

## Summary

For many centuries, the Danish language has influenced the Faroese language more than any other language. Nowadays, however, the influence of the English language is increasingly growing, and most Faroese young adults are now considered to be multilinguals. Faroese is still their mother tongue and dominant language, but they also know how to speak and understand English and Danish.

Although the influence of the English language is increasingly growing, its overall influence on the Faroese language has not been as great as that of the Danish language. However, one relatively new phenomenon - Faroese-English code-switching (FAR-ENG code-switching), seems to gain ground especially amongst the younger generations. In this thesis FAR-ENG code-switching is defined as one interlocutor using both Faroese and English in the same conversation. FAR-ENG code-switching appears to be used to a much greater extent than Faroese-Danish code-switching.

Furthermore, an even newer phenomenon has emerged wherein younger Faroese people and children are now being heard speaking English with their peers. This development is not the norm, although it is not unusual either.

A lot of work has been done which examines the influence of Danish on Faroese but there has not been much done to study the influence of English on Faroese. The research on English influences has been mostly on English loan-words in Faroese, the English pronunciation competence, what kind of Faroese-English code-switches are used, and some other phenomena brought about by the English language to the Faroese language. The existing research materials have not investigated what attitudes the Faroe Islanders have towards Faroese, English and FAR-ENG code-switching, and what their attitudes may imply with regards to the future survival of the Faroese language.

This master thesis therefore takes on a new approach as it uses a quantitative method to get an insight into what attitudes Faroese young adults have towards other Faroese young adults who are speaking Faroese, English, or switching between Faroese and English with their peers. The thesis also looks into their attitudes towards Danish, but to a much lesser extent.

The aim of investigating the attitude towards Faroese, English, and FAR-ENG code-switching is to get an indication of how the Faroese language is managing with the English language now being part of the Faroese young adults language competences.

The main goal is to get some insight into the future of the Faroese language as to whether it will survive or be replaced with English. It is also interesting to see if a possible hierarchy can be discovered that will reveal which language or style (i.e. code-switching), if any, can be considered higher than the others. A possible hierarchy based on attitudes to different kinds of languages or styles may also give an indication of how the future may look like.

Since the main focus is the influence from English on Faroese, most of the research is on the attitudes towards Faroese, English and FAR-ENG code-switching. To get a better picture of the situation, both the conscious and unconscious attitudes of the informants were investigated.

A matched-guise technique was used to disclose the unconscious attitude to the languages and style. Three different recordings were made of one group of narrators. The narrators were three young Faroese people, two of them women and one male, talking together about everyday issues. The informants were told to pay particular attention to the male narrator as it was only him that they would use to form the basis of their judgements.

In one of the recordings, the narrators read aloud a Faroese text, in another, they read aloud an English text, and in the third text, they switched between Faroese and English. The texts were as alike as possible with the main difference being the languages and not the content.

The informants were divided into three compatible groups. In each of the groups, there were people taking a 6th form, vocational, or higher education. One group of informants listened to the Faroese recording, one to the English, and one to the FAR-ENG code-switching. The informants were given a questionnaire with 13 different characteristic features that would be used to judge the male speaker. For each of the characteristics the informants had the option to judge the narrator on a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being the best evaluation and 5 the worst.

After having completed the matched-guise test, the informants were given yet another questionnaire. This second questionnaire investigated the conscious attitude to Faroese, English, and FAR-ENG code-switching, and the attitude to Danish a bit. The informants were asked directly about, how they felt about different kinds of language scenarios.

In addition to looking into their conscious attitude to different kinds of language scenarios, the questionnaire also included some background questions and some questions

about the informants' domain usage (what language they used where and in what kind of circumstances).

The main result of the unconscious attitude survey was that there was no significant difference in how the male narrator was judged, whether he spoke Faroese, English, or switched between Faroese and English. The result reflects how the male narrator is judged, when the average of all the 13 characteristics is added up for each language and style.

The results from the conscious attitude survey, unlike the results from the unconscious survey, showed differences in how the informants judged the different language situations: The more English was allowed to be a part of the communication between Faroe Islanders, the more negative the attitude got. As for the attitude to Danish, the informants valued it highly, although not higher than English. Compared to English, the results showed that the informants valued Danish equally high as English or a little bit less than English.

When asked about the informants' domain usage, the results showed that the Faroese population is a quite homogeneous one with Faroese being the language most commonly used for communication in all the 10 domains in the survey. The home-domain, which is the most important in passing on the language to the next generation and hence keeping it alive, scored the highest with over 80% of all of the informants only speaking Faroese and no other language at home.

The findings show that there are some discrepancies between the conscious and unconscious attitudes. The unconscious attitude can be interpreted as embracing and accepting of different kinds of language usage. In other words, Faroese young adults accept other Faroese young adults no matter if they speak Faroese, English, or if they are using FAR-ENG code-switching when they are communicating with their Faroese peers. The conscious attitude, on the other hand, shows a certain hierarchy, where the more English is a part of the communication, the more negative the evaluation gets. When the informants are conscious about language, English is not as accepted and embraced as Faroese.

The differences that the conscious and the unconscious attitudes towards Faroese, English, and FAR-ENG code-switching show can be read into the Faroese language history and be seen as a reflection of it. Faroe Islanders are used to having a lot of contact with Danish, while still maintaining their Faroese mother tongue. Potentially as a result of this, the Faroe Islanders are unconsciously accepting different languages, as the results from the unconscious attitude survey show they do.

On the other hand, the Faroe Islanders are very conscious about language usage and have been so ever since the national awakening in the 19th century. With the national awakening, a consciousness about good and bad language arose with pure Faroese getting the highest value, and influences from Danish and other languages a lower value.

In the light of the Faroese language history, the results can be interpreted as a continuation of the language situation in the Faroe Islands with the Faroe Islanders being accustomed to, and, on an unconscious level, accepting different languages being used, while at the same time, on a conscious level, being more critical to other languages than Faroese.

The interpretations of the results from the attitudes, put together with the results from the domain questions and the hierarchy ladder, imply that the Faroese language will survive and will not be replaced with English for the time being.

This master thesis, however, only investigates a small part of all the different components that may have some influence on the survival or death of the Faroese language. The conclusion, that the Faroese language will survive for now, is therefore made with reservations.