

For several decades, language revitalisation efforts have sought to counter a gap in the transmission of Breton, and to bring the language to younger generations. Today, the number of younger Breton speakers is growing, and various claims have been made about the variety of the language they speak, often termed 'Neo-Breton'. It is said to differ from the Breton of older 'traditional' speakers in terms of its lexis (highly Neo-Celtic) and grammar (influenced by French). My research explores the light that morphophonology can shed on the (potential) differences between 'Neo-' and 'traditional' Breton. This talk focuses on three claims that have been made about Neo-Breton; namely that younger speakers transfer French stress patterns into their Breton, that they are influenced by gender in French, and that they omit or are confused about mutation patterns.

My findings show that, contrary to claims in the literature, there is no broad transfer of French features into Breton, and that patterns of variation are much more complex than might be supposed. Some younger speakers do use different stress patterns from older speakers, but this appears to be a reanalysis of Breton stress, and is not identical to stress in French. Equally, while teenaged speakers may struggle with grammatical gender and mutation in Breton, most younger adult speakers maintain the expected Breton patterns. It is clear that 'Neo-Breton' is a label applied to a wide range of speakers with different linguistic backgrounds, and which encompasses a great deal of variation. Continued exposure to Breton appears to be key for younger speakers to reach adult proficiency, and for them to continue to use the language in adulthood.