

<b>Institution:</b> University of Cambridge		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UoA 26		
<b>Title of case study:</b> The revitalisation of Insular Norman in Jersey (Channel Islands): enhancing language preservation, language policy and cultural awareness		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2001-2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Mari C. Jones	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Professor of French Linguistics and Language Change	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> October 1993 – present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> August 2013 – July 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Varieties of Insular Norman, present in the Channel Islands for over 1,000 years, are now obsolescent, and the Norman variety of Jersey (Jèrriais) is spoken by only some 0.5% of the population. Mari Jones's initiatives, featuring widely in local media, have focused on the documentation and preservation of Jèrriais and on influencing language policy. Jones has collaborated in language planning initiatives, playing a role in the decision to make Jèrriais an 'official language' and ensuring that the language is taught in schools. Her engagement with residents, educators and policymakers has raised awareness and demonstrated the importance of Jèrriais to local identity. She has also built valuable links between language experts in Jersey and the wider language planning community, encouraging them to preserve and revitalise the language. Recognition of her expertise and reputation has led to her being invited by the States of Guernsey to advise on Guernsey's language revitalisation initiatives, thereby extending the reach of her impact in Jersey.</p>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Spence (1984:351) observed that 'unless there is a miracle, the local vernaculars [of the Channel Islands] will have disappeared completely within fifty years, and probably even earlier'. A negative attitude has been largely responsible for this decline. From the late 19th century, English started to displace Insular Norman, owing to trade and other links. Anglicization was further strengthened by the German Occupation of the Channel Islands during World War II, when significant numbers were evacuated to mainland Britain. On their return, the evacuees had either forgotten their Norman or had chosen to abandon it in favour of English. Since the War, the development of tourism, and immigration resulting from Jersey's growing offshore finance industry, have also contributed to the spread of English.</p> <p>Jones (Professor of French Linguistics and Language Change) was the first to examine the Norman speech of the Channel Islands within the framework of current linguistic theory. Her research has been crucially important because these languages are declining so rapidly that they are unlikely to be spoken for much longer. According to the 2001 census (p10), the number of Jèrriais speakers halved between 1989 and 2001 to 2,784. There are now fewer than 500 native speakers, according to the <i>Office du Jèrriais</i> (as at November 2020). Had Jones's research not taken place, much linguistic knowledge about Jèrriais would have been lost forever.</p> <p>Jones's peer-reviewed publications include the first monograph to comprehensively study Jersey Norman French [R1], a monograph examining how contact between Norman and its two typologically different superstrates, French and English, has led to linguistic divergence between Mainland and Insular Norman [R2] and a book chapter on the effect of language contact on personal pronouns in Mainland and Insular Norman [R3]. She has published an article analysing the structural mechanisms of language loss in Jèrriais [R4], an article exploring how emergent French linguistic norms are transferred into Mainland Norman [R5] and an article on current planning initiatives to revitalise Jèrriais [R6]. She has conducted a detailed analysis of the linguistic features of Jèrriais, providing data which have been</p>		

compared phonetically, structurally and lexically to other varieties of Norman spoken in Guernsey, Sark and Mainland Normandy [R2]. The originality of Jones's research within language death theory lies in the distinction it draws between language and dialect death; in its combination of historical-linguistic and sociolinguistic perspectives; and its empirical demonstration, for the first time, of (a) the language change undergone by Insular Norman as a result of being spoken in high-contact situations and (b) the linguistic divergence occurring between Insular and Mainland Norman caused by the former being in contact with English and the latter with French.

Jones's publications have used original data to reinforce the fact that all three extant varieties of Insular Norman are distinct from one another and of great value to the fields of French dialectology and language change. These data, which include 80 hours of recordings, represent the largest pan-Insular Norman corpus ever compiled and are a vital source for the linguistic analysis of Insular Norman. To gather this knowledge, Jones has engaged actively and in a sustained manner with the native-speaker community of Jersey since 1996. There are no remaining monolingual speakers of Jèrriais, so there is a real danger that the language will disappear without immediate efforts to preserve it. Jones's reputation as an internationally-acknowledged expert on Insular Norman, generated by her publications, have led to her being respected in Jersey and thus being invited by the local speech community to engage at an official level with politicians and other public figures to promote their native language and keep it alive.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

All the references listed below are peer-reviewed.

[R1] Jones, Mari C. 2001. *Jersey Norman French*. Oxford: Blackwell. ISBN: 978-0631231691 [DOI](#)

[R2] Jones, Mari C. 2015. *Variation and Change in Mainland and Insular Norman: A Study of Superstrate Influence*. Leiden: Brill. ISBN: 978-90-04-25713-9 (ebook) / 978-90-04-25712-2 (hardback)

[R3] Jones, Mari C. 2020. 'Mainland and Insular Norman: Pronoun Sharing and Pronoun Sparing'. In *Variation and Change in Gallo-Romance Grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780198840176

[R4] Jones, Mari C. 2018. 'Does Language Loss Follow a Principled Structural Path? Evidence from Jersey Norman French' *Journal of French Language Studies* 28/3 pp. 399-429. [DOI](#)

[R5] Jones, Mari C. 2017. 'Norman forms – French Norms: Diaphasic Variation and Language Contact', in H. Tyne, M. Bilger, P. Cappeau and E. Guerin (eds) *La variation en question(s)*. Brussels: Peter Lang, pp. 111-134. ISBN: 978-2-8076-0296-0

[R6] Jones, Mari C. 2008. 'Identity Planning in an Obsolescent Variety: The Case of Jersey Norman French', *Anthropological Linguistics* 50/3-4, pp. 249-265, listed in REF2, [istor link](#)

**Funding:** awarded to Mari Jones, 'Linguistic Variation', British Academy, July 2011- July 2013, RG63582 GBP7,499.25

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Norman French has been spoken in Jersey (Channel Islands) for over 1,000 years. Today, however, Jèrriais is obsolescent: spoken by some 0.5% of the population (c. 500 speakers, of whom about 100 speak it as their everyday language). Jones's research has changed the way the inhabitants of Jersey think about Jèrriais and has strengthened efforts to preserve the language. Jones's impact work has three strands which complement and reinforce each other: preserving and documenting the language; advising and informing local policymakers; and raising cultural awareness. By documenting and studying the language, Jones has not only created a valuable resource but also highlighted the value of Jèrriais to policy makers and raised its status amongst local speakers and their communities. Jones's work has contributed significantly to passing key pieces of legislation which have helped preserve the

language, ensuring that it continues to be taught in schools. Ultimately, her initiatives have played a significant role in the decision to make Jèrriais an official language in Jersey. Jones's earlier achievements were recorded in a REF2014 case study. In the current REF cycle she has produced significant new impacts. Beneficiaries include those who study and teach Jèrriais in Jersey and beyond, native speakers of Jèrriais and their local community, school teachers and pupils on the island, as well as local government officials and policymakers (the latter in Guernsey also).

### Impact on Language Preservation

Since 1996, Jones has recorded native Jèrriais speakers to preserve and document the language and to study it while this is still possible. The 35 hours she has recorded constitute the largest corpus of Jèrriais compiled to date and form part of her larger pan-Insular Norman corpus (80 hours). These recordings have been made available to *L'Office du Jèrriais*, a body that promotes and teaches Jèrriais, as reference data for the development of pedagogical material.

As part of her ongoing engagement with the Jèrriais community, Jones co-launched 'Jèrriais Today', a sustainable language documentation project (2017-18), with Dr Julia Sallabank (SOAS, University of London). Together, they co-ran workshops in Jersey to train locals to record native speakers. Twenty-six speakers were recorded in this project, which has helped create networks between learners and native speakers within the community. Its significance is attested by States of Jersey's Cultural Development Officer: 'the project to produce a recorded archive of spoken Jèrriais has been launched to such enthusiasm from the local community...It is clear, as a result of your [Jones's] persuasive advocacy, that a very committed team has been mobilised comprising not only those involved in teaching and studying the language but a much wider constituency of people who has responded to the invitation to become involved in preserving a unique aspect of Jersey's culture... It is truly a community venture.' [E1]

### Impact on Language Policy

Resulting from sustained engagement with the community to develop Jèrriais resources, government officials took notice of the significance of Jones's research, especially regarding community identity and heritage preservation. For instance, Jersey's Senior Language Support Officer notes: 'Mari Jones has been a long-standing supporter of our effort to maintain the Jèrriais language. She has helped us for many years in developing our policy for the language.... Her contribution is a vital part of the continuing struggle to prevent its imminent extinction' [E2]. This recognition has led to Jones's active engagement with policymakers, playing a prominent role in changing Jersey's language policy on three occasions since 2016.

1) Jones helped to introduce and ensure the continuing provision of Jèrriais language teaching in Jersey's primary schools. At the invitation of *L'Office du Jèrriais*, in 2016 Jones gave six presentations to audiences in the island, including Jersey's Chief Minister, Assistant Chief Minister, Lieutenant Governor, Bailiff, politicians, Jersey Heritage, Jersey Tourism, *La Société Jersiaise*, headmasters and the general public, including parents [E3]. These presentations were mentioned explicitly by several politicians debating an amendment to Jersey's Medium-Term Financial Plan 2017-19, which was carried unanimously by 42 votes (27th September 2016) and committed funding for an additional teacher of Jèrriais. The impact, recorded in Hansard, includes: 'the most telling point that struck me [...] was the presentation [...] Dr. Mari Jones. It was interesting for a Welsh lady to come to Jersey and say that here we have a living example of a language that has been around for 1,000 years that has, [...] set the foundations for modern English words. That is why I have absolutely no problem in supporting this' (*Deputy Le Fondré*) [E4]. In 1998, during the REF2014 cycle, Jones had helped draft a report and proposition to teach Jèrriais in Jersey's primary schools for the first time, which was implemented in 1999. Impacts continued during the REF2021 cycle: by June 2016, the retirement of two of the three Jèrriais teachers meant future provision was uncertain. Jones's work on local educational policy and funding has ensured that teaching of Jèrriais continues in school to this date, increasing pupils' awareness of their linguistic and cultural heritage [E5].

As a direct result of this policy change and increased funding, the number of Jèrriais learners in schools grew from 42 in September 2017 to 164 by September 2019 [E5] p.10.

II) The States of Jersey asked Jones to help draft the 2017-2019 Jèrriais Plan, presented on 16th June 2017 [E6]. Its aim of preserving, and increasing the visibility of, Jèrriais in the island was instrumental in creating the context for the key strategic language debate ([III] below) and laying the foundations for one 30-minute weekly Jèrriais lesson available to all schoolchildren in Years 4-6 once the new teachers were trained linguistically. As stated in a letter from Senator Jean Le Maistre, 'A Jèrriais Language Plan, which .... Dr Jones endorse[d] formally, was drawn up in the early months of 2017 and taken to the Council of Ministers for consideration in April. The plan to increase the teaching team to four was unanimously approved on 19th April [2017]...The longer term aim is to increase the teaching staff further, to enable the Jèrriais programme to be expanded into secondary schools.' [E7].

III) Deputy Jeremy Maçon invited Jones to help write a case for a debate on language policy held in the States of Jersey (12th February 2019) [E8]. Resulting from the debate, two propositions were carried [E8] p.109 - with 39 votes for 6 against: i) Jèrriais would, for the first time, become an official language of the States; ii) Jèrriais would be included on all official letter headings used in the public sector and on all new public signs. Hansard records an acknowledgement of Jones's work by Deputy Maçon and a statement from Jersey's Chief Minister that this work has made him think differently about Jèrriais: 'We [...] had a presentation from Professor Jones who is obviously a specialist in languages particularly, including Jèrriais, and the presentation she made to us is that you have a 1,000 year-old language, a living language, and if you do not do anything about it, it will die on your watch. That really struck home [...] if it sends a message to say: "Yes, you can have the ability to speak it in our Assembly" then maybe we should go for it [...] I will certainly be supporting this amendment' [E8] p.101. Prominent island officials had never before given such recognition to Jèrriais, raising its status considerably.

### Impact on Cultural Awareness

Jones's work has impacted civil society and cultural life by helping address the profile of Jèrriais within Jersey. It has raised awareness of the prevalence of Jèrriais in everyday environments and has helped locals appreciate its relevance to their cultural identity. From 2001 onwards, she has given invited lectures to the general public in Jersey, with exit questionnaires demonstrating that islanders feel differently about their linguistic heritage and understand the need to preserve it. For example, one member of the public attending a talk in June 2016 noted being 'more aware of the value of Jèrriais to my heritage and of its relevance to life today' [E3] p.2; another attendee felt 'inspired' and 'more determined to preserve it' [E3] p.21. One talk at Jersey Museum in June 2016 led directly to a request for Jèrriais language lessons from members the Jersey Heritage Living History Team who had attended and felt inspired to learn and preserve the language [E3] pp. 142-144. A talk entitled 'Why should we bother about Jèrriais?' at the Jersey Public Library on 7th April 2016 attracted 26 attendees compared to the usual average attendance of five. Public engagement was also undertaken via special events including 'Taking Jèrriais into tomorrow' (*Société Jersiaise*, 23rd May 2018, 56 attendees); 'Jersey's Linguistic Heritage: an evening with Mari Jones' (Jersey Heritage, 24th May 2018; 63 attendees), and 'A conversation with Mari Jones' (during the first Jersey Language Festival 27th September 2018; 57 attendees).

Jones's research has also impacted public discourse through local media coverage [E9]. Media interviews on BBC Radio Jersey (reaching 27,000 weekly listeners in February–December 2019) [E9] pp.1-4 and in the *Jersey Evening Post* (with a reach of 270,000 unique monthly visitors online) [E9] pp.5-8 exemplify the public debate on the value of keeping Jèrriais alive. Jones's work also led to an invitation to be the first non-islander to be guest speaker at the *Assemblée d'Jèrriais* lunch (April 9th 2017; 78 attendees). The first *Fête du Jèrriais* (Jersey French awareness week) took place in September 2018 and included a talk by Jones. This event was organised by one of the Jèrriais teachers, whose funding Jones had helped to secure via talks to States members. The Fête was attended by



the Chief Minister of Jersey [E9] p.9 and other local policymakers. Their social media posts [E9] pp.10-13 attest to the importance of Jones's role in raising awareness of Jèrriais and their resulting enthusiasm for language preservation. States member Kirsten Morrel tweeted "Superb presentation by Prof Mari Jones about this being the last chance to save jèrriais. It's more than just our language, it's our culture and history." [E9] p.11

While Jones had no direct involvement in the following initiatives, the increasing interest in Jèrriais can clearly be seen in the fact that the Office du Jèrriais has created new resources, with three picture books translated and distributed to over 3,000 children in 2018, 2019 and 2020. The number of café conversation groups rose from one in 2018 (St Helier) to three in 2020 (St Helier, St Ouen, St Martin) [E5] p.10.

### Wider impacts on language preservation

Jones's fundamental contribution to the promotion of Jèrriais showcases her long-standing engagement with minority languages across the Channel Islands. A case in point is the significant advisory role she played in the recent award of GBP300,000 by The Committee for Education, Sport & Culture (Guernsey) to support the establishment of a Guernsey Language Commission, which underpins the substantial reach of her impacts. In a personal letter, the President of the Committee expresses his 'grateful thanks for the considerable expertise you have provided which has been invaluable in supporting the Committee's efforts to reach this pivotal milestone in the history of our Guernsey language.' [E10]. This demonstrates the influence of Jones's work on policy-making and language preservation beyond Jersey.

Jones encourages and provides opportunities for Jèrriais teachers to engage with the wider language planning community via conferences she has organised (2011, 2012, 2016, 2018, 2019) and academic volumes she has edited (2013, 2015, 2017). One attendee explains how this knowledge exchange and engagement with the international language preservation community has profoundly benefitted his work teaching and promoting Jèrriais: 'Attending the conference has been instrumental in allowing me to develop my understanding of language endangerment and how it can be addressed....To be able to engage in discussion about the range of methodologies being employed throughout the world to keep our precious languages alive has inspired my work in revitalising Jèrriais.' He also describes Jones's vital contribution to language preservation: 'It has become clear to me that Jèrriais would almost certainly be in a more precarious situation were it not for the support of Professor Mari Jones.' [E11]

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- [E1] Letter from the Cultural Development Officer, States of Jersey, 12.04.2017.
- [E2] Email from Jersey's Senior Language Support Officer (now retired), 10.03.2016.
- [E3] Responses to talks: Exit questionnaires Jersey, June 2016 and London, February 2015; request for Jèrriais lessons following talk by Jones, June 2016.
- [E4] Hansard, 27.09.2016, debate on Jersey's Medium-Term Financial Plan 2017-19 (p. 33).
- [E5] Evidence of educational changes: Details of Jèrriais lessons in schools; Budget transfer from Central Contingencies to Education Department: Jèrriais Teaching, 16.05.2017
- Bailiwick Express* article '£110,000 allocated to plan to save Jèrriais in schools', 11.06.2017;
- Job advertisement for new role June 2017; Email and data on Jèrriais speakers and learners from Jèrriais Head of Service.
- [E6] States of Jersey, Jèrriais Language Plan 2017-19, pp. 2-3.
- [E7] Letter from the *Président of Le Don Balleine* Charitable Trust, 02.07.2016.
- [E8] States of Jersey, Official Report, 12th Feb 2019, pp. 86-110 and p. 101.
- [E9] Local media coverage and social media: BBC Radio Jersey interview screenshots, January, April and May 2017 and listener statistics; *Jersey Evening Post* article 'Loud and clear from the depths of Jersey's past', 22.04.2017; D Edbrooke and web statistics; *Jersey Evening Post* front cover image & caption 'Bouônjour', relating to *Fête du Jèrriais*, September 2018; Social media - *Fête du Jèrriais*.
- [E10] Letter from The Committee for Education, Sport & Culture (Guernsey), 15.09.2020.
- [E11] Email from *Maître du Jèrriais* regarding conference 07.07.2020