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**WELSH LANGUAGE AND ITS CULTURAL  
SIGNIFICANCE**

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**Plzeň 2014**

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Tomáš Procházka

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## ABSTRACT

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This undergraduate thesis provides a cohesive view on the development of the Welsh language in Great Britain since the arrival of Celts up until present day and based on the explored facts it attempts to provide a statement on its sustainability. The thesis is divided into three main parts. The first part provides background of the arrival of Celts to Britain and tracks the circumstances of historical development of the Welsh language until the sixteenth century. The second part concentrates on the key figures and events which have been responsible for both the decline of Welsh and for the fact that it has remained to be the most widely spoken Celtic language so far. The third part then looks closer on the extent of its governmental and organisational support, its educational provision and presents an image of its distribution and usage within Wales.

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## INTRODUCTION

As is known today, the Welsh language evolved as a combination from many older preceding languages of the Brittonic people. According to many scholars, the Welsh language had been slowly acquiring its early form from around the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. Until then the decisive elements shaping the language had been caused by migration or assimilation among the Celtic tribes who were more often than not at war. When the Romans arrived to occupy the island of Great Britain around 43 BC, it was the first and not the last time when the language had to uphold its existence adjacent to a language of an entirely different branch from within the Indo-European language family. To arouse interest in the language and to involve the reader to the circumstances of what have the “*Iaith Gymraeg*”<sup>1</sup> and its speakers trodden over on their pathway through the forming events of their history on the land beyond the Channel, is the aim of the first chapter.

Certainly, were it not for the few bold promoters that have contributed to the present existence of Welsh and its status so far, its current usage, however limited it appears today, could have been much less widespread, if not lost altogether. The second chapter introduces the important events and figures that have played leading roles in development of literacy, education, media and overall preservation of the language since the Laws in Wales Act up until the full official reintroduction of Welsh in Wales. Furthermore, this chapter introduces key developments in distribution of the Welsh population and its impacts upon the language. It does so while regarding the fact that the cases chosen are arguably the most visible ones and could be likened to the proverbial tip of the iceberg.

J. R. R. Tolkien has said at the O’Donnell Lecture in 1955: “Welsh is of this soil, this island, the senior language of the men of Britain; and Welsh is beautiful” (Stephens,

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<sup>1</sup> *Cymraeg*, or the Welsh language. The modern Welsh-language name for Welsh inhabitants is *Cymry*, and *Cymru* is the Welsh name for Wales. These words, both of which are pronounced [kəm.rɨ], originated from the Brittonic word *combrogī*, meaning “fellow-countrymen”. (Davies J. A., 1994)



1999, p. 89). However loyally may the words of the dedicated and keen philologist plead in favour of the Welsh language, nowadays it does have to work several times harder in order not to be replaced by a younger, more popular and agile novice like seniors mostly and eventually are. A struggle for revival of the Welsh language is largely being supported by various bodies like lobbying pressure groups or by the Welsh government which is spending part of its resources trying to secure the language's position. On one hand, the Welsh language is still one of the most notable among the surviving Celtic languages because of its highest relative number of speakers per capita. According to the UNESCO website, (Moseley, 2010), it is stated that the Welsh language is "vulnerable" but not yet "definitely endangered" as it is still being practised in some families as a mother tongue. But on the other hand it is not entirely secure because casual speech in Welsh often occurs in particular circles and situations only. Through the course of history the Welsh language has been in a decline and the third chapter attempts to provide sufficient background so that it is possible to assess the current health of the language. It draws data about and discusses the provision of the language's education in Wales, reveals its governmental and institutional support within Wales and provides information on the current distribution of the Welsh speaking population and on the distribution of the overall population within Wales. Finally, it reflects the relations to Welsh in Wales and especially England.

## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF WALES

Welsh, as well as most of the European and many Asian languages, can trace its linguistic origins back to the period around 6000 BC<sup>2</sup>. By then there existed numerous semi-nomadic tribes in a large steppe area defined amongst the Caspian Sea to the east, the Black Sea to the west and the Caucasus Mountains to the south. Regarded as the Welsh inhabitants' eldest common cultural ancestors could be the people of the so called Proto-Celtic "*Urnfield culture*"<sup>3</sup> which were thriving from around 1200 BC in Central Europe but it is very uncertain to what extent they shared their customs and language. The society of those people consisted of many individual tribes, which were trading with each other but very often they were on war terms ravaging the neighbouring territories. Also a constant migration to seek better life conditions was not at all rare. The extent of the Celtic presence in Europe can be illustrated on various toponyms of Celtic origin. Davies (1999) states that rivers like the Danube, Rhine, or Rhône have gained their name from the early Celts' denomination and similarly the city of London, Paris or Wien.

The excavations of the Iron Age Halstatt culture, discovered in the modern-day Upper Austria and estimated from 800 to 450 BC, and the later so called La Tène culture, excavated in Switzerland dating circa from 450 to the Roman conquest, suggest that it was probably these cultures that were the cradle out of which the Celtic people were spreading in all directions, mostly southwards and westwards and thus eventually crossing to the island of Great Britain. It is argued that the Celtic tribes were continuously settling the island in many smaller waves, the first of which started to occur approximately around 600 BC. However it is a matter of dispute among different authorities to answer the question when did the Celtic influx arrive in Britain. The distinguished Irish historian Myles Dillon claims that: "Celtic-speakers reached Britain and Ireland as early as 2000 BC, but the most generally held opinion tends to date their arrival to the centuries following 600 BC" (Davies J. , 1999, p. 9).

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<sup>2</sup> It was first suggested by Sir William Jones in his speech before The Asiatic Society in Calcutta in 1786 where he highlighted the formal resemblances between Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit and thus laying the foundation for comparative linguistics and Indo-European studies (Davies J. , 1999).

<sup>3</sup> "Urnfield" culture because of the custom of cremating the dead, putting their ashes in urns and burying them in the fields. (Chadwick, 1997).

The Brittonic languages were flourishing undisturbed on the island southwards from the Firth of Forth<sup>4</sup>. But they were to be disrupted as the Roman occupation of the Islands started in 43 AD as the continental Celts were already subjugated. By 70 AD the “Provincia Britannia” was stretching all over what is nowadays England and Wales in the south and as far as southern Scotland in the north up to the Hadrian’s Wall around 130 AD and several years later for a period of 20 years even up to the lesser-known Antonine’s Wall, built between the firths of the rivers Forth and Clyde. As far as the Celtic language under Roman influence was concerned, the fact that Britain was made a province and was allowed to live under its Latin overlord through diplomacy of paying tributes and taxes from the trade resulted in the existence of bilingual cities where the majority continued to speak Celtic. As Davies (1999) claims, in the Roman period the language of the natives proved its flexibility by borrowing new words and names from Latin. For example the words “*pont*” – *bridge*, in Latin *pons*, or “*bresych*” – *cabbage*, in Latin *brassica* and more. The Romans also brought with them new unknown phenomena which stemmed from their culture, like material, military tactics and organization, building skills and more, through which Celts were able to enrich their vocabulary (Davies J. , 1999).

Synchronically with the departure of the Romans by 410 AD, unless the numerous staying recruits from Germania into the Roman army are considered, the earliest Anglo-Saxon migration to Britain is believed to have occurred no later than the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. They had been coming in large numbers across the North Sea either in searching for better land with whole families, their animals and equipment stacked together on the ships, or to conquer and plunder (Shulz, 2011). The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle from about 615 serves as a good demonstration in the approach of the incoming culture: “Aethelfrith led his army to Chester and there slew numberless *Welshmen*<sup>5</sup>, and so was fulfilled the prophecy of Augustine, wherein he said, If Welsh will not be at peace with us, they shall perish at the hand of the Saxons.” (Stephens, 1999, p. 2). By the year 577 it is

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<sup>4</sup> Only if we consider Pictish as a distant relative to Brittonic and not its member, though (Kavanagh, 2012) states that: “The majority academic view of nowadays is that Picts spoke a Celtic language derived from the same Brittonic tongue which was ancestral to Welsh, Cornish and Breton.”

<sup>5</sup> The English term for the Britons and eventually for Wales and Welsh stems from the Old English *Wilisc*, *Wylisc* (West Saxon), *Welisc*, *Wælic* (Anglian and Kentish) (Harper, 2014).

believed the domination of the new incomers could be felt up to the River Severn estuary and by 616 the firth of the rivers Dee and Mersey. As Shulz alleges:

The Celts were no match for these roughnecks. The Romans had taught them how to play the lyre and drink copious amounts of wine, but the populace in the regions controlled by the Pax Romana was barred from carrying weapons. As a result, the local peoples, no longer accustomed to the sword, lost one battle after the next and were forced to the edges of the island (Shulz, 2011).

That in effect meant that Britons who could not resist and had not left before the superior Anglo-Saxons came would either be killed or assimilated, while the latter often meant enslavement and degradation. From the perspective of the Welsh language, the successive English domination over the island had resulted in many words from English being assimilated into the Welsh. For example English cap to Welsh “*capan*”, wheelbarrow – to “*berfa*” or table – to “*bwrdd*”. (Davies J. , 1999, p. 14)

Wales had by then acquired roughly its modern boundaries. It was after the Anglo-Saxon expansion, as they had thrust a wedge among the Britons and thus divided them, when an early form of Welsh language did probably start to distinguish itself. According to Davies, the previously used synthetic language<sup>6</sup> of Common Brittonic started, somewhen between 400 and 700 AD, to be shifting into an analytic<sup>7</sup> early Welsh language which through time resulted in its modern form (Davies J. , 1999).

In terms of classification of the Celtic languages, wherein the Welsh language has by acquiring its country and also linguistic boundaries become an independent member, there has been an ongoing dispute among linguists about how to categorize them. Basically, there are two supported overlapping theories first of which is Karl Horst

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<sup>6</sup> Synthetic languages largely convey their meaning at the end of the words through inflection.

<sup>7</sup> Analytic languages, as English, carry much of their meaning via word order and prepositions (Davies J. , 1999, p. 9).

Schmidt's Q-Celtic and P-Celtic division<sup>8</sup>, (Davies J. , 1999), and the latter, or the more recent and also having more adherents, that stands on geographical rather than phonetic ground, simply distinguishes between Insular and Continental Celtic (Greene, 2013). Thus the Welsh can be classified as being an Insular and a so called P-Celtic language.

There were yet other nations which had an impact on the Welsh language after the Anglo-Saxons. The raids of the Norse Vikings on the northern shores of Wales, even resulting in establishing a few smaller bases, are estimated to have started around the mid 9<sup>th</sup> century. Their presence on Welsh land had contributed to the adoption of the word "*iarll*" into the Welsh vocabulary, by which the nobles of the raiders were called.<sup>9</sup>

Another significant culture to share their influence were the French Normans. After they usurped power in England, following the battle in 1066, William the Conqueror ordered the earls of Chester, Shrewsbury and Hereford to invade and subdue the disunited Wales (Dodd, 1998). They succeeded only partially and already towards the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century the south-western and south-eastern parts of Wales were subdued and known as the Welsh Marches or Marchia Wallie. The popular Norman names as Robert, Richard or William have been besides England preserved also in Wales. Also the words for palfrey – "*palfrai*", baron – "*barwn*" or warrant – "*gwarant*" come from Norman-French.

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<sup>8</sup> The Schmidt's theory is based upon the different pronunciation of the Proto-Celtic letter "k" in certain cognate words of both branches. The Q-Celtic languages, nowadays the surviving Goidelic branch, consisting of Irish, Scottish Gaelic and Manx, have learned to pronounce it as "k" sound e.g. "ceann" – meaning head. The P-Celtic languages, nowadays the surviving Brittonic branch, consisting of Welsh, Cornish and Breton, have learned to pronounce it as "p" sound e.g. "pen" – meaning head.

<sup>9</sup> The English word "earl" seems to have a similar history, although the Old English and Norse, which were by then much closer, are of Germanic language family so possibly the word was already used in the Old English before the Nordic intervention. (Harper, 2014)

## **WELSH ENDURES ITS UNOFFICIAL STATUS**

### **The Laws in Wales Act of 1536**

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century the English language was already fully reclaiming its position in law, administration and social life of the upper classes in England after it had been curbed from those areas by the French of the Normans. It was during the reign of Henry VIII when a series of laws that included annexation of Wales were introduced in 1536 and later in 1542 passed in the English parliament. Nowadays, they are denoted to as The Laws in Wales Act, or the Act of Union since it made the inhabitants of Wales direct subjects of the English Crown and positioned them to the same level as the inhabitants of England. The most decisive outcome of the Act regarding the Welsh language was its exclusion from practically the same areas that were previously seized from English by Normans, namely administration, law and courts (Simkin, 2013). As a further illustration of the changes serves an excerpt of the Act itself where it stated:

The people of the dominion [of Wales] have and do daily use a speech nothing like nor consonant to the natural mother tongue used within this realm ... No person or persons that use the Welsh speech or language shall have or enjoy any manor, office or fees within the realm of England, Wales or other the king's dominions upon pain of forfeiting the same offices or fees unless he or they use and exercise the speech or language of English (Stephens, 1999, p. 9).

Starting to realize how could it hinder them it was almost inevitable that soon the Welsh gentry would engage in learning English, as the Act prescribed, and they would send their children to English public schools. The perfect knowledge of English was becoming a hallmark of the upper class status and when heard speaking Welsh it would in certain circles be looked upon with a socially disapproving bias the result of which was a successive abandonment of the Welsh language by the upper society members. At first, it was happening only in the most influential classes of Welsh aristocracy, particularly in the east, but in a horizon of at least 250 years it involved even the lesser gentry from all over Wales who would sometimes abandon Welsh completely or would lose influence (Dodd, 1998). As seen by Janet Davies: "Welsh culture, which had been essentially aristocratic,

came into the guardianship of the peasantry and the ‘middling sort of people’ – craftsmen, artisans and the lower clergy” (Davies J. , 1999, p. 22).

### **Translation of the Bible**

Besides the law and politics it was also the religion of Wales which was on a brink of change which subsequently created a good opportunity for significant works to be born and strengthen the Welsh language for a period of time stretching up until today. It started with king Henry VIII’s quarrel with Pope who forbade him from divorcing Catherine of Aragon in order to be able to marry his new love Anne Boleyn. Because Henry would not tolerate such disapproval and decided that the whole of England, which already included the whole of Wales, would rather turn from the Roman Catholic Church altogether to form a separate one, later to be called Protestant<sup>10</sup>. The departure from Roman Catholicism also meant that the language of the Church was no longer to be Latin but the local speech. As the logic prescribed, instead of Welsh it was supposed to be the English language to be heard all over parishes of Wales. The vast majority of people living in Wales then were monoglot Welsh speakers and therefore would not be able to understand much from their visits of the church. Rather than to risk unrest and also to spread English Protestantism the arousing problem was acknowledged even by the English government. It prompted Welsh bishops to procure their dioceses with translations of the Bible and the Prayer Book though the then aristocracy also intended that the translations would be accompanied by the English versions so that the readers would acquire some English vocabulary above that. It bred a good opportunity alluded at the beginning of this paragraph. On demand of the then government a few worth mentioning translations were completed. Published in 1567 was the William Salesbury’s translation of New Testament and Prayer Book. William Salesbury further contributed to the language by publishing a collection of Welsh proverbs and idioms, copied from the work of the foremost bard<sup>11</sup> Gruffudd Hiraethog, and a Welsh – English dictionary (Parry, 2014). However the one that was eventually to have a profound effect upon helping to sustain the Welsh language in a rich and as Davies puts it

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<sup>10</sup> Synchronically in the 16th century it was also a time of big Protestant Reformation in Europe and its influence was to be felt even in England as some of the measures taken were influenced by these new ideas. Interestingly enough however, the reason to call the English Church a Protestant Church derives more from the protest of Henry VIII against the Pope than from the involvement of the movement in Europe (BBC, 2014)

<sup>11</sup> From Old Celtic “*bardos*” - poet, singer. Bards have been enjoying great respect among Welsh. (Harper, 2014)

“highly literary and somewhat archaic” form was in 1588 the publication of the whole translated Bible, an ambitious task undertaken and finished by William Morgan (Davies J. , 1999, p. 23).

For the language the undisputable benefit of religion, regardless of its doctrine, is the attraction of intellectuals and scholars. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Wales was a place for several different attitudes to Christian Religion represented mostly by separatist non-conformist churches and the Church of England. Despite their differences, both of the denominational sides supplied the Welsh Trust, founded by Thomas Gouge in 1674, in order to establish schools for children where they would acquire an understanding of English. Collaterally, it spent a proportion of the funds on publishing Welsh-medium books which only between 1660 and 1730 amounted closely to 545. The activities of the Trust were in 1698 continued by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), a London based society existing still today. In spite of the SPCK’s intention to teach in its schools through the medium of English there were certain counties in northern Wales where Welsh was the sole medium of instruction (Davies J. , 1999).

### **Circulating Schools and Griffith Jones**

Possibly, as the most significant persona for Welsh people and the language in the 18<sup>th</sup> century can be considered Griffith Jones and his introduction of “circulating schools“ which played a major role in spreading literacy around Wales and consequently even in higher demand for books. He himself gained education at the Carmarthen Grammar School and after graduation was appointed a clergyman within the Church of England in 1708. His early involvement with the SPCK in 1713 led to his appointment to a rector at the Society’s school at Llanddowror, a village with which he would be connected even three hundred years later. Davies states 1731 to be the year when he began to engage in establishing the renowned “Circulating Schools” all over Wales. Its name stems from the practice of coming and going from parish to parish. The schools took place mostly in winter when people had more time to be present in the particular building of instruction while the school would be staying for about three months teaching the participants the Church Catechism and reading in the Welsh language. The book to read would be predominantly the Bible as it was practical for learning both. Griffith Jones himself was



training teachers at his parish at Llanddowror for the Circulating Schools. The movement was successful from its beginning and received support among others from Bridget Bevan, a friend of Griffith Jones, who took over keeping the schools after 1761. From today's perspective, the estimated impact of the schools slightly differs from authority to authority. Mary Clement claims that at the time of Jones's demise in 1761 there were recorded 3,495 Circulating Schools with over 158,000 scholars, (Clement, 2009), while Janet Davies adjusts and complements the information stating there were functioning overall 3,325 schools at 1,600 different locations with a tremendous 250,000 people out of 480,000 inhabitants of the then Wales having attended (Davies J. , 1999, p. 32). It was arguably the greatest achievement done in the education of the masses and it was realised by various individuals of the church. In its time it was already well recognized as Phil Carradice states: "In 1764, Catherine II of Russia commissioned a report on the activities of the schools with a view to creating a similar system in her own country." But naturally, not only positive attitudes occurred for: "Many people disagreed with teaching ordinary working men and women to read, particularly reactionary clergymen who felt that their position at the centre of the community was being undermined" (Carradice, 2010).

The end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century introduced dynamics which Welsh had to adjust to since a considerable shift in concentration from agriculture to industry was developing with the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For the Welsh language, there was to be felt a direct impact of the Industrial Revolution, spanning up to the half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as it caused all varieties of migration within, out of or into Wales. The communities grew not only by immigration, whether it were English, Scottish or Irish, but also as the industry was proving to be more economically viable more Welsh people were able to procure for bigger families which combined had effect on growth of the overall population of Wales (Dodd, 1998). The revolution would eventually change the composition of population and language at a significant scale. According to the 1801's Census, which was in fact the first official census conducted in the UK, 587,000 people were living in Wales. Half a century later, in 1851's census, the amount of inhabitants had risen considerably to 1,163,000. It was due to the migration though that despite the population had risen the percentage of Welsh speakers dropped from 80 to 67 percent respectively to the censuses. Even though the immigration was yet relatively minor around the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the

Welsh speaking communities were able to introduce many of the incomers to their language as the century went onwards and the rate of immigrants grew the communities were becoming more and more anglicised (Davies J. , 1999). However, it was an economist Brinley Thomas who through comparison to Ireland, which was during the same era suffering from insufficiency in occupational opportunities, argued for the bright side of the Industrial Revolution. His idea was that were it not for the industrial influx to Wales people would be forced to migrate for work probably out of Wales. Similarly as Irish then, through emigration the Welsh language would be most likely forgotten in abroad and also the original home community would be largely reduced (Carter, 2013). It is worth mentioning that still there were nearly 250,000 people born in Wales and living in England, the biggest part of whom in Merseyside, Liverpool, towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Davies J. , 2007).

Both Welsh people and language were lagging behind the fresh English organisational spirit introduced along with the Industrial Revolution. Regarding the people, this cultural difference may have stemmed already from another way of life and values prized by the Welsh people in medieval times. They were then used to protect themselves whenever danger presented itself and combined with the fact they were not burdened by taxes the dominant feature of difference from the English folk stood in their relatively high freedom and independence on the nobility. As the medieval chronicler Gerald of Wales recorded: “Welsh pay no attention to commerce, shipping or industry. They do not have orchards or gardens. Most of their land is used for pasture and they cultivate very little of it, growing a few flowers and sowing a plot here and there” (Price, 2000, p. 18). Obviously, it caused the discrepancy of habits as the English society was concurrently being more accustomed to service and production efficiency. Regarding the Welsh language, it had to adapt and learn to reflect new situations and things represented by the emergence of towns, cities and industry (Jones & Smith, 2000). It prompted Welsh scholars and language enthusiasts to invent and create new words. There are two notable authors whose efforts have been attested by time. Cleric and lexicographer John Walters published between 1770 and 1794 the English-Welsh dictionary containing many a useful phrases which have made it into the spoken and written vocabulary. Furthermore the publication of William Owen Pughe’s entitled “A Dictionary of the Welsh Language” was

even more abundant in terms of new vocabulary items (Davies J. , 1999). Among the inventions of theirs can be found e.g. “*diddorol*”- interesting, “*geiriadur*”- dictionary, “*cyngerdd*”- concert, “*cyfrefoldeb*”- responsibility or “*pwyllgor*”- committee. Pughe was also interested in grammar and advocated that it should not be merely described but also prescribed. However, his attempts to dispense with irregular verbs and plurals in order to create more consistent grammar system had met with incomprehension.

### **Report of the Commissioners as a Boost for National Feelings**

The economic influence of the Industrial Revolution coming into Wales from England was towards the half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century already very marked. It resembled the paradigm from the 16<sup>th</sup> century where the upper class status was signified by the knowledge of English. Also the company and factory owners and leaders were at first dominantly of English descent. The aspiration to know English in order to acquire more opportunities and to keep pace with the “march of society” was thus a logical consequence in thinking of many adherents of the so called Utilitarianism (Dodd, 1998). As the poet Walter Davies lamented in 1815: “The Welsh have the labour, the strangers have the profit” (Davies J. , 1999, p. 33). Such a constellation was very convenient for the English government giving it a good reason to aim for the spread of English language education without the risk of provoking much antagonism for according to Davies there had been a few riots especially in the 1830s and 40s because members of the Welsh speaking communities were disadvantaged due to poor education and felt growing exclusion (Davies J. , 2007).

In 1846, English government authorized a commission to investigate the state of education in Wales “especially into the means afforded to the labouring classes for obtaining knowledge of the English language. (Davies J. , 1999, p. 43)” Furthermore, the government insisted to observe the morals and behaviour of the Welsh people. Such an intention from what has been mentioned already it is most likely that insufficient education was only one of the government's concerns and they tended to search deeper into the mood of the Welsh communities. It is not uncommonly believed that “the findings of the enquiry had been more or less decided before the commissioners even began their work” (Carradice, The Treason of the Blue Books, 2011). The commission consisted of three

attorneys Lingen, Simons and Vaughan Johnson. None of them was able to speak Welsh, which in itself was a substantial deficit for inquiry, therefore they were relying on their subjective observations. Moreover, for the purpose of the survey they received informative letters from Anglican clergymen some of which were rather strict and spiteful. In describing the Nonconformists'<sup>12</sup> meetings the clergymen went so far as to describing them as occasions for illicit sex and the Welsh women as nearly all unchaste (Davies J. , 1999). The report, later to be known as the “Treachery of the Blue Books”, was ready by the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1847 and stretched to 1,252 pages. Its publication caused a surge of controversy and national feelings throughout a wide spectrum of Welsh society.

### **From the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and Emergence of Nationalism to Modern Day**

The period around the shift of the centuries was experiencing a further decline of the Welsh language and it is a tendency that would be repeatedly presented in censuses decade after decade. In the working communities both English and Welsh speakers were present but the fact that Welsh still had not acquired any official status led to a common trend of conforming to English. It was not only due to the prevalence of English speakers but also because of the formations of new trade unions in which only the English was officially applicable. An author Gwyn Thomas, quoted in Carter, wrote in relation to it: “The Welsh language stood in the way of our fuller union and we made ruthless haste to destroy it. We nearly did” (Carter, 2013).

By 1880, the school attendance became compulsory in all of Wales. It was this period that witnessed the infamous “Welsh Not” policy at schools. To prevent pupils from speaking Welsh, it was common to hang a wooden tablet with the engraved letters “WN” on the neck of any child heard speaking Welsh in the classroom which would be given and passed to another such wrongdoer, if there was any. The pupil wearing the tablet at the end of the day would then receive some form of punishment, usually corporal (Davies J. , 1999). Although somewhere such a practice is believed to have existed up until the 1920s, it was not present without the parents knowing and it is also argued that it was not such a widespread phenomenon as it is often claimed (Dodd, 1998).

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<sup>12</sup> Nonconformist, also called Dissenter, or Free Churchman, any English Protestant who does not conform to the doctrines or practices of the established Church of England (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2014)

On a more positive note, an era surrounding the brink of the centuries witnessed several events strengthening the Welsh language in the academic and learned circles. Regarding personal credit it was Kaspar Zeuss, a founder of Celtic philology from Germany, and his tribute to the field by publishing “Grammatica Celtica” in 1871. John Rhÿs, who visited Germany, drew inspiration from the developments in philology and became the first Professor of Celtic at the Oxford University in 1877 (Williams I. , 2009). These academic developments were supported also on an institutional level when the Universities of Aberystwyth, Bangor and Swansea were created in 1872, 1884 and 1920 respectively. The Royal Charter from the March 1907 also guaranteed the establishment of National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth and National Museum in Cardiff, the creation of which have roofed the legacy of the Welsh literary tradition and culture (Davies J. , 2007).

During the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was becoming more and more apparent in which language would the twentieth century Wales conduct most of its conversations. The census in 1901 revealed that hardly half of the population could speak Welsh which ten years later would already comprise only 43 percent and after the First World War in 1921 only 37 percent. The knowledge of English, on the other hand, was claimed in 1911 by nearly everyone in Wales, namely 91 percent. Moreover, during the interwar years, Davies claims as many as 390,000 Welsh to have emigrated, mostly to England, due to a coal mines depression and unemployment rate reaching 43 percent among men.

The difficult situation of the Welsh language was not indifferent to people like Ifan ap Owen of the Edwards family. He was building upon the legacy of his father, sir Owen Morgan Edwards, a professor of history at Aberystwyth, who, according to Mary James, told as his last wish to his son Ifan that “Wales should be given better educational opportunities” (James, 2009). From many of the endeavours of his fruitful life, Ifan ap Owen Edwards worked as a grammar school teacher, a university lecturer but by what is he most remembered today was his idea of founding the “Urdd Gobaith Cymru”<sup>13</sup> in 1922. One of the reasons why has been the Urdd such a success, and it still is a major youth

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<sup>13</sup> Translated as “The Welsh League of Youth”

organisation in Wales nowadays, was undoubtedly the personal quality of its founder. James describes him as “a man of vision, but also a realist. He was a leader who had the gift of winning over all kinds of people to support and sponsor his progressive and ambitious plans, being always one step ahead of his age” (James, 2009). The Urdd has since its beginnings engaged in organising a wide range of activities from sports, athletics and various games to trips and camps for Welsh learners. Urdd is also known to have been annually holding its own Eisteddfod<sup>14</sup> since 1929. The number of members of the Wales’s biggest youth organisation counted twelve years after its origin some 50,000 people, which, interestingly, is also the amount of people it holds nowadays (Urdd Gobaith Cymru, 2013). It comes as no surprise that Ifan ap Owen Edwards is also connected to the establishment of “Ysgol Gymraeg Aberystwyth” in 1939, the first school to have officially introduced Welsh as a medium of instruction (Davies J. , 1999).

Regarding the significant patriots of Wales, the name of Saunders Lewis revolved around many a significant achievements and events in the 20th century. Being born in a Welsh speaking family in Wallasey, Liverpool and growing up in a Welsh speaking community provided Lewis with a fluency in Welsh. After his studies of English and French at the Liverpool University, which have been divided in two parts due to his service in the First World War, he lectured Welsh at the University of Wales, Swansea (BBC, 2014). Because he was very concerned about the well being of Welsh and feared the idea of its extinction, in 1925 he decided to form a political party called Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru, which is nowadays known only as Plaid Cymru<sup>15</sup>. The party has slowly through the century gained a voice and nowadays it receives a decent support especially from the Welsh heartlands. Its strategy has always been to defend the language and promote more Welsh autonomy. Currently, it holds eleven out of sixty seats within the Assembly (Plaid Cymru, 2014).

In 1936, exactly four hundred years after the Laws in Wales Act, the English Government decided to build a bombing school on the Llŷn peninsula in Wales after it had been refused by people in England. In Wales it also provoked much antagonism but it was

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<sup>14</sup> Eisteddfod tradition comes from a medieval bardic festival of performance and competitions in poetry, music and dances (Davies J. , 1999)

<sup>15</sup> Party of Wales

built eventually. It was the resolute action of three leading figures of Plaid Cymru, namely D.J. Williams, Lewis Valentine and Saunders Lewis, that is nowadays considered as the vanguard of Welsh nationalism. They entered the bombing school premises, set its buildings on fire and then claimed responsibility at the Pwllheli police station (Davies J. A., 1994). The Caernarfon court refused their request to speak in Welsh, which caused even more grudge among Welsh public, and transferred the case to London where they were sentenced to nine months in prison. The whole affair opened the eyes of many Welsh people reminding them that their interests within Wales can be defended and it was confirmed soon at the National Eisteddfod of 1938 where a petition signed by nearly 250,000 people led to an approval of the Welsh Courts Act of 1942. The Act concluded that “the Welsh language may be used in any court in Wales by any party or witness who considers that he would otherwise be at a disadvantage by reason of his natural language of communication being Welsh” but it had not proved as much significant for the Welsh language status as for the recovery of Welsh self-awareness (Carter, 2013).

The 20<sup>th</sup> century has also seen an employment decline in an agricultural primary sector and the industrial secondary sector (Davies J. A., 1994). Although industry is still a significant economic part of Wales, with the growth of development people started to concentrate more on services and light manufacturing and have migrated to find jobs in the more prosperous and anglicised parts of the country, mostly to the southeastern and northeastern Wales, thus shattering the Welsh speaking communities even further (Dodd, 1998). But it was also the 20<sup>th</sup> century during which the Welsh language has started to receive a significant support. Currently, the most visible achievement for Welsh has been its attainment of official status within Wales. The Welsh language has lived for almost 480 years without such privilege.

## **CURRENT SITUATION OF WELSH**

### **Welsh Government and Group Initiatives**

Today, the official representative of Wales is the Welsh Government. Its rather short history can be dated since the Government of Wales Act of 2006. It has been formed from the National Assembly of Wales, which was affirmed to be created under the previous Act in 1998. Since 2006, the Welsh Government and the National Assembly for Wales have been introduced as two separate bodies with a limited power within the 20 devolved areas from Westminster, with the Assembly being responsible for the legislative and the Government for the executive branch of power. Even this limitation of powers disappeared when people voted 'yes' in the referendum in 2011 questioning: "Do you want the Assembly now to be able to make laws on all matters in the 20 subject areas it has powers for?" (National Assembly for Wales, 2011). One of the devolved areas denotes specifically the Welsh language.

Of course, it may be questioned whether in the competition among politicians and parties, who try to win every vote, all the language policy comes from a sincere interest or just another desirable strategy to succeed. Another concern was expressed by Saunders Lewis, in his "Tynged yr Iaith" radioed speech in 1962, when he said: "...if any kind of self-government were obtained before the Welsh language was acknowledged and used as an official language in local authority and state administration in the Welsh-speaking parts of our country, then the language would never achieve official status at all, and its demise would be quicker than it will be under English rule" (Stephens, 1999, p. 94). To paraphrase Lewis, he was worried that any devolved Welsh government when given power before the Welsh language was officially equalled with English would then not be motivated to engage in securing it. However, the Welsh Language Act of 1993 and mainly the royally approved National Assembly for Wales Act of 2012 have for the first time since the 16<sup>th</sup> century ensured official status of both Welsh and English in Wales and therefore made it an official language of the Assembly itself where some of the members speak it (BBC, 2010). Since the referendum on the creation of the devolved Welsh Assembly took place in May 1997, it appears that the circumstances expressed by Saunders Lewis about the fate of the language have not been fulfilled.



According to the currently progressing “Welsh Language Strategy for 2012-2017 - A living language: a language for living”, published on the official governmental websites, the language appears to be fully incorporated within the Welsh Government’s plans. and it is funding the language The Welsh Government’s Grant System policy is ready to promote projects supporting the Welsh language use within families and workplace, providing more Welsh language activities for Welsh speakers, improving Welsh language services, and projects introducing Welsh language software, applications, online services, content creation tools and overall Welsh language digital content. Last year it provided six grants from the digital field. For instance, a cooperation project of Bangor University Technologies and S4C to create a new Speech to Text module, or an Urdd Gobaith Cymru initiated project to create an app which will allow young people to post, find and review Welsh language events and activities within their communities (Welsh Government, 2014). Speaking of the latter project, evidently the app has already been finished and by 11.4.2014 uploaded on the Google Play store where it is available free of charge for all android devices. It has been downloaded within three days since its publication by around ten users but it is nigh impossible to predict its potential since it would require some source of information concerning the number of people aware of its existence.

Under the National Assembly for Wales Act 2012 the Welsh Language Board, created after the Welsh Language Act of 1993, has been abolished and its duties and responsibilities were transferred to the “Welsh Language Commissioner” the position of which is since being held by Meri Huws. The responsibility of the Commissioner is generally to try to “promote and facilitate the use of Welsh Language” within Wales and is also responsible for investigating complaints about discrimination or lack of services in Welsh. The Commissioner can personally try to influence policies of organisations or can officially, after a discussion with the Welsh Government, impose standards on organisations from the public, private or the third, non-profit, sectors in order to make them comply with the language use requirements. There is even the Welsh Language Tribunal to which organisations which are not willing or able to adjust to such standards can appeal within 28 days since the Commissioner’s impulse (Welsh Language Commissioner, 2014). With such plans and powers the existence of such an office seems to

be quite important for the Welsh Language promotion. A cause for minor concern emerged last year when it was confirmed that the Commissioner's efforts do not have to meet with an understanding as the former Minister for Education and Skills, Leighton Andrews, decided that 37 proposals submitted by Meri Huws were too complex and he rejected them all. He thereto explained that "some of the standards were contradictory and many appeared to be unreasonable or disproportionate" (BBC, 2013).

Regarding the money distribution for the Welsh Government, which is still under management of London, the budget scale for the Welsh language remains de facto dependent on the Government of the UK (Welsh Government, 2014). Although, a major survey released in August 2013 by the Commission for Devolution in Wales reveals a desire that more than 60 percent of those questioned are for further devolution from Westminster but simultaneously less than 20 percent are for a complete independence and separation from the UK (Morris S. , 2013).

Drawing from a document published by the Welsh Government in 2013 regarding the Welsh Government Budget<sup>16</sup> for 2014-2015, it is evident that the Department for Education and Skills have and will have received annually less and less money on its Welsh language plans (Welsh Government, 2013). Such a development goes straight against a statement made by the former Welsh Language Board chief executive Meirion Prys Jones in March 2012 before the Board was dissolved: "The Welsh Government must double its expenditure on the Welsh language to ensure its survival and it should push spending on the Welsh language towards the £20m mark over the next five years" (Hughes, 2012).

Apart from the Government, there are many groups trying to promote the well being of Welsh within different areas. From those bearing a major significance and renown are for example the already introduced Urdd Gobaith Cymru or Cymdeithas yr Iaith<sup>17</sup> or the government supported Mentrau Iaith.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See Appendix 2

<sup>17</sup> Welsh language society

<sup>18</sup> Language Initiatives (mentrau=pl., menter=sg.)

Cymdeithas yr Iaith, a “non-violent direct action pressure group”, exists since 1962 (Davies J. , 1999, p. 102). Formed by a group of young nationalists goaded to action by the Saunders Lewis’s inspirational speech in radio, it has been responsible for many a successful campaign. They may be known for the late 1960s campaign for the bilingual road signs or their boycott of TV fees and a consecutive hunger strike to persuade the Conservative Government to conform to their promise and create a dedicated Welsh-medium TV channel “S4C” in 1982. Their non violent character has been demonstrated on their reaction to the still current housing situation emerging in the 1970s, as real estate agencies have started to bid empty houses in heartlands for prices unaffordable by Welsh but affordable by English, similarly as the radicals from Meibion Glyndwr they were very concerned, but instead of descending to arson they only occupied the empty homes. Members of Cymdeithas have recently, as a response to the 2011 census’s decline of Welsh speakers, challenged the Welsh Government to procure six policy changes published in a “Living Manifesto”, or Maniffesto Byw (Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, 2013).

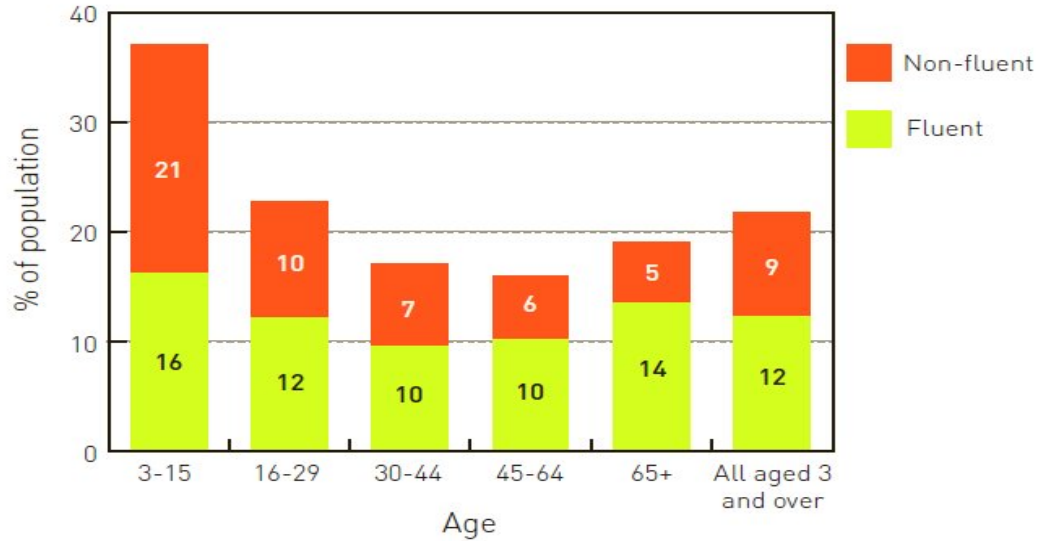
Mentrau Iaith Cymru is an organisation co-founded by several institutions, including the Government or BBC Radio 2, whose main purpose is to support and raise the use of the Welsh language in communities by providing activities and services. While the first Menter Iaith has been established in 1991 in Cwm Gwendraeth, there are nowadays 24 of them spread all over Wales in every county (Menter Cwm Gwendraeth, 2014). Mentrau’s services consist of organizing social activities for both children and adults where they can use and exercise their Welsh speaking skills and according to their websites, they also offer free of charge advice on the matters of bilingualism not only to individuals but organisations and businesses too. Each of the individual Menter Iaith has its unique websites with more information related to the particular region (Mentrau Iaith Cymru, 2014).

### **Educational Provision**

For the acquisition of any language it is generally acknowledged that the earlier an exposure to it begins the better. In Wales, state maintained nursery provision, either English or Welsh-medium, is somewhat limited and according to a school census from

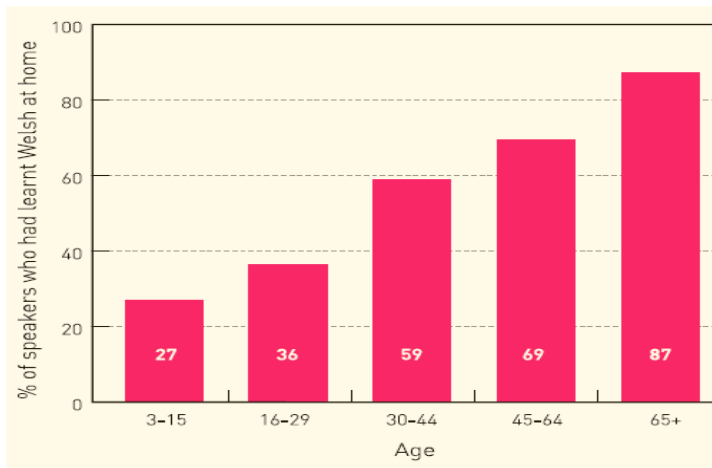
2012 there have been only 22 dedicated statutory nursery schools in Wales. It is a sector largely dependent upon either special departments in primary schools or private organisations. Fortunately for Welsh, there is since 1971 an organisation called Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin (MYM) labelling themselves as Welsh Early Years Specialists. Though it is a voluntary organisation, without the governmental and local authorities' grant support it could not exist. Numerically speaking, nowadays there are overall around 1,000 MYM groups caring for approximately 21,000 children (Mudiad Meithrin, 2013). Furthermore, since 1971, the censuses have been showing a rising number of Welsh speakers among the age group between 3-4 years. While the youngest Welsh speakers counted only 11,3 percent in 1971, in 2001 it was already 18,8 and in 2011 it was 23,6 percent. Between the last two censuses it were the age groups between 3-4 and 20-44, that went against the trend of a Welsh language decrease. The youngest group should be considered especially significant since it is the upcoming generation of potential Welsh speakers and it seems to be doing well so far (Welsh Government, 2014).

Concerning the statutory Education of the Welsh language at primary and secondary schools, it has been since the 1988's Education Act made a compulsory part of the National Curriculum up to the age of 16, the end of the key stage 4 (Mercator Education, 2001). Graph 1 below indicates clearly that the compulsory Welsh language provision has had a significant impact since the Education Act even though the quality of attained knowledge could be better.



Graph 1; Percentage of the population who can speak Welsh, by age and fluency (Welsh Language Board, 2006).

It is arguably the statutory education that is nowadays a key aspect for the Welsh language if it is to survive in the language repertoire of future generations. Partly due to the growing dispersion of the biggest traditional communities in the west and northwest of Wales the percentage of people acquiring knowledge of Welsh at home is showing a significant decrease in younger ages. See graph 2 below.



Graph 2; percentage of speakers who had learnt Welsh at home(Welsh Language Board, 2006)

The fact that to some extent all pupils in Wales are being taught the Welsh language does not in itself mean a salvation for it. According to Estyn, a Welsh school inspectorate, quoted by Williams, Welsh as a second language in English-medium schools has not been meeting standards since “many teachers are not confident enough and lack the knowledge to teach Welsh at an appropriately high level” (Williams H. , 2013). Also it must be respected that pupils visiting English-medium schools may lack a proper motivation for learning Welsh in the first place. According to another Estyn survey realised at English-medium schools at key stages 2 and 3, only slightly more than 3 percent of the classrooms from English-medium schools achieved a “very good” grade in Welsh language and a vast majority of classrooms scored either “good” or “satisfactory” grades (Estyn; Her Majesty's Inspectorate For Education and Training in Wales, 2004). Also from here comes the rise in demand for Welsh-medium schools because parents who want their children to really acquire both languages perceive such information.

In Welsh-medium primary and secondary schools, it is English that is taught as a second language and the rest of the curriculum, or most of it, is delivered through the medium of Welsh. By 2011, of all the 1,412 primary schools in Wales, 461 were Welsh-medium and the numbers for the secondary schools were 221 and 56 respectively. The ratio between the Welsh-medium and English-medium schools by county is largely dependent on their location within Wales. While a heartland like Gwynedd is an example of an extremely large inclination of schools towards being Welsh-medium, in other more anglicised counties the proportion of Welsh-medium schools is much lower and rather opposite. Certainly, it is positive that the number of pupils in these schools is slowly rising (Hughes S. , 2012). It seems that parents are starting to realise that children can benefit from better knowledge of Welsh and there has even been formed an interest group called “Parents for Welsh Medium Education” (RhAG) on whose websites is provided a listing of Welsh-medium primary and secondary schools sorted by county and including contact and further information (Rhieni Dros Addysg Gymraeg, 2014). However, there is a marked difference between Welsh-medium schools being located in an area where there are still a lot of people speaking Welsh and areas where not. They are even being distinguished to the so called traditional, also community schools, and the so called designated schools (Mercator Education, 2001). The pupils in the traditional ones are usually used to speak

Welsh naturally for they often come from Welsh speaking homes and Welsh is their first language. In the designated Welsh-medium schools, where majority acquired English as a first language, to motivate pupils to speak Welsh there is known to be present a so called “Tocyn Iaith”<sup>19</sup> system which is based on gaining or losing points, which are eventually exchanged for prizes, for being or not being heard speaking Welsh on the school premises. This fact that speaking Welsh has to be propagated even at Welsh-medium schools, though the designated ones, implies the real problem for promotion of the Welsh language use. Even if pupils do adhere to systems like Tocyn Iaith, once they are out with their friends or at home they return back to speaking English. The growing appeal on schools to compensate for the loss of Welsh in communities is indisputable. But in the documentary for BBC, Graham Daniels, the headmaster of Welsh-medium designated school near Swansea, doubted when asked about the realism of the current hope put in schools by parents and government and stated that “the preservation of Welsh is a challenge on which schools play a part of but it is not just down to the schools” (The Welsh Knot, 2010). What seems also alarming for Welsh judging from the David Williams’s document is that as much as 9 out of 12 pupils in a traditional Welsh-medium class announced to complete their A-Level exams in English. Even though it is a judgement made only on one example it is interesting due to its circumstances since it could indicate that similar proportion of pupils in other Welsh-medium secondary schools located in traditional Welsh speaking heartlands like Caernarfon do opt to finish their secondary education through the medium of English.

The institutions of higher education in Wales do of course provide Welsh and some of them, namely University of Wales, Aberystwyth, University of Wales, Bangor, and Trinity College Carmarthen, offer also more subjects apart from the language itself through the medium of Welsh. It is also the Universities of Wales that are responsible for Welsh language teachers’ training even for those with lesser or no knowledge of Welsh that are most likely to teach Welsh only as a second language. There have been eight institutions providing Welsh curriculum by 2001. Even the sector of higher education does meet with difficulties as Jones explains: “There has been a shortage of post graduate entrants to

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<sup>19</sup> Language Ticket

secondary PGCE<sup>20</sup> in certain subjects in recent years, including Welsh. Consequently, incentive grants are now offered to students' training" (Mercator Education, 2001).

A further positive for the Welsh language's education are the growing numbers of adults enrolling to Welsh language courses a phenomenon which have boomed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Davies J. , 1999). The courses are being funded by government and organised on a local authority level. The growth of interest can be illustrated by numbers of adult students from three seasons of 1993, 1998 and 1999. In the same chronological order, the numbers were 13,000; 21,500 and 23,634 adult students (Mercator Education, 2001).

There are several factors motivating people to learn Welsh. The one working for Welsh is that with the first language is connected the learner's cultural identity and developing it strengthens the bond to its culture (Zelasko & Antunez, 2000). It is also believed that bilingualism especially in early age brings greater mental flexibility. For the acquisition of Welsh is further pledging the fact that employment rate for people aged 16 to 64 amounts to 72.0 percent for Welsh speakers compared to 67.3 percent for those who cannot speak Welsh (Welsh Government, 2014). And of course the simplest and possibly the most natural motive is to be able to communicate and to be able to immerse deeper into the aspects of Welsh language culture.

### **Present Distribution**

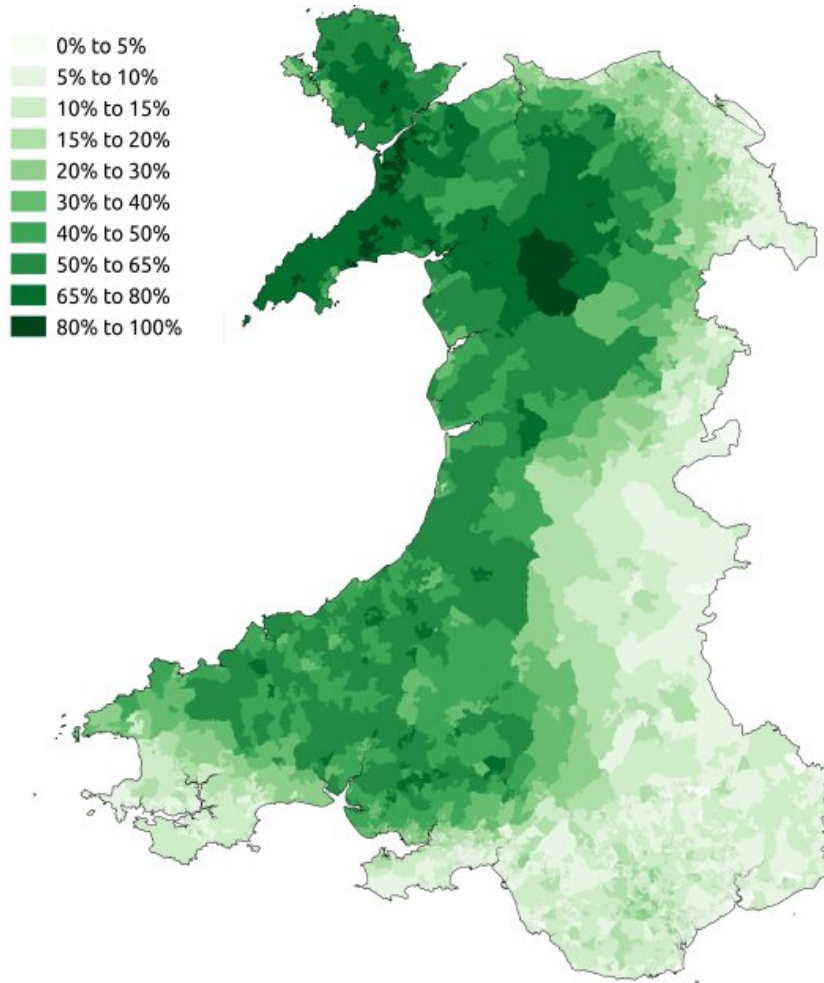
Of all the censuses before, the last three censuses are from the historical point of view the most surprising ones. It was for the first time that a census in Wales showed an increase in overall proportion of Welsh speakers since the Industrial Revolution (Davies J. , 1999). The variables were shifting from 508,000 Welsh speakers in 1991, having been 18.7 percent of population, to 582,000 Welsh speakers in 2001, having been 20.8 percent of population. Unfortunately, the most recent census from 2011 has discovered that the percentage has dropped back again by almost 2 percent (Welsh Government, 2014). Of the currently 19 percent of people able to speak Welsh 11 are fluent and the remaining 8 are not which has also significant consequences upon their choice of language spoken since 88

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<sup>20</sup> Post Graduate Certificate in Education



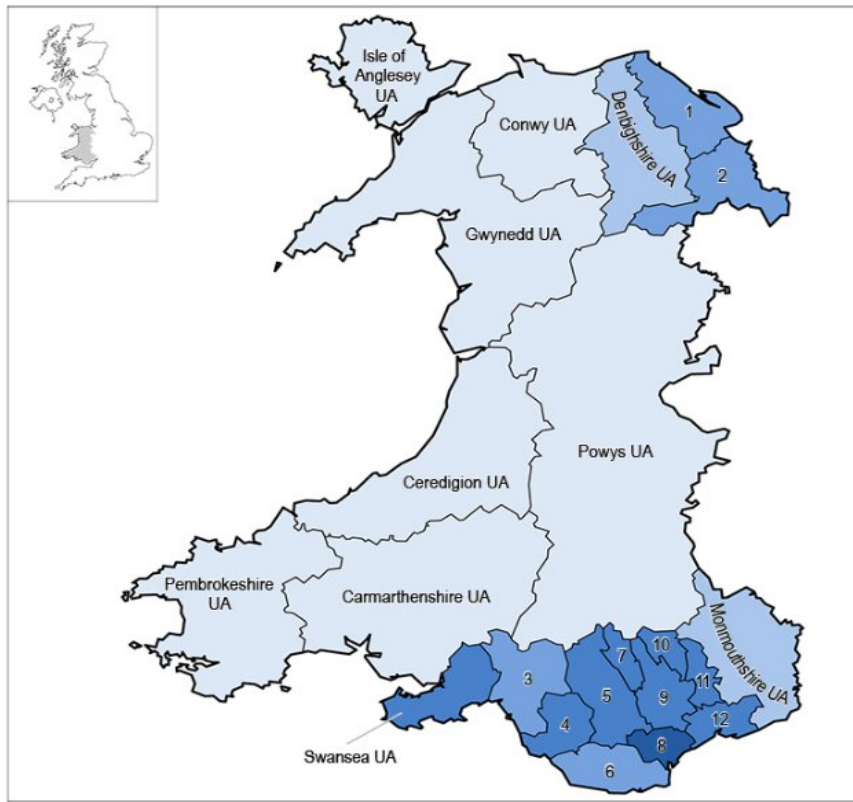
percent of the fluent speakers use Welsh daily while only 26 of those not fluent do so (Welsh Language Board, 2006).



Picture 1; The proportion of respondents in the 2011 census who said they could speak Welsh (Distribution of Welsh Speakers, 2014).

In context of both picture 1, above, and picture 2, below, it is clear that even though there is a high percentage of inhabitants in the western and northern parts of the country those parts are the least inhabited and the biggest concentration of people live in areas that are dominantly English speaking. A bit positively though, it also indicates that the lesser percentages in more populated areas can lead to a less overall difference of total number of speakers

Davies has in relation to the current migration and distributional developments remarked: “Welsh is becoming not a rural language, but an urban language and it's gaining strength in places like Cardiff” (Davies J. , BBC News, 2003).



Picture 2; Wales population density by unitary authority (Office for National Statistics, 2010)

Population density, 2010  
(people per sq km)



## Neighbourly Relations

Though the concern of Welsh towards the well being of the Welsh language appears to be rather positive, the Wales's long lasting connection to England is indisputable and it is interesting to look at current stances of English being both the most influential and practically the sole neighbour. Their stance towards the existence of Welsh nation and especially their language seems to not have altered that much through time and the mutual rivalry has always been there (BBC, 2009). Although the English cannot be seen as the sole initiator, since, as previously mentioned, the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw several passionate incidents coming from Welsh like the Fire in Llŷn in 1936 or the activities of the radical nationalistic group Meibion Glyndwr in 1979, they can be historically seen as major motivators of everything going on in Wales. Morris goes even further in regard to the status of the relations when he talks about a certain jealousy from the English of the Welsh "inextinguishable national spirit" (Morris J. , 2009). Also the fact that the Welsh Language is still being funded from taxes collected from all over the UK can raise further antipathy towards it. The deep rooted view towards Welsh is both being reflected and also perpetuated by numerous derisive remarks within the British popular culture which, on one hand, even though they are sometimes exaggerated and rather humorous, might have an influence on the public opinion. On the other hand, such remarks indicate that making fun of the Welsh people and Welsh language means their existence is being perceived and recognised within the English society though they are more negative than positive. From some of the most interesting, Jeremy Clarkson is known for his views on Welsh having said that Welsh language is a "maypole around which a bunch of hotheads can get all nationalistic. I think we are fast approaching the time when the United Nations should start to think seriously about abolishing other languages" (Wales Online, 2011). Even the very popular sitcom Red Dwarf from the production of the BBC, launched at the end of the 80s, makes use of jokes on Welsh behalf such as when one of the main characters says: "Open communication channels, Lister. Broadcast on all known frequencies and in all known languages, including Welsh." (Grant & Naylor, 1988). Also there are many people in Wales<sup>21</sup> who see themselves more British or English than Welsh so there are surely many inhabitants of Wales who are not much fond of the Welsh language either.

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<sup>21</sup> See appendix 1

## CONCLUSION

The mere longevity of the Welsh language and its legacy is more than impressive and in itself it might be seen as a justifiable reason for why to fight for it. History has shown that ever since this senior language of Britain appeared on the British Isles, it had to accustom to the fact that theirs is not the only culture that will exist in Britain. The Welsh vocabulary serves as a direct evidence of the diversity of cultures and languages it has experienced along its journey.

Ever since “*The Laws in Wales Act*” of 1536 was introduced and acknowledged in the English parliament, it in its consequence meant that the Welsh language had met the most significant competitor in history. Its status as well as popularity within Wales was to be continuously tested. As human nature dictates, far from everyone in Wales was concerned about the well being of the Welsh language when it was experiencing difficulties. On the contrary, there is no wonder that many people were ready to conform to English which, from a historical point of view, especially in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, has been projecting an image of practicality and success on all sides.

The answer to the initial question, whether the language is still in decline, tends to be ambiguous. On one hand, Welsh has been made a part of national curriculum in 1988 and in 2012 an official language of Wales and it is legally secured more than ever since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Welsh Government’s effort for the language is evident and reach of its financial support can be traced within numerous initiatives, organisations and groups all over Wales. The Welsh Language Commissioner is trying to widen the extent of organisations, especially in the private sector, which would start to operate bilingually. Further, there are many pressure groups and language initiatives, which have had successes already, like Cymdeithas yr Iaith, that are fully engaged to make sure that Welsh is returning to as many areas of life in Wales as possible and are lobbying for the language’s further rights. It is also evident that the Education Act of 1988 has been already playing its desired role and on a growing scale passes the language on younger generations as the recent censuses have revealed. A great part of credit for its growing extension goes to a voluntary educational organisation Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin providing Welsh for pre-

school children. If the present trend continues it should in a long term effect result in a growing proportion of inhabitants with a certain degree of knowledge of Welsh. So legally and numerically speaking, Welsh seems to have suspended the continuous decline.

On the other hand, it must be clear that without the financial dosage it has been receiving hardly any of the revival efforts could be realised regardless of how many passionate nationalists there would have been or will be. For Welsh, it would be best if it could manage to dispense with the money it receives not only to shun dependency but also because its funding draws more undesirable antagonism towards Welsh throughout British society and also the money it drains from the Government could be put for example to strengthen the lagging Welsh economy which could in return to some extent even prevent the migration out of the Welsh speaking communities.

Welsh, if it is to root down again, has a long and tedious journey ahead with little guarantee of success. Since it has been challenged by arguably the most powerful and applicable language in the world, regardless of all the legislation, regardless of all the policy, only if it manages to further attract more people to speak it, it has a chance to succeed.

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## SUMMARY IN CZECH

Tato práce poskytuje celistvý pohled na vývoj velštiny ve Velké Británii od příchodu keltů až po současnost a na základě zkoumaných skutečností se pokouší konstatovat její udržitelnost. Práce je rozdělena do tří hlavních částí. První část podává svědectví o příchodu keltů na území Británie a vysvětluje okolnosti vývoje velštiny v historických souvislostech až po období šestnáctého století. Druhá část je zaměřena na klíčové osoby a události jež stály jednak za úpadkem, a jednak za skutečností, že velština zůstala nejpoužívanějším keltským jazykem až do dnes. Třetí část pak blížeji nahlíží na zakotvení velštiny ve vládě a dalších organizacích, v současném vzdělávání a poskytuje náhled na rozvrstvení a používanost velštiny ve Walesu.

## APPENDIX 1

	All Persons	Welsh identity	Non-Welsh identity	Percentage who consider themselves Welsh
2001	2880100	1988800	884200	69,1
2002	2889500	1994400	893600	69
2003	2901200	1995600	904200	68,8
Year ending 31 Dec 2004	2910100	1977600	931800	68
Year ending 31 Dec 2005	2917900	1992100	924700	68,3
Year ending 31 Dec 2006	2928100	1987800	938800	67,9
Year ending 31 Dec 2007	2942400	1957800	984000	66,5
Year ending 31 Dec 2008	2955800	1896300	985100	64,2
Year ending 31 Dec 2009	2965100	1930100	1032700	65,1
Year ending 31 Dec 2010	2970400	1930000	1038500	65
Year ending 31 Dec 2011	2988000	1892300	1067200	63,3
Year ending 31 Dec 2012	3004300	1910600	1091800	63,6

Appendix1; Welsh identity (Welsh Assembly Government, 2013)

## APPENDIX 2

	£000s						
	2013-14	2014-15			2015-16		
	Baseline	Final Budget Plans	Year on Year % Change	Year on Year % Change (Real)	Final Budget Plans	Year on Year % Change	Year on Year % Change (Real)
<b>Revenue DEL Budget</b>							
Education and Training Standards	1,200,051	1,165,769	-2.9%	-4.7%	1,118,579	-4.0%	-5.7%
Skilled Workforce	74,903	69,043	-7.8%	-9.5%	70,903	2.7%	0.9%
Improving Wellbeing, Reducing Inequality and Increasing Participation	354,579	354,837	0.1%	-1.8%	344,052	-3.0%	-4.8%
Welsh Language	25,076	24,376	-2.8%	-4.6%	23,511	-3.5%	-5.3%
Delivery Support	4,049	3,149	-22.2%	-23.7%	3,049	-3.2%	-4.9%
<b>Total Revenue DEL</b>	<b>1,658,658</b>	<b>1,617,174</b>	<b>-2.5%</b>	<b>-4.3%</b>	<b>1,560,094</b>	<b>-3.5%</b>	<b>-5.2%</b>
<b>Revenue AME Budget</b>							
Improving Wellbeing, Reducing Inequality and Increasing Participation	-87,261	-108,554	24.4%	22.1%	-129,627	19.4%	17.3%
Skilled Workforce	-	6,000	-	-	6,000	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Total Revenue AME</b>	<b>-87,261</b>	<b>-102,554</b>	<b>17.5%</b>	<b>15.3%</b>	<b>-123,627</b>	<b>20.5%</b>	<b>18.4%</b>
<b>Total Managed Expenditure (TME)</b>	<b>1,571,397</b>	<b>1,514,620</b>	<b>-3.6%</b>	<b>-5.4%</b>	<b>1,436,467</b>	<b>-5.2%</b>	<b>-6.8%</b>

<sup>22</sup> Appendix 2; Education and Skills Resource Allocations and Percentage Year on Year Change (Welsh Government, 2013)

<sup>22</sup> DEL stands for Departmental Expenditure Limit