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Thorisdottir

ICELAND ANNIE



Fittest Woman on Earth: "Iceland Annie"

Annie Mist Thorisdottir, of Kopavogur, Iceland, has won the title of Fittest Woman on Earth in the 2011 Reebok CrossFit Games, from among thousands of women who started in the regional competitions in spring. She is something of a national hero in Iceland, where lots of people participate in CrossFit training. She is head coach and co-owner of CrossFit BC in Iceland. She has been doing CrossFit training for 2 years, last year finishing 2nd in the world.

Her Autobiography: *Currently studying chemistry at the University of Iceland. Background in sports, I was in gymnastics for 8 years, ballet for 2 years, bootcamp (1 hour of body weight exercises) 5 years, pole vaulting 2 years and CrossFit for 2 years now. Fell in love with it after the Games 2009... =) My brother is competing in the teams competition this year as well and my family now all in CrossFit! Smiling makes everything easier and more fun... =)*

CrossFit is a brand of strength and conditioning workout that combines weightlifting, sprinting, gymnastics, powerlifting, kettlebell training, plyometrics, rowing, and medicine ball training. It is used in nearly 2,000 gyms worldwide and by many fire departments, law enforcement agencies, and military organizations including the Canadian Forces, and the Royal Danish Life Guards.

—from <http://games.crossfit.com/node/40597> and Wikipedia.
See her in action and interviews on YouTube.

—submitted by *Eva Slawson*

Norwegian-English

Swedes have excellent English skills, according to a unique study by the Swedish educational company EF. But Norwegians and Danes speak even better English.

The EF English Proficiency Index, the first of its kind to rank English language proficiency, pulled its results from more than two million people in 44 different countries who took a free online English test between 2007 and 2009.

Norwegians were ranked as having the world's best English skills as a second language, followed by the Dutch and Danes. Swedes came in at number four, ahead of the Finns, according to the EF EPI.

—from *Scandinavian Press*, summer 2011



How the Swedish Language Lost Its Formality

Mr, Sir, Ms, Mrs or Miss? In Sweden you are mostly neither, since titles are not used as they are in Britain. There was, however, a widespread use of titles, and the more formal Ni, until the end of the 1960's when du-reformen – the you-reform – created a significant change in the Swedish language.

The defining moment of the reform was the opening speech that neuroscientist and professor Bror Rexed gave to his staff in 1967, when he assumed the post as General Director of The National Swedish Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen). He proclaimed that he would use the informal du (you) to address everyone, and he encouraged his co-workers to do the same. Back then, du was commonly only used when talking to close friends, family members and to address children.

Previously, the proper way to address people of the same or higher social status had been by title and surname. Colleagues spoke to each other in a more formal way at the office, asking if "Accountant Olsson could send the invoice" or "Managing Director Johnsson would mind postponing the meeting." The use of herr (mr), fru (mrs) or fröken (miss) was considered

acceptable in initial conversation with strangers of unknown occupation, academic title or military rank. This way of addressing often became complicated, since it required that the speaker keep track of people's position in society. The fact that the listener should preferably be referred to in third person, tended to further complicate spoken communication between members of society.

An unsuccessful attempt was made in the early 20th century to replace the insistence on titles with Ni, which corresponds to vous in French and Sie in German. Many European languages use, what is an originally plural pronoun, to indicate politeness when talking to only one person — a use that originates from the way Roman emperors were addressed. The Swedish Ni stemmed from the older plural pronoun I, but the social use was inspired by the German equivalent, which often was used to mark distance and military rank.

However, the use of Ni was never fully adopted by the Swedes. Instead, Ni ended up being used as a slightly less arrogant form of du, used to address people of lower social status, implying that the interlocutor had no title or office worth bothering about. Hence, since the use of

Ni got back into use in the 1980's, some older people can find it offensive.

The use of Ni today is mostly used as an address of courtesy when, for instance, a salesperson speaks to a customer.

Bror Rexed's speech in 1967 put words to a gradual change that had happened in Sweden over the last decade. With the liberalization and radicalization of Swedish society in the 1950s and '60s, the previously significant distinctions of class had become less important. Sweden's largest newspaper Dagens Nyheter had years earlier changed their linguistic usage in favour of du, and the development was considerably speeded up when Olof Palme, as new Prime Minister in 1969, let reporters call him du on live broadcasts.

It did not take long until du became the standard way of addressing, even in formal and official contexts with the only exception of the the Royal Family, whose members are still addressed in third person or by their titles.

by: **Elin Hellström** for sweden.se.

—<http://www.sweden.se/eng/Home/Education/Swedish-language/Reading/How-the-Swedish-language-lost-its-formality/>

—submitted by *Eva Slawson*