Institution:
1007857, Bangor University

Unit of Assessment:
UoA 26 - Modern Languages and Linguistics

Title of case study:
A Language for Living: Fostering the Use of Welsh in Daily Life

Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:
2010 – 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:**
1) Dr Rhian Hodges	1) Senior Lecturer in Sociology and Social Policy	1) September 2009 - present
2) Dr Cynog Prys	2) Lecturer in Sociology and Social Policy	2) September 2012 – present

Period when the claimed impact occurred:
1 August 2013 – 31 July 2020

Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N

1. Summary of the impact

Research in language policy and planning undertaken at Bangor University has significantly developed the understanding of language use and language transmission in relation to Welsh, informing policy and practice across a range of sectors including Welsh Government, Education, Third Sector, Healthcare and Civil Society. There has been notable impact on key Welsh Government language policy areas including community language usage and intergenerational language transmission where research findings have directed how Welsh Government and the office of the Welsh Language Commissioner approach the ongoing revitalisation of the Welsh language as outlined in the current Welsh language strategy, *Cymraeg 2050.*

2. Underpinning research

Focussing on the need to recognise the vital importance of micro-level interactions in the drive to ensure sustainable regeneration of the Welsh language, research undertaken by Hodges and Prys has centred on the fundamental aspects of daily life where language choices and language usage are habit-forming. Their research has centred on two key areas: *Civil Society* and *Education / Language Transmission*.

Civil Society
Research at Bangor University has analysed Welsh language use within civil society with an emphasis on understanding how Welsh speakers use Welsh and the barriers that affect language usage within communities **[3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.a, 3b]**. This enhanced understanding is essential in terms of implementing effective language planning strategies to create sustainable Welsh language communities and revitalise communities that need specific language resurgence. Research findings called for increased promotion of language use within informal settings, such as daily community interactions (i.e., shopping, accessing healthcare services), and for more effective planning and multi-agency partnership between Welsh Government (WG) and civil society stakeholders when facilitating Welsh language use within formally organised community activities. Research also emphasised the lack of choice in terms of language in community activities and how this could have a negative effect on usage and attitudes towards Welsh **[3.1,**

3.a]. Usage of the Welsh language within the voluntary sector has often been an under-reported field of study, despite being earmarked by WG and other stakeholders as a crucial area in which to provide services through the medium of Welsh (in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011). Research into language use in the voluntary sector outlined the impact of language on care and called for Welsh speaking staff / volunteers to provide Welsh-medium services for vulnerable service users. The study highlighted the challenges faced by the voluntary sector in recruiting Welsh speaking volunteers **[3.b]** and its impact on services for vulnerable service users **[3.2]**.

Education / Language Transmission

Research also explored the role of bilingualism **[3.5 - 3.6]** and education within the language revitalisation agenda in Wales, specifically early years language transmission and the language usage of new Welsh speakers **[3.3, 3.4]**. Research found that there were gaps in early years Welsh medium provision for parents with young children who wished to use and develop their use of Welsh within formal activities **[3.1]**. The study highlighted that parents were not always aware of this provision or of the progression routes through various WG programmes. The importance of non-Welsh speaking parental incentives in choosing Welsh-medium immersion education for their children was highlighted with cultural reasons (identity; belonging) identified as the main incentive. Research maintained that cultural incentives provide a positive language planning platform from which to reverse language shift and revealed the obstacles faced by new Welsh speakers using Welsh beyond education, such as lack of confidence, competence and themes related to language ownership and speaker authenticity **[3.4]**. Other language use spheres, such as the community and the workplace, are crucial in providing key language progression routes for new speakers of Welsh and thus contributing to language revitalisation. Responding to these language planning needs, innovative e-resources were created by Prys and Hodges in order to maximise language progression in the educational sphere.

3. References to the research

Research Outputs

3.1 **Hodges, R** and **Prys, C**. (2019) The community as a language planning crossroads: macro and micro language planning in communities in Wales. *Current issues in language planning*, **20**(3), 207-225 DOI (Underpinning WG grant, GBP 69,753.29, 3.a) Submitted to REF 2021 (REF identifier: UoA26_57)

3.2 **Prys, C**. (2010) The Use of Welsh in the Third Sector in Wales. *Contemporary Wales*, **23**(1), 184-200 (Copy available on request) Submitted to REF 2014

3.3 **Hodges, R**. (2012) Welsh-medium education and parental incentives – the case of the Rhymni Valley, Caerffili. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, **15**(3), 355-373 DOI Submitted to REF 2014

3.4 **Hodges, R**. (2018) Rhetoric or reality? Is Welsh really a living language and a language for living? Language use of new Welsh speakers in Cwm Rhymni, south Wales, in M. Hornsby and K. Rosiak. (eds.) *Celtic Studies, Eastern Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing (Peer-reviewed book chapter, copy available on request)

3.5 Gathercole, V. C. M., Thomas, E. M., Viñas Guasch, N., Kennedy, I., **Prys, C**., Young, N. E., Roberts, E. J., Hughes, E. K. and Jones, L. (2016) Teasing apart factors influencing Executive Function performance in bilinguals and monolinguals at different ages. *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism*, **6**(5), 605-647 DOI (Peer-reviewed journal articles)

3.6 Kennedy, I. A., Young, N. E., Gathercole, V. C., Thomas, E. M., Kennedy, I., **Prys, C**., Young, N., Viñas Guasch N., N. V., Roberts, E. J., Hughes, E. K. and Jones, L. (2014) Does language dominance affect cognitive performance in bilinguals? Lifespan evidence from preschoolers through older adults on card sorting, Simon, and metalinguistic tasks. *Frontiers in Psychology: Developmental Psychology*, **5**(11) DOI (Peer-reviewed journal article)

Grants

3.a **Hodges, R.** (2014 – 2015) *Welsh Language Strategy*. Welsh Government, UK Government, C163/2014/2015, GBP69,753 (Bangor University: R18G10)

3.b **Prys, C.** (2013 - 2014) *The Welsh Language and Volunteering.* Cardiff: Welsh Language Commissioner, GBP15,005 (Bangor University: R18G06)

4. Details of the impact

Over the last ten years, research by Hodges and Prys has had demonstrable impact across a range of sectors at local and national level including Government Policy, Education, Third Sector, Healthcare and Civil Society. The impact has been affected through influencing policy and practice in three key, interrelated areas: ***Welsh Government (WG) Language Policy and Projects***; the work of the ***Welsh Language Commissioner (WLC)***; and the field of ***Language Promotion and Education***.

Welsh Government Language Policy and Projects
Research has significantly influenced WG priorities in the area of language planning as attested by Deputy Chief Social Research Officer, WG: "*Understanding the factors that influence the use of Welsh in informal settings and at community level is a key element of the Welsh Government's work in relation to promoting the use of Welsh. Research undertaken by Dr Cynog Prys and Dr Rhian Hodges has contributed to the evidence base that is available to us, as we increase this understanding*" **[5.1]**. Citing the evaluative analysis undertaken by Hodges and Prys into the efficacy of WG's flagship language strategy, *A Living Language: A Language for Living* (2012 - 2017), the WG has changed its strategic priorities within the current WG language strategy, *Cymraeg 2050*, to focus efforts on community Welsh language use by prioritising key language use domains **[5.2]**. In particular, the strategy calls for further opportunities for teenagers and young adults to use Welsh socially, as highlighted in *Welsh Language Use in the Community* for which Hodges and Prys provided expert input **[5.3]**. The strategy also responds to the research finding that fluent Welsh speakers tend to switch to English when speaking to Welsh learners and new Welsh speakers. Based on the research, WG outlined their aim of embedding "*positive language use practices supported by formal and informal opportunities to use Welsh socially*" **[5.2]**. Research findings were also referenced by WG in its Welsh language strategy *A living Language: A language for Living - Moving Forward* **[5.4]**. Following recommendations surfaced by Prys in *Exploring Welsh speakers' language use in their daily lives* (S4C, BBC Cymru Wales, WG, 2013) **[5.5]**, the WG developed the marketing campaign 'Pethau Bychain' (Little Things) to influence daily linguistic behaviour and norms. Additionally, this research contributed to the WG policy of providing an active offer of Welsh language services within the health and social care sector as outlined in the WG's Strategic Framework for Welsh Language Services in Health, Social Services and Social Care, *More than just words* (WG, 2019). The research is also referred to within a key policy consultation document *National policy on Welsh language transmission and use in families* (WG, 2020). In addition, Hodges and Prys have been regularly approached to provide expert input to key WG reports and evaluations in the area of language planning, for example, *Process Evaluation of Cymraeg for Kids: final report* **[5.6]**.

Welsh Language Commissioner
Research undertaken by Hodges and Prys is regularly used to support WLC decision making and inform those public bodies legally required to adhere to the Welsh Language Standards published in 2015. Bangor University research underpins a co-produced WLC report assessing the use of Welsh within the voluntary sector in Wales **[5.7]**. The report contains twenty recommendations for good practice and are the only guidelines for language use in the Third Sector. Senior Officer, Welsh Language Commissioner's Hybu Team states: "*We refer to this work in our training sessions for third sector organisations. The slides we have prepared include quotes from the research and our top tips were created based on this evidence*" **[5.8]**. The WLC held several public events with voluntary organisations and stakeholders to promote the research findings and highlight examples of good practice. The WLC used the study to: "*Raise awareness of the findings and recommendations through meeting with stakeholders such as Welsh Government, WCVA, County Voluntary Councils, county volunteer bureaus, GwirVol and The Duke of Edinburgh Award, Welsh Sports Association*" **[5.7]**. Bangor research **[3.2]** also informs the WLC report, *My Language My Health* **[5.9]** and the best practice guidelines published by the WLC for county borough councils and National Park authorities **[5.10]**.

Language Promotion and Education

Research has informed language promotion initiatives across Wales and education practice across a range of age groups. A key development is the co-produced toolkit **[5.11]** (with Mentrau Iaith Cymru, the national organisation which supports the work of 22 local Menter Iaith language initiatives) to promote the use of Welsh in the community. The toolkit is used by Mentrau Iaith Cymru (MIC) to train staff and it is hosted on its website for community actors to download. Menter Iaith Bangor, Cered and Menter Iaith Caerffili use the toolkit to facilitate discussions, to understand how Welsh speakers use the language in a variety of contexts, and Menter Iaith Bangor has since expanded their activities by hosting workshops and organised bi-monthly community language panels (Popdy Trafod Iaith). Funded by Bangor University's ESRC Impact Acceleration Account, dissemination and discussion workshops were held with local stakeholders in eight communities across Wales between March and May 2017. Confirming the use and significance of the toolkit, Team Leader, Mentrau Iaith Cymru states: "*This practical resource has been of great use for both MIC and the local Menter Iaith initiatives, of which there are 22 organisations and over 100 members of staff. The toolkit contains valuable examples of innovative programs that can be adapted to work in various communities in Wales. As a result, the toolkit has been used during workshops and training days hosted by MIC*" **[5.12]**. The toolkit was launched by the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language at the 2017 National Eisteddfod and ignited important discussions on Welsh language community sustainability amongst practitioners and policy makers alike.

Responding to the need identified through research for enhanced availability of targeted materials in Welsh, particularly in relation to the prioritised group of teenagers and young people, Hodges and Prys have led on the development of unique multimedia Welsh-medium Sociology materials and worked to develop new and standardised terminology. These are used to teach A Level, Welsh Baccalaureate, and Degree-level Sociology across Wales. Their ground-breaking *Dulliau Ymchwil* (Research Methods) online resource **[5.13]** has over 1000 views and is used in other disciplines, such as education, history and music. This work also contributed to the development of Welsh language terminology in sociology and research methods. Examples include coining terms such as 'hapsamplu syml' (simple random sampling) and 'tanddosbarth' (underclass). Their work has been incorporated into the *Termiadur Addysg* (Education Terminology Dictionary) which is utilised by all primary and secondary schools, further education colleges and universities in Wales.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

5.1 **Testimonial letter from Deputy Chief Social Research Officer, Welsh Government** (reporter on the impact). Corroborates how the research has significantly influenced WG priorities in the area of Language Planning.
5.2 Welsh Government **(2017) Cymraeg 2050 – A Million Welsh Speakers**. Hodges and Prys' study, referenced as WG (2015), is cited on pp. 56 and 57.
https://gov.wales/cymraeg-2050-welsh-language-strategy
5.3 Welsh Government **(2015) Welsh Language Use in the Community**. Hodges and Prys provided expert input for this WG published study.
https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/24483/1/151007-welsh-language-use-community-research-study-en.pdf
5.4 Welsh Government **(2014) A living Language: A language for Living - Moving Forwards**. Pethau Bychain is referenced on p.21.
https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/welsh-language-strategy-2012-to-2017-moving-forward.pdf
5.5 S4C, BBC Cymru Wales and Welsh Government **(2013) Exploring Welsh speakers' language use in their daily lives**. The study, co-authored by Prys, contains recommendations that were later adapted by WG to develop the marketing campaign 'Pethau Bychain' to influence daily linguistic behaviour and norms.
https://www.s4c.cymru/abouts4c/corporate/pdf/e_daily-lives-and-language-use-research-report.pdf

5.6 Welsh Government **(2019) Process Evaluation of Cymraeg for Kids: final report**. GSR report number 06/2019. Corroborates Hodges and Prys' expert input to key WG reports and evaluations in the area of language planning.
https://gov.wales/process-evaluation-cymraeg-kids-final-report

5.7 The Welsh Language Commissioner **(2014) The Welsh Language and Volunteering**. Report based on Prys, Hodges and Mann's 2014 research. BU research is referenced on p.57 and on this basis calls for Welsh to be embedded in in social situations. (Copy available on request)

5.8 **Testimonial letter from Senior Officer, Welsh Language Commissioner's Hybu Team** (reporter on the impact). Corroborates the WLC use of Bangor research to promote good practice within the Third Sector in Wales.

5.9 Welsh Language Commissioner **(2016) My Language, My Health**. Prys [3.2] is referenced as evidence on pp63, 66 and 162. (Copy available on request)

5.10 Welsh Language Commissioner **(2018) Standards relating to promoting the Welsh language 5-year strategies: a best practice guide for county and county borough councils and National Park authorities**. Bangor research informed this report outlining best practice for Welsh public sector organisations (see pp.77–78). (Copy available on request)

5.11 Mentrau Iaith Cymru **(2017) A Toolkit for Promoting the Welsh Language in the Community**. Co-produced by Mentrau Iaith Cymru with expert input from Bangor University (Hodges and Prys). (Language: Welsh)
http://www.mentrauiaith.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/pecyncymorth_terfynol-1.pdf

5.12 **Testimonial letter from Team Leader, Mentrau Iaith Cymru** (reporter and participant in the impact). Corroborates the use and significance of the toolkit for Mentrau Iaith activities.

5.13 Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol **(2018) Adnoddau Amlgyfrwng Cymdeithaseg** (Sociology Multimedia Resources Pack). Evidence that a key educational provider is hosting Hodges and Prys resources (A Level, Welsh Baccalaureate, and Degree level Sociology) ensuring subjects can be provided in the Welsh language. (Language: Welsh)
https://llyfrgell.porth.ac.uk/Default.aspx?catid=585