

THE DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH & ITALIAN  
PRESENTS

# Michael Hornsby

Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland)

## Tackling Language Loss: Can the “new speaker” paradigm offer any new insights?

### About the talk:

The new speaker paradigm has gained a significant presence in contemporary academic literature on multilingualism and language learning (e.g. O'Rourke & Pujolar, 2013; O'Rourke, Pujolar & Ramallo, 2015), with new speaker research in minority language settings (e.g. O'Rourke et al., 2015; Ó Murchadha et al., 2018) frequently drawing on work in applied linguistics to explicate the native versus “non-native” dichotomy. The paradigm was the focus of COST Action IS1306 in the years 2013-2017 and the resulting “label” has been further used to refer to language users who adopt and practice languages and language varieties which are not typically associated with them (Ó Murchadha et al., 2018: 4). At the same time, the term has received a number of critiques based on speaker legitimacy and “authentic language.” These critiques are considered here and evaluated, along with the need to sometimes see the broader picture in language revitalization situations by putting “speakers” at the centre of our research focus, rather than concentrating on particular ways of speaking. To illustrate this, a particular set of lexical neologisms in one setting of language endangerment and revitalization, Breton in Brittany (France), will be discussed, particularly the aim these neologisms have in reflecting contemporary understandings of speaker (self-) representations.

### About the speaker:

Michael Hornsby is a professor in the Faculty of English and head of the Centre for Celtic Studies at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. His research interests are in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, especially the reaction of speech communities to the pressures of globalization and modernization, and in the preservation, revitalization, and transformation of minority languages. He is the co-editor, with Karolina Rosiak, of *Eastern European Perspectives on Celtic Studies* (Cambridge Scholars, 2018) and co-editor, with Larissa Aronin and Grażyna Kiliańska-Przybyło, of *The Material Culture of Multilingualism* (Springer, 2018), and the author of *Revitalizing Minority Languages: New Speakers of Breton, Yiddish and Lemko* (Palgrave, 2015). He has published articles in journals such as the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, the *International Journal of Multilingualism*, and the *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* and is editor-in-chief of *Studia Celtica Posnaniensia*.



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