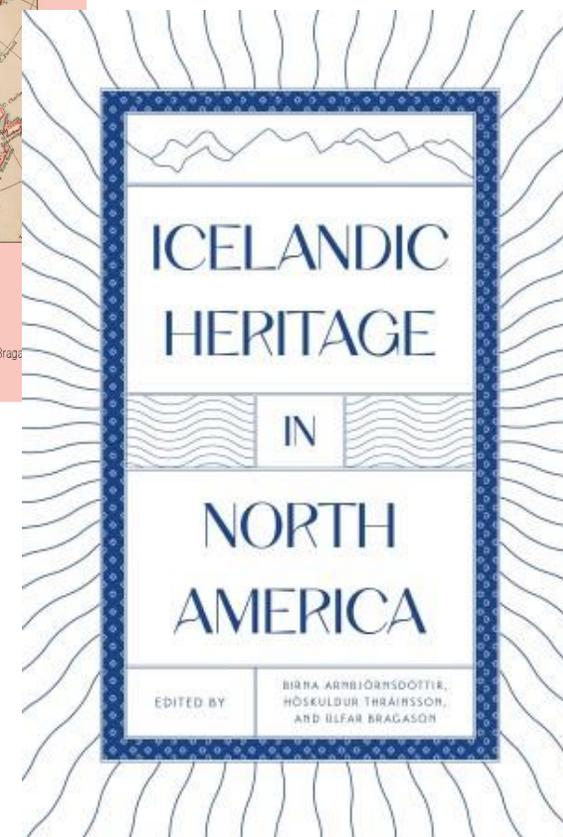
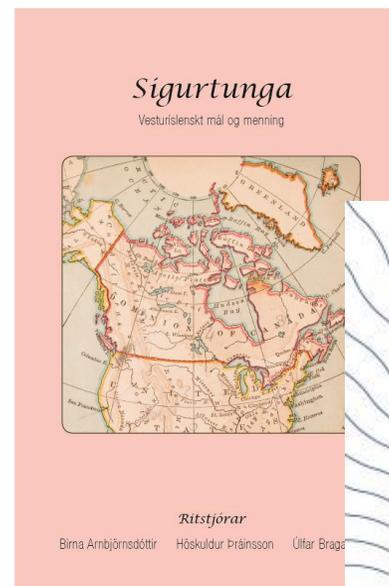


Icelandic Heritage in North America

Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir
Faculty of Languages and Culture
University of Iceland

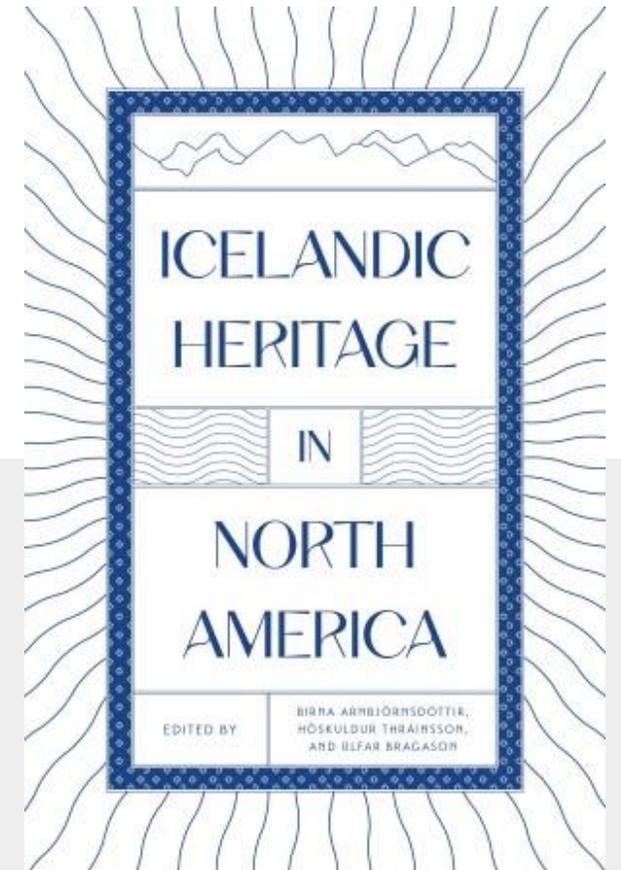


University of Victoria
October 8, 2023

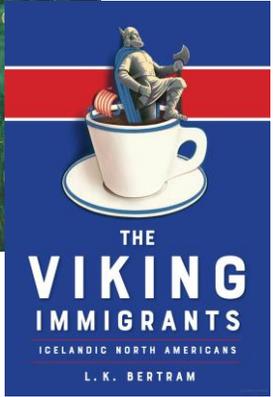
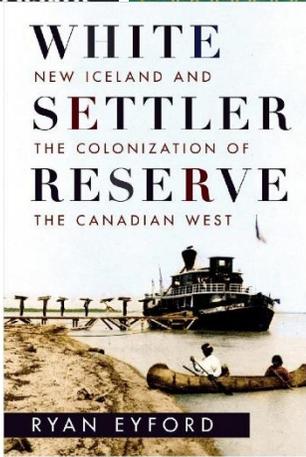
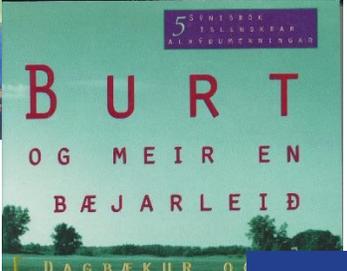
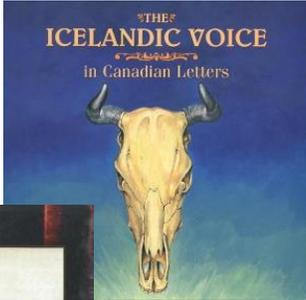
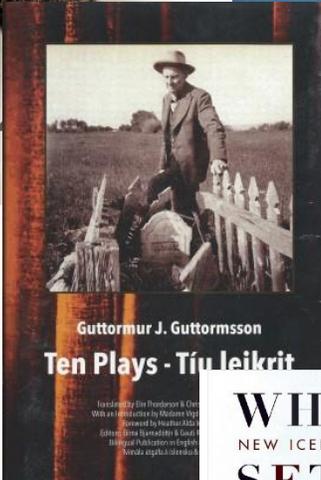
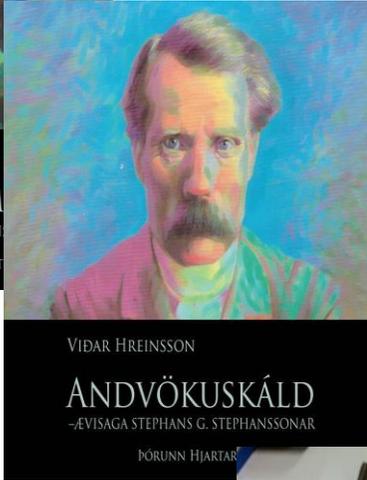
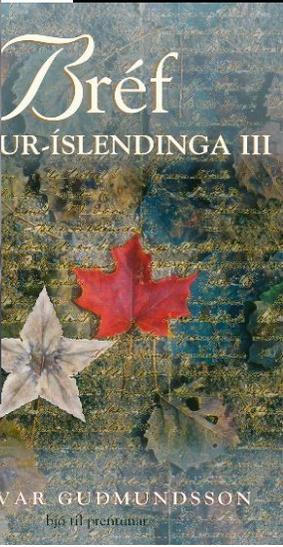
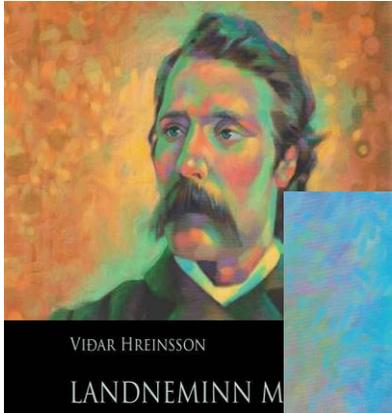
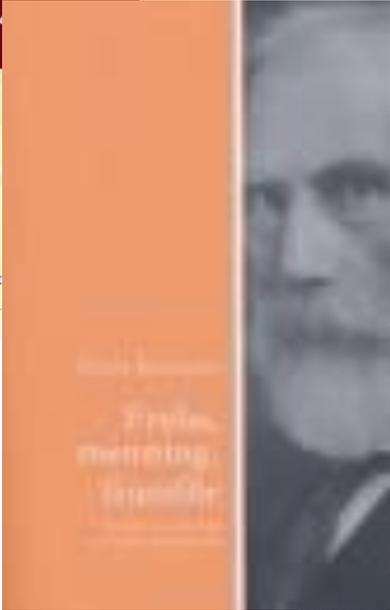
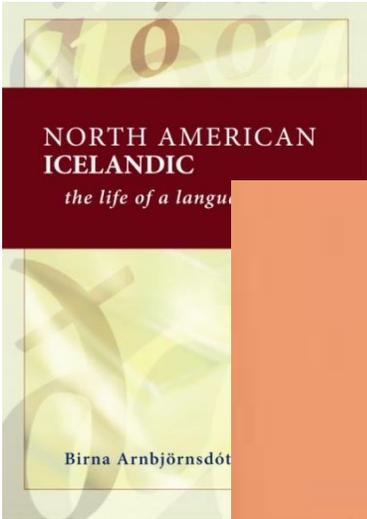
Overview

The Icelandic Heritage Project

- Main Themes and Findings
 - NA Icelandic
 - Heritage Language Research
 - Family Language Policy
 - Icelandic
- Acknowledgements



North American Icelandic Heritage



Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir

The Icelandic Heritage in North America

- Heritage languages and cultures are characteristic of immigrant enclaves where another language (and culture) is dominant.
- The Icelandic heritage survives in the US and Canada into the 4th generation.
- The *Icelandic Heritage Project* sought to describe this heritage and place it in a theoretical context of immigrant experiences.



The Icelandic Heritage Research Project

- The Development of Language, Culture and Identity in Language Shift
- RANNÍS Project Grant (2013–2014)
- Faculty and students
 - Höskuldur Þráinsson, Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir, Úlfar Bragason, Birna Bjarnadóttir, Daisy Nejman, Matthew Whelpton, Kristín M. Jóhannsdóttir, Sigríður Magnúsdóttir, Sigríður Mjöll Björnsdóttir, Nicole Dehé and others.
- Field trips to Canada and the US
 - Winnipeg, Gimli, Riverton, Arborg, Lundar, Brandon, Portage Prairie, Regina, Wynyard, Foam Lake, Edmonton, Vancouver, Nanaimo, Point Roberts, Blaine, Seattle, Fargo, Mountain.
 - 126 participants (Icel.), 101 (Engl.) average age 77 yrs.
- Included other relevant data sources
 - Literature, historical accounts and other documents and publ



Findings: North American Icelandic

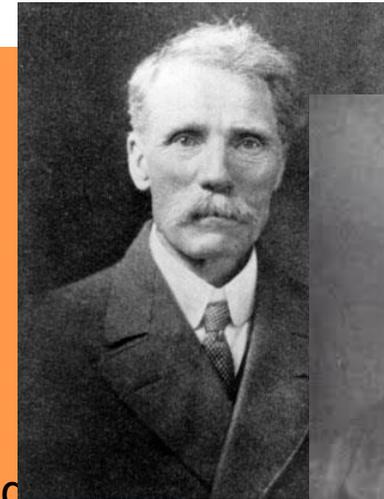
Not a single variety but grammatically consistent

- certain grammatical and lexical features are consistently found in the speech of a cross-section of NA Icelandic speakers
- the degree of embeddedness and influence of English in the speech of individuals, families and communities varies
- grammaticality judgements less robust as the grammar became more complex or had been acquired later in life
 - subjunctive mood
 - impersonal verbs



Heritage Language Policy

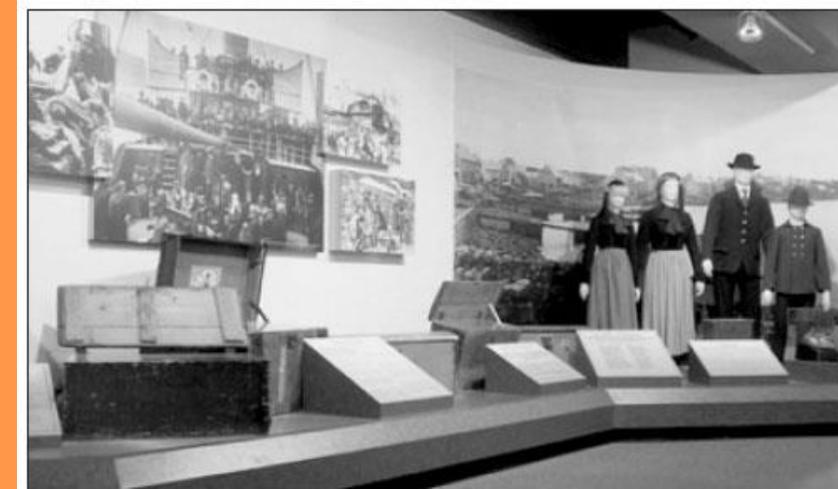
- Language Management, Ideology and Practices (Spolsky, 2004,2012)
- Implemented
 - by governments
 - by community leaders
 - Stephan G. Stephansson, Jóhann Magnús Bjarnason and Einar Kvaran
(Chapters by Birna Bjarnadóttir, Dagný Kristjánsdóttir, Guðrún Björk Guðsteinsdóttir)
 - through rich social debates
 - widely circulated periodicals and newsletters even for children that led to active social participation by many
(Chapters by Dagný Kristjánsdóttir, Vilhelm Vilhelmsson, Ólafur A. Sveinsson)
 - in families
 - Language Practices



“they shape children’s developmental trajectories, connect in significant ways with children’s formal school success, and collectively determine the maintenance and future status of minority languages” (King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry, 2008:907)

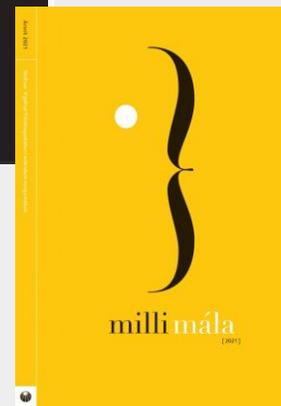
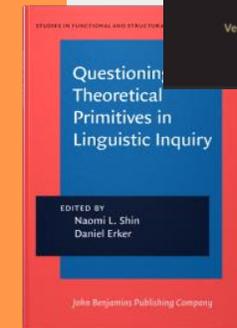
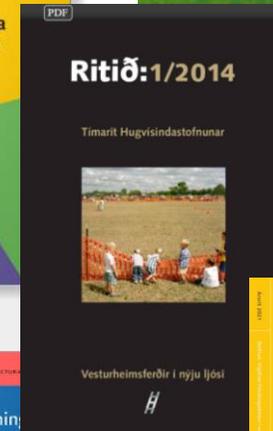
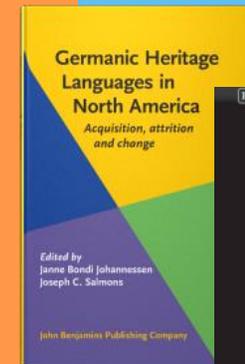
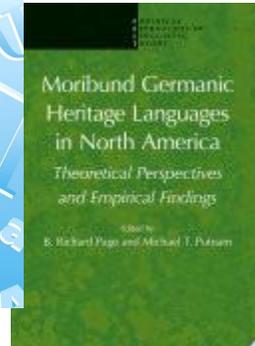
NA Icelandic Language Policy and Practice

- Bilingualism and Biculturalism (Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir et al., 2023)
- Sense of self as a literate people (Einar Kvaran, Guðrún B. Guðsteinsdóttir; Alda Möller, Úlfar Bragason)
- Emphasis on education
- Home literacy practices (Literacy starts at home)
 - Kvöldvökur/húslestur (communal reading) often handwritten manuscripts (Katelin Parsons)
- Story telling traditions (Gísli Sigurðsson)
- Debates supported language maintenance (oral and written)
 - Debating societies
 - Lögberg/Heimskringla is the oldest ethnic journal in N America
 - Children periodicals (Dagný Kristjánsdóttir)



Theoretical Context

- Multiple and massive data sources allowing for deep engagement with the participants and data on NA Icelandic
- Heritage language Research
 - Nature of language attrition
 - Incomplete acquisition or language attrition
 - Importance of ideology or beliefs about self and language to educational trajectories and social inclusion
- Many of the linguistic developments identified in NA Icelandic now also found in Iceland
 - Loss of subjunctive
 - Various lexical influences
 - Family language policies



Thank you!

Thanks to all the participants
in the Heritage Project!

Thank you, Helga Thorson and the
Richard and Margaret Beck Fund.

