

E  
u  
r  
o  
p  
a  
M  
i  
t  
t  
e  
K  
o  
n  
t  
a  
k  
t  
e  
Sprache und Kultur

SPRACH- UND KULTURKONTAKTE  
IN EUROPAS MITTE.  
STUDIEN ZUR SLAWISTIK  
UND GERMANISTIK 14

Nicole Dołowy-Rybińska

# “No One Will Do This For Us”

The Linguistic and Cultural Practices  
of Young Activists Representing  
European Linguistic Minorities



PETER LANG

SPRACH- UND KULTURKONTAKTE  
IN EUROPAS MITTE.  
STUDIEN ZUR SLAWISTIK  
UND GERMANISTIK 14

Nicole Dołowy-Rybińska

## “No One Will Do This For Us”

This book presents a portrait of actively engaged young people representing four linguistic minorities in Europe: the Kashubs (in Poland), the Upper Sorbs (in Germany), the Bretons (in France), and the Welsh (in the United Kingdom). In numerous statements cited in the book, drawn from interviews conducted by the author, young people speak for themselves and serve as guides to their minority cultures. They draw attention to the difficulties and challenges they encounter in their day-to-day life and activism. Based on their statements, the book examines the sociolinguistic situation of each of the minorities, the prevailing linguistic ideologies and the role of minority education; it also distinguishes different types of minority language speakers. The analysis focuses on the cultural and identity-forming practices of young people in the context of different forms of community life and their different pathways to becoming engaged representing their cultures and languages.

### The Author

Nicole Dołowy-Rybińska is an anthropologist, sociolinguist, and professor at the Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences. Her work focuses on the transmission and revitalization of endangered languages and on the relation between using a minority language and maintaining cultural consciousness.

“No One Will Do This For Us”

SPRACH- UND KULTURKONTAKTE  
IN EUROPAS MITTE  
STUDIEN ZUR SLAWISTIK  
UND GERMANISTIK

Edited by  
Andrzej Kałny and Stefan Michael Newerkla

Volume 14



**PETER LANG**

Nicole Dołowy-Rybińska

# **“No One Will Do This For Us”**

**The Linguistic and Cultural Practices of Young Activists  
Representing European Linguistic Minorities**

Translated by Daniel J. Sax



**PETER LANG**

### **Bibliographic Information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek**

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available in the internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

This work was financed within the National Programme for the Development of the Humanities funded in 2018-2020 by the Minister of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Poland, project no. 21H 18 0088 86 (90.162 PLN).



NATIONAL PROGRAMME  
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMANITIES

Original edition: „Nikt za nas tego nie zrobi”: Praktyki językowe i kulturowe młodych aktywistów języków mniejszościowych Europy. Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK. (Monografie Fundacji na rzecz Nauki Polskiej). Toruń: 2017.

Printed by CPI books GmbH, Leck

ISSN 2192-7170 · ISBN 978-3-631-82775-8 (Print)

E-ISBN 978-3-631-82785-7 (E-PDF) · E-ISBN 978-3-631-82786-4 (EPUB)

E-ISBN 978-3-631-82787-1 (MOBI) · DOI 10.3726/b17208

PETER LANG



Open Access: This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercial No Derivatives 4.0 unported license. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

© Nicole Dołowy-Rybińska, 2020

Peter Lang – Berlin · Bern · Bruxelles · New York · Oxford · Warszawa · Wien

This publication has been peer reviewed.

[www.peterlang.com](http://www.peterlang.com)

# Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	9
-------------------------------	---

<b>Introduction: Studying young people engaged in revitalizing minority languages in Europe</b> .....	13
---	----

Scope of research and methodology .....	15
---	----

Theoretical inspirations .....	22
--------------------------------	----

Structure of the book .....	26
-----------------------------	----

<b>Chapter 1: The sociolinguistic situation and language practices of young people</b> .....	29
--	----

The sociolinguistic situation of the four minorities .....	29
--	----

Kashubia: diminished home transmission .....	29
--	----

Brittany: in the shadow of trauma and the language revival of the 1970s .....	33
---	----

Upper Lusatia: impending language change .....	37
--	----

Wales: language communities and a territorial community .....	41
---	----

Language ideologies, symbolic violence and discrimination .....	47
---	----

Kashubia – language ideologies in the eyes of the young .....	49
---	----

A dead language, a rural language .....	51
---	----

Welsh – a non-progressive language .....	54
--	----

Speaking a minority language as an expression of nationalism .....	57
--	----

Lusatia – from quiet discrimination to overt hostility .....	59
--	----

State protection and language policy .....	63
--	----

The Kashubian language – change in status and prestige .....	63
--	----

Brittany – unappreciated state aid .....	66
--	----

Lusatia – a defensive stance .....	68
------------------------------------	----

Wales – application of the model language policy .....	70
--	----

Effects of language policy in the perception of the young .....	73
---	----

<b>Chapter 2: Institutionalized transmission of minority languages</b> .....	77
Types of education offered to minorities .....	77
Can schools save minority languages? .....	81
The role of teachers... ..	87
... and the role of parents .....	90
<b>Chapter 3: Young speakers of minority languages</b> .....	93
Problems concerning the modernization and standardization of minority languages .....	93
Dialectical vs. literary forms of a minority language .....	93
“Ideal types” of young users of minority languages .....	101
“Native speakers” .....	102
“Learners” .....	108
“New speakers” .....	119
<b>Chapter 4: How young people construct language identities</b> .....	133
Language vs. identity .....	133
Language as an ethnic boundary .....	140
Language vis-a-vis belonging to a minority .....	143
<b>Chapter 5: Community life in the eyes of young people</b> .....	151
Minority culture as a community – a paradise lost? .....	152
Minority identity as an option .....	160
Identification with a minority as a continuous struggle for identity .....	168
Towards a new type of relation .....	173



<b>Chapter 6: Community and language practices of the young</b> .....	181
Formation and role of interest groups focused on minority issues .....	182
From interest groups to activity-oriented communities .....	188
<i>Eisteddfod</i> – reinforcing a sense of belonging to a community through cultural practices .....	194
Minority communities of practice: language, education, identity .....	206
Online media: real vs. virtual communities .....	218
 <b>Chapter 7: Towards activism</b> .....	227
Participation in minority culture .....	227
Early stages of engagement .....	232
Parents .....	234
School .....	237
Cultural activities .....	238
Friends, activists .....	241
Chance/coincidence .....	243
Finding one’s own place .....	244
Parting from family and location .....	245
Becoming involved with preservation of the minority language .....	248
Engagement .....	249
Activism .....	253
Types of activism .....	258
Attitudes towards activism .....	263
Activist profiles .....	266
Subjective perception of benefits of activism .....	270
The world of activists as they view it .....	274

<b>Chapter 8: Between tradition, folklore and modernity</b> .....	277
Upper Sorbian culture – rites and folklore .....	279
Kashubia – from folklorization to modernity .....	291
Brittany – from community customs to invented tradition .....	302
Welsh culture – between everyday practices and festivities .....	312
In search of ethnic boundaries in the transcultural world .....	320
<b>Conclusions: Discourses of endangerment and responsibility</b> .....	329
The discourse of endangerment .....	330
The discourse of benefits of multilingualism .....	334
Quasi-political discourse .....	337
The discourse of responsibility .....	343
Epilogue .....	346
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	349
<b>Subject index</b> .....	377
<b>Name index</b> .....	385

## Acknowledgements

Writing this book was both an immense challenge and an immense pleasure. After years of intensive fieldwork involving many encounters with young people representing different European language minorities, having forged a network of contacts with other researchers studying the status and revitalization of endangered languages and having reviewed the extensive literature dealing with these issues, I felt the time had come to organize and summarize my observations and conclusions in book form. But more than anything else, however, I wished to find a way for those individuals who were the subjects and theme of this study, i.e. almost 100 different young people belonging to the four European language minorities I studied (Kashubian, Upper Sorbian, Breton and Welsh), to have their voices heard. It is to them that I owe the greatest debt of gratitude, and yet I can express that gratitude to them here only collectively, as ethical practice stipulates that they should remain anonymous. Still, I wish to emphasize as much as I can that their company, their ideas and initiatives, in which they engage with utmost passion, was what gave me all the energy I needed to conduct the study, so much so that I cannot even consider the time spent with them as “work.” During the three years of my fieldwork I met many fascinating young people who infected others with their attitude and enthusiasm. It is thanks to them and people like them that the future of minority languages in Europe, perhaps more widely in the world, is beginning to look somewhat more optimistic. I should stress, in particular, that in writing the chapter on young activists I was especially inspired by Tymoteusz Król, a young, passionate and fervent revitalizer of the language *Wymysiöeryś*, also known as Vilamovian. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to him, wishing him even more persistence and stamina in his further endeavours.

But I would not have been able to meet those young activists if it had not been for the people who helped me organize such meetings and reach out to various circles and groups. In Kashubia, my most important guides were two wonderful teachers of Kashubian, Felicja Baska-Borzyszkowska and Wanda Kiedrowska, to whom I owe my deepest gratitude and respect. I am also indebted to Łukasz Grzędzicki, who offered me a room for recording interviews at the Kashubian House [Dom Kaszubski], and to Artur Jabłoński. The Upper Sorbian part of my project would not have been possible without help from my friends Jadwiga and Fabian Kaulfürst, two very generous animators of the Sorbian culture and academic life. My thanks go to Ada and Jan Měškank for their help in transcribing Sorbian interviews and also to Dietrich Scholze-Šolta for the institutional support I received during my stays in Budyšin/Bautzen and for a grant from the Sorbian Institute at the final stage of writing this book. In Brittany, I relied on the help of Hervé Le Bihan, Aurélie Le Brun and Glenn Jegou in contacting young activists. I also owe special thanks to Fanny Chauffin, a marvellous teacher, activist and a dear friend of mine, who not only enabled me to carry out field studies in the

Diwan secondary school, but also had long conversations with me and organized scientific and cultural gatherings during which our findings were presented. In Wales, among the many people assisting me in carrying out my study, I would like to acknowledge the care, friendship and help of Elin Haf Gruffydd Jones, who constantly empowered me with her optimism and energy. I also greatly appreciate the help of the activist and artist Steve Eaves, who enabled me to organize a number of meetings and who introduced me to the circles of Welsh activists. However, it is impossible to mention here all the names of people to whom I owe a debt of gratitude, so I would like to take the opportunity to express my sincere thanks to all of them.

The research upon which this book is based was conducted under a grant from Poland's National Science Centre, which enabled me to carry out fieldwork, participate in conferences, collaborate with the international scientific community and to visit numerous libraries. In the discussion herein, therefore, the reader will find echoes of all these different kinds of experience, including first-hand conversations, theoretical inspirations, lectures and debates that I had an opportunity to attend. My perception of the cultural and social reality was profoundly affected by my studies at the Institute of Polish Culture, University of Warsaw. I am also indebted to my colleagues from the Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences for their valuable comments on an earlier, Polish draft of this book. My special thanks go to Agnieszka Pasięka and Andrzej Mencwel, whose constructive critical remarks were especially helpful in improving its final version.

For obvious reasons, I am not able to enumerate all the people who provided intellectual inspiration reflected in the analyses carried out in the book. Among them, however, I would like to take this chance to acknowledge (in alphabetical order) Anna Engelking, Michael Hornsby, Ewa Michna, Justyna Olko, Hanna Popowska-Taborska, Tomasz Rakowski, Karolina Rosiak (whom I thank for answering my questions on contemporary Welsh culture and sharing interesting materials with me), Julia Sallabank, Miren Artexte Sarasola (thanks to whom I appreciated the role of communities of practice in revitalizing minority languages), Claudia Soria, Leoš Šatava, Tomasz Wicherkiewicz, Elżbieta Wrocławska and Jadwiga Zieniukowa.

My warmest thanks are certainly due to my friends and family, who supported me at every stage of my research and writing this book. I thank my parents for being the wisest people I know and the most fantastic parents one could possibly dream of. I would not be able to persevere in my scientific pursuits without their constant encouragement, support and providing me with positive motivation. I thank my sister Patrycja for the close relationship we enjoy together and for always being there for me. I extend my thanks to Władek, who bravely coped with my moods when I was exhausted or plunged in thought. I very much appreciate his constant support, conversations about issues that were on my mind, and also his readiness to read what I had written and advance more or less critical comments. Finally, I would like to thank Ziuta for not holding a grudge against me for too long when I had to leave home to do fieldwork. I appreciate her being with

me and keeping a close eye on me during all the long hours I spent at the desk, and for taking me out for a walk when, in her view, I needed a break.

The translation of this book into English has been financed under a grant from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education within the National Programme for the Development of Humanities (Narodowy Program Rozwoju Humanistyki) and supported by the Foundation for the Polish Science's 'Translations' programme. I would like to thank the translator of my book, Daniel J. Sax, for his great translation as well as careful reading and inspiring comments.

This English version of this book differs from the Polish original, albeit only slightly so. Despite the two-year time lapse between its publication in Polish and the initial work on preparing this English version, I refrained from updating the bibliography or remodelling fragments that I might interpret or formulate differently today. The only alterations have involved shortening some of the interviewees' remarks and adding commentaries to some others. I have also added a brief description of the minority groups and research field in the introduction part.



# Introduction: Studying young people engaged in revitalizing minority languages in Europe

“Young people nowadays have no interest in anything,” “they don’t feel connected to the minority and they don’t care for the language of their forefathers,” “all they care for is the virtual world, they cannot form bonds or get involved” – such opinions about young people, both secondary school and university students, can be heard again and again, in different minority groups across Europe. This kind of discourse, known as the discourse of moral panic (Thompson, 1998; Czykwin, 2007), is indeed the dominant one on issues related to the revitalization of minority cultures and languages.

Indeed, as theories of reversing language shift (Fishman, 1991) underscore, a necessary condition for language survival is its continuous transmission, which means being used by each consecutive generation. However, in modern times cultural transfer across generations has been significantly hampered, if not completely suppressed. Older generations, strongly influenced by monolingual discourse and language policies oriented towards eliminating minority languages, often chose dominant languages to be spoken in their families. In schools, institutions and the media, only those languages were allowed. But more recently, minority groups have gradually won recognition for their languages in public life. Nowadays, not only are some minority languages being taught in schools and used in many domains of life, they are also receiving financial and institutional support. This includes policies aimed at protection and promotion, as well as active revitalization. Under such circumstances, every member of a minority could in theory use their ethnic language. In practice, however, this is not the case.

François Grin (2003) mentions three fundamental conditions that have to be met for a minority language to actually be used: having a sufficient capacity to use it (which can be achieved at home or at school), having an opportunity to use it in a language community or in public life, and having a desire to choose this particular language as a means of communication. In the case of languages covered by revitalization programs, the last of these three conditions appears to be the most difficult to meet. Young minority members are often expected not only to attain a high level of communicative competence in their language but also to identify with it, or even get actively involved in supporting its cause. This is, however, only one of the many possibilities that young people growing up in the twenty-first century have to choose from in shaping their identities and priorities. The old world of closed homogeneous language communities based on direct bonds has ceased to exist, replaced by a world that could be dubbed transcultural, characterized by unlimited information flow, mobility, and various possibilities to change

one's place of residence, job or language. Today's young people are citizens of the world rather than of the traditional "small homelands." Indifference towards belonging to a minority group and speaking its language, fostered by increasing cultural assimilation, globalization processes, economic conditions and lifestyle change, is one of the major threats faced by minority languages. It is this threat that activists fighting for the recognition of minority language rights seek to counteract, trying to draw as many people as possible out of what might be dubbed the "grey zone of ethnicity." The best remedy for such indifference appears to be active and conscious participation in the minority culture and getting to know the minority language not only as one used at school, or as an otherwise useless forefathers' language, but as a means of communication amongst a peer group, perceived by young people as their own.

This book hinges upon the results of the field research I conducted in recent years among minority communities in various locations in Europe.<sup>1</sup> These findings, later confirmed by other studies on young people's behaviour, including their participation in civil and/or community life, support the central thesis of the book: that having a conscious attitude of belonging to a minority culture and deciding to use and promote a minority language is to a large extent personal and depends on a combination of many factors. The most important such factors include attitudes inherited from the family environment, participation in cultural and social activities, and the emergence of communities of practice within minorities as well as bonds among peers (see Corona Caraveo, Pérez & Hernández, 2010). Developing a conscious attitude of belonging, accompanied by a sense of involvement in minority culture and language, may for instance be triggered by an encounter with an individual particularly able to inspire a young person and incite in them a "spirit of ethnicity." Or, alternatively, a young person may become friends with someone interested in the community's past and language, or become member of a group in which participation in a minority culture is valued and appreciated. Young people who develop an interest in ethnic culture and become engaged in the preservation of a minority language may then exert a crucial influence on their peers by preparing for them cultural activities on offer, through which communities of practice are created (Wenger, 1998) and ethnic awareness is gained. This can be achieved by forming a powerful group attracting ethnically undecided individuals, or by initiating and carrying out protests against the extant situation of a minority in such a way that other young people may join in. Therefore, the role of young people involved in the minority cause and that of language activists cannot be overestimated. This assumption is what motivated me to undertake research specifically on young people becoming interested in their culture and language and getting engaged in various activities related to them both within and outside their community. I wished to discover how their involvement in the life of a

---

1 I have studied minority languages in Kashubia since 2004, in Lusatia and in Brittany since 2005, and in Wales since 2010.



minority comes about, to observe how their cultural and language identity arises and becomes consolidated, to find out what they think about the surrounding world and why they want to change it. Scrutinizing the language and cultural practices of this particular group of young people and trying to adopt their perspective on the world can be a source of precious knowledge on the young generation of individuals coming from minority groups. This knowledge, in turn, may help revise some notions and practices concerning revitalization, making them better suited to the expectations and needs of the young generation, commonly recognized as being responsible for the future of minority languages and cultures.

## Scope of research and methodology

In my fieldwork,<sup>2</sup> I examined the situation of four language minorities in Europe: the Kashubs in Poland, the Upper Sorbs inhabiting Upper Lusatia in Germany, the Bretons in France and the Welsh in Great Britain.

The Kashubs<sup>3</sup> are speakers of a Slavic minority language that inhabit a relatively compact region of Poland, known as “Kashubia,” essentially clustered around the region of the city of Gdańsk on the Baltic Sea coast, from there trailing inland to the south-west. The Kashubian language is recognized as the sole remaining survivor of a range of Pomeranian tongues once spoken along the Baltic coast in former centuries, and as such it is a West Slavic language closely related to the dominant language of the region, Polish. The intergenerational transmission of Kashubian was significantly interrupted in the second half of the twenty century. Today the number of Kashubs is estimated as 300,000, based on the criterion of individual declarations, with approximately 100,000 speakers of the language. Kashubs do not have the status of a group officially recognized in Poland, but Kashubian is recognized as a regional language under the Act of 6 January 2005 on National and Ethnic Minorities and the Regional Language.

The Upper Sorbs are a minority community residing in Lusatia, a region of eastern Germany close to the border with Poland and the Czech Republic. Their language, Upper Sorbian, is a Slavic minority language surrounded by a dominant Germanic language, namely German. They are in fact one of two closely related minority communities in the same region: the Upper Sorbs live in a portion of the region known as Upper Lusatia, centred on the town of Budyšin/Bautzen, whereas Lower Sorbs (speakers of the related minority language Lower Sorbian) live in

---

2 The monograph is based on fieldwork carried out in 2012–2014 under a National Science Centre grant “Strategies for engaging young people in ethnic activities of autochthonic minorities across Europe: institutions, activities, identity choices (Kashubs, Sorbs, Bretons, the Welsh)” (UMO-2011/01/D/HS2/02085), affiliated with the Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences.

3 Note that other spellings have been used in English, including, for instance, “Cashubes” and “Casshubian.”

Lower Lusatia; my research pertained only to the Upper Sorbs. The Sorbs (both Upper and Lower) are recognized in Germany as national minorities, whose collective rights and language rights are guaranteed in the constitutions of the respective federal states (Saxony in the case of Upper Lusatia and Brandenburg in the case of Lower Lusatia). They obtain funding from the Foundation for the Sorbian People. The number of Sorbs (both Upper and Lower) has been reported as 60,000, but this number is not derived from any current studies or population statistics (see the discussion in the next chapter); the estimated number of Upper Sorbian speakers oscillates around 10,000–15,000. In the Catholic Upper Sorbian community, the intergenerational transmission of the language has been maintained.

The Bretons, in turn, are an indigenous people originally speaking Breton, a Celtic language (related to Welsh in the UK) and living in the region of Brittany, in the northwest corner of France. Brittany in fact has three languages: French (the dominant Romance language), Breton, and also Gallo, another Romance language often called a *patois* of French. It is difficult to estimate the number of Bretons, since the criterion of being a Breton is fluid. As an administrative region, Brittany is inhabited by over 4,000,000 people, but not all of them consider themselves Bretons. No statistical investigation on Breton identity has yet been carried out. The Breton language is spoken by less than 200,000 people and the intergenerational transmission of this language has been almost totally disrupted after the Second World War. The revival of the Breton culture and language dates to the 1970s. Bretons do not enjoy any special status in France, and their language is not recognized by the state. Activities aiming to protect the language have been supported by the local authorities, which allocate a share of the regional budget for this purpose, and by the Public Office for the Breton Language.

Welsh, a Celtic language, is the indigenous language of Wales, one of the component countries of the United Kingdom. The population of Wales is about 3,000,000, but as in the case of Brittany, the residence criterion cannot be accepted as decisive for the Welsh identity. Welsh is spoken by approximately 562,000 people in Wales. In the second half of the twentieth century the Welsh gained numerous rights thanks to the rise of the Welsh movement with organizations such as nationalist political party *Plaid Cymru*, Welsh Language Society (*Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg*), and devolution, obtaining partial autonomy and a parliament (the National Assembly for the Wales). The Welsh language is recognized as an official language in Wales (next to English) and its status in various domains of life is safeguarded by a number of organizations. The body responsible for language policy is the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Although these four groups differ variously in terms of status, population and sociolinguistic situation (as will be described in Chapter 1), the language situation of all these communities is complicated and the languages spoken by them are all under threat of extinction. One of the criteria that can be used to differentiate between these groups is the existence of a speech community and home transmission of a minority language. This criterion is met only in Catholic Upper Lusatia and in some areas located in northern Wales. In all the other areas, young people

can learn the ethnic language at school, in courses or on their own initiative. Participation in a minority culture and awareness of group belonging also differ significantly across the minorities under discussion. In Catholic Upper Lusatia, practically all children from Sorbian-speaking families participate in ethnic cultural life and rituals. All children attending Welsh-language schools likewise participate in various kinds of contests, cultural events and *eisteddfod* festivals. For children coming from non-Welsh-speaking families and schools, however, access to Welsh cultural life is limited. In Brittany, the Breton language was until recently taught only to children of parents involved in the Breton language movement. Besides, participation in Breton cultural life is rarely conditioned by speaking the language. The overwhelming majority of the region inhabitants do not speak Breton and are not interested in learning it. The Kashubian language can still be heard in little villages of Pomerania, but it is burdened with many negative ideological associations. Besides, it is often stigmatized as a rural and folkloric language of the past in the perception of young people. The last few years, however, have seen the development of language initiatives slowly but steadily contributing to an increasingly positive perception of Kashubian.

Despite these differences, however, there are also many striking similarities among the four groups. Crucially for this study, all the four communities include certain young people who do not merely participate in the life of the minorities but who also get actively involved in various kinds of efforts supporting their minority's cause. As their own testimonies indicate, their motivations and attitudes towards being engaged in promoting their minorities are very similar – similar enough to ensure that a certain coherent picture emerges from the four-way perspective adopted in this study.

This book cites numerous statements made by young people engaged in a minority cause, originating from over a hundred anonymous and semi-structured interviews<sup>4</sup> carried out with representatives of the four language minorities. The respondents were selected through a number of channels: through contacts with activists, organizations, societies and leaders whom I had known from previous research and who recommended their young collaborators to me; through secondary school teachers of minority languages; through students' organizations

---

4 The interviews were based on a questionnaire including fields and problems to be discussed with each interviewee. In the course of the conversations, however, I did not adhere to the fixed order of questions, trying to follow the train of the interviewee's talk, offering them an opportunity to elaborate on the issues they considered important or interesting. Each interview took about 1.5 – 2 hours and was conducted in a language spoken both by my interlocutors and myself: Polish in Kashubia, Upper Sorbian in Lusatia, French in Brittany and English in Wales. The interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed and (if necessary) translated into English. The spoken register is preserved in the translation. In square brackets [] I inserted missing words and explanations of the broader context of the conversation. Square brackets [...] also indicate omissions in quotations.

associated with minorities, and also through the minority media, local societies and political organizations. I made an effort to recruit my respondents from various circles and various fields of activities, that is why I rarely deployed the snowball method (Babbie, 2013: 191), in which interlocutors are requested to recommend their own acquaintances and colleagues. In a number of cases, however, young people did contact me and volunteered to participate in survey about which they had learned from their friends or from myself on the occasion of various activities in which I participated, or which I observed. I certainly faced no shortage of interlocutors, and those who participated in the interviews showed a great deal of enthusiasm. I did not want my respondents to remain complete strangers to me, so I tried to spend some time with each of them and also to participate in their activities and meetings. I conducted participant observation, communing with language activist groups, especially those having many young people among them. I took part in a number of formal and informal actions supporting the minority cause. I also attended classes for the ethnic youth and conducted many workshops for various groups. During my research I usually stayed in dormitories for school and university students. I attended rehearsals and performances of youth theatrical and musical groups. I also joined in meetings and discussions in students' clubs and youth societies. I was an active participant in the social life of my older-generation interlocutors as well, accompanying them to various events and meetings. During the three-year period of fieldwork I was present at many events which were important for the minorities, such as regional workshops organized by the young for the young, social and political debates on minority issues, cultural and language festivals, such as the Welsh *eisteddfod*, rallies for the language rights attended by young people, meetings and activities of civil disobedience groups and other events promoting the minority cause, such as the *Ar Redadeg* race around Brittany organized to raise funds for the sake of the Breton language. I spent much time talking informally to young people as well as to experienced activists and culture managers. With many of them I became friends on Facebook, which also turned into a valuable source of information for me. All the observations, conversations and meetings enriched my background knowledge and added an anthropological dimension to my study of the recorded interviews, next to the discourse analysis dimension.

At this juncture, I would like to devote some space to the heroes of this book: the young people who voiced their opinions in the interviews. They were between the ages of 16 and 25, limits I had set arbitrarily. The assumption was that interviewees would be old enough to be conscious of the choices they were making or about to make, and at the same time they would still be at an age when they can choose activities that are enjoyable and that shape their character and human relationships. Even though the age span of the group is not large, it can be divided into three major subgroups on the basis of age and experience. The first subgroup includes secondary school students. In Penelope Eckert's parlance, secondary school is "a hothouse for the construction of identities" (Eckert, 1998: 163). At school, characters and attitudes of young people are shaped under specific

conditions that Kathryn Woolard referred to as a “distinct chronotope” (2011: 618), using the term coined by Mikhail Bakhtin. Obviously, not every school is a hot-house in this sense, but language immersion and bilingual schools are of special significance, especially boarding schools in which students become strongly integrated with their peers. Such schools exist in Lusatia, Brittany and Wales. In Kashubia, where the minority language is taught as an optional subject, participation in Kashubian culture and speaking the language is only indirectly related to school. The second group consists of university students, some of whom have academic interest in the minority language and others who are engaged in various language- and culture-related actions outside university. Highly aware of the significance of their actions, their passion and enthusiasm still remain unhindered by professional duties. It should be noted that the identity and language behaviour of the young undergo changes once they become members of various communities of practice. Both secondary school and university provide opportunities for creating strong peer bonds and friendships, but after graduation individuals may find themselves in environments in which connections with a minority group are not valued, and language competence acquired during education proves to be of no use. Therefore, a third group can be distinguished that includes people who have completed formal education but continue to be involved in the life of a minority. They often work for organizations or minority media, are engaged in political and cultural issues, possibly as activists. For them, getting involved in minority problems has become a consciously pursued path of life, at least for some time. The distinction between those who are natural part of a minority environment at school or university and those who choose to be involved in a minority cause is vital: if people continue to change communities of practice throughout their lifetime (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004: 378), and participation in each of them affects their identity, it follows that the cultural and language behaviour of young people may also be subject to frequent changes (Woolard, 2011: 618). My interlocutors talk about their lives and, through this narration, they project a vision of themselves in the future, although this vision may or may not come true.

The young participants of my survey are engaged in the life of their minority group through a number of activities. The most important fields of their involvement include: 1) learning a minority language at school, at courses or by self-learning, underlain by the belief that the language should be preserved and revitalized; 2) studying the minority language and culture; 3) being active in students’ organizations and clubs promoting minority languages and cultures; 4) being active in informal youth groups promoting a minority and its language; 5) organizing cultural and social events related to speaking a minority language and participation in the minority life; 6) participation in and/or leading teams such as amateur theatres, musical groups, literary circles; 7) organizing and/or conducting language/culture lessons, such as minority language courses or language camps for children and teenagers; 8) involvement in the minority media, either as voluntary service or as a paid job; 9) involvement in a non-governmental organization or a minority organization promoting its language and culture, either as voluntary service or

as a paid job; 10) organizing language and/or culture events; 11) involvement in formal and/or informal minority organizations, including political ones; 12) organizing and/or participating in street rallies; 13) organizing and/or participating in civil disobedience activities, such as *Ai'Ta*, *A Serbsce?*, *Cymdeithas yr Iaith*. It has to be emphasized that in the minority environment, various forms of activity are typically combined and many of my interlocutors are engaged in a number of different fields.

Selecting people who are aware of their ethnic roots and who have chosen to identify with their minority and its language and decided to actively support its cause may undermine their credibility as respondents (Bourdieu, 1999). As activists talking to an outsider who is interested in their own perception of their minority language and culture participation, and also in their motivation and engagement, they will naturally try to present themselves and their activities in the most favourable light. Since many of them have been involved in activities promoting their culture and language for a number of years, they have absorbed a certain discourse specific to endangered languages and cultures, having learned which arguments are the most effective in convincing others that they are right. At the same time, however, it is obvious that a researcher has to critically analyse the interviewees' statements. In terms of the humanistic coefficient theory proposed by the sociologist Florian Znaniecki, we can conclude that even though the statements were produced by specific speakers, they are always interpreted through the prism of the researcher's experience (Znaniecki, 1934).

Elsewhere, Znaniecki (1931: 10–11) notes that “human statements” as a research material can be classified into two categories. One category includes statements communicating the speakers' observations that they consider to be true about the world. A researcher should not, however, treat the speaker's words as corresponding to facts but only as a testimony of the speaker's beliefs on social issues. Events described by subjects of a study can be considered as empirically verified only when they can be independently confirmed by the investigator. For instance, when an interviewee says that his/her peers do not take any interest in the minority culture, this does not mean that all young people are genuinely indifferent to this issue, but that the speaker perceives the situation in this way, which makes them disappointed and frustrated. The other category, according to Znaniecki, includes statements expressing the speaker's “desires and opinions,” through which their perception of reality is modulated: one cannot “doubt that such desires exist since being expressed in words is their real and active social symptom” (Znaniecki, 1931: 11). Therefore, if young activists declare that they consider themselves responsible for the future of their language and that they would like everyone around to speak this language, the content of such a statement should be treated as a social fact, which does not need to be verified.

The way young people select details of their own experience and the way they share them creates meanings (Seidman, 2006: 1). The words of young people quoted in this book are a specific kind of self-representation or a self-portrait created by a group of young activists, who become narrators of a story they intend to present

to the researcher. The picture arising from these stories results from negotiations between, on the one hand, their experience, what they consider positive, what they wish to share and what they prefer not to, and on the other hand, what they believe the researcher would like to hear. But since the activists form a group, they create a joint representation of who they are and how they would like to be perceived, based on beliefs pertaining to the characteristics of this group and implications following from being a member (De Fina, 2006: 354). How they look upon the group, then, results not only from the given individual's attitude and background but also from the problems they jointly encounter and from the picture of their culture functioning in the collective consciousness of people surrounding them.

In this book, the activities carried out by young people are analysed on two levels. One level comprises language and culture practices as observed by the researcher, and the other involves the young people's narrations related to them (Woolard, 2011: 641). Young people are narrators talking about the situation of their minority language, problems resulting from using it and identification with their culture. Their words are also interpreted as a conscious creation of a reality and a way of presenting it to an outside audience. In this way, the two layers of analysis intertwine: the layer of facts on the basis of which the picture of a present-day minority language speaker is construed together with their motivation, and the layer of a narrational creation, on the basis of which images, opinions, attitudes and discourses affecting the speaker can be distinguished. Analysis on the two levels is possible due to the fact that the interviews are but one of many types of materials collected over the years in the scientific project much exceeding the strict limits of this study. This broadly conceived endeavour includes observations, co-participation in many activities and events and also bonds that I formed with representatives of the minorities.

The self-portrait provided by young people turning into language activists presumably provides a key to understanding their motivation, problems they encounter and activities they undertake. The significance of this is recognized by Combs and Penfield, who note that "without increased attention to how language activism develops, is implemented and organized, minority and endangered languages are unlikely to achieve the reinforcement of official language policies which support their use and existence" (Combs & Penfield, 2012: 462). Thus, attention to problems and ideologies that young people encounter and that they often have to oppose, as well as knowledge on their motivation and on the impact of their involvement on themselves and on other people, can be utilized by minority language revitalization activists striving to encourage young people to join in various initiatives. Having a researcher enter their milieu and ask them to reflect upon and articulate their feelings on their language, culture and activism may also influence the young people themselves and the choices they will make in the future. Frequently, I received feedback from the young interviewees, stating that participation in the survey had been an important experience that made them ponder and verbalize their attitude to the minority language and culture, often for the first time in their lives. In this respect, the research discussed here can be seen as a form of engaged

anthropology. The comparative method, in turn, offers a possibility of drawing general conclusions on the attitudes of the young generation towards minority languages and people's willingness to participate in the life of a minority.

## Theoretical inspirations

The analytical perspective adopted in this book is close to that of linguistic anthropology, in which language and associated practices are seen not only as part of a broad cultural context but also as forces affecting and actively shaping the reality (Ahearn, 2011). On this approach, language should be investigated “not only as a mode of thinking but, above all, as a cultural practice, that is, as a form of action that both presupposes and at the same time brings about ways of being in the world” (Duranti, 1997: 1). I also draw upon various ethnographic and sociolinguistic approaches, applied to the attitudes of young people towards their minority language and culture (Baker, 1992; McCarthy, 2011; Wyman, 2012; O'Rourke & Ramallo, 2013), to the problems of endangered languages and their revitalization (Fishman, 1991; Hinton & Hale, 2001; Sallabank, 2013) and to the shaping of the collective identity of cultural and language minorities in the contemporary world. The way my interlocutors perceive certain categories which are essential from the standpoint of minority language and culture vitality is validated by the theory of ethnolinguistic vitality. The survival of a group united by common language and cultural identity is described as being conditioned by intergenerational transmission of language, institutional and organizational life, intra-group bonds as well as emotional attachment to the language. Its vitality is not dependent upon the number of speakers but upon their language attitudes, which determine whether a person speaks the language or rejects it (see Giles, Bourhis & Taylor, 1977; Allard & Landry, 1986; Ehalá, 2015). Another equally important theoretical inspiration setting the background for the present study comes from sociological work on participation in social life and civic engagement, especially by the young (Yates & Youniss, 1999; Shinn & Yoshikawa, 2008; Percy-Smith & Thomas 2010; Sherrod, Torney-Purta & Flanagan, 2010), as well as work on ethnic mobilization (Olzac, 1983; Giedrojć, Kowalewska & Mieczkowska, 2012). This kind of approach is also close to the ethnography of resistance (cf. Ortner, 1995), which analyses what actors of social movements “understand themselves to be doing, their salient practices, and the explicit and implicit assumptions that seem to guide these practices” (Urla, 2012: 202). Language activism is presented from the anthropological and animation-participating perspective, which sheds light on how participation in minority culture affects its perception and the sense of being engaged in its cause, and also on how such engagement is practically implemented in activism, thanks to which other people are encouraged to participate in a minority culture. In this sense, the book is a cultural study, focusing on the observation of specific practices carried out by young people within minority communities.

Due to the linguistic changes that took place in the twentieth century and the related processes of ethnic revival and mobilization, accompanied by attempts



to revitalize minority languages, especially in the sphere of education, minorities are no longer internally uniform groups which could be referred to as speech communities. Nowadays, they may consist of vast array of different categories of people: for instance, individuals who learned the local (dialectal, non-standard) language in their family home and use it for oral communication within their environment, but who cannot read or write it; those who can speak the local minority language and have additionally mastered a standard version to use in various domains (including in writing) and in communication with outsiders; people who know a minority language but do not wish to use it for various reasons; individuals who were born into partially assimilated families and who have a passive knowledge of the language but do not use it; individuals who would like to know the language and identify with it but who have not had an opportunity to learn it; individuals who learned the language at school or courses but who lack the desire or opportunity to use it; those who learned the language and use it in communication with selected people or groups; speakers of the standard variety who moved into a region inhabited by a minority and try to adjust to their new environment, etc. Many more such categories could be given, but all these types of individuals should be seen as belonging to the language community in the sense that all of them are in various ways associated with the minority language and all of them are its speakers (or at least potential speakers). As such, such notions as “language community” or “minority language speaker” will not be used in an essentialist sense throughout this book.

Despite the fact that ideal types of minority language speakers are posited herein for the sake of analysis, the proposed typology is not exclusive, but rather open-ended. Its purpose is not to include different practices in one set to make them look uniform, but to demonstrate that strictly defined categories according to which young minority language speakers could be described are simply inadequate. By the same token, I also question the notion of language competences, following the spirit of the ethnography of speaking, which takes a critical attitude to the extant language categories (Hymes, 2001: 20). Not only are the competences of each individual different, but so are the values attributed to languages, even among people coming from similar background (McCarthy et al., 2011: 40). Besides, every act of communication is dynamic and complex, both within a group and outside it. Looking at elements of social life in isolation from their broad context, it is easy to miss out on the holistic perspective, indispensable for understanding subtle processes and feelings of young people. Because of this, I shall scrutinize specific practices based on individual experiences (see Turner & Bruner, 1986).

Cultural experience, which “is best understood not as an outcome of events and intentional actions, but as an ongoing process or flow in which habits and routines are continually challenged and transformed” (Shove, Pantzar & Watson, 2012: 5), include everyday human behaviours and manifest themselves in human practices. The theory of practices is premised on the assumption that language, culture and society are rooted in a pre-established reality, which is at the same time a product of human words and actions, and a factor affecting them (Ahearn, 2011: 23).

Following Pierre Bourdieu, I understand practices as repeated actions organized by the cultural environment, regulated by “practical schemes, opaque to their possessors, varying according to the logic of the situation” (Bourdieu, 1990: 12). In his view, practices are structured by habitus, i.e. the embodied dispositions acquired by an individual in the process of growing up in a socio-cultural environment, affecting human actions, mental processes and understanding of the world (Bourdieu, 2013: 78–84). Practices need not be based on conscious and standardized sets of rules and are not treated as such by individuals.

Language practices are here considered as a kind of cultural practices. My intention is to present languages not as entities abstracted away from a cultural context, but as one of the elements and manifestations of reality in which subjects are immersed and which they at the same time construct. This way of looking at language is legitimate since “language uses are not only conditioned or generated by cultural processes, but they also affect such processes. Language phenomena are no longer to be seen as a privileged subject of investigation, becoming a departure point for studying the extralinguistic reality influenced by them” (Godlewski, 2016: 69–70). At the same time I assume that language is used in human communication among individuals whose competences and resources are socially determined. It follows that every language contact and every instance of choosing a language reflects a social structure, which is simultaneously expressed and reproduced in an act of communication (Bourdieu, 1991). Looking from this perspective at the language behaviour of the young generation belonging to a minority, such behaviour should be interpreted not as speech acts per se, but as practices rooted in the history and social-political-cultural context of the respective groups. This is particularly important in the case of language minorities, for whom the context includes a conflict with the dominant language and society: on the one hand, minority languages are being gradually marginalized and ousted, and on the other, they are being boosted by language policies, revitalization efforts and institutionalized protection. Echoes of this context can be heard in the young people’s narration.

The cultural and language practices of young people will be interpreted from the perspective of fieldwork and through analysis of their discourse, bearing in mind that my interlocutors have been shaped in a cultural context including their family home, school education, the environment in which they grew up, as well as various kinds of their interactions with individuals engaged in the minority cause. They are also influenced by the discourse of language endangerment, including such notions as violence being done against minority languages and the necessity to protect them. These notions are in fact involved in broadly conceived language policy, which is concerned with “not only official acts and texts, but also the undeclared, unofficial interactions and discourses that regulate language statuses, uses, and choices, and that are transacted in everyday social practice” (McCarthy et al., 2011: 32).

Language policy and the social-political-cultural context have an impact on the young representatives of minority cultures, on their attitudes towards language

and culture and on their language and cultural practices. All of them, regardless of the environment in which they have grown up and how they acquired language competences, continuously make choices that affect the construction of their language, culture and ethnic identity. What these choices concern is not only language, but also their friends, hobbies and participation in minority cultural life. Such choices are crucial for young people's identity, since minorities' mode of functioning has evolved from community life based on direct bonds and clearly delineated language and ethnic boundaries to institutionalized participation. Belonging to a minority has nowadays become an individual's choice, with the ethnic boundaries being set arbitrarily. The subject of minority identity construction, involving the issues of the existence and reconstruction of various types of communities, of the functioning of a minority culture in the present-day world and of how young people understand participation in such culture, is one of the pivots around which this book is structured. I attempt to capture and bring to the fore various tensions implied and sometimes even verbalized by my interlocutors. One of these is the tension between using two languages and participating in two cultures, i.e. the dominant and the minority one. There is also tension between unconscious and unorganized participation in a minority culture on a daily basis, and an institutionalized participation oriented towards creating this culture and securing its position. Further, there is tension between feeling nostalgic for strictly delineated communities, free of identity dilemmas, in which every individual knows their place, and joining groups in which identity has to be sought and shaped by participation, both at individual and collective level. There is likewise tension between images of minority culture presented in public discourses, both by minority activists and by outsiders, and the lifestyle of the young and their understanding of belonging to a minority. Finally, there is tension between the tradition in which a minority culture is rooted and on which it draws, and modernity implying unification but at the same time offering a chance to release minority cultures from the confines of folklore.

Given the arbitrary character of belonging to a community, the identity of people engaged in it arises to a large extent through participation in various kinds of communities of practice, which are a subject of scrutiny in this book, with respect to both their functioning and their influence upon the young. Following Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet (1992: 464), a community of practice can be defined as "an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short, practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour. As a social construct, a community of practice is different from the traditional community, primarily because it is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages." Since the backbone of the communities formed by the young activists I studied is minority language and culture, the collective identity of the members of a given practice is oriented towards these. Given that this identity involves protecting and supporting the language and culture, it is an activist kind of identity, which could also be dubbed a resistance

identity. The universe of language and culture practices of young people is presented as a manifestation of their way of experiencing and reflecting upon the minority culture, and also verbalizing their experiences. Observing such practices gives rise to practical knowledge (Bourdieu, 2013), i.e. not (fully) conscious knowledge on how to participate in and identify with minority culture in today's world of blurred ethnic and cultural boundaries. This study, not being intended as a theory of the functioning of minority languages in the present-day world, does not therefore aim to offer a complete picture of this phenomenon. Its aim is much more modest: to discuss the attitudes, practices and narrations of young people engaged in minority activism, offering a certain window to describing the situation of minority languages and cultures.

## Structure of the book

The book is divided into eight chapters. The first four chapters focus on language practices of young people: starting in Chapter 1 with an introduction into the sociolinguistic situation of the four language minorities in a broad context, through a discussion of the role of schooling in Chapter 2 and a presentation of types of minority language speakers in Chapter 3, and finishing with a description of the way young people construct their language identity in Chapter 4. The subsequent chapters deal with the culture, language and identity practices of young people in the context of various forms of community life: Chapter 5 discusses the nostalgia for communities with clearly delineated ethnic and language boundaries, Chapter 6 focuses on the formation of various kinds of groups through which young people create their collective identity as a minority identity, while Chapter 7 traces various paths leading to engagement in the minority cause, starting from active participation, through increasing involvement, up to language activism and the identity resulting thereof. Chapter 8 depicts the dilemmas faced by young people, concerning the shape of the minority culture in which they are engaged and which they thus create. The conclusions deconstruct the discourses that are influential among the young activists, affecting the way they present and create the cultural and language reality.

Each of the minorities is portrayed against the broad social, cultural and political background in which it functions and which impacts on its character as well as on the set of practices and activities that the minority can undertake. In parallel to this perspective, a comparative narration is conducted in order to tease out what is common among young people engaged in supporting minorities across the four-way perspective. This is justified by the fact that the heroes of this book function in a broad environment – not only supra-local but also supra-state, the role and influence of which is constantly increasing, together with new media and international institutions dedicated to minorities.

In the interest of clarity and to enable the reader to identify specific utterances with a specific speaker, a uniform schema of marking speakers and their statements

is applied throughout the book, giving the speaker's symbol, their age, gender and minority, the latter given in parentheses. For example:

**G25F(K)**: a 25-year-old female Kashub with symbol G.

**B22M(S)**: a 22-year-old male Sorb with symbol B.

**E16F(B)**: a 16-year-old female Breton with symbol E.

**S19M(W)**: a 19-year-old Welshman with symbol S.



# Chapter 1: The sociolinguistic situation and language practices of young people

## The sociolinguistic situation of the four minorities

### Kashubia: diminished home transmission

It is not easy to pin any exact number on the Kashub population. Brunon Synak (1998) estimated it as 250,000–300,000, whereas Jan Mordawski (2005) cited the figure 391,000, further classifying another 176,000 as people of “partially Kashubian descent.” In the Polish national census of 2011, the number of people who declared themselves to be Kashubs was reported as 108,000. The number of people who use the Kashubian language in everyday interactions is estimated as about 100,000, with some tens of thousands of speakers more using it only occasionally. Research has shown (Synak, 1998; Mordawski, 2005; Mazurek, 2010) that the intergenerational transmission of the language was significantly weakened in the latter half of the twentieth century, consequently, today’s young generation either have only a passive knowledge of the language – being able to grasp what the older generation is talking about – or they do not know it at all. Only a limited number of young people, living mostly in rural areas, acquire Kashubian at home.

The statements I collected from young people concerning the language situation at their family homes and in their local community to a large extent corresponded with statistical results reported in the 1990s and in the early 2000s (Porębska, 2006; Mazurek, 2010), indicating that the intergenerational transmission of Kashubian is declining and its symbolic function is gaining significance. My interviews indicated that there were few families in which parents spoke Kashubian to their children. In the 1990s, the majority of those who acquired Kashubian in their childhood were raised in rural farming, as is evidenced by this testimony:

**G25F(K):** They spoke Kashubian to me since my childhood. [...] Besides, we have a farm and you know – when you’re out working in a field, visiting your neighbours or doing the shopping, everybody speaks Kashubian there, even though they intertwine it with Polish words. [...] It seems to me that things is no longer like that now, because young people don’t really speak Kashubian. You know, they are taught, but at home, with this young generation, like from the 1990s and younger, you can’t sense this old Kashubian spirit anymore.

According to this 25-year-old woman, speaking Kashubian was confined to farming activity and everyday conversations with people from the local rural community. This young woman, who learned to write Kashubian at school and is currently employed in institutions promoting the Kashubian language and culture, notes

that the language they used at home was a dialectal variety of Kashubian, with numerous borrowings from Polish. She says that children born and brought up a few years later<sup>5</sup> “don’t really speak Kashubian,” which typically means that they understand it but lack the self-confidence to use it. This perception of Kashubian is shared by a slightly younger girl working for Kashubian-language media:

**H24F(K):** Everybody, practically everybody [knew Kashubian]. [...] But only people coming from farming families spoke Kashubian [...] Other people understood it perfectly but used it only to tell a joke, or say something amusing. Because speaking Kashubian is funny, that’s my explanation for it. Only some people actually communicate in Kashubian. [...] but never at school or in front of outsiders, just at home.

This young Kashubian woman confirms the observation that the only young people who spoke Kashubian were those from farming families. She also points to another interesting phenomenon in their language practices: children from Kashubian villages born at the beginning of the 1990s knew (at least some) Kashubian but they did not treat it as their own, using it only as a “language for performances.” She says: “speaking Kashubian is funny,” which is how this language was perceived by children. Moreover, as she goes on to say, even those who knew Kashubian, including herself, did not use it at school or in conversations outside school. Rather, the language was restricted to family and play. A similar opinion is voiced by the following young teacher of the language, who sees the belief that Kashubian cannot be a regular language of communication as being so widespread in Kashubian villages that their inhabitants are unwilling to convey this language to their children:

**I22F(K):** [...] we didn’t speak Kashubian unless we wanted to say something funny or when [as children] we used to pretend we were adults. That’s how we used to play in primary school: when we pretended to be older, we spoke Kashubian, because it was funnier. For us, it was a language of jokes. And my friends who have stayed here, in this environment, and who will probably always live here, don’t want to speak Kashubian [...] don’t want their children to speak Kashubian because, according to them, it’s a hindrance.

A different situation is depicted by the following 25-year-old woman, whose mother not only spoke Kashubian at home, alongside Polish, but she was also actively engaged in protecting and promoting the language. While the father is called a “true old Kashub” – someone who speaks the language without paying attention to it – for the mother, speaking Kashubian was a conscious strategy:<sup>6</sup>

---

5 This process may have been accelerated by the political transformation that took place in Poland in the early 1990s, significantly changing young people’s lifestyles.

6 As Synak notes, Kashubian intelligentsia frequently considered Kashubian to be a symbol, rather than a means of communication (1998: 198).



**B24F(K):** Since I was a little kid, both of my parents spoke Kashubian to me. My mom mostly because she is involved in various regional affairs and teaches Kashubian. My dad is in fact just a true old Kashub.

Some interviewees learned Kashubian not from their parents but from their grandparents – a pattern also reported by Synak (1998) and Mazurek (2010: 161). The following secondary school student admits that even though she understands Kashubian very well, until recently she was unable to find it in her heart to utter a word in the language. She explains that her parents were too busy to speak Kashubian to her:

**T18F(K):** At my grandparents' house, I mean. Because my parents were like, work – home, home – work, and when we talked, it was about what was happening in our lives and it just wasn't [in Kashubian].

The notion that one has to spend extra time and effort to speak Kashubian to one's children adequately reflects the situation of this language. The belief that it is impossible to reconcile the simultaneous use of two languages was widespread among the generation educated after the Second World War, when it was commonly upheld that Polish and Kashubian could not function jointly (Synak, 2001: 303). For the generation of grandparents, however, Kashubian was often not only their first but also their only language. Its use in a conversation with their grandchildren was therefore natural. Here is how a 20-year-old man, who recently became a Kashubian activist, remembers the language practices of his childhood:

**V20M(K):** My father and his brother, my uncle, and also granny speak Kashubian to me all the time. [...] I understood them perfectly. But I always replied to them in Polish because that was how I spoke to the other family members, schoolmates, etc. It is only today, when I'm visiting my home village and go out with my primary school friends, that it turns out all of them can speak Kashubian.

Even in those families that spoke Kashubian, it rarely became the children's first language. Used in communication with people from outside the immediate environment, Polish became a dominant language and started to prevail among Kashubs, too. At the same time, many young people were continuously exposed to Kashubian in their families, which led to passive acquisition and facilitated learning it at a later time. Some of my respondents, however, confessed that they never heard any Kashubian at home:

**J21M(K):** My mom, on the other hand [...] spoke Kashubian at her family home because she had to [...]. But at our home she only spoke Polish. [...] When I was little and I mixed some Kashubian words into Polish, she would often correct me. "Don't say *jo* [Kashubian for 'yes'], you should say *tak* [Polish for 'yes']"

This young man found out that his mother could speak Kashubian only when he himself decided to learn it as an adolescent. He remembers that his mother was concerned about him speaking pure Polish, without any intrusions of Kashubian

words and expressions. Mixing the two language codes was considered wrong or harmful, and it could even reflect badly on the speaker. Still, it was a widespread phenomenon, as evidenced by the following statement by a young man who took up Kashubian – consciously, as he himself says – only when he was in secondary school:

**P19M(K):** My parents know they live in Kashubia and that it exists. The language they speak is neither pure Polish nor pure Kashubian, I mean they have Kashubian words in their lexicon but these words are combined with Polish inflection and grammar.

In this family, Kashubian and Polish were intertwined in their home conversations but the former was not considered an autonomous language but something akin to local folklore, which was suitable for some places and some groups of interlocutors. Interestingly, the young man says the notion of being a Kashub was never talked about in his family, which may be taken as indication that the lack of a sense of language identity blurs ethnic boundaries and diminishes the sense of group identity. The teenager said repeatedly that he was “the first person in the family” to take any interest in Kashubian and – crucially – to sense that he had a Kashubian identity.

To better understand the dilemmas faced by young Kashubs in choosing a language for communication, let us take a look at their reflections on the presence of Kashubian in their local environment. Opinions held and expressed by peers are very important from the standpoint of choosing, or opting not to choose a particular language for interactions (Lanza & Svendsen, 2007). Many young people feel that Kashubian is rejected by their peers:

**J21M(K):** In small towns like Wejherowo or Kościerzyna, Kashubian is generally perceived as a rural language, spoken by undereducated people, so you’re not supposed to use it. But their parents speak this way, which they even openly admit, but still, they think it’s kind of embarrassing. So they don’t want to be like that.

Young people often display a negative attitude to Kashubian, stemming from long-standing discrimination and language ideologies reinforcing an unattractive image of its speakers. Only a limited number of young people use Kashubian and are open about it. A young woman who started learning Kashubian in secondary school claims that nowadays those who speak the language must be “ambitious enough” and well-informed to realize that knowing one more language can simply be beneficial. Others see Kashubian as “a language of peasants” and refute any connection with it. But as young people observe, in order to learn Kashubian, one should not be merely interested in the language itself but feel an urge to get immersed in the surrounding world:

**U18F(K):** [The majority of young people from my village attend a vocational school] so their ambitions do not reach beyond having a blue-collar job. In my opinion they were never interested in Kashubian because for them it’s a language of peasants,

kind of. They come from the country but they would like to think of themselves as city dwellers, maybe even from the capital.

The reason why speaking Kashubian and overt identification with this ethnic group is often negatively evaluated by average Kashubs is that it is seen as an indicator of low social prestige. Only those who are capable of reflecting on the situation of Kashubian and consciously choosing their identity – an ability typically characterizing educated people – have enough fortitude to break the existing stereotypes. Below is a comment made by a Kashubian journalist:

**O24F(K):** [In my class] there were two people who were open about their Kashubian origin. Nowadays, there are many more such people in secondary schools. I noticed that the better the secondary school, the more of them there are [...] It used to be the other way around, so I've heard.

Sociological studies carried out in the 1980s demonstrated very clearly that educated people aspiring to social advancement definitively abandoned Kashubian (Synak, 1998: 190 and 197–198). It was a language of the rural working class, typical of local life and communities. Today, the situation is changing: it is becoming a language of choice for educated and ambitious people.

### **Brittany: in the shadow of trauma and the language revival of the 1970s**

According to sociolinguistic and sociological research conducted in Brittany, among the total population of Brittany, which exceeds four million, the Breton language currently has about 200,000 speakers. Of these 200,000 speakers of Breton, 70% are over sixty of age (Broudic, 2009). This dramatic situation results from the severing of intergenerational transmission of Breton in the second half of the twentieth century. According to a survey from 1946, Breton was then spoken by 1,100,000, whereas a survey from 1997 showed that the number of speakers had dropped to 240,000. The situation of many families having some relations with Breton is adequately captured by the following statement about language practices provided by a student attending the Diwan immersion school:<sup>7</sup>

**B17F(B):** Well, in my family it was quite special. I have grandparents on my mother's side who are Breton-speakers, but I have never spoken with them in Breton because the Breton of my grandparents is really, really difficult to understand when you start to learn Breton [...]. And I never got into the habit of speaking Breton with them. And with my mother... hmm... she talks to me in Breton, and I answer her in French. Not because I don't want to speak Breton, but the problem is that I don't speak Breton as well as she does and when I speak she corrects me all the time. And finally, I started to speak French because it is much simpler like

---

7 Diwan is a network of immersion associative schools in Brittany.

this. But... well sometimes I do [speak Breton], but in general, in my family, only my grandparents speak Breton but not with us... my grandparents didn't transmit the language to their children. And my mother by herself took the decision to learn Breton.

There are the grandparents, who speak Breton but did not transmit it to their children. After a stay in Paris, their daughter returned to Brittany and decided to learn Breton herself. She sent her own daughter to a Breton immersion secondary school, so that is how my interlocutor learned Breton. When she attained some level of proficiency, her mother decided to make Breton the "official" language at home, but the experiment was only partially successful. To make the situation more complicated, the grandparents were first unwilling to speak Breton to their granddaughter, and then their Breton turned out to be incomprehensible to the girl.

Statements concerning language practices in Breton families can only be understood in the context of the circumstances that led to breakdown in the transmission of this language in the second half of the twentieth century. The reasons for that were many, including France's language policy aimed at eliminating minority languages both from public and private sphere, a change of lifestyle from agricultural-piscatorial to urban, the appearance of the exclusively French mass media and massive migration of the Bretons, which necessitated switching to the dominant language. Equally important were psychological causes, evident in my interlocutors' statements about their home language practices. In the collective consciousness, this language was disvalued by being associated with illiteracy and rusticity. Besides, it was believed that there was no prospect of social advancement for its speakers (Dołowy-Rybińska, 2011: 79–103). Children who spoke only Breton at school were ridiculed and punished, both physically and symbolically (Elégoët, 1978; An Du, 2000; Broudic, 2013). The generation of my interlocutors' grandparents experienced a very intense trauma, which not only made them cease using Breton in conversations with their children, but which also triggered negative attitudes towards the revitalization of Breton and its being taught to the young generation (Jones, 1998b). Nowadays Breton is thus used mostly by and among elderly people in their local environment. As many statements testify, their trauma was truly strong and had a long-lasting effect. The following female Breton graduate of the Diwan secondary school, who subsequently obtained a university degree in Breton and now works as a teacher of the language, shares her recollections:

**A25F(B):** [...] once I asked my grandma to say something or sing a song for me in Breton and she firmly refused because this would have awakened a lot of painful memories in her. I never managed to persuade her to speak Breton.

Another female Breton comments on the unwillingness on the part of the older generation to send their grandchildren to Breton-speaking schools:

**N23F(B):** One of my grandmothers [...] speaks Breton. But for her it is very tough. She was forbidden to use Breton when she was a kid and so on, and she simply

doesn't want to speak Breton to us [...] for instance, when my parents decided to send me and my brother to the Diwan school, she wasn't happy about it at all. She said it was a bad idea, it will have a negative impact on our reputation, we'll have trouble in life, and will be rejected by society. And she was really against it. For her, it was plainly negative.

The older generation, who were penalized and humiliated for their inability to speak French and who were forced to use French at school (Elégoët, 1978), are now afraid that the young generation, by devoting their time to learning Breton, may not have sufficient resources to learn the dominant language properly. This is one of the reasons why they refrain from speaking Breton to their grandchildren, and even when they occasionally do, they look for a pretext to switch to French. Another argument for using the official language in conversations is that it is a more universal tool of communication:

**P18F(B):** My grandpa very rarely speaks Breton. I tried to talk to him in this language several times but it didn't go quite well because... I don't really know. It's quite complicated – in the beginning my grandparents were opposed to the idea of me going to the Diwan school. My grandma was afraid that I would never master French. [...] Grandpa does not make any effort to understand what I'm saying [in Breton] so the whole thing is not going well.

The Breton of the older generation is dialectal and so differs slightly from the Breton young people are being taught at school (cf. Hornsby, 2005; Le Pipec, 2013). However, what will be shown later in this book, the lack of understanding between young people and “old” Bretons depends not on the actual language differences but on the language ideologies that create the impression of language distance.

Few of my interlocutors stated that they spoke Breton at home with their parents or one parent.<sup>8</sup> As it turns out, in the majority of such families, the parents learned Breton as adults and consciously chose it to be the language of communication with their children. It should be emphasized, however, that my interlocutors – young people taking interest in Breton – are an exceptional group that is not in any way representative of the young inhabitants of Brittany in general, 96% of whom ignore Breton completely (Broudic, 2009: 66). Most members of this exceptional group are the children of parents who actively joined the movement for the revival of the Breton language and culture back in the 1970s and 80s. This movement was quite strong and was especially attractive to young and rebellious people (Goalabre, 2011; more on the movement can be found in Nicolas, 1982; 2007; 2012). That generation managed not only to get rid of the stigma of poverty and backwardness commonly associated with the Bretons but also to transform

---

8 This is corroborated by the findings of sociolinguistic research: 70% of learners studying Breton declared that neither of their parents spoke Breton to them (Broudic, 2009: 137).

it into a positive image based on a feeling of unity with the old culture, abundant in a variety of practices, mostly related to musical performance and festivals (Le Coadic, 1998). The generation of my interlocutors' parents chose to learn Breton, which they saw as a symbol of social identification and as a means of recreating a bond with previous generations, the land and community (Le Nevez, 2006). Many of them belonged to a fairly resilient group of Breton activists known as *militants bretons*, who decided to learn the "illicit" language of their parents and grandparents and who travelled to the country to listen to conversations among the elderly, and joined especially organized courses of Breton (McDonald, 1989; Le Coadic, 1998). In this way the group of new Breton speakers (*néo-bretonnants*) originated, who tried, albeit not always successfully, to make their learned Breton their first language, and who actively fought for the preservation of this language. A Breton student describes his parents in this way:

**H20M(B):** My parents are speakers of Breton, which they use at home. But they were taught Breton – my mom in secondary school, and my dad at a course in Rennes. It had to be so because my grandparents were from the generation who got, in a way, traumatized [*traumatisé*] and refused to speak Breton. So in order to speak with their grandparents, my mom and dad learned Breton [...] But as for us, we always spoke Breton at home, it is my native language. I learned French at school.

Other interlocutors admit that the idea of making Breton the language of communication in their families was only partially successful:

**M21F(B):** My dad started to learn Breton when he was 18–19, so he was still young, but his parents also spoke Breton, although not to him. And his Breton is really fantastic. [...] My mom learned it at a somewhat later age and her parents didn't speak Breton. In fact, she learned it because my dad could speak Breton. I always spoke Breton with my dad, with my mom less so...

As it follows from the young activist's statement, Breton was to some extent the language spoken in her family, but she also admitted that her twin sister, who shared the same language environment and followed a similar Breton-language educational path until university, was unwilling to speak Breton, even to her. For the majority of my interlocutors Breton is a language they learned at school and they rarely have an opportunity to use outside especially organized events.

According to the statistics, among all speakers of Breton only 4% are in the age range of 15–19, which amounts to about 9,000 people. The percentage of young people who speak Breton has increased from 1 to 4% in the recent years, mainly thanks to the development of immersion and bilingual education (Broudic, 2009: 66). However, this figure is still dramatically low, with many native speakers of Breton remaining closed in isolated communities and sometimes having a sceptical attitude towards the young speaking what sounds like "strange Breton" to them. The actual magnitude of the differences between the varieties of Breton are not the crucial issue here; rather, it is the belief that communication is impossible that effectively renders it impossible. In this way, new Breton speakers do not have

many opportunities to use it in everyday conversations with peers. They often feel that Breton does not exist outside school at all:

**U25F(B):** [...] In the Diwan schools, we lost our accent. But outside of Diwan, Breton is a dead language.

People who are engaged in Breton cultural life but have not completed Breton language education confess that they lack motivation to learn the language, pointing out that opportunities to use it in communication are almost non-existent:

**I25M(B):** Practically no one speaks Breton around me so I don't feel any urge to learn the language. Of course I find it interesting to hear Breton spoken, but because I don't have anyone around I could speak to, I just don't feel like it.

Fañch Broudic (2011) anticipates that in the next 15 years the number of speakers of Breton will drop by 70%. The majority of the remaining speakers will have learned Breton outside home transmission.

### Upper Lusatia: impending language change

Much has been written about the difficulty in determining the number of Sorbs or speakers of either Upper or Lower Sorbian (cf. Elle, 2010b; 2014; Dołowy-Rybińska, 2011). These problems are due to the complicated history of the Sorbs, including discrimination prior to the Second World War and institutional support during the times of the German Democratic Republic ("East Germany"), which led the figures to be either underreported or overreported.<sup>9</sup> Another complication stems from the fact that demographic statistics in Germany do not include the criterion of nationality. Owing to that, there is no data as to the ethnic identity declared by inhabitants of Lusatia. Besides, Lusatia is internally divided along two axes: one axis of nationality-culture-language, separating the groups of Upper Sorbs vs. Lower Sorbs, and an axis of religion, on the basis of which Catholic Upper Sorbs are distinguished from Protestant Sorbs (cf. Dołowy-Rybińska, 2011). The first axis coincides with a geographical divide: Lower Sorbs inhabit Brandenburg, formerly a part of Prussia, where persecutions were much harsher than in Saxony, the homeland of Upper Sorbs. Historical processes as well as the language and national policies imposed by the two German states impacted on the present-day identity and language practices of the Sorbian nations. According to official statistics (Norberg, 1996; Elle, 2010b; 2014), Lower Sorbian is spoken by about 5,000 people, mainly from the oldest living generation. However, this number may be overestimated. Intergenerational transmission of Lower Sorbian was severely diminished in the 1930s, only to be completely interrupted after the Second World War (cf. Marti, 2014). The generation of the parents of today's youngsters do not

---

9 During the communist era, the number of Sorbs was invariably reported as 100,000. The data, however, was not based on any sociological studies (cf. Elle, 2011).

speak Lower Sorbian and the number of Lower Sorbian new-speakers is very low. Even though young people have been able to participate in language revitalization programs in recent years, these programs are not as effective as was expected (cf. Norberg, 2006).

The other axis, dividing the Sorbs into Catholics vs. Protestants, has an equal share in explaining the complexity of identity and language processes in Lusatia. This goes back to the times of the Reformation, when the majority of the Sorbs converted to Protestantism. The Sorbian Protestants, whose number was estimated in the nineteenth century as 200,000, as compared to about 20,000 Catholics (Scholze, 2011: 62), underwent very rapid linguistic and cultural assimilation (Walde, 2006; Malink, 2014). Having created a triple ethnic boundary (i.e. involving language, national identity and denomination) separating them from the German Protestants, the Sorbian Catholics formed a strong enclave, thereby preserving their identity protected by Catholic families and firm rural community, which was further reinforced by religious practices performed in Sorbian (cf. Walde, 1999; Walda, 2014). My interlocutors included only Upper Sorbs coming from the Catholic community, all of them native Sorbian-speakers. Given this fact, it should be noted that the discussion presented below concerns mainly the Catholic Upper Sorbs, whose young generation is actively engaged in promoting Sorbian culture and language. It has some relevance also to the Protestant Upper Sorbs, but does not apply to young people from Lower Lusatia.<sup>10</sup>

The Catholic Upper Sorbs, a compact group numbering about 7,500 people, inhabit a small area called in Sorbian *Při Klósterskej wodže* (German: *Am Klosterwasser*). The majority of the members of this community, irrespective of their age, can speak and actually use Upper Sorbian, as intergenerational transmission of the language still exists (Walde, 2004). Drawing their strength from common ethnic, cultural and religious roots, the community is opposed to assimilation. Many young Upper Sorbs coming from families cultivating a Sorbian identity speak the language of their forefathers until they leave their family home:

**A18F(S):** Before I left for Leipzig, I spoke Sorbian almost all the time. In fact, all my friends were Sorbs and we spoke Sorbian at school, except in German classes. I used German only in shops.

When both parents are Sorbs living in a Sorbian-populated area, Sorbian is the first and quite often the only language spoken by children until they go to school:

**B22M(S):** My mother is a Sorb from a Sorbian family; my father is a Sorb from a Sorbian family. [...] At home we always spoke Sorbian. We always speak Sorbian. That's how I was brought up. Sorbian is my native language.

---

10 In what follows, the terms “the Sorbs” and “the Sorbian language” will be used in reference to Upper Sorbs and Upper Sorbian.



Participation in Sorbian events, holidays and traditions is very often considered to be a marker of being Sorbian. Life in Catholic Upper Lusatia is to a large extent communal (Wałda, 2014), which allows native Sorbs to maintain their language on the one hand, but makes it difficult for new-speakers to be integrated into the group. As a 25-year-old female Catholic Sorb characteristically emphasizes in the following statement about her family, she was raised to be a Sorb. The Sorbian identity in the Catholic community is strongly associated with participation in religious holidays, which reinforces communal feelings. Unlike the Sorbian or German Protestants, the Catholic Sorbs regularly attend Sorbian-language masses and other religious events, which organize their yearly cycle. Numerous Sorbian-style church holidays and events associated with them, in which Sorbian is the only language of communication, reinforce in-group bonds.

**I25F(S):** First of all, I was brought up as part of the Sorbian community. The language is a very important element but no less important is the feeling that I am a Sorb and see myself as one. It is because both my parents speak Sorbian with family and friends and they are engaged in Sorbian life. That is for sure. [...] for me, the Sorbs are very religious, my parents too. So the Catholic life comes first. Thanks to the church tradition everybody has the Catholic costume and can participate in a procession at *Różant* [Rosenthal] as a *družka*<sup>11</sup> or on other occasions as well. This is so because the Sorbs have lived there. This is what being Sorbian means to me. Language, engagement, awareness – that’s the ideal.

The strength of the Catholic community derives from its long persistence (in the lands where they “have lived”). The customs are not invented traditions but have been continually passed from ancestors down to currently living Sorbs. Thanks to the rites, the Sorbs can manifest their cultural belongingness by means of the traditional costume and, most of all, actively engage in community life with other Sorbs. Events of this kind and the common language are, according to the young people, the most important means forming the identity:

**I22F(S):** Yes, because this is something that distinguishes us from others. Thanks to the fact that we speak Sorbian, we practice how to use it. That’s a part of my life. This is just inborn; I don’t know how to say it. It’s only natural for me that I speak Sorbian with the people who know it too. This is why I feel I belong to the group.

This young woman emphasizes an important issue: thanks to the meetings in a wide circle of Catholic Sorbs, young people have an opportunity to develop their language skills and to make speaking Sorbian feel natural. Stretching out beyond the confines of their home or close friends, their use of Sorbian enters the public sphere and becomes a force uniting the whole community.

At the same time, however, the social imperative obliging Catholic Sorbs to marry only within their own ethnic and religious group has been waning in the

---

11 A female participant of a Catholic procession, wearing a traditional outfit.

recent years (Walda, 2014). Together with increasing mobility of young Sorbs looking for jobs in other areas, this has caused an increase in the number of mixed Sorbian-German marriages. Language practices and the sense of belonging in such families are to a large extent dependent on the determination of the one Sorbian parent:

**C17M(S):** My mother speaks Sorbian to us and we, her children, also speak Sorbian to her. My father always speaks German, even though he understands Sorbian, but he doesn't use it. This means [my family is] half-Sorbian. We go to Sorbian masses and participate [in Sorbian events], when something takes place.

For this secondary school student, the choice of a language used at home is directly related to cultural and national identity. In fact, for Catholic Sorbs those who do not speak Sorbian are considered as "Germans" which considers also people from Sorbian linguistically assimilated families and as such excludes them from the circle of "real" Sorbs.

The Sorbian element of the family life is also founded upon participation in religious celebrations and cultural events, which serve as a "proof" of Sorbianness. Equally important for preserving the Sorbian language, especially in bilingual families (Budarjowa, 2014), is sending children to Sorbian schools:

**S17F(S):** My family is bilingual. My mother is Sorbian and my father is German. [...] It was very important to us that these languages were separated. Mother spoke only Sorbian with us and father German, because he couldn't otherwise. Then we went to a Sorbian kindergarten, primary school, middle school and secondary school.

However, despite living in Sorbian communities and participating in Sorbian and Sorbian-language events, young people have a feeling that the language situation around them is changing very rapidly, with German being heard increasingly often:

**O21F(S):** I notice that in our village everything is slowly getting Germanized. [...] I have a feeling that the awareness is no longer here, [the awareness] that we used to have. Our neighbours are beginning to speak German among themselves.

Young Upper Sorbs often verbalize their sense of an imminent threat to their language. Some of them point to specific examples of whole families switching from Sorbian to German among their local community. The following university student coming from a family of Sorbian activists, currently doing Sorbian studies in Leipzig, has developed a highly emotional attitude to the ongoing language change:

**B22M(S):** [Near my house] there's a family with four kids. The oldest girl is in the third grade. There are also three boys. But they speak German among themselves. That's because during the first years of their lives, their Sorbian parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, who live next door in the same village in the Sorbian area, all of them spoke German to those kids, even though the kids attended a Sorbian

kindergarten. They may have used a little Sorbian occasionally, but German was the language they used most of the time. Their reasoning was like “We don’t want our children to learn to speak German poorly.” And what happened? The kids speak German among themselves. Why? Because their parents spoke German to them. [...] What is your native language? The language that was spoken at home, right? And they speak German at home.

The change being described by the young people is not limited to home transmission. As my interlocutors point out, their peers of Sorbian or mixed descent often choose German as a language of communication among themselves. According to the following teenage Sorb, it is this choice made by Sorbian speakers that sentences their language to oblivion:

**N18M(S):** Well, you can hear that they speak German a lot. I don’t get why but some people think it’s cooler to speak German, even though they know Sorbian. [It is] a pity, being Sorbian will die out because of that.

In the two preceding statements, young people present common reasons behind switching to German: fear of not becoming a fluent speaker of the dominant language and its positively-connoted image. These extant language ideologies unwittingly contribute towards the weakening of the minority language. A decrease in the size of the Sorbian community also has serious consequences for language practices in Lusatia. A new education system in Upper Lusatia opened bilingual Sorbian-German education to learners from German-speaking families. Therefore, in the building of the Upper Sorbian Secondary School in Bautzen/Budyšin and its boarding house there are now more German-speaking students and German has become the dominant language in what used to be a stronghold of the Sorbian identity for the young generation. This can be heard in the school corridors, and does not pass unnoticed by students. It is important to notice that the protection of the Upper Sorbian language and community exclude potential new Sorbian-speakers. One secondary school student complains:

**T17M(S):** My younger brother is in grade six [...] the German influence is stronger there. [...] This Sorbian identity is receding there. I do speak Sorbian with my classmates, even though not always, but I can hear my brother talk to his classmates and I can see the difference. The difference may be small now but if things go on like this...

Many statements by the secondary school students share a similar pessimistic tone.

## **Wales: language communities and a territorial community**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, half of the population of Wales, i.e. almost a million people, declared themselves to be Welsh speakers. Subsequent studies indicated a rapid decline in the number of people speaking Welsh, accompanied by increase in the population inhabiting Wales (Williams, 2000). The most

recent survey obtained as part of the 2011 census<sup>12</sup> estimates that out of 3,100,000 inhabitants of Wales, 562,000 speak Welsh. About 30% of them, i.e. 169,000, are aged between 3 and 15, which shows an increase of young Welsh speakers as compared to previous reports. This increase can be linked to the introduction of Welsh as obligatory subject at schools and also to the development of bilingual and Welsh-language schooling (Morris, 2010: 81). Even though compact areas inhabited by Welsh speakers were originally found in North West Wales, due to internal migration, mostly by young people looking for employment, most of the Welsh-speaking population nowadays inhabit South Wales (Robert, 2009: 94). By this token, the image of a typical Welsh speaker is changing: the language is now less readily identified with farms, quarries, coal mines or churches, but is instead accumulating greater prestige, largely in connection with the bilingual middle-class elite inhabiting South Wales towns, where there are growing numbers of Welsh learners (Jenkins & Williams, 2000: 23).

Traditionally, the population of Wales was divided into Welsh speakers identifying with Wales, non-Welsh speakers identifying with Wales, and people of British identity (Balsom, 1985). These divisions are still largely based upon territorial distinctions, even though in recent decades the Welsh identity is no longer considered to be uniquely determined by blood relations and place of birth (Aaron, 2003: 4). Political causes and independence movements, which were the main factors distinguishing Welsh-speakers from non-Welsh speakers throughout the nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries, gradually lost significance due to the emergence of a mutual “enemy,” which led the groups to join forces in the 1997 devolution referendum.<sup>13</sup> However, looking at the language map of Wales, one can still observe a division between Welsh-speaking North and non-Welsh-speaking South and East-North. My fieldwork differed enormously between these two areas: in South Wales I met people who either learned Welsh or who moved there from North Wales with their parents or as adults in search of jobs. During my first stay in South Wales I found it difficult even to find any interlocutors, which never happened in North Wales. It was only my discovery of the Welsh-speaking community in South Wales that opened a door for me to meeting young activists. In the north of the country, on the contrary, there were too many volunteers for them all to participate in the study. The differences between the two regions manifested themselves not only in people’s attitudes towards the researcher but also in their descriptions of their home and local language practices. The young people whom

---

12 See: Office for National Statistics, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/language/articles/languageinenglandandwales/2013-03-04>

13 High unemployment in Wales, the closure of coal mines under Thatcher and a general social dissatisfaction became stimuli uniting the Welsh, who had not claimed political independence before, but rather demanded ethnic, linguistic and cultural recognition (cf. Toszek & Kuzelewska, 2011: 13–51).

I interviewed and the Welsh in general may be attached to their local dialect; they may even be opinionated about whether the north is more Welsh than the south, but neither this, nor the division into Welsh-speaking and non-Welsh speaking Wales, has any serious influence on the fact that the Welsh mostly identify themselves with Wales as a whole territorial and political unit.<sup>14</sup> According to Mari Jones, the sense of national identity and unity provided by a national language is stronger than the sense of belonging to a local community (Jones, 1998a: 325). Owing to that, considering Wales as being divided into small, separate communities does not appear to be justified.<sup>15</sup> Not how the following university student born in a small town in North Wales talks about her family language practices:

**L20F(W):** [Being Welsh] is very important for all of us. Like there is no English-speaking person in my family. We are all Welsh, and then, it is really important. My dad is like “yeah, we can raise a lot of children” and they want us all to get married to Welsh speaking people, so there are more Welsh-speakers... It sounds funny but it’s..., we all feel it really strongly, and we all want to, like, pass it onto next generations.

For this family, speaking the language is not only a means of communication, it is also a family mission. The girl has four siblings, who – as she says – are more fluent in Welsh than in English and who have been participating in Welsh cultural life since childhood. Such a strong bond with the Welsh culture and desire to protect the language is not standard, even in North Wales. The language practices described by another university student look considerably different:

- 
- 14 Some activists have posited that the divisions between Welsh-speaking and non-Welsh speaking Wales are played up artificially in order to instigate conflicts among members of the community. An activist of *Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg* (the Welsh Language Association) once said: “It is one Wales, yes, definitely. There is no part of Wales that I would say ‘that’s not Wales, that’s not Welsh.’ A lot of people try to play Welsh people, Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers, against each other saying ‘oh if we do this it will create a divide between Welsh-speakers and non-Welsh speakers.’ But that is not true. There is so much support for the Welsh language [from some non-speakers]. Are there some who are against the Welsh language? Of course, there are, but that does not change the point. The Welsh language does bring people together and gives us a sense of unity. But just living in Wales and being a part of Wales also brings people together.”
- 15 Researchers studying Wales and Brittany often apply a division into traditional communities, i.e. North-West Wales vs. the other part of Wales, and Lower Brittany vs. Upper Brittany. It should be noted, however, that due to the language processes that occurred in these areas in the latter half of the twentieth century the differences between the respective communities have been fading, even though they may still be significant in some respects. Still, failing to take into account the perspective of the minority as a whole may result in overlooking new phenomena and processes.

**A20M(W):** My family is a Welsh-speaking family, yeah. Welsh, I speak to my mother and my brothers, but my mother speaks English to my middle brother. [...] Because my brother, when he was about 13–14, he had relatively a lot of English-speaking friends. So his first language with them was English. Although, always speaking Welsh to me, always speaking Welsh to my older brother, he started to speak more English to my mum. And when I moved to my grandpa, it happened [that] my parents started to speak English with each other and to my brother. And then, when it's a habit, it's a habit and it's difficult to change it.

Welsh was the first language of this young man's mother but the second language of his father, so English was always present in this family. When my interlocutor had been a teenager, his grandmother passed away and his grandfather needed a day-to-day help. The family decided that the boy would live with his grandfather. Conversing with him reinforced the boy's Welsh identity and gave him awareness that the Welsh language has to be fought for, but his absence from his family home also had the impact of shifting the language practices there, with English taking a dominant position. It was only recently that my interlocutor deliberately started a process of conscious language practice change, striving to switch back to Welsh as the main language of the family.

Another university student coming from a Welsh-speaking family in South Wales describes his local environs as predominantly English-speaking. Unlike in many North Wales regions (Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire), where Welsh speakers still outnumber English speakers, if only slightly, in South Wales, Welsh speakers, most of whom are young, constitute a small percentage of the population (cf. Jones, 2012). Note that the attitude of young people towards the language is shaped to a greater extent by the family than by the local environment (Morris, 2014). This young man was raised in a family that was highly aware of their identity and was also determined to preserve it. According to his testimony, he never rebelled against speaking Welsh, on the contrary, he was proud of his proficiency in Welsh, which often proved challenging for his schoolmates. On the basis of observations of language practices in schools attended by both minority language natives and non-natives, we can venture the statement that mainly those children who are very strongly shaped by their families can resist the language pressure from the outside and are inclined to speak Welsh regardless of how it is perceived and evaluated by the environment.

**B20M(W):** [Where I am from] it's not full Welsh area, but the whole of my family speak Welsh [...] When I was in the Sixth Form in my school having Welsh language at home was very rare [...] So I was very proud of the fact that I had Welsh background. And also I've always been brought up in the support for *Cymdeithas yr Iaith*, what it's doing, in these ideas of Welshness, that you have to support *Cymdeithas yr Iaith*, you have to support Plaid Cymru, taking part in the *eisteddfod*. That sort of stuff.

A young man from South Wales who learned the language at school and decided to study it at university passes a harsh judgment on families that do not pass Welsh onto their children, thereby – in his opinion – dooming it to extinction. He is aware of the fact that he learned Welsh thanks to political and legal regulations, but he still believes that it is the parents, not institutions that are responsible for the language:

**C21M(W):** I am the first person in my family that speaks Welsh, so I am partly responsible for creating the first Welsh-speaking generation in my whole family. [...] If the people do not transmit the language onto their kids, it's like there are killing their own language. They kill the whole generation of Welsh-speakers, you know. And the legislation, it is important, obviously. But if the speakers don't pass it on and don't use it, then it is dead.

With Welsh-speaking people constituting only about 1/5 of the population of Wales, the number of mixed families is quite high. In such families, language practices depend on the attitude of the non-Welsh-speaking parent and on determination of the Welsh-speaking one.

**D20F(W):** It is quite complicated, cause my dad is English. But since he met my mum and moved to Wales, he became Welsh. [...] Everyone in my family feels really strong about Welsh, it's just that my dad can't speak it. He understands Welsh, he just responds in English. I think what makes us Welsh is our attitudes.

As this young woman indicates, what is even more important than actually speaking the language is whether those who do not know the language maintain a positive and accepting attitude towards Welsh-speakers, especially given that this kind of asymmetrical bilingualism is attested in many families. I have participated in many family meetings where some individuals conversed in Welsh, others in English, but they understood each other, and even if not, no one felt excluded. Thanks to this kind of attitude the English-speaking parent has a chance to learn Welsh, whether solely by such immersion or by additionally attending a course, at least to be able to attain basic communicative proficiency:

**G19F(W):** When my parents met, my father couldn't speak Welsh, and my mother was first language Welsh speaking [...] But through raising us as children, my father learned Welsh, so he is fluent now. Has never written Welsh at all, so his spelling is awful.

Language practices in mixed families may not be stable, with a variety of factors causing a change. A 25-year-old tells his story:

**K25M(W):** Welsh is my home language even though my dad speaks English, which is quite funny actually. Because just imagine when we are eating together like a family, me, my mum, my brother and sister we all are speaking Welsh and dad understands but speaks only English. My mum is quite strong, and she told him he has to learn, but he hasn't, she gave him a dictionary to learn it.

All the children attended Welsh-speaking schools but their dad has not bothered to put the dictionary to use. Despite the fact that the mother was quite firm, the young man admitted that of the three children he was the only one to speak Welsh on an everyday basis in his adult life. This can be attributed to the fact that he also studied Welsh and while at university became involved in language activism. His siblings, on the other hand, have been gradually switching to English since they left home, even in conversations with their mother. They are not passing Welsh on to their children, either. As indicated by studies conducted in Wales in the 1990s and confirmed by more recent ones (Jones, 2008: 547), children at the age of 3–15 raised in homes with only one parent speaking Welsh are much less fluent in Welsh than their peers from homes with two Welsh-speaking parents.

The reverse shift is also possible, however. Following some specific stimulus, family language practices may also change from the dominant language to at least some of the communication taking place in a minority language. Such a situation was experienced by the following 19-year-old, who founded a Welsh-language musical band, closely collaborating with *Cymdeithas yr Iaith*. His commitment affected the language practices at home:

**W18M(W):** Yeah, we are all from Wales and both my parents speak Welsh. But we don't speak Welsh at home a lot. I don't know why. It's just never been the case, it was a habit to speak English at home. But when it started with summer gigs in Welsh, I've noticed that even inside of the house we use a little bit more Welsh.

However, when asked if they can see a language change in their local environs, practically all of my young interlocutors responded affirmatively. The young woman cited above, who talked about her Welsh home, had this to say about such change, affecting even her younger sisters:

**L20F(W):** I think there were about 70% [of pupils at my school] that were speaking in Welsh. And the rest in English. But now when I go there I see that Welsh speaking people started to speak English with each other. [...] I think they just think it's cooler to speak English. So that's dangerous really, and it's increasing, really.

**NDR:** *Was it like this when you were in secondary school?*

**L20F(W):** Not as much. But my brothers and sisters now, when they speak Welsh, you hear English words in their vocabulary, really. It's really weird. I would like to tell them like "What're you doing?" It's scary, really, I've only just left, and you can hear it, like, and then you see that Welsh-speaking people are speaking English with each other. It really confuses me, but that's happening now around Wales at the moment. Young people just think it's cool to speak English with each other. I don't know if that's like change, maybe it's just a phase, I don't know but, yes, it's very strange.



## Language ideologies, symbolic violence and discrimination

Attitudes towards a language can be affected both by factors created by a dominant group, imposing a negative image of a minority language upon its speakers, and by the extant social and economic conditions. Due to such conditions a language may become associated with a low-prestige social group, or it may be considered of little practical usefulness, especially from the perspective of social promotion. On this basis language myths are created – beliefs that one language (or dialect) is allegedly somehow worse than another (i.e. standard) one, that it is impossible to express every idea in it, that it is ill-suited to the modern world, or that it is outright ugly and simplistic (Bauer & Trudgill, 1998). Although repeatedly and continually debunked by sociolinguists, such language myths still hold great sway as factors shaping people's language attitudes, since evaluations are made on the basis of tacit assumptions concerning the status, form and speakers of a language. Taken for granted and deeply rooted in social (sub)consciousness, such assumptions reinforce linguistic and social injustice (Tollefson, 2006: 47). As Shohamy (2006: xv) puts it: "The attitudes and ideologies related to a given language do not result from the language itself but from a social, historical and political conditions, everyday negotiations, conflicts and practices used by a community."

Young people's attitudes towards a minority language and culture thus depend mostly on how their family, friends and co-members of the community approach the language and its use. These relations are also influenced by historical, social and economic factors that have impacted on language users for years, giving rise to a linguistic market of sorts, in which every language has a value (Bourdieu, 1991). The perceived value of minority languages, imposed by the dominant language community by means of language policies and other instruments, was not high, at least not until recently. Bernard Spolsky distinguishes three basic components of a language policy: beliefs, practices and management. *Language beliefs* concern ideologies applied to a language, which contribute to its being perceived as equal or worse than another, as a language of success, as a rural language or merely as a local dialect, which is not worth any effort to be preserved. *Language practices*, in turn, indicate in what situations and by whom a language is used, whereas *language management* refers to specific regulations and laws that influence a language's status and language behaviour in a community (Spolsky, 2004: 1–15). It can be therefore stated that a language policy is not limited to official acts and regulations specifying how a language can be used in given spheres of life; it also includes a whole gamut of language behaviours influenced by the attitudes of other people.

The language policies adopted by minorities (as well as their feasibility in practice) are to a large extent correlated with general strategies of coping with inequality and the dominance of the majority culture. Zbigniew Bokszański distinguishes a few "types of cultural responses to dominance" (2006: 96–97): shifting minority cultural practices to areas unoccupied by the majority, making the minority culture secret with simultaneous participation in the official culture, gradual rejection

of the minority culture, or rebellion against the dominant culture accompanied by intensifying minority practices and struggling for having them officially recognized and legally sanctioned. To put it another way, we can classify a given minority's response to dominance and discriminatory practices as follows: adopting a victimized stance, accepting dominance and all the limitations consequent upon it (an attitude typical of the Bretons up until the 1970s and to some extent of the contemporary Sorbs); striving to change the status of the minority culture and raise its prestige, which involves a change in the prevalent language and culture ideologies (an attitude attested among the Bretons and the Welsh in the 1970s and among the Kashubs in recent years); harnessing the minority's dissatisfaction with the state policy so as to instigate action promoting its culture and language, which involves a rebellion against inequality and fight for a change (as can be observed in Brittany and Wales). Naturally, these types of attitudes can be only neatly teased out in theory, as in the real world there are many ideologies and other factors that simultaneously affect the behaviour and linguistic choices of the past, present and future generations of minority language speakers.

Language ideologies have been extensively discussed in the sociolinguistic literature (Schieffelin, Woolard & Kroskrity, 1998; Sallabank, 2013). This research was pioneered by Michael Silverstein, who defined them as "any set of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (Silverstein, 1979: 193). Since then, various definitions of language ideologies have evolved (cf. Chromik, 2014); in trying to shed some light on the dilemmas faced by young minority speakers, I shall assume a certain simplified definition herein. The point of departure is the assumption that the status and viability of a given language is conditioned not only by objective historical facts, but also by beliefs and prejudices often intentionally passed onto the target group to engrain in them a sense of inferiority about their language. As Harold F. Schiffman (1996: 5) states: "language beliefs (imprecisely called myths) are transferred to a group as a part of the social conditions that affect the maintenance and transmission of its language." Language ideologies thus represent and replicate beliefs about the minority group imposed by the dominant group.

For Kathryn Woolard (1998), one of the most influential researchers of this phenomenon, even though language ideologies pertain directly to language, they are never confined to language alone. "Rather they envision and enact ties of language to identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology. Through such linkages, they underpin not only linguistic form and use but also the very notion of the person and the social group, as well as such fundamental social institutions as religious ritual, child socialization, gender relations, the nation-state, schooling, and law" (Woolard, 1998: 3). This means that prevalent ideologies and beliefs, such as that one language is worse than another, that it is not suitable for use in formal situations, that using it may be detrimental to its speakers by disabling their social promotion or even intellectual development, are so strong that they not only devalue the language itself but automatically spread the highly negative image onto its users. The negative identity so obtained by a minority (Dołowy-Rybińska,

2011: 92–100) evokes a desire to shed the burden of negativity and may prompt cultural and language assimilation. It has to be emphasized that language ideologies are beliefs articulated by its speakers and/or surrounding groups, which legitimize the extant situation of a language. They are not the objective truth about a language; they are merely a representation of a negative attitude of the majority towards a minority.

Acting in the same way as symbolic power (e.g. Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), language ideologies are highly effective and durable as instruments for domination. The belief that some linguistic systems<sup>16</sup> are inferior to others is fed to minorities for a long time and in a variety of ways – by means of bans, via media messages, by limiting the impact of communications in a minority language, by means of symbolic and physical penalization of speakers, etc. Ultimately, minority members assimilate the belief that the widespread opinions are true (Bourdieu, 1991: 165–170). They reject their language once they start to perceive it in the way imposed by the dominant culture. This is what happened in Brittany in the mid-twentieth century and in Kashubia. Despite the fact that recent years have seen major change in the dominant language ideologies, the old ones are still present in the subconscious of the young generation, affecting their attitudes towards minority languages and their willingness to use these languages for communication.

### **Kashubia – language ideologies in the eyes of the young**

Young Kashubs, for instance, attest to a whole range of such language ideologies, often rooted in the official communist Poland policies orientated against multilingualism (Wicherkiewicz, 2011: 145), and specifically against Kashubs, considered as a “suspicious element” and hence subject to discrimination (Bolduan, 1996: 30; Obracht-Prondzyński, 2002: 153–193). The Kashubian language could not be used in public life (Synak, 1998: 140–141). Schools, too, played an important role in reinforcing the prevalent language norms (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Children were penalized and ridiculed for speaking Kashubian (Synak, 1998: 202–203; Mazurek, 2010: 100–101; cf. also Dołowy-Rybińska, 2011: 389–393). The attitudes thus acquired proved to be very strong, often bringing negative experiences onto my interlocutors whenever they spoke Kashubian outside home. The following young woman was a target of laughter when she mixed some Kashubian words into her Polish sentences:

**G25F(K):** [...] me and my brother often used Kashubian unconsciously, even during German or Polish language lessons. Sometimes a Kashubian word slipped out and the whole class would laugh at me, but for me it was not funny at all.

---

16 As one of the ideologically-motivated measures, negatively charged terms such as “patois” or “substandard variety” or “subdialect” may be used to refer to a specific linguistic system, instead of “language” (compare the Polish term *gwara*).

The testimonies provided by young people show that despite the enormous change in attitudes towards Kashubian, adolescents and children are still reluctant to use the language in public places, fearing hostile responses and ridicule.

**L23M(K):** [...] when someone at school still spoke Kashubian, maybe not teachers, but other kids would make fun of him. And watching many of my friends who spoke Kashubian at home, I saw that they didn't do so at school. Because of their schoolmates, etc.

Another young man wonders:

**X18M(K):** I don't know [why my schoolmates do not want to speak Kashubian]... Perhaps they are afraid of how others will react or what they will say, they may be laughing or ridiculing them.

This secondary school student has himself encountered similar reactions to speaking Kashubian. As the Kashubian language and identity is equated with inferiority and being a target of mockery, a negative identity (Erikson, 1975) is formed, when the targeted group accepts the imposed image and starts to marginalize its own significance (Bourdieu, 1991; Goffman, 1963). Both interlocutors point to the hostile and humiliating reaction of their peers as their main reason for abandoning Kashubian. Language ideologies widespread in society do have an impact on the formation of negative attitudes towards one's own language.

Language ideologies "are based on deep-seated dispositions and strongly held beliefs and perceptions concerning both language practices (what people do) and policies (what people should do)" (Sallabank, 2013: 64). As such, the stereotype of people using a minority language is reinforced among the general public. This in turn affects attitudes towards the language. In this context, what this secondary school student has to say about his father's opinion on people speaking Kashubian is particularly interesting:

**R17M(K):** My father is quite open about having his roots here, but this speech is not to his liking, he simply has unpleasant associations with it. He says that during communist times, when Polish was the language spoken at school and also by most people, he would go to work by bus and he could hear those drunkards at the back of the bus playing cards and speaking Kashubian. And he got quite irritated by this.

The link between speaking Kashubian and socially unacceptable behaviour is so strong in these people's minds that they automatically transfer a negative assessment of one person onto the whole group and create a direct connection between two inappropriate activities: excessive drinking and speaking Kashubian. A simple and stereotypical association invites itself. The young man cited above who was raised in a home where Kashubian was not valued claims that he enjoys learning the language but on the other hand he finds it hard to imagine that he could have a "real" conversation in Kashubian (i.e. outside of lessons). The belief that it is inappropriate to use Kashubian in certain places, especially those inhabited

by dominant culture members, is very deeply entrenched in the minds of many Kashubs and people living in their environment. Avoiding speaking Kashubian in towns is part of their strategy of mingling with the crowd, which means avoiding discrimination or being ridiculed, and fitting in with the world outside their locality. Dominant languages ensure anonymity, whereas when using a minority language, one is always “from somewhere” (Woolard, 2008: 304). As one young Kashub woman recalls:

**H24F(K):** [...] when we were going shopping to a city, maybe to Kartuzy or Gdańsk, and when we were speaking Kashubian among ourselves, as we got closer, my mum used to say, “C’mon now, kids, we’re not speaking Kashubian now, we’re speaking Polish; it’s not the done thing to speak Kashubian in the city.” This happens even today, that mum switches to Polish when we are in the city. That’s the way it works.

This young woman, who works in the Kashubian media, emphasizes that nowadays she does not lack the confidence to speak Kashubian in the streets of Gdańsk, but there are few opportunities to do so.

The most powerful ideology, still widespread in Kashubia to this day, is the belief that Kashubian is inferior to Polish. This is reflected in a negative attitude of the young towards the language of their forefathers. A university student of Kashubian studies admits:

**F23F(K):** [...] when I was a kid I always thought that it’s a kind of substandard language, that we weren’t supposed to use it and the right way was to speak Polish.

A friend of hers talks about bitter experiences that made her avoid speaking Kashubian and hide her identity for years:

**M22F(K):** I started school in Kościerzyna, where using Kashubian expressions was considered reprehensible; it was shameful to say *jo*. For us, it was a normal thing to speak this way. I couldn’t understand how they could not know such words, how they could punish me for using them. And I experienced many, well, perhaps not quite problems, but I just felt worse and I felt that speaking this way I was depriving myself of a chance to be someone better. That’s the way it worked. So I tried to adapt to the situation rather than to stand out.

Young people speaking Kashubian are often stigmatized as rural, inferior and uneducated – a pattern that becomes sanctioned in a social hierarchy (Goffman, 1963). By this token, shedding the stigma opens a possibility of joining in the world of people perceived as “better” and “normal,” which comes at the cost of denying one’s own identity (Eriksen, 2010: 35–36).

## A dead language, a rural language

Stereotypical views have a particularly detrimental impact on minorities, which typically spend centuries under the influence of a dominant group that imposes

a simplified and unfair image of the minority (Lippmann, 1965; Bokszański, 2001; Kłoskowska, 2001). Stereotypes are often formed on the basis of negative prejudices towards ethnic or other groups. On the other hand, stereotypes may sometimes be useful, in social interactions between people not knowing each other in person, enabling the interactants to attribute to the other person stereotypical features of the group with which they can be identified (Eriksen, 2010: 28–31). But besides this function of systematizing and categorizing the world, stereotypes can be also used for legitimizing inequalities and unfair distribution of social resources. They also help set the boundaries of one's own group (Eriksen, 2010: 30). Stereotyping minority members as simple and uneducated helps justify keeping them out of prestigious roles in society, whereas propagating the image of the minority culture as backward and folkloric facilitates policies promoting development and modernization, underlain by an alleged desire to help purportedly underprivileged groups. Since the real cultural differences between the majority and minority cultures have been to a large extent obliterated, and the minorities have learned to create and utilize such differences to achieve their own political, cultural and economic ends (cf. Nijakowski, 2009; Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009), the labelling and stereotyping of the minority by the dominant culture can become a strategy for hampering the minority's political or cultural aspirations that may be deemed dangerous by state authorities. Nowadays, many international and local organizations undertake efforts to protect endangered languages, considered to be the most essential exponent of identity and ethnic boundaries. Revitalization policies pursued by minorities aim to attract people who would like to join in the speech community, but who do not necessarily descend from the group of original speakers, often burdened with a negative image. Under such circumstances, the stereotyping of the minority language and its users is intended to protect the interests of the majority group or people assimilated with the majority from the minority's aspirations.

This strategy is effective insofar as learning a minority language, often incurring costs and offering no practical benefits in return, is a great challenge undertaken on the basis of a conscious decision. Stereotyping and labelling minority language speakers, which results in undermining the status of these languages, can thus be an effective strategy for halting the process of reversing language shift, especially among the young, who tend to be more sensitive to the opinions of others.

Georg Kremnitz distinguishes two co-existing forms of language prestige. One of them is internal prestige (French: *prestige interne*), i.e. the opinion a community holds about its own language. If this opinion is negative, owing to the influence of the external environment, a minority may abandon its language in favour of one considered to enjoy higher prestige (Kremnitz, 2013: 107). The other level is external prestige (French: *prestige externe*), stemming from stereotypes and prejudices held with respect to a group, partially created by language policies. If the latter do not support minority language development and its access to various domains of social life, a language begins to be perceived as unattractive and useless (Kremnitz, 2013: 107). As underscored by Schiffman, language ideologies “do not evolve *ex nihilo*; they are not taken off a shelf, dusted off, and plugged into a

particular policy; rather, they are cultural constructs, and are rooted in and evolve from historical elements of many kinds, some explicit and overt, some implicit and covert” (Schiffman, 1996: 22). Until the industrial revolution, minorities formed close-knit communities living in city outskirts, while cities were inhabited by dominant cultures. Even though this has changed, with many people, including minority members, taking advantage of mobility and multiple identities afforded by the global world (Pennycook, 2006; Heller, 2008), the stereotypical perception of minority languages as something synonymous with the distant past and its immobile traditional culture has remained.

Two most widespread beliefs concerning minority languages in Europe are that they are “dead” and “rural.” If they are dead and no one uses them, then learning them is beyond any point. If they are rural, and thus synonymous with low status, physical labour and a lack of education, then whoever is of higher social status would risk becoming degraded should they take an interest in this language. One of my Kashubian interlocutors dubbed Kashubian culture as “bumpkin” (Polish: *wsiurska*) culture, which means that it not only originated in the countryside, but it is perceived via negative stereotypical assumptions. Consequently, speaking a minority language does not merely mark a member of a community, it marks a person who is of lesser value and who deals with unattractive or uninteresting things. The student who tried to get rid of Kashubian expressions and to fit in with the Polish-speaking environment observes that negative attitudes towards Kashubian have not disappeared totally:

**M22F(K):** [...] my brother is one of those who don't think very highly about Kashubs, so he says: “Come on, just quit it, you're only making a fool of yourself. When they ask me at work what my sister does, I tell them she's a student. What does she major in? Polish studies. So she'll be a Polish teacher? Yeah, Polish and Kashubian. What, Kashubian? How *wiocha!* [how village-related, embarrassingly unsophisticated].” That's people's usual response – “how *wiocha!*” That it's something that belongs to the countryside and should remain there. That it's not something you share with people. I think that such prejudices are quite widespread, our culture still holds these stereotypes.

Another girl points out that anything expressed in Kashubian is automatically categorized as backward. What is Polish is modern, what is Kashubian is uncouth. One secondary school student observes that:

**U18F(K):** [...] according to many people, Kashubian is a language of peasants... A friend of mine says she couldn't possibly learn Kashubian because it sounds so terribly *wieśniacko* [old-fashioned and rural], and we should move forward rather than shut ourselves in the past. We can't move backward.

Due to the prevalent associations between Kashubian and the unprestigious countryside, those people who moved to towns decided not to pass Kashubian onto their children and on top of that they were negatively disposed towards the idea of learning the language. Another university student who was born in Gdańsk says:

**D22F(K):** As a child I didn't [learn Kashubian], because in our environment it was, as I said, the language of the country, why then learn the language of the country? There was no such intention, no one even tried. [...] I didn't think it was important, either – granny understands Polish, so why should I learn Kashubian?

Taking the above-presented background into account, it has to be stated that the process of revitalization of Breton culture, still strongly equated with poverty and backwardness in the first half of the twentieth century, especially in the post-war years, deserves to be described as phenomenal. The Breton movement of the 1970s not only undermined this negative image but also reversed it completely (Le Coadic, 1998). However, this especially applies to the culture of Brittany understood as regional heritage, whereas young people do still tend to hold to stereotypes about the Breton language, which is not spoken around them and which is said to be the language of the oldest generation. The stereotypes are based on an image of the Breton speakers as old people, living in some tiny village in Lower Brittany, wearing a folk costume with a characteristic caul.<sup>17</sup> The young Bretons claim that this is why their peers feel that learning Breton does not make any sense:

**E16F(B):** [...] people still think about Brittany in a stereotypical way, that it's a land of old people, *ploucs*, who speak Breton among themselves.

Young learners of Breton often encounter the view that Breton is a dead language, so not only learning it but efforts to protect it make no sense at all. This view, as my interlocutor intimates, justifies ignorance, a lack of involvement in activities promoting Breton, or even boycotting the work done by others:

**J21M(B):** [...] the majority [of the young] don't want to have anything to do with it, they aren't trying to get to know, to get interested in Breton culture and even less so in the language. Many people consider Breton dead and they can't see any reason why there should be bilingual information boards at university. [...] Some time ago there were elections at the faculty and there was a Breton list. When I explained to other students why I voted for Breton candidates, they poked fun at me and couldn't understand why I wanted Breton to be present at the faculty... they just thought it didn't make any sense.

## Welsh – a non-progressive language

In the twentieth century Welsh was burdened with a stigma rooted in the tragic fate of the Welsh people during the First World War, followed by a period of poverty and huge exodus (Jenkins & Williams, 2000: 3–5). Due to ever-closer contacts with English speakers, the presence of ridiculing attitudes towards Welsh speakers

---

17 An image that has to a large extent been popularized by products of French culture, the media and tourism (cf. Schrijver, 2006).



accompanied by the significance of the British identity emerging after the Second World War, the people of Wales started to switch to the dominant language, English. The latter was associated with progress, industrialization and new media. As mentioned before, young people's attitudes towards the minority language largely depend on family language practices, but when they are outside their home, they are naturally influenced by the language dominating in the community or social group to which they belong (Morris, 2014). Many Welsh youngsters testify that the school environment is firmly divided into Welsh-speaking groups and those speaking English. With English-speaking groups enjoying greater popularity, many young people refrained from speaking Welsh in peer groups:

**B20M(W):** I was in a Welsh language primary school and the only language spoken was Welsh. And then, in secondary school, there were two streams. And the English stream was much more forward and much more like always seemed to be more popular people there and then people sort of wanted to be more connected with them. So they just spoke English more.

A girl coming from a Welsh-speaking family living in South Wales notes another problem: if speaking Welsh is unpopular at school, pupils avoid this language so as not to stand out from the group:

**G19F(W):** [...] I don't know, I don't think it is just South Wales, but there is a strange culture where if you speak Welsh in school you are considered strange. Even though it is a Welsh medium school and the language of the school is Welsh. Within the pupils of the school, if you are Welsh speaking, you are frowned upon by your classmates. I am not quite sure why. [...] I think that people who speak Welsh at home, they have to follow the crowd. You know I didn't speak Welsh to some people, because you wouldn't want to be looked at strangely or you wouldn't want someone to talk about you behind your back. So you do, as awful as it sounds, you do adjust to the people who you think they have more authority of you even though they don't.

Similar practices of adjusting to the dominant or more prestigious group are also mentioned by the following young man, who started to pay attention to Welsh only after he left school:

**S19M(W):** I don't mean it in a nasty way, but there were always "uncool" kids who spoke Welsh. And me, I didn't want to be an "uncool" kid, and probably that's why I didn't speak Welsh at school.

Attitudes towards those who speak Welsh are influenced by a number of factors. A female student of a secondary school in Aberystwyth admits that a small group of Welsh-speaking people are accepted by virtue of their being generally likable. This is not a rule, though:

**P16F(W):** [...] we are just crazy people, but we are quite popular at school. And if someone speaking Welsh is popular than it is fine. So I think we are quite lucky,

you know. But I have a friend, also Welsh-speaking, but in school, she speaks English because no one else speaks Welsh there. She is not forced maybe, but they just think it's a normal thing to do, to speak English. Because no one else is doing it [speak Welsh with each other].

A law student who decided to attend a Welsh-language university says that she has to confront the following attitudes:

**I19F(W):** “No one speaks Welsh anymore so why do you bother,” “You don't need to be able to speak Welsh,” “You just need to speak English.”

Similar attitudes are cited by another Welsh university student of the same age:

**J19F(W):** [...] a lot of people would tell you that there is no point to study in Welsh and that you would not get anywhere with it.

Such statements are backed by ideology. The state ensures the Welsh language the right to be present in all domains of public life, but this will not materialize there if there are no people who not only can, but also want to use it. Because of such opinions maintaining that speaking Welsh is pointless, all the effort put into its promotion may therefore not yield the expected results.

**R20M(W):** Yes, I hear every day some negative opinions about speaking Welsh, that I shouldn't do this, that Welsh is a useless language. There is stuff in the English press all the time about how kids at schools are forced to speak Welsh. A lot of people complain about how much money goes on the Welsh language. Even if it is only about 3% of the Welsh Assembly budget that goes to the Welsh language.

One intern at a Welsh state institution complains about the impossibility of speaking Welsh in that institution and about a negative image being projected of the language. It has to be noted that negative opinions of the kind cited above are much more readily accepted when the economic situation deteriorates. The young activist therefore adopts an analytical approach to the position of Welsh: since the minority is always pushed to the margins, Welsh should be the first rather than the second language in Wales. He believes that as long as the situation does not change, English will always be the most highly valued on the linguistic market:

**A20M(W):** We've always been surrounded by the stronger neighbours. We turned out to have an inferiority complex, although I don't feel it exist anymore but a lot of people think [that] if you want to have a good job, if you want to live in a city, if you want to cross the bridge you need to get rid of your sentiment to the language. It's tricky because if you don't want to be a minority you are fighting to re-establish Welsh as a majority language, to make it the main language of Wales. My reasoning is that Welsh is everyday language of many people in Wales but everybody, 100% knows English as well. So to make their life easier, they would speak English.

## Speaking a minority language as an expression of nationalism

In the wake of social movements aiming to protect minority languages, another language ideology appeared. Legitimized by states' fear of minorities demanding independence, this ideology depicts people promoting minority languages as separatists or even fascists. In this way, minority activists are labelled as elements threatening the state's integrity and interests. Such labels are applied mostly in Wales and Brittany, which do have a record of struggling for independence/autonomy and also for language rights. But even in Lusatia, merely speaking Sorbian in the public sphere and in front of German speakers may be considered radical (cf. Elle K., 2013: 76–79). Young people believe that this is a kind of obsession or fear of the unknown. As one Breton activist puts it:

**K21F(B):** There are people who attack us really aggressively, saying, for instance, that demanding that Breton should be an official language in Brittany makes for a nationalistic and isolationist attitude, that bilingual Breton-French schools are good for nothing, that teaching Breton is useless and that, if you want to attend a bilingual school, it's much better to go to an English-French school. What else?... It's very infrequent, but sometimes they treat us like fascists. What can you say, it's just a phobia.

It is important to note that, among such critiques against Breton, one may sense the language ideologies of uselessness and accusations of nationalism and fascism. The latter are due to the historical context of the Breton movement, an extreme faction of which overtly proclaimed support for the Nazis during the Second World War, and also to France's language policy, which sees using languages other than French as a threat to the state's integrity. One Welsh activist has also encountered pejorative evaluations of efforts he made with his peers:

**A20M(W):** We were quite a forceful group within the school. We were used to being perceived as a sort of gang of people. We've been called Nazis, we've been called extremists, fascists... various things. At that time it hurt because we did not know why they are doing it. But now I know that it works like that. People were afraid of activists because they did not really understand what it was. They just couldn't understand why other people want to change their mind. I think that's the problem that people do not have enough education, people don't know what the issues are. When they see someone campaigning for an issue, they don't know why he is doing it, what is he doing, and they think it is against them.

This young man does not justify the negative attitude towards his activism supporting a minority language, yet he can understand its causes. At the same time he believes that education and being open towards multiculturalism would lead to greater acceptance for pro-Welsh activity. But as long as ideologies and prejudices rule, such action evokes fear and rejection.

In Kashubia, accusations of separatist intensions have been levelled against the Association of People of Kashubian Nationality, *Kaszëbskô Jednota*. The origins of

the association and its activities can be seen through the lens of the politicization of ethnicity or pluralization of identity discourses within minorities (Warمیńska, 2013: 190). Neither the association's official agenda, however, nor official statements made by its leaders include anything that could be interpreted as a threat to Poland sovereignty. The activists demand recognition for the Kashubs as a distinct nation from the Polish nation, their being granted the status of an ethnic minority in lieu of the present status of a group using a regional language, the prevention of discriminatory practices against Kashubs and the delimitation of sharper ethnic boundaries, which includes wider access to Kashubian as an element uniting the imagined Kashubian community. The group's aims are elucidated by one of its supporters in the following way:

**V20M(K):** I'm very far from separatism, I don't think that Kashubs should have their own government or that they should cut themselves off from Polish culture and have nothing to do with it because these cultures have permeated each other for hundreds of years. But they should be autonomous. I believe that a strong dose of cultural autonomy [...] would really make for a modern state. [...] If I could be a Polish citizen of Kashubian nationality, if I could have real influence on what is going on, I would fly the Polish flag next to the Kashubian flag. Because the Polish one would no longer stand for my being robbed of my identity, but for a state of which I could be proud.

The association's activities met with a negative reception from the very beginning. This may have resulted from the debate initiated by its members concerning the commonly accepted model of the double identity of the Kashubs: a national Polish one plus a regional Kashubian one (Obracht-Prondzyński, 2003: 126–127). Demanding recognition for Kashubs as a nation could be interpreted as a desire to sever ties not only to Poland but also to those Kashubs who feel connected to Poland. Another reason why the association garners critique is that it overtly invokes an analogy to another minority in Poland, namely the Silesians, who have been fighting for recognition of the Silesian nation, and of the Association of People of Silesian Nationality and Silesian Autonomy Movement as representing that nation. It has to be noted that the Silesian issue has given rise to a number of controversies over the recent years (cf. Nijakowski, 2004; Sekula, 2009; Kamusella, 2013), hence, by extension, *Kaszëbskô Jednota* acquired the reputation of being a radical and extremist organization, despite the fact that their official documents do not declare any such views. In my study carried out among young people, however, I was not interested in the views of all Kashubs as a whole, only in the views of people engaged in activities promoting Kashubian awareness. It follows from the statements by young people not associated with the Kashubian national movement, both recorded ones and spontaneous conversations, that many of them fear that some of the demands could in fact be harmful to Kashubia. What they feel is often a mixture of admiration for the fact that the “radical option” consistently speaks Kashubian and personal grudges stemming from behaviour on the part of their peers from *Kaszëbskô Jednota*; sometimes they simply absorb to the

more widely dominant views about the organization. Their negative attitude may be also due to unfamiliarity with some of the nomenclature, especially confusing the notion of autonomy with that of separatism, or to personal interactions with young activists from this organization, who are sometimes seen as conceited and detached, and whose statements are often much more extreme than official declarations and may be even interpreted as negating the need to sustain any ties with Poland. One of the members of the Pomorania Students Club, a bastion of Polish-Kashubian identity says:

**M22F(K):** I'm annoyed by the separatist attitude, that these people consider themselves to be only Kashubs [...] I'm annoyed that they don't want to admit that they have anything to do with Poland. They were born here, they live here, they work here, the Polish state provides for them. But they don't want to have anything to do with this Poland.

Young people from outside the national movement are afraid of being labelled "nationalists," as was the case with the Bretons and the Welsh.

### **Lusatia – from quiet discrimination to overt hostility**

It might seem that it is easier to oppose discrimination, an overt phenomenon, than covert language ideologies, deeply rooted in the subconscious. Discrimination based on culture, religion or language can be battled by means of arguments, or even prohibited by law. Language discrimination consists in unfair/humiliating treatment of a person because of the language they use and is strictly connected with the language ideologies prevalent in a given area: people who feel they are in a position of strength make judgements concerning the speakers of a certain language, their origins, character, as well as physical and mental predispositions. Such opinions lead to unfair treatment of individuals or communities considered inferior by the dominant group, as they are based on culturally, socially, economically and politically determined preferences maintaining that one language may be evaluated as better than another. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas called this kind of discrimination "linguicism," and defined it as "ideologies, structures and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, regulate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language" (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1989: 455). De facto, the difference between language ideologies and discriminatory practices is that the former deploy symbolic power as a tool, whereas the latter can resort to physical or mental violence. Their effects, however, are similar and include a feeling of inferiority, possibly resulting in a change of language practices. At this juncture, we should emphasize that the object of discrimination is not a language as such but the group using it. In other words, the evaluation of a language and its prestige derived from this evaluation are not based on any real linguistic or aesthetic factors but on the attitude with respect to its users. "Language, then, triggers certain reactions because of its associations with that which is really being

judged – the group” (Edwards, 1996: 704). Owing to this, as Rosina Lippi-Green claims, ideologies created by dominant groups and practices resulting from them are a reason why individuals and groups are denied recognition of their legitimate rights (Lippi-Green 2012: 67).

There is a long history of German discrimination against the Sorbs. It includes open discrimination accompanied by physical violence, especially in the Nazi period, and symbolic harassment, such as acts of destroying Sorbian monuments, erasing Sorbian information from bilingual boards or painting anti-Sorbian graffiti, which is attested even nowadays (cf. Walde, 2012). In the German Democratic Republic, discrimination against and the lack of acceptance for the Sorbs were a taboo subject and it is only in recent years that social campaigns are implemented in order to sensitize the inhabitants of Lusatia to multiculturalism (Ratajczak, 2011: 5). Most actions taken against the Sorbs are targeted at their language. I asked my interlocutors from all four minorities I studied about their negative experiences resulting from speaking a minority language or manifesting their ethnic identity. Only in Lusatia did this question set off an avalanche of stories, many of which expressed pain and trauma. Each of my interlocutors encountered situations in which they were forbidden to speak Sorbian, insulted or threatened with physical violence, although nobody reported the actual use of violence as punishment for speaking Sorbian. Young Sorbs often experience incidents when the language rights granted to them are breached by the Germans. One university student shares her memories:

**O21F(S):** While playing football we had many problems. [...] Once it was like this: we came, prepared ourselves, we got changed, as usual. Obviously, we spoke Sorbian with each other. A referee approached to us and said, “it would be better if you spoke German on the pitch, so the other team could understand you, they don’t want this [Sorbian].” And we [said] “no.” Then she started: “you can’t use it, it is forbidden, you are not allowed to speak Sorbian and you will face consequences for it.” And we were like: “What? Wait a minute, we are on Sorbian speaking territory, where we can use this language even in court.” But we didn’t say that to her. She didn’t want to understand us and wanted to give us a warning. She was absent for a longer while and when she returned, she said that she called someone and that person had said that we are not allowed to speak Sorbian. And she wanted to punish us. [...] That time I realized that Germans want to forbid us to use our language.

Confrontations between young people and older Germans, on whom they are dependent in many ways – in this case it was up to the German referee to decide if the Sorbs could participate in sports activities – are unequal by definition. Even though there are legal regulations granting the Sorbs the right to use their language in public life, including courts, institutions and most certainly a football pitch, if these regulations are not accepted by the Germans due to their unfamiliarity with the law or hostility towards the Sorbs, the latter find themselves in a difficult position. They can either demand respect for their rights by providing arguments,

or – as was the case with these girls playing football – give up. Their first impulse was to oppose the referee’s unfair order but they were not confident enough to argue that they simply had a right to speak Sorbian. The referee on the other hand proved to be completely ignorant when she said she had taken a second opinion on the issue and assured the girls they were not allowed to speak Sorbian on the pitch.

The young Sorbs I interviewed spoke much about Germans expressing animosity towards Sorbian being spoken in their presence, since – allegedly – the Sorbs could be speaking badly about the Germans. This kind of negative attitude was documented in research conducted by Cordula Ratajczak (2009; 2011), who indicates that the Germans generally accept the Sorbian language as long as it is not used in their presence. The researcher dubs this the “acceptance paradox” (German: *Akzeptanz-Paradox*) (Ratajczak, 2011: 35–39). As has been pointed out, the attitude of the dominant group to the use of minority languages in public places is one of the most important factors affecting opinions on that language (Bradley, 2002: 1). In Lusatia this attitude is markedly negative:

**N18M(S):** Many times I heard [some Germans] say: “Why are you speaking Sorbian? We’re here too” – at school, for instance. One of my Sorbian friends and I always spoke Sorbian, and when this teacher was with us, she said “Speak German, please. We don’t understand when you’re speaking Sorbian.” I couldn’t quite understand why. They don’t mind that we are talking, but they are unhappy about not understanding us. Then they think we are gossiping about them. Pity they see it so negatively.

This young Sorb goes to a German school, so he is surrounded mostly by Germans. His schoolmates do not allow him to speak Sorbian with a few other Sorbs attending the school, fearing that the Sorbs may take advantage of the fact that the Germans do not understand their speech and conspire against them. They perceive the bilingualism of the Sorbs as a negative phenomenon, rather than a sign of the wealth of their region.<sup>18</sup>

Young Sorbs are afraid of the prospect of aggression on the part of the Germans, especially given that there are considerable numbers of Neo-Nazis in some areas located near Lusatia. As such, Sorbs may often hear remarks voiced by their followers, or merely reckless teenagers who repeat whatever sounds like an attractive slogan to them. One such comment is remembered by a Sorbian student:

**P22M(S):** What hurt me the most was when one [man] [...] said “You’d have been the next after the Jews” or something like that. He meant that we were the next the Nazis wanted to kill off during the war.

---

18 This kind of attitude is widely attested across Europe, where the ideology of monolingualism as a desirable and positive phenomenon is deeply rooted (cf. Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998).

Such comments are really hard to take for young Sorbs, especially since most of them declare a double identity and feel strong bonds to the German state (Šatava, 2005: 53–55; Tschernokoshewa, 2013). Still, they face the prospect of verbal or physical aggression in the lands where they are the indigenous population, because of their language, Sorbian identity and also for being Slavs.

It is typical of many victims to justify the behaviour of their oppressors (cf. Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The Sorbs likewise tend to justify the anti-Sorbian views of some Germans, as characteristically expressed by the words of a student:

**I22F(S):** People from Budyšin are confronted with this every day, really. When the Germans have some antipathy they respond differently and tell us to speak German because they hear [Sorbian] every day and they're fed up with it. But in Leipzig people know nothing about the Sorbs except in our dorm, other than that they don't have any interactions with any Sorbs, so that's possibly why they think it's nice when they have a rare opportunity to meet a Sorbian student.

This young woman claims that the Germans living close to the Sorbs have a negative attitude towards them because of daily interactions between the two groups. At the same time, trying to prove that the attitude of the Germans coming from other German lands is positive, she incidentally discovers that in fact those Germans from other lands are unaware of the Sorbs' existence rather than genuinely friendly towards them, so when they learn about the Sorbs, they approach them as a regional attraction. All in all, the Lusatian Germans generally do not accept the Sorbs, and other Germans have never heard of them. Aware of this situation, young Sorbs cease to use their language outside their home or to reveal their identity. For those who have experienced aggression, their family may be very helpful and offer support.

**H25F(S):** I think it was hard for me when I was a kid in Pančice, in a primary school and then secondary school, I had problems with the Germans who would say "you Sorbs don't want to talk to us" or "speak German" or something like that. I grew up with that. And when you grow up like this, it can only get better later on. If you have a family, in whom you can confess and who will tell you "Listen, there's nothing wrong with you, it's OK to be like that," who will not make you feel rejected, who will not most definitely tell you "don't let anyone notice that you're Sorbian," but who will always stand by you, then I think it's not difficult.

My interlocutors from the other minority groups rarely mentioned discrimination. One of the Kashubs recalled an unpleasant situation on a suburban railway train in Gdańsk, where a group of thugs attacked him and a friend, with whom he was speaking Kashubian. Yet despite an absence of overt hostility, many Welsh, Breton and Kashubian interviewees did talk about humiliation and ridicule. Young people are hit by the realization that individuals coming from the same region as them may not understand that their language is actually used by anyone for day-to-day



communication. They reject it instead of being proud of it. This is how a Welsh student expresses his disillusionment:

**L20M(W):** It happened to us last Saturday, and it is happening all the time, that people get mad at you [because you speak Welsh]. You just go to the town and speak Welsh and then... I don't know, they just say stuff like "What are you doing? Why you speak that?" I get really angry because... how can they say that, we do live in Wales, so we have to respect this [language]. They are students. Some of them are just teasing you, trying to make you angry. What shocks me really is that these people, lots of them are from Wales. And I think that's really bad. Because they should respect it but they don't.

## State protection and language policy

### The Kashubian language – change in status and prestige

Kashubian was not protected by the Polish state until the twenty-first century. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it was considered to be bad-quality Polish, its autonomy from Polish was called into question, and it was subject to the politically motivated process of "dialectalization" (Kloss, 1967), especially under the communist rule. The use of Kashubian in the second half of the twentieth century was effectively curtailed by means of prohibitions and language ideologies, which led to a weakening of the intergenerational transmission and the language being pushed to the private sphere of life. Kashubian was a language of very low prestige resulting from previously existing associations and evaluation (Edwards, 1996: 703). For Jadwiga Zieniukowa (2006: 55), prestige is "the social position of a language, achieved on the one hand in the evaluation of its own speech community and on the other in the evaluation from outside, i.e. by other communities and the administration of the state on the territory of which this speech community, possibly being an ethnic community, lives." Zieniukowa argues as well that while a prestigious language is considered valuable, a lack of prestige may result in "negative effects within the cultural, social and legal-political situation" of its users (2006: 55). Commonly thought of as a patois or subdialect (Polish: *gwara*), Kashubian did not have a standard spelling system, despite various attempts undertaken by the Kashubian community since the mid-nineteenth century (cf. Breza, 2001). Its speakers also believed their language was inferior, unsuitable for interactions outside the home, such as schools, towns or official meetings.

Since the early 1990s, following the change of the political system in Poland, steps were taken to draw up an act ensuring some rights and privileges to minorities in Poland. In the culturally homogeneous country that Poland then was, the status of the Kashubians as an ethnic group or speech community was far from obvious (Synak, 1998: 25–26; Obracht-Prondzyński, 2002: 322; Łodziński, 2007; Wicherkiewicz, 2014: 233–234). After many years of disputes, carried out within Kashubian communities as well, a compromise was reached: in the "Act on National

and Ethnic Minorities and the Regional Language,” enacted in 2005, Kashubian was recognized as the only regional language in Poland. What might seem to be only a formality exerted a significant influence on the perception of Kashubian among the young generation. As aptly observed by Bernard Spolsky (2009: 1): “One fundamental fact about named varieties is that they are socially or politically rather than linguistically determined. A dialect becomes a language when it is recognized as such.” The following words by a Kashubian activist show that the change was real:

**N22M(K):** This language is important to us, we take pride in its being the only regional language in Poland so far, this brings about a lot of benefits and also boosts our sense of pride. Because a subdialect [*gwara*] is not the same. And a regional language is something more important, something that gives us strength and inspiration for further actions.

In this short statement, the young man underscores three important issues. First, Kashubian is Poland’s only regional language, which makes its speakers and other people symbolically connected to it feel unique. Second, the change of status brought about real benefits such as state funding for the protection and development of Kashubian, and this is something the young really appreciate. Third, by officially recognizing Kashubian as a language, the stigma of “subdialect” (the negatively connoted Polish term *gwara*) has been lifted, thereby providing young activists with additional motivation for getting involved. The claim that the status of being a language is tied to “power and prestige” (Jaffe, 2011: 208) is therefore true.

Very soon after the Polish act on minorities was passed, initiatives concerning Kashubian gained a lot of impetus, in terms of not only language policy<sup>19</sup> but also prestige planning. This term was introduced by Harald Haarmann, to differentiate between initiatives aimed to promote a positive image of a language from initiatives aimed to change its political status. He claims that “not only the content of planning activities is important but also the acceptance or rejection of planning efforts” (Haarmann, 1990: 105), which implies that for a language policy to be successful, the local community must be prepared for the changes. In Kashubia this project proved to be successful. The new regulations helped accelerate the development of Kashubian, which gained a literary form and started to be used not only in publications dedicated especially to the Kashubs but also in the local press. The Kashubs learned to systematically take advantage of the rights they had obtained: bilingual signs appeared immediately in localities with a sufficient number of Kashubian inhabitants, the Kashubian language appeared in the media – first in local radio and TV stations financed from ministry funds and then in the private media; it found its way into the churches, which meant a great deal to religious people (cf. Zieniukowa, 2015); and, most importantly, it started to be taught in schools (cf. Wicherkiewicz, 2014: 239–244). All these phenomena were

---

19 For more on language policy and planning in Kashubia, see Wicherkiewicz, 2014: 256–265.

consolidated and intensified during the preparations for signing and ratifying the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 2009.

The ever-increasing presence of Kashubian came as a certain cultural shock for the young generation. A student majoring in Kashubian studies admits that when she was a child, anything Kashubian was kept hidden. She has the impression that in 2005 everything suddenly changed, as if by magic:

**M22F(K):** Things are definitely different now. [...] I don't remember a lot from my childhood [...], being Kashubian wasn't that much spoken about then. The boom started in 2005 when it was officially decided that Kashubian is a language, and not a dialect. In recent years everything has changed because Kashubian was recognized as a language, otherwise it wouldn't have been possible.

In recent years, there have been a number of campaigns to promote the cause of the Kashubian language and culture. There are numerous Kashubian festivals and picnics, regional meetings, special days devoted to particular towns and localities, during which Kashubian flags, symbols, folkloric costumes, music and food can be seen, heard and tasted.<sup>20</sup> "Kashubianness" is becoming increasingly visible, forming part of the cultural landscape of Pomerania. It is also beginning to be thought of as something positive, which is definitely worthwhile and which can be a source of pride. Young Kashubs note the change that has occurred in the cultural and linguistic life of Kashubia, and they are also aware of the change in attitudes:

**D22F(K):** It seems to me that recently being a Kashub is no longer thought of as something uncool or totally lame and that it's not embarrassing to own up to your identity. There's no denying that was a common way of thinking. They thought, "oh my goodness, if I tell them I'm from Kashubia I'll be a target of ridicule, they'll think I'm stupid and who knows what else." Now people are no longer embarrassed, on the contrary, I think they rightly believe that they have something extra, something to show to others, they are unique. They aren't just ordinary Poles like everyone else, but they have something more. [...] and also because the news is spreading that it can be developed, it is possible to learn the language at school, etc.

Thanks to activities promoting the Kashubian identity, it is gaining recognition in the public sphere, which in turn attracts new people who join in and create new cultural events. In this way, "Kashubianness" is becoming fashionable: it is widely spoken and written about. This new dimension of the Kashubian cause impacts on the everyday lives of average Kashubs, at the same time inspiring Kashubian elites to undertake further actions to strengthen the Kashubian spirit and to create a supra-local community. These initiatives include annual Kashub Reunions, the Kashubs' Unity Day, and a new Kashubian Flag holiday. Celebrations of this kind

---

20 The significance of these symbols by far exceeds the mere visual presence of the Kashubs, as they also contribute to the creation and reinforcement of the Kashubian linguistic, national and ethnic community. Cf. Billig, 1995.

can be considered “invented traditions” which, through their symbolism and cyclic character, serve the purpose of “establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities” (Hobsbawm, 1983: 9). The Kashubian symbols exploited at such celebrations include flags, the Kashubian griffin, “Kaszëbë” bumper stickers, black and yellow shirts, outfits with Kashubian embroidery, the presence of people wearing Kashubian folk costumes, Kashubian music, and Kashubian-speaking hosts at picnics and festivals. By appealing to the sensibilities and imagination of the Kashubs, they reinforce the feeling that their culture can indeed be considered important and interesting. At the same time, through group participation, bonds are forged with Kashubs from beyond people’s circles of personal acquaintances (cf. Mazurek, 2010: 292–298). The Kashubian language and identity are present and increasingly accepted. One of my interlocutors drew a significant parallel:

**G25F(K):** I think yes, [the Kashubs] are slowly opening up. I don’t know how the Kashubs could be worse than other ethnic groups. In the same way as gender identity issues function alongside other views, Kashubian culture has become part of the reality.

Interest in Kashubian culture gradually ceases to be perceived as a sign of backwardness or oddity. On the contrary, it is beginning to be seen as a sign of originality and creativity, distinguishing young Kashubs engaged in culture-promoting activities from those who are not involved.

### **Brittany – unappreciated state aid**

Despite the fact that France’s language policy concerning minorities has changed considerably in recent years, the changes were not sufficiently conspicuous or condensed in time for the minorities to notice them immediately, as was the case of Kashubia in Poland. In fact, the language policy in France is orientated towards protecting the Republic as a single indivisible entity, with French being the only language. Minorities are a threat to this idea, originating from the French revolution and reinforced by the introduction of obligatory education in French in 1882 (cf. Hagège, 2006). It was in the latter half of the twentieth century that minority languages found a certain limited place in schools, regional media and the state in general. However, as Michael Hornsby (2010: 82) writes, they are still perceived as a threat to national unity and the universalism of French culture. This is evidenced by the fact that French politicians remain reluctant to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, even though since 2008 the constitution includes a clause recognizing regional languages as part of France’s heritage (on language rights in France cf. Garabato, 2013; Woehrling, 2013).

To claim that there are no instruments for protecting such languages as Breton would be unfounded, however. Such instruments are the result of many years of struggle by language activists, who had to have much determination and stamina, as they were condemned by society (cf. Nicolas, 1982; 2012). But through their

efforts, in 1977 the Charter of Breton Culture (*Charte culturelle bretonne / Karta Sevenadurel Breizh*) was signed, establishing many important Breton institutions, such as the Council for the Culture of Brittany (*Conseil culturel de Bretagne / Kuzul Sevenadurel Breizh*) dealing with language planning and other issues, the Institute of the Culture of Brittany (*Institut Culturel de Bretagne*) and after many years, the Public Office for the Breton Language (*Office Public de la langue bretonne / Skol-Uhel ar Vro*).

Change in Brittany was gaining momentum, with numerous initiatives and organizations facilitating the introduction of Breton into various domains of life (cf. Dołowy-Rybińska, 2011). All this, however, was accompanied by anti-minority attitudes manifested by many politicians, upholding a distinctly Jacobin image of France, with control over its citizens and denying space to any who do not meet all the conditions sanctioned by the state.

Brittany gained a strong regional identity as a land with characteristic Celtic culture (cf. Favereau, 2005). Moreover, institutions were established to ensure the preservation and development of the Breton language, bilingual and Breton-language schooling flourished, spending on the protection of regional minority languages increased significantly<sup>21</sup> and so did support for initiatives promoting Breton (Broudic, 2009: 149). Despite all these changes, however, few Bretons feel an urge to participate in any political or cultural activity for the sake of the Breton language. Also in the public discourse, such activities are barely mentioned, mostly due to fears of being accused of nationalistic propaganda, so there is only a niche for those who are already interested in Breton. It has to be kept in mind, though, that the generation born in the 1990s did not participate in the powerful political-cultural movement on behalf of the cause of Breton and Brittany that their parents once formed. Today all the issues connected with protecting the Breton language have come into an institutional framework and participation in Breton culture has lost the advantage of being seen as something adventurous or rebellious. As a result, young people believe that no one, except those learning Breton, actually takes any interest in the language. At the same time, the group of learners is increasing in size, including not only children of Breton activists (cf. Pentecouteau, 2002), but also individuals who plan to find a job connected with the Breton language, subsidized by the state or regional authorities. A one university student says:

**H20M(B):** I think that those who learn Breton are aware of the obligation to protect minority languages and cultures. This seems obvious, but not in France, which is a Jacobin state *par excellence*. So here, it is an enormous step forward. Of course, people who learn Breton at language courses may have all sorts of motivations. I don't know all of them. It's very diversified, which is a good thing because it means that there are more and more possibilities. For some people it is connected

---

21 Many institutions deal not only with Breton, but also with the other language of Brittany, Gallo.

with their profession, for instance in France<sup>3</sup> anyone can enrol in a six-month course to become a bilingual journalist or film technician. In my opinion this shows that Breton has been reclaimed by people as the group studying it is getting increasingly varied.

This statement characteristically departs from a critique of France's attitude towards minority languages – as a Jacobin state, generally negatively disposed towards all initiatives supporting minorities – but it also acknowledges opportunities for those who want to learn the language. These are in turn seen as conducive to the Breton community opening up to individuals who do not have natural ties to the language and may have aims other than language activism.

With Breton facing a dramatic drop in the number of speakers, the regional language policy is orientated mostly towards attracting people potentially interested in learning the language. In recent years intensive six-month Breton courses have become popular, after which one can obtain qualifications as a language teacher. This appears to be an attractive opportunity, since there are not enough Breton teachers, especially those able to teach in Breton. In the eyes of young activists, however, both the awareness that such courses are available and demand for them are still low. One university student, asked specifically about the courses, had this to say:

**J21M(B):** There are few people who want to become teachers and stay in Brittany. When they speak Breton, they can be certain they will stay in Brittany. So perhaps some of them may take advantage of that. [...] The region accepted a plan and supports educating Breton-language teachers, but still there are not enough of them. Every year a large number of posts for teachers remain vacant. People aren't hugely interested in these jobs.

**NDR:** *Why do you think that is?*

**J21M(B):** I think these people are not Breton native speakers and they don't feel connected to Breton culture, so they have no natural interest in it. Or they don't really feel familiar with Breton culture. They may not be even aware that there is such a plan. Some incentives have to be offered, but it's not easy.

Even those who tend to blame the French authorities for this situation cannot fail to notice that there is no shortage of opportunities, but the Bretons and other potential Breton speakers are not necessarily interested in them.

## Lusatia – a defensive stance

The protection granted to the Sorbs by the Germans as well as the language policy implemented in Lusatia can be considered a model for other regions. The Sorbs obtained rights as a minority in 1948, when the Act on the Protection of Lusatian People, known as “the Lusatian Law” (Sorbian: *Serbski zakon*) was passed, guaranteeing legal protection and state patronage for the language, cultural initiatives and development. A full organizational and institutional

infrastructure was created in order to cater to the needs of the minority, including Sorbian-speaking schools, pedagogical and academic institutions, a publishing house, daily newspapers, radio programs, musical bands and folklore groups. The Sorbian language was allowed to be used in public offices and state institutions for the first time in history, but the Sorbian community was at the same time under the control of by Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) (cf. Dołowy-Rybińska, 2013b). After the reunification of Germany in 1990, the Sorbs retained their privileges and institutions, which then started to be financed by the lands inhabited by the Sorbs, i.e. Saxony and Brandenburg, as well as the federal budget. The Foundation for the Sorbian People was established, although the funding at its disposal has not been increased, despite inflation. The new political situation bringing freedom of choice to the Sorbs turned out to be more perilous to the minority than living under the communist-era regime. It resulted in a strong migration out of Lusatia, especially of young people who are unable to find employment in their home region. The number of mixed marriages has grown, in which Sorbian may not be the language spoken to children, and generally, the Sorbs integrate with the Germans, blurring ethnic boundaries. In an attempt to salvage the situation, the Sorbs established a new educational institution, called the WITAJ Language Center (cf. Elle, 2014). Despite the pro-active language policy, many Sorbian schools have been closed or merged with German schools, due to an insufficient number of Sorbian pupils. Needless to say, this contributes to language change in these schools.

The official German policy towards the Sorbs cannot be blamed for the decline of Sorbian. Germany has signed and ratified international conventions and charters of minority languages, the constitutions of the respective German lands guarantee the rights of the Sorbs (Elle, 2014), and the minority is subsidized. At the same time, as was mentioned before, the general atmosphere among the dominant German culture in Lusatia is not friendly towards the presence of the Sorbs and their language in public life. Thus, the legislation provides the necessary means but there is no practice supporting the minority. The Germans are not the only ones to be held responsible for this situation, as the Sorbs themselves are not active enough in demanding respect for their rights. It is plausible that they adopted a passive stance during the communist era and also in the years following German reunification, when everything was provided to them (Dołowy-Rybińska, 2014). As a consequence of all the historical, economic and cultural factors taken together, the preferred strategy among the Sorbs of coping with German hostility towards their language and culture and also with efforts to curtail the use of Sorbian in institutions, schools or sports clubs is not to rebel, and therefore to fight back, but to passively submit, to turn a blind eye to harassment. Here is how one secondary school student comments on the typical behaviour of the Sorbs:

**D17M(S):** There was no reason [to forbid the Sorbs to speak Sorbian in the football team]. I wouldn't say it was bad that he told us not to speak Sorbian because everyone else is German there, but we still talked in Sorbian among ourselves,

when they couldn't hear us. It's no use fighting, but simply go on speaking Sorbian. Then the Germans might notice it isn't a problem.

The young man's main point was that when the Germans are not listening, the Sorbs can talk in Sorbian with friends. But the passive resignation is still present there, which also means accepting the fact that the Sorbs are not allowed to speak their language in public places. This secondary-school student says that rule-breaking – what he is talking about is a ban on using Sorbian issued by the team coach, not merely the unfriendly attitude on the part of other students – was actually nothing “bad.” This is something the Sorbs have to accept, as reflected also in the following statement by a university student specializing in Sorbian studies:

**O21F(S):** I attend the same class as a friend of mine, who is also Sorbian. We were speaking Sorbian to each other when someone said “hey, they're laughing at us” so we said it wasn't true. But then we started speaking German because of this. Then the Germans can understand and they know we aren't gossiping about them.

It is easier for the Sorbs to switch to German than to openly confront the attitudes of German speakers, explaining to them what multilingualism is about. The strategy that has been applied by the Sorbian community for a long time is known as “parallel biculturality,” which involves being accepted by the dominant culture so long as the two cultures do not interact (Ratajczak, 2011: 39–43): the weaker party tries to remain invisible and to avoid irritating the stronger party. But this strategy is adopted not only by the young inhabitants of Lusatia; Sorbian institutions also write letters to state institutions in German to avoid causing inconvenience or to better please the addressee, and so perhaps be more effective. This, however, may threaten the future of the Sorbian language.

## **Wales – application of the model language policy**

Wales is exceptional as compared to the other language minorities. First and foremost it has administrative boundaries, and a history distinct from the history of England, as well as the ideological foundations of a national movement (Fowler, 2001: 3) that are still reflected in cultural and language activities carried out today. The language policy currently conducted in Wales is virtually ideal. The movement for the Welsh language has a long history, with its peak falling on the 1960, when Saunders Lewis, one of the founders of the national party *Plaid Cymru*, pointed out that the Welsh language was on track to disappear at the beginning of the twenty-first century unless political measures were taken to protect it. His speech is treated as a founding act of the association *Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg*, a pressure group fighting for the recognition and protection of Welsh. The movement was so influential that in the 1970s bilingual road signs appeared and bilingualism started to be introduced into local institutions, post offices and other public places. In 1982 the Welsh TV channel BBC S4C was set up, which gradually turned into a Welsh-language channel (Phillips, 2000). The Education Reform Act of 1988 established



Welsh as an obligatory first or second language in primary education. Since 1991 many local cells of the organization *Menter Iaith* have been established, which undertake initiatives to boost the range and prestige of Welsh in a given area. In 1993 the Welsh Language Act was passed, in which it gained the status of an official language in the public sector of Wales. On the strength of this act the Welsh Language Board was appointed, to oversee the implementation of Welsh language policy. In 2012 this institution was replaced by the Welsh Language Commissioner. In 1997 the process of devolution was launched, leading to the establishment of National Assembly for Wales (cf. Toszek & Kuzelewska, 2011: 88–99) and to enhanced political autonomy. In 2011 the Welsh language obtained the status of an official language of Wales. Even though the institutions and acts did not automatically solve all the problems of the Welsh language, they laid the foundations enabling Welsh activists, politicians and revitalizers to move “from acts to action” (Williams, 2010).

Although the rate of Welsh speakers in Wales is about 19% and is on the decline, because the language is widely supported by ordinary people and institutions, some researchers (cf. Jones, 1998a: 17) nevertheless consider it to be an expanding language. The practical implementation of the legally binding language rights is carefully supervised by the state and local institutions, as well as by activists. After the long tradition of struggle and success that came in several steps, the language awareness in Wales is much stronger than in the other regions discussed in this study. The majority of Welsh people may not actively demand respect for their language rights, but those who are conscious of the value of their language and know the history of the struggle for it do strive to fully exercise their rights. The young Welsh people I interviewed told me that their rights are often not respected. This does not mean, however, that the situation of the Welsh is worse than that of the other minority languages I studied; rather, the young activists’ commitment to the cause means that they have a greater awareness of their language and rights than other minority speakers. As can be gleaned from the statements of my interlocutors, speaking Welsh outside home is far from easy, despite the official language policy. The following student from Cardiff says:

**C21M(W):** The Welsh language gets ignored. I try to use Welsh all the time but... for example when I need to fill in a form at University I want this form in Welsh. Which I can’t have anyway, but I report it. The woman on the phone says, “you can’t have it in Welsh,” and say “Yes, I can.” She said that I am complaining, that I am an arrogant person, that the Welsh community have unreasonable demands, that the Welsh language is too expensive... And all I asked for is a form! [For that reason] we are accused of being arrogant. Just [because] of the language we want to use.

This situation illustrates the importance of the general public attitude to the necessity of rescuing a minority language. Someone asking for respect for fundamental language rights often faces lack of understanding or even accusations of contributing to an economic crisis in Wales, allegedly caused by a lot of money being

spent on revitalizing Welsh. As another university student says, her enthusiasm to study through the medium of Welsh was also undermined by the attitude of the employees of an institution, which is theoretically obliged to offer help:

**N22F(W):** The main one, I think, was in my first year at University when I wanted to do my degree through the medium of Welsh. Legally it is my right but they really made me feel like I was making a big fuss, doing personal harm to them. Like they had more work because of me. And they were like “oh, you want to do it because you can’t speak properly [in English]. Don’t worry, we will help you.” And I just wanted to do it in Welsh for myself, not because I couldn’t do it in English. So it was a really frustrating experience. [...] They really made it hard for me to make Welsh the language of my education so I just gave up.

This young woman felt humiliated by the reaction she received from these people. She realized that the university staff was playing out the prevalent language ideology that one cannot be a bilingual person: either you speak English fluently, or you speak Welsh. Because of that they saw her desire to obtain a degree through the medium of Welsh as a symptom of insufficient competence in English. It has to be noted that in Wales there are many programs taught in Welsh at universities, and some of them offer scholarships to students doing their degrees in this language. Despite these possibilities, young people have to fight to have their rights respected, as this student in a bilingual grammar school attests:

**J19F(W):** When I was in the sixth form and I wanted to do drama, it was all through the medium of English. And I wanted to do it in Welsh but no one else wanted to do it with me in Welsh because maybe they did not feel comfortable enough in Welsh. So then I was looking for someone who would have helped me and teach me practical things on stage through the medium of Welsh. I found one person but she said “no, sorry.” But it was a bilingual school. And that time I did go complain to the teacher but there was no reaction. She said I’ve got to find someone by myself.

This young woman finally got her way. She found a person who agreed to work with her and the school had to accept this solution, fearing that otherwise they would be reported to the local authorities. The conclusion to be drawn, therefore, is that may that public institutions implement bilingualism as long as someone overtly demands it. In the words of young people, this requires a continuous struggle to have the legally enshrined language rights actually respected in practice. This is the same struggle that was initiated by the generation of their parents, whose protests won them the above-mentioned legal regulations. But as the young people point out, today, once these regulations are operational, people seem to care less, instead just taking for granted that the language is protected. As Joshua Fishman (1991) writes, the struggle for a minority language is never-ending. Resting on one’s laurels, grounded in the assumption that the language rights have at long last been secured inevitably, leads to a weakening of the language:

**NDR:** *And do you think that politics now influences the Welsh identity?*

**I19F(W):** Yeah, I think it has been like this. Politics was influential in the 1960s and 70s, with all the rebellions, burning and smashing signs, and protesting. It gave Welsh politics a violent name. And it was important because they achieved a lot through that. Whereas now, especially Plaid Cymru, I think it is miserable, they are pathetic, they don't really do anything, they don't really have a reason to fight for anything. And I think it makes Welsh politics a little bit softer at the moment.

## Effects of language policy in the perception of the young

The processes described above can be referred to as the politicization of ethnicity. They involve a minority group realizing and then further elevating the awareness of its cultural distinctiveness, which provides an incentive to get organized to ensure rights for the group. What originates as a spontaneous social movement turns into institutionalized and planned action, and minority groups begin to be involved in identity politics (Gergen, 1999; Eriksen, 1995; 2010; Warمیńska, 2013). The last several decades have seen a number of major changes in the language policies implemented in Europe and also significant shifts in the discourse on minority languages. These developments can be looked upon from the perspective of a rising awareness about the linguistic wealth of the world and its significance for preserving the cultural diversity and ecological balance of the old continent (cf. Nettle & Romaine, 2000).

Scrutinizing the minority-language discourse further, we can notice that it in fact reflects economic problems. As Alexandre Duchêne and Monica Heller (2012) note in their book about language in late capitalism, based on Pierre Bourdieu's concept, the discourse on languages, including minority ones, oscillates between "pride" and "profits," i.e. between the feeling of belonging to a community, the social capital resulting therefrom, and the value of language skills on the markets opening up thanks to policies being implemented. The two stances appear to be contradictory. On the "pride" side, there is integration, emotions, authenticity and solidarity, whereas on the "profits" side there is instrumentalism, rationality, strategy and power.<sup>22</sup> Against this background, researchers, politicians and ordinary people develop a new ideology concerning their language. Its symbolic and economic value rises so high that it is now looked upon as a commodity that should be managed, measured and controlled. Sociolinguistic statistics, research on language practices and perhaps even regulations and language rights can also be seen as part of the language strategy so conceived. To use the term coined by Michael Foucault (1991), nowadays we observe language "governmentality" (French: *governmentalité*), a phenomenon in which society subjects itself to control,

---

<sup>22</sup> These categories as defined by Duchêne and Heller (2012) were discussed by Jacqueline Urla at the plenary lecture *Landscapes of Language Ideology: Pride, Profit and Governmentality* of the conference "New Speakers in a Multilingual Europe: Opportunities and Challenges," Barcelona 2014.

at the same time thinking that it is simply following its own needs. The financial support received by minorities as well as the type of language policies conducted by states and minorities alike imposed a strict formalization on the way minority languages are conceptualized and acted upon, i.e. through grants, regulations, or dominant and subsequently internalized discourses (cf. Urla, 2012b). Under such circumstances, despite the increasing rights, funding and institutional support, there is a lack of grassroots initiative, as noted by many young activists, including this Welsh woman:

**N22F(W):** Well, it could go in a lot of different ways. Like with the cuts. Like people, for example, were able to make their own baskets and then the factories came and everyone was employed by the factories and they forgot the skills they had before. And that may be happening now because when lots of the state funding came people used them to do things for the Welsh culture. Now the state funding diminishes because of the cuts. And people, I think, they lost their self-drive because they do not have the skills they used to drive on to make things happening in Welsh. So I think now it will take years before people start to do things on their own.

This statement expresses sentiment for a simple life, but it also contributes an important observation that the skills for acting outside of the subsidized and politically accepted schemata have been lost. One Breton teenager notes that in all the activities and measures implemented today, people are lacking in passion and determination to pursue values beyond what is offered by state-funded institutions:

**G16M(B):** Today in Brittany we receive ample financial support from the French authorities. A lot of money. So what exists here today has been created thanks to, or through the actions of the French state. So we have this here... Anyway, the Bretons have benefited a lot from French programs and I think that because of the money France donated it is no longer perceived as an aggressor. Perhaps when the money is no longer available, people will turn towards cultural values, but I don't know, I can't predict the course of history, it just seems to me that it may happen, people may turn towards cultural values, towards their homeland and things that are much more essential [...]

According to this secondary school student, when France had been seen as an aggressor, the Bretons were more consolidated in their struggle, initiating activities based on their own tradition and patterns. Then, due to state funding, the minority issues became fully steered by state policy. The same problem is mentioned by a Sorbian secondary school student:

**T17M(S):** [It's] easier than it used to be. I mean, for instance, in the Prussian times, Sorbs were persecuted. Back then we were not allowed to speak Sorbian at school, in the village or at Sorbian and German meetings. That's why it's important that Sorbs received some support in the socialist era and since then it's been much easier to be a Sorb. However, in my opinion, since the time when it became easier,

being Sorbian has been dying out. When there were oppressions, as in the Prussian times, we all felt stronger as Sorbs because we all supported one another. Now, as you can do whatever you want, people no longer support one another. [...] There's no pressure on Sorbs, we get support from the Germans. If things were different, there would be some national movements, Sorbs would get organized, they would do everything by themselves. We got what we wanted. That's my opinion. Lusatia got lazy because of the German support and now it's getting smaller.

This young man points out that when the Sorbs had to struggle for survival and cope with overtly hostile policy, they had the motivation to struggle for their identity. Once their existence as an ethnic group became secured, they ceased to be actively involved and, consequently, ceased to be on a constant alert about the condition of the Sorbian identity. Moreover, he goes on to say that if state support backs off, that would mean a reinstatement of the previous conditions, including struggle for survival and rights. This shows that young people's attitudes to language policies are highly idealistic: they expect minority culture to equip them with values giving them strength and motivation to take action. On the other hand, they are aware that the extant system offers many privileges to minorities, but at the cost of imposing rigid frames upon them.



## Chapter 2: Institutionalized transmission of minority languages

### Types of education offered to minorities

There are three basic educational models applied in teaching minority languages in Europe, and each of them has some advantages and disadvantages. They differ with respect to the competences they offer to learners: not each model leads to full bilingualism, or to ethnic awareness and involvement in the minority cause. None of the models could be deemed optimal and applicable to all minority language groups (Hinton, 2001: 181). Rather, the choice of model has to be adjusted to the political, social, historical and economic context in which the minority language functions, including its relation with the dominant language, the language rights granted to the minority, the speakers' attitude to their language, the status and prestige this language enjoys, and most of all, the sociolinguistic situation of the community. It has to be noted that in the same way as the above-mentioned processes of politicization of ethnicity influence specific activities undertaken by minorities and boost their self-awareness as well as identity formation, education conducted through the medium of a minority language, and even its being taught as a second language, influences the attitude of a group to its language as well as its function and status in a society. When the first Diwan immersion school was set up in Brittany back in the 1970s, by a small group of devout Breton activists closely associated with the movement for revitalization of the language and culture (Vetter, 2013; Dołowy-Rybińska, 2016), few people had the courage to send their children to that school. As of today, the Diwan schools are widely appreciated and the reasons why they are chosen by parents stretch far beyond sentiment for the region or activism (Goalabre, 2011). In Kashubia, there are no immersion or bilingual schools proper due to lack of general acceptance for this kind of education, but in the recent years a large number of Kashubian-language academic publications and course books<sup>23</sup> have been published, which indicates that any language can become a medium of education. The only obstacle may be the general public's attitudes and the widely understood context. These, however, are subject to change, too.

Minority languages are currently taught in the following ways: as a subject in the school curriculum (as a second or foreign language), as one language of education in bilingual schools (where some subjects can be taught through the medium of a minority language and others through the medium of a dominant language,) or through immersion (with the minority language being the only medium of instruction). The first of these types of minority-language teaching is an example of "weak"

---

23 For example, a course book for organic chemistry was published in 2013 (cf. Nacel, 2013).

education, which aims to familiarize learners with the minority language without providing them with an opportunity to attain bilingualism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000: 579–580). This type of education is deployed in regions where the minority language has a weak status in the community and the generally held view is that children should not spend much time on learning a language of dubious usefulness. Weak education can also be applied in regions where the minority language has low prestige, possibly derived from its being treated as a dialect of the official language or in regions where the minority language is gaining recognition and is only being introduced to schools. In the latter case, weak education can be an intermediate step on the path towards introducing a stronger form of instruction. In regions where the minority language enjoys high status, as in Wales, it can be taught as a foreign language, too, alongside the bilingual and immersion system.

In the weak form of education, the minority language is typically taught as a foreign language or an optional school subject. At best, learners can achieve a level of proficiency enabling them to understand or produce simple texts, rarely to carry out a conversation with a native speaker. They are not able to use this language as a means of communication in everyday life. As achieving good command of a language learned at school is very difficult, the weak form of education may optimally serve as just a preliminary step in further studies pursued by an individual. At a minimum, the language acquires a certain symbolic function, since in the public view a language that has a place in the education system is higher in the hierarchy than a language that is not taught at all.

Kashubian is an example of a minority language taught only in the weak form.<sup>24</sup> Before 2005, it had been taught in just a few schools starting in the early 1990s, i.e. since the political transformation in Poland. It was officially introduced into schools after the passage of the “Act on National and Ethnic Minorities and the Regional Language” in 2005. At present, there are three lessons of Kashubian per week in schools for students whose parents expressed a desire to provide this kind of instruction to their children. In the school year 2014/2015 another class was introduced, during which students are educated about regional issues, such as the geography, history and culture of Kashubia. The number of children attending lessons of Kashubian is increasing. In 2014/15 there were 17,585 students enrolled,<sup>25</sup> 80% of whom attended primary schools, 15.5% middle schools and only 4.5% secondary schools (at present there are five secondary schools offering Kashubian as part of the curriculum). My research and the testimonies of my interviewees indicate that the Kashubian education encounters a number of obstacles, some of which will

---

24 In Wales, by comparison, Welsh is studied as a foreign language by all those who do not attend bilingual or immersion primary and secondary schools. In Brittany some schools offer teaching of Breton as a foreign language. In Upper Lusatia, in turn, Sorbian is studied as a foreign language and bilingually by some German-speaking students attending schools in which Sorbian is taught.

25 Retrieved from: <http://kaszubi.pl/aktualnosci/aktualnosc/id/1015> (access: 25.02.2015).



be briefly mentioned below. The main problem lies in the non-obligatory character of the lessons. Children who were enrolled in the Kashubian program often feel unfairly burdened or even punished by having to attend the extra classes while their non-participating classmates can play on the pitch or simply go home early. This in turn creates negative, possibly long-lasting, attitudes towards this language. Another problematic issue is the standard of teaching. Many teachers are not fluent speakers and some have moved into teaching Kashubian only to avoid being made redundant in the face of declining numbers of students. For one thing, then, their language competence is low, for another they lack the passion and motivation to present Kashubian to students as an important element of the ethnic identity. Another difficult challenge that has to be faced by teachers is mixed competence within classes: some children know Kashubian passively, whereas others are not familiar with it at all. Moreover, there is no continuity between schools of consecutive levels. Naturally, it is not possible to predict if the children who are now learning Kashubian at school will be able and willing to use it in the future and what role it might play in their lives. For a few years, University of Gdańsk offered a specialization in Kashubian, which has since been transformed into the program called “Kashubian Ethnophilology” in 2014/2015, after the Kashubian-Pomeranian Association committed itself to provide part of the funding for educating Kashubian teachers, cultural activists and journalists.

In contrast to weak education, “strong” education is intended to ensure full bilingualism, both among children belonging to a language minority and – ideally – also among children belonging to or assimilated into the majority. In strong education, the ethnic language is deployed as the medium of instruction in selected classes. Bilingual education is recommended by the European Union on the strength of the diversity principle (Rindler-Schjerve & Vetter, 2012). The model is known as “Mother Tongue + 2.” For some children attending bilingual schools, the minority language is the first one, whereas others are given an opportunity to achieve proficiency enabling them at some later stage of education to participate in classes in which this language is used as a medium of instruction (Craen, 1996: 83). Levelling the differences between those acquiring the language at home and those learning it at school may be very difficult, but the major benefit that bilingual schools provide is a wealth of opportunities for interaction and communication in the minority language, thanks to which it is not identified only as a school language. Needless to say, language competence and willingness to use it in interactions outside school depend on a number of other factors, too.

Bilingual schools have been successfully run for a long time in Wales,<sup>26</sup> where over 30% of primary school students attend bilingual or Welsh-speaking schools. In 2014 there were 403 such schools at the primary level and 54 secondary ones. Besides, all children up to the age of 16 have obligatory lessons of Welsh. The

---

26 The first bilingual schools were launched in Wales after the introduction of the Education Act in 1944.

Welsh and bilingual education is systematically supervised, improved and adjusted to the changing sociolinguistic situation (cf. Mercator, 2014). Bilingual schools play a particularly significant role in South Wales (Hodges, 2012; 2014) and in these regions where the intergenerational transmission is weak or non-existent. The success of bilingual education in Wales is most certainly evidenced by the increasing number of young Welsh speakers, even in regions in which this language was not spoken before (Aitchison & Carter, 2004: 2). At the same time, it has been observed that few students attending bilingual schools speak Welsh outside educational situations (Hodges, 2009).

In the Breton bilingual *Div yezh* schools established in 1982, there are almost 7,000 pupils and another 5,000 are being educated in *Dihun* private Catholic schools, partially implementing bilingual education and to a greater extent offering classes of Breton as a foreign language. Despite the rising number of pupils studying Breton in all educational systems, they still amount to about 1% of all school pupils in Brittany.

An interesting example of bilingual education is attested in Upper Lusatian schools. The main system functioning in Saxony divides students learning Sorbian into those studying it as a foreign language and those studying it as their first language. In the school year 2004/2005 the program of bilingual education “2 plus” was introduced (Budarjowa, 2009), aiming to level out the different language competences of students. This program is intended for children from German-speaking families, previously attending the *Witaj* immersion kindergartens (Budarjowa & Šoľćina, 2009). In the school year 2010/2011 there were 2432 children studying Sorbian or through the medium of Sorbian (cf. Budarjowa, 2014: 312–313). Participating in education through the medium of Sorbian, however, turned out to be challenging to children from German-speaking families, despite having attended Sorbian lessons for a few years. Moreover, the effects of such education also proved to be unsatisfactory (Gantefort et al., 2009; 2010). It should also be kept in mind that pupils learning Sorbian or through the medium of Sorbian constitute only 0.45% of the student population in Saxony (Elle K., 2013: 108), and due to the above-described tensions between the Sorbs and the Germans, there are few “new speakers” in Lusatia. As regards university education, Sorbian can be studied at the University of Leipzig, with graduates obtaining a degree giving them qualifications to work as teachers in bilingual schools.

Of the three educational forms listed above, teaching through the sole medium of a minority language, also referred to as immersion, is considered to be the most effective. This solution cannot, however, be adopted everywhere due to formal obstacles, such as an insufficient number of pupils potentially attending such schools, which prevents the authorities from funding them, or due to social concerns, such as that if children are educated through the medium of the ethnic language only, it will be difficult for them to participate in dominant-language university education or public life. In the immersion method, all verbal exchanges at school, during both classes and breaks, should be carried out in the minority language. Teachers should apply the method “one person – one language,” thanks

to which students realize that a given language is suitable for expressing every idea and that it can be used as a means of communication (Hinton, 2001: 181–182).

The immersion method offers the greatest chance of educating people fluent in the minority language who might be willing to use it in everyday communication. Not all immersion schools, however, are based on this premise. When a community uses a minority language for communication, children acquire this language and may learn the dominant language as a second one. In such communities, it is natural for parents to opt for immersion education for their children so that the minority language remains their first one. Such a situation also exists in some places in Wales and Upper Lusatia.

In regions where language transmission has been interrupted, the duty to teach the minority language to children and encourage them to use it in their free time rests with the school. This kind of situation occurs in Brittany, with the Diwan immersion schools established in the 1970s. Statistics show that only 8% of students attending the Diwan schools come from families in which both parents speak Breton. Another 17% were raised in families in which solely the father is a Breton speaker and in 1% of families it is the mother (Broudic, 2011: 48). According to other surveys, these numbers were slightly higher (Chauffin, 2017), but the participants admitted that despite knowing Breton, few of them actually use it as the main means of communication in the family. It is in the Diwan schools then where children get to know the Breton language and very often where they also have the only opportunity to use it. In theory, complete immersion is expected to lead to the emergence of a new generation of Breton speakers, for whom the minority language would become the primary means of communication. In practice, children at Diwan rarely speak Breton outside classes and many of them, especially those who do not continue immersion education after primary school, never achieve the language competence necessary to carry out a conversation. The majority of students do not have any contact with Breton after finishing school, anyway. Breton can be studied at three universities in Brittany and almost 900 students are enrolled in these programs, with about half of them attending courses of Breton as a second language.<sup>27</sup> Unlike in Wales, where Welsh studies programs are offered by four universities, and apart from that many programs can be studied through the medium of Welsh (although, as indicated by many previously cited statements, is not always practically possible), in Brittany no university runs programs through the medium of Breton apart from the above-mentioned Breton language studies.

## Can schools save minority languages?

The role and significance of minority language learning and education through the medium thereof is probably the most widely discussed issue among minority

---

27 Retrieved from: <http://www.fr.opab-oplb.org/5-chiffres-cles.htm> (access: 25.02.2015).

language revitalizers. There is no doubt that the introduction of obligatory education largely contributed to the language change in the twentieth century. The school as an institution was used as a tool for ensuring the reproduction of the dominant language and culture (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Classes were taught in the official language, which was intended first to bring on bilingualism and subsequently to wipe out the ethnic language. One of the aims pursued by school education was to fulfil the mission of the cultural and language assimilation of students, who would then adopt the state-imposed patterns of thought and behaviour, becoming fully-fledged citizens. It is a well-known fact that school affects views and perception of reality, in this way changing the ethnic culture (Hinton, 2001: 182). This observation constitutes a core of criticism levelled by some researchers against school education: regardless of the language spoken at school, it does foster a cultural change. As Joshua Fishman (1991: 22–24) argues, an ethnic language intrinsically associated with its culture would in this situation become but an artificial tool for expressing the dominant culture. However, it should be noted that cultural change is inevitable and the notion that the school is responsible for culture change is ill-devised in the case of the European minorities. This change was spurred not only by schools, but also by the new media, industrialization and urbanization, with minorities living in a multicultural world rather than in isolated reservations. Besides, as aptly noted by Nancy Hornberger (2008: 2), the revitalization process “is not about bringing a language back, but rather bringing it forward.”

Another objection put forth by Fishman concerns more fundamental issues. He does acknowledge a number of benefits stemming from the presence of minority languages at school, such as raising awareness of problems accompanying the functioning of minority languages, the development of written forms of these languages leading to their increased prestige, and even change of status and the possibility of being used in various domains of life. At the same time, he observes that studying a minority language at school does not restore intergenerational transmission, so in fact it does not contribute to preserving this language (Fishman, 1991; cf. also replies to Fishman by Ferguson, 2006: 83; Hornsby, 2014: 150–151). However, when the intergenerational transmission has been weakened or stopped, and when parents either do not know the language or do not pass it onto their children, school becomes the only place where children can not only get familiar with the minority language but also gain an awareness of their cultural heritage. Disregarding the differences between the various forms of education, from the Kashubian weak model, through the stronger bilingual schools in Lusatia and in Brittany, to the strong Welsh-speaking and bilingual schools in Wales, it is this role of school that was appreciated by my student-interlocutors. This is how a secondary school student coming from a family not speaking Breton and not having a strong Breton identity answers the question if speaking Breton boosts his ethnic identity:

**LL17M(B):** Yes... well... my family where I was raised has really nothing to do with the Breton culture, yet still I am committed to it. And it is through the language. If there had been no Diwan schools... no, I exaggerate now, but I don't know if I, personally, I would be committed... so yes [the Diwan school played the most important role].

In Kashubia, the identity-shaping function of education engraining or raising sociolinguistic awareness (cf. O'Rourke & Ramallo, 2015: 149) seems to be the most important, too. After a long period of marginalization of the language and dominance of negative ideologies, the school may provide the only chance to proliferate the number of speakers and open paths to new spheres in which the language could be used. Besides, as Alexandra Jaffe claims on the basis of her research conducted in Corsica, the school “plays an active role in defining both linguistic and socio-linguistic identities, creating new communities of practice and meaning” (Jaffe, 2011: 206). A secondary school student, who – in her own words – was forced to learn Kashubian at school, talks about this phenomenon in the following way:

**U18F(K):** If we don't learn Kashubian at school, we won't have the courage to tell everyone that we are Kashubs. If we use Kashubian only at home... this is what I came across only in villages, that they speak Kashubian at home. In towns Polish is spoken mostly. So if Kashubian is spoken only at home, they will think that they cannot say anything in Kashubian in town or at school because that will be seen as a rural trace or something like that. [...] But if they studied at school, perhaps even being forced to, then one hour a week could implant some Kashubian spirit in them.

The girl notes two important issues: school education raises the prestige of a language, thanks to which it may cease to be thought of as a home means of communication that could cause embarrassment in a public place. A contact with a language and familiarity with its cultural context provided by a teacher can also give young people a chance to choose their identity. Committing oneself to the Kashubian identity would be difficult if it was considered something socially unattractive, shameful or simply inaccessible to the young generation. This is what a graduate who studied Kashubian in his secondary school replied to the question if the school had affected his identity:

**P19M(K):** My Kashubian identity started at school. Then I began to ask myself if I am Kashubian or Polish. In my case, thinking about myself in Kashubian terms started thanks to school.

The link between the language studied at school and the one actually used is seen differently by young Sorbs, especially those attending the Sorbian secondary school in Budyšin, who spend nearly the whole week with their mates at school and in the boarding house. One Sorb who often emphasized in our conversations that he did not come from a family of “fanatics” provided the following statement:

**D17M(S):** If I didn't go to a Sorbian school, I wouldn't have so much interest in Sorbian because all my friends would be German. Then, I guess, I wouldn't see any reason whatsoever to speak Sorbian because you don't speak Sorbian just for the sake of speaking Sorbian. You do because you want to, and you talk to people and friends. I don't know who uses Sorbian on an everyday basis, if it's not at school or among friends. Perhaps at home.

According to this student, school gives them the feeling that speaking Sorbian makes sense. Given the German-speaking environment and their negative attitudes, young Sorbs could easily lose their motivation. Another Sorb adds what follows:

**K17M(S):** That's important because as a kid you don't have any other [source of] education, you spend half of your life at school and the other half at home. But if Sorbian is not spoken at home – well, even if it is, school should nurture Sorbian. Otherwise, kids see no sense speaking Sorbian. They say: "At school [everything] is in German, everything everywhere is in German, we don't have to speak Sorbian."

It has to be underscored that the problems scrutinized here pertain only to those people who participated in minority language instruction. Of all the places discussed in this book, access to this kind of education, either as learning a language or through the medium thereof, is fully provided only in Wales. Despite the decreasing number of Sorbian schools, the majority of families who value Sorbian education can still send their children to such schools. The lack of continuity between the various levels of education is attested everywhere, but it is most acute in Kashubia and Brittany.

In these regions many children are deprived of access to minority language instruction, despite the increasing number of schools in recent years. This problem was mentioned by one of my interlocutors. Some of his family members made a great effort to learn Breton as adults. Feeling a strong bond with Brittany, the student engages in a number of activities promoting Breton culture and participates in young people's debates on the future of the region. But he is planning to study science in the future and he fears that since he did not have a chance to study Breton at school, he may not find time to do so in his adult life:

**T16M(B):** I don't [speak Breton], but many people in my family do: my dad, my brother, my sister-in-law... I wanted to study Breton too. It was in *college* [middle school], in sixth grade. But there were not enough people who were interested and the class wasn't organized. I think this is a problem and many people are in the same situation. They just can't study Breton.

Learning a minority language at school is insufficient to achieve proficiency needed for fluent communication outside the school environment. This level of communicative competence can be acquired through practice, i.e. in conversations with other students and other people in general. The problem is that even in immersion schools, where the minority language should be used in contacts among students, the dominant language is often chosen instead. This is, for instance, the

case of the Diwan immersion secondary school in Brittany. When conducting my research, I spent a considerable amount of time at that school, visiting lessons as an observer, staying in the boarding house, dining in the students' canteen and spending break time with students in the school garden. The main language of conversations among students was French. Occasionally, after being spoken to by a teacher in Breton, young people continued to speak Breton for a while, which was not difficult for them. Yet, the language they chose spontaneously in the majority of situations was French. As can be seen in the following statement, such practices are talked about openly:

*NDR: And here at school, do you often speak Breton or you speak in the two languages?*

**E16F(B):** We speak in both, unfortunately. After lessons it's mainly in French and even at school there's less and less Breton because in our secondary school the number of people, I mean students, is growing. Many of them choose this school not necessarily because of Breton but perhaps to enjoy the company of their friends or the general atmosphere... But not for Breton as such. This corrupts the Diwan school to some extent.

The teenager believes that the reason why French is dominant in the school is that most students are not engaged in the protection of Breton. Unlike students enrolled during the first years of the immersion system, those attending the school nowadays do not come from families engaged in promoting the Breton identity (cf. also Vetter, 2013). Some young people, however, admit that it is the obligation to speak the minority language that makes them rebel against it:

**B17F(B):** I think on the whole that we tend to speak French because – well, perhaps not so much in the primary school, but in the middle school – there was too much pressure on us to speak Breton [...] We were told everything had to be in Breton, that this was the language of the school... so due to the fact that we were told to speak Breton again and again, we no longer felt like speaking Breton in the middle or secondary school and it seems to me that I speak Breton more often outside school than here, at school.

There are few places outside school where Breton can be spoken, as she admits later. A similarly rebellious tone can be heard in the following statement by a young Welshman:

**W18M(W):** When I was younger, I think a lot of people did not want to speak Welsh in secondary school, because we were forced into speaking Welsh. The teachers forced us to speak Welsh, that everything must be in Welsh. And everyone wants to rebel in school and the easiest way to rebel was speaking English. And the younger people in school – often it's really hard to hear a word in Welsh from them. But I think a lot of them when they get older they start to kind of explore why they should speak Welsh, why the school wants them to do it. But they think about it independently, and a lot of them then start switching back to Welsh. And once they decided for themselves.

As I observed, young activists engaged in promoting minority languages feel responsible for the future of these languages and tend to choose them as a means of communication. Sometimes, they become leaders of peer groups that naturally use Welsh or Breton in conversations. In Kashubian secondary schools, where Kashubian is a non-obligatory subject, students do not achieve high competence, so no conversations are spoken in this language. Many students attend classes of Kashubian, but this is where their connection to Kashubian begins and ends. Here is what a young activist says about her classmates from the secondary school:

**G25F(K):** Everybody actually registered for the Kashubian classes, but in fact they didn't feel like doing anything beyond that. From among my classmates it was only me, well, perhaps a few other people that got really involved in the work. And all the others were like "Kashubian, it's peanuts, I know that culture, it should be easy." They thought it'll be an opportunity to get a good grade.

According to this young woman, those who got involved in activism back then, are still devoted to the cause of Kashubian now.

The situation in the Sorbian secondary school in Budyšin/Bautzen is different. Some students study the majority of subjects through the medium of Sorbian, some study in the bilingual system, and others learn Sorbian as a foreign language. When I visited the school in consecutive years, each time I heard more German than in the previous years. When I asked in Upper Sorbian about where the teachers' room was, I often encountered pupils who were unable to answer such a simple question. Some of them replied "*Njerěču serbsce*" ("I don't speak Sorbian" in Upper Sorbian), or even "*Ich spreche nicht Sorbisch*" (the same in German). Why is it so that after a few years of learning pupils do not know the language even at the basic level, or are afraid to use it? This is how a university student of Sorbian explains this problem:

**B22M(S):** In the Sorbian secondary school we also have German groups. They are attended by students who could join Sorbian groups but chose German ones instead. [...] In the eleventh grade three quarters of the group didn't understand a word of Sorbian, despite the fact that most of them had been in the Sorbian secondary school since the fifth grade. Then I thought that there must be something wrong with the method of teaching Sorbian [...] Students don't take these classes seriously. They watch *Wuhladko* [a Sorbian TV program] and do some tasks. In my opinion, parents who send their children to a Sorbian secondary school should be open-minded and aware of the fact that the children will study Sorbian. Students likewise have to be aware of that. [...] When [a German student] goes to a Sorbian school, it has to be clear to them that "OK, I have to learn Sorbian, I have Sorbian classes, I have an opportunity to learn, I have Sorbian friends." But the reality looks different.

The presence of pupils who not only cannot but also do not wish to speak Sorbian in a Sorbian school is perceived as the main reason why German takes the role of the



medium of communication in interactions among students from Sorbian-speaking and German-speaking families. In a similar fashion, English was the language spoken in the Welsh school in South Wales attended by the young woman cited below, whose father was English and whose Welsh maternal grandparents had moved to England and used English in contacts with their family members. As she recalls, children in this school were surprised that someone may be willing to speak Welsh when no teacher is listening:

**D20F(W):** Because we were from the area where Welsh wasn't the main language of the community, a lot of pupils were in the same situation as me where at their houses they were speaking English. And I remember, there were some frictions between the people that spoke Welsh and those who did not want to. I remember once I walked through a corridor speaking Welsh with my friend, and a girl asked us "Why you are speaking Welsh? There's no teacher around." I think it takes up to a certain age for people to realize how important the Welsh is.

To answer the question whether schools can save minority languages, one could use Teresa McCarthy's (2008: 161) words, namely "No, *but...*" The school itself will not restore intergenerational transmission; it will not reconstruct a community. But it gives young people who have not acquired the language at home an opportunity to learn it. To those who did talk in this language with their parents, it offers a chance to become familiar with its literary form and to create a peer group speaking in the minority language. The school will not save the language, but it can raise linguistic and ethnic awareness and exert influence on attitudes. It also helps shape people, who, circumstances permitting, may become animators, teachers or politicians sensitive to language issues.

## The role of teachers...

The Welsh woman quoted above makes an important observation: at some point young people, at least some of them, begin to realize how important the minority language is to them and to their community. Then they may start to regret not having invested more effort into its preservation. If and when this realization comes depends to a large extent on a teacher, who may not only provide language instruction but also arouse students' interest and fascination in the language and culture. One of the Diwan secondary school students talks about his teacher in the following way:

**Y17M(B):** [...] for instance X. [...] [she] discovers new cultures in front of us all the time, such as Malaysian or Creole culture... Thanks to such teachers we learn a lot of things. I think that... in my opinion in French schools teachers just do their lessons and don't go any further with their pupils. So it's true that there is a divide between teachers and pupils. Here too, to some extent, we don't always listen to each other and we don't always share the same opinions, but still, classes are a lot more fun, we're having discussions and we're interested.

The relationship between teachers and students makes the latter feel significant, according to my interlocutors. This is achieved not only through the teaching method, but also through creating a bond, through showing passion for the minority language and culture and also through carrying out discussions in which teachers and students participate on equal footing, as people responsible for the future of the Breton language and culture. A graduate who attended a secondary school with Kashubian talks about his teacher's personality and passion in the following way:

**P19M(K):** I think that the teacher's personality cannot be underestimated. I know some guys who are taught Kashubian by teachers who just got these papers saying they are qualified to teach Kashubian in addition to who-knows-how-many other subjects and who teach these lessons just to make money. So these guys are unlucky because they miss a chance to meet the kind of people that our teacher invites in, they miss a chance to go to interesting places. If someone gets a bad teacher, they have worse perspectives from the very start. We were lucky, our teacher is really keen on teaching us something and showing us how Kashubian can be useful in professional life.

A young Sorb doing Sorbian studies is also grateful to his teacher, who shared her love for the language with her students:

**B22M(S):** [...] I was lucky because Ms X was my teacher. She's a wonderful person, full of passion. I liked her classes, she infected me with her enthusiasm. I saw how happy she was because of that.

Another teacher who infected her students with passion and devoted her time to those who were interested in studying is recalled by a Welshman coming from an English-speaking family. This is how he expresses his gratitude to this teacher for developing interest in Welsh:

**C21M(W):** Many people in secondary school developed their interests in Welsh, and they do speak Welsh, and in fact, they learnt Welsh like me. But there are some children who don't take an interest in it. Our Welsh teacher has me as a pupil who was willing to learn. And our relationship was... we became friends actually. She did teach me a lot of things, and she did teach me in Welsh. I mean she is brilliant. She gave me lots of books and things, she invested time in me because she knew I was interested. I want to thank her that I went that far as I had in Welsh. Because without her help, and her support, and her pushing me on, maybe I would never learn Welsh.

According to these young people, a teacher should not be merely a person transferring knowledge, assigning homework and telling how to spell a word in the minority language. A teacher should be a conscious representative of the minority and more – they should sense that they are fulfilling a mission. This is why training minority language teachers is such an important and difficult task. This is how the

above-cited Sorb, a future teacher of Sorbian, describes a kind of teacher he does not want to be:

**B22M(S):** I have seen such kindergartens [*Witaj*], where you could tell they lacked any internal drive or passion to carry on with the project. People working there were aware that their job is not productive. [...] Even among themselves, they [teachers – N. D.-R.] speak some mixed language, with some Sorbian and some German sentences. The children are out of balance because of that. [...] Generally, the project *Witaj* is a good idea. The only question is the staff qualifications. They have to be conscious and committed Sorbs, otherwise it's difficult.

Young Kashubs too often talk about teachers who, not being native speakers of the language, obtain some qualifications for teaching it. This may be a way to keep a job; schools benefit by obtaining state subsidies:

**V20M(K):** In the reality we live in, Kashubian is taught by a Polish teacher or by the school counsellor, who obtained qualifications in an online course and passed a fairly easy exam in basic Kashubian, which is sufficient for teaching in a primary school, where children are the most vulnerable. [...] Such teachers are not educated in the ideological sense, they don't acquire any knowledge about culture or history [...], so they lack knowledge or awareness that Kashubian is a language of communication. They don't think they should develop this, then, because they can see no point. They treat Kashubian as some extra hobby. And they don't understand why they should bother at all.

A frequently discussed topic among the European minorities is whether a minority language teacher should be (only) a specialist in language teaching or whether they should additionally be involved in shaping conscious representatives of the minority culture (Jaffe, 2011). The problem is of key importance, especially that the number of educated native speakers of minority languages who are at the same time aware that their role is decreasing. Language policy focuses merely on training a sufficient number of language teachers to staff newly opened schools. A young teacher of Breton wonders if an indifferent teacher can be successful in teaching the language:

**A25F(B):** [I know] two people who were not engaged, who were not activists or otherwise interested in culture. For them the only link to culture was via the language. On the other hand, their Breton wasn't very good because they only completed the six-month internship to learn it. [...] We laughed at them because we thought that it is necessary to be engaged in some way if you want to be a teacher in a bilingual school. Because you surely have to teach the language but you also have to say something about culture, so if you're not an activist, what is that you can say? You'll teach only the language and show nothing that stands behind it? There is always something behind the language, its history, the place it comes from. When you're a teacher you really have to be certain about choices you're making and be clear about the ideas that you want to transmit.

To young language activists, the idea of teaching a minority language means much more than shaping linguistic competence. It also includes shaping young people. This is what a Welsh activist says without any hesitation, when asked about the most important trait of a good teacher:

**S19M(W):** Enthusiasm. They should be young and open. If you want to talk about what is the most important for the Welsh teacher, I'd say today, at this present time, to me it is not even a question of teaching people Welsh, not a matter of teaching them grammar and words. It is also about teaching the history of Wales.

According to my interlocutors, teachers should not only be engaged. They should also have clearly defined principles and be able to highlight differences between the majority and the minority, in this way strengthening the minority's imagined community (Anderson, 1983).

### ... and the role of parents

Parents' attitudes are also crucially important for the language practices of children: Will the parents show the child that the language it is learning is important? Will they provide encouragement to attend extra classes during which other speakers of this language can be met? Is speaking the minority language important to them, and if they do not know it, do they show respect for it? Some children sent to minority language classes by their parents do not see any purpose of learning: if no one speaks this language at home, learning it is a waste of time which could be otherwise spent on play or some hobby. A student of Breton who was put off learning this language in her childhood and noticed its value only at university talks about the causes of problems with learning Breton in the following way:

**O24F(B):** I think that my dad's mistake was that he forced me to learn Breton without ever having explained to me why he was doing it. And never speaking Breton to me at home. There was a contradiction in all this because I had never heard Breton, despite my father speaking Breton and my grandparents speaking Breton. But still he forced me to attend the classes. And at some point, Breton became to me just like Latin.

A young teacher of Kashubian notes that children who do not understand why they are made to learn Kashubian often feel disadvantaged by having to stay longer hours at school. This in turn may create in them negative attitudes towards the language. This is why the teacher has to make every effort to make classes interesting:

**I22F(K):** [...] well, Kashubian at school takes three additional lessons. Apparently not much, but it makes a difference. And in principle Kashubian is neglected. It is an extra subject and the lessons are typically at the end. Your friends leave school at two o'clock and you have to stay until four because there are lessons of Kashubian.

So as a teacher you have to do your best to encourage the kids to stay because if the classes are boring, we won't persevere.

Teachers should make classes worthwhile, whereas parents should show the child that knowing the language makes sense, which is naturally easier when they themselves are learning it. This is what a Breton secondary school student says about her parents getting engaged in school life – and through this in Breton culture – and also learning the language as many parent of immersion school students do:

**DD16F(B):** Diwan [...] favours the parents' involvement and various activities carried out around the school because it is an association-type of school, [which] acts through volunteers and chains of people. So my parents got involved in the school life. At some point they even started to learn Breton in evening courses. [...] Practically, no parents of any of my schoolmates from Diwan spoke Breton, even though all of them followed more or less the same path of involvement and taking Breton lessons, with varying degrees of success.

Some parents got interested in the language only because their children started to learn it. Thus, sending children to minority language classes can apparently influence language practices at home, as testified by a Welshman:

**C21M(W):** [...] Now when I speak the Welsh language, my mother has a special interest in learning the Welsh language now. But I don't think that she would have wanted to learn Welsh if I couldn't speak it myself.

Not all parents, however, are open-minded about the minority language. Many of them are afraid that being educated in a minority school may negatively impact on their children's future prospects by diminishing their proficiency in the official language. This is what one student of Sorbian observes:

**A18F(S):** Many parents send their Sorbian children to German schools. These children go to German groups despite speaking perfect Sorbian, which is their first language, but [the parents] think that the kids may have some problems later on, which of course isn't true.

Yet another phenomenon can be attested in Kashubia, as this interviewee notes:

**O24F(K):** [...] there are fewer and fewer houses at which Kashubian is spoken. One of the reasons, in my view, is that parents have shifted the duty to teach Kashubian to children onto the school. Another explanation is like this: "My Kashubian is not so good; my child will learn incorrect forms from me." This is partly an excuse and partly just laziness. Some parents are not at ease because they still belong to these generations who felt ashamed of being Kashubian. All this will lead to the situation in which this language won't be useful to these children either. [...] There won't be any conversation [in Kashubian], even when these children grow up, because neither party will know any Kashubian, or they will speak two completely different varieties. After all, the parents who hadn't studied at school know a different language.

The young Kashubian woman above discusses the phenomenon often considered to be the major obstacle hampering communication between those learning the language at school and native speakers who acquired it at home. These ideologies will be discussed in the next chapter. Minority languages are nowadays present in many domains of life, and due to this, young people require language competences in various forms and registers of these languages, unlike the older generation that mostly used the informal variety of the ethnic language. At the same time, there is more than one way of achieving these competences, which explains why the situation of language communities is quite complex in this respect.

# Chapter 3: Young speakers of minority languages

## Problems concerning the modernization and standardization of minority languages

### Dialectical vs. literary forms of a minority language

For a minority language to exist in education, the media, official life and many other spheres, it must be codified and take on a literary form (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006: 102). Having a literary form allows a language to function as more than a dialect and gives it a wider scope than spoken language (Ong, 2002), which in turn helps create supra-local imagined communities focused around the common system (Anderson, 1983). This means that creating a standardized, supra-local version of a minority language has a linguistic and ideological dimension (Ferguson, 2006: 21). An examination of the linguistic planning and policies of European countries and regulations proposed by international institutions (such as the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages) reveals that they focus on providing minority languages with access to spheres which are inseparable from the written form. As such, the codification and modernization of minority languages can delay or even halt the process of linguistic change.

“In the global context, written and unwritten languages fall on two sides of a watershed in terms of expressive power, prestige, cultural capital and institutional protection,” sociolinguist Florian Coulmas (2005: 205) writes, going on to state: “Writing [...] works as a scaffold propping up the construction work in progress and leading the builders to proceed in certain ways rather than others.” Writing brings irreversible change to communities, not just in how they express themselves but to their daily lives, behaviour and values (cf. Goody, 1968; 1986). Writing is the foundation for all cultural institutions (schools, the media, public administration) and day-to-day activities (reading newspapers, making notes, preparing shopping lists, entering information into calendars, etc.). All this means that in the present day, minority languages without a literary form can only be used to a limited extent, becoming confined to increasingly narrow niches which would gradually disappear altogether, since the majority of day-to-day activities would be conducted in the dominant language (Hinton, 2001: 240). Minorities would no longer be self-sufficient and would not meet the criterion of “institutional completeness” in Raymond Breton’s classic theory. Breton noted that the stability of a group is based on the degree of local ties between formal and informal social institutions: the group is stronger and more stable if it includes as many close links as possible (Breton, 1964). By extrapolating this theory to the existence of writing in a minority language functioning as part of the written world, we can say that if

the minority language is able to meet the majority of requirements and become a medium of written as well as oral practice, its speakers will not have to use the official language in its place. The weaker the minority language in a given sphere, the more frequently it gets replaced and the more ties within the group become weaker and destroyed. This is, indeed, because such a minority language does not meet the requirement of functional completeness (Moring, 2007: 20). My interlocutors' statements and school and media practices confirm the importance of writing in their lives and the significant role which can be played by minority languages.

Relatively few European minority languages have a long literary tradition. However, even those that do (including Welsh, cf. Jones, 1998a, and the Sorbian languages, cf. Jentsch, 1999) have mainly been used as oral languages with a high internal diversity. Importantly, the existence of a supra-local written form, identical for all potential users, before the introduction of teaching in the minority language helps to avoid the kind of problems which arise in minority languages that were not standardized until as late as the second half of the twentieth century or early twenty-first century. Users of minority languages whose oral version is notably distinct from the newly determined standardized form frequently feel that the new version has been imposed on them from above; that it has been created somewhere far away by people who don't belong to their community, such as academics, activists or revitalizers (Shohamy, 2006: 63). This standardized form is regarded as a hybrid language, since it has not had the time to evolve and gain support from the community it should belong to. This is the current situation in Brittany and Kashubia, where the codification of the language is accompanied by the emergence of different language ideologies, arising between users of different dialects of the language and people who have learned the minority language in its written form. These ideologies refer to the authenticity of the minority language, the inability to communicate between generations, and to language ownership (Bucholtz, 2003; Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Woolard, 2008; O'Rourke, 2011; Hornsby & Quentel, 2013).

Revitalization processes of minority languages, mainly centred around written practice, require the language to have a literary form. People from a generation brought up in the minority language are frequently only familiar with its oral, dialectal form and unable to read or write the language; when they live side by side with those who learned the standardized form of the minority language at school, online or at courses, this can create an impression of a divide within the minority group. It is easy to divide users of minority languages into those who are "traditional," using an "authentic" language and practicing the "true minority culture" (i.e. people who live in villages and engage in pursuits associated with the "traditional minority culture"), vs. "new" users who haven't been brought up in the language but have acquired it later. The latter frequently live in towns and cities, therefore they are seen as "inauthentic" and their written language has an "artificial" feeling to it. As I will show, these divisions are created by researchers as well as by the minority language speakers themselves, from both native and new groups. It should also be stressed that divisions into the "then," when the minority culture was once alive and thriving, and "now" when it is being revitalized, are



dangerous for minority languages and communities. They need to be analysed in order to understand their origins, interactions and the potential consequences of their preservation.

Most native users of Breton belong to the older generation. Additionally, they have frequently decided not to transmit the language to their children due to its social, cultural and historical burden. Many older Breton speakers use their language only in contacts with friends and neighbours from the same generation and living in the same area, and almost never in the presence of outsiders or even with people who learned Breton at school. The Breton of the older generation is used almost exclusively in its oral form and it is highly dialectal; it marks boundaries between different Breton communities. Breton dialects use many loan words from French, even though the grammar and syntax of the two languages are highly distinct (Jones, 1998a: 321). Meanwhile, schools generally teach the language known as *néo-breton* or new Breton, which has been heavily transformed: it was created using elements of individual dialects with a new world order, simplified mutations and a homogenous pronunciation (Hornsby & Nolan, 2011: 315–316). The language also includes neologisms borrowed from other Celtic languages, in particular Welsh, which were not previously present in Breton (Hornsby, 2005).

Attempts to create a literary form of Kashubian were first made in the second half of the twentieth century (Breza, 2001; Treder, 2005), and the efforts were accelerated and finalized thanks to the introduction of the Polish Act on National Minorities in 2005. Since Kashubian was to be introduced on a wide scale to schools (and on a smaller scale to the media, official and public life), it was necessary to create a standardized form able to replace the highly diverse Kashubian dialects.

In Kashubia, the process of language standardization was even more complicated than in Brittany: at the time when activists started the process, Kashubian was widely regarded as a kind of “bad Polish” which should be eliminated altogether. Members of the older generation, still under the strong influence of this attitude, frequently speak Kashubian only to their peers but don’t know the writing system developed in order to modernize the language; they are afraid of it and don’t understand the underlying rules. They also aren’t familiar with Kashubian neologisms, which – as was the case with Breton – were created by academics to stand in for previously used Polish loan words (Dołowy-Rybińska & Popowska-Taborska, 2015). Children learning Kashubian at school acquire a form of the language different to that spoken at home by their parents and grandparents. Language modernization and linguistic planning lead certain language differences to be erased, certain others to be created. These processes are especially notable during “corpus planning” work – that is, when devising the language’s graphic form and during efforts directed towards the purification, modernization, standardization, stylistic simplification and unification of terminology (Kloss, 1969). The result is a discrepancy between the created literary language and the everyday linguistic practices of different groups (Jaffe, 2011: 207–208). As a consequence, parents frequently do not want to speak Kashubian with their children, claiming that they will pass on “bad,” “incorrect” language. This can lead to the following paradoxical

situation: Kashubian speech communities still exist in certain regions of Kashubia, but children learning their ethnic language at school are excluded from those communities because they use a “different” version of Kashubian which doesn’t reflect local culture. The learned language thus remains the language of school and homework rather than everyday communication.

Let us now examine some of the different language ideologies affecting communities where the standardization process was introduced recently. The first of these may be described as the “inability of different generations to communicate with each other”; this was highlighted by many of my interlocutors from Brittany and Kashubia, such as in the following:

**A25F(B):** For example, when I speak with my grandmother, I don’t always understand what she’s saying. I mean I do understand, but I always have to pay attention, make an effort. She often gives up and switches to French, to my great sadness. Sometimes when I say something to her in Breton, she doesn’t understand.

**AA16M(B):** Completely different. I am generalizing, but for them... the Old Breton people I have talked with, they’ve often told me [...] that it isn’t the same Breton. Straight away. Because for them Breton is something ordinary. And they don’t think there is any need to try hard to understand what someone is saying.

Young Bretons note that the older generation does not make an effort to understand their language. They add that they themselves sometimes do make this effort (which is not, however, always confirmed by my observations), but without the agreement of both sides conversation is not possible. In their opinion, the attitude of older people stems from the fact that they have always treated Breton as a language of conversation in their local community and they have never used the language with anyone from outside this group. This notion arises both from practice and from the conventional discourse that “old” Bretons don’t want to communicate with new speakers. One young Kashubian journalist spoke about native speakers of Kashubian being afraid of people who speak the literary version of the language:

**O24F(K):** And they talked to me in Kashubian, the neighbours, I heard them speaking Kashubian, but suddenly when I turned up at my village with a microphone one day, only a few people agreed to speak to me in the language. The rest are embarrassed, [saying] “we mangle the language,” “we speak wrong,” “we speak differently.” But of course they speak the language perfectly.

The young woman notes the change of attitude in Kashubs. While she spoke Kashubian to them as a member of the community, there were no communication problems. However, when she arrived as a journalist, carrying a microphone, people didn’t want to speak Kashubian to her, claiming that they mangled the language. Similar experiences have been reported by researchers in Brittany: Madeleine Adkins, for instance, arranged to record two native Breton speakers; however, one of the women cancelled at the last minute, claiming that her language was not good enough (Adkins, 2013: 60–61). Much like the people approached by the

Kashubian journalist above, these Breton women believed that the language they used was “common” rather than the “correct,” literary version. They felt that they did not meet the expectations or requirements.

Young people who have learned the minority language also note that their way of speaking differs from the pronunciation of native users, making understanding difficult. A young Kashubian woman reports:

**C21F(K):** My aunt is from near Bytów, I also try talking to her, but she speaks so fast and puts stress on the first syllable, which means she swallows all her vowels and I don’t understand everything. My Kashubian is different, it’s a learned Kashubian, my vocabulary is literary, so I tried talking to my aunt but she also often doesn’t understand me because I don’t have this intuition, I don’t know which words are from the north or the south, I use a general Kashubian, not as specific as my aunt.

She notes that Kashubian speakers who use the language to speak to “their own people” have problems understanding standardized language, since certain words or even accents are unfamiliar. Literary language isn’t tied to a specific place or community. It is assumed that “old,” “native” speakers of minority languages are generally poorly educated and live in rural areas (O’Rourke, Ramallo & Pujolar, 2015: 12) and are unfamiliar with the literary form. They are people who admit to speaking “their own way,” and their pronunciation makes it easy to identify “where they are from.” In contrast, speaking the standardized, literary form of the language renders the speaker anonymous and detached from a specific geographical and cultural context. It is “from nowhere” (Woolard, 2008: 304). That’s why those speakers are frequently rejected as members of the language community. By being prevented from speaking with native users of the minority language and having limited contact with others who have learned it, young people have little opportunity to practice the language.

Directly tied to this is the linguistic ideology of “authenticity.” Notably, it is applied both by native speakers of minority languages and by people who have acquired those languages later (cf. O’Rourke, 2011). Researchers (Bucholtz, 2003; Bucholtz & Hall, 2004) distinguish between “authenticity” and “authentication” – a reaffirmation of the declared identity of minority language users. While “authenticity” is an innate characteristic and results from predetermined power structures of ancestry, roots and transmission (Bucholtz, 2003: 400–403), “authentication” is a process of negotiating social practices. The status of a given language user is not permanent and can change, evolve or become bolstered as they convince people they interact with that their membership of the minority group is credible and true. Given favourable conditions, language learners may be accepted as “authentic” members of the language minority. However, before this can happen, they tend to spend a long time being excluded.

The first stage is defining which language is “authentic.” As we’ve already seen, this can be problematic, since the category of “authenticity” may be construed differently by learners (as the language of people they grew up with) as by native

speakers (as the form described as correct by language committees). This discrepancy was frequently mentioned by my interlocutors:

**A25F(B):** For example, my grandmother says – and I find it hurtful: “You speak proper Breton.” So I say, “What? But my Breton is awful...” But for her school Breton is proper Breton, even though it’s the other way round. But she can’t understand that.

Another feature of “authentic” language mentioned by young Bretons is accent, which reveals who learned the language at school and at home:

**O24F(B):** [...] I sometimes feel really stupid when I speak Breton with older people. Because I use book Breton. And when I speak with them, I think I have a horrible French accent, because they have a Breton accent, and I feel stupid, and awful, I’m embarrassed and afraid that I speak with a French accent, that they won’t understand me.

Embarrassment about their own accent and fear of not being understood are common to my young Breton interlocutors. Divisions between “authentic” vs. “new” Bretons are reinforced by scholars writing from ideologist positions, who regard the French accent as evidence of the “artificiality” of new Breton (cf. Madeg, 2010 and discussion in Hornsby, 2014). Meanwhile the belief that the literary language is a “better” form of the minority language can lead to people no longer interacting in the language. The following young Kashubian woman, learning Kashubian at school, explains that her mother, a native Kashubian speaker, didn’t want to speak the language to her daughter for fear of transmitting the “wrong” form of language:

**W18F(K):** [My parents] didn’t speak a lot of Kashubian to us. Just with each other. So then I started learning Kashubian at school, and one day I came home and said, “I want to do my final exams in Kashubian.” Then we started speaking Kashubian. But at one point mom said that I speak a different Kashubian to her. [...] it’s true that at school they teach a literary Kashubian, very nice. And at home it’s a bit different. So my mom said it didn’t make any sense [to speak Kashubian with me].

The young woman uses the term “very nice” to describe the literary language, most likely because she is unfamiliar with other terminology. But the term itself says a lot about people’s attitudes to language forms: spoken language includes a lot of Polish loan words and users frequently resort to code-switching (Eastman, 1992; Muysken, 1995; Woolard, 2004) in both directions between the minority and dominant language, frequently without even realizing it (Rampton, 1995). Meanwhile the language young people learn at school is seen as nice, correct, and – most importantly – distinct from the dominant language. Rosina Lippi-Green (2012) describes this perception of language forms as a “standard language ideology,” based on the belief that local varieties of a language have a lower value than standard language, which can lead to their rejection. Standardization of language is necessary if it is to cover all spheres of life; however, when this happens, it is imposed on all users as “correct,” “proper” or “obligatory/conventional,” which can

lead to conflict within the group and mean that language used by older generations loses its value (cf. Bourdieu, 1991: 48–49). In this context, it is interesting to hear from young people who are equally fluent in “native” and “literary” forms of the language. One young Kashubian woman says:

**H24F(K):** Naturally, we all – living somewhere in the countryside – feel that this literary language has nothing to do with our Kashubian language, that it is a creation of some eggheads who live elsewhere and write about it. [...] although now the objections against it have diminished. People are starting to understand that there is a need to create one language out of all these dialects. But there is still a situation like this: you read a book, you are from Kashubia, you speak Kashubian, but you don’t understand. My mom or my dad never spoke like this. They speak in this real Kashubian and they would never say it like this. Nobody would.

This young woman is clearly talking about feeling attached to the form of language used at home, which she describes as “real.” She also contrasts the literary language to this “our language” that she identifies with. At the same time, she is aware that a standardized form is necessary if the language is to survive. The statement “nobody actually speaks that way” is, according to Fishman, evidence that standardized, written language should not only be taught but also propagated and subject to deliberate action (Fishman, 1991: 346). This is because the function of the standardized language is not just to preserve it for future generations. It also aims to forge a new kind of identity for people belonging to the language minority. This is no longer a local identity rooted in a specific place and surroundings but a supra-local identity. A standardized minority language thus becomes a symbol of a supra-local ethnocultural identity (Fishman, 1968: 6), bringing together people who otherwise do not know one another and do not belong to the same community, but who can identify as a group through a shared language, even if this is only symbolic.

In Wales, such differences and divisions are entrenched in social memory, but Welsh people are striving to overcome them. A teenager from South Wales studying in the north describes the differences between the language of the north (used every day) and that of the south, mainly taught at schools:

**G19F(W):** A lot of people from South Wales, their written Welsh is very, very good. Because they are taught it in a classroom, so their Welsh will be quite correct. But their spoken Welsh won’t be very good because they don’t practice it. Whereas, I think, in North Wales, their spoken language will be very, very strong and much used but their written Welsh perhaps may not be as polished I suppose as that of people from South Wales because people from South Wales would be concentrated just on written Welsh. I don’t know if I should say that... but I think in North Wales it is a little bit more natural, perhaps because it is spoken every day, but it doesn’t mean... I know personally that my spoken Welsh is much more correct than that of a lot of people from North Wales. I noticed that straight away because... it is hard to explain it in English, but [...] their spoken Welsh is just a traditional type of Welsh, typical for North Wales. You know I was teased a little bit... but I don’t

mind because I know that the one I use is correct, and they say that my Welsh is artificial. But it doesn't mean I think they are worse than me or that I am better than them. That's how it goes, I suppose.

In contrast to Brittany or Kashubia, in Wales the differences in how language users are perceived are frequently based in categories of correctness, rooted in language skills having been obtained at home or school. The language as learned at home is regarded as “natural,” even though people learning it at school tend to pay closer attention to using correct grammatical forms. At the same time, note that what this young woman calls “correctness” may be seen by others as evidence of the language being “artificial.” Her words emanate a hidden conflict concerning “language ownership,” a notion with links to language competence, the concept of “native” language users and using the “correct” form of the minority language (cf. O'Rourke, 2011). The conflict lies in the question of who is more entitled to see themselves as a Welsh speaker: some people believe it should be anyone who speaks Welsh, while others insist that the minority language “belongs” only to those who learned it at home. The danger of establishing such a division, frequently combined with judgement of the competence of people learning the language, is that it can lead to language anxiety (O'Rourke, 2011) if people are told their language doesn't sound “natural” (Woolard, 2008: 315). One young Welsh man who learned the language at school says that he is frequently judged harshly by native speakers:

**C21M(W):** I think there are two different groups of Welsh-speakers: those who speak it at home, and those who don't, who learnt it. And I think that those who speak Welsh as a first language in the Welsh community do think they have a monopoly on the Welsh language and they do think they are original Welsh speakers and that they are more Welsh than everybody else in Wales.

The monopoly he talks about involves a conviction about native users having an exclusive right to the language. At the same time, given that their numbers are decreasing, they are becoming isolated as this ownership shifts to people who speak the literary language, which has a higher prestige (cf. the situation in Galicia, O'Rourke & Ramallo, 2013). In Wales, the question of “ownership” of language is about more than just a division of native speakers vs. learners; the other distinction involves historical geography, the split between the Welsh-speaking north and non-Welsh-speaking south. At this level, people from south Wales often feel scorned by their counterparts from the north. A young woman from the south who now studies at Bangor in north Wales says:

**G19F(W):** I realized in my first year that lots of North Welsh would not speak Welsh to me just because I have a different accent and they think I can't speak Welsh properly. So, I think, it depends where are you from, and it depends on your attitude as well. [...] I think it is the accent more than anything that differentiates people a bit.

Initiatives pertaining to a minority language, including the propagation of its literary version, affect how the local vs. standard language are perceived. One young Kashubian woman describes the process as follows:

**O24F(K):** The Kashubian [from my village] and the Kashubian from Gdańsk<sup>28</sup> are two completely different worlds. Because here, from the Gdańsk perspective, we are working to maintain, popularize this Kashubian. And back there, at home, that was simply a way of life. [...] My mom, when she saw these rhymes [written in Kashubian], she could understand what I was saying, [...] that wasn't a problem, but when she saw those strange letters... Because no one read Kashubian back there. Why would they? They didn't write in Kashubian, and they certainly didn't read it. And it was reading Kashubian that we were taught at school. And that totally changed how Kashubian is perceived.

“Ownership” of a language can be read as a metaphor for having control over the language and its situation. In this context, the statement “that changed how Kashubian is perceived” can be understood as the language gaining a new dimension, via engagement in the fight for its status and development. In turn, this means that the group which has contributed to this is convinced that it can control the production and distribution of language resources and determine power relationships (cf. Heller & Martin-Jones, 2001). However, is maintaining such divisions justified from the perspective of the young generation, who will be the core of the language minority in the future? Let us next examine the fluidity of the boundaries between people who might be classified as “native” speakers, “new” speakers and “learners.”

## “Ideal types” of young users of minority languages

The wide range of ways in which individuals relate to minority languages, and the vast variation in the language skills of the people trying to use them, have led researchers to posit more and more categories. Their objective in so doing is to try to organize the complicated reality in order to examine the mechanisms at play and identify the most important elements of each group. This leads to the definition of “ideal types” (Weber, [1949] 2017) of minority language users. Colette Grinevald and Michel Bert (2011) proposed a typology of speakers of endangered languages based on indicators such as language competence, the sociolinguistic situation of the group, use of the language and attitude towards it, self-assessment of skills, and linguistic insecurity. This led to the definition of several types of language users: “fluent speakers”; “semi-speakers”; “terminal speakers” who only have a passive knowledge of the language; “rememberers” whose language

---

28 Gdańsk, one of Poland's major cities, is the capital of Kashubia and the seat of Kashubian institutions which create and disseminate the literary version of the language.

has been pushed into the edges of existence but there is hope for its resurrection; “ghost speakers” who deny knowing the language but are familiar with it to some extent; “neo-speakers” / “new speakers”; and “last speakers” who haven’t transmitted the language and so it will disappear upon their passing (Grinevald & Bert, 2011: 49–52). Although this classification is important from the cognitive perspective, it is too intricate to describe the young speakers of several European minority languages, even those in different situations. In my research, I classified my interlocutors into three key groups: “native speakers,” “learners” and “new speakers.” I will show that even such broad group definitions turn out to be limited because the categories are too rigid to classify individuals whose language practice is highly complex. Additionally, young speakers of minority languages move between the categories over the years. As such, the discussion below is only meant to be indicative and serve organizational purposes.

### “Native speakers”

Joshua A. Fishman (1991) believes that family and the closest community provide the best guarantee of a minority language’s preservation. If a child doesn’t learn the language at home, then the situation will not be rescued by school or organized revitalization processes. His view is shared by native speakers of minority languages, especially those living in regions where the language is the main tool in daily communication. Here is how the situation is described by a young woman from Upper Lusatia:

**S17F(S):** If families don’t transmit the language to their children, which is already happening because other kids my age don’t speak Sorbian even though both parents are Sorbian, then Sorbian school won’t be able to help. They’ll learn something, but they won’t transmit what they learn. It doesn’t work. And so the older I get, the more I think that if someone Sorbian starts a family with a German partner, they must talk to them and educate them.

For this young woman, the situation seems clear: a “Sorbian family” is one which speaks Sorbian and where children grow up as native speakers of Sorbian. She doubts that someone who learns the language at school will become sufficiently fluent to pass it on. This view is typical of the majority of native speakers, who believe that a different way of transmitting their language cannot provide competence sufficient for it to be used in everyday life. She finishes her statement by making a reference to “a German partner,” since the phenomenon of ethnically and linguistically mixed couples is increasing not just in Lusatia (cf. Faska, 1998) but among all European minorities. This leads us to the question: will children born in a mixed-language family be native users of the minority language, and what does the category of “nativeness” hinge on? Researchers have long been pointing out that classifying language speakers into native (sometimes known as natural or traditional) vs. new is misleading, especially with respect to minority languages and their complicated backgrounds (Sallabank, 2013: 13–14). To simplify, it is assumed



that native users of minority languages are those individuals who acquired the language at home. If we return to the statements by young representatives of minority cultures concerning their language practices, it turns out that even those criteria can be elusive. Children’s attitude to the language and their competence and inclination to use it may vary depending on a wide range of factors (e.g. Do both parents come from families which spoke the minority language? Was the minority language used at home only or also in the community? Does the family live in a region inhabited by the minority? What is the attitude of speakers of the majority language to the minority? Have the children been educated in the minority language? Are there media sources available in the minority language, and are they consumed in the home?). For example, a young woman from a Welsh-speaking family living in a Welsh-speaking region says:

**I19F(W):** [My younger sister] is one of those who doesn’t speak Welsh with her friends. She is doing more activities outside of [the Welsh medium] school. It is not only that she doesn’t speak Welsh, she doesn’t read Welsh either. Her academic studies in Welsh are just crap. She doesn’t understand why. I try to explain it to her: “when you don’t practice something you’ll never be good at it.” But now she is angry and thinks that the Welsh teacher hates her. I say “no, it is because you don’t practice it at all.”

It turns out that even when transmission of the minority language through the generations has not been interrupted and the standardization process has been gradual, when young people learn the language from their parents and through the community and they are also taught in the language at school, they can still have problems in reaching a high degree of language competence allowing them to use it in different spheres. The following young woman from Lusatia points out that most speakers of Sorbian use colloquial language, leading to its gradual degradation:

**A18F(S):** If you learn to speak Sorbian at home, you only use colloquial language. You often use words which could be replaced by others to sound better. When I hear older friends speaking, it definitely sounds nicer than my language. I pay more attention to it now so that I use the dual form,<sup>29</sup> but if you’re not studying Sorbian you don’t pay attention to it.

The phenomenon she mentions is typical not just of Sorbian but of all minority languages which have remained marginalized for many years and which have been surrounded by more powerful languages. An important consequence of such language contact is code switching and “translanguaging” (García & Li Wei, 2014), as well as words and phrases being borrowed from one language into the

---

29 The Sorbian languages have “dual number” forms, referring to two people or objects (as distinct from the singular and plural); these forms are no longer used in other West Slavic languages like Polish.

other, usually from the more powerful to the weaker language (cf. Edwards, 1994a; Białystok, 2001). Although it is now believed that translanguaging is a positive trend, code switching has always been described pejoratively. That's certainly how it is perceived by communities which want to preserve their ethnic boundaries. A student of Sorbian describes the problem of mixing languages for the preservation of the minority language:

**O21F(S):** This is what bothers or upsets me: that people aren't consciously trying to speak better Sorbian. I mean words which are known in Sorbian but used in German. *Koch-wać* or *lüft-wać*.<sup>30</sup> It doesn't have to be this way.

Many young users of minority languages say openly that their competence levels in spoken and written language are not the same. Given that in everyday life the majority of texts are written in the dominant language necessary for official business, they extend this to university work, because they find it easier to create complex forms in the dominant language:

**H25F(S):** When I am working, when I am writing about our project, I realized that I would find it easier to write in German – all those phrases you use because you've heard them at university, and wrote assignments and the final project in German. That's what I think sometimes and how I explain it. It would be easier for me, but I then stop myself and say: "No, I really want to write this in Sorbian."

This means that writing in the minority language does not just require the ability; it also requires a high degree of awareness and determination, since it involves difficulties not present when writing in the dominant language. A young native Welsh speakers explains:

**B20M(W):** I feel much more confident in speaking Welsh, definitely. Here I had an option if I want to do it [study] in Welsh or in English and I decided to do it in Welsh. Because it's just something, I feel much more confident in it. Only, I prefer to read in English. Because... I can't remember the last I time I read a Welsh book. Everything I read is all in English. Because, it's again, I don't think the Welsh language has got an exciting presence in literature and stuff like that. So, I definitely feel more comfortable speaking in Welsh but I feel equal if not even more confident writing in English. Cause a lot of my English that I actually use is a sort of sophisticated.

The concept of native speakers of a minority language is the subject of a book edited by Neriko Musha Doerr (2009: 8–9); she writes in her introduction that the concept is a type of language ideology based on Herder's vision of a perfect minority language, which does not in fact exist. This ideology is based on the belief that being a native speaker automatically means the person has a higher level of language skills in all domains in which they use the language, therefore has a

---

30 Words combining a German root with a Sorbian suffix.

“complete and possibly innate competence” (Pennycook, 1994: 175). Meanwhile, apart from a few individuals from Catholic Upper Lusatia and North Wales, hardly any of my interviewees would say without hesitation that the minority language is their stronger language. In certain cases, young people have been brought up in families which used the minority language alongside the dominant language, yet they haven’t gained the ability to actively speak it. Others, including some quoted above, state that although the minority language is their native language, they nevertheless find it easier to read and write in the dominant language.

Young people, especially those studying the language, are frequently aware of the many mistakes they (or people around them) make when speaking the minority language. All dilemmas discussed above confirm that the concept of native speakers conceived of as ideal users of a minority language is highly imprecise and even misleading.

Another problem which arises when discussing the category of native speakers as those who can be held up as a model is the question of the assumed duration of this status. It is generally presumed that people whose parents spoke to them in a given language will always know the language. This doesn’t allow for the possibility that language skills can shift, to the detriment of one’s native language. Here a young Kashubian woman talks about how long-term separation from the minority language can give rise to problems in speaking it, even for people brought up in the language:

**B24F(K):** I speak it [Kashubian] fairly naturally. But the longer I spend away from people I can speak to, the harder I find it to switch.

Many of my interlocutors who declare themselves to be native speakers of their respective minority language admit that their siblings, brought up by the same parents in the same environment, don’t speak the language. Using the minority language depends on many factors, such as whether the person was a first child, circumstances under which they grew up, social circles and even political views. A young man from Wales who studied Welsh and now works in the language says:

**K25M(W):** I don’t think they [my siblings] are even confident in their Welsh language, they are much more confident speaking English. So I think that’s why they use their stronger language. I am really lucky that I went to university with Welsh people. I work with people who are very nationalist, I guess you can say, where the language is respected and promoted. And they don’t. So that affected me and them too.

This is echoed by a young Kashubian woman whose brother – brought up at the same home – doesn’t speak Kashubian, even though he understands the language:

**B24F(K):** I have a brother. He works at an office, he’s five years older than me and he’s an example of someone who could have no ties to the region, because his attitude is... that it doesn’t really interest him. He understands when someone speaks Kashubian to him, but he doesn’t really speak it himself, and I don’t know why.

We can see that being a native speaker is not equivalent to the individual using the minority language. First of all, currently all people who speak a minority language are bilingual and can easily use the dominant language. Second of all, minority languages are in a weaker position than the dominant one, so it's easier to choose the latter. This is why, with the exception of people living in close communities where using the minority language is easy, choosing the minority language must be a conscious decision even for native speakers. According to a young man from Wales:

**V20M(W):** But sometimes [even being native speaker] you have to make a conscious decision, to demand a form in Welsh and things like that. Although it is something quite relatively small. You know, it's a conscious decision, but it's a personal decision to live through the medium of Welsh.

The following young woman admits that for her Welsh and English are equivalent, and that she does not usually think about which one she is using. And so she often speaks English when she could be speaking Welsh, which disappoints her. She only minds herself when she is with a group of people working with Welsh:

**P16F(W):** When I am at a meeting in a Welsh organization, when I am with *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* people I may say something in English, and then I feel bad. Like "oh no, what am I saying." But I am with my friends, I do not notice it. So I guess, it is more emphasized when you are doing something through the Welsh language.

The division into native speakers vs. people who learned the minority language outside the home places subjects in a specific either/or perspective, of either native status (having an inherited culture) or acquisition (entering the group from the outside). Such a division can be useful if it is seen purely as a research category; however, if it becomes entrenched, it can carry tangible consequences for each group. It marks a boundary between individuals who are entitled to use the minority language or feel they are genuine members of a given community, vs. those who are not (Kroskrity, 2000). As such, it serves as another type of distinction between people who speak the language well (naturally and with little effort) and those who do so less well (with affect and an accent). We can hear how deeply these simplifications and the resulting views of the community are entrenched by listening to people who play an active role in maintaining and preserving the minority language. One young woman who speaks Kashubian at home, works in Kashubian-language media and has no links to any organized Kashubian groups has this to say:

**H24F(K):** They do it naturally, without any pressure or requirement, but they do it better, in that they speak better Kashubian than people from Gdańsk who learned the language. The difference is that people from Gdańsk speak Kashubian, there is even pressure on them to speak Kashubian, but they often switch to Polish. And people from rural areas also switch to Polish but... I don't know how to say it, but for them it's more natural.

These “people from Gdańsk” are Kashubian activists – individuals who have made an effort to learn the language and want to speak it wherever possible, which is sometimes taken by less engaged Kashubs as an “ostentatiously imposing their views on others.” I have frequently encountered complaints that those people do not speak Kashubian out of a love for the language but rather for personal gain. This serves to bolster the division into groups which are entitled to use the language and those which are not. It is made all the more striking when people who grew up speaking the minority language describe their relationship with the language as highly emotion-driven, while at the same time denying people who learned the language later this relationship. According to a young woman from Lusatia:

**M25F(S):** [...] when you're speaking Sorbian, you're always speaking to someone you know. Either you're friends, or you've known them a long time. [...] For me, German is the language of university study. Sorbian is my everyday language, family and friends.

A Sorbian student puts it even more bluntly:

**A18F(S):** German is cold for me. When I am speaking Sorbian, I am speaking from the heart, but when I am speaking German, it's from the head. I learned German quite late, not until when I was at kindergarten when I was about five years old.

The relationship she describes with the language puts it alongside feelings, friendships, emotions and relationships. The dominant language is placed on the side of learning and formal relationships. Native speakers of a minority language usually find it is easier to express themselves in it and present a “true image” of their personality. A teenager from Wales says:

**Y16F(W):** In Welsh is easier because I can express myself in Welsh easier because it's my first language. And also, I think when they know Welsh they get to know the real me easier, and I get to know real them because they also speak Welsh as their first language.

Many of my interlocutors state that people who lived in an area where a minority language is used frequently do not realize how endangered the language is, and therefore have no concerns using the dominant language beyond the community. They also often do not think there is any point in fighting for the language. A teenager studying at a secondary school in Wales says:

**H16M(W):** In my area, everybody speaks Welsh more or less. [...] So it is not something we think about as a problem. We don't feel that the Welsh language is dying. It tends to be indifferent. In my Sixth Form, I don't really need to speak English because all of my friends speak Welsh. The problem with Welsh is something from outside, that is, in the rest of Wales. And we feel strongly about language. We don't so much go out and do things, protest because it is not seen as a problem here.

A young man from Upper Lusatia notes that it wasn't until he started working at a Sorbian institution that he realized his own responsibility for the language and its form:

**G25M(S):** I speak Sorbian at home, at work. I prefer speaking Sorbian than German. I find it easier, but I have to admit that I have to pay attention to make sure I am speaking pure Sorbian. [...] I also noticed that since I've started working here, I pay closer attention to my language. It pays off more than when I spend my whole day speaking Sorbian. I work harder on it in private, try to speak more fluently.

In contrast with people who don't have to think about the minority language, people who have learned it are making a constant effort to use it and are often more aware of the value of the language. When home transmission of a minority language is weakened, it is individuals who learn it as a second language and want to use it who will determine the success of revitalization initiatives. As such, their exclusion from speech communities and the trivialization of the value of their language can damage the minority language's chances of survival.

### “Learners”

Young people who have not learned the minority language at home from parents or grandparents but are learning it by themselves or at school can be classified in the broad and varied category of “minority language learners.” The category includes people who feel positive and motivated about learning the language, but also those who have been forced into it by their parents or by circumstances. Some reach a high level of linguistic competence, while others struggle to understand even simple sentences. Some find a group which helps them practice the language and gradually start identifying with it, while others abandon learning after a while and never go on to using the language. Since the boundaries of the category are fluid and individuals rarely remain ascribed to it permanently, I would like to base its defining characteristics on statements made by young people who belong to this group and would describe themselves as such, by those who encounter learners on a daily basis, and by those who have learned the minority language to a sufficient degree to perceive themselves and be perceived as new speakers. I will use all these statements to outline the kinds of problems encountered by young people learning minority languages and the conclusions which can be drawn from this.

First and foremost, individuals who start learning a minority language as a foreign language or heritage language<sup>31</sup> have a different, less emotional attachment

---

31 A heritage language is one learned at home (passively or actively), but due to circumstances never fully developed. Individuals who identify with a given minority may choose to start learning the heritage language in adulthood (cf. Valdés, 2005; Polinsky & Kagan, 2007).

to it and they acquire it differently. It is not a language they use to express their thoughts, at least not at the beginning. Furthermore, even if they grow up surrounded by the minority language to a lesser or greater degree, their problems learning it are akin to those involved in learning a foreign language. A young teacher of Kashubian talks about problems experienced by primary school students who are starting to learn the language at school:

**I22F(K):** Now let's not kid ourselves, the truth is that those children [...] don't speak Kashubian at home with their parents. But where I teach, those kids understand everything in Kashubian. Because their parents and grandparents speak Kashubian with one another, and sometimes to the kids, too, but they don't respond to their parents in Kashubian. [...] And when I speak to them in Kashubian, they understand, but they don't want to respond in Kashubian. And I see a growing language barrier, like there is with a foreign language, like English or German. For them to say something in Kashubian, they really need to push themselves. They need a dictionary and their book to make sure they write things correctly, because they are afraid of making a mistake. And the way I see it, I think the way things are going, is that we will have to teach this language as a foreign one.

The problem I hear most frequently from young people learning a minority language is the negative attitudes of people around them (among both native speakers of the minority language, and speakers of the dominant language) to the way the learners use the language. They mention various language ideologies discussed above. A young Breton woman who studied in an immersive Diwan school in Brittany talks about the reasons she had trouble speaking Breton to native Breton speakers:

**U25F(B):** I met a person once with whom I could speak Breton. But every time I made a mistake – even not in grammar but in spelling, this person corrected me saying: “your parents are from here so you should pronounce this word like you pronounce it in this region and not as you said.” It blocked my conversation totally; I couldn't say another word in Breton.

Here we see a reference to the ideology of “authenticity” of the minority language: its users should be from “somewhere” and speak a specific variant of the language, situating it in the cultural and geographical sphere, rather than the literary variant which separates them from the territory and language continuity (Woolard, 2008). Faced with constant criticism and having their pronunciation continually corrected, young people prefer to switch to the dominant language which they speak more confidently without exposing themselves. A conviction that the language of native speakers is the “genuine” minority language and learners will always speak it “badly” also gets assimilated by the learners themselves. This can undermine their confidence in their abilities and their chances of becoming members of the minority language community. One secondary school student who has been learning Kashubian for three years says:

**Y18M(K):** I don't think someone who has learned Kashubian at school will ever, however hard they try, speak it as perfectly as someone who has been speaking Kashubian since birth. Kashubian is rarely encountered among people of my generation. Very few young people speak pure Kashubian. They either speak pure Polish, or Polish mixed with Kashubian.

The teenager stresses the impossible task of learners reaching a sufficient level of competence ("never"), although he does meet with a group of young people who have learned Kashubian by themselves and use it every day. In his view, someone who has learned Kashubian from their parents (as he says "since birth") speaks "perfect" and "pure" Kashubian; however, this is contradicted by sociolinguistic research which reveals the extent of the influence of Polish on dialectic variants of Kashubian (cf. Popowska-Taborska, 1998; this also applies to other minority languages such as Breton, cf. Hornsby, 2005). However, the power of ideologies is such, and they are so deeply entrenched, that they are believed to be true regardless of evidence to the contrary.

A young man from Lusatia talks about his dejection at constantly being corrected, discussing language practices of German-speakers learning Sorbian:

**B22M(S):** [...] there's no point in schools only focusing on the fact that it should be "č" instead of "c" or "f" instead of "w". Of course, spelling is important, but we shouldn't be putting off students by pointing out their spelling mistakes. They should at least be speaking Sorbian.

In my conversations with Welsh people, I frequently encountered the problem of the ideology of language "ownership," on the one hand, and the negative influence of fluent Welsh speakers on learners, on the other hand. This young university student talks about the attitude of certain Welsh speakers towards learners:

**J19F(W):** [...] I think that more and more people are not confident about the quality of their Welsh. They are more conscious of it. I think a lot of Welsh people are very Welsh and they think they speak perfect Welsh, and they are very judgmental of other people's Welsh. So if someone who was not that confident in Welsh, they can't say their Welsh is brilliant. Let's say if someone did not speak Welsh at home like other people who did. Then they feel intimidated by the other person, and they won't feel confident enough to speak Welsh even though their Welsh is nearly perfect. They just don't feel confident in doing it. I think a lot of people are intimidated by those Welsh people who are very critical as far as the quality of other people's Welsh.

Native speakers' belief that their Welsh is the correct and only "genuine" variant of Welsh means that they point out mistakes made by learners (mainly concerning vocabulary and accent) without realizing that they make mistakes themselves (mainly grammatical) and that perfect fluency isn't necessary to communicate in the language. Their attitude frequently means that learners of Welsh are afraid to speak and generally choose to speak English when talking to native speakers. This



is all the more because Welsh-speakers are often hostile to learners speaking their language:

**Z16M(W):** [...] when I was younger and tried to speak Welsh, but then everyone was just like that “oh, why are you speaking Welsh? Just speak English, it’s easier.” Even if I found it hard to speak Welsh, I wanted to try. There was one boy who spoke Welsh, and I talked to him in Welsh but he couldn’t understand why I struggled so much and why I didn’t just speak English with him.

This boy says that it wasn’t until he met girls who were highly motivated to speak Welsh and to include him into a group using the language at school that he overcame the barrier and started making progress. He adds that had it not been for them, he probably would have given up speaking Welsh altogether, even though he studies at a Welsh-language school. The crushing fear of saying something wrong is mentioned by almost all individuals who learn a minority language outside the home. In Kashubia, many young people say that they are afraid of speaking the language not just with people who have started learning it at school, but even with those who grew up “alongside” Kashubian – whose parents and grandparents spoke the language to each other but only Polish to their children:

**I22F(K):** I also didn’t speak Kashubian for a long time, until I was in secondary school when I opened up and started answering in Kashubian. My brothers are trying a bit now, but they also [have] this language barrier, they’re afraid. Because sometimes they’ll get something muddled, say something wrong, so immediately they say, “I won’t speak Kashubian, I’d rather just say it in Polish.”

Another young Kashubian woman who also started speaking Kashubian occasionally says that her siblings haven’t been able to overcome this fear:

**NDR:** *Do your siblings also speak Kashubian?*

**W18F(K):** “Reluctantly” is not really the right word. They say, “We can’t speak Kashubian well so we won’t speak at all.” But my sisters also say that they won’t speak because they can’t, and if someone speaks [Kashubian], they tell them to come to me because I speak perfectly and I can say everything.

A similar situation involving siblings who for some reason haven’t reached sufficient language competence and are afraid to speak the minority language is described by a young Breton woman:

**N23F(B):** I have an older brother who also went to Diwan, but only to *college* [middle school]. And he doesn’t speak at all, because he’s afraid of making mistakes. It’s a shame, but he is too afraid to speak.

This fear of using the minority language in practice is also found in families where one parent speaks the minority language but doesn’t consistently use the language when speaking to their children. This means that although young

people understand a lot (their knowledge of the minority language is passive), they cannot get themselves to use the language, even if they are learning it at school:

**I22F(S):** [...] I know people where one of the two [parents] speaks Sorbian, but doesn't pass it on to their children. It's like that with my boyfriend, he understands Sorbian, but not everything, and he's afraid to speak. Even though his mother is a native speaker, his father is German.

Young people who started learning the minority language at school and who have no opportunities to speak it outside the education context frequently associate the language with just a single, school-centred type of communication. As a result learners don't even attempt to use the minority language in other situations. Statements similar to that made by the young Breton man (below) can be found in Kashubia, Lusatia (for students from German-speaking families) and Wales, especially people living in English-speaking areas:

**J21M(B):** Because my friends and I learned Breton at school, for a long time I thought that everyone learns Breton at school and that it's just the language of school. So I didn't really see much point in speaking Breton beyond school. Even with friends at school, we rarely spoke Breton outside lessons.

People who have no opportunities to speak the minority language outside school frequently lack self-confidence. A Breton teenager notes the difference between people who only use Breton at school and those who have contact with the language outside the education context:

**LL17M(B):** Well... I think the problem is... I have never, for example, since I was young, had an opportunity to speak Breton beyond school. And it's noticeable, because you can see the difference: those who feel comfortable with Breton are those who spoke Breton with parents, with friends...

Speaking a language requires belonging to a group for which the language is the main tool of communication. This is echoed by another Breton teenager. Although her entire education has been at an immersive school, she claims that speaking the minority language is unnatural for students and that it requires constant effort and self-control:

**X16F(B):** Normally we are supposed to use it [Breton language] here all the time. But we don't do so because with our parents and so on... there are some who speak with their parents in Breton but we don't. And we are not in the habit of speaking Breton, so we choose French. Even if I like to speak Breton, it doesn't come just like that, naturally. Well, maybe yes, but I can't imagine speaking Breton just like that...

The problem of the minority language being limited to school is also raised by many Welsh teenagers who learned the language at school:

**R20M(W):** Cardiff is a very English-speaking area. If you went to a Welsh language school, only sort of 5% of children there are from Welsh speaking homes. The problem with the Welsh language is [that] there are not many opportunities outside of the classroom to speak Welsh. So it is a very in-school thing you do. And the kids in school don't actually speak Welsh.

Sociolinguistic research conducted in Wales confirms that outside the family, social groups are the most important for getting over the barrier of using the minority language (Morris, 2014). Another teenager from Wales describes the negative attitude he encountered as a learner. It put him off, and – as he admits himself – he didn't speak Welsh while he was still at school:

**S19M(W):** Because it was not a cool thing for me, it is something like outside thing. Because I am coming from an area where not many people speak Welsh and most of them are old people, and so when young people see you speak Welsh they think it is uncool, they think it makes no sense. They ask you why you speak Welsh. Here you speak Welsh only in the classroom, and outside of a class, it is always in English. It is very dominant.

However, today he is a Welsh language activist. I asked him what changed to make him open up to Welsh. He said:

**S19M(W):** I left school [laughs]. I went to work in a hospital for a year, and I needed to speak to old people, to patients. And I really saw that yes, it is really useful, this language, you know, it's a communication tool, and it can be an advantage to speak Welsh. I learnt Welsh at school, I just did not use it because when in school you needed to fit in. And we thought that using Welsh is uncool. So I had this ability, but I became more fluent since I left school.

A language which children only use at school may seem to them to be artificial and meaningless. They have no motivation to learn it sufficiently well to take it beyond the school walls. They rarely have the opportunity to discover for themselves that speaking the minority language makes sense – that the minority language can be a genuinely useful communication tool. Why is that? More than anything, as indicated by my interlocutors and my own observations, because for young people the minority language is reserved for use in designated spaces, which means they do not gain confidence because they simply have no opportunities to use it. When I asked young people when they have the opportunity to speak the minority language, only a few from North Wales and most from Upper Lusatia answered that the minority language is a part of their daily lives. My Sorbian interviewees state that they only use German for “official” activities, such as the media, seeing the doctor, occasionally playing sport. It should be added, however, that this only applies to individuals who learned the minority language at home and live in close-knit language communities, rather than those who only learn it at school. German-speaking school friends of my Sorbian interlocutors admit openly that they never use Sorbian, even when they are with other Sorbs. All young people who learn the

minority language outside the home mentioned the lack of opportunities to use the language. A secondary school student from Brittany explains when she has the chance to speak Breton:

**B17F(B):** Mainly during *fest-noz*.<sup>32</sup> [...] yes, it's mainly these kinds of meetings. For example, when I'm at a demonstration, then I speak more Breton... apart from that... the problem is that you can't tell apart people who speak Breton and who don't. For example, when I go to the shop, of course I'll speak French, even if the shopkeeper maybe speaks Breton... So I think that when there are meetings when it's known that most people speak Breton, we feel freer to speak Breton...

It's worth noting that the only opportunities of speaking Breton she mentions are meetings organized by engaged Breton activists, where it's known that the participants include Breton-speakers, or at least people who have a positive attitude to it. Her words are echoed by her friend:

**AA16M(B):** When I meet friends outside school [I speak Breton]. But they are friends from school, because it's really difficult to meet anyone who speaks Breton from outside Diwan. Anyway, when I was young I used to go to Breton summer camps. That was another opportunity. My parents organize *Redadeg*<sup>33</sup>, [...] so I often get to meet Breton-speakers from all over Brittany. And that gives me the opportunity to talk to a lot of people. Apart from that... those are my main opportunities to speak [Breton].

This young man only speaks Breton at school, at language camps and at meetings campaigning for Breton. However, these situations aren't sufficiently regular to provide him with steady contact with the language. A Welsh teenager also talks about a lack of everyday activities beyond school for young learners of the minority language; she adds, however, that there are more such opportunities in Welsh-speaking communities. In regions where there are no Welsh-speaking communities, the only opportunities are "concerts or demonstrations," or, as her friend puts it, events organized by the *Urdd* (Welsh League of Youth):

**Y16F(W):** I can't really think of anything that you can actually have in Welsh here, in this area. You really can't. Football is in English, rugby is in English, there are a couple of other things, and they are all in English. If you do it through school, if you do hockey in school, then you can have it in Welsh, but that's only through school. If you want some outside activities, I think they are all in English. Obviously, you've got some events, you've got Welsh gigs with Welsh musicians, I really like, and then there are Cymdeithas' rallies and protests.

---

32 Breton dance festivals.

33 Annual relay race held around Brittany over the course of a few days to raise funds for projects promoting the Breton language.

A Welsh-speaking student who encounters Welsh-language learners and sees that they have nowhere to practice their language skills, especially given that even native speakers struggle, gives another perspective on the difficulties with overcoming the barrier and participating in the minority culture life:

**U22M(W):** [...] the problem is that all the common stuff is done in English. If you have swimming lessons, you obey to do it through English. And this needs to be changed. There are much more Welsh language specific activities, but there are not very common, everyday activities through the medium of Welsh. And it should be changed. I think the Welsh language should be apparent in these common activities, like the swimming lessons. But the swimming teacher can't speak Welsh, and even if the majority of children are Welsh-speaking, it will be in English anyway.

Young learners of Kashubian are in an even more difficult situation. Kashubian is mainly used as an everyday language by older people in close local communities or by Kashubian activists. Both groups are isolated: the former because it regards Kashubian as a language only to be used in contact with family and friends, and the latter because it represents institutions and has little contact with young people. Additionally, Kashubian is only taught at schools as a second or foreign language. Despite changes, in many places it is still believed that speaking Kashubian can have a negative effect on students.<sup>34</sup> All this means that Kashubian is never used beyond lessons, and it is only one of the languages used by teachers during Kashubian lessons. A teenager who was highly motivated to speak Kashubian at school talks about his difficulties:

**P19M(K):** [in my class] there are two girls who learned Kashubian at home, and one also had lessons in middle school. Then there's me and X, another guy in my class, he also learned in school. And we sometimes try to speak Kashubian with one another, but it doesn't always work because we are at different levels and we don't always understand each other. That's the problem with learning spoken Kashubian from zero. So it's rare that we speak Kashubian.

My observations confirm that young people rarely speak Kashubian with one another, unless they belong to a language group. This also applies to people who

---

34 During my research I visited Kashubia several times to take part in Kashubian-language related programs, workshops and meetings for young people. During one such visit I met a teacher sent by her school to look after the pupils. During an informal conversation, wishing to share her doubts with a researcher from Warsaw, she said: “You know, it's all difficult. In my class there are kids who speak the dialect at home and then they have problems with correct Polish, they structure sentences badly. I'm not against teaching Kashubian at school, but there is a problem.” Such casual opinions expressed at various opportunities show the persistence of language ideologies and contribute to the low success rate in the teaching of Kashubian.

have reached a high level thanks to school and their own hard work. One graduate of a secondary school where he learned Kashubian says:

**P19M(K):** Unfortunately I [use Kashubian] in very few real situations. It isn't really a language used by many people I encounter. For example I have never used Kashubian in shops, at service points. There are situations when I know that the person I am talking to speaks Kashubian. Then I use it. [...] There are also people I met as Kashubs and we've spoken Kashubian since the beginning. Because it's normal that Kashubs speak Kashubian.

I asked what he meant by saying "meeting people as Kashubs." As it turns out, the phrase means meeting someone at a meeting organized by Kashubs (as in Kashubian activists/organization) and aimed at people interested in Kashubia. He admitted that he does not have the courage to speak Kashubian in other circumstances. However, even during official ceremonies or Kashubian meetings, the main language tends to be Polish. People occasionally speak Kashubian, but generally only during official speeches. In this situation the language simply serves a symbolic role rather than being a means of communication.

To shift from being a "learner" to a "new speaker" of a minority language, the individual needs practice. That's why it's so exasperating for young people to not have anywhere to speak their new language; that there are so few places where the minority language is present. My observations and the statements of my interlocutors show that finding a peer group and spending time with people whom they want to speak to using the minority language is far more important than events organized especially as opportunities to use the language. In today's world, which provides young people with a wide range of extracurricular activities and lets them pursue very narrow interests, focusing on a minority language group is not an obvious choice. The following young man started learning Kashubian at university; he says that he was able to become fluent quickly precisely thanks to finding people who spoke Kashubian with each other and who welcomed him into their group:

**K22M(K):** I found some great people, my friends. Because everyone admits that the best way to learn is to want to speak Kashubian, not being embarrassed or shy of it, becoming familiar with the language by listening to music, listening to people chatting in a bar [...] And that's also how I got there. And I said to my friends right at the start "listen, if I make a mistake, correct me." Because otherwise I'd keep being wrong and it would be pointless. Now I am learning to write. I know the spoken language, but I am still trying to learn to write because I keep making mistakes.

A secondary school student who – as she says – learned Kashubian from her grandparents but couldn't get herself to speak the language explains that it wasn't until she met people from the Pomorania Student Club who wanted to speak Kashubian that she slowly overcame the language barrier:

**T18F(K):** [...] in the beginning... I couldn't make myself speak Kashubian. I don't know, because I'm always blocked by something. But when I meet them, then after an hour I speak Kashubian, there's no other way, I can't speak to them any other way. [...] because... to start with I thought that, well, I can write Kashubian, but not speak it, and besides, who is there to talk to. And they said, "Jesus, girl, you're so young, everyone speaks their own way, why can't you? What are you embarrassed about?" I said I'm not embarrassed, I simply haven't got anyone to talk to. Because what? My parents might say a few things, but they're not very fluent.

The Welsh teenager below tells a similar story: it wasn't until he met people who wanted to speak Welsh and they didn't mind him making mistakes that he changed his language practice:

**Z16M(W):** I didn't speak a lot of Welsh at the beginning, because I had a group of friends where there were some English people that weren't really confident enough to speak Welsh, so we had to switch to English. And when I tried to switch back to Welsh, it was difficult. When I get to know people like P., who speak the Welsh language all the time, and I started to speak Welsh to them. But it just depends on the people. We do have some groups that speak Welsh, and we have others who speak only English just because one person struggles so they all switch then and they can't come back to Welsh because when you start talking in one language, it's difficult to change.

He also notes another problem mentioned by many of my interviewees: the difficulty in changing language practices. At the start of the learning process, contact is maintained in the dominant language. If the learner does not reach the point where they have the motivation or opportunity to switch to the minority language, they will continue speaking the dominant language. A student of Breton at the University of Rennes talks about a meeting place for learners and new speakers of Breton. The atmosphere is friendly and supportive, and as a result Breton becomes the language of conversation. In this instance it is this physical space, open to learners and people who make mistakes in the minority language, that determines the selection of language:

**O24F(B):** [...] we usually meet at one of two bars in Rennes where we know the bar staff speak Breton and the atmosphere is Breton, like speaking Breton is totally natural. [...] But I think it would be great if you got used to speaking Breton as soon as you meet someone. Because if you don't, it becomes difficult to start speaking Breton later. It should be a habit you get into from the start. I have a friend I work with at Diwan, we are also at university together. When we're at Diwan, we've got used to speaking Breton to each other. And we also speak Breton beyond school now, even though we started off speaking French.

Having contact with other users of the minority language and creating an environment where people can and want to speak the language gives young people the

opportunity to gain confidence in the minority language and, more than anything, the desire to speak it.

However, according to many sociolinguistic studies, the majority of learners never gain full competence in the minority language, and – even more so – they will never try to use the language. There are many different reasons why certain people who start learning a minority language nevertheless do go on to become new speakers. Some become aware of the value (and usefulness) of the language because of their job. According to a young Kashubian man who recently started working in local media:

**V20M(K):** [That's when] I started meeting people. Encountering culture. And that's when I felt that Kashubian is a real communication tool, because I found it easier to get along with people and gain their trust than approach them speaking Polish. Sometimes I was embarrassed, because they'd say, "What's this, you're from [Kashubian] radio but you can't speak Kashubian?" [...] since then I've felt that it's in me somewhere. And so I just started speaking to my friends.

For others, the breakthrough comes when they realize that the minority language isn't dead, but that it's used by many interesting people. A young Breton woman says:

**O24F(B):** I started thinking about learning Breton when a good friend started studying Breton in Rennes. And when I went to visit her, I saw what it's like, I met loads of young people who spoke Breton among themselves. And it meant that something shifted for me, because I saw that there is a way of doing something with Breton, that there are still people who speak Breton, so it's still a living language and you can still do something. So I started thinking about it then. [...] I wanted to learn Breton and join this... how can I describe it, this process, to keep the language alive and to oppose what happened, this oppression it used to be under, and that's basically what happened.

It's worth noting that for her, learning Breton was combined with a desire to join the movement supporting the language and to show her opposition to France's language policies. A young man from Wales describes a similar motivation to learn the language, driven by his awareness of the community:

**C21M(W):** I was quite aware of those who could already speak Welsh. And I was aware that I couldn't. So I was sorry that there are those who could and that I couldn't even if we are from the same country. So I started to ask myself questions how come we can be born in the same country, but we don't speak the same language.

These motivations, combined with finding a community where the minority language is actively used, lets young people identify more strongly with it and use it. As a result, they meet the requirements of moving into the next category of minority language users: new speakers.



## “New speakers”

It is impossible to set a clear divide between the categories of “learners” vs. “new speakers” of minority languages. The boundary is fluid and shifts depending on a wide range of factors, from social and cultural to personal. Many researchers forgo the learner category altogether, describing all individuals who can speak a minority language, even just a little, as new speakers. At the same time it should be stressed that the identity – be it collective, linguistic or individual – of new minority language speakers is shaped differently than that of native speakers (cf. O’Rourke & Ramallo, 2013). Speaking the minority language is just one of the many elements which come together to construct this identity. Frequently, the level at which individuals use the minority language is not especially significant in the process; what’s more important is how they feel about their knowledge and usage of the language, and what it means to them. As such, language skill is not the decisive factor when describing new speakers, since it is less important in constructing a linguistic identity than personal attachment (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011: 4). Since the significance of language competence is undermined in favour of motivation, engagement with the minority community and the desire to protect the language, setting the division between learners and new speakers seems justified. It should be stressed that all new speakers of minority languages have had to go through the stage of learning the language, therefore my descriptions of both categories sometimes invoke the accounts of the same individuals, sharing their statements according to the stage of their work on the language and identifying with the minority.

The term “new speakers” is used to refer to many groups, but especially with respect to minority languages,<sup>35</sup> and it has recently attracted most interest among researchers and language revitalizers.<sup>36</sup> As a result of the linguistic shift which affected many European minorities in the latter half of the twentieth century, combined with globalization processes of the contemporary world (Blommaert, 2010), minority language transmission between generations is becoming increasingly difficult. At the same time, changes to social structure within linguistic communities mean that growing numbers of potential speakers<sup>37</sup> no longer live in villages and

---

35 The term “new speakers” is used, for instance, with respect to Welsh people who start speaking Welsh (Robert, 2009); Catalonians who learn and use Catalanian are known as “New Catalans” (Woolard, 2011); the term *néo-bretonnants* describes people who learn and try to use Breton (Pentecouteau, 2002; Hornsby, 2005); new speakers of Galician are known as *neofalantes* (O’Rourke & Ramallo, 2013; 2015).

36 The broad applicability of the category is shown by the rapid growth of academic interest in this group and conferences and academic consortia on the subject (e.g. COST Action New Speakers in a Multilingual Europe: Opportunities and Challenges).

37 Potential speakers of a language (cf. Grenoble & Whaley, 2006: 172) are individuals who have certain ties with the language and the minority (come from linguistically assimilated families, live in the region inhabited by the minority, identify with the minority) and who could learn and start using the language.

rural areas traditionally associated with minorities and do not engage in traditional activities, but instead live in towns and cities and belong to an educated middle class (Jones, 1998b: 129). The weaker the transmission between generations, the more often we describe new speakers as people who use the literary rather than local variant of the minority language; they also don't necessarily originate from the minority, therefore their motivations for learning the language may be political rather than emotional (Romallo, 2013). As such, new speakers are frequently juxtaposed against native speakers. This contrast may be useful on a cognitive level since it allows us to describe the characteristics of the group; on the flip side, assumptions are dangerous since they fuel the already powerful ideologies of language "authenticity" and "ownership."

In spite of a high degree of interest in the phenomenon, there is as yet no consensus over who can and should be described as a "new speaker" of a minority language. In this study, in seeking to adopt a definition that would cover representatives of four such diverse language minorities, we should also note that the group will be highly varied; additionally, depending on sociolinguistic, political and cultural factors, it may include people with a wide range of linguistic skills and motivations. Due to the expansion of bilingual and immersive education in Europe, a shift in the discourse on endangered languages (O'Rourke & Ramallo, 2015) and the development of national and regional programs supporting minority languages, the numbers of individuals learning minority languages are on the rise. However, it turns out that only some of the people who learn minority languages go on to actually use them. Not all individuals learning minority languages have the capacity, opportunity and desire (cf. Grin, 2003) to make it their main language of contact within a certain group. The first marker distinguishing an individual as a new speaker rather than a learner would, then, be using the language at least to some degree. This is only possible when the person enters a community or develops close ties with other individuals who know and use the minority language, as per the second part of the definition. This could be using the language with other people who learned the minority language, as was the case for this young man from Kashubia:

**J21M(K):** It was around my first or second year of secondary school, there came the moment when I was entering many competitions [about Kashubia] [...] And at some competitions, when someone answered in Kashubian, there was a higher prestige and they scored more points. So I thought that I could do that, what's the harm in it, I'll have a go. So I had a go. And it was at one of these competitions that I met a friend, we met up the same day [...] And I met a few other young people there who spoke Kashubian. I didn't make the switch to speaking Kashubian straight away, but the moment came and it was very soon [...] that I started speaking Kashubian to them, because I decided that if I didn't start speaking then, then I never would.

This young man knew Kashubian sufficiently well to use it during special events. Note that he was already interested in Kashubian and Pomeranian issues.

However, he only started using Kashubian when he met a group of people with similar interest who were already speaking the language. Another route to using the minority language may involve gradual identification with the local community, as described by a young Breton man who learned at an immersive school:

**CC20M(B):** [...] [at the Diwan secondary school] I realized that when I was speaking Breton with people from my area, I felt blocked. It wasn't the same reality, with young and old people. And since then I have been turning more towards local Breton, more like the Breton of our ancestors. That's what I'm working hardest on.

They both admit that overcoming the barrier to speaking the minority language wasn't easy and involved meeting a group of people they wanted to talk to, as well as a certain mental shift in their minds. This brings us to the third component of the concept of new speakers of minority languages: they are individuals who make a conscious choice to speak the language and are involved with the minority life, at least to some extent. It is notable that for new speakers the minority language frequently becomes their main language rather than one just to be used during symbolic, public events, as is often the case with learners. This Kashubian new speaker describes the difference very well:

**A20M(K):** I get really annoyed by Kashubian hang-ups. For example [...] people deliver beautiful public speeches in Kashubian about how things were difficult for their grandparents, their parents, and how we can finally freely speak Kashubian and things are cool and times are great for us. And then I approach this person and start speaking Kashubian to them, and they reply, “stop messing around, why are you speaking Kashubian? We can speak normally.” And this hypocrisy and these hang-ups really annoy me. I want to show that apart from these speeches and amazing initiatives it's possible to be a Kashub on an everyday basis.

He criticizes his peers for learning Kashubian only to use it as a language of academia or public performances, or – as defined by Julia Sallabank (2013: 85) – as “a language for performance.” Learners do not identify with the minority language sufficiently to use it in informal conversations, as revealed by the phrase “speak normally,” meaning “speak the dominant language.” It should be stressed that the dominant language is the first language of both learners and new speakers of the minority language. The difference is that for new speakers “speaking normally” also means “speaking Kashubian,” as my interlocutor tries to show by talking to his friends in Kashubian in everyday interactions. It's also worth adding that his Kashubian-speaking friends are mainly people who have learned Kashubian and decided to use it.

New speakers of minority languages are not always able to pinpoint the time when the minority language became “their” language. The breakthrough comes when young people realize that the minority language isn't just the language of school (if that's where they learned it) or their heritage language (if it was the language spoken by their grandparents who didn't transmit it to the younger generations), but rather a language they can and want to express themselves in.

A young woman working in Kashubian-language media describes how she realized she had internalized the language when she started experimenting with it:

**O24F(K):** I think it was when I started adapting Kashubian to my needs. Before, when we were learning Kashubian at school, we were really just repeating it. It was all stuff that's already there. We learned songs which are already there, poems which someone has already written, and when I started singing with a band, when I was speaking to the audience, those were my first words in Kashubian. It was what I wanted to say at that moment. [...] And I think it was then, it was definitely then that I started the process of thinking consciously about Kashubia, you could say.

This young woman cannot be described as a standard new speaker of a minority language, since her mother spoke Kashubian at home and she herself used it without realizing. However, for her Kashubian was a language to be used in specific situations: at home to speak with family (usually in combination with Polish) and at school during lessons. It was only when she had to consciously use Kashubian on stage instead of Polish that she realized that it is a language she can use to express anything she wants. What's more, having reached this level of language awareness, she became involved in activism. Hers is a typical story about motivation and making a switch to using the minority language. Frequently just the decision to speak the minority language makes young people feel more closely involved with the minority and become gradually engaged with it. According to another young Kashubian woman:

**I22F(K):** [...] I think that the fact I speak Kashubian makes me more and more interested in the culture.

A secondary school student from Brittany adds, in the same vein:

**DD16F(B):** [...] I think when a person speaks Breton they are more interested and this quickly goes beyond the language. This person wants to know where it comes from and what it is connected to.

A student of Welsh adds that speaking the minority language makes the person feel a sense of responsibility for the language and its future:

**D20F(W):** [...] Welsh was pushed out, but I learnt it, and now I can speak Welsh. It kind of makes me feel I am proud and obliged to speak in Welsh. Because it is important for our society.

For all new speakers of minority languages, speaking it is a conscious decision made every day and in every situation. Its significance is shown by language practices described by my interlocutors, revealing that even siblings brought up together in the same social and cultural context frequently make different language choices. A young Breton activist who has made Breton an integral part of her life, both on a personal (her friends are Breton speakers) and professional level (she works for an

association promoting Breton), explains that her twin sister does not speak Breton at all even though she learned it at school:

**M21F(B):** I have an older brother and a twin sister. I always speak Breton with my brother, but never with my sister. I think it’s a case of whether it’s something you want to do or not. And my sister preferred to go in a different direction. She also studied at Diwan, up to secondary school level. [...] I think it’s a personal choice. She spent a lot of time living with her boyfriend’s family, and they have no ties to Breton culture at all. It’s a choice.

A similar decision was made by a young Kashubian woman who learned the language at home, but for a long time didn’t have the courage to speak it:

**I22F(K):** Then I decided that since I know I am a Kashub, since it makes me stand out and it might even be useful, then why shouldn’t I speak it. [...] And that’s how it ended up, when I started university and said that I’m from Kashubia, I often heard: “Oh, you’re from Kashubia, say something in Kashubian.” So I would speak Kashubian and everyone would say “That’s cool, that’s cool.” And I know that if I hadn’t started speaking Kashubian in secondary school, I don’t think I’d open myself to speaking at university. I have friends who are Kashubs, they say they are from Kashubia, but they don’t speak [Kashubian] because they [are afraid they] speak it badly.

Language learners often experience a block when they are first learning, and the best way to overcome it is to start speaking the new language. That’s why a successful process of becoming a new speaker of a minority language involves changing one’s social circles or language practices. This doesn’t just involve joining a group of new speakers of the minority language, but it can also be transferred into language habits in the speaker’s environment. However, this is dependent on the social and family context and the user’s personal engagement and determination. A young man from Wales who learned Welsh at school decided to switch to speaking Welsh with his sister after he started university in England:

**NDR:** *When did you start to speak Welsh to each other?*

**R20M(W):** After university, the last couple of years. Because we spoke English at home.

**NDR:** *So it was a decision?*

**R20M(W):** It was a decision by both of us to take that because she lives in London now and we liked to keep the Welsh language. Cause it’s valuable and important to us.

A young man from Kashubia changed how he uses the language at home to an even greater degree:

**A20M(K):** [When I learned Kashubian], I decided that it’s unnatural that I speak Polish with my mom, who also speaks Kashubian. So I decided that we’ll either speak Kashubian or not at all. The first few months were difficult, because my mom frequently spoke Polish to me, out of habit. So I had this method that when she

phoned me and started speaking Polish, I'd hang up. It was harsh, but it worked. After a few months everything got back to normal and we only speak Kashubian and it's great.

As already mentioned, becoming a new speaker of a minority language involves joining a new community, which means often having a shared language and similar views, participating in a movement promoting the minority culture and having common interests (cultural, political and social). Language choices made by young people have a different significance when they involve joining groups involved in the promotion of the minority language and culture. In such cases, the distinction between individuals seen as valid representatives of the minority and those whose identity could be questioned by members of this community hinges on the use of the minority language. A Breton teenager attending an immersive school states:

**DD16F(B):** [...] because it's a way of communicating when we don't want others to understand us. And it's true, when we go out in the town we speak Breton much more than at school. It's also a way of forming ties between people who speak Breton, and to stand out.

This girl notes that she and her friends speak more Breton beyond the school and the boarding house, since in different surroundings the language is not just one among several available means of communication, but it serves to show to others that the individual speaking it belongs to a specific group. By speaking Breton, students from the Diwan school distinguish themselves from others; in turn, this strengthens bonds within the group.

Meanwhile, a young Kashubian woman working in Kashubian-language media compares her commitment to the language to a hobby:

**H24F(K):** [...] it's like a hobby, an interest... it means I meet new people, I discover a different world, which allows me to... I don't want to say leave my problems behind, but it's a different world, a different life, and we can talk about it.

She is not describing speaking the language as a hobby in the sense of a relaxing way of spending her free time, but rather as an interest which brings together many people and provides them with a community of interests and a community of practice.<sup>38</sup> A young man from Wales explains that joining a group of Welsh-speakers is a marker of a Welsh national identity:

**C21M(W):** We are conscious that Welsh was spoken here for centuries and is the original language of our country. So we think first of all that we will become like

---

38 In contrast to communities of practice, in communities of interest, the ties between members do not create or shape a common identity. Members of communities of interest exchange information on their common interest, but they are not interested in other aspects of the lives or personalities of group members (cf. Henri & Pudelko, 2003).

native speakers to a certain extent, and also because we speak Welsh we become a part of a wider [group of language] revivals. [...] We have this feeling that Welsh is growing and [that] we are taking a part in this sort of national project, really. And we do feel a sense of a community then, because normally every one of us is lonely but then we have a sense of a community with all the people in Wales so we definitely have a sense of belonging to a wider thing, yeah.

Let’s pause over the way he describes new speakers of Welsh. First of all, he describes the group using the term “we.” In turn, the group has become a part of a wider community, which he describes as everyone who cares about the future of the language and who plays an active role in its revitalization. It is implied that he is talking about Welsh-speakers as well as individuals supporting the development of the language. Another important aspect shaping the community of new speakers of Welsh is the sense that they are acting together, meaning they are not alone and they are more powerful together. New speakers of minority languages frequently stress how shifting language practice affects their social lives:

*NDR: Has becoming a fluent Welsh speaker changed something in your life?*

**C21M(W):** Definitely it has, yes. In fact, I think everything is entirely different.

I wouldn’t be living in the same way if I couldn’t speak Welsh. Massive changes occurred in all different things. At first with my social life. [...] The biggest thing I would say is having new friends who speak Welsh.

These friends are all brought together by a common cause and by language practice which is only available to them. Knowledge of the minority language and belonging to a community can give young people a greater sense of value and confidence. A one Breton university student explains:

**V22F(B):** I’m someone who’s very shy. [...] And I think joining this [Breton movement] gave me a bit more confidence in comparison to before. [...] it gave me more confidence and more trust in my daily life. [...] the fact that [the course] is in Breton and that we’re with a professor who in a way is in the same boat as we are because they have the same language, and in the end, they want the same as we do, makes us immediately feel closer to each other. [...] Because we are all after the same thing, we feel more confident.

She believes the shared language provides closeness, but the fact is that it’s not just about the language but its status. It is a minority language shared by just a handful of people, and as such all its users are united in the fight for its survival. The very existence of such a group gives a sense of security. Joining a group of people speaking a minority language can also help individuals make a greater sense of their lives and open up opportunities not available to people who do not speak the minority language and who are not involved in the community. A young teacher describes the benefits of speaking Kashubian and belonging to the community:

**I22F(K):** So far it has given me everything. I belong to the Pomorania Student Club, because I am Kashub. The club has helped me learn many really useful things.

I learned courage, refinement, I learned about management and I learned lots of practical things. And since I can speak and write Kashubian, I'm interested in it, I have now started a postgraduate course in Kashubian, so I have a job and a means of supporting myself. All this thanks to Kashubian.

Generally, minority languages have a low value on the linguistic market. However, for people actively engaged in their preservation they are highly significant as social capital necessary for creating relationships and revitalization activities. These relationships and connections help people find a place for themselves on the niche market, where a sense of community and solidarity are key (Costa, 2015). People in those niches don't just use the minority language – they work in it and use it to construct their entire social and economic lives.

Using a minority language is a choice with a particular significance for young people. As sociolinguists have shown, choosing the minority language in place of the dominant language is always significant. And it is also – regardless of intention – perceived as a manifestation of identity (Coulmas, 2005: 175). According to Manuel Castells, “who constructs collective identity, and for what, largely determines the symbolic content of this identity, and its meaning for those identifying with it or placing themselves outside of it” (Castells, 2010a: 7). Since the choice of language is always loaded with connotations and entwined in a wide political, economic and cultural context, including the symbolic value of the language on the linguistic market (Auer, 2007), selecting it as the main language of everyday life, communication and employment is an identity decision. And since the choice is significant, it follows that the identity of new speakers of minority languages – if that is how we define them – is the identity of engaged individuals. In this case, individuals do not decide to learn and use the minority language spoken around them because of its prestige and future prospects (such as English). It is the drive to learn a language frequently associated with tradition and with persecution and marginalization, at least in the past; a language which symbolizes membership of a minority group, experienced past oppression and campaigns supporting language and minority rights.

I interviewed a Breton activist who realized how important the language was to her when she had no contact with it for a while. What she missed was the entire sphere of being a Breton-speaker, including belonging to a community supporting the language:

**N23F(B):** I only realized it when I left Diwan. Once I had no opportunities to speak Breton. [...] And then I thought that it's a shame, because I had to search for words, I had problems expressing myself. [...] And there came a point when I said to myself: “Oh no, I need to get back into it.” Because I was worried I would lose it. It's a treasure trove. And, anyway, it sets us apart from others. It's something more that we have and have with pride. It's an identity, a belonging to a territory; it's reviving a language.



For her, choosing the language was far more significant than simply choosing a means of communication. It involved a decision on identity, belonging to a community and committing to an ideology of reviving the endangered language. In this instance, the choice of language is tied with a sense of loss, separation from home and a realization of all the connotations carried by the language. Her statement also makes it clear that choosing a language does not have to be a once-in-a-lifetime decision, but that it needs to be re-examined and revalidated.

As such, a decision to use the minority language is not neutral because it requires the individual to be self-aware, determined and motivated. The choice can also be described as quasi-political in that it involves a personal engagement with local culture. Depending on family, education, language environment and position of the minority, individuals make language choices with various degrees of self-awareness and at various stages of their lives. Some, as this young man from Brittany, make the decision in secondary school and stick to it:

**CC20M(B):** I have to say that when you go to such a school, you already face a political choice. A decision to learn the language and use it in conversations with other people, for whom it also is not their first language... we can easily talk to each other in French, but when we choose to speak Breton, it is already a decision that we have to make. Because all your mates from home are French-speakers. So if we decide to speak Breton to them, it means we become personally engaged.

Engagement with the minority culture, which tends to increase the more the individual uses the language and becomes closer with other speakers, helps validate the choice of language. This support from people who define themselves as protectors of the minority language is especially important during the early stages of the shift from the status of learner to new speaker, since it provides validation for the decision in spite of any inconvenience, and as such helps the individual become gradually more fluent:

**NDR:** *In your case, is it a kind of choice to speak Welsh?*

**Z16M(W):** Yes, personally for me, yes. Cause I've started to go to *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* and I would feel a little bit like a hypocrite if I started speaking English there. So I started to try to speak Welsh more often to people.

He joined *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* thanks to friends who were already members. Since becoming a member, he has felt the obligation to start speaking Welsh, which he had previously only done at school. He found it difficult at first, but it became gradually easier; he also became increasingly aware of the threats facing the language and the need to act to protect it, until he started identifying as a Welsh activist. The link between activism and speaking the language reveals the context created by people involved with protecting minority languages and cultures. This means that the use of the language is tied with participation in cultural, political and social events organized by activists and attended by people interested in the language and culture. In other words, speaking a minority language is tied with the philosophy of participating in the minority culture and activism:

**N23F(B):** I think that on one hand the language is a real plus in forming bonds. But it also carries a certain philosophy. An additional one. I don't know, it's like the important side of activism. If there are so many festivals, so many concerts, if Brittany is so thriving, maybe there is a reason. It's because we have this strength to create, to live, to fight for what we love, because we want it.

Learning a minority language combined with the realization that the language is a value which must be protected and which must be fought for places people who internalize these values on a common platform with others sharing this idea. Entering a group of interested/engaged people brings new cultural practices involved with living in the minority language: visiting places where the language is used, meeting other learners of the language and participating in cultural (and at times political) events concerned with the language and its protection. As one young man from Brittany says:

**W20M(B):** [...] When you learn Breton, you get to know a whole different world – the world of Breton speakers, the world of militants, who participate in *fest-noz* and so on. Apart from that, there is the activism side. I live in Brittany, I feel Breton and there is the Breton language, which is going to be extinct soon, so... there is a political idea that we should save everything which belongs to a minority, all that is oppressed. I think that if I had been born in the Basque country, I'd fight for the Basque language because that is how the world functions: there are those who are oppressed and those who oppress. And for the first group we have to fight.

For this university student, learning the minority language and living in this language means having a certain attitude towards the world in which the language functions – a world in which minorities are marginalized. For him, speaking the minority language becomes an expression of a struggle to defend the language and against discrimination of the weak. People frequently choose to live in the learned minority language because they believe they “must” speak the language since they are responsible for it. A young man from Wales explains:

**W18M(W):** [...] it is also about a kind of respect for the language. You don't really speak English for the respect of the language cause it doesn't need it, it's a massive language. But sometimes you choose to speak Welsh because you feel it is right, you know, we have to speak this language because we have to keep it going on, we have to put the effort in. And English doesn't need that effort because it's worldwide.

Speaking the minority language is more than simply an act of communication, although young people frequently state that speaking the language is a “pleasure.” The use of the minority language by new speakers also turns out to be a form of activism (even if not all speakers feel this way or want to be associated with a specific movement), since it is tied to a belief that if they stop speaking the language, it will become extinct:

**J21M(B):** It’s something we do to protect the language. The most effective way is using it. And of course when I make my films it’s also an expression of Breton activism. But I mainly do it for the pleasure of doing something in Breton. [...] The point is that the language is alive, and there is pleasure in using it. So this is more than activism.

The scepticism of certain researchers towards reversing language shift by way of revitalization efforts based on transmission via means other than learning at home stems from their lack of belief that people who learned the minority language on their own initiative at school or by attending courses will want to and be able to transmit the language to the next generation. When interviewed young representatives of the four language minorities, I asked them how they see the language of their future families. The answers quoted below are of course speculative and the only way they could be verified would be by observing actual language practices at my interviewees’ families in the future. However, the declarations are testament to young people’s enthusiasm and desire to preserve minority languages. I deliberately start by quoting young men, although it is generally assumed that language is mainly transmitted by mothers.<sup>39</sup> A Breton university student who attended an immersive school says:

**R21M(B):** Speaking Breton to [children] has a clear aim. I even already told my girlfriend this. Unfortunately we started off speaking French, because she was only starting to learn Breton. Now it’s very difficult to switch to Breton [...] But to kids, definitely. And it’s not the same, anyway, because you can decide. If you speak Breton to them from the start and get into the habit, they will be bilingual from the beginning.

Another student who learned Welsh in secondary school also has no doubts about teaching his future children Welsh:

**C21M(W):** Oh yes, yes, definitely. I already thought about it, if I had children, I would have Welsh speaking children, as their first language. Obviously, if their mother doesn’t speak Welsh it might be a problem.

Young people’s desire to teach their future children their minority language is the result of their feeling of responsibility for the future of the endangered language and the awareness that its survival depends on it being transmitted. A young man from Kashubia who learned the language recently but is involved with Kashubian activists states:

**K22M(K):** Yes. That’s why I’d like to have loads of kids, [...] and for them to also speak Kashubian. [...] That’s my personal dream. I think that everyone who speaks the language today should speak Kashubian to children. Because we have to do

---

39 In this context it is notable that among Diwan students, Breton as a language of the home is transmitted almost exclusively by fathers.

something, we have to try, because everyone who speaks Kashubian is responsible for its future.

Young women are a much more cautious in their declarations about speaking the minority language to their future children, although almost all of them stated that they will try to do so. People who have grown up speaking the minority language and use it every day find it significantly easier to make those statements. However, even native speakers of Upper Sorbian wonder whether they will be able to teach their children Sorbian if they have a German partner:

**E17F(S):** It's very important to me. Even if I have a German partner, it would be important to me to at least try to teach our children Sorbian. It would also be important to me that he speaks at least a few words of Sorbian.

It is interesting, yet pessimistic, that only people who have personally seen the difficulties of trying to speak the minority language to children are hesitant in their answer:

**U25F(B):** My sister has a two-year-old daughter. But her father doesn't speak Breton. My sister decided that she will speak Breton to her child. But she works a lot, so the little girl goes to a childminder and learned to speak French from her. My sister would really like to speak Breton to her, but once she realized that the words her daughter understands are French, and talking to her kid is so enjoyable, she decided to make her life easier and speak French.

The following student of Breton who wants to make his future at his local community where Breton is actively spoken also has concerns. They result from his observations and conversations with his older brother, and from his language awareness he learned at university:

**CC20M(B):** My current plan is to teach Breton to my children as their first language. [...] I often talk to my brother about it, because he is also a Breton speaker, but [...] he's not sure if he will be able to teach his children Breton. Why? Because French is still his first language, [...] he has many passions other than Breton and Breton culture, even if it is a part of it. And he's worried that if he was going to teach all this to his kids in Breton, he wouldn't be able to teach them everything he wants to. [...] Some people wouldn't hesitate to say they will do it, but... to transmit everything, all emotions in Breton... we've experienced a lot in French...

New speakers of minority languages are highly enthusiastic and keen to fight for the future of the language they learned, and they are sometimes described as "radicals" or "converts," especially by native speakers. They frequently lead the way in organizing activities and programs protecting/revitalizing minority languages. Having put in a lot of effort in learning the new language and making the (frequently difficult) decision to speak the language and immerse themselves in an environment of people engaged with minority activities gives new speakers a high linguistic awareness. Their role gradually becomes more important, even though

they frequently have no family ties to the language and perhaps even region. Mari Jones (1998a: 235) wrote: “The born-again enthusiasm of such ‘converts’ to an obsolescent language may even position them at the very heart of the variety’s renewed transmission.” Whether this will be the case, only time will tell. However, the concern remains whether new speakers will be able to transmit the minority language to their children. And, just as they once made a choice to turn to the minority language as the central point of their community, they may one day make the choice to shift to a different group, abandoning the minority language with it.



## Chapter 4: How young people construct language identities

### Language vs. identity

Classical definitions of ethnicity regard the links between language and ethnic identity as fundamental, since language seems to be the most objective marker of group membership, visible (or, rather, audible) to individuals within and outside the community (cf. Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Edwards, 2009). However, observations of language minorities in Europe reveal that this seemingly obvious relationship has been changing. This is the result of weakened or interrupted language transmission in families, changes in how minority languages function, and the growing significance of revitalization processes, which have significantly expanded the concept of a speech community (Jaffe, 2011). It has been noted that as language change becomes more drawn out, more people see themselves as representatives of the given minority group without knowing the language (Fishman, 1991: 16). This means that ethnic identity does not necessarily go hand in hand with using the minority language. Carol Eastman (1984; Eastman & Reese, 1981) believes that “associated languages” are always at the core of ethnic identity, even when the minority language is not the main language in everyday use. Language plays a range of different functions, and as a result of globalization and associated “glocalization” processes these functions can become more symbolic than utilitarian, becoming an individual rather than objective marker of identity (Edwards, 1994a: 289). John Edwards concludes that the links between language reproduction and ethnic identity are gradually becoming weaker. This does not mean, however, that they are disappearing altogether. The best example of their power is the use of minority languages during cultural practices specific to their community and a symbolic manifestation of ethnicity long after the group members have stopped using the language in their everyday lives (Edwards, 1994a).

Marking clear boundaries around speech communities and giving them an unequivocal definition is impossible in today’s world. Scholars of contemporary language minorities should remember that they are no longer dealing with close-knit groups, distinctly isolated from their surroundings and showing clear ethnic and/or language boundaries. Today, members of language minorities can be individuals who use the given language in their everyday lives, individuals who are passive speakers or are learning the language at school, and individuals who do not speak the language but identify with the group or use elements of the language to mark their membership of the group. This is why Suresh Canagarajah stresses that we cannot regard such categories as “language” or “community” as obvious (Canagarajah, 2011: 95); rather, the attitudes and aspirations of groups linked with a given language should be viewed in a broad context. Representatives of minorities may experience, manifest or feel their links with the culture in different ways.

These are increasingly less closely tied to language: today it is possible to live as part of a minority culture while not speaking its language.<sup>40</sup>

However, for my interlocutors from four different language minorities, these ties between the language, identity and group membership are an important issue. Analysis of statements made by young people reveals a wide range of relationships, dependencies and ways in which these ties are established. Putting their statements in the context of language practice at home and in the community helps us notice similarities and differences in how these ties are perceived.

It should be stressed that the analysis presented below concerns thoughts and declarations by young people who have a very specific, engaged attitude towards minority languages and cultures. Their statements largely depend on how they and their community perceive the minority and the discourse dominating it: how group membership is discussed, how its boundaries are defined, how its history is understood, what its relationship is with the dominant culture, etc. An important part in this analysis involved observing how common imagination is reflected in everyday practice and in the perception of relationships with other members of the minority.

During the part of my research in Poland, I asked my interlocutors whether their families are “Kashubian.” Many young people answered the question with “yes, but...” (“but my parents don’t speak Kashubian”; “but my parents wouldn’t describe themselves as Kashubs”; “but we don’t engage in any typically Kashubian activities”). Only one young man answered spontaneously that his family is not Kashubian. Knowing him and several members of his family, and being aware that they are almost all strongly involved with the Kashubian community, its activities and meetings, I asked what kind of family he would describe as Kashubian. He said:

**N22M(K):** Most of all, one which has the language. I don’t know, I wonder, maybe that isn’t right, but it’s what I think. After all, language is the main carrier of culture and everything. So Kashubian, maybe not all the time, but at these unofficial family moments, so that parents speak Kashubian to each other and to their children. Some typical Kashubian customs, cultivating them. Maybe subconsciously. And also singing in Kashubian [...] or just cultivating Kashubian accents. But mainly the language.

The young man learned Kashubian at school, although he did not attain sufficient competence to use it conversationally. He also stated that in his view, a Kashubian family is one in which language transmission and participation in culture is “natural” or continuous. At the same time he admitted that he feels Kashubian, that some members of his family also identify as Kashubian, but that his family is not Kashubian. An “acquired” Kashubian identity seems to him to be less significant in

---

40 A good example is Sheilah Nicholas’s analysis of the young generation of the Hopi tribe of Native Americans tribe, whose attitude to their language is expressed by the statement: “I live Hopi I just don’t speak it” (Nicholas, 2009).



identifying with the minority than “innate,” even though his family has Kashubian roots and lives in the region. A young woman from a Kashubian-speaking family expresses a similar sentiment:

**I22F(K):** For me, a real Kashub is someone who speaks and understands Kashubian. And someone who doesn't speak or understand, then I have some suspicions whether they are a real Kashub [laughs]. Because I think that if someone thinks of themselves as a true Kashub, they have some catching up to do. After all, the language for me is the foundation.

Here the question of language is treated more directly: someone who thinks of themselves as a Kashub but has not had the opportunity to learn the language at home should make the effort to learn it elsewhere. Individuals making the effort to learn the language are Kashubs and should be seen as such. At the same time, the young woman – who started learning Kashubian at university – does not think that Kashubs should be limited to only those individuals who speak the language. She realizes that such a definition would mean she could not perceive herself as Kashubian, and she feels very close ties with the minority. However, she lists Kashubian as the fundamental marker of cultural membership of the group.

**F23F(K):** I don't think they aren't Kashubs, because they don't speak Kashubian. [...] But it simply seems to me that it's as though two people meet in a foreign land. One speaks a language, the other speaks the same language, and they immediately recognize each other. I think that with Kashubian it's important. You know for sure straight away that someone is also a Kashub.

In Kashubia, the language criterion is not seen as absolute, although many people see it as important or even fundamental. Young people who don't speak the language and learners of Kashubian who do not engage frequently identify with Kashubian culture and are recognized as Kashubs by speakers of Kashubian.

In Brittany, very few people speak Breton, especially among the young generation, therefore links between speaking the language and being Breton are treated very cautiously. This is all the more so because young people who have learned the language are aware of the experiences of the older generations and the sense of injustice they suffered. A secondary school student whose parents learned Breton after deciding to send their children to an immersive school says:

**AA16M(B):** If we say that we are Bretons, it is important to make an effort and learn the language. Because it is a big, even the most important part of the Breton culture, isn't it? But it's difficult, because there are people aged 60 or 70 who are fully immersed in the Breton community and who never learned the language, and it's hardly a surprise, because the situation was hostile. At the same time they can hardly be told they aren't Bretons since they don't speak the language. I think, though, that language is an important part of the culture, and it is important if you're going to feel Breton. [...] If nothing else, because I can speak Breton to

other people, and in Brittany it's something... symbolic, isn't it? [...] I think that speaking Breton is something which really shows we are in Brittany.

Drawing a simple link between knowing a language and cultural membership can be problematic. Young Bretons realize that Breton identity can be based on markers or cultural practices other than speaking the language. However, they see language as having symbolic value, objectifying cultural belonging. Young people note that many individuals had no opportunity to learn Breton, while others were pressurized to abandon it. It is easier for them to say that all Breton speakers feel Breton, which does not mean that people who don't speak the language cannot feel the same way:

**H20M(B):** It's not that it isn't important. I would like all people living in Brittany to be able to speak Breton. But I'm sure that when we speak Breton, we feel Breton. Although if someone doesn't speak Breton, it doesn't mean they don't feel they are Breton. That's obvious. Because when you speak a language, you feel... especially if it's the language of your school, the region where you live, it's the language of your grandparents. I think that all Breton speakers feel Breton.

Young people who have learned Breton find it easier to assert that all individuals who speak Breton are Bretons than that individuals who do not speak the language are not Bretons. This is partly because among the young generation, Breton is only spoken by people whose parents sent them to a Breton-language school or those who chose to learn it and immerse themselves in the culture. However, in Brittany even dedicated involvement in Breton cultural life rarely goes hand in hand with learning or even simply wishing to learn the language. A young woman who plays an active part in Breton culture (in particular traditional dance) says:

**S22F(B):** I think it's possible to be Breton without necessarily speaking Breton. I think it's interesting to know a few words, phrases, but... I think if you haven't been raised speaking Breton, you don't feel a strong need to speak it.

In the Upper Lusatian "Catholic triangle," where the language is still strong and communal life is based around religious practices and traditional customs conducted in Sorbian and with participants wearing Sorbian folk dress, young people perceive speaking Sorbian and being Sorbian as inseparable:

**NDR:** *Do you think it's possible to be Sorbian without speaking the language?*

**A18F(S):** Maybe some people are able to and still feel Sorbian, but if someone doesn't speak Sorbian, then it's completely understandable that they aren't seen as Sorbian. If someone were to tell me "I'm Sorbian," I would reply: "OK, so let's speak Sorbian." [If they said] "I don't speak Sorbian," I would reply, "You're not Sorbian to me."

Such categorical statements are repeated by all my interlocutors, whether they come from Sorbian or mixed Sorbian and German families. Young people regard

abandoning the language as a decision concerning identity: to become German. This university student encapsulates the sentiment:

**O21F(S):** Some of my family on my father's side is German, my grandparents were German. My dad's grandmother was Sorbian, or at least she spoke Sorbian. I'm not sure whether she wore Sorbian folk costume. But she certainly spoke Sorbian, except she didn't hand it down. That's why my father is German.

Ludwig Elle / Ela<sup>41</sup> posited that when it comes to Sorbian, the inseparable ties between identity and language are based on the role played by the language as a symbolic marker of group identity (as confirmed strongly by Sorbian intelligentsia since the nineteenth century), as well as on the deeply rooted and powerful – exceptional on the European scale – communication function of the minority language: the existence of Upper Sorbian schools, publications and media, and the theoretical possibility of using the language in public life. This extensive infrastructure means that Sorbs are conscious of the importance of their language (Ela, 1998: 73–75). It is notable that young Sorbs talk about the need to participate in local culture as a marker of being Sorbian to a greater extent than other minorities whose links with their language are less strong, and are at times mainly based on a symbolic manifestation of belonging to a cultural minority. Even in this case they value the language more highly:

**L24M(S):** This is the question: if someone doesn't get involved and participate, then how and why do they feel Sorbian? They are simply German. They are just like everyone else, unless they speak Sorbian. When you're actively speaking Sorbian and you don't deny it when someone turns up and speaks German, to me that means admitting. And that's why it's a relatively big step.

The notion advocated here is that individuals who do not participate in communal life are German, unless they speak Sorbian and perceive themselves as Sorbs. This means that being able to speak Sorbian is not enough to be perceived as Sorbian, while not knowing the language excludes people from this circle. It is worth noting that in Upper Lusatia there are few new speakers of Sorbian. In certain instances, people of German descent learn Sorbian and use the language in their professional lives, occasionally even serving in senior positions in Sorbian institutions, although in most cases they do not take on a Sorbian identity and are not generally identified as Sorbs. It is interesting that individuals who do not speak Sorbian rarely describe themselves as Sorbs (Ela, 1998: 74–75; Šatava, 2005). Young people relativize links between being able to speak the language and belonging to the

---

41 All Sorbs have two forms of their name. They use a German form in the German public life, and the Sorbian form for the Sorbian community and publications in the Sorbian language. Such double name-forms underline the separation between Sorbian and German worlds.

minority only when they are describing Sorbs from beyond the Catholic cultural and language circles, that is Evangelical Upper Sorbs and in particular Lower Sorbs:

**B22M(S):** It depends where you live. In the Slepó region, some generations don't speak Sorbian at all. Their situation is incomparable. It is Sorbian land, villages where our ancestors lived, where people really understand that it was inhabited by Sorbs for centuries, had great-grandparents who didn't speak German at all. Their grandparents would have spoken both Sorbian and German. The parents understand Sorbian, but they can't speak it. But apart from that they feel Sorbian. I think that's how it works. But you also can't say that language isn't an important element of identity. Many Sorbs would immediately say that language is definitely important. If I don't speak Sorbian, then having Sorbian ancestors isn't so important. In some villages you see Sorbian names on gravestones, but when two generations haven't spoken Sorbian, people will say, "There were never Sorbs here. I am not Sorbian." They deny any links. But if they spoke Sorbian...

This young man from a Catholic Upper Sorbian family spent a year in Slepó/Schleife, a transitional region between Upper and Lower Lusatia, where he met many people who saw themselves as Sorbs but who could not speak Sorbian. He explains the language shift and understands the locals when they identify as Sorbian. At the same time, he contradicts his own argument, seeking examples of how not knowing or speaking the minority language leads to assimilation. It can be said, then, that regardless of rational arguments he feels that without the language, Sorbian identity can become blurred.

In contrast, when I was in Wales the attitude that in order for someone to be Welsh they have to speak Welsh was extremely rare. Only individuals from Welsh-language communities and families with close ties to Welsh culture expressed this view. However, even those individuals adjusted their opinion when encountering Welsh people in different situations. A student from north Wales whose family is heavily engaged with the minority culture says:

**L20F(W):** Before I came here [to Aberystwyth], I was like, you have to speak Welsh to be Welsh. Now I'm at university, and I meet other people from different parts of Wales, and they feel it different to me. So I don't know what to think really. For me, I've always thought you have to be Welsh-speaking to be Welsh but now when I am here, I suppose, you don't have to be Welsh-speaking.

It wasn't until she left her community which existed as a Welsh-speaking bubble that she encountered myriad other ways of identifying with Welsh culture and came to understand how different people can develop their sense of belonging. In contrast to the young man from Upper Lusatia quoted above, this helped her understand that Welsh identity does not have to be based on language, even though for her personally the language is fundamental. Another university student who learned the language at school and is aware of the effort she had to put into the process says that she considers a positive attitude to Welsh and supporting it more important than actually being able to speak it:

**D20F(W):** It's a very big factor but I know a lot of people who don't speak Welsh, and they are completely Welsh. I think it is rather about attitudes. Even if you can't speak it you respect the language. And you don't want to see the language die. If you are Welsh you tend to appreciate it, and you see that it has always been put out, that makes you Welsh. You don't have to speak it to be Welsh, but you have to respect it.

The following young man from a Welsh-speaking family, raised in an English-speaking community but now engaged in Welsh politics, notes that in contrast with other minorities, all young Welsh people have contact with the language, since all English-speaking schools in Wales teach Welsh as a foreign language, at least theoretically. This means that all young people have some Welsh language foundations, even though not many build on them. In his views, many people only encounter brief moments when their sense of being Welsh comes together with the language, in particular when the Welsh anthem is sung before an international rugby game. This also reveals Welsh nationalism, frequently known as "80-minute nationalism" (cf. Johnes, 2000), directed against England when they are the opposing team. I experienced such a wave of Welshness during my research, when Wales crushed England in the Six Nations Championships. During the following week, Welsh people were extremely proud and in their conversations with me they frequently mentioned rugby and its significance, with a power associated with invented traditions (Mackay, 2010). During this time, their statements were also significantly more anti-English in tone. This is frequently mentioned by activists as an example of Welsh hypocrisy:

**B20M(W):** You've got the 80 minutes of a game, and then everyone is the biggest nationalist. You think we're gonna overthrow the government, start a revolution and gain independence. You can see during the game how nationalist everyone is and the hate towards England and the hate towards the English language and everything. That is shown during the game. But yet again, when the game is over, everything goes back to normal. I've seen lots of it. Even on Facebook and social media, you've got Welsh speakers, some of my classmates from school who had the whole education in Welsh, but on Facebook, they post [in English] "I am so proud to be Welsh today." So, if you are so proud to be Welsh why you put that in English? Why not put it in Welsh? Because the use of the Welsh language is a sign of the Welsh proudness, isn't it?

In summary, the statements made by young people from four different minorities reveal that their attitude to the relationship between language and cultural belonging is based on the specific language situation and origins, and – in a broader perspective – on the general sociolinguistic situation faced by the group. The stronger and more closely-tied the community using the minority language, the more this relationship is perceived as powerful. It is particularly worth noting the difference between Catholic Upper Sorbs and Welsh people from north Wales. The former see the relationship between language and cultural belonging as a highly

exclusive category, while the latter accept that people who do not speak Welsh are actually Welsh. The difference may be rooted in the fact that Wales has clear borders and the sense of territorial and national identity is more powerful. In regions where language transmission has been significantly weakened, the relationship is seen as less powerful or less important to young people's identities. At the same time, there is a more powerful overarching belief that it is possible to make the effort to learn the minority language, and that this effort should be encouraged. All my interlocutors regard their minority language as an element making them distinctive, directly revealing their cultural membership and a symbol of their group. A symbol which also co-creates an ethnic boundary of the minority.

### **Language as an ethnic boundary**

For young people from language minorities in today's Europe, language has a predominantly symbolic significance. Many people can say, on the one hand, "Speaking X isn't important, because my dad doesn't speak it and he has a very strong identity" and, on the other hand, they state that without the language their culture and the group identifying with it would cease to exist. This uncompromising position results, at least in part, from the ubiquitous discourse on endangered languages, stressing the definitive nature of the phenomenon. For young people, language – both actively used and perceived as important even if the person does not speak it – becomes one of the fundamental elements distinguishing between people who belong to the minority group and those who do not. This makes language an ethnic boundary. Seeking to define ethnic boundaries, Fredrik Barth (1969) stressed their relative nature: in his view, boundaries are only formed when a group confronts another group and as such must emphasize its characteristics and cultural differences, which become more durable and pronounced with the confrontation. Homogenous communities do not focus on ethnicity, since there is no reason to communicate cultural differences (Eriksen, 2010: 41). This aspect of defining ethnic boundaries is important, since young people frequently feel strong links to both the minority and dominant cultures, and they seek features and markers which would help them define themselves in cultural terms.

Ethnic boundaries, which can be described as invisible lines dividing societies, require that cultural differences in relation to other groups be amplified. To expose those differences, actors invoke the full range of cultural heritage to select elements which, at the given time and social context, allow them to demonstrate how their group is distinct from others; for some it means participation in certain cultural practices, while for others it means learning the minority language. These enhanced distinctions, present in ongoing social activities, are used to create (spontaneously or not) their significance for individuals and the group as a whole, "regardless of the degree to which these activities are instinctive and the extent to which they become the subject of autonarration of identity" (Nijakowski, 2009: 56). The fundamental role of ethnic boundaries, then, is distinction: making one group clearly stand out from another by assigning different values, preferences and

views (Bourdieu, 1984). Strategies of adopting distinctions vary. It is not important whether they are based on objective or subjective markers, since it is the way in which the group perceives distinguishing characteristics and treats potential markers of boundaries between groups that is decisive in how those boundaries are formed (Haarmann, 1986: 39). However, in today's world the boundaries can be set individually as well as arbitrarily. Frequently it is knowing the minority language which allows young people to make sense of the complex relationship between the two cultures they participate in. A young Breton woman talks about the role of Breton in her life:

**E16F(B):** [...] it [speaking Breton] allows me to identify... I don't know how to say it... to feel closer to Brittany, to distance myself a little from France. It's a bit like putting a barrier between France and Brittany, if I can put it like that.

The following Breton university student has a similar view:

**W20M(B):** Generally, the fact that I speak Breton makes me feel more Breton, because... What I will tell you now might sound silly, but my speaking Breton makes me feel less French.

Such an individual attitude to constructing ethnic boundaries is important when objective markers of belonging are insufficient. By speaking Breton, young people feel closer to the group associated with the language as well as distancing themselves from the strongly perceived ties with France. Using language as a distinguishing measure is even more significant in Kashubia, where the majority of people describe themselves as having a dual Polish-Kashubian identity. A young Kashubian man explains that he envies groups for whom using the minority language in their everyday lives is natural, and which gives them a strong and (in his view) undisputable identity:

**N22M(K):** When I meet people from other minorities, for example Sorbs, I really envy the fact that the only way they can speak with one another is in Sorbian. I think it's really cool that they speak Sorbian, read books in Sorbian. And they are surprised that we speak Polish to one another. It would be amazing if I could speak Kashubian to my Kashubian friends, if it were normal, and if it were out of place to speak Polish to them. Even though I would feel Polish. And that's the question, and it's worth considering. Because maybe then people wouldn't feel Polish anymore. I don't know.

This young man's dilemma concerns the relationship between language and identity. The problem is particularly relevant to people who cannot and/or do not want to make an unequivocal choice regarding their identity (cf. Šatava, 2005). The consequence of minority movements, a powerful discourse on language rights and protection of minority cultures which exaggerates ethnic boundaries for clarity of message does not, paradoxically, glorify multi- or even transcultural identities, but instead it drives nationalistic attitudes, excluding individuals who are unsure of them. The question whether speaking the minority language can determine a sense

of belonging, and if it does whether someone who does not speak the language can belong to the group, is problematic for young Sorbs:

**H25F(S):** The question is: who is German? There are many who live in Sorbian villages, attend Sorbian schools, understand a lot but don't speak. So: they are partly outside of the community. But many of them consider themselves Sorbs. They do not use the language but feel Sorbian. For me it is a bit strange... For me this person is German because they don't speak the language; but ultimately this person may be proud of it, may dance with us, tolerate it and get involved.

This young Sorbian woman turns the problem around. Rather than asking, "If I only spoke the minority language, would I (also) feel like a representative of the majority culture?" (most young Sorbs answer in the affirmative), she asks, "Can someone who doesn't speak our language identify with our culture?" She cannot come up with a definitive answer. Some individuals enter the community and are seen as belonging to it, while others always remain on the side lines even if they have learned the language. However, for the group and its ethnic boundaries the very fact of distinguishing itself through stressing the minority aspect of the culture is more important:

**S17F(S):** We're a minority and simply... what's special for us is that although there are very few of us, we stick together. And so if Sorbian didn't exist, there would be the question of whether the community would still exist, whether we would still be involved with all these institutions, groups, whether all this would remain or not? If not, then we would be just like everyone else in Germany. As this small nation we stand apart from all others.

Defining distinctive elements seems essential to young people, in particular when membership of a group is no longer determined by objective factors. At the same time, language as a marker of identity has a mainly symbolic significance, bringing together the community imagined as a whole and confronting it with the community of the majority language. A secondary school student from Wales says:

**H16M(W):** I am not one of those people who say, "if you don't speak Welsh you are not Welsh." But I don't think... if there is no Welsh, there would no longer be Wales because there would be nothing but accent differentiating the Welsh from the English or the Scottish.

It is clear today that since for language minorities neither the category of language nor identity are clear-cut and easily defined, it is impossible to analyse the relationship between them in an essentialist way (Jaffe, 2011: 209). It should be assumed that the relationship is a construction formed as part of a long process affected by shifting cultural, social and political circumstances. This is why it should be examined in a broad context, taking into account the situation faced by the group and individual language and cultural practices. The relationship between minority languages and the cultures they represent is equally difficult to define.



## Language vis-a-vis belonging to a minority

The difficulty in defining the relationship between language and culture stems from the complexity of situations and language practices in minority cultures. At the same time, young people talk about this relationship at length and place it at the centre of their discussion on the need to preserve minority languages. The scale may result from the discourse on expressing minority culture in the given language, permeating into the common consciousness of young people, educated in the minority language and engaging in activities to preserve it. However, young people largely perceive this relationship instinctively, and because they devote a lot of their time to thinking about the language and what it means to belong to the culture, they also give a lot of attention to the relationship. Young people from Upper Lusatia frequently note that it is impossible to transmit Sorbian culture without knowing the language, not only on the semantic level but also in deeper meanings relating to the foundations of group functioning and creating a common identity.

**A18F(S):** [...] if you don't speak Sorbian, you can't fully understand the culture, because here, when you say or sing something, it's always in Sorbian. Songs which have some meaning, explain something. If someone really wants to understand Sorbian culture – not just know more or less what's going on but really feel it – they have to speak Sorbian. [...] German people who know a bit about the culture and watched some customs won't identify strongly with it.

According to the young woman, in order to understand Sorbian culture and identify with it, observing it is not enough, even with a degree of participation. Only being able to speak the language guarantees true involvement and experience of the culture. She juxtaposes understanding the message with truly experiencing, feeling it. Another Sorbian secondary school student goes even further in describing this relationship: in her view, speaking Sorbian implies participation in Sorbian culture understood as actively practicing and experiencing customs:

**E17F(S):** When someone speaks Sorbian, they are practicing Sorbian customs, just because they are speaking it. When someone learns Sorbian from their parents, they are accepting Sorbian customs. [...] They are related. I don't think it's possible otherwise.

This way of seeing the relationship between culture and language means that being able to speak the minority language gives people access to those products of culture which do not exist at all in the dominant culture, making them exclusive to insiders. A young man from Wales explains:

**R20M(W):** If the language is very weak and there are only a couple of thousand people who speak Welsh, then the Welsh identity dies with it. Because without the language we would not be able to sing the Welsh anthem, read literature, there

would be no National Eisteddfod, no Urdd, we would not have what identify us as Welsh. Without the Welsh language, we would just be another part of the world.

Here language takes on a distinctive value, distinguishing Welsh people – that is those who are able to access the culture through the language – from all others. And there is more: to a large extent, the minority culture functions in today's world through invented traditions such as the *eisteddfod*, and it is maintained and transmitted by organizations such as Urdd where children are immersed in typically Welsh activities conducted entirely in the language. If the minority language were to cease to exist, this aspect of culture would no longer exist, according to some young people. A young man from Brittany notes a similar aspect of the language:

**R21M(B):** Yes, of course [language] is important for Breton culture. On the day the language disappears, it will leave a huge hole, I think, in Brittany's history. Because there are so many things in Breton, of course, things linked with an earlier way of life. [...] There are super interesting things in Breton, stories, fairy tales, really interesting. There is an entire oral culture with so many tales... And when people lose Breton one day, they won't be able to read or speak, and there is this whole part of Breton culture which will disappear. Because if people won't be able to speak, everything will be forgotten. And we will lose many things.

It is worth noting that, in contrast to the previous Welsh interlocutor, this young Breton man associates speaking Breton with the past. Because transmission of the language was interrupted, another generation of Bretons functions without speaking Breton; however, its value is still appreciated and even promoted by individuals who know the language. But what purpose does being familiar with literature and oral output actually serve? The obvious answer is that it helps understand the foundations of culture the young people participate in. Familiarity with those works may also serve as a hallmark of group membership. A young man who learned the language at school and who identifies as a Kashub believes that being able to speak Kashubian enables individuals to join Kashubian circles, therefore it has a utilitarian function:

**P19M(K):** [Language] is one of the main markers of being a Kashub, I think. It's what distinguishes us from other people. Without the language the culture would be nothing. It would be nothing without the language, because today everything in Kashubia revolves around Kashubian. Theatre, literature, music – it's all focused on the language. Not knowing the language would make it really difficult for someone to immerse themselves in all this. Because if you join a group of Kashubs who are involved more deeply, and you don't know Remus,<sup>42</sup> for example, there's

---

42 A reference to the main character of one of the most important novels written in Kashubian, *Żécé i przigòdë Remùsa* (The Life and Adventures of Remus) by Aleksander Majkowski (1938).

always going to be a problem. Because they do and it can come up in conversation, and you don't know what's going on.

Let us consider his words in more detail. The young man believes that being able to speak the language allows people to understand the cultural canon of works which all “authentic” Kashubs must know. Having common cultural references enables people to communicate on the basis of high context, as defined by Edward Hall (1976), without having to explain everything. All participants recall works or cultural phenomena familiar to all members of the group. This way, Kashubs as a community are seen as a particular kind of people. Knowing the language does not just make it possible for individuals to join this community; it is essential. He also notes the way in which Kashubian culture functions in today's world: through state-subsidized cultural formats such as “theatre, literature, music.” Not being able to create and participate in these formats means individuals can find themselves outside the cultural circuit.

Many young people who grow up in a minority culture and language, in particular university students working on problems faced by minority languages and cultures (most frequently studying the philology of the specific minority language, occasionally political science, cultural management, European studies etc.), base their thinking about the relationship between language and culture on theories developed by scholars such as linguists and anthropologists, starting with Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf (Sapir, 1949; Whorf, 1952) and their highly popular hypothesis indicating powerful links between the language used by a given community and people's worldview and the cognitive structures it represents. Another concept whose echoes resound in statements made by my interlocutors is the “linguistic view of the world,” understood as an “interpretation of reality, contained in language and verbalized in a range of ways, explained as a set of judgements about the world” (Bartmiński, 2009: 12). Ethnolinguistic theories, of course, are not generally quoted directly by young people; more frequently they are sufficiently well known to have entered popular language discourse and so get mentioned by people who are not familiar with the theories on the language–culture relationship from which they sprang.

For this young Sorbian woman who strives to have as much contact with Sorbian language and culture as possible, the language is more than simply a communication tool; it means that people who know the language have a common way of referring to the past and cultural heritage which constitute a common identity:

**M25F(S):** It's contained in the language. It's not just words, but how someone thinks. What their consciousness is like. Through history, through experience. Native Sorbian speakers have similar experiences, for example Easter, or they sing in Sorbian choirs, or belong to groups of *družki*. They are small, banal things, but in the end, you have this sense which exists thanks to this common language.

A young man from a Welsh-speaking family who became aware of his Welshness thanks to his relationship with his grandfather who told him many Welsh stories says:

**A20M(W):** Some people don't understand that, they think it's only a language, communication. But a language is a different way of thinking of the world. And I would lose my culture, I wouldn't have such a strong connection with my grandfather, without the language.

The student tries to separate the concept of language as a communication tool ("language, communication") from language as a way of preserving the given culture's highly specific way of interpreting reality and perceiving the world. He believes that the shared language made it possible for him to connect with his grandfather, not just on the level of basic communication but as a way of perceiving the world. A university student of Breton who learned the language in an immersive school explains the phenomenon in different words:

**CC20M(B):** Perhaps it's the case that [...] it's impossible to exist in a culture without the language. It's something which is developing in Brittany at the moment. Everyone says: "Yes, we're Breton, we want to be seen as such," and outside Brittany they say: "Where are you from?" "From Brittany." They know the flag, of course... but it remains a façade. I don't know how to say it. I am increasingly convinced that you can't do it without language. Because language lets you go much further. It's a way of seeing the world. When Breton is spoken, when I speak Breton, I try to enter this way of seeing the world, which is not the same as when I speak French. And that's the richest part of culture, to have this vision of the world specific to the culture. And if we don't have the language to express it, we can only conclude that we're just an exception in French culture. If Brittany loses the language, then of course it would be good to maintain its essence in terms of culture, but it will be essentially French.

It is worth spending more time analysing this statement, although it is an excellent explication of ethnolinguistic theories about the links between language and culture. By reconstructing it we could say that language allows us to preserve "true culture," its quintessence, which is not just a vaneer manifesting cultural belonging but it also concerns deep cultural heritage. The young man explains that language contains an essence which is unique to the given culture. He adds that by preserving their cultural practices without language, Bretons would become the same as all other French people, simply performing a spectacle which is no longer understood. Before I continue with my interpretation, I would like to recall a typical statement by a young Kashubian woman who learned the language at home:

**G25F(K):** [...] the language encapsulates our world, our outlook. And the language reveals which part of Kashubia people come from. But in my experience, I see that when I am here in Gdańsk, I speak differently, I use a more literary language. When I go home in the south I go back to speaking my own way. And this might sound

strange, but it's closer to my heart than literary language. Although I like both. But when you speak your own language, at home, then speaking that language holds the entire character, the whole soul of Kashubia.

The young woman juxtaposes literary, formal Kashubian against “her” version of the language, which embodies the Kashubian “soul” – something which can be described as a specific vision of the world. Let us return to the theory of a linguistic vision of the world. Jerzy Bartmiński believes that language contains an interpretation of reality “which can be described as a set of judgements about the world. They can be judgements preserved in the language itself, its grammatical forms, lexicon, clichés (such as proverbs) and other forms and implied texts” (Bartmiński, 1999: 104). It would seem, however, to be a misapplication of this concept of the linguistic view of the world to refer it to learners and new speakers of minority languages, as well as languages which have undergone codification and standardization for the purposes of revitalization and which function in two variants – dialectal (as an everyday language used within the community) and literary (as a language devised through a process of linguistic engineering which functions in areas which are not covered by dialectal variants) (cf. Dołowy-Rybińska & Popowska-Taborska, 2015). Kashubian and Breton have undergone similar processes to create literary versions of both languages. The young Kashubian woman quoted above notices the difference because she herself uses both the local and literary variants. In contrast, the young Breton man learned the minority language, which had already undergone modernization and purification. However, he says: “When I speak Breton, I try to enter this way of seeing the world, which is not the same as when I speak French.” Since this “way of seeing the world” is not equivalent to the “linguistic vision of the world,” it is worth considering what it actually is, and how young people, who frequently learn the minority language in its literary form and mainly use it when speaking to other people who have also learned it, construct their identities.

New Kashubian and Breton languages do not reflect the “linguistic view of the world”; they do not express the way of thinking encapsulated in dialectal languages, inseparably linked with the rhythm of the seasons, religious rites, work and community life. This does not mean that the languages are less valuable or that they do not transmit their culture. However, we should consider what kind of minority culture they do express. Only by defining it will we understand how young people identify with the minority; this includes those who were brought up speaking the minority language and those who learned the literary version later.

Currently, used and revitalized minority languages are closely tied to contemporary minority cultures and their dilemmas; they are their representation. Naturally, the culture represented by minority languages today is different than the culture of hermetic local communities frequently associated with traditional culture. It fits into the concepts of post-modernism and fluidity of borders and identities of individuals based on intertwining influences (cf. Appadurai, 1996). Speaking a minority language indicates a specific position: standing up to the

dominant culture, to globalization and to unification. This is why identities of individuals built on foundations of such culture closely resemble resistance identity, constructed by people who are in positions/conditions devalued and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination, thus building trenches of resistance and survival (Castells, 2010a: 8). A young man from Wales explains:

**NDR:** *So you say that the minority status influences the Welsh identity?*

**U22M(W):** Yes. Because you define yourself not as much by what you are but by what you are not. You don't belong to a majority. You reflect more on what you are, I think.

Contemporary minority culture, in particular when it comes to the young generation, is largely a culture of a struggle to preserve the language, to survive, to fight discrimination and to protect minority rights. This message is contained in the discourse on minority languages. The very fact that the language is used by young people is significant. In places where the minority language has maintained a powerful position in the community, where it is used in people's everyday lives, the link between the minority language and resistance identity may be weaker. However, it should be remembered that languages do not have an equal value on the language market (Bourdieu, 1991), which is always dominated by more highly valued dominant languages over minority languages. Today, all individuals who speak minority languages are at least bilingual and use the dominant language in at least some activities. This is why, in today's world, all individuals are faced with the need to make language choices. When these choices favour minority languages, they are equivalent to showing support for the weaker language while making certain sacrifices, or in order to enter a community which assigns a higher symbolic value to the minority language. As such, they are acts of identity, which reveal individuals' personal identity and their search for social roles (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985: 14). Consciously choosing a minority language – be it by parents deciding to send their children to a language school, or by an activist speaking during a demonstration – becomes a choice “in favour” of the minority, and identity-building. This identity is built on the developing relationship between the learner and the language rooted in a very specific context of exclusion on one side and revitalization on the other, and in the context of family histories. Many young people only start discovering these histories through learning the language, and only then can those histories become an element of their individual identities. This constructed identity implies a sense of responsibility for the future of the minority language. A student from Brittany describes the process of learning the language together with the associated contexts:

**O24F(B):** Because for me the language is heavily laden with connotations. But it's also great, because it gives motivation, which... I don't know how to explain it, but... it's fun learning a language with all this emotional context. I get the impression that many Breton speakers have a very emotional attitude to the language.

What's more, it's an endangered language, so we often hear that this fight is something very personal, because the language is in great danger. And that's quite unusual.

Statements made by my interlocutors show that an identity constructed on the basis of a protest against the mainstream and choosing the minority language is an engaged identity, full of passion, because it is impossible to remain passive when it comes to such choices. This young man from Upper Lusatia stresses the responsibility all minority language speakers have for its future:

**B22M(S):** We aren't ordinary Germans. We are Sorbs, who have also learned German. [...] We speak two languages. And, also, one of these languages is seriously endangered. If we had grown up with German and English and hadn't learned to speak English properly, it doesn't matter, because millions of other people speak it all over the world.

The following Welsh university student notes that speaking a minority language gives her a sense of pride precisely because it isn't something obvious or common. In turn, this goes with the conviction that being a member of a minority is a conscious act, while belonging to the majority is just a matter of course.

**I19F(W):** I think it can be important for a lot of people. There's more of a passion about it because it is not widely spoken. So I think more people are proud to speak it, cause it is not so common. Whereas if you ask the English if they are proud to speak English most of them would say "well no, I just speak English." And I think a lot of Welsh people feel proud to speak Welsh. Because it is a kind of inheritance from your country.

All young people I interviewed are becoming aware that their languages are getting weaker. A Sorbian secondary school student explains why he feels he should speak Sorbian:

**T17M(S):** [...] I feel that Sorbian culture is dying. When my great-grandmother, or grandmother – when we go on an outing, for example, and she says that all this was once Sorbian, the whole village spoke Sorbian, and there's nothing Sorbian left anymore. You see how much has changed. [...] Lusatia was large, once upon a time. Now it's just a little spot in Eastern Saxony. That's why it's important for Sorbian to exist, so that this spot doesn't keep getting smaller but that it grows and continues to grow.

A young man from Kashubia explains a similar sense of responsibility for the language and culture:

**K22M(K):** There's only a handful of people left, so we have to show that we're here, that it hasn't been lost. For me personally, it means something that Kashubian has been entered into UNESCO's Red Book of Endangered Languages. [...] These are forecasts; it would be great to stop it, so that things don't end like this.

Anthony Giddens writes, "In the settings of modernity [...] the altered self has to be explored and constructed as part of a reflexive process of connecting personal and social change" (Giddens, 1991: 33). Young people's identities are formed in relation to the minority culture in its specific "here and now:" a struggle against unfavourable social and economic processes. Frequently, young people have to come to this conclusion by themselves, after they reach a certain stage and find a group they want to define themselves against. Minority identity can start as an individual choice, which is then used to build references to the group, its culture and how it mobilizes against threats. Cultures of contemporary language minorities are cultures whose fundamental marker is, paradoxically, engagement in its protection. This engagement means that as well as speaking the language, young people become conscious participants in certain communities and cultural practices involved with protecting the language. There are strong ties between such culture and minority identity and minority languages whether they are new, learned or even transmitted in spite of decreasing power and economic value. They cannot be described in terms of a "linguistic view of the world," but rather in terms of "social representations" (Wagner & Hayes, 2005), where the language is treated as a "medium which allows us to reach systems of beliefs about the world which constitute group identity" (Trutkowski, 2007: 378), while each community undergoes ongoing processes of interpretation which change previous understanding of the culture.



## Chapter 5: Community life in the eyes of young people

Previous chapters have sought to show that the category of a minority language speaker cannot be precisely delineated due to the fact that language competences and practices, as well as the extent to which young people identify themselves with a broadly defined minority group, may vary among them. Not only is the ideal minority language speakers difficult to define; the category of a language community is equally vague. Researchers dealing with ethnography of speaking posited the distinction between language communities, similar to Anderson's imagined communities centred around the ideal (or standard) language being this group's identification mark, and speech communities, being created among people using certain language codes and sharing language practices (cf. Hymes, 1986; Duranti, 1988; Silverstein, 1996). A speech community is succinctly defined by Suzanne Romaine (1994: 22), as "a group of people who do not necessarily share the same language, but share a set of norms and rules for the use of language. The boundaries between speech communities are essentially social rather than linguistic."

Young people can therefore identify with a minority language community regardless of their actual language competence, but the strength of the bond and motivation behind it depends on their upbringing, experience and cultural practices. It is doubtful whether it can be legitimately stated that young people belong to a specific language community defined on the basis of using (one variety of) a minority language. On the other hand, they can be considered a part of speech community including people who interact with each other and share more than a common language code. Such groups formed around young minority activists can be commonly attested, as young people consciously involved in language minorities establish various types of communities, which may not necessarily be based on speaking a minority language, but which are involved in various activities related to this language.

In my characterization of the groups comprising young people representing minority languages, I shall refer both to classical notions of social bonds and to concepts derived from present-day anthropology and sociology, pertaining to various kinds of relational dependences, which my interlocutors can potentially enter. Many of those theoretical notions have met with (often well-founded) criticism, but they still appear to be useful for systematizing the ideas stemming from the words of young people, who often present a simplified, if not clichéd, account of relations and bonds developing among minority members. What is important for my research is how young people perceive and describe bonds between themselves and a certain broadly understood group (the imagined community), and also bonds with their peers, with respect to whom they define and calibrate their identity. As will become apparent in this chapter, when trying to characterize their

communities, my interlocutors refer to how they imagine the world and the life of this community in the past and it is against this background that they present the account of their community's current practises. Interestingly, in these accounts young people deploy sociological theories, known to them to varying degrees, describing the life of communities and civil societies. Echoes of such theories reverberate in how young people perceive relationships within their own group. Owing to that, I choose to apply the category of community when describing my interlocutors' viewpoint on collective life, despite the fact that from the anthropological perspective, it may not always be adequate to the types of groups formed by young people. This concept is, however, most often (if not too often) used by my interlocutors to define their place in the world.

### **Minority culture as a community – a paradise lost?**

The category of community is fluid, especially when applied to young people raised in the world of instantaneous information flow and strong individualization. Rooted in the nineteenth century, the classical definitions of community pointed out that the ways of forming communities evolve together with modernization, population growth, development of transport, social mobility, urbanization, industrialization and division of labour, all promoting individualization of human beings (cf. Olcoń-Kubicka, 2009: 16). Of the various concepts proposed in the literature, the distinction between community (German *Gemeinschaft*) and civil society (German *Gesellschaft*) put forward by Ferdinand Tönnies (2001) has proved to be particularly useful. On this account, a community is formed by a group of people closely related to one another by intensive and organic direct interactions. Within a community so understood there are strong control and dependence mechanisms that hold the group together, and the number of institutions and subgroups operating within this community is small. On the other hand, a civil society, determining relations among individuals in the modern world, is characterized by indirect instrumental or rational bonds motivated by a common goal. The relations among humans are typically mediated and institutionalized. In a similar vein to Tönnies, Émile Durkheim (1997) also distinguished two types of social bonds dependent on the character of human relations. Individuals within a community are linked automatically and unreflectively by “mechanical solidarity”; an individual breaking it would face punishment. Relations among individuals in modern developed societies are governed mostly by “organic solidarity,” following from the division of labour and the need to collaborate. Under this type of dependence it is an individual's awareness and ability of reflection that are conducive to performing the common task successfully. In a community based on mechanical solidarity, an individual does not choose to belong, but is born into it. Membership in organic solidarity groups is chosen by an individual, whose identity is formed independently, albeit in some connection with the group (Malešević & Haugaard, 2002: 5).

Opposition between types of relationships among people depending on the cultural and social circumstances is also discussed by Max Weber (1978), who advocated the distinction between “communal relationship” (German *Vergemeinschaftung*), based on a subjective sense of belonging, affect and tradition and “associative relationship” (German *Vergesellschaftung*), based on rationality as well as common values and goals.

There is a good reason to recall here the classical notions indicating that communities as small isolated groups tied by strong direct bonds no longer exist, as it is this image of a minority community that my interlocutors envision as an ideal pattern and object of their sentiment. Young people imagine the ideal minority community in which their ancestors lived “in olden days,” vaguely referring to the lifetime of their great-grandparents, when their grandparents were children, which is almost an unreal perspective for my interlocutors. This vision represents life in a traditional culture, in a “pre-” epoch: pre-rationalization and pre-individualization, the epoch prior to social, cultural and media developments that shattered bonds uniting individuals. The strongly mythologized traditional world based on rituals and ceremonies was characterized by “multifunctionality of products and actions,” associated with “the relative uniformity of society, holistic character of social roles and bonds tying a group together” (Pawluczuk, 1978: 53). The essence of this world is stability, oral tradition and practical transmission of knowledge within families and the community. People make their living by growing crops and seek authority among the elderly, who possess wisdom and experience (cf. Dobrowolski, 1966). At the same time, according to Anthony Giddens (1990: 36) “inherent in the idea of modernity is a contrast with tradition.” Despite the fact that the world of young people living today is – in their own perception – light years away from traditional society, they constantly invoke this image when trying to describe their own participation in a minority culture. The community imagined by the young people was based on close bonds between their ancestors, strong attachment to the land, joint work and celebrations. This kind of life, according to my interlocutors, is what enabled communication only in the minority language, since the community spent all the time together. Interestingly, this vision does not accommodate cultural interactions with other groups, which could threaten the harmonious symbiosis within the community and their isolation from external influences. The imagined predecessors did not have to reflect upon their cultural identity, since if there are no ethnic boundaries, identity is not consciously felt. A secondary school student presents the following vision of the past Sorbian community:

**S17F(S):** The villages where they lived were 98% Sorbian. They went to school for eight years at most [...] Agriculture was very well developed, even more than nowadays and it was their way of earning their daily bread. They didn't make money working on a computer but by doing farm work, where Sorbian was spoken all the time. Or take another example: nowadays when you need a duvet, you go out and buy one. But back then women sat together, plucking feathers, singing and speaking Sorbian. These relationships, they didn't have to be aware of them.

The lack of awareness and reflection upon identity that used to characterize minority groups is often emphasized in the statements. According to my interlocutors, their ancestors simply lived their Sorbian/Kashubian/Breton/Welsh lives without making any choices, as this was the culture into which they were born and there was no other, and without making any attempts to pursue alternative lifestyles, as they were not aware of such opportunities, mostly due to limited access to formal education and lack of mobility. Those communities were based on family bonds, as Tönnies' definition states. This image of a community, resembling nineteenth-century romantic vision of idyllic rural life close to nature, is envisaged as the ideal, but young people are fully aware that this ideal belongs to the past and could not be possibly revived today, due to the magnitude of changes that have taken place. One of my interviewees, A., who is engaged in the Kashubian national movement, refers to these changes as "the encroachment of Polish culture," and what he means is that increasing cultural interactions with the Poles led to the gradual assimilation of the Kashubs. He also mentions the severing of family ties due to individualization and other phenomena, which resulted in growing loneliness of individuals. All this reflects the potency of sociological theories of post-modernity. The young man notes another aspect of minority cultures: today, they are being revived and not just preserved, which means they are being created anew on the basis of selected past patterns.

**A20M(K):** For my grandparents, this was something they were born with. Their Kashubian identity was something they were not aware of but at the same time something they could not deny. And because of that there was no pride resulting from being a Kashub. They were just born Kashubs and that was it. [...] They didn't have awareness of their ethnicity but the bond among them was very strong. Mostly based on family ties [...] Today we are living in a completely different world and this is not enough – unfortunately the family ties have been broken and the families themselves have so much to do with Polish culture that what Kashubian culture needs is more of a revival than preservation. So the difficulty is that there are no bonds anymore and we have to create them anew.

The statements made by young Kashubs talking about the differences between what used to be and what is now are characteristically similar. If we set side by side the testimony of a 23-year-old student who started learning Kashubian recently and who discovered her roots as a teenager, and the words of a young woman born into a Kashubian-speaking family, it is evident that some aspects of Kashubian culture are perceived in the same way, regardless of the cultural and language background of the observer:

**F23F(K):** Well, I think that my grandparents were not quite aware of the fact that they were a kind of ethnic minority. They knew they were born here, that they spoke Kashubian and that they were Kashubs but that wasn't full awareness. Then, in my dad's generation people stopped using Kashubian among themselves. And, in my generation, it was reborn anew. Not only within families but also outside.

The impulse comes from the outside, for instance from school, the awareness of Kashubia and “Kashubianness.”

**H24F(K):** I think my grandparents didn’t even know they were Kashubs. They knew for sure that they spoke Kashubian and that there is the other language, that is Polish. But my grandparents [...] have problems speaking Polish. Kashubian is their first language and they have never pondered on being some minority, or where they live, that this region is exceptional in any sense or that it has borders. It never occurred to them. It is our generation who have an opportunity to decide if we are Kashubs and what our attitude is. For them, it was just natural and for us... I don’t want to suggest that it is artificial, all I want to say is that we have a choice and we can look at it differently.

Both women note that in old times the Kashubs were not thought of as a group distinct from the Polish community, or in fact they were not thought of as a community of any specific kind, such as minority or nationality. They were largely unaware of their identity (“were not quite aware of the fact that they were a kind of ethnic minority,” “didn’t even know they were Kashubs”). “Minority” is a political term that is meaningful only relative to a dominant culture and state (Eriksen, 2010: 147–148). It is against the background of another group that a community notices cultural differences and defines itself in this context. The cultural change, which is not precisely described in the statements but which includes interruption of language transmission and lifestyle change, loosened human bonds referred to by H. as “natural.” For her part, F. notes that the Kashub identity is revived “from the outside,” through political, educational and cultural actions carried out in Kashubia. It follows that family ceases to be a guarantor of preserving the minority culture. As this culture has become institutionalized, it is now necessary to make an identity choice, which can be seen as an opportunity to leave the group and join the mainstream culture or as a conscious and responsible participation in the minority culture situated in opposition to the dominant culture.

The way young people look at the institutionalization of a minority culture is reminiscent of Tönnies’s civil society, in which actions are performed by organizations, and individuals constitute a group through pursuit of a common goal, with this goal being political, such as recognition of a minority status, or societal, such as revitalization of language and culture. Characteristically, the division into community and civil society comes with an appraisal: community is authentic and emotional whereas civil society is artificial and oriented towards practical purposes.

Authenticity is invoked in the following statement by a Sorbian secondary school student, for whom the ideal of “real” Sorbian life can be attained through living in a village, farm work, participation in the community life, such as cultivating customs and mutual support, and speaking Sorbian:

**J17F(S):** For me, a real Sorb was raised in the country, because it’s where the old traditions and customs are cultivated, for instance *mejemetanje*.<sup>43</sup> I’ve never seen

---

43 The custom of putting up a tree in May.

it in any town. The rural community is also very important. Simply helping each other. And agriculture, which was the main source of income for our ancestors. And the Sorbian language, of course, growing up in the country, on the whole.

When the contemporary model of life is confronted with the ideal of the traditional community, for whom Sorbian was the means of everyday communication and who lived in harmony off their physical labour, young people often ask the question of whether this kind of life would be now possible at all. As the following statement shows, the answer is negative:

**F20F(S):** There didn't use to be any other option than the Sorbian lifestyle. I mean everybody wore Sorbian costumes ... Nowadays, there are so many other possibilities that it is no longer so [...] In old times they simply didn't have a choice, everyone wore the same things. Holy masses or holidays were more festive. It was very important, but things are no longer like that.

In the eyes of the young, the traditional life is no longer possible since there are "other possibilities." They believe that it is no longer possible to be "simply" a representative of a minority because life offers many opportunities. They underscore that there was no alternative to the community life ("there didn't use to be any other option"): everybody took part in the collective life and holidays or otherwise they would have been excluded from the community governed by strong internal regulations. This kind of reasoning corresponds to sociological theories pointing out that modernization was accompanied by increasing individualization. The beginnings of this process date back to the nineteenth century. According to Georg Simmel, when people liberated themselves from "the privileges of the higher estates, the despotic control of commerce and life in general, the still potent survivals of the guilds, the intolerant coercion by the church, the feudal obligations of the peasantry, the political tutelage dominating the life of the state, and the weakness of municipal constitutions" (Simmel 1950: 64) differences among individuals started to appear. Initially however, this happened largely within the bounds of social institutions that played integrating and socializing roles. As is pointed out by sociologists, the extreme form of individualization came together with the "second" (Beck, Bons & Lau, 2003) or "late" (Giddens, 1991) modernity, characterized by the detraditionalization of collective life, the decreased significance of social institution and the transformation of human relations. Discussing the above-mentioned notions, Olcoń-Kubicka (2009: 24) writes: "The disintegration of categorical communities and devaluation of authorities shifts the focus on an individual, whose actions are now evaluated on the basis of their own system of values." Despite the fact that such claims cannot be accepted uncritically (cf. King, 1999; Adams, 2003), this is how my interlocutors perceive the world they live in.

Young people observe that, unlike the imagined world of their ancestors, the present-day world forces them to make decisions: which group to join, which cultural activities to participate in, how to define themselves with respect to others. Due to the necessity to make a choice, the traditional customs and habits that used

to be constitutive of a group and that served as means of defining this group's identity become relative. When a group's unity is no longer manifested through common customs, they cease to be perceived as significant or serious. This is what transpires from the following statement made by a Breton associated with a Celtic group. Talking about dancing, which is his greatest passion, the man illustrates the change: dancing used to play a role in providing communal bonds (cf. Jigourel, 2009), today, it is performed "for pleasure" or for preserving the tradition and culture:

**I25M(B):** We dance for pleasure. They also enjoyed it, but they did it in everyday life.

Is it the same? I think it is difficult to compare. Tradition matters to us. This is what helps culture survive, as well as participation in festivals and internships.

The somewhat simplified account of the transition from the traditional to modern forms of life offered by sociologists harmonizes with the perception of the world by my interlocutors: due to modernization and individualization a community has turned into a civil society, and life based on direct bonds, the rhythm of nature and communal rituals has adopted institutionalized forms providing the foundation of the group's existence, with visual symbols playing a major role (cf. Billig, 1995). Nowadays, the life of a minority crucially depends on such institutions as school, which pass on the knowledge of history, customs and traditions to the next generations. This is what a Kashubian secondary school student observes about the differences in the life of a minority then and now:

**X18M(K):** [...] we learn Kashubian and they just talked without any effort, they didn't have to learn. They followed their conscience in how they behaved with respect to others. But I think it was totally different with the customs. Perhaps they are still preserved nowadays but surely it is done in a modern way.

**NDR:** *What do you mean?*

**X18M(K):** It used to be different, more like a holiday. Now everything is prepared, the customs are staged and that's it. In old times it was more of a true celebration. Now it is more official.

The young observe that participation in "officially" prepared activities differs from genuine "celebration" not only in practical terms but also in that it no longer evokes collective emotions or bonds. This is what the words "the customs are staged and that's it" indicate – the spectacle is directed and there are viewers rather than participants. Some young Kashubs point out that cultivating old traditions could be seen as transgression of social norms:

**J21M(K):** [...] Such as, for instance, hoaxes on New Year's Eve. Nobody does it anymore but when I was a little boy we used to call in on our neighbours and play tricks. No one was surprised or upset, it was just a Kashubian custom and everyone knew that. If I did something like that today, people would call the police immediately.

Longing for the unconscious way of belonging to a minority community results to a large extent from the difficulties and sacrifices entailed by a decision that people need to make today if they want to be a part of such a community. This is why young people often refer to the traditional bond-based community as “a paradise lost.” This kind of vision is particularly strong among Kashubs who contrast the past “authenticity” with the present “artificiality” or even “commercial character” (cf. Nowicka, 2006). One of the Kashubian women says:

**I22F(K):** That was so natural for them. [...] To me they were so true, so real as Kashubs. First, they spoke Kashubian fluently, second, they spoke all the time and weren't ashamed of it. Third, what made them stand out [...] was rooted in their awareness. The fact that they were so religious, that they were so hard-working. Nothing unusual, but they were unique because of these qualities. And now I can see, and it annoys me, that the “Kashubianness” is a bit just to show off and also possibly to get some benefits because we know that Kashubian is fashionable so perhaps it can be useful, we can get some profits so let's go for it.

Such impressions stem partially from the rapid pace of changes that have been recently taking place in Kashubia: due to “Kashubianness” being *en vogue*, many people have changed their attitude to culture and many people make their living carrying out some kind of cultural activities. The traditions cultivated at home have now become part of public space, with a number of ways becoming available to develop these traditions and a number of people conducting their own policies of ethnicity. Nurturing “Kashubianness” may also be a means to achieving some other ends.

Young Sorbs present yet another viewpoint on the cultural change. For them, the past has become mythologized, with historical events playing no significant role. When Sorbs gained freedom after the reunification of Germany in 1990, processes such as labour migration and general mobility, previously hampered by the communist system, were unleashed. It has to be emphasized that from among all my interlocutors only young Sorbs see freedom as a threat to their group's continuity. Young people representing the other minorities do notice negative consequences of the cultural change, but they are happy or even proud to decide about their identity. The Sorbs, however, resort to metaphors of disaster that fell upon their community. In the light of sociological and anthropological analyses the diagnosis is correct, but taking into consideration it has been made by young people who have their dreams and ambitions, it calls for further scrutiny. A Sorbian secondary school student reveals her opinion as follows:

**E17F(S):** It was obvious that they were Sorbs and there was nothing else. But now [...] it's a little different because you can leave Lusatia or you can choose to be a Sorb, unlike it used to be in the country. Nowadays this choice is even more important than back then. Another thing is that children used to do as they were told by their parents, even adult children. Today it is no longer so, children have their own opinions.



Interestingly, E. and many others voice a sentiment for the world in which the community holds together and the bonds among them stem from generally obeyed rules. Today, as she says, “children have their own opinions,” which sounds somewhat pejorative, and so does the very possibility of choosing a cultural identity. Another Sorbian teenager speaks in a similar tone:

**S17F(S):** On the one hand you can be happy that you can do anything, but for a Sorb it’s not like that at all. I guess even in East Germany it was better when there were limitations. [...] A teacher and a caregiver were the main jobs for women. Working with children was something natural for a woman. And today, well, we’ll all become engineers or scientists and there will be no one left at home? No one will learn craftsmanship or farming. [...] To find your own path in Sorbian life is a kind of Odyssey. You have to find your priorities and tasks. You can be happy when you say to yourself later on “OK, I’m not a doctor who could work in Munich or Dresden, but Sorbian is not spoken there.” You are happy when you do something for the Sorbian nation.

The reasoning presented by S. is premised on the assumption that the change of lifestyle caused Sorbian women to drop their traditional occupations, which involved speaking Sorbian and cultivating Sorbian culture among children, in order to pursue careers which offer them opportunities of self-advancement. Typical Sorbian community-building activities were likewise replaced by professions requiring migration. According to S., if individual abilities are the only limit to choosing a lifestyle, Sorbian culture is endangered. Consequently, to save this culture it is necessary to sacrifice oneself and one’s own aspirations of individual development in fields other than Sorbian culture. Few people are prepared to make such sacrifices – both of these Sorbian interlocutors, by the way, are going to university and planning to live “in town,” i.e. outside the Sorbian community, at least until they set up families. This is how the first part of S’s statement can be understood: everybody can make a choice and take any decision but if you want to be a Sorb, your choice is limited. The issue mentioned by many other speakers is also touched upon here: the old generations living in the traditional world did not have to nurture their identity in any way: they were born into a culture and inherited it. For young people, this is no something longer obvious. Here is what a young Kashub says about making a choice and freedom as a threat to culture:

**N22M(K):** [...] the world didn’t use to offer so much to young people. Today there seems to be so many things, such an array of options for them that traditional life doesn’t seem to be important or attractive. Young people often think that Kashubia and Kashubian are our grandparents’ cup of tea.

This student characteristically refers to young people as “them,” in this way distancing himself from ethnically undecided people and indicating clearly that he is among those who have made a decision. In the world where everything is a matter of choice, it is individuals who have to decide if, why and how they want to identify with a minority culture.

## Minority identity as an option

Since the traditional minority community has undergone a major transformation, the way of entering such a community as well as the character of belonging and experiencing a bond with others have also changed. Participation in a group is now subject to reflective verification, or in other words “Just as community collapses, identity is invented” (Young, 1999: 164). Polish cultural anthropologist Roch Sulima describes the differences between the different types of bonds: “Sameness is heritage, identity is autonomy. There is an object element in sameness (objects belonging to the family or community, sacred places or landscape memorials). Identity is of a relational character, it is a point of reference. Sameness is expressed via oppositions: us vs. them, me vs. us, and also me vs. me in self-communication. Identity is expressed via relations between me and you, or us and you” (Sulima, 2001: 140). Here the difference is underscored between the feeling of sameness within one group as opposed to another group, rooted in the past and in the memory, and an individual autonomous decision about identity and building relations with others who have made the same choice. This distinction has further consequences concerning what an individual’s participation in a minority involves, both from the perspective of that individual and the group.

Community in Tönnies’ sense, appearing in the young people’s visions of the past, was based on a number of objective features, distinguishing one group from another. Such features included origins, common language, customs and religion (cf. Posern-Zieliński, 2005). Nowadays, however, due to gradual disintegration of compact groups, weakening language transmission, the blurring of ethnic boundaries with respect to objective features and the simultaneous sharpening of boundaries by identity policies conducted by minorities, individuals can find their place in a group and identify with it, regardless of their descent. Young people not only feel that they can choose their identity; making a choice seems inevitable. They think along similar lines as Anthony Giddens (1991: 5): “[t]he more tradition loses its hold, and the more daily life is reconstituted in terms of the dialectical interplay of the local and the global, the more individuals are forced to negotiate lifestyle choices among a diversity of options.” These options include not only the dominant culture tempting young people with attractive lifestyle, career and personal development prospects or opportunities of rich social life and the minority culture, the value of which has to be appreciated on an individual basis. Alternatives to these options are provided by all possible lifestyles and identities surrounding an individual in the contemporary world and having “global flows” (Appadurai, 1996). Young people consider themselves authors of their biographies, believing that they can decide who they want to be and on what principles. Ulrich Beck (1992) refers to this phenomenon as “choice biography” or “self-reflexive biography,” and calls contemporary people *homo optionis*. The necessity to choose identity on every possible level of life is not by any means limited to minorities, but in the case of young members of minorities this process is much more conscious, since they are

constantly confronted with questions about their status and identity, having to explain their decisions now and again.

Another factor supporting the need to base decisions concerning identity and participation in a minority group on self-reflection is the belief that there are other ways of entering a group than being born into a community, i.e. through identity based on objective features. This belief is widespread among my interlocutors and the people among whom they live and with respect to whom they define their identity. By this token, the choice of identity based on subjective features, i.e. intention to join in and reflection upon membership in a culture, becomes open to people who have not had any family connections with this culture. The former type of identification, known as primordial, is premised in the assumption that the ethnic bond is buried deeply in the consciousness of group members outside their rationality. The latter type is related to an instrumental approach to cultural identity, which can be used for achieving economic or political goals (cf. Geertz, 1963; Eller & Coughlan, 1993). In theory, the two approaches pertain to two different models of minority cultures: the community model and the civil society model. In practice, however, as is evident in the statements produced by my interlocutors, the two models of minority identity are intertwined and equally important. It has to be noted that even though young people appreciate the importance of culture as an inherited value, they do not exclude those on whom it was not passed by previous generations. Primordialism is in this case free from dangerous ideas that, according to Arjun Appadurai (1996), led to ethnic wars and sanctioned the notion of anciently-rooted differences between groups. By evoking the idea of heritage, young people construct the mythical past of a group, which may provide them with a solid foundation at the time of identity crisis. At the same time, young people intend this foundation to be available to all individuals constituting a minority. Shutting themselves away from "others," which can be observed in the speech of some young activists, is therefore motivated by the desire to emphasize the group's strength and distinctiveness.

Theories of identity at the age of late modernity present individuals as detached from the cultural context from which they originate. When listening to the testimonies, however, it can be noted that the young people's identity dilemmas refer to the cultural heritage and their position with respect to it. Many of them are deeply immersed in the local environment, enjoying support of their families or peer groups of various kinds (cultural, social or political), which reassure them in their choices. While reflecting upon their identity and opting for a minority group, most of them take the cultural heritage into consideration, at the same time keeping in mind that it can be either obtained directly or through individual interest. Here is what one young Kashub says about his feeling Kashubian through upbringing in a Kashubian family:

**L23M(K):** First of all, we live in Kashubia. My parents have lived here since their childhood, like their parents. They were never ashamed to speak Kashubian and they always used this language [...] and thanks to this, the language has survived,

like in not so many families [...] So the language is one thing. Second, the customs, which we have plenty of, mostly connected with local holidays. And songs, music means a lot in Kashubia. [...] All this is passed from one generation to another, and I hope it will always be like that.

The reasons why the young man identifies himself with Kashubian culture correspond to all the postulates of primordial identity: origins, family, language, customs and communal life based on strong bonds among group members. At the same he admits that “Kashubianness” was much talked about in his family, and because of that his identity was shaped consciously. The upbringing of this Breton secondary school student was similar in this respect:

**G16M(B):** [...] I was born in Brittany. My dad is involved in politics. So in a way this is not my choice because I was born in a family which made me predestined to become Breton. But I also wanted to be Breton. And it is a question of desire. It is a choice, it’s all about whether you want it or not. There are people who say: “I’m French” and even if they live in Brittany, they are French.

This teenager emphasizes that he feels connected to Brittany not only through his place of birth and living but also through his upbringing, as his father is a Breton activist. He can be said to have inherited the Breton identity as cultural capital, which is very highly valued in his environment. Still, the teen stresses that he wanted to be Breton. This is important because, and this point is rarely brought up in the statements, not every inhabitant of Brittany is ethnically Breton. Regardless, then, of how bonds with culture were created, membership in it depends on the cultural context in which an individual functions or which they invoke. It is especially important in the case of young people who happen not to have any resources of minority awareness at home or in some other immediate environment.

In this context, it may be interesting to consider the following statements by a young Kashubian activist, saying that when language transmission was weak and assimilation to the dominant culture took place, membership in the minority culture has to be brought to the fore:

**A20M(K):** I was raised in a Kashubian family. Both my parents are Kashubs, and so are my grandparents, everyone. But my identity was suspended because nothing followed from it. If someone asked me if I was a Kashub I would say yes, but somehow it didn’t mean a lot. My parents spoke Polish to me, grandparents too. [...] In my family there wasn’t any great Kashubian patriotism.

This student sees his identity against the background of both models. He identifies as a Kashub, because he comes from a Kashubian family who spoke Kashubian and lived in the region (objective features of cultural membership). However, until the time when he developed an interest in Kashubian culture, started asking questions and learning the language, which he did not acquire at home, and then became involved in Kashubian political and cultural causes (instrumental ethnicity), he thought of his identity as “suspended,” i.e. not fulfilled. Looking at young

representatives of minority cultures from a broader perspective, it appears that a “suspended identity” is widespread: they identify with a group to some extent, but they do not care about its future or about preservation of the language. When making decisions, they are not driven by the need to satisfy the group’s interest but their own. The two typically pull in opposite directions, with the group interest not being profitable. Leoš Šatava (1999; 2005) refers to such individuals as being “ethnically indifferent” and demonstrates that this “grey zone” of the young indifferent to their ethnic origin and group membership is on the rise.

This phenomenon was invoked in a number of testimonies, in which it was stated that in many cases having the choice of identifying with the minority culture often means failing to make any choice, which boils down to an unconscious negative choice:

**E25M(K):** I would be [a Kashub], not matter what. But there’s always an option to shut yourself away from this, to leave and forget [...]. So it is surely a conscious choice, I’m sure it is.

A conscious choice can, young people feel, be made in favour of the minority culture or against it. The former should be accompanied by active involvement in its cause, the latter means complete rejection of one’s identity. However, there is a whole continuum of shades in between the two extremes, comprising passive members of the group, or people who are ethnically undecided or indifferent. Researchers studying young people belonging to minorities are aware that their attitudes and the next generations’ desire to socialize in a minority culture will determine the future of these cultures to a large extent (cf. Šatava, 1999: 100). Hence every conscious choice made by an individual is significant. A young Kashubian woman observes what follows:

**I22F(K):** [...] parents may be for example Kashubs, but it does not necessarily mean that their child will be a Kashub too. I have seen many such cases where it was like this: my parents are Kashubs and they speak Kashubian but I don’t speak Kashubian, nor am I a Kashub. So you really have to make a conscious decision: yes, I am a Kashub too, because I want to be like my parents, because I am interested, because it is important, because I understand Kashubian.

When someone consciously decides to identify with a minority culture, it takes more than just not renouncing the ancestors’ culture but also accepting some obligations (“I am interested, it is important, I understand”). On this assumption, a minority culture is open to everyone, regardless of their origins. Despite my previous reservations, even the most hermetic of the four cultures investigated in this study, i.e. the culture of Catholic Sorbs, can be subject to identity choices, as the testimony below indicates:

**E17F(S):** First of all, you are born as a Sorb, but you can also decide about it. I know people who say they were born in Sorbian families but then they turn German. [...] But there are also some Germans who learned Sorbian and feel Sorbian. You have

to feel it and then you can think of yourself as Sorbian. But you have to be committed. I don't have respect for people who say, "I'm Sorbian" and the very next day "I'm German." I can't understand it. You have to make a choice. But all this starts at your cradle. It stems from your childhood.

The girl believes that being born in a Sorbian family is not enough because many such people "turn German" (i.e. they make a negative ethnic choice). She does not exclude the possibility that people born in German families can become Sorbian and be identified as Sorbs as long as they show an attitude proving their commitment to the community. Then the Sorbian identity becomes a real choice ("you have to be committed"). On closer scrutiny, the speaker's statement reveals an interesting paradox: despite her initial announcement, the girl contradicts herself towards the end, where she returns to the primordial concept of the Sorbian identity, which has to "start at your cradle." This is largely motivated by her own experience and scarcity of positive examples of "Sorbian converts" around her. Also interesting from this perspective is the testimony from a male Sorb working for an institution involved in the revitalization of the Sorbian language. As he emphasizes, the Sorbian identity was something he naturally absorbed rather than chose, but it also got reinforced when he started to ask himself questions concerning the future of the Sorbian language:

**G25M(S):** It wasn't really a decision in my case, I just grew in this. [...] But possibly I did it too, even though unconsciously, that is I made a choice. [Because] I was thinking about the future of Sorbs, about families in which one partner is Sorbian and the other is not. There are more and more situations like that and, in my opinion, something should be done to introduce Sorbian in such families. Everybody has to make a decision for themselves. We didn't have to.

Those who straddle two cultures to a greater extent (Tschernokoshewa, 1999), i.e. those who were raised in mixed families and identify both with the dominant and the minority culture, or those who are in a relationship with a German partner and have children with them, having to decide about the language of socialization and education for them, face a bigger dilemma. At the same time, young Sorbs realize that the negative identity choice, i.e. choosing a "German" life would deprive them of the community in which they were raised and which provides an important point of reference for them:

**M25F(S):** Well, I could say I didn't feel like it. I could live my own life and keep distance. Perhaps then I wouldn't have visited this place or another or I'd have missed some birthday or some other holiday. I can make my own choice. Everybody is free to decide in favour or against this.

Young people who are engaged in activities promoting a minority culture tend to think about belonging to a cultural community in exclusive terms, with the identity being "either-or" (Šatava, 2005). Surprisingly enough, though, they find their place in today's transcultural world. Their doubts may result from the fear of not

being identified by others as representatives of a minority. An individual's identity is composed of their own classification and other people's perception as a member of a group (cf. Bokszański, 2006). If objective features, such as appearance, are not helpful in categorizing an individual as a member of a group, a decision taken by this individual requires some external manifestation. The most effective way to manifest one's choice is to speak a minority language:

**Z16M(W):** Yes, there is a decision. You need to decide, kind of, am I British or am I Welsh. If you speak more English, you may say you're Welsh, but inside of you, you are more British, and that's how people see you. But if you feel strongly about the Welsh language, you see yourself possibly as more Welsh than British.

According to young people who have taken a positive identity decision, the very manifestation of one's identity is not enough. A conscious membership in a minority culture means acquiring those elements of culture on which the cultural distinctness has been built throughout the years, such as familiarity with history as well as interest and participation in culture. It is of key importance for people who were born outside Wales, hence they have no family or place bonds, so they have to prove their relationship with the minority culture in some way, as this Welsh activist claims:

**E25F(W):** That's kind of a difficult one, because there are for example learners, Welsh learners who moved here from another country, and they say, "I feel Welsh." So I think it is up to a person, people choose how they feel. You know, how they relate to the past, what they know about the past.

The identity choice can be a matter of an individual's decision, but it should not be based on a passing interest. It should involve a feeling of unity with a group based on a common place of living, common interests, common political views, etc. Researchers of present-day ethnicity note that an instrumental motivation for joining a group should not be seen as a calculated plan in which there is no place for bonds between the individual and the group. Arjun Appadurai claims that instrumental motivation, which may be for instance related to the need to consolidate a group, can be so deeply instilled in the collective identity that it becomes natural and works as an effective incentive to take action (Appadurai, 1996: 14–15), as long as it is internalized by individuals driven by this kind of motivation. A young Welsh woman compares identification with a minority culture to gender:

**N22F(W):** It is just how I identify. It's like with gender, it only depends on how you identify yourself. I know people who came here, my friend's partner, he came here from Birmingham but he is learning Welsh, and he identifies himself as Welsh, and he does more for the Welsh language than a lot of people who were born here.

Despite such declarations, young people underscore that those who were not born into a minority culture should prove that they are worthy of it. What is expected of them is some proof of involvement. This is how a young Breton teacher explains to her pupils that they have a right to feel Breton regardless of where they come from:

**A25F(B):** [...] in my class there is a girl [from outside Brittany], and [she] felt rejected by other children who kept saying she wasn't Breton. I told her to take it easy because what matters is if she feels Breton herself. She said she did because she was learning the language, she liked dancing and singing. I said in that case there isn't anyone else in the class who would be more Breton than her. And that really boosted her confidence. Because being Breton isn't in your blood, it is in your head and heart.

In the account of the post-modern world offered by (Giddens, 1990), the ties between time and space have been relaxed and institutions took over from families the duty of socializing children with a (minority) culture. In this world, everyone, regardless of their place of birth, origins, or – to a lesser degree – place of living can consider themselves to be a member of a minority. Young people often stress that identification with the minority culture is their own well-thought-out choice, independent of where they were born, how they were raised or what others think. The following secondary school student from Kashubia started to identify with the ethnic culture thanks to the lessons of Kashubian:

**P19M(K):** In my opinion it is all about identifying with this culture. With the heritage, with where you come from. And you have to reach that awareness by yourself. You can't talk anyone into it. You can't tell anyone: "You are a Kashub because of this, this and that." The point is that that you need to admit this yourself. Before yourself and before others.

Reaching the decision to identify with a minority culture can be a long and difficult process. Especially for those who were raised in assimilated or ethnically indifferent families belonging to what Šatava calls the grey zone of ethnicity. In such cases a young person needs a strong impulse to make a decision. This is what this young Kashubian activist understands by being shown "an alternative path:"

**J21M(K):** I don't think you can reach this decision all by yourself. You have to come across something that will show you this alternative path. [...] But to come across this, there has to be a factor that will evoke this kind of thoughts. [...] it can be a different thing for different people.

Young Bretons likewise emphasize that some external impulse is necessary to spur the reflection on identity dilemmas to make people notice that something like "minority identity" exists. This process can take place at school:

**CC20M(B):** Yes, it was a process. [...] And the fact that my parents had sent me to the Diwan school. It's obvious that this is the foundation of everything else. Because to be able to make a choice, we have to be offered some foundation first. Because if you are not familiar, you don't know that something like this exists, you've never immersed yourself in it... at some point you have to come across this, so that you can say here's an opportunity.



An external stimulus coming from the environment, family, books, participation in cultural events or from one's own reflection upon the world is important for young people, especially those who are in the process of searching for their place and identity. A woman coming from a Kashubian family talks about her search for identity and leaving the grey zone of ethnicity in the following way:

**G25F(K):** I think it was in my secondary school, during the period of soul searching. I started to read a lot of fiction, for example Remus... [...] And it was then when I started to realize that I am a Kashub. I mean I have always been one, it's not that I suddenly decided to be a Kashub, but I started to notice that the legends, stories my grandmas used to tell me were taken from literature, that they hadn't made it all up themselves, that this is our past and heritage.

It is an awareness of the bonds with culture and a sense of belonging to it that constitute the *sine qua non* for acquiring a minority identity. This woman admits that once she started thinking about herself as a part of the Kashubian community, the old stories that she used to see as unrelated to any kind of reality started to make sense as pieces of one puzzle, thanks to which she could discover her heritage. This is what incited her to undertake further actions. Some activists, however, feel that the realization of belonging to a minority may sometimes be too effortless. If not accompanied by any kind of action, it can be even dangerous for a minority. As one Welshman politically involved in the Welsh cause puts it:

**H16M(W):** I think it is too easy to be Welsh today. Anybody can say "I am Welsh." You go to England and people may say, oh yes, I am Welsh. It is easy to say, "I am Welsh." But being Welsh with all these responsibilities of being Welsh, it's not so easy. In my opinion, if you're Welsh, you've got a responsibility to preserve your inheritance, which is the language and the culture, the *eisteddfod*, for your children and the next generation. And it is a responsibility.

A Sorbian secondary school student talks about responsibility and active participation in the minority culture in a similar vein:

**K17M(S):** If somebody says they want to be Sorbian [but does nothing about it], it's like somebody said they want to be Catholic and don't go to church. The point is if they are interested in proving it or not. If somebody considers themselves Sorbian, they have to be actively interested in preserving the language, and not just talk like "I'm a Sorb because my great-grandmothers spoke Sorbian a hundred years ago" – that's not what being Sorbian is about.

Choice, decision, responsibility – these are the most often evoked categories in terms of which young people discuss their minority identity. At the same time, they are aware that there are many identity decisions they have to take during their lifespan, as identity and group membership are not given once and for all. Owing to this, many of my interlocutors refer to yet another crucial issue: the struggle for identity.

## Identification with a minority as a continuous struggle for identity

Struggling, fighting for the culture and striving for recognition are recurrent topics in statements on “how to be a member of a minority culture.” As was mentioned, young people have a strong sense of responsibility for the minority language and its future. This responsibility extends to the minority culture, its preservation and collective identity. The decision to speak in a minority language is not neutral. They feel, however, that choosing their identity forces them to face adverse circumstances resulting from the situation of their group. This is how one Kashub comments on this issue:

**A20M(K):** I don't want to impose anything on anybody, but I believe that when you decide to be a Kashub [...], it's like you enter into a state... I don't know how to put it, our lives become a constant struggle for identity.

What does this “struggle for identity” involve? On the one hand, it means demanding political recognition, without which a group is deprived of any material basis for its existence. On the other, it is also the need to recognize one's own identification with the group in the largely homogenized world. Young people are convinced that one's identity and belonging to a group have to be proved all the time. Despite there being a number of options for identification, the choice of a minority identity is far from obvious, both for people born in minority families and for those who developed fascination with the minority culture and want to be part of it. This choice may be also not noticed or not accepted by the wider society surrounding the minority. But for young people who have taken the decision, their identity is fully conscious, often subject to analysis, also in conversations with others who have made similar decisions. Their identity is constantly being revised due to the changing political, social and cultural context, and due to dominant discourses and changes on the perception of a given group.

Such identity-analysis incites young people to undertake actions for the minority culture cause, which in turn requires effort and constantly proving their worth as members of this culture. This is how one Kashub who returned to his region after university to become an activist sees this problem:

**E25M(K):** [...] It may well be that our grandparents simply inherited all this. And we are trying to save what we got from them so that it does not disappear in today's homogeneous world. That's why perhaps the stakes are higher now. On the other hand, circumstances are now better than before and if we are able to turn the fashion for “Kashubianness” into something more durable, it will all depend on our activity. I mean to continue to be Kashubs, we have to do something about it.

The inherited identity is not essentially different from the chosen identity with respect to the effort an individual has to invest in proving it genuine. As the man says, “to continue to be Kashubs, we have to do something about it,” i.e. to confirm cultural membership and to protect the minority culture, since being aware

of the threat obliges them to take action. Purposeful activities within a group aimed to confirm membership in it are also mentioned by young Bretons, as in the statement below:

**DD16F(B):** Of course you can't be Breton without doing something. People who do nothing for the sake of Breton culture but keep saying that they are Breton, are not really Breton in my opinion. To be Breton you have to join in, participate, do something... first of all you have to create, you have to ... do projects, new projects to... make Breton television, whatever, but really to be Breton you have to do something...

These words of the Breton secondary school student are highly emotional. It is difficult for this teenager to tell exactly what has to be done to be “really Breton,” but it definitely includes broadly understood active involvement in Breton culture. A Welshman who learned Welsh at school is of a similar opinion, emphasizing that there is a continuous struggle between the Welsh identity and the British identity. “Welshness” has to be therefore reaffirmed now and again, as it cannot be taken for granted. To be Welsh, it is necessary to make a choice, and to remain active, as he insists:

**NDR:** *Do you think it is easy to be Welsh today?*

**C21M(W):** No, no, it is not because being Welsh is a battle, you can't just be Welsh. Being Welsh forces you to do something about it. If you are born in America, you are American automatically. Born in France – you are French. If you're born in Wales, it means you are British and not necessarily Welsh. And you need to choose which one you want to be.

It is then clear that, according to my interlocutors, being born at a certain place and in a certain community, which in the past would automatically entail membership in that community and provide answers to such questions as how to live, what to do, what activities to participate in, what to celebrate, which religion to follow is no longer binding for individuals in these respects. Participation in a minority culture has to be, as they claim, problematized. The whole world has to be approached with reflection, since in Giddens' (1990: 38), view “social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices, thus constitutively altering their character.” In the parlance of my interlocutors, their participation in a minority culture is not “natural,” they have to find their own path to it and to identify themselves through it and against its background. While pondering their membership in a minority culture, they compare themselves with how their parents and grandparents existed within groups and on the basis of this, they draw conclusions about the present times. A Kashubian teacher says:

**I22F(K):** [...] in fact the generations of our parents and grandparents were not so interested, they weren't into studying Kashubian literature or history, etc. they just spoke Kashubian, and it was fine. Those who now start to take an interest in

this culture, they have to do it, so to say, on a higher level. If they realize that they are from here and that they want to be from here, that they want to learn more, they reach for more advanced knowledge, literature and culture, so these people are more aware of all these things.

Following the train of thought presented above, it can be said that the older generations did not have to take an intentional interest in Kashubian culture, which was simply around them. They did not have to prove their ethnic membership, either. They were classified as “us” by their own group and as “them” by other groups. Today, when minority cultures function differently and socialization has been taken over from families and communities by educational and cultural institutions, young people who would like to get closer to or join in a culture have to recognize (or create) their links with this culture and then develop an interest in the group’s history, literature and traditions. This is why, as the Kashubian teacher insists, young people who have taken an identity decision are to a greater extent aware of what minority culture is about and what consequences follow from membership. The following secondary school student from Brittany is also convinced that cultural membership has to be fully conscious. In her view, gaining this kind of awareness is accompanied by understanding the role of language and culture, and ultimately getting engaged in the minority cause:

**B17F(B):** Yes, I think it’s more.... Their attitude is different, because... because they used to ... well, no, it depends ... But yes. For example I know elderly people who were forbidden to speak Breton when they were at school. I think for them the value of the language is different. But they are more inside, in a way. Because they keep speaking Breton, they are in this environment, and we feel an urge to understand, to be aware to what extent we need it.

People born before the cultural turn simply lived in the Breton community, the existence of which was taken for granted. The adolescent says that the Bretons were “more inside” the group, belonging to it in a natural way. Young people, on the other hand, “feel an urge” to get to know the culture and to gain awareness of responsibility for its future – a problem non-existent for the Bretons of previous generations. It is interesting that young people often observe that the older generations who did not have to contribute anything to be considered members of a minority group show lesser attachment or weaker commitment to it. This may be connected with the elderly people’s negative attitude to revitalization and modernization of language and also to the style of young people’s activism. This is what a student of the Kashubian language at university confesses about her family:

**C21F(K):** [...] My grandpa is accustomed to these people, to this land. But still I think he look at this from a different perspective, he was through all these evictions, etc. It seems to me that he could get rid of all this at any time, at least superficially. But it might disappear inside him too.

People who did not transfer the language and ethnic awareness to the subsequent generations are perceived by the young as not holding a strong attachment to the minority identity. Those whose “Kashubianness” was discovered by themselves, on the other hand, are often driven by a certain neophytic zeal and ardently declare this to be their desired way of life – a decision that, not infrequently, is disproven in the future. The following student of the secondary Diwan school shares a similar opinion about the older generations:

**AA16M(B):** [...] old Bretons went through a lot of bad experience when they were kids and Breton was being pushed out by French. And they were quite shocked ... by that, you could say. So their attachment to our culture is not as strong as ours. Because we learned Breton and are now living at the time when we are trying to raise it from its decline. We want everybody to be able to learn and this is a kind of revolution. And they tried very hard not to speak Breton. And sometimes they are absolutely astonished that we do want to speak Breton. Opinions may vary among people, but generally speaking, their attachment to culture is that they just speak Breton among friends.

The line of argument presented by this school student deserves some attention: the oldest-generation Bretons experienced humiliation because of their cultural identity and due to this, they did not transmit the language, as the most important component of that culture, to the next generations. The fact that they could give up their culture is, in the eyes of this student, evidence that their attachment to the culture was weak. He goes on to say that today young people invest tremendous effort in learning the language and they also participate in Breton events, further the “revolution” and show passion for Breton culture. This kind of involvement is often met with criticism on the part of the older generation. The young Breton concludes by saying that the older people’s attachment to Breton culture is only about speaking the language in everyday life. They are passive whereas young people have to actively prove their “Bretonness,” they have to work towards it and nurture it. Here a clash between two attitudes manifests itself again: natural Bretons, who cannot be really accused of not being Bretons, but who do not care for the future of the Breton culture, and Bretons of choice, who struggle for the preservation of the language and culture. Young people reflect much upon the issues such as who can claim to be a real Breton and what are the essential components of “Bretonness.” As regards the passivity of the older generation, young people’s opinions are ambivalent, whereas passivity of their peers who do not show interest in the minority culture is met with overt criticism. The feelings that young Bretons extend towards old people combine admiration for their authenticity with anger oriented towards their passivity and resentment shown to those who are trying to protect the culture. A Welsh secondary school student is also disappointed by his grandparents’ passive stance, as they do not seem to notice that the status and prestige enjoyed by Welsh are changing:

**H16M(W):** Speaking of my grandparents, it doesn't seem like they have the same pride and the burning need to keep the language still alive. Cause they still lived when the Welsh language was looked down upon and forbidden to use, when Welsh had no status. You might think they grew up with the language and therefore they're proud. But it doesn't look like that to me, there is no fire there. Today we grow up listening to our parent's stories about wiping down the signs, being arrested, but them, I don't know.

The teenager's words seem to indicate that the young minority generation, especially in Wales and in Brittany, thinks of cultural membership in terms of the necessity to struggle, as was instilled in them by the tales told by their parents, who instigated language revival movements. This dimension of the minority identity is mentioned in other statements too:

**L20F(W):** I think they didn't have to worry about that, cause it was there for them. I think now you don't hear it [Welsh] as much, maybe. And I think now, it's more of a battle now, rather than it's just there. So for my generation, we are more like we have to battle for it, and we have to look after it. And for my grandparents it was more obvious, I suppose.

The struggle for the language and culture as well as responsibility for their future – these are the two most important aspects of the present-day minority identity. This also involves a specific quasi-political vision, relying on the “expressionistic concept of politics,” as Ulrich Beck (1994: 18) called it following Jürgen Habermas, in which social and political forms are interchangeable. Having a political vision of the minority language and culture does not necessarily mean that this vision is congruent with official policies implemented by institutions. What it means is that the minority identity and its ways of expression have become strongly politicized, and that individuals can voice opinions concerning how this identity can be shaped and sanctioned, even if only in the form of “manufacturing social commitments and obligations, no matter how tentative” (Beck, 1994: 20). Minority culture and participation in it are therefore perceived by young people as different from what it used to be: no longer is it seen as unreflective living an everyday life but as creating awareness of identity and vision of the minority's place in a state and in the world. This is how one Breton university student describes this process:

**CC20M(B):** [...] on the one hand there are those who grew up in the Breton environment, who acquired Breton without making a personal choice about it. Without a political or any other choice. And they are not necessarily oriented toward the future, they don't have any political vision concerning the language. This is a language they grew up with, it's easier for them to use it in some situations, for instance when talking with childhood friends. And this is also a relationship which constitutes a community. [...] But for the young it is different. They are born, like for instance me, in a French environment, and we form a group in which we find our place. This group consists of people who have learned or are learning Breton

and who have some vision of Brittany, together with its language and culture. And if we are speaking Breton, that's because this is our choice.

Comparing the world of Breton native speakers with the world of the young *néobretonnants*, the student refers to a “political vision,” which can be understood as conscious activities oriented towards securing the minority status to the Bretons and ensuring rights and developmental opportunities to their language. The older generations living in the Breton-speaking community were, according to this young man, deprived of such a vision.<sup>44</sup> It is only people who invested effort in learning and using the language that think about their participation in minority culture in terms of a task or project. The speaker notes that young engaged Bretons constitute a kind of community too, with the common views and activities being a kind of glue bonding the group together. Such a community differs from that of their grandfathers, but it is still quite distant from a society with purely instrumental motivations of membership.

## Towards a new type of relation

In his book *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, Anthony Cohen (1985) observes that community and communal values have been long seen as the opposite of modernity. This radical view seems to be untenable, considering the multitude of extant forms of collective life and the visible need for people to create groups based on direct interactions and strong emotional bonds. Cohen claims that communities did not cease to exist with the onset of modernity, but they changed their character and hence need to be redefined. The critics of the nineteenth-century theories of communal life have also pointed out that present-day communities are no longer based on primordial and direct bonds but on symbolic relations contracted on three planes: place, interests and “communion” understood as “spirit of community” (cf. Lee & Newby, 1983; Willmott, 1986; Crow & Allan, 1994). It is claimed that present-day communities can be created around a place offering common local space, around passion which can bring together individuals who do not share other interests, or around strong arbitrary bonds through which individuals establish sense of joint actions and coexistence. Recalling Frederik Barth's theory of ethnic boundaries, Cohen states that the present-day community is based on two criteria: first, group members “have something in common with each other” and second, there exist features that “distinguish them in a significant way from the members of other putative groups” (Cohen, 1985: 12).

---

44 The Breton movement *Emsav* was established in the nineteenth century. The vision of community then, however, was based on living far away from civilization and the influence of other groups, cultures and languages. In a way, this vision was detached from historical reality.

It is interesting to explore the kind of bonds that exist among young people engaged in minority life, who discover their identity (if they come from assimilated families), reaffirm it and decide to manifest it (if they are born in families that valued membership in minority culture), or choose it on the basis of their own needs (if they have had little in common with minority culture before). At first glance these three groups have little in common: they vary with respect to language proficiency, motivations and reasons to use it, and also with respect to identify with the imagined community. Besides, they may not differ in any systematic way from their peers who do not identify with a minority. On closer inspection, however, some common characteristics can be discerned. First of all, they are all young people who have consciously decided to join in minority life and to enhance their encounters with the language and culture (it has to be kept in mind though that only time will tell if this will be a lasting commitment). They were raised or educated within a specific discourse of endangered languages and cultures, the necessity to protect them as well as active involvement in social life. They are united not only by a local context, which may not be identical or equally relevant for all members of a minority, but also by the supranational, especially European context of the functioning of minorities in the twenty-first century. Relations created by young people are therefore multifarious, and their specific characteristics will be the subject of consideration in what follows.

The most fundamental characteristic of young people, and at the same time the essence of their chosen identity or its main symbolic manifestation, is their relation with the minority language. This relation has already been discussed on the level of an individual and the problem I would like to address now is whether – and if so, then to what extent – the minority language and attitude towards it can be treated by young people as a foundation upon which a group tied by emotional bonds is built. It appears that the minority language and stance towards it unites young people regardless of how fluent speakers they are.

First of all, language can provide a foundation upon which a cultural community is based. Such a community can exist only in a region where a minority language is a tool for communication and its speaker know one another. This kind of situation holds in Lusatia, as presented in the testimony below:

**S17F(S):** It's simply the Sorbian community. Everybody knows everybody else, they influence each other. When we are with our parents and they are celebrating birthday or some other occasion, they greet all the people and so on. It isn't like this in other parts [of Lusatia]. There people know each other inside villages, but not outside. It holds people together.

The Catholic Upper Lusatia is exceptional in that the area inhabited by Sorbian speakers participating in Sorbian rituals is small so that the relations among them resemble those characterizing a traditional community. Other territorial and language communities can take different forms. The feeling of a bond among speakers of Welsh is described by a Welsh student in the following way:



**J19F(W):** [...] It is one thing about Wales that it is one big community, with many smaller communities inside. And I think all Welsh-speakers are a part of this community. And there is one thing about being a Welsh-speaker. If you are Welsh speaking, you will find your community, and you are welcome there.

The sense in which the young woman uses the word “community” deserves some attention. She says that all Welsh-speakers belong to “one big community,” which seems to be an imagined community rather than a set of local communities based on direct interactions. People belonging to this “big community” feel connected to others who speak the language and they feel “welcome.” This kind of community can be thought of as a “community of attachment,” based on two types of relations: direct interactions and sense of identity. As Peter Willmott (1989: 12) puts it: “If people see themselves as sharing membership with others [...] this helps them, even in the absence of any personal relationship with their fellows, to locate themselves in the wider social structure, and to make sense of their lives in what may otherwise seem a complex and anonymous world.”

My interlocutors typically identify with an imagined community, which provides an important point of reference for them and in the cause of which they become engaged. Of greater importance, however, are relations existing in reality, especially if they are based on attachment to a minority language. In order to identify such groups, it may be worthwhile to find out something about the life of people identifying with a minority language. A female Kashub working in the Kashubian speaking media but not formally associated with any organization says what follows:

**H24F(K):** [...] I think I could divide the Kashubian community into two subgroups. One of them is those who grew in Kashubian families, like my friends who speak or at least understand Kashubian, they are from nearby villages [...]. And the other group, which is official and active [...], those who are engaged, who live and breathe the Kashubian language. The rural Kashubs don't seem to have an awareness... or maybe they do, but they speak Kashubian not because they believe they are obliged to. It's just natural, somewhere in their heads, and nobody ponders it.

For a local community, the language is one of the elements of social life, intertwined with other elements such as neighbourhood, growing up together, common topics of conversations and activities. Created purposefully, the society of activists also pivots on speaking the language but for them it is a manifestation and a driving force behind involvement in the minority cause. The Kashubian language providing the foundation of the two groups is not the same language for each of them, both in formal and in ideological terms. Even though each of the groups is based on its own concept of language, they are all united together on the level of imagined community by the very idea of sharing this language.

Various types of groups based on speaking a language or other relations to it are discussed by this Welsh activist, who learned Welsh at school:

**R20M(W):** [At a birthday party in North Wales] there were about a hundred people there, and they all could speak Welsh. And they were speaking Welsh to each other for the whole evening. I've never seen anything like that before because I am from Cardiff, I am not used to something like that. And I felt it was just pride, pride of seeing everybody speaking in the Welsh language. [...] Nobody switched into English, they were speaking Welsh fluently, like they do all their life. And I there I felt that pride. [...] It's not like the *eisteddfod* where Welsh language speakers gather together, and you know they all speak Welsh already. But it was that family thing, they were all speaking Welsh, and that's a unique thing.

One group consists of Welsh speaking people living in a small locality in North Wales. All of them are linked by family, neighbourhood or social ties (they are at a birthday party). Speaking Welsh unites them since this is their language of communication. The youngster coming from South Wales had never come across this kind of language community before. As a learner of Welsh and an activist he has participated in *eisteddfod*, a Welsh culture festival (see the next chapter for details), during which everybody speaks Welsh regardless how fluent they are – an unspoken rule that every participant of this festival follows. *Eisteddfod* participants are joined together not only by speaking the language but also by the feeling of taking part in a common project for the sake of Wales and its heritage. The bonds originating among them are therefore different from those present in a local Welsh community.

The division discussed by the young people appertains to their lives, the institutionalization of the minority culture and frameworks for its functioning. It can be noted that in one type of group, which can be referred to as communal, the language functions in a natural and at the same time unreflective way. Members of such groups are united by local rather than language identity.<sup>45</sup> In the case of groups united by an idea, such as speaking a minority language, relations have to be created. It would not be appropriate, however, to refer to these relations as societal since such the relational potential of groups can by far exceed performing an instrumentally defined task. Another difference between the two kinds of groups concerns the possibility and ways of combining them. A local community cannot be entered easily; it takes time before a potential new member is accepted by other group members as one of them. Individuals belonging to the other type of group share some ideals, values or interests, related to the issue of fundamental importance, i.e. the minority language not only “bridging” individuals within a group, but also “bonding” them by facilitating joint actions, to use Robert Putnam's (2000) metaphor. Despite the fact that joining this group is easier, not everyone can be accepted as a member. The decisive factor here is not birth and upbringing but being accepted by other members. As David Lee and Howard Newby (1983: 57)

---

45 People who are not speakers of the language can also belong to such groups by virtue of being in close relationships with other members.

observe, living side by side does not necessarily mean that neighbours have a lot in common. There may not be any interactions between them, as it is not physical proximity but the nature of human relationships that is the most important aspect of community. This is what a Kashubian activist says about such differences:

**J21M(K):** Yes, that's something completely different. Because when you're among your own people every day and you share interests and views with them, everything is very close and similar. But when you only live next door but know nothing about these people, it's really hard to talk about anything. I started speaking Kashubian with these people when I decided that my literary variety of Kashubian was good enough. And then I started to say some casual things to them, but you know – just short utterances and things.

This Kashub's testimony takes up the issue of conducting conversations in the minority language with representatives of the two groups. His words are significant in that they show that living in a village and being raised next to certain people does not guarantee any attachment to them. The man says that he does not feel connected to his neighbours in the village, locating his emotions and seeking connection to people with whom he shares interests and views. The Kashubian language, however, is a key opening the doors to both groups, i.e. not only to the social group built upon the common cause but also to the local community, with whom the speaker initially exchanges "short utterances."

Speaking a minority language in interactions with others is often considered to be a sufficient condition for creating a bond, especially with people of similar age, who may have gone through similar experience with the language. A woman born in a Kashubian-speaking family voices the following opinion:

**O24F(K):** When I talk to my friends in Kashubian, very often I forget that we come from different places. In a way I forget that I met them at university, not when we were kids. I treat these friends automatically as my childhood friends. [...] Or it seems to me like I've known them much longer than I really have.

This can be interpreted as meaning the Kashubian speakers are united by the feeling of belonging to one local community, regardless of the real geographical distance between them. This local community comprises similar memories, experience and a common code affording a sense of closeness. This kind of proximity through language can also be achieved, albeit in a different way, among people who have learned or acquired a minority language as the second one. This young woman who learned Kashubian at university and is not yet a fluent speaker, claims that the very fact of using Kashubian makes people feel closer:

**H24F(K):** Yes, it seems to me ... relations get closer with those people with whom I speak Kashubian. [...] the Kashubian language breaks the ice in various situations. Because we are from the same home.

The metaphor of "home" describing relations among Kashubian-speaking people is quite remarkable here, as it evokes common origins and close family ties. A young

Breton who went to an immersion school sees the influence of a common minority language on the perception of newly met people in the following way:

**H20M(B):** As far as friends are concerned, it doesn't matter if someone speaks Breton or not. But if I don't know somebody and for instance I meet them in a bar and I can hear this person speak Breton, that creates some kind of trust in me.

Those who are learning a minority language and are interested in improving their competence, and most of all, they want to be engaged in actions promoting the language and culture naturally seek the company of people who have the same interests, passions and needs. Such a group for whom using a minority language and protecting it is not considered weird can offer valuable support and reassure a person that their identity decision was right. This is what a Welshman says about creating a group of this kind:

**C21M(W):** I have my friends from the same community to speak Welsh with anyway. So I found out who can speak Welsh and then we became a group of friends. So we created our own social network. We use the Welsh language, we hang around together, we go to the same club in our town weekly, where we know we can use Welsh. So we make an effort, make sure we take an active part in the Welsh life of our community. To know who we are. You can pass a Welsh-speaking person on the street, but you never know if this person is Welsh or not. So we try to network each other, so we know who's who.

This testimony indicates that a group based on using a minority language has two major functions. The first is purely social – young people who speak the same language meet, enjoy spending time together or have parties, which is conducive to creating friendships, possibly getting closer with time. The other is about delineating the group boundaries and membership: Welsh speakers do not form a group unless they initiate direct interactions. The Welshman says he found out who speaks Welsh in his locality and, as he puts it, they “became a group of friends.” The leap from being strangers to a close relationship is rapid. Many learners of a minority language, especially new speakers of these languages, recall that thanks to their familiarity with the language, their relations with its users were immediately set in a certain perspective bringing people close together. This is what a young female Breton says:

**A25F(B):** The internship I mentioned, it was the first one for adults organized for people from all over Brittany. [...] There were only Breton-speaking people. I can't explain that feeling but we came there and it happened. Everybody said hello and chatted to everybody else. It's much easier for us to approach another Breton-speaking person because we know from the very start that we share something. Such common things obviously attract people. These common things are not visible. In a place where everybody speaks Breton, we are happy mostly because we can speak only Breton. [...] here we feel like a group. [...] we feel stronger when we are together, when we are with other Breton-speaking people.

This woman expresses the view that people using a minority language (here all of them have learned Breton, although to a different level of proficiency and in different circumstances) find it easy to network with other speakers of this language because as she says, “we know from the very start that we share something.” And what they share is not confined to a common language, even though the language provides an initial incentive to start relationships. It also includes common experience of learning a language situated in a specific social and political position. She does not say that all Breton speakers are connected, instead she insists that “in a place where everybody speaks Breton [...] we feel like a group,” i.e. in a place where people meet for a specific purpose related to involvement in minority culture. It is thus not only the language but actions concerning it that have the bonding effect.

In the past, Rennes was not a Breton-speaking town but it has become an important centre of Breton culture. It is a seat of many institutions dealing with culture and language policies of Brittany, attracting many learners of the language and students. There are a few places where Breton-speaking people meet, so when I was beginning my research stay at the University of Rennes, I was told the names of places where I should go to look for people who matched the profile of my interviewee. Indeed, I soon became a regular visitor to three bars, being an informal centre of the Breton-speaking world in Rennes. It was due to my interest, a positive attitude towards the language and willingness to learn it that was quickly accepted by people with whom I could talk and who helped me enter the environment of Breton-speaking inhabitants of the town. A student of Breton talks about one of these bars in the following way:

**R21M(B):** [...] there aren't many people who speak Breton and that's one of the reasons why we feel close. And we became close friends fast. Like in this bar. When you hear someone speak Breton, you start talking to them and it can go on for hours. You keep talking and you don't even look at your watch. Then you exchange phone numbers, you meet next week and you become pals [...]. So when you hear someone speak Breton, you start a conversation immediately. This is how friendships start.

The minority language becomes an impulse to get to know the person speaking. Since in the circles of young people this language is invariably related to specific topics of conversation, those who speak Breton refer to mutually familiar places, people, opinions or interests, which further boosts their proximity. People who have engaged their time, energy and emotional involvement into the minority cause meet others, for whom this is also important, so they all feel naturally connected. As the Kashubian activist admits:

**C21F(K):** [...] when I accidentally meet someone in some strange place and this person knows something and is interested, or simply speaks Kashubian, I'm simply delighted and I focus all my attention on that person.

Young people believe that such relationships start easily because familiarity with the minority language evokes an instinctive sentiment causing strangers to feel

close to each other. The affinity of interests, discovered gradually as the conversation unfolds, is also of great importance.

Many people consciously involved in a minority language also share views on the world. There are therefore many possibilities of reaching mutual understanding. According to this young Kashub, Kashubian-speakers feel emotionally connected:

**A20M(K):** There is an emotional bond. If you can hear someone speak Kashubian, you immediately get closer to this person. And we are united by common views, the fact that we can trust each other and talk about various things, including opinions, and we know we won't be laughed at or misunderstood. These relations are much closer.

In this activists' opinion, all people with a passion for Kashubian and especially those who decided to learn it and use it as their first language are united by common views. Despite the fact that Kashubian activists belong to various groups, which are often markedly distinct or even conflicted – something this man is fully aware of, as he himself is engaged in this conflict – there are still groups based on close ties and there are even more potential communities. Territorial factors are of lesser importance since such communities can comprise members who meet only during especially organized events. What matters is involvement in the common cause, as the Breton activist intimates:

**K21F(B):** Nowadays many young people come from over the world [so] I'm not sure if the feeling of belonging to a specific place is really strong. I would say yes, thinking about my friends and my environment but ... for us it is so because we are in *Ai'Ta*, we have friends there, or in other associations. All of us are very much engaged. When an interesting [Breton] play is on in the theatre, we all go see it.

This woman differentiates between those united by joint actions (being members of one association, participating in the same cultural, social or political events), and those united by nothing more than living in the same region. Young people born and raised in the (post)modern world feel that they are united with other people speaking the minority language, participating in the minority culture and sharing similar interests by means of bonds that may turn into communal relations as long as people subscribing to these values are given opportunities to meet each other in person.

## Chapter 6: Community and language practices of the young

Despite the transformations in how minorities function and in the relations between their members, the long-prophesied breakdown of interpersonal ties and community life has not occurred. The changes that have taken place pertain above all to how groups are formed, namely to the shift away from the superimposed and permanent bonds that exist between people who live, reside and act together towards groups formed by individuals who are aware of their distinctiveness yet seek the support of people with whom they have something in common. Consequently, new forms of socialization emerge, and so do new types of social bonds and communities. Participation in such communities constructs the identity of individuals as well as group identity, which is based on shared involvement in certain activities. For quite some time, researchers have argued over whether it is legitimate to use the term “community” to describe different types of groups emerging in the present-day world. In their attempts to describe interpersonal relations that are established in certain more or less closed societies, many of such researchers propose a new terminology or bring into focus certain distinguishing characteristics of the groups they analyse. Such groups, which consist of people brought together by their shared concerns, interests and beliefs are sometimes referred to as “communities of interest” or “communities of assent” (Morris, 1996). In this context, however, the meaning of the word “community” goes beyond the primary meaning of the word, i.e. a group of people interested in the same thing, activity or phenomenon. As Peter Willmott (1989) points out, the word “interest” may refer both to ethnic roots, religion and politics as well as leisure activities. Importantly, such groups create a sense of identity and shared membership. Consequently, the word “community” may refer to “such sentiments or feelings, and to social bonds and patterns of behaviour that can sustain and reflect those sentiments and feelings” (Willmott, 1989: 4). In turn, Michel Maffesoli (1996) calls the groups that are formed in today’s world “new tribes,” arguing that they are based on shared emotions, which result from an affinity with others, offer individuals support, help them choose a specific lifestyle, and allow a more profound identification. In order to last, such a group creates its own rituals and practices, whose repetitive nature allows it to confirm its existence. Within such a group, individuals raised in the atomized world can undertake to perform various tasks together. Nonetheless, “emotional communities” are based on sentiments and feelings, so they are strong but not necessarily durable. As Maffesoli (1996: 122) puts it, “In contrast to the stability induced by classical tribalism, neo-tribalism is characterized by fluidity, occasional gatherings and dispersal.” As long as people remain linked to a specific group and act as part of it, the group offers them the sense that the activities that

they undertake are well-motivated and facilitates their engagement, which creates, confirms and strengthens their identity.

The existence of today's "communities" is characterized by three important elements (Davies, 2003). One of them, which invokes the classical definitions of the notion of "community," refers to the place that brings people together (it does not have to be a physical place), enabling them to gather together, get to know one another and engage in interactions. Interactions, in turn, are the second of the elements required for the existence of a group that has the characteristics of a community. It is thanks to interactions that identity is constructed. Individuals' shared identification with others is created through the same references (cultural symbols) and a sense of belonging to the same group. The present-day world facilitates simultaneous involvement in many "communities" related to emotions, interests and practices. Each of them influences persons, their perception of the reality around them and their actions. Many of the young people I interviewed and observed in the course of my research will cease to promote minority cultures in their future, change their interests and invest their energy elsewhere. Others will solidify their views and convictions and join official minority institutions or become engaged in political life. Before this happens, however, they will recruit more people to join the grassroots groups/communities to which they belong, and such newly-recruited individuals, through their participation and engagement, will continue to promote these groups and support their development. In this way, more and more people, through their relations with others and within the framework defined by the group's goals and functioning mode, will develop their awareness and identity. Such communities, which may be ephemeral or more durable, are exactly what determines to a considerable extent the future of minority languages and cultures. This chapter looks at several different types of groups that have the characteristics of a community, the formation of such groups and their functioning as well as the benefits that they offer to their members. The groups described here may vary in their characteristics, but they share a similar goal, namely to solidify the sense of collective identity and therefore influence the durability of a specific minority culture.

### **Formation and role of interest groups focused on minority issues**

What could be done to encourage young people raised in a dominant culture to take an interest in the culture of a minority so as to make them want to be involved in this culture and actively identify with it? This is one of the most difficult questions asked both by minority organizations and by the young people who actively promote and support minorities. One of the ideas that I would like to describe and analyse in this book involves creating a space in which secondary school students (who are not too young to have independent reflections, but at the same time do not have fully crystallized views and interests) could meet and work



together on issues related to a minority culture, enjoy themselves, make contacts and even strike up friendships as well as learn, thus broadening their knowledge about their “small homeland” and about what they could do to support and promote it. Examples of such activities can be found in each of the minorities that I analysed. Some of such activities are promoted by state-supported organizations established to preserve the identity of young generations, for example the Welsh organization *Urdd*, the Sorbian youth association *Pawk*, and the Breton Celtic circles. Others seek to respond to the needs of specific local communities in specific territories. Here, I would like to focus on the workshops for secondary school students that have been organized for several years by the Pomorania Students Club in Kashubia.

These workshops – called “Remus’ Wheelbarrow” [Remusowa Kara] workshops after the main character of a Kashubian novel – are an idea from a group of university students who wanted to come up with a suitable form of meetings that would give young Kashubs the opportunity to look at the Kashubian culture from a new perspective. Here is how one of the workshop organizers explains this need:

**I22F(K):** We often hear the opinions that they thought those were just old songs, grandmas in folk costumes, generally nothing but embarrassment. So it’s our mission to change this thinking.

The Pomorania students have the impression that young people usually associate the Kashubian culture with folklore performances and the Kashubian language either with elderly people or with school classes and therefore find it hard to identify with them. For several years, the workshops have been co-funded by the competent ministry, which on the one hand enables the Pomorania students to do many tasks that otherwise would not have been possible and on the other one defines the framework for such activities. Nevertheless, the Club’s preparations for the workshops still take place amid stormy discussion, in which I have participated on several occasions.

Many of the young people that I interviewed mentioned that participation in the workshops was an important experience for them – it enabled them to meet their peers interested in Kashubian culture and change their thinking about participation in cultural activities as well as made them want to join a group promoting Kashubia. I asked the Pomorania students to take me to the workshops they were organizing. I did not want the secondary school students participating in the workshops to treat me as an outsider, so I agreed with the Pomorania members that I would join the preparations and run one of the proposed workshops, thus stepping into the role of an organizer. My position was therefore twofold: I was actively involved in purely organizational issues and moderated discussions and at the same time conducted my observations.

A several-day workshop is designed to make all the participants feel that they must put certain effort, prepare a project related to the Kashubian language and/or culture to qualify for the workshop. Usually, they are offered several options, for example making a film/music video on Kashubian topics, writing a story/

drawing a comic about Kashubs/in Kashubian, making a poster/an illustration for a Kashubian work/organization and so on. The results of their efforts are then shown to all participants at the beginning of the workshops, sparking off many positive reactions and comments. Consequently, every participants feels involved from the outset, which helps in their activity during the workshops later on. Several months before the workshops, the Pomorania members tour schools and talk about their club and the “Remus’ Wheelbarrow” workshops, thus encouraging secondary school students to participate. Some people attend the workshops every year. Others go only because their friends have decided to go, but they are not convinced that they will like the proposed form of the workshops. Stories told by friends who have already participated in the workshops also play an important role. One secondary school student who has participated in the “Remus’ Wheelbarrow” workshops three times relates that she found out about the first workshop from an older friend:

**T18F(K):** [...] it was at the beginning of my first year in secondary school, and I went [to the workshop] alone. Straight from there, I went to the integration camp [of my class in secondary school], it was in the middle of the camp. [...] And I started talking about how I went there and met those people. And when the declarations were made that they wanted to learn Kashubian here, [the teacher] said, “Girl, just go to another meeting and you will drag others with you.” And they liked that.

The coach drove off from the centre of Gdańsk and travelled across Kashubia, picking up groups of students from several secondary schools on the way. When they were getting on the bus, they were somewhat disoriented – they were not sure what they should expect and how they should treat students from other schools. Initially, all participants formed small groups consisting of students from the same school. On the way to the workshops, the Pomorania members tried to introduce elements of integration games, tell something about the workshops and initiate joint songs, but that did not bring about any significant results. The situation changed slightly when a group of last-year secondary school students got on the bus. They were not going to the workshop for the first time, so they knew what they should expect. They immediately started to joke loudly and then sing, and more people joined eagerly. The regulars helped the newcomers settle in.

When we arrived, we were accommodated in triple rooms. The participants chose their own roommates, so the accommodation solidified the existing groups, thus maintaining earlier divisions. Similarly, the existing social groups initially remained intact during meals. Practically no participants talked to students from other secondary schools. On the first evening, the organizers managed to partially overcome those divisions. We all gathered in a large, chilly hall where qualification projects and their authors were presented. The organizers introduced themselves and said a few words about their club and the workshop programme. I found it interesting (and disappointing) that most of the organizers knew Kashubian yet conducted all the classes in Polish. I wondered if I should call their attention to this

fact in the evening, but I did not want to interfere in their plan, so I decided to see how the situation would develop.

The workshop started on the next day. The participants were divided into four smaller groups and allowed to choose which group they wanted to join. All the workshops were intended as both theoretical, or aimed at presenting Kashubian issues, and practical, with the participants being tasked with creating a work related to the topic (during the media workshop, for example, the organizers presented different programmes about Kashubs and Kashubian-language programmes, after which the participants were instructed to go to a nearby town and take a survey on the Kashubian life and Kashubs in that town).

Another organizer and I prepared a workshop focusing on sea-related topics. My part was more anthropological, his was more literary. I wanted to engage the participants in reflections on how closeness to the sea influenced the Kashubian culture and its image and how the Kashubs themselves defined themselves in relation to the sea. It turned out that very few of the participants felt connectedness to the sea, and some even said that they never went to the seaside. I felt that the secondary school students expected more of me, but I was not sure what I should do in that situation. So I thought I would use the time we spent sitting in a group of ten in a small room and started to ask them about what they did in their lives, why they had come to the workshops, what being Kashubs meant to them and what they thought about the Kashubian culture. Completely unexpectedly, a few people became very animated and started talking about themselves, about how they understood their Kashubian identity and above all about what annoyed them most about that culture. Two students were especially actively engaged in the discussion. It quickly turned out that they were actively involved in the promotion of the Kashubian culture, though in completely different ways: one was involved in the activity of the *Kaszëbskô Jednota* association and had very solidified views on the Kashubian reality and her words reflected the phrases used by her older friends; another was linked to a folk band in which he had been active for many years and which meant a lot to him. The argument that broke out between them gradually began to influence the students who had been initially more reserved and to engage them in the discussion. When my colleague came to redirect the discussion to literary topics, we all felt somewhat disappointed. At the same time, we knew that an important process had been initiated: that process was self-reflection.

The organizers had prepared three days filled with numerous attractions. From the first evening, the purpose was to engage people and force them to branch out of their safe groups and get to know others. Here is how one of the regular participants described the workshops, saying that the most important thing they offered was:

**P19M(K):** Openness, as simple as that. [...] everything there is so informal. Regional workshops are always associated with something serious, with a trip, a visit to some activist, but we simply have fun there. [...] We are on first-name terms with the organizers, there's no rigorous rule requiring us to go bed at a certain hour.

This trust and great openness, the fact that we don't set any boundaries, that really everyone can come if they want to – that's the only condition.

It appears that the workshops send out such a strong message specifically thanks to this voluntary aspect, these efforts to awaken interest in the Kashubian culture, sometimes among people who were previously completely uninterested in this topic (the workshop offered many people their first opportunity to consciously reflect on this issue when working on the projects to qualify for the workshop), gradual involvement in the proposed activities and even the formulation of proposals by the participants. As one secondary school student puts it:

**X18M(K):** You can talk to people more [there], about what it's like, what they do, how they feel. We then come back home or to school full of... what do you call it... full of enthusiasm. We simply know what's going on [in the Kashubian culture], we find out from other people and from each other.

The transformations in the group, the interactions between the participants and the spontaneous discussions about the Kashubian identity all demonstrated that this form proved itself well among young people. Also, my observations of the group dynamics indicated that an important role was played by individuals who already had links to Kashubian culture: they initiated discussions about the Kashubian identity, joined conversations and shared their opinions eagerly, thus encouraging others to express their opinions, initially in private situations, during conversations at the table, and then in larger groups. At the same time, I was left wanting more, even disappointed that the Kashubian language was not used during the workshops, that no one was fighting for it or even trying to use it. The interviews I had earlier taken showed that language played a much bigger role. For example, one secondary school student told me:

**Y18M(K):** [...] I liked that a lot, because the form of those meetings was very interesting. Secondly, you could meet people with quite similar interests or people who had already started to take an interest in Kashubian topics. You could use the Kashubian language, because during other trips in which we take part one or two people can speak Kashubian, and others don't understand anything. But there, you could speak Kashubian freely.

I wondered if that was how the young man had remembered the workshops in which he participated and Kashubian was indeed used there, or if perhaps he wanted to make me, a person interested in the Kashubian language and its use, feel better by saying that there were places where young people could speak this language. Kashubian activists were invited to the meeting on the last evening, and that changed a lot. The first statement was made in Polish. Since the organizers started the meeting in Polish, it was adopted as the language of the meeting without reflection. But the second speaker started speaking Kashubian, commenting that it was a language that everyone surely understood. What followed was what I had been waiting for – it was so simple that I started

kicking myself for not reacting on the first day. After the second speaker's statement, the discussions were held in Kashubian! Those who were not sufficiently fluent in Kashubian to engage in the conversation (or were not confident about their skills) answered in Polish, explaining why they had chosen Polish instead of Kashubian. When too many of such comments were made, one after another, and Polish gradually turned into the language of the meeting, the same activist (well-known for his consistent use of Kashubian) would speak out and introduce Kashubian again. Although it had seemed to me that this meeting was the weakest point of the workshops (offering the least room for interaction), it proved to mark a turning point in my observations. During the goodbye party in the night, groups of students who knew Kashubian used the language to communicate.

As this story serves to illustrate, "Remus' Wheelbarrow" workshops and similar events organized by other minorities play two roles. First of all, they offer young people who have never met before a chance to establish friendships. Such meetings are organized against the backdrop of topics related to the Kashubian identity, so the relations that emerge between the participants are based on their attitudes not only to one another but also to Kashubian culture and (as it later turned out) to the Kashubian language. In this way, the group of young people linked to the Kashubian culture is growing. By sharing a certain point of reference, groups of people with similar interests may undertake new initiatives in Kashubia. They may also join existing groups of activists. Here is how one first-year university student who had participated in the workshops in secondary school summed them up:

**P19M(K):** Over these three years, I've made friends chiefly thanks to "Remus' Wheelbarrow." It means three or four days when we spend all the time with young people who are or will be interested in the Kashubian culture. So the way it starts is that we simply shift from ordinary conversations to topics linked to Kashubs, sometimes we even start speaking Kashubian, because that's not something obvious at such meetings.

Of course, the influence of such workshops (as well as other possible activities in which young people can participate) depends on individual people, their openness to proposed topics and their willingness to join activities and participate in them and to make relevant friendships and cultivate them later on. For this reason, the organizer says cautiously that the goal of the workshops is attained if young people take even a slight interest in the Kashubian culture:

**I22F(K):** [During the "Remus' Wheelbarrow" workshops], we try to make them somewhat more aware. Maybe not exactly of the language but mainly of the fact that they are from this region, of the history of this region, what makes it stand out, why it is important for us, why it should be important for them. For older people, being Kashubian is clearly in their blood, so we also want young people to feel that way too, to catch the bug.

## From interest groups to activity-oriented communities

In recent years, many members of the Pomorania Students Club have been recruited from among the participants of the workshops, which offer young people a chance to see what the Club does and decide if they want to become involved. Previously, the Pomorania Students Club consisted only of people who had already taken an interest in Kashubia and Kashubian identity and looked for a suitable place and suitable company for themselves. Initially, many people who join the Club do not find active involvement important. It matters more for them to find a group of people like them with whom they have more in common than the fact of studying in the same city. That is how this was described by a Kashubian student who said that she felt lost at her faculty and could not join any social group. She declares that she had been unable to find a place for herself or make friends until she joined Pomorania:

**I22F(K):** [...] to me, Kashubia means not only the language but also the entire system of values. I lost this system of values during my studies, because things really look completely different in the countryside. I'd already had such a system, I knew what I should or shouldn't do. When I went to university, they did everything there that you shouldn't do. I was completely stunned by that. Initially, I liked it, but then I decided I didn't like that at all. I simply could find no common ground with those people. [...] When I came to Pomorania, and those girls were like me, they had the same system of values, they thought in the same way, in the Kashubian way, so to speak, I decided I could see that not everyone was like those people at university, there were also people that I found normal and I would stick with them, because I felt better with them.

Therefore, those who join the club above all look for a group in which they feel at home. Those who come to Gdańsk from small Kashubian villages, where life follows a different rhythm, have problems that pertain to something else and neighbours create a certain local community, so it can be difficult for them to join new groups. Several people told me that they knew about the existence of the Pomorania Club from meetings in secondary schools, but they were initially reluctant to attend them.

**G25F(K):** As for Pomorania, I was generally afraid to go there, because I thought I couldn't speak Kashubian well, and there would be people there [who] surely knew a lot, and if I, a poor girl from a village went there, what would I do there? I would only embarrass myself. But I mustered up the courage in my second year, and it was generally good. [...] there was a family-like atmosphere, one that encouraged conversations in Kashubian. [...] I found refuge in Pomorania, there is one place in the entire Tri-City area where you can speak Kashubian freely and do something together.

What plays a decisive role for the Club's existence is specifically this aspect of a "family-like" atmosphere, the fact that its members can be people with whom they

have something in common and to whom they feel closely connected through their language, origin and shared past experiences and – as something that gradually grows in importance with every meeting – through their involvement in shared activities. This young Kashubian woman also mentioned the possibility of using Kashubian. However, I could rarely hear Kashubian at the Pomorania meetings that I attended. Members of the Club explain that this is because they do not want to exclude people with a Kashubian identity who would like to become actively involved in the Kashubian culture and help create it but do not speak the language:

**I22F(K):** In Pomorania [...] we rarely speak Kashubian, because essentially only a few people speak Kashubian well. Others say that they don't want to, because they're ashamed. And there are a few people who don't speak Kashubian at all. They simply feel they are Kashubs, but they don't speak Kashubian. So if something has to be done quickly, some ongoing issues need to be handled, we speak Polish. But for example if some guests visit us and they speak Kashubian, we try to speak Kashubian. But it is hard to make us talk to each other in Kashubian in a natural way.

By using a language that everyone knows, the Pomorania students want to, as they put it, show their respect for those who do not speak Kashubian. As shown by the example above, involving people switching to Kashubian under the influence of people who consistently use Kashubian regardless of the situation, such an approach may entail negative consequences from the perspective of breaking the ice and encouraging people to get to know the language. On the other hand, this makes those who do not have crystallized views on their Kashubian identity to settle into a new group more easily.

The Club's image depends on the strong individuals who are its members and who form a group of committed members around themselves. When I started attending Pomorania's meetings as part of my research in the early 2000s, the atmosphere in the Club was completely different. Those who led the way in the Club were students with very definite and quite radically expressed views on the Kashubian identity. The conversations were dominated by the Kashubian language, and those who did not agree with what was back then a very controversial attitude to the Kashubian culture (the treatment of Kashubian identity as separate from Polish identity) could not find a place for themselves in the club. At the initial stages of group membership, having a sense of security and mutual understanding is more important than sharing the idea of the promotion of a minority culture. The latter only grows in importance when all members feel well in the group and are certain of their activities and involvement. Before this happens, a sense of incompatibility and misunderstanding acts as a deterrent. One young woman who later became a Pomorania activist relates:

**O24F(K):** [...] when I first met the Pomorania Students Club, I was devastated. I said I'd never go back.

**NDR:** *Whynot?*

**O24F(K):** Because I met various kinds of people there. I met some I'd known before, and I liked their views on Kashubia, but I also met [...] what we could call the separatist faction of young Kashubs. And I thought it was scary.

Pomorania brings together people with similar interests and views on issues related to their culture and its members gradually confirm and strengthen the ties that exist between them by undertaking consecutive activities, with young people believing that the Club's most important value involves finding similar people. Having such a group not only motivates and encourages them to do something together but also makes members of the Club feel at home:

**I22F(K):** The people I stick with in Pomorania are close friends and I have better contacts with them, because I feel I'm happier with them than with someone else.

Such an approach is confirmed by the words of a young woman who had major concerns about joining the Club yet gradually joined more activities and acquired experience and skills that, as she puts it, she would not have acquired elsewhere with her personality.

**NDR:** *When you became active here in the Pomorania Club, did you like such activity, this activity of organizing things, encouraging people...? Do you like that?*

**G25F(K):** [...] I generally didn't like being active too much, I preferred to do what others told me to do than to decide what should be done. But over time, when different duties came, I had to start acting alone. Here, I kind of had to get things done. And I think it's good, because that gave me a lot of experience and ease in handling different things.

Commitment and involvement in activities are the very reasons behind the Pomorania Club's existence. Many people admit that they initially did not want to do that, they could not and they were afraid. At the same time, however, they observe that each task, each responsibility for doing a project, organizing an event or a meeting with other people, all of which required them to be part of a well-functioning team, made them identify with the Club more and more strongly. Without this sphere of joint action for a specific purpose, those individuals would have made friendships, but they would not have been forced to form a community of action. One young Kashubian woman describes how each task she received made her feel more and more strongly that she was part of the group:

**I22F(K):** [...] the girls [from Pomorania] who were in charge back then would give us tasks. One, two, three [tasks]. So when we had those tasks, we had to come later to say if we did them or not. Gradually, that was how we settled down so well that we couldn't imagine a week without a Pomorania meeting and we also felt that what we were doing there was important, needed, and that it was indeed good that we were there.

The Pomorania Students Club is a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) that is joined by more and more people who learn from other activists what they should



do and how. Individuals, even if they hold very strong views and are strongly convinced of the need to promote the Kashubian language, cannot achieve much on their own. By supporting its members and making them feel they are not alone, the group also gives young people a sense that everything is possible. At the same time, the ideas and personalities of all members influence how the Club operates, what characteristics it takes on and how it is perceived by others. A community of practice can function specifically because of the bonds that are formed between its members in various spheres and these bonds are then gradually transformed into more profound relations. As a result of these relations, activity is seen as something pleasurable. Here is how one female member of the Club describes this aspect:

**M22F(K):** Sure, you could do something by yourself, but a group has more strength and encourages you more. We have the courage to break through. We have a chance to organize something, to get help from our friends, to create something. So I think that the likelihood of doing something good for Kashubian culture is much higher than when you're working by yourself. Besides, it is fun when you do it together with friends.

Teamwork and participation in a community of practice are very important from the educational standpoint. According to the theory of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), on the one hand, individuals learn by functioning within a certain set of specific activities and behaviours and acquire information and skills related to the activities they perform and to the ways in which they are prepared. On the other hand, by doing work that brings specific and visible results (for example when the former participants in the "Remus' Wheelbarrow" workshops later join the Club once they go to university), people start seeing the importance of being active. Above all, those who become involved begin to understand that active participation in social and cultural life makes sense, brings effects and offers measurable benefits. One member of the Club relates:

**N22M(K):** In my studies [...] I saw such things could be done and it was not beyond reach, all these things could be done with little cost and with few people, but you had a certain influence over everything. [...] here in Pomorania, I've learnt that things can be done, if you only want it, you have an influence over everything that will happen later.

The Pomorania Students Club is unique in that it is directly affiliated with the Kashubian-Pomeranian Association, meets in a room in the Kashubian House [Dom Kaszubski] in Gdańsk and remains linked to the broader organizations in many ways. Its goal involves actively promoting and supporting Kashubia and the Kashubian language. There are many students clubs affiliated with universities (for example, the Kejadenn Association at the University of Rennes 2, which

brings together students of the Breton language<sup>46</sup>), but not all of them are directly focused on action. Many of them were founded to give people who pursue similar activities (studying a minority language) or belong to the same group (speaking this language and identifying with a minority culture) a chance to meet, spend some time together and strengthen their identity. Joint action takes on different forms: from social meetings, through the cultivation of customs, to preparation of actions and the organization of the life of members of a specific minority. Such activities and their effects nonetheless are less important than the fact that they are done together and it is always possible to ask friends for support or simply spend the time together in an enjoyable way. Currently, this is the nature of the Sorabija club at the University of Leipzig, which has the only Sorbian studies program in Germany.

When I asked students what the Sorabija club did, I initially received specific answers: organizing the artistic part of the *Schadzowanka* – yearly meetings of the Sorbian intelligentsia, as well as cultural events and lectures devoted to Sorbian issues in Leipzig, preparing the celebrations of Sorbian customs outside Lusatia. After that, young people mention that membership in the club allows them to spend time with people who know one another and come from the same region:

**P22M(S):** [...] we cultivate all these Sorbian customs here in Leipzig, which is not something obvious. For example, we erect a maypole and then celebrate, there are dances and a festivity. Apart from that, [we celebrate] if someone has a birthday, we often sit together in Centrifuga, where we often talk or play games, watch TV. It's similar to a youth club to which young people come.

The club is seated in Centrifuga, a club created in the common room on the Sorbian floor of the hall of residence in Leipzig. In addition to attending several cultural events organized by the club, I not only visited Centrifuga every time I went to Leipzig but also lived there briefly sometimes. During the day, the club is very calm, so I could take the opportunity to carry out interviews with students, talk

---

46 One of the members of the *Kejadenn* club, R21M(B), described the Club's activity in the following way: "Above all, we take people who would like to come to a meeting and who are starting [to learn] the Breton language. And who can't speak yet. But there are people from Diwan, too. When I came here, I was received very well. [...] So we try to integrate people, help them... make progress in Breton, we show them places where people speak Breton, because you can obviously learn Breton in courses, but you learn it above all in everyday life. [...] this year, we've brought a Breton-language theatre group to Rennes. Also, we are volunteers for the *fest-noz* at the Yaouank festival in November. We normally also collaborate with the Diwan secondary school in writing books for children. And we try to respond to offers of projects. That's because people have their own ideas, and it is good if they can pursue them." Above all, however, members of *Kejadenn* form a group of friends who go out together, attend Breton events and demonstrations. The club's primary goal is to create a community of people who speak and learn Breton.

and drink tea. Meetings attended by more people take place in the evenings. Sometimes a few people meet to play card games or talk. Some students decide to meet via Facebook (previously by word of mouth) and throw parties in Centrifuga that end late in the night and are filled with Sorbian songs and discussions about the future of the Sorbian language. One university student of Sorbian studies said that she believed the most important thing about the club was:

**O21F(S):** [...] the community. The evenings when we sit together, have interesting conversations. Sometimes, but not very often, we discuss certain things [related to the Sorbian identity]. It's very interesting to be able to exchange opinions with other people.

The community of Sorbian (and Sorbian-speaking) students is largely based on the time that they spend together, the feeling that they can rely on others. Coupled with occasional active involvement in certain activities, this plays an important community-forming role:

**A18F(S):** There is this strong bond between us. If I want to talk to someone, I come to the club and I can always find someone to talk to. We simply feel this bond. After spending all day at the university, attending lectures, when we learn, we can sit together in the evening, play some games or simply talk.

One distinctive characteristic of the Sorabija club is that most students from Lusatia, especially those studying Sorbian studies and all the students who live on the Sorbian floor of the hall of residence (where most of the students who do not want distance themselves from their culture try to live), become members of the club. Many students declare that they knew about Sorabija's existence (from their older siblings, friends and relatives) even before they came to Leipzig, while others did not find out about the club until they arrived:

**P22M(S):** Before I went to university, I didn't know it existed. When I started [my studies], there was this first evening for first-year students: more senior students made sure to inform all those who were new in Leipzig. First, there was this first official evening when you had to declare, "Yes, I want to be in the Sorabija association," and drink this vodka that was very strong and burnt your throat. It's a ritual that means you're now in.

A different student relates that joining the club is very important for those who start these studies, because it allows them to find a group of people with whom they will spend their time in the coming years and establish strong bonds.

**L24M(S):** At the beginning, when I was a new member, it was something very important. From the very beginning I felt welcomed; I got to know all of these people there. When they went out to celebrate, I went out with them and this way I got to know others. In Leipzig the club also has a certain opinion and when you say that you're in Sorabija, the [reaction is as follows:] "Oh, he belongs to the Sorbs." In this company, you become more active than when you try to do something by yourself.

The young man points out that membership of the club facilitates self-identification with the community with which they spend their time and organize joint activities. Also, outsiders see membership of Sorabija as a demonstration of Sorbian identity. Joining the club also means becoming gradually involved in the group's customs and activities and passing them on to others, who may modify and alter them, but not reject them. One student admits that the group makes it easier to be active. Another student even says that separation from the Sorbian environment and membership of a community that must reaffirm its Sorbian identity with respect to the German environment are exactly what causes the young people who were not actively involved in Lusatia to start joining different activities in Leipzig and gradually realize that such an attitude gives them more than passivity:

**I22F(S):** Well, here in Leipzig, everyone is involved. Everyone takes part in our customs here. Everyone is in Sorabija, organizing the carnival. Well, not everyone, but most people. Things definitely look different than at home.

**NDR:** *But why is it the case that everyone [is involved] here, but very few people there?*

**I22F(S):** Because this means learning in a group. Really, everyone can join Sorabija. After that, things are automatic. At home, there are no youth associations that we could join.

Obviously, it is not true that there are no youth organizations of this type in Lusatia. There are various associations that do organize Sorbian customs or activities for young people, for example the *Pawk* association. But as long as young people are at home, in a homogenous area inhabited by the Sorbs, they do not have to confirm or prove their identity, unlike in Leipzig. Membership of the club also offers support within a group to which young people feel linked. Creating a space where individuals can meet with other people with whom they share their minority identity and where they feel that more people are in a similar situation and they can do more together is very important, especially for young people who feel they may be alone in their identity-related choices.

### ***Eisteddfod* – reinforcing a sense of belonging to a community through cultural practices**

The Welsh word *eisteddfod* (meaning a “session,” plural *eisteddfodau*) refers to a festival of Welsh culture and language. The practice dates back to the Middle Ages, with the first records of a session of bardic poetry and concerts for the Welsh aristocracy coming from 1176 (Davies, 1998). The living traditions gradually died out, but were revived in the 18th century on the wave of the Romantic search for roots, and so blossomed in the form of an “invented tradition,” as a many-day competition and Welsh cultural event (Morgan, 1983). Since then, the festival tradition has changed its form and undergone transformations, while retaining its important role as a point of reference for the Welsh national identity. There are nowadays

numerous local *eisteddfod* festivals, as well as larger events, the Urdd Eisteddfod – a youth competition, and the National Eisteddfod – a week-long event.

Carol Trosset (1993: 42) writes that this type of festival “is felt to be an enactment of fundamental elements of Welsh culture” and as such might serve as a basis for analyses of the Welsh identity. This is why the *eisteddfod* festivals play a more important role than the symbolical functions associated with invented traditions – it serves as the foundation of Welsh identity and a way to express it. In their form, the *eisteddfodau* have adjusted to the requirements of the present-day Welsh culture and reflect political and identity-related transformations within the Welsh community and the Welsh movement. For this reason, the *eisteddfod* festival is perceived by many as a “microcosm of all that is Welsh” (Bernard, 2003: 34). A present-day *eisteddfod* not only involves Welsh competitions in traditional dances, songs, music and poetry but also offers a place for rivalry in natural or mathematical sciences, modern dance competitions, performances by bands of young musicians (on the condition that the songs are performed in Welsh), creative writing competitions and so on. Thanks to their well-established role in society, repetitive nature and the meanings they convey, *eisteddfod* festivals may be interpreted a constant reconstruction of Welsh identity (Edensor, 2002).

When we look at how the *eisteddfod* festivals function at various levels of Welsh social life, their consecutive manifestations, the place that they occupy in the (Welsh and British) media and above all numerous references to the *eisteddfodau* in the statements made by the people I interviewed (both on and off the record), it clearly emerges that the festival plays a constitutive role for today’s Welsh identity – through its symbolical form and through how it shapes the attitudes of those who belong to the community. Drawing on and invoking the traditions of Welsh culture and making references to history currently appear to play a lesser role than the permanent presence of *eisteddfodau* in the life of Welsh-speaking children and the relations that are developed during such festivals between speakers of Welsh.

In fact, an *eisteddfod* entails a lot more than a week-long festival that brings together the Welsh elite. It is an entire network of meetings, competitions and games that take place throughout the year across Wales and engage people from all social classes and of all age groups. In the course of my research, I took part in different *eisteddfodau*. I went to two school-level meetings. I went to one of these meetings (in Mid Wales) together with a friend of mine – an activist and a mother of children who take part in the festival’s competitions – so I had the opportunity to find out about the organizational aspects and talk to the parents of the children performing at the festival. During the second meeting (in North Wales), I was an observer watched and warmly received by the local community. As a person who did not speak Welsh and appeared at an event for people who knew one another well and formed a relatively closed community, I garnered quite a bit of attention. I also participated in a student *eisteddfod* in Aberystwyth, the Urdd Eisteddfod in Cardiff and the National Eisteddfod in South Wales. I talked to people who did not go *eisteddfodau*, as well as to regular visitors, contestants, organizers, judges and volunteers (many people played all those roles in different moments of their lives).

All of them, regardless of the level of their engagement, said the same thing: when they thought about Wales and being Welsh, they pictured an *eisteddfod*, in its different forms.

An *eisteddfod* is difficult to define, because it comprises both competitions and shows as well as community meetings. It is a grand performance that engages everyone who comes to the festival: participants, observers and service staff. It forms a broad network of connections, styles of participation and involvement, between people who are linked to the event in different ways. For many people, an *eisteddfod* is a style of life in the Welsh culture. This was probably described most comprehensively by one Welsh secondary school student:

**Y16F(W):** Eisteddfod [...] it's a big part of every Welsh child's life. [...], we go to the Eisteddfod to feel this atmosphere, it is so nice there, there are all these little shops around this place and concerts. I danced the Welsh dances until I was 12 and that was my way of me being Welsh [laugh]. The stereotype! But that's true! In the end, it gives us confidence that we are a nation, cause as every typical nation we have our own songs and tradition. And we learn how to perform. [...] In England you don't have that, so you don't have the opportunity to learn it. It is very special. You have these experiences and that you did it with all these people. And that they all are Welsh. And it's nice. When you are at the Eisteddfod, you have days and days when you just speak Welsh and don't say a single word in English. And it's great, I love that.

The life of Welsh children largely revolves around preparations for competitions, school and local preliminaries, which are a great experience for the children, and finally the trips to the Urdd Eisteddfod and the National Eisteddfod. Rivalry between children is not very important – what matters is the possibility of experiencing the Welsh culture: Welsh dances, songs, recitations and team activities. As one secondary school student puts it, this was “a way to be Welsh.” This is particularly important, because – apart from school and after-school Welsh-language activities organized by various associations – the life of many children does not differ from the lives of their peers. They often speak the same language, even when they talk to their parents, go to the same places and watch the same television programmes as other British children. One girl who is now actively involved in political efforts to promote the Welsh language regards this method of confirming the Welsh identity as stereotypical. She herself feels surprised that she has said this, but a moment later she confirms that this is indeed how she feels – that this is the most important and conscious aspect of her Welsh childhood. Another aspect involves developing a collective identity, also a national identity, confirmed by mythical and symbolical support as well as traditions and history that everyone knows and refers to (Smith, 1986). National awareness and the reconstruction of national identity emerge through participation in and references to the *eisteddfod* festivals both in daily life and practices (school activities, performances, media messages) and in joint celebrations (the National Eisteddfod) (Edensor, 2002). Also, there are the practical skills that children acquire during competitions and the characteristic

socialization of Welsh-speaking children in a performative culture (Trosset, 1993). Many of the individuals I interviewed mentioned that the experience of performing on stage, which almost every Welsh-speaking child has, influenced their future public activity. The secondary school student quoted above also stressed that participation in performances distinguished the Welsh from the English, who had to develop their talents individually. Another aspect mentioned by the young woman refers to the relations that develop between the Welsh-speaking participants in *eisteddfod* festivals and the emerging values related to their functioning within a community. Participants in *eisteddfodau* feel that they are there together, for the same reasons and for the same purpose. The bonds between them are confirmed and strengthened by the Welsh language, which is used by everyone and distinguishes them from those “on the outside” – outside the festival, outside the community. Although the relationship between the *eisteddfod* festivals and the Welsh language has manifested itself in numerous ways throughout history and has not always been obvious (cf. Bernard, 2003), it now not only has symbolical importance for young people raised in the times of devolution and activities aimed at preserving the Welsh language and stimulating its development but also gives them the sense that there is a time and place in which Welsh is the primary language of communication.

Consequently, *eisteddfodau* organize the lives of Welsh-speakers and Welsh-learners (for more information about the role of *eisteddfodau* for language learners, see Newcombe, 2007). All Welsh-speaking and bilingual schools collaborate with Urdd, a youth organization that prepares local competitions. Practically all Welsh-speaking children take part in such competitions, regardless of whether they want to perform on stage and enjoy doing so. Depending on their skills, they may take part in sports or science competitions, recitations, dances, musical shows... One of my sources, L., a 20-year-old student of Welsh from North Wales, relates with a flush spread over her face that when she was a child, she wanted to participate in all competitions and her parents had to stop her. She believes that the families in the Welsh-speaking world could be divided into what she calls “*eisteddfod* families” and “non-*eisteddfod* families,” or those that become involved in *eisteddfod* festivals and try to participate at many levels, vs. those whose involvement is limited to taking children to additional classes that prepare them for competitions and then to the competitions. Her family was definitely an *eisteddfod* family, so the whole of her life had been guided by participation in various competitions:

**L20F(W):** Every Saturday we go to this small *eisteddfod*, in different communities. Usually, it is either in the village hall or in the chapel. And then you just compete. And then you get the results, and you get small awards, like 50 pence. It is like that every week. [...] The small *eisteddfod* starts around October and lasts until April. There is a few months’ break. Besides this period, everything was about *eisteddfod*. And in between, we prepared for a big *Eisteddfod*.

Some related that they participated in school *eisteddfodau* only because their teachers had made them, but they did not like it. One university student relates:

**U22M(W):** Everybody had to be in a choir. It was different between primary school and secondary school. In primary school we really enjoyed it. And then you realize you cannot sing. And you stuck with reciting, but you're not a poet. And you become less motivated to do it personally. You still enjoy watching it. But you don't want to be on the stage and compete yourself.

For small children, the *eisteddfod* competitions are quite an experience. Some love it, others are afraid to perform on stage and try to participate only in group performances. After months of trials, when the time comes for local competitions, all members of the local community gather in the schools, halls or other places where the competitions are held. Everyone has someone linked to *eisteddfod* competitions: a child, a grandchild, a nephew. Watching the competitions is not exactly exciting (only the parents are excited, and only when their own children are performing) – one after another, children sing the same songs, recite and dance... As soon as their children walk off stage (often only to return later on to take part in another competition), many parents go to a nearby pub where they comment on the school shows with a certain detachment. But when I once tried to find out what they think about that, they all went out of their way to explain to me, an outsider who does not understand the distinctive aspects of local life, why preserving the Welsh culture would not be possible without *eisteddfodau*. They said that thanks to Urdd children not only learn Welsh songs and dances (the traditional culture) but above all have a place where they can speak the Welsh language outside school. They explained that they themselves took part in *eisteddfod* competitions, and so they knew that Welsh culture was not the same as English culture, and they try to convince me that they cannot imagine their children could not being involved. The discussion was interrupted by one of the parents shouting that the dance competition is about to start. We all came back to the room to watch the children exerting themselves on stage. From their perspective, an *eisteddfod* festival is just a bit of fun. But from the perspective of later years in their lives, it may take on symbolical significance. L., who believes that participation in *eisteddfodau* is a style of life, explains:

**L20F(W):** [I started when] I was about 4–5 years old starting out. And since then I have been doing it all the time, so I've got experience. This year I perform, too, so we have already started rehearsals. There is the Eisteddfod yr Urdd, that's for children, from about 4 years old to about 21. And there is the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol [National Eisteddfod], and that's the oldest type of *eisteddfod*. With old people, in their 80s as well as 5-year-old children doing it. It's a big tradition, and that is a sort of celebration of Welsh culture and language, really. Because mostly everyone there is Welsh-speaking and you hear it around the hills everywhere. It is a big festival. And everyone is Welsh speaking there, and people come from all of Wales.

**NDR:** *Do you like it?*

**L20F(W):** Oh, definitely. I don't know what I would do without it. It's a part of my life. And everybody knows what an *eisteddfod* is. Without that, it would be really



different. It is really important to celebrate and to remember that we've got still a living language, really.

The fact that “everybody knows what an *eisteddfod* is” plays a very strong symbolic community-forming role. All Welsh people – regardless of whether they are actively involved in *eisteddfodau*, visit them as viewers or know Welsh – can refer to the competitions as a foundation for the Welsh culture and its medium. Of course, outside local festivals, where everyone knows everyone, rivalry plays a more important role. Those who take part in these competitions are the winners of the lower-level competitions. During the Urdd Eisteddfod in Cardiff, I had the impression that everyone was tense. However, the regulars explained to me that the location also influenced the atmosphere of the competitions. After the main competitions, I felt that the tension had eased and the participants, in particular the older ones, behaved like everyone their age – they were attempting to escape the control of the organizers and guardians. At some point, I even started to get the impression I was at a sort of youth camp, where everyone knew everyone well and joked and took part in the activities organized for them only because they were already there. The competitions may also be seen as a pretext to meet people from other schools and other places in Wales.

Also, the competitions play a role for the secondary school students interested in Welsh culture by helping them choose their path in life, because they give them a chance to test themselves and to be assessed by authorities outside school. One university student of Welsh relates:

**G19F(W):** I had the idea to study music and history, but as for studying Welsh at the university, I wasn't sure. But it made a difference when I went to the end of the competition in the Urdd Eisteddfod and got first place in the scriptwriting competition. And I think that gave me a bit of confidence. And then I felt that I could do it. Because it is different. When you're in school, the feedback from teachers at school it's different than having a prize from someone who doesn't know you. So that was a big shock, but at the same time, it made me realize that ok, I am quite good at this, maybe I should carry on with this.

In turn, the atmosphere of university-level competitions is completely casual and social, as if everyone realized that the competitions are simply games, something “you do because you are Welsh,” but they should be taken with a certain grain of salt. Very few people want to make it to the National Eisteddfod, or at least very few people want to show they care about doing so.

The National Eisteddfod is an event that takes place at many different levels. One of them is formed by the people who organize the event – the institutions and organizations that make sure that the festival is logistically and financially prepared, the contestants and their loved ones, the organizers and hordes of volunteers. Many of them are recruited locally in the area where the festival is organized in a given year. It is held in a different place and in a different part of Wales every year – alternately in the north and in the south, making it possible

to involve new people in its organization, and also giving inhabitants of different parts of Wales who do not go to all the competitions a pretext to come and see the National Eisteddfod. This also has an impact on the image of Wales, which is seen by many as heterogeneous, even divided. As one student puts it:

**U22M(W):** It's a good way to get to know your country better. Because it is in a different location every year, so you go there. Otherwise, I wouldn't spend all week in some of these places.

When the National Eisteddfod is organized in a given area, Welsh-speaking individuals, especially those involved in different forms of promoting the Welsh language, regardless of their profession and social status, drop or reschedule all their occupations and engagements to become actively involved in the preparations. I asked a friend of mine who is a lecturer at Bangor University if we would meet at a certain regularly held academic conference, as we usually did. She replied, "You know, I won't be able to come, because this year the Eisteddfod will be near where I live and I will be needed there." Everyone in Wales understands this explanation. Volunteers do everything: they organize accommodation, help with the logistics, sell the tickets, and help people navigate their way across the vast site with tents and stalls featuring presentations of people and institutions.

Preparations for the National Eisteddfod are grand in style. The festival occupies a huge area that is always located outside a city. There is a specially designated area where competitions and accompanying lectures are held, Welsh institutions present their achievements and organizations encourage people to become members. A large pink tent is where the most important performances and presentations play out – here is where the festival is opened and closed, the winners receive prizes and appear on stage again and the most prestigious competitions take place, including the "chaining of the bard"<sup>47</sup>. Some people come to the National Eisteddfod specifically to watch the shows and therefore book seats near the stage. But the *eisteddfod* life is particularly vibrant outside the main tent, with crowds of visitors moving along designated alleys or, if it is raining, running from one place to another. Dance, song and recitation competitions take place in numerous tents. Other tents host displays of scientific experiments. Still others accommodate stands for learners of Welsh (and the competitions organized specifically for them) – here is where they can find out where they can continue their education most effectively and how. There is an art tent where the most important Welsh artists present their paintings, installations and audio-visual displays. All Welsh-language institutions set up stands, where visitors are encouraged to study at different Welsh universities that present their programmes and stipends for speakers of Welsh as well as organize a number of lectures and discussions devoted to studies of the Welsh language. Educational, social and cultural organizations also have stands. Many of

---

47 A very old tradition, dating back to 1176, of recognizing the bard that wins the competition for "awdl" poetry (written in a strict metre form called *cynghanedd*).

them organize meetings or shows prepared by their members. Welsh publishers present new publications and local producers, craftsmen and artists showcase and sell their products. Several tents put on plays in Welsh, for which the actors (both amateurs and professionals) prepare for many months. There is also a place for folk music concerts and the sale of CDs. At the back, there is a small stage for artists playing all sorts of music. There are small children jumping on the grass outside the stage, and groups of people sitting or standing at tables, eating and drinking local beverages sold from trailers. There is a different type of music coming from every corner and people are variously engaged, making their way between the stands, performances and presentations, with or without a plan. Here is how one Welsh student described this:

**O20M(W):** There is nothing better than the Eisteddfod. It brings all people together, associations, charities, political parties... we are all on top of it. [...] Maybe it is expensive, but does it matter? The word *eisteddfod* means more than the physical stuff that we are doing. It's the feeling you get, it's seeing people for the first time, meeting people you haven't seen for a long time, networking between institutions and associations, competing. It's the feeling rather than a festival. It's not about the physical stuff, but about emotions.

In addition to the festival site, there is also a campsite that is located at a certain distance and occupied chiefly by young people. Close to the campsite, there is another tent with a music stage where young Welsh bands and sometimes even friendly bands from across the world play concerts into the late-night or early-morning hours. The atmosphere here resembles that of the Woodstock festival – there is a lot of alcohol and exuberant dancing, with groups of young people sitting outside the tents, playing the guitar and singing. Consequently, the National Eisteddfod takes place at several levels also in the social sense – there are official presentations and competitions, and every guest receives a programme of the events, which take place simultaneously in many places. Queues for some performances, especially theatrical performances in small tents, and the most important competitions start to form long before their beginning. As for other events, visitors are free to come and leave during the shows. In parallel with the official programme, there are unofficial meetings whose importance is even greater than that of the official activities, prepared meticulously many months in advance. People go to the National Eisteddfod to meet other people, whom they may know or not know, talk, drink beer and engage in discussions on the situation of Wales and the Welsh language. Here is how one student described the atmosphere of the festival:

**I19F(W):** One part of it is seeing so many people that you don't see often because it brings everyone from all of the country together. [...] And also, it's a massive cultural festival, so there is so much of everything around, there is art there, children singing over there. It's just a lovely feel, apart from when somebody does not win [laugh].

The National Eisteddfod has many participants. Most of them are students and observers, who come to spend some time at the festival, feel its atmosphere. The national event always takes place in early August to allow everyone to come and participate. Some people attend every year for a week with their families, friends and children, with trailers or tents, and treat the festival as an important part of their summer holidays. There are also people who reserve spots for their trailers many months before the festival to make sure that there will be enough space for them. Others, especially young people, make arrangements with their friends, camp out and sleep in tents, take part in competitions, in particular in the concerts of Welsh bands after dusk. Still others come to the festival for a day or two to assess the organizational aspects. They usually come to see the most important events (such as the churning of the bard) that take place in the last days of the festival. But there are also people who come just to see for themselves what the festival is all about, because they live nearby. It is estimated that the festival site is visited by around 20,000 people every day.

Young people stress that those who meet at the National Eisteddfod come from all over Wales, but they also note that many of the visitors are regulars. They have the impression that these are largely the same people linked to the Welsh culture and Wales, for whom presence at the festival carries not only social but also symbolic significance. One teenager even opines that it is hard to meet new people at the National Eisteddfod:

**H16M(W):** I don't know if you will meet new people there, because in the Eisteddfod you always meet the same old people. You go walking there, and you always meet the ones you met two years ago.

At the same time, as a result of the festival's repetitive nature and the fact that it attracts specific people who share something – not so much a common vision of Wales, because these may be completely different, but rather a conviction that they should cultivate and manifest their Welshness – the *eisteddfod* participants quickly form bonds:

**U22M(W):** When you go to the Eisteddfod, you see people from all of Wales. You see them every year there, cause they support it every year. So those people who go to the Eisteddfod, they form a community.

Those who do not want to or cannot come to the festival in person can watch detailed coverage of the event on the Welsh channel S4C, which broadcasts many of the performances live, carries interviews with guests and authorities on issues related to the Welsh world as well as discussions on the decisions of the judges. Before the Welsh-language channel was established, the festival was covered by the BBC. The fact that programmes devoted to the National Eisteddfod were shifted to a channel that is intended not only for the Welsh, but above all for speakers of Welsh, reinforced the message of the creation of an imagined community of Welsh-speaking individuals (cf. Browne, 2005). The role that the mass media play in this respect cannot be stressed enough. Whether directly or indirectly, the media

convey ideas needed to create and preserve the recipients' collective identity. On the one hand, they recreate the conviction that a specific community really exists and that certain individuals (recipients) belong to that community. On the other hand, they shape the identity of a group – in this case, people who are happy and enthusiastic about their culture and who speak Welsh (cf. Jones, 2007). Thanks to television, all those who identify with being Welsh may follow the National Eisteddfod's program, the related events, in a sense the festival's atmosphere and most definitely weather, which is always discussed extensively.

Since the National Eisteddfod is a calling card of Welsh identity, the festival also carries political significance. On the one hand, politicians and parties appear at the festival and argue that their platform is good for Wales. On the other hand, the National Eisteddfod itself also becomes a subject of political discussions. In the mid-20th century, a controversial rule was introduced, making Welsh the only permitted language of the festival. Many people believe that the rule excludes people and creates divisions in Welsh society, because it limits the festival participation of those who identify with Welshness yet do not speak Welsh. They argue that if the National Eisteddfod is to be a prism through which the Welsh nation should be seen, it should be open to everyone who feels part of it (cf. Watkins, 2007: 181–182). Others stress that the observance of this rule is the only thing that prevents the festival from being dominated by the English language, whose presence would marginalize the use of the minority language.

The people I interviewed, who not only are involved in activities promoting the Welsh culture but also speak Welsh, have well-established views on this issue. The ubiquity of the Welsh language and the possibility of meeting people who not only have the same interests but also speak the same language and belong to the same minority are exactly what makes the atmosphere of the festival so special.

**D20F(W):** It is such a unique week and place, we are all together. It's a week when basically everybody speaks Welsh. And all these people get together in one place. And it's about celebrating being Welsh and speaking Welsh.

This young woman argues that the National Eisteddfod is about “celebrating [...] speaking Welsh” – the purpose is not only to cultivate traditions or even meet friends but also to find people who are in the same situation and feel stronger together:

**D20F(W):** It is where you meet friends, and you can keep the language going. People see that there are people out there who are doing the same and it is important for them. Because here, no one actually speaks Welsh, if you go to a party or a seminar, there is no Welsh. But when you are at the Eisteddfod, everyone speaks Welsh.

Many young people complain that Welsh is a socially accepted language only as long as it is used in specially designated areas. They relate that they have met with unpleasant reactions, for example when they addressed a shopkeeper in Welsh. During the National Eisteddfod, by contrast, speaking Welsh comes as no surprise – it is the rule. I was often accosted by people who asked me questions, to

which I replied shyly, “*Dwi ddim yn siarad Cymraeg*” (I don’t speak Welsh). Such an answer sometimes provoked a grimace of disgust, so I quickly added (in Welsh) that I was from Poland. The sense that Welsh is not merely a language that can be used on equal terms but also the most important language of the festival is important to young people:

**Y16F(W):** Because you take part in all these activities and you meet people who speak Welsh all the time, you get used to it, and you start to think you don’t need to speak English, at least in some circumstances.

Young people claim that since Welsh is not forced and it can be heard everywhere and the activities in which they participate (both officially and unofficially) are linked to the Welsh culture and take place in the Welsh and Welsh-speaking community, they develop a stronger sense of their identity. That is because this sense shaped by interactions with others. As one student puts it:

**L20F(W):** [...] in the past few years you hear more of it [English language]. But when you go to the Eisteddfod, everyone’s Welsh and it’s really nice cause you just feel more Welsh.

Some even believe that participation in the National Eisteddfod bears testimony to an individual’s Welsh identity. Welshness is reinforced by participation in the festival, which confirms links to the culture and the nation.

**R20M(W):** The Eisteddfod is what we do to show that we are Welsh. You’re taking part in all these activities to show that you’re a part of this, to show that you are Welsh.

During the National Eisteddfod, Welshness manifests itself in different ways. Just as there are many ways to participate in the festival, there are also many Welsh identities (Davies, 1998: 151). The festival is a place both for those who confirm their Welshness by participating in traditional Welsh cultural activities and for those who are just starting to think about themselves in terms of belonging to a specific nation by having fun and spending their time with people who identify with Welshness. All the people who are actively involved in the National Eisteddfod admit that the festival strengthens their Welsh identity. But there is more:

**I19F(W):** I think it [Eisteddfod] is a sense of national pride because it’s a part of our cultural history. Everybody knows that the Welsh are good at singing. So this is a kind of proof that they are.

Depending on the age and the group of people with they come to the festival and the people they encounter, festival-goers can discover their Welsh identity in different ways, and this identity can have different characteristics. Those who come to the National Eisteddfod are people active in the Welsh culture – politicians, associations that present their activity and finally hordes of Welsh activists who try to persuade other visitors to support the promotion of the Welsh culture and

the Welsh language financially or through active participation. According to an activist with *Cymdeithas yr Iaith*, an *eisteddfod* is a place where it is possible to recruit new members:

**E25F(W):** We do use the *eisteddfod*, the two festivals, the National and Urdd Eisteddfod [to recruit new members]. We send our volunteers there, we hold events throughout the week, from the opening events to rallies. We speak to people, trying to get them to join and to see what they can do in their area.

Many of the Welsh activists I talked to confirmed that the National Eisteddfod marked a turning point in their lives. During the festival, they met and made friends with people who had already participated in the Welsh movement and for the first time thought consciously that they could become actively involved in the promotion of the Welsh language. A Welsh student and activist says:

**B20M(W):** I think I joined *Plaid Cymru*, the National Party and *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* at the same time, at the Eisteddfod, when I was 17.

It is also possible to join the community of Welsh-speaking activists through participation in the National Eisteddfod in a different way. One young Welsh man who comes from a “non-eisteddfod family” relates that he first came to the festival because he had taken an interest in Welsh politics and concluded that he had to see what the National Eisteddfod really looked like. Participation in the festival made him more active also in his Welsh-language school, and so he returned to the festival, this time as a participant:

**W18M(W):** Since I got a little bit more involved with Welsh politics, I started to be more involved also with everything to do with Welsh culture. And they kind of dragged me into the choir and we went to the Eisteddfod. And I started to enjoy it then.

We can wonder what makes young people with certain links to Welshness and the Welsh language decide to switch from a passive stance to active involvement during a week-long camp. To someone like me, who went to the National Eisteddfod together with people who were already involved in Welsh culture, the answer is obvious. Young people who invest their free time and energy in becoming actively involved in Welsh culture feel that they have found people close to them, who have similar experiences and similar interests. Active involvement provides the basis for and complements the social and friendly relations that are developed between the participants in the festival and that young people would like to have also in their everyday lives. During the festival, young people join a group that consists of people brought together by the Welsh language and their willingness to spend time together. One university student from a non-Welsh-speaking family said that during the National Eisteddfod she saw for the first time that there were many people in the same situation as her and that they were enthusiastic about their second language. Here is how this student defines the newly-discovered sense of belonging to a community:

**D20F(W):** Eisteddfod [is important] because everybody is together, just enjoying together the Welsh language. No matter where you are, you can be in the pub, you can be in the field, on a bus, but as long as people are gathering and enjoying, using the Welsh language, they're together feeling the same thing.

## Minority communities of practice: language, education, identity

Communities of practice are one of the most important types of group that young people form and through which they forge and strengthen their collective identity (also as a minority group). The notion of “communities of practice” was posited by Jean Lave and Étienne Wenger, who analysed social learning methods. The concept is therefore linked to the theory of “situated learning” (Lave & Wenger, 1991), which holds that “learning [is] not [...] a process of socially shared cognition that results in the end in the internalization of knowledge by individuals, but as a process of becoming a member of a sustained community of practice” (Lave, 1991: 65). Communities of practice are groups of people formed around shared efforts or work, who “develop and share [...] practices – as a function of their joint involvement in mutual activity” (Eckert & Wenger, 1994: 2), during which the identities of those participating in such practices are formed. In Wenger’s formulation, communities of practice must meet three requirements. First of all, their members must interact at different levels, and through these interactions mutual engagement is formed. Secondly, all the participants must share certain endeavours and practices that are referred to as a joint enterprise. Thirdly, those participating in a community of practice must have a shared repertoire of resources related to language, style and routines through which they express their identity as group members (Wenger, 1998: 72–85).

Forming such a community of practice requires something more than the motivation of individuals. The individuals must unite in their pursuit of a common goal and in order to unite, they must meet and establish relations, find a place for themselves in their engagement and start working together. Communities of practice are therefore formed in places in which individuals must spend more time together and engage in various types of interactions. A community is formed around such places and the individuals that appear there are gradually included into this community. As a result of working together and engaging in shared activities, people can benefit from their participation in a group, and new individuals, by contributing to the achievement of the community’s goals, internalize its ideology and become strongly linked to it (McIntosh & Youniss, 2010: 31). Young people from minority cultures form different types of communities of practice that are or are not institutionally rooted. Such communities may be found both in amateur theatre or musical groups as well as in youth organizations that arrange for activities for others. The aforementioned students clubs can be also regarded as communities of practice.



One example of a community of practice *par excellence* that I would like to present here is the Diwan immersion secondary school. This unique school is where young people spend most of their time, because they live in a residential house<sup>48</sup> that is located in a building next to the school, learn in Breton, participate in numerous school and after-school activities and remain under the influence of the Breton movement's discourse. The Diwan students learn not only the Breton language but also the skills related to living in a specific group that shares certain practices through which they form their identity in relation to the community (Wenger, 1998: 4). Consequently, learning in Diwan is a process of becoming a member of a certain community of practice (Lave, 1991; Eckert & Wenger, 1994). Before I explore more deeply the functioning of this community of practice, the nature of this developing identity, and what the students learn at school, I must first briefly present the history of Diwan schools.

---

48 Boarding schools and halls of residence where young people from a minority culture reside are very good places for the formation of communities of practices. Such places include for example the Pantycelyn hall of residence at Aberystwyth University, where young Welsh-speaking people not only live together but also act together and engage in activities promoting their language, thus forming a strong community and engaging more people in these activities. Here is how one young resident describes the place:

**B20M(W):** I am an active person, and we have a lot of opportunities to do things together. And I always say to people: if you want to have a quiet life, don't go to Pantycelyn, because it's dynamic and very noisy. And most of the people there are Welsh, and it's a brilliant thing. And the canteen means a lot for the social aspect, cause everybody is meeting for lunch and dinner in the canteen and everyone socialises. Also, a Welsh Students Union is located in Pantycelyn, and we are organising Welsh language social events, from gigs, meetings to performances, and every month we have Welsh language nightclub where only Welsh language songs are played through the night. It's good fun, and we can socialise. The good thing about Pantycelyn is that when you meet Welsh people from Pantycelyn, you also meet other people from the Welsh language community in the town. Another community of practice is formed in the hall of residence of the Sorbian secondary school in Budyšin/Bautzen. Just like in the Diwan boarding school, young people not only live here and participate in daily school classes and social gatherings but also have an opportunity to become actively involved in the Sorbian cultural life:

**G25M(S):** There were only Sorbs in the boarding school, because the students whose parents were German were from the Budyšin area. The atmosphere was very friendly. All the time at school, we were with friends, all this time spent together – it was the most beautiful time. In the morning, we had breakfast together. [...] Sometimes, this was like a camp, but one that continued all year. We learned together and celebrated together, which was the coolest thing. I think fondly of that time, because it was something special. We prepared Sorb traditions together, such as *mejemetanje*, we sang in bands and performed in a theatre – this was also included.

The first Diwan immersion school was established in 1977 on the wave of the popularity of the Breton movement, which caused the re-evaluation of Breton culture in 1970s and initiated modern thinking about the necessity of protecting the Breton language (cf. Perazzi, 1998; Chauffin, 2017). Diwan schools were established and were long run by Breton activists. Since their inception, the Diwan schools have faced numerous problems, both institutional (France regarded education in a language other than French as unconstitutional and despite their efforts Diwan schools were not granted the status of public schools) and financial (they often found themselves on the brink of bankruptcy) (Nicolas, 2001: 136). The functioning of the schools relies on the active engagement of the teachers, staff and parents, who help the school organizationally (Diwan is an associative school) and financially – numerous *festoù noz* were organized in Brittany and the symbolical proceeds (from the tickets and the crêpes made and sold by parents) were allotted to secure the school's fundamental needs. At the same time, the schools and the people who ran them as well as the parents who sent their children there were strongly linked with and involved in the movement demanding that the Breton language and other minority languages in France be recognized and given equal rights. The Diwan students appeared at all demonstrations staged in Brittany, almost becoming their symbols. In 1994, the only Diwan secondary school was opened in Carhaix/Karaez in central Brittany, on the outskirts of town in an area away from other buildings – which also creates the unique atmosphere of being “outside” the town, the community and the reality of France in the 21st century. Young people from the whole of Brittany come to this boarding school to continue their immersion education and live there. Currently, the school has around 250 students aged 16–18.

I conducted field research during my several stays at the Diwan secondary school. I was introduced by Fanny Chauffin, a Breton activist and a teacher of French who at the time was writing her doctoral dissertation on Diwan schools. In previous years, the school had built a new residential house, which resulted in a considerable improvement of the conditions in which the students lived. The school helps students forge contacts and spend their time together. The residential house, where most of the students of this small school lived, had a large room where the students could meet in their free time. It also had a smaller room where musical bands (there are always several of them in the school) could rehearse. Outside the buildings, there is a large lawn where, if the weather permits, students can sit, play football, play the guitar, sing, talk and enjoy themselves. It was on that lawn that I took most of the interviews with the students. Initially recruited by Fanny Chauffin and the *animateur* who watched over the students' safety and maintained order at school, students gradually started to approach me and ask if I could record interviews with them. I had off-the-record conversations with many students over meals in the canteen. I also audited classes and ran workshops. Whenever I came back to the school, the atmosphere and the language practices were somewhat different. Some classes tried to speak Breton, although most of the young people only used French in contacts between one another. However, all of them took part in

different school and after-school Breton-language activities (musical and theatrical activities, creative writing workshops) consistent with their interests.

When I first arrived at the secondary school for longer as part of the research described in this book,<sup>49</sup> the students were preparing for a demonstration in support of the Breton language<sup>50</sup> that was to be organized two weeks after I left the school. Both in interviews and in off-the-record conversations, the students often referred to that fact, declaring firmly that they would attend the demonstration and explaining why they believed it was important. Another important event that influenced the atmosphere in the school during my stay there was a trip of several dozen students to Brest for a concert of Danyèl Waro, a Creole singer from Réunion Island. Before the concert, the students had a meeting with the artist that was completely different from the school meetings I had earlier attended. Although the students were initially shy and the teacher had to start the conversation, when the discussion turned to the linguistic situation and the oppression of minorities by the state, the conversation became less formal and even the students who did not say anything nodded their heads and gave out sounds expressing their dissatisfaction with the linguistic situation and their contempt for France's language policy. For the next two days, groups of students would sing Waro's songs they had remembered, as well as Breton songs that they thought were close to that context. In the interviews I took, they also referred to France's oppressive language policy, which they had discussed with the artist. My next meeting with the students was during *Ar Redadeg*, a race organized every two years by an association that had its roots in the Diwan school. The route of this week-long race is planned across Brittany, and people and associations "buy" the kilometres that they run, holding their "message" (the words of an important Breton figure addressed to the participants in the race and read out at the end of the race). The income from the race is allotted to financing previously selected Breton-language projects and activities. Many Diwan school students and graduates volunteer to help during the event. The school also bought kilometres, and a group of a dozen students and graduates ran together in the middle of the night. All of them were dressed up and carried flags and banners, sang in Breton and enjoyed themselves. The Diwan schools were also engaged in other activities related the race: different schools hosted festivals and events organized by students, teachers and parents.

The school is an exceptional institution that is very often perceived only through the prism of the knowledge that the students acquire and that is confirmed by tests and exams. However, what the students of that school learn goes far beyond the

---

49 I also visited the Diwan secondary school earlier in the course of my research as part of the UNESCO/Keizo Obuchi Fellowship in 2006/2007, when I was gathering materials for my doctorate (cf. Dolowy-Rybińska, 2011).

50 The demonstration had 10,000 participants. On the same day, similar demonstrations were held across France in places inhabited by language minorities.

knowledge found in textbooks. Jean Lave and Étienne Wenger (1991: 53) called this process situated learning, concluding that:

As an aspect of social practice, learning involves the whole person; it implies not only a relation to specific activities, but a relation to social communities – it implies becoming a full participant, a member, a kind of person. In this view, learning only partly – and often incidentally – implies becoming able to be involved in new activities, to perform new tasks and functions, to master new understandings. Activities, tasks, function, and understandings do not exist in isolation; they are part of broader systems of relations in which they have meaning. These systems of relations arise out of and are reproduced and developed within social communities, which are in part systems of relations among persons. The person is defined by as well as defines these relations. Learning thus implies becoming a different person with respect to the possibilities enabled by these systems of relations. To ignore this aspect of learning is to overlook the fact that learning involves the construction of identities.

This lengthy quote provides an excellent illustration of the processes taking place in the Diwan secondary school, where education means not only acquiring knowledge or linguistic skills but also becoming a conscious participant in Breton life, a process that means engaging in shared practices (related to learning and living together, establishing friendships, having fun, and participating in the activities of the Breton movement) and remains under the influence of the discourse related to endangered languages and the need to protect the Breton culture. The students also learn engagement in activities promoting the Breton language and culture. And since “[t]he construction of practitioners’ identities is a collective enterprise and is only partly a matter of an individual’s sense of self, biography, and substance. The construction of identity is also a way of speaking of the community’s constitution of itself through the activity of its practitioners” (Lave, 1991: 74), I will allow Diwan’s students and graduates to present the school in their own words, as a place that shapes their identity.

In line with the theory of situated learning, the education process is not only about what we do but also what atmosphere we do it in, with whom, in what conditions, and what attitudes we have. Diwan students and graduates speak most about the atmosphere at the secondary school and the close relations that are formed between them. The community formed by the students of that school is particularly strong, because they are together all the time, not only during classes. As one of them says:

**B17F(B):** We live at the boarding school and we stay here all week, so we live as a group and have to be together all the time, 24 hours a day, here at the school. [...]

The very fact that we live at the boarding school and are together all the time enriches our social lives, interpersonal relations, generally our life as a community.

One Diwan graduate explains that thanks to the language and common objective of learning in Breton, relations between people become closer. He also points

out another important aspect of how communities of practice function: due to the small number of people associated with the school (teachers and students) everyone knows one another and the network of connections creates “mutual engagement” among everyone who makes up the community:

**J21M(B):** This is a different state of mind than at a classic French secondary school.

First of all, everything is in Breton, and that changes everything. Moreover, there are not many of us, so our classes are small and we know everyone. It’s a bit like a second family. And it’s a boarding school that we live at. I lived at the boarding house from middle school to the end of secondary school; I got accustomed to it and really liked it.

Another aspect of living together and sharing all everyday practices with the same people, who share a common objective, involves treating one another as members of the same community, within which everyone helps one another:

**F18M(B):** That’s because we have close relations; we are together all the time, the whole week. So we have to support each other somehow. And we always find the time to have fun, but also to help each other with different problems, with homework or with problems in private life as well. If someone has trouble with their family, or friends, or if things are not working out with their boyfriend or girlfriend. [...] And we really are there for each other.

As this shows, the students form a strongly idealized image of the community that exists at the Diwan secondary school. They maintain that there is no rivalry between them, with everyone helping one another and cooperating. Many of my interlocutors also draw attention to the sense of solidarity and democracy that prevails within the school:

**E16F(B):** I very much like the solidarity between people. The fact that we know everyone at the secondary school, and that brings us very close to each other. We even speak to teachers using *tu*, rather than *vous*. I think that shortens the distance between teachers and pupils. That really helps us learn, it motivates us even more than in other secondary schools, where everything is more formal.

Reinforced by mutual practices and active participation in life in school and outside of school, the relations between pupils are viewed as being not just strong, but also permanent:

**H20M(B):** [...] even here, in Rennes, I meet with friends I have known since pre-school. We are very good friends. Because we were at the boarding house all week and together experienced things other than just school classes, we feel like more than friends, I treat them like my brothers and sisters. [...] I meet everyone at least once a year, some people I see rarely, but we form a kind of chain and know what’s up with one another. This is a community, because we meet and can count on one another.

A second element of a well-functioning community of practice is “mutual endeavours.” There is no lack of those, not only at the Diwan secondary school, but in the whole immersive Breton schooling system. Because the existence of the Diwan schools was continually under threat, the students participated in various types of activity for the sake of the school: collecting money, holding protests, organizing cultural events, the proceeds from which were allocated to support the further existence of the school. As one secondary school student recalls:

**B17F(B):** [...] from the beginning [of my education in Diwan] we participated in organizing events, lotteries, games, *fest-noz*, Breton traditions... And in all, I participated in such things when I was really small. I must have been about seven when I was already a waitress serving crepes during the *fest-noz*, and I was really happy about it. We did a lot of different things and it had an effect on us.

All of these things fit into the context of the broader Breton movement. They bring young children already into contact with and under the influence of the activists who are demanding recognition for Breton and a guaranteed status for it in official life. It seems that the greatest lesson that Diwan school students learn is an understanding that the surrounding reality can be altered through mutual efforts. Fighting for their own school serves as a small-scale substitute for the broader struggle for Breton culture and language, and strengthens the students’ awareness of their own co-responsibility. However, it is not the objective itself that is most important, but the bonds that are forged between members of the community during the shared practices. The school students speak a great deal about those bonds:

**B17F(B):** [...] protests were in fact the most pleasant moments in my life, my school friends and I were there, we sang for the sake of the Breton language. [...] And that was magnificent. We were all part of the same movement. And you could sense it. Yes, I love that. That’s generally that’s what Diwan is like, it forms bonds... we get the impression that we are all truly together, for the Breton language and for Diwan. It’s hard to explain.... You can feel that you are not alone, that you are with everyone, together.

Secondary-school students describe the bonds they share in the context of the activities they take part in, especially those undertaken for the sake of the Breton language. They make the students feel closer to one another, as they view themselves in opposition to other people who are unable to understand their commitment. The mutual practices they share are of course not exclusively related to Breton culture or language: like all teenagers, the Diwan school students spend their time flirting, sneaking out of the school for a beer, playing cards. But their involvement in Breton life distinguishes them from their peers, and thereby strengthens the community. Another secondary school student says:

**DD16F(B):** I think that all this makes us feel closer to each other than to other people. From time to time we discuss the Breton language situation with our friends. [...]

This is something special for the Diwan schools, and we have been here since childhood and we really talk about it a lot. We talk a lot about the *fest-noz*, about Breton dances and holiday traditions, about what we feel is common to us. All of my friends know how to dance, we listen to Breton music and even discuss the political issues concerning our region, we share ideas...

According to Étienne Wenger (1998: 149), “Developing a practice requires the formation of a community whose members can engage with one another and thus acknowledge each other as participants.” All institutions, in particular schools, shape the collective identity of their members by engaging individuals in their running by forging social communities (Eckert & Wenger, 1994: 4). Collective identity is formed through relationships between group members and between the group and other groups. This sense of being different, developed on different levels as a “shared repertoire,” is very powerful among students at Diwan schools.

Bourdieu (1984) described distinction as the process of differentiation between social classes through constructing and reproducing appropriate structures. Students at Diwan schools use distinction techniques based on the school’s role in activism and the symbolic role of Breton. They emphasise their distinction from students from other schools and anyone who is indifferent about the future of Breton. The role of language in the process of distinguishing students from Diwan schools is fascinating. As mentioned above, secondary-school students rarely speak Breton with each other. However, they discuss the language at length and treat it as a symbol of their identity. Under the specific sociolinguistic conditions characterizing present-day Brittany, identification with Breton culture, symbolized by the knowledge of and references to the minority language, is combined on many levels with constructing a personal identity versus the mainstream French culture (Delon, 2007: 44). It is noteworthy, then, that when students spend time outside school, especially when they want to be noticed for being different or as being Diwan students, they are far more likely to speak Breton.

Lave and Wenger note the role of language in the process of creating communities of practice. They believe that we should distinguish between “talking about” practice and “talking within” practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991:109). Talking about practice means creating stories and histories distinctive to the given group, building foundations and supporting collective memory and engaging with public life. This indicates group membership. In the case of Diwan students, talking about practice mainly means all kinds of activism, including the history of the foundations of Diwan, demonstrations and Breton-language events. It also means discourse on endangered languages, the oppressive political system in France and persecution of minorities, duplicated and repeated in many ways. Talking within practice, in turn, is defined as communication required to continue ongoing activities. It is worth noting, then, that Diwan students have created their own language based on French but featuring numerous Breton words and phrases. Their Breton is equally distinctive in that it repeats certain errors and forms which are not used in literary Breton. This version of Breton is frequently described as “Diwan language.”

It is used and understood as part of language practice of this specific community. Speaking Breton, and even consciously belonging to a Breton-language community, allows young people to identify with Brittany in spite of being immersed in French culture outside school. For young Bretons this is significant. For the older generation, speaking Breton was equivalent to being Breton. Meanwhile, the younger generation tends to associate cultural identity with “practising” culture, where language and its (real and/or symbolic) use forms part of this practice (Nicholas, 2011: 53).

Researching students at Diwan schools, speaking to them and observing their participation in various kinds of practices shows that they resemble a subculture based on a sense of identity and belonging, formed through activities which confirm and maintain common meaning (Martin, 2004: 33). They have their own language, and they are distinguished by – as they admit themselves – their “alternative” clothing (Kennelly, 2011: 101–104) expressing their distinctive identity. Although Diwan students are proud of the fact that everyone at their schools wears what they want,<sup>51</sup> when one looks at the teenagers one notices a striking similarity, which makes them appear as a distinctive, recognisable group. A secondary-school student says:

**Y17M(B):** We have a similar way of thinking and living. Of course that’s a generalization. For example, when we go somewhere, like yesterday when we went to Quartz [concert hall in Brest], there was someone who said, “Oh, that’s Diwan.” Because almost all of us have long hair, we behave, how can I put it... We move in a group and so on. We are close. And this is often noticed, and I think we are more open...

Openness is another trait Diwan students ascribe to themselves. They link it directly to a belief that by not supporting minority languages and cultures, French culture implies a closed and intolerant attitude. Meanwhile, since Diwan students are educated at schools which by definition oppose French policies, it follows that they must be sensitive to issues of multiculturalism and multilingualism.

**F18M(B):** [...] it isn’t the same identity, the same culture. We are more... I think we are a lot more open to difference. We are all slightly extraverted. We’re all a bit crazy, I’d say. Well, maybe not crazy, but... zany. And I think it’s our mentality. I don’t really know, but it’s important that we are a bit different. It’s not quite the same.

Diwan students have their own style and their own code (they use Breton when they want to stress their distinction, as well as using their own jargon). They perceive themselves as being open to difference, and mentally and quasi-politically

---

51 As Y17M(B) puts it: “Here there isn’t a single brand or outfit worn by everyone. Everyone dresses their own way. But whenever I go past a French secondary school, it’s *oh là là*, everyone is wearing the same t-shirts, the same trousers. I actually think that’s ugly.”



they place themselves in opposition to the French system. The way they describe French schools is notable by juxtaposing formal teaching and the education they receive at Diwan (the schools have a “chilled out” atmosphere and the relations between students and teachers are informal) and creating an image of the French system as being oppressive. French schools are presented as a counter-standard to the lauded immersive education system:

**Y17M(B):** [At Diwan] it’s really a way of life which is totally different to French schools. For example, I have a few friends who decided to find out what “normal education” is like. And when I talked to them, they said they were completely wrong. Because the relations between students are different. Here, we are real friends, we see each other regularly. But in normal schools there aren’t those real relations.

Another important aspect of identity shaped by participating in the Diwan community, stressed by students, is how they relate to minorities and oppose the system. According to my interlocutors, Diwan teaches young people to think in political terms. This is situational, by participating in demonstrations, meeting activist, maintaining the atmosphere at school and joining in discourse on threats faced by the minority. This Diwan graduate states that the school taught them to fight:

**J21M(B):** [...] I remember demonstrations supporting the school when I was young, and at Diwan it seems that we always had to fight. And we learned it... Maybe it wasn’t part of the lessons, but to be at Diwan, you had to fight for it. Because in France you can’t be different, it’s frowned upon... You can’t be different. And when you speak Breton, you are different.

This specific skill is directly linked to activities young people participate in since childhood and which result from the need to engage in school life and in getting involved in activities supporting the school:

**U25F(B):** [...] Diwan was in a very difficult situation, there was this constant threat that it would no longer exist because the French government didn’t want to give any money. So it was a fight every day. Every day we wondered whether the school would be closed down. So yes, I’ve always been aware.

Growing up and learning in an atmosphere of activism, contact with people with clear views about the situation of the minority language and culture, and – more than anything – identifying with the institution created as a direct result of the Breton movement, means that students quickly become aware of the situation of Breton culture and language. The young cultural activist and Diwan graduate says:

**L25F(B):** We were attentive to what was happening around us. There were always problem of recognition of our school. We heard that it is excessive [to learn Breton], that it’s a dead language... And when you hear those things all the time, you start to counteract them. Obviously, we had different opinions but the consciousness was there. This is a secondary school with a strong political consciousness. So we

started as teenagers to be interested in the political discourse, in politics, not in the national sense but local, regional. We were increasingly strongly interested in the place of Brittany, of the region, of our language, what to do about it... Also, our parent's attitudes were important, they were also engaged in the existence of the school, and they all know each other. It was all important and had influence on the way we were formed.

Collective identity arises among Diwan students as a result of regular participation in a range of activities and the resulting engagement, since "activity and social relations are closely intertwined" (Eckert, Goldman & Wenger, 1997: 3). These values come together to create their cultural capital, which some of them take into the next community: the Breton movement. At Diwan, "learning is the vehicle for the individual's engagement with a community and with society at large" (Eckert, Goldman & Wenger, 1997: 6). Students learn active participation in cultural, linguistic and political aspects of community life and become individuals for whom the future of Breton culture and language is important. Young people learn to engage with and take responsibility for the world around them through practice and participation. Research by Fanny Chauffin (2017) has shown that Diwan students are highly active in cultural circles thanks to the school's engagement in movements based on practicing Breton culture and language, which requires participation in many activities. As Chauffin (2017) reports, over 80% Diwan students participate in extracurricular activities such as music, theatre, dance etc. Moreover, 22% graduates state that their job is directly linked with those activities, with a further 14% engaged with artistic groups. Many graduates are involved with social activism, politics and the Breton movement. Young people also believe that their activity is linked to the education they received at Diwan:

**NDR:** *Do you think it's related to the type of education?*

**P18F(B):** Well... I guess yes. You know, when I observe my sister who would like to involve herself in some kind of association but says that she has no time for it, etc. And Diwan [...] gives us a kind of support, a reason, because from the beginning there is a language that we have to fight for. And it turns us to engagement, I think. Now we struggle for the Breton culture but it pushes us also towards a different types of engagement. It is easier for us because... In Diwan we have something to be committed to, and we see that there are people around us who are also engaged in it and are ready to help us, to show how to engage.

Eckert and Wenger (1994: 2) write: "social relations form around activities, the activities form around relationships, and particular kind of knowledge and expertise become part of individuals' identities and places in the community." Many Diwan graduates go on to become Breton activists. Some do so consciously having included participation in Breton culture and language in their way of life. Others believe that they become activists by accident: they do something they enjoy, and since it happens to be linked with Breton, they become part of the movement. From the perspective of their current lives and participation in Breton culture,

graduates from Diwan secondary schools state that attending those schools had a major impact on their future attitude:

**Q20M(B):** From the beginning, apart from Breton, there is something more important we learn at Diwan. [...] We learn how to become involved in something. [...] Diwan really shows that you have to do something and you have to do it with others because in a group you are stronger. And there a certain ideology has been passed on to us, maybe a little bit utopian, but... it's really a school of civil life, where we were taught to live with other people, to interact easily, to be able to express our thoughts. Yes, it is a school of civil life, besides a place to learn Breton.

In comparison with the situation back in the twentieth century, Diwan schools are now significantly more stable, although their financial problems are far from over. There are growing numbers of schools and teaching materials, and training programmes for bilingual teachers (including state-funded, intensive six-month training programmes). They include individuals who chose bilingual teaching as a good career path in today's difficult employment market. They are not activists and at times they lack the passion characteristic of teachers during the early days of Diwan schools (cf. McDonald, 1989). At the same time, the promotion of benefits of bilingualism and the high quality of teaching<sup>52</sup> at Diwan mean that parents' motivation to send their children there is gradually shifting from activism to pragmatism (Goalabre, 2011); in those cases, the parents are frequently themselves not involved with Breton movements and may find it difficult to engage with the school. As a young Breton activist says:

**N23F(B):** I wonder if it isn't a bit of a fashion: that your kids will learn Breton. People say that learning two languages at a young age makes it easier to learn more later. And sometimes I think people only do it to make it easier for them to learn other languages later. It is not activism in any way.

**NDR:** *Is that bad?*

**N23F(B):** It's not about whether it's bad. It's just in a different spirit. I discussed this with members of Diwan schools who said that there are plenty of parents who don't speak Breton who send their kids to Diwan schools, they take them in the morning and pick them up in the evening, but everything else that involves more engagement – extra projects, maintaining the school, collecting funds and so on – then there isn't anyone. Young parents don't even notice it. It's still done by older people, while others can't be bothered, they don't care. There are those who are constantly organizing something, doing something, making an effort. But

---

52 The Diwan school in Carhaix was described by *Le Figaro* as the best secondary school in France in 2013 (!). Retrieved from: <http://etudiant.lefigaro.fr/les-news/palmares/detail/article/le-classement-2013-des-meilleurs-lycees-de-france-1540/> (access: 17.04.2015).

others just take their kids to school, it's in a completely different spirit than twenty years ago.

This attitude means that Diwan as a school of civic life and the cradle of future activists may also change.

### **Online media: real vs. virtual communities**

Any discussion of communities of young people must not overlook those created by mass media, in particular the digital world. The role of the media in the process of protecting and revitalizing endangered languages is widely discussed (cf. Riggins, 1992; Cormack, 2000; Buszard-Welcher, 2001; Browne, 2005). Some scholars believe that the benefits of the existence of new media in minority languages does not compensate for the damage done to them by the arrival of mass media in the first place (Fishman, 1991). According to others, "what better strategy could there be for ensuring minority survival than the development by minorities of their own media conveying their own point of view in their own language" (Riggins, 1992: 3). Based on the theory of institutional completeness, indicating a group's stability due to its involvement with local institutions, Tom Moring states that if minority media do not meet all the needs of the group and its members, they will resort to media of the dominant culture, which in turn weakens ties within the group. Therefore, if the media is to achieve institutional completeness, speakers of minority languages should have wide-reaching access to all kinds of media in their own language (Moring, 2007).

Classic sociolinguistic studies also refer to representatives of minorities using different kinds of media. They are asked about reading books, availability and reading the press, listening to radio and the existence and access to television programmes in the minority language. When asked this, young people (with a few exceptions) answer that they rarely have access to these kinds of media in the minority language. Some explain that mass media in their language are not attractive, although the majority admit that they rarely listen to the radio or watch TV in general, never mind reading books. This is because they get the majority of information, entertainment and social contact online. Following the principle that "the medium is the message" (McLuhan, 1964), the internet has changed the way people think and function, especially those born since the dawn of the information age. It affects all spheres of life, from transmitting information to creating relationships on individual and community levels. According to Andrzej Mencwel, McLuhan's words should be interpreted as "it is impossible to truly understand any message if you ignore the properties of the medium, because the medium is not an occasional costume for the message but the shape that gives it its meaning" (Mencwel, 2006: 55). This means that we cannot study young people's attitudes and linguistic practices without paying close attention to the role and function of digital media. Although the internet and its use were not the subject of my study, I soon discovered that the lives of my interlocutors are so closely intertwined with their

activities online that the latter had to be examined even when they were not being discussed. Naturally the role of the internet is also viewed differently by different scholars. Sceptics believe that digital media will drive minority languages (and, in the longer term, also most major languages) to extinction, since the main language of the internet is English and direct, global communication supports a uniform means of communication.<sup>53</sup> In turn, enthusiasts claim that the internet provides the best opportunity for minority languages, since its vast capacity and prospects it provides mean that those languages can carve a space for themselves and rebuild their position lost to dominant languages (Cormack, 2000: 3). As is the case with the majority of discourse and research into the internet, the arguments are deeply rooted in the emotional investment of the researchers; they also describe a highly dynamic situation, changing from month to month.

In my reflection on young people's attitudes to minority languages and ways of joining in with the social and cultural life of their minority and becoming active in supporting it, the internet is not so much a subject of study as an inseparable context of all language, cultural and social practices. In contrast to traditional mass media (print and audio-visual), the internet is not a distinct, separate space which can be isolated and analysed in and of itself. Young people live in the real-life and virtual realities at the same time, rather than in parallel as had been claimed until recently. A brand new hybrid reality has arisen at the intersection. Since young people no longer distinguish between what happens online and offline, the spheres intertwine on all levels of their private, school, family and social lives (Rainie & Wellman, 2012). In my discussion below, based on field studies, interviews and observations conducted in passing of young people's Facebook use, I analyse several ways in which the internet shapes cultural and language practices of young people involved with their minority. Some of the conclusions can be extrapolated to people who do not identify with or take an interest in minority cultures, while others apply just to this narrow group.

Due to the nature of my research, I am only interested in practices typical of the internet as a participation media. Although its roles as broadcast media (Dębski, 2008) is important due to the high volume of information in minority languages available online and the resulting awareness of these languages and their use in different domains, it only interests me inasmuch as it influences the behaviours and attitudes of my interlocutors. Here, the most important contribution of the internet is how it presents minority languages as modern and adaptable to the

---

53 Research by W3Techs indicates that 54% of all online content is in English, but the data shows a changing presence of minority languages online (and notes its slight increase). However, this study did not include languages used on internet forums. See: [https://w3techs.com/technologies/overview/content\\_language/all](https://w3techs.com/technologies/overview/content_language/all) (access: 18.06.2019).

modern world<sup>54</sup> (Buszard-Welcher, 2001). For young people, functioning online is proof of their adaptation to the requirements of the modern world. A young man from Wales says:

**U22M(W):** Welsh culture is modern because it is a bilingual culture and global trends are towards people who can speak more than one language. Yes... I can use the internet in Welsh, I have Welsh interface on my laptop, Windows in Welsh. Facebook is in Welsh for me.

It also seems that the presence of minority languages online is now so obvious to young people that they are more likely to notice if they are absent. As a participative media, the internet also allows people to create bonds and use minority languages in communication on all levels.

Online media are unique precisely because they are interactive. Users get to decide what they read, watch or listen to, when, where and how, and the medium focuses on dialogue and discussion with other users (Lister et al., 2009). This means that the internet is a medium shaping the social sphere, both virtual and real. It is also a democratic medium: it provides a space for participation and expression of opinions to everyone in (almost) any format and giving all participants equal opportunities. Until recently, some scholars claimed that since the majority of content exists only in the dominant language, so instead of waiting for it to be created in their language, representatives of minorities will adapt their practice to the available technology (Cunliffe & Herring, 2005: 132). However, this is not the case. Minority activists quickly realized the significance of their language being visible online and sought to create suitable software and interfaces of the most important social media in their own language. However, even when it has not been possible to create media in minority languages (the ongoing campaign “*Facebook e brezhoneg*” is yet to result with a creation of a Breton Facebook interface; a similar campaign “*Kaszubski fb? Jo!*” has been launched recently in Kashubia), young people simply use their language in a dominant language space. A young Breton activist says:

**A25F(B):** There is still no Breton Facebook, although we are fighting for it. But it's enough for someone to post in Breton and you click like, add a comment and join in. We are creating our own Breton reality.

However, for this to be possible, young people must know their minority language. Many young people learn the language at school, although not all have access to this. People who wish to learn have infinitely more opportunities than even a few years ago. With enough determination, it is possible to learn minority languages

---

54 This meaning is made all the more significant by the fact that minority languages and cultures are generally presented in traditional media in a folkloric context as traditional cultures (Tschernokoschewa, 2000).

online. This young Kashub is one of the most engaged activists promoting the language (including in mass media):

**A20M(K):** I didn't start learning at school, but [...] I found myself on Wikibooks where there are seven Kashubian lessons. I looked through them, and during the two weeks of holidays I learned grammar and spelling. This was in middle school.

The young man says that he became interested in Kashubian through school competitions he was sent to by a teacher. There came a point when he realized that since he has discovered his Kashubian identity, he should also learn the language. This young man from Wales gives a similar background to becoming active in promoting Welsh:

**NDR:** *You said you did not manage to learn Welsh at school. So how did you learn it?*

**S19M(W):** Through the internet and then through Welsh speaking people, through *Cymdeithas yr Iaith*.

Learning grammar is not enough to start communicating in the language. The young man found a group of people he could practice speaking Welsh with. Other new users of minority languages who decide to learn the ethnic language themselves also admit that they started speaking by joining a group of people who already communicate in the language and by trying to use the language to post online. Since the internet is dominated by written text (Rheingold, no date: 176) and interactions must be rapid, knowing the language in its written form is essential. This is described by another young man who says he is taking private lessons in writing in Kashubian from a friend:

**K22M(K):** We have an arrangement where we meet once a week and he teaches me writing in Kashubian. [...] I also try to write myself where I can, hoping I will be corrected, and we also try to chat on Facebook or wherever using Kashubian. I have everything installed on my computer [Kashubian keyboard] and we email each other. We try to make it alive, even in a group of four or five people.

Almost all young people are constantly online, remaining in constant contact with other internet users and posting updates about themselves and their lives. During the time of my research work, one of the most important online spaces occupied by young people, both in terms of interaction and personal updates, is Facebook (Rainie & Wellman, 2012: 21 et seq.). In terms of vitality of minority languages, it is important how young people use them to communicate on social media. Ongoing sociolinguistic research into social media reveals that in online communication, people tend to use the same language they use with the given person in face-to-face communication (Cunliffe, Morris & Prys, 2013). Even people with large numbers of Facebook friends tend to stay in active contact with relatively few. Others simply passively follow (or not) other people's updates. This means that the more friends communicate using the minority language, the more visible it becomes. This is important for people engaging in communication (using the language, practicing spelling, building bonds) and for more or less casual observers who find

those updates. Naturally, language practice on Facebook differs between different minorities. Research conducted by Daniel Cunliffe's team in Wales reveals that language behaviour differs between people who use the minority language (in this case Welsh) at home and those who learn it at school. In Wales, using the language also depends on whether the given local community also uses the language in its daily life. The situation is rather different in Catholic Upper Lusatia, since ethnic boundaries between Sorbs and Germans are powerful and closely tied to language. As a result, online communities are divided along ethnic lines: Sorbs communicate using Sorbian by code-switching to make communication easier. In German-Sorbian groups, German is the almost exclusive language of communication; this is due to the ongoing stigma faced by Sorbian, concerns of Sorbs about being perceived as "lesser" by Germans and their desire to keep their circles separate from the German world (cf. Ratajczak, 2011). My research into Facebook, conducted using the ethnographic method (Postill & Pink, 2012; Baker, 2013) and involving observing updates and communication among my interlocutors and their friends, indicates that the main reason for choosing one language over another is other individuals in the conversation. Bretons learning the language tend to use Breton more frequently when chatting online than in face-to-face communication:

**NDR:** *When it comes to the internet, do you use Breton?*

**F18M(B):** Yes, frequently in emails. But it tends to be in messages among a group of friends, such as invitations to parties and so on. Then it's often in Breton.

**NDR:** *Because it's with people from Diwan, is that right?*

**F18M(B):** Yes. With people who speak Breton, that is people from Diwan, but I don't even know anyone from outside Diwan who speaks Breton well. But frequently, when we are organizing a Breton event, we discuss it online or on Facebook in Breton.

A young Sorbian woman stresses that it would be unnatural to use a different language in written and spoken communication with the same person:

**NDR:** *So on social media, for example Facebook, do you write in Sorbian?*

**J17F(S):** Yes. With friends who I speak Sorbian with I also write in Sorbian. It would be strange otherwise. For me it's difficult, if I speak Sorbian to someone, to suddenly switch to German. It's a very strange feeling, I think. Yes. But I also have a Sorbian friend and we always speak German, because that's how it's been since the start [of our friendship], and it's difficult to switch.

The situation faced by Kashubs is interesting in the context of other minorities. In this case, of all my interlocutors who have gone on to become my Facebook friends, only those who are openly and strongly involved in activities protecting the language write in Kashubian. Others, especially secondary-school students, only use Kashubian in extreme circumstances, such as when talking to teachers of the language. This student explains her difficulties with writing in Kashubian and her attitude to the language:



**W18F(K):** If I don't know something, then sometimes I will ask, and if my grandmother doesn't know, I check online or some other way. When I was writing a report in Kashubian, I was doing a lot of checking online because it's easily accessible and free to use. I quite often use Kashubian when talking online [to my teacher], but not so much with my friends. They're not into Kashubian and they are afraid to write in the language.

As well as being a communication tool, the main direct role played by the internet – in particular in creating communities of individuals with shared social and cultural backgrounds and allowing them to participate (actively or passively) in social dialogue – is disseminating information about events and activities organized in a given community, which has a far wider reach than advertising in traditional media or relying on word-of-mouth. All young people who take an interest in a minority language or participate in events involving the minority culture receive Facebook alerts about upcoming concerts, demonstrations, new books and so on. Social media such as Facebook allow users to discuss events, make arrangements to attend them, share opinions with friends and even influence their organization or repertoire through comments and likes. This way of disseminating information about events, new groups, recruitment to amateur theatres or cultural projects and so on is available to almost all internet users; they can also participate in them and motivate one another. For young people, their Facebook lives are just as real as their offline lives. Marking oneself as someone who is taking part in an event or liking it has an impact on a broader social perception of the activity and, by extension, of the minority culture. A young Sorbian woman says she likes pages of Sorbian events she is interested in to keep up to date:

**NDR:** *So why do you like those pages?*

**E17F(S):** Because I can find out a lot about what's happening in Sorbian. Facebook events I look at, such as “*Jolka*” events [Sorbian-language amateur cabaret], because I am interested in them and I like going there.

Online media are also making the links between information, communication and action much stronger (Rainie & Wellman, 2012: 14). Internet users find information more quickly and are able to exchange information faster and more easily with others, which in turn makes it easier for them to get involved. A young Breton woman talks about Facebook's role in events and activism:

**K21F(B):** [...] when you want to communicate something, advertise it so people get involved with something, like an *Ai'Ta* campaign, or join a new association, or we are looking people for theatre performances, then we talk to each other, but mainly [disseminate information about it] via Facebook. [...] Sometimes [applicants] aren't people we know personally, but they are often friends of friends. Then we get to know them, find out their names, start saying hello, and it goes from there.

Disseminating information on campaigns and cultural events thus becomes as important as attracting participants and arousing interest in the minority culture among people who were previously indifferent to it.

**V20M(K):** Fortunately, there are growing volumes of materials [on Facebook]. Mainly by those people, often young, engaged people. Because by choosing this path, they also want to convince other people. And they document becoming more mature to Kashubian communities, Kashubian culture, based on their own example. And those materials are available. There are lesson-plans online on Kashubian history for teachers. [...] Young people have growing opportunities to discover Kashubian, especially since they don't have to travel. It's enough to type in a few discussion forums and they [can] meet people who are engaged in it.

The young man notes two things: one concerns the availability of materials and getting to know his culture using the internet, while the other concerns interacting with other people interested in similar subjects. He notes that “newbies” can learn simply by following online discussions and becoming inspired to get involved. Another Kashubian activist describes his own, similar path.

**NDR:** *Where did your views come from?*

**A20M(K):** It was online contact. I was looking at different forums and discussions, and I was more convinced by the argument supporting Kashubs being a distinct nation. [...] Then I got to know those people.

The young man followed the legitimate peripheral participation principle, one of the most important techniques of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The theory concerns how new individuals join existing communities. To start with, their participation may be peripheral (weak with a low degree of risk), but the format is entirely legitimate. As they get to know the community and start identifying with it, the individual is gradually nudged from the peripheries towards the centre to eventually join it fully, take on its values and shape their own identity alongside it.

The online media also allow interaction between people who are not physically in the same place. That means individuals who have emigrated from the region inhabited by the minority can keep in touch. Another important opportunity provided by the internet, in particular for young activists, is being able to contact people from all over the globe who are interested in problems faced by minorities and who may find ways of supporting them. Even simple actions like liking minority campaigns are important, since they bring the matter to public attention. Describing contemporary social movements originating online, Manuel Castells states: “In our society, the public space of the social movements is constructed as hybrid space between the Internet social networks and the occupied urban space: connecting cyberspace and urban space in relentless interaction, constituting, technologically and culturally, instant communities of transformative practice” (Castells, 2015: 11). By using internet forums, many people discover that there are many others who think the same way as them and experience similar anger

towards the dominant culture. Gaining an understanding that we are not alone in our revolt drives enthusiasm, hope and conviction that change is essential. Acting alongside others reduces fear of consequences. The internet allows activists to establish real and virtual partnerships with other minorities, organizations and individuals. These partnerships mean that minority voices – usually quiet due to their size and political position – are amplified. Young people realize this and want to make the most of it. A young Welsh student says:

**L20F(W):** I try to do this thing on Facebook now. I try to get in contact with different student communities in Scotland, Ireland. I try to get us all together and just share. We try to do it on the ByG side.<sup>55</sup> At the moment it is only Wales, but we try to spread it to other cultures, like the other Celtic cultures in Britain, to show that we are all the same really. There are differences but we are very similar.

In his book *Network Society*, Manuel Castells ponders whether groups which are created and function online are communities. He notes that the majority of ties formed online can be described as weak. However, he adds, “Virtual communities seem to be stronger than observers usually give them credit for” (Castells, 2010b: 388). He also writes, “SNS users transcend time and space, yet they produce content, set up links and connect practices. There is now a constantly networked world in every dimension of human experience. People in their networks co-evolve in permanent, multiple interactions. But they choose the terms of their co-evolution” (Castells, 2015: 200). By observing how young people behave at various levels of their online lives, it is notable that many of their social media groups overlap with their “real life” social circles. Sometimes they make first contact online, as was the case for this Welsh activist who describes how he first got involved with *Cymdeithas yr Iaith*:

**NDR:** *How did you find out about it?*

**S19M(W):** Facebook. I made contact with a guy through Facebook, I never met him before, I found him on the internet, and I wrote him that I wanted to speak Welsh and wanted to join them. So we met. You know how it is, as soon as you know one person from this community, you know all the people around it. So I went to the *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* meeting not knowing anyone, and I went out knowing more people than ever. I talked to them, they knew people, these people knew other people... That is a network of Welsh speaking people. Once you break into that network, you open so many doors there.

In other cases, real-life contacts can shift online. A Kashubian secondary-school student who actively supports minority language campaigns says that she has met people who introduced her to them by chance:

---

55 The *Byw yn Gymraeg* association (Living in Welsh), founded by Welsh-speaking students at the University of Aberystwyth.

**T18F(K):** I met them by chance, because once on a train I spotted a girl reading a book in Kashubian. And that's how it started; she was a member of Pomorania, with a placement or job at Radio Gdańsk. And now when there are meetings, they write it on Facebook or somewhere that there's a meeting and whether I'd like to pop in and take part. Of course it's a long way to Gdańsk, but sometimes I go, we meet and chat. If not, then I still know what they are doing via Facebook.

The most important role played by the internet is shaping and strengthening bonds within groups. The interactive nature of the internet allows people to meet and create strong, mutual bonds rooted in communication between members of a given community. By observing Facebook interactions between young people, it is clear that they are not anonymous. Every individual presents as themselves, even if they use a pseudonym and an image which isn't their own photo. Young people decide for themselves who they interact with and who they want to meet online. Research confirms that people interacting with others online generally don't try to contact strangers but tend to communicate with individuals who already belong to an extended social network (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). It has also been found that Facebook is mainly used to maintain relationships formed offline (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007) and that although new relationships may start off as weak, they are generally based on a real-life element common to the online community. It appears that the online media and the way young people function in the hybrid reality have a stronger impact on the transmission of signals concerning minority cultures and ways of joining them than individual activists can achieve. They can be in constant contact, seek more inspiration from groups or events they wouldn't have otherwise been aware of, and encourage others to join in. However, for them the internet is not the main reason why they became directly and actively involved. It was and remains a tool, a context, and at times a medium for those activities.

## Chapter 7: Towards activism

In the previous chapter, we examined different types of cultural practice which bring young people together to create groups which can be described as communities (rooted in practice or interests, or virtual communities). We saw how young people form and maintain bonds that allow them to absorb the cultural content of the minority culture. The process means that young people build communities with their peers and start constructing their (individual and communal) identities in relation to the minority culture and its healthy functioning.

This chapter, in turn, examines the complicated process of young people becoming involved in the broadly-understood minority culture – from becoming interested in it, gradually immersing themselves in it, to conscious activism within it. We will also examine different strategies of young people's linguistic and cultural activism and their expectations of what activism is. I suggest looking at minority culture and participation in it from the perspective of young people who, having been brought up at the boundary of the dominant and minority cultures and frequently coming from families which are assimilated in terms of language and culture, gradually discover their minority culture and find their place within it to be able to consciously and actively participate in its promotion and later protection. Research shows that young generations, regardless of their education opportunities, tend to identify with the minority culture to a lesser degree or not at all. There are many reasons for this: the progressing globalization of cultural content and opportunities for development and action mean that today all young people have so many choices of how to lead their lives and what to participate in that it takes a complex combination of events, motivation and personality traits for them to become involved with their minority culture and language. As such, young people's interest in and engagement with the minority culture are frequently directly influenced by specific events, individuals and activities which allow them to perceive the minority culture as their own, one they want to identify with. Therefore, becoming actively involved with a minority culture is frequently linked with young people's engagement with culture in general.

### Participation in minority culture

In order to define young people's participation in minority culture, we must first examine what this culture is and step beyond dominant patterns of cultural participation, in favour of having representatives of the given community reaching for existing or even creating new cultural resources.<sup>56</sup> This understanding of cultural

---

56 I was inspired by the activities and publications prepared at the Section for Cultural Animation, Institute of Polish Culture, University of Warsaw (cf. Godlewski et al., 2002; *Teraz! Animacja kultury*) and reflections in theoretical works by Marek

participation assumes that actions are created and taken deliberately; however, it does not account for the phenomenon of existing in culture as an integral part of participating in it.

Participation in culture is generally studied by statistical analysis of consumption: how often, where and when do residents of a given region make use of the resources of cultural institutions such as cinemas, theatres, cultural centres, museums and music groups. Some statistics also include amateur cultural activities such as theatres and concerts (cf. Morrone, 2006; Eurostat, 2011). Defined this way, participation can be understood as “participation in artistic culture created as part of institutional popularization activities” (Grad, 1997: 5). Antonina Kłoskowska’s sociology papers (1972; 1981) describe different ways of perceiving cultural participation, albeit with a similar undertone. She describes it as manipulation of semi-otic cultural resources by creating, experiencing and interpreting their messages. A third concept, the one most widely accepted in Poland, was formulated by the sociologist Andrzej Tyszka, who wrote that cultural participation means “[...] individual participation in cultural phenomena – assimilating their content, using their resources, following their norms and standards – as well as creating new values and reproducing and processing existing ones” (Tyszka, 1971: 122). As Marek Krajewski puts it (2013: 42): “The common feature of this understanding of cultural participation is treating culture as something external to individuals; something they manipulate, use, consume to meet their needs, which in turn decides who they are in the social sense, their place within social structures, and how near or far they are from the ideal of ‘cultural individuals’ as defined in their community.” This definition of cultural participation does not include individuals subconsciously following the standards and influences of the culture they were born and brought up and in which they function as a factor shaping sensitivity, the way of perceiving the world and values important both on individual and social levels.

Although, as Krajewski rightly notes, a rigid understanding of cultural participation does not fit in with how the contemporary world works, when I asked my interlocutors to describe themselves as representatives of the minority culture, they generally started from just this format: they talked about bands they belong or have belonged to, any instruments they play and the kinds of organized activities supporting the minority culture they participate in. Of course this framing of their stories is understandable; they have been brought up seeing minority culture as something quite separate from their daily lives, therefore something which should noticeably stand out from their usual activities. However, as soon as they gain some distance from the question and describe their family history and attitude to the minority culture and learning the language, and talk about their daily lives, their depiction of how they “exist in culture” starts resembling

---

Krajewski, whose text “*W kierunku relacyjnej koncepcji uczestnictwa w kulturze*” [Towards a relational concept of participation in culture] I use as a reference point for the dominant concepts of cultural participation (Krajewski, 2013).

live cultural participation as defined by Wojciech Burszta (2011: 11) as “the sphere of practices which includes rather than excluding, activates rather than teaching, becomes a true reality rather than occasional celebration.” My reflections on this way of being in a culture, the influence of landscapes, climate, childhood games and language use (not necessarily in terms of minority vs. majority language) on how individual personalities are shaped, and on what can be described as culture in the anthropological sense (cf. Mencwel, 2006; 42–45), arose mainly when I asked my interlocutors whether there was a point in their lives when they realized that minority culture exists as separate from majority culture. According to this young man from Kashubia:

**J21M(K):** I suppose at home we didn't have this idea that we stressed that something was Kashubian, ours. [...] But there were many natural things. Except we didn't realize we were doing them. We saw them as ours, rather than Kashubian or Polish. Just ours. That's how things are and that's it. [...] But my younger sister... lots has changed now, many customs have disappeared, and I see that they are no longer there, but then people do them automatically, by themselves. Because when they were children they saw us doing it and they are repeating it. I try to not say to them that it's Kashubian, only that it's ours. When you know that something is yours, then maybe you don't do it so consciously, but you tend to pass it on. And this affects the vitality of this culture.

Being and participating in Kashubian culture involves not just taking part in organized cultural events, but also engaging in a range of cultural practices such as rituals, feasts and ceremonies, food and spending time together, all of which my interlocutor describes as “natural” elements forming a part of his life. He states that he only realized that they belong to “Kashubian culture” when he was preparing a school presentation on Kashubian customs. This young woman from Brittany who has been singing *kan ha discan* at a local *fest-noz* since childhood also says she was conscious of taking part in the minority culture:

**U25F(B):** [...] we sing at lots of small events in the region. When we were younger, we did it all the time, just for fun [...], now we sing less frequently, usually when *fest-noz* is held for an important reason, to support a Breton association...

She says when she and her sisters were children, after each performance they joined with other celebrations, danced or ran among adults “as kids do.” It's only now that she is an adult she steps onto the stage with a specific aim: to support other people's activities promoting Breton culture. She seemed very surprised by my question whether she thinks that singing at a *fest-noz* is a kind of engagement:

**U25F(B):** [...] for me, *fest-noz* is not a cultural activity. [laughs] Singing, dancing, drinking beer at *fest-noz*, well... [laughs].

Singing at *fest-noz* is regarded as local practice, as experiencing life in a community. Framed this way, cultural participation is simply a daily custom rather than a specially organized event one may but does not have to attend. Krajewski

describes this way of seeing culture as relational, in which “culture is the effect of the binding of various elements in a collective and a factor describing the course of the process. [...] it is not a thing, or a collection of things, but a property of links creating a defined community, their specific configuration. It regulates our behaviour [...] because it is a specific system of elements bound into a community” (Krajewski, 2013: 37).

According to some of my interlocutors, it is also possible to participate in culture consciously or subconsciously. Asked to explain what she means by this, a young Sorbian woman says:

**O21F(S):** [...] subconsciously, [when] someone thinks: I like dancing, so I'll join a dance group. But the [dance] group wears costumes, Evangelical or Catholic, it's something Sorbian. So I think that it is subconscious that by joining such a group the person supports tradition and culture and follows customs.

Singing, dancing and participating in an organized cultural group can be interpreted on two levels. Deliberate participation in minority culture means taking part in certain activities because they are an inherent part of that culture. “Living Sorbian culture” subconsciously means joining friends in favourite activities which may, coincidentally, be attributed to the canon of the minority culture by outsiders. However, this distinction does not matter to young people in their daily lives. What's important is being active, having fun and interacting with others, which has an indirect impact on shaping their identities and values. It can be said, then, that culture and participation in culture is something which defines and shapes people belonging to certain communities and distinguishes them from other groups. In this sense, minority culture is not and should not be seen as a range of spectacles and activities which are deliberately associated with what minority culture is supposed to be. Just like all others, minority culture is a living thing which evolves as all its components change and evolve. One does not step into minority culture briefly, only to exit it again. Minority culture is something lived every day, even though in many dimensions it overlaps with other cultures, especially the dominant culture with which it is in constant contact.

Describing activities in rural regions in Poland, Tomasz Rakowski has written that by finding grounds for developing culture and cultural competences in a vision of modernization, rural culture is perceived through a prism of deficiency, immaturity and scarcity. As such, participation in culture is understood as behaviour lauded from the perspective of urban culture (Rakowski, 2013: 9). Similar phenomena are observed in minority cultures. Ways of thinking about participation in those cultures are not so much about conveying information and values generated by them but about forcing young people into existing, socially acceptable dominant standards which are financed top-down. As Rakowski writes, “this conceals a danger of imposing this version of creativity as a common value, almost a common standard, which in practice can mean enforcing language use and a certain ‘discursive violence.’ More than anything, however, it can cause a lot of damage even earlier – from the very start it can obliterate everything which is present in these



communities, such as their own, local competences and ‘grassroot creativities’ [...]” (Rakowski, 2013: 9). The fact is that they seem to be important for the endurance and cohesion of minority communities and they shape their identities. The problem is that only certain ideas, including those suggested by young people, will be approved by the relevant institutions and thus gain financial support. Any approved activities must now be categorized as “projects.” This limits the creativity of representatives of minorities to fit within existing frameworks. But this is not the only dimension of acting within culture which is dangerous for minorities. Just as damaging is the pursuit of customs believed to be traditional in the minority, but which had never actually been practiced by the local community. A young Kashubian woman describes this problem, which puts off many young people from participating in minority culture which no longer feels like their own:

**H24F(K):** For example, no one had ever seen or heard of any “beheading the kite”<sup>57</sup> here. Now it turns out it’s an old Kashubian custom, and it has to happen at all village events.

Standardizing minority cultures by homogenizing their local differences, used as a strategy of creating a culture everyone can identify with, means that it no longer functions in everyday life but turns into regulated spectacles. In the next chapter, I will explore how problematic it is for young people to treat participation in minority culture in selected, consumption-driven categories which impose a division between what “can be regarded” as a minority culture and what “doesn’t fit in.”

My interlocutors, people from minority cultures, are not simply spectators of the culture or perhaps its creators. Most importantly, they are its participants. This is why I am interested in how, by being in the culture and becoming increasingly aware of it, they themselves perceive it and how their actions affect how it evolves. At the same time, their (minority) identity is shaped and changed as part of the process. As such, I am interested in participation in culture which requires an active attitude, open to interactions with the surroundings and other members of the community, to experiences and to creating new values. I wrote earlier about the existence of an ethnic “grey zone” which includes individuals from minority cultures who deliberately do not identify with them and who declare that they do not consider their survival important. This means that not all individuals born and living as part of a minority culture are active participants in it, even if they attend language lessons or go on organized trips. Visiting a museum with a group of students may have very little to do with active participation in culture, and instead is simply an encounter with some limited elements of the culture. However, engaging in conversation with artists/curators/animations who not only present certain objects but encourage visitors to interact inspires personal reflection or

---

57 A Kashubian midsummer folk custom involving a ritual beheading of a kite, a bird once regarded as a symbol of evil in the region.

experience; it turns into participation because it requires active and emotional participation through contact with other people rather than simply looking at art. This young woman talks about her participation in Kashubian culture:

**G25F(K):** [...] I remember when I was little [...] the custom of beheading the kite was always important in the village. Today the Kashubian element has gone a bit, although Masses are still held in Kashubian and people speak [Kashubian] at them, but this whole setting... When I was little, [...] we always waited for it impatiently, all kids, because we walked [from one place to another] and it was a kind of pageant. Because everyone from the village walked in this pageant behind a horse-drawn cart. Everyone was wearing something colourful, girls had garlands. [...] And we sang a lot of Kashubian songs. And the same reason for setting garlands down the river, but also a bonfire... And people trumpeted in the four directions of the compass. And everyone always took part. I couldn't have imagined not going to these events.

Children taking part in local customs were active participants in them. Preparations, participation and later recalling the event shaped their identities, their view of the world and how they formed community bonds. By becoming active participants in interpersonal, artistic, promotional and cultural events, young people enter “into interaction under the circumstances of working and creating together,” which in turn allows them to “eradicate authoritarian hierarchies and eliminate all-knowing attitudes and distinctions between teachers and students” (Piwowska, no date: 30). All participants co-create the spectacle which at the same time strengthens their relationships and common identity. This understanding of cultural participation applies to promotional activities which require engagement from participants, and this engagement turns them into creators and conscious contributors. This way of existing in a minority culture – regardless whether it is spontaneously cultivated by families or peer groups or initiated by local cultural promoters, teachers or young people themselves – has the most powerful influence over young people and it is frequently the first stage along their way of becoming engaged with minority activities.

## Early stages of engagement

Joan Pujolar, a scholar of the Catalan language and its speakers, adopted the Catalan word *mudes* as a term denoting changes in social performance. Pujolar focuses on linguistic *mudes* – important biographical junctures, when an individual takes a conscious (to a varying degree) decision to change their linguistic repertoire in favour of the minority language. For participants in his study, these turning-points included the time of starting primary and secondary school and university, entering the job market, getting married and having children (Pujolar & Puigdevall, 2015: 167). Language choices and identification with a minority culture become “life investments with open meanings” since they are performative acts which bear long-term social consequences which are constantly being negotiated

by users of the language and communities around them (Pujolar & Puigdevall, 2015: 169). Choosing a language and realizing the desire to identify with a minority culture brings specific changes to young people's lives. More than anything, they gradually become active members of the given community and start identifying more strongly with it by participating in its culture at various levels. However, this awareness does not mean a change in their attitude towards the dominant culture or lead them to become active campaigners for the minority culture. Joan Pujolar and Isaac González (2012) go as far as to posit that speaking minority languages and participating in minority cultures has today become "de-ethnicized" as a result of political, economic and social changes.<sup>58</sup> Observing young people learning at immersive or bilingual schools, or taking part in activities specific to minority cultures, reveals that identity shaped this way is rarely expressed as activism which requires making specific life decisions. The identities of participants in minority cultures are therefore highly diverse, as is the way and degree of their participation. However, discovering one's roots, history of the community and activities typical of it and one's own place within the community affects how individuals perceive themselves and others in the context of this culture. Change is particularly noticeable if participation in minority culture goes hand in hand with learning the language, especially when the young person starts speaking the minority language. It also forms an additional "linguistic persona" which can interact with other speakers of the minority language and take part in certain communal practices. Pujolar and Puigdevall (2015: 172) wrote: "[...] mobilising a specific linguistic or discursive competence in social life cannot be interpreted as a simple, abstract, cognitive exercise. Instead it should be seen as a form of positioning, the production of a social persona that claims a specific discursive position that is open to recognition or contestation." This attitude is less pronounced in participation in minority culture, although individuals who immerse themselves in activities and discourse surrounding the culture develop a wide range of new practices, inspirations and behaviours which in turn affect how they perceive their place in the world and the specific community.

The important biographic junctures experienced by my interlocutors, i.e. the moments in life that have determined how they engage with their own culture and language, are of course on a different scale than those described by the above-cited scholars of Catalan. This is mainly because I work with young people who are yet to

---

58 "De-ethnicization" of a minority language largely depends on the socio-political context in which the language functions. In Catalonia, linguistic rights of individuals using the minority language have a long tradition, and many children attend schools where teaching is delivered in Catalan. Others learn the language during extracurricular classes. Catalan also functions in public life. However, the languages I am examining in this study have not attained this status; this even applies to Welsh. This is why using them is a far more significant act of self-identification, which means they have not undergone the process of de-ethnicization.

experience those junctures in their lives, even though changing schools or starting university can be highly significant, since they involve meeting new people. The cultural *mudes* discussed below have been indicated by my interlocutors. I did not ask them directly about what they felt were important moments in their lives from the perspective of their linguistic and cultural awareness; rather, these answers emerged from their narratives about their own lives and activities within the cultural minority. As such, these “moments” are not simply discrete events. They also concern the surroundings, practices and individuals who had a major impact on my interlocutors. Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant (1992: 124) write: “Human action is not an instantaneous reaction to immediate stimuli, and the slightest ‘reaction’ of an individual to another is pregnant with the whole history of these persons and of their relationship.” This is why stimuli to become engaged have many forms: some may have been inspired by their circles at certain stages of their lives to experience something which would clearly and consciously steer them towards the minority culture. According to young people, entering the world of the minority culture opened the field for further activities, which in turn piqued their interest further and fostered their engagement. The *mudes* I list are typological, allowing me to rank broader, more complex and interlinked phenomena.

Young people entering the world of a minority culture resembles other socialization processes. Analysing attitudes of “young people in the new world,” Hanna Świda-Ziemia dedicates one of her chapters to young activists in Poland (Świda-Ziemia, 2005: 165–204). According to her and her students’ research, the most significant – although not determining – influence on their engagement comes from their environment and family traditions, participating in and organizing activities from a young age, as well as (or perhaps more than anything) having a community bound by strong emotional ties. Stories by young minority language activists paint a similar picture.

## Parents

The first reference point for young people is their family home. It is where they are socialized; it is values and practices learned at home that shape their social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and which they will reproduce in the future. Parental attitudes towards belonging to an ethnic group and minority language have a major influence on which attitudes are adopted or rejected by young people (Baker, 1992: 109). Parents transmit an interest in minority culture and attitudes towards practices involved with participating in it. This student of Sorbian studies explains his attitude towards his culture:

**B22M(S):** I grew up with it. Our dad was always telling us where things are in Lusatia. We always went to different places to look at everything. Whenever a commemorative plaque was unveiled in a village, we were there. I really think it’s good that we did it. I am grateful for it. For years, every Christmas we were given Sorbian

books. We got them whether we wanted them or not. And then we read them. Our parents paid close attention that we did.

This young man grew up in a minority language-speaking home, and his parents' engagement meant that he learned about his environment and its history, participated in official and unofficial celebrations involving the minority culture, and learned to be an active spectator of cultural content.

Research shows that young people growing up in homes where community and civic issues are discussed, whose parents are engaged with the community or show positive aspects of participation, are more interested and have a greater tendency to become involved (McIntosh & Youniss, 2010: 31). For language minorities, these signals are of two types. It could involve being brought up in the minority language and parents speaking it with each other, their children and within the community. It could also involve an attitude of being open to the minority language, even if it isn't the main communication tool within the family, such as sending children to language schools and activities and showing them the language is valued. This helps children become familiar with the language and the minority group's situation and find a space for themselves within it. This has been the case for this 25-year-old Sorb, who became involved with a local educational institution after graduating from university:

**GM25M(S):** My mother was teaching Sorbian. She also participated in Sorbian courses in Bautzen. My dad plays in a Sorbian amateur theatre group. It is important for our family. My parents did not have to work hard to make us, the children, speak Sorbian and participate in Sorbian culture. We were brought up that way. It was the only obvious way.

For the following young woman, the daughter of a Kashubian activist, it is clear that if it were not for her mother, a teacher and activist for the language and region, she would not have learned Kashubian, like most of her peers:

**NDR:** *Has your mum's engagement helped you discover various things to do with Kashubia?*

**B24F(K):** Yes, definitely. Because there aren't many people like me, who spoke Kashubian at home and where the links to the region were stressed, I am talking about people roughly my age, they don't tend to feel very close ties to the region.

When parents participate in cultural, political and social activities supporting the minority, children find it easier to become interested in those issues (Rochon, 1998: 161). Simply by joining in and taking on the responsibilities of being a part of a group means that young people enter minority life more strongly, because individuals learn and construct their identities through group participation (McIntosh & Youniss, 2010: 30). This was the case for the following young Breton, who – despite his tender age – runs and organizes many Breton cultural events in his local community, as well as participating in public debates on the situation in Brittany and its language:

**T16M(B):** I discovered these circles kind of by accident, because my dad plays the bagpipes. Once [...] I insisted, went with him and started play the bagpipes. And so, step by step I was included in the band, I joined the association, and once you're in an association like that you want to do as much as you can, help organize festivals and so on. And gradually become involved in cultural life.

Parental attitudes are even more strongly reflected when it comes to civic and/or political engagement. For many young people, values and practices gained at the family home play a formative role, bolstering their engagement and stimulating them to action (Sherrod, 2006: 14). Research shows that key values held by parents are frequently transferred to the next generation. This is especially clear for parents who are or have been activists, because they are more likely to teach their children the importance of understanding others and of serving the common good (cf. Franz & McClelland, 1994). A young man active in *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* and in the youth division of *Plaid Cymru* says:

**B20M(W):** I think [my engagement] started because of my uncle. He was very sensitive to this because he was actually arrested in the 1980s for protesting for a better status of the Welsh language. And he spent some time in jail. So, it passed onto me through family more than anything. [...] I think I was just born in it, it developed in me with time. It's always been there since I was little. Everyone wears *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* t-shirts, stickers... It was always there. I just accepted it even before I actually understood why. But when you get older you really start to accept what is behind *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* and you want to defend the Welsh language and you want the best for Wales.

This student describes his uncle as someone very close to him, as well as being something of a hero – a standard to be followed. The family treats the fight for Welsh rights as a civic duty. As he grew up in this atmosphere and started to understand what the struggle is for and why, he decided to become active himself.

The following Breton secondary school student, whose father, a former activist with the Brittany Liberation Front (FLB),<sup>59</sup> taught his son about Breton issues, has similar views about the need to protect Breton culture and language:

**G16M(B):** I talked to my dad about it a bit, and he said, "Look, it's a fight for our language." That was during a demonstration in Rennes. He said: "I am going, because this is my country and it's the right thing to do." And he also said that I am his son, so I will go with him, take part in it, to be able to decide for myself in the future. But whenever he talked about it, my dad tried not to get into political problems. [...] he always tried to direct me more towards cultural issues, the language and learning to speak Breton. And he wanted me to learn about our past

---

59 *Front de la libération de la Bretagne* is an organization with a terrorist slant, demanding that Brittany be granted independence, which was especially active in the 1970s. It is entirely rejected by the majority of Breton movements.

and our ancestors as much as possible, rather than getting me involved with politics straight away. But I also remember that he told me once that politics is really important in Brittany, and even when we often didn't have time, he tried to introduce me to various issues.

The family home transmits the most important values tied with culture and minority language, and a positive attitude to them. However, showing and conveying an active attitude towards the world around them to children also plays an important role. If they are to become engaged with the culture and language, young people must have a sense that their engagement is important and that they are able to create culture themselves.

## School

We have already touched upon the role played by schools in the process of helping young people make a conscious choice to enter language and cultural communities. The significance of school activities is greater for children who do not speak the minority language at home and whose families do not discuss issues concerning cultural identity. However, school education is also important for children brought up in closely-knit language communities. Young people form important friendships and relationships at school, and they join social groups and communities of practice some of which help them (re)define their linguistic and cultural identities (Jaffe, 2011: 206). Schools foster language competence, in particular those in the literary language (cf. Martin-Jones, 2011). They also teach important cultural skills, especially during various kinds of extracurricular activities, which help young people learn about and become interested in minority issues. They can join other students to create communities of practice, which allows them to gain knowledge through action; the learning process becomes a process of gaining awareness of cultural belonging and becoming members of a given group (Lave, 1991; Eckert & Wenger, 1994). I spoke to a young Sorbian woman brought up in a Sorbian-speaking family whose parents are involved in cultural activities:

**H25F(S):** [...] first of all, school gives access. You can take part in activities with your friends. At the Upper Sorbian Grammar School, there is easy access to various opportunities. [...] For example we have performed at a theatre and it was great. We performed our play many times – sometimes in Sorbian, sometimes in German. We were proud and it was great fun. I think that it improved our [cultural] awareness.

Through activities enabling young people to form communities of practice involving Sorbian, the school helps students form closer ties and improve their understanding of the importance of Sorbian issues. Naturally, schools can encourage and discourage young people in equal measure. As stated in Chapter 2, a lot depends on individual teachers and the attractiveness of the activities on offer. This young woman explains that if it were not for her Kashubian language teacher,

she would have been unlikely to centre her life around activities promoting the language:

**G25F(K):** [...] if not for my secondary school, I wouldn't even know how to write in Kashubian. Because you know, at home, we spoke Kashubian, but then my parents cannot write in this language at all [...]. Also, taking part in performances [of an amateur theatre run by Kashubian teacher] enabled me to get know Kashubian literature. [...] You know, during regular classes there is never enough time to learn everything. But while preparing for a performance you need to get familiar with the writer – the author, and the whole context in which a story, a tale, or a drama has been created.

It was the school's theatre club which introduced her to Kashubian works, and encouraged her to participate in Kashubian culture and work with others to promote it. These activities changed how she looks at the minority culture and helped her form bonds with other students taking part in performances. The theatre club at school was a community of practice, with participation leading to the formation of a common identity through common engagement (Eckert & Wenger, 1994: 2).

Additionally, at school young people can learn about what situation their language and culture are in and why. Awareness of this situation, especially when it is transmitted by a teacher involved in minority issues, can influence young people's interest in the issues and lead to them become engaged with activities supporting the group. A young man from South Wales whose family did not speak Welsh at home, even though one of his parents was involved with Welsh politics, says:

**R20M(W):** Yes, it started in secondary school. It was not the curriculum really, it was the teachers who wanted to introduce us... cause in Wales the teachers are quite independent of government, and they can choose their own curriculum. We've learnt about the history of Wales and the conflict with English people. We've learnt about the Welsh speaking Wales, and I really wanted to see it, how it is outside. Outside because when you are in Cardiff... Still 20 years ago there were not many people who could speak Welsh. Now more people speak Welsh on the streets. It was definitely in school that it started, it wasn't a family thing. And since then I got involved in stuff like *Plaid Cymru* and *Cymdeithas yr Iaith*.

We cannot overlook the role played by schools involved with the minority language movement, such as Diwan in Brittany; its functioning and influence on shaping young people's collective consciousness and engagement in issues faced by their minority was discussed in Chapter 6.

## Cultural activities

Not all kinds of activities involved with minority culture bring similar effects. When participation can be passive and imitative, it does not drive the individual's engagement. However, it can be based on active and creative participation, which



promotes individual self-realization (Godlewski, 2002: 63–64). This type of participation can lead to individuals joining groups, forming bonds and becoming engaged. Based on long-term studies conducted in London, Mirza Munira (2006: 104) says: “Any number of sociable or educational activities, for instance, in sport or education or community work, might be more effective in building social capital or addressing social exclusion.” By joining cultural activities and practice, young people form bonds and learn as well as gaining social and cultural capital. Extracurricular activities at schools also encourage young people to form communities of practice which provide further opportunities to learn the language, develop community skills, share practices and shape identities in relation to those groups (Wenger, 1998). Research shows that participation in performative activities which require young people to engage with and give something of themselves plays a crucial role in how young people choose their future lifestyles and shape their identities; they learn new things and develop their abilities, including creativity, teamworking, improvisation and flexibility, all of which are essential in adulthood. They also gain the most important skill for engagement with minority life: motivation (Miles et al., 2002: 3).

Such participation also has a real effect on the desire and ability to use the minority language (Artexte Sarasola, 2014): young people find pleasure and sense in speaking the minority language, as well as practicing using it in environments other than home and school, which are frequently not associated with the language. A student of Welsh who did not grow up speaking Welsh at home says:

**D20F(W):** I wouldn't say there is that much of a difference [concerning language competence]. It's about the attitudes towards the language really. Some people just used the Welsh language without even thinking about it, and others had to think about using it really. It depended on what you did in school. If you did a lot of extracurricular activities, like preparing different things for *Eisteddfod*, a lot of people did something connected with sport and some were involved in drama... they could speak a lot more Welsh, they got used to it. And those people who didn't get involved had a lot of difficulties to speak.

She stresses that at school where the majority of students learned Welsh, those of them who used it as a communication tool within a group focused around cultural events started identifying with it more quickly.

Young people join extracurricular activities either because their parents suggest it or because they decide to do something their peers are doing. Regardless of the initial motivation, the positive experiences and new friendships can lead to independent and deliberate participation in minority culture. This young Sorbian woman explains:

**F20F(S):** I saw other girls being *družki* [participants of a Catholic procession, wearing a traditional costume] and I wanted to do the same. My cousin performed at a Sorbian theatre so I decided that I would also join. He showed me that it's something beautiful. I don't know, it seemed obvious that I was involved. Some friends

were doing something and I liked it, I also wanted to do it. I joined the orchestra by myself. I knew myself that I wanted to do it.

Initially, this young woman copied her peers and wanted to do the same things. However, her participation in Sorbian cultural life gradually became a conscious choice.

Organizations offering cultural activities and efforts of communities encouraging young people to join them have a common goal: the individual development of young people as members of a broader group by active participation and engagement (Speer, 2008: 214). Hosting cultural events which sneak in elements of the minority language or history make young people sensitive to those issues. The following student of Breton, from a family which does not speak the language and is not involved with the minority, recalls that her first contact with Breton culture happened at dance classes in a Celtic club:

**V22F(B):** [...] [...] When I was a child, after-school activities were one hour and half long. We danced for one hour and then there was “half an hour for culture.” People who taught us how to dance, young girls, gave us a talk about Brittany, history, stories, taught us a few words in Breton, some silly things, colours, etc.... It was short but very interesting and it allowed us to understand that it is not only for amusement, like judo or sport, but it was related to something important.

Being a member of a youth cultural group is mainly a social experience. By taking part in such events, young people have the opportunity to make new acquaintances and friends and learn about new values, at times different from those they experience at home. Such relationships give sense to bonds and enhance a sense of belonging to a community (Cotterell, 2007: 223). Peer relationships are significant for young people, since it is important that they fit in and do not stick out of the group (Miles, Dallas & Burr, 1998). Trends and pastimes are not trivial issues; rather, they provide an important context for how young people make key decisions concerning their futures. “The demands on young people which arise from youth cultural involvement are twofold: they have to orientate themselves in the landscape of lifestyles that surround them, creating and occupying a niche they consider to be integrative as well as individual” (Miles et al., 2002: 17). Cooperation between group members becomes the greatest challenge for participants, since it helps them build further interest in the community’s goals, while learning those goals and identifying with them supports and justifies individual sense of belonging (McInstosh & Youniss, 2010: 31). Robert Putnam (2000: 117) also shows that those individuals who “belong to formal and informal social networks are more likely to give [their] time and money to good causes than those [...] who are isolated socially.” Young people gain a sense that they are doing something they enjoy and something which is important for the group as a whole, which in turn makes them more inclined to give more of themselves for the common goals. They also have an opportunity to meet individuals who may encourage them to join in

with more organized activities. A young Kashub describes the early stage of his interests:

**N22M(K):** [...] it started when [...] I joined a folkloric dance group, quite by chance. We performed different Kashubian events and it was where I had my first contact with Kashubian, because unfortunately we didn't speak Kashubian at home. In secondary school [...] we joined [...] the biggest regional ensemble of song and dance. And I am still a part of it. Everything went OK, we had a lot of performances, even abroad, and our self-confidence grew, our pride of being Kashubs. [...] And there I met a girl who was already in the Students Club Pomorania and she said, "You have to join the Pomorania Club." So I did.

His story is as important as it is typical. Participating in cultural events allowed him to make an early distinction between the minority and dominant cultures, and start learning the language which he did not speak at home. By joining the group he met peers who went on to become friends; the close ties between them were in part based on the growing pride in belonging to the minority culture. He also met a Kashubian activist who led him to taking the next step in engagement in minority issues.

## Friends, activists

As the work of scholars such as Jacqueline Kennelly has shown, engaged individuals from families with no ties to activism frequently admit that their first impulse for becoming involved was developing relationships with other young people who played the role of their "cultural guides" in the world of activism (Kennelly, 2011: 117–118). Researchers of social movements also note the importance of networks between individuals and engaged people who introduce them to the relevant circles (Della Porta & Diani, 2006). It is contact with engaged individuals which is quoted by my interlocutors as one of the most important stimuli for full and deliberate engagement in minority language and culture issues. This student of Breton, active in numerous Breton organizations and syndicates, says that he became "seriously involved" thanks to his brother who introduced him to his circle of activists:

**W20M(B):** It seems to me that it was in [Diwan] secondary school when I started to think about acting on behalf of the Breton language. But my activity took concrete form after I left secondary school. When I finished secondary school, my brother was finishing his BA in economics at Nantes and was beginning to be involved with *44 Breizh*<sup>60</sup> with people I knew, but not too well. That's when I first heard about it, and when I left secondary school, I joined *44 Breizh* and it was probably

---

60 Association campaigning for the Loire-Atlantique department to join Brittany.

my first real commitment. [...] That's when I started to work in the specific sense of the word.

Research shows that people whose friends include many activists are much more likely to become activists themselves (Hart & Lakin Gullan, 2010: 73). Simply the presence of active individuals in a peer group can influence others. "Even if it does not result in bringing in new recruits to a cause, activism may raise awareness of issues and expand imagination" (Kassimir, 2006: 23). However, frequently exchanges of ideas, views or personal experience helping young people gain an understanding of activism are enough to stimulate them to become more engaged and opens new, fascinating options of becoming involved (Sherrod et al., 2006: 463). This teenager from Wales who has become active recently recalls how this started:

**Y16F(W):** I have a friend, and we spoke a lot about it [involvement for the Welsh language], and we are both members of *Cymdeithas*. And he's already been going to meetings, and he invited me to go to meetings. And since then I've been looking at different opportunities [...] I made friends with many people. I've become informed, I read Welsh papers, as much as I can see. I am looking for local events.

This young activist's words confirm that peer groups, their views and attitudes can influence interest in minority culture and language issues. Colin Baker believes that participation in minority activities, events and groups can bolster a positive attitude towards the language (Baker, 1992: 109). The experience of this young Kashubian activist who organizes cultural activities to try to recruit new members to the cause is interesting in this context:

**A20M(K):** [...] for me it's definitely a success to have recruited a few people who are now involved with my theatre group. We formed a Kashubian-language theatre group, enrolling people who are already involved with the Kashubian movement. But there weren't many of them, so we invited a few others who [...] already had some stage experience and just had to learn the lines in Kashubian. It was an interesting experience for them [...] and [our] attitude infected them, and we were really able to recruit a few people to our cause.

Another young Sorbian woman was drawn into becoming active in Sorbian culture by a friend who was already engaged. Although she took part in rural Sorbian customs, she had previously shied away from "organized" forms of Sorbian culture. She joined them because of her friend, and she realized that this participation is important for the preservation of her sense of being Sorbian:

**A18F(S):** I have a very good friend who is heavily engaged. She has this ability to motivate people. And she does a lot for young people from the village. There are mainly boys, and she's one of just three girls. [...] She's something of a mother among them. She tries to introduce them to Sorbian culture. Every now and again she organizes trips to Sorbian theatres for performances in Sorbian. When *Pawk* was organizing a Sorbian festival, she said: "Come on, we'll go." [...] She wants

young people to do things which are truly Sorbian. She was my inspiration. Now I say to myself: "Right, let's go to the theatre..."

## Chance/coincidence

Engagement with minority culture activities can begin (and often begins) by chance, combined with a certain grounding provided by family, school or peers. At times it's a question of being in the right place at the right time. This teenager recalls the beginnings of his adventure with the Welsh movement which he is now strongly involved with:

**NDR:** *And how did you join Cymdeithas yr Iaith?*

**W18M(W):** They kind of started the band for us, really, cause... the four of us had been going around pubs and stuff. And then I got a phone call from someone asking if we'd be interested in having a gig. And I thought, "all right then, let's make this a proper band now." Before then, we'd been singing a lot in English, and in Welsh. And then we decided, "all right, let's do it properly in Welsh." It was a great opportunity, and we thought it was a fantastic start for us. And it was a big day for *Cymdeithas yr Iaith*, the 50th birthday, and around this, it was a really good start.

The early stages of engagement with the minority culture can also be combined with a desire to "dazzle"; to do something special to make the most of it. At times this motivation turns into a genuine interest and a gradual shift to the world of activism. The following young man from Kashubia tells his story:

**A20M(K):** This interest stemmed from the fact that I was a good at civic studies and the teacher was looking for volunteers to enter a competition of Kashubian knowledge. I went along thinking about getting a grade rather than any other reason, but I became interested in it. Because until then I only associated being Kashubian with the family home, visiting my aunt occasionally where they speak with a slightly different accent, and that every week there's ten or twenty minutes on the TV on Sundays and grandad watches it. That was all that being Kashubian meant to me. And then it suddenly turned out that we have our whole history [...] And I got so interested in it all that I decided to learn the language.

Another Kashubian secondary-school student tells a similar story about her early interest and later active participation in culture. Her activities were initially motivated by money: a group of young people decided that they would raise more funds if they performed in Kashubian than in Polish. It slowly dawned on them that their performances were not just enjoyed by the local community, but that they were seen as important. After a while, they came to understand this significance:

**T18F(K):** To start with, it was: let's get changed, we'll earn a bit of cash, do some singing... So I said, if you sing in Polish and there are five other groups before you, they'll bung you 50 grosz and no one will appreciate it. So we decided that we'd get

changed, sing in Kashubian, and when we did that, people stopped and watched. And when we started playing and singing carols [in Kashubian], they started singing the second verse. And so on. Then some people would say we haven't been over there yet, and why should another street miss out... And in the end, we had to go all over [the village]. Then other villages joined in which belong [to our district]. And everyone liked it. Then we realized ourselves why it's so important.

My interlocutors frequently describe how they shifted gradually from low-key activities, when they didn't have to consider the entire cultural context, to organizing their own activities with a deliberate focus on the minority language and culture. This young Breton woman says that her involvement started with her love of dance and attending *fest-noz* where she met a group of Breton activist which she gradually joined:

**K21F(B):** During holidays I went to many *fest-noz*, and one was organised by the *Ai'Ta* collective. The collective fights for Breton to be an official language. I went along, signed up, gave my address and that's how it started. Then I spoke to a few people from the collective, there was a campaign, we went, I met people and that was the start. Then I became involved as much as time, place and other things allowed. I really wanted to join in.

Participation in *fest-noz* is an expression of cultural belonging, but it does not have to mean being an active supporter of the culture. However, it provides opportunities to meet people who are actively engaged and who can direct an undecided individual towards becoming involved.

This was the case for this young Sorbian woman who was a member of a dance group, so to some extent she already participated in organised Sorbian culture. Her active participation in culture started from being asked by an experienced animator to help in organizing Sorbian cultural events for children:

**E17F(S):** Because I am in a dance group and there are three of us from the same village, we were asked if we could help [organise activities for young children]. We said we could and then met to talk about who could do what. It took a while, but it was great telling kids about [customs] and then doing them together with them. [...] It gives a lot of joy. We meet, talk and then sing Sorbian songs.

To start with, preparing activities for children meant fulfilling the activist's request. However, the young woman gradually discovered that she enjoys it and that she is good at it. The next step was joining the *Pawk* youth association.

### Finding one's own place

The individuals quoted above started off by enjoying being active within the minority culture and language so much that they started getting more involved. However, this engagement would not have been possible had they not found something personal in those activities which they enjoyed, helped them develop and

which they wanted to pursue. This young Sorbian woman who has been involved with a youth organization since secondary school recalls:

**H25F(S):** What happened was that [friends] talked me into it. After my first YEN<sup>61</sup> seminar, [...] I got “promoted” relatively quickly in the youth group. Then this moved to *Pawk*, because I enjoyed organizing things. I enjoyed working with the group, experiencing things. I could say that I already had visions and plans when I was at this seminar. I was proud that I was enthusiastic and that I also had ideas.

Her first experience of active participation in minority culture was sufficiently positive to encourage her to become further involved. Very frequently the stimuli discussed above overlap, giving the young person a good grounding for becoming involved.

A particularly interesting example is provided by a young Welsh woman who acquired a passion for politics at home. She participated in Welsh cultural life, which she enjoyed. Through her interests she met slightly older friends; she was fascinated by them, and they increasingly involved her in direct action. When she started university, she found a space for herself and started becoming involved in minority activities by herself:

**N22F(W):** My dad, he is quite a political one, he was organizing lots of things to support Welsh. I went there with him. And during *Eisteddfod*, always doing something with *Cymdeithas yr Iaith*, I always wanted it, me and my cousins, we were always there when we were 13–14. So it was always there. And then I went for meetings in North Wales. I remember when my friends got arrested when I was 16. I was disappointed that they did not ask me to do the thing with them, but I was proud of them. You connect with people, and then you get more involved, you go for meetings and stuff. But when I came down to South Wales, I found the *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* office, and I specifically wanted to participate in meetings and things, and here I really got involved.

## Parting from family and location

Young people from families practicing the minority culture frequently see their grandparents as the proper carriers of the culture, given that they have lived, as they say themselves, in “true minority culture.” They become models for young people to emulate; symbols of how the minority culture should function. This is why many of my interlocutors, including this student of Sorbian studies, believe it was being close to grandparents that set them on their path:

**P22M(S):** Yes, I think that my grandmother had the greatest influence on it [...]. I visited regularly to bring her coal, or wood to burn in the stove. We often talked,

---

61 Youth of European Nationalities.

and she was really pleased that someone came to visit [...]. She awoke a Sorbian consciousness in me, because she wore a folk costume and somehow, I don't really know how, but I felt that I want to do it.

As individuals close to their grandparents grow up, they start to understand the stories about their minority culture and the sometimes difficult and traumatic experiences that stem from belonging to it. When such stories fall on fertile ground, they can bring about a shift in young people's value systems and push them towards becoming actively involved with minority issues. This young Breton activist describes an event which had a major impact on her:

**K21F(B):** [...] when I saw my grandfather crying for the first time in my life. My grandfather had a fairly difficult life, he went to war, he was captured by Germans, he was at a concentration camp, but he was a strong person. I had never seen him cry, he was always optimistic that everything would be all right, that life would return to normal. But one time, when he was talking to my father about Brittany and told him that when he was little people laughed at him when he spoke Breton... My grandfather didn't usually say much about what he thought. He never cried, and didn't really get wound up. I don't really know how to describe it. And one day he was talking and said that he won't die until Brittany found its way... that he would give his life for his language and for his nation... and then, saying that, he had tears in his eyes [...] And when I saw my grandfather crying like that, it really moved me.

Her grandfather's stories meant that the young woman started seeing her involvement with her language as a task she should take on. For many young people, their grandparents and their stories become a reference point for their own activities which they dedicate to them. This young Kashub describes his engagement:

**K22M(K):** [what I do is a kind of] testament to my grandparents. That's how I see it. [...] It was great when for Kashubian flag celebrations [...] I prepared a talk in Kashubian, it was my first report in Kashubian, on Kashubian topics [...] and my mum's siblings saw it, they said, "It's a shame his grandparents didn't live long enough to see their grandson being so active, because it must be a great source of pride in heaven for them." Man, such small words, but they really encouraged me, showed that what I do is really great and I feel great doing it.

This young Sorbian woman expresses a similar sentiment about her devotion to her grandfather and listening to his stories when she was a child:

**E17F(S):** My grandfather, my mum's father, was very active in Sorbian culture. When he was dying, the most important thing to him was that we should continue in the same direction. He was my favourite grandfather. He was someone special, he always talked about what he used to do, talked about Sorbian culture. I sat on his knee, and he talked to me. He really guided me in this direction.



For many young people, the most traumatic event which encourages them to become involved in the minority culture is the death of a grandmother or grandfather they were close to. This young man from Wales describes how the passing of his grandfather who taught him Welsh motivated him:

**A20M(W):** I was very close to my grandfather. [...] When my grandmother passed away, I lived with my grandfather because we did not want him to be alone, and I was still close to home. My grandfather was Welsh, he couldn't speak much English, and when he got old he did not speak English at all. [...] He told me a lot of stories, a lot of stories of his past... And then he suddenly passed away, and it was quite a shock for me. And I started to see that without the language, without this connection I'd lose these stories that my grandfather used to say. [...] I think it was because seeing how his generation, the last generation whose main language always has been Welsh passing away, and my generation is not that strong [in language] as my grandfather's generation. And I think it was the realization that "this is actually a problem." And that's what kicked me to do it.

Individuals can also become aware of their ties with a minority culture and language as a result of becoming separated from that culture. Young people frequently regard participation in minority culture (and speaking the minority language) as something imposed on them by authorities such as family or school. When using the minority language is not their choice, it can drive resentment and objection, erasing any perceived benefits of belonging to the minority. Many young people say that it was not until they left the family home, school and the surroundings where they grew up that they started to realise how much they miss them and how much they treasure their multiculturalism and bilingualism. This young Breton activist says that she became involved in supporting Breton culture and language after returning from university in a different part of France:

**N23F(B):** There were lots of small things which made me get back to it. But it's also because I left, I went to Bordeaux, I met other people. I have a feeling that it was a path I was following step by step, not necessarily realizing it. But the path was taking me to the place of my origin. I could probably choose something else just as easily, but every time I was drawn back to things which were linked with culture, with language, with things I have in my heart.

For the following young Kashubian woman, who learned the language in secondary school and started participating in Kashubian cultural life, choosing to study a subject unrelated to Kashubia meant that she came to realize what her greatest passion is. By becoming separated from Kashubian culture, she rediscovered what she enjoys in life and what she would like to dedicate herself to in the future:

**C21F(K):** Later [...] I enrolled at the Maritime Academy in Gdynia. And I realised pretty quickly that it isn't something I want to do with my life. Of course I passed exams in maths, physics, and Kashubian was something extra, for me... And really [later no one] had to convince me that I should do Kashubian studies. I quit the

Maritime Academy after the first semester and [...] I was really doing a lot: apart from working [in Kashubian circles], I was expanding my knowledge and travelled a lot [around Kashubia] and discovered lots of great places.

## Becoming involved with preservation of the minority language

Some young people admit that they only realised at some point in their lives that they started to understand the sense of what had been conveyed to them at home or at school concerning the minority culture, its situation and protection. This young Breton woman who graduated from a Diwan secondary school describes how understanding her teachers came as a real revelation:

**M21F(B):** [...] I clearly remember this demonstration I went to with my parents, my whole family and friends. And I think I experienced a revelation [*prise de conscience*]. I mean, I realized that there is really something important in this, after all you can't see Breton on plaques, on signs... And I understood that since there are so many people here today, there must be a reason. [...] after that, every time I was out in town, I noticed that Breton is invisible and it's a shame... and [...] after that I knew that I want to go to the [Diwan] secondary school.

Sometimes a deeper interest in minority issues and becoming involved with them starts from a choice made to a lesser or greater conscious degree which seemingly does not require engagement: choosing what to study or what job to take. However, it turns out that the choice entails joining a certain group and becoming familiar with its burning problems. This student of Sorbian studies at the University of Leipzig says that before starting university she did not consider becoming active in the minority circles:

**I22F(S):** Well actually, I started to get involved when I came to Leipzig and joined *Sorabija*. And I decided to consciously do something when I enrolled in Sorbian studies. From the moment I started my studies, I became that way: I want to do something with others, or look at what others were doing [for Sorbian culture].

Her slightly older colleague took an even longer route:

**G25M(S):** To be honest, [I first became interested in Sorbian] when I started my apprenticeship [at a Sorbian organization] three years ago. Until then I only had a vague idea what the [Witaj] Language Centre is, what Domowina does, but I only knew that they worked on maintaining Sorbian culture. Now I fight for it myself.

Joining a group tied to the minority encourages young people to analyse and adapt their attitude towards the language and culture and improve their understanding; more than anything, it helps them find their own place among activists. The process can be linked to the phenomenon of situated learning and legitimate peripheral participation, described by Jean Lave and Étienne Wenger (1991). During socialization processes, individuals who initially do not engage and who rarely participate

in communal activities gradually become more involved to become genuine, fully-fledged members of the community. This member of Pomorania explains how she did not think of herself in terms of being Kashubian prior to joining the club:

**NDR:** [...] *So your more conscious participation in Kashubian culture began with the Pomorania club?*

**D22F(K):** I think so. Because previously it was only that I had Kashubian friends I recognized that they were Kashubs, and I also have a family from Kashubia. And that's it. And for me to become more involved, it started only after I joined the club. Now it is an important part of my life.

One of my interlocutors described her first interest in Kashubian culture as “catching a bug.” Once that happens, the individual can enter the next stage of minority awareness: becoming engaged in activities supporting it.

## Engagement

Active participation in minority culture allows young people to learn about and understand their environment, as well as helping them realize that it constitutes an important value without which their own lives and their communities would be deprived. Additionally, interactions with animators and activists promoting the minority culture may lead people who have become interested in the culture to develop predispositions such as “ability to self-organize and act without encouragement from the state/government, awareness of the community’s needs and goals, and ability to act for the common good” (Litwinowicz, no date: 23). The combination of individuals noticing the value of minority culture and wanting to show it off turns into engagement.

Psychologists note an important dimension of engagement: it covers targeted action, which is not instrumental in terms of the objective. Objectives (such as protection/revitalization of endangered languages) are simply an excuse to continue ongoing activities rather than an overall goal (Lewicka, 1993: 17–19). As such, engagement is action driven by action; by all external factors and internal experiences which makes individuals take and maintain a certain course of action despite obstacles and attractive alternatives which might otherwise encourage them to abandon their activities (Brickman, 1987).

Examining the stimuli that encourage young people to become engaged with the minority language and culture reveals that they have varying motivations and ways of being involved, and each individual chooses a way of engaging that suits them. The definitions of engagement have also changed over time. The French sociologist Olivier Bobineau (2010: 66–67) stated that in the early 20th century, engagement mainly had connotations of family and community, attesting common bonds and interests (Fr. *l'engagement attestataire*). In late 1968, engagement was directed against “paternal morality,” making into a contention (Fr. *l'engagement contestataire*). The generation of activists born during the 1980s focuses on developing a range of axiological strategies alongside people they consider to be similar

(Fr. *l'engagement confinitaire*). The contesting engagement of the 1960s and 1970s has evolved into voluntary engagement, based on similarities between individuals and passions they share. This kind of engagement is based around the existence of “emotional community” (Maffesoli, 1996), resulting from people’s need to identify emotionally with others. The existence of such communities means that individuals brought up in an atomized world are able to join others in action. Such groups or communities of practice give individuals a sense of value of their activities and engagement, and they shape, confirm and bolster individual identity.

Many scholars and activists working with minorities believe that the greatest problem and challenge in activating young people today is the multitude of choices and opportunities available to them. This is because actively supporting a minority culture requires time, dedication and passion. Unless they are directed towards this interest, young people must share these resources among other activities. This young Welsh activist notes that if a group includes at least one charismatic individual convinced that they are acting for a good cause, they can motivate other individuals who have previously been undecided:

**E16F(W):** [...] students are quite difficult because their free time is so short, and they have exams, and holidays and there is so much going on. And it is very difficult to get them to, you know, sit down and do anything else in their lives, but... it depends on the group as well. If you have one or two people, who are really keen and willing to get all their friends together, then you do see a lot of people doing things. But there are also some years when there is almost no one to do it.

Her observations concern the role played by communities of practice; by participating in them, young people become engaged with the minority culture. According to many of my interlocutors, it is the community dimension and acting towards a specific if distant goal that marks the strength of their engagement. This young Sorbian woman who went from participating in groups, via devising and implementing projects for young people, to working in a minority organization, states that it is impossible to be a member of such a group and remain indifferent. This is because an engaged person is surrounded by other engaged individuals who all motivate one another:

**M25F(S):** When there is someone who is interested in similar things and has similar goals [it is easier to get involved]. All members of these groups [are like that] – I do not know anyone who says, “I’m in a dance group, for example, but I don’t care about anything else.” I can’t imagine saying something like that, one thing rules out the other.

Studies of individuals engaged with various kinds of student movements reveal that one of the factors that motivates them to take action is joining certain communities and becoming involved through formal and informal networks, which help them express feelings and give them a sense of group solidarity. This shifts their perspective from an individual to community perspective. “The choices that are rational for an individual in an atomized environment are not necessarily the

decisions reached by someone in an environment rich in organizational networks and group solidarities” (Rochon, 1998: 96–97). It seems that the greatest benefit of young people becoming engaged with minority languages and cultures is creating community identities of activists. Those who become deeply involved with the group frequently imagine that everyone around them shares their views, which often give them a false impression of the language community as a whole and the problem it faces:

**S17F(S):** Everyone has a way of becoming involved [in being active]. Whether it’s really conscious or as something additional, you simply have to do something, go to events and support it this way. That’s why I could say that we act as Sorbs ... There are also people who don’t belong to these [circles], but generally speaking I think we all know each other, all these choirs and dance groups. And you always hear about someone or other. You basically don’t know anyone who isn’t engaged.

This means that engagement has a social dimension which is enjoyable in and of itself (meeting friends and doing things together), as well as involving activities explained by an overarching goal. It is the influence of social and peer groups on individuals becoming engaged with causes that makes communities of practice formed by young people, discussed in the previous chapter, so important. Engagement is easier between people who share interests and activities. Simply sharing a location, such as student accommodation, school or a music group, does not mean the individual is engaged. If they do not want to interact and do not find their own place in the group’s activities, they may remain passive. However, the existence of this environment helps individuals realize that engagement can have social and communal aspects. According to this student from Wales:

**B20M(W):** [...] living in Pantycelyn you have to make sacrifices, you have to take an active part. You’re not going to become a part of a Pantycelyn community if you don’t attempt to be. You have to take an active part in it.

Relationships between engaged individuals can be viewed from the perspective of social networks, where groups, associations or organizations are seen as social structures based on ties between individuals and the group as a whole. For individuals, social benefits of group participation are gaining many new friends, as well as developing relationships with adults who have loose ties to the group, such as animators, teachers, activists or politicians; the latter is frequently applied by young people in their adult lives (Cotterell, 2007: 228–229). The existence of the group means that when an individual finds themselves in a new environment, they find it easier to find their own place, get a job or join in with interesting activities. This young Kashubian journalist explains:

**V20M(K):** The Kashubian world offers endless opportunities to journalists, because we immediately gain access to the media where we can have great specializations, ones we are interested in, and it seems that the career path is much faster. [...] once you are in the Kashubian world, it suddenly turns out that you know one

employer and another, because they are all active in Kashubian spheres, meet, suddenly everyone is friends, because after all you are a Kashub, so even if there are some differences in worldview, you can meet and talk, and that's a good thing. [...] Once you work your way into the Kashubian world, you are never alone. And that's also beautiful.

This is not simply about the measurable benefits (finding a job, subsidized holidays, participating in projects) accessible to individuals engaged with active communities. It is more that each subsequent engagement, job or holiday with other interested and engaged people mean the individual becomes more strongly involved with the minority. This is because the shaping of common identity as part of participation is at the core of communities of practice. The idea of identity based on participation is, in turn, strongly tied to the concept of motivation, since the significance given to the world by individuals is linked to their activities (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 122). This makes engaged individuals feel they have their own place in the world. This young Breton man who graduated from a Diwan secondary school and is active in Breton-language groups in Rennes says:

**NDR:** *What does participation in those meetings give you, in your life?*

**J21M(B):** It gives me identity. At least I know... I told you before about the students who didn't ever fight for anything, for any cause. Me, I fought for Breton. My parents were sensitive about environmental issues. I used to demonstrate also for that cause. This is important for the identity to have things you want to defend. The fact that I speak Breton also distinguishes me from others. And it taught me to fight for something important and to know that you have to do it.

The existence of communities of practice allows individuals who have been separated from their environment for some reason to find one another; additionally, they can find and follow a purpose through the group's defined goals and by working with others, since active participation in a group leads to the development of practical skills (Rochon, 1998: 136). The story of this young Kashubian woman is a good example:

**I22F(K):** When I went to university, I didn't like it at all, I didn't like anything about Gdańsk, and I wanted to come home. And it was really thanks to Pomorania that I opened up again. Because everyone [at university] seemed so smart. Meanwhile I'm from a village, I don't know anything and I keep saying this *jo* [Kashubian for "yes"]. [...] It wasn't until I became active in Pomorania, [...] that I opened up and I remembered that I like doing this. I enjoy organizing things, I like when I have a lot of duties and I do them, because then I feel cool and needed. So with Pomorania it isn't just so that we're there because we are on some mission. Pomorania also teaches us ordinary things, being open to others, social skills, it teaches courage.

There is another important dimension of communities of practice of young people from language minorities. Joining such a group, especially in areas where traditional language communities do not exist, when people who speak the minority

language are surrounded by a majority using the dominant culture, motivates individuals to act and provides them with a space where they can use the minority language. This young Kashub who started learning the language as a teenager says:

**NDR:** *Did the existence of this group of friends help you to begin learning Kashubian?*

**V20M(K):** It did not just help – it enabled me to do it. Enabled. If not for the young people with whom I had some sort of a connection, if not for friendships or acquaintances, I wouldn't have joined it, because language and culture are social skills. This is either a communication tool or a way of expressing values that unite us. I don't feel any connection with the elderly. Or, to put it differently: there are few areas where I feel connected with them. And if not for the young people who were thinking in a similar way, who shared my passions or even views on some issues, I would have never entered the Kashubian culture. Because there would not have been anybody with whom I could do it.

This young Breton woman who organizes meetings for young speakers of Breton and encourages them to interact by creating a space to meet and participate in activities describes her own involvement:

**K21F(B):** [...] had I not met people who also spoke Breton, who felt the same as I do, I don't know whether I would be doing all this all on my own. Perhaps a bit, but not all that much. And it's true that meeting people, especially from the *Ai'Ta* collective... since then I have met other young people who also speak Breton. I mean I knew them before, but it wasn't until then that we started speaking Breton in this normal, everyday way.

## Activism

Todd Gitlin, sociologist and American social activist of the 1960s, defines an activist as “someone who moves people into action and doesn't just rouse them for a particular occasion, who doesn't come and go but steadily works up strategies, focuses energies and (crucially) settles in for the long haul” (Gitlin, 2003: 4). Scholars of language activism and the participation of linguists in it describe the phenomenon thus: “Activism is frequently defined as intentional, vigorous or energetic action that individuals and groups practice it to bring about a desired goal. For some, activism is a theoretically or ideologically focused project intended to affect a perceived need for political or social change” (Combs & Penfield, 2012: 461). In minority communities which generally have no public institutions and political leverage (or they exist but are weak), the decisive role falls on activists who develop strategies, focus their attention on specific issues of exclusion, discrimination and a lack of interest in minority problems and goals, and urge other people to become engaged through direct action (Gitlin, 2003; Combs & Penfield, 2012: 461).

Being engaged with a cause does not have to lead to activism. Not all individuals who consider the future of minority languages and cultures to be important want to or are able to become involved in its promotion, join social movements and

initiate activities, protests and direct action. Only some take the entire path from participating in minority culture, via engagement, all the way to activism. It has been noted that the more activities young people are involved with, the more they explore the world of engaged individuals and the greater the proportion of their friends has similar interests, the more closely they feel involved with the group and its ideals. This young man from Upper Lusatia describes how he became an activist:

**L24M(S):** Well, it started kind of automatically. It was not my conscious decision. It started when I was dancing in a group. And there I began to become involved in the organizational parts. And it went on like this to the next involvement, because they were looking for someone who could take over the local branch of the [Sorbian organization]. [...] And after, I went to Leipzig, and I joined the students club, *Sorabija*. Through *Sorabija* I started to write articles for the Sorbian press. One thing led to another. When you commit to one [activity] and look around, you begin to become involved in the next one.

For many engaged individuals, we are seeing the process escalating from one activity to another. As Maria Lewicka (1993: 25) puts it, this stems from their ongoing need to find new sources of inspiration. For individuals who are engaged and start motivating themselves, reaching a partial goal is not sufficient but instead serves as encouragement for further action. As one young Kashub states:

**NDR:** *So: the more you do, the more you get involved?*

**V20M(K):** Yes. The more it hurts you, the more it pisses you off, the more time you devote. [...] And at the end your friends tell you: "OK, fine, but give us a break, we're at the disco..." But at the same time it starts to build up in you. [...] And it starts to be your passion.

According to my interlocutors, when their involvement turns into a passion, it not only doesn't feel like a burden but gives them a sense of achievement and shapes their personalities. There frequently comes a point when young activists also take jobs involved with the minority culture and language. This young woman active in many fields of Breton language and culture and working for local authorities organizing Breton cultural festivals says:

**NDR:** *Where do all your ideas come from?*

**N23F(B):** I don't really know. Here it is a job, something to do with my degree, my interests and what I want to do. I've always been interested in theatre, and I've been involved with animation for seven years. And it so happens that something new happened with every step, and it ended up gaining incredible proportions. And I should really back down a bit, because I am struggling to keep up with everything... But I don't know, it's also all identity, it's something I've been doing for many years. I grew up in this environment. I also want to contribute to the survival of Breton in one way or another.



Current movements supporting minority languages are based on various types of engagement and activity. Since they are internally inconsistent and focused on many different dimensions (such as language, education, tradition, culture, tourism, economic development of the region, local politics), they are bound together by activists who tend to know one another and belong to different related circles. In this sense minority circles are inclusive and set up such that individuals create networks of connections between each other and between other organizations (Della Porta & Diani, 2006: 121–127).

Young activists frequently stress that their activities have a special meaning for their minority, since they are more aware of their peers' needs than adults who have been active for many years. Many have already experienced learning the minority language to be able to speak it, so they realize it is a process fraught with difficulties and requiring specific encouragement. Young people believe that they are closer to the issues, which makes them better at organizing more effective and attractive activities for their peers. Since participation may evolve into engagement, and – given the right conditions – into activism, the process somewhat resembles a self-propelling machine. It makes it easier for a generation of young people who are undecided of their ethnic belonging to find their place in the minority culture. This young Sorbian woman says:

**H25F(S):** Thanks to *Pawk* they [young people] have an opportunity to get to know young people from other villages and to take part in events. We try to do some modern projects, which attract young people, obviously, everything in Sorbian. We try to make them understand that what is in Sorbian, is not necessarily silly, serious or traditional. It is not only about literature, about culture, but the point is to do cool things together. We organized a modern music festival twice. One: the bands can present themselves, and it is contemporary Sorbian music, not folklore and classical stuff. Secondly: young people start to admit their Sorbianness openly. To realize their identity. But I think that the most important is to show that it really exists, that we can say “Hey, our culture is really rich,” and people see it.

Activism, including linguistic, is more than just participation in culture and promoting the minority. For my interlocutors it is also about general attitude. It is about collective action which shapes individual identity in relation to group identity. It means gradually internalizing group ideology, accepting it as one's own and learning a specific discourse. This young Breton man who is a member of the *Ai'Ta* collective says:

**Q20M(B):** It was really after I finished secondary school. [...] That was when I [became involved] with *Ai'Ta*. And it was there that I really started to do something. And I learned to talk about it, because whenever there's an *Ai'Ta* campaign, it always brings a lot of people together and we have to explain what we are doing and why, we have to try to convince them. So to start with I took over a discourse which wasn't necessarily my own, but then I started to think about it and I understood myself why it's important.

Since activism is tied with ideology, young people first have to understand it. This is why the engaged attitude of minority representatives develops through a process of a gradual understanding of individuals that the situation of the community and minority language differs from that of the dominant society. The following young man from Wales, active in *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* and working at a Welsh institution concerned with linguistic legislation, describes the process of realizing the need to fight for a better status for the language:

**K25M(W):** There is no kind of particular incident, it is gradual. [...] also learning the history of my nation and how people have been kept down in the past. [...] So learning things like that and spending a lot of time with my grandparents I guess. Especially my grandma was very strong in things like that. [...] And then they told me we had to defend it as well. At first it was like I believed in it with my heart but I also thought that it is something quite stupid. And then you realize that you have to defend it: like everyone asks you all the time “Can’t you speak English?” Well, yes, I can speak English but that is not the point. This is my country and I should be able to have things bilingually. And you have to justify it all the time. And you finally start to fight for your language.

As an individual’s awareness of prejudice grows, it turns into an opposition to the injustice and an understanding that since the group does not have sufficient clout or equivalence with surrounding cultures (Bokszanski, 2006: 92–97), it requires support. According to the following university student from Brittany, the opposition does not have to relate to the situation faced by a single specific minority to inspire him to action; rather, it becomes an opposition to inequality and discrimination in general:

**J21M(B):** I think that when you are young, you have to fight for something, for the weaker, whether they are minorities, language or something else. I think it’s important. And it’s sad that not everyone gets involved. After all there are so many things which need protecting today: Breton, the environment...

Sometimes it is direct, personal experience of discrimination in terms of language or origin which opens young people’s eyes and triggers resistance. This was the case for the following young Sorbian woman; despite participating in many cultural groups, she originally did not consider becoming an activist because she did not realize the situation was as bad as she had heard. Her attitude changed when she became a victim of persecution herself:

**A18F(S):** When I was still living in Budyšin and had driving lessons, one time I was coming home from theory lessons and I had a badge on my bag with the inscription “we were, we are, we will be,”<sup>62</sup> the Sorbian flag and a linden leaf. I carry it

---

62 Motto symbolising the strength of the Sorbian nation, frequently used to stress the Sorbian nature of Lusatia.

because I am open about being Sorbian. This time three men followed me and were saying aggressively, “Hey, you Sorb, what do you want here in our country?” and things like that, really racist things. I thought about it for a long time and I was scared, but in the end, I thought that when something like that happens, you have to react to it. You can’t just leave it.

By joining in with activism, individuals express their refusal to accept their language being seen as inferior, disregard for minority right and outright discrimination. They refuse to accept the world as it is and demand change (Gitlin, 2003: 4). Young people I have spoken to, such as the following student of Welsh and member of several associations promoting the language, frequently believe that having been brought up in an atmosphere where they have to demand their rights makes them more aware that the world does not treat all people and languages aequal:

**U22M(W):** [...] I think this is a result of my upbringing in the Welsh language. Cause you realize that things are much related to social tensions and political events. I think as a Welsh language speaker you have much more opportunities to become political just because of the tensions and the pressure that is on the Welsh language. You are forced... more opportunities arise to become political just because you are aware of these tensions.

In fact, some young people cannot imagine that it is possible in today’s world to identify with a minority without being active in its promotion. I spoke with a young man from Kashubia who admits that he entered the world of the minority relatively recently. He states that until then he did not speak the language, he did not feel any connection with the culture and did not feel the need to develop them. However, a chance encounter (through work) put him in touch with various aspects of today’s Kashubia and he quickly felt himself drawn to it. From that point on, he has been involved and started sympathizing with the Kashubian nationalist movement:

**V20M(K):** [...] I think you can’t be a young Kashub without being an activist.

**NDR:** *Why?*

**V20M(K):** Because once you start getting involved, it starts to matter. And when it starts to matter, you realize there are so few of you that being Kashubian needs to be highlighted, at least for the next few years. [...] You have to try all the time to maintain this awareness in yourself and show it to other people, because you feel that by getting involved, in these topics, you simply feel the threats.

The sense of threat, injustice, refusal to accept discrimination and prejudice of weaker groups also fosters a sense of responsibility. This is widely seen as the basis for all kinds of activism (Sherrod et al., 2006: 599). The sense of responsibility means that despite difficult conditions, young people do not give up and become more deeply involved instead. This young woman from Kashubia says:

**O24F(K):** [...] If I did feel responsible, I wouldn't organize as many activities, volunteering many hours, sometimes for weeks just to complete a given project. I wouldn't stand in the freezing rain, helping housewives from the countryside to sell bread with lard. If I did not feel responsible, I would simply do nothing. But I do something. It proves that I do feel responsible.

This Breton student who graduated from Diwan and tries to be involved with different activities promoting Breton language and culture, even though it is not easy where he currently lives, says:

**Q20M(B):** Today I think that if I did not feel responsible, I would be irresponsible. Then what I do wouldn't serve anything. It is my duty, maybe even despite myself, I have to be responsible. It's not so much that I feel responsible that I am responsible. Because I speak Breton. And it would be irrational on my part if I said I am not responsible.

I asked the following young Welshman whether he feels responsible for the future of Welsh language and culture by organizing many cultural activities and serving many functions in Welsh circles. His answer was very enthusiastic:

**O20M(W):** Yes, yes, yes, yes! I'd stress it every time I go somewhere. I can't stress it more than if you don't take that Welsh course, these courses won't be there next year. And if you don't take these courses for a few years maybe there won't be any Welsh at university at all. If we don't use Welsh, we will lose the privileges we have. And we cannot lose them. [...] We have to think how to win it: culturally, academically, socially. Also politically. The big challenge is to get young people in favour of it, so the Welsh language and identity is important for them. [...] Influencing others and responsibility are the most important. I hope that I have both. Someone said to me one day: "There is no point in organizing this event, there is only a couple of people coming." And I said, "well, that's a couple of people more than before to be interested." And if I manage to change one persons' mind or get that one person on board, to learn the language, to appreciate it or whatever, I've won. I can be happy.

## Types of activism

Just like engagement, cultural and linguistic activism manifests differently at different times and in different contexts (Combs & Penfield, 2012: 461). The choice of actions, means and slogans of protest, and the ability and extent to which individuals can act, depend on the situation of the given language, its existing protection mechanisms, the most important threats, and the attitude towards it from the minority and dominant communities. Bernard Spolsky described linguistic activists as important actors of language management, since their ideas have a single goal: preserving or revitalizing the threatened language. "Working at a grassroots level, they attempt to influence existing, former, or potential speakers

of the language to continue its use and to persuade government to support their plans. Lacking authority, they depend on acceptance of their ideology by those they try to influence..." (Spolsky, 2009: 204). He also notes that the situation of linguistic activists is very different to that experienced by the previous generation, which fought for basic rights for language minorities when their very existence was being completely ignored. The older generation stood up to the authorities and systems excluding minority languages and cultures from public discourse. Today, activists are backed by local, regional, national and even international organizations supporting their activities at least on a symbolic level. These conditions affect engagement and motivation, at least to some extent. Today, linguistic activism is mainly aimed at communities, although it also includes supralocal and even global themes, since young people are able to keep in touch with activists from other minorities by creating networks and belonging to international support organizations.

Lonnie Sherrod (2006: 2) writes: "Activism includes protest events and actions, advocacy for causes, and information dissemination to raise consciousness." In her view, in this context even writing letters to the authorities can be regarded as activism. Let us then examine different kinds of activities young people engage in, starting from those which may not be widely regarded as activism while also meeting all the criteria of engagement.

Activities supporting minority languages do not have to be spectacular. In a situation when the greatest threats to minority languages are progressing assimilation, linguistic ideology which leads to the minority language being seen as an inferior form of communication, and indifference of existing and potential users of the language, activism starts from individual choices (Combs & Penfield, 2012: 463). The most important element is learning the minority language and striving to use it even when it is not welcome. The basic rule of all language speakers, which is also the most commonly broken, is the right to use the language all the time (Hudley, 2013: 813). In this context, choosing the minority language is not neutral: it automatically draws categorization, because it is perceived by young people as an engaged act. I spoke to a young Breton woman whose father speaks the language, who attended an immersive school and who now promotes Breton in the city where she studies. When asked whether speaking Breton can be seen as a form of activism, she says:

**K21F(B):** Not for me, because for me it wasn't a choice. But maybe it is. Yes. Since I graduated from a bilingual school and I speak Breton with my friends, to me it's still natural and I don't really feel like I am an activist. But it's true that when we hear people's reactions, such as "Oh, you are speaking Breton, even though you could be speaking French. You're brave," and so on, then as soon as we start explaining, we are categorized as a group [of activists] and sometimes even [accused of] nationalism or chauvinism. And all we're doing is speaking Breton!

Another young Breton goes as far as saying that in a world where everything happens in Breton, speaking the minority language becomes a political decision.

This is especially the case when it is not simply a decision to choose the language to speak with friends, but using the minority language in a situation when, rationally speaking, this may have no actual benefits. This student of political sciences from Wales, strongly engaged in direct activities promoting the language, chose to do his degree in Welsh:

**NDR:** *So you think that choosing the Welsh language [as a language of study] is as well a kind of activism?*

**B20M(W):** Yes, I think so. The thing is that there are not many of us who do it. Studying at [name of faculty] in my year, in Welsh, there are only eight of us. And this is compared to about 200 who do it in English. So it is definitely a kind of activism because everyone in the Welsh language community of students is very nationalistic. And every time we get something from our department and it is only in English, like information about an exam or something, we e-mail back asking why it is not in Welsh. So there is definitely activism behind it.

During my interviews, I even encountered claims that learning a minority language makes no sense unless it is combined with ongoing engagement and active promotion. This is especially clearly stated in situations where language communities have become dispersed and it is difficult to find circles where the language is regularly used. This is sometimes the case in Brittany. This secondary-school student from an immersive school describes this relationship:

**DD16K(B):** [...] if I speak Breton, I cannot keep it just to myself. It would make no sense to know the language and do nothing about it. If I speak Breton, I would like that something comes from it. I would like to be inside of it, to create some projects, some activities on behalf of this language. Only then it makes sense.

The effort put into learning and using a minority language is an obligation to act. One such act is objecting when rights given to the language are not respected. A young Welsh student describes her attitude to activism:

**D20K(W):** [Being a Welsh language activist] means to fight for what I feel is right about the language. If there weren't bilingual signs here and now, I would probably complain and ask the office of translation to provide one and then they'd set it up. I also make it known I am a Welsh speaker and I am proud. I try to start every conversation if I can in Welsh like if I am going to shop and I want to get something I ask in Welsh. And I only switch to English if someone says "Oh, I am sorry I don't speak Welsh." I also sign petitions, protest if I have to...

Another type of activity aiming to show the power of the movement is demonstrations. They are held differently in different regions with different goals. In Kashubia, direct demonstrations are almost non-existent, apart from parades during festivals and events such as the Kashubian Congress. However, participants do not usually carry banners with political messages. These first appeared with the creation of the *Kaszëbskô Jednota* association. In Lusatia, demonstrations have been held more frequently in recent years, in particular to highlight threats to

specific groups: school closures, demolition of villages to open lignite mines or proposed cuts to Sorbian culture and language funding. In Wales, demonstrations are held regularly, forming a part of a longstanding tradition of a struggle for language rights started with the *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* demonstration on a bridge in Aberystwyth in 1962. Sometimes demonstrations can turn into skirmishes. In Brittany, demonstrations are mainly held to show that there are still people who consider the future of Breton to be important. The occasions bring together all groups, communities and associations supporting the language and culture; they form a core part of the Breton movement and symbolize it. Young people describe them passionately:

**A25F(B):** [We participate in demonstrations] in order to show that we exist, and we don't want to be pigeonholed! Because without activism there would be no Diwan schools, and without them there would be no Breton language in its current form. I think it allows us to do what we want, to live our lives. If it were not for activism, we would live the life politicians designed for us. Demonstrations are supposed to show that we exist; they are a time when we can scream as loud as we can when we are treated unjustly or when we don't agree with something. You have to fight whenever you lack things you need to live or things that we want. If we didn't do it, we wouldn't have what we have now. [...] There is still much to do. As long as there is something to be done, there will be demonstrations.

Demonstrations symbolize opposition to political decisions and a disregard for the language by the political system. Almost all young people from Wales and Brittany whom I interviewed attend demonstrations, and many also organize them. This Welsh student describes activities he has been engaged with since secondary school, stating that the social aspects of these activities were as important to him as their political angle:

**U22M(W):** Yes, we did the stuff like we went down to the town during lunchtime to protest maybe or on Saturdays, we organized rallies. We arranged buses taking people for the Welsh gigs... once a month we had a gig, so we arranged buses to go to that. Or arranged the gigs ourselves as well. We went down to Cardiff for rallies as well. We liked it definitely because it was an opportunity to socialize and feel you're doing something wise. As a Welsh language speaker, you feel the pressure all the time because it is a minority language, so all this pressure creates a sort of political tensions, so it is a way of expressing what you believe in and what is important to you.

The most visible type of activism is direct action. It is in these cases that the traditions and achievements of activism of older generations are the most clearly reflected in the practices of young people. This is also because "The 'technology' of protest evolves slowly, limited by the traditions handed down from one generation of activists to the next, and crystallized in institutions" (Della Porta & Diani, 2006: 181), stressing the symbolic ties with earlier movements. However, there is space in all activities for the creativity of new generations and individuals (Della

Porta & Diani, 2006: 168–196). This is why in Lusatia direct actions of social disobedience are only used in extreme cases. An informal group of social disobedience *A Serbsce?* [What About Sorbian?] was formed recently, based on linguistic movements found in Western Europe. Its activists post stickers bearing the slogan on buildings which should be but are not bilingual (cf. Mieczkowska, 2012). However, the group's activities are criticized by older Sorbian activists, as well as by some young people.<sup>63</sup> Young activists of the *Kaszëbskô Jednota* association have only recently launched similar campaigns, which so far remain almost invisible. In Brittany, individuals from the immersive Diwan schools created the “pacifist organization of social disobedience” *Ai'Ta* a few years ago; the group organizes demonstrations and spontaneous “wild *fest-noz*”<sup>64</sup> in public spaces drawing public attention to the issues facing Breton, covers up French-language signs in cities, and demand the introduction of Breton in public offices through original campaigns developed by young people. Many young people admit that they have joined or intend to join *Ai'Ta* since the collective does not get directly involved with politics while expressing protest against the absence of Breton in public life through interesting campaigns. This student who attended an immersive secondary school says:

**Q20M(B):** I started joining *Ai'Ta*'s campaigns and I realized that I like the collective's philosophy and that it pertains to me personally. In terms of activities, to start with they were mainly amusing, nice campaigns. Maybe they are less nice now, but we are trying to do something which is a form of protest. Something which is visible and taken up by the media to show our message. And I like that about this collective.

The activities of *Ai'Ta* recall those taken by *Stourm ar Brezhoneg* [Struggle for Breton], which has been taking radical steps since its earliest days to demand major changes from the French government through campaigns of destroying or defacing French monolingual signs and demanding an official statute for Breton in public life (cf. Nicolas, 2001). In its attitude, the latter group has mainly been seeking inspiration from the Welsh association *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* (cf. Phillips, 2000). People joining in with *Cymdeithas yr Iaith*'s activities feel that they are truly able to influence decisions being made about their language:

---

63 A Sorbian secondary school student [D17M(S)] stated: “There are these Sorbian stickers ‘*A Serbsce?*’, so I partly think that’s cool because it can be a hot topic, but I also don’t know if it makes sense to get involved with how money is managed and so on.” This attitude also reveals the conservative tendencies of Sorbs.

64 Such “wild *fest-noz*” recall the traditional Breton events during which participants dance in chains, accompanied by music and alcohol. In the 1970s, they became a symbol of the struggle for the ethnic and linguistic revival of Brittany (cf. Dołowy-Rybińska, 2013a); they are organised without official permits at sites and venues not designated for public gatherings or events.



**A20M(W):** I know, there are different types of people. Some people like lobbying and sending letters and other people like to campaign. I like to campaign. [...] It started when I was in the sixth form [...] there was always too few of us who chose to do the minimum in Welsh. [...] And it made me think that it wasn't right, that I have to defend it [...] I joined *Cymdeithas Yr Iaith*, the Welsh Language Society, and I decided I had to do something [...] In my village everything is monolingual, English only, and that's not right. I contacted a person responsible but nothing changed. We only heard some excuses. We sent many letters, made a lot of phone calls – no reaction. So we decided to take matters into our own hands and we bought some spray cans. When I sprayed the signs, they installed bilingual ones. It was the first thing I did myself after becoming a CYI member.

It is very rare that activism leads to political engagement in groups of such young activists. Most young people speak of politics with contempt or disdain, believing that politicians are not interested in the future of minority languages since they only care about current interests of voters. Political engagement comes later, similarly to joining organizational structures of the minority. However, this also depends on context. Some young Kashubs involved in promoting their language see their activism in categories of political belonging. In Upper Lusatia, a few young people are interested in political debates, including the recent, notorious initiative to establish a *Serbski sejm* (Sorbian Parliament).<sup>65</sup> In recent years, Brittany has achieved partial cultural autonomy, while Breton parties and political organizations with different policies rooted in Breton issues have far-reaching traditions (cf. Dołowy-Rybińska, 2011: 152–157). Some have youth wings; however, when I contacted them, I discovered that there are very few members aged 25 or under, and those listed are not active or keen to talk. Certain young Welsh activists are more closely involved with politics in the belief that in the current situation of advanced autonomy certain decisions must be taken on a political level. As one student relates:

**B20M(W):** I joined *Plaid Cymru* and *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* [...] when I was 17. Because I was going to join a university a year after and I thought that maybe I should start to be more involved in politics. So I decided to join the political party, not only supporting it but also to play an active role [...] and expand my duties and contribute towards it. And since then I also took part in different riots and gatherings.

## Attitudes towards activism

Given that attitudes to activism vary in different countries and regions depending on local history, achievements and associated mythology, not all young people

---

65 An initiative to create another body (separate to *Domowina*) to concern itself with Sorbian rights. The parliament would make decisions concerning the Sorbs and Sorbian languages. See [www.serbski-sejmik.de](http://www.serbski-sejmik.de).

who are engaged in activities promoting the minority language and culture want to be referred to as activists and identified with groups which are widely seen as involved with activism. This reflects interesting tendencies involved with the shifting paradigm of engagement and activism in today's world. Some of my interlocutors go so far as to state that – in comparison with the local stereotype image of activists – they do not consider themselves to be activists. This young Kashubian woman who participates in and organizes many events supporting the language and works in Kashubian media is not even sure whether she would say that she “is active in promoting Kashubian culture.”

**H24F(K):** I don't know if I am active in promoting Kashubian culture. I wouldn't say so. I am not active in any association, Pomorania, I am not a member of any group, I don't organize events. I am just an active participant of all these things.

She goes on to explain that she feels this way because people who consider themselves to be activists belong to a world she does not identify with:

**H24F(K):** Because I am not so driven by ideology as people from Gdańsk. I haven't got such a fixation on this point. [...] I would prefer if it were more natural. Because I don't think that it is the most important thing in the world, even though it's often like that at work, I am immersed in this always, all the time.

This student of Sorbian studies who is involved in many cultural fields describes her activities in the minority in a similar way. She does not want to admit that she is an activist, comparing her engagement with that of “real activists:”

**A18F(S):** I am not engaged directly, but for example I went to Europeada,<sup>66</sup> I help out at a folk festival, I organize activities for Sorbian-speaking children – on Sundays we have activities such as painting and tinkering. I am more engaged with church life, also with kids.

The following young man from Brittany who graduated from an immersive secondary school and now runs a website dedicated to creative work by young Breton speakers and participates in Breton-language activities for young people in the city where he is studying admits to being an activist, but only reluctantly so:

**J21M(B):** Yes, I am one in spite of myself, because I don't have the impression that I am an activist. But it turns out that in relation to my friends who don't speak Breton, I am almost – in comparison to them – an extreme activist. Because they don't do anything, they don't defend this in any way. And I... well... I went to Diwan school and we went on demonstrations to save our school, to fight for everything we had... So I guess yes, I am an activist. And it's natural, I suppose...

---

66 Football championships for European minorities.

What kind of action is regarded as activism depend on the perspective. People who have no ties to the Breton movement, do not speak the language and are not active participants in Breton culture see learning the language as a form of activism, and even more so using it in the public sphere. Individuals who know and use Breton claim that activism should involve direct action. In turn, people engaged in specific direct action believe “real activists” to be individuals whose actions have a political and anti-state dimension. This means that individual attitudes depend on ideology, location and historical circumstances which form the context, giving the idea of activism positive or negative connotations (Kassimir, 2006: 23). In Lusatia, the very terms “activism” or “activist” stir protest. Sorbs regularly claim that the phenomenon is unknown in Lusatia. This is because activism is semantically linked with active and politically-motivated protesting and struggling for rights, and these kinds of activities are very conservative and extremely rare in Lusatia. Young Welsh people I interviewed who are not members of *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* do not see Welsh activism associated with the organization as attractive to them: the original goals have been met and Welsh is now one of the official languages in the country. They are against any illegal activities, such as arson at holiday cottages owned by English visitors, since they believe it undermines the movement. Some, such as this student of Welsh who has been engaged in promoting the language in various spheres of life for many years, state categorically:

**NDR:** *Do you consider yourself an activist?*

**M20F(W):** No, I am not at all. Don't get me wrong, I think Welsh is important and worth keeping alive but... I associate a certain type of person as being a Welsh language activist. I am not one of these people [...]. I know that some people got a strong passion for the language. I got it as well, but I show it in a different way. I think when it comes to politics and stuff like that, having a party for Wales, independence, I think... the stuff like that doesn't interest me. I think it is not really a question of politics to keep the Welsh language alive. And I don't think that refusing to talk in English would keep the Welsh language alive.

Young people are also concerned about social exclusion resulting from illegal activities, since the majority have serious considerations about their future professional lives. They believe that at this stage of the struggle the goal should be convincing people to speak Welsh rather than fighting for new rights. The following student of Welsh, active in an association of Welsh-speaking students and member of a Welsh-language amateur theatre, says:

**G19F(W):** Lots of bad things have happened concerning the Welsh activism lately, burning down cottages and things like that. That is not fair, and I think they were wrong to do it. Yes, it was a political statement, but they could have done it another way. And you have a lot of people judging it, people who blame activists for that, just like me. Because I think there are other, peaceful ways of doing it. And I think for the people who want to do it, that's fine, but I don't feel like I need to because

I know that I will be probably living the rest of my life through the medium of Welsh. And I am happy about this, but I wouldn't say that I am an activist.

Present-day activists are far more concerned about extremism and being accused of radical activism than their parents' generation. They see it as their duty to encourage people to use the language, rather than to coerce change. Many believe that it is only possible to convince people who are yet to decide to participate in revitalization projects by painting a positive image of the minority culture, language and activists. One young Breton woman engaged with culture says:

**S22F(B):** It's quite complicated and not one-dimensional, because activism can turn into extremism, which isn't any good for anyone. But I also disagree with forcing people into anything. We mustn't force people, we don't have this power, and it isn't our goal. Our goal is to make people love Breton culture rather than imposing it on them.

One secondary-school student who is a member of a music ensemble and has an interest in Breton politics does not want to be seen as an activism for similar reasons. When I asked him how he would describe his position, he responds:

**T16M(B):** Perhaps "defender" [*défenseur*] would be more appropriate, because I think that "activist" [*militant*] makes one think of shutting others out. It makes me think of a struggle for independence. That's what I associate activism with.

Regardless of how young people engaged with minority cultures and languages describe themselves, they belong to a narrow group of individuals who are not indifferent and who have chosen to take on a responsibility for the future of their communities. Spending more time with them and among them reveals that those circles attract individuals with specific personality traits.

## Activist profiles

Not all individuals engaged in activities promoting minority language and culture become activists. This depends on a range of factors, a key of which is personality such as mental traits, temperament, experience and cultural models in the individual's circles (cf. Szymczak, 2013). Based on my interviews with young people, it is easier to describe a set of traits common to activists rather than define their background: some come from families speaking the minority language at home and were brought up in an environment of live cultural transmission, while others grew up in families where the minority language was not spoken at all. Others have no family ties with the minority. Wide-ranging studies have shown, however, that young activists tend to come from educated, middle-class families and believe that their attitude and engagement can influence the world. Writing about how young people, especially secondary-school students, shift towards using Catalan, Joan Pujolar notes that this relatively rare phenomenon mainly occurs in "good" students who achieve good results. He found that for this reason

Catalan is being associated with people who are educated and have a wide range of skills, while the monolingual sector is left to individuals who are not as well educated (Pujolar & Puigdevall, 2015: 175). Some of my interlocutors from all the minorities I investigated made similar observations. Trying to define individuals who are active in Kashubian circles at her school, this secondary-school student from Kashubia says:

**U18F(K):** Really, they are good students who have always been interested in more than just what we are learning during lessons. [...] They prepare for dictation tests [in Kashubian], for competitions, and they've always been interested in it. [...] Maybe because they've been aware that it's important to them.

To a large extent, activism requires acting as part of a group with other people.<sup>67</sup> According to Thomas R. Rochon, group solidarity is a type of politicized group identity. In his view, as well as awareness of group belonging, solidarity is based on three kinds of attitude: dissatisfaction with the current status of the group, a belief that it is driven by external political, social and economic factors, and a conviction that acting together can improve this situation. "Identification with a group encourages a person to associate group interests with individual interests. Solidarity with that group brings with it an expectation that other group members will be mobilized for the cause" (Rochon, 1998: 101). The desire to get involved and act is one of the most important traits described by young activists. This politically-engaged young man from Kashubia says:

**K22M(K):** [...] I wouldn't be able to sit down in an armchair after work and just watch TV. Although sometimes a man just wants to come home, sit down and do absolutely nothing, just turn on a stupid TV show, but I know that after two days like that I would be bored out of my mind. I'd have to go somewhere, do something, organize something.

Being active goes hand in hand with an attitude of not accepting indifference. Just experiencing mobilization and action has an impact on individuals, since it helps them gain an awareness and understanding of the world around them. Engaging with activism allows people to distance themselves from a sense of helplessness in the face of unfavourable circumstances (Rochon, 1998: 134). This attitude translates into engagement and specific linguistic practices. The following young man from Wales who became interested in Welsh after graduating from secondary school and soon became involved with activities promoting it notes that the situation faced by the language depends on individual choices made by young people rather than (just) on suggested ideas:

**S19M(W):** It is a question of opportunities, but opportunities are not enough. It is rather making something that people want to take part in. You know, I could open

---

67 Although it should be said that activists also can and do act alone.

a book club in Welsh but no one would come. [...] Sometimes it is about creating opportunities for ourselves: going into the shop and asking people to speak Welsh. Not just waiting because no one will give us this opportunity.

As discussed by Meira Levinson, the decision to participate in civic life is at least in part determined by individual attitudes. It depends on whether the individual believes that anyone can influence authorities (political efficacy), that they have a duty to participate in civic life (civic duty) and that every individual is a part of a larger society (civic identity) (Levinson, 2010: 341). This attitude is shaped by a range of factors, including social capital gained at home, school or elsewhere, and individual predispositions and character. One Welsh activist who describes himself as a “political animal” says:

**O20M(W):** [...] I was always the one who stayed and joined in the conversation. And I was listening to the group. I would have been about 12 but adults were always around me. And I would rather stay there and listen to the conversation than go and play or watch the telly. This is what my brother would do. Since then I have always found myself a bit more inclined to listen to people. But I think from around the age of Urdd both me and my brother were involved in Wales and Welshness. From the beginning it was an activist movement, you know, going against the main trends, going against what it is or used to be or should be. When I first found out that speaking Welsh in the classroom is [perceived as] something wrong, I rebelled.

His statement makes a reference to another very important trait common to activists: disagreeing with the current order. Rebecca Klatch, an American sociologist studying social movements, notes that “commitment to a social movement involves not only conviction about what is wrong with the world, but also the decision to act out these beliefs, to strive for social change. Commitment also means a conception of oneself as someone who takes action in defence of deeply held values, someone who cares” (Klatch, 1999: 97). This is confirmed by my interlocutors. This Breton activist who is also involved with environmental movements says:

**NDR:** *What character traits do you have to have to become an activist?*

**H20M(B):** It’s hard to say, because there are many kinds of activism. I think the main trait is that when you see how things work, you are not able to ignore them, walk right by it. I can’t imagine that not doing anything, that I come home from work and just don’t care about the world. Because there is always a reason to defend something. Especially for us, in the Breton milieu. There is always something to do, something to fight for. For funding, for our rights. I think that’s what we learned at the Diwan. That and the fact that you have to fight injustice. For me, it comes completely naturally.

As stated above, activism is strongly linked with collective identity which is shaped by acting as part of a group. Individuals who join in organized movements

slowly try fitting in with the group. Activism can also drive a sense of self-worth and improve perception of individual and collective effectiveness (Sherrod et al., 2006: 319). This combination means that engaged individuals will strive to join or create a group they can work with. One of the young leaders of the *Kaszëbskô Jednota* association says:

**J21M(K):** I decided that it can't be that I just shut myself off and that's it, and I feel self-satisfaction. You have to go further and look for people. [...] I've been able to gather a group and it has since grown and we meet and act in different directions.

Activists put in a lot of energy and effort in their actions. Many young people I interviewed are involved with various kinds of campaigns and devote their time and energy. One Sorbian activist involved with the *Pawk* association notes:

**E17F(S):** Sometimes you have to be careful, you're doing this and that, and here and there, and then someone else asks you [for help], and suddenly there's so much. I'm the kind of person who always agrees: "Sure, I'll help, I'll do something with you."

Based on personal experience, Todd Gitlin writes: "The wrong motives not only corrupt and betray you, they are more likely to bring bad results" (Gitlin, 2003: 10). Ilona Hlowiecka-Tańska states that the activist mindset is rooted in "selflessness, understood as subordination of individual interests to those of the community, an ethics of service and altruism, and a sense of solidarity with those weaker than yourself" (Hlowiecka-Tańska, 2011: 93). This young Kashubian activist who has been working in minority media stresses the activism aspects of engagement:

**O24F(K):** For one, to be engaged in such activities, you have to be a community worker. [...] the proportion of active people is low, and it doesn't just apply to Kashubian circles. It's because there are people who then continue being active, and those for whom these activities are partly communal... because Kashubia may be a way of life, but it will never be the most lucrative, the most fashionable. You can find a place for yourself in it, but it's not the mainstream. Obviously.

This is why individuals who decide to join with such movements must have share one more trait: they must not be driven by any material benefits from such activities. The lack of financial reward for their efforts may be compensated for at a later stage, when young activists find employment involving promoting and supporting the minority. The jobs may be at political organizations or minority associations, the media, educational establishments or institutions. Research by Ilona Hlowiecka-Tańska indicates that being able to raise finance for minority activities eliminates this part of the "ethos which demanded that moral value should be measured by the degree of a person's indifference to material issues" (2011: 95). However, this aspect of activism very rarely arose in my interviews. This may be due to the ages of my interlocutors; they are largely young enough not to have to worry about financially supporting themselves and they see activism in a different light than older people. However, the closer they are to graduating from university and

having to find a job, the more they are concerned whether their engagement will work in their favour. As one young woman from Brittany puts it:

**K21F(B):** Well, there is something... when you are writing your CV, all those engagements are not really recognized. Only your professional experience is taken into account. And in my case, it would only be babysitting... And animation... well, I never did it professionally. I prefer to organize unofficial concerts supporting people with no papers or to take part in a festival against the language change. I think that through this engagement we feel really free, that we are doing what we want to do. [...] It is just a pleasure.

A sense of standing up for an important cause is a reward for the effort; however, the pleasure derived from these activities does not last forever. Fatigue can set in between activities which increase energy and working with others which gives young people a sense of belonging to a community and being involved in something important. Having an overarching goal helps young activists cope. However, the sacrifices they have to make in advance are real. This young Breton woman who combines volunteering in culture, animation and education with a recently started job at a school says:

**NDR:** *Is it tiring sometimes?*

**A25F(B):** Yes. Especially in winter [laughs]. Especially in winter, because you have to go in the evening, after work... It feels far more difficult in winter than in summer. Because in summer there are also all the festivals, everyone speaks Breton and that gives me energy. There is a lot of fun. And in the summer, you have to build up strength to last you through winter. I am mainly talking about evening Breton courses, because that's volunteering. And work is work, you have to go one way or another and I don't ask myself whether I want to or not. And when it comes to volunteering, these questions always arise.

All these people and their statements are united by two key traits of young activists: passion and optimism. Such engagement would not be possible without faith that activism can bring about social change, that the effort will be repaid in some way, that actions taken by various kinds of collectives can genuinely influence other people's ability and desire to use minority languages. Therefore, it is worth listening to how young people themselves perceive the benefits of their activism and engagement.

### **Subjective perception of benefits of activism**

Participation in social movements is not rewarded in the same way as participation in other types of organizations. Activism does not provide a financial incentive, not all activities are socially acceptable, and their effectiveness remains uncertain. Additionally, the cost of participation in such movements can be high, because their activities may be stigmatized by members of the community or by the authorities (Rochon, 1998: 95). However, members of subsequent generations



continue joining social movements and activities striving to implement change. This means that they must be driven by something other than financial gratification. The sociologist Olivier Bobineau states that engaged individuals become involved out of a desire to feel useful; being engaged brings them satisfaction and a sense that they are doing something important (such as fighting for the rights of underprivileged groups). Other benefits he lists include bringing sense to one's life and joining a group with strong bonds which are different to those between family members or work colleagues (Bobineau, 2010: 100–122). My interlocutors expressed similar views on the benefits of engagement. This young woman from Lusatia says that for her activism is mainly about enjoyment and a sense of responsibility for the future of the community:

**H25F(S):** [...] when a person becomes involved, you notice that activism is good for you, you take pleasure in it, you become increasingly immersed. You want to be a Sorb and pass it on.

Many people take up jobs at minority institutions or in the media as volunteers and activists. However, this does not mean that they have given up on being active. Employees of minority organizations (both public and cooperative) frequently remain activists, simply turning their engagement into a source of income (cf. Zabaleta et al., 2009). This young Breton woman who works for the local government and is involved in activities on many levels says:

**N23F(B):** [...] I think it's something which has come up slowly, and I think that I was simply able to make the most of many opportunities. Like Breton theatre, BAFA,<sup>68</sup> which I did in Breton and I really wanted to do more with it. And every time I could make something else of it. It's a lot of things like that. And [the organization where I work] – they found me. Because they already knew me, because [local authorities] are responsible for young people's affairs, such as Breton-language camps. So they already knew me from the work I did in the summer and came to me and said: "We are organizing a festival, we need someone who can do it, who can speak Breton." So the language was always my strong point and I was always able to use it to progress, and it has helped me with my work.

Activism means young people gain experience, learn new skills and meet new people who are also engaged with protecting minority languages. As well as teaching them specific skills, they stress that the work brings them a lot of satisfaction and a sense of belonging. This young man from Kashubia who is active in many organizational and political fields says:

**NDR:** *What do you personally get out of your engagement on behalf of Kashubia?*

---

68 *Le brevet d'aptitude aux fonctions d'animateur en accueils collectifs de mineurs* – an internship and diploma entitling the holders to work with children and teenagers.

**N22M(K):** Satisfaction, above all else. Pride and a feeling that I am not passive. As you know, there are not many young people like this, who act in a Kashubian environment. I feel that I'm not standing passively on the side, but I get involved and try to act as much as I can, to give all that I have. That's one thing. The other thing I get out of it is the fact that I'm learning all the time. [...] I get to know the specificity of differences of opinion, ideology, different perspectives on various issues related to being Kashub.

Engagement also gives young people a sense of meaning, and makes them feel like they stand out from the crowd and are contributing to something valuable. When asked what gives her life meaning, this teenage activist who recently joined the Welsh association *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* gives a similar answer to the Kashub mentioned above:

**Y16F(W):** The satisfaction that I am doing something. That I am not being a normal teenager, who gets home and watches TV. I actually believe in something, I am doing something. And it is to show I believe, to show it to others who don't want to go out and do things. They are ready to judge us, but they wouldn't do it themselves.

An important dimension mentioned by all my interlocutors and which I have discussed above is the existence of a group individuals feel close to and can depend on. Identifying with a group also means that individuals internalize its interests. "Solidarity with that group brings with it an expectation that other group members will be mobilized for the cause. People high in group solidarity spend a relatively large proportion of their time interacting with others in the group and talking about the issues that concern the group" (Rochon, 1998: 134). This young Breton woman studying in Rennes and active in several associations says:

**NDR:** *The fact that you're committed to a cause, what does it give you?*

**O24K(B):** What does it give me? You remember when I told you that there's a community of Breton speakers, right? It works like this: if you're in the community, you're part of a kind of a chain, where everyone knows each other. It's nice to be in, because we always know what's going on. It's important in social terms, in terms of our relations. It's funny, because it always turns out that you know someone who knows someone who knows someone else... it's really cool. So, in social terms, sure.

However, the most important and most frequently mentioned benefit of engagement is that it brings meaning. This young Kashubian activist explains:

**J21M(K):** I don't know, in my case it has become something I love, and... for me it has become my whole life. And I don't really see my life making sense beyond it, and this is where I find myself most fully.

He is echoed by a young passionate man from Wales who has devoted himself to the protection of and respect for linguistic rights:

**A20M(W):** It gives you a reason to do something. I spend my days campaigning, asking anybody, my friends if something is happening. And if I see bilingualism is not working, I am trying to find a solution to these problems. What would I do with my time if I didn't? Maybe I could sit down and have a cup of tea? I don't know. But, you know, it gives you a reason to be who you are. If you can't fight for things that are important for you, what is endangered, then what you have? If you have a passion for your language, you want to make sure that other people can join you in what you are enjoying. It gives you a cause to be who you are, isn't it?

A young woman with whom I talked, and who is involved with (frequently illegal) campaigns in Wales and encourages other young people to join them, expresses a similar sentiment when asked about benefits of activism. For her, activism is not simply acting towards a specific goal, but also a way of life, perceiving reality and responding to injustice and wrongdoing:

**E25F(W):** [Being an activist] gives me everything, a sense of life. I think if I wasn't campaigning for the Welsh language, I would be interested in human rights, animal rights, whatever. [...] Finding something I could change was always the thing for me and... I came across *Cymdeithas yr Iaith*, I got involved, and I felt I could change something. And I really can. So yes, being able to feel that you are changing something, changing minds, attitudes, changing ideas, changing policies and changing everything. And I think, that gives me more than anything. It gives me a sense of achieving something and it is important and this can be carried on. It is tiring because you are constantly pushing things and sometimes you have this feeling that you are not getting anywhere but then something happens and it encourages you and gives you power to act.

We can also consider the extent to which young people's engagement and activism are to do with belonging to a minority culture and their personalities. Of course, it is impossible to determine whether they would be as engaged and socially and politically active had they not belonged to minorities, nor is it possible to separate their experiences from the very fact that they belong to minorities. However, I was interested in finding out whether they themselves think that under other circumstances they would have been as engaged in community life. The young Welsh woman quoted above says:

**E25F(W):** Campaigning is a part of this. If I weren't Welsh I wouldn't be campaigning, I don't know. I'd probably be campaigning for something else. There are so many things as important to campaign for. So campaigning is a thing that defines me as being Welsh. The constant campaigning for, yes, even to speak Welsh. It is quite a negative thing actually, isn't it? But [being Welsh] is quite unique as well. It is a kind of being different, and I like being different.

According to her, activism is tied to her attitude towards her life and the world as a whole. This young Breton man involved with activities promoting the language

expresses a similar view; however, he is also aware that he will have leave to Brittany for at least a few years, if not for his entire professional life:

**Q20M(B):** I know that wherever I live I will be engaged with local issues. Because for me being Breton, just like being anyone else, is about animating your region, your place. It's important to keep things moving and so that people can express their opinions on all matters. And for me it's obvious that I will be engaged.

## The world of activists as they view it

When I asked my interlocutors how they perceive existing movements promoting their language and culture, I received a very wide range of answers. Some are wholly convinced that almost everyone in their community is engaged because this is precisely what lies at the core of their community. In turn, some claim sadly that there are only a handful of individuals who are engaged and they hardly include any young people. Why such a wide range of answers? On the one hand it could be because of my interlocutors' intentions, hoping that I perceive their culture in a specific light. On the other hand, young people who spend time in activist circles are surrounded by similarly-minded people who are also their acquaintances, friends and companions in their activities. They also spend their free time together, therefore they may perceive their community in a rather idealized way. This very active young Sorbian woman has the impression that all her peers are involved in culture one way or another:

**E17F(S):** There are those who don't do all that much, but everyone has something they are involved with. I don't know anyone who doesn't do anything. Most of my friends have a lot of activities, and they don't know what they need to do when. I don't know. I have a sense that most Sorbs do a lot.

This image of how representatives of minorities are engaged is as typical of activists as it is deceptive. A different view can be cast by individuals who have joined minority activities recently and are not yet as hermetically surrounded by people with similar interests. This secondary-school student from Wales says:

**Y16F(W):** [...] you always see the same people. I can't say much because I am not in it that long, but through all the meetings, the big meetings and events, there are always the same people. And most of them are the older generation that has been going there for a while [...] *Cymdeithas* actually wants more young people to join, but it is hard, it is hard today because of the situation may be, I think. They care less, young people.

**NDR:** *And why is that so?*

**Y16F(W):** I don't know, I really don't know. It might be television, or it might be the modern age, but I think it doesn't matter to anybody anymore. It is about the attitudes of a person. And those some of us means that someone cares, so we need to continue.

If a group of activists includes a low number of young people, those who belong to it tend to feel more responsible for the group's activities. On the other hand, lower numbers of young people in the world of activism may reflect the proportion of individuals who are ethnically aware and who speak the minority language. This young Breton activists says:

**O24F(B):** You always meet the same people, whether it's at events organized by the association, or you go to see a Breton play at the theatre or to *fest-noz*, there are the same faces. When I volunteered at the *Yaouank* festival, I met lots of people from my class and syndicate. You know? This world is really small [...], so everyone has to know one another.

This limited worldview of activists has two aspects. On the one hand, it could be due to the fact that there are not many people willing to fight for the cause supported by my interlocutors, which, in turn, can bring their languages and cultures to disappear. On the other hand, when young people are aware that most people they know are also engaged means they perceive those ties as strong, and they have a sense of belonging to a closely-knit community of individuals with similar views on issues they consider important. One of my interlocutors describes the circles of Kashubian activists:

**J21M(K):** This world [of Kashubian activists] is really diverse, but it's also very small. People who are engaged in their everyday lives probably number under a hundred. And I think that there probably aren't more people like that throughout Kashubia. [...] I think that more than anything [they are joined by] attachment to the region and a desire to act, some kind of progress. And this kind of common mission, which is to not allow all this to collapse, die, so that it can all be transmitted to the next generations. And the question of how it's done, with what awareness, and what other goals there might be, how it's talked about, that's a whole different question. Maybe it's good that something distinguishes these associations.

The young Kashub notes the existence of different kinds of engagement. People who organize and lead activities are few and far between. They also create a diverse cultural and social environment open for others to participate in. This Sorbian student has a similar view:

**P22M(S):** There's always the question of how someone is engaged. Some people are involved such that they often take part in things – they are everywhere all the time. Others are really active, they want to organize things or do things. I think there are more people who take part in some things, they are more defensive, but they support everything and have a positive attitude. I think there are more of them. The others could be counted on the fingers of both hands – those who are really active.

Leaders and active individuals are rare in all communities. Their role is to provide conditions and opportunities for people who do not have their own ideas, who are ethnically and linguistically undecided, so that as many as possible want to and

are able to join in with the activities on offer. As I have shown, active participation in cultural life and interactions with other engaged and interested individuals may lead them to reach new levels of cultural and social awareness and become actively involved in their community and its causes. This is the greatest success activists, including young people, can hope for. At the same time, however, they must answer the question: what culture do they want to support? In the contemporary world, this is not at all clear.

## Chapter 8: Between tradition, folklore and modernity

Researchers interested in minority issues often ask about how minority cultures function in today's world and how their ethnic boundaries are constructed, both in immigrant cultures and in indigenous linguistic and cultural minorities (cf. Wimmer, 2008). Of course, these groups differ enormously. Representatives of the former invoke the cultural memory of their community and refer to (physical and mental) artefacts brought from their home country, and can also draw upon content coming from the reference country. The situation for indigenous minorities is more complicated, because their culture itself is subject to change under the influence of the social, political and economic context as well as ever-closer contacts with the dominant culture (and other surrounding cultures), with its representatives undergoing processes of acculturation. In their efforts to maintain their minority identity, they are unable to refer to any extant community evolving at its own pace, in order to see that some kind of change taking place within their culture is inevitable. Hence the tendency to highlight above all those aspects of minority culture that invoke the past in different ways, from folklorization to the creation of invented traditions.

Minority cultures have ceased to be traditional cultures under the influence of traditional cultural change, the kind which forces their leaders and representatives to create new ways of understanding their identity and therefore to reinvent themselves. As part of this process, minority cultures may become mental constructs, characterized by idealizing values imbued with strong emotions. Groups may refer to and invoke such constructs, thus stressing their distinctiveness. Another possibility is to envision minorities as a kind of quasi-political entity. As Roch Sulima (1992: 170–180) puts it, this path runs through various “-isms” (universalisms, nationalisms, regionalisms). The former option opens up to the folkloric landscape and the world of traditional values, through which a group may further strengthen its identity. The latter, in turn, strives to present modern aspects of the functioning of minorities and to play down public perceptions that link minorities to traditional culture, in addition to remaining open to new solutions needed for minorities to gain at least a certain degree of political independence. These two paths may run parallel to each other. Usually, however, they intersect in many places or may even merge. If folklorized minority cultures want to remain attractive to young people, they aim for modern forms of expression yet simultaneously undergo ideologization. Minorities that want to be given the rights and political status enabling their further development sanction these efforts by invoking traditions, history and distinctive rituals and axiologies. What is more, the paths that are chosen are rarely defined in advance. For minorities, following these paths and reflecting on various choices and behaviours already play an identity-forming role.

The very choice of a strategy is by no means arbitrary – rather, it is strongly rooted in the cultural, political and social context in which a specific group has functioned and in which it is currently situated. At the same time, this shows that a minority's mode of functioning is never given once and for all; instead, it evolves together with the changing conditions in which this minority functions and depends on how deeply representatives and leaders of specific groups reflect on cultural processes. Shaped by the digital revolution, the world in which today's young people have been raised differs considerably from the world of their grandparents or even parents, so expectations related to the life of minority cultures have likewise undergone significant transformations. When referring to the idealized traditional world, young people think and talk about the necessity of adjusting minority cultures to the modern world. As Roch Sulima argued, it turns out that the “urban–rural, central–peripheral, regional–universal and folkloric–national oppositions are all variants of the same pattern” (Sulima, 1992: 170), but they simultaneously lose their diagnostic power.

Such oppositions are called into question, but their persistence as constructs imagined and internalized by representatives of minority communities has not been invalidated. When we listen to the words and thought-patterns of young people raised in the 21st century, we notice not only echoes of earlier discussions and the influence of the patterns of functioning of minority cultures established in a specific socio-political context. What young people say and think about their culture is also characterized by a fear that their cultures may be “incomplete” or “insufficient” when compared against national cultures. This fear also concerns the blurring of cultural differences and, by the same token, losing the clear distinctiveness of minority cultures. If minority cultures and dominant cultures have become identical, if they take the same models as reference points and require the same ways of thinking, feeling and behaving, is it at all possible to have a distinctive identity? Such dilemmas, which have already echoed through many of the discussions above, prove particularly strong when questions are asked about the modernity and topicality of minority cultures as well the possible and desirable mode of their functioning in the present-day world. In my description of the dilemmas faced by young people in the context of the current functioning and image of the cultures with which they want to identify, I adopt an emic perspective of the groups I have studied, by not only quoting the statements of their members but also by presenting and explaining their point of view. Highlighting this is important not only in light of not only my own research, but also with respect to the dominant narrative related to minority cultures, which are traditionally described from the perspective of dominant cultures and developed, national communities and therefore pictured as culturally and economically handicapped as well as culturally underdeveloped, which limits their participation in Europe's high artistic culture (cf. Sulima, 1992: 172; Gandhi, 1998; Rakowski, 2013). Such perceptions of minority cultures largely impact on how their elites think about themselves; hence the folklorization and intellectualization of these cultures and efforts to retain – or even ossify – the old ways coupled with the simultaneous negation of differences



that could entail political consequences. This way of thinking and the dominant discourse of speaking about minority cultures reaches young people and affects how they perceive their surroundings. At the same time, the media and the unlimited flow of information, which may be seen as a source of globalization-related threats, help young people find new ways to cope with the contradictions imposed on them and to develop identification and differentiation strategies.

Each of the communities I have studied has its distinctive characteristics and dilemmas, whose foundations and intensity vary depending on the differences in their situation and the context in which they function: the degree and form of folklorization, the acceptance of cultural change by the dominant society and the minority group itself, as well as attitudes towards traditions and ways of expressing them. Such differences cannot be ignored, despite similarities in how these communities reflect on the possibility of preserving the distinctive aspects of minority cultures in today's world, permissible changes and the local–universal opposition and how they express their reflections. What young people have in common are wide-ranging reflections on traditions and their current role as well as the restrictions that result from their identification with folklore, perceiving them as a threat to their culture, presented as unattractive to young people. On the other hand, they fear that treatment of ethnicity as a fad and its commercialization will cause their culture to lose what they describe as its “spirit.” These dilemmas will be described in a broader cultural and social context for each of the groups. Similarities and differences between the groups will be highlighted and summarized in the final part of this chapter.

## **Upper Sorbian culture – rites and folklore**

When compared against other minority cultures under study, the Catholic Upper Sorbs appear to form a particularly distinctive group. Although the Sorbs live in the same way as the Germans who surround them, it is hard to avoid the impression that – in the researcher's eyes – Lusatia forms a world that follows the rhythm of religious holidays, deeply immersed in the related rites. In the eyes of an outside observer, Sorbian culture simultaneously seems very highly folklorized. Ceremonies, choir performances, shows, exhibitions, celebrations of holidays, even major family gatherings all feature women dressed in folk costumes and presentations of the products of the “traditional” Sorbian culture and are dominated by folk music. Even in the language courses that have been organized for many years by the Sorbian Institute in Budyšin/Bautzen, students from all over the world are exposed above all to what is typically referred to as folk culture but what, after closer contact, appears to be folklorism. Over the many years of my research trips to Lusatia, during which I attempted to understand its culture, I would fall into a certain trap of comparativism that I set for myself. When I compared manifestations of the vitality of minority cultures and their modes of functioning in today's world (cf. Dołowy-Rybińska, 2011), I perceived Sorbian culture, which was immersed in folklore and filled the public sphere with the folklorist

symbols of the traditional culture, as a spectacle made for show, a manifestation of distinctiveness through the emphasis placed on the folk aspects of culture, which in my opinion had no substantiation in the surrounding world. Over the many years of my studies, I went through numerous crises related to my inability to understand what prompted people living in the 21st century to carve out a niche in their lives that was completely at odds with the world around them. In recent years, however, when I not only observed the Sorbian rites but also had the opportunity to participate in them as a person close to the Sorbian culture (who knew the language and had many Sorbian friends), I had a chance to gain further insight into this cultural phenomenon. Interviews with young people, in turn, allowed me to better understand the mechanisms and interdependencies that exist in this sphere. The Sorbian culture manifests itself in folklore, but folklore does not prevent it from modernizing. Explaining this phenomenon will require me to first clarify the historical and political context that has influenced the mode of functioning of the Sorbian culture and elucidate the difference between folklore and folklorism.

The inhabitants of Upper Lusatia live in a rural and agricultural region with its centre in Budyšin/Bautzen, a small town where Sorbian institutions have their seat. The Sorbian intelligentsia, who started to make intensive efforts to preserve and develop their culture in the 19th century (cf. Brankač, 1970; Šolta, Kunze & Šen, 1984), did not want to distance themselves from common Sorbs. Its representatives still live in Lusatian rural areas and participate in the Sorbian culture and cultural life. Such rural and local aspects as well as a certain disconnection from the “big world” are important characteristics of Sorbian culture. Also, they can be seen as the sources of the greatest threat to this culture in connection with the growing mobility of young generations, who leave to study in major urban centres and metropolitan areas and often do not come back to Lusatia. On the one hand, there is a strong connection between the Sorbs and life in a small group of people who know one another well and participate in the Catholic religious life and the customs that follow its rhythm. On the other hand, the current shape of the Sorbian culture was influenced by the policies pursued by the communist authorities of East Germany after the Second World War. The Sorbs, who had been persecuted in Hitler’s times, were then afforded protection that was without precedent in the world of that era: Sorbian institutions and schools were established and so was a Sorbian publishing house with daily newspapers, elements of bilingualism were introduced, and the Sorbs were allowed to cultivate the customs that provided the basis for their culture. However, the privileges given to the Sorbs in East Germany also entailed a number of obligations. Since decisions related to manifestations of the Sorbian cultural life depended on the authorities, the Sorbs had to be present in the public sphere and their celebrations and rites became increasingly folklorized (cf. Elle, 1992). At the same time, they had limited possibilities of advancing other, political and ethnic/national goals of their community. The mark of years of functioning in this context is still visible in Lusatia (cf. Dołowy-Rybińska, 2014). The Sorbian cultural life in East Germany was subject to political and ideological functions. Folkloric celebrations, used to demonstrate loyalty with

the “Slavic brothers,” were organized chiefly by Domowina, which remained under party control (cf. Elle, 2010a). Impressive performances and celebrations therefore served as a way to include people into East Germany’s system of government, assign them to a specific group. The presentation of the Sorbs as a “model minority” required a strong visualization of their culture, including numerous displays of traditional culture, performances of folklore bands, based on the presentation of the Sorbian customs and holidays, including the religious ones. The secularization function of those customs went hand in hand with their promotional, tourism-related function. The Sorbs in East Germany were expected to play the role of a relic of the past (Szczepankiewicz-Battek, 2003: 164), and their culture was largely reduced to that function. For that reason, the lingering consequences of the communist era in Lusatia include the strong folklorization of Sorbian culture (Dołowy-Rybińska, 2013b).

It is specifically the clash of these two phenomena – on the one hand, the rural sense of community immersed in Catholic rites, which protected the Sorbs against Germanization for hundreds of years, and on the other, the strong visual folklorization of culture in the communist era – that makes it so problematic to understand the Sorbian culture. Such understanding may be facilitated by the distinction between “external” vs. “internal” ethnic customs, proposed by Aleksander Posern-Zieliński (1982). The former involve manifestative demonstrations of folklore (above all showy-performance folklore, which meets the requirements of performing arts) aimed at expressing ethnic pride and highlighting homogeneity. The internal customs, by contrast, are not cultivated for show – they result from the needs of the community that participates in them. As Posern-Zieliński wrote (1982: 96), “This type of folklore is more private, intimate and spontaneous, unlike modern performative forms, which are manifestations of institutionalized folklore.” Lusatia is characterized by the presence of both these types of ethnic customs. In the eyes of observers, however, the showy-performance forms seem to be forcefully taking over the function of community customs. To better grasp this phenomenon, therefore, it is worth turning to young Sorbs, who describe their culture and their participation in it in ways that are sometimes naïve but also free from such strong influence of external discourses.

Practically all of the young people I interviewed participate in the Sorbian culture in a twofold manner, i.e. both in organized activities (they are members of dance groups and choirs, they play Sorbian music and so on) and in the informal community life in their neighbourhood (they go to church and participate in religious and collective rites). Numerous meetings organized in villages, youth clubs, private houses and students’ clubs or on the occasion of some public events usually continue until late in the night. Young Sorbs do not differ in any way from their peers from other regions of the world, listen to the same music, wear similar clothes and have equally easy access to the mass media, but when they are in a group, they often spontaneously start singing Sorbian songs that can be called folk songs. Apart from uncontrolled modern dances, young people also dance partner dances. Much to my surprise, they do so eagerly, because they have participated in

such parties since they were children. In Lusatia, dances, music and rites as well as the accompanying meetings are all part of the cultural heritage (Szacki, 1971: 152–153), which comprises the subjectively interpreted traditions of a specific group, “all of its cultural accomplishments and historical experiences, which influence the past that burdens the present” (Posern-Zieliński, 1982: 78). For young Sorbs, the present seems strongly burdened by the past and at the same time becomes a subject of reflections at various levels.

In his writings on tradition, Edward Shils (1958) pointed out that the durability of a specific practice or belief alone did not make a tradition, and a tradition must be also accompanied by affirmative attachment to the past. A closer look at what young people say about their attitudes to tradition shows that they treat it as a positive value. One student of Sorbian studies in Leipzig says:

**A18F(S):** One week before Easter, for example, I already feel excited and happy. I can't wait for Easter and the related customs [...]. On a Sunday morning, I feel completely differently when I'm here [in Lusatia] than when I'm somewhere else and I simply have to go and see something. This is part of us. During Easter, for example, I'm proud that I'm a Sorb and I can show that we have these beautiful customs. That's what I think when I talk about how I feel [about my culture].

Shils observes that in order for a tradition to exist, one more condition must be met: “A particular relationship to the individual or collective performers or believers in the past is called for. Some belief in affinity – be it primordial or civil or charismatic or ideal – is a necessary condition of the willingness to receive a tradition, to accept it as a mandatory model for one's own conduct and the judgement of others” (Shils, 1971: 131). For young Sorbs, participation in rites not only represents a link to the past and their forefathers, about whom they talk a lot on the occasion of such participation,<sup>69</sup> but also confirms the continuity of Sorbian identity. On the feast day of Corpus Christi, shortly after a procession attended by young women dressed in Sorbian national costumes, I talked to one young Sorb, who said:

**F20F(S):** I can't imagine that this could no longer be here. I'd say that these customs form a certain community. If they didn't exist, the Sorbian people, who are very close-knit – also because we have to fight for the preservation of the language and the customs – if they didn't exist, this community, these people, this thinking and maybe also this character wouldn't exist, either.

This young woman talks about the community dimension of the Sorbian rites, which make people stick together and continue to fight for the preservation of their culture. Other individuals I interviewed also pointed out the significance of participation in ritual life. This is especially important, because young people

---

69 A18F(S): “Grandpa and grandpa also live with us. Our grandma is very pleased that we do this, because she remembers the old ways.”

declare that they do not like many of these customs. But they like the atmosphere of the celebrations and the possibility of spending time with their friends. One secondary school student says:

**C17M(S):** [...] I wouldn't say these customs are attractive, but after these celebrations, you get together to have beer or talk – and that's what's attractive.

One of his peers offers a similar explanation:

**J17F(S):** Apart from that, when it comes to Sorbian customs... yes... my mum sometimes tells me that I have to dye eggs with wax, because I don't always feel like doing that. But when I start, it's always cool. Also, if you do that in the boarding school, you form a community, you talk to people to which you would not normally talk.

The vitality of the Sorbian customs and rites is also determined by their strong immersion in the Catholic religion, which plays three roles for the Upper Sorbs I have interviewed. First of all, it reinforces ethnic boundaries, because the Sorbs are surrounded by Germans and protestants. Secondly, it is strongly linked to the Sorbian language, which is the language of church services and religious ceremonies in Catholic Upper Lusatia. Thirdly, it strengthens group identity by enabling the Sorbs to hold regular meetings and participate in cultural activities together. These aspects of the Catholic religion and customs are also described by young people:

**B22M(S):** I think that being a Sorb is also linked to faith. That's the impression I get. On Sunday, people still go to church. But not everyone does, especially when it comes to young people. There [in the church], you can hear the same or very similar things, but you can always hear something in Sorbian. That's part of the whole. You're a Sorb and, well, in fact you're also a Catholic.

A secondary school student expresses her thoughts in a similar way:

**E17F(S):** This Sorbian community is a great thing. We can meet together. Without it, the language would be gone – if we didn't look after culture so much. This culture, these customs are like a wall that you can hold on to and that will keep things Sorbian. It is also thanks to this faith, if we go to church together and everything is in Sorbian there, then this Sorbian identity is maintained.

Both young people emphasize the role of customs, which bring members of the Sorbian community together and simultaneously protect this community from falling apart. In the student's comments one can hear a certain fear of imminent cultural changes, accompanied by secularization, also among the Sorbs. If religion is so strongly linked to customs and customs are performed in Sorbian, then all these elements provide the basis for the Sorbian culture and, in the opinion of young people, must exist together. The same secondary school student defines this interrelatedness in the following way:

**E17F(S):** When someone speaks Sorbian, this alone essentially means observing the customs. Those who have learned Sorbian from their parents also adopt Sorbian customs. [...] These things are linked together. There's essentially no other way.

The notion of there being an inseparable link between speaking Sorbian and participating in customs shows the exclusivity of this culture (the difficulty of being accepted as a new speaker of Sorbian) but also the strong connection between this type of cultural participation and the Sorbian identity present in the awareness of young people. Such attitudes and perceptions of the Sorbian culture are linked to something I have not found on such a scale in other places that I researched, namely young people's conservatism, related to their fears about the permanence of their culture. On the one hand, there are of course voices arguing that it is necessary to modernize the Sorbian culture and make sure that it is present in the spheres to which it previously had limited access. On the other hand, young people treat certain elements of the Sorbian culture as sacred. A Sorbian secondary school student says:

**T17M(S):** [...] Sorbian music is getting closer to modern music. There's also contemporary Sorbian music. We don't want to be as "sleepy" as the older generations. We're young, we want to do something new, and we want it fast. Of course, it's impossible to modernize certain things, for example all these old dances, folklore groups. They can't be modernized, because they have been so for centuries. It's impossible to make it more up-to-date. If we wanted to do so, all the Sorbian identity would be gone, because the important elements of this Sorbian identity would be gone. It's necessary to accept this and keep doing this.

The young man's comments are consistent with the observations made by Posern-Zieliński, who wrote that every cultural process is characterized by a mixture of opposing tendencies. Tendencies towards change clash against those opposed to change. "Such tendencies strengthen the existing forms and cause their petrification. They often sacralize them so as to make them even less susceptible to any modification through the fact of sacralization alone" (Posern-Zieliński, 1982: 77). For young Sorbs, these divergent tendencies are strongly present in all aspects of their lives specifically because of the important role played by participation in the Sorbian rites. Jerzy Szacki writes that "conservatism occurs when a system that has existed for a long time is completely threatened, but it still exists and its defenders think that it can still survive" (Szacki, 2011: 206). The statements made by young people and observations of their cultural practices show that these are exactly the fears that can be found in Lusatia. A student of Sorbian studies explains:

**I22F(S):** Because these customs have always been like that and, in my opinion, it will be better if they stay this way. If something changes, it will go in the wrong direction and it will be gone completely. It's better to stick with the old things, which have always worked.

On the one hand, traditionalism extends the existence of a range of folk culture contents (Posern-Zieliński, 1982: 81). On the other, a group perceives their durability as the main factor determining its ethnic identity and providing the basis for its cultural distinctiveness (Burszta, 1975). It appears that this role is currently played in Lusatia by traditional costumes, which are absent from daily life yet present in every sphere of the ritual and public life in Lusatia. Much has been written about traditional costumes having the power to create ethnic and cultural boundaries by enabling people to present and highlight their identity and culture, in the context of both popular culture, especially subcultures (Muggelton, 2000), and ethnic cultures, or even the Sorbs themselves (including Schönig-Kalendar, 2000; Tulloch, 2004; Feng-fang, 2009). Practically all young Sorbian women have traditional costumes and wear them with pride. Here is how one secondary-school student described the role of traditional costumes:

**E17F(S):** It could be said that it's a Sorbian uniform. [...] this costume shows well that who is a Sorb and who isn't. I think it's great that I have such a costume. Also because this is linked to the Church things, but that's because we worship this, so I think it's important.

The girl chose two important aspects of the role played by folk costumes. First, they are linked to Sorbian and religious traditions and therefore take on special importance and are “worshipped.” Secondly, they identify members of the group visually and define the boundary between those who wear them and those who can only observe others. By the same token, costumes confirm group membership in the eyes of its members as well as outsiders. However, we should not ignore another aspect of the function fulfilled by traditional costumes, namely that of an element of the visual folklorization of the group, the reduction of its role to an object that is being watched. For that reason, many of the Sorbian girls and women I interviewed told me that wearing traditional Sorbian costumes was a difficult experience for them, especially when they had to do so in public outside their community. They often admitted that they felt put on display in such situations and they found the experience difficult, even humiliating.<sup>70</sup> However, almost all of them add that they find the costumes very important and are proud to wear them

---

70 I encountered similar opinions about costumes in the Kashubian culture, but they are more clearly linked to the folklorization of culture. Young Kashubs are reluctant to wear Kashubian costumes, and this applies even to those linked to folklore bands. One of the young people I interviewed made an interesting observation by admitting that it was easier for him to wear the costume in a group. N22M(K): “[...] I'll never forget it: when I was in middle school, we went with this band to Hel and we performed in some Kashubian centre. One day, of our own initiative, he had this parade, we walked down the main street of Hel, all across the street, we played and waved at people. We were fooling around, but so what? I'm a Kashub, so I won't be ashamed of that. I still remember that. People took out their cameras, waved and smiled, we also gave them some joy. And we knew there was nothing to be ashamed

during Sorbian holidays. The conservatism of young Sorbs manifests itself in the wearing of the costumes and its performative function. They sometimes criticize their friends, especially female friends, who do not succumb to traditional models or combine them with everyday life. One Sorbian secondary-school student made an interesting comment:

**D17M(S):** [...] for example, those girls from the Sorbian boarding school. As Sorbian Catholics, they know they can't have any piercings – [what would it look like:] folk costumes plus piercings? But they decided to get piercings anyway, and they didn't wear any earrings at school, but they normally wear them. They like it. But they don't go well the Sorbian folk costumes.

**NDR:** *Whynot?*

**D17M(S):** Because their grandmothers and mothers see this. And a girl with piercings can also see that they don't go well [with Sorbian costumes]. Piercings – these grandmothers and grandfathers are so old-fashioned, and that's why.

**NDR:** *Do you think that a Sorbian girl shouldn't have any piercings?*

**D17M(S):** Well, no. Sorbs can have [piercings] and they also get them. But they can't wear them with typical Sorbian costumes.

**NDR:** *So you think that there should be no changes in these things, in the Sorbian culture and customs?*

**D17M(S):** In my opinion, tattoos and piercings are... for me, they could be there, but on the condition that you make sure that they're not [visible], because there used to be no such things.

The young man complains not so much about girls highlight elements of a culture that is seen as non-Sorbian and modern on a daily basis, as about their presenting them together with the Sorbian costumes, which he sees as vested with symbolic powers. The unchanging appearance of the costumes and the girls<sup>71</sup> who wear them ensures the continuity of the custom. Certain forms “existed in the past,” so they should be preserved in the same form until the present day. This is because “the tangible, social and ideal products (objects, goods) of cultural tradition give rise to specific value judgments among individuals and in the whole group. All the things taken from the past and all the things that people pass down (or attempt to pass down) to the next generation belong to the system of individual and group values and are values in the full sense of the word and therefore give rise to attitudes of recognition, respect, efforts to possess or preserve it” (Burszta, 1974: 342). Therefore, what seems surprising is not so much the Sorbian young man's conservatism as the very high degree of reflection on the traditions that he observes. In a situation of the isolation

---

of. Especially because there were more of us. We weren't alone, we were such a tight-knit group that no one later laughed at school.”

71 Many of the girls I interviewed also complained about the hairdos they were required to wear to make the traditional headdress look “like from the past.”



of a minority culture, self-awareness of cultural content would not be possible. When cultural content and practices undergo deterritorialization, this enforces a confrontation between a group's own culture and the cultures of other groups, thus opening critical attitudes, which in turn imply awareness and a selective approach to it (Giddens, 1991). Lusatia's opening up to the external world has not so much reaffirmed representatives of the community in their criticism of their own traditions as provoked reflections that led them to consciously regard these traditions as "the ideal status," which should be protected at any price (Szacki, 2011: 51). At the same time, this traditionalism raises objections among young people, especially when they feel limited in their major and minor life choices. The secondary school student cited above sees older people as "guardians" of traditions, those who might feel offended by changes in the costumes or customs. On the other hand, many young people blame the elderly for the ossification of traditions and the lack of change. They believe that older generations are unable to understand that the world is changing:

**H25F(S):** As for some people in this older generation, I have the impression they're afraid of novelties, changes, things that are different from what they were taught. I think you can't do that. You should be open and accept [novelties]. Of course, you should work to preserve certain forms, but [...] this should change freely and [older and younger generations] should be able to work together.

As we can see, the young woman does not believe that the traditional forms of Sorbian culture should cease to exist. As a person who has been active among young people from different parts of Lusatia for many years, however, she expresses her concerns about the fact that many young people are weary of the choices imposed on them. She fears that if their voices and needs are ignored in advance ("because things have always been done this way"), they will turn their backs on the Sorbian culture as unfit to meet their needs. Such traditionalism, which boils down to "the conservation of everything that is old for fear of movement in any direction, out of complete inertia in thinking and acting" (Szacki, 2011: 187), also reduces traditions to a spectacle. I have also heard the following opinions expressed during my interviews:

**T17M(S):** I think [the Sorbian culture] is essentially not [attractive], because it is as old as it was a hundred years ago. There are attempts to develop it, because this is truly the tradition by which our grandmothers lived. Young Sorbs don't feel like doing what our great-grandmothers did. That's what I'd say. It isn't attractive, but people get involved, look after it.

**S17F(S):** The problem is that many people, especially young people, don't want to take this as theirs. This is not modern, whereas young people are simply adjusted to what is modern, so it's hard to attract them. [...] That's why there is a problem with making Sorbian identity more up-to-date, but I'm a little traditional and I say that we'll lose something, these traditions and so on. It's hard to find the common ground.

These two comments show that many Sorbs involved in Sorbian culture fear that this culture is becoming completely separated from the daily life of young people, who will not feel any connection to it. At the same time, the two teenagers stress that this culture should be nonetheless preserved in the form in which it has functioned for years. Such ostensibly contradictory judgments are constant parts of the life of young Sorbs. It is also rooted in the external image of the Sorbian community as a folklore group that is incongruous with the modern world. Elka Tschernokoshewa (2004: 231) claims that this folkloristic image of the Sorbs is a construct created to meet the needs of the dominant culture: depicting the Sorbian culture in opposition to the German culture separates them and creates clear membership divisions. In this way, the Sorbian culture is associated with holidays and traditional customs and the German culture with the modern world, the media and novelties. This confirms the superiority of the dominant culture, because folklore is treated as the manifestation of a simple, folk culture that has not modernized or created any high, elitist culture, thus proving its cultural maturity and development. Young Sorbs have a problem with this depiction and they resist it by promoting modern forms of expression of the Sorbian culture (especially in the context of music and the media) but sometimes also by distancing themselves from their Sorbian identity.

Here is where reach the duality of the forms and functions of the Sorbian identity: living and non-staged folklore versus folklorized forms put on public display. That is because folklore means a “certain knowledge and creative artistic ability of a specific community” and as such remains closely linked to the life of a specific community in a given place and at a given time, so “its form and content also reflect the conditions of this life.” By the same token, as Burszta (1974: 311) writes, changes and transformations related to changes in the life of local communities are inherent in folklore. As the ethnologist adds, folklore manifests itself in the fullest way in the form of customs and rites, songs, dances and music. All these elements are present in the life of Sorbs during not only holiday celebrations but also ordinary gatherings of people who belong to the same community. Music is perhaps the most important element of the Sorbian culture. In Lusatia, everyone sings on every occasion: in churches, during events, parties and weddings. Numerous choirs are formed and many Sorbs are actively involved in their activity. Children learn to sing not at school and not even in choirs but as part of everyday practice (cf. Statelova, 2013). The same holds true for Sorbian customs, such as the particularly well-known Easter Horse Riding processions. Such processions attract tourists from all over Germany and therefore serve as presentations of the Sorbian culture and its distinctive nature. Young people are aware of this fact:

**A18F(S):** It’s really something special. It’s enough to see how many tourists come to Lusatia for the Sorbs, to see our different customs. During Easter, there are so many people in Lusatia, also from other countries or different parts of Germany. I think it’s very important that we show them that a nation can be full of life and have mutual bonds.

The young woman immediately adds that this is only an additional aspect of such celebrations, which are not driven by tourism but by the needs of the Sorbs and are rooted in the Catholic religion:

**A18F(S):** You can't turn the Sorbian culture into a product to make money. [In Lower Lusatia] the culture is still alive only for tourists. Here [in Upper Lusatia], it is also alive for the nation, for the identity, not just for tourists. That's a lot more important than showing someone how cool our nation can be.

Researchers have studied this duality of the Sorbian rites, including Easter processions, in an attempt to understand the phenomenon (cf. Schork, 2008). Before I get back to the internal contradictions within the Sorbian culture and its functioning in today's world, I would like to look more closely at what young people see as "genuineness" of the Sorbian rites and why they do not perceive them as folklorized and therefore invalid elements of their own culture. I earlier mentioned the strong links that young people see between the Sorbian customs, the community life and the use of the Sorbian language. This triad and the inseparability of its component parts are exactly what provides the basis for this sense of the "genuineness" of the Sorbian customs. When attempting to explain this phenomenon, young people refer to examples from Lower Lusatia, where the customs are still present, but the element of ethnicity and the language have disappeared. Catholics from Upper Lusatia see the rites performed in Lower Lusatia as having only a performative function:

**G25M(S):** For those people, what was once a custom is now a spectacle. I imagine that this will happen to our culture as well. I wouldn't like it to be just a spectacle, I'd like it to continue to develop as a culture, but I think that Lusatia will shrink, especially the language.

Culture, unlike folkloristic spectacles, is alive and pertains to the people who participate in it. As one student said, Sorbian customs are modern for as long as they are experienced by people who consider themselves modern:

**P22M(S):** [...] I think the Sorbian culture is modern. Let's take customs, for example. Many people think they're not modern, that they're archaic. I don't agree, because they're modern also because these customs are always practiced by the new generation. Customs are as contemporary as anything else. The fact that it's a tradition this doesn't mean it's not contemporary. The essence of customs may also pertain to today's life.

If the Sorbian customs and the Sorbian culture are to be preserved, they must be constantly created and recreated anew by the young generation. It must be their culture and therefore have the forms and express the contents that belong to young people and through which they can express themselves. They frequently exist alongside the forms with which young people do not identify very eagerly but which they regard as part of their heritage:

**RB18F(S):** I only listen to folklore music during holidays, when there's no other choice. Of course, it's very nice, but I don't do it so eagerly that if don't have to. [...] I very much like going to the concerts of Sorbian music, especially modern music. In our club, there are meetings of a band that plays metal with Sorbian lyrics. And Sorbian lyrics with metal music are great. Many young people in Lusatia listen to that. I like such combinations a lot. [...]

**NDR:** *Do you think it's important that the Sorbian culture is being modernized?*

**RB18F(S):** I think... on the one hand, it shouldn't be so artificial, but it should also require people to show some ingenuity. So that they would like to continue to protect this culture. On the other hand, the links to old traditions must be preserved and fostered.

While in Lusatia, I heard many similar opinions, which included contradictory opinions. They reveal the existence of a certain paradox in the Sorbian culture: some young people are reluctant to participate in and observe traditional Sorbian holidays, which they consider obsolete. They feel that, as participants in the Sorbian folklore life, they are regarded by outsiders as people belonging to a different system. This affects them, and many of them feel discouraged from identifying with the culture of their ancestors. But when they turn from observers into active participants, the Sorbian traditions, celebrations and customs come alive for them and participation in these traditions, celebrations and customs is exactly what develops their bonds and their sense of identification with other Sorbs to the greatest extent. I will quote two characteristic comments:

**UB17M(S):** I don't like going to folklore concerts, I'm not particularly fond of the atmosphere, but I like giving such concerts, for example with our choir. Such folklore concerts are usually boring and stiff, there's nothing to do. But I generally like this music, I like these songs, so I like singing them. When we put on a concert, we have fun, we can show something.

**SB18F(S):** [...] I'm a little annoyed by this Catholicism, by the fact that everyone has to do it. But I am Catholic and I find this important. But the Sorbs are very conservative in this respect. Secondly, this Sorbian costume is uncomfortable and you get very hot when you wear it. But I like it, it's beautiful. But I had a moment in my life when I rebelled against putting this costume on. Because people looked at me in a weird way and that annoyed me. But now I can see that that there are people who say that I look beautiful in this costume. And I no longer have a problem with it.

The folkloristic aspects of the Sorbian culture may be sometimes burdensome for young people, but they can also modify their traditions in a creative way, sometimes risking criticism on the part of the older generations, who regard themselves as guardians of these traditions (Langer, 2005). Importantly, these elements of tradition, modified by young people, slowly become part of the canon of the Sorbian culture, making this tradition alive, despite the fact that it appears unchanging. In the following chapters, I intend to show that efforts to modernize traditions and create a modern image of a culture may take on various forms. Also, contradictory

ideas are usually mutually exclusive and they are put into effect by people who differ in their understanding of what minority cultures should be in the present-day world. However, the situation in Lusatia is exceptional. Here, a culture based on customs and traditional costumes exists alongside the modern culture and there is practically no division into those who “create” or “participate” in one sphere or the other. An activist from one of the Sorbian institutions described this phenomenon in the following way:

**PB25F(S):** These spheres often overlap greatly – the same people perform in folklore bands, dance Sorbian dances wearing traditional costumes and then create modern music, hip hop and so on. That’s nothing strange here. No one has a problem with that. I like it very much that there is no need for such divisions.

## **Kashubia – from folklorization to modernity**

Out of the other minority cultures discussed in this book, the Kashubian culture is closest to the Sorbian culture – including because both belong to the Slavic minority cultures in former Eastern Bloc countries. On the first, superficial encounter, both seem to be strongly folklorized and to emphasize above all their showy, performance-based aspects, filled with folk symbols. But when we go deeper into the topic, get to know people, talk to them and look at how they perceive their own culture, we start to see the differences. These can be partially attributed to the political and historical situation of the two groups and the ongoing, very rapid changes in Kashubia. While the Sorbs in East Germany were afforded protection and could develop their culture in many aspects of their lives (within the scope permitted by the authorities), the Kashubs, in line with the authorities’ policy of blurring ethnic boundaries, were referred to as an “ethnographic group” (Wicherkiewicz, 2011: 148), one that could only function in the form of folklorized cultural events. Despite the establishment of the Kashubian Association in 1956 (later renamed the Kashubian-Pomeranian Association), the Kashubs had very limited possibilities of deciding about themselves and demonstrating their collective identity. In addition, the Polish People’s Republic’s policy of “uniformization” and resettlement into areas inhabited by the Kashubs made their customs and rites, still alive in Kashubia after the Second World War, gradually cease to form a constitutive part of religious life. The proximity of two Slavic cultures and languages – Polish and Kashubian – and the latter’s very low prestige resulted in the strong assimilation of the Kashubs. Linguistic similarity (with Kashubian being considered a dialect of Polish) was presented as proof that the Kashubs were not a distinctive ethnic group. After the end of the First World War, the Kashubs still had a very poor sense of their cultural distinctiveness and could not develop their culture in the communist-era Polish People’s Republic, which allowed their distinctiveness only in terms of folklore. Also, the intellectual aspects of Kashubian culture (language and literature) developed as a niche (Obracht-Prondzyński, 2002).

The folklorization of Kashubian culture, understood as the reconstruction of selected forms and contents of tangible and intangible folklore in deliberately arranged situations (Burszta, 1974: 311), which means in isolation of their meaning, cultural context and bearers, was a measure deliberately taken by the authorities to limit the tendencies towards the development of the Kashubs' cultural self-awareness. The folklorization of Kashubian culture was part of the plans to marginalize all minorities in the Polish People's Republic and make them less visible (Łodziński, 2010: 23). Kashubian regionalism with its manifestations, such as open-air museums, ethnographic museums, traditional costumes and embroidery, has become a symbol of the Kashubian culture and its most important manifestation (cf. Kwaśniewska, 2007). In Kashubia, just like in Lusatia, the effects of that policy remain visible to the present day.

When the political system changed, the Kashubian culture started to develop dynamically, with the Kashubian language being gradually introduced in schools, media and public life.<sup>72</sup> However, the links between Kashubian identity and folklorism, strongly rooted in collective imagination, also among Kashubian activists, prevented transformations in this sphere of life. Many Kashubian activists, who have gotten traditions and folklore confused with the showy folklorization of manifestations of cultural activity, perceived (and still perceive) themselves and the institutions in which they are active as "guardians of tradition." In addition, the abandonment of symbolical and visual manifestations of the Kashubian identity, such as Kashubian embroidery and the traditional Kashubian costumes worn by Kashubian regional bands and by many people to celebrate special "Kashubian" occasions, gave rise to fears that without these distinctive aspects the Kashubs would not differ in any way from the surrounding Poles and their cultural distinctiveness would become watered down.<sup>73</sup> As Agnieszka Pasięka showed, "It seems that in order to find a place in the social imaginary, minorities have to be dressed in traditional costumes and presented as craftsmen, farmers, and practitioners of an exotic rite" (Pasięka, 2015: 217). Traditionalism understood in this way made it difficult for people outside small Kashubian farming communities that lived in

---

72 In 2003–2004, students of ethnology in Warsaw conducted very interesting studies of different manifestations of the functioning of the Kashubian culture and customs in today's life (cf. Kalinowski, 2006).

73 In the early twenty-first century, groups of Kashubian activists held important discussions on the extent to which the Kashubs could free themselves from the costumes they wore. One of the activists and people running a folk band replied indignantly to the suggestions of the removal of the aura of folklorism from the Kashubs: "You [...] would like to dress the Kashubs in jeans. How do you imagine that? How would the viewers who have accidentally come to the shows without reading the posters know they are Kashubs? We can't write that on their jeans. I can't imagine how rock bands can promote Kashubia without even an inkling of Kashubian traditions." Retrieved from: <http://www.naszekaszuby.pl/modules/news/article.php?storyid=370> (access: 24.06.2015).

small villages where some Kashubian traditions were preserved to see anything different from this folkloristic aspect, which in turn effectively discouraged young people from identifying with the Kashubian culture. Here is how one Kashubian secondary-school student told me about her first conscious contact with the Kashubian culture:

**NDR:** *Can you recall your first contact with the Kashubian culture? The first time you said to yourself, "oh, that's Kashubian"?*

**U18F(K):** I think it was when I went to an orchestra competition and there was a Kashubian group performing. There were only old ladies on stage, in those costumes and they started to sing. I didn't know at all what language they were singing... Only afterwards did I find out that it was Kashubian. And I was sceptical about this, because I couldn't understand it at all. I thought that it was a language for old ladies who only crochet, sitting at home and nothing else.

**NDR:** *How old were you?*

**U18F(K):** About 6–7.

**NDR:** *So, your first contact with the Kashubian culture...*

**U18F(K):** ... was like 'oh dear!' Because there were no young women, no girls and I thought that Kashubian must be like that.

**NDR:** *And how long did that image remain?*

**U18F(K):** I guess to the secondary school. It was so orthodox for me. So: this is folklore, ok, we don't have to go back to it, they can live like this, but I don't need this. I think it was something like that.

This secondary school student associated the Kashubian culture with something that did not belong to her world in any way. The methods by which Kashubian culture is presented on stage alone create a certain distance to viewers, making it difficult for them to identify with the communicated content. Roch Sulima explained that the meaning of folklorism was determined not by folkloristic and folklorized objects alone (such as dances, folk costumes and stories) as quotes from the folk culture but by the types of the relations between the senders and the receivers that were hidden behind them. He wrote: "The phenomena that we term folklorism occur more or less in the following way: 'we' present our rituals, our songs and our stories to 'you,' and they serve 'us' and 'you' as ways of having fun, although they previously fulfilled other functions in our culture, ones that researchers described as related to life, religion, existence and so on. Consequently, 'we' and 'you' have arranged via institutions to meet for the purpose of having fun" (Sulima, 1992: 187). However, the problem is that today's young people not only do not think that such spectacles are fun but also associate them with something very distant. One young Kashubian activist sees this as the reason why his peers are not interested in the Kashubian culture:

**A20M(K):** I think that there is certain difficulty here, because this Kashubian culture is sold in a wrong way. It's presented more as a relic of the past, so young people often have the feeling that this is a history lesson: this is how things were

in the past, how the life of the generation of our grandparents looked, so this doesn't apply to us. We can watch this, take an interest, but it doesn't apply to us. That's because the Kashubian culture is promoted in a wrong way. We don't promote Kashubian culture as something that should directly influence young people. Unfortunately, young people must reach these conclusions alone, like I did.

The same aspect is stressed by another Kashub who is thinking about teaching Kashubian at school in the future. When asked what image of the Kashubian culture would be now attractive to young people, she answers:

**B24F(K):** For sure, not a typical relic of the past, because it's like... Whenever I meet new people, especially from other parts of Poland, but from here as well, and I say that I am Kashub, I can see in their eyes that they perceive me as someone straight out of an ethnographic park. Of course I think that our folklore is interesting, colourful, etc. But for today's times... it does not harmonize with our times. So I think that we have to make the Kashubian culture more up to date.

This young woman points out to the consequences of the promotion of the folkloristic image of the Kashubian culture. In her opinion, such depictions objectify this culture and entail a certain simplified, folkloristic image of the people who represent it. Young people told me repeatedly, and on many occasions, that this bothered them and caused their aversion. In their opinion, the best remedy to folklorization involves modernizing the Kashubian culture and presenting it as consistent with the challenges of today's world. However, the fundamental questions are, what should this modern culture be like and in what forms should it manifest itself? Young people offer different answers and different ideas in response to this question. One of these ideas, which is especially frequently used by Kashubian creators, involves adjusting the folkloristic motifs of the tangible culture (Kashubian embroidery and craft) and the intangible culture (especially music) to the forms derived from the dominant culture. One student from Kashubia says:

**I22F(K):** The Kashubian culture is all these elements that differentiate us from other cultures. So, up till now, it has been most of all the folk culture. Those folk songs which are sung sometimes in new arrangements – are interesting and worth listening to. This folk culture, which is as important as the older heritage element, matches our new trends well. As the Kashubian embroidery on t-shirts or on some home utensils (towels or something). All this fits in well into our modern world.

Such an approach to efforts to modernize a minority culture (and its image) appear particularly characteristic of the complex mode of its functioning in today's world. On the one hand, the modernization of a culture through the arrangement of its typical elements in new and modern forms brings elements of this minority culture closer to young people, raised among global culture models. On the other one, this form makes it possible to stress the "otherness" of the Kashubian culture, without deviating from its established symbols. This creates a double cultural quotation and simultaneously reduces fear of the loss of the exceptional, "genuine"



aspects of the minority culture. The young woman stresses that the preservation of “folk culture” is important, but it is hard to say how this folk aspect should be understood. It is therefore worth spending some time analysing this aspect of the Kashubian culture, which is often forgotten in considerations of the modernization of culture – in the eyes of some young people, it offers “real proof” of the Kashubs’ cultural distinctiveness. For many of them, the value of their culture lies in its local aspects, its occupation of a niche and even its “backwardness.” A student of Kashubian specialization characterizes the Kashubian culture in the following way:

**F23F(K):** It is this atmosphere. On the one hand, when I was a child, I thought it was so *wsiurskie* [bumpkin, village-related and embarrassingly unsophisticated]. Now, I think it’s more *swojskie* [homey, local, ours, familiar]. I’d say it’s a homey, niche culture, and not everyone can touch it, it’s not for everyone. It’s clear that there are such important things as literature and other creative works, but for me it’s especially an emotional feeling, something that brings together a small group of people, chosen people.

Such a view of the Kashubian culture is interesting not because it is incongruous with the one proposed by most young people but because it paradoxically stresses the features of the modernization of culture that are feared by many people, even those who actively promote it. Describing Kashubian culture as something *wsiurskie* may be interpreted in two ways: firstly, as folklorization, something that is related not only to its village-related aspects but also to its embarrassing lack of sophistication. Here is how a different respondent described Kashubian culture:

**H24F(K):** It’s certainly something *wsiowe* [village-related]. I use that word because I don’t know how to say this properly. Even there, Kashubian culture means napkins, vases, dance groups... boring. Boring. That’s what I feel.

The village-related aspects of this culture are clearly linked to the distinctive way in which it is presented, namely through folklorized artefacts of folk culture. But when we get back to the previous statement, we will see that – secondly – the speaker’s attitude to this culture changed as she became more deeply and intimately involved in its aspects. The notion of *wsiurskie* ‘bumpkin’ thus became replaced by *swojskie* ‘homey,’ which carries completely different connotations, as something one knows well and understands. As such, the bumpkin/homey nature of Kashubian culture are contrasted against the way of thinking that is imposed on young people by the dominant culture, cultural organizers and financing institutions, about what a modern, developing culture should look like and how it should function (cf. Rakowski, 2013). The bumpkin/homey nature of Kashubian culture actually – and somewhat paradoxically – makes it elitist, specifically because it allows it to be different and therefore also inaccessible or at least incomprehensible to most people. Consequently, dressing up Kashubian culture, so understood, in a costume of modernity could actually harm it by making it seem vulgar, accessible, understandable to everyone and tailored to external models. Importantly,

many young people therefore fear modernity thus understood. One Kashubian activist said:

**N22M(K):** [...] the problem is, does this world have to strive to make everything modern? [...] [Kashubian culture] is what it is and what's the point of adapting it to make it attractive? Of course, this might look cool and attract many people, but preserving this tradition... [...] The question is, does "modern" mean "good"? Is the world headed in a good direction? Maybe if we stop the Kashubian culture from becoming attractive and modern, we will preserve the good features of this culture, instead of making it worse.

Importantly, this speaker draws a contrast between the adjectives "modern" and "attractive." What is attractive appeals to people and therefore saves culture from being marginalized and forgotten, yet at the same time, this may also cause it to lose its unique nature. Young people keep asking themselves what kind of minority culture they want to create and for whom. If many are put off by the folklorized image of this culture, while at the same time few are able to grasp its "homey" nature for reasons related to the assimilation that took place in the latter half of the 20th century, the minority culture should offer so many possibilities to people who are ethnically indifferent/neutral that everyone is able to find something for themselves there. In the opinion of young people, it is therefore necessary to stop the Kashubian culture from being guarded in a way that prevents any change. One Kashubian activist claims that young people need to be allowed to play with Kashubian culture:

**O24F(K):** For one thing, they need to be made aware that this is their culture, not something they can learn and do by dancing [folk dances], singing Kashubian songs in a specific literary language approved by a specific council with a specific accent; not only by pursuing culture, serving specific meals for holiday supper. But by making young people aware that this is *their* culture and they can do whatever they want with it. When they take a Kashubian embroidery pattern and want to get it tattooed on their buttock, they have the right to do so. If they take a Kashubian embroidery pattern and want to buy a paper napkin with this pattern, they have the right to do so. Because this is something that's alive, something that is theirs.

By postulating the "liberation" of the Kashubian cultural content, this young woman nonetheless does not restrict herself to playing with the elements that are obviously associated with the Kashubian identity. Extracting them from the models imposed by folklore and placing them in the context of popular culture is expected prompt young people to accept them. Consequently, these considerations may be summed up with the statement that not much is left without visual forms that are established in collective awareness and associated with the Kashubian culture and therefore allow this culture to be identified as separate from the Polish culture. However, young people rebel against this understanding of the Kashubian culture and see its distinctiveness as lying not in traditions and folklore but in the

Kashubian language, which is separate from the Polish language. Things that are “in the Kashubian language” obviously belong to the Kashubian culture, as opposed to the Polish culture. One Kashubian activist explains:

**J21M(K):** This culture is modern, but it has not rejected everything that was previously there. It simply makes use of all these traditions, bringing them into the modern times. It can develop, and that’s visible, but I personally believe that it should be a little more modern and it should move forward a little more. It should surround us more broadly, [through] things that we have used on a daily basis for many years but are still not absent from Kashubian culture, the Kashubian language. As for such things as technology, if we don’t bring the Kashubian language there, we automatically don’t think about them as part of Kashubian culture. But if the Kashubian language appears there, then we think, yes, this is Kashubian.

When we retrace this Kashubian activist’s train of thought, we can see that first he expresses a conviction that if modern aspects become rooted in traditions, this may protect Kashubian culture from losing its distinctive characteristics. Secondly, Kashubian culture must be present in everyday life, at every level. This is not possible when we identify culture with folklore, even if some of its elements are adapted to new forms. Thirdly and consequently, the young man says that it is necessary to look at what determines the rhythm of the life of today’s young people and how Kashubian culture can become part of their life. If young people use mobile phones, their Kashubian identity might manifest itself in phone casings with Kashubian embroidery. In that case, it would stay at the level of external presentation – a casing with Kashubian embroidery is merely a symbol of Kashubian identity. Phones will be more strongly linked to the Kashubian identity if they feature content in Kashubian. Consequently, this means not only the use of Kashubian over the phone but the availability of Kashubian-language menus in phones. As this activist says, if technological solutions have an interface in Kashubian, no one will say that they do not belong to the Kashubian culture. Such situations are not about symbols but about specific everyday practices. In today’s world, language is the only element of the Kashubian culture that could adapt completely to the modern era. This is noted also by people who claim that they feel no need to manifest their distinctive Kashubian identity:

**B24F(K):** It seems to be that [language is] probably the most important, because it’s probably the only element that can be adapted to modernity. Because for other elements of culture, it may be a little harder to do.

Young people see language as an element that has the power of liberating the Kashubian culture from the shackles of folklorism. The Kashubian activist cited below made an important statement in this context. He did not learn Kashubian at home or at school. His father, despite not knowing Kashubian, is engaged in Kashubian cultural life. In primary school, the boy started to perform in a Kashubian dance group where he met people strongly involved in preserving Kashubian language and culture. At the beginning of his studies, he engaged in

institutional activities promoting Kashubia. Over the past two years, he took part in short courses of Kashubian twice. However, he did not have enough time, had no speakers of Kashubian in his surroundings and no motivation to learn the language, so he did not learn it well enough to start speaking it. He believes that:

**N22M(K):** The language is the medium for all this, because via it everything gets transmitted at home. [...] And later there's literature, texts in the Kashubian language, music, media, Radio Kaszëbë. Without the language nothing stands a chance here, everything will be reduced to folklore. This, I feel, was what was previously being inculcated in children. I was indoctrinated that Kashubia, our whole culture, was really nothing but folklore, nothing but children dancing in Kashubian costumes. Of course, in my case it has developed with age into a sort of consciousness, but in most cases, it stays at the level that we are ordinary Polish people, only we can dance, have our folklore, take snuff, we can go to festivals and that's it. But it has no influence on normal life. Yet the point is that it actually should influence it. It would be nicer and more normal for us to listen to the news in the Kashubian language, to talk in Kashubian with our friends, to read books in Kashubian. It would be just great.

In the context of the information I gathered during his biographical interview and my observations of his everyday language practices, this Kashubian activist's statement must be regarded as declarative, which not only does not change its interpretation but even brings it into sharper focus. The young man starts off by saying that language is the medium of a culture passed down from generation to generation. It also makes it possible to create works of Kashubian high culture (literature) and popular culture (songs and media). He goes on to what he remembers from his childhood – he did not learn the Kashubian culture or the Kashubian language at home, but he joined a folklore band, so he encountered the Kashubian culture presented in its folklorized, performance forms, as opposed to living, everyday forms. In his eyes, this Kashubian identity, expressed through participation in festivals, the wearing of traditional costumes and snuff taking,<sup>74</sup> was nonetheless disconnected from life. It remained reduced to folklore. It is likewise associated with folklore by most of the children currently being raised in Kashubia. While in the group, however, he met Kashubian activists and therefore started to reflect on certain aspects of the Kashubian culture. In his opinion, it should manifest itself in everyday life in the possibility of speaking, reading and watching television in Kashubian. He argues that it would be “nicer and more normal” to use Kashubian on a daily basis. Given the fact that he has difficulty communicating in Kashubian, his words should be interpreted in a different context – only those who speak Kashubian would not have to prove their Kashubian identity in every life

---

74 Snuff is regarded as a typically Kashubian product, used both to promote the region and as a kind of identity policy (cf. Kulesza, 2006).

situation by manifesting Kashubian symbols, which could be reserved for special occasions, as is the case with national cultures.

As Colin Baker has observed, in order for a minority culture to be adopted by young people and recognized as theirs, it must permeate as many spheres and aspects of their lives as possible. In his opinion, “A menu restricted to language lessons in school is a diet for a few. The menu needs to include a constant re-interpretation of minority language cultural forms. Minority language discos and dating, minority language rock bands and records, minority language books and beer festivals become as important as traditional cultural forms” (Baker, 1992: 136). There are many manifestations of the Kashubian culture in modern forms, and their number keeps growing gradually. There are more and more bands that play new arrangements of folk hits as well as amateur Kashubian theatres that perform plays written for them or translations of world literature into Kashubian, there are Kashubian comic troupes, stand-up comedians and even parodies of TV series. Kashubian culture is increasingly visible, which attracts those who would not be interested in its folkloristic aspects. In a word, Kashubian culture is becoming fashionable. An activist and journalist who uses Kashubian language in her work says:

**O24F(K):** Some people have their Starbucks cups, we have the Kashubian language. And that’s fashionable. [...] But not every [manifestation of the Kashubian culture] is. [...] If we look at Kashubia only in terms of laying flowers by monuments of activists, if we only care for Kashubia in terms of decorating chapels for religious celebrations, if we only care for Kashubia in terms of serving bread with lard and cucumbers, it doesn’t stand much of a chance. Of we only care for Kashubia in terms of wearing these beautiful folk costumes, there’s no chance. But the Kashubs, especially the young Kashubs, have gone further, beyond that. It is evident that they are interested.

Kashubian symbols cease to be associated exclusively with folkloristic performances and start to be linked to the local identity coupled with pride in the region. The blossoming of the Kashubian culture and language and their modernization go hand in hand with young people’s efforts to search for their roots and reinvent themselves. The Kashubian culture and the Kashubian identity have become fashionable, which, coupled with financial subsidies, started to make the promotion of the Kashubian culture profitable. However, the consequences of this situation are more complex. On the one hand, there is a risk that this culture may become commercialized. And such commercialization is increasingly present in Kashubia. One young woman admits:

**G25F(K):** Well, I guess it is [fashionable]. Because [people] see that this can be partially profitable, because you can set up a tourism business or whatnot. Because of these bands that use the Kashubian culture and songs...

In this way, the Kashubian culture, presented in a modern dimension and therefore ostensibly disconnected from folklorism, returns to such a presentist function. As

Posern-Zieliński (1982: 95) writes, “the elements of folklore introduced into popular culture and exploited by the mass media have become a malleable material that is used to create attractive products characterized as exotic and successfully used in the industry, trade, tourism as well as regionalist and ethnic movements.” Consequently, young people fear that the Kashubian culture will become “a culture for sale” (Nowicka, 2006) and undergo commercialization, which will in turn cause its valuable elements to be replaced with tackiness. One Kashubian author points out to the appearance of many products that imitate the Kashubian culture, but their quality is very low:

**L23M(K):** [I’m bothered] that Kashubian has become fashionable and many people are trying to benefit from that, so they record albums with songs in Kashubian with no vocal or linguistic skill. What’s the point of recording them, then? People who don’t know any Kashubs will take those records, listen and [conclude] that those Kashubs are all lame.

There are also fears that if products of culture are forcefully created and promoted only because they are in Kashubian, their quality will be low and their content will have nothing to do with the Kashubian culture. It could be said that such are the rules of mass culture. The following secondary school graduate who learned Kashubian in secondary school lists a number of spheres that could be regarded as “modern” Kashubian culture:

**P19M(K):** In addition, there is something like “Kashubian Idol,” a competition where people sing in Kashubian and our local stars are promoted. And that’s everything that fits in with this general global trend. It’s the same model, but it’s [organized] on a smaller scale in Kashubia and in Kashubian. I think that such activities, those in which Kashubia wants to stay in touch with general trends, are on the one hand good, because this culture gets closer and closer to people, and on the other one not very good, because the literature becomes shallower and shallower, something you read out of boredom, not something you can think about more deeply.

As a result of this clash between the modern, widely promoted Kashubian culture and how people imagine the traditions from which Kashubian culture is derived, young people start to think about Kashubian culture in terms of “artificial” culture, which is promoted, sold and commercialized, vs. “real culture,” characteristic of villages and based on values associated with the Kashubian identity. A Kashubian journalist says:

**H24F(K):** I don’t think we should be pushy with the Kashubian culture. Here, it has been recently the case that at every local event, on every stage, there is a Kashubian band, there’s this huge inscription “Kashubian Day of Something” or “Kashubian Holiday of Something.” There are Kashubian costumes, Kashubian meals, everything is called Kashubian and that’s too pushy. I think this should stop.

**NDR:** *So there’s too much Kashubian culture now?*

**H24F(K):** Too much of this artificial, inflated culture. The real Kashubian culture means something completely different than a title.

**NDR:** *So tell me, what do you think real Kashubian culture means?*

**H24F(K):** Working hard, less talk and more action. Definitely, attachment to family, not to such artificial Kashubian traditions and customs we encounter so often nowadays. [...] What else? Attachment to land and God, that's how I feel it.

Consequently, culture is understood not as a set of customs and institutions, but as the determining factor behind the characteristics and behaviours of the people who form it. Positive values associated with the older generations of Kashubs (family, customs, religion and hard work) are contrasted against the understanding of the Kashubian identity as a mere façade that helps gain certain profits. For that reason, some young activists wonder about the possible consequences of efforts to modernize the Kashubian culture through the promotion of the Kashubian language used in spheres previously reserved for national languages. Pursuant to the Poland's "Act on National and Ethnic Minorities and the Regional Language," the Kashubs as a group have no status, with protection (and therefore financial support) being afforded only to the Kashubian language. In the opinion of some people, this emphasis on the promotion of the Kashubian language and the related activities turns it into a construct abstracted from the cultural whole. Consequently, young people fear not so much changes in the language itself as the loss of the distinctiveness of their culture, its unique characteristics, its "spirit." One young Kashubian woman fears that the values that made the Kashubs stand out among other inhabitants of Pomerania may be lost amid efforts to make the Kashubian culture more modern, efforts understood as the promotion of the Kashubian language:

**C21F(K):** You may know no Kashubian, but if you feel you're part of this land... I feel this is not enough, because I know Kashubian, but I don't know much about the Kashubian customs and rites. And people from the older generations, our grandparents and great-grandparents, who may speak no Kashubian but were raised in a specific way, they feel this Kashubian spirit more than me or anyone else who only speaks Kashubian. I think that such people are more likely to be called Kashubs than we are.

The commercialization of ethnicity is a common phenomenon in the 21st century. Creating products related to the ethnic market, despite their "kitschiness," and participating in cultural spectacles performed "for show," despite fears of the loss of genuineness, do not necessarily entail exclusively negative consequences for the community. Individuals taking part in this ethnic theatre simultaneously become its recipients, as a way to "enact their identity, and, in the process, objectifying their own subjectivity, thus to (re)cognize its existence, to grasp it, to domesticate it, to act on and with it" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009: 26). Paradoxically, the commercialization of culture therefore makes it possible to restore the real relationship with this culture, consistent with the requirements of modern life, and therefore contributes to its survival. In this sense, folklorized forms of Kashubian culture also

play a role as long as they enrich not the tourists who watch them but those who participate in such spectacles. Finally, I would like to quote a fledgling Kashubian journalist who says that he rebelled against the Kashubian culture, despite the fact that it was instilled into him at home (in the form of “the Kashubian spirit”). Encounters with the Kashubian world, which he was expected to describe, was not so much difficult as thought-provoking:

**V20M(K):** I was in a state of denial about this Kashubian identity throughout my adolescence [...]. I felt I was [a Kashub], that all of my grandmother’s customs and views, the language in which she spoke to me [...], all these elements surrounded me, stimulated me, that the culture in which I had been raised was different from the Polish culture or any other culture. [...] I became a reporter. [...] I travelled across Kashubia and covered various events. For example, an anniversary of the formation of a [folklore] band with many years of traditions. [...] So as an 18-year-old rebelling against the Kashubian culture, I ended up [at this ceremony]. God in heaven, what am I doing here? Such tasks made me humbler. I saw that the people who formed such bands really had a knack for what they did. It is their passion, their way of life, they meet. [...] So I slowly warmed up to this Kashubian culture, mainly because I only met people involved in it. At the same time, I felt that the culture I saw [during the folklore band’s anniversary celebrations] was not my culture, it was not the culture I wanted to help create.

When this Kashubian reporter got to know groups linked to folklore performances, which he had earlier disliked very much, he realized that they could be something valuable in and of themselves. However, this value should be attributed not to the visual aspects, perceived by outsiders, but to the pursuit of folklore as a cultural practice through which performers establish closer relations and form a community, thanks to which they start to understand their place in the local surroundings.

## **Brittany – from community customs to invented tradition**

As a tourism region in France, Brittany presents visitors with what is considered typical for the land: regional culinary specialties like buckwheat flour crêpes called *galettes bretonnes* and folklore with characteristic women’s headdress – tall lace caps from the region of Bigouden (Bro-Vigoudenn). One secondary school student complains that this picture of the region, created by marketing experts, makes people identify the Breton culture with such images:

**B17F(B):** Even I have a tendency to associate it with stereotypes about the Breton culture. Because now in France, the Breton culture is kinds of like... for example, tourism and all of this... distorts the picture of the Breton culture. So where there’s talk of Breton culture, I can often see crêpes, bonnets, and *fest noz*, really such things [...] So this is what immediately comes to my mind, because this is the picture created by marketers to attract tourists.



Other recognizable aspects of Breton cultural practices include music and dance, which function in both folkloristic and modern forms. In the former forms, they manifest themselves in numerous bands called *bagad* (plural *bagadoù*), which perform during most outdoor activities and at specially organized concerts and festivals. Inspired by Scottish bands, the *bagadoù* appeared in Brittany after the Second World War and quickly gained the status of traditional Breton bands. Many children whose parents identify in different ways with the Breton culture belong to such bands, and so do many adults. Some only attend several rehearsals, others stay in the bands for life.

In turn, Breton folk dances are danced in Celtic circles (called *cercles celtiques* in French and *kelc'hioù keltiek* in Breton). As folklore groups presenting different aspects of Brittany's folk culture, such bands have been formed since the beginning of the 20th century, when the traditional Breton world started to break apart under the influence of ever-stronger contacts with the French culture. In their current form, focused mainly on dancing, *bagadoù* started operating after the Second World War and reached their peak in the 1950s (cf. Micheau-Vernez, Vally & Brékilien, 1984). In Celtic circles, people dance traditional dances from different parts of Brittany, prepared under the watchful eye of choreographers, who make sure that the dances have the proper form and are consistent with traditions and visually attractive in a way that permits the modification of their forms. A dance group has a workshop that creates costumes made to look like folk costumes. Celtic circles, especially during peak season, travel from one show to another and from one festival to another, because such events are held very frequently in Brittany and therefore solidify the folklorist image of this culture. However, the association between the Breton culture and the past and the folklore presented to tourists is received negatively by young people, who fear that such stereotypical presentation of Brittany may be regarded as harmful for their activity. At the same time, when they try to define what the Breton culture means for them, they invoke associations from the sphere of folklore:

**K21F(B):** [...] by definition, it would be costumes, customs, traditional houses and so on. But that was before, now it's already a little outdated. Now, when we go to a festival and see people dressed in traditional costumes, we think that young people in Brittany don't dress like that. This refers to the earlier culture. But now, I don't know. [...] I think when you're inside, it's hard to have a comprehensive picture of what this culture is.

The folklorist image of the Breton culture, solidified by the performances of *bagadoù* and Celtic circles, makes it possible to define the Breton culture in a simple and clear way – as a culture that has rich music and dance traditions that should be preserved and presented in the form of a spectacle about the past. However, the young woman quoted above confirms, young people have difficulty defining what the Breton culture currently is. This is exactly why individuals linked to Celtic circles and *bagadoù* believe that the Breton folklorist culture should be promoted

to prove that it exists and that the Bretons have different roots and traditions than the French. One Celtic circle activist admits:

**S22F(B):** But by this [recreation of Breton folklore dances], even if we are not ossified in traditions, this allows the Breton culture to be at least a little visible. I think it's a lot when culture is conveyed in this way. This also makes it possible to use the Breton culture even without being part of it. And to experience it.

It is interesting that the young woman says that folklore makes it possible to “use the Breton culture without being part of it.” The world of Breton activists is divided quite clearly into two camps: one wants Brittany to obtain a political status and Breton to be guaranteed language rights and engages in activities to this end, while the other deals with folklore, traditional music and dances, without engaging in political issues. For them, the Breton identity is a regional, not ethnic identity, whereas folklore enables them to find a place in the local world and pursue a hobby that offers the possibility of “saving a fading world from oblivion.” Individuals involved in folklore activities are very unlikely to simultaneously campaign in favour of political issues. One of the people I interviewed, who has run a Celtic circle for some time, argues that these days it is more important for the Breton traditions, especially costumes and dances, to survive so that future generations may get to know them, than to save the Breton language, which in his opinion is doomed to become extinct. Similar sceptical comments on the issue of Breton were made by S., quoted earlier. A different young woman who has been linked to a Celtic circle all her life (through her parents, who run it), was a student of the Diwan school and now teaches Breton in a bilingual school relates that she met with open aversion on the part of members of her circle when she suggested the introduction of basic Breton into classes.

However, young people do not associate Breton music and dances only with traditions and the past. Music is one of the most important aspects of the culture of today's Brittany. Numerous bands are being formed, the music industry is blooming, and Brittany is famous for the largest European music festivals such as *Vieilles Charrues* in Carhaix and *Festival Interceltique* in Lorient, which attract an audience of up to several hundred thousand people. In this market, there is room for both music based on modern arrangements of traditional musical motifs and modern songs in Breton. Avant-garde artists who play small concerts and musicians accompanying during *festoù-nnoz* are also quite successful (cf. Defrance, 2004). There are also artists who win nationwide recognition by singing in Breton, such as Nolwenn Leroy, who has come under heavy criticism from young people for having poor pronunciation and focusing on commercial aspects yet has contributed to the popularization of the Breton language.<sup>75</sup> Breton music is what young people regard as the most important aspect of their culture and their most

---

75 Teachers of Breton for adults said that after the success of her album *Bretonne*, they noticed a distinct rise in the number of people wanting to learn Breton.

frequently pursued cultural practice. This is why they get annoyed when Breton music is discussed in terms of folklore. One secondary school student says:

**Y17M(B):** There is this term that is used by many people who say that Breton music is folkloristic. But I don't think it's folkloristic. Because folkloristic is what you say, for example, "Did you see that there was a lot of Breton music at the festival?" But here [in the Diwan school], there is as much Breton music throughout the year as during festivals. Because we don't want to show once a year that we speak Breton or play music. For me, the term "folkloristic" is not used correctly. [...] When I hear "folkloristic," it's like putting something in a cage for people to watch it and say, "oh, it's nice, interesting, beautiful." Of course, we have folklore elements in our schools – there are costumes that were once worn and now you put them on special occasions, but this is art.

The speaker intuitively differentiates between the folkloristic aspects that merely play the functions of a spectacle and the manifestations of the vitality of a culture, its permanent presence. He understands folklore as an "art" and music is one of the cultural practices of the daily lives of school students. Many young people admit that they find these two aspects important in the Breton culture.

**Q20M(B):** [...] the Breton language and the Breton music. [...] the culture changes, and folklore remains the same. The Breton culture means its spirit. There's is traditional music, but above all [there is] the spirit. Maybe it's a simplification to say so, but we in Brittany have always celebrated a lot and we still do so. [...] This is a way of living, the spirit of joy, despite the history of Brittany, which was sometimes difficult. [...] I think that the Breton culture makes this region alive. For example, the Transmusical Festival in Rennes has nothing to do with the Breton culture, but I am convinced that this is in the Breton spirit. Just like there is Breton music, which is made in Brittany by people that want to enliven it. Here in Brittany, there is something to do every weekend. And that's the Breton culture, something is always happening.

In the opinion of this young man, "the spirit of the Breton culture" is connected with the pursuit of music as well as festivities and collective participation in artistic events. It may even manifest itself in efforts to preserve traditions and folklore as well as the organization of festivals, even if they have nothing to do with the stereotypically understood Breton identity. The activist believes that the quintessence of the Breton culture is expressed in the organization of music festivals and participation in such events. Other young people add that this "spirit" likewise expresses itself through self-organization, activism and the promotion of the Breton culture. In the opinion of a young activist, this is specifically how the Breton culture is made more modern:

**K21F(B):** The Breton culture is now expressed in a modern way, for example in people's dynamism. Initially, there were many people who organized various things: humanitarian campaigns, travel and so on. It was this state of mind,

openness to different things, people who become involved in various associations. We can see this state of mind in many people from the Diwan school. For me, this alone is modern, this feeling of being included in everything that is happening around us. Being modern also means becoming involved in various projects.

Elsewhere I have I described the phenomenon of the gatherings of the Bretons as connected with their community and parish life, their self-help and their functioning vis-à-vis the state culture (Dołowy-Rybińska, 2011: 123–131). However, it is worth stressing that young people who are involved in efforts to promote and support Brittany feel strongly that they are part of a larger and robust institution, a movement in which they can express their needs and put their ideas into action, including because Breton culture offers its participants numerous collective cultural practices, through which they can develop stronger ties and a stronger sense of involvement in a common cause. One secondary school student describes culture as something that expresses itself through interpersonal relations:

**B17F(B):** To me, Breton culture means above all relations between people, it means what happens between people who meet... the relations between people, in this atmosphere...

In Brittany, almost all gatherings, both local and community meetings and those organized by associations or institutions, are accompanied by night dance festivals called *festoù-noz* (singular *fest-noz*). They can take on the form of dances in well-lit rooms attended by people who know one another and belong to the same territorial community, but they can be also linked to major music festivals. People come to *festoù-noz* to dance, talk to their friends and other people, drink beer and collectively participate in a lifestyle that can be called “Breton.” And that is exactly the primary yet not overtly defined goal of these night festivals – to live the Breton lifestyle and to keep the Breton culture alive (cf. Dołowy-Rybińska, 2013a). The proceeds from *festoù-noz* are usually used for purposes related to the Breton culture. Most dancers are regulars, while others attend *festoù-noz* only when they are organized to support “a just cause.” Some see dancing Breton chain dances with their little fingers intertwined as an important practice in their lives, while others do so to demonstrate their belonging to the Breton culture. One Breton activist (who is not alone in her views) sees participation in *festoù-noz* as a symbol of what sets Breton culture apart from French culture:

**A25F(B):** Here in Brittany, we have two cultures, one alongside the other. For example, the atmosphere of discos – I would not call it Breton. For us, the equivalent role is played by *festoù-noz*, despite the fact they end at 1 am, not at 5 am. Discos are not our culture.

Contrary to this differentiation, *festoù-noz* are not folkloristic in their nature, despite having their roots in the group dances danced in Breton communities on the occasion of the harvest (Jigourel, 2009). After the First World War, traditional forms of community life and related cultural practices were supplanted by dances

and urban customs connected with the dominant culture. In the early 1950s, Breton dances as symbols of the traditional culture were recreated, reconstructed and propagated as part of the gradual rehabilitation of Breton culture.<sup>76</sup> Breton dances began to function as an invented tradition – Breton culture activists maintained that dancing these dances would restore the continuity of the Breton culture and its severed links to the past (Hobsbawm, 1983). Such activities resulted in a booming popularity of Celtic circles and became part of the folkloristic heritage of the region. In 1970s, the Breton movement’s activists simultaneously took over the idea of *festoù-noz* as rural celebrations (and by the same token as celebrations of the “authentic” Breton life), which fit in very well with the public mood in that period and the search for connections with the traditional Breton culture. “Wild” *festoù-noz*, organized on beaches, in barns or on fields and accompanied by music concerts, emotional political discussions and copious amounts of alcohol, set the stage for the movement for the revival of Brittany and became its symbol (cf. McDonald, 1989) as well as a “school of being proud to be Breton” (Simon, 1999: 144). Steps taken in the 1970s triggered a chain reaction: from the awakening of Bretons’ awareness, through the improvement of the region’s economic situation, to cultural contestation (Favereau, 2005). The period witnessed the blooming of ideas related to Brittany’s cultural identity, a certain cultural revolution in which the most important role was played by musicians and the ubiquitous *festoù-noz*. After that period, night festivals no longer played such a significant role, but they nonetheless remained symbols and manifestations of the Breton identity and a cultural practice that was kept alive. One Diwan school student opined:

**F18M(B):** I’d very much like to [live the Breton culture in the future]. Otherwise everything I’ve learned here, all my studies in Breton, would be for nothing. I guess the easiest thing for me will be to simply play at *festoù-noz*. [...] I want to play at *festoù-noz*, because it’s something like a big family, the same people are always in the same places.

Almost all of the people I interviewed declared that they attended *festoù-noz* whenever they had an opportunity to do so. Despite interpreting their participation in the festivals as a Breton cultural activity, they did not feel that this practice was incongruous with their daily lives. That is because the festivals are consistent with the preferences of today’s young people. Here is how one student describes this phenomenon:

**O24F(B):** I think it fits in very well with this era. There was this risk that everything would turn into some sort of folklore, something ossified, exotic, taken from a different era and so on. And that’s not the case here. That’s not the case at the level of

---

76 The collaboration of the Breton movement’s pro-Breton, nationalistically-oriented faction with the occupying forces during the Second World War brought disgrace on the Breton culture and led to its marginalization.

music: there are plenty of bands that play Breton music, do very novel things. But this is a similar situation: people talk about it, lament that it's no longer possible to dance to this [music]... And it's true that you sometimes can't dance to the music of these bands, but that's not the point.

Breton music has evolved, thus expressing the needs of successive generations, and that is why it has been kept alive as a cultural practice. The young Breton woman is therefore annoyed by the discussions that have been held in recent years on whether the form of *festoù-noz* should be allowed to change. The festivals feature the performance of traditional Breton dances that require specific rhythms, which gives rise to the fears that a change in accompaniment would cause Breton dances to be replaced with modern dances, which in turn would strip *festoù-noz* of their Breton character. Some of the bands that perform at *festoù-noz* already play non-dance music, which has come under heavy criticism from various groups but also earned the support of many people, especially among the young. The individuals I interviewed often told me about feeling torn between the practices in which they would like to participate and the sense that they should preserve the distinctive characteristics of the Breton culture. However, not all of them see cultural change as something negative. For example, one secondary school student, who also plays in a *bagad*, observes:

**T16M(B):** [...] it's also a certain sign of openness. Because we didn't invent these modern things. We look for modern things among what has been invented in France, England and the United States. And we adapt them to our music and it seems to me that this is a sign of openness, of the fact that we are modernizing.

Adapting external motifs to incorporate them into the traditional Breton music is not necessarily seen as harmful to the Breton culture. On the contrary, this could demonstrate its openness and adaptation to the modern era. For that matter, such openness seems obvious to young people: how can they isolate themselves from new content if they have Facebook friends all over the world, go to festivals of African films and eat Asian cuisine? However, this approach is foreign to many "guardians of tradition," activists who are often responsible for important events and festivals representative of Breton culture. Much to the disappointment of young people, they attempt to prevent changes in the Breton culture. A young activist says bitterly:

**N23F(B):** [...] Breton culture is now very folkloristic. And I think it's getting a bit artificial. [...] the problem is, if a culture doesn't modernize, then I think it dies. At least that's the danger. If a culture remains something for the old, it will be alive only among the old. It's also necessary to interest young people.

In the opinion of this young woman, the folklorization of the Breton culture does not mean separating its components from their meaning, embedded in a specific cultural context (for example, music served the purpose of improving the effectiveness of work and strengthening bonds in a community). If today's people

live different lives than their ancestors, their cultural practices had to change as well. Folklorizing a culture therefore means that those responsible for the presentation of the Breton culture appear to overlook the fact that certain traditions have changed their forms yet have also been kept alive as practices. In the young woman's opinion, presenting folklore performances to the public therefore prevents active participation in the Breton culture. Meanwhile, young people who are actively involved in the Breton culture perceive it as modern. Nevertheless, they realize that there is considerable discord between how they perceive their own culture and its image presented to the external world. Here is how one Diwan school student explains this problem:

**P18M(B):** I don't think Breton culture is very conservative or traditional, despite what people often think. Yes, I think it's modern and it has evolved quickly over time. [But] people still see it as rural, so the Breton culture is not quite sure where it should be placed. I get the impression that there is still this room for hesitation between something too traditional, which would allow us to preserve our roots, and the people who would like to make this culture more modern... I don't think we know for sure what we would like to or should do – make it modern or keep it traditional.

This student's dilemma is therefore connected with a sense that the less clear the cultural boundaries are, the more firmly the ethnic boundaries should be drawn. However, different groups understand efforts to reinforce these boundaries differently. Some see them through the prism of a stronger emphasis on the traditional culture, linked to the period when cultural differences were evident. Others link the possibility of the survival of the culture to the pursuit of identity politics. Young activists can sense this discrepancy quite strongly. In their opinion, the Breton culture cannot develop fully, because it is "not sure where it should be placed." One secondary school student talks about this sense of being torn between the folkloristic image of the Breton culture and its modern forms:

**F18M(B):** But we're not people from these stereotypes. We don't all wear traditional costumes with caps and we don't dance all day. So the Breton culture is modernizing, moving forward, following the Breton movement, while keeping its roots.

**NDR:** *What does that mean?*

**F18M(B):** Roots... traditions, some Breton holidays that have been preserved... Aside from that, there are performances and competition of *bagad* bands and such things. And the costumes have been the same for many years.

This student says that the picture of the Bretons popularized in the media is incongruous with what they are like. In an attempt to emphasize that the modernization of the present-day Breton culture does not simultaneously mean its detachment from its roots, he nonetheless cites examples of activities that are stereotypically associated in collective awareness with Brittany, thus labelling it as folkloristic. Sensing the incongruity of these categories, young people become even more annoyed by the dominance of this folkloristic image of Brittany. They perceive

the sense of being torn between tradition and modernity as discord between the folklorized forms of the Breton culture and the practices of their daily lives. One secondary school student says:

**DD16F(B):** I think this was earlier mainly a tradition, so when people talk about Brittany outside the region, they immediately think of images of the Bigouden region, the seaside and people making crêpes. But that's not what immediately springs to my mind. For example, I find the Breton costumes outdated. Such things are now only used for shows. Today, something completely different is being created and to me this is exactly what the Breton culture means... of course, the past and traditions are important, but culture means the things that are created every day. For a culture to last, you need to create, not only stick to traditions...

She observes that too many discussions about the Breton culture understood as folklore ignore the aspects that are "created every day" and prove the vitality and topicality of this culture. This, in turn, reduces the momentum of the activities that promote the Breton culture and leads to their perception as needless, because they disrupt the picture of their culture that has already been internalized by the community. One Breton activist opines:

**Z25M(B):** I fear that if someone says, "Breton culture," people visualize dressed-up people playing bagpipes or eating crêpes with salted butter. This is so limited, so simplified that it does bother me a bit. Because when I talk about Breton culture, I see a much broader range. It can include very modern things, modern music, the whole community. But I fear most people see Breton culture as something traditional, for sale...

The combination of the words "traditional" and "for sale" is likewise characteristic of the Breton culture, because it is promoted specifically through folklorized forms. Interestingly, young people believe that these forms include no longer only the groups that present forms derived from the Breton folk culture in spectacular ways but also other "symbols" of the Breton culture related to the cultural and ethnic revival of the 1970s – Alan Stivell and the band Tri Yann. One student of Breton argues that repetitive references to these groups and their creations as products of "the modern Breton culture" exclude its currently emerging forms:

**R21M(B):** I think that all these events on posters are folklore, not culture. But that's how they are shown, people are pleased, because they hear bagpipes and see how people dance and wear caps. But to me that's not what the Breton culture means, not even a little bit. Because there are so many things that are being created, not just Tri Yann or whatnot. There are some good bands, there's everything we want, but no, they still play bands from 40 years ago, which are a bit outdated. They don't change their repertoire, they continually play the same things, although interesting things are now being created in Brittany.

In the opinion of some people, the modernity of the Breton culture, demonstrated by a multitude of forms and genres that correspond with global musical trends,



means its ability to become part of the world that derives profits from music and festivals. This is because it is connected with “modern” thinking about culture:

**Q20M(B):** [...] it’s definitely modern, with all these largest festivals in France. They may be commercial, but this commercial aspect of the Breton culture proves that it’s modern, that it has managed to fit in with other things.

Breton culture is currently being promoted in many different ways. It is also becoming fashionable, which is demonstrated by the emergence of numerous brands that make use of Breton symbols and adapt them creatively as well as the continued presence of these brands in the market. On the one hand, young people sometimes argue that this activity is “for sale” and does not reflect attachment to the culture that is close to them. On the other, commercialization of symbols linked to Brittany could bring benefits to the region and consequently also to Breton culture. Here is how one young Breton woman describes this:

**A25F(B):** We can see more and more different shops with clothes with the word “Breizh,” but there’s nothing behind it. But that’s nothing bad; the more, the better. It makes the culture more visible, but the word “Breizh” is only a display.

When asked about manifestations of the modern character of the Breton culture, young people point to the aspects related to new media and technologies, which means their everyday practices. One characteristic comment was made by a secondary school student who, just like many of his peers, points to the possibility of using new media in Breton as proof of the modernization of the Breton culture:

**G16M(B):** [...] but there’s also a growing number of modern newspapers that cover current topics and debates and discussions. There’s also television [...]. And even if it’s not modern, it’s becoming modern, things are changing very rapidly. One must not believe that the Bretons will remain a rural and traditional culture, because it keeps developing and moving in a completely different direction.

He stresses another important aspect of the Breton culture that should make people see it from a new perspective. The changes that have taken place within this culture pertain not only to its forms of expression it but also to its demographic and geographic structure. Breton culture is slowly becoming a culture of young people (although it continues to be associated with the oldest, Breton-speaking inhabitants of Brittany) and city dwellers (although it is still symbolized by small villages in Lower Brittany). It is becoming more urban, centred in big cities, especially Rennes, which was historically not part of the Breton-speaking regions but is now the seat of many Breton local government and political organizations. In the capital of Brittany, there are also many students who had a chance to meet with the Breton language at school and are now trying to promote their own Breton culture. Young activists fear that linking the Breton culture to rural areas and Lower Brittany may cause it to cease to exist in the eyes of the outside world when the inevitable change of the language occurs. One student points to this aspect:

**CC20M(B):** One thing is certain: at some point, the old will be gone, they will die. For now, they're still more vital than the young, but at some point, they will perish. But young people will still live this culture, because they are young, because they want to develop it, because they have ideas, because they like it more and more, regardless of whether they are from Brittany or from other places. For me, the new Breton culture [...] means the culture that will be in the future. But somewhat nostalgically, where is this connection, what can you do to recreate a link in a chain that has been broken? As for this Breton culture that will be created, where will it have its legitimization to combine the Breton culture and the Breton language?

Young people attempt to find an answer to this question, as do their peers from other minority groups. They believe that the preservation of the image of their culture as folkloristic and rooted in traditions is harmful, because it puts off those who are ethnically undecided. They want to see the Breton culture as modern, they want it to change, but they also fear that it may become detached from its roots, which will cause it to lose what sets it apart from the dominant culture.

## Welsh culture – between everyday practices and festivities

Unlike the regions inhabited by the other minorities discussed in this book, Wales has a defined status and borders, as well as its own myths and a recorded history, which can be invoked when invented traditions or national holidays are established. This fact plays quite a significant role in debates about the Welsh people's cultural and ethnic distinctiveness, be they political debates about Wales' potential independence or the sociocultural discussions about the revival of the language and the functioning of institutions that support the preservation of Wales' distinctiveness. When describing Wales' separateness from England, young people cite the most characteristic determinants of culture, such as history, tradition, myths and symbols (Smith, 1986). Here is how one student describes what being Welsh means for him:

**A20M(W):** [...] It's a feeling of belonging to where you are from. It's a feeling of pride in your country, your family, your old tradition knowing that Welsh is the oldest spoken language in Europe. One of the oldest at least. It's important that our history dating to 3rd or 4th century is known, and that the bridge between the past and the present is priceless to me. [...] We've got our legends we identify with and which make us proud of where we are from.

The pride that this young man takes in speaking "one of the oldest spoken languages in Europe" manifests itself in the *eisteddfod* competitions, analysed earlier in this book. In the opinion of young people, the festivals are important, but they also present the Welsh culture as folkloristic. Young people from families linked to the Welsh language and culture grew up participating in these events. However, their peers who have not participated in the festivals since childhood view the message of *eisteddfodau* as anachronistic. Although new competitions

are now being introduced into the permanent program of the festivals, the image of the inhabitants of Wales seen by the outside world (not only the non-Welsh but also the non-Welsh-speaking world) is particularly that of people who cultivate druidic traditions and dance clog dances. Young people see this picture of their community as harmful. When asked if she considers *eisteddfodau* to be important for young people in Wales, one Welsh activist replies hesitantly:

**E25F(W):** Umm.... Yes, yes, I suppose they are because it does give them that sense that they are doing something in Welsh and it's a part of their culture and that kind of thing. But it's a difficult one because you don't want the Welsh language just to be something that is connected or seen as just involved with the old traditions that are just carried on.

Other people I interviewed expressed similar opinions. They argue that the image of Wales is very strongly folklorized, which may be harmful to the Welsh culture and efforts to encourage young people to actively participate in this culture and use the Welsh language. It is worth pausing briefly to analyse why young people feel so strongly about how their culture is perceived by outsiders. Above all, the development of the Welsh language appears quite robust, especially when compared against other minority languages, and it is used actively in many institutions and business organizations. Wales has its own Welsh-language television channel and some Welsh films are internationally successful.<sup>77</sup> Welsh is also present in the new media and in the public sphere. At the same time, young people often hear opinions that their culture is old, even dead. One student from Wales says that she constantly encounters claims that Welsh culture is outdated:

**M20F(W):** It doesn't make me nervous, I just tell them that it's not history. Yes, it is a part of history, but there's still a lot of life. It is not dead culture.

Young speakers of Welsh, especially those who had to learn the language or wanted to use it in everyday life yet realized that they had to constantly fight for this right, are not only aware of the situation of their culture but also active in the quasi-political sphere, which is where the most important discussions on the Welsh culture, nation and language are currently playing out. The broader the possibilities of using the Welsh language in everyday life, the more emotionally young people react to what they believe is an unfair image of Wales as a land of traditional culture civilized by Britain. The depiction of Welsh culture as outdated is connected with the fact that those presented as users of Welsh are usually elderly people, who

---

<sup>77</sup> Numerous acclaimed films produced since the 1990s (cf. Woodward, 2006; 2012; Price, 2013) include at least two that have won international recognition: the film *Hedd Wyn*, which was nominated for an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film in 1993, and Gruff Rhys's *Separado!*, which won many awards. Welsh animations are likewise popular (Robins & Webster, 2000).

typically have occupations characteristic of farmers. Here is how one secondary school student explains this:

**P16F(W):** Welsh speakers, they are disappearing. People say, “Oh, my mum or grandma used to speak Welsh.” So I think this image is just because the elderly people speak Welsh it seems to be an old thing. But... it is also because of tourism. They show tourists that Wales is old-fashioned. Like on TV, the advertisements show costumes, cottages, charming fireplaces, that kind of stuff. But you know, not everyone in Wales looks like that. I think that the media doesn’t really help.

In her opinion, the stereotypical image of Wales is based on three pillars: the first is defined by the age of those who speak Welsh, the second is created by the tourism industry, which pictures Wales as a world of ossified traditions, and the third is formed by the media, which perpetuate the folkloristic image. Meanwhile, young people are very strongly aware of the fact that the traditional world of Welsh linguistic and religious communities, the one in which their grandmothers and grandfathers were raised, will perish with them. The community life, which previously determined group membership, is increasingly supplanted by imagined symbols of national identity, manifested during the celebrations of the feast day of Saint David, the patron saint of Wales. Such festivities quickly turned from modest ceremonies celebrated by smaller communities into grand street parades that showcase national and popular symbols of the Welsh identity (cf. Enough-Jackson, 2013). Most young activists that I interviewed said that Wales should regain its independence one day. When asked if such a political change might actually alter anything, one student of Welsh replied:

**C21M(W):** [...] when Wales becomes independent, for example, maybe people in Wales will develop a new identity. An institutional identity, civic identity rather than a cultural identity. I think that the Welsh state would change the perception of the language. I also believe that with Welsh independence we would be able to control our things, roads, taxation, housing [...] and it would change our situation.

His peer from North Wales, below, adds that it is the absence of independence that makes the Welsh identity difficult. Wales is not politically independent and therefore not recognized as a separate state, so considering the Welsh culture in isolation from the British culture proves problematic. Some young people doubt if modern-day Welsh culture even exists. This secondary school student says:

**Y16F(W):** [...] we’ve lost most of our celebrations, we’ve lost our church holidays, the folk dances are no longer as they used to be. I don’t know, I think now it is rugby more than anything. It is kind of a stereotypical way of perceiving Wales, with leeks, daffodils, and sheep. And that we are all farmers. Which might sometimes be true, but not always. I don’t think we have our culture anymore.

This young woman believes that Wales is now more famous for its national sport than for the customs that draw people together. She also fears that the traditional elements of the Welsh culture may become blurred in the popular culture, which

is typical of the English or global culture, rather than Welsh culture. Despite being in a better situation than their peers from other minorities, therefore, young Welshmen and Welshwomen turn out to face dilemmas of the same nature: where is the boundary between what is Welsh and what is national/global, and what might be done to help their culture modernize without losing its distinctive characteristics? Nevertheless, they have no doubt that a folkloristic image may harm, rather than help their culture. One university student says:

**B20M(W):** I think my image of Welsh culture is more traditional, people in traditional clothes, dancing, daffodils, maybe a leek somewhere... just all this old stuff, the symbols of Welshness. [...] It's a very old view. Cause you don't get something like that in modern Wales. So maybe one of the problems is the lost connection with the younger generation. [...] So it is time to create a new identity, and a new image of Wales more appealing to young people.

Wales's transition from the traditional Welsh world to the modern culture was very rapid; this process culminated in the Second World War together with the emergence of a strong national discourse related to the need to protect national sovereignty. Consequently, young people are not quite sure how to be Welsh. Nevertheless, they are convinced that Welsh culture, though promoted as folkloristic in the outside world, may be regarded as modern. Unable to separate the aspects of their lives that are Welsh from the ones that belong to British culture, they stress in particular that nowadays they can do anything in Welsh, use it in the new media and at work. When asked if he sees Welsh culture as modern, one university student replies:

**A20M(W):** There is technology, we've got Facebook in Welsh. There is a strong Welsh speaking input, strong Welsh speaking Facebook community. So Welsh culture is developing. It's not the most modern culture, there are so many ancient elements, but just because there are ancient elements through the culture, it doesn't make it unmodern. It's just, you know, able to keep its tradition plus to renew.

This young man expressed an idea that is important to many young people. When I was analysing the role of the *eisteddfod* festivals in today's Wales, I paid attention not only to the fact that they are rooted in tradition, which makes young people aware of their cultural distinctiveness, but also to their community-forming role. A similar role is played by celebrations related, for example, to St. David's Day. Preserving connections with the past, even ensuring the visibility of Welsh symbols, is important, because this helps people create an imagined community and stress their "banal" everyday nationalism (Billig, 1995). Young people do not want to detach themselves from their traditions and stop organizing *eisteddfod* festivals or other Welsh festivities. However, they would prefer to have greater visibility of a different aspect of their Welsh identity, namely the one linked to everyday life in Welsh, used for example in modern technologies.

The Welsh language is afforded protection and its use in various spheres is regulated by legislation and promoted. Such regulations nonetheless do not stop young

people from feeling that it is impossible to live their lives fully in this language as a result of its inferior position compared with English and the limited sphere in which it can function. All inhabitants of Wales, whether they want this or not, must live in English-speaking culture. For this reason, it is clear from their statements that young people feel that by devoting their time to things that are not directly related to Wales or the Welsh culture (through Welsh institutions and the language) or are only symbolically related (references to Welsh traditions, history and myths), they participate in the national culture, rather than Welsh culture. One student concluded:

**N22F(W):** In some ways, it is easy to be Welsh, but it depends on context. If you step outside the Welsh community and study sociology, philosophy or sciences, it would be hard to study it and keep your Welsh identity and feel that you are doing something specific just for Welshness. The Welsh newspapers they are not like newspapers. They are like cultural newspapers. They speak only about cultural news. I remember, it was like a surprise, one week there were a lot of suicides so all the main headlines on the front pages [in English] were only about it. But in the Welsh newspaper, the news was like “No places to park at Eisteddfod,” on the front page! So it is like, in the Welsh language you can only write about the Welsh culture and community.

This comment shows a high degree of awareness of not only the status of the Welsh culture as a minority culture but also the projection of its image (by people outside and inside the group) in a way that highlights this minority status, understood as “incompleteness,” even “insufficiency.” This image keeps the Welsh culture locked in a world disconnected from everyday problems and conveys the message that holiday celebrations are important in the Welsh culture, because they characterize it, whereas the real life lies on the side of the British culture. Consequently, the image of Welsh culture as limited to selected spheres of life is very deeply rooted in young people’s awareness, irrespective of how “Welsh” (here in the context of the Welsh language) their lives are. Such an image was presented by the young woman studying law in Welsh at university, as well as by the following activist who organizes political campaigns. When asked to list the associations that come to her mind when she hears the phrase “Welsh culture,” she replies with a laugh:

**E25F(W):** Oh gosh! [laugh] You do think of *Eisteddfod* and traditional dancing... it’s a normal association when you think of something typically Welsh... But, not, it has changed a lot. Our culture is actually quite modern. You have many writers, and there are new films... yes, the Welsh culture has changed quite a lot. And there are a lot of subcultures, you have a lot of people working on fanzines and online websites, a lot to do with different aspects of culture. So, there is probably a mix, you still got very traditional, and then you’ve got very modern things [...]. Yes, there is a mix of cultures between the old and the modern.

This young activist believes that it is necessary to change this image of the Welsh culture, which is linked to festive celebrations and therefore folklorizes the

traditional culture, and this change should involve promoting the conviction that the Welsh culture may function, and currently functions, in all spheres of life and the practices of young people and reinforcing this belief in the collective awareness. Welsh culture is helped by the official status of the Welsh language (which all young people see as a tool that adapts best to “modernity”) and the support it receives. However, the modern Welsh culture is expressed in a language that is not known by many people who identify with Wales and is broadly used by older generations, which is why it remains a niche culture addressed to a narrow group of the young people who know Welsh. Consequently, it remains closed and obscure to people outside the group of “chosen ones.” Its only active participants are therefore those who were born in this culture, joined it through their friends or have otherwise taken an interest in it. When pondering what might be done to attract young people to the Welsh culture, one student opines:

**G19F(W):** So I think if you have more things like the gig I went to last night, which was all Welsh-medium and with really good music. I think a lot of people grew up with Welsh music in the background. Whereas if you show them something Welsh that is so modern, so culture enriching, and presented in an entirely different way to Eisteddfod, I think that’s what is important. You know, a lot of Welsh literature now is going on, and it is too modern, almost. Everything is a bit rude, a bit vulgar, and not everybody wants to read literature like that. I am not saying it’s bad literature, it’s just not to everybody’s taste. So I think you need to promote more things for young people, they must be good things, good films, good programs. They may be controversial, but they must be in Welsh.

In the opinion of this young woman, Welsh culture would stand a chance of attracting more people if it did not restrict itself to presenting the same topics. Welsh culture should be universal and offer something interesting to all people, regardless of their age, education and interests. However, this development of the Welsh culture is limited by its minority status. There are so few recipients of this culture that this affects the form and substance of cultural activities. One Welsh musician and activist gets annoyed by this degradation of the Welsh culture:

**W18M(W):** I don’t think there are enough writers who would write Welsh novels and when they do they don’t just write, but they think, what would Welsh speakers like to read. And it is not good. Because they think they cannot allow themselves to use modern forms cause there would be no recipients. I think if Welsh culture is about to become modern, it must be treated in the same way as English culture. If you’re gonna write a song, write a song, and not something based on an image of what the Welsh people want. Otherwise, you get stuck in the same routine.

Reducing the Welsh culture to topics that are regarded as Welsh and therefore “can be sold” entails yet another consequence: it perpetuates the stereotypical image of this culture and limits even further the group of the potential recipients of other cultural messages. However, young people in a sense understand the conservatism of this culture (although they do not approve of it). They note that it is motivated

by the fear that the Welsh culture may become watered down under the influence of the global culture. Here is how one activist explains this:

**N22F(W):** I can understand why Welsh culture has this conservatism to it, because they're trying to defend against globalization, so I can understand that's the reaction to it.

No one is currently calling into question the need for the Welsh culture to function in all possible spheres of life and everyday practices of young people, who want to live according to the models of the dominant culture yet also stay in the sphere of influence of the minority culture. However, this minority culture is in a sense becoming similar to the dominant culture, which is why many people do not want it to lose its values in the course of modernization. In the opinion of one of the people I interviewed, these values are connected with the local aspect of the minority culture, which can be contrasted against the global culture:

**K25M(W):** [...] yes, it should definitely be more modern. But you should keep your old values and not throw the baby out with the bath water, throw out something valuable and replace them with some second-hand things. So you should kind of incorporate your traditional values into modern things, fine. [...] There are lots of different ways you can do it. But I think the problem is how to make it more appealing to young people; also a lot of young people think it's irrelevant to modern life. What's important is that people could live a modern life but through Welsh. You can eat soup from the supermarket, but you should be able to do it in Welsh.

This young man fears that a culture that invokes the Welsh traditions and the Welsh past (the period when its ethnic boundaries were so obvious that no one needed to manifest their distinctiveness) could appear unattractive to the young. He therefore argues that the Welsh culture should not be limited to references to the past. Again, the rescue comes in the form of the Welsh language ("eating soup in Welsh"), which makes it possible to transfer practices taken from the global culture (buying soup in a can from the supermarket) into the Welsh culture. Similar opinions are expressed by a student who believes that the "prehistoric" aspect of the Welsh language fulfils important mythmaking functions, which bring into focus the need to preserve it, but it is simultaneously not the best incentive for those who did not learn the language at home. In order for such people to want to identify with the Welsh culture, the language must be present everywhere, especially in spheres that are attractive to young people.

**B20M(W):** I think one of the things is to make the Welsh language be seen as something cool. Because by the younger generation the Welsh language is viewed almost like a prehistoric language, the language of the Celts, the language of the oldest generation. It is not seen as exciting anymore. Because everything exciting is through English, all the films, all the music, it is all through English. It makes English the language of success, the language of the cool, the language of the popular. So I think we definitely need to concentrate on making the Welsh language



more visual and more appealing to the young community. Because that's the thing, I myself actually did not realize how active Welsh is until I went to a university and going to gigs, and stuff like that, you actually see how Welsh is actually used within the community.

This young man states that "everything exciting is through English," but he quickly switches to the conclusion that such things do exist in Welsh, though not many people find out about them. He did because he lived in a residence hall for Welsh-speaking students and joined a group of people interested in this topic, who found out from their older friends where they should go and what they should see. A student from a different university makes a similar point:

**T20F(W):** A lot is happening, there are gigs and stuff like that. But I suppose it is small culture, and modern Welsh culture is not known to people, really.

**NDR:** *Why not?*

**T20F(W):** I guess it is not well promoted. And people just don't really know about it, or they are not interested, I don't know.

In turn, another student involved in the Welsh political and cultural life is concerned that Welsh culture is only attractive to those who were raised in this culture or became involved in its conservation. Others, even those who try to get to know it better (attending an *eisteddfod* for a brief moment or a concert) will not find it interesting:

**O20M(W):** Welsh music is becoming now attractive and modern, linking pop music with Celtic music. But the only people who listen to this music are people who were engaged from the beginning. My father was a member of a Welsh band. So I was always raised in such sense of a community and in that music environment. Whereas when I show this music to an English-speaking person raised on English-American music, they will say it's boring. So I see this culture is modern and cool cause I was raised in it. But the challenge is to make other people aware of it and getting them involved. For someone who was not raised in it to understand it and like it, you know, takes time. If someone goes to *Eisteddfod* only once, he won't get it and won't say "Now I think it is cool."

Young people define the modernity of their own culture in various ways. As I wrote earlier, they associate it chiefly with the language, which successfully functions in the new media, and with music. For others, the modernity of their culture manifests itself in the very fact that they identify with it. A 20-year-old man says:

**R20M(W):** Yes, for me it is modern cause the majority of people who speak [Welsh] are young people.<sup>78</sup> So it is a very modern thing to speak Welsh. Other people here

---

78 Statistically, this is not actually true. This imagined notion is due to the rapid increase in the number of young people who have studied Welsh (to varying degrees) at school.

will probably tell you about the Welsh modern rock scene and stuff like that, but it is not really important to me. I see it as a modern thing because I am young, I speak it, and I am modern.

One secondary school student I interviewed was even surprised that people her age saw Welsh culture as serious and old-fashioned. For her, this culture not only remains the culture of her everyday life (as someone who comes from a Welsh-speaking family) but also gives her constant emotions in connection with her involvement in cultural activities:

**P16F(W):** I just think it's funny that so many people find it old-fashioned or serious. And I think it's so great and so funny. But then you see so many pictures and see how people present it. I think it is so stereotypical. But for me, I find it amusing, for me it is a culture of jokes, singing, but people present it as something serious. In my group – I am a member of *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* – we always try to show that it is not serious, it is not a school culture, it is not formal. We live it, and for us, it is very informal.

However, the girl admits that the perception of the Welsh culture by her friends is linked to how it is presented to people. Those in the know (“my group – I am a member of *Cymdeithas yr Iaith*”) can see a different face of this culture and experience it not only at home, at school or in contact with institutions but also in their social life and pastime activities. However, this sphere is not accessible to many people. It is nonetheless this niche aspect that activists see as the biggest value of their culture. They see it as attractive, because it differentiates them from the surrounding world. They are special. As one student says, Welsh culture allows them to break the rules imposed by the mainstream culture:

**U22M(W):** Often people don't realise [that the Welsh culture is modern] because they associate it with more traditional things. Ignoring the fact that most young people want to do it in their way, to break away all these ties and to cross borders. For many young people, Welsh culture is what lets them break these ties, break the rules, be independent, be individual.

## In search of ethnic boundaries in the transcultural world

Searching for and constructing ethnic boundaries (the boundaries of language communities, the boundaries of the communities with which young people identify) poses a major challenge facing young minority activists. It bears upon the dilemmas they face in connection with the fluidity of cultural references and the disappearance of clearly defined divisions between dominant and minority cultures. What is more, it even seems that young people's language and cultural practices demonstrate that these boundaries, if they are to exist, must be set arbitrarily by individuals and by their portrayal of the rightful place of the community with which they identify in the present-day world. Consequently, there are

many strategies for establishing boundaries: some lean towards political meanings and conscious self-determination on issues regarding the future of a specific group, others stress cultural distinctiveness rooted in history and tradition, still others are based on the structure of social networks and the assimilation of the resources that they generate. In today's world, both identifying with a minority culture and practicing it are conscious activities based on choices and reflections. Young people were raised in a world that could be called transcultural, a world with the free flow of information, meanings and values. Popular culture transcends social, religious and state boundaries, blurring to a certain extent ethnic, national and linguistic differences, which – in order to exist – must be constructed, even brought into sharp focus. At the same time, the uncertainty caused by the blurring of permanent points of reference and the possibility – even necessity – of assuming many different social identities may lead to the polarization of identity, the construction of clear ethnic boundaries and even rebellion (Appadurai, 2006). Ethnicity in the primordial sense becomes watered down, because representatives of minority groups do not differ in any obvious way from representatives of dominant cultures. Identity is not assigned to an individual, it is something that an individual constantly chooses. In turn, the necessity of constantly making identity-related decisions may result in radicalization, because the preservation of distinctiveness requires engagement in related activities. For this reason, globalization does not mean the disappearance of cultural diversity and researchers argue that it is exactly when the world's pursuit of uniformity is at its greatest that people conclude that “everyone has got ‘culture’” (Sahlins, 1999: 401). By searching for what sets them apart from others, for cultural distinctiveness, minorities preserve and express their separateness. Wolfgang Welsch wrote that transculturality does not mean uniformization and “[i]t is, rather, intrinsically linked with the production of diversity” (Welsch, 1999). In turn, diversity requires the constant creation and affirmation of boundaries, which are by no means obvious to the group as a whole or to the individuals who form it.

Studies carried out among young people who consciously identify with minority groups and engage in the promotion of their cultures and languages show that they find it very difficult to define their cultural affiliation and identify the elements of their lives that could be categorized as belonging to the minority culture and those that belong to the dominant culture. This difficulty grows together with the degree of fragmentation of the language community and the blurring of clear differences as a result of the modernization of the minority culture on the one hand and the absence of sufficient political recognition on the other. Consequently, setting ethnic boundaries is easier for the Catholic Upper Sorbs, who live in communities whose members are bound together not only by their language but also by their religion, than for the Bretons, who are raised in the official language of the state and find it hard to identify the ways in which their culture differs from French culture. It is easier for young inhabitants of Wales to separate Welsh culture from British culture, because they can refer to their legends and traditions as well as the existence of a political boundary that defines a specific area as Welsh (regardless

of the nationality of the people who inhabit it), than it is for the Kashubs to separate Kashubian culture from Polish culture. Most Kashubs were raised in the belief that what sets them apart from the Polish culture is above all folklore, which is incongruous with everyday life. Resistance to this attitude provided a basis for the emergence of a small national group whose members seek ethnic boundaries by reinterpreting history and demonstratively using the Kashubian language, which they themselves have often learned as a foreign language. However, the views held by Kashubian “nationalists” are unacceptable to most Kashubs, who identify with Polish culture. At the same time, the stronger this identification, the more difficult it is for them to define the Kashubian aspects of their lives. Young Bretons likewise experience similar difficulties in identifying what makes their lives Breton and naming those aspects. In this situation, what serves as the point of reference is a specific system of values and traditions, which are often passed down at school, not through community practices. Identification becomes a conscious creation, one that requires constant confirmation and redefinition.

Before the cultural and linguistic change that occurred in the 20th century, people drew their sense of security and stability from their belonging to a specific community, traditional culture and religion. In the modern world, however, life is a sequence of choices that people must make with no permanent support or certainty that the choices they make are right (Barker, 2003: 176). When the young people I interviewed reflected on their culture, they therefore often talked about tradition, searching for a point of reference there and by the same token also for a justification of their individual identity-related choices. Young people seek clear references, whereas “the world of traditional forms of socialization appears, from the perspective of modernity, to be an integrated world that could provide individuals with a permanent and certain horizon of action determined by the boundaries of the community” (Jacyno, 2004: 135). What matters to them, however, is not the past itself or participation in traditional customs but the possibility of invoking such customs to confirm their place in the new configuration of values and references. Many young people I interviewed admitted that belonging to a minority group and engaging in its promotion were linked to a conscious decision that might, but did not have to, be motivated by their origin and their desire to find their roots, which would justify these decisions and legitimize them in the eyes of the community. Consequently, drawing on traditions has become an identity strategy for them. In turn, traditions are subject to reflections – they represent a consciously adopted point of reference. As Małgorzata Jacyno (2004: 133) writes, “In these conditions, tradition is no longer a systemic ‘mechanism’ for recreating the past; instead, it becomes an individually constructed and selected context of the interpretation and reinterpretation of a participant’s current experience.” References to tradition no longer mean (only) confirming the existence of a certain set of standards and values upon which a specific community relies but also making use of commonly known narratives, images and symbols that refer to a specific culture to confirm its existence (Lubaś, 2008: 42). By the same token, this reaffirms people in their conviction that their choices make sense.

Young inhabitants of Wales treat *eisteddfod* festivals as an invented tradition that fulfils certain community-forming functions, but they do not treat the festivals as folkloristic festivities organized for local inhabitants and tourists. The young people I interviewed see *eisteddfodau* as a Welsh territory, separated in time and space, where they can live the Welsh life all day and speak Welsh, without wondering if it is appropriate to do so or if they will be understood. It is a kind of carnival time in which hierarchies become reversed: Welsh culture becomes the dominant culture and, for one week a year, outsiders must adjust to the rules governing the Welsh world. The boundaries of Welshness are determined by *eisteddfodau*: those who participate in the festivals are Welsh. The festivals not only confirm that Welsh culture exists but above all create links between today's inhabitants of Wales and their ancestors, for whom Welshness was something obvious and who cultivated those traditions in the past (Shils, 1971). However, none of the *eisteddfod* participants ask themselves whether recitation competitions were organized in the same way centuries ago, because the purpose is not thoughtless repetition but rather the identification of certain values that currently living people see as theirs in their awareness (Szacki, 2011: 137).

Similarly, young Bretons who participate in *festoù-noz*, both the local events and the major international music festivals, feel that they are doing something "typically Breton," because the tradition of dancing, which expresses the relations between members of a specific group, is seen by them as constitutive of their culture. Such practices continue to carry significance, despite the fact that the form of dances and their role in society have changed. However, this poses no identification problem. Tradition can, and even must, be modernized, because it only comprises what the current community sees as positive and recognizes as tradition (Szacki, 2011: 141–143). Consequently, if traditions are to be cultural practices of young people, they must recognize these traditions as their own. Of course, the world in which young people live requires forms of communications that differ from the ones that existed earlier. James Clifford (1988: 14) concluded that "Twentieth-century identities no longer presuppose continuous cultures or traditions. Everywhere individuals and groups improvise local performances from (re)collected pasts, drawing on foreign media, symbols, and languages." At the same time, the new forms of expression, consistent with the changing world, have made it possible for people to remain aware of their links to the past. One could therefore repeat after Talal Asad that "when one talks about tradition, one should be talking about, in a sense, a dimension of social life and not a stage of social development. In an important sense, tradition and modernity are not really two mutually exclusive states of a culture or society but different aspects of historicity" (in: Mahmood, 1996). Young people from minority cultures devote a lot of attention to the relationship between tradition and modernity, because the world of clear-cut divisions and boundaries is a thing of the past. Here is also where traditions are situated, serving as a point of reference for young people. At the same time, they live in a constantly changing modern world. That is why they find it so important

to constantly reaffirm and creatively make use of the traditions and history of their groups in the activities and practices that belong to the system of today's world.

However, this interpretation of tradition is not obvious to its "guardians." Unable to refer to some politically defined organism that might justify these ongoing changes inside a minority, or to the (physical and ethnic) boundaries specified by the community itself and its surroundings, minority cultures constantly grapple with the dilemma of the permissibility of changes within their own community, sometimes arriving at radical forms in their conservatism. Shils makes this point: "Traditionalism, which is a form of heightened sensitivity to the sacred, demands exclusiveness. [...] It is satisfied only if the traditionalist outlook permeates all spheres – political, economic, cultural, and religious – and unifies them in a common subordination to the sacred as it is received from the past" (Shils, 1958: 160). The fear that a minority identity will be lost if any of the components of the culture regarded as traditional changes nonetheless prevents this culture from being alive and turns it a museum of its own traditions. Traditionalism understood in this way, which solidifies cultural forms and substance "for reasons related to their alleged or real value" (Lubaś, 2008: 11) may not only lead to the abandonment of creativity in a culture but even prompt young people, who must choose and confirm their identity alone, to refuse to identify with a culture understood in this way.

Importantly, the interviewees from each group were critical of the widely promoted image of minority cultures as being traditional, locked in some unspecified space and time and represented by people who should behave in a specific way and practice customs regarded as characteristic of this group. Such aversion, particularly visible among the Upper Sorbs, is not related to negative attitudes to tradition as such, because its importance is stressed by almost all young people. However, they object to the folklorization of their cultures and their images, which follow from a reactive, traditionalist and even conservative approach to how a minority should function in today's world. It should be noted, however, that this image is so deeply entrenched in how young people imagine their own culture that they find it hard to free themselves from its influence.

The strength of the functioning of this vision of minority cultures is based on the popularity of folklorization, which, apart from "exoticism" (Said, 1978), was (and still is) a primary strategy used by Europe's dominant cultures to devalue "others." It serves to simplify the aesthetic and semantic meanings of a complex cultural entity, separate them and rearrange them anew to form a new whole. Initially, folklorization was only used by dominant cultures, which did so to reaffirm their superiority. It was later taken over by activists from fragmented or assimilated minority cultures who had no other possibility of defining their distinctiveness and started to use it as a primary – and gradually the only legitimate – way to express their distinctiveness. Minority institutions became guardians of the unchanging nature of the customs that demonstrated their distinctiveness (Kempny, 2004).

Folklorization as a cultural strategy refers to the 19th-century Romantic concept of traditional cultures as authentic cultures. Folklore is perceived as the expression of a simple, folk culture that did not modernize or create a high, elitist culture,

which would have demonstrated its development and social maturity (Lavoie, 1986: 71–72). In order to highlight the distinctiveness of minority cultures and their continuity, certain traditions and customs, played out in front of audiences on special occasions, were preserved and conserved. They came to be symbolized by folk costumes of varying degrees of “authenticity.” Everyday cultural practices, in turn, were separated from institutionalized activities that were expected to confirm belonging to a minority group, both in the group and outside of it. Gradually, this led to the perpetuation of the image of minority cultures as functioning in some abstract time and space.

Many children from European minority groups were raised to cultivate a folkloristic image and understanding of culture and of participation in culture. In their case, participation in the minority culture is often limited to after-school ethnic, cultural and language-learning activities. As they grow up, they distance themselves from such organization of minority life, because they no longer want to participate in such spectacles; such participation may even meet with aversion on the part of people in their everyday surroundings. As all other European teenagers, young people from all four minority groups studied here go to parties and discos, drink alcohol, watch television series and play computer games. Young people do not find participation in a minority culture important if it is in no way consistent with their lives, interests and tastes. This creates and expands the grey zone of ethnicity, those who are indifferent to minority issues and do not understand what identification with a minority culture should mean. This problem has been repeatedly signalled by young activists from all the minorities discussed in this book, and we have seen it many times in the interviews cited herein. Even the Upper Sorbs, who are raised in language and cultural communities based on ritual and religious practices, rebel against the reduction of ethnic activities to folklore. In addition, they fear that the perpetuation of this image will create greater distance between them and the Germans who surround them or even spark aversion from the latter. Young Kashubs see the folklorization of their culture as the reason why their peers are reluctant to identify with it. Young Bretons, in turn, are concerned that the French treat their culture as a tourist attraction and the commercial character of folkloristic festivals perpetuates the image of their culture as a relic of the past. Young inhabitants of Wales are annoyed by the fact that when Wales is discussed on British television, the only aspects that are shown are ones that perpetuate the image of their culture as peripheral. At the same time, young people realize that the folklorized image of their culture is not only spread by the national media but also preserved and even promoted by local activists, who want to bring into focus the aspects of their culture that differ undeniably from the dominant culture. This is why young representatives of minority cultures who consciously identify with these cultures and are actively involved in their promotion often choose a different identity strategy, namely one linked to the politicization of their cultures.

Here, the search for distinctive components of minority cultures turns into a creative activity. It makes use of the trend towards alternative, minority lifestyles as well as the rules of the political game: discourse on human rights and linguistic

rights (Bell, 1975: 169). Identity politics, closely related to globalization, is one of the ways of “reacting to a situation in which it becomes necessary to redefine the relations between the dominant culture in a given nation-state and the cultures of the spontaneously emerging minorities” (Kempny, 2004: 182).

Effective identity politics<sup>79</sup> requires not only modern thinking about identity-related issues but also measures and campaigns addressed to as many people (potentially) related to a specific minority as possible. A minority culture modernizes when the lifestyle of its representatives changes. At the same time, as Eriksen argues (2010: 195), “Contemporary ethnicity can be described as the process of making cultural differences comparable, and to that extent, it is a modern phenomenon.” Consequently, cultural differences are stressed by means of each of the strategies for highlighting the cultural distinctiveness of a specific minority group. In terms of the group’s new image, it becomes important which of its components or characteristics will be brought into focus or created as part of the adopted measures.

The showcasing of the cultural distinctiveness of minorities is usually reduced to emphasis placed at three levels (Posern-Zieliński, 1982: 89): high culture (references to major works created either currently or in the past as part of this culture); folklore and attempts to revive it (folklorization) so as to make it attractive not only to the group members but also to outsiders; and popular culture (celebrating, spending time together, eating). However, in order for a minority culture to avoid being pushed into the margin of the dominant culture and institutionalized in terms of the way it functions, it must be present in all spheres of everyday life. It must constantly adjust to everyday life and modernize. However, this modernization of minority cultures triggers extreme reactions: from claims that its closeness to the dominant culture causes it to lose its distinctiveness, to a willingness to abandon traditions and rely on the culture functioning only in modern aspects. All these reactions, both those praising the virtues of modernization and those condemning it as a road to the loss of cultural distinctiveness, are ideologies and as such attempt to present modernization processes through the prism of the benefits desired by the people who take advantage of them (Berger, Berger & Kellner, 1974). Regardless of their attitudes to traditions and the level of folklorization of their culture, however, young people often arrive at the conclusion that if they are modern and identify with a minority culture, then this culture is also modern, regardless of how it is presented or perceived on the outside.

Listening to the statements made by young people and watching their cultural practices, one can notice that the dilemma between tradition and modernity is

---

79 I understand identity politics in line with Thomas Hylland Eriksen’s definition, as “political ideologies, organization, and action that openly represents the interests of designated groups based on ‘essential’ characteristics such as ethnic origin or religion, and whose legitimacy lies in the support of important segments of such groups” (Eriksen, 2001: 42).



only superficial. Young people attempt to find new forms for these components of traditional cultures that continue to occupy an important place in the collective perception of the group and therefore determine its distinctiveness. They do not want to distance themselves from history and traditions. However, they want to belong to a minority group without changing their lifestyle, values and habits. Young people think about their ethnic culture in different terms than previous generations, because the context and character of the functioning of minorities have changed. Young people want to practice a minority culture and creatively develop it as their culture – they do not want to be a relic from the past shown on television or presented to tourists. One fundamental activity that they take involves adapting some aspects of minority cultures to modern technologies, trends in art and applications. Such efforts are especially discernible in music, where the range of solutions is very broad: from modern arrangements of folk motifs to the performance of songs from new musical genres in minority languages.

Language is regarded by everyone as the aspect of a minority culture that adapts best to the modern era and confirms in the simplest way that a specific person, event or spectacle is connected with a specific minority. For this reason, young people find it easier to differentiate between what belongs to the minority culture and what belongs to the dominant culture in the spheres where a given minority language functions as a basic means of communication within the community. A book written in a minority language is a creation of this minority, regardless of its content. However, this situation is still exceptional in the face of the disrupted continuity of intergenerational transfers, continuously weakened by mixed language and culture marriages, people's mobility, the low position of minorities and the low prestige of their languages. A strong language policy makes functioning in the Welsh language possible (though difficult, as my interviewees declared) in many spheres of life, also outside school and work. With a certain amount of determination, speakers of Welsh can live their lives in Welsh in certain places in Wales, even if they do not have occupations stereotypically considered as Welsh. However, the languages of other minorities are in a worse situation. Upper Sorbian, the everyday language of this community, is not used publicly in other spheres than those dedicated to minorities (their institutions and schools). Despite the existence of certain legal regulations, the Sorbs find it difficult to handle their affairs in public institutions in Sorbian and it is completely impossible for them to communicate in this language in the business sector. In the context of Kashubia and Brittany, where the process of assimilation was a lot more intensive and the position of minority languages is weaker, the use of minority languages is limited to narrow social groups. One type of group is formed by native speakers of the minority language, who nonetheless often cannot imagine speaking their ethnic language outside the circle of family members and closest friends. Another type of group is formed by those who want to stress their membership in the minority by using its language, which they learned as a foreign language. In their eyes, knowing an ethnic language forms the basis of their identity, it underscores an ethnic boundary where others think it has become blurred. Those who do not

know the minority language may express their identification with the minority through their participation in more or less organized cultural life, their political views and their actions.

Nevertheless, the dilemmas that young people face regarding the extent to which a minority culture can change and still remain itself are not completely resolved. It is obvious that they are members of the dominant culture of the states in which they live, regardless of their behaviour, views or attitudes to the past or to traditions. Such membership is determined by their identity documents and citizenship. State cultures guard their traditions and pass them down with the help of an extensive infrastructure of schools, public holidays, symbols, museums and institutions. Minority cultures must work out their own forms, draw their own ethnic boundaries. However, these boundaries must be drawn and interpreted in a new way (Cohen, 1985: 74). They must influence what is happening not only outside the group, by stressing and creating their distinctive features, but also inside the group, which pertains to every individual that identifies with it. Boundaries of minority cultures may therefore run across various spheres and vary in strength depending on individual experiences and views. Likewise, they may be constructed arbitrarily based on differences that stem from a new transcultural system of references. Young people want to use these new possibilities, they want a minority culture to be their own culture, regardless of what transformations it may have to undergo. However, contrary to the predictions of the guardians of tradition from older generations, they have no intention of distancing themselves from the past. References to the past are therefore an inherent part of the discourse of young activists.

## Conclusions: Discourses of endangerment and responsibility

Overall, I must admit that conducting field research among young people who represent minority groups and are simultaneously interested in the minority culture, or personally engaged in efforts to promote and support it, was a very positive experience for me. This is, of course, to some extent a recognized phenomenon: scholars who study minority cultures and languages, especially in the context of their revitalization, not infrequently find it difficult to remain passive and uninvolved (cf. Sallabank, 2013). We often move (more or less consciously) from the role of observers to that of experts, popularisers and even activists, although we think we keep our distance and conduct “objective” observations. However, when researchers spend years in contact with language communities, making friends and acquaintances, accompanying activists in their daily activities, listening to their discussions, plans and projects as well as participating in specific activities, we soak up a certain characteristic “discourse of endangerment” of minority cultures and languages, involvement and responsibility for their future. This discourse is very powerful, because it organizes the world in terms of moral duties and ethical attitudes towards those whose voice in the struggle for their rights is not heard loudly enough.

The book has sought to present a kind of (self-)portrait of a certain group of young people and their paths of action. In particular, I very much wanted the linguistic and cultural practices of the young people who are engaged in efforts to promote and support minorities to be described in their very own words, words which express their own specific thoughts, ideas and stories. When quoting their statements, I therefore found it impossible to ignore their emotionally charged aspects. In my analysis in the various chapters of this book, however, I strove not to emphasize efforts to deconstruct the discursive layer of the interviews I cited – so as not to disrupt the flow of the arguments being made and considered, and in order to present the clearest possible picture of the linguistic and cultural practices of the people I interviewed, their attitudes towards minorities and minority languages.

What emerges from the numerous statements made by young people cited in the previous chapters, therefore, is a very interesting yet complex image of today’s minority language communities, the individual speakers of minority languages as well as their problems and dilemmas. When young people speak about their lives, families and attitudes to their languages and prevailing ideologies, when they relate their participation in a minority culture and their involvement in efforts to promote it, they reveal problems that other (potential) speakers of minority languages must face, as well as mechanisms for taking action. Insights gained in this way may help boost the effectiveness of language revitalization efforts, laying

bare those aspects of reality that are often forgotten in different projects. The way in which young people interpret their links to various groups and construct their identity towards their peers and their community, their approval or rejection of the adopted images of their cultures and languages and their perception of how a minority culture should function, may all make an important contribution to the understanding of the social and cultural processes that take place at the intersection of minority and dominant cultures in the increasingly uniform world.

However, this picture of young people interested in the promotion of their minority cultures would not be complete without at least some analysis of the kind of discourse used by them, along with its sources and strengths. It is precisely to an analysis of this discourse that we will now turn in this final concluding section.

In general, the statements made by young people not only speak volumes about themselves and their culture, but also provide a basis for a critical analysis of the language they use – which is by no means neutral. Rather, it comprises a whole array of references, influences and dominant narratives, which on the one hand demonstrates that young people are very strongly embedded in a broader community of language activists and on the other one points to the strong influence of the discourse that simultaneously shapes their perception of the world, multiculturalism and multilingualism. Young people treat their discourse not merely as a tool for telling their own stories but also as a more or less consciously constructed way of presenting the world and their attitudes to its functioning. It is striking that regardless of the cultural, political and historical context of their own group, what may be called the “discourse of endangerment” of languages and the “discourse of responsibility” for their future used by young people from quite different European minorities turn out to be very similar. This may result from a very strong message that is created by international institutions and organizations that deal with minority languages and affects not only consecutive individuals involved in the promotion of minorities but also researchers, politicians and the public. At the same time, when young people talk about the surrounding reality, they filter it through “narrative structures” that “organize and give meaning to experience” (Bruner, 1997: 267). As such, devoting some attention to deconstructing young people’s discourse will allow us to see in what terms they perceive the activities taken to promote and support minority languages and cultures and the consequences of its adoption for activists, for the languages that they focus on and for other observers of the social reality, who are not necessarily linked to minorities.

The language used by young people interviewed in this book will be analysed here in terms of four types of discourse, which we will call: the discourse of endangerment, the discourse of the benefits of multilingualism, quasi-political discourse, and the discourse of responsibility.

## **The discourse of endangerment**

Overall, a broad campaign for the preservation of minority languages has been under way for several decades now. First initiated by major international

organizations responsible for the conservation of the world's cultural and linguistic heritage, such as UNESCO, it gradually grew in scale. Its fundamental task was accomplished quite quickly: the public found out that many of the world's extant languages were in a very difficult situation and their numbers were estimated to shrink significantly in the coming years. The tactics used by the organizers of this campaign were intended to provoke people's imagination by means of catchy metaphors illustrating the enormity of the loss. These were quickly picked up by the mass media, which became increasingly willing and eager to discuss the disappearance of the world's linguistic and cultural diversity, the death of languages and peoples. Currently, there are many international organizations involved in the promotion of the world's languages (for example the Mercator Network, until recently the European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages), foundations and NGOs (such as the Foundation for Endangered Languages, the Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages and Eurolang), which influence a growing number of people thanks to the use of social media. Such organizations promote the discourse of language endangerment. From a sphere reserved for researchers, whose actions are either supported or opposed by language communities, the struggle for the preservation of endangered languages has become a problem that attracts the attention of the whole world and, by the same token, generates considerable financial resources.

The most important terms used here include "language death." It is through this and other catchphrases that languages are shown to be constructs that exist in isolation from their users, outside their specific practices. Consequently, a language "is born," "exists," "develops," "weakens," and finally "dies." If we look at the statements made by young people, we will notice that they use the same phrases: a language "perishes," "dies," is "endangered" or "weak" and it gets "killed." Young people have adopted this depiction of minority languages, though not necessarily consciously – it has simply become the only way to talk about the world's linguistic diversity. Such a discourse is beneficial to international organizations, because it allows them to focus on languages, not their users, who must make language choices alone (Duchêne & Heller, 2008: 6–7). There are plenty of examples of this discourse. Here, I would like to cite one taken from the UNESCO website:

It is estimated that, if nothing is done, half of the 6000 plus languages spoken today will disappear by the end of this century. With the disappearance of unwritten and undocumented languages, humanity would lose not only a cultural wealth but also important ancestral knowledge embedded, in particular, in indigenous languages.<sup>80</sup>

This short quote alone illustrates several basic ways to create the atmosphere of endangerment around languages. One strategy, linked to a certain general penchant for numbers and precision, therefore involves stating how many languages

---

80 See: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/endangeredlanguages/> (access: 12.08.2015).

exist in the world and how fast they are dying. Most sources mention 6,000 languages, but some argue that the number is even greater. A specific number gives people the sense that they can imagine the phenomenon in question, urging them to realize that many languages (still) exist, but there is a finite number of them. This is why drawing attention to the quick “disappearance” of languages (“at least half of the world’s languages will be dead or dying”) over a specific period of time (“by the end of this century” or “by the year 2050”<sup>81</sup>) is so important in the discourse of endangerment. The various means that can be used to particularly speak to people’s sensitivities in this regard include charts (for example those illustrating that half of the world’s population uses just the 25 most-spoken languages in the world<sup>82</sup>) and the metaphorical presentation of potential losses (“One language dies every 14 days”<sup>83</sup>). At the same time, however, no one explains to the public how the world’s languages are actually counted (is this even possible at all, given the multitude of definitions of what a language is?) or what basis has been adopted for the estimates of the pace of their disappearance. However, such strategies are very powerful and appealing. Many of those who hear or read such forecasts immediately ask themselves whether this is inevitable, whether there is anything that could be done to save these languages. If they remain indifferent, they side with the “murderers,” or at least those who do nothing to prevent a disaster, although they could speak out on this issue. Allying with those who are fighting for the survival of languages is, on this approach, the only humanitarian thing to do and demonstrates sensitivity and humanity.

There is also another discursive strategy used in the fragment quoted above, one which involves highlighting which elements of the world’s rich diversity will be lost when these languages die, namely: cultural heritage (often likened to the world’s biological diversity, just as the disappearance of languages is described in the same terms as the loss of plant and animal species), the knowledge encapsulated with these languages, and indirectly the culture inherent in these languages (a notion greatly helped by the popularization of the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis). All this conveys an image of degradation that reaches much deeper than just languages – it affects the very foundations of human civilization, which will not be the same without the multitude of the languages that function in the world.

The young people I interviewed indeed argued both that each language is unique and should be protected:

**F18M(B):** Any language deserves to be saved. It is a part of a culture, multiculturalism, respect for everybody, otherness.

---

81 See: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/yoursay/language\\_and\\_identity/endangered\\_languages/languages\\_more\\_threatened\\_than\\_mammals.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/yoursay/language_and_identity/endangered_languages/languages_more_threatened_than_mammals.shtml) (access: 12.08.2015).

82 See: <https://mettahu.wordpress.com/2013/10/08/your-native-language-dictates-your-habits-of-mind/> (access: 12.08.2015).

83 See: <http://rosettaproject.org/blog/02013/mar/28/new-estimates-on-rate-of-language-loss/> (access: 12.08.2015).

and that the conservation of the world's multilingualism is as important as the preservation of biodiversity:

**E17F(S):** For me every language is unique. I imagine a flower-filled meadow, and every language is one plant and we try to keep all these plants. So they must be under protection. And it should be like this with languages because they are also very rare but they belong to the world. Each language has its beginning and history, and it would be a shame if it ceased to exist.

They also argue that all languages are part of the world's cultural heritage and its conservation is important:

**A20M(K):** [...] this is such great heritage that you just cannot ignore it and say 'oh well'...

**V20M(W):** [...] we have to protect it cause it's our heritage. Our cultural heritage. And it was transmitted from generation to generation. We still have a chance to keep it.

Finally, they argue that every language should be protected from stronger languages, which always strive to dominate and marginalize weaker languages and cultures:

**V20M(K):** It is not organized in such a way so as to reach an agreement together and maintain both cultures, cultural distinctiveness, but the stronger culture eats the weaker one.

Also, in line with the popular concept of "linguicism," one can often hear that languages do not die, but they are rather "killed" by stronger languages and cultures:

**B20M(W):** I know English people are OK but [when they settle in Wales] something wrong is happening and the English language is coming to Wales. And now they're killing our Welsh language. And this keeps on pushing it out.

The discourse of the endangerment of languages is perfectly consistent with other anti-modernization discourses that are dominant in today's world, especially the discourse of modernization-as-disruption (Braun, 2002: 92), which my interviewees often refer to in their statements (see Chapter 5). In their comments, they also repeat arguments of the harmful effect of globalization on minority cultures:

**R17M(K):** It seems to me that now, in this era of globalization, people have realized that what used to be an important component, all this diversity, this entire mosaic, may simply disappear one day and we won't even know anything about it.

We can also hear echoes of the discourse of equality (tolerance, feminism and gender identity) and human rights. This context offers defenders of minority languages a lot more room to manoeuvre, enabling them to position themselves

as broadly understood defenders of the rights of those whose voice is not heard loud enough.

## **The discourse of benefits of multilingualism**

The language ideologies that have gained the strongest footing in Europe include the notion of standard forms of languages having an advantage over their non-standardized variants (see Chapter 3; Silverstein, 1996) and the ideology of monolingualism (Hornsby, 2010), which is derived from the idea of nationalism. Monolingualism came to be “taken as normal, and therefore as essential to linguistic and cultural development both at the level of the community and at the level of the individual” (Heller, 2006: 85). The ideology of monolingualism is based on the conviction that there is a direct link between language use and nationality, which is also reflected in the personal, moral and ethical traits of individual people. Each additional language brings chaos into this neat whole, disrupts its cohesion and therefore poses a danger to the existence of the state and its functioning. This ideology grew in strength as consecutive generations were raised monolingually, no longer aware of the fact that their ancestors had been multilingual and their multilingualism had enabled them to live in harmony with many surrounding groups.

As a result of the ideology of standardization, which went hand in hand with the ideology of monolingualism, those who used the standardized form of the official language were perceived as being on a higher intellectual level and having greater social value (Woolard, 1998). Since the standard form of language, used in the system of bureaucracy and national institutions, is linked to the influential group that imposes this form as the only valuable one, the dominance of this form of language results in the reproduction of the power of the elite that uses it (Bourdieu, 1977), thus confirming and perpetuating the underlying ideologies of standardization and monolingualism. Minorities that were subject to these ideologies were expected to abandon their languages of their own free will and for their own good, in order to achieve a higher status and get better jobs. Consequently, they are subjected to symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1991) and come to believe that they will be better off by changing their language. They become an object affected by “monolingualizing tendencies” (Heller, 1995: 374) used in light of the multilingualism of citizens by the bureaucratic system of the state, which links the nation to a specific language in its standard form. The power of the ideology of monolingualism therefore lies in the fact that nations which seem monolingual and safeguard the domination of their language (such as France and the UK) are in fact multilingual.

A counter-ideology, in this case the ideology of multilingualism, took quite a long time to emerge – in order for a new narrative to be adopted, the previous one first has to be called into question. A social change must occur, because “[s]tories operate not simply in the realm of the mind, as ideas; to be convincing they also must have a base in experience or social practice” (Bruner, 1997: 277).



Before multilingualism came to be regarded as a value in Europe, European minorities underwent a major linguistic change related to the weakening of the intergenerational transfers of their languages. When the discourse of language endangerment gained popularity in Europe, language minorities were often in the position of no longer uniform bilingual or multilingual communities, but communities that were already (to a certain degree) linguistically assimilated. For that reason, the reversal of that linguistic change, as demanded by those engaged in the revitalization of languages and researchers, had to be linked to the restoration of multilingualism in communities that had become to a large degree monolingual and profoundly permeated by the ideology of monolingualism. In order for this to be accomplished, it proved necessary to roll out quite big guns of argumentation and create a discourse that could promote multilingualism over monolingualism.

The most frequently formulated argument in favour of multilingualism (cf. Edwards, 1994b) that has made it into the daily discourse of those who promote and support minority languages is the “naturalness” of multilingualism, its functioning in most places in the world. However, this approach serves as a springboard for other arguments, which list specific benefits enjoyed by those who know multiple languages, especially those who have learned them since birth / the beginning of their education. Such arguments are the only sort that can sway parents embedded in the ideology of monolingualism and encourage them to decide to bring up their children in a way that is not necessarily considered right by most people (specifically due to the dominance of the ideology of monolingualism). Language revitalizers therefore cite scientific studies to prove the “falseness” of arguments in favour of monolingualism and the “correctness” of those favouring multilingualism. The latter include the argument that a child that speaks at least two languages has better language skills, understands the functioning of languages better and therefore finds it easier to use language in the process of thinking and problem solving (Cummins, 1981). Such a child also finds it easier to differentiate between form and substance, learns each consecutive language faster, finds it easier to listen and remember, exhibits improved cognitive skills and is more creative. Consequently, such a child is likewise more likely to get a better job in the future and work more effectively with other people. Such arguments are raised in various configurations by organizations that promote minority languages and cited in leaflets for parents, on websites, and so on. Of course, they have been also adopted by the young people I interviewed, who cited them surprisingly frequently in their interviews. Let me quote several characteristic comments:

**N23F(B):** The fact that I speak Breton makes me think about my vocabulary all the time, on how to express something. I want to correct myself all the time, develop, learn more.

**I19F(W):** Speaking another language always makes your life richer. There are more opportunities than [for] those who speak only one language or only two.

**F23F(K):** This is also an investment in language. Learning languages is very important and it seems that if you learn one more language in your childhood, it is easier later.

One Sorbian university student made a particularly noteworthy comment:

**B22M(S):** [When you speak two languages] your mind develops differently. Also new possibilities open up for you when you know a German and a Slavic language. Languages are keys. In the contemporary world, everything happens through languages, even in computers. [...] When you are bilingual you have a different attitude to languages. You know that any person in the world has their own mother tongue. When you go to Africa, and they have their language there, and you know that, then you are prepared, open, and they will receive you totally differently than for example a German tourist who demands that everybody speaks German.

The Sorbian student's words are noteworthy, because they encapsulate all the ideas related to the promotion of multilingualism: the relationship between language and identity, the accelerated cognitive development of bilingual children, better opportunities in the future and positive attitudes to other languages.

Another set of arguments in favour of the multilingual upbringing of children that was mentioned by the Sorbian student cited above refers to their attitudes to others and the world: "a person who speaks multiple languages has a stereoscopic vision of the world from two or more perspectives [...] [and] a better understanding that other outlooks are possible" (Cook, 2001). For this reason, as argued by researchers and emphasized by activists, multilingual individuals can better understand and appreciate representatives of other cultures, but they are also less prone to racist or xenophobic views or a lack of tolerance. In addition to cognitive benefits, the Sorbian student also points to openness to others demonstrated by bilingual individuals, their ability to understand and get to know them better as well as their ease in establishing relations, because, as he believes, interpersonal relations of multilingual individuals are based on mutual respect, which is something that monolingual people often lack.

The young people I interviewed stressed that all cultures are equally valuable:

**P18F(B):** [...] I think that all cultures are equal.

In addition, they repeat that learning/speaking a minority language has made them not only more emphatic but also more tolerant, open to all types of "otherness:"

**DD16F(B):** [...] It seems to me that I am more open to the world than some of my friends who speak only French. I am more interested in other cultures...

**M25F(S):** [...] when you know two languages and have two identities, which you have to somehow reconcile, you become more tolerant to different ideas and so on.

**V20M(K):** [...] we are open to different cultures.

**U22M(W):** I think we've got more respect for other cultures because I know specifically what my culture is and what it is not.

They also believe that living in two cultures and languages has prompted them to fight for the rights of the underprivileged:

**H20M(B):** I think that those who learn Breton realize the necessity of protecting minority languages and cultures.

I would not like to challenge the arguments in favour of bilingualism or the declarations made by the young people I interviewed. However, we should remember that their statements are often not based on their own experience but were adopted from people and institutions that promote the idea of multilingualism.

Young people's declarations and opinions sometimes contradict their practices, and their eagerness to achieve their goal, namely the recognition of minority rights, may lead to the creation of stronger boundaries and divisions between their group and other groups (especially in the context of immigrants, who make it more difficult for a specific region to retain its cultural distinctiveness). For this reason, the quasi-political discourse used by young people sometimes reflects the discourse that the nation-states use with respect to minority languages, which they perceive as a threat. Consequently, what young people involved in promoting and supporting minorities adopt from the discourses that surround them are a way of talking about the state that controls a specific minority and phrases related to national issues, even ideologies of monolingualism.

## Quasi-political discourse

The discourses of language endangerment and the benefits of multilingualism are very strongly embedded in the global context, and they are also used in this context by the people I interviewed in all minority groups. However, the quasi-political discourse adopted by young people who engage in efforts to promote and support minorities pertains above all to the specific context of the functioning of a specific group. It is adopted by young people above all from older generations of activists, who have long created the framework for a narrative about the perception of the surrounding reality and the majority–minority relations. Here, I would not like to deconstruct national and ethnic discourses of more groups, which are subjects of analysis elsewhere (see for example Barré, 2007; Dołowy-Rybińska, 2013c). I merely wish to point out the most important elements that are repeated in the discourses that young people have adopted from the minority movements they have joined, because I believe that their internalization may prove the continuity of these movements and young people's involvement in their activity.

Above all, the discourse of a constant struggle with the nation-state over respect for minority rights and its self-determination remains strong. When young people talk about the state as an active and conscious entity, they use such phrases as “does not allow,” “does not permit,” “prohibits” and “disables.” The state is portrayed as deliberately defying minorities, because the limitation of their rights lies in its interests:

**A20M(K):** If this state wants to be our state, it should respect us as such.

**D20F(W):** In Britain, we have never really been considered Welsh.

**T17M(S):** We have allowed ourselves to be subjugated by the Germans.

**J21M(B):** [...] in France, you can't be different, that's frowned upon.

Consequently, the discourse used by activists reflects political relations: minorities “fight” for their identity (see Chapter 5), for the right to function and use their language, and the state limits these rights with the use of various measures.

The way in which young inhabitants of Wales present the world is very strongly politicized, clearly embedded in the context of the fight that has been waged by *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* since the 1960s as well as devolution and the acquisition of language rights. Young people in Wales are not only highly aware of their language rights but also – through their presence in a community that stigmatizes all cases of disrespect of their rights by the authorities – stress especially strongly that they have limited possibilities of using their language:

**A20M(W):** Obviously, with devolution, people think ‘oh the situation is changing, it’s good.’ No, it’s not.

**M20F(W):** [...] there is a political will, we just need to do more, demand more. So we can always do better and strive for better.

They are likewise influenced by the discourse related to the potential independence of Wales, reinforced by the independence campaign that was ongoing during my research and preceded the referendum held in Scotland in 2014:<sup>84</sup>

**C21M(W):** Wales will never be strong when it is a part of England. The Welsh language will decline, first of all, like it was since the beginning of the English occupation of Wales. Welsh has been treated poorly; Welsh speakers have been treated poorly as well because we were occupied by the government of England.

When young people talk about Wales, they use such words as “conquered,” “taken” and even “occupied” by England, whereas England and the English language are seen as the worst enemy of the Welsh minority:

**B20M(W):** I’ve got nothing against English people in terms of individuals. But yet again it is the whole idea of English oppression, imperialism, breaking ties within the Welsh community.

In the discourse of the Bretons, the state is likewise pictured as opposing minorities and preventing the recognition of their rights. Such a discourse is used by the entire Breton movement and the movements that represent other minorities in France and collaborate with the Breton movement at different levels. Consequently, we can often hear such phrases as “oppression,” “harassment” and “persecution,” which are linked to something that is very strongly present in the discourse of

---

84 Over 55% of inhabitants voted against Scottish independence.

young people, namely references to the anti-minority policy pursued by France since the revolution (“the Jacobin state,” “the policy against minority languages”) and directly to the experiences of the generation of their grandparents (“they abandoned the language,” “they were traumatized,” “because of them, they started to feel ashamed”). Some use another concept that is popular in the Breton movement, namely that of Brittany’s “internal colonisation.”<sup>85</sup> One constant element is France’s reluctance to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, discussed extensively in the French media and on the internet. Young people describe the state as unfavourably disposed to minorities:

**W20M(B):** Everything is decided in Paris.

**CC20M(B):** [...] dominance, the imposition of the French language.

**B17F(B):** [...] their main goal is to destroy our language to get rid of the problem, as if we posed some threat to the French culture.

Sporadically, the Bretons themselves are described as “a nation” (French *nation*). Young people use the term “a people” (French *peuple*) a lot less frequently.

References to the national issue are also present in the discourse of young Kashubs. Their power is influenced by the dispute that has been ongoing in the Kashubian movement for several years now. For a long time, the movement was dominated by the perception of Poland not only as a welfare state but also as the state with which the Kashubs identified. However, the more recent emergence of a small group that demanded that the Kashubs be recognized as a separate nation caused a stir in the Kashubian community. Arguments raised by both sides and constant references to this issue in the group of activists and among commentators have been reflected in the comments made by young people, who always refer to national issues when they are talking about Poland and its attitude towards minorities:

**A20M(K):** The Republic of Poland is our country; God forbid we would like to break away from it [...]. For this reason, we would like our nation to be respected and recognized in Polish law.

**I22F(K):** I don’t know why some people [...] believe that these should be separate nations. I have never differentiated, divided them in this way.

Another context of the discourse of Kashubian young people is their upbringing in the period of very powerful transformations in Kashubia’s ethnic and linguistic landscape, especially thanks to preparations for enacting the Act on National and Ethnic Minorities and the Regional Language and its implementation. The pace of changes and the development of ethnic awareness is reflected in the words of young Kashubs:

---

85 This concept has been also adopted by the Kashubian national movement.

**M22F(K):** [...] this boom started in 2005, when a decision was issued that Kashubian was a language, not a dialect. Back then, something started to happen, a decision was issued that it should be taught at schools [...] everything gathered pace. It's now easier to get in touch with the Kashubian language, for example through the radio or the internet.

It is particularly difficult to describe the discourse of the young Upper Sorbs in similar terms, because it has very few political characteristics. Young Sorbs are not interested in politics, and they refer to it very rarely. When asked about specific issues, however, they demonstrate considerable awareness of the functioning of their group and its dependence on decisions made at various levels. It is therefore worth analysing why the points of reference that appear to be fundamentally important for other minorities are almost absent from the discourse of the Sorbs. One of the reasons for this situation may be the defensive nature of the Sorbian movement. The rights of the Sorbs have been guaranteed since after the war and the Sorbs themselves became accustomed to passivity in standing up for their rights during years of communism, and after the reunification of Germany the state maintained the privileges that they had earlier enjoyed. For these reasons, the discourse of the Sorbian movement is largely unpoliticized. In the context of ethnic and/or linguistic discrimination, which all of the people I interviewed experienced, it may appear surprising that the Sorbs describe the country in which they live in neutral and sometimes even positive terms.

**S17F(S):** Thanks to this, we have support from the state. We wouldn't be able to have our own country now. We have support from Germany.

**G25M(S):** I don't see this as a political problem. I think the Sorbian culture is well supported by Germany and the states of Brandenburg and Saxony. Not only financially but also on other issues.

Young people have adopted this characteristic discourse of keeping things in perspective and not complaining about their situation from the older generation of Sorbian activists, so it is consistent with the rhetoric that has been long accepted in the Sorbian movement.

There is one dimension of the quasi-political discourse that young people do share, however, because they have adopted it from international organizations and NGOs – the conviction that all minorities have a lot in common:

**N23K(B):** We can find common ground with all of them, topics of common interest, things we care about. The relations between people from minority groups differ from those between people from majority groups.

**U22M(W):** They are fighting the same fight that you are fighting, their community is under oppression in the same way that you are. So I think I probably think more like a Catalan or Basque, than an Englishman. Because again they need to fight for what they are, [to prove] that the fact you speak a language does not mean that you belong to a dominant culture.

**F20F(S):** I'd say, as a representative of a minority, it is very beneficial to have good relations with other minorities. Because you know what others must go through and fight against. In my opinion, communication is then better.

**A20M(K):** We are often inspired by something other minorities are doing, because they face the same problems as we do.

For this reason, minorities should engage in collaboration:

**Y17M(B):** [...] this relationship between different minorities: the Basques, the Corsicans, Catalonia... that's what this is all about. We feel really close to one another. That's where our strength lies.

**G19F(W):** [...] we should do what we can to preserve [Welsh] and you think of other minority groups and you think you should support them in trying to preserve their language and traditions.

Young people also emphasize the exchange of ideas and revitalization projects between minorities:

**M22F(K):** [...] you can compare your problems, your experiences, you can compare your development paths, and you can cope with those problems together, have fun together, you can open up and do something together, not just isolate yourself.

In addition, they reiterate that other minorities are close to them, because their languages were subjected to the same oppressive measures as their own languages and they are likewise forced to stand up against the dominance of other cultures and languages.

**Y16F(W):** Maybe because I speak a minority language myself, I think it's a kind of a great thing, and it is important to protect small languages. And I think people of other minority would also respect me because I am from this background. Because they have also been pushed around by a stronger language like French or Spanish.

They argue that contacts with other minorities make it easier for them to understand their own culture.

**G16M(B):** The true exchange [involves] getting to know other cultures but also using this to understand your own culture better. And seeing that there are many things that we have in common.

In turn, the sense that all representatives of minority groups share a similar history may reaffirm young people in their identity-related choices and in their further fight for their culture and language:

**G25M(S):** What is positive and what was visible is that there were minorities there and we could show that we were not the only people in Europe who form a small island in a big country. It's also good for us to see that there are a lot of such minorities. You always hear about it, but when you see this, it is something special.

All these arguments are part of the discourse of major international and non-government organizations that promote contacts between minorities and represent their voice in the global arena. By organizing meetings and seminars or conducting informational campaigns, they stress the importance of cooperation between minorities, which makes the voice of the weak heard more loudly. Young people adopt this discourse on the one hand from activists from these organizations, from other young people who are members of their youth organizations and above all from social media, through which these organizations conduct their campaigns.

Nevertheless, internal differences are visible even within this discourse. Inhabitants of Wales usually refer to the necessity of forming a united front with other Celtic language minorities in the UK against the dominance of English:

**G19F(W):** [...] especially the Celtic languages, because there is this feeling of being oppressed by English. I think the Cornish, Irish and Scottish, we are all confronted with England. And a lot of people would be against England. And I think you can understand why, because the English invaded us years and years ago, and they oppressed us and our language. And I think things like that help me to realise that the minority groups are somehow similar cause they suffered from the stronger countries, and stronger languages, and stronger cultures.

The Bretons are particularly eager to cite the example of the Basques, because the Breton movement collaborated with the Basque movement for a long time, and the Bretons and the Basques still play a leading role in demanding recognition of minority rights in the international arena:

**G16M(B):** I know a lot about the Basques, the Corsicans... I think we don't know other minorities well enough, and that's really a shame. There are plenty of other minorities in Europe and all around the world and, of course, we can't know them all, but that's very interesting.

The Sorbs talk about the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), but they focus chiefly on ties to other Slavic minorities and the Slavs in general, with which, as they declare, they have more in common than with the Germans. They are convinced that other Slavic nations will support their efforts:<sup>86</sup>

---

86 This conviction is also part of the Sorbian discourse. The Sorbian intelligentsia have always worked closely with the Poles and the Czechs. So far, the main argument in favour of learning Sorbian in Lusatia has been the conviction that if one knows Sorbian, it will be easier for one to learn Czech, Russian or Polish. In reality, very few Sorbs take up this challenge and schools rarely offer courses of other Slavic languages. Some of the people I interviewed even admitted that they had never visited Poland or the Czech Republic despite their proximity. However, closeness between Slavic nations and languages remains an element of the discourse.



**B22M(S):** You can always find something you have in common with other Slavic countries and nations or other minorities. It could be always said that we are also a minority. We are important, although we are the smallest Slavic nation.

References to other minorities also appear in the discourse of the Kashubs. For the time being, however, they have so little experience in collaboration with other minorities that the word “minority” is more likely to represent an idea than a specific group.

**N22M(K):** We’re in the minority, so we know other minorities, because we are interested in this.

When talking about their lives and experiences, many young people admit that they have never had direct contact with representatives of other minorities (apart from those active in international organizations). Certain individual activists are indeed walking encyclopaedias of information about minorities and have a vast knowledge about the world’s endangered languages and cultures. However, most of them have limited information about other minorities and their activity. Consequently, collaboration between minorities is not something they have experienced themselves, but it is strongly embedded in the discourse of activism and the protection of minorities. What is meant in this discourse, however, is not real collaboration but the shared sense that if minority movements act together they will be able to resist the dominance of majorities and assimilation processes. Such thinking is visibly influenced by the discourse of endangerment as well as responsibility for the future of minority languages and cultures.

## The discourse of responsibility

The individuals I interviewed use a language characteristic of people who are passionate, involved, and enthusiastic about their role as activists (they confirm and become reaffirmed in this conviction by participating in my interviews). Consequently, they adopt the way of speaking typical of the group with which they identify or are starting to identify. This is especially visible when they start talking about how their languages can be “saved.” They commonly use such phrases as “we should...,” “we must...,” “we need to...,” “one has to support...,” or “no one will do this for us.”<sup>87</sup> Of course, the discourse on behalf of which they speak can be heard in the recommendations they offer and the way they formulate them. Although their ideas are fresh, the narrative that they use duplicates the existing, established narrative in which they were raised and which they adopted.

Young people often stress that they feel responsible for the future of their language and their culture (see Chapter 7) and they are actively involved in their promotion, because they see them as the most precious good, one without which

---

87 The latter common assertion serves, of course, as the title of this book.

neither themselves nor the world would be the same. Interestingly, when asked who in their opinion was responsible for the future of minority languages, the young people I interviewed answer without hesitation that everyone is:

**A20M(W):** The Welsh people. Everyone who speaks Welsh has a duty and obligation to ensure that they continue to do so and [they should] create opportunities for it.

**Q20M(B):** The Bretons. The first enemy of the Breton language is not Sarkozy but the Bretons themselves. Because the people who are against Breton are Bretons and they retard Brittany. And I think [that] if we want to develop our culture we have to first motivate all Bretons. This is the only way in which something can be achieved.

**G25F(K):** Ourselves and no one else. If we just speak Kashubian then... of course, it depends also on schools, on education, on the young generation. On what identity they choose, if they want to cultivate this culture or not. And, of course, on us, the existing Kashubs, because if we don't raise the young generation in Kashubian, if we don't speak Kashubian to them everywhere, at home, on the street, it will definitely not survive or it will disappear. But it always depends on us, Kashubs.

**B22M(S):** Each for their own part. Every Sorb. The language will [exist] as long as it will be used by families.

Responsibility for the future of minority languages therefore rests on their speakers, who should try to pass on these languages to young generations. Politicians, teachers and activists are further down the list. At the same time, young people realize that many people in their surroundings do not take this responsibility and do not use minority languages or transmit them to young generations and sometimes even do not want to send their children to schools where ethnic languages are taught. My interviewees say clearly that these indifferent people pose the biggest threat to their languages and the biggest challenge to them as activists. It is therefore worth looking again at how young activists see those who are part of the "grey zone of ethnicity." They talk about such people with disdain and sadness:

**T16M(B):** They are self-contained, narrow-minded, they have a lot of prejudices.

**K22M(K):** There is a common nihilism, unwillingness to do anything. I'd call it the disease of civilization. I observe it in my peers, they don't have any goal in their life.

**K25M(W):** Well, I think that the majority of Welsh people are indifferent... even my parents, you know. [They think] what I do is very stupid and extremist.

**I22F(S):** There are Sorbs who don't know what to do with this who do not value it and don't transmit it. It makes me angry. They just don't care if it survives or not.

Above all, however, these people are pictured as passive: they think that they want the best for themselves/their children – good education, an easy start in life, many open opportunities. Consequently, they are guided in their actions by economic conditions and, by the same token, by the diktats of those who have managed to convince them that using minority languages reduces their chances in life. They are subjected to symbolic power, because they believe that they are abandoning the languages of their ancestors out of their own free will and these languages

will never prove useful in their lives. In this way, they implement the agenda of the dominant groups. As such, it is possible to reverse the question of responsibility: Who, in the opinion of young people, is to blame for the fact that languages are disappearing? Here, the answer is again (almost) the same: it is all those who are indifferent are to blame, and their blame lies in negligence, in the rejection of the values of their community for the sake of illusory goods offered by the external world. Thus, all people are responsible for the future of minority languages and cultures, but they are likewise subjected to the laws of the market, political forces, ideologies and discourses and they refuse to assume this responsibility. As a result, the young people I interviewed believe that real responsibility rests not on people but on activists, who have the duty to convince others to use minority languages and identify with minority cultures. Therefore, it is the young people involved in the promotion of minorities who are responsible for the future of minority languages and culture. Here is what they have to say:

**E25F(W):** We [activists] need to make sure that we are passing on our language and passing on our culture. And make sure that people are aware that their culture is important and that it's up to them to be a part of this. It's not just that people know about the culture but to make them want to be a part of it.

**W20M(B):** I think one way is to put ourselves in the position of a victim and say that we are persecuted and that we should get compensation. But we can also say – Forward! Let's live in Breton, let's live the Breton culture! I think that if Breton is to be preserved it will only be because Bretons themselves decided to save it. But we need to help them to realize it.

**K22M(K):** We as young activists. We need to build this conviction among people that it is worth transmitting this language and this culture forward. [...] to continue to take these small steps. Also, we should not require any high culture of people, [we should not require] everybody to suddenly go to the Kashubian theatre, but let's show that we can hang a Kashubian flag on a car next to the Kaszëbë sticker. It's cool to do such small things, make such small gestures, slowly continue this idea of passing the Kashubian culture on.

**H25F(S):** We need to try to engage young people, which means making them realize how important it is, to talk about it. We have to dare putting people into some actions.

This form of the discourse of involvement, which stresses the role of activities undertaken by individuals and by the group with which individual activists identify, plays an important role for young people: it mobilizes them into action, reaffirms them in their sense of responsibility, and gives them the energy to continue their efforts. Consequently, the discourse they use is not only taken over from older generations of activists but it becomes so strongly internalized as to make its emotional and ethical charge help them persevere in this difficult role, for which they can only expect payment in the form of satisfaction and enthusiasm caused by small successes.

How young people construct narratives impacts on the stories that they tell. Such narratives determine whether the narrator and the characters will be pictured as passive or active towards the surrounding reality, as victims of the system or as individuals who actively influence their future. The choice of the narration strategy also impacts on the reality, because "Narratives are not only structures of meaning but structures of power" (Bruner, 1997: 269). Consequently, the adoption of the discourse of endangerment by young people mobilizes them into action, quasi-political discourses make them focus on generating resistance and joining the movement that remains in opposition to the state, which in turn makes them self-aware of their culture and identity. The discourses of the benefits of multilingualism and responsibility for the future of languages, in turn, reaffirm them in the conviction that their activity is right and sustain their euphoria even if the actions they take fail to bring the intended results.

## Epilogue

I spent three years among representatives of four different European minorities, observing how young activists, secondary-school and university students interested in the minority cultures, took their first steps in the field of the promotion of minority languages and cultures. Over this time, I met with them and talked to them on numerous occasions and I was included in various interesting activities. I was continually astonished by their enthusiasm, which also reaffirmed me in the conviction that my research made sense. Thanks to their words, actions and everyday joy with successful campaigns, they infected me and others with the sense that the protection of minority languages and cultures was important.

As a researcher who has spent years studying this topic, I am often asked why we should save minority languages, if people do not want to use them? I thought for a long time how I could formulate my answer, which I found so obvious that I had difficulty verbalizing it. Should I use the arguments raised by linguists, international organizations, the activists themselves? Arguments that are "rational," "scientific," or "emotional"? It was not until I started conducting research among young activists that I was reaffirmed in the conviction that the answer should actually be quite simple: because there are people who find the future of their languages and cultures important. Nothing more, and nothing less.

The young people I interviewed turned out to know a lot about the political, social and historical context of their own groups. Despite being so young, they were already proficient in using discourses that were important for activists and helped them make others aware of the importance of their actions and goals and encourage others to join them. Their identification with a minority culture is based on practicing it as an endangered culture. Using minority languages, which many of them have learned outside their home, requires awareness and reflection. Activism is therefore inherent in the cultural and linguistic practices understood in this way and involvement is inherent in such activism. Of course, it can become stronger over time, but it may also dwindle.

I started writing this book immediately after I finished my field research. I have met with many of the people I interviewed regularly for a long time and I have observed others on Facebook. Over these several years, the lives of the individual people have changed. Some of them have remained activists, whereas others have completely abandoned the promotion of their languages. Some of them lost their interest in activism after finishing their university studies and starting families and redirected their social activism elsewhere. Several people have become actively involved in the political life of minorities. Others have found jobs in minority institutions or organizations, where they could make use of the experiences and contacts they made earlier. Several of them have become teachers of minority languages, some are doing doctorates related to minority topics. Others have left their little homelands and will most probably never go back. Still others received jobs in fields so far away from the promotion of minority languages that their involvement gradually dwindled. Some high-school graduates, full of enthusiasm at school, have taken up other interests during their university studies, joined other communities of practice and stopped promoting their cultures. But the purpose of this book is not to draw up any tally. Rather, I wanted to describe the linguistic and cultural practices of specific people at a specific time – their dilemmas, problems and strategies of engagement in the life of minorities, identification with groups and promotion of their interests. Although my research covered a very narrow and distinctive group, I believe that I have succeeded in shedding some light on the processes that are important in thinking about language communities, their functioning and the measures they take to preserve their identity, language and culture and will be used both to make social diagnoses of today's society, especially young people, and by ethnic leaders and authors of minority language policies.



# Bibliography

- Aaron J. (2003). *The Welsh Survival Gene: The “Despite Culture” in the Two Language Communities of Wales*. National Eisteddfod Lecture: Meifod.
- Adams M. (2003). The Reflexive Self and Culture: a Critique. *British Journal of Sociology*, 54(2): 221–238.
- Adkins M. (2013). Will the Real Breton Please Stand up? Language Revitalization and the Problem of Authentic Language. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 223: 55–70.
- Ahearn L. M. (2011). *Living Language: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Aitchison J. & Carter C. (2004). *Spreading the Word: The Welsh Language 2001*. Talybond: YLolfa.
- Allard R. & Landry R. (1986). Subjective Ethnolinguistic Vitality Viewed as a Belief System. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 7: 1–12.
- Anderson B. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso: London.
- An Du C. (2000). *Histoire d’un interdit. Le breton à l’école*. Lannuon: Hor Yezh.
- Appadurai A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Appadurai A. (2006). *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger*. Durhan-London: Duke University Press.
- Artexte Sarasola M. (2014). Les jeunes et la revitalisation du basque au pays basque nord. L’influence de la bertsolaritza sur l’usage de la langue et l’identité. *Zeszyty Łużyckie*, 48: 129–147.
- Auer P. (ed.) (2007). *Style and Social Identities: Alternative Approaches to Linguistic Heterogeneity*. Berlin–New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- Babbie E. (2013). *The Practice of the Social Research*. 13th edition. Belmont: Wadsworth.
- Baker C. (1992). *Attitudes and Language*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Baker S. (2013). Conceptualising the Use of Facebook in Ethnographic Research: As Tool, as Data and as Context. *Ethnography and Education*, 8(2): 131–145.
- Balsom D. (1985). *The Three Wales Model*. In: J. Osmond (ed.), *The National Question Again: Welsh Political Identity in the 1980s* (1–17). Llandyssul: Gomer Press.
- Barker C. (2003). *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice and Critical Debates*. London: Sage Publications.

- Barré R. (2007). *Les langues celtiques, entre survivance et renouveau élitiste?* Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
- Barth F. (1969). *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: the Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Bergen and Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Bartmiński J. (1999). *Punkt widzenia, perspektywa, językowy obraz świata*. In: J. Bartmiński (ed.), *Językowy obraz świata* (103–120). Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej.
- Bartmiński J. (2009). *Językowe podstawy obrazu świata*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej.
- Beck U. (1992). *Risk Society. Towards a New Modernity*, trans. M. Ritter. London-Thousand Oaks-New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Beck U. (1994). *The Reinvention of Politics: Towards a Theory of Reflexive Modernization*. In: B. Ulrich, A. Giddens & S. Lash (eds.), *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social* (1–55). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Beck U., Bons W. & Lau C. (2003). The Theory of Reflexive Modernization: Problematic, Hypotheses, and Research Programme. *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 20(2): 1–33.
- Bell D. (1975). *Ethnicity and Social Change*. In: N. Glazer and D. P. Moynihan (eds.), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press: 141–174.
- Benbough-Jackson M. (2013). A Nation on the March. *Planet*, 209: 47–56.
- Berger P. L., Berger B. & Kellner H. (1974). *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness*. London: Penguin Books.
- Bernard K. (2003). The National Eisteddfod and the Evolution of the all-Welsh Rule. *North American Journal of Welsh Studies*, 3(1): 33–47.
- Bialystok E. (2001). *Bilingualism in Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Billig M. (1995). *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage Publications.
- Blommaert, J. (2010). *Sociolinguistics of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Blommaert J. & Rampton B. (2011). Language in Superdiversity. *Diversities*, 13(2): 1–21.
- Blommaert J. & Verschueren J. (1998). *Debating Diversity: Analysing the Discourse of Tolerance*. London–New York: Routledge.
- Bobineau O. (2010). *Les formes élémentaires de l'engagement. Une anthropologie du sens*. Paris: Temps Présent.
- Bokszański Z. (2001). *Stereotypy a kultura*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Funna.



- Bokszański Z. (2006). *Tożsamości zbiorowe*. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.
- Bolduan T. (1996). *Nie dali się złamać. Spojrzenie na ruch kaszubski 1939–1995*. Gdańsk: Oficyna Czac.
- Bourdieu P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu P. (1984). *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. R. Nice. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu P. (1986). *The Forms of Capital*. In: J. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (241–258). New York: Greenwood.
- Bourdieu P. (1990). *The Logic of Practice*, trans. R. Nice. Redwood City: Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu P. (1991). *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bourdieu P. (1999). *Understanding*. In: P. Bourdieu (ed.), *The Weight of the World* (607–626). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bourdieu P. (2013) [1977]. *Outline of the Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice. Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu P. & Passeron J.-C. (1977). *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, trans. R. Nice. London-Thousand Oaks-New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Bourdieu P. & Wacquant L. (1992). *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. London-Oxford: Polity Press, Blackwell Publishers.
- Boyd D. M. & Ellison N. B. (2007). Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1): 210–230.
- Bradley D. (2002). *Language Attitudes: the Key Factor in Language Maintenance*. In: D. Bradley & M. Bradley (eds.), *Language Endangerment and Language Maintenance* (1–10). London–New York: Routledge.
- Brankač A. (1970). *Serbski biografiski slownik*. Budyšin: Domowina.
- Braun B. (2002). *The Intemperate Rainforest: Nature, Culture, and Power on Canada's West Coast*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Breton R. (1964). Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 70: 193–205.
- Breza, E. (ed.) (2001). *Kaszubszczyzna. Kaszëbizna*. Opole: Uniwersytet Opolski. Instytut Filologii Polskiej.
- Brickman P. (1987). *Commitment, Conflict, and Caring*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc.
- Broudic F. (2009). *Parler breton au XXIe siècle. Le nouveau sondage de TMO-Réions*. Brest: Emgleo Breiz.

- Broudic F. (2011). *L'enseignement du et en breton. Rapport à Monsieur le Recteur de l'Académie de Rennes*. Brest: Emgleo Breiz.
- Broudic F. (2013). Langue bretonne: un siècle de mutations. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 223: 7–21.
- Browne D. R. (2005). *Ethnic Minorities, Electronic Media, and the Public Sphere: A Comparative Study*. Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press Inc.
- Bruner, E. M. (1997). *Ethnography as Narrative*. In: L. P. Hinchman & S. Hinchman (eds.), *Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences*. New York: State University of New York Press. 264–280.
- Bucholtz M. (2003). Sociolinguistic Nostalgia and the Authentication of Identity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 7(3): 389–416.
- Bucholtz M. & Hall K. (2004). *Language and Identity*. In: A. Duranti (ed.), *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology* (369–394). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Budarjowa L. (ed.) (2009). *Witaj a 2plus – wužadanje za přichod / Witaj und 2plus – eine Herausforderung für die Zukunft*. Budyšin: Serbske šulske towarstwo.
- Budarjowa L. (2014). Le sorabe à l'école: les sigles Witaj et 2plus. *Revue des études slaves*, 85(2): 303–316.
- Budarjowa L. & Šolćina J. (2009). *Serbšćinu wuknyć a wučić – ewaluacija Witaj a 2plus / Sorbisch lernen und leben. Sprachstandsanalyse in ausgewählten Kindertagesstätten der Ober- und Niederlausitz*. In: L. Budarjowa (ed.), *Witaj a 2plus – wužadanje za přichod / Witaj und 2plus – eine Herausforderung für die Zukunft* (60–93). Budyšin, Serbske šulske towarstwo.
- Burszta J. (1974). *Kultura ludowa – kultura narodowa. Szkice i rozprawy*. Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza.
- Burszta J. (1975). Tradycje ludowe w Polsce współczesnej. *Kultura i Społeczeństwo*, 19(4): 91–98.
- Burszta W. J. (2011). *Wstęp: Przede wszystkim praxis*. In: W. Kloskowski (ed.), *Kierunek kultura. W stronę żywego uczestnictwa w kulturze* (9–11). Warszawa: Mazowieckie Centrum Kultury i Sztuki.
- Buszard-Welcher L. (2001). *Can the Web Help Save My Language?*. In: L. Hinton & K. Hale (eds.), *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice* (331–345). San Diego: Academic Press.
- Canagarajah S. (2011). *Diaspora Communities, Language Maintenance, and Policy Dilemmas*. In: T. L. McCarty (ed.), *Ethnography and Language Policy* (77–98). London–New York: Routledge.
- Castells M. (2010a). *The Power of Identity*. 2nd edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Castells M. (2010b). *The Rise of the Network Society*. 2nd edition. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

- Castells M. (2015). *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*. 2nd edition. Cambridge-Malden: Polity Press.
- Chauffin F. (2017). *Diwan 40 ans déjà! Ur skol e brezhoneg*. Fouesnant: Yoran Embanner.
- Chromik B. (2014). Aspekty pojęcia ideologie językowe istotne z perspektywy działań rewitalizacyjnych. *Zeszyty Łużyckie*, 48: 65–76.
- Clifford J. (1988). *The Predicament of Culture Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. Cambridge, Mass and London: Harvard University Press.
- Cohen A. P. (1985). *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. New York: Ellis Horwood Limited.
- Comaroff J. L. & Comaroff J. (2009). *Ethnicity, Inc*. Chicago-London: University Of Chicago Press.
- Combs M. C. & Penfield S. (2012). *Language Activism and Language Policy*. In: B. Spolsky (ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Policy* (461–474). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cook V. (2001). *Requirements for a Multilingual Model of Language Production*. Retrieved from: <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/vivian.c/Writings/Papers/RequirementsForMultilingualModel.htm>. (access: 30.07.2015).
- Cormack M. (2000). Minority Language Media in a Global Age. *Mercator Media Forum*, 4: 3–15.
- Corona Caraveo Y., Pérez C. & Hernández J. (2010). *Youth Participation in Indigenous Traditional Communities*. In: B. Percy-Smith & N. Thomas (ed.), *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation. Perspectives from Theory and Practice* (141–149). London–New York: Routledge.
- Costa J. (2015). New Speakers, New Language: on Being a Legitimate Speaker of a Minority Language in Provence. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 231: 127–145.
- Cotterell J. (2007). *Social Networks in Youth and Adolescence*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London–New York: Routledge.
- Coulmas F. (2005). *Sociolinguistics: the Study of Speaker's Choice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Craen van de P. (1996). *Pédagogie et linguistique de contact*. In: H. Goebel, P. H. Nele, Z. Starý & W. Wölck (eds.), *Kontaktlinguistik. Ein internationales Handbuch zeitgenössischer Forschung. Contact Linguistics. An International Handbook of Contemporary Research. Linguistique de contact. Manuel international des recherches* (81–88). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Crow G. & Allan G. (1994). *Community Life: An Introduction to Local Social Relations*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Cummins J. P. (1981). *The Role of Primary Language Development in Promoting Educational Success for Language Minority Students*. In: F. C. Leyba (ed.),

- Schooling and Language Minority Students: A Theoretical Framework* (3–49). Los Angeles, CA: California State University.
- Cunliffe D. & Herring S. C. (2005). Introduction to Minority Languages, Multimedia and the Web. *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia*, 11(2): 131–137.
- Cunliffe D., Morris D. & Prys C. (2013). *Investigating the Differential Use of Welsh in Young Speakers' Social Networks: A Comparison of Communication Face-to-face*, in *Electronic Texts and on Social Networking Sites*. In: E. H.-G. Jones & E. Uribe-Jongbloed (eds.), *Social Media and Minority Languages: Convergence and the Creative Industries* (75–86). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Czykwin E. (2007). *Stygmat społeczny*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Davies C. A. (1998). "A oes heddwch?" *Contesting Meanings and Identities in the Welsh National Eisteddfod*. In: F. Hughes-Freeland (ed.), *Ritual, Performance, Media* (141–159). London–New York: Routledge.
- Davies C. A. (2003). *Conceptualizing Community*. In: Jones S. (ed.), *Welsh Communities: New Ethnographic Perspectives*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- De Fina A. (2006). *Group Identity, Narrative and Self-Representation*. In: A. De Fina, D. Schiffrin & M. Bamberg (eds.), *Discourse and Identity* (351–375). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Defrance Y. (2004). *La musique*. In: J. Bescond (ed.), *Toutes les cultures de Bretagne*. Morlaix: Skol Vreizh.
- Della Porta D. & Diani M. (2006). *Social Movements: An Introduction*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Delon E. (2007). *Jeunes Bretons ou "l'identité enchanteresse"?*. L'Harmattan: Paris.
- Dębski R. (2008). *Od mediów przekazu do mediów uczestniczenia: kierunki i narzędzia badań*. In: R. Dębski (ed.), *Od mediów przekazu do mediów uczestniczenia. Transmisja i nauczanie języków mniejszościowych* (139–156). Kraków: Universitas.
- Dobrowolski K. (1966). *Studia nad życiem społecznym i kulturą*. Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków: Ossolineum.
- Doerr N. M. (ed.) (2009). *The Native Speaker Concept*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Dołowy-Rybińska N. (2011). *Języki i kultury mniejszościowe w Europie: Bretończycy, Łużyczanie, Kaszubi*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
- Dołowy-Rybińska N. (2013a). The Fest-nnoz: A Way to Live Breton Culture. *Colloquia Humanistica*, 2: 233–254.
- Dołowy-Rybińska N. (2013b). *Między instytucjonalizacją i folkloryzacją – kultura łużycka w NRD*. In: M. Bogusławska i Z. Grębecka (eds.), *Komunizm na peryferiach: rubieże ideologii i rzeczywistości społecznej*

- (253–272). Warszawa: Wydział Polonistyki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego; Kraków: Wydawnictwo Libron – Filip Lohner.
- Dołowy-Rybińska N. (2013c). Kaszubski dyskurs narodowościowy – spojrzenie antropologiczne. *Sprawy Narodowościowe – Seria Nowa*, 43: 107–129.
- Dołowy-Rybińska N. (2014). Les Sorabes sont-ils «une minorité modèle»? *Revue des études slaves*, 85(2): 235–250.
- Dołowy-Rybińska N. (2016). Language Attitudes and Community Engagement: Diwan – The Breton Immersion High School Through the Eyes of its Pupils. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 15(5): 280–292.
- Dołowy-Rybińska N. & Popowska-Taborska H. (2015). Czy współcześnie powstający kaszubski język literacki oraz obecnie tworzony język neobretoński mogą stanowić przedmiot dociekań badaczy językowego obrazu świata?. *Studia z Filologii Polskiej i Słowiańskiej*, 50: 270–279.
- Duchêne A. & Heller M. (2008). *Discourses of Endangerment: Sociolinguistics, Globalization and Social Order*. In: A. Duchêne & M. Heller (eds.), *Discourses of Endangerment: Ideology and Interest in the Defense of Languages* (1–13). London–New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Duchêne A. & Heller M. (ed.) (2012). *Language in Late Capitalism: Pride and Profit*. London–New York: Routledge.
- Duranti A. (1988). *Ethnography of Speaking: Towards a Linguistics of the Praxis*. In: F. J. Newmeyer (ed.), *Linguistics: The Cambridge survey*, Vol. 4. *Language: The socio-cultural context* (210–228). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Duranti A. (1997). *Linguistic Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Durkheim E. (1997). *The Division of Labour in Society*, trans. W. D. Halls. New York: Free Press.
- Eastman C. M. & Reese T. C. (1981). Associated Language: How Language and Ethnic Identity are Related. *General Linguistics*, 21(2): 109–116.
- Eastman C. (1984). *Language, Ethnic Identity and Change*. In: J. Edwards (ed.), *Linguistic Minorities, Policies and Pluralism* (259–276). London–Orlando: Academic Press.
- Eastman C. (1992). *Codeswitching*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Eckert P. (1998). *Age as a Sociolinguistic Variable*. In: F. Coulmas (ed.), *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics* (151–167). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Eckert P. & McConnell-Ginet S. (1992). Think Practically and Look Locally: Language and Gender as Community-based Practice. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 21: 461–490.
- Eckert P. & Wenger E. (1994). *Transition from School to Work: An Apprenticeship in Institutional Identity*. In: *Working Papers on Learning and Identity*, 1. Palo

- Alto: Institute for Research on Learning*. Retrieved from: <https://www.stanford.edu/~eckert/PDF/transition.pdf>. (access: 20.04.2015).
- Eckert P., Goldman S. & Wenger E. (1997). *The School as a Community of Engaged Learners*. Report no. 17.101, Institute for Research on Learning, Menlo Park, CA. Retrieved from: <http://www.stanford.edu/~eckert/PDF/SasCEL.pdf>. (access: 15.04.2015).
- Edensor T. (2002). *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*. Oxford-New York: Berg.
- Edwards J. (1994a). *Language, Diversity and Identity*. In: J. Edwards (ed.), *Linguistic Minorities, Policies and Pluralism* (277–310). London–Orlando: Academic Press.
- Edwards J. (1994b). *Multilingualism*. London–New York: Routledge.
- Edwards J. (1996). *Language, Prestige and Stigma*. In: H. Goebel, P. H. Nele, Z. Starý & W. Wölck (eds.), *Kontaktlinguistik. Ein internationales Handbuch zeitgenössischer Forschung. Contact Linguistics. An International Handbook of Contemporary Research. Linguistique de contact. Manuel international des recherches* (703–708). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Edwards J. (2009). *Language and Identity: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ehala M. (2015). *Ethnolinguistic Vitality*. In: K. Tracy, C. Ilie & T. Sandel (eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction* (1–7). New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Ela L. (1998). *Etno- a sociolingwistiska sytuacja serbszciny*. In: H. Faska (ed.), *Serbszcina* (73–78). Opole: Uniwersytet Opolski – Instytut Filologii Polskiej.
- Elégoët F. (1978). *Nous ne savions que le breton et il fallait parler français. Mémoires d'un paysan du Léon*. Plabennec: Breizh Hor Bro.
- Elle K. (2013). Von Geiz bis Gastfreundschaft. Analyse eines Stereotypsystems am Beispiel der Oberlausitzer Sorben. *Lětopis – Zeitschrift für sorbische Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur*, 60. Bautzen: Domowina Verlag.
- Elle L. (1992). *Sorbische Kultur und ihre Rezipienten. Ergebnisse einer ethnosozilogischen Befragung*. Bautzen: Domowina Verlag.
- Elle L. (2010a). *Die Domowina in der DDR. Aufbau und Funktionsweise einer Minderheitenorganisation im staatlich-administrativen Sozialismus*. Bautzen: Domowina Verlag.
- Elle L. (2010b). *Sorben – demographische und statistische Aspekte*. In: M. T. Vogt, J. Neyer, D. Bingen & J. Sokol (eds.), *Minderheiten als Mehrwert* (309–318). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Elle L. (2011). *Wie viele Sorben gibt es – noch? Oder: Kann un soll man Minderheiten zählen?* In: E. Tschernokoshewa & I. Keller (eds.), *Dialogische Begegnungen. Minderheiten – Mehrheiten aus hybridologischer Sicht* (209–223). Münster–New York–München–Berlin: Waxmann.

- Elle L. (2014). *Sprachenpolitik in der Lausitz. Sprachenpolitik und Sprachenrecht im deutsch-sorbischen Gebiet 1990 bis 2014*. Bautzen: Sorbisches Institut.
- Eller J. & Coughlan R. (1993). The Poverty of Primordialism: the Demystification of Ethnic Attachments. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 16(2): 183–202.
- Ellison N. B., Steinfield C. & Lampe C. (2007). The Benefits of Facebook “Friends”: Social Capital and College Students’ Use of Online Social Network Sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12(4): 1143–1168.
- Eriksen T. H. (1995). *Small Places, Large Issues: An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology*. London: Pluto Press.
- Eriksen T. H. (2001). *Ethnic Identity, National Identity, and Intergroup Conflict*. In: R. D. Ashmore, L. Jussim & D. Wilder (eds.), *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict, and Conflict Reduction* (42–68). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eriksen T. H. (2010). *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*. 3rd Edition. London: Pluto Press.
- Erikson E. H. (1975). *Life History and the Historical Moment*. New York: Norton.
- Eurostat (2011). *Cultural Statistics. Edition 2011*. Retrieved from: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-32-10-374/EN/KS-32-10-374-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-32-10-374/EN/KS-32-10-374-EN.PDF). (access: 18.05.2015).
- Faska H. (ed.) (1998). *Serbščina*. Opole: Uniwersytet Opolski – Instytut Filologii Polskiej.
- Favereau F. (2005). *Bretagne contemporaine: Langue, culture, identité*. Morlaix: Skol Vreizh.
- Feng-fang T. (2009). *Gendered Ethnicity – Ethnicized Gender: Traditional Costumes as an Expression of Ethnic Identity? Three Case Studies of Sorbian Women*. In: I. Keller & L. Scholze-Irritz (eds.), *Trachten als Phänomen der Gegenwart* (33–41). Bautzen: Domowina-Verlag.
- Ferguson G. (2006). *Language Planning and Education*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Fishman J. A. (1968). *Sociolinguistics and the Language Problems of the Developing Countries*. In: J. A. Fishman, C. A. Ferguson & J. Das Gupta (eds.), *Language Problems of Developing Nations* (3–16). New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Fishman J. A. (1991). *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Foucault M. (1991). *Governmentality*. In: G. Burchell, C. Gordon & P. Miller (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (87–104). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fowler C. (2001). *Analysing the Welsh Identity*. Welsh Governance Centre/Canolfan llywodraethiant Cymru, Cardiff University/Prifysgol Caerdydd (Working Papers IV).

- Franz C. E. & McClelland D. C. (1994). Lives of Woman and Men Active in the Social Protests of the 1960s. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 66(1): 196–205.
- Gandhi L. (1998). *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Gantfort C., Roth H.-J., Migai N. & Gogolin I. (2009). *Sorbisch-deutsche Schulen in Sachsen: Ergebnisse zur Sprachentwicklung in der Grundschule*. Universität Hamburg, Universität zu Köln.
- Gantfort C., Roth H.-J., Migai N. & Gogolin I. (2010). *Sorbisch-deutsche Schulen in Sachsen: Ergebnisse zur Sprachentwicklung in der Sekundarstufe*. Universität Hamburg, Universität zu Köln.
- Garabato C. A. (2013). *De la loi Deixonne à la révision de la Constitution en 2008 : l'impasse idéologique ?*. In: G. Kremnitz (ed.), *Histoire sociale des langues de France* (321–337). Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
- García, O. & Li Wei. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Geertz C. (1963). *The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States*. In C. Geertz (ed.), *Old Societies and New States: the quest for modernity in Asia and Africa* (105–157). New York: Free Press.
- Gergen K. J. (1999). *Social Construction and the Transformation of Identity Politics*. Retrieved from: [http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu/documents/30887409/Social\\_Construction\\_and\\_the\\_Transformation.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ56TQJRTWSMTNPEA&Expires=1448380546&Signature=7FfcjVjFCxVCvZBjDpIpAWf1rmE%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DSocial\\_Construction\\_and\\_the\\_Transformati.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu/documents/30887409/Social_Construction_and_the_Transformation.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ56TQJRTWSMTNPEA&Expires=1448380546&Signature=7FfcjVjFCxVCvZBjDpIpAWf1rmE%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DSocial_Construction_and_the_Transformati.pdf) (access: 20.01.2015).
- Giddens A. (1990). *The Consequences of Modernity*. London: Polity Press.
- Giddens A. (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. London: Polity Press.
- Giedroń M., Kowalewska D. & Mieczkowska M. (eds.) (2012). *Mobilizacja i etniczność: procesy mobilizacji mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych w województwie zachodniopomorskim na tle doświadczeń grup narodowościowych w innych regionach*. Szczecin: IPIE US.
- Giles H., Bourhis R. & Taylor D. (1977). *Towards a Theory of Language in Ethnic Group Relations*. In: H. Giles (ed.), *Language, Ethnicity, and Intergroup Relation* (307–348). New York: Academic Press.
- Gitlin T. (2003). *Letters to a Young Activist*. New York: Basic Books.
- Goalabre F. (2011). The Choice of Bilingual Schools in Language Shift Situation in Brittany and in the Western Isles of Scotland. *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 31: 118–136.



- Godlewski G., Kurz I., Mencwel A. & Wójtowski M. (eds.) (2002). *Animacja kultury. Doświadczenie i przyszłość*. Warszawa: Instytut Kultury Polskiej UW.
- Godlewski G. (2002). *Animacja i antropologia*. In: G. Godlewski, I. Kurz, A. Mencwel & M. Wójtowski (eds.), *Animacja kultury. Doświadczenie i przyszłość* (56–67). Warszawa: Instytut Kultury Polskiej UW.
- Godlewski G. (2016). *Antropologia praktyk językowych: wprowadzenie*. In: G. Godlewski, A. Karpowicz & M. Rakoczy (eds.), *Antropologia praktyk językowych* (7–80). Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
- Goffman E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Goody J. (1968). *Literacy in Traditional Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Goody J. (1986). *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society (Studies in Literacy, the Family, Culture and the State)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Grad J. (1997). *Badanie uczestnictwa w kulturze artystycznej w polskiej socjologii kultury*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM.
- Grenoble L. A. & Whaley L. J. (2006). *Saving Languages: An Introduction to Language Revitalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Grin F. (2003). *Language Policy Evaluation and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Grinevald C. & Bert M. (2011). *Speakers and Communities*. In: P. K. Austin & J. Sallabank (eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Endangered Languages* (45–65). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gruffudd H. (2000). *Planning for the Use of Welsh by Young People*. In: C. H. Williams (ed.), *Language Revitalization: Policy and Planning in Wales* (173–207). Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Haarmann H. (1986). *Language in Ethnicity: A View of Basic Ecological Relations*. Berlin–New York–Amsterdam: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Haarmann H. (1990). *Language Planning in the Light of a General Theory of Language: a Methodological Framework*. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 86(1): 103–126.
- Hagège C. (2006). *Combat pour le français: au nom de la diversité des langues et des cultures*. Paris: Éditions Odile Jacob.
- Hall E. T. (1976). *Beyond Culture*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Hart D. & Lakin Gullan R. (2010). *The Sources of Adolescent Activism: Historical and Contemporary Findings*. In: L. R. Sherrod, J. Torney-Purta & C. A. Flanagan (eds.), *Handbook of Research on Civic Engagement in Youth* (67–90). New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

- Heller M. (1995). Language Choice, Social Institutions and Symbolic Domination. *Language in Society*, 24: 373–405.
- Heller M. (2006). *Linguistic Minorities and Modernity: A Sociolinguistic Ethnography*. London–New York: Continuum.
- Heller M. (2008). Language and the Nation-State: Challenges to Sociolinguistic Theory and Practice. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 12(4): 504–524.
- Heller, M. & Martin-Jones, M. (2001). *Introduction: Symbolic Domination, Education, and Linguistic Difference*. In: M. Heller & M. Martin-Jones (eds.), *Voices of Authority: Education and Linguistic Difference* (1–28). Westport, CT: Ablex Publishing.
- Henri F. & Pudelko B. (2003). Understanding and Analysing Activity and Learning in Virtual Communities. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 19: 474–487.
- Hinton L. (2001). *New Writing Systems*. In: L. Hinton & K. Hale (eds.), *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice* (239–250). San Diego: Academic Press.
- Hinton L. & Hale K. (eds.) (2001). *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Hobsbawm E. (1983). *Introduction: Inventing Traditions*. In: E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (1–14). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hobsbawm E. & Ranger T. (eds.) (1983). *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hodges R. (2009). Welsh Language Use Among Young People in the Rhymni Valley. *Contemporary Wales*, 22(1): 16–35.
- Hodges R. (2012). Welsh-medium Education and Parental Incentives – the Case of the Rhymni Valley, Caerffili. *International Journal of Bilingualism and Bilingual Education*, 15(3): 355–373.
- Hodges R. (2014). Caught in the Middle: Parents’ Perceptions of New Welsh Speakers’ Language Use: The Case of Cwm Rhymni, South Wales. *Zeszyty Lużyckie*, 48: 93–113.
- Hornberger N. H. (ed.) (2008). *Can Schools Save Indigenous Languages? Policy and Practice on Four Continents*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hornsby M. (2005). “Néo-breton” and Questions of Authenticity. *Estudios de Sociolinguística*, 6(2): 191–218.
- Hornsby M. (2010). *The Ideology of Monolingualism as “Standard” in Brittany*. In: M. Watson and L. Milligan (eds.), *From Vestiges to the Very Day: New Voices in Celtic Studies* (67–75). Aberdeen: AHRC Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies.

- Hornsby M. (2014). 'Une prononciation déficiente, francisée': The Debate over an "Authentic" Accent in Revitalized Breton. *Zeszyty Łużyckie*, 48: 149–171.
- Hornsby M. & Nolan J. S. (2011). *The Regional Languages of Brittany*. In: J. A. Fishman & O. García (eds.), *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity: The Success-Failure Continuum in Language and Ethnic Identity Efforts* (310–322), Vol. 2. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hornsby M. & Quentel G. (2013). Contested Varieties and Competing Authenticities: Neologisms in Revitalized Breton. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 223: 71–86.
- Hudley A. H. (2013). *Sociolinguistics and Social Activism*. In: R. Bayley, R. Cameron & C. Lucas (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Sociolinguistics* (812–831). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hymes D. (1986) [1972]. *Models of the Interaction of Language and Social Life. (Revised from 1967 Paper)*. In: J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (eds.), *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication* (35–71). Oxford–New York: Blackwell.
- Hymes D. (2001) [1974]. *Foundations in Sociolinguistic: An Ethnographic Approach*. London–New York: Routledge.
- Ilowiecka-Tańska I. (2011). *Liderzy i działacze*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
- Jacyno M. (2004). *Strategie rekonstrukcji przeszłości w autonarracji biograficznej*. In: J. Kurczewska (red.), *Oblicza lokalności. Tradycja i współczesność* (133–147). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IFiSPAN.
- Jaffe A. (2011). *Critical Perspectives on Language-in-Education Policy: The Corsican Example*. In: T. L. McCarty (ed.), *Ethnography and Language Policy* (205–229). London–New York: Routledge.
- Jenkins G. H. & Williams M. A. (2000). *The Fortunes of the Welsh Language 1900–2000. Introduction*. In: G. H. Jenkins & M. A. Williams (eds.), "Let's do our best for the ancient tongue": *The Welsh Language in the Twentieth Century* (1–27). Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Jentsch H. (1999). *Die Entwicklung der Lexik der obersorbischen Schriftsprache vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zum Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Bautzen: Domowina Verlag.
- Jigourel T. (2009). *Festou-noz. Histoire et actualité d'une fête populaire*. Tours: Communication Presse Edition.
- Johnes M. (2000). Eighty Minute Patriots? National Identity and Sport in Modern Wales. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 17(4): 93–110.
- Jones E. H. G. (2007). *The Territory of Television: S4C and the Representation of the "Whole of Wales"*. In: M. Cormack & N. Hourigan (eds.), *Minority Language*

- Media: Concepts, Critiques and Case Studies* (188–210). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Jones H. M. (2008). The Changing Social Context of Welsh: A Review of Statistical Trends. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 11(5): 541–557.
- Jones H. M. (2012). *A Statistical Overview of the Welsh Language*, Welsh Language Board. Retrieved from: [http://poliglotti4.eu/docs/A\\_statistical\\_overview\\_of\\_the\\_Welsh\\_languagef2.pdf](http://poliglotti4.eu/docs/A_statistical_overview_of_the_Welsh_languagef2.pdf). (access: 12.03.2015).
- Jones M. C. (1998a). *Language Obsolescence and Revitalization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jones M. C. (1998b). Death of a Language, Birth of an Identity: Brittany and the Bretons. *Language Problems and Language Planning*, 22(2): 129–142.
- Kalinowski P. (ed.) (2006). *Catering dziedzictwa kulturowego? Kaszubi i Kaszuby w oczach etnologów*. Gdynia: Region.
- Kamusella T. (2013). *Szlonzocy (Ślązacy) i ich język: pomiędzy Niemcami, Polską a szlonskim (śląskim) nacjonalizmem*. Zabrze: Narodowa Oficyna Śląska.
- Kassimir R. (2006). *Youth Activism: International and Transnational*. In: L. R. Sherrod, C. A. Flanagan, R. Kassimir & A. S. Syvertsen (eds.), *Youth Activism: An International Encyclopedia* (20–28). Connecticut–London: Greenwood Press.
- Kempny M. (2004). *Wspólnota i polityka tożsamości jako sposoby organizacji kulturowej różnorodności – o potrzebie nowej topiki teorii społecznej w dobie globalizacji*. In: M. Jacyno, A. Jawłowska & M. Kempny (eds.), *Kultura w czasach globalizacji* (179–198). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IFiSPAN.
- Kennelly J. (2011). *Citizen Youth: Culture, Activism, and Agency in a Neoliberal Era*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- King A. (1999). Legitimizing Post-Fordism: A Critique of Anthony Giddens' Later Works. *TELOS*, 115: 61–77.
- Klatch R. E. (1999). *A Generation Divided: The New Right, the New Left, and the 1960s*. Berkeley–Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Kloss H. (1967). “Abstand” Languages and “Ausbau” Languages. *Anthropological Linguistics*, 9(7): 29–41.
- Kloss, H. (1969). *Research Possibilities on Group Bilingualism: a Report*. Quebec: International Center for Research on Bilingualism.
- Kłoskowska A. (1972). *Spoleczne ramy kultury*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Kłoskowska A. (1981). *Socjologia kultury*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Kłoskowska A. (2001). *National Cultures at the Grass-root Level*. Budapest/ New York: Central European University Press.

- Krajewski M. (2013). W kierunku relacyjnej koncepcji uczestnictwa w kulturze. *Kultura i Społeczeństwo*, 1: 29–67.
- Kremnitz G. (2013). *Questions de terminologie et de concepts*. In: G. Kremnitz (ed.), *Histoire sociale des langues de France* (103–112). Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
- Kroskirty P. (2000). *Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Politics and Identities*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.
- Kulesza M. (2006). *Chcemë le so zažec? Zażywanie tabaki na Kaszubach wczoraj i dziś*. In: P. Kalinowski (ed.), *Catering dziedzictwa kulturowego? Kaszubi i Kaszuby w oczach etnologów* (241–272). Gdynia: Region.
- Kwaśniewska A. (2007). *Regionalna kultura kaszubska a tożsamość*. In: C. Obracht-Prondzyński (ed.), *Kim są Kaszubi? Nowe tendencje w badaniach społecznych* (204–218). Gdańsk: Instytut Kaszubski w Gdańsku.
- Langer R. (2005). Was ist Tradition? Identität im 21. Jahrhundert in der zweisprachigen Lausitz. *Lětopis – Zeitschrift für sorbische Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur*, 52(1): 104–116.
- Lanza E. & Svendsen B. A. (2007). Tell me who your friends are and I might be able to tell you what language(s) you speak: Social Network Analysis, Multilingualism, and Identity. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 11(3): 275–300.
- Lave J. (1991). *Situating Learning in Communities of Practice*. In: L. B. Resnick, J. M. Levine & S. D. Teasley (eds.), *Perspectives on Socially shared Cognition* (63–82). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Lave J. & Wenger E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lavoie G. (1986). Identité ethnique et folklorisation: le cas des mongols de Chine. *Anthropologie et société*, 10(2): 57–74.
- Le Coadic R. (1998). *L'identité bretonne*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
- Lee D. & Newby H. (1983). *The Problem of Sociology: An Introduction to the Discipline*. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Le Nevez A. (2006). *Language Diversity and Linguistic Identity in Brittany: A Critical Analysis of the Changing Practice of Breton*. Sydney: University of Technology.
- Le Page R. B. & Tabouret-Keller A. (1985). *Acts of Identity: Creol-based approaches to Language and Ethnicity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Le Pipec E. (2013). Les trois ruptures sociolinguistiques du Breton. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 223: 103–116.
- Levinson M. (2010). *The Civic Empowerment Gap: Defining the Problem and Locating Solutions*. In: L. R. Sherrod, J. Torney-Purta & C. A. Flanagan

- (eds.), *Handbook of Research on Civic Engagement in Youth* (331–362). New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- Lewicka M. (1993). *Mechanizmy zaangażowania i kontroli w działaniu człowieka*. In: M. Kofta (ed.), *Psychologia aktywności: zaangażowanie, sprawstwo, bezradność* (15–62). Poznań: Nakom.
- Lippi-Green R. (2012). *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London–New York: Routledge.
- Lippmann W. (1965). *Public Opinion*. New York: The Free Press; London: Collier Macmillan Publishers.
- Lister M., Dovey J., Giddings S., Grant I. & Kieran K. (2009). *New Media: A Critical Introduction*. London–New York: Routledge.
- Litwinowicz M. (n.d.). *Społeczeństwo obywatelskie, w: Teraz! Animacja kultury*. Warszawa: Stowarzyszenie Katedra Kultury. Retrieved from: [http://www.wpek.pl/pi/85043\\_1.pdf](http://www.wpek.pl/pi/85043_1.pdf). (access: 12.07.2015).
- Lubaś M. (2008). *Wprowadzenie. Tradycja a zmiana społeczna*. In: G. Kubica & M. Lubaś (eds.), *Tworzenie i odtwarzanie kultury. Tradycja jako wymiar zmian społecznych. Studia z dziedziny antropologii społecznej* (7–29). Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.
- Łodziński S. (2007). *Między grupą etniczną a społecznością posługującą się językiem regionalnym. Ewolucja statusu prawnego Kaszubów w polityce państwa w Polsce po 1989 roku*. In: C. Obracht-Prondzyński (ed.), *Kim są Kaszubi? Nowe tendencje w badaniach społecznych* (145–169). Gdańsk: Instytut Kaszubski w Gdańsku.
- Łodziński S. (2010). *Polityka wobec mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych w Polsce w latach 1945–2008*. In: S. Dudra & B. Nitsche (eds.), *Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne w Polsce po II wojnie światowej* (13–24). Kraków: NOMOS.
- Mackay H. (2010). *Rugby – An introduction to Contemporary Wales*. In: H. Mackay (ed.), *Understanding Contemporary Wales* (1–23). Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Madeg M. (2010). *Traité de prononciation du breton du nord-ouest*. Brest: Emgleo Breiz.
- Maffesoli M. (1996). *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of the Individualism in Mass Society*, trans. D. Smith. London-Thousand Oaks-New Dehli: Sage Publications.
- Mahmood S. (1996). Talal Asad: Modern Power and the Reconfiguration of Religious Traditions. *SEHR*, 5(1). Retrieved from: <https://web.stanford.edu/group/SHR/5-1/text/asad.html>
- Malešević S. & Haugaard M. (2002). *Introduction: The Idea of Collectivity*. In: S. Malešević & M. Haugaard (eds.), *Making Sense of Collectivity. Ethnicity, nationalism and globalization* (1–11). London–Sterling, Virginia: Pluto Press.
- Malink J. (2014). Les protestants sorabes. *Revue des études slaves*, 85(2): 265–272.

- Marti R. (2014). Haut- et bas-sorabe: une cohabitation linguistique difficile. *Revue des études slaves*, 85(2): 215–233.
- Martin P. J. (2004). *Culture, Subculture and Social Organization*. In: A. Bennett & K.Kahn-Harris (eds.), *After Subculture. Critical Studies in Contemporary Youth Culture* (21–35). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Martin-Jones M. (2011). *Languages, Texts, and Literacy Practices: An Ethnographic Lens on Bilingual Vocational Education in Wales*. In: T. McCarthy (ed.), *Ethnography and Language Policy* (231–253). London–New York: Routledge.
- Mazurek M. (2010). *Język, przestrzeń, pochodzenie. Analiza tożsamości kaszubskiej*. Gdańsk: Instytut Kaszubski.
- McCarthy T. L. (2008). *Schools as Strategic Tools for Indigenous Language Revitalization: Lessons from Native America*. In: N. Hornberger (ed.), *Can Schools Save Indigenous Languages? Policy and Practice on four Continents* (161–179). Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- McCarthy T. L. (ed.) (2011). *Ethnography and Language Policy*. London–New York: Routledge.
- McCarthy T. L., Romero-Little M. E., Warhol L. & Zepeda O. (2012). *Critical Ethnography and Indigenous Languages Survival: Some New Directions in Language Policy Research and Praxis*. In: T. McCarthy (ed.), *Ethnography and Language Policy* (31–52). London–New York: Routledge.
- McDonald M. (1989). *“We are not French!”: Language, Culture, and Identity in Brittany*. London–New York: Routledge.
- McIntosh H. & Youniss J. (2010). *Toward a Political Theory of Political Socialization of Youth*. In: L. R. Sherrod, J. Torney-Purta & C. A. Flanagan (eds.), *Handbook of Research on Civic Engagement in Youth* (23–42). New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- McLuhan M. (1964). *Understanding Media: The Extension of Men*. Cambridge, MA–London: The MIT Press.
- Mencwel A. (2006). *Wyobrażenia antropologiczne. Próby i studia*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
- Mercator (2014). *The Welsh Language in Education in UK*. Regional Dossiers Series. Retrieved from: [http://www.mercator-research.eu/fileadmin/mercator/dossiers\\_pdf/Welsh\\_in\\_the\\_UK\\_2nd.pdf](http://www.mercator-research.eu/fileadmin/mercator/dossiers_pdf/Welsh_in_the_UK_2nd.pdf) (access: 24.01.2015).
- Micheau-Vernez M., Valy J.-J. & Brékilien Y. (1984). *Un cercle celtique. 1948–1983: réflexions sur le mouvement des cercles en Bretagne*. Lorient: Institut culturel de Bretagne.
- Mieczkowska M. (2012). *“A serbsce?” jako przykład działań na rzecz praw językowych mniejszości serbołużycyckiej*. In: M. Giedroń, D. Kowalewska & M. Mieczkowska (eds.), *Mobilizacja a etniczność. Procesy mobilizacji mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych w województwie zachodniopomorskim*

- na tle doświadczeń grup narodowościowych w innych regionach* (27–34). Szczecin: IPIE US.
- Miles S., Dallas C. & Burr V. (1998). “Fitting in and Sticking out”: Consumption, Consumer Meanings and the Construction of Young People’s Identities. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 1: 81–91.
- Miles S., Pohl A. Banha R., Manuel B. & Do Carmo Gomes M. (2002). *Communities of Youth. Cultural Practice and Informal Learning*. Burlington: Ashgate.
- Mordawski J. (2005). *Statystyka ludności kaszubskiej. Kaszubi u progu XXI wieku*. Gdańsk: Instytut Kaszubski.
- Morgan P. (1983). *From a Death to a View: the Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period*. In: E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (43–100). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Moring T. (2007). *Functional Completeness in Minority Language Media*. In: M. Cormack & N. Hourigan (eds.), *Minority Language Media: Concepts, Critiques and Case Studies* (17–33). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Morris D. (2010). *Young People and their Use of the Welsh*. In: M. Delyth (ed.), *Welsh in the Twenty-First Century* (80–98). Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Morris J. (2014). The Influence of Social Factors on Minority Language Engagement amongst Young People: An Investigation of Welsh-English Bilinguals in North Wales. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 230: 65–89.
- Morris P. (1996). *Community Beyond Tradition*. In: P. Heelas, S. Lash & P. Morris (eds.), *Detraditionalization. Critical Reflections on Authority and Identity* (223–249). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Morrone A. (2006). *Guidelines for Measuring Cultural Participation*. UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Retrieved from: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/culpart06.pdf>. (access: 12.07.2015).
- Muggelton D. (2000). *Inside Subculture: The Postmodern Meaning of Style (Dress, Body, Culture)*. Oxford: Berg.
- Munira M. (2006). *The Arts as Painkiller*. In: M. Munira (ed.), *Culture Vultures. Is UK Arts Policy Damaging the Arts?* (93–110). London: Policy Exchange.
- Muysken P. (1995). *Code-Switching and Grammatical Theory*. In: L. Milroy & P. Muysken (eds.), *One Speaker, two Languages: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Code-Switching* (177–198). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nacel J. (2013). *Chemiô ôglowô i ôrganicznô*. Gdańsk: Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie.
- Nettle D. & Romaine S. (2000). *Vanishing Voices. The Extinction of the World’s Languages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Newcombe L. P. (2007). *Social Context and Fluency in L2 Learners. The Case of Wales*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.



- Nicholas S. (2009). "I live Hopi, I just don't speak it": The Critical Intersection of Language, Culture, and Identity in the Lives of Contemporary Hopi youth. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 8(5): 321–334.
- Nicholas S. (2011). "How are you Hopi if you can't speak it?": An Ethnographic Study of Language as Cultural Practice Among Contemporary Hopi youth. In: T. L. McCarty (ed.), *Ethnography and Language Policy* (53–75). London–New York: Routledge.
- Nicolas M. (1982). *Histoire du mouvement breton*. Paris: Syros.
- Nicolas M. (2001). *Bretagne, un destin européen ou la Bretagne et le fédéralisme en Europe*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
- Nicolas M. (2007). *Histoire de la revendication bretonne ou la revanche de la démocratie locale sur le « démocratism »: des origines jusqu'aux années 1980*. Spézet: Coop Breizh.
- Nicolas M. (2012). *Breizh. La Bretagne revendiquée: des années 1980 à nos jours*. Morlaix: Skol Vreizh.
- Nijakowski L. M. (ed.) (2004). *Nadciągają Ślązacy: czy istnieje narodowość śląska?* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.
- Nijakowski L. M. (2009). *Tworzenie, odtwarzanie, niszczenie i zanikanie granic między grupami etnicznymi*. In: L. M. Nijakowski (ed.), *Etniczność, pamięć, asymilacja: wokół problemów zachowania tożsamości mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych* (48–74). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe.
- Norberg M. (1996). *Sprachwchselfprozeß in der Niederlausitz: Soziolinguistische Fallstudie der Deutsch-Sorbischen Gemeinde Drachhausen/Hochoza*. Uppsala: Studia Slavica Uppsalsensia.
- Norberg M. (ed.) (2006). *Das bilinguale Sprachprogramm WITAJ in der Kindertagesstätte und in der Schule in der Niederlausitz. Einblicke und Ausblicke*. Bautzen: WITAJ-Sprachzentrum.
- Nowicka E. (2006). *Etniczność na sprzedaż i/lub etniczność domowa*. In: L. Adamczuk & S. Łodziński (ed.), *Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce w świetle Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego z 2002 roku* (285–301). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.
- Obracht-Prondzyński C. (2002). *Kaszubi. Między dyskryminacją a regionalną podmiotowością*. Gdańsk: Instytut Kaszubski, Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego.
- Obracht-Prondzyński C. (2003). *W kręgu problematyki kaszubsko-pomorskiej. Studia i szkice*. Gdańsk–Wejherowo: Muzeum Piśmiennictwa i Muzyki Kaszubsko-Pomorskiej w Wejherowie, Instytut Kaszubski.
- Olcoń-Kubicka M. (2009). *Indywidualizacja a nowe formy wspólnotowości*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.
- Olzac S. (1983). Contemporary Ethnic Mobilization. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 9: 355–374.

- Ong W. (2002). *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World*. London-New York: Routledge.
- Ortner S. B. (1995). Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 37(1): 173–193.
- O'Rourke B. (2011). Whose Language is it? Struggles for Language Ownership in an Irish Language Classroom. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 10: 327–345.
- O'Rourke B. & Ramallo F. (2013). Competing Ideologies of Linguistic Authority amongst “New Speakers” in Contemporary Galicia. *Language in Society*, 42(3): 287–305.
- O'Rourke B. & Ramallo F. (2015). Neofalantes as an Active Minority: Understanding Language Practices and Motivations for Change amongst New Speakers of Galician. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 231: 147–165.
- O'Rourke B., Ramallo F. & Pujolar J. (2015). New Speakers of Minority Languages: the Challenging Opportunity. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 231: 1–20.
- Pasieka A. (2015). *Hierarchy and Pluralism: Living Religious Difference in Catholic Poland*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pawluczuk W. (1978). *Żywioł i forma: wstęp do badań empirycznych nad kulturą współczesną*. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy.
- Pennycook A. (1994). *The Cultural Politics of English as International Language*. London–New York: Longman.
- Pennycook A. (2006). *Postmodernism in Language Policy*. In: T. Ricento (ed.), *An Introduction to Language Policy* (60–76). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Pentecouteau H. (2002). *Devenir bretonnant. Découvertes, apprentissages et réappropriations d'une langue*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
- Perazzi J.-C. (1998). *Diwan, vingt ans d'enthousiasme, de doute et d'espoir*. Spézet: Coop Breizh.
- Percy-Smith B. & Thomas N. (eds.) (2010). *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation: Perspectives from Theory and Practice*. London–New York: Routledge.
- Phillips D. (2000). *The History of the Welsh Language Society 1962–1998*. In: G. H. Jenkins & M. A. Williams (eds.), *Let's do our Best for the Ancient Tongue. The Welsh Language in the Twentieth Century* (463–490). Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Piwowska D. (n.d.). *Uczestnictwo, w: Teraz! Animacja kultury*. Warszawa: Stowarzyszenie Katedra Kultury. Retrieved from: [http://www.wpek.pl/pi/85043\\_1.pdf](http://www.wpek.pl/pi/85043_1.pdf). (access: 15.07.2015).

- Polinsky M. & Kagan O. (2007). Heritage Languages: In the “Wild” and in the Classroom. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 1(5): 368–395.
- Popowska-Taborska H. (1998). *Szkice z kaszubszczyzny. Leksyka – zabytki – kontakty językowe*. Gdańsk: Gdańskie Towarzystwo Naukowe.
- Porębska M. (2006). *Das Kaschubische: Sprachtod oder Revitalisierung?: Empirische Studien zur ethnolinguistischen Vitalität einer Sprachminderheit in Polen*. München: Otto Sagner.
- Posern-Zieliński A. (1982). *Tradycja a etniczność: przemiany kultury Polonii amerykańskiej*. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich.
- Posern-Zieliński A. (2005). *Etniczność. Kategorie. Procesy etniczne*. Poznań: Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk.
- Postill J. & Pink S. (2012). *Social Media Ethnography: The Digital Research in a Messy Web*. Retrieved from: <http://blogs.bournemouth.ac.uk/research/files/2013/04/Postill-Pink-socialmedia-ethnography.pdf>. (access: 16.04.2015).
- Price E. (2013). A Cultural Exchange: S4C, Channel 4 and Film. *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 33(3): 418–433.
- Pujolar J. & González I. (2012). Linguistic “Mudes” and the Deethnicization of Language Choice in Catalonia. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 16(2): 138–152.
- Pujolar J. & Puigdevall M. (2015). Linguistic “Mudes”: How to Become a New Speaker in Catalonia. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 231: 167–187.
- Putnam R. D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks.
- Rainie L. & Wellman B. (2012). *Networked: The New Social Operating System*. Cambridge, MA–London: The MIT Press.
- Rakowski T. (ed.) (2013). *Etnografia/animacja/sztuka. Nierozpoznane wymiary rozwoju kulturowego*. Warszawa: Narodowe Centrum Kultury.
- Ramallo, F. (2013). *Neofalantismo*. In: E. Gugenberger, H. Montegudo & G. Rei-Doval (eds.), *Contactode linguas, hibridade, cambio: contextos, procesos e consecuencias* (245–258). Santiago de Compostela: Consello da Cultura Galega.
- Rampton B (1995). *Crossing: Language and Ethnicity among Adolescents*. London: Longman.
- Ratajczak C. (2009). “Sorbisch is schon o.k. – aber nicht hier in Deutschland”. *Erste Ergebnisse einer Befragung Bautzner Schüler über ihre Einstellung zur sorbischen Sprache*. In: C. Prunitsch (ed.), *Konzeptualisierung und Status Kleiner Kulturen* (373–388). München–Berlin: Verlag Otto Sagner.
- Ratajczak C. (2011). Vom Image einer Minderheitensprache – Erfahrungen und Einstellungen Bautzener Schüler zum Sorbischen. *Lëtöpis – Zeitschrift für sorbische Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur*, 58. Bautzen: Domowina Verlag.

- Rheingold H. (n.d.). *The Virtual Community*. Retrieved from: <http://www.rheingold.com/vc/book/intro.html> (access: 18.04.2015).
- Riggins S. H. (1992). *The Media Imperative: Ethnic Minority Survival in the Age of Mass Communication*. In: S. H. Riggins (ed.), *Ethnic Minority Media: An International Perspective* (1–20). Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Rindler-Schjerve R. & Vetter E. (2012). *European Multilingualism – Challenges and Perspectives*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Robert E. (2009). Accommodating “New” Speakers? An Attitudinal Investigation of L2 Speakers of Welsh in South-East Wales. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 195: 93–115.
- Robins T. & Webster C. (2000). *Between Nation and Animation: The Fear of a Mickey Mouse Planet*. In: S. Blandford (ed.), *Wales on Screen* (110–127). Bridgend: Seren.
- Rochon T. R. (1998). *Culture Moves: Ideas, Activism, and Changing Values*. Princeton-New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Romaine S. (1994). *Language in Society: An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. London: Blackwell.
- Sahlins M. (1999). Two or Three Things that I Know about Culture. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 5(3): 399–421.
- Said E. (1978). *Orientalism*. London: Penguin.
- Sallabank J. (2013). *Attitudes to Endangered Languages: Identities and Policies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sapir E. (1949). *Selected Writings in Language, Culture and Personality*, ed. D. Mandelbaum. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Schieffelin B., Woolard K. & Kroskrity P. (eds.) (1998). *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schiffman H. F. (1996). *Linguistic Culture and Language Policy*. London–New York: Routledge.
- Scholze D. (2011). *Religia i narodowość katolickich Serbołużyczan na Górnych Łużyczach*. In: E. Golachowska & A. Zielińska (eds.), *Wokół religii i jej języka* (57–68). Warszawa: Slawistyczny Ośrodek Wydawniczy.
- Schork M. (2008). Das sorbische Osterreiten in der Oberlausitz. *Sociologische Reflexionen. Lětopis – Zeitschrift für sorbische Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur*, 55(2): 42–60.
- Schöning-Kalender C. (2000). *Textile Grenzziehungen. Symbolische Diskurse zum Kopftuch als Symbol*. In: J. Schlehe (ed.), *Zwischen den Kulturen – zwischen den Geschlechtern. Kulturkontakte und Genderkonstrukte* (187–197). Münster: Waxmann.
- Schrijver F. (2006). *Regionalism after Regionalisation: France, Spain and the United Kingdom*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

- Seidman I. (2006). *Interviewing as Qualitative Research. A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Sekuła E. (2009). *Po co Ślązakom potrzebny jest naród? Niebezpieczne związki między autonomią i nacjonalizmem*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Naukowe i Profesjonalne.
- Sherrod L. R. (2006). *Youth Activism and Civic Engagement*. In: L. R. Sherrod, C. A. Flanagan, R. Kassimir & A. S. Syvertsen (eds.), *Youth Activism: An International Encyclopedia* (2–11). Connecticut-London: Greenwood Press.
- Sherrod L. R., Flanagan C. A., Kassimir R. & Syvertsen A. S. (eds.) (2006). *Youth Activism: An International Encyclopedia*, Vol 1–2. Connecticut – London: Greenwood Press.
- Sherrod L. R., Torney-Purta J. & Flanagan C. A. (eds.) (2010). *Handbook of Research on Civic Engagement in Youth*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- Shils E. (1958). Tradition and Liberty: Anonymity and Interdependence. *Ethics*, 68(3): 153–165.
- Shils E. (1971). Tradition. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 13(2): 122–159.
- Shinn M. & Yoshikawa H. (ed.) (2008). *Toward Positive Youth Development: Transforming Schools and Community Programs*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Shohamy E. (2006). *Language Policy. Hidden Agendas and New Approaches*. London–New York: Routledge.
- Shove E., Pantzar M. & Watson M. (2012). *The Dynamics of Social Practice: Everyday Life and how it Changes*. London: Sage Publications.
- Silverstein M. (1979). *Language Structure and Linguistic Ideology*, w: P. R. Cline, W. Hanks and C. Hofbauer (eds.), *The Elements: A Parasession on Linguistic Units and Levels*. Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society: 193–274.
- Silverstein M. (1996). *Monoglot “Standard” in America: Standardization and Metaphors of Linguistic Hegemony*. In: D. Brenneis & R. Macaulay (eds.), *The Matrix of Language: Contemporary Linguistic Anthropology* (284–306). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Simmel G. (1950). *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, trans. K. H. Wollf. Glencoe: The Free Press.
- Simon P.-J. (1999). *La Bretonnité. Une ethnicité problématique*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
- Skutnabb-Kangas T. (2000). *Linguistic Genocide in Education – or Worldwide Diversity and Human Rights?*. New Jersey–Londyn: Taylor & Francis.
- Skutnabb-Kangas T. & Phillipson R. (1989). “Mother Tongue”: *The Theoretical and Sociopolitical Construction of a Concept*. In: U. Ammon (ed.), *Status and Function*

- of Languages and Language Varieties* (450–477). Berlin–New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- Smith A. D. (1981). *The Ethnic Revival*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith A. D. (1986). *The Ethnic Origins of the Nations*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Speer P. W. (2008). *Altering Patterns of Relationship and Participation: Youth Organizing as a Setting-Level Intervention*. In: M. Shinn and H. Yoshikawa (eds.), *Toward Positive Youth Development: Transforming Schools and Community Programs* (213–228). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Spolsky B. (2004). *Language Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Spolsky B. (2009). *Language Management*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Statelova R. (2013). *Musikalische Begegnungen bei den Sorben*. Bautzen: Domowina Verlag.
- Sulima R. (1992). *Słowo i etos. Szkice o kulturze*. Kraków: Zakład Wydawniczy FA ZMW “Galicja”.
- Sulima R. (2001). *Głosy tradycji*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG.
- Synak B. (1998). *Kaszubska tożsamość: ciągłość i zmiana. Studium socjologiczne*. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego.
- Synak B. (2001). *Współczesne funkcjonowanie kaszubszczyzny*. In: E. Breza (ed.), *Kaszubszczyzna/Kaszëbizna* (295–316). Opole: Uniwersytet Opolski-Institut Filologii Polskiej.
- Szacki J. (1971). *Tradycja: przegląd problematyki*. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.
- Szacki J. (2011). *Tradycja*. 2nd edition. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
- Szczepankiewicz-Battek J. (2003). *Tożsamość kulturowa Serbołużyczan*. In: E. Orłowska & J. Klimentowski (eds.), *Kulturowy aspekt badań geograficznych. Studia teoretyczne i regionalne* (155–170). Wrocław: O/Wrocławski PTG.
- Szymczak W. (2013). *Partycypacja osób zaangażowanych społecznie. Struktura, funkcje, modele*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL.
- Świda-Zięba H. (2005). *Młodzi w nowym świecie*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie.
- Šatava L. (1999). *Ethnic Identity and Language/Culture Attitudes among Students of the Sorbian Grammar School in Bautzen/Budyšin*. *Lětopis – Zeitschrift für sorbische Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur*, 46: 78–103.
- Šatava L. (2005). *Sprachverhalten und ethnische Identität. Sorbische Schüler an der Jahrtausendwende*. Bautzen: Domowina Verlag.
- Šořta J., Kunze P. & Šen F. (eds.) (1984). *Nowy biografiski słownik*. Budyšin: Domowina.

- Teraz! *Animacja kultury* (n.d.). Warszawa: Stowarzyszenie Katedra Kultury.  
Retrieved from: [http://www.wpek.pl/pi/85043\\_1.pdf](http://www.wpek.pl/pi/85043_1.pdf). (access: 18.07.2015).
- Thompson K. (1998). *Moral Panic: Key Ideas*. London–New York: Routledge.
- Tollefson J. W. (2006). *Critical Theory in Language Policy*. In: T. Ricento (ed.), *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method* (42–59). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Toszek B. & Kuźelewska E. (2011). *Od wizji do rzeczywistości. Dziesięć lat dewolucji w Walii*. Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA-JR.
- Tönnies F. (2001). *Community and Civil Society*, ed. J. Harris; trans. J. Harris, M. Hollis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Treder J. (2005). *Historia kaszubszczyzny literackiej*. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego.
- Trosset C. (1993). *Welsh Performed: Welsh Concepts of Person and Society*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Trutkowski C. (2007). *Teoria społecznych reprezentacji i jej zastosowania*. In: M. Marody (ed.), *Wymiary życia społecznego. Polska na przełomie XX i XXI wieku* (373–400). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.
- Tschernokoshewa E. (1999). *Nachdenken über Zugehörigkeiten. Leben im Spagat*. In: E. Müllner (ed.), *Entweder-und-oder. Vom Umgang mit Mehrfachidentitäten und kultureller Vielfalt* (106–124). Klagenfurt: Drava.
- Tschernokoshewa E. (2000). *Das Reine und das Vermischte. Die deutschsprachige Presse über Andere und Anderssein am Beispiel der Sorben*. Münster: Waxmann.
- Tschernokoshewa E. (2004). *Constructing Pure and Hybrid Worlds: German Media and "Otherness"*. In: U. Kockel & M. N. Craith (eds.), *Communicating Cultures* (222–242). Münster: Waxmann.
- Tschernokoshewa E. (2013). "Bin ich Deutscher oder Sorbe?". *Wege und Irrwege zu einer hybridologischen Forschungsperspektive in der Lausitz*. In: E. Tschernokoshewa & F. Jakobs (eds.), *Über Dualismen hinaus. Regionen – Menschen – Institutionen in hybridologischer Perspektive* (13–42). Münster: Waxmann.
- Tulloch C. (2004). *Dress*. In: E. Cashmore (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Race and Ethnic Studies* (117–119). London–New York: Routledge.
- Turner V. & Bruner E. (eds.) (1986). *The Anthropology of Experience*. Urbana–Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Tyszką A. (1971). *Uczestnictwo kulturze. O różnorodności stylów życia*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Urla J. (2012). *Reclaiming Basque: Language, Nation and Cultural Activism*. Reno: University of Nevada Press.
- Valdés G. (2005). Bilingualism, Heritage Language Learners, and SLA Research: Opportunities Lost or Seized?. *The Modern Language Journal*, 89(3): 410–426.

- Vetter E. (2013). Teaching Languages for a Multilingual Europe – Minority Schools as Examples of Best Practice? The Breton Experience of Diwan. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 223: 153–170.
- Wagner W. & Hayes N. (2005). *Everyday Discourse and Common-sense: The Theory of Social Representation*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Walde M. (1999). Das sorbische katholische Milieu und die Nationalisierungsstrategien. *Germanoslavica*, 6(11): 183–198.
- Walde M. (2004). Demographisch-statistische Betrachtungen im Oberlausitzer Gemeindeverband “Am Klosterwasser”. *Lětopis – Zeitschrift für sorbische Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur*, 51(1): 3–27.
- Walde M. (2006). Die konfessionellen Milieus und die Assimilierung der Sorben. *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, 2: 221–238.
- Walde M. (2012). *Wie man seine Sprache hassen lernt*. Bautzen: Domowina Verlag.
- Wałda M. (2014). Le noyau catholique sorabe. *Revue des études slaves*, 85(2): 273–280.
- Watkins J. R. (2007). *Imagining Wales and Welsh Identity in Three Contexts*. PhD thesis, Purdue University Graduate School.
- Warمیńska K. (2013). Polityka a tożsamość. Kaszëbskô Jednota. *Studia Migracyjne – Przegląd Polonijny*, 39/1(147): 189–206.
- Weber M. (1978). *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. G. Roth & C. Wittich. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Weber M. (2017) [1949]. *Methodology of Social Sciences*, trans. E.S. Shils & H.A. Finch. London-New York: Routledge.
- Welsch W. (1999). *Transculturality – The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today*. In: M. Featherstone & S. Lash (eds.), *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World* (194–213), London: Sage. Retrieved from: [http://www2.uni-jena.de/welsch/papers/W\\_Welsch\\_Transculturality.html](http://www2.uni-jena.de/welsch/papers/W_Welsch_Transculturality.html) (access: 13.06.2019).
- Wenger E. (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Whorf B. L. (1952). Language, Mind, and Reality. *ETC: A Review of General Semantics*, 9(3): 167–188.
- Wicherkiewicz T. (2011). *Language Policy and the Sociolinguistics of Kashubian*. In: C. Obracht-Prondzyński & T. Wicherkiewicz (eds.), *The Kashubs: Past and Present* (141–177). Bern: Peter Lang.
- Wicherkiewicz T. (2014). *Regionalne języki kolateralne Europy – porównawcze studia przypadku z polityki językowej*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Rys.
- Williams C. H. (2000). *On Recognition, Resolution and Revitalization*. In: C. H. Williams (ed.), *Language Revitalization: Policy and Planning in Wales* (1–47). Cardiff: University of Wales Press.



- Williams C. H. (2010). *From Act to Action in Wales*. In: D. Morris (ed.), *Welsh in the Twenty-First Century* (36–60). Cardiff: Cardiff University Press.
- Willmott P. (1986). *Social Networks, Informal Care and Public Policy*. London: Policy Studies Institute.
- Willmott P. (1989). *Community Initiatives: Patterns and Prospects*. London: Policy Studies Institute.
- Wimmer A. (2008). The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries: A Multilevel Process Theory. *American Journal of Sociology*, 113(4): 970–1022.
- Woehrling J.-M. (2013). *Histoire du droit des langues en France*. In: G. Kremnitz (ed.), *Histoire sociale des langues de France* (71–88). Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
- Woodward K. (2006). Traditions and Transformations: Film in Wales during the 1990s. *North American Journal of Welsh Studies*, 6(1): 48–64.
- Woodward K. (2012). The Desert and the Dream': Film in Wales since 2000. *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, 9(3): 419–435.
- Woolard K. (1998). *Introduction: Language Ideology as a Field of Inquiry*. In: B. Schieffelin, K. Woolard & P. Kroskrity (eds.), *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory* (3–47). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Woolard K. (2004). *Codeswitching*. In: A. Duranti (ed.), *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology* (73–94). Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.
- Woolard K. (2008). *Language and Identity Choice in Catalonia: The Interplay of Contrasting Ideologies of Linguistic Authority*. In: K. Süselbeck, U. Mühlischlegel & P. Masson (eds.), *Lengua, nación e identidad. La regulación del plurilingüismo en España y América Latina* (303–323). Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert; Madrid: Iberoamericana.
- Woolard K. (2011). Is There Linguistic Life After High School? Longitudinal Changes in the Bilingual Repertoire in Metropolitan Barcelona. *Language in Society*, 40(5): 617–648.
- Wyman L. T. (2012). *Youth Culture, Language Endangerment, and Linguistic Survivance*. Bristol– New York–Ontario: Multilingual Matters.
- Yates M. & Youniss J. (eds.) (1999). *Roots of Civic Identity: International Perspectives on Community Service and Activism in Youth*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Young J. (1999). *The Exclusive Society: Social Exclusion, Crime and Difference in Late Modernity*. London: SAGE.
- Zabaleta I., Xamardo N., Gutierrez A., Urrutia S. I. F. & Ferré C. (2010). Between Language Support and Activism: A Complementary Journalistic Function Among European Minority-Language Newspapers. *Journalism Studies*, 11(2): 190–208.

- Zieniukowa J. (2006). *Pojęcie aksjologiczne "prestż" a społeczna sytuacja języków mniej używanych – casus łużycczyzny i kaszubszczyzny*. In: J. Zieniukowa, *Języki mniejszościowe w komunikowaniu społecznym. Studia nad funkcjonowaniem języków łużyckich w XIX i XX wieku (55–80)*. Warszawa: Instytut Sławistyki PAN.
- Zieniukowa J. (2018). *Zagadkowa kaszubszczyzna. Studia o kaszubskim języku regionalnym*. Warszawa: Sławistyczny Ośrodek Wydawniczy.
- Znaniecki F. (1931). *Miasto w świadomości jego obywateli. Z badań Polskiego Instytutu Socjologicznego nad miastem Poznaniem*. Poznań: Polski Instytut Socjologiczny.
- Znaniecki F. (1934). *The Method of Sociology*. New York: Farrar & Rinehart.

# Subject index

44 *Breizh* 241

## A

Aberystwyth 55, 138, 195, 207 n.48,  
225 n.55, 261

actions 18, 19, 23–24, 60, 64, 65, 74,  
153, 155, 156, 167, 168, 173, 176,  
178–180, 182, 192, 224, 227–228,  
231, 258, 259, 262, 265, 269, 270,  
328, 331, 344, 345, 346

– direct/of social disobedience 262

– public perception 277

– revitalization 13, 21, 126

activism 21, 22, 26, 46, 57, 68,  
77, 86, 122, 127–129, 170, 213,  
215–217, 223, 227–276, 305, 343,  
346, 347

– language activism 21, 22, 26, 46,  
68, 253

activist 14, 17–21, 25–26, 36, 42–43,  
57–59, 67, 71, 74, 77, 86, 89, 94–95,  
107, 114–116, 127, 148, 151, 162,  
167, 175, 180, 185–187, 190, 205,  
212, 215–217, 220, 225, 236,  
241–242, 244, 248–251, 253–276,  
298, 307, 316, 324–325, 329,  
337–340, 342–346

– language activist 14, 18, 21, 60,  
90, 113, 234, 260, 265, 330

activities, after-school 196, 207–209,  
240, 325

Act on National and Ethnic  
Minorities and the Regional  
Language 63–64, 78, 95,  
301, 339

*Ai'Ta* 20, 180, 223, 244, 253,  
255, 262

*Ar Redadeg* 18, 209

*A Serbsce?* 20, 262

assimilation, language/cultural 14,  
38, 49, 82

attitudes 14, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24, 26,  
34, 42, 45, 47–50, 53–56, 65, 67,  
70, 75, 77, 79, 84, 87, 90, 98, 109,  
133, 139, 141, 163, 171, 187, 195,  
210, 216, 218, 219, 232, 234, 236,  
239, 242, 263–266, 268, 273, 274,  
279, 282, 284, 286, 287, 324, 326,  
328–330, 336

– civic 218, 236, 268

– language 22, 47

authenticity 73, 94, 97, 109, 120,  
155, 158, 171, 325

## B

BAFA 271

*bagad* 303, 308, 309

Bangor 100, 200

Barrier, language 109, 111

Bilingualism 45, 61, 70, 77, 78, 79,  
82, 217, 247, 273, 280, 337

– visual 281–282

boarding school

– Diwan secondary school 34, 87,  
121, 192, 208, 209 n.49, 210–212,  
217, 248, 252

– Upper Sorbian Grammar School  
in Budyšin/Bautzen 237

boundary

– ethnic 25, 32, 38, 52, 58, 69, 104,  
140–142, 153, 160, 161, 173, 222,  
277, 283, 291, 309, 318, 320–328

– language as a boundary 26, 133,  
140–142

Brest 209, 214

Britany Liberation Front (FLB) 236

Budyšin/Bautzen 15, 41, 62, 83, 86,  
207, 256, 279, 280

**C**

## capital

- cultural 93, 162, 216, 234, 239
- social 73, 126, 239, 268

Cardiff 72, 113, 176, 195, 199,  
238, 261

Carhaix 208, 217 n.52, 304

Celtic circles 183, 303, 304, 307

choice 25, 33, 40, 41, 69, 77, 116,  
121, 123, 126, 127, 131, 141, 148,  
150, 155, 156, 158–169, 171–173,  
237, 240, 247, 248, 258, 259, 278,  
290, 346

- of identity/belonging to  
group 155, 168

- language 33, 40, 121, 122, 124,  
126, 127, 148, 232, 331

code-switching 98, 222

community 10, 13, 14–16, 23, 25,  
26, 29, 36, 38–47, 52, 53, 55, 58,  
63–65, 68–71, 73, 77, 78, 81, 87, 90,  
94, 96, 97, 99, 100, 102, 103, 106,  
107, 109, 118–121, 124, 125, 126,  
127, 130, 131, 133, 134, 135, 137,  
138, 139, 142, 145, 147, 148, 150–  
229, 231–235, 238–240, 243, 249–  
251, 256, 260, 269–277, 280–283,  
285, 287–289, 301–316, 319–324,  
327, 330, 334, 338–340, 345

- of attachment 175

- emotional/neo-tribalism 181

- imagined 90, 93, 151, 174, 175,  
202, 315

- of interest 124, 181

- Internet 223, 224

- language 13, 16, 19, 23, 25, 41–47,  
71, 79–81, 92, 97, 98, 100, 101, 103,  
109, 111, 113, 119, 128, 138, 151,  
174, 176, 207, 214, 237, 239, 251,  
252, 260, 320, 321, 329, 331, 347

- of practice 25, 124, 190, 191, 206,  
207, 212, 238

- and society 151, 155, 161

- speech 16, 23, 52, 63, 96, 108,  
133, 151

completeness functional/

institutional 93, 94, 218

consciousness 21, 34, 47, 143, 145,  
161, 215, 238, 246, 259, 298

contestation 233, 307

cultural animation 277 n.56

cultural change 82, 155, 158, 277,  
279, 283, 308

cultural contacts 226, 230, 240, 277,  
303, 341

cultural experience (definition) 23

culture

- attractiveness 237

- commercialization 279, 299–  
301, 311

- global 294, 315, 318

- modern 291, 294, 315

- for sale 300, 311

- traditional 53, 136, 147, 153, 156,  
198, 220 n.54, 277, 280, 281, 288,  
299, 307, 309, 311, 313, 317, 322,  
324, 327

customs 39, 134, 136, 143, 155–157,  
162, 170, 192, 194, 211, 229, 231,  
232, 242, 244, 280–284, 286–291,  
292 n.72, 301–312, 322, 324,  
325, 340

*Cymdeithas yr Iaith* 16, 20, 43, 44,  
46, 70, 106, 127, 205, 221, 225, 236,  
238, 243, 245, 256, 261–263, 265,  
272, 273, 320, 338

**D**

de-ethnicization 233

detraditionalization 156

devolution 16, 42, 71, 197, 338

dialect 43, 47, 64, 65, 78, 93–95, 99,  
115 n.34, 291, 340

dialectalization 63

- discourse 13, 18, 20, 24, 67, 73, 96,  
120, 134, 140, 141, 143, 145, 148,  
174, 207, 210, 210, 213, 215, 216,  
219, 233, 255, 259, 279, 315, 325,  
328–346  
– of endangerment 329–347  
– of multilingualism 330–337  
– quasi-political 337–343  
– of responsibility 343–346
- discrimination 32, 37, 47–63, 128,  
148, 253, 256, 257, 340
- distinction 19, 100, 106, 124,  
140, 151–153, 160, 213, 214, 230,  
241, 281
- distinctiveness  
– cultural 73, 285, 291, 292, 295,  
315, 321, 326, 333, 337  
– language 296–297
- Diwan* 33–35, 37, 77, 81, 83, 85,  
87, 91, 109, 111, 114, 117, 121,  
123, 124, 126, 129, 133, 166, 171,  
192, 207–218, 222, 238, 241, 244,  
248, 252, 258, 261, 262, 264, 268,  
304–307, 309
- domination 49, 148, 334
- Domowina 248, 263 n.65, 281
- E**
- economic crisis 71
- education 19, 23, 24, 36, 37, 41, 53,  
57, 66, 70–72, 77–84, 93, 112, 120,  
127, 139, 154, 164, 200, 206–218,  
227, 237, 239, 255, 270, 317,  
335, 344  
– bilingual 36, 79–80  
– immersion 81, 208  
– minority language as a foreign/  
second language 13–27, 77–131,  
208, 248–249  
– strong form 79  
– weak form 77–78
- Eisteddfod 17, 18, 44, 144, 167,  
176, 194–206, 239, 245, 312, 313,  
315–317, 319, 323
- engagement 20, 22, 25, 26, 39, 101,  
119, 123, 127, 150, 182, 196, 200,  
206, 208, 210, 211, 216, 217, 227,  
229, 232–255, 258–260, 263,  
264, 266, 267, 269–273, 275,  
321, 347
- ethnic mobilization 22
- ethnography of resistance 22
- ethnography of speaking 23, 151
- ethnolinguistic vitality 22
- Europeada 264
- European Charter for Regional  
or Minority Languages 65, 66,  
93, 339
- F**
- fashion for ethnicity 168
- Federal Union of European  
Nationalities (FUEN) 342
- fest-noz* 114, 192 n.46, 212, 213, 229,  
244, 262, 275, 306
- folklore 25, 32, 69, 183, 255,  
277–328
- folkloric groups/performances/  
music/dances 36, 183, 279, 281
- folklorism 279, 280, 292 n.73, 293,  
297, 299
- folkloristic image 288, 294, 309,  
314, 315, 325
- folklorization 277–279, 281, 285  
n.70, 291–302, 308, 324–326
- Foundation for the Sorbian  
People 16, 69
- G**
- German Democratic  
Republic 37, 60
- German reunification 69

Globalization 14, 119, 133, 148, 227,  
279, 318, 321, 326, 333  
governmentality 73  
grey zone of ethnicity 14, 166, 167,  
325, 344  
guardians of tradition 292,  
308, 328

## H

habitus 24

## I

identity 15, 16, 19, 22, 25–26, 32, 33,  
37–44, 48, 50–52, 55, 58–60, 62,  
65–67, 72, 73, 75, 77, 79, 82, 83,  
85, 97, 99, 119, 124, 126, 133–143,  
145, 148–155, 157–174, 176, 178,  
181–183, 185–189, 192–196, 203,  
204, 206–218, 221, 224, 231–233,  
237, 238, 250, 252, 254, 255, 258,  
267, 268, 277, 278, 282–285, 288,  
289, 291, 292, 296–302, 304, 305,  
307, 309, 314–316, 321, 322,  
324–328, 330, 333, 336, 338, 341,  
344, 346, 347  
– Breton 16, 82, 85, 136, 162, 304,  
305, 307  
– collective 22, 25, 26, 126, 165,  
168, 182, 196, 203, 206, 213, 216,  
268, 291  
– construction of 210  
– double 58, 62  
– engaged 149  
– Kashubia 32, 59, 65, 83, 134, 141,  
154, 185–189, 221, 292, 296–299,  
301, 302  
– and language 19, 37, 38, 137  
– minority 25, 26, 150, 160–168,  
171, 172, 194, 277, 324  
– negative 48, 50, 164  
– and religion 160  
– of resistance 148

– Sorbian 38, 39, 41, 62, 75, 137,  
138, 164, 193, 194, 282–284,  
287, 288  
– Welsh 16, 42, 44, 72, 138, 143,  
148, 169, 195, 196, 203, 204,  
314–316  
identity politics 73, 309, 326  
ideologies (language) 32, 35, 41,  
47–63, 94, 96, 109, 115, 334  
– of authenticity 94, 97, 109  
– of monolingualism 61 n.18, 334,  
335, 337  
– of nativeness 102  
– of ownership 110, 120  
– of standard language 98  
image of language/culture/  
minority 47, 52, 64, 153, 266, 278,  
290, 303, 312, 315–317, 325, 326  
individualization 152–154, 156, 157  
industrialization 55, 82, 152  
institutionalization of  
culture 155, 176  
instrumentalism 73  
intergenerational transmission 15,  
16, 22, 29, 33, 37, 38, 63, 80,  
82, 87  
Internet 218–226, 339, 340  
– role in preserving minority  
languages 106  
invented tradition 39, 66, 139, 144,  
194, 195, 277, 302, 307, 312, 323

## K

Kashubian-Pomeranian  
Association 79, 191, 291  
*Kaszëbskô Jednota* 57, 58, 185, 260,  
262, 269  
*Kejadenn* 191, 192 n.46  
knowledge of language 23, 29, 108,  
109, 118, 126, 140  
active 108, 118, 126, 140  
– passive 23, 29, 101

**L**

- labelling 52, 309
  - language
    - act of identity 127
    - associated 133
    - competences 23, 25, 80, 92, 151
    - and culture 15, 19, 20–22, 24–26, 29, 35, 47, 48, 65, 67, 69, 77, 82, 87, 88, 124, 127, 134, 143, 145, 146, 149, 155, 170–174, 178, 182, 210, 214, 215, 220, 227, 238, 241, 244, 248, 249, 251, 253, 254, 258, 259, 261, 264, 266, 274, 275, 297, 312, 327, 330, 333, 337, 343, 345–347
    - dead 37, 51–54, 215
    - and dialect 23, 47, 64, 93–101, 147
    - heritage 108, 121
    - native 36, 38, 41, 105
    - non-progressive 54–59
    - for performance 30, 121
    - protection 63–75, 128, 346
    - of the school 55, 85
    - standard 51, 98, 101
    - status 16, 24, 47, 52, 58, 63–66, 78, 97, 125, 256, 304
    - symbolic role/function 116
  - language beliefs 47, 48
  - language change 40, 46, 69, 82, 133, 270
  - language management 47, 258
  - language myths 47
  - language planning 67
  - language policy 16, 24, 34, 47, 57, 63–75, 89, 209, 327
    - Brittany 14 n.1, 16–19, 33–37, 43 n.15, 48, 49, 54, 57, 66–68, 74, 77, 80–82, 84, 94–96, 100, 109, 114, 122, 127, 128, 135, 136, 141, 146, 148, 162, 166, 170, 172, 173, 178, 179, 208, 209, 213, 214, 229, 235–238, 240, 241 n.60, 246, 256, 260, 261, 262 n.64, 263, 264, 270, 274, 302–312, 327, 339, 344
    - Kashubia 15, 19, 29–33, 49–51, 63–66, 83, 84, 89–91, 94–101, 105–107, 109–112, 115–118, 120–126, 134, 135, 145–149, 157–159, 161, 162, 166, 235, 248, 249, 257, 260, 267, 269, 271, 275, 291–302
    - Upper Lusatia 15–17, 37–41, 78 n.24, 81, 102, 105, 108, 113, 137, 138, 143, 149, 174, 222, 254, 263, 280, 283, 289
    - Wales 14 n.1, 16, 17 n.4, 19, 41–46, 56, 57, 70–73, 81, 82, 84, 99, 100, 107, 113, 118, 123–125, 128, 138–140, 165, 169, 175, 176, 195–203, 220–222, 225, 236, 238, 242, 247, 251, 256, 261, 265, 267, 268, 272–274, 312–317, 323, 325, 327, 333, 338, 342
  - leader (ethnic) 275–276
  - legitimate peripheral participation 224, 248
  - linguicism 59, 333
  - linguistic anthropology 22
  - linguistic landscape 339
  - linguistic market 47, 56, 126
  - linguistic view of the world 145, 147, 150
  - locality 51, 176, 178
  - Lower Sorbian 15, 37–38
  - Lower Sorbs/Lower Lusatia 15–16, 37, 38
- M**
- manifestations 24, 26, 126, 133, 137, 165, 174, 175, 195, 279–281, 288, 292, 299, 305, 307, 311
  - media 13, 18–19, 26, 30, 34, 49, 51, 54, 64, 66, 82, 93–95, 103, 106, 113, 118, 122, 124, 137, 139,

153, 175, 185, 195, 196, 202,  
218–226, 251, 262, 264, 269, 271,  
279, 281, 288, 292, 298, 300, 309,  
311, 313–315, 319, 323, 325, 331,  
339, 342  
– broadcast 219  
– mass/new 26, 34, 55, 82, 202, 218,  
219, 221, 281, 300, 311, 313, 315,  
319, 331  
– minority 17–19, 218, 269  
– participation 219  
– social media/Facebook 18, 139,  
193, 219–226, 308, 315, 331,  
342, 347  
mobility 13, 40, 53, 152, 154, 158,  
280, 327  
modernity 25, 150, 153, 156, 161,  
173, 277–328  
modernization of language 170  
moral panic 13  
motivation 17, 20, 21, 37, 64, 67, 75,  
79, 84, 113, 117–120, 122, 148, 151,  
165, 173, 174, 206, 217, 227, 239,  
243, 249, 252, 259, 298  
*mudes* 232, 234  
multilingualism 49, 70, 214, 330,  
333–337, 346

## N

narratives 234, 278, 322, 330, 334,  
337, 343, 346  
National Census  
– Poland 2011 30 n.5  
– Wales 2011 41–42  
Nationalism 57–59, 139, 259, 277,  
315, 334  
*néo-bretonnants* 36, 119 n.35  
NGOs 331, 340

## O

observation, participant 18  
orientalism/exoticism 324

## P

parents/family 17, 29, 31, 32,  
35–42, 90–92, 103, 105, 108–112,  
134–136, 148, 158, 166, 169,  
195–198, 207–209, 217, 234–239,  
266, 278, 303, 304, 335, 344  
participation in culture 134,  
165, 228, 230, 231, 243, 244,  
255, 325  
*Pawk* 183, 194, 242, 244, 245,  
255, 269  
People's Republic of Poland 339  
*Plaid Cymru* 16, 44, 70, 73, 205,  
236, 238, 263  
politicization of ethnicity 58,  
73, 77  
Pomorania Students Club 59, 116,  
125, 183, 188–191  
post-modernity/late  
modernity 161, 166  
practices (definitions) 25, 31, 47  
prestige, language 52, 63–66  
prestige planning 64  
primordialism 161  
Public Office for the Breton  
Language 16, 67

## R

Remus' Wheelbarrow/*Remusowa*  
*Kara* 183, 184, 187, 191  
Rennes 36, 117, 118, 179, 191, 192  
n.46, 211, 236, 252, 272, 305, 311  
reproduction 82, 133, 334  
residence hall  
– Centrifuga 192, 193  
– Pantycelyn 207, 251  
responsibility 108, 122, 129, 148,  
149, 167, 168, 170, 172, 190, 212,  
216, 235, 257, 258, 266, 271,  
329–347  
Reversing Language Shift 13,  
52, 129



revitalization 13, 15, 21, 24, 34, 38,  
52, 54, 77, 82, 94, 102, 108, 125,  
126, 129, 133, 147, 148, 155, 164,  
170, 249, 266, 329, 335, 341  
revitalizers 71, 82, 94, 119, 335  
rugby 114, 139, 314

## S

Schadźowanka 192  
school 17–19, 29–42, 55–57, 79–96,  
98–103, 108–117, 121–124, 166–168,  
195–199, 207–222, 237–238  
secondary school 13, 17–19, 31–34,  
36, 40, 41, 46, 50, 53, 55, 62, 69,  
74, 78, 82, 83, 85–88, 91, 107,  
109, 111, 114, 116, 120–123, 129,  
135, 142, 143, 149, 153, 155, 157,  
158, 162, 166, 169–171, 182–188,  
192, 196–199, 207–212, 214, 215,  
232, 236, 238, 241, 245, 247, 248,  
252, 255, 261, 262, 264, 267, 283,  
284, 287, 293, 300, 302, 305, 306,  
308–311, 314, 320  
separatism 58, 59  
situated learning 191, 206, 210,  
224, 248  
social movements/on behalf of  
minorities 22, 57, 73, 224, 241,  
253, 268, 270, 271  
social network 178, 224, 226, 240,  
251, 321  
sociolinguistic research 35 n.8, 110,  
113, 221  
sociolinguistic situation  
– Britany 33–37  
– Kashubia 29–33  
– Upper Lusatia 37–41  
– Wales 41–46  
*Sorabija* Students Club 192, 193  
Sorbian Parliament 263  
speakers/users of minority language  
– ideal type 101–102

– learner 108–118  
– native 102–108  
– new 119–131  
– potential 23, 119  
– traditional 94, 231  
standardization/codification 93–101  
state 48, 52, 56, 62–75, 113, 145,  
209, 211, 264, 265, 306, 314, 321,  
328, 334, 337–340  
St David's Day 314, 315  
stereotypes 50, 196, 264  
stereotyping 52  
stigma 35, 51, 54, 64, 222  
*Stourm Ar Brezhoneg* 262  
struggle  
– for identity 167–173  
– for language 261  
symbolic power 49, 59, 286,  
334, 344

## T

teachers 17, 34, 68, 72, 79, 80,  
85–90, 125, 170, 197, 208, 209, 211,  
215, 217, 222–224, 232, 237, 238,  
304 n.75, 344, 347  
tourism and language/culture 255  
tradition 39, 71, 74, 94, 126, 153,  
157, 160, 194, 198, 200, 230, 233  
n.58, 261, 277–328  
traditional costume 39, 239, 285,  
291, 292, 298, 303, 309  
traditionalism/conservatism 285,  
287, 292, 324  
transculturality 321  
translanguaging 103–104  
trauma 33–37, 60, 246,  
247, 339

## U

UNESCO 149, 209 n.49, 331  
urbanization 82, 152  
Urdd 144, 183, 195–199, 205, 268

**V**

voluntary service 19

**W**

Welsh independence 314

Welsh Language

Commissioner 16, 71

WITAJ Language Centre 69

*Witaj*, schools/programme 69, 80,  
89, 248

**Y**

Youth of European

Nationalities 245 n.61

## Name index

### A

Aaron Jane 42  
Adams Matthew 156  
Adkins Madeleine 96  
Ahearn Laura M. 22, 23  
Aitchison John 80  
Allan Graham 354  
Allard Réal 22  
An Du Claude 34  
Anderson Benedict 90, 93, 151  
Appadurai Arjun 147, 160, 161,  
165, 321  
Artexte Sarasola Miren 10, 239  
Asad Talal 323  
Auer Peter 126

### B

Babbie Earl 18  
Baker Colin 22, 234, 242, 299  
Baker Sally 222  
Bakhtin Mikhail 19  
Balsom Dennis 42  
Barker Chris 322  
Barré Ronan 337  
Barth Fredrik 140, 173  
Bartmiński Jerzy 145, 147  
Bauer Laurie 47  
Beck Ulrich 156, 160, 172  
Bell Daniel 326  
Benbough-Jackson Mike 314  
Berger Brigitte 326  
Berger Peter L. 326  
Bernard Kimberly 195, 197  
Bert Michel 101, 102  
Białystok Ellen 104–105  
Billig Michael 65, 157, 315  
Blommaert Jan 61, 119  
Bobineau Olivier 249, 271  
Boksański Zbigniew 47, 52, 165, 256  
Bolduan Tadeusz 49

Bons Wolfgang 156  
Bourdieu Pierre 20, 24, 26, 47, 49, 50,  
62, 73, 82, 99, 140–141, 148, 213, 234  
Bourhis Richard 22  
Boyd Danah M. 226  
Bradley David 61  
Brankač Achim 280  
Braun Bruce 333  
Brékilien Yann 303  
Breton Reymond 93  
Breza Edward 63 95  
Brickman Philip 249  
Broudic Fanch 33–37, 67, 81  
Browne Donald R. 202, 218  
Bruner Edward M. 23, 330,  
334–335, 346  
Bucholtz Mary 19, 94, 97, 133  
Budarjowa Ludmila 40, 80  
Burr Vnien 240  
Burszta Józef 285, 286, 288, 292  
Burszta Wojciech 229  
Buszard-Welcher Laura 218–220

### C

Canagarajah Suresh 133  
Carter Harold 80  
Castells Manuel 126, 148, 224–225  
Chauffin Fanny 9, 81, 208, 216  
Chromik Bartosz 48  
Clifford James 323  
Cohen Anthony 173, 328  
Comaroff Jean 52, 301  
Comaroff John L. 52, 301  
Combs Mary Carol 21, 253, 258, 259  
Cook Vivian 336  
Cormack Mike 218, 219  
Corona Caraveo Yolanda 14  
Costa James 126  
Cotterell John 240, 251  
Coughlan Reed M. 161

Coulmas Florian 93, 126  
 Craen Piet van de 79  
 Crow Graham 173  
 Cummins James P. 335  
 Cunliffe Daniel 220–222  
 Czykwin Elżbieta 13

**D**

Dallas Cliff 240  
 Davies Charlotte Aull 182, 194, 204  
 De Fina Anna 21  
 Dębski Robert 219  
 Defrance Yves 304  
 Delon Erwan 213  
 Diani Mario 214, 255, 261, 262  
 Dobrowolski Kazimierz 153  
 Doerr Neriko Musha 104  
 Dołowy-Rybińska Nicole 10–347  
 Duchene Alexandre 73, 331  
 Duranti Alessandro 22, 151  
 Durkheim Emile 152

**E**

Eastman Carol 98, 133  
 Eckert Penelope 18–19, 25, 206, 207,  
 213, 216, 237, 238  
 Edensor Tim 195, 196  
 Edward Brickman Philip 95  
 Edwards John 59–60, 63, 103–104,  
 133, 335  
 Ehalá Martin 22  
 Elégoët Fanch 34, 35  
 Elle Katharina 57, 80  
 Elle Ludwig / Ela Ludwig 37, 69, 137,  
 280, 281  
 Eller Jack David 161  
 Ellison Nicole B. 226  
 Engelking Anna 10  
 Eriksen Thomas Hylland 51, 52, 73,  
 140, 155, 326  
 Erikson Erik H. 50

**F**

Faska Helmut 102

Favereau Francis 67, 307  
 Feng-fang Tsai 285  
 Ferguson Gibson 82, 93  
 Fishman Joshua A. 13, 22, 72, 82, 99,  
 102, 133, 218  
 Flanagan Constance 22  
 Foucault Michel 73  
 Fowler Cawryn 70  
 Franz Carol E. 236

**G**

Gandhi Leeli 278  
 Gantefort Christoph 80  
 Garabato Carmen Alén 66  
 Geertz Clifford 161  
 Gergen Kenneth J. 73  
 Giddens Anthony 149–150, 153, 156,  
 160, 166, 169, 287  
 Giedroń Marzena 22  
 Giles Howard 22  
 Gitlin Todd 253, 257, 269  
 Goalabre Fabienne 35, 78, 217  
 Godlewski Grzegorz 24, 227, 238–239  
 Goffman Erving 50, 51  
 Goldman Shelley 216  
 Gonzalez Isaac 233  
 Goody Jack 93  
 Grad Jan 228  
 Grenoble Lenore A. 93, 119  
 Grin François 13, 101, 102, 120  
 Grinevald Colette 101, 102

**H**

Haarmann Harald 64, 141  
 Habermas Jürgen 172  
 Hagege Claude 66  
 Hale Ken 22  
 Hall Edward 145  
 Hall Kira 19, 94, 97, 133  
 Hart Daniel 242  
 Haugaard Mark 152  
 Hayes Nicky 150  
 Heller Monica 53, 73, 101, 331, 334  
 Henri France 124

Hernández Julián 14  
 Herring Susan C. 220  
 Hinton Lianne 22, 77, 80–82, 93  
 Hobsbawm Eric 66, 307  
 Hodges Rhian 80  
 Hornsby Michael 10, 35, 66, 82, 94,  
 95, 98, 110, 119, 334  
 Hudley Anne. H. Charity 259  
 Hymes Dell 23, 151

**I**

Iłona Iłowiecka-Tańska 269

**J**

Jacyno Małgorzata 322  
 Jaffe Alexandra 64, 83, 89, 95, 133,  
 142, 237  
 Jenkins Geraint H. 42, 54  
 Jentsch Helmut 94  
 Jigourel Thierry 157, 306  
 Johnes Martin 139  
 Jones Elin Haf Gruffydd 10, 2030  
 Jones Hywel M. 46  
 Jones Mari C. 34, 43, 71, 94, 95

**K**

Kagan Olga 108  
 Kalinowski Paweł 292  
 Kamusella Tomasz 58  
 Kassimir Ron 242, 265  
 Kellner Hanfried 326  
 Kempny Marian 324, 326  
 Kennelly Jacqueline 214, 241  
 King Anthony 156  
 Klatch Rebecca 268  
 Kłoskowska Antonina 51–52, 228  
 Kloss Heinz 63, 95  
 Kowalewska Dorota 22  
 Krajewski Marek 228–230  
 Kremnitz Georg 52, 156  
 Kroskryty Paul 48, 106  
 Kulesza Miłosz 298  
 Kunze Pětr 280

Kuźelewska Elżbieta 42, 71  
 Kwaśniewska Anna 292

**L**

Lakin Gullan Rebeca 242  
 Lampe Cliff 226  
 Landry Rodrigue 22  
 Langer Robert 290  
 Lanza Elizabeth 32  
 Lau Christoph 156  
 Lave Jean 191, 206, 207–210, 213, 224,  
 237, 248, 252  
 Lavoie Gervais 324–325  
 Le Coadic Ronan 36, 54  
 Le Nevez Adam 36  
 Le Page Robert Brock 148  
 Le Pipec Erwan 35  
 Lee David 173, 176–177  
 Leroy Nolwenn 304  
 Levinson Meira 267  
 Lewicka Maria 249, 254  
 Lippi-Green Rosina 59–60, 80  
 Lippmann Walter 51–52  
 Lister Martin 220  
 Litwinowicz Małgorzata 249  
 Łodziński Sławomir 63, 292  
 Lubaś Marcin 322–324

**M**

Mackay Hugh 139  
 Madeg Mikael 98  
 Maffesoli Michel 181, 250  
 Malešević Sinisa 152  
 Malink Jan 38  
 Marti Roland 27  
 Martin Peter J. 214  
 Martin-Jones Marilyn 101, 237  
 Mazurek Monika 29, 31, 49, 66  
 McCarthy Teresa L. 22–24, 87  
 McClelland David C. 236  
 McConnel-Ginet Sally 25  
 McDonald Maryon 36, 217, 307  
 McIntosh Hugh 206, 235

McLuhan Marshall 218  
 Mencwel Andrzej 10, 218, 229  
 Micheau-Vernez Mikael 303  
 Mieczkowska Małgorzata 22, 262  
 Miles Steven 239, 240  
 Mirza Munira 239  
 Mordawski Jan 29  
 Morgan Prys 194  
 Moring Tom 94, 218  
 Morris Delyth 42  
 Morris Jonathan 44, 55, 113  
 Morris Paul 181  
 Morrone Adolfo 228  
 Muggelton David 285  
 Muysken Pieter 98

**N**

Nacel Jerzy 77  
 Nettle Daniel 73  
 Newby Howard 173, 176  
 Newcombe Lynda Pritchard 197  
 Nicholas Sheila E. 134, 214  
 Nicolas Michael 35, 66, 208, 262  
 Nijakowski Lech 52, 58, 140  
 Nolan Shaun J. 95  
 Norberg Madlena 37, 38  
 Nowicka Ewa 158, 300

**O**

O'Rourke Bernadette 22, 83, 94, 97,  
 100, 119, 120  
 Obracht-Prondzyński Cezary 49, 58,  
 63, 291  
 Olcoń-Kubicka Marta 152, 156  
 Olko Justyna 10  
 Olzac Susan 22  
 Ong Walter Jackson 93  
 Ortner Sherry B. 22

**P**

Pantzar Mika 23  
 Pasieka Agnieszka 10, 292  
 Passeron Jean-Claude 49, 82  
 Pawluczuk Włodzimierz 153

Penfield Susan D. 21, 253, 258, 259  
 Pennycook Alastair 53, 104–105  
 Pentecouteau Hugues 67, 119  
 Perazzi Jean-Charles 208  
 Percy-Smith Barry 22  
 Pérez Carlos 14  
 Phillips Dylan 70, 262  
 Phillipson Robert 59  
 Pink Sara 222  
 Piwowska Dorota 232  
 Polinsky Maria 108  
 Popowska-Taborska Hanna 10, 95,  
 110, 147  
 Porębska Marlena 29  
 Porta Donatella Della 241, 255,  
 261–262  
 Posern-Zieliński Aleksander 160,  
 281, 282, 284, 285, 300, 326  
 Postill John 222  
 Price Elaine 313  
 Prys Cynog 221  
 Pudelko 124  
 Puigdevall Maite 232–233, 267  
 Pujolar Joan 97, 232–233, 266–267  
 Putnam Robert 176, 240

**Q**

Quentel Gilles 94

**R**

Rainie Lee 219, 221, 223  
 Rakowski Tomasz 10, 230–231,  
 278, 295  
 Ramallo Fernando 22, 83, 97, 100,  
 119, 120  
 Rampton Ben 98, 119  
 Ranger Terence 66, 307  
 Ratajczak Cordula 60, 61, 70, 222  
 Rheingold Howard 221  
 Rhys Gruff 313  
 Riggins Stephen Harold 218  
 Rindler-Schjerve Rosita 79  
 Robert Elen 42, 119  
 Robins Tim 313

Rochon Thomas R. 235, 250–252, 267,  
270, 272  
Romaine Suzanne 73, 151

**S**

Sahlins Marshall 321  
Said Edward 324  
Sallabank Julia 10, 22, 48, 50, 102,  
121, 329  
Sapir Edward 145  
Šatava Leoš 10, 62, 137, 141, 163,  
164, 166  
Schieffelin Bambi B. 48  
Schiffman Harold F. 48, 52–53  
Scholze Dietrich / Scholze-Šolta  
Dietrich 9, 38  
Schöning-Kalender Claudia 285  
Schork Marén 289  
Schrijver Frans 54  
Seidman Irving 20  
Sekula Elżbieta Anna 58  
Šen Franc 280  
Sherrod Lonnie R. 22, 236, 242, 257,  
259, 269  
Shils Edward 282, 323, 324  
Shinn Marybeth 22  
Shohamy Elena 47, 94  
Shove Elizabeth 23  
Silverstein Michael 48, 151, 334  
Simmel Georg 156  
Simon Pierre-Jean 307  
\Skutnabb-Kangas Tove 59, 78  
Smith Anthony D. 186  
Šolčina Jana 80  
Šolta Jan 280  
Speer Paul W. 240  
Spolsky Bernard 47, 64, 258, 259  
Statelova Rosemary 288  
Steinfeld Carles 226  
Stivell Alan 310  
Sulima Roch 160, 277, 278, 293  
Svendsen Bente Ailin 32  
Świda-Ziemba Hanna 234  
Synak Brunon 29–31, 33, 49, 63

Syvertsen Amy S. 242, 265  
Szacki Jerzy 281–282, 284, 287, 323  
Szczepankiewicz-Battek Joanna 281  
Szymczak Wioletta 266

**T**

Tabouret-Keller Andrée 148  
Taylor Donald M. 22  
Thatcher Margaret 42  
Thomas Nigel 22, 267, 326  
Thompson Kenneth 13  
Tollefson James W.  
Tönnies Ferdinand 152, 154, 155, 160  
Torney-Purta Judith 22  
Toszek Bartłomiej H. 42, 71  
Tredler Jerzy 95  
Trosset Carol 195–197  
Trudgill Peter 47  
Trutkowski Cezary 150  
Tschernokoshewa Elka 62, 164, 288  
Tulloch Carol 285  
Turner Victor W. 23  
Tyszka Andrzej 228

**U**

Urla Jacqueline 22, 73, 74

**V**

Valdés Guadalupe 108  
Valy Jean-Jacques 303  
Verschueren Jef 61  
Vetter Eva 77, 79, 85

**W**

Wacquant Loic 49, 62, 234  
Wagner Wolfgang 150  
Wałda Měrćin 38–40  
Walde Martin 38, 60  
Warمیńska Katarzyna 57–58, 73  
Waro Danyèl 209  
Watkins Jody R. Taylor 203  
Watson Matt 23  
Weber Max 101, 153  
Webster Chris 313

- Wellman Barry 219, 221, 223  
Welsch Wolfgang 321  
Wenger Étiene 14, 190–191, 206, 207,  
209–210, 213, 216, 224, 237–239,  
248, 252  
Whaley Lindsay J. 93, 119  
Whorf Benjamin 145, 332  
Wicherkiewicz Tomasz 10, 49,  
63–65, 291  
Williams Colin H. 41–42, 54–55, 71  
Williams Mari A. 42, 54  
Willmott Peter 173, 175, 181  
Wimmer Andreas 277  
Woehrling Jean-Marie 66  
Woodward Kate 313  
Woolard Kathryn A. 18–19, 21,  
48, 51, 94, 97, 98, 100, 109, 119, 334  
Wyman Leisy Thornton 22
- Y**  
Yates Miranda 22  
Yoshikawa Hirokazu 22  
Young Jock 160  
Youniss James 22, 206, 235, 240
- Z**  
Zabaleta Inaki 271  
Zieniukowa Jadwiga 10, 63, 64  
Znaniński Florian 20



**Sprach- und Kulturkontakte in Europas Mitte.  
Studien zur Slawistik und Germanistik**

Edited by Andrzej Kątny and Stefan Michael Newerkla

- Band 1 Andrzej Kątny (Hrsg.): Sprachkontakte in Zentraleuropa. 2012.
- Band 2 Andrzej Kątny / Izabela Olszewska / Aleksandra Twardowska (eds.): Ashkenazim and Sephardim: A European Perspective. 2013.
- Band 3 Jacek Witkoś / Sylwester Jaworski (eds.): New Insights into Slavic Linguistics. 2014.
- Band 4 Witold Wojtowicz: Studien zur "bürgerlichen Literatur" um die Wende vom 16. zum 17. Jahrhundert. Übersetzt von Karin Ritthaler. 2015.
- Band 5 Anna Averina: Partikeln im komplexen Satz. Mechanismen der Lizenzierung von Modalpartikeln in Nebensätzen und Faktoren ihrer Verwendung in komplexen Sätzen. Kontrastive Untersuchung am Beispiel der Partikeln *ja*, *doch* und *denn* im Deutschen und *ведь* [vedʲ], *же* [že] und *вот* [vot] im Russischen. 2015.
- Band 6 Emmerich Kelih / Jürgen Fuchsbauer / Stefan Michael Newerkla (Hrsg.): Lehnwörter im Slawischen. Empirische und crosslinguistische Perspektiven. 2015.
- Band 7 Andrzej Kątny / Izabela Olszewska / Aleksandra Twardowska (eds.): Ashkenazim and Sephardim: Language Miscellanea. 2019.
- Band 8 Piotr A. Owsiniński / Andrzej S. Feret / Grzegorz M. Chromik (Hrsg.): Auf den Spuren der Deutschen in Mittel- und Osteuropa. Sławomira Kaleta-Wojtasik in memoriam. 2017.
- Band 9 Wolfgang Gladrow / Elizaveta Kotorova: Sprachhandlungsmuster im Russischen und Deutschen. Eine kontrastive Darstellung. 2018.
- Band 10 Michail L. Kotin (Hrsg.): Wortschätze und Sprachwelten. Beiträge zu Sprachtypologie, kontrastiver Wort- bzw. Wortschatzforschung und Pragmatik. 2019.
- Band 11 Katja Brankačec / František Martínek / Anna Paap: Lehnprägungen im Tschechischen und Sorbischen. Eine diachrone, korpusbasierte Analyse ausgewählter Lexeme und Präfixe. 2019.

- Band 12 Ewa Golachowska: Conversations with God. Multilingualism among the Catholics in Belarus in the Late Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Centuries. Sociolinguistic Study. 2019.
- Band 13 Anna Zielińska. Grenzlandsprache. Untersuchung der Sprachen und Identitäten in der Region Lebus. Übersetzt von Klaus Steinke. 2019.
- Band 14 Nicole Dołowy-Rybińska. "No One Will Do This For Us". The Linguistic and Cultural Practices of Young Activists Representing European Linguistic Minorities. 2020.

[www.peterlang.com](http://www.peterlang.com)