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Deficit and new values in the linguistic market for small languages

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Presentation outline

- Comparison of contexts
- Ideological challenges faced by new speakers of Giernesiei and Francoprovençal
- Traditional vs. new linguistic markets
- Towards a new analytical framework

Two small, 'severely endangered' languages: Giernesiei

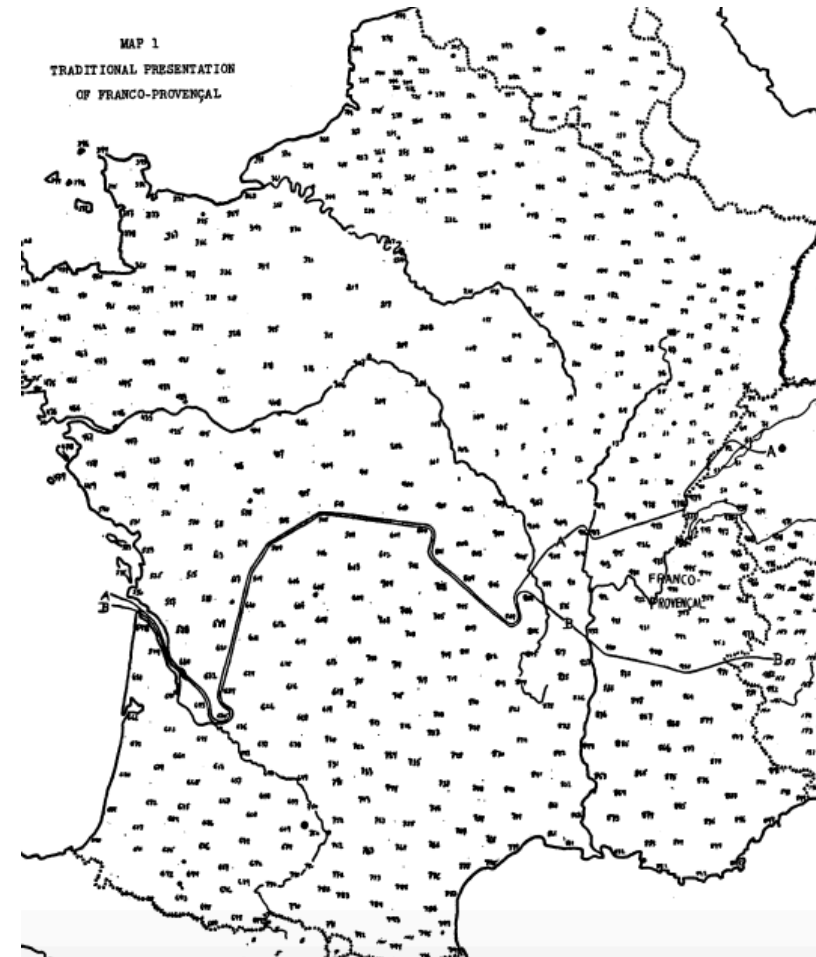
- **Guernsey** (Channel Is.)
- Semi-autonomous British dependency
- Indigenous language: Giernesiei (Norman, *oïl*)
- Only 100-200 fluent native speakers? Mainly aged 80+
- Only 6 proficient speakers under 60? (youngest 48)



Francoprovençal



(Bert *et al.* 2009: 14)



(Hall 1949: 2)

Francoprovençal

i) Does it actually exist?

‘Le nouveau groupe proposé [...] n’offre aucune unité géographique’ (Meyer 1875: 295).
[This newly proposed dialect grouping [...] does not form a discrete unit].

‘Le francoprovençal tout court n’existe pas’ (Helmut Lüdtke 1971: 69).
[In short, Francoprovençal does not exist].

‘Le francoprovençal existe-t-il?’ (Tuailon 2007: 9)
[Does Francoprovençal exist?]

ii) No linguistic identity?

‘[Le francoprovençal n’a] jamais fait l’objet d’une conscience linguistique commune’ (Matthey and Meune 2012: 108)
[Francoprovençal has never been associated with a coherent linguistic identity]

iii) A confusing name

‘Ce nom est [...] un peu trompeur, car il semble suggérer qu’il s’agit d’une langue mixte’ (Walter 2003: vii).
[This name is somewhat misleading, for it seems to suggest a hybrid language].

Linguistic markets

- Bourdieu developed the concept of fields or markets (e.g. 1991)
 - Not only with regard to language
- **Economic capital**: money, assets
- **Cultural capital**: knowledge, skills, education, tastes
- **Symbolic capital**: prestige, credentials
- One form of capital may be converted into another
 - e.g. prestige ways of speaking facilitate knowledge acquisition and economic advantage
- Fundamental link between actions and interests

Damned if they do, and damned if they don't

- New speakers of small, highly endangered languages find themselves in a double-bind
- Older/native speakers express a desire for younger people to learn such languages
- There is increasing desire among younger people for language revitalisation
- But new speakers are marginalised by self-appointed gate-keepers to traditional linguistic markets
 - Native speakers act as gate-keepers to linguistic markets where 'authentic language' (Coupland 2003: 419) is carefully monitored and maintained

Common issues re: Giernesiei and Francoprovençal

- Ownership (power in the linguistic market)
 - New speakers being robbed of language opportunities
- Authenticity, legitimacy
- Status (language ~ dialect?) and glottonyms
- Criticism and discouragement
- Myth of no earlier new speakers
- Lack of opportunities to practise
- Insufficient access to input
- Different strategies among new speakers - accept authority or rebel?

Legitimacy, authenticity and authority in small languages

- Native-speakerism
 - “language guardians” uphold traditional ways of speaking
 - maintenance of traditional power (elders = authorities)
 - “Lots of people see Giernesiei as a nostalgic thing and almost as a secret society or club with an audible membership card to belong to the community” – *prospective new speaker, M, 40s* (Sallabank and Marquis in press)
- Linguistic variants produced by new speakers are criticised (delegitimised) and rejected
 - “We don’t like people who speak our patois badly we prefer to speak with real patois speakers and to speak either French or our real patois, but not to massacre the patois” – *Swiss native speaker, M, 80+* (Kasstan in press)

Traditional linguistic markets for small languages

- Traditional (native) speakers have access to heritage languages as symbolic capital
- In Guernsey, English was used for utilitarian events such as commercial and official transactions;
French was used for religion, has high status;
Giernesiei fulfilled a phatic or affective role; now a nostalgic one.
Francoprovençal as a “langue de la terre”
- Impact on language development
 - Giernesiei/Francoprovençal associated with the past
 - lexical modernisation etc. is not felt to be a priority

‘Alternative’ market values

- There have been some attempts to (re)define market values which valorise minority/heritage languages:
 1. Schiffman: ‘a sort of linguistic black-market’ (2002: 98)
 - ways that official markets are undermined or resisted
 - analogous to Labov’s (1972) ‘covert prestige’ or solidarity-driven values in linguistic psychology
 - no further details/development on the idea
 2. ‘Linguistic Emancipation’ (Huss & Lindgren eds. 2011)
 - ‘conditions that must be present for a given underprivileged language to move upwards on an imagined hierarchical scale of languages’ (Bull 2013: 33)
 - ‘to imagine different, more or less parallel linguistic markets, e.g. global ..., national ... and, in addition, several linguistic submarkets’ (Bull 2013: 44)

‘Linguistic sub-markets’

- Part of minority sociolinguistic *habitus* is the traditional deficit ideology about minority languages
- Black market values and emancipation explain revalorisation and maintenance of low-status varieties
- But they do not cater for the differing value-systems of traditional vs. new speakers
- In our contexts, another part of *habitus* is ideologies of legitimacy and the dominance of native-speaker models

‘Linguistic sub-markets’

- In effect new speakers are creating a sub-market of a linguistic sub-market:
 - **revitalisation** (Giernesiei);
 - **reclamation** (Francoprovençal);
 - Parallel with marketing theory: **micro-markets** for local economies
- While prospective new speakers are socialised into these ideologies, some are also willing to challenge assumptions in order to make the languages their own



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New market values?

- Refusing gate-keeper 'authenticity'
- Alternative glottonyms
- Symbolic language use is becoming an increasingly important forum for 'preserving' Guernesiais and Francoprovençal
 - Performance, song, 'heritage'/ 'cultural' events
- Identity-construction (personal and political)
 - Indexicality (Silverstein 2003)
- Commodification of local language
 - Place branding and political agendas
 - Linguistic landscape
- Most (if not all) of these are arguably examples of **post-vernacular** language use (or concepts)



Julia

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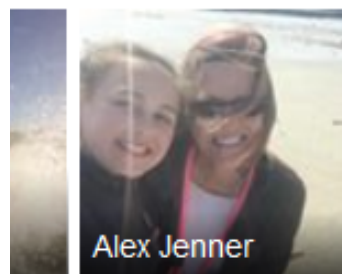
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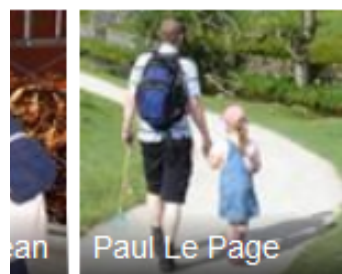
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Sarah Buck

**Jonathan Le Tocq**

21 April at 12:33 · Twitter ·

Nou souette ene buone journaïe à la Roine Elizabeth II, note Duc, onié, à l'ocasiaon d'aver gonyaïe nonànte àns! #Queenat90 #guernesiais



Share



Richard Harding and 18 others

1 share



Natasha Tostevin I don't understand what you have said but I get the general idea! x

· 1 · 21 April at 21:16



Paul Le Page If you get re-elected you need to use your political influence to put a Guernésiais translator on Facebook. I've no idea what "Nou souete ene bualoës journaïe to the roine Queen Elizabeth II, note Duke, Onnie, ocasiaon of notif gonyaïe ninety years old" is supposed to mean! 😊

· 22 April at 22:08 · Edited

Chat (2)

Nou z-a besouoïn
d'oui toutes les vouaïx.
Faot s'enr'gistraï.
J'lé fais mé!

Anna Brehaut

election2016.gg
my vote, my voice. #voteqsy



Challenging authority in linguistic markets

- **Post-vernacular** language use does not challenge native-speakerism
 - It reproduces and perpetuates the notion that new speakers will never/can't become legitimate (fully fluent/accurate) speakers
- **Mudes** have been identified as a feature of new speakers
 - 'a critical juncture in the life cycle where a speaker changes linguistic practice in favour of the target language' (Walsh & O'Rourke 2014: 68)
 - **Commitment** to speaking the language
 - New speakers adopt language as a new currency
 - 'actively defining the sociolinguistic landscape in their own terms' (Jaffe 2015: 38)

Potential sources of authority (power) in a 'new linguistic market'

- Language knowledge through formal lessons
- Expertise gained through linguistic studies and language documentation
- Involvement in language policy and planning
 - Both top-down and bottom-up arenas
- Commitment demonstrated through activism (linguistic, political?)
- New orthographic proposals and practices
- Language development: terminology, new speaker varieties
- 'we can understand the new communicative order as a future-oriented flexible, vacillating and changeable phenomenon rather than a static, frozen and rigid state based on heritage only' (Walsh and O'Rourke 2015: 2)

Some conclusions...

- Looking for potential new market values
 - to ‘have local languages and cultures continue in whatever form they may take’ (Goodfellow 2009: 21)
- Overcoming ideological challenges faced by new speakers of RMLs:
 - authenticity, ownership, (il)legitimacy
- Challenging ‘post-vernacularity’ as a goal
 - Implies terminal decline
 - Pessimistic and insulting view of new speaker abilities
- New kinds of market values, ‘currencies’ or linguistic capital for ‘new speaker communities’ – what might these look like?

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