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Justifying Revitalisation: Addressing Contestedness as an Obstacle in Picard

Abstract

Picard, a minoritised Gallo-Romance language spoken in France and Belgium, is a contested language often characterised as "bad French". Due in part to this negative stigma, it has historically been neglected by policies in support of regional languages. However, it was officially allowed to be taught in regional schools for the first time in 2022, reinvigorating revitalisation efforts for the language. But how does the contested status of Picard impact revitalisation? And how do those involved in Picard revitalisation act to counteract the effects of contestedness? This study investigates these questions using data from 45 semi-structured interviews with community members, as well as participant observation from fieldwork in the region. Results suggest that the contested status of Picard contributes to stigmatisation and a lack of support for revitalisation, but that different types of language planning actors have distinct strategies for addressing contestedness.
Keywords: contested languages; Picard; language revitalisation; langues collatérales; language policy and planning; prestige planning; language planning actors; agency

1 Introduction

Picard, also known as *ch'ti*, *ch'timi*, *rouchi*, and simply as patois among many speakers, is a minoritised language spoken in northern France and Belgium. As a Gallo-Romance language, it belongs to the same immediate language family as French. For this reason, as well as its association with rural and working-class communities, it is often seen as an inferior variety of its sister language. It is therefore a prototypical example of a contested language, a language whose status as such is disputed (Nic Craith, 2006), a fact which can add to the challenges of revitalisation. Despite this, revitalisation efforts for Picard have existed for many years, and they have recently intensified due to policy changes in their favour.

The goal of this article is to demonstrate how contestedness impacts revitalisation efforts in Picard, as well as how different types of social actors involved in Picard revitalisation combat the negative effects of contestedness. I will illustrate these points using data from interviews with community members and participant observation from fieldwork in France and Belgium. To begin, I will present the theoretical context for this paper and a brief introduction to Picard, followed by a description of the present study. I will then discuss the effects of contestedness on the revitalisation of Picard. Finally, I will describe the strategies that different types of language planning actors use to address the effects of contestedness.

2 Background

2.1 Revitalisation and Language Planning

Language revitalisation is traditionally described as a process in which minority language users, communities, and linguists "[search] for and [invent] ways and means to reverse language shift" (Hinton, 2001, p. 4).

Since language shift is the act of abandoning the habitual use of one language in favour of another (Weinreich, 1953/2010, p. 68), this definition of language revitalisation emphasizes the reversal of such a shift, a process outlined by Fishman (1991). However, recent work on language revitalisation goes far beyond the idea of reversing language shift, putting revitalisation in its broader sociocultural context. This new perspective primarily views language as a product of society that is constantly renegotiated, making language revitalisation "primarily not about language but about people" (Costa, 2017, p. 10) and not detachable from related societal debates. This view sees revitalisation as a social movement (Costa & Gasquet-Cyrus, 2013; Heidemann, 2014; O'Rourke & Dayán-Fernández, 2024) and a way for social actors to compete for both symbolic power and material benefits (Costa & Gasquet-Cyrus, 2013, p. 212). Instead of seeing revitalisation simply as a way to increase the number of minority language speakers, this approach sees it as a way of fostering "long-term community (re)building and healing from the intergenerational trauma that is a result of the violent disruptions that cause language shift" (Linn & Dayán-Fernández, 2024, p. 4). This approach to language revitalisation highlights the contributions of community members rather than the traditional emphasis on the impact of government policies and institutions.

The shift to a focus on bottom-up efforts in language revitalisation follows a general trend in the field of language policy and planning (LPP), the theoretical basis for this article. LPP is an interdisciplinary field (T. Ricento, 2015) often described as a subfield of sociolinguistics (Jernudd & Nekvapil, 2012), and it broadly investigates the "interventions that seek to modify somehow the linguistic behaviour or attitudes of a given speech community" (Oakes, 2023, p. 36). These interventions can come in a number of forms, from explicit language policies at the state level to linguistic practices within families. However, while early work in LPP concentrated on language planning at the state level, the so-called "ethnographic turn" (Oakes, 2023) in LPP scholarship has addressed the importance of language planning actors at all levels, drawing attention to the agency of local players and integrating ethnographic methodologies into the field (see Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Johnson & Ricento, 2013). While the topic of agency in LPP has featured frequently in recent work (e.g., Bouchard & Glasgow, 2019; Johnson & Johnson, 2014; Liddicoat & Taylor-Leech, 2021), the intricacies of agency – including the specific ways in which different types of actors contribute to LPP processes at different levels – are still not well understood.

2.2 LPP Actors

Scholars have proposed several different ways of categorizing the social actors involved in LPP. For instance, T. K. Ricento and Hornberger's (1996) "onion" metaphor describes the different levels of LPP as layers of an onion, with legislation and political processes representing the outside layers, followed by states and supranational agencies, then institutions, and finally classroom practitioners, who are "at the heart of language policy" (T. K. Ricento & Hornberger, 1996, p. 417). This metaphor demonstrates how actors at different levels of LPP can contribute to the overall implementation of language policies, an idea which has since been generalised beyond the context of teaching practitioners.

However, with the aim of combining ideas from previous publications, Zhao (2011) proposes a framework for the study of social actors in LPP. The different types of social actors included in this framework are the following: people with power, people with expertise, people with influence, and people with interest. People with power refer to those with significant political and institutional authority, such as government officials. On the other hand, people with expertise are linguists and other experts in their respective fields, who often act as advisors in LPP contexts. People with influence are "social elites" (Zhao, 2011, p. 910), who may include writers, artists, celebrities, and other prominent figures. Finally, people with interest are those who do not possess institutional power or broad social influence, but who contribute to language practices at a grassroots level through their individual choices, attitudes, and actions. It is important to note that a single person may behave as different types of LPP actors in different contexts – for example, an individual's actions as a person with interest may differ from their actions as a person with power or expertise. In this article, I will draw on this framework to demonstrate the contributions of different types of LPP actors to Picard revitalisation.

2.3 Prestige and Contestedness

When a minoritised language suffers from stigmatisation, measures to combat this stigma are needed to support revitalisation efforts. Haarmann (1990) proposed the term "prestige planning" to describe such measures, which include any activities designed to influence public perception of a language. He argued that prestige planning should be considered a separate category of language planning, different from corpus or status planning, since prestige planning activities involve the acceptance of LPP efforts rather than their production. Whether or not one agrees with this division, prestige planning is crucial for minoritised languages, since it allows them to increase support both within the minority community and in the surrounding majority group (Sallabank, 2011, p. 286).

One category of languages that often struggles with prestige is that of contested languages. Contested languages are closely related to a major national language, typically the language of the nation-state in which they are found, but are not entirely mutually comprehensible with that language (Tamburelli & Tosco, 2021). As a result, they are often considered subordinate varieties or "dialects" of the more prestigious language, and they commonly experience a lack of political and societal support. Eloy (2004) uses the term *langues collatérales* to describe these types of languages, using Picard as a primary example. As we will see, Picard – like other languages in the Oïl branch of Gallo-Romance languages – often suffers from a lack of prestige in France and Belgium, where it is considered to be a lesser variety of French.

2.4 Picard

Picard is spoken in the Hauts-de-France region of northern France and the neighbouring Hainaut province of Belgium (see Figure 1). It owes its minoritised status to a historical aggression toward regional languages by the governments of those countries, especially France, where monolingual ideologies are still enshrined in the Constitution (Hawkey & Kasstan, 2015). The exact number of speakers of the language is difficult to determine for several reasons, including a lack of recent survey data and varying definitions of what "speaking Picard" entails. For example, many Picard users do not see themselves as speakers of a regional language, but rather as speakers of a substandard *patois* or a dialect of French. Nevertheless, according to the most recent survey data from France, Picard was spoken by between 2.7% and 27.3% of the population in the five northernmost departments of France in the 1990s (Blot et al., 2004, p. 2). In Belgium, according to a survey conducted between 2021 and 2022, 54.6% of people in the traditionally Picard-speaking area professed to understand Picard partially or very well (Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, 2023, p. 38). However, the use of Picard has declined sharply since the Second World War, and intergenerational transmission of the language has now all but ceased (Francard, 2009, p. 109). Because the status of Picard is similar in both France and Belgium, with most revitalisation efforts occurring at a grassroots level, I will draw on data collected from both countries in this paper.

While Picard is now rarely transmitted from parent to child in the home, it is far from a dead language. There are many active clubs and organisations focused on speaking, writing, and reading Picard throughout the traditionally Picard-speaking area, both in France and Belgium. Local marionette companies perform traditional Picard plays, artists create Picard music, and authors publish new Picard poems, books, and newspapers. In 2022, after years of neglect by the French government, Picard courses were officially permitted as an optional subject in regional public schools for the first time ('Le picard fait une entrée timide à l'école', 2022). While Picard had long been taught in unofficial contexts, this change marked a new era in revitalisation efforts for the language. Of course, instructors who volunteered to teach Picard immediately encountered a number of challenges, including the selection of an orthography and access to pedagogical materials. Another challenge involved confronting the stigma associated with Picard, due in part to its perception as a "dialect" of French rather than a "language" in its own right. The contestedness of Picard remains a barrier to revitalisation, with many individuals considering that "c'est comme du français, mais c'est drôle" [it's like French, but it's funny] (Pooley, 1996, p. 2).



Figure 1. Map of the traditionally Picard-speaking area in northern France and Belgium, where Picard is represented in blue (reproduced from Région Hauts-de-France, 2021)

Note: The colour scheme of this map has been adjusted from the original to enhance clarity.

3 Present Study

Clearly, Picard is a contested language that now depends on revitalisation efforts to retain its presence in the community. But what effect does contestedness have on the Picard revitalisation movement? This article will address the following questions:

1. In what ways does the contested status of Picard impact revitalisation efforts?
2. How do LPP actors implicated in Picard revitalisation act to combat the effects of contestedness?

In the following sections, I will address these questions using qualitative data from a larger project on Picard revitalisation. These data were collected during fieldwork in the French region of Hauts-de-France and the Belgian province of Hainaut in 2024. In May of that year, I conducted interviews with 45 people connected to the Picard revitalisation movement, including cultural performers, musicians, authors, activists, native speakers, students of Picard, and instructors of the language at various levels. The interviews were conducted with participants from all departments of Hauts-de-France (Pas-de-Calais, Nord, Somme, Aisne, and Oise), as well as Hainaut in Belgium. I also took ethnographic notes on cultural events and

other experiences I had interacting with locals during that time, as well as during additional fieldwork from September to December of that year. The information in this paper also draws on my experiences with the local population as a university student in Amiens from September 2019 to January 2020, and later as an English instructor at a university in Lille during the 2024–2025 school year. I also interacted with the population via a pilot survey conducted between October 2022 and April 2023, but those data are not cited in the present article. All interviews were transcribed and compiled with ethnographic fieldnotes using NVivo14 software. I then performed reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021) using deductive coding to investigate the research questions assessed in this paper. While the data may not represent the full range of experiences of Picard community members, they provide valuable insight into the perspectives of different types of LPP actors.

4 Impact of Contestedness on Picard Revitalisation Efforts

The contested status of Picard impacts revitalisation efforts in a number of ways. Given what we know from the existing literature on contested languages, it is not surprising that stigmatisation is the most notable consequence. Citations from participants confirm that the perceived proximity between French and Picard contributes to negative attitudes toward the latter. Take for example the following testimony from a participant who was raised in southern Picardy, relatively close to Paris:

(1) *Je viens de [censuré] dans le sud de l'Oise, où on ne parle pas picard. On a des représentations même très très négatives sur le parler régional. Peut-être que c'est l'effet parisien qui fait ça, mais la proximité français/picard était très stigmatisée, surtout cette distance des langues.*
I come from [redacted] in the south of the Oise department, where they don't speak Picard. People have very very negative ideas about the way of speaking in the region. Maybe it's the Parisian effect that contributes to that, but the proximity between French and Picard was very stigmatised, especially the distance between the languages. (Participant 31)

The relationship between contestedness and negative attitudes toward Picard is thus salient to community members. The impact of this stigmatisation on the revitalisation of Picard is, of course, that speakers are less likely to want to speak the language to their children, and that non-speakers are less likely to want to learn the language in the first place.

However, it is not just the language that is stigmatised, but the people and culture of the Picard-speaking region, which are traditionally associated with farmers and blue-collar workers. The harmful portrayal of Picard speakers as backward and uneducated, especially in the media, is a recurring theme in the data. Participants often mention the well-known 2008 film *Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis*, which pokes fun at stereotypes about northern France, but opinions are mixed. Some participants critiqued the stereotypical portrayal of northerners in the film, but many appreciated the way that the film introduced northern culture to the rest of France and the world. However, participants also highlighted the reality television series *Les Ch'tis*, in which boisterous northerners vacation together in foreign cities. This series intentionally portrays people from northern France and Belgium as unintelligent and superficial, affirming the stereotype that people from the traditionally Picard-speaking area are uneducated speakers of "bad French".

While confirming the existence of this stereotype, some participants stressed the fact that educating the public on Picard can reverse their negative opinions of the language, despite its connection with lower socioeconomic classes:

(2) *En fait, le picard peut être bien vu à partir du moment où les gens considèrent que c'est une langue, que c'est un moyen de s'exprimer qui est précis. En fait, quand ils commencent à la richesse et la précision du picard, les gens commencent à penser ça. Mais c'est vrai que je ne veux pas te mentir : partout où on va, même dans la rue, si les gens parlent picard, c'est le langage des cassos, comme on dit, des cas sociaux, des personnes de classe un peu moindre.*
Actually, people begin to see Picard in a positive light as soon as they realize that it's a language, that it's a way of expressing yourself that's systematic. When they start to recognize the richness

> and precision of Picard, people start to recognize that. But it's true, I won't lie to you: everywhere you go, even in the street, if people are speaking Picard, it's the language of the *cassos*, as we say, the *cas sociaux*, people who are kind of lower-class. (Participant 16)

Since education is an effective method to counteract negative stereotypes about Picard and its speakers, the first lesson of any Picard class is spent teaching students about the origins of Picard, the systematic differences between Picard and French, and the value of speaking more than one language. In a way, this first lesson involves justifying the language's worth and the utility of learning it. I first noticed this in the Picard courses I took as an undergraduate student in Amiens in 2019, and my conversations with current Picard instructors indicate that it is also common practice in primary and secondary school classrooms. Public talks on Picard are also frequently concentrated on "justifying" the speaking, studying, and teaching of the language. While these types of interventions have a very positive impact, it is true that the need for them is an unfortunate byproduct of contestedness. If the language were not contested, instructors might not have to dedicate resources and class time to justifying its status as a language before lessons can begin.

Finally, it is worth noting that contestedness also affects the perception of Picard as a shared marker of identity. As we have seen, in part because of contestedness, many Picard speakers do not consider their speech variety a language, but rather a local *patois* or dialect. The consequence of this is not only that Picard is not seen as a language, but also that Picard is not seen as a single, cohesive entity. For many Picard speakers, the language that they speak is the *patois* associated with their village or city. While linguists, activists, and speakers who are especially involved with the language recognize a Picard-speaking area that stretches from Picardy to southern Belgium, this territory does not correspond to an area of shared identity. While the northern departments of Nord and Pas-de-Calais identify with a tradition of mining and industry, the southern departments of Somme, Aisne, and Oise are considered to be more rural. The lack of shared identity in the Picard-speaking area can easily be explained by the sociopolitical history of the region, so it is not a direct result of language contestedness. However, the fact that Picard is not widely considered to be one language attached to one specific territory makes it difficult to mobilize a language-based social movement that includes the entire Picard-speaking area.

5 Approaches to Combatting Contestedness in Picard

Although contestedness has a negative effect on revitalisation efforts for Picard, people involved in those efforts combat contestedness in a number of ways. In this section, I will use Zhao's (2011) categories of LPP actors to demonstrate how different types of actors counteract the effects of contestedness.

5.1 People with Power

According to Zhao (2011), "people with power" are primarily those who occupy public office. However, Picard has historically not been included in language policies that support regional languages (Hornsby, 2019), so there are not many such actors contributing to positive language planning efforts for Picard revitalisation at the highest ranks of government. Despite this, one significant recent development in France was a memorandum published in December 2021 by the French Ministry of National Education and Youth. The memorandum added Picard to the official list of regional languages allowed to be taught in public schools, and the regional education system of Hauts-de-France has since permitted official courses in the language – although finding and training Picard instructors has made the introduction of courses slow. In Belgium, Picard is recognised as a *langue régionale endogène* [endogenous regional language], a class of languages that have been recognised by the state since a decree adopted by the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles in 1990. While these languages do not have official status per se, the 1990 decree recognizes them as belonging to regional cultural heritage. A 2024 decree by the Fédération encourages the promotion of regional languages, but there are not yet official Picard classes in schools.

While it is not comprised of politicians holding public office, it seems appropriate to include in the category of "people with power" an organisation which receives funding from the regional government of Hauts-de-France. The Regional Agency for the Picard Language (*l'Agence régionale de la langue picarde*),

which has existed in its current form since 2009, has as its mission to "améliorer l'image de cette langue dans tous les secteurs, et à développer la présence du picard en milieu scolaire et périscolaire" [improve the image of the language in all sectors, and to develop the presence of Picard in both educational and extracurriculur contexts] (Région Hauts-de-France, 2021; my translation). The Agency hosts a number of prestige planning initiatives, including an annual Picard literature prize, the publication of dictionaries and other books, an online Picard course for new speakers, a program to encourage municipal governments to promote Picard (including with the implementation of bilingual signage), and many other activities.

The Agency's answer to contestedness in Picard is to develop an image of the language as a singular entity, on par with non-Gallo-Romance regional languages like Breton, which are clearly distinct from French and are traditionally associated with a specific territory. To do so, it promotes a normalised variety of the language, a "Reference Picard," complete with a standardised writing system and a Committee for Neology and Terminology to oversee the creation of new Picard terms. To manage the linguistic and cultural variation between the north and south of the Picard-speaking region, the Agency has established a written norm for each, following the polynomic approach to standardisation (see Jaffe, 2019; Lebsanft & Tacke, 2020), where two standards are used simultaneously. Hornsby (2019) expresses doubt at the utility of this approach, noting that it "crucially requires a strong sense of common identity within a clearly bounded territory, both of which are notably absent in the case of Picard" (p. 182). However, on a micro level, participants of this study who were connected to the Agency reported success in the classroom using this approach. Regardless, the Agency uses its limited institutional power to promote an image of Picard that emphasizes the unity of the language throughout the region, as well as the status of Picard as equal to other regional languages of France.

5.2 People with Expertise

"People with expertise" include linguists, scientists, and other experts in their fields who impact LPP in some way. In the case of Picard, such experts are usually linguists working at the university level or designing curricula for primary and secondary school classrooms. People with expertise participating in this study reported several different approaches to combatting contestedness. One notable approach was the valorisation of regional culture, even before beginning language instruction. This was the approach of a primary school teacher, who describes it as follows:

(3) *Ce que je trouve intéressant c'est qu'on puisse, à travers un projet pluridisciplinaire avec un ensemble de professeurs autour de ce projet, à la fois amener du local et du picard. Moi, je travaille sur la langue avec la comparaison français/picard. On travaille sur les contes* […] *je leur propose Le Petit Chaperon Rouge en picard. C'est ce qu'on peut faire par exemple en français. En anglais, en espagnol ou en allemand on peut voir par exemple les langues régionales, ça n'existe pas que chez nous, il en existe aussi ailleurs. En sport on peut travailler sur les jeux picards.* […] *On essaie de greffer des choses petit à petit autour du picard.* […] *Notre objectif est d'ouvrir les élèves au plurilinguisme pour leur faire comprendre que quand on parle une langue en plus du français étudié en classe, on est riche de quelque chose. C'est extrêmement important. Je pense que c'est ça le message, c'est la richesse.*
What I find interesting is that, using a pluridisciplinary project with a group of teachers who are all involved, we can bring in local issues and Picard at the same time. Personally, I address the language aspect by comparing French and Picard. We work on stories […] I give them Little Red Riding Hood in Picard. That's what you can do, for example, in French class. In English, Spanish or German, you can look at regional languages, for instance. They don't just exist here, they also exist elsewhere. In gym class, you can work on traditional Picard games. […] We try to add things little by little that relate to Picard. […] Our goal is to open the students' minds to plurilingualism to make them understand that when you speak a language in addition to the French studied in class, it enriches you. It's extremely important. I think that is the message: it's enriching. (Participant 31)

This approach counteracts the stigma surrounding Picard by showing students that the local culture has value, and that multilingualism – even (or especially) when one speaks a minoritised language – is a posit-

ive thing. Participants with expertise also drew on this approach when leading the new two-year university diploma in teaching Picard, where instructors took courses in sociolinguistics to better understand the benefits of multilingualism and the fact there is no inherent hierarchy between languages. In this way, people with expertise combat the effects of contestedness by valorizing local culture and treating minoritised languages as equal to all other languages.

5.3 People with Influence

"People with influence" are those who enjoy significant social influence, either because of "their knowledge/skills, their contribution to society, their personality and high moral standard, or just the public nature of their careers" (Zhao, 2011, p. 910). There are many such figures in the Picard-speaking world, especially those who are known for their artistic skills, from authors and poets to singers and other performers. All of them contribute to the promotion and prestige of the language through their craft.

A notable example is an organisation in Belgium called – somewhat misleadingly – the "Walloon Cabaret" of Tournai (officially *la Royale Compagnie du Cabaret Wallon Tournaisien*). The Cabaret, which promotes the local variety of Picard and not Walloon, is a prestigious group of performers who write and sing their own material in the language. The Cabaret was founded in 1907, and since 1927 it has hosted the annual Adolphe Prayez Competition, which offers prizes for poetry, songs, and monologues written specifically in the Tournai variety of Picard. The competition has very detailed rules, with specific requirements for rhyme, meter, and other poetic elements. To become an official member of the Cabaret, one must win the competition, making entry into the group even more difficult and prestigious.

Organisations such as Tournai's Walloon Cabaret, as well as individuals with social influence, have a significant impact on the prestige of Picard. By creating art, music, or simply by using the language, people with influence can improve its reputation. In this way, they help Picard resist the negative impact of contestedness. However, it should also be noted that many of these influential figures are less influential with younger generations, who do not have the nostalgia for Picard that drives many speakers to consume art, literature, and entertainment in the language. Even so, people with influence combat contestedness by maintaining a high standard for literary and artistic creations in Picard.

5.4 People with Interest

Finally, we have "people with interest": people who become involved with a language on a personal level, but who do not possess institutional power or significant social prestige. These types of LPP actors make up the majority of actors who contribute to prestige planning in Picard. There are countless individuals who perform traditional marionette plays, create Picard clubs, give presentations on Picard language and culture, translate and perform modern songs in Picard, and read Picard books in local libraries, among many other things. Again, the approach to combatting the effects of contestedness for this group is the valorisation of local culture:

(4) *Moi c'est plus la culture qui m'intéresse, le rapport entre les langues, les pratiques culturelles. Mon truc, c'est que quand on est dans une minorité, si on veut s'affirmer et si on ne veut pas que cette minorité perde son importance, on est parfois plus porté à créer et à conserver des formes d'expression qui peuvent être facilement négligées ou oubliées. Je vais te dire quelque chose d'intellectuel : la langue, c'est le vecteur privilégié de la culture. Il y a d'autres vecteurs pour la culture, mais si la langue disparaît* […] *il faut conserver les mots les plus flagrants, mais surtout les pratiques culturelles.*
Personally, it's more the culture that interests me, the relationship between languages, the cultural practices. My whole thing is that, when you're part of a minority, if you want to assert yourself and if you don't want the minority to lose its importance, you're sometimes more inclined to create and to conserve the forms of expression that could easily be neglected or forgotten. Let me tell you something intellectual: language is the primary vehicle of culture. There are other vehicles of culture, but if the language disappears […] you have to conserve the most significant words, but especially the cultural practices. (Participant 01)

For this participant, and for many other people with interest, the main reason to promote language is to promote local culture and identity. For many of them, the language itself is not even the most important element; rather, it is a way to maintain cultural traditions. Thus, in order to counteract the negative stigma that surrounds such traditions in the Picard-speaking area, people with interest focus on promoting them. This, in turn, contributes to the destigmatisation of the language, and it may also help to foster a shared identity in the region.

6 Conclusions

To conclude, the contested status of Picard – as with many other contested languages – has a negative effect on revitalisation efforts. Specifically, it contributes to the stigmatisation of the language, it requires time and resources to be spent on justifying revitalisation efforts, and it does nothing to reinforce a shared regional identity, which is necessary for language-based social movements. However, different types of LPP actors contribute to prestige planning for Picard in order to combat the effects of contestedness. While people with power focus on bolstering the social movement by portraying Picard as a single entity connected to a specific territory, people with expertise choose to highlight the valorisation of local culture and the importance of multilingualism. On the other hand, people with influence attempt to elevate the perception of Picard by maintaining a high standard for art and literature in the language, while people with interest focus on the promotion of local cultural traditions.

This paper contributes to a broader conversation on the agency of social actors in language policy and planning, demonstrating that prestige planning efforts are possible (and necessary) at all levels – from people with power, expertise, influence, and interest alike. In addition, it provides specific examples of the ways in which LPP actors can combat the effects of contestedness on the revitalisation of a minority language.

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