

## Lexical creativity and new speaker stereotypes among users of Breton on Facebook

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Sociolinguistic studies of Breton have typically posited the existence of a discrete “new speaker” category, characterised as young, educated speakers who have learnt the language in the context of formal schooling. These speakers are thought to use a standardised, non-dialectal form of Breton, both by preference and as a result of lacking access to the more diverse, dialectally fragmented varieties of traditional speakers. Due to the association of this category with certain characteristics relating to age, mobility, literacy and motivation, it can be expected, if these stereotypes are true, that users of Breton on social media will overwhelmingly come from this group. The Breton found online, and data about its users, can thus be examined to determine a. whether these speakers conform to stereotypes that suggest their language is highly standardised and “purist”, and b. whether the two groups of speakers can indeed be separated so strictly based on sociolinguistic criteria such as age and method of acquisition.

This paper focuses on the first of these questions, presenting findings from doctoral research focusing on the largest Facebook group for Breton speakers, *Facebook e brezhoneg*. It highlights some specificities of the data from this group, compared with traditional media contexts examined as part of the same research. These include in particular the use of certain non-standard vocabulary, including both borrowings from French and English, and overly “purist” neologisms; as well as highly performative and ludic uses of language designed to show off users’ high level of competence in a variety of languages. Suggestions will be made regarding the relevance of these practices to the new/traditional speaker binary, and to the role that social media play in renegotiating how Breton speakers balance concerns of communication and identity as the language revitalisation movement continues to evolve.