



**HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS**

Hugvísindasvið

# **English Proficiency and English Exposure in the Media**

*A comparative study between countries with high and low  
English exposure*

**B.A.Essay**

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**January 2013**

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## Abstract

The aim of this essay is to demonstrate the differences between countries that are exposed to English, and countries that are not exposed to English in the media. The English exposure in the media of Iceland and Hungary are presented as examples of countries with a different amount of English exposure. The research on the English exposure of these two countries illustrates that Icelanders are more exposed to English than Hungarians and that Icelanders are more proficient in English. A study was conducted on the English exposure of subjects from 11 different countries, and the subjects' view on their English proficiency. In the second part of the essay the results of the survey are examined. Subjects were divided into two groups: Those from Scandinavian countries and Holland represented high English exposure and from Hungary, France, Spain and Italy represents those countries that have a minimal exposure to English. Both the comparison of English exposure in the two countries and the survey's result supports the idea that those countries that are more exposed to English in the media have a higher proficiency of English users than those countries that are not, or have a smaller amount of exposure to English. Unfortunately there is not enough evidence that would support the idea that one could acquire a foreign language only by being exposed to English from the media; however this field has plenty of potential for further studies in the future.

## 1. Introduction

Foreign language learning has a long history which dates back to the middle ages when Latin was the dominant language in Europe. Foreign language teaching became popular due to monks teaching young boys how to read and write in Latin. Foreign language teaching has become more significant in modern times as the general public began to learn foreign languages and it became a part of public education. With exchange programs such as Erasmus, student mobility is growing each year. Of course one of the criteria of studying or living abroad is learning a communication tool which, in most European countries is English since it is the most spoken foreign language in Europe (Eurobarometer, 2006).

English education in school has been around for centuries, yet it is still not efficient enough in several European countries, especially in the Eastern region and the Southwestern part of Europe. However the development of the modern world offers an immense variety of language learning tools for the general public. The internet offers hundreds even thousands of language learning applications, online dictionaries and several other tools that are useful to students for the English learning process. As it has been mentioned we are at the dawn of the digital world, each year countless popular English movies, songs, even computer games are released. These features are available for everybody who can spend a small amount of money on them and has the proper tools to play them. Every day, social websites such as *Facebook*, *Twitter* or the upcoming webpages like *9gag*, have more and more followers. The question whether one can learn a foreign language simply by watching television or playing computer games remains controversial. Blanc and Hamers (Bilinguality and Bilingualism, 2000) states that one person cannot learn a language through media. The topic of this essay was chosen based on a personal experience that it is possible to learn a language by watching television, playing computer games, listening to music or reading in English. In this study research will be presented, where two countries with a different amount of English exposure in the media are compared. In the second part of the study a survey will be presented which aims to gain a greater overview of the English exposure of a number of randomly selected individuals from different countries and how this exposure

affected their acquisition of the English language. The purpose of this study is to support the idea that English exposure in the media benefits one's English proficiency and speeds up the foreign language acquisition process.

## 2. A comparison of English exposure between the Icelandic and Hungarian media

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the background of the study that will be introduced in the second chapter. Two countries with different media exposure will be compared. Hungary represents the Southern, Central and Eastern European countries with little English accessibility. Iceland will be presented as an example of high English exposure found in the Scandinavian countries and Holland. Due to historical reasons the English language in media has not been present in Hungary as much as in Iceland. The purpose of this chapter is to present the English exposure in the media in both countries.

### 2.2 English as foreign language in Hungary

According to the survey *Europeans and their languages (2006)* 56% of Europeans declared that they can speak another language than their own. On the other hand 44% of Europeans state that they cannot speak any foreign languages. Hungary is one of the top countries with a high percentage of people that do not speak any foreign languages (Eurobarometer, 2006). Precisely 58% of the country speaks only Hungarian, thus only 42% of the Hungarian population can speak a foreign language. The survey suggests that out of those Hungarians that can speak a foreign language, 25% can have a conversation in German, however only 23% can have a conversation in English. This is the second lowest percentage in Europe after Turkey with 17%. These numbers are alarming due to the fact that the most common language spoken in the EU is English and since Turkey is not a member of the European Union it makes Hungary the country with the lowest percentage of proficient English speakers in the EU. One of the reasons for this may be the low English media exposure.

### 2.3 English in Hungarian television broadcasting

The database of Nielsen Audience Measurement (2012) states that Hungarians over the age of four spent an average of 4.46 hours a day watching television. The AGB Nielsen Media Research states that between 2005 and 2009 every household in Hungary had at least one television. These numbers are evidence that the average

Hungarian is highly exposed to television broadcasting. According to NMHH (2012) the most popular Hungarian channels in 2012 were *RTL Klub*, *TV2* and *M1*. *RTL Klub* and *TV2* are both privately owned television channels while *M1* is a public owned channel. According to *tvr-hét* (2012) program guide between the 24<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of December, there were zero hours of foreign language televised on the privately owned channels i.e. 100% was in Hungarian. On the public channel, *M1* provided 2.35 hours of foreign broadcasting, however none of it was in English. Those 2.35 hours of broadcast in Slovakian, Serbian, Romanian, Croatian and German are languages that are spoken by neighbor countries of Hungary targeted the emigrants that live in Hungary. The lack of English broadcasts is significant; however there is a new approach by *TV2* with the cooperation of MNHH (2012) to make several movies and television shows available in their original language for the viewers.

#### 2.4 English in Hungarian cinema

Unfortunately there were no given statistics such as number of visitors, number of movies per year or number of subtitled movies per year. Therefore advertisements from two of the biggest movie theatres from different companies in Budapest were examined. Both cinemas were examined based on their program on 30<sup>th</sup> December. The smaller cinema, *Mi Mozink Lurdy* (*Lurdy*) provided 24 movies on their program and the larger movie theatre *Cinema City Aréna* (*Aréna*) had 40 movies playing on 30<sup>th</sup> December (port.hu, 2012). Out of 24 movies *Lurdy* had 15 dubbed movies in Hungarian, 6 movies that were in the original language (4 in English) with Hungarian subtitles, 2 movies were Hungarian production and 1 was a silent movie. That means that 71.5% of the movies were dubbed and only 28.5% of the movies played in *Lurdy* were actually with the original language.

In *Aréna*, out of 40 movies 30 were dubbed, 6 were subtitled, 3 were Hungarian productions and one was a silent movie. That means that in this cinema 83.3% of the movies were dubbed and only 16.6% were in the original language.

Since these are the two largest cinemas in Hungary, they are probably fairly typical and

these numbers point to the fact that the major Hungarian cinemas are barely exposed to English or any other foreign language.

## 2.5 Books in Hungary in English

In Hungary most foreign books are translated into Hungarian. The largest bookstore in Hungary suggests that the top ten sold books two are written by Hungarian authors and the rest are translated into Hungarian (Alexandra, 2012). Despite these numbers the largest bookstores do contain a significant amount of books in English, however the most commonly bought books are the ones translated into Hungarian (Alexandra, 2012). In an average primary and secondary school most of the books are translated into Hungarian with the exception of language books.

## 2.6 Websites in English in Hungary

The internet usage in Hungary is 65.4% (Internet World Stats, 2012). The top 3 most viewed websites are “facebook.com”, “google.co.hu” and “youtube.com” (Alexa, 2012). Not surprisingly all three websites have an option to change the original language to Hungarian. It is not unexpected since the most popular websites are available in Hungarian. Although if we look at a wider aspect, in the top ten most visited websites in Hungary other than the already mentioned top 3, there are three foreign websites, two of them have the option of having them in Hungarian, and there are four Hungarian websites and only one of them has the option of an English translation.

## 2.7 Computer games in English Hungary

This medium is the odd one out compared to the others since the top three games played in Hungary are all in English (HVG, 2012). However there are several language patches online that are available for everyone to download for free. These language patches usually change the menu of the game or they add subtitles to the games. Of course there are companies such as *EA Sports* that translates the entire game and provide Hungarian commentary for sport games.

## 2.8 English as foreign/second language in Iceland

Unfortunately the study *Europeans and their languages* (2006) had no information on the percentage of English users in Iceland. However, English is widely used in Iceland, not only in everyday life, but also in education and business (Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2011). Arnbjörnsdóttir (2007) debates the question whether Icelanders use English as a foreign language or a second language. She states that English is neither a foreign language nor a second language in Iceland; however it is closer to having second language status (Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2007). The reason for this conclusion is that most Icelanders have good listening and speaking skills, however they lack in productive skills, therefore their productive skills do not reach the standards of the second language users in English. The high percentage of immigrants can be also a factor in the wide usage of English. 7.6% of the whole population of Iceland are immigrants (nationmaster.com, 2012).

## 2.9 Icelandic television broadcasting in English

A study was conducted by Ortega (2011) of Icelandic television usage and English appearance on Icelandic television. Ortega (2011, p. 8) states that 98% of Icelandic households have a television (DataMarket) and Icelanders watch television 2.5 hours a day on average (Capacent). As in Hungary, out of the top three Icelandic television channels two are privately owned (*Skjár einn* and *Stöð 2*) and one is a public channel (*Sjónvarpið*). The study of Ortega (2011) examined the top most viewed channels. He examined the amount of English material broadcasted on each channel on the second week of June (Ortega, 2011, p. 9-10). His study shows that the public channel had less English television broadcasts than Icelandic. *Sjónvarpið* had a total amount of 73.7 hours of broadcasting time that week and out of 73.7 hours, 57.2 hours were in Icelandic and only 16.5 hours were in English (Ortega, 2011, p. 9-10). The results of the examination of the private channels demonstrate that Icelanders are highly exposed to the English language. *Skjár einn* had a total number of 126.4 hours of broadcasting and the whole 126.4 hours were in English (Ortega, 2011). The numbers were not this one sided with *Stöð 2*, however out of 49.4 hours, 38 hours was English material while 11.4 hours was Icelandic material (Ortega, 2011, p. 9-10). In general most of the television broadcasts, especially the American TV

shows and movies contain subtitles; however the programs aimed at the younger audience such as cartoons are usually dubbed.

#### 2.10 English in Icelandic Cinema

In 2010 Icelanders went to the cinema on average five times (Hagstofa Íslands, 2010). To be able to compare the Hungarian and the Icelandic cinemas, the same methodology was followed as above with the Hungarian cinemas. Two of the biggest cinemas, *Háskólabíó* and *Kringlubíó* were examined. In *Háskólabíó* there were a total number of 5 movies (mídi, 2012). Out of those five movies four were in English with Icelandic subtitles and only one dubbed movie. The dubbed movie was an animated movie, thus it was aimed towards the younger audience. In *Kringlubíó* there were 6 movies in total (*Sambíó*, 2012). Out of the 6 movies, 4 were subtitled and 2 were in Icelandic for the same reason as it was in *Háskólabíó*.

These numbers point to the fact that exposure to English in the cinema is quite high.

#### 2.11 Websites in Iceland

97.1% of Iceland has an internet connection (Internet World Stats, 2012). Like in Hungary the top three most visited websites are “facebook.com”, “google.com” and “youtube.com” (Alexa, 2012). These websites also allow the users to have the language in Icelandic. In the top ten most visited websites besides the already mentioned three, the fourth place is “google.is” and the rest are Icelandic websites (Alexa, 2012). That means that in the top ten most viewed websites there are five Icelandic sites.

#### 2.12 Computer games in English in Iceland

The status of the use of computer games in Iceland is much like that found in Hungary with only the small difference that the sport games have no Icelandic commentary. Also the lack of Icelandic language patches found online supports the idea that in Iceland those that play computer games have no need for any subtitles.

#### 2.13 Conclusion

Iceland and Hungary are presented as examples of countries where exposure to English in media is very different. The examination was based on five different areas of

media and the usage of foreign language in the given country. First, each country's television broadcast was examined. The amount of English material in television is significantly higher in Iceland than in Hungary, meanwhile Hungarians watch nearly twice as much television daily than Icelanders. This leads to the conclusion that Hungarians are more exposed to media than Icelanders; however Icelanders are more exposed to English material in the Icelandic media. The same pattern can be applied to the other fields of media, such as the cinemas, books and computer games. The only area where the English exposure is similar is the internet. The top ten most visited websites in both countries are in their own languages.

The usage of English as a second or foreign language in both countries was examined. Arnbjörnsdóttir (2007) states that users of English in Iceland are closer to "second language users" than to "foreign language users" while in Hungary it is clearly not the case. The status of English in Hungary cannot be considered anything other than a foreign language. All in all, the Icelandic population seems to have the high English proficiency of the Scandinavian countries and the English users are closer to second language users, while in Hungary the number of people who know English is the lowest in the European Union. The exposure of English in media is clearly higher in Iceland than in Hungary. This supports the hypothesis that the exposure to English in the media may affect English proficiency in a positive way.

### 3. Survey and methodology

Having described two different situations of English exposure in Europe, the next step was to survey young people from all over Europe with different levels of English exposure and to examine their perception of the effect on their English proficiency.

#### 3.1 The survey

My electronic survey was conducted between 5<sup>th</sup> November and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2012. This survey was created through *Google spreadsheet*, however the questions were not provided by Google and they had to be personally created. The survey was promoted on the *Facebook* page of Erasmus Student Network Reykjavik, which is an exchange student organization. It was advertised among 500 people and 253 were willing or able to fill out the questionnaire. The selected group of 500 people contained a great variety of European nationalities, with different backgrounds. The only criterion of the survey was that the participants' mother tongue could not be English.

The main aim of the survey was to measure the English exposure in media between the citizens of different countries; however there were several additional questions that were asked to obtain relevant background information on the participants. In the survey there was no specific question regarding nationalities but rather the mother tongue of the subjects. There were a total number of 34 different languages represented. English was eliminated since the survey was aimed at those who use English as a foreign or second language.

#### 3.2 Purpose of the survey

In general the survey was conducted to examine the English exposure of other countries from Europe other than Iceland and Hungary and correlate this to respondents' views about their English proficiency. The reason for this was to give a better overview of the different levels of English exposure in Europe. The survey's main aim was to examine individuals' English exposure from the media specifically. The countries (mother languages) were then divided into 2 groups depending on the level of English exposure in the given country.

### 3.3 Survey questions and purposes

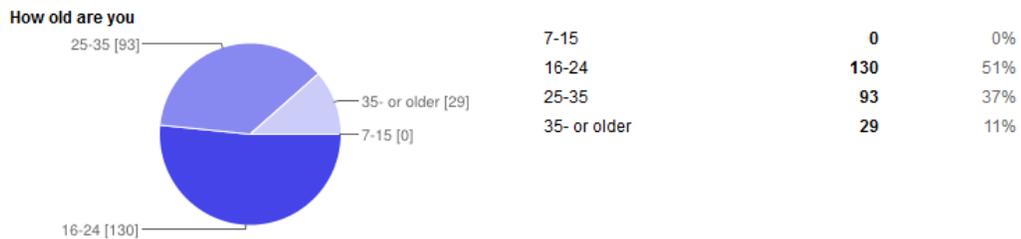
In this subchapter, the questions of the survey, the possible answers, summary of the results and the motive of the questions will be presented. The presented graphs were taken from the summary of the Google spreadsheet that was generated automatically by the provider of the spreadsheet. The reason for presenting this information about the questions is to get a lucid overview of the thought process behind the survey. There were 18 questions investigating mostly the subjects' English exposure; however there were also several questions examining their English proficiency.

#### 3.3.1 How old are you?

This question was simply asked to illustrate the variety of the subjects, that the survey was exposed to a larger group, even though most of the participants that answered were between the ages of 16 to 35.

This question was a multiple choice question with the following possible options:

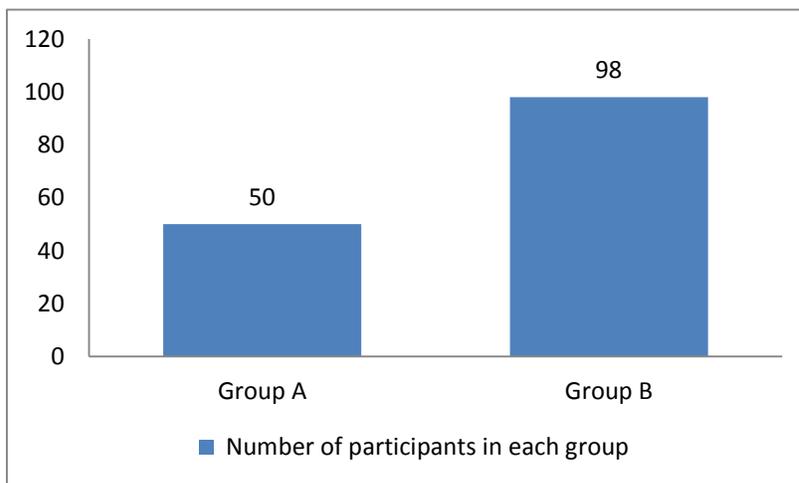
- 7-15
- 16-24
- 25-35
- 35- or older



The results illustrate that the majority of the participants were between the ages of 16 and 35, however several subjects were over 35 which gives a great variety of individuals.

### 3.3.2 What is your first language/ mother tongue?

The countries (mother tongues) were divided into two groups. The separation of the countries was based on the participants' answers. The answers were manually selected from the spreadsheet and divided into two groups according to their level of English exposure. In the first group those countries were put together where the level of English exposure is quite high like the Scandinavian countries and Holland ("Group A") and in the other group those countries were divided where the level of English exposure is low, like Hungary, Spain, France or Italy.

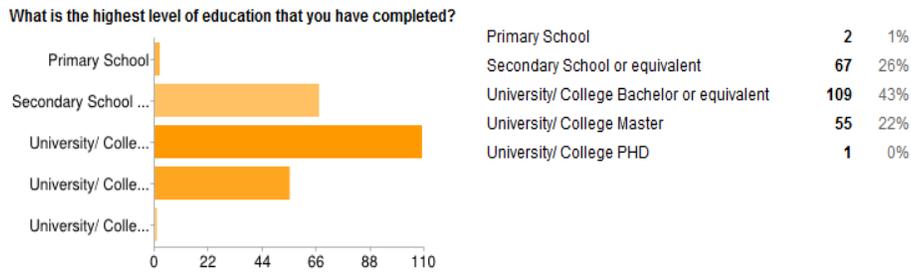


### 3.3.3 What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

This background question was asked to assess the education level of the participant. The data was examined during the analyzing process whenever a subject's level of English was unknown.

This question was a multiple choice question with the following possible options:

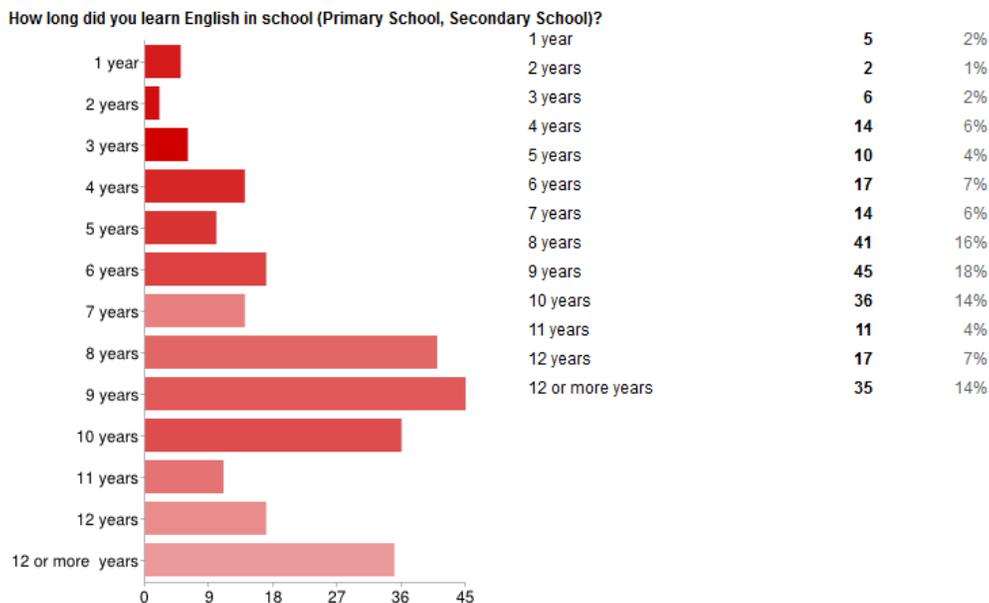
- Primary School
- Secondary School or equivalent
- University/ College Bachelor or equivalent
- University/ College Master
- University/ College PHD



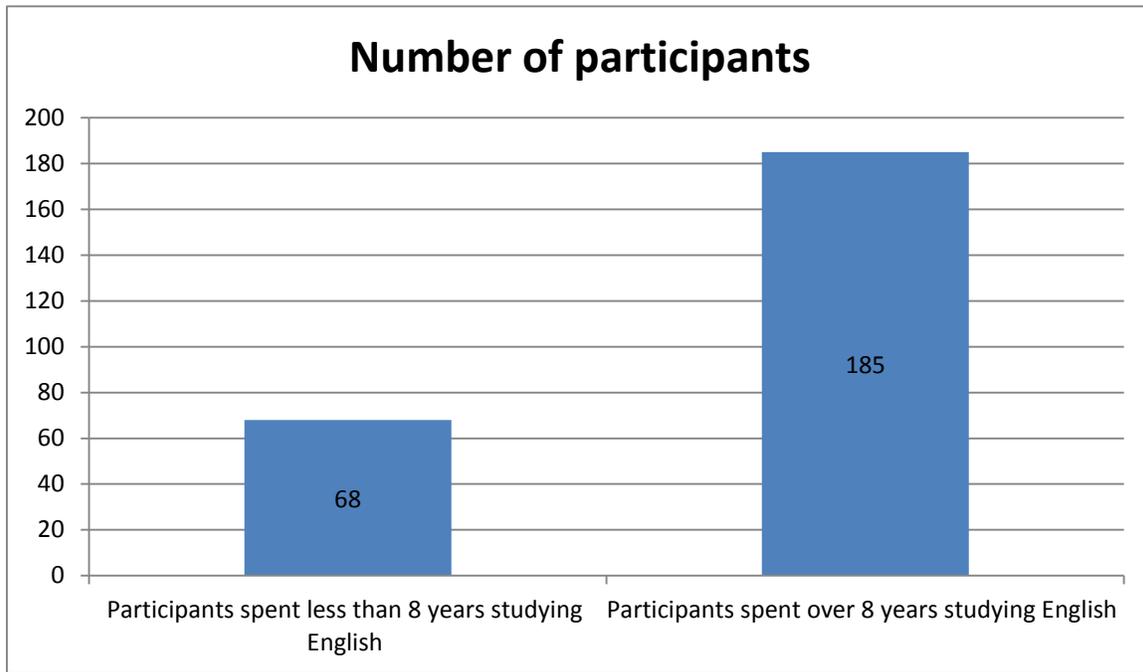
The result presents that about 65% of the participants have completed university or college, 26% of the subjects completed secondary school and 1% has only finished primary school. The outcome of this background question illustrates that majority of the subjects were well educated.

### 3.3.4 How long did you learn English in school (Primary School, Secondary School)?

This was one of the main questions of the survey. As it will be presented in the next chapter, a great part of the analyzing process was based on this question. As it can be seen in the chart below most of the participants studied English in primary and secondary school over eight years; however there are several subjects who spent fewer years in school studying English. All of the participants were examined separately.



The results demonstrate that majority of the participants have spent over 8 years in school studying English.

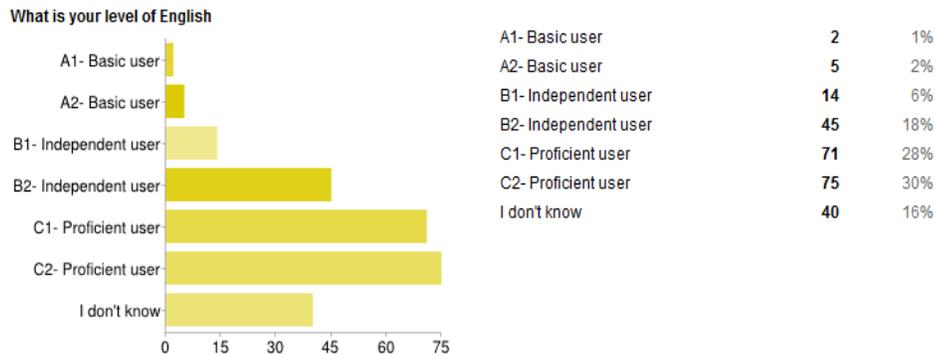


### 3.3.5 What is your level of English?

This question was one of the most significant of them all. During the analyzing process the participants were divided into groups based on their level of English. Those participants that did not know their level of English (option: “I don’t know”), were examined as separate group.

This question was a multiple choice question with the following possible options:

- A1- Basic user
- A2- Basic user
- B1- Independent user
- B2- Independent user
- C1- Proficient user
- C2- Proficient user
- I don't know



### 3.3.6 What is the level of your spoken English?

The reason for the next three questions was to support the question about the subjects' level of English. Due to this question, a number of results were filtered and were counted as invalid answers. The reason for this decision was that the participants declared that their level of English was A1/A2 which is a basic user status, even though their level of spoken English, written English or understanding of spoken English was “good” or “very good”.

This question was a multiple choice question with the following possible options:

- Poor
- Average
- Good
- Very good



### 3.3.7 What is the level of your written English?

This question was a multiple choice question with the following possible options:

- Poor
- Average
- Good
- Very good



### 3.3.8 What is the level of your understanding of spoken English?

This question was a multiple choice question with the following possible options:

- Poor
- Average
- Good
- Very good



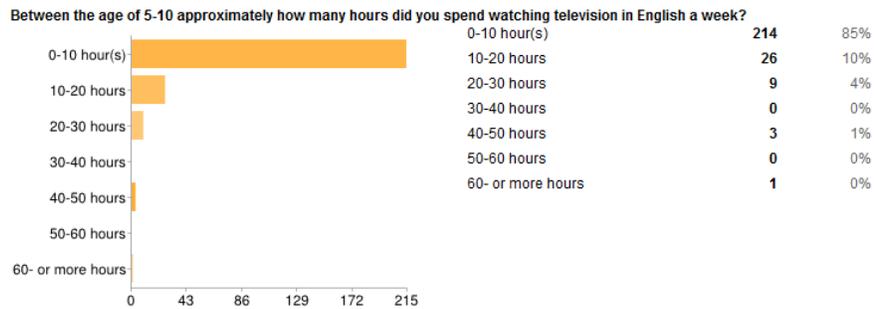
### 3.3.9 Between the ages of 5-10 approximately how many hours did you spend watching television in English a week?

The following 9 questions were the main reason of the study. These questions were raised to determine the subjects' exposure to English in the media. There were 3 different media sources that were used, television, computer games and reading in

English. These questions were a major part of the analyzing process.

This question was a multiple choice with the following possible options:

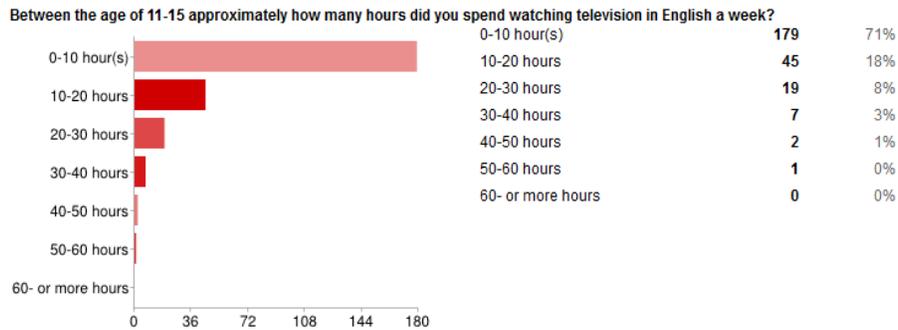
- 0-10 hour(s)
- 10-20 hours
- 20-30 hours
- 30-40 hours
- 40-50 hours
- 50-60 hours
- 60- or more hours



3.3.10 Between the ages of 11-15 approximately how many hours did you spend watching television in English a week?

This question was a multiple choice with the following possible options:

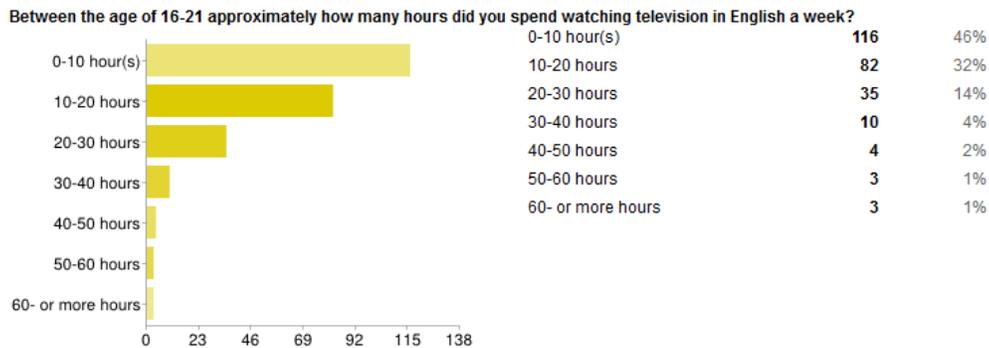
- 0-10 hour(s)
- 10-20 hours
- 20-30 hours
- 30-40 hours
- 40-50 hours
- 50-60 hours
- 60- or more hours



3.3.11 Between the ages of 16-21 approximately how many hours did you spend watching television in English a week?

This question was a multiple choice with the following possible options:

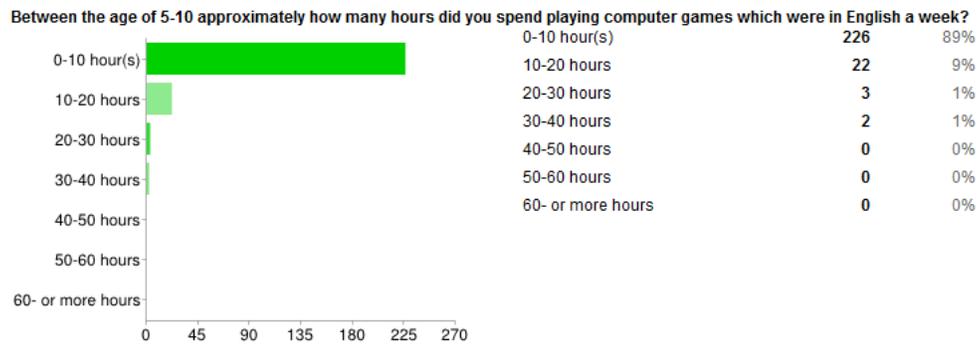
- 0-10 hour(s)
- 10-20 hours
- 20-30 hours
- 30-40 hours
- 40-50 hours
- 50-60 hours
- 60- or more hours



3.3.12 Between the ages of 5-10 approximately how many hours did you spend playing computer games which were in English a week?

This question was a multiple choice with the following possible options:

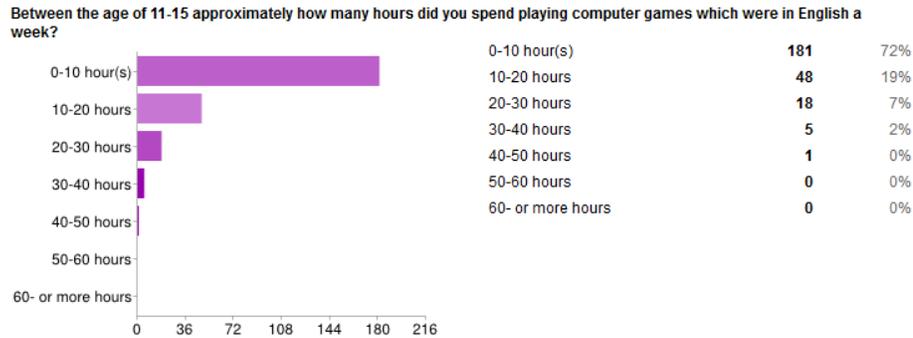
- 0-10 hour(s)
- 10-20 hours
- 20-30 hours
- 30-40 hours
- 40-50 hours
- 50-60 hours
- 60- or more hours



3.3.13 Between the ages of 11-15 approximately how many hours did you spend playing computer games which were in English a week?

This question was a multiple choice with the following possible options:

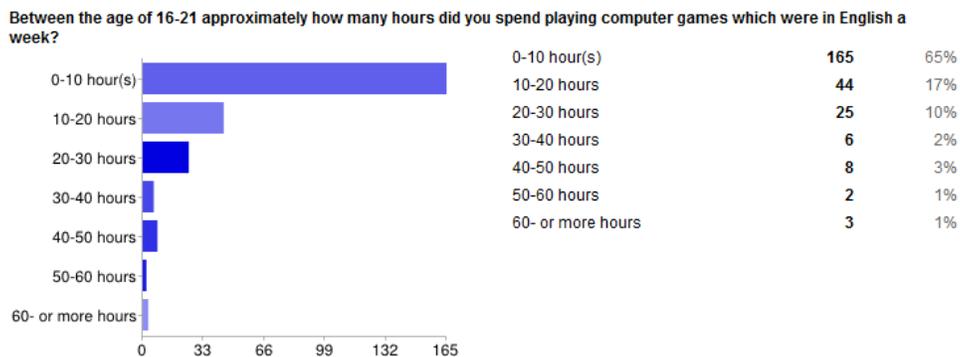
- 0-10 hour(s)
- 10-20 hours
- 20-30 hours
- 30-40 hours
- 40-50 hours
- 50-60 hours
- 60- or more hours



3.3.14 Between the ages of 16-21 approximately how many hours did you spend playing computer games which were in English a week?

This question was a multiple choice with the following possible options:

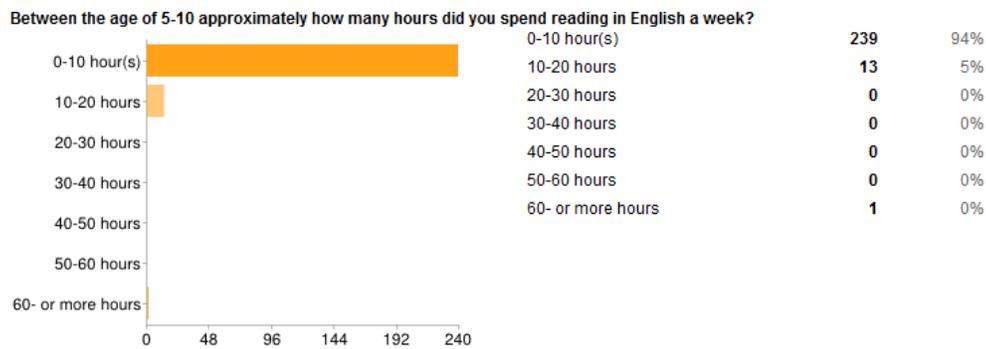
- 0-10 hour(s)
- 10-20 hours
- 20-30 hours
- 30-40 hours
- 40-50 hours
- 50-60 hours
- 60- or more hours



3.3.15 Between the ages of 5-10 approximately how many hours did you spend reading in English a week?

This question was a multiple choice with the following possible options:

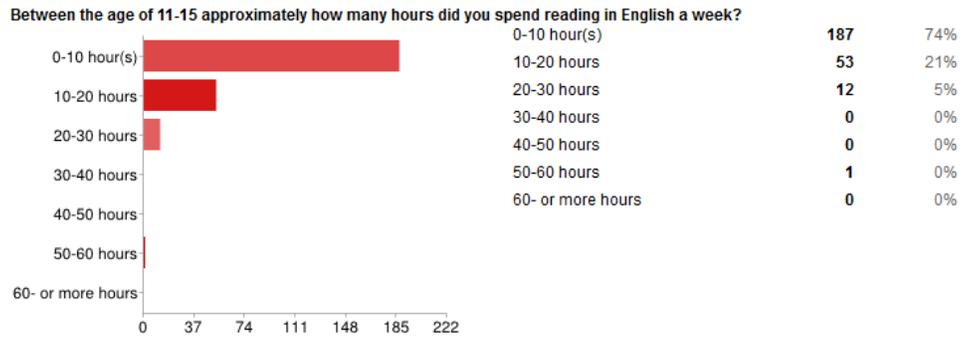
- 0-10 hour(s)
- 10-20 hours
- 20-30 hours
- 30-40 hours
- 40-50 hours
- 50-60 hours
- 60- or more hours



3.3.16 Between the ages of 11-15 approximately how many hours did you spend reading in English a week?

This question was a multiple choice with the following possible options:

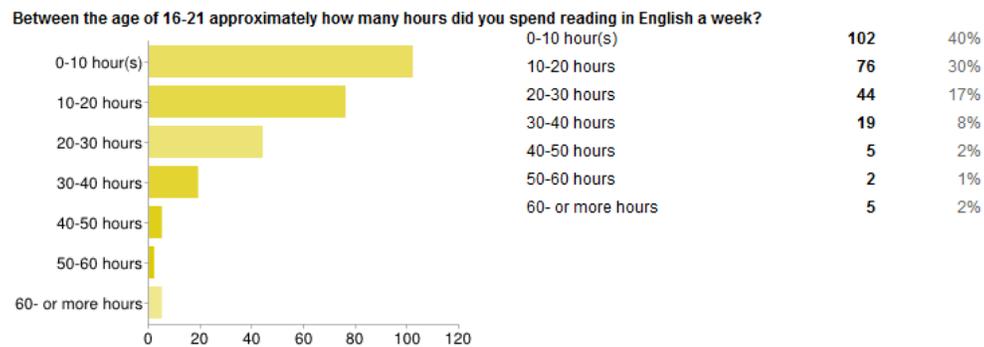
- 0-10 hour(s)
- 10-20 hours
- 20-30 hours
- 30-40 hours
- 40-50 hours
- 50-60 hours
- 60- or more hours



3.3.17 Between the ages of 16-21 approximately how many hours did you spend reading in English a week?

This question was a multiple choice with the following possible options:

- 0-10 hour(s)
- 10-20 hours
- 20-30 hours
- 30-40 hours
- 40-50 hours
- 50-60 hours
- 60- or more hours



### 3.3.18 Do you use English on a daily basis?

Just as in several previous questions, this particular question was raised to get a better overview of the subjects' English proficiency.

This question was a multiple choice with the following possible options:

- Yes
- No



## 4. Analysis and Conclusion of the Survey

### 4.1 Introduction

The analyzing of the survey was based on results of the participants. The results were collected through an online spreadsheet that was provided by Google. Out of over two hundred and fifty answers, five of those responses had to be counted as null and void, due to the fact that the subjects native language was English, As English is not their second language they do not fit the criteria of the survey.

Prior to the analyzing process, the number of languages was counted. In total there were thirty four languages and English which was not counted for the reasons that was already mentioned above. The countries were divided into two groups. The Scandinavian countries and Holland were put together in the same group as an example of countries with high English exposure. Hungary, France, Italy and Spain were put together in the same group as an example for countries with low English exposure.

The analyzing process was divided into two main parts. In the first part of the analyzing process, the amount of English exposure was looked at in both groups. In the second part of the analyzing process the subjects' proficiency of English was examined.

### 4.2 English exposure in "Group A"

#### 4.2.1 English exposure in television

As mentioned in a previous chapter, the Scandinavian countries and Holland have an exceptional amount of English speakers. In these countries a major part of the television broadcasting is in English with subtitles. The results, as they were expected presented a great number of subjects that were exposed to English material from television between the ages of 5 to 21. Results show that there were only 7 subjects out of 50 that were not or were barely exposed to English from television. That means that 14% of participants were not exposed to English from television while 86% of the subjects were significantly exposed to English. Out of the 7 subjects that were not or barely exposed to English material in television 2 were exposed to English from another source of media. It is

interesting to point out that 4 Icelandic, 2 Finnish and 1 Danish subject were not or barely influenced by English from television.

#### 4.2.2 English exposure in Computer games

The English exposure to computer games in the Scandinavian countries and Holland were not as one sided as it was with the television. The number of subjects that were exposed to English from computer games and those that were not or were barely was nearly even. 28 subjects were exposed to English from computer games while 22 participants were not or were barely exposed to English from computer games. Thus concludes that in this group 56% of the participants were and 44% of the subjects were not or were barely exposed to English from computer games.

#### 4.2.3 Reading in English

In “group A” lastly the participants’ exposure to English reading material was examined. The results show that in this field of media, majority of the subjects were exposed to English, namely 70%, and 30% were not influenced by any English reading material. That means that out of 50 subjects, 15 had no significant amount of exposure to English in this area. As it was presented in the previous chapter, in Iceland most of the best seller books and also a great amount of school books are written in English, therefore the number of Icelandic subjects that had no exposure to English from any written material is considered to be quite high.

The results present that 10% of “group A” was not significantly influenced by English in the media.

### 4.3 English exposure in “Group B”

#### 4.3.1 English exposure in television

In the theoretical part of this study, Hungary’s broadcasting was presented. The lack of English material can also be applied to the other countries in “Group B”, (Spain, France or Italy). Out of the 98 participants that are in this group only 40 subjects (41%) were exposed to English from television. Even though 58% of the subjects were not

or were barely exposed to English material from television between the ages of 5 to 21, the 41% is still considered high in those countries where English is rarely present in the media. One possible reason for this high percentage of people that have been exposed to English from television is the development of the digital world. It is no longer difficult to watch movies or television shows online in English. 37 participants were exposed to English from television between the ages of 16 to 21 and considering the subjects' age it is safe to say that the internet was already that advanced that it was possible to watch English movies online.

#### 4.3.2 English exposure in computer games

The results of the computer games were very similar when compared to the television broadcast. Those subjects that were exposed to English from computer games were 42% present in this group while those participants that had no significant English exposure from any computer games were the majority of the group with 58%. 42% of the subjects were exposed to English from computer games between the ages of 5 to 21. The reason for this rather high percentage is that only a few computer games are translated in these countries as it was stated before. Even with a language patch that is available online the user is only provided with subtitles, the spoken language in the game remains original, most of the time English.

#### 4.3.3 Reading in English

As it was mentioned before countries like Hungary have a great variety of foreign books and several of the most viewed websites are available in English, therefore the percentage of those subjects that read any English material between the ages of 5 to 21 are not surprisingly higher than any other source of media, namely 46%. That means that in this group those subjects that had no reading experience in English were still the majority in the group, namely 54%.

According to the results there were 33 subjects or 34% of the group that were not significantly exposed to any English in the media. That is significantly higher than in "group A".

#### 4.4 English proficiency “group A”

The participants were divided into three groups according to their answer, “good” or “very good”, “average” or “poor”.

##### 4.4.1 Spoken English

It is a general assumption that the citizens of the Scandinavian countries speak good English. The results of the survey supports this assumption since in “group A” 96% of the participants stated that their level of spoken English is “good” or “very good”, while only 4% said that their level of spoken English is average. There were zero subjects that declared their spoken English “poor”.

##### 4.4.2 Written English

The results illustrate that the majority of the subjects are “good” or “very good” in written English; however there were two participants that said that their level of written English is “average” and one that said it is “poor”. It is interesting to note that the subject that gave his level of written English as “poor” was not significantly exposed to English from computer games or written English; however the subject was highly exposed to English speaking television broadcasting.

##### 4.4.3 Understanding of spoken English

The results of “group A”’s understanding of spoken English were rather one sided. 100% of the subjects said that their understanding of spoken English was “good” or “very good”. The results state that only 5 subjects were not majorly exposed to the English language in this group, although all 5 of these participants are using English daily.

#### 4.5 English proficiency “Group B”

The participants were divided into 3 groups according to their answer, “good” or “very good”, “average” or “poor”.

#### 4.5.1 Spoken English

As it has been stated before the number of English users in the countries of “Group B” is one of the lowest in Europe (Europeans and their languages, 2006), however majority of the subjects of “Group B” stated that they are “good” or “very good” in spoken English, namely 74%. 22% of the subjects stated that their spoken English is “average” and 6% of the participants had “poor” level of spoken English.

#### 4.5.2 Written English

Majority of the subjects stated that their written English was either “good” or “very good”, namely 79.5%. On the other hand there were 15.5% that stated that their level of written English was “average” and 5% declared that it is “poor”.

#### 4.5.3 Understanding of spoken English

Surprisingly a high percentage of the subjects in “Group B” had a “good” or “very good” understanding of spoken English, specifically 82%. Those subjects that stated that their level of understanding of spoken English was “average” were 13%, while 5% declared their understanding of spoken English to be “poor”.

#### 4.6 Results of individuals

The results of the survey were also examined by individuals. The subjects were examined whether they have been exposed to English speaking media or had very little exposure. The results demonstrate that majority of the participants were exposed to English speaking television, games or read in English. The percentage of the participants that were exposed to English speaking media is the highest with a C1/C2 level of English. The result of the survey also demonstrates that most subjects spent over nine years studying English in school, however the majority of participants, which studied fewer amount of years in school such as between 1 and 5 years or 6 and 8 years, were exposed to English speaking media. That may indicate that by watching English speaking TV, playing English speaking computer games or reading in English can benefit and speed up the process of second language acquisition.

#### 4.7 Conclusion of the survey

In this part of the analyzing process the subjects were divided into groups (“Group A” and “Group B”), based on their first language. The highly exposed countries such as the Scandinavian countries and Holland were put into “group A”, while those countries that are barely exposed to English in the media, like Hungary, Spain, France or Italy were put in “Group B”.

In the first part, the participants’ exposure to English in media was examined. The results point out that in “group A” the subjects were highly exposed to English in television while in “Group B” majority of the participants were not influenced by English in television. The outcome of examining the exposure to English in computer games was quite similar; however in “Group A” larger percentages of the subjects were exposed to English through computer games. Reading in English was also more common in “Group A”, while majority of the participants in “Group A” were exposed to written English material; the numbers were fairly balanced in “Group B”.

In the second part of this analyzing process the level of proficiency was examined. Firstly the level of spoken English was observed. In both groups majority of subjects had “good” or “very good” level of spoken English however while in “Group A” only 4% of the subjects had an “average” level of spoken English. In groups B 22% of the subject had an “average” level of spoken English and 6% of “Group B” had a “poor” level of spoken English. In written English “Group A” was more proficient than “Group B”, however 2% of “Group A” (one subject) had “poor” level of written English. “Group A” also were more proficient in understanding of spoken English. While 100% of “Group A” filled out “good” or “very good” as the level of understanding of spoken English, no more than 82% of “Group B” were on the same level of understanding of spoken English.

All in all, the survey illustrates the gap between the two groups’ English exposure in the media and also their English proficiency. The results of the survey support the hypothesis that the exposure to English in media increases the English proficiency, however for a clearer conclusion more researches needed in this field with a larger amount of randomly selected participants.

## 5. Conclusion

This study was conducted to examine the possible positive effects of English exposure from the media. In the first chapter two countries, Hungary and Iceland were compared on several levels. Both countries' exposure to English material in the media was measured. In Iceland the amount of exposure to English language is significant. The Icelandic television is greatly influenced by English, with several hours of English broadcasting. The same pattern can be applied to the books sold in Iceland. As it was presented before in Iceland most academic books are in English, and on the top ten bestseller list there were only English books. On the other hand, Hungary represented a country that is barely influenced by English in the media. There are certain approaches (NMHH, 2012) in the media to give an option to the viewers of English material; however it is still in an early status. The lack of English exposure in the Hungarian media can be linked with the fact that Hungary has one of the lowest percentage of English as a foreign language speakers in Europe, while in Iceland English is considered to be closer to a second language (Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2007) than to foreign language status. This comparison of the two countries' English exposure in the media supports the hypothesis that higher exposure to English material in the media affects greatly one's second or foreign language acquisition.

In the second part of the study a survey was presented which was aimed to get an overview of the English exposure of two groups with different amount of English exposure from the media. In one of the group ("Group A"), the Scandinavian countries and Holland was presented as an example of those countries that are highly exposed to English and in the second group ("Group B"), Hungary, Spain, France and Italy was presented as an example of countries with low English exposure.

The results illustrate that the participants from "Group A" were more exposed to English from the media than the subjects from "Group B". The subjects from "Group A" also showed a higher proficiency in written, spoken and understanding of English than the participants from "Group B". This concludes that subjects with a history of English exposure are more proficient in English.

The results of the survey were also examined by individuals. The conclusion of this process is that those subjects that were exposed to English achieved a higher level of English, furthermore those subjects that studied English less than 6 years in primary or secondary school and they were exposed to English from the media, they reached a higher level of English than those that were not exposed to English.

Taking into account of these conclusions from the survey and from the theoretical research, the results support the idea of exposure to English material in the media benefits the second or foreign language acquisition, specifically the proficiency of English usage and the speed of the acquisition. Despite all the supporting results and the conclusion of the study, more studies with a larger and more varied group of subjects is needed.

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