

Word count – 1,412

AI Statement

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

Bilingualism and multilingualism

Baker and wright (2021) suggest bilingualism is defined as the use of two languages whilst multilingualism involves the use of more than two languages. The benefits of being bilingual include higher levels of focus and concentration and an increased ability to problem solve and multitask. Research also shows that being bilingual or multilingual can delay the effects of dementia. In addition to this, bilingualism ensures the brain is fit and healthy and can even speed up the recovery process for injuries such as a stroke. Research in India of 600 people that had suffered a stroke demonstrated that the recovery of the brain from a stroke was significantly more likely when the patient was bilingual (Vince,2016). However, in contrast to this, Baker and wright (2021) suggest that some people believe that bilingualism can have a negative effect on the brain and thinking, many believing that bilinguals are less intelligent as they would not be able to store information and skills from other areas. Saer, A Welsh researcher in the 1960's found a 10 IQ point contrast between children in Wales who were bilingual compared to children that only spoke English (Baker and wright,2021). Booton et al (2021) suggests that another benefit of bilingualism and multilingualism is that children are further developing their language skills and children are also able to interact and communicate with a variety of people which will further develop their social skills. Children who are bilingual and multilingual are also more likely to have better job opportunities. Bilingualism has a positive cognitive effect on both children and adults demonstrated through learning, memory and attention span (Booton et al,2021).

Welsh as an additional language

Many children who are not born in Wales but taught in Wales will learn Welsh as an additional language. This is often difficult as studies have shown that support for children with Welsh and English as an additional language often does not address the needs of the pupil. This can be due to a lack of teacher training and lack of appropriate resources. Studies have shown that a more consistent assessment tool for pupils with Welsh as an additional language is needed to better understand their ability and the best way to support them. (Welsh government, 2014). It is important that practitioners working in the early years who support children with Welsh or English as an additional language to gain an insight of the child's language and culture when they join the setting and to work in collaboration with carers and parents. This will give the practitioner a better understanding of how to support the child and their learning (National Literacy Trust 2022).

Brain Development

More children in the world are multilingual today rather than monolingual. Multilingualism increases and supports brain development as children begin to think in multiple languages. Often children will have a home language referred to as their mother tongue and English. Parents must encourage and support a child's home language whilst learning English as they may lose fluency of the home language (National Literacy Trust, 2022). Bilingualism has many effects on children's brain development. Research has shown that children find it easier to learn languages at an earlier age and that children who are bilingual find it easier adapt to new situations and new environments. Bilingualism supports cognitive development as it supports healthy brain function and learning a new language can be beneficial later in life and decrease the chances of decline in cognitive ability (Ruben,2017). Bilingualism also has a positive effect on attention, concentration and memory. However, in contrast to this,

children who are bilingual often find it harder to learn English compared to those where English is their first language (Wein, 2016).

Divergent thinking

Divergent thinking is a versatile way of solving problems. Divergent thinking includes being creative and discovering new ideas and divergent thinkers can often see things from different perspectives (Vaduva, 2018). Bilingualism has been linked to higher cognitive function including divergent thinking as children switch between two languages. However, in contrast to this, the connection between bilingualism, creativity and divergent thinking has been questioned as many believe that it is related to culture. Bilinguals are likely to be more imaginative and creative as they have different experiences in life and a more diverse culture. Studies have shown that these experiences can improve creativity and divergent thinking (Booton et al, 2021).

Links with early years frameworks and programmes

There are many strategies and policies in place to promote bilingualism in the early years. These include the Welsh promise which was created by Clybiau plant Cymru kids' clubs by supporting settings to promote and develop the Welsh language. The promise includes 3 stages where your setting will work towards a bronze, silver and gold certificate. Bronze includes the first steps of promoting Welsh within the setting and creating a strong foundation. Silver includes the setting using incidental Welsh and incorporating it into routines. Finally, the setting will achieve a gold award that indicates the Welsh language is being promoted and ingrained within the setting (Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs, 2023).

In addition to this another strategy to promote the use of Welsh in Wales and the early years is Cymraeg 2050, which aims to create a million Welsh speakers by 2050. The government aim for children under 5 to be immersed in the Welsh language to help children become more fluent. By ensuring the use and promotion of Welsh in early years care and education, the government believe this will provide more opportunities for children and develop their skills, whilst strengthening the Welsh language and its future. Practitioners in the early years promote the Welsh language by using incidental Welsh and using common phrases as seen in the assignment video. The government

also aims to reach this goal by working with families to understand the Welsh language and support them to make well informed decisions regarding their children's future. The government also aim to close the gap for children in poverty and disadvantaged families ensuring that children in Wales all have an equal opportunity to become Welsh speakers. To help achieve this, In English speaking primary schools the way Welsh is taught will be modified and practitioners will ensure they are providing quality provision. The main focus of Cymraeg 2050 is to grow the number of Welsh speakers in Wales, to grow and encourage the use of the Welsh language and working in partnership with schools, the community and the NHS (Welsh Government, 2017).

Another Welsh government policy that promotes the use of the Welsh language in the early years is the national policy on Welsh language transmission and use in families. The Welsh government believe that the amount of Welsh spoken at home is likely to determine the use of the welsh language later in life. They aim to achieve this by supporting parents and families that wish to develop their Welsh language skills to further support their children and encourage families that already speak Welsh and build their confidence, so they are able to use more Welsh around the home and with their children. The Welsh Government believe that as more children are learning the Welsh language and increasing their confidence, in the future there will be more adult Welsh speakers to use and promote the Welsh language within the household. The policy is working to encourage children to use Welsh in the future with their children and families, allow children and adults to develop their Welsh language skills and increase their confidence and supporting families that already speak Welsh to promote the Welsh language at home (Welsh government, 2021).

Another scheme to support and promote the Welsh language is Camau. Camau is a scheme to support practitioners working in the early years to encourage the use of Welsh in settings and support the government in achieving their aim of Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers. The aim of Camau is to increase the number of Welsh speaking practitioners to help develop children's use and understanding of the Welsh language. They support this by providing online Welsh courses to further develop practitioners Welsh language skills. Camau aim to remove any barriers to learning the Welsh language by proving free online courses that are easily accessible. The courses

allow practitioners to learn in their own time and it is flexible around work and home commitments. Camau keeps in contact with learners and tracks their progress throughout the course providing support when needed (Early Years Wales, 2020)

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Assignment video -

[IMG_4856.MOV](#)