

Chapter 10

The Lightning Veil: Language Revitalization in Wales

COLIN H. WILLIAMS

Cardiff University

INTRODUCTION

The Welsh language, which is indigenous to Wales, is one of six Celtic languages. It is spoken by 562,000 speakers, 19% of the population of Wales, according to the 2011 U.K. Census, and it is estimated that it is spoken by a further 200,000 residents elsewhere in the United Kingdom. No exact figures exist for the undoubted thousands of other Welsh speakers beyond the United Kingdom who are able to communicate in Welsh as migrants to other European countries, members of the Welsh diasporas in North and South America, Australia, and Southern Africa; and language learners elsewhere.

The subject of this chapter is a sometimes mysterious, often idiosyncratic process, which always involves struggle, sacrifice, and tension.¹ Language revitalization is an attempt to counter trends that have influenced decline in the use and learning of the language. The pressures typically are a combination of historical conquest, political and economic control, and deep psychological hurt whereby a former relatively autonomous group are subjugated into a dependent people whose prime markers of distinction, such as language or religious differentiation, are eroded, made illegal, or otherwise eradicated from formal public life. At various periods in West European history, this has been the fate of Welsh, Irish, Gaelic, Breton, Basque, and Catalan, among others.²

Thus, at root, language revitalization speaks of a much deeper and significant historical trend, the attainment of an element of cultural and popular autonomy within salient historical domains such as public education, local government, and community development.³ Language revitalization is a conscious effort to change ideas, values, attitudes, and behaviors.

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Political Agitation in Favor of Language Revitalization

In the United Kingdom, many of the worthwhile initiatives in support of the promotion and recognition of the Welsh language have been achieved as a result of direct action and stealth politics, often in the face of considerable opposition and hostility by agencies of the hegemonic state and its local representative institutions. It is now the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) that determines the shape of some 20 devolved policy areas, of which the Welsh language is one.

Over the past century, the Welsh language movement has been marked by increasing sophistication, specialization, and breadth of approach.⁴ Three distinct phases may be identified. In the period 1912–1962, the concern was with gaining public recognition for the language and with establishing a designated Welsh language education system. The second stage, around 1962–1980s, witnessed a period of mobilization linked to a wider sustained protest at the perceived unfair treatment of Welsh in public and civic life.⁵ Its main ambitions were to promote the growth of Welsh-medium education, to ensure bilingual public services, and to secure the establishment of a Welsh-medium television channel, S4C. The third and current stage is preoccupied with two different sets of challenges. The first is the spatial and geolinguistic impact of differential migration on predominantly Welsh-speaking communities and the attempts to “normalize” Welsh through expanding the demolingusitic base of pupils who attend Welsh-medium schools. The challenge here is to construct a sociolinguistic context that reinforces Welsh language skills outside the school-based socialization experience. Although essentially a phenomenon of the anglicized southeast and northeast, there is growing evidence that this is becoming a more prevalent issue throughout Wales. The second political, administrative, and legal challenge has to do with constructing a national infrastructure that embeds the current opportunities to use Welsh more deeply within the fabric of society. The focus here has been on the articulation of language policy, citizen services, and rights; the passage of new language legislation; the role of information technology; and the need to secure a greater presence for Welsh language skills within the economy.

Let us look at the first challenge in more detail. The sociolinguistic stability of communities is the bedrock on which the discourse regarding successful language revitalization process has been based. In the coalfield areas of the south and the slate-quarrying districts of the north, the Welsh language and its associated culture were heavily influenced by the penetration of advanced capitalism, globalization, and the increasing internationalization of social mores, political ideologies, popular culture, and leisure pursuits. Although Anglicization characterized the eastern coalfield area, the mass and density of Welsh-speaking communities in the west and north were sufficiently robust as to withstand the acculturating effects of rapid industrialization, at least for two generations.

By the 1960s, this was no longer feasible, as the Welsh-speaking communities began to shrink and atrophy. A crisis mentality in relation to the survival of Welsh necessitated new ideas and forms of action to resist language decline. A major

concern of language campaigners, and a consideration in government policy, has been the condition of Heartland communities in the informal designated area known as “Y Fro Gymraeg.” Initially associated with *Adfer* in the 1960s and 1970s, the foundation of this appeal is territorial recovery, initially through private economic and community endeavors. The stimulus for this movement was the economic and social undermining of rural Wales by undifferentiated state policies, the uneven effects of regional development and capitalist penetration, tourism, and the growth of second-home ownership. A modern variant of this anxiety over loss of local control, housing policies, inadequate employment, in-migration, and creeping Anglicization resurfaced in Gwynedd with the formation of Cymuned (community) in the early part of this century. Coupled with this has been a progressively spiraling housing market, which disadvantages local purchasers and forces younger families to move from the community to less attractive locations in market terms. As a consequence of these demographic forces, the sociolinguistic nature of many predominantly Welsh-speaking communities, including their social networks, is undergoing a profound transition.⁶ All of these concerns were made far more acute by the publication of the 2011 Census headline results on the Welsh language (Welsh Government, 2012b), which revealed a decline in Welsh speakers from 20.8% in 2001 to 19% in 2011. Thus, despite an increase in the size of the population, the number of Welsh speakers decreased from 582,000 in 2001 to 562,000 in 2011.

In this chapter, I want to focus on four pillars of language revitalization, namely, language policy and sociolegal developments, formal education, the family, and community life. A more comprehensive analysis would include interpretation of economic diversification, regional development in United Kingdom, global commercial trends, IT and software initiatives and their impact on behavior and language choice, and the U.K. devolution process and constitutional change, together with European Union (EU) influences in myriad domains.⁷

GOVERNMENTAL SUPPORT FOR LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

Wales represents a distinct variant within U.K. public policy in that the U.K. central government has been crucially involved in supporting Welsh language initiatives since the early 1960s and in establishing a distinct language regime. Critical reforms such as the establishment of the Welsh television channel S4C, a Welsh national curriculum following the passage of the Education Act 1988, the Welsh Language Act in 1993 (Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1993), and the establishment of the NAW in 1999 as a result of constitutional reform and devolution have their origin in Westminster legislation. The underlying reason why such reforms were instituted has much to do with the pressure exerted by civil society, a powerful and well-placed language lobby, the internal dynamics of the party political system, and the differential response to nationalism, both cultural and political. A cogent argument could be constructed that these lobby capacities have been piecemeal, contingent, nonpermanent, and powerful only in the sense that they have been relative to the capacities of

individuals in a given location. Be that as it may, a central feature of the 1993 legislation was the creation of a language promotion agency, the Welsh Language Board (WLB), which was set to be the determining influence on the contours of Welsh language policy for almost 20 years.

The Welsh Language Act of 1993

The passage of the Welsh Language Act of 1993 provided a statutory framework for the treatment of English and Welsh on the basis of equality⁸ and was a turning point in the history of Welsh language promotion. The Act established a statutory WLB and ushered in a system whereby named public organizations were required to specify, by means of a language scheme, what range of bilingual services they would offer to the public (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1993). Within a decade, the WLB had established itself as the principal agency for the promotion of Welsh in public life and had adopted several far-reaching programs of action in the field of community development, language transfer within the family, educational strategies, IT, and private sector initiatives (Campbell, 2000; C. H. Williams, 2000).

The 1993 Act details key steps to be taken by the WLB and by public sector bodies in the preparation of Welsh language schemes, which are designed to implement the central principle of the Act, that is, to treat Welsh and English on the basis of equality. However, this obligation is not absolute; public bodies need only implement the principle "so far as is both appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practicable." The Act provides that the Board must issue guidelines as to the form and content of schemes each public body must regard in preparing their scheme, that the public body must carry out consultations in the preparation of the scheme, and that the scheme must be submitted to the Board for approval. The guidelines require details on how the body's scheme will deal with the Welsh-speaking public in terms of correspondence, telephone communication, and the conduct of meetings, together with the organization's identity, iconography, signage, publishing and printing material, official notices, press notices, publicity, and advertising.

The Board also had the right to extend its remit in other sectors covered by the Act, and had given priority to education and training. By June 1998, the Welsh education schemes of 2 local authorities had been approved, and a further 15 were being developed. Further and higher education colleges, together with Welsh-medium pre-school provision, have also received attention. Starting in 1998, Education Learning Wales, with input from the Board, had coordinated a national strategy for Welsh for Adults, and this sector has benefited from a more robust and systematic provision of service, accreditation of adult tutors, resource development, and strategic intervention related to skills acquisition in key areas of the economy, such as insurance and banking, retail sales, and the legal profession. In total, grants of £2,027,000 were distributed in the year 1997–1998 to local authorities to promote Welsh language education.

The WLB was a public body sponsored by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). Total grant in aid for the year April 1, 2009, to March 31, 2010, was

£13,653,000. The net expenditure for the year was £13,781,000 (2008–2009: £13,512,000). On March 31, 2010, the general reserve was £596,000 (2008–2009: £701,000). By 2010, a total of 487 public sector language schemes had been approved, with a further 76 approved in the voluntary sector (WLB, 2010). By 2011, over 565 Welsh language schemes had been validated, including all Education Authorities and Tertiary Education Institutes in Wales, and the annual grant expenditure of the WLB had risen to £7,522 million in 2009–2010.

The Welsh Language Board and Language Management

In successive strategy documents (WLB, 1995), the Board set itself four priorities⁹:

1. To increase the numbers of Welsh-speakers
2. To provide more opportunities to use the language
3. To change habits in relation to language use
4. To strengthen Welsh as a community language

However, the WLB did not have a real statutory remit to achieve all this; rather, through the local action plans and language schemes the WLB was able to develop a working relationship with county authorities in relation to their Welsh-medium education and service provision (WLB, 2005, 2006, 2008a). The Welsh language scheme system put the onus on the public bodies to discuss and shoulder responsibility for Welsh language services for the first time; this was a major step forward for the language revitalization program.¹⁰

The WLB had become the key agency in language revitalization for it now created a discourse and set an agenda for process and action.¹¹ In 1996, following local government reform, the eight counties became 22 local authorities, and this provided an opportunity to create new Welsh language schemes that opened up new possibilities. This was realized in 1996–1997 when a new system of language schemes was created with the first being Carmarthenshire County Council. The language scheme system was extended to other local authorities, universities, and further and advanced education colleges. For the first time public bodies had to conform to a statutory language scheme and had to report regularly on how they were adhering to an agreed scheme. Language schemes also created a discourse within institutions that had never previously been required to discuss the needs of Welsh speakers. Now they were required to consider how they were going to service the interests of Welsh into the medium-term future, and this led to elements of mainstreaming Welsh through the establishment of 558 Welsh language schemes that have totally transformed the role of Welsh within public administration. However, as reported in C. H. Williams (2010, 2013), the delivery of the services was inconsistent and difficult and has led to a reform of the system in favor of a set of service delivery standards as discussed below.

An important influence in the process is the cumulative impact and role of civil society (C. H. Williams, 2008). Whatever the difficulties and challenges posed by

civil society to the direction or decisions of the WLB Board, there were at the very least access points for dialogue, discussion, and disagreement. Formally these were provided in the shape of regular public meetings of the WLB, hosted somewhere in Wales every 6 weeks or so. The general public were thus afforded an opportunity to air their grievances, interrogate and challenge the decisions of public officials and WLB personnel, and give early advance warning of several issues on the horizon. WLB data and evidence on trends affecting the Welsh language in, for example, education, health, housing, and the like often grounded the discussions in locally related context and within a regional or national perspective also, so as to gauge how the local community was faring with regard to the rest of the nation.

At another step removed from such public fora was the intense networking the WLB undertook both with its partners, public organizations in the United Kingdom and the EU, and with, of course, professional societies, lobby groups, and special interest groups, concerned, for example, with the media, education, translation, tourism, skills development, housing, and so on. These meetings afforded the collection of additional data and perspectives and often acted as a precursor to the development of WLB strategy in specific domains. They also built up a certain degree of trust and complicit understanding that the promotion of Welsh was a concern of both civil society and responsible agencies. This is not to say that there was necessarily ready agreement or that the WLB was not the subject of intense criticism and scrutiny, especially in the allocation of grant awards. But these channels of informed opinion did add to the general intelligence displayed in and around the implementation of language policy.

This was an undoubted strength in terms of networking and in furthering the influence of the Board within different regions and interest groups. A conscious strategy was pursued whereby the Board would instigate initiatives and then promote the ideas and activities under the banner of the partner. A good example is the TWF initiative that arose from the WLB Community Research Project (C. H. Williams & Evas, 1998),¹² although in the long term this approach to language management may have damaged the Board as the political authorities and the general public did not appreciate or value the extent to which the WLB was actually both the principal actor and the main driver in coordinating the movement to revitalize Welsh. This, together with its status as a quango, one step removed from direct government control, was the reason why the Government of Wales announced that it was of the mind to abolish the WLB, which duly happened in March 2012.

The Legacy of the Welsh Language Board

Doubtless in international comparative terms the WLB will be hailed as one of the few genuine innovative language-planning agencies. It has earned its respect in Welsh public policy circles in terms of its effectiveness as a promotional body and as an asset to the long-term fortunes of the Welsh language. It operated at a pivotal time in the development of Welsh governance and civil society and had a very constructive role to play in transforming the Welsh language from a political football to a public good.

There are grounds for arguing that the WLB was not given a sufficient opportunity to fulfill its complex and challenging remit. It embarked on approving Welsh language schemes only in 1996, and this was followed by a 7-year preparatory period when the supporting infrastructure was put in place. There were two critical features of this period. One was the educational aspect of the Board's work whereby it tutored named institutions and local government officers and helped manage their expectations as to how to implement the statutory obligations contained within the Welsh Language Act of 1993. The second feature was its partnership with the Welsh Government and its successive ministers, some of whom were far better than others in extending the remit of the Board and in securing additional resources for it to staff its increasingly ambitious program of action.

One of the chief virtues of *Iaith Pawb* (WAG, 2003), the first Action Plan of the WAG, was that it allocated sufficient resources to allow the Board to monitor performance, and this came to full fruition in 2006, ironically a full 2 years after it had been announced that the WLB was to be incorporated directly within the Government. There is a bittersweet irony in the timing of all this for Board members and staff. In consequence, several of them were led to ask whether it was really necessary to abolish such a relatively young organization when the legislation had not been fully tested and the Welsh language schemes were still finding their operative role within the public sector. However, in several submissions made to the NAW Legislation Committee scrutiny process of 2010, a consistent criticism was made of the WLB that it either lacked teeth or failed to use the powers it had in a sufficiently robust manner until its later years. In consequence within the new system it was assumed that "regulated bodies (would) take compliance with language obligations seriously" (Lewis, 2010).

That will depend to a great extent on the nature of the new language service standards currently being developed and how rigorous the Welsh Language Commissioner will enforce compliance by named bodies.

EDUCATION

A significant feature of Welsh-medium and bilingual education is that it has grown in an organic manner, largely as a result of parental power, rather than purposive planning by either central or local authorities save for the pioneering work of Glamorgan, Clwyd, and Gwynedd local Education Authorities.¹³ The result is that parts of the education system are innovative and engaging, whereas others are inadequate; for despite understanding the nature of bilingualism in detail, there have been too few attempts to develop a holistic approach to educational provision that encompasses the whole range of required outcomes. Currently there are signs of a more strategic approach to constructing a bilingual educational sector, but it is still too early to talk of a comprehensive Welsh model. More critically socioeconomic and political developments in society threaten to undermine, or at least weaken, some of the progress made to date, as will be reported below.¹⁴

The range of issues includes the lack of consistency in terms of the linguistic provision in different types of schools, the specific challenges posed to Welsh-speaking communities by the presence of pupils who possess radically different capacities in terms of their Welsh language skills, the need for the sector to increase its capacity to foster adequate skill sets so as to prepare pupils both for external examination assessment and the world of work, the enduring challenge of “managing” linguistic continuity trends, and the growing role of Welsh-medium provision within the Higher Education sector so as to realize the full range of the current education and language strategy. Until recently the various stages of education were not planned in an integrated manner and are still not resourced in an effective and mutually supportive way (Baker & Jones, 1999). Beyond the formal statutory sectors of the education system, consideration also needs to be given to broader socioeconomic elements, including greater capacity building, language awareness, and in-service retraining, all of which are crucial elements in the development of a bilingual economy and workforce (Cwmni Iaith, 2008; Welsh Local Government Association, 2004).

Educational Experiments

Throughout the period 1948–1988, the statutory education system was largely unilingual English in character. In the early part of this period, namely, 1948–circa 1972, the growth in the number of Welsh-medium schools offered an opt-in choice for parents in some areas who wished their children to pursue a bilingual education. As far as the U.K. government was concerned, Welsh was to be promoted primarily through the education system, and the Welsh Office and local Education Authorities adopted a rather laconic and laissez-faire approach to the provision of Welsh-medium education in toto, although there were significant individual initiatives taken by some of Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Schools and local authorities such as Flint and Glamorgan in the late 1950s and early 1960s.¹⁵ The scholastic, social, and sporting standing of the first Welsh-medium schools were of such a high order that they established Welsh-medium education as a credible alternative for many parents who hitherto were apprehensive about committing their children’s education to an unproven, minority, and somewhat differentiated education pattern. The 1966 Education Act defined Welsh-medium schools as those that taught over half their foundation subjects, excluding Welsh, English, and Religious Education, either wholly or partly through the medium of Welsh.

In 1971 the establishment of *Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin* (The Welsh Medium Nursery Schools Movement) formalized a close confederation of voluntary and non-statutory nursery schools that had been growing in numbers since the late 1940s. This new movement was a significant step forward, opening up Welsh-medium education to a new cohort of parents who did not necessarily speak Welsh and providing the first entry point into the Welsh-medium system, while simultaneously providing a boost to community development and refreshing the system with many new ideas regarding language transmission and child care.

The gains made in the provision of Welsh-medium education were almost entirely as a result of the pressure exerted by parental demand in specific locations usually championed by tireless articulators of the cause.¹⁶ In the north and west of Wales, local Education Authorities such as Gwynedd pursued a comprehensive approach whereby the vast majority of primary schools and a large proportion of secondary schools delivered a bilingual curriculum. Clwyd formulated the idea of specialist Welsh language supply teachers, Athrawon Bro, and diffused the idea to the rest of Wales. In the period 1980–1996 there developed a comprehensive Ancillary Teacher service, Gwasanaeth Bro, which went some way toward remedying a long-term lack of supply of trained Welsh teachers.

In the second part of this period, circa 1974–1988, despite these initiatives, in many parts of Wales, 45% of pupils did not receive regular lessons in Welsh. This was changed following the Education Act of 1988, which made Welsh one of four Core Subjects in the National Curriculum in schools that taught through the medium of Welsh and a compulsory subject in all other schools within the statutory education age range of 5 to 16 years.¹⁷ Since its implementation in 1989, all children had an opportunity to develop bilingual skills, and a substantial minority could develop real fluency in Welsh. Previously some Education Authorities had concentrated their efforts on the teaching of Welsh as a second language (L2) during the years 3 to 6. With the implementation in 1989/1990 of the National Curriculum, Education Authorities and schools started to teach Welsh in English-medium schools throughout the entire age range, from Reception classes onward, and this development may in part be responsible for the upturn in the 2001 census. Both the numbers and attitude to Welsh changed markedly.

The single most important feature of the Education Act was the steady growth in L2 delivery, and this approach to bilingualism through statutory educational policy remains an important element of the government's strategy as articulated in the language policy *Iaith Pawb* (WAG, 2003) and various educational strategies.¹⁸

During the early 1980s, incremental reforms in education, the legal system, public administration, and local government had increased the opportunities to use Welsh in society. However, these were regarded as piecemeal, insufficient, and rudimentary. The challenge of the 1980s was to realize a fully functional bi/multilingual society through creating new opportunities for language choice within the public, voluntary, and private sector of the economy. Single-issue educational organizations such as Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, RhAG (Rhieni Dros Addysg Gymraeg), and CYDAG (Cymdeithas Ysgolion Dros Addysg Gymraeg), together with civil society action movements such as Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg and Cefn, had raised the language issue to a national concern, and indeed, the three formative decades 1963 to 1993 had been significant in terms of articulating the chief causes of language decline, identifying areas of growth in education and public administration, and mobilizing sections of society in defense of the language as detailed in the contributions of Jenkins and Williams (2000).

Yet all this energy and pressure had been sporadic, largely uncoordinated, and one step removed from government policy and resourcing. Having gained a victory in the establishment of S4C in 1983, the two remaining unfulfilled demands at the start of the nineties were political devolution and legislative recognition of the right to use Welsh in the widest possible spheres of public life.

The National Profile of Welsh-Medium Education

In 1999, as a result of U.K. constitutional change, a devolved NAW took over responsibility for educational policy. After the first decade of devolution by 2010, there were 464 mainly Welsh-medium primary schools, representing 30.7% of all primary schools, an increase of 18 schools over the previous decade. These provided education for 53,479 children (20.8% of the national total), an increase of 9,495 pupils on the 1991 figure of 43,984. At the secondary level, there were 55 Welsh-speaking schools (as defined by the 1996 Education Act), an increase of three over 10 years. The most significant change within the decade was the increase in the number of secondary pupils learning Welsh as an L2, up from 122,112 (67.8%) in 1999 to 146,656 (83.1%) in 2009.

Currently the Welsh-medium education system is characterized by four strengths: the professional commitment of highly motivated teaching staff; very strong parental support; high academic achievement; and a supportive cultural and community basis to the educational provision that promotes a meaningful and rich school experience and rewards innovation and engagement.¹⁹ This profile is tempered by a number of weaknesses that, as the system has grown, have generated a good deal of reconsideration regarding the aims and achievements of the sector. The weaknesses are inconsistency in the nature of the educational experience, far too much fragmentation in the sector, and a general uncertainty as to what counts as a Welsh-medium and/or a bilingual school, for there are at least four working models in operation. An overriding complicating factor is that these trends and patterns vary geographically. Thus, in some areas there are poor succession rates in the transfer of Welsh-medium pupils from the primary to the secondary and tertiary stages of education.²⁰ In other areas, such as southeast Wales, progression rates from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 are high, with little loss.²¹ Progression from first language at Key Stage 2 to first language in secondary in the Welsh hinterland lead to further attrition and the creation of the WLB's Continuity and Progression Project, which had initial success. Thus within the Welsh medium, as opposed to the bilingual categorization, there is less by way of fragmentation, uncertainty as to linguistic nature, or clarity of outcome and ambition. Designated Welsh-medium secondary schools are to be found both in the predominantly Welsh-speaking areas of west Wales (Carmarthen and Ceredigion) and in the predominantly English-speaking eastern parts of Wales. In the north and west, the most important demolingusitic variable is the rate and scale of persistent non-Welsh-speaking migration (largely English) over the past decades. This demographic influx threatens the long-term viability of national language and educational

policies, such as *Iaith Pawb* (WAG, 2003; C. H. Williams, 2004) and the degree to which county education authorities can maintain the primacy they have given to Welsh as a medium of both education and examination. One element of success is the *Canolfannau Hwyrddyfodiaid* (latecomer centers), which are centers designed to accelerate the linguistic integration of in-migrant pupils at primary level into the education systems of predominantly Welsh-speaking counties such as Gwynedd and Môn.²²

Redknap (2006) has argued that the 1966 Education Act definition of Welsh medium no longer offers a sufficiently precise description of the extent of the Welsh-medium teaching in a school, nor does it fully reflect the degree to which immersion education works. "By now, this statutory definition is not sufficiently robust to meet the needs required for the collation and analysis of meaningful statistical information" (p. 11). Consequently, greater emphasis has been placed on identifying a range of bilingual experiences along a continuum, and in some county education authorities, schools have been categorized into models that reflect the proportion and range of subject taught through the medium of Welsh.

Lewis (2010) has drawn attention to several underlying difficulties that face predominantly Welsh-speaking local authorities, most critically that Welsh learners who do not perform satisfactorily are not given more intense, supportive Welsh language tuition (e.g., *gloywi iaith* = language improvement lessons) but are rather encouraged to pursue their studies and formal examinations in English. Although at times pragmatic, this seems to be a self-defeating outcome of an ostensibly Welsh-medium education system. Lewis has identified seven structural weaknesses that characterize the current practice of schools and education authorities in predominantly Welsh-speaking regions of Wales. The first concerns the language of instruction and the language of formal assessment. At times, for very specific subjects the whole of the instruction may be in Welsh but the external assessment may be in English, sometimes because the only examinations offered by schools are ones provided by examination boards outside Wales and are therefore not in Welsh. Also, it is argued that the proportion of Welsh-medium assessment is low in comparison with the Welsh-medium schools in the more Anglicized areas of northeast and southeast Wales. Thus, two issues interact, the first are continuity and succession rates, the second is the language of assessment versus the language of instruction debate. A third situation arises where the formal assessment may occur in English whereas the teaching may have followed bilingual precepts.

A second trend, as identified by Estyn (the office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales; Menter a Busnes, 2010) and educational specialists such as Redknap (2006), is for pupils who have followed a first-language Welsh program at primary school to switch to study Welsh as a second language in some secondary school clusters or counties. Redknap (2006) observes that "this loss of ground is apparent in the transition period between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, and even more ground is lost as pupils move to Key Stage 4 and beyond" (p. 12). Thus,

linguistic continuity is a consideration for all ranges. There are some puzzling tendencies though. Redknapp details the decline as indicated by Assembly Government statistics (2000–2003) whereby 17.6% of pupils were assessed in Welsh at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000. Only 13.9% of the same student cohort were assessed in Welsh 3 years later at the end of Key Stage 3. She indicates that the language loss is most acute in the traditionally Welsh-speaking counties of the north and west.

As a consequence, some L2 pupils have tended to not demonstrate a mastery or real confidence in the use of either or both languages, and this has implications for their ability to integrate fully into predominantly Welsh-medium social networks and to take up bilingual employment opportunities. However, recent evidence and debates surrounding the language delivery and acquisition rates of L2 have been far more encouraging than is generally acknowledged, and this pattern seems set to continue.

Lewis (2010) confirms Redknapp's (2006) analysis and argues that some secondary schools in predominantly Welsh-speaking areas, such as the counties of Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion, do not cater for the full potential of L2 students. Consequently, a great deal of solid, preparatory work undertaken in honing language acquisition skills at the primary level is not realized or fulfilled by the secondary-level experience. As a result, this particular variety of education tends not to be "cost-effective." Because such schools do not always succeed in integrating pupils from a non-Welsh-speaking background, it is possible that English becomes the default language of social exchange among the first-language Welsh speakers. The advantage of Category 1 and 2a models is that they can adopt robust and unambiguous language policies that are not a characteristic of the other so-called Welsh-medium schools. In consequence, non-Welsh-speaking migrants to such areas can demand English-medium education for their children at the expense of the provision made for local Welsh-speaking families (Lewis, 2010).

The Current Welsh-Medium Education Strategy

In May 2009, the WAG published its plans for Welsh-medium education. This was a very welcome development as previously the Education Department had been criticized for not contributing in a detailed manner to the preparation of the *Iaith Pawb* strategy document (C. H. Williams, 2004). The Government outlined six strands by which it will implement its Welsh-medium educational strategy in the pre-statutory age range of 3 to 5 and the statutory age range of 5 to 16 (WAG, 2011):

1. Improve provision planning (prestatutory and statutory)
2. Improve provision planning (post-14)
3. Develop language skills and continuity
4. Ensure numbers and train practitioners
5. Center support to improve qualifications, resources
6. Contribute toward informal use

As with all such strategies, the long-term impact will be felt only when local authorities and educational institutions fully implement the government's vision. But there is also the critical issue as to how the government will honor its own involvement in this strategy and allocate sufficient resources to realize the declared aims. How these targets are to be met is, as yet, unclear, for a persistent problem with bilingual education is its inconsistent implementation. Within this long history of fragmentation, fresh initiatives, and radical proposals, one feature stands out—namely, the patterned inconsistency between what was practiced by local authorities and what was recommended in the policy documents of the government. Indeed a persistent criticism has been the very lack of government leadership and policy clarification in this field.

Wales has not lacked good ideas or champions in the field of Welsh-medium education. Quite the opposite, for in the period 1939 to 1988, Wales was a pioneer in Europe of bilingual education (I. W. Williams, 2003). What Wales has lacked is a universal set of standards by which educational provision could be measured and improved on.²³ The current degree of planning, resourcing, and strategic oversight is far greater than that obtained in predevolution days.²⁴ This augurs well for the medium-term future, but as with so many other fields of public policy, much depends on external influences: the political calculations and machinations of government, local, national, and U.K.; the fiscal policies adopted by successive Chancellors of the Exchequer; and the manner in which certain budgetary requirements are interpreted and implemented at the local level.

The prevailing discourse is an admixture of evidence, propaganda, and hype. What are needed are clear well-reasoned messages that advance the cause of Welsh-medium education within an increasingly plural and multilingual context, both within Wales and globally. Typically, such arguments have been made in relation to parental choices and to prospective students, but this message needs to be rearticulated so that it is also aimed at politicians and decision makers and businesspeople, the probable employers. Much of the discourse reflects a post-Thatcher, quasi-Blairite concern with meeting demand, viewing education as a free choice exercised by customers in a relatively closed market. There is little discussion of measuring need or considering the logical questions that arise in post-18 education if a larger proportion of the statutory 5 to 16 age-group receive a Welsh-medium education. A small glimmer of hope is the realization that civil society needs to be engaged in these detailed discussions, and not just as parents, so that Welsh may be treated increasingly as a public good and not as a political football.²⁵

There is also a belated recognition that the balance between the various educational sectors needs to be recalibrated. One consideration is the trend for parents to decide on a Welsh-medium education for their children at primary level, only for different patterns to emerge at the secondary level due to such children being transferred by some parents from Welsh-medium to bilingual or English-medium schools. A more positive trend is the additional emphasis on Welsh for Adults in the current education and learning strategy, which is welcomed as it provides language skills and confidence for both young parents and those who are required to use Welsh in

the workplace. One lacuna is the skills development and training for the workplace, which needs urgent attention if the aim of creating a bilingual society is to be realized in any meaningful way. Thus, greater capacity building, language awareness, and in-service re-training are all urgent and crucial priorities.²⁶

Tertiary-Level Bilingual Education

One of the chief difficulties facing language planners in building capacity and improving language skills throughout the system is the lack of succession as students progress from primary, through secondary, to tertiary education.²⁷ Wales has a poor record of tertiary-level Welsh-medium provision. In June 2009, the WAG produced a *Statistical Bulletin on Welsh in Higher Education Institutions* (HEI) 2007/08, whose key results were as follows:

- The number of students studying some of their course through Welsh increased again—continuing the upward trend of recent years, as around 3.5% of all enrollments were studying some of their course through Welsh.
- In all, 3.5% of student enrollments at Welsh HEIs had some teaching through the medium of Welsh, compared with 3.2% in 2006/2007.
- There were 4,445 student enrollments at Welsh HEIs with some teaching through the medium of Welsh, 9.1% greater than the number in 2006/2007 (4,075).
- There were 4,050 Welsh domiciled students at Welsh HEIs with some teaching through the medium of Welsh, 7.9% greater than the number in 2006/2007 (3,755).
- Of those students with some Welsh teaching, 26% of full-time students and 62% of part-time students received all their teaching through Welsh.
- There were 620 academic staff able to teach through the medium of Welsh, but only 390 academic staff teaching through the medium of Welsh actually do so.

In February 2009, the higher education sector agreed to establish a national electronic resources portal and a virtual learning environment for the Welsh-medium higher education sector. This consists of a central repository of Welsh-medium web-based resources that can be used by all Welsh-medium students and practitioners, and includes a virtual learning environment to host learning materials for collaborative modules and to guide the learner in an effective way. The 2009 Welsh-medium Education Strategy proposed that three subgroups be established to support the work of the HE Sector Group. These would focus on aspects of the National Development Plan, namely, Marketing, Progression, and Stimulating Demand; Staff Development; and E-Learning and Blended Learning. There are 12 network panels that enable institutions to collaborate on developing new resources and provision for Welsh-medium higher education in particular subject areas. Significant investment has been made to provide Welsh-medium lecturers via the Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme and the Welsh-Medium Teaching Fellowships Scheme, which are administered by the Centre for Welsh-Medium Higher Education.

Y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

Conscious that there was a need for a national level initiative to promote Welsh-medium university education, the Minister for Education and Skills announced the establishment of a Federal College Planning Board, chaired by Professor Robin Williams. This was a policy promise of the coalition government in line with the commitment in *One Wales*. Its report, released in 2009, envisaged a “spoke and hub” arrangement among all the stakeholders: the HEIs, including the staff and students; the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW); and the WAG. By August 2011, the College had become an independent legal entity with its own constitution and an independent decision-making structure but “owned” by the HEIs as a group. Its first student enrollment was in September 2011. There has been a formal agreement between Y Coleg and HEFCW to guarantee that the funds channeled through the Coleg are directed in accordance with its constitution, the accountability requirements of HEFCW, and the wishes of the Welsh Government. This administrative structure, based on a small central hub together with branches in the HEIs, should ensure efficient communication and a rapid decision-making process. Staff and students participating in Welsh-medium teaching and learning are able to be members of the Coleg and have representation on its National Council.

Historically, Welsh-medium provision was concentrated at Aberystwyth and Bangor, Trinity College, and Lampeter; consequently, any attempt to build up provision within the rest of the HEI sector is faced with some severe difficulties related to patterns of expectation and capacity issues. This is because there has been a tendency to treat Welsh-medium education in many universities as an add-on feature and not integral to the institute’s remit and mission. Farsighted institutions, such as Trinity Saint David, had recognized the element of growth and opportunity for developing a distinct profile that such policy initiatives offer. However, other institutions were sanguine about committing a great deal of energy, not to say resources, to the pursuit of bilingual teaching and research. This reticence has been met to a large extent by the appointment of well-qualified and dynamic staff in several hitherto underdeveloped fields in terms of tertiary Welsh-medium education such as the Law, Health Education, Engineering, and the Social Sciences. The Coleg displays a great deal of ambition and augers well for the future development of the sector.

New Challenges in a Changing Context

Clearly, the contours of Welsh language revitalization are shaped by wider considerations. I want to draw attention to three currents of change that are likely to have an impact on the direction bilingual education will take over the medium term. The first is the legislative rights turn. In March 2010, the Welsh Government announced a new Welsh Language Measure, which included the following commitments: (a) the replacement of Language Schemes by new national standards of language service delivery, (b) the establishment of a Welsh Language Commissioner, (c) the abolition of the WLB. In December 2010, the details of these reforms were included in a draft Welsh Language Measure.

What legislative devolution occasions is a different constitutional configuration within the United Kingdom as a multilevel state. In terms of education, it is quite likely that a more integrated set of Welsh models will emerge, distinct from their English, Scottish, and Northern Irish counterparts. But the ability to sustain a separate educational system that is at least equal to that which obtains in other parts of the United Kingdom is a constant challenge given the scale of the fiscal settlement from the U.K. Treasury. Current complaints by business leaders about the relatively poor skill levels of Welsh students and the underperformance of the regional economy together with lower rates of inward investment all suggest that new ways of promoting excellence and entrepreneurship have to be found. National Assembly politicians and many within the educational system would favour Welsh-grown answers to specific Welsh problems. Others argue for a greater transfer of knowledge from other contexts and more harmonization of policies within the EU.

Between December 2010 and February 2011, consultation took place on the Government's wider strategy for the Welsh language. *A Living Language: A Language for Living* (Welsh Government, 2012a). The document provides a strategic framework for the support and promotion of the Welsh language within the family, in the community, at work, and at leisure. Successful implementation of numerous proposals in this Strategy will complement both the principles and objectives of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy. These strategies should make a valuable contribution to the linguistic experiences and opportunities of children and young people, as they progress through their educational careers and extend their use of the Welsh language into the wider community. In February 2011, the granting of Royal Assent to the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, passed in December 2010, marked another milestone in the history of the Welsh language. In terms of policy and legislation, therefore, one can justifiably argue that the Welsh language has never been in such an advantageous position.

The developments reported on suggest that although there is a firmer commitment to improving bilingual education at the statutory school level, the promotion of Welsh-medium teaching and scholarship at the level of HEIs remains fragmented, idiosyncratic, and inadequate. The response is driven largely by national government finance and authorization, which is in itself periodic and often short term rather than structural and integral to educational planning and policy. In consequence, many of the initiatives described herein have yet to realize their full potential, let alone be accepted as part of the normal provision of university-level education and training. Yet the signs are promising, and much of this is related to the determination of committed individuals and lobby groups who long ago recognized that the foundations of a bilingual society are built not only within the statutory education sector but critically within the Higher Education sector also if real skills development at a professional level is to be achieved.²⁸ The delivery of bilingual services by a wide range of professional bodies in Wales, as elsewhere in Europe, presupposes a capacity-building period, not just a language rights regime and improved opportunities to use the

language in a wider set of domains. The promotion of Welsh within the work place and the economy more generally remains a major challenge that currently seems to be ranked fairly low down in the “list of things to do” order, being subordinate to initiatives in the Welsh for Adults sector, language legislation, and a new set of statutory educational strategies. Yet, without this structural transformation in the instrumental value of Welsh in day-to-day real life, so many of the other gains will remain as potential assets to be realized someday in society rather than being fundamental features of the modern way of earning a livelihood and of serving customers in many “banal” situations.²⁹

The deeper question is where does power lie within the education system, and whose interests are best served by current strategies and reforms? If elements of the promising plans and strategies are realized as fact, and not just in rhetorical terms, then some of the constraints that curtail current ambitions will have been lifted, but if past experience is any guide, they will soon be replaced by a different set of constraints—such is the lot of minorities struggling to navigate into the mainstream.

COMMUNITY LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

The third pillar of language revitalization I wish to discuss is community development. This is the essential context for giving life to a language, for no matter how proficient the education system is in producing capable speakers, it is in the socioeconomic reality of daily life that a language gains purchase and demonstrates vitality. Two central questions drive the community language revitalization program:

How may endangered communities mobilize their own resources and those of external official agencies to promote language revitalization efforts?

How may such communities engage in the politics of language mobilization without running the risk of alienating the very people in whose name language revitalization efforts are conducted?

These are cardinal issues because all too often community-level initiatives become trammled by the conventions of government bureaucracy, and what starts out as the politics of recognition soon becomes the politics of compulsion and regulation.

It is generally agreed that community language planning practice should be predicated on a thorough understanding of the local context, which involves gathering information about the social practices, language use and values of specific individuals and social groups, and sociolinguistic and socioeconomic processes and trends.

To realize its fourth objective of community development, the WLB was involved in the following planning initiatives:

- Undertaking research into the linguistic makeup of Welsh-speaking communities and the social and economic factors that affect them
- Identifying the main threats to the Welsh language within Welsh-speaking communities and formulating action plans for addressing potential problems in conjunction with key players across all sectors
- Discussing and developing with local government unitary authorities, especially those in the traditional geographically distinct Welsh-speaking strongholds, their role in terms of administering language initiatives and coordinating language policies
- Promoting cooperation between communities to foster mutual support, encouragement, and understanding
- Assessing the effectiveness of existing community-based initiatives (e.g., “Mentrau Iaith”) as a means of promoting the use of Welsh, and evaluating their usefulness as a model for facilitating the creation of new locally run initiatives
- Facilitating the establishment of local language fora to promote Welsh language initiatives, to create opportunities for using Welsh, and to motivate and encourage people to do so
- Promoting the learning of Welsh by adults (including the provision of worthwhile opportunities to use Welsh outside the classroom and other ancillary support)
- Providing grants to support activities to strengthen Welsh within the community

Mentrau Iaith: The Community’s Response

How are such aims and initiatives to be realized and coordinated by community-based organizations? A promising answer concerns the development of the 23 community language enterprise agencies, the *Mentrau Iaith*, which operate as community regeneration organizations with a linguistic cutting edge. Wales comprises 22 County Authorities, and by today, almost all local authorities contain or share a *Menter Iaith*. In addition, a *Menter Iaith* was established in Patagonia, Argentina, in 2008, to serve the needs of the Welsh diaspora and their descendants.

In the first period of incremental growth (1991–2001), two compelling reasons were given for supporting *Mentrau Iaith*, namely, that in situations characterized by strong language potential but a weak sociolinguistic network, *Mentrau Iaith* were deemed to offer a significant sociopsychological fillip for Welsh maintenance. Second, as local language planning bodies, they could function as a focus to create a new set of partnerships between the central government in the form of the National Assembly, the WLB, local government, statutory public bodies, health trusts, and a variety of other voluntary agencies and private companies, so as to extend the domains within which it would be possible to use Welsh.

Between 1993 and 2012, *Mentrau Iaith* were funded mainly by an annual grant from the WLB, at some £1.3 million per annum, together with ancillary funding by Local Authorities, which amounted to about £310,384 per annum. They are now funded directly by the Welsh Government.

A Menter (pl. Mentrau) Iaith is a local organization that offers support to communities to increase and develop their use of Welsh in a variety of ways. Advice is provided to parents on raising their children bilingually, to public and voluntary organizations on how to increase their use of Welsh, to businesses eager to begin to offer a bilingual service to their customers, and to those who wish to know more about Welsh-medium education. Typically their activities would include social and leisure opportunities for children and young people to use their Welsh, opportunities for Welsh learners to use their language outside the classroom, short translation work or putting clients in touch with a translator, and partnership with local organizations to offer social activities.

The first venture, Menter Cwm Gwendraeth, was established in January 1991. It acted as a pioneering program to promote Welsh at the community level and to provide a model for language planning that could be adapted to other parts of Wales. Its initial strategy aimed at the following:

- To create social conditions that will nurture positive attitudes toward Welsh and an increase in its general use
- To normalize the use of Welsh as a medium of social and institutional communication
- To highlight the close relationship between language and attitudes that relate to quality-of-life issues, the environment, and the local economy

Understandably, as each Menter is designed to serve a local area with quite varying socioeconomic needs and strengths, there will be variants on the original model described above. One such variant is the second Menter established, namely, Menter Aman Tawe, whose goals were to act as a program to promote the Welsh language in the Tawe and Aman Valleys.

Menter Aman Tawe functioned as a coordinating forum for Welsh in a relatively depressed region ravaged by the twin effects of deindustrialization and high levels of out-migration. It focused its activities on youth work and on adopting Welsh as a natural extension of daily life, including the creation of social activities, games, and cultural events, as the conventional social networks, having broken down, were less able to support Welsh-medium vitality. In its early days, it placed a great emphasis on direct social involvement with people and paid far less attention to structural planning than did other mentrau. Some might argue that Menter Aman Tawe's impact was thus more immediate and direct, adopting an essentially pragmatic mode of action. However, this style also reflected the social class and occupational structure of the area, which is predominantly working class and relatively poor.

Initially some 25 village committees were established to expedite the work of the Menter. By 1997, many had ceased to function due to a lack of sustained enthusiasm on the part of the volunteers. After the initial enthusiasm abated, Menter Aman Tawe was faced with the lack of social leaders who could advance its cause. There was no lack of commitment or initiative displayed by its staff; what was lacking was

a sense of community ownership of the Menter, as opposed to a community interest in its success. As the national network of Mentrau Iaith themselves developed, it was recognized that the needs of the Aman valley could be better served by amalgamating the initial Menter organizations so as to produce economies of scale and build capacity from within the broader area covered by the County of Neath Port Talbot.

The principal consequence of linguistic intervention in the postindustrial valleys of Gwendraeth and Aman was an upsurge in community confidence and pride as residents experienced the regenerative impulse of more dynamic sociolinguistic activity in the locality. It has also contributed to the re-formation of cultural and socioeconomic networks on a limited scale. This observation holds true for many of the other 20 Welsh mentrau established in the intervening period. In tandem with national language strategies, the Mentrau Iaith have prompted many of their local region's institutions to offer a practical language choice in their service provision. These new opportunities have led to the strengthening of Welsh-medium activities in the spheres of popular culture, sport, health care, children's activities, and so on.

Evaluation of the Mentrau and Community Language Planning

Today the Mentrau Iaith continue to refine their national framework and core mission, having become significant agencies for tackling linguistic fragmentation. Another advantage is that mentrau can encourage the use of Welsh in limited domains and without them constituting part of the official administration of any district. To maximize this autonomy, mentrau staff have to display political acumen and demonstrate interpersonal skills, for they must operate as respected coordinating bodies, without necessarily accruing any political status or institutional power.

The better developed mentrau possess a great deal of experience and have adopted earlier policy recommendations made by WLB-sponsored reviews such as the Community Language Project (C. H. Williams & Evas, 1997), which sought to outline a strategic framework for the development of mentrau. The Community Language Project also recommended concentrating on how social leaders are nurtured and integrated into the language regeneration process. Three other means of revitalizing Welsh within the context of community language planning proposed by Williams and Evas (1997, 1998) included Local Action Plans, which have been adopted; by contrast, the establishment of resource centers at county and national levels and developing the role of linguistic *animateurs* have not yet been supported.

A second review *Venturing Onwards* (Jones & Ioan, 2000) contained two significant recommendations:

The WLB's statutory functions, funding and staffing levels must be extended in order to guarantee its influence and effectiveness in co-ordinating language planning initiatives both nationally and at community level; and secondly that any local language planning must be backed by national institutional power; otherwise, members of the local communities do not have sufficient power to achieve any change themselves. (p. 123)

As a result of implementing these recommendations, the mentrau witnessed a period of sustained growth, becoming an integral element of Welsh language policy and planning. By 2008, a network of 22 Mentrau Iaith had been established, with support from the WLB totaling £1,450,537. This was a 122.3% increase on the level of support for the 18 mentrau who in 2001/2002 received £652,425. The mentrau also attract funding from other sources such as Local Authorities, the European Commission, and the National Lottery. In comparative spending terms, the WLB in 2007–2008 allocated £2,844,820 to promote Welsh language education, £1,123,601 to Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin (the Welsh-medium nursery school organization), £663,754 to Urdd Gobaith Cymru (the Welsh League of Youth), and £478,839 to the National Eisteddfod of Wales (WLB, 2008b).

The mentrau continue to attract a wide variety of external funding so as to pursue their collective aims, thus they become a more integral element of community life and service provision. For example, in 2012, Menter Iaith Sir Ddinbych gained Heritage Lottery Funding for developing their Memories Museum project, while neighboring Menter Iaith Conwy attracted project finance from the Rural Development Plan to fund a County Translation service, an Outdoor Pursuits Agency, and to subsidize attendance for adult learners of Welsh at the National Language Centre in Nant Gwrtheyrn.

Outstanding Challenges

How have the Mentrau Iaith responded to successive changes in the welfare state, the neoliberal, and the emergent Welsh tradition? Having initially been largely dependent on the WLB for their finance, direction, and legitimacy, the mentrau were in a precarious position as a grassroots language regime. The neoliberal concern with regulation, target setting, value for money, and accountability increased the pressures on the mentrau to be institutionalized and brought into conformity with the dictates of a semistate agency, which they sought to resist. This brought on disagreements with the WLB over directions of strategy, issues of funding, and accountability. One common source of tension was that several mentrau, to secure additional finances, had extended their original brief and became service providers in a range of fields, such as tourism, social services, Welsh language teaching, and translation, and so on. But this was a predictable response to the neoliberal pressures as they responded both to market demands and to the various sources of funding, both local and EU, that were available.

A further criticism is that some mentrau at some stages in their development lacked ambition and were far too isolated from the national network and the sponsoring bodies, often disorganized and financially prone to short-term disasters for lack of accurate and professional planning. Again this is a feature of being reliant on local volunteers, many of whom are engaged in winning the soft targets or engaging in the more “fun” aspects of youth work, or cultural activities, rather than the management and control aspects of administration. Consequently, the WLB had difficult periods when it sought to exercise the strictures of fiscal probity, regular accounting procedures, and good local governance practice.

Issues of finance, remit, and responsibility have also reflected a wider set of tensions between the emergent Welsh tradition and the prevailing U.K. state tradition that at times has complemented and/or been “hegemonized” by that state tradition. Although the mentrau are more reflective of the Welsh tradition, they are not immune to these shifts in the state tradition.

In relation to community development, the Welsh Government has inherited the WLB’s staff expertise and is responsible for continued financial support, which in 2012–2013 involved a £1.5 million contribution to the costs of the mentrau. The mentrau adhere to the aims enunciated in the Welsh Language Strategy 2012–2017 (Welsh Government, 2012a), which is a product of a more distinct autochthonous Welsh tradition. One of the two operational changes of note is that the mentrau now make a bid for finance in their annual grant application, which may also involve them in undertaking to do more diversified work for additional finance. The second reform is that the Welsh Government now funds Mentrau Iaith Cymru directly to undertake part of the responsibilities the WLB discharged. This involves the diffusion of information, community best practice, and innovative ideas; the production of a monthly bulletin; the arranging of seminars, workshops, and conferences; and the in-service training of staff and volunteers, together with direct support for individual mentrau. It would seem sensible to enhance the role of Mentrau Iaith Cymru as the national agency responsible for delivering an overall strategy, training, and capacity building within the field; engaging in economies of scale with respect to human resource issues, insurance, police, and security vetting of new staff; the cocreation of new projects; and specializing in large grant applications that several of the smaller mentrau find daunting and beyond their resources.

For these developments to bear fruit, there would have to be a corresponding strengthening of the capacities of the core civil staff within the Welsh Government who are responsible for community language policy, especially as they relate to the much larger Community First project and the reconfigured Welsh language policy directorate, which since June 2013 is answerable directly to the First Minister of Wales.

Given that these changes will involve a more direct, interventionist approach the future development of the mentrau raises some intriguing questions. First, should any additional mentrau be conceived primarily as a language or community or economic development enterprise, or a combination thereof? Second, are there too many mentrau and would some rationalization along subregional lines be a more effective use of staff, resources, and energy? Third, what should be the relationship between the mentrau and the local authorities? In time, one can anticipate that selected local authorities be asked to shoulder more responsibility for supporting the needs of any new, refashioned or existing mentrau iaith. In political terms, this may be a positive move as it is far more likely to enable mentrau iaith to coordinate their myriad activities *within* a variety of well-established statutory and voluntary organizations, enabling them to operate as cost-effective interventionist agencies engaged in the process of community regeneration. However, as a result of a number of structural

reforms and fiscal cutbacks, the capacity of local government to take on more and more responsibilities is open to question.

If mentrau are meant to be interventionist agencies, should they be a short-term or a medium-term venture? One of the paradoxes facing mentrau is that they are destined to lose their catalytic element by becoming incorporated into the institutional system they were designed to effect through intervention. Thus, need mentrau necessarily be temporary adjuncts to other community initiatives as was the original WLB approach? Or given that the current Welsh Government has taken direct responsibility for the language, should they become permanent agencies within the linguistic regime charged with the coordination and encouragement of Welsh-medium activities initiated by others? Governments tend to wish to fund such initiatives only for a relatively short life span so as to encourage self-sufficiency through the search for new core funding, but they often find themselves unable to jettison the financial guarantees they provide. Although financial autarchy may be a viable ambition, there is still a tendency to treat the mentrau as an extension of government language policy. Theoretically the menter employees are answerable to their local committee, but in several cases government bodies have treated them as proxy civil servants and in the most extreme cases have stepped in, suspending their grant-in-aid and foreclosing on failing mentrau.

However, herein lies a major conundrum for planners and activists alike. Unless there is a clearer definition of the role of mentrau and a shared operational conception of basic terms like *community*, *empowerment*, and *partnership*, there is every possibility that this type of language planning will be challenged periodically. As public finances become more limited, attempts will be made to “return” or “transfer” to the community the power and responsibility for the reproduction of Welsh without also releasing the necessary political and economic investment to realize this wish fulfillment as social practice.

Finally, three trends need to be taken into account. First the costs of community support have risen considerably, but the initial financial dependence on the WLB has given way to a more diverse basis that includes central government and local authority finance, private finance, and EU support. Second, the range of mentrau activities is growing and cumulative. Consequently there is a need for economies of scale and for prioritizing where language-related investment is located so as to support the increasing demands on the provision of new software, IT, translation, terminological innovations, best practice work programs, templates, and so on. This calls for a careful central control of corpus and status planning (currently within the purview of the Welsh Language Commissioner), so that unnecessary duplication in a fairly limited market is reduced. Third, the support of the Welsh Government has been critical in terms of setting out language policy in its strategic document *Iaith Pawb* (2003) and later related policy statements, particularly the Welsh Language Strategy (2012a). It was recognized in 2003 that to deliver this policy, the central language planning agency, the WLB, needed to build up its staff and resource capacity so as to manage

and fund these initiatives, and this expansion was achieved. Consequently, although much of the potential for community language planning has been based on the willingness of committed volunteers and professionals, the case for the development of the various policies has been grounded in evidence-based evaluations and regular monitoring of the programs. This has provided a robust argument for the promotion of Welsh and has consequently been far less susceptible to accusations that such programs fail to satisfy community needs and long-term improvements in social welfare, skills acquisition, economic diversification, and leisure activities. In fact, quite the opposite case can be made with confidence, for such initiatives appear to work and are thus worthy of continued development in the Welsh context.

LANGUAGE POLICY REFORM IN CONSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The transition from administrative to legislative devolution in Wales has demonstrated many of the complexities inherent in U.K. constitutional reform. Issues of legislative competence, joint scrutiny of draft bills, and the interdependence of senior civil servants in briefing on common issues are all critical to the success of the manner in which both Westminster and Cardiff legislation apply to Wales. I want to argue that in terms of the prevailing discourse, we have moved inexorably during the period 1993–2013 from a misplaced faith in language promotion to a misplaced faith in language regulation as the contours of Welsh language policy have been shaped by successive official strategies, legislative initiatives, and profound organizational change.

In May 2011, the NAW election saw the Labour Party returned to power with 30 of the 60 available National Assembly Members.³⁰ The First Minister, Carwyn Jones, renamed the Wales Assembly Government as the Welsh Government and with a slimmed-down cabinet transferred responsibility for the Welsh language from the Heritage Department to the Education Department, headed by Leighton Andrews, Assembly Member. Although this aligned the interests of the Welsh language far closer to the main statutory responsibility of education, it did not necessarily reduce the crosscutting relevance of bilingualism for all policy matters of the Government of Wales. With the resignation of Leighton Andrews, the Minister for Education and Skills, on June 25, 2013, Welsh language policy was transferred to the remit of First Minister Carwyn Jones with immediate effect.

Having abolished the WLB in March 2012, some of its functions were transferred to government and some to a Welsh Language Commissioner, which became operative in April 2013.

The Welsh Language Commissioner

How might the Welsh Language Commissioner's duties and basic operation be developed? The development of a robust system could be a major step forward in implementing language standards, especially if specific attention were paid to the sociolinguistic condition of various types of community contexts. Of major interest is just how the new set of Standards, particularly those concerned with service delivery that are the core of the Language Measure, will play out in society.

It is evident that the Measure should be as clear and unambiguous as possible in its application, so it must be able to answer the doubt of cynics as to what exactly the legislation is purporting to achieve. A common complaint of the Measure in its formative stages was that this was a piece of framework legislation that did little to specify the exact nature of language responsibilities in Wales, and even less for members of the public to know what exactly they could claim as an unconditional expectation in the provision of language services and national standards. Recent debates over the setting of standards, the government's rejection of the Commissioner's proposed version in the March 2013, and government's insistence that a new, simpler, and more operational set be codified had delayed but not damaged the idea of a comprehensive set of standards.

In related fashion, some may argue that the Measure militates against the principle of equal treatment and application to a far greater extent than does the Welsh Language Act of 1993. They would argue that the one cardinal obligation of the 1993 Act is that it requires all organizations to prepare a common core legally binding document, namely, the Welsh Language Scheme. However, much of the strength of the new set of standards is that they are more binding and subject to far greater regulatory control than the Language Scheme, so that the principle of equal treatment and consistency should be well served if the new system is implemented rigorously.

Among the institutional challenges the Commissioner will face is the issue of legitimizing the role and the office. It could be argued that a timely investigation of the Welsh Government's noncompliance would certainly demonstrate the independence of the office, but with what medium-term implications? A related institutional issue is how to keep the "best" of the WLB process and experience while demonstrably active in a new context.

It seems evident that some additional work will have to be undertaken in order to define and finesse the relationship between the *promotion* of Welsh as an official language and its *regulation* in terms of the compliance functions of the Welsh Language Measure, that is, the statutory regulation. Additionally, one may legitimately ask how the Welsh Language Commissioner will influence behavior and initiate reform within the public administration system and with the Welsh public writ large. Part of the answer will undoubtedly be influenced by the style, authority, and character of the prime officeholder and senior colleagues, and in consequence, one may ask what weighting should be given to advocacy and a proactive stance in operationalizing the remit of the post?

Doubtless, when the revised Welsh system is fully operational there will be some additional challenges.³¹ The most critical in both conceptual and operational terms is to make the new system work in a timely and professional fashion. A real consideration must be to guard against the temptation to spend an inordinate amount of time establishing the new system, and thus lose momentum or public engagement. A related medium-term challenge is to determine how best to develop additional legislative measures in relation to language policy and the creep toward defining "rights" in this field. If such rights are to be realizable they must also be resistant to challenge, else the edifice will crumble.

One of the effects of constitutional reform in the United Kingdom is that we are evolving toward a variable geometry of legislative outcomes as a result of the increasing competence in devolved fields being demonstrated by parliaments and assemblies in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. An underlying thread in the discussion, which has influenced the progress toward the establishment of a Welsh Language Commissioner, is the proposition that in time the Commissioner would be charged with putting forward draft proposals by which the notion of language rights might be realized as legislative fact by the NAW.³² This proposition goes far beyond the adjudicative role of an ombudsman or auditor general and aligns the Commissioner far closer to the Welsh Language Policy Unit and NAW clerks as they seek to reflect law advances in policy development. In that respect, the Commissioner will have a more proactive rights role than that currently exercised by all the other subject Commissioners in Wales, whose mandates derive from an earlier period and have not been determined by primary legislation with an express obligation to develop a rights agenda.

The Emergence of a Welsh Tradition?

Revitalization elements have depended on a lucid exposition of the role of the former semiautonomous WLB in the process of stimulating practical developments in language planning. Now that the Welsh Government has taken direct control over Welsh language policy, consideration should be given to additional variables that influence language revitalization efforts. In some senses, this may be reflective of an emerging third state tradition, namely, the Welsh tradition. Having been so long dominated by the Labour Party and socialist principles, there remains in Wales an uncompromising attachment to distinct interventionist politics, to the Welfare State, the National Health Service, and universal benefits, in the form of “free” medical prescriptions, transport and bus passes for the over-60s, and nonpunitive university fees for Welsh residents or those from Wales who have opted to study at other U.K. universities. The fiscal pressures may emanate from a neoliberal U.K. Treasury, but within the Barnett Formula budget the Welsh government exercises a considerable amount of discretion. As a result, it has given priority to community regeneration, the up-skilling of the work force, and backing local initiatives for self-sustaining growth.

CONCLUSION

The driver for language revitalization has been the unstinting commitment of individuals acting as parents, local sociopolitical activists, or decision makers. The initial domain they targeted was the formal education system, and the platform this created for subsequent developments in creating a partial bilingual society should not be underemphasized. It is significant that the contours of language revitalization have not followed a national plan or strategy in a slavish manner; they have been largely ad hoc, if innovative. Having been initiated as an organic, ground-up movement, language revitalization shows increased signs of top-down language planning and professional direction. For the first time in Welsh history, the government has

shouldered responsibility for language policy and operates within a potentially robust promotional and regulatory context. In that respect, although the demolingusitic reality may continue to disappoint, given that so many of the Welsh speakers produced by the education system inevitably migrate, those who remain face a more positive future where increased opportunities to learn, live, and work in Welsh are being realized. If the Welsh example of language revitalization teaches us anything, it is that stubborn collective action by the community must be stimulated before government language policy responds in a reactive manner, but having so responded, that community engagement must also be maintained, for fear of losing direction and long-term momentum (Williams, 2007a, 2007b).

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NOTES

¹The darkening veil might have categorized the predicament of the Welsh language from around 1871 to 1971. In this chapter, I argue that gradually the colonial and relatively pessimistic darkened veil of the previous generations is being lifted and replaced by a more constructive, purposive, and outcome-oriented set of actions so as to restore Welsh to its role as a national language.

²The category of language revitalization referred to tends to be subsumed under substate nationalism.

³I will not rehearse the historical process of state integration. For accounts, see C. H. Williams (2000) and Jenkins and Williams (2000).

⁴The initial concern with devising an official policy for Welsh language education within the Welsh Department of the Education Board may be traced to 1907; thereafter, a small number of highly influential central government reports drew attention to the desirability of increasing the provision of Welsh language teaching. For details, see Morgan (2003).

⁵The most influential actors were Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg (The Welsh Language Society), Cefn, RhAG, CYDAG, and more episodically Cymuned (Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, 2005).

⁶Groups such as Adfer and Cefn in the past, and Cymuned, CYD, Dyfodol, and RhAG today, have augmented the pressure brought to bear by the Welsh Language Society in terms of a collective movement to advocate reforms in the field of civil rights, housing, tourism, planning, education, language legislation, a Property Act, and the deepening of the bilingual character of the National Assembly.

⁷An element of this approach may be seen in C. H. Williams (2013).

⁸The Welsh Language Act of 1993, passed by the U.K. Parliament on October 21, 1993, repealed several of the historically significant pieces of legislation that had shaped the contours of Welsh life, not least the Laws in Wales Acts of 1535 and 1542, the so-called Acts of Union of England and Wales, which incorporated the territory of Wales into the English Crown system and state.

⁹The Welsh Language Board, a semistate agency was created by the Welsh Language Act of 1993 and functioned between 1993 and March 2012 when it was abolished and some of its functions were divided between the Welsh Government and the newly created office of the Commissioner for the Welsh Language.

¹⁰Of the eight county authorities at the time, only six had a language plan.

¹¹In the period 1994–1999, John Walter Jones, the Chief Executive of the WLB, had a firm and robust view of how the organization should be run and what its immediate remit should be. Within the education section, a more creative and free hand was allowed, which brought dividends in terms of a strategic oversight and innovative action/intervention. Rhodri Williams as Chair of the WLB secured some internal rearrangements, Meirion P. Jones became responsible for Language Planning, and Prys Davies became responsible for Language Schemes; as a consequence of these appointments, a more integrated approach was adopted toward thematic development, innovation, and forging new partnerships.

¹²For details of this Transfer Within Family initiative, please visit <http://twfcmru.com/?skip=1&lang=en>

¹³The two terms *Welsh-medium* and *bilingual* are often used interchangeably in general discourse; however, the former term refers to designated schools whereas the latter is a more loose term incorporating a range of contexts, situations, and practices.

¹⁴This is in many ways a sketch of the current system and is offered as a summary overview and interpretation of selected issues only.

¹⁵The three pioneering high schools were Ysgol Glan Clwyd (1956) and Ysgol Maes Garmon, (1961) in Flintshire and Ysgol Uwchradd Rhydfelen in Glamorganshire (1962).

¹⁶Active participants in southeast Wales included Dorothy Rees, Member of Parliament; Gwyn Daniel; Cassie Davies; Maxwell Evans; Lily Richards; and Raymond Edwards, whereas pioneering teachers at nursery and primary level in one location, Barry, included Ceinwen Clarke, Irene Williams, Rachel Williams, W. R. Evans, and Elwyn Richards.

¹⁷In one of the repeating dualisms of language policy in Wales, the Education Reform Act of 1988 removed responsibility for Further Education from Gwynedd's direct control just as it was about to launch a major push in bilingual education within that sector. I am grateful to Dr. Carlin for this observation.

¹⁸For a comprehensive account of the growth of Welsh-medium schools, 1939–2000, see I. W. Williams (2003).

¹⁹WAG (2003).

²⁰Piecemeal and infrequent research has been undertaken on several aspects of Welsh-medium education, largely in the form of snapshot surveys or more sustained PhD theses, such as that completed by H. S. Thomas in 2009 and elaborated on in Thomas and Williams (2013), which is replete with acute insights and evidence-based policy recommendations.

²¹Succession is a major problem at all levels after primary education is completed. Thus, were the same number of pupils to be enrolled in senior secondary and post-18 courses as are enrolled as 5- or 7-year-olds in the educational system, the capacity to use Welsh as a real language of choice within social and commercial life would be revolutionized.

²²In Wales, England, and Northern Ireland, a Key Stage is a stage of the education system that identifies the educational knowledge expected of pupils at various ages.

²³A more general point is that in many respects the education system works reasonably well, and thus the reflections presented here deal only with those “problem areas” or issues that need far more robust government leadership and clearer strategies.

²⁴The Department of Education and its Minister have a crucial role, but the relationship with Local Authorities is often tense when it comes to sanctioning or disallowing the establishment of Welsh-medium schools, for example, Caerffili, Cardiff, and Carmarthenshire.

²⁵The WLB had a statutory duty to provide strategic oversight in the policy area of bilingual education but little real power to direct the internal deliberations of HEIs. Some would argue that the WLB had not exercised its duty for strategic planning, as the lack of cross-border local authority cooperation has shown: Ysgol Gyfun Llangynwyd is an obvious example.

²⁶It is recognized that a great deal of tension is inherent in the structural transformation Welsh is undergoing in its progress from a political football to a public good; perhaps this is a necessary creative stage, but for how long should it endure and why has not the political

system conformed to a more mature representation of Welsh as a national resource? These are deep and troubling questions that go to the heart of the power relationship between the linguistic minority and the state.

²⁷Other considerations that I do not investigate here are the following: Are we developing a linguistic underclass? What is the link between language of home, school, community, media, and society? Despite warnings, are we continuing to overburden the education system in order to deliver solutions to largely identity and sociolinguistic issues? How are we to deal with the growing discrepancy between the official institutional perspective and the “street” perspective on Welsh language rights, behavior, and achievements?

²⁸I recognize that progression from the statutory sector to the higher education sector relates to a different type of succession and opens up a greater deal of choice in terms of discipline specialization. Nevertheless, the overall point regarding continuity of both language of instruction and language of assessment remains pertinent.

²⁹This includes start-up investment in Welsh-medium lectureships in a range of nontraditional subjects and pressure to recognize skills qualifications and training for the professions, for example, the Law, Pharmacy, Optometry, Accountancy, and so on.

³⁰I use the term *banal* in the same manner as many have used it to describe *banal nationalism*—that is, the taken-for-granted, everyday reality of eking out an existence in this all-too-fraught and fragile world.

³¹For the short term, they governed alone, but they had to strike an accord with the Liberal Democrats to get their first budget through. If the Government adopts a heavy legislative and policy program, they will likely seek a junior coalition partner to ensure a relatively stable period of office.

³²Legal experts have suggested to me that if the Scottish precedent holds true, there will be far less instances than expected as civil society tends to be “tolerant” of the need for devolved powers to bed in and be given time to work and adapt to a new legal system.

³³Prior to the details of the Language Measure being known I would have said that this would seem to be an incongruous role for the Commissioner’s Office, even if the temptation to boost the NAW’s competence and capacity might favor close cooperation between the Parliamentary drafters and the Language Commission. When confronted by unclear authority in unchartered waters, prudence suggests a strict separation of the functions of the lawmakers and the law regulators.

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