

# Hey nørdar! Investigating Faroese-English Language Contact in Computer-Mediated Communication

## Hey nørdar! Føroyskt-enskt málamband í teldusamskipti

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### Abstract

The purpose of this empirical study is a detailed examination of the use of English nouns in the context of written Faroese in computer-mediated communication. The data is derived from one of the biggest Faroese online forums, *Kjak.org*. As this approach is unprecedented in the linguistic study of the Faroese language, the methodology will be based on comparable investigations into Faroese and other Scandinavian languages. However, the focus will be original in nature, due to the phenomena observed in the data. Paying attention to various variables that come into play in computer-mediated communication in general, such as the influence of features found in spoken language, as well as complex multilingualism, this paper will scrutinise aspects of both morphological and orthographical integration of English nouns. Most strikingly, unlike in previous studies on English loanwords in Faroese, the language material investigated here displays a wide range of creative ad-hoc strategies for solving a number of linguistic problems, such as the marking of morphological boundaries,

ad-hoc gender assignment, <ð> as a means of breaking the hiatus etc. As the virtual absence of normative pressure in computer-mediated communication seems to be pivotal in this context, the role of language ideology will also be discussed in this paper.

### Úrtak

Ætlanin við hesi empirisku rannsóknini er at gera eina nágreiniliga kanning av nýtsluni av enskum navnorðum í føroyskum skriftmáli. Kanningin byggir á teldusamskipti, og kemur tilfarið frá einum av teimum størstu føroysku online stöðunum, sum eru til, t.e. *Kjak.org*. Av tí at ein slík tilgongd til ensk lán ikki fyrr er gjørd, er kanningarhátturin heintaður frá líknandi kanningum av føroyskum og øðrum skandinaviskum málum, men kortini soleiðis, at fokus í greinini er serstakt, og kemur tað av teimum fyrbrigdum, sum koma fram í tilfarinum. Við at gáa um teir ymisku variablarar, sum hava týðning í samskipti við teldum alment, til dømis ávirkan frá talumálseyðkennum umframt ógviliga samansettum fleirmáli, so

hefur verið granskað væl og virðiliga í hesi greinini bæði, hvussu navnorðini eru tillagað til bendingarskipanina, og hvussu tey eru tillagað til skriftmyndina. Fram kemur sjónliga, og tað er ikki sætt fyrr í granskingini av enskum lánorðum í føroyskum, at fleiri kreativar ad-hoc loysnir eru valdar fyri at loysa ymiskar trupulleikar, sum markeringin av marki ímillum morfem, ad-hoc kynstillutanir og at <ð> verður sett inn í ljóðglopp o.s.fr. Av tí at normativt trýst næstan ikki er til staðar í teldusamskifti sum hesum, er leikluturin hjá málráktini eisini tikin til umrøðu.

## 1. Introduction

20 years ago, Jóansson (1997: 217) observed that “[o]nly some of the most recent not-naturalised loanwords do not comply with the [...] conventions [of Faroese spelling and grammar] so far; therefore they are in most cases avoided in the written language”. A decade later, Simonsen and Sandøy (2008: 60) hypothesised that the absence of certain inflectional forms in their data may have been caused by a reluctance on the part of the respective language user(s) to implement morphological modifications when the orthographic form of the loanword contained certain features such as a silent final <-e>, e.g. in *interface*. The purpose of this study is to investigate whether hypotheses like this one could be verified or falsified in the context of Faroese-English computer-mediated communication.

The results indicate that computer mediated communication (henceforth CMC) with its conceptionally oral nature does indeed exhibit strikingly different language use patterns. This paper also aims to demonstrate how CMC is a worthwhile re-

search area for those interested in getting an *in vitro* insight into ongoing contact-induced language change. From a sociolinguistic point of view, the results also confirm the fact that the Internet appears to be one of the strongest promoters of *English as a World language* (henceforth EWL) with regard to the Faroese speech community. So far, this has only been measured in terms of language attitudes by Jacobsen (2012: 68f.), who noted in his study that acceptance towards English loans and even a predilection for them over their Faroese equivalents was highest among those informants who owned a computer with Internet access.

The following research questions are central to this paper:

- a) To what extent and in which regards do Faroese language users in the context of CMC integrate English loanwords or code-switches into their mother-tongue? Which observations can be made regarding e.g. inflectional classes, gender assignment and orthographic adaptation processes?
- b) Does this linguistic nativisation occur more or less frequently in CMC than in the language material examined in previous studies (i.e. “traditional” print media such as newspapers or novels)? If so, why? Do notions of language ideology have any bearing on how foreign language material is treated by the Faroese in the context of CMC?

In order to find adequate answers, we will first explore the relationship between the two languages involved. Then, a distinc-

tion between code-switching and borrowing will be made, before CMC and its distinctive features will be outlined. In the main chapter 5, the language material will be analysed, with a particular focus on certain morphological and orthographic integration patterns. Finally, these will be summarised and discussed in the wider context of language contact, ideology, and change.

## 2. Contact between Faroese and English

During the Second World War, the Faroe Islands came into very close contact with the English speech community as they were occupied by the British from 1940 to 1945, whose military airbase in Vágur became the country's first and only civil airport in the 60s (Jóansson, 1997: 164). Their impact on the locals is not to be underestimated, since back then, the islands only counted around 30,000 native inhabitants (Jóansson, 1997: 164). Many loans from this era bear witness to the intimate language contact during that period (Jóansson, 1997: 164f.). In fact, the impact the English language has had on Faroese goes back further than the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In his comprehensive lexicological study, Jóansson (1997) lists loans that had entered the Faroese language even before the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Some of them are actually highly frequent in everyday usage – e.g. *trupul/trupulleiki* ‘trouble’, an old loan borrowed from between 1600 and 1800 (Thráinsson *et al.*, 2004: 446). Nevertheless, the most intense period of language contact between Faroese and English arguably started when the latter gained its status as

a world language in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the global spread of English has reached an unparalleled scale, since no other known language can be said to have had a gain of up to one-and-a-half to two billion speakers within a period of 400 years (Kachru, 1985: 11; Crystal, 2003: 110; Jenkins, 2003: 2; Melchers and Shaw, 2003: 8). English does not only act as a foreign language in many countries, but also serves intranational purposes in various social, cultural, commercial and educational domains (Berns, 1995: 8f.; Jenkins, 2003: 14). As it is used more often in non-native-speaker contexts than in those involving native speakers (Modiano, 1999: 22; Graddol, 2006: 29; Berns, 2009), it is best described as *English as a lingua franca* (henceforth ELF), i.e. “basically a mode of communication [...] which can have various varieties” and which “encompasses all types of communication among bilingual users of English in the Expanding Circle” (Cogo, 2008: 58).

ELF has entered Europe from two directions, namely *top-down* and *bottom-up* (Seidlhofer *et al.*, 2006: 5). In this context, the *top-down* dimension involves more or less officially institutionalised, normative language contact in all kinds of educational or professional domains; while *bottom-up* refers to the mostly unregulated contact at the individual level “through popular music, dance, sports, or computers” (Seidlhofer *et al.*, 2006: 5). Indeed, “[p]art of the explanation for the strength of the popularity of English is this synergy between top-down and bottom-up

processes” (Phillipson, 2003: 89). The Scandinavian countries can be regarded as a prime example of the extent to which EWL can permeate and dominate the mass media from below, its most important vehicle being products of popular culture such as TV series, movies and online entertainment (Preisler, 1999: 241f.). It is therefore not uncommon for native speakers of the same language, e.g. Danish, as studied by Preisler (1999: 241f.), or as will be shown in this study, Faroese, to routinely include English language material in their conversations.

Thus, English leaves its traces in the languages it comes into contact with. While its long-term effect is most visible in the form of lexical borrowings, one of the short-term manifestations is code-switching (Cogo, 2008: 58). Both will be the subject of the next section.

### 3. Borrowing vs. code-switching

*Code-switching* refers to the use of at least two different codes by bilinguals (or multilinguals) within one conversation or one text (Myers-Scotton, 2006: 239). It can either occur in consecutive turns between speakers, between sentences in the same speaker’s turn (inter-sentential), or within a sentence (intra-sentential or inter-clausal) (Myers-Scotton, 2006: 239). In this process, the different codes usually fulfil distinct functions (Treffers-Daller, 2009: 66f.). As the dominant code, the *matrix language* is the one providing the main morphosyntactic frame determining the *well-formedness* of a sentence (Myers-Scotton, 2006: 241, 243). The *embedded language* merely participates, mainly by

contributing lexical elements (Myers-Scotton, 2006: 243). In the present study, Faroese serves as the matrix language, while English fills the role of the embedded language.

In contrast, *lexical borrowing* is the incorporation of lexical items derived from one language, the *donor language*, into another, the *recipient language* (Myers-Scotton, 2006: 210f.). In the data analysed here, English acts as the donor language and Faroese as the recipient language.

There are two main types of borrowings: On the one hand, *established loans*, “which typically show full linguistic integration, native-language synonym displacement, and widespread diffusion, even among recipient-language monolinguals”, and on the other the so-called *ad-hoc* or *nonce-borrowings* (Poplack, 1993: 265). As the latter presuppose active knowledge of a second language (L2) on the part of the speaker, they can be regarded as code-switches, more precisely as insertions, which is how they will also be treated in this study (Poplack, 1993: 265; Muysken, 2000: 3, 5, 33, 64). Due to the status of ELF, the bilinguals’ average English language proficiency is rather high, so that some scholars even postulate a gradual bilingualism among ELF-users (cf. Mesthrie, 2006). One result of this is that fewer and fewer borrowings tend to be assimilated to L1-pronunciation patterns, so that the boundaries between code-switching and borrowing are becoming increasingly blurred. This becomes particularly obvious in the domain of CMC, whose main characteristics will be outlined in the following section.

#### 4. Computer-mediated communication

In the last two decades, the advent of the Internet and its influence on global communication has become a much researched object of study in a number of disciplines (Thurlow *et al.*, 2004: 20; Bodomo, 2010: Xf., 1; Georgakopoulou, 2011: 93). Its revolutionary impact on cultural life in the Western hemisphere can be compared to that of other communication technologies in the history of mankind, such as the printing press or the telephone, and has ushered in what is often referred to as the *Information Age* or *Knowledge Society* (Thurlow *et al.*, 2004: 26; Bodomo, 2010: XI, 1). Computer-mediated communication can be defined as

“the coding and decoding of linguistic and other symbolic systems between sender and receiver for information processing in multiple formats through the medium of the computer and allied technologies [...] and through media like the internet, email, chat systems, text messaging, YouTube, Skype, and many more to be invented” (Bodomo, 2010: 6).

Despite its multifaceted nature, a list of core-features of CMC can be drawn up with some confidence. These features are mostly based on the technical constraints and affordances of the production and reception conditions of the given technical framework(s) (cf. Clark and Brennan, 1991; Brennan and Lockridge, 2006). CMC thus tends to be multimodal (i.e. containing various forms of media), multi-codal (i.e. containing different codes, such

as symbols, icons, indices) and hypertextual (Thurlow *et al.*, 2004: 33; Bodomo, 2010: 117f.). Furthermore, CMC is typically characterised by its asynchronicity or its quasi-synchronicity, meaning that the exchanges are either all subject to time lags, however short, or that only part of the interaction is synchronous, while others are asynchronous (Thurlow *et al.*, 2004: 33; Bodomo, 2010: 117f.). Most notably, the boundaries between written and spoken language are fluid in CMC. Speaking in Koch and Oesterreicher’s (1985; 1994) terms, it is characterised by conceptional orality in a written medium (Thurlow *et al.*, 2004: 124–126; Georgakopoulou, 2011: 94f.). Another widely observed property is the extensive use of multilingual resources, especially with regard to EWL (Bodomo, 2010: XII, 2, 13f.; but cf. also Thurlow *et al.*, 2004 for linguistic diversity).

In order to explore the impact of EWL on Faroese in a CMC setting, a well-established form of communication within CMC (in German *Kommunikationsform*, cf. Dürscheid, 2005; also Herring, 2007), the *discussion forum*, was chosen to serve as a linguistic database. Such forums are generally marked by temporal asynchronicity<sup>1</sup>, their many-to-many participant structure, their social norms (also known as *netiquette*), as well as certain technical restrictions and affordances such as the possibility to use different codes (pictures, emoticons etc. besides language) and modes (embedding of e.g. video or audio files), or a function allowing users to directly quote other users. The different discussion threads are made up of individual user entries, comparable to turns in

spoken conversations, which usually, but not necessarily refer to previous entries in the discussion thread at hand. Generally, some prior planning in terms of content and style of the entries can be expected, and the users also have the possibility to edit their entries in hindsight.

The present corpus was compiled from *Kjak.org*, an independent Faroese discussion forum. Subdivided into different sub-forums, it covers a wide range of topics, such as politics, society, sports, philosophy, cooking and entertainment. More precisely, the data was retrieved from the sub-forum *Filmar, sendingar og telduspøl* ('Films, TV shows and computer games'). In this collection of different discussion threads, users talk about products of popular culture as found in some of the most extensively consumed forms of mass-media entertainment. Since these can be said to be a stronghold of Western and particularly Anglophone culture and hence a supreme domain of EWL (Seidlhofer *et al.*, 2006: 5), the English language can be expected to feature prominently in conversations revolving around popular culture conveyed by the mass media.

At the time of documentation, the sub-forum was comprised of 341 threads, which together were made up of 5158 individual entries, roughly spanning 4 years of user activity, amounting to roughly 580,000 tokens. From this database, 131 types and 942 tokens relevant to this study's purpose were extracted and analysed.

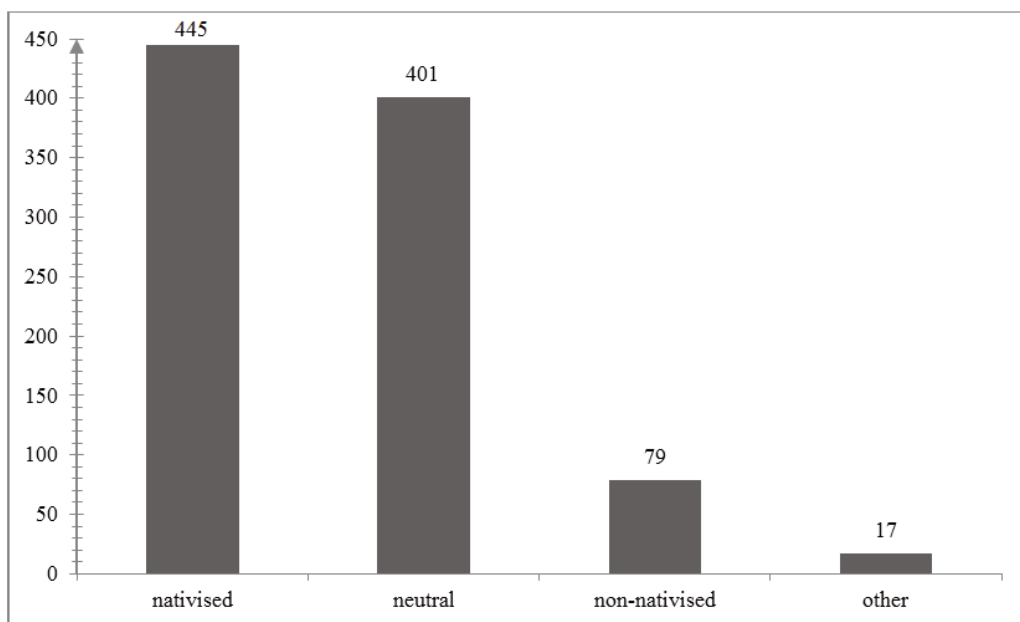
The entries on *Kjak.org* can be read by anyone with Internet access, so that the type of communication there can be clas-

sified as public (as opposed to private or semi-private). On the other hand, posting on the forum requires prior registration. Thus, the users cannot remain completely anonymous, but are nevertheless free to create a user profile that does not need to match their identity in real life, but may instead include pseudonyms, fictitious avatars and locations etc. Perusing *Kjak.org*, and particularly the sub-forums analysed here, one gets the impression of a rather close-knit online community in which the users are fairly familiar with one another – a fact also reflected by a relaxed and colloquial tone of discourse characterised by a mixture of both conceptionally written and oral features.

## 5. The study

The basic research variables of this case study are modelled on those investigated in Sandøy and Petersen's (2007) and Simonsen and Sandøy's (2008) studies. But instead of covering nouns, adjectives and verbs, the present focus will lie exclusively on nouns, since these constitute a) the most commonly borrowed lexical category (Thráinsson *et al.*, 2004: 446; Myers-Scotton, 2006: 210) and b) are most likely to be subject to a highly diverse and complex range of nativisation processes, whereas imported adjectives usually remain uninflected in Scandinavian languages, and verbs tend to be subject to regular integration patterns (Svavarsdóttir, 2007: 30f.).

Most of the lexemes in the present corpus are simplex lexemes, while compounds were only taken into account if their headwords were borrowed from English, not just their modifying elements.



**Fig. 1.** Overall morphological integration (n = 942)

Furthermore, proper names, be it of persons, computer games, TV shows, movies, countries etc. were not taken into account. The only exception was made for a small group of highly frequent and morphologically partly integrated product names, namely *Mac*, *Macbook*, *Wii* and *Xbox*. Furthermore, the name of the free encyclopaedia *Wikipedia* was included as well on grounds that will be explained later (chap. 5.1.2). Another rather problematic group, which was nevertheless included, is that of abbreviations, including both acronyms such as *RAM* and initialisms such as *URL*. Finally, a small group of internationalisms with orthographically partly nativised Danish variants was included due to the fact that their spelling often revealed them to be directly influenced by English orthographic norms.

### 5.1. Morphology

In order to fit in with the Faroese paradigm of nominal inflection, English nouns need to be integrated with respect to several morphologically marked grammatical categories, i.e. gender, number, case, all of which are structured according to several declension classes, and furthermore definiteness, with the enclitic definite article in turn inflecting for gender, number, and case.

The vast majority of tokens are evenly distributed among two categories, *nativised* (n = 445) and *neutral* (n = 401). The former comprises all the tokens which are overtly integrated into Faroese grammar by means of inflectional suffixes (cf. Simonsen and Sandøy, 2008: 52), e.g. English *the snobs* → Faroese *snobbarnir*. These make up 47% of the entire number

of tokens. By contrast, *neutral* tokens are those which do not need any such overt inflectional modification in order to fit in with Faroese inflectional patterns (cf. Simonsen and Sandøy, 2008: 52). These include for example all indefinite M./F./N.Acc.Sg. forms, such as the following, since they are usually bare stems in Faroese as well:

- (1) *Eg sendi eitt link<sup>2</sup> til hendan trádin<sup>3</sup> til Elding.*  
'I sent a link(N.Acc.Sg.)<sup>4</sup> to this thread to Elding.'
- (2) *'TheRing' hevur 7, okkurt í rating.*  
'The Ring' has a rating(F.Acc.Sg.) of 7, something.'
- (3) *havi annars ein chip í mínari gomlu PS1*  
'by the way, I've got a chip(M.Acc.Sg.) in my old PS1'

The number of *non-nativised* tokens, i.e. nouns that remain unchanged despite requiring the compulsory addition of inflectional morphemes to mark agreement in case, number and gender, is comparatively low (8%). The fact that the number of morphologically marked nouns is higher than that of neutral nouns stands in contrast to Simonsen and Sandøy's (2008: 60f.) findings: In their corpus compiled from newspapers, the number of neutral forms was twice as high as the number of those forms that were morphologically nativised. This could arguably be due to different media characteristics, especially with regard to normative pressure, which tends to be higher in traditional print media than in CMC. In the next chapters, a selection of findings will be discussed, starting with an

analysis of the grammatical categories gender and number.

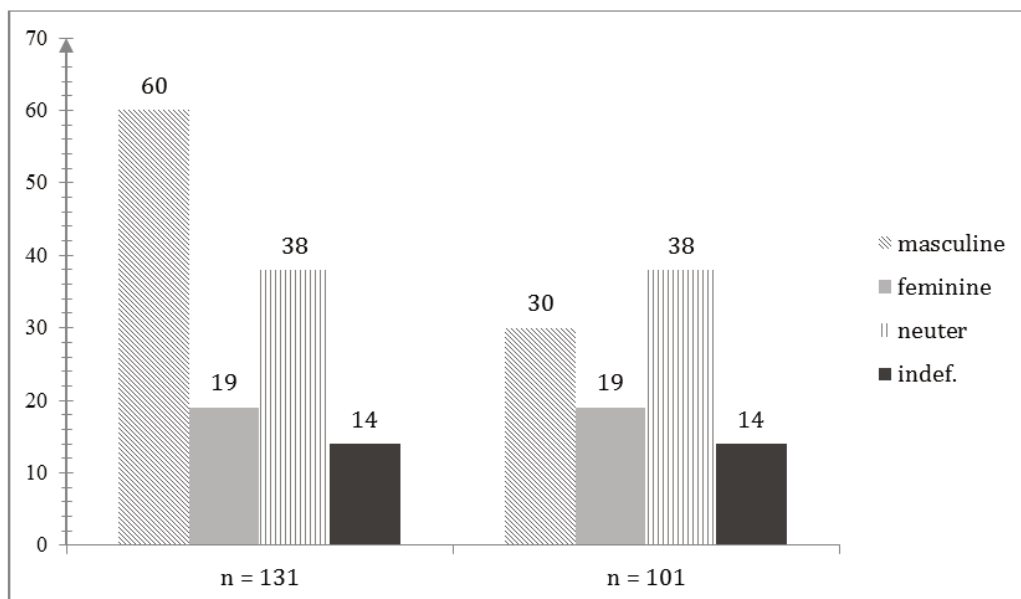
### 5.1.1. Gender

Typologically speaking, there are two major gender assignment systems. On the one hand, the so-called *natural gender systems* (Corbett, 1991: 9), i.e. semantic systems "where semantic factors are sufficient on their own account for assignment" (Corbett, 1991: 8), for example where males are referred to with masculine nouns and females with feminine nouns (cf. also Wagner, 2005: 222). This is what we find in the present-day standard varieties of English<sup>5</sup>, where gender manifests itself along a male/female divide, as well as an animacy scale (Baugh and Cable, 2002: 11; Wagner, 2005: 225, 233). While higher animals and humans are referred to with *he*, *she* and *who*, lower animals and inanimates are referred to with *it* and *which*<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, gender is generally a covert category in English, i.e. it is not formally encoded on the nouns themselves<sup>7</sup>.

On the other hand, Faroese has the markings of *formal gender assignment systems*, i.e. systems in which "gender is determined to a large extent by formal criteria" (Wagner, 2005: 222). These criteria or rules are usually phonological or morphological (Wagner, 2005: 222).

As a basic principle, "neither strict semantic nor strict formal systems seem to exist" (Corbett, 1991: 63). Mixed systems are predominant among the world's languages, but even in formal systems, "gender always has a basis in semantics" (Corbett, 1991: 63), so that in case of assignment rule conflicts, "semantic considera-





**Fig. 2.** Dominant gender assignment by type (n = 131: all types, n = 101: agent nouns relativised)

tions normally take precedence” (Wagner, 2005: 222f.). This phenomenon is known as the *Core Semantic Override Principle*, according to which, “grammatical gender equals biological sex” (Petersen, 2009: 20, 63, 304). This general gender assignment hierarchy is also used in Faroese, i.e. semantic assignment rules (SAR) take precedence over morphological assignment rules (MAR), which in turn rank higher than phonological assignment rules (PAR) (Petersen, 2009: 306). For example, one fundamental Faroese SAR states that “nouns denoting persons are m.” (Petersen, 2009: 152). Another rule states that “human beings of both or unknown sexes are neuter” as in *barn* ‘child(N.)’, *meniskja* ‘human(N.)’, or *fólk* ‘people(N.)’ (Petersen, 2009: 164).

In the analysed corpus, neuter is predominant among the types (n = 38) if the large group of agent nouns (as for instance English *designer* → Faroese *designari*(M.) is relativised<sup>8</sup>, reducing the total number of masculine types by 50% from n = 60 to n = 30 (cf. Fig. 2). This confirms Petersen’s (2009: 89f., 112) assumption that neuter is the default gender at word-level, as well as his observation that it manifests itself particularly in the context of borrowing.

This finding may be regarded as further evidence for the precedence of the default neuter rule. Once more, some aspects of these findings are similar to those of Simonsen and Sandøy (2008: 60), who noted a significant affinity for strong neuter among imported nouns, most likely be-

cause they require the least amount of morphological integration, so that many borrowed nouns can remain unchanged without violating Faroese grammar. The following sub-sections will give a detailed account of how some of the abovementioned gender assignment rules are at work in the present corpus.

### 5.1.1.1. Masculine nouns

As explained in the previous section, masculine nouns constitute the second largest group of types in the present corpus if the high number of agent nouns is relativised. In most instances, their gender could possibly be influenced by their Danish counterparts, as illustrated in the following:

- (4) *topp 100 kool Odmar... ger ein blogg um tað eisini.*  
‘top 100 cool Odmar... make a blog (M.Acc.Sg.) about that as well’
- (5) *So tá hesir snobbarnir viðmæla ein film, ið í roynd og veru er góður*  
‘So when those snobs(M.Nom.Pl.Def.) review a film which is actually good’

*Blog* is a common gender noun in Danish, so that it is equally likely to either become masculine or feminine in Faroese. Throughout the present corpus, however, there is a clear tendency for Danish common gender nouns to be assigned masculine rather than feminine gender. The gender assignment in *snob*, which is either common gender or neuter in Danish, can be explained with reference to one of the central SAR in Faroese, which is “nouns denoting persons are masculine”. According to the assignment hierarchy, SAR are

most likely to override all the other rules, in this case either the default neuter rule or the PAR “monosyllabic nouns are neuter”.

Some nouns clearly violate the formal rule that no masculine noun in the nominative singular can have a zero-ending or a consonantal ending other than [l], [n], [ɹ] and be masculine (cf. also Petersen, 2009: 301), as witnessed by the following example:

- (6) *Men hatta var ein áhugaverdur gimmick, back in the day.*  
‘But that was an interesting gimmick(M.Nom.Sg.), back in the day.’

This could either have been solved by suffixing the aforementioned gender marker *-ur*, or by assigning a different gender, especially since Danish *gimmick* is common gender and thus could also have become feminine in Faroese.

- (7) *Bloggur í stuttum (og til stuttleika) um film.*  
‘A brief (and fun) blog(M.Nom.Sg.) about films.’
- (8) *helst um har býr ein litil sci-fi nördur í tær*  
‘especially if there is a little sci-fi nerd (M.Nom.Sg.) inside of you’
- (9) *hvar er stylisturin???*  
‘where is the stylist(M.Nom.Sg. Def.)???’

Both *blog* and *nörd* are common-gender nouns in Danish, with the assignment for *nördur* and *stylistur* being further motivated by the SAR “nouns denoting persons are masculine”.

- (10) *So hvat hasin **dudurin** goggar um er fyri meg ikki ordeliga klárt.*  
 ‘So what this dude(M.Nom.Sg.) is blabbing on about is not entirely clear to me.’

As the lexeme *dude* shows a great amount of morphological and orthographic variation throughout the corpus<sup>9</sup>, it may be classified as a code-switch rather than a borrowing. The user’s decision to add the gender marker is based on the same motivation as the two previous examples, the word-level semantic rule “nouns denoting persons are masculine”.

In some cases, neither of these rules can be said to have a bearing on the user’s gender assignment, as witnessed by the next token:

- (11) *men tan fyrsti **patch’urin** er komin, og hjálpur uppá tað.*  
 ‘but the first patch(M.Nom.Sg.) has been released and is clearing that up.’

*Patch* is neither lexicalised in *Den Danske Ordbog* (Hjorth *et al.*, 2013), nor is it covered by any semantic rule, so the motivation for this particular choice of gender is not readily deducible.

### 5.1.1.2. Neuter nouns

Relatively speaking, neuter nouns constitute the largest group of types in the present corpus. One particular sub-group whose gender assignment is solidly predictable is that of well-established monosyllabic loans that have also been assigned neuter gender in Danish. This is the case for *link*, which actually also has a phono-

logically and orthographically integrated Faroese variant, *leinki*(N.)

- (12) *liggji sjúk heima og tók synd í mær sjálvari... inntil eg sá **linkið** hjá tær!!*  
 ‘I’m at home sick and was feeling sorry for myself... until I saw your link(N.Acc. Sg.Def.)’

As a rule, all monosyllabic nouns in this corpus that can be counted as code-switches, or at least do not qualify as well-established loans, have a distinct tendency to become neuter. Two more examples:

- (13) *og eg tori at vedda uppá at Klovn **crewið** hevur heinta íblástur úr Curb.*  
 ‘and I dare to bet that the Klovn crew(N.Nom.Sg.Def.) was inspired by Curb.’
- (14) *Men tað er ein sjangra-allir independant filmar hava ikki hatta **feelið**.*  
 ‘But that’s a genre – not all independent movies have this feel(N.Acc.Sg.Def.)’

In the next example, several rules are likely to have governed gender assignment:

- (15) *Veit nakar um eina online-versión, har **“ghost’ini”** hava sama “movement pattern” sum í Arcade versiónini?*  
 ‘Does anybody know whether there is an online version where the “ghosts”(N.Nom.Pl.Def.) have the same movement pattern as in the Arcade version?’

Apart from being monosyllabic (PAR) and arguably ranking low on the animacy hier-

archy (SAR) and hence unlikely to receive masculine or feminine gender, *ghost* is also likely to have been assigned neuter gender as a result of semantic analogy: Faroese ‘ghost’, *spøkilsí*, is neuter as well.

### 5.1.1.3. Feminine nouns

(16) *Havi annars spæld demoið og tað er heilt gott.*

‘By the way, I’ve played the demo (N.Acc.Sg.Def.) and it’s really good.’

As an abbreviation of *demonstration*, *demo* is a common gender noun in Danish; on account of MAR “all Danish nouns ending on -sion/tion are common gender” (Petersen, 2009: 253f.). These would regularly become feminine in Faroese (Petersen, 2009: 253f.). However, <-o>=/o/ in the final position is a formal property that can also trigger neuter gender assignment as in *foto* ‘photo(N.)’ (Petersen, 2009: 254).

In this study, this potential assignment conflict was often resolved in favour of feminine gender, as most tokens on -o preserved the gender of the unabbreviated form of the respective lexeme (e.g. *demonstración*(F.) → *demo*(F.)).

(17) *Eg fari at ogná mær Starter Kit’ina, sum er bilig.*

‘I am going to acquire the Starter Kit(F.Acc.Sg.Def.), which is cheap.’

Since Danish *kit* is neuter, and phonologically similar Faroese words like *kitt* ‘putty(N.)’, *splitt* ‘discord(N.)’ or *spritt* ‘liquor(N.)’ also fall into this gender class, another explanation needs to be found.

One could be the user’s attempt to disambiguate *kit* from native *kitt*, although this seems rather unlikely in the given context. Alternatively, it could be interpreted as an instance of semantic analogy, which causes the gender of an already existing native lexeme to be transferred to a synonymous or otherwise semantically closely related lexeme, both native and non-native (Petersen, 2009: 104, 276; cf. also example (15)). Here, the most likely candidate would be *útgerð* ‘equipment(F.)’. By the same token, English *quest* may have become feminine in analogy to Faroese *leitan* ‘quest(F.)’:

(18) *til skinner murders questina í BG2.*

‘until the skinner murders quest (F.Acc.Sg.Def.) in BG2.’

Similarly, native Faroese *boks* ‘box(F.)’ is likely to have caused the predominant gender assignment for *Xbox*, as illustrated in the following:

(19) *Eg havi tað sjálvur á Xbox’ini.*

‘I’ve got it on the Xbox(F.Dat.Sg.Def.) myself.’

Furthermore, there are also morphological rules which determine feminine gender. One states that action nouns ending on the deverbal suffix -ing in Faroese are feminine, as witnessed below:

(20) *Rás2 heimasíðan hevur einki online tilfar uttan live streamingina*

‘The Rás2 homepage has no online content other than livestreaming(F.Acc.Sg.Def.)’

However, only few types in the present corpus have a clear-cut gender affiliation. In many cases, gender assignment seems to be rather unstable and thus open to ad-hoc negotiation, as will be shown in the next paragraph.

#### 5.1.1.4. *Indecisive gender assignment*

Double gender is a phenomenon not only restricted to loanwords, but one that can and often does occur among native nouns as well (cf. Petersen, 2009: 255f.). In the present corpus, vacillating gender in English loans or code-switches constitutes the rule rather than the exception. This is the case because the tokens associated with most types show considerable variation in that respect, making it necessary to determine the “dominant” rather than the “absolute” gender for each type. At least in this particular segment of CMC, the aforementioned assignment rules and their hitherto observed hierarchy do not appear to act as fully reliable predicators for gender assignment. Sometimes, there is even intra-individual variation. The following entry was made by user “shooter”:

- (21) *Áðrenn eg startaði spælið aftur installeraði eg nýggja patchið manuelt.*  
‘Before restarting the game, I installed the new patch(N.Acc.Sg.Def.) manually.’

In answer to this, another user, “Polrw”, writes:

- (22) *Hevur tú patchin?*  
‘Do you have the patch(M.Acc.Sg.Def.)?’

To which “shooter” replies:

- (23) *Ja, mín batnaði eisini aftaná patchin, men tað kemur fyri viðhvørt tó.*  
‘Yes, mine also improved after the patch(M.Acc.Sg.Def.), but that does happen occasionally.’

User “shooter” starts out assigning neuter gender to *patch*, but then switches to masculine instead. A few exchanges later, however, he reverts to using neuter again:

- (24) *So inntil viðari eri eg ikki glaður, men vónandi fara patchini at gera tað sötari.*  
‘So for the time being I am not happy, but hopefully the patches(N.Nom.Pl. Def.) will make it better.’

A third user had opted for feminine (*patch'ina*(F.Acc.Sg.Def.)) gender instead. From this, it becomes obvious how inherent features such as gender are sometimes negotiated on the spot and subject to *inter-speaker convergence*, the process in which a language user consciously or subconsciously attunes their linguistic behaviour to that of their interlocutor(s) (cf. Giles *et al.*, 1991).

Actually, there is strong evidence that variation according to the user appears to be yet another variable that needs to be factored into gender assignment. Considering the fact that *patch* is a code-switch rather than a loanword, this gender instability becomes a bit more understandable. Most of the nouns discussed so far can be categorised as belonging to strong inflectional classes. Their weak counterparts will be discussed in the next section.

### 5.1.1.5. Weak nouns

One of the most striking results of this study is the scarcity of weak-class nouns as opposed to the strong nouns discussed so far, i.e. masculine class 5 nouns ending on *-i* such as *granni* ‘neighbour(M.)’ (Thráinsson *et al.*, 2004: 81f.), feminine class 5 nouns on *-a* following the paradigm of e.g. *tunga* ‘tongue(F.)’ (Thráinsson *et al.*, 2004: 89f.), and neuter class 3 nouns ending on *-a* like *eyga* ‘eye(N.)’ (Thráinsson *et al.*, 2004: 85). The only exception includes agent or instrument nouns on *-ari* which fall into the weak masculine declension class 5 (Thráinsson *et al.*, 2004: 81f.). The fact that the weak declension paradigms are the most regular ones begs the question as to why only a small number of loans were converted into these classes, as can be seen below:

(25) *Sambaert Wikipediú so hevir Anton Yelchin (Chekov) sáttmála um at gera tveir filmar afturat*

‘According to Wikipedia(F.Dat.Sg.), Anton Yelchin (Chekov) has a contract for two more movies’

(26) *hetta er mín yndlings Benny Hill sketcha!*

‘this is my favourite Benny Hill sketch (F.Nom.Sg.)!’

(27) *So missur mann eina kotu burtur*

‘Then you lose a code(F.Acc.Sg.)’

In some cases, the loan already exhibits a suitable formal feature in its original form, i.e. it ends on *-a* (F./N.) as in *Wikipedia* or *-i* (M./N.). This feature has been re-analysed in (25) as the declension class marker of a weak feminine class 5 noun,

which regularly becomes *-u* in the accusative and dative singular (Thráinsson *et al.*, 2004: 89f.). Conversely, the author of (25) could have categorised *Wikipedia* as a neuter class 3 noun whose declension marker is *-a* for all cases in the singular (Thráinsson *et al.*, 2004: 85). By contrast, (26) and (27) do not have any such formal trait at first glance. However, according to one PAR, common gender nouns ending on <-e> in Danish such as *adresse* ‘address(U.)’ are regularly converted to class 5 feminine nouns, i.e. *adressa* ‘address(F.)’, or as in (27) Danish *kode* ‘code(U.)’ → Faroese *kota* ‘code(F.)’ (Pettersen, 2009: 253f.). *Sketch* (26), on the other hand, does not bear any formal resemblance to class 5 weak nouns.

The biggest group of weak nouns in this corpus is that of agent or instrument nouns, which ties in with the findings from previous studies on recent loans (Thráinsson *et al.*, 2004: 447). In English, these are derived from verbs by affixing the morpheme *-(e)r* as in *to compute* → *computer*, *to rock* → *rocker*. Their Faroese equivalents are formed with the derivational suffix *-ari* and belong to the weak masculine class 5 (Thráinsson *et al.*, 2004: 82; Pettersen, 2009: 235). Examples from the corpus include:

(28) *um man hugsar sum ein 15 ára gamal babyrockari/skatari*

‘if you think like a 15-year-old baby-rocker/skater(M.Nom.Sg.)’

(29) *Ein av mínum yndis-bloggerum Dan O’Brien*

‘One of my favourite bloggers(M.Dat.Pl.), Dan O’Brien’

- (30) *Meini eisini at nærum allir browsarar eisini hava filtur sum man kann velja.*  
‘I also believe that almost every browser(M.Nom.Pl.) also has filters you can choose.’
- (33) *Hippie’arar ávegis til Mardi Gras á motorsúkklu.*  
‘Hippies(M.Nom.Pl.) on motorcycles on their way to Mardi Gras.’

Apart from those regularly integrated agent nouns, there is a group of lexemes which can be referred to as morphological pseudo-Anglicisms, because their derivation is not a native process, but rather one that only takes place once the original English lexeme has been imported into the recipient language. In other words, pseudo-Anglicisms denote lexical material which is transferred from English into another language and used in a non-native way (Koll-Stobbe, 2009: 25f.).

Thus, English *to cast* → Danish *caster* → Faroese *castari* ‘a person in charge of casting(M.)’ is a Danish pseudo-Anglicism:

- (31) *hvussu hart arbeiði tað er hjá castar-unum á X Factor?*  
‘how hard the casters(M.Dat.Pl.Def.) for X-Factor have to work?’

*Hostari* in (32) as derived from English *host* may well be a genuine Faroese pseudo-Anglicism, since *\*hoster* is not codified in Danish:

- (32) *Hvar hostarin er, og hvar allir spælarnir koma frá.*  
‘Where the host(M.Nom.Sg.Def.) is, and where all the players come from.’

Finally, *hippie* appears to have been given similar treatment.

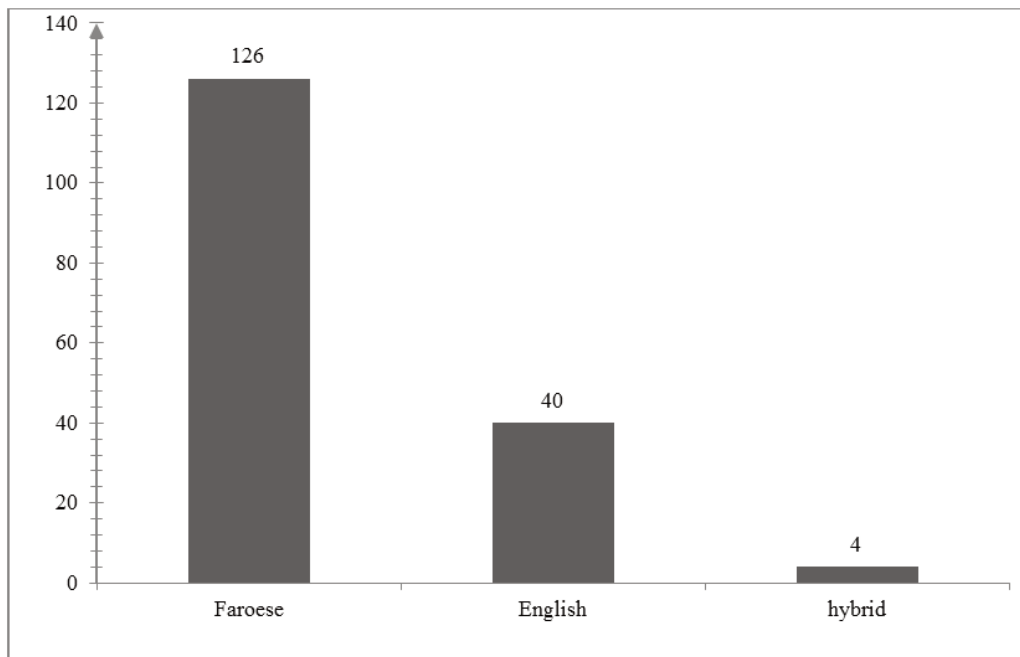
All in all, this tendency to create agent nouns from semantically suitable English loans seems to be a phenomenon worthy of further research. It could be the generalisation of a SAR, since prototypically, *-ari* nouns denote persons, so *-ari* may be overgeneralised as a suffix for English borrowings with the semantic feature PERSON. Something similar also has been observed in Icelandic by Svavarsdóttir (2007: 38) for English *hit* → Icelandic *hittari*.

### 5.1.2. Number

In Simonsen and Sandøy’s study (2008: 61), the percentage of native plural forms (58%) is lower than the results found in this study (78%). However, it needs to be pointed out that this comparison is rather tenuous on account of the considerably lower number of pluralic tokens in their corpus: 26 vs. 170 in the present one (cf. Fig. 3).

The largest part of the plural morphemes suffixed to English nouns in the present corpus are Faroese ones, while roughly a fourth agrees with English pluralic *-(e)s*, as illustrated by the following examples:

- (34) *Italiensk tala, ongar explotiónir, ongar babes og eingir feitir one-liners.*  
‘Italian audio track, no explosions, no babes and no fat one-liners(M.Nom.Pl.)’
- (35) *Annars er tað sjórænara vikin<sup>10</sup>, har ein*



**Fig. 3.** Plural morphemes (n = 170)

*kann fiska eftir torrents.*

‘Apart from that, The Pirate Bay is the place to fish for torrents(M./F./N.Pl.).’

In four cases, the English plural morpheme *-s* was kept despite the addition of adequate Faroese plural morphemes:

(36) *Eins og homofoba redneck’sarnir í endanum*

‘Just like the homophobe rednecks (M.Nom.Pl.Def.) at the end.’

(37) *Og Frakland er mær vitandi ikki tann stóri produsenturin av banalum poppp-korn flicksum.*

‘And as far as I know, France is not a major producer of trivial popcorn flicks(M./F./N.Dat.Pl.).’

The two code-switches in (36) and (37) contain a triple plural marking with the English *-s*, the Faroese M.Nom.Pl. *-ar*, and the enclitic Faroese article M.Nom.Pl. *-nir*. This is reminiscent of the process by which some English lexemes are imported in their plural form, a fairly common phenomenon, especially in the Mainland Scandinavian languages. Examples include English *tip* → Norwegian *tips* ‘tip(N.Sg.)’, where the *-s* has been re-analysed as belonging to the stem, thus producing a new, extended singular form with a fossilised, non-morphemic *-s*, e.g. *et tips* (known also as *klipsord* in Norwegian or *kepsbildningar* in Swedish).

At first glance, a number of pluralic nouns do not appear to receive any mor-



pheme at all. However, it could be argued that they have actually been accorded a zero morph in the nominative or accusative plural, marking them as neuter nouns as illustrated in the following two examples:

(38) *Allar stjornur hava slík gimmick sum skilja tey burtur úr mongdini.*

‘Every star has such gimmicks (N.Nom.Pl.) which set them apart from the crowd.’

(39) *So har eru ymisk hint*

‘So here are various hints(N.Nom.Pl.)’

While the zero plural is a regular allomorph for neuter nouns, it is unusual for masculine and feminine nouns. Sandøy and Petersen (2007: 61) observed that some of the participants in their survey

seemed to use this paradigm for lexemes like *airbag*. In the present study, only two tokens clearly fitting this pattern could be found – an unmarked masculine and a feminine plural, one an initialism, the other a product name:

(40) *Keypti mær fyrr í ár tveir Nietzsche DVD*

‘I bought two Nietzsche DVDs (M.Acc.Pl.) earlier this year’

(41) *allur xbox fingið 3 árs garanti og tær xbox ið blíva gjørdar ídag hava nýtt chip set sum skuldi forða fyri RROD.*

‘All Xboxes(F.Nom.Pl.) have got a 3-year warranty, and those(F.Nom.Pl.) Xboxes that are being made nowadays have a new chip set that should prevent RROD.’

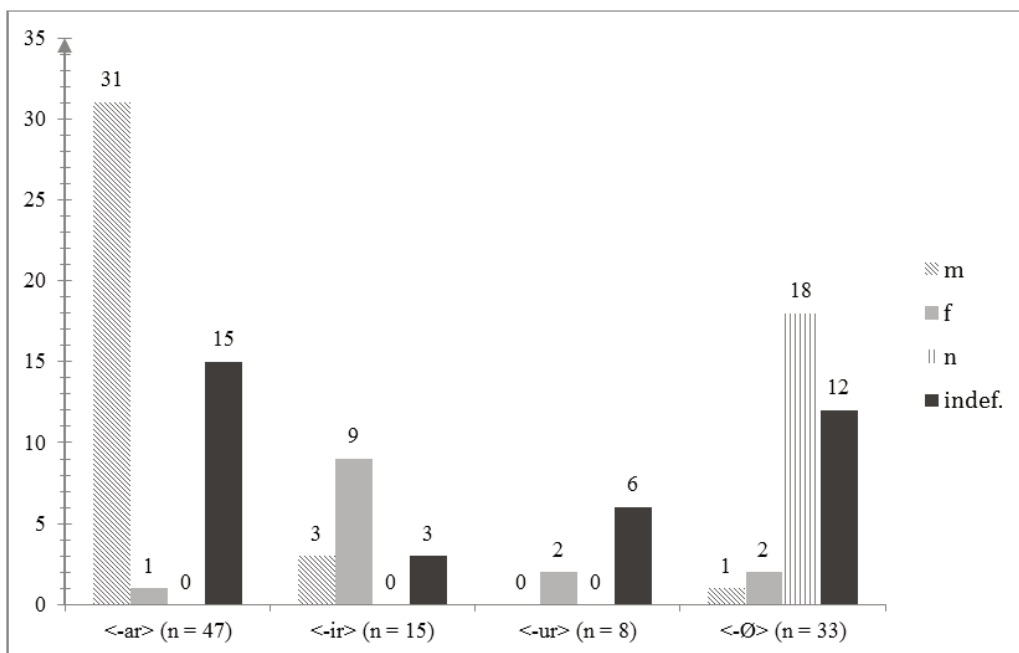


Fig. 4. Faroese plural suffixes by gender (n = 126)

With a total of 47 tokens, *-ar* is by far the most commonly used plural-suffix in this corpus (cf. Fig. 4). It is followed by the zero morph  $-\emptyset$  with 33 instances, 18 of them clearly marking neuter nouns, while only three of the remaining ones could be categorised as masculine or feminine. In third and fourth place are *-ir* and *-ur*, with 15 and eight tokens respectively, both of them dominantly marking feminine lexemes.

In his statistical analysis of native language material, Petersen (2009: 209) had previously arrived at a more or less identical distribution.

### 5.1.3. Unexpected patterns

Since regional variation is a characteristic feature of modern Faroese, with several dialects dotted around the country's numerous isles (Thráinsson *et al.*, 2004: 339f.), and due to the lack of an official spoken standard, it is not surprising to find instances of spoken Faroese transferred to its written form in CMC. This can be seen in the plural allomorphs of agent nouns. There is a clear split between spoken and written usage: Whilst the written standard only allows *-ar* for marking the plural of agent nouns on *-ari*, most Faroese use the allomorph *-ir* when speaking. However, as spoken and written language are not independent, but rather interdependent, properties from one may well cross over to another and vice versa. In the following examples, the non-standard, oral allomorph *-ir* replaces the standard *-ar*, illustrating the closeness of CMC to spoken usage.

- (42) *hattar passar sum tú sigur; at flestu gamarir hata ea*  
'what you say is true, that most gamers(M.Nom.Pl.) hate EA'  
(43) *Allir tit "popparir" mugu síggja Dead Of Night.*  
'All you "poppers"(M.Nom.Pl.) ought to see Dead Of Night.'

Another deviation from regular Faroese declension paradigms was observed in strong masculine and neuter nouns. These have in common that they require the case marker *-i* in the dative singular<sup>11</sup>. However, in some cases, this suffix does not appear:

- (44) *Sigames hava longu gjørt nógvur forbetringar; ið eru úti við einum patch.*  
'Sigagames have long since made many improvements which have been released in a patch(M./N.Dat.Sg.).'  
(45) *Reint krimi-doku, við einum feitum twist i endanum.*  
'Pure crime-thriller docu with a fat twist(M./N.Dat.Sg.) at the end.'

In two instances, the users violate a straightforward MAR: Faroese action nouns ending on *-ing* are always feminine. However both for *streaming* and *rating*, neuter was chosen instead, as in:

- (46) *Annars, so er tað sjáldan at teir nýggju horror filmar fáa høgt rating*  
'Otherwise, those new horror movies rarely get high ratings(N.Acc.Sg.).'  
(47) *Lógligt streaming á netinum*  
'Legal online streaming(N.Nom.Sg.).'

This may be yet another indicator of the default neuter rule, which seems to be able to override any other rule, especially MAR and PAR, while there are no clear cases of SAR being superseded in favour of default neuter. Comparable observations were made by Petersen, when he identified over 500 neuter nouns ending on *-i* in *Donsk-føroysk orðabók* (1995) like *kaffi*, *poesi*, *pedofili*, which he considers as evidence “to confirm that neuter is default at the word-level, as other motivations for the change are hard to find” (Petersen, 2009: 108).

## 5.2. Orthography

### 5.2.1. Vocalic and consonantal integration

Overall, orthographic integration occurs much less frequently than morphological nativisation in the present corpus, and it does so with a much higher degree of variation. As illustrated in Fig. 5, 63% (n = 598) remain unchanged, despite violating Faroese orthographic norms, 15% (n = 142) are neutral, and only the remaining 21% (n = 202) show signs of adaptation in their spelling.

Once more, this ties in with Simonsen and Sandøy’s (2008: 73) observations. Actual orthophone integration is very rare, and most tokens are only partly adapted to

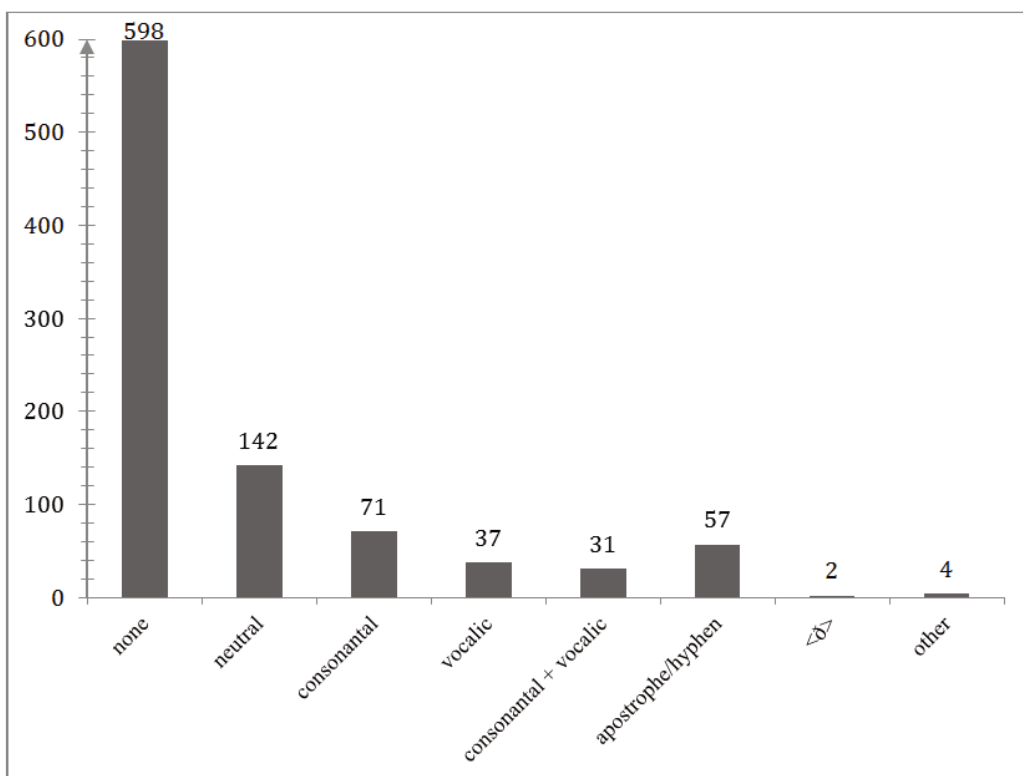


Fig. 5. Overall orthographic integration (n = 942)

Faroese orthographic norms. The findings also confirm Jóansson's (1997: 39) observation that most of the recent loans are not naturalised, at least orthographically, and even less of them are codified, despite their fairly common currency.

However, English <c>/k/ is sometimes replaced with Faroese <k>/k/ (as in (48)), while English <c>/s/ is substituted with the orthophone native <s>/s/ (as in (49)). In (50), the grapheme <c> is exchanged for <k> since <c> is not part of the Faroese alphabet (Poulsen *et al.*, 1998).

(48) *Allar **konsolinar** og nú eisini PSP Go og iPhone hava smá downloadable spøl.*

'All consoles and now PSP Go and iPhone, too, have small downloadable games.'

(49) *Serian gongur út pá, at Tina Fey er **produsarin** á eini skemtirøð*

'The series is centred on Tina Fey as the producer of a comedy series'

(50) *Og eisini eitt tað feitasta **soundtrakki** NAKRANTÍÐ!*

'And it also has the most awesome soundtrack EVER'

In (51), the palatoalveolar affricate /tʃ/, which both languages have in common, and which in the English lexeme is realised graphemically as <ch>, is replaced by the native grapheme combination <tj>, as in *tjaldur* or *fitjing*.

(51) *har eru 5 **sketjir** tilsamans*

'Here are altogether 5 sketches.'

(52) *Robert Downey jr. dugir eisini sítt **sjitt**<sup>12</sup>.*

'Robert Downey, Jr. also knows his shit.'

In (52), the English grapheme-morpheme correspondence <sh>/ʃ/ is replaced with Faroese <sj>/ʃ/. In word-initial position preceding <i>/i/, it is actually very rare and can only be found in other integrated loans such as <sjimpansa> 'chimpanzee' or <sjitur> 'Shiite'. The unmarked rendition would be <sk> as in <skinn> 'skin', <skip> 'ship' etc. Possibly, this spelling was chosen in order to avoid confusion with Faroese <skit>/<skittur> 'dirt, excrement, shit' and thus to achieve semantic differentiation. In addition, this token has undergone a gemination of final <t> to <tt> in order to satisfy the syllable quantity rule<sup>13</sup> and to represent /<sup>h</sup>t:/.

Vowel adaptation is far less common than its consonantal counterpart. This may be explained by the fact that a) vowel quality is generally more difficult to pinpoint than consonant quality and b) vowel quantity is usually established through the quantity of the adjacent consonants (cf. Simonsen and Sandøy, 2008: 67–70). However, we still find some instances of vocalic integration.

(53) *Tað var annars forrita av bara tveimum **dúðum** (fyri tað mesta).*

'Incidentally, it was programmed by just two dudes (for the most part).'

In this case, British English *dude* /dju:d/ or American English /du:d/ becomes Faroese /túu:t/. Considering that in stressed syllables, vowel graphemes followed by a single consonantal grapheme usually correspond to a long vowel phoneme in Faroese, any change in the particular marking of length is strictly speaking not

necessary, as Faroese <dud> would be suitable to represent /tu:t/. Therefore, this spelling could be seen to indicate the British rather than the American English pronunciation, since Faroese <ú>/œu:/ is very similar to British English <u>/ju:/.

- (54) *Hey nördar.*  
‘Hey nerds.’

In 1985, the American English loanword *nerd* was changed to <nörd> in Danish (Jarvad, 2008: 31; *Donsk-føroysk orðabók*), replacing <er>/ɜ:/ with Danish <ør>/œv/. This variant was then borrowed from Danish into Faroese as <nørdur>/<sup>l</sup>nœɾtuɹ/.

- (55) *trenarin kemur við sovornum dummum úttalilsum*  
‘The trainer makes such stupid statements.’

Another sound change engendered by the indirect import of a lexeme via Danish can be seen in the example above. The original English diphthong /eɪ/ has been replaced by a long monophthong /e:/. This substitution can also be found in Danish, where it is also graphemically represented as <æ>/ɛ:/ in *træner*.

- (56) *Tað mær dámar best við seriuni er hvussu alt hongur saman hjá nøkrum redneck rúmdarkovboyarum.*  
‘What I like best about the series is how everything is about some redneck space-cowboys.’

In this codified variant spelling of English

*cowboy* as <kovboy>, the English diphthong /aʊ/ is segmented into the vowel-consonant combination <ov>/ɔv/, making it technically both a vocalic and a consonantal adaptation.

Most vocalic integrations, however, are of a purely graphemic nature. Many diphthongs in English are represented graphemically in a discontinuous manner by means of a final silent but non-deletable <e>. This is illustrated by minimal-pairs such as <tap>[t<sup>h</sup>æp] vs. <tape>[t<sup>h</sup>eɪp] or <win>[wɪn] vs. <wine>[waɪn]. *Discontinuous* in this context means that the word-final grapheme <e> is always separated by an intervening consonant from the vocalic grapheme, together with which it represents the diphthong, i.e. <VCV>. Since this graphonotactic feature has no equivalent in Faroese, it is very often dispensed with, as in:

- (57) *er tad ikki ein av teimum grovu jokunum*  
‘isn’t that one of those crude jokes’  
(58) *Hvar eru bestu **producarar**, bestu instrumentalistar, komponistur*  
‘Where are [the] best producers, [the] best instrumentalists, composers’

By deleting the silent <e>, the language user also avoids the inadvertent creation of a graphemic hiatus, i.e. <producearar>. In English, the removal of <e> in <produce-> before <-arar> would cause <c> to be pronounced /k/ instead of /s/ in (58). However, in this particular context, this orthographic modification by a non-native user of English is supposedly of no consequence with regard to the actual pronunciation of the lexeme.

In the present corpus, more often than not, the English spelling is preferred to already existing and, more importantly, even codified orthographically nativised alternatives, as can be seen below:

(59) *Kann ein ikki fylgja við í tí sum maðurin sigur; má ein umhugsa móguleikan at seta seg á listan til ein **pacemaker**.*

‘If you can’t follow what the man says, you might want to get in line for a pacemaker.’

(60) *Feit viðger av búning, at vera **teenagari***  
‘Great piece about coming-of-age, about being a teenager’

(61) *Parturin tá Homer etur hatta **chillið**, og kemur uppá eitt tripp*  
‘The bit where Homer eats this chili and starts tripping’

For <pacemaker> (59), *Donsk-føroysk orðabók* (Skála *et al.*, 1998/2016) also lists <peysmeykari> besides <(hjarta)kvikil>, and the listeme for <teenager> (60) is <tineygjari>. By contrast, the dictionaries<sup>14</sup> disagree on the standardised form of <chili> (61). While both *Donsk-føroysk orðabók* (Skála *et al.*, 1998/2016) and *Føroyisk-ensk orðabók* (Skála and Mikkelsen, 2007/2016b) retain the non-native spelling, *Ensk-føroysk orðabók* (Skála and Mikkelsen, 2007/2016a) suggests <kili>, which according to Jacobsen (2012: 219f.) is also in use.

In his sociolinguistic survey of attitudes towards and use of direct and indirect loanwords in Faroese, Jacobsen (2012: 214f.) also examines the acceptance of such nativised alternatives, including <kovboy> ‘cowboy’, <tineygjari> ‘teen-

ager’ and <Kili> ‘Chile’ (to which the vegetable owes its name). In this study, it was shown that nearly two thirds of the respondents rejected <kovboy> and <Kili>, and almost every interviewee disapproved of <tineygjari> (Jacobsen, 2012: 216). Since the normative pressure of language ideology is arguably lower in the conceptionally oral medium of CMC than in other written media, it is not surprising that we do not find these disfavoured nativised variants here, but rather their non-puristic, unadapted counterparts<sup>15</sup>.

In some instances, foreign language material is marked as such with the help of single or double quotation marks as exemplified below (cf. also Meisenburg, 1992: 52):

(62) *og óansæð hvat eg geri, so fáí eg ikki tað ‘**gappið**’ vekk*  
‘And no matter what I do, I can’t get rid of that ‘gap’.’

(63) *har “**ghost’ini**”<sup>16</sup> hava sama “**movement pattern**” sum í Arcade versiónini?*  
‘where “the ghosts” have the same “movement pattern” as in the Arcade version?’

Both *gap*, *ghost* and *movement pattern* have full equivalents in Faroese: *glopp*, *spøkilsí* and *rørslumynstur*. However, in the context in which they are being used here, they can be regarded as technical terms associated with particular games, namely *Football Manager* and *Pac Man*. A striking orthographic feature is the rather frequent insertion of an apostrophe <’>, less often a hyphen <->, to demarcate the boundary between the non-native nominal stem and the native affixed inflectional

morphemes. One group of lexical items that is particularly prone to such a treatment is that of abbreviations, or more precisely, initialisms, as illustrated below:

- (64) *Eg havi eini 300-400 útvaldar filmlistarligar dvd-arar sum standa á hyllini*  
 ‘I have some 300–400 selected film-art DVDs standing on my shelf’
- (65) *Tað er tað sama á PC’inum hjá beiggja mínum í DK*  
 ‘It’s the same on my brother’s PC in Denmark’

Another class of lexemes shares a common phonological property, i.e. all of the English items end on a vowel:

- (66) *Um tú hevði hugt meira eftir so hevði tú sæð, at hatta ikki bara var um demo’ina.*  
 ‘If you had given it a bit more thought, you would have seen that it wasn’t just about the demo.’
- (67) *Men sum sagt, lat meg byrja við byrjanini, intro-in og outro-in eru alt for langar*  
 ‘But like I said, let me begin at the beginning, the intro and the outro are way too long’
- (68) *Nú veit eg ikki hvønn hasin blinkandi smiley’urin er til*  
 ‘Now I don’t know what that blinking smiley is for’

Arguably, the following examples could also be included in this group, although orthographically, the lexemes do not end on a vocalic grapheme, but on a silent consonantal one, namely <w>:

- (69) *haha ja eg hugsaði akkurát tað sama, tá eg sá hattar interview’ið*  
 ‘haha yes I was thinking exactly the same when I saw that interview’

In all these instances, the apostrophe could be regarded as an orthographic hiatus-filler breaking up marked vowel combinations. The apostrophe is also inserted in cases of a purely graphemic and not phonological hiatus between morpheme boundaries, more precisely a silent final <e>:

- (70) *Tann obligatoriska Tarantino joke’in/dialogin var genial...*  
 ‘That compulsory Tarantino joke/dialogue was genius...’
- (71) *Rate’ingarnar eru høgar eisini.*  
 ‘The ratings are also high.’

Example (71) deserves special attention since its author has reanalysed the original language material in a way which effectively marks it as non-native. The expected and standard language form, i.e. the gerund of *rate* would be <rating>. Generally, the stem loses the final <e> if the morpheme *-ing* is suffixed<sup>17</sup>. However, the author preserves the <e> before the *-ing* and instead inserts an apostrophe to mark the morpheme boundary. It could be that the deverbal *-ing*-suffix to derive action nouns is treated as a Faroese morpheme here, since it is the same in both languages. Thus, the derivational process here is marked as a Faroese, not an English one.

Finally, there is a large number of words in which neither the phonological nor the orthographic make-up seem to necessitate any additional boundary demar-

cation, as they neither end on phonological nor purely orthographic vowels.

(72) *Ja, eg havi sæð allar 4 tær fyrstu season'irnar.*

'Yes, I have seen all of the four early seasons.'

(73) *Eg fari ikki at geva tær links, men tað eru góðir torrent'ar harúti...*

'I'm not going to give you any links, but there are good torrents out there...'

There are two possible explanations for this strategy: On the one hand, it could simply be that the user wishes to flag the non-native language material as such, perhaps because they feel insecure about the "right" way of morphologically integrating an apparently "wrong" lexeme. (Sub-conscious) notions of purism may again play a role here.

On the other hand, the apostrophes or hyphens may actually be used to enhance readability and hence comprehensibility by "protecting" the morpheme boundary against potentially disruptive syllabication.

### 5.2.2. <ð> as orthographic hiatus-breaker

One of the better known idiosyncrasies of the highly etymological writing system which was developed for Faroese during the National Romantic Period is the fact that the grapheme <ð> in most cases has no phonetic counterpart (Lindqvist, 2003: 135f.). In word-final position, it is completely silent and in some cases, like <tað>=[t<sup>h</sup>ɛa:] 'this(N.Nom./Acc.Sg.)', also deletable<sup>18</sup> (Lindqvist, 2001: 61f.), whilst elsewhere, it leads to a qualitative and quantitative change in the preceding vowel

such as in <góðs>=[kœs:] 'goods', or it can also be realised as [k] in front of [ɹ] as in <veðrið>[<sup>h</sup>vekɹ]. This mismatch between graphemic representation and actual pronunciation is a common error source, both for native and non-native users of Faroese alike.

However, if <ð> occurs between two vowels, it is not silent, but nevertheless deletable (Lindqvist, 2001: 61f.) as shown in <frøði>[-jɹ] and <frøi>[-jɹ]. In this position, the resulting hiatus is filled with an epenthetic [j], [v] or [w] in accordance with a set of complementary distribution rules (Thráinsson *et al.*, 2004: 38f.). The present data contains some intriguing examples which may provide an insight into the actual synchronic status of <ð>.

(74) *Endiliga fær man ein annan vinkul á Stillahavskriggið, og tað uppá ein originalan og hugvekjandi máta, frá einum amerikanskum 'cowboyði.'*

'Finally we get a different angle on the Pacific War, and that in an original and thought-provoking way, from an American 'cowboy'.'

(75) *Downloadaði demoðina, men fekk hana ongantið at rigga.*

'I downloaded the demo, but I could never get it to work properly.'

Etymologically, the <ð> in <cowboyði>=[<sup>h</sup>k<sup>h</sup>au:pɔrjɹ] 'cowboy(M./N.Dat.Sg.)' is entirely unmotivated. As this grapheme a) does not exist in English and b) has no straightforward phonemic equivalent in Faroese, it can be concluded that its insertion in this and the other cases listed above is purely orthographic in na-



ture. In other words, the intervocalic <ð> has been reanalysed synchronically as the default grapheme representing the hiatus-breaking phonemes /j; v; w/. This appears to have happened at the expense of its diachronic base. Since it apparently lacks an underlying phoneme<sup>19</sup>, its only purpose seems to be the graphemic representation of hiatus-breaking epenthetic consonants in spoken Faroese. And this is exactly how it is used in this corpus. The same strategy was employed in certain internationalisms with a comparable phonological make-up.

Most importantly, these findings close an alleged gap that was discovered by Simonsen and Sandøy (2008: 60f.) when they reported that they could not find any instance of *bingo* ‘bingo’ with a suffixed morpheme, e.g. <bingoið> ‘bingo(N.Nom./Acc.Sg.Def.)’ in the *Føroyamálsdeildin* corpus, despite the fact that inflected forms can be occasionally heard in spoken usage and are even listed in the current online edition of *Orðabókagrunnurin’s* Faroese dictionary (Poulsen *et al.*, 1998/2016). Instead, the neuter nouns ending on unstressed <-o> only appeared in their bare, i.e. uninflected form. By contrast, the results of the present study indicate that it was most likely normative pressure that may have prevented the users from suffixing the adequate morphemes to these lexemes. In CMC, this pressure is mostly absent, and thus the users are more likely to devise creative ad-hoc solutions for this problem. Thus, they bridge the gap between a fully-fledged inflectional paradigm in spoken and an apparently defective one in written usage.

All in all, morphological adaptation

occurs much more frequently in this corpus than orthographic integration. That is to say, while nouns are often clearly assigned inflectional elements marking number, case and gender, orthographic integration is rather the exception than the norm, and is often only implemented partially. Approximately one fourth of all tokens in this study have been integrated into Faroese morphology without having undergone any change in their graphemic form. The opposite case, i.e. orthographic without morphological integration, only occurs once in the data:

(76) *Men hvat nyttar tað at hava betri  
hardware tá ið øll spøl koma út til báðar  
konsoles?*

‘But what good is it to have better hardware when all games are released for both consoles?’

Since Faroese orthography is very closely modelled on Danish norms in terms of loanwords (cf. Jacobsen, 2012: 265f.), this finding yet again confirms the triangular relationship between Faroese, Danish and English. Among the Nordic languages, both Danish and Faroese stand out for having the lowest degree of orthographic nativisation of English borrowings (cf. Jacobsen, 2012: 265f.).

## 6. Conclusion

Contrary to Simonsen and Sandøy’s (2008: 60f.) observation that certain “problematic” lexemes, particularly in terms of their word-final phonological and/or graphemic make-up (*bingo*, *interface*), appear to resist inflection in written Faroese, this study

provides ample proof that, at least in the context of CMC, morphological integration is the rule rather than the exception. Overall, Faroese language use in CMC is marked by a high density of English borrowings and code-switches, as well as a high degree of creative solutions to various conflicts occurring at the morphological, phonological and orthographic interface between Faroese and English. Instead of avoiding integration and thus leaving the non-native language material fully uninflected and orthographically unadapted, the language users on *Kjak.org* generally tend to apply at least morphological modifications in line with their native Faroese grammar.

By combining the morphological and orthographic variables discussed in this paper – inflectional suffixes and consonantal and/or vocalic graphemes – we arrive at different degrees of integration along a continuous scale which can be illustrated as follows:

token	degree of integration
demo(s)/dude(s)	low
demo-ina/dude'inum	
demoið/dudurin	
demođina/dúdum	high



**Table 1.** Integration scale

Starting at one end of the scale with either uninflected lexemes (*dude*(M.Nom./Acc./Dat.Pl.)) or non-native inflection (*demos*(F.Nom./Acc./Dat.Pl.)) and no orthographic adaptation whatsoever, the degree of integration progresses throughout

different stages: First, there is overt “flagging” with the help of punctuation marks, predominantly hyphens or apostrophes (*demo-ina*(F.Acc.Sg.Def.), *dude'inum* (M.Dat.Sg.Def.)). The morphemic boundaries between the non-native content and the native grammatical morphemes are immediately visible. At the next stage, the language users dispense with such markers, integrating the morphemes more or less seamlessly (*demoið*(N.Nom./Acc.Sg.Def.)), sometimes by making minor orthographic adjustments (e.g. deleting the stem-final *-e* in the case of *dude+urin* → *dudurin*(M.Nom.Sg.Def.)). In a final step, some users employ decidedly native graphemes in order to achieve a maximum degree of orthographic integration in addition to the morphological adaptation (*dúdum*(M.Dat.Pl.)). In the case of “intrusive <ð>” in *demođina*(F.Acc.Sg.Def.), the users simultaneously enhance morphological integration in a “genuinely Faroese” manner. In the present corpus, stages two (morphological integration with the help of punctuation marks as morphemic boundary markers) and three (seamless morphological integration both with and without regard to Faroese graphotactics) are the most common. Of course, code-switched or borrowed lexemes do not necessarily have to follow this progression from one end of the scale to the other. Some do not advance further than the first or second step, others immediately enter on e.g. the third step and stay there. However, in the process of a code-switch obtaining its “full-time job” as an established loanword (cf. Myers-Scotton, 1989: 340), it tends to follow a trajectory of increasing

integration from top to bottom, with morphological nativisation usually preceding orthographic nativisation.

Based on these findings, it can be argued that the inhibition to combine native and non-native language material in one lexeme is considerably lower in CMC than in other written types of text (newspaper articles, classified ads, literature) researched in previous studies<sup>20</sup>. The members of the Faroese online community are facing the challenging task of negotiating language use and subsequently notions of identity amidst the forces of purism and accelerating globalisation in what is technically a *trilingual* communication setting (Knudsen, 2010: 136). Jóansson (1997: 202) remarks that a number of recent, non-nativised English borrowings are in all likelihood indirect loans that have entered Faroese via Danish. Jacobsen (2012: 200f.) also found that his Faroese respondents regarded the Danes' relationship towards English loanwords to be the least purist and most relaxed in comparison with the rest of the Nordic speech communities, i.e. the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Not only do the Faroese interviewees think that the Danes hardly ever translate or replace lexemes borrowed from English, but they also judge their own language awareness to rank highest among their Nordic neighbours (Jacobsen, 2012: 201). This is of interest for the present study in so far as it further corroborates the important role Danish appears to have played as a mediating language between English and Faroese. If the Danish speech community is perceived to be highly Anglophile by the

Faroese, it can be inferred that one major indirect point of access to the English language is through Danish, as encountered by the Faroese, i.e. on TV, in cinemas, on the Internet, and not least through personal contact<sup>21</sup>. Several observations presented here – particularly regarding gender assignment and a number of spelling variants – indicate the considerable bearing the Danish language seems to have had on the integration process of English loanwords in Faroese. However, it could also be argued that over the past twenty years, the direct influence from English has been steadily increasing at the expense of Danish, particularly due to the growing importance of the Internet.

Finally, another key element for interpreting the findings presented here appears to be language ideology or rather a more relaxed approach to linguistic purism in the context of CMC. Purist ideology has a tradition that goes back over more than one century in Faroese, actuating around 1890 (Jacobsen, 2012: 259). Albeit moderate in comparison to similar Icelandic endeavours, Faroese efforts to replace foreign language material with appropriate native counterparts have had a discernible impact on codified works such as dictionaries and textbooks (Thráinsson *et al.*, 2004: 452f.). On top of that, the Faroese *málnevnd* ('language committee') provides guidance and advice in linguistic questions (Thráinsson *et al.*, 2004: 452f.). Nevertheless, the importance of purism has been on the wane for the last 30 years, especially among the younger, more educated generation, which is most likely to associate purist attitudes with lower social status (Jacobsen, 2012:

261f.). As witnessed by earlier studies, high normative pressure seems to discourage integration, leaving non-native language material grammatically stranded and sticking out like a sore thumb in traditional written media. By contrast, in the less strictly monitored context of CMC, this purism-induced unease appears to be overruled by a straightforward need for linguistic functionality (cf. also Petersen, 2006: 16–19). Arguably, this is in part the result of *Kjak.org*'s pervasive user-pseudonymity and their relaxed and informal tone of communication.

Rather than leading to the often decried “simplification and decay” of the mother-tongue, the emergent grammatical and orthographic patterns described here, such as the introduction of morphological boundary markers, can be said to introduce a new layer of functional linguistic complexity. Thus, this unregulated “Faroeseisation from below” may be considered to be less of an actual threat to the linguistic vitality of Faroese than the institutionalised purist agenda imposed from above, whose restrictive outlook on direct loan integration may even be deemed detrimental to its own self-proclaimed aim of keeping the language alive.

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### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> At times, when a debate is more heated than usual, it can speed up to the point where it becomes quasi-synchronous.
- <sup>2</sup> In the context of language material taken from the corpus, the respective borrowed or code-switched tokens are set in bold. In some cases, other linguistic elements showing a particular type of grammatical agreement, such as adjectives or verbs, are also marked in this manner.
- <sup>3</sup> Spelling mistakes (or common media-induced idiosyncrasies such as replacing <ð> with <d> when using a Danish instead of a Faroese keyboard) have been left unaltered, i.e. as they appear in the original forum entries. To make the text more readable, they will not be marked as such either (e.g. with [sic!]) throughout the rest of this paper.
- <sup>4</sup> In the translations, the grammatical categories will be glossed in the following order: gender (M./F./N.), case (Nom., Acc., Dat.), number (Sg./Pl.) and definiteness (Def./Ø).
- <sup>5</sup> However, this does not apply to all regional varieties of e.g. British English (cf. Wagner, 2005).
- <sup>6</sup> With the exception of *metaphorical gender* in cases where inanimate objects such as ships or cars are referred to as *she*; sometimes also the use of *it* to avoid embarrassment when the gender of a new-born is not readily detectable (Hogg, 2005: 124f.).
- <sup>7</sup> Exceptions include compounds, attributive constructions, and derivational sex-marking suffixes such as *-ess* in *prince – princess*, or *-ine* as in *hero – heroine*, whose use especially for denoting female professions, i.e. *waitress*, has been receding over the past decades (cf. e.g. Holmes, 1993).

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- <sup>8</sup> I.e. if the 31 different types of agent nouns found in the corpus are grouped together and treated as one collective type instead of 31 individual ones.
- <sup>9</sup> Besides not being codified in any Faroese or Danish dictionary.
- <sup>10</sup> Incidentally an intriguing case of a direct translation of a proper noun, perhaps with humorous and/or euphemistic intent (*The Pirate Bay* being the name of an infamous online index facilitating (mostly illegal) peer-to-peer file sharing).
- <sup>11</sup> The only exception to this rule concerns the neuter class 2, e.g. *dømi*(N.).
- <sup>12</sup> This is an interesting loan translation of *to know one's shit* based on Faroese *at duga sitt kramm*, which in turn is derived from Danish *at kunne sit kram*.
- <sup>13</sup> Like all modern North Germanic languages, with the exception of Danish, the Faroese syllable structure is governed by the so-called quantity rule (Germ. *Quantitätsregel*), according to which a stressed syllable must have one of four possible configurations: V:#, V:C, VC: or VCC (cf. Thráinsson *et al.*, 2004: 18). The gemination of consonant graphemes as a means of marking consonant length and in turn vowel brevity (i.e. VC:) is one of the most regular and most frequently occurring orthographic integration processes in the present corpus, with examples (4, 5, 7, 29, 52, 61, 62) merely representing a very small selection.
- <sup>14</sup> If the lexeme is included in the first place – for example, *Føroysk orðabók* (Poulsen *et al.*, 1998/2016) does not list it at all.
- <sup>15</sup> Which makes example (56) even more remarkable.
- <sup>16</sup> In this case, the double quotation marks (“) may also have been selected over single ones (‘) in order to distinguish them more clearly from the boundary-marking, word-medial apostrophe (’), since the font provided on *Kjak.org* uses the same sign for both single quotation marks and apostrophes.
- <sup>17</sup> Exceptions are scarce, e.g. British English <ageing>.
- <sup>18</sup> I.e. it can be deleted without any consequences for the word’s phonetic make-up, resulting in homophones such as <tað> vs. <ta>, both pronounced [t<sup>h</sup>ɛa:].
- <sup>19</sup> At least it is very opaque, cf. Lindqvist 2001: 104–106 for a discussion of /ð/ with regard to preterite forms of a certain group of verbs.
- <sup>20</sup> Recently, some of these solutions (especially the use of morphemic boundary markers) appear to have started “spilling over” to more traditional written media – for example in August 2016, one could read about the famous Ovastevna <regattaðina>(F.Acc.Sg.Def.) in *Vikublaðið*, the most widely read (weekly) newspaper on the Faroe Islands.
- <sup>21</sup> In their profiles, several forum users stated “Copenhagen” as their current place of residence.

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