

## Rhagair / Foreword

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*in Welsh and English*

I nifer ohonom sydd wedi bod yn rhan o weithgaredd y *Linguasphere* o'r dyddiau cynnar mae ymddangosiad y gyfrol hon ar drothwy'r oes newydd yn amserol iawn. Teimlaf mai anrhydedd yw cael llunio rhagair byr i'r ddogfen hanesyddol hon.

Yr hyn sydd yn wyrthiol ydyw mai gwaith un ysgolhaig yn bennaf sydd gennym yma : un a fu yn gweithio am hir amser heb lawer o gymorth ymchwil unrhyw sefydliad. Mae hon yn gyfraniad afaelgar a gwerthfawr, yn dangos gallu i gofrestru a dadansoddi yn gyfwin nifer o bynciau. Y gwir pwysicaf a digamsyniol yw bod newydd-deb yn y gwaith.

Fy ngobaith i ydyw y bydd a gwaith arloesol yn ysgogi nifer eraill i fanylu ac i ychwanegu at y gwaith maes ymhob rhan o'r byd. Mae' r cwestiynau allweddol a godir yn y rhagarweiniad, boed hwy yn athronyddol neu yn ymarferol, yn haeddu' r sylw mwyaf oddi wrth bawb sydd yn ystyried dyfodol ein byd o ddifrif.

Un o gryfderau amlwg y fethodoleg a ddefnyddir yn y gyfrol hon yw' r gallu i restru ac i leoli ieithoedd y byd yn annibynnol ar unrhyw system hierarchaidd o gyfundrefnau gwleidyddol a thueddiadau diwylliannol ac economaidd unffurfiol.

Mae hyn yn peri i mi ofyn a yw' n bosibl defnyddio' r *Gofrestr* fel adnodd i ddeall, ac fel arf i wrthsefyll, y duedd i gydymffurfio a fynnir gan wladwriaethau pen-arglwyddiaethol neu hegemoneg ein byd ?

I nifer eraill nid dyma' r cwestiwn amlwg na phriodol, ond gan fod cynifer o'n ieithoedd yn prysur ddiflannu, teg yw gofyn am ddefnyddioldeb y prosiect. Yn y bôn, prosiect addysgiadol a gwyddonol yw y menter hon sydd yn agored i bawb, i gyfrannu ato, ac i'w ddefnyddio fel bo'r galw.

To those engaged in the activities of the *Linguasphere* programme from its early days, the appearance of this volume at the dawn of the new millennium is a very timely affair. I feel deeply honoured to have been invited to pen a short preface to this historically significant document.

What makes it an extraordinary accomplishment is that this is predominantly the work of one scholar, researching alone without the advantage of a large research institute to fall back upon. This is an accessible and significant contribution, which demonstrates an extraordinary capacity for codifying and interpreting the myriad factors which constitute the *Linguasphere* Register. The most significant feature is its pioneering novelty.

My sincere hope is that this innovative work will inspire many others to fill in the extra details required, having first undertaken meticulous field-work in all parts of the world. The fundamental questions which are raised in the introduction, be they of a philosophical or practical nature, deserve the serious attention of all who claim to be vitally interested in the future of our world.

One of the obvious virtues of the methodology employed in this volume is the ability to classify and locate all the languages of the world independently of its hierarchic political system and homogenising economic and cultural trends.

This innovative contribution leads one to ask whether it is possible to use the Register as an interpretative resource and powerful instrument to withstand those homogenising trends which are determined by hegemonic powers.

For many other users of this work, this would not be the central, obvious question to raise. However, given that so many languages are currently endangered, it is only fair to ask questions concerning the potential application of this project. Fundamentally, this venture is an educational and scientific project which is open to all who wish to contribute, and to use for their own purposes.

Deallaf nad yw yn brosiect gwleidyddol fel y cyfryw, ond mawr obeithiaf y bydd yr adnodd unigryw hwn yn cael effaith llesol ar ddyfodol ieithoedd llai eu defnydd ar draws ein byd.

Nid ein pwrpas chwaith yw esgeuluso buddiannau a chyflwr ieithoedd grymus y byd. I'r gwrthwyneb, os derbynir ein dadl fod pob iaith yn perthyn i'r un system yn y pen draw - fel y dywed ein arwyddair "seren yw llais pob un yng ngalaeth yr ieithoedd". Yr hyn sydd yn arwyddocaol yw'r berthynas rhwng yr ieithoedd a *Gofrestrir* yma.

Maddeuwch imi am grybwyll esiampyl o hyn o'n profiad ni yng Nghymru. Diddorol yw nodi mai yng Nghymru y mae cartref llythrennol ac ysbrydol y prosiect. Ar un wedd mae perthynas hanesyddol y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg yn ymddangos yn syml. Erbyn heddiw ni chymhlethir y sefyllfa gan ymyrraeth nifer helaeth o ieithoedd eraill, ond hyd yn oed yma mae'n anodd sicrhau dyfodol dwyieithog i'r genedl, cymaint yw llwyddiant y broses o Seisnigeiddio'r wlad.

Ar y llaw arall, ceir yn yr India, cartref ysbrydol arall i'r prosiect, berthynas gwbl wahanol rhwng yr ieithoedd brodorol a'r Saesneg. Sylwer, serch hynny, bod ein cyd-weithwyr yna yn rhannu nifer o'r un gobeithion a phryderon â ni wrth drafod rôl iaith a dewis iaith mewn peuoedd fel addysg, gwleidyddiaeth, y gyfraith ac adloniant. Mater o gyd-destun, cymhlethdod ac o raddfa ydyw.

Os oes yna un neges amlwg i bawb yn y gwaith swmpus hwn yna rhaid argyhoeddi'r cyhoedd ac asiantaethau dylanwadol y byd bod ein ieithoedd yn eiddo i ni oll ac ein bod yn rhannu'r cyfrifoldeb drostynt. Da o beth fyddai gweld sefydlu cylchoedd trafod a gweithgorau ymarferol ym mhob rhan o'r byd i weithio dros y realiti, sef amlieithrwydd sydd yn ganolog wrth i ni ddeall ac ymdopi â'r byd heddiw.

Fel y dywed fy nghyfaill, a'm cyd-weithiwr, Roland Breton, y mae Dafydd Dalby wedi treulio rhan helaeth o'r degawd diwethaf yn ysgogi eraill i rannu ei freuddwyd, sef trefnu holl gyfoeth ieithoedd y byd oddi mewn i un system. Nid gormod yw dweud fod ar y gymuned ryngwladol ddyled enfawr iddo am ei arweiniad, a' i ddyfalbarhad wrth arloesi yn y maes hwn.

Braint i mi yw cael cydweithio â Dafydd Dalby fel ffrind agos, a braint bellach yw cael y cyfle i gyflwyno'r rhagair hwn. Mawr yw ein dyled iddo am ei gampwaith.

I recognise that this is not primarily a political exercise, but it is my fervent hope that this unique resource will have a benign influence on the plight of so many lesser used languages worldwide.

In stressing this aspect, we do not ignore the interests and needs of the stronger world languages. In fact, the opposite is the case if we remember that one of the fundamental tenets of our approach is to conceive all the world's languages in terms of a single interpretative system - a principle encapsulated in our motto: "in the galaxy of languages, each person's voice is a star". What is of significance are the relationships identified within and among the languages in this Register.

Permit me to illustrate this in relation to our own experience here in Wales, which is both the spiritual and literal home of the project. From one perspective the historical relationship between Welsh and English is apparently very simple. Today our situation is not unduly complicated by the presence of a number of other languages, but even here it is difficult to guarantee a bilingual future for the nation, such has been the success of the Anglicisation process in our country.

On the other hand in India, another spiritual home for the project, a rather different set of relationships obtain between the indigenous languages and English. Notwithstanding such differences, it is significant that our colleagues there share with us so many of the same hopes and fears in relation to the role of language and language choice in spheres such as education, government, the law and entertainment. It is a matter of degree, scale and context rather than of kind.

If there is one overarching message for all in this excellent work, it is that we need to convince both the general public and influential decision-making bodies, that the world's tapestry of language diversity belongs to all and that ultimately we all share responsibility for maintaining this rich diversity. An excellent by-product of this work, and of this conviction, would be the establishment of discussion groups and the initiation of pragmatic action to foster multilingual awareness and mutual respect as a cardinal principle of our attempts to interpret and adapt to the vagaries of this complex world.

As we have been reminded by my good friend and colleague, Roland Breton, Dafydd Dalby has spent much of the past decades seeking to inspire others to share in his vision of systematically arranging and interpreting the rich complexity of the world's languages. It is no exaggeration to claim that the international community owes him a great debt for his inspirational leadership and perseverance in pioneering a unique way of developing this syncretic field of language in the global context.

It is a great privilege to count Dafydd Dalby both as a colleague and a friend and it is an extra privilege to have had the opportunity to pen this Foreword. We are all greatly indebted to him for his work.