Welsh-English Bilingualism in Wales

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ELN

An integrated and inclusive foundational approach to literacy across Europe

KEY WORDS –
• Literacy
• Foundational
• Europe
• Inclusive

WG1 AIMS:
• “discuss impact of multilingual/bilingual learners on literacy teaching and learning”
I. Describe Welsh-English bilingual context
   – Language demographics of Wales

II. Current literacy attainments – Taylor et al., 2013

III. Key features of Welsh language and orthography

IV. Educational policy
   – Teaching through the medium of Welsh
   – Literacy teaching in TD, SPLD

V. Consider issues of interest for research and practice in literacy education
Where is Wales?
How bilingual is WALES?

Proportion of people (aged 3 and over) able to speak Welsh, by LSOA, 2011

Source: 2011 Census

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## Welsh Language Skills 2011

**UK, national census**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welsh language skills</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per cent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No skills in Welsh</td>
<td>2,008</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>2,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can speak, read and write Welsh</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can understand spoken Welsh only</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can speak but cannot read or write Welsh</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other combination of skills in Welsh</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can speak and read but cannot write Welsh</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can speak Welsh(^1)</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>562</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 2: Percentage of people who speak Welsh by age and fluency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Fluent in Welsh</th>
<th>Can speak a fair amount of Welsh</th>
<th>Can only speak a little Welsh</th>
<th>Can just say a few words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-15</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-29</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-44</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All people (3+)</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
National Survey for Wales, 2013-15
Welsh Government and Welsh Language Commissioner, 2015

Chart 22: Language of education at primary school by age and fluency

Chart 23: Language of education at secondary school by age and fluency
Chart 14: Welsh speakers’ description of their ability to write in Welsh by their fluency and age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fluency</th>
<th>16-29</th>
<th>30-44</th>
<th>45-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fluent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very well</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not well</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Fluent</th>
<th>16-29</th>
<th>30-44</th>
<th>45-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very well</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not well</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 26: Language in which Welsh speakers aged 11 to 15 studied subjects at secondary school

- **Welsh**: 73%
- **Geography**: 41%
- **History**: 40%
- **Physical Education**: 40%
- **Music**: 39%
- **Drama**: 39%
- **Art and Design**: 39%
- **Design and Technology**: 38%
- **Mathematics**: 37%
- **Modern Languages**: 36%
- **Science**: 36%

- Almost always or mainly Welsh
- Equal Welsh and English
- Almost always or mainly English
- Other

**Note:** The percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.
### Chart 29: Language Welsh speakers are most comfortable using, by age and fluency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Welsh</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Equally comfortable in both</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-29</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-44</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-29</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-44</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National Survey for Wales, 2013-15
Welsh Government and Welsh Language Commissioner, 2015
Questions Arising

• Who should be considered bilingual?
• Who should be considered a learner EL2, WL2?
  – Where to draw the thresholds?
• Bilingual ≠ Biliterate; on which ability should one select/compare participants?
II. Welsh Pupils’ Early Literacy Attainments

(Wiserd – Millennium Cohort Study, Taylor et al., 2013; BERA report, 2013)

• Recent cause for concern

• Study tracking 19,000 children in UK ‘Home Nations’ (England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland) from birth (2000-2001) to age seven
  – Age 3: Wales = England < Scotland
  – Age 5: Wales < England = Scotland (Vocabulary)
  – Age 7: Wales < England = Scotland (Reading)

  • But similar in maths, and slightly ahead in reasoning, and possibly happier...
Questions Arising

• What may be the cause?
• Could the Welsh language -- spoken or written -- be the ‘handicapping’ factor?
• Could bilingualism itself be the factor?
• Other causes?
III. Characteristics of Welsh

- Member of the Brittonic branch of the Celtic languages spoken natively in Wales
- Sociolinguistic note: The Welsh take pride in their musical and poetic heritage
- Traditions of oracy are highlighted
  - Song & Poetry:
    - Men’s and other choirs
    - Opera
    - Eisteddfod
Welsh Phonology

• Characterised by a number of sounds that do not occur in English and are typologically rare in European languages; e.g.,
  – voiceless alveolar lateral fricative [ɬ]
  – several voiceless sonorants (nasals and liquids), some of which result from consonant mutation.

• **Stress** usually falls on the penultimate syllable in polysyllabic words, while the word-final unstressed syllable receives a higher pitch than the stressed syllable.
Consonant Mutation

• Change in a consonant in a word according to its morphological or syntactic environment.
  – initial consonant mutation of all modern Celtic languages is prototypic
  – feminine singular nouns are mutated after the definite article
  – adjectives are mutated after feminine singular nouns.
  – In most of the languages, the possessive trigger various mutations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welsh</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gwraig</td>
<td>woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mawr</td>
<td>big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y wraig fawr</td>
<td>the big woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cath</td>
<td>cat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ei gath</td>
<td>his cat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ei chath</td>
<td>her cat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eu cath</td>
<td>their cat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mutation is said to be a cause of spelling difficulty among children.
### Consonants and Vowels

#### Plosive
- **Voiceless**
  - Labial: s
  - Dental: p
  - Alveolar Central: t
  - Palatal: k

- **Voiced**
  - Labial: b
  - Dental: d
  - Alveolar Central: d

#### Affricate
- **Voiceless**
  - Labial: tʃ
  - Dental: dʒ

- **Voiced**
  - Labial: dʒ

#### Fricative
- **Voiceless**
  - Labial: f
  - Dental: θ
  - Alveolar Central: s
  - Palatal: ʃ
  - Dorsal: θ
  - Glottal: h

- **Voiced**
  - Labial: v
  - Dental: θ
  - Alveolar Central: z
  - Palatal: θ

#### Nasal
- **Voiceless**
  - Labial: m
  - Dental: n
  - Alveolar Central: n

- **Voiced**
  - Labial: m

#### Trill
- **Voiceless**
  - Labial: r

#### Approximant
- **Voiceless**
  - Labial: l
  - Dental: j

### Vowels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Front</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Back</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Close** | ɛi | ɛi | ʊ, ɨ
| **Mid** | ɛ/ɛi, ɪ| ɛ/ɪ, ɪ̞| əɛ/ɛi, ɪ̞, ʊ̞, ɪ̞, ʊ
| **Open** | aɪ | aɪ, əːɪ | əʊ/ɛ, əʊ/ɛ/ɪ |

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**First component**

- **Front**
- **Central**
- **Back**
Dialects

• There is no standard or definitive form of the Welsh language. Perceived by speakers to be a major feature of the language

• Although Northern and Southern Welsh are the two commonly supposed main dialects, in reality additional significant variations exist between areas.

• The perhaps more useful traditional classification is of four main dialects –
  – *Y Wyndodeg*, the language of [Gwynedd](#);
  – *Y Bowyseg*, the language of [Powys](#);
  – *Y Ddyfedeg*, the language of [Dyfed](#); and
  – *Y Wenhwyseg*, the language of [Gwent](#) and [Morgannwg](#).
Orthography

• **LETTERS:** Welsh is written in the Latin alphabet traditionally consisting of 28 letters, of which eight are digraphs treated as single letters for collation:

a b c ch d dd e f ff g ng h i j l ll m n o p ph r rh s t th u w y

• "j" is used in many words borrowed from English, like *jam, jôc "joke" and garej "garage".*

• "k", "q", "v", "x", and "z" are used in some technical terms, like *kilogram, volt* and *zero*, but in all cases can be, and often are, replaced by Welsh letters: *cilogram, folt* and *sero*.

• **DIACRITICS:** most common diacritic is the **circumflex**, which disambiguates long vowel, most often in the case of homographs, where the vowel is short in one word and long in the other: e.g. *man "place" vs mân "fine", "small".*

• Also: **acute accent** (Welsh: *acen ddyrchafedig*), the **grave accent** (Welsh: *acen ddisgynedig*), and the **diaeresis mark** (Welsh: *didolnod*) are also used on vowels, but accented letters are not regarded as part of the alphabet.
Orthographic Consistency

• No formal measures
• Certainly ‘relatively’ consistent but not perfect
  – Some causes of inconsistency include marking of vowel length, some doublet spellings (two ways to spell a single phoneme), spellings of loan words
Registers – Important for learners

- Modern Welsh falls broadly into two main registers—
  - Colloquial Welsh (Cymraeg llafar) and
  - Literary Welsh (Cymraeg llenyddol).
- Colloquial Welsh is used in most speech and informal writing.
- Literary Welsh is closer to the form of Welsh standardised by the 1588 translation of the Bible and is found in official documents and other formal registers, including much literature.
- As a standardised form, literary Welsh shows little if any of the dialectal variation found in colloquial Welsh.
IV. Welsh Education Policy

• Since 2000, Welsh instruction is mandatory in all schools to age 16
  – What does this mean?
  – Foundation Phase (3-7 years) is to be delivered through the medium of Welsh
  – From Year 3 onward, English tuition is introduced
  – All local authorities in Wales have schools providing bilingual or Welsh-medium education.
    • The remainder study Welsh as a second language in English-medium schools.
Foundation Phase Milestones

• Expected attainments in Bilingualism
• Iaith Pawb: A National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales (WAG, 2003) sets out the following key target:

“The long term goal for our early years provision is to achieve a situation in which very many more under 5s have had sufficient exposure to Welsh to be able to move into either Welsh-medium or effectively bilingual schools.”
Foundation Pre-literacy goals

- Acquire and absorb Welsh through a holistic curriculum, through structured play, and through having a specific structured developmental and progressive programme. **Language skills learned in one language should support their development of knowledge and skills in another.**

- Children should become familiar with Welsh names of letters, their shapes and sounds. **Using transferable skills, they will appreciate the phonetic nature of the Welsh language.** Further along the learning continuum, they will begin to read on their own, with others and to practitioners. With increasing confidence and familiarity with the language, their stories will develop in complexity, both in the narrative and the language used.

- **Bilingualism**: Whether settings/schools teach largely through the medium of Welsh or the medium of English, the aim in the end is to enable children to play a full part in a bilingual society and to use both Welsh and English to the best of their ability.

- **Bilingual Future**: A Policy Statement by the Welsh Assembly Government(2002) and Iaith Pawb: A National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales ... children in Wales have a unique opportunity to build on these dual skills.

Dyslexic Pupils: Educational concerns

• If not well supported, at risk:
  – Increasing literacy/learning deficit
  – Worsening self-esteem/self-efficacy
  – Increased likelihood of antisocial behaviour → prison
  – Worsening employment prospects

• Implications for governments:
  – Costs of dealing with consequences of literacy failure
    • Estimated £2.5 bn/annum (Every Child a Chance Trust, 2009)
    • + £45,000/dyslexic by age 37 (KPMG Foundation, 2006)
      – Extra tuition, unemployment support, criminal justice costs
Approaches of English and Welsh Governments to Policy Making Regarding Provision for Pupils with Dyslexia and SPLDs

Reviews of research literature

- **Rose & WG Review**
  - Extensive reviews of published research on topics related to dyslexia

Surveys of current & best practice in the field

- Benchmarking exercises and surveys
  - Data collection about current provision for pupils with dyslexia in schools
  - Seeking to identify current best practice
  - Seeking to establish teacher training needs
The Reviews

Main Topics

• Defining dyslexia
• Detection/Assessment
  • Optimal type
  • Optimal age
• Intervention
• Teacher training
• Additional SpLDs (comorbidities)
• Concurrent filed evidence

Welsh provision
Welsh assessment and diagnosis

Literature Review: Caravolas et al., 2012.
http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills...
WG – Benchmarking Study (2009-2010)

Main aims to survey current practice re.:

• Definition (understanding) of dyslexia
• Structure of provision
• Screening and identification
• Assessment
• Dealing with overlapping disorders
• Intervention
  • Primary
  • Secondary
• Funding
• Teacher training
• Welsh language support
• Parent/pupil involvement

Survey method – questionnaires and semi-structured interviews in schools – 22 Local Authorities
Interviews designed and led by working group of professionals.
Outcomes: Definition
A commendable achievement of the Rose Review

Rose Dyslexia Review 2009
Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling.

Characteristic features of dyslexia are:
- Difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed.
- Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities.
- It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points.
- Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in: aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia.

A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded intervention.

WG Review concurs with Rose
Outomes: Identification

Rose

— “Early identification of dyslexia can be achieved in the context of high quality literacy teaching for all, combined with robust systems for monitoring progress and adapting teaching for those who have difficulties. “

— Notice and Adjust

— “Teachers should NOTICE when a child is not responding and ADJUST what they do”

Not Universal ‘Screening’

Courtesy John Rack
Outcome: Identification
Screening and Assessment - WG

• Endorses:
  1) Early identification of risk of dyslexia by teacher
     • Letter Knowledge, Phoneme Awareness

But also ‘Holistic Assessment’
  ✍️ Early identification of co-occurring difficulties by teacher

  ✍️ screen for ‘other areas of concern’ (comorbid difficulties)

  2) More complete assessment carried out by specialist practitioner

_WARN_ A Wales-specific issue: In what language??
Outcomes: Intervention

Rose - WG

- **Early** intervention targeting those ‘at risk’
- **Structured, multi-sensory** teaching
- Build **foundation skills** (pre-literacy)
  - Rhythm, rhyme, sound
- Print **links** to sound
- Make structure of written language **explicit**

Add broader skill sets (co-morbidity):

- Body awareness, spatial awareness, visual perception, balance, co-ordination
Outcomes: Teacher Training

• Early identification and possibly early skills assessments raise issues for teacher training
  – Surveys show teachers may not have the knowledge or skills to identify children who are struggling with literacy (and poss. other difficulties)
The Rose Report: Key Points

Inclusion

– All teachers have a responsibility to help identify children with specific learning difficulties and to adapt their teaching methods to enable them to be fully included.

Individualised Interventions

– Specialist literacy intervention programmes are essential and should be available throughout the country.

WG Review concurs with Rose
Wales-specific issues
Results of Benchmarking Survey

Large variability among Local Authorities and Schools re.
- Definition of dyslexia,
- identification,
- provision of support – 69 different ‘packages’
- Teacher training

**Diagnosis**

- Lack of Welsh assessment / intervention materials
- Lack of qualified, Welsh-speaking specialists
  - E.g. Educational Psychologists
- Lack of attested interventions for bilingual context
Next steps toward policy change in Wales
Ipsas for COST on EU stage?

• Task & Finish Group:
• Research on Welsh support
  – Identify best method of supporting children with literacy difficulties in bilingual Welsh/English context
  – Develop appropriate screening and assessment tools in Welsh
• Literacy assessments to include all aspects of literacy difficulties
• Support for other SpLDs in line with dyslexia
• Central resource of open access materials and information for teachers, parents and others
• Information for parents
Thank you