

Student number- 2405439

ECEY4010

Word count- 1,429

I have not used any AI in this assignment.

<https://uowtsd-my.sharepoint.com/my?id=%2Fpersonal%2F2405439%5Fstudent%5Fuowtsd%5Fac%5Fuk%2FDocuments%2FMultilingualism>

### Multilingual and bilingual practice in the Early Years

According to NALDIC (2011) bilingualism is being fluent in more than one language, however it means different things to different individuals therefore defining it is difficult. Individuals with varying bilingual qualities may be classed as bilingual. Some people may describe themselves as bilingual but only have the ability to converse and communicate in certain languages with others orally. The term multilingual refers to an individual able to speak three or more languages and able to understand the languages. The term bilingual refers to an individual who can speak 2 languages. Chen and Padilla (2019) state there are different types of bilingualism, they have been categorized according to the degree of bilingualism. Baker (2011) says simultaneous bilingualism can include acquiring two languages at the same time early in life, stage 1 mixes two languages, stage 2 is when words are separated from each language and stage 3 is when one language becomes more dominant than another. Baker continues to explain sequential bilingualism, this is where the child acquires the first language and becomes fluent in a second language later in life.

In general the term 'bilingual provision' refers to a wider range of teaching and early years settings that include varying amounts of Welsh language in their day to day activities. Estyn is the office of Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales and is established under the Education (Schools) Act 1992. Estyn is responsible for inspecting quality and standards in education in Wales. It also provides advice to the Welsh Government on quality while promoting the best practice and care, it has included a number of reports on Welsh-medium settings and bilingual education. (Benedictus-van den Berg et al., 2014).

### Benefits of Multilingualism and Bilingualism

There are many benefits to multilingualism, Xia et al (2022) states that several studies have shown bilingualism has a positive effect on an individuals cognitive and creativity skills. Chibaka (2018) supports this by saying that bilinguals and multilinguals have proven to be more creative, bilinguals not only have the ability to have a different approach to a problem but bilingual competence provides them with possible new and different ideas. Bilinguals have the ability to switch on one language while switched off another language while communicating this subsequently improves their communication skills.

### Brain Development and Divergent Thinking

The rapid changes that happen in a child's brain in the early years lay crucial foundations for later life, a child as young as 6 months old can detect a shift between two languages.

Traunter (2019). Goksan et al (2020) states growing up in a bilingual household is becoming more common, early life experiences shape brain and cognitive development. A wide research suggests bilingualism has advantages for individuals in control, for example the ability to shift between goals and control their attention. Early bilingualism with practice of two languages can be associated with improved performance on some EC tasks, in addition as this is increased connectivity between EC-related brain networks this is due to the increased time spent using and controlling two languages and alternating between the both.

Furthermore, Goksan et al (2020) also states bilingualism has been shown to impact differences with functional brain activity and connectivity, one study reported the earlier age a child is introduced the stronger functional connectivity between the left inferior frontal gyrus pars triangularis and its right homolog and with the right inferior parietal lobule. However Booton (2021) states many children grow up bilingual, and although bilingualism has been linked to a range of linguistic and cognitive skills one of these skills being creativity literature with children has found mixed results, possibly due to methodological limitations. In the study they undertook, bilingual and monolingual children underwent three trials for divergent thinking, nonverbal intelligence, exposure to English language and vocabulary and no differences were found between all children. So while bilingualism has many benefits for individuals, divergent thinking is not proved to be one of them.

### Welsh as an Additional Language

Welsh government (2014) describes Welsh as an Additional Language (WAL) as an individual who has a first language which is neither English or Welsh and chooses a Welsh medium education therefore needs support accessing the whole curriculum in the medium of Welsh. An example of this is an individual born in a different country and/or a parent or carer speaks a different language at home. There is no official WAL equivalent to the EAL (English as an additional language) five stage model produced by WG and used in all LA's, because of this the EMA's in two LA's have translated the EAL five stage model into Welsh which is used as a guidance to routinely assess and determine individuals needs for support with Welsh.

### Legislations

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There are many legislations and acts that ensure curriculum includes the use of languages and culture diversity. Wales currently has 22 Welsh language initiatives, these enable people to socialise in Welsh, arrange activities in the medium of Welsh for fluent Welsh speakers and for Welsh learners. Welsh Government (2020) states The Language, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience aims to support learning across the whole curriculum and enable individuals to gain language skills and knowledge in English, Welsh and international languages. Learning and experience in the area aims to support others to communicate in Welsh, English and international languages which can promote better local, national and global understanding. Individuals engaging in this helps them become healthy, confident individuals ready to lead rewarding lives as valued members of society. The skills learned through languages and literacy are key to enabling individuals the ability to be open to others views, and developing positive relationships.

Welsh Assembly Government (2003) believes that the Welsh language is an important part of our identity. It is important for the culture, history and social fabric of the nation. UK governments have made legislations and policies which have had a positive effect in the rise of Welsh language. The Welsh Language Acts of 1967 and 1993, the launch of S4C, the Welsh language television programmes and the establishment of the Welsh Language Board in 1988 have all had a big improvement on the Welsh medium in Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government's strategy pursues three strands these include; A National Policy Framework with the Assembly Government setting, providing strategic leadership to encourage the growth and development of the Welsh language; The Language and the Community, which focuses on policies and actions which promote economical sustainable communities in Wales;

The Language and Rights of the Individual, which focuses on the rights and responsibilities of the individual. The Assembly Government's policies will continue to encourage and support individuals to learn Welsh while encouraging them to use the medium of Welsh in their everyday life.

### Video

In the video linked above, the practitioner uses music and games to promote the use of another language. Beaton (1995) states music is the most persuasive experience in an individuals life, and it can be the core of curriculum. For rhythm and harmony sink into the brain and have a powerful effect on one's brain development. The video also shows use of puppets which Beaton describes as an important part of a child's play building one's confidence and memory skills. Learning through music and play encourages social skills, confidence, builds self esteem while enhancing languages. Puppet use also enhances motor

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skills, hand eye coordination and speech and language skills. Storytelling also plays a vital role in children's language education. It enhances critical thinking, concepts, while providing enjoyment to the audience. Incorporating another language into storytelling allows for learning through play while repeating the new languages and having visual pictures in the book allowing the child to learn the new language through vision and language. Supporting other cultures as well as the child's own teaches the children diversity and embraces everyone's culture. (Irgin 2025).

To conclude supporting multilingualism and bilingualism helps support each child while learning new cultures and teaching diversity. Learning new languages can lead to children being more creative and giving them freedom. Childcare practitioners have an important role in ensuring children are given the best opportunities and experiences to support their development, this can be done with enriching environments, invitations to play that include other languages and cultures, and support. Experiencing Welsh at an early age, when language acquisition skills are at their most effective can be valuable for the preparation for a child learning Welsh so incorporating many activities, and daily routines with Welsh phrases or words can be of great support for a child's development. (Early years provision 2017).

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