

## **“Mae pobl monolingual yn minority” : a quantitative study of Welsh-English code-switching**

Although it is true that monolingual speakers are a minority worldwide, they are in the majority in the UK and even in Wales, where only about 20% of the population are bilingual in Welsh and English. Like many bilinguals elsewhere, many speakers of both Welsh and English make use of the resources of both their languages by code-switching. While this has previously been denigrated as indicating poor command of one or both languages, or even an indicator of imminent language death, I shall report on evidence showing that (a) Welsh grammar is predominant in code-switching data and (b) that it is the most fluent speakers of both Welsh and English who do the most code-switching. The evidence comes from a 40-hour corpus known as *Siarad* which was collected from 151 Welsh-English bilinguals and is available at [www.bangortalk.org](http://www.bangortalk.org). An automatic glossing system made it possible to extract more than 60,000 clauses from the data and to quantify the extent of code-switching. Focusing on bilingual (vs. monolingual) clauses as the dependent variable and using Rbrul to conduct a multivariate analysis, it was possible to identify the extralinguistic factors which favoured code-switching. We found that the significant factors were age and pattern of bilingual acquisition. Younger speakers switched more than older speakers, and those who had acquired both languages in infancy switched more than those who had acquired one language first and then the other. We interpret these findings as suggesting that code-switching is becoming more acceptable in Wales and that it is associated with high rather than low levels of fluency.