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Reasons to learn a minoritised language: the case of migrant new speakers of Welsh in Cardiff, Wales

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the reasons for migrant new speakers of Welsh in Cardiff to learn the language given that English is the main communication medium in everyday life. From interviews with 10 migrant new speakers of Welsh and their language diaries, this paper shows that migrant new speakers were interested in accessing the Welsh culture and society through the Welsh language. Although they did not learn it for financial gain, migrants noticed the linguistic capital of Welsh. It is also found that migrant new speakers had personal reasons for learning the language based on their unique language timelines and interest in languages. Findings show that neither Gardner's socio-educational nor Dörnyei's psychological frameworks can fully explain reasons for migrant new speakers to learn Welsh. Although minoritised languages are conventionally regarded to be related to nativeness, this paper argues that people who are non-traditional speakers, including migrants, can play a role in revitalising the languages.

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Introduction

Welsh (*Cymraeg*) is one of the two official languages in Wales, yet a minoritised one. The 2021 Census shows that there were 538,300 people aged three or above who spoke Welsh in Wales (17.8% of the population) (Welsh Government, 2022a) while the Annual Population Survey in 2024 provides an estimation of around 862,700 speakers (28.0%) (Welsh Government, 2024a). Revitalisation efforts have been seen over the past few decades. Since the 90s, the Welsh language provision has been embedded in the immersion education for school-age pupils, including those in English-medium schools. In order to create more Welsh speakers, adult education provision is also available for people who are interested in learning the language. People from diverse backgrounds have made an active choice to learn the language. An often-overlooked group is migrants.

This article explores the reasons for migrant new speakers to learn Welsh by drawing on data from semi-structured interviews with 10 international migrants and

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dairies written by them. Following studies on ‘new speakers’, this research attempts to shed light on non-traditional speakers in the discussion of language revitalisation. Participants all lived in Cardiff and learnt Welsh through the provision by Learn Welsh Cardiff. In the Welsh capital city, only 12.2% of its population could speak Welsh according to the Census and 20.8% according to the Annual Population Survey (Welsh Government, 2022b, 2024b). In the first part of this article, the theories related to motivation to learn a new language, the ‘new speaker’ category, the Welsh provision to adults and previous literature on new speakers’ reasons to learn Welsh are discussed. The second part presents and discusses the findings of this study. By presenting new perspectives regarding the learning of minoritised languages, I argue that migrants can contribute to the Welsh language revitalisation. Moreover, I expect that this article will benefit the understanding of the new speaker’s social category in sociolinguistics.

Integrativeness and instrumentality, and L2 Motivational Self System

In the studies of motivation to learn a second language, Gardner and Lambert’s socio-educational model (1972) in distinguishing integrativeness and instrumentality is popularly cited (Dörnyei, 2020). Instrumental motivation is related to the personal gain from acquiring the language while integrative motivation is linked to the interest in a specific community that speaks the targeted language (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Although popularly applied as a theoretical framework to understand people’s learning of another language, the socio-educational model does not come with no dispute. In the context of Global English, Ushioda and Dörnyei (2009) argue that there is no specific speech community that people who learn English can identify. Instead, people who learn English may project themselves as a capable English speaker. Deploying the psychological concepts of ‘selves’, Dörnyei and Csizér (2002) state that ‘integrativeness and instrumentality would be associated with different self domains, and motivation to learn an L2 would be related to achieving possible selves and to resolving self-discrepancies between actual and ideal selves’ (454).

Due to the dissatisfaction with the socio-educational model, Dörnyei (2005) proposes a psychological model, the L2 Motivational Self System, which directly evolved from Gardner’s theory of integrative motivation (Dörnyei, 2020: xix). The psychological model includes three components: the ideal L2 Self (‘concerns a desirable self-image of the kind of L2 user one would ideally like to be in the future’), the ought-to L2 Self (‘reflects the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet the expectations of others and to avoid possible negative outcomes in the process of L2 learning’), and L2 Learning experience (‘focuses on the learner’s present experience’) (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017, pp. 456–457). Throughout the years, there has been a call to replace Gardner’s integrativeness with Dörnyei’s L2 Ideal Self. In the comparison of the two models, Claro (2020) concludes that Gardner’s integrativeness represents identification with an external locus, while Dörnyei’s ideal L2 self represents identification with an internal locus (253). Thus, one cannot replace another. Claro (2020) argues that the external referents are relevant to the internal referent. For example, when one identifies with L2 speakers, they internalise the desired aspects of those L2 speakers. These desired aspects then become part of one’s own desired self.

Recently, the L2 Motivational Self System has been criticised for its inability to explain the learning of languages other than English (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017). Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie (2017) admit that the model may show 'blatant bias' toward English learning motivation and not be able to comprehensively understand the motivation to learn languages other than English (LOTES) (457). The elements that make the L2 Motivational Self System inapplicable to the learning of LOTES include: (a) the confounding interaction of English – and LOTE-related self-images, (b) the individualistic focus of the ideal L2 self, (c) the different nature/role of the ought-to self associated with languages with substantial versus marginal social support, (d) the different nature of goals in the learning of English and LOTES, and (e) the differing role of unconscious motives in the study of English and LOTES (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017). Due to the limitations of both Gardner's socio-educational and Dörnyei's psychological models, more studies into motivation in the LOTE context are desirable to identify the model(s) to application. The current study applies concepts from both models (integrativeness, instrumentality and ideal self) to help understand the reasons for migrant new speakers to learn Welsh.

Migrant new speaker of Welsh

Dissatisfying with the ethnic focus in the study of minoritised languages, a 'new speaker' category has emerged (O'Rourke et al., 2015). New-speakerness removes the notion that a language is linked to nativeness and an exclusive language legitimacy (O'Rourke & DePalma, 2016; O'Rourke & Pujolar, 2013). New-speakerness, epistemologically, values the agency of those who learn and/or acquire the language as language users given that they did not speak the language from birth, when they grew up or learn it because of their familial linkage to the language.

Recognising new speakers as legitimate language users is relevant to their language learning process (individually) and the revitalisation of minoritised languages (socially). New speakers face barriers when they attempt to communicate with fluent speakers or even a lack of opportunities to practise (Jaffe, 2015). This tendency of othering new speakers undermines their potential to become more fluent and comfortable speakers. Whereas, in fact, new speakers, including migrants who are the focus of this paper, may want to become users of the minoritised language and contribute to the cause of preserving the language (Daussà et al., 2020). Deploying the lens of new speaker to understand people's reasons for learning a minoritised language rebuts the idea that the language is only reserved for people from a specific place (O'Rourke & DePalma, 2016) and locates the minoritised language as an inclusive language.

New speaker as a term has been used in the context of the Welsh language. It has been used to describe different groups of language users in previous studies, for example, pupils in English-medium schools in Wales (Selleck, 2018), Polish migrants in Northwest Wales (Rosiak, 2018), and adult immigrants (Augustyniak & Higham, 2019). Selleck (2018) notes that the term '*dysgwyr* (learners)', instead of new speakers, was the preferred lexical choice within the surveyed community. Hornsby and Vigers (2018) also notice that their participants did not necessarily see the 'learner' category as a problem. Nevertheless, Selleck (2018) deploys the term new speaker as a notion that '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' (65). Similarly, the term *migrant new speaker of Welsh* is used in this paper consistently to emphasise new speakers' profiles and practices (O'Rourke & Pujolar, 2013).

Welsh language provision to adults and migrants

The Welsh language has been minoritised in Wales although efforts to revitalise the language have been seen over the past few decades. Since the nineteenth century, speaking Welsh was discouraged as the language was stigmatised in official discourse (Edwards & Newcombe, 2005). Exclusion of the Welsh language in official education (Edwards & Newcombe, 2005), economic development which saw an influx of English speakers (Young et al., 2024) compounded with the fact that family transmission of the language halted (Johnes, 2020), the linguistic landscape echoes Bourdieu's (1991) idea of the linguistic market where English is seen as more valuable than Welsh. Since the mid-twentieth century, awareness of the decline of the Welsh language and the desire to revitalise it have emerged. The 1960s and 70s saw a surge of interest in Welsh courses for adults and activism to demand protection for the Welsh language (Morris, 2000; Williams, 1976). Authorities also acknowledged the importance of the language. In 1982, a Welsh language television channel was established. The Welsh Language Board was set up under the Welsh Language Act 1993 (Edwards et al., 2011). Since the 1990s, the Welsh language provision has been embedded in the immersion education for school-age pupils meaning that those in English-medium schools would have Welsh classes (Jones, 2016). Nonetheless, the number of speakers and the percentage of the population who could speak Welsh declined from 929,800 (49.9%) in 1901 to 500,000 (18.5%) in 1991 (Welsh Assembly, 2003).

Welsh education provision for adults has been developed and become centralised over the past few decades. A network of Welsh for Adults classes was first established by the University of Wales, Further Education colleges, the Workers' Educational Association, Local Education Authorities, and voluntary organisations (Morris, 2000). The enrolments on Welsh courses provided by universities and local authorities grew from 5000 in 1972–1973 to over 20,000 each year in 1996–1997, with record enrolments of more than 25,000 in 2004–2005 (Newcombe, 2007, p. 18). During the same period, WLPAN, an intensive Welsh course, was developed based on Israel's ULPAN model. By 1982, there were 43 WLPAN courses in Wales (Newcombe, 2007, pp. 21–22). In 1994, eight regional consortia were established that were responsible for coordinating the provision, the marketing training for tutors, etc (Welsh Government, 2013). Later in 2000, Education and Learning Wales, a Welsh Assembly-sponsored public body, became responsible for the funding arrangements for Welsh for Adults. In 2006, six Welsh for Adults Centres were established and received funding from the Welsh Government. In 2013, a comprehensive review of Welsh language education provision for adults suggested that the Welsh Government should establish a National Entity to be responsible for providing strategic leadership to regional providers (Welsh Government, 2013). Following this suggestion, the Welsh Government awarded the contract to develop the National Centre for Learning Welsh to the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (Morris, 2021). In 2016, the National Centre for

Learning Welsh was established. To date, the National Centre works with 10 course providers across Wales.

There has been a growth in enrolment in the courses offered by the National Centre. In 2022–2023, 16,905 people learnt Welsh across the providers which saw a 33% increase on 2017–2018 when the Centre published data for the first time (National Centre for Learning Welsh, 2024a). Among the people who enrolled in the courses in 2022–2023, 85% entered information about their ethnicity. 96% of them identified as white while 4% are of diverse ethnicities (National Centre for Learning Welsh, 2024b). There is no data on migration, the focus of the current paper, from the National Centre. Since 2022, the courses have been made free of charge for people between 16–25 from all backgrounds (Welsh Government, 2022d). With other forms of financial support, 44% of people who enrolled received their courses free of charge in 2022–2023 (Estyn, 2024). At the time of writing (the close of 2024), the course fees for a whole academic year and half a year stand uniformly at £100.

Recently, platforms have been utilised to let migrants, particularly speakers of languages other than English and Welsh, learn the Welsh languages. Civil society organisations piloted to offer Welsh taster sessions to refugees as early as 2020 (Morris, 2020). Following an iteration in 2019 where the Welsh Government called on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) providers to integrate the Welsh language into their classes (Welsh Government, 2019), Welsh language elements have been added to some provisions. Another approach deployed by ESOL providers is to introduce a separate Welsh for Speakers of Other Languages (WSOL) course. For example, quoted in a 2023 report (Learning and Work Institute Wales and the University of South Wales, 2023), a representative of REACH, a hub for ESOL in cities across Wales, indicated that the organisation started WSOL ‘about 4 years ago’ (38). In 2021, a 10-hour WSOL course for refugees and asylum seekers, developed by the National Centre, started at *Addysg Oedolion Cymru* (Addysg Oedolion Cymru, 2022; 2023; Learning and Work Institute Wales and the University of South Wales, 2023). In 2023, the National Centre launched a free *Croeso i Bawb* (All are welcome) online package which introduced the Welsh language and Wales to ‘people whose first language is not English or who do not speak much English’ (National Centre for Learning Welsh, 2023). The package is available in Ukrainian, Cantonese, Syrian Arabic, Farsi, and Pashto.

Given the limited devolved competency, the Welsh Government has looked for ways to promote the Welsh language to migrants (Edwards & Wisthaler, 2023). These policies align with two policy goals of the sub-state. First, making Wales an inclusive nation. In its Anti-racist action plan, the Welsh Government (2024c) claims that ‘our vision for the Welsh language is expansionist and inclusive: Welsh is a language for all and a way of uniting people from different backgrounds’ (116). The devolved government aims to promote access to Welsh-medium education and opportunities to use Welsh among ethnic minority communities (Welsh Government, 2024c). Also, in 2019, the Welsh Government announced Wales as a ‘nation of sanctuary’ which serves as a counternarrative to the state’s hostile approach to asylum seekers and refugees (Edwards & Wisthaler, 2023). However, the limited provision of Welsh language education to refugees made a campaigner comment that ‘the policy must change if the Welsh government is going to stick to its commitment to make Wales a genuine sanctuary nation’ (Morris, 2020). Second, encouraging more people to become Welsh speakers. In its *Cymraeg 2050*

strategy, the Welsh Government has pledged to achieve a milestone of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 (Welsh Government, 2017). Recruiting new speakers, including migrants, is important in achieving this goal of language revitalisation (Augustyniak & Higham, 2019). Nonetheless, 'more research is needed to understand intersectionality between (and within) minority groups in Welsh-speaking communities' (Augustyniak & Higham, 2019, p. 96).

Learning a minoritised language: the Welsh context

For adults, learning Welsh is an active choice in a bid to acquire the language. In its nature, it is different from pupils learning it through compulsory education whose attitudes and experiences might not be positive (Rhys & Smith, 2022). Studies on pupils also focus on whether they want to have their post-compulsory level study in the medium of Welsh which links to the linguistic value of the language (Davies & Trystan, 2012; Jones, 2019). A number of studies have been conducted to explore the reasons for adults to learn Welsh. Adult new speakers learn and practice Welsh through opportunities in the community (Hodges & Prys, 2019) and/or adult Welsh provision (Baker et al., 2011). Drawn from Williams (1965), HMI (Wales, 1984), Morris (2000) and Newcombe (2007), Morris (2022) concludes that an integrative orientation prevails as a common finding in the studies of motivation amongst adults who learn Welsh over the last half century. However, in their quantitative research on why people learn Welsh, Morris et al. (2024) suggest that the integrative and instrumental reasons are intertwined.

Research that explores the learning of Welsh by migrants is limited. A dedicated scholar is Rosiak. Rosiak's (2018, p. 2023; Rosiak & Zydorowicz, 2023) studies particularly explore the perspectives of Polish migrants on the Welsh language. In Wales, according to the 2021 Census (Welsh Government, 2022c), Poland was the most common country of birth outside the UK. Contradicting the claims that Poles are not interested in the Welsh language, findings show that Polish migrants in Northwest Wales have positive attitudes towards it (Rosiak, 2018). Motivations to learn the minoritised language depend on the strength of Welsh as a community language in the area, if people have school-age children learning Welsh and personal connections Rosiak, 2018. Further, Rosiak (2023) finds that integrativeness plays a significant role in minority language learning. Whereas the ideology of authenticity, which locates the value of a language in its relationship to a particular community, demotivates new speakers to learn the targeted language. Rosiak and Zydorowicz (2023) also argue that the claim by Polish migrants that Welsh pronunciation is markedly different from Polish pronunciation is not based on the linguistic ground but rooted in the social and ideological perceptions of Welsh. In contrast to Rosiak's focus, Augustyniak and Higham's (2019) participants are a diverse mix of migrants. They note that migrant new speakers see the language as a cultural and economic asset (Augustyniak and Higham, 2019), which suggests that learning Welsh provides symbolic capital (links to personal prestige, honour, and recognition) and potentially financial benefits. By learning Welsh, migrants, Bermingham and Higham (2018) argue, are 'transforming the relationship between language and ethnicity and opening up new civic and plural ways of belonging' (404).

Migrant new speakers of Welsh process a different social identity compared to that of traditional speakers as is evidenced in Trosset's (1986) ethnographic work. As a new

speaker of Welsh from the United States (the ‘learner’ category is used by Trosset), Trosset conducted the fieldwork for a year while living in various parts of Wales and mostly among Welsh speakers and speaking mostly Welsh. The paper discusses the difficulties that new speakers face when trying to create chances to speak Welsh with fluent speakers. The findings are echoed in Jaffe’s (2015) research on new speakers of Corsican in Corsica where it is noticed that new speakers have to create or activate the conditions to learn. Trosset (1986) further proposes the idea of ‘verbal performer’. Although everyone is a verbal performer, new speakers are ‘unlike other verbal performers, they do not assume accountability to an audience; they have it forced upon them’, (Trosset, 1986, p. 180) as they are perceived by native speakers as non-normal speakers. The distinct social identity of migrant new speakers poses an interesting question as to why they learn the language given the potential ‘othering’ by traditional speakers. Nonetheless, the experiences of migrants as new speakers of Welsh may be different depending on the locality. The current study took place in Cardiff, the most diverse place in Wales, where 16.5% of its population were estimated to be born outside the UK while the Welsh national average was 6.9% (Welsh Government, 2022c). Given the metropolitan nature of Cardiff and the unlikely scenario that Welsh is the common medium of communication in everyday life, the study is interested in exploring the reasons why migrants decide to learn the Welsh language in this demographic and linguistic context.

Method

The findings of this paper are based on data from interviews with and language diaries by 10 Cardiff-based international migrant new speakers who were learning Welsh with Learn Welsh Cardiff. Learn Welsh Cardiff (*Dysgu Cymraeg Caerdydd*) is one of the regional providers that works with the National Centre for Learning Welsh. It provides five levels of courses, including Entry (*Mynediad*), Foundation (*Sylfaen*), Intermediate (*Canolradd*), Advanced (*Uwch*) and Proficiency (*Gloywi*). Classes are delivered in-person and/or online. All participants in this study were recruited with the help of Learn Welsh Cardiff as a recruitment email was sent by them on my behalf. After the recruitment email was sent, all potential participants contacted me directly via email. Four criteria were set for eligible participants: have learnt or are learning Welsh; are adults; were not born and raised in the UK; and have not learnt Welsh via compulsory education. Eventually, there was a mixture of countries of origin, ages, and professions among the 10 new speakers as shown in Table 1. Welsh pseudonyms are assigned to participants.

Table 1. Participants’ characteristics.

Participant pseudonym	Country of origin	Age	Profession
Jac	Colombia	45	Research Associate
Gwen	Nicaragua	32	Journalist
Gethin	Hungary	25	Public Servant
Sioned	Spain	28	Tutor
Carys	New Zealand	30	Researcher
Heledd	Australia	38	Lecturer
Alys	Bulgaria	31	Writer
Mari	France	36	Researcher Officer
Ffion	Italy	47	Unemployed
Beca	Ukraine	41	Teaching Assistant

The current paper is derived from my master's dissertation and ethical approval was granted by School Research Ethics Committee, School of Social Science, Cardiff University (SREC Number: 539).

Each new speaker was interviewed independently. They were given the option to conduct the interview in-person or online. Both options were chosen. All interviews were conducted in English between May and June 2024. Interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. As for diaries, new speakers wrote their diaries independently about their everyday usage of Welsh. The diary period was set to be two weeks while two new speakers only conducted for a one-week period. After transcribing the interviews and receiving the diaries, I then analysed the data to develop codes and themes in an inductive manner (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Although the participants were not those who could only be reached and secured by someone who has a strong 'insider' identity, I shared the same identity with them as a new speaker of Welsh. Selleck and Barakos (2023) argue that the researcher's identity is an important element as it is relevant to the motivation for research, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and presentation. Nonetheless, thus far only Hodges (2021) acknowledges her position as a new speaker of Welsh. The majority of researchers have not approached their identities when researching bilingualism in Wales (Selleck & Barakos, 2023). The fact that I am a migrant new speaker of Welsh might have helped me to elicit talks during the interviews and gain the trust of the participants. Yet, it is important to recognise that I do not share the same linguistic repertoire with participants nor the Welsh learning journey as everyone's journey is unique.

Results

Why do migrants decide to learn the Welsh language?

It is an active choice to dedicate time, no matter how much or how little, to learn Welsh. In the case of this study, all participants were of working age. One of the participants identified that they were unemployed at the time of data collection. Participants did not have compulsory schooling, which included Welsh language education, in Wales. Therefore, they put themselves up for learning Welsh. New speakers were at different points in their Welsh learning journey. As a result, reasons to learn Welsh are not solely defined by what made them start learning Welsh, but also why they continued doing so. The study identified three themes relevant to why migrant new speakers decide to learn Welsh, i.e. connection with Welsh culture and society, personal reasons, and career prospects.

Connection with Welsh culture and society: integrativeness

New speakers acknowledged the low proportion of people who speak Welsh in Cardiff. Jac expressed that 'it's very unlikely people would speak (*Welsh*)', while Gwen said that 'not as often as you would expect to hear it (*Welsh*) in the city, you know, the capital of Wales'. Despite this, learning the Welsh language was seen as a potential gateway to the Welsh cultural landscape as Ffion suggested that 'languages are great in showing you a side of a culture that otherwise you wouldn't see'. It was echoed by Carys, who

said: 'It would be a great way to learn about the country and sort of feel like I belong here I guess. It's like a way to connect'. Migrant new speakers were keen to immerse themselves into the Welsh culture. However, contrasting to previous findings (Rosiak, 2018), this integrative orientation is not necessarily related to the existence of a speech community in the locality. The desire to master the Welsh language is related to certain imaginary scenarios in the future, for example, 'just listen to the radio and everything' (Beca), 'be able to pronounce like the place names and the names in general' (Gethin), and 'be a part of a certain event or things' (Sioned). Indeed, some new speakers were already consuming Welsh language content that served general Welsh speakers and was not tailored for people who were learning. For example, they listened to Welsh music: 'On my playlist I have the occasional song by *Bwncath* coming up, or maybe one by *Pedair*' (Jac's diary), 'I listened to Eve Goodman on my way to work' (Gwen's diary), 'Listened to some Welsh-language music while cooking dinner' (Heledd's diary); listen to radio: 'Listening to BBC Radio Cymru while cooking' (Beca's diary), and watch TV shows: for example 'Watched an episode of *Un Bore Mercher* (S4C crime show), with English subtitles' (Carys' diary).

Some new speakers believed that they had a role to play in sustaining and revitalising the language. For instance, Alys said: 'The exposure to it made me realise, 'oh it's really sad that this language is dying,' (.) I would like to, you know, participate in keeping it alive'. The term 'dying language' contrasts with the Welsh Government's (2012) notion that Welsh is '*iaith fyw*' (a living language). Indeed, Alys was the only participant who used 'dying' to describe the Welsh language. Nonetheless, the terminological difference did not hinder the shared urge to take part in preserving the language. The sympathy towards the Welsh language and the conscious act to learn it by migrant new speakers suggest that the protection and sustainability of minoritised language does not necessarily link to nativeness (O'Rourke et al., 2015). By continuously learning Welsh, the personal connection with the language could get stronger as the following excerpts suggest:

I honestly think learning Welsh is the main reason that I like this country (...) if I think about living in England, I don't really feel any sense of attachment to England because it's just, you know, 'oh I speak English'. It's just it's a country that's very culturally similar to New Zealand (...) but then I think about Wales and there's this very special thing that I'm sort of participating in that is very unique to this country. (Carys)

I didn't feel like that with any of the other languages, but I actually feel kind of a responsibility now that I've got to this point where actually I can ... I mean I don't have all the vocabulary and I make lots of mistakes. But I can ... I can speak um ... like I have kind of a duty to at least retain that and keep practicing it yeah. (Mari)

The connection that new speakers wanted to build with the Welsh culture and society through the Welsh language might have been strengthened by the fact that some people did not speak and appreciate the language. The following excerpts highlight the sentiments new speakers had toward the position of the Welsh language in society:

I've spoken to people that have been raised in Wales that don't come from Welsh speaking families and when I have mention (sic) that I study Welsh, some of them have told me some words like 'good morning', 'please' or the days of the week, which I honestly found it ridiculous and a bit sad. These people have been living here for a way longer

time than me, they've been schooled in Wales and yet it seems like I have a higher level (Sioned's diary)

(...) in general um ... I think not ... not many people really care about like the Welsh language unfortunately in Cardiff at least. And ... and ... and not many people are proud of their ... them speaking or like knowing Welsh you know I feel like which ... which is quite sad. (Gethin)

The following conversation shows the subtle dilemma between Mari and their colleagues based on the perception of the Welsh language:

- Mari: Hmm ... I don't know. I think ... uh ... at work for example I think apart from my colleague who spoke (*Welsh*) I think the other ones are like ... they're a bit like, Ohh, she's very Welsh. Isn't that funny? Kind of thing like ... like I ... like I'm a little child uh ... who's like picked up a new activity and they're like, ah, but but ... but so I feel like they don't really take it very seriously. (Um.) Yeah, that's quite interesting.
- Researcher: Then would you say they were wrong because you ... you're actually learning it like seriously?
- Mari: Yeah yeah, for sure. But I also wonder if maybe it's linked to the whole attitude towards Welsh where some people like quite resistant to it and (Sighing.) you know there is a ... I think in the university for example there are ... there are people who are like, 'ohh why do we have to translate everything in Welsh? No one reads the Welsh version anyway'. So it's like ... kind of like sense that you know Welsh is just like ... just box that you have to tick but actually it's not a real thing. No one ... no one cares about it. Um ... which obviously I don't ... I don't agree with but yeah hahaha.

The talks by new speakers signal that the minoritisation of the Welsh language may not just be a historical event but is continuing in the present. There are efforts to revitalise the language such as adult provision, on the one hand. But there is a visible opposition in society, perceived by new speakers, on the other. Interestingly, this kind of opposition towards the Welsh language may link to a stronger urge for new speakers to learn and sustain the language.

Personal reasons

Migrant new speakers had different language timelines and levels of interest in languages. Thus, some reasons for new speakers to learn Welsh could be personal. Benson (1991), Belmar (2018) and Belmar et al. (2019), based on the socio-educational model, propose a three-fold model to explain the learning of minoritised languages by new speakers. Personal reasons, for example, 'aesthetics' and 'own heritage or that of close ones' are found (Belmar, 2018). In this study, personal reasons include the linkage of Welsh with the new speaker's 'own' language and general enjoyment of learning languages.

A handful of new speakers mentioned the language(s) of their countries of origin when discussing their reasons for learning Welsh. The social attitudes towards those languages and the number and proportion of speakers may not be directly comparable to the Welsh language in Wales, but new speakers could project the power dynamics of languages from their country of origin to that in Wales. This is what Roldós (2018) refers to as the 'mirror effect'. The mirror effect 'implies a (1) bidirectional transposition, for which the

sociolinguistic situation in the host country modifies the sociolinguistic beliefs acquired in the home society AND ALSO (2) taking action and engaging: a change not only in language ideologies but also in language practices ...' (Roldós, 2018, p. 47). Below are two excerpts, first by a Catalan speaker and tutor, and second by a Ukrainian speaker:

... like my first language is Catalan and I think that because of that I've always been ... uh ... you know I've always had this kind of sensibility towards languages (...) it didn't make sense for me to not be interested in study [*sic*] Welsh because I teach ... a ... a language that has been minoritised and it's a language that I love and means a lot to my community and to my identity. And I feel that for the Welsh is something that I can relate a lot. (Sioned)

And in the situation with the Russian and Ukrainian was pretty much similar as Welsh and English in Wales. So Russia was dominating language in Ukraine and nobody would care to learn Ukrainian, yeah it was the kind of language in ... mandatory in schools. But nobody would speak it and people tried not to really learn it ... pretty much like Welsh language now. But we turn it around completely. And I've felt very proud that we've done it and I want to ... sorry ... I want Welsh language to achieve the same thing. (Beca)

For people from Wales or with a Welsh heritage, the Welsh language is linked to the Welsh identity. For Welsh speakers, the language can prove their Welshness while non-speakers have shame or guilt about their linguistic incompetence (Evans, 2019). It is due to the perception that the Welsh language is 'a way of defining a distinctive Welshness against English-ness' (Evans, 2019, p. 180). However, this sentiment about the power relation between the English and the Welsh languages can also be shared by migrants who did not have the experiences of being born and growing up in Wales nor do they have a Welsh heritage as those in Patagonia, Argentina (Banegas & Roberts, 2020). Thus, the findings here suggest that minoritised languages are not native-owned. Indeed, in the cases of Sioned and Beca, it was their foreign language timelines that made them feel the Welsh language was relatable. In addition, new speakers who could not speak the language(s) back home could also make connections between those languages and Welsh. When asked whether their cultural background had affected their decisions to learn Welsh, Carys and Jac replied:

I think definitely. I mean I don't speak Te Reo Māori and regret that quite a lot. I think if I went back, I would definitely learn. So that was probably a motivator I was thinking, 'well, I'm not gonna do that again. I'm not gonna live in a country and not learn the language'. (Carys)

It (*learning Welsh*) was not something that I had to do ... because I explored also indigenous and Creole languages in Colombia, which I do not speak. But the problem was basically that you here could get a course in Welsh, whereas at home there's no way of getting a course in Wayunaiki or Nasa Yuwe or any of the languages that I was exploring so ... (Jac)

Aside from the sentiment towards the minoritisation of the Welsh language, learning it can be sprung from individual enjoyment. A handful of new speakers indicated that they enjoyed learning languages in general. Some new speakers had learned different languages, for example Jac (English, German, Scottish Gaelic, Welsh), Gwen (English, Dutch, Japanese, Welsh), Gethin (German, English, Spanish, Welsh), and Ffion (English, French, German, Spanish, Chinese, Welsh). The learning itself can be an interesting activity for new speakers as Mari indicated 'I've always been interested in languages so I thought it would be nice um ... to learn a bit more about the language of the place that I was living

in um yeah'. Gwen said they enjoyed learning different tenses in Welsh and that the mutations were interesting. Gethin explained that learning languages could lead to intellectual rewards:

(...) I think like knowing a language and speaking a language is not just about ... like um ... that ... that the benefits that you get from like work and stuff like that ... you know. It's ... not ... not just about that, it's more like an intellectual thing as well like I ... I find it ... uhm ... I ... I feel like it's a ... it's a good way to like get a different perspective on ... on things as such you know. (Gethin)

The personal reasons to learn Welsh as discussed in this session show that new speakers decided to learn Welsh based on their personal experience and interest. These reasons cannot be comprehensively explained by Gardner's socio-educational framework. Instead, it is more suitable to apply Dörnyei's psychological framework. Migrants had projected ideal versions of themselves (becoming a new speaker of Welsh) based on their language timelines and interest in language. Therefore, they decided to learn the Welsh language.

Career prospects: instrumentality

Some new speakers mentioned the economic benefits of learning Welsh. They understood that the skill in Welsh would potentially benefit them economically. However, it appeared that most of them were not able to claim any benefits from it yet. New speakers saw the benefits would only come at an uncertain time in the future:

Um ... yeah and it might be that if I wanted to change job ... in a different job it might be more useful I don't know. (Mari)

I would imagine like once I progress more and I can say that I'm more fluent it ... and once I go for ... for other jobs when ... where it might be more useful then it ... it might be a bigger advantage I would say. (Gethin)

Um ... I'm ... I'm not sure how realistic that goal is. I would have to become much much much better at Welsh to use it for ... for work, but who knows? (Heledd)

I don't want to think, 'oh I'm going to get a job' because I ... no I don't think so. I don't want to raise my expectations or something. (Ffion)

Studies have argued that the Welsh language has become a benefit for career prospects as Bermingham and Higham (2018) suggest that there is an expansion of linguistic capital of the minoritised language. Nonetheless, there are nuances to it. For new speakers, realising the linguistic capital of Welsh and claiming the benefits that it accompanies are different. In order to claim the benefits, new speakers have to invest an uncertain amount of effort and time to learn and practise Welsh. Consider also the socio-economic backgrounds of the new speakers in this study. Since all of them but one were employed, they might not have the urge to change jobs with the aid of their skill in Welsh. Nonetheless, Welsh could be useful for their current job duties. Beca said that the skill in Welsh 'helped me with my work at school' although they had started the job before learning Welsh. Speaking of their future career development, Beca also said that the language might be beneficial for them to develop a website for a Welsh audience. One exception was Gwen who reported they had directly benefited professionally from the language.

The start time for their first Welsh course overlapped with the period when they were looking for a new job:

I applied to many jobs and I always mentioned that I was learning in [sic] Welsh and I was learning Welsh and then I was working. I was committed to even do it outside of office hours and things like that. And that really helped me to the point that I got a job in [company name] in [month]. So two months after I started. (Gwen)

Overall, for new speakers in this study, integrative reasons prevail the instrumental ones according to the two-fold socio-educational model. New speakers would like to enter the Welsh culture and society through the Welsh language. It was thought that there were some elements that one could not experience solely with the skill in English, the dominant language in Wales. Whereas instrumentality could not provide a strong explanation for new speakers learning Welsh continuously. New speakers did not see that there was a concrete point where they could claim the career benefits with the skill in the Welsh language. Nor they necessarily needed to claim these benefits. Moreover, this study finds that new speakers had their personal reasons to learn Welsh. They projected the linguistic landscapes from their countries of origin to that in Wales. The sentiment and/or sympathy towards the minoritised language made them learn it. Other than that, learning Welsh, or other languages, could be an enjoyable activity for new speakers.

Discussion and conclusion

This paper has attempted to amplify the voices of migrant new speakers of Welsh, particularly those who lived in Cardiff, and explored their reasons for learning Welsh. Following Gardner's socio-educational framework, this study has found that integrativeness was shared among new speakers as a reason to learn. New speakers did not particularly expect to gain career capital through the skill in the language although none of them would reject it if it happened. Moreover, this study has found personal reasons (Belmar, 2018; Belmar et al., 2019; Benson, 1991) for migrant new speakers to learn Welsh. By projecting the language dynamics in their countries of origin to that in Wales, some new speakers had a desire to contribute to strengthening the position of the Welsh language. Moreover, some people had a fruitful language timeline showing that they enjoyed learning languages in general. Pujolar and Puigdevall (2015) proposed the idea of linguistic *muda*, which refers to how specific biographical moments can precipitate changes in the speaker's linguistic repertoire. For migrant new speakers in this study, moving and living in Cardiff served as a linguistic *muda* for them to learn Welsh. The lack of explanatory capacity of Gardner's framework may be supplemented by Dörnyei's psychological framework. Because of their unique language timelines and exposure to different languages, new speakers might have formed a vision of an ideal self that they wanted to achieve.

With the new speaker lens, this study has shown that migrant new speakers could be a potential group to contribute to the revitalisation of the Welsh language. The talks by the participants echo previous findings (Belmar et al., 2019, pp. 151–152; McLeod & O'Rourke, 2015, pp. 260–285) that new speakers have a high commitment to the revitalisation of minoritised languages. Echoing Augustyniak and Higham (2019), this study suggests that the voices of migrants are to be included to improve language policies. We have

seen that migrant new speakers regarded Welsh as a tool to connect to Welsh culture and society. Although the linguistic landscape suggests that acquiring the Welsh language is not a necessity, some migrants have chosen to learn it anyway. Wales is a Nation of Sanctuary (Edwards & Jones, 2024; Edwards & Wisthaler, 2023), as the official narrative goes, it would be an epistemological injustice if migrants were not included in the national goal to revitalise Welsh. Moreover, since migrants have the potential to contribute to the collective goal to revitalise the language, there appears an interest in increasing outreach and developing a strategy to promote the language as an inclusive language. Promotion to companies, universities, colleagues, and civil society groups is desired to attract more people from different backgrounds to learn Welsh.

The findings show that migrants may learn Welsh regardless of an existing speech community nearby. It signals that the symbolic capital in the Welsh language can lie somewhere else. New speakers expressed that they wanted to consume Welsh language content and be in Welsh language events. By learning the language, they could achieve these goals. The availability of Welsh language content for example, TV shows, radio, music, books, and events with traditional elements appeared to be attractive to (potential) new speakers. As Pietikäinen et al. (2018) suggest minoritised language media can add symbolic value to the language, and the increase in availability and improvement of the Welsh language content may potentially attract more people to begin their Welsh language journey. Not exactly discussing the Welsh language content, but Davies's (2021) research provides insights into the importance of available resources. In her study on Welsh and bilingual provision in Further Education, Davies (2021) quotes Bourdieu (1991) and argues the impossibility of separating people's choices from the social expectations of their networks. Given the power context of Welsh and English, pupils who actively 'ask for' Welsh provision have to go against the social norm (Davies, 2021), which is a burden to access the language. She criticises the application of the neo-liberal ideas of 'choice' and 'demand' in planning Welsh provision in Further Education. Instead, increasing provision may create demand. Drawing from this argument, the support for creative individuals and industries to produce more and higher quality Welsh language content can potentially improve the symbolic values of the Welsh language. These pieces of content will support the journey of new speakers and create more new speakers as a result.

This paper is one of the few to take the views and experiences of migrant new speakers of Welsh as the focus of the study. More research is needed to strengthen the theoretical framework for understanding the motivation for migrants to learn another language. It is desired that more studies are conducted to explore the social identity of this group of new speakers to contribute to the study of new speakers in sociolinguistics. In terms of methods, this research has demonstrated a collaborative approach to data collection where interviews and diaries were used. Different methods may be beneficial to further explore the motivation, experience, and social identity of migrant new speakers of Welsh and other languages.

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