A survey of Breton expressive words

Mélanie Jouitteau

A SURVEY OF BRETON EXPRESSIVE WORDS

Mélanie Jouitteau, IKER, CNRS

UMR 5478, Université de Pau et des pays de l'Adour, Université Bordeaux Montaigne

- to appear as chapter 9 in Jeffrey Williams (ed), Expressivity in the European Linguistic Sphere, Cambridge University Press.-

ABSTRACT:

This paper provides an organized ranking and a discussion of expressives in Breton. Expressives are defined as expressions whose morphophonology is not entirely arbitrary, partly iconic. I provide an inventory of them in Breton, a Celtic modern language spoken in Western France in a bilingual context with French. I discuss the productivity of the operations of expressive morphology, their exclusive use for expressive means, and their degree of iconicity. I show for each category in turn what operations or structures might be exclusive to expressive words. [1]

1. METHODOLOGY AND ROAD MAP

Breton is an Indo-European language, with a grammatical tradition in French. Mimetics and ideophones were singled out in the diachronic studies of the XIX° century because their diachronic derivation showed irregularities. As a result, dictionaries tend to mention expressives, often with a translation to them. I have started this study by organizing the results of exhaustive searches in the available lexicology material adapted for automatized searches with the keywords *interjection, interj.* or *onomatopée, onom.* (Matasović 2009, Deshayes 2003, Le Gonidec 1821, Henry 1900,

1 In this paper, R in the glosses stands for the preverbal particle 'rannig'. The Breton dialects (Kerne, Leon, Treger, Gwenedeg or Standard) are mentioned in italics. For reasons of space, each source of an occurrence could not be referred to here, but each of them is carefully sourced on the wikigrammar of Jouitteau (2009-). I have favoured for discussion in this paper the forms that I could cross-reference in several corpuses. Examples are presented in their original orthography.

Ernault 1927, 1879-1880, and Cornillet 2020). I have created a dedicated page in my wikigrammar of the Breton language (Jouitteau 2009-2022) for each variety of expressives mentioned in the formal literature: interjections, mimetics (= *onomatopée* in French tradition), taboo word camouflage, and phonoesthemes (= *ideophones* in French tradition), and sorted the collected data accordingly. This systematic ranking process ensured that an expressive type was not neglected by accident. It confirmed that these varieties can not be understood as categorial, mutually exclusive classes because a given expression may belong to several of them, but they do show consistent morphological, syntactic and semantic properties. I obtained a premodern Breton inventory containing mostly mimetics, ideophones and some minimal interjections like *aiou !* to express pain, some of them now outdated.

The twentieth century saw a new academic interest in the study of orality and familiar registers. Pedagogical descriptions of the Breton language gradually took stock of the decline of Breton oral practices, and turned to helping Breton leaners to attain near-native linguistic efficiency. This triggered a greater attention to a wide variety of expressives, especially taboo expressions, interjections and all sorts of focalizing strategies seldom reported before. I integrated into my survey the notes, examples and remarks of Gros (1974), a stylistic treaty of great descriptive value. I have next enriched my data collection by a manual study of sixteen Standard Breton comic books (listed in annex I). Most of them are translated from an available French comic, which allowed me to observe the translation strategies of different authors. Finally, I have conduced three elicitations with two native speakers of the Breton language.[2] At all steps of the data organization process, I have enriched the description by targeted searches in Menard and Bihan (2016-), Favereau (2016-), Jouitteau (2009-), and with internet search engines.

In the following, I present in section 1 the morphological hallmarks of Breton expressives :

2 The raw elicitation data is available on line at the elicitation center of the wikigrammar (Jouitteau 2009-2022), and is also redistributed across the wikigrammar. My deepest thanks and gratitude go to the speakers A-M. Louboutin (*Kerne*) and Janig Bodiou-Stephens (*Treger*). Thanks also to Marijo Louboutin for her kind help to set up the elicitations in pandemics times, and to the IKER (CNRS) laboratory for support.

reduplication, apophonic alternations and a trisyllabic recurring pattern. In section 2, I turn to each syntactico-semantic variety in turn. I discuss the productivity of the expressive operations (Do they operate across all categories ? Are they lexically restricted ?), their exclusivity (Does a given expressive operation always result in expressives or not ?) and their iconicity (Is it iconic at all ? In what sense is it iconic ?). For reasons of space, I have mostly set aside phonoesthemes that would require a dedicated study. [3]

2. MORPHOLOGICAL HALLMARKS

2.2. REDUPLICATION

Reduplications are to be found on mimetics (1), phonoesthemes (2), and taboo word camouflage (*an dipadapa* ‘the diarrhea’).

(1) *ur c’harr éh ober* ***kwik-kwik-kwik*** *East Kerne*

a car at to.do /kwik-kwik-kwik/

‘a car doing kwik-kwik-kwik’

(2) *Te’ vad a zo* ***gwigour*** *ez potou !* *Treger*

you ! R is creak in.your shoes

‘But you, you have bloody creaky shoes !’

The reduplication structure in (3) bears alone the expressive dimension, whereas (4) adds apophonic alternations. Neither /bardi/ nor /barda/ are lexical entries, and the repetition of these non-sensical words iconically denotes the action of uttering unimportant language.

3 Phonoesthemes result mostly of articulatory coincidences, with some candidates for perceptive phonoesthemes. They are documented, following the French terminology, under ‘idéophones’ in the wikigrammar Jouitteau (2019-).

(3) ***hag evel****-henn* ***hag evel****-hont* *Standard*

and like-this and like-that

'and yadeyackyack... '

(4) a. *ha* ***bardi****, ha* ***barda****… ha* ***bardi*** *ha* ***barda*** *…* *Standard*

and /bardi/ and /barda/ and /bardi/ and /barda/

b. *ha* ***flip*** *ha* ***flap****, ha* ***jip*** *ha* ***jap****…* *Kerne*

and /flip/ and /flap/ and /ʒip/ and /ʒap/

'and yadeyackyack... and yadeyackyack…'

I found only weak evidence for the reduplication of interjections. The attention attractor *C'hep !* 'Hep !' shows an extra initial /p/ in reduplicated *Pep pep !* 'Hep! Hey! I'm talking to you !', expressing impatience. Other minimal interjections can appears twice side by side (6, 7), but without morphological fusion or rearrangements they could simply be repeated (5). The change in meaning is consistent with the pragmatic effect of repetition: the speaker behaves as if the interlocutor did not hear or pay attention to the previous occurrence. The *verum focus* interjection *A !* repeated in (6) and (7) expresses intensification while implying the interlocutor doesn't fully realize the extent of an intensity.

(5) *ur pladad eus ar c'hentañ !...* ***Menam ! Menam !*** *Standard*

a plate of the fist Yum Yum

'An abundant dish of first quality ! Yum-Yum !'

(6) *Deuet tomm din ken a oa,* ***HaHa!*** *Treger*

came hot to.me as.much R was Ah!Ah!

'I had an intense heat stroke (You can't imagine) !'

(7) ***Aaaa !*** *Me meus bet tomm* ***ayayaylh !*** *Kerne*

Ah!Ah!Ah! I have had hot Ouch!Ouch!Ouch!

'I had an intense heat stroke (You can't imagine) !'

Iconicity of reduplication is clear in intensifiers: more of the linguistic material obtains a greater degree of its meaning (*berr* 'short', *berr-berr* 'very short'). Reduplication is also iconic when it targets dynamic movement or change of state verbs (8) and prepositions (9) to obtains iterative meaning: more linguistics items obtain more of its meaning. The separative *di-* prefix at the heart of the reduplicated verbal structure in (8) is fully productive with all verbs.

(8) *Goude e vezont* ***bloñset ha dibloñset*** *tout evel-just.* *Leon*

after R are hit and prefix.hit all of-course

'Afterwards, they are bruised of course.'

(9) *Hezh skôe ket war ar youd, oa* ***'biou-'biou*** *bep taol.* *Kerne*

this.one hit not on the porridge was beside-beside each hit

'He didn't hit the porridge, but next to it every time.'

Reduplication does not always produce expressive words. The adjective *berr* 'short' has no adverbial counterpart, but its reduplication around coordination does (*berr-ha-berr* /short-and-short/ 'briefly'). Reduplication is here exocentric, with an expressive impact due to rhythm, but without iconic dimension. Reduplication of a verb with a diminutive (10) obtains 'less of the same meaning', opposite of (8). In (10), the two occurrences do not construct a greater degree. They have a consecutive reading (living well and then less than well). Reduplication obtains an iterative reading on this alternation.

(10) ***Bevañ-bevaik*** *a rae, kalonek atav…* *Standard*

to.live-to.live.small R did brave always

'He was barely getting by, always brave…'

No expressive semantics is present in reduplication of the head noun of an analytic demonstrative that creates a free choice item : *ar plac'h-mañ-plac'h,* /the girl-here-girl/ 'any girl, whatever girl'. The left of the reduplicated structure *ar plac'h-mañ* would be a demonstrative, 'this girl', if in isolation. Jouitteau (2015) has shown this would not be the right analysis for the reduplicated structure. The reduplicated structure exists independently of the determiner (11), but the analytic demonstrative does not (absence of mutation on *kêr* shows that the article is syntactically absent, cf. *ar gêr* 'the house'). The adverbial clitic *-mañ* 'here' is a deictic. The reduplication of the head noun on its right obtains a less than clearly identified referent (≈ house here or any house, really).

(11) *Pa veze dornadeg, e* ***kêr-mañ-kêr****…* *Kerne*

when was threshing.collective in house-here-house

'when the wheat was threshed in such and such a house …'

2.2. APOPHONIC ALTERNATIONS

Expressive apophonic alternations are present in mimetics, phonoesthemes, interjections and taboo word camouflage. Mimetics include the common *tik-tak* 'sound of a clock' or *balingbalom* 'sound of bell' (12). The noun *chuchumuchu* 'whisper, murmur' relies on the reduplication of an voiceless fricative in articulatory coincidence with the act of murmuring, which reveals its phonoesthetic dimension. Phonoesthemes typically use apophonic alternations in monosyllabic minimizers like in (13) or *tremen ku-ha-ka,* to.pass /ky/-and-/ka/, 'to narrowly pass'. Interjections sporadically use

apophonic alternations like *Menam-menam !* ‘Yum-yum !’ (5). They extensively resort to it for taboo word camouflage. In (14), *Fitamdaoula !* camouflages /faith in my God/ ‘Goodness me !’. The equivalent interjection *Satordallik !, Satordistac’h !* camouflages the adjective *sakre* ‘sacred’ and *Doue* ‘God’*; Tankerru !* camouflages *Kurun !* ‘thunder’; *Nondidiko !, Nondididisteg !* camouflages the French borrowing *Nom de Dieu !*, literally ‘name of God’, etc.

(12) ***Baling Balom**, Marrig zo klaoñv…* *Kerne (song)*
Baling Balom Mary.little is sick
‘Ding-dong, Little Mary is sick…’

(13) *N’ o deus ket bet tro da lavaret* ***na bu na ba !*** *Standard*
neg 3PL has not had time to say neither /by/ nor /ba/
‘They didn't have time to say phew !’

(14) *Hañ,* ***fitamdaoula !*** *Setu tapet Fulup avat !* *Kerne*
right ! taboo.word here caught Philippe exclamative
‘Right ! Goodness me ! Philippe is caught out !’

The vowels of apophonic alternations in expressive morphology consist mainly of the maximally distinctive vowels, /i, a, u/, as well as /e/ and the central vowel /y/. None of them are nasals. This set of vowels contrasts sharply with that of fillers and hesitation marks *Añ...*, *Beñ…*, *Bo …*, *Eee...*, *Eump...*, *Hañ...*, *Hmmm...*, *Ma...*, *Oc'h...*, *Oñm…* The later represent more typically the Breton non-expressive vowel system with nasals /ã, ɛ̃, ø̃, õ/ or the vowels /a, o, ɔ, e/. This contrast in vowel systems between expressive apophonic alternations one the one hand, and fillers and non-expressive morphology on the other hand shows that expressive morphology can resort to a distinctive, dedicated vowel system.

Breton expressive morphology does not have monopoly on apophonic alternations. Several non-expressive paradigms make use of apophonic alternations, like the nominal *-ed* suffixation of adjectives (*klañv* /kl**aõ**w/ ‘sick’ > *kleñved* /kl**ɛ̃ṽɛ**t/ ‘sickness’ and *yac'h* /j**a**X/ ‘healthy’ > *yec'hed*

/j**e**h**ɛ**t/ ‘health’). The set of vowels can clearly exceed the expressive set, as illustrated by internal plurals (*troad* /tr**oa**t/ ‘foot’ > *treid* /tr**ɛj**t/ ‘feet’, or *roc’h* /r**ɔ**X/ ‘rock’ > *reier* /r**ej**ɛX/ ‘rocks’, or *askorn* /ask**ɔ**rn/ ‘bone’ > *eskern* /**e**sk**ɛ**rn/ ‘bones’), or infinitival heads and their participial (*sevel* /s**e**vɛl/ ‘to rise’, *savet* /s**a**vɛt/ ‘risen’, *sentiñ /s**ɛ**nti*/ to obey > santet /s**ã**ntɛt/ ‘obeyed’, or *lemel* /l**e**mɛl/ ‘to remove’ > *lamet* /l**ã**mɛt/ ‘removed’).

Guerssel & Lowenstamm (1994, 1996) have studied the relationships between the different verbal patterns of classical Arabic and have proposed an apophonic path ordering the melodic primitives. This path is implicational and derivational : ø => I => A => U => U. Ségéral (1995), and Ségéral and Scheer (1998) have extended these results to strong German verbs, and proposed that this path and its implicative meaning are universals of human language. Since then, as noted in Scheer (2000:7), “other works have revealed the existence of apophonic systems which conform to the predictions. Such is notably the case of the Ge'ez (classical Ethiopian, Ségéral 1995, 1996), Acadian (Ségéral 1995, [2000]), Berber (Bendjaballah 1998a, 1999), Bédja (Cushite, Bendjaballah 1999), Italian, French and Spanish (Boyé 2000), Somali (Cushitic, Ségéral and Scheer 1997 [...]) and English (Ségéral and Scheer 1996 [...]), the system of weak verbs in Classical Arabic (Chekayri and Scheer 1996, 1998, 2004)”. No expressive Breton word collected for this paper contradicts this proposition of a universal; we have *flik-flak* ‘flic-floc’, but not */# *flak-flik*, *Menam-Menam* ‘Yum-Yum’, but no */# *manem-manem*. Only two cases seemed to go upstream the path, inside non-reduplicated words : *cholori* ‘racket’ and *mont e belbi* /mõn e b**ɛ**lbi/, /go in futilities/ ‘to loose one’s mind’, but their expressive dimension is up to debate.

2.3. A TRISYLLABIC PATTERN

A trisyllabic pattern with apophonic alternation emerges as distinctive across all expressive categories. It is particularly salient in ideophones that evoke a disorderly fall in several consecutive

movements because their wild morphological variation preserves the trisyllabic pattern: *Badadav ! Badadaou !, Badadouilh !, Boudoudoum ! Boudadoof ! Boudoudouf !*, and maybe also *Fataklev !*. Like their French equivalent *Patatras !* and *Badaboum !,* these interjections are mostly constructed with plosive consonants and vowels patterning in x-x-y (*Pa**r**adaouf !* allows for a liquid). Their speech act is paraphrasable (*she fell !*), and their temporal anchoring is consecutive or coinciding with the time of the paraphrase. They are not mimetics if the fall is silent. The aspectual structure of *Paradaouf !* in (15) is loosely ideophonic over the three consonants p-r-d (> not exactly three consecutive movements).

(15) *Lod-all 'meus bet gwelet koz-lammat ag... **paradaouf!** var an douar.* *Leon*
some-other have benn seen bad-to.jump and badaboum on the earth
'I've seen others jump badly and badaboum! down.'

The same pattern is observed in (16), a song sung with a child on one's knees, making it jump to the rhythm of a horse that walks, then trots, then gallops. The ternary consonant rhythm reproduces that of the gallop - letting the vowels rhyme. Finally, the pattern is found in taboo word camouflages (*ar vadadailh*, *an deur-deur-deurt* 'the diarrhea'), and in the noun *talabao* 'tumult' (17).

(16) ***Didedoup ! Didedoup !** Da Vontroulez da 'vit st**oup** !* *Kerne*
/didØdup didØdup / to Montroulez to get tow
'Let's go to Montroulez to look for tow.'

(17) *youc'hadennoù an dud ha **talabao** al loened* *Standard*
cries the people and tumult the animals
'the cries of humans and the tumult of the beasts'

Such trisyllabic pattern is not exclusively expressive (cf. *bodadeg* 'meeting', *talaspik* 'stool', *talatenn* 'headband', etc).

3. MIMETICS, PHONOMIMES

Mimetics (*onomatopées* in the French descriptive tradition) mimics extralinguistic sounds and strictly denote sounds.[4] They are derivationally productive and furnish raw material feeding lexical categories (nouns, verb, adverbs) with various loose associative meanings. Menard and Bihan (2016-) offer a representative sample of examples using the mimetic /flip/, which denotes the 'noise of a whip' and can be the bare object of the verb *ober* 'to do' (*ober flip* 'to do an action producing the noise /flip/), alone or reduplicated (18).

(18) *...ken ra* ***flip-flip-flap*** *lost he liviten paour.* *Standard*
so.much does /flip, flip, flap/ tail his jacket poor
'… so much that his poor jacket goes /flip, flip, flap/.'

The noun *flip* also denotes the object producing /flip/, *ur flip* 'a whip', which in turn derives into several expressions with associative meaning to : (i) the gesture of throwing a flip, in *strinkañ e flip* /to throw in /flip//, 'to throw on the fly', (ii) the aspectual structure of the action of throwing a whip (*mont e flip*, /to go in /flip//, 'to leave quickly' or *diwar ar flip,* /from the /flip//, 'hastily' or 'on the flight'), (iii) the reference of something that has the effect of a whip (*ur flip*, a drink with hot cider, sugar and brandy), (iv) several denotations, pictorial representations of dangerous tongue movements (gossip, fire movements). Each of the derived results can productively enter further regular morphological derivation. The nominal suffix *-ad* yields *flipad* 'whiplash, gossip', and even 'long path'. *Ur flipad* means 'a lot, a lot of time, a long way', probably from the elongated structure of a physical whip together with the intensifying effect of the hit 'whiplash'. The aspectual construction *achap en ur flipad* /escape in a flip.N/ means the contrary: 'in not a lot of time'. The

4 Mimetics include some conventionalized speech to animals, which I set aside here. The wikigrammar presents them at 'huchements'.

verb *flipañ* has meanings as different as ‘to slip away, to drink, to spend, to slander, etc.’. These meanings do not seem to compete with each other in the lexicon, nor does it with the non-expressive *flip* ‘ear-lobe’, as if the image of the whip was still convoked each time, instead of conventionalized in the lexicon. In (19), the noun *flip* denotes a fast, possibly silent, out-and-back trajectory. It commutes with a mimetic (bare object) or an infinitival verb heading a small clause like *lammat* to jump’, but not a deverbal noun *lamm* ‘jump’ (*Ne ri nemet lamm*(-at) hag er-meaz*). In (20), *flip* appears in a narrative infinitive, again commutable with *lammat* ‘to jump’ (... *ha lammat d’e wele*).

(19) *Ne ri nemed **flip** hag er meaz.* *Leon*
neg will.do only /flip/ and in.the out
‘You will just pop in.’

(20) ... *ha **flip** d’e wele.* *Standard*
and /flip/ to his bed
‘… and he jumped in bed.’

Mimetics of shocks and impact productively produce aspectual adverbs such as *plouf, splash, flav, krak*, *pfiouff*. etc. In the following examples, the aspectual adverbs are fully integrated into the syntactic structure, between the subject and the predicate of the sentence, where aspectual adverbs otherwise appear (21). The derived mimetic is not paraphrased by the sentence, it modifies it. The adverb appears alone in a tensed sentence (21), but it is introduced by a coordination marker in narrative infinitives, like a realized subject does, in (22) and (23), or a participial clause in (24).

(21) *Kaor Morwena dioustu nun taol* ***piouff*** *a zo kollet.* *Kerne*

goat Morwena now in.one hit /pjuf/ R is lost

'Morwenna's goat, suddenly, pfiouff, disappeared.'

(22) *... ha me ha* ***badadav*** *da vont d'ar bord all.* *Treger*

and I and /badadaw/ to to.go to.the edge other

'... And boom! I fainted !'

(23) *... ha me ha* ***splash*** *da gouezhañ 'ba 'n dour.* *Treger*

and me and /splaʃ/ to fall into the water

'... And splash! I fell in the water !'

(24) *... ha me ha* ***splash*** *kouet 'ba 'n dour.* *Treger*

and me and /splaʃ/ fallen in the water

'... And splash! I fell in the water!'

Expressive aspectual adverbs built on shocks and impact mimetics differ from non-expressive aspectual adverbs because they contain information on the physical properties of the materials that impact each other (*plouf, splash* liquid, *flav* sticky, flexible solid, *krak* rigid solid, *pfiouff* gas, etc.). Other aspectual adverbs do not (cf. *a-greiz-tout* 'suddenly', *ingal* 'permanently', *dalc'hmat* 'constantly', *adarre* 'again', *a-bep-eil* 'alternatively', etc.), even the expressive ones if they do not mimic shocks and impacts (*lip-ha-lip, tre-ha-tre, penn-da-benn* 'completely').

Expressive aspectual adverbs of shocks and impact show a gradability in iconicity, from mimetics to ideophones as illustrated in table (25) that organizes data from two elicitations with the same speaker in Locronan (Kerne). *Flav* appears only for liquids "if they are sticky enough" like egg yolk or glue. The trisyllabic *Badadav !* /badadao/ is more generalist than the other two and spans across all the solids. It tolerates an egg yolk impact (in contrast to *klak !*, clearly rejected), and the fall of matches. The silent fall of chocolate powder further signals that the trisyllabic *Badadav* is not a

mimetic. The lack of mass articulation in chocolate powder even thinners the ideophonic value of the trisyllabic structure.

(25) *shocks and falls mimetics (adverbs and interjections)* *Kerne*

fall on hard ground of:	liquid	egg yolk, glue	baby (even sticky)	plate, cupboard, bench	matches	chocolate powder
Flav !	*/OK	OK	*	*	*	*- not tested -*
Klak !	*	*	*	OK	OK with gesture	*
Badadav !	*	#	OK	OK	OK	OK

(26) *Ale (**Klak !**/ Krak! / **Badadav !**) An alumetez 'zo kouet war an douar!* *Kerne*

come.on /klak/ /krak/ /badadaw / the matches is fallen on the ground

'Patatras, the matches fell on the floor !'

These complex derived mimetics can also semantically encode the result of an action like the separation of subparts. *Klak !* is accepted both for the fall of hard furniture and for the fall of matches and their scattering on the ground (26). This speaker uses a reduplicated *glililing* for the fall of marbles, but /klak/ in (26) is not reduplicated. Instead, the speaker accompanies *klak !* with an ostensible distributive gesture of the hands (a palm spread). In (26) above, *krak* did not require a distributive gesture to express the separation of its subparts. The *klak / krak* contrast is confirmed below with a bench that falls and breaks (*krak*), or that falls but stays intact (*klak*). In (27), the syntactic structure is a small clause without a realized subject. The consecutive temporal reading is brought by the coordination marker. The preposition *war* is static, so all the information (*he) fell and broke* is brought by *krak*.

(27) *Kouet eo ' bank ha { **krak / klak** } war an douar !* *Kerne*

fallen is the bench and /krak/ / /klak/ on the earth

'The bench fell on the ground, (and broke / and didn't break)'

Now if one compares *Klak !* with *Dao !* 'Paf !' associated with the gesture of knocking, the former has a patient argument, whereas the later semantically links two arguments (hitting agent, hitted patient). They are still not syntactic verbs : *Dao !* could not take an object (* *Dav an nor !* 'Knock at the door !') or be passivized (*/# *Dao ! gant Frank.* 'He was hit by Frank').

Meinard (2015) distinguishes interjections from mimetics (in which she includes nouns directly derived from mimetics like *ur flip* 'a whip'). The present data confirms her generalisation that mimetics and their derived nouns are a productive source of lexical creation, and that they can refer, as opposed to interjections that are predicative in nature and never refer. However, mimetics of shocks and impact constitute an inter-class. These derived mimetics contain aspectual information, thematic relationships (patient, agent, etc.), as well as fine grained information on the parameters of the impact (materials involved, end result), like verbal predicates would (*to unstick*). These "semantically rich" aspectual adverbs can always have the distribution of paraphrased interjections like (26). Adjunct adverbs resemble interjections because they can have lexical content related to emotions, and have neither argument nor inflected form. The Breton narrative infinitive structures in (22, 23, 24, 27) allow for non-tensed matrix sentences, and seem to provide a bridge for mimetics of shocks and impact to move from fully integrated aspectual adverbs to interjections.

4. INTERJECTIONS

Interjections are not derivationally productive and can replace a sentence, which differentiates them from mimetics (Meinard 2015). The interjections are generally invariable, with minor variations related to the address (gender, formal mode of address) that are not instantiated by expressive

interjections. They vary in semantic size. The lightest seem the interpellation interjections *Eh !, C'hep !, Hep !, Yao !, Yo !, You !, Alo !, Ola !, Oc'hola !, Orê !*, etc., which are all interchangeable. We saw *C'hep !* 'Hep !' can be repeated in *Pep pep !* 'Hep! Hey! I'm talking to you !'. Next come a set of interjections with an opaque and minimal morphology but some sort of translatable proto-semantic content (28), in which we also find the mimetics of shocks and impact like (26). They are syntactically optional, and only allowed in the left and right peripheries of the sentence, not in the middle field of tensed sentences (28). Most of those minimal interjections are of arbitrary morphology (cf. *A !* 'Oh! So...' or 'That's for sure!', or *Ac'ha !, Ac'hañ ! Oc'ho !, Ac'haaaa !* 'I was right!' or 'I got you !', etc.), to the exception of an enclitic *-X* ideophonic on the act of spitting that express disgust: *Ec'h !, Oc'h ! Fac'h ! Fec'h !* or *Ac'h* in (28), or to the ideophonic flavour of *Fou ! Hou ! Fow !* 'Phew !' expressing relief.

(28) ***(Ac'h !)*** *Henn neus lakaet din* ***(*Ac'h !)*** *e zaorn war ma foñs* ***(Ac'h !)*** *Treger*
Yew! he has put to.me Yew! his hand on my fondation Yew!
'He put his hand on my ass, yew !'

A third set of interjections takes from grammaticalisations of lexical material. Most of those non-iconic morphology, to the exception of the ideophonic monosyllabic minimizers *Mik !, Grik !, Chik !* 'Hush !' that derive respectively from the adjective *mik* 'inert', or from a noun denoting a 'word' (unless *Chik !* is from *chik* 'chin', or *chik* 'quid of tobacco'). The three variants however show a convergence of forms, with the same single syllable in *-ik* which is also homophonous to the diminutive suffix.

Interjections seldom have derived forms, which is not surprising if they are sentences (Meinard 2015), but again the agentive interjection of shock and impact *Dao !* in (29) shows a suspiciously verbal behavior because the prefix *ad-* is normally reserved to verbal or nominal roots (*adober* 'to

do again', *adkoan* 'second supper'). However, both interviewed speakers had the *Badadav !* crash interjection, but neither accepted it with the *-et* participle suffix (* *Badavet*, obtained from the made up French * *Badaboumé*). The verb-flavoured *Yao !* 'Gee up !' is to be treated aside, as a stylistic use of the language normally dedicated to giving orders to horses (30).

(29) *Dao ! Taol kaer! **ad**-Dao ! Kaerat !* *Standard*[5]

Paf ! blow beautiful again-Paf ! handsome.optative

'Wham !... Well-done ! And again ! Bravo !'

(30) *Ha **yao** da vro Vec'hiko !* *Standard*

and gee.up to land Mexico

'...and Gee up ! Back to Mexico !'

5. TABOO WORD CAMOUFLAGES

Breton taboo words mainly concern the sexual, scatological or religious domain, and occasionally some references to poverty or dirt (*kutez* 'slum, hovel', *lastez* 'garbage'), some infirmities and diseases (*moñs* 'stump'), as well as some violent natural phenomena (*kurun* 'thunder', *foeltr* 'lightning'*)*. Specialized lexicons bring together these words on which language documentation is usually silent, like the *Cryptological Glossary of Breton* by Ernault (1884-1902), or the dictionary of taboo words by Menard (1995). The taboo dimension of a word seems to be enough to give it an interjection value (*Gast !,* /prostitute/, 'Fuck !') and/or an intensification value (*ur c'hastad hini*, /a prostitute.content one/, 'an enormous one' or *alkool ar c'hast,* /alcool the prostitute/, 'fucking alcool' or *Petra ar c'hast eo ?* /what the prostitute is / 'What the fuck is it ?'), but only camouflaged taboo words show expressive morphology like *Fidamdoustik !*, *Fidambie !* or *Fitamdaoula ! s*een in (14) camouflaging *Feiz d'am Doue !* 'Faith in my God !'. Camouflaged taboo words are motivated

5 Example found only once, p. 7 of the *Tintin* Album 'Flight 714' translated in Standard Breton by An Here edition. The English translation here is from the English album. French was *PAF ! Bien ça ! Re-PAF ! Bravo !*.

by a necessity to show ostensible avoidance, rather than really avoid an offence. An offending word is commonly replaced by another offending word. *Fidamdoull !* avoids pronouncing the name of /God/ only to replace it by *toull* 'hole', giving '#Faith in my hole'. Both a taboo word and its ostensible avoidance are compatible (31). They flourish in colloquial language, but can still appear in polite usages. In (31), the speaker is a business manager in a youth album (Tintin).

(31) ***Atoe !*** ***Ma Doue!*** *Pegen plijet on ouzh ho kavout…* *Standard*

to.#God My God ! how happy am at you find

'Oh Gosh ! Oh my god ! What joy for me to find you… '

Interjections only marginally give derived adjectives (*She is a wow !* Bottineau 2013). Breton taboo camouflage interjections have an evaluative semantic dimension which could allow for an adjectival derivation. The camouflage of the interjection *Feiz d'am Doue !* appears after the determiner like a noun in *ar fidamdie a blantenn-mañ* /the /fidamdije/ of plant-here/ 'this fucking plant'. The semantic structure is predicative (this plant is /fidamdije/), but *fidamdie* is illicit as a predicative noun (* *Fidamdie eo ar blantenn-mañ*, //fidamdije/ is this plant /). Any expressive morphological camouflage allows for the structure, also written in comics as *ar ☠ ☠ ☠ ☠ ☠ a blantenn-mañ*. Non-expressive interjections are here ungrammatical (**an ac'hanta a blantenn-mañ,* with *ac'hanta !* 'Well!', or ar **ar memestra a blantenn-mañ*, with *memestra !* 'all the same !'), as are mimetics (**an dao a blantenn-mañ*, with *Dao !* 'knock, hit'.

The equivalent construction /det N1 of NP2/ is known in French as the qualitative construction with a 'pure degree' interpretation (*cette sapristi de bonne femme*). It involves a nominal group without predicate inversion, topped of with an evaluative adverbial projection (Doetjes and Rooryck 2003). In contrast to French, the Breton construction also allows adjectives, including non-evaluatives (**une longue de plante*, but *un hir a blantenn* 'a long plant',

an hir a blantenn-mañ /the long of plant-here/ 'this long plant'), leaving open the categorial nature of *Fidamdoue*.

6. CONCLUSION

Breton expressive morphology uses reduplication, apophonic alternations, and/or a specific trisyllabic pattern, none of them being exclusive to expressive morphology. Apophonic alternations use a dedicated vowel system, which however still obeys Ségéral and Scheer (1998)'s universal apophonic path ordering the melodic primitives. Mimetics derive referring nouns, as opposed to interjections that are predicative in nature (Meinard 2015), but the Breton matrix infinitives (narrative infinitives) provide a bridge for mimetics of shocks and impact like *klak, dao* or *badadav* to move from fully integrated aspectual adverbs to interjections. Mimetics of shocks and impact constitute an inter-class with more verbal-like properties, including a morphological derivation normally reserved to verbs or nouns, but they still can not passivize or be derived as participles (compare with *Don't yuck somebody else's yum*), and a gradability in iconicity.

ANNEX I – COMICS USED AS CORPUS

An Here (ed.). 2003. *Nij 714 da Sydney*, translation of Hergé (1963). *Vol 714 pour Sydney*, Casterman (ed.).

Ar Menn, Brieg. 2015. *Ar pevar gringo Dalton*, Bzh5 (éd.), translation of Morris and Goscinny (1967) *Tortillas pour les Dalton,* Dupuis (ed.).

Bannoù-Heol (ed.). 2000. *Sell 'ta !, Boulig ha Billig*, translation of Roba (1988) *22! V'là Boule et Bill !*, Roba SPRL, Dargaud (ed.).

Biguet, Olier. 2017. *Tintin en Amerika*, translation of Hergé (1973) *Tintin en Amérique*, Casterman (ed.).

Bzh5 (ed.). 2007. *Ar pevar Sant Dalton*, translation of Goscinny & Morris (1971) *Les Dalton se rachètent*, Dargaud (ed.).

Kervella, Divi. 2001. *Troioù-kaer Tintin: Bravigoù ar Gastafiorenn*, An Here (ed)., translation of Hergé (1963) *Les bijoux de la castafiore*, Casterman (ed.).

Kervella, Divi. 2002. *Troioù-kaer Tintin: Al Lotuz Glas*, An Here (éd.), translation of Hergé. 1946. *Le Lotus Bleu*, Casterman (ed.).

Kervella, Divi. 2002b. *Troioù-kaer Tintin: An Enez du*, An Here (éd.), translation of Hergé. 1963. *L'île noire*, Casterman (ed.).

Kervella, Divi. 2006. *Ar c'hazh e Breizh*, translation of Geluck, Philippe (2000) *Le chat est content*, Casterman (ed.).

Keit Vimp Bev (ed.). 1984. *Yakari hag an estranjour*, translation of Derib & Job. 1982. *Yakari et l'étranger*, Casterman (ed.).

Le Saëc, Erwan. 1990. *Ar skarzherien*, Keit Vimp Bev (ed.).

Monfort, Alan. 2006. *Gaston 14*, Yoran Embanner (ed.), translation of a selection from four albums *Gaston Lagaffe* by Franquin, Dupuis (ed.).

Monfort, Alan. 2007. *Gaston 10*, Yoran Embanner ed.), translation of *Gaston 10*, a selection from three albums *Gaston Lagaffe*, copyright Marsu 2007 by Franquin-Dupuis.

Moulleg, Loeiz. 1978. *An Ankou, troioù-kaer Spirou ha Fantasio*", Dupuis (ed.), translation of Fournier (1976) *L'Ankou*, Dupuis (ed.).

Preder & Armor. 1977. *Emgann ar Pennoù*, Preder (éd.), Armor diffusion, translation of Goscinny and Uderzo (1966) *Le combat des chefs*, Dargaud (ed.).

Skol an Emsav 1977. *Pare Paotred Dalton*, translation of Morris and Goscinny (1975) *La guérison des Dalton*, Dargaud (ed.).

REFERENCES

Boyé, Gilles. 2000. *Problèmes de morpho-phonologie verbale en français, en espagnol et en italien*, thesis, Université Paris 7.

Bendjaballah, Sabrina. 1998a. 'Aspects apophoniques de la vocalisation du verbe berbere (kabyle)', *Langues et Grammaire II-III, Phonologie*, Patrick Sauzet (éd.), 5-24. Paris: Université Paris 8.

Bendjaballah, Sabrina. 1999. *Trois figures de la structure interne des gabarits*, thesis, Université Paris 7.

Bottineau, Didier. 2013c. 'OUPS ! Les émotimots, les petits mots des émotions : des acteurs majeurs de la cognition verbale interactive', Chatar N. (dir.), *Langue française* 180:4, *L'expression verbale des émotions*, 99-112.

Chekayri, Abdellah & Tobias Scheer. 1996. 'The apophonic origin of Glides in the verbal system of

Classical Arabic', Lecarme, J., J. Lowenstamm, U. Shlonsky (éds.), *Studies in Afroasiatic Grammar*, La Hague: Holland, 62-76.

Chekayri, Abdellah & Tobias Scheer. 1998. 'La provenance apophonique des semi-voyelles dans les formes verbales en Arabe Classique', *Langues et Linguistique* 2, 15-54. Fes, Maroc.

Chekayri, Abdellah & Tobias Scheer. 2004. 'The appearance of glides in Classical Arabic defective verbs', *Folia Orientalia* 40, 7-33.

Cornillet, Gérard. 2020. *Geriadur Brezhoneg-Galleg,* ms., corrected version.

Deshayes, Albert. 2003. *Dictionnaire étymologique du breton*, Le Chasse Marée, Douarnenez.

Ernault, Émile. 1884-1902. 'Glossaire cryptologique du breton', avec un additif et corrections et 2 suppléments, *Kryptidia*, vol. II, III, VI, VIII, edited by Le Menn in 1999.

Ernault, Émile. 1927. *Geriadurig brezhoneg-galleg*, Lanvrieg.

Favereau, Francis. 2016-2022. *Grand dictionnaire bilingue breton-français, français-breton,* https://geriadurbrasfavereau.monsite-orange.fr/index.html.

Le Gonidec, J-F., 1821. *Dictionnaire celto-breton ou breton-français*, Angoulême: Trémenau.

Gros, Jules. 1974. *Le trésor du breton parlé III. Le style populaire (Éléments de stylistique trégorroise)*, Barr-Heol, Lannion: Giraudon.

Guerssel, Mohand & Jean Lowenstamm. 1994. 'Ablaut in Classical Arabic measure I active verbal forms', Communication à la Second Conference on Afro-Asiatic Languages, Nice.

Guerssel, Mohand & Jean Lowenstamm. 1996. 'Ablaut in Classical Arabic measure I active verbal forms', *Studies in Afro-Asiatic Grammar*, J. Lecarme, J. Lowenstamm & U. Shlonsky (eds.), 123-134. La Hague: Holland Academic Graphics.

Henry, Victor. 1900. *Lexique étymologique des termes les plus usuels du breton moderne*, Plihon et Hervé (éds.), Rennes.

Jouitteau, Mélanie. 2009-2022. *ARBRES, site de recherche sur la syntaxe formelle de la microvariation syntaxique de la langue bretonne*, http://arbres.iker.cnrs.fr.

Jouitteau, M. 2015. 'Free choice and reduplication, a study of Breton dependent indefinites', Tomasz Czerniak, Maciej Czerniakowski and Krzysztof Jaskuła (éds.), *Representations and Interpretations in Celtic Studies*, Lublin, 201-230.

Le Menn, Gwennolé (ed.). 1999. *Glossaire cryptologique breton d'Emile Ernault*, éd. Skol.

Lozac'h, Gurvan. 2012-2019. *Diksionêr Kreis-Breizh Breton-Français,* ms.

Matasović, Ranko. 2009. *Etymological dictionnary of Proto-Celtic*, Brill, Leyde.

Meinard, Maruszka Eve Marie. 2015. 'Distinguishing onomatopoeias from interjections', *Journal of Pragmatics* 76, 150-168.

Menard, Martial. 1995. *Alc'hwez Bras ar Baradoz Vihan, Geriahudur ar brezhoneg*, An Here.

Menard, Martial and Hervé Le Bihan. 2016-. *Devri: Le dictionnaire diachronique du breton*, Université Rennes II and Kuzul ar Brezhoneg, http://devri.bzh/.

Doetjes, Jenny and Johan Rooryck. 2003. 'Generalizing over quantitative and qualitative constructions', Martine Coene and Yves D'hulst (eds.), *From NP to DP, volume I: The syntax and semantics of noun phrases*, 277–95. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Scheer, Tobias. 2000. *De la Localité, de la Morphologie et de la Phonologie en Phonologie*, Habilitation, Université de Nice Sophia-Antipolis.

Ségéral, Philippe. 1995. *Une théorie généralisée de l'apophonie*, thesis, Université Paris 7.

Ségéral, Philippe. 1996. 'L'apophonie en ge'ez', *Studies in Afroasiatic Grammar*, Jacqueline Lecarme, Jean Lowenstamm & Ur Shlonsky (ed.), 360-391. La Hague: Holland Academic Graphics.

Ségéral, Philippe. 2000. 'Théorie de l'apophonie et organisation des schèmes en sémitique', *Research in Afroasiatic Grammar*, Jacqueline Lecarme, Jean Lowenstamm & Ur Shlonsky (eds.), Amsterdam & Philadelphia: Benjamins, 263-299.

Ségéral, Philippe & Tobias Scheer. 1998a. 'A Generalized Theory of Ablaut: the Case of Modern

German Strong Verbs', Albert Ortmann, Ray Fabri & Teresa Parodi (éds.), *Models of Inflection*, Tübingen: Niemeyer, 28-59.

Ségéral, Philippe & Tobias Scheer. 1997. 'Apophonic theory and Cushitic languages', Communication au colloque GLOW, Rabat/ Maroc, 19-21 mars 1997.

Ségéral, Philippe & Tobias Scheer. 1996. 'Modern German and Old English strong verbs: two ways of running apophony', Communication au colloque Generative Grammatik des Südens, Berlin, 17-19 mai 1996.