

## Lykilorð

málstöðlun, tilbrigði, félagsmálfræði, setningafræði

## Keywords

standardisation, variation, sociolinguistics, syntax

## Abstract

The Reykjavík Grammar School (1846–1904) has been widely regarded as a primary force in the implementation of standard language norms in Iceland. The present article attempts to test this hypothesis in a selection of 189 student essays from the grammar school, including a survey of the teachers' corrections. Three linguistic variables were selected, both known from the prescriptivist tradition and corrected in the essays: 1) the generic pronoun *maður*, 2) the finite verb in third (V3) rather than second position (V2), 3) the definite article *sá* vs. *hinn*.

Based on a series of statistical tools, a log-likelihood test for the generic pronoun, generalised linear mixed-effects models and conditional random forests for verb placement and the definite article, it is argued that the use of non-standard variants correlates significantly with progression of study (grades 1–3 vs. 4–6) and/or graduation score (low vs. high). The small corpus size prevented an analysis along the lines of Hinrichs et al. (2015), who recommend testing whether the (non-)use of one stigmatised variant also correlates with the (non-)use of other stigmatised variants. Here, the educative variables arguably fulfil a similar function, independently from observing frequency decrease over time. The results thus suggest that prescriptive efforts were, indeed, quite successful.

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