Multilingual Practice

According to Study.com, the definition of bilingualism can be described as having "the ability to communicate in two languages", (2023). For example, if a person is able to speak in German and Mandarin, they would be considered as a bilingual speaker. Similar to bilingualism, multilingualism is defined by someone who can communicate in more four or more languages. Having the ability to communicate in three languages is known as trilingualism. In 2023 it was stated that 43% of the world's population considered themselves to be bilingual whereas as 17% considered themselves as multilingual. In the same year, 6.5% of the UK's population were noted as multilingual, (Preply, 2025)

There can be many different reasons for the need to have multilingualism. These being colonisation, migration over centuries and recent migration. There are many benefits that come with being able to speak two languages. These benefits can come under different stages of life. They can be related to education, career, health and everyday life. Focussing on education, being bilingual may enable a person to be more successful in their tasks and they may also find it easier to learn new languages as they develop. Regarding career, having the ability to speak two languages is an extra skill that can be added to application forms, and it is also said that bilingual speakers earn up to 11% more, (Carmarthenshire County Council, 2024). Multilingualism also comes with many benefits. Some social benefits are the development of professional practice. Majority of workplaces are multicultural so having the ability to communicate in multiple languages can help that person to excel in their career choice. It can also help you develop personally. Some people are constant learners and like to be trying new things all the time. Taking that opportunity to learn new languages can allow that person to feel satisfied in themselves and their learning, (BUSSU, 2023). Multilingualism is a brilliant opportunity to learn about different cultures. Learning a new language comes with the chance to also learn about that country's food, religion, behaviours and social habits. This can also be seen as a benefit to social skills in the workplace and everyday life. Multilingualism comes with cognitive benefits also. Research was carried out in Barcelona, and it was recorded that multilingual people are better at observing their surroundings. The differences in their brains were also investigated and it was found that people who are bilingual/multilingual could easily point out any irrelevant and misleading information, (Inlingua, 2022).

In Wales in 2021 it was recorded that 29.5% of the Welsh population aged from three years and older were able to speak Welsh. That equals to 900,600 people. Despite this figure not being fairly recent as it is now four years ago, according to Welsh Government, the figures of Welsh speakers had been slowly increasing every year since 2010, (2023). In the same year it was documented that 91.1% of the population of

Wales used English as their main language, (Office for National Statistics, 2022). There can be various reasons as to why Welsh or English may not be someone's first language. It could be that they are born in a different country, parents speak a different language at home or that they choose to learn the social language first. For a child to learn a new language can feel scary and challenging which is why it is important for schools to be prepared for these situations. Teachers of Welsh additional language students are less aware of that child's needs. Some ways that a teacher can help make that child feel comfortable and accepted can be to make the environment safe, communicate with the parents, use visual learning and to speak clearly. Using the dual language approach is also a suitable teaching method. Using methods such as code switching and targeted translation can help enable children to embrace cultural awareness and diversity. It can also help children to retain their identity and boost their self-esteem. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs can be linked in with this. Planning activities that allow the children to learn from each other can also been used as an effective tool. This can improve a child's communication skills and empower them, (Welsh Government, 2024). There can be barriers with additional languages. Lack of guidance and funding for teachers is a running theme. For the children, they may have difficulty making friends and settling in which can lead to them feeling overwhelmed. Using technologies such as interactive whiteboards, recordings and translation software can be effective when teaching the children. They can also be used to communicate with the parents if needed. Activities such as nursery rhymes and stories are also a good tool to use when wanting to share and explore the culture of a language.

Vygotsky is a known theorist and is mentioned a lot when learning about the early years. He is well known for his attachment theory and emotional bonds. This theory states how the cognitive development of a child is shaped by social interactions and cultural context. Despite his theory not being mainly focused multilingualism, it does highlight the role of culture in language. He believed that language is a social and cultural tool and it's important in language acquisition. His theory can be used by teachers to create supportive learning environments for multilingual children, (Gowrie, no date).

The brain develops the most in the first stages of life. For young children, this is when their brain is learning the most. Multilingualism has been shown to benefits young children and their brain development. Not only has it been proven to benefit language skills but other areas too. Such as, social skills and cognitive development. It has also been said that multilingualism has been proven to increase the brain's flexibility. Divergent thinking is considered one of the most important components of creative thinking and according to study multilingual children demonstrate a higher skill in creativity, (National Library of Medicine, 2023).

Welsh4Parents is an online site which is funded by the government. It includes useful sources, television programmes and apps. Aswell as this it also offers advice for

families. Welsh4Parents was designed as a way to not only involve but also educate parents on the Welsh language.

A change was made to the Curriculum for Wales. What was known as “Modern Foreign Languages” has since been changed to “International Languages” and is now identified as home and community languages which has been designed to open the options for language learning. One aim for this change is to embrace different languages and cultures. It is also to share this information to join communities. The Common Europeans Framework of Reference for Languages was a big inspiration for this new change to the Welsh Curriculum, (Central South Consortium, 2021).

Based on the information in this piece of work, the benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism have been highlighted and spoken upon. Bilingualism and multilingualism are seen as highly beneficial for people of all ages. It improves upon brain development and divergent thinking and key skills such as social, communication and language. Bilingualism and multilingualism in schools is an appropriate tool to learn about different cultures and share information. It is a beneficial way to educate young children on different cultures. For future practice, more funding should be provided for all learning facilities for the benefit of the children. Teachers should be trained for when faced with bilingualism and multilingualism and more knowledge should be highlighted for this topic.

Reflection

For my 10-minute video, I decided to choose colours as my topic of conversation. I chose this as I am not fluent in Welsh language, so I wanted to choose a topic that I felt comfortable and familiar with.

As a way to engage the audience I used props and also made my own. I used different items that visibly were one colour. I did not choose any items with more than three colours on them as I did not want to make the task seem too difficult. I printed out on a piece of paper the words of different colours both in English and in Welsh. I chose to then write those colours in the same colour as the word to make it more understandable. In order to add some more Welsh language into the video I also spoke about feelings and emotions. For example, when showing the word red (coch) I would say which emotion you may relate with it which can be anger (grac).

Considering that I did not grow up in a Welsh speaking household and do not speak Welsh as my first language I think that my knowledge on the words and my pronunciations was correct. Doing this assessment has widened my understanding of

the Welsh language and has also sparked my interest into learning more Welsh in the future.

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I have not used AI to complete my work