The impact of Computer Mediated Communication on Icelandicwritten language

In my paper I want to review the impact of CMC on Icelandic written language use. During the last years in Iceland like in many other parts of the world, a virtual reality has developed which interacts with the real one. The internet and its opportunities to connect and communicate, for example through social networks, increasingly determine the lives of Iceland’s population. The importance of this form of communication, where language plays a central role is a new testing ground for Icelandic as a medium of language use. As Icelandic internet users have access to a wide range of websites in different languages language contact can be assumed. This in turn could have an impact on language variation or even language change. Language on the internet has to adjust to a media new situation. While a few decades ago it was easy to distinguish between asynchronously written and synchronously oral communication it is now possible to communicate in synchronously written ways, because of constant technical innovations. The result is a hybrid of medi ally written and conceptually oral communication. The rapidity of the dispersal of new communication channels and technical development contrasts with traditional written language use in Iceland that is assumed to be conservative. It is often claimed that Iceland follows a “puristic” approach to its language. Therefore, Icelandic is supposed to be more resistant to foreign influence than other languages. However, CMC has already created some morphological innovations, e.g. acronyms like “lol”, which are used in Icelandic internet postings. Based on a database of forums and blogs, which I am in the process of compiling, I review which features of the said hybrid form have entered asynchronous internet-based communication in Icelandic. On the assumption that the given sign repertoire (e.g. solely written signs and symbols in CMC) influences the language, I will present examples showing these new features. In so doing I consider the question whether the new interconnection through the internet is able to prise open the said resistance and to what extend linguistic innovations within and because of CMC could be productive enough to create new patterns in Icelandic.