

Transmission of Breton among immersion-school students: the impact of home language

1 Introduction

Breton, a Celtic language spoken in Brittany, has undergone decades of obsolescence, with social and political pressure gathering speed in the 19th century and lasting beyond the Second World War. Since then, efforts to revitalise the language have gradually been gathering speed, in an attempt to halt the decline of the language, and, crucially, to ensure that it is spoken by younger people. These efforts have focused both on raising the profile of Breton, for example, through visible bilingual signage, and on Breton-medium schooling. The exact number of Breton speakers has been difficult to estimate, and until recently, the most accurate estimates came from Broudic's (2009) survey, which gave a figure of 206 000 Breton speakers, of whom 46% were aged over 75, and only 4% were aged 16-19; however, this was an increase from just 3% in 1997. In 2018, a new, more wide-ranging, survey was undertaken (Moal, 2018) and preliminary results indicate that the number of speakers remains stable at around 207 000 fluent speakers (though this could also indicate that the 2007 survey underestimated the number of speakers). The mean age of speakers in this survey was 70, and only 5% of speakers were aged under 40.

This increasingly elderly speaker population reflects the loss of the transmission of Breton within the family. Parent-to-child transmission of Breton effectively ceased following the Second World War; this can be seen clearly in Broudic's (1999) discussion of St Méen, (northern Finistère), where in 1946 all schoolchildren spoke Breton, but by 1952, only 10% did. This exemplifies Dorian's (1981) 'demographic tip', whereby 'a language which has been demographically highly stable for several centuries may experience a sudden tip' (Dorian, 1981: 51). While this may seem sudden, it results from a gradual build-up of negative feeling towards the language, which leads parents not to transmit it to their children. This negative feeling stemmed from the increasing stigmatisation of Breton as 'backward' and undesirable, but was compounded by the post-war political atmosphere in France: Breton separatist groups such as *Breiz Atao* aligned themselves with the Nazi regime, and actively opposed local Resistance movements (McDonald, 1989).

Today, there is a small but growing community of younger 'new speakers' of Breton, and it has been observed that there are differences between the 'traditional' Breton of older speakers, and that of new speakers. This is largely because, as a result of the gap in intergenerational transmission, the Breton modelled to these new speakers is generally a standardised variety, which abstracts away from the regional variation of traditional varieties; these speakers are also more susceptible to interference from French. It has been claimed that new speakers' Breton differs from traditional Breton in a number of ways: it is said to have a 'Celticised' lexis, and avoid French loanwords (Jones, 1995); it does not maintain phonological processes such as stress and liaison (Madeg, 2010); it lacks certain key morphophonological features such as mutation, parts of the verbal paradigm, and inflected prepositions (Dressler, 1972; Hewitt, 1977; McDonald, 1989); and it has a preference for SVO word order (McDonald, 1989). While it is clear that many new speakers do 'sound different' from older speakers, more recent research into the Breton of new speakers is starting to challenge some of these claims (see, e.g. Le Ruyet, 2011; Davies-Deacon, 2017; Kennard &

Lahiri, 2017; Kennard, 2018b), and to provide a more nuanced and detailed picture of the Breton spoken by younger speakers.

1.1 Breton-medium education

A central part of efforts to revitalise Breton, Breton-medium education began in 1977 with the establishment of *Diwan* (Bocquenet, 1985). Although the *Loi Deixonne* had permitted the teaching of minority languages in France since 1951, the reach of this was limited, and the *Diwan* schools (*Diwan* meaning ‘seed’) were set up in response to a perceived lack of Breton provision in the schooling system (Kuter, 1999). What began as a single school for children aged 2-6 now covers the whole span education up to age 18; however, while there are many *Diwan* primary schools (*skolioù*; 48 in total, across Brittany), there are only six *skolajoù*, for pupils aged 11-15, and one *lise*, for pupils aged 15-18, which has implications for children continuing Breton beyond age 11. Bilingual Breton-French streams within the state and Catholic education systems followed the establishment of *Diwan*; however, while under the *Diwan* system the focus is on immersion in Breton, and French is introduced gradually, in a state primary stream pupils receive equal amounts of Breton and French, and learn to read and write in French before Breton. This bilingual stream continues at the secondary level, but pupils receive fewer hours of Breton in comparison to French.

Breton-medium schools play a crucial role in the acquisition of Breton by younger speakers. The 2018 survey (Moal, 2018) suggests that 90% of Breton speakers aged 15-24 acquired Breton through formal education. The number of pupils in Breton-medium education is small, but growing. In September 2019, 18,890 pupils attended Breton-medium education across Brittany and in the Loire-Atlantique¹ *département* (Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg, 2020), and this is growing year on year.² This means that around 3% of pupils in Brittany attend Breton-medium schooling (Académie de Rennes, 2019).

Breton-medium schools face a number of challenges, many of which are not unique to Breton, but common to a number of language revitalisation contexts. The first is the question of ‘which Breton’ to teach in schools (Poisard et al., 2014). There exists a great deal of regional variation in Breton, and many older speakers find the accepted standard inaccessible, because they were educated in French and only use Breton in a highly local context.³ The differences between local varieties are often commented on by older speakers, both as a source of local pride, but also to claim the impossibility of teaching Breton to younger generations (Le Dû & Le Berre, 1996). Largely, schools use the standard variety, which is more practical from the perspective of publishing teaching materials, but may widen the gap

¹ Although the *département* Loire-Atlantique was part of the historic region of Brittany, it is not today part of the Brittany administrative *région*. Despite the fact that Nantes was for a time the seat of the dukes of Brittany, the city itself has never been Breton-speaking; however, Breton was spoken in rural parts of Loire-Atlantique as late as the 20th century (Mathelier, 2017). In September 2018 there were 798 pupils in Breton-medium education in this region (Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg, 2020).

² Figures from previous years: 2018 – 18,337; 2016 – 17,024; 2015 – 15,696. The *Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg* webpage is updated every year, and previous years’ figures do not remain available; however, these figures can be found in Kennard (2017; 2018a; 2018b).

³ This echoes Dorian’s (1981) findings for East Sutherland Gaelic, where speakers were unable to follow Gaelic-language radio broadcasts because the variety used, the standard, was so unfamiliar.

between older and younger speakers, with some claiming that these two groups are unable to understand one another (Le Dû, 1999).

Additionally, teachers might bring regional features from their native area to schools elsewhere. The *Lise Diwan* in Carhaix brings together pupils from across Brittany, who may also have encountered a range of regional Breton features. This is especially true of pupils from the *Gwened* region in the southeast, which has a notably different dialect of Breton (e.g. stress; palatalisation). Some younger speakers now come from areas in Upper Brittany, such as Rennes and Nantes, which are not traditionally Breton-speaking: naturally they do not have any exposure to a local variety of Breton, and so tend to use the standard variety. These sorts of issues have led to questions about what constitutes 'authentic' Breton (Hornsby, 2014).

A separate issue is that of language use outside the classroom. Pupils may be confident using Breton in an educational setting, but in peer-group interactions in a social context, this may be more difficult, with French as the default. This in turn leads to the issue of continued Breton usage beyond the time spent in Breton-medium education. First, as mentioned above, there are far fewer secondary-level *Diwan* schools than primary schools, and the provision for Breton in the state *Div Yezh* stream decreases at the secondary level. This is partly because fewer pupils choose to continue with Breton beyond age 11, and Broudic (2010) discusses reasons for this: the choice may be made by the pupil, not the parent; secondary education is seen as 'more important' than primary education, and so the majority language, French, is seen as more suitable; and finally, the necessity for many pupils to travel a long way and/or board may make Breton secondary education less attractive. Pupils who cease to attend Breton medium education aged 11, or over the course of their teenage years, may find that they cease to use the language altogether after this point.

This has an impact on the use of Breton after the end of formal schooling, particularly in light of the fact that students may struggle to use Breton outside a classroom setting. Baudu (2015) interviewed a number of former *Lise Diwan* pupils who had had children of their own and found a mixed picture of language use, often linked to unfamiliarity of informal Breton. One participant said 'I feel fake when I speak Breton to [my children], I feel like I'm acting, playing a role a bit' (Baudu, 2015: 64). Speakers may not have the linguistic resources to use Breton in the domain of daily family life, which in turn acts as a barrier to the transmission of Breton within the home.

Language transmission within the home has been shown to be important in younger speakers' language use in other minority language contexts. Research into gender and mutation in Welsh, for example, found that children from Welsh-speaking homes were more proficient than children from English-speaking homes (Gathercole & Thomas, 2005; Thomas & Gathercole, 2007; Thomas & Mayr, 2010; Thomas et al., 2014). However, this does not seem to be true of all features, or in all minority-language contexts, since there may be other factors at work: Mayr et al.'s (2017) study of monophthongs found that there was little difference between adolescents from Welsh-speaking and English-speaking homes, while Nance (2015) investigated vowels and laterals in adolescent Gaelic speakers, and found few differences between speakers from English and Gaelic backgrounds.

Taking all of this into account, this chapter examines the impact that a young Breton speaker's linguistic background might have on their use of certain morphophonological features. Given the claims regarding new speakers' use of morphophonology, we might expect to find a range of variation, with some speakers closer to standard usage than others. The rest of the chapter is as follows: section 2 discusses the linguistic backgrounds of the fieldwork participants; details of the morphophonological features and findings from the fieldwork are presented in section 3, and the implications of these are discussed further in section 4.

2 Fieldwork

2.1 *Lise Diwan* students and linguistic background

Over the course of several fieldwork visits in 2017-18, 103 pupils at the *Lise Diwan* in Carhaix participated in research investigating a variety of features of Breton morphophonology. Of these, 55 reported speaking Breton at home (i.e. 53.4%). This is quite a large proportion, and contrasts with Kennard's (2018b) study, involving schoolchildren aged 8-14, none of whom spoke Breton at home with their parents, and only one of whom had a family member who spoke Breton. It is possible that the higher proportion of *Lise* pupils speaking Breton is because these speakers are older, aged 15-18. The level of commitment to Breton is a factor in whether or not pupils continue in Breton-medium schooling beyond the primary level; (Broudic, 2010) thus, it is possible that these pupils come from families who are more invested in Breton, and are more likely to have Breton at home.

Asking pupils whether they speak Breton at home provides quite limited information about the amount of Breton input they receive outside school and does not distinguish between, a home where parents take an interest in children's homework, but the language of communication is French, and a home where all interaction is in Breton. Questions about home language usage therefore need to be somewhat more nuanced, and to consider the kind of Breton spoken by relatives and how they came to speak Breton. A subgroup of 33 pupils (henceforth, *Liseidi* 'lycée pupils') who participated in the above research were asked further questions about language use at home. They were aged between 14 and 18 at the time of the fieldwork (mean age = 16.0), and come from homes all over Brittany, including the traditionally French-speaking areas of Upper Brittany.

Participants were asked complete a short questionnaire (in French) containing four questions about their linguistic background: (i) Do you speak Breton as your native language? (ii) Do you speak another language fluently? (iii) Do you speak Breton at home? (iv) If yes, with whom? The second question was asked in case any participants had another first language at home, but in fact none did, and so this will not be considered further. More interesting are the responses to the other questions. Of 33 participants, 14 considered themselves to have Breton as a native language, while 19 did not. Speaker identity is a key issue in the field of minority language revitalisation, so this question was asked to gauge how participants positioned themselves within the Breton-speaking community. On its own, the response does not provide very much information, but it is more interesting taken in conjunction with the responses to question (iii). Here, participants were given a forced choice between "Yes, often", "Yes, sometimes" and "No". A summary is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' responses to fieldwork questions

		Do you speak Breton at home?			
		Often	Sometimes	No	Total
Do you speak Breton as your native language?	Yes	6	7	1	14
	No	1	8	10	19
	Total	7	15	11	33

Unsurprisingly, those who self-report as native Breton speakers also report that they speak Breton at home, at least sometimes, with only one exception. Equally, those who report that they speak Breton at home “often” also regard Breton as a *langue maternelle*, with just one exception.

The final question, which asked participants with whom, in their household, they spoke Breton, drew a variety of responses, summarised in Table 2. More detailed information about each participant is given in Table 3. Participants were free to give any response they chose, and many speak Breton with more than one family member.

Table 2. Breton-speaking family members of *Liseidi*

Family member	Number of responses
Parent (mother, father or both)	12
Sibling(s)	14
Grandparent(s)	4
Whole family	2

Table 3. Breton-speaking family members of *Liseidi*

Participant	Speaks Breton at home with...	How often?
AS	Sisters; grandparents	Sometimes
EP	Whole family	Often
GK	Brothers and sisters	Sometimes
GS	Sisters; father	Sometimes
GZ	Brother	Sometimes
HA	Whole family	Often
HS	Brother	Sometimes
JU	Sister	Sometimes
ML	Sisters	Sometimes
MM	Parents; sisters	Sometimes
MW	Mother	Often
OK	Parents; brothers	Often
PP	Mother	Often
QP	Parents; brother; sister	Sometimes
QV	Brothers; father	Sometimes
RY	Grandparents	Sometimes
SO	Parents, sisters	Sometimes
TJ	Sister	Sometimes
UU	Parents; sister; grandmother	Sometimes
UX	Mother; grandmother	Often
XL	Father	Sometimes

Of particular interest in this chapter are those speakers who use Breton with a family member of a different generation, rather than only siblings, since this may shed light on possible intergenerational transmission within the home. It is interesting to note additionally, as shown in Table 3, that those speakers who use Breton “often” at home all use Breton with at least one parent; those who only use Breton with siblings report speaking the language at home “sometimes”, which is hardly surprising if their parents do not speak Breton and the language of the home is French.

2.2 Further interviews on linguistic background

As well as completing the written questionnaire regarding home language usage, a smaller group of 14 participants, all of whom had responded that they used language at home with parent or grandparent, were asked additional questions as part of a linguistic interview. The goal was to discover more about the linguistic background of other Breton-speaking family members: how they had acquired or learnt Breton, and how much they used it with the participant in question. Examining the paths that parents had taken to becoming Breton speakers revealed both a range of experiences and some common trends. In all but one of the families, the parent or parents had not grown up speaking Breton, but had usually learnt the language in adulthood. For several, this was alongside their child as he or she attended a *Diwan* primary school, as the excerpt in (1) demonstrates:

(1) Speaker XL

Int: You speak Breton at home sometimes, is that right?

XL: Yes, mainly with my dad.

Int: Did he learn Breton as well?

XL: Yes.

Int: Also at Diwan?

XL: No, erm, while erm... when I was at primary school he learnt as well alongside me.

It is particularly interesting to note, then, that none of the parents had attended *Diwan* as pupils themselves, which echoes Baudu’s findings, discussed above. Rather, the majority had learnt Breton in adulthood, usually primarily through private study, but also through evening classes, Breton-language courses such as those provided by *Stumdi*⁴, and through intensive training. Four of the participants had parents who were themselves teachers in *Diwan* schools, three at the primary level and one at secondary level (*collège*). All four had learnt Breton in adulthood, and XN’s discussion is typical of this (see (2)).

(2) Speaker XN

Int: So, you speak Breton at home, is that right?

XN: Yes, yes, also with my sister.

Int: Oh right, so your father, did he learn Breton?

XN: Yes, he learnt Breton.

Int: At the Diwan schools as well, or –?

⁴ *Stumdi* is a Breton teaching organisation that offers a range of different courses in the Breton language.

XN: No, not in the Diwan schools, he learnt it when he was twenty, I think, on his own, and then he became a Breton primary teacher.

Not all parents had acquired Breton exclusively in adulthood. Two parents had also acquired some passive knowledge of Breton in childhood from their own Breton-speaking parents (the pupils' grandparents). However, even between these two cases, there are differences in the outcomes from this exposure to Breton at an early age. For OK's mother, this was then supplemented by further studies in Breton, bringing her to full fluency, while for QV's father, this left him with a very good passive understanding of Breton, but difficulties communicating complex ideas.

(3) Speaker OK

Well erm, my mother actually heard [Breton] when she was young. Her parents spoke to her in French but erm they spoke Breton between themselves so she ha- ... and with her grandmother as well, so she understood everything. And in fact when she arrived at the Lycée there was a Breton option, and she said to herself 'oh well, why not?' and she learnt it, and so she continued.

(4) Speaker QV

QV: He [my father] understands Breton very well. And as for speaking, he knows everyday words, but when it gets more... let's say... complicated, erm... He doesn't manage. It's a bit too technical.

Int: So, did he learn Breton?

QV: Yes, because my grandparents didn't use Breton, and in fact, erm, at that time, it was shameful to speak Breton; you had to learn French. So they only speak Breton amongst themselves, they learnt Breton. So, they spoke in French... erm to their children, that is my father, and his sisters, but erm, but after a while he learnt to understand.

In addition to this passive knowledge, one speaker (UX) has a parent who is a native Breton speaker; her linguistic background will be discussed below in section 2.3.

One final interesting point to raise is the motivation behind parents' choice to learn Breton. For those who learnt Breton alongside their children, this is fairly clear, but two participants had additional information to add about their parents' reasons for learning Breton. EP explained that while her father had started to learn Breton as an optional subject at secondary school, and then continued these studies later, her mother had chosen to learn Breton after meeting her father, and he had helped with her studies.

(5) Speaker EP

My dad learnt Breton first, he started it at secondary school with a Breton option, and he continued it afterwards; and my mum, when she met my dad she didn't know how to speak Breton but learnt partly with my dad. However, my brothers and I have spoken Breton since we were very small, yeah.

OK, whose mother had acquired a passive knowledge of Breton in childhood (see (3) above), explained that her father had learnt Breton in adulthood, having grown up in a non-Breton-speaking area, and was inspired by his discovery of the *Diwan* schooling system.

(6) Speaker OK

And my father, he's from the Nantes area, and erm, he came erm, well, to Finistère when he was young, to be a children's activity leader. And that was when he discovered the Diwan school in [Town]. And he went there [...] and he decided to learn Breton.

It is clear that the participants in this study come from a wide range of linguistic backgrounds. The next section will focus on a subset of participants with contrasting backgrounds in an attempt to identify patterns in their spoken Breton that might be linked to their use of the language at home, and the type of speakers they interact with in the home environment.

2.3 Case studies: participants

Seven teenaged speakers of Breton from different linguistic backgrounds have been chosen as case studies: EP, JU, MM, QP, QV, UX and XH. A summary of their responses to the questions asked during the fieldwork is given in Table 4, and these are then discussed in more detail below.

Table 4. Case study participants: linguistic backgrounds

Participant (M/F, age)	Breton at home?	How often?	With whom?	Interlocutors' paths to Breton?
EP (F, 16)	Yes	Often	Whole family	Father → <i>collège</i> Mother → with father
ML (M, 17)	Yes	Sometimes	Siblings	<i>Diwan</i>
MM (F, 15)	Yes	Sometimes	Parents; siblings	Both parents → Stumdi Mother → intensive
QP (F, 17)	Yes	Sometimes	Mother; siblings	Father → passive knowledge Mother → native speaker
QV (M, 16)	Yes	Sometimes	Father; siblings	Grandmother → passive knowledge + later study
UX (F, 16)	Yes	Often	Mother; grandmother	
XH (F, 17)	No	NA	NA	NA

These seven participants have been chosen to reflect the wide range of linguistic backgrounds that the liseidi have, including the different paths to speakerhood that their interlocutors at home have taken, and the fact that more participants responded that they spoke Breton at home 'sometimes' than 'never' or 'often'. More female than male speakers took part in the study, hence there are 5 female and 2 male participants among the case studies.

XH (F, 17) does not speak Breton at home, and therefore comes from a completely French-speaking background. She does not identify as *bretonnant*. Four of the speakers, ML, MM, QP and QV, report speaking Breton at home 'sometimes'. ML only speaks Breton with his sisters,

all of whom are also *Diwan* pupils; neither of his parents speaks Breton. The other three also speak Breton with at least one parent. MM's parents learnt Breton in adulthood through the Breton training organisation *Stumdi*. QP's mother comes from a French-speaking background, but having studied Breton took an intensive language course before training to become a Breton-immersion teacher at primary level. Interestingly, QP does not identify as *bretonnant*, while the other three speakers do.

(7) Speaker QP

QP: My mum, she's a Breton primary school teacher

Int: Oh right! So did she learn it?

QP: Erm no... erm...

Int: When she was small?

QP: Well, quickly, you know... but in any case she did Breton studies

Int: Okay. So she wasn't at Diwan?

QP: No, she was at a French lycée

QV has a particularly interesting linguistic background. As discussed above, his father grew up with a passive knowledge of Breton, but finds speaking it more difficult (see excerpt in (4)). Although QV uses Breton 'sometimes' at home, mainly with his father and siblings, he also spoke about using Breton in other non-school contexts, as the excerpt in (8) shows.

(8) Speaker QV

Int: It's great that you have family who speak Breton

QV: I don't just speak Breton with my family

Int: Yeah?

QV: I do theatre in Breton

Int: Oh right?

QV: That helps as well

Int: Yes, yes

QV: Then, there's the lise as well

Int: Of course

QV: Then otherwise... my brothers speak Breton as well, they were at Diwan [...] My big brother, my oldest brother, left Diwan in year 4 [i.e. aged 15], then the other before year 3 [i.e. aged 13], and so they don't speak Breton as much

Finally, EP and UX often speak Breton at home with their families. EP reported that she spoke Breton with the whole family, and that her parents had learnt Breton in adulthood (see excerpt in (5) above). UX has an interesting and unusual linguistic background, as her mother identifies as a native speaker of Breton, while her maternal grandmother grew up with a passive knowledge that she later built on with further study in adulthood. UX was the only participant who described her linguistic background in this way, but this restoration of intergenerational transmission is ultimately the aim of revitalisation efforts such as *Diwan*.

(9) Speaker UX

Int: And you speak Breton at home as well ?

UX: Yes

Int: With your mother?

UX: Yes

Int: So, did she learn Breton?

UX: Yes, she... it's her own native language too

Int: Oh yes? Ah well that's great! That's quite unusual

UX: Yes

Int: So, your grandmother as well –

UX: Yes, she learnt it, however

Int: Yes, yes, so did she not speak it from childhood, is that it, or... ?

UX: My grandmother? Er well, her family spoke Breton but as it wasn't very correct, it was forbidden and all that, she had to learn, properly, when she was an adult.

Since these participants come from different linguistic backgrounds, this may have influenced not only their attitudes towards the language, but also the kind of Breton they speak. Of course, the linguistic environment of the *Lise Diwan* itself also plays a role: this is where most pupils speak the greater part of their Breton, and as it is a boarding school it is a more immersive environment than a day-school. It is also important to note the relevance of peer-group language for adolescent speakers (although of course, the level of home language usage is likely to play a role as well; this is discussed further in Section 4). Nance (2019) contrasts studies where home language seems to play a role in minority language acquisition (e.g. Gathercole & Thomas, 2009), and others where there appears to be little difference between younger speakers on the basis of home background (e.g. Nance, 2015; Morris, 2017). She hypothesises that while there may be initial differences between pupils based on home background, these are later levelled out as those who are acquiring the language purely through immersion schooling receive enough input in the minority language to catch up with their peers. The peer group thus becomes more important than the parents' language.

3 Findings

3.1 Breton morphophonology

The discussion can now turn to an examination of certain Breton morphophonological features as used by these seven speakers; namely, grammatical gender and mutation. These are both areas characteristic of Celtic languages which differ from French, which might make them more difficult for younger speakers to acquire. Breton has two grammatical genders, masculine and feminine, and these are signalled primarily by agreement with the numerals two, three and four, and by patterns of mutation. Mutation is the replacement of the initial consonant phoneme of a word by a different consonant phoneme under certain morphosyntactic conditions (Ball & Müller, 1992). Examples from Breton are given in (10).

(10) Initial consonant mutation in Breton

a. *ti* 'house'

b. *ma zi* 'my house'

c. *e di* 'his house'

There are four types of mutation in Breton, but only two, lenition and spirantisation, will be discussed in this chapter. They affect only a subset of consonant phonemes, and the phonological changes they involve are illustrated in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5. Breton lenition

Unmutated	p	t	k	b	d	g	gw	m
Mutated	b	d	g	v	z	h, x ⁵	w	v

Table 6. Breton spirantisation

Unmutated	p	t	k
Mutated	f	z	h, x ⁵

Mutations can be triggered by a preceding word, as in (10), such as a particle, possessive, or preposition, but can also be affected by morphosyntactic properties of lexemes such as gender and number. Key to the discussion in this chapter is the fact that feminine singular nouns undergo lenition following the definite and indefinite articles, but masculine singular nouns do not. However, masculine singular nouns beginning /k-/ undergo spirantisation in the same context.

Breton is said to have an opaque system of grammatical gender, as has been described for Welsh (Thomas & Gathercole, 2007), meaning that the cues to gender are contradictory and not readily available. This can be seen in Breton in three main ways:

- (i) Not all consonants undergo mutation; e.g. s-initial nouns do not change regardless of gender.
- (ii) There is no one-to-one relationship between a particular mutation and a particular gender; e.g. lenition is found in feminine singular nouns following the article, but so do masculine plural nouns referring to humans. Lenition thus marks both masculine and feminine, and singular and plural.
- (iii) There are a number of exceptions to the regular mutation rules; e.g. d-initial feminine nouns never lenite following the article.

A summary of mutation in singular nouns following the articles is given in Table 7.

Table 7. Mutation of singular nouns following the articles

	Masculine	Masculine: /k-/	Feminine	Feminine: /d-/
<i>Unmutated</i>	pesk 'fish'	kazh 'cat'	kador 'chair'	dremm 'face'
<i>Mutated</i>	ur pesk 'a fish'	ur c'hazh 'a cat'	ur gador 'a chair'	un dremm 'a face'
<i>Mutation type</i>	None	Spirantisation	Lenition	None

In addition to mutation of the nouns themselves, Breton also signals grammatical gender through lenition of attributive adjectives, which follow the noun. Adjectives undergo lenition when they follow a feminine singular noun, but not a masculine singular noun. However, this is also subject to phonological constraints: adjectives beginning with voiceless stops only lenite when the preceding noun ends in a sonorant. Other lenitable adjectives are not subject to this constraint. This is summarised in Table 8.

Table 8. Mutation of adjectives

	Masculine	Feminine, final sonorant	Feminine, final obstruent

⁵ The grapheme <c'h>, which is used for both lenited /g/ and spirantised /k/ (as well as existing as a non-mutated form) is variously pronounced /h/ and /x/ by different speakers and in different contexts.

	pesk 'fish'	kador 'chair'	bag 'boat'
bras 'big'	ur pesk bras	ur gador vras	ur vag vras
kozh 'old'	ur pesk kozh	ur gador gozh	ur vag kozh

Finally, gender is also signalled by agreement with the numerals two, three and four, which in Breton precede singular nouns. These numerals also trigger their own mutations on the nouns that follow them, but this is completely regular, and not affected by the gender of the noun in question. A summary is given in Table 9.

Table 9. Forms of the numerals

	Masculine <i>kazh</i> 'cat'	Feminine <i>bag</i> 'boat'
'two'	daou gazh	div vag
'three'	tri c'hazh	teir bag
'four'	pevar c'hazh	peder bag

Three features have been chosen as representative of this area of morphophonology, and will be considered for the seven case studies in this chapter:

1. Mutation in nouns following the (indefinite) article
2. Form of the numeral 'two'
3. Mutation in attributive adjectives following the noun

3.2 Fieldwork elicitation

To obtain the data under discussion in this chapter, two main elicitation tasks were used. Participants were asked to name items in Breton, which were presented using PowerPoint on a laptop screen. In the first, the items were presented in groups of four: first one item, then two, then three, then many. Participants were asked to name the items in Breton by saying 'an X', 'two Xs', 'three Xs', 'Xs' in turn. Thirty-four⁶ nouns were used, of which 14 were masculine (8 mutable, 6 not) and 20 were feminine (12 mutable, 8 not). In the second exercise, participants were shown pairs of images, one with a small item, and one with a larger version of the same item. They were asked to name the items by saying 'a big X; a small X'. The same list of nouns was used as in the first elicitation task, with one exception (*sant* 'saint' was not included, because it was felt 'a big saint; a small saint' was semantically odd).

The fieldwork in question surveyed not only the liseidi, but also adult speakers; both those who had grown up speaking Breton, and those who might be better identified as 'new speakers'. Their data will not be discussed in this chapter, other than as an occasional base of comparison.

3.3 Use of morphophonology

It seems reasonably intuitive to assume that receiving Breton input at home would improve teenaged speakers' proficiency in Breton. However, it is also sensible to assume that the amount of Breton spoken at home will also play a role. Looking at the case studies, then, we

⁶ A further two nouns were in fact included in the elicitation task, but as they are listed as having either gender, they will not be considered further.

might expect to see a difference between those who speak Breton often at home (EP and UX), in comparison to XH, who does not speak Breton at home, and that those who speak Breton at home sometimes (ML, MM, QP and QV) would be somewhere in-between. We might also see finer-grained differences between these last four, depending on their family members' use of Breton. The questions being investigated can therefore be summarised as follows:

1. To what extent does the language of the home affect teenaged speakers' use of key features of Breton morphophonology (gender and mutation)?
2. How relevant is the amount of Breton spoken at home?
3. How relevant are family members' own linguistic backgrounds in the use of the speaker's Breton?

Rather than categorising speakers' usage as 'correct' or 'incorrect', the findings are expressed in terms of 'expected usage': that is, what would be expected in adult speakers and/or Standard Breton. In fact, the adult speakers who took part in the same linguistic fieldwork (both adult new speakers and older speakers who grew up in a Breton-speaking environment), do not always conform to Standard Breton usage, or indeed more regionally-based descriptions of the language. It would therefore be odd to assume that the *liseidi* would do so consistently. As a group, the *liseidi* tend to lag behind adult speakers' usage (see Table 11 for details of average usage), but if we examine the data across all three morphophonological features first of all, it seems as though the expectations above are borne out. Table 10 is an expanded version of Table 4, giving an indication of the extent to which the speakers under discussion conform to the expected morphophonology for adult native speakers.

<Table 10 about here>

It is clear that EP and UX, who often use Breton at home, are consistently the closest to expected usage and adult norms. They use the expected mutated following the article in all (UX) or almost all (EP) contexts, use the expected form of the numeral most of the time, and lenite adjectives following feminine nouns more than any of the other speakers. The average usage for all of the *liseidi* is given in Table 11, along with the average usage for adults who completed the same fieldwork tasks as a means of comparison. EP and UX are above the average for the *liseidi* for all three features, and conform to adult usage for all but the adjectival mutation. It is interesting to note that although the parents of EP and UX followed different paths to becoming speakers of Breton, there is little to choose between them in terms of morphophonology.

Table 11. Average usage of key morphophonological features

Speaker group	% expected mutation following article	% form of numeral	% mutation of adjective
Liseidi	85.6%	64.1%	33.3%
Adults	95.7%	86.0%	69.4%

The speakers who use Breton at home sometimes, with a variety of different interlocutors of differing backgrounds, unsurprisingly show a degree of interspeaker variation. ML and QV are most similar to one another, being somewhat below the *liseidi* average for all three morphophonological features. This is particularly striking for the mutation of adjectives

following feminine nouns, which QV does not do at all, and ML does in only one instance. They thus produce utterances such as (11).

(11) Adjectives: QV and ML

- a. *ur vag **h**ras* ‘a big boat’ [expected: *vras*]
- b. *ur volenn **h**ihan* ‘a small bowl’ [expected *vihan*]

In contrast, MM and QP are much more variable, being comparable to ML and QV in some features, but much closer to adult norms in others. QP uses the expected mutation following the article in over 90 per cent of instances, but her usage of the numeral ‘two’ and her lenition of adjectives are both below average for the *liseidi*. MM, on the other hand, does not use the expected mutation following the article in as many contexts, yet her use of the numeral and adjectival mutation is much closer to adult usage, as the examples in (12) and (13) illustrate. These findings point to a much patchier understanding of Breton morphophonology among these students than among those who speak Breton more frequently at home, and the implications will be discussed further below.

(12) Mutation following the article

- a. Expected mutation: lenition (QP)
ur volenn ‘a bowl’
- b. Unexpected mutation: no mutation (MM)
ur bolenn ‘a bowl’

(13) Form of the numeral ‘two’

- a. Expected numeral
div blac’h ‘two girls’ (MM)
- b. Unexpected numeral
daou blac’h ‘two girls’ (QP)

Finally, we might expect XH to diverge the most from expected adult usage, given that she does not speak Breton at all at home, but in fact this is not the case. Despite having no Breton input outside the school environment, she uses the expected morphophonological features to a greater extent than ML and QV, and at times is approaching adult norms. This is a surprising finding, and points towards a great deal of variation amongst speakers, and the relevance of individual factors such as speakers’ aptitude for learning languages.

4 Discussion

With this overview in place, the discussion can now turn to the implications of these findings for understanding the role played by the use of Breton in the home environment in teenaged speakers’ proficiency. Naturally, there are limitations with this study. It relies on self-reporting; what speakers mean when they say they speak Breton at home ‘sometimes’ or ‘often’ is not quantified, and there is likely to be variation between speakers that is not captured here. Although we have some indication of the ‘type’ of Breton that parents and other relatives speak, their Breton has not been analysed for this study. It might have been possible to see family-based trends if this had been the case (e.g. lack of lenition of adjectives following feminine nouns, or normative use of the numeral ‘two’). This type of in-depth study,

which examines both teenaged speakers' Breton and the Breton of their caregivers and other Breton-speaking relatives, would shed a lot more light on exactly how important input from the home is in influencing how they speak the language.

That aside, it seems clear that using Breton often at home, with a variety of family members, leads to a more adult-like production of Breton morphophonology. Lenition of adjectives following feminine nouns is much lower than descriptions of Standard Breton would lead us to expect, but this appears to be very variable even among adult speakers. It is not surprising to find a relatively low rate of usage among the *liseidi* when the input they receive is so variable. However, what is particularly interesting about EP and UX is that despite the fact that their Breton-speaking parents have acquired the language in quite different ways, they do not differ greatly from one another in the features under discussion here, suggesting that uninterrupted intergenerational transmission may be less influential than simply using Breton as the default language of the home.

What these findings also seem to suggest is that the intergenerational use of Breton may be more influential in supporting the acquisition of certain morphophonological features than peer group usage. This can be seen for speakers ML and QV, who both use Breton at home 'sometimes', but are less proficient in these morphophonological features than the other speakers. ML uses Breton at home sometimes, but only with his siblings, who also attend the *Diwan* schooling system. They do not speak Breton with their parents. While it is heartening to hear of *Diwan* pupils using Breton outside the classroom, given that this is one of the biggest challenges facing the immersion school system, it seems that it may have a relatively small impact on speakers' use of Breton morphophonology (though it may, of course, improve other aspects of their Breton not studied here, such as lexis and fluency). Using Breton with siblings at home therefore seems to be an extension of the peer-group environment at the *Lise Diwan* itself.

As discussed above, QV has a particularly interesting linguistic background. Although he sometimes speaks Breton at home with his father and brothers, he seems to view his additional Breton-language activities as more relevant to his use of Breton than his home environment. He is clearly a keen language user, who is incorporating Breton into every part of his life, but this does not translate into a more adult-like morphophonology. Again, this seems to indicate that intergenerational, family-wide use of the language may be more influential.

As this is only a set of case studies, any conclusions drawn regarding the role of Breton in the family are necessarily limited. Nowhere is this clearer than with speaker XH. Despite never speaking Breton at home, her use of the expected morphophonology is largely average for the *liseidi*, and ahead of ML and QV. This suggests that while using Breton at home often with parents is beneficial for immersion school pupils, not having this input does not necessarily mean that teenaged speakers will lag behind their peers. The variation that MM and QP exhibit, displaying adult-like proficiency in some areas but not others, also supports this, and points to a somewhat patchy acquisition of Breton morphophonology among some speakers. However, it is interesting that even weak trends can be observed here, given that other studies of adolescent speakers of minority languages have found the impact of home background to be minimal (Mayr et al., 2017; Nance, 2019). Given findings by Thomas &

Gathercole (2007), *inter alia*, it is possible that the effect of linguistic background on the morphology and morphophonology is more persistent than in the phonology, but this is merely conjecture, and a wider-ranging study would be required to investigate this.

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