

English swearword use by Welsh-English bilinguals in Welsh-language tweets

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When is a word “English”, anyway?

BETHAN TOVEY - ENGLISH SWEARWORDS IN WELSH-LANGUAGE TWEETS



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Code-switching vs. Borrowing:

- *#*@*!– length of the lexical unit?
- *#*@*!– morphological assimilation?
- *#*@*!– phonological assimilation?
- *#*@*!– presence in dictionaries and pedagogy?
- *#*@*!– frequency of use?

Testing the criteria:

- *#*a*!– current focus: integration
- *#*a*!– morphological integration
- *#*a*!– phonological integration needs a proxy
- *#*a*!– testing orthographic integration: do W-En bilinguals spell En-origin words differently when writing in colloquial Welsh?

Welsh orthography represents sounds very differently from English:

cuddle

/'kʌdl/ /'kiðlɛ/

bead byd

/bid/

Finding data:

- *#***a***!- CMC: shares features of written and spoken language
- *#***a***!- Twitter: lends itself to informal communicative registers
- *#***a***!- enough Welsh data to provide a decent corpus (about 1.2m words, in this case)

Procedure (briefly!):

- *#*a*!– run python programme “get-old-tweets” on frequency-list-derived multi-word search terms
- *#*a*!– clean data, retaining only Welsh tweets from accounts that tweet in a personal (i.e. non-corporate) voice
- *#*a*!– use CorCenCC tools to segment and tag the resulting texts

Does Welsh even **have** swearwords?



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Replying to [@mattmccormick](#)

4:41 am - 4 Jan 2013



Is swearing allowed by welsh people?

been reading a interview with Lostprophets and Ian said F**K and he said something like he shouldn't be swearing cos he's welsh and his mum won't be happy (he's 31 LOL) so is swearing wrong in wales?



1 following



13 answers



Answers

Relevance ▼



🏆 **Best Answer:** There are no swear words in the Welsh language. We are God fearing chapel people and if we swore everybody would be talking about us in the corner shop

Anonymous · 1 decade ago



6



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Comment



Asker's rating ★★★★★



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dan dân

Disgrifiad o rywun slei a sarfffaidd ei ffyrdd. Bastad sy' wastad a chyllell barod i bob cefn.

cer i grafu

Awgrymiad i berson eu bod yn llawn cachu ag fod angen iddynt adael yn unionsyth.

Why are English-origin swearwords so common in Welsh?

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Ffyc me dwi di gneud dim ond edrych ar gwaith fi ers ta pedair awr a dwi dal myn dalld DIM BYD

(Fuck me I've done nothing but look at my work for like four hours and I still don't understand ANYTHING)

Anodd weithiau pan fo rhywun yn protestio'n ddiwyd, dim ond i'r clowns sy'n llywodraethu gachu arnot ti ar fympwy! #bastads
(It's hard sometimes when you protest diligently, only for the clowns in charge to shit on you on a whim! #bastards)

Mae ishe blydi gras.

Give me strength.

(literally: Bloody virtue is needed.)

Discourse structure:

- *#*a*!– bilinguals code-switch
- *#*a*!– code-switching is common at boundaries
- *#*a*!– swearwords are often used as DMs
- *#*a*!– DMs usually precede/follow boundaries
- *#*a*!– bilinguals may find it hard to fully deactivate their most-used DMs

Swearing and emotion:

- *#*a*!- swearing often fulfils emotional functions
- *#*a*!- emotionality of swearwords is highest in one's dominant language, and higher in naturalistically-acquired languages
- *#*a*!- more young W-En bilinguals acquire Welsh at school, and are En-dominant
- *#*a*!- traditional W swearwords are fairly mild and tend to be religious in nature - En borrowings usually stronger

Preliminary results

The swearwords:

*#*a*!- fuck

*#*a*!- bloody

*#*a*!- damn

*#*a*!- shit

Coding:

***#@!- morphology:** Welsh, English, None

W: "dammo", "ffwcian"

E: "ffycd", "ffycsêcs"

N: "blydi", "ffac", "dam", "shite"

***#@!- orthography:** Welsh, English, Mixed

W: "blyditywydd", "ffycoff", "damo"

E: "bloody", "damn", "feck", "shitforbrêns"

M: "bludi", "dam", "ffwck", "focin"

Results - raw counts:

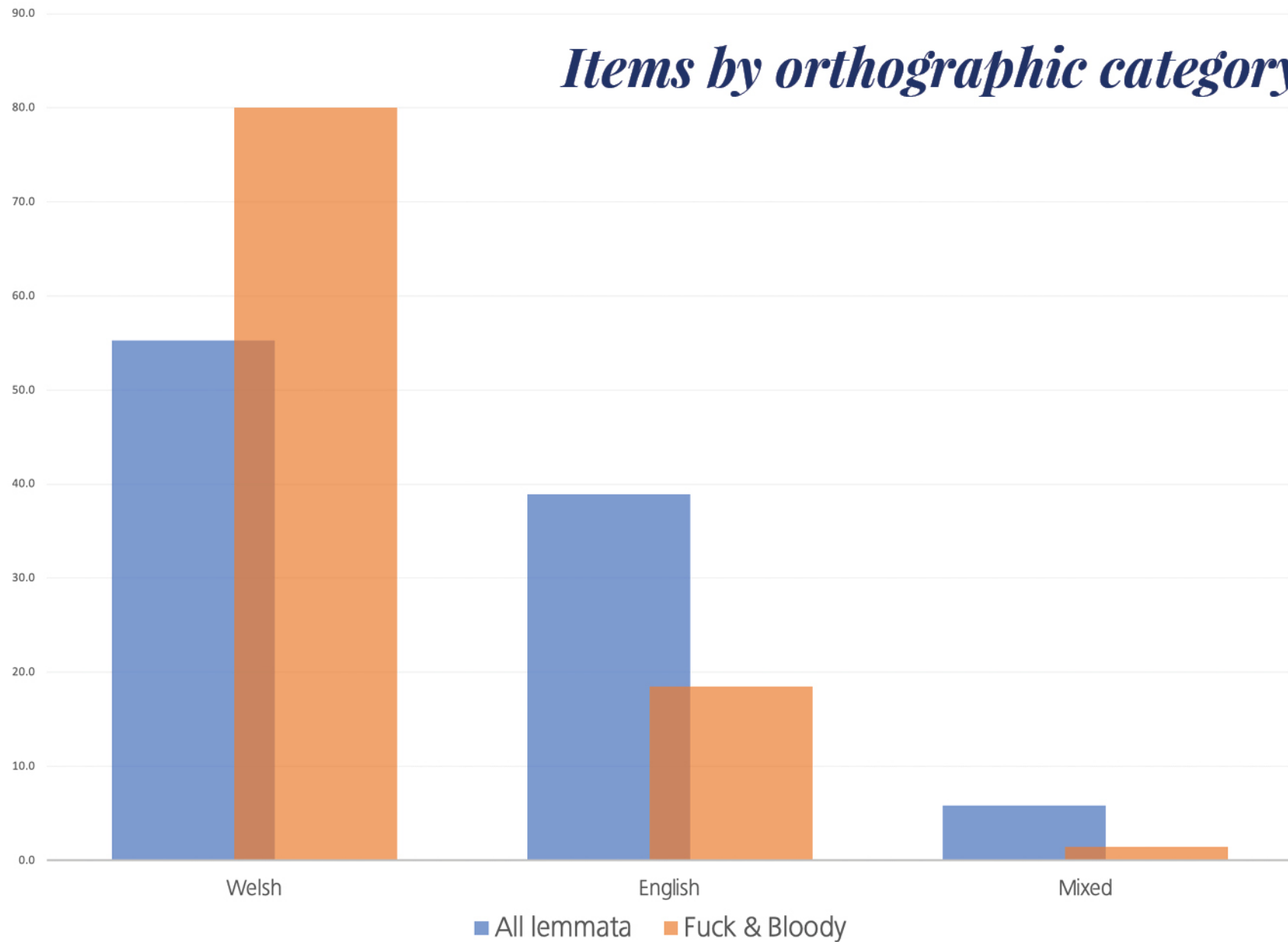
		<i>orthography</i>			
		WELSH	ENGLISH	MIXED	TOTALS
<i>morphology</i>	WELSH	66	0	1	67
	ENGLISH	209	69	5	283
	NONE	500	408	22	930
	TOTALS	775	477	28	1280

Results - orthography % by lemma:

orthography

	WELSH	ENGLISH	MIXED
BLOODY	86.7%	13.1%	0.3%
SHIT	-	100%	-
FUCK	73.4%	23.9%	2.7%
DAMN	61.0%	18.6%	20.3%
AVERAGE	55.3%	38.9%	5.8%

Items by orthographic category



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Implications:

- *#@!– En-origin words whose phonology demands different W and En orthographic strategies are found with W orthography in Welsh CMC
- *#@!– the words in this study are far more frequently produced with W orthography, even if they have clearly En morphology
- *#@!– analysis of broader data needed in order to understand the interaction of different kinds of linguistic integration