



New speakers as agents of social and linguistic change in Francoprovençal-speaking communities

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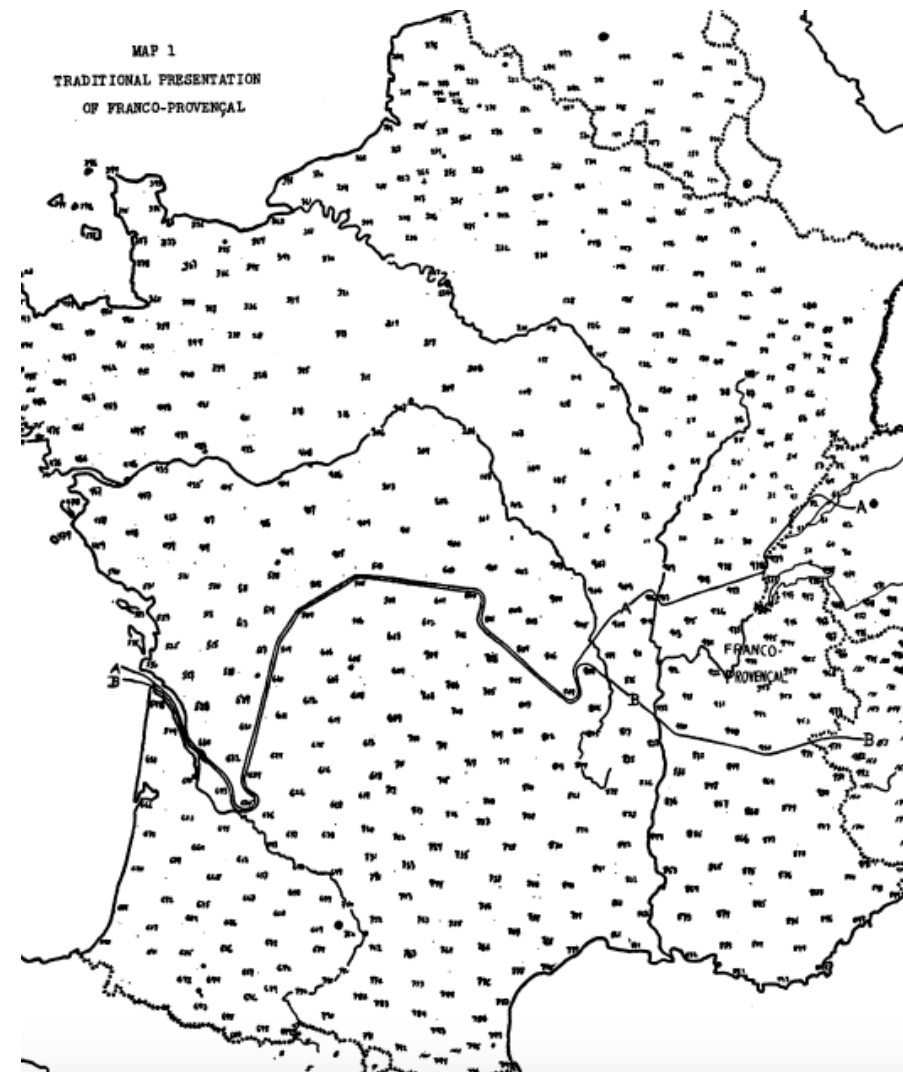
Presentation outline

- Brief overview of Francoprovençal
- Concept of the 'new speaker'
- New speakers of Francoprovençal
- Research questions
- Methodology
- The data
- Conclusions

Francoprovençal: brief overview



(Bert *et al.* 2009: 14)



(Hall 1949: 2)

Francoprovençal: some problems

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, the Francoprovençal language does not exist].

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

iii) 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 a coherent linguistic unit]

ii) 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].

‘New speakers’ and revitalisation

As a category of speaker

- Acquire the minority language in an educational context
- Linguistic forms can be far removed from traditional norms (e.g. Hornsby 2005 on Breton)
- Reported to find themselves to be socially and linguistically ‘incompatible’ with native speakers (cf. O’Rourke and Ramallo 2011, 2013)

Francoprovençal → Arpitan

- Emerging out of efforts to revitalise Francoprovençal
- Term their varieties instead ‘**Arpitan**’
- Highly politicised language militants
- Support a pan-regional linguistic identity and a multidialectal orthography

Picking up the mantel?

‘L’unification de ces parlers sera le but du mouvement populaire harpitan [...] De la fusion entre les langues, sortira une langue « nouvelle » : la LANGUE HARPITANIE’ [emphasis in original]’ (Harriet 1974: 7-8).

[The unification of these varieties will be the aim of the Harpitan movement [...] From the unification of [these varieties] [...] a “new” language will emerge: the HARPITAN language]

'New speakers' and revitalisation

ORB multidialectal orthography

'Orthographe de référence B' [Reference orthography B] (cf. Stich 1997; 2001; Stich *et al.* 2003)

Commands very little community-level acceptance

'[...] cette tentative de standardisation ne fait pas l'unanimité, tant parmi les linguistes que les locuteurs' (Matthey and Meune, 2012: 107).

[This attempt at standardisation is far from being accepted unanimously; it is rejected by both speakers and linguists alike].

Some common criticisms:

- An artificial standard
- Heavily influenced by Standard French
- Arbitrary selection of variants, often not those of widest currency

Standardisation by the back door?

- Contains a section on 'prononciation recommandée' for those who seek a 'francoprovençal standard'-like pronunciation (Stich 1998: 78)



Photo: arpitania.eu

'New speakers' and ORB

/l/-palatalisation in obstruent + lateral onset clusters

In Romance, palatalisation of /l/ in velar + lateral and labial + lateral clusters onset consonant clusters (i.e. /kl, gl, pl, bl, fl/) is common (e.g. Tuttle 1975).

/l/-palatalisation in Francoprovençal

In Francoprovençal, /l/-palatalisation in velar and labial + lateral clusters renders a number of different forms. Some examples for CLOCCA > 'cloche' (Fr) ('bell'):

[ˈkjoʃi] - St.Martin, monts du Lyonnais

[ˈkloθe] - Habère-Poche, Savoie

[ˈkliosə] - Ollon, Valais

[ˈkʎotse] - Valsavarenche, Aoste

[ˈtjoθi] - Toussieu, eastern Lyonnais

[ˈʔotse] - Nendaz, Valais

[ˈkluse] - Savièse, Valais

ORB: <cll, gll, bll, fll, pll>, so <clloche>

Recommended pronunciation = C+[ʎ]

Research questions

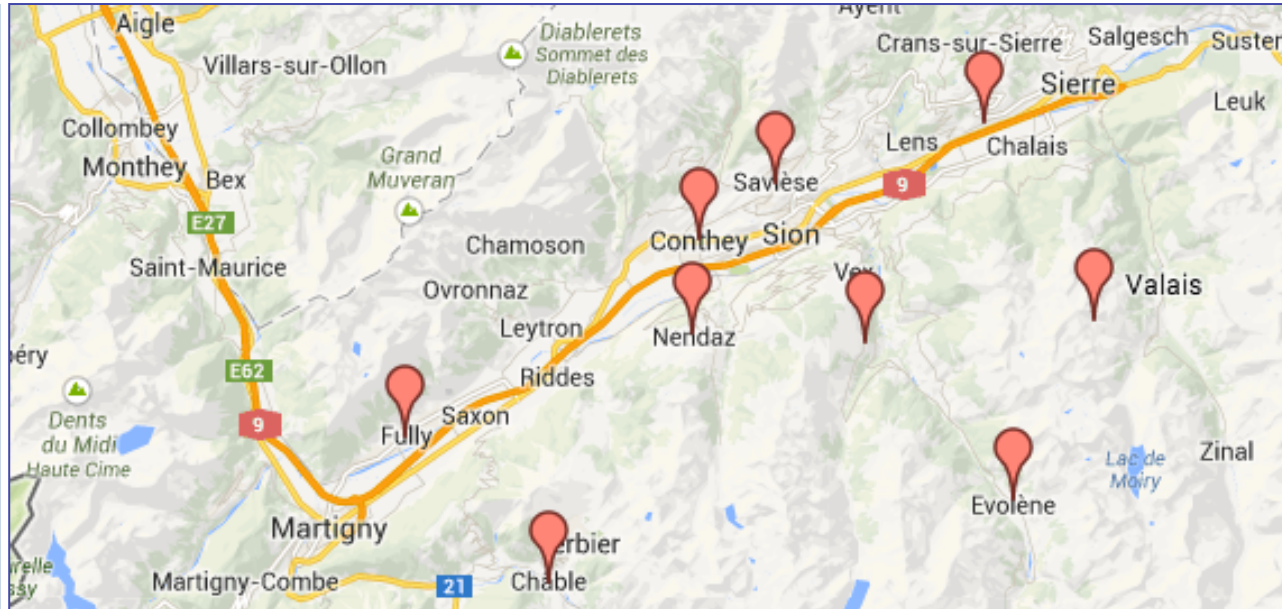
Do new speakers diverge linguistically from traditional native speakers?

- What sort of variants are employed?
- Do they opt for traditional variants?
- Do they approximate to highly localised forms that they might view as more grass-roots?
- Or do they adopt instead variants that might more closely resemble ORB?
- Or something else?
- Is there accommodation?

Do other speakers continue to maintain highly localised forms, or is there any evidence for levelling?

Methodology

Valais, Switzerland



Valais fieldwork sites:

- Bagnes
- Conthey
- Évêque
- Fully
- Hérémence
- Nendaz
- Ollon
- Savièse

Les monts du lyonnais, France



Lyonnais fieldwork sites:

- Lyon centre
- Rontalon
- Saint-Martin-en-Haut
- Saint-Symphorien
- Toussieu

Methodology

French sample

- 16 native speakers (5 female; 11 male; acquired language from birth)
- 2 'late' speakers (both male; acquired language later in life, typically as teenagers)
- 3 'new speakers' (all male; acquired language as an academic exercise)

Swiss sample

- 23 native speakers (8 female; 15 male)
- 9 'late' speakers (4 female, 5 male)
- 4 'new speakers' (1 female, 3 male)

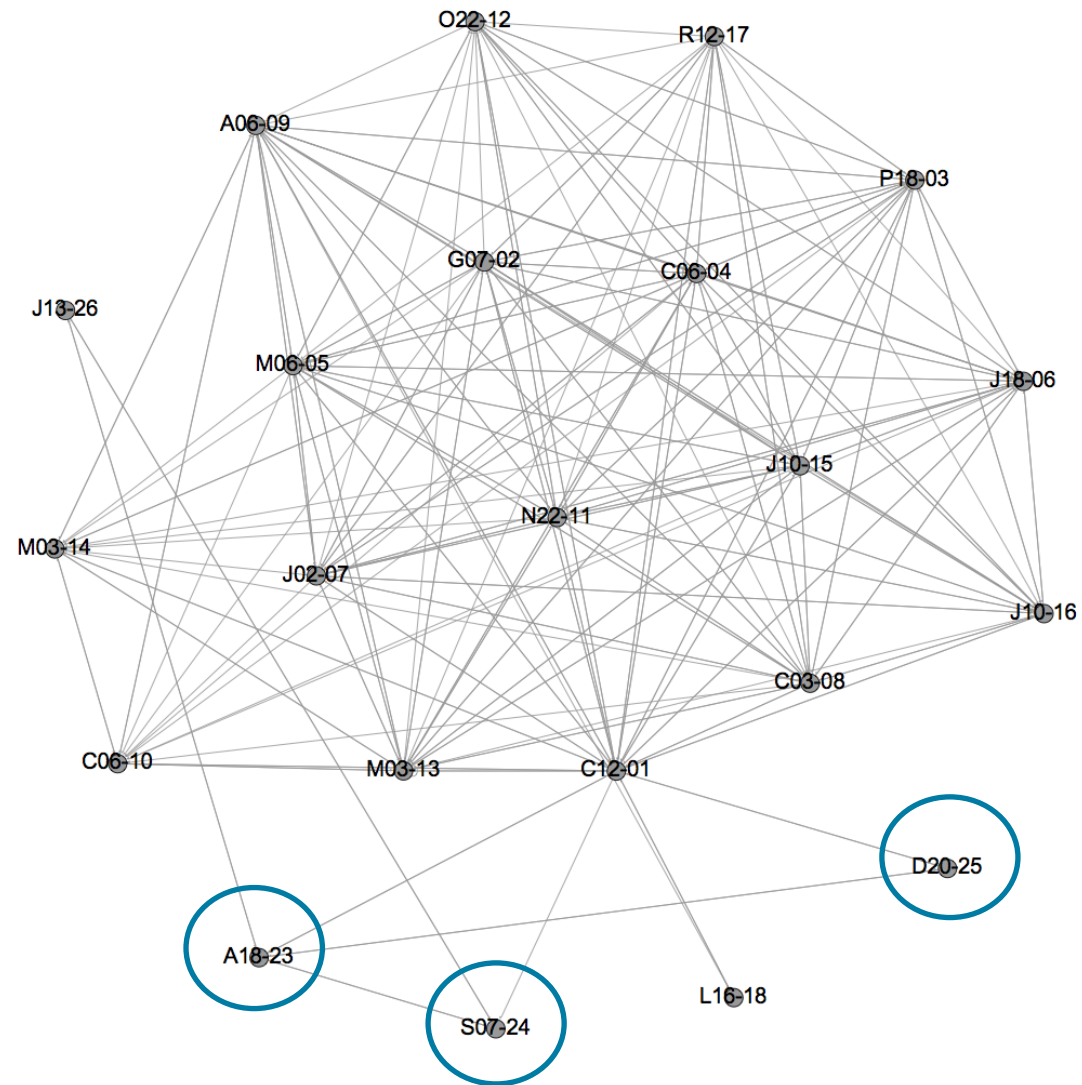
Interview

- Structured elicitation tasks: wordlist and reading passage exercises
- L1/L2 single and mixed group interviews for spontaneous speech: 'participant observation' (e.g. Milroy 1987)

Sociometrics

- Inspired by social network studies in bilingual communities (e.g. Matsumoto 2010)
- Used to enhance the analysis of variance
- Speakers quizzed on daily associations

Snapshot of the sample network



Dependent (l) variable

Envelope of variation

/l/-palatalisation in obstruent + lateral word-initial consonant clusters

/kl, gl, bl, pl, fl/

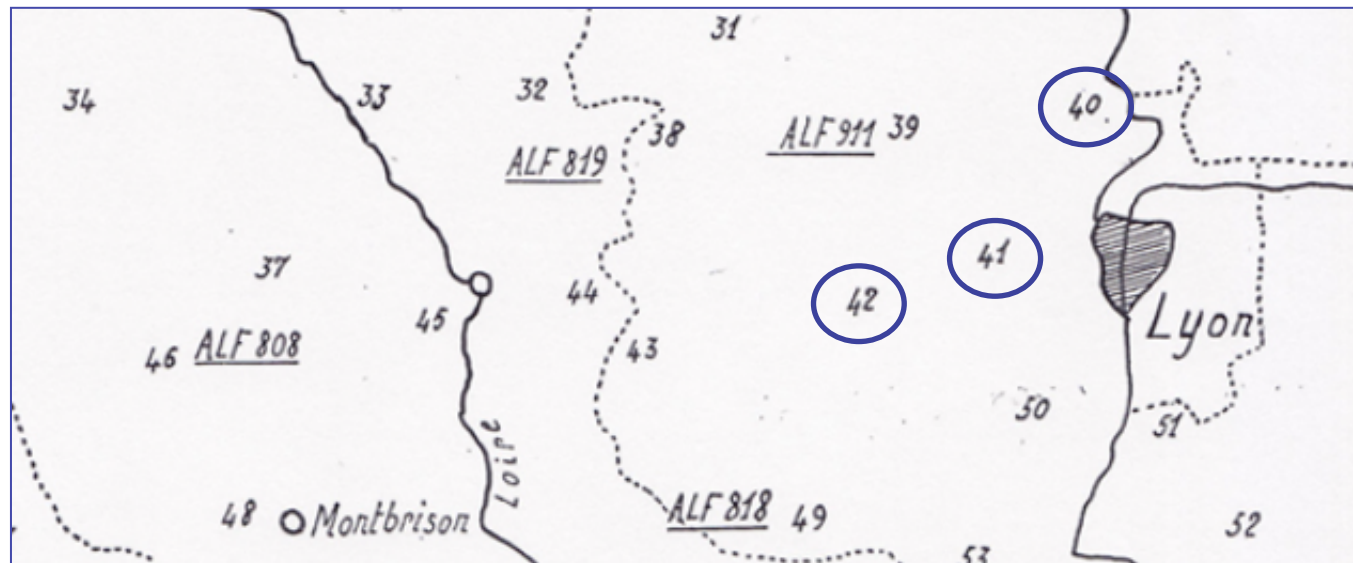
Following vowel in the phonetic environment is not a constraint on variant selection

Attested palatalised forms in Francoprovençal

Cluster	Attested palatalised forms (Stich 1998: 47-50)
/kl/	[kl], [kʎ], [tj], [ʎ], [j], [çl], [çʎ], [ç], [tʃ], [θ]
/gl/	[gl], [gʎ], [ʎ], [j], [ð]
/pl/	[pl], [pʎ], [pj], [pθ], [pf]
/bl/	[bl], [bʎ], [bj], [bð], [bv]
/fl/	[fl], [fʎ], [çl], [çʎ], [ç], [θ]

/l/-palatalisation in les monts du Lyonnais

ALLy map #	Data point 40	Data point 41	Data point 42
clé (697) 'key'	[çjo]	[kjo]	-
cloches (905) 'bells'	[çjots]	[kjoʃi]	[kjoʃi]
glas (1046) 'tolling bell'	[çjots]	[joʁ]	-
blé (46) 'wheat'	[blo]	[blo]	[blo]
fleur (1164) 'flower'	-	[floœʁ]	[flurəta]
pluie (782) 'rain'	-	-	[pløvi]



(Atlas linguistique et ethnographique du Lyonnais, Gardette 1950-1957)

2012 data: les monts du Lyonnais

Tokens:

- 439 tokens of (l) in /kl, gl, pl, bl, fl/ clusters across all three speaker types and both formal and informal speech styles
- Tokens were transcribed auditorily
- Uneven distribution of speakers in the sample: few female speakers; not all speakers sat both a group interview and structured elicitation tasks given their frailty in many cases
- Data therefore very fragmentary

Native speakers: velar vs. labial clusters



les cloches ('the bells')
M L1 - ['kʝɔ]



glace ('mirror')
M L1 - ['gʝasi]



les cloches ('the bells')
F L1 - ['kʝɔ]



glace ('mirror')
F L1 - ['gʝasi]

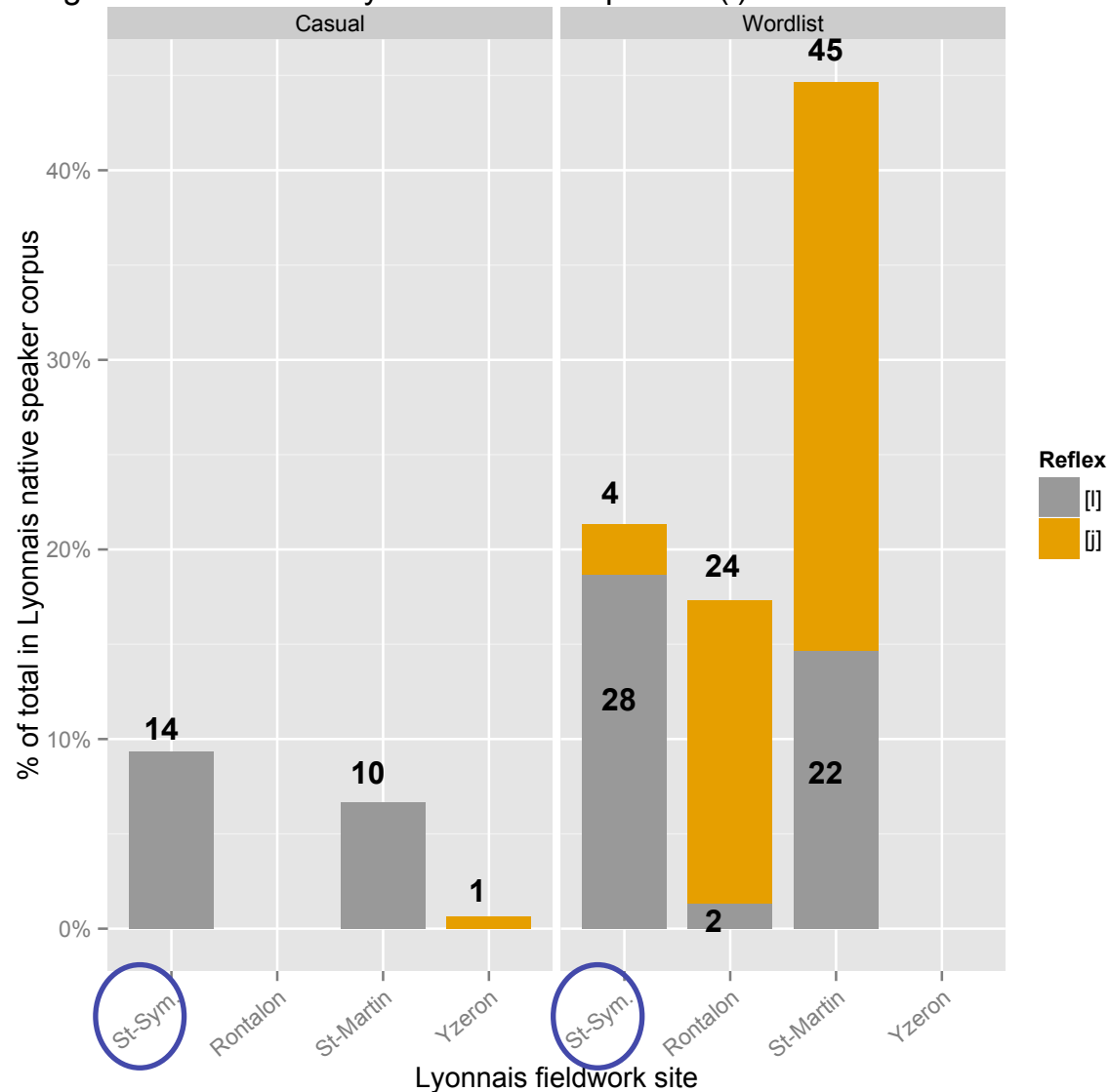
Table 2. Distribution of // variants by cluster

	velar + lateral	labial + lateral
[l] (no palatalisation)	50% (N=76)	100% (N=179)
[j] (palatalisation of //)	50% (N=76)	0%

- Native speakers keep palatalisation to the velar sets.
- But, surprising degree of variation within the velar sets!
- Macro socio variables such as sex and age didn't show any obvious trends... But style seemed to show some interaction.

Native speakers: velar /l/-palatalisation, style

Fig 1. Distribution of Lyonnais native speaker (l) reflexes for velar sets

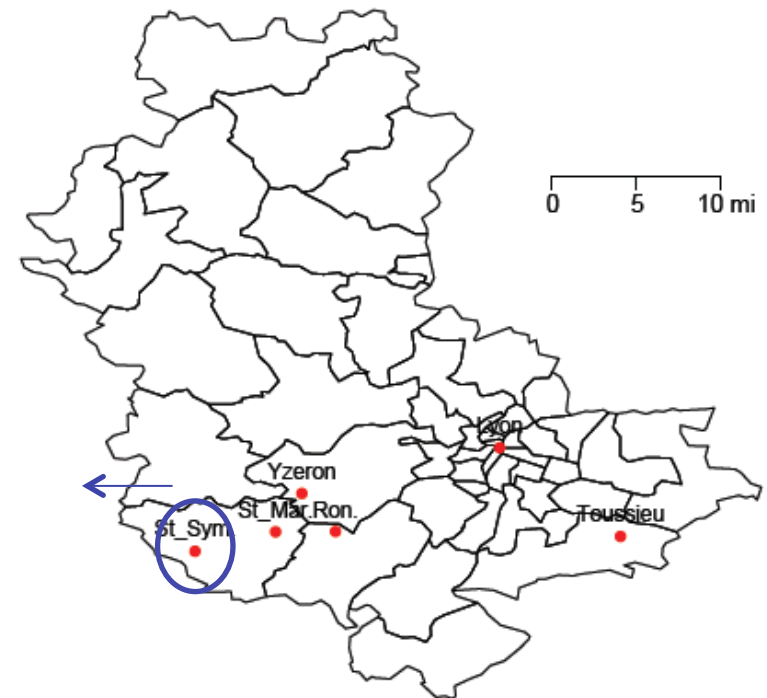


Fragmentary data, but:

Dialectal reflex [j] maintained in velar + lateral clusters

However, [l] also abounds in the data

- Stylistic effect
- Proximity to the Loire and away from Francoprovençal heartland > far fewer palatalised tokens in both styles
- Convergence with Standard French?



Late speakers

- Data come from only two speakers
- Data too fragmentary to draw any meaningful conclusions
- But...

Table 3. Distribution of /l/ variants by cluster

	velar + lateral	labial + lateral
[l] (no palatalisation)	20% (N=3)	100% (N=21)
[j] (palatalisation of /l/)	80% (N=15)	0%

- Late speakers also distinguish the velar and labial sets
- N=3 tokens indicating unpalatalised laterals
- Pattern not dissimilar from their reference group

New speakers

Table 4. Distribution of // variants by cluster

	velar + lateral	labial + lateral
[l]	37% (N=10)	91% (N=53)
[ɫ]	37% (N=10)	5% (N=3)
[lʲ]	19% (N=7)	3% (N=2)



les cloches ('the bells')
L2 - ['klɔʃe]



glace ('mirror')
L2 - ['glasi]



les cloches ('the bells')
M L1 - ['kjoʃ]



glace ('mirror')
M L1 - ['gjasɪ]

New speakers

Table 5. Distribution of // reflexes by new speaker participants

	A18-23	S07-24	D20-25
[l]	74% (N=40)	67% (N=8)	79% (N=15)
[j]	9% (N=5)	33% (N=4)	21% (N=4)
[ɭ]	17% (N=9)	N=0	N=0

Explaining the palatalised lateral in the data?

- ‘Interdialectal’ form (Trudgill 1986: 60), representing a ‘compromise between dialect and Standard French’ (Hornsby 2009: 172)
- Alternatively, is this influence from Arpitan and ORB?

[ˈkʲɔʃi] - St.Martin, monts du Lyonnais

[ˈklɔθe] - Habère-Poche, Savoie

[ˈkliosə] - Ollon, Valais

[ˈkʲɔtse] - Valsavarenche, Aoste

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[ˈkluse] - Savièse, Valais

ORB: <cll, gll, bll, fll, pll>, so <clloche>

Recommended pronunciation = C+[ʌ]

New speakers

Indicators for engagement in the Arpitan movement

- labels their variety ‘Francoprovençal or Arpitan’ rather than ‘patois’;
- acquired Francoprovençal in an educational setting;
- reads Francoprovençal literature from other regions;
- uses Francoprovençal on the Internet;
- engages in language activism; participates directly in the Arpitan movement.

Index

- a score of 0-2, constituting a **low** integration index;
- a score of 3-4, constituting a **mid-way** integration index;
- a score of 5-6, constituting an independent category labelled as **ARP** (Arpitan), which can be described as a ‘highly self-conscious’ category of speakers, ‘whose shared attitudes, repertoires, and discourses are largely predicated on the other components of the [...] index’ (Woolhiser 2007: 16).

Table 6. Engagement index and frequencies for Lyonnais new speakers

Feature:	A18-23 (ARP)	S07-24 (ARP)	D20-25 (mid-way)
palatalised lateral	17%	0	0
palatalisation in labial sets	21%	50%	0

Conclusions

- Francoprovençal, has been undergoing gradual language death for some time.
- Data from native speakers suggest that convergence is taking in the direction of the dominant language.
- But now has an ambitious language activism movement and a proposed pan-lectal orthographical norm.
- Emerging new speakers have effectively rebranded the language, and they seek to forge a pan-regional identity for what they call Arpitan
- While they are keen to show that they command the dialect, and are able to produce highly localised variants, they also demonstrate divergent speech patterns to L1 speakers – these variants might be linked to a wider pan-Arpitan identity.
- Despite the poverty of data, Trudgill has argued that small token numbers should not be ignored, for they might represent ‘vestigial variants’, that may represent ‘the seeds of later change’ (1999: 320).

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