

Indo-European Language I

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Question #1: Compare and contrast the language you have chosen to study and your native language (and any other languages you have studied, if you like). Consider each language's syntax and grammar, as well as vocabulary matters, such as cognates, derivatives or borrowed words. (Minimum 300 words)

The language that I am studying that I will be using for this paper is modern Welsh. I have been taking classes from a lady in the Welsh League of Arizona here in Tucson.

Welsh is, in many ways, still a primitive language. As it has been isolated and under siege for centuries it really hasn't changed as much as English has. While English has tended to become more simplified over time, the same cannot be said of Welsh.

In English, verbs usually are only one word, e.g. 'He wants...'. In Welsh, however, verbs often are made up of two words. 'He wants..' in Welsh would be 'Mae o isio..', with the word for 'he' being 'o'. The verb is 'mae - isio'. To write, 'I want', would be 'Dw i isio' with the word for 'I' being 'i' and the verb being 'dw - isio'. 'She wants' would be 'Mae hi isio' and 'You want' would be 'Dach chi isio'.

To write the phrase, 'the house', you would write the preposition 'y' for 'the', as 'y ty'. But there is no word for 'a', so 'a house' would just be 'ty'.

One difficult thing for foreigners to master is the mutation (Prosser and Parry, 50). This is where words will change depending on how they are used in the sentence. Other languages have changes in their endings, but Welsh has changes in the *beginnings* of the words! The most common mutation is called the *soft mutation*. Words that begin with one of 9 letters change those letters whenever they follow the words 'o' (from) or 'i' (to). Words beginning with the letter 't' change to 'd'. 'C' changes to 'g'. 'P' changes to 'b', etc. So the town name of Porthmadog would change after the word 'o', say, to Borthmadog. The sentence, "I am going to Porthmadog" would be in Welsh, "Du 'in dwad o Borthmadog." This can be very confusing. Some words change just because they follow a feminine noun. The word for 'red', or 'coch', mutates to 'goch' after a feminine noun, like the word for 'dragon', or 'ddraig'. So a 'the red dragon' would be 'y ddraig goch' instead of 'y ddraig coch'.

There are also no simple words for yes and no. Rather, one answers by using the verb forms. This can be quite complicated. In the dictionary there are 10 words for 'yes', and that's just the present tense (Lewis, 259 and 266).

In vocabulary, Welsh is an Indo-European language – actually, a descendant of ancient Celtic (the Brithonic, as opposed to the Irish Goedelic, branch). As such, many words are IE based. Take the numbers 'one', 'two' and 'three'. In Welsh, these would be 'un', 'dau' 'tri', pronounced like, 'een', 'die' and 'tree'. Just a casual look would reveal that these three numbers are very similar to the same numbers in Latin, French and even English, among others.

But there are lots of words borrowed directly from English. For instance, the word for 'shop' is 'siop'. In Welsh, 'si' is pronounced as 'sh' in English. The words are almost identical. Other words are 'siwgr' (pronounced 'shoo-gar'), 'coffi' (pronounced as 'coffee'), and 'brecwast' (pronounced as it looks – and means 'breakfast'). In verbs, 'to smoke' is 'smoccio', and 'to cycle' is 'seiclo'. The list goes on.

Welsh is also thought to not have many vowels. This is because one common Welsh vowel is the letter 'w', which is pronounced as 'oo'. When reading Welsh, knowing how to pronounce this one letter can make a world of difference.

Question #2: Based on what you understand about the language studied, linguistics in general, and your knowledge of the associated culture(s), briefly describe how the characteristics of the language may reflect the attributes, history or values of the associated culture(s). (Minimum 300 words)

Welsh is descended from the language of the Celts of Britain from before the time of the Romans. At that time, Celtic on the continent was similar to Latin, and there is reason to believe that the Celtic spoken in the British Isles was very similar. Upon the departure of the Romans, however, Britain was invaded by many Teutonic-speaking tribes from the continent, with the Saxons being predominant. Over a few centuries the Saxons managed to wrest the majority of the island south of Hadrian's Wall from the Celts, who found themselves holding out only in Wales and Cornwall, protected by their remoteness and the high mountains. It is during this period, from roughly 400 – 800 C.E. that Welsh crystallized out of Brithonic, the Celtic language of Britain (Davies, 45).

From that time forward, Welsh, as a language, has been under siege. The Welsh managed to hold the Saxons at bay, at least in the north, but the coming of the Normans meant the end of Welsh sovereignty. The victory of Henry Tudor (Henry VII), a Welsh nobleman, over Richard III gave hope to the Welsh of a change in their fortunes, but all it resulting in was the Act of Union, putting Wales

firmly under English rule. During the Civil War and after, the Welsh language was repressed (though the translation of the Bible into Welsh during the reformation did much to preserve the language) and English migration into the country, particularly in the south, diluted the numbers of Welsh speakers. By the Victorian Era, the language was in dire straits indeed. But Wales became a stronghold of the Liberal Party in the UK, and when they were in power in the late 19th century, Welsh institutions were established. Since then there has been a growth in interest in the language, and now there are parts of Wales where Welsh is still spoken on the street.

This isolation, the high mountains and lack of respect meant that Welsh broke up into many different dialects. The largest break is between the north and the south. There is even a bit of snobbery on the part of the northerners, who look down the Welsh speakers of the "English" south. In fact, a word used to describe a person from South Wales, 'hwntw', has been used in the same breath as the word for 'simple' or 'learner' on the Welsh list. As a descendent of people from southwest Wales, I find this amusing. However, the translation of the Bible into Welsh in the Reformation did result in a formal or literary form of Welsh that everyone can understand, north and south.

Question #3: Create a tape recording and accompanying "phrase-book" of a minimum of 25 phrases or sentences in the Indo-European language of your choice. Try to choose phrases and sentences that will a) be useful to you in your studies and/or spiritual practices; and b) reflect the cultural uniqueness of the native speakers of that language.

The phrases are written below, with their translations. The translations are courtesy of the Welsh Language Board and Mr. Deiniol Jones, an ADF member from North Wales. I researched these phrases for the Welsh Kin and for this course, putting them on the Kin's web page with sound bites of my Welsh cousin speaking many of the phrases.

1. "Behold the Waters of Life!" – "Wele Ddŵr Bywyd!"
2. Objects
 - a. "This Cup" – "Y Cwpan Hwn"
 - b. "This Well" – "Y Ffynnon Hon"
 - c. "This Sacred Place/Nemeton" – "Y Man Cysygreddig Hwn" or "Y Nefed Hwn"
3. "May the Gods and Ancestors Bless _____" – "Bydded y bendithion y Duwiau a'r Hynafiaid a'r _____"
4. "Gods be with you (plural)." And "And also with you (singular)." – "Bydded y Duwiau gyda thithau." And "A gyda thi."
5. "Thank you"
 - a. "Diolch" – when speaking to a person or group (this is almost slang).
 - b. "Diolch i Ti" – when thanking a God, Goddess or spirit.

- c. "Diolch i Chi" – when thanking a group of Gods, Goddesses or spirits.
 - c. "Ancestors, we thank You!" – "Hynafiad, diolcwn i Chi!"
 - d. "Nature Spirits, we thank You!" – "Ysbridion Natur, diolchwn i Chi!"
 - e. "Gods (Deities), we thank You!" – "Dduwiau, diolchwn i Chi!"
6. "So be it" – "Bydded felly."
7. Terms to fill in the blanks:
- a. "Pole" – "Polyn"
 - b. "Tree" – "Coeden"
 - c. "Stone" – "Maen"
 - d. "Pit" – "Pwll" (meaning deep pit or pool) or "tyll" (meaning hole)
 - e. "Tribe" – "Y Llwyth"
8. The Gates
- a. "Let the Gates be opened!" – "Agorer y Pyrth!"
 - b. "Let the Gates be closed!" – "Caeed y Pyrth!"
9. More objects of blessing:
- a. "this man" – "y dyn hwn"
 - b. "this woman" – y wraig hon"
 - c. "this child" – "y plentyn hwn"
10. "Protection of the Gods upon you (plural)." – "Bydd y Duwiau yn gwarchod chi."
11. "This place (mundane place)" – "y lle hwn"
12. "This object – "y peth hwn"
13. "This water (not whiskey)" – "y dŵr hwn"
14. "May the Gods be honored." – "Anrhydedded y Duwiau."
15. "Sacred Fire" – "Tân Cysygreddig"
16. "We are here to honor the Gods" – "Rydym yma i anrhydeddu'r Duwiau"
17. "Ancestors, accept our sacrifice!" – "Hynafiaid, derbyn ein haberth!"
18. "Nature Spirits, accept our sacrifice!" – "Ysbridion Natur, derbyn ein haberth!"
19. "Gods (Deities), accept our sacrifice!" – "Dduwiau, derbyn ein haberth!"
20. "Sacred Well, flow within us!" – "Ffynnon Sanctaidd, llifa o'n mewn!"
21. "Sacred Tree, grow within us!" – "Goeden Sanctaidd, tyfa o'n mewn!"
22. "Sacred Fire, burn within us!" – "Dân Sanctaidd, llosga o'n mewn!"
23. "Gods, give us the Waters of Life!" – "Dduwiau, rhwch i ne Ddyfroedd Bywyd!"
24. "Bright blessings be upon you (pl)." – "Bendithion disglair arnoch chi."
25. "Every blessing" – "Pob bendith" (this is traditional Welsh)

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