

Teaching Icelandic as a second language: The view from Iceland

In recent years, the Icelandic language has seen an enormous, rapid increase in interest among non-native speakers, both in Iceland and internationally. While all this interest is generally regarded by Icelanders as a cause for celebration, it also entails structural and pedagogical challenges. The country's population has risen dramatically due to immigration while at the same time, Iceland has gained ever-increasing popularity on the world stage as a tourism destination and a brand, which has led to record-high numbers of students of Icelandic as a second language domestically, while also contributing to a growth of Icelandic departments at universities and language schools abroad. This brief talk will attempt to outline the current situation of Icelandic as a second language and the challenges currently facing the Icelandic language, with regard to various relevant factors such as immigration statistics, the current Icelandic course offerings at local schools and universities and the place of English in contemporary Icelandic society. For that purpose, reference will be made, inter alia, to a recent OECD report commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

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