'Defnyddiwch y Gymraeg': Community sport as a vehicle for encouraging the use of the Welsh language.

Lana Evans[a], Nicola Bolton[a,] Carwyn Jones[a] and Hywel Iorwerth[a]
[a]Cardiff School of Sport and Health Sciences, Cardiff Metropolitan University, Cardiff, Wales.

Corresponding author: Lana Evans LMEvans@cardiffmet.ac.uk

OrcID id:

Lana Evans: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8349-7854

Nicola Bolton: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2178-2219

Carwyn Jones: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0033-8098

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Abstract

Despite cultural and statutory changes, including significant investment in Welsh medium education, latest census data show a drop in the percentage of Welsh speakers. Moreover there is a concern that many of those who are able to speak Welsh are not using it – the language is not 'alive'. The Welsh Language Commissioner has identified sport as a space where Welsh can be used, encouraged and promoted. The aim of this study was to investigate whether community sport clubs can provide a space to encourage the use of Welsh. Using qualitative methods we found that strategies to promote Welsh in sports clubs are potentially divisive. The dominant and 'operational' language of many community sport clubs is English. Increasing the use of Welsh in these clubs risks excluding non-Welsh speakers, but ignoring the language denies Welsh speakers the opportunity to participate in Welsh.

Keywords: community sport, social inclusion, Welsh language, young people, minority language

Introduction

The potential for sport to be a vehicle for wider community values and change has been acknowledged (Collins 2010). Much of the current research regarding sport's wider role is concerned with development and peace (Burnett 2015; Spaaij, Oxford and Jeanes 2016), the social inclusion of vulnerable youths (Haudenhuyse, Theeboom and Skille 2014; Nols, Haudenhuyse and Theeboom 2017; Schaillée, Theeboom and Van Cauwenberg 2017), and poverty (Collins and Haudenhuyse 2015; Haudenhuyse 2018). According to Safel, Harvey, Lévesque and Donnelly (2007) language is a key element of community membership. However, there is limited academic research into the application of minority language use within different contexts (Nikolov and Djigunovic

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[1] Translation – 'Use Welsh'.

2006), especially concerning community sport. Although limited in number, academics have evaluated the role of sport in other minority cultures and their languages (Dallaire 2003a, 2003b; Dallaire and Harvey 2016; Erueti 2016). The aim of this study is to investigate whether community sport clubs can be a space to encourage the use of a minority language, specifically the Welsh language.

According to the 2011 census, 19% of people living in Wales were able to speak Welsh (the country's heritage, but minority language [Boon 2014])[2]. This represents a worrying 2% decline from the previous census figure (conducted every decade in the UK) and comes despite the number of initiatives and laws designed to reverse the decline in Welsh speakers (Welsh Language Act 1967; Welsh Language Act 1993; Welsh Language Measure 2011; Welsh Language Standards 2018). Unsurprisingly the education system has been the focus of many initiatives. The 1988 Education Reform Act made Welsh a core and compulsory subject for school pupils, aged 5-16, in the statutory sector in Wales (Department for Education and Science 1988). In 2011 this was extended to all children aged 3-16 years old (Jones 2016), and in 2015, Donaldson's (2015) report endorsed the policy that Welsh will remain a compulsory subject.

Educational institutions play an important role in sustaining and developing a minority language for both first and second language speakers (Thomas, Lewis, and Apolloni 2012). Children and young people acquire a second language in many ways (Montrul 2016). Some live in bilingual or minority language homes, whereas others acquire their second language at school. An individual's language preference is heavily dependent on the educational, social or linguistic context (Hornberger 2003). Early language acquisition is important for developing favourable attitudes towards languages and language learning (Commission of the European Communities 2003).

The use of Welsh beyond the school gate is a particular concern in areas of Wales considered to be non-traditional Welsh speaking (Hodges 2009; Thomas Lewis and Apolloni 2012; Thomas, Williams, Jones, Davies, and Binks 2014), for example South East Wales. Some young people may not use Welsh outside the formal school setting at

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[2] A Welsh speaker is defined as an individual able to hold a conversation through the medium of Welsh.

all in these communities. Yet it is relevant to note, the role of the Urdd[3] which seeks to offer opportunities for young people to speak Welsh in the community.

Non-traditional Welsh speaking areas of South Wales share a similar heritage of rapid industrialisation and in-migration of an English speaking population during the 19th and early 20th centuries (Thomas 2000). English became the lingua franca and Welsh disappeared entirely from public life (Jenkins and Williams 2000; Loffler 2000). The censuses between 1901-1951 record 20% reduction in Welsh speakers. In 2011, less than 15% of residents aged three or over in the case study area (used for this research) were recorded as Welsh speakers compared to the national average of 19% (Office of National Statistics [Census] 2011; Welsh Government 2015). Moreover, less than half of the fluent Welsh speakers use the minority language on a daily basis (Welsh Government 2015). The regional variation in Wales is significant in this respect. For example, in some areas of Gwynedd (North West Wales) a child has greater opportunities to converse in Welsh throughout their day. They might speak it with their parents, in the local shop, on the bus, at school, and in the community. In contrast, in some areas of South Wales, a child is likely to use Welsh only when communicating with the teacher.

The Welsh Government's latest strategy to improve the use, status and visibility of the Welsh language, *Cymraeg (Welsh) 2050: a million Welsh speakers* (Welsh Government 2017) is ambitious. By 2050 they predict that the Welsh language will be thriving; there will be a million speakers and Welsh will be used in every aspect of life. Achieving the vision will not be easy. It will require that children not only learn Welsh at school, but *use* it in their everyday lives. It will also require the Welshification or at least bilingualification of some communities, institutions and social practices. There are currently a number of structural and individual barriers to change including a reluctance and inability (real or imagined) to facilitate transformation.

Sport has been identified as having a key role in achieving the *Cymraeg 2050* vision. There is a long tradition of looking to sport to realise certain social or political aspirations beyond the obvious physical and psychological benefits. In the UK, when New Labour (government) came into office in 1997 there were notable shifts towards emphasising the wider benefits of sport (Houlihan and White 2002). Their manifesto

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[3] Urdd Gobaith Cymru is a Welsh Government funded organisation which aims to provide opportunities through the medium of Welsh for children and young people. These opportunities comprise cultural and sporting activities.

outlined the government's belief that sport should enhance the nation's sense of community, identity and pride. Moreover New Labour believed that sport and recreation activity could contribute to neighbourhood renewal and cross-cutting issues related to the importance of civil society, citizenship and social inclusion (Coalter 2017; Houlihan and White 2002; King 2009). The concept of social inclusion under New Labour was characterised by a shift from the pursuit of equality to the redistribution of opportunity (Fairclough 2000) and this is re-emerging as a relevant policy direction (Cabinet Office 2015).

Sport has the potential to bring individuals from a variety of social and economic backgrounds together, offering a sense of belonging and providing opportunities to value capabilities and competencies (Bailey 2005). Bourdieu's (1977) notion of *habitus* refers to the physical and social environment constituted by the individual and relates to the dispositions of early specialisation in the *field*. Linguistic capital is an important consideration for the development and understanding of minority languages in practice. Bourdieu (1991) suggests that a group's dominant dialect defines the linguistic habitus and prevents, therefore, other languages from gaining legitimacy. Linguistic capital is defined by capability, therefore the ability to use a language impacts on whether it is recognised as an acceptable medium of communication, and is embedded in social, cultural, economic, and political contexts (Fang 2011). It is associated with the acquisition and use of other forms of capital, which empowers people to overcome struggles in social status and recognition (Bourdieu 1991).

Social inclusion is concerned with ensuring that all children and adults are able to participate as valued, respected and contributing members of society (Donnelly and Coakley 2002). To be socially excluded, as defined by Levitas, Pantazis, Fahmy, Gordon, Lloyd and Patsios (2007, 9), is to be denied "resources, rights, goods and services" and thereby lack the 'social capital' "to participate in the normal relationships and activities". The aspiration in Wales is for the 'sport-value' to be accessible through Welsh for all and for the 'Welsh-value' to be accessible through sport for all. Perhaps more accurately there is a unique 'Welsh-sport good' to be realised. It is fair to say that in community sport clubs (particularly in non-traditional Welsh speaking areas) English is the dominant and in some cases exclusive language and thus Welsh carries little linguistic capital in many community sport settings. This is principally due to self-perceptions of speaker dominance, hegemony of the English language, language ability, resistance towards the

use of it among non-Welsh speakers, and language courtesy (Hodges 2009; Thomas *et al.* 2014).

Method

The question, 'whether sport can contribute to achieving some of the *Cymraeg*: 2050 goals' is nebulous. We decided, therefore, to narrow our focus and adopted a case study of one particular community in South Wales. This non-traditional Welsh speaking community is prototypical of the kind where Welsh is a minority language, largely a school language, and carries little value in the community. According to Harrison, Melanie, Franklin and Mills (2017) a case study approach is "an effective methodology to investigate and understand complex issues in real world settings" and our methods sought to capture the multi-faceted landscape of Welsh language use. A Welsh medium secondary school was selected as the starting point for building our case study which focused upon two key objectives:

(1) Increase our insight into pupils' naturalistic linguistic practices and attitudes (how they view and use the language); and

(2) Increase our insight into the linguistic ethos of particular community sport clubs attended by pupils from the school

The evidence collected for this paper derives from two research settings that included one school and seven community sport clubs. A community sport club is defined as a local voluntary organisation whose main purpose is to provide opportunities to participate in sport (Spaaij, Magee, Farquharson, Gorman, Jeanes, Lusher and Storr 2016). The relevance of conducting research in these contexts was to understand the diversity of language use between the school's Welsh speaking environment and the English speaking environment of the seven clubs.

To tackle the first objective a mixed method approach was employed, including participant observations and semi-structured interviews at *Ysgol y Bont* (a pseudonym), from October 2015 to June 2016. *Ysgol y Bont* is a Welsh medium comprehensive school located in a non-traditional Welsh speaking area. The lead researcher took a 'participant observer' role which was openly discussed with the school in order to 'normalise' her presence and build a rapport with the pupils (Gobo 2008). The researcher's own background (a Welsh speaker from a non-traditional area) helped the 'rapport' building

process and minimised the risk of pupils changing their behaviour. Pupils will often change the language they use in the presence of a teacher – it was important that pupils did not make such changes in the presence of the researcher (purported Hawthorne effect; Chiesa and Hobbs 2008). *Ysgol y Bont* is a medium size comprehensive school which has less than 1000 pupils. Of these, 15% of *Ysgol y Bont* pupils reported to have grown up speaking Welsh at home. It was not possible to observe all pupils at one time, therefore the researcher attended physical education lessons for each year group and also sat and observed in different locations across the school during break times. The aim was to understand the language practices and to see what the world looked like from the pupils' perspective (Delamont 2004). During this research phase, the lead researcher conducted classroom activities (alongside a qualified teacher) where pupils created posters representing their community interests and activities (Leyshon, Bolton, and Fleming 2015). Seven community sport clubs covering five sports (i.e., swimming, hockey, lifesaving, gymnastics and athletics), accepted an invitation to participate and served as locations for phase two of research.

The second research phase (concerned with the second objective) adopted weekly or bi-weekly observations at community sport clubs (n=7). Semi-structured interviews with pupils attending the clubs (also involved in the first research phase) (n=14), coaches and club officials (n=11) were also conducted. Ten of the 25 interviews were conducted through the medium of Welsh (young people (n=8); club officials/coaches (n=2)). The data were collected between May 2016 and November 2016.

The third research phase included follow-up focus groups and interviews which were conducted with young people (focus group participants (n=16), one to one interview participants n=6)) during May 2017 and June 2017, to advance our critical understanding and to check our observations about behaviours and attitudes towards the use of the Welsh language. The selection of young people for this research phase was based on participation in the first and second research phases, as well as purposefully sampling a selection of young people who demonstrated negative attitudes towards Welsh. The focus groups also gave an opportunity for those young people who did not participate in the field-based interviews to share their experiences. These were conducted at *Ysgol y Bont* and hence through the medium of Welsh. Four focus groups were conducted with between three and five participants with participants' ages between 11-18 and community sport club interests in swimming, hockey, lifesaving, gymnastics and athletics. Focus groups lasted between 25-30 minutes and interviews between 4-15minutes. The lead

researcher followed a semi-structured guide, for both individual interviews and focus groups which included themes derived from the participant observation data (e.g., use of Welsh in community sport).

All interviews and focus groups were recorded, transcribed and the data was stored using NVIVO [versions 10 and 11] (Bandara 2006; Sotiriadou, Brouwers, and Le 2014). Observational data (collected in the school and community contexts) were also managed through NVIVO. NVIVO allowed the researcher to mark significant themes which emerged within the data and then to sort these into codes or specific themes (Bryman 2016). Final themes were derived from both the literature (deductively) and field work insights (inductively), which featured in NVIVO as 'nodes' or categories. Themes were also derived from obvious expressions used by participants or observations, and through analysing the underlying meanings behind those expressed. Examples of themes include (but are not limited to): motivation to speak Welsh; opportunities and support to use Welsh at the club; champions of Welsh language; and challenges facing the use of Welsh in community sport. Welsh language data are presented in the original verbatim form with an English translation below. The study was approved by the University's ethics process. Loco parentis consent was granted by the school's head teacher and main club official (whosoever was empowered to do so) for participant observations. All staff and young people were informed about the research and were regularly updated. Informed consent was obtained from all interview participants including the consent of the parent/guardian and the assent of the pupils. In order to protect the identity of the school, clubs and participants, pseudonyms are used throughout.

Results and Discussion

Our findings suggest a fluid picture, but with some fairly fixed points. In community sport clubs in this area, the language of the majority of coaches, volunteers and administrators was English. English was the club's 'operating language' and most children spoke English. More careful analysis reveals, as one might expect, a fairly complex range of behaviours, attitudes and beliefs surrounding the Welsh language. We discuss the findings according to three themes identified during the analysis: (i) local language context; (ii) critical reflections regarding social inclusion; and (iii) Welsh as a community language. All have implications for the success of any community sport based strategy to increase Welsh language use.

Local language context

Language use within any given community and within different practices in that community depends on the local context (Selleck 2013). One surprising and perhaps prejudiced attitude towards Welsh was voiced by one of the coaches in the study:

> *"What's the point…no one uses it…it's a dying language."*
> *[Field notes 27/7/16]*

Such attitudes were articulated, and whilst there is no way for us to generalise on the prevalence of such attitudes, it's clearly inimical to any attempt to encourage the use of Welsh. Our research also confirmed that there is a perception among pupils that Welsh was not a 'living' language, but a school language, and this was keenly felt in homes where English is dominant.

> *A year 7 pupil and I are talking about how her mum tries to speak Welsh with her. She tells me that she says to her mum that Welsh is for school.*
> *[Field notes 21/6/16]*

Welsh is the language of *Ysgol y Bont* and all subjects are taught in Welsh (apart from the subject 'English'). This separate language school policy is explicitly adopted to safeguard the minority language (Lemke 2002; Selleck 2013; Jones and Lewis 2014). Pupils are expected to comply with school rules – to speak Welsh – and teachers enforce these rules. Such a stance is not always popular among pupils and may contribute to the perception of Welsh as a school language – a language that *must* be used.

> *"Fi just mhoen siarad Saesneg am unwaith… Cymraeg yw iaith yr ysgol."*
> *[I just want to speak English for once… Welsh is the school language.]*
> *[Year 7 interview 16/11/16]*

Although apathy towards the language might be expected among certain pupils, even pupils who backed the Welsh language at school were reluctant to use it in community sport clubs. Such pupils not only chose to communicate in English, but also seemed to share the view that Welsh should not be spoken outside school - it had little or no value for them – it carried little or no linguistic capital of these young people.

We found that there were a number of factors contributing to the reluctance to use Welsh beyond the school gate. A common perception among pupils and coaches/officials was that their Welsh wasn't good enough or that they didn't feel confident, which are key

components of increasing linguistic capital (Bourdieu 1991). Many of the young people and coaches saw limited availability of Welsh speakers as a barrier for increasing its use in community sport clubs. Recruitment of minority language participants in non-traditional areas was also identified (Dallaire and Harvey 2016) as a challenge in Québec. Dallaire's (2003b) conclusion that sport's contribution to promoting minority identities was closely connected to promoting minority languages.

> *"I just think they are slightly limited because you have such a wide audience and therefore people don't like to exclude therefore they revert to a language where everyone is included. We don't have enough Welsh speakers, certainly within our club, that would justify trying to force that… as teenagers everyone just wants to feel included as children and they just want to be a part of … [a group]… and I think that trying to force the language on a group and a child would probably … feel excluded … you know it is … [as if]… you are in France and everyone is speaking in French … you are expected to absorb and assimilate, but it is because … [the] …English language … [is]… dominant … [here, therefore]… I think there is a slightly different concept and therefore they don't view it in the same light."*
> *[Parent Volunteer interview 31/10/16]*

The limited numbers of Welsh speakers taking part and/or coaching within the community sport clubs is a significant practical impediment, even to tokenistic use of Welsh.

> *"I think that the biggest thing is that a lot can't speak Welsh so if you wanted a conversation to everyone at the same time that's about the only thing. If you can't speak it you can't use it."*
> *[Volunteer Coach interview 10/11/16]*

The dominant dialect has shaped the linguistic habitus and attitudes of not only the Anglophones, but also Welsh speakers. The Welsh language has been unable to gain legitimacy in such communities, mainly due to its low perceived social value and capital beyond school.

Critical reflections regarding social inclusion

Marginalisation of Welsh speakers

We found that some parents and community sport providers did not subscribe to the value of promoting Welsh through sport - at least not in comparison with other values. A coach's apathy or ambivalence, or their enthusiasm and passion towards the language

played a significant role in a club's 'language ethos' and consequently in whether young Welsh speakers felt excluded or included. Gould and Carson (2011) and Schaillée, Theeboom and Van Cauwenberg (2017) also reported that a coach's actions and behaviours influence the social and personal development of a young person.

> *"O ni mewn clwb [chwaraeon] gyda fy nghyfnither ac o ni yn siarad Cymraeg gyda'n gilydd a ma da ni rhai o gyfnither yn iau hefyd o ysgolion iau… ni gyd yna yn siarad Cymraeg gyda'n gilydd ac wedyn oedd yr arweinydd ddim yn hoffi bod ni yn gallu siarad Cymraeg achos oedd o ddim yn gallu deall beth oedden ni'n dweud, felly fe nath o ofyn i ni ddim siarad Cymraeg rhagor. Ond mi oedd hynni'n anodd i'r rhai iau oherwydd iaith gyntaf nhw yw Cymraeg… felly o ni dal yn siarad Cymraeg gyda'r rhai iau felly nathe nhw hala ni i'r cornel, felly o ni fethu siarad yr iaith."*
> *[I was in a [sports]club with my cousin and we were speaking Welsh with each other, and we also have other cousins who are younger and go to primary schools… we were all speaking Welsh with each other, and then one of the leaders didn't like that we could all speak Welsh, because he couldn't understand what we were saying so he asked us not to speak anymore Welsh. But that was hard for the younger ones because Welsh is their first language… so we continued to speak Welsh with the younger ones, so they sent us to the corner, so we couldn't speak the language.]*
> *[Year 9 interview 4/6/17]*

Two friends expressed the following views in one of the focus groups:

> *P1: "Fi'n chwarae [chwaraeon] a ma lot fawr o fy ffrindiau yn chwarae gyda fi, so ni fel arfer yn naturiol yn siarad Cymraeg oherwydd rydym yn siarad Cymraeg yn yr ysgol a mae rhai pobl mae nhw ddim really yn hoffi bod ni yn siarad Cymraeg oherwydd mae nhw ddim yn deall…"*
> *[I play [sport]with a lot of my friends, so we naturally speak Welsh because we speak Welsh in the school, but there are some people they really don't like that we speak Welsh because they can't understand…]*
>
> *P2: "Fi'n cytuno gyda P1, mae nifer o bobl yn gweld e fel bach yn gyfrwys ac yn amharchus oherwydd mae nhw just yn meddwl eich bod chi yn siarad amdanyn nhw."*
> *[I agree with P1, there are a number of people who see it as a bit cunning and disrespectful because they just think that you are speaking about them.]*
> *[Focus Group 2 8/05/17]*

These extracts reflect a common trope where Welsh language is concerned and identify a difficulty in terms of social inclusion. Using Welsh in a predominately English context can create tension. On the one hand the minority users feel like unwelcome 'outsiders' and may be asked to desist or face more subtle forms of exclusion. On the other hand

there is sometimes suspicion and paranoia among non-Welsh speakers that they are being excluded, perhaps intentionally so, from a conversation. A further consideration is 'language courtesy'. Welsh speakers said they often turn to English out of a sense of courtesy in order to ensure that non-Welsh speakers weren't excluded. Article 30 of the Children's Rights in Wales, states that children have the right to practise their language and celebrate their culture (Welsh Government 2018). We found no evidence of *de jure* denial of these rights, but there was some evidence of a *de facto* denial embodied in a 'Welsh not welcome' ethos. Such norms are a genuine threat to inclusion and represent a risk of exclusion (Levitas *et al.* 2007).

Further evidence of the consequence of the *de facto* impediment is revealed in the following quote:

> *"Mae gen i ffrindiau sy'n siarad Saesneg a dydyn nhw ddim yn hoffi e pan ddwi'n siarad Cymraeg oherwydd ma' nhw'n meddwl fy mod i yn siarad tu nol i'w cefn nhw... Mae hynni'n upsetio fi tipyn oherwydd mae'n neud fi mas fel person sy ddim yn meddwl am ei ffrindiau. Mae'n neud i fi teimlo fel fi methu defnyddio'r Gymraeg o gwmpas nhw oherwydd fyddent yn offended. A dwi really dim mhoen bod fy ffrindiau ddim yn mwynhau fy nghwmni."*
> *[I have friends who speak English and they don't like it when I speak Welsh because they think that I am speaking behind their backs… That upsets me quite a bit because it makes me out to be a person who does not think about their friends. It makes me feel like I can't use Welsh around them because they will be offended. I really don't want my friends to not enjoy my company.]*
> *[Year 7 interview 10/11/16]*

The research revealed that bilingual young people generally chose to speak English over Welsh as a way of blending in with their friendship group, thus questioning the role of linguistic capital (Fang 2011).

Sport participation has the potential to bring individuals from a variety of social and economic backgrounds together (Bailey 2005), but our data suggest that the picture is complex in a Welsh language context. Many young people participating in the clubs were pupils attending other local English medium schools, but all would have had some formal and informal exposure to Welsh in their school careers. The difference in linguistic capital among pupils is one of degree rather than kind. Furthermore, some coaches or administrators have had no formal educational experience of Welsh, but if they live in Wales they will have a significant degree of exposure to the language (television, radio, bilingual road signs, popular culture, place names, official

documentation etc.). Their actions and behaviours and the dominant dialect of their group is important for the development and understanding of minority languages in practice.

Marking identity

Despite the reservations of many young people about using Welsh in community sport clubs there was a minority who were passionate about the language, wanted to raise awareness of it and promote its use. These young people were prepared to confront exclusionary attitudes and practices. They were confident in voicing opinions and promoting a Welsh-speaking ethos, thus extinguishing themselves from the Anglophone culture.

> *"Mae'n neud i fi eitha fel trist a chrac… bod pobl yn trio dod mewn a ddim gadael i ni siarad yr iaith rhagor… O ni wedi dweud wrth (y plant iau) bod nhw yn cael siarad pa bynnag iaith ma nhw mhoen ac felly i ddim gwrando ar bobl sydd yn dweud arall wrthyn nhw a dyle nhw fel ddim gadael i bobl fel yna cael dylanwad arnyn nhw, dyle nhw cael siarad yr iaith ma nhw yn fwy cyfforddus gyda… o ni eisiau neud pobl yn ymwybodol bod yna iaith yn y wlad a bod iaith y wlad yw hi a dyle fel y bobl yn y clwb ddim really dweud wrthym ni pa iaith dyle ni siarad â dyle ni ddim."*
> [*It makes me feel quite sad and angry.. that people try to come in and stop us from using the language… I said to the younger children, that they could speak whatever language they wanted to and so not to listen to people who try and say otherwise to them, and that they should not let people like that influence them, they should speak the language that they are most comfortable to use… I wanted to make sure that people were aware that there is a language in the country and that it is the country's language and people like those in the club shouldn't really tell us what language we should or shouldn't be using.*]
> [*Year 9 interview 4/6/17*]

This comment is characteristic of a 'pro Welsh' attitude. To some extent it represents a political and cultural commitment to the language and may or may not reflect personal or family political affiliations with the plight of the Welsh language. Those with high linguistic capital are less likely to be influenced by the behaviours and actions of coaches or significant others, indicating that ability and confidence to use the language is vital for developing a minority ethos. This stance is often, but not exclusively tied to factors such as ability and confidence to speak Welsh which in turn is often but not exclusively tied to '*iaith yr aelwyd'* (the language of the hearth).

Increasing the confidence of learners

Loffler (2000) suggests that hearing Welsh could positively impact on the confidence of learners and perceived abilities have been identified in previous research (Laugharne 2007; Thomas *et al.* 2014) as impacting on language choice. In addition to the passionate speakers, we found some young Welsh participants who, although reticent about using Welsh themselves outside school, were interested in supporting and fostering positive attitudes and confidence among friends from their own Welsh medium school and friends studying Welsh but attending an English medium school.

> *"Whenever they needed help, they would come to us and we would translate it for them, so if they needed help they could always come to us and we would help… It made me feel really quite proud of myself because obviously you are able to do stuff that they weren't and it makes you feel a lot better."*
> *[Year 10 interview 16/11/16]*

> *"With Anna, she bought her Welsh GCSE essay in and I helped her with that and gave her help with that during land training on a Thursday… I helped her get an A*… I don't really speak Welsh during the club because there are no one really who can speak it fluently… Obviously she was really happy and I was just like wow I can help anyone now from an English school."*
> *[Year 9 interview 7/11/16]*

Some young people also actively encouraged non-Welsh speakers to be involved with Welsh medium conversation(s) so not to feel excluded.

> *P1: "Mae o fach yn drist bod nhw yn teimlo fel bod ni yn defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn erbyn nhw, felly dyna pam bod ni yn trio cynnwys nhw yn fwy fel bod nhw yn teimlo bach yn fwy fel rhan o'r gymuned a'r teulu sy'n siarad Cymraeg."*
> *[It is a little sad that they feel that we are using Welsh against them, which is why we try to include them more so that they feel like part of the Welsh community and family.]*

> *P2: "Fi'n cytuno gydag P1 mae'n rhwystredig iawn yn aml oherwydd mae'r iaith Gymraeg yn ail iaith i nifer yn y wlad, ond mae'n iaith ein gwlad ni."*
> *[I agree with P1, it's usually very frustrating because the Welsh language is a second language to many people in the country but it is the language of our country.]*
> *[Focus Group 2 8/05/17]*

Some Welsh medium pupils felt obliged to include non-fluent Welsh speakers in Welsh medium conversation. Often a more 'fluid', 'flexible' or 'accessible' form of Welsh would be used. Using a 'hybrid' dialect, or 'Wenglish' as it's sometimes labelled,

is controversial (Selleck 2013). For language purists it is a threat and teachers in Welsh medium schools tend to discourage its use.

> P3: *"Dydych chi ddim moen ddefnyddio geiriau o tu fewn braweddegau fel Wenglish… Oherwydd dwi'n weithau neud e a wedyn fel ni'n cael stwr yn yr ysgol. A felly mae'n well just I ddechrau'n fresh gyda pobl Saesneg so bod nhw yn siarad yr iaith Gymraeg yn well."*
> *[You don't want to use Wenglish words within sentences… because sometimes when I do it, then I am told off in school. So it is better to start it fresh with English people so that they can speak Welsh better.]*
> *[Focus Group 3 9/05/17]*

Despite this young person realising the tensions of using 'Wenglish', its flexibility was noted and it has been known to increase confidence in holding conversations. Among friendship groups, it is common to hear 'Wenglish' and for many fluent and non-fluent Welsh speakers the flexibility it affords both helps inclusivity in, and the flow of, conversation.

The results of this study supports research conducted by Schaillée, Theeboom and Van Cauwenberg (2017) who reported that the behaviours and actions of significant others (i.e. family, peers, coaches) have an important influence on the social development of young people. It was recognised, that paradoxically some young Welsh speakers were conscious that their actions to use and promote the language could in turn socially exclude non-Welsh speakers. Typically they would take action to avert social exclusion among their young non-Welsh speaking peers.

Welsh as a community sport club language

Thomas *et al*. (2014) argue that the opportunity to speak Welsh can be limited, especially within non-traditional speaking areas. Our research showed such limitations in concrete situations. In the community sport clubs, Welsh speakers (those able to speak some Welsh) in general and those desiring to use Welsh were always in the minority. The absence of a Welsh 'agenda' away from school, coupled to other factors already mentioned (non-speakers, attitudes of coaches, language courtesy) created a barrier to 'doing-sport' in Welsh.

> *"It is kinda hard and not everyone speaks Welsh."*
> *[Year 7 interview 10/11/16]*

> *"No one really knows how to speak it. We know the basic bore da [good morning], prynhawn da [good afternoon] sut wyt ti [how are you], but that is about it, we don't have the knowledge of how to construct a sentence together and I think that with the kids speaking Welsh they kind of want that because they would probably understand it a lot more."*
> *[Coach interview 26/11/16]*

A recent (2017/18) initiative *Amdani* [go for it] set up by the Welsh Language Commissioner seeks to address some of the difficulties we have identified. The focus is to provide resources that will facilitate learning and using Welsh in sporting contexts. Resources will allow both non-Welsh speaking coaches and young people to communicate in Welsh (or bilingually) using flip cards within their sessions showing Welsh terms. The young people within this study thought that such an approach might be important in the promotion of the language.

> *P1: "Well fi'n meddwl bod pobl yn ystyried dysgu'r iaith Gymraeg yn rhywbeth boring... Ond, dwi'n meddwl os allwch chi blethu dysgu'r iaith ac fel neud chwaraeon neu neud rhywbeth fyddech chi'n neud tu allan i'r ysgol, fi'n meddwl bydd hynny yn neud e bach yn fwy hwyl."*
> *[well I think that people perceive that learning the language is boring... But I think that if you can tie in learning the language with something like doing sport or something that you would do outside school, I think that would make it more fun.]*
> *[Focus Group 2 8/05/17]*

A strong theme that emerged from the data was the notion of normalisation. The more Welsh was spoken and heard in community sport clubs, the more likely it would be accepted and the more 'normal' it would become to have a 'bilingual' club where both Welsh and English are used side-by-side. The *Amdani* initiative has the potential to contribute to this process of normalisation, but it requires the commitment of clubs and individuals to make it work.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate whether community sport clubs can provide a space to encourage the use of Welsh. Our findings illustrate a complex and often-contradictory picture of the Welsh language in a non-traditional Welsh-speaking area. The Welsh language has always been divisive and our research shows this remains relevant. For many young people involved in this study Welsh was a school language, it represented conformity to rules and played no meaningful role in their lives. In school,

some pupils felt excluded because Welsh was the 'endorsed language' yet they themselves were more comfortable expressing themselves in English[4].

Some passionate and enthusiastic Welsh speakers similarly feel excluded and marginalised. Opportunities to 'live' through their preferred language outside of school are limited and they sometimes encounter conflict when they speak Welsh when it's not the endorsed language. They reported feeling reluctant to speak Welsh in their community sport clubs because of a personal sense of courtesy and in some cases individuals at clubs explicitly discouraged speaking Welsh. On a more positive note, we found evidence that Welsh was a language that was valued and that pupils wanted to encourage and foster its use. The challenge for community sport is to consider how Welsh could be used and encouraged, and how this might be done inclusively.

There is a need for a shift in culture and attitudes in order for this to become a reality, and this will be a long-term process rather than one which can be established quickly. A simple answer, as many could suggest, would be to encourage the use of English, as a means of ensuring inclusivity. However this would then have implications on the future of minority languages. If Wales is to preserve its heritage language and reach a million confident and willing Welsh speakers, attitudes and behaviours need to change to become more inclusive. There is a call from this research to encourage Welsh to be spoken and for bilingualism to be celebrated to ensure that minority speakers feel socially included within the community.

This research provides some valuable insights into the use of, and the attitudes, behaviours and perceptions towards the practice of the Welsh language within school and community sport clubs among young people. It explores the issues associated with the use of a minority language and the challenges it faces. Although the objectives of this research have been fulfilled, it is acknowledged that there are some limitations. The community club sample size was enough to achieve the objectives of the research, however higher recruitment rates of clubs would have improved the project by increasing the stories told. Also, more popular sports such as football, rugby and dance were not included within this research and this partly reflects the season when the classroom research was undertaken. Despite these limitations, a strength of this research is that in-

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[4] Endorsed language -here we simply mean the *de jure* or *de facto* language of the context. Apart from the school, the Urdd and perhaps the family, English is the endorsed language of the case study area.

depth empirical research was conducted that a complex and somewhat critical picture of the challenges regarding social exclusion among those who use the Welsh language beyond the school gate within non-traditional Welsh speaking community sport clubs.

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