Children Prefer Natives

A study on the transmission of a heritage language; Standard Breton, Neo-Breton and traditional dialects

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Abstract

I present a linguistic effect by which heritage language speakers over-represent traditional input in their acquisition system. I propose that native young adults children of the missing link generation disqualify the input of insecure L2 speakers of Standard and prefer the input of linguistically secure speakers in the making of their own generational variety. Given the socio-linguistics of Breton, this effect goes both against statistical and sociological models of acquisition because speakers disregard features of Standard Breton, which is the socially valorised variety accessible to them and valued by school and media. I detail three case paradigms where grammars of native young adults present features of traditional dialects for which they had very rare input, together with consistent counter-influence in both Standard Breton or French. The article provides baselines for the investigation of the syntax of the generation of Breton speakers who received full Breton schooling in immersion schools. It shows that influence from both Standard Breton and French is not incompatible with native-like properties in their Breton syntax.

Key words: heritage language, acquisition, Neo-Breton, bilingualism, diglossia
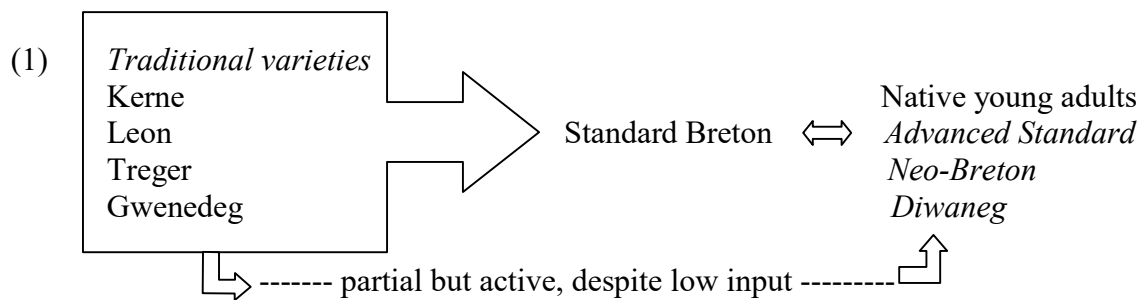
1. Introduction

This article is part of a wider project aiming to propose a syntactic portrait of the different varieties of Breton spoken at the beginning of the 21st century. Jouitteau (forthcoming) has investigated the differences between traditional varieties and the Standard variety of the language, showing that traditional dialects differ among themselves by a consistent set of grammatical properties, but that Standard as a modern dialect does not differ more from traditional varieties than these traditional varieties among themselves. This dialectal microvariation, including Standard, provides the

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[1] This work has benefited from comments by Milan Rezac and two anonymous reviewers, whom I thank here. Any remaining errors are mine. This work has also benefited from the patience and openmindedness of numerous Breton speakers whom I heartfully thank here. Raw elicitation data is signalled between square brackets, and can be consulted online at the elicitation center of www.arbres.cnrs.iker (Jouitteau 2009–2018). Native judgements on French are, when not specified otherwise, from the author. In the Breton glosses, R stands for the preverbal particle (*rannig*).

baseline input for today's children and young adults. In this article I will show that despite the young Breton speakers being flooded by French on the one hand, and Standard Breton spoken by non-natives (media, teachers) on the other, their Breton does retain some rare syntactic properties prototypical of the traditional varieties, properties that their teachers and parents are not even conscious exist in the traditional varieties. In terms of language transmission, the challenging sociolinguistic situation of the Breton language thus provides ideal conditions for the study of the language acquisition of a heritage language with reduction and/or attrition of the input.

The focus of this paper is the syntactic variety used at the beginning of the twenty first century by native young adults who have been entirely schooled in Breton. In the previous literature, this variety may appear under the label *Neo-Breton*, *Advanced Standard* or *Diwaneg*, from the name of the immersion school system *Diwan*. The three terms are equivalent, with some minor pejorative or approbatory connotations linked to them. I follow Kennard (2013) in keeping to the neutral term of *linguistic variety of native young adults*. The representation in (1) illustrates the working hypothesis that there exists a variety of Breton spoken by the younger generations, which contrasts itself with both traditional varieties and written Standard. Such a variety still has to be syntactically defined.

(1)
Traditional varieties		
Kerne		Native young adults
Leon	Standard Breton ⟺	*Advanced Standard*
Treger		*Neo-Breton*
Gwenedeg		*Diwaneg*

⟹ ------- partial but active, despite low input --------- ⟹

Linguistically, a given speaker of any variety of Breton in (1) can be a native of this variety, in which case (s)he is an early bilingual for which Breton is L1, or a late bilingual for which Breton is L2. I will focus here on early bilinguals, in order to provide a baseline for further studies. While referring to (1), it is important to remember that if, statistically, it represents different age generations from left to right, this is due to the fact that no grandparent can be a native of a new variety. However, depending on the input they receive, children can acquire any of the varieties in (1). In particular, I will show that young native speakers coming from families where transmission was

uninterrupted are not accurately defined as speakers of a linguistic variety one could label *Neo-Breton*, but rather as speakers of their own local traditional variety.

Cautious use of the terminology is in order because there is much confusion as to the definition of a *Neo-Breton speaker*. Any of the varieties in (1) can be learned as a second language (L2), producing *new speakers* of Breton. Hornsby (2014: 109), for example, studies Neo-Breton from interviews he conducted in Breton language courses aimed at adults. In a sociological sense, young adults speaking Breton are all new Breton speakers in the sense that they all face the linguistic pressure of French and show contact phenomena and various effects of diglossia. The study of the grammatical varieties of adult learners belongs to the field of second language learning and is not the focus of this paper. In a syntactic or cognitive sense, a native speaker and an adult learner are not expected to have the same internal grammar of a given language. The linguistic brain of the former has grown in contact with at least Breton, whereas the linguistic brain of the latter grew deprived of this input. Their bilingualism is expected to differ, as do their contact phenomena with French.

Finally, this article does not focus on the early productions by children. For example, children with Breton schooling but low familial Breton input have been shown to underuse the form *vez* of the copula in passive structures, a feature that they share with L2 learners (Davalan 1999: 111–115). Different maturation processes are in place for acquisition, and children are not expected to produce perfectly any target language. The extent of their sociological diglossia, and the consequences of the attrition of the input they receive in different linguistic dimensions (phonology, pragmatics, prosody, lexicon, etc.) concerns the field of the acquisition of a heritage language. Again, in a sociological sense they are new speakers of Breton, but the emergence of a new variety of Breton would be better observed after the stabilisation of adult age.

In the first section, I will provide a brief introduction to the different generations speaking Breton in the twenty first century and address the question of language attrition and native competence in the younger generations. I show that children of the generation where Breton is the least spoken still evidence native-like behaviour in a way that sets them apart from L2 speakers. The second part of the article provides evidence for non-Standard input in young adults. I present a series of syntactic phenomena evidenced in native young adults that are ungrammatical in both Standard Breton and French, and can be shown to derive from the direct influence of a traditional dialect. In the last three paradigms, the influence can be traced back to an early caretaker from

their grandparents' generation from whom they have had very little input in the language. These results suggest that during the acquisition of this heritage language, the child's mind operates a positive discrimination towards traditional varieties, allowing for cross-generational transmission in impoverished input contexts.

2. Contemporary varieties of Modern Breton

Breton passed in the course of one century from being the dominant language of Low-Brittany to a semi-clandestine status. In 1902, 80% of Breton speakers were using the language on a daily basis. Half of them were monolinguals, bilingualism with French being restricted to towns like Brest, Quimper, Morlaix or Concarneau. By 1914, Breton was the most widely spoken Celtic language, with 1,3000,000 speakers, half of them monolinguals (see Moal 2003, 2004; Broudic 2006). One century later, Breton is hardly heard in public, still with about 200 000 speakers but with projections as low as 15,000 speakers in one or two decades. Less than 5% of children in Brittany have access to some form of education in Breton, which meets UNESCO's criteria for highly endangered languages that less than 30% of children get an education in the language. The number of children having at least partial education in Breton is now growing again, after a *missing link generation* or two in the transmission (This missing link generation is now 20-50-year-olds, Ofis 01/2018). This article specifically investigates linguistic transmission across this missing link generation(s).

2.1. Five generations make the typology of input for acquisition

I count five active generations in modern day Breton: children (0-18 years old), young adults (18-35), individuals of the missing link generation, heritage language grandparents and great-grandparents. I consider here only native speakers in the sense that they had considerable input before the critical age of five, thus excluding second language learners.

These children receive their education up to high school in immersion or bilingual *Diwan*, *Div Yezh* or *Dihun* schools. There is considerable individual variation in their mastery of Breton, depending on the age of their first contact with the language (parenting, kindergarten, primary school from age 3 or 4), quality and quantity of this input, duration of schooling in the language, and presence of the language outside of school (Davalan 1999; Mermet 2006; Kennard 2013). It is not uncommon for their parents to be French monolinguals. The study of the syntax of children concerns the

field of bilingual acquisition in a heritage language context, and I leave it here aside for further research.

The generation of young adults is the first in the last century that have had their entire education in Breton. Their first contact with the language was rarely at home, sometimes at day-care (Mermet 2006) or at primary school, starting at the age of four or five, with uninterrupted practice of the language. As such, they linguistically qualify as native speakers (contra Hewitt 2016), with characteristics of both early bilinguals and heritage speakers, and a diglossic behaviour. They show some influence of their parents' generation, who are overwhelmingly non-natives. This new adult generation enters the job market, which, if in Breton, places them in the work place among the older generation of non-native L2 speakers. Young adults are famous for their relaxed use of code-switching, and for the occasional production of some distinctive signs of language attrition of the L2 type, like loss of gender, or seemingly erratic mutations (for example *daou mignonez* /two.M friend.F/ instead of Standard *div vignonez* /two.F F.MUT.friend.F/). Linguistically, such forms draw a clear contrast with both spoken and literary Standard Breton, as well as with traditional dialects. However, caution is in order. Such productions are not automatically the result of the speaker not knowing or mastering the traditional or standard form. In elicitation, the same speaker can also have a spoken variety much closer to traditional varieties or to Standard that amount to another register. This generation shows obvious cases of bilingualism in at least two varieties of Breton. An illustration of this is provided by Gwenedeg speakers raised at home in their dialectal variety, who also speak Standard Breton by the end of high school. Diglossic effects typically impact the choice of different Breton varieties depending on context.[2]

The next older generation, the middle one of our five generations typology, represents the missing link generation. Natives do exist but are rare; speakers from this generation typically are L2 or L3 literate speakers whose syntax is heavily influenced by Standard Breton, and their prosody by French. There is a great deal of individual variation among the non-native speakers in the mastery of traditional dialects. Some learned actively with traditional speakers, some did not. Some have both children and

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[2] My perception from discussions with those young adults is that there is a kind of pleasure associated with openly using forms that they know to be incorrect. I suspect that, to some extend, they may use typical L2 faulty forms to embarrass the older adults as a kind of generational post-adolescent appropriation of the language. They sometimes get trapped in their own game and get used to those forms, probably under real L2 influence. This attitude may be reinforced by a new trend of reclaiming bilingualism.

parents that are native speakers in the language, some none. When fluent because they are active in the language, they typically have a job in the language and produce linguistic material (TV, written media and radio, schools, editorial boards, etc.) or are in a place of political importance, hence their generally broad linguistic influence despite relative linguistic insecurity. Natives from this generation, if socialised in the language in their generation, have to interact daily with L2 speakers.

The next older generation is that of the so-called traditional speakers that had their first serious contact with French in school, which started at about age seven at the time. They stand out in their generation which was overwhelmingly raised in French. Early exposure to Breton can be due to different factors: brittophone parents accepting Breton transmission (which is politically significant, and can be found alongside an inclination towards Standard or other normative attitudes), monolingualism of the grandparents (the massive reduction of monolinguals only happened in the sixties), or traditional households favouring contact with grandparents in a traditional rural economy. For different reasons, including World War II, some have also been raised by their own grandparents. This generation is currently leaving the job market in which they traditionally had a rather low social status, hence their relative lack of influence at the political level and in the school systems. When fluent, they are grammatically productive, with clear-cut judgements consistent over time on syntactic structures they have never encountered before. This generation shows typical signs of a heritage language, comparable to the linguistic results of immigration. The language competence of the traditional speakers is diglossic and usually impacted upon at the lexical level. They sometimes lack Breton words for common objects or animals ('door handle', 'snails', etc.), and they are reluctant to use code switching as a lexical compensation. Their use of French lexical borrowings is widespread but restricted to terms long integrated into Breton (productive French borrowings date back to at least Old French). In (2a), a traditional Breton speaker pronounces *e-barzh ar bal* 'in the ball' as /parbal/, with a shortening of the preposition *e-barzh* 'in' as /ba/ and an initial devoicing sandhi triggered by the preceding /t/. This realisation disregards the concurrent reading with a French borrowing *mourir par balle* (2b) that both younger generations and L2 speakers would typically avoid.

(2)

a.　*He (h)i　zo　marvet　　　par　bal*.

　　she-echo is　　died　　　　in.the ball

'As for her, she died during the ball.'
Central Breton, Favereau (1984: 209)

b.   *He(h)i   zo marvet   par bal.*   (*par balle*)

she-echo is died   by bullet

'As for her, she was shot.'

reading with a French borrowing

Most speakers of the grandparents' generation are not literate. They typically speak and easily understand only a few dialectal varieties, and their competence in Standard Breton shows great individual variations.[3] Modification of their own Breton with respect to the Breton of their own parents also varies. They were usually the first early bilinguals in their family line (hence the persistent reports that "grandparents don't speak the same anymore").

The next and oldest generation, that of the great-grandparents, has salient traditional prosody, and testifies to a state of the language when most speakers were monolinguals or bilinguals, with Breton as their dominant language.

The portrait of the generations of Breton speakers would not be complete without a quick note on the impoverishment of cross-over-generational linguistic transmission due to a drastic switch in the situation of the grandparents' generations in the linguistic transmission. The elderly are alive longer, but have fewer opportunities to provide linguistic input to children now than when all the generations lived in common traditional households or small communities. Access to higher education, rural desertification, and the housing crisis in urban centres all converged during the twentieth century to exclude grandparents from the nuclear family, restricting their access to their grandchildren to occasional family events or vacations. The ban on communication in Breton has been more effective in a nuclear family model, because a single generation was providing linguistic input to the children in everyday life. All of these factors converge and predict that younger generations could not have retained the

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[3] Hewitt (2016) states that "no native speakers speak Standard", by which he means that no traditional speaker has access to Standard. My experience is that although access to Standard is clearly not a given, native traditional speakers show great individual variation as to their practices. Some learned to read and write in the language, some like to listen to the radio or TV, or have extensive exchanges with the younger generations practising Standard. Hewitt also claims that no Standard speaker is a native, which is also contrary to my experience with the fluent young adults.

traditional syntactic features absent from Standard: these features would be absent from the input provided by L2 Standard speakers.

In all generations of native speakers, there is important individual variation as to the intensity of their practice of the language, which impacts on their syntax and gives rise to different levels of fluency. Grinevald and Bert (2011) identify seven types of speakers: fluent speakers, semi-speakers, terminal speakers, rememberers, ghost speakers, neo-speakers and last speakers, via four interrelated parameters: language competence that addresses the level of acquisition attained and degree of individual loss, exposure to language versus vitality of the language at time of acquisition, use and attitude and, finally, self-evaluation of language skills. Those variables are poorly documented for Breton syntax, and I am careful here to select fluent speakers. This study thus concerns transmission in a best-case scenario, and has no pretension to represent the majority of speakers. The existence of various gradations of language attrition is not controversial, as opposed to the very existence of fluent speakers with native-like linguistic behaviour.

In the next section, I show that at least some of the adult speakers show a native-like competence that L2 speakers do not attain.

2.2. The question of native competence in adults

Let us first examine the case of a native speaker in his fifties and thus part of the missing link generation. There was no Breton immersion schools when he was a child, and he was raised both in Standard Breton by an L2 father, and in the local Douarnenez traditional variety by both a native mother, and a native caretaker since an early age. He is literate and well read in Standard Breton, a variety to which he openly assumes a strong positive bias. Jouitteau (2015a) has investigated with him the syntactic licensing environments of an existential free-choice item, *den-mañ-den* 'a person, any person' in a series of elicitation sessions. The structure under investigation is illustrated in (3)–(6). The reduplication process makes it obvious that no French nor English influence is at play. This structure is not favoured in Standard Breton: it is barely mentioned in descriptive grammars or monographs on local varieties, and its complex syntactic distribution has not been previously described (7). However, the licensing contexts for

the bare noun formed by reduplication coincide in the results with those proposed in the formal literature for existential free-choices in Greek, English and Italian.[4]

(3) *D'an nebeutañ,* **lenn** *levr-mañ-levr* *diwar al listennad*
at the least read book-here-book from the list
a zo bet roet dit.
R is been given to.2SG
'Read at least one book, (any book) from the reading list.'

(4) *Kenkas* **welfes** *studier-mañ studier o truchañ, lavar din.*
in.case would.see.2SG student-here student at cheating tell to.me
'Tell me in case you see any student cheating.'

(5) *Hag eñ* **nije** *graet tra-mañ-tra* *evit lakaat*
Q would.have done thing-here-thing for put
anezho war e du ?
P.3PL on his side
'Would he have done anything to gain their approval?'

(6) **Ma** *c'hoarvezh tra-mañ-tra,* *kelaouit ac'hanomp.*
if happens thing-here-thing inform P.1PL
'Inform us if *anything* happens.' *Douarnenez*, H.D.

(7) *∃-FCI licensing contexts:* (Giannakidou 2001; Chierchia 2013)

  (i) occurrence in imperatives, conditional and future tenses, modalities of necessity and possibility

  (ii) occurrence in the restriction of *if*-clauses

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[4] Here are Jouitteau's notes on the elicitation (2015): "I have favoured multiple in-depth elicitations with a single speaker with consistent judgements (about ten hours in five sessions). The informant, H.D., in his fifties, is a native from the Douarnenez dialect. One of his parents is a non-native but a fluent speaker, the other one a native. He also had a native caretaker as a young child. H.D. is at least trilingual, in French and Breton, as well as English. He has easy access to Breton literature and to the written standard, for which he overtly assumes a normative attitude. Apart from the Douarnenez and Standard varieties, the speaker has had little exposure to other dialects. He showed consistent judgements from one session to the other."

His native-like judgements show that literacy in Standard, lack of Breton schooling, input from an L2 parent, contact with French, and even a politically assumed bias towards Standard Breton together are not factors that lead to an absence of native competence, at least concerning the availability of robust grammaticality judgements. These results may not be surprising considering the fact that the speaker indeed had consistent native input from traditional varieties at an early age, and no later interruption in his practice. But what about the children of this missing link generation?

I have submitted dialectal Breton data to an ex-*Diwan* pupil now in his thirties ([Brendan Corre 12/2017]). The speaker was raised in Treger Breton by his native mother, with maternal grandparents who were also speakers from Treger. He now works in the countryside and reports multiple Breton contacts in everyday life. During elicitation, the speaker was to provide grammaticality judgements on the sentences coming from different dialects including Standard. The sentences were presented under their respective written dialectal form, without translation. He was asked to propose a correction, sometimes also a translation when ambiguity was expected. The data below comes from this protocol.[5]

First, the results show that B.C.'s exposure to Standard did not create an unlocalised and uniform variety of Breton. Much like a prototypical speaker of a traditional dialect, he shows forms that are specific to his Southern Treger dialect (Prat). Treger dialects vary as to their agreement patterns with the subject of a verb *kaout* 'have'. Preverbal and postverbal subject asymmetry is reported for Plougrescant by Le Dû (2012: 104–5), while regularisation towards complementarity effect was reported for Tréguier by Leclerc (1986: 76). B.C. patterns with Plougrescant, despite Tréguier geographically intervening between the two locations. His agreement pattern with the verb *kaout* 'have' has an asymmetry: a preverbal subject triggers obligatory agreement (8), whereas a postverbal subject doesn't (9). He also has in spontaneous production the plural forms of the demonstrative pronouns like *zeoù* in (8), as is widely reported in Treger.

(8)

a.　　(***Zeoù*** / *an dud*)　　*neu**ign***　　　*komprenet.*　　　[his proposed correction]

b.　　(***Zeoù*** / *an dud*)　　**neus*　　　*komprenet.*

　　　these / the people have.(PL/*SG) understood.

'They/the people have understood.'

(9) *Komprenet   neu**ign**   (* an dud)*
     understood   have.3PL   the people
     'They/the people have understood.'

Other forms are not specific from Treger proper, but belong to the wider central area going from Treger to Kerne, like the regularised morphology of the verb *kaout* 'have' with its agreement morphemes on the right (8), or the use of the declarative complementizer *penaos* (10). The influence of Central Breton can be felt with the erratic distribution of the verbal particles *a/e* (11), morphological weakening of determiners in (11) and (12), or use of the verb *kas* 'to want' (13).

(10) *Dre   ar   bourk e   rede   ar   brud   **penaos***
     across the   town   R   ran   the   rumour   that
     lestr Kola   a   oa   bet   kollet.
     vessel Kola   R   was   been   lost
     'The news ran across town that Kola's vessel had been lost.'

(11) *'Barzh 'guizin e   **z**ebront   bara.*
      In   kitchen R   eat.3PL   bread
     'They eat bread in the kitchen.'

(12) *Herwe   penoz mañ   uhelder   **r**mor*
     depending.to how   is   highness   the.sea
     'depending on how high is the sea.'
                                              [his translation from French, correcting (17)]

(13) *Tout   an   dud   atav   '**gas** gwel   Kristiane.*
     all   the   people always   (R)   want   to.see Kristiane
     'People, each time, they try to see Kristiane…'
                                              [his proposed translation in French]

B.C. consistently rejects the items and structures that are exogenous to the traditional variety of Prat. In the domain of complementisers, he judges as ungrammatical the oppositive complementiser *na bout zo doue, nabochdou* 'even if' of High Kerne, the declarative complementiser *la(r)* 'that' of Kerne, the polar interrogative *c'hwistim* of Goelo, the polar interrogative *mendare* of Enez Sun (Sein), the complementiser *hann* 'if' of Lanijen (Lanvenegen)*,* the complementiser *eñ* 'if' of Ar Yeuc'h (Le Juch), as well as the complementiser doubling *en en deus* of Gwenedeg. In the domain of preposition, he rejects the forms typical of Leon like *anez* 'without it' or *dac'h* 'from'. When presented with non-standard forms, B.C. does not correct them. He judges as grammatical the use of *emañ* as a copula (12) or as an auxiliary (14). He even firmly rejects standard forms that he must have had to use at school, and persistently corrects them with dialectal forms of the central area. He strongly rejects any form of the *ez eus* copula (16). Some Leon forms were rejected as ungrammatical as in (17a), together with its Standard equivalent with comments like "I don't say it like that" as in (17b). He is prompt to propose dialectal forms he feels more natural, as in (12), correcting (17).

(14) *Kit   da   wel   ma   **'ma**   digouet   ho   preur.*
      go   to   to.see if   is   arrived   your   brother
      'Go see if your brother has arrived.'

(15) *War   an   daol   **zo** /*ez eus   paper*.
      on   the   table   (R) is /*R is   paper
      'There is paper on the table.'

(16) *War   ar   c'hanol   (**zo** /*eh eus/*ez eus)   gwaet   poncho*.
      on   the   canal   (R) is   R is   R is   done   bridges
      'Bridges were built over the canal.'

(17)

a.	****dac'h***	*an uhelder*	***dac'h** ar mor*.	Breton from Plougerne (Leon)
b.	*? **diouzh***	*an uhelder*	***eus** ar mor*	Standard
c.	*diouzh*	*uhelder*	*ar mor*	Standard
	from	the highness	of the sea	

'depending on how high is the sea.'

These results converge with what would be expected from a literate traditional native speaker of the older generations. Two syntactic phenomena may provide a contrast with, specifically, the oldest generation, that of the greatgrandparents of Treger. The speaker fails to recognise structures of *da* insertion in questions, which are documented in North Western dialects, including by the Treger speaker Jules Gros (Trédrez-Locquémeau) in the sixties. B.C. also finds as ungrammatical direct possessive structures with a determiner, as documented for the generation of the greatgrandparents in Bear (Yekel, Georgelin and Ar C'hozh 2015–2018). This could derive from attrition, as well as from dialectal variation across Treger, or from the natural evolution of the dialect of Prat.

Given these results, I consider that young adult speakers like B.C., raised at home and at school in Breton, socialised in the language, and with no interruption of practice, are native speakers of Breton in the same way traditional speakers are. Davalan (1999: 99) estimated this profile of children raised at home in "real bilingual environments" and getting Breton schooling at "maximum 10%" of the Breton speaking children. Can we find a contrast with speakers of his generation that had Breton schooling but were raised in households where the familial transmission is incomplete or non-existent? Among those speakers, great individual variation is to be expected with respect to their mastering of traditional dialects. If their input came mainly from L2 sources, or if practice was interrupted after school, they should also show different levels of attrition. Jouitteau and Rezac (2016) have conducted a study of the semantics of collective nouns in Breton, in which they report that fluent speakers with this profile can provide grammatical judgements on very intricate syntactic matters, provided they were schooled in Breton from a young age and had no long interruption in their practice of the language. They comment on the elicitation sessions they had with a native speaker in her twenties, schooled in *Diwan* with her siblings. Both her parents were L2 speakers of Standard: "contrary to the idea that the sociolinguistic extremely minoritised position of the language makes it unable to be tested on young speakers anymore, we found that [M's] results were robust: (i) judgements consistent across sessions; (ii) sharp judgements on semantically borderline novel sentence types; (iii) lack of hypercorrection where her judgements diverged from Standard Breton, and (iv) uncertainty in domains that correspond to those where there is uncertainty in English

and French". Of course, if young adults show enough signs of native competence to conduct fine-grained elicitations with them and to conduct a syntactic study, this is no definitive argument that their syntactic proficiency is in all respects equivalent to that of Breton monolinguals one century earlier. However, it provides a clear contrast with L2 speakers who do not demonstrate such fine-grained judgements with consistency over time.

In the following section, I present a syntactic test that sets apart young natives schooled in Breton and non-natives. It involves a quite intricate syntactic problem posed by the paradigm of 'tens plus one in a demonstrative'. Young adult native Breton speakers solve this problem with a creativity and a self-confidence typical of native speakers, while fluent L2 speakers typically fail to provide a resolution to the problem.

2.3. The tens plus one in a demonstrative conundrum

The Breton numeral system makes use of discontinuous numerals as in (18), where the numeral surrounds the head noun. The unit numeral appears before the head noun, and the numeral of tens after it. In (18), an analytic demonstrative *ar... -mañ* 'the…-here' has been added and surrounds the entire constituent. A definite article thus appears at the beginning of the entire construction. Independently, the cardinal 'one' for counting is *unan*, but is realised *ur* before a head noun, a form which is homophonous with the quantifier and indefinite article *ur* 'a'. As a result, in 'tens plus one' cardinals like 21, 31, 41, the cardinal 'one' *unan* is used in continuous numerals (19), whereas the presence of the head noun with these numerals triggers the discontinuous form and imposes *ur* before the head noun (20).

(18)

a. *Kas   din   ar   pevar roc'h ha tregont-mañ.   Standard*, M.L. [01/2015]
   bring to.me the   four   rock and thirty-here
   'Bring me those thirty four rocks.'

b. [definite determiner [unit numeral [N] and tens numeral] – deictic]

(19) *Kas   din   { * ur / unan } ha tregont   eus   ar   re-se.*
      bring to.me   a /   one   and thirty   of   the   N.PL-here
      'Bring me thirty one of those.'

14

(20)   *Kas   din*   { *ur* / * ***unan*** }   *roc'h* **ha**   ***tregont****.*

        bring   to.me   a /   one   rock   and   thirty

        'Bring me thirty one rocks.'

Adding an analytic demonstrative to the structure in (20) is a conundrum because it seems to require both a definite and an indefinite article at its initial. Such a co-occurrence */an un…/* has no equivalent in the language. The first determiner *an*, *al*, *ar* cannot be used, as both the initial for the demonstrative and the unit numeral, the definite article *ar*, never realise the cardinal 1, 'one'. The analytic demonstrative cannot function without its initial determiner. The only syntactic environment where the definite determiner is dropped in a demonstrative is the direct possessive construction (21) that requires absence of determiner (22). However, analytical demonstratives are incompatible with a possessive determiner (23). The analytical demonstrative is incompatible with an indefinite determiner (24).

(21)   *ø korn-mañ*   *ar*   *sal*

           corner   the   room

        'this corner of the room'

(22)   **ar*   *c'horn-mañ*   *ar sal*   Gourmelon (2014: 92)

        ar   *c'horn-mañ*   *eus*   *ar sal*

        the   corner-here   of   the room

        'this corner of the room'

(23)   *(**ma**)* *an*   *(**ma**)* *eontr-se*   *(din)*

        my   the   my   uncle-here   to.me

        'this uncle of mine'

(24)   *Kas*   *din*   {***ur*** / *ar* }   *roc'h -mañ.*

        bring   to.me   a / the   rock -here

        'Bring me this rock.'   *Standard*

        It is quite rare to have to express a 'tens plus one' number with a head noun in a demonstrative, and all fluent speakers, native and non-native alike, tend to avoid it by

different avoidance strategies. In elicitation, when forced to solve the problem, we can be reasonably sure they are trying it for the first time. Three L2 fluent speakers refused the task. Two considered the task undoable. The third speaker is a fluent L2 speaker socialised in the language, who has had contact with Breton since the age of eleven, and later on with one parent. He tried successively multiple solutions (25), ending up unsatisfied. (26) was proposed days after as the best solution, and avoids the problem altogether.

(25)

  a. #? *ar   maenig   gwenn-mañ   ha tregont*
  b. # *ar   maenig   gwenn   ha tregont-mañ*
      the rock.little   white(-here)   and thirty(-here)
      'these thirty white little rocks'

(26) *an   unan   ha   tregont   a vaenigoù-mañ*
      the   one   and   thirty   of rock.little.s-here

Young natives, on the contrary, come up with fast, creative and unique solutions. M.L.'s solution is to accept the appearance of determiner doubling on the surface as in (27). She is interpreting *ur* as an allomorph of *unan* under discontinuous numerals. Being a numeral, *ur* is, for her, not incompatible with a demonstrative, as in (18).

(27) *Degas **an   ur   roc'h   ha   tregont**-se   din.*
      bring   the   a   rock   and   thirty-here   to.me
      'Bring me those thirty one rocks.'   M. Lincoln [07/2016], p.c.

Other speakers reject (27) as ungrammatical, and avoid the problem of determiner doubling by exceptionally producing a continuous numeral as in (28). This word order possibility is the last resort for this speaker: he otherwise conforms to Standard; when the structure is not contained inside an analytical demonstrative, he refuses continuous numerals with a head noun (29), and produces discontinuous numerals (30).[6]

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[6] The head noun *mein* has no number opposition in his dialect.

(28) *an* **un'** **ha** **tregont**   *mein-se.*
     the one and thirty rock-here
     'those thirty one rocks.'   J-M. Ollivier [11/2017], p.c.

(29) * **un'** **ha** **tregont**   *mein.*
     one and thirty rock
     'thirty one rocks.'

(30) **ur** *mein* **ha** **tregont**.
     a rock and thirty
     'thirty one rocks.'

Another speaker rejecting (27) produces a discontinuous numeral in (31). He seems to interpret *ar* as both the definite determiner necessary for the demonstrative, and the unit numeral. Note that the speaker also switches number on the noun. The lexical item used for 'rock' in (31) is the plural form *ar vaen* with a distinct diphthong that contrasts with the singular masculine form *min, ar min* used in (32) and (33). Use of a plural head noun is unexpected because only singular head nouns otherwise appear with numerals. This suggests that there is a complex underlying structure isolating the head noun and the numeral in (31). The two adjectives may also have produced an overload absent in (27) and (28), and be responsible for the switch.[7]

(31) **ar** **vaen** *bihan* *gwenn* *ha* *tregont-***mañ**   B. Corre [12/2017]
     the rocks small white and thirty-here
     'those thirty-one little white rocks'

(32) **ur** **min** *bihan* *gwenn* *ha* *tregont*
     the rock small white and thirty
     'thirty-one little white rocks'

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[7] Neither forms, *ar min* or *ar vaen*, are Standard. Le Dû (2012) gives for Treger (Plougrescant) the masculine singular *e min(n)*, and plural *e vêṇ* with the same irregular mutation in the plural observed in B.C's data. Standard Breton would make use of a masculine *maen* form with a *mein* plural form. The standard number opposition between *maen* singular and *mein* plural is however not found in Vallée (1931), Helias (1986) or Merser (2009). Both Favereau (1993) and Ménard (2012) give a vowel number opposition (sg. *maen*, pl. *mein*), and both plural forms *ar mein/ar vein*.

(33) **an   daou   vin   bihan gwenn ha   tregont-mañ**
      the   two   rock   small white and   thirty-here
      'those thirty-two little white rocks'

  The three native speakers have diverging solutions to the problem. The first point here is the creativity of their solutions. It is remarkable that these young adults can solve intricate syntactic problems that they probably never encountered in real life. This syntactic creativity is the sign of true natives, whose brains were formed at an early age with the structure of the language. The second point is the robustness of their judgement. Once they had had less than thirty seconds to evaluate different options, all showed self-confidence as to the validity of their solution, and of the ungrammaticality of other strategies. They are not reacting like speakers trying to guess what the rule is. They are looking for it, internally, and trying it aloud to check if the prosody fits their grammar.

  Young natives schooled in Breton have mathematics classes in the language and master the Breton discontinuous numeral system, but do not plausibly receive an external input for this under-used construction for which there is no prescriptive rule in any grammar so far. Their mathematics teachers are typically L2 speakers from the missing link generation and the 'tens plus one in a demonstrative' conundrum is typically unsolvable for L2 speakers. No prescriptive grammar even mentions the problem, let alone its answer. The resolution of the problem did not come from French structures. French has no equivalents for either discontinuous numerals or analytical demonstratives. There is here no plausible influence from the traditional speakers, first because of the scarcity of the structure in discourse, and second because traditional speakers typically use continuous numerals like in French (Hewitt 2001) or even switch to French for counting as a diglossic effect. Presented with the problem, some traditional speakers either cannot be tested because they have lost the discontinuous system altogether (*Plougerne,* M.L.B. [04.2016]), or find (27) unparsable and cannot find an alternative (*Skaër/Banaleg*, H. Gaudart [03.2017]), grouping them here with the L2 speakers.

3. Non-Standard features in young adults
3.1. Influence from traditional varieties

Traditional varieties show a wide array of syntactic differentiations. Standard Breton is a modern dialect quite close to the traditional variety of Leon, with relatively few original features of its own (Jouitteau forthcoming). In the scientific literature, some syntactic features have been proposed to set apart Neo-Breton from Standard Breton, or from traditional varieties. I will set apart the described productions of L2 speakers or children, and review the remaining evidence.

Davalan (1999: 101) mentions an overuse of the copula *zo* in equative sentences, leading to the Neo-Breton *Me zo Yann* /me is Yann/ 'I am Yann' instead of the traditional *Me eo Yann*. He himself mentions, however, that the former is also found in all Southern dialects (Kerne and Gwenedeg).

Kennard (2013: 311, 2014) studies the placement of pronominal and lexical subjects in negative sentences, comparing the results of traditional speakers around Kemper and those of young adults. Both young adults and the elderly produce a small amount of preverbal lexical subjects in wide focus sentences, resisting the normative pressure of Standard Breton that imposes a focus reading on a subject before negation. Hornsby (2005: 198) mentions a Neo-Breton use of the copula *zo* with a postverbal indefinite argument as in (34a), in contrast with Standard as in (34b). This pattern is in fact observed in all the central area from Treger to Kerne (Académie bretonne 1922: 291; Kervella 1970: 59; Favereau 1997: 443; Chalm 2008: C7144; Goyat 2012: 297). Some examples are also found in Gwenedeg in Herrieu (1994). The adoption of forms from the central area may, or may not, be related to the fact that the only *Diwan* high school in the country is located right in the middle of this central area.

(34)

    a. *Amañ* **zo** *trouz.*   *Neo*

    b. *Amañ* **ez eus** *trouz.*   *Correct standard*, Hornsby (2005: 198)

       here   R is noise

       'There is noise here'.

The analysis of the variation in (34) is straightforward. In Leon and Standard, the subject of the copula is an empty expletive with [- definite] specification. It triggers the *ez eus* form of the copula associated with postverbal indefinite subjects. In varieties triggering *zo* like in the central area, this empty subject, or a definite version of it, is preverbal in the structure. The argument whose existence is asserted, here *trouz* 'noise',

is not the subject but the predicate of the copula. Placing the subject before the copula invariably triggers the form *zo* in all dialects, which is not observed in (35). Before negation, it also does not trigger obligatory agreement as a subject would (36).

(35)   *Tud*   **ez**   **eus**   *amañ.*   *Leon*, Davalan (1999: 104)

        people R   is   here

        'There are people here.'

(36)   ***Trouzioù***   *n'*   *eus/**ez int***   *ket*   *bet.*   *Standard*

        noises   neg'   is / are   not   been

        'There has been no noise.'

Hornsby (2005: 198) remarks on a Neo-Breton use of the copula *zo* after *bout/bez* 'to be', which is an expletive or *verum focus* particle as in (37)a. *Bout zo...* or *Bez' zo...* followed by an indefinite in existential constructions, however, is found across many traditional Eastern varieties: Treger (Le Bozec 1933: 6), Gwenedeg (Guillevic et Le Goff 1986: 56), West Kerne (*Plozevet* (38)) and East Kerne (*Skaer/Bannaleg* [H.G. 04/2016b], *Riec* (39)).

(37)

    a.   *Boud/Bez'*   **zo**   *trouz er-maez.*   *Neo*

    b.   *Boud/Bez'*   **ez eus**   *trouz er-maez.*   *Standard*, Hornsby (2005: 198)

        to.be   is   noise in.the-outside

        'There is noise outside'.

(38)   **Bez'**   **zo**   *tud*   ([be zo 'ty:d])   *Plozevet*, Goyat (2012: 297)

        to.be   is   people

        'There are people.'

(39)   **Boût 'zo**   *goulou.*   *East Kerne (Riec)*, Bouzeg (1986: 35)

        to.be is   light

        'There is light.'

In supposedly Neo-Breton (34a) and (37a), young adults do not conform to Standard nor to a derived version of it. They also do not mimic French, which has no equivalent for the different forms *a zo* and *ez eus* of the verb 'to be'. Instead, (34a) and (37a) reflect the influence of different traditional dialects.

In the particular case of the children of the missing link generation, we saw that their contact with the generation of their grandparents is quite restricted in terms of linguistic input. If, as children, they were acquiring language by reproducing the most statistically recurrent forms produced in their presence, they should not have retained the traditional forms. In the remainder of this paper, I present three outstanding syntactic paradigms collected from two bilingual natives in their twenties. They were both raised in the Breton immersion school system *Diwan*. During the elicitation with them, I found structures that are highly deviant from Standard and cannot be derived from French influence. If anything, schooling, grammatical meta-knowledge of the Standard language or exposure to Standard media should prevent these facts from occurring. Thanks to these speakers providing me with access to the traditional speakers with which they had contact with as young children, I could trace these rare syntactic features back to an early caretaker or grandparent. I propose that this cross-generational syntactic transmission from grandparents to grandchildren, despite reduced input, suggests a natural bias in children towards secure speakers, especially in heritage language contexts where they are flooded into a massive L2 input.

3.2. Pronouns bound by verbal impersonals

The first speaker of this study is I.G., in her early twenties. She grew up in a French speaking family. Her smaller sister was also schooled in *Diwan*. Her father is bilingual in the third language of the country, Gallo, a romance language. Her mother-in-law understands Breton but seldom uses it, with clear L2 features. During elicitation, I.G. showed an unexpected structure completely exogenous to Standard Breton; an impersonal subject binding a possessive pronoun of features 2SG or 1PL, as in (40). By contrast, only the phi-less possessor *s*-pronouns *son*, *sa*, *ses* can be bound by an impersonal *on* in French (41) (see Rezac and Jouitteau 2015 for a detailed analysis in terms of phi-deficient anaphora).

(40) *Ne   ouier   ket   james **da** /**hon** chañs.*   I.G., * in Standard
       neg   know.IMP   neg   never your/our chance

'One never knows his own chance.'

(41) **On** ne connaît jamais ***notre/*votre/*leur/sa/*ta/*ma**   chance.
     One never knows   *our/*your.PL/*their/his/*your.SG/*my   chance.

The facts of I.G. are found in the Breton of her grandfather A.M., a native from Leon in Kerlouan. He is a late bilingual with French as a second language. He is now living in Lesneven. His practice of the language was never interrupted, in particular thanks to his wife who is from the same dialect. His grammar allows remarkable latitude for local anaphora to the verbal impersonal. All possessive pronouns are allowed to refer to the impersonal in (42), except for the two first persons. The 2SG *da* is rejected in (42) because the verbal impersonal *emeur* in the context imposed indirectness of the address. A.M. has *da* co-refering to a generic impersonal in (43). A.M. only resists the first person *ma* across contexts.

                                                                          [A.M.Q2]

(42) [A. visits a friend whose wife welcomes him and says the friend is on the
      balcony with a great cocktail. A says to his friend:]

      Klevet am   eus   emeur
      heard   R.1s   have   is.IMP

      en Ø / *hon* / *hoc'h* /   *o* /   *e* /   **da* /   **ma* eas; gwir eo?
      in.the / our/   your(pl)/   their/   his/   your(sg)/   my   ease, true is
      'I have heard that someone's taking it easy, is it true?'

                                                                          [A.M.Q1]

(43) *Gwelloc'h   e kaver   atav   eost   an   amezog*
      better   R find.IMP   always   harvest   the   neighbour

      eget   da   eost   da-unan.
      than   your(sg)   harvest   your(sg)-1
      'One finds better the neighbour's harvest than one's own [lit. your own]'

If there were French influence here, it would specifically and only promote the 3SG possessor anaphoric to the impersonal (*En France **on** tue **sa** femme tous les trois jours*, lit. 'In France one kills his wife every three days'). However, for A.M. in Breton, 3SG is a rare option. The 3PL possessor is more common in (44).

(44) *Pa vezer en hon/ *e / ?o eas e kaner gwelloc'h.*
when is.IMP in our / *his / ?their ease R sing.IMP better

'One sings better when at ease.'   [A.M.Q2]

The semanticopragmatic contexts for possessive pronouns to be bound by an impersonal are very limited. The grandmother, despite being from the same village as her husband, does not show those forms – she prefers realising generic verbal impersonals by a generic 2PL. I.G. and her grandfather A.M. were separated by 120 km, with linguistic contact during small vacations or family events that were also partly in French. Geographical distance also means that at school, if I.G. happened to be in contact with traditional speakers, those would likely have been from a different dialect with nothing like (42). Moreover, even A.M. himself uses competing systems, which again reinforces the scarcity of acquisition input for (40). In the grammar he most frequently uses now in his eighties, 1PL personal pronouns are the most common anaphora to verbal impersonals (45). This is also documented at least for Kerne in Cast and Locronan (Rezac and Jouitteau 2015). The 1PL form for I.G. could thus come from this source, but input for the 2SG form must have been very small.

[A.M.Q2]

(45) *Pa gemerer warnomp (hon-unan) deskiñ brezhoneg*
 when take.IMP on.1PL (our-one) to.learn Breton

'When one takes upon oneself to learn Breton.'

(46) [from a *Goldilocks* type of context]
O kousket emeur hon/*e-unan em gwele! Leon, [A.Q2]
at to.sleep is.IMP our-one in my bed

'Someone is sleeping by themselves in my bed!'

(47) *... e kemerer ur sakre sammad war hom c'hein.*
... R take.IMP a mighty burden on our back *Kerne*

... that someone/people carry a mighty burden on their backs. [L.Q1], [A-M.Q1]

The observed facts are not a default strategy available across languages. It is plausibly a direct transmission of a rare syntactic feature, across the missing-link generation and

despite the extreme scarcity of the input. The sociolinguistic hypothesis that speakers tend to positively discriminate socially valorised varieties would here incorrectly predict a preference for Standard forms, because the family does not show particular representations of social downgrading. A possible counter-effect however could come from the mother of the missing-link generation, who expresses a clear emotional attachment to the traditional language of her parents.

3.3. Idiosyncrasy of singulatives and double plurals

The two next paradigms come from elicitations with M.L., who is now in her mid-twenties. She was schooled in *Diwan* and raised in Plougerne with both parents L2 speakers of Standard and two older sisters also in *Diwan*, with whom she switched to French around the age of six. She works and is socially active in the language. She lives with an L2 speaker.

Elicitations were conducted primarily to study the system of singulatives and plurals on singulatives (Jouitteau and Rezac in press, 2015). In descriptive grammars, in most formal studies on Breton collectives and in Standard Breton, any collective noun can take a singulative marker *-enn* and a double plural *-ennoù*. However, M.L. uses this system in a very unproductive way. Among the 35 words tested with her, only two collective nouns ended up with a regular *-enn, -ennoù* derivation. She has some plural-agreeing underived lexemes that are traditional collectives, but which lack singulative plurals in *-ennoù*: *buzug* 'earthworms', *kelien* 'flies', *gwenan* 'bees' or *istr* 'oysters'. She has plurals in *-ennoù* missing an independent collective base, like *klogorennoù/*klogor* 'blisters' or *orjalennoù/*orjal* 'wires'. She also has lexemes missing the singulative singular *-enn*. She reported discomfort with the singulative form *frouezhenn* 'fruit' that is usually taken as a prototype for this derivation in Standard Breton (48). Some double plurals lack the singulative, e.g. *brujun(*enn)où* 'crumbs'. Three sessions were necessary to end up with the triplets in (49) below.

(48) *Dav   eo   debriñ 5 frouezh**enn**   pe   legumaj   bemdez.*
      Necessary   is   to.eat 5 fruits.SG   or   vegetable(s)   everyday
      'One has to eat 5 fruits or vegetables a day.' Region Bretagne website [2018/01]

(49) In search of tripartite oppositions for M.L. (Leon/Diwan)

	N	N+SG *-enn*	N+SG+PL *–où*
pear(s)	*per*	*perenn*	*perennoù*
hair	*blev*	*blevenn*	*blevennoù*
plant(s)	*plant*	*plantenn*	*plantennoù*
midge(s)	*fubu*	*fubuenn*	*fubuennoù*
star(s)	*stered*	*steredenn*	*steredennoù*
crumbs	*brujun*	*brujunenn*	*brujunoù*

Of these, some have to be set aside: *blev* 'hair(s)', because of a mix of singular and plural behaviour rather than a uniform plural alone, which we take as a sign that *blev* has, for her, occasional mass uses. The recent French borrowing *plant* 'plants' could be ambiguous with a competing borrowing, the singular count noun 'plant' (in French, *plante* 'plant' is only a singular count noun). Across the dialects, *stered* 'stars' is ambiguous between a collective or a regular plural. This leaves only *fubu-enn-où* 'midge(s)' as a functioning triplet. M.L.'s neighbour and occasional caretaker, M.L.B., a traditional speaker from Plougerne, also has an idiolectal restriction on the derivation of collectives. The idiosyncrasy is organised around the same lexical item *fubu* 'midges'. In (50), the plural agreement is forced by placing the subject before negation. It ensures that *fubu* is plural like all collective nouns. The singular *fubuenn* and its plural *fubuennoù* were independently recognised.

(50)   *Ar **fubu**   n' **int** ket glas.   (fubu**enn**,   fubu**ennoù**)   M.L.B.*
       the midges.coll neg are not blue   midges.SG midges.SG.PL   M.L.
       'The midges are not blue.'

Non-productivity of collective nouns is not particular to Plougerne. Whenever systematically tested for it, traditional speakers from most dialects demonstrate idiosyncrasy. In Mahalon/Esquibien (Kerne), J.J., 87 years old, did not identify any triplets at all. Even typical lexemes like *logod* 'mice' were missing one or another member. In Locronan (Kerne), A-M.L., 80 years old, also failed for most triplets. She gives *steredennoù* as a word she knows from songs without using it. A noun chosen in the protocol as a control count plural, *razh* 'rat' with its plural *razhed* 'rats', turns out to yield what seems to be a collective triplet. The singular *razh* is missing, and the plural

rayed [= Standard *razhed*] has been reinterpreted as a collective. Derivation gives the count singular *rayedenn* and its plural *rayedennoù* (cf. Le Roux 1927: map 545; Trépos 1957: 243; Favereau 1997: §80).[8]

(51)   In search of tripartite oppositions for A-M. (Locronan)

	N	+SG	+PL
pear(s)	*per*	*perenn*	**perennoù*
mouse, mice	*logod*	*logodenn*	**logodennoù*
star(s)	*stered*	*steredenn*	**steredennoù*
rat(s)	*raed*	*rayedenn*	*rayedennoù*

It seems indisputable that M.L.'s idiolectal restriction comes neither from Standard Breton nor from French. Influence does not plausibly come from another dialect: both M.L. and her childhood neighbour M.L.B. share the same item '*fubu-enn-où*' 'midge(s)'. In a rather sporadic contact situation, M.L. adopted both the positive forms *fubu*, *fubuenn*, *fubuennoù*, and picked up on the vast restriction of the construction. This means that she was able to enrich her derivation system by positive evidence (the forms produced by M.L.B.), but also by indirect negative evidence, that is by the forms that M.L.B. was *not* producing. Normative Standard regularly insists on those derivations, which means that M.L. has been able to interpret and probably produce forms like *frouezh* 'fruits', *frouezhenn* 'fruit' without integrating it fully into her own personal grammar. Ten years later, she recognises the correctness of these standard forms, but doubts she would use them herself.

3.4. Optional agreement with a postverbal subject

The last paradigm was discovered accidentally during the previous elicitations with this same speaker, and concerns agreement. The Breton agreement system, in traditional dialects as well as in Standard, is characterised by a 'complementarity effect' by which the features of the subject appear either as a lexical or pronominal subject or as an agreement morpheme, but not as both. When features of the subject are realised as the

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[8] The elicitation raw results can be consulted online at:
http://arbres.iker.cnrs.fr/index.php?title=%C3%89licitations#noms_collectifs

subject itself, verbal agreement is realised by a 3SG morphology irrespectively of preverbal or postverbal placement of the subject (Stump 1984; Borsley and Stephens 1989; Jouitteau and Rezac 2006 and references therein). M.L. has a standard agreement pattern, except that she has optional verbal agreement with postverbal subjects, at least with the copula *eo* 'to be' (52). Her mother, a fluent L2 speaker, has no hesitation in judging *int* ungrammatical in (52). Again, M.L.B. shows an optional pattern (53). She has otherwise a regular agreement system: preverbal subjects trigger 3SG agreement (54), as is the case in all dialects.

(52) *Niverus* **eo/int** *{ an dud /   ar razhed / ar per*   *}*^{**PL**}   M.L. [05.2014]

      numerous   is/are   the people   the rats   / the pears

      'The { people /rats /pears } are numerous.'

(53) *Niverus*   **eo/int** *an*   *dud.*   *Leon (Plougerne)*, M.L.B

      numerous   is/are   the   people

      'The people are numerous.'

(54)

    a.   *Louedañ*   *a*   *ra/ re***ont**   *buan ar c'hraonv*^{**PL**} *.*   *Leon (Plougerne)*, M.L.B

        to.rot   R   does./do.PL fast   the nuts

    b.   *Ar c'hraonv*   *a*   *goustoum(*ont)*   *louedañ*   *buan.*

        The nuts   R   uses(use.PL)   to.rot   fast

        'Nuts rot fast.'

In Plougerne, other speakers from the same generation show the same agreement pattern (55), and Elégoët's corpus (1982) contains examples from the older generation. Verbal agreement with a postverbal subject is verified in (56) and (57) in a corpus of spontaneous speech produced by a natice speaker of Plougerneau/Plougerne who was born at the beginning of the 20th century. Such an exceptional agreement pattern is also documented in Middle Welsh (Meelen 2016: 227).[9]

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[9] Timm (1995: fn18), who conducted elicitations in Treger, had mentioned the existence of an agreement pattern with a postverbal subject available for some speakers, but without any further information. Kennard (2013: 91) notes the recurring pattern of optional agreement with a postverbal subject in native young adults. She even estimates it occurs in half of the utterances with the verb 'to be'. The only example she provides is with negation (*N'ema***int** *ket an* **daou** *gi oc'h ober ar memes tra*, 'The two dogs

(55) *Breinañ*   *a*   *re**ont** ar patatez*^{PL} *e-barzh*   *ar boutot.*

to.rot   R   do   the potatoes   in   the basket

'The potatoes are rotting inside the basket.'   Y. P., [kontañ kaoz 12/2017]

(56) *O!*   *Hir*   *a-walc'h*   **oant**   *ar fournioù* ^{PL}.

Oh   long   enough   were   the ovens

'Oh, the ovens were long enough.'   *Leon (Plougerne)*, Elégoët (1982: 42)

(57) *Anvet*   **oant**   *tout ar gouverioù*^{PL} *ganeomp.*

named   were   all the channels   with.us

'We knew the names of all the channels (passages for the boat).'

                                 Leon (Plougerne), Elégoët (1982: 39)

In this paradigm, the influence from traditional varieties could have come from different traditional speakers in Plougerne, and the input may have been more important than in the previous cases. Let us now turn to the linguistic pressure of Standard Breton or French which would both resist a richer agreement with a postverbal subject. Standard Breton requires 3SG morphology in (52) to (57) because the subject is expressed. In colloquial or standard French, postverbal subjects coincide with impoverished agreement (58), if any ((59a)–(60a) is typical of colloquial French). Moreover, the verb agrees in person with a preverbal subject, and not with a postverbal one (61) (Lahousse 2003). The hypothesis of French influence in (52) to (57) would thus make incorrect predictions.

(58) *Il*   **(est**/**sont)**   *venu*   *trois*   *personnes*.

it   is / * are   come   three   people

'Three people came.'

(59)a. *C'est*   *des*   *linguistes*   b.   *Ce*   *sont*   *des*   *linguistes.*

    it is   indef.   linguists   it   are   indef.   linguists

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are not doing the same thing' vs. *N'emañ ket ar balafenned o nijal!* 'The butterflies were not flying.'). The source is her speaker E, who has been schooled in *Divyezh*, but whose location is not disclosed. The fact that this speaker sometimes resists mutating an initial /d/ could be a dialectal clue pointing towards Treger.

'They are linguists.'

(60)a. *C'est   mes   parents*   b.   *Ce   sont   mes   parents.*
it is   my   parents   it   are   my   parents
'They are my parents.'

(61)   *L'aventure   que   (*Marie et toi)   vivez*
the adventure that   Mary and you   live.2PL
*(Marie et toi)   fait   scandale.
Mary and you   does   scandal
'The adventure that Mary and you live is scandalous.'

I conclude that optional agreement with a postverbal subject in Plougerne is preserved in M.L.'s grammar despite the opposite influence of her linguistic varieties in Breton and French.

If children had only a statistical way to go with linguistic input, they would not show these facts. If they were to be influenced more easily by socially valorised dialects, they would show preference for Standard forms that they hear at school or in the media. If they were driven only by emotional preference, they would likely show the standard forms that their parents from the missing link generation read to them at night. Transmission of the abovementioned syntactic features seems only possible if children positively discriminate in favour of the rare input they have from traditional natives at ease in the language, showing a children's preference for native linguistic input.

4. Conclusion

Unsurprisingly, young speakers of the twentieth century who received education in Breton show more proficiency than their grandparents in highly diglossic environments like mathematics or giving the day. In families with no interruption of transmission and, as far as we could see here, native speakers raised in Breton without interruption of practice show that schooling in the Standard variety does not impact tremendously on the syntactic quality of transmission. It has also been demonstrated that the transmission of traditional Breton features can arise even in children of the missing link generation, even for those with low exposure to the elderly. Scarce input from traditional natives,

even if statistically insignificant, and even if associated with lower social status, has been shown to be sufficient for at least partial syntactic transmission, despite school Standard prescriptive pressure, media Standard Breton and French influence, in a clearly diglossic context favouring the latter. I have proposed that this effect derives from positive discrimination towards the input of traditional native speakers. This conclusion strongly supports programmes of contact between schooled children and the elderly, because children take advantage of even scarce input from traditional natives and secure speakers.

This study is not conclusive as to the existence or non-existence of a syntactically definable new variety of Breton spoken by young adults. The studied non-standard features in young adults all seem to derive from the influence of existing traditional dialects. From the syntactic point of view, and as far as the elicitation material examined here is concerned, it is not the case that new rules of grammar emerge, or that some newly grammaticalised items initialise a generational evolution of the language. A question remains for further research: do children from the missing link generation share with traditional native speakers of their age a variety of language that can be defined in syntactic terms?

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