



LEVEL 6 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

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Programme:	BA Primary Education with QTS		
Module:	Yr Iaith ar Daith 3		
Module code:	ECAD6006C	Contribution to Overall Module Assessment (%):	40%
Lecturer:	Catherine Morgan	Internal Verifier:	
Assignment Title:	Critical response to an article that provides evidence of sound knowledge and understanding of themes related to the teaching of Welsh in the English-medium sector.	Word count (or equivalent):	2000
Submission deadline:	8 th November, 2019	Return date of provisional marks & written feedback:	6 th December, 2019
Submission method:	All written assessments, where practical and possible, must be submitted via Turnitin unless otherwise instructed by the Lecturer. (Please DO NOT put this assessment specification into Turnitin or it will match many similarities with other students' submissions.) Alternative submission method (if applicable): Late submission of the assessment will result in a late penalty mark. Penalties for late submission: Up to <u>one week</u> late, maximum mark of 40%. Over one week late, 0%. Only the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may approve a change to submission dates.		
Academic honesty / referencing:	Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.		

Critical response to an article that provides evidence of sound knowledge and understanding of themes related to the teaching of Welsh in the English-medium sector.

Bilingualism can be defined as ‘the ability to use more than one language’ (Lightbrown and Spada, 2013, p. 214). One issue associated with bilingualism is that the level at which one is considered to be bilingual is open to interpretation. Mayor depicts that the extent to which one ‘knows a language’ is a matter of personal judgement (Mayor, 1994, p.75). One method that could be implemented to learn a language, the Natural Approach, pays little attention to the grammatical rules of the language, focusing on the use of the language to communicate in different situations (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.178). If ‘knowing a language’ includes its grammatical rules, it could be argued that a person who has learned using the Natural Approach does not know the language well enough to be considered bilingual.

The article, ‘Non-Native English Students Learning in English: Reviewing and Reflecting on the Research’ (Bernado and Gaerlan, 2011, p. 1), reviews research based on how students with English as an additional language (EAL) learn through the medium of English. It was written by 2 authors; Allan B.I. Bernardo, a professor in the Department of Psychology, linked to the brain development aspect of the topic (University of Macau, 2019); and Marianne Jennifer M. Gaerlan, an assistant professor of Applied Linguistics, linked to the language area of the topic (De La Salle University, 2008). The article relates to another article exploring the experiences of EAL learners within a university in the United States of America (Shi, Harrison and Henry, 2017, p.25).

The intended audience of this article is educators with an interest in teaching those with English as an additional language. Academic language is used alongside the explanation of key terms such as English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL). The article focuses on the teaching of subjects that are not language-based. However, this research may have been beneficial for parents and carers to read. Had the article been written in a more reader-friendly way, parents could use the studies involved to make informed decisions on what language they would like their children to be educated in.

Mathematics is the only area of the curriculum that has been dedicated its own section within the article. As an abstract concept, it is stated that the language in which Mathematics is taught should have little impact on pupils’ performance. However, it would be interesting to compare this with the learning of EAL learners within abstract areas of the creative arts. It

has been proven that drama lessons, using the developing language, have a positive impact on the acquisition of oral language (Dunn and Stinson, 2011, p. 622).

When Filipino bilinguals were asked to recall mathematical skills that had been taught to them in English, and apply them to a problem-solving task, they performed better in English (Bernado and Gaerlan, 2011, p.3). Contrastingly, the same study highlighted that when a task involved comprehension and the application of concepts, bilinguals found it easier to complete the task in their first language. (Bernado and Gaerlan, 2011, p.3). When compared to education in Wales, research determined that a child's first language was the language in which they were the most proficient (Rhys, 2014). For this reason, it could be argued that in order to achieve their full potential, learners should be educated in their first language as it would be their strongest.

Baker (2011, p. 154) supports this, stating that primary school aged bilinguals were identified as being ahead of their monolingual peers when developing the cardinal concept of number. The ability to grasp the concept of numbers as symbols has been accredited to the increased attention control required to respond appropriately to either of their languages. Estyn highlights the cognitive advantages of bilingualism in their supplementary guidance for inspectors (Estyn, 2017, p. 2). Despite this, Baker (2015, p.170) states that bilingual learners may find it difficult to dissect the meaning of some mathematical terms as they differ from their every-day usage. Using different vocabulary for the same function makes the syntax more difficult for a learner to understand in their second language.

When compared to Welsh in mathematics, research suggests that whilst the acquisition of abstract skills is unlikely to be hindered by the use of Welsh, comprehension tasks may become more difficult for the learner if they are taught in their second language. It has been suggested that in order to improve learners' development of Welsh, it should be used across the curriculum (Welsh Government, 2013, p.32). Within the Foundation Phase Framework, there are Welsh-medium statements in the Language, Literacy and Communication area of the curriculum, however, there are not any within Mathematical Development (Welsh Government, 2015). This does not support the Welsh Government suggestion as practitioners are given no specific guideline of how to support the development of Welsh across all areas of the curriculum. It has also been highlighted that all departments within the learning environment should support the approach and commit to the inclusion of Welsh within their lessons (Welsh Government, 2013, p.33). Additionally, Recommendation 13 of the Welsh

Government's 'One Language for All' review states that all teachers should be provided with training to ensure that the most effective methods of teaching language are understood and implemented across the curriculum (Welsh Government, 2013, p.32).

Bernado and Gaerlan's (2011, p. 5) study also highlighted the importance of teachers being able to model the use of the second language (L2) well. Students explained that teachers were able to model the use of both English and Filipino in their tasks, using subject-specific language in both their first language (L1) and their L2. When compared to the use of Welsh in English-medium schools, Estyn (2017, p. 7) recommends that professional development is made available for teachers who do not specialise in teaching Welsh. The Welsh Government's Sabbatical Scheme offers Welsh-language training for teachers who would like to improve their proficiency in Welsh and support the teaching of Welsh as an L2 within English-medium schools (Welsh Government, 2013, p. 36). Although the scheme has been held in high regard by those who have completed it, it may prove difficult for some practitioners to access it. There have been concerns that schools are not willing to release their teachers to allow them the opportunity to attend the course, this may be due to its intense nature and a duration that spans up to three months (Welsh Government, 2013, p.36). When a member of staff is released to attend the Sabbatical Scheme at Foundation level, they will be absent from the classroom for 11 weeks. In order to support schools, the Welsh Government will reimburse up to 55 days of the cost of a supply teacher (WJEC, 2019). This means that schools may only be liable for the cost of a supply teacher for 5 weeks. Despite this, some schools may not be able to afford the cost of a supply teacher for such a prolonged period of time.

The training of all staff within a school may be expensive. However, it has been argued that in order to achieve the Welsh Government's goal of a million Welsh speakers by 2050, it is vital that Wales has 'an education system that provides Welsh language skills for all' (Welsh Government, 2017, p. 7).

'Do the school's teachers make effective use of the Welsh language as a medium of communication, both in lessons and in other situations?' – Supplementary Guidance: Welsh (Estyn, 2017, p.7).

The students involved in the focus article stated that their teachers primarily used their L1 outside of the classroom (Bernado and Gaerlan, 2011, p.5). Although there are similarities to

be observed in English-medium environments, it is expected that teachers use a high standard of oral Welsh outside of the classroom. The use of Welsh outside of the classroom is explicitly mentioned in Estyn's Supplementary Guidance for school inspectors. This highlights the importance of all practitioners holding a sufficient standard of the Welsh language to be used in all aspects of school life. Furthermore, the Welsh Government have released the target of increasing the number of primary school teachers who are able to teach in Welsh from 2,900 in 2017, to 5,200 by 2050, an increase of 55% (Welsh Government, 2017, p. 12). This demonstrates the importance of increasing the use of Welsh, by teachers, both inside and outside of the classroom. From personal experience, it has been observed that Welsh is used both inside and outside of the classroom. Outside of the classroom, the use of Welsh commands has been observed both on the playground and in the corridor, for example, 'Dim Rhedeg' to control behaviour on the way to assembly. Conversely, research carried out within Wales suggests that, outside of the classroom, learners would rather communicate in their strongest language, this is usually their L1 (Rhys, 2014).

When studying the success of bilingual Filipino learners in English, the social influences on the L2 were considered (Bernado and Gaerlan, 2011, p.5). When asked about their social influences, students discussed factors that were beyond the classroom. Learners drew attention to the positive influence of their family when using English, stating that it was common for them to switch between their L1 and L2 when talking with family at home. In comparison to Wales, it has been emphasized that pupils should be confident in using the Welsh language in varied contexts beyond their Welsh lessons (Estyn, 2017, p.4). Moreover, learners should be equipped with the reading skills to allow them to understand written Welsh in a range of forms, for example, on a health leaflet or a road sign (Estyn, 2017, p.4). Be that as it may, some parents in Wales have shown concern in regard to their ability to support their child in their home-learning tasks. Additionally, parents have reservations about how learning through the medium of Welsh may hinder their academic development (Rhys, 2014).

Interestingly, when discussing social influences on the development of their L2, students described using English at home and at school. The community had little influence in their language development as the primary language within their community was Filipino. Having said that, the influence of the community varies from area to area. With this in mind, it would be irresponsible to infer that the community has no impact on the development of a learner's

L2. The 2011 census in Wales found that in many areas of Gwynedd, over 70% of people aged three and over were able to speak Welsh (Welsh Government, 2017, p.8). Contrastingly, in many areas of Bridgend, less than 10% of people aged three and above were able to speak Welsh (Welsh Government, 2017, p.8). Within an area such as Gwynedd, it is likely that the community surrounding the school would have a greater impact on the development of Welsh as it is likely to be used in social contexts, such as when going to the shop. On the other end of the spectrum, the community surrounding a school in Bridgend would be unlikely to help a learner to develop their L2 as few people in the community are able to speak Welsh.

According to statistics, Bridgend is one of the most deprived communities in Wales (ITV, 2014). It would be interesting to compare the influence of the community within more and less affluent areas. It may be possible that there are fewer linguistic opportunities in economically deprived areas. Welsh may seem to have very little value within the area. Within an NHS study, findings included that the systems in place to identify, record, and respond to patients' language choice in healthcare (NHS, 2004, p. 2). The report highlights that whilst some patients may choose to receive their treatment through the medium of Welsh, it is not always possible for the NHS to provide a bilingual service. However, it was found that most healthcare professionals are able to respond in English, this gives English a greater value to the community as patients are able to use it as a means to receive treatment (NHS, 2004, p. 2).

If the studies discussed in the article are based within the same area, it would be impossible to determine if the external community actually has no impact on the learners' development of their L2, or if it is just not the case in that specific area of the Philippines.

In conclusion, there are many similar factors highlighted when comparing learning English as a second language in the Philippines, to learning Welsh as a second language in Wales. It is vital that the learning of an L2 is not confined to the classroom. Being provided with the opportunity to use the second language in a range of contexts has been highlighted by many as being fundamental to the learner's development and confidence in that language. As important as the use of language across the curriculum is, it is even more important that the practitioners in these other areas are able to use the language effectively themselves and are able to confidently model the language in their specific area of expertise.

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