

Université

de Strasbourg

**Minority Languages
what actors for what future?**
University of Strasbourg, 21-22 November 2019

Maximilien Guérin

maximilien.guerin@cnrs.fr

Transmission and dynamics of the Crescent languages



This work is part of the following projects, both funded by the French National Research Agency: ANR-17-CE27-0001-01 (Project "The Linguistic Crescent: A Multidisciplinary Approach to a Contact Area between Oc and Oil varieties") & ANR-10-LABX-0083 (program "Investissements d'Avenir", Labex EFL, Strand 3, Workpackage LC4 - "Les parlers du Croissant : une aire de contact entre oc et oïl"). It contributes to the IdEx Université de Paris - ANR-18-IDEX-0001.

Labex **EFL**

Plan

- ♦ The Crescent area
- ♦ Local organisations
- ♦ Local transmission & dynamics
- ♦ Conclusion
- ♦ References

Plan

- ♦ **The Crescent area**
- ♦ Local organisations
- ♦ Local transmission & dynamics
- ♦ Conclusion
- ♦ References

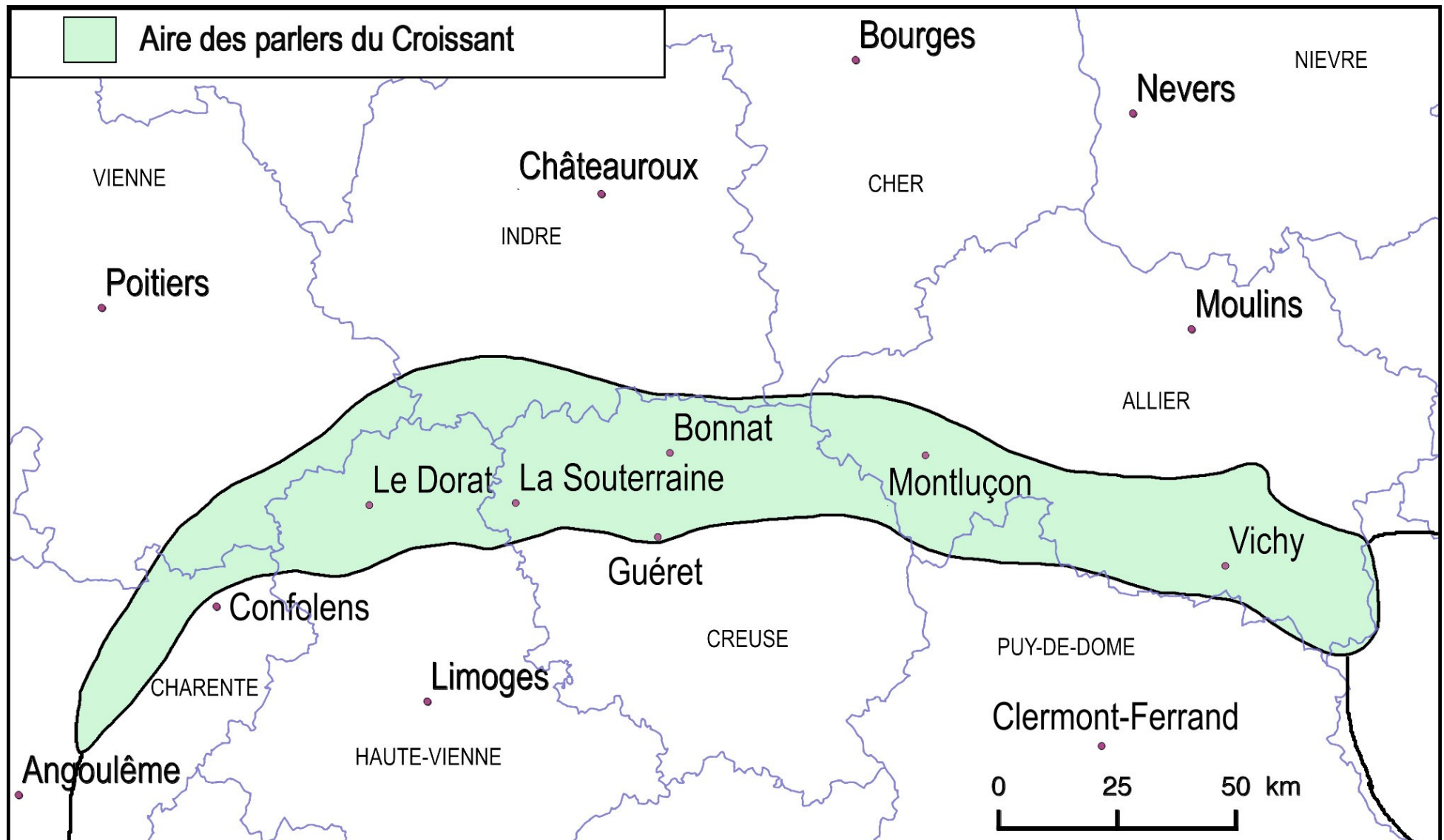
The Crescent area

- Situated on the Northern Fringe of the Massif Central (France)
- Has a form of a half moon (a 'crescent')
- The local gallo-romance dialects simultaneously display typical features of:
 - Oïl varieties (French, Poitevin-Saintongeais, Berrichon...)
 - Oc varieties (Limousin in the west and Auvergnat in the east)
- Crescent dialects are often called
 - 'Marchois' (~ 'Marchese') on the Limousin side
 - 'Bourbonnais' on the Auvergnat side
- Crescent area = dialect continuum
 - Variation is very great (especially on a north-south axis)
 - More than 20km → intercomprehension may be difficult

The Crescent area



The Crescent area



Linguistic history of the Crescent

- Crescent = endangered languages
 - Nearly all speakers = bilingual since the 19th Century
- Local dialects remained the vernacular language until the middle of the 20th century
- After WW2, “process of disappearing”
= breaking the line of generational transmission
 - ~ Language policy in France

Current sociolinguistic situation

- Typology of speakers:
 - > 70 yr. = native and fluent speakers
 - 40-70 yr. = terminal speakers
(some passive knowledge
and very limited productive skills)
 - < 40 yr. = French monolinguals

(Austin & Sallabank 2011)

Current sociolinguistic situation

- Languages of oral tradition
 - No written literature (except some recent texts)
 - No literary or standard language
- Each one speak her/his own dialect
 - The few existing texts are all written in specific dialect
- These dialects are not taught in schools
 - family transmission only

Plan

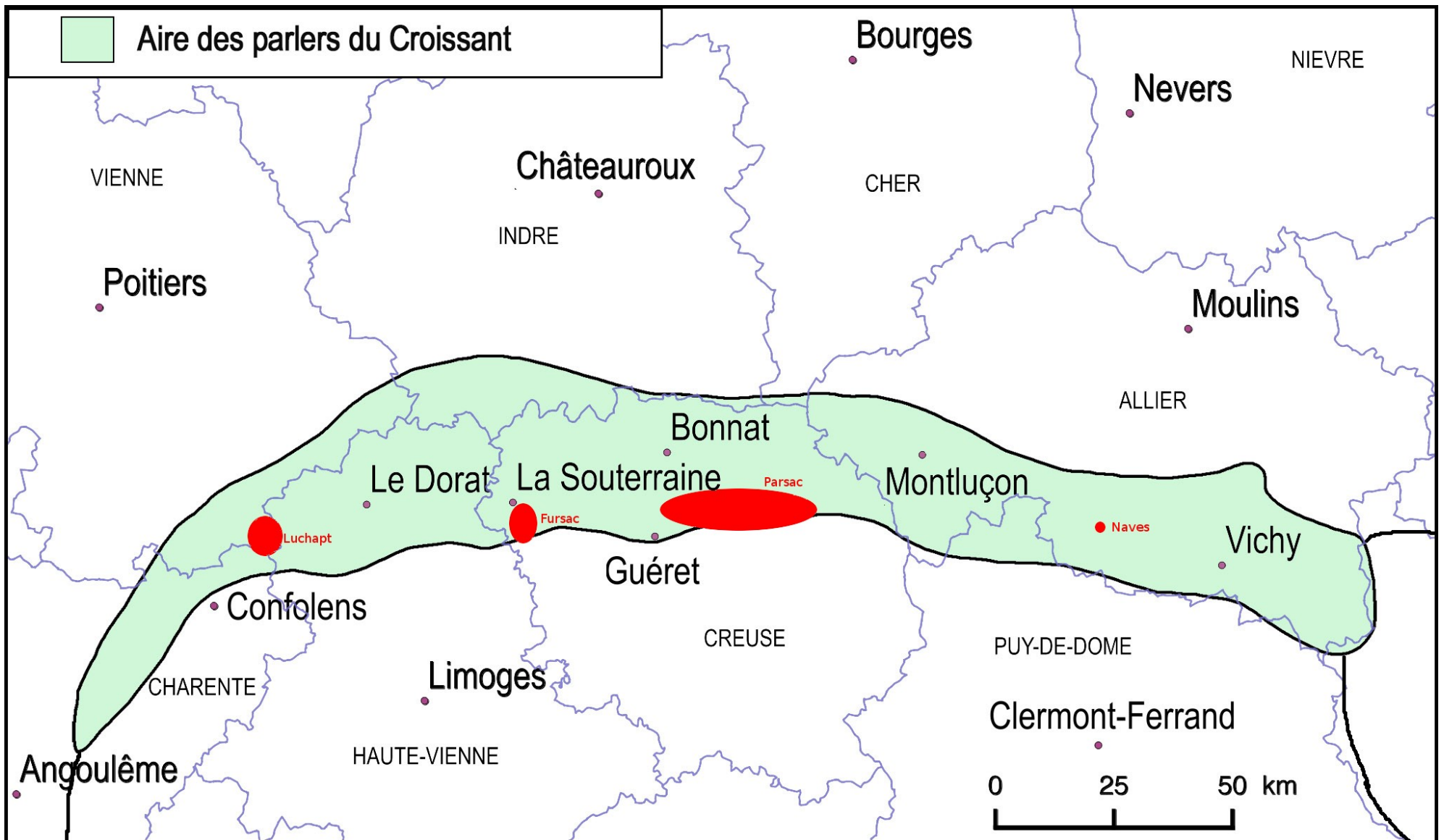
- ♦ The Crescent area
- ♦ **Local organisations**
- ♦ Local transmission & dynamics
- ♦ Conclusion
- ♦ References

Local organisations

- Speakers are welcoming with great enthusiasm initiatives for their dialects
 - as those of the project “The Linguistic Crescent” (Quint & Guérin 2017)
- Local initiatives
 - Isolated local initiatives (texts, lexicons...)
 - Local groups working on a lexicon (Luchapt, Châteauponsac)
 - Language course (Saint-Agnant-de-Versillat)
 - Sketches and songs (Parsac)
- Meetings bringing together speakers from all Crescent area, every year in Creuse
 - Fursac, Parsac, La Celle-Dunoise, Crozant, La Souterraine...



Local organisations



Local organisations

- Part of association: **La Traverse**
- Area: Luchapt (Vienne) and adjacent municipalities
- Members: ~10 (75 years on average) / not all fluent speakers
- Objectives: preserve the "patois"
- Activities: meetings (lexicon & chitchat), visits to a retirement home
- Audience: ~10
- Diversity: diversity taken into account, no standard
- Orthography: french-based
- Press: several articles (La Nouvelle République)
- Radio: -
- TV: no
- Website: no (not scheduled)
- Social networks: no (not scheduled)

Creation: 2013



Local organisations

- Association: **Anam causer a Feurçac** (We go to speak to Fursac)
- Area: Fursac (Creuse) and adjacent municipalities
- Members: 28 (70 years on average) / not all speakers (but learning)
- Objectives: preserve/promote the "patois"

Creation: 2018

- Activities: songs (guests), readings, other activities
- Audience: 70 pers. max

- Diversity: diversity taken into account, no standard
- Orthography: classical Occitan (adapted reading)

- Press: several articles (La Montagne)
- Radio: announcements (France Bleue Creuse)
- TV: no

- Website: no (not scheduled)
- Social networks: no (not scheduled)



Local organisations

- Association: **Si N' Causavan** (If We Talked) Creation: 1996 (2013)
- Area: Parsac (Creuse) and adjacent municipalities
- Members: 58 (75 years on average) / not all speakers (but all understand)
- Objectives: preserve/transmit the "patois"
- Activities: meetings, talks local history/culture, choir, shows, concerts, visits to retirement homes
- Audience: 70 to 500 pers. max
- Diversity: diversity taken into account, no standard
- Orthography: french-based
- Press: several articles (La Montagne, L'Echo du Berry)
- Radio: announcements (France Bleue Creuse)
- TV: no
- Website: no (not scheduled)
- Social networks: no (not scheduled)



Local organisations

- Association: **Naves Expo**
- Area: Naves (Allier) and adjacent municipalities
- Members: 5 (60 years on average) / not all speakers
- Objectives: promote the local History and heritage ("patois" is a part of this heritage)
- Activities: visits in the local museum
- Audience: 2 to 15 pers. max (small museum)
- Diversity: diversity taken into account, no standard
- Orthography: thorough french-based
- Press: some articles (La Montagne)
- Radio: some (RCF)
- TV: some (FR3)
- Website: <https://naves-expo-en-bourbonnais.blog4ever.com/>
- Social networks: no (Facebook scheduled)

Creation: 2004 (2017)



Plan

- ♦ The Crescent area
- ♦ Local organisations
- ♦ **Local transmission & dynamics**
- ♦ Conclusion
- ♦ References

Local transmission & dynamics

- No direct transmission
 - no language course (except Saint-Agnant)
- No standard (to teach)
 - diversity always taken into account
 - no clearly established and/or common orthography
- Young generations rarely involved
 - barely no children or teenagers in audience
- Few written materials (books) (except Naves)

Local transmission & dynamics

- Classical Media
 - Press: several articles in local newspapers
 - Radio: only self-announcements
 - TV: barely nothing
- Internet
 - Website: no (not scheduled by most)
 - Social networks: no (not scheduled by most)
- Use of Media
 - Mainly to announce or present ad hoc activities
 - Seldom to present all activities & works
 - Never to build a community or create courses

Plan

- ♦ The Crescent area
- ♦ Local organisations
- ♦ Local transmission & dynamics
- ♦ **Conclusion**
- ♦ References

Conclusion

- Despite a growing public enthusiasm, local initiatives have little broad impact
will not be able to stop
the progressive process of disappearing
- Preserving but not transmitting
- No enough language teaching skills
- No enough new media skills

Conclusion

- No broad support
 - 😊 Municipalities
 - 😊 Local press
 - 😐 Local radios
 - 😞 Bigger public institutions
 - 😞 TV
- Difficulties to grow and develop

References

- Austin, Peter K. & Julia Sallabank (eds.). 2011. *The Cambridge Handbook of Endangered Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, David. 2000. *Language Death*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Guérin, Maximilien. 2017. Le marchois : Une langue entre oc et oïl. *Séminaire de l'équipe Linguistique du FoReLL (EA 3816)*. University of Poitiers, 17 February.
- Quint, Nicolas. 1996. *Grammaire du parler occitan nord-limousin marchois de Gartempe et de Saint-Sylvain-Montaigut (Creuse) : Étude phonétique, morphologique et lexicale*. Limoges: La Clau Lemosina.
- Quint, Nicolas. 1998. Aperçu d'un parler occitan de frontière : le marchois. *Bulletin de l'Association Internationale d'Études Occitanes* 14. 126-134.
- Quint, Nicolas & Maximilien Guérin. 2017. Les parlers du Croissant : une aire de contact entre oc et oïl. *XII^e Congrès de l'Associacion internacionala d'estudis occitans*. Albi, 10-15 July.
- Ronjat, Jules. 1913. *Essai de syntaxe des parlers provençaux modernes*. Mâcon: Protat.

Thank you for your attention!



**Do you
have any
questions?**