

Institution: Swansea University		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 26		
Title of case study: Reversing Language Shift in Wales: Influencing Government Funding and Language Policy, Increasing Social Networks for New Speakers of Welsh, Creating Wider Cultural-Economic Community Benefits.		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2009 - 2014 (publications 2000 - 2019)		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Steve Morris	Principal Investigator and Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics and Welsh	Throughout the period
Heini Gruffudd	Co-Investigator, Senior Lecturer in Welsh	Retired 2003, then employed as Tutor
Period when the claimed impact occurred: August 2013 – 2016		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact <p>Our research showed that adult new speakers of Welsh in non-Welsh speaking areas are more successful when able to access Welsh-language social networks via study in Welsh language multi-purpose centres ('<i>Canolfannau Cymraeg</i>'). Widely publicised via Welsh Assembly Member and stakeholder-sponsored events, our key finding had a direct influence on Welsh Government policy and its decision to fund 10 new centres. This GBP2,250,000 investment has so far provided an enhanced learning environment for around 100 Welsh for adults classes and contributed in excess of GBP1,300,000 to local economies across Wales. The Welsh experience has also informed language planning in Ireland.</p>		
2. Underpinning research <p>Our research was the first to investigate the impact of <i>Canolfannau Cymraeg</i>¹ on social networks of new speakers of Welsh and their potential as drivers for RLS (Reversing Language Shift) in predominantly non-Welsh speaking areas of Wales. Adult Welsh language learning, particularly in those areas of Wales where Welsh is not the main community language, can flounder due to insufficient opportunities to practice and feel part of a Welsh-language social network. Our research explored the efficacy of <i>Canolfannau Cymraeg</i> and other factors involved in improving learning outcomes with the aim of boosting the number of Welsh speakers and the proficiency of Welsh learners in Wales.</p> <p>In 2009 Swansea University's 'Welsh for Adults Centre' was successful in winning a GBP35,000 research grant from the Welsh Government following a competitive process. This award endorsed the project investigators' expertise in language policy research [see R3, R5], building upon</p>		

¹ The term '*Canolfan Gymraeg* / *Canolfannau Cymraeg*' is used to refer to a centre where classes for learners are combined with social activities for Welsh speakers in the community as well as various other facilities e.g. cafés or bars.

previous commissioned work for the Welsh Language Board [R6] and a previous impact case study on language planning and children presented to REF 2014.

Driving the research was the central question of **whether learning in a *Canolfan Gymraeg* improves the availability of social networks to adults**, thereby also increasing fluency and encouraging the cultural embeddedness of learners. Data was provided by one third of all adult learners of Welsh attending advanced level courses. Participants completed questionnaires and took part in focus groups held in strategic locations. In relation to existing opportunities to maintain social networks in Welsh, we discovered that ‘traditional’ Welsh domains only attracted a limited number of participants. (R1, section 7.4, ‘History of Language Centres/Canolfannau Cymraeg’ lists 8 centres, including *Clwb Brynmenyn* which came to an end in 2003. The history of each centre is different, but most were established by ‘local enthusiasts’, without government funding).

The research compared outcomes for adult learners who had studied in a *Canolfan Gymraeg* and those who had not had this opportunity. Our data showed that amongst learners who go to a *Canolfan Gymraeg*, 43% use Welsh regularly there and 35% use it occasionally. The research highlighted **integrative motivation as the main driver** for adult learners of Welsh [R1 p.38].

The research also took on an international dimension. After investigating strategies in other language communities that could be adapted to the efforts to integrate adults who have learnt Welsh, we found that the nearest model to the *Canolfannau Cymraeg* is the Euskaltegis in the Basque Country, which had founded approximately 200 centres by 2014 [R4].

Our report [R1] recommended the development of the *Canolfan Gymraeg* model in order to create a link between new speakers and the rest of the language community, raising their awareness and providing a safe linguistic environment for them. A number of strategies [R2] were recommended with a common theme of ensuring that at B1/B2 CEFR² level learners have sufficient linguistic resources to be able to communicate in and get access to Welsh-language social networks. Our research documented the state of current provision [R1, R4], and based on the findings, argued the case for establishing new *Canolfannau Cymraeg*, supported by government via a national body, as a “creative and productive” means of “enriching social networks for adult learners of Welsh”.

3. References to the research

The underpinning research is based on government-commissioned funding [R1, R2 by Welsh Government; R6 commissioned by the Welsh Language Board], with R2 involving scholars from the universities of Swansea, Cardiff and Oxford. The research includes items peer-reviewed and published by an academic press (University of Wales Press), edited by a leading authority in the field, Cardiff and Cambridge-based scholar Colin Williams [R3, R5]; a further item was prepared for publication by the Learned Society of Wales, the national academy for arts and sciences [R4].

[R1] Heini Gruffudd and Steve Morris, ‘Canolfannau Cymraeg and Social Networks of Adult Learners of Welsh: Efforts to Reverse Language Shift in comparatively non-Welsh-Speaking Communities’, (Original report on completion of research commissioned by Welsh Government, July 2012). Available in English at:

<https://www.swansea.ac.uk/media/Canolfannau%20Cymraeg%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf>

In Welsh: <https://www.swansea.ac.uk/media/Canolfannau%20Cymraeg%20-%20Adroddiad%20Lawn.pdf>

[R2] Diarmait Mac Giolla Chríost with Steve Morris et alia, *Welsh for Adults Teaching and Learning Approaches, Methodologies and Resources – A Comprehensive Research Study and Critical Review of the Way Forward*. Cardiff University: Welsh Government, 2012, 322pp.

² CEFR = Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-08/130424-welsh-adults-teaching-learning-approaches-en.pdf> ISBN: 978 07504 85401

[R3] Steve Morris, 'Adult Education, Language Revival and Language Planning', in *Language Revitalization: Policy and Planning in Wales*, ed. by Colin Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), pp. 208-220.

[R4] Heini Gruffudd, 'Cymunedau Hyfyw: Parhad y Gymraeg' [Vibrant Communities: The Continuity of the Welsh Language], public lecture (2014), published as a full research paper in 2019 by the Learned Society of Wales. Available at: <https://www.cymdeithasddysgedig.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Cymunedau-hyfyw-FINAL.pdf>

[R5] Heini Gruffudd, 'Planning for the Use of Welsh by Young People', in *Language Revitalization: Policy and Planning in Wales*, ed. by Colin Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), pp. 173-207.

[R6] Heini Gruffudd, *Iaith y Dyffryn / Welsh in the Vale: A Survey of the Welsh Language amongst Parents and Pupils of the Tywi Valley* (University of Wales Swansea / Welsh Language Board, 2002), 33pp, ISBN 1 900346 55 5: <http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20120330040248/http://www.byig-wlb.org.uk/Cymraeg/cyhoeddiadau/Cyhoeddiadau/4860.pdf>.

Who grant was awarded to	The grant title	Sponsor	Period of the grant (dates)	Value of the grant
Steve Morris	Canolfannau Cymraeg	DCELLS – Welsh Government	2009 – 2010	GBP35,000.00

4. Details of the impact

Influencing Welsh Government Language Policy and Funding

Our research has played a critical role in **influencing the Welsh government's GBP2,250,000 support for creating 10 new Language Centres**. "As a result of Steve Morris's original research, the Welsh Government has opened 10 Language Centres across Wales... Steve's research made the case to support these types of community hub" (Welsh Government Deputy Director, Welsh Language Division) [C1].

The **research was supported by then First Minister Carwyn Jones** [C2] who announced the creation of new *Canolfannau Cymraeg* to underpin the government's commitment to **promote the use of Welsh**, outlined in the policy statement '*Bwrw Ymlaen*' (2014). The last centre was opened in November 2016, and the Welsh Government has set up a National Board to oversee their development and impact on the various communities.

Language pressure groups including *Dyfodol i'r Iaith* [A Future for the Language] have also recognised the significance of this relationship between language and community, committing in their manifesto to "the creation of a Welsh Centres network across Wales", as the centres represent "focal points for Welsh-speaking life in their areas" [C3 p.15].

Economic and Cultural Benefits (i): Influence on Local Economies

Canolfannau Cymraeg have considerable economic impact in their local areas, and the **total economic impact within South Wales was GBP1,300,000**.

The 2015 *Evaluation of the Economic and Cultural Impact of Canolfan Soar* report [C4] demonstrated that this well-established **centre in Merthyr Tydfil was worth approximately GBP608,000 to the local economy over one year**, based on “the direct, indirect and subsequent rounds of expenditure induced by the activities by the Centre”.

“Through its provision of space for local businesses Canolfan Soar and its tenants are contributing to **developing the local economic infrastructure**. They make a further positive impact by **providing employment** and using a range of local suppliers. The Centre has also become a **community hub** and is host to a cluster of like-minded businesses which is **promoting knowledge exchange and creative partnerships**” [C4].

Comparison of the initial plans, strategies and activities of the new *Canolfannau Cymraeg* [C5] and their 2018 end-of-grant reports [C6] shows their **main economic benefits**:

- Cardiff: recruitment/training of 30 volunteers, 200 ‘friends’ of the centre contributing GBP14,000 a year.
- Pontardawe: community book shop/resource centre opened.
- Bangor: increase in the use of Welsh amongst local businesses through (i) greater visual signage (ii) confidence-raising sessions with 25 members of staff.
- Carmarthen: 70+ agencies, businesses and social clubs used the facilities in the first year.

Economic and Cultural Benefits (ii): Influence on Use of Welsh

Reports submitted to the Welsh Government by the newly-established centres [e.g. C7] demonstrate that in addition to adult new speakers of Welsh, **beneficiaries include families, children and young people**, thus developing the impact in relation to children and language planning, the focus of our case study in REF 2014 [R5, R6]. The creation of the centres has also led to the promotion and strengthening of the language within their wider communities.

Our research highlighted integrative motivation as the main driver for adult learners of Welsh [R1 p.38]. The new *Canolfannau Cymraeg* provide invaluable opportunities in mainly non-Welsh-speaking communities for learners to couple their motivations with **opportunities to use the language and integrate in Welsh-language social networks** which otherwise are not easily accessible. Groups benefit from being able to extend the domains where they use Welsh and by having space to expand and consolidate their social networks in the language.

Further academic evaluation of the impact created by the new centres (2018) [C8] noted **strong support for the *Canolfannau Cymraeg***:

- 76% of respondents [*n* 100] thought more should be set up;
- 32% said that the presence of a *Canolfan Gymraeg* had a big effect on their use of Welsh with 46% agreeing it helped increase confidence in speaking the language;
- 61% of those who did not live close to a centre felt one was needed in their area;
- 76% believed that the presence of a *Canolfan Gymraeg* had an effect on the use of Welsh in their community.

Moreover, our research has **international reach**. As a result of seeing our research turned into funded government policy and the evaluations showing the positive impact on language learning and the integration of new speakers into target language social networks, other minority language communities are considering the *Canolfannau Cymraeg* model for their own Reversing Language Shift planning.

The 2016 briefing 'Building Irish Language Networks and Communities outside the Gaeltacht' by Professor Colin Williams, a world-leading authority on language planning [C9], highlights that the Welsh Government "backed the idea that safe spaces that were multipurpose could help promote the social use of Welsh", and frames the *Canolfannau Cymraeg* as a **model to inform future language planning in Irish** outside of its core areas.

1. Sources to corroborate the impact

[C1] Testimonial (Welsh Government Civil Servant); details and illustrates how the project activity and outcomes have influenced and impacted upon Welsh Government activity.

[C2] Welsh Government funding announcement for *Canolfannau Cymraeg* (03/12/2014); Welsh language strategy (p.12) referring to the further 6 centres funded in 2015/16:

<https://gov.wales/written-statement-welsh-language-centres-and-learning-spaces>;

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/welsh-language-strategy-annual-report-2016-to-2017.pdf>

[C3] Manifesto of the Welsh language pressure group 'Dyfodol i'r Iaith':

<http://www.dyfodol.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/DYFODOL-English-Manifesto.pdf>

[C4] *Evaluation of the economic and cultural impact of Canolfan Soar, Merthyr Tydfil*, report by Arad Research (July 2015, qualitative and quantitative data):

<http://www.mentrauaith.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Economic-and-Cultural-Impact-Final.pdf>

[C5] Welsh Government's Sub-section for the Welsh Language first meeting (2015) with representatives of the *Canolfannau Cymraeg* (meeting minutes):

<https://llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2019-01/180119atish11842doc11.pdf>

[C6] End-of-grant reports for the *Canolfannau Cymraeg* set up in 2014/15:

<https://llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2019-01/180119atish11842doc12.pdf>

[C7] Llanelli *Canolfan Gymraeg* (Y Lle) end-of-grant report, including examples of centre beneficiaries:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-01/180119atish11842doc03.pdf>

[C8] MPhil, Aberystwyth University, 2018, evaluating the impact of the *Canolfannau Cymraeg* established by the Welsh Government between 2014-2016:

[https://pure.aber.ac.uk/portal/en/theses/astudiaeth-ar-draweffaith-canolfannau-cymraeg\(29ac644d-e88f-4ed3-89d4-9dc0aec1929a\).html](https://pure.aber.ac.uk/portal/en/theses/astudiaeth-ar-draweffaith-canolfannau-cymraeg(29ac644d-e88f-4ed3-89d4-9dc0aec1929a).html)

[C9] Briefing report by Professor Colin Williams for *Supporting 'New Speakers': Building Irish Language Networks and Communities outside the Gaeltacht*, stakeholders' meeting (14/10/2016):

https://www.nspk.org.uk/images/TCD_Stakeholders_Final_Report.pdf.