

“UNE ARME DE PREMIER ORDRE”: REPRESENTATION OF BRETON AND WELSH IN REVIVALIST DISCOURSE AROUND 1900¹

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The present article examines the ways in which the Breton language is represented and perceived in revivalist writings from around 1900, with comparative references to the image of Welsh in the publications of Welsh revivalist authors from the same period. Undoubtedly, the existence of the minority language was one of the most important arguments for any nation-building movement in claiming cultural and political rights. In the process of promoting the language, the revivalists were nevertheless facing difficulties arising from its minority position. These included, for instance, the language boundary in Brittany or the risk of being accused of separatism. Revivalist movements therefore adopted different discourse strategies to represent the language, with the aim to appeal not only to its speakers but also to accommodate members of the majority language community, as well as an international audience. This article seeks to answer the following questions: what are the representational strategies the revivalist groups adopted to defend and promote the minority language in addressing the general public? How did they communicate the necessity to revive or keep a minority language alive to a non-speaker or a non-member of the nation? The main sources employed are publications by members of Breton and Welsh revivalist movements. Methods of discourse analysis are applied in a comparative and transnational perspective.

Introduction

The history of any revivalist movement is naturally associated with a certain minority language whose rights were being neglected within a larger state

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scheme. The existence of the language represents one of the most valid arguments in the pursuit of autonomy rights or recognition of a separate identity and culture within a state or vis-à-vis a national public. Therefore the language usually occupied the most important place within the collective representation of a revivalist movement, and the Breton regionalist movement before the First World War was no exception in this respect.

It is however a well-known fact that the Breton language has never been widely spoken across the whole Breton territory. Since the Middle Ages Brittany has been linguistically divided between the so-called Upper Brittany (the eastern part of the Armorican peninsula), whose inhabitants speak Gallo (a Romance language close to French), and Lower Brittany (the western part of the peninsula), where Breton, a Celtic language, is spoken. While the language boundary has shifted subsequently and both languages have lost much of their ground to French, this linguistic barrier was still firmly in place during the second half of the nineteenth century. Bearing that in mind, one could pose a question as to how the Breton regionalists coped with this difficulty in presenting the necessity to revive the Breton language. Moreover, revivalist efforts at the time could easily be discredited by being labelled as separatist. It was therefore very important to carefully tune the revivalist communication about the Breton language towards the feelings of the general public, be it Breton or French.

This article attempts to answer the following questions. First, what were the representational strategies the revivalist groups adopted to defend and promote the minority language in addressing the public? Second, how did they communicate the necessity to revive or keep a minority language to a non-speaker or a non-member of the nation? The case of Welsh and its revival is used here as a comparative reference in a study of Breton regionalism in order to enhance the understanding of the chosen discourse strategies. The main sources are relevant publications by members of Breton and Welsh revivalist movements. Methods of discourse analysis inspired by the work of Ruth Amossy are applied in a comparative and transnational perspective.² The first part of the article provides the necessary context by introducing the Breton and Welsh revival movements. The core part explores five main discursive strategies used by Breton regionalists in their publications, leading to a summary.

² Ruth Amossy, *La présentation de soi: ethos et identité verbale* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2010).

Context

The revivalist efforts in Brittany before the First World War peaked in the formation of the Union régionaliste bretonne (URB), established in 1898, and the Fédération régionaliste de Bretagne (FRB), formed in 1911 as a result of secession from the URB. The movement started to take shape in the 1890s and was based on the local cultural and literary awakening that occurred in all French regions in the second half of the nineteenth century.³ Some authors consider the URB the beginning of the whole “mouvement breton” (*emsav*),⁴ because of its extensive goals that were for the first time not only cultural, but also political, seeking to gain greater autonomy rights for Brittany.⁵ The main role of the organization, presented in the first issue of its official journal *Bulletin de l'Union régionaliste bretonne*, was to protect and defend regional, political, literary, agricultural, and business-related interests of Brittany.⁶ In this context it is important to note that as the movement called for wider autonomy rights on a federal principle, it would be inaccurate to refer to the URB members as separatists. As for the social composition of its readership, URB appealed mostly to the French-speaking *petits bourgeois*. The society gathered several hundred members, including some eminent personalities: the Marquis de l'Estourbeillon, who served as president of the URB and became its most important figure, Anatole Le Braz, Jean Choleau, Yves Berthou, Taldir Jaffrennou, Francis Even, François Vallée, and many others.⁷

The efforts of the revivalists received a strong impulse from the vehement centralist policy that was applied to the whole of the French territory in the 1890s. The republican government carried out important steps to centralize the French state not only administratively, but also culturally. Several laws significantly diminishing the position of local languages were implemented at the time, in combination with efforts to unify the education system.⁸

³ For more information on the literary awakening and the formation of regionalism in France, see publications by Anne-Marie Thiesse, e.g., “L'invention du régionalisme à la Belle Époque,” *Le Mouvement Social*, 160.3 (1992): 11-32, or *Écrire la France : le mouvement littéraire régionaliste de langue française entre la Belle-Époque et la Libération* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1991).

⁴ The *Emsav* (meaning “uplifting” or “uprising”) is a general term used to cover all autonomist, regionalist, or separatist initiatives in Brittany.

⁵ E.g., André Yann Denis, *Histoire du mouvement breton* (Paris: La Pensée universelle, 1992).

⁶ “Congrès de Morlaix, aout 1898,” *Bulletin de l'Union régionaliste bretonne. Congrès de Morlaix.-Vannes.-Guingamp.-Quimperlé de 1898 à 1901* (1902): 12.

⁷ The URB bulletin issues usually contain a list of members for the given year.

⁸ For more information on education under the Third Republic in France see Anne-Marie Thiesse, *Ils apprenaient la France. L'exaltation des régions dans le discours patriotique* (Paris: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1997).

For the purpose of this discourse analysis, the bulletins and almanacs of the Union are the main sources. The bulletins were published annually in relation to a congress of the URB, organized every year between 1898 and 1913. The almanacs were also published annually between 1904 and 1914. Regarding their content, the latter was intended for a more general readership than the bulletins, which contained practical information about the life in the region.

Welsh revivalists enjoyed a better position than their Breton counterparts in this period, which was due to several factors. First, the language movement and literary awakening in Wales had already started to develop at the turn of the eighteenth century, much sooner than in Brittany. The Cymmrodorion Society was established as early as 1751, its original aim being to gather important Welsh speakers in London. From 1820, it provided significant financial support for *Eisteddfodau*, the Welsh-language festivals of music and literary activities, which became the most important events for promoting and cultivating the Welsh language. The idea was also reinforced by the activities of the famous Iolo Morganwg (Edward Williams), founder of the Gorsedd Beirdd Ynys Prydain (Assembly of the Bards of the Island of Britain), a society gathering Welsh-language poets, which exists up to this day. A number of other societies promoting the Welsh language and culture were founded during the nineteenth century. The scandal known as the Treachery of the Blue Books in 1847 and the Education Act of 1870 had a great impact on the social history of the Welsh language and Welsh society started to defend its culture intensively.⁹ The number of Welsh periodicals published between 1835 and 1850 was close to 200 and by 1900 it even doubled. It was the press that had the greatest impact on the acknowledgement and success of the Eisteddfod as a national institution, while originally the impact of the event was only local.¹⁰ The 1880s and 1890s is a period that saw the most noticeable improvement of the position of Welsh

⁹ Treachery of the Blue Books (Brad y Llyfrau Gleision) is a term used to describe a scandal connected to the publication of three volumes of *Reports on the Commissioners of Enquiry into the State of Education in Wales* in 1847. It contained controversial and disparaging information about the Welsh, aiming against their language in particular. It resulted in strong reactions and agitation around the country and had an important impact on education and literature in Wales. Digital copies of the “blue books” and a brief commentary on their impact on Welsh society are available at the website of the National Library of Wales, “The Blue Books of 1847,” *The Library.wales*, <https://www.library.wales/discover/digital-gallery/printed-material/the-blue-books-of-1847> (accessed 20 March 2020).

¹⁰ Marion Löffler, *The Literary and Historical Legacy of Iolo Morganwg (1826-1926): Iolo Morganwg and the Romantic Tradition in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007).

within the society, especially in the domain of schooling, as bilingual education and instruction in Welsh were perceived more positively in primary schools in Welsh-speaking areas than ever before.¹¹

For the purpose of this article, two influential journals of the time, promoting Welsh culture, literature, language and politics, have been examined and analysed: *Young Wales* as the representative magazine of the Cymru Fydd movement, a political organization tending towards Home Rule rights,¹² and the magazine *WALES* edited by Owen Morgan Edwards,¹³ which had more of a cultural scope. The issues of *Young Wales*, published 1895-1903, and the issues of *WALES*, published 1894-1897, provide sources for the discourse analysis of the representation of Welsh in this article. These two journals were chosen as a representative sample to cover opinions from a larger spectrum of the Welsh cultural environment of the time.¹⁴ Attention is also devoted to the position of the Welsh Language Society, founded in 1899, whose mission was “to promote (a) the use of Welsh as a means of education, and (b) better teaching of Welsh in the Welsh-speaking, English-speaking, and bilingual districts of Wales.”¹⁵

Discursive Strategies

“Une arme de premier ordre”

To start with the language itself, its existence and presence within Brittany is the most emphasized aspect in the regionalist publications. The authors are aware of its importance in claiming autonomy rights and therefore they highlight its presence in most of the articles, although only around seven percent of the texts in the bulletins were actually written in Breton (and most of these were songs or poems). Breton regionalists confirm the role of the language as leverage by calling it “une arme de premier ordre” [a supreme weapon] they have in their

¹¹ For more information about social history of the Welsh language in the nineteenth century, see the extraordinary collection *A Social History of the Welsh Language. The Welsh Language and its Social domains 1801-1911*, ed. Geraint H. Jenkins (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000).

¹² Kenneth Morgan, *Wales (1880-1980): Rebirth of a Nation* (New York: University of Wales Press, 1981) 114-17.

¹³ For more information about O.M. Edwards see Morgan 103-105.

¹⁴ All issues are available in digital form at the website of the National Library of Wales, “Welsh Journals,” *The Library.wales*, <https://journals.library.wales/home> (accessed 20 March 2020).

¹⁵ *The Welsh Language Society: Scheme and Rules of the Society* (Bangor: Jarvis & Foster, 1901) 5.

hands.¹⁶ They also express a deep hope and belief in the successful future of their actions with special reference to the future of Breton, such as: “In fifty years, the question will not be whether the Breton language should disappear before the French language, but it will be whether the French language will not one day disappear before the Breton language.”¹⁷

The vital importance of Breton for the URB was manifested most prominently in the issue of its bulletin from 1902, which as a whole could be considered an indignant reaction to the prohibition of using Breton as a language of instruction in religious education, including the catechism. This act was proposed by Émile Combes, French Minister of the Interior.¹⁸ A single issue of the URB bulletin usually contains several hundred pages, and in the 1902 issue, the whole bulk of pages 37-235 was dedicated to the topic. It even includes a transcription of the discussion over the prohibition of the Breton language in the French parliament in January 1903 and a list of members who voted for adopting the controversial piece of legislation.¹⁹ Moreover, the URB members did not hesitate to present this measure as an international insult in Pan-Celtic circles:

This attack against the Breton language had its repercussions not only among the Celts of Armorica, but also among those living overseas, and in the middle of October, Mr. Le Marquis de l’Estourbeillon, President of the Union Régionaliste Bretonne, received from the Committee of the Panceltic Association established in Dublin the invitation to attend an extraordinary meeting where he would get advice on how to make Mr. Combes reconsider his decision.²⁰

¹⁶ “Journée du samedi 10 aout. Séance de travail du matin,” *Bulletin de l’Union régionaliste bretonne. Congrès de Questembert et de Rostrenen 1907* (1908): 106.

¹⁷ “Dans cinquante ans, la question ne se posera pas de savoir si la langue bretonne doit disparaître devant la langue française, mais elle se posera de savoir si la langue française ne disparaîtra pas un jour devant la langue bretonne.” H. Lajat, “L’Avenir de la race bretonne,” *Almanak Keoredigez Broadus Breiz Evis Ar Bloavez 1904. Almanach de l’Union régionaliste betonne pour l’année 1904* (1904): 103.

¹⁸ For more information on the prohibition of Breton language in 1902 and the reaction of the public see Fañch Broudic, “L’interdiction du breton en 1902: une étape vers la Séparation,” *Les Bretons et la Séparation, 1795-2005*, ed. Jean Balcou (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2006).

¹⁹ *Bulletin de l’Union régionaliste bretonne Congrès d’Auray 1902* (1903): 203-205.

²⁰ “Cet attentat contre la langue bretonne eût son retentissement, non seulement parmi les Celtes d’Armorique, mais aussi parmi ceux d’Outre-Mer et, dès le milieu du mois d’octobre, M. Le marquis de l’Estourbeillon, Président de l’Union Régionaliste Bretonne, recevait du Comité de l’Association Panceltique établi à Dublin, l’invitation

The Welsh revivalist press also emphasized the Welsh language and its preservation as an important matter to discuss. Correspondence between Breton and Welsh revivalists includes mutual assurances about the priority that should be given to language. For instance, Taldir Jaffrennou, member of the URB and the Breton Gorsedd, received a letter from a member of the Guild of Graduates of the University of Wales, who claims: "I am in entire accord with you in thinking that the language movement is the most important of all the Celtic movements. If the Irish had given more attention to the preservation of their language, they would have done better than they have."²¹

Nevertheless, in Welsh journals, the emphasis on language was connected primarily to three further themes which were given priority: education, Welsh history, and Welsh literature. Language revival itself did not represent such an important issue as it did in the Breton case. This difference between Breton and Welsh revivalists seems to lie in the understanding of language as a defining tool for building a nation at the time. In contrast with the Bretons, the definition of a nation did not depend so heavily upon the existence of Welsh for the Welsh activists, although it still represented a powerful asset.²² Vernacular literature, culture, and history provided a more comprehensive argument for claiming autonomy rights in the Welsh case, covering both the English- and Welsh-speaking population. One author in an article for the magazine *WALES* for instance diminishes the role of language and explains the existence of a separate Welsh nation by topography:

It is not race or language that has made Wales a separate country and the Welsh a peculiar people. Wales owes its separate existence to its mountains; it is to the mountains that the Welsh people owe their national characteristics. [...] Many languages have been spoken among the mountains, memories of which survive in place names or in the grammatical peculiarities of the living languages of the country: but Wales remains while language after language dies away from its eternal mountains.²³

de se rendre à un meeting extraordinaire où l'on aviserait aux moyens de faire revenir M. Combes sur sa décision." *Bulletin de l'Union régionaliste bretonne Congrès d'Auray 1902* (1903): 40.

²¹ Charles Morgan, Letter to François (Taldir) Jaffrennou, 13 November 1899, Fonds Jaffrennou-Taldir, Departmental Archives of Finistère, Brittany, France, 44 J, 104-106.

²² Paul O'Leary, "The Languages of Patriotism in Wales 1840-1880," *A Social History of the Welsh Language. The Welsh Language and its Social domains 1801-1911*, 536-37.

²³ "The History of Wales. II. – Why Wales Has a History," *WALES* (June 1894): 57.

Apolitical and Loyalist Attitudes

In the process of putting forward a minority language, the Breton regionalists were often forced to defend themselves against accusations of separatism. In response to this, they adopted a representational strategy of open apoliticism and a non-sectarian position, while expressing their loyalty towards the central state. To put it simply, this rhetoric aimed to argue that there was no relevant reason for preventing the Bretons from reviving and keeping their language since it was not meant as an anti-governmental or anti-republican effort. The second article of the statutes of the URB puts it clearly: "The URB prohibits all political or religious discussions."²⁴ The article also possibly served to avoid penalties according to the Association Act (*Association loi*) of 1901 which stipulates that associations cannot have "an illicit objective, against the laws, the principles of morality, or cannot have the aim of attacking the integrity of the national territory and the republican form of the government."²⁵

The loyalty of Bretons towards the French state was communicated in various ways. Firstly, when talking about the relation between Brittany and France, the Breton regionalists adopted the rhetoric of the Third Republic by calling Brittany "petite Patrie" (small homeland) and referring to France as "grande Patrie" (great homeland). This was a general discourse strategy used by the French state at the time to address former provinces, such as Brittany, with the purpose of ideologically unifying France, so far culturally a highly diversified territory. Consequently, the regionalists could safely use the terms "nation" and "national" also in reference to Brittany. Furthermore, they were also defending themselves against accusations of separatism by direct statements or proofs of loyalty. For instance, in the description of an event organized by the URB, explicit reference was made to the national anthem, "La Marseillaise," and the flag-salute ceremony ("Salut au Drapeau") as an integral part of the gathering, with a witty footnote saying: "They would not have grounds to call us separatists!"²⁶ Lastly, the Bretons were constantly referring to a military force

²⁴ "L'URB s'interdit toutes discussions politiques et religieuses," Statuts de l'Union régionaliste bretonne, part of a letter to the prefect, 29 April 1903, Departmental Archives of Morbihan, Brittany, France, T 1322.

²⁵ "un objet illicite, contraire aux lois, aux bonnes mœurs, ou qui aurait pour but de porter atteinte à l'intégrité du territoire national et à la forme républicaine du Gouvernement," "Loi du 1er juillet 1901 relative au contrat d'association," *Journal Officiel de la République française* (2 July 1901): 4025.

²⁶ "On aurait mauvaise grâce à nous traiter de séparatistes!" *Bulletin de l'Union régionaliste bretonne Congrès d'Auray 1902* (1903): 29.

that Brittany possesses and which France used, especially during the Franco-Prussian War. Thus, according to the regionalist rhetoric, the Breton people deserved to have rights to revive and keep their language because they had already proved their loyalty: “[...] contrary to the ministry’s insinuations, Breton was and is the national language of Brittany, despite our union with the beautiful country of France, which we love and which our fathers defended.”²⁷

As regards Welsh revivalist discourse, the *WALES* magazine edited by O.M. Edwards proclaimed its apolitical position from the very beginning. Edwards describes the magazine as “non-political” in the first paragraph of the introduction to the first volume,²⁸ and stresses this position later on when he explicitly describes the Welsh version of the magazine *CYMRU* as a journal for the Welsh-speaking public “that was neither sectarian nor political.”²⁹ On the other hand, *Young Wales*, as an official journal of the political movement *Cymru Fydd*, shows its political position openly, in contrast with other Welsh media of the period:

We gladly take this opportunity of acknowledging, with a feeling of much indebtedness, the yeoman services which Mr. O. M. Edwards and others of our countrymen are rendering our country through the medium of their periodicals. [...] Our mission is mapped out in other directions. Our aims are to a great extent political, and for this reason we hope to fill a place in the periodical literature of Wales, which is at present unoccupied.³⁰

According to this statement it seems that such apolitical viewpoints represented a mainstream within the Welsh media environment at the time. It is difficult to draw conclusions from this impression, however, and to evaluate whether the proclaimed apoliticism was not a mere strategy applied in order to support the Welsh language. Regarding the use of loyalty to the central state as an argument in advocating language rights as we find it in Breton regionalism, discourse analysis of Welsh journals does not indicate similar tendencies. The explanation

²⁷ “[...] contrairement aux insinuations du ministère, le Breton a été et est la langue nationale de la Bretagne, malgré notre union au beau pays de France, que nous aimons et que nos pères ont défendu,” “Protéstation de la Fédération des Etudiants Bretons,” *Bulletin de l’Union régionaliste bretonne Congrès d’Auray 1902* (1903): 62.

²⁸ Owen M. Edwards, “Introduction to Volume I,” *WALES* (1894): III.

²⁹ Owen M. Edwards, “Introduction,” *WALES* (May 1894): 1.

³⁰ “Salutatory,” *Young Wales* (January 1895): 2.

might lie in a more ruthless attitude of the French state towards minority languages than was the case in the United Kingdom.

The Ancient Language

Another strategy that the URB used to promote and justify the usage of the Breton language was a rather ‘traditional’ tack of claiming and underlining its ancient character. The purpose of this rhetoric was to prove a genuine right to use and keep the language by declaring its antiquity. Accordingly, the usual adjectives or qualities associated with the Breton language in the regionalist publications follow this pattern and the most frequent expressions thus include “langue antique des Bretons” (the ancient language of the Breton people), “langue des ancêtres” (language of the ancestors / ancestral language), “la vieille langue nationale” (the old national language), or “noble langue celtique” (the noble Celtic language). The reader also often witnesses comparisons with French in this respect, when for instance the authors qualify the Breton language as “older and therefore more respectable than French” and as a language “which was already mature when the *langue d’oïl* [a dialect continuum that includes standard French and its closest relatives] only stuttered in its variants.”³¹

Unlike the Breton publications, both Welsh journals analysed here only rarely praised Welsh for its supposed antiquity. Instead, the Welsh revivalists highlighted the antiquity of their literature. This was essentially due to the preservation of Welsh medieval manuscripts. The authors usually emphasize the so-called golden period of Welsh literature, starting from the end of the thirteenth century and ending in the middle of the sixteenth century with the succession of the Tudors, adding that “immediately after the conquest, Welsh literature seemed to be extinct.”³² On the whole, Welsh literature represents the most amplified topic in the publications. To all appearances, Welsh revivalists, unlike their Breton colleagues, were mobilizing the language through the medium of abundant vernacular literature. In Brittany, the older Breton-language literature had not been preserved and therefore could not represent an argument for the purpose of the language revival. Up to the nineteenth century, the Breton-language culture was predominantly oral. Another quote from *Young Wales* illustrates this point:

³¹ “plus vieille et partant plus respectable que le français,” and “qui était déjà mûre quand la langue d’oïl bégayait dans ses langues,” *Bulletin de l’Union régionaliste bretonne Congrès de Saint-Pol-de-Léon 1905* (1906): 84, 35.

³² “The Literature of Wales. I. – An Outline of The History of Welsh Literature,” *WALENS* (May 1894): 45.

the noble language, whose accents have been heard among the hills and valleys of Wales for over 2,000 years, [...] whose literature is the oldest in Europe, and which attained definite literary form and structure centuries before English was born, whose Mabinogion captivated the world's mind in the Middle Ages, and in our own times inspired the noblest creations of Tennyson – the language for which countless generations of Welshmen have bled and struggled and sacrificed and died [...].³³

Omission of Difficulties

When facing the difficulty of the existence of the barrier between Upper and Lower Brittany, the language border between Breton and Gallo speakers (as explained above), the regionalists adopted the strategy of avoiding this topic in their publications altogether. The authors were attentively omitting the existence of the language border in the extensive publications of the URB until around 1907. The purpose was to create the impression that the whole of Brittany was unified, particularly in view of the Breton language as the main argument to gain autonomy rights. The URB members begin to mention the two languages and their relation only with the 1907 congress held in Questembert, in the upper part of Brittany (Gallo speaking area), albeit still rather scarcely:

the Gallos are our brothers and ignorance alone sometimes puts a quarrel between them and the Bretons: on the contrary, now united, they will have to help us in the work of the Breton Renovation that we have undertaken.³⁴

Moreover, while admitting the difficulties connected to the linguistic division, the regionalists tend to blame the French when they explain the barrier in reference to the “départementalisation” of France, an administrative reform of the territory carried out by the French state just after the Revolution.³⁵

³³ Llewelyn Williams, “O Fon i Fynwy,” *Young Wales* (February 1895): 49.

³⁴ “Nous leur dirons qu’à cause de tout cela les Gallos sont nos frères et que l’ignorance seule met parfois de la brouille entre eux et les Bretons : qu’au contraire, désormais unies à nous, elles devront nous aider dans l’oeuvre de Rénovation bretonne que nous avons entreprise,” *Bulletin de l’Union régionaliste bretonne. Congrès de Questembert et de Rostrenen 1907* (1908): 33.

³⁵ “On a trop parlé de Haute et de Basse-Bretagne, de Bretagne Bretonnante et de Bretagne non Bretonnante, de pays breton et de pays gallo. Il s’est même créé une certaine rivalité, qui ne le sait? entre Hauts et Bas-bretons; des esprits étroits se sont

As for the Welsh journals, they choose not to create the impression of linguistic unity (which would be impossible anyway, given the public awareness resulting from the high density of printed media coverage in Wales at the time). Instead the authors are rather straightforward, commenting on the language situation in Wales and criticizing it. For instance, Owen Edwards tries to compare the readership of the *CYMRU* and *WALES* magazines in the introduction to the first volume of the latter:

As far as culture and thoughtfulness are concerned, [...] English Wales is at least half a century behind Welsh Wales. By means of *CYMRU* I have been in close touch with the Welsh reading public during the last three years and a half, and I find that, among Welsh working men, there is a demand for longer and more thoughtful articles than the historical and literature articles of that magazine.³⁶

Eventually, the Welsh authors readily criticize the linguistic situation, such as when they denounce the employment of English monoglots as postmasters in Welsh-speaking areas of the country, which could lead to substantial difficulties: "if you write Abertawe for Swansea, you will probably get your letter back undelivered."³⁷

Bilingualism

Similarly to many other minority language movements, the Breton regionalists were promoting the Breton language by using the argument of the advantage of being bilingual: "A man who knows two languages is worth four."³⁸ They were stressing the perks of bilingualism, especially in relation to education, as they considered bilingual learning the only reasonable teaching method, certainly in the Breton-speaking areas. According to a report by Taldir Jaffrenou from the first Pan-Celtic Congress held in Dublin in 1900, delegations from all the Celtic

plus à entretenir je ne sais quelle barrière de jalousie ou de défiance entre les deux portions de la Bretagne. Tout cela est la conséquence du partage de notre pays en départements." *Bulletin de l'Union régionaliste bretonne. Congrès de Questembert et de Rostrenen 1907* (1908): 95.

³⁶ Edwards, "Introduction to Volume I": III.

³⁷ "Some Freaks of Her Majesty's Post Office. A Protest from a Very Loyal Subject," *WALES* (July 1895): 308.

³⁸ "homme qui connaît deux langues en vaut quatre," *Bulletin de l'Union régionaliste bretonne. Congrès de Plougastel-Daoulas 1908* (1909): 56.

countries agreed on accepting a resolution linked to this demand: “The Celts will join hands and work together to adopt the bilingual teaching method in all Celtic places.”³⁹ Yann Goblet, a member of the URB, applauds bilingual teaching methods applied in other Celtic countries in an article from 1908 and suggests that their experience be used as an example to follow, especially with the purpose of expanding literacy:

Indeed, in Wales it [bilingual education] has been yielding the best results for years, and although it is very recent in the Highlands of Scotland, it has already proven itself there. While our brothers overseas can thus work on rational studies and raise themselves intellectually, the old system of “ignoring the existence of Breton” is still imposed on us in Brittany. And the result is clear; statistics show that it is our counties that provide the largest contingent of illiterates.⁴⁰

As may be expected, for the Welsh bilingualism represented an important aspect for promoting their language as well. The Welsh Language Society handbook provides ample proof. This brochure describes the methods of bilingual teaching as modern and internationally recognized, and even provides specific practical advice for potential teachers.⁴¹ Moreover, with the purpose of promoting Welsh, the authors present it as a simpler language to learn than English. They suggest that Welsh-speaking children should be taught to read their own language first, as its “orthography is so simple, consistent and regular,” before they acquire better English, whose system of spelling is “immensely more complicated.”⁴² Last, the handbook also underlines the fact

³⁹ “Les Celtes se donneront la main et travailleront ensemble à faire adopter dans tous les centres celtiques la méthode d’enseignement bilingue.” See “Congrès de Quimperlé. Septembre 1901,” *Bulletin de l’Union régionaliste bretonne. Congrès de Morlaix.-Vannes.-Guingamp.-Quimperlé de 1898 à 1901* (1902): 41.

⁴⁰ “En effet, en Galles, il a donné depuis des années les meilleurs résultats, et quoique tout récent dans les Highlands d’Ecosse, il y a déjà fait ses preuves. Tandis que nos frères d’Outremer peuvent ainsi faire des études rationnelles et s’élever intellectuellement, on nous impose toujours en Bretagne le vieux système consistant à ‘ignorer l’existence du breton’. Et le résultat est clair; les statistiques montrent que ce sont nos départements qui fournissent le plus fort contingent d’illettrés,” *Bulletin de l’Union régionaliste bretonne. Congrès de Plougastel-Daoulas 1908* (1909): 59.

⁴¹ For instance the teachers of Welsh are advised to “avoid feminine nouns in the first few lessons, on the principle of introducing only one difficulty at a time.” *The Welsh Language Society: Scheme and Rules of the Society* (Bangor: Jarvis & Foster, 1901) 8.

⁴² *The Welsh Language Society* 14.

that after acquiring a certain level of Welsh, it "can be employed also as a vehicle of information" and that "after one year's efficient teaching the children can receive simple lessons in Scripture, Common Things, or Geography in Welsh."⁴³ Thus, the language was promoted as a means to access new sources of information. While promoting bilingual education, Bretons primarily fought for the instruction of Breton-speaking children through the medium of their native tongue (which was not possible due to French centralist efforts). The Welsh, on the other hand, were in a more comfortable position, and they even promoted the teaching of Welsh in English-speaking areas.

Conclusion

Discourse analysis of Breton regionalist journals and the subsequent comparison with Welsh revivalist discourse of the same period has revealed a set of the most evident representational strategies used to promote the minority language in the given context. The coverage of the language as a separate topic was greater in the Breton environment where regionalists needed to campaign against measures introduced by the French government in support of French to the detriment of local languages. The Welsh language in this period enjoyed a more secure position in the British context, and other topics than the language itself were therefore prioritized by the authors and editors of the Welsh revivalist press, such as the ancient Welsh literature.

A similar difference can be observed regarding the alleged antiquity of the Breton language which should have created an impression of a natural right of the people to use and keep it. In contrast, the antiquity of literature rather than of the language itself was used to promote Welsh culture. The efforts of Breton regionalists to resist the pressure of French centralism and to defend themselves against accusations of separatism also had an impact on the declared apoliticism of the *Union régionaliste bretonne*. The position of the Welsh press was very much alike in this respect; however, the political focus of the Young Wales movement again proves that the political pressure from the British government was less efficient than in France. In order to communicate the necessity to revive Breton to the general public, the regionalists also preferred to omit explanations of the rather difficult linguistic situation in Brittany. In contrast, Welsh bilingualism was presented as a reality, causing issues that needed to be dealt with. The example of the different requests made by Breton and Welsh revivalists regarding bilingual education demonstrates that the Bretons were in a more volatile position.

⁴³ *The Welsh Language Society* 9.

As shown above, it can be argued that the less favourable attitude of the French state towards minority languages had a serious impact on the discursive strategies employed by Breton regionalists in order to promote the Breton language. In contrast, the Welsh revivalist rhetoric seems to be more moderate and problem-oriented because of the already established status of the Welsh language in society. It would be interesting to test this rather generalizing conclusion in an analysis that would include a larger and more diverse source base covering other Celtic-language areas as well. Considering the separatist tendencies in Britain today, it would be of considerable interest as well to analyse the representational strategies of current Celtic language promoters, and see how strategies have evolved over time and have been adapted to current needs and topics.