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‘Authentic’ Language as a Contested Concept in Brittany

Introduction

Many communities of minoritised language speakers in western Europe include significant populations of new speakers, or language users who have typically made the conscious choice to acquire the minoritised language in question through individual efforts rather than doing so through intergenerational transmission. This is certainly the case in Brittany as well, where it is common to talk of a divide between older speakers who grew up with the language, and younger ‘new’ speakers who have acquired the language through the school system in particular.

Older traditional speakers are characterised as using Breton with close family and neighbours of the same generation, and live in rural locations. They are generally not literate in Breton, having been schooled in French, and their language is sometimes termed *breton populaire* (Breton of the people) (Le Pipec, 2013). The majority of these speakers have few opportunities to use the language, and may suffer from first-language attrition effects. In contrast, younger speakers are characterised as living in larger towns which are more likely to have schools providing Breton-medium education. They are generally better educated and have more qualified employment opportunities than older speakers. Most come from French-speaking

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households and are literate in Breton, and their language is said to be influenced by the written form of their language (Le Ruyet, 2012). It can be noted that while there are far fewer younger speakers (3.8% of the total Breton population) than there are older speakers (28%) (Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg, n.d.), these speakers have been characterised as highly engaged in community and social efforts: it is incontrovertible that young, active speakers are visible and influential in Brittany, as elsewhere (Dołowy-Rybińska, 2020, p. 19).

This article sets out to examine the notion of 'authentic' language in Brittany by exploring the notion of 'authenticity' through a Bourdieusian lens, one which allows us to examine ideologies and discourses of what it means to speak 'authentically' related to notions of authority and constitutive power. It does so by examining questions of the claims made around the language of young, active speakers, how the status of a 'legitimate speaker' is conferred (or withheld), and to what extent the debate over such questions is able to be resolved, at least partially. The article also discusses to what extent such tensions are due to the processes of language revitalisation which Breton (like many other minority languages in Europe and beyond) is experiencing at the present time.

Language authenticity and language revitalisation

The revitalisation of a language means different things to different people and often prior ideological clarification (in the sense Fishman (2001) proposed) in a minortised setting has not been established, since other goals (such as establishing courses or schooling in the language) are seen as more pressing and take up a great deal of community energy. However, this can result in revitalisation efforts being contested by the language community when common goals and a common sense of understanding have not been established. Furthermore, the considerable efforts invested in constructing and implementing a standard can often be undermined by a sense of rejection from speakers who purportedly should benefit from the increased recognition of the language (Hornsby, 2015, p. 110), such as the native speakers of Breton mentioned above.

One aspect that is frequently criticised in the literature is the 'authenticity' of the language of new and/or younger speakers of Breton as the result of revitalisation processes. Authentic language is a contested term. Speakers, including new speakers, are very often expected to produce language 'authentically' if they are to be accepted in a speech community, most especially a minoritised language community. What is meant, though, by 'authentic

language'? The authenticity of the revitalisation processes of minority languages centres on what Bodó and Fazakas (2018, p. 571) identify as "a substantial similarity between previous and new linguistic practices, despite the break in continuity". In other words, for a number of minority language speakers, activists and commentators, the historicity of a particular minority language needs to be closely maintained if it is to count as the authentic expression of a particular community. However, given the many reports from a number of minority language communities that intergenerational transmission has considerably slowed down or has practically ceased, Woolard's (2016, p. 24) words that "authentic languages can be learned by no one; speakers are supposed to come by them 'naturally' rather than working to acquire them" highlight the dilemma many communities are facing; radically different linguistic forms are currently being produced in those communities with little or no intergenerational transmission, and who rely instead on alternative forms of transmission, such as the production of new speakers in a variety of educational settings.

Bodó and Fazakas (2018, p. 572) accurately note that while "language advocates work to create 'a bond with the past' (Bucholtz, 2003, p. 399), *revitalisation by definition means the introduction of new practices that are not directly connected to past ones*" (italics mine). Such new practices can include, to take two examples from Breton, 'orthographism' (the influence of spelling on pronunciation), and the spread of uvular [ʁ] in the face of historical [r] or [ɾ], which have been described by some researchers as "post-traditional speech varieties" (Moal et al., 2018, p. 2014). Hincks (2000, p. 31) points out the change in the intonation and accentuation of Breton is undoubtedly the most significant cause for concern, but such features can change without a language being considered to have become extinct.

There are at least two approaches to language revitalisation in the literature: 'static' and 'dynamic' (Marquis & Sallabank, 2014). In a 'static' discursive framework, the indigenous language has a mainly nostalgic value and the focus is on maintenance of the traditional language community, and its authority and legitimacy, rather than on the development of new users or uses, as in Romaine's (2006, p. 464) definition of language revitalisation. People who share this viewpoint are usually referred to as 'traditionalists'. Part of this viewpoint is linked to a continuing ideology of deficit when comparing the different ways people have acquired speakerhood in a particular minority language community.

In a 'dynamic' language ideology, local language is promoted as a source of shared identity for all; people who share this viewpoint aim to increase the number of speakers, expand the domains of the minority language, and increase its prestige. They may be more interested

in widening fluency than being concerned about accuracy in second-language acquisition terms, and actively seek new users, new forms, and new uses for the language.

All the above strategies and ideologies can exist simultaneously and in a parallel fashion in any situation of language minoritisation/revitalisation, and when they do, can lead to tensions within the community in question. One of the more obvious tensions which emerges is the 'production' of the next generation of minority language speakers. Whereas the obvious way for many supporters and revitalisers of minority languages is through intergenerational transmission, this can obviously prove problematic, since an endangered minority language is in that position *precisely* because such transmission has fallen to such low levels that speaker numbers in the younger generations are not being reproduced at the rate of older generations.

Thus authenticity, particularly authentic language, can become a point of contention in minority language communities. I have noted elsewhere that Breton, to take the example of a language where this contestation is particularly high, particularly the linguistic practices of new speakers, can be viewed as 'inauthentic' because of allegedly French phonetic influence and ignorance of 'native' Breton idioms and phraseology (reported in Hornsby, 2017, p. 100). What the problem (in perception) might be instead is the fluency of new speakers of Breton.

Understanding someone is not just a question of correct grammar and/or correct pronunciation, it is also the ability of the speaker to speak fluidly in a non-halting way, with an intonation which allows for good comprehension. Getting used to speaking with different speakers, with different styles of speaking is also an important factor. In Hornsby (2017) I refer to a young speaker who found his Breton improving when he started using the language for communicative purposes outside of the school. Similar evidence is available in the film *O Seizh Posubl* (Daniellou, 2009), where a man who had learned his Breton through Diwan and was subsequently employed as a radio interviewer found his fluency improved as he used the language in day-to-day interactions with older speakers. Moreover, in a recent film made in Breton (*N'eo ket echu ar fest ganimp*; Hirrien, 2017) we can note the playing out of the sociolinguistic notion of accommodation, which is the theory that people adjust (or accommodate) their style of speech to one another in order to communicate effectively (Gallois et al., 2005). The younger speaker shows some hesitancy, phrases his questions in such a way that the older speaker needs to reformulate them in order to understand them, but it is important to note here that authentic communication is taking place.

Language socialisation is also another important concept here, which focuses on how learners are socialised through the use of language as well as how they are socialised to use language (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p. 184). Language socialisation happens in an interactional context. In the above example, the communication in Breton is between an older, dialectal speaker and a younger speaker and both become socialised to each other's way of speaking over a period of time. We are often told that such intergenerational communication is rare. It is nevertheless 'authentic' in its nature (i.e. communication is achieved). It is no less authentic when new speakers gather to use Breton in different contexts, such as at a *fest noz* (a social event at which there is Breton folk music and singing and traditional dancing), or in an educational setting. Difference does not equal inauthenticity.

Language authenticity on the linguistic marketplace

The concept of 'authentic language' in any given minoritised language setting is vague and means different things to different speakers and to different commentators. Very often, deciding how 'authentic' speech is has little to do with the actual linguistic output under consideration and more to do with the 'legitimacy' of the locutor who is producing the utterance. Thus, if the speaker and the language she produces matches the expectations of the hearer, the speaker has legitimacy conferred on her and her language is considered 'authentic'. However, should one or both of these expectations not be met, the resulting evaluation is that some aspect of the interaction is 'inauthentic'.

The social order in which these interactions take place has been described by Bourdieu as a 'marketplace'. Within this linguistic marketplace, the different positions occupied by various speakers are hierarchical in nature; the marketplace functions relatively smoothly if this hierarchy is observed. However, the relative peaceful nature of the marketplace is disrupted when this hierarchy is disrupted or interpreted in a non-orthodox way. "[S]peaking in unexpected places, with passing in unexpected ways" (Pennycook, 2010, p. 90) is one of the ways in which the stability of the linguistic marketplace can be disrupted, and given the fragile and increasingly fragmented nature of minoritised linguistic marketplaces, 'passing' (in Piller's (2002) sense of the word) can depend as much on perceptions of speaker legitimacy as much as correctness of speech or apparent competence and/or fluency in the minoritised language.

Legitimate language and language practices, according to Bourdieu, are those that have official recognition, and through which other forms of cultural capital are controlled and distributed. Gaining access to authentic language and having the right to use it therefore depend on the recognition granted to the language user as being a 'legitimate speaker'. Hence, being able to claim oneself as a 'speaker' of a minority language depends not just on being able to control the forms of the language to produce the language accurately and fluently but is also contingent on whether or not others recognise you as a speaker of the minority language in question. This recognition does not hinge on some objective or psychological measure of competence, such as one's intelligibility, but rather, as Bourdieu points out, on the particular conditions of the linguistic marketplace that grant legitimacy.

Legitimate speakers

Bourdieu's (1991) concepts of cultural and linguistic capital as the symbolic representations of resources to which social actors have different levels of access are particularly important when considering the notion of authenticity in the context of minoritised languages. According to Bourdieu and other sociologists (Bourdieu, 1991; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), what defines speakers as legitimate is their right to speak and have the power to impose reception – that is, to decide who is recognised as an equal, as another legitimate speaker. This raises the question – how does a legitimate speaker recognise another legitimate speaker? In this schema, a legitimate speaker possesses a certain level of linguistic capital.

What is linguistic capital? According to Bourdieu, linguistic capital (as a form of cultural capital) is the accumulation of a person's linguistic skills that determines their position in society. For our purposes here, we can understand 'society' as a language community, a group of language speakers or users among whom various discourses and ideologies circulate.

One of the discourses which circulates among Breton speakers (or to say otherwise the Breton-speaking community) concerns the source and quality of Breton linguistic capital. How is this linguistic capital acquired? According to Bourdieu, it is developed through nurture attributes and processes (that is to say, the environment), rather than natural attributes (for example, genetic inheritance) (Bourdieu, 1986). In other words, having a Breton-speaking parent does not guarantee that someone will be Breton-speaking him or herself. It is important to remember that the possession of linguistic capital is enhanced by numerous factors, such as the development of a critical attitude and consciousness,

mastery of communicative tools, and active involvement in oral conversation and social interactions. Thus the richness of this accumulation of linguistic capital is a very important factor in the profile of a legitimate speaker.

As far as successful language acquisition goes, no characteristic is more stable than age. Although older learners can be very effective language learners, most research shows that the younger the learner is, the more effective the learning is (Bialystok & Hakuta, 1994). The advantages of younger learners are well known, including the ease of acquiring native-like pronunciation, stress and fluency. These advantages have been variously attributed to (a) critical and sensitive periods of language learning, (b) age-related general cognitive differences, (c) language and cultural shock, (d) lower expectations and fewer pressures for children and (e) differences in learning situations. Though most advantages seem to rest with the young, adults are favoured in terms of metacognition, strategy awareness and use, and explicit grammatical understanding. Some older learners can make significant progress in language learning by accentuating positive features and disregarding, to the greatest extent possible, fear and social comparison (Oxford & Lee, 2008, p. 307). In other words, one can become a speaker of Breton (or any other language) at any age, as Singleton (1995, p. 20) has argued.

Thus in many situations of language acquisition, early exposure, especially in the form of intergenerational transmission, is the optimal situation for effective transmission. However, in the case of those Breton speakers who acquired their skills intergenerationally in the middle of the twentieth century or earlier, Dressler (1991) has shown that in many cases language acquisition has been imperfect. Dressler worked with native speakers of Breton and was able to categorise them based on their language skills:

		Born between
(1)	Healthy speakers	1892–1932
(2)	Weaker speakers	1911–1942
(3)	Preterminal speakers	1938–1951
(4)	Better terminal speakers	1936–1952
(5)	Worse terminal speakers	1933–1962
(6)	Rememberers	[not considered]

These categories can be broken down in a descending scale. Healthy speakers are fully competent speakers of the language, whereas weaker speakers show less competence

than the healthy speakers, but are still fully functioning in the receding language. Terminal speakers are beginning to lose some of the vocabulary and grammar of the language and do not remember a complete form of the language as it had been spoken by the larger community, which used it in all domains. They can be further divided into preterminal, and better and worse terminal speakers, which suggests that the loss of linguistic competence is slight in preterminal cases but severe in worse terminal cases. A rememberer knows individual words or phrases (and sometimes entire texts) but cannot use the target language productively (Grinevald & Bert, 2011, pp. 50–51).

Dressler shows how these native speakers of Breton can show phonological interference, with terminal speakers putting the final stress on words (as in French) and, in the other direction, older healthy speakers having a strong Breton accent in French. Furthermore, according to Dressler, terminal speakers do not suppress all 'deviant' processes (because they had not been subjected to enough sociolinguistic control which normally suppresses the natural allophonic processes which are at the disposal of small children). Moreover, stylistic shrinkage can also occur: "The whole style repertoire shrinks to a very narrow one of casual styles both in phonology and syntax" (Dressler, 1991, p. 101). There are also massive lexical loans from the dominant into the recessive language. Furthermore, word formation is non-productive. Today creative production of morphological neologisms is lost, even with healthy dialect speakers. In the nineteenth century, *batteuse* (threshing machine) was translated into Breton by its speakers as *dornerez* but in the twentieth century, *moissoneuse-batteuse* (combine harvester) was adopted wholesale in the lexicon of Breton speakers. Finally, Dressler notes, inflected forms, such as impersonal forms (e.g. *bez–er* 'one is') tend to be non-productive. Terminal speakers never used such forms in Dressler's study, and pre-terminal speakers only use them sometimes, and only ever in the present tense (Dressler, 1991, pp. 101–102).

Thus, being a legitimate speaker of Breton cannot solely be tied to being a fully competent speaker of Breton in all situations. No one would claim that Dressler's Breton speakers were less legitimate that other Breton speakers – it would be ridiculous to claim otherwise, since these speakers grew up with the language. This raises the issue of the use of terms such as mother tongue, native language, parental language or indeed, second language, etc. These terms are not necessarily how speakers describe the languages they use and indeed do not tell us much about the subjective, emotional relationships with languages which are central to personal experiences of language use and language learn-

ing (Kramsch, 2009; Pavlenko, 2012). We can therefore no longer make assumptions about how a legitimate speaker of Breton might have acquired his or her linguistic skills. What is 'authentic' language in this case?

It certainly does not equal competent use of Breton in Dressler's examples, since only one category in his research shows fully competent usage, namely his 'healthy speakers'. We can no longer assume that a so-called native speaker is more competent – and therefore more legitimate – than a new speaker, who may in fact speak Breton more frequently than someone who heard the language in their childhood, but who does not use it as an adult in 2022. This is backed up by Singleton's interpretation that "the evidence does not consistently support the hypothesis that younger learners are inevitably more efficient than older learners in the phonetic/phonological domain" (Singleton, 1989, p. 137) when learning a language. Nikolov (2000, p. 122) has further shown that "exceptionally successful learners […] want to sound like natives, they share intrinsic motivation in the target language which is often part of their profession, or they are integratively motivated". Thus some learners – by no means the majority, but in a number of notable cases – can match or surpass the linguistic skills of native speakers in a minority language. Much depends, as noted by Nikolov, on the motivation of these learners and the learning context in which they find themselves. Legitimacy as a speaker can be earned as much as it can be intergenerationally bestowed.

It is therefore perhaps more useful to think of the act of Breton speaking as a situated practice within the Breton language community. The Breton language community is not simply the sum of all people who can speak Breton, but a dynamic and complex network of people who identify with and who use their language in ways which are both heterogeneous and interrelated. Breton speakers do not all use Breton in the same way, so not all speak the same type of Breton and do not all use Breton for the same social purposes (Le Nevez, 2013, p. 91). Thus, being a 'legitimate' speaker of Breton means engaging with the Breton language in some way – whether it is having a childhood link with the language and using that linguistic knowledge when appropriate (and which may not be very often), or whether it means using the linguistic skills acquired over the course of a year in an intensive course as an adult – both are 'legitimate' ways of speaking Breton.

In linguistics, the idea exists of the 'ideal native speaker', whom Chomsky (1966) has defined as a speaker who is capable of giving valid judgments on their language and of identifying ill-formed grammatical expressions although they may not be able to explain exactly why they are ill-formed. Chomsky also states that

> linguistic theory is concerned with an ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance. (Chomsky, 1966, p. 3)

However, the 'homogenous speech community' in all probability does not exist, in both majority language communities and most certainly not in minoritised, fragmented language communities. And the speaker who does not have memory limitations, is not distracted and who does not make mistakes does not exist either! It is therefore important not to define legitimate social participation solely through the production of specific forms of language, but rather through the shared experience of people and their on-going commitment to a shared understanding of a community of practice (Le Nevez, 2013, p. 98).

Linguistic continuum in situations of language minoritisation

In many situations of minoritised languages, we can detect a linguistic continuum, a continuous spectrum of speech varieties ranging from highly dialectal forms to more educated, standardised forms, despite the myth that only two varieties exist: the Breton of the people and so-called neo-Breton. This continuum is located within Bourdieu's notion of the marketplace, in which certain forms closer to one end of the scale can be deemed to be more authentic (or of more value) than other forms which are located toward the other end of the scale, described by Le Pipec (2013) as an axis gradually leading from the most 'endogenous' (i.e. not showing any external influence) Breton to the most 'exogenous' (showing considerable external influence).

According to Le Pipec, the most endogenous Breton is the one least influenced by French, and Breton in its most exogenous form displays the greatest influence of French. In this schema, the last 'natural' speakers are those whose mother tongue is Breton and for whom it is a dominant language – and Le Pipec considers that they speak an endogenous form of Breton, or one which is 'uncontaminated' and therefore has a higher value on the linguistic marketplace. Le Pipec places so-called terminal speakers, such as those mentioned above, more towards exogenous Breton, because they are bilinguals whose competence is limited in Breton and very inferior to their mastery of French. This does not, in fact, make

much sense since the Breton of these speakers is likely to be fossilised – good at some levels (e.g. chit chat) and less good at other levels (e.g. expressing more complex ideas). A limited repertoire probably represents a developmental break rather than an encroachment of French on their linguistic skills in Breton.

Moreover, what Le Pipec's schema does not take into account is a scale of language proficiency. And proficiency in language can be obtained from a number of starting points. Intergenerational transmission is of course the most efficient way of ensuring this – together with early socialisation in the language – and even though there are a number of examples of native speaker and new speaker parents transmitting Breton to children in the twenty-first century, these examples are the exception. This is not to say that fluent Breton speakers cannot gain their proficiency by other means. For example, a young speaker I interviewed in 2014 pointed out that when he was at a Diwan lower secondary school, older people in his village seemed reluctant to speak to him in Breton, but once he had left school and was working locally, he was able to communicate much more easily with older speakers by adapting the way he spoke to local speech norms (Hornsby, 2019, p. 396).

Let us take another example. The sociolinguist and broadcaster Fañch Broudic, speaking of the death of Christian Fagon, points out that he had learned Breton at the end of his secondary studies and that he had acquired a very good intuitive knowledge. In other words, a "Breton speaker of good quality" (*bretonnant de bon aloi*, as Fañch Broudic describes him) acquired his status as a speaker after the age of natural acquisition (Broudic, 2017).

So why does language proficiency differ in the Breton-speaking community? The simple answer is: the interruption in intergenerational transmission which occurred in the 1950s, when Breton-speaking parents massively switched to using French with their children. This interruption has meant that Bretons have had to find new ways – sometimes very creatively – of learning their language and then of passing it down the generations. Most people are familiar with these 'new' ways, but they tend to centre on educational means of transmission.

What is less discussed, as mentioned above, is the lack of ideological clarification (Fishman, 2001), which is often not taken into consideration at the start of any language revitalisation movement. What type of Breton did this revitalisation movement want to create? The question appears not to have been asked, at least to not any great extent. Transmitting Breton through the schools is of course a very good idea, but we should not be surprised if this has resulted in a different type of Breton speaker than in the past.

Immersion schooling, not just in Brittany, but also in my very direct experience in Wales (I trained to teach in Welsh immersion schools as a student) and also from the evidence from Scotland and Ireland, all point to a transformation in what it means to be a speaker of a Celtic language in the twenty-first century.

Why do these differences exist? Quite simply, different children and indeed different adults have different capacities for learning. As Krumm (2013, p. 166) has pointed out, "language acquisition is always embedded in concrete social, historical and individual situations and […] it is always emotionally charged". Cohen and Dörnyei further point out: "When learners embark on the study of an L2 […] they carry a considerable 'personal baggage' that will have a significant bearing on how learning proceeds" (Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002, p. 170). This personal baggage includes such factors as age, aptitude, motivation and strategy. Individual differences will thus be apparent in the linguistic output of different new speakers as a result.

The circularity of the ideology of authenticity

As we have seen, the ideology of authenticity is the driving force which leads to people making judgements about the quality of language of new speakers of Breton. Language ideologies are the beliefs and attitudes that shape speakers' relationships to their own and others' languages, mediating between the social practice of language and the socio-economic and political structures within which it occurs. Breton (along with other so-called regional languages in France) is situated in a state which has long been known for its particular hostility towards regional languages, to an extent that marks it out from other democratic nation-states and which at times has prompted comparisons with authoritarian regimes (Hornsby, 2010, p. 171). Nevertheless, at a regional level, the language has acquired an increasingly official status over the years. In 1985, a state examination (CAPES) was created for new Breton teachers (Jung & Urvoas, 2012, p. 40), allowing them to gain the same qualification as teachers of any other subject. The total number of pupils educated in some form of Breton bilingual or immersion setting in the school year 2022–2023 was nearly 20,000 (Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg, n.d.). The *Office de la langue bretonne* / *Ofis ar Brezhoneg*, originally set up in 1999, was re-established as the *Office public de la langue bretonne* / *Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg* (OPLB/OPB) in 2004, since when it has been financed by the regional government of Brittany, as well as departmental councils, and run "as a public service institution" (Ó hIfearnáin, 2013, p. 122).

These developments, modest as they are in comparison to progress in relation to minority languages in other countries, have led to the establishing of alternative realities in how Breton is perceived both by the general populace and by Breton speakers themselves. Once almost universally viewed as a language of the past and with no future, the Breton language now offers opportunities which would have been hard to imagine in the latter half of the twentieth century. In anthropological terms, the way the language has begun to be perceived is through a change in *regime*, which can be understood as a spatial and temporal set of practices, either physical or symbolic, through which rules are established to determine an inside and an outside, and in which not just anyone is allowed to participate or seen as legitimate (Bourdieu, 1991).

These regimes construct an in-group description (or discourse) of how power is organised and distributed, and how this is ultimately part of how a group views itself, what belongs inside and what belongs outside, and the rules that form the symbolic (i.e. conventional) lines that compose it. In other words, an alternative narrative has appeared among Breton speakers, one which values new developments, new forms of language and new speakers of it. That is not to say that the previous narrative – one of shame and of negativity – does not still persist. It does and it can manifest itself in a myriad of ways, including the straightforward embarrassment of being a Breton speaker (particularly among older speakers) but also more indirectly, through harsh criticisms of any attempt to modernise the language, or to use it outside of its traditional domains. And the ideology of authenticity is a particularly useful tool in such a narrative. If younger speakers of Breton in the twenty-first century do not sound the same as the older speakers of Breton, born in the middle of the twentieth century, then what is the point of revitalising it? The link with the past is (in this narrative) just too tenuous for the modern language to be 'authentic' enough.

Authenticity is always subjective and can never be a fixed category. Coupland reminds us that "[t]o be authentic, a thing has to be original in some important social or cultural matrix" (Coupland, 2003, p. 419). In a Breton context, this social and cultural matrix is very often taken to be located – and not unreasonably so – among the group of Breton speakers who grew up largely before the 1950s. Yet, as we have seen, due to reasons of language shift and minoritisation, this matrix does not guarantee competent use or indeed engagement in the Breton language. The layers of such a matrix are addressed by speakers in various situationally embedded ways and on various 'orders of indexicality'. Indexicality

is the property of linguistic elements to index or point to certain non-linguistic entities. In sociolinguistics, these indexed entities are usually social meanings, indexed by sociolinguistic variables. Thus the social meaning embedded in accent, as discussed above, can point to an 'unexpected' speaker (in Pennycook's (2010) sense of 'unexpected' here). It is unusual for older speakers to hear younger people speaking Breton and using an accent which has more influence from French than they were used to hearing when growing up. The social and cultural matrix has shifted from a primarily family setting, where the language was transmitted intergenerationally or even within the local community, to one where more and more Breton speakers are acquiring their linguistic skills by other means, particularly in an educational setting.

Moreover, in this schema, much as in the previous family/community matrix, any form of authenticity is subject to evaluation. Performed authenticity, for instance, involves the perspective of a speaker as the original author or performer of their communicative intentions, while an interpreted authenticity would represent an act of speech evaluated by an external source. Perspectives on the authenticity of languages are constructed based on language use, similar to what Coupland has termed "the discursive construction of authenticity and inauthenticity" (Coupland, 2010, p. 105). These discourses embed and reinforce the underlying ideologies of authenticity (or inauthenticity) which people access when evaluating their own or others' ways of speaking, drawing on the social and cultural matrix which is their first point of reference.

These ideologies can be multi-layered and complex, and sometimes contradictory. For example, an older, native speaker can lament the loss of a particular accent or idiom or turns of phrase which they cannot detect in other, perhaps younger speakers, or they can accept the rather radical shift in Breton-speaking which has happened in their own life times, not without a certain sense of nostalgia rather than any hostility toward the new forms of Breton they come across. A younger Breton speaker might accept their own way of speaking because that is all they hear in their daily milieu – other younger Breton speakers talking in exactly the same way they speak themselves. Or they can aspire to speak the same way as *ar re gozh* (older people) because it recalls for them their locality, or the way their own grandparents speak Breton, or because they want to distinguish very clearly between Breton and French as separate languages. All are different ways of speaking Breton and each Breton speaker constructs for herself a sense of 'authenticity' when she speaks, one which works and makes sense in her world.

Very often, this construction of authenticity can be achieved through 'authentication', which, as the performative dimension of authenticity, is

> a discursive process, rather than authenticity as a claimed or experienced quality of language or culture, can then be taken up analytically as one dimension of a set of intersubjective 'tactics', through which people can make claims about their own or others' statuses as authentic or inauthentic members of social groups. (Coupland, 2010, p. 105)

Breton-speaking is authenticated in various ways and by various groups – older speakers can sometimes claim not to understand the speech of younger, immersion-educated speakers, and vice versa, with the frequent trope of "*n'eo ket ar memes brezhoneg*" (it is not the same Breton) being used as the reason for the lack of intercomprehension. Yet this situation would point to a lack of familiarity with linguistic diversity within the Breton-speaking community and – as in the case of the film mentioned above, where the younger and older speaker manage to communicate very successfully despite intergenerational and linguistic differences – this lack of familiarity can, with patience and good will, be overcome.

Authenticity is, however, not purely discursive. It also resides in the representation, construction, experimentation and/or performance of identity. This connection between authenticity and (personal as well as socio-cultural) identity leads to (self-)legitimatisation – or not. Thus the process by which the ideology of authenticity works is circular. A legitimate speaker of Breton is one who speaks authentic Breton – and authentic Breton is the way to recognise a legitimate speaker of the language. It is only by recognising the circularity of this discourse – and by recognising that authenticities are plural in nature, given the shift in matrices of reference that the Breton language has experienced over the past 100 years – that it might be possible to move beyond this narrative and appropriately address more pressing issues which face the revitalisation of the Breton language in the twenty-first century.

Conclusion

The situation is indeed complicated, and quite tense, as people who grew up speaking the language try to make sense of their position in relation to these 'new' speakers, whose presence can reinforce a sense of double alienation – firstly, from deep memories of actively being discouraged from using the language publicly and an associated sense of shame of being a minority language speaker; and secondly, by the appearance, in their later years, of

younger speakers who say they are speaking the same language as them, but who sound markedly different from what they remember growing up. For new speakers, who are attempting to reconnect with their immediate heritage or who are symbolically resisting globalisation through learning a local, non-majority language, this confusion on the part of older, native speakers can produce in them a sense of entrenchment or defensiveness.

What is certainly not helpful in these situations is the denigration which these new speakers are sometimes subjected to – not necessarily, it has to be noted, by the native speakers themselves, but by academics and other commentators who take up the native speaker position and make pronouncements on their behalf, often to the detriment of younger people who are attempting to (re)learn the language in question, for a whole host of reasons. For example, Wmffre notes:

> The Breton spoken by most young people now – be they products of Diwan [immersion] schooling or adult learners – reflects their submersion in a French-speaking society. They speak Breton as you would expect a French speaker to speak any other language, with an execrable accent. (Wmffre, 2007, p. 488)

Such rhetoric encourages the creation of divisions, through a discourse of failure to reach 'authentic speakerhood' and by means of unsubstantiated assertions. In this way, 'elitism' can be constructed and imposed from the outside in ways that might be unrecognisable to members of the actual speech community themselves.

This is not the way forward for an endangered language. If research is to be socially relevant, it needs to be applicable in helping understand why these tensions exist, and not further alienating segments of the key stakeholders in a minority language setting. The revitalisation of a minoritised language does certainly need input from experts, commentators and key stakeholders, but the input needs to be practical as well as critical. Solutions as well as problems need to be offered if the revitalisation of a minority language is to be deemed successful by all concerned.

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'Authentic' Language as a Contested Concept in Brittany

The question of authenticity in language has been approached from a number of theoretical standpoints. A significant type of feature which may bestow authenticity and legitimacy is the linguistic. Linguistic performance can be viewed in terms of either the unreflectingly fluent and competent use by the ideal native speaker or, in opposition, the inauthenticity of the non-native language learner. As pointed out by Martin Gill in his paper "Exclusive Boundaries, Contested Claims: Authenticity, Language and Ideology", authentic speech is romanticised as "native, spoken, verbatim, unrehearsed, off-the-record, sincere, vernacular and non-standard". Such a definition is easily understandable by the wider public outside of academia. However, it begs the question: who has the authority to make this distinction and who can validate these authenticity claims? Mary Bucholtz proposes instead the concept of authentication, or the outcome of constantly negotiated social and linguistic practices. Debates over what constitutes 'authentic' language in minority language settings are particularly noticeable, given the processes of revitalisation many of them are going through. This paper aims to move the discussion away from the purely linguistic when considering what authenticity means, and investigate the concept from a more speaker-centred perspective. The example of Breton in Brittany is taken as the case study here – what it means to speak Breton 'authentically', according to whom, and to which norms. In particular,

attention is paid to the authentication process of negotiation and how different actors approach and manage this dynamic.

Keywords:
Breton language; linguistic authenticity; speaker legitimacy; new speakers; minority language

„Autentyczność" języka jako pojęcie sporne – przypadek Bretanii

Kwestii „autentyczności" języka przyglądano się już z wielu pozycji teoretycznych. Istotny czynnik nadający autentyczność i legitymizujący użycie języka przez mówcę stanowią często cechy językowe. Realizację językową można opisywać jako bezrefleksyjną, płynną i kompetentną w wykonaniu rodzimego użytkownika języka, lub przeciwnie, jako nieautentyczną w przypadku użytkownika nierodzimego, uczącego się języka. Według artykułu *Exclusive Boundaries, Contested Claims: Authenticity, Language and Ideology* autorstwa Martina Gilla, autentyczna mowa jest idealizowana jako „rodzima, mówiona, dosłowna, nieprzećwiczona, nieoficjalna, szczera, potoczna i niestandardowa". Taka definicja jest łatwa do przyjęcia przez rzesze użytkowników języka spoza środowiska akademickiego. Naukowcom jednak nasuwa się pytanie: kto jest upoważniony do dokonywania tego rozróżnienia i kto może potwierdzić postulat autentyczności. Mary Bucholtz proponuje zamiast tego koncepcję uwierzytelnienia, czyli rezultatu stale negocjowanych praktyk społecznych i językowych. Debaty o tym, co stanowi język „autentyczny", są zauważalne zwłaszcza w przypadku języków mniejszościowych, z których wiele podlega procesom rewitalizacji. Niniejszy artykuł ma na celu przesunięcie dyskusji nad autentycznością języka z czysto językoznawczej perspek-tywy w kierunku tej skoncentrowanej na mówcy. Jako studium przypadku wybrano język bretoński w Bretanii i postawiono pytania o to, co, według kogo i w oparciu o jakie normy oznacza mówienie po bretońsku „autentycznie". Szczególną uwagę poświęcono procesowi uwierzytelnienia przez negocjację oraz temu, jak różni użytkownicy języka podchodzą do tej dynamiki i jak nią zarządzają.

Słowa kluczowe:
język bretoński; autentyczność języka; uprawnienie mówców; nowi użytkownicy języka; język mniejszościowy

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