

[ECEY4010.mov](#)

This assignment will be written about bilingualism and also multilingualism and how it impacts with early years .Many factors will be looked at in how bilingualism and multilingualism supports children in early years and specifically how it impacts in Wales, as in Wales not only Welsh is used but a variety of languages brought into Wales from various other parts of the world.

Both bilingualism and multilingualism have benefits for Wales , however we can also take into consideration the negative factors for both. The Welsh language has not always been considered a positive factor in early years settings. In the 19th century and leading into the early 20th century the Welsh language was prohibited to be spoken in a school and were only allowed to speak English , if they were heard speaking Welsh they would be given a wooden block on string that would be around their neck until another child was heard speaking Welsh and that would be passed on and the child that had it at the end of the day would be punished , this would lead to the Welsh language being used less . Eventually the Welsh law ended this cruel punishment in 1942 allowing Welsh to be used again in the educational setting. In Wales children and parents are given the choice of attending a Welsh medium school which allows education to be taught in the Welsh language which can be a positive of continuing the Welsh language however can single out certain families that may not have a Welsh background which could deprive that child of having an opportunity to be able to attend a Welsh medium school which can lead to the English schools which may rarely be given the opportunity to learn Welsh or even if they are taught English it may not be to the standard or practice that the child needs to be able to develop and interest and learning of the Welsh language . Statistics from Census(2021) the last recorded analysis of Welsh speakers in Wales ages 3 and above showed that only 27.8% of the population of Wales could speak Welsh , showing that this is the lowest recorded percentage over the last eight years of the statistics being recorded. These records could be down to so many factors the range of other different languages that have been brought over from other countries to Wales , older generations being limited to the use of the Welsh language so the Welsh language is not being passed down generations and so many more factors.

English as an additional language is teaching the English language to individuals who are not native to the English language . Having English as an additional language for a child can open a range of skills, one of the biggest being communication, for a child who is not fluent or have an understanding of the English language it would be difficult for them in mainstream school . They may not only have to learn the English language but they may not understand the routine of things in a Welsh school , in Wales we have some cultural history children from other backgrounds will not understand. Wales celebrate st davids day which children from other countries would never have an understanding of. Also the children might have to adapt to a completely different routine from what they are used to and feelings of

anxiety could be brought on by not understanding the language . With learning English as a second language for a child would be difficult in an early years setting it would also be difficult at home as parents might not have an understanding of the English language which then will become difficult for the child with perhaps things such as home learning and also communication between an early years practitioner and the parents will be difficult as they are able to understand the language .

Bilingualism is essential for early years brain development , it has so many cognitive benefits for a child's development. Studies from the University of Lewis (2021) state that children that are bilingual show that they have better problem solving skills due to the switching of languages , this gives the child the ability to be able to be more creative with their problem solving and helps them to make more precise decisions on how to solve the problem. Another cognitive benefit from bilingualism is having an improved memory and having a better ability of multitasking . Research from the same university shows that bilingual individuals often have a better working memory as the child is usually juggling between different languages , this leads to the brain having to store and retrieve information more efficiently leading to the overall strengthening of the memory capacity. Enhanced memory contributes greatly for the child's future leading to better academic performances and also helps with managing daily tasks , all benefits for future studies and careers. Bilingualism also helps towards children's attention and focus due to the brains ability to manage two or more languages which allows for enhanced selective attention allowing a child to be able to concentrate better and also filter out distractions which is difficult for a child in an early years setting. It has also been said that bilingual children have the skill of being able to filter out unnecessary and irrelevant information even at the early age of seven months. This improved focus is particularly beneficial in environments which require children to have the skill to use their sustained attention on demand and when doing activities or tasks that require quick thinking decisions. One of the most significant research statistics to come from bilingualism and brain development is protective effect against cognitive decline meaning that as the child is using their brain constantly between other languages it is always working , quoting this as a mental workout realistically which is using the different languages to keep the brain active and engaged this will help to increase cognitive reserve which is the brains ability to improvise and find alternative ways of functioning when faced with different challenges. Using this skill is crucial for maintaining the child's cognitive health and adapting to new situations or unexpected obstacles along the way of their education . Another benefit of bilingualism is that it allows for executive function which refers to the mental process that allows the child to plan, focus attention, remembering instructions and managing multiple instructions . Additionally to all these skills bilingual children are able to enhance their mental agility , which allows for the child to switch between tasks and their creativity and ideas more fluidly. Being able to use their mental agility is beneficial for preparing them for new environments and learning how to adapt to things such as routines as well as learning.

Jerome Bruner theorist views of bilingualism is very relevant for the importance of it in early years . Bruner was an American psychologist that created the 3 tiered system of internal representatives which are enactive which is action based, iconic which is image based and lastly symbolic which is based around language which fits in with the topic of bilingualism. Bruners theory of cognitive development does not specifically focus on the topic of bilingualism but his theory shows the relevance of his stages linking to bilingualism. Starting with the enactive representation which involves learning through actions as well as physical experiences which can be applied to bilingualism by engaging with the child or children with hands on activities using the target language . Which leads on to the next stage which is the iconic representation which focuses on visual and photographic learning , this can be used to support language by using pictures , diagrams and other visual aids. Using this representation would be supportive for children that need additional support or are non verbal . It would support them by using visual learning and expand their visual and expressive learning. Using this learning will illustrate vocabulary and concepts in a second language. Then we concentrate on the last stage which is the symbolic representation , this stage involves abstract thinking and the use of language which is a crucial element for bilingualism for children as they learn their second language to use for communication and understanding. We can also link Bruner's key ideas to bilingualism , discover learning links into bilingualism perfectly and is a create example of allowing children to freely learn the language and use their own ideas as a way of learning. Bruner has a concept of scaffolding which suggests that teachers should provide support and guidance to help children learn, which can be used in the bilingual school education by providing structured language. Bruner also proposed a spiral curriculum where concepts are revisited and explored at different levels of complexity, this can be used in bilingualism by gradually introducing new vocabulary and grammar structures during the progress of the child's educational journey.

In conclusion the research and information concluded in this essay shows both the positive and negative sides to bilingualism in the early years settings. It has shown the incline and decline of the Welsh language users in Wales over the last century and what measures that have been introduced to keep the Welsh language as part of the curriculum in Wales. Bilingualism benefits all children through out their early years education and sets them out to achieve their highest potential with their learning also .

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