

## Impact case study (REF3b)

<b>Institution:</b> Swansea University : Prifysgol Abertawe
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 28b - Modern Languages and Linguistics (Celtic Studies)
<b>Title of case study:</b> Informing and influencing the creation of language policies and strategies at local and national government levels to promote the use of Welsh amongst young people
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>

The research has informed and influenced the creation of language policies and educational strategies at local and Welsh government levels which have had a direct impact on:

- 1) expanding the domains where Welsh is used by young people;
- 2) embedding the tracking of linguistic progression between key stages;
- 3) expanding Welsh medium school education in the context of language policy for the normalisation of a minority language.

The research also informed the work of the campaign and pressure groups RHAG [Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg, *trans. Parents for Welsh Medium Education*], and Dyfodol i'r Gymraeg [*A future for Welsh*], which have elected the lead researcher, Gruffudd, as Chair within the REF census period.

<b>2. Underpinning research</b>
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The underpinning research was funded via a £150K grant from the Universities Funding Council and published in 1996 (R1). The primary research was undertaken by Heini Gruffudd (lecturer in Welsh at Swansea University 1990 to 2004) in response to the publication of seminal work by the US sociolinguist Joshua Fishman, *Reversing Language Shift* in 1991. The underpinning research aimed at exploring issues from a Welsh language context and adopted a methodology and rationale that were informed by the theory of Reversing Language Shift [RLS] and the intergenerational transmission of language.

This was the first time that research into the use of Welsh by young people had been conducted in the context of RLS and in order to inform holistic language planning at a community level. The communities looked at in the research ranged from areas with low densities of Welsh speakers – Port Talbot, Neath and Swansea city – to those with high densities – upper Swansea Valley and East Carmarthenshire and found that pupils attending 16+ Welsh medium education were more likely to establish positive language practices than those who had transferred to English medium provision [R1, p.170]. Of particular concern were the negative attitudes of those who attended comparatively weak forms of bilingual 16+ provision in areas of higher densities of Welsh speakers. The main research conclusions informed the three strands outlined in the impact summary above:

1. The need to plan for the development of Welsh medium school education in order to normalise the choice of language medium in education for all young people in their local communities.
2. The need to ensure and track linguistic progression from primary to secondary to sixth form levels to maximise positive attitudes to the use of Welsh amongst young people at the critical 16+ age.
3. The need to provide a critical mass of Welsh speakers at the 16+ age range in order to enhance opportunities to use the language in the community and provide appropriate community structures.

C1 described the findings of the research as having '*...profound implications for educational policy*'. (Colin Williams (ed.), *Language Revitalization: Policy and Planning in Wales*, (University of Wales Press, 2000) p.37 and R5). On the basis of this initial report, Gruffudd was commissioned by the Welsh Language Board to carry out further studies in two regions of Carmarthenshire (R2 and R3). This was followed by a commission by ACCAC (the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales) for research on language progression between the primary and secondary sectors in Wales (R6). Given that the initial research had highlighted strong correlation between community use of Welsh and linguistic progression in school, ACCAC was particularly interested in this aspect, as it tackled directly a concern of the Government Welsh Language strategy document *laith Pawb* (2003: p40), namely that '*It appears that a drift from first language to second language*

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*occurs as pupils transfer from primary to secondary school... We shall be asking ACCAC.....to examine these issues in more detail.'*

**3. References to the research**

(R1) Heini Gruffudd, *Y Gymraeg a phobl ifanc* (University of Wales Swansea, 1996) 210pp ISBN 1-900346-15-X: this report was an output of the £150K Universities' Funding Council funded project and was produced in accordance with their quality measures.

(R2) Heini Gruffudd and Peter Hallam, *Dwyieithrwydd anghyflawn* (University of Wales Swansea / Welsh Language Board, 1999), 56pp ISBN 1 900436 35 4

<http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20120330040147/http://www.byig-wlb.org.uk/Cymraeg/cyhoeddiadau/Cyhoeddiadau/4866.pdf>. This report was commissioned by the Welsh Language Board.

(R3) Heini Gruffudd, *laith y Dyffryn/Welsh in the Vale: A survey of the Welsh language amongst parents and pupils of the Tywi Valley* (University of Wales Swansea / Welsh Language Board, 2002), 33pp ISBN 1 900346 55 5

<http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20120330040248/http://www.byig-wlb.org.uk/Cymraeg/cyhoeddiadau/Cyhoeddiadau/4860.pdf>. The report was commissioned by the Welsh Language Board.

The following (R4 and R5) were published in edited or refereed publications:

(R4) Heini Gruffudd, 'Young people's use of Welsh: the influence of home and community', in *Contemporary Wales*, 10, (1998), pp. 201 – 218.

(R5) Heini Gruffudd, 'Planning for the use of Welsh by young people', in Williams, C. (ed.), *Language Revitalization: Policy and Planning in Wales*, (UWP, 2000), pp. 173 – 207.

(R6) Heini Gruffudd, Elin Meek, Catrin Stevens, *Symudiad Disgyblion rhwng Cymraeg a Chymraeg Ail laith* (Llais y Lli, Swansea / ACCAC, 2004), 147pp: report commissioned by ACCAC.

Peter Hallam was employed as a full-time research assistant 1998-1999 on R2. Dr Elin Meek and Dr Catrin Stevens were external part-time research assistants during 2003-2004 on R6. Research funds for the commissioned projects were c. £10,000 (Welsh Language Board), and c. £10,000 (ACCAC); a further c. £5,000 for the 'Welsh in the Vale' project (Welsh Language Board).

**4. Details of the impact**

i) **Expanding the domains where Welsh is used by young people:** By 2001, this issue was recognised as a principal strategic theme in language planning in Wales. Citing 'the research results', C6 acknowledged how Gruffudd's research made them aware of the importance of influencing the language of young people's languages domains.

As more and more Mentrau Iaith [Community Language Initiatives] came into existence, so did the recognition through earlier experience with Mentrau Myrddin that the use of Welsh by young people was a core area for community language planning, policy and strategy. Gruffudd's research findings were now influencing the planning processes of a variety of beneficiaries from the grass roots level, to the Chief Executive of Mentrau Iaith Myrddin (C3) and senior Welsh Language Board staff.

From 2008, planning for the use of Welsh by young people has become central within all Mentrau Iaith, as evidenced by annual reports and corporate plans (C7). All have appointed specific officers to promote the use of Welsh with young people in the last five to ten years. The impact of Gruffudd's research in the Carmarthenshire area has been particularly noticeable, leading in recent years to Welsh language care clubs, the *ownzone* project, a youth theatre and an innovative pastoral service as evidenced in C8. C3 has stated that "...the strategic development work carried out by the Mentrau Iaith in Carmarthenshire with young people was largely based on the research into language use by this particular age group undertaken by Gruffudd. The model has now been used and adapted across Wales, with Mentrau Iaith providing young people with more social opportunities to use the language."

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Recently, the use of Welsh by children and young people was identified as an important strategic area by the Welsh government in 'A living language: a language for living – Welsh language strategy 2012-17', pp. 28 – 32 (C9).

(ii) **Embedding the tracking of linguistic progression between key stages:** The underpinning research highlighted marked differences in approach in more traditionally Welsh-speaking counties, e.g. Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire. The guidance given to parents and students here was weak and Gruffudd argued for a more proactive approach. As a direct consequence of Gruffudd's report, language progression policy was revised. According to C2, the research has "...ensured that consideration of linguistic progression and the language continuum have become embedded in the language and education planning processes of Welsh county councils from 2008 onwards."

C4 has stated that: "*Ceredigion's Educational Language Strategy was launched in 2008. Gruffudd's research was instrumental in informing and guiding policy and practice. During the time immediately before the blueprint for the Strategy was formed, Gruffudd was invited to visit the Ceredigion Education Scrutiny Committee and address it on various aspects of the research results. This undoubtedly contributed positively towards the Authority's establishment of the Strategy, directly informing the Strategy's tracking of Welsh-medium provision and progression between different key stages and influencing the whole process of establishing new schools in the county.... Recently, the strategy was a factor in motivating Ysgol Gynradd Aberteifi to switch from being a mixed-medium school to being a Welsh-medium school [...] Unquestionably, this dependable body of research advanced the case for improving Welsh-medium education in the county.*"

In 2010, the Welsh government produced its *Welsh medium education strategy* (C10), describing it as 'a historic milestone'. For the first time ever, the Welsh government tracks and sets progression targets for Welsh-medium education, between KS 2 and 3, and KS 3 and 4. '*Local authorities will be expected to agree targets for Welsh-medium education, to be submitted as part of their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans to DCELLS for annual monitoring from 2011.*' (p.22) This national strategy puts in place the proposals made by the research commissioned by ACCAC in 2004, along with the previous reports by Gruffudd.

(iii) **Expanding Welsh medium school education in the context of language policy for the normalisation of a minority language:** RHAG [*Parents for Welsh medium Education*] used the underpinning research as a basis for its own normalisation plans for Welsh medium education. A particular example of this [which can be corroborated by C5] is the 1999 plan RHAG formulated for the Swansea region. It argued for (i) a sixth form at the only Welsh medium secondary school in the area, (ii) a second Welsh medium secondary school, and (iii) new schools in areas of the authority where lacunae were identified based on an analysis of demand using Gruffudd's research's arguments for holistic, geographically balanced, normalisation of the provision of Welsh medium primary schools. The normalisation plan, again using the template provided by Gruffudd's research, was presented in the context of enhancing national language policy by contributing to the maintenance of Swansea's percentage of 13% Welsh speakers and for the County to measure the demand for Welsh medium education. During 2008 – 2013, (i) and (ii) had been embedded in the system and a substantial inroad made into (iii) with two new schools opening in areas high on the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation in 2011. C11 notes a rise in the percentage of 7 year olds receiving Welsh medium education in Swansea from 8.6% (2001) to 12.6% (2011).

Gruffudd's research has informed the activities of RHAG and persuaded him to engage in the campaign for Welsh-medium education as the pressure group's elected Chair in 2000-03 and 2009. He is presently its research officer, and in 2012 was elected Chair of Dyfodol i'r Gymraeg, a cross-party pressure group for the Welsh language.

RHAG has campaigned with parents and local government to develop Welsh medium school education across Wales, leading to the opening of 15 new Welsh medium primary schools since 2008. C12 provides an evaluation of the growth of Welsh medium education 2002 to 2012.

The Welsh government's *Welsh medium education strategy* (C10), states that it now expects 'local authorities to plan effectively for Welsh-medium provision' (p.13). The body of policy-changing research produced by Gruffudd, often for government agencies, informed, influenced and led in part to this 'historic' statement.

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- C1 Professor in Welsh at Cardiff University, a former member of the Welsh Language Board and an international scholar in language planning  
The standard and impact of the research in general.
- C2 Chief Executive of the Welsh Language Board to 2012 and current Chief Executive of NPLD [The Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity]  
The impact of the research on planning, policy and strategy within the Welsh Language Board
- C3 Chief Executive of Mentrau Iaith Myrddin (to 2006) and current County Councillor with Carmarthenshire County Council  
The impact of the research on (i) the organisation of specific events to increase the use of Welsh amongst young people and (ii) education policy change in the Aman and Tywi valleys resulting in an increase in the number of subjects offered through the medium of Welsh.
- C4 Director of Education at Ceredigion County Council to 2009  
The impact of the research on the implementation by Ceredigion County Council of a strategy to ameliorate linguistic progression between the primary and secondary sectors.
- C5 Head of Education Planning and Resources, City and County of Swansea, Education Directorate, Civic Centre, Oystermouth Road, Swansea SA1 3SN  
The impact of the research on the planning for expansion of Welsh medium education in the City and County of Swansea
- C6 The *Corporate Plan Executive Summary* of Mentrau Myrddin (2001) acknowledged how Gruffudd's research raised awareness of the importance of influencing the language of young people's language domains, accessible at <http://online.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/agendas/eng/RATC20011210/REP06.htm>
- C7 Evidence of the planning for the use of Welsh by young people in *Mentrau Iaith Cymru: Adroddiad Blynyddol 2011-2012* <http://www.mentrauiaith.org/cymraeg/mictaflen.php> and 2012-2014 Corporate Plan <http://www.mentrauiaith.org/dogfen/CynllunCorfforaethoIMAC12-14f4.pdf>
- C8 Annual report of Menter Cwm Gwendraeth 2011-12 detailing strategic development work with young people <http://www.mentercwmgwendraeth.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Adroddiad-Blynyddol-2011-12.pdf> and also the website: <http://www.mentercwmgwendraeth.org.uk/plant-a-phobl-ifanc>
- C9 Welsh Government five-year strategy, from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2017 *A living language: a language for living – Welsh language strategy 2012-17* <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/welshlanguage/publications/wlstrategy2012/?lang=en>
- C10 *Welsh medium education strategy* <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/welshmededstrat/?lang=en>
- C11 Strategaeth Addysg Cyfrwng Cymraeg: Annual Report, 2011-2012 pp 27-28 <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/120619wmesannualreport1112cy.pdf> evidences the rise in the percentage of 7 year olds receiving Welsh medium education in Swansea.
- C12 An evaluation of the growth of Welsh medium education from 2002 to 2012 edited by Heini Gruffudd, accessible at [http://www.rhag.net/dogfennau/rhagolwg\\_28\\_english.pdf](http://www.rhag.net/dogfennau/rhagolwg_28_english.pdf)