



Iceland: A Microcosm of Communities Affected by the Spread of English

Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir
University of Iceland

18. November 2017

University of Victoria

Richard Beck Lecture

Global English

Kachru's Concentric Circles of English

The Expanding Circle

- China, Egypt, Indonesia, Israel, Korea, Nepal, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Russia, Zimbabwe

The Outer Circle

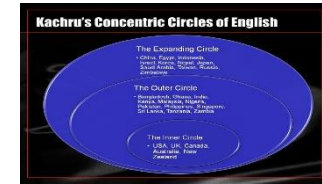
- Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Zambia

The Inner Circle

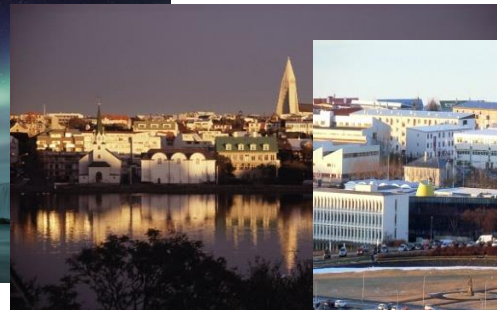
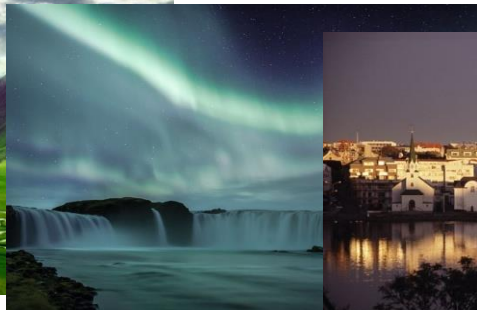
- USA, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand



Iceland



- Population: 325.000
- Nordic Welfare State
- Language: Icelandic.



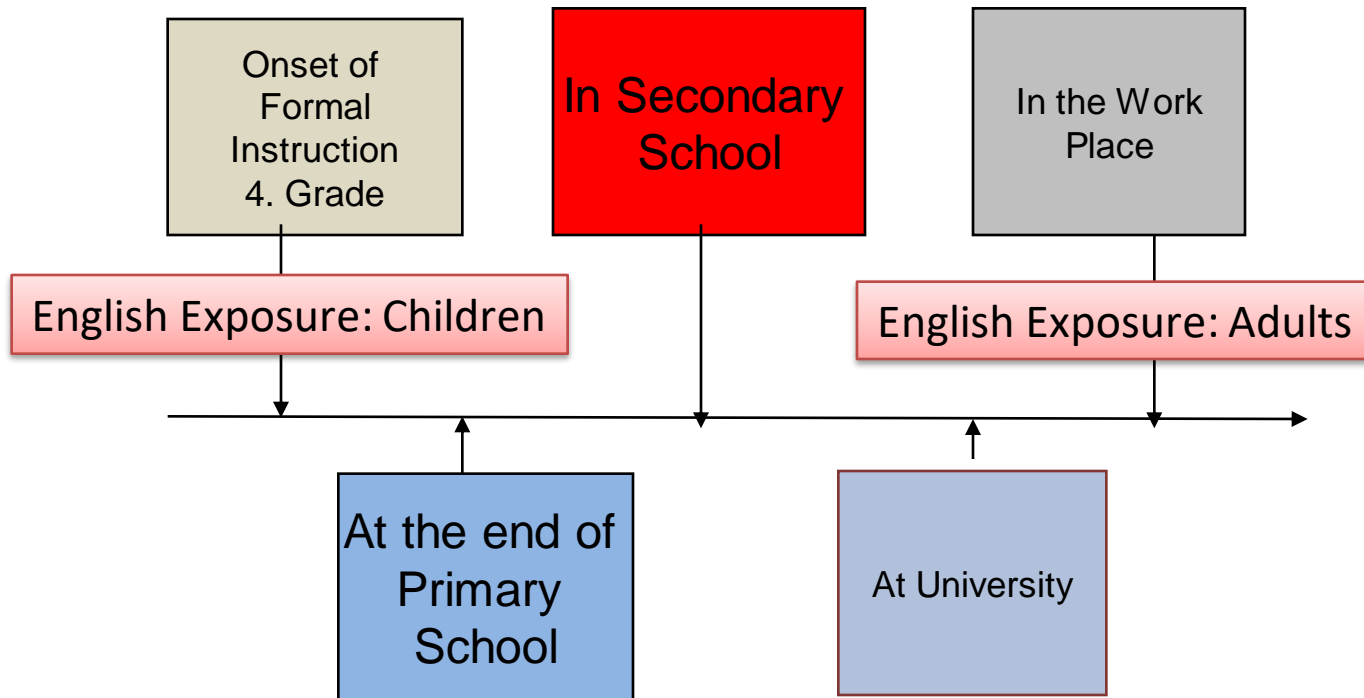


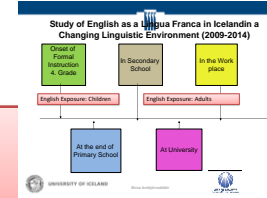
Theoretical Background

- ELF Movement (Jenkins; Seidlhofer; Maurannen)
- English Expansion - Dynamic Model (Schneider, 2007)
- Growth of EMI Programs in Iceland and the Nordic Countries (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014)
- Limitations of EFL based pedagogies to prepare EMI students (Dearden, 2015; Dimova, et al., 2015; Arnbjörnsdóttir & Prinz, 2014; Arnbjörnsdóttir & Ingvarsdóttir, 2017, 2010; Hellekjær, 2005; Percorari et al, 2011)
- The New EAP Approach at the UI draws from a range of pedagogical traditions (Kern, 2000; Swales, 2004; Garnder and Nesi, 2013; Hyland, 2017, Doolan, 2017).



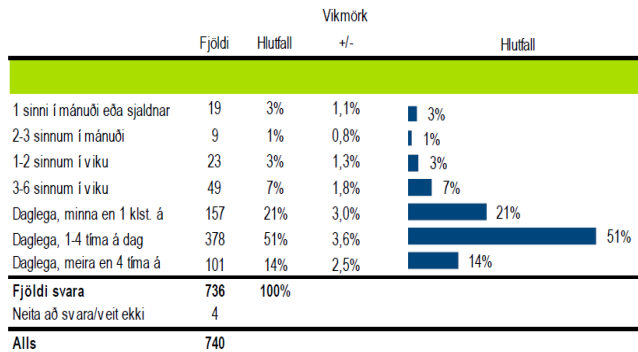
Language Development across the Lifespan: The Impact of English on Education and Work in Iceland



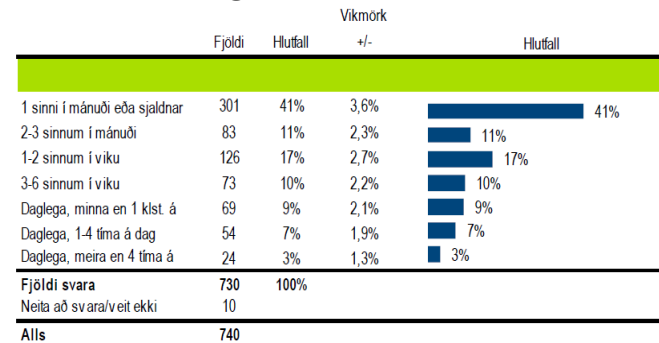


English Exposure: 750 Adults

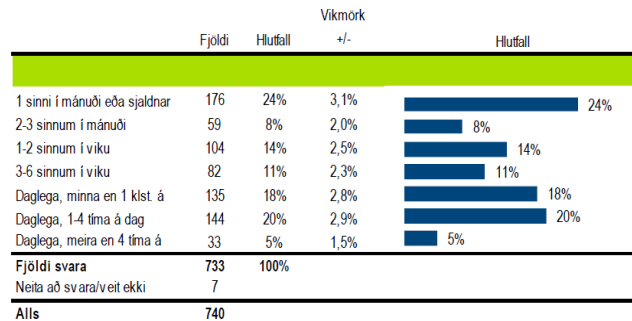
Hear English



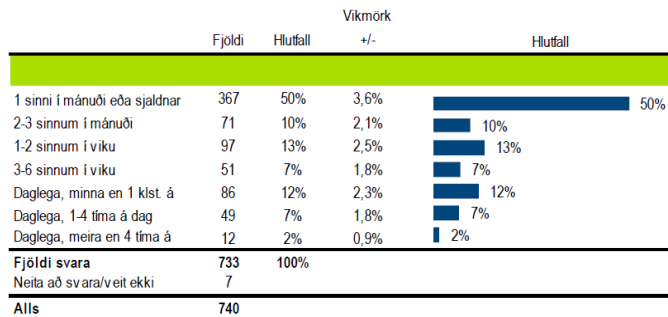
Speak English

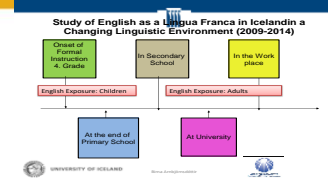


Read English



Write English





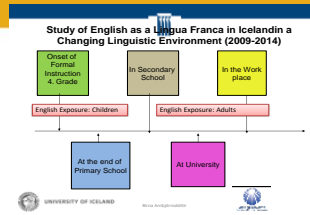
Self Reported English Proficiency: 906 Adults

Comprehension

	N	%
Good/ Rather good	666	73%
Neither/ Nor	150	16%
Poor/Rat her poor	86	10%

Speaking

	N	%
Good/ Rather good	594	65%
Neither/No r	198	21%
Poor/Rathe r poor	134	15%



Self Reported English Proficiency: 906 Adults

Reading

	N	%
Good/ Rather good	647	70%
Neither/Nor	158	17%
Poor/ Rather poor	120	13%

Writing

	N	%
Good/ Rather good	513	56%
Neither/Nor	219	23%
Poor/ Rather poor	202	22%

Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir



The Linguistic Landscape of Iceland?



English and Language Policy in the Nordic Countries



- Nordic residents, who internationally speaking, have good English skills. (Declaration on a Nordic Lang. Policy, Art. 2.1)
- ... that business and labor-market organizations be urged to develop strategies for the parallel use of language.
- ... that it be possible to use both the languages of the Nordic countries essential to society and English as languages of science .

(Declaration on Nordic Language Policy 2006, p. 94)



Parallel Language Use?

Parallel Language Use:

“The use of parallel languages refers to a situation in which two languages are considered equal in a particular domain, and where the choice of language depends on what is deemed most appropriate and efficient in a specific situation.”

www.cip.ku.dk



Major Findings

Education/EFL

- Students who begin formal English instruction in the 4th grade exceed the curriculum goals for that grade
(Ásrún Jóhannsdóttir, 2018)
- Extramural English exposure is reinforced in EFL instruction in primary and secondary school. i.e. conversational, receptive language
 - Heavy emphasis on literary genres at advanced levels
 - Students report that their English education had little to do with their actual English needs once at university or at work
 - Lack of consistency in type and amount of reading in primary school
(Anna Jeeves, 2013, Jóna G. Guðmundsdóttir, 2016)
- Tests at the end of secondary school reveal that lexical and writing proficiency is insufficient for university study
(Guðmundur Edgarsson, 2018)
- General overestimation of English skills.

Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir
Hafþís Ingvarsdóttir Editors

Language
Development
across the Life
Span

Impact of English on Education and
in Iceland

 Springer


rannís



Major Findings

EMI at the University of Iceland

- 90% of textbooks are in English
- Proliferation of instruction, theses and assignments written in English
- Robust confidence in English skills
- Actual proficiency in informal, receptive English
 - Limited awareness of academic genres
 - Inability to match register to task
- 35% of students struggle greatly with English
- 50% claim that their workload increases
- 83% report problems working with two languages.

Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir
Hafdis Ingvarsdóttir Editors

Language
Development
across the Life
Span

Impact of English on Education and
in Iceland

Springer





The Work Force

English skills a job requirement?	3% yes
How much English used ?	71% emails daily
	69% read docs daily

“writing and speaking English fluently
has become fundamental to getting work done”

Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir
Hafdis Ingvarsdóttir *Editors*

Language
Development
across the Life
Span

Impact of English on Education and
in Iceland

 Springer



Conclusions

- Enormous extramural exposure
- Overconfidence in English skills
 - Students
 - Teachers
 - Population as a whole
- Traditional EFL Curriculum fortifies receptive, colloquial English
- Icelanders struggle with English in education and the work place

Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir
Hafdis Ingvarsdóttir *Editors*

Language Development across the Life Span

Impact of English on Education and
in Iceland

 Springer



A Hidden Challenge!



- Conflicting policies (Hultgren, 2016)
- Overestimation of proficiency
 - Receptive = Productive
 - Lack of genre awareness
 - English vs. Icelandic?
 - Repertoire of registers and genres?
- Instructors do not see it as their role to support language
- Tradition?



Academic English at the University of Iceland

- Academic English needs of Icelandic students across disciplines
 - Students at UI struggle with course content in English
 - Students registering for courses in the BA in English prog.
 - Straining department resources
 - BA program is content based with a focus on Literature and Linguistics – no remedial English courses
- BA English students
 - Lacked proficiency in Academic English
 - Had fewer opportunities to write in over- enrolled courses
- Traditional composition course ineffective
 - Poor student evaluations, limited observable improvement, high instructor turnover.



Response:

Reorganized Program/New Approach to Teaching Writing to meet EMI Needs

BA in English Program:

- Intensive academic writing course
- Genre based courses

General Student Population:

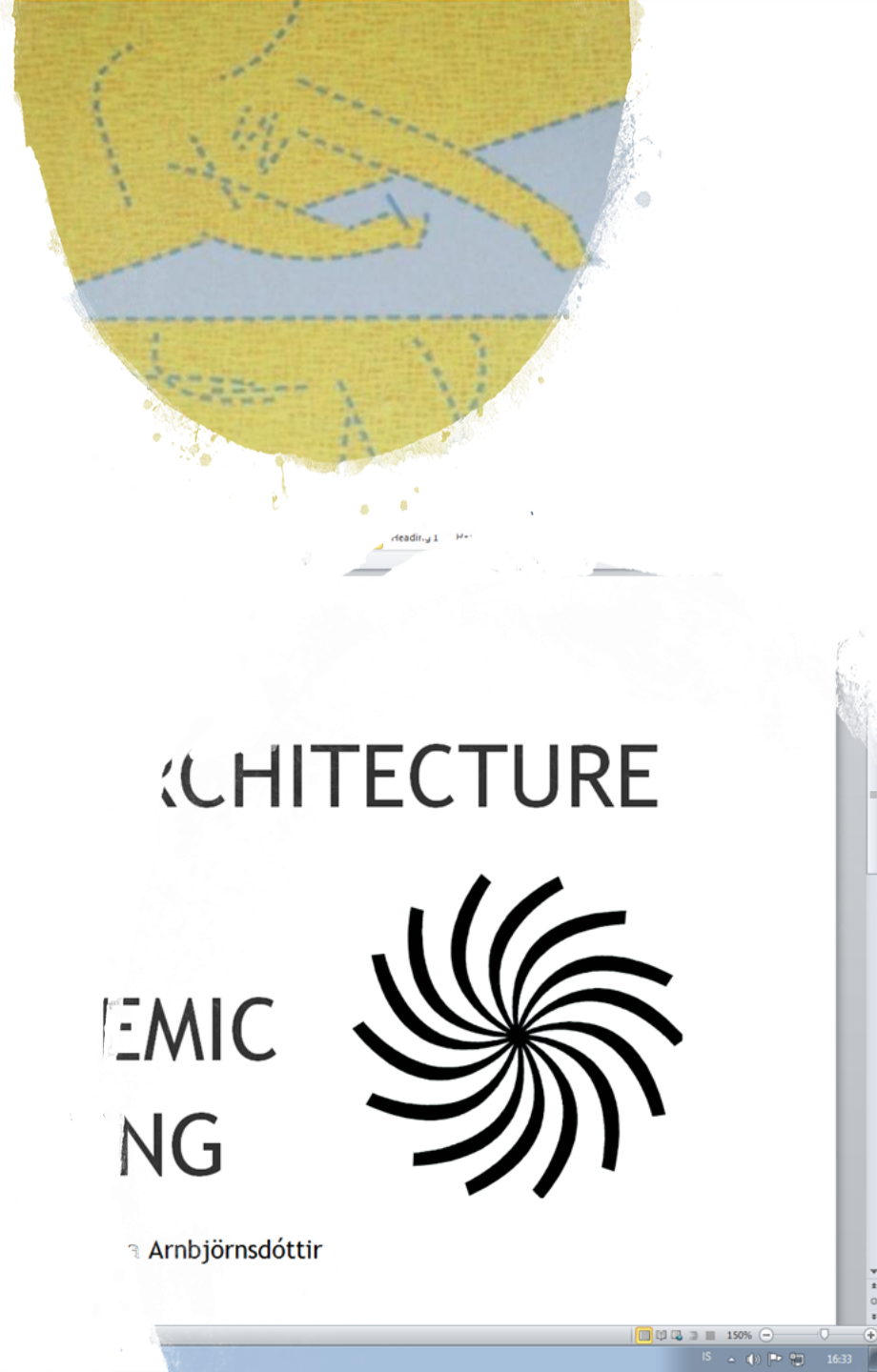
- Academic English Program

Constraints:

- Awareness is growing but, many departments do not accept transfers from English

Developed a New Approach to Teaching English to Students in EMI Programs

- Raise Awareness through AWARE
- Focus on a “Gateway” Genre
- Authors: Patricia Prinz and Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir





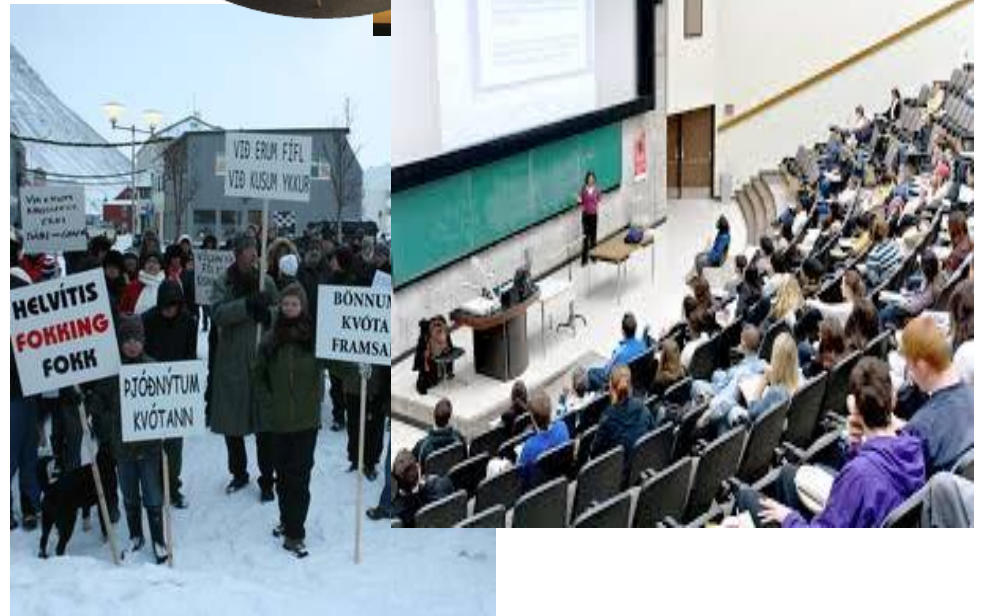
The Approach

- **Thesis Driven Writing**
- **Limited genres with a focus on transferable features**
 - Expository writing (description, narrative, enumeration, and compare/contrast)
 - A case study
 - A research paper
- **Authorial Voice:** writing assignments based on student own personal knowledge and experience For 2/3 semester text
- **Mastery of a single element** at a time which synthesized into larger writing tasks over the semester.

The Linguistic Landscape of Iceland?

A new linguistic context:

- ELF at the grassroots level
- ENL standards in Education and the work place.

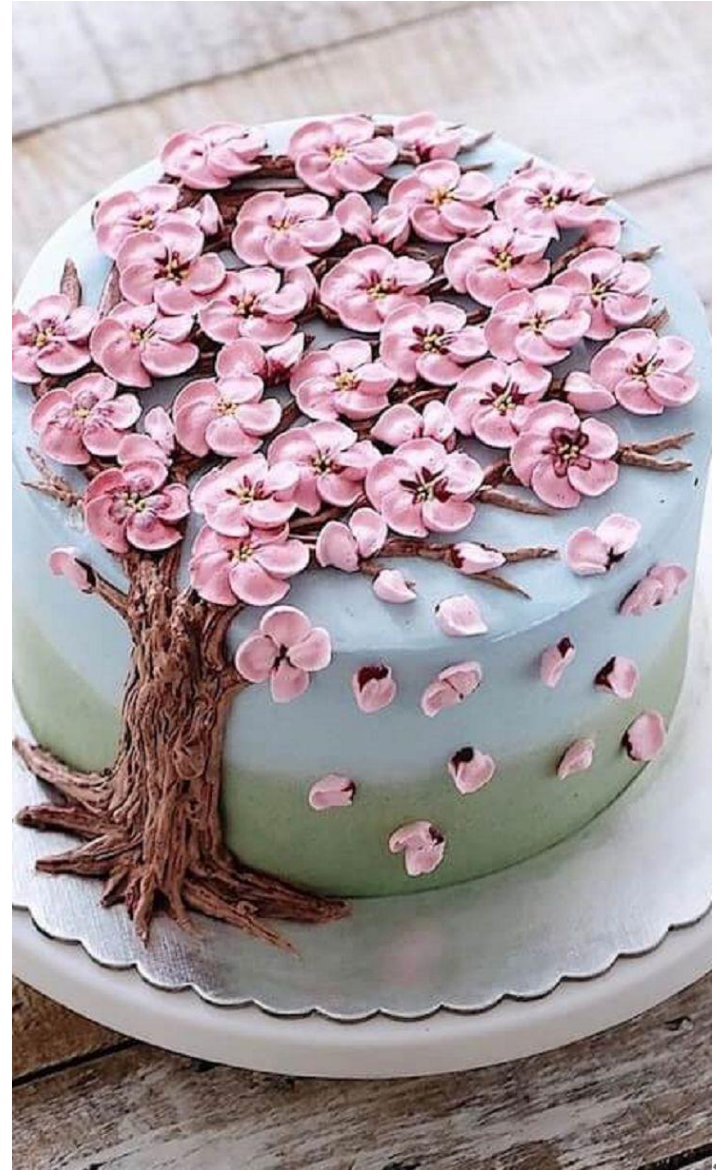


Future?

- 2019-2023: 2.6 % economic growth
 - Travel Industry
- 2016/2017: 30.275 newcomers in Iceland
 - Can only increase
- Internationalization of education and the work force



**THANK
YOU!**



Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir



- Anna Jeeves. 2013. Relevance in Learning English: Students' Voices. Ph.D. Diss.. University of Iceland.
- Anna Jeeves. 2010. English at Secondary School: Perceptions of Relevance. Ráðstefnurit Netlu – Menntakvika 2010. *Netla – Veftímarit um uppeldi og menntun og Menntavísindasvið Háskóla Íslands*.
- Ásrún Jóhannsdóttir. 2010. English in the 4th grade in Iceland: Exploring exposure and measuring vocabulary size of 4th grade students. Ráðstefnurit Netlu – Menntakvika 2010. *Netla – Veftímarit um uppeldi og menntun og Menntavísindasvið Háskóla Íslands*. <http://netla.khi.is/menntakvika2010/008.pdf>.
- Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir. 2011. Exposure to English in Iceland: A Quantitative and Qualitative Study. Ráðstefnurit Netlu – Menntakvika 2011. *Netla – Veftímarit um uppeldi og menntun og Menntavísindasvið Háskóla Íslands*. <http://netla.hi.is/menntakvika2011/004.pdf>.
- Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir. 2009. Enska í háskólanámi. *Milli mála*. Ársrit Stofnunar Vigdísar Finnbogadóttur. Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan.
- Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir and Hafdís Ingvarsdóttir 2010. Coping with English at University: Students' Beliefs. Ráðstefnurit Netlu – Menntakvika 2010. *Netla – Veftímarit um uppeldi og menntun og Menntavísindasvið Háskóla Íslands*. <http://netla.khi.is/menntakvika2010/008.pdf>
- Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir og Hafdís Ingvarsdóttir. 2010. Íslenskan, enskan og fræðaskrifin. Ársrit Stofnunar Vigdísar Finnbogadóttur. Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan.
- Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir og Hafdís Ingvarsdóttir (ritstj.). 2007. *Teaching and Learning English in Iceland*. Reykjavík. Stofnun Vigdísar Finnbogadóttur/Háskólaútgáfan.
- Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir and Patricia Prinz. 2013. An English Academic Writing Course for Secondary Schools: A Pilot Study *Netla – Veftímarit um uppeldi og menntun og Menntavísindasvið Háskóla Íslands*. <http://netla.hi.is/greinar/2013/ryn/018.pdf>.
- Hafdís Ingvarsdóttir og Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir. 2010. Coping with English at Tertiary Level: Instructors' Views. Ráðstefnurit Netlu – Menntakvika 2010. *Netla – Veftímarit um uppeldi og menntun og Menntavísindasvið Háskóla Íslands*. <http://netla.khi.is/menntakvika2010/010.pdf>
- Kern, R. 2012. "Language Teaching and Learning in the Postlinguistic Condition?" with Mark Nelson, in Lubna Alsagoff, Willy Renandya, Guangwei Hu, & Sandra McKay (Eds.) *Teaching English as an International Language: Principles and Practices*. London: Routledge.
- Kern, R. 2000. *Literacy and Language Teaching*, Oxford University Press.
- Samuel Lefever. 2010 English Skills of Young Learners in Iceland. Ráðstefnurit Netlu – Menntakvika 2010. *Netla – Veftímarit um uppeldi og menntun og Menntavísindasvið Háskóla Íslands*.



Reference

- Arnbjörnsdóttir, B. and Ingvarsdóttir, H. (2010). Coping with English at university: Students' beliefs. *Ráðstefnurit Netlu – Menntakvika Netla – Veftímarit um uppeldi og menntun og Menntavísindasvið Háskóla Íslands*. Available from: <http://netla.khi.is/menntakvika2010/008.pdf> (Accessed 10th November 2016)
- Arnbjörnsdóttir, B. and Prinz, P. (2014). An English academic writing course for secondary schools: A pilot study. *Netla, veftímarit um uppeldi og menntun*. Available from: <http://netla.hi.is/an-english-academic-writing-course-for-secondary-schools-a-pilot-study/> (Accessed 13th September 2016).
- Dimova, S., Hultgren, A. K., Jensen, C. (Eds.) (2015). *English-Medium Instruction in European Higher Education: English in Europe, Vol. 3*. Amsterdam: DeGruyter.
- Flowerdew, J. (2016). English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) writing: Making the case. *Writing & Pedagogy*, 8(1), 5-32. Available from: <http://dx.DOI:10.1558/wap.v8i1.30051> (Accessed 29th December 2016)
- Hellekjær, G. (2005) *The acid test: Does upper secondary EFL instruction effectively prepare Norwegian students for the reading of English textbooks at colleges and universities?* Unpublished Doctoral Thesis at the University of Oslo, The Faculty of Arts, The Department of Teacher Education and School Development. Oslo.