

# Language Ideologies and Minority Language Education: Lessons from Brittany for Kashubia

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NICOLE DOŁOWY-RYBIŃSKA\* and  
MICHAEL HORNSBY\*\*

\*Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland.

Email: nicoledolowy@gmail.com

\*\*Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, al. Niepodległości  
4, 61-874 Poznań, Poland. Email: mhornsby@wa.amu.edu.pl

In many situations of minority language education, the focus has been on gains in the absolute numbers of speakers, with the result that less attention has been paid to the processes and linguistic outcomes associated with students in these educational programmes. In this article, we initiate a discussion on the revitalization situations in Brittany and Kashubia from a comparative perspective. In particular, we look at the different models of education in each of these regions and examine ethnographic data that highlight the attempts of students to attain legitimate ‘speakerhood’ of the minority languages in question. In particular, we take into the consideration the difficulties associated with these situations of attempted additive multilingualism when the general trend, among the majority populations, is toward standardized monolingualism. By way of a conclusion, we attempt to evaluate the different educational systems in both regions in terms of the production of future generations of ‘successful’ Kashubian and Breton speakers by examining the various language ideologies that are apparent in both situations of language revitalization.

## 1. Introduction

The concept of language ideologies has been used quite often within the framework of educational research,<sup>1</sup> and also where it concerns minority languages, which are subjected to systems of beliefs shared by members of a society (minority and/or majority). For example, people might believe that a particular language is not worth using in education, has no grammatical system and is not adequate enough to express complicated subjects such as chemistry or mathematics.<sup>2</sup> The force of language ideologies can be so strong that both ethnic language users (or their descendants) and

dominant language speakers exclude the possibility of introducing a minority language into the state system of education. After the ethnic and linguistic revival in Western Europe of the 1970s some minority languages have gained a place in education. It has been recognized that this process was quite straightforward and was generally well-received by the society concerned. However, observing the results of minority language education from the perspective of many years, researchers can state that there are no negative consequences relating to multilingualism nor of being taught through the medium of a minority language. Nevertheless, language ideologies do not disappear when languages are introduced into schools and continue to affect minority language use. To show the great number of possible language ideologies in minority language education we present two different, and yet with many similarities, cases of lesser-used languages: Breton in France and Kashubian in Poland. The first belongs to a different linguistic branch than that of the state language, with a significant degree of linguistic distance. The second is linguistically closer to the language used by the dominant society, with a certain degree of mutual comprehension. The history of informal and institutional Breton language education is much longer than the educational set-up in Kashubia, where language standardization has been attempted only recently. Nevertheless, when comparing the two situations of minoritization, we find some similarities as well as some interesting parallels between these two languages. Moreover, we think that only by becoming conscious of how and why language ideologies function, can they be more successfully managed.

### ***1.1. The Sociolinguistic Situation of Breton and Breton Language Education***

According to figures from Observatoire de la Langue Bretonne,<sup>3</sup> the Breton language in Brittany, north-west France, has been losing numbers of speakers in absolute terms for the past century or so. From 1,982,300 speakers of Breton out of a total population of 3,316,600 people in Brittany in 1886, or approximately 60% of the population, the number of speakers dropped to 304,000 out of a total of 4,040,463 in 1999, or approximately 7.5% of the population. Thus, the twentieth century saw a massive decline in the number of speakers of Breton, or a decline of 85%. This decline has continued into the twenty-first century and Broudic<sup>4</sup> considers that there are about 174,000 speakers left, which would put the loss at 91%. This would tally with the work of Héran, Filhon and Deprez,<sup>5</sup> based on the 1999 census in France, which showed that the transmission rate of Breton in 1999 to the younger generations stood at only 10%.

Revitalization efforts began in the twentieth century, largely outside of the realm of overt governmental policy. In fact, the French state rebuffed these early grassroots initiatives, closing public school programmes that taught Breton. The Roman Catholic Church played a more active role, printing liturgical works in Breton and teaching the language in religious schools from the nineteenth century onwards. In political terms, France signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 1999 but has been at a political impasse concerning its constitutionality ever since, leaving it without ratification and therefore any real room for its

application. This national linguistic policy gap, while leaving intact the supremacy of French, has allowed some room for the development of linguistic actions favouring Breton at grassroots level, such as the initial establishment of free private Breton immersion schools (Diwan) in 1977. Diwan can be considered as one of the pioneers of the 1980s' Breton language revitalization movement, shifting established prejudices and stirring the political realm and the Breton population towards greater language consciousness. After the success of these non-profit-making independent Breton-medium schools, the *Éducation Nationale* established bilingual, public schools, fully funded by the French state; however, it is illegal for these schools to teach over 50% of their curriculum through the Breton language. In 2015, Diwan educated around 2839 primary school students, 876 secondary school (up to age 15) and 369 sixth form students (up to age 18), totalling 4087 pupils in the Diwan system. The bilingual state schools mentioned above totalled 7128 pupils and additionally, the private Catholic school system had 5130 pupils in their French-Breton bilingual schools. However, given the lack of continuity in the bilingual state and Catholic systems, especially at the lycée (sixth form/*terminale*) level, the Diwan system is the most successful in ensuring continuous access to Breton-language education from kindergarten to the end of the mandatory schooling period, meaning that the number of Diwan pupils who continue up to the age of 18 is proportionality much larger.<sup>6</sup>

### ***1.2. The Sociolinguistic Situation in Kashubia – The Need for Kashubian Language Education***

It is hard to establish the exact number of Kashubs living in Poland today but we can estimate that there are now from 300,000 up to 500,000 people who declare themselves to be Kashubs or of Kashubian descent.<sup>7</sup> By the mid-twentieth century, all Kashubs spoke the Kashubian language – when being Kashubian was in no way recognized by the public authorities (Polish or German), the language was the main marker of Kashubian identity. The situation of the Kashubian language began to change as a result of political and social developments. One of the most important reasons for this was the existence of different language ideologies in Kashubia with the most important ideology of the standard language, which discredited Kashubian as a dialect of the Polish language. They were strengthened by the People's Republic of Poland (1944–1989) whose authorities and language/cultural policies aimed to make Poland a monolingual and a monocultural state.<sup>8</sup> The management of linguistic matters by the government during this period led many Kashubs to intentionally abandon their ethnic roots and their language as the most important marker of their cultural identity. During this era the use of the Kashubian language was forbidden not only in public life, but also in the education system. Children who used the minority language in school were reprimanded, ridiculed, and suffered corporal punishment from teachers who were obliged to force them to use the Polish language. Similarly, Kashubs who were involved in any kind of Kashubian movement were reprimanded and even imprisoned.<sup>9</sup> In a newly monocultural and monolingual socialist country, such as Poland became after the Shoah, and after the resettlements

of Ukrainians and Germans, there was no place for a multicultural system or for any type of distinction because cultural diversity was perceived as dangerous and everyone had to represent the same type of socialist person. All these factors weakened the intergenerational transmission of the Kashubian language. By the mid-twentieth century, language shift had occurred. Current sociological research in Kashubia indicate that today only about 80,000 people use the Kashubian language in everyday life with another 40,000 declaring they use it often.<sup>10</sup> The research points out, additionally, that only a small percentage of children are familiar with this language and use it at home.<sup>11</sup>

The political change after 1989 had an impact on the Kashubian language. Kashubian leaders quickly organized themselves to secure recognition for the Kashubian language within the Polish state. The preparation for the *Act of National and Ethnic Minorities and the Regional Language* (voted by the Polish Parliament finally in 2005) has revealed how strongly language ideologies are rooted within the Kashubian community and this concerned Kashubian activists as well: there was a strong element within the Kashubian leadership who preferred Kashubs not to be recognized as a national or ethnic minority but (only) as a group that uses a *regional* language.<sup>12</sup> And this was how it was resolved: only Kashubian is recognized in contemporary Poland as a regional language but people using it officially do not form a group with any recognized status. This has shaped the way the language is perceived and how the education system functions.

As the family unit was no longer the central point of language transmission, it was necessary to introduce the language into the schools. The process started before the law concerning minorities in Poland was regulated. At the beginning of the 1990s the first private primary school where the Kashubian language was one of the languages of instruction was established in a small Kashubian village, Głodnica, by the Kashubian language activist, Witold Bobrowski.<sup>13</sup> The school functions to the present day, although other establishments did not follow this educational model. So the Kashubian language schools did not become – contrary to Breton Diwan education – an actor in the Kashubian language market.<sup>14</sup> Instead, all Kashubian elite efforts have been directed into introducing Kashubian as a compulsory subject only for those children whose parents signed their agreement. This Kashubian language teaching system was subsequently approved officially by the authorities. The number of children who are learning Kashubian as a second/foreign language rises from year to year (for many different reasons, including the Kashubian language education financing system which is attractive for school administrations) and in 2014/2015 school entry reached almost 18,000 pupils. Consequently, most Kashubian learners are in primary schools (about 80%) whereas in secondary schools (Polish *gimnazjum*) the number drops to 15%, and in high schools it is only 5%. It means that there is a key difficulty with continuity in the teaching of the Kashubian language. It seems that the most important problem of Kashubian education lies in its ‘weak’ form which, according to Tove Skutnabb-Kangas<sup>15</sup> does not lead to real bilingualism. The lack of social consent for the introduction in Kashubia of ‘strong’ forms of regional language education (such as bilingual or immersion schools) results from the influence of the still effective Kashubian language ideologies.

## 2. Ideologies of Language Revitalization

In both Brittany and Kashubia, the relatively new presence of Breton and Kashubian in an education setting, although these settings are quite different in nature, does reveal a number of similar language ideologies which are held and which influence the way the languages are seen within schools, and how revitalizers and educators present them to their pupils and to the wider world in general.

### 2.1. Ideologies of Language of Diwan

What strikes any visitor entering a Diwan establishment for the first time is the emphasis on the (exclusive) use of Breton, which Osterkorn has deemed ‘an artificially created monolingual space’.<sup>16</sup> He observed that outside of the Diwan school he was investigating that there were multilingual directions outside school, which were contrasted with monolingual directions on the school grounds and inside the school building. Moreover, a sign aimed at the students displays the expectation of the school authorities that Breton is the language to be used at all times on the school grounds and in the school buildings. He further noted that communication with parents is bilingual (Breton and French) but that certain documents (school certificate or particular official letters) are in Breton only. He concluded that the creation of a monolingual space within the schools is to help the overall aim of totally immersing the students in Breton.<sup>14</sup> Vetter has noted that the monolingual environment espoused by Diwan is to produce balanced bilinguals, and that this bilingualism ‘is to be achieved by using exclusively the less powerful language during nursery’. Diwan thus draws upon total and early immersion or – as is explained in printed information about Diwan’s pedagogical project – ‘C’est le paradoxe de l’immersion: on devient bilingue par ... le monolinguisme’ (‘The paradox of immersion is that you become bilingual through ... monolingualism’). Immersion schooling in Breton is, then, ‘positioned in a transitional sphere between mono- and heteroglossic ideologies’.<sup>17</sup>

How did Diwan arrive at such a position? McDonald<sup>18</sup> describes how the founders of Diwan wanted ‘a different society’, which would emphasize ‘Bretonization’. This translated into ‘the use of Breton as a vehicular language from kindergarten to the university in all the domains of teaching’ (‘implij ar brezhoneg evel yezh kevredigezhel eus ar skolioù mamm betek ar skolioù-meur en holl domanioù ar c’helenn’).<sup>19</sup> This was as a result of the policies of the national education system in France, which had imposed French as the sole language of instruction in its schools, even in those areas of the country where the first language of the pupils had not been French, but a local regional language.<sup>20</sup> Not unsurprisingly, Diwan early on sought to rectify the situation of language loss by attempting to reverse the shift in a parallel fashion through pursuing a policy of monolingual instruction in Breton, although this was obviously through parental choice and not state imposition. McDonald notes that this sometimes sat uneasily with some parents, who ‘wished Breton to be taught to their children; they were also faced, however, with the blunt fact that the spontaneous language of their homes was largely French’.<sup>16</sup> Thus, from the beginning, an ideology of monolingualism was apparent among members of the movement, an ideology

which attempted to reverse French educational policy of monolingual French-language education through mirroring this policy, but through the medium of Breton, which ran counter to the “‘alternative” educational ideals which emphasized continuity between home and school”<sup>16</sup> of some parents. This tension over a monolingual approach to education (and, simultaneously, to revitalizing the Breton language) goes some way to explaining the rise of alternative models of Breton-language education, which were created within the state and private (Catholic) educational networks.

## ***2.2. Kashubian Language Ideologies and Possible Types of Kashubian Language Education***

### ***2.2.1. Ideology of Monolingualism***

The ideology of monolingualism is based on the Humboldtian and Herderian rhetoric of the inextricable link between a nation and its language. Herder associates the evolution of language forms with the founding of the concept of ethnic and national groups. The ‘one language equals one nation’ concept resulted in the European monolingual hegemony ideology. Despite much research deconstructing this ideology, its false evidence and resulting consequences,<sup>16,21</sup> it is still ‘taken as normal, and therefore as essential to linguistic and cultural development both at the level of the community and at the level of the individual’.<sup>22</sup> The strength of language ideologies is deeply embedded in social perception and internalized by particular groups so they come to be taken as ‘natural’ or ‘self-evident’.<sup>23</sup> An ideology of monolingualism resulted not only in the persecution and minorization of national/ethnic minority’s languages (as they are perceived as dangerous for the Nation-State concord, as in the case of the Breton language) but also in a systematic denial of the value of collateral languages because they are not related to any ‘nation’ or ‘ethnicity’, commonly held to this day. This aspect of the ideology of monolingualism is the biggest threat for the Kashubian language. Until recently, most Kashubs did not portray themselves as different from the surrounding nations (either Polish or German).<sup>24</sup> Instead, they tended to declare a form of dual identity: national – Polish and regional – Kashubian.<sup>25</sup> As such, Kashubian was not treated as a ‘real’ language by the dominant society, since Kashubs themselves are not a ‘real’ nation. This serves as an excuse not to create Kashubian language schools. In addition: the eagerness of some Kashubian groups to establish such schools is perceived as a threat by Poles and indeed by most Kashubs themselves. The logic behind this reasoning is: if Kashubs had their own schools, they would emancipate themselves as a nation, and this would provoke many problems for the Polish state. Kashubs can – in line with typical postcolonial societies who, after years of repression, adapt the axiological system and the way of perceiving the world in the manner of their oppressor(s) – assert that Kashubian language schools are not necessary in Kashubia and that the Kashubian language itself is not suited to be the language of instruction. In this second line of argument we recognize the resonance of the ideology of the standard language.

### 2.2.2. *Ideology of Standard Language*

The standard language ideology associates people who do not use the standard, normalized official form of a language, as individuals of a low intellectual level and low social position.<sup>2</sup> Since the language in its standard form is related to the influential group who impose it as the only worthwhile form, and by this consolidates the reproduction of power relations,<sup>12</sup> this ideology is constantly legitimized and embedded. Taking into consideration that even when a standard form exists, regional languages are used mostly in private life, and in oral face-to-face communication, this ideology therefore has important consequences for them.

Despite some earlier attempts to create a literary form of the Kashubian language (from the second half of the nineteenth century) and to codify it (since the 1920s) Kashubian has been standardized only recently, beginning at the end of the twentieth century. Just a few years ago, Kashubian language researchers classified the language as being *in statu nascendi*.<sup>26</sup> The work on this language's codification has been carried out in somewhat of a hurry in order to prepare Kashubian for its new functions in the public sphere, which were gained as a result of its recognition under Polish law. But – as with the endless discussions about the Breton language – the existence of Kashubian in two quite different forms: dialectal varieties used by older and middle generations in the smaller (and sociolinguistically distinctive) Kashubian villages, and the Kashubian literary language – is also the source of many problems within the Kashubian community. These misunderstandings referred to the standard language ideology in two ways. To begin with, many Kashubs argue that language that exists only in the oral form is unsuitable for use in schools where the Polish language should be the only language of instruction. The second ideological argument is that the language codified by the Kashubian Language Board is so different from the Kashubian language used by Kashubian native speakers and, it is claimed, that it is not understandable by them.<sup>27</sup> In this case it will never become a community language, so there is no point in giving more public space to it. The third argument refers to a language ideology which, despite many sociological shifts, is still a strong factor in Kashubia: a linguistic variety perceived as a 'dialect' is not worthy of use in public life.

### 2.2.3. *Standard Language*

The ideology of a 'pure' language seems to be in opposition with the ideology of a 'standard' language. But on further examination it would appear that these two opposing ideologies have much in common and the idea that a standardized form of a language is either 'good' or 'bad' (when in fact, linguistically speaking, it is just another variety of the language in question) is to be found in Brittany and in Kashubia (and by extension elsewhere, of course).

Madeg makes much of the forms of Breton which are inextricably linked to certain regions of Brittany. In his introduction,<sup>28</sup> Madeg mentions the areas of Cornouaille, Tréguier and Léon and posits them as some sort of 'heartland' of the language, where (presumably) the 'best' Breton is spoken. (Understandably, he does not include the Vannes area, the Breton of which is considerably different to the above-mentioned areas, and which has seen attempts to forge a local unified literary form for this dialect.)



While there is sense in identifying these areas as sharing many common features which serve to unite ‘the’ Breton language into a whole without resorting to standardization, Madeg is still clearly following an ideology of standard language – except that the ‘standard’ he is proposing is a standard based on notions of territoriality and authenticity. However, many young people – Breton learners and Breton new speakers alike – do not sense that they are using a particular register of Breton when they speak. This is because they use Breton mostly (if not only) in an environment of other ‘standard’ or ‘literary’ language users. Only a few try to use the language they learned at school with local Breton ‘native speakers’. Then they feel the difference, as a Breton language student and Diwan graduate stated:

I was the best Breton speaker at school but even me, I am afraid of using Breton outside. When I tried to speak with people from my sides, I had a kind of blockage. It was not the same reality between young and old. And since then I decided to turn to the local Breton, to the Breton of our ancestors. (CC, 20-year-old man)

Both Breton and Kashubian were standardized in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries but by then family language transmission had already begun to be weakened. The standardized varieties of Breton and Kashubian are perceived as ‘artificial’ by the native-speakers of these languages. In many cases it resulted in the ‘older’ people claiming not to understand the ‘young’ minority language speakers. Consequently, the gap between them is becoming greater, and the ‘standard’ as well as the ‘authentic’ or ‘pure’ language ideologies are growing. A Kashubian high school pupil speaks about the failure to reintroduce the Kashubian language at home:

I started to learn Kashubian at school and then I decided to take the Kashubian final exam. I said to my mum, ‘You have to speak Kashubian with me now.’ And we started to speak Kashubian. But once my mum said to me that I spoke different Kashubian and it would be better for me not to hear her uneducated language. And she refused to speak Kashubian with me. (W, 18-year-old woman)<sup>29</sup>

#### 2.2.4. *Dialect-versus-Language Ideology*

Despite the popularity of Max Weinreich’s maxim that ‘A language is a dialect with an army and navy’, the notion of dialect determines its power and social position.<sup>30,31</sup> Moreover, what can legitimately be called a ‘language’ and what remains a mere ‘dialect’ constitutes an important political, economic and social issue. Calling Kashubian a ‘dialect’ of the Polish language has a long tradition as it has always been a matter of enmity between two nations in a state of war: Poles and Germans. Both sides wanted Kashubs to declare themselves part of their respective nations. As language is perceived to be a symbol of cultural difference, neglecting its self-sufficiency meant denying Kashubian subjectivity and thereby rejecting their right to choose their nationality. This process was strengthened during the People’s Republic of Poland, when Kashubian was presented as an inferior way of speaking, as ‘spoiled Polish’, denoting primitivism and lack of culture and manners. As Tove Skutnabb-Kangas wrote:

‘Languages’ are defined positively or neutrally, as the general, abstract, self-evident, and unmarked norm, whereas dialects, vernaculars, and patois are defined partly



negatively, with connotation to some kind of deficiency, commonness, lack of cultivation and civilization, partly as undeveloped ... forms of communication.<sup>13</sup>

They are treated as sub-categories of ‘real’ languages and this contributes to their low status and low prestige, as they are often associated with having no written forms and as such are not able to function fully in developed societies. The use of the term ‘dialect’ has thus wider consequences than just the cognitive. Not to call Kashubian a ‘language’ became a part of the assimilation policy of the state. Dialects had no prestige and their social valorization was low. As a result, Kashubs felt disadvantaged as they were accused of using an ‘inappropriate’ version of the State language which should be corrected as it provoked psychological and social problems for its users.<sup>32</sup> Even if Kashubian had been recognized as a regional language of Poland and officially not called a ‘dialect’ anymore, people’s perceptions change slowly. Parents are afraid that a school where the role of Kashubian is too important (as in bilingual or immersion schools) would harm their children’s education. The same arguments are reproduced in Brittany.

### 3. Alternative Ideologies

#### 3.1. *Alternative Ideologies in Brittany*

As mentioned above, Breton medium education is currently available to Breton children in three forms of schooling: the independent immersion schools (run by the Diwan association), bilingual classes in public schools (supported by the Div Yezh association) and bilingual classes in private Catholic schools (Dihun). As Rogers and McLeod have noted, ‘the authorisation for the creation of bilingual streams in the public schools, provided that sufficient demand has been expressed, is part of this trend, whereby a market-related, “supply and demand” element has entered into official discourse’.<sup>33</sup> Unlike Diwan, Div Yezh schools follow exactly the same curriculum as other state schools, following the principle of ‘*parité scolaire*’ (‘educational balance’), where half of the school day is conducted in Breton, and the other half in French. Emphasis is placed on the production of translations into Breton of textbooks used in the rest of the schools in the national education system.<sup>34</sup> The Catholic association that organizes similar bilingual classes in Catholic schools, Dihun (‘Awaken’), appears to go further in its pursuit of linguistic diversity, since it styles itself as an association of parents that works for the development of bilingual teaching in Breton and French *and* of the Gallo language (an *oïl* language, spoken in eastern Brittany, and closely related to other Romance varieties in northern France, including standard French) within the Catholic education system (‘*ur c’hevread kevredigezhioù tud ar skolidi divyezhek e skolioù ar gelennadurezh katolik*’).<sup>35</sup> Similarly to Div Yezh, Dihun emphasizes very much the concept of ‘*schedule parity*’ (‘*parité horaire*’), indicating that Breton will not dominate the educational experience, but will be used in ‘reasonable proportion’ to the use of French. The stated aim of all three organizations is to produce pupils who are bilingual, although through the lens of apparently different discourses of language, namely a discourse of monolingualism opposed to a discourse of bilingualism. Diwan attempts to produce bilinguals by using

the less prestigious or less powerful language from the early stages of education onward. Diwan thus relies upon total and early immersion to establish bilingualism in its pupils, which it admits is paradoxical, since bilingualism is achieved via an ideology of monolingualism. We would argue, however, that these discourses are different manifestations of the same language ideology, based on a sense of legitimacy – in the cases of Div Yezh and Dihun, deference is paid to French as the language of reference. Educational parity is presented as the ‘reasonable’ option, because it still safeguards the supremacy of French, the implication being that equal input of both Breton and French as part of the educational system will not in any sense detract from French language skills. Less obviously, the immersion model also posits French as the *langue de référence* since the framework within Diwan mirrors the French educational system’s insistence on monolingualism, except that French has been replaced by Breton. As Vetter correctly points out, ‘monoglossic and additive bilingualism is still the dominant rule’ at Diwan.<sup>15</sup>

### ***3.2. Promotion of Bilingualism in Kashubia through Education?***

Within the framework of the research project on young people’s attitudes towards minority languages and their involvement in the protection of these languages, Nicole Dołowy-Rybińska conducted, over a period of 3 years, an ethnographical observation in two high schools in Kashubia where the Kashubian language is taught. The first important conclusion is that the language the students used among themselves informally in both schools was Polish only. Kashubian was used exclusively during Kashubian language lessons and only to communicate in the formalized way with the teacher, e.g. while answering the teacher’s question posed in Kashubian or when reading exercises in Kashubian. Any informal conversation – with the teacher or with classmates was never held in Kashubian. In reply to the question why pupils who were known to be able to speak Kashubian but did not use this language, the answers were twofold. The first was that the level of the knowledge of the Kashubian language amongst the pupils was so diverse that it would be almost impossible to converse in the language. Second, the more frequent answer was, ‘Kashubian is the language of a lesson, not of real life’. The problem of the treatment by new speakers of a minority language as a ‘school language’ is common to different groups with different types of minority language instruction (see, for example, Hickey<sup>36</sup> in the case of Irish, and Hickey *et al.*<sup>37</sup> in the cases of Welsh and Irish). But when children or young people are never given the chance of using a language they have learned as a language of spontaneous communication or at least as a tool of communication within different situations – it is hard for them to perceive it as a language of importance in their lives.

### ***3.3. Language as an Argument in the ‘Identity War’ in Kashubia***

What can be perceived as most dangerous for the future of the Kashubian language as a living tongue is that it is often used by Kashubian activists as an argument in the ‘identity war’ that has recently become more intense. This ‘war’ concerns two Kashubian movement ‘options’. The first, as represented by the Kashubian-Pomeranian

Association, can be characterized as ‘conservative’. Its followers reject a ‘pure’ Kashubian identity, claiming that Kashubs are Poles possessing a strong regional character.<sup>22</sup> The role of the language is not therefore involved. Kashubian – in their opinion – should be maintained and have a place in public life, but cannot and should not function as the language of Kashubia. The second ‘option’ is often called ‘radical’ but I think this expression has a pejorative resonance and should not be used. These are people connected to the Association of the People of Kashubian Nationality, ‘Kaszëbskô Jednota’, but not only. They claim Kashubs are distinct from the Polish people, and want to be recognized a nation. They demand ‘ethnic minority’ status for Kashubs. The Kashubian language here is often treated as a marker of Kashubian distinctiveness. Artur Jabłoński, one of the ‘Kaszëbskô Jednota’ leaders, wrote in his propagandist book and manifesto with the meaningful title, *Kashubs. The National Community* that:

[...] today we protect and develop the language that has ceased to perform its main function – a tool of communication. Kashubian children learn it at school, often without knowing why they are required to learn it, and treat their ancestral language as one more additional subject. When emphasizing the protection of the language only (which is needed, an undisputable fact), a very important element of identification has been neglected, the consciousness of its own distinctiveness – cultural and historical – and this is the most important aspect in the identity process.<sup>38</sup>

Jabłoński considers that language that is not a part of community life but just a tool of communication or even an ‘artificial’ tool of communication – as, in his opinion, children who do not feel the community sense of using the language, will never learn it – will not survive. In his opinion, strengthening community consciousness is the only way of maintaining and developing a minority language. It would be difficult to defend or disprove this thesis, but this is not the objective of this article. The problem is that while one ideological group of Kashubian leaders (related to the Kashubian-Pomeranian Association) feels satisfied with the way Kashubian is taught at school, the other group (associated with ‘Kaszëbskô Jednota’) advocates the creation of immersion schools. Both groups use ideological arguments which make any compromise difficult. The existence of different types of education: teaching minority language as a foreign/second language, bilingual education and immersion education as is the case in Brittany, seems to have become a part of a discussion held in parallel to the educational objective. These objectives are to have the minority language taught in schools and to re-establish its function as a tool of communication in community life. Therefore, minority language education can be considered as fully successful if new speakers of this language are capable of transmitting it to the next generation. That is why it can be dangerous to consider the minority language as a tool in this ‘identity war’. The consequences for a minority language can be detrimental as a result.

#### 4. Conclusions

The comparison between some of the existing language ideologies functioning in minority language educational settings shows how important their deconstruction is.

A certain level of consciousness about what seems to be ‘an authentic image of a language’ is only the result of social beliefs and – in many cases – prejudices, as we detailed above, and can assist the linguistic minorities in their attempts to make their language(s) official. The nature and strength of particular linguistic ideologies – as we have shown in this article – depend on many factors, involving both the minority group situation, its history, relations with the majority group, and the status of the language and its social perception. Different ideologies can be found where the language is treated by society as a dialect of the dominant language. It is different, for example, when the language status is constantly denied by the state – as is the case of the Breton language.

On the other hand, there are numerous ideologies that are similar in both cases, although their significance and implementation can have different forms: the ideology of monolingualism, which in the case of the Breton immersion Diwan schools, is also used by Breton activists in order to implement multilingualism; and, in the case of the Kashubian language, this results in its lack of use as a language of instruction. In both language situations, the ideology of the standard language comes into play and, as a consequence of the standardization processes these languages have gone through, and of the social conviction that these languages, which have functioned for centuries nearly exclusively as an oral medium, are therefore not fit to be used in literary domains in modern society. The latter argument is obviously the expression of a language ideology opposed to minority languages *per se*.

What lessons can be taken from this comparison, especially for the Kashubian language, the position of which in school education is far weaker than the Breton language? First of all, in order to establish a minority language’s presence in the dominant surroundings, there is the need for different types of minority language education. Parents who have to decide on their children’s education should have a choice and not be forced to accept just one type of dominant language or minority language school that is imposed on them. In Brittany today, parents can choose between schools where the Breton language is the language of instruction, bilingual schools and schools where Breton is taught as a separate subject. In Kashubia, only the latter type of schooling is possible. The argument that it is not possible to introduce Kashubian language education into schools is one of the main encumbering points professed by language ideologies. The lack of social agreement for minority language to be taught as a language of instruction is also the result of language ideology: every language can be used to express everything possible. There are no languages which are just too poor to express modern concepts. There are only those languages which are not prepared to perform all the possible functions of expression.

Nevertheless, the imposition on parents of an educational solution they are not ready for will not achieve the desired results. But it is possible and necessary to influence people’s attitudes concerning minority languages. There is a need for work on the language (language standardization), to provide it with a place in public life (in order to allow people to become familiar with it) and to educate people about existing language ideologies. This is the only way the influence of language ideologies can be reduced.

When the first Diwan School was established in Brittany in 1977, there were many comments that children learning through the medium of the Breton language would never learn French properly or would not succeed later on in life. Similar arguments are being put forward against Kashubian-medium education today. After almost 40 years of Diwan's existence, the Diwan high school is known as one of the best schools in France and its students obtain high scores during their baccalaureate exams and at university level. This can only be seen as an encouraging sign for the Kashubian language.

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#### **About the Authors**

**Nicole Dolowy-Rybińska**, PhD, anthropologist and sociolinguist, is an adjunct professor in the Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences and a member of the Polish Young Academy. She is working on the problematic of European minority languages, their transmission and issues of linguistic protection, as well as on the language and cultural practices of minority languages users and young language activists. Her research areas are Kashubia (Poland), Lusatia (Germany), Brittany (France) and Wales (UK).

**Michael Hornsby**, PhD, DLitt, is visiting professor at the Centre for Celtic Studies, Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. His main area of interest is new speakers of minority languages, particularly Breton, and issues over linguistic legitimacy and language ownership. His monograph on these topics, entitled *Revitalising Minority Languages: New Speakers of Breton, Yiddish and Lemko* (Palgrave Macmillan), was published in 2015.