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The Construct of the Pedagogical Norm and the Teaching of Variability in Minority Languages: A Welsh Example

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The pedagogical norm was originally proposed (Valdman, 1988; 1989 etc.) to facilitate the decisions language teachers or writers of pedagogical materials must make regarding what to present in the classroom and how to prioritize variants that will be presented. The construct was originally developed to deal with highly variable phenomena in French, such as the teaching of the mid-vowels or of interrogative structures, but it can easily be extended to other languages and settings. The pedagogical norm seems particularly useful for the teaching of minority languages, as these are often less standardized and do not enjoy the same wealth of pedagogical materials as major European languages do. In this article I briefly discuss the criteria for determining a pedagogical norm and then I apply the construct to a highly variable structure in Welsh, namely tag questions attached to normal (VSO) clauses.

Introduction

One of the major tasks facing foreign language (FL) or second language (L2) teachers is the selection of appropriate linguistic forms to serve as the acquisitional targets for students in the classroom setting. In some ways this is less an issue for the major, familiar western European languages than for Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs), especially languages of linguistic minorities, such as the Celtic languages. This is in part because the major European languages currently taught in North America, particularly Spanish, French, and German, have long, well-established pedagogical traditions and are therefore endowed with extensive, and in many cases first-rate, pedagogical materials designed as ready-to-use, complete packages. Decisions about what forms to teach have necessarily already been made by the writers of these materials, thus the teacher adopting the materials need not necessarily confront issues of norm selection or ordering directly.

With "small" languages, it is much more difficult for the teacher to avoid having to directly confront issues of what to teach and when. There are typically fewer pedagogical resources available for these languages (though this situation has greatly improved in recent decades for some of the Celtic languages), and the existing materials do not always agree on which dialect is represented, what orthography is used, or how literary or colloquial a register is taught.

During the course of the twentieth century, the closely related Brythonic languages Welsh and Breton both gave rise to thorny issues of standardization, which in most cases are even now not fully resolved. This is particularly the case with Breton, as several competing orthographies have been put forth over the course of the twentieth century, with books and some pedagogical materials written in each (Ar Merser, 1993).

Breton is also spoken in several widely divergent dialects, between which mutual intelligibility is claimed to be difficult or even impossible. The natural intergenerational transmission of Breton in the home setting went into a precipitous decline in the years following World War II, and has now all but ceased, threatening the long-term prospects of the survival of the language, or at least of its traditional varieties. The modern drive to restore a Breton vernacular has been spearheaded by young, middle-class urban militants who in most cases are not native speakers of the language and who have sought, for ideological reasons, to replace French borrowings with neologisms using native Celtic roots. The Breton spoken by these *néo-bretonnants* is often accused of being unintelligible to traditional native speakers, most of whom are rural, less well-educated and, by now, elderly. All of these issues have a direct bearing on choices that the teacher will have to make in the classroom.¹

Welsh is in many ways better off than Breton, but it, too, poses dilemmas for the teacher. The twentieth century saw far-reaching changes in the kinds of Welsh being taught to adults learning the language as a FL or as L2, a population which has skyrocketed in recent decades. In the first half of the century, the pedagogical target continued to be based more or less on the traditional literary variety of the language. Literary Welsh (LW) has a long written tradition, with roots going back to the language of the bards in the Mid-

¹Good summaries of the recent history of Breton can be found in Abalain (1995) and Timm (2003).

dle Ages, and it received its fullest illustration in William Morgan's translation of the Bible in 1588. The modern literary standard is not tremendously different from the language of the 1588 Bible, in part because of the importance of the local chapels, which sprang up all over Wales in the wake of the Reformation and which continued to implement Biblical Welsh as a written standard well into the early twentieth century. Not surprisingly, however, over time the Welsh that chapel goers spoke at home had diverged rather considerably from the language of the written standard, developing into two major regional varieties, those of North and South Wales, each with its own subdialects. The spoken varieties never enjoyed the same degree of standardization as LW, and the latter would remain the target variety for the classroom up until the mid-twentieth century, as can be seen even in the first books in the *Teach Yourself* series, such as Bowen and Jones (1960).²

In the 1960's, Welsh teachers finally moved to teaching something closer to actual speech. Particularly significant was the variety known as *Cymraeg Byw* or "living Welsh," which was promoted by the Welsh Joint Education Committee beginning in 1964 as a bridge between the traditional written standard and the modern colloquial varieties. Some of the forms in *Cymraeg Byw* were attempts to find a middle ground between the dialects, and the result has often been criticised as a hodge-podge, a new dialect not natively spoken by anyone. This accusation was based on the promotion of forms such as *dydy e ddim* 'he is not', which is intentionally intermediate between the Northern *tydi o ddim* and the Southern *dyw e ddim*. Yet if some of the less desirable creations in *Cymraeg Byw* have been castigated as inauthentic learner's dialect, the application of a pedagogical norm to the teaching of Welsh in North America, though the same principles could be applied in other languages and other settings.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows: in section 2, I discuss the construct of the pedagogical norm and the criteria which are taken into account in its development. Then in section 3, I explore what a pedagogical norm might look like for the teaching of a particular grammatical construction which presents a fair amount of variation along the axes of formality and dialect, namely tag questions in Welsh. Finally in section 4, I summarize and make some concluding remarks.

² See Jones (1998) for an in-depth discussion of issues in the standardization of Welsh.

The pedagogical norm

The pedagogical norm is a theoretical construct which represents an approach for deciding what forms to select for presentation in the FL and L2 classroom for which levels of instruction, as well as in what order the different forms should be presented.³ An important way in which the pedagogical norm differs from traditional FL norms is that the latter are seen as too restrictive:

Traditionally, the monitored speech of educated native speakers has been accepted as the appropriate target for classroom FLL [Foreign Language Learning]. But that target is too restrictive and reductionist. In their various verbal interactions native speakers do not evidence an invariant set but a repertoire of linguistic features and communicative strategies which they apply variably, depending on the numerous factors that determine the total communicative setting. Thus, the attainment of near-native proficiency entails the capacity to perceive and reproduce the total repertoire of target native speakers. (Valdman 1988: 222)

The ultimate goal of foreign language instruction is thus to present something closer to the full range of linguistic options available to native speakers, and to empower learners to produce the socially and contextually appropriate target forms as needed. This is accomplished by a cyclical ordering of presentation, in which a target concept is progressively revisited over the course of beginning and intermediate language instruction, with new forms or uses being added each time, until eventually all of the desired variants of the TL structure and their uses have been taught. Simultaneously, learners are imbued with a sociolinguistic awareness of the communicative contexts in which a given structure is or is not an appropriate choice. In his later writings on the subject, Valdman developed three sets of criteria for evaluating competing variants in order to

³ Originally proposed and developed by Albert Valdman (Rudy Professor Emeritus of French Linguistics at Indiana University) for addressing certain kinds of variability in French such as interrogative structures and the pronunciation of the six vowels known as mid-vowels, the concept of the pedagogical norm has been applied to a number of other variable features in French and in other languages. See Gass, Bardovi-Harlig, Magnan and Walz (2002) for a recent collection of articles extending the use of the construct to a variety of new areas.

establish a pedagogical norm: linguistic, epilinguistic, and acquisitional criteria. (See for example Valdman 1988 and 1989, among others).

For the first of these, the *linguistic* (or *sociolinguistic*) criteria, the variants selected as the targets of instruction in the FL or L2 must be authentic, reflecting the actual language behavior of native speakers in real communicative situations. They should also be frequent and characteristic of the target language, and they should have a significant geographical distribution. This criterion effectively rules out the creation or selection of a form like Welsh *dydy e ddim* 'he is not' (referred to in section 1 as a creation of the *Cymraeg Byw* movement) as a viable pedagogical norm.

The second group of criteria are the *epilinguistic* or *psychosocial* criteria. The variants selected as pedagogical targets should reflect not only native speakers' idealized views of their speech but also the expectations that both native and non-native speakers have regarding the kinds of linguistic usage which are appropriate coming from L2 adult speakers and learners. It appears that in some communities at least, native speakers of a language expect foreigners to speak better than they themselves do, by demonstrating productive control of features characteristic of formal usage and writing:

Accents and other interlinguistic features are highly salient markers of out-groups. This fact would lead us to exclude from pedagogical norms features symbolizing in-group membership, such as socially or regionally marked variants. Appeal to the notion of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1977) also supports the selection for foreign learners of norms associated with dominant social and political status conferred by variant forms: the higher the social status associated with a variant, the more remunerative the investment. (Valdman, 1989, p.21)

Indeed, it stands to reason that, all else being equal, learners are better off aiming to reproduce valorized than stigmatized speech.

The third set of criteria, the *acquisitional* or *psycholinguistic* criteria, should take into consideration relative ease of learning and use by proceeding from the simpler and more easily generalizable forms, those suffering few or no exceptions, to more complex forms. In determining a pedagogical norm, the relative ordering of the pres-

entation of variant structures is motivated primarily by acquisitional considerations, with those patterns easiest to acquire and use being presented earliest. As a result, it is sometimes the case that the earliest structures taught may not be the most valorized structures in the TL, but in such cases they are viewed as elements of transitional stages intended to facilitate the later full acquisition of the entire range of TL variation. Indeed, one of the main differences between the concept of the pedagogical norm and traditional classroom norms is that, unlike the latter, pedagogical norms are not static. Rather, they are designed to accommodate a gradual, sequential approximation to selected target norms.⁴

In the next section, I examine a particularly variable point of Welsh grammar, namely tag questions, in view of illustrating the application of the pedagogical norm to the teaching of Celtic Languages.

Tag questions in Welsh: a pedagogical norm

A tag question is a short interrogative phrase attached to the end of a declarative statement which serves to turn it into a question. Spoken English makes rather frequent use of tag questions. Typically a negative tag question is attached to an affirmative statement, and an affirmative tag to a negative statement, as follows:

- (1) Your father works at the bank, doesn't he?
- (2) Your father doesn't work at the bank, does he?

It is usually claimed to be the case in English that the pattern illustrated in (1) is used when the answer 'yes' is expected, while the pattern illustrated in (2) anticipates a negative reply. Although tags echo the verb and subject (pronoun) of the declarative statement to which they are attached, the list of verbs which can occur in English tags is limited to auxiliaries and modals (*have, be, can, could,*

⁴ In the proposed sequences for some of the variables examined in the pedagogical norm framework, the pool of target language variants from which transitional targets can be drawn has even included stigmatised forms, such as fronting (*Où tu vas?*) and in-situ questions (*Tu vas où?*) in French, as opposed to the most valorized construction, inversion (*Où vas tu?*) and the neutral construction with *est-ce que* (*Où est-ce que tu vas?*). The inclusion of stigmatised constructions as transitional targets was a controversial aspect of the construct which met with some opposition, and Valdman's later writings usually stop short of proposing the early use of such constructions.

should, will, etc.). Thus, the dummy auxiliary *do* is used in the English examples in (1-2) rather than the main verb *work*.

Tag questions in Welsh are broadly similar to those in English, for instance in echoing the verb of the declarative, and, for the most part, in using only modal and auxiliary verbs, not full lexical verbs. Tag questions in Welsh are, however, characterized by a striking amount of variation in form which goes well beyond anything found in most varieties of English. For example, the second person plural tag using the present tense of the verb *bod* 'to be', equivalent to "aren't you?" occurs with no fewer than fifteen spellings representing some ten or so different pronunciations, ranging from the fairly literary (*onid ydech chi?*) to the increasingly colloquial (*on'd ydech?/ ond ydech chi?*) to northern dialect forms (*yntydach?/ yntydach chi?/ tydach?/ ond ydach?/ 'd ydach?/ 'n dydach?/ yn dydach?/ on'd ydach chi?/ yndach?*) and southern dialect forms (*ond 'ych chi?/ on'd 'ych chi?*). Much of the variation is purely orthographic (e.g., spelling *ond* with or without an apostrophe to indicate the elided vowel), but other features are dialectal (e.g., the ending of the verb in [ax] or in [ix], and the presence of a subject pronoun in the southern tags versus its usual but not categorical absence in the northern forms).

In this section I briefly characterize the different tag question patterns available in modern Welsh, drawing from the range of available registers. Then I examine how the notion of the pedagogical norm might be applied to the teaching of these patterns.⁵ In the interest of space I will not consider tags used with non-VSO, or topicalized, sentences.

In LW (as described in works such as Williams 1980; Thomas 1996; Thorne 1993), tag questions attached to normal word-order sentences (i.e., those whose word order is VSO, or verb-subject-object) make use of the interrogative particle *oni(d)* followed by a conjugated verb. The interrogative particle takes the shape *onid* in front of a vowel, as in (3), and *oni* in front of a consonant, as in (4) and

⁵ I include LW because this register is still synchronically available to modern speakers, both for formal speech and also, to a greater degree, in writing. LW, as a linguistically conservative variety, is also partially a reflection of an earlier stage of the spoken language and therefore is not unlike the ancestor of the modern colloquial varieties in some important ways. For a fuller discussion and analysis of the historical development of tag questions in modern Welsh, see Rottet and Sprouse (2006).

(5); it causes aspirate mutation⁶ in the initial consonant of the verb it precedes when that verb starts with /p/, /t/, or /k/; thus *cawn* has become *chawn* in (4). Otherwise it causes soft mutation, and thus *gwnâi* has become *wnâi* in (5):

(3)	Mae	bridio	'n	anwyddonol,	onid	yw?
	is	breed	PRED	unscientific	Q.NEG	is

'Breeding is unscientific, isn't it?' (Thorne 1993, p. 253)

(4)	Cawn	gyfarfod	eto	cyn	y	cyngerdd,	oni	chawn?
	get.1P	meeting	again	before	the	concert	Q.NEG	get.1PL-FUT

'We'll have a meeting again before the concert, won't we?' (Thomas 1996, p. 532)

(5)	Ffoniai	am	bump,	oni	wnâi?
	phone.3SG-COND	for	five	Q.NEG	do.3SG-COND

He would phone at five, wouldn't he?' (Thomas 1996, p.532)

The LW *oni(d)* tags are negative, as they are made up of *o* 'if' and *ni(d)* 'not', and they are attached to affirmative statements when an affirmative reply is expected. LW does not typically use a tag with a negative utterance; that is, no tag is generally used in LW when a negative reply is expected (Thomas 1996, p. 532).

The tags used in modern CW differ somewhat from this pattern, and the two major dialect regions, North and South, also differ from each other. The descendants of the LW tags using *oni(d)* will be shown first in their South Walian (S) forms and then in typical North Walian (N) forms. In S, the interrogative particle *oni(d)* is generally contracted to *on'* [ɔn] before a consonant and *on'd* [ɔnd] before a vowel, and unlike LW, an overt subject pronoun appears in the tag, as seen in (6).

⁶Welsh, like all of the Celtic languages, has mutations in which the initial consonant of most words is subject to change depending on the preceding word or in some cases depending on the word's function in the sentence. In Welsh there are three mutations: the aspirate mutation in which initial [p t k] become [f e x]; the nasal mutation in which [p t k b d g] become [m̥ n̥ ŋ m n ŋ]; and the soft mutation in which [p t k b d g tʃ m] become [b d g v ð -l r v].

(6)	Mae	hi	'n	problem,	on'd	yw	hi?
	be.3SG	she	PRED	problem	Q.NEG	be.3SG-INT	she

'She's a problem, isn't she?' (Elis 1980, p. 166)

In some tags the dummy third person singular masculine pronoun *fe* is used regardless of what the logical grammatical subject is. This is the case in the preterite, where the S tendency is to use the tag *ond do fe* 'didn't he?' (also written as one word, *ondofe*), regardless of the actual subject, as in (7).

(7)	Fe	gafodd	hi	blentyn,	ondofe?
	AFF	have.3SG- PRET	she	child	Q.NEG do he

'She had a baby, didn't she?' (Jones 1970, p. 66)

Additionally, the aspirate mutation of /p t k/ is typically replaced with a soft mutation in S tags, and in some cases, no mutation is used (e.g. *on' byddai fe* or *on' fyddai fe?* 'wouldn't he?').

In N dialects, the changes undergone by the *oni(d)* tags are more complex. The interrogative particle itself can be contracted to *on'* [ɔn] as in S, but it often gets further reduced to [ən] or even [n], often spelled simply *yn*, as in (9), or even 'n. In fact, the particle can be deleted altogether, leaving just a final [d] (which alternates with [t] in this environment) as a prefix on the vowel-initial verb, as seen in (10) and (11).⁷

(8)	Ma'	peidio	deud	y	gwir	yn	rhyw
	is	fail	tell	the	truth	PRED	some
	fath	o	gelwydd,	on'd	ydl?		
	kind	of	lie	Q	is		

'Failing to tell the truth is a kind of lie, isn't it?' (Elis 1958: 89)

⁷There are related issues, involving the loss of the negative polarity of the particle in N dialects, which are too complex to summarize here. They are explored in depth in Rottet and Sprouse (2006).

(9)	Popeth	wedi	mynd	fel	wats	i
	every-	after	go	like	watch	to
	thing					
	ti	erioed	yn	tydi	Adrian?	
	you	ever	q	is	Adrian	

'Everything has always gone like clockwork for you, hasn't it, Adrian?' (Gwanas 2003: 274)

(10)	Mae	hynny	'di	digwydd	o	'r	blaen,	'dydi?
	is	this	after	happen	of	the	fore	q.is

'This has happened before, hasn't it?' (Ross 1992, p. 231)

(11)	Mae	'n	beryg	i	ni	Wneud
	is	PRED	danger	to	us	Do
	dim	ar	frys,	tydi?		
	anything	on	hurry	q.is		

'It's dangerous for us to do anything in a hurry, isn't it?' (Gwanas 2003, p. 266)

Note also that in contemporary N typically no subject pronoun is used in tags. The tendency is for the verb of the tag to be unmutated, whether the particle *yn* is present or not, as seen in (12).

(12)	Wel,	fasach	chi	'n
	well	be.COND-2PL	you	PRED
	gwybod	hynny	hefyd,	basach
	know	that	also	be.COND-2PL

'Well, you would know that too, wouldn't you?' (Ross 1992, p. 167)

Thus, there are several important differences between the typical forms that affirmative-expectancy tags take in N and S dialects, including the usual spelling of the particle, its typical phonetic realizations, whether or not it can be deleted, and whether or not a subject pronoun is usually present.⁸

⁸There are also further differences, the description of which would take us into too much detail. The interested reader is referred to Rottet and Sprouse (2006).

We saw above that LW does not typically use tag questions when a negative reply is expected. Modern CW, however, frequently does use tag questions here as well. In S there are two major patterns in use. In the first, the negative adverb *nag* (or *nac*) precedes a verb and a subject pronoun as in (13), while in the second, no negative particle occurs before the verb (14), which, when consonant-initial, is soft mutated (15).

(13)	Ti	ddim	yn	becso	am
	you	NEG	PROG	worry	for
	ddim	byd,	nag	wyt	ti?
	NEG	world	NEG	are	you

'You're not worrying about anything, are you?' (Morgan 2000, p. 121)

(14)	Dwyt	ti	ddim	yn	anghofio
	NEG.are	you	NEG	PRED	forget
	dim,	wyt	Ti,	Gwen?	
	anything	are	you	Gwen	

'You're not forgetting anything, are you Gwen?' (Jones 1995, p. 44)

(15)	[F]ydd	e'	ddim	yn	syrpreis,	fydd	e?
	be.3SG-FUT	he	NEG	PRED	surprise	be.3SG-FUT	he

'It won't be a surprise, will it?' (Elis 1980, p. 21)

The pattern in (14) and (15) works, then, more or less like English, in that an affirmative tag is attached to a negative declarative sentence and implies expectation of a negative answer.

In N, there are also two major patterns for tags when a negative reply is expected. The first is essentially the same as the S pattern illustrated in (13), except that the subject pronoun is typically omitted.

(16) Dwyt ti ddim yn Twllu 'r lle [...],
 NEG. are you NEG PROG Darken the place
 nag wyt?
 NEG be.2SG

'You're not going back there [...], are you?' (Prichard 1988, p 108)

The second pattern common in N is like the first except that it adds the particle *yn* to the beginning of the tag.

(17) A 'd ydi hi byth yn
 and NEG is she never PRED
 dŵad nŵan yn nag ydi
 come now Q NEG is

'And she never comes now, does she?' (Roberts 1995, p. 46)

These patterns are summarized in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 illustrates the third person singular present tense tag equivalent to 'isn't he?' Table 2 shows the forms equivalent to the existential tag 'isn't there?' or 'aren't there?' and is included here because there is less variation in form, making it easier for the non-Welsh-speaking reader to compare the different patterns.

	Literary Welsh	North Walian	South Walian
expecting positive answer (cf. 'isn't he?')	onid yw?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yn dydi? (on'd ydi?) • tydi? (dydi?) • ydi? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on'd yw e? • nag yw e?
expecting negative answer (cf. 'is he?')	---	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nag ydi? • yn nag ydi? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nag yw e? • yw e?

Table 1: Comparison of major Welsh tag questions for 3sg present tense of 'to be'

	Literary Welsh	North Walian	South Walian
expecting positive answer (cf. 'isn't there / aren't there?')	onid oes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yn does? (on'd oes) • toes? (does) • oes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on'd oes e? • nag oes e?
expecting negative answer (cf. 'is there / are there?')	---	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nag oes? • yn nag oes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nag oes e? • oes e?

Table 2: Comparison of major Welsh tag question types for existential tags

It seems clear that it would be completely undesirable for the teacher of Welsh to present all of these patterns together in the classroom, at least early on in the pedagogical sequence, if ever. Which of these patterns, then, should a teacher present?

Let us briefly consider this question in the light of the criteria examined in the previous section for establishing a pedagogical norm.

The epilinguistic criterion would probably identify the *oni(d)* tags of LW as the most appropriate target, since these are arguably the most valorized. However, in terms of the acquisitional criterion, the LW tags are more difficult to acquire and manipulate correctly insofar as they involve the increasingly rare aspirate mutation, and in terms of the sociolinguistic criterion the LW tags are disfavored because of their rarity in speech today. Furthermore, the LW pattern does not offer a tag pattern to use when a negative reply is expected, whereas we have seen that Welsh speakers regularly use tags for this purpose. For all of these reasons, we must conclude that the LW tags are not the best choice for initial presentation of tag questions in Welsh.

Some of the regional patterns can be excluded by the sociolinguistic criteria on the grounds that they are not highly valorized, or that they are too regional in character. For example, the S pattern which takes the form verb + pronoun, though it is acquisitionally easy for native speakers of English whose language uses the same pattern, is likely to be stigmatized, at least by some N speakers, since it may be perceived as a direct translation from English (which it probably is, historically). Similarly, the N-specific forms, in particular those which delete the particle but maintain a [d] or [t] prefix on the verb, and those which make use of *yn* + *nag*, are sure to be perceived as too "northern" in character and would probably not be an

appealing model for students with ties to South Wales.

The sociolinguistic criterion leads us then to identify the *on'd* + verb pattern for tags when an affirmative answer is expected, and the *nag* + verb pattern when a negative answer is expected, as the pedagogically most appropriate starting point. Both N and S dialect areas share these patterns, at least to some degree, and therefore these patterns are geographically more neutral than the others.

As to whether or not to include a pronoun in the tag, this is a small enough matter that examples could be given of both the N and S patterns, and indeed, it is impossible to completely avoid regional forms since the third singular present tense interrogative form of 'to be' will necessarily have a regional coloring, *yw* in S tags and *ydi* in N tags. Thus, *on'd yw e* (with the pronoun *e* 'he') and *on'd ydi* (without a pronoun) could be presented from the outset as fixed expression variants. There is, however, an acquisitional reason for preferring tags that do not include the pronoun, all else being equal (e.g., *on'd oes?* versus *on'd oes e?* 'isn't there/aren't there?'), which is that the tag question without a subject pronoun can serve as a kind of prompt for the responsive. Instead of using uniform words for 'yes' and 'no', answers to yes-no questions in Welsh take the form of responsives which include a verb form, and in the negative, the particle *na(g)* plus a verb form. This parallel between question tag and responsive is illustrated in (18) and (19).

(18) Q: Mae llawer o bobl yma, on'd oes?

'There are lots of people here

R: Oes.

'Yes (there are).'

(19) Q: Does dim llawer o bobl yma, nag oes?

'There aren't many people here, are there?'

R: Nag oes.

'No (there aren't).'

There is less of a parallel between question tag and responsive when the subject pronoun is included in the former, since it is nearly always excluded in the latter.

4. Summary and conclusions

In this paper a particularly complex and variable structure of Welsh,

namely tag questions used with verb-initial (VSO) declaratives, was examined in the light of the criteria used for establishing a pedagogical norm. It was found that the best starting point for teaching Welsh tag questions are tags of the type *on'd* + verb, e.g., *on'd wyt?* 'aren't you?' *on'd oes?* 'isn't there?aren't there?' *on'd bydd?* 'won't he (be)?' etc., and of the *nag wyt* 'are you?' *nag oes* 'is there/are there?' *na fydd?* 'will he (be)?' etc. These two patterns appear to have the widest geographical distribution, are the least marked in terms of perceptions of regional origin, and they are also pedagogically useful in that they anticipate the shape of the responsive.

At a later stage, when tag questions are revisited in the cyclical process of instruction, the more regional variants can be presented for passive knowledge (or active knowledge for those learners who wish to concentrate on a particular regional variety). At the last stage in the sequence, learners would be presented the literary form of the tags, which they will be unlikely to need to produce but are certain to encounter if they read Welsh literature.

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Celtic Studies in European Higher Education: CRAMLAP – Celtic, Regional and Minority Languages Abroad Project

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The Celtic, Regional and Minority Languages Abroad Project (CRAMLAP) is funded by the European Commission to research the provision and pedagogy of regional and minority languages outside their national borders in Europe. The teaching of Celtic languages across Europe was the focus in year one (2003-2004). This article summarizes the qualitative data received in response to questionnaires sent to institutions across Europe offering Celtic Studies. Responses indicated that Celtic Studies are quite widely available across Europe. The languages are taught in comparative linguistics, linguistics and English departments, with few dedicated Celtic departments or sections outside the Celtic countries. Irish is supported abroad by Irish government grant aid which will become more widely available in the immediate future. Many of the teachers have considerable experience, but limited pedagogic training. The lack of suitable teaching resources is the most commonly expressed concern.

The Project

As an outcome of the European Year of Languages 2001 and a public consultation in 2003, the European Commission adopted an Action Plan *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity* for the period 2004-2006:

(http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/doc/official/keydoc/actlang/act_lang_en.pdf).