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### **Re-negotiating ideologies of bilingualism on the margins of education**

#### ABSTRACT

**This article reports on an ethnographic study carried out in three interrelated sites: two contrasting secondary schools and a Youth-Club (the principal focus of this article), in an area of southwest Wales. This article highlights the incongruence between the language at home and the language of the school and posits that the relationship between language use at school and in the wider community needs to be problematised and questioned far more than has been done thus far. This study questions whether school-based ideologies and school-based practices are re-negotiated or contested on the margins of education and whether this re-negotiation and contestation plays an important role in whether a young person chooses to use Welsh or English outside of school. It will be argued that recreational spaces, even though loosely connected to schools as institutions, function as more open spaces where institutional ideologies are actively reworked and renegotiated, either through choosing to use English or by mixing and blending different aspects of linguistic resources, or by re-negotiating and questioning which version of Welshness is more valuable, 'the removed and authentic' (as seen at the Welsh school) or the 'new and hybrid' as seen at the Youth-Club.**

## Introduction

The 2011 census highlighted a decline in the number of Welsh speakers, with a 2% drop from 21% (576,000) in 2001 to 19% (562,000) in 2011 (Office for National Statistics 2012)<sup>1</sup>. Simultaneously, there are increasing numbers of children receiving their education through the medium of Welsh (School Census Wales 2014). In light of the recent census, the way young people orientate to and use the Welsh language outside of school is now subject to intense scrutiny at the level of Welsh language policy.

The most recent strategy document, *Iaith Fyw: Iaith Byw/A Living Language: A Language for Living* (2012) places a greater emphasis on the use of Welsh in the wider community, with a particular focus on young people. It outlines two core elements, firstly 'to enable and encourage children and other people to acquire the language' (ibid: 14) and secondly, to enable and encourage people to use the language on a daily basis' (ibid: 14). The simple phrase 'encouraging and enabling' implies two very different and opposing ideological and practical stances with 'encouragement' not entirely consistent with a free and unrestricted choice. There are increasing attempts to control and intervene in the free time of young people, with an emphasis placed on promoting and 'ensuring' that recreational activities lead to an increased use of Welsh. Furthermore, the use of English and/or bilingual practices are apparently of little concern. Thus the concept of 'choice' seems to come and go from Welsh language policy discourse<sup>2</sup>. It is significant to note the contradictory and problematic relationship that arises between a free and relatively un-restricted recreational space that young people choose to attend and the apparent desire to influence and, in many ways, restrict the language choices and practices of young people in these recreational spaces. The policy shift in *Iaith Fyw: Iaith Byw* assumes that recreational spaces are subject to language-ideological influence. By ethnographically investigating one such space (a Youth-Club) the feasibility of *Iaith Fyw: Iaith Byw*'s new priorities will be assessed. Furthermore, a 'living' language implies spontaneity and lack of constraint (and thus choice). There is a clear conflict between the aspirations for a 'living' language and the increased institutionalisation of language choice in young people's 'free time'. Arguably, in *Iaith Fyw: Iaith Byw* we see a subtle ideological shift from promoting choice to a policy that is, at least to some extent, based on coercion, pressure and influence.

A small number of studies have highlighted the incongruence between the language at home and the language of the school, in the Welsh context. A recent study by Thomas and Roberts (2011) investigated children's social use of language at school, at home and in the community and revealed that amongst primary-aged children English was often the language of peer-peer conversations, especially when out on the playground. Similarly, Thomas, Lewis and Apolloni (2012) suggest that a child's exposure to Welsh is often limited to the educational domain, highlighting that there were many more instances of English speech in peer-peer conversations and that children often reverted

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the numbers of Welsh speakers has declined in both actual and percentage terms.

<sup>2</sup> The earlier strategy document *Iaith Pawb/Everyone's Language* (Welsh Assembly Government 2003) was characterised by an ideology of choice and equality of access: equality between languages and choice as to which language to use, with an apparent desire to normalise bilingualism on these terms.

back to using English when the teacher was no longer around. Likewise, Morris (2010) identified that older children from mixed-language backgrounds, who have had equal exposure to both Welsh and English, also tend to report higher levels of use of English than of Welsh in their peer-peer networks (Morris 2010). Morris, when comparing secondary and primary-aged children, also highlights that the use of Welsh by secondary-aged children reduced in every setting; with the teacher, peer-peer interactions both inside and outside of the classroom and outside of school. The secondary cohort therefore warrants much closer examination (as will be done here) largely because it is students of this age that are key to carrying a revitalised language through into social life (Coupland 2005).

Thomas, Apolloni and Lewis' more recent study (2014), indicates that perceived language competency may be crucial in determining the extent to which Welsh is used outside of the formal classroom setting. They established that their respondents (primary-aged children) rated their abilities in English significantly higher than their abilities in Welsh and consequently, displayed more favorable views towards English than towards Welsh. Laugharne's (2007) study of university students' use of and attitudes towards Welsh concurs, suggesting that these patterns are influenced by perceived speaker competence; the higher their perceived competence the more positive their attitudes seemed to be towards Welsh. Attitudes towards Welsh at home, among peers in school and in the wider community have also been seen to play an important role in children's uptake and use of Welsh (Baker 1992, 2006). Morris (2010) however, highlights that the predominant influence on the use of Welsh within networks of friends, outside of school, was the language of the home, with young people from Welsh speaking homes having mainly or only Welsh-speaking friends, with these patterns of language use having been institutionalised at an early age.

However, the aforementioned studies rely on self-reported findings, with all the inherent difficulties relating to validity. Additionally, a number of the studies draw speculative conclusions about the use of Welsh *outside* of school by relying solely on data gathered *within* the school. The relationship between language use at school and in the wider community needs to be problematised and questioned far more than has been done thus far. Students' experiences of language, both inside and outside of school are embedded in much more extensive ideological frameworks and in line with this, there is a need to continually question the evolving relationships between home, community and the school. This study seeks to do just that by questioning whether school-based ideologies and school-based practices are re-negotiated or contested on the margins of education and to question the 'reality' 'on the ground' (Hornberger and Hult 2008: 285).

It is by looking at conversational interaction, among students of secondary school age that we can develop a deeper understanding of the complex cultural and ideological pressures on young people's engagement with the Welsh language. In other words, it's only by looking at relatively uncontrolled social speech (as will be done here) that we can make an assessment of whether and how school-based ideologies of language either do or do not remain in force. Additionally, does re-negotiation and contestation play an important role in whether a young person chooses to use Welsh or English outside of school?

Data for this paper will be drawn from a comparative ethnographic study of three interrelated sites, two contrasting secondary schools (a bilingual school and an English-medium school) and a third, a Youth-Club, selected as a point of convergence for the two groups of students, and the principal focus of this paper. All three sites are in an area of southwest Wales largely considered (although not entirely without contestation) to be a heartland for the Welsh language, one in which the Welsh language is traditionally used in everyday communication. It will be argued that whilst the schools channel official ideologies of language and bilingualism (see below for further discussion.), recreational spaces (taken to mean an informal leisure-space or leisure-activity, outside of the school, and therefore away from parents and teachers), function as more open spaces in which institutional ideologies are actively re-worked and re-negotiated.

### **Research Context**

Ysgol Arnant<sup>3</sup>, the so-called ‘bilingual’ school is located in a rural town with approximately 70% of people aged three and over reporting to have some knowledge of the Welsh language (Office for National Statistics 2004: 40-63)<sup>4</sup>; this increases to 92% if we look only at the school-aged population (3-15 years old). The school is classified by the local education authority as a category 2A ‘bilingual school’ with 80% of the curriculum delivered through the medium of Welsh. However, the school functions largely monolingually (in Welsh), with around 83% of students coming from homes where Welsh is the main language. Furthermore, 91% of the students are reported by Estyn, the educational inspectorate for Wales, to speak Welsh as their first language or to a corresponding standard. In Heller’s terms it is a monolingual zone established in order to produce bilinguals (Heller 2006: 17). Whilst there is an acceptance that the students will, in their wider social lives, function as bilinguals, within the confines of the school there is constant re-affirmation of the monolingual ideal (e.g. Welsh-only signage, Welsh-only assemblies and announcements, Welsh-only policy within the school, in classrooms and in ‘free’/recreational spaces).

Ysgol Ardwyn, the ‘English’ school is located in a small market town (the schools are 8 miles apart), with approximately 77% of people aged 3 and over reporting to have some knowledge of the Welsh language (Office for National Statistics 2004: 40-63). Once again, this increases to 89% if we consider only the school-aged population (3-15 years old). The English school is designated as an English-medium school (EM) by the local education authority, with only 12% of students reported to speak Welsh as a first language or to a corresponding standard. That said, the majority of students were taught primarily through the medium of Welsh in partner primary schools. There is a Welsh stream, amounting to around 30 students in each year-group. These students study five subjects through the medium of Welsh for the duration of Key Stage 3 (aged 11-14). The school, whilst English-dominant, also functions bilingually through bilingual signage, bilingual correspondence to parents/students, bilingual assemblies and

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<sup>3</sup> Note that all names have been anonymised.

<sup>4</sup> Note that statistical data is drawn from the 2001 census rather than the current 2011 census owing to the fact that data was collected within the earlier period.

announcements, and, as the students confirm, there is institutional tolerance of both English and Welsh as well as of code-mixing.

Students at the ‘Welsh’ and ‘English’<sup>5</sup> school have a markedly different understanding and orientation to the language ideological content of their education. Students at the ‘English’ school identify a particular institutional ideology of bilingualism, flexible bilingualism (Blackledge and Creese 2010) (see Selleck 2013 for further discussion in relation to this research context) that gives an apparent choice, and offers discretion to students. The students clearly identify that there is an institutional openness and tolerance towards language at the English school; they can in their terms ‘speak either one’. Furthermore, they don’t expect any punitive control: they won’t ‘get told off’. Conversely, at the Welsh school, choice is perceived as a threat to the minority language and thus, through separate bilingualism (Blackledge and Creese 2010), boundaries are put up to protect the language. Students identify the strict language separation that is encouraged by the Welsh school, they are aware that they are ‘not supposed to speak English’ and that teachers ‘want you to always talk Welsh’. As a politically motivated ideology, this policy operates within the confines of the school to the effect that there is little or no language choice available at the level of practice.

The Youth-Club is housed in a converted chapel in the same town as the Welsh school. Approximately fifty young people (aged between 11-18) regularly attend, coming equally from both the English and the Welsh schools<sup>6</sup>. The Youth-Club is one of many out of school activities that are available to young people, although it is one of only a handful that are not run by the schools. During the school term the club is open twice a week between 4.30pm and 8pm. The Youth-Club is laid out over two floors, with a variety of different recreational spaces available for the young people. In addition to the spaces within the building the young people are allowed to leave the Youth-Club and ‘hang out’ at the local park and visit the local convenience stores. I draw on the Youth-Club as a site that captures a component of young people’s leisure time and leisure space, in order to explore the informal contexts and processes whereby young people can shape and manage their identities. It is in such a space, away from parents and teachers, that ‘significant aspects of young people’s personal and social identities are affirmed, contested, rehearsed and re-worked’ (Hall et al. 1999: 506). That said, due to the rural nature of the community and the time it would take to travel the sometimes-lengthy distances between home, school and Youth-Club, many of the young people regularly attend Youth-Club in their school uniform (a feature I will argue, is salient to the discourse that emerges). Of the 7 members of staff working at the Youth-Club, three are Welsh speaking. In other ways too, the Youth-Club functions

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<sup>5</sup> Scourfield and Davies (2005) develop a view on ‘collapsing language and nation’ in Wales, noting that Welsh-medium schools are commonly described as ‘Welsh schools’ and English-medium as ‘English schools’, a process confirmed in my own data. For this reason the two schools will be referred to as ‘the Welsh school’ and ‘the English school’, as the students themselves do, even though these designations conflict with the authorised perspectives.

<sup>6</sup> The Youth Club is a recreational space and therefore not regulated by the local authority. Consequently, statistical data is not available. That said, roughly equal numbers of students from the Welsh and English school attend, with only the occasional student from elsewhere attending.

bilingually, with bilingual signage, bilingual correspondence to parents/students, bilingual activities, and a bilingual website and Facebook group. Additionally, it is worth recalling that all students who attend the English-medium school are taught Welsh either as a first or second language. Therefore all students who attend the Youth-Club, at least theoretically have some ability in the Welsh language.

Young people who attend the Youth-Club identify that there is an open and tolerant approach towards language, perceiving that they 'won't get a row for speaking the wrong language'. In many respects this resembles the flexible bilingualism that characterises the English school. That said, they are aware of pressure, in the form of letters home, from the Welsh school urging young people to make the 'right choice' to attend Welsh-speaking clubs' rather than the 'Saes Club'<sup>7</sup>. Intervention of this sort reflects the perceived threat to the Welsh language, a minority language under threat that, within language policy and planning ideologies in Wales, needs preserving and maintaining, and not just within the confines of the school. Furthermore, this intervention shows an awareness on the part of the school that Welsh is not the language of choice for many of their students once they leave the school gates, and that whilst it may be possible to create a Welsh-only enclave within the confines of the school, outside in the 'real' world the Welsh language is threatened on a daily basis.

## Methods

The data for this study came primarily from periods of fieldwork carried out between September 2008 and January 2011<sup>8</sup>. During this period I made a series of visits to the schools, to the Youth-Club and to the wider community, with approximately thirty-two hours spent at the Youth-Club. My time at the Youth-Club was characterised by two principal methods: ethnographic participant-observational fieldwork (resulting in field-notes) and audio recordings of spontaneous interaction, using personal recording devices, in the form of lapel microphones. My research at the Youth-Club allowed me, in some instances, to follow the within school participants in their recreational and free time. That said, all of the students opted into wearing the lapel microphones and in this sense they were self-selected. The students wore the microphones for 3-4 hours each evening. Whilst the data presented within this article were elicited primarily through the audio recordings of naturally occurring conversational interaction, within-school

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<sup>7</sup> 'Saes Club' is used, as a derogatory term, to refer to the Youth-club as a club 'for English persons'/for English speakers'. That said, 'Saes' is the written, abbreviated form of Saesneg = English (language), which does not get abbreviated in oral speech; sais = English (nationality) (used a lot in spoken and written Welsh).

<sup>8</sup> Approximately forty visits of varying length were made to the community in question.

data from ‘ethnographic chats’ (Selleck 2013) and field-notes<sup>9</sup> also informs my analysis<sup>10</sup>.

### **Re-negotiating/Contesting School-based Ideologies □**

The primary focus of this article is to consider whether the school-based ideologies are carried over to the Youth-Club. Broadly speaking I view contestation as an explicitly and openly confrontational process whereby the status quo is actively disputed and challenged. Re-negotiation is instead characterised by compromise, with parties working collaboratively to come to new understandings. Re-negotiation is often implied and embedded within discourse. By focusing on contestation and re-negotiation within the Youth-Club setting, it is not my intention to imply that students whilst at school accept without questioning the school-based language ideologies and school-based practice. Instead, the contestation at the Youth-Club differs in that it is more marked (more explicit), conducted in a different setting (outside of school), and draws on students from both schools.

A clear and explicit example of a student contesting the school-based ideologies and school-based practice is seen in the following field-note (Extract 1). Here, a student from the Welsh school, is talking about her recent temporary exclusion from school.

#### **Extract 1**

I was helping out in the kitchen, keeping an eye on the tuck shop. Autumn came in to see me to explain that she had been temporarily excluded from school for having her mobile phone with her, which she said was ‘obviously against the school rules’. Autumn explains that as this wasn’t the first time she had been caught with her phone she was sent home for a few days. She reports that whilst off school she received a telephone call from the Headteacher, whom she reports is ‘such a gog’. She explains that the Headteacher was trying to talk with her about her behaviour in an attempt to get her back to school. Autumn then says ‘oh God he was like constantly speaking Welsh at

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<sup>9</sup> My time at the schools was spent observing, where possible, classrooms, assemblies, break times, lunchtimes, school shows, sporting fixtures, and parent’s evenings. Observations were also made in a range of different classroom settings (Welsh-medium, English-medium, top-set and bottom-set). In addition to this, documents including school prospectuses, correspondence home (letters), and classroom work-sheets were also collected. Additionally, I developed ethnographic protocols – ‘ethnographic chats’ (Selleck 2013) to access students’ orientations to the consequences of language education policies.

<sup>10</sup> Whilst the ethnography presented here draws on all of the aforementioned data sources I have had to make choices about what data to present and how best to present that data. In this sense this ethnography, like any other, is partial and restricted and therefore not presented as comprehensive. The examples provided as data extracts are illuminating moments, highlighting key elements of the unfolding story. Most significantly, they show ideological values that are salient to participants, and hence to the research aims. These values emerged from several single experiences of observations and are crystallised in particular utterances or narratives. So the data presented here has validity in this regard, even if it is also subjective and interpretive.

me, I was just like answering in English, can't be arsed with that, I was just like yeah, no, yeah, no, to be honest I couldn't even understand his gogness'. □

The school's insistence on Welsh makes English available for any kind of resistance, and here Autumn explicitly contests the school ideology and the investment in monolingualism. On two occasions (line 6 and line 10) she refers to the Headteacher as a 'gog' (a colloquial and derogatory term for a person from/or who sounds as if they are from North-Wales; it is derived from the Welsh word *gogledd*, meaning 'north'). By referring to him as a gog she is clearly positioning herself against the school norms and expectations<sup>11</sup>. It seems remarkable that she is subject to normative pressure of this sort to use Welsh and that she is clearly resistant to it. Put differently, Autumn seems to be resisting others' attempts at positioning her as a monolingual Welsh-speaking student and consequently a 'good' student (an association between a 'perfect' student and speaking Welsh was established in the within-school data from the Welsh school). Blackledge (2000) argues that where a school has such a dominant ideology of monolingualism, you immediately encounter questions such as 'who's in?' and 'who's out?' Autumn is evidently not engaging with the school rules and expectations, not only by speaking English but also by having her phone with her at school, and as a result she has been physically excluded from the school; in Blackledge's terms she 'is out'<sup>12</sup>.

In the following example we see a clear contrast to this direct challenge to the school-based ideologies, with the girls choosing instead to re-negotiate in a more covert way. In the 30+ hours of naturally occurring data that was collected at the Youth-Club very little Welsh surfaced. For this reason it is interesting to track particular extracts where some elements of Welsh do appear. The following extract is part of a lengthier dialogue between a group of girls, all of whom attend the Welsh school<sup>13</sup>.

### **Extract 2 – Abi, Gina, Kayleigh and Bethan**

*(Walking back from a local shop)*

Abi: *mae tecstiliau 'n really galed a ni wedi gwneud poced hefyd (.) oedd e'n galed (.) can't do it (.) mae tecstilau yn really galed.* ('Textiles is really difficult and we have made a pocket too (.) it was hard (.) can't do it (.) my textiles is really hard.') □

*(Back at the Youth-Club)*

Gina: what happened today

Abi: oh no it's just (.) Amy Davies, she's just being nasty (.)

Gina: is that all?

Abi: well yeah (.) and it's kind of hurt my feelings (.)

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<sup>11</sup> In the eyes of many students, head teachers come to represent and embody the ethos and culture of the school more generally.

<sup>12</sup> The within-school data shows that the separate bilingualism of the Welsh school and the construction of a monolingual Welsh only enclave requires a considerable amount of management, control and intervention on the part of the school. The students report that detentions and temporary exclusions for repeatedly using English in school are commonplace.

<sup>13</sup> The girls are all 'first-language' Welsh speakers and come from homes where Welsh is the main language. Note also that Gina and Abi are sisters.



Gina how would you like it OK if you chose French as an option then you moved to (.) you moved to *gwnio* ('sewing') and everyone understands (.) knows what to do and how to use the machines and stuff except for you (.) cos I haven't machined since year eight Gina and now I'm in year ten (.) and I do know how to use them like but not properly, so I was like yeah (3.0) what was I saying (.) and then um(.) oh yeah I accidentally went on Cara's one(.)and then Rhiannon looked at her and said she's in your seat she's touching your seat she's using your machine and Cara was like laughing and then um Amy Davies I didn't know what to so I was just standing there and was like oh shit Kayleigh: anyway continue

Abi: I'm just talking about the thing (.) and then she was just like (.) yeah (.) and then Amy Davies whispered to Rhiannon (.) and I was just like oh my God I don't know what to do (.) they just laughed at me

Gina: weren't you sitting by her at dinner though?

Abi: yeah I know (.) she was loner so she came to sit by me

Bethan: I would have said fuck her

Gina: you should've said you've been unkind to me why you sitting by me

Abi: no cos that was before (.) *cinio* ('lunch') then *tecstilia* ('textiles')

At the start of the extract the girls are outside of the Youth-Club, walking back from a local shop. They are all wearing their school uniform, a feature that is arguably salient to the emerging discourse. At the start of the extract the matrix language is Welsh. The ideology of the school (and the investment in monolingualism) would have these girls using Welsh in all interactions on school grounds as well as beyond the school grounds. A student's school uniform is a visible sign of school identity, and by wearing the uniform outside of school they potentially carry their school-based identity and plausibly, their school-based ideologies, with them. Thus, 'out on the street...visibly uniformed it is about being recognised, about being hailed both as a 'student' and as a student of this or that school' (Whelen 2008: 304). Arguably, what we see here is evidence of these girls playing what Heller (2006: 114) refers to as 'the game'. The girls appear to keep the public image or face of the school as Welsh, and relegate their seemingly contradictory use of English (contradictory to that of the monolingual ideology of the school) to the backstage activities and domains (in this case the Youth-Club). In other words when outside of school, visibly uniformed the girls conform to ideological precepts.

However, once the girls return to the Youth-Club, they very quickly return to using English with only occasional lexical code-switching within this. It was established in the within-school data that at the Welsh school the girls are urged to keep their languages separate (separate bilingualism). By mixing and blending different aspects of their linguistic resources they are challenging and contesting the ideology that seeks to keep their linguistic resources discrete and thus it can be argued that language choice is used strategically by these girls. In other words the girls seem less likely to endorse the compartmentalisation of their different sets of linguistic resources. It is generally considered 'cool' to rebel against school rules, expectations and norms. Thus, the mixing of different aspects of their linguistic resources in peer talk arguably highlights an attempt to present themselves as 'cool' and trendy. Furthermore, in the within-school data Abi suggests that she 'speaks English properly' as opposed to the 'really really

Welsh people who speak English funnily and stutter'. These girls therefore favour bilingualism, perceiving it as a desirable and valuable skill and the choice to use both Welsh and English further reflects this position. Nevertheless, the relatively infrequent free choice of Welsh for these girls marks a significant re-negotiation and re-alignment with school-based ideologies and school-based practice.

Within Extract 2 school lexis tends to be in Welsh. For these girls the topic domain of school seems to naturalise the use of Welsh, and so in this sense perhaps it isn't entirely a free choice to use Welsh. In the within-school data from the Welsh school Abi concurs with Harri who suggests that 'really really Welsh' students 'understand like everything'. Here, however, Abi comments on how 'hard' a school subject is. The implication is that other students in the class fully understand the Welsh and are therefore more easily able to complete the practical sewing task. Once again it emerges very clearly within this extract that the girls perceive that they are under no obligation to use Welsh whilst at the Youth-Club and identify that they are free to choose which language they want to use and when. In some senses it seems that the girls are keeping their languages largely separate in terms of social domains (school vs. the Youth-Club), with Welsh largely limited to school and recreational spaces equating to the use of English. In other words the students do not stay within the ideological precepts of the Welsh school's policy, except in their mentioning of school subjects. Moreover, this is perhaps a further example of the unintended consequences of the education system and the separation and boundaries that are put up around language at the Welsh school.

In the following extract we see another example of a more explicit contestation of school-based ideologies. Here however, the extract involves a mixed group of girls (Anna and Claire, who attend the English school and Harri, who attends the Welsh school). The girls all attended the same primary school and are part of an established friendship group.

### **Extract 3 - Anna, Harri and Claire**

Shop Assistant (SA): no school today?

Anna: no I was in work experience

SA: oh good

Harri: and I couldn't be arsed

SA: you can't be arsed,

Harri: no (.) I'm moving back to Ysgol Ardwyn though, I've had enough of Ysgol Arnant

SA: ah you're moving back to

Harri: Ysgol Ardwyn

Claire: yeah cos Arnant is shit

SA: yeah?

Harri: if I get sent to Ardwyn that's fine

As in Extract 2 the girls are outside of the Youth-Club in a local shop buying sweets. I argued in relation to Extract 2 that, when outside of Youth-Club and visibly uniformed, the girls appeared to conform to ideological precepts of the Welsh school (by using Welsh). The girls in this extract are not wearing their uniform and thus appear to be under less obligation to preserve and maintain the public image of the school and to

uphold the school-based ideologies<sup>14</sup>. In this extract, Harri openly criticises the Welsh school and what they stand for, making it clear that she wants to move to the English school, arguing that she's 'had enough' of the Welsh school and its norms and expectations. In the within school data, from the Welsh school it emerged that Harri flouts the rules and expectations of the school by choosing to speak English and the above extract appears to confirm this. That said, towards the end of the extract she implies that any decision to move may not be entirely her own, with the word 'sent' indicating her perception of a key ideological stance apparently inherent within the Welsh school. In the within-school data it emerged very clearly that students at the Welsh school were aware of an apparent threat that if they chose not to use Welsh and would prefer not to conform to the ideological and linguistic expectations of the school, they could 'always go to the English down the road'. The implication is that the school would carry out this threat in order to preserve the monolingual ideal of the school. For the first time we see an explicit mention of the rivalry between the two schools, with Claire stating that the Welsh school is 'shit'. Note however, that there is still no direct mention of the school's language policy being the issue of the reasoning behind this stance. There is a nod towards this in the following extract taken from the within-school data from the English school.

#### **Extract 4 – Anna and Claire**

Anna: have you seen Harri?

Claire: she only went there [to the Welsh school]

Anna: so big headed (.) she only went there because her friends are there and she'll walk round (.) and if you look her (.) "what you looking at" in a Welsh accent and stuff (.) she used to be quite nice if you know what I mean and now she's gone really (.)

Claire: yeah cos I've seen her when I went to football (.) with this school and she was with Arnant and she was like [in accent] "hi Claire" but in Welsh (.) I was like "yeah OK" (.) ignore her

It emerges very clearly that, whilst Anna, Claire and Harri get on at Youth-Club, a space largely outside of the school's control (as seen in Extract 3), when representing their schools' the girls indicate that the situation is less amicable. Arguably, this extract marks a further example of what Heller (2006: 114) calls 'playing the game', with Harri adjusting her behaviour (her performance) to expected identities; whilst representing the school Harri appears to conform to social expectations, that she won't be friendly with students from the English school, and instead will diverge away from them by speaking Welsh (or English with a markedly Welsh accent). Interestingly, Harri indicated in Extract 3 that she had 'had enough' of the Welsh school and their norms and expectations. What we see, then, is an individual contradiction – on one hand wanting to conform to school expectations and on the other hand wanting to be cool and socially acceptable (see the discussion of Extract 2 for further detail on the association between being 'cool' and rebelling against school norms and expectations). In other words, students must negotiate a world in which they need specific kinds of language to succeed in different contexts. To maintain and build on peer-group relationships the students, whilst at school may need specific kinds of Welsh (with a clear separation

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<sup>14</sup> The uniforms are visually distinctive (with the Welsh students wearing a distinctive red and black combination and the English school wearing blue and grey).

from English); however whilst outside of school they need types of English and/or bilingual practices.

Up to this point we've seen that the young people who attend the Youth-Club contest and re-negotiate the school-based ideologies, primarily by questioning the monolingual ideal, but also by 'playing the game' (Heller 2006: 114), adjusting their language choices strategically to present and portray the image and identity that they feel is more desirable within a particular context. In Extract 5 we see the students continuing to re-negotiate and contest the school-based ideologies and school-based practice, but we see that they also start to draw conclusions regarding the perceived value of Welsh, and of a Welsh identity in the 'modern' globalised world (one that they position as opposed to and contrasting with the school-based ideology).

In Extract 5 we see a further example of mobile phones being the basis for school exclusion (as first seen in Extract 1). Here a group of students (Abi, Dylan and Kayleigh) from the Welsh school are discussing the rural and traditional pastime of fishing.

#### **Extract 5 – Abi, Dylan and Kayleigh**

Dylan: this is the most expensive rod I've got

Abi: how much is it?

Dylan: one hundred and sixty

Abi: did you pay one hundred and sixty for a rod?

Dylan: it's about the salmon though innit (.) the tip in the rod

Kayleigh: well at least you'll actually use it

Abi: I wouldn't use it if it cost one hundred and sixty quid (.) I wouldn't buy it for one hundred and sixty quid (.) your mum actually paid for that? (2.0) smurf (.) that's his nickname

Dylan: and I might be getting another one (.) it's the salmon (.) and you should see (.) how big the salmon

Abi: *Tri chwarter awr cyn bod fi'n gorffen(.) Wednesday* ('three quarters of an hour before I finish(.)Wednesday') □(*girls start singing*)

Dylan: they could (.) fifty pound salmon in the river (.) the biggest salmon that's been caught in the river is sixty pounds □(*girls start singing*)

Kayleigh: wow (.) is that a lot?

Dylan: yeah □(*girls continue singing*)

Abi: I remember fishing(.) bring bring bring bring (.) bring bring (.) hello (.)I got chucked out of that school club

Dylan: oh yeah (.) remember when I (.) first time she came I was going to fucking leave □(*girls continue singing*)

Dylan: Do you know the first thing a salmon □  
(*girls start singing*)

Dylan: salmon going backwards

Kayleigh: Oliver made two cakes

Dylan: like that

Kayleigh: Abi (.) Oliver made two cakes (.) one flakey and one birthday cake for

Abi: why didn't he be a chef?

Dylan: the salmon □(*girls continue singing*)

Dylan: You coming down to river?

Abi: No bye (3.0) boring □(*girls continue singing*) □

In this extract we see the pupils starting to make the association between an 'old', local, rural, heritage culture that they come to associate with speaking Welsh and the opposing urban, 'new' culture that they associate with English. The tension is most apparent in the short exchange in lines 18-21, about the school-based fishing club (which as a club based at the Welsh school would fall under the school ideology as a monolingual Welsh only environment). Abi has taken her mobile phone with her to the school club. She starts by re-enacting the telephone ringing, she then answers the telephone (in English), before indicating that she was thrown out of the club. So it is clear that the 'new' technology of the mobile phone is apparently not permitted at the club. Notwithstanding the obvious issues of having a phone ringing at a fishing club (an activity associated with peace and tranquility), the extract highlights the tension between what Coupland (2003) has referred to as 'old local', heritage type activities and the 'new global' mobile phone. Mobile phones are regularly banned in British secondary schools and so in this sense the Welsh school is no exception. However it seems to take on a further dimension. The school is, as previously mentioned, attempting to create an enclave for the Welsh language. It is therefore possible that the mobile phone is seen as a symbol of outside influence, in this case the English language. Note that Abi indicates that she answers the telephone in English. In both Extract 1 and Extract 5 the mobile phone is the justification for being excluded from school and schoolbased activities. The perceived threat of the new media combined with an emphasis on an 'authentic identity...anchored in the pre-shift society' (Jaffe 2007: 53) and a preference for an 'idealised version of the heritage culture' (Blackledge and Creese 2010: 122), seems to result in pupils making an association between using Welsh and participating in cultural heritage-type activities (again re-iterated in the policy documents that connect Welsh with the *Urdd Gobaith Cymru* and Young Farmers clubs). Within this community, being Welsh speaking (or at least a first- language Welsh speaker) appears to have two different social and indexical associations; one is rurality and 'folk' (as seen here) and the other is 'middle class' as seen in Extract 4 - where the girls perceive that the Welsh school turns a friend who uses a Welsh accent (or Welsh) as a marker of superiority into someone 'snooty' (that is not to say that there aren't any middle class English-dominant families, but these characteristics are not made salient by the young people in either the within-school or Youth-Club data).

What is the language dimension of local vs. non-local or global? And how does young people's talk articulate local vs. non-local concerns, aspirations and values? The girls make it clear, both implicitly and explicitly, that they are not interested in the rural pastime of fishing. Within this extract, singing functions pragmatically as an attempt to change the subject. They are, by singing, evaluating the discourse of fishing as dull. The girls clearly enjoy singing (throughout my time working with the girls they regularly sang the latest chart music and discussed their latest album downloads and purchases). The activity of singing (in English) is thus positioned in this dialogue as more interesting than fishing. Language-ideologically then, we have singing in English vs. fishing through the medium of Welsh, with the girls clearly choosing to engage with singing and to disengage from fishing. In sum, the girls attempt to distance themselves from institutionally imposed pupil and learner identities and instead they choose to highlight aspects of their youth identity associated with popular urban culture.

Another way that the disinterest in fishing is seen within this extract is Abi's use of Welsh (Line 12). The implication is that Dylan is taking too long telling his story about salmon. Arguably, the use of Welsh shows a further association between boredom and participating in heritage/cultural-type activities. It is, however, not until line 31 that the girls explicitly state that going to the river to fish is 'boring'. What we see in this example is that these girls find different ways of aligning themselves against traditional, cultural, purist ideologies and activities, that might more easily embed the use of Welsh and which they clearly associate with their school. The girls appear to be contesting the legitimacy of the school's ideology which they consider to be an outdated 'idealised version of the heritage culture' (Blackledge and Creese 2010: 122), preferring instead to align themselves with 'modern' media, and its use of English. In this sense the girls seem to establish and create alternative identity positions that move beyond their institutionally salient identities of pupils and learners and institutionally imposed heritage identities.

## **Discussion**

By looking at how young people engage with the Welsh language outside of school, this study has gone some way towards providing a richer and more nuanced understanding of the research context as well as a deeper understanding of the complex cultural and ideological pressures on young people's engagement with the Welsh language. Put another way, the approach adopted here, has allowed for a fuller understanding of how individuals experience and interpret the language-ideological content of their education and how their actions and accounts in their free time are shaped by the school-based ideologies and school-based practice as well as language policy and the broader political climate.

It emerged that whilst the schools channel official ideologies of language and bilingualism (see Selleck 2013 for further detail), recreational spaces, even though loosely connected to schools as institutions, function as more open spaces where institutional ideologies are actively re-worked and re-negotiated. Whilst contestation did occur amongst students from the English school it was largely restricted to the dominant monolingualising tendencies of the Welsh school, with students using the relatively 'free' space of the Youth-Club, to reflect, sometimes critically, on their school-based identities and, in some instances at least, rebel against them. It would seem that the strict separation and boundaries that are put up around language at the Welsh school and the perception of limited language choice, resulted in students questioning and deliberately opposing the school norms and expectations. As mentioned, Blackledge (2000) argues that where a school has such a dominant ideology of monolingualism, you immediately encounter questions such as 'who's in?' and 'who's out?' In other words who's on board and going to conform to ideological precepts and equally who is going to contest and re-negotiate these ideologies? There is a sense that some will be included and some will be excluded. In other words the rhetoric of choice in Welsh language policy and planning hides the fact that there are winners and losers in competitive markets (Fairclough 2006: 60), and that there are likely to be unforeseen inequalities (Tollefson 1991).

The contestation and re-negotiation manifested itself in particular ways. For some students the use of English, at the Youth-Club (and at the Welsh school) was a way of contesting the school ideology and the investment in monolingualism. For others, mixing and blending different aspects of their linguistic resources (as seen in Extract 3), allowed them to challenge and contest the ideology that sought to keep their linguistic resources discrete (the separate bilingualism of the Welsh school). However, re-negotiation and contestation went beyond a simple language choice with students re-negotiating and questioning which version of Welshness is more valuable, in Heller's terms 'the removed and authentic' (as seen at the Welsh school) or the 'new and hybrid' (as seen at the Youth-Club) (Heller 2003: 147). In other words is language revitalisation about restoration (returning to the original pre-shift type Welsh) or about transformation (giving new life to the Welsh language, making it a language for modern day Wales – 'one that is powerful, adaptive and a modern medium'? (Welsh Assembly Government 2012:5).

The Youth-Club data allows for a more nuanced understanding of this local/global interface, which informs the construction of youth identities. The Youth-Club simultaneously encourages the 'students' to engage with a wider and potentially global popular culture (consequently, English is encountered on a daily basis through audio-visual mass media and various other forms of popular culture), but without wholly losing touch with their local identities and connections. Within the complex bilingual context, the negotiation between global and local is inflected by language choice. Thus, the 'students' have to negotiate their relationships with the nationalist ideologies that often characterise Welsh-medium schooling, but also with more global ideologies, mainly mediated by English. Furthermore, we see young people at Youth-Club distancing themselves from the traditional, cultural, purist ideologies and activities, that might more easily embed the use of Welsh and which they associate with the Welsh school.

There are deeply fundamental questions at play here. It has become clear that there is a gulf between the increasing numbers of young people receiving their education through the medium of Welsh, and the levels of Welsh language usage outside of school, arguably the most salient issue for the future of the Welsh language. Is the Welsh school, by inadvertently fostering such rebellion through current tendencies towards 'separate' bilingualism, in fact hastening the very language shift they aim to prevent? Alternatively, can the Welsh language be strengthened by a more open and flexible approach, as at the Youth-Club, or would this be ineffective in the long run? In light of this, I question whether the recent policy shift towards greater control and intervention in recreational spaces, with an emphasis placed on promoting and 'ensuring' that activities lead to an increased use of Welsh, with the use of English and/or bilingual practices of apparently little concern, will have the desired effect in making Welsh a 'living language'? Will it not simply lead to further rebellion and further exclusion amongst young people who for whatever reason, choose to use English outside of school?

Whilst there may be, as Rhys (2014) suggests a need for more 'attractive initiatives for using the Welsh language outside of the classroom' (Click on Wales 2014) there is also

a need to address and monitor the relationship between and the influence of the school-based ideologies and school-based practice on the ways young people orientate to and understand language outside of school in recreational spaces.

Whatever the approach, if the future of the Welsh language is ultimately down to younger generations, then power and control needs to be delivered to them. Whilst this research has contributed to the debate around bilingualism in Wales, it is not yet fully clear where we are 'in terms of the new bilingualism in Wales' and where we might 'be heading' (Coupland and Aldridge 2009: 6). Further critical sociolinguistic research is still needed on the Welsh context, in order to better understand the complexities that arise and the impact it has on young people and their language use. That said, the living-out of the sociolinguistic models of Wales by young people in the data highlights that an apparently simple idea about bilingualism in Wales is in reality complex, with rich local classification systems in operation. The view of Wales as a particularly successful example of language planning misses the fact that impressively ambitious policy moves are giving rise to lay ideological tensions that we need to be more aware of.

**Words 7229 (excluding references and endnotes)**

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