

## **Lexical expansion in Breton: Preserving linguistic diversity through language planning**

Michael Hornsby, Centre for Celtic Studies, Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. [mhornsby@amu.edu.pl](mailto:mhornsby@amu.edu.pl)

Key words: language modernisation, standardisation, lexical expansion, ideologies

The modernisation of minority languages involves updating them for use in contemporary, everyday contexts—particularly in digital, educational, and professional domains—to combat language shift and prevent loss in linguistic diversity. Corpus planning and standardisation are key to this preservation of sustainable multilingualism. Creating new technical, scientific, and administrative terms allows languages to be used in modern professional and educational environments and developing a formal register or standard variety allows the language to be taught and used in official settings. At the same time, avoiding overly rigid standardisation, which could alienate native speakers, by incorporating colloquial registers, is a very important consideration.

This paper looks at the processes of language standardisation and lexical expansion in the case of the Breton language, a minoritised Celtic variety spoken and currently being revitalised in the north-west of France. In particular, it examines the educational need for the development of specialised registers for teaching purposes, since immersion schooling is one the main ways the language is being revitalised. Data are presented on a number of initiatives to expand and develop the lexicon and also the reception of such newly developed language by educators and school students. Furthermore, initiatives to express concepts that have come to the fore in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (such as gender identity and sexual expression) are also examined as part of the modernisation of the language to make it fit for purpose. The paper concludes by highlighting the complexity of the situation and the occasional objections to such initiatives, based on an ideology of “authentic language”.