

The Intergenerational Language Transmission of Welsh

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1 Introduction

This chapter reports the results of a study into the intergenerational transmission of the Welsh language in Wales and its use in families (Evas et al. 2017a; Evas et al. 2017b). The original research was commissioned by the Welsh Government¹ and aimed to examine how Welsh-speaking parents used Welsh with their children and the extent to which socio-psychological factors influenced patterns of Welsh language use in the home. The Welsh Government has highlighted the intergenerational language transmission of Welsh as a key strategic priority and the research was commissioned as part of the Evaluative Framework in order to assess the extent to which Welsh Government had achieved these strategic aims and also in order to inform future work.

In order to achieve aims of the research, we firstly undertook a quantitative analysis of census data in order to explore the relationship between Welsh language transmission and household composition, county of residence, and socio-economic background at an aggregate level. Secondly, primary data were collected from 60 main caregivers of children aged 0-4 years old (all of whom reported being able to speak Welsh either as a result of either parental transmission or immersion education). A written questionnaire collected data on caregivers' background, language use and wider social values. The latter aspect of the questionnaire was informed by methods in social psychology and, in particular, Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB; e.g. Ajzen 1991). The socio-psychological measures aimed to ascertain whether caregivers' attitudes towards the Welsh language and their ability to speak Welsh with their child, caregivers' linguistic identity, and community norms

¹ The project, entitled 'Research into Conditions Influencing Welsh Language Transmission and Use in Families', was commissioned by the Welsh Government and originally published on 12 June 2017 in accordance with the Government Social Research Publication Protocol (Social Research Number: 29/2017). The report was authored by Jeremy Evas, Jonathan Morris, and Lorraine Whitmarsh (Cardiff University) in conjunction with Hywel M. Jones (Stafiaith) and Sioned Lewis and Tanwen Grover (Arad Research). The views expressed in this chapter and in the original report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government. The original report (Evas et al. 2017a) and executive summary (Evas et al. 2017b) are available here: <https://gov.wales/welsh-language-transmission-and-use-families-0>

influenced the use of Welsh in the home. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with the main caregivers which elicited data on caregivers' linguistic experiences both prior to the birth of their child and their experiences of language use with their children. These data were analysed qualitatively using thematic analysis (Silverman 2015: 216).

In the current chapter, we focus specifically on the analysis of the qualitative data in order to explore the main themes which arise regarding caregivers' experiences of the intergenerational language transmission of Welsh. By focussing on the qualitative aspect of Evas et al. (2017), this chapter is guided by the following questions:

1. What are the conditions that facilitate Welsh language transmission within families, and the conditions that make Welsh language transmission less likely?
2. What are the conditions that influence patterns of Welsh language use within families with children in the 0-4 age group?

The remainder of the chapter is structured as follows. Section 2 presents an overview of previous work on the transmission of Welsh and highlights the social factors which have been shown to influence the intergenerational transmission of Welsh. Section 3 outlines the methodology for the data collection and subsequent analysis. Section 4 presents the thematic analysis of the qualitative data and, finally, Section 5 discusses the results in the context of the research questions.

2 Research Context: The Transmission of Welsh

2.1 Previous research

Previous work has suggested that positive attitudes towards Welsh among Welsh-speaking parents might not necessarily lead to intergenerational language transmission. In one of the earlier studies on the transmission of Welsh, Harrison et al. (1981) found that parents were generally against the decline of Welsh and were eager for their children to receive their education in both Welsh and English. They noted, however, that such positive attitudes towards the Welsh language and its use among parents did not translate into transmission and use with their own children in all cases (Harrison et al. 1981: 61). In other words, there are other factors which influence the transmission of Welsh even when parents have positive attitudes towards the language.

Based on interviews and focus groups with caregivers, Irvine et al. (2008) suggest that positive caregiver attitudes towards Welsh is important for intergenerational transmission but that caregivers' own fluency and confidence in the language also play a vital role (Irvine et al. 2008: 3)². The idea that caregivers' confidence in Welsh influences the likelihood that they will transmit the language to their children has been mirrored in other studies both in the Welsh context (e.g. Harrison et al. 1981: 63; Bellin et al. 1997: 12) and internationally (e.g. Beykont 2010; Smith-Christmas, this volume).

As well as positive attitudes among parents, transmission of a minority language is also more likely in households where both parents speak that language. In the Welsh context, analyses of census data reveal that the transmission of Welsh is more likely in families with two adults who are able to speak the language (Evas et al. 2017: 51). The rate of transmission is significantly lower in one-adult families where the adult speaks Welsh and lowest in two-adult families where only one caregiver speaks Welsh (Evas et al. 2017: 60). Other work has shown that the use of Welsh in two-adult families where only one caregiver speaks Welsh can be a contentious issue which can lead to non-transmission (e.g. Harrison et al. 1981). A further consequence of apathetic or negative attitudes towards Welsh on the part of the non-Welsh-speaking parent can lead to the decrease in the use of the language between the Welsh-speaking caregiver and the child(ren), especially in the presence of non-Welsh-speakers. This, in part at least, appears to be due to a perception among some Welsh-speaking and non-Welsh-speaking parents that speaking the language in front of non-Welsh-speakers is impolite and exclusionary (Jones and Morris 2007).

Gathercole et al. (2007) included a number of social and attitudinal factors in their analysis of the transmission of Welsh in various communities in western areas of Wales. They found that caregivers who themselves had been socialised in Welsh in the family were more likely to transmit the language to their own children (especially if their partner was from a similar linguistic background). This factor was also highly correlated, however, with the caregivers' perceptions of their own ability

² Irvine et al. (2008) evaluated the Twf (Growth) scheme which aimed to increase the number of bilingual families who transmit Welsh to their children. In order to achieve this aim, the Twf staff worked with healthcare professionals in order to raise awareness about the benefits of transmitting Welsh in the home and of bilingual education (Irvine et al. 2008: 8-9).

in Welsh and, in turn, the use of Welsh with friends and in wider social networks (Gathercole et al. 2007: 97). The percentage of Welsh spoken in the local community was also found to be a significant predictor of transmission, with those in areas with a greater proportion of Welsh speakers more likely to transmit the language. It should be noted that this correlation was confounded with a number of other factors, however, such as the number and proportion of Welsh-speaking families where both caregivers spoke Welsh and the availability of wider social networks in Welsh (Gathercole et al. 2007: 85).

Areal comparisons of Welsh transmission are therefore inherently difficult because there are correlations between the percentage of Welsh speakers in an area and the use of Welsh and other linguistic practices (e.g. Jones 2008, 2012). Despite these difficulties, however, it could still be argued that there has been a lack of work which considers areas where the majority of the community do not speak Welsh. Harrison et al. (1981), for instance, collected data in areas where over 60% of the population spoke Welsh. Similarly, Gathercole et al. (2007) undertook research in communities where between 45-75% of the local population were Welsh-English bilinguals. The inclusion of a predominantly non-Welsh-speaking area in the current study arguably allows for a more diverse set of experiences which reflects the different ways in which Welsh is acquired and used in the daily lives of its speakers (see Section 3.2).

2.2 Policy context

In 2017, the Welsh Government published its strategy for the Welsh language entitled 'Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers' (Welsh Government 2017). The strategy refers to the transmission of the language in the family under the strategic theme of 'increasing the number of Welsh speakers' (see also Evas et al. 2017: 5–7 for an overview of previous strategies)³. The strategy refers to both the importance of transmission in the home for the vitality of Welsh whilst recognising that facilitating the acquisition of the language outside of the home is also necessary to meet the target of one million Welsh speakers (Welsh Government 2017: 17).

³ The three strategic themes around which current Welsh Government Welsh language policy is based are (1) increasing the number of Welsh speakers, (2) increasing the use of Welsh, and (3) creating favourable conditions – infrastructure and context (Welsh Government 2017: 5).

The strategy recognises that ‘encouraging more parents/carers to transmit the language to their children is a key priority’ (Welsh Government 2017: 21). In order to achieve increases in transmission rates, the government’s main priority is ‘to encourage and support families to use Welsh with their children, promoting the advantages of Welsh-language opportunities to parents and prospective parents, and ensuring that families have opportunities to learn Welsh’ (Welsh Government 2017: 34). A specific policy regarding Welsh language transmission (partly informed by Evas et al. 2017) is expected to be published in the period 2019-2020 (Welsh Government 2019: 3).

3 Methodology

As stated in Section 1, the research aimed to examine the factors which influence the transmission of Welsh in the home and to investigate patterns of use among caregivers and children aged 0-4. The focus of the current chapter is on the thematic analysis of qualitative data elicited by semi-structured interview. The following section therefore details the relevant methodological aspects of the study. It begins with information on the overall research design and sample before concentrating on how the qualitative data were coded and analysed.

3.1 Research Design

The qualitative data were collected via semi-structured interviews which contained both open and closed questions. Closed questions were included in order to complement the quantitative component of the wider research project for which data were collected via written questionnaire (Evas et al. 2017: 65–69). The inclusion of both a written questionnaire and closed questions in the interview schedule also allowed the respondents to provide clear self-reported data their background and their linguistic behaviour with their children. For instance, the question regarding transmission was phrased as ‘what language do you and your partner (if applicable) use with your youngest child?’ Respondents were given a number of closed options which were then elaborated on in the interview. The closed questions also elicited data on caregivers’ own linguistic background and their current language use. This informs the qualitative analysis insofar as we are able to fully describe the sample (see Section 3.4) and show tendencies among specific groups of speakers (for

instance, those from Welsh-speaking or English-speaking families) to raise similar themes.

The questions and statements included in the semi-structured interview (see Evas et al. 2017: 197–202 for a copy of the interview schedule) were designed to elicit narratives surrounding broad themes which have found to be prevalent in previous research (see Section 2.1). These themes are summarised in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Themes and examples of questions used in the semi-structured interview for main caregivers (see Evas et al. 2017 197-202).

Theme	Example
Use of Welsh in caregiver’s family	Tell me about how much Welsh was used in your family when you were growing up.
Experience of the Welsh language in childhood	Did you enjoy using Welsh when you were a school?
Current language use	So, in what language do you generally feel most comfortable?
Language use in the home	If you generally use [name of language(s)] to talk to [name of child], can you tell us about what language(s) they use when they start a conversation with you?
Family Language Policy	Tell me more about whether you discussed what language you were going to use with the baby before it was born...
Community and local provision	Could you tell us about the activities available for your children in Welsh?

The data elicited in the study are based on respondents’ self-report and the study does not include any observational elements (see Smith-Christmas, this volume). Similarly, we did not attempt to elicit data from children. This is arguably a limitation as we are unable to triangulate the data or observe patterns of linguistic behaviour or bilingual speech processes (such as ‘translanguaging’, see Creese and Blackledge 2010). Whilst this would have inevitably enriched the current study, we felt that the methodologies used in the Evas et al. (2017) were appropriate considering the aims of the research as well as time restrictions.

3.2 Sample Design

The sample design for the study included 60 families who had at least one child aged 0-4 years at the time of data collection and who reported at least one caregiver being able to speak Welsh. The decision to include 60 families allowed for meaningful analyses of the quantitative data whilst minimising the risk of data saturation (whereby a limited number of themes arise regardless of sample size) in the qualitative data (see O'Reilly and Parker 2013).

The sample was stratified equally by region and respondents were recruited from north west Wales (comprising the counties of Anglesey and Gwynedd) and south east Wales (which included the county boroughs of Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf). Table 2 shows the rural-urban classification and linguistic profile for the two regions.

Table 2: Rural-Urban classification and linguistic profile of the regions included in the study (after Evas et al. 2017: 72).

Area	Rural-Urban Classification	Linguistic Profile : % able to speak Welsh (according to 2011 Census)
North West: Anglesey and Gwynedd	Rural	Anglesey: 57.2% Gwynedd: 65.4%
South East: Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf	Semi-rural	Caerphilly: 11.2% Rhondda Cynon Taf: 12.3%

As can be seen in Table 2, both Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf are semi-rural areas located in the South Wales Valleys near to the cities of Cardiff, Newport and Swansea. Gwynedd and Anglesey, on the other hand, are rural counties located in the north west Wales. The differences in the percentage of the Welsh-speaking population in the two regions are also clear and Gwynedd and Anglesey contain the highest percentage of Welsh speakers as a proportion of the population in Wales. The decision to include both regions was taken in order to create a more diverse sample rather than to compare the two regions. In the following analysis, therefore, we concentrate primarily on speakers' individual linguistic background and experiences and refer to the region they live in where necessary, rather than make a *priori* comparisons between areas (see Jones 2008 for an exploration of the correlations between the percentage of Welsh speakers in different areas and various aspects of Welsh language use).

Further stratification of the sample (e.g. by the sex of the main caregiver or by the main caregiver's linguistic background) was not felt to be achievable given the timescale or appropriate given the ways in which various social factors may be correlated. The main caregiver's (self-reported) ability to speak Welsh was included as a caveat for inclusion in the sample.

3.3 Respondent Recruitment and Data Collection

Respondents had either been participants in the National Survey of Wales and had given consent to be contacted for future studies, or were recruited via local schools.

The National Survey of Wales is an annual survey conducted on behalf of the Welsh Government. Parents who had noted that they (1) were able to speak Welsh, (2) had a child aged under five, (3) were willing to be contacted for future research, and (4) lived in the four counties listed in Section 3.2 were contacted and provided with details of the study. This resulted in 13 interviews.

The remaining 47 respondents were recruited via local schools or using a 'snowball' approach (whereby respondents suggested acquaintances who might also be suitable for the study). A total of 24 Welsh-medium and English-medium primary schools in the two regions were contacted and provided with information about the project. Although the snowball approach can be problematic as the sample is not completely random as a consequence, this approach allowed us to contact parents with children under nursery school age who would otherwise not have received information about the project.

Possible respondents were firstly contacted via telephone and asked to complete a short screener questionnaire. This questionnaire was designed to ensure that respondents fit the criteria for the project (namely that they were able to speak Welsh, lived in one of the two regions, and had at least one child aged 0-4 years). Following this, the interview was arranged at a convenient time and place for the respondent⁴.

3.4 Respondents

⁴ Respondents were the main caregivers for their children and those contacted to take part in the research. Written questionnaires were also distributed to the partners of the main caregivers (where applicable) and are analysed in Evas et al. (2017: Chapter 5). Further reference will not be made to these data in the current chapter.

As stated in Section 3.2, all respondents were the main caregiver for at least one child aged 0-4 years and reported being able to speak Welsh. The sample was also equally stratified by region. Of the 60 respondents, 85% were women ($n=51$). The age of the respondents ranged between 20 and 45 years. The respondents had between one and four children ($M=1.75$) and the age of the youngest child ranged from two days to five years old ($M=2.64$).

The linguistic background of the respondents also varied. For instance, 47% of the respondents acquired Welsh at home as a young child ($n=28$) rather than through immersion education or post-compulsory education. In response to the question regarding the language in which they felt most comfortable, 65% of respondents stated that they felt more comfortable in English ($n=39$) compared to 25% of respondents who stated that they felt more comfortable in Welsh ($n=15$) and 10% who stated that they felt equally comfortable in both English and Welsh ($n=6$).

With regards to transmission, 41% of respondents stated that they almost always or mainly spoke Welsh with their youngest child ($n=25$). This compares to 35% of respondents who stated that they almost always or mainly spoke English with their youngest child ($n=21$) and 24% who stated that they roughly used equal amounts of both Welsh and English ($n=14$). When asked whether they made a conscious decision to use a particular language with their children, 68.3% stated that they used whichever language felt appropriate at the time ($n=41$).

3.5 Qualitative Data Coding and Analysis

The semi-structured interview data were analysed using thematic analysis. In order to undertake the thematic analysis, the interview data were firstly coded. The codes used to label the data were firstly pre-supposed by the researchers based on the interview schedule and research aims (see Evas et al. 2017: 99 for a full list of the codes used). During the process of coding the data, however, additional labels were added where necessary (Rubin and Rubin 2005: 209). Following the coding of the data, broader themes were derived (see Bryman 2016: 584-589). These themes were pertinent to the research questions posed in Section 1 and are discussed in Section 4 below.

4 Results

As stated in Section 3.1, the following themes are based on respondents' recollections of their own experiences and may not be as reliable as long-term observations. A further limitation of this approach is that discussions regarding language use are based on respondents' own perceptions and are likely to be somewhat reduced to the blanket statements outlined in Section 3.4. More observational research would certainly allow us to examine so-called 'flexible bilingualism' (e.g. Creese & Blackledge 2010) in situ. Whilst it is hoped that such research on the intergenerational transmission of Welsh will be undertaken, we would also stress that self-reported data have a role to play in sociolinguistic inquiry, especially when the foci of the research include speakers' own experiences and their reflections on particular life events. The following sections outline themes relevant to the decisions around intergenerational language transmission.

4.1 The use of Welsh as an unconscious behaviour

For many of the respondents, the transmission of Welsh was an unconscious decision which was not discussed overtly.

The respondents who reported the transmission of Welsh as an unconscious decision also, unsurprisingly, reported using Welsh as their main language of interaction following the birth of the child. These caregivers were overwhelmingly from Welsh-speaking families and had been socialised in Welsh in the home. The following excerpt shows the response of one mother from Gwynedd who reported transmission as an unconscious behaviour:

mae bob dim yn fy mywyd i wedi bod drwy'r Gymraeg (...) mae fy addysg i wedi bod trwy'r Gymraeg, ac wedyn mae fy ngwaith i wedi bod trwy'r Gymraeg, ac mae fy ngŵr i'n Gymraeg, mae fy mhlant i'n Gymraeg felly dydi hi ddim yn rhywbeth dwi wedi gwneud yn 'conscious' er mwyn cael gwaith (...) mae jyst wastad wedi bod yna

everything in my life has been through Welsh (...) my education has been through Welsh, and then my work has been through Welsh and my husband is Welsh-speaking so it isn't something I've done consciously in order to get work (...) it's just always been there

In the excerpt above, the respondent refers to living her life in Welsh. Among those respondents who reported the transmission of Welsh as an unconscious decision, almost all had spoken Welsh with their immediate family, had Welsh-speaking social networks in the local community growing up and had attended

Welsh-medium education. These respondents also continued to use Welsh as their main language both inside and outside of the home.

A related sub-theme among many of those who reported transmission of Welsh as an unconscious decision was confidence in their abilities in Welsh or in some cases in both Welsh and English. In the following excerpt, a mother from Gwynedd explained that Welsh was an unconscious decision because it requires more effort for her to speak English:

achos fy mod i wedi magu yn Gymraeg, dwi'n arafu pan dwi'n siarad Saesneg a rhoi geiriau Cymraeg mewn bob hyn a hyn. Dwi'n gorfod meddwl mwy am siarad Saesneg

because I've been raised in Welsh, I slow down when I speak English and put Welsh words in every so often. I have to think more about speaking English

The excerpt above exemplifies a tendency among many of the respondents from Welsh-speaking backgrounds, most of whom resided in Anglesey in Gwynedd where the majority of the population speak Welsh, to use Welsh as the main language of interaction in their daily lives. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these respondents often talked about being less confident in English due to not using it very frequently. Consequently, the use of Welsh with their children was often framed in terms of being a 'natural' choice.

Whilst the majority of these respondents also had Welsh-speaking partners, the transmission of Welsh was sometimes noted as being an unconscious decision among those who had non-Welsh-speaking partners (although this was not the main pattern found in the data for such respondents, see Section 4.3). In the excerpt below, a mother with a non-Welsh-speaking partner states that it was expected that she would speak Welsh with her baby and the issue was not discussed:

oedd o'n gwybod mai dyna oedd y sefyllfa yn mynd i fod felly (...) dwi'n reit stubborn yn y ffordd yna (...) basa dim byd wedi gwneud i fi siarad Saesneg efo hi

he knew that was how the situation was going to be so (...) I'm really stubborn in that way (...) nothing was going to make me speak English to her

This respondent came from a Welsh-speaking background and makes it clear that the use of Welsh with her child was an unconscious decision. Despite this, however, the fact that she refers to using Welsh because she is 'stubborn' with regards to language use suggests that the decision to transmit Welsh among parents whose partners do not speak the language might not be as 'natural' as in cases where both

parents speak Welsh. Indeed, this was found to be the case in the majority of respondents whose partners did not speak Welsh.

4.2 The use of English as an unconscious behaviour

Due to the nature of the sample (see Section 3.2) and the demographics of the two regions therein, the majority of those from Welsh-speaking families who reported the transmission of Welsh as an unconscious behaviour were from Anglesey and Gwynedd. Similarly, most of the participants who reported the transmission of English as an unconscious behaviour with their children were from Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf and the majority of these respondents had acquired Welsh through Welsh-medium education. For these respondents, the use of Welsh in the family home had not been a consideration in the early years, as this father from Rhondda Cynon Taf stated:

if you don't speak Welsh at home, which we didn't, when you have a child, it tends to be that you don't even think about the language (...) When they start school, then you make a decision (...) if you're not used to speaking [Welsh], English is the default setting

In the excerpt above, the father refers to a decision around the transmission of Welsh when the child reaches school age. Discussions around Welsh-medium education are discussed in Section 4.4 but this comment reflects a main theme in the sample, namely that the use of Welsh in the home is often not considered by Welsh-speaking parents from non-Welsh-speaking backgrounds who have acquired the language through the immersion education system.

Most of the respondents from English-speaking families reported low use of Welsh after leaving the education system. As shown in the excerpt above, this often resulted in no consideration of using Welsh with their children prior to the birth of the child and in the early years. Many of these respondents did report discussing Welsh-medium education for their children, however, which subsequently raised questions regarding language use in the home when the child started school. This is discussed further in Section 4.4.

4.3 Discussing transmission in linguistically exogamous families

The respondents who reported discussing the transmission of Welsh either prior to birth or shortly after the birth of their child were predominantly in relationships with non-Welsh-speaking partners and from Welsh-speaking backgrounds. Such

discussions were largely reported as being positive despite some disagreements among parents:

[Dwi'n] cofio cael y discussion gyda [thad y plentyn] pan o'n i'n feichiog am ba iaith o'n ni'n mynd i siarad (...) oedd y ddau ohonon ni up in arms am ba iaith o'n i'n mynd i siarad a dwi'n credu mai dyna pam ni wedi cytuno, reit siarada ti Saesneg a wna i siarad Cymraeg (...) [Mae'r Gymraeg] yn rhan mawr o sut ces i fy magu, isio [plentyn] gael yr un fath

[I] remember having the discussion with [the father of the child] when I was pregnant about which language we were going to speak (...) both of us were up in arms about which language we were going to speak and I believe that's why we have agreed, right, you speak English and I'll speak Welsh (...) [Welsh] is a big part of how I was raised and I want [child] to have the same thing

In situations where there were disagreements between parents (or in fewer cases between the Welsh-speaking parents and the partner and their extended family), the Welsh-speaking parent generally went on to speak Welsh with the child. This was often reported as changing over time, however, as some parents found that they often switched to English in the company of non-Welsh-speaking family members (see Evas et al. 2017: 107 for a more in-depth analysis).

4.4 Making a conscious decision about Welsh-medium education

As was stated in Section 4.2, using Welsh in the home was not considered by the majority of the parents who had acquired Welsh via immersion education (the majority of whom lived in south east Wales). It became apparent during the interviews, however, that many did discuss Welsh-medium education at various stages. In the following excerpt, it is clear that these discussions can start prior to the birth of the child:

even before I was pregnant I've always said that I wanted my children to go to a Welsh school and my partner has always known that

It was clear that many of these parents had not considered using Welsh themselves but felt that Welsh-medium education was of great importance:

I am proud that I can speak Welsh (...) I'm glad I got educated through Welsh and it made me more passionate to want to pass it down to my own children, to carry it on, not for it to die out

I think I'm very proud that I can speak Welsh, and when I speak to colleagues, a lot are reluctant to send their children to Welsh school and I try to encourage that and say, you know my parents didn't speak Welsh and I didn't find it difficult at all

In the two excerpts above, both parents refer to a sense of pride in being able to speak Welsh and, in the first excerpt, a desire to transmit the language. The fact that

discussions around Welsh-medium education rather than transmission of the language was a theme in the interview data indicates positive attitudes towards the language among many of these caregivers, but also suggests that they do not see the home as the vehicle for passing it on to the next generation.

It should be noted that many of these parents reported an increase in their use of Welsh once their child(ren) had started Welsh-medium education. This was, however, restricted to incidental Welsh in most cases and did not lead to a change in the main language of interaction between the Welsh-speaking parent and child (see Evas et al. 2017: 110–113 for more detail).

When asked further about their own language use, it became clear that issues around confidence and a perceived lack of opportunity to use Welsh since leaving school were possible reasons why the language of interaction between parent and child did not change. Most of the respondents from English-speaking families in Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf noted little use of Welsh after leaving the education system and now felt 'rusty' and 'out of practice'. Such patterns in the data are exemplified in the following excerpts:

[Welsh] would feel like speaking a different language now, it just came naturally when I was young

rydw i'n trio siarad Cymraeg ond rydw i'n stryglo. Dydw i ddim eisiau colli'r iaith, mae'n bwysig i fi ond I hardly get a chance to use it

I try to speak Welsh but I struggle. I don't want to lose the language but [respondent switches to English] I hardly get a chance to use it

While many parents from English-speaking backgrounds in the south east stated feeling unconfident in Welsh, it should also be noted that many of these respondents had begun using more Welsh after their child started in Welsh-medium. In the second excerpt above, the respondent (a Father from Caerphilly) notes that he does try to speak Welsh. Some other respondents also stated that they were gradually using more Welsh and becoming more confident as a result.

5 Discussion and Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to examine how parents use Welsh with their children and how the use of Welsh in the home is influenced by various factors (based on Evas et al. 2017). A thematic analysis was undertaken of semi-structured interview data from 60 main caregivers based in two regions of Wales. Prior to discussing the results, it should be noted that both this research and previous work indicates that intergenerational language transmission is a very complex issue which can be influenced by a number of factors. We do not argue that all relevant factors have been considered here and, as pointed out previously, this study did not observe respondents' linguistic behaviour in situ or longitudinally. Rather, the thematic analysis identified broad patterns in the way the transmission of Welsh is navigated by parents and the extent to which these patterns are influenced by the background of the parents.

For the majority of caregivers in the sample, language transmission and language use in the home was an unconscious behaviour which did not tend to be overtly discussed. The transmission of Welsh as an unconscious behaviour among those from predominantly Welsh-speaking backgrounds has been found in previous work (e.g. Gathercole et al. 2007: 89). For the majority of those for whom the transmission of Welsh is an unconscious decision, Welsh was the language they used with their partners (if applicable), their family, and their wider social networks. It seems likely, therefore, that any decline in close-knit Welsh-speaking networks will also lead to a decline in unconscious transmission of the Welsh language (cf. Nesteruk 2010 on the importance of social networks). This does not necessarily mean that successful transmission is more likely in geographical areas where Welsh is more of a community language (and such a claim would be beyond the limits of the current study). But, rather, that parents' early socialisation in the language and access to lifelong social networks is of great importance.

In cases where the transmission of Welsh was overtly discussed, the main caregiver was from a predominantly Welsh-speaking background but had a non-Welsh-speaking partner. Although there were sometimes disagreements, the Welsh-speaking parent reported speaking mainly Welsh to the child in all cases. Despite this, some respondents in linguistically exogamous relationships noted that Welsh was reserved for one-to-one interaction with the child and that English was used

when non-Welsh-speaking family members were present. Previous research into Welsh and other languages indicates that maximal input in the minority language is needed and that support of the partner who does not speak the minority language is of great importance (e.g. Jones and Morris 2009; Mejía 2015; Festman et al. 2017). Further research on such families is needed in order to examine parental ideologies and their influence on the transmission of Welsh.

The current study has also shown that the transmission of Welsh is rarely considered by Welsh-speaking parents who do not come from Welsh-speaking backgrounds and who tended not to have Welsh-speaking social networks. In the case of this sample, this did not mean that respondents from non-Welsh-speaking backgrounds had negative attitudes towards the language. Instead, they tended to want their children to speak Welsh but only considered that this could be achieved through Welsh-medium education. This supports previous claims that positive attitudes towards a minority language do not necessarily result in successful intergenerational language transmission (e.g. Ó hÍfearnáin 2013). The results in the present study suggested that many parents consider their own language use once the child starts Welsh-medium education but that they sometimes do not feel confident enough to use the language.

The results of the thematic analysis strongly suggest that early socialisation in Welsh and strong normalisation of the language will facilitate (but not guarantee) intergenerational language transmission. The fact remains, however, that such early socialisation is not experienced by the majority of Welsh speakers. In terms of both future research and Welsh language policy interventions, therefore, it is important to note that a 'one size fits all' approach is not likely to succeed. In particular, the fact that many of these 'new speakers' (O'Rourke et al. 2015) of Welsh did not consider transmission suggests that relevant stakeholders (such as initial teacher training providers and the Welsh Government) should develop social psychological approaches to positively encourage the use of Welsh from an early age and attempt to ensure that structures are in place across Wales in order to facilitate the use of Welsh after compulsory education. With reference to transmission in particular, it appears that consideration needs to be given to how prospective parents (and particularly those who are likely to not consider the transmission of Welsh or those in linguistically exogamous relationships) can be encouraged to use the language prior to the birth of the child and supported following the birth of the child.

6 References

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