

Factors weakening and strengthening the ethnolinguistic vitality of the

The presentation discusses the results of research on the ethnolinguistic vitality of communities using collateral languages in Poland, with particular emphasis on the Kashubian community. It was conducted within the frame of the research project “Linguistic Diversity in Poland: Collateral Languages, Language-Oriented Activities and Conceptualization of Collective Identity” (2021-2027). The ethnolinguistic vitality study was conducted using a survey method in 2022–2023. Based on the findings, drawing on critical sociolinguistics and applying psychometric methods, a model of ethnolinguistic vitality was developed. The model includes 13 variables, among them two observable ones: intergenerational language transmission and self-assessment of language competence, as well as 11 latent variables, including among others, the ones directly discussed in the presentation: language practices, the ideology of collaterality - the perception of these languages and their communities not as distinct and independent, but as “incomplete” forms subordinated to the dominant language resulting from the proximity between the collateral language (Kashubian) and the dominant language (Polish). The third is a subordination/affirmation variable – that is, the extent to which the group considers it appropriate to use its language in various situations. It connects to the rule of politeness and linguistic subordination nom. Research conducted in Kashubia revealed a discrepancy between the high prestige of the language – stemming from positive attitudes toward it, its status as a recognized regional language, and the activities undertaken to support it – and the weakening intergenerational transmission and declining use of the language across different contexts. These findings should be of interest to the language community. They show that simply protecting a language is not enough to ensure that it is used. The recommendations arising from the study call for the introduction of a cautious language policy in Kashubia aimed at raising users’ awareness of the Kashubian language and encouraging its use in all situations.

300 words

Key words: Kashubian, ethnolinguistic vitality, language ideologies, language endangerment, language protection, language use