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KASHUBIAN AND MODERN FORMS OF MEDIA – NEW SURVIVAL CHANCES FOR ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

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Abstract. Indirect communication channeled through various forms of media is undoubtedly dominant in the modern world. This is especially true in a situation when a minority language is no longer the most important means of communication within a given community, i.e. when most direct contact between representatives of that minority take place in the dominant language. If the use of a minority language therefore becomes impossible in direct situations, it becomes increasingly eagerly used in forms of indirect communication. Minority language can find natural niches where it can be used in the contemporary world, the most important of these being the mass media. During past 20 years the situation of Kashubian language has changed. The very interesting, complex, and not yet complete processes of standardization, codification, and propagation of a literary language have enabled the Kashubian language to establish its presence in schooling, literature, and the media. Not only has the character of the language changed thanks to these new niches of occurrence, but new cultural niches where the language is used and groups which use it have also emerged.

Keywords: Kashubian language, mass media, mediated communication, linguistic and cultural niches

In modern times, a minority group does not always need its own language as a means of communication – sometimes all of its members are perfectly bilingual in the dominant state language, often the latter is their first language or even the only one known by a whole family or group. For some this is an argument that such a minority language is disappearing, that attempts at revitalizing it merely represent artificial life-support – "artificial" because this is no longer a language crucial for the existence of the given group, for communication within the group, frequently even among closest family. However, such opinions meet with very strong objection from minorities themselves, who treat their language as the most characteristic marker of their identity, distinguishing them from

the dominant group. As long as a minority language exists even in vestigial form and people show a desire to maintain it, every effort should be made to ensure its survival. Minority languages are nowadays being used in different situations than they were in the past – not in direct, day-to-day communication but in special situations, at celebrations, or in mediated communication. That is why I would also like to consider how the appearance of minority languages in the mass media (radio, TV, Internet) has influenced minority cultures, the role they play, and the survival chances of a given minority language. It seems that a minority language can still play an important role for the existence of the minority group – no longer as a basic means of communication, but rather as a symbol of belonging to that group, of preserving one's ethnicity (Edwards 1996). Backing efforts to support the minority language, sending one's children to ethnic schools, participating in events where the language is used even to a minimal degree – all of these things entail a commitment to the minority culture and serve as a sign of identification. Kashubian, as a language that has recently been gaining a new status and new significance, can serve as an excellent example here.

The present situation of many European minority languages is complicated. On the one hand, the intergenerational transmission of most minority languages has broken down, fewer and fewer people are using minority languages in everyday life, in private communication with other members of the ethnic community, and with family, friends, neighbors. These problems likewise affect the Kashubian minority and its language. Statistical data (Mordawski 2005) indicate that there are now about 500 000 people who identify themselves fully or partly with the Kashubian group, 60% of them can speak the Kashubian language, but only about 80 000 use it in everyday life. Most of those who know Kashubian belong to the oldest generation. The middle generation knows the language but rarely uses it outside of the family, whereas the younger generation has passive or no knowledge of Kashubian before going to school. A hundred years ago all the members of the Kashubian community knew the language. There are many reasons for this breakdown – the status of the language, the linguistic policies followed by the state, and the place of the minority language in the education system, media, government, etc. (Edwards 1992). In the case of the Kashubian language the most important reasons for language shift was a change in lifestyle – the Kashubs, a rural

farming and fishing society, became fragmented when many of their members left the villages, moved to the cities and worked in different domains. Needing to adapt and to function in their new environment, they switched to the dominant language. The age-old fabric of the community disintegrated. In the latter 20th century, Kashubs ceased to differ in terms of lifestyle and dress from the surrounding Poles and neighboring Germans, although they were still distinct in terms of habits and language at the outset of the 20th century.

Kashubs inhabit a border zone that has for centuries been subject to rivalry between Poland and Germany. Both countries have pursued assimilating policies in the area. The real change in the situation of the Kashubian language took place in communist-era Poland (1945–1989). The state linguistic policies 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 in schools as well. 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. In a socialist country there was no place for a multicultural system or for any type of distinction; everybody quite simply had to be the same. Kashubs were thus subject to concerted state efforts to undermine the language community – they came under public ridicule through the circulation of jokes (such as "A herring is not much of a fish, nor a Kashubian much of a man" or "Sell your horse and buy a Kashub – he will eat little but work a lot") or sayings that ascribed negative traits to members of the minority group or their language (e.g. Kashubian is not a language but merely a local dialect form of the Polish language) (Synak 1998: 125). In official discourse it was forbidden to use the adjective "Kashubian" in conjunction with the noun "language". On TV and radio the region was no longer referred to as the "Kashubian lands" as it had been, but simply as the "coastal" region (Szultka 2001: 39). There was no place for any Kashubian language press, literature or radio/TV programs. All these factors weakened the intergenerational transmission of the Kashubian language.

The situation described above is characteristic for many European minority languages, as well as for other small Slavic languages. Interesting similarities are apparent, for example, from a

comparison between Kashubian and the languages of the Sorbians, groups of Slavs living in border zones in Germany. At the end of the 19th century there were about 150 000 people speaking Sorbian. The present estimated data put the number at 20 000 people able to communicate in one of the two Sorbian languages without problems: Upper Sorbian (about 12 000–15 000) and Lower Sorbian (about 5 000–6 000) (Elle 2000: 18). The abandonment of the Sorbian language in favor of German and assimilation with the dominant culture were the result of the policies that had been pursued from the 18th century, especially in Lower Lusatia: the Sorbian language was then removed from the Church, public life and schools. The worst persecutions were inflicted on Sorbians after Hitler came to power, when a system of supervising the Germanization of the Sorbian people was created. Speaking Sorbian and admitting to Sorbian origins was strongly repressed. However, the parallels between the Kashubian and Sorbian cases diverged somewhat in the post-WWII era. The situation of the Sorbian culture in some senses changed for the better after the war, with Sorbians becoming a 'model minority' in the German Democratic Republic, financed and supported by the state. Bilingual institutions, media and schools were opened; cultural and educational life was organized. Yet at the same time Sorbians had to agree to a compromise: to relinquish their national affairs to the state, with limited possibilities of action, and to the folklorization of their culture. In addition, the influence of the mass media and migration resulted in a dramatic decrease in the Sorbian population. Unfortunately, the changes which took place after the reunification of Germany did not lead to greater changes in the cultural and linguistic policies pursued by the Sorbians themselves. Despite favorable policies in Germany (the rights of Sorbians are written into the Saxony and Brandenburg constitutions, the Sorbian languages are recognized as minority languages of Germany and supported with subsidies), the Sorbians maintain a passive attitude towards Germany and the new possibilities for action that this new situation offers (Kudela 2009: 116–120).

The situation of the Kashubian language, on the other hand began to see certain positive changes following the collapse of communism in 1989. Kashubian organizations started to develop and to act for the preservation of the Kashubian language and for the Kashubian ethnic community. The rights of Kashubs gradually gained legal footing, at first in the Polish "Act on the National and Ethnic Minorities and Regional Language" (which gives the

Kashubian language official recognition as a regional language in Poland), and then in the "European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages" (ratified by Poland in 2009). The Kashubian language is at present the only officially recognized regional language of Poland (the country's other minority languages being the languages of national minorities who have states beyond the Polish borders). Here, comparison between Kashubian and the Silesian language – which is not officially recognized as a regional language of Poland, and therefore not supported by the state budget – seems to lead to the conclusion that it is the determination of the Kashubians and their actions which have led to the uncommon success and popularization of their language and culture. Over the past 20 years, therefore, Kashubian has turned from a rejected dialect into a government-protected regional language with many measures aimed at preserving it: Kashubian-language signs and street names have appeared; Kashubian has been included in the program of school education in the region (although unfortunately not as a language of teaching nor even as a required subject for every child, but as a foreign language taught 3 hours per week at parents' explicit request); in some localities Kashubian is recognized as an official language in which Kashubs may settle their administrative affairs; courses have been organized for Kashubian language teachers and for public officials; and last but not least – Kashubian has appeared in the new media. At first in the press and in books, then on the radio (firstly on the local state station "Radio Gdañsk" for a few minutes a day, but since 2004 on the private "Radio Kaszëbë" station broadcasting only in the Kashubian language). Things are not as good in terms of TV, where Kashubs have very little airtime (about half an hour a week) (Obracht-Prondzynski 2007: 29–31).

Even if the Kashubian community realized the importance of the Kashubian language's existence in the schools and in different media, its successful introduction into such spheres was far from a foregone conclusion. Kashubian had existed in a written form since latter half of the 20th century, yet it had no standardized form – each author wrote in his own manner using words he thought best. This situation had to change when Kashubian was allowed to enter the educational system and media. The question arose: What form of the language should be taught and propagated? Kashubian, like most minority languages, has many dialects and people in different regions of the Kashubian lands spoke differently. The language needed to be codified, and a reform of

Kashubian was completed in 1996. Since then there have been special projects to popularize this new version of the language.

However, as in many places where a minority language becomes standardized (e.g. in Brittany, France), a problem arose in the Kashubian lands: the oldest generation, for whom Kashubian was the first language of contact with family, neighbors and friends and used in everyday life, complained that the Kashubian standard language was artificial and claimed not to understand it. Reading in this language was also difficult for them. On the other hand the younger generation, who have a passive knowledge of Kashubian (they are able to listen to conversations in the Kashubian language between their grandparents or parents, yet respond in Polish), learn the newer standard language which exists in the media, in the schools, in legal acts, but not in local community life. The oldest and the youngest generation therefore cannot (or do not wish to) understand each other speaking the same language.

However, there was a second, even more serious problem: young people who learn Kashubian at school rarely use it outside of lessons or special places (meetings of the Kashubian community, events organized by Kashubian cultural organizations, etc.), choosing to communicate with their surroundings and intimates in the dominant language (Synak 1998, Mordawski 2005). In this situation, the appearance of the Kashubian language in the Internet has entailed a major change in its situation and position.

Speaking most broadly, the rise of the Internet has been very advantageous for the Kashubian-speaking community, especially for the young. First of all it has engendered an increase in the language's prestige (if Kashubian can be used online, it cannot be so inferior and unsuitable after all). Secondarily, the Internet has facilitated the use of Kashubian in different kinds of direct and passive communication: in oral form (Internet radio, TV, short films like YouTube – even if this kind of use is still limited, there is every indication that its popularity will continue to increase), in passive written form (increasing numbers of bilingual websites or sites written solely in the minority language – local government sites, Kashubian or tourist organizations), and in active written form (blogs, forums, etc.) It is notable that this is the first time Kashubian has been widely used in such forms.

The Internet has made it possible for young people to meet one other remotely. Within some Internet forums virtual Kashubian communities have been created: young people communicate, ex-

change remarks about Kashubian culture and its functions in the modern world, and find other people to whom Kashubian culture and language are also important. Such a positive influence of new media on the possibility of preserving a minority language is also visible in the case of the Sorbian language: young people are creating Internet forums virtual communities in social network services through which they can communicate, thus reinforcing ethnic relations and facilitating the use of the language despite distances and the occupational demands of speaking only German. It seems that – apart from places in Catholic Upper Lusatia where the Sorbian-language community still exists – the new media is making it possible to maintain a language which is slowly falling out of everyday use in face-to-face linguistic contact.

The situation of the Kashubian language has thus changed widely over the past 20 years, and there is every indication that it will continue to evolve. Nowadays Kashubian exists in two forms: on the one hand as a language of everyday communication for some Kashubs, especially in rural areas and especially for the oldest generation, whereas on the other hand it is a language which appears more and more often – in symbolic form – in public life (in speeches, meetings of Kashubian organizations, local politicians, etc.) The first academic texts have been written in Kashubian. It is taught in school, so teenagers have a different relation to it than the older generation. It exists in the media, in working life (at least for some groups). Kashubian is purposely chosen by Kashubian activists and those who decide to learn the language to explore their own ethnic roots. It seems that the group for whom Kashubian is the language of most of their everyday contacts will continue to diminish little by little, whereas the future of Kashubian (as that of many other minority languages of Europe) will depend to a rising extent on its finding new niches of existence. Therefore Kashubian will be the first language of an ever-smaller group, yet will gain a more and more important position in new dimensions where it was never used before.

Representatives of minority cultures, politicians, and sociolinguists have for years been pondering what can and should be done to ensure the survival of these languages. The objective is not just to record their dwindling existence and archive such records for posterity, but to fully revitalize these languages – i.e. to bring about a situation in which they can be used in all domains of life, both private and official. These efforts can be gauged using

Fishman's *Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale* (Fishman 1991), which describes the successive steps that should be taken to achieve an improvement in the situation of an endangered language. However, although this scale accounts for various domains in which minority languages may appear, it fails to consider the kind of situation in which a language may exist by performing functions more symbolic than communicative in nature. It also does not consider the new way in which minority languages function in fields where they have not previously been present, but which have recently risen to become their most important environments. If we take a closer look at how the Kashubian language (and other European minority languages like Sorbian or Breton) have been used in recent years, we will notice that evaluating these languages purely in terms of their use for direct group-internal communication generates a false picture of them. These days, many minority languages have moved beyond community relations and are now distinctly and increasingly present in domains where they were until recently excluded – on the grounds of their being unofficial, perceived as associated with simple, rural life on the fringes of the "big-time" world.

Fishman maintains that the intergenerational transmission of a minority language, which is the most important and fundamental condition for the preservation of minority languages, depends exclusively on the existence of what he calls "real community". This term he introduces to distinguish a "real" community of people closely linked to one another, whose relations and communications take place through direct contact, from its "virtual pale shadow." Fishman claims that the revitalization of minority languages can be successful only if there is a reemergence of group-internal relations which only the minority language is adequately suited to express. The *real community* concept thus indirectly relates to the new phenomenon of minority languages being used in new, previously nonexistent dimensions. However, these new fields of use for minority languages, such as the mass media, seem not to satisfy some researchers. Fishman writes that "although cyber-space can be put to use for RLS purposes, neither computer programmes, e-mail, search engines, the web as a whole, chat boxes nor anything directly related to any or all of them can substitute for face-to-face interaction with *real family imbedded in real community*" (Fishman 2001: 458).

Fishman links the survival of minority languages to the existence of primary interpersonal ties, of a group for which this

language is the most important. It is hard not to agree with this: no other kind of interpersonal relation, no other means of communication offers so many opportunities for self-expression, expression of the world, or forges such direct contact. Language may perform its functions, present an image of the world, enable the expression of any emotion, of any phenomena or thought, only when it is a basic means of communication, when people think, feel, and speak in that language. But many minority languages, including Kashubian, are for an increasingly large group of individuals not first languages, only languages learned in school or on courses. Imparting a primary role to them, restoring the functions they once performed within communities, does not now seem possible without a stage of mediated communication, deeply rooted in forms of media.

Following the actions undertaken by the linguistic minorities in the last few years, we can see that instead of disappearing these minority languages are altering their functions. While not questioning the primary significance of direct communication and intergenerational transmission, we should also give some consideration to whether in today's world continuing to stress the direct mode of communication truly offers minority languages real chances of survival. We thus need to raise the question of whether a minority language truly can nowadays begin to function again in the same way as it once did in the past – and the answer indeed seems to be no, for at least several reasons. Not only is it impossible to turn back the clock, to revert to the same state of affairs prior to modernization, before the downturn in the use of the given minority language and the breakdown of traditional community bonds. Today's world is also highly media-based, dominated by mediated communication via the press, radio, television, and Internet. This is especially important for minority languages, which are no longer the main means of communication within their communities since most direct contacts between representatives of the minority take place in the dominant language. While the use of these languages is very limited in direct situations, they are on the other hand being used with increasing popularity in mediated communication. Minority languages are thus finding new niches for themselves where they can be used in the modern world. The most important of these niches are new forms of media.

These new fields of minority language use arose in conjunction with the ethnic revolution of the 1970s, with changes in legislation in Western European countries (somewhat later in Central

Europe as well), a different approach taken by international organizations and bodies (such as the EU and UNESCO), and also a diametric change in the lifestyles of groups forming ethnic or linguistic minorities within a given country. Today's world is characterized by easy movement and travel, changing one's place of residence in view of employment, personal development, or a relationship with an individual from a completely different parts of the country or world. The fragmentation of the group that once communicated using a minority language makes the preservation of that language on the level of direct relations and communications with other members of the group in day-to-day contacts increasingly difficult, if not impossible. The process of urbanization, the migration of people from villages to cities, alters the lifestyle from rural to urban, replacing traditional labor on one's own farm with office work or other types of employment characteristic of city life – and all of this means that representatives of a minority culture increasingly use the dominant language in their daily lines, the language of the majority in urban areas. The dominant language is also a language more appropriately matched to the new lifestyle, adopted from the dominant culture.

It is easy to notice that minority languages are occupying less and less space in home life, family life, and private life. Yet although they are increasingly rarely the languages of socialization for children, who no longer acquire them at home, they are nevertheless taught in schools. These languages also have their place in the media, including – or perhaps especially – in the new forms of media. The shift from forms of media which only served to transmit content to types of media in which people can engage in mutual communication has consequences for the community as well as for the quality and form of the language they use. On the Internet, as we have noted, minority languages have found such a niche in oral form (Internet radio, TV), passive written form (increasing numbers of bilingual websites or sites written solely in the minority language), or active written form (blogs, forums, etc.). Such multiplicity of uses, in turn, facilitates the development of the minority language, enabling it to take better root in the world and to spread. "On an internal level, the media are responsible for the development of specific oral and written genres, as well as the corresponding discursive, grammatical and lexical forms". (Martí et al. 2005: 175). Those who want to communicate in a minority language over the Internet must/should know the language not only orally, but also be able to read

and sometimes write the language. For many of Europe's minority languages, which for centuries were uncodified or were not taught in schools, this is something wholly and qualitatively new.

Moreover, minority languages are increasingly being protected by legislation on the national and/or European level and having significant funding allocated to their protection. Language commissions or councils are established and tasked with developing adequate vocabulary (e.g. necessary for the functioning of these languages in a modern context, on television and radio, in schools); there are programs to promote the presence of these languages in public life. More literature is now being produced in minority languages than ever before, newspapers and periodicals are being published entirely or partially in such languages. Sometimes such a surplus of materials intended for a small audience, sometimes even a group which utilizes its language only to a vestigial extent, is surprising and even fails to be understood by the majority. However, each such gazette or book may contribute to a change in attitude towards the minority language, and may perhaps offer the only occasion to have contact with it.

The attitude of the minority communities themselves to the issue of protecting their languages is changing, although only a few individuals engage themselves directly in related efforts. Even when a minority language is not used within a whole community, there arise certain enclaves in which speaking the minority language brings prestige and is a source of pride. These may be social groups comprised of individuals who became familiar with one another for instance while participating in promotional activities within minority groups, and found motivation to use the language. Frequently these are groups of cultural activists who consider it a duty to speak in the minority language. Increasingly there are also sometimes social networks which combine an interest in minority languages, a desire to learn a specific language, and a need to find partners in developing a community that they could not form in the real world. Members of such groups mobilize one another, giving each other encouragement and friendship, forming a completely different kind of minority community: a community based on virtual contact. However, their impact is increasingly extending beyond the virtual world. Efforts made by minority groups and the new type of needs they give rise to are nowadays making knowledge of a minority language a factor being increasingly considered in job hiring or promotion.

The future of endangered languages in large part comes down to the question of what impact modern forms of media will exert on their ability to survive. Media access enables people to use a minority language even when they have moved away from the region inhabited by the minority (listening to the radio, watching television, or reading newspapers online). New forms of media also provide previously unknown opportunities to practice and hone language skills via online contacts with other language users, through discussion forums and chat rooms. Often the minority language is used in the new media in trace amounts, in the form of interjections, individual expressions, and screennames, yet even such use serves as a clear signal of cultural identity to others. The Internet finally creates a chance for everyone to participate in events relates to the minority culture: making it possible to listen to the radio or watch television in the minority language from any place on the globe. It also changes people's attitudes toward such languages. For a long time minority languages were exclusively encapsulated in discourse of ethnologists and linguists – which pigeonholed them as collections of artifacts or sources of grammatical curiosities but cut them off nearly completely from the existing pursuit of modern, daily life. The dominance of such an approach has meant that minority languages are still perceived more in terms of the past, rather than as an active factor shaping the community's future. As Laura Buszard-Welcher has written, "for endangered languages, the commotion raised by a cool site can have the important function of increasing the language's prestige (especially among younger people) and its domains of use." (Buszard-Welcher 2001: 337). Presence and use in the new media alters people's attitudes towards minority languages, triggering a change in their image. It does indeed appear that the new media will continue to offer more and more opportunities and chances to use minority languages from year to year.

However, the very existence of minority languages in new forms of media, in schooling, or in official life already alters the character of these languages, and together with them the essence of the minority culture. Leanne Hinton admits that "people who wish to revitalize their language because of a desire to return to traditional culture and values must be aware that language revitalization does not automatically bring people back to these traditional modes of thought. If the language is learned solely in school, than it is school culture and school values that are learned along with it.

Even when a conscious effort is made to teach traditional culture and values, the schoolroom agenda imposes its own culture on the students". (Hinton 2001: 182). Analysis of cultures that have been studied indicates that minority languages frequently become introduced into the system of education or the media at a moment when their transmission has already become weakened. And so for many children learning the minority language it is no longer a basic tool of daily communication, but rather a "foreign" language. A language related to the life of a traditional community is not able to fully function in the modern world. Minority languages therefore become subject to targeted efforts. New words are coined to describe phenomena related to the modern world and a standard version of the language develops, which is not so much the outcome of usage adopted by the community as a form imposed from the top down, to serve the needs of the new way in which they languages are functioning. Minority languages like Kashubian are taken out of their natural context of use and cleansed of borrowings from the official languages, which is meant to preserve them in "pure" form. The richness of linguistic variations, which also reflect historical processes related to population migrations, dialectical forms, and uses characteristic for the lives of people in small communities, therefore becomes eliminated. The impact of this trend can be sensed in statements made by individuals for whom the minority language was their first language: they do not accept the progressive changes and consider the form of the minority language used in schools and the media to be artificial, foreign, and incomprehensible. That gives rise to two important consequences. Firstly, it is challenging for the minority language so construed to gain the acceptance of society, for the new words, terms, and phrases to enter common usage. Secondly, this language will presumably never be a first language, a language of daily life, for anyone (at least for the time being). For it to be able to function at all, it needs to find cultural niches in which it can be used. But there, too, it will exist as a kind of supplement, a symbol, an enhancement of communication in the dominant language, not as a comprehensive, only, most important language.

This language cannot, for obvious reasons, be treated as the most important mark of an ethnic group's distinctness. It is not directly linked to its character, customs, or cultural models. It constitutes a kind of translation from the majority language. The majority language must, after all, describe phenomena with which

representatives of minority cultures are familiar from their experiences in the world of the majority, from their daily lives which do not differ significantly from the lives of others around them. Representatives of minority cultures are not satisfied to listen to their language being used exclusively in the context of traditional folk culture, which is not the culture in which they were raised and live in, even though it may represent some important reference point for them. If a minority language is to stand a chance of revitalization, therefore, it has to be used as a language for communicating things and events which belong to the modern world – akin to how belonging to a minority culture in today's world represents a kind of supplement to normal, ordinary life within the world of the dominant culture.

Looking from this perspective – remaining conscious of the fact that minority languages will not function in the future as they did in the past – we should conclude that the modern world, and the modern media in specific, do offer minority languages great chances for survival. However, we cannot expect a miracle to happen automatically: minority languages will not once again become a basic means of a group-internal communication. But they can successfully find cultural niches where they will be used, and users who will consider it important to speak or write them in concrete situations. That is why it seems that minority languages will not disappear completely: they will be taught in schools and on courses, literature will be written in them, they will serve as languages of artistic expression and above all as languages of the new forms of media. By the same token, they will become a kind of glue binding together virtual communities and real people for whom using the minority language is a source of prestige, distinction, a distinctive sign. Despite their dominant symbolic function, they may retain a communicative function precisely owing to their existence in modern forms of media, in the schooling system, and other possible domains. As a result, by finding cultural niches for themselves, minority languages will stand a chance of surviving in the modern world.

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Kokkuvõte. Nicole Dołowy-Rybińska. Kašuubi keel ja kaasaegsed meediavahendid – uus ellujäämisvõimalus ohustatud keelte jaoks. Kaudne suhtlemine läbi erinevate meediavormide on kaasaegses maailmas kahtlemata domineeriv. See kehtib eriti olukorras, kus vähemuskeel ei ole enam antud kogukonna kõige tähtsam kommunikatsioonivahend, st kui kõige vahetum kontakt teatud rahvusvähemuse esindajate vahel toimub dominantkeeles. Kui vähemuskeelt ei ole seetõttu võimalik kasutada otseses suhtluses, siis hakatakse seda veelgi enam kasutama mitteotseses suhtluses. Kaasaegses maailmas pakub massimeedia võimalust, kus vähemuskeel võib leida oma loomupärase niši. Viimase 20 aasta jooksul on kašuubi keele olukord muutunud. Keeruline, kuid mitte veel lõppenud standardiseerumisprotsess, normeerimine ja kirjakeele propageerimine on võimaldanud kasutada kašuubi keelt koolis, kirjanduses ja meedias. Tänu nendele uutele niššidele ei ole mitte ainult keele iseloom muutunud, vaid esile on kerkinud ka uued kultuurivaldkonnad, kus keelt kasutatakse, ja rühmad, kes kasutavad samuti rohkem kašuubi keelt.

Märksõnad: kašuubi keel, massimeedia, vahendatud suhtlus, keelelised ja kultuurilised nišid