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On new speakers and language revitalisation: Arpitan and community (re)formation

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Abstract:

Today, it is uncontroversial to claim that France's regional (minority) languages (RLs) are in decline. However, revitalisation movements have nonetheless continued to surface, and this chapter considers one by-product of such efforts: the emergence of *new speakers* in RL contexts. The term 'new speaker' refers to individuals who acquire the target language not through traditional transmission contexts (e.g. home, family), but instead as adults through language revitalisation initiatives. The chapter focuses on revitalisation efforts in the context of Francoprovençal, a severely endangered and understudied RL spoken transnationally across French, Italian and Swiss borders. A critical examination of current studies supplemented with recently collected empirical data shows new speakers to be central agents in a movement championing proto-nation-statehood across national borders, reorienting the region's traditional sociolinguistic field.

1. Introduction

Linguists now broadly agree that the regional (minority) languages (henceforth RLs) of France are in 'terminal decline' (Hornsby 2009: 158). As a large body of literature has shown, the evidence from France is part of a much broader pattern, in that language

endangerment is a global phenomenon (e.g. Grenoble and Whaley 1999, 2006). However, this decline has also been met with increased interest in language revitalisation, a local response to endangerment at a global level, and efforts are 'on the rise' (Urla 2012: 5). This is true of France, too, in spite of the 'unusual intolerance' (Grenoble & Whaley 1999: 5) that the French state has traditionally harboured for linguistic diversity. In France, perceptions of RLs have broadly become more favourable, where they have come to be seen as an important part of cultural heritage. McDonald (1989: 53) for instance highlights that what were once known invariably as 'patois' are now identified as 'local', 'regional', and 'minority' languages. Evidence of this changing practice has also been documented empirically at an administrative level by Éloy (1997), who compiled a corpus of labels used in the *Journal officiel des débats* showing a clear absence of the label 'patois' in official state publications. While the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages remains unratified in France (see Harrison and Joubert, this volume), a 2008 constitutional amendment now states that 'les langues régionales appartiennent au patrimoine de la France' ['regional languages belong to the heritage of France'] (Article 75-1). However, not all RLs have enjoyed the same linguistic and cultural renaissance.

'Francoprovençal'[1] is the glottonym assigned by linguists to a highly fragmented grouping of severely endangered Romance varieties traditionally spoken at the intersection of the French, Italian and Swiss borders (see Figure 1). While the language was once well-entrenched from Lyon to Geneva (see notably Gardette 1974), Francoprovençal has long suffered from a dwindling speaker base, resulting notably from a marked breakdown in intergenerational transmission dating back to the Second World War. There is no consensus on remaining numbers pan-regionally, but the most optimistic estimates range from between 120–200,000 speakers (or << 0.1% of the total

regional population); in general, Francoprovençal has been classified as severely endangered (Salminen 2007).

[Figure 1 here]

(taken from Kasstan & Nagy 2018)

Francoprovençal is a language contested on all fronts. Its introduction in the 19th century as a coherent grouping has never been fully accepted by linguists: Ascoli's (1874 [1878]) foundational paper, which proposed the grouping, did so on the basis of just one phonological feature, and scholars have long since argued against its linguistic borders and criteria for demarcation (see Martin 1990 for a detailed overview). Despite the permanence of a three-way partition on the linguistic map of France, as late as 2007, linguists have continued to ask: 'le francoprovençal existe-t-il ?' ('does Francoprovençal exist?') (Tuaillon 2007: 9). For speakers themselves, there has never been a sense of membership or belonging to a larger linguistic system that linguists call 'Francoprovençal': their focus instead converges on highly localised and increasingly postvernacular practices (that is, symbolic practices rather than practices reflecting a language in everyday use). The case of Francoprovençal, then, poses miriad problems for language revitalisers that most other RLs in France cannot be said to suffer from. For instance, while the Breton language may be perceived as fragmented and obsolescent, speakers have no difficulty identifying Breton varieties, a clearly demarcated Breton space, or *bretonnant* identity. None of these assumptions can safely be made in the case of Francoprovençal, which has been called 'une langue méconnue' ['an unknown language'] (Stich 1998: 7) and 'une langue oubliée' ['a forgotten language'] (Tuaillon 1988: 188). However, in spite of the challenges, revitalisation efforts are 'on the rise here', too, and this chapter focuses on a by-product of these efforts: the emergence of *new speakers* of Francoprovençal. The 'new speaker' label is

used in the endangered-language contexts to refer to individuals who acquire the target language not through traditional transmission routes (e.g. intergenerational mother-tongue transmission), but instead as adult second-language learners through language revitalisation initiatives. While revitalisation efforts in the wider Francoprovençal-speaking zone tend to be fragmentary with little cross-border cooperation, a pan-regional revitalisation movement has emerged in recent years with goals oriented around greater exposure and recognition, more favourable language planning policies, augmenting speaker numbers, and improving literacy rates. Unlike other speakers of Francoprovençal, most new speakers subscribing to this movement refer to their language as *Arpitan*. The glottonym 'Arpitan' is a concurrent to 'Francoprovençal', which is now particularly prominent on the Internet and enjoys a significant presence on authoritative websites such as 'Ethnologue' (ethnologue.com/language/frp). 'Arpitan' was introduced in order to respond to the confusion brought about by the traditional label, which implies a mixed French/Provençal hybrid (for details see §3). Moreover, they see common unity in a language and geographical space that transcends national borders, and they differ in important linguistic, political, and economic respects from traditional speakers too.

This chapter explores the changing sociolinguistic field of traditional Francoprovençal-speaking communities, and assesses the effects brought about by the arrival of endangered-language learners. For context, section 2 provides a detailed overview of the status of Francoprovençal spoken in France. Section 3 then critically examines recent work on new speakers of Francoprovençal. In drawing on a range recent empirical studies, it will be argued that, unlike most other new-speaker cases so far surveyed, the evidence here points to a movement perhaps better described as (or akin to) a *Community of Practice* (Wenger 1997), whose members have internalised

ambitions of proto-nation-statehood that deviates markedly from the hopes and aspirations of most other community members. Section 4 then concludes with avenues for further research.

2. On the status and vitality of Francoprovençal spoken in France

In France, Francoprovençal can be best characterised as a language that has long been undergoing 'gradual death' (Campbell & Muntzel 1989: 182–6), that is, the loss of a language due to gradual shift in a contact setting. Reasons for shift are primarily social, and result from both top-down and bottom-up factors.

First, as Kasstan & Nagy (2018: 4) highlight, the official status of Francoprovençal varies considerably across all sites in which it is spoken. For instance, while multilingualism is recognised by Switzerland's constitution, Francoprovençal remains absent from Article 70, which accords status to the Confederation's official languages. Resources are however devolved at a cantonal level, and there is provision for Francoprovençal to be included in education and media, particularly in the Canton of Valais where the greatest concentration of speakers is found (see Diémoz 2018). Conversely, over the border in France, Francoprovençal was not recognised as a 'langue de France' ["language of France"] by the Ministry for Culture and Communication until as late as 1999 (Cerquiglini 1999: 6). It is not accorded privileges comparable to e.g. Basque or Breton in the national education system, in spite of calls from some circles, as it is not seen as sufficiently different from French (see Bron 2011).[2] Second, no empirical studies have evidenced any maintenance of intergenerational transmission in France for some time now. One of the largest and most recent (self-reporting) surveys of the Francoprovençal spoken in the (former) *département* of Rhône-Alpes (Bert et al. 2009) found little if any evidence for ongoing mother-tongue transmission: in drawing

conclusions from results of a sample of approximately 1000 respondents, the authors observe the rate of transmission to be 'almost non-existent' (2009: 75). The compounded effects of these factors have resulted in a shrinking speaker base. No precise figures for remaining speaker numbers exist: while Ball (1997: 68) uses figures from Kloss & McConnell (1984) and Kloss et al. (1989) to suggest that just 30,000 speakers remained in France at the time of writing, Moseley (2007: 246) had put figures at 35,000 for the *départements* of Savoie and Haute-Savoie alone. These inconsistencies result from the fact that no data are collected in the French National Census on the use of regional languages in France. The National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies has carried out some research on regional language vitality (notably Clanché 2002), though no data specific to Francoprovençal are presented in this work. It is clear, however, that Francoprovençal has been losing ground to French for some time now. Most recently, Zulato et al. (2018) assess Francoprovençal's overall vitality in relation to Brenzinger et al. (2003)'s UNESCO vitality scale: they observe France to be ranked among the lowest for the region as a whole across all nine factor groups employed in measuring language vitality (see Table 1).

Table 1 Cross-regional Francoprovençal vitality (after Zulato et al. 2018: 13)

Criteria	Aosta Valley	Piemonte, Italy	Apulia, Italy	France	Switz.	Canada & USA
1) Intergenerational transmission	4	2	4	1	4	2
2) Number of speakers	21-70,000	14,000	700	60,000	16,000	600
3) Proportion of speakers to total population	4	1	5	1	3	1
4) Shifts in domains of use	3	1	4	1	3	1
5) Response to new domains and media	2	0	1	1	2	0
6) Materials for language education and literacy	4	2	2	2	2	0
7) Governmental and institutional attitudes and policies; official status and use	3	3	3	2	3	1
8) Community members' attitudes	4	*no data*	4	1	3	4
9) Type and quality of documentation	3	1	2	2	3	1
Overall vitality score	3.5	1.4	3.1	1.4	2.9	1.3

In particular, the authors highlight that there has been little in the way of community responses to new language domains: Francoprovençal thus remains the preserve of the most intimate domains of usage. Further, Pivot (2014: 26-29) has argued that, in Rhône-Alpes at least, Francoprovençal can now be characterised as a 'postvernacular' language, in that it continues to form a part of identity construction among some in the community, despite it no longer being used in daily communication. Anecdotal evidence of this comes from fieldwork conducted by the present author in 2012 in *Les monts du Lyonnais* – a mountainous, peri-urban region where speakers of Francoprovençal can still be found (see Kasstan 2015). Here, among the more proficient users that were interviewed, participants admitted that even within the confines of the home, between spouses, very rarely is Francoprovençal employed over French. This is significant in light of the observation that the 'inability of minorities to maintain the home as an intact domain for the use of their language' (Romaine 2000: 189) has been

shown to be a deciding factor in the process of language shift. However, the same speakers are actively involved in a local dialect association – one of the so-called 'club patois' (Tuaillon 1988: 203) where Francoprovençal maintains some symbolic status. These dialect associations have existed in France since the 1970s, and they demonstrate at least some community-level desire for their linguistic heritage be preserved. These associations have been important spaces for the practice of Francoprovençal among learners, too, particularly among 'late speakers' (defined here as French monolingual speakers born after 1950, following a break in intergenerational transmission, but who nonetheless have received some early exposure to the language).[3] However, the number of associations offering adult classes is now diminishing rapidly (Bert et al. 2009: 69), and in general attitudes towards the teaching of Francoprovençal are increasingly negative (see §3). Revitalisation efforts have also been hampered by the lack of an obvious prestige variety of Francoprovençal to select from for standardisation, though regional orthographical conventions do exist that facilitate extra-curricular activities (these tend to be phonetic-spelling systems, with little mutual intelligibility outside of the region of use).[4] There is in general little agreement between associations in France on how best to rebuild a speaker-base, and efforts are coordinated independently.

3. New speakers of Francoprovençal and the 'Arpitan' community

While there are no figures on transmission rates of Francoprovençal as an L2 within the *club patois* in France (cf. efforts in Switzerland, Meune 2012), these associations have nonetheless provided important ground on which to build an embryonic community of *new speakers*.

New speakers can be characterised as individuals 'with little or no home or community exposure to a minority language but who instead acquire it through

immersion or bilingual education programs, revitalization projects or as adult language learners' (O'Rourke et al. 2015: 1, see also O'Rourke & Ramallo 2013, Kasstan 2017 and references therein). New speakers have been a focus of a number of studies on endangered languages. Cross-linguistically, they have been characterised as middle-class urbanites, who are well-educated and highly politicised in the sense that they are often involved in language revitalisation movements too. Such descriptions are far removed from those associated with traditional RL speakers, i.e. older, non-mobile, rural dwelling, and working class (e.g. Blanchet & Armstrong 2006). Where they emerge, new speakers are regarded as important and influential arbiters in fluctuating community practices, given that they can make up an important number of learners acquiring a variety that is typically obsolescent or moribund. In some cases, such changing sociolinguistic environments have engendered communal splits between new speakers and traditional speakers where contact between the two occurs, which has given rise in some cases to sentiments of social and linguistic incompatibility. For example, in echoing the works of Jones (1998) and others, Atkins highlights that some traditional native speakers of Breton see *néo-Breton* (a standardised variety of Breton used in Breton-medium *Diwan* schools) as 'inferior' (2013: 66), and she describes 'a communal split – along linguistic, generational, class, and educational lines – between the speakers of traditional dialects and speakers of neo-Breton' (2013: 58). Comparably, as new speakers are a relatively new phenomenon in the context of Francoprovençal, they have only been the focus of very recent empirical studies (see notably Kasstan & Nagy eds. 2018), and only a handful of speakers have been the subject of investigation in France. Bert et al. (2009: 43) estimated that new speakers might form 3% of their sample (though no distinction is made between Francoprovençal and Occitan respondents in their data). Nonetheless, new speakers now comprise an

important component of a transnational revitalisation movement which has emerged in the wider region in recent years. This *Arpitan* movement departs from traditional-speaker led efforts in a number of important respects. First, its members are encouraged to adopt bilingual-like practices, particularly in new domains of usage. There is therefore a conscious break with older, more common practices (or practices of a postvernacular nature) that remain the interest of the traditional *club patois*, with a focus instead on modernity. Its members are very active on the Internet, where they have developed resources that include the formation of a regular radio broadcast ('Radiô Arpitania'), and online materials for learners. Second, as mentioned in the introduction, its members tend not to refer to the language spoken as 'Francoprovençal' (as used by linguists) or 'patois' (as used by most speakers), but as 'Arpitan'. The glottonym is derived from the proper noun 'Harpitanie' which is taken from a 1970s Aostan Marxist group called the *mouvement harpitanie* (see Josserand 2003 for a discussion), whose manifesto was at the time very explicit in its call for linguistic unification in the region:

La langue ethnique […] de la région […] est la langue franco-provençale qui […] existe sous forme de nombreux parlers […] L'unification de ces parlers sera le but du mouvement populaire harpitan [...] de la fusion entre les langues, sortira une langue « nouvelle » : la LANGUE HARPITANE [emphasis in original] (Harriet 1974: 65–7).

[The ethnic language […] of the region […] is the Francoprovençal language which […] exists in the form of a number of varieties […] The unification of these varieties will be the goal of the Harpitan movement […] A 'new' language will emerge from this unification: the HARPITAN LANGUAGE].

The borrowing of 'Harpitan' and adaptation to 'Arpitan' is itself socially significant in that the glottonym has been derived for ideological purposes. The root *arp-* is argued by its proponents to be derived from the Proto-Indo-European form for 'alp'[5], and *arp-* is also a common root form for many toponyms that surround the vast Mont Blanc region. There is therefore a strong patrimonial component to the Arpitan construct that pre-dates the formation of existing national borders. It is also striking that Harriet's statement assumes an ethno-national link between a unified single people (who he terms 'Harpitans'), and one common language. Moreover, in appropriating the Aostan movement's label *Harpitanie*, Arpitans refer to the territory in which the language is spoken by the toponym 'Arpitania', with its own borders (ignoring existing onomastic issues such as national boundaries) and a pan-regional Arpitan flag ('lo roson'). Therefore, if language denomination implies a process of social construction, as has been argued by Canut (2000) and others, then 'Arpitan' ('Arpitania' etc.) provides a model example of the classic (ethno)-nation-state construct: a people of common putative biological (and thus ethnic) descent speaking one ancestral language within a common patrimony (e.g. Fishman 1977). Moreover, it is not coincidental that *arpitan* is morphologically similar to *occitan*, and it has been suggested that this is because activists wish Arpitan to emulate its sister-language's relative success in terms of revitalisation and recognition (Meune 2012: 20). The glottonym 'Arpitan', then, forms part of a larger ideologically motivated social construct (the beginnings of an 'imagined community' in Anderson's 2006 [1983] terms) that attempts to build a common transnational *arpitaniste* space and linguistic identity for all Francoprovençal speakers. This is despite the fact that: (a) many speakers in France and southern Italy are geographically far removed from the Alps; (b) the Francoprovençal-speaking region encompasses three nations that have never known any political or linguistic unity;[6] and

(c) it is often argued that there is little overall sense of Francoprovençal identity among native speakers, and that such sentiments, if they do exist, are only to be found locally, and *not* nationally, or even transnationally (e.g. Grinevald & Bert 2013: 278).[7] Therefore, the aspirations of the Arpitan movement seem somewhat at odds with the complex sociolinguistic and political context that characterises the Francoprovençal region.

Another form of practice that distinguishes *arpitanistes* from traditional speakers of Francoprovençal relates to orthographic conventions. To achieve its stated aims, and to promote greater status for Francoprovençal among its speakers, the Arpitan movement has turned its attention to orthographic normalisation, as there is no universally accepted written standard (see Martin 2002): they have adopted a proposed multidialectal orthography termed *Orthographe de référence B*, or 'ORB' (Stich 2001), which is prominent on the Internet, and which has even been used recently for the translation of a number of Tintin comics.[8] The proposed standard is also accompanied by a dictionary (Stich et al. 2003), which contains a diverse range of neologisms to denote modern concepts (see examples in Table 2, below).

Table 2. Lexical variation in Francoprovençal (adapted from Kasstan 2017)

Neologised ORB variants	*French borrowings into Francoprovençal*	*Standard French*	*English gloss*
enversenc	setentriono	septentrional	northern
tela	Internet	toile	Internet
yo-que-tè	portoble, natel	téléphone portable	mobile phone
frustrapot	armonika	harmonica	harmonica

It is noteworthy that ORB is rejected by most native speakers, and remains deeply unpopular with some linguists too (Tuaillon 2004 being an impassioned example). As a pan-lectal orthography with a one-to-many correspondence between graphemes and phonemes, it has been criticised for its dramatic simplification of a number of complex local and supralocal phonetic-spelling systems, as well as the considerable influence it draws from Standard French (for summaries of these arguments, see Flükiger 2006, and, *contra*, Matthey & Meune 2012). Although there are fundamental differences between ORB and existing orthographical systems, contesting *how* Francoprovençal is represented on paper betrays prescriptive attitudes that are driven by familiar notions such as speaker authenticity and language ownership. Schieffelin & Doucet for instance have shown how contested orthographies should 'be viewed as sites of contested identities rather than as neutral academic or linguistic arguments without political, social, or educational consequences' (1992: 427). While ORB has been identified by some participants to be entirely accessible in interview conditions conducted by the present author, given its similarities with Standard French[9], other participants reject it because it does not reflect a locally circumscribed, more authentic variety of Francoprovençal. Some speakers in the Swiss context have even referred to it as a 'sort of Esperanto', given that normalisation often requires compromise between competing forms (see Kasstan forthcoming). Orthography as a conflict site in language revitalisation is well documented in the literature (e.g. Grenoble & Whaley 2006), and Dorian (1994) among others has sounded the alarm that native-speaker purism over compromise can impede efforts to reverse language shift – which remains a primary concern of the Arpitan movement.

For all of its ambition, the size and scope of the Arpitan movement is much smaller and narrower than comparable movements in more well-studied contexts. There

are no existing figures on Arpitan new speakers, but Kristol has remarked anecdotally that they number no more than 'a few dozen' (2016: 350). Whatever the size of the community of new speakers, it should be highlighted that they nonetheless represent a decisive shift away from obsolescence and towards revitalisation (see Jaffe 2015). However, it is also important to consider the extent to which there is support at the level of the community for initiatives pursued by the Arpitan movement, if they are to be successful. On this point, it is important to stress that the aims and methods of the movement have been drawn up largely independently of other regional revitalisation initiatives, and this has led to significant disagreement on what the aims should be, and how they ought to be achieved.

One over-arching goal of the Arpitan movement has been to drive greater literacy rates through the production of pedagogical materials (composed in ORB) to be used in schools, particularly in France, where vitality scores are lowest. However, there is no clear empirical evidence to suggest that speakers broadly wish for Francoprovençal to be introduced in schools transnationally. For instance, while speakers continue to support the ongoing presence of the language in the school curriculum in those parts of Italy where Francoprovençal is still spoken (see e.g. Josserand 2003), this is not necessarily true elsewhere. Concerning France, Hawkey & Kasstan (2015) published findings from sociolinguistic interviews conducted in the Lyonnais region in 2010. Language-attitude data taken from among a sample of eighteen native speakers revealed that while two thirds of respondents were in favour of the inclusion of Francoprovençal in the school curriculum on a voluntary basis, none were prepared to state that this should be mandatory, which was viewed as a hindrance to social mobility when a dominant language such as English could be acquired instead. Larger scale (self-reported) participant surveys have revealed more ambiguous results.

Bert et al. (2009) found that 42.9% of their sample (n = approx. 1000) responded favourably to the question 'Souhaiteriez-vous que vos enfants ou petits-enfants puissent assister à des cours de langue régionale ?' ['Would you like your children or grand-children to be able to attend regional language classes?'] (Bert et al. 2009: 84). However, again, both Francoprovençal *and* Occitan are spoken in Rhône-Alpes, and the data provided are not broken down by language. This evidence serves to indicate that the goals developed by the Arpitan movement may not follow the majority of the community members' needs or aspirations.

Community reactions to the increased presence of 'Arpitan' as a label for the language, particularly online, and its orthographic representation in the form of ORB, have also been subjects of survey work. Kasstan (2016) reports on the extent to which the glottonym 'Arpitan' has made headway in some Lyonnais communities in France. He finds that no traditional speaker in his sample (n = 18) was aware of this term at the time of study in 2010. Similarly, Meune (2012) identifies just one instance of 'Arpitan' occurring in his data, which come from field surveys in the Canton of Vaud (Switzerland), whereas no tokens are found in a corpus he compiled from local newspapers between 1909–1998 (Meune 2018), and Nagy (2000) identifies no instances in her data collected in Faeto and Celle (Italy). This might seem surprising for a glottonym that has been in use now for nearly five decades. However, when new speakers engaged in the Arpitan movement are the object of study, the picture changes: in all cases so far surveyed, they show near exclusive use of the label 'Arpitan' (Kasstan 2016: 83, Meune 2012: 21), and they are most often users of ORB, where it is found predominantly on social media platforms.

In sum, then, *arpitanites* largely comprise a small community of new speakers who are playing an active and important role in securing the language's posterity. These

speakers are qualitatively different from traditional speakers of Francoprovençal in socio-economic and political terms, and the evidence presented here suggests also important disparate practices: they have taken up the mantle of linguistic unifiers in a region comprising three national borders; they have baptised the language of this region 'Arpitan'; and they have taken to orthographic normalisation.

The disparity between the profiles and practices of Arpitan new speakers and other speakers of Francoprovençal begs the question of whether or not they might best be described as a discrete *Community of Practice* (CofP), defined by Wenger (1998: 76) as a body of individuals with a shared repertoire, who come together around mutual engagement in a jointly negotiated enterprise. The CofP framework provides a useful analytic domain, for it neatly circumscribes boundaries around practices and activities that its members engage in. However, Wenger identifies three criteria that must be met in order to identify a CofP, each of which will be directly related to the above discussion in term below.

First, Wenger states that there must be mutual engagement of members in an endeavor (i.e. a regular gathering of different people around a mutually shared enterprise). We have seen above that *arpitanistes* from different regions can come together to share in the practices described above; these practices are not shared by other participants in these communities. Second, members should share in some jointly negotiated enterprise or shared goals. This is exemplified by an annual gathering of Francoprovençal speakers at the *Fête Internationale du Patois*, which provides an important venue for *arpitanistes* to engage with local communities on subjects that matter to them. Their primary goals have been to raise awareness of the wider linguistic realities of the Francoprovençal region; to augment speaker numbers; and to normalize orthography. The *fête* provides them with one of the few occasions when this CofP can

come together to achieve its goals. Third, a CofP is said to be characterized by the members' 'shared repertoire'. Owing to the size of the community of new speakers in the context of Francoprovençal, there has been little work on the identification of a new-speaker shared repertoire (or pool of variants) analogous to that of e.g. Scottish Gaelic (Nance et al. 2016). However, recent work by Kasstan (2015) and Kasstan & Müller (2018) has drawn a link between emergent socially meaningful linguistic variation found among Arpitan new speakers in speech production and the use of ORB in writing. This is significant, for it implies that orthographic normalisation (the use of ORB) among new speakers is beginning to bare socio-stylistic variants specific to this group – a shared repertoire.

New speakers belonging to, or motivated by, the Arpitan movement can then be described in terms of a CofP. Not only does this clearly reflect disparate practices on the ground, but it could also explain why some new speakers that emerge outside of the Arpitan movement (i.e. in the context of other revitalization initiatives) may not subscribe to the *arpitaniste* agenda (for a discussion see Kasstan forthcoming). Such a hypothesis would require further research to confirm.

4. Conclusions and directions for future research

This chapter has given an overview of the current status of Francoprovençal as spoken in France. It is clear that Francoprovençal has been undergoing gradual death for some time, and the broad picture suggests a case of terminal decline. However, the prospect of complete language shift has reinvigorated revitalisation movements on the ground. One outcome of revitalisation movements has been the rise in new speakers adopting RLs in purely educational circumstances, rather than via intergenerational transmission. Evidence from Francoprovençal reveals new speakers to be qualitatively different from

traditional speakers. These differences have led to emergent tensions in traditional native RL speaking communities that oscillate around disagreements over future aims and ambitions for language revitalisation, in particular: how the language should be represented orthographically, and what it should be called. Such tensions, which we have seen can reflect wider contested sites relating to language authenticity, ownership etc., hold important consequences for ongoing revitalisation initiatives as it relates to language status and perceptions outside of its borders. A closer examination of new speakers reveals an emergent embryonic CofP, whose members hold views, beliefs etc. that have contributed towards a communal split, akin to the sorts of sociolinguistic incompatibilities described elsewhere (cf. Atkins 2013 on *néo-Breton*). The *arpitaniste* new speakers described above hold very different ideological views of what a Francoprovençal space looks like, and what it means to be a Francoprovençal speaker. In effect, the evidence points towards new speakers being central agents in a movement championing proto-nation-statehood across national borders, in spite of their small numbers. The movement's members orient around shared goals, and the structure of the CofP reflects the practices of its members. In particular, recent evidence points towards a focusing of sociolinguistic variants which mark membership in the wider movement.

The Francoprovençal context reveals a number of research trajectories. First, the evidence presented above illustrates the important of porting theoretical frameworks in sociolinguistics typically applied to dominant languages into endangered-language contexts. The application of the CofP framework has provided some understanding for the emergence of the Arpitan movement, and it has cast light on new sociolinguistic practices, and how those practices reflect and build meaning for speakers. Diversifying the sources of data will provide fresh viewpoints on these

established frameworks, and would respond to recent calls from the field of sociolinguistics more broadly (e.g. Smackman 2015). Second, the case study presented on Francoprovençal highlights the tensions that exist between different stakeholders concerning a language spoken transnationally across three states. Those communities that remain in France are clearly most under threat from complete language shift, whereas communities outside of France are faring better. Greater transnational cooperation remains the missing link. Researchers actively engaged in these communities should consider how these issues can be addressed by framing linguistic research around the Principle of Debt Incurred (Labov 1982: 173) and the Principle of Linguistic Gratuity (Wolfram 1993), in other words - obtaining data from a community obliges the researcher to help the community using said data. Such endeavours may prove decisive in ensuring posterity for obsolescent Francoprovençal.

Acknowledgements

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[1] The glottonym 'Francoprovençal' replaced 'Franco-Provençal' (with a hyphen) from the 1950s. Ascoli (1874, republished 1878) was first to propose 'franco-provenzali' (see Kasstan 2016 for a discussion).

[2] There is some provision for facultative extra-curricular language education and literacy where support on the ground is strongest, and the greatest concentration of interest in education provision has come from the Savoie region, where there is a tradition of recognising a distinct 'Savoyard' space, identity, and variety, as different from the rest of the Francoprovençal-speaking zone.

[3] 'Late speakers' correspond to Bert (2009: 31)'s 'young later speakers', and Dorian (1981: 116)'s 'younger fluent speakers'.

[4] Schüle (1980) for example proposed an orthography based predominantly on the Valdôtain varieties of Francoprovençal, while the *Graphie des Conflans* (proposed by the association *Amis des patois Savoyards* in the 1970s) is based on the Savoyard varieties (see Martin 2002 for an overview).

[5] Evidence from the Oxford English Dictionary (see 'alp, n.') contradicts this claim.

[6] That said, cooperative efforts are only now beginning to emerge transnationally (see most recently Diémoz 2018)

[7] It is noteworthy that speakers surveyed by the author have often claimed there to be little or no mutual intelligibility between varieties from the same region (even over a distance of just a few kilometers), let alone across national borders. Conversely, most speakers will claim that their own variety most closely resembles the Valdôtain varieties spoken in the Aosta Valley. This has been reported too by Pannatier (1999) and Martin (2005) among others, though this has not been confirmed empirically.

[8] ORB succeeded *Orthographe de référence A* which was also proposed by Stich (1998).

[9] This observation is made from interviews conducted in 2012 (Kasstan 2015), but requires further quantitative research.