

Language Shift, Diglossia and Dialectal Variation in Western Brittany: the Case of Southern Cornouaille¹

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1. Introduction

In the first part of this paper I trace the language shift from Breton to French within the historical, social and ideological framework in which it occurred. I then argue that 19th and 20th-century attempts by scholars and militants to rehabilitate the Breton language led to the creation of a unified standard (*peurunvan*).² The consequence has been the rise of a three-way diglossic rapport between the speakers of French, the new Breton standard³ and those of the traditional Breton vernaculars.

¹ I should like to thank Christian Fagon (Plouzané, Finistère), Stephen Hewitt (Paris), who was among the first to broach the subject of the acceptability of modern literary Breton to native Breton speakers in an excellent master's dissertation (Cambridge 1977), and Professor Jean Le Dû (University of Western Brittany, Brest) for having read a draft version of this article and for their helpful observations, suggestions and corrections. Of course, any remaining errors are my own.

² The concept of "standard" language would require an entire discussion unto itself. In short, prior to the creation of "*peurunvan*," which is primarily a set of orthographic conventions, there were two ecclesiastical norms (the first based on Léonais Breton for KLT and the second for Vannetais). Both local standards were conceived by native Breton-speaking priests during the 19th century. For political reasons (see below) they were forcibly unified (i.e. *peurunvan*) by the Nazis in 1941 (cf. Ronan Calvez 1999, 2000, on the role of Leo Weisgerber and Roparz Hemon in this endeavor). This harsh fact lies at the heart of the orthographic dispute that persists to this day and explains why many left-leaning Bretons refuse to use it. The problem is thus more ideological than it is linguistic or orthographic.

³ By "new standard" I am referring to a highly prescriptive form of the literary language which is characterized by neo-Celtic linguistic purism and hypercorrective tendencies (elimination of French linguistic influence).

Taking the varieties of southern Cornouaille (Finistère) between Quimper and Quimperlé as a point of comparison,⁴ I focus on a number of phonological, morphological, syntactical and lexical features which, though far from exhaustive, are not generally taken into account in the new standard language. These details provide a general idea of how varieties of Breton function at the micro-dialectological level, as well as ways in which they can differ from the standard and other spoken varieties.

The paper concludes with observations regarding the necessity to consider languages, language varieties and their speakers within relevant social contexts.

1.1. The Historical and Cultural Background of the Language Shift

Brittany is currently in the final stages of a language shift from Breton to French, a process which began nearly a millennium ago. Ironically, it is the Bretons' 9th-century military successes against the Franks which appear to have set the stage for the shift (Humphreys 1991: 97). With their capitals of Rennes and later, Nantes, established deep in the Romance-speaking territory of Upper Brittany, marriages between the leading families of Brittany and France became commonplace, the consequence being that the Breton aristocracy gradually adopted the Old French language and culture. This leads to the question of whether a system of diglossia existed in Old Breton. In other words, was the Old Breton spoken by the ruling classes⁵ the same as that found in the Old Breton glosses and, if so, did it differ significantly from the language of the peasantry? Indeed, it is clear that the Old Breton fragments and glosses originate from the same Brittonic *lingua franca* used in the *scriptoria* of Celtic Britain. Nevertheless, it would be rash to assume that the popular Breton of the period was of the same variety as that spoken by the higher social ranks. If Falc'hun (1963, 1981) and Fleuriot (1980) are correct, the first British immigrants would have encountered Gaulish-speaking inhabitants as well as a sprinkling of vulgar Latin speak-

⁴ Considering the linguistic distance between the Breton of southern Cornouaille and the standard language, I have adapted the orthography (except where indicated) to southern Cornouaillais Breton. Nearly all examples included in this paper were collected in Saint Yvi, southern Cornouaille from informants born between 1902 and 1908. A certain number were collected from my friend and collaborator, Mrs. Mona Bouzec, Breton teacher and author, of Riec-sur-Belon. I should like to take this opportunity to thank her for having taught me so much about the Breton of her area. In a few cases, I have included two versions of a given sentence for comparative purposes, one in local Breton and the other in the standard language. In these cases, the different versions of the sentence are clearly indicated. Examples written in local Cornouaillais dialect will be followed by **SY orth** = Saint Yvi orthography. All other individual Breton words or phrases are written in *peurunvan* orthography. When appropriate, examples are accompanied by a phonetic transcription of the local southern Cornouaillais (i.e. normally Saint Yvi and/or Riec) pronunciation.

⁵ By this I mean a form of Brittonic that was used orally by the intellectual and ruling classes (i.e. professional poets and nobility). The elite language *par excellence* was, of course, Latin.

ing communities when they began arriving in Armorica in the 4th and 5th centuries (cf. Chadwick 1969). Evans (1990: 156) is quite straightforward in his assessment:

In Brittany, relatively remote and far removed from the more intensely romanised centres and in close proximity to Celtic-speaking Britain and in close contact with it, circumstances may have been exceptionally favourable for the late survival of Gaulish. Here, there is little doubt, Insular and Continental Celtic did merge.

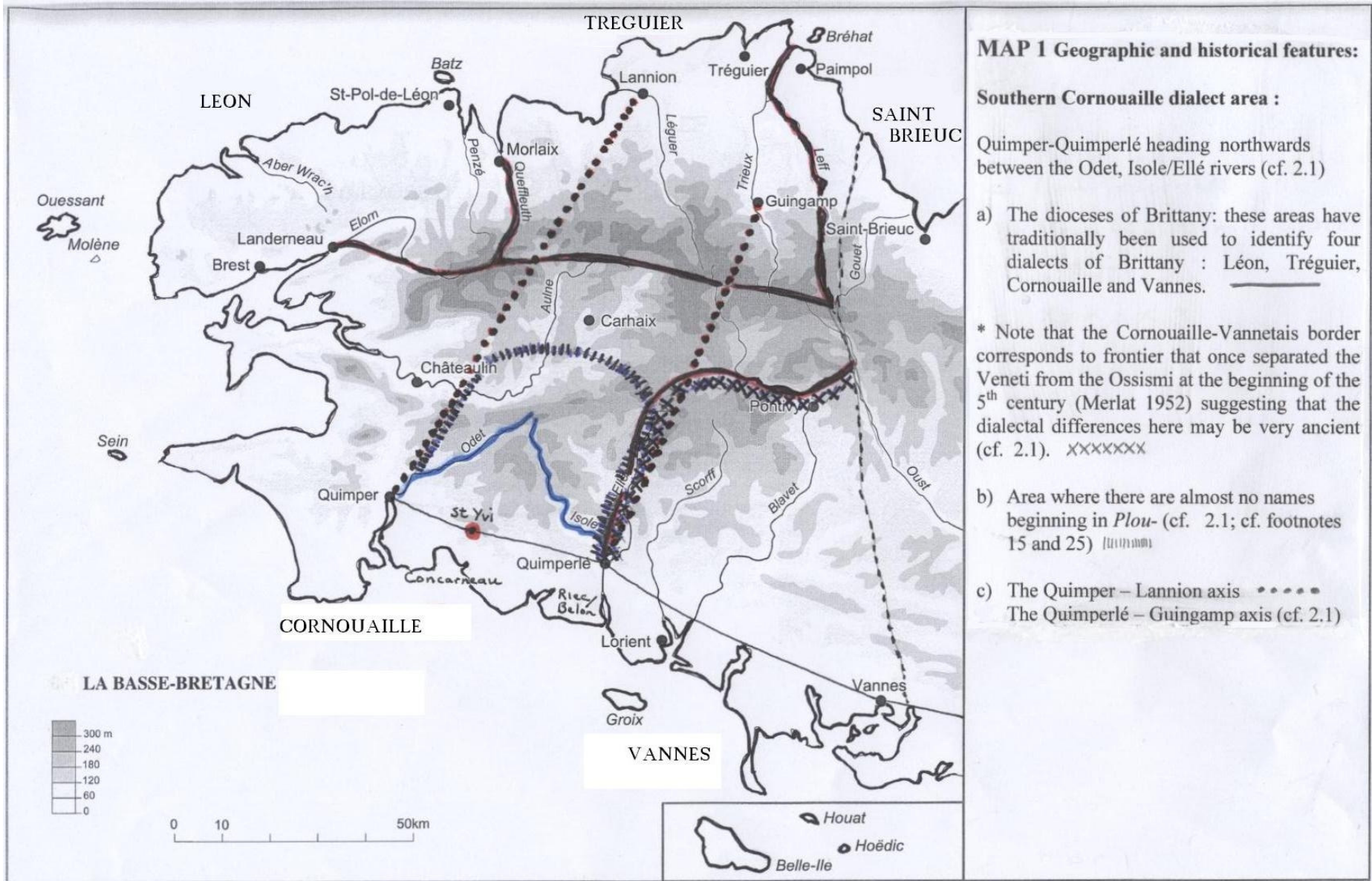
Although the Gaulish contribution to the development of the Breton language will probably never be determined with any degree of certainty owing to a lack of direct evidence, it appears probable that the roots of the modern Breton dialects are to be sought in this initial period of contact, the Vannetais and Cornouaillais border being a likely reflection of an ancient linguistic and ethnic frontier (see map 1a). They would thus not result from the “degenerative” French linguistic influences that followed the Treaty of Union of Brittany and France in 1532 as has been sometimes suggested (cf. Loth 1883: 81, 327).⁶

Confined to the western half of Brittany (*Breizh Izel*), the Breton language has been spoken since the Middle Ages by illiterate peasants, fishermen and the petty nobility. Although the Catholic clergy developed two local standards of Breton (based on the Léonais and Vannetais varieties) for the purposes of preaching and teaching catechism, its linguistic impact on the spoken language appears to have been relatively limited, particularly in the Cornouaille and Trégor regions. Whatever the ultimate causes, modern Breton is spoken today under a multitude of dialectal forms in which intercomprehension is sometimes difficult, if not impossible. Considering that a mere 5% of the Breton-speaking population can read Breton,⁷ it is one of the few modern European languages to have escaped the direct normalizing influence of a standardized, prescriptive model. In this regard, the geolinguistic picture here is not unlike that which one would have encountered in medieval England and France. As such, it offers a trove of information concerning language variation, language contact, language change, as well as the social conditions under which these occur.

In 1900, Breton was still the first language of 90% of the inhabitants of Western Brittany, 50% of whom were monoglots (Broudic 1995; 1999: 19). Yet, by the 1950s, most parents (the youngest now in their seventies and eighties) had stopped transmitting Breton to their children. This was a process that began after World War I and was generalized after 1945.

⁶ In his study of the Arnold von Harff glossary, Guyonvarc’h (1984) showed that the Breton spoken near Nantes in 1499 was clearly dialectal and part of the Vannetais dialect.

⁷ This statistic is based on the estimates of several colleagues in the Celtic Department at the University of Western Brittany, Brest (also cf. Hewitt 1977). Naturally, nearly everyone can read and write French nowadays.



Although it cannot be denied that the French State and, through it, the public school system actively encouraged this process (cf. below), it is also important to understand that most Bretons considered their language to be a symbolic reflection of their subordinate social status and poor economic situation. As such, they saw it as a major impediment to their own advancement. Mastering French, it was felt, would grant a brighter social and economic future for them and for their children. This alone may offer the best explanation for the remarkable rapidity of the shift. If one accepts this interpretation of events, the Bretons were thus active participants in the change of languages and not passive victims as they are often portrayed.

Another factor which accelerated the language shift and which is sometimes underestimated as a cause for the decline of the language is the passing away of the last monoglots during the 1960s and 1970s.⁸ Because the use of Breton was no longer an absolute necessity, French gradually and almost imperceptibly became the primary medium of communication in most households. This explains why, even though over two hundred thousand Bretons still can and do speak Breton, its use is increasingly restricted to intimate circles of older family members, neighbours and friends, and is normally used when no monoglot French speakers are present, a rarity these days.⁹ For most native Breton speakers today, the use of the language is distinctly affective and it is psychologically on a parallel with *tutoiement* in French (Le Dû, personal communication). That is to say, one only uses it with people with whom one has well-established social bonds. Just as the social network of these speakers is shrinking as the older Breton speakers pass away, so is the opportunity to use the language on a regular basis.

1.2. Competing Ideologies

There is an ideological dimension to the language shift, as well. The first stems from the consequences of the French Revolution one of the goals of which was to mould the socially, culturally and linguistically fragmented population of France into one nation. With this in mind, the Abbé Grégoire undertook a famous study in 1794 on behalf of the Republican authorities to determine how many of France's 23 million inhabitants actually spoke a form of French resembling the current norm. The answer was an astonishingly low three million. The rest spoke French patois or languages such as Alsatian, Basque, Breton, Flemish and Occitan. It was decided that something had to be done to change the situa-

⁸ Marie-France Sellin, a native speaker and former secretary at the Saint Yvi town hall, told me that the last monoglots she dealt with (translating administrative documents, etc.) died in the 1980s.

⁹ In such cases, the conversation immediately switches to French. On more than one occasion, I have observed people who were speaking Breton and as soon as a stranger came within earshot, the conversation shifted to French and then back to Breton as the person went out of hearing distance.

tion, but it was not until the *Loi Jules Ferry* was passed in 1881 that French-medium public schools provided a mechanism for teaching the French norm to the nation's children.

The paradox is that while the peasantry was anxious to embrace the French language and culture, many Breton intellectuals of the early 19th century, deeply instilled with the Romantic spirit of the period, saw the Breton people in an entirely different light, namely, as the inheritors of an ancient and noble Celtic language and culture which had been transmitted to them from time immemorial, albeit in a corrupt state. Much as 19th-century scholars sought to reconstruct the Proto Indo-European language and establish the ethnic and cultural links between the European peoples, it was felt that the Breton language and culture held a wealth of secrets which were simply waiting to be revealed. It is in this spirit that the best known of these scholars, Vicomte Hersart de la Villemarqué, produced his *Barzaz Breiz*, a collection of ballads which he claimed to be authentic emanations of early Brittonic bardic poetry having the same sources as the ancient literary masterpieces of medieval Wales.¹⁰ Other scholars, such as A. de la Borderie, A. de Jubainville and A. de Courson were interested in revitalizing other aspects of Breton history, language and culture. In the field of linguistics, it is probably Joseph Loth (1883; 1890) who most contributed to the idea that Breton was an exclusively Brittonic language devoid of any Gaulish influence. Just as 19th-century Englishmen presented themselves as pure-blooded Anglo-Saxons (cf. German 2000), their Breton counterparts saw themselves ethnically as British Celts.

These influential scholars can be said to be among the founders of modern Breton studies and, as such they presented a new nationalistic vision in which Brittany and its people were portrayed as victims of an aggressive and imperialistic France. Bernard Tanguy (1977) convincingly demonstrated the underlying reasons for this sudden rise in Breton nationalist sentiment and corresponding anti-French attitudes. According to him, this was largely a reaction of the former ruling elites to the radical social and political changes which had rocked France following the French Revolution.

Meanwhile, the mass of the Breton population remained largely oblivious to this new version of Bretonicity with its stress on Celtic origins, close linguistic and cultural bonds with the Welsh, Cornish, Irish and Scottish Gaels and hostile-

¹⁰ Despite claims he was a forger of the same ilk as James MacPherson and Iolo Morgannwg, Donatien Laurent (1989), in his publication of de la Villemarqué's long lost field notes, has shown that the picture is rather more complex. Considering the raw material for his ballads (*gwerziou*) were in southern Cornouaillais dialect of the kind studied in this article and copied in his own hand, often very hastily scribbled as if it keep up with the singer-informant, this seems to demonstrate rather conclusively that de la Villemarqué actually did collect many of the ballads in the collection. As he wrote himself in his introduction to the *Barzaz Breiz*, for a given ballad, he combined various versions he had gathered and reworked them, including the language (and the names of the characters) in an attempt to "reconstruct" what he believed to be the "original" text, often granting free reign to his imagination.

ity towards France. This was due in large part to the fact that the highly centralized French national curriculum presented an idealized vision of French culture, literature, history and language in which there was little room for the nationalistic aspirations of a few Breton scholars. The inevitable consequence of this was that today the mass of the Breton people know very little about the linguistic, cultural or historical origins of their country. The gap between the social classes on this issue of Breton identity is thus striking and has had a profound effect on attitudes towards the Breton language and culture to the present day. In terms of cultural consciousness the ultimate irony is that Bretons are sometimes reproached for having passively abandoned a historical and linguistic heritage about which they know relatively little.¹¹

It is thus the work of these 19th-century scholars, who often modeled their efforts on those of their insular Celtic brethren in Wales, Ireland and Scotland, which provided the ideological foundations for the linguistic and cultural revivals (called *emsav*) which occurred between the two World Wars, and most recently, since the 1960s. These revivals were spearheaded by highly motivated militants, nationalists and intellectuals, many of whom, it should be noted, were/are not native Breton speakers. Through their hard work, persistence and sheer enthusiasm, they succeeded in imposing a standardized, unified form of Breton called *peurunvan* (also called *zedachek* because of the characteristic spelling <zh>) as the primary medium of communication in the Breton media and in the schools.¹² Furthermore, what Bud Khleif (1978) called the “ethnic revival in the First World,” with its emphasis on minority rights and driven by a rapidly expanding middle class, or “knowledge class” as he puts it, has provided great stimulus and appeal to the movement since the 1960s.

Indeed, the last quarter century has seen the foundation and expansion of numerous independent *Diwan* Breton-medium schools throughout Brittany which have spawned a new generation of Breton speakers who are now fluent in the new standard. Nevertheless, although there can be little doubt that, without these schools, this generation of Breton speakers would not have existed, they represent fewer than 1% of students under 18 years of age. Moreover, even if the *Diwan* schools do form the backbone of the language movement, it is also impor-

¹¹ This is not to say that Bretons are not fiercely proud of their region, but the language is not necessarily the focus of that pride. Much of it revolves around the natural beauty of country, its architecture, gastronomy and cultural and musical traditions. Common stereotypes concerning the Breton character are advanced (their being stubborn, hard workers, tough, brave, etc.). It is true, however, that there is a growing awareness among the younger generations of shared Celtic identity, particularly with the Irish and Welsh, as manifested in the popularity of the *Fêtes de Cornouaille* and, especially, the *Fêtes Interceltiques de Lorient*, but the question is how deep does this go and what does “Celticity” really mean for them? Most students I have questioned at the University of Brest have only the vaguest impressions about the links between Brittany and the other Celtic countries. Informal polls I have conducted show that upwards of 70% of the students bearing common Breton names of Celtic origin (Le Goff, Le Corre, Cadoret, Bizouarn, etc.) have no idea what they mean.

¹² See footnotes 2 and 3.

tant to recall that Breton is also offered in the private (i.e. Catholic) and public school systems.¹³ While many individual teachers do their best to teach a form of Breton that is in tune with that which is used in local community, the differences between the vernaculars and the new standard spoken version of the language poses serious pedagogical challenges.

Consequently, even though the teaching of the standard is staunchly defended as the only hope for the language, one of the major drawbacks has been the development of a new form of diglossia. Indeed, native speakers often claim that they find the Breton used by the children and much of the media difficult if not impossible to understand.¹⁴ Paradoxically, many critics complain that the new norm is phonologically “French,” syntactically hypercorrect and lexically “neo-Celtic”.

This linguistic tension is further exacerbated by the cultural, educational and generational differences that contribute to discouraging communication between the generations. The bottom line is that younger, urbanized standard speakers often have little in common with older, less formally-educated rural native speakers. Furthermore, given that many older people simply refuse to speak Breton with the young and actively discourage its use (for the reasons provided above), compounded with problems of intercomprehension arising from the linguistic nature of the standard language, younger speakers and learners often have little choice but to use the language among themselves. They thus often find themselves cut off from the linguistic source which could potentially provide them with full access to the natural language as it has been transmitted down through the centuries. It was with this problem in mind that a program entitled *Quêteurs de mémoires* “Memory seekers” was recently launched by the *Conseil Général du Finistère* at the instigation of two Breton speakers, Annaïg Daouphars and André Le Gac, to encourage communication and establish new bonds between the generations. This particular program, however, is limited to Finistère.

¹³ More precisely, students can choose Breton as an elective (1 to 3 hours per week) or follow the *filière bilingue* or “bilingual curriculum” consisting of 3 hours of Breton, 3 hours of geography and history, and 3 hours of math, all taught through the medium of Breton. The aim is to achieve absolute parity between Breton and French with a view to replacing the loss of the old generation of Breton speakers.

¹⁴ My own experience is that native speakers tend to exaggerate problems of intercomprehension between dialect areas. A weekly radio program on RBO once hosted by Daniel Jequel, himself a dialect speaker from southwestern Cornouaille (Loctudy, Bro Vigoudenn), shows that vernacular speakers from vast areas of lower Brittany can communicate quite easily with one another when the cultural and affective framework is well-defined and familiar.

2. Linguistic Evidence

A fundamental question is whether the gulf between the vernaculars and the written standard is as much of a problem as has been claimed. Is this situation truly unique to Brittany? Is the existence of a standard a help or a hindrance to the survival of the language? In order to provide some answers to these questions, I shall now focus on a regional variety which is spoken between Quimper and Quimperlé in southern Finistère (i.e. southern Cornouaille) to illustrate the kinds of linguistic phenomena which differentiate it from the standard language as well as other regional dialects. The issue will be explored in terms of phonology, morphophonology, morphology, syntax and the lexicon, in particular the question of French loans as opposed to recent Celtic neologisms.

2.1. Geolinguistic and Socio-Cultural Considerations

In very general terms, the dialect area under consideration extends from the Odet river (Quimper) to the Isole and Ellé rivers (Quimperlé) and reaches as far to the northeast as Carhaix in central Brittany. Because of its geographical setting, the Breton of this region shows certain similarities with both the Léonais and Vannetais dialects, but especially to the forms of Breton stretching from the southwestern tip of Brittany to the northeast along the Concarneau-Lannion and Quimperlé-Guingamp axes, confirming Professor Falc'hun's theory of an intermediate dialect which includes much of Cornouaille and Trégor (Falc'hun 1963, 1981). According to this view, there would only be three major dialects and not four: 1) Léon, 2) Vannetais, and 3) Cornouaille-Trégor-Goélo, the latter forming a single entity (cf. Map 1).

The area of south-central Cornouaille under consideration is characterized by an absence of place names beginning with "Plou".¹⁵ It also corresponds closely to the region where the *coiffe* of Fouesnant was once worn and where the *bal de l'aven* dance was most popular. My informants (from Saint Yvi and Riec) also claim to be most at ease here when speaking local Breton,¹⁶ and it is where they

¹⁵ Several hypotheses have been proposed to explain the significance of this: it was not colonized by the initial waves of Brittonic settlers and the entire area may have remained empty until after the colonization period had ended; it may have been inhabited by Gauls and thus received relatively few British settlers; it may have been settled later by Britons arriving toward the end of the colonization period, some of whom may have been from Wales (see footnote 25). However, there are numerous Brittonic-type place names in *Lan-* and *Tre-*: Langolen, Landelo, Lamphily, Landrevarzec, Trevarez, Tregourez, etc.

¹⁶ Furthermore, the boundaries just described correspond closely to those established in two dialectometric studies (German 1984, 1991). The second, which used the Lerman computer program (University of Rennes II) and was performed at the *École Polytechnique de Nantes*, showed the correlation between 20 pairs of key phonological variables typical of this area and the cultural and place name data indicated above.

best know the place names in Breton (at a micro-toponymical level).¹⁷ Finally, the modern-day linguistic frontier separating the Cornouaillais and Vannetais dialects corresponds not only to the limits of the dioceses of Cornouaille and Vannes but also to the ancient border separating the two Gaulish tribes which once inhabited the area: the Veneti and Ossismi, suggesting that the dialectal differences here may be very ancient. The striking concordance between the cultural, historical and linguistic evidence, reinforces the hypothesis that the speakers from this area form part of a relatively cohesive and ancient speech community. These and other pertinent cultural, social and linguistic features are illustrated in maps 1 and 2.

2.2. General Phonological Features

A number of phonological features helps identify speakers from this area. Many characteristics below are also shared with the Breton of the Trégor region. All of the examples provide clues allowing Breton speakers to identify the origin of their interlocutors, often with remarkable precision.

- 1) The loss of intervocalic *-z-* (< Brittonic *ð*) > in numerous words such as: *kuzhañ* ['ky:ɛ] “to hide,” *kouezhañ* ['kweo] “to fall,” *digouezhañ* [di'gweo] “to arrive,” *lazhañ* [lao] “to kill,” *hiziv* ['hiu]/['ʃiu] “today,” *anezhi* [nɛj] “of her,” *anezhañ* [nãõ] “of him,” *anezho* [nɛ] “of them,” *dezhi* [dɛj] “to her,” *dezhañ* [dãõ] “to him,” *dezho* [dɛ]/[dɛo] “to them,” etc. Evans (1964: 10) demonstrates that the phenomenon also exists in Welsh. This could suggest that the tendency may be quite old in Breton: Middle Welsh *rodi* > *roi* “to give,” Modern Breton *roi/rei*); also cf. Old Breton (Fleuriot 1985: 81) and Middle Welsh (Evans 1964: 137) *buei* “used to be” as opposed to *bydei*. Compare this to the Modern Breton of this region: *bi* “used to be” versus literary Breton *beze*. There are also numerous examples where */z/* has not been lost, but in most cases, this */z/* originates from Brittonic or Latin **s* plus secondary lenition; **casica* > *caseg* > *kazeg* “mare”. Other examples: *gwazed* “men, husbands,” *gwizi* “sows,” *pouezet* “weighed,” *boazet* “to be accustomed to”.
- 2) The loss of final */z/* > \emptyset (< Brittonic */ð/*) is also commonplace: *menez* [mi:n] (only used in place names: *Beg Menez*; *Menez Riou Bihan*, etc.). It is worth mentioning that Evans (1964: 10) notes that the loss of intervocalic and final */ð/* is a rather common feature of Middle Welsh, and it is

¹⁷ Otherwise, except for major towns and cities such as Brest, Douarnenez, Morlaix, Vannes, Nantes, Rennes and Paris, they know only the French forms of place names outside of their dialect area.

thus not to be excluded that this phenomenon is old in some cases: OW *triti*, Modern Welsh *trydedd* and Modern Breton *trede*, Welsh *mywn* (Ir. *medon*), Middle Welsh *y vyny* “up” (< *mynydd*), Modern Trégorrois *Méné*. Other examples: *bez* [beð] (see (b) below) “grave,” *gwez* [gʷeʃ:] “trees,” etc.

“Zh” resulting from Brittonic *-θ; Brittonic/Latin *-s tends to resist this change: *kozh* [ku:ʒ] “old,” *laezh* [le:ʒ] “milk,” *kazh* [ka:ʒ] “cat,” *tizh* [ti:ʒ] “speed,” *pezh* [pɛʃ] “thing”/“that which,” *gwezh* [gʷeʃ] “time,” *bazh* [ba:ʒ] “staff,” “cane,” *pouez* [pwe:ʒ] “weight,” *skarzhed* [skæʒ] “poured,” etc. West of Bannalec, *Brezhoneg* (<zh> < Brittonic *-θ, i.e. the “Breton language”) is pronounced with a /z/. East of Bannalec, however, it is generally pronounced without the /z/ [bʁe'ð:nɛk].

Two other interesting features in this area are:

- a) final and intervocalic <z> pronounced [œ:], with the nasalization of the preceding vowel and the loss of the phoneme /z/: *teuziñ* [tœ:i], *beuziñ* [bœ:i], *kleuz* [klœ:], *gouez* [gwe:i].
 - b) throughout the zone under discussion, intervocalic and especially final /z/ are also rendered by an unvoiced /-d/ in a scattering of words: *bez* (Welsh [be:ð]) which is homophonous with *bed* [bɛ:d] meaning “world”; *buhez* [by:d] “life”; *bemdez* [bemdɛt] “everyday”. This feature is to be found most frequently around Trégunc and Nevez: *laezh* [le:d] “milk,” *pezh* [pit] “thing”/“that which,” *c’hoazh* [χwɛt] “still,” *kozh* [ku:d] “old,” *kosoc’h* [kɔsɔχ] “older,” *mamm goz* [mām 'gu:d] “grand-mother,” etc. It is difficult to know whether this is a recent development (i.e. /z/ > /d/) or whether it is older (/ð/ > /d/).
- 3) The loss of intervocalic /v/ > ø – in a number of words, intervocalic /v/ is also elided as in *lavared* [læ:rɛd] “to say,” *devez* [deʷəs] “day” (both [de:vʃ] and [deʷəs] are heard in Saint Yvi), *klevout* [kleo] “to hear,” *klevet* [kle:d] “heard,” *kaved/kavout* [kɛut] “find,” “get,” *kavet* [ke:d] “found,” *sevel* [se:əl]/[sewəl] “to rise,” sometimes with initial /z/ ([se:v]) is also heard in Saint Yvi), *savet* [se:d] “risen,” *eva* [eo] “to drink,” (but past participle *evet* [e:vɛt] or imperative *ev(it)* [ev]), *avel* [ɛ:l] “wind” and *ivez* [ɛ] “also”.
 - 4) The opposition of palatalized and unpalatalized bilabial glides. In the area under discussion, initial <gw> and <w> are palatalized when followed by a close tense long vowel (/i:/, /e:/, /ɛ:/) as in *gwin* [gʷin] “wine,” *gwen* [gʷɛn] “white,” *gwiz* [gʷe:ʒ] “sow,” *gwisket* [gʷiʃɛt] “dressed,” *gwir* [gʷi:ʳ] “true”

and *gwer* [gʷɛːʷ] “green”. Note that such palatalization is not commonly heard in Trégor Breton which may indicate that this feature is relatively recent in Cornouaille and elsewhere, perhaps, as a result of French influence. Minimal pairs:

<i>gwez</i> [gʷɛːʷ] “trees”	<i>gouez</i> [gʷɛːʷ] [gʷeː] “wild”
<i>gwez</i> [gʷɛːʷ] “trees”	<i>gwas</i> [gʷaːz] “husband”
<i>gwisket</i> [ˈgʷiʃkət] “dressed”	<i>gwasket</i> [ˈgʷaʃət] “crushed”
<i>gwen</i> [gʷɛn] “white”	<i>gouenn</i> [gʷɛn] “species, descendant”
<i>gwele</i> [gʷɛːʷ] “bed”	<i>goell</i> [gʷeːʷ] “yeast” / <i>gouel</i> [gʷeːʷ] “religious festival”

The existence of these minimal pairs may reflect an older accentual opposition of the kind which occurs in Welsh: *gwydd* [gʷiːð] “trees”: *gwydd* [ˈgʷiːð] “wild”. If so, this implies that the distinction must go back at least to the late Brittonic period.

- 5) In the area of Quimper, /r/ is normally pronounced as a velar fricative when it occurs initially in a stressed syllable or word. It is pronounced as a schwa [ə] or [ø] when intervocalic or final position.
 - a) postvocally: *pesketer* [pɛʃˈkɛtə] “fisherman,” *ker* [keː] “farm,” *mor* [muː] “sea”.
 - b) intervocalically: *kirri* [kiːi] “carts,” *foennejiri* [fweniˈziːi] “hayfields”.
 - c) pre-consonantly: *dorn* [doːn] “hand,” *darn* [dæːn] “part,” *gortozit* [goˈtɛːt] “wait,” *gorlañchenn* [goːˈlãːʃɛn] “oesophagus”.
 - d) post-consonantly in consonant clusters: *paotr* [pot] “boy,” “son,” *mestr* [mɛʃ] “master”.

- 6) One of the most salient characteristics of this area concerns the stress system. Generally speaking, in KLT varieties, the stress falls on the penultimate syllable but, unlike in the Léon region where the vowel of final unaccented syllables is normally clearly pronounced, the Breton of this area resembles certain varieties of English and German. When final unstressed syllables end in a consonant, the consonant is usually syllabic as in the following words: *mevez* [ˈmeːvɛʃ] “drunk” (feminine), *ebeul* [ˈhøːb] “colt,” *ledan* [ˈleːdɛn] “wide,” *huchenn* [ˈhyʃɛn] “dust,” *karabasenn* [karaˈbasɛn] “a priest’s female servant,” *gwerc’hez* [gʷɛːʷˈχɛʃ] “virgin,” *rastell* [ˈras] “rake”.

To the west of Bannalec, the tonic accent normally also falls on the penultimate syllable: *gantañ* [gã:to] “with-him,” *ganti* [gati] “with-her,” *ganto* [gata] “with-them,” etc., but as one approaches Quimperlé, there are numerous examples which have the stress on the final syllables, as in Vanetais: *gantañ* [ga'tõ] “with-him,” *ganti* [ga'ti] “with-her,” *ganto* [ga'tɛ] “with-them,” etc. In disyllabic words, there are a number of doublets where, depending on the speaker and area, stress can fall on either syllable *laket* ['lakət] (also [lak]) versus *lakaet* [la'kɛt] “placed,” *gouezet* ['gwi:ət] versus [gu'jɛt] “knew,” etc.

The force of the tonic accent can be so strong that it provokes the loss of final syllables ending in a vowel or *-et*; *-ed*; *-oud*: [bæ:ʔ] “bread” for *bara*, [ãm] “here” for *amañ*, [gɥɛ:l] “bed” for *gwele*, [gɥel] “seen” for *gwelet*, [læ:ʔt] for *lavaret* “said”.¹⁸ For this reason, these final syllables tend to be lost altogether in normal speech. Fleuriot (1980: 65) discusses this phenomenon in southern Cornouaillais Breton and believes that it reflects an ancient and innate tendency in the Brittonic languages that led to the loss of final syllables in early Brittonic. If true, this would be a purely internal development and not a sign of language decay as some have supposed. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that when the stress shifts to another syllable, its original form is restored: *amzer* [ãmzə] “time, whether” > *amzeriou* [ãm'zi:ʔzu] “times”; *bihan* [bi:n] > *bihanoc'h* [bi'jãnɔχ] (but Scaer [binɔχ]); *gwele* [gɥɛ:l] “bed” > *gweleou* [gɥɛle:ju] “beds”.

Linked to this is the case of apocope where unstressed syllables and vowels are elided as in Leonais *abalamour da betra* which is reduced to [blãm bɛa] in this region or *sabatuet* “shocked” which is pronounced [sap'ty:], or *koulz lavaret* > [ku'læ:ʔ] “that is to say,” etc.

2.3. Some Morphophonological Features

I will now outline a number of features relative to the mutation system that distinguish the Breton of this area.

Lenition: [g] > [ɸ], [ɣ]

Broadly speaking, the lenition of initial consonants occurs much as in the standard language. An exception is the lenition of /g-/. Normally, the orthogra-

¹⁸ The name of a fishing boat from Guilvinec has been transcribed in phonetic spelling as *Les ne da lar* meaning “Let them talk” (standard Breton: *Leskit anezho da lavarout*).

phic systems known as *peurunvan* and *etrerannyezhel* indicate the lenition of <g> by <c'h> while the *orthographe universitaire* represents it by <h>. In his NALBB, for the area in question, Le Dû (2001; map 369) documented several examples of nouns with initial [g] leniting to [ɣ] or [ɣ̥], a strongly rasped voiced velar or uvular fricative frequently interpreted as /r/.¹⁹ Jackson (1967: 734) believes that the ultimate source of this /r/ is Primitive Breton voiced velar fricative [ɣ], but that it is “hardly identical with it”. Denez (1972: 20) implies that the pronunciation of lenited [g] in standard Breton should be voiced velar fricative [ɣ]. Some local writers even represent this phoneme orthographically as <g'h>.

The ALBB also regularly shows lenition of [g] to velar [ɣ] or uvular [ɣ̥] voiced fricative at Nevez, Scaer, and Elliant. Jackson (*ibid.*: 313, 735) implies that this uvular quality results from the contact of final /-r/ of the definite article “ar” with the initial fricative /ɣ/ or /h/ and gives the example *ar c'havr* [ɣauə] “the goat” ([aɣ] + [ɣ-], [h-] > [ɣ̥-]). Although he could not have known this when he wrote a *Historical Phonology of Breton*, this hypothesis appears unlikely (cf. definite article *an* below). The ALBB also gives [ə'kæ:ə] “the leg” (map 216) for Scaer, Elliant and Nevez. With regard to the lenition of [g] to velar [ɣ] or uvular [ɣ̥], after vowels, Jackson (*ibid.*: 735) writes: “lack of adequate information of *r* prevents a decision whether it also occurs after vowels, but in *da givri* ‘thy goats’ the only part of the *r*-area with a relevant form, pt. 54 (Nevez),²⁰ has <h> and not <r>.”

From St. Yvi to Riec, [g] regularly lenites to velar voiced fricative [ɣ] or uvular [ɣ̥] after vowels. The following are some examples and present into *peurunvan* orthography:

- a) 3rd person masculine sing. poss. adj. “e” [i] + /g-/: *e c'houzoug* [i ɣuk] “his neck,” *e c'horlañchenn* [i ɣo^olã:ʃɛ̃] “his throat,” *e c'har* [i ɣæ:^o] “his leg”.
- b) after adverb *re*: *re c'hlav* ['ɣɛ ɣlao] “too much rain” (or *re a c'hlav* ['ɣɛ: ə ɣlao], lit. “too much of rain”).
- c) after feminine nouns: *yar + c'hlocherez* ['jæ:^o ɣlo'ʃe:^os] “mother hen”.
- d) after the preposition *da* “to”: *da + gouzout* [də 'ɣut] “to know”; *da + gortoz* [də 'ɣotəs] “to wait”; *da + grial* [də 'ɣi:^ol] “to weep”; *da + goulenn* [də 'ɣul] “to ask”.
- e) after the dual *div*: *div + g/c'har* (dual) ['djuɣæ:^o] “two-legs”.

¹⁹ This orthographic interpretation is common in local place names: *Loch ar Raor* (Saint Yvi) for *Loch ar C'havr*.

²⁰ Cf. LeRoux's ALBB.

- f) after preverbal particle (preverbal particle *a*: deleted in normal speech, the only trace is lenition): *eñ a c'houlenno ganeoc'h* [hãõ 'ʁulu ga'nɔχ] “he’ll ask you”; *eñ a c'hortozo ac'hanoc'h* [hãõ ʁo'teo hã:χ] “he’ll wait for you”.
- g) after the reflexive particle *en em* [nim]: *en em c'houzañv* [nim 'ʁu:zɲ] “to stand each other”.

Nevertheless, there are other examples such as *ar c'houlaouen* [ʁə'lœun] “the candle” and *ar c'hraouez* [ʁaus] “the wheelbarrow” (< *goulaouen* and *graouez*) which are treated at St. Yvi as having original initial uvular [ʁ] or velar [ɣ].²¹ Rather than [i 'gʁaus] “her wheelbarrow” or [o 'kχaus] “your wheelbarrow,” one hears instead [i 'ʁaus] and [o 'χaus], respectively. Given that apical /r/ is common to the east of this dialectal zone (Vannetais) and to the north (Léon and Trégor), it appears likely that the existence in this dialect of voiced velar fricative [ɣ] (< [g]) in initial position may have facilitated the shift from apico-alveolar /r/ to velar or uvular /r/ with French as a reinforcing influence: *ar c'ho* [(ə) 'ʁo:] (cf. ALBB, pt. 54, map 301, and pt. 128 of the NALBB, Nevez) “the mole,” *ar c'hovel* [(ə) 'ʁo:l] “the smithy,” *da c'hrial* [də 'ʁi:ʀl] “to cry,” etc.

To conclude this discussion, we can state with reasonable assurance that this mutation is the reflection of an archaic state of affairs since the lenition of [g] to [ɣ] occurred in both Old Breton and Old Irish.

2.4. The Spirant Mutation

Unlike in most other regions of Brittany (cf. German 1984, Le Dû 2001), the spirant mutation is fully represented in this region and corresponds to the literary (historical) treatment of these phonemes. This involves the spirantization of voiceless bilabial plosive [p] > [f], apico-alveolar plosive [t] > [s] (and not [z] as in literary Breton) and voiceless velar plosive [k] > [χ].

The mutation occurs in a number of contexts such as after the following possessive adjectives: 1st person sing. *va* [ma], 3rd person sing. fem. *hec'h* [i], 1st person pl. *hon* [no], [ãn] and 3rd person pl. *o* [o]. It also occurs after the ordinal numbers 3, 4 and 9. Here are some examples:

²¹ The ALBB (map 363) only has *graouez*, not the lenited form.

[p] > [f]

<i>va fenn</i>	[mə fen]	“my head”
<i>he fenn dezhi</i>	[i fen dəj]	“her head”
<i>hor pennou</i>	[no 'fenu]	“our heads”
<i>o fennou</i>	[o 'fenu]	“their heads”

[t] > [s]

<i>va zad</i>	[mə sa:d̥]	“my father”
<i>he zad</i>	[i sa:d̥]	“her father”
<i>hon tad</i>	[no sa:d̥]	“our father”
<i>o zad</i>	[o sa:d̥]	“their father”

[k] > [χ]

<i>va c'herent</i>	[mə 'χe ^o n]	“my family/kin”
<i>he c'herent</i>	[i 'χe ^o n]	“her family/kin”
<i>hor c'herent</i>	[no 'χe ^o n]	“our family/kin”
<i>o c'herent</i>	[o 'χe ^o n]	“their family/kin”

After ordinal numbers 3, 4, 9, /p/, /t/, /k/ > /f/, /s/, /χ/:

<i>tri fardon</i>	['tχi 'fæ ^o d̥n]	“three ‘pardons’”
<i>teir flac'h</i>	['tej ^o flax]	“three girls”
<i>pevar c'hi</i>	['pɛw ^o χi]	“four dogs”
<i>peder zro</i>	['pɛd ^o sχo]	“four turns”
<i>nao c'haz</i>	['nao χaz̥]	“nine cats”

One of the salient distinguishing characteristics which identifies speakers from within the area under discussion (i.e. east of Bannalec) is the spirantization of /k/ + a front tense vowel > palato-dorsal /ʃ/ rather than velar fricative /χ/; [mə 'ʃi:] versus [mə 'χi:] “my dog,” [mə 'ʃik] for [mə 'χik] “my meat,” etc. The latter pronunciation is common to the west of Bannalec. Related to this feature is a similar phenomenon whereby /h-/ + front tense vowels is pronounced as a palato-dorsal /ʃ/ rather than a glottal /h/. Thus, one hears *hiziv* ['ʃiu]/[ʃju:] “today” to the east of Bannalec and ['hiu]/[hju:] to the west of it.

Note also that in much of Cornouaille, the tendency is to pronounce intervocalic [-χ-] as a palatal glide [j] as in *merc'hed* ['mjɛ:jɛt] “girls/daughters,” *merc'her*

[ˈmjɛːjə] “Wednesday”. There are exceptions to this tendency, however: *yec’hed* [ˈjɛːχət] “health”; *pec’het* [ˈpeːχət] “sin”; *dalc’h* [ˈdæːχɛ]²² “to hold/keep”; *gwalc’hiñ* [ˈgʷɛːχɛ] “to wash”; *sec’hiñ* [ˈseːχɛ] “to dry”. In the Breton of southern Cornouaille this can result in minimal pairs such as *sec’hed* [ˈsejt] “thirsty” and *sec’hed* [ˈseːχət] “dried”. Once again, these kinds of features quickly identify the precise geographic origins of a given speaker.

2.5. The Provection of [m], [n], [l], [ʁ]

The provection of [m] > [hm], [n] > [hn], [l] > [hn], [ɣ] > [χ] or [hr] was examined in detail by H. Humphreys (1972) for St. Nicolas-du-Pélem. The provection of these consonants results from the sandhi external effect of final voiceless [h] of the third person sing. fem. and second person plural possessive adjectives *hec’h* [ih] and *hoc’h* [oh]. While Humphreys writes that aspiration occurs in free variation before or after these consonants, I have only ever heard it after the consonant. In this case, the examples provided here must result from the metathesis of [h] and [m], [n] and [l]. The contact of voiceless glottal fricative [h] with voiced velar fricative [ɣ] results in a voiceless velar fricative [χ]. Whether or not metathesis occurs is thus impossible to tell in this case. Provection also occurs in the following contexts:

1) after the 3rd pers. sing. fem. poss. adj. *he(c’h)* [i] “her” and after the 2nd pers. pl. poss. adj. *ho(c’h)* [o] “your”.

<i>he(c’h) mamm</i>	[i ˈmhãm]	“her mother”
<i>he(c’h) nerzh</i>	[i ˈnheːs]	“her strength”
<i>he(c’h) levr</i>	[i ˈlheoː]	“her book”
<i>he(c’h) relijion</i>	[i χəleːʒiːn]	“her religion”

<i>ho(c’h) mamm</i>	[o ˈmhãm]	“your mother”
<i>ho(c’h) nerzh</i>	[o ˈnheːs]	“your strength”
<i>ho(c’h) levr</i>	[o ˈlheoː]	“your book”
<i>ho(c’h) relejion</i>	[o χəleːʒiːn]	“your religion”

2) in the area of Quimperlé one also commonly hears a related provection in the following contexts: /-h + b-/ > /p-/; /-h + d-/ > /t-/; /-h + g-/ > /k-/; /-h + gw-/ > /kw/.

²² V+ [ʁ]/[l] + [χ] > [χ].

<i>he(c'h) baz</i>	[i 'pa:z̥]	“her staff”
<i>he(c'h) dorn</i>	[i 'toːn]	“her hand”
<i>he(c'h) gar</i>	[i 'kæ:ː]	“her leg”
<i>he(c'h) gwele</i>	[i 'kʷe:l]	“her bed”

<i>ho(c'h) baz</i>	[o 'pa:z̥]	“your staff”
<i>ho(c'h) dorn</i>	[o 'toːn]	“your hand”
<i>ho(c'h) kar</i>	[o 'kæ:ː]	“your leg”
<i>ho(c'h) kwele</i>	[o 'kʷe:l]	“your bed”

3) this treatment also occurs after vowels and glides:

<i>hec'h aval</i>	[i 'haol]	“her apple”
<i>hec'h eontr</i>	[i 'hjõn]	“her uncle”
<i>hec'h oad</i>	[i 'hwa:d̥]	“her age”

<i>hoc'h aval</i>	[o 'haol]	“your apple”
<i>hoc'h eontr</i>	[o 'hjõn]	“your uncle”
<i>hoc'h oad</i>	[o 'hwa:d̥]	“your age”

That this is not a recent phenomenon seems apparent from the following Middle Welsh example: *Ys mi ae heirch*, where the initial <h> of *heirch* results from the aspiration of the feminine third person infixed pronoun <eh> (Evans 1964: 140), in other words, *ys mi a-eh eirch*, lit. ‘It is I who-her seek.’ (cf. Breton *hec'h* < Brittonic **esias* > *ei(h)*). Given the etymology, it would probably be better to spell *hec'h* and *hoc'h*, *heh* and *hoh*, respectively.

Note that in most other dialects, there is no contrast between the second person possessive adjective and the third person possessive adjective:

<i>ho(c'h)/o mamm</i>	[o 'mãm]	“your/their mother”
<i>ho/o nerzh</i>	[o 'neːs]	“your/their strength”
<i>ho/o levr</i>	[o 'leoː]	“your/their book”
<i>ho/o relejion</i>	[o ʁələ'ʒi:n]	“your/their religion”

In this region, not making the distinction in the spoken language is considered grammatically incorrect.

2.6. The Lenition and Provection of [m], [b], [g]

A similar phenomenon occurs after the preverbal particle *o(c'h)* (in the standard language) in progressive constructions which are realized phonetically in this zone as [-h] and [ih]/[ɛh]. This particle is often said to result from the Old Breton preposition **gourth* > *outh* > *ous* > *ouh*, meaning “at,” “to” or “against”. Nevertheless, given that lenition is obviously older than provection in this case, the preverbal particle must originally have ended in a vowel, and not in /-s/ or /-h/, which caused the provection. Could it be that the original form of the preverbal particle was [i] or [e] (< *e(n)* meaning “in”) in this region and that it functioned in the same way as the Welsh progressive preverbal particle *yn* “in” in progressive structures? If so, it may be that *e*, *i* were later confused with the preposition *gourth* > *ouc'h* and/or modeled on the use of the possessive adjective *hec'h* [ih] analogically.²³ Whatever the source, the preverbal particle provokes two mutations in the spoken language:

- a) the first is the propective mutation affecting [n], [ɣ]/[ʁ], [l] exactly in the same way as after the 2nd person pl. /3rd person sing. possessive adjectives *ho(c'h)* [oh] and *he(c'h)* [ih] described above.
- b) the second mutation concerns lenition and provection of [m] > [v] > [f]; [b] > [v] > [f] and [g] > [ɣ] > [χ].

Again, neither the provection of [m], [n], [l], [ʁ], nor the lenition and provection of [m], [b], [g] are reflected in the literary language, neither were these features studied in Le Roux's ALBB. Both groups of mutations are represented as follows. Examples of the provection of [n], [l], [ʁ]/[ɣ]. The orthography of following examples has been adapted to the Breton of St. Yvi.

Ni oa 'h neuñi (neuial)'ba 'mor
 [nɛ wa 'ɲhœ:i ba' 'mu:ʔ]
 'We were swimming in the sea'

Ema hi 'h lenn hoh leor
 [ma hi 'lhenn o 'ltheoʔ]
 'She is reading your book'

²³ I thank Anders Jørgensen's (p.c., 26/7/07) for pointing out Alan Heusaff's Saint Yvi example whereby *noazh* [nhwa:z], *Eñ oa aet noazh* [nhwa:z] *ba' 'lenn* “He went into the lake naked” would stem from *en(t) noazh*. If this hypothesis is correct, it could have special relevance here. Nevertheless, the reason for the voicelessness and aspiration remain somewhat ambiguous and requires further investigation.

Oa haoñ 'h ruilh ba'n hent sort meo 'vi' (evit) oa haoñ

[wa hãõ 'χøʎ ba n'henn so³t 'meo vi wa hãõ]

'He was so drunk that he was rolling in the road'

In each case, the mutation itself is the only phonological sign of the presence of the preverbal particle.

- Examples of lenition and provection: [m] to [f]

Oa haoñ 'h vodesi (< modesi)

[wa hãõ fo'dɛ:sɛ]

'He was dreaming'

- Examples of lenition and provection: [b] to [f]

an dour zo 'h virvi (< birvi)

[ɲdu:⁹ zə 'fi³vi]

'The water is boiling'

- Examples of lenition and provection: [g] ([-h] + [ɣ-] > [χ-])

Ema hi 'h g'houlenn (< goulenn; h+ g'h > c'h /x/)

[ma hi 'χul]

'She is asking'

Vowels following the preverbal particle are aspirated when used with progressive aspect:

Emoñ 'h evo (evañ)

[mõ 'heo]

'I am drinking'

Glides /j/ and /w/ are also aspirated in this context:

A(n) c'hi se a zo 'h yudel

[(ə) 'χi:sən zə 'hɣy:d], west of Bannalec

[(ə) 'ʃi:sən zə 'hɣy:d], east of Bannalec

'That dog is howling'

Ema hi 'h werc'hi heh dilhad

[ma ɡʲi 'hɣɛ:χɛ i 'tiʎət], east of Bannalec

[ma hi 'hɣɛ:χɛ i 'diʎət], west of Bannalec

'She's washing her clothes'

2.7. Some Morphological Features

2.7.1. The Definite Article ‘an’

In Cornish and Middle Breton, *an* was the usual form of the definite article in all positions (not *ar* and *al*). This archaic feature of southern Cornouaillais Breton disappeared everywhere else in Lower Brittany, but has been preserved in place names throughout western Brittany, such as *Keram pont*, *Keramborgne*, *Kerangall*, etc. Nevertheless, when d’Arbois de Jubainville came to Fouesnant in 1874, he specifically stated that he heard neither “ar,” nor “al” here. In fact, this is still the case for the entire region from Fouesnant to Riec. *An* is thus found not only before /t/, /d/ and vowels, where one would expect it in the standard language, but also before /p/, /b/, /g/, /h/, /w/ and occasionally before /s/ and /m/.²⁴

The fact that //nn// was fortis in all positions until comparatively recently probably explains its survival; it has four allomorphs: [nn] (before vowels), [n], [m], [ŋ]. *An* is not syllabic before vowels or before semi-vowels. It is generally syllabic before /h/, /t/, /d/, /p/, /b/, /g/:

<i>an alar</i>	[ˈn̥a:lə]	“a/the plough”
<i>an ozac’h</i>	[n̥ˈwax]	“a/the owner of a farm”
<i>an talmoc’h</i>	[n̥ˈtalmɔx]	“a/the hog”
<i>an darn</i>	[n̥ˈdoːn]	“a/the piece”
<i>an hañv</i>	[n̥ˈhãõ]	“a/the summer”

[m] is a bilabial voiced nasal and atonic before bilabial stops [p] and [b]. It is also syllabic:

<i>ar (an) pemoc’h</i>	[m̥piˈmɔx]	“a/the pig”
<i>ar (an) plac’h</i>	[m̥ˈplax]	“a/the girl”
<i>ar (an) beleg</i>	[m̥ˈbelek]	“a/the priest”
<i>ar (an) bed</i>	[m̥ˈbɛ:d]	“a/the world”

The second allophone is a velar voiced nasal and atonic before the voiced velar stop [g]:

²⁴ In careful speech *an* must have been pronounced more clearly until quite recently. Note the verses of the following rhymes and songs: ... *ha foet e rer daoñ gan am botik lann* “and whip his rear end with a switch of gorse,” or *c’hoari koukou gan am merc’hed* “play ‘coucou’ with the girls” (SY orth).

<i>ar (an) groc'hen</i>	[ʔ' gʷɔχɲ]	“a/the skin”
<i>ar (an) ger</i>	[ʔ' ge: ^ə]	“a/the farm”
<i>ar (an) gwaz</i>	[ʔ' gwaz: ^ə]	“a/the husband”

Nevertheless *an* (with fortis <n> [ãnn]) was weakened to lenis apico-alveolar nasal [n] before fricatives (/f/, /v/, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /χ/ /ʎ/), liquids (/l/), and nasals (/m/, /n/) at some point in its history, and there is no evidence for the Breton of this area of which I am aware that shows that it was further reduced to apico-alveolar [r] before disappearing altogether. De Jubainville indicates he heard *an* before *zul*, *merc'het* and *lonned* (his orthography). Jackson's argument that /ɛ/ of [(ə) 'ɛau^ə] results from aɛ + *havr* “goat” would seem improbable under the circumstances, at least with regard to the varieties around Saint Yvi.

For this reason, before fricatives, laterals, liquids or nasals *an* is pronounced as a faint [ə]; often it is totally inaudible. Here are some examples:

A(n) forc'h houarn a zo barz a(n) c'hraou
 [(ə) fo'χæwən zo ba 'χœu]
 ‘The pitch fork is in the barn’

A(n) zaout a zo 'h puri ba'n park
 [(ə) 'zœut zə 'py:ɛ ba m'pæ^ək]
 ‘The cows are grazing in the field’

A(n) skeul a zo herpet diouz a(n) vur
 [(ə) 'ʃkø:l zə 'he^əpət døz (ə) 'vy:l]
 ‘The ladder is leaning against the wall’

2.7.2. Aspects of the Definite and Indefinite Article + Lenition

The distinction between the definite and indefinite articles, which is so clear in other Breton dialects, is not generally made in this area. In most of Lower Brittany, the indefinite article is stressed before monosyllables. Thus, at Plome-lin (ouest of Quimper) *ur paotr* “a boy” is pronounced [o pot] whereas “the boy” is pronounced [ə 'po:d̥]. Le Dû (1978) shows the same mechanism is at work at Plougrescant, in northern Trégor. From Saint Yvi to Riec, on the other hand, “a boy” and “the boy” are both pronounced [m'po:d̥]. Absolutely no distinction is made between them.

2.7.3. The Standard Breton *-añ* Infinitive Suffix represented Southern Cornouaillais [o]

It is the archaic pronunciation feature of Trégorrois and Goélo Breton (/ã/, spelled *-aff* in Middle Breton) that was adopted in the *peurunvan* (and *etrerann-yezhel*) orthographic system while the léonais pronunciation was taken up in Professor Falc'hun's *orthographe universitaire*: *kouezhañ* versus *koueza*, *evañ* versus *eva*, etc. In the area of southern Cornouaille under consideration, however, the infinitive ending corresponding to /a/ and /ã/ is often /o/. Examples: *koueo* (*kouezhañ*) "to fall"; *eo* (*evañ*) "to drink"; *hankoueo* (*ankounac'haad*) "to forget"; *stoueo* (*stouiñ*) "to stop"; *tañweo* (*tañvañ*) "to taste"; *digoueo* (*digouezhañ*) "to arrive"; *lao* (*lazhañ*) "to kill".²⁵

2.7.4. The Superlative Morpheme *añ* [õ], [ɲ]

Likewise, /a/ and /ã/ are the most common pronunciations for the superlative throughout Brittany. These pronunciations are usually rendered either as [õ] or syllabic [ɲ] throughout the area in question: *brasañ* [brasõ] "biggest," *bihanañ* [bi'jãõ] "smallest," *izellañ* [i'zɛlõ] "lowest," *uhelañ* [y'ɛlõ] "highest," *ledanañ* [le'dãõ] "widest," *kosañ* ['kusõ] "oldest," *hirrañ* ['hiχõ] "longest," etc. ([ã] and [õ] originate respectively from Brittonic *-sāmos* (Jackson 1967: 327). It is possible that the modern Cornouaillais pronunciation results from the early vowel affection *-samos* > *-sōmos* > *-hōμ* > *-(h)õ*. Note also that the fortis/voiceless quality of the preceding consonant is probably a very old feature resulting from the protraction of /h-/ (from the voiceless lenis [s] > [h]: early Brittonic **-samos* > late Brittonic [-hãμ]/[hõμ] > modern Breton *añ*, *oñ*; Middle Breton *-aff*, Modern Welsh *-af*): *brasañ* [bra:z + hõ] > ['brasõ] "biggest," *kosañ* [ku:z + hõ] > ['kusõ] "oldest," *hirrañ* [hi:r + hõ] > ['hiχõ] "longest".

After adjectives ending in *-s* or *-z* and *-c'h*, some speakers pronounce *-añ* as a syllabic [-ɲ]: *ar brasañ* [m'brasɲ] "the biggest," *ar sec'hañ* [ɲ'se:χɲ] "the driest".

2.7.5. *Emañ* versus *eo*

Emañ is normally described as a "situational" or "locative" form of the verb *boud/bezañ* "to be".

²⁵ There are a number of place names in the region which may have connections with North Wales (Langolen/Llangollen, Tourc'h/Twrch, Elliant/Elgent, etc.) and Dyfed, Landelo/Llandeilo (Sant Yvi, the last Welsh saint to come to Brittany in 720 was from Cardiganshire; Davies 1993: 79). Jean-Yves Plourin (UBO, personal communication) wonders whether certain morphological and lexical items may have a possible Welsh source (cf. *-o* infinitives, etc.).

Standard Breton: *N'emañ ket er ger*
 Saint Yvi [ma kɛ ba ŋ'ge:^ə neʝ/nãõ]
 'She/he is not at home'

Unlike in the Trégor and Vannetais Breton varieties, which only have 3rd person sing. and plural *emañ* and *emaint*, as in Welsh and Cornish, Cornouaillais and Léonais Breton (hence the standard use) have a complete paradigm of this verb, namely: *emaon*, *emaout*, *emañ*, *emaomp*, *emaoc'h*, *emaint*. It would thus appear that this is a relatively recent development in Cornouaillais and Leonais (Hemon 1975: 205). Nevertheless, it is not impossible that these paradigms have existed in the spoken language longer than one might think. Syntactically its use is flexible:

Hiou ema brao (SY orth)
 lit. Today is (sit.) beautiful.
 'Today the weather is beautiful.'

Ema brao hiou (SY orth)
 lit. Is (sit.) beautiful today.
 'The weather is beautiful today.'

Brao ema hiou (SY orth)
 lit. Beautiful is (sit.) today.
 'The weather is beautiful today.'

This paradigm can also be combined with *bet* (past participle “been”) to form perfective tenses such as: *emaon bet*, *emaoc'h bet*, *emañ bet*, etc., structures which are not accepted in standard Breton but which are common throughout much of Cornouaille from the Pays Bigouden to the Vannetais border. Semantically, they can be interpreted as a preterite or perfective (i.e. when describing an action occurring at a fixed point in the past that is detached from the moment of speech or, conversely, a past action still retaining a link with the moment of utterance).

*Emoc'h ket bet da skol dec'h bégur' mestr skol neus goul' ganim pelec'h
 oac'h chomet.* (St. Yvi)
 You were not at school yesterday because the school master asked me where
 you were.

Furthermore, in this region, there is a marked tendency to use *emañ* where, in standard Breton, one would normally have *eo*: *Emom digoue'et* [mõm di'gwɛt] “we have arrived” rather than *digouezhet omp* [di'gwɛd õm] and *emañ tomm* or *tomm emañ* rather than *tomm eo*. Nonetheless, structures with *eo* are also possi-

ble. Note the alternation in the use of *emañ*, *emoñ* and *eo*, *on* in the following example:

Goude-se ema deuet (an Intron de) la Depuisneuf ha sed benn eo deuet²⁶ la Depuisneuf ... ha ema deuet hi da Geronsal, mamm a lar de'i: "Kontant on da vond 'hat! Dibao pell zo emoñ kontant da vond!" (SY orth)

After Lady de la Depuisneuf came, and when la Depuisneuf came (pause) to Keronsal, mother tells her: "I am happy to go. I have wanted to go for a long time."²⁷

Some informants insist on the fact that a phrase such as *emañ prest koan* "dinner is ready" is more dynamic (i.e. sit down before dinner gets cold!) than *prest eo koan* which, for them at least, is neutral, but I have never been able to establish this with real certainty. However, the following example seems to reinforce this analysis.

Ni lare mod-ma [mõm] daoñ "Med ma sad, ema ket poent da zond da'n ger c'hoaz?" "D'ober p'ra emoc'h deuet c'hoaz?" lar haoñ ... (SY orth)

We said to him like this "But father, isn't it about time to come home now?" (he was drinking with his friends; he responds angrily) "What have you come to do (here) then!?" says he.

2.8. Syntax

There is a tendency in the (new) standard language to shun SVO structures because they are perceived to result from French influence. In the spoken language, however, SVO structures are common throughout Brittany, and in particular in the area under consideration. For example, affirmative sentences (= impersonal conjugation), subject + 3rd pers. sing. verb, *Me a gar* "I love/like". Diachronically, this construction stems from a Brittonic cleft structure:

Ys mi a kar(am) (Hardie 1948: 95)
 Is mi a gar
 'It is I who loves'

Because the copula was unstressed, it was elided in speech, just as in contemporary modern Irish. Such SVO constructions are very common in Middle Welsh. E. Evans (1990: 171) writes that the so-called "Abnormal Sentence" (i.e. SVO) may have been for "Welsh and its parent language (or languages) a nor-

²⁶ *Eo*, and not *ema*, normally follows the subordinator *benn* "when".

²⁷ The context here is the Countess de la Depuisneuf's visit to the the narrator's family telling them that she was expelling them from their home.

mal order of constituents, if we accept (as Fife would urge us to do, in accord with his analysis) that topic in Gallo-Brittonic and neo-Brittonic in various ways and at various stages ‘was more central to the syntax’”. If so, assertions that such SVO structures result from French influence are exaggerated, although French usage could obviously play a reinforcing role.²⁸

As for the preverbal particle *a*, it was elided in speech in Breton just as in Middle Welsh, Cornish and in Irish. Both Old Welsh and Old Breton had several morphological variants of this relative pronoun: <*hai*>, <*ay*>, <*a*>. S. Evans (1964: 63) gives the following Old Welsh example:

ir serenn hai bid in arcimeir o
‘the star which is opposite *o*.’

In Modern spoken Breton, when it is followed by a verb beginning with a consonant, the only trace of this particle is the lenition it provokes. When it is followed by a verb beginning with a vowel, an interesting archaism reveals itself.

Cornouaille	<i>Me a ya</i> [me ya] (< * <i>[ha]i a</i>) “I go”
Tregor	<i>Me a ha</i> [me ha] (< * <i>h[ai] a</i>) “I go”

It is probable that such SVO structures were common in late Brittonic at the time of the migration to Brittany.

2.8.1. Subject marking

On the question of “null subject languages,” Radford (1997: 17-18) writes the following:

There appears to be no language in which it is okay to say “drinks wine” (meaning “he/she drinks wine”) but not okay to say “eats pasta” (meaning “he/she eats pasta”). The range of grammatical variation found across languages appears to be strictly limited: there seem to be just two possibilities – *languages either do or don’t systematically allow verbs to have null subjects* (my emphasis).

In other words, the languages of the world either have:

- a) a finite verb + subject pronoun
- b) a finite verb + “null” subject pronoun.

²⁸ Conversely, considering the long periods of contact between Irish and Welsh speakers in Wales, one wonders whether the VSO structures which are currently dominant in modern Welsh might in some way result from much older Irish contact influence. Cf. also the perfective structure: *wedi* + verb. This construction is virtually absent in Cornish and Breton.

The Breton evidence would appear to contradict this contention since, unlike standard Breton, or Léon/Trégor Breton, the tendency in southern Cornouaillais is to use a pronoun whenever it is possible. This should serve as a warning that, considering the linguistic diversity of Breton, generalizations about any aspect of its grammar should be made with great caution.

In Cornouaillais Breton, the subject is indicated morphologically in two ways:

- 1) Synthetically, in the form of a bound morpheme.
- 2) Analytically, in the form of:
 - a) a pronominal form placed before or after the verb phrase.
 - b) the conjugated preposition *a*: 3rd person sing. masc. *anezhañ*, 3rd person sing. fem. *anezhi*, 3rd person plural *anezho*, usually in phrase final position, which can function as a pronoun. 1st person plural *ac'hanomp* has a similar function, but also appears in affirmative sentences.

In the first case, the verb is marked by a bound morpheme (so-called personal forms) in negative phrases and in subordinate clauses just as in standard Breton:

ne garan ket anezhi
 'I don't love/care for her.'

After coordinating conjunctions and in subordinate clauses, the verb that follows normally requires a personal form:

Ha weloñ heh fenn, peseurt mod penn noa hi ... ema maro hi deus an aksident-se. (SY orth)
 lit. And see-I her head, what kind of head had-she ... is (sit.) dead she from the accident-that.
 'And I see her face, the way she looked ... she died as a result of that accident.'

Ha ni oam ket gouest goud p'ra oa haoñ 'kas²⁹ kaoud. (SY orth)
 'And we were not able to know what he was (a-)seeking to obtain.'

2.8.2. Redundancy

Nevertheless, even in subordinate clauses, the syntactic structure is frequently SVO in the spoken language as we can see in the hybrid constructions below in which the personal inflections have been retained, but the subject preposed.

Hendall ni welem ket den 'bet gwech ebet ba n'amziriou-se. (SY orth)

²⁹ Heusaff (1996: 165) proposes that *kas* (instead of expected *klask*) in this context may be etymologically related to Middle Welsh *keissaw* "to seek".

A-hent-all (ni) ne welemp ket den ebet en amzeriou-se. (StanBret)
 ‘Otherwise, we did not ever see anyone in those days.’

Blam ni ‘ouiem kin brezoneg. (SY orth)
Abalamour (ni) ne ouiemp nemet brezhoneg. (StanBret)
 ‘Because we only knew Breton ...’

In other cases, the topicalized pronoun remains and the inflectional suffix disappears.

Med ni vi ‘c’hoarzin. (SY orth)
Med ni a veze/vezemp o c’hoarzhin. (StanBret)
 ‘But we were laughing.’

The topicalization of the subject also appears in Middle Welsh.

Ac yn y lle y vrawt a gytsynhwys instead of *Ac yn y lle y kytsynhwys y vrawt.*
 ‘And immediately his brother consulted ...’

Note that the direct object complement can also be thematized and take the place of the grammatical subject. In the following example, there are two direct object complements, the second coming as an afterthought to specify the meaning of the first.

A(n) re wenn, vi pradet an dilhad gwenn ganoc’h. (SY orth)
 lit. The white ones (clothes), were (BE past habitual) beaten the white clothes with-you.
 ‘You used to beat the white clothes.’

In this sentence, two constructions have been combined in one:

- a) *A(n) re wenn* (i.e. *an dilhad gwen*) *vi pradet (ganoc’h).* (SY orth)
 lit. The white ones (i.e. the white clothes) were beaten with-you.
 ‘You used to beat the white clothes.’
- b) *vi pradet an dilhad gwen ganoc’h.* (SY orth)
pradet vi an dilhad gwen ganoc’h
 lit. Were beaten the white clothes with-you.
 ‘You used to beat the white clothes.’

2.8.3. *Subject marking: 3rd person sing.: haoñ ‘he’, hi ‘she’, nenn ‘one’*

In the following affirmative sentences, the pronoun is placed after the verbal group.

N’oun (n’ouzon) ket hann (hag-eñ) ema chomet haoñ ba’n ger. (SY orth)
‘I don’t know whether he stayed at home.’

Ha benn eo [e] deuet hi, ‘yar, en traoñ ... (SY orth)
‘And when she, the hen, came down ...’

Ken buan vé bet maro haoñ (SY orth)
lit. Just as fast would have been dead he.
‘He could just as well have died.’

Ba’n amzer oan yaouank vi ket kas’ nenn kalz da skol. (SY orth)
‘During the time I was young, one was (past habitual) not often sent to school.’

2.8.4. *Subject Marking: 3rd person pl. ‘hè/hent’*

Hè is a reduced form of *hent* [henn], also pronounced *hint* [hint] in much of central Cornouaille and Tregor (literary Breton *int*; Middle Welsh *int*; (*h*)*wynt*). *Hè/hent* is a free morpheme which can be placed either before or after a (normally) uninflected 3rd person singular verb (+ aux.). This slide towards analitycity must have been facilitated by a need to identify the subject, whether masculine or feminine, in the phrase, a phenomenon which was probably reinforced by analogy with the structures just signaled in 2.8.3. In the following affirmative sentences, the subject pronoun directly follows the verb *boud*, the main lexical verb or the verbal group.

Blam vé hè ‘torné ... (SY orth)
Abalamour e vezent o tornañ. (StanBret)
‘Because they were threshing ...’

Benn eo kouet hè barz ... (SY orth)
Pa oant kouezhet e-barzh. (StanBret)
‘When they fell in ...’

Benn eo maro hè ... (SY orth)
Pa oant marvet / Pa varvjont (StanBret)
‘When they died ...’

2.8.5. Characteristic Uses of the Preposition ‘a’

Although inflected forms of the preposition *a* are used as direct objects in most forms of Breton and in the standard language, *Roet am-eus anezhañ dezhi* or *Me am-eus roet anezhañ dezhi* ‘I gave it to her,’ it can also have an agentive function. Indeed, among older speakers, the subject is often indicated by the inflected preposition *a*, normally the 3rd person singular, and the 1st and 3rd person plurals: *anezhañ* [nãõ], *anezhi* [nej], *anezho* [nɛ]. This trait appears limited to the areas southeast of Carhaix. It occurs almost exclusively in negative sentences and is not generally accepted in standard Breton. Notice that the verb is not normally inflected. Syntactically, the inflected forms of *a* always appear in sentence-final position.

‘Ema ket digoue’et ‘naoñ, ‘nei, nè. (SY orth)
lit. Is (situational) not arrived of-him, of-her, of-them.
‘He, she has/ they have not arrived.’

Ema ket ‘n ger vraz ‘nei. (SY orth)
‘It is not a big farm (of her).’

In certain fixed expressions, some speakers use the paradigm for all persons: *oar ket ‘hanon* ‘I do not know,’ *oar ket ‘hanout* ‘you do not know,’ *oar ket naoñ* ‘he does not know,’ *oar ket nei* ‘she does not know,’ *oar ket ‘hanom* ‘we do not know,’ but older speakers tend to use this only for the third persons singular and the first and third person plural. *Ahanom* (i.e. *ac’hanomp*; *peurunvan*) is also used in affirmative sentences (cf. 2.8.7).

Interestingly, there are similar examples of the inflected preposition ‘o’ being used in Middle Welsh to mark the subject (cf. *Pwyll Pendewic Dyued*; *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*), just as in southern Cornouaillais Breton:

Ac yna edrych ohonaw fe ar liw yr erchwys.
lit. And there a looking of-him on the color of the pack.
‘And there, he looked at the color of the pack.’

Heusaff (1996: 30) gives the following example from Morgannwg in modern spoken Welsh:³⁰

nid oes dim ohono efe ‘n canu
lit. neg. There is not of-him in-singing.
‘He is not singing.’

³⁰ The verbal noun as a historic infinitive, with the preposition ‘o’ marking the agent or subject. Cf. Irish *do* in the same function, as *ar bhfhéuchaint do* (Thompson 1957: 24).

The normal manner of expressing this in Cornouaillais Breton would be:

N'ema ket 'kana naoñ or haoñ ema ket 'kana naoñ (SY orth)

lit. He is not a-singing of-him.

'He is not singing.'

This would seem to suggest that the structure is very old indeed and stems directly from a common late Brittonic source. It is thus not a form of degenerated Breton, as some have argued. *Anezhañ, anezhi, anezho* are generally used as echo pronouns to reinforce the subject.

It is not uncommon for a topicalized grammatical subject to be counterbalanced by a post-posed inflected preposition.

Ma eontr 'oa ket kontant 'naoñ. (SY orth)

'My uncle was not happy.'

Ha haoñ noa lâret dei (=dezhi) 'vi ket bet chom 'naoñ. (SY orth)

'And he told her that he would not stay.'

In this manner, the necessity for an inflectional morpheme on the verb becomes optional. This redundancy triggers a move towards morphological simplification of the verb. In the following example, the verbal suffix is abandoned showing the potential for slide towards analycity.

An dud teue ket da vakañs nè (anezho) giz ra hè brem'. (SY orth)

Ne deue ket an dud en ehan labour evel ma reont bremañ. (StanBret)

'The people do not come on vacation like they do now.'

Hè lare oa ket 'kas kaout an dra-se 'nè. (SY orth)

Int a lavare/lavarout a raent n'edont ket o klask kaout an dra-se. (StanBret)

'They were saying that they were not looking for that.'

2.8.6. Emphasis through Redundancy

We have seen then that the redundant use of subject markers through the combination of:

- a) proper nouns / personal pronouns
- b) verbal suffixes
- c) inflected forms of the preposition *a*

can lead to the gradual erosion in the use of verbal inflections. Nevertheless, when a phrase is expressed negatively, the speaker can – and often does – revert to the use of the verbal suffix endings when he wishes to emphatically mark the subject. This shows that the inflectional endings are far from lost in the system.

bégur ma sud 'ouient ket tamm galleg 'bet nè. (SY orth)
peogwir ne ouie ket va zud tamm galleg e-bet. (StanBret)
 'Since my parents knew no French at all.'

Med 'uiou-se oant ket mad kin 'nè. (SY orth)
nemed ar viou-se ne oant ket mad ken (mui). (StanBret)
 'But those eggs were no longer any good (of-them).'

bégur hè reent ket nintra e-bet kaer da zibi nè. (SY orth)
Peogwir ne raent ket netra ebet kaer da zebriñ. (StanBret)
 'Since they did not make anything at all to eat (of-them).'

2.8.7. Uses of *ac'hanomp* 'of-us' in Affirmative Sentences

As mentioned above, another example of analytical construction is the occasional use of 3rd pers. sing. of the verb + *ac'hanomp* instead of the synthetic form (*omp/emaomp/oamp/vezomp/vezemp*), often in subordinate clauses beginning with *benn* "when":

Bé vi ahanom 'hond da Sant Ivi. (SY orth)
 lit. When was (past habitual) of-us (a-) go to Saint Yvi.

Pa vezemp o vont da Sant-Ivi. (StanBret)
 'When we used to be going to Saint Yvi.'

Benn zigoue ahanom ba'n ger. (SY orth)
 lit. When we used to arrive of-us at home.

Pa digouezhemp er ger or Pa en em gavemp er ger. (StanBret)
 'When we used to get home.'

In the examples above, *ahanom* (i.e. *peurunvan ac'hanomp*) functions syntactically like the personal pronouns *nenn*, *haoñ*, *hi*, *hè*.

2.8.8. Phonological Simplification and Reanalysis: a Move towards Synthetic Structure

The drift towards analytical structures of the kind shown above has not been generalized and pronominal forms have not yet completely replaced the synthetic structures.

Ha sed oam bet 'h evo ['eo] kafet. (SY orth)

lit. And so, we went a-drinking coffee.

'And so, we went to drink some coffee.'

In fact, the Breton of this area reverts to synthetic structures when necessary to avert confusion in certain paradigms where phonological simplification has occurred, such as in the examples below:

Southern Cornouaillais	Standard Breton	Southern Cornouaillais	Standard Breton	Southern Cornouaillais	Standard Breton
Present	Present	Imperfect	Imperfect	Habitual past	Habitual past
<i>1 meus</i>	<i>am eus</i>	<i>1 mo/ma</i>	<i>am boa</i>	<i>1 mi</i>	<i>am beze</i>
<i>2 teus/peus</i>	<i>ac'h eus</i> <i>az peus</i>	<i>2 to/po/pa</i>	<i>az poa</i>	<i>2 ti/pi</i>	<i>az peze</i>
<i>3f neus</i>	<i>he deus</i>	<i>3f no/na</i>	<i>he doa</i>	<i>3f ni</i>	<i>he deveze</i>
<i>3m neus</i>	<i>en deus</i>	<i>3m no/na</i>	<i>en doa</i>	<i>3m ni</i>	<i>en deveze</i>
<i>1 neus</i>	<i>hon eus</i>	<i>1 no/na</i>	<i>hor boa</i>	<i>1 ni</i>	<i>hor beze</i>
<i>2 peus</i>	<i>hoc'h eus</i> <i>ho peus</i>	<i>2 po/pa</i>	<i>ho poa</i>	<i>2 pi</i>	<i>ho peze</i>
<i>3 neus</i>	<i>o deus</i>	<i>3 no/na</i>	<i>o doa</i>	<i>3 ni</i>	<i>o deveze</i>

Without having recourse to the inflected forms, there would no longer be any way to distinguish the 3rd pers. sing. feminine and masculine from the 1st and 3rd plural forms: i.e. *en deus*, *he deus*, *hon-eus*, *o-deus* > *neus*. This may have rendered the use of subject pronouns quasi obligatory in this dialect: *neus hi*; *neus haoñ*; *neus hè*.

Nevertheless, another strategy was adopted involving the use of inflectional endings such as the 1st person plural // -m// (/ -s/ + /m/ > /n/; *hon eus* + *-om* > [nem], ['nøsn]) and the 3rd person plural //ont// (*o deus* + *-ont* ['nøsn]). Note also that // -m// can be used with other tenses, the imperfect and past habitual, for instance: *noam* (< *hon boa* + *-om* > [nõm]); *nim* (*hon be(z)e* + *em* > [nim]). This demonstrates that the system is still sufficiently productive to make use of the inflectional morphemes to clarify such ambiguities. Examples:

Ha sed noam lâret ... (SY orth)

'And so we had said ...'

Ni 'neus surveillet 'nei ('yar) ha neusom gwelet 'nei 'hond tram 'chouch.
(SY orth)

'We watched her (the hen) and we saw her (a-)going toward the stump ...'

Ma mamm a breparé traou dom benn zigoue ahanom ba'n ger bégur aliez
nim ket debet tamm merenn 'bet. (SY orth)

'Mother prepared things for us when we arrived at home since we often did not eat / had not eaten any lunch at all.'

While it appears that analytic structures such as those with the third person plural formed with *he* ('*ma hè = emaint, ra hè = reont*, etc.) are relatively recent, other constructions with a (*anezhañ, anezhi, ac'hanomp, anezho*) are clearly much older.

2.8.9. Lexical and Phonological Variation

Breton dialects are characterized by lexical and phonological variation. Taken together, the observer is often able to determine with considerable precision the geographical provenance of a given speaker. For instance, the literary word *hiziv* "today" exists under multiple forms throughout lower Brittany, *hiou* and *chiou* (cf. above) in the region under investigation, *chiriou, hiziou, hiniou* or *iniou* in the Vannes dialect region, *hirou, fenos, hidio* in central Cornouaille, *hirie* in Trégor, *icho*, in Léon and so on. Almost nowhere is it *hiziou/hiziv*.

When I was in the beginning stages of my fieldwork in preparation of a thesis on Saint Yvi Breton (1984), I was often surprised that the same person would provide two or three lexical items or phonological variants of the same word, sometimes in the space of a few minutes, without seeming overtly conscious of the fact. For example, for *a-walc'h* "enough," I collected three forms from the same speaker: /*wax*/ being the most common and informal, but also /*walχ*/ and /*waløχ*/, the fullest form. All three were indicated in the ALBB at the surrounding points of inquiry, thus confirming Falc'hun's observations on the question of lexical variation.³¹ Indeed, Le Roux's ALBB provided clarification for a significant number of the variant forms I had found. With nearly twice the number of points of inquiry, Le Dû's NALBB offers even more precision in this regard. In cases where such variation occurred, I discovered that an isogloss separating two or more forms generally passed through or near Saint Yvi, thus showing the accuracy of the Atlas.

The following is a partial list of variables used by the same informant from Saint Yvi which can be verified in the ALBB.³² In each case, the first example is

³¹ Falc'hun (1981): "For a given word, the Atlas generally gives one variant per locality, whereas I would sometimes note three or four and sometimes even more from the same informant. But in this case, the Atlas mentioned them in the surrounding area."

³² Leontine Le Gall, born in 1902.

the preferred form: *anveo* and *anneo* (Standard *anavezout*); *savar* “speak” versus *preg* (*komz* is only used as a noun meaning “word of honor”); *gwech ebet* “never” versus *jamez* (< French *jamais*) and *morse* (associated with La Forêt Fouesnant); *dañvad* “sheep” versus *menneg*; ³³ *wennek* “eleven” versus *unnek*; ³⁴ *dian* “under” versus *didan* (standard *dindan*); *ober* “to do” versus *gober*; *goustadig* “slow” versus *difoun*; *gwennek* “penny” versus *blank* (Vannetais, not used but understood); *kerzed* “to walk” versus *bale*; *raouez* “wheelbarrow” versus *gerial* (standard *kar-rigell*); *paotr* “son” versus *mab* (used in fixed expressions: *mab-nevez* [map 'nɛ:] “bridegroom”); *ed-du* (with provection [i 'ty:]) “buckwheat” versus *gwiniz-du* (with provection [gʷini'ʃty:] “buckwheat”); *ouzon* versus *oun* “I know” (the latter is used only in negative constructions); *hoc'h-torc'h* versus *talmoc'h* “male pig for breeding” and finally *direikdim* versus *dirakon* “in front of me”.³⁵

Many other examples not found in the ALBB were also collected. Note, however, that there can often be certain nuances between the variables: *fulaienn* versus *brumachenn* (*fulayen* is felt by speakers to mean “a light fog,” whereas *brumachenn* is generic); *amziriou* “times” versus *mariou*; ³⁶ *hankoue'o* “to forget” versus *dizoñja*; ³⁷ *ba goueled/gouelek* “at the bottom of” versus *ba deun* [ba 'dœ:n], *ba deon* [ba 'deõn] (Standard *devn*); *kreuc'h* versus *piz* “mean,” “cheap”; ³⁸ *c'hoarve'o* (*c'hoarvezañ*) “to happen” versus *digoueo* (*digouezhañ*) “to arrive” or “to happen,” and *eo* (*erru*) “arrive”.³⁹ Neither *fulaienn*, nor *kreuc'h* are known outside the immediate area of Saint Yvi.

Given that none of my informants was literate in Breton, their use of the language was clearly more flexible and less constrained by prescriptive rules than is the case for formally educated French or English speakers today. In this sense, it would be fair to say that Breton speakers are perhaps even more susceptible to what Howard Giles et al. (1975) refer to as “language accommodation”. In other words, depending on a number of constraints linked to social condition, age, sex and especially geographical origin, each speaker has interiorized an inventory of linguistic variables which are conditioned by rules that govern their use. This allows them to adapt their speech to those of individuals that they encounter from other areas from within and from outside their immediate communities. At some point along the geographic continuum which is difficult to identify scientifically,

³³ In the literary language it means a “small animal” or a “kid goat”.

³⁴ The use of these is idiomatically conditioned, however: *we'nneg eur* “eleven o'clock,” but *'unneg vla* “eleven years old”.

³⁵ Alan Heusaff gave the last form in his Breton dictionary of Saint Yvi Breton. My informants said they did not use it, although they understood it.

³⁶ Once again, these variants are often found in specific collocations *ba'n amziriou-se* and *tro mariou-se*, both meaning “in those days/times”.

³⁷ Not to be confused with *Chom war lerc'h* “to forget,” “to leave something behind” (as in “I forgot my hat” = *chomet eo ma sok war ma lerc'h*).

³⁸ *Un tamm kreuc'h* “cheapskate” is felt to be much stronger than *piz*.

³⁹ I have only heard this *erru* in the following progressive construction: *Ema hi 'h e(rr)o* ['heo] “she's coming”.

intercomprehension becomes more difficult (see map 2). In this case, speakers generally prefer to resort to French.

2.8.10. French Lexical Borrowings

It is obvious from Brittany's geographic position and history that language contacts between the Breton and French linguistic communities go back centuries. Generations of Breton speakers were conscripted into the French navy and army, farm hands frequently sought labor in France, merchants came and went to sell their wares on both sides of the linguistic frontier. The seaports, always a medium of linguistic exchange, were another major source of influence. A language shift is thus a rather insidious process that often operates imperceptibly from within a language community with bilingual and semi-bilingual members each contributing their part to the overall development of the language.⁴⁰

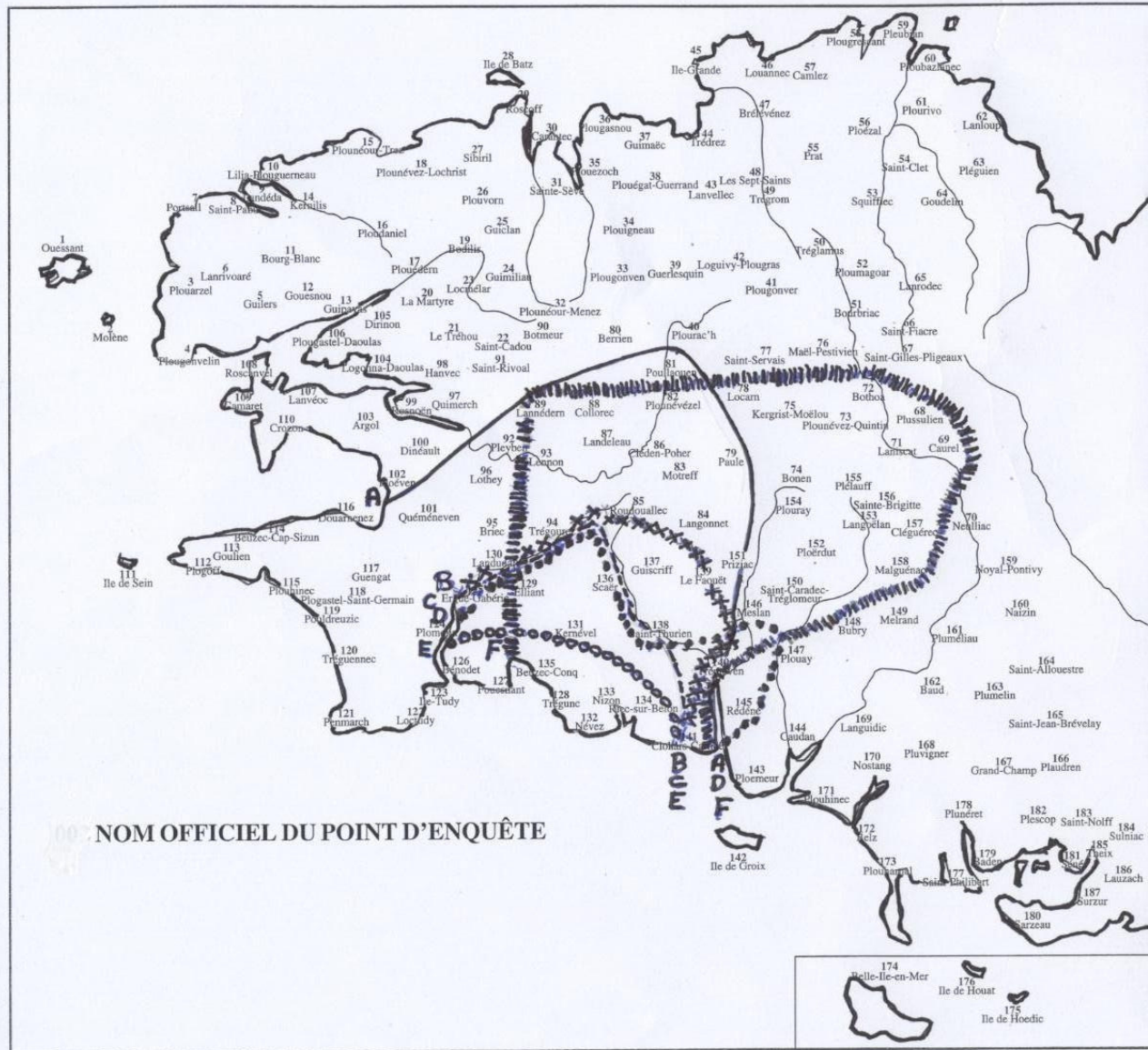
A number of factors precipitated matters. After the Treaty of Union in 1532, Brittany was absorbed into the Kingdom of France. In 1539 King Francis I issued the decree of Villiers-Cotterets stating that French would henceforth replace Latin as the official language of administration.⁴¹ The establishment of centers of public administration in Quimper, Brest, Morlaix, etc. brought in small but influential groups of individuals who formed the social and economic elites in towns throughout Brittany. The new political situation thus further reinforced a diglossic rapport between the two languages which had already existed.

In many ways, the social status of Breton resembles that of English during the Middle Ages. In the following passage from the Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester, written around 1300, the author bemoans the fate of the English language and the social dominance of the French and their language (Algeo 1982: 161).

*þus com lo englond in to normandies hond & þe normans ne coupe speke þo (then) bote hor (their) owe speche & speke french as hii (they) dude atom (did at home) & hor (their) children dude also teche so þat **heimen** (nobles) of þis lond at of hor blod come holdeþ (keep) alle þulke (that) speche þat hii of hom nome (took). Vor bote (For unless) a man conne (knows) frenss me telþ (one accounts) of him lute (little). Ac (but) **lowe men** (humble) **holdeþ to engliss & to hor speche zute** (yet). **Ich wene** (believe) **þer ne beþ** (is) **in al þe world contreys none þat ne holdeþ to hor owe speche bote englond one** (alone) *ac wel me wot (one knows) uor to conne (know) boþe wel it is; vor þe more þat a mon can þe more wurþe he is.**

⁴⁰ Nevertheless, genealogical research I have conducted in the area in question shows surprisingly little migration into the area before 1945. This certainly could be part of the reason why Breton was the sole language of communication among the peasantry until so recently.

⁴¹ Jean Le Dù informs me that "French replaced Latin as the administrative language in the 13th century, even before it did so in Île-de-France".



MAP 2 : Cultural and linguistic features

a) The general area where the post-posed inflected preposition “a” (of) functions as a semantic subject (cf. 2.8.5):

Ema ket digouet nê
 Lit. Is (sit.) not arrived-of-them
 “They have not arrived”.

*Note: This zone also corresponds to the region where my informants claim they can “get by” relatively well in Breton.

b) The limits of the region where the “coiffe de Fouesnant” (*giz Fouen*) was worn.

XXXXXXXX

c) The region where my informants claim to be the most at ease when speaking Breton.

*Note: It also corresponds to the region where my informants know most of the local Breton pronunciations of the towns and parishes.

d) Core area where the “bal de l’Aven” dance was most popular. (2.1)

.....

e) The definite article “an” + /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /g/, /gw/ rather than standard Breton “ar” < Middle Breton “an” (cf. 2.7.1)

oooooo

f) Provection of /m/, /n/, /l/, /r/ : zone identified by Humphrey Humphreys (1972) (cf. 2.5)

||||||||

Just as Englishmen after the Norman Conquest, the Bretons borrowed hundreds of French words that are now part and parcel of the Breton language. Just as in English, many of the words taken during early periods of contact have preserved Old French or dialectal characteristics, which have been lost in standard French: retention of /s/: *respont*, *mestr*, *ospital* (Modern French *répondre* “respond,” *maître* “master,” *hôpital* “hospital”); retention of Middle French Pronunciation /k/ (> /ʃ/): *ker* “dear,” *kas* “send” (Modern French *cher*, *chasser*); retention of /we/ in *poezon* “poison,” *boest* “box,” *koent* “attractive,” *koef* “head-dress” (Modern French *poison* “poison,” *boîte* “box,” *coant* “pretty,” *coiffe* ‘head-dress’), etc. (cf. Piette 1973).

Some expressions such as *chom trankl* (*chômer tranquil* = standard French *rester tranquille*) appear to derive from older dialectal forms of French. Other borrowings show that they entered the language via Gallo (the Romance dialect spoken in Upper Brittany). Hence southern Cornouaillais *arboulhetez*, a word meaning a “small funnel” is clearly akin to *avouillette* a word known in the Nantes area (for transferring wine into bottles). This is not to be confused with *tinouer* (< *entonnoir*) or *c’hargouer* or *founilh* “funnel”. All of these are used in the area; all are of French origin.

In what he called the “route d’invasion des mots français,” Falc’hun (1981: 142) demonstrated how these borrowings tended to follow the major road networks, particularly from Nantes (Loire-Atlantique) towards Vannes and westwards towards Quimperlé. The consequence is that as one goes further to the west and northwest the frequency of French words diminishes. As one might expect, it is the Vannetais dialect that absorbed the greatest number of words of French origin, and Léon, the least. Here are some examples of doublets cited by Falc’hun: *sourd* “deaf” versus *bouar*; *kordaner* “cobbler” versus *kere*; *teisir* “tailor” versus *gwiader*; *sonein* “to sing” versus *kana*; *pichon* “bird” versus *ezn* or *lapous*; *afer* “necessary” versus *ezomm*; *orch* “oats” versus *hey*; *ming* “lukewarm” versus *klouar*; *blank* “penny” versus *gwennek*; and finally *bossar* “butcher” versus *kiger*.

As a consequence, the extent and selection of French borrowings vary according to region. For instance, Trégor Breton has taken in words such as *vontañ* (< *fonder* “to melt”), *foñs* (< *fond* “bottom”), *kochon* (< *cochon* “pig”), *tintin* and *tonton* (< *tante* and *tonton*, “aunt” and “uncle”), etc. where southern Cornouaillais has retained the original Breton words *teuzi* [tœ̃:i] “melt,” *devn* [deõn] or *goueled* [gwelẽk] “bottom,” *pemoc’h* [pi’mœ̃χ] “pig,” *moereb* [mwẽp] “aunt” and *eontr* [jõn] “uncle,” etc. Counter-examples exist where Trégor Breton has retained the Celtic forms.

Nevertheless, the situation today is significantly different from that of past centuries. Even if there are still some older speakers for whom Breton is clearly the dominant language, all Breton speakers are now bilingual. They have an option that most of their parents and grandparents did not. If there is a technical term or concept that is relatively rare in Breton or does not come immediately to

mind, they have immediate access to the French word. The consequence is that the number of borrowings used in spontaneous speech is often extremely high, particularly when discussing subjects outside of the realm of traditional Breton language usage. The once steady trickle of words entering the language has now become a flood. In his research, Ternes (1992: 373) states that as much as two-thirds of the vocabulary used in everyday spoken Breton is of French origin.⁴² While this is difficult to quantify, as we saw above, for every French borrowing recorded in a given dialect one often finds a corresponding Breton word or words elsewhere. Furthermore, the frequency of French words drops significantly when the conversation revolves around agriculture or other familiar topics.

The fact is that the French language came hand-in-hand with governmental and regional agencies and institutions, schools, banks, police and military facilities, hospitals, new technology along with a host of modern concepts and ideas during the 19th and 20th centuries. The problem then is not that French has necessarily *replaced* Breton. If this were the case, there would be a reason for optimism since it would imply that Breton already possessed the core vocabulary used in these domains. Rather it would be more accurate to say that it has been *crowded out* by French.

Although Breton, like any other language, certainly had/has the linguistic tools to enable speakers to conceive abstract intellectual and technical terms, in their eagerness to master the French language, Breton speakers ceased coining new terms.⁴³ Given the scope of the change that has occurred over the past one hundred years, this is hardly surprising. Even national languages such as French, German and Spanish are struggling to replace thousands of anglicisms with native terms, often with a notable lack of success. Once again, the dearth of new vocabulary can be viewed through the prism of diglossia with French being perceived as the language of “progress” and technology, Breton being the language of rurality, the past and the home. And even in the domains where it was once strongest, the use of Breton has rapidly declined since the Second World War along with the demise of agriculture and the fishing industry to which it was functionally tied.

Here are a few examples of native technical terms once used in southern Cornouaille by my informants: *marc’h-du* “locomotive” (literally “black stallion”),

⁴² As I have already argued elsewhere, the percentage varies according to the dialect in question. The number of Breton loanwords in the modern written language is normally far lower than in the spoken language (cf. 2.8.11. *Neologisms*). The opposite is true concerning Middle Breton texts, however, which are filled with French borrowings. I agree with Jules Gros (1974: 5) who writes: “Si je n’hésite pas à donner le breton parlé en exemple, c’est en raison de l’excellence de sa syntaxe et de sa richesse en tournures originales, spirituelles et pittoresques. Sur le plan grammatical et stylistique, il doit en vérité constituer la base de la langue écrite.”

⁴³ As Jean Le Dû (p.c., 2007) rightly points out “native speakers just went on speaking their own home dialect. None had ever in mind the creation of an intellectual vocabulary. Just like any African speaking his own language at home but who would never dream of using his home language for administrative purposes.”

marc'h-houarn “bicycle” (lit. “iron stallion”), *karr-tan* “automobile” (lit. “fire cart,” because they originally had steam engines and fire came out of the exhaust pipe). The airplane was called a *karr-nij* “flying cart”. In the area of Audierne, the telephone was given the name *neudenn gas-pell* (lit. “far-sending thread”). Today, except for the oldest speakers, French words are used for these items: *lokomo'tif*; *'velo* or *bi'lo*; *'oto* or *o'to*; *a'vion*; *tele'fon*, etc. It would seem that in the area under discussion native Breton terms for new inventions stopped being coined shortly after the First World War. A large array of topics and subjects relating to such banal everyday items (i.e. “rug,” “curtains,” “blinds,” “light bulb,” “toaster,” “bank loan,” “turn signal,” “x-ray machine,” etc.) simply do not exist in popular Breton.⁴⁴

2.8.11 Neologisms

Language planners and those active in the defense of the Breton language and culture have long recognized that, if Breton is to survive, speakers must be equipped with vocabulary that is adapted to modern world and they have been very active in creating neologisms. The problem is that it has usually been well-educated individuals having a firm knowledge of the literary language and its history who invent these new terms. Moreover, they often show a penchant for linguistic purism, the unspoken objective seeming to be to purge as many French words from the language as possible, even those borrowed centuries ago.

Their activities have thus revolved around two objectives: inventing new words to deal with new concepts unknown in the vernacular language and replacing already existing French words with words of Brittonic origin. In the first case, a host of new words has entered the language such as *sevenadur* “culture,” a word unknown in popular Breton, the closest equivalent in Cornouaillais Breton being *seven* / *sevenegez* (noun) “haughty, supercilious” (man or woman). *Kev-lusker* “engine” has been selected to replace *mekanik*, *moteur*; *mezeg* “doctor” is preferred to universally used *medisin* [mi'diʃɛ̃] or [ˈmɛlʃɛ̃]. A few extreme examples of this are the use of Welsh *ateb* to replace *respont* “respond” (*répondre*)

⁴⁴ For the past two years, Mrs. Mona Bouzec and I have been collecting all the vocabulary and idioms we have gleaned between Quimper and Quimperlé. We are now classifying them according to theme which range from the physical world (i.e. nature, the human body, buildings, etc.) to abstract concepts related to man’s social behavior (i.e. ways of expressing affection, anger, sadness, etc.). One of the purposes is to provide a linguistic tool for those seeking to learn (or relearn) local Breton in order to facilitate communication with their native-Breton speaking family members. The underlying principle is that if a language is to survive it must be maintained within a close-knit family environment. While schools play an important role, they cannot offer the same affective dimension in which language thrives. The corpus is already quite large (300 pages so far) but, although we were fully aware of the paucity of technical vocabulary, we were nevertheless struck by the extent which Breton is lacking in native terms that are fully adapted to modern life.

or *lu* “army”⁴⁵ to replace *armée*. For example, the naval museum in Brest is called *Mirdi ar Morlu* (lit. “Conserve-house of the sea-army”), a term which no native speaker would understand.

An additional difficulty results from the fact that many words used in popular Breton are given new meanings in the standard language. *Diforc’h*, for instance, is now employed in the standard language to replace *diferañs* [di’fe:ʒs] “difference”. While *diforc’h* is indeed used with this meaning by some speakers of the Vannes dialect, for most speakers of the Cornouaille and Trégor vernaculars, *diforc’h* is used to describe a cow aborting its calf.

There is a host of other such examples like *yez’h* for “language” rather than *langaj*. *Yez’h*, in varieties where it is actually used, means the sound made by running water. *An da zond* “the future” is used by many neo-Breton speakers instead of *an amzer da zond* “time to come”; *demat* “good day” instead of popular greetings such as *traou ya mat?* “How are things?,” *mond a ra mad an traou ganoc’h?* “How are things going with you?” or *mond a ra mad an bed ganoc’h?* “How is the world going with you?,” etc.; *trugarez* instead of *bennoz Doue doc’h* (“God bless you,” with provection [beni’stœu dɔχ]) or *mersi (braz)*, etc.

The result is that much of the new Breton vocabulary often appears unidiomatic or downright foreign to native speakers.⁴⁶

2.8.12. Unintended Consequences

We have seen that the new standard has been promoted primarily via the school system and media, not in the households of Brittany. Furthermore, certain salient features of popular Breton such as stress on the penultimate stress and “sing-song” intonation patterns have passed into the vernacular French of Western Brittany. Middle class standard speakers of French often associate these characteristics with older, uneducated, rural Breton-speakers and it is often imitated in jokes about country bumpkins, etc. Because it is felt to be so *plouc* (“hick”), many young learners of Breton cannot bring themselves to take on this accent and prefer to retain French syllabic stress on the final syllable. Likewise, virtually no younger speakers pronounce /r/ as an apico-alveolar trill or even, in the case of northeastern Trégor/Goelo, as a retroflex /r/. French uvular or velar fricatives are preferred. Conversely, native speakers are often annoyed by what sounds to them like a strong French accent in Breton.

⁴⁵ It is attested in Old Breton and Middle Welsh, nevertheless.

⁴⁶ Mona Bouzec and I have created a “commission” of about a dozen native speakers who are busy coming up with terms for new concepts, inventions and ideas that they feel correspond to the logic of popular Breton (often humorous) and are acceptable to their peers than their more intellectual, abstract counterparts. The point is not necessarily to replace the more literary neologisms, but rather to offer informal alternatives to which native speakers can relate.

It is thus remarkable that negative French stereotypes regarding popular spoken Breton and non-standard Breton French have influenced the phonological development of the new spoken standard. As we have seen, aside from phonological interference, other differences exist that extend to morphology, syntax and the lexicon, in particular the rejection of French loan-words. Despite this, the positive side is that the new standard is indeed better equipped, lexically at least, to cope with the modern world. The problem is that the only ones capable of using it are a small group of younger, well-educated enthusiasts.

3. Conclusion

In the beginning of this paper, I explained that ever since the Breton aristocracy abandoned the Old Breton language in favor of Old French, the peasantry has been left to fend for itself. Since that time, their literary expression has been strictly oral and generally devoid of the cultural refinement and niceties normally associated with polite society. Isolated in the west of the Armorican peninsula, the language slowly evolved into a highly complex ensemble of fragmented dialects, a state of affairs that still characterizes the spoken vernaculars today.

We also observed how militants and scholars, in an effort to revitalize and elevate the status of the Breton language, created a new standard. Spoken by approximately 5,000-10,000 people, militants hope to establish it as the second official language alongside the French standard. The Breton dialects, on the other hand, are spoken by about 200,000 people or more but, for the reasons I have outlined above, the latter have little or no overt motivation to promote the language. Furthermore, the dialects they speak are sometimes scornfully portrayed as debased patois corrupted by French influence and spoken by “terminal speakers”.

Using the Breton spoken between Quimper and Quimperlé as a point of comparison, I have attempted to demonstrate that this and other Breton varieties are, nevertheless, essential constituents of a still living language. Although their use is in decline, the dialects often reveal fascinating insights into the historical development of the language that have often gone unobserved in the standard language and grammars. Put another way, popular Breton is the reflection of millennia of oral transmission.

Another lesson is that the gap between standard and dialect speakers is essentially the result of social status, educational level, different world views and the functional compartmentalization of Breton (i.e. who uses the language, with whom and under what conditions/purposes). For this reason, it may be more helpful to think along the lines of Bernstein’s “restricted code” and “elaborated code” to explain the differences between them (Bernstein 1971). While I would not agree that speakers of the restricted code are “cognitively deficient” in any way, the use of popular spoken Breton, as we have seen, is generally restricted to familiar networks or clusters. As such, relationships between speakers are generally more intimate, informal and egalitarian and, for this reason, the “shared as-

sumptions of the group will be implicitly understood rather than overtly expressed” (Trudgill 1983: 133). This phenomenon is clearly not restricted to Breton. Regardless of the language concerned, so-called “restricted codes” have frequently led to negative prescriptive judgements about the “sloppiness,” “laziness” or the “degenerated” nature of the idiom of dialect speakers.⁴⁷ Standard speakers, on the contrary, are trained to perform in disparitary,⁴⁸ socially complex environments which necessitate that their frame of reference be far more explicit and precise. Just as in non-standard English, the same kinds of social factors conditioning the use of restricted and elaborated codes exist in the Breton-speaking communities of Western Brittany so that, today, dialectal Breton is used primarily (when used at all) as the restricted code. When the elaborated code is appropriate, most native speakers shift to French, because no natural or well-established Breton standard or norm (acceptable to all native speakers) is at their disposal and, for that matter, it never has been.

One of the unintended consequences of this linguistic tension has been the rise of a new form of diglossia that has not existed since the Middle Ages, in which standard Breton is the “high” language and dialect Breton is the “low” language (Ferguson 1959). Once again, this assessment masks the fact that, in general, dialect speakers are totally uninterested in the existence of a Breton standard that most have no intention of learning or using anyway. For them, the only credible “high” language is the French norm.

Having said this, many teachers and members of the Breton media are increasingly conscious of these problems and, over the past 10 years, many improvements have been made. One thing appears clear at least: when dialect speakers can understand a television (or radio) program without effort and if they can relate to the subject content, they gladly watch it. Nevertheless, despite recent attempts to narrow the divisions, it appears unlikely that mentalities will change sufficiently or quickly enough for non-standard and standard Breton speakers to find a *terrain d’entente* which would reverse the current decline and enable them to meld into one linguistic community sharing a common code of linguistic evaluation. It thus appears highly likely that the only form of Breton which will be spoken in 30 years from now will be some form of the new standard.

⁴⁷ In his excellent description of Bolton dialect (Lancs.), Graham Shorrocks writes about the linguistic insecurity of the speakers of his home town. His account is particularly relevant here: “Attitudes to dialect are often negative ... A great many people in the area feel ashamed of their speech – to a degree that goes beyond what is generally appreciated. I have personally known those who would avoid, or could never really enjoy, a conversation with a stranger, because they were literally too ashamed to open their mouths. It has been drummed into people – often in school, and certainly in society at large – that dialect speech is incorrect, impure, vulgar, clumsy, ugly, careless, shoddy, ignorant, and altogether inferior.” (Shorrocks 1998: 90-91).

⁴⁸ “Disparitary” (formal) is a translation of Le Dû and Le Berre’s term “disparitaire” (*Bardume, Standard, Norme*, 1996).

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