



<b>Title</b>	Out of the communist frying pan and into the EU fire? Exploring the case of Kashubian
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<b>Publication date</b>	2009-07
<b>Publication information</b>	Nestor, Niamh, and Tina Hickey. "Out of the Communist Frying Pan and into the EU Fire? Exploring the Case of Kashubian." Taylor & Francis, July 2009. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/07908310903075142">https://doi.org/10.1080/07908310903075142</a> .
<b>Publisher</b>	Taylor & Francis
<b>Item record/more information</b>	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10197/5317">http://hdl.handle.net/10197/5317</a>
<b>Publisher's statement</b>	This is an electronic version of an article published in Nestor, N. and Hickey, T.M. : Out of the communist frying pan and into the EU fire? Exploring the case of Kashubian. Language, Culture and Curriculum, 22 (2) 2009-07, pp.95-119. Language, Culture and Curriculum is available online at: <a href="http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07908310903075142#.UuZsFPtFCF">http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07908310903075142#.UuZsFPtFCF</a>
<b>Publisher's version (DOI)</b>	10.1080/07908310903075142

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To cite this article:

Nestor, N. And Hickey, T.M. (2009) Out of the Communist frying pan and into the EU fire? Exploring the case of Kashubian, *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 22:2, 95-119, DOI: [10.1080/07908310903075142](https://doi.org/10.1080/07908310903075142) **To link to this article:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07908310903075142>

## **Out of the Communist frying pan and into the EU fire? Exploring the case of Kashubian**

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*A language currently at the nexus of change is Kashubian (in Polish: kaszubski), a West Slavic language spoken in northern Poland in the province of Pomerania. Termed a 'regional language' by the Polish government in preparation for the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (signed in 2003 and ratified in 2008), it presents interesting parallels with other minority languages at different phases, in terms of its weak economic status and a history of repression. The impact of Poland's accession to the EU in 2004 and the Polish government's recent revitalisation initiatives will be explored. The views of three prominent Kashubian activists are considered as they reflect on the past, present and future of Kashubian. Issues considered include the changing status of Kashubian and the impact of such change on identity, the role of Catholicism in supporting Kashubian and the need for development in the spheres of literature and education. Of particular interest is a consideration of the effect on the language's visibility and status as a result of having a Kashub, Donald Tusk, become Prime Minister in October 2007, following decades of neglect and denial of Kashubian's status as a language under Communism, and he is one of those interviewed here.*

### **Introduction**

Indigenous languages are under siege around the world, noted Hornberger (1998, p. 439) as they come under 'seemingly irresistible social, political and economic pressures'. These pressures are intrinsic to what Castells (1996, 1997, 1998), in his analysis of the Information Age, characterizes as the tension between a new form of globalised capitalism and the social movements defending cultural singularity and individual autonomy. He notes that the attempt to affirm or reaffirm identity around seemingly stable or socially unchangeable factors such as religion, ethnicity or territory becomes more urgent in times of structural instability and change. Rassool (2000) concurs that linguistic minority group rights become more complex and dynamic in a time of rapid social, political, cultural and technological change. She also notes that language and identity are an 'arena of ongoing cultural conflict, struggle, choice and decision-making' (2000, p. 391). While the role accorded to language in identity construction is much debated from a range of theoretical positions (e.g. by Tajfel's (1978) Social Identity Theory; Anderson, 1991; May, 2000a; Rassool, 2000), the unprecedented acceleration in language decline and loss (Crystal, 1999; Krauss, 1992, 1995) has placed a spotlight on what May (2000b, p. 365) has characterized as the unequal power relations between majority and minority languages, particularly 'the on-going role and influence of nationalism and the nation-state in valorising majority "national" languages and stigmatising and marginalising "minority" languages'.

The role that language policy and language education play in counteracting the social, political and economic pressures on endangered languages has been the subject of much research (e.g. Fishman, 1991; Hornberger, 2008; Ricento, 2006; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; Spolsky, 2004). In some political circumstances, language policies can change very rapidly, and/or the pace of social change can be greatly accelerated by external forces (Wright, 1999). For example, the 2004 accession of 10 new states to the EU has brought about such circumstances for a number of minority languages within this territory, and has significant implications for their survival. One such language is *kaszëbsczi* or Kashubian, a West Slavonic language spoken in northern Poland in the province of Pomerania along the Baltic Coast. Poland is a particularly interesting context within which to study minority language maintenance, since, as Cirko (2001) argues, there has been a long history of concern in Poland about the survival of Polish itself, under what were considered to be significant threats of Germanisation and later of Russification. Cirko also noted that there were concerns about the cultural consequences and implications for Polish of integration into the European Union, with the enactment of a new law in 2000 which aimed to strengthen the Polish language against the tide of German, English and Russian. While Poland's application and eventual accession to the European Union has brought benefits in terms of legislative changes, it has also provided new and acute challenges for its indigenous languages. The economic benefits of workforce mobility mean that successful migration is tied to the acquisition of the relevant high-status languages, seen as the languages of economic opportunity. Emigration has affected the whole of Poland but, as is the trend in many other minority language communities (cf. Huss, 2008, p. 128), has particularly impacted on rural areas such as Kashubia.

Kashubian is of particular interest because it has experienced enormous policy reversal (Paulston, Chen, & Connerty, 1993) over a relatively short space of time, from repression to recognition and (some) support (as outlined below). There are some parallels between the situation of Kashubian under Communism and the situation of Basque and Catalan under Franco's dictatorship (1939–1975). Despite the fact that both Basque and Catalan suffered serious repression, in the intervening 30 years they have gone on to experience relatively different revitalisation curves. Fishman (1993, 2006b) concluded that assessment according to his graded intergenerational dislocation stages (GIDS) showed Catalan to be in a relatively stronger position than Basque. Similarly Pradilla, (2001, p. 63) described Catalan as 'healthy', whereas Cenoz and Perales (2001, p. 9) conclude that Basque is 'a minority language in its own territory'. While there is some debate about relative differences in outcome for these two languages, in the wider European perspective both Catalan and Basque revitalisation efforts have been exceptionally successful compared with other minority languages. It is, nevertheless, noteworthy that both also face serious problems currently, such as dealing with significant inflows of migrants who may be resistant to the minority language and legal cases regarding the constitutional right to education in Spanish. Fishman's analysis shows that positive outcomes are not necessarily linked to higher-order and high-profile legal or educational provisions, such as those that are found in the relatively less successful cases of Basque (and a fortiori Irish, as Fishman (1993, 2006b) noted) on the one hand and Catalan on the other. Instead, Fishman showed that some stages of his eight-stage reversing language shift (RLS) model are more foundational than others. Here, the case of Kashubian is considered in order to assess how efforts at RLS are being developed, and at what stages, in the light of research on other RLS movements.

Bourhis and Barrette (2006, p. 246) noted that 'three broad dimensions of sociostructural variables influence the vitality of ethnolinguistic groups: demography, institutional support and status'. The number of speakers of Kashubian and their distribution in urban and regional areas will be outlined here in light of recent studies and Census returns, while the other two variables are explored in more detail.

Fishman (2001) pointed out that threatened languages need to gain formal representation in the relevant institutions of community, region and state which control education, health, the media, industry and cultural and religious institutions in order to survive, while they need to garner informal support in organising their own community as an effective lobby group. Status relates to a language community's social prestige, which in turn is heavily influenced by its history within the local and national context, and the prestige of its language and culture both nationally and internationally. The current levels of institutional support for Kashubian are briefly summarised here in the introduction, and further explored in the qualitative data. The effect of being members of a low-status group is also explored in the data, in order to assess how Kashubian activists interpret the current status and prestige of their language and culture.

Bourhis and Barrette (2006) noted that progress in wresting institutional power often depends on the emergence of leaders and activists who can mobilise their community to lobby effectively for more institutional control within multilingual states. Similarly, Hornberger (1998, p. 452) reminded us that 'it is not the number of speakers of a language, but their positioning in society, that determines their patterns of language use'. Thus, the views and experiences of pivotal figures in language maintenance movements can provide valuable insights in considering minority language maintenance issues. The current situation of Kashubian is considered here in the context of data from three influential and strategic figures in the Kashubian community, one of whom, following the data collection, attained the position of Polish Prime Minister. The issues explored relate to those identified above as markers of ethnolinguistic vitality, specifically those relating to issues of institutional control (discussed here particularly with regard to education, literacy and the media) and to the current and historical status of Kashubian and Kashubs within Poland, and the effect this has on Kashubian identity. Some of the themes emerging from these interviews are discussed in relation to a recent language planning document prepared by the Kashubian–Pomeranian Association (*Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie [ZK-P]*, 2006), the main representative body for Kashubs in Poland, entitled *Strategy for protection and development of the Kashubian language and culture*. First, however, in order to establish the context, the impact on the Kashubian language of recent historical events in Poland is outlined, with a brief consideration of the current demographic and sociopolitical situation of the language and its community.

### **Context:**

#### ***Kashubian under Communism<sup>1</sup>***

According to Fane (1993), Soviet language policy centred on encouraging bilingualism and the promotion of Russian in place of ethnic languages. In Poland, the legal right of Kashubs to use Kashubian was specifically targeted by the post-1945 Communist government. Thus in Castells's (1997) terms 'the Legitimising Identity' introduced by the Communist institutions of society included Polish and Russian, but excluded Kashubian. Indeed, the delegitimisation of Kashubian extended to expressly forbidding use of the term 'language' for it,<sup>2</sup> and its speakers and supporters resorted to the terms Kashubianness (Polish: *kaszubszczyzna*/Kashubian: *kaszëbizna*), and Kashubian speech (Polish: *mowa kaszubska*/Kashubian: *kaszëbskô mòwa*) instead (Mercator, 2004). While the Communist government clearly targeted the Kashubian language as a means of fracturing Kashubian group identity, it could be argued that Kashubs developed a collective 'resistance identity' (Castells, 1997) around their religious beliefs and Roman Catholic practice. This resistance, however, while cementing Kashubian group identity as a whole, was not sufficient to prevent language decline in the face of stigmatisation and repression. A major feature of this was the Communist government's refusal to provide education through

Kashubian (Majewicz & Wicherkiewicz, 1998), and a ban on speaking Kashubian at school (Mercator, 2004). The traditional school system effectively transmitted the message that Kashubian was a marker of rural backwardness and limited prospects, while 'urban Polish' language and culture was superior and necessary for modern life. While outright opposition to Kashubian groups lessened somewhat over time (e.g. Borzyszkowski (2005) notes that the ZK-P was founded in the more relaxed political environment in Poland in 1956, and continued to function under Communist rule), the State's policies specifically designed to suppress the regional culture and language of ethnic groups (Treder, 1997) remained in force, and the official delegitimation of Kashubian impacted most on its intergenerational continuity, as well as impeding the development of other aspects of the language such as the development of a standardised orthography and the expansion of its literature.

### **The current situation: Kashubian under democracy**

Kashubian differs from standard Polish in its phonology, vocabulary and word-formation, but less so in inflection and syntax (Treder, 1997). According to Zieniukowa (2004), native Polish speakers find it very difficult to understand Kashubian. Dialectologists estimate that there are more than 50 dialects, which can be categorised into three main groups: northern, central and southern (Mercator, 2004; Wicherkiewicz, 2001). The ZK-P has estimated the number using Kashubian on a daily basis at approximately 180,000 (ZK-P, 2006, p. 8). Mordawski (2005) claims that 367,500 Kashubs can speak Kashubian, and that approximately 81,000 use it on a daily basis. Other estimates range from about 150,000 to about 300,000<sup>3</sup> with at least some proficiency in the language (Porebska, 2006; Synak, 2001; Zieniukowa, 2004). Clearly, there is some dispute about the number of Kashubian speakers, and the figures quoted tend to include those of lesser competence as well as those with full fluency. The Census 2002 figure of over 52,000 who use Kashubian as their home language (or one of their home languages) is cited in the Mercator (2004, p. 23) dossier on Kashubian as 'undoubtedly an important indicator for language planners and educational activists'.

The first significant attempts at intervention on behalf of Kashubian have occurred in recent years. At the forefront of this struggle is the Kashubian community itself, a group 'worthy of praise and close observation' (Majewicz & Wicherkiewicz, 1998). Their activism prepared the way for the most notable success, which was the official recognition of Kashubian by the Polish government as a regional language in its preparation for the ratification and implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, signed in 2003 and ratified in 2008. This elevated the status of Kashubian by calling for its ongoing protection and promotion. Since Poland's 2004 accession to the EU, grassroots activism has been further bolstered by EU legal support. The 2005 Law on National and Ethnic Minorities and Regional Language allows Kashubs to use Kashubian in their municipalities, in place names, region names and street names; it also allows them to use and spell their Christian names and surnames according to the rules of Kashubian orthography (Mercator, 2004, p. 9; ZK-P, 2006, p. 15). This law also makes provision for the rights of minority language speakers to found and run schools<sup>4</sup> that teach the minority language or through that language. By 2008, approximately 10,000 pupils were taking Kashubian lessons on average three times a week (Mercator, 2008). While these numbers are low, Mercator (2004) notes the recency (1991) of policy changes allowing for the teaching of Kashubian, and the significance of the introduction of Kashubian into a school system that had hitherto been totally inimical to the language and had supported its stigmatisation as a marker of rural ignorance and poverty.

## **Aims**

This study used a qualitative approach to gain insight into the experiences, perspectives and priorities of a purposive sample of pivotal language activists in the Kashubian language community. Following Elliott, Fischer, and Rennie's (1999) guidelines for qualitative research in psychology and related disciplines, it used a qualitative methodology in order to 'understand and represent the experiences and actions of people as they encounter, engage and live through situations. . .based as much as possible on the perspective of those being studied' (p. 216) rather than on preconceived ideas or hypotheses. It was considered appropriate at this juncture in the recent revitalisation efforts for Kashubian to carry out an exploratory study that allows the informants to present their own perceptions of the current situation, and to carry out analyses to identify the main themes emerging from the interviews with the informants. A central aim was to consider these emerging themes 'externally' in the light of the experience of other endangered languages, and 'internally' in terms of reviewing them against the 2006 planning document for Kashubian published by the ZK-P. This planning document was distilled from a series of discussion meetings and work-shops for larger groups of ZK-P activists and other interested stakeholders in the previous years (ZK-P, 2006, p. 8). It aimed to detail the priorities and actions to be undertaken in order to ensure the protection and development of the Kashubian language and culture. Thus, the comparison between the interview data and this planning document allows an assessment of commonalities and differences between the informants and a larger grouping of Kashubian activists, thereby allowing some exploration of any potential points of tension within the Kashubian movement, as well as allowing a consideration of those themes against the wider backdrop of research on language revitalisation.

It is relevant here to note that while the ZK-P is a non-governmental organisation with no official connection to any party, it is strongly associated with Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform; PO), the political party of Donald Tusk, Poland's current Prime Minister elected in late 2007 and one of the interviewees in this study. There are a number of other prominent Kashubs in the PO party serving as senators, MPs and other political figures. Given the role of the ZK-P in Kashubian maintenance to date, and its association with prominent figures currently in government, it is argued that it is particularly timely and appropriate to examine the themes emerging in the interviews in the context of the ZK-P planning document, since it is possible that these priorities will be influential in policy formation regarding Kashubian in the near future. These priorities and the themes from the interviews will also be discussed in terms of Fishman's (1991) stages of RLS.

Finally, in line with Elliott et al.'s guidelines for qualitative research, it is important to establish the orientation of the authors in a qualitative study such as this. The researchers approached this task as non-Kashubs and non-Poles, but as informed observers with a professional interest in endangered minority languages. The first author, who conducted the interviews, is a fluent Polish speaker who had lived in Poland for some years and had begun the study of Kashubian at the time of the interviews. Thus, it was possible that she was seen as an interested outsider with some appreciation of the subtleties of the situation, but with a degree of neutrality given her outsider (non-Polish, non-Kashubian) status, which also allowed a reconsideration of issues that might be taken as read or for granted in discussions within a minority language movement.

## Methodology

The three interviewees were selected in a purposive sample as key informants to represent different spheres of activity within the Kashub and wider Polish community: a religious/community leader, a writer/activist and a politician. The interviews used a semi-structured approach (see Appendix 1 for the interview protocol) in order to explore the views of the participants. The data collected were transcribed and translated by the first author. A content analysis approach was used, with the transcripts being divided initially into sections reflecting the key areas of discussion in the interviews. The responses in each section were recorded, reviewed and grouped into mutually exclusive categories and the categories were adapted for use as a coding frame, which was then used to code all interviews. In order to ensure the reliability of the coding frame the researchers separately reviewed the transcripts and discussed the key sections and themes. The findings discussed here represent the core themes that emerged:

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Themes	
Kashubian Identity	<i>Sub-themes</i> Stigma and religion Kashubian identity/dual-identity Kashubs' and Kashubian's image Multilingualism
Education and literacy	
The future prospects of Kashubian	<i>Sub-theme</i> Promoting intergenerational transmission and home use

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The responses of the participants were reviewed to identify the commonalities and differences on each theme and sub-theme, but it was decided that, for clarity of presentation here, and since the participants were selected as significant activists and identifiable, this presentation would be most effective if it focused on individual responses on the themes that each individual emphasised most. These themes are then discussed in relation to the ZK-P's (2006) language planning document in order to establish points of intersection between the interviews and the aims and concerns identified in that document.

### *The religious/community leader*

Fr Stanisław Gackowski (born 1934) has been a Roman Catholic parish priest in the region of Kashubia since 1959, and also a Kashubian activist and L2 learner of Kashubian. Recognising the inter-relationship between the language and religious faith and practice, Gackowski learned the language himself, often giving sermons in Kashubian. So intertwined did he see religious practice and language to be that he organised language lessons in Kashubian in the local community, now giving back the language to the community that he learned it from, in an effort to promote and maintain both language and religious affiliation.

Gackowski asserted that the Roman Catholic faith has been and remains of pivotal importance for Kashubs. In Gackowski's view, Communism failed to take hold in Kashubia because Communist leaders recognised the strength of Kashubs' commitment to their religious faith and therefore moderated their challenge to it, and in turn, the Kashubs' exercise of their faith gave the language an important public forum:

*Usually Communists said that party members were not allowed to go to Church. They didn't say it in Kashubia because they wouldn't have*

*attracted people. God, faith and people are very important for Kashubs. They [Kashubs] weren't aware that Communism was an ideology without God. When they had to choose, they chose faith over the party. (Gackowski, 30 May 2006)*

He reflected on the hard times of the past, when Kashubs were made to feel ashamed of their language:

*In the beginning, the Communists were afraid that Kashubs would create their own state – land, language, etc. They weren't allowed to use the language in offices, in schools. Teachers from other parts of Poland acted particularly terribly in this situation – they punished children for using Kashubian. They thought that Kashubian wasn't a language but a dialect, and that the children should speak 'literary Polish'. (Gackowski, 30 May 2006)*

Looking to the future, as a man who had experienced the period of active repression of the language under Communism, Gackowski saw much to be optimistic about. When asked if he saw Kashubian as having a place in the future of Poland he emphatically replied 'Yes!' Reflecting on positive steps towards this, Gackowski stressed the importance of the official recognition of the language in supporting the revival of Kashubian:

*The government officially recognised Kashubian as a language... After 1989, people once again took interest in their own languages and dialects. (Gackowski, 30 May 2006)*

He pointed to a number of activities in which Kashubian and religion continue to play mutually supporting roles:

*In many places in Kashubia, schools run religion lessons in Kashubian. There are schools with Kashubian as a language of instruction. The Bible has been translated into Kashubian. (Gackowski, 30 May 2006)*

Outside of the central importance he accorded to religion in the maintenance of Kashubian, Gackowski also stressed general aspects of Kashubian culture, noting that there are now many Kashubian music and dance groups and in many situations, traditional Kashubian dress is worn; for example, children often make their First Holy Communion in traditional Kashubian dress, serving to further consolidate the link between Kashubian culture and Catholicism.

### ***The writer/activist***

Some of these themes were taken up by the second interviewee, Eugeniusz Pryczkowski (born 1969), an L1 speaker of Kashubian, and a writer and prominent activist in the provision of Kashubian literature. His activism is not exclusively literary however, since he is also active in outreach in the language, as editor/presenter of the Kashubian TV programme *Rodnô Zemìa* (The Fatherland), and also as a journalist with different regional newspapers. However, in the interview, his focus was on education and literacy, and on Kashubian identity. He has been an important figure in the formal linguistic socialisation

recognised by Fishman (1991) as Stage 5 of his GIDS framework, in promoting literacy and expanding the range of Kashubian to include more formal varieties and literary genres. Pryczkowski in his interview placed great emphasis on the importance of continuing to enlarge the stock of publications in Kashubian. His contribution to the literature of Kashubian is significant: not only has he written and published many books from his own publishing house, and edited and promoted the books of others, but at a more fundamental level of provision for the language, he was also involved (as recently as 1996) in the standardisation of orthographical rules for Kashubian. One of the critical issues he identified was the poor Kashubian literacy skills among Kashubian speakers:

*They speak Kashubian at home but they don't know how to write. They can't even read. So we started the long process of educating teachers, which is still going on and will end - I don't know when! (Pryczkowski, 4 July 2006)*

Pryczkowski highlighted the fact that the development of modern Kashubian literacy and literature is in its infancy, commenting that even publishers and editors are still learning the language, particularly the orthography, and that for this reason, there continues to be a paucity of those able to publish literature in Kashubian. Pryczkowski, for his part, publishes prolifically through his publishing house and stressed the importance of this activity, particularly for the fields of education and teacher-training:

*I've published about 40 books by different authors and I especially promote young poets and prose writers. We need more and more literature of this type so that teachers who are teaching at schools and are also studying have some material to work on. Not having enough material is a constant problem. (Pryczkowski, 4 July 2006)*

However, Pryczkowski remains positive in his outlook. He pointed to the fact that it took only one 'brave' teacher to start teaching Kashubian in 1991, an initiative which, in its novelty, was perceived as being 'amazingly strange' at that time. As the idea took hold, the issue of the availability of qualified teachers arose, and so the 'long process' of teacher-training started. Now, he noted, school authorities are aware of the economic benefits conferred by the EU for the teaching of minority languages in schools, and are throwing their weight behind the introduction of Kashubian into the curriculum. He was aware that this economic argument is further strengthened by the fact that providing Kashubian as part of the curriculum entails the employment of more teachers:

*The principals of schools have already understood that it's worth teaching Kashubian because we are in the EU and there is money that can be given by the government to support ethnic languages. (...) And so the principals of schools know that behind the whole teaching of Kashubian there is additional money that you can get, and that this can lead to the reduction of unemployment because you can hire more teachers. So the economic argument is also an important argument here. (Pryczkowski, 4 July 2006)*

In addition to the lack of materials and qualified teachers, he noted that a fundamental obstacle to the teaching of Kashubian comes from parents themselves. Pryczkowski feels that it is here that efforts at Kashubian revitalisation-through-education meet with their most serious resistance:

*In order to be able to form a class of Kashubian in schools, we must have a group of at least seven students. The students' parents must sign a declaration allowing children to learn Kashubian. This is the most serious problem because generally the children want to learn, but their parents forbid them to do so. This is slowly changing now. (Pryczkowski, 4 July 2006)*

He explained that the reasons behind these parents' reluctance to allow their children to learn Kashubian centred on the stigma still attached to Kashubian. This stigma operated at different levels of the community, and Pryczkowski admitted that it can be an uphill struggle to convince even teachers of the value of teaching Kashubian:

*The teachers themselves are not really fully convinced about the sense in teaching Kashubian. I try to encourage the people who see the sense in it – for example my wife and my friend – to encourage enthusiasm in them. It's not so easy. (Pryczkowski, 4 July 2006)*

He contrasted this reluctance due to stigmatisation with another theme, the positive effect of the relationship of Kashubian with Roman Catholicism under Communism, and his perception, as a longstanding activist, that religion has held and continues to hold a central place in the lives and identities of Kashubs. In Pryczkowski's view, the role of the Roman Catholic Church in the preservation and promotion of Kashubian has been critical for its survival and for redressing in some ways the negative image of the language promulgated under Communism. Pryczkowski argued that the positive connection between Kashubian and Catholicism is as important as the re-introduction of Kashubian to schools. He commented on the paradox that it was older Kashubs, who possess the best knowledge of Kashubian (and therefore are in the strongest position to transmit the language to their grandchildren), who were most affected by Communism's negative policies towards Kashubian and felt the resulting stigma most. However, it was also this older generation who tended to have the strongest religious beliefs, and thus he argued that the Church's support for Kashubian went some way to mitigating the negative Communist stereotyping of the language and its speakers so acutely felt by that generation:

*The authority of the [Roman Catholic] Church is decisive. If priests say that Kashubian is important, if they themselves speak Kashubian, then this is an unquestionable argument for pre-serving and popularising the language. This especially applies to the older generation who know Kashubian, but who are burdened with stereotypes about the language. The devoutness of Kashubs results in many priests coming from the area. They [the priests] know Kashubian. Their attitude, then, matters a great deal. (Pryczkowski, 4 July 2006)*

In Pryczkowski's experience, this negative stereotyping was one of the key reasons for the weak language transfer between the generation of Pryczkowski's parents and his own, with speakers wishing not to pass on to their children the sense of shame they associated with speaking the language. However, in considering current conditions, he took up the theme of Kashubian (dual-)identity, asserting that there have been significant improvements in this regard in recent years and that Kashubs are now prepared to assert that Kashubian is a language and beginning to feel proud of that language, rather than stigmatised for it. This pride, he commented, allows for a greater acknowledgement among Kashubian speakers of a sense of dual-identity, which makes it important for them to assert their Polish nationality, but to couple it with a sense of Kashubian ethnicity:

*For the last sixteen years, I have to say that there has been a significant change. Seventeen years ago no one would have mentioned Kashubian as a language. (. . .) [Now] we are Polish but we have dual-identity: we feel Polish by nationality but we are also an ethnic group of Kashubs and we have our own language. (Pryczkowski, 4 July 2006)*

### ***The politician***

Donald Tusk (born 1957), the leader and co-founder of the political party *Platforma Obywatelska* (Civic Platform; PO), is a native of Gdańsk, a Kashub and a long-standing member of the ZK-P. In 2005, Tusk ran for the presidency of Poland, and while he narrowly lost, he became the most prominent Kashub in Poland. In October 2007, PO won 44% of the vote in the general election, making him Prime Minister of a coalition government. Tusk describes himself as a fourth generation Kashub and initially took up the theme of Kashubian identity and stigmatisation, stating that when he was growing up in an urban area, exposure to what was a strongly rural-based Kashubian language and culture was rare.

*I was born in Gdańsk, a big city, and the ideas of Kashubian, including the language, but also the customs and culture, were never visible in big cities. Everyday use of Kashubian was specific to Kashubian villages or small towns. Gdańsk was historically the capital of Kashubia, but down through the centuries it became Germanised and so, if Kashubian was used here at all, it was mainly among people who came to Gdańsk to sell their produce or fish. (Tusk, 15 May 2006)*

The lower status of Kashubian discussed by the other interviewees and the idea that Kashubian did not belong to the urban setting are clearly illustrated by these remarks. At that time Tusk associated the language with small farmers who travelled into the city to make a living, a group with lower socioeconomic status which could be clearly distinguished by their activities and language from the inhabitants of the city. By speaking Kashubian, therefore, people revealed their rural background and lower socioeconomic status (SES):

*In Gdansk, the language was regarded negatively, something one should be ashamed of. And so the Kashubs who came to Gdansk for good lost their Kashubian identity in the very first generation. (Tusk, 15 May 2006)*

Thus, Tusk points out that the stigmatisation of Kashubian and Kashub identity had a significant impact on intergenerational transmission and language proficiency among subsequent generations, since speakers who experienced these negative attitudes were less likely to pass the language on to their children. Tusk himself was not raised as a Kashubian speaker but is an adult L2 learner of Kashubian. As a result, he claims that he is better described as a 'reclaimed' or 'retrieved' Kashub, pointing to the possibility of such a reclamation of Kashubian identity even after language shift has taken place in preceding generations. Tusk states that, due to the stigmatisation he and the other interviewees had reported, his family's Kashubian background was never openly discussed while he was growing up, and family members actively discouraged any attempt to broach the subject. In fact, he noted that he did not even discover his Kashubian connections until he was 21.

*In my family, no one admitted to being a Kashub. My grandmother*

*spoke a little Kashubian, but she was ashamed of that. One day, as a grownup, I said to my grandmother, 'You are Kashubian and I am Kashubian. Why have you never spoken to me about that?' My grandmother scolded me, saying that I must not offend her and that she was not any such thing. (Tusk, 15 May 2006*

Reflecting on this negative attitude to Kashubian identity, he explained that this attitude was typical of Gdansk at the time, embodying a great negativity towards all things Kashubian.

A sub-theme to emerge in Tusk's interview was the significance for counteracting this stigmatisation of increasing the visibility of Kashubian through harnessing the media, so that there will be a greater awareness that speaking Kashubian and being a Kashub is 'something nice, something good and not something bad or shameful'. He noted the value of highlighting famous Kashubian personalities, as well as his own position in public life, in order to promote more modern and positive associations with the language and culture. In his view, exposure to well-known Kashubs openly talking about their identity in the media has had a positive influence on the image and identity of Kashubs in general. Significantly, he added that it showed people that they had nothing to be ashamed of:

*If this Tusk, for example, says on TV every other day that he is a Kashub, then it must be some- thing good and not something bad or shameful (. . .) What matters is that someone like me, someone who has gone so far in the world of politics, keeps reminding people about their own Kashubian roots. It is thanks to this that most people have heard about Kashubs. (. . .) So I believe that what I did is I showed people that someone from a big city, someone pursuing a career (. . .), someone who is often in the media, is constantly aware of his roots. (Tusk, 15 May 2006)*

Tusk elaborated on this shift in image in his analysis of the years since the fall of Communism by taking up the theme of the significance of the connection between religion and Kashubian culture. Commenting on the recent renaissance in Kashubian (also echoed by the other interviewees) he argued that, far from the stigma associated with the language until relatively recently, he now sees the development of a 'healthy snobbery' regarding the language and culture, especially among younger generations. Tusk claimed that this was due to a number of things. First of all, he noted that the language had found a strong representative voice in the ZK-P. He pointed out that the ZK-P's close cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church was interpreted as a sign of its opposition to the Communist government, and this gave it positive associations with radicalism. Tusk commented on the significance of the ZK-P organisation being granted an audience with Pope John Paul II during his visit to Communist Poland in 1987. He also stressed the political significance in the 1980s of the ZK-P's staunch support of *Solidarność*, the first independent trade union in Communist Poland. In this way, he argued, the ZK-P created a positive image for itself, and as a consequence, for Kashubs in general. This positively impacted on public opinion, especially among the young, as they saw the organisation as anti-Communist and therefore as 'something heroic'. According to Tusk, these positive associations and attitudes extended to Kashubs and thus being a Kashub became something heroic, and he saw these associations as including the language and culture of Kashubs also:

*It [the ZK-P] acted legally during Communism but it was not a*

*Communist organisation. When Solidarność was born in 1980, the ZKP supported it wholeheartedly, and that built a very positive attitude among young people, who were, by nature, against Communism. So being Kashub meant something heroic, something anti-Communist, and that was a very attractive attitude for the young. (Tusk, 15 May 2006)*

Tusk also credits the young ‘Kashubian intelligentsia’ with having taken up the mantle in the fight for Kashubian. In this, Tusk noted that the ZK-P has helped by its contact and cooperation with other European groups engaged in the protection of minority languages: ‘The first partners to teach us to fight for our language were the Frisians from the Netherlands’. He emphasises the importance of the support from these groups in developing the ZK-P campaign to have Kashubian taught in schools in the region. Tusk’s awareness of the success or partial success of some minority language revival and maintenance movements outside of Poland appeared to carry particular weight with this EU-aware politician. Tusk views Poland’s accession to the EU as a significant and positive factor in the struggle to preserve Kashubian, because of the EU policy of protection towards minority languages.

*Nowadays, thanks to the fact that we are becoming Europeanised, Kashubian is undergoing a renaissance. This is because Europe cares about minorities. (Tusk, 15 May 2006)*

These links with other language revival movement may have contributed also to what was, according to Tusk, a second important driver for the Kashubian renaissance: an extension of Kashubian identity to include an awareness of the value of bi- and multilingualism. Now he pointed out, the Kashubian language, rather than being an impediment to its rural speakers in gaining access to the wider world, has become the second or third language of the Kashubian intelligentsia. Thus, he believes that this group sees the acquisition of Kashubian as a value-added benefit, rather than as a risk, since this is the group most likely to be aware of the cognitive benefits of being brought up in a multilingual environment:

*It is possible to observe that people brought up in bilingual or trilingual environments are happier. It has a great influence on one’s personality, on one’s mind. Such people have stronger roots. (Tusk, 15 May 2006)*

Tusk links the revival of interest in Kashubian with the positive approach taken by the EU towards minority languages, and some awareness of the position of other minority languages within the EU. He stresses the high regard that ordinary Poles have for European institutions and attitudes in general, and significantly, he connects minority language maintenance with what is seen as the progressive European approach, implicitly contrasting it with the Russification of the Soviet Union:

*For many people in Poland, if something is European, it must be good. Since in Europe, in most European countries, they care so much about ethnic minorities, it means that there must be something important about them [ethnic minorities] – something more than just folklore or folk dance. Poles have learnt a lot about this, not only from newspapers but also from their time spent abroad. For example, a lot of my friends go skiing to the Italian Tyrol, and notice that the regional TV is trilingual. (. . .) When we read, for instance, about the great revival of Irish in*

*Ireland or Welsh in Wales, this all shows us that this is very important, that this is a part of being European, that one can't be considered European if one doesn't respect ethnic minorities. This realisation has been very significant. (Tusk, 15 May 2006)*

This realisation has had particular impact on the political domain. Tusk pointed out that the recognition of Kashubian under law as an ethnic minority language accords with Kashubs' belief that their national language is Polish and that Kashubian is a separate ethnic minority language. Tusk therefore appears to present a co-existence model rather than an independence model for Kashubian.

*Recently, we passed a bill about national languages other than Polish and, in it, there is a separate chapter devoted to Kashubian as the only language of ethnic minority. Ethnic, notnational, because Kashubs, in the vast majority, regard themselves as Poles, but their language is not Polish. (Tusk, 15 May 2006)*

Here, Tusk is emphasising that Kashubs do not see their 'Kashubianness' as separate from their 'Polishness', but instead, see the two as linked, but with most Kashubs claiming Polish nationality first, as is illustrated by the low numbers claiming Kashubian identity first in the 2002 Census. This echoes the point made also by Pryczkowski that Kashubs are very mindful of their dual-identity, with primacy given to their Polish identity. There is even a Kashubian slogan: 'No Kashubia without Poland; no Poland without Kashubia'. Therefore, if their language is not termed a 'national' language (given that Polish is implicitly recognised as the 'national' language) but an 'ethnic' language, this supports their ethnic identification as Kashub, in addition to their national identification as Polish, without raising the spectre of independence or separatism within Poland.

On the future of Kashubian, Tusk stated that he believes Kashubian will remain a 'home language' or a language one would learn as a hobby. Thus, he foresees Kashubian playing a role primarily in the private domain – as a language used within the family – maintained and supported by the minority in a diglossic situation. However, he stressed that this minority would include the influential, educated urban elite, rather than being restricted to the elderly, rural Kashubs of former times. Harking back to his earlier comment about the 'healthy snobbery' he sees developing in the young towards Kashubian language and culture, he also predicted that the language will continue to be seen as something of an 'added extra' for the younger generations, added as a second, third or indeed fourth language to their linguistic repertoires, rather than as a constricting marker of rural poverty and lack of opportunity. Thus, while Tusk ascribes importance to the image of Kashubs in the public sphere and to the presence of Kashubs in the media, he seems to see the intergenerational transmission of Kashubian as shifting to a bilingual or multilingual model, based on incentives such as enhanced image and ownership by an urban intellectual elite rather than a rural out-group.

## **Discussion**

In reviewing the contributions of the interviewees, the range of their activism and concerns can be viewed along the graded intergenerational dislocation scale proposed by Fishman for characterising RLS movements, as they each exemplify differences in the focus of their activism. Gackowski's learning and teaching of Kashubian as a second language to adults is a Stage 8 activity, while his cultural interaction in Kashubian involving the community-based older generation of devout Kashubs could be characterised as Stage 7, and his reinforcement of community use and service as a pastor contributes to Stage 6's home-

family-neighbourhood use of Kashubian. Pryczkowski's contribution to standardising the orthography of Kashubian could be characterised as a Stage 8 activity, extended by his participation in Kashubian cultural events (Stage 7), his extensive Stage 5 contributions to developing literacy in the language, his support for providing training and materials for teachers of Kashubian (Stage 4) and his Stage 2 media services. Tusk described himself as a long-standing activist with ZK-P, with personal experience of Stages 8, 7 and 5, but he appears to see his role currently more as one lying within the sphere of Stage 2 concerns with the media and creation of a climate and image for Kashubian, and promulgating the value of a new elite of Polish-Kashubian bilinguals who are not necessarily native-speakers of the language, but who value minority languages in a multilingual perspective that looks beyond Poland to European ideals.

Despite these differences between the interviewees, certain common themes also emerged. In particular, the theme of Identity was a central one, with sub-themes of the stigmatisation of Kashubian under Communism allied with the significance of the Roman Catholic religious affiliation of Kashubs in countering that; other sub-themes were the attempts to develop a positive identity for Kashubian that pivots on a dual Polish-Kashubian identity rather than an either/or identity, the enhancement of the image of Kashubs and Kashubian, and Kashubian as a strand in a multilingual identity. The identity-related themes are discussed together below, since they are highly inter-related. Another theme, the contribution of the promotion of Kashubian education and literacy is discussed in terms of the revitalisation goal. The fact that these themes also figure largely in the planning document issued by the ZK-P (2006), Strategy for protection and development of the Kashubian language and culture indicates their significance in the wider Kashubian community and their potential to influence the Kashubian movement in the future.

### ***Kashubian identity***

The interviewees each adverted to on-going changes in Kashubian identity formation following a period of stigmatisation, when its connection with Catholicism as a marker of its opposition to Communism was highly significant. Rassool (2000) discusses Castells's (1997) argument that identity formation is in fact an organic process of self-identification, which involves constructing new and empowering cultural codes out of historical materials, resulting in identities that are 'sources of meanings' for individuals, and which allow minority groups to express their needs and their dissent from the hegemony of the nation-state. In the State's legitimisation and valorisation of Polish as the chosen 'national' language and as a symbol of modernity and progress, Kashubian came to symbolise 'tradition and obsolescence' (May, 2000a, p. 370). This dichotomy is clear also in Treder's (1997) description of divergences within the Kashubian community, with up to 50% of Kashubs reporting (in his survey in the mid-1990s) that speaking Polish indicated a higher socioeconomic status and pointed to an urban lifestyle, whereas they felt that speaking Kashubian negatively exposed the poverty and rural origins of the speaker. Tusk's emphasis on on-going change in the image of Kashubian speakers is echoed by Obracht-Prondzyński (2007, p. 10): 'an ancient Kashubian inferiority complex, or embarrassing rejection of Kashubianness, is now being replaced by a fashion to be Kashubian'.

This points to a shift underway from what Castells (1997) terms 'resistance identity' in response to delegitimation and stigmatisation, towards the formulation of 'project identity' in Castells's terms. The 'dual-identity' concept appears to be a longstanding element of Kashubian identity and has been noted in other studies (cf. Kurczewski's (2007) investigation of the importance of dual-identity for Kashubs among a sample of respondents in a small fishing village in Kashubia; also, Obracht-Prondzyński, 2007;

Synak, 1998). The dual-identity concept articulated by the interviewees may, indeed, have sprung from Kashubian's Resistance Identity, at pains to preserve itself by presenting itself as unthreatening to national unity. Both Pryczkowski and Tusk stressed its importance in the renaissance they have observed since the fall of Communism. A significant aspect of this renaissance is that Kashubs are now being empowered to choose how they self-identify, rather than having this identification imposed on them. Robotham (2005, p. 107) notes that Castells viewed resistance identity as purely defensive, whereas project identity not only resists, but 'is also able to put forward positive alternatives to the status quo [and is] transformative of the fundamental conditions which produced its oppression', and does this on the basis of the cultural materials available. Tusk appears to move towards a formulation of such a project identity in his comments about an emergent urban, educated multilingual identity for Kashubs, whereby Kashubian is associated, not with tradition and looking inward, but with modernity and looking outward to a Europe seen as supporting linguistic diversity. This accords with Robotham's (2005, p. 107) characterisation of project identity as using the 'group's inner cultural resources' to build a new identity that re-positions its group members in society.

A significant challenge for the construction of such a project identity for Kashubs will be the role accorded to religion, given its centrality in its resistance identity. Both Pryczkowski and Gackowski pinpointed the Catholic Church as a lifeline of sorts, acknowledging the central role of religion in the lives of Kashubs and the unique position the Church occupies in the revitalisation of Kashubian. However, despite the more radical image of Catholicism in Poland than elsewhere, it now shares the difficulty seen in other European countries of remaining relevant to younger generations whose lifestyles differ markedly from those of their rural less educated parents and grandparents. Tusk, as a successful politician, signals an awareness of the growing secularisation of Polish society, and the changing role of religion there since Communism, and seems to recognise the need to loosen the links between the language and religion in modernising the image to make it more appealing to younger generations. Whereas Pryczkowski, Gackowski and the ZK-P's Strategy seem to hark back to earlier times in stressing the central importance of the Roman Catholic Church in the lives of Kashubs, Tusk seems to be attempting to 'unpack' this solid identification between Kashub identity and religion, by highlighting the value of multilingualism and the aspects of Kashubian culture more likely to appeal to the young. In this regard, Kashubian shows some similarities to the Catalan, Basque and Galician experience, where such secularisation of modern society has already impacted on the identification of the threatened language with a religious affiliation. Tusk sees that promoting a modern, multilingual dual-identity for Kashubs and emphasising the cultural and cognitive benefits of bilingualism in Kashubian and Polish may be more effective in promoting language transmission among the current generation of young adults than appealing to older, more devout speakers by emphasising the connections with Catholicism. The dilemma is that this risks alienating the latter, who, as is also evidenced by the interviewees here, include some of the most committed language activists.

To some extent this tension hinges on differences in the assumptions about what being a 'good Kashub' entails. Fishman's analysis suggests that it is crucial that such assumptions are clarified and consensualised at an early stage of the RLS efforts, if the subsequent efforts are not to be conflicted and contested from within. Thus, the ZK-P Strategy's targeting of church services as a way of promoting Kashubian use in a public arena may, in fact, be a case of 'preaching to the converted' while consolidating the identification of Kashubian with the older and more conservative rural heartland of native speakers, at the cost of alienating the younger urban elite that Tusk is trying to reach. Tusk appears to be attempting to bolster the image of the 'new' Kashub, whom he is at pains to present, in Fishman's (1990, 2006a, p. 84) terms, as contradicting the image

of 'past-oriented, conservative, change-resistant dinosaurs' which is the stereotype of RLS activists. This new image emphasises an unthreatening (to Polish) diglossia that seeks to capitalise on the non-conformism of Kashubs under Communism and to embrace the features that Tusk indicates will promote the future success of Poland at EU level: a commitment to EU values, higher levels of education leading to greater economic success, wider experience and a more open attitude to bilingualism and multilingualism. Tusk sees potential gain from reaching out to younger users by capitalising on the 'healthy snobbery' that is associated with increasing one's linguistic repertoire by learning Kashubian in addition to Polish, and possibly other languages. Rassool (2000, p. 395) would locate such a view within the Information Age of transnationalism and cross-cultural communication where multilingualism 'seen as central to the forging of a cosmopolitan identity, represents a strategic lifestyle choice'. However, Rassool cautions that it is unclear how this cosmopolitan identity relates to 'the still unresolved language inequalities in the postcolonial and postcommunist world', where minority languages compete with the hegemony of world languages.

Despite this difference in orientation, there are some interesting similarities between Tusk's analysis of the stigma/identity issue and that found in the ZK-P planning document, and in their contributions to a Kashubian project identity. The ZK-P (2006) Strategy also prioritises the need to address the self-consciousness caused by stigmatisation that led to language shift by encouraging a sense of pride in Kashubian ethnicity and a celebration of this difference. Significantly, it argues the need to do this initially regardless of language proficiency (2006, p. 21), claiming that feeling and being Kashubian must not be something unattainable for non-Kashubian speakers. Thus, it would appear to be proposing that, while reversing the language shift is desirable, the strength and pace of this reversal will rest on promoting ethnic/regional pride and a sense of connection, not only to the language, but also to the region and to the group (2006, p. 21), Tusk appears to be in accord on this issue in terms of his desire to lessen negative feelings towards the language and strengthen positive identification with the group and region. Haładewicz-Grzelak (2006, pp. 432–434) also emphasises the need to increase ethnic or regional identification first, stating that, in the Kashubian context, RLS 'involves employing the strategies which strengthen ethnic identity' such as Kashubian use in religious services, and use of Kashub emblems such as their own flag and anthem, more than concentrating on intergenerational transmission within the family. However, Fishman's (1991, 1993) analysis of RLS would indicate that unless the language's crucial link to intergenerational continuity is maintained, it will be much harder to get back to Kashubs-via-Kashubian after positive and rewarding images of Kashubs-via-Polish have taken firm hold. Tusk did not comment on the fact that some of what he sees as increasing the visibility of Kashubian ethnicity in positive ways is through Polish. Extending the profile of modern Kashubs to include urban, career-oriented younger Kashubs, he believes, enhances the future viability of the language by offering an alternative to the stereotypical image of the elderly, rural Kashub, but according to Fishman's analysis, there are also inherent dangers in striving to enhance or rehabilitate the image of Kashubs through the medium of Polish.

On the other hand, both Tusk and the ZK-P document also see a value in making the Kashubian language itself more visible in the public domain (education, media and Internet) in order to increase its status. Some progress in this regard has been seen in recent years, with Kashubian newspapers and supplements to local newspapers in the Kashubian language and development of the Kashubian media. In particular, there has been an increase in Kashubian programming on both local TV and radio stations, and this is an area which will benefit from increased development. The Mercator Media Forum has presented evidence over a number of years of the role of the media in supporting endangered languages. Moriarty (2008) has pointed to the value of television programming in the Irish and Basque

revitalisation efforts in providing increased contact with the language and an alternative milieu outside of the educational domain in which to experience the language. However, in relation to such Stage 2 activities, Fishman (1990, 2006a, p. 93) cautioned that early RLS movements must not be carried away by the ‘most glamorous institutions . . . in the public eye’ since the acid test remains the fostering of demonstrable intergenerational transmission.

### *Education and literacy*

Pryczkowski was aware of the need for capacity building in the literacy sphere in order to give Kashubian a greater range, since the ‘elaboration of more formal varieties and the attainment of literacy in one or another of these varieties contributes to the solidification of wider intercommunal bonds and the cultivation of additional support opportunities for RLS’ (Fishman, 1991, p. 96). Currently, there is a small but steady output of Kashubian literature (mostly for adults) being published, and the language has also been promoted through local initiatives such as Kashubian poetry recitals. Both Pryczkowski and Tusk were acutely aware of the need to increase the stock of published literature in Kashubian in order to increase literacy levels among Kashubian speakers, both native speakers and learners. Trainee teachers and other adults, both native speakers and learners, need suitable materials urgently to promote their literacy skills in the language. Most teachers have been formally educated through Polish, and this has left a dearth of teachers who are actually able to read or write in Kashubian. The ZK-P’s Strategy also gives a high priority to literacy promotion, according equal importance to the development of literacy skills as verbal skills. It supports Pryczkowski in his call for the publication of literature for use in schools (2006, p. 12), and it also recommends the publication of a Church song book and liturgical readings to promote literacy among older native speakers. A focus on educational and religious literature may be unduly narrow and the current lack of prioritisation of provision of materials for young children in the ZK-P Strategy document may need reconsideration, given the benefits of promoting home literacy activities in the minority language found in Wales, New Zealand and Friesland. One relevant strategy that has been used in Wales (Edwards & Newcombe, 2003) would entail producing and supporting the use of books for young children (including dual-language books initially), as this would increase the use of Kashubian in the home and help to lay a foundation in literacy skills in Kashubian among the next generation. As was experienced in the Maori and Irish revival movements, it may take some time before the materials produced in the target language can adequately serve the full range of needs of its potential (future) readership, from adults down to child learners and speakers, but a strategy that deliberately targets a future readership, rather than publishing simply what is available (which can lead to a corpus with too many unread books of adult poetry, too few books for children and no books for teenagers, as was the case in Irish in the 1980s) may yield greater returns.

Education is one of the main focus points of the ZK-P document, but its statement that: ‘it is school that guarantees a further transmission of Kashubian’ does not accord with Fishman’s (1991) analysis of RLS. Haładewicz-Grzelak (2006, p. 432) also stresses the importance of education as a focal point for Kashubian language activists, and argues that, with the recent decline in intergenerational language transmission, Kashubian language revitalisation currently depends on the educational institutions. Obracht-Prondzyński (2007, p. 19) agrees and sees Kashubian teaching in schools as a way to substitute for declining transmission in the home, but he assesses this project as ‘risky’ because teaching may not become ‘common enough’ before intergenerational transmission ceases. Current estimates of the numbers learning Kashubian in school range from 4400 (Mercator, 2004 dossier on Kashubian) to 10,000 (Mercator, 2008). This may represent significant growth in the intervening period, or some conflict between sources. Apart from needing to become

more widespread, Pryczkowski acknowledged that the teaching of Kashubian in schools is still insecure, and that while schools and teachers are cognisant of the monetary benefits now of teaching Kashubian, teachers themselves may not be fully convinced of the actual value in teaching the language. When minority language teaching is well-resourced and effective, it has been shown to play an important role in language revitalisation efforts (e.g. Edwards & Newcombe, 2005; Fishman, 1991; Hornberger, 2008) but as Fishman (1991) emphasised, RLS efforts are prone to place undue reliance on school. Spolsky (2008, p. 158) also warned against over-dependence on schools, stating that ‘school is not enough’, since it is the intergenerational transmission of the home that is the foundation of reversing shift. Nevertheless, we must not under-estimate the role of education in language revival, and Fishman also acknowledged that school-based language learning plays an important role in RLS, in making it central to three of his eight stages. Thus, it is not the case that such language teaching efforts are not an important or necessary component of RLS, but that they do not appear to be sufficient for revitalisation. Fishman’s (1991) assessment of the poor results from the Irish efforts at RLS through education is instructive in this regard: ‘we must guard against allowing our academic affiliations and general biases (which tend to make us view education as the universal panacea for any and all problems) to lead us prematurely to assume that schooling is “the solution” to RLS problems. The Irish experience alone should disabuse us of that fallacy’ (Fishman, 2006a, p. 98). Fishman emphasises that intergenerational transmission must be secured to ensure continued language maintenance, and thus would question the wisdom of placing too much reliance on schools as the engine of RLS in the Kashubian context.

International research on revitalisation does point to the value of immersion teaching in supporting family and community use and also increasing the pool of young proficient speakers (e.g. May, 1996; Spolsky & Shohamy, 1998). This is also acknowledged by the Strategy, but as yet this model is not available in Kashubian due to funding issues (ZK-P, personal communication, January 2009). The development of Kashubian-medium education would be highly significant in increasing proficiency among a group of child learners while assisting their parents’ (more limited) rediscovery of the language, and a successful immersion school would effectively raise achievement in the language as well as improving the status and profile of the language, as has been the case in the Basque Country, Catalonia, Wales and Ireland, for example. The ZK-P planning document seeks primarily to spread the teaching of Kashubian as a subject in a greater number of schools, but it also seems to aspire to Kashubian-medium education (‘To run schools providing education of and in Kashubian’ [ZK-P, 2006, p. 13]). However, it is significant that it does not lobby explicitly for even a small number of Kashubian-medium schools, possibly indicating a lack of confidence currently in parental demand for such a model and the resources and teachers to run it successfully. A priority therefore might be greater cooperation with Language Planning Boards and other EU regional minority language organisations in order to investigate ways of facilitating educational outreach to parents regarding the promotion of immersion models of education (particularly immersion pre-schooling), and the exploration of the necessary educational resources used in other settings which could be translated and/or adapted to Kashubian-medium teaching. Such coordination of effort between different minority language groups, and sharing of resources which can be adapted for particular languages, was discussed at the EU conference on promoting regional and minority languages in education held in Brussels in 2006.

### ***Future prospects: promoting intergenerational transmission and home use***

The Euromosaic Study (2004, p. 260) noted that despite 'discreet efforts' at Kashubian revitalisation, the critical factor of Kashubian intergenerational transmission is not yet secure. Treder's (1997) survey findings indicate an abrupt decline in intergenerational transmission and Pryczkowski recognised the crucial importance of convincing native speakers of the value in passing the language on to their children and grandchildren, Fishman's pivotal Stage 6 intergenerational nexus. Both Pryczkowski and the ZK-P Strategy highlight the importance of convincing ordinary people of the need to use the language on a regular basis 'at home, at work and in public' (ZK-P, 2006, p. 10). However, there were some notable differences on this issue. When Tusk talked about the future role of Kashubian as a 'language of the home' it was to point to its limited utility in the public domain. Such a role, as a language that is mainly restricted to the private or home domain would handicap the revitalisation effort (Fishman, 1991). Pryczkowski argued that it is the older generation of fluent speakers who now need most to be convinced about the importance of its intergenerational transmission. However, Fishman's (1991) caution might be worth noting here about Stage 7 actions targeting cultural experiences and attitudes among older speakers: 'the road to societal language death is paved with the good intentions called "positive attitudes"' (1991, p. 91), which he sees as a short-sighted strategy, since a language used mainly by this generation will die as that generation dies. Unless the ceremonial, educational, community and media language efforts link into the daily family socialisation process, they will not be successful in RLS. Exploration of ways to involve fluent older speakers on a practical level in the transmission enterprise might be more beneficial at this point, such as the Maori approach to enlisting grandparents' help in *kohanga reo* or immersion preschools to support the less-fluent parent-generation of teachers and to show the older speakers the benefits of helping young children to acquire the language. However, as yet only two private kindergartens (Mercator, 2004) use Kashubian (and it is not clear if they are entirely Kashubian-medium, or include some teaching in the language), and plans to develop an early immersion programme (ZK-P, 2006, p. 14) based on those in Wales and Brittany (Mercator, 2004, p. 14) have been set aside due to funding issues (ZK-P, personal communication, January 2009).

### **Conclusion**

While Kashubian had experienced significant repression up to relatively recently, it must now manage a new set of challenges accompanying its improved status in a rapidly changing Poland. A great deal has been achieved since 1991, with a range of efforts to mitigate the effects of the stigmatisation of the language under Communism, and between five and ten thousand pupils learning the language in school (Mercator, 2004, 2008). Significant strides have also been made in legal provision for the language, partly as a result of accession to the EU. However, within the context of new economic opportunities outside Poland for Polish citizens, it suffers the difficulty, like many minority languages, of convincing its current and potential speakers of its value. Accession to the EU conferred the benefit of mobility to Polish citizens prepared to migrate to secure their futures. However, such mobility may have strengthened the view that Kashubian has very low value in the wider world. Minority language migrants may 'marry out' and begin to raise families where that minority language is not passed on, as occurred in the Irish context (Ó Riagáin, 1998). Thus, even though the current relative buoyancy in the Polish economy compared with the recession-hit countries to which Poles formerly migrated may be positive in attracting home many of the migrants of recent years, it could also be problematic for Kashubian if families returning to Kashubian-speaking communities have shifted to Polish or English during their migration.

The interviews presented here provide food for thought in reviewing the achievements and challenges still to be tackled in relation to Kashubian revitalisation. The task of shifting from a resistance identity formed under repression to a project identity embodying positive attitudes appears to be paramount at present for Kashubs, and may lead to some tension within the movement as this new identity is constructed. Attitudes to the language and its users need to evolve, both externally and internally, from the stereotype of the provincial, devout, impoverished Kashub stoutly resisting repression to encompass a more secular, educated, urban elite. Tusk evidenced his desire to raise the status of Kashubian and promote an image of Kashubs as modern, change-embracing citizens with no separatist political agenda, but appeared to expect the language to be used mainly in the private domain and spoken as a second or third language by an intellectual elite. While all three informants emphasised the pressing need to address the poor image of Kashubian after decades of stigmatisation, Fishman (1991) pointed out that a concentration too early in a revitalisation effort on status and power goals can impede the foundational stage of promoting intergenerational transmission until it is too late. Tusk's projection of Kashubian being maintained in a multilingual context as a valuable additional resource in the private domain, not necessarily as the main language of the home, overlooks the dangers described by Fishman (1993, 2006b, p. 118) as inherent in aspiring only to a diglossia-attaining situation, without the safe harbour of strong intergenerational transmission of a fluent and rich language used on a daily basis in the home, neighbourhood and community. In this regard, Fishman noted that the Irish and Frisian experiences show the dangers of declining intergenerational transmission in a diglossic situation. Another aspect of this relegation of Kashubian to the private sphere is that there are dangers, according to Fishman's analysis, of personifying the image of the successful, public Kashub through Polish only, since it makes it harder later to revert to giving the language a central place in the rehabilitated image of the group.

One of Fishman's major contributions to RLS analyses has been his proposal of a series of graded priorities in RLS efforts, which offers the merit of focusing attention and limited resources on what must be tackled first, and also of constantly directing attention back to the central question of intergenerational continuity. The interviewees noted the importance of legal provision for the language, and the high-profile media provision of positive images of Kashubian character and culture, which have helped address the stigmatisation of the language, and these point to activism at the higher Stage 2 of the GIDS. The other issues discussed, such as standardisation of the orthography of the language, teaching it as a second language to adults, promoting literacy in the language, and supporting community use by older speakers relate to Stages 8, 7 and 5. What received relatively little attention from these informants was discussion of supports for encouraging intergenerational continuity (Stage 6) and there was no discussion of immersion education in the language (Stage 4a). It appears that the demand for Kashubian-medium education, and the possibilities of meeting that demand in terms of schools, teachers and educational materials are not yet ready. The proposed small-scale introduction of Kashubian kindergartens may help to 'grow' the demand for immersion primary schooling in the future, as was found in the case of Irish and Welsh. The provision of such early immersion groups, as well as future expansion into primary school immersion programmes has also been found to support home use and transmission, the crucial stage that presents such difficulty in RLS efforts. However, the postponement of plans to expand these preschools points to the lack of funding for Kashubian language and education, a constant problem in Poland's developing economy where infrastructural developments compete with social/educational ones. Indefinite postponement of early immersion as an effective means of supporting acquisition of the language could reduce the possibility of revitalisation, and increase the chances of a lingering death with occasional ceremonial/cultural uses.

Kashubian faces significant difficulties in overcoming the legacy of repression and consequent decline in intergenerational transmission. Kashubs are not alone in addressing these problems, however, and some of these challenges are shared with other European minority languages. The placement of a sympathetic, if pragmatic, politician such as Tusk in a key political role, and the activism of passionate and committed speakers such as Pryczkowski and Gackowski, augur well for the language. Similarly, the openness to building on the experience of other endangered languages at different points on the revitalisation curve evidenced among some of the activists interviewed here and in the ZK-P Strategy document may be of significance, both at a theoretical and at a practical level in Kashubian's future maintenance and revitalisation. The time may now be opportune for a review of the Kashubian RLS efforts to date, so that the critical stages of targeting inter-generational continuity and further developing educational provision can be developed in optimal fashion. An EU-wide consultative group might be well-placed to support Kashubian activists in developing the next stages of the Kashubian planning process. An example of a practical cooperative project would be the adaptation (not merely translation) for Kashubian of resources developed by other minority language groups, particularly those aimed at parents regarding the value of bilingualism and of maintaining a minority language in the home, in order to promote home transmission. Other projects could look at supporting the spread of Kashubian-medium preschooling; developing a range of materials and interventions promoting Kashubian among young children both in the home and in kindergarten; and exploration of Maori approaches to involving the more fluent grandparent generation in childcare, preschool and home language activities related to the transmission of Kashubian would also be appropriate.

Gackowski, in his interview, was convinced that Kashubian has a definite place in Poland's future. Tusk spoke of the surprising 'vital force' of the language and emphasised the cognitive benefits of being brought up in a multilingual environment, possibly attempting to broaden the appeal of revitalisation. The election of a Kashub to the role of Prime Minister of Poland represents a significant opportunity for increasing the status of and supports for the language and helping to achieve at least some of the aims laid out in the ZK-P planning document. The existence of this blueprint of strategies aimed at the preservation, promotion and development of the Kashubian language at the time when the Civic Platform came to power means that some of the necessary consciousness-raising and information-gathering is already advanced, and increases the possibility that at least some of its proposals will be implemented at this pivotal point. In a rapidly changing Poland now experiencing some prosperity but against the backdrop of world recession, Kashubian, having survived significant adversity, must face the new challenge of managing opportunities, with the potential for a measure of political support at national and European level. The next two decades may be critical for the future of Kashubian.

## Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank Tomasz Wicherkiewicz for his generous assistance, and Henryk Telesiński, Ewa Zmuda-Trzebiatowska and Monika Ziętek for their invaluable help throughout.

## Notes

1. In the brief overview here of Kashubian from the start of the twentieth century, *Historia, Geografia, Język i Piśmiennictwo Kaszubów* (Borzyszkowski, Mordawski, & Treder, 1999) as well as *The Kashubs, Pomerania and Gdansk* (Borzyszkowski, 2005) were invaluable resources. As *Historia, Geografia, Język i Piśmiennictwo Kaszubów* was unavailable in English, the authors have seen fit to translate it in order to provide the readers with a general overview of the aspects of Polish history which are of relevance to this article.
2. So effective was this strategy that the belief persists among many Poles that Kashubian is a dialect.
3. Toops (2007) states that large estimates such as Synak's are 'highly inflated'.
4. Under law, Polish educational institutions can be public or private, or funded by communities.

The existing schools which provide education in/about Kashubian are predominantly public or community schools (Mercator, 2004, p. 12).

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