'We're not fully Welsh': Hierarchies of belonging and 'new' speakers of Welsh

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Introduction

This chapter seeks to problematise the concept of the 'new' and 'learner' speaker from the standpoint of a situated, ethnographic analysis and in doing so, draws on research conducted in two contrasting secondary schools in south-west Wales: an English-medium school and a designated Welsh-medium school. The focus in this chapter lies in Ysgol Ardwyn[1], an English-medium school where only 12 per cent of students report speaking Welsh as first language or to a corresponding standard, and where approximately 88 per cent of the students can therefore be considered as 'new' or 'learner' speakers of Welsh. The intention is to understand how students at this English-medium school orientate to, contest, and re-define what it means to be 'Welsh' and 'English' and how they construct their own legitimacy as individuals, as language users and as speakers of a minority language.

Within the field of sociolinguistics, discussion of 'new speakers' is a relatively recent one, albeit one that has perhaps been examined under the more familiar, yet now increasingly contested labels such as 'non-native', 'second language', and 'L2 speaker' (O'Rourke et al., 2015). Although scholarship on 'new speakers' has been extremely productive in recent years, Costa (2015) suggests that the term is not without its difficulties, with academics and practitioners using the terms for varying purposes. Broadly, the 'new speaker' label has been used to describe 'individuals with little or no

home or community exposure to a minority language but who instead acquire it through immersion or bilingual educational programs, revitalisation projects or as adult language learners' (O'Rourke et al., 2015, p. 1). Beyond that, the characteristics of 'new speakers' can and do vary depending on the context under investigation. However, Walsh and Lane (2014) suggest that the strength of the terms lies in the fact that it is 'sufficiently focused to be useful as an analytical tool but broad enough to capture the diversity, complexity and heterogeneity of the contexts, practices and ideologies' (Walsh and Lane, 2014, p. 1). For my research on Welsh adolescents, I find that the utility lies in the concept rather than the term itself; in other words, the notion of a 'new speaker' provides a lens through which to investigate the contemporary dynamics of minority language communities, rather than exists as a precise term by which to categorise the members of a particular community. It should be noted that the term 'new speaker' is not in wide circulation within the community under investigation and instead the term *dysgwyr* (learners) is the preferred lexical choice (*cf.* Carty, this volume, for a parallel example in a Gaelic context). Additionally, neither has the concept of a 'new' or 'learner' speaker been extensively researched within the Welsh context more generally (see below for some marked exceptions). In this sense, Wales does not differ from other research contexts in that studies on language revitalisation have generally focused on native and/or heritage communities, with significantly less attention paid to new speaker profiles and practices (O'Rourke and Pujolar, 2013).

Within the Welsh context 'new speakers' have conventionally been conceived as 'new cohorts of young learners…largely in non-heartland zones, especially the populous and traditionally very Anglicised urban southeast' (Coupland and Aldridge, 2009, p. 6).

Robert's (2009) attitudinal study focused on one such community, looking at L2 speakers of Welsh in south-east Wales, highlighting the presence of some negative attitudes towards second-language speech and second-language speakers, with 'new' L2 speakers perceived as 'less Welsh' than L1 speakers. Scourfield and Davies (2005) chose to focus on minority ethnic children within Wales, as 'learners' of Welsh and found (p.105) that Welsh identity continues to be viewed as 'narrow, exclusive and still tending to whiteness'. Little or no research has turned its attention to the so-called 'heartland' communities – conventionally defined as areas where more than 60 per cent of the population report to have some knowledge of the Welsh language[2] (Aitchison and Carter, 2004, p. 36)[3]. In their analysis of the 2001 Census data, Aitchison and Carter (p.36) report that four areas (Gwynedd, Ynys Môn, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion) continue to be distinguishable as heartland areas. However, Aitchison and Carter (p. 65) also warn that 'the linguistic centre of gravity in Wales is shifting', as these areas also indicate significant decline since 1991: in all but one area (Gwynedd), the number of people reporting to have some knowledge of the Welsh language falls below 60 per cent.

Jones and Martin Jones (2004) suggest that it is in these very 'traditional' communities, questions of 'new speakerness' are coming to the fore. Schools in these areas are drawing an increasingly diverse student intake, with the need to cater for a range of linguistic proficiencies. This study looks at one such heartland community in south-west Wales in order to explore how students contest and re-define what it means to be 'Welsh' and 'English' and how this relates to how they construct their own identities.

Welsh Language Policy

Welsh language policy, at least in one of its most influential formulations, namely *Iaith Pawb*/Everyone's Language (2003), is characterised by an inclusive ideology – one of choice and equality of access – with equality between languages and choice as to which language to use and an apparent desire to normalise bilingualism on these terms. The overriding vision of policy in Wales is one of a 'truly bilingual Wales' – one where people can 'choose to live their lives through the medium of either or both Welsh or English and where the presence of the two languages is a source of pride and strength for everyone' (Welsh Assembly Government, 2003, p. 1). *Iaith Pawb* is therefore based on the underlying premise that the option to learn and use Welsh (and English) is open to all, regardless of linguistic background. In Williams' terms, '*Iaith Pawb* seeks to deliver us from the old prejudice that the Welsh language belongs by birth right to a shrinking minority alone' (Williams, 2005, p. 24).

In more recent policy documents such as *Iaith Fyw, p. Iaith Byw*/A Living Language: A Language for Living (Welsh Assembly Government, 2012), we see a subtle shift towards an apparent 'choice' between Welsh and/or English to an emphasis on the Welsh language alone: 'our vision is to see the Welsh language thriving in Wales' (Welsh Assembly Government, 2012, p. 14). The document outlines two core elements, firstly 'to enable and encourage children and other people to acquire the language' (ibid, p. 14) and secondly, to enable and encourage people to use the language on a daily basis' (ibid, p. 14). There is a notable shift from capacity building (increasing the number of Welsh speakers) to increasing the number who want (or choose) to use Welsh. However, 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. Furthermore, in *Iaith Fyw: Iaith Byw* we see a marked shift towards a language ideology of persuasion with talk of the need to 'convince' young people of the value of the Welsh language and 'influence' them (Welsh Assembly Government, 2012, p. 29).

Additionally, the document is noticeably more exclusionary than *Iaith Pawb,* positioning those who 'learn Welsh as a second-language' in opposition to those who 'receive Welsh medium education', (Welsh Assembly Government, 2012, p. 8), arguing that the former are likely to have 'limited fluency' (Welsh Assembly Government, 2012, p. 8), where fluency is understood to mean equal competency in both Welsh and English. The document goes on to suggest that learning and speaking Welsh at school is insufficient, arguing that the 'language needs to be used and supported in the home' (Welsh Assembly Government, 2012, p. 12). By positioning 'new speakers' of Welsh – those who have acquired the language outside of the home – in this way, the policy is arguably 'denigrating new profiles of speakers as in some way less authentic' (O'Rourke et al., 2015, p. 4). Further, as schools in Wales, after all, have long been considered the 'primary agency for changing the language situation' (Farrell et al., 1997, p. 489), and thus, in this sense, are the main site of distribution of Welsh and of a Welsh identity, positioning new speakers in these terms raises questions as to the legitimacy of 'new' speakers and 'learners' of Welsh and, as will be postulated in this chapter, forces education to become a site of struggle over who gets to count as 'Welsh' and what gets to count as 'speaking Welsh.'

Welsh Language Education Policy

Under the National Curriculum in Wales, it is compulsory for all students to study Welsh up to the age of 16, either as a 'first language' or as a 'second language'. It is widely

accepted within the educational community that not only is the teaching and learning of Welsh as a second language, in many cases, not effective but that it is often under-valued by young people and in many cases also stigmatised and stereotyped (Robert, 2009). As will be argued in this chapter, the terms 'first' and 'second' language are ideologically-laden and divisive, and arguably serve only to create an artificial difference between students. The *One Language For All* (2013) review document posits the notion of a Welsh language-learning continuum, one whereby 'all pupils in Wales would follow the same programme of study and could be assessed against one framework' (Welsh Assembly Government, 2013, p. 24) and where the term 'second language' could ultimately be removed altogether. While only in draft format, this apparently more flexible and dynamic approach to language learning and language use not only acknowledges the varying contexts of language use in Wales, but also moves away from the concept of 'second language' towards a co-ordinated and integrated consideration of the Welsh language as it is spoken and used currently. While ultimately this may partially remove the problematic binary division between 'first' and 'second' language Welsh speakers or 'learners' and would perhaps allow students to move more freely between different fluency levels, it would arguably remain difficult for pupils in English-medium schools to achieve the same linguistic level as pupils in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools and the continuum would still face the challenges posed by ideologies around authenticity and legitimacy.

In recent years there has been an increasing emphasis placed on the Welsh language and Welsh cultural dimensions of the curriculum in Wales, marking a considerable effort by the government to use school systems to establish visions of national language and

identity. The seminal policy in this regard is *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*/Curriculum Cymreig (ACCAC Qualifications Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales, 2003), intended to encapsulate the Welshness in Welsh schools. Note that in Wales, a distinction is to be made between the adjectives '*Cymreig*' pertaining to Wales (as used here) and '*Cymraeg*' pertaining to the Welsh language and thus within the title of the curriculum here there appears to be some glimmer of recognition (in the eig/aeg distinction) that being Welsh might mean more than speaking Welsh. Despite this, the document claims that 'the Welsh language is…a crucial part of the *Curriculum Cymreig*' (ACCAC Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales 2003, p. 8) and thus, ultimately an inseparable feature of Welshness is assumed to be a crucial part of helping students identify their own sense of Welshness and a real sense of belonging. The curriculum is thus presenting an image of Wales and of Welsh identity as mediated through Welsh as opposed to through English and/or bilingually (and thus appears to contradict the concept of 'true' bilingualism as outlined in *Iaith Pawb*). That said, under its 'linguistic' heading, *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* outlines the aspirations for an inclusive approach towards the Welsh language: Welsh with access for all. It acknowledges that 'there are many different levels of fluency in Welsh' and that 'there can be no single view of what it is to be Welsh' (ACCAC Qualifications and Curriculum Assessment Authority for Wales, 2003, p. 5).

In addition to suggesting that a sense of Welshness is intrinsically linked to the Welsh language, *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* relies on established discourse and stereotypes to produce representative experiences of Welshness for students. Iconic Welsh images/figures (authors, artists, composers and places – Llangranog and Glan-llyn, both

in traditional 'heartland' areas), as well as traditional cultural activities (Urdd and Eisteddfodau, a Welsh festival of literature, music and performance) are held up, with varying degrees, as reliable representations of Welshness in schools (*cf.* Sallabank and Marquis, this volume, for similar examples of how the minority language is framed in 'traditional' terms). Smith (2010, p. 110) argues that this reliance on portrayals of traditional 'heartland' institutions and practice leaves 'little room for young people to recognise their own sense of Welshness'. Furthermore, it is these 'authentic' Welsh experiences that are perceived to enable strong claims to Welshness and authenticity. It will, thus be argued that the restrictive sense of Welshness presented through documents such as *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*, and adopted within the community in question, results in students perceiving that they fail to meet purist criteria, and consequently positioning themselves and others as being more or less Welsh, resulting in a sense of sociolinguistic hierarchies.

More generally, what emerges is the construction of an apparently clear-cut dichotomy between 'new' and 'traditional' speakers, indexed through the type of language choice that users display, with those attending 'Welsh-medium' education hierarchically positioned in a preferential position, which is argued to be indicative of an investment in revitalisation efforts and of a protectionist ideology. This empirical research seeks to determine how this plays out 'on the ground:' how do young people at one English-medium school orientate to, contest, and re-define what it means to be 'Welsh' and 'English'[4]?

The research context

The project is a comparative ethnographic study of two contrasting secondary schools in an area of south-west 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. The focus here will be on Ysgol Ardwyn, the 'English' school[5], located in a small market town, where approximately 89 per cent of the school-aged population (3-15 years old) report to have some knowledge of the Welsh language (Office for National Statistics 2004, 40-63)[6].

The 'English' school is designated as a category three, English-medium school (EM) by the local education authority, with only 12 per cent of the students reported to speak Welsh as a first language or to a corresponding standard (with approximately 690 students on the school roll). There is a Welsh stream, numbering around 30 students (one form-group) in each year group. These students study five subjects through the medium of Welsh for the duration of Key Stage 3 (aged 11-14 years). The school functions bilingually (for example, bilingual signage, bilingual correspondence to parents/students, bilingual assemblies and announcements) and the students confirm a tolerance of both English and Welsh as well as code-mixing. That said, it remains an English-dominant environment.

Comparisons will be made with the 'bilingual' school, located in a small rural town (around 8 miles from the 'English' school) where approximately 92 per cent of the school-aged population (3-15 years old) report to have some knowledge of the Welsh language (Office for National Statistics, 2004, 40-63). The school is classified by the local education authority as a category 2A 'bilingual school' with 80 per cent of the curriculum delivered through the medium of Welsh. However, the school functions

largely monolingually in Welsh, with around 83 per cent of the students coming from homes where Welsh is the main language (with the remaining 17 per cent coming from homes where English is the main language). Furthermore, 91 per cent of the students (with approximately 527 students on the school roll) are reported 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, p.17). While 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 ideology (for example, Welsh-only signage, Welsh-only assemblies/announcements, Welsh-only policy within the school classrooms and 'free'/recreational spaces).

The schools serve the same bilingual community, and students and their parents/guardians are aware of the positioning of the two schools – both conceptually and in terms of language ideologies – in relation to each other. The schools are viewed as alternatives within a single community, and local discourse is a rich source of comment on the nature and consequences of language education policies and practices. The following looks at how local teenagers orient to these discourses and how these these orientations in turn mediate identity negotiations at the local level.

Methods and Data
The data for this study came primarily from periods of fieldwork carried out between September 2008 and January 2011[7]. This research was characterised by the use of three principle methods: ethnographic observational fieldwork, ethnographic chats (Selleck, 2013), and audio recordings. I made a series of visits to the schools and to the wider community, observing, where possible, classrooms, assemblies, breaktimes, lunchtimes, school shows, sporting events, and parents' evenings. Observations were also made in a

range of different classroom settings (Welsh-medium, English-medium, top-set and bottom-set[8]). In addition to these methods, documents including school prospectuses, correspondence home (letters), and classroom worksheets were also collected.

I developed ethnographic protocols in order to access students' orientations to the consequences of language education policies. The ethnographic chats that were employed here were characterised by specific procedural and interactional characteristics of frame and genre, which differentiates them from the ethnographic interview in three principle ways. Firstly, there was much less control encoded into the written prompts than there would have been with interview questions. Prompts were pragmatically realised as open-ended 'topics' rather than specific questions. A second point of departure from the ethnographic interview was the level of involvement from the researcher – once prompts had been given to the students I had little or no involvement in the 'chat,' as many of the follow up questions were initiated by the students themselves. In this sense, the ethnographic chats resembled an everyday 'normal' conversation in that students were free to introduce new topics. The third difference between an interview and an ethnographic chat relates to turn-taking. In ethnographic chats, participants were able to build alignments and misalignments with each other relative to the topic of the prompt, which allowed for more cumulative multi-party interaction.

The data presented within this article were elicited primarily through ethnographic chats, although other sorts of ethnographic participation-observation and subsequent field notes also inform my analysis[9].

Language Policy in the English School: 'Flexible Bilingualism'

In focusing the analysis on the English medium school, I broadly adopt the dichotomy presented by Blackledge and Creese (2010) – that of 'flexible' versus 'separate' bilingualism. Whereas 'separate bilingualism' is used to describe what Heller refers to as 'parallel monolingualism' (Heller 1999, p. 271), and Baker 2003 and Fishman (1967) characterise as bilingualism with diglossia, in which each language is used for distinct and separate functions,[10] 'flexible bilingualism' and other related concepts such as translanguaging (Garcia, 2009) and heteroglossia (Bailey, 2007), all point to 'an approach to bilingualism that is centred, not on languages as has often been the case, but on the practices of bilinguals' (Garcia, 2009, p. 140), where these practices are presumed to include fluid movement of various types between languages. However, although flexible and separate bilingualism are two meaningful categories which help to provide an initial characterisation of the two schools, the differences between the two schools in terms of language policy, practice, and ideological orientations cannot be fully accounted for solely within this dichotomy. Bearing this in mind, however, there are some very clear indications an ideology of flexible bilingualism exists in the English school, as illustrated in the following extract:

EXTRACT 0.1 SIXTH-FORM, 'ENGLISH FORM', DAVID, WILL AND ALICE

David: you can speak whatever you want

Will: yeah

David: sometimes you can speak to a teacher and you won't understand (.) can

                     say that I don't know what you mean (.) but

Alice: they won't

Will: they won't tell you off

David: won't tell you off or anything

Researcher: very laid back

Alice: yeah

David: just because this is a bilingual school they have to promote both languages

Alice: yeah it's up to you

In this extract, the students immediately show a willingness to comment on the language policy operating in their school, and they seem to have a clear conception of what it means to be at a 'bilingual school'. The students clearly identify that there is an institutional openness and tolerance towards language, and that they are encouraged and allowed to use both languages within the school, thus reflecting a policy of flexible bilingualism. Further, the students do not expect any punitive control: they will not, in their terms, 'get told off' for a particular act of language choice. It is clear therefore that the students perceive individual autonomy to exist in terms of language choice. As seen above, David identifies that there is a commitment to 'promoting both languages' at school, so for these students bilingualism involves both the use and promotion of two languages under minimal institutional constraints. As a result of the way in which languages are ideologically positioned and presented within the school – which can best be classified as 'flexible bilingualism' – the students perceive that their school is 'bilingual' (line 11), a distinction which contradicts the official categorisation of the school as 'English medium' as well as the perception of those in the wider community.

Complications, Contradictions and Contestation

Not 'Fully Welsh'?

Despite the existence of this flexible bilingualism – where ostensibly, bilingual language practices are manifestations of perceived 'belonging' to both Welsh-speaking and English-speaking communities (in whichever way one may see these as bounded communities) – as well as the fact that the Welsh language is commonly positioned 'as a defining dimension of Welsh identity for *both* Welsh speaking and non-Welsh speaking Welsh people alike' (Livingstone et al., 2009, p. 298, emphasis my own), it emerges that some students at the English school feel 'less Welsh' than those at the Welsh school. These students are ostensibly part of the same Welsh 'heartland' as those at the Welsh school; however, there are instances in the data in which the students draw on discourses which demarcate boundaries around languages and language users, resulting in clear divisions between 'Welsh' and 'English' students, and which sometimes call into question perceptions of 'national' and 'ethnic' identities. This is illustrated in the following extract, in which a group of male interlocutors position themselves as not 'fully Welsh':

EXTRACT 0.2 'WELSH FORM' JAMIE, MATTHEW AND NICK

Jamie: I would say it's a lot more Welsh in Ysgol Arnant

Matthew: you've got to speak Welsh (.) proper Welsh

Nick: they speak Welsh in English classes

Matthew: I mean it's fine if you're (.) if you're (.) if you're um Welsh (.) like fully Welsh (.) I think that's the place that you'll go

Jamie: yeah (.) if you know Welsh that is where you'd go but not for learning Welsh

Matthew: Yeah if (.) cos your mum and dad speak Welsh (.) told you to go there

Jamie: yeah

Here, the students at the English school position themselves as not 'fully Welsh,' thereby suggesting that to be considered 'fully Welsh,' one needs to speak 'proper Welsh'[11], 'speak Welsh all the time, even in English classes' and come from a Welsh speaking home. One also, it appears, needs to 'know' Welsh, not be a 'learner' of Welsh.

This raises an issue of authentic Welshness which potentially equates L1 versus L2 language usage to 'traditional' versus 'new' speakers of Welsh. This is interesting at the level of ideology because it buys into a purist assumption about the integrity of Welsh in a situation where, for many historical reasons, people who have some Welsh 'fail' to meet purist criteria. Non-Welsh speakers (or those perceived to have a lower competence level, or those with a preference for speaking English) are required to negotiate a position within or in relation to the notional category of being 'Welsh'. This is evidenced in the following extract, in which the same students (Jamie, Nick, and Matthew) contest being referred to as '*saesons*' by the students at the Welsh school:

EXTRACT 0.3, YEAR 7, 'WELSH FORM' JAMIE, NICK AND MATTHEW
Jamie: they [students at the Welsh school] just call us *saeses*

Nick: *saesons*

Matthew: and we're not really like (.) English (.) we can speak Welsh too

Jamie: and Wenglish

Nick: yeah it's so stupid cos we weren't actually born in England and we can

speak Welsh (.) just not all the time

Matthew: we're just not hammie

Throughout my time in the field it emerged that there are two dominant cultural stereotypes in operation within this particular community: *hambone* (to refer to a Welsh farmer and or Welsh-speaking person) and *saeson* (to refer to an English speaking and/or non-Welsh speaker, born either inside or outside of Wales), both of which are used as derogatory terms. Here, the interlocutors discuss the use of term *saes* by students at the Welsh school, which they place in opposition to *hambone* in line 8. These boys, who, as discussed in the previous extract, do not view themselves as 'fully' or 'proper' Welsh, emphasise the ways in which they *do* conform to a 'Welsh' identity (they can speak Welsh and they were not born in England, for example) more so than students at the Welsh school, where, from my observations, a Welsh identity appeared taken for granted. In line 5 of the above extract, Jamie explicitly mentions 'Wenglish' (a version of flexible bilingualism[12]) as a means of identity performance. For these students, Wenglish appears to allow for and, to a large extent, reflect, the students' hybrid social identities: they appear to feel neither 'foreign' (*saes*) nor 'indigenous' (*hambone*) but find themselves caught up in the intersection between these two opposite positions, 'juggling creatively with available linguistic resources in order to express this experience of "in-betweeness"' (Johnson and Milani 2010, p. 45). In this sense, Wenglish is a gesture towards a Welsh identity. For these students, therefore, having competency in Welsh is sufficient to enable a claim over Welshness – in other words, it may not be necessary to habitually *choose* to speak the language, provided one has the skill, should the need arise, in order to identify as Welsh.

What has emerged thus far, and which is particularly evident from the above extract, is that students at the English school perceive a need to reconsider and re-negotiate the

basis of their Welsh identities ('they call us *saeses,* but we can speak Welsh too'). What this example highlights is that while speaking Welsh continues to be a cultural indicator and an ethnicity marker (McWhorter, 2001, p. 279) for students at both schools, the students at the English school view language acts as a 'pre-eminent but not exclusive badge of ethnicity' (Crystal, 2000, p. 122). By this I mean that they acknowledge that if you speak Welsh and go to the Welsh school you are, in their words, 'really Welsh', but they position this stance within the ideological framework that you can also be Welsh and *not* speak Welsh. In this sense, the students at the English school appear to have a more flexible conception of identity than students at the Welsh school, as at the English school there appears to be more room for negotiation of the language/ethnicity relationship.

A Scale of 'Welshness' versus 'Englishness'?

An overview of the English school was provided earlier but, to summarise, each year-group has four form groups, with one of these forms classified as the 'Welsh' form, allowing approximately 30 students to do certain curriculum subjects through the medium of Welsh. In addition to this, the students are set into five ability groups for Welsh (as a curriculum subject), with the 'top set' referred to as the '*mamiaith* class' (the mother tongue class), and with the remainder of the sets referred to as the 'learner groups', with 4 differentiated levels within this category. This apparently simple categorisation, however, is in reality far more complex, as the headteacher explains in the following field note.

EXTRACT 0.4

It's my first day of data collection at the school. I am shown to the Headteacher's office to discuss the plan for the week. Over a cup of tea we decide which form-groups I will observe during the week and the Head fills

in a timetable for me. During the meeting he re-iterates that the Welsh stream consists mainly of the higher ability students, it is apparently 'tantamount to the top set' and consists mainly of 'good language learners' rather than the first-language Welsh speakers (which he says generally come from agricultural backgrounds and are therefore often less able and consequently placed in the lower or 'learner' sets).

Here, the headteacher's comments alludes to a possible contradiction: the 'Welsh form' exists as a space which caters for 'good language learners' but to the disadvantage of the 'first-language Welsh speakers', who are effectively marginalised and excluded from the Welsh language within the school. The institutionalisation of minority languages can, as seen here, create new forms of linguistic authority that devalue 'traditional' forms and speakers (Ciriza, 2012; Frekko, 2009; Jaffe, 1999). Furthermore, it institutionally endorses a view of Welsh as a commodified, acquirable skill that is desired by certain members of the school community and sets this against the perception that rural, agricultural 'Welsh' families are often less able and therefore placed in lower, or learner sets. These concepts are further illustrated in the following extract, in which a group of students from the Welsh form question and re-negotiate what it means to be a 'first-language Welsh speaker:'

EXTRACT 0.5 YEAR 7, 'WELSH FORM' EMMA AND PHOEBE

Emma: Molly is in I which is like the English (.) Englishest form (.) and she's in the first-language Welsh class

Phoebe: well she is first-language

Emma: *mamiaith*

Phoebe: she got taught (.) she got learnt it (.) uhh she got taught it in primary school didn't she?

Emma: yeah but she's like a *mamiaith*

Phoebe: so why did she end up in the English form?

Emma: don't know

In the above extract we see, once again, that not only is Welshness gradable, so is Englishness, with the girls questioning and highlighting the contradictory situation, with Molly being in the *mamiaith* class as well as the 'Englishest' form. This is a good example of 'flexible bilingualism' in terms of the students' conceptualisation of what it means to be Welsh: in their eyes you can be a *mamiaith* (a mother tongue/first-language speaker) of Welsh who has learnt Welsh, so they are not bounded by the strict view that you need to 'know' Welsh to be considered 'fully' or 'proper' Welsh. For these students 'Welsh first-language' seems to relate to competency in the language and speaking the language like an authentic Welsh speaker (line 8), rather than claims of authenticity in the traditional application of the term (and this is hardly surprising given that 'Welsh' is also used to refer to the top set).

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted how the increasingly diverse student intake within schools in Welsh 'heartland' communities, and the resulting institutionalisation of a minority language, has led to a 'multiple, complex ideological field' (Jaffe, 2015, p. 42), in which students contest and re-define what it means to be 'Welsh' and 'English' and construct

their own legitimacy as individuals, as language users and as speakers of a minority language.

Flexible bilingualism has been discussed in relation to its ideological underpinnings and corresponding institutional arrangements. While students at the English school perceive an open and tolerant approach towards language at the English school and identify that, in their terms, they are able to speak 'whatever they want', boundaries continue to exist around languages and language users, resulting in clear divisions between the 'English' and 'Welsh' students. It has been argued that many students at the English school, who are ostensibly part of the same heartland community as those at the Welsh school, struggle to position themselves in terms of the national category of being Welsh, and that the students perceive a language hierarchy to exist, with students at the Welsh school being considered 'proper' or 'fully' Welsh. That said, the research overall reveals that students at the English-medium school define legitimacy and authenticity in far more complex ways than students at the Welsh school (Selleck, 2013).

A number of students at the English school appear to conceptualise and orient towards a Welsh identity without the need for Welsh, with their use of Wenglish viewed as one way in which they can negotiate and position themselves within the national category of being Welsh—a kind of coping mechanism, as it were. In this sense, the students at the English school do not appear to consistently valorise the 'monolingual' students at the Welsh school nor do they seek to conceal their 'non-native' acquisition (Jaffe, 2015, p. 26).

The day-to-day sociolinguistic experiences of these students highlights that an apparently simple idea about bilingualism in Wales is in reality complex with rich local

classification systems in operation, which are only understood by on-the-ground observations. What is often presented as a model of successful language planning perhaps to some degree overlooks the fact that ambitious policy moves are giving rise to lay-ideological tensions that require further attention; there is arguably a gulf between the oversimplifying rhetoric of language planning and the local politics of language and ethnicity that follows in its wake. Thus the ways the young people talk about and use the terms 'Welsh' and 'English' potentially 'poses a barrier to the development of an inclusive Welsh citizenship' (Scourfield and Davies, 2005, p. 83) and raises questions of the notion of true bilingualism and the ideology of choice as outlined in *Iaith Pawb*.

Notes

1. Note that all names have been anonymised.

2. Although it should be acknowledged that this has altered over the years. Aitchison and Carter in their 1991 study posited the notion that a heartland area was one where 70%-80% of the population report an ability to speak Welsh.

3. Note, however, that unlike the Gaeltacht in Ireland, these areas are not officially recognised within Wales. The Welsh Spatial Plan (2008), does partition Wales into a number of distinct regions or areas – arguing that 'traditional heartlands of the Welsh Language' exist (Welsh Assembly Government 2008)

4. I have argued elsewhere (Selleck 2013) that in simple terms there is a cause-effect relationship between public policy and the language policies, practices, behaviours and attitudes at a local level. While the focus of my study is on students and their interpretations of the ideological content/context of their

education, it is important to acknowledge that their experiences are embedded in much more extensive ideological frameworks; while these do have an effect at local level, they are not always directly reflected there, since local conditions dictate a local response. There is a need to continually question the evolving relationships between policy and practice.

5. 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'. This collapsing can occur in both English and Welsh-medium education (Scourfield and Davies 2005, 93), a process confirmed in my own data. For this reason, I refer to the two schools in my study as 'the Welsh school' and 'the English school', even though these designations conflict with the authorised perspectives.

6. 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.

7. Approximately forty visits of varying length were made to the community in question.

8. Setting or streaming students according to their ability is fairly commonplace in British secondary schools. Under this system, students are assigned to classes according to whether the students' overall achievement is above average, normal, or below average and students attend academic classes only with students whose overall academic achievement is the same as their own. In this case, top-set refers to the academically most able while bottom set refers to those who are deemed least academically able.

9. While 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.

10. A more detailed discussion of these terms in relation to their different ideological underpinnings and corresponding institutional arrangements is provided in an earlier article (Selleck, 2013).

11. Separate bilingualism is used to describe what Heller refers to as 'parallel monolingualism' (Heller 1999:271), and Baker 2003 and Fishman (1967) as bilingualism with diglossia, where each language is used for distinct and separate functions.

12. Exactly what the students mean by 'proper Welsh' remains unclear. Elsewhere the students attempt to define it as an 'ideal' version of Welsh that is free from anglicisms and that conforms to the 'prescribed rules'. This is an area that would warrant further research.

13. Wenglish is a highly ambiguous folk-linguistic concept that one encounters in Wales, often relating to the use of culturally Welsh-English expressions, and/or the use of lexical loans from Welsh in English discourse.

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