

*Higher Education's Contribution to the
Maintenance and Revitalization of Minority
Official Languages: The Cases of Wales and
New Brunswick*

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ABSTRACT

The revitalization of the Welsh language through the education sector has been widely documented and applauded. This success is limited, however, by the poor provision of Welsh-medium higher education. Research was undertaken to examine the contribution that universities can make to maintaining and revitalizing minority official languages and the factors that affect implementation of this type of language planning. Canada has a long history of French-medium and bilingual provision, and its higher education system has similar roots to the British one. The minority French-speaking population of the province of New Brunswick is roughly similar in proportion and distribution to Wales's Welsh-speaking population. Having established a dedicated French-medium university in the 1960s, New Brunswick provided a tried and tested alternative model of provision. Elite interviews were carried out with key players in minority-language-medium higher education in the two locations, some of the findings from which having been included below.

The article is part of a larger study that examined the macro, meso and institutional levels, but this article concentrates on the meso-level language planning and policies of the New Brunswick Provincial Government, and the Welsh Assembly Government in terms of their actual or potential impact on higher education in the two contexts. It draws on documentary research and on interviews conducted with officials and academics in Wales and in

New Brunswick. Although both of these governments have a considerable amount of autonomy in relation to education and language, their activities do have to take account of macro-level Acts, Charters and laws and work within them. In this article the meso level also includes government-funded bodies that have particular responsibility for higher education, in particular funding councils that have authority over the resources needed to implement language policy and planning activities, and the language planning bodies that have been set up to oversee implementation.

The main types of language planning taking place in this sector are categorized as:

Status and corpus planning – terms that are widely used by sociolinguists to refer to the ‘allocation and reallocation of functions of language in a speech community’ (Cobarrubias, 1983: 41) and the development of orthography, structure and grammar of a language (Bourhis, 1984), respectively.

Acquisition planning – planning to create language spread by increasing the number of speakers, particularly through the family and bilingual education (Baker, 2003: 93)

Opportunity, use and incentive planning – relating particularly to language used at work, but also to expansion of its use within the community and leisure activities (Baker, 2003).

Contextual information

New Brunswick is a province situated on the east coast of Canada and sharing its northern border with Quebec and its western one with the United States and Ontario. The 2000 Canadian census records 32.9 per cent French mother-tongue speakers within the province, with a concentration of francophones in the north (Statistics Canada, 2001). It has two main universities – the francophone Université de Moncton and the anglophone University of New Brunswick, each offering a wide range of provision.

The UK census recorded 20.5 per cent of the population of Wales as able to speak Welsh in 2000, with the main concentration of these being in the west and north of Wales, although the traditional ‘heartlands’ have become fragmented due to the reduction in rural communities (Williams, C. H., 2000) and also because of the success of Welsh-medium education. As Tables 6.1 and 6.2 show, Welsh-medium higher education is spread across all of

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Wales's universities and across a range of subjects, but with a concentration on those more traditionally associated with Welsh: teacher training, arts, social sciences and humanities.

Provincial Policy in New Brunswick

New Brunswick is the only officially bilingual province in Canada (Doucet, 1995) and could therefore be expected to have well-developed language policies. Some of the most important ones date back to the early 1960s, even before the first Canadian Official Languages Act (1969). Separate assistant ministers for education had been appointed in 1964, each with responsibility for one of the linguistic communities. The funding and administration of the school districts had also been rationalized, in 1966, to give a structure based on language of delivery and with parents playing a key role in decision-making (Martel, 2002). A French-medium university had already been established in Moncton, in 1963, on the recommendation of the Deutsch Royal Commission, out of a number of smaller, mostly Catholic, colleges

Table 6.1
Full-time equivalent enrolments on Welsh-medium higher education
provision by institution 2000–1

Institution	
University of Glamorgan	5.80
UoW, Aberystwyth	202.44
UoW, Bangor	463.39
Cardiff University	0.53
UoW, Lampeter	65.57
UoW Swansea	20.99
UoW Institute, Cardiff	69.83
UoW College, Newport	19.56
N. E. Wales Institute	1.90
Trinity College, Carmarthen	310.35
Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama	2.00
Coleg Menai	9.25
Total	1171.61

Source: HEFCW (2002), table 1, based on HESA data.

Note: UoW = University of Wales.

Table 6.2
Full-time equivalent Welsh-medium enrolments by academic category

Academic Subject Category (ASC)	2000/1	Change in nos*
2. Medical	0.40	0.40
3. Science	21.87	21.28
5. Built environment	16.14	2.44
6. Maths, IT and computing	17.55	17.55
7. Business and management	49.51	17.47
8. Social sciences	83.64	-31.85
9. Humanities	289.41	105.25
10. Art, design and performing arts	156.56	62.62
11a. Initial teacher training	493.72	-73.69
11b. Non-initial teacher training	42.81	21.80
Total	1171.61	143.27

Source: HEFCW (2002), table 2, based on HESA data.

Note: * For period 1996/7 to 2000/1.

(Cameron, 1991). Set up through the joint efforts of Père Cormier, a pioneer in French-medium education, and Louis Robichaud, the first francophone Prime Minister of New Brunswick (www.acadie.net), this Commission's recommendation was that New Brunswick should have two main universities, one anglophone and one francophone 'to reflect the bilingual character of the province' (Cameron, 1991: 6). The siting of the francophone university was not uncontroversial for both linguistic groups, given that Moncton is outside the French-speaking heartlands and that many parts of the area are predominantly anglophone. However, campuses are maintained in Edmundston and Shippagan, which offer a limited range of courses within the predominantly francophone communities, and anglophones have the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton and St Jean, some three hours' travelling distance from Moncton.

In terms of its contribution to the maintenance and revitalization of French, the early establishment of separate universities was of considerable importance. It is widely recognized that minority languages are threatened when they are in contact with majority languages and where they do not fulfil specific functions (Fishman, 1991; Baker, 2003). By creating a separate francophone university, another environment was established where French is the main language of communication within it and it has its own 'boundaries' with English. In addition, since this is a university, the importance of

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the language for academic use across a range of subjects is confirmed, one of the 'high status' functions named by Fishman (1991). In turn, this helps both to enhance the status of French in the eyes of its speakers and the outside world and to lengthen the pre-school–compulsory education continuum. This was identified as important in acquisition planning and in motivating parents to send their children to French-medium schools.

In the schools sector the community, and particularly parents, have been empowered to participate in educational decision-making by the establishment of discrete school-governance structures. Equally, by having its own university, the francophone community's powers are extended to another important domain. As the Université de Moncton has developed it has come to play an influential role within its own community and within the power structures of New Brunswick.

It has to be recognized that the francophone university has faced and continues to face considerable challenges, in terms of its place in a province that is two-thirds anglophone, but in terms of its contribution to language planning, its creation was a very important step and one envied by many of the bilingual Canadian universities. It is a major player in language planning for the Atlantic provinces, with a research centre in the field of applied linguistics, a Centre for Acadian Studies and a body of proactive academics, who are quick to respond to any changes in policy concerning the francophone community (www.umoncton.ca).

The first New Brunswick Official Languages Act (OLA) was passed in 1969, several months before the federal OLA (Mallea, 1984), and included equal rights to schooling in their languages for the two linguistic communities. The Prime Minister of New Brunswick at the time, Louis Robichaud, was able to manage the tensions on both sides of the linguistic divide by including languages in his wider agenda of 'chances égales pour tous' – equal opportunities for all (Landry and Lang, 2001: 271). Now heralded as a trail-blazer for language rights, he admits that it was a 'bold and innovative move' at the time (Daily Gleaner, 2002a: 2). The 1969 Canadian Official Languages Act established certain rights to equal treatment in federal courts and agencies, and the New Brunswick Act did the same in relation to the provincial legislative assembly. This Act was really a foundation on which the New Brunswick people and government have been able to build, the 'beginning of a giant leap forward' (Acadie Nouvelle, 2002a: 2).

The gradual decentralization of educational structures on the basis of language was therefore key to the province's language planning approach and in line with the general trend identified in language planning literature to

assign much of the responsibility for this to education. What is curious, therefore, is that the structures for the administration of higher education moved in the opposite direction. Until 1973 the universities in New Brunswick were administered by the provincial Higher Education Commission. The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission Act of 1973 established a commission for the whole region with a remit to 'assist the Provinces and institutions in attaining a more efficient and effective utilization of resources in the field of higher education in the region' (Government of New Brunswick, 1973: S.11). Whilst the institutions were divided on linguistic lines, the overall management of their funding spanned three provinces and both francophone and anglophone universities. This creates opportunities for collaboration, but also competition for the funding that is essential for the continuation of French-medium higher education.

At present Moncton is, according to a member of its senior management, in a privileged position in that, although 'the viability of sustaining such a range of courses is questioned every 3 to 4 years', there is not the same pressure to reach sector-wide staff-student ratios as there is in Wales. Nevertheless, Moncton still cannot have a totally free hand. A particular problem is that there are no courses on offer in medicine in the province through either language. This problem is overcome by provincial-level agreements between New Brunswick and Quebec for students to study there, but, according to interviewees, this is also problematic because graduates often choose to stay in Quebec rather than return to New Brunswick, where there is already a shortage of French-speaking medical professionals. The reasons given for this were 'the ease of living in French' in Quebec as well as the 'better pay and conditions'.

The Université de Moncton has been given a specific role within New Brunswick, which it is at pains to guard, and this alone is important in maintaining the French language. When the possibility of a bilingual medical school was raised by a Liberal leadership candidate in 2002, its Vice Chancellor was quick to point out that Moncton has a particular role to play in the francophone and Acadian community and that the current system (of sending students to Quebec) works well. He added that he was opposed to this type of bilingual delivery 'because it would be very difficult for us to maintain our unique character within a bilingual framework. There is normally a tendency to speak the majority language in such contexts' (Acadie Nouvelle, 2002a).

The New Brunswick Official Languages Act (Government of New Brunswick, 2002) focuses on areas outside education, having established in

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its opening section (p. 3) that educational rights are already enshrined in the Canadian constitution. Areas such as health, police and municipal services also receive considerable attention in the Act, with a 20 per cent rule being introduced for municipal councils to deliver their services in the minority language. This is an extension of duality into other areas of public life. The English-speaking press and the provincial government hailed the new Act as innovative and transformational. The *Daily Gleaner*, for example, carried the headlines ‘Politicians shed tears’ (of joy) (2002a) and ‘“Bold” new law praised’ (2002b). The French-speaking community was more sceptical: ‘Encore beaucoup à faire’ (Still lots to do) (Acadie Nouvelle, 2002d); ‘Le N-B revient de très loin’ (New Brunswick has come a long way from a very low starting point) (2002b) and ‘La province s’est fait forcer la main’ (the province has had its hand forced) (2002c), a reference to the protracted debates and compromises that took place during the formulation of the policy.

Most importantly, in terms of the promotion of language maintenance and revitalization, the Act established a provincial language commissioner to ‘investigate, report on and make recommendations with regard to compliance with the Act’ and also to ‘promote the advancement of both official languages in the Province’ (Government of New Brunswick, 2002: 43(9)). This type of body plays a key role in ensuring implementation and evaluation of language policy and planning. The federal Commissioner of Official Languages praised this move, particularly in relation to its future role in promoting the minority language (Adam, 2002).

In New Brunswick the early establishment of a French-medium university meant that a lot of language planning per se was done at a very early point, and attention in later policy has turned to the extension of language planning and policy to other domains of society. It has been shown that the university has played a key role in status planning and in extending acquisition and opportunity/use/incentive planning in this province.

The Welsh Assembly Government’s policies

The first two years of the twenty-first century were a time of considerable activity for the National Assembly for Wales (NAW), or the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), as the government side of the institution was renamed in 2002. Having finally found its feet and a specific agenda (and, some would say, with the May 2003 elections quickly approaching), the

Assembly government and its committees engaged in a range of reviews that led to policies in a number of areas. As one interviewee put it:

A lot of initiatives are already in place and they have created an atmosphere in which there needed to be the next stage, really, about what its [the Welsh language's] future is going to be within the very different age we live in now than the 1960s when the whole language issue was ignited by the protest campaigns and so forth.

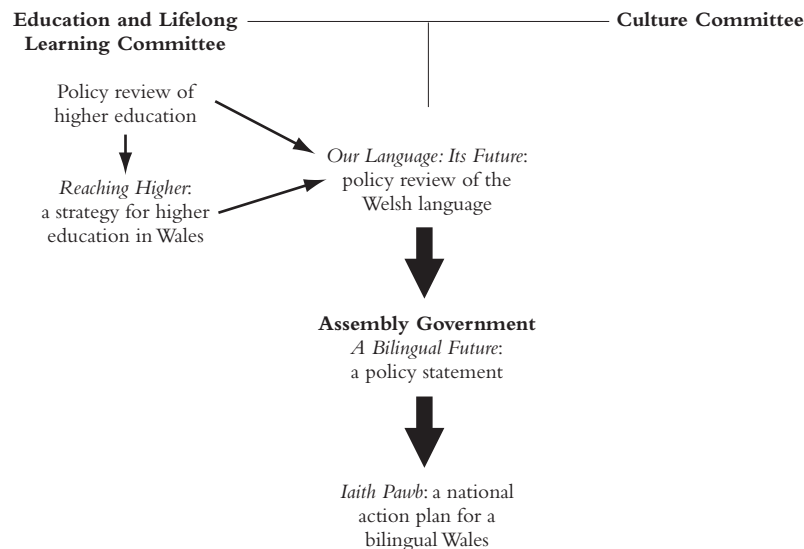
The 1999 and 2000 Institute of Welsh Affairs' reviews trace the initial problems the new government had in finding its feet and a distinct agenda for Wales (Osmond 1999a, 1999b) and the gradual re-emergence of the language question. This focused initially, although not exclusively, on Plaid Cymru's concerns over in-migration and its effects on the Welsh-speaking heartlands, which led to major arguments between Labour and Plaid Cymru (Osmond, 2001). By 2002, when *A Bilingual Future* (see below) was launched, Rhodri Morgan, the Assembly's First Minister, acknowledged that it 'was an attempt to stop language becoming a political football in the run up to next May's [2003] Assembly elections' (quoted in Osmond, 2002: 11). By December 2002, when *Iaith Pawb*, the action plan for the implementation of this policy was launched, there was widespread support on all sides: 'All four parties in the Assembly welcomed the document, a rare consensus over what over the past 2 years has been an extremely contentious issue, in and outside the Assembly' (Osmond, 2002: 11).

Figure 6.1 shows the policies and strategies that have been developed in relation to language and higher education, and their interrelationship. The arrows on the left-hand side of the diagram show that the Assembly's Education and Lifelong Learning Committee played a central role in the formulation of these policies and strategies, and the question of Welsh-medium higher education provision therefore had to be faced.

The two policy-review reports give differing statistics, but the fact that between 'less than 2%' (NAW, 2001: 3.18) and '3%' (WAG, 2002b: S54) of students in Wales are studying some of their course through the medium of Welsh was highlighted. This was unanimously viewed as a poor result when 23 per cent of Wales's secondary schools are Welsh-medium (Humphreys and Williams, 2001b), and was therefore identified as an area for development.

Alongside the review of higher education, which led to the *Reaching Higher* policy, the Culture Committee undertook a joint review of the Welsh language with the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee (WAG, 2002b). Parts of this (particularly 17.19 to 17.30) relate to higher education,

Figure 6.1
Welsh Assembly Government Welsh-language and higher education-related policy development, 2000–2



and these will be examined below in the section on 'Our language: its future'.

July 2002 saw the publication of *A Bilingual Future*, the policy statement on the Welsh language by the Assembly government, with the promise of a national action plan. This was duly issued in December 2002, entitled *Iaith Pawb* – 'Everyone's Language'. This action plan shows how the Assembly intends to mainstream the Welsh language in the domains over which it has power, and will therefore be examined in the final section.

Policy review of higher education and Reaching Higher

Between 2000 and 2001, the Welsh Assembly's Education and Lifelong Learning Committee undertook a review of higher education. As part of this it invited 191 organizations to respond to an initial questionnaire covering six key areas. The Welsh language was included in section 3.5, with

the question: 'In what ways can HE contribute to the development of bilingual capacity within Wales?' (NAW, 2001: 135). Suggested issues were 'developing robust mechanisms to support the expansion of Welsh-medium provision within the sector' and 'identifying the needs of public, private and voluntary sectors for Welsh-medium provision within the sector'. The committee also heard forty-six papers from key stakeholders between November 2000 and July 2001 (NAW, 2001: 139–45). Of these, two paid particular attention to the issue of Welsh-medium higher education: Humphreys and Williams's paper (2001b) on behalf of the University of Wales Board for Welsh-Medium Teaching, and that by Dafydd Glyn Jones, a researcher from Bangor University, entitled *The Quality and the Medium* (D. G. Jones, 2001). The first proposed a (virtual) 'National Centre in support of Welsh-medium teaching' (Humphreys and Williams, 2001b), the second, the establishment of a Welsh-medium federal college (D. G. Jones, 2001).

The motivations for language planning are often complex, and this is no exception. Some of the governmental pressures for change were examined above, but the questions that were used in the consultation exercise show that there were also goals linked to societal and educational initiatives and the 'opportunity, use and incentive' planning identified by Baker (2003). The Assembly government's general agenda for higher education also had an important role in shaping the policy that subsequently developed. It is very evident that Humphreys and Williams's proposal sat far more easily with the committee's overall priorities, since it is moderate in its funding expectations, makes extensive use of ICT, an area of strong focus for the Assembly (www.cymruarlein.wales.gov.uk), and is firmly rooted in collaboration and cooperation between higher education institutions (Humphreys and Williams, 2001b: appendix 1). This reflects the main thrust of the policy review document which states from the outset that 'it is believed that collaboration will lead to significant growth' (NAW, 2001: S1.2ii). The policy that came out of this review, *Reaching Higher* (WAG, 2002a), expresses this more strongly, with section 13 stating that:

HE must make links within the sector and across boundaries. We want a sector that takes its rightful place in the Assembly's wider priorities and principles, including those of sustainability, social inclusion, equal opportunities and the development of bilingualism.

The proposal is based on the gradual development of a 'centre' to concentrate efforts by staff in the various higher education institutions (HEIs) on developing materials and teaching methods for Welsh-medium delivery. The

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aim is to capitalize on strengths in the various institutions by spreading expertise and sharing teaching through, amongst other means, the use of video and Internet links. The main activity will come from Bangor, Aberystwyth and Trinity (Carmarthen), where the expertise is concentrated (see Table 6.1) but it is a plan that aims to include the eight other institutions and encourage development in them. The implementation strategy that it advocates is target-based, in line with many of the initiatives in Wales, with the suggestion that three modules in every course be offered through the medium of Welsh by 2007 (NAW, 2001: S3.20), which would appear to be very ambitious, given the very poor current situation.

The alternative proposal by Dafydd Glyn Jones, for a federal Welsh-medium college, again 'based at existing HEIs within Wales, to promote teaching and learning through the medium of Welsh . . . was not supported by the committee at this time' (NAW, 2001: S3.23). The basis of this proposal was to 'establish a group of academics who teach or are prepared to teach and research through the medium of Welsh' (Jones, 2001: 12). The paper includes calls for the funding councils to 'forget' staff-student ratios, stating that 'if one teacher can teach and inspire one pupil [*sic*] through the medium of Welsh, this is a significant contribution' (Jones, 2001: 16). This would obviously open the floodgates in terms of funding, and goes against the established measures of performance. Jones also emphasizes the need to train Welsh-speaking 'thinkers' to redress the 'intellectual poverty' (p. 15) of Wales and contribute to a new Welsh-speaking elite. This goes against current trends of social inclusion and widening access to higher education. In addition, the targets of an increase of 200 Welsh-medium lecturers and 1,500 students (that is, almost 100 per cent) within five years, and an aim of ensuring that every subject is taught through the medium of Welsh somewhere in Wales (p. 16) are far more radical than the alternative proposal and have huge funding implications. Furthermore, the style and tone of the paper reveal Jones' obvious frustration with the lack of progress in Welsh-medium higher education.

The debate and motions that this paper caused within the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee (ELLC) show just how controversial it was. They also highlight the problems attached to engaging in a fact-finding and consultation exercise in relation to language planning. A series of motions by committee members Huw Lewis and Janice Gregory sought initially to have the papers 'set aside' (Thomas, 2001: 39) or excluded from the evidence to be considered. This caused problems in terms of the powers of the committee and its duties as regards evidence presented to it. The basis for the

wish to exclude the paper was that its tone was 'xenophobic and racist' (against the English-speaking Welsh) (ELLC, 2001a: opening remarks). The minutes of the subsequent committee debate (ELLC, 2001b) and the catalogue of motions in Annex 8 of the policy-review document show how the final statement that it was 'not supported by the Committee' came about (NAW, 2001: S3.23). Some members of the committee did highlight the positive side of the proposal (Thomas, 2001), but it was too radical in every sense for this review.

By the time that the interviews for this study were carried out, the proposals contained in *Reaching Higher* had become firmly embedded in the sector, so the official line was that the federal college idea was 'neither the Assembly's policy nor the funding council's'. Some interviewees could see, however, that there was still a place for the proposals, but perhaps in a different form and at a later date. Thus, one person could see that Aberystwyth, Bangor and Trinity would be in favour of such proposals but he would wish any form of federal Welsh-medium college 'to also include other institutions so that Welsh-speaking students could be offered a greater range of high quality courses'. The funding implications are considerable, but also the needs in terms of staffing and resources. According to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) statistics (2002) there were 253 staff teaching subjects other than language through the medium of Welsh in 1999–2000, which is a very low base on which to develop. Even if there were sufficient Welsh-speaking staff available to form such a college, there are issues about whether they would want to move out of departments into much smaller units, and of where they would sit in terms of the research assessment exercise. However, rather than dismissing the idea, it was thought by some to be feasible as a long-term strategy once provision has been built up through the National Centre.

The vision that is promoted in *Reaching Higher* is very much one of a bilingual future, with all higher education institutions catering for both language communities. The proposal for a separate institution in whatever form has been rejected, thus ruling out any possibilities of creating 'boundaries' between the majority and minority languages, as was seen in the case of the Université de Moncton. The Assembly government's vision is of a 'bilingual future' for Wales, and a dual system of higher education on the New Brunswick model, whatever its merits, would be at odds with this. However, the current system has developed ad hoc and puts the two languages in constant competition. As was seen in Tables 6.1 and 6.2, the provision of Welsh-medium courses is limited in terms of subjects and

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geographical spread. It is recognized that this is having an adverse effect on acquisition planning and on the potential for the development of the use of the Welsh language in employment, public services and adult life in general. However, there is a reluctance on the part of the government to fund further development without engaging in the initial fact-finding stage of planning. The Université de Moncton was established almost forty years before the Welsh review of higher education and in a very different climate to today's. At that time the power base for Wales was in London and lobbying did little more than secure grant funding for a number of lecturers' posts (Williams and Morris, 2000). The Welsh language has gone through considerable revitalization and language planning has had many successes (Baker, 2003) but the student figures quoted above show that higher education is not even contributing to its maintenance. Nevertheless, it has had an important role in corpus planning and producing dictionaries and educational materials, and the Canolfan Bedwyr at Bangor University is doing important work on terminologies for different fields of work.

Turning now to what became the alternative proposal, the (virtual) National Centre to support Welsh-medium higher education, the interviews conducted in Wales shed light both on the development of these proposals and on their feasibility. There were two drafts, the first one being more ambitious than the second with plans for a more comprehensive centre requiring substantial funding. Objections to this came from within the sector, especially from the institutions traditionally involved in Welsh-medium delivery, since, as one informant put it, 'they meant that funding would be taken away from the institutions themselves'. The resources attached to Welsh-medium delivery are already limited (£1.23m. in per capita premiums and £300,000 in the Welsh-medium provision fund in 2002/3 (HEFCW, 2002)) and it is natural that those who already receive it would wish to see it at least maintained. The revised proposal, therefore, was based on a smaller funding requirement, with the staffing base reduced to six or seven, at least initially, and the inclusion of a scholarship scheme.

As was seen earlier, the National Centre plan is based on collaboration and cooperation between the various institutions in order to produce materials and, perhaps, to deliver modules jointly. The problem with this, as with the whole of the thrust of *Reaching Higher*, is that it requires 'a big change in mindset for institutions'. They are used to competing for students, research grants and, particularly, core funding; now they are being asked to cooperate and collaborate. To a certain extent, as one interviewee said: 'lecturers and institutions that already deliver through the medium of Welsh are used to

collaborating. Networks have been in place for a long time in the more traditional Welsh-medium subjects (such as history) but also in the sciences'. In addition, the Board for Welsh-medium teaching, through the Welsh-medium Development Officer, has set up subject panels to collaborate and develop modules that could be delivered in any institution.

The Funding Council are confident that as the *Reaching Higher* agenda of collaboration comes on stream there is 'going to be less of a feeling of competition, which is one of the factors that does inhibit collaboration' (interview) and more initiatives will develop. Others are more sceptical. According to one interviewee, there is a willingness to collaborate on part one degree modules but he is less sure about collaboration on modules for parts two and three, which require more specialist knowledge and much more developmental work. Again, the issue of funding and staffing lies beneath this: 'Is it fair for Wales to use Bangor lecturers unless they will get sufficient compensation? . . . Why should they work harder than their English-speaking counterparts just because of some 'moral duty' to the Welsh language?'

It is clear, then, that any work undertaken by lecturers under a collaborative framework will have to be tied to resources in such a way that both lecturers and their institutions will receive adequate compensation. There is also the problem of the autonomy of institutions and their staff, and of the very different approaches to learning and teaching within the sector. There have already been cases where 'proposals for packages based on a more student-centred approach than more traditional universities may be accustomed to using have met with opposition' (interview).

One final point that needs to be considered here is why this proposal was adopted. This has been hinted at above, but that discussion presented the proposals in terms of two alternatives that the Review Committee were asked to consider. However, Ceu Williams, one of the authors of the 'National Centre' paper, feels strongly that these should never have been considered as alternatives. He had been asked to put together 'some ideas' about the development of Welsh-medium in the higher education sector. Because of the 'quite atrocious' response to the Dafydd Glyn Jones paper, the committee 'more or less took our paper as it was not as extreme as Dafydd Glyn's paper. It was meant as a support mechanism but the Assembly, and some lecturers, took it as the development plan for higher education' (Dr Ceu Williams). He foresees a situation, in five to ten years' time, when the sector will probably be much closer to the federal college model, because of the work done through the National Centre and the scholarship scheme.

The higher education strategy that came out of the review, *Reaching*

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Higher (WAG, 2002a), carries forward support for a virtual National Centre in support of Welsh-medium teaching (paras 55–6) but requires ELWa-HEFCW to obtain data to give a clearer picture of ‘current and forecast levels of demand throughout the system and a better understanding of the inter-relationship between supply and demand’ (WAG, 2002a: 5, S55). Thus, economic considerations are still very much the priority. The three Welsh-language-related undertakings that came out of the long process of review and debate are expressed in tentative language:

- ‘we shall invite HEFCW to commission a **report into current levels of demand and supply in Welsh medium higher education**, the projected demands and the steps that should be taken to increase demand.
- we shall ensure that **HEFCW to** [*sic*] **enter into dialogue with the Board of Welsh Medium Teaching** to see how demand can be best met.
- we shall consider funding – including **pilot language learning sabbaticals for practitioners** – in the context of successive Budget Planning Rounds’.
(Welsh Assembly Government, 2002a: 16, point 56, underlining added).

The implementation strategy is therefore through the funding council and budgets, which highlights the link between policy and funding. The policy has the potential to bring about positive action to develop Welsh-medium provision, but this will depend on further research and evidence that there is a genuine need for such provision.

The HEFCW interim report on supply and demand requested in *Reaching Higher* was published in July 2002 (HEFCW, 2002). The points that it makes in relation to supply and demand can be summarized as follows:

- a) the relatively limited range of Welsh-medium provision is unlikely to be giving enough choice to individuals who wish or could be encouraged to take advantage of Welsh-medium higher education opportunities (3.2). This finding is based on the survey of current provision and on work done by Dr Cen Williams with pupils in years 12 and 13 on their future study intentions.
- b) Current provision cannot supply the quantity of graduates who are able to work at a high level in Welsh in a range of disciplines to enable Wales to become truly bilingual (3.4). This in turn points to a need for more reliable information on employers’ needs, which was also pointed out in interviews.
- c) The lack of ‘supply’ of higher education courses through the medium of Welsh is impacting on choices made by pupils for year 12 (at the age of

16). If they know that they will have to study through the medium of English at university they may well opt out of Welsh-medium education at 16 (3.8). Thus, lack of supply in higher education is impacting on demand and on student take-up further down the education system.

The findings of this interim report show the role that has been mapped out for higher education within the larger agenda of maintaining and revitalizing the Welsh language. In (a) and (c) there is evidence of the need to build on the successes of programmes within the compulsory education sector, that are key to intergenerational transmission. If students wish to study through the medium of Welsh, as the tables above indicate this choice is severely restricted. Part of the same research cited in (a) also confirmed the preference among many Welsh-speaking school pupils to study in Cardiff, which is seen to hold considerable advantages as a large city with a lot of amenities, but where provision through the medium of Welsh is also very limited. Therefore, provision needs to be planned in such a way as to take account of these considerations if higher education is to fulfil its role in promoting the growth of Welsh.

The lack of provision in universities can have a negative impact on status planning and on the development of schooling. It sends out messages that the language is not a high-status one that is fully functional as a medium of study. One interviewee underlined the need to work on creating awareness and expectations since 'sixth formers do not expect Welsh-medium provision and therefore don't ask for it'. For two interviewees this means that there needs to be a new approach to marketing Welsh-medium higher education so as to highlight the benefits and stimulate demand. Without the 'supply' of a full range of courses, however, it is difficult to envisage a real upsurge in demand.

There is also the challenge of stimulating students' confidence and developing support for Welsh-speaking students because, as one person put it: 'Let's face it, if your degree counts on it and you think your Welsh is not strong enough you are going to be frightened about the percentage of your marks being judged on that'. The level of students' language skills is also a problem at the Université de Moncton, where it is regarded as one of the features of the minority-language context. School experience, language use in the wider social context, the status attributed to the language, and the language use and attitudes of peers are important factors that will affect the success of language planning that involves extending the take-up of minority-language-medium higher education.

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The role of higher education in ‘opportunity, use and incentive planning’ was highlighted earlier, and the findings in (b) above suggest that universities are not currently in a position to fulfil this. The Welsh Language Act (1993) requires all public bodies to prepare a Welsh language scheme that shows how they will deliver bilingual services to the public. The Welsh Language Board has a long-term goal of extending this on a voluntary basis to private companies in the future (WLB, 1999). There is, then, a growing demand for Welsh-speaking employees at all levels of organizations, which higher education is failing to meet. In addition, the sector cannot expand because it is not producing enough Welsh-speaking lecturers to teach the forthcoming generations. At present there is little hope that the language learning sabbaticals proposed in *Reaching Higher* will have more than a minimal impact.

The targets set for Welsh-medium higher education in *Reaching Higher* are far lower than any suggested during the review, with a goal of 7 per cent of students taking ‘some element’ of their course through the medium of Welsh by 2010 (WAG, 2002a: S72). This could mean as little as submitting some work in Welsh or receiving tutorial support from a Welsh-speaking tutor. Needless to say, although deemed ‘ambitious’ by the *Western Mail* (Mason, 2002) this stops well short of enabling the sector to fulfil the role that it could play in the maintenance and revitalization of Welsh.

Policy review of the Welsh language by the Culture Committee and the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee: Our Language: Its Future

Since the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee was also involved in this review, it is not surprising that the paragraphs on higher education are very similar to the ones in *Reaching Higher*. It contains a proposal for doctorate and fellowship schemes to increase the pool of those who can teach in the language (17.26). This has the potential to provide ten new Welsh-speaking lecturers per year over a five-year period. It is also an attempt to stop good graduates from leaving education. As one interviewee put it: ‘at the moment someone who takes a first-class degree is off to the Assembly or into the media because the opportunities and the stability and the job prospects are better’. Despite the positive aspects of this scheme, interviewees expressed some scepticism about ‘the implicit assumption that good doctoral students will automatically be good lecturers’.

In section 17.27 of the review document, there is the first real sign of any attempt to place Welsh-language planning within the remit of universities by

seeking to ensure 'a central place for Welsh-medium teaching within the planning processes of institutions'. This ray of hope is short-lived, however, as the idea is not developed further within the policy review document, neither is it referred to directly in *A Bilingual Future* or *Iaith Pawb* (see below). *Our Language: Its Future* calls for the National Assembly for Wales to set up a 'strategic cross-cutting unit at a high level within the Assembly to take forward Welsh language strategy and monitor its implementation across different policy areas' (WAG, 2002b: 6). It also recommends that this should be taken through to the Assembly Supported Public Bodies (ASPBs) through their remit letters, which should contain a 'specific requirement to support the Welsh language' (p. 6). Here, then, is the beginning of a coherent framework for implementation that has the potential to be continued down into the universities.

A Bilingual Future *and* Iaith Pawb

In the second half of 2002, the Welsh Assembly Government drew together the threads of the different policies on the Welsh language that had been developed by its committees into a policy statement and action plan. The foreword to *A Bilingual Future* states that the Welsh language 'will be mainstreamed into the work of the Assembly Government and its agencies' (WAG, 2002c: 2). This, along with 'positive support' for communities to ensure that they are economically and socially sustainable, is the flavour of the whole policy.

Although not directly related to language planning in higher education, the establishment of a Welsh Language Unit within the Assembly government to oversee the process of mainstreaming and assist policy development is important. It creates a structure at the highest level that makes it incumbent on all ministers to 'take ownership for identifying and addressing Welsh language issues in their own policy areas' (*Iaith Pawb*, WAG, 2002d: 2.22). With the Unit working in conjunction with the Welsh Language Board a more coherent approach to language planning should be developed over time. The *Iaith Pawb* Action Plan promises extra funding for the Welsh Language Board (2.38), giving it an enhanced capacity to monitor and review language schemes (2.37). Given that many higher education institutions in Wales have been slow in drawing up a scheme, this may allow the Board to give further support to institutions and enable more regular and thorough scrutiny of implementation.

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The direct references to further and higher education in these documents state that ‘over time we want Welsh-medium provision to be viewed as part of the mainstream provision’ (WAG, 2002c: 9) but no time limit or goals are set. *Reaching Higher* is referred to as the main strategy, and it is reiterated that data on supply and demand is to be the foundation of any future developments and investment, including language-learning sabbaticals for lecturers (4.18).

Reaction from interviewees to *A Bilingual Future* and *Iaith Pawb* has generally been positive. It is felt that there is now a clearer steer away from simply taking a funding policy approach to a more central, coordinated one that ‘will invest in the infrastructure of post-16 and higher education’. The central place that Welsh has now been given within the Assembly government is welcomed, but a lot will depend on how the plans develop and on the funding support that goes with them.

Conclusions

It has therefore been seen that universities do have an important role to play in language planning and can contribute to the maintenance and revitalization of minority official languages. The use of the language in university study confirms its status and adds to the domains in which it functions. In New Brunswick it has been possible to give this a more prominent form and for the francophone university to become the focal point of activities linked to the culture and language of Acadia. In Wales it is more successful in areas where there is a concentration of provision. The universities also have an important contribution to make to ‘opportunity, use and incentive planning’ by producing minority-language-speaking graduates who can take up opportunities within the employment market where bilingualism is required. In turn, this can lead to an expansion, both in the areas of work in which the language is used and in the services that are delivered through Welsh or French. This depends on there being effective planning within the employment sector to ensure that appropriate opportunities are available. The francophone population in New Brunswick has traditionally been economically disadvantaged (Cyr et al., 1996), so the development of these types of opportunities not only helps to redress economic inequality but also creates a more positive image for the French language. In addition, these graduates can be employed by the universities to increase the pool of lecturers and ensure that this type of language planning is maintained and developed.

Although a contribution by graduates to intergenerational transmission is not guaranteed, the existence of well-planned and reputable higher education courses through the minority language is important in underpinning acquisition planning. Wales is making a poor contribution to this at present, as its provision is underdeveloped and does not respond to student need, but the Université de Moncton is playing an important role in completing the continuum from pre-school to post-school education. This in turn impacts on the demand for schooling and the perceptions of parents of the usefulness of the language in securing well-paid employment.

Language planning and policy at the meso level is at very different stages in the two contexts and reflects two very different approaches. These are influenced by varied political pressures and priorities and by changing trends in government and language planning. They also reflect different conceptions of the way in which minority-language communities' rights and needs are addressed, in respect of higher education. Whereas a dual system of delivery was chosen in the 1960s as a way of addressing the needs of the 'two linguistic solitudes' (Edwards, 1994) in Canada, in Wales this separation has never been made and current planning is being carried out in the context of a 'bilingual future' (WAG, 2002c). Whether or not this is the best approach for the Welsh language is really no longer up for debate, as the deliberations of the Assembly government have confirmed that this is the policy that has been adopted for the foreseeable future. In spite of this fundamental difference, in both contexts there are shared challenges at the meso planning and policy level in terms of bringing about a more coherent approach, as reflected in the appointment of a language commissioner in New Brunswick and the establishment of a Welsh Language Unit within the Welsh Assembly Government.

Research within the institutions in the two contexts revealed that, despite the major differences in meso-level planning and policies and in the way in which minority-medium higher education is delivered, there are still many shared issues and challenges. Per capita funding models are particularly problematic on both sides of the Atlantic, alongside issues of recruiting viable cohorts from a 'minority' community. Staffing, course and materials development are also shared areas of concern and ones that have to be faced if the successes of the Welsh- and French-medium 5–16 education sector are to be built on in higher education. There is no single ideal model of provision, but it has to be recognized that the current situation in Wales is a major obstacle to the maintenance and revitalization of the Welsh language.

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