

Speaking Welsh and migration from Wales to England

Hywel Jones, Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg / Welsh Language Board

Research questions:

What is the extent of out-migration from Wales? Are Welsh-speakers less likely to migrate than non-Welsh speakers? Has the situation changed in recent years? What is the effect of other factors such as age, country of birth and social class?

Findings:

- Approaching one fifth of all children from Wales migrate to England on a long-term basis.
- Welsh-speakers are less likely to out-migrate, especially as adults, than those who can not speak Welsh.
- Migration from Wales to England appears to have increased since 1971.
- Being born outside Wales is associated strongly with out-migration.

1. Introduction

The age profile of people reported by the Census as able to speak Welsh changed substantially between 1991 and 2001.

As well as the effects of education, and rates of retention of the language, these changes reflect changes to the composition of the population of Wales arising from migration.

The ONS Longitudinal Study is a record linkage study containing census information on a 1 per cent sample of the population. A previously published analysis examined the relationship between individuals' ability to speak Welsh in 1991 and 2001. It showed net gains in ability for all age groups apart from the 65+ age group. Although falls in percentages speaking Welsh can be caused by in-migration, any falls in the numbers speaking Welsh must therefore (apart from deaths) be caused by out-migration. The analysis reported here aimed to investigate the scale and nature of out-migration.

It has been estimated that 690,000 people could speak Welsh in the UK in 2001, 110,000 of whom were resident in England.

Age profile of Welsh-speakers in Wales, 1991 and 2001

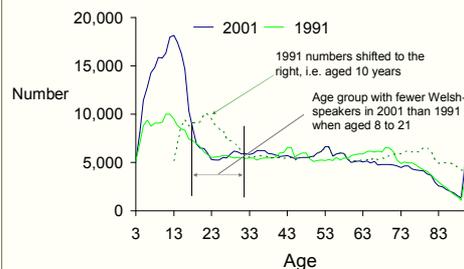


Figure 1. Age profile of Welsh-speakers in 1991 and 2001. Source: Census.

2. Method

The ONS Longitudinal Study was again used, this time to look at *out-migration*.

- The percentage able to speak Welsh shows considerable spatial variation. Those areas with high percentages are particularly important for intergenerational transmission of the language. For analytical purposes, two areas were distinguished: a traditionally Welsh-speaking area and the rest of Wales.

Percentage able to speak Welsh, 2001, and the area defined as traditionally Welsh-speaking

Percentage able to speak Welsh, 2001: all aged 3 and over

(Number of electoral divisions)

- 65.2 < 88.4 (86)
- 48 < 65.2 (114)
- 28 < 48 (85)
- 14.8 < 28 (128)
- 6.6 < 14.8 (468)

Traditionally Welsh-speaking area as defined for the analysis (based on pre-1996 districts)

Unitary authority boundaries, 2001

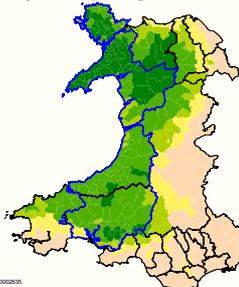


Figure 2. "Traditionally Welsh-speaking area". 51% of all Welsh-speakers lived in it in 1971.

- To assess the magnitude of long-term out-migration, the LS sample resident in Wales in 1971 was matched with the 2001 LS sample in England and Wales. The same was done for the LS sample resident in Wales in 1981. The proportions migrating from Wales to England over 30 and 20 years could then be estimated.

- To examine the possibly changing effect of different factors the thirty years since 1971 were analysed as three consecutive 10-year periods. The LS sample resident in Wales in 1971 was matched with the 1981 LS England and Wales sample, and 1981-91 and 1991-01 similarly matched. These three sets of data were then analysed using cross-tabulations and by separate logistic regression of the odds of migration to England on various factors. This part of the analysis *excluded* people in some social classes: occupations inadequately described; those in the armed forces; and **students**, those of independent means, permanently sick, or housewives. Effectively, this part of the analysis was thus only of (a major sub-group of) adults.

3. Results

a) Migration of young people over 20- and 30-year periods

Substantial proportions of children brought up in Wales emigrate to England. Higher proportions of non-Welsh-speakers emigrate than of Welsh-speakers though in Figs. 3 and 4 only the differences in the percentages moving from the traditionally Welsh-speaking area are highly significant ($p < 0.001$).

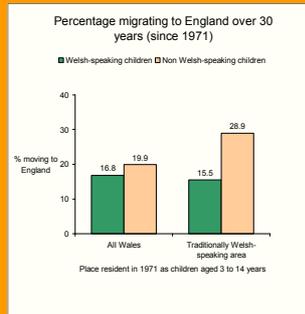


Figure 3. Migration of children over 30-year period

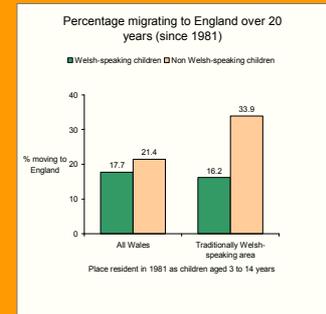


Figure 4. Migration of children over 20-year period

b) Migration of adults over 10-year periods

- Looking at out-migration of adults, over 10-year periods, out-migration to England increased over the last 3 decades, from 5.4% in 1971-81 to 6.4% in 1991-01.

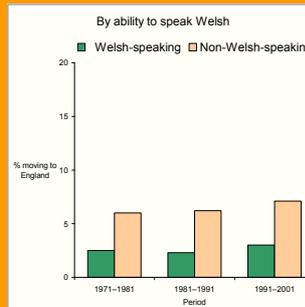


Figure 5. Migration by ability to speak Welsh

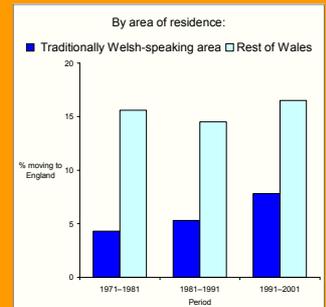


Figure 6. Migration by area of residence

- Welsh-speakers had low rates of out-migration. A logistic regression of out-migration on ability to speak Welsh, area of residence, social class, sex and age, found Welsh speaking ability to be significant (see Table 1) and an interaction between ability and area of residence.

Period	Odds ratio	Significance
1971-81	1.368	0.053
1981-91	1.805	<0.001
1991-01	1.941	<0.001

Table 1. Effect on out-migration of not speaking Welsh: multiplicative effect on odds (on out-migration) of not speaking Welsh compared to speaking Welsh.

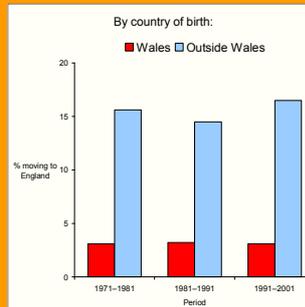


Figure 7. Migration by country of birth

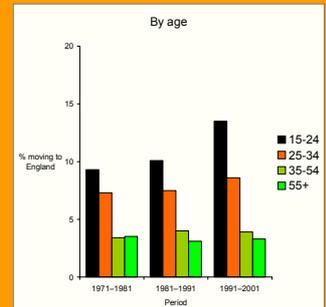


Figure 8. Migration by age

- Modelling the odds on out-migration of non-Welsh-speakers separately identified youthfulness (i.e. being aged 15-24 or 25-34) and country of birth with significant effects in all three decades. Skilled manual and unskilled people were also significantly less likely to out-migrate, compared to those in professional occupations. Residence in the traditionally Welsh-speaking area significantly increased the odds on out-migration only in the 1991-01 decade.

- Modelling the odds on out-migration of Welsh-speakers separately on area of residence, social class, sex and age, found only youth (here being aged 15-24) and country of birth to have significant effects.

Factor	Period	Odds ratio*
Traditionally Welsh-speaking area v. Rest of Wales	1991-01	1.694
Age 15-24 v. 55 and over	1971-81	3.655
	1981-91	4.513
	1991-01	7.818
Born outside Wales v. born in Wales	1971-81	5.774
	1981-91	4.649
	1991-01	7.111
Unskilled occupations v. Professionals	1971-81	0.213
	1981-91	0.199
	1991-01	0.371

*: multiplicative effect on odds of out-migration of factor compared to reference group

Table 2. Some significant effects on out-migration of non-Welsh-speakers.

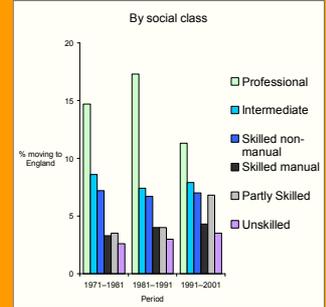


Figure 9. Migration by social class

References

- Jones, H. (2005). Ability to speak Welsh in the censuses of population: a longitudinal analysis. *Population Trends Winter 2005 122*. Office for National Statistics.
- Jones, H. (2007). *Estimation of the numbers of Welsh-speakers in England*. Welsh Language Board.

Acknowledgments

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For further information

Contact: hywel.jones@welsh-language-board.org.uk
Tel: +44(0)29 20878034
<http://www.welsh-language-board.org.uk>

