

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

Bernardo and Gaerlan (2011) regard learning as the process where individuals link and relate existing and new information. This can be demonstrated through practicing and conveying their understanding to others. Bialystok (2010, cited in Bernardo and Gaerlan, 2011) argue that those who are bilingual ‘perform better’ when it comes to tasks that are non-verbal e.g. solving a puzzle. Similarly, Marian and Fausey (2006, cited in Bernardo and Gaerlan, 2011) found that bilingual learners who would learn in their second language could understand concepts of a subject more precisely. However, there are other factors that affect how individuals acquire a second language. There are also classifications of bilingualism. Valdes and Figueroa (1994, cited in Baker, 2001) would consider the factors of: age; the balance of languages, and whether the language(s) are being learned and used at home. Referring to these ideas, the importance of ‘a bilingual Wales’ is highlighted by the Welsh Government. They introduced an action plan with a goal of increasing the number of Welsh speakers in Wales by 5%. This was to be achieved by 2011 (Redknap et al., 2006). Some would argue that this goal was not achieved as according to Conwy County Borough’s (2017) 2011 consensus, the percentage of Welsh speakers in that county had decreased by 2% since 2001. Yet the Welsh Government (2017, p. 4) still proposes a target which aims to produce a million speakers of Welsh by 2050. They believe it is important to allow individuals to gain ‘ownership’ of the language in order to contribute to “...the culture, society and economy of Wales”. Underlined in the *Well-being of Future Generations Act of Wales (2015)*, it suggests that the Welsh language should be encompassed in its culture. Redknap et al. (2006) adds that it is essential to learn Welsh as a first and second language to conserve it for future generations. For these reasons, themes within the teaching of Welsh in the English-medium sector will be explored and critically analysed in response to an article about learning a second language (English) through different approaches.

Baker (2001) claims that bilingualism is an ‘ambiguous’ term as it can refer to individual and societal experiences. Baker would contend that the research group in the article by Bernardo and Gaerlan (2011) links to both individual and societal perspectives. Baker (2001) would suggest that Bilingual Filipinos use ‘functional bilingualism’ where they speak English in different contexts of their day to day lives. Ellison (2012) writes that this as ‘additive’ bilingualism as they speak English on top of their native language. Although, Bernardo and Gaerlan (2011) found that the learners they studied viewed their school and home environments as having more of an influence when it came to learning English as opposed to learning from their communities who predominantly spoke Filipino or Tagalog. Baker (2001) would consider this as ‘individual bilingualism and diglossia’. They use English (minority language) primarily within educational settings, and they speak their native language (majority language) within community engagements. However, Baker argues that Wales promotes ‘bilingualism without diglossia’. Wales’ aim is to give individuals the opportunities and choice to use and speak Welsh in all environments such as education and the media, instead of limiting its use for ‘specific purposes’, giving Welsh a ‘sentimental value’ rather than an economical purpose. Therefore, Wales believes that following a diglossia approach

will defeat their aim (Baker, 2001). On the other hand, Fisherman (1980, cited in Baker, 2001) conveys that learning and using a minority language will not be the same as using a universal language such as English, hence, minority languages should be maintained at 'home and community'.

A theme of sociolinguistic influences or individuals' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of learning another language can be considered in this response. Referring to intrinsic intentions, Gaerlan (2009, cited in Bernardo and Gaerlan, 2011) found that some learners managed to successfully grasp English through 'popular media' such as films and the internet, and 'personal beliefs' about how to use the language. As Filipinos engage in English through 'popular culture' Bernardo and Gaerlan (2011), Williams (2005, cited in Stanulewicz and Skrzypiec 2009) argues that the Welsh language should attract young people through technology and what is deemed 'fashionable'. This may not be the case for those currently learning Welsh as a second language. In general, reports have suggested the need for the improvement in Welsh second language as issues range from: the lack of 'Welsh skills' and confidence pupils possess when transitioning to Key Stage 2/3; not enough opportunities to hear and use the language; and practitioners who lack a 'thorough understanding' of how Welsh should be taught in school (Welsh Government, 2013). Identifying these barriers, the Welsh Government (2017, p. 14) intends to "increase and widen opportunities" for individuals to use their Welsh skills and "create an environment where everyone will want to use the Welsh language."

WJEC (2011) demonstrates current examples of the promotion and practice of Welsh in English-medium schools. They look at whether the pupil has a positive attitude towards learning Welsh and whether they use their skills in extra-curricular activities and community events. They demonstrate an example using *Bishop Hedley Catholic High School* in Merthyr Tydfil. Despite having only two fluent Welsh teachers, the school are 'committed' in following the WAG Bilingual Learning Strategy. They encourage teachers to use the language as well as pupils in different aspects of school life such as: lessons; bilingual signs; lunchtimes; registration; assemblies; and prayers. They observed that extra-curricular activities such as Urdd Club and visiting Glan-llyn and BBC Studios Cardiff, would encourage children to use the language. Their pupils are also aware that employers in Wales are keen towards a Welsh qualification. Crystal (2000, cited in Baker, 2001) and Williams (2005, cited in Stanulewicz and Skrzypiec 2009, p. 272) believes that bilingualism creates an "intelligent region", therefore it should have a 'strong' role in educational policies and society. It is argued that policies should advocate the importance of economic opportunities as well as promoting Welsh identity in schools. For example, Ysgol Bro Teifi prioritise Welsh and 'cultural identity' as it is part of their behaviour policy. Also, Ysgol Gymraeg Casnewydd use the philosophy for children approach to develop children's oracy skills. Through using 'the sound picture drama strategy' the children were able to relate to characters of 'Trywern', which provided children with "...emotional experiences and rich language..." (Estyn, 2018, p. 8). However, Bernardo and Gaerlan (2011) claims that language did not have an effect with the 'mathematical performance' of Filipino learners. Bernardo and Gaerlan's (2011) recommendation of supporting bilingual learners in developing their linguistic skills within other disciplines is not feasible in areas in South Wales where more English-medium schools are situated. They are less likely to have Welsh speakers because of its ethnic diversity, with only 23% of Welsh speakers in Wales (Welsh

Government, 2015) and the increase of over 50% of EAL (English as an Additional Language) learners in the UK (including Wales) since 1997 (Grigg, 2015). However, local authorities in areas of Welsh medium/bilingual education, particularly in Key Stage 2, are providing 'Latecomer Centres' for children to learn Welsh 'rapidly' in order to cope with its demands (Welsh Government, 2011). This could perhaps be recommendation for English-medium sectors. Additionally, Estyn's Annual Report (2009) found that there was a lack of good provision and resources in English-medium primary and secondary schools. In these schools, there was not enough opportunities for pupils to use their Welsh in school. It was reported that 'two-thirds' of secondary school learners demonstrated 'shortcomings' in their Welsh second language work. The argument that the Welsh language is not taught at a good standard, therefore, schools rely on 'Athrawon Bro' to assist them in the 'linguistic' methodologies and resources to teach Welsh (Welsh Government, 2011).

Extrinsic motivations such as acquiring a job for 'professional advancement' may act as an incentive for social mobility for Filipino bilingual learners (Bernardo and Gaerlan, 2011). Crystal (2000, cited in Baker, 2001, p. 52) suggests that to increase the likelihood of language acquisition, the perception of the language should be highly valued, and it should lead to "a stable economic base". Comparing the values of other countries in Europe, it is surveyed that 32% of individuals are motivated to learn another language because of work and 27% desire 'personal satisfaction' (European Commission, 2006). Perhaps the Welsh Government's advocacy for Welsh language acquisition is supported by Strubell's (1996, cited in Nekvapil, 2011) 'Catherine Wheel' model. This is a cycle where, once an individual acquires substantial language competence, they can use the language in various social situations. It can result in the demand of the language use within services and commercial gain. Individuals become aware of this demand, hence, motivation drives language use in the social climate.

Furthermore, psycholinguistic or cognitive gains can be demonstrated in the research conducted by Blot et al, (2003, cited in Bernardo and Gaerlan, 2011). They learned that bilingual learners who 'switched' from one language to another when working on brainstorming tasks obtained a deeper understanding of concepts. They believe that this is because bilingual learners can access 'wider knowledge' through 'linguistic codes'. Marian and Shook (2012) explains that bilingual individuals can connect what they hear to words in their languages. They call this 'language co-activation' which can occur instinctively. However, they also discuss that bilinguals are susceptible to issues regarding the speed in which they grasp images and the difficulty recalling specific words. Consequently, Swartz (2013, p. 54) challenges the common idea of (specifically in education) second language acquisition, maintaining that it is a "complex cognitive skill" and that individuals possess 'limited' information processing abilities. Marian and Shook (2012) add that there is a possibility of confusing listeners, who speak only one language, when bilinguals switch between languages. Similarly, Piaget and Vygotsky research found that those who are bilingual or native bilinguals, would outperform monolingual peers in non-verbal tasks (Weil, 2012). In terms of children's abilities, Sloane (1979) argues that it is better to acquire language pronunciations at an early age (between 15 months to puberty) due to the maturity process of the brain. This is because young children are keen to imitate, and embarrassment of pronunciations can come after puberty. Therefore, adults are more likely to experience 'a psychological stumbling-block'. Bialystok (2017) expands Sloane's idea by mentioning that infants are responsive to 'phonetic distinctions' and that bilingual infants maintain this for

longer. Estyn (2013) have recognised that Welsh skills in Foundation Phase are being developed, though not substantially. There are some schools where young children lack the confidence to use Welsh in the classroom through aspects such as ‘play’ and ‘singing’. Although, most schools enjoy teaching and learning Welsh, where children question and respond in basic terms. Due to the heavy focus on oral skills, children tend to progress less in reading and writing. Estyn suggests that schools should plan reading and writing tasks that relate to everyday situations e.g. writing shopping lists. They found that children were more engaged. According to the Welsh Government (2014), head teachers from English-medium schools were in favour of prioritising Welsh language development in the early years because of the insufficient development of skills within this area. Conversely, early years children learning Welsh in Welsh-medium schools ‘benefitted’ from Foundation Phase learning as their literacy skills were well developed. The Welsh Government (2017, p. 35) are therefore considering “... formalising early years’ care and services and mainstreaming the Welsh language.”

Redknap et al. (2006) talks about how the rise of Welsh-medium education was influenced by ‘language immersion’, implying that the Welsh language was deeply embedded in their learning. Consequently, these children become fluent in the language and use it as their primary form of communication in school. Comparably, research by Gathercole et al. (2007, cited in Welsh Government, 2017) suggests that children’s language acquisition is predominantly impacted by the language spoken at home and how often it is spoken. For this reason, the Welsh Government (2017) recommends that there should be more opportunities for parents and families to use the language. However, they argue that ‘personal and complex issues’ can have an affect on the level of language utilised. Likewise, Gaerlan’s (2009, cited in Bernardo and Gaerlan, 2011) study found that the Filipino learners commented on how their teacher modelled English and used it within several disciplines. This is supported by Estyn (2013) who view that the modelling fluency will help the child progress in the language.

Overall, the themes surrounding the teaching of a second language presents complex findings. Nevertheless, the Welsh Government are currently proposing that Welsh language education will no longer be separated and will become one programme of study, as their goal is for learners to improve their skills in the language. The National Education Union argued that effectiveness in teaching the Welsh language is questioned through assessments conducted by the Government (Wightwick, 2019). Hence, the Welsh Government are working with stakeholders who have attended ‘Sabbaticals’, to create a training programme for trainee students and teachers to develop their Welsh skills and their methodology, in the hopes of raising standards (Redknap et al. (2006). The Welsh Government also consider that supply teachers are needed for this intervention, therefore, substantial funding is required (Welsh Government, 2011).

Wordcount: 2,200

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Student Self Evaluation Form

This section repeats in brief the common assessment criteria detailed on previous pages. The *extent* to which these are demonstrated by you determines your mark. Using these criteria, tick the box that best indicates the level of achievement you feel you have achieved with regard to each of them.

Common Assessment Criteria Applied	Level of Achievement						
	REFER		3 rd	2:2	2:1	1 st	1 st
	OUTRIGHT FAIL	UNSATISFACTORY	SATISFACTORY	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT	EXCEPTIONAL
1. Subject Knowledge and Understanding (which includes using research-informed literature and knowledge and understanding of the subject)	0-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-100%
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
2. Intellectual Skills (Analysis)	0-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-100%
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
3. Pedagogic and Professional Applications (Practical Application and Deployment)	0-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-100%
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
4. Key Transferable Skills	0-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-100%
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐

PLEASE COMMENT ON AREAS IN WHICH YOU FEEL THAT YOU HAVE PERFORMED WELL	PLEASE COMMENT ON AREAS YOU FEEL THAT YOU NEED TO DEVELOP
- Synthesising information. - Including evidence.	- Be more concise. - Use a wider range of resources and referencing. - Provide more pedagogic practical applications.
Student's Name	Jovine Barrientos
Student's Signature	

