

# Towards A Million Welsh Speakers? Language Policy and Planning in Wales

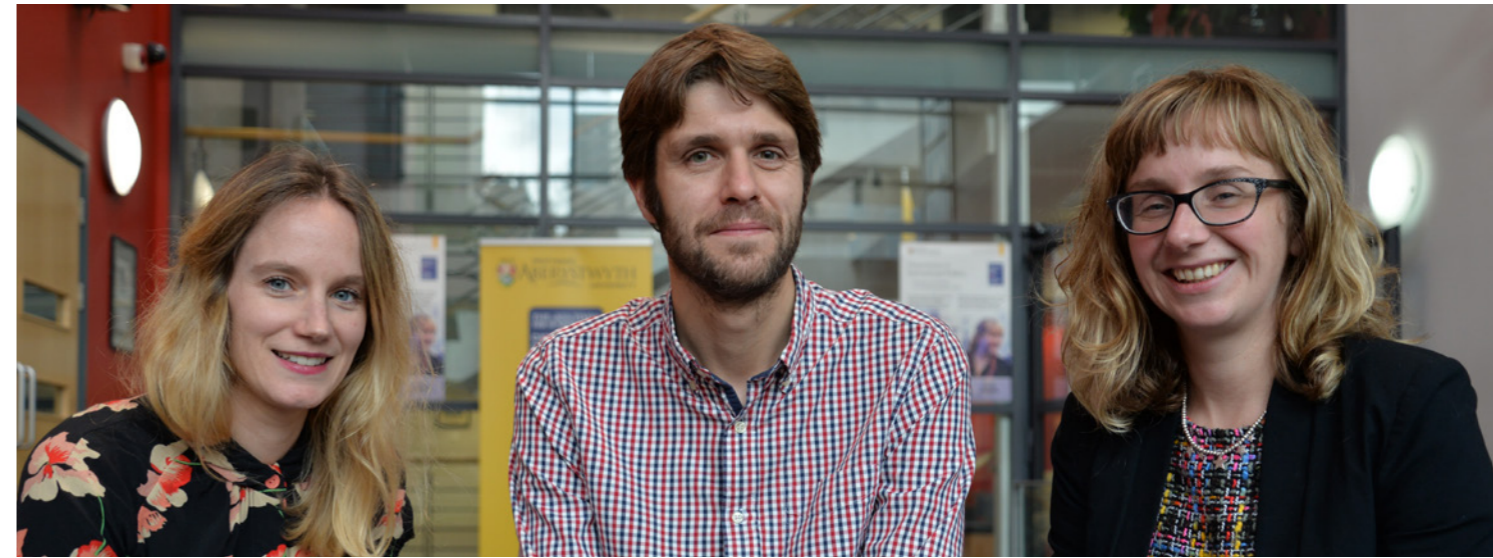


## RESEARCHERS

Dr Huw Lewis  
 Dr Elin Royles  
 Dr Catrin Wyn Edwards

## THE OVERVIEW

Reflecting the growing political significance of cultural diversity: public policy interventions that seek to revitalise the prospects of regional or minority languages have become increasingly prominent in many parts of the world. Recent research by Dr Huw Lewis, Dr Elin Royles and Dr Catrin Edwards at Aberystwyth's Department of International Politics has focused on analysing the different approaches to language revitalisation that have been adopted by sub-state governments across Europe and North America. Based on this research, between August 2016 and July 2017, they were able to inform and influence the policy discussion that fed into the preparation of the Welsh Government's ambitious national language strategy, *Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers*, published in July 2017.



## THE RESEARCH

The research conducted by Lewis, Royles and Edwards falls into the interdisciplinary field of language policy research. Specifically, their work has focused on analysing policy interventions by European sub-state governments aiming to revitalise regional and minority languages. Key findings from their research are that language revitalisation strategies need to:

- Strike a balance between the challenge of increasing the absolute number of minority language speakers and increasing social use of the language.
- Take greater account of the implications of social changes such as the increase in levels of personal mobility, the rise in networked forms of social interaction and the decline in significance of local and territorially based communities.
- Place more of an emphasis on regional level initiatives, alongside more familiar community-based ones.
- Promote a response to immigration that is based on partnership with current speakers of the minority language, as exemplified by the *voluntariat per la llengua* programme in Catalonia.

## THE IMPACT

### IMPACT ON POLICY AND PLANNING

Based on their research expertise, Lewis, Royles and Edwards have developed strong links with public officials and other key stakeholders associated with policy efforts to promote the Welsh language. Consequently, when the Welsh Government embarked on the process of developing a new national language strategy, they were well-placed to contribute to the ensuing policy discussion. They were able to inform and influence this process through close engagement with officials from the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Division, during the initial discussion phase, the public consultation and into the final drafting period (January-July 2017). During this period, they attended key meetings, delivered CPD training, drafted internal briefing papers, hosted a closed research briefing, and prepared a detailed submission to the official public consultation exercise for relevant government officials.

### IMPACT AND PUBLIC RECOGNITION

Eluned Morgan MS, then Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language, publicly acknowledged the contribution of Lewis, Royles and Edwards to the work of developing the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy, in a speech delivered in Aberystwyth in May 2019.

“ Dwi am weld y nifer o bobl sy'n gallu mwynhau siarad a defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn cyrraedd 1 miliwn erbyn 2050. Dwi'n gwybod bod yr Adran Gwleidyddiaeth Ryngwladol wedi chwarae rhan actif yn y broses o ddatblygu'r strategaeth Cymraeg 2050 a'ch bod chi'n dal i wneud gwaith ymchwil ar faterion cynllunio laith felly hoffwn ddiolch i chi am eich cefnogaeth ”

ELUNED MORGAN AS

“ I want to see the number of people who enjoy speaking and using Welsh reach 1 million by 2050. I know that the Department of International Politics has played an active role in the development of the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy and that you are still undertaking research on language planning issues so I would like to thank you for your support ”

ELUNED MORGAN MS