

Language attitudes and perceptions of identity in Brittany

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Introduction

Breton is an indigenous Celtic language spoken mainly in the west of Brittany, the peninsula of westernmost France lying between the English Channel and the Bay of Biscay. Traditionally it is the language of a large part of Brittany, but over the centuries the linguistic border has gradually moved to the west, and it is now spoken in the area known as *Basse-Bretagne* (*Breizh Izel* in Breton, Lower Brittany), which comprises all of *Finistère* and the western halves of the *Côtes-d'Armor* and *Morbihan départements*. The division between *Basse* and *Haute Bretagne* (BB and HB respectively) is confirmed by a number of sources including Falc'hun (1963), Fleuriot (1980, 1982), and Abalain (1989). Although the areas of *Basse* and *Haute Bretagne* have never had any administrative status, the division represents the linguistic dichotomy (Humphreys 1992: 621). Broudic (1995) gives an account of the changing limits of the frontier between the two regions. According to McDonald (1989), Breton has been little spoken, if ever at all, in most parts of HB, where the language is therefore taught for its symbolic value as 'the language of Brittany' rather than for purposes of communication. Indeed, recent research has shown that people in HB are very much aware of Breton and link it with Breton identity even if they have no immediate experience of it themselves. (Le Coadic 1998: 213).

The language spoken by probably all inhabitants of Brittany today, and which has progressively displaced Breton, is of course French, and the relationship between Breton and French constitutes one of the central themes of this study. But this 'French' varies considerably, especially according to the extent to which the speaker uses regional features, and we shall consider a Breton-accented French (from rural *Finistère*) and a variety of French unmarked by regional features. The latter may be defined as the pronunciation characteristic of well-educated and higher status speakers throughout modern France, as codified in dictionaries like the *Petit Robert*,

and as taught to foreign learners of French. For a discussion of variation within educated French cf. Walter and Martinet (1988). According to Carton et al. (1983: 77-78), this variety is characterized by specific linguistic features, for example, the speaker uses /a/ in place of /ã/ and /ɑ̃/, and /ɛ̃/ instead of /ɛ/, and also by particular prosodic patterns. This study seeks to explore the extent to which these three varieties are symbols of in-group loyalty and solidarity for young people in Brittany today.

Although a great deal of research into language attitudes and identity has been carried out in a variety of locations, very little empirical work has addressed the nature of evaluative reactions towards accented speakers in France (an exception being Paltridge and Giles's 1984 examination of attitudes towards four different regional accents of French), and this in spite of the fact that there has been some debate about the relative prestige of French accents (Martinet 1945, Capelle 1968) and a substantial amount of research examining attitudes to the French language outside France (see Bourhis 1982 for a survey of language attitudes in different Franco-phone countries). One of the aims of this study is to help bridge this gap in the research, at least with regard to one region of France.

Attitudes towards language varieties in Brittany and questions of identity and the future of the language were investigated in two phases, each consisting of two parts. Phase 1 took the form of a structured questionnaire and a matched guise test (hereafter MGT), and produced data that was subsequently analysed quantitatively. Phase 2 was more interpretative, using interviews and pair discussions, and producing data analysed qualitatively. The study sought to combine several methods to gain different kinds of insights so that the strengths of one approach would compensate the weaknesses of another.

Theoretical issues

Researchers in language attitudes have traditionally used the following:

- the analysis of the *societal treatment* of language varieties (i.e. demographic and census analysis and analyses of government and educational language policies: Agheysi and Fishman 1970)

- *direct assessment* with interviews or questionnaires
- techniques of indirect assessment which involve experiments and tests to investigate how listeners respond to speakers of different varieties (in the social psychological tradition) or users of particular variables (in the variationist tradition). The 'matched-guise technique' (MGT) is the 'core method' (Coupland and Jaworski 1997: 268) used in the social psychological tradition.

In addition to these methods, the use of an approach using discourse to collect and analyse language attitudes, advocated by Giles and Coupland (1991), is explored here in order to further our understanding of the processes involved in their construction and expression.

Closely connected to language attitudes is the relationship between language and identity, and this is examined directly in the questionnaire, indirectly through the MGT, and investigated further in the discursive data. The MGT is designed to reveal more about listeners' perceptions of speakers than can be found through direct attitude questionnaires and has undoubtedly been the most widespread technique used to elicit evaluative reactions to various speech styles, accents, dialects, and languages since its inception by Lambert et al. in 1960. The main advantage of this technique is that in experiments concerned with the perception of distinct language varieties, such as dialects, it eliminates most of the effect of voice quality differences between speakers as two or more of the 'voices' are, in fact, produced by one speaker using realistic guises of different languages or speech characteristics. One criticism which has been levelled against the MGT and which is addressed by the pair discussions is the possibility that the evaluative biases often found against certain varieties in these studies could be largely due to the fact that the listener-judges are provided with a pre-determined set of evaluative descriptors (Lee 1971). Although the pair-discussion informants were provided with the same evaluative set as that given to the listener-judges in the MGT, they were encouraged primarily to discuss spontaneously their impressions of each guise. The specific question raised by the discursive data is whether the particular language variety is the essential marker of Breton identity, or whether other non-linguistic factors can also serve as markers of identity for the informants. Referring notably to the case of the

Irish, Edwards (1985) maintains that a distinctive mother tongue is not a crucial ingredient of a national or regional identity, a finding which takes account of the fact that distinctively Irish ways of speaking English are more and more acceptable within Ireland and to the outside world (cf. Edwards 1977).

Fieldwork

All non-bilingual primary and secondary schools in the state sector in Brittany were invited to participate in the study. At this stage it was decided to concentrate on two of the four *départements* of Brittany: Finistère (BB) and Ille-et-Vilaine (HB), in order to compare the rural and traditionally Breton-speaking *département* of Finistère, with the more urban and traditionally non-Breton-speaking *département* of Ille-et-Vilaine. The selection procedure was intended to highlight the cultural distinctiveness of HB and BB and consequently those informants who were not born in the respective regions were excluded from the study. Although there is obviously a certain amount of cultural diversity *within* the two regions, it was felt that the global comparison made *between* them was valid in view of the choice of schools in rural villages in Finistère and schools in the urban centre of Rennes which served to emphasize the (stereo)typical western/eastern dichotomy. Breton classes were optional in all participating establishments and were attended by a minority of the subjects. This was considered to reflect the typical situation in schools in Finistère. As there were only two native speakers of Breton in the entire sample, all other Breton speakers in both regions would have learnt Breton at school and therefore formed a homogeneous group across the regions. The research instruments used to examine attitudes and identity will now be examined.

The questionnaire used in Phase 1 of the study (see Appendix 1), consisted of two main sections; the first concerned with language use, attitudes, and identity, and the second with the relationship between language and identity and the future of Breton, where the respondents were required to indicate the extent of their agreement with ten statements accompanied by a series of rating scales (the French version of the Likert Scale).

The MGT, also used in Phase 1, *indirectly* assesses attitudes through the elicitation of listeners' subjective reactions to different

speech varieties. The choice of evaluative traits adopted in the current MGT was based primarily on information provided by French informants in the pilot study and also on research carried out by Le Coadic (1998) which elicited Breton stereotypes from children of a similar age to the informants in the present study. The set of traits given in the evaluation sheet in Appendix 2 was selected to reflect a range of non-overlapping characteristics, covering both 'solidarity' and 'status' dimensions. The data was coded and analysed by assigning a number from 1 to 5 to each rating.

The following speakers were chosen to provide the guises for the MGT because as well as being bilingual in Breton and French, they were also bi-accented in French i.e., they could naturally produce unmarked and Breton-accented French in ways which were perceived by speakers from HB and BB who participated in the pilot study to be entirely unexceptional and spontaneous. *Speaker A* is female, 55 years of age, and grew up in a small town near Lannion, in the Côtes d'Armor. Her first language was Breton (she has a Trégor accent) and she learnt French at school. *Speaker B* is female, 35 years of age, and is from Plouguerneau in Finistère. During her childhood, her parents always spoke Breton to each other and French to her. This meant that she was able to understand spoken Breton but that she could not speak it herself, and she learned to speak Breton at school. *Speaker C* is female, 40 years of age, and she grew up in Landivisiau in Finistère. Her first language was French, although like *Speaker B* her parents always spoke Breton to each other, which meant that she could understand Breton but also learned to speak it at school.

It was considered desirable before analysing the MGT data to comment briefly on those features of stress and intonation in Breton-accented French and Breton which differ from unmarked French and which might therefore influence attitudes (the text is given in Appendix 3).

Turning firstly to the stress system in Breton-accented French, in words of more than one syllable the main stress falls on the penultimate syllable, in contrast with unmarked French where it tends to fall on the last syllable: e.g. (from the MGT recordings)

(1) j'ai co:mmencé le :latin.

The aspect of the sound system which most differentiates unmarked and Breton-accented French, however, is intonation. The intonation

of Breton-accented French is influenced by that of the Breton language, with a typical rise on the penultimate syllable of a group (cf. Carton 1983: 33-34), whereas that for the unmarked extract ends on a fall. This characteristic holds for all varieties of Breton.

Phase 2 of the study consists of the systematic analysis of discursive data, and the principal aim of this approach is to obtain further insights on attitudes and perceived identity to supplement the questionnaire and MGT. Informants for the questionnaire and matched guise sections of the study came from both parts of Brittany. Given that qualitative analysis is considerably more time-consuming (the 62 interviews and 31 pair discussions produced 30 hours of recordings) and that smaller numbers are necessarily involved, it was considered desirable for this phase to use a sub-population of the original set to allow more detailed comparisons to be made across the quantitative and qualitative findings, rather than to seek to match all of the matched guise and questionnaire informants in both regions. The BB group were chosen because the results from the questionnaire part of the study suggested that these informants had more direct *experience* of the Breton language and were more likely to have definite attitudes (both positive and negative) on the matters to be discussed than the informants from HB.

The stimulus material consisted of a shortened version of the written questionnaire and the matched guise recordings used for the first stage of the fieldwork the previous year. The discursive data would then illuminate the data elicited from the BB informants from the original written questionnaire and MGT. The pair-discussion data was subsequently used to construct a 'profile' of each guise in terms of age, place of origin, and accent, in addition to those status and solidarity traits which were identified during the coding process as the most frequently used by the informants (in this context coding involves dividing the data into relevant themes). The presentation of the 'agreed profiles' in tabular form serves to highlight the contrasts of the two guises of the same individual, an approach which, as far as I am aware, constitutes an innovation in language attitudes research. It is my contention that this kind of natural data provides insights into the content of attitudes and perceptions of identity, which cannot be revealed through quantitative work alone.

A pilot study is generally considered essential in work of this kind, since it may reveal inadequacies in the procedure that must be corrected. The question 'you are still a true Breton if you speak Gallo without necessarily speaking Breton' (Gallo is the Romance

dialect of eastern Brittany) was excluded from the first draft of the questionnaire after its piloting amongst informants from BB and HB revealed that none of the respondents had a clear idea of what Gallo was. The relationship between Breton and varieties of French and identity therefore became the main focus. During the MGT pilot study the Breton-accented variety was identified as a rural Breton accent by informants from both regions. It was essential to establish the recognition of this regional accent amongst the informants in Rennes in view of recent research which suggests that the pronunciation of the urban varieties of French is becoming increasingly standardized or 'levelled' (Armstrong and Boughton 1999). One of the main objectives of the MGT is, after all, to see how people use the speech of others as a clue to non-linguistic information about them such as their social background and personality traits.

The questionnaire was distributed by teachers to their pupils in the participating institutions (470 questionnaires were returned) and the MGT was administered by myself to 258 listener-judges in the same schools. The discourse phase was carried out by myself in the BB schools a year later.

The study differentiates between informants on the basis of region of origin (BB and HB), gender, and age (12 years and under, 13-14, 15-16, and 17 and over). The reason for comparing attitudes in BB and HB is twofold: firstly to see whether informants from both regions perceive Breton speakers as possessing a stronger Breton identity than non-Breton speakers and secondly to ascertain whether there are significant differences in the attitudes towards Breton in the two areas, bearing in mind that it has symbolic importance in both.

Results – Phase 1

The questionnaire

We will look firstly at the most pertinent results on language use in Section 1 of the questionnaire and then look more closely at attitudes towards the three language varieties and the relationship between these accents and identity.

The results show that the majority of respondents had no understanding of Breton (55%), and never spoke (65%), read (72%), or wrote (78%) the language. However, a substantial minority (45%)

claimed that they understood Breton to a certain extent, though this fell to 35% for those claiming to speak the language. Other studies of languages or dialects in decline have also shown that levels of active use tend to fall earlier than comprehension (Hadjadj 1983). Further examination of the composition of the data confirmed this tendency.

The responses to the question *Dans quelle mesure vous sentez-vous breton(ne)?* indicated that the majority of these informants considered themselves to be either more French than Breton (30%), or to be completely French and not at all Breton (31%), with 18% seeing themselves as either more Breton than French or completely Breton. Cross-tabulation of the data, and subsequent verification by chi-square tests, showed that use of the language, whether passive or active, was strongly correlated with the informant's sense of identity. However, further probing via the interview data revealed that those BB informants who considered themselves to be Breton maintained that this was not necessarily related to whether or not they were able to *speak* the language. In many cases they cited living in Brittany and having parents from Brittany as more important criteria for Breton identity. These findings suggest that even though the informants do not consider speaking the language to be a prerequisite for Breton identity, the reality of the situation is that those who perceive themselves to be Breton tend to have a higher level of ability in the language, and typically come from BB. Within the context of minority languages, Edwards (1985) makes a distinction between what he calls the *communicative* and *symbolic* functions of a language: 'the basic distinction here is between language in its ordinarily understood sense as a tool of communication, and language as an emblem of groupness, a symbol, a rallying point' (Edwards 1985: 17). Responses to the question on language and identity, and the additional evidence provided by the interview data, suggest that although the informants perceive Breton in the context of the second function, the first function may also have an effect, albeit at the subconscious level.

In the second section of the questionnaire, the informants were presented with a series of statements and asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed: the rating system was quantified on the following scale:

Table 1: Questionnaire rating scale

Tout à fait d'accord	1
Plutôt d'accord	2
Indifférent	3
Plutôt pas d'accord	4
Pas du tout d'accord	5

The reactions to the statements to be examined here address two main issues: the relationship between language and identity and young people's perceptions of different accents.

The preliminary analysis of the different responses to each statement consists of the percentage frequencies, followed by an examination of the extent to which the responses to the statements are correlated. Factor analysis is then employed to determine the inherent dimensionality of the data set and the subsequent identification of its underlying dimensions which are used in the final stage of the analysis. This consists of an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), which examines the relationships between these dimensions and the independent variables of region, age, and sex.

High correlations were found between these four statements which formed the *Breton identity* factor in the overall analysis. (See Table 2 below.) The other identified factor was labelled *Future of the language*. The items loading on the *Breton identity* factor are all concerned with young people's perceptions of the relationship between language and identity. There was no statistically significant difference between the responses of the two regional groups, with the only significant effect being the main effect of age, with no interactive effects detected. This suggests that the regional groups are homogeneous in their perception of the relationship between language and identity. Further interpretation of the main age effect using post hoc tests of least significant difference identified one statistically significant difference between the 12 and under and 15-16 age groups, with the 15-16 year olds displaying a stronger sense of Breton identity. This result is clearly related to that obtained for the question on perceived Breton and French identity in the first section of the questionnaire: for that question, 64% of those aged 12 and under considered themselves to be more French than Breton compared with 41% of the 15-16 year olds.

Table 2: Percentage responses of young people's perceptions of the relationship between language and identity in Brittany

No.	Statements	Responses to statements (%)*				
		1	2	3	4	5
(1)	Pour être un(e) vrai Breton(ne) il est nécessaire de parler breton.	23	20	8	22	27
(2)	On est toujours un(e) vrai Breton(ne) si on parle français avec un accent breton sans pour autant parler breton.	32	29	17	8	14
(3)	On est toujours un(e) vrai Breton(ne) si on utilise quelques mots ou quelques expressions bretons, sans pour autant parler la langue.	25	29	16	17	13
(4)	Le breton est une langue réservée aux personnes âgées.	9	8	8	13	62
* see Table 1 for scales						

The questionnaire data suggests that the use of Breton as a component of Breton identity is partly communicative and partly symbolic. This corresponds to the notion of an 'associated' language, and demonstrates a continuing attachment, whether conscious or subconscious, to a language no longer widely spoken as a native language, but whose communicative revival is constantly being promoted with ever-increasing opportunities for expansion of one's personal command of the language.

The matched guise study

Factor analysis has frequently been used to rationalize the evaluation items in matched guise tests. Factor analyses of responses to the MGT in this study indicated that the ratings given by the listener judges for each of the speaker traits were reflections of a smaller number of judgement dimensions, namely the two broad factors of social status and group solidarity as reported by previous

researchers including Ryan (1979) and Ryan and Giles (1982). Factor scores were calculated for each factor which constituted the two dependent measures in a four-way ANOVA (age \times sex \times language variety \times region), designed to test the statistical significance of the differences among the mean scores of these groups. Post hoc tests were applied to locate significant effects more precisely.

Age groupings

Among the 13-14 year olds, Breton-accented French was evaluated more favourably than the other two varieties for the status traits ($p < 0.001$). This finding is not entirely consistent with expectations in view of the fact that the traditionally favourable ratings of (social) status are closely linked to the standardness of the language variety used by the speaker (cf. Bradac 1990). However, as children move from the *école primaire* to the *collège* between the ages of 12 and 13, they are subjected to many new influences and pressures, one of the strongest being that of their own peer group. Therefore the favourable evaluation of Breton-accented French by the 13-14 year olds for the status traits may be accounted for by their own assimilation of non-standard speech forms during this period, when they are typically undergoing a re-evaluation and reassessment of their own identities. This process is inextricably bound up with that of peer group membership and the positive reinforcement of non-standard speech forms.

Regional groups

Analysis of the results for the two regions predictably revealed major differences in the evaluation of the language varieties. In BB the 12-and-under age group rated unmarked French more favourably than the two other varieties for the status traits ($p < 0.001$) whereas the same age group in HB assigned the most positive rating to Breton, and the least favourable to unmarked French. This difference can be accounted for by differing regional perceptions of the Breton language, with, for the most part, the BB group associating it with a typically rural lifestyle, and therefore not rating it highly for status, and the informants from HB associating knowledge of it with the more statusful qualities of intelligence and being well-educated. The youngest informants from HB were more

impressed by the ability to speak Breton than by the ability to use an unmarked accent.

Male and female groups

There were no statistically significant interactive effects amongst the female informants ($n = 256$), whereas there were several for the males ($n = 213$), and these were all for the solidarity traits. The BB males ($n = 100$) were found to have more favourable attitudes towards Breton-accented French than the males from HB ($n = 113$) ($p < 0.001$). This result can be accounted for by the *familiarity effect*, a concept developed by Giles (1970) in his study of the perception of different British accents. More positive assessments are typically made by listener-judges living within or close to the communities which use this particular variety of Breton-accented French, who associate it with the warm and friendly characteristics typical of the solidarity dimension.

The absence of significant differences between the evaluations of the female regional groups and particularly for the Breton-accented French variety, may be explained by the tendency for female speakers in general to react less favourably to non-standard language varieties than to more prestigious forms of language, with the regional division having much less of an effect than it does for male speakers. The data from many language use studies suggests that women tend consistently to achieve scores closer to the overt prestige norm of the standard than to the non-standard variety (cf. Giles 1970, Milroy and Milroy 1978), and findings from the current study suggest that this tendency is also reflected in the way in which females evaluate language.

Results – Phase 2

Interviews

Selective transcriptions were made of the BB interviews from audiotapes, and the transcribed data was thematically coded. The data was analysed by searching for patterns in the data, and analysing the functions and consequences of the ideas expressed, an approach advocated by Potter and Wetherall (1987). The issues highlighted by the speakers which were of most relevance to the

quantitative data were analysed. The role of language and accent in marking identity in speech was identified as highly significant. The link found in the questionnaire data between the reactions to the statements concerning the relationship between language and identity is corroborated in the interviews with the BB informants where responses to the question *pour être un(e) vrai Breton(ne) est-ce qu'il est nécessaire de parler breton* make frequent reference to a Breton accent, preempting the content of the subsequent question concerning accent and identity. This is illustrated in this observation of a 17 year old girl that *'je crois que être un vrai Breton c'est bien connaître sa région ben éventuellement avoir un accent pareil et non, il faut pas nécessairement connaître le breton'*. The majority of informants from both regions shared this view, and further questioning revealed that a love of Brittany and its culture were considered to be important factors in the determination of Breton identity: *'pour être breton il faut aimer la Bretagne et puis la culture aussi, et il faut se sentir breton'* (15 year old girl).

The minority of interviewees who agreed that speaking Breton was an important aspect of Breton identity all employed the adjective *vrai* to qualify their answers, as in the response of the following 13 year old girl:

il faut savoir parler breton, et puis vivre comme un vrai Breton, avoir une ferme, du bétail, parce que les vrais Bretons c'est plutôt des gens comme ça, et puis ils font toujours les crêpes à la maison. Ce sont plutôt les personnes âgées, et le dimanche ils ont la coiffe bretonne.

The response of this informant indicates that there is a clear difference between the interpretations of *vrai* by the informants with the majority considering it in terms of a general Breton identity where language is not a necessary dimension of Bretonness, and the minority evoking a genuine *bretonnant* epitomizing everything stereotypically Breton.

Answers to the question *est-ce qu'on est toujours un(e) vrai Breton(ne) si on parle français avec un accent breton sans parler la langue?* display an overwhelming consensus amongst the BB informants that this Breton accent from Finistère is a strong marker of Breton identity — *'oui, l'accent marque des racines'* (18 year old male) — and many are proud of the fact that their Breton identity is

detectable from their accent: '*ah oui, on me dit tout de suite "tu es breton toi", et j'en suis fière*' (13 year old girl).

The responses of the majority of informants indicated that competence in Breton was not conceived of as a necessary component of Breton identity, and that origin and residence were deemed to be the key determiners of identity. The theme of language and identity is continued in the results of the pair discussion data with an examination of the *perceived identity* of speakers of Breton-accented French, unmarked French, and Breton.

Pair discussions

The pair discussions provide a broader picture of the guises used in the MGT according to the perceptions of the informants from BB, unconstrained by the closed response format of the semantic differential scales in the MGT, and giving the informants the freedom to respond in their own terms. The discourse produced by the informants in response to these recordings has been examined for references to the speaker's perceived age, geographical and/or sociocultural origin, and accent or voice quality, characteristics which were produced without prompting, suggesting that listeners spontaneously attempt to locate speakers in terms of such social parameters.

In virtually all cases the first thing which informants attempted to do was to attribute an age grouping to the particular speaker. This may be explained by the fact that society has stereotypical beliefs and expectations about the attitudes and behaviours associated with age categories, including stereotypical impressions of the language used by different age groups. The significance of age is doubly pertinent as both Breton and Breton-accented French are often associated with older speakers, especially in traditionally Celtophone areas. After age group, the discussion in many cases focused on the relationship between the speaker's geographical and sociocultural origin and his or her accent, presumably the result of the strong association between them in the minds of the informants. The final part of the dialogue typically centred on the personality traits which were provided for informants in the form of a list to encourage them to comment on those characteristics used in the earlier MGT study. In many cases, however, the listener-judges merely listed the traits which they considered to be associated with a particular speaker,

providing very little additional information. This information will appear in the profiles of the guises.

Perceived speaker ages

There were references to age by all 31 pairs of informants for the Breton-accented French guises, including estimations of the speakers' age with reference to people known personally to the informants, and especially grandparents: *'pour l'âge, ben entre mon père et ma grand-mère'* (15 year old boy on Speaker C). This finding can be attributed to the perception that the speakers of Breton-accented French were from the rural parts of Brittany and were typically associated with a farming background which, for the informants, was synonymous with advancing years.

Turning now to the two Breton guises, it was found that the younger informants typically made comments suggesting that the two Breton speakers were old: *'elle a l'air assez âgée ... vers soixante-dix ans'* (13 year old girl on Speaker B), and the older informants perceived both speakers to be young: *'c'est une jeune femme'* (15 year old girl on Speaker A, aged 55). In reality the speakers were aged 35 and 55. These rather variable perceptions reflect the MGT data which indicated that some of the informants from BB assumed that the speaker had learned Breton as a second language, rather than acquired it as a native. This supposition was manifested in the unexpectedly high scoring of the Breton guises for the status traits. There is clearly a distinct division between those who perceive the speakers of Breton to be *néo-bretonnants*, a new generation of native speakers who have learnt Breton as a second language via the education system or evening classes (Jones 1995: 428), distinct from the traditional speakers of the language, and those who consider them to be native speakers from stereotypically rural communities. It has been well documented (cf. Kuter 1989) that these are two distinct speech communities which have only marginal contact.

Responses to the unmarked French guises indicates that they were both perceived to be young by the informants: *'une femme près de la trentaine à peu près, et très bourgeoise'* (14 year old girls on Speaker C, aged 40).

Perceived speaker origin

Closely related to these different perceptions of the Breton speakers is their geographical/sociocultural origin. Turning firstly to Breton-accented French, the dialogue indicates the strength of the conviction amongst the informants that both Breton-accented French speakers originated from rural areas of Brittany: '*c'est vraiment une voix bretonne et paysanne ... on voit bien qu'elle est de la Bretagne, elle vit dans la campagne*' (14 year old girls on speaker A). The comments reveal many of the negative stereotypes associated with a rural lifestyle, thereby providing an explanation for the unfavourable reaction to this variety in the MGT.

It is interesting that reference was also made to the *Pays Bigouden* in the discourse with respect to Breton-accented French, since this district, in southern *Finistère*, is the home of the most original traditional Breton costumes, including the tall *Bigouden* head-dress, pictures of which are often used in publicity for the region: '*c'est une paysanne ... on dirait Pays Bigouden avec son accent breton*' (15 year old boys on speaker C).

There was also a tendency amongst the listener-judges to associate the language variety with the way in which their grandparents speak: '*ben, mes grands-parents, c'est exactement ça ... moi, c'est mes voisins, ils ont une ferme et puis des vaches, mais c'est quand même un accent typique de la campagne, c'est la campagne profonde, chez les sauvages*' (17 year old boys on Speaker C).

Many of these comments suggest that although a large number of the informants live in these rural areas, they do not appear to associate this accent with young people. This can be attributed to the marked linguistic differences between the Breton-accented French of the informants and that of the recorded speakers. It is evident from the recordings of the informants in discussion that their Breton-accented French does not exhibit such a marked rise in intonation on the penultimate syllable of the sense group and that the stress falling on the penultimate syllable is less marked than for the guise voices. This suggests that it is these particular features of Breton-accented French which are particularly associated with the characteristics highlighted by the informants.

The finding in the MGT data that the younger BB listener-judges think speakers of the Breton guises originate from rural areas is corroborated in the pair-discussions. Typical comments from the 14-and-under age range include '*elle vient de la campagne, elle est*

plouc', and again show the tendency of the listener-judges to associate knowledge of Breton with living in the countryside, with one 14 year old girl suggesting that speaker A may be a farmer: '*elle vient plutôt de la campagne, elle est peut-être fermière*'. In contrast to Breton, the reaction to unmarked French concerning perceived origins of speakers was unequivocal — the speakers were seen to be city dwellers by all listener-judges.

References to the accents of the guise speakers

In many instances the listener-judges made direct reference to specific accents, and tended to associate this with a particular identity. The reactions of the listener-judges to Breton-accented French were found to have a common theme, namely that all participants consider the speakers of this variety to have '*l'accent du breton de la campagne*', as expressed by one 13 year old female.

In the pair discussions concerning the Breton guises there appear to be two separate considerations: firstly the younger listener-judges (12-and-under and 13-14) believe that as Breton is being spoken, the speakers must be from rural areas — '*elle est paysanne parce qu'elle parle breton*' (13 year old boy) — whereas the older informants (15-16 and 17+) associate Breton speakers with intelligence and a good education: '*elle a l'air instruite, intelligente parce qu'elle parle breton, c'est pas facile de parler breton*' (17 year old female to Speaker A). This important age division seems to be the result of contrasting experiences of these age groups with Breton, with the younger informants considering Breton in terms of their older relatives from rural areas, and the older informants associating it with formal instruction in the language, which a number of them have already undertaken. These two positions reflect the results found in the MGT data.

Unlike the age difference in the reactions elicited in response to the Breton guises, the reaction to the unmarked French variety was consistent. There were noticeably fewer references to accent in the case of this variety, because the listener-judges typically considered the speakers to have either no accent — '*elle vient de la ville parce qu'elle n'a pas d'accent breton*' (13 year old boys on Speaker B) — or one with which the listener-judges were not overly familiar — '*c'est pas notre accent à nous*' (13 year old girls on Speaker C) — or an accent which they associated with an urban setting: '*elle a un petit accent de la ville*' (13 year old girls on Speaker B). It is also

interesting to see that each speaker of this variety is referred to as *bourgeoise*, an observation which appears to be directly linked with the way in which their speech is articulated: '*c'est une femme très bourgeoise ... oui, ça se voit parce qu'elle parle lentement et elle articule bien*' (14 year old girls on Speaker C).

These comments provide further confirmation of the well-attested finding in language attitude studies that standard varieties typically evoke favourable reactions towards status traits.

Profiles of each guise.

Profiles of all guises are presented in Tables 3-5, which will give typical reactions to each of them in order to highlight patterns running through the discourse data. In these tables, when the reactions of the listener-judges in the 12-and-under and 13-14 year age groups are differentiated from those of the 15-16 and 17+ age groups, the former are given within each table cell in line a, and the latter in line b.

Table 3 shows that Speaker A has an agreed profile for the Breton-accented French guise: she is a fairly old person who lives in a rural area, and although likeable, is uneducated and unintelligent. For the Breton guise, however, there is a certain amount of disagreement, which has been illustrated in the table by indicating the two opposing perceptions and attitudes of the different groups of BB informants. However, it is important to stress again that it is not being claimed that this data is technically representative of any larger population, as this is not among the normal requisites of qualitative research, with its use of characteristically small numbers of informants. Overall, however, the results suggest that the younger BB informants tend to associate this guise with someone who lives in a rural area, who has the stereotypical characteristics of a country person, with the assumption that Breton is their native language. The older informants gravitate towards the opposing view that the speaker of this guise comes from an urban area, is well-educated, and has learned Breton as a second language.

One of the reasons for constructing the profiles was to ascertain whether the opposing views of the Breton guises were linked to factors other than a differing perception of the particular language variety. For example, it is possible that the different personality traits attributed to Speaker A in her Breton guise may have been the result of these particular listener-judges perceiving her as young,

and not just because she was speaking Breton. However, the fact that the perceptions of the younger informants are consistent with those of the older ones for the two other varieties suggests that the Breton guises are being evaluated according to the perceived sociolinguistic context rather than any other speaker characteristics discerned by the informants.

Table 3: Profile of perceived identity and personality of Speaker A (aged 55)

Guisse:	Breton-accented French	Breton
perceived age	<i>assez vieille, assez âgée</i>	a. <u>old</u> : <i>une personne âgée, une soixantaine à peu près</i> b. <u>young</u> : <i>jeune beaucoup plus jeune</i>
perceived origin	<i>une paysanne de la Bretagne</i> <i>elle vit dans la campagne</i>	a. <u>rural</u> : <i>de la campagne, peut-être fermière</i> b. <u>urban</u> : <i>plutôt de la ville</i>
linguistic references	<i>un accent de la campagne</i> <i>un accent plouc</i>	a. <i>comme elle parle breton, à mon avis elle vient de la campagne</i> b. <i>elle a l'air instruite, intelligente parce qu'elle parle breton, c'est pas facile de parler breton</i>
status	<i>plouc, bête, peu instruite</i>	a. <i>elle est plouc, elle parle breton, et elle vient de la campagne</i> b. <i>intelligente</i>
solidarity	<i>plutôt sympathique</i>	<u>favourable attitudes</u> (vast majority of informants): <i>je la vois chaleureuse</i> <u>unfavourable attitudes</u> (very small minority): <i>elle est vraiment pas accueillante du tout</i>

Table 4: Profile of perceived identity and personality of Speaker B (aged 35)

Guisse:	Breton-accented French	Breton
perceived age	a. <u>old</u> : <i>personne âgée, une soixantaine d'années</i> b. <u>young</u> : <i>assez jeune</i>	<i>plutôt jeune, à peu près vingt-cinq ans</i>
perceived origin	a. <u>rural</u> : <i>elle a l'air d'habiter à la campagne, elle parle bien le breton</i> b. <u>urban</u> : <i>de la ville, une Bretonne assez bien parlée</i>	<i>c'est pas du tout la campagne, ça, elle vient plutôt de la ville</i>
linguistic references	a. <i>elle vient plutôt de la campagne, le breton est parlé le plus à la campagne</i> b. <i>plutôt de la ville</i>	<i>elle vient de la ville, elle n'a pas d'accent</i>
status	a. <i>plouc</i> b. <i>intelligente, instruite et elle a de l'ambition</i>	<i>c'est une fille qui me paraît assez intelligente</i>
solidarity	<u>favourable attitudes</u> : (vast majority of informants): <i>plutôt chaleureuse accueillante</i> <u>unfavourable attitudes</u> (very small minority): <i>désagréable ... pas du tout sympathique</i>	<i>désagréable ... froide</i>

Table 4 shows that for Speaker B's Breton guise there was a division between those who perceived the speaker of the guise as old, and those who considered her to be young, as was also the case for the Breton guise produced by Speaker A. This result is striking as there are twenty years between their actual ages. This similarity between the responses obtained for the same variety produced by two different speakers is maintained throughout the complete set of results, and therefore confirms that the informants in this case are indeed responding to the variety rather than to any other factor. This

is further reinforced by the remarkable difference between the perceived age of Speaker B's Breton guise (in her 60s) and that of the same speaker in her unmarked French guise (around 25). There is also a consensus amongst the informants that the speaker of the unmarked French guise is young, that she comes from the town, and that although intelligent, she is perceived as being rather unfriendly. This profile is also represented in the extracts concerning the unmarked French guise produced by Speaker C, which are reproduced in Table 5.

Table 5: Profile of perceived identity and personality of Speaker C (aged 40)

Guise:	Unmarked French	Breton-accented French
perceived age	<i>encore plus jeune que les deux autres*</i>	<i>elle doit avoir soixante, soixante-cinq ans</i>
perceived origin	<i>de la ville parce qu'elle a l'air distinguée et tout</i>	<i>un accent typique de la campagne</i>
linguistic references	<i>elle parle bien</i> <i>elle doit être de la ville</i>	<i>avec l'accent on reconnaît tout de suite que c'est quand même quelqu'un de la campagne, et en plus l'intonation, c'est du vrai breton ça</i>
status	<i>intelligente</i>	<i>pas très cultivée, pas très intelligente</i>
solidarity	<i>désagréable, froide</i>	<i>je la vois pas avec un visage très souriant</i>
* 'les deux autres' refer to Speaker A, Breton-accented French (55 years) and Speaker B, Breton (35 years). This informant (a girl of 15) rated both as 'jeune'.		

Table 5 indicates that, for all profiling categories, Speaker C is perceived very differently in the two guises of unmarked French and Breton-accented French, and that there is consensus amongst the informants regarding the representations. In her unmarked French guise, Speaker C is perceived to be young and to have an urban origin, whereas she is deemed to have a typical country accent and to be much older in her Breton-accented French guise. In both cases

the overall profiles are very similar to those constructed from the pair discussions of the same two language varieties produced by Speakers A and B. This again confirms that the informants are reacting to the language variety rather than to any other speaker characteristic and thereby further validates the MGT results.

The most striking finding to emerge from the profiling of the data from the pair-discussions was the fact that it was only the Breton guises which provoked significant disagreement amongst the informants, and even this was consistent within age groups. The most likely explanation, which involves the distinction between native speaker and *néo-bretonnant*, has already been discussed.

Summary and conclusions

This study set out to examine language attitudes and perceptions of identity in Brittany with specific reference to Breton, Breton-accented French, and unmarked French. The different phases of this study have all revealed patterns of contrasts between the language varieties concerned — contrasts in attitudes and perceptions of identity, and indeed contrasts between the attitudes of different demographic groups towards each variety. Interesting contrasts were discovered in the questionnaire responses regarding the social values associated with Breton and Breton-accented French, and the extent to which features of these two varieties were perceived as markers of Breton identity. The MGT added a third dimension in the form of unmarked French and illustrated that the use of a particular variety influenced the type of personality which was projected. I concluded that this reflected the way a language, as part of a culture, may be closely linked with other aspects of that culture.

Within the various types of contrast mentioned, and using complementary methodological techniques, it was possible to discern overall tendencies in the attitudes of the young people vis à vis the three varieties and the relationship between language and identity.

The interview data revealed that many informants were more likely to define their identity in terms of their place of origin and that of their parents, than with reference to the variety of language which they spoke. Nevertheless many interviewees differentiated between being Breton and being a *true* Breton, by specifying that whereas the former did not require any knowledge of Breton, the latter did.

The identification of the Breton identity factor in the responses to the statements on language and identity in the questionnaire lent additional support to the previous findings concerning feelings of identity, i.e., that the Breton language, for these informants, did not necessarily determine identity. However, in spite of this, one clear result which emerged from the MGT was that there appeared to be a stronger association in the minds of the listener-judges between Breton identity and Breton-accented French, than between Breton identity and the Breton language, evidence that Breton-accented French was a more *available* symbol of identity for them than Breton, which very few of them were confident in using. This was also the predominant view amongst the BB informants in the discursive data.

These results suggest that cultural values can in some circumstances attach every bit as much to accentedness of a majority language as to the minority language itself. This supports the point made by Edwards (1985) with reference to the Irish context, namely that cultural content can persist even after the minority language ceases to be available as its symbolic marker. Results from both phases of the current study indicated that attitudes to Breton-accented French and Breton were inextricably linked in the minds of some informants, a result of the close relationship enjoyed by both in relation to Breton identity.

Appendix 1: The questionnaire

LA LANGUE BRETONNE ET SON UTILISATION.

Ce questionnaire fait partie d'une enquête sur la langue bretonne, et son rôle dans la vie quotidienne. Je vous serais reconnaissante si vous pouviez le remplir en suivant l'ordre de présentation des questions, et en y répondant aussi franchement que possible.

Vous pourrez si vous le souhaitez, justifier ou expliquer vos réponses, qui seront traitées en toute confidentialité. Merci d'avance, Rachel Hoare.

(1) Comprenez-vous le breton?

- ☐ Pas du tout
- ☐ Moyennement
- ☐ Un peu
- ☐ Bien
- ☐ Parfaitement

- (a) Si vous comprenez le breton, veuillez indiquer votre niveau de compréhension en choisissant l'une des réponses suivantes:

Je comprends une conversation parfaitement. ☐
Je comprends la majeure partie d'une conversation. ☐
Je comprends des bouts d'une conversation. ☐

- (b) Si non, aimeriez-vous comprendre le breton?

Cela m'intéresserait beaucoup. ☐
Cela m'intéresserait assez. ☐
Cela ne m'intéresserait guère. ☐
Cela ne m'intéresserait pas du tout. ☐

- (2) Parlez-vous breton?

☐ Tous les jours
☐ Plusieurs fois par semaine
☐ Une fois par semaine au plus
☐ Moins d'une fois par semaine
☐ Jamais

- (a) Si vous parlez breton, veuillez indiquer votre niveau en choisissant l'une des réponses suivantes:

Je parle tout à fait couramment. ☐
Je me débrouille ☐
Je connais quelques mots ou phrases. ☐

- (b) Si vous ne parlez pas breton, aimeriez-vous le faire?

Cela m'intéresserait beaucoup. ☐
Cela m'intéresserait assez. ☐
Cela ne m'intéresserait guère. ☐
Cela ne m'intéresserait pas du tout. ☐

- (3) Lisez-vous le breton?

☐ Tous les jours
☐ Plusieurs fois par semaine
☐ Une fois par semaine au plus
☐ Moins d'une fois par semaine
☐ Jamais

- (a) Si oui, veuillez indiquer ci-dessous ce que vous lisez en langue bretonne:

Des livres bretons ☐
 Des articles bretons dans les journaux ou revues français. ☐
 Des articles bretons dans les journaux ou revues bretons. ☐
 Des lettres/messages écrits par d'autres bretonnants. ☐
 Autres (à préciser). ☐

- (b) Si non, aimeriez-vous lire le breton?
 Cela m'intéresserait beaucoup. ☐
 Cela m'intéresserait assez. ☐
 Cela ne m'intéresserait guère. ☐
 Cela ne m'intéresserait pas du tout. ☐

- (4) Vous arrive-t-il d'écrire en breton?

☐ Tous les jours
☐ Plusieurs fois par semaine
☐ Une fois par semaine au plus
☐ Moins d'une fois par semaine
☐ Jamais

- (a) Si oui, veuillez indiquer ce que vous écrivez:

Des lettres. ☐
 Des messages. ☐
 Un journal intime. ☐
 Des travaux écrits à l'école. ☐
 Autres (à préciser) ☐

- (b) Si non, aimeriez-vous écrire en breton?

Cela m'intéresserait beaucoup. ☐
 Cela m'intéresserait assez. ☐
 Cela ne m'intéresserait guère. ☐
 Cela ne m'intéresserait pas du tout. ☐

- (5) Dans quelle mesure vous sentez-vous breton(ne)?

Je me sens complètement breton(ne) et pas du tout français(e). ☐
 Je me sens plus breton(ne) que français(e). ☐
 Je me sens autant français(se) que breton(ne) ☐
 Je me sens plus français(e) que breton(ne). ☐
 Je me sens complètement français(e) et pas du tout breton(ne). ☐

VEUILLEZ REPONDRE AUX AFFIRMATIONS SUIVANTES, EN UTILISANT L'UNE DES REPONSES PROPOSEES:

- (a) Tout à fait d'accord
 (b) Plutôt d'accord
 (c) Indifférent
 (d) Plutôt pas d'accord.
 (e) Pas du tout d'accord.

		a	b	c	d	e
(6)	Pour être un(e) vrai(e) Breton(ne) il est nécessaire de parler breton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(7)	On est toujours un(e) vrai Breton(ne) si on parle français avec un accent breton sans pour autant parler breton.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(8)	On est toujours un(e) vrai Breton(ne) si on utilise quelques mots ou quelques expressions bretonnes, sans pour autant parler la langue.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(9)	Le breton est une langue réservée aux personnes âgées.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(10)	Il est important que les enfants apprennent à parler français et breton.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(11)	L'enseignement du breton devrait être obligatoire dans tous les établissements scolaires de Bretagne.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(12)	Il est plus utile d'apprendre l'anglais ou l'allemand que le breton.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(13)	Il est important de conserver la langue bretonne.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(14)	Vous arrive-t-il d'utiliser des expressions ou des mots bretons lorsque vous parlez français? Si oui, veuillez en donner quelques exemples:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

INFORMATIONS GENERALES:

Sexe:

M ☐

F ☐

Année de naissance:

Lieu de naissance:

Lieu de résidence:

Depuis:

Appendix 2: The matched guise rating scale

	Très	Plutôt	Entre les 2	
Froide	—	—	—	Chaleureuse
Sympathique	—	—	—	Désagréable
Intelligente	—	—	—	Bête
Instruite	—	—	—	Peu Instruite
Ambitieuse	—	—	—	Sans Ambition
Travailleuse	—	—	—	Paresseuse
Honnête	—	—	—	Malhonnête
Têtue	—	—	—	Conciliante
Plouc	—	—	—	Chic

INFORMATIONS GENERALES:

Sexe:

M ☐

F ☐

Année de naissance:

Lieu de naissance:

Lieu de résidence:

Depuis:

Appendix 3: Matched Guise Text

Je vous écris pour vous dire que tout va bien. J'ai cinq profs et douze cahiers. J'ai commencé le latin. Le premier mot que j'ai appris est 'rosa' — C'est comme 'rose'. Jusqu'à maintenant j'aime bien le latin. Le professeur, il est petit et il met un dictionnaire sur sa chaise pour pouvoir surveiller toute la classe. Je suis dans le fond et c'est bien pour travailler. Le prof d'histoire, il parle drôlement mais ça ne fait rien. J'ai un copain, il s'appelle Le Floc'h — il est de Tréguier et son père est marchand de charbon. A ma table au refectoire il y a cinq grands types — Je ne pensais pas qu'ils étaient si grands. Un d'eux a des cheveux noirs. S'il me bat, je lui donnerai des coups de pieds en dessous de la table. J'ai besoin: (1) Un stylo avec de l'encre rouge. (2) Un peigne — on m'a volé le mien. Je vous embrasse — Salut à Fanch Meurig mais pas à son frère.

"Pikou"

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