The challenges and risks inherent in Welsh language revitalization and the Cymraeg 2050 Strategic Plan

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Master's Degrees by Examination and Dissertation
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Abstract

The new Welsh Language Strategy, *Cymraeg* 2050 makes dramatic demands upon the resources, infrastructure and policies of Welsh language planning. To bring about the desired increase in Welsh speaker numbers there will need to be a complete rethink of Welsh language policy, and the challenges faced are considerable. This thesis explores these challenges, considering the two essential pillars of language revitalization, acquisition and retention of speakers, both child and adult. Overarching themes such as evidence, measurement, resources and leadership are considered, as are the specific challenges relating to the different facets of language revitalization. The family is the traditional cornerstone of Welsh language transmission. However it is clear that the family unit no longer provides the numbers of Welsh speakers required if the language is to thrive. Consideration is, therefore, also given to the education system, both statutory education for children, and language learning for adults. To succeed in its stated aims, *Cymraeg* 2050 must result not only in an increased rate of Welsh speaker acquisition, but also an improved rate of retention rate of speakers. The traditional strongholds of the Welsh language are shrinking, with in-migration reducing Welsh speaker numbers in percentage terms, and out-migration reducing them in absolute terms. Retention is considered not only in terms of quantity of speakers, but also quality of language. It is probable that poor language quality, with an associated loss of prestige, will jeopardize the relationship between identity and language, so important to Welsh language maintenance. There is an inherent tension between a focus on quantity, and a focus on quality. This raises the question whether the focus on a large number of speakers is not actively detrimental to the future of the Welsh language, which might be better served by more fluency, and strengthening the core areas of Welsh community use.

Introduction

On 1st August, 2016 at the National Eisteddford of Wales, First Minister Carwyn Jones announced that the goal of the new Welsh Language Strategy would be the creation of a million Welsh speakers by 2050[1]. In making this announcement, the First Minister heralded a dramatic rethink of Welsh language revitalization policy. The projections at the time, extrapolated from evidence based reports, suggested that the number of Welsh speakers would reach approximately 750,000 within two generations[2]. Existing policy and implementation methods were not deemed sufficient to reach the new target[3], so a rethink of both was required. *Cymraeg* 2050 is the strategic policy document that has been created to expound that vision, and in it has been added the second goal, that of doubling the percentage of Welsh speakers who use Welsh every day, from 10% to 20%. The Executive Summary for the revised strategy, released for public consultation in the autumn of 2016, declared a need for:

> "more children in Welsh-medium education, better planning in relation to how people learn the language, more easy-to-access opportunities for people to use the language, a stronger infrastructure and a revolution to improve digital provision in Welsh, and a sea change in the way we speak about it."[4]

The history of Welsh in Wales, prior to 1993, has been, at best, one of neglect, at worst, of systematic destruction. There have, however, been some small fortuitous elements that go some way to explaining why Welsh is more robust than most other

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[1] BBC, News, Welsh language target of one million speakers by 2050 [online]. Available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-36924562 <accessed 5 March 2018>

[2] C.H. Williams, 'Policy review: Wake me up in 2050! Formulating Language Policy in Wales', *Language Policy in Wales | Languages, Society and Policy* (2017) [online]. Available at http://www.meits.org/policy-papers/paper/wake-me-up-in-2050-formulating-language-policy-in-wales <accessed 27 February 2018>

[3] Welsh Government, Welsh Language Strategy, Cymraeg 2050, 2017 [online]. Available at: http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/170711-welsh-language-strategy-eng.pdf <accessed 14 November 2017>

[4] C.H. Williams, 'Policy review: Wake me up in 2050! Formulating Language Policy in Wales'.

minority languages globally, and the most robust of the Celtic languages[5]. Firstly, despite the great damage done to the prestige of the Welsh language by the Acts of Union in 1536 and 1542, the sanctioning by the Tudors of the translation of both the Bible and the Prayer Book into Welsh created a standard, literary form of Welsh[6]. This provided a platform for theological discourse, academic treatises and works of literature to be created in, and translated into, Welsh. Secondly, the industrialisation of Wales, particularly in the South, whilst driving rapid Anglicization, also enabled Welsh speakers to remain in their own country, with their own language, and yet find jobs. This is in marked contrast to the Scots and Irish, who were forced into large scale emigration by economic necessity, particularly to the New World[7]. Finally, whilst the rural / urban population shift associated with the industrialization of Wales damaged communities in the countryside, the Welsh language found new homes in the community activities of the growing towns and cities. Chapel, choirs, sports clubs, Eisteddfordau, brass bands and miners' libraries all became centres of Welsh language use, meaning that the language was not dependent upon formal institutions for its survival. This final factor has been put forward by Williams[8] as a key reason why the Welsh language became more strongly bound with concepts of identity than was the case for the other Celtic languages, increasing its chances of survival. As is discussed below, the powerful cultural identity / Welsh language link has been, and continues to be, an essential element in the health of the Welsh language. Maintaining this link needs to be part of any Welsh language revitalization strategy.

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[5] Williams, C. H., 'The Celtic World' in J. A. Fishman and O. Garcia, eds, second edn *Handbook of language and ethnic identity: Disciplinary and regional perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
[6] Williams, C. H., 'The Celtic World'
[7] Williams, C. H., 'Welsh (in Wales)' in D. Ó Néill, ed., *Rebuilding the Celtic Languages* (Talybont: Y Lolfa Cyf, 2014).
[8] Williams, C. H., 'The Celtic World'

The first milestone in the current period of language policy was the Welsh Language Act of 1993 which recognized Welsh and English as co-equal languages for public services and governance[9]. It also established the Welsh Language Board, responsible for the promotion of the Welsh language. The Act had several positive outcomes, including the establishment of bilingual public administration and greater clarity as to the duties of, and expectations upon, certain institutions regarding Welsh language use. It accommodated enhanced provision, over and above the minimum standards, in regions where Welsh language use was more prevalent, but suffered from inconsistency of service provision.

The strategy *Iaith Pawb,* (Everyone's Language), was operational from March 2003. This strategy stated unequivocally that its goal was to create a bilingual Wales where people might choose to live their lives through the medium of Welsh, or English, or both. It was a clear commitment to the cause of the Welsh language and, although not all its goals were met, it enabled many steps forward in corpus and status planning[10]. In 2012, the same year as the Welsh Language Board ceased to function, *Iaith Fyw: Iaith Byw*, (A Living Langue; A Language for Living), replaced *Iaith Pawb*. In this year, the Welsh Government Welsh Language Division became solely responsible for

[9] UK Government Legislation, Welsh Language Act, 1993 [online]. Available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1993/38/pdfs/ukpga_19930038_en.pdf <accessed 20 February 2018>

[10] Welsh Government, Welsh Language, Iaith Pawb [online]. Available at: http://gov.wales/depc/publications/welshlanguage/iaithpawb/iaithpawbe.pdf?lang=en <accessed 14 November 2017>;

C. H. Williams, Language Strategies in Comparative Perspective, *The Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity* (2013) [online]. Available at: http://www.npld.eu/uploads/publications/139.pdf <accessed 18 February 2018>

language policy and planning[11], initially reporting to the First Minister, Carwyn Jones, and later to the then Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language, Alun Davies. The key differences between *Iaith Pawb* and *Iaith Fyw: Iaith Byw* were the increased focus on the workplace and reduced focus on a bilingual Wales in the latter[12]. Like *Iaith Pawb*, *Iaith Fyw: Iaith Byw* has resulted in some success, most notably the greater number of children now able to speak Welsh. Both strategies, particularly *Iaith Pawb*, were critiqued for a lack of a robust evidence base, a lack of monitoring systems, and insufficient resources[13]. These concerns remain relevant with the advent of *Cymraeg* 2050.

Two and a half decades after the Welsh language act was passed, there are grounds for optimism for the future of the Welsh language. These include:

- The existence of the Welsh Government (WG), with divisions focussed on economic development, housing, education, and public health, which feed into the context for language planning, and the Welsh Language Division itself

- Legal recognition for Welsh, in Wales and Westminster

- EU recognition

- Education provision, both of Welsh and in the medium of Welsh

- Extensive corpus planning

- Raised prestige and status for the language

- Provision for Welsh in print, and broadcast media

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[11] Welsh Government, Welsh Language Strategy, Welsh Language Policies up to 2017, Iaith Fyw, Iaith Byw [online]. Available at: http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/122902wls201217en.pdf <accessed 14 November 2017>;
C. H. Williams, Language Strategies in Comparative Perspective.
[12] C. H. Williams, Language Strategies in Comparative Perspective.
[13] *ibid.*

- Literary production and publication of Welsh language books

- Research and academic activities both in and about Welsh in higher education.

This is an impressive list, but Welsh continues to be a threatened language.

The "forces for and against"[14] language revitalization need to be understood and managed. In this thesis, the challenges facing Welsh language revitalization will be considered as encapsulated in the *Cymraeg* 2050 document. The two essential processes that will be discussed are the retention of speakers, which will be considered in the contexts of both quality and quantity, and the acquisition of speakers, which will be considered in the contexts of both children and adults.

Overarching Challenges

There are several overarching challenges that impact all strategy elements for language retention and acquisition. Two, strongly related, elements are those of the statistical evidence used as a basis for policy formulation, and the robust measurement of outcomes. This is specifically acknowledged in the Cymraeg 2050 document, which states:

> "If the strategy's objectives are to be realised, we will need a firm evidence base and a commitment to evaluate the effectiveness of programmes and interventions delivered in its name."[15]

The document outlines research initiatives that will be put into place. However, at present, the evidence as to what works, that provides the basis for the strategy and

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[14] Ó Néill, D., 'Conclusion' in D. Ó Néill, ed., *Rebuilding the Celtic Languages* (Talybont: Y Lolfa Cyf, 2014).
[15] Welsh Government, Welsh Language Strategy, Cymraeg 2050, 2017 [online].

outcome measurement, appear insufficient. The data basis for policy development is drawn from several disparate data sources. These same data sources will in later years be used to determine whether the strategy and its implementation are progressing successfully. Key among these are the Decennial Census, Welsh Language Survey, National Survey for Wales, Annual Population Survey, Welsh Government People Survey, Public Services Data[16], Pupil Level Annual School Census, Welsh Examinations Data, Lifelong Learning Wales Record and the Higher Education Statistics Agency Data[17]. It is not currently apparent whether these will be supplemented in the future. These sources provide a vast quantity of information, but policy formulators have identified that there are gaps in their evidence based understanding, particularly of Welsh language use and early years' acquisition. For example, the Census, despite being the stated starting point for defining and counting Welsh language speakers in the Cymraeg 2050 strategy, does not provide detailed information regarding the social context or use of bilingualism. Moreover, it is on occasion contradicted by other data sources[18], and there is no mechanism for establishing why that might be. For example, in 2001, the percentage of children assessed as L1 Welsh in National curriculum tests, was higher than the percentage listed as fluent in the census[19]. The true picture is clearly far more complex than the census can capture.

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[16] including DVLA, NHS.
Williams, C. H., 'Welsh (in Wales)'.
[17] Williams, C.H. 2017, "Policy review: Wake me up in 2050! Formulating Language Policy in Wales".
[18] H. M. Jones, A statistical overview of the Welsh Language, 2011 [online]. Available at: http://www.comisiynyddygymraeg.cymru/English/Publications%20List/A%20statistical%20overview%20of%20the%20Welsh%20language.pdf <accessed 10 January 2018>
[19] Williams, C. H., 'Welsh (in Wales)'.

The current research priorities for policy formulators aim to address these shortfalls, showing awareness of the gaps in the data from which they are working[20]. As the strategy unfolds and is implemented, robust and comprehensive evidence to support the choices made and to evaluate their impact will, in some instances, be lacking. This is one of several challenges that have been acknowledged by the WG during the public consultation processes. The WG readiness to accept, and address, issues identified by the academic community, and by policy formulators, demonstrates a commitment to success, and to building the relationships required to take the strategy forward. The good level of consensus as to how to tackle some of the complex issues[21] that arise as part of the strategy is also positive, but appropriate data and robust measurement of outcomes remain key to the success of any strategy.

A third overarching challenge is the absolute need for committed leadership, from the highest political levels down. *Cymraeg* 2050 demonstrates a clear understanding of this need in that it puts the need to "provide strong leadership, and use our influence for the benefit of the language" as the first bullet point under "How we will put our strategy into action"[22]. However, putting such leadership into place, maintaining it, and ensuring consistency is not a straightforward matter. Already, since the strategy's launch, Alun Davies, former Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language has moved to a new role. The WG has acknowledged that better co-ordination and leadership is called for in the case of several specific policy initiatives, such as the generally successful *Mentrau Iaith*[23]. Fragmented responsibility for essential

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[20] Williams, C.H. 2017, "Policy review: Wake me up in 2050! Formulating Language Policy in Wales".
[21] Williams, C.H. 2017, "Policy review: Wake me up in 2050! Formulating Language Policy in Wales".
[22] Welsh Government, Welsh Language Strategy, Cymraeg 2050, p.15.
[23] *ibid.*

programmes, such as adult learning, consistently undermines such programmes[24]. No

strategy, no matter how well conceived, can be successfully implemented without key

bodies, not least the WG itself, fulfilling their critical roles as legitimising institutions.

Fourthly, there is the inevitable consideration of resources, both financial and other.

Whilst only a small percentage of the population of Wales asserts that money should

not be spent on language revitalization[25], with most being comfortable with some

expenditure, funds are limited. The period of austerity measures implemented by the

Westminster Government has resulted in year on year cuts to the WG budget since

2010, and a 5% percent reduction in real terms in the November 2017 budget[26]. This

has reduced money available in several sectors, despite the WG's assertion that they

have not chosen the path of austerity[27]. Several projects have inevitably suffered. The

Twf, Cymraeg o'r Crud programme's replacement, *Cymraeg I Blant* has a budget

£200,000 lower than that of its predecessor[28]. Successfully piloted schemes, such as

the 2002 Welsh language immersion programme for Year 6 to 7 pupils have not been

rolled out more widely, and difficult decisions regarding research project priorities

have had to be made. There is an inherent "structural tension"[29] as to how best to use

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[24] Williams, C. H., 'Welsh (in Wales)'.

[25] Davis, H., Day, G., and Drakakis-Smith, A., 'Attitudes to Language and Bilingualism among English In-Migrants to North Wales' in D. Morris, ed., *Welsh in the Twenty-First Century* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010).

[26] Welsh Government Response to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Autumn Budget 2017 [online]. Available at http://gov.wales/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2017/responsetobudget/?lang=en <Accessed 27 February 2018>

[27] *ibid.*

[28] National Assembly for Wales, Research Briefings, Save Twf – Cymraeg o'r Crud Services Briefing Pages [online]. Available at http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/documents/s59109/Research%20Brief.pdf <Accessed 27 February 2018>

[29] Williams, C. H., 'Welsh (in Wales)'.

limited resources to revitalise Welsh as a thriving language, and upon which domains to focus.

Retention of Welsh Speakers

Historically, the story of the Welsh language has been one of attrition. By the end of the nineteenth century, Welsh had ceased to be the dominant language in Wales[30], and by the middle of the twentieth century the story was one of near collapse[31]. The legislation and strategies outlined above appear to have stopped the decline, and a modest but important upturn in numbers is being seen[32]. However, if the number of Welsh speakers is to grow, it is imperative that the issue of the retention of existing speakers is addressed. It would be naïve to suggest that all attrition can be prevented; young people to grow up, move away from the parental home, and begin new phases of their lives. In a mobile and multicultural society, some Welsh speakers will inevitably migrate, both within and without of the United Kingdom. The retention rate must improve significantly, however, if the strategy outlined in *Cymraeg* 2050 is to succeed, and the Welsh language is to flourish.

Perhaps the most visible form of attrition is the physical movement of people. Both out-migration from, and in-migration to, predominately Welsh speaking areas are significant risk factors, the former in terms of absolute numbers of Welsh speakers in an area, the latter in terms of the percentage of Welsh speakers. Both are powerfully

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[30] Williams, C. H., 'On Recognition, Resolution and Revitalization' in C. H. Williams, ed., *Language Revitalization: Policy and Planning in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000).
[31] *ibid.*
[32] Welsh Government, StatsWales, Census Results 2011 [online]. Available at: https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Welsh-Language/WelshSpeakers-by-LocalAuthority-Gender-DetailedAgeGroups-2011Census <accessed 28 February 2018>

influenced by social and economic factors, but out-migration particularly so[33]. It is imperative that, for *Cymraeg* 2050 to succeed, a broad spectrum of socio-economic, employment and housing strategies are devised and implemented. This is understood by policy formulators[34]. Many initiatives are in place to address these issues, not only to assist in the revitalization of the Welsh language, but also to protect and grow the well-being of the Welsh population[35]. Rural / urban migration is an entrenched issue, and one that affects not only Wales. The provision of infrastructure, good year-round jobs, and affordable housing is an area of focus in Westminster too.[36] However, it is the case that West Wales and the Welsh Valleys suffer greater economic hardship than any other regions in Britain, except for Cornwall[37]. These regions have been identified by the European Union as being amongst the poorest in Europe, defined as "Less Developed Regions"[38], that is, regions where per capita GDP is less than 75% of the EU average. This makes West Wales, the heartland of Welsh language usage, disproportionately vulnerable to economically driven out-migration.

Such out-migration perpetuates the cycle of downward economic trends as the communities can no longer sustain businesses such as post offices, retail outlets and other community infrastructure[39]. Again, initiatives have been put into place to

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[33] Jones, H., 'Welsh Speakers: Age Profile and Out-Migration' in D. Morris, ed., *Welsh in the Twenty-First Century* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010).

[34] Welsh Government, Welsh Language Strategy, Cymraeg 2050.

[35] Welsh Government, Cabinet, Ministerial Statements, The Welsh Government's wellbeing objectives [online]. Available at: http://gov.wales/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2016-new/wellbeingobjectives/?lang=en <accessed 10 February 2018>

[36] UK Government, Speeches, Prime Minster's speech on Making Housing Fairer [online]. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-on-making-housing-fairer-5-march <accessed 7 March 2018>;

[37] European Union, Regional Policy, [online]. Available at: https://europa.eu/european-union/topics/regional-policy_en < accessed 20 February 2018>

[38] Prior to 2013 known as Objective 1 regions.
  European Union, Regional Policy, [online].

[39] Williams, C. H., 'On Recognition, Resolution and Revitalization'.

address this, such as Communities First and Vibrant and Viable Places[40], but, to date,

successes have been modest. Supporting these initiatives are some established

organisations aiming to promote entrepreneurial activity in economically disadvantage

regions, such as *Menter a Busnes*, and supportive community groups such as *Mentrau*

Iaith. It seems probable that digital platforms will enable the creation of successful

businesses in rural Welsh regions if the support, mentoring and infrastructure is in

place. Of these, infrastructure appears to be the weakest link[41]. Broadband provision,

as an important example, is very poor in much of rural Wales, and without it online

businesses cannot thrive. The WG is specifically addressing this through its *Superfast*

Cymru programme which had enabled superfast connectivity to 661,00 properties

since its inception in 2013, up to the last review in September 2017[42]. It is not clear if

businesses reaching out to a global online market will do much to promulgate the use

of Welsh, but they would provide much needed employment, and a reason for young

adults and others requiring jobs to stay in the area in question. Conversely,

employment in local government may do much to generate a strong economic

motivating force in support of the Welsh language. In many rural areas of Wales, the

"good jobs", with stability and better pay, are perceived to be those in local

administration, a sector with a particularly high requirement for Welsh language

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[40] Welsh Government, Topics, Communities, Communities First [online]. Available at:
http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/communitiesfirst/?lang=en <accessed
20 February 2018>;
Welsh Government, Topics, Housing and Regeneration, Vibrant and Viable Places [online]. Available at:
http://gov.wales/topics/housing-and-regeneration/regeneration/vibrant-and-viable-places/?lang=en
<accessed 20 February>
[41] Welsh Government, Science and Technology, Digital Infrastructure, Superfast Broadband [online].
Available at: http://gov.wales/topics/science-and-technology/digital/infrastructure/superfast-
broadband/?lang=en <accessed 4 March 2018>
[42] *ibid.*

speakers[43]. There is evidence to suggest that this motivates parents to ensure that their children learn Welsh[44] and adults to ensure that they learn it themselves[45]. Overall however, the situation in rural areas is one of continued economic difficulty[46], and associated out-migration of young people.

Many of the jobs available in rural areas are in agriculture and tourism, both heavily seasonal and precarious sectors[47]. Creating a stable employment situation for future generations of young people based upon these industries is difficult as both lend themselves to employing transient, geographically mobile workers. Tourism, in particular, is a double-edged sword. It provides employment, but the employment is seasonal, and often precarious. It showcases the beauty and socio-cultural uniqueness of Wales, and in so doing, encourages in-migration whereby monolingual English speakers move to the region, often inflating house prices beyond the reach of local young people, and potentially reducing the overall percentage of speakers in that community[48]. Every year between 1981 and 2001 Wales experienced net in-migration[49], and the trend continues to this day[50]. The attractive, and often coastal, traditionally Welsh speaking area is the focus of much of it[51].

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[43] Welsh Government, Social Research, Welsh language skills needs in eight sectors [online]. Available at: http://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2014/140429-welsh-language-skills-needs-eight-sectors-en.pdf <accessed 23 January 2018>
[44] C. Williams, 'Language Gained: A study of language immersion at 11-16 years old' *Education Transactions Series*, School of Education, University of Bangor, (2002) [online]. Available at: https://www.bangor.ac.uk/addysg/publications/Language_Gained%20.pdf <accessed 20 January 2018>
[45] *ibid.*
[46] Williams, C. H., 'Welsh (in Wales)'.
[47] Williams, C. H., 'Welsh (in Wales)'.
[48] Morris, D., 'Young People and their Use of the Welsh Language' in D. Morris, ed., *Welsh in the Twenty-First Century* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010).
[49] Jones, H., 'Welsh Speakers: Age Profile and Out-Migration'.
[50] Welsh Government, StatsWales, Census Results [online]. Available at: https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Estimates/Local-Authority/populationestimates-by-localauthority-year <accessed 28 February 2018>
[51] Morris, D., 'Young People and their Use of the Welsh Language'

A study of the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht[52] asserts that a linguistic community needs to maintain a proportion of 70% of speakers for a language to maintain its vitality. Census data shows that very few regions in Wales still maintain that density of Welsh language speakers[53]. Furthermore, the maps used in the *Cymraeg* 2050 document clearly illustrate that even those communities with over 70% Welsh speakers are far from being immune to Welsh language attrition, with several showing a loss in numbers of speakers between 2001 and 2011, particularly in Eastern Gwynedd and in Anglesey. *Cymraeg* 2050 states that areas where there is a high density of Welsh speakers "remain central to our vision[54]", whilst rightly asserting that there is no easy answer to the challenges that these areas face. However, there does not appear to be a specific element in the strategy focussed on protecting Welsh speaking in those areas. Indeed, with a big number of speakers to recruit and a stated aim of doubling the percentage of speakers who use some Welsh every day, it is not clear that the resources could be available in the *Cymraeg* 2050 strategy to focus upon the high Welsh speaker density, but low overall population areas. Demographically, the boundary between Welsh- speaking Wales and Anglicized Wales is being pushed westward[55], and attrition continues in the core of Welsh speaking communities in Wales. The threat posed to Welsh language use by in-migration is pronounced. *Cymraeg* 2050 risks creating a Wales where perhaps large numbers of people speak

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[52] C. Ó Giollagáin, S. Mac Donnacha, F. Ní Chualáin, A. Ní Shéaghdha and M. O'Brien, *Comprehensive Linguistic Study of the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht: Principal findings and recommendations* (Dublin: Brunswick Press, 2007) [online]. Available at: http://www.cogg.ie/wp-content/uploads/Linguistic-Study-of-the-Use-of-Irish-in-the-Gaeltacht.pdf <accessed 5 March 2018>

[53] Welsh Government, StatsWales, Census Results 1971 [online]. Available at https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Welsh-Language/WelshSpeakers-by-LocalAuthority-Gender-DetailedAgeGroups-1971Census <Accessed 26 February 2018>

[54] Welsh Government, Welsh Language Strategy, Cymraeg 2050, 2017 p.18. [online].

[55] Morris, D., 'Young People and their Use of the Welsh Language'.

some Welsh, and perhaps many use it every day, particularly those in education[56], but few fluent native speakers remain. The vision of a bilingual nation, enshrined in *Iaith Pawb*, where a person might elect to live their life through the medium of Welsh, may be fading away as the maintenance of fully Welsh speaking communities ceases to be the main strategic focus.

Morris, in her research on language use amongst young people, has identified three distinct types of community[57], categorized by the relationship between members of the two language groups. The first of these, Assimilating Communities, are those where considerable pressure is put upon incomers and other non-Welsh speakers to learn and use the language. Whilst such communities tend to be in areas where there is a high density of Welsh speakers, there is a suggestion of a more complex picture. Secondly, there are Distinctive Language Group Communities, where the Welsh-speaking group and the English-speaking group appear to co-exist without much interaction. These could be interesting to policy formulators because, whilst they are not an obvious source of new Welsh speakers, the Welsh speaking group in the Distinctive Language Group Communities appear to be protected to a degree from some of the forces of Welsh language attrition. A deeper understanding of why this might be could provide a basis for combating the erosion of Welsh use by social forces. Finally, Morris identified Assimilated Communities which regrettably for the future of the Welsh language, appear to be a frequently occurring case where the Welsh language group was "rapidly being assimilated into the normative context where

[56] Welsh Government, Statistics and research, Welsh language use survey 2015, [online]. Available at: http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2016/160301-welsh-language-use-in-wales-2013-15-en.pdf <accessed 15 January 2018>
[57] Morris, D., 'Young People and their Use of the Welsh Language'.

English was the predominant language"[58]. This last group highlights the threat of in-migration; almost all these communities were in areas that had seen a recent influx of in-migrants[59].

Additionally, in-migration triggers further out-migration, as house prices are forced higher, meaning that young locals are unable to afford to live in the area. It also frequently contorts the age profile of the community, threatening its wellbeing and survival by reducing child numbers and inflating house-prices[60]. In recent years, several organisations have made submissions to policy formulators highlighting the need to address spiralling house prices and affordable housing in certain areas[61]. The Homebuy scheme, Social Housing Grant Programme and Affordable Housing planning have perhaps mitigated the issue[62], but the fact remains that younger local people are often unable to remain in their area as they cannot afford to live there. In the face of a Britain-wide affordable housing crisis[63], it is unlikely that the WG will be able to resolve this issue even in the timescales associated with *Cymraeg* 2050. In the place of departing young people are in-migrants, frequently retirees, who must then be persuaded to engage with, and learn the language of the local community. Organisations such as *Mentrau Iaith*, and the *Urdd* have, with government

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[58] Morris, D., 'Young People and their Use of the Welsh Language'.
[59] *ibid.*
[60] Williams, C. H., 'Welsh (in Wales)'.
[61] *ibid.*
[62] *ibid.*
[63] Shelter England, What the housing crisis is [online]. Available at:
http://england.shelter.org.uk/campaigns_/why_we_campaign/the_housing_crisis/what_is_the_housing_crisis <Accessed 25 February 2018>;
Shelter Cymru, Homes For All Cymru Manifesto [online]. Available at
https://sheltercymru.org.uk/homes-for-all-cymru-manifesto/ <Accessed 25 February 2018> ;
Shelter Cymru, Shelter Cymru call on new Welsh Government for more affordable homes [online].
Available at https://sheltercymru.org.uk/shelter-cymru-call-on-new-welsh-government-for-more-affordable-homes/ <Accessed 25 February 2018>

encouragement, engaged with some of these new residents to assist integration, but success has been limited[64].

Even apparent economic boons to Wales can be detrimental to the number of Welsh speakers. Welsh language policy needs to be considered when planning economic initiatives, particularly major capital projects[65]. For example, the new nuclear power station in Wylfa on Anglesey is now close to getting all required permissions for its construction. The number of jobs that will be provided is impressive. For the two concurrent projects at Wylfa and Oldbury-on-Severn in England a projected construction workforce of around 4,000 workers will be required, with up to 9,000 workers at the peak of construction. The average construction time for a nuclear power plant is around eight years[66]. Once the power station is operational, 850 new full-time jobs will be created in Wylfa alone[67]. This will produce a significant, positive economic ripple effect, with additional money being spent in the area on a broad range of goods and services. However, the impact upon the Welsh language, in what is currently a Welsh language stronghold, could be catastrophic. It is highly improbable that all, or even many, of these new workers will be local and / or Welsh speakers. A sudden, dramatic influx of probably predominately English speakers is unlikely to integrate linguistically, particularly since the majority, the construction workers, will only remain in the region for perhaps a decade, and may well be working at both sites.

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[64] Williams, C. H., 'Welsh (in Wales)'.
[65] Williams, C. H., 'Welsh (in Wales)'.
[66] World Nuclear Report [online]. Available at:
http://www.worldnuclearreport.org/IMG/pdf/20150715wnisr2015-v1-lr.pdf <Accessed 24 February 2018>
[67] Horizon Nuclear Power: Careers [online]. Available at:
https://www.horizonnuclearpower.com/careers <Accessed 24 February 2018>

It is indicative of a lack of robust integrated planning that, at present, there is no specific plan to support the Welsh language in response to this threat.

Reduction of Welsh speaker numbers is not only caused by migration however. Attrition of Welsh languages skills through life is an equally important issue. *Cymraeg 2050* has two stated goals, to dramatically increase the number of people who speak Welsh, and to double the percentage of Welsh speakers who use some Welsh every day, both by 2050. Welsh usage and retention are inextricably bound, so the two themes sit well together. Wei asserts that early acquisition without ongoing use and support often leads to incomplete acquisition, low proficiency level and attrition[68]. Unless the significant majority of Welsh speakers can be prevailed upon to use their Welsh, maintaining and developing their language skills through life, overall speaker numbers will not grow as desired. The transition phases through the education system are particularly high risk points for continued Welsh language development in children, and will be discussed below in a consideration of Welsh language acquisition. However, if children and adults are not able, or willing, to use their Welsh outside of an educational context, it is unlikely that they will maintain their skills, participate in a Welsh language community, or speak Welsh with their children in turn. Ongoing language use is essential for language maintenance, and the retention of speaker numbers. As Fishman asserts:

> "Language choices, culminated over many individuals and many choice instances, become transformed in the processes of language maintenance or language shift."[69].

[68] Wei, L., 'Dimensions of Bilingualism' in L. Wei, ed., second edn. *The Bilingualism Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

[69] Fishman, J. A., 'Who Speaks What Language to Whom and When?' in L. Wei, ed., second edn. *The Bilingualism Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p.58.

More must be done to facilitate those choices favouring Welsh. In the language of *Cymraeg* 2050*, the use of Welsh must be *normalized*.

Currently language attrition in adolescence is a particular source of concern. In part, this is caused by children moving into English medium education as they progress through the school system, with decreasing focus on the development and maintenance of Welsh language skills. A small but significant percentage of children who complete their primary education in Welsh medium schools switch to English medium schools for their secondary education[70]. There is, however, a marked reduction of the average amount of Welsh spoken socially by all bilingual children as they progress to adulthood, even if they ostensibly maintain their Welsh skills[71]. There are several suggested causes for this phenomenon, although it is not fully understood. However, many scholars agree that linguistic insecurity is a major factor in the lack of minority language use[72]. The relationship between linguistic insecurity and language shift is not straightforward, nor has it been proven to be unequivocally causal. However, there is a correlation between articulations of linguistic insecurity and shift, with many speakers too embarrassed or uncomfortable to use the minority language, accelerating the normalization of the dominant language[73]. Abtahian and Quinn define three forms of linguistic insecurity, the most relevant to today's Welsh language context being the "insecurity of young speakers who might be criticised by older fluent

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[70] Wei, L., 'Sociolinguistic Dimensions of Bilingualism', p.30.

[71] *ibid.*

[72] Fishman, J. A., 'Who Speaks What Language to Whom and When?';
Jones, H. and Williams, C. H., 'The Statistical Basis for Welsh Language Planning: Data Trends, Patterns, Processes' in C. H. Williams, ed., *Language Revitalization: Policy and Planning in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000);
M. R. Abtahian and C. M. Quinn, 'Language Shift and Linguistic Insecurity' in K. A. Hildebrandt, C. Jany and W. Silva eds, *Language Documentation & Conservation Special Pulbiclication No.13: Documenting Variatio in Endagered Languages.* (July 2017) [online]. Available at: http://nlfrc.hawaii.edu/ldc/ <accessed January 28 2018>

[73] M. R. Abtahian and C. M. Quinn, 'Language Shift and Linguistic Insecurity'.

speakers for not speaking the language correctly"[74]. With the prevalence of adult

Welsh language learners, it is not only the young who are affected by such insecurity,

nor is it only the old whose opinions are feared.

This is an instance where a focus on the quality of Welsh spoken could be a negative

force, directly reducing the quantity of Welsh spoken. In the Welsh Social Survey

study, it was found that over 40% of adult Welsh speakers are too insecure about the

quality of their Welsh to use it[75]. This is a serious issue when one considers the

dramatically reduced opportunities for use, the reduced normalization of Welsh, and

the degeneration of linguistic ability over time that may result. It could be that formal

Welsh is particularly at risk, as use of language in a formal context generally brings

with it increased anxiety and increased insecurity. Parallels can be drawn with the

situation in Java, where young speakers of Javanese, despite being raised in that

language, now lack the confidence to use the high register levels, that is the polite,

formal form. For fear of getting it wrong, they instead choose to use the dominant

Indonesian language, thereby rapidly accelerating language shift towards Indonesian[76].

It is likely that considerations of language ownership and legitimacy perpetuate and

grow linguistic insecurity. In the Javanese example provided above, it was clear the

negative judgement from the older generation, who felt themselves guardians of the

"pure", "correct" form of language, was causing the younger generation to feel that

their version of the language was not valid, and that in some way the language did not

[74] *ibid.*

[75] Jones, H. and Williams, C. H., 'The Statistical Basis for Welsh Language Planning: Data Trends, Patterns, Processes'.

[76] M. R. Abtahian and C. M. Quinn, 'Language Shift and Linguistic Insecurity'.

belong to them[77]. L2, or for that matter lower proficiency L1 minority language

speakers can be treated by L1 native speakers as illegitimate users of the language[78]. A

form of testing can occur between two speakers upon meeting, whereby each aims to

establish whether they feel that the other is a "legitimate" speaker of the minority

language[79]. If one party fails such a test, perhaps by making errors of pronunciation,

syntax, or cultural referencing, access to the minority language is denied them, and the

other party will switch to the dominant language for the rest of the conversation[80]. Of

course, in several instances the L1 speaker may simply become aware that they are

speaking with someone whose Welsh is less good than their English, and so will switch

language in a well-meaning, but misguided attempt to be helpful[81]. Whatever the

cause, the opportunity to speak Welsh is lost, and is likely to remain so, as once two

individuals establish a language for interaction, it is very unlikely to change[82].

A lack of support around Welsh learners and speakers, and a lack of understanding

about the nature of bilingualism both feed into the creation of linguistic anxiety. In his

study of self-reported difficulties in performing tasks in Welsh for L1 and L2 speakers,

Evas[83] found that that L2 speakers consistently reported having more difficulty with

every linguistic task. They also reported a far higher sense of their Welsh not being

"good enough"[84]. A causal link is inferred[85]. It has been established that many adult

learners wishing to maintain their Welsh elect to do so by remaining in classes, rather

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[77] M. R. Abtahian and C. M. Quinn, 'Language Shift and Linguistic Insecurity'.
[78] Hornsby, N., *Revitalizing Minority Languages: New Speakers of Breton, Yiddish and Lemko* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
[79] M. R. Abtahian and C. M. Quinn, 'Language Shift and Linguistic Insecurity'.
[80] Hornsby, N., *Revitalizing Minority Languages: New Speakers of Breton, Yiddish and Lemko.*
[81] M. R. Abtahian and C. M. Quinn, 'Language Shift and Linguistic Insecurity'.
[82] F. Grosjean, *Bilingual: Life and Reality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).
[83] Evas, J., 'Declining Density: A Danger for the Language?' in C. H. Williams, ed., *Language Revitalization: Policy and Planning in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000).
[84] *ibid.*
[85] *ibid.*

than using their Welsh in the 'real world'[86]. Furthermore, Welsh for Adults courses frequently fail to prepare their students for the 'real world' context, and for the occasional negative responses that they will encounter[87]. It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the provision of ongoing support and language skills development for L2 speakers is required if Welsh language usage is to increase. The *Cymraeg* 2050 document identifies the need to raise awareness of what bilingualism is[88], some Welsh courses[89] specifically encourage people to accept making mistakes, stressing the learning value of getting it wrong, and the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) User Generated Content (UGC) initiatives described below[90] all go some small way to targeting this issue; but it remains unclear how the *Cymraeg* 2050 strategy will succeed in getting people to overcome their fear of using Welsh.

For Welsh to become normalized, the community of speakers must have the skills and confidence to use their Welsh, but they must also have the opportunity. One of the learning points from the *Iaith Pawb* strategy was that many Welsh speakers felt denied opportunities to speak Welsh, leading to increased focus on language rights, and the responsibilities of institutions[91]. Progress has been made in those domains. However, daily usage in, for example, shops, doctors' and dentists' surgeries is diminishing, even in areas typically considered to be strongholds of Welsh language[92]. Past initiatives

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[86] D. Mac Giolla Chríost, *Welsh for Adults teaching and learning approaches, methodologies and resources: A comprehensive research study and critical review of the way forward (*Welsh Government, 2012), p.21 [online]. Available at: http://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/130424-welsh-adults-teaching-learning-approaches-en.pdf <accessed 3 February 2018>
[87] *ibid.*
[88] Welsh Government, Welsh Language Strategy, Cymraeg 2050.
[89] Say Something in Welsh: Becoming Fluent [online]. Available at: https://www.saysomethingin.com/welsh/info/becoming-fluent <accessed 4 January 2018>
[90] BBC, The Future of Welsh Language Broadcasting [online]. Available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/corporate2/cymruwales/about/rtd_speech_jul2015 <Accessed 4 March 2018>
[91] Williams, C. H., 'Welsh (in Wales)'.
[92] Evas, J., 'Declining Density: A Danger for the Language?'.

such as the "Welsh Spoken Here" badges, and "Start a conversation in Welsh here" had some degree of success[93], but the challenge as to how to encourage Welsh usage outside the relatively easily controlled educational and institutional contexts remains.

A significant boost to the normalization and prestige of Welsh came in 1982 with the creation of Sianel Pedwar Cymru (S4C). Broadcast media, such as S4C, BBC Wales and Radio Cymru are a constant reminder to bilingual and monolingual speakers alike that Welsh is a living language with a population of speakers who use it to cover subjects from the quotidian to the elevated. The continued presence of such media does much to support Welsh language use. However, there is a national phenomenon whereby people are moving away from mainstream broadcast media to online content[94], particularly amongst adolescents / young adults. An effective WG strategy for carrying the Welsh language forward into new media forms is currently lacking, as the WG's technological focus is on education provision. The incidence of Welsh use in social media is low. As this is an essential element of particularly young people's social interaction, this is problematic for the maintenance of the language outside the educational domain. Of fluent Welsh speakers, only 13% mainly text in Welsh, 10% mainly email in Welsh, and of adult Facebook and Twitter users, the number who mainly write in Welsh on these platforms is 9% and 6% respectively[95]. Almost no Welsh speakers who do not consider themselves fluent use these media in Welsh[96].

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[93] Welsh Government, Statistics and research, Welsh language use survey 2015.
[94] G. Doyle, 'From Television to Multi-Platform: Less from More or More for Less?', *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, Vol 16(4): 1–19, (2010).
[95] Welsh Government, Statistics and research, Welsh language use survey 2015, p.6.
[96] *ibid.*

Amongst the creative community, a traditional stronghold of the Welsh language[97], much is being done. There is a new upsurge in popular music sung in Welsh. There have been fewer mainstream successes than in the '90s and early '00s, with Catatonia, Gorky's Zygotic Mynci and Super Furry Animals, but acts singing in Welsh such as 9bach and Gwenno are nonetheless reaching large audiences throughout Britain. Welsh filmmaking is increasingly well regarded, and in print media the publishing sector continues to flourish, albeit focussing heavily on Welsh cultural works, educational and children's books[98]. The challenge now is to maximise this cultural capital, and build upon it to further normalize the use of Welsh in creative work. It is essential that if Welsh is to thrive, and if *Cymraeg* 2050 is to reach its stated goal, that the retention of numbers of Welsh speakers be dramatically improved. However, there may inevitably be some attrition; it is in the nature of young people to move away from the family home, and it is probable that a percentage will continue to move to England. Whatever the attrition rate will be, it will need to be accommodated by a proportionate additional rate of acquisition. Therefore, to have one million Welsh speakers by 2050, after attrition, more than a million will need to have acquired the language to allow for the numbers lost through that attrition.

Retention of Language Quality

There is an inherent conflict between the goal of large numbers of speakers, and the maintenance of language standards. In the short to mid-term, with the resources available, one may focus upon quantity, or quality, but one will be at the cost of the

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[97] Welsh Government, Social Research, Welsh language skills needs in eight sectors.
[98] Williams, C. H., 'On Recognition, Resolution and Revitalization'.

other. Whilst the number of Welsh speakers continues to rise steadily, the number of fluent speakers continues to decline[99]. The correct balance for the Welsh language and the Welsh people must be determined, and aimed for, in the full and open understanding of the risks inherent in managing such a tension. The current strategy document appears to prioritise quantity of speakers, and to sidestep the issue of what the potential impact to quality will be.

Cymraeg 2050 provides no rigorous definition as to what constitutes a speaker. The document states that its starting point is the definition provided by the census. This has the advantage of facilitating ten-yearly data gathering, but it is not a robust definition. Nor is it one that lends itself to strategy monitoring based on identified key linguistic groups, such as L1 children or L2 adults. It is, of course, the case that language skills are complex, and on a continuum, but, without defined thresholds of proficiency it is unclear what level of mastery is desired. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) provides a useful set of thresholds for L2 language learners[100] which will be referred to here when needed. No reference is made in *Cymraeg* 2050 to this, or any equivalent framework. However, such defined thresholds are essential to understand what the proficiency objectives are. Without such clarity, success or failure cannot be measured, and inherent risks cannot be quantified and mitigated. One million people able to speak Welsh to CEFR A1 level is far more achievable, but dramatically less valuable to the future of the Welsh language than one million or fewer L1 or L2 CEFR C1/2 speakers and writers.

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[99] Welsh Government, Statistics and research, Welsh language use survey 2015.
[100] Appendix A

Next to consider is the issue of the impact of adult learners upon a language. Linguistic scholars have noted that whilst there is no such thing as a simple language, some languages show a marked *relative* simplicity. Typically, this phenomenon is found in *exoteric* languages[101], that is those have become the lingua franca of a geographical area. Examples include Mandarin, with its relatively small number of tones, Indonesian, with its unusually straightforward grammar, and English, with its almost complete lack of verb endings, and its lack of gender[102]. Some scholars[103] have determined the cause to be the vastly greater number of adult learners that an exoteric language will attract, and, in the case of English, the Viking invasions, resulting in yet more adult learners[104]. Adults, with their less plastic brains, and often with greater demands upon their time, do not generally learn languages well. Languages that have had to contend with influxes of adult learners, often have had pieces of "inessential" grammar "broken off"[105].

Welsh is an esoteric, in-group, language[106], and one with a considerable literary tradition and successful corpus planning, but, nevertheless, it is reasonable to suppose that an influx of adult learners results in a degree of simplification[107]. The risk of simplification has been increased by the, perhaps necessary, choices made by some

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[101] J. H. McWhorter, *Linguistic simplicity and complexity: Why do languages undress? Language contact and bilingualism* (Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter, 2012).

[102] J. H. McWhorter, *Language interrupted: Signs of non-native acquisition in standard language grammars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[103] *ibid.*

Trudgill, P., 'On the sociolinguistic typology of complexity loss' in F. Seifart, G. Haig, N. P. Himmelmann, D. Jung, A. Margetts, and P. Trilsbeek eds, *Potentials of Language Documentation: Methods, Analyses, and Utilization* [online]. Available at: http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.923.6533&rep=rep1&type=pdf <accessed 6 October 2017>

[104] J. H. McWhorter, *Linguistic simplicity and complexity: Why do languages undress? Language contact and bilingualism.*

[105] *ibid.*

[106] *ibid.*

[107] *ibid.*

educators. Already some Welsh for Adults teachers have elected to simplify the Welsh that they offer their students for example, by dropping mutations in the interrogative and negative forms in the past tense[108]. If one considers that adult learners will, in many cases, fail to master perfectly even the version of Welsh that is put before them, the risks to the quality of language going forward are significant. The current discourse around language proficiency, moving from a focus upon language mastery to one of communication competence[109], goes some way to endorsing the simplification of language.

It is not only adult learners that present a threat to the quality of the Welsh language, however. The conversation regarding Welsh language acquisition is typically framed such that two groups are considered, L1 and L2, where L2 sub-divides into children and adults. There is, however, an additional level of complexity as pertains to L1 learners, introduced by the concept of heritage speakers[110]. The heritage speaker phenomenon is typically associated with immigrants who changed country at a very young age / the children of immigrants, and hence have learned their mother tongue whilst immersed in another language context. When one considers that significant numbers of fluent Welsh-speaking children in Wales either do not speak Welsh at home, or are not educated in Welsh, or do not socialise in Welsh, the heritage-language concept is applicable to the Welsh context. In the Land of their Fathers, many Welsh children today may be speaking "immigrant" Welsh.

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[108] Pers. Comm. 26 February 2018.

[109] J. Cenoz, Defining Multilingualism, *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, Vol 33: (2013) pp.3–18.

[110] S. Montrul, R.Foote and S. Perpiñán, Gender Agreement in Adult Second Language Learners and Spanish Heritage Speakers: The Effects of Age and Context of Acquisition, *Language Learning: A Journal of Research in Language Studies*, Vol 58, (Issue 3): (2008) pp. 503–553.

Studies of ostensibly native, L1 Irish Gaelic speakers in the Republic of Ireland have identified several indicators of reduced language proficiency in the minority language. These include the reduction of the phoneme inventory, irregularities in the morphology and syntax, use of L2 grammar patterns, reduced literacy in the minority L1 language and reduced abilities relating to creative language use such as mockery, sarcasm, and the expression of strong emotion[111]. These are characteristics of the reduced language skills associated with immigrant heritage language acquisition. As there are strong parallels between the legislative, budgetary, planning and media support aspects of the Irish situation in Ireland and that of Welsh in Wales, it is reasonable to suppose that similar phenomena are occurring amongst young Welsh speakers. Ó Giollagáin, following Montrul et al, asserts that insufficient L1 language input during a critical period, early in childhood, may be the cause of notably weak L1 language competencies. Both scholars advocate the introduction of Early Minority Monolingualism[112] to attempt to redress the balance in favour of the minority language. This idea has great merit. However, it is hard to see how it could be achieved in a situation where, in 2002, the percentage of children who were fluent Welsh speakers *and* spoke it home was a mere 6.2%, and falling[113], despite the overall number of fluent Welsh speaking children rising[114]. A specific strategy, focussing upon language quality, to support L1 fluent Welsh speaking children is called for. The 2050 document contains no such strategy.

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[111] Ó Giollagáin, C., 'The Eclipse of the First Language Minority Speaker: Deficiencies in Ethnolinguistic Acquisition and its Evasive Discourse', in H. G. Lewis and N. Ostler, eds, *Reversing Language Shift: How to Reawaken a Language Tradition* (Bath: The Foundation for Endangered Languages, 2010), pp. 11-22.
[112] Ó Giollagáin, C., 'The Eclipse of the First Language Minority Speaker: Deficiencies in Ethnolinguistic Acquisition and its Evasive Discourse'.
S. Montrul, R.Foote and S. Perpiñán, Gender Agreement in Adult Second Language Learners and Spanish Heritage Speakers: The Effects of Age and Context of Acquisition.
[113] Williams, C. H., 'Welsh (in Wales)'.
[114] *ibid.*

This has significant repercussions for the future quality of the Welsh language.

Heritage language speakers are a form of native speaker[115], and associate themselves

strongly with the cultural identity associated with their "mother tongue". However,

they rarely display the mastery of language shown by L1 speakers who have remained

immersed in their own language context[116]. Whilst their language skills appear "native-

like" due to their superior phonology relative to L2 learners, a close examination of

their language reveals that they do not exhibit L1 mastery of their heritage language.

Whilst phonology is not an absolute measure of language quality, due to the great

diversity in dialect phonologies, it is a valid indicator of spoken ability in the context of

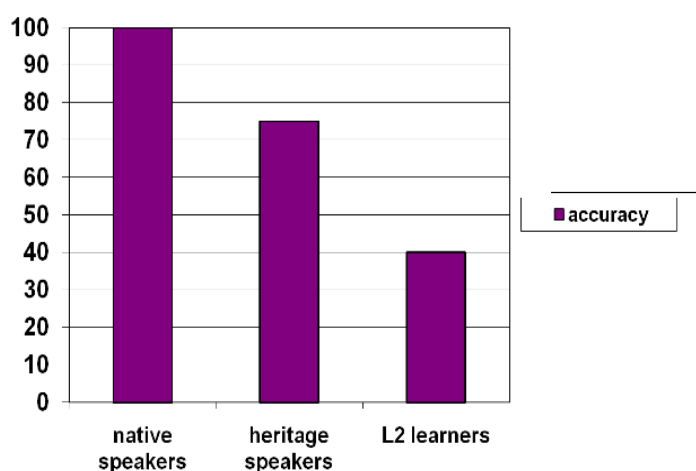a minority language surrounded by a conflicting phonology.

Figure 1. Accuracy of Phonology in Native, Heritage and L2 speakers[117]

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[115] S. Montrul, *On Heritage Speakers as Native Speakers*, Birmingham Illinois Partnership for Discovery, Engagement and Education, 2016 [online]. Available at: https://experts.illinois.edu/en/publications/gender-agreement-in-adult-second-language-learners-and-spanish-he <accessed 14 January 2018>

[116] *ibid.*
J. H. MCWhorter, *Language interrupted: Signs of non-native acquisition in standard language grammars*.

[117] S. Montrul, *On Heritage Speakers as Native Speakers*, p.50.

However, when one considers morphosyntax, a stronger indicator of overall language quality, it is apparent that the heritage speaker is not linguistically equivalent to the native speaker, even though both types of speakers would usually be considered L1. The language mastery of a heritage speaker is, rather, akin to that of an L2 speaker.
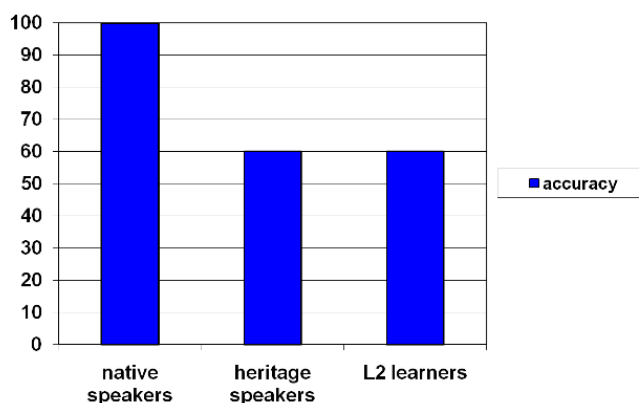

Figure 2. Accuracy of Morphosyntax in Native, Heritage and L2 Speakers[118]

A key reason for the native speaker / heritage speaker disparity is the fact that heritage speakers will rarely continue their language acquisition process fully into adulthood, a phenomenon widely seen in Welsh language education, and referred to in *Cymraeg* 2050. The achievement of native language proficiency requires a long process of development from birth to adulthood, as is discussed below. If this process is interrupted, it results in often permanently incomplete mastery[119]. When one considers the attrition-rates for child Welsh language speakers / learners, such attrition is not only detrimental to numbers, but to language quality.

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[118] S. Montrul, *On Heritage Speakers as Native Speakers*. P.51
[119] S. Montrul, R.Foote and S. Perpiñán, Gender Agreement in Adult Second Language Learners and Spanish Heritage Speakers: The Effects of Age and Context of Acquisition, *Language Learning: A Journal of Research in Language Studies*, Vol 58, (Issue 3): (2008) pp. 503–553.
J. H. MCWhorter, *Language interrupted: Signs of non-native acquisition in standard language grammars.*

Any degeneration of the Welsh language poses a threat to the prestige of the language, which is vital to maintain if the language is to have a future as a community language[120]. In this light, the survival of Welsh as a literary language must also be considered. Welsh has an important literary, academic and theological tradition. Creative works, sophisticated discourse and higher education require a near mastery of language, equivalent to CEFR C2. Without a significant focus on the retention of language quality, the number of individuals able to produce such work will reduce each year, regardless of, or even due to, any increase in overall speaker numbers. This in turn will lead to the atrophying of Welsh literary culture and academic endeavour, and in a loss of hard won prestige for the Welsh language. The 2015 Welsh Language Survey found that, of adults who speak Welsh, only 28% said that they could write Welsh very well[121].

Wales is a diglossic country, populated in the main by a combination of monolingual English speakers, and bilingual Welsh / English speakers. The diglossic context is multi-layered however, in that within the languages spoken there are both H and L forms. For clarity, the following terms are used:

H – High language

L – Low language

H_W – High form of the Welsh language

H_E – High form of the English language, "Queen's English"

L_W – Low form of the Welsh language – typically L1 home dialect, possibly a variant of L2

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[120] N. Dorian, *Investigating Obsolescence: Studies in Language Contraction and Death* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[121] Welsh Government, Statistics and research, Welsh language use survey 2015.

L_E – Low form of the English language – typically L1 home dialect, possibly a variant of L2

It should be noted that these terms relate only to diglossic concepts, and do not relate to language proficiency.

The education system in Britain ensures that, regardless of which English dialect, (i.e. L_E,) is spoken at home, all individuals have access to instruction in 'Queen's English", that is H_E. Mastery of H_E will vary according to education level, but a strong core of fluent H_E speakers and writers is guaranteed in every generation. It is not clear if an equivalent H_W core is guaranteed, however. Many L2 speakers are not exposed to H_W, and very few, if any, will master it. When one considers the current attrition rates amongst L1 speakers, it is probable that many of those will also fail to master H_W. The future of the Welsh equivalent of "Queen's English" whatever that may be, is not guaranteed. Policy makers for some beleaguered minority languages have consciously embraced a core of L2 speakers, and the attendant language simplification, as the only route to language survival open to them[122]. It should be noted that in those cases, the current number of speakers is, at best, in the hundreds, not the hundreds of thousands as is the case for Welsh. A language that is fighting for its life is unlikely to have the luxury of being able to insist upon language purity, and it may be that Welsh does not need to be simplified in this way to guarantee its survival. Policy makers in Wales must consider whether a simplification, what many might consider a degeneration, of the Welsh language, is a reasonable price to pay for increased numbers of speakers.

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[122] M. Olthuis, S. Kivelä and T. Skutnabb-Kangas, *Revitalising Indigenous Languages: How to Recreate a Lost Generation* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2013);
University of Berkeley, Linguistics, Survey of California and Other Indian Languages [online]. Available at: http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/~survey/languages/california-languages.php <accessed 6 January 2018>

A modified form of this debate has already been identified at the BBC. In her paper

considering the balance of "authentic" versus "standard" Welsh, Law identifies the

tension inherent in trying to maintain a high standard of Welsh language in

programming, whilst encouraging participation and a sense of inclusion[123]. The focus

of her research is the balance between H_W and L_W, particularly as it relates to audience

participation and User Generated Content. However, if we frame L2 and heritage

Welsh as alternative dialects, that is as alternative L_W forms, then the BBC situation is

clearly directly relevant to the overall Welsh language quality debate.

Minority language programme producers face a similar dilemma to minority language

policy makers and educators in determining whether to embrace, or tolerate, linguistic

diversity in the minority language, or whether to adhere to concepts of standard,

"correct" or "pure" language. Acutely aware of their role in language revitalization,

producers often choose to encourage audience participation since this is most likely to

encourage minority language use[124]. In a microcosm of the Welsh language strategy

quality versus quantity conundrum, producers must attempt to balance encouraging

people to participate, and helping them feel that the language and the conversation

belongs to them, with maintaining the standard of the language such that they

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[123] Law, P., 'Interacting with the BBC: The maintenance of "authentic" versus "proper" Welsh', in H. G. Lewis and N. Ostler, eds, *Reversing Language Shift: How to Reawaken a Language Tradition* (Bath: The Foundation for Endangered Languages, 2010), pp. 127-131.
[124] Cormack, M., 'The Media and Language Maintenance' in Law, P., 'Interacting with the BBC: The maintenance of "authentic" versus "proper" Welsh', in H. G. Lewis and N. Ostler, eds, *Reversing Language Shift: How to Reawaken a Language Tradition* (Bath: The Foundation for Endangered Languages, 2010), p. 129.

continue to show Welsh as a high prestige, living language, with the flexibility and sophistication required to address any topic.

The collective view articulated by BBC minority language producers was that it was most important that people "get to hear a language they understand and that means something to them"[125]. It is possible that this summation also encapsulates the philosophy that underpins *Cymraeg* 2050; it is most important that people "get to live in a language they understand [speak, write, study in, create in, think in] that means something to them". The implication of this summation is that some "degeneration" of everyday Welsh may be acceptable, but, if that is so, that fact needs to be agreed, stated, and where possible and appropriate, mitigated. As one producer said:

> "BBC Wales, BBC Cymru and Radio Cymru have always been seen as the bearers of [a] certain standard. Not just preserving the Welsh language but providing an environment where the Welsh language has dignity and is a modern language of communication. Because obviously that's the point of any language, communicating, so if that goes then there's no point at all to it![126]"

Considerations of "authentic" versus "standard"[127] Welsh raise another issue that appears to have been side-stepped in *Cymraeg* 2050, namely that of standardization. Welsh has a rich diversity of dialect, a situation which is necessarily jeopardised by the education system becoming the bedrock of Welsh language revitalization. If it is necessary for Welsh to become standardized, and the increasing dependence upon schooling and upon L2 learners suggests that it is, which version of Welsh should be the standard? Furthermore, where standardised Welsh takes root, be it the Welsh equivalent of "Queen's English", or the L2 or heritage dialect, many speakers of other Welsh dialects risk feeling disconnected from their own language, and the essential

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[125] Law, P., 'Interacting with the BBC: The maintenance of "authentic" versus "proper" Welsh'.
[126] Law, P., 'Interacting with the BBC: The maintenance of "authentic" versus "proper" Welsh'. P.129
[127] *ibid.*

link between language and identity is again in jeopardy. A complete strategy must include clarity as to the nature of the standardised version(s) of Welsh that will be taught, including, if they are to be different, L2, L1 H_E, and L1 H_w language. Furthermore, it must address how the population of Wales, particularly the Welsh speaking population, can be engaged to consider the standardised version to be *their* language.

Here again the simplistic assessment of a diglossic context where English is the H language and Welsh the L does not allow a comprehensive modelling of the situation. For example, in England, a majority monolingual English context, there is clarity that L_E is the home language, be it Geordie dialect, Thames Estuary or not L_E at all but L Panjabi or Polish. As such it is used for interactions with family and friends. H_E is "Queen's English", taught in school, used by government, and seen on the news. Both H_E and L_E have their domains where they are supported and to some degree maintained, although there is much evidence to show that dialect variation is being eroded in all languages[128]. The situation in Wales is more complicated however. For some the home language will be L_E, for others L_W, but in all cases children will be dependent upon the education system for development of both H_W and H_E. This is clearly achievable, with many bilingual and biliterate young people leaving Welsh language secondary education with the language skills that they need to excel in either language. However, if this is to be sustained, and the numbers of such individuals are to grow, the multiglossic nature of bilingual Welsh / English speaking children needs to be understood by educators and policy formulators. It is not equivalent to the situation of H and L language in monolingual English education, and nor is it as straightforward

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[128] University of Essex, Department of Linguistics, Language Change and Dialect Loss [online]. Available at: http://orb.essex.ac.uk/lg/lg405/jspurl/language%20change.htm <accessed 26 February 2018>

as second language acquisition. Bilingual children in Wales need to be equipped with H_E, H_W and L_W as a minimum if they are to participate in Welsh language higher education, participate in complex discourse of the highest level in Welsh, and maintain a Welsh language connection with their community. Specific education strategies may well need to be considered. At present, the census data suggests that the great majority of even bilingual children are leaving secondary education with H_E, L_E and L_W instead[129]. Accordingly, the future of H_W is under considerable threat.

Some consider that the advent of digital communication and social media pose an additional threat to the quality of the Welsh language. Digital communication and social media have long been the favourite bugbear of language purists in many languages; however, several leading linguistic scholars[130] have refuted the argument that online posts, tweeting, texting and similar are damaging language, pointing to users' sophisticated ability to contextualise their communication style. There is no reason to suppose that such communication will be more detrimental to Welsh than it would be to English for example, that is, not detrimental at all if speakers are equipped with language skills prior to engagement with such media. L2 learners attempting to improve their Welsh exclusively through Twitter are unlikely to gain sophisticated Welsh language skills. However, if the other aspects of Welsh language education are robust, be it for L1, L1 heritage or L2 speakers, it is likely that digital platforms will provide far more opportunities for the revitalization of the Welsh language, than threats to it. Responsibility needs to be taken by those in positions of status regarding

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[129] H. M. Jones, A statistical overview of the Welsh Language.
[130] J. H. McWhorter, *Doing our own thing: The degradation of Language and Music and why we should, like, care* (Cedar Rapids: Arrow Publications Inc, 2005).
C. Wood, N Kemp, and B. Plester, *Text Messaging and Literacy: The Evidence* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014).

their use of Welsh on platforms such as Twitter, but there is evidence to suggest that this is being done. Universities[131], the BBC[132] and the National Assembly for Wales[133] all have social media use guidelines that refer to the need to maintain a linguistic standard, and organisations such as Canolfan Bedwyr at Bangor University provide courses, in Welsh, on how to manage social media effectively in Welsh. The embracing of digital technology by the WG in support of the Welsh language has begun with electronic learning platforms being rolled out[134] and extensive use of online facilities in education. However, there is only ad hoc support for Welsh speakers who wish to use their language online at present. Initiatives are forthcoming from the academic and media sectors, with tools such as online spelling and mutation checkers on the BBC websites[135], albeit they are not embedded in UCG areas. What is missing at this stage is an integrated digital strategy from the Welsh Assembly Government in support of *Cymraeg* 2050, that focusses on community use, and not purely upon education.

Acquisition of Welsh Language Speakers

As has been noted above, to reach the goals laid out in *Cymraeg* 2050, a dramatic acceleration in the growth in Welsh language speaker numbers is required. This can only be brought about, if indeed it can be brought about at all, by a dramatic rethink of Welsh language revitalization policy with associated infrastructural investment,

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[131] Bangor University, Planning, Social Media Policy [online]. Available at: https://www.bangor.ac.uk/planning/policy-register/documents/policy-use.pdf <accessed 1 March 2018>

[132] Law, P., 'Interacting with the BBC: The maintenance of "authentic" versus "proper" Welsh'.

[133] National Assembly for Wales, Social Media Communications Policy [online]. Available at: http://www.assembly.wales/NAfW%20Documents/About%20the%20Assembly%20section%20documents/Social%20media%20communciations%20policy%20en.pdf <accessed 1 March 2018>

[134] Welsh Government, News, Education, Google for Education to be rolled out in Welsh schools next year [online]. Available at: http://gov.wales/newsroom/educationandskills/2017/google-for-education-to-be-rolled-out-in-welsh-schools-next-year/?lang=en <accessed 2 March 2018>

[135] Law, P., 'Interacting with the BBC: The maintenance of "authentic" versus "proper" Welsh'.

committed leadership and, above all, a powerful and effective mode of acquisition for every demographic of learner. Cy*mraeg* 2050 divides the potential Welsh speaking population into those Welsh speakers provided by the family unit, and those provided by education. This division does not reflect a simple L1 / L2 split, as some Welsh speakers produced by the education system will be deemed to be, and assessed as, L1 Welsh speakers.

In 2009, MacKinnon, in response to a Ministerial initiative, explored from where potential new Gaelic speakers could come[136]. Whilst the context in which Gaelic language revitalization efforts take place is very different to that of Welsh[137], the categories that were identified are comprehensive, and valuable, and will be used here. They are:

1. Newly-born children of Welsh speakers being brought up as Welsh speakers

2. Children acquiring effective Welsh abilities through preschool and playgroup experience

3. Children consolidating this through effective primary school experience

4. Children continuing to do so at secondary school

5. Adults learning Welsh

6. Persons only able read / write Welsh developing speaking ability

7. Persons only able to understand Welsh developing the confidence to speak it

8. Persons who have abandoned Welsh in later life re-acquiring confidence and ability

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[136] MacKinnon, K., 'Growing a new generation of Gaelic speakers: an action plan in response to a Ministerial initiative', in H. G. Lewis and N. Ostler, eds, *Reversing Language Shift: How to Reawaken a Language Tradition* (Bath: The Foundation for Endangered Languages, 2010), pp 63-67.
[137] Williams, C. H., 'The Celtic World'.

9. Migrant Welsh speakers who have left Wales returning to it.

Child Learners

1. Newly-born children of Welsh speakers being brought up as Welsh speakers.

Fishman, and many after him, consider intergenerational language transmission to be the cornerstone of language maintenance and revitalization[138]. It lies at level six of Fishman's widely used Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale model of language shift[139]. Furthermore, evidence suggests that Welsh speakers who acquire the language at home are more likely to consider themselves fluent[140]. To ensure maximal intergenerational language transmission, the WG must overcome several specific challenges. Parents must be equipped with the language skills, the support, and the conviction required to transmit Welsh to their children. It is improbable that policy initiatives will impact the number of children born to Welsh speaking families, and it is sobering to note that, in 1997, 70% of Welsh language households had no children in them[141]. However, some work can be done to improve the chances of parents electing to speak Welsh with their children. The two key factors determining whether a minority language speaking parent will speak that language with the child are firstly, how natural it seems, and secondly, the parents' conceptions of identity[142]. Both,

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[138] Fishman, J. A., 'From Theory to Practice (and Vice Versa)' in J. A. Fishman, ed., *Can Threatened Languages be Saved?* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 2001).
Baker, C. and Prys Jones, M., 'Welsh Language Education: A Strategy for Revitalization' in C. H. Williams, ed., *Language Revitalization: Policy and Planning in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000).

[139] Fishman, J. A., 'From Theory to Practice (and Vice Versa)'.

[140] Welsh Government, Statistics and Research, Welsh language transmission and use in families [online]. Available at: http://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2017/170612-welsh-language-transmission-use-in-families-summary-en.pdf <accessed 18 February 2018>

[141] Aitchison and Carter in Williams, C. H., 'Welsh (in Wales)' in D. Ó Néill, ed., *Rebuilding the Celtic Languages* (Talybont: Y Lolfa Cyf, 2014).

[142] Welsh Government, Statistics and Research, Welsh language transmission and use in families [online].

predominately psychological, factors are strongly affected by the way in which the parents acquired Welsh, and considerations of language proficiency.

Regarding naturalness, if a parent was not spoken to in Welsh by their own parents, if they perceive Welsh as being the language of schooling, then it may not feel natural to speak Welsh to their baby[143]. Furthermore, considerations of Welsh language quality and proficiency are key to intergenerational language transmission. If parents' own Welsh language proficiency is not high, it is difficult for them to speak Welsh all the time. They are unable to articulate the full range of emotions and concepts that they wish to express. Welsh is not, therefore, a language that they can use when deeply emotional, or exhausted, or which has the personal, in-family vocabulary associated with parent / infant dialogue[144]. In this instance, they are very unlikely to be able to speak Welsh exclusively, or even predominately, with their child[145].

Support can be provided, and makes an important difference. The success of the *Twf, Cymraeg o'r Crud* programme[146], now replaced by *Cymraeg I Blant*, demonstrates that effective policies can be implemented in support of intergenerational language transmission. *Cymraeg* 2050 identifies as one of its plans the roll-out of a national initiative to facilitate an understanding of bilingualism, which shows an understanding of the need to motivate parents. Pilots have been run of education schemes, such as providing information on bilingualism in the Bounty Packs provided to new mothers, and training for midwives and health-visitors so that they communicate the value of

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[143] *ibid.*

[144] J. H. McWhorter, *Linguistic simplicity and complexity: Why do languages undress? Language contact and bilingualism.*

[145] Welsh Government, Statistics and Research, Welsh language transmission and use in families.

[146] Williams, C. H., 'Welsh (in Wales)'.

bilingualism[147]. Currently there is insufficient data to fully gauge the schemes' effectiveness. For success, they require effective co-ordination between the Welsh Language Division, and much larger government departments such as Education and Skills, and importantly, Health. Government policy formulators have conceded that this has historically been a "major stumbling block"[148].

Parents will generally do their utmost to make the effort to speak Welsh with their children, despite the difficulties, if they consider the Welsh language to be core to their conceptions of their own and their families' identity. Such issues are complex[149], but one of the challenges facing *Cymraeg* 2050 is ensuring that the cultural identity / language link remains strong. Maintaining language prestige and quality are key to this link, as is a sense of ownership of the Welsh language on the part of L1 Welsh speakers. Quite apart from the impact on the quality of language itself, L2 focussed programmes, frequently termed enrichment programmes[150], are typically associated with privileged out-of-region incomers, and middle class urban dwellers[151]. This can result in issues of legitimacy, such as those described above, and in what Hornsby terms a "power-struggle" for ownership of the language[152]. This conflict is inherently detrimental to efforts for language revitalization and negatively impacts the identity / language link. There is evidence from the other Celtic regions, as elsewhere, that an influx of L2 learners jeopardizes a language's link with cultural identity. The situations of Gaelic in Scotland and of Breton in Brittany are very different to that of Welsh in

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[147] Baker, C. and Prys Jones, M., 'Welsh Language Education: A Strategy for Revitalization'.

[148] Williams, C.H. 2017, "Policy review: Wake me up in 2050! Formulating Language Policy in Wales".

[149] Fishman, J. A. 'Introduction in J. A. Fishman and O. Garcia, eds, second edn *Handbook of language and ethnic identity: Disciplinary and regional perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[150] A. MacCaluim, *Reversing language shift: The social identity and role of Scottish Gaelic learners* (Belfast: Cló Ollscoil na Banríona, 2007).

[151] *ibid.*

[152] Hornsby, N., *Revitalizing Minority Languages: New Speakers of Breton, Yiddish and Lemko.*

Wales. There is a more strongly felt regional, rather than national, link in those cases, and in neither case was the Celtic language indigenous or ubiquitous[153]. However, a cautious parallel may be drawn, and attitudes towards language ownership and cultural identities identified in Scotland and Brittany are likely to exist in Wales. MacDonald quotes a Gaelic-speaking resident of the Carnan region, worried that Gaelic was becoming "middle-class and posh" in the Lowlands[154].

> "I like the Gaelic. But if it's going to become something artificial, then, well, I won't feel like speaking it at all. I don't want Gaelic to be kept alive by making it artificial. […] For myself I'd prefer if it died."[155]

A similar view was articulated by the daughter of, now deceased, Breton speakers in Finisterre.

> "What they teach now is called Breton, but it has nothing to do with the language that my parents and grandparents spoke. I doubt that they could even understand it. It's fake, and I have no interest in it."[156]

Since, as has been discussed, a sense of identity is one of the two key motivating forces for parents when it comes to intergenerational language transmission to their children[157], damaging the link between language and identity risks reducing such transmission. As cultural identity is also cited as one reason for parents to choose Welsh language education for their children[158], that acquisition route could also be negatively impacted. This situation may be aggravated by a high percentage of L2 leaners. Hornsby asserts that minority languages do not "touch" L2 speakers as they do L1[159] and, accordingly, there is a weaker link with identity. Intuitively this may also

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[153] Williams, C. H., 'The Celtic World'.
[154] A. MacCaluim, *Reversing language shift: The social identity and role of Scottish Gaelic learners*.
[155] *ibid* P.87.
[156] pers. comm., H. Rica, contacted by telephone by the author.
[157] Welsh Government, Statistics and Research, Welsh language transmission and use in families.
[158] C. Williams, 'Language Gained: A study of language immersion at 11-16 years old'
[159] Evas, J., 'Declining Density: A Danger for the Language?'.

be the case for L1 speakers who acquired their Welsh outside the family unit; however, evidence for this assertion is not available.

What is clear is that the family as cornerstone of Welsh language transmission is under considerable strain. The 1993 Welsh Language Use survey found that 55% of the Welsh speaking population, that is only 12% of the total population of Wales, considered Welsh to be their "mother-tongue". In many families where one parent spoke Welsh, the children were unable to speak it[160]. As both the 2001 and 2011 census showed a reduction in the number of children learning Welsh in the home, the situation today is likely to have deteriorated further[161]. Historically, Welsh language policy has been successful at maintaining and developing the prestige of Welsh, but the situation as it relates to language quality, and the attendant issues of ownership and insecurity, is far more precarious, as has been discussed above. It is not clear from *Cymraeg* 2050 that the importance of language quality to the intergenerational transmission of Welsh is being addressed. When one considers that the view among many linguistic scholars that intergenerational transmission lies at the heart of any successful language revitalization strategy[162], this is a potentially worrying omission.

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[160] Williams, C. H., 'On Recognition, Resolution and Revitalization'.

[161] Welsh Government, Statistics and research, Welsh language use survey 2015;
Welsh Government, StatsWales, Census Results 2011 [online].
Welsh Government, StatsWales, Census Results [online]. Available at:
https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Welsh-Language/WelshSpeakers-by-LocalAuthority-Gender-DetailedAgeGroups-2001Census <accessed 28 February 2018>

[162] Fishman, J. A., 'Who Speaks What Language to Whom and When?';
Jones, H. and Williams, C. H., 'The Statistical Basis for Welsh Language Planning: Data Trends, Patterns, Processes';
M. R. Abtahian and C. M. Quinn, 'Language Shift and Linguistic Insecurity'.

2. **Children acquiring effective Welsh abilities through preschool and playgroup experience.**

In 1971, the Welsh-medium nursery schools movement, *Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin* (MYM), was set up to provide Welsh language pre-schools and groups throughout Wales. Renamed *Mudiad Meithrin* (MM) in 2011, it has been the cornerstone of such provision since that date. Statistical evidence suggests that its activities have been successful. The results of the census have shown that the percentage of children aged 3 to 4 who can speak Welsh has steadily and consistently increased, from 11.3% in 1971, to 23.3% in 2011[163]. Since there was no increase in the percentage of Welsh-speaking families over the same period[164], this increase may be assumed to be the positive effect of pre-school education. Between 2002 and 2016 the programme delivered by MYM / MM was the *Twf, Cymraeg o'r Crud*. It was well regarded, garnering praise from parents, local communities, and bilingual education experts such as Colin Baker[165]. It has been now been replaced with *Cymraeg I Blant*, also delivered by MM. However, the scope has been somewhat reduced, and critics claim that *Cymraeg I Blant* offers only a piecemeal approach, and that national co-ordination and continuity have been lost[166]. Concern has been voiced that the new programme does not provide a service in all the regions covered by the old. The financial provision has also been reduced by £200,000[167] and financial issues have been considerable for this programme. MM has been consistently loss making for some years, losing £181,000 in

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[163] Welsh Government, StatesWales, Census Results 1971 [online].
[164] *ibid.*
[165] Mudiad Meithrin, [online]. Available at: http://www.meithrin.cymru/about-us/ <accessed 28 February 2018>
[166] Save Twf – Cymraeg o'r Crud Services Senedd Briefing Pages [online]. Available at http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/documents/s59109/Research%20Brief.pdf <accessed 27 February 2018>
[167] *ibid.*

2015, and £471,000 in 2016[168]. A further loss of £200,000 was predicted for 2017. Some services have been cut, particularly in Cardiff, but "lack of interest in the service" was the reason given, rather than financial considerations. This is also concerning, suggesting as it does a lack of interest on the part of parents in Cardiff in Welsh language early years' immersion. It appears that early years' provision is of a good standard but that considerations of money, geographical reach and demand remain as important barriers to its effectiveness nationally.

3. **Children consolidating this through effective primary school experience.**

The revitalization of the Welsh language to date is in large part due to the considerable contribution made by bilingual education[169]. The home, family and community are essential domains for language planning, but they are very difficult to access and to influence[170], so the focus on education as the new pillar of Welsh language acquisition is vital. Many young people now get their Welsh from school, not home. Overall numbers of Welsh speakers, albeit not fluent speakers, are rising steadily, due to the significantly improved rates of acquisition in the education system[171]. By 1995 the 'pyramid of linguistic decline'[172] had been inverted, with higher numbers of young speakers than old, a notable achievement. The primary phase of education appears to be particularly successful. Large, and increasing, numbers of primary age children are describing themselves, or being described by their parents, as fluent. The 2011 census reported that 38.2% of 5-9 year olds, and 42.2% of 10-14 year olds spoke Welsh[173]. The

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[168] BBC, News, Wales [online]. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-37794257 <accessed 10 February 2018>
[169] Baker, C. and Prys Jones, M., 'Welsh Language Education: A Strategy for Revitalization'.
[170] *ibid.*
[171] H. M. Jones, A statistical overview of the Welsh Language.
[172] Evas, J., 'Declining Density: A Danger for the Language?'.
[173] Welsh Government, StatsWales, Census Results 2011 [online].

statistical data varies somewhat, with different surveys using different methodologies reporting somewhat different percentages of L1 and L2 Welsh speakers in primary education[174]. Overall, however, the picture of language acquisition in Welsh medium primary schools is a positive one. The key challenge in this domain, therefore, is to expand provision.

The *Cymraeg* 2050 document states the intention to increase the number of primary teachers who can teach in Welsh from 2,900 to 3,900 by 2031, and to 5,200 by 2050[175]. This is an ambitious target. It is not clear where such numbers of additional teachers will come from. Even allowing that some existing teachers may be able to develop their Welsh language skills sufficiently, extensive recruitment and training programmes will have to be put in to place. Furthermore, such teachers may be required to master more than Welsh language and primary education teaching skills. As Baker asserts, we often expect primary teachers to teach in two languages, without providing specific training as to how best to handle the complexities that may arise from such a methodology[176]. He highlights the lack of "theoretically sound rationale" and "evidenced-based […] methodology". It may be that this undermines the strength of bilingual education.

Furthermore, it is not clear where the additional teachers would teach. Increasing Welsh-medium / bilingual primary education provision requires either the creation / expansion of such schools, and/ or the changeover of English-medium schools to

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[174] H. M. Jones, A statistical overview of the Welsh Language.
[175] Welsh Government, Welsh Language Strategy, Cymraeg 2050.
[176] Baker, C., 'Increasing Bilingualism in Bilingual Education' in D. Morris, ed., *Welsh in the Twenty-First Century* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010).

Welsh-medium / bilingual schools. Neither route has been specifically adopted in the strategy. The quantity of primary education provision today slightly exceeds demand, albeit Welsh-language provision is slightly less under-subscribed on average than English language provision[177]. Such a shift will therefore require some economic justification and support at a Local Education Authority (LEA) level. Additionally, if more children are to be given Welsh-medium / bilingual education, more parents must be successfully convinced of its value.

4. Children continuing to do so at secondary school.

Whilst the numbers of Welsh speakers in primary schools, and even middle schools, are rising steadily, in secondary schools the picture is less positive. In the 2011 census the number of Welsh speakers aged between 15 and 19 was 29.4%, a noticeable drop from the primary stage. Furthermore, around 40% of Welsh speaking children in Wales move from being categorised as L1 speakers, to L2 at secondary stage[178]. Whilst Baker points out that levels of language proficiency need to be considered as part of a continuum[179], and advocates the abandonment of L1 and L2 categories in schools, a policy also proposed in Cymraeg 2050, this shift is indicative of insufficient development and maintenance of the Welsh language at the secondary stage. This is a major issue for the survival of the Welsh language, as, by the end of primary education, Welsh language skills are highly unlikely to be sufficiently developed to enable fluent Welsh language use in later life[180], and it is improbable that there will be

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[177] C. Williams, 'Language Gained: A study of language immersion at 11-16 years old'.

[178] Jones, H., 'Welsh Speakers: Age Profile and Out-Migration'.

[179] Baker, C. and Prys Jones, M., 'Welsh Language Education: A Strategy for Revitalization'.

[180] R. A. Berman, *Language development across childhood and adolescence* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishng Co., 2004) [online]. Available at: https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=ahq6C91Q3EEC&oi=fnd&pg=PR1&dq=(Berman+2004)+language+into+adulthood&ots=jlX0JzP2rz&sig=kSLjtjWCIbB28xUD2GVUSEO-X4Q#v=onepage&q=(Berman%202004)%20language%20into%20adulthood&f=false

a solid foundation of H_W. As can be seen from the following graph, if the Welsh language acquisition process is effectively arrested at age eleven, individuals will typically be less than 70% of the way through their language acquisition process[181]. This has significant consequences for language quality, language use, and the probability that these individuals will, in turn, speak Welsh with their children. As Welsh is not developed and supported during the secondary education phase, the situation deteriorates further due to language attrition.
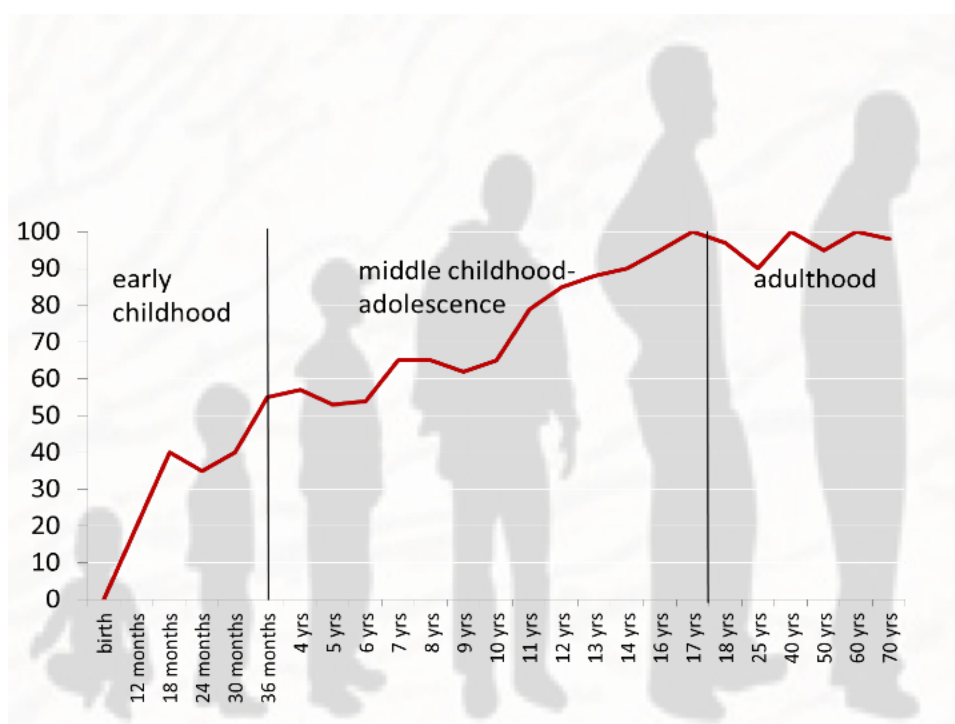

Figure 3. First Language Development Through Childhood, Adolescence and Adulthood (L1 speakers) [182]

Additional Welsh language input after the primary education phase is essential, be it in school or elsewhere. Furthermore, the continuation of the development and maintenance of the Welsh language through education in the secondary phase is

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[181] *ibid.*

[182] S. Montrul, *On Heritage Speakers as Native Speakers*.

strongly linked with fluency. Of people educated at secondary level in schools where the language of education was at least mainly Welsh, 86% consider themselves fluent. Only 33% of those educated mainly or exclusively in English in secondary school considered themselves fluent[183], regardless of other factors such as primary education and home or community language.

In the 2017 School Census it was found the number of Welsh medium secondary schools had decreased. This was deemed to be due to the increase in the number of Welsh medium middle schools. The consequence is that Welsh-medium education provision past the age of thirteen has diminished. In the *Cymraeg* 2050 document there is a stated intention to increase the number of secondary teachers who can teach Welsh from 500 to 900 by 2031 and to 1,200 by 2050; and to increase the number of secondary teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh from 1,800 to 3,200 by 2031 and to 4,200 by 2050. The challenges and considerations raised above regarding increasing primary school teacher numbers apply equally to the increase of secondary teacher numbers. Moreover, the intended curriculum review[184] is to be focussed on the secondary level[185], particularly post-16 level, requiring additional training of even existing teachers and the creation of new teaching materials. All of this will require considerable funding in a very challenging climate. *Cymraeg* 2050 also states that increasing numbers of Welsh speakers must come from English medium schools. However, there, the teaching of Welsh is treated little differently to the teaching of French or German, a weak, 'drip-feed' model. Welsh

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[183] *ibid* p.7.
[184] Welsh Government, Welsh Language Strategy, Cymraeg 2050.
[185] *ibid.*

speakers are no more produced than are French or German speakers[186]. Bilingualism and biliteracy may not be the goals of such methodology, and they are not achieved. In the context of Welsh language revitalization this is insufficient. If there is a real intention to get to one million Welsh speakers, of whatever level, by 2050, then the Welsh language teaching methodology in English-medium schools must be revisited, so that they too can play their part.

Secondary school age is also a time of increasing socialising independent of the family unit. The language used for such socialising will establish patterns of language use as the young person becomes bonded with their community, and develops their identity[187]. In some ways, Wales has subverted the classic diglossia model in that, whilst clearly still the L language, Welsh has taken on some H domains, and lost some L domains. For many Welsh speakers today, Welsh is the language of school, and local government, and English is the language of socialising, friends and, in many instances, of community and home[188]. It may be that this is an inherently unstable position, and the instability is more likely to favour the dominant English language than the minoritized Welsh.

Thought must be given to how young people may be encouraged to use Welsh outside of the educational context. This is an area where policy formulation and legislation do not easily reach. The issues, therefore, are those of language retention, already discussed. Normalization of Welsh, opportunities for use, and the media are key. Issues of language insecurity, explored earlier, are also particularly relevant here. If adolescents / young people perceive pressure and criticism from the older generation,

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[186] Baker, C. and Prys Jones, M., 'Welsh Language Education: A Strategy for Revitalization'.
[187] Morris, D., 'Young People and their Use of the Welsh Language'.
[188] Welsh Government, Statistics and research, Welsh language use survey 2015.

or from their peers, as to the quality and "correctness" of their Welsh, or receives

negative messages relating to their "legitimacy" as Welsh speakers, then they will stop

using the language[189], and attrition rates will be accelerated. The general pattern as

young people move through the education system is of an overall shift towards

English, and the quantity of provision of Welsh-medium Tertiary education is

woeful[190]. It has been demonstrated that immersion schemes at Year 6 /7 successfully

enable a second, alternative entry point into Welsh-medium education for those who

have begun their education in English[191]. However, despite the success of the pilots,

the initiative has not been rolled out more widely. The numbers of children fluent in

Welsh at pre-school age, and at primary age, must therefore become sufficiently high

such that any attrition at secondary school and in adulthood can be accommodated.

Adult Learners

5. Adults learning Welsh.

The *Cymraeg* 2050 document states that a goal of the strategy is to create an

additional 1000 adult learner Welsh speakers per year. The implication is that this is an

additional 1000 speakers net, after attrition rates have been factored in. This is a very

ambitious target when one considers the barriers to acquisition, and the attrition rates

amongst adults. In his paper on potential sources of Gaelic speakers, MacKinnon states

that the number of potential new speakers from adult learning is "significant, but

small"[192]. As Wei points out, there is no inherent reason why adult learners should not

become accomplished Welsh speakers. There is now evidence to demonstrate that,

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[189] M. R. Abtahian and C. M. Quinn, 'Language Shift and Linguistic Insecurity'.
[190] Williams, C. H., 'Welsh (in Wales)'.
[191] C. Williams, 'Language Gained: A study of language immersion at 11-16 years old'.
[192] MacKinnon, K., 'Growing a new generation of Gaelic speakers: an action plan in response to a Ministerial initiative'.

contrary to received wisdom, late acquisition *can* still lead to a high proficiency level in a language[193]. However, failure rates amongst adult language learners are high, with up to 94% abandoning attempts to learn a language before achieving fluency[194]. The time, application and motivation to learn a language can be very difficult to find when one is an adult, with significant pressures upon one's time and attention.

As adults are no longer in statutory education, they are far less easily reached by legislative approaches. It is essential, therefore, that motivating forces are present for them to learn Welsh. Gardner identifies two kinds of motivation for second language acquisition, *integrative orientation*, whereby an individual learns a language in order to integrate more fully with their community, and *instrumental orientation*, whereby the language is learnt for more practical reasons such as employment or advancement[195]. It appears that integrative orientation is the most important consideration for adult Welsh language acquisition[196]. This situation is unique in Britain[197], as non-Welsh speakers do not have to learn Welsh to be able to live their lives in Wales. The number one reason given by adult learners for learning Welsh in a Gwent study was a "feeling of Welsh-ness", the second most important reason was parents wishing to support children attending Welsh medium schools[198]. It is probable that many parents in a largely Anglicized county such as Gwent would have had to make a conscious decision to send their children to Welsh-medium schools, which itself may well have been

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[193] Wei, L., 'Dimensions of Bilingualism'.
[194] J. J. Asher, *Learning Another Language Through Actions* seventh edn. (Los Gatos: Sky Oaks Productions, 2012).
[195] R. C. Gardner and W. E. Lambert, *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning* (Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1972).
[196] Morris, S., 'Adult Education, Language Revival and Language Planning' in C. H. Williams, ed., *Language Revitalization: Policy and Planning in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000).
[197] *ibid,* p.213.
[198] *ibid.*

informed by a sense of "Welsh-ness". This strongly underlines the necessity of maintaining the link between the Welsh language and the national cultural identity, if the language is to survive and prosper. If in-migration, a deterioration of language quality, or language insecurity are allowed to corrode that link, the future of adult Welsh language acquisition is at risk. Morris's assimilating communities may be key here[199], providing both motivation to learn Welsh and opportunities to practise it for adult learners.

Instrumental motivations appear to be far less important than integrative orientation. In a Swansea study[200], the instrumental motivation offered to students in the questionnaire, that Welsh would be advantageous for work / employment, came only joint third place, after "Welsh-ness" and supporting children in Welsh-medium education[201]. A similar motivational profile has been found in similar studies throughout Wales[202]. Despite oft-stated perceptions in some areas that Welsh is required to find work, clearly very few adults feel compelled to learn Welsh for that reason. This view is supported by data on employer attitudes. It appears that only a third of employers in Wales consider the presence of Welsh language skills in their establishment to be even "fairly important", fewer than considered it to be "not important at all"[203]. When a study was carried out in the Autumn of 2013, only one in ten employers had had any vacancy in the last 12 months where at least a basic level of Welsh would have been desirable. Most of these were in childcare and social care,

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[199] Morris, D., 'Young People and their Use of the Welsh Language'.
[200] Morris, S., 'Adult Education, Language Revival and Language Planning'.
[201] Morris, S., 'Adult Education, Language Revival and Language Planning' p.214.
[202] *ibid.*
[203] Welsh Government, Social Research, Welsh language skills needs in eight sectors [online].

and in the North of Wales[204]. It hardly needs saying that Welsh language skills may be considered irrelevant by those individuals who intend to pursue their career outside of Wales.

Learning Welsh reduces the probability of out-migration from Wales[205]. This strongly suggests that there is a correlation between language acquisition, and strong ties to community and place. The causal nature of this relationship cannot be asserted with certainty from the data available, but it is apparent that Welsh language acquisition should be, to a degree, a force against out-migration. However, a more important factor in migration is whether a person was born in Wales[206]. There are two kinds of adult learners, those born in Wales, and those not. Whilst in many ways the challenges facing both are the same, it can be argued that there is a lower motivation to learn Welsh based upon cultural identity, and a higher risk of attrition in the case of the latter. According to Jones, individuals born outside Wales is far more likely to migrate out of Wales, regardless of whether they are a Welsh speaker or not[207]. Welsh language acquisition amongst adults born outside Wales is therefore inevitably associated with high levels of attrition. When one considers that only 5% of those aged between the ages of 45 and 65 who were not born in Wales can speak Welsh[208], it is apparent that it is very challenging to increase the numbers of Welsh speakers in the in-migrant adult population.

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[204] *ibid.*
[205] Jones, H., 'Welsh Speakers: Age Profile and Out-Migration'.
[206] *ibid.*
[207] Jones, H., 'Welsh Speakers: Age Profile and Out-Migration'.
[208] H. M. Jones, A statistical overview of the Welsh Language.

Steve Morris asserts that there is a "huge untapped demand for the opportunity" to be able to learn Welsh[209] amongst adults, citing a survey carried out in 1992 that found that 10% of all non-Welsh speakers in Wales would like to learn Welsh. However, there is an important difference between articulating a desire to do something, and demonstrating the motivation, commitment and focus required to do it. Parallels can be drawn with the situation of non-Basque speaking residents of Basque areas. A similar motivation profile has been discerned, and a similar expression of interest articulated[210]. Despite excellent adult learning infrastructure in that region however, very few adults have succeeded in learning the language, blaming the time needed and difficulty of the language on the one hand, and the commitment required by the courses on the other. Theoretical circumstances favourable to learning were identified, namely the provision of time-off work for language learning, a tie in with family activities, a tie in with pleasurable activities, and a reduced time commitment for learning[211]. It is not obvious however, how such circumstances could be created for Welsh, particularly outside the local government sector, nor is there evidence at this stage to prove the effectiveness of such circumstances. Most adults prefer to express their support of the Basque language by encouraging their children to learn it, rather than tackle it themselves[212]. It is probable that similar behaviour occurs in Wales. Welsh adult learning provision is not as uniform as that of Basque, but it is the case that those courses most likely to result in fluency in a relatively short space of time,

[209] Morris, S., 'Adult Education, Language Revival and Language Planning'.
[210] Ortega, A. and Amorrortu, E., 'The attitudes of non-minority language speakers to minority language revitalization: What are non-Basque speakers prepared to do for Basque?', in H. G. Lewis and N. Ostler, eds, *Reversing Language Shift: How to Reawaken a Language Tradition* (Bath: The Foundation for Endangered Languages, 2010), pp. 52-60.
[211] Ortega, A. and Amorrortu, E., 'The attitudes of non-minority language speakers to minority language revitalization: What are non-Basque speakers prepared to do for Basque?'.
[212] *ibid.*

such as the immersion courses, and Wlpan, demand great commitment on the part of the students[213].

Good quality provision is available for adult learners of Welsh. However, many adults still find the language difficult to acquire. The drip-feed model of once a week evening classes has been proven to be a weak model of language acquisition[214], and one unlikely to lead to fluency. Nonetheless, it is probable that many adult learners are using this model, as it is the one most easily accessed and most readily integrated into everyday life. Research undertaken in 2005-6 found that fewer than half of English in-migrants had succeeded in learning some Welsh[215]. It is improbable that fluency levels are high amongst this group, despite evidence of a "generally positive position on their identity within Wales"[216]. The main reasons given for not learning Welsh among English incomers were first and foremost the difficulty of the language, followed by it not being necessary, and then lack of time. These reasons made up nearly 90% of the replies[217]. Interestingly, amongst those who had not learnt Welsh, several had made the attempt, in some cases more than once[218]. Learning a new language is difficult, and takes time. Creating a context where many more adults are able and willing to expend the considerable time and effort to learn Welsh, and to learn it well, remains a challenge, and one for which there is presently no obvious solution.

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[213] Morris, S., 'Adult Education, Language Revival and Language Planning'.
[214] C. Baker, *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* fifth edn., (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2011), p. 210.
[215] Davis, H., Day, G., and Drakakis-Smith, A., 'Attitudes to Language and Bilingualism among English In-Migrants to North Wales'.
[216] *ibid.*
[217] *ibid.*
[218] *ibid.*

6. Persons only able read / write Welsh developing speaking ability.

As Jones points out[219], there is a tendency to think of the four language skills forming a hierarchy, with writing as the highest level of ability, then reading, speaking, and lastly understanding as the easiest and, therefore, first of the skills to be acquired. The census shows that this is not an accurate reflection of the situation of adult Welsh speakers, for whom the distribution of skills is rather more complex[220]. However, MacKinnon's conjecture that there may be those who only read and write, (in his case Gaelic, in this instance Welsh,) but do not speak the language[221], does not appear to be borne out by the census data for Wales. On the contrary, the issue appears to be that although numbers of Welsh speakers are rising, the level of Welsh-medium literacy is much lower, and falling, although paralleled by a significant rise in English-medium literacy during the same period[222].

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[219] H. M. Jones, A statistical overview of the Welsh Language.
[220] Welsh Government, StatsWales, Census Results 2011 [online].
H. M. Jones, A statistical overview of the Welsh Language.
[221] MacKinnon, K., 'Growing a new generation of Gaelic speakers: an action plan in response to a Ministerial initiative'.
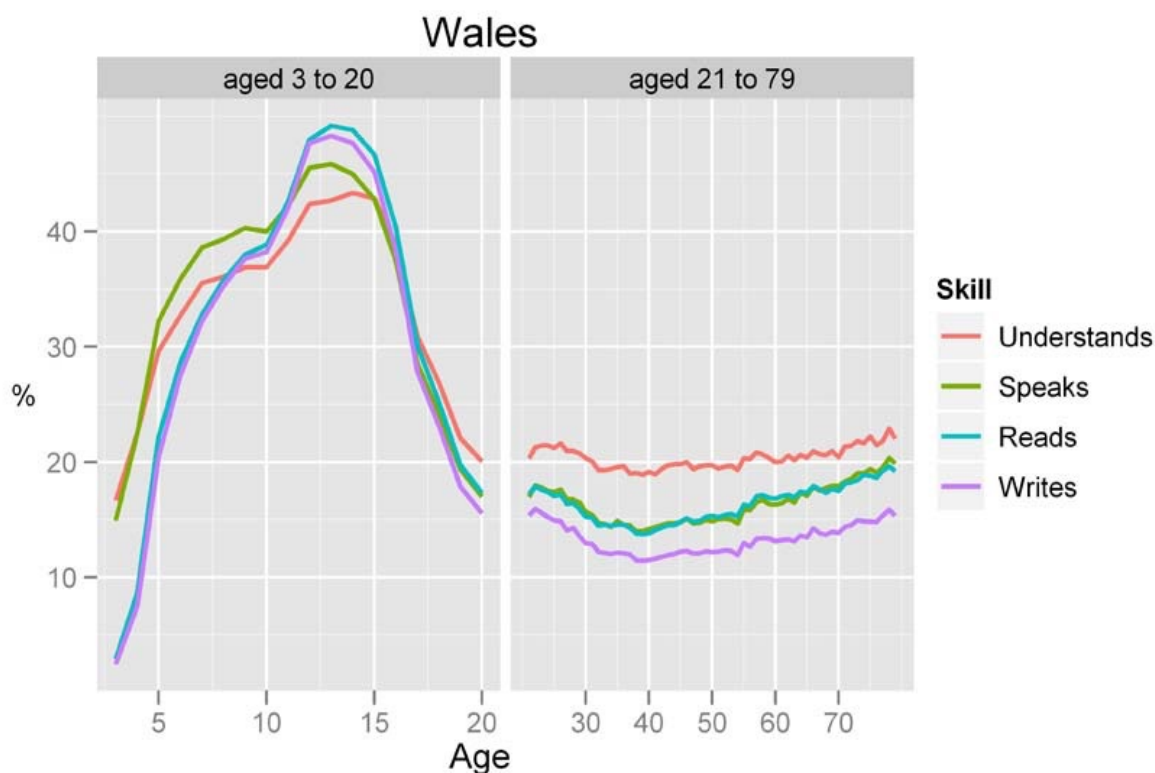[222] *ibid.*

Figure 4. Wales: % able to understand/speak/read/write Welsh, by age, 2001[223]

The data suggests that there is a correlation between literacy levels and fluency, and the numbers of fluent speakers of Welsh are also falling. The challenge, therefore, is not only to encourage readers and writers of Welsh to speak, but to support Welsh speakers to increased proficiency, fluency and literacy. The issues outlined above regarding adult Welsh language acquisition all pertain here, but it may be noted that, in addition, there appears to be little provision for those wishing to take their Welsh forward in these specific domains. It may be that a programme of confidence building / literacy courses, comparable to the *alfabetizacíon* model used in Basque areas, and commended by Steve Morris[224], is required. However, it appears that for the stated goals of *Cymraeg* 2050, this category of adults will not be an area of focus.

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[223] H. M. Jones, A statistical overview of the Welsh Language, p.24.
[224] Morris, S., 'Adult Education, Language Revival and Language Planning'.

7. Persons only able to understand Welsh developing the confidence to speak it.

It may be that this group proves to be a source of a small number of Welsh speakers, but those that understand Welsh are already captured by the census data at present. The picture presented by the census is complicated, and is likely to be somewhat incomplete as several respondents, having specified that they speak Welsh, appeared to consider questions regarding their understanding of Welsh as not relevant, as understanding is implied by speech[225]. However, a close study of a subset of 2001 census replies showed that almost 15% of respondents who stated that they could speak Welsh, also said that they could not understand it[226]. Counterintuitive as this may be, it suggests a situation where people have learnt some key Welsh phrases, but do not feel that they could understand were someone to address them in Welsh. It appears that there are three main challenges to the development of speakers from those that understand Welsh: normalization of the use of Welsh, linguistic insecurity, and proficiency. Acquisition of proficiency, and the joint issues of insecurity and perceptions of legitimacy have been previously addressed.

Normalization is much mentioned in *Cymraeg* 2050. For the strategy to achieve its second stated goal, that of doubling the percentage of Welsh speakers who use Welsh every day, it is imperative that the use of Welsh becomes more widespread. The adult language world is one where legislation has had less impact. Community use of Welsh is dependent upon factors which policy formulators cannot easily influence. Maintaining a critical density of Welsh speakers in a community and Morris's

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[225] H. M. Jones, A statistical overview of the Welsh Language.
[226] *ibid.*

assimilating communities are key, but difficult to bring about. As Jones points out, the geographical distribution of Welsh speakers changed between 1991 and 2011, such that the number of areas with a high density of Welsh speakers has fallen significantly[227]. This means that Welsh speakers are increasingly linguistically isolated, and the probability of one meeting another at random decreased over that period. This not only has negative consequences for the use of Welsh, but also for the formation of Welsh speaking households[228].
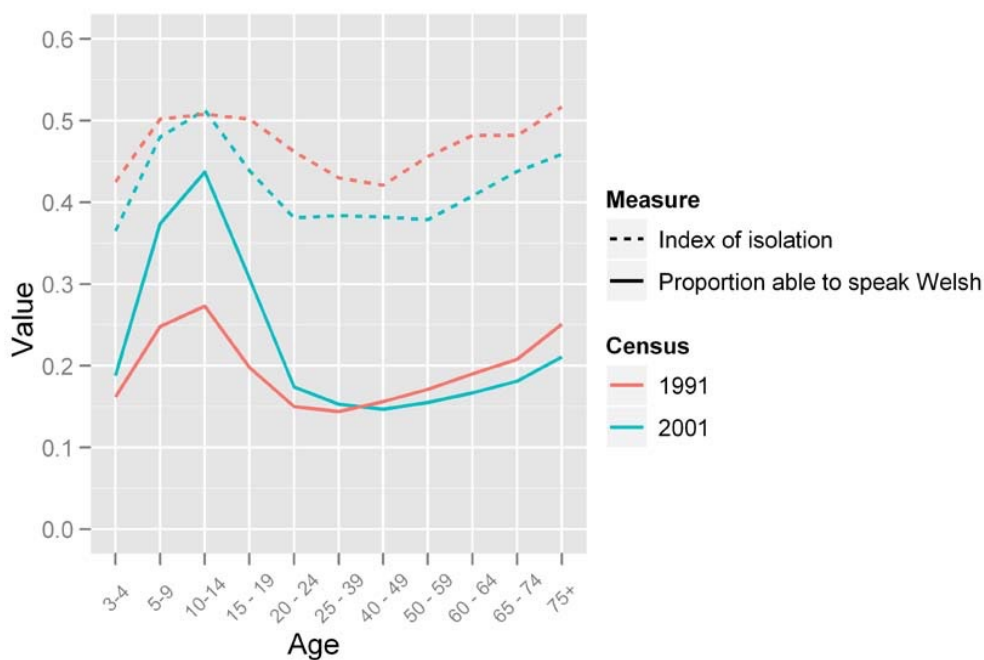
Figure 5. The likelihood of one Welsh speaker meeting another at random (the index of isolation) and the proportion able to speak Welsh, 1991 and 2001, by age group[229]

Also potentially damaging to the normalization of Welsh is the ongoing decrease in household size. In 2001, 10.9% of Welsh speakers, lived alone, and this percentage

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[227] H. M. Jones, A statistical overview of the Welsh Language.
[228] *ibid.*
[229] *ibid,* p.19.

continues to rise[230]. For these people, 'living in Welsh speaking households' does not mean they have an opportunity to speak the language at home; instead their home use of Welsh will be exclusively passive, consisting of listening to and watching broadcast media.

The media in Wales is facing several threats. The Institute of Welsh Affairs (IWA) Media Audit of 2015 found that the situation of the Welsh media was worse than that in the other devolved regions, on almost every measure[231], with a lack of funding, lack of forensic journalism, and lack of locally originated output. The only exception was that of Welsh language television. Whilst the report did not focus specifically on Welsh language provision, it is clear that a generally weakened media, with inadequate funding, excessive consolidation and poor journalistic quality across the board does little to support the normalization and prestige of the Welsh language[232]. Wales is the only devolved region with no independent arm of ITV providing services, and no indigenously owned commercial radio station[233]. Conscious investment and improvement in these areas is required if they are to reach the standard required to actively support Welsh language revitalization. The WG website is upbeat, listing several Welsh regional newspapers, radio and television channels[234], but few of these are of consistently high quality or reach.

[230] Welsh Government, StatsWales, Census Results 2011 [online].
H. M. Jones, A statistical overview of the Welsh Language.
[231] Institute of Welsh Affairs, IWA Wales Media Audit 2015 [online]. Available at: http://www.iwa.wales/click/wp-content/uploads/IWA_MediaAudit_v3.pdf <accessed 26 February 2018>
[232] ibid.
[233] ibid.
[234] Welsh Government, Community, News and Media [online]. Available at http://cymraeg.gov.wales/events/community/news-and-media/?lang=en <Accessed 4 March 2018>

The jewels in the Welsh media crown are undoubtedly *Sianel Pedwar Cymru* (S4C), BBC Wales, and BBC Radio Cymru. The quality of provision has been assessed by the IWA as being consistently high[235], and the audience figures are impressive. BBC Radio Cymru boasts 30% of the Welsh speaking population among its weekly listenership, with each listener tuning in for an average ten hours per week[236]. The advent of alternative broadcast media clearly presents challenges in terms of increased competition and change in audience habits, but it is clear from the BBC's own data that public service broadcasting has a particularly strong audience base in Wales[237]. Furthermore, the Welsh language television media appears to be rising to the challenge, with both the BBC offerings and S4C on iPlayer, and S4C's Y Gwyll now on Netflix, the world's largest on demand content supplier[238].

The critical risk posed to the well-being of Welsh language broadcast media, and its ability to support Welsh language revitalization efforts such as *Cymraeg* 2050, is lack of funds. In 2010, S4C suffered a 24% cut to its funding, and most its funding was transferred to the BBC trust, that is the licence fee, a source of income which is under considerable pressure[239]. The spend on the separate statutory 10 hours a week supplied to S4C by BBC Wales has reduced from £23.5m in 2010-11 towards £19.4m in 2016-17. In real terms, S4C has endured a 36% cut in funding, and BBC Cymru Wales a cut of 16%[240]. Whilst much of the BBC cuts have impacted English language broadcasting in Wales, the impact on Welsh language provision is important. Several

[235] Institute of Welsh Affairs, IWA Wales Media Audit 2015 [online].
[236] BBC, The Future of Welsh Language Broadcasting [online].
[237] *ibid.*
[238] BBC, The Future of Welsh Language Broadcasting [online].
[239] Institute of Welsh Affairs, IWA Wales Media Audit 2015.
[240] *ibid.*

scholars have highlighted the value of minority language media to the support of acquisition, normalization, and prestige of minority languages[241]. The WG recognises its value, and specifically mentions it in *Cymraeg* 2050[242]. However, the media in Wales is a reserved matter, under the direct control of the Westminster government[243], so whilst the First Minister can demand extra investment, and has done so[244], financial support of the Welsh language media is not in the gift of those focussed on Welsh language revitalization.

8. Persons who have abandoned Welsh in later life re-acquiring confidence and ability.

When one considers the high levels of language attrition that seem to be prevalent, particularly amongst the 15- 29 age group[245], it seems probable that re-acquisition of Welsh amongst this demographic could be a source of new speakers. The challenges faced in developing this group are those of adult learners more generally, combined with issues of linguistic insecurity, addressed above.

9. Migrant Welsh speakers who have left Wales returning to it.

Finally, MacKinnon suggested that if those who had migrated away could be persuaded to return, they might provide a further source of speakers[246]. In 2007, it

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[241] N. Dorian, *Investigating Obsolescence: Studies in Language Contraction and Death*;
Williams, C. H., 'Welsh (in Wales);
Hornsby, N., *Revitalizing Minority Languages: New Speakers of Breton, Yiddish and Lemko.*
[242] Welsh Government, Welsh Language Strategy, Cymraeg 2050.
[243] Institute of Welsh Affairs, IWA Wales Media Audit 2015.
[244] *ibid.*
[245] Welsh Government, StatsWales, Census Results 2011 [online];
Welsh Government, StatsWales, Census Results 2001 [online];
Welsh Government, StatsWales, Census Results 1991 [online]. Available at:
https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Welsh-Language/WelshSpeakers-by-LocalAuthority-Gender-DetailedAgeGroups-1991Census <accessed 28 February 2018>
[246] MacKinnon, K., 'Growing a new generation of Gaelic speakers: an action plan in response to a Ministerial initiative'.

was estimated that 110,000 Welsh speaking adults were resident in England[247], 16% of the Welsh speaking population at that time. Such large numbers beg the question, might Welsh-speakers resident in England be counted towards the one million target in the future? Efforts to draw back those who have migrated away will hinge upon the economic considerations outlined above, however an additional area of focus might be the maintenance of Welsh language skills outside of Wales. Issues of linguistic isolation, and a lack of instrumental motivations will work against such maintenance, but if appeals to cultural identity can be made, and digital platforms such as Skype and online Welsh language communities leveraged, it is conceivable that the Welsh diaspora could be prevailed upon to maintain their language skills, until such time as they elect to return to Wales, should they choose to do so.

Adult language acquisition in all its forms faces considerable challenges. Moreover, despite the bullish pronouncements of scholars such as S. Morris, R. Jones, and M. Olthuis[248], it is not clear how the typical levels of adult Welsh language acquisition will significantly assist the revitalization of the Welsh language. In terms of the stated goals of *Cymraeg* 2050, adult learners have something to offer, but as Fishman states:

> "Even were the numbers of the unreached to become substantially smaller, the feedback of these RLS[249]-efforts to the home-family-neighbourhood-community nexus of intergenerational tongue transmission is far from certain."[250]

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[247] Jones, H., 'Welsh Speakers: Age Profile and Out-Migration', p.119.
[248] Morris, S., 'Adult Education, Language Revival and Language Planning';
Jones, R., in Morris, S., 'Adult Education, Language Revival and Language Planning';
M. Olthuis, S. Kivelä and T. Skutnabb-Kangas, *Revitalising Indigenous Languages: How to Recreate a Lost Generation*.
[249] Reversing Language Shift
[250] J. A. Fishman, *Reversing Language Shift* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1991). Pp. 165-6.

Summary

Cymraeg 2050 is a bold strategy, with two very ambitious goals at its core. It may be that it turns out to be a statement of commitment and an indication of the desired direction of travel of the WG Welsh language strategy, rather than a set of realistic and achievable deliverables. Taken at face value, however, it makes dramatic demands upon the resources, infrastructure and policies of Welsh language planning. Recent survey results and extrapolations suggest that in the near future there will be no significant increase in either the numbers or the percentage of people who can speak Welsh. Current predictions anticipate a Welsh speaking population in Wales of 750,000 within approximately two generations. *Cymraeg* 2050 aims to reach 1,000,000 speakers within one generation. To bring about such an increase there will need to be a complete rethink of Welsh language policy, something acknowledged in the *Cymraeg* 2050 strategy document. The challenges faced are considerable. The volume of data available to provide a true picture of the Welsh language in Wales is impressive; what is currently lacking is the detail of what is happening in the various differing linguistic communities in Wales, and robust measurement of outcomes, so that policies can be rigorously assessed, and refined. In addition, clear leadership and commitment is essential, as is the appropriate investment of resources with associated expenditure. At this time, it does not appear that the continuity and levels of leadership, the co-operation between divisions, and the finance required are in place.

The traditional cornerstone of Welsh language transmission, the family, is no longer providing the numbers of Welsh speakers required if the language is to be revitalized. Support for parents, and education as to the benefits of bilingualism, may help

improve matters, but, inevitably, *Cymraeg* 2050 looks to both statutory and adult education to reach its targets. Building upon the status and corpus planning successes of previous strategies, the intention is to increase the number of Welsh teachers and those who teach through the medium of Welsh, and to overhaul the Welsh syllabus. Those in statutory education are most easily reached, but whilst some level of Welsh language education is mandatory until age sixteen, the attrition rate after that point is dramatic. Pre-school and primary school provision is of high quality, and there has been considerable success in growing the numbers of Welsh speakers in those age groups. For this demographic, the key challenge which remains is how to increase the demand for, and supply of, Welsh language / Welsh-medium education. At secondary school, however, the challenges are broader. Rather than continuing to develop their Welsh language skills, at this stage many children stop using as much Welsh in school as they had done previously. The increasing importance of socialising outside of the school and family puts further pressure on the use of Welsh in this age group, as English is often the language of leisure and social communication. Community and neighbourhood speech habits are more difficult for policy formulators to influence, and there have been few successes in increasing Welsh use in these domains. Issues of linguistic insecurity and legitimacy become more important in adolescence, and by adulthood too many Welsh speakers have all but abandoned their use of Welsh.

Adult education may offer some lapsed Welsh-speakers a way of bringing back their use of the language. It is also an essential element of the strategy for acquiring Welsh speakers after the age of statutory education, and from the in-migrants moving to Wales. There are, however, considerable barriers to be overcome, even for those motivated to learn Welsh, either due to instrumental or integrative orientations.

Language learning is difficult, and takes considerable time and commitment. The 'drip-feed' approach to language learning, prevalent both in adult education and in English-medium statutory education, has been proven to be a weak model, and one unlikely to result in fluency. Many adult speakers will abandon efforts to learn Welsh having achieved little or no proficiency in the language. A strong link between national / cultural Welsh identity and the language is valuable and should be reinforced as it will provide some adult learners with the impetus that they need to learn Welsh. That same sense of identity may, in turn, provide the motivation for adults to speak Welsh with their own children if they are able, and find it natural, to do so.

To succeed in its stated aims, *Cymraeg* 2050 must result not only in an increased rate of Welsh speaker acquisition, but also an improved rate of retention of speakers. Minority language speaker density of 70% of the population has been found to be the critical level, below which a language's position as the community language is under significant threat. The traditional strongholds of the Welsh language are shrinking, with in-migration reducing Welsh speaker numbers in percentage terms, and out-migration reducing them in absolute terms. *Cymraeg* 2050 specifically highlights the value of areas where Welsh is still the community language. Morris has classified the differing linguistic communities in Wales, and it is clear from her research that Assimilating Communities are a precious resource in Welsh revitalization efforts. However, protecting such communities is a complex process, and solutions to the myriad issues of economic deprivation, rural / urban shift, affordability of housing and lack of employment opportunities are not easily found. Welsh language targets are rightly incorporated in the WG's national well-being measures, and an awareness of

the inter-related nature of the issues is present. However, joined-up policy planning is lacking, as is illustrated by the case of the planned Wylfa nuclear power plant.

Cymraeg 2050 focuses on speaker numbers, and uses the self-reported census data as the basis for establishing those numbers. In so doing, it effectively side-steps the issue of language quality. No proficiency thresholds have been established, and no consideration of protecting the H form of Welsh, or the literary language, has been demonstrated. Indeed, issues of Welsh literacy are unaddressed, other than by implication through the delivery of the Welsh language education syllabus. The achievement of true fluency is similarly neglected. The numbers of fluent speakers are captured in the census, but *Cymraeg* 2050 does not have a fluency goal enshrined within it. The situation regarding numbers of fluent Welsh speakers continues to deteriorate, despite the upturn in overall speaker numbers.

In many instances the world over, an influx of adult and L2 learners has been shown to be detrimental to a language, causing shifts in its phonology and syntax, and resulting in a relative simplification of grammar. Additionally, the principle of incomplete heritage language acquisition is well established. Studies of learners of a minority language where the linguistic inputs are interrupted, show that incomplete mastery is the outcome. Clear parallels can be drawn with children learning Welsh without full home, community, and school support.

The second goal of *Cymraeg* 2050, that of doubling the percentage of people using their Welsh daily requires, and feeds back into the normalization of Welsh. High speaker density communities facilitate this, but as the trend towards speaker isolation

continues, such normalization becomes increasingly difficult. Digital domains may provide an alternative platform for Welsh language interaction, perhaps including Welsh speakers no longer resident in Wales. The Welsh language broadcast media has a great contribution to make, but faces a funding crisis.

The pivotal relationship between the Welsh language and national / cultural identity has enabled the survival of the Welsh language to date, and continues to do so. The link must be reinforced, but it is probable that poor language quality, with an associated loss of prestige will put it in jeopardy. It may be, therefore, that a loss of quality of language will ultimately lead to a loss of quantity of speakers. More typically however, there is an inherent tension between the focus on quality and the focus on quantity. This tension raises a major question, as to whether the focus on an impressive, headline grabbing number of speakers is not actively detrimental to the future of the Welsh language, which might be better served by more fluency, better language, and strengthening the core areas of Welsh community use. It may be that the single biggest risk factor to the revitalization of the Welsh language is not one of the many challenges that might undermine the *Cymraeg* 2050 strategy, or its implementation. It is possible that the biggest danger to the future of Welsh is the strategy itself, sacrificing language quality for numbers of speakers and, in so doing, fundamentally aiming to achieve the wrong outcome.

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Appendix 1 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - Self-assessment grid

		A1 Basic User	A2 Basic User	B1 Independent user	B2 Independent user	C1 Proficient user	C2 Proficient user
Listening		I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
Reading		I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.
Spoken interaction		I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.
Spoken		I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a

production	live and people I know.	simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well- structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.