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Insight into computer-mediated communication

as a new variety of written Icelandic

1 Introduction

The Internet and constant development of digital communication technology has a tremendous impact in Iceland. According to the *Global Information Technology Report 2013*, 92.6% of Icelandic households have Internet access and based on the estimates of Internet world statistics, 67.2% of Iceland's population are registered on Facebook.

In Iceland, the Internet is used for entertainment, information gathering and communication, just as it is in other parts of the world. Technological innovations now allow communication through a range of electronic devices and an array of platforms including for example blogs, email, (video) chat and (video) telephony. Nevertheless, the digital discourse is still mainly represented as written communication. However, it has been shown that online communication displays structures that are deviant from standard writing norms such as the neglect of spelling rules and punctuation or compensation strategies for non-verbal communication features (cf. Androutsopoulos 2011). Consequently, patterns and style used on a blog or on Facebook are different from those occurring in previous (personal) writing that is written communication outside the digital medium. The scope of rea-

sons ranges from various purposes for online communication (some being formal, others informal) to constantly changing communicative settings. Because of the latter, language has to transform appropriately to comply with new requirements and possibilities (Crystal 2006, Schlobinski 2006) presented by time, space and technological limitations that arise. The result is a set of verbal and non-verbal strategies that vary across national languages, although cross-linguistic similarities are possible (cf. Sveningsson 2003:139).

However, research on online communication, often referred to as *computer-mediated communication* (CMC) (Herring 1996, Thurlow, Lengel & Tomic 2004, Wright & Webb 2011), is still mostly focused on the English language (Baron 2008, Greiffenstern 2010, Herring 2004)[1]. Especially smaller languages have hardly been taken into account. This paper aims therefore to broaden the picture and to give an initial insight into Icelandic CMC. Regarding the often claimed "purist" language policy in Iceland, the examination of CMC becomes especially relevant, for it contains features that contrast with what one may call "good Icelandic". English borrowings (*like*, *nice*) for example, are frequently used in Icelandic CMC. Moreover, strategies to compensate for essential elements of oral communication, such as tone and body language, can be observed. Examples of this are the use of emoticons and verbalized laughter. Finally, spelling, such as the use of diacritics, and punctuation are not prioritized in the digital discourse. Instead, the creative use of spelling and punctuation in CMC may serve individual and stylistic purposes.

With regard to the analysis of CMC as a new variety of Icelandic, we must first understand its nature. Accordingly, this paper will address the following questions: What linguistic features are significant? How can they be categorized? And what functional purpose do they serve? Answering these questions will aid to assess whether CMC can be characterized as a new variety of written Icelandic.

In order to answer these questions, section 2 will first give an introduction to CMC as a new way for communication and will then

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[1] Introduced in the 1980s, the term *CMC* was first used to encompass (interactive) communication through different computer related platforms such as instant messaging, chat and email (cf. Baron 2008: 11). With the coming of new digital communication technologies that are not computers in the narrow sense, such as mobile phones, the term was expanded to communicative interaction through electronic devices (e.g. Thurlow, Lengel & Tomic 2004). This essay will thus use the term in the latter sense and understand CMC as written (interactive) communication carried out on digital electronic devices.

specifically focus on the communicative options of Facebook as it provides the source for the corpus that will be introduced in this paper. In section 3, a case study is discussed. The results are then presented in section 4, with due regard to their communicative function and meaning for CMC as a variety of written Icelandic. Finally, section 5 serves to summarize the most relevant findings.

2 Computer-mediated communication

2.1 A new written variety

In linguistics, scholars have approached CMC from various perspectives, using an array of methods and focusing on a variety of phenomena. Some have tried to give a general overview of CMC specific forms (Runkehl, Schlobinski & Siever 1998, Storrer 2000). Others have surveyed CMC with regard to discourse analytic questions (Schönfeldt 2001, Beißwenger 2003). Yet others discuss the role of CMC for language (Bittner 2003, Crystal 2006) and the impact of English on individual languages, refuting anxieties that it might dominate the digital discourse (Sveningsson 2003, Thurlow, Lengel & Tonic 2004). Language change in and through CMC, and the categorization of CMC as written or spoken language has also been a topic of linguistic investigation (Haase et al. 1997, Smyk-Bhattacharjee 2006).

Nonetheless, CMC is neither written nor simply typed spoken language. Users have to develop strategies to meet communicative challenges involved in interaction without visual contact (Storrer 2001). Moreover, some essential features of oral communication are missing or become functionally reinterpreted. Since the utterance is conveyed as a whole, planning units such as hesitation sounds are not needed but may be used to fulfill stylistic purposes. Furthermore, CMC contains elements of writing, for example punctuation and spelling features such as upper and lower cases. Baron (2000:248) therefore describes CMC as an "emerging language centaur – part speech, part writing".

CMC also reveals communication codes that go beyond traditional elements of interaction. Emoticons are neither associated with standard writing nor speaking, as are hashtags[2]. Their use however

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[2] Hashtags are character strings with an initial hash that were primarily used as metatags on different platforms to technically link different posts together in or-

is common practice in online communication. Thus the written and oral strategies are complemented by non-verbal symbols, which Crystal (2006:51) describes as "electronically mediated properties". In his work he argues that CMC is something completely different from previous writing and speaking due to the inclusion of spoken, written and sign language features. At the same time it incorporates structures and strategies that none of the named mediums utilizes. He therefore proposes to see CMC, in contrast to speech, writing and signing, as a "fourth medium" for language (Crystal 2006:272).

   In public discourse, CMC has often been perceived as "homogenous language". Yet it encompasses distinct varieties. Different "Internet situations" imply different varieties (Bittner 2003, Crystal 2006). That is to say, the language used in blogs varies from the language in emails and, furthermore, both differ from the language used in chat groups. According to Androutsopoulos (2003:174), two criteria are hence relevant for the distinction of Internet-situational varieties: the distance of time between production and perception, and the communicative direction. This means that it is important whether the communication is (near-) synchronous (e.g. chat) or asynchronous (e.g. email) and whether it is interactive (e.g. chat) or not (e.g. blog).

   For the categorization of CMC components Androutsopoulos (2007:81–3) suggests four themes that are applicable across languages and Internet situations: *conceptual orality*, *semiotics of compensation*, *linguistic economy* and *graphostylistics*. In this regard *conceptual orality* refers to aspects associated with (informal) spoken language, such as interjections. This categorization is based on a model of speaking and writing dimensions proposed by Koch & Oesterreicher (1994) who allocate the terms *spoken* and *written* language not only to the medium in which language is used but also with linguistic style.[3]

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   der to facilitate the search for relevant topics. In addition to that however, they have now developed a semantic function, giving indications on what broader topic the sender is referring to.

[3] Koch & Oesterreicher (1994) differentiate between the termini *spoken* and *written* language both by the linguistic medium, that is either spoken = phonic or written = graphic, and the linguistic style, the "conception" as they call it. Concerning the medium, the terms *spoken* and *written* language are clearly separated: Language is verbalized either in a spoken or written manner although a change of medium is possible (as in dictation writing). Regarding conception however *spoken* and *written* language are two opposite poles of a continuum which includes numerous graduations. Critical for the location of an utterances or text on the continuum are categories, such as grade of closeness or grade of emotionality, that determine its style.

Semiotics of compensation includes aspects that compensate for non-verbal strategies of communication, such as facial or prosodic features. Prominent elements of this theme are emoticons and verbalized laughter. Furthermore, *linguistic economy* refers to strategies to shorten a message in order to comply with space, time or other limitations, as for example acronyms and abbreviations. Finally, *graphostylistics* describe alternatives of writing, based on the phonetic representation of a word or a word combination. A distinct realization for this is the replacement of lexemes and words by homophonic graphemes or grapheme combinations (*see you → cu*).

2.2 Facebook discourse as a test case

Representing the communication trends on the Internet on a micro level, Facebook has developed various ways of (self-) expression and communication. There are synchronous and asynchronous as well as interactive and non-interactive options to communicate. They range from written private messages to posts shared with a broader audience and a video-call application.

This paper however focuses on the *group* utility, which enables its members to engage with others, share items and discuss specific topics. Facebook groups refer to a wide spectrum of purposes as for example work and project related themes or topics of individual interests (sports, music). They are created by an individual and maintained by the group members, who post, update or upload files, comment on updates, poll the group or chat with everyone at once. Furthermore, members are able to remove their updates and comments again.

Facebook groups may be public, private or secret. Whereas any Facebook user may find and join a public group, see the members and their posts, private groups are visible albeit not accessible to the public. In other words, one must be added to the group by another member to be able to participate in the communicative interaction. Finally, secret groups are invisible to the public. Participants are selected and added by other group members and only they may see and edit posts.

As updates are published and commented on at any time, or not at all, communication in groups is asynchronous at large. The tone is prevalently informal and the communicative direction may be both monological and dialogical.

Because the group utility allows a rather easy collection of data, and considering that the language can hardly be described as dif-

ferent from other Facebook communication, it constitutes a suitable
corpus for linguistic observation. Because groups consist of a limited
number of members that interact with each other in various com-
munication "pairs", it provides a well-defined and yet multifaceted
source for the collection of data. Private groups moreover allow for
data collection that complies with ethical standards. Their members
are generally more active and their number lower so that it becomes
easier to obtain the permission of all group members to use the data
for research purposes.

3 Data and Methodology

The rest of this paper focuses on a case study concerning characteris-
tic properties of Icelandic CMC in order to depict and analyze CMC-
inherent properties and to define it as a potential new variety of writ-
ten Icelandic.

3.1 Corpus

The corpus introduced here is an active private Facebook group[4] with
24 participants aging between 21 and 31. Three members are non-
native speakers of Icelandic, and have therefore been excluded from
the analysis. This leaves 562 posts and comments, published between
June 19th, 2012 and April 25th, 2013. The total number of analyzable
tokens is 5,310. It is important to note, that the group members know
each other personally which might influence the interaction.

   Although the corpus is rather small, it allows an initial overview of
the diversity and the potential of Icelandic CMC.

3.2 Methodology

In order to facilitate the analysis, the corpus has been downloaded
and sorted into utterances and further into lists of tokens. The lists
have been analyzed according to the themes proposed by Androut-
sopulos (2007): *conceptual orality, semiotics of compensation, linguistic
economy* and *graphostylistics*. In so doing, properties corresponding

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4   The members have been asked for permission to use the data for research pur-
    poses. They have agreed without exception.

with Androutsopoulos' (2007) categorization model and deviating from previous writing norms have been extracted and counted.

In this analysis, borrowings adapted to Icelandic phoneme-grapheme correspondence, such as *næs* 'nice', which could be categorized as *graphostylistics* due to their alternative writing, are counted as instances of the theme of *conceptual orality*. This coincides with the frequent use of (English) borrowings in spoken Icelandic. Foreignisms are often anxiously observed and contrast with Icelandic purist language policy that aims to keep the Icelandic lexicon "pure" (cf. Hanna Óladóttir 2009, Kristján Árnason 2006, 2009). Full integration of borrowings into Icelandic requires adaption on different levels such as accent, phonology, morphology and grammar (cf. Baldur Jónsson 2002, Guðrún Kvaran 2004). In addition, neologisms are created in order to counteract the distribution of borrowings. Nevertheless, (English) borrowings are one of the most distinctive features in the corpus.

For a deeper analysis the themes have been expanded into subcategories as shown in the following.

4 Results

The findings, introduced here, do not serve as quantitative or qualitative measures, but rather illustrate features and patterns present in Icelandic CMC. The phenomena observed in the corpus are deviant from (previous) writing outside the digital medium and may hence serve as an indication of the development of a new variety of written Icelandic.

4.1 Conceptual Orality

The following examples, (1)–(4)[5], illustrate the two most frequent phenomena that were classified as realizations of *conceptual orality* according to the model of Koch & Oesterreicher (1994), English borrowings and interjections. (The content of each example is described in a footnote.)

(1)   **A: Jæja** krakkar, **boys are back in town.** Ætla að
        henda inn grófri dagskrá fyrir löngu dagana. (...)
        A: róleg á **likeinu**

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[5]   In the examples, each participant is represented by a letter of the alphabet to ensure anonymity. The letters do not refer to the same participant across examples.

B: Langir dagar eru svo skemmtilegir, ég bara varð!
C: **Æj**!! Mig langar í fjöruferð!
D: næs!
E: Djöfull væri ég til í fjöruferð.
F: ÞESSIR DAGAR VERÐA FRÁBÆRIR!!! **OH MY GOD**! [6]

(2)   **A:** Langur dagur á morgun. **Jííííhaaaaaaaaa**
       B: Vá, vandræðalegt, takk fyrir að minna mig á þetta.[7]

(3)   **A:** Er **séns** ad fa far med einhverjum úr midbænum i kvöld?
       B: haha það er svo erfitt að horfa á þig **ströggla** svona
       A: Hjáäââlp!!![8]

(4)   **A:** Takk fyrir **awesome** kvöld í gær!!![9]

For a deeper analysis, Table 1 presents all categories of *conceptual orality* as well as their type and token distribution.

	English expressions				Other foreign expressions				Inter-jections		Lexical Creations	
	Un-adapted		Adapted		Un-adapted		Adapted					
	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens
	55	91	25	51	3	3	1	1	31	76	2	2
Total number of types/ tokens	80/138				4/4				31/76		2/2	

Table 1. Conceptual Orality: Categories are English expressions, foreign expressions (non-English), interjections and lexical creations. The first two categories are subdivided into unadapted and adapted expressions, and they include both single words and phrases. Phrases are counted as one expression. The last row shows the total number of types and tokens for each category.

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[6]   In (1), the participants converse about the schedule for some long working days.
[7]   In (2), A reminds the audience of a long working day. B thanks for the reminder.
[8]   In (3), A asks the audience to get a ride. B replies that it is hard to see A struggling. A then calls for help.
[9]   In (4), A thanks the audience for a great evening.

Interjections (*jæja, æj, jíííhaaaaaaaaa, vá*) are a frequent phenomenon in the corpus as are English words and phrases[10], both with English spelling (*oh my god, awesome*) and adapted to Icelandic orthography and/or grammar (*likeinu, næs, ströggla*).

Unadapted English borrowings include English single words and phrases that are not adapted according to Icelandic phoneme-grapheme correspondence but are rather used with English orthography (*boys are back in town, awesome*). Unadapted English borrowings include all terms that follow this pattern even if their form coincides with Icelandic orthography. The most frequent unadapted English borrowing is *kids* and its derivation *kiddos* with a total number of incidences of 13. The word was always used to address the audience either in the expression *hey kids* (5) or as a single word (6).

(5)   **A: Hey kids**. Það er hádegisfæðsla í Halastjörnunni
      núna á föstudaginn frá kl 11.30. Frír matur og mega
      fjör. (...)
      B: YEEES [11]

(6)   **A:** hvað er planið **kids**?? Er þetta off eða?[12]

Mega is the second most common English word in the corpus and accounts for 11 tokens. It is used both as an adjective (5) and an adverb (7).

(7)   **A:** Takk fyrir **mega** næs fund krakkar (…)[13]

It can be observed that phrases (*boys are back in town, oh my god*) are always unadapted (cf. (1), relevant part repeated as (8)). In the category of *unadapted English borrowings*, 19 out of 91 tokens are phrases. However, the category of *adapted English borrowings* contains no phrases. It is likely that phrases often function as citations and therefore they are not adapted to Icelandic orthography.

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[10] With regard to phrases a distinction between *borrowing* and *code switching* could be made but is of no further use for the purposes of this paper. Hence, both single words and phrases are called *borrowings* in this paper. Furthermore, there is dissension in linguistics about how to define and differentiate the terms *borrowing* and *code switching*. For further reading about the distinction of *borrowing* and *code switching* see Thomason 2001 and Winford 2001.

[11] In (5), A announces a free lunch.

[12] In (6), A asks what the plan is and whether a plan was cancelled.

[13] In (7), A thanks for a meeting.

(8)   **A:** Jæja krakkar, **boys are back in town.** (…)
       (…)
       F: ÞESSIR DAGAR VERÐA FRÁBÆRIR!!! **OH MY GOD**!

Adapted English borrowings include lexical items that have been adapted to Icelandic grammar and/or spelling by adjusting the orthography to standard rules of Icelandic phoneme-grapheme correspondence and to rules of Icelandic grammar (e.g. *næs* 'nice', *ströggla* 'to struggle'). With a total of six incidents *næs* is the most frequent adapted English borrowing. It is interesting to observe that the word occurs only once with English spelling but six times with Icelandic orthography. Even though the corpus can hardly be considered representative this may indicate the advanced integration of *næs* into Icelandic. However, relative to English expressions with original spelling (91 tokens), the adaption to Icelandic is less common in the corpus (51 tokens). Regarding the aforementioned requirements for the full integration of borrowings into Icelandic this becomes especially interesting.

As seen in the word *næs/nice*, some terms may occur in both adapted and unadapted form. The word *shit* occurs three times with English and twice with Icelandic spelling (*sjitt*).

(9)   **A: Sjitt** krakkar. Þessi er sko GEIÐVEIKT **NÆS**.[14]

(10)   **A: Kids**, hverjir eru með I föstudagsbjor, eg þarf að kynnast ykkur!
       A: nei **shit**, kemst ekki, vandræðanlegt.[15]

Here, the use of either English or Icelandic spelling seems to be of individual choice. As the examples in (8) and (9) indicate, the same user tends to either adapt all borrowings in their utterance (*sjitt*, *næs*), or none (*kids*, *shit*).

A different strategy may however be observed regarding the expression *like* which occurs several times in the corpus. In these occurrences, *like* has a Facebook-related meaning of pressing the *like*-button in order to express one's appreciation of a post or comment. In three of the six examples that occur in the corpus it is unadapted.

(11)   **A:** mikið elska ég starfsmannafélag reykjavíkurborgar. (…)
       B: fáranlegt **like** á það![16]

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[14]   In (9), A finds something very good.
[15]   In (10), A proposes to meet for a beer but has to take back the proposal later.
[16]   In (11), A expresses his/her love of the union. B approves.

(12)   **A:** Heyheyhey! Við ætlum nokkur á Vegamót á
morgun að borða! (…)
B: Matur og Fylleri **LIKE**[17]

(13)   **A:** Krakkar, hverjir eru til í eitthvað skemmtistuð um
helgina, fös eða lau??
A: like = já?[18]

Yet, in three examples *like* is adapted to Icelandic grammar though
not to Icelandic spelling rules, e.g. *likeinu* (cf. (1), relevant part repeat-
ed as (14)).

(14)   (…)
A: róleg á **likeinu**

In (14), *like* is used as a noun. The stem retains its English form but the
word is adjusted to Icelandic grammar by attaching the dative article
(*-inu*) in accordance with the preceding preposition *á*.

    In the other two cases, *like* is used as a verb, as for example in (15).
The spelling is English but the Icelandic infinitive ending *-a* is added,
with a dash.

(15)   **A:** Kæra samstarfsfólk. Vilduð þið vera svo góð að
kíkja á krotið mitt, hugsanlega **like-a** og í mesta lagi
deila, ég verð ykkur ævinlega þakklát.[19]

Concerning the verb form, the mixing of English spelling and Icelan-
dic inflection (as in *like-a*) displays an exception since other verbs in
the corpus are adapted in both orthography and grammar (see for
example *ströggla*). Furthermore, the use of a dash to adhere the in-
flectional ending can only be observed for *like*. The English orthog-
raphy becomes especially interesting when taking into account that
the button to press says "líkar þetta" in the Icelandic Facebook inter-
face. However, Facebook was initially English speaking and the term
like as a Facebook-inherent act is entrenched across languages. The
preference of *like* over *líkar* in the corpus may thus derive from the
endeavor to highlight the Facebook-related meaning in contrast to
the intrinsic semantics of *líkar*.[20] Since the verb form of *like* is treated

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[17]   In (12), A proposes dinner at a restaurant. B approves the idea.
[18]   In (13), A proposes to meet at the weekend and explains that pressing the *like* but-
ton means *yes*.
[19]   In (15), A asks the audience to have a look at something, press the *like* button and
repost it.
[20]   This coincides with a tendency in colloquial Icelandic in general to use the bor-

differently from other adapted English verbs (as for example *ströggla*), the dash is most likely a consequence of the orthographically unadapted verb stem and may serve as a clearer visualization of the inflectional ending.

The mixing of an English spelling of the stem and an Icelandic inflectional ending like in the form *likeinu* is not exceptional since the same partial adaption can be observed in other Facebook and Internet related terms:

(16) (…)
    A: minnir að það sé askja mannauðakerfi, vertu viss um að **browserinn** leyfi **popups** því annars opnast glugginn ekki[21]

(17) (…)
    A: hver komst inn á **facebookið** þitt?[22]

Similar to *like* it can be argued that the terms in (16)–(17) are not adjusted to Icelandic orthography because of their Facebook (*facebookið*) or Internet (*browserinn*, *popups*) related meaning.

Another such example is the term *facereip* in (18):

(18) (…)
    A: haha þetta var **facereip**, samt til við tækifæri[23]

The term derives from the English neologism *facerape*, which according to the online *Urban Dictionary* refers to an unauthorized use of someone's Facebook account resulting in humorous changes of status updates or posts to friends. Only the second part of the compound is adapted according to Icelandic phoneme-grapheme correspondence, possibly due to the fact that the latter part of a compound dominates the inflection.[24]

The category *Other foreign borrowings* includes lexical items from foreign languages other than English.

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rowed verb *læka* for the meaning 'to put a Like on' rather than applying the psych verb *líka* 'to like' in this context.

[21] In (16), A explains how to open a website.

[22] In (17), A asks another participant who entered his/her Facebook account.

[23] In (18), A explains that someone announced something through his/her Facebook account without permission.

[24] This pattern is common in so-called hybrid words where the first part of the compound is foreign based and the second part Icelandic. In this way the hybrid word fits well into the Icelandic inflectional system. Guðrún Kvaran (2004) presents several examples of hybrid words in Icelandic.

(19) (…)
A: hvað kostar þetta?
B: nada[25]

The expressions observed include French (*gúrm* 'gourmet') with adapted orthography, as well as Swedish (*älsklings* 'darlings') and Spanish (*nada* 'nothing', *pronto* 'soon'). All these words keep their original spelling. As shown in Table 1, such expressions occur rarely (altogether 4 tokens), indicating the domination of English as the main source of foreign influence in Icelandic digital discourse.

In accordance with earlier CMC research (cf. Androutsopoulos 2011, Storrer 2000) and the model of Koch & Oesterreicher (1994), *interjections* (as for example *jæja, æj, vá, jíííhaaaaaaaaa*) are also classified as instances of *conceptual orality.* Interjections are common in the corpus (altogether 76 tokens), with *hey* being the most frequent one (11 tokens). Other common interjections are *jæja* (nine tokens), *vá* (eight tokens) and *oh* (seven tokens).

Finally, *lexical creations* comprise formations that are created for stylistic reasons:

(20) **A:** Djöfull sem ég sakna ykkar. kv. Frá
babbadíbubbílandi[26]

Lexical creations are, however, hardly used in the corpus. The only example of an Icelandic creation is the one shown in (20), *babbadíbúbbílandi.* In addition the English formation *alrightyright* occurs once.

In short, interjections and English borrowings are the most frequent features of the *conceptual orality* theme in the corpus. As for English borrowings, single words may occur both adapted and unadapted to Icelandic. Borrowed phrases are always unadapted. Internet and Facebook related terms can have Icelandic inflectional endings but they are not adapted to Icelandic orthography. It has been pointed out that English is the dominant language in the field of computers in Iceland (e.g. Hanna Óladóttir 2009:72). Although many programs and Internet platforms such as Facebook are offered in Icelandic, Icelanders are used to the English terms in the realm of computers. It is therefore not surprising that English computer-related terms are not adapted to Icelandic spelling in the corpus.

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[25] In (19), the costs of something are the topic of the conversation.
[26] In (20), A says that he/she misses the other group members.

4.2 Semiotics of Compensation

The following examples introduce phenomena categorized as *semiotics of compensation*.

(21) **A:** Jæja krakkar, hverjir eru til í spurningarbombuna á
þriðjudaginn, með **L-L-L-Loga** bergmann. (...).
B: Haaaaaa?
C: Takk en nei, takk.
A: Þar að segja að koma sem áhorfendur.
D: hahahaha... fáum við peninga**..??**
A: já og utanlandsferð
D: hells to the yeahh
C: Ég vil fara til Fijii**...**[27]

(22) **A:** prufan gekk sjúklega vel og ég er komin með
vinnu á Vegó! woop woop**!!**
B: Til hamingju**!!!**
C: NICE! Til hamingju!
D: Æði, til hamingju! Hlakka til að koma í kokteilA til
þín **;-)**
A: takk öll **:-D** hlakka til að fá þig í kokteilA til mín! **:-)**
E: geggjað **:-D**[28]

Semiotics of compensation are mainly introduced through laughter and emoticons as well as expressive punctuation and forms of written prosody, for example through the capitalization of words.

Table 2 shows the distribution of types and tokens of the strategies used for the compensation of non-verbal features of interaction.

	Expressive punctuation		Emoticons		Written prosody				Verbalized laughter	
					Foreign based		Icelandic			
	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens
	6	116	12	86	11	12	28	33	3	31
Total number of types/tokens	6/116		12/86		39/45				3/31	

Table 2. Semiotics of Compensation: Categories are expressive punctuation, emoticons, written prosody and verbalized laughter. Written prosody is subdivided into foreign based words and Icelandic words. The last row shows the total number of types and tokens.

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[27] In (21), the attendance of a quiz show is topic of the conversation.
[28] In (22), the participants congratulate A on a successful job interview.

Expressive punctuation is represented through six different types, the most frequent ones being the multiple representation of dots (50 tokens), multiple exclamation marks (44 tokens) and multiple question marks (14 tokens) as shown in (23) and (24) (repeated sections of (21)–(22)):

(23) (…)
      D: hahahaha**...** fáum við peninga**..??**

(24)   **A:** prufan gekk sjúklega vel og ég er komin með
       vinnu á Vegó! woop woop**!!**
       B: Til hamingju**!!!**

Concerning *emoticons*, the regular smiley is the most frequent type (37 tokens). Beyond that, the winking smiley (21 tokens) and the laughing smiley (12 tokens) are commonly represented.

Written prosody is expressed through the capitalization of words and word combinations (27 tokens) and by multiple letters (20 tokens):

(25) **A: ERUÐ ÞIÐ TILBÚIN**?????????
      B: þeeeegiðu…(…)[29]

Capital letters are in general interpreted as screaming or shouting, whereas multiple letters are perceived as sound lengthening. Both strategies serve to emphasize the word or word combination in question. Even a combination of both strategies occurs as shown in (26) (repeated from (5) above):

(26) (…)
      B: YEEES

An interesting observation is the realization of emphasis in emoticons:

(27)   **A:** Rétt upp hönd sem ætla á tónleika á lau?! **o/**
       B: 0//[30]

In (27) the emoticon *o/* (zero or *o* followed by a slash) represents the raising of a hand, with zero respectively *o* depicturing the head and the slash illustrating the raised arm. In the response the emoticon is taken over but a second slash is added. The representation through grapheme multiplication is thus used to underline the response.

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[29] In (25), A asks the audience if they are ready. B replies with "Shut up!".
[30] In (27), A asks the audience to raise their hand if they will be attending a concert.

Verbalized laughter is represented mainly through *haha* (29 tokens). The length however is variable, i.e. *hahaha* or longer manifestations may appear. Apart from that *hehe* and *híhí* (one token each) are realized.

In sum, the above findings highlight the presence of semiotics of compensation in Icelandic CMC as CMC characteristic features. The representations found in the corpus solely contain properties of CMC that are used across languages. However individual strategies appear, such as the emphasizing of emoticons (*o//*), presumably for creative stylistic reasons.

4.3 Linguistic economy

Besides *conceptual orality* and *semiotics of compensation*, examples of *linguistic economy* occur in the corpus. In this analysis the term encompasses both linguistic shortenings (e.g. acronyms) and orthographic economy, such as the non-occurrence of diacritical marks (cf. (28)–(30)), as both result in the simplification of orthographic form.

> (28)   **A:** Vitiði hvort það **se** ekki þannig að maður er bara
> með 3 **manaða** uppsagnarfrest ef maður er **fastraðinn**,
> er að spyrja fyrir vinkonu mina sem vinnur i
> **Kringlumyri** og langar að losna [31]

> (29)   **A:** NEIOH, það gleymdist að **lata** mig vita ad **eg** ætti
> ekki að vinna **i** dag (...)
> **B: lol** á þig (…)[32]

> (30)   **A**: **eigum** við að panta borð **kl** 8?[33]

In Table 3 the categories of *linguistic economy* are listed with their types and tokens.

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[31] In (28), A asks for a period of notice.
[32] In (29), A complains about not having been informed about a day off from work.
[33] In (30), A asks to book a table.

	Acro-nymes		Abbre-viations		Shortenings				Spelling			
					Foreign based		Icelandic		Foreign based		Icelandic	
	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens
	3	6	5	15	1	1	5	8	4	4	54	452
Total number of types/ tokens	3/6		5/15		6/9				58/456			

Table 3. Linguistic economy: Categories are acronyms, abbreviations, shortenings and spelling deviations. Shortenings and realizations of spelling deviations are subdivided into foreign based words and Icelandic words.[34] The last row shows the total number of types and tokens.

As shown in Table 3, variation in spelling (*se* instead of *sé*, *manaða* for *mánaða*, *fastraðinn* for *fastráðinn*, *Kringlumyri* instead of *Kringlumýri*, *lata* for *láta*, *eg* for *ég'*, *i* instead of *í*) occurs frequently in the corpus (altogether 456 tokens). Spelling is facilitated in different ways. The strategies follow traditional techniques of typewriting, which are dominated by a sign-repertoire that does neither consider diacritics nor language-specific characters, due to its endeavor of general validity. Spelling consistency is not required. Special characters may be used but diacritics left out, as in (28) and (29) (*manaða*, *fastraðinn* instead of *mánaða*, *fastráðinn*). In other examples diacritics are used but special characters are left out as in (31) (repeated from (3) above) (*ad* for *að*, *med* for *með*, *midbænum* instead of *miðbænum*):

(31)   **A:** Er séns **ad** fa far **med** einhverjum úr **midbænum** i kvöld?

Also, the correct use of upper and lower case according to official spelling rules becomes irrelevant as in (32) (cf. (30) above).

(32)   **A**: **eigum** við að panta borð kl 8?

Correct spelling does not seem to be required. Only in one example a user refers to a spelling deviation in the response as shown in (33) (repeated from (22) above):

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[34]   The same foreign based terms were also counted in the theme of *conceptual orality.*

(33)   (…)
D: Æði, til hamingju! Hlakka til að koma í **kokteilA** til
þín ;-)
A: takk öll :-D hlakka til að fá þig í **kokteilA** til mín!
:-)

By repeating the deviation in the response, the spelling is only in-
directly referred to. Other than that, spelling deviations seem com-
monly accepted.

Acronyms have been mentioned as a characteristic feature of CMC
(cf. Crystal 2006, Baron 2008). Specifically, *lol* 'laughing out loud' has
obtained transnational fame. In this corpus *lol* occurs three times.
Other acronyms are hardly used in the corpus. The total number of
tokens is six and all acronyms that occur are of English origin (*lol*, *asap*
'as soon as possible', and *btw* 'by the way').[35]

Abbreviations are more common than acronyms (altogether 15 to-
kens). They are established Icelandic abbreviations, with *kv* 'kveðja'
and *kl* 'klukkan' being the most frequently used (six tokens each).

Shortenings have a total number of nine tokens. Five out of six types
are Icelandic with two being common shortenings for the days of the
week (*fös* 'föstudagur', *lau* 'laugadagur'). The others follow a com-
mon strategy, the shortening with an *ó*-ending (*vandró* for "vandræði"
('problems'), *brennó* for "brennibolti" (name of a ball game), *abbó* for
"afbrýðisamur" ('jealous').

(34)   **A:** hey **btw** hver er síðan fyrir til að stilla tímana? (…)
B: ég las þetta hrikalega vitlaust hjá þér, sé það núna,
vandró.[36]

The only foreign based shortening is *diff* ('difference') which is used
in the informal expression *meikar ekki diff*:

(35)   **A:** (…) akkurat mánuður í að ég sjái ykkur og blessuð
börnin! kv. spennt og sakna
A: eða aðeins svona rúmlega, meikar ekki **diff**..[37]

To summarize, the strategies to facilitate and shorten spelling are not

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[35] Due to their English origin they are also counted as occurances of the theme of
conceptual orality.

[36] In (34), A asks for the website to correct clocked working hours. B then explains
that he/she had at first misunderstood the post.

[37] In (35), A says that it is exactly a month until he/she will see the other person again
but then revises the comment with respect to the exact time even if it does not
make a difference.

developed through CMC, even if they are frequently used for economic reasons. The neglect of standard spelling is encouraged by the fact that apparently it does not lead to misunderstandings or rebukes. Other time saving strategies such as acronyms and abbreviations are hardly used. Space-saving techniques are not needed as space limitations are hardly ever reached. As communication in Facebook groups is asynchronous or near-synchronous at most, time pressure is negligible. However, Facebook is increasingly used with smart-phones which often do not provide the Icelandic keyboard. Spelling inconsistency and the lack of diacritics may therefore stem from technical limitations that arise as a result of the device used. Nevertheless, as CMC in Facebook is informal it can be stated that standard writing rules are obsolete in this Internet situation.

As spelling and grammar adaptations of foreign-based expressions towards Icelandic rules were analyzed under the heading of conceptual orality, *graphostylistics* are hardly represented in the corpus. The only representation in this context is *@myplace* 'at my place':

(36) **A**: (…) smá reunion í kvöld **@myplace** (…)[38]

5 Conclusion

Although the case study introduced in this paper is rather small, its findings illustrate significant characteristics of Icelandic CMC. Some of the features can be compared to previous research on modern Icelandic language use, which have discussed the recent influence of globalization on Icelandic (e.g. Hilmarsson-Dunn & Ari Páll Kristinsson 2010). For example, Leonard & Kristján Árnason (2011:96) state: "From both the speaker's and the language planners' perspective, the enthusiasm for insisting on the ideology of linguistic purism appears to have begun to wane over the last 20 years."

English words and phrases are not a characteristic of CMC in particular as lexical borrowing is a general tendency in informal Icelandic. Ásta Svavardóttir for example argues that English borrowings are more frequent in informal language than in formal language (cf. Ásta Svavardóttir 2004:175). The use of English expressions and of interjections in the corpus thus reflects informal language use in Icelandic CMC.

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[38] In (36), A proposes to meet at his/her place.

The English borrowings reveal various patterns concerning their adaption to Icelandic grammar and orthography. Some borrowings are orthographically adapted with few or no exceptions (*næs*), whereas in other cases adaption seems to be a matter of personal choice (*shit* or *sjitt*). Computer and Internet related terms are adapted grammatically, by adding inflectional endings, but do not follow the rules of Icelandic phoneme-grapheme correspondence (*like-a*, *likinu*, *browserinn*). It has been argued that English is the dominant language of computers and of the Internet and that borrowings in these settings are often positively perceived (cf. Hanna Óladóttir 2009). Hence, the preference for English spelling of such words is possibly connected to their semantic relation to the Internet or to Facebook.

Apart from English borrowings and interjections, strategies for the compensation of non-verbal communication strategies can be observed in the material, including emoticons, verbalized laughter, written prosody and expressive punctuation. These strategies are cross-linguistic phenomena of CMC that have sometimes been considered to be the only "real" linguistic innovation of the Internet (Androutsopoulos 2007:82). Finally, spelling deviations occur frequently in the corpus in the form of neglecting diacritics, upper case or punctuation. Two reasons may cause spelling deviations: The first reason may be technical limitations that arise when Facebook is used with smartphones that do not provide the Icelandic keyboard. The second reason may be that spelling rules are not prioritized in Facebook as the communication is informal and correct spelling is therefore considered to be less important.

As a fairly new phenomenon it cannot be foreseen yet where CMC is heading in Icelandic and what standards may evolve. Broader and deeper studies are needed to be able to make conclusions about patterns and generalizations. However, the elements and strategies introduced in this paper display significant deviations from other written varieties. Although CMC does not necessarily develop new linguistic features, it incorporates properties that in their combination may form a new variety of written Icelandic with regard to (informal) language use and new means of expression. Beyond that, CMC enables users to unfold their linguistic freedom and creativity in both verbal and non-verbal ways (cf. Smyck-Bhattacharjee 2006). The Internet therefore provides a fruitful new testing ground for the study of (informal) language use in modern Icelandic.

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Lykilorð

netsamskipti, íslenska, málbrigði, Internet

Keywords

computer-mediated communication, Icelandic, language variety, Internet

Útdráttur

Á undanförnum árum hefur þróast á Íslandi eins og víða annars staðar sýndarveruleiki til hliðar við raunveruleikann og í gagnkvæmum tengslum við hann. Internetið hefur vaxandi áhrif á líf Íslendinga með þeim samskiptamöguleikum sem það býður upp á. Aukið mikilvægi samskipta gegnum rafræna miðla hvetur til rannsókna á málnotkun við nýjar aðstæður. Því hefur verið haldið fram að netsamskipti (e. *computer-mediated communication*, CMC), þ.e.a.s. (gagnvirk) samskipti með stafrænum rafeindatækjum eins og tölvum og símum, samræmist ekki venjulegum viðmiðum ritmálsins þar sem málnotkunin lagi sig að nýjum möguleikum og takmörkunum. Markmið greinarinnar er að gefa innsýn í íslensk netsamskipti. Athugunin byggist á safni færslna úr virkum Facebook-hópi og valin dæmi úr efninu varpa ljósi á ýmis einkenni slíkra samskipta á íslensku. Meðal þeirra eru einkenni sem gjarnan eru tengd talmáli svo sem ensk lán, bæði stök orð og frasar, og upphrópanir. Einnig birtast einkenni sem endurspegla aðferðir til þess að koma til skila í riti hljómrænum og myndrænum þáttum munnlegra tjáskipta, t.d. tónfalli, áherslum og svipbrigðum, auk atriða sem spretta af þörf á að einfalda og flýta fyrir ritun. Þar sem margir þessara þátta víkja frá því sem hefur tíðkast í ritmáli almennt er því haldið fram að netsamskipti leiði til nýs afbrigðis af ritaðri íslensku.

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