



# Cultural Symbols, Identity and Language Revitalisation: A Kashubian Perspective (C-SILK)

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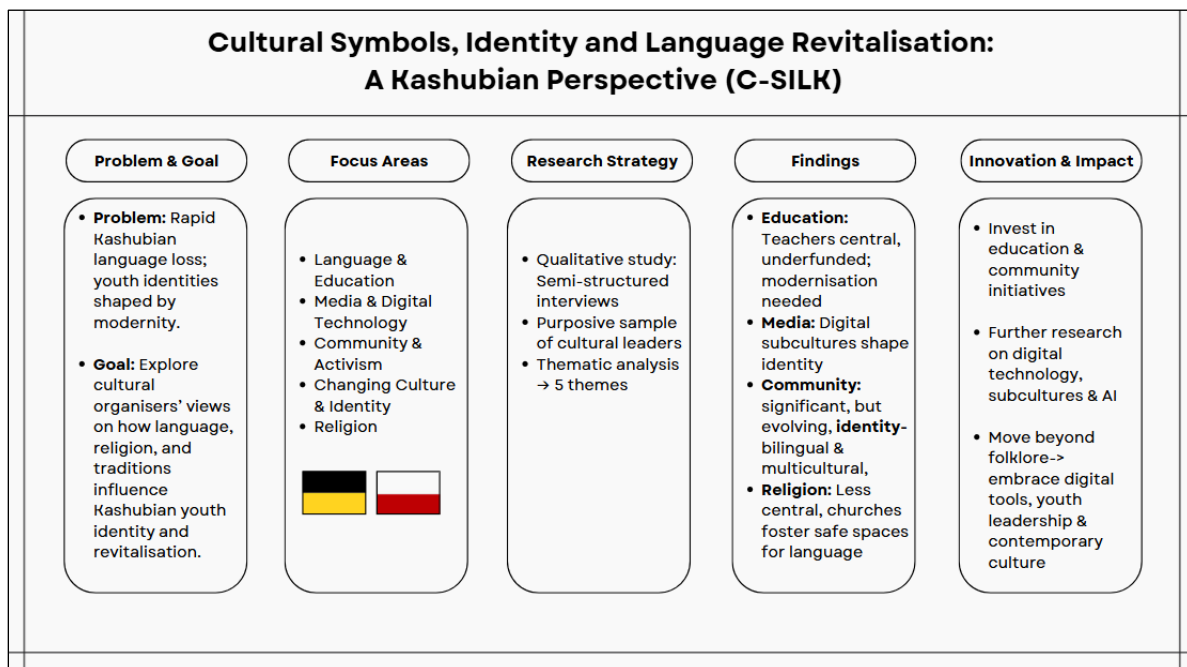
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**Abstract:**

Languages embody identity, memory, and culture, yet many are rapidly disappearing. Kashubian, spoken in northwestern Poland, is currently classified as endangered. This study explores how community leaders perceive Kashubian youth identity and their engagement with cultural symbols such as language, religion, and tradition. Using a qualitative design, the study conducted semi-structured interviews with cultural facilitators, educators, and activists. Data were analysed thematically, resulting in five key themes: (1) education and teachers, (2) media and digital technology, (3) community and activism, (4) changing culture and identity, and (5) religion.

Findings show that teachers play an important role in preserving Kashubian but face persistent underfunding and structural challenges. Media and digital technologies, particularly music and online subcultures, strongly shape youth identities and often resonate more than ethnic or traditional markers. Community remains central but is evolving toward more bilingual, multicultural, and inclusive expressions of identity. Religion is less central for younger generations, yet it remains embedded in Kashubian language and culture, with churches continuing to provide safe spaces for use of the language. The study concludes that effective revitalisation requires moving beyond folklore to integrate digital culture, youth leadership, and stronger investment in education and community initiatives.



**Figure 1:** A visual abstract for Cultural Symbols, Identity and Language Revitalisation: A Kashubian Perspective (C-SILK)

## Introduction:

Languages are more than tools of communication- they carry history, identity, and cultural memory. Yet the world faces an unprecedented loss of linguistic diversity, with the United Nations warning that one language disappears every two weeks (Maryniak et al., 2021). Each loss erodes not just vocabulary but ancestral knowledge and unique worldviews (Bielak, 2018; Dolowy-Rybinska, 2021; Shahid & Abiodun, 2024; Squillaci, 2021). Preserving endangered languages like Kashubian, spoken in northwestern Poland, is therefore vital for sustaining cultural diversity and heritage.

While previous research on language preservation has focused on policy or community action, the role of cultural symbols- art, music, folklore, religion- in shaping youth engagement remains underexplored. This study addresses that gap by examining the perspectives of Kashubian cultural organisers: how they believe young people perceive their Kashubian identities, how youth engage with cultural symbols, the challenges organisers face, and the support they seek from governments and local communities. The study has both local and global relevance: it can inform strategies for Kashubian revitalisation while offering insights applicable to minority and indigenous communities worldwide.

Kashubians are a West Slavic community, native to Pomerania, historically spread between the Odra and Visula rivers but now concentrated in northwestern Poland. Their political status shifted repeatedly: absorbed into Prussia during the partitions (1772-1918); reintegrated with Poland after WWI; occupation under Nazi Germany during WWII and returned to Poland in 1945 (Gleichgewicht, 2019; Obracht-Prondzynski & Wicherkiewicz, 2012; Zieniuk, 2006). Kashubian identity has long been ambivalent. Writers like Derdowski<sup>1</sup> emphasised Polish national belonging while Majkowski<sup>2</sup> promoted a Kashubian identity alongside Polishness (Piestrak, n.d.). Linguistically, Kashubian sits at the edge of the Slavic family, shaped by

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<sup>1</sup> Hieronim Derdowski (1852-1902) was a Kashubian activist and poet, born in Wiele (Pomerania). He famously stated: *Nie ma Kaszëb bez Polonii, a bez Kaszëb Polšczy* "No Kashubia without Poland, no Poland without Kashubia", which became a motto of Kashubian-Polish solidarity. His role was pivotal in linking the Kashubian diaspora to broader Polish national movements. ('Hieronim Derdowski', 2025)

<sup>2</sup> Aleksander Majkowski (1876- 1938) was a Kashubian physician, journalist, social activist and writer, born in Kościerzyna. He is best known for his novel *Žëcé i przigòdë Remùsa* (*The Life and Adventures of Remus*), considered the Kashubian national epic and a cornerstone of Kashubian literature. He was the founder and editor of the magazine *Gryf*, which promoted Kashubian identity and autonomy. He was also the leader of the *Young Kashubian Movement*, which sought to modernize Kashubian culture and strengthen its ties to Poland while resisting Germanization. Today, he is regarded as a central figure of Kashubian culture before WWII and a symbol of Kashubian national revival. ('Aleksander Majkowski', 2025)

Polish and characterised by strong dialectal variation, limiting mutual intelligibility even among Kashubs.

After WWII, Kashubians experienced language discrimination under Polish People's Republic, which pursued a monolingual society (Dolowy-Rybinska, 2021; Dołowy-Rybińska, 2020). Many children were deprived of learning Kashubian, creating a “missing generation” of speakers (Hinton, 2001). Fishman (1990) emphasised intergenerational transmission as central to reversing language shift, yet in Kashubia, this chain was broken. In 2005, Minority Law enabled its use in public signage; in 2008 the European Charter recognised it as a regional language (Mercator, 2004). Still, Kashubian faces the legacy of suppression and fractured transmission.

Research highlights the importance of community leadership in revitalisation (Bourhis & Barrette, 2006; Maryniak et al., 2021; Nestor & Hickey, 2009; Squillaci, 2021). Dołowy-Rybińska (2015) demonstrated this in her interviews with Kashubian cultural figures. The present study builds on such work by focusing on cultural leaders- curators, artists, organisers- who act as preservers of tradition and innovators, making culture accessible to youth while mediating between generations.

Cultural symbols- flags, embroidery, music, religion- are powerful markers of belonging, collective memory and identity (Bourdieu, 1991). In Kashubia, they remain highly visible in festivals and public life. Yet scholars warn against *folklorisation*, “the reconstruction of selected forms and contents of folklore in deliberately arranged situations” (Burszta, 2011; Dołowy-Rybińska, 2020). When endangered languages are confined to staged events they risk reduction to relics (Heinrich, 2021; Squillaci, 2021). Revitalisation is more effective when traditions are reinterpreted to resonate with contemporary identities.

Catholicism has historically reinforced Kashubian identity and many expressions have religious roots (Mazurek, 2021). Smith (2007) argued that shared religious symbols strengthen collective identity. Yet rigid frameworks may alienate younger generations, who increasingly distance themselves from institutional religion (Dołowy-Rybińska, 2020). This tension illustrates the wider debate between continuity and adaptation.

Digital media has transformed identity formation, particularly among youth. Mobile phones and social media enable new channels of communication and cultural exchange ((De Bot & Stoessel, 2002, 2002; Salawu, 2018; Sawyer, 2011), though globalisation increases the dominance of English and Polish (Munyai & Phooko, 2021). Research on Basque activism

shows how music, memes, and gaming normalise minority languages (Urla, 2014). For Kashubian, the challenge is to harness these tools to make the language relevant in everyday life, balancing risks and opportunities.

The literature shows that Kashubian, like many endangered languages, has been shaped by a history of suppression, disrupted intergenerational transmission and contested identity. While policies and legal recognition have raised its status, revitalisation depends on whether young people find Kashubian meaningful in their daily lives. Much literature has focused on state policy or community activism, but perspectives of local figures (teachers, curators, organisers) receive less attention. By focusing on their views, this study investigates the space between tradition and modernity, and between local heritage and global influences. In doing so, it highlights both the opportunities and tensions in revitalising Kashubian language and culture, addressing a crucial gap in the literature.

### **Methodology:**

This study employed a qualitative, three-phase research design combining contextual analysis and fieldwork to investigate approaches to Kashubian language preservation.

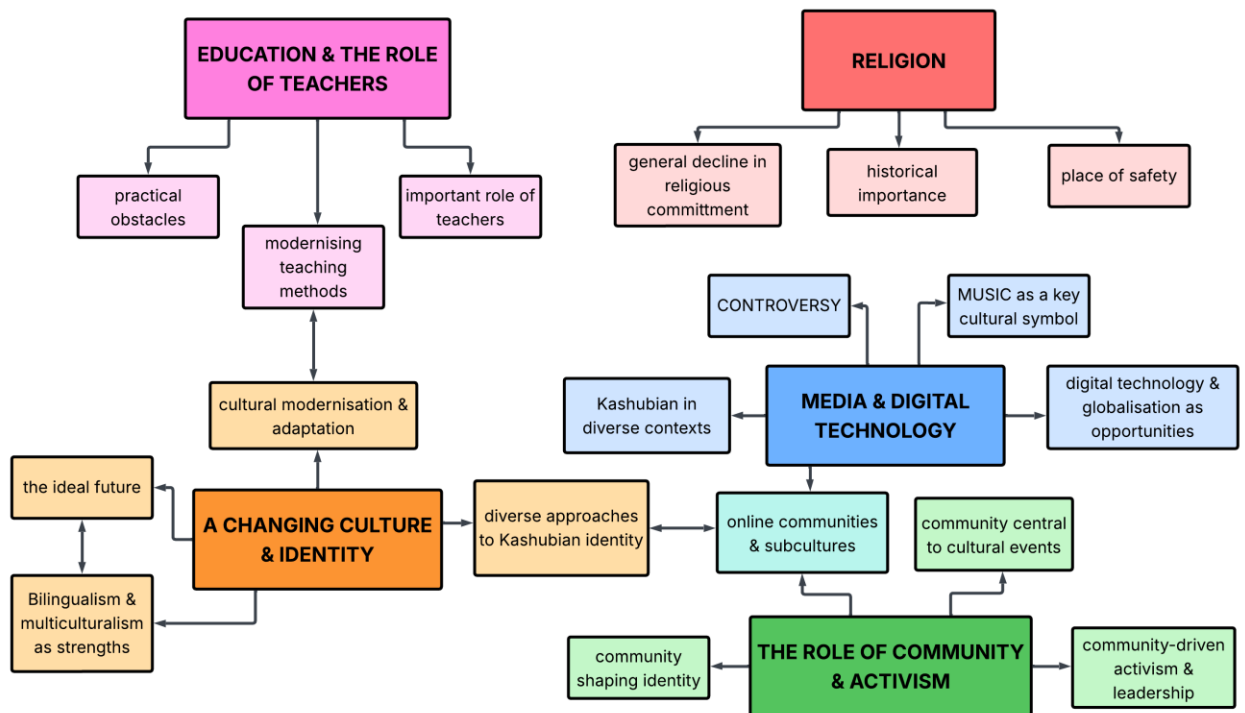
- *Phase 1: Literature review*  
Provided context on Kashubian people and language within existing research, identifying key symbols (e.g., folklore, traditions, cuisine) and challenges to language survival. Insights from this phase shaped interview design.
  
- *Phase 2: Data Collection*  
Semi-structured interviews and a focus group explored how cultural symbols are perceived, used, and valued in language preservation (Swaminathan & Mulvihill, 2018). Additional factors such as education, policy, and community activism were examined.

Interviews featured open-ended questions across six sections, covering youth identities, cultural symbols, generational change, language use, and future hopes (see Appendices 1 & 2). A purposive sample of 12 cultural leaders (curators, language teachers, artists, academics, cultural organisers) was recruited to ensure diverse perspectives. Virtual semi-structured interviews (25-60 minutes) were conducted via Microsoft Teams for ease of recording and

transcription. Two were conducted in person for participant convenience, and two participants requested a focus group format. Interviews followed a standardised set of sections with flexibility for follow-up questions and exploratory discussion (see Appendix 1). Data was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This involved an initial familiarisation with transcripts; coding; development of sub-themes, overarching themes, and creation of a thematic map. Findings were then compared with insights from literature review to strengthen interpretations and inform recommendations for language revitalisation strategies.

Ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection (Appendix 3). Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained, informed consent was obtained, and data were securely stored.

**Findings:**



*Figure 2: Visual overview of data using a thematic map*

### ***Education & teachers***

Participants highlighted several structural challenges facing Kashubian teaching, most notably limited funding: *“finances (...) biggest problem”* (AT046). This lack of resources creates “systemic” issues, such as enrolment limits in high schools: *“magical threshold, 112 children”* (TA101). Teachers reported developing their own material (e.g., *“everything has to be created by ourselves”* (AT046)) and facing scheduling difficulties, with lessons often timetabled at the day’s end or as additional classes.

Outside classrooms, Polish frequently replaces Kashubian in everyday interactions: *“we immediately switch to the language of the person”* (AOT426). Yet students clearly want immersion: *“Why don’t you adults talk to us in Kashubian?”* (TA101). Although spoken fluency varies, comprehension remains strong: [many] *“understand 100% even if they can’t speak a sentence”* (LA819).

Several interviewees pointed to Catalonia as the ideal example where language education is compulsory: *“In Catalonia it is normal... in our country, it is selective”* (AT046).

Respondents wished Kashubian were introduced systematically in all schools.

Teachers were consistently described as central to revitalisation. Their role is not only instructional but also inspirational - *“Will we ignite their hearts for this small homeland? This is a huge burden and obligation”* (OE513). They help students distinguish Kashubian from Polish while reducing the stigma of code-switching: *“They weave expressions... [teachers ensure] they can speak purely in Kashubian and Polish”* (OE513). This also prevents embarrassment about mixing codes (OE513).

Teachers stressed listening to youth and tailoring lessons through projects like Minecraft or escape rooms. Modernising teaching by balancing folklore with contemporary culture ensures young people are *“part of the culture not just observers”* (EA132-B). By combining heritage with modern approaches, schools instil a sense that youth *“are responsible for the identity of their region”* (OA219).

### ***A changing culture & identity***

Participants described Kashubian identity as diverse and context-dependent: *“the situation in Kashubia is very diverse... difficult to find one generalised image”* (ERA315). For rural

youth, identity was rooted in family traditions: *“it’s obvious... because their grandpa is”* (AO192), whereas urban youth experience greater struggles in affirming their Kashubian identity.

Identity was frequently portrayed as compatible with Polish identity: *“like having two hands... I feel both 100% Kashubian and 100% Polish”* (OA219). Bilingualism was described as an intellectual advantage, boosting learning and cognitive skills (LA819). Identity was also presented as inclusive, with participants envisioning *“Kashubians of different skin colour... other languages”* (AOT426).

Several interviewees noted Kashubian’s added cultural value, describing it as *“something characteristic”* (OA219) and *“interesting”* (AO192). The language can create cultural spaces separate from older traditions, providing roots while allowing individuals to find their place in a globalised world (EA132-A).

Younger generations sought to move beyond stereotypes: *“you don’t have to flaunt yourself in folk costumes... to think well about the region”* (ET131). Traditions and symbols are being reshaped through fashion, fantasy games, or retail. Many linked this adaptability to Kashubia’s history of resilience: *“we have a great ability to survive”* (ERA315).

Participants envisioned a future modern, bilingual community where Kashubian is used freely and without stigma, in conversation, emails and tickets: *“treated the same way as the Polish language... its status has been raised”* (OE513).

### ***Media & digital technology***

Participants consistently identified music as the symbol youth most strongly connect: *“music is probably the most attractive element”* (AOT426). Contemporary Kashubian music spans punk, opera, hip hop, rap, and discopolo, moving beyond folk. This diversity was seen as a source of pride, rather than *“a source of shame”* (ET131) and as evidence of a living culture where even controversy signals vitality.

Digital technology and globalisation were perceived as opportunities rather than threats. Smartphones and online platforms put Kashubian *“at [youths’] fingertips”* (OA219), allowing events to be documented, materials preserved, and global trends integrated: *“Globalisation does not have to be an enemy, it can be a tool”* (LA819).

However, participants noted the need for improved digital infrastructure- keyboards, dictionaries, translation apps- to normalise everyday use. Beyond music, media like literature, comedy, and slam poetry were highlighted as vehicles for contemporary Kashubian culture, and economic opportunities for creators (AT046).

Importantly, Kashubian should not be confined to folklore or traditional contexts. The language must also engage global issues, subcultures, and youth interests, engaging audiences “*not in love with typical Kashubian culture*” (LA819). What matters, as one participant put it, is finding someone who will “*talk to them in Kashubian about a specific topic*” (OA219).

Controversies around language, history, or religion were seen positively: “*it means it moves someone*” (AT046). They also reflected misunderstood histories: “*if someone does not know history, it is difficult*” (AO192), including debates over the national anthem or myths of folklore passed down for many generations (AO192, EA132-B).

### ***The role of community & activism***

Cultural events featuring symbols like the griffin, flag, and embroidery remain central to expressions of Kashubian identity. However, these festivals often cater primarily to older generations. Events are often scheduled during holidays, so teachers can’t actively bring students to participate; they only mention that events exist (AT046), limiting participation. Participants emphasised that community also operates through digital spaces. Social media connects Kashubians but creates “*bubbles*” (EA132-A). For many young people, identity increasingly reflects global subcultures and worldviews: “*identity often ceases to be related to ethnicity (...) other identities appear*” (LA819). Platforms such as Discord, YouTube, and Minecraft have become sites for Kashubian language learning, memes, and live streams. These show digital culture’s potential, though some feared it risks reducing the language to a tourist attraction.

Kashubian identity often becomes more visible in contexts outside the region. Encounters with outsiders, travel, and maturity heighten awareness: “*identity is born (...) with maturity and also with travel*” (AO192). This suggests that Kashubian identity is dynamic, shaped by external interactions as much as local traditions.

Ties to community also inspire activism, from family to student clubs. Participants stressed the need for visible leaders and generational cooperation: “*If older ones don’t set a good*

*example, then it can be difficult*” (LA819). Activism, art, and cultural work can also provide income and opportunities to “*break out*” beyond Polish-language spheres (AT046).

### **Religion**

Participants consistently observed a decline in religiosity among Kashubian youth: “*religiosity is probably not as important as it used to be*” (AT046). This was more evident in urban areas, while rural youth were described as more bound to tradition: “*Kashubian youth (...) are brought up in tradition, we go to church (...) because you have to go*” (AO192). Some explicitly distanced themselves from the Church’s position on social issues such as LGBTQ+ rights, recalling moments when they “*did not agree with what the church was promoting*” (AO192). Although “*many Kashubian traditions derive from the Catholic religion,*” participants stressed that faith is no longer essential: “*it is not that today, in order to be a Kashubian, you have to be a believer*” (OA219).

Historically, religion shaped the patriarchal family model- “*there is a man, the head of the family (...) passed down from generation to generation*” (ET131)- but younger generations often reject this. Yet, traces of religious influence remain embedded in the language, such as greetings and farewells (EA132-B): “*to greet ‘praised be Jesus Christ’, to say goodbye ‘to God’.*”

Despite declining religiosity, the Church continues to serve as a Kashubian-speaking space. Liturgical readings allow students to “*show in church what they have learned at school*” (AOT426). Although engagement skews toward older generations: “*first the grandmother is standing in front, then the young one (...) behind her*” (AA161).

### **Conclusion:**

Kashubian youth identity is diverse and context-dependent, shaped by urban–rural differences, immigrant perspectives, and personal experiences. Bilingualism and multiculturalism are viewed as strengths, with Polish and Kashubian identities viewed as complementary, echoing research on the benefits of bilingualism and the myth of monolingualism as a desirable norm (Bialystok, 2001; Dolowy-Rybinska, 2021; Lenore, 2021; Marian & Shook, 2012; Olko & Sallabank, 2021; Woniakiewicz, 2008).

Traditional symbols- flag, embroidery, and folklore- are often perceived by youth as outdated, while contemporary culture (music, digital media, fashion) provides stronger connections. Revitalisation research similarly stresses “defolklorisation,” reinterpreting traditions in modern forms to engage younger generations (Dołowy-Rybińska, 2015b; Olko & Sallabank, 2021; Ortiz, 2021; Sznajder, 2021).

Positive leadership and role models are vital, echoing findings in other minority-language contexts (Nestor & Hickey, 2009). Teachers are pivotal but face funding and resource constraints. Modernised teaching that combines traditional and contemporary culture helps students feel like active participants in shaping their heritage, not passive observers.

Community and leadership remain significant. Identity often becomes most salient when individuals leave the region or encounter outsiders, while role models and intergenerational cooperation inspire youth. Religion’s role is declining, though churches remain safe spaces for Kashubian use, and religious language remains even as neutral alternatives emerge. Controversy and debate (over language or history) indicate cultural vitality rather than division.

Findings challenged expectations, particularly the limited appeal of traditional symbols, with youth connecting more to creative reinterpretations (e.g., folklore in games, embroidery in fashion). Others, such as the importance of bilingualism, digital media, and leadership, aligned with existing literature, confirming their relevance in the Kashubian context.

Future research should engage directly with Kashubian youth to verify whether adult perspectives align with their lived experiences. Further work is needed on digital subcultures, emerging technologies such as AI, and intergenerational dynamics, especially how older generations respond to modern reinterpretations.

Greater investment in Kashubian education is essential, particularly teacher training, with evidence showing revitalisation is cost-effective (Dolowy-Rybinska, 2021; Majerska-Sznajder, 2021; Olko & Sallabank, 2021). Contemporary culture- music, gaming, poetry- should be integrated into schools and events to make revitalisation relevant. Developing accessible digital tools (dictionaries, keyboards, and translation apps) and supporting youth leadership and community initiatives are vital. Creating spaces for constructive debate will ensure that Kashubian remains dynamic, inclusive, and responsive to change.

This project deepened my understanding of Kashubian culture, revealing how youth, community, and modernisation shape identity and preservation. Engaging with cultural leaders strengthened my confidence, communication skills, and ability to lead conversations in unfamiliar settings. Although surveying high school students proved unfeasible due to the overlap with the summer holiday period, adapting the methodology to include additional interviews with cultural leaders provided valuable insights into their role in fostering youth engagement. This flexibility enriched the project and revealed the importance of leadership and community involvement in revitalisation. On a personal level, it allowed me to reconnect with my Kashubian heritage and reinforced a long-term commitment to supporting preservation.

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## Appendices:

### *Appendix 1: Interview Script (POLISH VERSION)*

#### Wstęp:

- „*Jak minął Panu/Pani dzień/tydzień do tej pory?*”
- „*Czy to dla Pana/Pani szczególnie pracowity okres w roku?*”

#### Wstęp do wywiadu

Dzień dobry i bardzo dziękuję, że znalazł(a) Pan(i) czas na rozmowę ze mną. Nazywam się Sophie i prowadzę badania na Uniwersytecie Cambridge. Moim projektem zajmuję się współczesną tożsamością i kulturą kaszubską, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem młodzieży.

Te badania są dla mnie również bardzo osobiste- mój tata jest Kaszubem, więc dorastałam w kontakcie z tą kulturą i bardzo zależy mi na lepszym zrozumieniu, jak wygląda ona dziś.

Celem projektu jest zrozumienie, jak osoby aktywne w obszarze kaszubskiej kultury i tożsamości- takie jak Pan(i)- postrzegają jej współczesne przemiany oraz w jaki sposób ich działalność wpływa na młodych ludzi. Interesuje mnie, jak młodsze pokolenia angażują się w język, symbole kulturowe, media cyfrowe i inne formy wyrażania tożsamości we współczesnym świecie, a także jak ten przekaz jest kształtowany przez osoby mające wpływ na dyskurs kulturowy.

Rozmowa potrwa około 30 minut. Za Pana/Pani zgodą chciałabym nagrać wywiad, aby móc później dokładnie przeanalizować odpowiedzi. Nagranie będzie przechowywane w bezpieczny sposób i wykorzystane wyłącznie do celów naukowych.

Chciałabym również zapewnić, że Pana/Pani tożsamość pozostanie anonimowa – w żadnej publikacji nie pojawią się nazwiska ani żadne dane umożliwiające identyfikację. Jeśli są pytania, na które nie chce Pan(i) odpowiedzieć, to oczywiście nie ma takiego obowiązku. Ma Pan(i) również prawo do wycofania się z udziału w badaniu w dowolnym momencie, także po zakończeniu wywiadu – bez podawania przyczyny.

Czy wyraża Pan(i) zgodę na udział w badaniu i nagranie tej rozmowy?

*(czekaj na potwierdzenie)*

Dziękuję- w takim razie zaczniemy od kilku pytań wprowadzających.

### Sekcja 1: Tło i rola

Czy mógłby/mogłaby Pan/Pani krótko opowiedzieć, jak zaangażował/a się Pan/Pani w pracę związaną z kulturą i językiem kaszubskim?

### Sekcja 2: Postrzeganie tożsamości młodzieży

Z Pana/Pani perspektywy, jak młodzi Kaszubi dziś podchodzą do swojej tożsamości Kaszubskiej?

### Sekcja 3: Symbole kulturowe i zmiany pokoleniowe

Które elementy kultury kaszubskiej- takie jak muzyka, festiwale, język czy inne symbole- przemawiają dziś do młodych ludzi?

- *Czy są takie, od których młodzież się dystansuje?*

Czy zauważył/a Pan/Pani, że młodzi ludzie tworzą nowe formy wyrazu kulturowego, np. poprzez media cyfrowe, modę lub muzykę?

- *Czy uważa Pan/Pani, że te nowsze formy również stanowią część kaszubskiej tożsamości?*

Jak udaje się Panu/Pani pogodzić potrzebę zachowania tradycji z chęcią utrzymania kultury żywej i autentycznej?

- *Czy próbował/a Pan/Pani modernizować lub reinterpretować elementy kultury?*
- *Jak unika Pan/Pani sytuacji, w której kultura staje się jedynie folklorem lub „historią do muzeum”?*

### Sekcja 4: Język i tożsamość

Jak młodzi ludzie korzystają dziś z języka kaszubskiego – w szkole, w domu, w Internecie lub podczas wydarzeń kulturalnych?

- *Czy język kaszubski odgrywa aktywną rolę w ich codziennym życiu, czy raczej ma wymiar symboliczny?*

Jaką rolę – według Pana/Pani – odgrywają platformy cyfrowe, takie jak media społecznościowe, muzyka, filmy czy popkultura, w kształtowaniu tożsamości młodych ludzi?

Czy uważa Pan/Pani, że religia i tradycje religijne nadal wpływają na to, jak młodzi Kaszubi postrzegają swoją tożsamość?

- *Czy- Pana/Pani zdaniem – ta rola zmieniła się z czasem?*

#### Sekcja 5: Wyzwania i nadzieje

Jakie największe trudności napotyka Pan/Pani, próbując angażować młodych ludzi w kulturę kaszubską – zwłaszcza w nowoczesnych formach?

- *Czy doświadczył/a Pan/Pani oporu- ze strony młodzieży lub starszych pokoleń? Jak Pan/Pani na to reagował/a?*

Co daje Panu/Pani nadzieję na przyszłość języka i tożsamości kaszubskiej?

- *Jakie zmiany chciałby/chciałaby Pan/Pani zobaczyć – w edukacji, mediach lub polityce – które mogłyby lepiej wspierać zaangażowanie młodego pokolenia?*

#### Sekcja 6: Refleksja

Gdyby mógł/mogła Pan/Pani wyobrazić sobie idealną przyszłość kaszubskiej kultury i tożsamości, jak by ona wyglądała, (zarówno w kontekście relacji z kulturą polską, jak i w globalnym świecie)?

- *I (jeśli chciał(a)by Pan/Pani dodać) – w jaki sposób Pana/Pani praca lub podejście może przyczynić się do realizacji tej wizji?*

#### Koniec:

W takim razie zakończę nagranie.

Na koniec chciałabym jeszcze zapytać, czy zna Pan/Pani może kogoś, kto również mógłby być zainteresowany udziałem w takim wywiadzie — na przykład nauczycieli języka kaszubskiego, osoby pracujące z młodzieżą, animatorów kultury czy inne osoby zaangażowane w działania na rzecz kultury kaszubskiej? Będę ogromnie wdzięczna za każdą sugestię albo kontakt.

Jeszcze raz bardzo dziękuję za rozmowę i poświęcony czas — to naprawdę dla mnie ważne.

Jeśli miał(a)by Pan/Pani jakiegokolwiek pytania po rozmowie, proszę śmiało pisać do mnie mailowo.

Jeszcze raz bardzo dziękuję i życzę miłego dnia!:)

## ***Appendix 2: Interview Script (ENGLISH VERSION)***

### Intro:

- *"How has your day/week been so far?"*
- *"Is this a particularly busy time of year for you?"*

### Introduction to the interview

Good morning and thank you very much for taking the time to talk to me. My name is Sophie and I do research at the University of Cambridge. My project deals with contemporary Kashubian identity and culture, with particular emphasis on young people.

This research is also very personal to me – my dad is Kashubian, so I grew up in contact with this culture and I really want to better understand what it looks like today.

The aim of the project is to understand how people active in the area of Kashubian culture and identity - such as you - perceive its contemporary transformations and how their activities affect young people. I'm interested in how younger generations engage with language, cultural symbols, digital media, and other forms of identity expression in the modern world, and how this message is shaped by influencers in cultural discourse.

The conversation will last about 30 minutes. With your permission, I would like to record an interview so that I can carefully analyze the answers later. The recording will be stored securely and used for scientific purposes only.

I would also like to assure you that your identity will remain anonymous – no names or any personally identifiable information will appear in any publication. If there are questions that you do not want to answer, then of course there is no obligation to do so. You also have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, including after the interview – without giving a reason.

Do you agree to participate in the study and to record this conversation?

*(wait for confirmation)*

Thank you - then we will start with a few introductory questions.

### Section 1: Background and Role

Could you briefly tell us how you got involved in the work related to Kashubian culture and language?

### Section 2: Youth Identity Perceptions

From your perspective, how do young Kashubians approach their Kashubian identity today?

### Section 3: Cultural Symbols and Generational Changes

Which elements of Kashubian culture – such as music, festivals, language or other symbols – appeal to young people today?

- *Are there any that young people distance themselves from?*

Have you noticed that young people are creating new forms of cultural expression, e.g. through digital media, fashion or music?

- *Do you think that these newer forms are also part of Kashubian identity?*

How do you manage to reconcile the need to preserve tradition with the desire to keep culture alive and authentic?

- *Have you tried to modernize or reinterpret elements of culture?*
- *How do you avoid a situation in which culture becomes only folklore or "history for the museum"?*

### Section 4: Language and Identity

How do young people use the Kashubian language today – at school, at home, on the Internet or during cultural events?

- *Does the Kashubian language play an active role in their everyday lives, or does it have a symbolic dimension?*

What role do you think digital platforms such as social media, music, movies or pop culture play in shaping young people's identities?

Do you think that religion and religious traditions still influence how young Kashubians perceive their identity?

- *In your opinion, has this role changed over time?*

## Section 5: Challenges and Hopes

What are the biggest difficulties you encounter when trying to engage young people in Kashubian culture – especially in modern forms?

- *Have you experienced resistance from young people or older generations? How did you react to this?*

What gives you hope for the future of the Kashubian language and identity?

- *What changes would you like to see – in education, media or politics – that could better support the engagement of the young generation?*

## Section 6: Reflection

If you could imagine the ideal future of Kashubian culture and identity, what would it look like (both in the context of relations with Polish culture and in the global world)?

*The end:*

Then I'll end the recording.

Finally, I would like to ask if you know anyone who could also be interested in participating in such an interview- for example, Kashubian language teachers, youth workers, cultural animators or other people involved in activities for the benefit of Kashubian culture? I will be extremely grateful for any suggestion or contact.

Thank you very much again for the interview and your time- it's really valuable to me.

If you have any questions after the interview, feel free to write to me by e-mail.

Thank you very much again and have a nice day!:)

### Appendix 3: Ethical Approval confirmation



RE: Submission for Ethical Approval

From MMLL Ethics Committee <ethics@mml.cam.ac.uk>  
Date Mon 30/06/2025 09:26  
To Sophie Kleina <sk2344@cam.ac.uk>

Dear Sophie,

Many thanks for your patience!

I can confirm ethics review approval for your study, on the understanding that you will obtain informed consent and store participant and experimental data in accordance with our usual policies (see <https://www.research-integrity.admin.cam.ac.uk/research-ethics> and <https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection>).

- Please remember to anonymize all data and take time to review the online training material on data protection <https://www.training.cam.ac.uk/cppd/course/cppd-dataprot>
- Please inform the Committee of any significant changes to your research.
- Please confirm that you have read the ethics protocol for audio recordings if used.

Best wishes,

Miyoung (on behalf of MMLL REC)

Miyoung Kim | Research Grants Coordinator  
Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages and Linguistics  
<https://www.vle.cam.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=168852>

### Appendix 4: List of Participants (with interview type and length of interview)

<i>Participant Code:</i>	<i>Interview type</i>	<i>Length of interview (approx. in mins)</i>
<i>AT046</i>	Individual	45
<i>OE513</i>	Individual	25
<i>LA819</i>	Individual	40
<i>TA101</i>	Individual	50
<i>ET131</i>	Individual	30
<i>AA161</i>	Individual	30
<i>ERA315</i>	Individual	25
<i>AOT426</i>	Individual	60
<i>AO192</i>	Individual	30
<i>OA219</i>	Individual	30
<i>EAI32-a</i>	Focus Group	55
<i>EAI32- b</i>	Focus Group	55

## **Appendix 5: Polish Versions of Quotations used in Results**

(English translation in **black**, Polish original text in **red**)

### **Education & teachers:**

*“finances (...) biggest problem” (AT046)*

*„finanse (...) największym problemem” (AT046)*

*“magical threshold- 112 children” (TA101)*

*„magiczna liczba- 112 dzieci” (TA101)*

*“everything has to be created by ourselves” (AT046)*

*„wszystko musimy stworzyć sami” (AT046)*

*“we immediately switch to the language of the person” (AOT426)*

*„natychmiast przelączamy się na język rozmówcy” (AOT426)*

*“Why don't you adults talk to us in Kashubian?” (TA101)*

*„Dlaczego wy dorośli nie rozmawiacie z nami po kaszubsku?” (TA101)*

*“understand 100% even if they can't speak a sentence” (LA819)*

*„rozumieją w 100%, nawet jeśli nie potrafią powiedzieć zdania” (LA819)*

*“compulsory education” (EA132-A)*

*„obowiązkowa edukacja” (EA132-A)*

*“introduce Kashubian to all schools” (AOT426)*

*„wprowadzić kaszubski do wszystkich szkół” (AOT426)*

*“Catalonian it is normal, and everyone goes because they have to, because it is a compulsory language and, in our country, it is selective and in the last hours” (AT046)*

*„W Katalonii jest to normalne, i wszyscy chodzą, ponieważ muszą, ponieważ jest to język obowiązkowy, a w naszym kraju jest selektywny i w ostatnich godzinach” (AT046)*

*“Will we ignite their hearts for this small homeland? This is a huge burden and a huge obligation” (OE513)*

*„Czy my rozpalimy ich serca do tej małej ojczyzny. To jest ogromny, ogromny ciężar i ogromne zobowiązanie.” (OE513)*

*“They weave expressions and phrases from the Kashubian language into the polish language (...) [teachers ensure] they can speak purely in Kashubian and purely in polish” (OE513)*

*„wplatają wyrażenia, zwroty z języka kaszubskiego, (...) żeby potrafili mówić czysto w języku kaszubskim i czysto w języku polskim.” (OE513)*

*“embarrass[ed] about the fact that they mix these language codes” (OE513)*

*„Żeby nie zawstydząć ich tym, że oni mieszają te kody językowe” (OE513)*

*“important we listen to children” (AT046)*

*„ważne, abyśmy słuchali dzieci” (AT046)*

*“part of the culture not just observers of it” (EA132-B)*

*„część kultury, a nie tylko obserwatorzy” (EA132-B)*

*“instilled with the awareness that they are responsible for the identity of their region”*  
(OA219)

„wdrożeni w świadomość, że są odpowiedzialni za tożsamość swojego regionu” (OA219)

#### **A changing culture & identity:**

*“the situation in Kashubia is very diverse (...) difficult to find one generalised image”*  
(ERA315)

„ta sytuacja na Kaszubach jest bardzo różnorodna (...) trudno tutaj o jakiś jeden uogólniony obraz.” (ERA315)

*“it’s obvious... because their grandpa is”* – (AO192)

„to oczywiste... ponieważ ich dziadek jest” – (AO192)

*“like having two hands... I feel both 100% Kashubian and 100% Polish”* (OA219)

„to jest trochę jak mieć 2 ręce, (...) czuję się i stuprocentowym koszulką i stuprocentową Polką.” (OA219)

*“there will be Kashubians of different skin colour... other languages”* (AOT426).

„będą kaszubi o różnym kolorze skóry. Będą mówili też w innych językach” (AOT426)

*“something characteristic”* (OA219)

„coś charakterystycznego” (OA219)

*“interesting”* (AO192)

„interesujące” (AO192)

*“you don't have to flaunt yourself in folk costumes... to think well about the region” (ET131)*

*„nie trzeba się obnosić w tych strojach ludowych (...) żeby dobrze myśleć o regionie,”  
(ET131)*

*“we have a great ability to survive” (ERA315)*

*„jako kaszubi mamy ogromną zdolność adaptacyjną i ogromną zdolność przetrwania.”  
(ERA315)*

*“treated the same way as the Polish language... its status has been raised” (OE513)*

*“żeby ten język kaszubski był traktowany tak samo jak język polski (...) jego status został  
podniesiony” (OE513)*

### **Media & digital technology:**

*“music is probably the most attractive element” (AOT426)*

*„muzyka jest prawdopodobnie najbardziej atrakcyjnym elementem” (AOT426)*

*“young artists show the Kashubian language does not have to be ashamed” (ET131)*

*„młodych artystów, którzy pokazują, że język kaszubski nie trzeba się go wstydzić.” (ET131)*

*“at [youths'] fingertips” (OA219)*

*„na wyciągnięcie ręki [młodzieży]” (OA219)*

*“Globalisation does not have to be an enemy, it can be a tool” (LA819)*

*„Globalizacja to nie musi być wróg, to może być narzędzie.” (LA819)*

*“do something they love and have money from it” (AT046)*

*„robić to, co kochają i zarabiać na tym” (AT046)*

*“not in love with typical Kashubian culture” (LA819)*

*„kaszuba to nie musi być ktoś, kto jest taki bardzo zakochany w kaszubskiej kulturze” (LA819)*

*“talk to them in Kashubian but who will talk to them in Kashubian about a specific topic” (OA219)*

*„rozmawiać z nimi po kaszubsku, ale kto porozmawia z nimi po kaszubsku na konkretny temat” (OA219)*

*“it means it moves someone” (AT046)*

*„to znaczy, że porusza kogoś” (AT046)*

*“if someone does not know history, it is difficult” (AO192)*

*„jeśli ktoś nie zna historii, to jest ciężko” (AO192)*

### **The role of community & activism**

*“only say that there is something on” (AT046)*

*„tylko powiedzieć, że coś takiego jest” (AT046)*

*“identity often ceases to be related to ethnicity (...) other identities appear” (LA819)*

„tożsamość często przestaje być związana z etnicznością (...) pojawiają się inne tożsamości”  
(LA819)

*“identity is born (...) with maturity and also with travel” (AO192).*

„tożsamość rodzi się (...) z dojrzałości i także z podróży” (AO192)

*“If older ones don't set a good example, then it can be difficult for the younger generation”  
(LA819)*

„jeśli starsi nie dają dobrego przykładu, to młodszymi pokoleniom może być trudno” (LA819)

*“break out” (AT046)*

„wyłamać się” (AT046)

### **Religion:**

*“religiosity is probably not as important as it used to be” (AT046)*

„religijność już chyba nie jest tak ważna jak kiedyś” (AT046)

*“Kashubian youth (...) are brought up in tradition, we go to church, (...) because you have to go, there is no discussion” (AO192).*

„młodzież kaszubska szczególnie wsi jest wychowana w tradycji, chodzimy do kościoła fizycznie chodzimy, (...) bo trzeba chodzić tam nie ma jakby dyskusji,” (AO192)

*“did not agree with what the church was promoting” (AO192)*

„nie zgadzało z tym, co kościół dziś tam promował,” (AO192)

*“many typically Kashubian traditions derive from the Catholic religion,” (LA819)*

*„Wiele typowo kaszubskich tradycji wywodzi się z religii katolickiej,” (LA819)*

*“it is not that today, in order to be a Kashubian, you have to be a believer” (OA219)*

*„to nie jest już tak, że dzisiaj, żeby być kaszubą, trzeba być osobą wierzącą” (OA219)*

*“to greet ‘praised be Jesus Christ’, to say goodbye ‘to God’, to thank ‘God bless you’”  
(EA132-B)*

*“na przywitanie ‘niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus’ na pożegnanie ‘z Bogiem,’ żeby  
podziękować ‘bóg zapłać’ (EA132-B)*

*“there is a man, the head of the family (...) passed down from generation to generation”  
(ET131)*

*„jest mężczyzna, głowa rodziny (...) i to jest oczywiście przekazywane z pokolenia na  
pokolenie” (ET131)*

*“show in church what they have learned at school” (AOT426)*

*„pokazać w kościele, co nauczyli się w szkole” (AOT426)*

*“first the grandmother is standing in front, then the young one (...) behind her” (AA161).*

*„najpierw stoi przede mną babcia a za nią dopiero stoi młody” (AA161)*