

I Jordan MacDonald acknowledge the use of Chat GPT <https://chatgpt.com/> on 18th April 2025 to find a reference for Guildford (1967) and to summarise Guildford and Robinsons work.

I used the prompt(s):

1. Who talks about divergent thinking
2. Find me a reference for J P Guildford
3. Robinson and Guildford similarities divergent thinking

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work.

I confirm that I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide as evidence.

Contents page

1. Activity recording link
2. Supporting paper
3. Reference list

Activity recording link

https://uowtsd-my.sharepoint.com/:v/g/personal/2411206_student_uwtsd_ac_uk/ERfu6UwTG8FI6040cbtKEYBJ51c_0mQc-13mTmKS4D7RQ?nav=eyJyZWZlcnJhbEluZm8iOnsicmVmZXJyYWxBcHAI0iJPbmVEcmI2ZUZvckJ1c2luZXNzliwicmVmZXJyYWxBcHBQbGF0Zm9ybSI6IldlYilsInJlZmVycmFsTW9kZSI6InZpZXciLCJyZWZlcnJhbFZpZXciOiJNeUZpbGVzTGlua0NvcHkiX0&e=cNzCMS

Supporting paper

[file:///C:/Users/shaun/Downloads/ECEY4010%20Bilingualism%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/shaun/Downloads/ECEY4010%20Bilingualism%20(1).pdf)

Reference list

[file:///C:/Users/shaun/Downloads/Ref%20list%20bilinguism%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/shaun/Downloads/Ref%20list%20bilinguism%20(1).pdf)

Introduction

This paper will discuss what bilingualism is and to explore the benefits of being bilingual, it will focus on Welsh as an additional language, the practical video attached will demonstrate activities using English and Welsh languages. The video demonstrates activities that support brain development, this paper will discuss in depth what ways practitioners can support bilinguals in the early years practice and how it helps brain development. It will also look at divergent thinking and how this effects children. Finally, the frameworks and programmes supported by the Welsh Government to encourage the Welsh language will be discussed.

What is bilinguism?

Ballarinim *et al.* (2023) says bilingualism is when a person frequently communicates using two languages. However, Baker (2014) found that describing bilingualism is difficult to condense into one definition, as people will have varied abilities of understanding each language and believes that someone can still be considered bilingual despite how often they use their additional language. Bialystok and Werker (2017) agree that bilingualism is not constrained to one definition, they acknowledge that people's level of ability in language is varied, and someone can still be described as bilingual without being fluent in both languages.

Benefits of bilingulism

Baker (2014) says that raising a child to become bilingual is a decision that will influence their future, it can alter their personality, their social groups and even future employment. Formerly bilingualism was viewed as having a negative impact on cognitive development, it was believed that using two languages hindered the brain functioning and deteriorated the quality of their home language (Tözün and Hatt, 2013). However, in recent year's theorists have corroborated the positive effects of bilingualism, Baker (2014) believes that being able to speak two languages has a positive effect on a person's life and presents a window of opportunities including cognitive advantages such as problem solving and enhanced creativity. Bialystock (2017) agrees that being bilingual enhances cognitive development, she places emphasis on the benefits of cognitive aging meaning that people who are bilingual have the power to delay on set conditions like Alzheimer's and dementia. Similarly,

Baker (2014) notes that children who are bilingual retain more information and can preserve their memories better than those who are monolingual (a person who only speaks one language).

Additionally, more employers in Wales are now advertising for jobs that either require Welsh speakers or express preference for Welsh speakers, there is a higher chance of being considered for a job for bilinguals. Moreover, it is now essential that public service jobs have enough staff members who can speak Welsh as people have a right to use their preferred language to communicate (Welsh Government, 2016; WeCare Wales, 2022).

Welsh as an additional language

Baker (1993) says that Welsh is considered a minority language, and the future of the Welsh language growth relies on commitment and passion of existing bilingual speakers. Welsh Government (2017) shows its commitment to the Welsh language by investing in a strategy that is working towards the goal of one million Welsh speakers by 2050. However, there is a big question mark around whether this goal is achievable. Baker and Wright (2021) question whether minority languages are in danger of falling behind with history rather than being pushed through into the modern world, as languages such as English and Chinese dominate the internet. Bowyer (2021, cited in Welsh Parliament) said that while the language was growing in educational settings it was not as frequently used day to day, will this statistic interfere with Wales achieving one million Welsh speakers by 2050? Welsh Government recognises the cultural value of maintaining and growing the Welsh language and believes that targeting early years will help to support their goal. The government have invested into expanding nursery groups such as cylch meithrin and Welsh-medium schools both of which focus on the development of the Welsh language demonstrating that the push for Welsh language in schools could be the answer to achieve their goal by 2050. Practitioners have a duty to respect what language children wish to communicate in and have a responsibility to facilitate appropriate resources to support their Welsh language needs (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2016).

Brain development

Research shows, learning a second language from a young age makes it easier to become bilingual, children's brains grow rapidly in the first few years of their life and as such being exposed to two or more languages in the early years allows children to absorb and retain better than those who are exposed to additional languages later on in life (Cunningham, 2011). This is seen in the work of Lenneberg (1967) who introduced the "Critical Period Hypothesis" he believed that learning a language was a natural occurrence and that there is a critical period between birth and puberty whereby languages are more easily learned, this is due to a child's brain developing faster than any other time in their life, the brain is more absorbent to new information thus making it easier to retain new languages. Bialystok (2017) has investigated the cognitive effects of bilingualism and how the brain copes with using two languages, she identified that switching between two languages from an early age led to more comprehensive cognitive skills such as increased attention span and the ability to alternate multiple tasks easier than a monolingual. Mueller Gathercole, *et al.* (2010) agrees with Bialystok that bilingualism supports cognitive flexibility.

One of the methods practitioners use to imbed the language in early years is repetition, as shown in the video attached to this paper, the practitioner uses a lot of repetition, this method of teaching improves the chances of retaining what has been heard (Early Years Wales, 2016; Smidt, 2016). Early years practitioners can support bilingual learning through play, an example of this is story telling looking at books together and making up stories based on the pictures that are seen (Welsh Government, no date).

Divergent thinking

Divergent thinking is the ability to think outside the box, believing that one question has several possible answers and not just one single possible outcome (Guilford, 1967). Robinson (2016) agrees with Guilford and says that while creativity is not the same as divergent thinking, creativity grows from the ability to think with a divergent mind and that when children reach school age, schools destroy divergent thinking and mould children to believe there is only one correct answer to each question this in turn kills their natural ability to think creatively. Robinson advocates for educators to focus on supporting and encouraging students to use their unique sense of creativity and divergent thinking and not quell it. Currently and for many years, schools are testing children as individuals however; Robinson believes that different

people have different strengths and would work better in collaboration with others which leads to growth, he believes that collaboration is best. Both Guildford and Robinson emphasise the need for school systems to move away from current conformity and move towards a system that embraces differences in thinking and nurtures holistic creativity.

Regarding bilingualism Bialystock (2015) says that bilinguals have increased cognitive adaptability likely occurring because of richer cultural experiences and possibly because bilinguals' brains are working harder to switch between languages. However, Booton, *et al.* (2021) argues that despite bilinguals having a broader range of cultural experiences that could offer increased opportunities for creativity, there is no evidence to suggest bilinguals are more creative than monolinguals. One of the ways in which this was tested is by using the Torrance Test of Creative thinking created by Ellis Paul Torrance this test requires participants to think of as many ideas as possible in response to a question.

Links with early years framework and programme

The Welsh Government has created a number of frameworks and programmes to support and enhance Welsh language education, such as Mudiad Meithrin (2023) an organisation who is dedicated in laying the foundations for Welsh language in early years, they believe every child in Wales regardless of their background should have the opportunity to learn Welsh through play. Organisations like Mudiad Meithrin help to contribute to the target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050, as previously discussed.

The Welsh Government (2022) promotes the curriculum which holds educators responsible for supporting students to realise their full potential and develop holistically, the curriculum also places emphasis on students embracing their home cultures and ethical beliefs. BookTrust Cymru (2024) is reading charity funded by the Welsh Government that promotes bilingualism in Wales, it delivers programmes such as Bookstart Cymru that provide children in Wales with free books encouraging families to read together in both English and Welsh, they also run the Big Welsh Rhyme Time which invites children to enjoy songs, rhymes and poems using Welsh language, an example of this is demonstrated in the video link attached to this paper,

the practitioner uses rhymes and songs similar to the Welsh rhyme time to support early Welsh language.

Efa Gruffudd Jones has been appointed to Welsh commissioner since January 2023 her primary role is to encourage and aid the use of Welsh language in everyday life. The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure (2011) made Welsh an official language in Wales, and it is Efa's job to support Welsh-medium education, promote the value of the language and spread awareness of the rights people have to use the language and receive services in Welsh.

Conclusion

In conclusion, bilingualism is a concept that is more complex than simply being fluent in two languages. It offers significant cognitive and cultural benefits particularly when introduced at an early age. Research by Bialystok, Baker and others highlight the positive impact it has on brain development. Divergent thinking enhances creativity and adaptability both valuable skills that can benefit future generations. Welsh bilingualism is supported by various government programmes and underpinned by policy. Finally, with continued investment and support from the Welsh Government, Wales is making a strong effort to reach its goal of one million Welsh speakers by 2050.

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