Minority language communities, technology and social networks

Daniel Cunliffe – University of South Wales

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REVITALISE
Language Revitalisation and Social Transformation

Digital Language Vitality

- Digital fitness
  - Connectivity, digital literacy, keyboard…
- Digital presence and use
  - Presence and use of digital media, production, social media…
- Digital performance
  - Range of things that can be done using the language - prestige, authority, identity…

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Digital Ascent

Stage	Characteristics	
Thriving	extensive digital use by both native and foreign speakers and well supported with software resources from both Apple and Microsoft	
Vital	digital use by native speakers, but lacking software support from Apple and Microsoft	
Emergent*	community use of texting and social media, digital use mainly private and informal	
Latent*	digital ascent is still possible, but not currently evident	**Heritage** there are archived digital materials for the language, but no current digital communication by native speakers
Still	there is no observed digital use of the language and digital use is very unlikely to occur in the future	

Kornai, A. (2013) Digital Language Death. *Gibson, M. (2015) A framework for measuring the presence of minority languages in cyberspace.

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Social Media Benefits

- New domain for language use
  - Particularly for written language
- Connects speakers
  - Low speaker density, mobility, diaspora
- Affective benefits
  - Modern, cool, appeals to young people

Decreasing share of voice

- "…new media, including broadcast media and the Internet, usually serve only to expand the scope and power of the dominant language at the expense of endangered languages." (UNESCO, 2003, p11)

- Increased share of majority voice in traditional media
- Increased share of majority voice in digital media
- Increased share of majority voice in social media

- Multiply the share of voice of the majority language

- Penetration into the home and social sphere
- Increasingly personal, increasingly on!

UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages (2003) Language Vitality and Endangerment

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Necessary conditions

- Grin argues for a language to be used, people must have:
  - The capacity to speak the language
  - written form, read and write
  - The opportunities to do so
  - digital literacy, affordable, low technology barriers… perceived as opportunity
  - The desire to use the language
  - desire to use social media

Grin, F. (2003) Language Policy Evaluation and Europe: The European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages.

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Desire: Language

Youth

<<There isn't anything stopping us from using Welsh on the web, we're just lazy. We can't be bothered to speak Welsh.>>

<< …after we leave school every computer we see will be in English. If we learn how to do things in Welsh it will be more difficult to do things in English, because we wouldn't understand what the words say.>>

Adults

Desire: Twitter

- Connect with others (37.9% of responses)
- Curiosity (33.6%)
- Share information (22.5%)
- Business/work related (22.5%)
- …
- Welsh community (4.7%)
  - The respondent made specific reference to using Twitter to connect with, or share information about, the Welsh cultural community, including (but not limited to) the Welsh language.

Opportunity: Language Policy

"while SNS are sometimes seen as unregulated spaces, they in fact represent highly regulated linguistic environments…" de Bres

Agent	Scope
• Peers	Conversation
• Moderators	Moderated space
• SM platform providers	SM platform
• Government etc.	It varies…

de Bres, J. (2015) Introduction: Language policies on social network sites.

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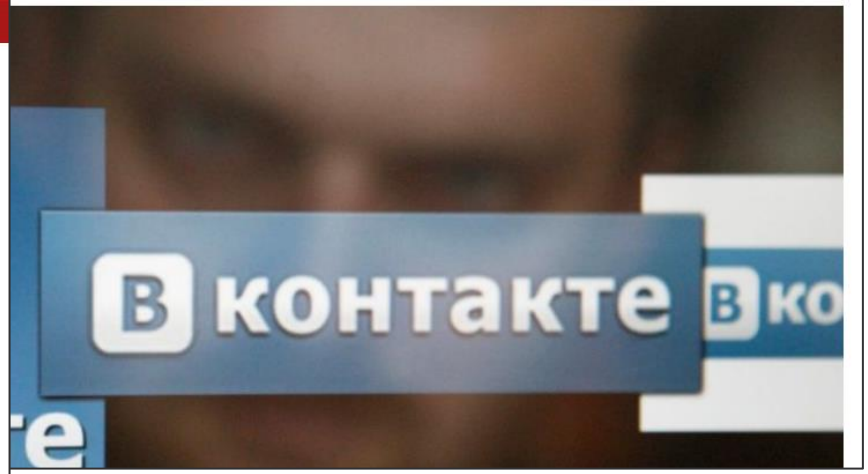
Europe | France Election 2017

Ukraine's Poroshenko to block Russian social networks

16 May 2017 | Europe Share



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Thailand backs off lese-majeste Facebook ban threat

16 May 2017 | Asia Share

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Opportunity: Expectation

Adults

- Respondents were asked how many tweets they expected to read and write in Welsh before they started using Twitter:

n=263	None	Some	No idea
Reading	13%	**61%**	26%
Writing	18%	**54%**	28%

- Indicates the extent to which Welsh language use online has become normalised and is expected to be used in new online domains.

Opportunity: Social Proof

- Mentrau Iaith Cymru identified factors which Welsh speakers believed inhibited the use of Welsh in social media, these included:
  - a lack of Welsh-language content on social media as compared to English language content;
  - other Welsh speakers lack of use of the language on social media, particularly lack of use by famous or influential Welsh speakers;

Youth

<<When I joined Facebook, some of my Welsh friends were there, and only they were there, so I spoke Welsh with them and it's carried on.>>

Mentrau Iaith Cymru (2014). The Welsh Language and Social Networks.

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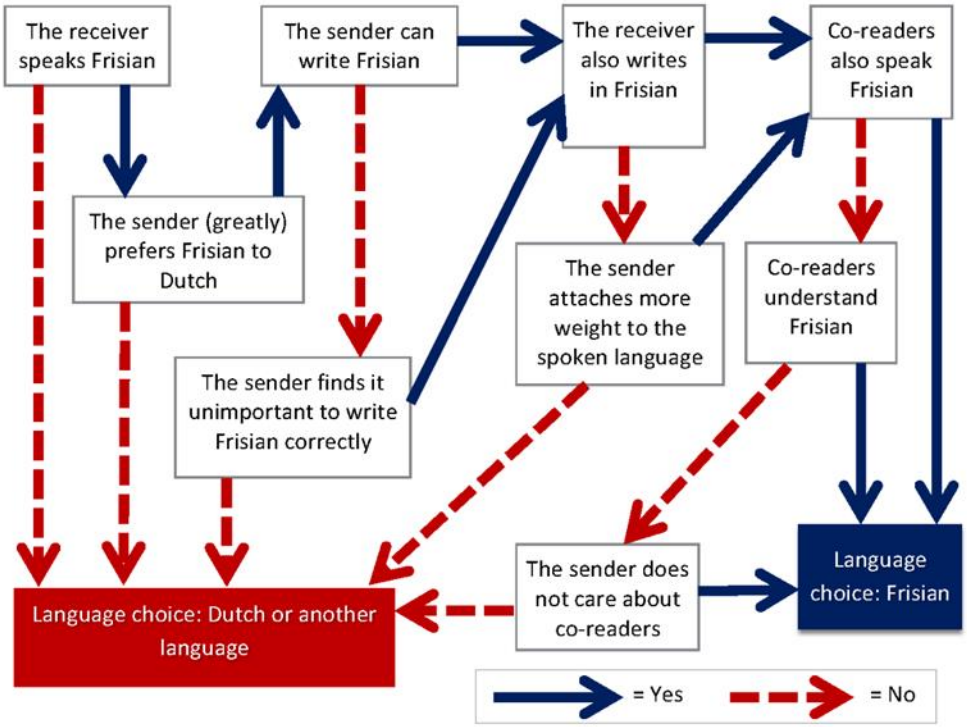
Language Choice



Schematic language choice model for Frisian and Dutch on social media

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Jongbloed-Faber, L. (2015) Friezen op sosjale media. Translation provided by Lysbeth Jongbloed-Faber

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Audience

- Welsh, Frisian, Irish…
- Generally the intended audience appears to be the single biggest determiner of language choice across social media platforms among those who use minority languages.
- Probably under-reports those who simply choose not to use it.

Johnson, I. (2013). Audience design and communication accommodation theory: Use of Twitter by Welsh-English biliterates.
Jongbloed-Faber, L. (2014) Taalgebrûk fan Fryske jongerein op sosjale media. Lackaff, D. and Moner, W.J. (2016). Local languages, global networks: Mobile design for minority language users.

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Individuals

- Individuals tend to speak just one language with another individual and do not change according to the medium of communication.
- Specific (known) audience – more likely to be in shared minority language
- Language use on SNS an extension of language use in peoples daily lives.

Wider audiences

- Wide, general audience – more likely to be in majority language
  - Original tweets, status updates…
- Likelihood increases as perceived proportion of minority language speakers in the audience falls…

  …share of voice influences production as well as consumption
- Desire to reach a wider (international) audience
- Not wishing to appear rude – language politeness
- Majority language default when minority language proficiency not known

Johnson, I. (2013). Audience design and communication accommodation theory: Use of Twitter by Welsh-English biliterates. Jongbloed-Faber, L. (2014) Taalgebrûk fan Fryske jongerein op sosjale media. Lackaff, D. and Moner, W.J. (2016). Local languages, global networks: Mobile design for minority language users.

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Audience on Facebook

Youth

<<It depends on what language I would usually use with them in school and around.>>

<< It depends if their first language is Welsh or English. If they usually speak Welsh in their home with their parents, I'll write in Welsh to them, so that if their parents see it, they know that they still speak Welsh with me. If they usually speak English, as a first language, I'll speak English with them. >>

<< It depends who are the majority of people who need to understand it. >>

Choice on Twitter

Adults

- To direct to a specific audience (54.1% of responses)

  <<If I want to connect with another person who speaks Welsh.>>

- Topic-related (42.6%)

  “If the tweet were relative to the Welsh language, culture or media; sometimes if related to other Celtic languages or linguistics. I’ll occasionally tweet in Welsh if it’s related to my current location in Wales, such as my hometown, university, or the weather.”

- Tweeting in Welsh feels natural (13.1%)

  << Welsh is my natural language, it feels odd to tweet my ideas/thoughts/comments in English.>>

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Different SM Platforms

- Jongbloed-Faber observed differences in the likelihood of Frisian being used on WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter, suggesting that the platforms support different types of audience and ties.

- Many Welsh-speakers appear relatively unconcerned that their Welsh-language content uploaded to YouTube may be viewed by non-Welsh-speakers.

  Youth

  "This is a short clip of the beginning of our GCSE Drama performance. If you don't understand the language its because its welsh."

- Might in part be due to the less critical role of language in the predominantly audio-visual nature of YouTube content.

Jongbloed-Faber, L. (2015) Friezen op sosjale media.

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The Network

- People create their own audience and choose which audiences to be a part of.
- To some extent, and not necessarily deliberately, they control share of voice.

Social networks

Youth

<<I would say, even though we are in school with each other all day, we just speak with us! We have other friends who we've known over the years, but most of the time, we keep in touch with our closest friends.>>

<<People I know from school. People in my year who I like, but if I don't like them I don't add them. Also, because I used to live in America, I have lots of friends over there.>>

Wrexham
London
Bangor
Denbighshire
Bethesda

Share of voice

- The groups in which Welsh was used had more than double the proportion of Welsh speakers than the general population.

Youth

Share of voice

<< Our Facebook is a Welsh section of the Internet, where our friends speak Welsh.>>

<< You have Welsh groups, so you are encouraged to speak Welsh. I think there are much more Welsh speaking people on it. >>

[R1] << Apart from Facebook, there aren't a lot of websites that have Welsh. >>

[R2] << MSN and hotmail are in English, Twitter is in English . . . >>

Twitter networks

Adults

- Respondents (n=240) were asked if they were more or less likely to follow someone on Twitter if that person tweeted entirely or mainly in Welsh.

negative	neutral	positive
4%	36%	**60%**

- 32.9% would be ‘much more likely to follow them’.

- Networks of Welsh speakers with relationships that cut across the boundaries of friendship and Interest-based networks.
- Networks with more Welsh speakers than would otherwise expect to be the case – greater share of voice

Twitter conversations

Twitter conversations among top 500 Tweeters in Irish and Welsh

Scannell, K. (2013) Mapping the Celtic Twittersphere. http://indigenoustweets.blogspot.co.uk/2013/12/mapping-celtic-twittersphere.html

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Conjecture

- If we can influence the network…
  we can influence the share of voice…

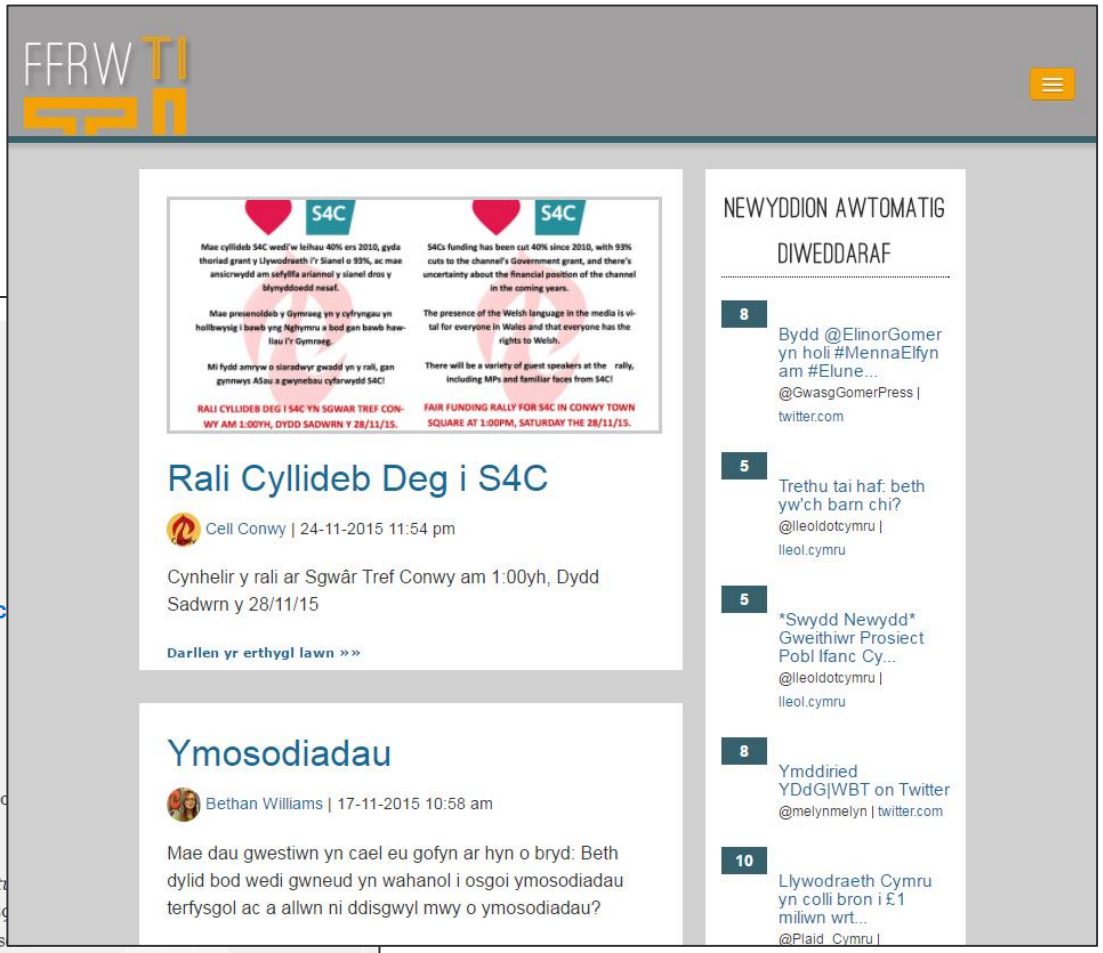
- If we can influence the share of voice…
  we can influence the use of the minority language.

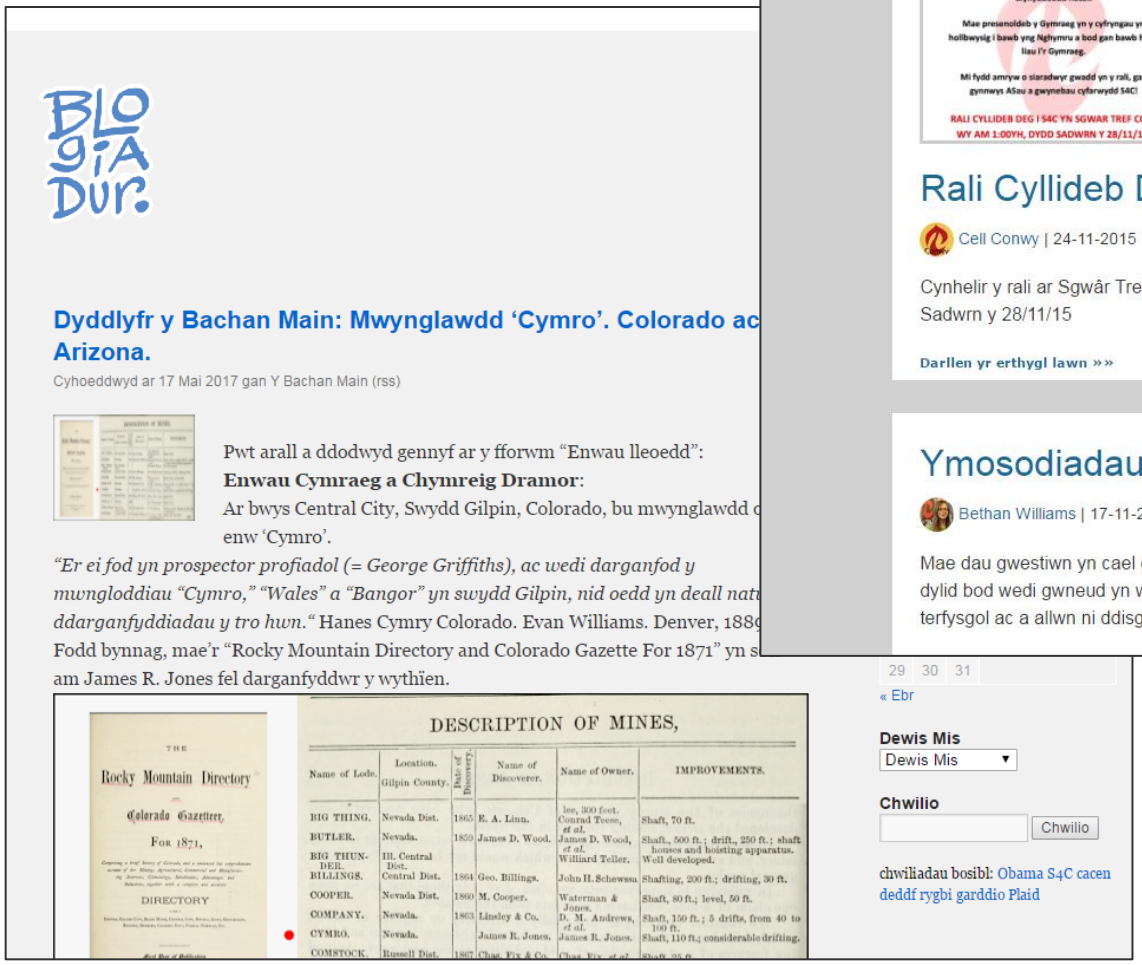
The Network

- Social influence.
- Role of recommender algorithms.

- Building networks.
- Aggregating content.
- Creating ghettos.

Yr Awr Gymraeg
#yagym
Lleol.cymru
@lleoldotcymru
Following
Bloedd y Bore i chi @Dewi_Llwyd @gildasmusic @RhCadwaladr @Trydwr Bore da a mwynhewch y dydd #BloeddyBore #Cymraeg
BORE DA
mwynhewch y dydd
#bloeddybore
lleol.cymru
RETWEETS 2
LIKES 2
11:00 PM - 5 May 2016
Tweet your reply
AWR Y Dysgwyr
#aydysgwyr
TWEETS 4,684
FOLLOWING 754
FOLLOWERS 1,117
LIKES 320
Awr Y Dysgwyr
@AwrYDysgwyr
#aydysgwyr - Nos Lun (9-10)! Gofynwch cwestiynau, rhannu syniadau, ymarfer. Monday Night (9-10). Ask questions, share ideas or practice. (6-7) ym Mhatagonia!
Ym Mhob Man
Joined January 2016
Tweet to Awr Y Dysgwyr
46 Followers you know
Awr Y Dysgwyr Retweeted
Gwilym Dafydd @GwilymDafydd · 22h
Replying to @AwrYDysgwyr @LyndaNewcombe
Os yng Nghaerdydd, cofiwch am Yr Awr Hapus ar foreau Llun yn VH Coryton, 10.45-11.45. a Chlonc. Falle bydd Huw James, awdur llyfr jocsyno
Awr Y Dysgwyr Retweeted
sioptytawe @sioptytawe · May 16
Noson meic agored @menterabertawe nos Wener YMA. Ydych chi'n canu, barddoni, chwarae offeryn, dawnsio neu eisiau dweud cwpwl o jôcs?
Jacs yn Joio





http://www.blogiadur.com/hafan/
http://ffrwti.com/

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Ghettos

- Lackaff and Moner argue that there may be a benefit in creating exclusively minority-language social media platforms
  - a sufficient number of speakers
  - speakers who are used to operating across a range of different social media platforms.

Lackaff, D. and Moner, W.J. (2016). Local languages, global networks: Mobile design for minority language users

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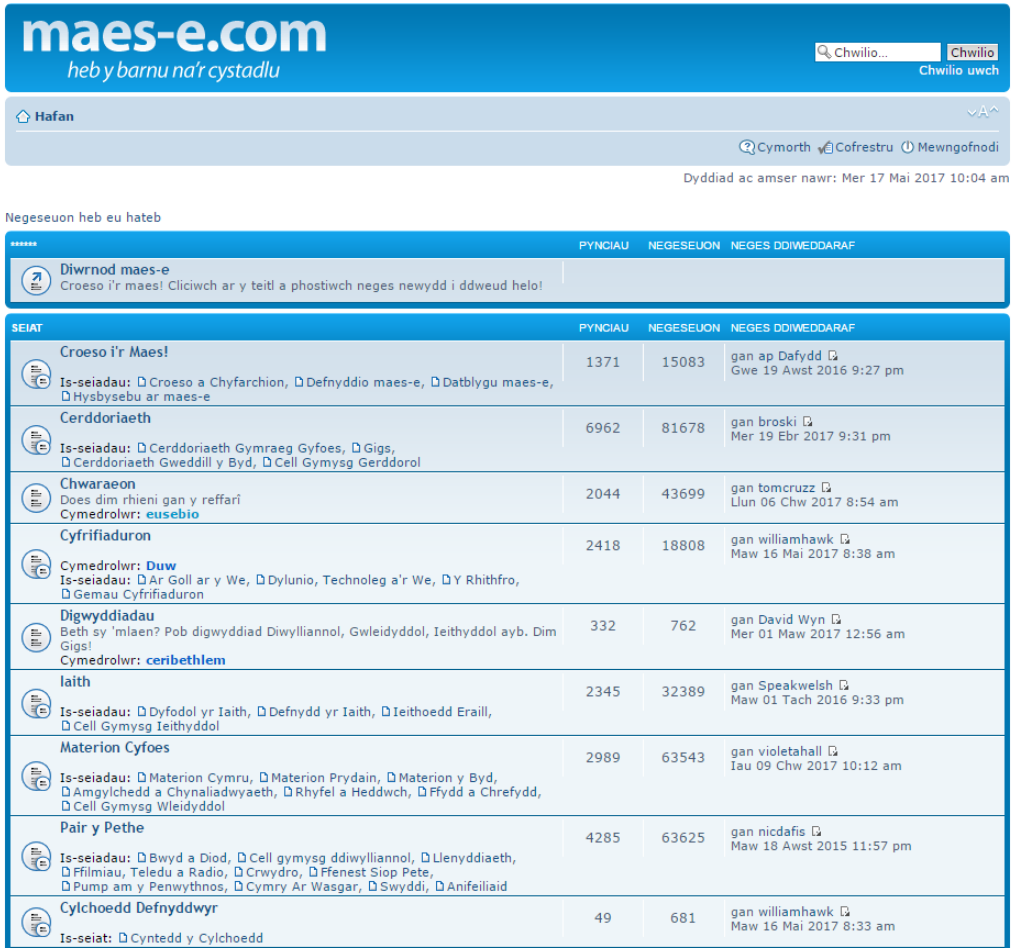
Ghettos



https://maes-e.com/
https://www.clecs.cymru/

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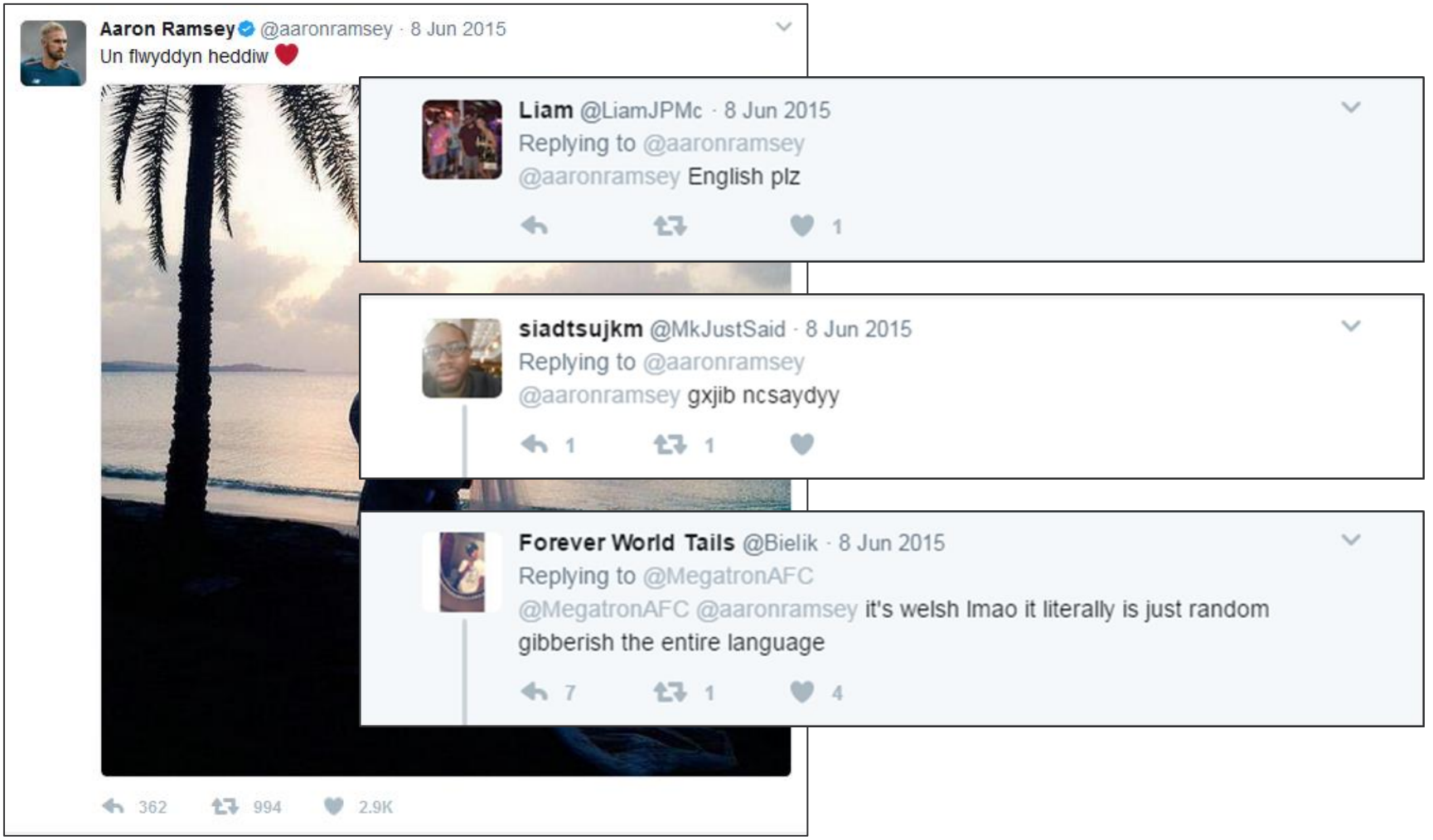
Conclusions

- Technology acts as a multiplier for the majority language share of voice.
- Share of voice in a social network influences consumption of the minority language, but also its production.
- It may be possible to increase minority language use by increasing the share of voice in particular spaces within social media.

END

Peer Policy


Aaron Ramsey @aaronramsey · 8 Jun 2015
Un flwyddyn heddiw
362
994
2.9K
Liam @LiamJPMc · 8 Jun 2015
Replying to @aaronramsey
@aaronramsey English plz
1
siadtsujkm @MkJustSaid · 8 Jun 2015
Replying to @aaronramsey
@aaronramsey gxjib ncsaydyy
1
1
Forever World Tails @Bielik · 8 Jun 2015
Replying to @MegatronAFC
@MegatronAFC @aaronramsey it's welsh lmao it literally is just random gibberish the entire language
7
1
4

Peer Policy

Aaron Ramsey @aaronramsey · 18 Jun 2015
Thanks for all the nice and suppo
to speak it and will continue to use
322
2.2K
3.4K
Aaron Ramsey @aaronramsey · 8 Jun 2016
Happy anniversary to my beautiful wife #2years
94
904
2.7K

Moderator Policy

Peace in Ireland message board manager posted:

> "This board is designed for English speakers and Gaelic postings are not allowed […] posts in Gaelic [even with an English translation] will be removed without further recourse to the person who posted it."

Ostler, N. (1999) Fighting words: As the world gets smaller, minority languages struggle to stake their claim. *Language International* 11 (2) 38-39, 45.

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Platform Policy

News › Wales News › Gwynedd

Businesses banned from advertising in Welsh on Twitter prompting complaints from firms

The social media giant says it doesn't support the language, prompting businesses to claim the social media company is suppressing minority languages

810 SHARES

BY LYDIA MORRIS
09:06, 19 AUG 2015 | UPDATED 10:27, 19 AUG 2015

NEWS

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in Twitter Ads. It looks like you are Tweeting in Welsh. Unfortunately Welsh is not one of our supported languages at this time.

Currently, small business advertisers who are located in our open countries are eligible for Twitter Ads. It is not possible to target other countries at this time, advertisers must have a valid billing address and be Tweeting in Afrikaans, English, Spanish, French, Italian, Dutch, German, Hebrew, Japanese, Finnish, Norwegian, Swedish and Danish.

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Opening Doors
harmonihomes.com
or call 029 2085 8145

RECOMMENDED

WalesOnline. Businesses banned from advertising in Welsh on Twitter prompting complaints from firms. 19 August 2015, http://www.walesonline.co.uk