

## The community as a language planning crossroads

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### Current issues in language planning

DOI:

[10.1080/14664208.2018.1495370](https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2018.1495370)

Published: 27/05/2019

Peer reviewed version

[Cyswllt i'r cyhoeddiad / Link to publication](#)

*Dyfyniad o'r fersiwn a gyhoeddwyd / Citation for published version (APA):*

Hodges, R., & 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. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2018.1495370>

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# **The community as a language planning crossroads: making the case for micro language planning in communities in Wales.**

This paper teases out the meeting points between macro and micro language planning in Wales and how this impacts upon community language use in real terms. The paper draws upon data gathered from an evaluation of the Welsh Government's strategy towards the maintenance and promotion of the Welsh language on a community level in Wales. Conducting this research provides an insight into how the community acts as a language planning crossroads where a plethora of factors contribute to language use within this sphere.

Key findings report that many opportunities exist to use the Welsh language at macro and micro language planning levels within the communities, including opportunities provided via Welsh Government programmes. However, gaps in community provision exist and linguistic community interaction often occurred within daily, micro activities such as shopping and accessing services rather than within formally organised community activities at a macro level. Furthermore, evidence of existing complex language norms and ideologies play a part in the negotiation of language use within these communities. Such findings are key in informing the Welsh Government's most recent Welsh Language draft strategy which outlines their vision to create 'one million Welsh speakers by 2050' (Welsh Government, 2017, p.1).

Keywords: Community; Language norms; Micro language planning; Minority Language; Welsh Language.

## **Introduction**

Community language behaviour patterns are often central to minority language maintenance and revitalisation strategies worldwide. Within his GIDS (Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale) framework, Fishman (1991) stated that for a language to be living and for it to secure a future it had to be regularly spoken by its community of speakers. However, the community can be viewed as a language planning crossroads where macro and micro-level language planning meet. Indeed, communities more often than not, tend also to bridge wider cultural, economic and social factors that impact upon a minoritized language's ecology. Such factors make up what Spolsky (2004, p. ix) describes as 'the full ecology of human life.' This paper will reason that the community is a central component of language policy and planning where social actors come into contact with macro language policies and navigate language use in their day-to-day lives via their language attitudes, ideologies and the linguistic norms of their communities. Furthermore, it will argue the case that micro language planning should be placed at the very epicentre of language planning strategies that take into consideration the needs of the local community and aim to increase language use from a bottom-up basis.

However, traditional definitions of language planning often focused on planning at macro-levels by national governments and agencies (Liddicoat and Baldauf, 2008).

Indeed, post-colonial language planning consisted mainly of nation building and securing unity during often unstable times and was macro-centric in nature (Rubin and Jernudd, 1971; Fishman 1974 and Ricento, 2000 and 2003). Furthermore, Liddicoat and Baldauf (2008, 3) highlight, “the marginalisation of micro-level language planning” within language planning definitions in favour of macro and power-orientated understandings of language. Along with the need to focus more greatly on local language planning context, the role of power and agency of social actors is an important consideration. Barakos (2016) discusses the integral role of actors and their agency in shaping and re-shaping the implementation of language policy. Moreover, Haarmann (1990) suggested a clear need to recognise the work of a range of key language planning players by emphasising three agentive groups – government agencies, pressure groups and individuals. This in itself is reminiscent of a key question raised by Baldauf (2006, 148); ‘does language planning operate on a continuum from the macro to the micro?’ This is an important consideration within this paper as we discuss the meeting of macro-level planning (top-down government-led language planning strategies) and micro-level planning (community actors engaged in running community activities). Furthermore, we argue that an additional level of micro level planning involving individual interaction outside formal community activities; such as day-to-day language use and choices in shops and businesses warrants additional deliberation within our research study.

When studying community language planning, an understanding of the sociological, socio-linguistic and legislative contexts is all important. Indeed, the study of languages should not exist within a social vacuum (Bourdieu, 1991) and further complexity is added to these discussions when considering factors impacting upon speakers’ individual language practices. Moreover, language use within a community also reflects economic, political, cultural and societal influences (Baker & Prys-Jones, 1998). It is within these, what could be deemed as pressure points, that language use within a community is continually renegotiated at a micro level.

Several competing frameworks are presented to analyse the use of language within social settings. According to Fishman, community norms dictate which language or variety is appropriate for each setting, with the high language used for religion and education while low language used for everyday life (Fishman 1972, p. 92). A structural-functionalist perspective is presented within the diglossic model, while the role of power, conflict and choice of language is often neglected (Martyn-Jones, 1989). Indeed, Blommaert (2005) and Edwards (2016) advocate the importance of the inter-relationship between authority, power and the politics of language.’

As a result, the literature within sociolinguistics and the sociology of language discuss a number of factors that influence language use within a specific context, including language choice and ability, language attitudes and ideologies and the domain of language use. Spolsky also (2004, p. 39) refers to the ‘tripartite division of language policy into language practices, language beliefs and language ideology’. Armstrong (2012, p. 145) argues that language ideology is an important factor in the maintenance or attrition of a minority language, and that ‘language ideology can be viewed as the link between language ability on the one hand, and language use on the other.’ The influence of language attitudes upon language use is also well documented (e.g. Baker, 1992; Garrett, 2010) and is seen as an ‘important barometer, providing a climate of the language’ (Baker & Prys-Jones, 1998, p.174). Language ideologies are also seen as important factors in influencing the use of a language within a specific context (Blommaert, 1999).

Williams and Morris (2000, p. 25) also present two key variables in order to conceptualise language use as a social action – institutionalization and legitimation.

While the use of a language within a context has legitimacy, the use of another language may be institutionalised, such as the use of the high status language within official domains. As a result, Martyn-Jones (1989, p. 122) suggests that the ‘choices between languages are socially determined.’ While top down macro level language planning is seen as the traditional domain of language planning, an understanding of micro level linguistic interaction is key in understanding how language is actually used by actors within their communities. Language ideologies, power relationships and language norms are therefore salient points in the understanding of language practices by social actors. As a result, Chua and Baldauf (2011) Picanço (2012) question the effectiveness of government-lead macro-level language planning on a micro level. It could be argued that many now believe that the communities themselves must be key agents (Mac Giolla Christ, 2008) in developing language use patterns and ideologies that foster and develop language use on micro community level.

### **The Welsh Language Context**

In Wales, the Welsh language forms part of the Brythonic branch of Celtic languages and is spoken by approximately 562,000 (19%) of the Welsh population aged 3 years and over (ONS, 2012). Despite increases in numbers of speakers in 2001, there has been approximately a 2 per cent decrease in the numbers of Welsh speakers since the 2001 Census (ONS, 2012). Complex patterns of migration and discrepancies in self reporting language competence are amongst the factors behind this change (Welsh Government<sup>i</sup>, 2012). Such factors contribute to an ever changing linguistic map of Wales and its Welsh speakers. Increases in urban localities such as Wales’ capital city, Cardiff and south Wales’ valleys locations are often juxtaposed with decreases amongst traditional ‘rural localities such as Gwynedd and Môn in North-West Wales and Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion in West Wales (Jones, 2010; Welsh Language Commissioner, 2012).

However, despite a general decrease in the numbers of Welsh speakers, slight increases in the 1991 and 2001 Censuses could point to particular growth in Welsh-medium provision and especially the compulsory nature of Welsh as a school subject following the Education Reform Act of 1988 and the subsequent establishment of the National Curriculum (W.G. Lewis, 2008). WG policy states that all pupils aged three to sixteen should study Welsh either as a first or a second language (Jones, 2016). Furthermore, on a community level the 2011 Census reported a drop in the number of electoral wards where over 70% of the population were able to speak Welsh, down from 59% in 2001 to 49% in 2011. These communities were found in the counties of Gwynedd, Ynys Môn and Conwy. The county of Carmarthenshire had 5 electoral ward in 2001 with 70% of its inhabitants able to speak Welsh. No one electoral division in Carmarthen contained over 70% of Welsh speakers in 2011 (ONS, 2013b, 1). As a result, Census data suggests the erosion of communities containing a high percentage of Welsh speakers which call into question the sustainability of such communities as acknowledged by the WG (2012) and discussed within this paper.

While the Census collects data regarding Welsh language abilities, the Welsh Language Use Survey (2015) gives insight into Welsh language use in everyday life. According to the survey, 11% of the Welsh population speak Welsh fluently and just over half of Welsh speakers use the Welsh language daily (WG and WLC,<sup>ii</sup> 2015, p. 6-7). An increase was also seen in the number of respondents noting that they spoke Welsh, but not fluently (WG & WLC, 2015, p. 6). Nonetheless, reflecting the results of the 2011 Census, a decrease was seen in the areas that previously included a high concentration of

Welsh language speakers (WG & WLC, 2015, p.33). Further research also points to a decrease of the social usage of the Welsh language within traditional localities (Morris, 2007; Morris, 2010; Thomas & Roberts, 2011; Thomas, Lewis & Apolloni, 2014). On the other hand, there have been marked increases in the numbers of new Welsh speakers from non-traditional, urban localities in Wales, due to the growth of Welsh-medium and bilingual education (Robert, 2009; Hodges, 2012, 2014; Thomas & Williams, 2013). These findings reflect the changing landscape and contexts of Welsh language use in Wales and outline the challenges facing the WG and other language planners in Wales.

## **Welsh language policy and planning context**

Since 1999 Wales has been a devolved nation within the United Kingdom with limited decision making powers on issues such as education, health and the Welsh language itself (Royles, 2007). Indeed, the transfer of policy-making from a centralised government to one of a regional nature encapsulated a policy paradigm shift that included language policy within mainstream social policy for the first time in Wales (Williams, 2011, Carlin & Mac Giolla Chríost, 2016, Lewis & Royles, 2017). Consequently, in 2011 the WG passed the Welsh language Measure noting for the first time that the ‘Welsh language has official status in Wales’ (WG, 2011, p.1) and set out a new legislative framework to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh by the public in Wales through the function of the Welsh Language Commissioner. The Measure can be seen as the most recent attempt to strengthen the position of the Welsh language, within a historic context of English being used as the sole official language, and language of high status, in Wales (G. Lewis, 2008; Parry, 2012). Despite this, it could be argued that the Measure falls short of providing key language rights to services in Welsh (Vacca, 2013).

The WG’s Welsh language strategy, *A living language: a language for living* (2012) summarises the WG’s vision for the Welsh language.<sup>iii</sup> The third strategic area of the Strategy addresses ‘strengthen[ing] the position of the Welsh language in the community’ (WG, 2012, p.16) and it is this specific strategic area that will be addressed within this paper. Within the WG’s Welsh language strategy, the current indicator of linguistic vitality on a community level is the number of individuals attending Welsh language activities supported by the WG. This paper hopes to begin a discussion regarding the robustness of this indicator. Additionally, the WG also recognises a ‘...cause for concern for the sustainability of the language in its traditional Welsh-speaking heartlands’ (WG, 2012, p.8). Furthermore, the WG recently outlined its updated vision to create, ‘one million Welsh speakers by 2050’ (WG, 2016, p.1) through (amongst other strategic aims) normalising the daily use of the Welsh language, especially within communities where the Welsh language is used naturally. Therefore, our opinion is that there is a clear need in Wales, as within other minoritized language contexts, to further study the complex factors affecting language use within communities (Morris, 2007; Morris, 2010).

The aim of this paper is to discuss the opportunities available to use the Welsh language within six communities across Wales. Furthermore, it hopes to assess whether the purposeful planning strategies put in place by the WG to promote Welsh as a community language are effective for the needs of those communities (Hodges, et al, 2015). However, the main focus of this paper will be to assess the role of macro language planning initiatives and their impact and implementation on a micro community level.

## **The Research Study**

Bangor University was commissioned to undertake a research study on behalf of the WG between November 2014 and March 2015. This paper reflects the authors' interpretations of primary data collected within the research study and is not representative of the viewpoints of the Welsh Government. The purpose of the study was the following:

- (1) To add to the WG's understanding of how the Welsh language is used in communities across Wales.
- (2) To assess whether the programmes put in place by the WG to promote Welsh language use are meeting the needs of those specific communities.

The aim of the study was to provide an outline of the opportunities that exist to use the Welsh language in different communities in Wales. Furthermore, the study aimed to reach some conclusions about the influence and appropriateness of programmes funded and developed by the WG to promote the Welsh language in communities and to identify the factors that define communities' linguistic vitality. However, the main focus of this paper is to provide an insight into the community language norms and practices of Welsh speakers and the implications of these practices for the WG's Welsh language strategy.

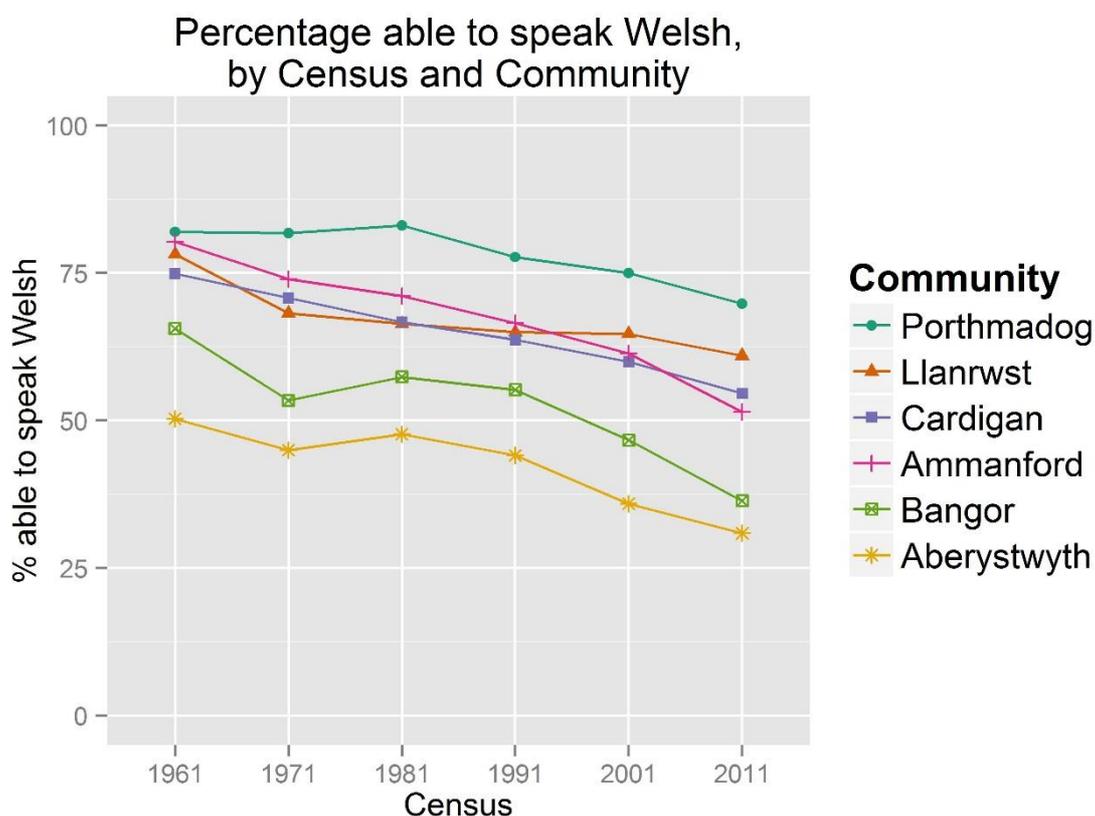
Six communities were chosen in discussion with the WG to be a part of this research study. The following four communities, Cardigan, Bangor, Llanrwst and Ammanford were chosen in an attempt to look at locations that have received specific investment by the WG through programmes designed to promote Welsh language use in the community. In terms of 'intensity of intervention', the most prominent programme was the existence of Language Action Plans in the four communities named above. Language Action Plans were an attempt by the Welsh Language Board (active 1993 to 2012) to take action in areas of linguistic significance, with the aim of working closely with local partners to increase social use of the Welsh language. There was also an attempt to compare these locations with two communities, Aberystwyth and Porthmadog, where there has not been such a strong emphasis by the WG on the provision of opportunities to use or strengthen the Welsh language within the community.

Figure 1: Location of communities



Source: created by the authors (for the purpose of this paper)

Figure 2: Percentage able to speak Welsh by census and community



Source: WG, 2015, p. 38

According to Census figures, all six of the communities studied had seen a decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers between 1961 and 2011. However, all six communities included in this study represent examples of communities with a relatively high percentages of Welsh speakers. At one end of the scale is Porthmadog where 69.8% of the town's population could speak Welsh in 2011. In Llanrwst, 61.0% of people aged three and over could speak Welsh; this figure was 54.6% in Cardigan and 51.5% in Ammanford. At the low end of the scale are the university towns of Bangor and Aberystwyth; 36.4% of the population of Bangor and 30.9% of the population of Aberystwyth could speak Welsh. It is interesting to note that a paradox exists between numbers and percentages of Welsh speakers within these communities, were as the two communities studied with the highest number of Welsh speakers are also the two communities with the lowest percentage of Welsh speakers.

A mixed methods approach was utilised during the data collection phase of the study. For the purpose of this paper, focus group interview data will be discussed and supported by Census Data regarding the Welsh language<sup>iv</sup>. Focus groups were chosen as a key research method as they offer an opportunity for respondents to discuss their views with other community members (Morgan, 1997). Community groups that were already

active within the communities were chosen therefore the respondents participated voluntarily and defined their membership organically (Acocella, 2011). 5 focus groups were conducted within each of the 6 research communities, in an attempt to collect data from individuals from varying backgrounds. The following categories define the composition of the focus groups:

- (1) parents with young children
- (2) young people
- (3) middle age
- (4) older people
- (5) adult Welsh language learners.

An interview schedule asked about the following within the focus groups: the social activities in the communities; the language of the activities and who arranges and attends these activities; everyday opportunities to use the Welsh language, and any gaps identified and the future of the Welsh language in their communities. Ethics permission was received from Bangor University Ethics Committee and participants were encouraged to participate in both Welsh and English.

## **Research Findings**

This paper provides an overview of key research findings across the six communities featured within this research. This section of the paper will highlight examples of language use contexts where we argue that macro and micro language planning meet and where individuals need to continually negotiate their language use within a community setting. The macro and the micro are represented in the paper by WG initiatives and community actors themselves. This could be interpreted as social actors coming into contact with macro language policies (or lack of macro language policies) and having to negotiate and renegotiate language use on an individual, micro level. Different examples will be discussed within this section; language use in shops and businesses, the influence of the education sector on community language practices as well as the language norms associated with adult Welsh language learners. These language use spheres represent the myriad of ways in which actors come into contact with other community members and institutions that influence their wider language use.

### ***Macro and micro opportunities to use the Welsh language***

Awareness and use of Welsh language and bilingual activities were seen in each of the six communities. There were specific examples of individuals attending many Welsh language activities organised in the community (including those funded by the WG<sup>v</sup>). These activities were funded by the WG, directly or indirectly via a third party, and could be seen as classic examples of macro language planning initiatives. The programs included activities for young children and their parents, activities for school aged children, older young people, adults and older people.<sup>vi</sup> The WG was not specifically named when community activities were discussed. There was a perception amongst focus groups participants that Welsh language and bilingual activities in their communities were organised by local people on behalf of the local community. Nonetheless, many of the activities named were in fact financed by the WG. In all communities studied, research

participants also offered examples of activities that are held through the medium of Welsh without any purposeful planning by the WG thus highlighting that there was a mixture of formal and informal community activities often taking place, both as a result of macro level initiatives and micro “grassroots” activities.

Whilst four of the six communities within this research had received a higher intensity of intervention via WG initiatives, there was no clear evidence of a marked difference between those communities that had received intensive interventions and those that had not. Of particular interest is that the two communities displaying pronounced indicators of potential language shift (Fishman 1991) from Welsh to English were two communities that received a high level of intervention from the WG. These communities were Ammanford and Cardigan where Welsh was perceived as a language for the older generation by some participants within this study. As a result, it appears that the WG are aware of the challenges faced by these communities (e.g. based on Census results). However, the outcomes of these macro language planning interventions may not be easily measured as language shift can be attributed to a number of complex factors.

Organisations providing activities for parents and young children are the most commonly referred to within this study and reflect the WG’s focus on developing proficiency in Welsh during the early years (WG, 2016a). As a result, their prevalence and high visibility within the communities studied could be interpreted as examples of successful macro level language planning within the communities’ studied. Despite prevalent opportunities to use the Welsh language, the evidence gathered also shows that the provision is more comprehensive for some groups than others. Some focus groups reported gaps in Welsh-medium and bilingual opportunities for older children/ young people. This was particularly true in Cardigan and Ammanford as noted by a member of the focus group for young people in Ammanford, ‘... the opportunities are dying out a little now we're older.’ It could be argued, therefore, that many micro-level community activities had disappeared from both communities placing the onus on macro-level state intervention. Subsequently, this could call into question the vitality of the linguistic ecology of the community.

However, the contemporary Welsh language music scene was referred to consistently across the communities studied where it was noted that it provided a relevant and unique space for Welsh language use, especially amongst older young people. As one participant in the Porthmadog Young People Group noted, ‘I do everything in Welsh, I go to Welsh gigs ... everyone's the same in college, everyone likes the Welsh gigs and bands.’ It is interesting to note that while the Welsh language popular music scene was originally a grass-roots movement epitomising micro-levels of community language planning; more recently, this particular field is one which has received purposeful planning on a macro-level from the WG and its partners.

Communities faced different challenges in providing opportunities to use the Welsh language often dependent on their distinct language ecology. Porthmadog, for example, presented as a community where the Welsh language opportunities provided were readily available but not always fully accessed according to a member of the Porthmadog Young People Group noted, ‘I think there's plenty of Welsh language events in the area but very often not enough people take advantage of them.’ This linguistic community could represent a healthy linguistic ecology dominated by micro-level Welsh language community activities where the need for macro intervention is limited.

One clear theme in the focus groups was the fact that not everyone had the time to attend organised community activities regularly, as they had other priorities within

their busy daily lives. For many individuals that took part in the study, their social interaction tended to be more informal, happening as part of their daily activities, for example when shopping and accessing key services such as health care provision. This calls into question the robustness of the WG's current indicator of linguistic vitality on a community level, which is the number of individuals attending Welsh language activities supported by the WG. This macro measurement could be interpreted as one very narrow type of community interaction, leaving many Welsh speakers and their specific language use 'off the radar'.

### *Language Negotiation in a wider context*

As many of those that took part in the study did not regularly attend formal community events in either Welsh or English, individuals often spoke in wider terms about the broader opportunities to use Welsh within the community. This gave us insight into the complexities associated with language behaviour patterns and norms that are often found within the community (Baker, 1992; Fishman, 1991; Garrett, 2010; Williams & Morris, 2000). This complexity reflects the lived reality of individuals living within multilingual communities.

### *The use of English in shops and businesses*

While the private sector in Wales does not come directly under current language legislation (WG, 2011), language use within privately owned shops and businesses appear to be a key location for social interaction and language use. A consistent theme raised by focus group members were the opportunities, or lack of opportunities, to use the Welsh language in shops and businesses in their local communities. A regular pattern discussed was the perception that the use of English was the linguistic norm in shops between members of the public and staff. According to one member of the young people group in Ammanford; 'nearly every one of the staff speaks Welsh but the customers speak English'. In this example, whilst the public and staff members may have competence in both English and Welsh, English is used more frequently as this seems to be the linguistic norm reflecting current language ideologies within these communities. However, despite the perception that English was the main language of interaction in shops, it was also noted that a number of shop employees could speak Welsh. This is supported by the most recent Census results which note that all of the communities studied contained a higher percentage than the national average of Welsh speakers, with 4 of the 6 communities containing over 50 percent.

While some social norms and community linguistic practices can be interpreted as having a negative effect on language maintenance, other, more positive linguistic practices were also found. Some participants reported that they made a conscious decision to look for Welsh language services in shops within their communities. In one example, a member of the Cardigan middle age focus group noted that '...we know who we can speak Welsh to and there's a tendency then to go back to those shops or to those people in the shop.' This could represent an example of micro language planning strategies that reflect individual language ideologies at work within the community.

A barrier to Welsh language use within the retail sector was often the uncertainty surrounding employees' language skills. Focus group participants reported looking for a visual cue to inform them about that individual's language ability. An example of one of these cues was the Working Welsh badge that denoted the Welsh language proficiency of

staff.<sup>vii</sup> Some individuals wanted to see wider use of the badges as a way of encouraging Welsh speakers to use the language with confidence in public situations. As a group the Welsh language learners noted that wider use of the badges was needed to highlight opportunities for them to practice their Welsh language skills in a supportive environment. In another example, a member of the young people's group in Bangor noted that English was perceived as the language of the local retail sector unless there was a visual cue to speak Welsh from the outset:

'... people just start to speak English, so I just assume they don't speak Welsh, the only time they've spoken Welsh to me is when I wear a [Welsh language school] tie and they start in Welsh ...' (Bangor Young People Group)

This finding suggests that visual cues, a badge or other type of prompt within the linguistic landscape (Gorter, Heiko and Van Mensel, 2012) has a role to play in fostering minority language use within a setting where the linguistic competence of social actors is unknown. As shops and businesses are key domains for linguistic interactions, further understanding of these interactions may be needed in the absence of clear macro language planning initiatives. Further research may be needed in this field in an attempt to shed further light on the dynamics of language interaction, norms and language ideology within the retail sector.

### ***Influence of education on community language use***

Language planning within the statutory educational system in Wales can be seen as an example of macro language planning. This study highlights the influence of the educational sphere within the wider community setting. Whilst some schools in Wales provide a Welsh-medium or a bilingual education, the language of instruction in individual schools can vary. Welsh taught as a subject within an English language curricula is commonplace within the majority of schools in Wales. The varying language practices of individual schools and the actors within them (e.g. pupils and teachers) may reflect a complex macro-micro level interplay. Furthermore, language norms and practises outside of the formal classroom setting also had another layer of complexity to the linguistic composition of schools (see Hodges, 2012 and 2014, Thomas and Roberts, 2011).

Within the research study, the perception in some communities was that individuals tended to form their language norms and practices at school, particularly during their teenage years. It was noted that these language practices influenced their social use of Welsh beyond the education system. Furthermore, there was a perception amongst participants that there was strong social use of the Welsh language in primary schools but a decline in use by secondary school age.<sup>viii</sup> Key examples were found in the towns of Llanrwst and Ammanford in particular. Many members of the young people groups felt that they had lost confidence in Welsh when moving from primary to secondary school, many described a clear language shift; a change in linguistic behaviour between the sectors. As noted by a member of the Llanrwst Young People's Focus Group, 'In little school, they make you speak Welsh, you have to, everything's in Welsh but then they relax when you go up [to secondary school], they give you the option and that's where the Welsh is lost.'

As a result, data from focus group interviews suggest that the educational system has a role to play in developing and maintaining fluency and establishing norms of language use within the wider community. This is particular importance as the teenage

years are seen as key in the development and future use of a minority language (Ó Riagáin 1997, Mac Giolla Chríost 2005, Ó Riagáin et al, 2007). The data also suggest that gains made within the school curriculum may be undone when moving between stages within the educational system, and that the loss of language practice may have an adverse effect on wider community language use. This reflects research by Liddicoat and Taylor-Leech (2014) which suggests that the education system may curtail multilingual development amongst pupils of heritage language schools.

The role of adult Welsh language learners within the community was also explored within this research. Amongst the adult Welsh learner focus groups there emerged a strong sense that they wanted to put their developing linguistic skills to use and to integrate within the six communities studied. Despite this, the general tendency reported was that the majority of Welsh speakers tended to speak English to Welsh language learners, despite the fact that they are attempting to learn the Welsh language. A similar finding was reported by Andrews (2011) in a Welsh language context and Smith-Christmas & Armstrong (2014) in a Scottish-Gaelic context. These findings could raise questions about adult learners' having access to key opportunities to develop language skills and foster language ownership. Moreover, a number of Welsh learners voiced particular frustration about the lack of informal opportunities within the community to practice their Welsh language skills beyond activities specifically designed for learners. There was evidence from Welsh speakers that the confidence and fluency of learners and less fluent speakers also affected their opportunities to use the Welsh language in the community. These language norms prevented Welsh language learners from practising their Welsh language skills and gaining confidence as new speakers of Welsh. Many learners believed that Welsh speakers needed to be encouraged to use the Welsh language with them. As one individual from the Ammanford Welsh Learners Group noted, '...lots of people don't like to speak Welsh with learners. If we try, most people are happy, but it's too slow for them. It's harder to talk to learners.'

These examples represent the language norms, practices and ideologies of individuals within the communities studied. It reflects complex and well-established micro-level interaction between individuals and these interactions may be difficult to influence and may represent the limitations of macro-level planning. However, as noted by Armstrong (2012, p.154), external socialisation sights within the community have a role to play in reinforcing language norms. As a result it could be argued that in order to influence individuals' language practices, institutions within the community, and beyond, should have a leading role in adopting and promoting language norms conducive to language maintenance.

## **Discussion**

The study presents examples of current community language planning initiatives in six communities in Wales. This paper provides evidence of an attempt by the WG to reverse language shift (Fishman, 1991) through purposeful macro language planning strategies within the communities studied. This study highlights the challenge facing language planners and policy makers regarding the variety and compositions of the linguistic communities (WG, 2012) which often influence the type and intensity of interventions at different language planning levels. There is evidence of pronounced indicators of language shift within two communities in particular, Ammanford and Cardigan (even though these communities had received intensive interventions by the WG). This pattern suggests the limitations of macro-level language planning in the face of broader challenge facing minority language communities. However, if there is a

deficit in the micro language planning, macro level intervention (in this instance by the WG) is required to sustain community language use therefore highlighting the need for a multi-faceted approach incorporating various levels of planning on a community level.

Interestingly, those questioned within this study did not name the WG directly when discussing community activities. This may suggest that social actors have taken ownership over macro-level community programs to promote Welsh at a grassroots level. This highlights evidence of community autonomy and ownership of language planning strategies specifically tailored by the communities themselves (Baldauf 2006, 148; Mac Giolla Christ, 2008:88). This is a clear example of the blurred lines between macro and micro level community language planning as actors are often tasked with implementing macro-level language planning strategies on a micro community level. This research study found that local actors and grass-roots based community groups also contributed to local linguistic ecologies (in some communities more than others). For example, formal community activities like clubs and groups were found in all communities and many were directly or indirectly funded by the WG. There is evidence, therefore, that the WG do participate in micro-level language planning via community based and regional level organisations. However, due to the complex nature of community interaction, it is difficult to ascertain whether these activities meet the needs of the communities studied as each community is unique and experience multi-layered influences that impact upon their linguistic ecology and day-to-day linguistic practices. Evidence from the research study could, therefore, confirm what Mac Giolla Chríst (2008) states that the communities themselves must be key agents in developing language use patterns and ideologies that foster and develop language use on micro community level.

This study calls for a shift in how Welsh language community activity and interaction needs to be measured in the future. We question the usefulness of the WG's macro-level indicator (how many participants attend formal Welsh language community activities) and call for more meaningful dialogues with community actors that reflect the multi-layered aspects of community language use. To move community language planning discussions forward we see the need to broaden the focus of community language initiatives beyond formally organised activities (e.g. clubs and societies). While these are important, our interpretation from the research study results is that there is a clear need for the WG to continue to support, develop and nurture programs that promote the normalisation of Welsh within more formal and informal community activities. Moreover, we emphasise the significance of wide-ranging daily interactions within the community and feel that key discussions lie within language use norms and practices in shops and whilst accessing services. This micro-level reality (which is largely beyond direct governmental influence) is more difficult for the WG and community language planners to plan for, especially as language norms and language ideologies (Armstrong 2012) can often influence the linguistic choices. However, this is a key domain in which social actors make use of language on a community level and requires a response from Welsh language policy and planners in Wales. As individuals within this research study were seen to target specific shops or employees that spoke Welsh this suggests the need to pay more attention to agency on an individual level within community language planning. This could be interpreted as micro-level language planning on an individual level reminiscent of Haarmann's (1990) differing levels of agency that include active individuals making informed language choices. Furthermore, the use of Working Welsh badges (worn by staff to denote Welsh language ability) is an important element of the language negotiation process and language contact and contributes to the linguistic landscape (Gorter, Heiko and Van Mensel, 2012) of the Welsh language in daily life.

Language choices are often socially determined (Martyn-Jones, 1989) and it could be argued that there is an institutionalised norm of using English within formal contexts (Williams and Morris, 2000). There is evidence to support these theories within this study. The use of English dominated in certain settings such as in shops and whilst accessing services and this study highlights the possible complexities of the power dynamics of language use and language choice (Blommaert, 2005; Bourdieu, 1991; Martyn-Jones, 1989). This language use domain is of vital importance in providing further opportunities to use Welsh on a community level. We call for increased attention to be paid to these language norms within community language planning in order to influence the opportunities available to use and to normalise Welsh within a community setting.

This study also highlights the difficulty in differentiating between macro and micro levels of community language planning as the boundaries between both are often blurred (Liddicoat and Baldauf 2008) and can operate on a continuum from macro to micro (Baldauf 2006). The study further highlights the community as a language planning crossroads where the macro and the micro meet and where individual actors have to navigate the complexities of daily social interaction. The macro and the micro are represented in the paper by WG initiatives and community actors themselves. There is evidence of macro and micro level community activities within the communities studied. However, these distinctions weren't often made by community actors themselves. This paper contains examples of the implementation of macro level policies by the WG on a micro community level which are undertaken by individual actors. This could highlight the process of languaging as noted by Barakos (2016) as community organisations were seen to implement language policy at grass roots level. Further complexity is added as the community bridges other language use spheres and is therefore dependent upon a wide range of external factors (Baker & Prys-Jones, 1998. Ferguson, 2006). The communities studied within this research are influenced by multiple streams of macro- level planning by the WG (e.g. community planning, education and public services). An example found in this study was that language behaviour patterns in the education system influenced language use in the wider community. This example suggests that the community-based interventions by themselves are not enough to fully support Welsh language use on a community level. As a result, clearer steps need to be taken in order to strengthen the position of the Welsh language by employing strategies that acknowledge the multi-faceted nature of community language use.

## **Summary**

This paper highlights the interplay between macro and micro-level language planning in the community. In Wales, macro-level planning is often delivered via a variety of local community actors. These range from more formal government-funded but community-based organisations (that are directly involved in language planning) to more ad-hoc, organic and naturally-occurring Welsh language activities and groups. This emphasises the community's role as a language planning crossroads which involves the macro and the micro and everything in between. This research study emphasises the clear need for both macro and micro-level language planning within a minority language community context. Furthermore, it calls for a more sophisticated understanding of daily individual interactions between community actors. These daily interactions provide core opportunities to use minoritized languages within the community and should not be overlooked or undervalued when developing language planning strategies on a local level. Discussions relating to community language planning should involve a broad range of

language use platforms, many of which are beyond formal community activities. This holistic language planning approach is crucial if the WG's ambitious target of almost doubling the numbers of Welsh speakers to one million speakers by 2050 (WG, 2017) is to be seriously contemplated.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the following for their contribution to the original research study: (names withheld for peer review).

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- <sup>i</sup> The acronym ‘WG’ for Welsh Government will be used from this point onwards within this paper.
- <sup>ii</sup> This acronym stands for Welsh Language Commissioner, ‘WLC’ will be used within this paper.
- <sup>iii</sup> After the completion of the study the WG has published a new language strategy ‘Cymraeg 2050 – A million Welsh speakers. However, this paper will concentrate on the content of the 2012 language strategy.
- <sup>iv</sup> Statistical information used within this paper was provided by Hywel M Jones (<http://statiath.com>) and appears within WG 2015 research study (see references for full citation).
- <sup>v</sup> For further information please see Hodges et al 2015.
- <sup>vi</sup> See report for further information regarding WG-funded programs: <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/welsh-language-strategy-evaluation/?skip=1&lang=en>
- <sup>vii</sup> The Welsh Language Commissioner provide free ‘Cymraeg’ (Welsh) badges, posters and lanyards for businesses and organisations: <http://www.comisiynyddygybraeg.cymru/English/Commissioner/Pages/ordercymrbadges.aspx>
- <sup>viii</sup> Children move from primary to secondary education at the age of 11 in the U.K school system.