

DEVELOPMENT OF A WELSH LANGUAGE LEARNING WEBSITE - CYMRU ACADEMY

1. Introduction

The UK Statistics Authority released a report to showcase statistics about the use of the Welsh Language in Wales. In July 2019 - March 2020, it recorded that “78% of the Welsh population cannot speak Welsh”[1], when investigating the frequency of people speaking Welsh. This combined with the recent announcement of Duolingo, one of the most popular ways to learn a language online, “no longer supporting the Welsh Language” [2] for the “1.5 million people” [3] up to 2019 that started learning Welsh. This could suggest there is a gap, where there is people wanting to learn Welsh, and a lot of potential beginners wanting to learn the language, but few forms of learners accessing the resources required to learn the language. This has lead to the initiation of this project and the desired to produce a platform where adult beginners can learn the Welsh language online, through a website developed for this purpose.

2. Aim and Objectives

Aim -
The projects aim is to create an innovative educational website for adult beginners learning the Welsh Language.

- Objectives -**
- Conduct secondary research into the pivotal components required to create a language learning platform and the strategies and content required to provide effective resources
 - Conduct primary research and analyse data collected to understand the views and insights into requirements that potential users believe would be impactful to incorporate for a more effective and efficient language learning experience.
 - Produce designs that can be used to then implement a prototype of the Website for usability testing, feedback and outline future improvements required.
 - Evaluate the projects completion and the steps completed to provide insight into the projects successes or drawback and future recommendations concluded from the production of the project.

4. Design and Implementation

The design and implementation phase begun with creating digital wireframes based on the requirements outlined from the research insights gained within the literature review and survey analysis. These wireframes consisted in a number of web page designs that covered the potential navigation, interactive features, content layout, and website flow. After this process was complete, development of the database design was conducted. This included design and justification of the necessary fields, the datatypes and maximum amounts of data entry characters into these fields.

Within the summary of the research phase it was decided that the website would be created using HTML and PHP within Notepad++ to write the scripts for the website. Then, the website will use an XAMPP server on my personal device to develop the prototype of the website.

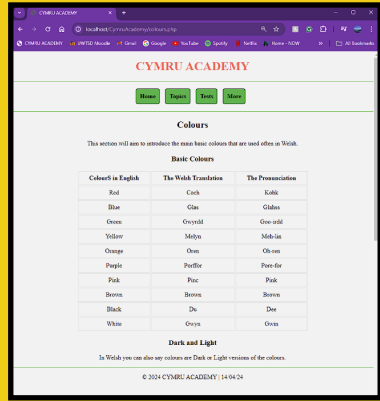


Figure 2 - Colours Topic Page

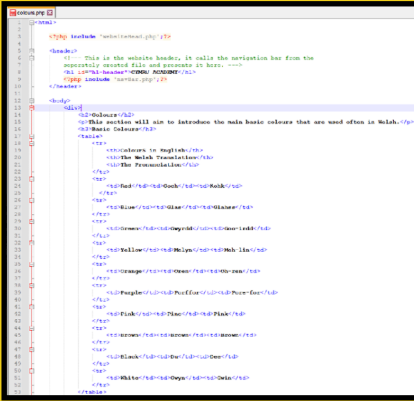


Figure 3 - Backend Script

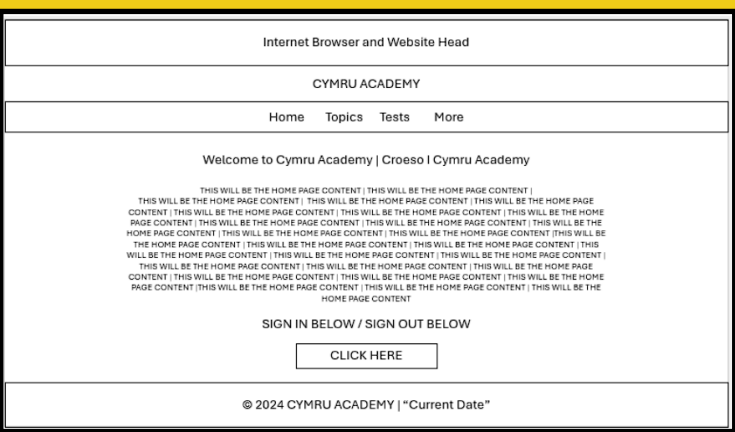


Figure 1 - Wireframe design of the Cymru Academy home page. The project was completed using a waterfall methodology to ensure that steps of the project were completed one by one in order before progression to the next stage. This kept the project flowing and progressing through the stages to follow the timeframe set.

Within the scripts of the website they included a number of ‘If’ and ‘Else’ statements. P, div, a, href, elements, tables, scripts, and functions were also used to complete the backend implementation of the digital wireframe designs. This along with a CSS created the final front end designs and successfully linked together with the database and server so that it was able to be hosted and functional as planned in the design stage.

5. Evaluation

From the feedback collected about the final prototype, we can see that this project is successful on the majority. There was complete development of topic pages supplying resource for learning, tests for assessing knowledge, connection to the working database for signing in accounts, designs catered to unfamiliar and familiar language learning website users. There was however improvements suggested including the implementation of an on website user to user chat for practising communicating, topics with sentence structures to develop speaking the language and not just words and their meanings, and possible improvements made to the usability for new first time users.

6. Conclusion

The completion of this project demonstrates what can be achieved within the time frames of a project like this, also what future endeavours could be taken to create a website like the one created within this project and possible better versions and implementations. This could be done by incorporating aspects that are beneficial and learning from the errors created within this project. If these are avoided and the project is replicated by another researcher, the outcome could be more beneficial to the users. Resulting in a more successful product that can be marketed towards people from Wales and outside of Wales, that are eager to learn and share Welsh.

7. Recommendations

The first recommendation that can be stated after completing this project is to research and potentially develop a working user to user chat system, that allows users to talk together online using the Welsh that they have learnt within the topics on the website. Also, topics could also be developed to incorporate other learning strategies and content to provide users with a more diverse form of learning the language. Furthermore, research further into cascading style sheets (CSS), to produce a further developed and professional website front end that the users will be able to use and understand effectively and efficiently to promote their learning focus on the content included.

8. References

- [1] GOV.WALES, “Welsh language use in Wales (initial findings): July 2019 to March 2020 (revised),” GOV.WALES, [Online], Available: <https://www.gov.wales/welsh-language-use-wales-initial-findings-july-2019-march-2020-revised-html#79590>
- [2] E. Price, “Welsh government accused of ‘breaking’ Welsh Duolingo course,” Nation. Cymru, [Online], Available: <https://nation.cymru/news/welsh-government-accused-of-breaking-welsh-duolingo-course/>
- [3] C. Watkins, “2020 Duolingo Language Report: United Kingdom,” Duolingo Blog, [Online], Available: <https://blog.duolingo.com/uk-language-report-2020/>

3. Research Methodology

The research methodology for this project was split into two aspects, the first of these consisting of a literature review, and the second of these was achieved by completing a survey. Both research methods were aimed to achieve insight into the aspects required to be included within the website design, currently available resources and the ways that content can be supplied and taught to new language learners. Also, the data produced from collecting survey responses allowed for analysis to be conducted, outlining requirements and key build components. The survey philosophy was aimed to be both positivism and phenomenological to gain both quantitative and qualitative data to understand viewpoints on the websites functionality and interactive aspects.