REVIVING FRENCH ARPITAN: RECOMMENDATIONS TO REVITALIZATION EFFORTS

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Abstract

Arpitan, also known as Francoprovençal, is a severely endangered regional language with around 120,000-200,000 speakers, spoken at the crossroads of France, Italy, and Switzerland. This paper is a review of the literature on the current linguistic situation of Arpitan. It first presents an overview of current Arpitan revitalization efforts, along with potential impediments and favorable conditions of revitalization. At last, it proposes consultative advice on where to direct Arpitan revitalization efforts and how. Previous literature on Arpitan focuses mainly on the vitality of the language and its usage; however, there is an insufficient analysis on behalf of revitalization efforts. Thus, this paper, written from an outsider's perspective, aims to bridge the gap between linguistic knowledge and practical advice on revitalization. This review could be potentially useful as a reference for Arpitan activists in France as they plan revitalization projects. It is hoped that the paper would update the linguistic community on the status of Arpitan and inform Arpitan revitalization activists from a third-party point of view.

Keywords

Francoprovençal, Arpitan, Endangered Languages, Language Revitalization

1. Introduction

Over the past 30 years, the linguist community has seen a rising interest in the study of endangered languages. The term "endangered languages" designates languages that are used by a decreasing number of speakers to the extent that it will gradually fall out of use completely. There are numerous potential causes of this decline, which vary from case to case. These include deliberate deterrence from government policies, negative speaker attitudes towards their native language, and many more. In response, language revitalization activists have sought to revive the use of dying languages through a range of means.

This paper investigates one of such endangered languages, the Arpitan. I will first provide a general survey of the background and status of Arpitan. The region where the Arpitan language is spoken, or "Arpitania," lies at the crossroads of France, Italy, and Switzerland. Additionally, Arpitan is also spoken in Faeto and Celle in southern Italy (Bichurina, 2016).
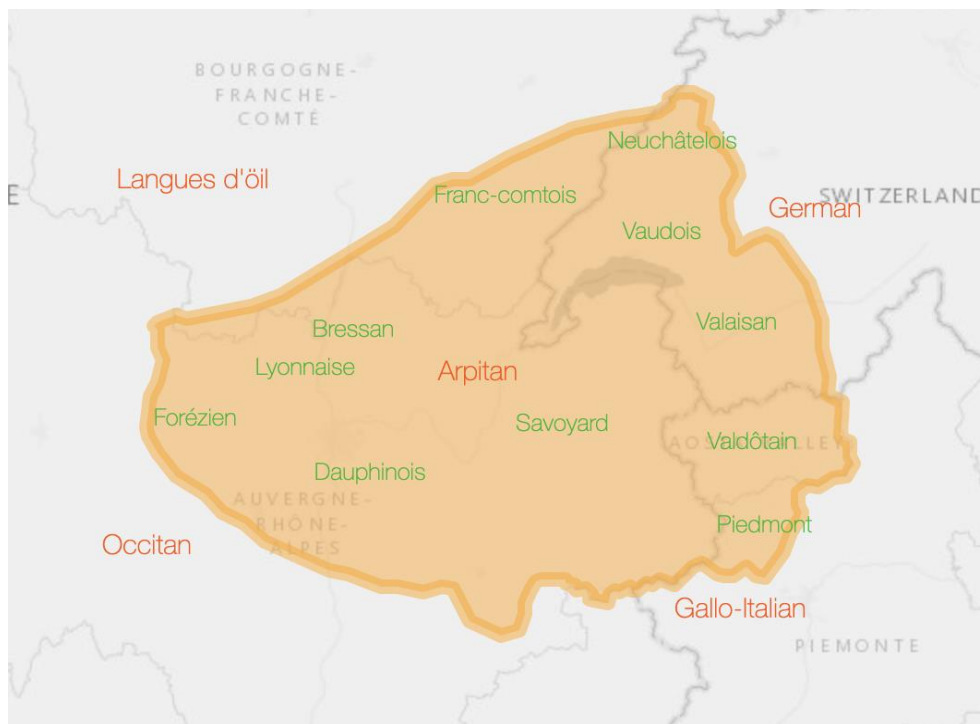

Figure 1: *Arpitan's Geographical Location and Its Linguistic Varieties*

The endangerment status of Arpitan is highly threatening. UNESCO classifies it as severely endangered. *Ethnologue*, an authoritative linguistic journal on language endangerment data, describes it as a language "in trouble," i.e. "intergenerational transmission is in the process of being broken, but the child-bearing generation can still use the language so it is possible that revitalization efforts could restore transmission of the language in the home." Recent estimates

pin the number of all speakers at around 120,000-200,000 (<0.1% of the total regional population) (Salminen, 2007), which is already a generous count that includes speakers of all levels of fluency and nationality. A 2013 official document reported 80,000 speakers in and another 130,000 semi-speakers (Paumier, 2013), yet a 2015 study saw a drop in this number to 50,000-60,000, with roughly another 16,000 speakers in Switzerland and 28,000 speakers in Italy (Kasstan, 2015). The majority of speakers in the French Rhône-Alpes region who speak fluent Arpitan are at least 60 years old. A decreasing number of people speak it as a mother tongue. In most cases, its usage in the region is diminishing or is limited to within the household (Bert, 2011). In contrast, the language is still relatively viable in Aosta Valley, a region in northern Italy, where among the 120,000 inhabitants, 40-60% speak the language. Nevertheless, Aostans have expressed concern for the future of Arpitan as well ("Aostans", 2015).

The topic of language endangerment is especially concerning due to its rapid speed and extensiveness. Where language extinction occurs, language groups often experience a loss of social identity. In this process, much of the traditional cultural practices and experiences are either lost or would need to be refashioned in another language. Hence, it is crucial to linguistic communities to preserve and revitalize their language. Arpitan is no exception.

2. Current Revitalization Efforts

Revitalization groups include speakers of all levels of fluency, from semi-speakers to fluent speakers. Over time, a certain degree of language fluency is transmitted from native speakers to semi-speakers. Activities center around local projects (collections, monographs, dictionaries, and preparation for festivals and evenings with songs, storytelling, and saynètes). However, since many of these groups are not formulated into associations, there is limited contact between groups. Federations on the regional level do not exist (as of 2009), even though such entities have long existed in Savoie (Lou R'biolon) and Monts du Lyonnais (Bert, 2011).

2.1 New Speakers

"New speakers" have been a recent force in the Arpitan language revival. In endangered language studies, new speakers are usually middle-class, well-educated urbanites (Kasstan, 2019) that acquire a given language through adult second-language courses rather than from the traditional intergenerational transmission, i.e. the natural inheritance of the language from the

family and continuous usage in the household (O'Rourke et al, 2015). Where "new speakers" emerge, they could be very influential in language revitalization (Kasstan, 2019).

One revitalization organization that adopts the "new speakers" strategy is the Alliance culturèla arpitanna. By taking on new, innovative methods other than the traditional "club patois", i.e. local gatherings to talk, joke, or perform plays and folksongs in Arpitan, it emphasizes bilingualism in domains of usage other than the home. It encourages members to take advantage of online learning materials as well as other resources such as the Radio Arpitania, the first internet radio that broadcasts in Arpitan. Arpitanists meet at the annual International Festival of the Patois to discuss goals, raise awareness, and foster cross-regional communication, which is extremely important for a situation like Arpitan where revitalization efforts are largely localized (Kasstan, 2019).

2.2 Education and other Student-related Activities

Arpitan was first taught in schools during the 1970s in Savoie and Haute-Savoie, as well as in the Isère and the Lyon region. Folksongs and "saynètes," i.e. short plays, were also involved in the learning experience. These were produced at a festival at the end of the year. In the 1980s, some secondary schools had Arpitan courses one hour per week, financed by the Board of Education of Grenoble Academy. At the same time, partnerships with the Federation of Groups of the Savoyard language Lou R'biolon allowed teenagers to express themselves in front of the public. This also created connections with the Aosta Valley community in the form of exchange programs and the scholastic Arpitan competition "Jean-Baptiste Cerlogne" in Aosta Valley.

In 2000, a similar competition – the Constantin and Désormaux scholastic Savoyard competition – was created in the Savoie and Haute-Savoie area. Around 200 to 300 students participate in this competition each year. From 2000 to 2010, schools made continuous progress in Arpitan education. At the Boëge secondary school, students could choose to take 2 hours per week from Grade 6 to Grade 9. There were also training sessions for teachers in Bonneville, Chambéry, and Grenoble. Arpitan education relied on voluntary teachers, who generally developed their approaches to Arpitan education because Arpitan education programs do not benefit from systematic teacher training.

From 2004 to 2010, there was an average of 275 students every year, according to a census by the Association of Teachers of Savoyard/Francoprovençal. Nevertheless, although

Arpitan education is relatively stable in secondary school and high school, it was more fluctuant in primary schools.

Parents also established numerous associations in 2006 in partnership with the Association of Teachers of Savoyard/Francoprovençal. These organized performances and festivals where students performed in Arpitan, as well as conferences that discuss regional languages in France in general with experts (Bron, 2011).

2.3 Written Materials

Equipped with a full French-Arpitan dictionary, Arpitanists have used innovative methods to raise awareness of the language, especially in 2006 and 2007. Multiple comic books were translated into Arpitan, such as Tintin, Lucky Luke, and Gaston Lagraffe, among other genres such as novels and biographies (Aliance culturèla arpitanna, n.d.).

2.4 Financial Aid

During a 2013 interview with Aliance culturèla arpitanna, Belkacem Lounes, delegate in the Monitoring Committee of Regional Languages (Comité de Suivi des Langues Régionales) in the Regional Council of Rhône-Alpes (Conseil Régional Rhône Alpes), revealed that his committee had met with budget constraints in supporting revitalization organizations that year with € 170.000 in pursuing policies in favour of regional languages (Neumuller, 2013). Keep in mind that the Rhône-Alpes regional government also supports Occitan as well. In 2016 the Rhône-Alpes department is combined with Auvergne into the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, which involves part of Langue d'öil as well, another regional language in France.

Although online activist groups have not disclosed much information about their budgets, the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes government dedicated € 333.000 to the promotion and development of regional languages as well as additional funding to organizations. This includes € 4.100 to Institute of the Savoyard Language, the Franco-Provençal of Savoy and € 6.000 to Aliance culturèla arpitanna (La Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, 2018).

2.5 Current Goals

Aliance culturèla arpitanna sets the goals of their association as to promote cultural projects linked to the Arpitan regions and particularly the promotion of historic language […] of Arpitan […], to make it visible to the public and be involved in promoting the idea of a codified orthography that will ensure a written intercomprehensibility (Aliance culturèla arpitanna, n.d.). This "codified orthography" refers to the ORB, which will be discussed later.

Besides, the Association of Teachers of Savoyard/Francoprovençal has been pushing the Ministry of National Education to include Arpitan as an option on the Brevet and the Baccalauréat, two educational qualification examinations that students need to take at the end of secondary school and high school, respectively. This would motivate students to continue studying if the language is to be tested. Unfortunately, the Ministry has refused the demand, classifying the language as part of the Occitan or Langues d'öil, while paradoxically the Ministry of Culture and Communication recognizes it as an independent language (Bron, 2011).

3. Impediments to Revitalization

3.1 Community Attitudes

Language revitalization efforts depend heavily on the will of the speakers themselves (Wurm, 2002) and this is naturally the ideal impetus for revitalization movements (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006). However, the Arpitan community maintains a generally negative perception of their language or are reluctant to revitalize it. The way the Arpitan community perceives their language may impede revitalization efforts in several ways, and local planners could consider incorporating tactics that shift community attitudes into revitalization plans.

First, a 2019 interview with local senior speakers showed that some may view Arpitan as the inferior language that is "prétentieux" (pretentious), "plagié" (plagiarised), "mal interprété" (misinterpreted) (Depau, 2018) and linguistically unevolved, with "no grammar" and is merely "deformed French" (Meune, 2007). This internalized depreciation of the Arpitan language is most probably the result of a painful experience at school during the 1940s, where speaking the "patois" meant being "mocked, or even told off" by teachers (Pecchio, 2015). Speaking a regional language was viewed as a fault that needed to be corrected in the child. Left with stressful, depressing memories, speakers may carry this shame after becoming adults and naturally choose not to teach the language to the next generation, thereby impeding the intergenerational transmission in the home domain. Yet this may be the only means of securing language revival in the long term and all other means (education, media, and government legislation) cannot support the same sustainable language use (Fishman, 1991).

Second of all, communities are unconfident and pessimistic about the revitalization efforts. According to a 2010 survey, "there is a clear discrepancy between the hopes and the expectations on behalf of these speakers for the language (Hawkey & Jonathan, 2015)."

However, this result was based on a mere sample of 18 interviewees and of course does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the whole population.

Third, it has been argued by some scholars that Arpitan has become a "postvernacular language" that still forms part of the speaker's identity but is no longer in use (Pivot, 2014). Some associate it with a long-gone past, and although they view it with much nostalgia and affection, they argue that language documentation is preferable to revitalization (Depau, 2018). Such an attitude reflects a reluctance to revitalize the language yet simultaneously longing for the recovery of one's cultural roots. This feeling is especially prevalent among seniors or traditional speakers. These are speakers who generally oppose the transmission of the language through schooling and prefer the traditional home transmission, the loss of which has partly contributed to their loss of faith in revitalization (Meune, 2007). Hence, activist groups should carefully investigate the general opinion of the local community and set goals accordingly. If, for instance, a community tilts towards language documentation instead of revitalization, then it may be a waste of time and effort trying to implement rigorous Arpitan courses at school.

Lastly, some parents also view Arpitan as a hindrance to social mobility. The same 2010 study as mentioned above reveals that speakers do not believe that an Arpitan curriculum at school should be mandatory. In comparison with a lingua franca like English, Arpitan indeed offers less economic values as a second language.

Community attitudes are essential for local activists to keep in mind when devising language revitalization plans so that language programs match the willingness of the community members, which is crucial to whether movements evoke resonance among speakers and achieve success.

3.2 Linguistic Varieties

Arpitan is a language with unique linguistic qualities that requires unique forms of revitalization work, compared to other languages. It is a grouping of many varieties with "highly localized phonological, morpho-syntactic, and lexical forms (Hawkey & Jonathan, 2015)" and it only exists in this state, according to linguist Gaston Tuaillon (Tuaillon, n.d.). Mutual intelligibility is reported as being problematic (Kasstan, 2019), even between speakers separated by only a few kilometers (Kasstan, 2015). These sub-languages are named independently, including Bressan, Dauphinois, Forézien, Lyonnais, and Savoyard in France; Valaisan, Vaudois, and Fribourgois in Switzerland; Faetar and Valdôtain in Italy (Hawkey & Jonathan, 2015). There

are other regional colloquial terms as well, such as "sarde" used by Savoyard speakers and "gaga" used in the Forez region. The sub-languages do not have sharp, distinct boundaries but instead form a transitional zone (Hall, 1949) that spreads across Southern France from east to west. Arpitan is simply the eastern part of that continuum.

This implies that, should the various localized forms be standardized and taught by the school curriculum as part of the revitalization campaign, there would then be an inevitable loss of the authenticity of the Arpitan varieties in their original form. This is because a standardized, written language is unlikely to imitate the spontaneous, fluid, living oral forms of Arpitan that constitute this "transitional zone." This may invoke the opposition of conservative revitalization efforts that aim to revitalize a "purist" form of Arpitan in its entire diversity and variety. Besides, this linguistic variety has led current efforts to be highly localized and limited within the boundaries of individual communities rather than being a pan-regional Arpitan movement. In addition to the language, community needs and aspirations may vary, indicating that activists could consider approaching communities individually.

3.3 Orthography

Arpitan has remained an oral language throughout its history, and due to its high level of linguistic variation, many individual phonetic systems exist across the sub-varieties. Thus, orthography systems have been developed independently within the local communities (Hawkey & Jonathan, 2015).

An attempt to standardize Arpitan across all varieties was a "supradialectal" (pandialectal) writing system called Orthography of Reference B (hereafter referred to as ORB), developed by Dominique Stich in 2003, after which he published a French-Arpitan dictionary in ORB. This system seeks a compromise among the differences by allowing for various pronunciations of the same word. For instance, words like "lafé, lassé, and lahél" come from different sub-varieties but all are cognates that mean "milk." The ORB thus uses "laçél" to represent all of them. The same word can be pronounced differently to suit the needs of the individual: some pronounce the ending "l," some do not; some do not pronounce "ç" and some others, after learning, pronounce it as "f" or "ss" (International Federation of Arpitan, n.d.). The ORB is prevalently used on the Internet for Arpitan, and it was also used to translate the Tintin comic books into Arpitan (Hawkey & Jonathan, 2019)

Apart from ORB, another writing system that is used is the Conflans Orthography, proposed by the Center of Savoyard Culture and linguists G. Tuaillon et C. Abry. This writing system strictly specifies the transcription of every single sound present in the Savoyard language, a sub-variety of Arpitan spoken in the Savoy region. Using the Conflans Orthography, each sound in the International Phonetic Alphabet can only be transcribed in one way, which means that intercomprehension between dialects of written material using the Conflans Orthography is difficult due to different transcriptions. Furthermore, even though the Conflans Orthography is the reference writing system in the Savoy region, local dictionaries may not strictly adhere to this standard. For instance, the Dictionary Savoyard-French of the Albanais Region states in the preface: "For the consonants, I have adopted the spelling system called the Conflans. For the vowels, I believed it would do well if I distanced myself away from it to restore all the nuances in my patois (Viret, 1998)." Communities outside the Savoy region have likewise developed individual dictionaries, such as Bressan and Faetar.

There has been an ongoing debate among revitalization activists, local scholars, and community members alike about which orthography system is better: a centralized pan-regional standardization or independent writing systems tailored for each of the varieties. Standardized writing facilitates the process of documentation, enables mutual comprehension, which increases opportunities to use the language since speakers would no longer be restricted to Arpitan usage within the local community. It also allows for the language to enter higher social domains, such as in government legislation and education, especially in the case of Arpitan where activists aim for its adoption in the Baccalauréat, i.e. the national high school examination system in France. It has also been perceived to be a unifying political strength in other revitalization cases (Tulloch, 2006). Nonetheless, it would be useless if speakers choose not to adopt it, due to the perception that it is an artificial, externally imposed language that no longer represents their own. This is particularly true in the case of Arpitan speakers, where some criticize ORB as too complicated and similar to Standard French, exactly the language that contributed to Arpitan's decline (Hawkey & Jonathan, 2015; Grasset, 2017). It is also condemned of incapable of presenting Arpitan in its variety, the essential feature of Arpitan. If it is imposed against the will of the speakers, standardization may backfire and cause an internal split within the community, which is detrimental to language revitalization (Tulloch, 2006). On the other hand, non-standardization emphasizes the regional identity and promotes a sense of attachment to the local form. It could

serve as a boost if bottom-up grassroots movements could get fully motivated in revitalization efforts. However, an over-prevalence of micro-level language planning may also cause a "decentralization of initiatives" that is equally harmful to revitalization, as seen in the case of the Innu language in Canada (Mailhot, 1985). Mutual unintelligibility may result in speakers using French instead of Arpitan in cross-community communication, as well as the government questioning the promotion of Arpitan without a shared form (Tulloch, 2006). It is still a question whether Arpitanists should unify the writing system into one or should the two systems coexist as they do in the status quo. Arpitanists also debate whether Arpitan should be written down in the first place. Many traditional speakers regard writing the language as "murdering" it and "denatur[ing]" it (Depau, 2018) because its diversity lies in its oral form.

3.4 No Clear Identity

Unlike other regional languages in France (such as Breton), Arpitan speakers lack a clear sense of an "Arpitanian" identity, due to its highly localized varieties. A linguistic sense of social belonging, if there is any, remains confined to the local level (Hawkey & Jonathan, 2015). Since language is deeply connected with social backgrounds and personal identity, this may impede Arpitan movements from appealing to a social sense of belonging as powerful rhetoric, which is a useful tool for raising awareness and uniting the community.

4. Positive Conditions for Revitalization

4.1 Motivation

Surveys showed a shared request among Rhône-Alps habitats (both speakers and non-speakers) for policies in favor of the Occitan (i.e. another regional language spoken in the Rhône-Alps region) and Arpitan languages. This shows that communities recognize the importance of endangered language protection and revitalization.

The Savoy community in Savoy and Haute-Savoie has taken this awareness a step further by combining language revitalization with demands for the recognition of fundamental human rights. The region used to belong to the Duchy of Savoy and was an independent, self-governing territory until it was annexed by France in 1860. Today, the French government does not recognize the Savoyards as an ethnic minority group and has been "failing to adhere to international standards regarding the protection of minorities and their human rights," including lack of "funding and [local] control over their linguistic education" (UNPO, 2019).

The "Mouvement Harpitanya" in Aosta Valley, Valais, and Savoy during the 1980s was a similar but more radical separatist movement, where Arpitan was linked to the "oppressed classes" as opposed to the French-speaking bourgeoisie and élites. The movement fell out of favor in the end, but it nonetheless advanced certain ideas. For instance, there is a similarity between the movement and the recent cultural movement that gathers young people in Switzerland, Savoy, and Lyon etc. and pushes forth a common cultural program (Lavy, n.d.).

By tying language revitalization movements to larger social rights movements, language functions as a critical symbol of identity that distinguishes the ethnic group as a minority group. Associating language protection with a higher cause (such as human rights) mobilizes more people to join in the movement and to take pride in their Arpitan heritage. A strong motivation that comes from the political context thus serves as a powerful stimulus to language revitalization.

4.2 Regional Government Support

In the interview with Aliance Culturèla Arpitana mentioned in the "Financial Aid" section, Lounes explained what has been done at the department of Rhône-Alpes and what it aims to do. In terms of the media, they have made discussions with the federation of associative radios in Rhône-Alpes and would arrange similar discussions with the television to broadcast Arpitanian content. This is done in the attempt to reduce internalized contempt within Arpitan (and Occitan) communities through the spread of music, debates, and news in Arpitan, as well as through the promotion of local products.

The committee has also made co-operations with other regional language groups with more successful revitalization movements (Occitan) so that bilingual schools could be established on the model of Occitan schools. The ultimate goal is for children to transmit the language from the school to the home domain. Other aims include creating jobs for Arpitan teachers to launch a voluntarist policy since negotiations for national support have been futile (Aliance Culturèla Arpitana, 2013).

The department also includes raising awareness as a major part of their campaign, since several inhabitants are still ignorant of regional languages or the importance of supporting their transmission through public policies. They also try to convince the young and the society of the many benefits of multilingualism (Bengio, 2011).

Notably, officials' approach Arpitan as a means to better formulates a distinctive regional identity, which is an important counter current against the notion that languages belong to the nation and not to the regions (Hawkey & Jonathan, 2015). However, it must be kept in mind that the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes also needs to relocate its resources to the protection of two other regional languages as well. Though it covers most of the Arpitan-speaking communities within French borders, Franc-Comtois remains unprotected by the Department Bourgogne-Franche-Comté.

4.3 General Delegation for the French Language and the Languages of France

The General Delegation for the French Language and the Languages of France operates under the Ministry of Culture and Communication and is in charge of the current French language policies. It was established as one of the entities responsible for carrying out the Loi Toubon and represents an important move towards linguistic heterogenization in French language policies. Its missions include:

- To contribute to the development and the valorization of the languages of France
- To coordinate work associated with the conservation, constitution, and diffusion of the corpus in French and the languages of France within the ministry responsible for culture
- To assure the observation of linguistic practices, within the assistance of administrations and competent research circles (Mitterand, 2009)

The delegation has held collaborative dialogues with regional governments, the linguistic and cultural centers, and local authorities. It also accords the official status of "language of France" to Arpitan and recommends that Arpitan courses could take place in a limited number of institutions with the tools needed (dictionaries and scholastic grammar) (Paumier, 2013).

4.4 Sufficient Documentation

Arpitan, as previously mentioned, is a fully-documented language with a written grammar and a dictionary. Hence, it is possible to teach or learn Arpitan. In the worst-case scenario – the language becomes extinct – it is still potentially revivable, as long as speakers have enough will. This is shown in the case of Hebrew revival, where the language was completely extinct yet was revitalized due to an abundance of documentation and an incredible will and effort from the Jewish diaspora (Zuckermann & Walsh, 2011).

5. Recommendations

5.1 Adopt Double Orthographies

As mentioned above, there has been a long debate between the two writing systems of ORB and regional orthographies. This paper proposes that the two orthographies could be adopted by local communities in parallel in different domains of usage; they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Different orthographies may be used for different domains of usage, for instance, regional writing systems can record theatre, poetry, folksongs, or other local forms of documents. However, in other domains of usage that require a formal use of language (e.g. government, education, workplace), written texts (curriculum development, legislative texts) may need to adopt a standardized form of orthography, given the unfavorable cost-benefit analysis and infeasibility of, for instance, developing a separate set of learning materials for every variety (Tulloch, 2006).

Hence these formal uses of language require a standardized orthography that fosters pan-regional mutual intelligibility. At the same time, it does not compete with regional orthographies but is rather a complementary writing standard that is necessary for Arpitan to enter "higher" social domains, which contributes to its long-term survival (Tulloch, 2006). Also, the implementation of a standard has proved to be beneficial even when it is met with opposing voices from the community at first, as in the case of Breton where the standard was increasingly accepted by speakers over time (Tulloch, 2006). However, a possible outcome is indeed the younger generation becoming incapable of using the traditional orthography. This is where intergenerational transmission and usage in the home domain becomes especially important. This may prove difficult for students, who would need to learn two sets of spelling systems.

To promote oral mutual intelligibility, revitalizers could consider other strategies, such as increased exposure of different Arpitan varieties on the radio, as in the case of Irish. The Irish radio, Raidió na Gaeltachta, broadcasts programs in all three Irish dialects, helping speakers to familiarize the pronunciations of other dialects while connecting them through shared cultural content that promotes a sense of attachment to other communities (Tulloch, 2006).

5.2 Shift Community Attitudes

To encourage the double writing standard mentioned above, revitalizers could consider emphasizing that ORB should be perceived as an additional skill in the linguistic repertoire of the speakers instead of as an opportunity cost. Though the ORB may not be the most authentic

orthography, it is necessary for the long-term prosperity of the language. It is also the best outcome possible because it incorporates all the varieties of Arpitan. This avoids selecting one of the dialects as a standard, thereby placing others in a socially inferior status, which provokes stigmatization and language extinction. Furthermore, speakers should understand that this policy only puts the ORB and the regional orthography at equal prestige with only separate functions.

Other community attitudes towards Arpitan could also be shifted through the positive promotion of the image of Arpitan. To counter the notion that "Arpitan is inferior to French," revitalizers could emphasize that this is an externally infused misconception, a result of past "misguided" policies. Informing speakers about recent moves towards inclusion and valorization of regional languages could infuse a sense of being valued and appreciated. Revitalizers could also publicize that one of the Arpitan varieties, Faetar, spoken in Faeto, in Southern Italy, is a more prestigious language than even French or Italian among its speakers. Indeed, one of the crucial reasons that Faetar is still a living language is the pride that speakers associate with the language (Zulato et al, 2017). The community uses Faetar in all informal domains and are deeply connected to it as an integral part of their minority identity, which speakers view as a distinctive one, distanced from the Italian national identity. They also hold positive views of its usage in education (Perta, 2008). However, this is most probably so because Faetar is linked to a Gallic heritage that distinguishes it from the rest of the Italian dialects, a situation that cannot be replicated in French Arpitania.

Following the Faeto community example, planners could implement new domains of usage (e.g. museums, street signs, choir performances, preaching, recipes, pop culture, online social media platforms) which increases exposure to Arpitan and thereby attracts the attention of community members to the language. This also implies that Arpitan is not obsolete but a living, dynamic language in use, an important perception that distinguishes revitalization from the documentation.

Other successful revitalization stories from Italy can be used to boost confidence in revitalization efforts so that speakers hold optimistic attitudes towards the prospect of these movements, which is crucial for mobilizing the active participation of the community. However, Italian dialects and regional languages receive support from the national government (namely Law No. 482/1999) and allow the language to be used in education, in public offices, in local government, in the judicial system, and the mass media (Perta, 2008). Hence, the political and

social background is already in favor of Arpitan use in Italy. However, it is reported that speakers feel somewhat apathetic to the external standards imposed by local authorities and planners and hence continue their methods of preserving cultural heritage and practicing the language in private (Perta, 2008). This shows that the active participation from the speakers may be more important and effective than legal aid, implying that French Arpitan community members may be able to overcome the lack of national government support with local initiatives while at the same time pushing for legislative change.

5.3 Attract Community Members

To foster intergenerational connections that would serve as a step to reviving home domain transmission, planners could consider organizing community gatherings that encourage young speakers or new speakers to approach traditional speakers. This would also be beneficial for valorization among senior traditional speakers because it signals a renewed interest of the youth towards the cultural heritage that elders possess, which could be an extremely effective motivator.

Local planners could also consider compensation for active local speakers as a source of motivation as well. This could come in the form of financial or honorary titles, etc. The exact form of recompense would depend on the local situation, including whether speakers are already motivated even without compensation, whether the budget allows, whether speakers are reluctant to accept any reward other than money, etc.. This may require interviews with locals to obtain a full comprehension of the local preferences, combined with a cost-benefit analysis of the financial outcomes.

5.4 Promote Multilingualism

Italian Arpitan communities have demonstrated that multilingualism is key to balancing the national identity and the regional one. A 2002 survey by the Foundation Emile Chanoux reveals that in Aosta Valley, 23.5 percent of the population speak Italian, French, and Franco-Provençal; another 12.7 percent speak Italian, French, Franco-Provençal and Piedmontese (an Italian dialect); 55.4 percent of the population speak Franco-Provençal with other languages; 75 percent speak French and 96 percent speak Italian. Other Italian dialects, including Calabrian, Veneto, and Sardo Walser, can also be heard; Walser, a German dialect is spoken by some; new immigrants speak Spanish and Portuguese. The majority of the population is bilingual, trilingual,

or quadrilingual ("Aostans", 2015). Faetar is heavily influenced by French, a result of contact between languages that come from multilingualism (Bichurina, 2016).

Aostans view language as a strong symbol of social status: Arpitan is the language of local peasants, French is associated with the bourgeoisie, and Italian is the language of the state and that of immigrants (Bichurina, 2016). Besides, languages are assigned to different functions though equally important in one's linguistic repertoire: Faetar provides the cultural value of staying rooted in one's origins, while Italian is the work-oriented capital that permits social mobility (Perta, 2008). Hence, French Arpitan speakers should understand that learning French is not a trade-off with speaking Arpitan. The two can hold different social functions and can be used in parallel. Also, compared to other lingua francas such as English, Arpitan may be easier to learn due to its similarity to French.

5.5 Improve Revitalization Organizations

The revitalization project in Aosta Valley is extremely systematic in terms of compartmentalization: the René Willien Center of Francoprovençal Studies (Centre d'Études Francoprovençales René Willien) promotes and researches the Arpitan language and Arpitanian culture; the Regional Bureau for Ethnology and Linguistics (Bureau régional pour l'éthnologie et la Linguistique) is responsible for language planning (i.e. authorities deliberately influencing the usage of language within a speech community); the Sportello Linguistico assists with learning both the written and the oral language as well as Arpitan translation and redaction. French Arpitan efforts could perhaps draw inspiration from this manner of functioning (Zulato et al, 2017).

Activists could approach each community individually to investigate the specific needs, attitudes, and usage situations and make clear, tailored goals for the communities, perhaps, if circumstances allow, in collaboration with linguists and sociologists as well. As discussed above, maximum effectiveness can best be achieved by matching community aspirations with the goals of revitalization efforts. It is also important that planners first aim for practical, conservative goals, such as "one hour of Arpitan class in one local high school per week," instead of "re-establish Arpitan home transmission."

Cross-community communication should be pursued to share successful methods of revitalizing Arpitan and of promoting cultural activities. Currently, this type of communication comes in the form of annual Arpitan festivals. This can be expanded to more frequent

conversations that also help to construct a pan-regional "Arpitanian" identity by tightening bonds across the region.

6. Conclusion

This essay reviewed existing literature on the linguistic situation in French Arpitania. Subsequently, it proposed several recommendations to revitalize efforts from a third-party point of view. Several factors have contributed to its decline in usage and may impede revitalization, while advantageous conditions exist as well. Since the Arpitan movement is relatively recent, continued updates of the linguistic situation in Arpitania would be of great interest to the academic community. Further research may be conducted on the different orthographies in Arpitania, including the conflict between divergence and standardization, or on mutual intelligibility across varieties. Current materials mostly focus on the attitudes of senior speakers; hence the voice of younger generations may be included in research to provide a complete overview of community attitudes. Furthermore, linguists could consider working with local communities to provide an exact report of the situation and to offer expertise on revitalization efforts.

The present author hopes that the proposals presented may contribute to Arpitan revitalization, both in terms of language planning and community-level change. As a major symbol of social identity, language is the vehicle through which people experience much of the cultural, spiritual and intellectual life. When a language is lost, many of these practices would need to be translated into another language, and in this process, much of one's roots are lost. Another extinct language also means fewer materials for linguists to understand the human mind in terms of how we perceive the external world. For a fascinating language like Arpitan, it is in everyone's best interest to revive and pass on the cultural legacy.

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