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## Silesian and Cashubian Ethnolects as Contrasting Types of Ethnic Identity Strengthening\*

*Abstract:* The research reported in the article investigates sociolinguistic factors of ethnic identity change and identity strengthening, as exemplified on the processes of ethnic revival in the regions of Upper Silesia and Cashuby. The article compares selected aspects of synchronic and diachronic situation of the two ethnolects in Poland: Cashubian and Silesian. The analysis singles out some focal points around which ethnic identity tends to concentrate, for example identity bonds, official inscriptions, language of instruction. The identity strengthening strategies in the respective ethnolects are then compared and discussed. The framework is based on sociological and anthropological theories, e.g. *rational choice theory*, *functionalism* as well as on the semiotic *rich-get-richer principle*, the paradigm of *visual anthropology* and the technique of *visual essay*.

*Keywords:* contrastive identity study, identity shift versus identity strengthening, covert versus overt identity, language standardization, language shift versus revitalization.

It is well known that language can act as an important defining characteristic of ethnic group membership, and in many communities, the link between language and ethnicity is strong, and obvious. It also has to be recognized, however, that a simple equation of ethnic and language group membership is far from adequate (Trudgill 1983: 127)

### Introduction

The assumption that language is a paramount factor of group cohesion seems self-evident with respect to minority languages. The present article investigates the issue basing on the ethnolects which in the past did not manage to coin their standard versions, namely, the vernaculars of the regions of Upper Silesia and Cashuby in Poland. The referential research was supplemented with the field study conducted in 2005 in the region of Cashuby and Silesia, as well as the analysis of internet language data. I tried to avoid passing value judgments (cf. prescriptive versus descriptive linguistics) and hence the term ‘ethnolect’ (coined by Majewicz) is used instead of the

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term ‘dialect’, which is especially important with respect to much itinerated ‘language or dialect’ discussion on Cashubian.

The referential part of the research is mainly based on elaborations by accomplished scholars investigating the varieties in question: based in Warsaw, Gdańsk and Poznań Universities in the case of Cashubian (the Poznań contribution includes the research by Gerard Labuda—the rector of Adam Mickiewicz University 1962–65, Ludwik Zabrocki and Alfred Majewicz) and in the case of Silesian, the researchers based in Silesian Institute in Opole, Opole University as well as many others (Osowski, Berlińska, Lis, Wyderka, etc.).

The contrastive study revealed that the revival entails the renouncement of the vernacular. In the case of Cashubian both the language shift and revitalization are operative. In other words, the imposition of the standard variety is a separate process from the failure of the family to transmit vernacular dialects of Cashubian. Ethnic identity strengthening is a uniform process involving ‘re-cashubization’ even of these realms of cultural heritage which traditionally had been connoted with the Polish language (e.g. religious services). In the case of Silesian the vernacular is cultivated as a covert prestige medium, the overt prestige being granted to both Polish and German. The rise of German Minority in Silesia is a peculiar revival process, which had to click on by renouncing the vernacular (Silesian) identity. I attempt at an explanation for such an identity diversification.

The socio-ethnic context is as follows. According to the sociological estimates (as quoted after Wicherkiewicz 2000) the Cashubian population amounts to 330–550 000, of which more than 100 000 declares Cashubian as their mother tongue. The exact population of German minority in Poland has been the subject of debates. The minority organizations estimate it at 400–800 000, of which the lion share lives in the Opolian Silesia (as quoted after Wicherkiewicz 2000). The characteristic of this minority group is the fact that only about 6–30% of the population can speak German and within variegated levels of proficiency. Silesian is not listed in the Wicherkiewicz’s specification of Polish ethnolect taxonomy. The specification of European House ([www.domeuropejski.pl](http://www.domeuropejski.pl)) lists nine national and ethnic minorities inhabiting Silesia<sup>1</sup> but does not give any figures concerning Silesian identity, either. The 2002 census allowed for only one answer on the nationality question, therefore it is possible that many Silesian residents who would admit to the Silesian nationality (identity), nevertheless registered as Polish nationals, which is a logical priority. Notwithstanding, the 2002 census figures reveal that Silesian nationality was declared by 173 200 people.

I singled out the following categories which I assumed to reflect identity strengthening strategies: language of instruction, official inscriptions, literary output, devising identity bonds, gaining international recognition. These categories served as a sort of heuristic corpus which would aid to understand why the varieties undergoing similar linguistic superstate influences in the past adopted totally divergent cynosures of ethnic revival. Then the divergent strategies of identity strengthening were juxtaposed using the functional approach. It turned out that these identity strengthening strate-

<sup>1</sup> Czechs, Karaims, Latvians, Lemkos, Armenians, Gypsies, Russians, Slovaks, Ukrainians and Jews.

gies set high standards to be met by an ethnolect in order to be eligible for the identity carrier status. In other words, there are some societal functions which a standard language must fulfill. If the vernacular variety is not capable to meet them, another variety is chosen.

Such an assumption is in congruence with the autopoiesis theory (cf. Skibiński 2005: 112), which treats sustaining autonomic organization and identity of a system as the main, defining function of a living organism, whereby societal autopoietic systems evince autonomist tendencies: “The way I speak, how I express myself in a given language, in other words, the form of common discourse, is at the same time the sign of identity and the main factor of its strengthening”<sup>2</sup> (Skibiński 2005: 112).

The reasons for basing the contrastive identity research on Silesian and Cashubian varieties are manifold. First of all, the question of ethnic identity and identity conflict in Poland is most pronounced in the case of these two regions (we are disregarding here the *gorallenfolk* episode). Secondly, the two varieties were diachronically subject to similar superstate influences, equally destroying from the part of Polish and German languages. The process of suppression of the restricted code and creating language deficiency feelings has also progressed in a very similar way. Both Silesian and Cashubian were considered inferior by the Poles and by the Germans. The Germans called Silesian “Wasserpölnisch” (Ossowski 1948) and similar derogative expressions were implied with respect to Cashubian. Similarly, just as for the German (Prussian) state both Cashubian and Silesian vernaculars were not German enough, for the newly created People’s Republic the varieties were not Polish enough, which resulted in carrying out ethnic repressions and the programs of the homogenization of the Polish socialist society (the so-called *repolonization*).

Thirdly, the two regions are distant enough to rule out any mutual influence. Such a situation enables tracing and comparing the mechanisms of identity change because the concomitant development of ethnic identity progressed in opposing ways. The Cashubian ethnolect is becoming standardized through unremitting language revival process, and in the region of Upper Silesia the overt ethnic awakening was effectuated by building group identity not around the vernacular variety (Silesian) but the language of former trespassers—German, giving rise to the German minority in Silesia, which is usually connected with overt renouncing the identity of a speaker of Silesian. The caveat must be made at this point that there are also more and more pronounced attempts at the standardization of Silesian, as well as elaboration of synchronic and diachronic dictionaries of Cashubian (cf. B. Wyderka’s research) and etymological elaborations. Furthermore, there are also isolated ventures in the realm of Silesian nationalism (e.g. Ruch Autonomii Śląska) however, they have not reached yet the status of a social movement and will equally be omitted from the analysis.

It might be hypothesized that, in Zabrocki’s terms, the Cashubian region can be classified as a language community and the Upper Silesian region as a communicative community, which can account for the divergence of identity strengthening processes:

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<sup>2</sup> All translations from Polish are mine, MHG.

The fundamental notion, as well as the starting point for further sociolinguistic studies, was for him [Zabrocki] the notion of a communicative community, which he understood as a group of people in which there exist objective conditions for exchange of information [...]. A language community is a communicative community which possesses a uniform means of communication, i.e. one common language [...] Language community is a kind of superstructure imposed on a communicative community [...]. A communicative community, in turn, is, to a great extent, a product of extra-communicative factors such as geographical, economic, political, religious, ideological and cultural (Bańcerowski 1980: 18).

### Silesian and Cashubian Awakenings

Let us begin by tracing some facts about German awakening in Upper Silesia from the perspective of identity shifts. In 1956 in Western Germany there start to appear societies of Silesians (“ziomkostwa”) which, among other things, edited newspapers, such as *Schlesische Rundschau*” or *Unsere Oberschlesier*.<sup>3</sup> They were the main propagator of the concept of German minority inhabiting Poland. The German organizations, which subsequently sprang into being in Opole and Katowice voivodship, received the support of German revisionist societies (*Bund der Vertrieben*, cf. Lis 1993, Berlińska 1999) On February the 16<sup>th</sup> 1990 Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne Mniejszości Niemieckiej na Śląsku Opolskim was registered in Opole. From that time on the residents of Silesia were officially permitted to declare one’s ‘German identity’ while continuing to live in Poland. Already in the beginning of 1989 Johann Kroll started collecting signatures of people who declared such identity. Accompanied by media turmoil, the existence of German minority in Silesia became a fact. German awakening activists used the identity slogans to manipulate public opinion. For example, Johann Kroll, in his speeches frequently expressed the opinion that Silesians were the nation without the ‘fatherland’ and without the future. There were frequent opinions that the native tongue of the Silesians has always been German (cf. Lis 1993). The manipulations of national concepts, on the basis of which the identity of German minority was blossoming, necessarily entailed cutting off any Polish elements, which also meant denigrating the vernacular by the activists.

In the joint proclamation issued in 1989 by the first post-war Polish non-communist government and the German party headed by Helmut Kohl it was stipulated, among other things, that both sides would enable people identifying with either Polish or German nationality to preserve their cultural identity. Furthermore, both sides would enable access to cultural heritage—respectively German or Polish, the inhabitants of Silesia should identify with. It was thus officially acknowledged that there was no such thing as a Silesian identity and Silesian heritage to which one might admit.

The astonishing fact is that as years go by, the societies of German minority proliferate: at present there are 16 societies of German minority registered in Silesia (cf. [www.domeuropejski.pl](http://www.domeuropejski.pl)). I consider the fact astonishing because all sociological surveys show that the number of native German speakers in Opolian Silesia is diminishing, which, coupled with the fact of subsequent waves of German emigration

<sup>3</sup> For the detailed discussion on German press in Silesian see Glensk, Joachim 2005. “Sankcje wobec prasy niemieckiej ukazującej się na Śląsku w I połowie XX wieku.” 55–77 In: Kossakowska-Jarosz, K. 2005. (ed.). “Śląsk—siła tradycji i współczesne problemy” Opole 2005: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Opolskiego.

from the region and lack of any immigration, cannot explain such a proliferation. Furthermore, it must be taken into account that nobody was allowed to stay in the region of Silesia in the newly created socialist Poland unless they proved their Polish provenance. In other words, you had to prove you were Polish to be allowed to stay in Silesia after the war. Anybody who could not come up with any Polish affiliation had to leave.

The fact that the national awakening in the region of Silesia took place without any recourse to the ethnolect of the region makes it unique among the revival movements across languages. The members of the minority organizations often consider themselves Silesians, with the reservation that they are the German Silesians. Adopting such a stance, they reject their own vernacular, which they often use in informal situations (covert prestige). I would venture a claim that being a Silesian at present mostly means being of a double nationality: Polish and German (cf. *rational choice theory*). At the same time, it does not necessarily imply the identification with the neither German language nor German culture. According to most sociolinguistic surveys, older generations in Upper Silesia still speak German, being in the state of bilingualism, while the younger generations, although they easily admit to German nationality, are not willing to learn the language.

The lack of connection between the Silesian ethnolect and the Silesian cultural identity could be best illustrated by the quotation taken from Berlińska (1990: 113) “Ja to jestem niemiecki ślązak, bo Polakiem to bych nie chcioł być.” “I am a German Silesian because I would not like to be Polish.” As can be seen, the speaker admits to German identity on the basis of individual (rational) choice, speaking however, vernacular Silesian. We might thus say that in the region of Upper Silesia, apart from the Standard Polish, there exist two independent identification codes: informal (covert) Silesian and overt—German. If we accept after Bartoszek (Jacher as quoted in Bartoszek 1993) Jacher’s suggestion who considers indispensable to conceptualize national integration processes on three planes: ethnic, national and state, we might venture to say that in the case of Silesia those planes did not coexist harmonically. The main conflict to be traced could be formulated as the conflict of the activities of the state and national identity. What is more, such a conflict caused the suppression of the first plane—ethnic integration.

Let us now turn to the Cashubian ethnolect. It is spoken in the region of Cashuby which is in the northern part of Poland. Most researchers agree that it formed part of a dialectal continuum of Lekhitic languages, with the Polish language as the eastern periphery and the Polabian (połabski) language<sup>4</sup> being the western periphery. Apart from the diachronic changes which affected the whole Lekhitic group, Cashubian ethnolect has undergone some changes which were idiosyncratic. Furthermore, it was more consequent in carrying out the changes affecting other Lekhitic languages. Finally, it preserved, especially the northern varieties of Cashubian, a lot of anachronisms—both phonetic, morphological and lexical, which had disappeared

<sup>4</sup> It might be observed that Polabian was unquestionably granted the status of a language, which, given the vivid discussion on the status of Cashubian, might prompt the conclusion that the extinction of a variety greatly augments its chances of achieving the taxonomic status of a language.

from the Standard Polish. This is the reason why Baudouin de Courtenay called this variety “more Polish than Polish itself.”

With the view of these facts, Cashubian justly deserves the opinion of being the most idiosyncratic and divergent from the Standard Polish of all other so-called dialects of Polish. We can thus observe the semiotic principle of rich-get-richer at work: predictably, the varieties with less conspicuous differences from the standard of the region are more likely to undergo assimilation and are less resistant to change. The ethnolects which are already more idiosyncratic would be slower in adapting to the superstrata variety.

Figure 1

“Cashuby welcome to” plaque in one of the most renown tourist resorts in Cashuby.  
The inscription is in standard Cashubian.



Let us next compare the influence of German on the two varieties. As it was mentioned in the beginning, the nature, length and intensity of language contact with German were of comparable nature in both ethnolects. However, the impact of German on the Cashubian ethnolect was almost negligible. The contrast is acute if we compare the situation with the changes affecting the Silesian ethnolect: the extent of the influence of German upon Silesian is often not realized by the Silesians themselves. For example, most Silesians are convinced that the native Silesian words for *grandma* and *grandpa* are German, which testifies to the affinity of the variety with that language: *Ohma* and *Oppa* respectively. However, the native Silesian lexemes are different: *starka* and *starzyk*. Notwithstanding, in contemporary Silesian exclusively the German lexemes are in use, adapted to the Polish orthography, morphology and syntax, e.g. *ołpowie* ‘grandparents’. It might be interesting to note that the Cashubian cognate is identical and was preserved intact: *starka* and *stark*. (cf. *mowa starków* ‘the speech of the ancestors’). Ironically, the purest form of Silesian was preserved in the United States, in the settling of 19<sup>th</sup> century Silesian emigrants in Panna Maria in Texas.<sup>5</sup>

Most researchers are agreed that the development of standard Cashubian should be equaled with the development of the literary Cashubian. From the diachronic perspective we might enumerate various causes of the failure to develop a Cashubian

<sup>5</sup> In 2004 Muzeum Śląska Opolskiego in Opole organized the exhibition on the occasion of the 150 anniversary of the Panna Maria village: *Panna Maria—150 lat Śląskiego osadnictwa w Teksasie*. The descendants of the emigrants who in on the occasion of the anniversary visited Silesia and who spoke the variety as it stood in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Silesia, had difficulty communicating with the speakers of contemporary Silesian.

literary standard. Functionally speaking, Cashubian and Polish have complemented each other throughout history: Cashubian being the restricted code, used in family circles and in everyday conversations in neighborhood groups, while Polish, as an elaborated code, was language of the official documents, education and religion (the so-called uneven qualitative status).

According to Zieniukowa (2002: 64), the attachment to the mother tongue, with the concomitant respect for Polish, could be one of the factors inhibiting the creation of the Cashubian literary standard in the past. Other researchers (e.g. Szultka 2002) point out that Cashubians, even in the Middle Ages, when their political position was quite strong, have never aspired to their own nationalism. Moreover, they were not able to transfer their dialectal variegation into the supra-tribal lingua franca.

The crucial point to notice is that in the Cashuby region each generation, starting from the seminal books by A. F. Hilferding, F. Ceynowa and S. Ramułt in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, comprised at least several writers who purposefully chose Cashubian as a means of their literary expression. Nevertheless, each of them wrote in their local *patois* which meant that literary Cashubian output had covered practically all the Cashubian dialectal continuum. It also implies that none of the dialects had managed to impose its features on the rest to create a standard version. We must point out here that the dialectal variegation in Cashubian is so significant that a speaker of one of the Northern dialects can have difficulties communicating with the speaker of one of the Southern-Cashubian dialects. The crucial observation was made by Treder (2002: 218), who commented that it is only the youngest generation of writers that managed to become detached from the vernacular conditioning, mainly because some of these writers could not speak Cashubian in their youth, [emphasis added, MHG] hence they succumbed more easily to the Cashubian of contemporary literature. Standard languages have a very unusual character, and they are almost pathological in their lack of diversity. However, they are indispensable (cf. Gelner's *context-free* versus *context-dependent* communication) for the functioning of contemporary society. As can be observed in the case of Cashubian (and also for example in Catalanian or Latgavian), language standardization seems a paramount step in strengthening ethnic and cultural identity, although it entails renouncing regional (dialectal) differences.

To compare, the general consensus of expert opinion on Silesian is that one of the most deplorable facts of its history was almost total lack of any writers who would ennoble this variety by creating literary works of art (cf. Ossowski 1948). Nowadays, of course, there are writers writing in the Silesian dialect, we cannot however speak of any literary tradition. Silesian is usually used as a marked value, or intended to diverge from the universal schemata. Moreover, many contemporary writers and poets from the Upper Silesian region write in German. (e.g. Horst Bienek, who writes about Silesia in German).

Apart from the literary output there is another possibility to ennoble a variety, namely by the tourism in the region. It might be hypothesized that tourism can create a sort of a sociolinguistic feed-back loop. On one hand, tourists visiting the region are expecting as many *exotica* as possible and, by their expectations, they foster

cultivating the vernacular. That was the case for example with the mountaineers' dialect in Poland.<sup>6</sup> At present, its prestige coefficient is quite high, which is due, among other factors, to the strong underpinnings from the tourists. The mountaineers' accent in speech is not a source of language deficiency feelings. On the contrary, it stereotypically evokes connotations of a tough, living close to the nature, person. The tendency can be exemplified by the fact that lots of commercials, especially of low alcoholic beverages, use the mountaineers' dialect to advertise their brand, selling the stereotype of a 'tough guy'. Silesia can hardly be called a potential tourist venue; hence it has never been the object of the influence of tourism business. Cashub region, on the contrary, has always been a very popular vacation site, and it has even acquired the nick of "Cashubian Switzerland." The region is gaining importance as a tourist spot and significantly, the majority of inscriptions in the standard Cashubian which I was able to find, are located in the largest tourist resorts.

## Identity Strengthening

### 1. Introducing Identity Bonds

The linguistic situation in Cashuby can be interpreted as two separate processes. The first is the downdrift of the restricted code (language shift), which phenomenon is the same both in the Silesian and Cashubian region. The second process going on in Cashuby has no parallel in Silesian region. Nevertheless, it is also quite popular across words' languages, as the so-called ethnic revival, or reversing language shift. The sociolinguistic space affected by the reversal of language shift in Cashuby is however different than the milieu undergoing language shift. In practical terms it involves employing the strategies which strengthen ethnic identity. The so-called 're-cashubization' is originated by the cultural elites of the region. Usually it is the middle-class well educated people and with well-grounded professional and social position that could afford to speak Cashubian. The revival is thus carried out not through the family but through the educational institutions, which in the past used to be the main factor suppressing the vernacular in accordance with deliberate governmental policies emphasizing nationality and national unity. All sociolinguistic studies are agreed that family as a means of transmitting the vernacular variety is less and less significant.

Part of my research consisted in checking reading texts in Standard Cashubian. However, nobody from the older generations volunteered to read. Instead, I was referred to the Tourist Information Centers, museum workers (who would not read the Cashubian texts, either) or school teachers. It shows the rift between vernacular varieties and the standardized variety. Also, it supports my claim that standard, especially written Cashubian, has to be learnt as a foreign language is: only the people trained

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<sup>6</sup> "Mountaneers' dialect" (*gwara góralska*) is already an introduction of a level of descriptive stereotyping abstraction. Poland has various, ethnically and culturally different mountainous regions. There is much dialectal variation, differences in national dress and in customs amongst them. However, stereotypically, "mountaneers" connotes solely with the region of Podkarpacie, specifically the Tatra mountains (Zakopane).

in reading standard Cashubian attempted to read and even they often had vocabulary problems.

The identity strengthening process can be noted also in the language of religious services. In the times when the region Cashuby was under Prussian partition rule, religious services for Cashubian Catholics were held in Polish. Moreover, the Cashubians also have their anthem. This situation was in fact welcomed by the Cashubians since Polish was much more similar to their native ethnolect than German. Hence, traditionally and unquestionably, the language of the Catholic religion and the language of prayer in Cashuby has always been Standard Polish. At present, though, there is an increasing tendency to hold mess in Cashubian. New Testament has been translated into Cashubian and there are sermons and books of prayers available in the Cashubian version. In other words, the strengthening of ethnic identity involves changing the stereotypic thinking, even so deeply grounded as the religious habits.

Figure 2

**The plaque with *Pater Noster* [Our Father] prayer, which a Cashubian pilgrimage left in Jerusalem to let the world know that God understands Cashubian.**



Figure 3

**The Cashubian flag and emblem.**



Identity strengthening involves devising identity bonds. Above you can see the Cashubian flag and emblem. We might trace here certain ambiguity: the flag and emblem are usually associated with the nation, not with the ethnic group. Cashubians do not aspire to their own nationality but it is clear that in this case there is certain interplay of ethnic and national identity. Moreover, Cashubians also have their anthem,

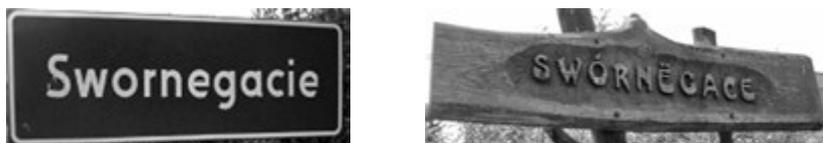
*Ziemiô Rodnô* by Trepka. There is also an unofficial ‘anthem,’ which is accessible on postcards in all souvenir shops and which can be heard in all folk festivals. It is a folk tune *Kaszebsci nuty* ‘kaszubian music.’ Ethnic identity strengthening is implicated in the fact that the earliest version of the tune in all probability was in German and it was about a nobleman, not a Cashubian person. Then the tune was translated into Cashubian and became a stereotypic carrier of Cashubian identity (cf. Geppert in [www.naszekaszuby.pl](http://www.naszekaszuby.pl)).

## 2. Official Inscriptions

The status of a language as a carrier of ethnic identity can be best illustrated by official inscriptions, place names and by achieving international recognition. The pictures below show the name plaque of one of the most renowned Cashubian tourist resorts—Swornegacie.

Figure 4

**Plaques with the place name of one of the villages in Cashuby. The first (official) inscription is written in standard Polish and the second (unofficial) is written in standard Cashubian orthography.**



The name sounds quite hilarious in Polish—something like “jolly trousers.” The Cashubian translation is more down-to-earth: *gac* means a ‘lake’ and *sworne*—‘connected’, so we get ‘connected lakes’. However, the oldest Cashubian residents remember that the original name of the place was Swory, which is of course much less picturesque and attractive tourist-wise. Still, the place name is in Cashubian, even though adapted to the Polish pronunciation and spelling. The picture in Figure 4 on the right shows the version of a place name as it is written and as it should be pronounced in standard Cashubian which implies a next step, unofficial so far, of identity strengthening. Not only the place name is Cashubian but it is, unofficially so far, written in the standardized version of the regional language, not in Polish.

The next picture (Figure 5) catches a moment in time—a moment of transition that the Cashubian ethnic identity is experiencing. The name of the school cannot be in this commune (*gmina*) officially translated into Cashubian yet, it might be observed that the emblem of the region is already placed alongside the Polish one and in fact the name of the school in standard Cashubian is already there, carved in wood.

An important step in strengthening ethnic identity is gaining international recognition. In 2003 on the motion of Zasoby Kaszubsko-Pomorskie Cashubian was granted the international code CBS. The code is mainly used for archives and library purposes; however, it seems an ideal solution for denoting and propagating the newly budding standard on web pages. In 2005 Cashubian was recognized as a regional language in

Figure 5

The comprehensive school in Swornegacie. The red plaque in the upper left corner shows the name in Polish and the unofficial vaulted wooden plaque is the Cashubian version.



the light of Polish legislation (the law from 6<sup>th</sup> January 2005 on language and ethnic minorities).<sup>7</sup>

The regional language, according to the law, can be defined as the variety traditionally used by the inhabitants who are a minority group and which is different from the official language of the state. It does not encompass the dialects of the official language nor the language of the migrants. In the light of the law, the Cashubian is a regional language. The law also stipulates that if the number of the inhabitants speaking the regional language in a given commune exceeds 20%, the commune can apply for the inscriptions in the regional language alongside the standard Polish and all the official petitions can be made in the regional language.

From the legislative point of view, there are two types of bilingual inscriptions: the translations of the names of the official centers, and the so-called “physiographical names,” denominating the topographical names, e.g. place names. For example, in the Cashuby region the plaque with the name of the Kartuzy district is bilingual. In Upper Silesia, however, introducing such plaques is still controversial and requires an opinion poll.

Analyzing the status of the standard language as a means of official instruction in educational centers brings to light differences in the respective revival movements. In Cashuby students are already allowed to write their A levels (*matura*) in Cashubian, just as the speakers of Byelorussian or Ukrainian are in the eastern regions of Poland, although Cashubians have never been a nation, contrary to Byelorussians or Ukrainians. To compare, it is not possible to write *matura* entirely in German, even in the region of Upper Silesia. German is taught exclusively as a second language. Needless to say, Silesian variety is not officially taught anywhere but informally it is cultivated with great care and devotion in village social centers (e.g. Łubniany or Pruszków village social houses). It is still however a covert prestige process and it has not reached yet the status of a revival. As it has been mentioned in the beginning,

<sup>7</sup> For the exhaustive discussion on European and Polish legislation on language and ethnic minorities with the emphasis on the Cashubian legislation, cf. Majewicz (1987, 2002).

Figure 6

Left: a plaque of the Cashubian secondary school in Brusy, where students can choose Cashubian as the language of instruction.

Right. The plaques on the siege of Kartuzy district authorities. In agreement with the law on regional and auxiliary languages the inscriptions are in Standard Polish and Standard Cashubian.



Figure 7

Left: Bilingual plaques in the siege of the Chrzastowice commune authorities (adapted from [www.wochenblatt.pl](http://www.wochenblatt.pl)).

Right: the bilingual plaque on the siege of authorities in Strzelce Opolskie. In this region there was no controversy whatsoever in accepting the plaque.

Wójtowie boją się dwujęzycznych tablic  
2006-07-04



there are joint scientific efforts (e.g. research at Silesian University) aiming at the standardization of Silesian. There are also weeklies and monthlies where the Silesian heritage is exhaustively presented. They are either in Polish (e.g. *Śląsk—Miesięcznik Społeczno-kulturalny*) or in German (e.g. *Silesia Nova, Oberschlesien*).

Most revival movements start from fighting the right to have the inscriptions in the language of the region. In the Opolian Silesia, if the fight took place, it was the fight for either Polish or German inscriptions. In the late 30-ies German socio-national authorities supplanted all the place names which had Slavic connotations with German names. First, there were phonetic adaptations of Slavic lexemes to German pronunciation. Then, chronologically later, these phonetically assimilated names were supplanted with German place names, semantically connected

Figure 8

**Bilingual (unofficial) plaques on the siege of the Foundation for the Development of Silesian Region in Opole. Left: bilingual inscriptions inside the building, right: the plaque outside.**



(or not) with the original name. For example, we might quote here two names in the Opole voivodship: *Chruscice* and *Chruscina*. Till 1935 the names were, correspondingly, *Chroszczütz* and *Chrostzinna*. Then they were changed into *Rutenau* and *Reisern*. *Dziewkowice* also had two official names: *Schewkowitz* and *Frauenfeld*. We might note in passing that the commune head Wieschollek naturally chose *Frauenfeld* in his individual revival attempt, although *Schewkowitz* was a chronologically earlier version than *Frauenfeld*. In the early post-war period all German inscriptions, place names included, were methodically removed (Sochacka 1993). For example, *Frankenstein*, through an intricate associative process, was named *Ząbkowice Śląskie*.

The implementation of bilingual inscriptions in Upper Silesia is a much more complicated issue than bilingual inscriptions in Cashuby. First of all, the possibility to introduce bilingual inscriptions created a lot of societal controversy. For example, in the city of Racibórz there was a motion to introduce inscriptions in German alongside Polish. The inhabitants protested, replying that in such a case the inscriptions in Czech should also be supplied. Moreover, it was claimed that there was no need for German inscriptions altogether: all those who left Poland for Germany can read Polish, so they could find their way when they come back to visit (cf. [www.wochenblatt.pl](http://www.wochenblatt.pl)). In general, the commune heads were somewhat reluctant to introduce such inscriptions even in the communes that qualify for the implementation, because of the polarization in the society they would entail.

I interpret the introduction of the bilingual inscriptions as an identity strengthening strategy. The claim is supported by the fact that the bill did not mean anything for the language minorities which already have the status of a nation, for example, Lemkos or Ukrainians. The most numerous groups of Lemkos and Ukrainians did not submit motions for the inscriptions to the National Commune Register, nor did the Podlesie communes (of which 13 qualifies), or Suwałki Byelorussian communes, where there are communes with 80% of Byelorussian population. It is just the two discussed regions

of Poland, where the revival movements are the most pronounced, that immediately submitted the motions for the inscriptions.

The detailed discussion of the identity strengthening by contrasting other nations (minority languages) and other ethnic groups is beyond the scope of the present paper. The wide context of socio-historical conditioning would have to be brought to light, which might have implications for purely sociological studies but not directly for the case sociolinguistic study, which is attempted by the present research. We might adduce here just one exemplary cause for varying attempts at revival: past experiences. The Cashubians have never experienced acute repressions for being an alien nation because they have never been a nation. It might be hypothesized that nations, such as for example the Ukrainians, might have reservations to openly fight for their ethnic identity in Poland because of the past nationality conflicts.

Figure 9

**The advertisement for a catering establishment near Opole. *Witojcie* is the dialectal version of ‘welcome’. It could be both Silesian and mountaineers’ (*gwara podkarpacka*) dialect. The standard Polish realization would be *witajcie*.**



The picture above summarizes some of the topics that have been covered so far. Furthermore, it is a particularly graceful object for visual anthropological analysis. First of all, it must be pointed out that it advertises not just a catering establishment: the restaurant and hotel in question have been operative for decades, so it is quite renowned in the area. The name has been changed—originally the establishment was just called “Under the bear” (*Pod Niedźwiedziem*). We can thus observe the addition of a mountaineers’ flavor (“*Zajazd Góralski*”—“mountaineers’ inn”) which is in congruence with my hypothesis that tourist ennobling is a sort of a back coupling, the mountaineers’ (*Podkarpacie*) culture undergoing reinforcement through positive stereotyping. The commissioners seem to disregard the fact that the inn is the dead centre of Silesia, it specializes in Silesian cuisine and nothing inherent points to its mountaineer affiliation.

The “welcome” inscriptions are tri-lingual: on top *Witojcie*, which is written in the mountaineers’ dialect (*gwara podkarpacka*) but it can also be a Silesian realization, then below, there are versions in English and German and no standard Polish correspondent. In the background there is some more mountain flavor: a picturesque blue

mountain (Podkarpacie) landscape. Finally, there is a welcoming couple in mountaineers' national dress. The dress itself implies another level of far-fetched stylization: not only 'mountaineers' connotes solely with the Podkarpacie region, but some elements in the dress which are supposed to come from Podkarpacie are freely combined with those which (for example the man's vest) are dissociated with any historical reality.

### 3. Reaching Far

The subsection reviews the channels of social influence with respect to promoting ethnolects. In the past the identity strengthening function was carried out through the press. The press also reflected the controversial attitudes towards ethnic identity. It might be recalled that the group of Cashubian writers and theoreticians, grouped mainly around the periodical *Zrzesz Kaszëbskô* (1933–1939; e.g. Aleksadner Labuda, Jan Trepczyk, Stefan Bieszk, etc.) were the cynosure of strong controversy directed towards the so-called "Cashubian issue." 1950s and 60s witnessed the proliferation of Cashubian newspapers. Contemporarily, some newspapers (e.g. *Dziennik Bałtycki* "The Baltic Daily") have the weekly supplement *Norda* partly in Cashubian. *Norda's* allotted space of one page is usually taken up by the following topics: reports of the Cashubian heritage competitions, cultural events in Polish, Gospel in Cashubian and a humorous essay in Cashubian (the section's name translates as "so as not to forget the ancestors' speech").

Radio broadcasts are an important factor in promoting ethnic identity. It might be of merit to notice that both Silesian and Cashubian also has recourse to this means of societal propagation. We might observe the increasing amount of radio broadcasts (especially on Sundays in *Radio Opole* Broadcasting Station) which are held in Silesian variety. The identity clash can be also observed because although the broadcasts are held in Silesian, there is also a proliferation of German "family" music, especially during so-called request broadcasting (*koncert życzeń*). The most popular Cashubian radio broadcast (*Radio Kaszebe*) is available also on-line and can be listened to at [www.radiokaszebe.pl](http://www.radiokaszebe.pl).

Figure 10

Some of the headings in *Norda*—the Cashubian weekly addition to the daily *Dziennik Bałtycki*



Figure 11

**Left. Internet opinion poll. Surfers are asked to vote for equating the status of Cashubian with Standard Polish in the Pomorskie voivodship. Right: Internet opinion poll. Surefers are asked to vote for the autonomy of the Upper Silesian region.**

The figure displays two internet opinion polls. The left poll, titled 'SONDA', asks: 'Czy język kaszubski powinien być zrownany z językiem polskim w woj. pomorskim?' (Should the Kashubian language be equated with Polish in the Pomorskie voivodship?). It offers four radio button options: 'Tak - jako drugi język urzędowy.' (Yes - as a second official language), 'Tak - ale jedynie jako obowiązkowy język w szkołach.' (Yes - but only as a compulsory language in schools), 'Nie - jedynie nauczany w szkołach jako język dodatkowy.' (No - only taught in schools as an additional language), and 'Nie.' (No). There are buttons for 'Zgłosuj' (Vote) and 'Zobacz wyniki' (View results). The right poll, also titled 'Sonda', asks: 'Czy Górny Śląsk powinien mieć autonomię?' (Should Upper Silesia have autonomy?). It offers five radio button options: 'Tak.' (Yes), 'Tak, ale autonomię powinny mieć wszystkie regiony Polski.' (Yes, but all Polish regions should have autonomy), 'Nie, obecna formuła samorządności jest wystarczająca.' (No, the current self-government formula is sufficient), 'Nie, należy ograniczyć obecny zakres samorządności.' (No, the current self-government scope should be limited), and 'Nie, Górny Śląsk powinien być niepodległym państwem.' (No, Upper Silesia should be an independent state). There are buttons for 'Głosuj' (Vote) and 'Wyniki' (Results). Both polls feature a coat of arms at the top and a search bar labeled 'szukaj...'

However, nowadays, Internet is becoming one of the major factors of ethnic identity strengthening and of shaping social acceptance. Figure 11 shows the internet opinion poll. You can vote for the Cashubian language being admitted equal rights to Polish in the region where it is spoken, which illustrates the continuity and decisive direction of the process of ethnic identity strengthening. The figure on the right shows another opinion poll, held by the Ruch Autonomii Śląska ‘movement for the autonomy of Silesia’. As can be observed, the linguistic issues are absent from the concern of the movement. The predominant bias is political.

In the prolific internet discussion on the status of Cashubian some points of paramount importance can be singled out. The authors of the internet letters under analysis accuse the Polish educational publications of stereotyping the dialectal status of the Cashubian language into the society, in spite of the achievements of the generations of Cashubian grammarians. Secondly, it is claimed that people are afraid that recognizing Cashubian as a separate language will entail separatist tendencies. In other words, identity strengthening is stereotypically connoted with nationalism. However, it must be observed that in the internet discussion under analysis the Cashubians unquestionably admitted to the Polish nationality and within that nationality,

they want to preserve their language, which was internationally recognized as such. Again, the contrast with the Upper Silesia region is acute. For native Silesians, the palpable criterion of being a Silesian nowadays implies basically having a double nationality: Polish and German. They are not particularly willing to identify with German language or culture.

Figure 12

Internet site “Only for Silesians,” (the web address is in the picture), which is a place for very informal (“no censorship” proviso) discussion on Silesian identity problems.

**Tylko dla Ślązaków** (228) Założyciel marcin841

Forum przeznaczone dla Ślązaków, celem omawiania krzywd doznanych od wszelkich państw, władz państwowych, narodów - jak również celem dyskusowania o problemach tożsamości i języka śląskiego, oraz o wszelkich innych tematach związanych ze Śląskiem i Ślązakami. Bez cenzury! (najwyżej forum zostanie zamknięte przymusowo z pogwałceniem wolności słowa)  
Zaprzężnione forum:  
forum.gazeta.pl/forum/71,1.html?f=21095

+ dodaj swoją reklamę  
+ dodaj do ulubionych forów  
+ rozpocznij nowy wątek

Sortuj według:

- **wielu Nos tu je? (32)** builder 01.06.06, 15:35
- **Dlaczego język śląski nie został dotąd spisany? (19)** bartoszcze 29.05.06, 17:44
- **Gorole a sprawa śląska. Teoria. (18)** e.day 08.05.06, 22:57
- **Nostalgia za famiłokami (1)** bezzad 22.02.06, 13:28
- **Nicky Cruz opowiada... historia prawdziwa (3)** yarek\_sshalom 22.02.06, 13:23
- **Czemu Gorole sa tacy Poj\*\*\*\* (3)** lukasz508 20.11.05, 15:41
- **Lubliniec nie chce być w śląskim !!!! (1)** cruz\_10 04.10.05, 07:14
- **Drodzy Ślązacy :)))))))) (25)** carranta 27.09.05, 22:08
- **Czy Śląsk jest wykorzystywany? (12)** bartoszcze 19.09.05, 14:56
- **Nossol auf dem St. Annaberg bei Haltern (3)** hanyz\_hanz 07.09.05, 22:56

The above quoted site is one of the informal links to the discussion on Silesian by the Silesians. The contributions are either in Standard Polish, German or in Silesian adapted to the Polish orthography. Worth noticing is the “hanyz\_” nick of a contributor: *Hanyz* is a derogative for a Silesian person, etymologically coming from the Polish adaptation of a German common name, *Hans*. Another derogatory nick which appears on the page is *Gorole*, which amounts to the same as *Hadziaje*, denoting both the newcomers from the eastern territories and non-Silesian inhabitants. The in-depth analysis of the site deserves a separate research which surpasses the scope of the present paper, I would nevertheless like to quote one of the internet opinions on the standardization of Silesian, which is written in Silesian: “Jo kupił we ksiengarnio katowicko ilustrowany słownik gwary śląskiej. A jak z niey wyciepnonć te niyemieckie hajmaty, cugi, cufałki a polskie słowa to wiela ostanie?” [I have bought in the Katowice bookshop an illustrated dictionary of Silesian dialect. If we take out the German *hajmaty*, *cugi*, *cufałki* and Polish words, will there be much left?].

An important step towards propagating the standardization of Cashubian orthography was the creation of Cashubian word-processor.

Figure 13 shows the Standard Polish version of the processor (middle) juxtaposed to the Cashubian version (left). According to the authors, the processor was created to propagate Cashubian standard in Internet and in the computer science. There

Figure 13

The juxtaposition of the Cashubian (left) and Polish (middle) version of the Cashubian word editor. Available on the web page of *Zasoby Kaszubsko-Pomorskie*. Right: A very informal version of the Word in Silesian. It reflects the stereotyping of a Silesian speaker having inferior cognitive abilities to a speaker of a standard variety.



is a slight semiotic loop: it rather seems that the editor is a help to create and strengthen the Cashubian standard. A new vocabulary is created to cater for the demands of contemporary culture. It might be observed that the Cashubian version is more linguistically 'purist' than standard Polish. The terminology, which in Standard Polish involves some loans or calques from English, features Cashubian lexemes, e.g. the word *autorzy* 'authors,' which in Polish is an adapted loan, is Cashubian: *Úsòdzcë*. The same goes with 'download' and 'powered by' which in Polish are preserved in the English original spelling and Cashubian version employs the standard Cashubian lexemes, the native status of which is sometimes questioned. It seems that a lot of care is taken to introduce Cashubian into the realm of technology and create new standard Cashubian vocabulary for concepts which in standard Polish are denoted by English loans, calques or adaptations.

Figure 14 shows some of the most popular websites, respectively for German and Cashubian. In *Wochenblatt*, just as it was the case with Cashubian in *Norda*, there is a small section—a series of jokes—in Silesian: *U onkla Hanysa* 'At uncle's Hanys.' We might observe here some kind of an identity clash. The title says that it is a newspaper of the Germans in Poland. However, the content of the article on the right implicates the lack of affiliation with the German nation. Let us trace some of the expressions from the text on the right (Kommentar) in free translation from Polish. "The drawing for the FIFA was favorable for us. The Germans lead the group A but Poland also was placed in Group A. And further down: Because of the World CUP Germany will pomp up into their economy 10 billions euros for which they will get new and more beautiful stadiums [emphasis added MHG]." Definitely, *THEY* denotes Germany and *US* refers to Poland, which implies the author's identification with the Polish, not the German nation.

Figure 14

Top: The Polish version of the bi-lingual (on-line versions available in Polish and German) Silesian weekly *Schlesisches Wochenblatt* ("The newspaper of the Germans in Poland"). Bottom: Cashubian version of one of the most popular Cashubian websites, [www.Kaszubia.com](http://www.Kaszubia.com).

# SCHLESISCHES WOCHENBLATT

Zeitung der Deutschen in der Republik Polen

Informationen, Hintergründe, Service

---

**Aus dem Inhalt**

Już wróćce w SW nowa strona, poświęcona życiu parafii O czym będziemy pisać, zależy od was, naszych czytelników. Czekamy na propozycje!

**MENU:**

- O Tygodniku Śląskim
- Kontakt
- Cennik reklam
- Prenumerata
- Jugend-Slask
- Archivum artykułów
- Wyslij e-mail
- Linki www
- Powrót do strony głównej

**O mniejszości bez ogródek**  
(2005-12-22)



Członkowie DFK Wałce mówią otwarcie o sytuacji Niemców na Opolszczyźnie

Przyjeżdżam do Domu Kultury w Wałach. Tu ma siedzibę miejscowe DFK. W środku czeka już na mnie grupa jego członków. Będziemy rozmawiać o mniejszości. Przy kawie i ciastkach, ale za to bez owiania w [zobacz artykuł >>]

**Komentarz**

**Niemcy wygrali**

Losowanie FIFA World Cup Germany 2006 wypadło dla nas pomyślnie. Niemcy przewodnicząc grupie A, ale również Polska znalazła się w grupie A. 9 czerwca 2006 wielki futbol jako pierwszy rozegrał gospodarze z Kostaryką, a w dwie godziny później Polska z Ekwadorem. Już te mecze mogą dać odpowiedź na pytanie, która z drużyn wyjdzie z grupy. Z powodu World Cup 2006 w gospodarstwie 10 miliardów euro. Za to otrzymają nowe i jeszcze ładniejsze, przebudowane stare stadiony. 200 okazanych futbol. Poszerzone autostrady i 50 tysięcy nowych miejsc pracy. Mistrzostwa świata w piłce nożnej przyniosą Niemcom dużo splendoru. Oby tylko nie miły wspólnego z rzymską

---

**U onkła Harysa**



FAJNE, ŻE JÓ MÓJ KUPIŁ PRZECHŁODZĄCĄ POCIEJĄ, ALE TERAZ MOJÓZ MÓ DĄC, JEŻEŻE NA KONO - MARNA LOKALIZACJA, EU TO WOLYDNO JEJ PRÓBNO!

**Nie będę wyciągał siekiery na mniejszość**  
(2005-12-21)



Z Bogdanem Tomaszkiem, nowym wojewodą opolskim, rozmawia Engelbert Misi

– W samorządzie województw w Opolu władzę sprawuje Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej i Mniejszość Niemiecka. Nadzwór w przesłupaniu prawa ze strony rządu spoczywa w Pańskich rękach. Czy będzie panu trudno [zobacz artykuł >>]

**Kawa będzie pilnował Niemców**

## kaszubia.com

Kaszëbskô wëdowiednô starna.

Kaszëbskô Wëdowiednô Starna

Lëczba

KASZUBIA PL

KASZUBIA DE

---

**GÓDŁE**



Z Iżnoćcë Gódów 6 Nowogò Rokù żeczã Wama wiele redoscë e zeszecógò.

Róczã tãż do czëtnictwa

wëjmóków ze Swiatégò Pismionã ó narodzënim Jezusa e Gódówkã spiewów (Bùdzysz, Trepczik, Bieszk, Pepriszczk, Rompszczk...)

Mark Iwãdziszczk

---

**Tatczëznã e spëcznã**

**KASZËBSCZI HYMN**

• Zemia Rodnô - Jana Trepczka

Zemia rodnô, pészni kaszëbsczkã kraju, Ód Óduńska tu, jãż do Róztoczã bróm! Tã jes snôżó jak kwiat rozkwitł w maju. Ce, tatczëznã jô lubòbnã tu móm. [...]

**HISTORJÓ**

• Kartë òbjmu kaszëbscznë w stãdnych stòlatach

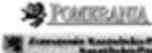
---

**GEÓGRAFIJÓ**

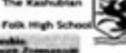
• Kaszëbscznã dzysz

• Kaszëbskô - pészni Zestówk geógraficznych mionów

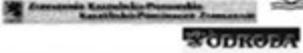
**AGENCJE**



POMOCNIK



The Kashubian Folk High School



Związek Kaszëbskô-Pòmorskô Kaszëbskô-Pòmorskô Związek



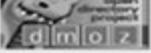
ODRODA

**KASZËBSCZI W INTERENCË**

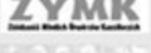


WIKIPEDJÓ

Wolnô encyklopedijô

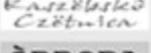


DMOZ



ZYMK

Związek Kaszëbskô-Pòmorskô



Kaszëbskô Czëtnica



ODRODA

odroda\_slk\_p.pl



Kaszëbsczã k-melion



KaszEd

Kaszëbsczã e-uk

---

**Kùltura e kùlnszt**

**KASZËBSCZË BIOGRAMË**

- Alojzy Bùdzysz (1874 - 1934)
- Aleksander Labòda (1902 - 1981)
- Jan Trepczik (1907 - 1989)
- Sztëfan Fihùs (ur. 1920)
- Marion Majkòwsczi (ur. 1929)
- Jan Drzëbòzn (1937 - 1992)
- Eugeniusz Óòlãk (ur. 1949)
- Stanisław Bartòlek (ur. 1950)
- Jerzi Lisk (ur. 1950)
- Eugeniusz Prëczkòwsczi (ur. 1969)

**JAROSLAV HAŠEK · PRZËGÓDË BËLNËGÓ ZÓLNËRZA SZWËCJA Z CZËSCJÓD PREDOLMACZËŁ VLADISLAV KNOLL**

---

**EWANGELJÓ W DOLMACZKËNÓ O. DR. SIKÓRÉ (WËJMCZ)**

- Wedle sw. Jana
- Wedle sw. Mabeùsza
- Wedle sw. Lùkòsza

Secondly, the thematic scope in the case of Cashubian and German Minority internet sources is different. You might notice the heavy bend on culture and tradition on the Cashubian webpage, just as it was the case with *Norda* page: religion and the preservation of the cultural heritage occupy the lion's part and the current affairs relatively small. On the contrary, the *Wochenblatt* issues are mostly devoted to the discussion of political influence and community life, which implies that the identity strengthening is based in this case on extra-linguistic and extra-cultural factors—mainly political influence and local focus. The forces can be translated into political bonds of communicative communities in Zabrocki's taxonomy.

### Conclusions

It was impossible to present either Upper Silesian or Cashubian issue in all its complexity. First of all, "Silesian dialect" is an idealization and I use the term rather as a prototype of a hypothetical Silesian standard (cf. Wyderka 2005 in Simonides for a detailed study of dialectal variation in Opolian Silesia). I decided to take some mental shortcuts in order to justify my assumption, namely, that comparing various strategies with respect to identity strengthening could lead to insights about the nature of such processes in the functionalist framework, in accordance with the statement by Trudgill (1983: 127): "[i]t is not easy to determine what factors are involved in the establishment of these varying attitudes to language and ethnic group membership. However, the examination of sociolinguistic situations in which attitudes of this type appear to be undergoing change may be revealing." This entailed necessarily disregarding minor revival attempts (cf. Introduction) and concentrating only on the most pronounced identity strengthening strategies.

Coming back to Skibiński's (2005) application of autopoietic theory, we might say that the study verified his claim that the stabilization of a system as an autonomous entity delimits the conditions under which its identity can come into existence. I showed how the strategies for national identity strengthening differ in both discussed groups. In the region of Silesia, given the discussed ethno-national imbalance and the lack of literary input in that variety, the Silesian variety could not become the carrier of ethnic identity strengthening. Accordingly, in the region there is an intricate situation, with the standard Polish as an elaborated code, Silesian as a restricted code, and German, which in a sense is the language of official reunions and is supra-overt. It is also used in family circles, especially with older generations. German awakening is thus a political and community issue rather than linguistic. To wit, it takes place regardless of German language and German culture as such: the cultural dimension of the German nation seems to be less important than the local dimension.

What is more important, admitting to German heritage frequently entails renouncing the Silesian identity and Silesian ethnolect. The status of Silesian from the German perspective is again beyond the thematic scope of the present work but it seems that the existence of Silesian identity, as separate from Polish nationality, is

unquestioned.<sup>8</sup> In the Cashuby region identity strengthening proceeded in a natural way. The process entails creating identity bonds (emblems, anthems), introducing topographic inscriptions and attempts at the standardization of the literary output as well as introducing standard Cashubian in education and religion. The thing which is lost is dialectal variegation—so to speak vernacular Cashubian, which used to be transmitted through family.

I set out with Gadamerian assumption that the interpretation of signs, works and the text embodies the individual's participation in the tradition and the linguistic mediation can become textual mediation in the dialogue of participation (cf. *Sprachlichkeit* and *Schriftlichkeit*). Hence, in the guise of a visual (photo) essay I traced some of the implications of regional inscriptions, taking care to note where and why they appear.

The study also corroborated the application of Zabrocki's (1966) community laws. Let us recall some of them briefly:

Each communicative community tends towards a uniform means of communication, i.e. a uniform language. Most often this language wins which represents a communicative community within which a communicative contact is established. In other words, this language wins which is used by the superordinate communicative community [emphasis added MHG] (...). Language communities, on their part, try to resist the forces that result from the emerging communicative communities. It should be remembered though, however, that language communities are something more than just communicative communities possessing a uniform means of communication. Each nation identifies itself with the language in which, throughout its historical development, it has stored its cultural and material values, as well as a specific mode of perceiving the world (Bańcerowski 1966: 19).

I thus suggest interpreting the processes which occur in the region of Upper Silesia as typical differentiating communicative community processes, and the processes going on in the Cashuby region as integration language community processes. The standardization of Cashubian means rejecting regional variegation in the name of the entire cultural load already vested in the Cashubian ethnolect. On the other hand, the crystallization of German Minority in the region of Upper Silesia which took place in the 1990-ies, contributes to the polarization of the society, hence it might be called a differentiating process. Furthermore, the study has shown that ethnic identity, stereotyping, nationalism and commercialism, on some level of analytical abstraction, might be interconnected. It should be stressed once more, however, that the ethno-national issues, especially in the region of Upper Silesia, are much more intricate than the scope discussed in the article and I did not try to be exhaustive. However, for the clarity of argument, I assume that the degree of idealization I adopted can illustrate the interplay of identity strengthening strategies which was the topic of the paper.

To conclude, the results of the research reported in the paper seem to support J. Badouin de Courtenay's (1897) elementary rules for establishing linguistic taxonomy:

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<sup>8</sup> The quotation taken from *Oberschlesien* No 12, 2006: "Die Schlesien, Nieder- und Oberschlesien, gehören zu den Leistungsträgern in der deutschen Nationalmannschaft: Miroslav Klose (...), Michael Ballack (...), Lukas Podolski. (...) Ohne diese Schlesier wäre der derzeitige Erfolg der deutschen Nationalmannschaft undenkbar."

- the correlation of two languages or dialects is not established on the grounds of the extent of mutual intelligibility, nor the names used by the ethnic group,
- the most crucial is the awareness of belonging which wakes up spurred by the specific historical conditions.

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