# Two Early Examples of Welsh English as a Marker of National Identity : Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal's Hymn to the Virgin and Shakespeare's Fluellen.

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## Two Early Examples of Welsh English as a Marker of National Identity: Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal's *Hymn to the Virgin* and Shakespeare's Fluellen

In this paper I first examine a number of characteristic phonetic features of Welsh English as they appear in Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal's 15th century poem entitled *Hymn to the Virgin*. I then investigate the Welsh-influenced speech of the Captain Fluellen, one of the main characters of Shakespeare's play, *Henry V* (1599). The approach used here is both sociolinguistic and diachronic. The working hypothesis is based on the view that the English and Welsh languages have exercised mutual influence on one another since the two languages have been in contact, that is to say for well over a millennium. I argue that this linguistic interaction has provoked, and continues to provoke, significant changes that have altered the way English has been spoken by Welshmen through the ages. Likewise, the Welsh language itself has also been influenced by standard and non standard dialects of English as they were spoken at various periods of contact, especially in terms of lexical borrowing. In the present study, we explore two highly symbolic examples of Welsh English, the first as viewed from the inside by a Welshman and the second as viewed from the outside by the famous Warwickshire playwright, William Shakespeare. Although many of the salient features of Welsh English

* CRBC, UBO/UEB.

as it was spoken 400 to 500 years ago are no longer recognizable as such today, both examples demonstrate that, along side the Welsh language itself, the English of Wales has long served as a beacon of Welsh identity.

## Historical and linguistic context

Before the arrival of the Germanic-speaking Anglo-Saxons in the middle of the 5th century, what is today England and the Scottish lowlands were entirely Brittonic-speaking. As late as the mid-6th century, and probably much later, one could have walked from Dumbarton (< *Dun Brython* : Fort of the Britons) in Strathclyde to Land's End in Cornwall and spoken dialects of the same Brittonic language (Chadwick 1963, 1976; Fleuriot 1985 and Jackson 1953, 1967). By the 8th century, the socially dominant Anglo-Saxon communities had absorbed the Brittonic-speaking inhabitants in most of these areas (Härke 2001, 2003, German 1996, 2000, Tristram 2002, 2008). The old idea that the Britons were either chased out of England or slain on the spot by the conquering Anglo-Saxons (Freeman 1867, Stubbs 1870) is no longer taken seriously by most specialists. Recent Y-chromosome studies (German, Härke, Stumpf, Thomas 2008) and mitochondrial DNA research (Sykes pc 2006) suggest that the colonization of Britain was characterised by large numbers of unions of Anglo-Saxon men and British women.[1] For this reason, the anglicization between the eastern and central areas of Celtic Britain (i.e. England) most likely resulted from a language shift rather than from full-fledged population and language replacement. Moreover, this new picture increases the likelihood that there is a Brittonic substratum in the English language, a hypothesis that has

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1. Oxford University geneticist, Bryan Sykes (2003: 185-186) cites a study of populations in Pasco and Lima, Peru, who were thought to have been of unmixed Amerindian ancestry. Although it was discovered that 95% of the MitDNA was clearly Amerindian, over 50% of the Y-chromosomes (traced through the male line) were European. Another study conducted in the Colombian province of Antioquia near Medellin, one of the earliest Spanish colonies founded in the early 16th century, found that 94% of the Y-Chromosomes were European, 5% were African and only 1% Amerindian, while 90% of the mitDNAs were Amerindian. Given that it is known that a social cast system was in place in Anglo-Saxon England, a similar situation seems to have existed in what is today the English Midlands.

until now never been considered seriously (Tristram 2002, 2008; German 1996, 2000; Filppula, Klemola, Pitkänen 2002). If this is the case, the current anglicization of Wales, Scotland and Ireland should be perceived as the culmination of a process which began 1,600 years ago.

It was thus these West Germanic-speaking colonists who introduced the Old English language into Britain. Their word for the Britons and, for that matter, all the inhabitants of the Roman Empire, was *Wealh* or *Welsh*, a rather contemptuous term meaning "foreigner". Therefore, when Old English texts such as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* speak of "Welshmen", they often mean "Britons" in the broad geographic sense, not "Welshmen of Wales" as we understand the word today. As the territory under Brittonic control was progressively reduced to the western and northern regions of Britain, that is to say, Cornwall, Wales, Cumbria, and Strathclyde, the term Welsh – and in the Welsh language, *Cymry* < *cumbrogi, "the compatriots" – came to be restricted to them. By the 16th century, "Welsh" was an English term associated with the Britons of Wales. Significantly, Welshmen continued to refer to themselves as *Brython* (Britons) as well as *Cymry* as late as the 17th century.

According to John Davies (1993: 63), one of the earliest recorded contacts between a Briton from Wales and the English occurred in the year 610 when a cleric named *Beuno* first overheard the Old English language while wandering near the Severn River. So horrified was he to hear the speech of the pagan invaders that he fled to Gwynedd, one of the most inaccessible parts of *Ynys Prydein* (the Island of Britain). Such was the hostility between the Britons and the English that the British clergy actually refused to evangelise them, a task they left to the Irish (ibid.). Apparently the idea of sharing heaven with these potential converts was more than they could bear! Unfortunately, the attitude displayed by *Beuno* towards the in-comers has been characteristic of Welsh-English relations ever since.[2]

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2. The Breton Abbé Pezron's assertion that the Bretons were the descendants of Gomer, the grandson of Noah, was adopted for the Welsh by Theophilus Evans in his *Drych y Prif Oesoedd* (Mirror on the First Ages), 1716 (cf. Davies: 1993: 303). This myth is the source of the deep-rooted belief that Welsh was the language of Godliness, whilst the English language is the language of worldliness and sin. The idea was further reinforced by stories about Christ having actually

Nevertheless, although historians have tended to emphasise the long periods of hostility that have divided the English and Welsh, it is certain that there is a far more positive dimension to their relations, particularly after the conversion of the English to Christianity in the late 7th century. It is this more constructive side of English-Welsh relations that I wish to highlight here.

## Parry-Williams' *English Loanwords in Welsh*

Direct proof of the early cultural and commercial contacts between the Welsh and English comes in the form of Old English loanwords in Welsh. Parry-Williams was one of the first scholars to offer a detailed study of these Welsh-English linguistic contacts in his fascinating 1923 study entitled *The English Element in Welsh: A Study of the English Loan-words in Welsh*. In his introduction he laments that his subject was not considered worthy of scholarly interest by linguists of his day, perhaps on account of its concentration on the Welsh language (Parry-Williams 1923: 1):

> It is a matter of surprise that hitherto a most important and fruitful field of enquiry, the English loanwords in Welsh, has been sadly neglected or contemptuously ignored. It nevertheless abounds in features of interest which might well engage the interest of the student of the history of English pronunciation. And for one clear, outstanding reason: that Welsh is phonetically a conservative language, whereas English, since the Old English period... is astounding in its changes and in the swiftness of those changes.

Parry-Williams's work unambiguously demonstrates that the contacts between the Welsh and English go back to the Old English period and he illustrates a number of very interesting examples to prove his point, among them early borrowings retaining their Old English infinitive endings *–an* and *–ian*. Significantly, one of the oldest such borrowings is the verb *cusan*, "to kiss"! Other examples include *smwcan* ("to smoke"), *llepian* ("to leap") and *hongian* ("to hang").

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visited Britain and the Bible having been translated into Old Welsh/Brittonic at the time of Joseph of Arimathea. All of this is probably behind the oft repeated contention that "Welsh is the oldest language of Europe".

By the 12th and 13th centuries, the only Brittonic-speaking regions of Britain were Wales, Cornwall and, perhaps, isolated areas of Strathclyde. In Wales, the major areas of language contact had spread westwards from areas along the Welsh-English border into Pembrokeshire and scattered towns throughout Wales where English and French-speaking merchants and troops were present. For this reason, periods of multilingualism cannot be ruled out in such places. The language shift in Wales was thus a rather insidious process whereby, over a long period of time, the source language was whittled away from within the language community. During the first stage of the shift, the process concerned bilingual or even trilingual individuals and sometimes entire families or social clusters rather than entire language communities.

This brings us to Parry's (1985) point concerning the Welsh English varieties of South Wales. He stresses the importance of distinguishing between the diminishing number of Welsh-speaking individuals for whom English is a foreign language and the over-whelming majority of Welshmen who now speak it as a native or quasi-native language. Of course, until the late 19th century, most were first-language Welsh speakers with little or no knowledge of English. When studying the history of English in Wales, it is critical to keep in mind that the phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon of the English of such speakers was not only profoundly marked by their own Welsh dialects but also by the social and regional varieties of the Englishmen with whom they were in contact.

## Swrdwal's *Hymn to the Virgin*

Given the rapid evolution of the English language described by Parry-Williams (op. cit.), the date of a given Welsh English text is a crucial element to take into account. Swrdwal's poem is thought to have been written around the year 1480 at the beginning stages of the Great Vowel Shift, a linguistic event which drastically transformed the nature of Middle English long vowels. His poem, *Hymn to the Virgin*, has survived in several manuscripts, the earliest of which dates to the 16th century. The most authoritative study of this poem was undertaken by the great specialist of English historical phonology, E. Dobson, who edited the poem in 1953, perhaps in answer to Parry-

Williams's appeals. Although little is known about Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal's life, it is thought that he came from an aristocratic family and was trained in Welsh bardic poetry. He composed the poem while he was a student at Oxford University. It is during his stay there that some English students taunted him with claims that the Welsh had no culture, nor poets worth mentioning. He is reported to have responded the following:

> I am only a poor scholar as regards my scholarship and am not to be compared with many learned and distinguished scholars from Wales, whose steps I am not competent to follow. But, nevertheless, it would be weakness of me if a poor unaccomplished Welshman could not compete with the most learned Englishman in poetic composition and many other points. But our best scholars are not so frivolous and worthless as to apply their minds and thought to disputing and quarreling with bragging English... I shall compose a poem in your own tongue; and if all the Englishmen in England compose such a poem or equal it, revile the Welsh. If you cannot compose it, leave the privilege which God has given them. And recognize yourselves that you cannot compete with the Welsh. (translation in Dobson 1953: 112).

The first strategy employed by Swrdwal in composing his poem was to use Welsh *cynghanedd,* a very ancient and extremely technical set metrical rules governing patterns of alliteration, assonance, interior rhyme and end rhyme. Secondly, in order to facilitate its use, he used Welsh orthography throughout the poem. Thanks to the conservatism of written Welsh, scholars thus have a rather precise idea of the phonetic values of English phonemes as they were perceived by a native Welsh speaker at the very beginning of the Great Vowel Shift. For instance, the following extract clearly shows that ME /iː/ had already moved to /ei/ in some contexts (*abeiding* "abiding", *geid* "guide", *ei* "I", etc.) while it remained /iː/ (or [i], [ɪ]) before /χ/ (*michti, wricht, hicht*), as in conservative varieties of modern Scots. Many other long vowels remained unchanged : /eː/ or /ɛː/ in *leding* "leading", *ffest* "feast", /aː/ in *ladi* "lady", and so on.[3]

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3. For a thorough review of these features cf. German 2000a, 2000b.

*O michti ladi, owr leding tw haf*
/o ˈmɪχti ˈlaːdi, our ˈleːdiŋ tu ˈhaːv/
O mighty lady, our leading to have

*At hefn owr abeiding*
/at ˈhevən our əˈbeidiŋ/
At heaven our abiding (abode)

*Ynto ddy ffest efrlesting*
/ɪnto ðə ˈfeːst evərˈleːstiŋ/
To bring us into the everlasting feast

Swrdwal's poem confirms what Parry-Williams' work has also shown, that is to say, /z/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/ and even /ʃ/, common in modern-day spoken Welsh and Welsh English, were not yet established constituents of the Welsh phoneme inventory during the 15th and 16th centuries. Proof of this lies in the fact that there existed no native Welsh orthographic conventions to spell these sounds. As Parry (1977, 1979) and Penhallurick (1991) have demonstrated, many older Welshmen still have had difficulty pronouncing them nowadays. All of the problematic phonemes indicated by Parry-Williams also show up in Swrdwal's poem:

| Middle English Source | Welsh English graphemic interpretation | Examples from Parry-Williams and Swrdwal |
|---|---|---|
| ME : /z/ | <s> [s] | *<taslio>* "dazzle" |
| ME : /ʃ/, /ʒ/ | <si> or <se> : [sj], later [ʃ] | *<wys>*  "wish" |
| ME : /tʃ/, /dʒ/ | <ts>, <ds>, <si> [ts], later [ʃ] | *<dsiws>* [tsɪus] "Jews" <br> *<dsuws>* [tsïus] "Jews" <br> *<dsiwsws>* [ˈtsiusus] "Jésus" |

This pronunciation of "Jésus" seems confirmed by William Salesbury, one of the Welsh translators of the 1588 Welsh Bible. He wrote a Welsh-English dictionary in 1547 in which he used Welsh orthography to help Welshmen pronounce English more accurately. He writes <tsiesuw> for Jesus, suggesting that Swrdwal's pronunciation for these words may also have been /tsiusus/ "Jesus" and /tsius/ "Jews" respectively.

"Hymn to the Virgin":

> *Maedyn notwythstanding*
> /ˈmaidïn notuiθˈstandiŋ/
> A Maiden nowithstanding

> *Hwo wed syts wyth a ryts ring*…
> /hwo ˈwed ˈsïts ui  a ˈrïts ˈriŋ…
> Who wed **such** with a **rich** ring…

Indeed, many of these these phonemes appear to have entered the Welsh language as a consequence of contact with not only the English but possibly with Anglo-Norman French speakers: *siambr* "chambre"; *mersiant* /ˈmersjãnt/ "merchant"; *tors*, "torche". Note also <h> dropping in words such as *oribl* "horrible"; *ostes* "hostes"; *ilar* "Hilaire"; *ermitwr* "ermite" (hermit) which may also reflect direct French influence on Welsh (Parry-Williams 1923).

Other phonemes which Welshmen have found difficult to pronounce until recent times are glides such as /j/ and /w/ which were rendered as vowels. This is also demonstrated in Swrdwal's poem:

> *Wynn iwr lwf and iwr lofing*
> /ˈuin iur ˈluv and iur ˈloviŋ/
> To win **your** love and **your** loving

> *I set a braents ws tw bring*
> /ˈiː set a ˈbraints us tu ˈbriŋ/
> **Ye** set a branch (of the tree of Jessie) to bring us (to the everlasting feast)

> *I wann ddys wyth blys*
> /iː ˈuan ðis uiθ ˈplis/
> **Ye** won this with bliss.

The pronunciation of the bilabial glide /w/ as a full vowel, [u] or [uː], is also characteristic of Swrdwal's poem :

*Ei <u>wl</u>d, as owld as ei sing*[4]
[ẹi uld as ould as ẹi siŋ]
I **would** as old (long) as I sing

*...tw <u>wn</u> yn his michti wing\**
*/tu ˈuːn in his ˈmiːχti ˈuiŋ/*
To **wone** (dwell) under his mighty wing

Parry-Williams (ibid. p. 228) gives examples such as *wdcneiff* "woodknife"; *utward* "woodward"; *wits* "witch"; *waets* "watch"; *wrsip* "worship". Interestingly, this trait is also common in areas of the West Midlands and appears to be a very old feature of the varieties spoken there. Shakespeare, who was from Warwickshire, sometimes writes "world" *'orld*, etc. This must have been pronounced much as older Welshmen from eastern Wales or South Wales still might pronounce them (cf. Parry 1977, 1979). The feature may even result from an older Brittonic influence on the English of the kind mentioned above.

Obviously, a more detailed analysis of all the features in the poem lies beyond the scope of this article. I shall conclude this discussion of the "Hymn to the Virgin" by giving a few examples of the devoicing of voiced plosives and provection. Indeed, the devoicing of voiced consonants is limited to final position as in the following examples: *bant* "band"; *went* "wend"; *ant* "and" ; *off* /of/ "of" (six examples). As we shall see, unlike Shakespeare, he does not show the devoicing of initial consonants. Yet, given that the devoicing of initial and medial voiced consonants was a common feature of Welsh and Welsh English until recent times (cf. German 1996, Jones 1984, Penhallurick 1991, Thomas 1984), it is very possible that devoicing was such a natural part of Swrdwal's speech that he simply was unconscious of it (cf. footnote n°7). Thomas (1984: 184-185) writes:

> Indeed, the phonetic opposition between so-called 'voiceless' plosive series and the corresponding 'voiced' one in Welsh English is less one of voice than of the relative strength of the aspiration features which accompany them. Variations on the strength of aspiration, with both the voiceless and voiced series, parallel those of the voiceless series in RP.

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4. ME iː > /ei/ rather than directly to /əɪ/ is also supported by Wilde (1956).

The partial or complete devoicing of voiced consonants (plosives, fricatives or affricates) described here results from effects of the aspirated voiceless glottal /h/. This is akin to provection (i.e. the devoicing and assimilation of two contiguous consonants), another feature common to all the Brittonic languages. Swrdwal's poem also gives a number of examples of provection, a phenomenon which was also commonplace in Middle Welsh and still is very present in modern Breton : *heh breur* /i ˈprø:r/ "her brother ", *pemp gwenneg* [pẹm ˈkụenẹk], "five pennies" ; *deg gwenneg* [dẹk ˈkụenẹk] "ten pennies"; *ed du* [i ˈty:] "buckwheat"; *beb bloaz* [bẹ ˈpla:] "each year".[5]

Provection in Swrdwal :

> *Awl dids wel dwn tabeit te bwn*
> / aul ˈdi:ts wel ˈdu:n taˈbeit te ˈbu:n/
> All deeds well done to abide the boon: -t + ð- > tt
>
> *A god mat trwn*
> /a ˈgo:d mat ˈtru:n/
> a God-made throne : /-d/ + /θ-/ (or /t-/) > /-t/+/θ/ (or /t/) > /-tt-/
>
> *tabeit te bwn*
> /taˈbẹid te ˈbu:n/
> to abide the boon : /-d/ + /ð-/ > /-t/ + /θ/ > /tt/
>
> *rwt tri*
> /ˈru:t tri/
> rood tree : /-d/ + /t-/ > /-t/ + /t-/ > /tt/
>
> *kreist tat*
> /ˈkreist tat/
> Christ that … : -t/  + /ð-/ > /-t/ + /θ-/ > /tt/[6]

Considering the examples cited above, it seems clear that Swrdwal purposely highlighted Welsh orthography, *cynghanedd* and

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5. These examples are from southern Finistère.
6. Note, however, that there are examples of <the> written as <te> in early Middle English tests such as the Peterborough Chronicle.

the Welsh pronunciation of English words to stress the Welshness of his composition. The sole reason for doing so appears to have been to impress his English classmates not only with his own poetic talents but also to showcase the inherent richness and beauty of Welsh bardic tradition. *For this reason alone, the text is of the utmost sociolinguistic significance since it is perhaps the earliest example of an extended text in which Welsh-influenced English is used by a Welshman for the purposes of underscoring Welsh national identity.*

## Shakespeare's Henry V

In his play, *Henry V,* Shakespeare caricatures the speech of Captain Fluellen, the zealous Welsh follower of King Henry V of England at the Battle of Agincourt. Shakespeare, however, only focuses on a few phonetic features, in particular the devoicing of initial voiced plosives /b-/ > /p-/, /d-/ > /t-/. Indeed, his examples correspond even more closely to those provided by Parry-Williams in his study of English borrowings in Welsh (1923 : 219-220) than to Swrdwal's, especially his examples of initial /b-/ > /p-/: *plow up* "blow up"; *pridge* "bridge"; *God pless* (probably pronounced [got 'ples] "God bless"; *prave poys* "brave boys"; *plue* "blue"; *he was porn* "He was born". Compare these to Parry-Williams's (ibid.) examples dating roughly to the same period: *preins* "brains"; *planced* "blanket"; *ploc* "block"; *clwpa* "club"; *rupar* "rubber".

One example of Shakespeare's humorous use of Welsh English is the passage in which Fluellen translates *Alexander Fawr* (< *Mawr* "big", "great"), not as Alexander "the Great" but literally as Alexander "the Big". With the devoicing of initial voiced plosive /bh-/, this is rendered, to the delight of the Welsh and English alike, "Alexander the Pig"!

Shakespeare also gives a few examples of /d/ > /t/:  "*I pray you to serve Got and keep you out of prawls, and prabbles' and quarrels*" and *digt* instead of "digged" (i.e. dug) in the phrase *the duke is digt himself four yard*. Therefore, in all probability, the actor portraying Fluellen would have pronounced a phrase such as "*as good a gentleman as the devil is*", "*as goot a gentleman as the tevil is*". The spelling of Fluellen's name itself is also an attempt to pronounce the Welsh lateral fricative /ɬ/; spelt <ll> in modern Welsh.

Shakespeare gives only one example of provection where *Saint Davy* is written *Saint Tavy*. What is striking in each case is that all of the features that appear in Fluellen's speech are also present in Parry-William's work and in other contemporary sources. This is significant because the manner Shakespeare and later playwrights portrayed Welsh speech has been frequently brushed aside by critics as "stage Welsh" and is generally considered to be an unrealistic form of Welsh English used by Englishmen to caricature and mock the Welsh (Lewis 1882). Given that features such as the voicing of initial plosives were much more frequent in the speech of Welshmen during the 17th century, there can be no doubt that Shakespeare was a much better dialectologist than most people might believe today.

Note, however, that while there can be no doubt that Shakespeare was using Fluellen's Welsh-influenced English to amuse his audience, it must not be forgotten that when he wrote the play in 1599, Elisabeth I was still the queen of England.[7] As Spencer's "Faerie Queene" (1590) demonstrates, she was presented, not as an English but rather as a British (i.e. Brittonic/Brythonic) Queen. In keeping with Geoffrey of Monmouth's pseudo history *Historia Regum Britanniae (History of the Kings of Britain)*, which was viewed as an official historical reference text until the 17th century, this was a conscious decision on the part of the Tudors to portray themselves as rightful descendants of British-Celtic kings, including Arthur, and thus as the rightful guarantors of the sovereignty of Britain. Moreover, it is in 1577 that the Welshman, John Dee, coined the term "British Empire" in an effort to further glorify this British Celtic past (Davies 1993). This was based on a legend that King Arthur had won a vast empire in the north Atlantic and that, Madog ap Owain Gwynedd's later voyages would have brought these territories under Welsh rule. "By the age of Elizabeth, he asserted, they were under the sovereignty of the queen as successor to the Welsh princes" (Ibid. p. 255). Shakespeare was certainly familiar with such stories as well as with the *History of Kings of Britain,* the ultimate source of his "King Lear" (< *Leir*/*Llyr*). Regardless of what he may have thought of the Welsh personally, he had to tread lightly when portraying them before his queen.

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7. It was also Elisabeth who gave the order to translate the Bible into Welsh.

## Conclusion

This brief survey illustrates a number of phonetic features common in Welsh English as it was spoken in 1480 and in 1599. While some of these pronunciations can still be heard in the mouths of the oldest Welsh speakers of Gwynedd, Clwyd and Dyfed, they are no longer prominent characteristics of the English spoken by younger non Welsh-speaking Welshmen today. Indeed, the fact that English is the native language of 80%-90% of the Welsh population today[8] raises the sticky question of the role of the English language in Wales. Is it still to be considered the language of an imperial, invasive and hostile enemy which has been imposed on the Welsh to the detriment of the Welsh language and culture? This sentiment is still openly expressed by militant Welsh speakers and may be quietly shared by many others (German 1996). Many English monoglots, however, consider that Welsh English should be considered on a par with the Welsh language itself as part and parcel of the cultural inheritance of Wales. This position is forcefully espoused by Robert Penhallurick (1993):

> Any talk of "Welsh English" or of a "system", depends not on a linguistic analysis, not on linguistic factors, but on an acknowledgement of the nation, and its language: the only workable definition of Welsh English is that it is the English spoken by the Welsh and by those born and bred in Wales. Even "English in Wales" signifies the connection between, the interdependence of, nation and language,. The linguistics' terms 'dialect' or 'variety' cannot be used: we know there is no one Welsh English dialect, or variety. This leaves us with 'language' and Welsh English is only, solely, nothing more than a 'national' language, language of the Welsh.

The evidence presented by Swrdwal and Shakespeare's works reinforces the contention that from both within Wales and without, Welsh-influenced English can and clearly has served as a beacon of Welsh identity for the past 600 years, even if the salient characteristics which typify it have evolved over the centuries.

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8. Indeed, nearly half of all Welsh speakers today are secondary bilinguals.

Nevertheless, while some monolingual English-speaking Welsh-men have expressed resentment regarding of the rising status of Welsh, a language in which most will probably never achieve real proficiency, Welsh-speakers have rightly pointed out that, if Welsh English is one day legitimised as an alternate linguistic symbol of Welshness, it may actually accelerate the erosion of the Welsh language itself.

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