of compulsory education in particular, are to create the human capital required in a country's economy, to develop a sense of national identity and to promote equality or at least a sense of social inclusion… The use of schooling as a means of creating equality, or at least equality of opportunity, is an idea more evident in some countries than in others. In Europe it is a common theme… What we can conclude is that foreign language learning – and first/foreign language learning for minority children – has a complex relationship with equality of opportunity (pp. 5, 22, 26).

It has been stated in Eurydice (2001) that foreign languages are considered an essential discipline in compulsory education curricula in European countries. In modern Europe, the acquisition of foreign language skills by European citizens has become necessary in order to be able to fully participate in the new professional and personal opportunities open to them. This priority is clearly stated in the 1995 European Commission White Paper on education and training (Eurydice 2001). In the same edition it is acknowledged that the Icelandic education system has always emphasized foreign language learning, due to the very limited use of the Icelandic language outside the country. In the curriculum guidelines that were published in the spring of 1999, English has taken over the place of Danish as the first compulsory foreign language in Icelandic primary schools. That reflects the constantly increasing importance of English as the language of international business, commerce, education and communication in today's world. According to Byram (2008), „the position of English as a world language means there is a more obvious relationship between language learning and the economic purpose of education. Education authorities readily see the importance of investing in the teaching of English for economic benefits, as do learners, and especially the parents of young learners" (p. 27).

This research is a part of the larger study that is examining the status of English in Iceland. It was motivated by an ongoing discussion in the schools about a problem in the field of English language teaching. There seems to be a considerable discrepancy in English proficiency between Icelandic and immigrant children. Therefore, this study pursued the following goals:

- To get an insight into the situation in today's English language classroom in Iceland where there are both Icelandic and a considerable number of immigrant children, and to find out whether there is a discrepancy in English proficiency between the two groups.
- To find what type of instruction teachers are able to provide immigrant children with, what strategies they use and whether they differ from instructional practices used with Icelandic children.

Research Questions

1. Is there a discrepancy in English proficiency between Icelandic and immigrant children in the 10th grade of Icelandic primary schools?
2. If so, what are the possible reasons for it?
3. Do teachers use any particular strategies to assist foreign children with their English?

Chapter 2 will present a theoretical background for this study. Issues related to social integration of immigrant children through education system, second language acquisition, bilingualism and the status of the English language in Iceland will be discussed.

Chapter 3 will provide information about the study: its participants, the tests that were employed and the methods of analysis of the results.

Chapter 4 will have the analysis of the data which will be followed by the discussion of the results and the implications of the study in chapter 5.

Chapter 6 will offer a conclusion of the study.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Immigration Trends

According to Eurydice (2004), demographic trends within a country are determined by ongoing changes in three variables - namely, the birth rate, the mortality rate and net migration. There are considerable differences among European countries in relation to these trends. Four countries have experienced immigration flows corresponding to over one and a half percent of the total population for several consecutive years within the last twenty years: Germany, Cyprus, Luxembourg and Iceland. Immigration to Iceland has increased in the last six years, and the origin of immigrants has changed: an influx of Nordic countries' nationals has partly given way to immigration from Eastern Europe (Poland and Lithuania) and from Asia (the Philippines and Thailand). It is evident from the following chart (fig.1), which shows the top 10 nationalities being issued residence permits in Iceland in 2006 by the Icelandic Directorate of Immigration.
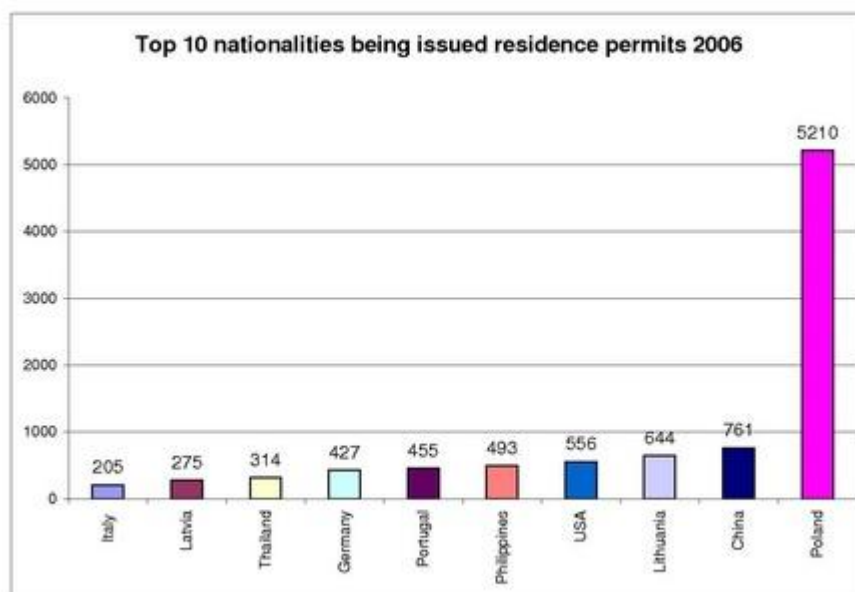
Fig. 1: Shows the top 10 nationalities issued residence permits in Iceland in 2006.

As a result of the growing influx of immigrants to Iceland in the last several years, there has been an increase in the numbers of foreign-born students in Icelandic schools. According to the Icelandic Bureau of Statistics, in the autumn of 2008 there were 2,069 pupils with a foreign mother tongue in Icelandic compulsory schools, or 4.8% of all pupils, which is more than ever before.

Hanna Ragnarsdóttir (2007) has stated that a widely spread multicultural population and immigrants living in most areas of Iceland, rural as well as urban, characterize Iceland as a multicultural society. According to her research, in some villages immigrant children constitute up to 20-50% of the schools' populations and in some areas in Reykjavik 50% of children in preschools are immigrant children.

Therefore, the immigrant population in Iceland has become a social reality that needs to be considered on several different levels.

2.2. Social Integration of Immigrant Children through Education System

Since schools are the place where immigrant children first come into systematic contact with a new culture, it is important to look at the role they play in assisting immigrant children and their families with social integration.

For society in general and educators in particular, to be able to assist immigrant children and their families with adjusting to life in a new country, it is important to understand why people decide to leave their homelands and immigrate to other countries, where they may have to adapt to life in a society with a different set of values, traditions and, often times, language. According to Coelho (1998), "teachers in schools that receive students who have recently arrived from other countries, or whose parents are immigrants, need awareness of the immigrant experience, and how the experience may affect the students and their families" (p. 25).

Coelho (1994) in her article on social integration of immigrant and refugee children has identified a number of factors that lead to immigration. The so-called 'pull factors' relate to the needs of the host countries to fill up the gaps in the labor market caused by an aging population. Immigrants replace and expand the workforce in order to support the social services and revitalize economy. Middle-class and professional immigrants are attracted to countries like Canada, the United States, Australia or Western Europe by the opportunity to get a greater material reward for their work than is possible in the developing countries. In both of these cases, the host countries benefit significantly from receiving immigrants. Then, there is a group of so-called 'push factors' that include political or religious persecution, poverty, and famine. However, no matter what the reasons for immigration are, it is a very stressful experience, particularly for children. As Coelho (1998) has pointed out, it is much easier to adjust to a new situation if it is a situation of one's own choosing. Unfortunately, the sad reality is that neither refugees, nor the children of immigrants in general have much of a choice in this matter. The children move to a country of their parents' choice, often leaving their extended family, friends and a familiar way of life behind. Ogbu (1992, in Edwards, 1998) has used a term "involuntary minority" for this group of immigrants. Coelho (1994) argued that "lack of choice and feelings of powerlessness may have very negative effects on

the eventual adjustment of immigrants to their new life" (p. 304). Furthermore, it is important to remember that while immigration is a stressful experience for all children, the trauma most refugees have experienced by witnessing death and violence, often losing friends and family, makes the process of adjustment to a new life even more complicated. Such children, according to Edwards (1998), often exhibit highly disruptive behavior or/and withdrawal, and their teachers are responsible for finding out as much as possible about the children they are working with in order to understand their special needs.

Edwards (1998), Banks and Banks (2005), and Cummins (2001b) among others have stated that many students from ethnic minority communities experience marginalization and tend to underperform academically in various multicultural societies. However, Gay (2000) has argued that the lower grades of these students are the symptoms, not the causes of the problems. Many attempts have been made to explain the lack of success of immigrant children in schools in various countries, and a number of factors that have a potential to impact immigrant students' learning outcomes have been identified. In general, these factors fall under one of the following categories: the social status of the immigrant children's families, flaws in the structure and setting of education system, and the children's lack of language and/or subject content knowledge.

Gay (2000) has pointed out that many immigrant families experience frequent changes in residence, which interferes with the children's educational continuity. "They have to adjust to a new culture, language, style of living, and educational system. This geographic, cultural, and psychoemotional uprootedness can cause stress, anxiety, feelings of vulnerability, loneliness, isolation, and insecurity. All these conditions can have negative effects on school achievement" (p. 18).

There are several studies indicating that social class (Knapp and Woolverton, 1995), minority status (Darling-Hammond, 1995; Ogbu, 1995) and migrant status (Olneck, 1995) affect students' educational experience (the studies were cited in Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Genesee (1994), for example, has argued that the linguistic and social background of children from minority sociocultural groups explains in significant ways academic difficulties they face. The correlation between socioeconomic status and children's performance in school, including grades and other formal indicators of progress, has been emphasized by Genesee, Paradis and Crago (2004). For example, in a review of research on the literacy development of English language learners in the United States since 1980s, Genesee and Riches found a strong correlation between the socioeconomic status and performance on a variety of literacy measures, so that students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds scored significantly lower than students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds (reported in Genesee, Paradis and Grago, 2004). Their findings are supported by the research conducted at the University of Miami Language and Literacy Study which has shown that socioeconomic status has a large

effect on children's standardized scores – so much so that some people claim that SAT score is more highly correlated with parents' income than the scholastic aptitude (Pearson, 2008).

Hanna Ragnarsdóttir (2007) has pointed out that in the case of immigrant students, learning is usually a one-way process rather than an interaction. They are expected to adjust to the new society, be re-socialized or acculturated, and if the re-socialization does not take place, the immigrants face the danger of isolation. According to Coelho (1994), cultural isolation and minority status influence immigrant children's learning success. Many immigrant families have limited opportunities for social interaction with the mainstream culture due to long working hours, often with the people from the same minority group. Children at school often also socialize within their own cultural group.

Discussing the impact the minority status can have on immigrant children, Coelho (1994) has stated,

> In their own countries they were likely to be able to identify with the majority population, and children were presented with authority figures (teachers, the judiciary, the medical profession, politicians, and other public figures) with whom they could identify as role models. In their new environment they may be presented with few positive images of people like themselves and be in contact with few people of their own background who are in positions of respect and authority in the mainstream society. This can have a very negative impact on self-esteem and damage a child's motivation to learn. (pp. 307-308).

Coelho (1998) has argued that in order to help immigrant children to overcome their feelings of isolation, the structure of schools and classroom programs needs to promote positive intercultural interaction and provide students from minority groups with opportunities to "find out first-hand about mainstream and other cultures while members of the mainstream culture get a chance to develop non-stereotypical views of other cultures rather than a distorted view of reality that exaggerates the importance of their own group" (p.35).

Cummins (2001b) has claimed that the devaluation of immigrant students' identity in the process of their interaction with educators can have a negative impact on their motivation to study. When students perceive that their identity is endangered, they tend to respond by withdrawing from participation in the life of the school or even go as far as to drop out of school in order to preserve their sense of self. Cummins (2001b) has claimed that unless schools include the issue of identity in their analysis of the causes of students' academic difficulties, their improvement efforts are likely to be unsuccessful.

The schools are responsible for developing an inclusive environment where immigrant children's particular needs are taken into consideration. Coelho (1998) has pointed out that these children have to interact with two cultures and establish their identities as bicultural and

bilingual individuals in a multicultural environment. On one hand, they need to learn the dominant language and culture to be able to achieve academic success and become integrated into the school's social life. On the other hand, they need the security and sense of identity that comes from their native language and culture. Therefore, schools that serve multilingual and multicultural communities need to accept the responsibility of making sure that everyone in the school values cultural diversity, and of helping all students and their families to feel included and valued without giving up aspects of their culture that are important to them. Carrasquillo (2002) has emphasized the importance of creating an environment in the school/classroom that would demonstrate a genuine respect and concern for all students, regardless of their racial, cultural, ethnic or linguistic background. In other words, schools need to be prepared to provide multicultural education, which Swartz (1992) has defined as:

> … education that uses methodologies and instructional materials which promote equity of information and high standards of academic scholarship in an environment that respects the potential of each student. An education that is multicultural conforms to the highest standards of educational practice: the use of well-researched content that is accurate and up-to-date; the presentation of diverse indigenous accounts and perspectives that encourage critical thinking; the avoidance of dated terminologies, stereotypes, and demeaning, distorted characterizations; the use of intellectually challenging materials presented in an environment of free and open discussion (p. 34).

Multicultural education has become a rapidly growing field in educational research and school development according to Hanna Ragnarsdóttir (2007), who believes that it is a response to the marginalization of various minority groups in schools almost worldwide. In line with Swartz' definition of multicultural education, Banks and Banks (2005) have described it as "education that incorporates the idea that all students – regardless of their gender and social class and their ethnic, racial or cultural characteristics – should have an equal opportunity to learn in school" (p. 17). They have identified five main dimensions in multicultural education: content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, an equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture. Content integration deals with "the extent to which teachers use examples and content from a variety of cultures and groups in order to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalizations, and theories in their subject area" (p. 20). The knowledge construction process is defined as "the extent to which teachers help students to understand, investigate, and determine how the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed within it" (p. 20). Prejudice reduction refers to "lessons and activities teachers use to help students develop positive attitudes toward different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups" (p. 21). An equity pedagogy exists when "teachers modify

their teaching in ways that will facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, gender, and social-class groups" (p. 21). An empowering school culture describes a situation when "students from diverse racial and ethnic groups and from both gender groups are empowered by a school culture and organization" (p. 22). Banks and Banks (2005) have identified the goal of multicultural education as to "change teaching and learning approaches so that students of both genders and from diverse cultural, ethnic, and language groups will have equal opportunities to learn in educational institutions" (p. 13). They have pointed out that "this goal suggests the necessity to bring major changes into, first, the ways that educational programs are conceptualized, organized, and taught; and secondly, to transform educational approaches" (p. 13). In her turn, Gay (2000) has offered the following definition of multicultural (or culturally responsive, as she calls it) education:

> Culturally responsive teaching can be defined as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them. It teaches to and through the strengths of these students. It is culturally validating and affirming and has the following characteristics:
>
> - It acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students' dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning and as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum.
> - It builds bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived sociocultural realities.
> - It uses a wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected to different learning styles.
> - It teaches students to know and praise their own and each others' cultural heritages.
> - It incorporates multicultural information, resources, and materials in all the subjects and skills routinely taught in schools (p. 29).

Gay (2000) has emphasized the role of teachers in this process of transformation by stating that "changing teachers' attitudes, expectations, and feelings of efficacy is as imperative to the design and implementation of effective culturally responsive teaching as is increasing their knowledge about and commitment to cultural diversity and mastery of related pedagogical skills" (p. 62). Furthermore, Cummins (2001b) has stated that the fact that "teacher education institutions still treat issues related to culturally diverse students as marginal and send new teachers into the classroom with minimal information regarding patterns of language and emotional development among such students and few pedagogical

strategies for helping students learn" portrays discrimination against immigrant learners (p.p. 204-205). Therefore, educational structures need to be changed in order to prepare teachers for working according to the principles of multicultural education in a culturally diverse classroom.

Returning to the discussion of the factors that can affect the academic success of immigrant children, it is vital not to underestimate the importance of cooperation between schools and children's homes. Coelho (1994) has argued that the lack of parental involvement has a strong influence on immigrant children's achievements in school. Numerous studies have proved that the involvement of parents of various minority students in their children's education can increase their academic success (Brooker, 2002; Conteh, 2003; Cotton, Hassan, Mann and Nickolay, 2003; Cummins, 2000 and 2001; Epstein, 2001; Hughes and Greenhough, 2003; Wrigley, 2003 are some of the studies cited in Hanna Ragnarsdóttir, 2007). However, for parents of immigrant children it is more difficult to get involved in their children's education for a number of reasons such as not speaking the language of the host country, feeling alienation and distrust; thinking that they do not have sufficient education skills to assist in the classroom; or simply having to work long hours or shifts and because of that lacking time for interaction with their children. However, according to Coelho (1998), their lack of participation does not indicate the lack of interest in the education of their children. On the contrary, she believes poor immigrant and minority parents often have great expectations that the school system will enable their children to overcome the economic difficulties and social isolation that they themselves have experienced.

In addition to the previously mentioned factors, there is also a possibility that immigrant children may have to get adjusted to cultural differences in the process of schooling, i.e. in the educational and instructional approach of the new school system. As Coelho (1998) has pointed out, it is important to remember that different cultures are accustomed to different teaching and learning styles and different student-teacher relationships. Immigrant children used to a teacher-centered classroom and a transmission approach to education may feel lost and uncomfortable without a familiar structure, which can result in their reluctance to take part in the classroom interaction; while the lack of signs of respect towards the teacher that has become prevalent in the western classroom, can cause children from cultures where teachers are respected and highly valued to become confused and withdrawn.

Another conflict that can occur, according to Delpit (1995) and Carrasquillo (2002), Gay (2000), and Banks and Banks (2005) is between school and home cultures of immigrant children. It is actualized in at least two ways. When a significant difference exists between learners' school and home cultures, teachers can easily misinterpret students' attitudes, intentions or abilities as a result of the difference in styles of language use and interactional patterns; or they may use styles of instruction and/or discipline that contradict the immigrant

child's community norms. An example of such a conflict mentioned in Gay (2000) is teachers' demand from their students to look at them when they are talking to them. In some cultures direct eye contact is a signal of attentiveness, while in others it can be perceived as staring, a cultural taboo. Another example, given by Banks and Banks (2005) is the contrast between individualism (a belief that individual success is more important than commitment to family, community, and state), common in the western cultures, and groupism (a belief that commitment to the family and group comes before commitment to oneself), found in Asian nations, such as China and Japan. Thus, multicultural education faces the challenge of assisting students from diverse groups in navigating between the cultures of their homes and communities, and the school culture.

Another factor that can have a powerful impact on students' performance, according to many scholars, is their teacher's expectations (Edwards, 1998; Banks and Banks, 2005; Gay, 2000; McKeon, 1994). McKeon (1994) has argued that according to Brothy and Good's (1974) study, teachers' perceptions and expectations play a significant role in the education of all students. According to Coelho (1998), students who are consistently expected to do well often do, whereas students who consistently receive more negative messages often fail to succeed academically. Furthermore, Gay (2000) has claimed that students who are perceived positively are advantaged in instructional interactions. Those who are perceived negatively or skeptically are disadvantaged, often to the point of total exclusion from participation in important academic interactions. Gay has identified the following variables that influence teachers' expectations: racial identity, gender, ethnicity, social class, home language, and even physical appearance. According to Coelho (1998) there is evidence of some groups of minority students receiving negative messages more consistently than others. Teachers can communicate their expectations of the students in different ways: e.g. through addressing more questions to some students than others or giving some more time to think before answering than to others; praising some less often while criticizing them more frequently, or by a different amount of feedback they give to their students. Teachers' expectations may be internalized by students as part of their self-concept, which in turn affects their performance (Brothy and Good, 1978 and 1994 cited in Banks and Banks, 2005 and Gay, 2000). Thus, differential treatment by teachers leads to differential academic outcomes of the students. However, according to Lindholm-Leary (2001), when teachers use positive social and instructional interactions with minority and majority students equally, both groups perform better academically. Therefore, it is important to warn teachers about the dangers of stereotyping if educational equity is to be observed in the classroom.

Furthermore, Lindholm-Leary (2001) has stated that the academic success of language minority students is affected not only by the status perceptions of their teachers, but also by the status perceptions of their majority peers.

Cummins (2001b) has emphasized the impact of second language proficiency on immigrant children's achievements in learning. He claimed that the lack of proficiency in L2 is the major reason for bilingual students' academic failure. Children's conversational fluency is often misinterpreted by their teachers as a valid indicator of overall proficiency in the language. Consequently, they stop providing language assistance to the bilingual students which leads to them experiencing academic difficulties.

It is clear from these data that academic success of culturally diverse students is determined by multiple factors. Thus, it seems apparent that not only immigration entails various challenges for the immigrants, but it places a great responsibility on the receiving side. Coelho (1998) has argued that no matter how many immigrant students a school might receive per year, one or several hundred, it needs to, first, develop a program of reception and support, and secondly, to educate the host community for life in a culturally diverse society.

As stated in Eurydice (2004), the integration of immigrants in accordance with law is now an important constituent of the European Union policy, and the education system has been identified as an arena in which integration can take place. Some European countries have already gained rich experience in policy making for the integration of immigrant children into schools, while others have just begun to discuss how their education systems should be adjusted in order to meet the challenge of the increasing numbers of immigrant children entering schools. In the same report it is acknowledged that national education authorities are aware of the need to develop special support measures for immigrant pupils if they are to benefit from their right to education in the same way as nationals. European education systems have to decide what measures they will take in order to ensure that all young people within compulsory education age-range, whether or not they are nationals of the countries concerned, benefit from their right to education in practice.

The next section will focus on the situation with social integration of immigrant children through education system in Iceland.

2.3. Social Integration of Immigrant Children through Education System in the Context of Iceland

As has been discussed earlier, over the last two decades Iceland has seen an increased influx of foreign-born children into its preschools and primary schools. According to Hanna Ragnarsdóttir (2007), immigrant studies are a rapidly growing field of research in Iceland. She has stated that,

> The studies already undertaken and official reports show difficult and negative experiences of many immigrant children in schools (Sigfúsdóttir, Ásgeirsdóttir, Kristjánsson and Sigfússon, 2006), lack of continuity between homes and preschools (Ingólfsdóttir and Jónsdóttir, 2004; Ragnarsdóttir, 2002, 2004), isolation and

marginalization in basic schools (Gyedu-Adomako, Sigfúsdóttir and Ásgeirsdóttir, 2000; Ingólfsdóttir and Jónsdóttir, 2004; Ragnarsdóttir, 2002, 2004; Vigfúsdóttir, 2002) and a rate of almost 100% in dropouts from colleges, according to official reports (Menntamálaráðuneytið, 1998)… Experiences of marginalization have also been reported by students that have other mother languages than Icelandic at university level (Ragnarsdóttir and Blöndal, 2006). While the National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory School (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2004) as well as the National Curriculum Guide for Preschools (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2003) emphasize equality, school reform and development in Iceland has generally not taken into account the five necessary dimensions of Multicultural Education (pp. 18-19).

Hanna Ragnarsdóttir (2007) has conducted an extensive study that examined individual experiences of 10 immigrant families during the processes of immigration and adjustment to a new society and school community. She has argued that according to her studies on the growing number of immigrant children in schools and the school context, many teachers in Icelandic schools are not very well prepared for the new reality and tend to simplify and generalize their views about different cultures, ethnic groups and religions of children in their schools. She has discussed the lack of contact between schools and parents. According to her research, the schools expect parents to initiate contacts, but due to a lack of information and familiarity with the Icelandic school system, the parents are often reluctant to do it. Language is another barrier for interaction between teachers and parents. Hanna Ragnarsdóttir (2007) has argued that teachers often lack understanding of the importance of flexibility in interaction, respect and knowledge concerning intercultural communication. She has also pointed out that not all preschools and primary schools in Iceland are equally well prepared or equipped for the reception of immigrant children, and that even in the most advanced schools that have developed policies and internal processes regarding new multicultural environment, the focus is mainly limited to the teaching of Icelandic to the immigrant children.

Although the findings of Hanna Ragnarsdóttir's (2007) research indicate the urgent need for policy and school reform in Iceland, it should be acknowledged that offering immigrant children assistance with the linguistic difficulties they encounter is an important step in the process of integrating them into the Icelandic education system and society. According to Eurydice (2004), the linguistic difficulties often become a reason for problems with reading and writing and eventually lead to school dropout. Since Icelandic is the language of instruction in Icelandic schools, immigrant children need to acquire a high level of proficiency in Icelandic if they are to achieve academic success, which means that they have to develop linguistic skills both in communicative and academic language to be able to participate in social interaction, negotiate meaning and deal with both contextualized and de-

contextualized language. Hilda Hernándes (1992) has stated regarding the nature of language proficiency of second language learners that communicative and academic language skills develop over time, one preceding the other, and the process varies greatly among the learners. How children learn language is affected by a number of cultural, social and personal factors which will be examined in the following section, but it is worth noting now that according to Cummins (2001a), it takes up to two years to gain context-embedded (face-to-face) communicative proficiency and five to seven years to obtain context-reduced (academic) communicative proficiency.

In the next section I would like to look at certain aspects of second language acquisition, i.e. different definitions of this concept, various reasons for second language learning, similarities and differences in the processes of first and second language learning, conditions for second language learning, and different dimensions of proficiency in L2.

2.4. Second Language Acquisition

2.4.1. Definitions. Saville-Troike (2006) and Gass (1994) define second language acquisition (SLA) as the study of individuals and groups who are learning a language subsequent to learning their first one as young children, and the process of learning that language. The additional language is called a second language, even though it may actually be the third or fourth to be acquired by an individual. Commonly, there is a distinction made between the concept of a second language (L2) and a foreign language (FL). Saville-Troike (2006) defines a second language as "typically an official or societally dominant language needed for education, employment, and other basic purposes; it is often acquired by immigrants or minority group members who speak another language natively" (p. 4). A foreign language, on the other hand, is one "not widely used in the learners' immediate social context which might be used for future travel or other cross-cultural communication situations, or studied as a curricular requirement or elective in school, but with no immediate or necessary practical application" (p. 4).

2.4.2. Reasons for Second Language Learning. Baker (1993) believes it is important to identify the different reasons for learning of majority and minority second languages by children. He has grouped the reasons for second language learning into three categories: *ideological, international* and *individual*. Assimilating with the mainstream culture can serve as an example of the ideological reason for second language learning among language minority children. Baker has pointed out that striving to assimilate tends to lead to the dominance of the second language and even the repression of the home, minority language. In contrast, when children learn a minority language as their second language, the aim of society is usually to maintain and preserve that minority language. Another reason in the same group

is to create harmony between language groups through bilingualism (e.g. in Canada, where there are two official languages). Baker argued that second language teaching does not exist in a political vacuum, therefore it is important for second language teachers to understand the learners' goals and their own role in the process of L2 teaching.

The international reasons refer to the need to learn another language in order to use it for international trading and gaining access to information, which opens opportunities for new knowledge, skills and understanding.

The individual reasons include cultural awareness (i.e. breaking down ethnic and language stereotypes), cognitive training (for general academic and educational value), affective goals (e.g. self-awareness, self-confidence, social, emotional and moral development), and career and employment opportunities (the more languages one knows, the wider variety of careers he can choose from).

2.4.3. Acquisition of L1 vs. L2. When children enter school, usually they have a working knowledge of their first language which they have obtained with little or no formal teaching, and usually at a very young age. In accordance with Chomsky's (1959 cited in Mitchel and Myles, 2004) original theories, Carrasquillo and Rodrigues (2002) have suggested that children learn their spoken language by making hypotheses based on the language of other people, especially adults in their environment. They test a number of language strategies and learn through feedback whether their speech makes sense to others. Later they use the same cognitive skills in learning to read and write. Then they follow the same sequence of linguistic patterns acquiring a second language. However, there are some differences in the process of L1 and L2 acquisition, since, as Mitchell and Myles (2004) have pointed out, L2 learners are more cognitively mature; they have already experienced learning a language and can build on the cognitive and linguistic knowledge and proficiency of their L1; and they have different motivations for learning L2. Carrasquillo and Rodrigues (2002) have identified a number of language principles that distinguish SLA from L1 learning. They are:

1. Motivation influences the speed and ease of SLA. Positive attitudes toward the target language and culture facilitate language acquisition.
2. Language learning represents a collaborative meaning making process. Successful L2 learners effectively use interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning. Language is learned interactively and in context. Listening, reading, speaking, and writing are all active language components, interrelated skills in the process of oral and written communication. Children use language to understand and communicate meaning.
3. Errors are a natural part of L2 learning.

4. Language learners' goals and empowerment skills are essential in the process of SLA. Learners need to be empowered to learn language for their own personal reasons of achieving competence and autonomy.

5. Language helps to perpetuate culture, and as a tool for that purpose it is vitally connected to a person's cognitive and affective development. Thus, in helping students to acquire L2, it seems beneficial to validate and preserve the first culture by accepting it and using it in the classroom so that optimal transference can take place (pp. 60-62).

Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (2002) believe that understanding these principles would help L2 teachers to expect errors and view them as indicators of learners' development, to provide meaningful activities and opportunities for listening till learners are ready to speak, plan activities to decrease anxiety among learners, and recognize the importance of validating first language and its culture.

2.4.4. Conditions for L2 Learning. It is a well recognized fact that L2 learners will not all achieve the same success (Gass and Selinker, 1994; McKeon, 1994; Mitchell and Myles, 2004). Learning is affected by many internal and external conditions, which influence the rate and success of SLA and have social, cognitive and affective implications. A number of factors that can affect SLA success have been identified by various scholars:

1. According to Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (2002) and Mitchell and Myles (2004), language aptitude is a significant cognitive factor. The concept of language aptitude encompasses such skills as phonetic coding ability, grammatical sensitivity, memory ability, inductive language learning ability.

2. Intelligence is another important cognitive factor (Mitchell and Myles, 2004).

3. Learning style (Carrasquillo and Rodriguez, 2002).

4. Language learning strategies (Mitchell and Myles, 2004).

5. Personality is another important variable in determination of success in L2 learning. According to Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (2002), extroverted learners learn to speak the language more rapidly and are more successful than introverted learners, because they find it easier to make contact with other speakers of the target language.

6. Attitude, which refers to the set of beliefs that learners hold toward members of the target language group and their own culture, is another important factor according to Mitchell and Myles (2004) and Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (2002). Ringbom (1987), for example, has stated that attitudes to the target language and its speakers influence SLA very strongly. The status, prestige and extent of language use, compared with the learner's L1, play in important role in SLA. Gardner and Lambert (1972) have

argued that "an integrative and friendly outlook toward the other group whose language is being learned can differentially sensitize the learner to the audiolingual features of the language, making him more perceptive to forms of pronunciation and accent than is the case for a learner without this open and friendly disposition" (p. 201). In fact, they claimed that if the student's attitude is highly ethnocentric and hostile, no significant progress in acquiring any aspects of the language will be made. "Such a student not only is perceptually insensitive to the language, but apparently is also unwilling to modify or adjust his own response system to approximate the new pronunciational responses required in the other language" (p. 201).

7. Motivation refers to learners' goals and orientation, and its importance is discussed by Mitchell and Myles (2004) and Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (2002). According to Gardner (1972), motivation can have an "instrumental orientation", i.e. an individual's desire to gain social recognition or economic advantages through knowledge of a foreign language, or "integrative", i.e. learners' perceptions of the other ethnolinguistic group, his attitudes towards representatives of that group, and his willingness to identify with them enough to adopt distinctive aspects of their behavior. There seems to be a general agreement among scholars that motivation is one of the most complex and foundational issues in SLA (Gardner, 2002; Dörnyel and Clément, 2002; Genesee, Paradis and Crago, 2004; Carrasquillo and Rodriguez, 2002; Gass and Selinker, 1994; Spolsky, 1989; Skehan, 1989). Genesee, Paradis and Crago (2004) have suggested that attitudes and motivation can be even more important than general intelligence in some cases, especially when a second language is being learnt in school or the child is learning an additional language under difficult personal or social circumstances.

8. Mitchell and Myles (2004) have emphasized the role of the age-factor in determining success of L2 learning. They have pointed out that "the language learning mechanisms available to the young child cease to work for older learners, at least partly, and no amount of study and effort can recreate them" (p. 19).

Individual success of L2 learners is reflected in the level of proficiency they attain in this language. The next section will focus on different dimensions of L2 proficiency.

2.4.5. Dimensions of L2 Proficiency. As has been previously pointed out, there are several dimensions of language proficiency. Cummins (2001b) has drawn a distinction between three dimensions: conversational fluency which he defines as "the ability to carry on a conversation in familiar face-to-face situations", discrete language skills which refer to "specific phonological, literacy and grammatical knowledge that students acquire as a result

of direct instruction and both formal and informal practice", and academic language proficiency which includes "knowledge of the less frequent vocabulary, as well as the ability to interpret and produce increasingly complex written and oral language" (p. 65).

Based on the studies regarding the length of time required for immigrant students to attain different levels of proficiency in the second language, Cummins (2001b) has stated that it takes about 1-2 years of exposure to the language either in school or in the environment in order to develop conversational fluency. Discrete language skills are learned by L2 learners at a relatively early stage of their SLA; in fact, he pointed out that these skills can be learned as the basic vocabulary and conversational proficiency are being developed. However, 5-7 years are required for attaining academic language proficiency, according to Cummins' (1981) study (reported in Cummins, 2001b).

Collier's (1987) data indicate that it required children who arrived in the USA between ages 8 and 12, with several years of schooling in L1, 5-7 years to reach national norms in reading, social studies and science. Those who arrived before age 8 required 7-10 years to attain national norms, while those who arrived after age 12 often ran out of time before they could catch up academically in language-based areas of the curriculum (reported in Cummins, 2001b).

Klesmer's (1994) study with almost 300 students aged 12 in Toronto indicated that teachers considered students for whom English was a L2 as average for their age in speaking, listening and reading after 24 to 35 months in Canada. In the area of writing, teachers considered ESL students to have almost reached the mean for Canadian-born students after 5 or 6 years (reported in Cummins, 2001b).

Cummins (2001b) has also made a reference to Shohamy's (1999) study in Israel, the findings of which indicate that 7 to 9 years are required for immigrant students to arrive at similar achievements as native speakers in Hebrew literacy and slightly less in mathematics.

It is important to remember that, as Cummins (2001b) has pointed out, L1 students gain more sophisticated vocabulary and grammatical knowledge and increase their literacy skills every year, therefore L2 learners "must catch up with a moving target" (p. 75).

SLA is a field of extensive research and numerous theories that the size of this paper does not allow to capture in-full or cover in-depth. However, according to Baker (1993), second language learning is the route to bilingualism, and therefore it seems appropriate to shift the focus of the next section to this phenomenon.

2.5. Bilingualism

2.5.1. Definitions of Bilingualism. In spite of the fact that there is plenty of research available on bilingualism today, it is hard to come across a clearly-cut definition of this phenomenon. Can one be considered a bilingual if he is more fluent in one language than in

another? Is it possible to call someone a bilingual if he never or rarely uses one of his languages? It seems like a simple classification of who is and who is not a bilingual does not exist. According to Skutnabb-Kangas (1981), "there are almost as many definitions of bilingualism as there are scholars investigating it", but we need the definitions in order to describe and compare bilingual individuals or different situations in which bilinguals find themselves (p. 81). Brisk and Harrington (2000), for example, describe bilinguals as people who "know more than one language to different degrees and use these languages for a variety of purposes" (p. 3).

Someone's linguistic ability can be measured in relation to four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. These four language skills can, in turn, fit into two categories: receptive and productive skills. How competent is one in a language? Again, there is no single perspective that everyone would agree upon. Canale and Swain, for example, have proposed a model of language competence that includes four components (as presented in Hedge, 2000): linguistic competence, pragmatic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. The linguistic competence is concerned with the knowledge of the language itself, its form and meaning. It involves knowledge of spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary, word formation, grammatical structure, sentence structure, and linguistic semantics. The pragmatic competence includes knowing how to use language in order to achieve certain communicative goals or intentions and being able to do it appropriately to the social context. Discourse competence means knowing how to perform the turns in discourse; how to maintain a conversation, and how to develop the topic. Strategic competence is the ability to cope in an authentic situation and to keep the communicative channel open. Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) has introduced the concept of the language used for thinking as the fifth area of language competence. However, she has argued that definitions of bilingualism based on one's competence tend either to be too narrow, so that hardly anybody falls within the criteria, or too broad, so that almost everybody becomes bilingual. Those definitions that fall in-between the two extremes often fail to specify precisely the degree of competence in all areas.

Another way to define bilingualism is through function and attitudes (identification). So, basically, the form of the definition will depend on what it is being used for. The definition Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) has proposed combines several different criteria - origin, competence, function and attitudes:

> A bilingual speaker is someone who is able to function in two (or more) languages, either in monolingual or bilingual communities, in accordance with the sociocultural demands made of an individual's communicative and cognitive competence by these communities or by the individual herself, at the same level as native speakers, and

who is able positively to identify with both (or all) language groups (and cultures), or parts of them (pp. 89-90).

However, the Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) has emphasized that all definitions must be subject to change. To overcome the inadequacies of the existing definitions of bilingualism, she suggested using descriptive profiles to characterize bilingual speakers from different points of view (e.g. function, both internal, i.e. language as the means for cognition, reflection and consciousness, and external, i.e. function towards others, competence and attitudes, the demands of the individual and of society, as well as the linguistic media).

2.5.2. Different Kinds of Bilingualism. Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) has identified five kinds of bilingualism: *natural bilingualism* which refers to the situation when an individual has learnt two languages without formal teaching in the course of her/his everyday life as natural means of communication, and often learnt them at a relatively young age. Children whose parents speak different languages to them and children who live in a community which speaks a different language from their family can serve as an example of natural bilinguals.

The second kind is *school bilingualism*. It indicates learning a foreign language at school by means of formal teaching, and implies that the learner has had limited opportunities to use the language as means of natural communication.

The third kind is *cultural bilingualism*. This term refers to adults who learn a foreign language for reasons of work, travel, and so on.

And the last two kinds of bilingualism are *elite* and *folk* bilingualism. Elite bilinguals are usually highly educated, with some part of their education being in foreign languages, with some opportunity to use the languages naturally. Folk bilinguals, on the other hand, have usually come from a linguistic minority and have been forced to learn the other language in practical contact with people who speak it. Skutnabb-Kangas has pointed out, that elite bilingualism has never been a problem, while folk bilingualism is connected with many educational difficulties (in situations when the teaching of children bilingual in this way is wrongly organized).

Baker (1993) distinguishes between *minimal* and *maximal* bilingualism. The first term refers to the early stages of bilingualism where one language is not strongly developed. The latter term indicates a native-like control of two or more languages. The third kind he has identified is *balanced bilingualism*. A balanced bilingual is someone whose competencies in both languages are well developed. The fourth type of bilingualism is *semilingualism*. This term is used for people who do not have "sufficient" competence in either language, i.e. people with quantitative and qualitative deficiencies in both their languages when compared with monolinguals (in terms of the vocabulary size, correctness of the language, unconscious processing of language, language creation, mastery of the functions of language, and

meanings and imagery). The concept of double semilingualism has received fierce criticism from Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) who has argued that "it is just one of the ways in which the shortcomings of the school system are projected on to the individual children, to be experienced as the children's shortcomings both by themselves and by others" (p.248). Baker (1993) has also identified a number of problems with the notion of semilingualism:

1. The term is used in a belittling way, especially in Scandinavia and the USA.

2. The reason for languages being underdeveloped may not be in bilingualism but in the social, political and economical situation, which means that the term may be political rather than linguistic.

3. Many bilinguals use their two languages for different purposes and events, i.e. languages may be specific to a context and a person may be competent in some contexts but not in others.

4. The problem may lie in the educational tests that are used to measure language proficiencies being insensitive to the qualitative aspects of language and to the great range of language competencies.

5. There is dispute regarding the frequency of double semilingualism. There is a lack of sound objective empirical evidence for deciding who fits the category of a semilingual and who does not.

6. An apparent deficiency may be caused by unfair comparison with monolinguals (pp. 9-10).

Baker (1993) also distinguishes between two types of childhood bilingualism – *simultaneous* and *sequential*. These notions are parallel to Skutnabb-Kangas's concepts of *natural* and *school* bilingualism. The first type refers to a situation when a child acquires two languages early in life at the same time (e.g. through parents who each speak a different language to him/her). The second type means that a child learns one language first, and then a second language later on in life.

Another important distinction that Baker (1993) makes is between bilingualism as an individual phenomenon and societal possession. This means that bilingualism can be approached and studied from different perspectives. For example, bilingualism as a societal phenomenon can interest sociologists, sociolinguists, politicians, geographers, education and social psychologists. Very often bilinguals form groups that can be located in a particular region (e.g. Catalans in Spain) or scattered across communities (e.g. Mexicans in the USA). They can form a distinct language group as a majority or minority. When there are two languages in a society, the term often used is *diglossia*. Baker (1993) has noted that a language community is more likely to use one language in certain situations and for certain functions, while the other language will be used in different circumstances and for different

functions. He has stated that where different languages have different functions, then an *additive* rather than a *subtractive* bilingual situation may exist. He stated,

> An additive bilingual situation is where the addition of a second language and culture are unlikely to replace or displace the first language and culture. For example, the English-speaking North American who learns a second language (e.g. French, Spanish) will not lose their English but gain another language and parts of its attendant culture. The 'value added' benefits may not only be linguistic and cultural, but social and economic as well. Positive attitudes to diglossia and bilingualism may also result. In contrast, the learning of a majority second language may undermine a person's minority first language and culture, thus creating a subtractive situation. For example, an in-migrant may find pressure to use the dominant language and feel embarrassment in using the home language (p. 57).

The concept of additive and subtractive bilingualism was introduced by Lambert (1984), who characterized additive bilingualism as associated with high levels of proficiency in the two languages, adequate self-esteem, and positive cross-cultural attitudes and subtractive bilingualism, on the other hand, with lower levels of second-language attainment, scholastic underachievement, and psychological disorders.

The significance of this distinction is supported by a number of linguists whose research findings indicate that the status of the child's first language can have multiple effects on his development. Genesee, Paradis and Crago (2004) claimed,

> Minority language children learning a majority L2, such as immigrant children in North America, Western Europe, and Australia, are often in subtractive bilingual environments because their ultimate bilingual proficiency might be low due to lack of proficiency in their L1, and they may not experience the cognitive advantages conferred by dual language learning that are found in additive bilingual environments… Not only can loss of L1 have pernicious effects on a child's social and psychological well-being, but it can also have negative cognitive consequences for a bilingual child academically. There is extensive research evidence pointing to the interdependent development of L1 and L2 verbal skills for academic purposes (pp. 141-142).

Coelho (1998) has stated that language is of profound importance to the psychological health of individuals and communities, and schools have enormous power to promote or inhibit the use of languages other than the language of the school, and to influence attitudes towards students' languages.

Hanna Ragnarsdóttir (2007) has argued that languages are inevitably linked to power relations in each society in that a dominant culture's or cultures' language or languages will in most cases also be the language or languages used predominantly in school settings, thus

marginalizing other languages which affects immigrant children's success in learning an additional language or languages and the development of their identities. She has also pointed out that if a school environment does not support mother tongues, it can lead to children's avoidance of their mother tongues, which can cause difficulties in relations between children and parents as well as affect children's cognitive development.

The relationship between language and culture has been emphasized by Fishman (1991) in terms of three links: a language indexes its culture, i.e. the language that has grown up round a culture best expresses that culture, its interests, values and world-views; a language symbolizes its culture, e.g. during World Wars I and II, German-Americans, and even Swiss-German-Americans, were careful not to speak German in public in the USA because the German language became symbolic of the German nation and America was at war with it; and culture is partly created from its language, i.e. much of the culture is enacted and transmitted verbally, e.g. its songs and its prayers, its laws and its proverbs, its tales and its greetings, its curses and blessings, its philosophy, its history and its teachings.
This point of view is supported by Genesee, Paradis and Crago (2004) who claimed that,

> Because of the interwoven nature of language and culture, dual language children are particularly at risk for both cultural and linguistic identity displacement. Erasing a child's language or cultural patterns of language use is a great loss for the child. Children's identities and senses of self are inextricably linked to the language they speak and the culture to which they have been socialized. They are, even at an early age, speakers of their languages and members of their cultures. Language and culture are essential to children's identities (p. 33).

There have been several studies carried out in Canada and the United States that indicated a positive correlation between students' proficiency in their L1 and academic success and acquisition of L3. A study by Thomas and Collier (1997, reported in Cummins, 2001b) that analyzed more than 700,000 student school records compiled from five large school systems in the United States found that the amount of formal schooling in L1 that students had received was the strongest predictor of how rapidly they would catch up academically in L2. This variable was more powerful than socioeconomic status or the parents' level of proficiency in L2.

Cummins (2001b) has also reported two studies conducted in Canada that suggested a positive effect of bilingual students' L1 academic development on the learning of additional languages. The first one was Swain and Lapkin's (1991) study that involved more than 300 grade 8 students in the same bilingual program. They found that children who had acquired literacy in two languages performed significantly better in the acquisition of a third language than did children from monolingual backgrounds or those bilingual backgrounds who had not acquired literacy in their home language. The second study was carried out by Bild and Swain

(1989), who found a significant positive correlation between the number of years in heritage language classes and proficiency in a third language.

According to Cummins (2001a), the distinction between additive and subtractive bilingualism helps to bridge the gap between socioeconomic factors and the actual process of cognitive development. Subtractive bilingualism implies that as a bilingual individual in a language minority group develops skills in L2, his competence in L1 decreases. Cummins argued that under these circumstances it is likely that many bilingual children will not develop native-like competence in either of their two languages. Baker, 1993 and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981 referred to this phenomenon as semilingualism and argued that it has negative emotional, cognitive, linguistic and scholastic consequences for bilingual children.

The next section will outline the history of research on bilingualism and cognitive development.

2.5.3. Bilingualism and Cognitive Development. According to Baker (1993), the research of the effect of bilingualism on cognitive development can be roughly divided into three periods: the period of detrimental effects, neutral effects and additive effects. From the early nineteenth century to approximately the 1960s, the prevalent belief among academics was that bilingualism had a detrimental effect on thinking. The early research on bilingualism and cognition seemed to indicate that monolinguals scored higher on mental tests than bilinguals, particularly on verbal IQ tests. However, as has been pointed out by Baker (1993) and Cummins (2001a), the early studies had many serious methodological limitations, thus they cannot be used to support the claim that monolinguals are superior to bilinguals in cognitive development.

These studies were followed by a series of research which found no difference between bilinguals and monolinguals and received a name "the period of neutral effects". For example, Jones (1959) concluded from his study of 2,500 children aged 10 in Wales that monolingual and bilingual children from the same socio-economic class did not differ significantly in non-verbal IQ, and therefore, bilingualism was not necessarily a source of intellectual inferiority.

The study by Peal and Lambert (1962) has paved a way for a new era of research into bilingualism and cognitive development. Their investigation took into consideration the methodological flaws of the research conducted during the period of "detrimental effect". According to their examination of 110 middle-class children in Canada, bilinguals scored higher on 15 out of 18 variables measuring IQ. They concluded that bilingualism increases mental flexibility; the ability to think more abstractly, more independently of words and form concepts; that an enriched bilingual and bicultural environment benefits the development of IQ; and that there is a positive transfer between a bilingual's two languages facilitating the development of verbal IQ. In spite of a number of limitations of their study (e.g. the exclusion

of unbalanced bilinguals), it was, nevertheless, of great historical significance (the description of the studies found in Baker, 1993).

Cummins (2001a) explained the negative outcome of the early studies by assuming that many of the bilingual children participating in them were from language minority groups and their L1 was being replaced by L2 which may have resulted in them not having native-like proficiency in either of their two languages, while the subjects of Lambert's study were balanced bilinguals in additive bilingual learning situation. Cummins (2001a), in his attempt to resolve a contradiction between the research outcomes of those three periods, has developed a theory that became known as the *threshold theory*. According to Cummins (2001a), "the fact that the bilingual subjects in earlier and more recent studies are likely to have attained different levels of linguistic competence suggests that the effects of bilingualism on cognitive growth may be mediated by the level of competence an individual attains in his two languages" (p. 41). In other words, a child needs to attain a certain minimum or threshold level of proficiency in both languages to avoid cognitive disadvantages and to allow the potentially beneficial aspects of becoming bilingual to influence cognitive growth. In fact, Cummins (2001a) has suggested that there are two threshold levels. Reaching the minimal or lower threshold level of bilingual proficiency would be sufficient for protecting an individual from negative consequences of bilingualism. However, achieving the second threshold level of bilingual proficiency is necessary for long-term cognitive benefits to be manifested. Cummins (2001a) has claimed that the attainment of the threshold is determined by more fundamental social, attitudinal, educational and cognitive (e.g. language learning aptitude) factors. He admitted that the threshold level of bilingual competence cannot be defined in absolute terms; it is likely to vary depending on the amount of time spent through L2 and on the type of cognitive operations that must be expressed through L2. Thus, the more time is spent through the L2, the higher must be the level of L2 competence necessary to avoid cognitive deficit. However, Cummins (2001a) has pointed out that the threshold hypothesis does not explain how L1 and L2 skills are related to one another. To address this issue he introduced the *developmental interdependence* hypothesis. The developmental interdependence hypothesis proposes that "the level of L2 competence which a bilingual child attains is partially a function of the type of competence the child has developed in L1 at the time when intensive exposure to L2 begins" (p. 75). Thus, in minority language situations a prerequisite for attaining a higher threshold level of bilingual competence is maintenance of L1 skills which, as has been supported by research evidence (Greaney, 1977; Swain, Lapkin and Barik, 1976; Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa, 1976; Tucker, 1975, as cited in Cummins, 2001a), leads to cognitive benefits for minority language children.

Expanding on the work of Cummins, Collier (1995) has examined data from various studies conducted with a very large number of children who were tracked over many years.

The findings of her research have indicated that the most significant background variable was the amount of formal schooling students received in their first language. When comparing the effects of various kinds of intervention on children entering school with no English at the age of five, it was found that non-native speakers being schooled in L2 for part or all of the school day typically did reasonably well in the early years of schooling, but from the fourth grade on through middle and high school, when the academic and cognitive demands of the curriculum increase rapidly with each succeeding year, students with little or no academic and cognitive development in their L1 did less and less well as they moved into the upper grades. The children who consistently performed best, even above the level of average monolingual English speakers, were those attending two way bilingual programs where equal amounts of time were spent studying each language in classes with children from both the English-speaking and minority language communities. These findings support the notion of the interdependence of languages and the transfer of skills (the reports of the study were found in Edwards, 1998 and Banks and Banks, 2005)

In recent years the research has shifted from comparing monolinguals and bilinguals on IQ tests to looking at such processes as *divergent* or *creative* thinking. Contrary to *convergent* thinking, where a person has to find a single acceptable answer to a question or a solution to a problem, divergent thinking implies producing a variety of answers, most of which are likely to be valid. Thus, according to Baker (1988) divergent thinking is "in process and product, a more creative, imaginative, open-ended and free-thinking skill" (p. 23).

According to Baker (1993), divergent thinking is measured on four dimensions: fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration, where flexibility refers to "different categories into which a person's answer can be placed"; and elaboration "reflects the extra detail which elaborates over and above that which is necessary to communicate a basic idea" (p. 119). Baker analyzed the research comparing bilinguals and monolinguals on a variety of measures of divergent thinking (Anisfelt, 1964; Gowan and Torrance, 1965; Bruck, Lambert and Tucker, 1976; Cummins and Gulutsan, 1974; Cummins, 1975; Cummins, 1977; Noble and Dalton, 1976 are some of the studies he has analyzed) and concluded that a majority of research findings suggest bilinguals' superiority to monolinguals on divergent thinking tests. However, he pointed out a number of problems with those studies that need to be taken into account in order to make a firm decision: some studies failed to control adequately for differences between bilingual and monolingual groups (e.g. in age or socio-economic background); other studies had such small samples that it is difficult to generalize from them; some studies failed to define or describe the level of bilingualism in their sample (which turned out to be an important variable in the research by Cummins (1977) where balanced bilinguals showed superiority to "matched" non-balanced bilinguals on fluency and flexibility

scales of verbal divergence); and not all studies found a positive correlation between bilingualism and divergent thinking.

Furthermore, two other areas where bilinguals seem to score higher than monolinguals should be mentioned - metalinguistic awareness and communicative sensitivity. Based on the studies by Bialystok (1991) and Goncz and Kodzopeljic (1991), Cummins (1994) has stated that the acquisition of two or more languages entails positive consequences for metalinguistic development. Bialystok's study involved about 120 children age 5-9. The findings of her research indicated that bilingual children judged grammatically more accurately, showed more advanced understanding of some aspects of the idea of words than did monolingual children, and were ahead of monolinguals in counting words in sentences. Bialystok concluded that fully fluent bilinguals have increased metalinguistic abilities. Her conclusion was supported by the outcomes of Ricciardelli's (1992, 1993) studies, in which bilingual children outperformed their monolingual peers on several measures reflecting creative thinking, metalinguistic awareness, and verbal and non-verbal abilities (the studies are cited in Cummins, 2001) and Lasagabaster's study in 1997 which found that bilinguals presented a higher level of metalinguistic awareness than monolinguals (cited in Cenoz, 2003). In 2001 Bialystok reviewed research on the relationship between bilingualism and metalinguistic awareness and concluded that bilinguals tend to obtain better results in tasks related to word awareness and in tasks demanding high levels of control of attention (in Cenoz, 2003).

Communicative sensitivity was investigated among others by Genesee, Tucker and Lambert (1975). Children in bilingual and monolingual education age 5-8 were compared on their performance in a game. The findings of that study indicate that bilingual children may be more sensitive than monolingual children in a social situation that requires careful communication. A bilingual child may be more aware of the needs of the listener (the description of the study and its findings were found in Baker, 1993). The outcome of a more recent study, conducted by Safont (2003) has also indicated a positive effect of bilingualism on communicative sensitivity.

To account for a relationship between bilingualism and cognitive advantages, Cummins (2001a) has suggested that bilinguals may have a wider and perhaps more varied range of experiences than monolinguals due to operating in two languages and, often times, cultures; they develop a more flexible learning set as a result of switching languages and making use of two different perspectives; and they may consciously or subconsciously compare and contrast their two languages.

Another area where research findings suggest a positive impact of bilingualism is third language acquisition. The next section of the paper will focus on this phenomenon and the studies that have investigated it.

2.5.4. Effect of Bilingualism on Third Language Acquisition. Cenoz (2003) has defined third language acquisition as the acquisition of a non-native language by learners who have previously acquired or are acquiring two other languages. The acquisition of the first two languages can be simultaneous (as in early bilingualism) or consecutive. There is a number of ways for children to become multilingual. Children may grow up in multilingual communities or a bilingual family while being exposed to a third language outside the home. In some European countries the linguistic minorities have gained status and support for their languages in the form of bilingual school programs. Children from such communities have two well-established languages by the time they are introduced to a third/foreign language in school. However, most of the time, it is not the case for the children of immigrants. They often have to begin studying a third/foreign language before they have gained a good command of their second language. Cenoz and Hoffman (2003) have emphasized the importance of bearing in mind the rich variety of sociolinguistic situations that exist, in regards to the languages and their relative status, the acquisition contexts and the sociocultural and psychological effects they may have. They have pointed out that third language acquisition can be approached from several different perspectives, for example, educational, sociolinguistic or psycholinguistic. However, they observed that one constant in many of the otherwise very diverse studies, is that the third language almost always is English. English has become the language of international communication which makes it a useful and a desirable language to learn.

Cenoz (2003) has pointed out that the study of third language acquisition brings together two fields "that have traditionally ignored each other": second language acquisition and bilingualism. The focus of the studies in the field of bilingualism has been on its effects on cognitive development, while the research on second language acquisition concentrated on the processes involved in the acquisition of a second language and the description of the resulting proficiency. Even though third language acquisition has apparently a lot in common with second language acquisition, there are, nevertheless, important differences between the two. One of the most essential differences pointed out by Cenoz (2003) is the fact that third language learners have already acquired two other languages, either simultaneously or consecutively. Therefore they have access to two linguistic systems and the experience of the acquisition of another language, and are likely to be influenced by the general effects of bilingualism on cognition. Another difference, according to Cenoz (2003), is a wider range of temporal possibilities. In SLA languages are acquired either simultaneously or consecutively, while in the case of L3 acquisition, there are four different possibilities (the three languages can be acquired consecutively; two languages can be acquired simultaneously before L3 is acquired or after the L1; and the three languages can be acquired simultaneously). L3 acquisition includes a greater variety of other factors that are usually considered in SLA, such

as age and context of acquisition of the languages. There are also other factors that are usually linked to research in bilingualism, such as the status of different languages and the degree of proficiency in L1 and L2 at the time when learners start acquiring L3, that contribute to the diversity of third language acquisition.

In spite of the fact that third language acquisition is quite a common phenomenon all over the world, unlike second language acquisition, it is a relatively new field of empirical research. It has developed considerably in the last several years, and a number of authors have published their articles focusing on different aspects of the phenomenon (e.g. Cenoz, Hufeisen, & Jessner, 2001; Cenoz & Jessner, 2000; Clyne, 1997; Hoffmann, 2001 cited in the review in Cenoz 2003).

In 1991 Cenoz conducted a study on the effect of bilingualism on a general proficiency in the third language. Her study included 321 bilingual (Basque-Spanish) and monolingual (Spanish) secondary school students who were learning English as their third language. Once such variables as socioeconomic status, exposure to English, general intelligence and motivation had been controlled, bilingualism was found to have a significant effect on different aspects of English proficiency such as listening, writing, speaking, reading, grammar and vocabulary. However, the influence of general intelligence and motivation showed to be stronger than that of bilingualism (in Cenoz, 2003).

Lasagabaster's study in 1997, that became an extension of the previously mentioned research, aimed to compare the level of proficiency in English obtained by 252 bilingual and monolingual children in the Basque Country. The subjects were in the 5th grade of primary school and in the 2nd year of secondary school in a non-Basque speaking area. Once the effect of factors such as socioeconomic status (SES), exposure to the language, general intelligence and motivation, had been controlled, the findings indicated that the level of bilingualism (Basque-Spanish) was closely related to the level of proficiency in English as measured by several tests of oral and written proficiency. Another finding of the study was that bilinguals presented a higher level of metalinguistic awareness than monolinguals (in Cenoz, 2003).

Another study reviewed by Cenoz (2003) that confirmed the positive effect of bilingualism on L3 acquisition was carried out by Sanz in 2000. In this study bilinguals and monolinguals from different areas of Spain were tested on English grammar and vocabulary, and bilinguals scored higher than monolinguals in the tests. Similar results were obtained in the research conducted by Brohy in 2001 on the acquisition of French as a third language by Romansch-German bilinguals and German speaking monolinguals in Switzerland. Brohy measured general ability in French and found that bilinguals obtained significantly higher scores in the acquisition of French than monolinguals (also described in Cenoz, 2003).

The studies by Munoz (2000) and Sagasta (2001) compared bilinguals with different degree of bilingual proficiency acquiring English as a L3. The results of their study suggested

that learners with a high level of proficiency in the L1 and L2 tended to obtain a high level of proficiency in English (in Cenoz, 2003).

A study by Thomas (1988) conducted with immigrant children in the U.S. compared 10 monolingual English-speaking learners of French with 16 bilingual English-Spanish speaking students. The subjects were tested on vocabulary, grammar and written production. Such variables as SES, exposure to the language, method and teacher were controlled. The results of the study indicated that bilingual learners of French scored significantly higher than monolinguals. Thomas has divided bilinguals into two subgroups: those who had literacy skills in their first language and those who were fluent in it but had literacy skills only in English. He observed that literacy in the first had positive influence on the acquisition of a third language. Thomas explained the results of the study by bilinguals' better developed metalinguistic awareness and sensitivity to language as a system that helps them perform better on activities associated with formal language learning (reported by Cenoz, 2003).

Similar results were obtained in a study by Tena (1988) who compared monolinguals and bilinguals in the acquisition of English in the Philippines. In this study bilinguals obtained significantly higher scores in all tests of English than monolinguals (in Cenoz, 2003).

Cenoz and Hoffmann (2003) have reported a study conducted by Sagasta Errasti, who focused on the effects of bilingualism on writing skills in a third language. She compared the effect of the different levels of her subjects' bilingualism on the acquisition of writing skills in English in the Basque Country. The results of her study indicated that balanced bilingualism (a balanced bilingual is someone who is approximately equally fluent in two languages across various contexts, according to Baker, 1993) in Basque and Spanish could have a positive effect on the acquisition of writing skills in English. Cenoz and Hoffman (2003) pointed out that the languages involved in Errasti's study presented important differences in regards to linguistic distance.

However, Cenoz (2003) has also reported several European studies conducted with immigrant children that did not find significant differences between monolinguals and bilinguals in the acquisition of a third language. For example, a study by Jaspaert and Lemmens (1990) compared Italian immigrant children who were acquiring Dutch as a third language while also receiving instruction in Italian and French, and French-speaking monolinguals. Another study was carried out by Sanders and Meijers (1995) in the Netherlands. It compared Turkish-Dutch bilinguals, Moroccan-Arabic bilinguals and Dutch monolinguals, who were all learning English as a third language. Such abilities as grammatical judgment, spontaneous language use, word comprehension and word recognition were measured. The results suggested that there were no differences between monolinguals and bilinguals.

A study by Schoonen, van Gelderen, de Glopper, Hulstijn, Snellings, Simis, and Stevenson (2002) in the Netherlands analyzed proficiency in written English by native speakers of Dutch and immigrants who were bilingual in their L1 and Dutch and were learning English as a third language. The results of the study suggested that there were no significant differences in the different measures of writing proficiency between the two groups except for two of the measures. These outcomes were explained by linguistic distance between the L1 and the L3 in the case of immigrant learners, and by the development of the L1 and its status.

Balke-Aurell and Lindblad (1982) conducted a study in Sweden. They compared English proficiency of native speakers of Swedish and 2736 immigrants who were bilingual in Swedish and another language. The subjects were tested on grammar, listening, word comprehension and reading. The general results of the study indicated that there were no differences between the groups (from Cenoz, 2003).

In regards to the effect of bilingualism on specific aspects of L3 proficiency, a study by Safont (2003) should be mentioned. She analyzed metapragmatic awareness and pragmatic production of third language learners of English with a focus on request acts realizations. In her study Safont investigated a possible positive effect of bilingualism on communicative sensitivity by focusing on a specific area of pragmatic competence, the speech act of requesting. Safont provided data from Valencia, where Catalan and Spanish are spoken. She analyzed the use of request formulae by 80 monolingual (Castilian) and 80 bilingual (Catalan and Castilian) female learners of English as a foreign language in a discourse completion test and role-play task. Participants' responses to a discourse evaluation test were contrasted in determining their degree of metapragmatic awareness. Results from her analysis pointed to the advantage of bilinguals over monolinguals in justifying their evaluation on the appropriateness of certain requests' strategies to particular contexts, as well as on their use of request realizations. Thus, this study also provides evidence to the positive effect of bilingualism on third language acquisition.

However, Cenoz (2003) has reported several studies that failed to show bilinguals' advantage over monolinguals. For example, a study by Jung (1981) examined the command of some morphological and syntactic elements (possessive pronouns, personal pronouns, and plural) among German learners of English and immigrant bilingual learners of English. Jung found that monolinguals scored higher than bilinguals, but he did not indicate whether the differences were statistically significant.

Another study was performed by Okita and Jun Hai (2001) who compared monolingual Chinese-speakers to bilingual Chinese-English speakers in the acquisition of Japanese writing characters. The monolinguals in their study obtained higher scores than the bilinguals.

It seems possible to conclude from the research data available today that bilingualism has no negative effect on third language acquisition and in many cases can be associated with a positive impact on the acquisition of a third language. There seems to be more consistency in the results of the studies that investigated general aspects of proficiency than in those studies that examined specific aspects of proficiency in L3. The explanations provided by the researchers link studies in SLA with research in bilingualism. Most studies on general aspects of proficiency report a positive effect of bilingualism on third language acquisition when it takes place in an additive context and bilinguals have acquired literacy skills in their L1. According to Cenoz (2003), this positive impact can be explained as related to learning strategies, metalinguistic awareness and communicative ability, but it can also be linked to the fact that bilinguals have a wider linguistic repertoire that can be used as a basis in third language acquisition. The typological closeness of the languages seems to enhance the positive transfer between languages.

However, bilinguals do not demonstrate advantages on all aspects of metalinguistic awareness which can explain the inconsistency in the results of the studies examining specific aspects of proficiency in a third language. As has been pointed out by Cenoz (2003), third language acquisition is a complex phenomenon influenced by a number of factors and contexts, and no simple explanation can be offered to account for various research findings.

Since there has been a significant increase in the numbers of immigrant students in Icelandic schools, the next section will provide a closer look at the issues of bilingualism and education of bilingual children in the context of Iceland.

2.5.5. Issues of Bilingualism and Education of Bilingual Children in the Context of Iceland. Immigrant children face multiple challenges when entering various levels of the education system in Iceland. One of the challenges is acquiring Icelandic since it is the language of instruction in Iceland. As has been previously explained, immigrant children need to develop both communicative and academic language skills in order to participate in social interaction and have a chance of succeeding academically. However, it is important to remember that as Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir (2000) pointed out, while immigrant children are learning a new language from the beginning, their monolingual peers continue to read and deepen their proficiency in the mother language, so using Cummins' (2001b) terms, the immigrant learners must „catch up with a moving target".

Consistent with the previously reviewed studies on the importance of L1 for the different aspects of bilinguals' development, Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir (2000) has argued that when the acquisition of L2 starts after the acquisition of another language in children who are not well-grounded in their mother tongue, and the mother language is not maintained, it has a negative effect on the development of language and especially literacy, which leads to difficulties in

studying. Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir (2008) has emphasized the important role that the school plays both in ensuring that language acquisition of immigrant children is not interrupted when they change languages, and in providing children with an opportunity to learn and practice the language structure that characterizes the texts of the text-books. Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir (2008) has stated that those children who are exposed to language transitions by moving between countries, for example children who learn Icelandic as L2 in Iceland, and at the same time learn other subjects in Icelandic, do not always have a good foundation in their L1, and without special assistance and adaptation of the study materials often fall behind in their studies in the process of acquiring Icelandic. Therefore, it is important for these children to continue to receive instruction in reading in their L1, while the schools make sure that bilingual students keep up with their peers in other subjects.

Solveig Brynja Grétarsdóttir's study (2007) indicated that only 73,1% of children for whom Icelandic is L2 enter secondary schools in Iceland, which is considerably fewer than children for whom it is L1. Furthermore, her research revealed that 64% of children from the first group either never go to a secondary school or drop out of their studies.

In accordance with the findings of Hanna Ragnarsdóttir's (2007) and Solveig Brynja Grétarsdóttir's (2007) studies, Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir (2000) has stated that many bilingual children in Iceland receive little if any assistance with Icelandic. Dropping out of school because of reading difficulties is common, so is illiteracy, and bilingual students more often than not lose interest in studying, which leads to unemployment, as well as social and cultural isolation. Therefore, much is yet to be done before it is possible to say that Iceland has succeeded in the adaptation of the education system to the changed needs of its more diverse student population.

The goal of this research is to look at English proficiency of Icelandic and immigrant students in Icelandic primary schools, therefore in the next section I would like to discuss briefly the status of English in Iceland.

2.6. The Status of English in Iceland

There has been an ongoing discussion about the status of English in Iceland. By a generally accepted definition, a language is considered to be one's second language if it is readily available in their environment, and the individual has plenty of opportunities to hear, see, and use it, or in other words, if one is learning it in the target culture. Foreign language can be defined as the language of a group with which the individual has little contact and interaction. The English language in Iceland does not fit neatly either of these definitions as it is not a native language in the country, but at the same time it is available in the environment and the children get exposed to it from an early age through television, music, computer games and internet use. Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir (2007) has suggested that "this dual distinction

is no longer adequate given the increased presence of English in countries such as Iceland where it is widely spoken but is not a native language" (p. 52). In a survey conducted in 2005-2006 by Lovísa Kristjánsdóttir, Laufey Bjarnadóttir, and Samuel Lefever (2006) that included 788 students in 8 primary schools in Iceland, 86 percent of children in the 9th and 10th grade said they watch films and shows in English, and 88 percent listen to music with English lyrics. Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir (2007) has pointed out that many Icelandic children get exposed to English when traveling or spending long periods of time abroad while their parents study, and that English is used on travels even to non-English-speaking countries. She has pointed to the data from a survey that showed that 75% of those surveyed used English in countries where English was not an official language. Due to such a rich exposure to English, many Icelandic children come to school already fluent in the language. Unfortunately, it is not the case in all the European countries. A review of research on foreign languages in primary and pre-school education within the European Union (1998) states,

> Frequency of exposure to a foreign language varies greatly from one member state (or region) to another, so that in certain cases children begin learning a foreign language at secondary already possessing the rudiments of the language, while in other cases the lack of such exposure poses a problem not only for pupils but also for their teachers' levels of linguistic competence (p. 22).

Considering how diverse the student population in Iceland has become, with learners from many various countries and cultural and linguistic backgrounds represented there, it seems possible to suppose that there would be a discrepancy in English proficiency between the Icelandic children and their peers from other countries where English is not as available in the environment or does not enjoy an equally high status in a society.

3. Methods of Research

This study has attempted to answer the following questions:

4. Is there a discrepancy in English proficiency between Icelandic and immigrant children in the 10th grades in Icelandic primary schools?

5. If so, what are the possible reasons for it?

6. Do teachers use any particular strategies to assist immigrant children with their English?

3.1. The participants

There were two groups of participants in the research – teachers and students. The first group of participants consisted of teachers of English in Iceland. They were asked to fill out a questionnaire on their professional post list. The questions in the survey of the teachers related to whether or not they had immigrant children in their classes, their perception of the situation in regards to English proficiency of Icelandic and immigrant students (whether, in their opinion, there is a discrepancy between the two groups; and if yes, then why), whether or not their immigrant students had any problems communicating to them or their classmates in English or Icelandic, their expectations of the learners, whether or not they have been provided with any special assistance in regards to teaching English to immigrant children, and the teaching strategies they use.

The second group of subjects included 17 Icelandic and 16 immigrant students, all of whom were in the tenth grade of two primary schools in Reykjavik - Fellaskóli and Austurbæjarskóli. Both classes had been chosen by the school administration. It should be noted that in this study the term "immigrant students" applies to foreign-born children. However, students who are native speakers of English are not included in the survey.

The class in Fellaskóli that participated in the survey had 23 students enrolled, 3 of whom did not take English with the class. On the day when the survey was conducted, 17 children were present in class: 8 immigrant children and 9 Icelandic children.

The class in Austurbæjarskóli had 20 students, of whom 11 were Icelanders and the other 9 – immigrant students. On the day of the survey 17 children were present in class: 8 immigrant and 9 Icelandic students. Due to autism, one of the Icelandic learners was not able to participate in the survey. The data from two other students (one immigrant and one Icelandic) were discarded due to the immigrant student's lack of proficiency in both, English and Icelandic (she had recently moved to Iceland and was not able to understand or answer the questions and left a lot of them unanswered), and the other student indicated that English was his father's native language and the language regularly spoken at home. Therefore, the data from 15 immigrant students and 16 Icelandic students were processed.

The group of the immigrant children consisted of 5 students from Poland, 3 from Vietnam, 1 from Portugal, 1 from Senegal, 1 from Lithuania, 1 from the Philippines, 1 from China, 1 from Colombia, and 1 from Kosovo.

There were significant variations in the length of their stay in Iceland, with the shortest being 7 months and the longest - 10 years. None of the 15 students indicated that they spoke English at home.

Considerable variations were also observed in the number of years the immigrant children had been studying English as a foreign language. While one of them, on one hand, indicated that English had been introduced in the first grade, somebody else, on the other hand, had not started studying it till the eighth grade. The majority, however, had begun studying English between the third and fifth grades.

3.2. The Tests

3.2.1. Survey of the Teachers of English. Teachers (of primary, secondary schools and universities) were asked to fill out a questionnaire on their professional post list. As has been previously explained, the survey contained ten questions that related to the teachers' perception of the situation in regards to English proficiency of Icelandic and immigrant students, to the communication problems in either English or Icelandic between the immigrant children and teachers or/and their Icelandic classmates, their expectations of the learners, whether or not they were provided with any special assistance in regards to teaching English to immigrant children, and the teaching strategies they used. The survey was administered by means of *www.surveymonkey.com*. The same web site was used to collect and analyze the data. 25 teachers of English participated in the survey, of whom:

- 1 (7%) taught at a university
- 19 (76%) taught at secondary schools
- 7 (28%) taught at primary schools

(Two participants taught at two types of schools).

3.2.2. Survey of the Learners. The survey of the learners was conducted in two primary schools in Reykjavik. Each school had chosen a 10th grade class with both Icelandic and immigrant children enrolled. The students were asked to fill out a questionnaire. The questionnaire had been found in REVA (http://www.reva-education.eu/spip.php?page=article&id_rubrique=213&id_article=203&lang=en), p. 193. It was developed in the mid-1990s by Berns, Hasenbrink and Skinner who set up a project which aimed to assess the impact of the media on English language skills and language attitudes to English in different parts of Germany. It was later used in a comparative study that aimed to assess pupils' skills in English in eight European countries: France, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, Finland, Germany, Norway, and Denmark. The questionnaire had

to be slightly modified to fit better the aims of the present study (since all the participants were studying in the same country). All the questions were followed by their translation into Icelandic, and the students could answer the questions in either English or Icelandic.

The authors of the REVA project stated,

> In order to explain differences between groups of pupils within and between countries, information on a considerable amount and variety of variables is needed. The fact that pupils receive their education in country X or Y in itself can never explain why they show a particular level of proficiency that may differ from levels found in other countries. While there may be underlying cultural factors that have an impact on national educational systems, explanations for differences between countries can only be elucidated if there are variables that can be empirically tested: English language contact through the media and in personal contacts, attitudes towards the English language, socio-economic background of pupils, and language proficiency (p.16).

Therefore, the questions in the survey related to the previously listed variables. The amount of exposure to English was reflected in questions on contact with the language through interaction (e.g. parents, peers, holidays in foreign countries) and through media of different types (radio, music, TV, magazines, internet).

Attitude to English was measured through opinions on the language itself and opinions on whether or not it is important to know it. In the questionnaire the pupils were asked to indicate what specific advantages they see in knowing English. The advantages listed were the following:

- Communication abroad
- Comprehension of music texts
- Facilitation of working with computers
- Sounds better in English
- No expression in the native language
- Needed for further education
- Better chance to get a good job
- Read books in English
- Understand English language TV program without subtitles
- Easier contact with foreigners
- Access to new developments in science and technology

Questions on socio-economic background inquired information on the highest level of parents' education and their proficiency in English, according to pupils.

A self-evaluation of their proficiency in English was included. The test based on "Can-do"- statements, correlating to the level B1 of the Common European Framework of References for Languages was administered. In this test students had to indicate on a scale to what extent (very easy, rather easy, rather difficult, very difficult) they considered themselves capable of carrying out specific activities in English (e.g. understand a simple message, write a short report, read an average journal article, etc). However, it did not include questions about speaking. Three domains of competencies covered were written comprehension, oral comprehension and written production. This test had also been found in the REVA project report.

The reasons why the questionnaire was chosen rather than the interviews with the students were:

- It is relatively easy to distribute and collect.
- A greater number of people can be surveyed than is practical or possible through an interview.
- The results can be more easily compared and analyzed than open-ended discussions.
- Misunderstanding is less likely since the questions are delivered in both, English and Icelandic, so learners with lower proficiency in English should be able to understand and answer the questions correctly too.
- Less emotional pressure on the children than in the situation of one-on-one interview with an interviewer and possibly an interpreter.

3.3. Methods of Analysis: Statistical Procedures

For the teacher questionnaire descriptive statistics were used.

For the student questionnaire desciptive statistics as well as the following inferential statistics for some variables were used. To test for the null hypothesis concerning mothers' and fathers' level of education, as well as the students' opinion about the importance of English and the lyrics of the songs, Chi Square ($\chi2$) was used with Yates correction when needed. In the question on parents' level of education, due to a small number of subjects, primary and secondary levels of education were grouped together. In many questions students were asked to evaluate on a Likert scale. The qualifiers on the Likert scale were then transformed into ascending numbers, treated as ordinals, and the differences between the two groups evaluated using Mann-Whitney U test. Differences between the means were in some instances evaluated using either Students´t-test, when the data had a normal distribution, or Mann-Whitney U test, when they were not distributed normally. A 95% confidence interval was used as a criterion for significance. There were 7 students that did not provide the appropriate data in some questions but for the sake of the power of the study, their data were included in other variables where they did provide the appropriate data.

4. Analysis of the Data

4.1. Analysis of the Teacher Questionnaire

As has been mentioned earlier, the teacher questionnaire contained 10 questions. Question 1 inquired information about the type of school the participants taught at: primary, secondary or university. Twenty-five people completed the questionnaire.

Of those twenty-five:

- 7 (28%) were primary school teachers
- 19 (76%) were secondary school teachers
- 1 (4%) was a university teacher

Two participants taught at two types of school. These data are shown in fig. 2.
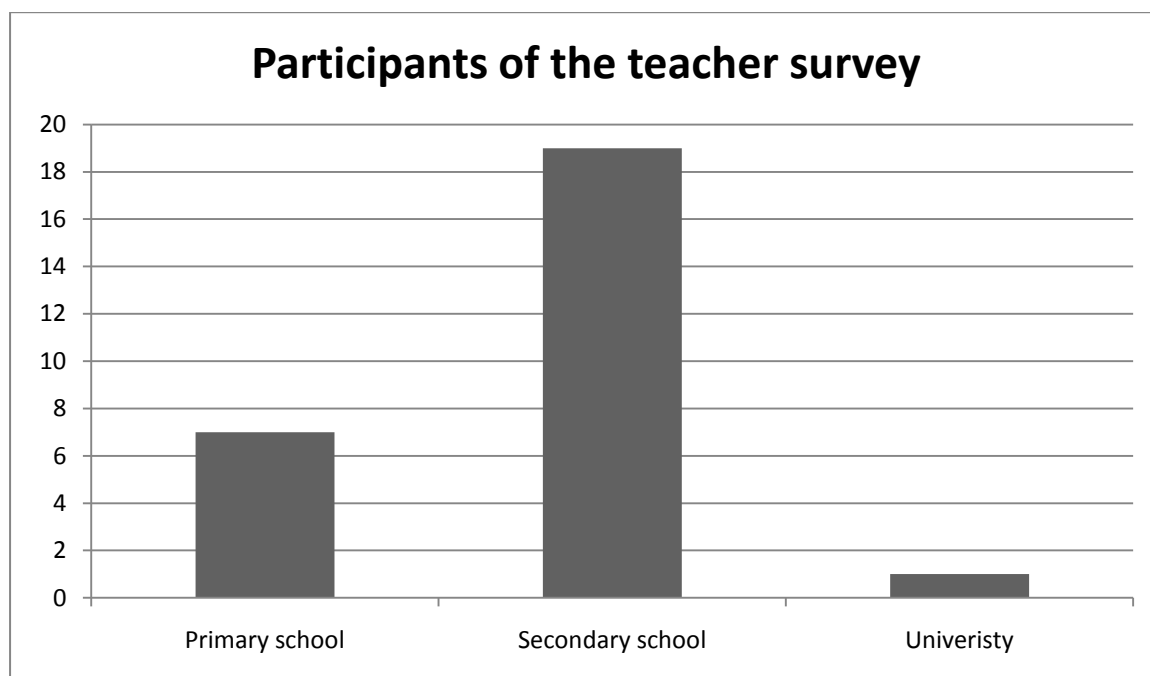
Figure 2: Shows the number of teachers from different types of school. The Y-axis is the number of teachers.

In respect to having immigrant children in their classes (question 2), 18 (72 %) of respondents answered "yes" and 7 (28%) answered "no". Fig. 3 demonstrates these data.

Teachers who have and do not have immigrant students in their English classes
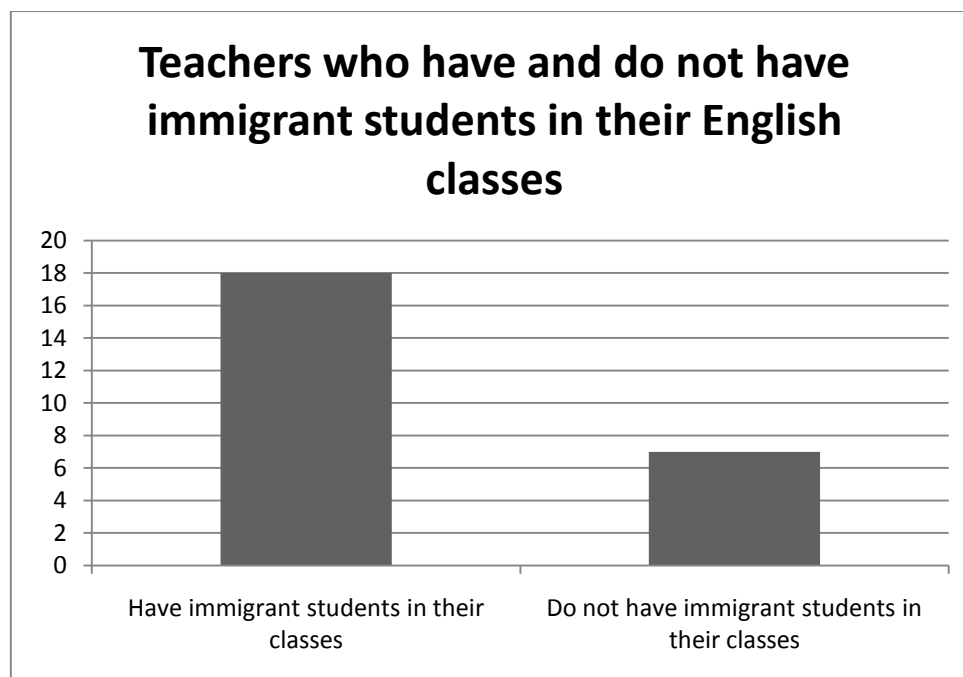
Figure 3: Shows the number of teachers who had immigrant students in their English classes and the number of teachers who did not. The Y-axis is the number of teachers.

Concerning teachers' assessment of immigrant students' English proficiency in comparison to their Icelandic classmates (question 3) the responses were (see also fig. 4):

- 3 (15,8) - similar
- 10 (52,6%) - lower
- 7 (36,8%) - depends on the student

Nineteen people answered this question and six did not respond to it.

English proficiency of immigrant students in comparison to their Icelandic classmates'
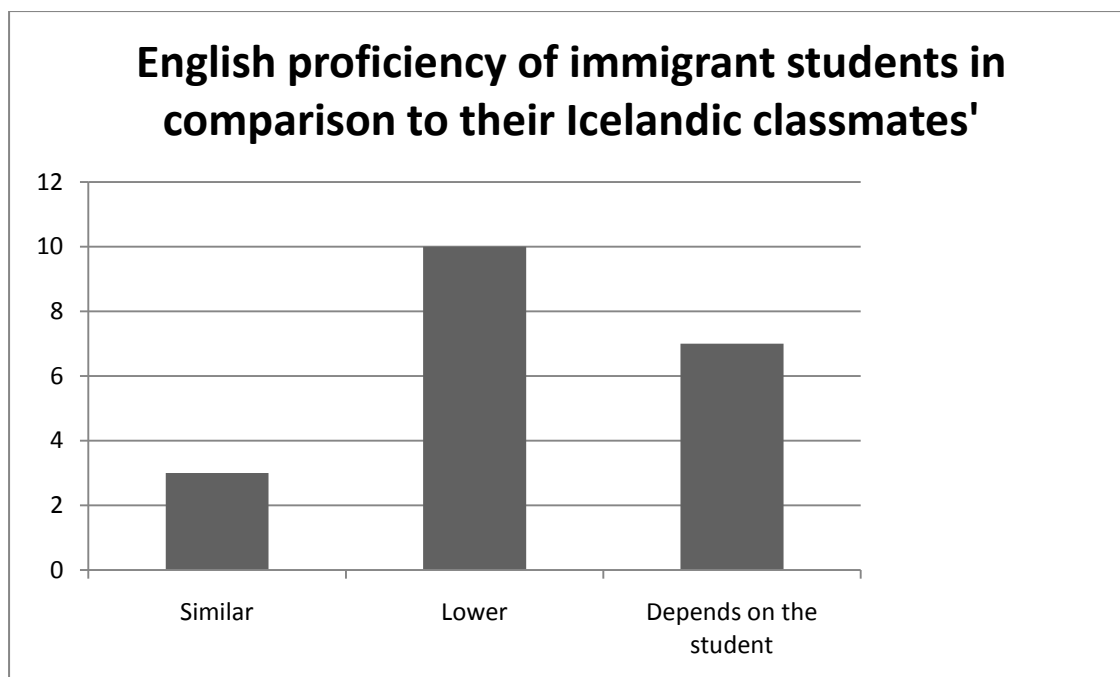
Figure 4: Shows the number of teachers who estimated English proficiency of immigrant students as similar/lower than English proficiency of the Icelandic students, and the number of teachers who believed that it depends on the student. The Y-axis is the number of teachers.

Question 4 asked the teachers whether they believed that there is a discrepancy in English proficiency between the two groups of students and to explain the possible reasons for that. Fifteen respondents did not answer the question, while ten shared their opinion. The following explanations were offered:

- Started English studies later than the Icelandic counterparts
- Difference in emphasis in their home country, both in terms of which parts of English to focus on and the importance of English in general
- Students from Eastern Europe and China are usually more highly motivated than Erasmus students from Western Europe. The difference in standard is therefore, probably a direct result of the purpose of their study in Iceland. Erasmus and other exchange students are here for the personal experience, while visiting students (who are not on exchange) tend to take their studies more seriously. Native English speakers tend to think they know more than they do simply by virtue of their fluency in the language of study
- English is often their L3
- Students' lesser abilities
- Because they can mix together both English and Icelandic, and because most books have Icelandic instructions
- Some students have learnt very little English in their homeland

Therefore, the following factors have been identified by the teachers as the possible reasons for a discrepancy in English proficiency between the Icelandic and immigrant students:

- The number of years the students have been studying English for
- Difference in emphasis in the curriculum of the home country
- Importance of English in a society they come from
- Motivation
- English being L3
- Learners' aptitude
- Lack of proficiency in L2 which is the support language for studying English as L3

Question 5 inquired whether the immigrant children had problems communicating in English with their teachers or classmates. Eighteen teachers answered this question. The responses were (see also fig. 5):

- 1 (5,6%) – never
- 4 (22,2%) – rarely
- 10 (55,6%) – sometimes
- 3 (16,7%) – often
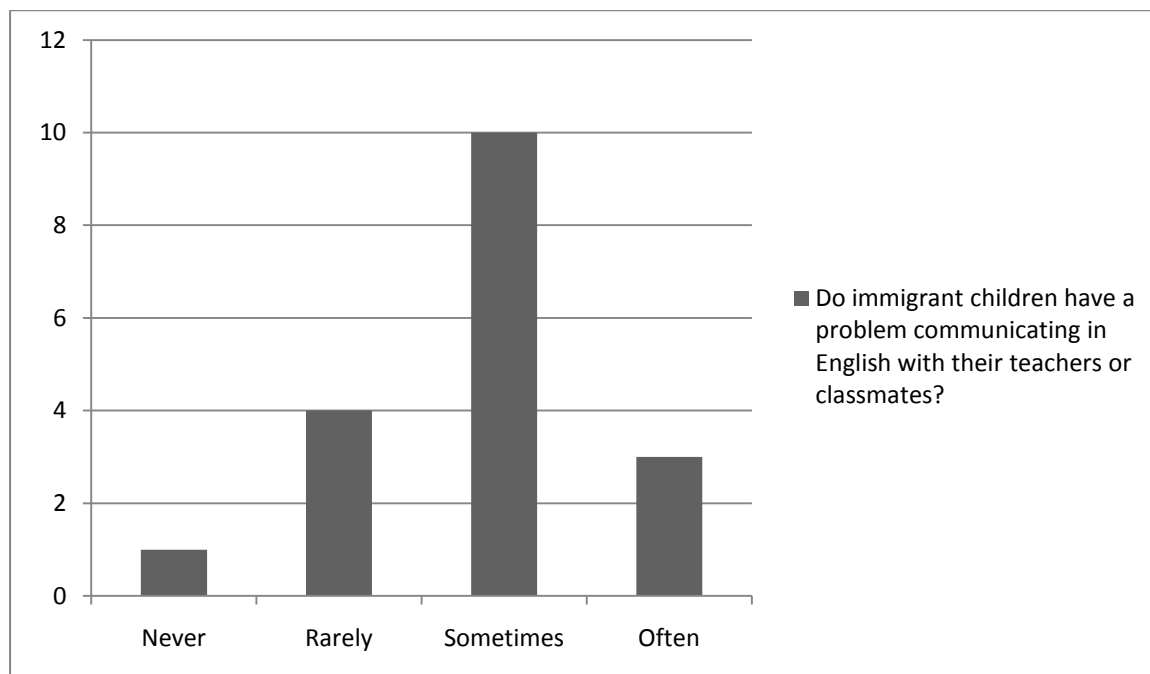
Figure 5: Shows the number of teachers who stated that immigrant students never/rarely/sometimes/ often had a problem communicating to them or their Icelandic classmates in English. The Y-axis is the number of teachers.

Question 6 asked teachers whether their immigrant students had a problem communicating to them or to the classmates in Icelandic. Nineteen people responded to the question, while six people did not answer it. The responses were (see also fig. 6):

- 1 (5,3%) - never
- 2 (10,5%) – rarely
- 9 (47,4%) – sometimes
- 7 (36,8%) – often
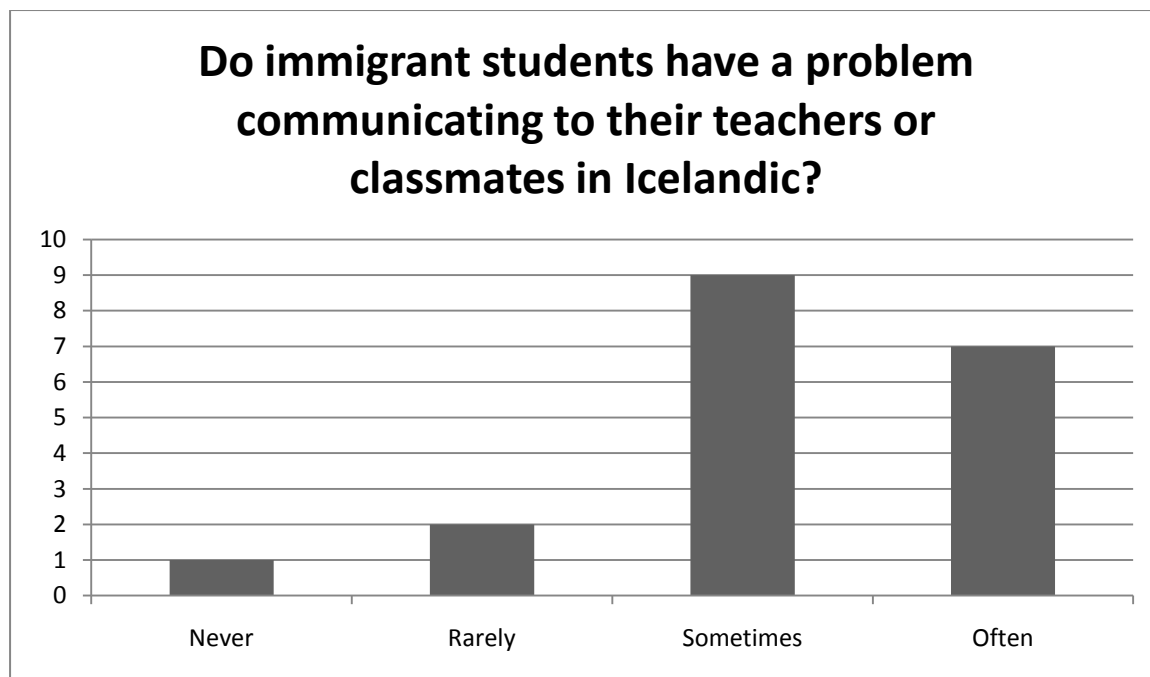
Figure 6: Shows the number of teachers who stated that immigrant students never/rarely/sometimes/ often had a problem communicating to them or their Icelandic classmates in Icelandic. The Y-axis is the number of teachers.

Question 7 dealt with teachers' expectations of the immigrant students. Nineteen people answered the question and six did not respond to it. The answers were (see also fig. 7):

- 1 (5,3%) - slightly higher than from the Icelandic students
- 9 (47,4%) - the same as of the Icelandic students
- 7 (36,8%) – slightly lower
- 2 (10,5%) – quite lower

Teachers' expectations of the immigrant students
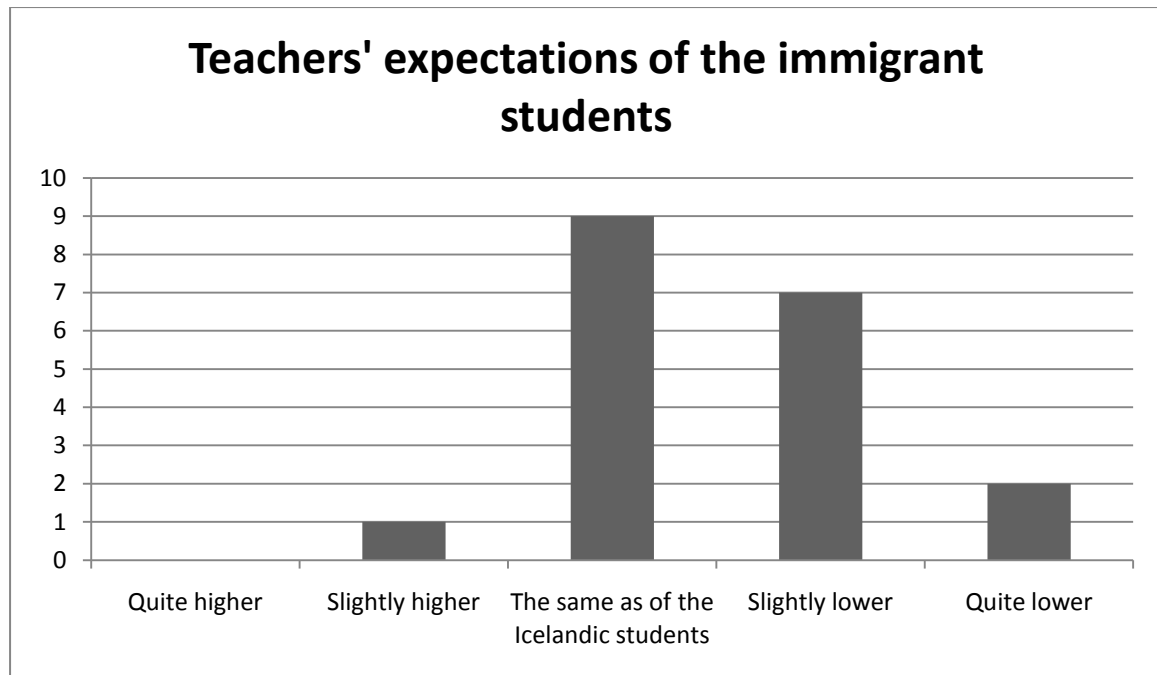
Figure 7: Shows the number of teachers whose expectations of the immigrant students were higher/slightly higher/slightly lower/quite lower/the same as of the Icelandic students. The Y-axis is the number of teachers.

Question 8 inquired whether teachers were provided with any special assistance in regard to teaching English to immigrant students (fig. 8).

Nineteen people responded to this question. Their answers indicated that:

- 2 (10,5%) were provided with assistance
- 17 (89,5%) were not provided with assistance
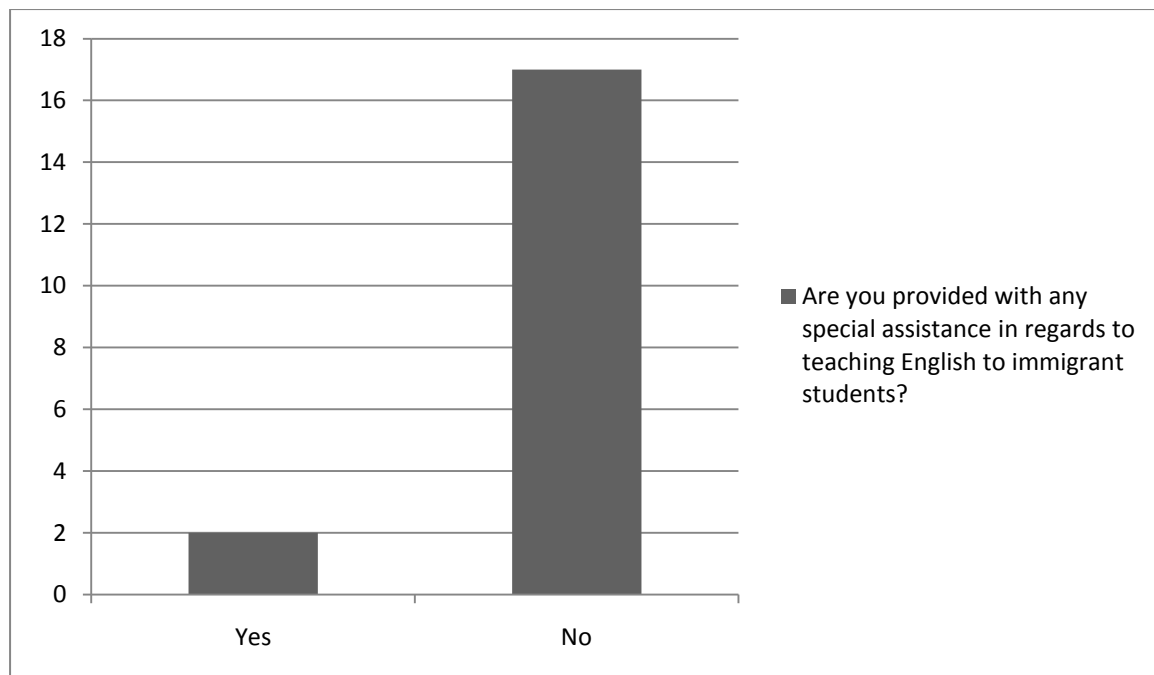
Figure 8: Shows the number of teachers who received and did not receive special assistance in teaching English to immigrant students. The Y-axis is the number of teachers.

Question 9 inquired whether teachers used the same teaching strategies with Icelandic and immigrant students (fig. 9).

Nineteen people answered this question. Their answers were:

- 11 (57, 9%) Yes
- 6 (31, 6%) No
- 2 (10, 5%) Other: giving an immigrant student the same program as to other weaker learners; trying to understand students' background in English learning and going from there.
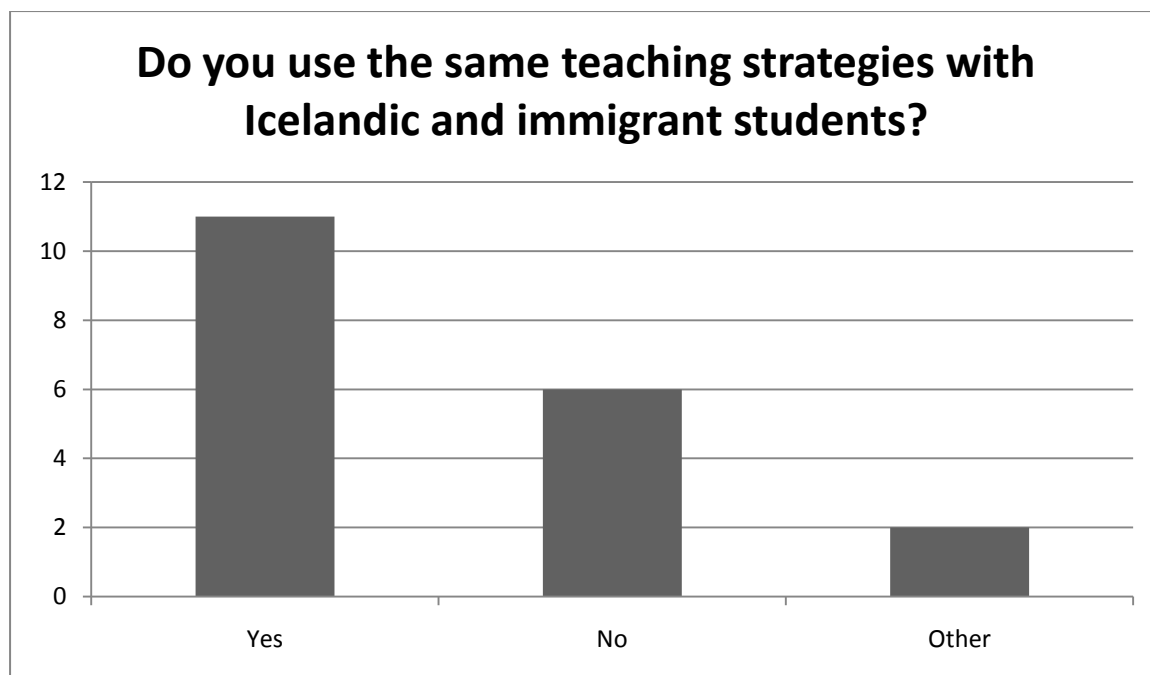
Figure 9: Shows the number of teachers who used the same/different teaching strategies with Icelandic and immigrant students, and those who mentioned a specific strategy they used with the immigrant students. The Y-axis is the number of teachers.

Question 10 asked teachers who used special strategies to assist immigrant children with lower English proficiency to share what strategies they found to be effective. Six people responded to this question. Their answers were:

- Have a Polish-English bilingual dictionary available in the classroom for them to use. Also have grammar sheets in Icelandic that reinforce the grammar being taught through English
- Encourage self-learning on specific aspects of important parts of English that the students can do for free online, both in class and at home, which they can then continue to work on in their own time and when they go back to their home country
- Mostly use readers with CDs and spoken interaction, along with a little light writing
- Build vocabulary and speech
- Give the pupils a chance to prove themselves - talk to them - find what they are good at - work from there - through their interest
- Allow them to translate their passages into English and not Icelandic

Based on the data obtained through this survey, it seems possible to make the following conclusions:

- The majority of teachers of English in Iceland have immigrant students in their classes

- More than half of the teachers perceive the immigrant students' proficiency in English as lower than their Icelandic classmates', while quite a few teachers believe it depends on the student

- The discrepancy in English proficiency between immigrant and Icelandic students is believed to be caused by a number of factors, namely:
    - The difference in the number of years the students have been studying English for
    - Different emphasis in the curriculum in the students' homelands
    - Importance of English in societies they come from
    - Difference in motivation to learn English
    - English being their L3
    - Learners' aptitude
    - Lack of proficiency in L2 (Icelandic) which is the support language for learning English as L3

- A majority of immigrant children have problems communicating to their teachers and/or classmates in both, English and Icelandic

- Almost half of the teachers have similar expectations of the immigrant and Icelandic students, while the other half has lower expectations of the immigrant learners. Very few teachers have higher expectations of the immigrant learners than from the Icelandic

- Most of the teachers are not provided with any special assistance in regards to teaching English to immigrant children

- More than half of the teachers use the same teaching strategies for immigrant and Icelandic students

4.2. Analysis of the Learner Questionnaire

The number of participants in the learner survey is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Shows the number of students participating in the survey,

whose data were processed.

	Fellaskóli	Austurbæjarskóli
Immigrant students	8	7
Icelandic students	9	7

As has been explained earlier, three more students were present during the administration of the questionnaire, but one of them did not participate in the survey, and the data from the two others (one Icelandic student and one immigrant learner) have been discarded.

The first six questions provided general background information about the students.

Question 1 – Gender of the participants

The data on the gender of the participants is shown in table 2.

Table 2: Shows the data on the gender of the participants.

Immigrant students		Icelandic students	
Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
5	10	12	4
29,4%	71,4%	70,6%	28,6%

Chi square ($\chi 2$) for gender and nationality was 5,427 (P=0,02), in other words, there was a significant difference in gender distribution between the two groups.

Question 2 – Place of birth

All the Icelandic students indicated Iceland as their place of birth. The group of the immigrant students presented a lot of diversity in this respect.

The following table demonstrates the countries of the immigrant students' origin and the number of students from each of these countries in the group.

Table 3: Shows countries of origin of the immigrant students, the number of students from these countries (N) and the percentage this number represents (%).

	The name of the country	N	%
1.	Poland	5	33,3 %
2.	Vietnam	3	20,0 %
3.	The Philippines	1	6,7 %
4.	Portugal	1	6,7 %
5.	Senegal	1	6,7 %
6.	Lithuania	1	6,7 %
7.	China	1	6,7 %
8.	Colombia	1	6,7 %
9.	Kosovo	1	6,7 %

As we can see from table 3, students from Eastern Europe represented the largest population followed by students from Asia.

Question 3 – How long have you lived in Iceland?

Fifteen Icelandic students said that they had lived in Iceland all their life, while one boy wrote thirteen years. However, between the immigrant students there were considerable variations in the length of their staying in Iceland with the shortest being seven months, the longest – ten years and the average – three and a half years.

Question 4 – Language spoken at home

All the Icelandic students indicated Icelandic as the language spoken at home.
The answers of the immigrant students are presented in table 4:

Table 4: Shows the languages spoken at homes of the immigrant students.

	Language	Number of students
1.	Polish	5*
2.	Vietnamese	3**
3.	Spanish	1
4.	Lithuanian	1
5.	Portuguese	1
6.	French and Wolof	1
7.	Albanian	1
8.	Cebuano	1

*One boy listed Icelandic as the second language used at home (with a sibling).

** Two of these students mentioned Icelandic as the second language used at home.

Question 5 – Mother's native language

- Fifteen Icelandic students answered "Icelandic"
- One Icelandic student answered "Vietnamese"

The answers of the immigrant students are presented in table 5.

Table 5: Shows mothers' native languages that were listed by the immigrant students:

	Mother's native language	Number of students
1.	Polish	5
2.	Vietnamese	3*
3.	Cebuano	1
4.	Chinese	1
5.	Spanish	1
6.	Lithuanian	1
7.	Portuguese	1
8.	French	1
9.	Albanian	1

* One of them mentioned Icelandic as her mother's second native language

Question 6 – Father's native language

All sixteen Icelandic students said that Icelandic was their father's native language, while one of them indicated German as his father's second native language.

The answers of the immigrant students are summarized in table 6.

Table 6: Shows fathers' native languages that were listed by the immigrant students.

	Father's native language	Number of students
1.	Polish	5
2.	Vietnamese	2*
3.	Icelandic	2
4.	Spanish	1
5.	Lithuanian	1
6.	Portuguese	1
7.	Chinese	1
8.	French	1
9.	Albanian	1

* One student mentioned Icelandic as her father's second native language

Questions 7 and 10 provided important information on socioeconomic background of the students. They dealt with the level of their parents' education and English proficiency.

Question 7 – Parents' highest level of education

There are data from sixteen Icelandic students (but two indicated only one parent's highest level of education) and fourteen immigrant students. See tables 7, 8 and 9.

Table 7: Shows the number of parents of the Icelandic and immigrant students who have university/secondary/primary education.

	Parents of Icelandic students	%	Parents of immigrant students	%
University education	12	40	4	14,29
Secondary education	12	40	19	67,86
Primary education	6	20	3	10,71

Table 8: Shows the number of mothers with primary and secondary education and mothers with university education in both groups.

Mothers' level of education	Icelandic	Immigrant
Primary or secondary school	9 60,0%	12 85,7%
University	6 40,0%	2 14,3%

Chi square (χ2) for mothers' level of education and nationality was 1,283 (P=0,257), in other words, there was no significant difference in the distribution of the mothers' level of education between the two groups.

Table 9: Shows the number of fathers with primary and secondary education and fathers with university education in both groups.

Fathers' level of education	Icelandic	Immigrant
Primary or secondary school	9 60,0%	10 71,4%
University	6 40,0%	4 28,6%

Chi square (χ2) for fathers' level of education and nationality was 0,066 (P=0,798), in other words, there was no significant difference in the distribution of the fathers' level of education between the two groups.

Question 10 – Estimated level of English proficiency of parents

The answers are presented in table 10.

Table 10: Shows the minimum, maximum, the standard deviation (s.d), and the mean scores for mothers and fathers.

Students	Min.	Max.	Mean for mothers	s.d. for mothers	Mean for fathers	s.d. for fathers
Icelandic	1	6	4,81	0,834	4,87	0,957
Immigrant	1	6	3,93	1,163	4,6	1,724

Scale: very good = 6, good = 5, so-so = 4, bad = 3, very bad = 2,

and does not know any English = 1.

According to the Mann-Whitney U test, Z=2,273 (P=0,023) for the difference in mothers' estimated level of English proficiency between the two groups. In other words, there was a significant difference between the two groups on this variable with the estimated level of English proficiency being higher for the mothers of Icelandic students.

In the case of the fathers, Z=0,103 (P=0,918) for the difference in their estimated level of English proficiency between the two groups. In other words, there was no significant difference between the two groups on this variable.

Questions 8 and 9 dealt with the use of the English language abroad.

Question 8 – Did you ever live for more than 6 months in a country where you had to use English to make yourself understood?

Table 11: Shows the number of the students who answered "yes" and "no" to this question and the percentage this number represents.

	Icelandic students	%	Immigrant students	%
Yes	1	6,25 %	8	53,33 %
No	15	93,75 %	7	46,66 %

The students were not asked to specify the country where they had lived but it is possible to suppose that a lot of the immigrant students whose answer to this question was "yes", had to rely on English for communication upon their moving to Iceland till they gained sufficient proficiency in Icelandic.

Question 9 – Have you ever been on vacation in a country where you had to use English to be understood?

The answers are summarized in table 12.

Table 12: Shows the number of students who answered "yes" and "no" to this question and the percentage this number represents.

	Icelandic students	Number of students in percentage	Immigrant students	Number of students in percentage
Yes	15	93,75 %	4	26,66 %
No	1	6,25 %	11	73,33 %

Students whose answer was "yes" to the first part of question 9 were asked to indicate the number of times they had traveled to English/non-English speaking countries and the average length of stay in those countries.

Table 13: Shows the average total length of stay (number of days) in English/non-English speaking countries.

Students	Estimated total length of stay in English-speaking countries (s.d.)	Estimated total length of stay in non-English speaking countries (s.d.)
Icelandic	17,56 (27,11)	63 (46,292)
Immigrant	7,93 (24,276)	7,47 (21,732)

According to the Mann-Whitney U test, Z=2,118 (P=0,034) for the difference in the total length of stay in English-speaking countries between the two groups with the Icelandic students spending significantly more time in English-speaking countries.

In the case of the total length of stay in non-English speaking countries, Z=4,033 (P<0,001) for the difference between the two groups with the Icelandic students spending significantly more time there.

Question 11 – Average grade for English

See table 14.

Table 14: Provides information on the minimal, maximal, mean grades of the students, and the standard deviation.

Students	Min.	Max.	Mean	s.d.
Icelandic	1	10	8,125	1,025
Immigrant	1	10	6,867	1,246

According to an unpaired t-test, t=3,08 (P=0,005) for the difference between the mean grades of the two groups. In other words, the Icelandic students had significantly higher grades in English.

Question 12 - At what grade did you start learning English at school?

According to the data provided by the students, the average length of studying English at school for an Icelandic student was 6 years, and for an immigrant student 5,86 years.

Question 13 – How many English lessons a week do you have?

The average number of English lessons in both groups was 4.

Question 14 – Do you take English with your classmates?

The answers are presented in table 15.

Table 15: Shows the number of students who took/did not take English with their classmates
and the percentage this number represents.

Students	Take English with classmates	%	Do not take English with classmates	%
Icelandic	15	93,75	1	6,25
Immigrant	10	66,66	5	33,33

Question 15 – How many minutes a week do you spend on your English homework on
average?

See table 16.

Table 16: Shows the average number of minutes a week a student in a group spent on his
English homework and the standard deviation.

Students	Average number of minutes a week per student in a group	s.d.
Icelandic	21,67	45,185
Immigrant	51,00	64,232

According the Mann-Whitney U test, Z=2,66 (P=0,008) for the difference in the amount of time spent doing homework. As these data indicate, the immigrant students on average spent significantly more time doing English homework.

Questions 16 – 21 dealt with opportunities for contact with English.

Question 16 – Do you listen to radio programs in English outside of school?

See table 17.

Table 17: Shows the mean score of the reported frequency of listening to the radio in English
outside of school and the standard deviation.

Students	Mean	s.d.
Icelandic	1,75	0,775
Immigrant	2,67	0,9

The scale was used where: 1-never, 2-seldom, 3-sometimes, 4-often.

Z=2,655 (P=0,008) for the difference in reported frequency of listening to the radio in English outside of school. These data indicate that the Icelandic students listened to the radio programs in English outside of school significantly less than the immigrant students.

Question17 – Outside of school, do you watch TV programs in English?

The Icelandic networks provide a wide range of non-dubbed TV programs in English, most of which have Icelandic subtitles. The answers are summarized in table 18.

Table 18: Shows the percentage of students who watched English language TV programs with subtitles/without subtitles/with and without/did not watch TV programs in English.

Students	Yes, with subtitles %	Yes, without subtitles %	Yes, with and without %	No %
Icelandic	25	43,75	31,25	0
Immigrant	40	26,66	20	13,3

According to these data, the most-frequently chosen option for the Icelandic students was "without subtitles", while for the immigrant students it was "with subtitles".

Question 18 – Do you listen to music more often in English texts or in some other language?

The answers are summarized in table 19.

Table 19: Shows the percentage of students who chose the same option for an answer and the total number of answers.

Students	Only English %	Mainly English %	Somewhat more in English %	About the same for each	Somewhat more in %	Mainly in %	Total N=100%
Icelandic	6,25	62,5	12,5	12,5	6,25 Japanese	0	16
Immigrant	13,33	40	13,33	20	6,66 Spanish	6,66 Chinese, Japanese	15

According to these data, the majority of students in both groups had a lot of exposure to English through music.

Question 19 – About how many hours a week do you listen to music?

On average, an Icelandic student spent 19,75 hours (s.d. 18,94) and an immigrant student 7,62 hours a week listening to music (s.d. is 10,19). According to the Mann-Whitney U test, Z=2,372 (P=0,018). In other words, there was a significant difference between the two groups on this variable.

Question 20 – Is the text/message of the songs you listen to important to you?

Table 20 summarizes the answers.

Table 20: Shows the number of students for whom the text/message of the songs was important and the number of students for whom it was not important, and the percentage this number represents.

Students	Important N	%	Not important N	%
Icelandic	10	62,5	6	37,5
Immigrant	14	93,3	1	6,7

Chi square (χ2)=2,631 (P=0,105). In other words, the distribution of importance of lyrics in music was not significantly different between the two groups.

Question 21 – How much English do you use outside of school?

The answers are summarized in table 21.

Table 21: Shows the mean score and the standard deviation for contacts with English language (a 4-point scale was used, where 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often).

Variables	Icelandic students		Immigrant students		Z*	P*
	Mean score	s.d.	Mean score	s.d.		
Parents	1,38	0,719	1,67	0,724	1,368	0,171
Siblings	1,44	0,814	1,57	0,646	0,937	0,349
Friends	1,75	0,577	2,57	0,852	2,733	0,006**
Music	3,56	0,629	3,2	0,941	1,003	0,316
TV/Video/DVD	3,75	0,447	3,07	0,594	3,103	0,002**
Radio	2,06	0,998	2,27	0,884	0,772	0,44
At the movies	3,56	0,727	2,87	1,125	1,854	0,064
Newspapers	1,50	0,894	1,8	0,676	1,594	0,111
Magazines	2,20	1,014	2,2	0,775	0,134	0,893
Books	2,19	1,109	2	1,069	0,499	0,618
PC games	3,50	0,73	2,67	1,175	2,079	0,038**
Internet	3,50	0,632	3,33	0,724	0,639	0,523
Travelling abroad	3,12	0,957	2,33	1,047	2,019	0,043**

*Mann-Whitney U test

** Difference between the groups is significant (P<0,05)

According to these data, music, TV, movies, internet, and computer games were the main sources of contact with English for the students in both groups. Travelling abroad appeared to be another important opportunity for students to come in contact with the English language, especially for the Icelandic children. There were significant differences between the two groups on four variables: friends (with the higher score for the immigrant students), TV/video/DVD, PC games and travelling abroad (with the higher scores for the Icelandic students).

The following three questions dealt with students' attitude to English. Students were asked to indicate how much they liked the English language, how important it was for them to know it and the advantages they saw in knowing English.

Question 22 – Do you like the English language?
The answers are presented in table 22.

Table 22: Shows the percentage of students who chose each category and the total number of answers.

Students	Very much %	More like than dislike %	More dislike than like %	Do not like at all %	Total N=100%
Icelandic	75	25	0	0	16
Immigrant	60	33,33	0	6,67	15

Question 23 – How important is it for you to know English?

The answers are summarized in table 23.

Table 23: Shows the percentage of students who chose each category.

Students	Very important %	Rather important %	Not at all important %	Total N=100%
Icelandic	93,75	6,25	0	16
Immigrant	86,67	13,33	0	15

The outcomes of questions 22 and 23 indicated that the majority of students in both groups liked English and considered knowing it important.

Question 24 inquired additional information on attitudes to the English language. Students were asked to indicate what advantages from a list offered to them they agreed with and considered important. The outcomes are presented in table 24.

Table 24: Shows the percentage of students in both groups that chose each category.

	Icelandic students %	Immigrant students %
	Total N=16	Total N=14
With English I can make myself better understood abroad	100	92,86
With English I can understand music texts better	75	64,29
With English I can manage more easily with computer and other technical equipment	93,75	64,29
A lot of things sound better in English	43,75	35,71
For a lot of things there is no equivalent in my native language	50	7,14
You need English for further education	68,75	64,29
With English I have a better chance of getting a good job	62,50	85,71
With English I can read books in English	75	71,42
With English I can understand TV programs in English without subtitles	93,75	92,85
With English it is easier to have contact with foreigners	87,5	85,71
English gives me access to new developments in science and technology	68,75	35,71

There were considerable differences between the two groups in relation to four categories: "managing with computer and other technical equipment", "no equivalent for a lot of things in my native language", and "access to new developments in science and technology", which seemed to be more important for the Icelandic students than for the immigrant learners; while "getting a good job" was seen as an advantage by more immigrant learners than Icelandic students.

Question 25 asked the students to indicate how much English in their opinion they had learnt through school, through media and in other ways in order to see what sources of learning English they perceived as important. The outcomes are presented in table 25.

Table 25: Shows the portions in percentage attributed by the learners to school, media or other sources in acquiring English (mean and standard deviation).

	% through school		% through media		% in other ways	
Students	mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.
Icelandic	37,81	21,289	40,31	30,767	22,44	21,024
Immigrant	38,46	14,632	28,46	18,862	33,08	23,764
Z or t	t=0,093*		t=1,274*		Z=1,416**	
P	0,926		0,214		0,157	

* Student´s t-test (unpaired)

** Mann-Whitney U test

As can be seen in table 25, there were no significant differences between the two groups on this variable.

4.3. Analysis of the Students' Self-Assessment

The self-assessment scales were made up of eleven questions which can be merged into three competency domains: oral comprehension (four questions), reading comprehension (four questions), and written production (three questions). However, the first two questions may have been understood by the learners to apply to either oral or reading comprehension, therefore caution should be exercised in interpreting the findings. The data were calculated manually and analyzed in a similar way as in the REVA project. To make the comparison between the three scales consisting of a different number of items possible, and to make easier the reading of the results, they are presented as a percentage of the score maximum for each scale (the ratio of the score by the maximum score available for the scale multiplied by 100).

The following table is constructed from the relative frequency of the answer "very easy" and "rather easy". This relative frequency being the complement of the opposite answers "rather difficult" and "very difficult". This is sufficient to demonstrate learners' perception of their abilities.

Table 26: Relative frequency of the aggregate answers "easy" and "rather easy"
to questions related to oral comprehension, reading comprehension and written production.

	Oral comprehension	Reading comprehension	Written production
Icelandic students	100%	100%	85,1%
Immigrant students	70,0%	62,7%	55,5%

In light of these findings, it is possible to make the following conclusions:

- The Icelandic students assessed their proficiency in English as higher than the immigrant learners in all three domains of competencies.
- Both groups of students evaluated their abilities in the skills related to written production lower than in the skills related to oral and reading comprehension.

5. Discussion

This study has pursued the following goals:

- To get an insight into the situation in today's English language classroom in Iceland where there are both Icelandic and a considerable number of immigrant children, and to find out whether there is a discrepancy in English proficiency between the two groups.

- To find out what type of instruction teachers are able to provide immigrant children with, what strategies they use and whether they differ from instructional practices used with Icelandic children.

Therefore, the questions this study has attempted to answer were:

1. Is there a discrepancy in English proficiency between the Icelandic and immigrant students in the 10th grade of Icelandic primary schools?
2. If so, what are the possible reasons for it?
3. Do teachers use any particular strategies to assist immigrant children with their English?

The findings of this study suggest that the majority of students in both groups like English and consider knowing it important (which is consistent with the findings of Lovisa Kristjánsdóttir, Laufey Bjarnadóttir, and Samuel Lefever's study, 2006). However, based on the data received through the teacher and student surveys it is possible to conclude that there is a discrepancy in English proficiency between the Icelandic and immigrant students in the 10th grade of Icelandic primary schools.

More than half of the teachers reported that they assessed immigrant students' English proficiency as lower than the English proficiency of Icelandic students. The significant difference in the average grade for English reported by the students themselves (with the Icelandic students' average grade being higher than that of the immigrant students') and the outcomes of the students' self-assessment supported the teachers' report.

In light of the data received through the surveys and the studies discussed in the literature review, a number of various explanations can be offered in order to account for the discrepancy in English proficiency between the two groups.

- There was a significant difference in gender distribution between the two groups.
- The average length of staying/living in Iceland was very different between the two groups. Most of the Icelandic children indicated that they had lived in Iceland all their life, while the average length for the immigrant students was three and a half years. As has been suggested by the teachers, some of the students may have come from countries with a different emphasis in the curriculum and/or a different degree of importance of the English language in a society which could have impacted those learners' proficiency in the English language.

- There was a significant difference in the level of English proficiency of the mothers between the two groups with a higher score for mothers of the Icelandic learners. The parents' level of education and proficiency in English were two variables related to the socioeconomic status of the students.

- Apparently, the Icelandic students travel to countries where they use English for communication considerably more frequently than the immigrant learners and they spend significantly more time there. In the REVA project it has been stated that peer groups are very important during holidays for this age group, and English is likely to be used as a lingua franca for contact between teenagers with different language backgrounds.

- The immigrant students get exposed to English significantly less than the Icelandic students through music, PC games and TV.

- In relation to the advantages the students saw in knowing English, there were considerable differences between the two groups in the following categories: "managing with computer and other technical equipment", "no equivalent for a lot of things in my native language", and "access to new developments in science and technology", which seemed to be more important for the Icelandic students than for the immigrant learners; however, it is interesting to note that "getting a good job" was seen as an advantage by more immigrant learners than the Icelandic students which indicates instrumental orientation (i.e. individual's desire is to gain social recognition or economic advantages through knowledge of a FL, according to Gardner, 1972) of their motivation in language learning.

- Many teachers indicated that their expectations of immigrant students were lower than of the Icelandic learners. As has been discussed earlier, based on Brothy and Good's (1974, 1994) studies, Edwards, 1998; Banks and Banks, 2005; Gay, 2000; McKeon, 1994 among others stated that teachers' perceptions and expectations have an impact on students' academic performance.

- The majority of teachers stated that they were not provided with any special assistance in regards to teaching English to immigrant children. The education of teachers in Iceland should prepare them for working in a culturally diverse classroom by providing them with the various pedagogical strategies suitable for students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and making them aware of the particular dynamics that are at work in bilingual education and in the process of L3 acquisition.

- Immigrant children often lack proficiency in L2, Icelandic. Many of them are in the process of acquiring literacy skills in Icelandic at the same time as they have to study L3, English. Although bilingualism is usually associated with positive effects on L3

learning, according to Cummins'(2001a) threshold theory, achieving the second/higher threshold level of bilingual proficiency is necessary for long-term cognitive benefits of bilingualism to be manifested.

- Possible lack of literacy in L1. According to Cummins'(2001a) Language Interdependence Hypothesis, the level of L2 competence which a bilingual child attains is partially a function of the type of competence the child has developed in L1 at the time when intensive exposure to L2 begins. Furthermore, according to the findings of Thomas's (1988) study, literacy in the first has a positive influence on the acquisition of a third language.

- According to the findings of Ragnarsdóttir's (2007) study, there is a lack of cooperation between immigrant children's homes and schools which, as has been discussed earlier, can have a negative impact of immigrant children's academic performance while the involvement of parents of various minority students in their children's education can increase their academic success.

- Immigrant children's minority and migrant status can affect negatively their performance in school (according to the studies of Darling-Hammond 1995; Ogbu, 1995; Olneck, 1995; cited in Lindholm-Leary, 2001).

- According to Gyedu-Adomako, Sigfúsdóttir and Ásgeirsdóttir, 2000; Ingólfsdóttir and Jónsdóttir, 2004; Ragnarsdóttir, 2002, 2004; Vigfúsdóttir, 2002 (cited in Hanna Ragnarsdóttir, 2007) immigrant students in Icelandic primary schools experience isolation and marginalization. According to Coelho (1994), cultural isolation and minority status influence immigrant children's learning success.

It is difficult to point out the main factor that could in itself explain the discrepancy in English proficiency between the Icelandic and immigrant learners. It appears to be the outcome of the interplay between several variables: socioeconomic status (which can explain the difference in the frequency of travelling abroad); amount of exposure to English (which can be linked to their socioeconomic status and motivation); linguistic difficulties (related to developing L1 and L2 skills, as well as in communication with teachers); challenges associated with being an immigrant (i.e. minority status or isolation).

A number of practical applications for schools can be drawn out of these findings.

First of all, schools need to develop/improve programs of L2 assistance for immigrant students in order to reduce academic difficulties they experience, provide them with a support language for L3 learning, and make it easier for these students to continue their education onto a secondary and tertiary level.

Secondly, the importance of developing students' L1 cannot be overemphasized. Therefore, it is necessary for schools to encourage immigrant students to read in their native

languages and use them without feeling embarrassed. They need to create an environment where immigrant students could feel that their culture and language are important and valued by teachers as well as other students, and where diversity is welcomed.

And thirdly, hiring teachers of the immigrant students' origin could serve a double purpose: it would make it possible for immigrant students to learn some subjects in their native languages, which can be particularly important while they still lack proficiency in academic L2; and it would provide them with positive images of people of their own background, somebody they can relate and look up to, thus helping them with their feelings of isolation and/or being in minority.

In regards to the third question this study has attempted to answer „Do teachers use any particular strategies to assist immigrant children with their English?" only 42% of the teachers responded positively. The following were the strategies they listed:

- Have a Polish-English bilingual dictionary available in the classroom for them to use Also have grammar sheets in Icelandic that reinforce the grammar being taught through English
- Encourage self-learning on specific aspects of important parts of English that the students can do for free online, both in class and at home, which they can then continue to work on in their own time and when they go back to their home country
- Mostly use readers with CDs and spoken interaction, along with a little light writing
- Build vocabulary and speech
- Give the pupils a chance to prove themselves, talk to them, find what they are good at and work from there, through their interest
- Give an immigrant student the same program as to other weaker learners
- Try to understand students' background in English learning and go from there

I believe the fact that only 42% of the teachers employ special techniques in teaching English as a foreign language to immigrant children reflects a need for developing strategies that would equip teachers for working in a culturally and linguistically diverse classroom, for example organizing seminars or training sessions that would enable teachers to gain a better understanding of the immigration experience and ways in which they can assist immigrant children with adjustment and integration, as well as provide teachers with the knowledge of the key issues of bilingualism and bilingual education, and specific techniques that are effective in L3 teaching.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that there is a discrepancy in English proficiency between Icelandic and immigrant students in the 10th grade of Icelandic primary schools, and various explanations of this phenomenon have been provided.

The fact that more than half of the teachers that responded to the survey employ the same strategies with Icelandic and immigrant children in teaching English as a foreign language is also important given that the immigrant children's proficiency is lower. However, a number of teachers identified the strategies that they found to be effective in assisting immigrant students with learning English.

Various implications of the findings of this study have been suggested.

Although the study had certain limitations (i.e. a small number of subjects, uneven gender distribution in the groups, and missing data from several subjects on a few variables), it is the author's hope that its findings may have contributed to a better understanding of the academic reality of immigrant children and enhanced the discussion on the status of English in Iceland and the issues related to teaching English to all children in Icelandic schools.

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Appendix

Teacher Questionnaire

This is a survey for teachers of English in Iceland. The survey is part of a research project the goal of which is to gain insight into today's English language classroom in Iceland where there are both, Icelandic and immigrant children. We are interested in students´ English proficiency, instructional practices and teachers' resources. We would appreciate your cooperation.

1. What type of school do you teach at? Please, circle the answer that applies.
   o Primary
   o Secondary
   o University
2. Do you have immigrant students in your English classes?
   o Yes
   o No
3. How in general would you assess their English proficiency in comparison to their Icelandic classmates'?
   o Higher
   o Similar
   o Lower
   o Depends on the student
4. If it is higher/lower, why do you think it is?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   Do immigrant students have a problem communicating to you or their classmates in English?
   o Never
   o Rarely
   o Sometimes
   o Often
5. Do immigrant students have a problem communicating to you or their classmates in Icelandic?
   o Never
   o Rarely
   o Sometimes
   o Often

7. Would you characterize your expectations of the immigrant students as:

   o Quite higher

   o Slightly higher

   o The same as of the Icelandic students

   o Slightly lower

   o Quite lower

8. Are you provided with any special assistance regarding the instruction of English to immigrant students?

   o Yes

   o No

9. Do you use the same teaching strategies with Icelandic and immigrant students?

   o Yes

   o No

   o Other

   _____

   _____

   _____

10. If you use any special strategies to assist immigrant children with lower English proficiency, what are some of them that you find to be effective?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   Thank you!

Learner Questionnaire

This study is about how much English you hear and use both in school and out of school. It takes about 15 minutes to fill out the questionnaire. When a line ('....................') follows a question, please write your answer on that line. You may write in English or Icelandic. When a 'O' appears, please mark the appropriate answer. You will find more instructions in the questionnaire.

Þessi spurningalisti snýst um að athuga hversu mikla ensku þú heyrir og notar bæði í skólanum og utan skóla. Það tekur u.þ.b. 15 mínútur að fylla hana út. Þegar það kemur "……………" eftir spurningu, skrifaðu þá svarið við spurninguna á þeirri línu. Þú mátt svara annað hvort á ensku eða á íslensku. Þegar þú sérð "O", svaraðu þá viðkomandi spurningu með því að setja x í hringinn. Þú færð frekari leiðbeiningar í spurningalistanum.

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1. **Sex** *Kyn*: O **Male** *Karlkyns* / O **Female** *Kvenkyns*

2. **What is your place of birth?** *Í hvaða landi fæddist þú?*...

3. **How long have you lived in Iceland?** *Hversu lengi hefur þú búið á Íslandi?*…………………………………………………………………………………

4. **Which language(s) do you speak at home?** Hvaða *tungumál talar þú heima hjá þér?*...

5. **What is your mother's native language?** *Hvert er móðurmál móður þinnar?*...

6. **What is your father's native language?** *Hvert er móðurmál föður þíns?*...

7. **Parents' highest level of education**: *Hæsta menntunarstig foreldra*:

		Father *Faðir*	**Mother** *Móðir*
1. **Primary education**	*Grunnskólanám*	O	O
2. **Secondary education**	*Framhaldsskólanám*	O	O
3 **University education**	*Háskólanám*	O	O

8. **Did you ever live for more than 6 months in a country where you had to use English to make yourself understood?** *Hefur þú nokkurn tímann búið lengur en 6 mánuði í landi þar sem þú þurftir að tala ensku?*

     O Yes

     O No

9. **Have you ever been on vacation in a country where you had to use English to be understood?** *Hefur þú nokkurn tímann verið í fríi í landi þar sem þú þurftir að tala ensku?*

     O Yes

     O No

If no, please continue with question 10.   *Ef neí, farðu þá beint að spurningu 10.*

If yes, indicate the type of the country (English speaking or non-English speaking), how often and the average length of your stays. *Ef já, tilgreindu hvort það land hafi haft ensku sem móðurmál eða ekki, hversu oft þú hefur farið þangað og meðal tímalengd dvala þinna þar.*

                                   How many times / **Average length of stay**

                                          Hversu oft / *Meðal tímalengd dvalar*

- **English speaking countries**

Lönd þar sem enska er móðurmál   ………………………/ …………………….................

- **Non-English speaking countries**

Lönd þar sem enska er ekki móðurmál   ………………………/……………………..............

10. **How well do your parents know English? For each person mark the option that seems right to you.** *Hversu vel tala foreldrar þínir ensku? Veldu þann kost sem þér finnst eiga best við um hvert þeirra.*

	Father *Faðir*	**Mother** *Móðir*
Very good *(Mjög vel)*	O	O
Good *(Vel)*	O	O
So so *(Allt í lagi)*	O	O
Bad *(Illa)*	O	O
Very bad *(Mjög illa)*	O	O
Doesn't know any English *(Kann enga ensku)*	O	O

11. **What is your average grade for English?** *Hver er meðal einkunn þín í ensku?*..

12. **At what grade did your start learning English at school?** *Í hvaða bekk byrjaðir þú að læra ensku?* ………………………………...

13. **How many English lessons a week do you have?** *Hvað ertu í mörgum enskutímum í viku?*………………………………………………………………………………………

14. **Do you take English with your classmates?** *Ertu í enskutímum með hinum bekkjarsystkinum þínum?*

    O Yes

    O No

15. **How many minutes a week do you spend on your English homework on average?** *Hvað eyðir þú mörgum mínútum á viku að meðaltali í að læra fyrir enskutímana?* ………….
minutes/*mínútur*

16. **Do you listen to radio programs in English outside of school?** *Hlustar þú á útvarpsefni á ensku utan skóla?*

    O **Never** *(Aldrei)*

    O **Seldom** *(Sjaldan)*

    O **Sometimes** *(Stundum)*

    O **Often** *(Oft)*

17. **Outside of school, do you watch TV programs in English?** *Horfir þú á sjónvarps-efni á ensku utan skóla?*

    O **Yes, with subtitles**. *Já, með undir-textum*

    O **Yes, without subtitles**. *Já, án undir-texta*

    O **No**. *Neí*

If no, please continue with question 18. *Ef neí, farðu þá beint að spurningu 18.*

If yes, list the types of programs you watch and write for each of them how often you watch them. *Ef já, skrifaðu þá hvers konar sjónvarps-efni þú horfir á, og taktu fram hversu oft þú horfir á hvern þátt fyrir sig.*

Sjónvarpsefni **Program**	Sjaldnar en einu sinni á mánuði **Less than once a month**	1-3 x á mánuði **1-3 times a month**	1 x í viku **Once a week**	Oftar en einu sinni í viku **More than once a week**	Daglega **Daily**

18. **Do you listen to music more often with English texts or in some other language?**
Please, circle the answer that applies to you. *Hlustar þú oftar á lög með enskum textum eða með textum á öðrum tungumálum?Settu hring um rétt svar.*

      1. **Only English** *(Bara með enskum textum)*

      2. **Mainly English** *(Aðallega með enskum textum)*

      3. **Somewhat more English** *(Aðeins meira með enskum textum)*

      4. **About the same for each** *(Jafnt með enskum textum eins og með öðrum textum)*

      5. **Somewhat more in** …………………. *Aðeins meira með textum á …………….*

      6. **Mainly in** …………………. *Aðallega með textum á …………………………..*

      7. **Only in** ………………….. *Bara með textum á ………………………………..*

19. **About how many hours a week do you listen to music?** **Please write down the total**
number of hours in an entire week (Radio, on CD's and other media):
...........................hours. *Hversu margar klukkustundir á viku hlustar þú á tónlist?...............*

20. **Is the text/message of the songs you listen to important to you?** *Skiptir*
textinn/boðskapur þeirra laga sem þú hlustar á þér máli?

      O Yes

      O No

21. **How much English do you use outside of school? Mark the answers that apply to**
you. *Hversu mikla ensku fæst þú við (talar, lest eða hlustar á) utan skólatíma?*

	very often	often	sometimes	never
	mjög oft	*oft*	*stundum*	*aldrei*
a. **Parents** *Foreldrar*	O	O	O	O
b. **Siblings** *Systkini*	O	O	O	O
c. **Friends** *Vinir*	O	O	O	O
d. **Music** *Tónlist*	O	O	O	O
f. **TV/Video/DVD** *Sjónvarp eða DVD*	O	O	O	O
g. **Radio** *Útvarp*	O	O	O	O
h. **At the movies** *Bíó*	O	O	O	O
i. **Newspapers** *Dagblöð*	O	O	O	O
j. **Magazines** *Tímarit*	O	O	O	O
k. **Books** *Bækur*	O	O	O	O
l. **Computer games** *Tölvuleikir*	O	O	O	O
m. **Internet** *Internet*	O	O	O	O
n. **Traveling abroad** *Ferðalög erlendis*	O	O	O	O

22. **Do you like the English language**? *Hversu vel líkar þú enska tungumálið?*

    O **Very much** *(Mjög mikið)*

    O **More like than dislike** *(Líka það meira en að mislíka)*

    O **More dislike than like** *(Mislíka það meira en að líka)*

    O **Don't like it at all** *(Líka það alls ekki)*

23. **How important is it for you to know English?** *Hversu mikilvægt er það fyrir þig að kunna ensku?*

    O **Very important** *(Mjög mikilvægt)*

    O **Rather important** *(Fremur mikilvægt)*

    O **Not at all important** *(Alls ekki mikilvægt)*

24. **What advantages are there for knowing English? Below is a list of some advantages of English. Please, circle the letter by the answers you agree with.** *Hverjir eru kostir þess að kunna ensku? Hér eru nokkrir kostir þess að kunna ensku. Settu hring utan um stafinn við þá kosti sem þú ert sámmála.*

a. **With English I can make myself better understood abroad**. *Með því að kunna ensku getur folk erlendis skilið mig betur.*

b. **With English I can understand music texts better**. *Með því að kunna ensku get ég betur skilið ensk lög.*

c. **With English I can manage more easily with computer and other technical equipment**.

Með því að kunna ensku ræð ég betur við tölvur og annars konar tækni-búnað.

d. **A lot of things sound better in English**. *Margt hljómar betur á ensku.*

e. **For a lot of things there's no equivalent expression in my native language**. *Það er ýmislegt sem ekki er hægt að tjá á sama hátt á móðurmáli mínu.*

f. **You need English for further education**. *Maður þarf að kunna ensku til þess að menntar sig frekar.*

g. **With English I have a better chance of getting a good job**. *Með því að kunna ensku aukast líkur minar á að fá góða vinnu.*

h. **With English I can read books in English**. *Með því að kunna ensku get ég lesið enskar bækur.*

i. **With English I can understand TV programs in English without subtitles**. *Með því að kunna ensku get ég skilið sjónvarpsþætti á ensku án undir-texta.*

j. **With English it is easier to have contact with foreigners**. *Með því að kunna ensku er auðveldara að vera í tengslum við útlendinga.*

k. **English gives me access to new developments in science and technology.** *Að kunna ensku gefur mér aðgang að nýjungum í tækni og vísindi.*

25. **Write down in percent how much English in your opinion you have learnt** *(Skrifaðu með prósentu-tölu hversu mikla ensku, þér finnst þú hafa lært):*

     Through school *(Í skólanum)*   _____ %

     Through media *(Ígegnum fjölmiðla)*   _____ %

     In other ways *(Á annan hátt)*   _____ %

Learner Self-Assessment

Please, read the following list of statements and mark with "X" how easy or difficult it is for you to do those things in English. *Lestu eftirfarandi fullyrðingar og merktu við hversu auðvelt eða erfitt þér finnst það vera að gera þessa hluti á ensku.*

For me the following is *Mér finnst eftirfarandi vera*	**Very easy** *Mjög auðvelt*	**Rather easy** *Frekar auðvelt*	**Rather difficult** *Frekar erfitt*	**Very difficult** *Mjög erfitt*
1. **I can understand instructions and questions or requests in everyday English.** *Ég get skilið fyrirmæli og spurningar eða beiðnir á einfaldri ensku.*				
2. **I can understand the main ideas of stories, if they deal with themes I am familiar with.** *Ég get skilið megin atríðið í sögu ef hún fæst við þema sem ég kannast við.*				
3. **I can get information which is important to me from radio and TV programs, if they deal with familiar topics.** *Ég get skilið upplýsingar sem skipta mér máli í útvarpi og sjónvarpi, ef það tengist efni sem ég kannast við.*				
4. **I can understand radio, CDs and TV programs even if I do not know all the words.** *Ég get skilið útvarp, geisladiska og sjónvarpsþætti, jafnvel þótt ég skil ekki hvert einasta orð.*				
5. **I can read through texts to find out what they are all about or if they are useful.** *Ég get lesið texta og skilið um hvað hann fjallar eða hvort hann sé gagnlegur.*				
6. **I can understand texts written by other young people and react to their contents**. *Ég get skilið texta sem eru skrifaðir af unglingum og haft skoðun á textana.*				
7. **I can understand literary texts well enough to be able to say something about them.** *Ég get skilið bókmenntir nógu vel til að hafa einhverja skoðun á þær.*				
8. **I can choose texts from brochures, magazines, newspapers etc., and get information from them which I need to use**				

for example in a project. *Ég get skilið texta úr bæklingum, tímaritum, dagblöðum osf. nógu vel til að nýta mér upplýsingar úr þeim ef ég þarf á því að halda.*				
9. **I can express my own opinion in writing about a drawing, picture or painting.** *Ég get tjáð skoðun mina um myndlist (teikning, ljósmynd eða málverk) skriflega.*				
10. **I can describe a journey, a weekend, an event or a party in a personal letter.** *Ég get lýst ferðalagi, helgi, atburð eða veislu í persónulegu bréfi.*				
11. **I can take notes from a text or lecture in order to make a report about it.** *Ég get glósað úr texta eða í fyrirlestri og gert síðan grein fyrir textanum eða fyrirlestrinum út frá glósunum.*				

Thank you! *Takk fyrir!*