Terminological practices on Breton wikis: The role of online communities in the maintenance of French regional languages

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The Breton context

- Celtic language traditionally spoken in western Brittany, long history of language contact with French; now around 200,000 speakers (Broudic 2013)
- (Perceived) divide between traditional and new speakers:
    - "a new generation of Breton speakers, who represent a radical shift in stance … who, in many ways, stand apart from the traditional speakers of the language" (Jones 1995:428)
    - "the language reformers – both earlier and today – are urban and intellectual. They draw on aspects of culture familiar to them in renovating Breton, aspects which do not resonate with traditional speakers" (Timm 2001:454)
    - More recently, cross-linguistic work on new speakers (e.g. Hornsby 2015; Smith-Christmas et al. 2018)

- Public body since 2010, involved in all areas of language planning
- Online resources:
  - TermOfis: database of official terminology
  - Terminology forum

Wikipedia

- Wikipedia started in 2001; Breton version started in 2004
- Breton Wikipedia: over 70000 articles (6.5 million in English)
- "Anyone can edit"
- Demographics: surveys have found that 6–22% of editors are women (https://diff.wikimedia.org/2015/04/30/how-many-women-edit-wikipedia/)
- Existing research landscape: some work on policy, authorship, a little on lesser-resourced languages

- Baxter (2009):
- Previous work on Breton Wikipedia
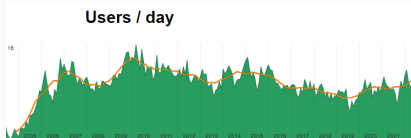- Approaches to orthography and lexis
- Potential importance of Wikipedia in providing terminology
- Questions around sample sizes and researcher positioning
- **Is the Breton Wikipedia a "terminology provider"?**

- Number of active users declined prior to 2019, but has increased since then
- Sharp increase in edits: most from a user who now has a paid position involving Wikipedia
- No evidence of any votes since 2007

Users / day

https://br.wikiscan.org/, 17 June 2022

- Minimal presence of the terminology solicited by the OPLB: only three out of 317 suggestions, *irinnouriezh, kontadenn,* and *kouezhadenn*
- 13 users have created articles in the last 30 days, tending to focus on particular themes
  - Notable lack of Breton terms: only 49 out of 213 new articles contain any Breton at all in the title

Wiktionary

- Dictionary counterpart to Wikipedia: 7 million articles in English, 48000 in Breton
- Room for more non-standard vocabulary?
  - Dialectal words are evident, but not words in other orthographies
- 12 out of the 317 OPLB terms represented, mostly with different/broader meanings

Wiktionary

- 79 new pages created in a 30-day period; 46 are for Breton words
- Some include sources: publications ranging from 1877 to 1988
- A single-user effort: legitimacy?

warlock

⟨⟩A   ☆   ✏

∧ Saozneg

📖 **Anv-kadarn**

warlock

1. sorser

Gerioù heñvelster

- magician
- sorcerer / sorceress
- wizard / witch

Going forward

- Questions around representation and legitimation
- Whose voices are we privileging when we take notice of what happens in online contexts?
- What (and who) are these projects for? Merely contributing to a statistic?
- Importance of considering contextual information/mixed-methods research

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