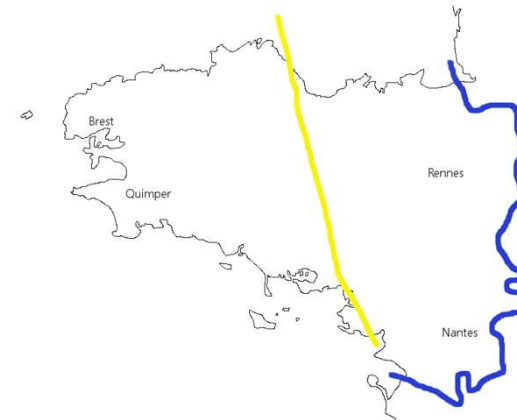


New speakers and standards in Breton

Merryn Davies-Deacon / Queen's University, Belfast



Breton

- Around 200000 speakers
- Academic literature divides them into *new speakers* and *traditional speakers*



New speakers

- Speakers who have acquired language by means other than an uninterrupted chain of intergenerational transmission dating back indefinitely



Breton: New speaker stereotypes

- Young
- Middle-class
- Mobile
- Well-educated
- Live all over Brittany
- Acquire Breton as a second language
- Acquire Breton in formal education
- Use Breton as much as possible
- Militant promotion of Breton
- Literate in Breton
- Proud of Breton identity



Traditional speaker stereotypes

- Older
- Working-class
- Educated only to a low level
- Often farmers
- Located in rural hamlets
- Restricted to western Brittany
- Acquire Breton through intergenerational transmission
- Restrict use of Breton to intimate settings
- Speak Breton only because of linguistic ability
- Inability to read and write Breton
- No strong sense of Breton identity



New versus traditional speaker language

New speakers	Traditional speakers
Use “standardised” Breton	Use dialectal Breton
French-influenced linguistic structure	Linguistic structure not influenced by French
Celtic-derived lexicon	French-influenced lexicon



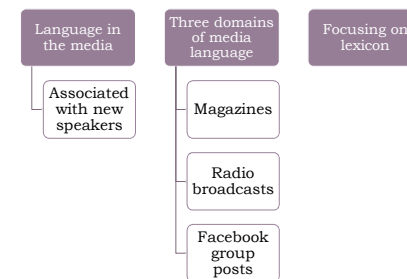
The lexicon of Breton

- Identified as a prominent feature of new versus traditional speaker distinction

French	TB	NB
<i>magasin</i> 'shop'	magazin	stal
<i>raison</i> 'reason'	rezen	abeg
<i>boulangerie</i> 'bakery'	boulangerezh	baraerezh



Research aims



Radio		Magazines	Facebook
Public (state) station	Associative (independent) stations	<i>Bremañ</i>	<i>Facebook e brezhoneg</i> (99 “speakers” in sample)
News bulletins	Longer programmes	<i>Brud Nevez</i>	
		<i>Ya!</i>	

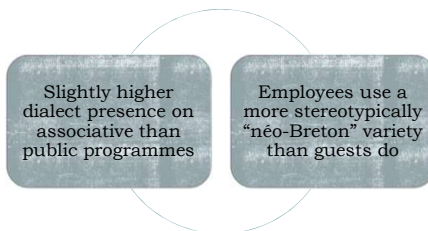
Divisions of the corpus

Findings: Radio

Least conformant to “néo-Breton” stereotype due to medium and register

Not much difference among different types of programmes: observed variation probably due to different subject matters

Variation within the radio subcorpus



Middle position in terms of register, reflected by overall moderate conformance to “néo-Breton”

Some extremely purist vocabulary and spelling

Some extremely dialectal posts

Findings: Facebook

Specific features of the Facebook subcorpus



Overall, most conformant to stereotypical “néo-Breton”, befitting higher register

However, *Brud Nevez* is noticeably different

**Findings:
Print**



“Néo-Breton” publications

Bremañ is more “classical”, using coinages and keeping borrowings separate

Ya! uses more international borrowings and is more tolerant of dialectal uses



Interviews

Carried out
in August
2018

Interviewees
came from a
range of
backgrounds



Some points from interview data

All expressed a favourable attitude towards dialectal words

Many stated that their own language has changed over the years

Conclusions: The corpus

- Variation continues to occur in Breton, even in contexts where new speakers are expected to be the majority population

Conclusions: Academic work

- New and traditional speakers should not be considered to form two halves of a binary in academic discourse

Conclusions: Language planning

- Language planning needs to recognise the validity of multiple repertoires so as not to alienate speakers with diverse backgrounds, motivations and ideologies