

**"WALKING THE LINE":  
BILINGUAL SORBS, EMOTIONS, AND ENDANGERMENT IN EASTERN GERMANY**

**BY**

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**DISSERTATION**

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# ABSTRACT

As an anthropological study of language and emotions, this dissertation explores the local practices of the bilingual Sorbs, an endangered language community in eastern Germany near the Czech border. In the broadest terms, *“Walking the Line”: Bilingual Sorbs, Emotions and Endangerment in Eastern Germany*, is a story of survival and innovation through a focus on language variation in a situation of asymmetric bilingualism. By focusing on the dynamics of linguistic vitality, my arguments offer an alternative to classic discussions of code-switching. The significant contribution of this work is a detailed analysis of what Sorbs call “mish-mash.” Sorbs create mish mash through a range of practices not only alternating between German and Sorbian resources but also drawing on other notions of language use including modern and old referents, authoritative and expert skill-related markers, written and spoken markers, and linguistic items that index urban and rural scenes. In developing an account of the ways Sorbs alternate between linguistic resources, I emphasize heterogeneity and the interrelationships between emotions, identities, and linguistic choices through an emphasis on register variation.

Three main themes guide my analysis of data related to an electronic dictionary project (Sorb, German, and English) and ethnography cum translation, a methodological intervention that centers on gathering translations. In addressing identity, I demonstrate the Sorbs experience their notions of selfhood as both bilingual and monolingual while describing themselves as Sorbs and Germans. Thus, I investigate questions related to Sorbian selfhoods. Temporality centers on Sorbian notions of linguistic competency as they relate to their language acquisition and education. Sorbian ideas of competence also entail local notions of purity and “correctness” while coinciding with enactments of linguistic authority and expertise. Finally, I investigate standard language ideology, a key site to consider multiple allegiances to

more than one linguistic standard, by analyzing borrowings. With multiple linguistic loyalties, I ask why Sorbs make certain linguistic choices and experience tensions among standards. These three theoretical inquiries allow me to advance a new lens to consider bilingual practices as semi-standardized. Using a mixed methods analysis of Sorbian translations of Munro Leaf's *The Story of Ferdinand*, I expose how Sorbs mix registers as they create written mirror of mish-mash.

As an ethnographic tale of affect, this dissertation provides evidence of the ways Sorbs walk their line by maintaining emotional and linguistic balance. Building on a nuanced understanding of multiple emotional discourses, I argue that stances like anger, shame, ambiguity, and satisfaction entail a variety of linguistic and cultural practices. By avoiding a simple explanation of ways that emotions affect Sorbian individuals, I bridge a local study of an endangered language community with broader concerns: how people experience political change; what do they do with bilingual resources; and why individuals maintain multiple notions of selfhood. Thus, my dissertation findings expose a narrative of survival in the face of endangerment that transcends a Slavic community in Saxony. By scrutinizing with greater precision language variation and the minute details of language and emotion as social action, my work interconnects these three questions through rigorous theorization about globalization and endangerment. This dissertation offers direction for those who would take such questions in these arenas further.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrative Materials .....	vi
Chapter One: An Imaging and Imagining of Bilingual Sorbs in <i>Łužica</i> /Lusatia/ <u>Lausitz</u> .....	1
Chapter Two: A History of Endangerment in Eastern Germany.....	33
Chapter Three: A Lived Linguistic Politics .....	62
Chapter Four: The Emergence of a Research Strategy .....	103
Chapter Five: “ <i>To je wšojedne</i> (It Doesn’t Matter)”: Emotions and Endangerment in Bilingual Lusatia .....	140
Chapter Six: The Intricacies of Bilingual Mish-Mash .....	167
Chapter Seven: Variation and Virtuosity from Theoretical Perspectives .....	199
Chapter Eight: The Stories within <i>The Story of Ferdinand</i> : An Ethnography cum Translation in Bilingual Lusatia .....	223
Chapter Nine: Mish-mash across Sorbian <i>Ferdinands</i> .....	253
Chapter Ten: A Personal and Professional Statement.....	289
Appendix A: Institutional Map.....	322
Appendix B: Funding Allocations .....	323
Appendix C: Map of Sorbian Spaces in Bautzen ( <i>Budyšin</i> ) .....	324
Appendix D: <i>Ferdinand</i> Text.....	325
Bibliography .....	330

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIALS

## **TABLE OF IMAGES**

Image 1: Sorbs as Objectified Folk.....	1
Image 2: Anthropologist as Insider and Outsider .....	2
Image 3: Village Protest .....	3
Image 4: Opening Procession of a Sorbian Parade.....	4
Image 5: Sorbian Dancers in Crostwitz .....	4
Image 6: Festival Attendees.....	5
Image 7: <i>Serbski Dom</i> (House of Sorbs).....	6
Image 8: Sorbian Women in the Fields.....	7
Image 9: A “Pure” Sorb Speaking on a Cell Phone.....	8
Image 10: Participants in the Summer School for Sorbian Language and Culture.....	8
Image 11: A Conversation between a German Director and a Sorbian Actor.....	9
Image 12: Sorbian Bible .....	11
Image 13: Campaign Poster .....	12
Image 14: Sorbian Protestors .....	13
Image 15: Traditional Sorbian Elder .....	14
Image 16: German Well-Being.....	16
Image 17: A Sorbian Woman and an Anthropologist Painting Easter Eggs.....	17
Image 18: “Empty” Sorbian Village.....	18
Image 19: Easter Riders .....	21
Image 20: Bautzen’s Yellow Misery .....	22
Image 21: Silent Protesto.....	23
Image 22: Ferdinand .....	24
Image 23: Learning Mish-mash.....	25
Image 24: Mish-mash in Miłocicy .....	26
Image 25: A Map of Sorbian Villages Paired with Images of Sorbian National Dress .....	28
Image 26: A Sorbian Translator in Smolar’s Bookstore .....	29

## **TABLE OF TABLES**

Table 2.1: Situated Statistics of the Sorbian Community .....	52
Table 6.1: A Representative Table of Diverse Standards.....	188
Table 9.1: Coding and Categories .....	254
Table 9.2: Spoken and Written Frictions .....	256
Table 9.3: Authoritative and Expert Frictions.....	257
Table 9.4: Modern and Old Frictions .....	258
Table 9.5: Village and Urban Frictions .....	259
Table 9.6: German and Sorbian Frictions .....	261
Table 9.7: Alternation Range .....	269
Table 9.8: Alternations between Written/Spoken and Sorb/German Markers .....	269
Table 9.9: Alternations between Written/Spoken and Modern/Old Markers.....	269
Table 9.10: Alternations between Urban/Village and Sorbian/German Markers.....	270
Table 9.11: Comparison between Budyšin Register Allegiance and Sorbian/German Alternation .....	270
Table 9.12: Comparison between Budyšin Register Allegiance and Modern/Old Alternation..	270
Table 9.13: Verbs Associated with “Smelling the Flowers” .....	275
Table 9.14: Carolyn’s Frictions in “Smelling the Flowers” .....	276
Table 9.15: Tiffany’s Frictions in “Smelling the Flowers” .....	278
Table 9.16: Mark’s Frictions in “Smelling the Flowers” .....	280
Table 9.17: Interpretations of “Spanish Ladies” .....	281
Table 9.18: Frictions in “Spanish Ladies” .....	282

## **TABLE OF GRAPHS**

Graph 3.1: Distribution of Funds .....	88
Graph 8.1: Demographics of Translators: Age, Education, and Gender.....	229
Graph 9.1 Ungrouped Markers in Carolyn’s <i>Ferdinand</i> .....	263
Graph 9.2: Grouped Markers in Carolyn’s <i>Ferdinand</i> .....	263
Graph 9.3: Alternation between Grouped Markers in Carolyn’s <i>Ferdinand</i> .....	264
Graph 9.4: Percentage Use of the Budyšin Register in 11 out of 27 Sorbian <i>Ferdinands</i> .....	265

Graph 9.5: Alternation between Registers .....	268
Graph 9.6: Alternations across Sorbian <i>Ferdinands</i> : Examples from 11 out of 27 Translations.....	272
Graph 9.7: Frictions in Carolyn's <i>Ferdinand</i> .....	276
Graph 9.8: Frictions in Tiffany's <i>Ferdinand</i> .....	278
Graph 9.9: Frictions in Mark's <i>Ferdinand</i> .....	279

## **TABLE OF FIGURES**

Figure 3.1: Institutional Map .....	87
Figure 4.1: Lusatian Map.....	108
Figure 6.1: Mapping of Semi-standardized Practices .....	191
Figure 7.1: Interaction between Registers.....	208



# CHAPTER ONE

## An Imaging and Imagining of Bilingual Sorbs in *Łužica/Lusatia/Lausitz*

When people ask me about my research with the bilingual Sorbs, a national minority in Germany whose members speak an endangered language, I answer with a broad description of my project by saying that I explore the intersections between language and emotions through an anthropological lens. In this dissertation, I offer an alternative ethnography of emotions not simply by describing different affective discourses but by analyzing the movement of intellectual concepts, widely accepted views of language and language use, and a philosophical inquiry into the meaning of “happiness.” In this introduction, I present a pictorial essay in order to visually contextualize my research and arguments. In order to communicate the mixed messages about languages, identities, and language use, I alternate between the contemporary and historical images that affect Sorbs, Germans, and other individual unfamiliar with a community who settled in Germany around 600 A.D.

In using imaginings and images in this introduction, I follow in the footsteps of Bronislaw Malinowski when he asked the reader to “imagine yourself suddenly set down surrounded by all your gear...imagine yourself then, making your first entry into the village (Malinowski 1932:



*Image 1: Sorbs as Objectified Folk*

*At An octogenarian birthday celebration for Kristina's grandmother, Kristina and I had discussed her mixed emotions about tourists wanting to photograph her grandmother wearing the traditional dress without permission.*

4).” I have several goals in mind in putting this montage together. One goal involves the mixed messages that Sorbs hear about Sorbian identities—often contributing to mixed emotions. For example, one image is of older women wearing traditional dress (see Image 1), but who do not want to be photographed, because it is invasive and disrespectful to their rights. For them, like Kristina’s grandmother, their traditional dress is everyday clothing and not something for a tourist to capture with a possible intention of objectifying a folk culture. In contrast, in Image 2, I am in a photograph with my in-laws, Sorbs who in no way appear distinctive with respect to their dress. These images represent dialectic between how Sorbs imagine themselves and are imagined. Furthermore, these imaginings capture the ironic imaginings that non-Sorbs and Germans may think about Slavic Volk in Germany.

My second goal is to bring attention to historical and contemporary discourses of silencing as a prelude to a discussion of politics of indistinction (see Chapter 3) and choices that sorbs make to separate both physically and linguistically from the Sorbian community. I use two interrelated discussions to offer a broader view of the Sorbian setting. Through a consideration of the contemporary emotional climate of unhappiness, I argue that feelings of not belonging contribute to migration away from the Sorbian community. Migration, right now, is a current Sorbian concern as an insidious factor in cultural and linguistic erosion. Yet, many academic discussions of globalization focus on movement of people away from the places they were



*Image 2: Anthropologist as Insider and Outsider*

*I am standing between two Sorbian women, cousins of Nano, my father-in-law (in the blue and white coat), before the Easter riders rode through the village of Miłočicy, where I conducted research.*

born. My questions in this dissertation are primarily about the conditions of life for Sorbs in Lusatia as well as their linguistic practices. Yet, I recognize the salience of migration with regard to my interest in what Sorbs experience in Germany.

By focusing on the survival of the Sorbian community in eastern Germany, my research balances an emphasis on linguistic data with rigorous attention to the socio-cultural aspects of

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*Image 3: Village Protest (Sign Translations: Top- Panschwitzers are also with [them]. Bottom- The Sorbian language lives.)*

*During the summer (2005), Kristina told me about a Sorbian protest in the village. One of her mother's coworkers was dismissed speaking Sorb at work. The protestors, mainly Sorbian youth, gathered together to voice their concerns without speaking. In a surprising decision, this silent protest spoke volumes about Sorbian feelings about language use.*

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bilingual lives. With sensitivity to the social life of ideologies, my research reflects a heightened awareness of bilingual practices and an ability to

respond to methodological challenges. As the title suggests, *“Walking the Line”: Bilingual Sorbs, Emotions, and Endangerment in Eastern Germany,*” this work focuses on bilingual practices as a navigation of linguistic resources. Each chapter traces relevant affective discourses and their role in social relations including shame, experiences of ambiguity and anger, and the complexities of linguistic well-being. Reflecting classic and contemporary concerns, my research breaks new ground and stays true to an anthropological interest in the intersections between local practices and globalizing/nationalizing processes.

As shown in the image 3, Sorbs often have sufficient grounds to “speak” out against linguistic discrimination. With a long history of Sorbs experiencing linguistic prejudice— the

Sorbian language use was first banned in 1293 A.D., forbidden again in 1327 A.D., and outlawed in 1937 during the Third Reich—Sorbs feel historical and contemporary passions for their linguistic rights as a national minority, a “Nation ohne Staat (nation without a state)” (Zwahr 2003), and group of people who should be able to speak the Sorbian language at work, in business, in schools, at public events, and in private interactions.

In this photograph of the opening parade for the International Folklore Festival (IFF) (2007) in Bautzen, two Sorbian women in traditional dress are carrying a sign that is decorated with national flags of the festival participants. Some bystanders are watching with interest and



*Image 4: Opening Procession (IFF)*

another (see Image 4) is watching me the anthropologist taking the picture. Both the Sorbian parade participants and I are objects of curiosity. When I spoke to other Germans about my being in Germany, they responded telling me that they have never heard of the Sorbs and asked me if the Sorbs spoke “Plattdeutsch,” a non-standardized, often deprecated (by some Germans), Northern German language variety (Low German). This equivocation of bilingual Sorbs with speakers of Plattdeutsch signals a deprecatory view held by many Germans of speakers of

another (see Image 4) is watching me the anthropologist taking the picture. Both the Sorbian parade participants and I are objects of curiosity. When I spoke to other Germans about my being in Germany, they responded telling me that they have



*Image 5: Sorbian dancers in Crostwitz*

alternative German language varieties. In the current moment, derogatory views of non-standardized German language users now includes “Ausländer(foreigner)” and “Gastarbeiter(guest workers)” (Dailey-O’Cain 2000; Mandel 1994). Yet, Sorbian experiences of linguistic and political prejudice demonstrate that Sorbs have historically been considered “other” as representatives of a “Slavic island in a German sea” (Páta 1932).

The sign, with its flags and the name of the festival, “Internationales Folklorefestival” point to two discourses about Sorbian identities and indirectly engage a rhetoric about language use (see Image 4). The sign refers to national identities through a globalizing



*Image 6: Festival Attendees*

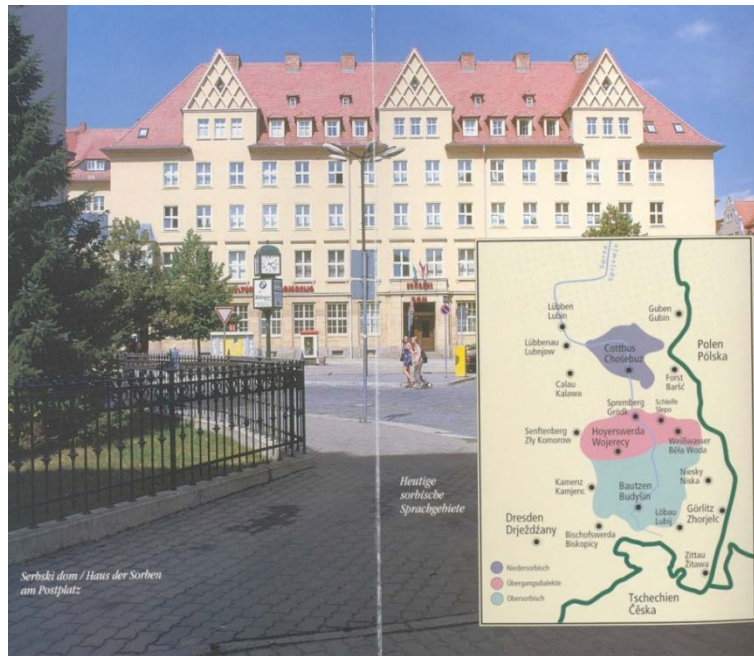
perspective in the images of multiple national flags and the word “international” (see Image 4). Yet, in the photograph language fades into the background as it does on the street. During my 22 months of research that included attending the biannual International Folklore Festival twice, I noticed relatively few bilingual Sorbs watching the procession. Their absence results in very little language use at this particular event. Rather, Sorbs

attend activities in Crostwitz, a centrally located village in what Sorbs consider the Sorbian heartland. Their reasons for not attending the parade and sometimes even not going to the three day long activities that include performances by many folkdance groups (see Image 5), the temporarily erected gathering space where attendees and participants purchase food and drink (see Image 6), the Sorbian mass on the final day, and the open-air market are indicative of the power of emotions in the Sorbian politics, social relations, and linguistic praxis.



## A Brief Summary of the Sorbian Communities

The bilingual/multidialectal Sorbian community settled in *Łužica/Lausitz/Lusatia* in the sixth century, which is considered the Sorbian homeland. Today, this area is contemporary



*Image 7: Serbski Dom (House of Sorbs)*

*Serbski Dom is an impressive building that symbolizes Sorbian national consciousness and current political tensions. Center caption: Current Sorbian-speaking area (blue area is Upper Sorb, grey area is Lower Sorb, and pale pink is patois dialect area). The total Sorbian territory is about 60 miles long and 40 miles wide. I worked with members of the Upper Sorbian community.*

Saxony and Brandenburg bordered by Poland to the east and the Czech Republic to the south (see Image 7). The original Slavic tribes known as the *Łužici* (the present-day Lower Sorbian dialect [LS] and the *Milčeni* (the present-day Upper Sorbian dialect [US]) occupied Upper and Lower Lusatia as part of Wendish movement into the eastern area of Europe. The Sorbian

community developed two distinct dialects, which follow the early settlement. In northern Lusatia (Brandenburg), the Lower Sorbian *dolnoserbsko* (Niedersorbisch) dialect community experienced greater linguistic oppression than the Upper Sorbian *hornjoserbsko* (Obersorbisch) community faced in Saxony. Another discourse of difference that affects Sorbian social relations from a broader perspective involves religious affiliation. While Lower Sorbian speakers are Protestant (Evangelisch), the Catholic Upper Sorbian community represents the most significant part of the Sorbian community today. During my fieldwork, Sorbs held different ideas about these language varieties—some believing that the two codes represent distinct languages. The historical division of the community reverberates with current conditions in which the Lower Sorbian community is experiencing a greater threat to the survival of their dialect.

The not readily visible dynamics entail ideas about Sorbian language use and identities that Sorbs associate with village and urban scenes. When I asked Sorbs to imagine their past, they often responded that Sorbs were farmers (see Image 8), and not representatives of a bourgeois culture associated with the leaders of national movement of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century; e.g. Jan Arnošt Smoler or Handrij Zejler.

Discourses of rural-urban difference represent an important component of Sorbian notions of “traditional” identities. Traditional identities reflect Sorbian attachments to an agrarian, or in the Spreewald, a riparian landscape, ideas about Sorbian ethnicity, and what Dorothy Holland and colleagues (1989) call “figured

*Image 8: Sorbian Women in the Fields (Panschwitz-Kuckau Cloister).*



Landarbeiterinnen des Klosters Panschwitz-Kuckau bei der Grumtarbeit, 1961

worlds.” In their arguments, figured worlds inherently involve a plurality of social and linguistic worlds in which subjects “fashion senses of self—that is develop identities” (Holland et al. 1998: 60). I take their arguments to my understanding of fields of linguistic practices in which social realities are mediated by relations of power, emotions, and ideas about language use. Thus, in



*Image 9: Participants in the Summer School for Sorbian Language and Culture*

their persona and landscape, bilingual Sorbs experience a range of linguistic practices and social action that range from silencing, as Holland and colleagues borrow from Pierre Bourdieu, to finding a voice that expresses both their own agency and the constraints that they experience. Even the etymological roots of the Sorbian word for “German”— “*Němska*” ironically echoes with the discourses of silencing in that the Sorbian word means “those who cannot hear.”

From a linguistic perspective, Sorbs currently associate images of a “pure” Sorb as growing up in a Sorbian-speaking household, going to Sorbian church services, living in a Sorbian village, marrying a Sorb, teaching their children Sorb, and taking part in Sorbian activities; e.g. singing in a Sorbian choir, wearing Sorbian traditional dress on special occasions.<sup>1</sup> Images of “pure” Sorbs (see Images 9 and 10) often coincide with ideas of modernity and progress. The young women in Image 9 are wearing “modern” shoes with heels with their traditional dress and the young woman in Image 10 is talking on a cell phone. While Sorbs acknowledge considerable latitude in inhabiting languaged worlds, it

*Image 10: A “Pure” Sorb Speaking on a Cell Phone*





also entails multiple balancing acts that they accomplish linguistically, socially, emotionally, and culturally.

As pointed out by Elka Tschernokowa, a Sorbian academic, media images of Sorbs often present them as “traditional” or “pure” and she, then, asks and offers an answer:

Why do we hear words like “pure,” “genuine,” and “old” while modern-day Sorbs are surfing the net, are on their way to the fitness centre and, right now, are watching the Football World Cup, and – of course—the wedding of Paul McCarthy in Ireland. My answer to this question...is the principle of thinking of otherness as counter-reality (Tschernokoshewa 2004: 229).<sup>2</sup>

Throughout her article, Tschernokowa attacks an “either-or” model of Western thinking (see also Chapter 4) that reinforces a one language-one culture-one nation ideology.<sup>3</sup> This dichotomous way of viewing others produces two results, in her analysis of the German media—either essentializing or ignoring differences. In response to these media discourses, she



*Image 11: A Conversation between the German Director and a Sorbian Actor*

*These two men, the director on the left and the lead actor on the right, discussed language use and his acting techniques in a Sorbian play (see Chapters 3 and 4).*

offers a third alternative: hybridity. Her arguments resonate with similar positions of Sorbian intellectuals that “difference is taken seriously but it is not presented as something absolute. It is something that can be crossed” (Tschernokoshewa 2004: 237). To apply her arguments to linguistic practices engages my concept of languaged worlds and walking the line between them.

In contrast, imaginings of “impurity” or difference are more problematic for Sorbs to define when considering language use (see also Cameron 1995). Linguistic purity does not entail avoidance of German resources or not accommodating German speakers. Rather, it entails subtle negotiations of language use associated with education, expertise, and the literary language. These associations, I argue, are balanced by markers of authentic spoken speech, words that Sorbs consider older and village talk. For many Sorbs, like the actor in Image 11 and Elizabeth in *Microcosm 1*, this process of balancing exemplifies what many Sorbs call mish-mash. As an everyday use of Sorbian and German resources, mish-mash entails myriad enactments of linguistic diversity. Yet, bilingual Sorbs make varied distinctions that are not just ideas about “Sorbian” and “German” language use.

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*Microcosm 1: Being bilingual is like walking...if you try to stand on one foot you would just fall over- Elizabeth, a Sorbian woman.*

*During an interview Elizabeth described bilingualism and her image inspired the dissertation's title.*

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Indeed, I intend to chip away at several false dichotomies using theoretical tools, ethnographic data, and empirical findings. From a more general perspective, my dissertation findings utilize a tripartite framework of language, emotions, and nationalizing and/or globalizing process. Primarily, I work at eroding an interlingual, or in my work Sorbian-German oppositions, and replace these dichotomies with complementarity. Another dichotomy that I challenge is a rural-urban divide by looking at the mixing of the registers associated with these spaces. With this theoretical orientation, I deconstruct notions of modern versus not modern, expertise versus authority, urban versus village language use, and written and spoken utterances.

My research demonstrates that other dynamics play a significant role in the ways Sorbs use Sorbian resources and fashion their selves. For example, Sorbian understanding of written and spoken language use also impacts Sorbian linguistic practices. Notions of a historical literary language often overlap with standard language ideologies in that written modalities may be considered modern by some Sorbs. Thus, some aspects of the Sorbian language use in a Bible (see Image 12) may be imagined as more like newer varieties of the Sorbian language. In contrast, some Sorbs may consider more recent spoken uses as representative of older Sorbian language use. With the first book published in 1574, a hymnal with catechism, the Sorbian language community is a group of people with established literacy practices. As a situation of asymmetric bilingualism, the Sorbian community maintains stability through flexibility and adaptability in their linguistic practices, navigations of social relations, and a constellation of emotional discourses.



Erste vollständige obersorbische Bibel aus dem Jahr 1728  
(Sorbische Zentralbibliothek im Sorbischen Institut, Bautzen)

#### Image 12: Sorbian Bible

*Caption: The first complete Upper Sorbian bible translation from the year 1728. (Sorbian Library in the Sorbian Institute, Bautzen)*

## **Broader Contexts: Germany, the EU, and Post-socialist States**

National discussions, dilemmas and goals transform traveling words [and emotional discourses are] in motion [and] once again point us toward the instability not just of words [and emotions] but also of political projects with which they are associated...here are tentative moments in processes of changing nations, states, and societies; they shift with public debates, intellectual innovations, and institutional change (Tsing 2009: 15)

Immediately following the collapse of Berlin Wall (1989), ethnographies of transition that addressed this massive ideological shift characterized anthropological work in the post-



*Image 13: Campaign Poster*

*In the foreground, a picture of Sorbian Easter eggs, a marker of traditional folk art.  
Translation: Not just a folklore, we are also a people.  
(Subheading) Protect Minorities PDS.*

socialist successor states. In many of these contexts, emotions, especially nostalgia and insecurity, were transformed. The image of Sorbian eggs in the campaign poster hints at the emotions that Sorbs experience when they are conceptualized as “only a folklore” and resonates with Wende discourses (see Image 13). Now, enlargement of the European Union (EU), that integrates Slavic nation-states (Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia) interests intellectual inquiry and policy makers because of a resurgence of national pride (see Image 13). However emotions, albeit not always directly addressed, remain an important thread in both EU and post-socialist foci.

Through the lens of language as social action, my research focuses on the intersection between emotions and anthropology (Abu-Lughod 1986; Besnier 1995; Herzfeld 1997; Lutz 1988; Svašek 2006; Wilce 2009b) via nationalizing and globalizing discourses (Bellier and Wilson 2000; Borneman 1991; Goddard, Llobera, and Shore

1994; Shore 2000; Wright 2000). As an EU and post-socialist scholar, I take heed of developing discussions on language rights, nationalism, and multilingualism (Arzoz 2008; Creech 2005; Duchêne 2008; Glaser 2007; Kraus 2008; Mar-Molinero and Stevenson 2006; Nic Craith 2006; Nic Shuibhne 2002; O'Reilly 2001).<sup>4</sup> However, many of these explorations focus on two points—emotions, language/linguistic practices and/or nationalism—rather than the myriad intersections. Macro-micro intersections such as this one I explore in my research are an important cornerstone of linguistic anthropology. My research focus on the survival of the Sorbian community in eastern Germany not only offers insights into linguistic practices, but also bridges an interest in post-socialist contexts with discussions of globalization.

As pointed out by Maruška Svašek (2005), rapid political and economic changes coincide with an array of emotions ranging from hope and desire to disillusionment, anger, and mistrust. In Germany, reunification coincides with localized sentiments of “ostalgie or nostalgia” (Berdahl 1999), which reveal another side to post-socialist desires. Bilingual Sorbs experience these emotions as a “deep-lying

dialogue of languages” (Bakhtin 1981: 365). Political and institutional support as a form of “benign neglect” and part of democratic deficit reinforces the structures of inequality. In the Sorbian context, hegemonic discourses give greater value to German linguistic practices. In



*Image 14: Sorbian Protestors*

*Carrying the Sorbian national flag, the protestors took advantage of an opportunity to fight for their language. The protest contrasts strongly with the everyday battles that Sorbs face in which their rights are protected by Saxon law.*

other post-socialist discussions, changes in national boundaries coincide with new language policies, decreased funding for minority languages, and linguistic standardization (Bermel 2007; Bilaniuk 2005; Csargo 2007). Thus my project, “deal[s] with the life and behavior of discourse [and emotions] in a contradictory and multi-Languaged world (Bakhtin 1981: 275).

Taking a distinctly linguistic stance, Graham Jackman argues that “the Wende was in some respects above all a linguistic event” (Jackman 2000: 9). In the “autumn of discontent” in 1989 growing unrest in the Germany foreshadowed the challenges of linguistic unification of the east and west German speech communities. Even though linguistic differences between Ossis (east Germans) and Wessis (west Germans) may have lessened, regional identification and discourses of difference still permeate German and Sorbian language attitudes. Thus, Jan Blommaert’s historical perspective applies to a Sorbian linguistic narrative in that...

the story of language must not be an abstract *histoire d’idees* in which developments are narrated as sequences of phases...Rather it should be a story of different, conflicting, disharmonious practices performed by identifiable actors, in very specific ways, and by means of very specific instruments (Blommaert 1999: 426).

However, these insightful discussions minimize the significance of emotional discourses. My dissertation sheds light on socio-linguistic choices in endangered communities and language variation by exposing other factors that matter when considering the

*Image 15: Traditional Sorbian Elder*

*Caption: A married woman in traditional Schleife costume giving [her] godchildren presents to the girls who are also dressed in the “narodni drasta (national costume).” Some Sorbs recommended that I conduct my research in Słěpo (Schleife), a place they imagined as representative of traditional Sorbian culture.*



linguistic survival of a post-socialist/EU national minority. Although my findings represent a thoroughness that Malinowski calls for in ethnographic story of language, it is not an investigation of traditional cultures as portrayed in Image 15 or even that I was directed to by Sorbian academics.

## German Emotional States

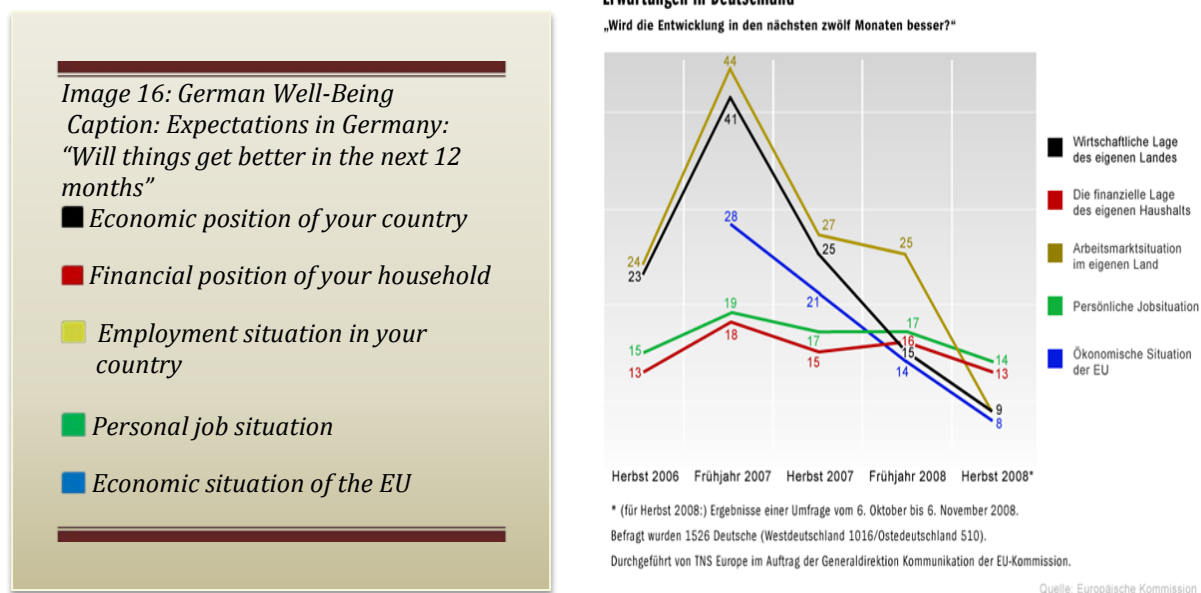
Before I focus more specifically on the Sorbian community in the following chapters, I describe here some of the broader dynamics in Germany through the lens of emotional discourses. In a broader contextualization of the Sorbian community, I will also address the linguistic discourses of difference between what was the Deutsche Demokratisches Republik (DDR) or German Democratic Republic (GDR, 1949-1990) and now is Bundesrepublik Deutschland (BRD) or Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).

Recent studies of happiness have focused on intersections of health and wealth through a nationalizing lens by addressing some basic questions. For example, the Easterlin paradox investigates links between economic development and average level of happiness (Stevenson and Wolfers 2008). Similarly, the Eurobarometer study, “Deutsche pessimistischer als andere EU-Bürger (Are Germans more pessimistic than other EU citizens),” illustrates a broader supranational interest in “happiness” (Gathman 2009). These intellectual and popular interpretations of subjective well-being expose an underlying concern of EU policy makers and bureaucrats, “Are people, and more specifically Germans, happy?” From these studies, the general climate in Germany could be construed as less happy than one might expect. During my fieldwork, I had to confront this possibility and often wondered why bilingual Sorbs and Germans told me,



“Ich hab[e] zuviel Stress (I have too much stress).” This type of statement acknowledges obstacles to Sorbian well-being and relates to a broader German contemporary mood and discussions of well-being.

Although recent surveys rank Germany as 35th with regard to relative life satisfaction vs. economic capital, other indicators point to general feelings of discontent (Wikipedia N.d.). In 2009, Germany crossed a threshold of more Germans leaving Germany than returning to their homeland (Neil 2011). Popular programs on television: “Goodbye Deutschland: Die Auswanderer (Goodbye Germany: The Emigrant),” “Mein



Neues Leben (My New Life),” “Auf und Davon (Up and Gone),” and “Die Auswanderer (The Emigrants)” also speaks to German desires to leave Germany (Diessner 2008). Although this ever increasing rise in emigrations may not entirely reflect on the happiness of German citizens, expectation are also indicative of a general trend, in which Germans are neither happy nor optimistic with their life situations (see Image 16). While the Eurobarometer graph in Image 16 indicates economic factors, it



also shows a general growing pessimism and decreasing faith in both German and European governments (Gathman 2009). To the point that 7% of the German population is leaving Germany, the recent Eurobarometer (2008) report exemplifies another aspect of German unease relating to emotional climate in Germany. Der Spiegel reports that Germans are more pessimistic than other EU citizens and, even more surprising, only 38% of Germans believe that “things are going right” in Germany (Gathman 2009). I bring up these broader indicators to suggest that happiness, or the desire for it, is a significant emotional concern for Germans, and, in turn, for Sorbs, in the current moment.

## Mobility: German and Sorbian Movements

*Image 17: A Sorbian Woman and an Anthropologist Painting Easter Eggs*

*As we painted eggs in the SKI, I asked her why she did not live in Lusatia anymore. Like Maria, she felt too much pressure at home. In fact, her father had demanded that she come to Bautzen to paint Easter eggs, a mandate that caused her to feel resentful of family obligations.*



During my field work, I spoke with many Sorbs about leaving Lusatia. In the life histories of Sorbs from Jennifer, a woman approaching ninety, to Maria, a young adult who had recently graduated from high school, I heard narratives of displacement that directly related to physical relocation (see Image 17). In the following chapter I will attend to narratives of displacement by looking at affective discourses that led to Sorbs moving away from Sorbs (see also Baynham

and de Fina 2005). While this ethnographic research on transnationalism exposes the problems that individuals often encounter in their new environment, researchers often fail to ask specifically why someone felt motivated to leave their homeland or about how people feel about newcomers. As I have demonstrated previously, people in Germany may not be happy with their life circumstances and desire to leave. My attention to mobility exposes the dilemmas Sorbs face in Lusatia. As one of the central components of globalization research that Arjun Appadurai (1997) calls “ethnoscapes,” mobility is often disconnected from life in the homeland or place of origin. I adapt such arguments to specifically consider the ways ex-patriots or Sorbs in Lusatia experience their languaged worlds as icons of new hybridity (Koven 2004a). My attention to Sorbian ethnoscapes coincides with current Sorbian concerns with demographic loss. As more Sorbian youth move away, not necessarily because they desire a new homeland, instead they yearn to be away from the Sorbian speaking area.

For Croatians in Canada, Daphne Winland (2007) focuses on the desires that diaspora Croats feel for a new homeland and the disdain that homeland Croats feel



*Image 18: “Empty” Sorbian Village*

*We, participants in the Summer Course in Language and Culture (2004), arrived in this small village after driving its original location. The Sorbian organizer has told us that original village was destroyed by brown lignite mining and that only one Sorbian women lived there, refusing to leave his home. This man’s refusal to leave was legendary. The organizer also told us that man was taking his to the European courts because the German ones refused to hear his petition.*

toward those who “fled” their country of origin. While Winland exposes the role of affect in antagonistic social relations between homeland and transnational communities, she focuses on their new lives. Thus, Winland keeps her focus strictly on the nationalizing discourses associated with developing a Canadian national status rather than mixed emotions felt by Canadian Croats about relocation and the communities they left. My adaptation of her questions reflects a cultural concern with how things are at “home” for Sorbs, residents of the former post-socialist DDR.<sup>5</sup>

Sorbs have experienced several historical discourses of relocation and they may distance themselves in by moving away. These discourse compare, in my opinion, to the lived emotional experiences of transnationals, in that Sorbs may feel displaced, depressed, alienated, and unprotected by a nation-state. As Farida Tillbury (2007) observed with East African transnationals in Australia, feelings of hopelessness affect dislocated people and, in turn, these people may lose their optimism about the future in a new homeland (see Chapter 2). In Image 18, a newly erected Sorbian village represents an attempt to provide new homes after brown coal mining. During socialism, many villages were destroyed but replacing villages does not mean that it can replace a Sorbian space. One Sorb said, “How can this be a village?...there are no dogs or chickens and my house is not one I was born in.” Intertwined with the emotional evaluation of loss of Sorbian territory is another sentiment—one of national alienation from both German and Sorbian homelands. Many Sorbs also experience power and disenfranchisement as neither the German nation-state nor the Sorbian nation “without a state” are able to protect to Sorbian rights.

Current discourses of East/West German differences not only reinforce cultural and linguistic stereotypes but also speak to different economic conditions, EU attitudes, mobility, and historical narratives. First, a continuing economic depression after an initial flow of money from West Germany and high unemployment contributes to an internal division. For Maria (see Microcosm 2), she is a part of Sorbian demographic shift of Sorbian youth moving outside of Lusatia to find employment. Maria also feels a sense of loss and depression about her alienation from her homeland as she travels to European countries. Second, the east Germans possess a weaker sense of belonging toward the EU and feel a greater regional belonging to East Germany (Minkenberg 2005, see also Flemming and Hedetoft 2005). Third, the existence of the east German nation-state complicates a historical national trajectory, because of the creation and erasure of

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*Microcosm 2: Maria and Mobility*

*Maria, a young college-age woman, who was working in Berlin television company, and I talked our lives since we had not seen each other in eighteen months. As we sat in an elegant restaurant Maria told me about her recent job offer that would mean not moving back to Lusatia. She was unsure about taking because she might not be acting as a Sorb. Although her family supported her decision, she knew that they felt that as a Sorb she needed to return to her "homeland" where she could be with other Sorbs. However she told me about her emotional conflict that arose from a sense of Sorbian loyalty. She explained that her first trip to Italy excited her, because she anticipated belonging to a community and not feeling like an outsider. Although she grew up in a Sorbian household, she still felt a sense of displacement. Using a metaphor of a suitcase she explained her feelings. She said, "It is like having a suitcase that has too much stuff and that she could not always pack everything into the suitcase." I asked her if this was because of having German things as well, she shrugged her shoulders and said that was part of it. Although Maria responded affirmatively, her response was reserved. The guilt and pressure she felt from her family to return, to not take the job in Berlin weighed more heavily on her mind than the stresses she associated with Germans. For Jennifer, the feeling of having "too much stuff" and the difficulties she faced in deciding what to pack and what not to include in her suitcase hints at the "weightiness" of linguistic choices faced by Sorbs.*

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the east German nation-state. Living in Lusatia, the Sorbs experience a double-sided struggle for authority as marginalized Ossis and as Sorbs who call their regional homeland Łužica (Sorb) and not Lausitz (German). In the re-unified German nation-state, members of the Sorbian community feel multiple belongings and estrangements in their linguistic and socio-political contexts.

In October 1990, Sorbs stopped being citizens of “Sorbian nationality and became German citizens once again” (Barker 2000: 134). No longer socialist citizens, German reunification coincided with the emergence of an east German identity associated with the defunct socialist state and an enduring sociolinguistic rift. This perpetuating schism resonates with strong regional belongings or German feelings for their local Heimat (homeland), and memory practices dealing with the collapse of socialism (Applegate 1990; Berdahl 1999; Boym 1994, 2001; De Soto 2000; Drakulić 1993; Edson 2000; Gallinat 2006; Ten Dyk 2000; Yurchak 2006). Patrick Heady and Giesl Miller (2006) plumb a discussion of nostalgia to connect emotions with economic activities. Yet, as Alaina Lemon asks, “what ELSE does nostalgia point to besides a relation to memory or to the past” (Lemon 2006: 218), or to a “wall in the head,” to borrow from Berdahl (1999). Furthermore, Heady and Miller argue that nostalgia is not just about the past but also changing community conditions in which current social relations are troubled. Comparing these insights about nostalgia to contemporary Sorbian dynamics, Sorbs do not necessarily long for a golden mythic past, but are mourning the present moment. As shown in Image 19, ideas about the



*Image 19: Easter Riders*

*In an embodied ritual, the men travel through the villages singing songs. Considered an honor, the men enact a vision of the golden past.*

Sorbian golden past still circulate especially in the sadness that Sorbs expressed that were not so many riders who could wear the golden wreath on their lapel, symbolizing 50 years of being an Easter rider.

East-West discourses of difference also expose a shifting dialogue about linguistic and cultural identities as individuals adapt emotionally and linguistically to changing circumstances. Nancy Ries and Daphne Berdahl stand out in bringing attention to the specifics of emotional discourses during the transitional period in Russia and reunified Germany. In her ethnography of Russian laments during perestroika, Ries identifies two loci of paradox that encourage laments and litanies in public and private contexts—the Soviet state with its internal contradictions and perestroika with all its disappointments and unintended consequences (Reis 1997: 169). Likewise, Germans and Sorbs experienced multiple contradictions to such a degree



*Image 20: Bautzen's Yellow Misery*

*This prison is only one block away from the Sorbian High school, a constant reminder to students as they walk by it of Bautzen's history of silencing. From an economic perspective, three forms of enterprise mainly drive the economy in Bautzen: tourism, prisons, and Sorbian institutions.*

that “they formed a tangle, nearly as hard to unravel discursively and politically” (Reis 1997: 169). Berdahl stresses the dialectics of memory, an argument that applies to emotional tangles in that “one discourse may be compelling and other times not” (Berdahl 1999: 218)—inherently a process of shifting symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1991). By taking on the nuances of emotional, linguistic, social, and political landscapes, I untangle emotional contradictions of languaged worlds.

One specific facet of affective discourses involves the voices and visible presence of bilingual Sorbs. Not

only were Sorbs silenced politically, as I mentioned earlier, but notions of silence are a significant part of East-West German discourses of difference. As part of Sprachlosigkeit (speechlessness) and affirmations by east Germans with the protest chant of “Wir sind ein Volk (We are a people),” (see also Image 13), east Germans experienced a particular dynamic of silencing that entailed imprisonment of political dissidents—in Gefängnis II (Stasi-Knast) and Gefängnis I, the largest socialist prison, “Das gelbes Elend(The Yellow Misery)” in Bautzen— and linguistic chauvinism directed toward east Germans after reunification.<sup>6</sup> The historical echoes continue to impact Sorbs in subtle ways; for example for high school students who often walk by the prison on their way to the Sorbian high school (see Image 20). As a lived experience, passing by the prison symbolically reiterates the historical and contemporary position of the dominant German nation-state(s). While these dynamics of silencing and linguistic politics indicate the power of emotional discourses in Germany, my work exposes the nuances of languaged worlds informed by the perspectives of speakers of an endangered language.



*Image 21: Silent Protestor*

*A protestor is wearing a piece of tape over his mouth, a symbolic act about linguistic prejudice.*

## **A Detailed Walk through this Dissertation**

Step-by-step, my dissertation highlights the ideological and linguistic intricacies of linguistic survival. Emotions figure prominently in each chapter as I trace the affective strengths and weaknesses in play at each stage of



analysis. Throughout the dissertation I will use an emotional rubric to guide my chapter-specific engagement with the extensive literature that relates to ideologies, linguistic politics, bilingualism, code-switching, and language shift. The second chapter contextualizes the emotional dynamics of the Sorbian community. At the heart of this discussion, I direct attention to the history and the economic forces that contribute to feelings of anger and sentiments of sadness. Emotive dialogues fuel linguistic self-silencing, an intra-community embodied politics of Sorbs not wanting to identify themselves as Sorbian speakers. Acting in equipoise to these potentially destructive emotions, Sorbs narrated their fearlessness, pride, and solidarity in the face of an uncertain future. Through a detailed outline of the cultural linguistic economy (see Chapter 3), I draw on Sorbian narratives, which express the passions that currently divide and unify the Sorbian community.<sup>7</sup>

Even as many Sorbs are representatives of Sorbian interests to the general public in the production of events, texts and even interacting with non-Sorbs, they also are often prominent figures with status in the community as educators, actors and actress, secretaries, and policymakers. Yet, even as visible figures they also often struggle with the pressures of their position as language workers. Their challenges coincide with a politics of indistinction, an embodied enactment of silence (see Image 21). As part of a larger concern, many Sorbs act in ways that result in their invisibility either by not speaking or interacting with other Sorbs. Although this community



*Image 22:  
Ferdinand*

*During translation,  
I brought a book  
with removable  
pieces of paper on  
which we would  
write their text.*





*Image 23: Learning Mish-mash*

*An anthropologist learning mish-mash in Miłocićy (Summer 2005) after a village festival.*

dynamic evokes a type of linguistic distancing, it is an indicator of discontent, unhappiness with other Sorbs, frustration with policy decisions and every day expectations of Sorbian language use, and undercurrents of anger and resentment.

In the fourth chapter, I sketch my methodological strategies, which

culminated in collection over 60 Sorbian translations of *The Story of Ferdinand* (Leaf 1936).<sup>8</sup> Through this linguistic event, Sorbs focused on a story of a Spanish bull that would rather smell the flowers than fight (see Image 22). By speaking to their desires to speak Sorb and to avoid conflict, this classic children's book resonates with Sorbian emotional turmoil. This project represents a methodological putsch, because Sorbs not only rendered a translation based on their "feelings," but also focused on their personal perspectives on language use rather than the reluctance they felt toward working with me. Through an epistemological timeline of my research in the Sorbian community, I expose the practical issues that defined and refined my questions; I focus on shame as a sentiment that affected my interactions with Sorbs and among Sorbs, themselves. These interactions reflect diglossic discourses of difference. To accomplish these goals I situate myself negotiating insider and outsider status as a Sorbian speaker/language learner and as an individual with changing relationships with bilingual Sorbs. Another critical component of Chapter 4 is a detailed discussion of the emergence of research strategies

and an accessible explanation of conducting linguistic anthropology in a field site where speakers and local ideologies pushed me the researcher to revise and adapt to a series of methodological challenges. In walking through my methodological steps, I consider the ways that Sorbs frame mish-mash, a Sorbian understanding of language use that mixes German/Sorbian resources. During the summer of 2005, I actually began to learn from Sorbs about their understandings of mish-mash (see Image 23). As Sorbs describe linguistic diversity, the nuances of the linguistic practices and affective experiences of language use and negative evaluations reveal the constructions of my ethnographic journey and the stories embedded in Sorbian languaged worlds.

In speaking of the contents of stories, Michel de Certeau characterizes them as makeshift things composed of the world's debris (Certeau 1984: 107). In the fragments,

*Image 24: Mish-mash in Miłociy*

*Angela is selling Serbske Nowiny, the Sorbian newspaper. She promoted mish-mash by keeping her store open even though she wanted to retire.*



Sorbian ideas of village and urban language use intersect with nationalizing discourses.

This debris also required of me a process of sifting through the contradictory elements and experiences of shame to “fill the

homogeneous form of the story” (Certeau 1984: 107). By composing a narrative of my methodological travels and travails, I set the groundwork to consider Sorbian usages of mish-mash and semi-standardized practices.

My use of the term “semi-standardized practices” that I introduce in the fourth chapter marks a theoretical twist on Nancy Dorian’s (1977) identification of “semi-speakers.” In her work in a Scottish Gaelic community of Cumberland, she asserts that researchers should work with individuals with different competencies and not just speakers with “native,” first language (L1), or high competency. Although I concur with Dorian’s incorporation of semi-speakers, I differ in her emphasis on “semi,” an evaluative category that classifies individuals as lacking in their linguistic proficiency. In fact, many Sorbs like Angela (see Image 24) pointed out the differences between mish-mash and a form of “standardized” Sorb of *Budyšin*.

More specifically in the sixth chapter that initiates a more formal linguistic consideration of Sorbian practices, I lay the groundwork for my analysis and discussion of *Ferdinand* translations. Using ethnographic evidence and a Sorbian debate about language use, I establish an intertwining of emotional discourses of ambiguity and anger with evaluations of borrowings, loan words, and metalinguistic commentaries especially in Sorbian use of “das klingt komisch (that sounds funny).” As I progress through my argument, I unpack the complexities of local language ideologies and ways Sorbs understand discourses of temporality, identity and standard language ideology.

Theoretically this chapter makes several interventions by identifying several local ideologies. At the heart of this discussion, I advance two locally experienced dialogic understandings of Sorbian language use that contribute to semi-standardized practices. Sorbs understand internalized monolingualism as recognition of Sorbian first language acquisition—that Sorbs associate with growing in a village Sorbian speaking household.

Yet as Sorbs encounter other forms of language use in newspaper, books, schools, theater performances, and public events, they associate language use with Budyšin (Bautzen). These two locally experienced understandings of language use and space, I argue, correspond to two registers. Furthermore, register variation entails other Sorbian evaluations of language use as written and spoken, as authoritative and expert, as entwickelt (modern/invented) and old, and as German and Sorb. As a constellation of categorical characterizations of language use, Sorbs strategically evaluate utterances in ways that exemplify the contradictions of bilingual/endangered language practices.

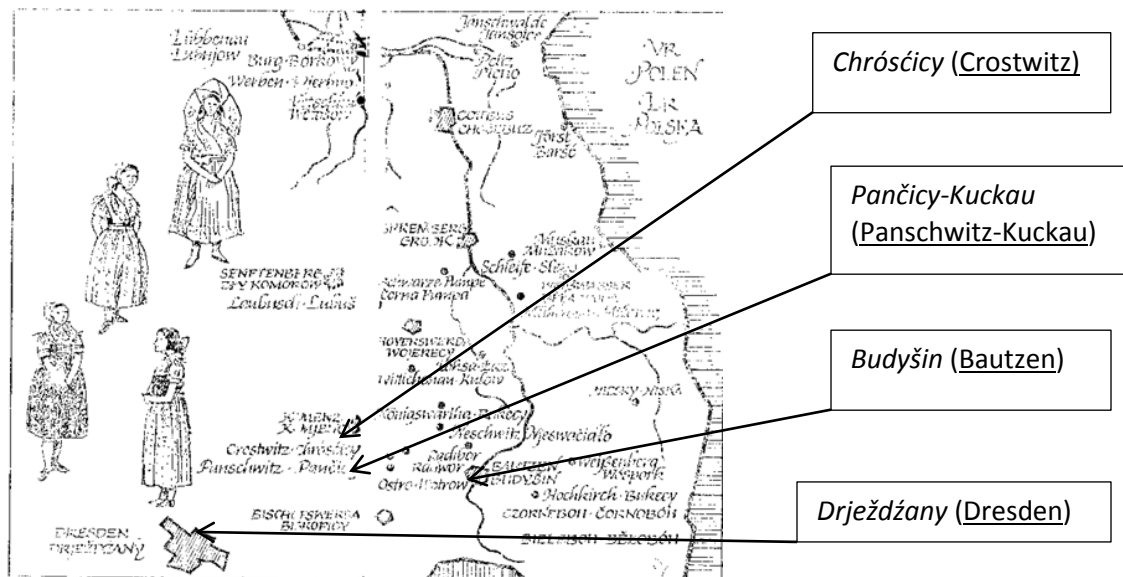


Image 25: A Map of Sorbian Villages Paired with Images of Sorbian National Dress

*Chrósćicy represents a rural gathering space. I resided in Budyšin (February-December 2007). Prior to this, I lived in Pančicy-Kuckau, where the protest and the cloister are symbols of Sorbian identity. This village was only one kilometer from Miłočicy, where I lived with Kristina's family (2005).*

In the eighth and ninth chapters, I use a two pronged analysis to demonstrate that linguistic diversity characterizes bilingual Sorbian praxis. By combining statistical and ethnographic analysis, I provide a rich discussion of what I identify as frictions or differences between Sorbian resources. From data that I gathered in rural and urban settings (see Image 25), my study takes into account generational, spatial, and temporal discourses. The map of Sorbian villages illustrates how German-Sorbian language use is linked to place names, temporality through the images of traditional dress.

More specifically, I present an argument about register variation that Sorbs accomplish by felicitously alternating between markers of rural and *Budyšin* language use. From my continuing discussion of emotions in languaged worlds, I complete my earlier conversation about happiness that I had begun in the second chapter's examination of "unhappiness," in which I discuss how Sorbian language workers like the woman in Image 26 experience mixed emotions about their roles in the Sorbian community. My key argument is that Sorbs experience a sense of linguistic satisfaction in mixing registers, a creative process of



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*Image 26: A Sorbian Translator in Smolar's Bookstore*

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showing allegiance to multiple repertoires of language use. Their allegiances and even non-allegiances draw on notions of temporality, identities, and standard language ideology.

I conclude my arguments by returning to more personal comments that speak to scholars and Sorbian speakers. In attending to the broader significance of my dissertation findings, I reposition my work in the globalization and language documentation literature. Through a discussion of poetics and register variation as “mixed bag,” an idea that evokes Maria’s story, I contend that Sorbs constantly balance selfhoods and linguistic resources through mixing registers. My final thoughts resonate with the introduction of my own and Sorbian imagining of the future.

Throughout the dissertation, I discuss emotions as lived and often revisit themes without explicitly making a direct statement. For example, I introduce shame in the third chapter and revisit it again in the fifth chapter. This writing strategy allows me to emphasize certain specific arguments while creating a complex image of the emotional discourses that affect Sorbian linguistic practices in myriad ways. Thus, I present emotional and linguistic arguments that evoke Clifford Geertz’s (1973) metaphorical analogy of “turtles all the way down.” This hermeneutic explanation is similar to Sorbian understandings of “das klingt komisch (that sounds funny),” mish-mash, and selves, because a layering of meanings exists in each linguistic and cultural maneuver. While Sorbs endeavor to stay balanced while walking the line in multi-linguaged worlds. In this pictorial essay, I have presented an overview of linguistic politics and emotional undercurrents in the Sorbian community. In the following pages of this dissertation, I

will progressively layer evidence of emotions as linguistic and social action as I approach Sorbian linguistic practices.

#### Image and Microcosm Sources

- Image 1: Anthropologist's field work (2006).  
Image 2: Anthropologist's field work (2007).  
Image 3: Anthropologist's field work (2005).  
Image 4: Anthropologist's field work (2007).  
Image 5: Anthropologist's field work (2007).  
Image 6: Anthropologist's field work (2007).  
Image 7: Brankatsch (2000: front matter).  
Image 8: Hose (2006: 75).  
Image 9: Anthropologist's field work (2004).  
Image 10: Šatava (2006: 20).  
Image 11: Anthropologist's fieldwork (2007).  
Microcosm 1: Interview (July 2007).  
Image 12: Scholze (1999: 25).  
Image 13: Anthropologist's field work (2005).  
Image 14: Anthropologist's field work (2004).  
Image 15: Scholze (1999: 40).  
Image 16: Eurobarometer 70 (2008).  
Image 17: Anthropologist's field work (2007).  
Image 18: Anthropologist's fieldwork (2004).  
Microcosm 2: Field notes (2007)  
Image 19: Anthropologist's field work (2007).  
Image 20: Bautzen Budyšin (N.d.).  
Image 21: Anthropologist's field work (2004).  
Image 22: Leaf (1936: Facing page of page 5, see Appendix D).  
Image 23: Anthropologist's field work (2005).

- Image 24: Anthropologist's field work (2007).  
 Image 25: Völkel et. al. (1970: front matter).  
 Image 26: Anthropologist's fieldwork (2006).

#### Key to Font Distinctions

<i>Italicized</i>	Sorb
<u>Underlined</u>	German
SMALL CAPS	Emphasis

<sup>1</sup> Like Lois Kuter (1989) found in the Breton community, Sorbs experience a symbolic opposition between languages, a dynamic that entails mixed emotions about being “real” speakers of a “little” language.

<sup>2</sup> Tschernokoshewa continues her argument by criticizing the German media for portraying images of the Sorbs as farmers (see Image 8).

<sup>3</sup> Kathryn Woolard (1998b) summarizes the reasons that linguistic anthropologists are interested in language ideologies.

<sup>4</sup> Many of the discussion were influenced by earlier work on nationalism and theories of nation-state building (Gellner 1983, Giddens 1990, Handler 1993, Handler 1983; Hobsbawm 1990; Smith 1998)

<sup>5</sup> Slavenka Draculić (1993) narrates the own transformations in post-socialist persona after the collapse of the wall through rich detail of everyday communist life.

<sup>6</sup> The colloquial name of “Stasi Knast (Stasi jail)” refers to the secret police that controlled and watched east Germans to such a point that people worried about their neighbors turning them in to the police. Although the Stasi may not have often tortured Germans physically, they threatened their livelihoods, educational opportunities, and homes.

<sup>7</sup> I am drawing on a tradition in linguistic anthropology that focuses on the theoretical intersections of political economy and language (see Gal and Irvine 1989; Irvine 1996)

<sup>8</sup> In the analysis, I focus on 27 coded translations for reasons discussed in Chapters 4 and 10.



## CHAPTER TWO

# A History of Endangerment in Eastern Germany

The Sorbs have been crying wolf for a thousand years, but their language is still not dead.  
-Commentary from a Sorbian language worker

In this evocative evaluation of Sorbian language endangerment, several sentiments arise: fear of language death, exasperation at not being heard, anger at having to give the alarm for a long period of time and, perhaps even, surprise and hope that the Sorbian language and culture will survive the current dangers facing it. Like Benjamin Whorf (1941) experiencing the empty gasoline can and the different meanings associated with an utterance, I discovered various sentiments about “endangerment” within the comments made by bilingual Sorbs. Like the double entendre in the theater worker’s statement, Sorbs often encounter intertwined messages of survival and death in their daily linguistic lives.

Through Sorbian narratives and understanding of everyday lived politics, I demonstrate that Sorbs self-silence, thereby often becoming invisible. While historical and contemporary dynamics characterize a contact zone with Germans and other Sorbs, this same zone is also an affective site of multi-linguaged worlds and multiple social relations. Sorbs may take control of their own lives by expressing their dis-ease with the historical and contemporary situation often navigating a range of stances from speaking Sorb to “being a bilingual Sorb” that engender both self-critique and a critical gaze of German “others.”

Understanding the contemporary emotional dynamics of Sorbian praxis requires a detailed map of the places and spaces where the Sorbs use their endangered western Slavonic language. In this chapter, I begin my contextualization with Sorbian linguistic history. With a

critical eye, I outline the historical basis for the current emotional state of bilingual Sorbs who may express feelings of shame, anger, or ambiguity while recognizing their own unhappiness.

Before I began my doctoral program, I first gained knowledge of the Sorbian community through a representation of Sorbs as a folk culture. Similar to what an individual might read about the Sorbs in a tourist brochure, my initial image compared to touristic pictures that show Sorbs wearing traditional dress or painting Sorbian eggs. Such visible markers are no less important than the ones not so readily observable. In the introduction, I presented many of these images. Ironically, this type of folk representation that implicitly commodifies Sorbian culture as an object of tourist interest was the first encounter that I had with Sorbs before I even began my doctoral program. My German professor at Louisiana State University had brought a postcard to our class (2002). Using it as an intersubjective tool, I told this story to Sorbs when they asked me how I heard about the Sorbs. When I arrived to conduct a pilot ethnography (2004), this image affected my investigations in Bautzen (*Budyšin*). Intellectually I knew that the reality of Sorbian lives would be different, but I imagined a picturesque setting in which Sorbs challenged endangerment without severe emotional repercussions. As I walked in the empty back alleys, I also saw bilingual signs—representations of language protection by the government. Looking at books and other materials that I had gathered, I still wondered where Sorbs spoke Sorb and wore the clothes that I had seen in that postcard two years ago.

With my own growing awareness, I began to recognize how Sorbs experience alienation through deeply felt, yet contested discourses about their worth as a polity and as individuals. Historical and contemporary anxieties about endangerment and economics are prime sites to consider the affective realities of languaged worlds. Sorbian expressions of anger come from

fears about their linguistic survival and the realization that losses in funding contribute to linguistic and cultural loss. Sorbian diatribes reflect an inverted Malthusian fear, because their financial subsistence even fails to match their declining population due to falling birth rates, assimilation, and emigration. Added to this concern, I believe that other factors also threaten the survival of the Sorbian community, e.g. decreasing opportunities for face-to-face contact, geographical shrinking of the Sorbian homeland, loss of villages, closing of schools, reduced production of Sorbian events and especially, for the purpose of my studies, emotions. Specific Sorbian concerns range from not having a Sorbian school that one's children or grandchildren may attend to whatever governmental entity (Saxon, German, European or the imagined global community) will be deaf to Sorbian concerns. At its most basic level, Sorbs fear that if their resources—their language, their voice, and their assets are not used, funded, or available, then they and those resources will be lost. As Sorbs embrace beliefs that their language is a “treasure” or approximate their worth according to population size or material objects (Hill 2002), they connect endangerment to economics. In this chapter I take Jane Hill's questions of “who is listening?” and “what do they hear?” a step further to ask “what do they feel?”

The commentary, that introduces this chapter, is about on-going affective premonition of linguistic and cultural loss. This commentary also hints at a state of unrest—a Sorbian community in a perpetual state of alarm. Sorbs, as speakers of an endangered language, have seen the “value” of their language repeatedly change and they have been warned of their demise. For example, the Sorbian context transformed virtually overnight in November 1989 after the Berlin wall fell. However, this event was not the only time in the Sorbian scene when emotional states of Sorbian community experiencing a rapid change as I will discuss.

## **Broken Promises and Cruel Optimism**

As I focus on the historical conjunctions that have led to contemporary Sorbian affective discourses, I consider a grand narrative of Sorbian history from failed attempts to become an autonomous nation to possible extermination during the Third Reich. In the hyberbolic description of Sorbian survival for a thousand years, a state of incredulity, as Jean-Francois Lyotard (1984) would describe it, characterizes Sorbian endangerment. From the nationalizing meta-narratives from socialist and post-socialist texts (see Spreng 2008), I have highlighted the historical bases and contemporary materializations of Sorbian fears that come from broken promises and the rationales behind an optimism that is not blind to cultural, political, and linguistic losses, but very aware of the endured historical “cruelty” of the Sorbian community. In thinking about survival despite overwhelming odds, Lauren Berlant considers cruel optimism a condition of ordinary life in which “people learn to identify, manage, and maintain the hazy luminosity of their attachment to being x [emphasis in original], given that their attachments were promises and not possessions after all (Berlant 2010: 112).” Sorbs have heard promises from a series of governmental entities that would protect their national, linguistic, and cultural value. Yet, Sorbian attachments are promises to be managed or, more specifically, how Sorbs consider themselves a “Volk.” This very term invokes a promise that if Sorbs protect their “tradition” then they will be protected.<sup>1</sup>

For example, a Sorb may have gone to Sorbian school where he or she learned a type of language use associated with the rise of nationalism and intense linguistic standardization that occurred during the socialist period. Although Sorbs may reject written modalities when they elect to not read the Sorbian newspaper or books, they embrace the literary language in other

activities. One way that Sorbs show loyalty to a standardized variant would be going to Sorbian church services and using a family Bible that is typed using the older Germanized and not the more recent Latinized form. Church may be a setting in which Sorbs “act” Sorb because this may be the only time during a week that they take part in a public Sorbian event. These choices reflect a careful management of language use. To extend this reasoning further, their acceptance of written language use is an alternative, not nationalizing, narrative.

Concurrent with their management of types of language use, Sorbs also use Sorbian resources on an answering machine message or telephone, in a note left at a friend’s house, or term of address like I used by always calling my father-in-law “*Nano*.” At the same time bilingual Sorbs are not just members of a traditional Slavic minority who hear a ritual performed in an endangered language or have attended a school funded by the Saxon government. Rather, they are people with national rights who fashion themselves using multiple ideas of what Sorbs are and how they should use their linguistic resources.

## Historical Overview of the Sorbian Communities

Sorbian linguistic history entails moments when Sorbs acquired an increasing set of attachments while political processes cast aspersions on Sorbian worth. In a comparative analysis of Sorbian texts (Spreng 2008), I identified five critical moments from Sorbian historical narratives (Kasper 1987; Kunze 1995, Pech and Scholze 2003b; Scholze 1999, 2003; Völkel 1969). These meta-narratives not only engender a sense of cruel optimism, but also historically index transformations in language, ethnicity, national consciousness, and political status. Four of these moments correlate with significant transformations in the Sorbian language.

First, the status of the Sorbs changed when the Sorbian tribes became subordinated to the German tribes in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Sorbian community was under the control of Bohemian king, the Polish prince, and Brandenburg. These shifts in territorial control foreshadow contemporary discourses of non-national status and laid the historical foundation for ambiguity with regards to Sorbian political subjectivities. Second, the Sorbs became two separate national communities (Upper Sorb and Lower Sorb) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This process also coincided with sedimentation of two literary languages associated with the Catholic and Protestant churches. Third, when the Nazi regime adopted an aggressive and racist policy, the Sorbs experienced a racialized threat to their existence. Fourth, during the socialist period, the Sorbs received meaningful state support that was designed primarily to ensure the development of socialist citizens and only secondarily a policy intended to safeguard the survival for the ethno-linguistic national minority. Fifth, in the newly imagined integration of the EU, the Sorbs experience a new threat as a lesser-used language community, a people without a state but whose institutions face severe financial cutbacks, a minority with highly problematic emotionally infused tensions that feed Sorbian fears. Based on my earlier textual analysis, I argue that Sorbian narratives hold the key to current dynamics.

Sorbs' feelings about endangerment suggest an emotional shift in the Sorbian community. While socialist narratives resonate with a David and Goliath theme, Köstlin (2003) suggests that the emergence of a new pessimistic tone. Although this overview addresses socialist and postsocialist narratives, I recognize that another narrative may emerge. As I argue in this chapter, a critical awareness of "unhappiness" is needed as Sorbs adjust to the possibility that they are a "sterbender Europäer (dead Europeans)"(Köstlin 2003: 430).

In socialist texts, Sorbs are a national minority and bilingual socialist citizens, but postsocialist texts exemplify a meta- narrative of EU-global or multinational citizenry, whose value rests in their traditional culture. Having lost the possibility to become a separate nation-state in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Sorbian national consciousness continued to develop. According to their own national ideals based on Smoler's national definition; (i.e., a Sorbian nation does not need a Sorbian nation-state [Brock 1969]), many Sorbs still accept this version of national identity. Now, the bilingual Sorbs are a regional community that has lost nationalist aspirations for autonomy in modern transformations in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Sorbs attempted three times to become a separate nation: during the mid-nineteenth century participating in democratic revolutions that was part of larger European political shift to nationalized system of states, through a petition to President Woodrow Wilson at the Treaty of Versailles (1917), and in an appeal to Stalin during the Moscow Foreign Ministers' Conference (1947).

As I address Sorbian history, I bring attention to three intertwined themes that form the crux of my dissertation's argument. First, I consider identity and its relationship to changing names given to this group of people. Second, my focus on temporality explores changing language ideologies. Third, I frame Sorbian experiences of standard language ideology through a temporal lens. My goal in the present discussion involves exposing the historical basis of these threads and connecting them to contemporary language use.

## Languaged Markets

Pierre Bourdieu (1991) provides a framework to conceptualize languages as part of the market in which symbolic capital affects linguistic exchanges and is built on historically specific fields of practice. Bourdieu's basic assertions shed some light about the Sorbian cultural

linguistic economy. In the Editor's introduction, Richard Nice's summary can be compared to the Sorbian sociolinguistic economy...

a market economy based on capitalist principles was separated out and constituted as a relatively distinct sphere of production and exchange, a centralized state administration and legal system were established and progressively disassociated from religious authority; fields of intellectual and artistic production [...] emerged and acquired a certain autonomy, with their own institutions (universities, museums, publishing houses, etc.) their own professionals (intellectuals, artists, writers, etc.) and their own principles of production, evaluation, and exchange (Bourdieu 1991: 25)

In bilingual Lusatia, the *Serbski Dom* (House of Sorbs) historically and currently is a type of "centralized state administration." Furthermore, the people, who work there, who I identify as language workers, experience a sense of power albeit one that it is recognized and monitored by themselves and by other Sorbs.

During my fieldwork, I felt the compartmentalization or disassociation of the Sorbian market in mundane and more ephemeral ways. When I would enter the central administrative building called *Serbski Dom* (House of Sorbs), the front electrified doors (often locked) reminded me that I was entering a distinct sphere and a place where all the decisions concerning the Sorbian linguistic economy were made. This five-story block-long building in Budyšin conveys a sense of importance and represents the hard work and donations of the Sorbian population from 1897 to 1904 to erect a structure large enough for a publishing house, museum, and library. Burned down by the SS in 1945, *Serbski Dom* was rebuilt during socialism and has been renovated since the collapse of socialism. Yet this sense of compartmentalization also results in a feeling of distancing. As I would continue upstairs, I encountered closed office doors and difficulties meeting with Sorbs in the very places of power. As I travelled in and out of these spaces, I recognized that Sorbs employed in the Sorbian institutions conducted themselves, to some degree, according to their notions of "legitimate" language and principles.



However, they also expressed mixed emotions about their isolation from other segments of the Sorbian community, a point that I will return to later with ethnographic data.

While his seminal treatise exposes the relations of power in language use, Bourdieu furnishes an excellent starting point to consider linguistic inequalities. First, Bourdieu argues that the market is unified, which means the power relations and symbolic values are fixed. He perceives that all relations in the market reflect and respond to an economic logic and, more specifically, a capitalistic one. Despite the merits of this argument, Bourdieu grounds this in a seemingly stable common sense epistemology that resonates with a monolingual ideology. Bourdieu also argues that participants unconsciously act in various fields thereby reproducing their dispositions without questioning or reflecting upon them. And, finally, Bourdieu's argument led to a portrayal of a linguistic market in which the dominant language always governs a hierarchy and individuals can only reproduce or challenge structural inequalities. In large part, Bourdieu's reliance on a monolingual ideology stems from a monolingual bias which I am not alone in challenging.

Kathryn Woolard (1985) contends that Bourdieu falls victim to several oversights. She questions the ability of cultural institutions to autonomously reproduce the hegemony of standardized and legitimate language over co-existing varieties (Woolard 1985: 740). As a corollary, she disputes Bourdieu's notion of unconsciousness in the actions of individuals as their behavior reproduces structural inequalities. Dangerously close to self-contradiction, Bourdieu offers another view of consciousness.

It is true that one sometimes encounter individuals whose social trajectory, quite as much as their position, inclines them to a vision divided against itself. I am thinking here of a woman selling sporting goods in a "difficult" housing project who vigorously defends herself against the aggressive behavior of the young people in the project even as she expresses sympathy for their position (Bourdieu 1999b: 4)

Although describing a very different situation, this woman's behavior resonates with Sorbian bilingual/monolingual practices that are emotionally saturated with multivalent evaluations. Likewise, Sorbs may defend language from linguistic incursions while at the same time expressing allegiances to mixing languages. They engage a sense of cruel optimism as they alternate between linguistic resources in acts of defiance, because linguistic purity would signal an unconscious acceptance of a monolingual or German language ideology. Bourdieu's emphasis on the distress that comes from such clashing interests is critical to rethinking linguistic markets peopled by individuals who experience ordinary suffering, what Bourdieu (1999b) considers *la petite misère*. In turn, many Sorbs engage in a politics of indistinction in order to relieve the everyday suffering that they experience via the local linguistic politics.

The second major point that Woolard raises in assessing Bourdieu involves a theoretical challenge to the idea of full integration of the market or a situation in which distinctive varieties are eliminated or denigrated. Eloquently posed, she asks "to what extent is hegemony fully established—and to what extent is it possible to speak of markets in which alternative or opposing linguistic forms are generated and maintained?" (Woolard 1985: 740). I align my understanding of the market with Bourdieu and Woolard's interrogations and offer an explanation. While the hegemonic hierarchy of the market depends on the state's/community's role in promoting one language, this process is often hampered by multilingual speakers who adeptly or not interweave their resources. Bourdieu perceives the "contradictions of a state whose right hand no longer knows, or worse, no longer wants what the left hand is doing" (Bourdieu 1999a: 183). Such a shift in the state's (or in my research in the Sorbian community's) gaze, instantiates and reinforces "increasingly painful 'double constraints'"

(Bourdieu 1999a: 183) that prevent integration of the linguistic market and the corresponding hierarchy between languages, because the people committed to producing one standard actually often promote and practice more than one variety.

Despite Woolard's fruitful train of thought concerning the market, I believe it is critical to acknowledge the power of hegemonic relations. Throughout my fieldwork as I would walk from one Sorbian space to another, I often felt the economic and political aspects of every linguistic interaction that I witnessed and in which I participated. This saturation of the linguistic market with economic and political forces took on a surreal quality that forced me to consider the heavy weight of these discourses on Sorbian shoulders. I found it challenging not to simply impose a hegemonic interpretation onto my data collection. Almost like being in a movie I could frame each *MISE EN SCÈNE* in two ways to borrow from George Marcus' (1997) critique of complicity. On one hand, I could sense and evaluate the power of German discourses to dominate and devalue Sorb. On the other hand, I could see many Sorbian acts as challenging the German practices of linguistic domination. In either scenario, I would be complicit in adhering to a monolingual way of thinking.

My use of this oppositional paradigm speaks to potential forms of monolingual bias, preconceived notions that individuals should only speak one language at a time. At its most basic level bilingual talk challenges linguists, educators, policy makers, bureaucrats, and the general public. Suzanne Romaine asks why the ideal speaker-listener image and monolingual thinking continues to exist in a world where multilingualism is the *de facto* and *de jure* reality (Romaine 2009: 457). At its most primal level, when we embody a monolingual bias, we construct an exotic other, viewing bilingual talk and language mixing as defective. Following

Peter Auer's and Li Wei's (2007) lead, I propose that monolingual ideologies present multiple problems, because this type of thinking spurs economically unsound decisions in the EU and in Sorbian institutions by promoting an ideology of one preferred variety of language use.

In summarizing the predominant threads in discussions of monolingualism, I also take heed of my own assumptions. Peter Auer (2007a) offers an excellent discussion of the multiple facets of monolingual bias in linguistic research from historical roots and theoretical assumptions to the effect of such a bias on code-switching research. Monica Heller also connects continuing existence of forms of discrimination to the nation-state and globalization. In her arguments, Heller (2007, 2008, 2010) relates these biases to linguistic commodification.<sup>2</sup>

### Identities in Historical Perspectives

Yet in both the socialist and postsocialist narratives certain continuities exist that involve notions of identities associated with temporal dimensions of language use. One parallel thread in the texts involves an acknowledgement that Sorbs present a political quandary.<sup>3</sup> In both narratives, Sorbian historians draw attention to difficulties of the German nation-state[s] in defining the Sorbs as a political entity. During the National Socialist period the "wendische Frage/Problem (Wendish problem/question)" signaled a shift in meaning for this ethnic term as the Nazis considered "Die faschistischen Pläne zur „Endlösung der Wendenfrage (The Fascist Plan for the final solution of the Wendish question)" [section heading] (Völkel 1969: 72-73); i.e., the scheduled deportation of Sorbs to concentration camps. From 1936 on, the Nazi party moved toward the eradication of Sorbianness. Bilingual signs were removed; the terms "Wendish" and "Wend" were erased from public view; and Sorbian names on monuments were Germanized. In 1937, after refusing to use the term "wendische sprechende

Deutsche (Wendish speaking Germans)” *Domowina*, *Serbske Nowiny*, and all other Sorbian publications were banned except for the Catholic newspaper.

These debates about Sorbian nationalism reappeared during the Third Reich when the Slavic Sorbs overcame an unimaginable threat to their survival. Like other communities targeted by Nazi oppression and Germans, I believe that the Sorbs feel shame and other conflicted emotions about their short-lived initial Nazi sympathies, and I would add, their cooperation with the socialist government. My textual analysis and ethnographic fieldwork indicate that the Sorbs were terrified of deportation and still fear German prejudice (see Spreng 2008). These Sorbian anxieties contribute to their silence about the Nazi period, a historicized desire to not bring attention to themselves, and possibly, a current practice of not speaking Sorb around monolingual Germans or avoiding them. During fieldwork (Summer 2004), a Sorbian informant was suing a German restaurant owner for throwing him out of restaurant after speaking Sorb. According to my Sorbian informant, the German business man articulated many racist comments and brought up a Nazi discourse by saying, “all the Sorbs should have been sent to the gas chambers.” Thus, many Sorbs have internalized the possibility of prejudice and are extremely aware of Sorbian linguistic practices and German anti-Sorbian sentiments.

In contemporary interactions Germans describe Sorbs as an insular people who “have their own world” and “keep to themselves.” My initial impressions of the Sorbian community support this portrayal, especially since the Sorbs tend to be more comfortable and intimate with other Sorbs although there is German/Sorbian everyday contact, friendships, and marriage. A number of Sorbs expressed to me wariness and even disapproval of Sorbian/German marriages and dating. Another Sorbian tension is a reflexive critique of Sorbs

who do not interact with other Sorbs or do not speak Sorb. Interconnected with code-switching practices and code choices, silence, isolation, and invisibility are definitive components of Sorbian linguistic lives. Looking at the historical basis of silence as part of a politics of indistinction is a critical component of understanding Sorbian selfhood. The roots of Sorbian isolation and low visibility lay in their long history of oppression and discrimination, which reached its apogee during the Third Reich that Sorbs and Germans still actively discuss today.

Although the Sorbs were not initially aware of the potential dangers the Nazi regime portended, the Sorbian-Nazi relationship represents a problematic and difficult subject. Since many Sorbs joined the Nazi party, especially during its infancy, their preliminary display of support would be interrogated after World War II.<sup>4</sup> I would suggest the possibility that the Sorbs may have employed a strategy of “hiding in plain sight” to avoid unwanted or negative attention to their community, like other oppressed communities have done throughout history. Even for those Sorbs who joined the Nazi party, their membership does not mean that the Sorbian community or those who became members knew about or supported the Nazi racist’s policy or their genocidal goals. When Hitler assumed power, Sorbian discussions focused on whether the new German leadership might improve their position. The Sorbs hoped for more governmental support than was available under the Weimar Republic which would improve the likelihood of Sorbian survival.<sup>5</sup> Their measured optimism compares to other pre-WWII German sentiments of hope, especially since Hitler had taken substantial steps toward rebuilding the German economy and morale. Before the outbreak of World War II, the position of the Nazi government remained unclear, but became steadily more racialized and aggressive about “wendische Frage (the Wendish question).” The Nazi regime considered the Sorbian population

“eine innere deutsche Angelegenheit (an internal German affair)” (Förster 2003: 74). Whether the Sorbs were German, the government eventually decided that the Sorbs were not Germans.

In the *Serbsky Nowiny* (February 4, 1933), the question arose whether the Sorbs should collectively oppose the Nazi party and Adolph Hitler. Even asking the questions revealed an optimistic hope that the new government would support Sorbian interests. In the early moments of the Nazi period, the Nazis seemed to embrace the Sorbian minority evidenced by a photograph of Hitler with a group of Lower Sorbian girls; however, beginning with the banning of the Sorbian newspaper in April 1933, Nazi policy took a less tolerant position to the Slavs in Germany.<sup>6</sup> In 1935 the League of the German East, Bund Deutscher Osten (BDO),<sup>7</sup> was set up in Bautzen to restrict Sorbian activities. The establishing of the BDO represented an attack against Domowina, because its surveillance of Domowina activities restricted its autonomy. An acrimonious dialogue ensued between Pawoł Nedo (1908-1984), the leader of Domowina, and the Nazi institution that culminated in the removal of Nedo in April 1937. Nedo aggressively defended Sorbian rights with a patriotic slogan, “For our Sorbian people, to the last breath,” (Kasper 1987: 18). In 1937, Domowina and *Serbsky Nowiny* refused to use the designation of “wendische sprechende Deutsche (Wendish speaking Germans),” because these terms denied Sorbian nationality by only recognizing their German national status (Barker 2000a).<sup>8</sup> Their refusal asserted an ethnic difference that the Nazis did not support.

Attempting to define the scope of the Sorbian problem, the 1939 census moved toward a final solution for the problem of minorities (see Table 2.1).<sup>9</sup> Although the racist classification did not extend to Sorbs in the census, an underlying racialization emerged in the census methodology, which was based on an official view of ethnicity not based on mother language or

nationality (see also Domínguez 1997).<sup>10</sup> The census protocol assumed that a group has only one ethnicity, which denied a bi-national Sorbian subjectivity. Although the census results indicated a relatively small Sorbian population, it failed to lessen the harshness of the Nazi-Sorbian politics. The division between Germans and the Wends necessitated “endgültige Eindeutschen des wendischen Sprachgebiets (a final Germanization of the Wendish-speaking areas)” (Förster 2003: 98). On May 15, 1940, Himmler made plans for the deportation of the Sorbs to Poland; however, Hitler decided that transfers needed to wait until the end of the war. Himmler’s statements, “einige Gedanken über Fremdvölkischen im Osten (some thoughts about the foreign folk) [implying the Sorbs are foreign] in the east” (Kunze 1995: 63), illustrates the Nazi attitude that the Sorbs were not ethnically German, justifying their anti-Sorbian policy. By the end of the war, the policy of systemic destruction of Sorbian culture had taken its toll. The Sorbs resisted Nazi oppression through their cultural traditions such as the wearing of traditional dress, which provided solidarity for the threatened community (Kunze 1995: 64). Even though a number of Sorbian leaders fled Lusatia, many were imprisoned in concentration camps or prisons.<sup>11</sup> The educational/linguistic erasure and the directed attacks on Sorbian leaders and activists revealed that the Nazis intended to eliminate the Sorbian language. Despite the aggressive Nazi policy, the Sorbs were not deported, but their experiences during the Third Reich remain a bitter part of Sorbian history (Förster 2003: 2000).

### Temporality in Historical Perspectives

Another aspect of the postsocialist discussions of Sorbian identities relates to generational shift in ideologies. In Cordula Ratajczakowa’s (2009) study of Sorbian youth, she provides statistical and ethnographic evidence that younger Sorbs are shifting away from



Sorbian language use. Furthermore, she suggests that the “*njech kóždy rěči, kaž chce* (it cannot be any language, rather [the language] one wants)” (Ratajczakowa 2009: 13-14). She argues that contemporary Sorbian youth feel differently about language use than older generations. While Ratajczakowa implies that the linguistic practices of older Sorbs are traditional, bicultural, and based on national linkages, she proposes that younger Sorbs do not make linguistic choices out of national obligations. In the current moment, Ratajczakowa also contends that Germans increasingly reject different languages. Thus, she calls for a “new intercultural future” in which Sorbs’ bilingualism is promoted in a different way, not through national ideals but giving individuals the choice to choose the language that they will speak. Her arguments hint at the pressures that Sorbs experience to speak Sorb. Furthermore, Ratajczakowa’s discussion of language use indicates a generational shift in identities and language use.

While the socialist narratives acknowledge contemporary threats to Sorbs, the socialist story presented a “rosier” view of the Sorbian situation. Highlighting socialism’s benefits for Sorbs, socialist texts hide the real mechanics of these discourses in Sorbian lives as the ambiguity that Sorbs may feel about nationalized identities. In hiding increasing Germanization and threats to Sorbian survival, the socialist narrative relied on the strength of national identity to promote a national minority. One component of this narrative involves education. While the Sorbian community believed that education promoted the growth of the Sorbian nation in the socialist dialogues, education also indexes a standardized unified language, and/or an idealization of subordinated endangered languages. In the socialist texts education is the “key” necessary for Sorbian national survival but economics represents a historical battle lost long ago. The postsocialist narrative presents another story in which survival lies in maintenance of

traditional cultural practices which will in turn lead to funding for Sorbian community. This postsocialist shift in the metanarrative also corresponds to an emphasis on the multicultural value and diminished worth of a Sorbian national language standard that increasingly accepts international loan words from English (Pohončowa 2009).

### Standard Languages Ideologies in Historical Perspectives

In socialist and postsocialist texts, a narrative of standard language ideologies emerges in discussions of education and economic factors. Furthermore, Sorbian authors strategically relate their ideological stances on education and economics to the Wendish question either as what to do with the Sorbs as a traditional folk or how to solve a sociopolitical problem of a national minority. In considering standard language ideologies, I recognize the emergence of contradictions in defining a linguistic standard and Sorbian community.

Although education, a prime force for standardization practices, remains important for the Sorbian community, the principles of formal education also obscure the real interactions of Sorbs who may or may not use standard Sorbian. From my pilot ethnographic projects, I encountered language attitudes of admiration for a mixing of Sorbian and German resources while also appreciating a pure standardized form of Sorbian ideally taught in schools. The educational emphasis of socialist and postsocialist narratives evokes a quantification of languages and speakers, because students and teachers must exist for schools to be warranted. Furthermore, ideas about a Sorbian education immediately bring up ideas about standardization and ownership of a certain type of linguistic resources (Kuter 1989).

To unpack the role of economic discourses in these narratives, I assert that every reference to national status of the Sorbs in the last 160 years involves an economic association.

As John Borneman puts it:

Yet nations as imagined communities also depend on the local [or regional]: they generalize the nation from specific economic and class histories while disparaging and erasing 'competing' ones (Borneman 1993: 289).

German domination, imperialist, capitalist, fascist or socialist, according to the appropriate historical moment, buttresses a cohesive argument of German oppression of the Sorbs. Socialist texts largely motivated by a Marxist-Leninist framework support an economic argument by blaming capitalism for the lack of "development" of Sorbian language, culture, and national consciousness. In contrast, postsocialist narratives shift culpability to socialism. When Edmund Pech asks:

Allerdings ist gleichzeitig zur Verkleinerung des angestammten sorbischen Siedlungsgebiet, zum Rückgang der sorbischen Sprache und Kultur gekommen. In der Mitte der fünfziger Jahre wurden annähernd 100 000 Sorben ermittelt, am Ende der DDR war die Zahl auf rund 60 000 gesunken. Gerade diese Entwicklung scheint angesichts der weit reichende staatlichen Förderung unverständlich zu sein. Daraus ergibt sich die zentrale Fragestellung: Wie positiv war die DDR-Minderheiten-politik wirklich? Um darauf eine Antwort zu finden, müssen neben der Minderheiten auch politische-ideologische sowie ökonomische und soziale Faktoren berücksichtigt werden (Pech 2003: 102).

Above all it has been that the fall of the Sorbian language and culture stems from the reduction of the ancestral Sorbian settlement area. In the middle of the 1950's there would have been approximately 100,000 Sorbs; at the end of the G.D.R. the number had sunk to around 60,000. This development is incomprehensible in the face of costly state support. From this comes the central question. How positive was the G.D.R. minority politics really? To find an answer, the political-ideological and economic and social factors must be considered for minorities (My translation).

The postsocialist/EU discourses also reiterate a correlation between economics and endangerment, because funding is critical to Sorbian survival. Thus, when Sorbs debated a cut of 2 million Euros to funding (Fall 2006), they were also dealing with a broken promise that the German nation-state would take care of the Sorbs. Yet, the reality that the current EU moment is more "dangerous" to the Sorbian community is strategically

avoided in most of the postsocialist texts. When I conducted my research, I believed that Sorbs numbered 60,000 speakers. From my best estimation today, I would propose that there are only 5,000 to 7,000 Upper Sorbian speakers—this is more conservative than Paul Lewis’ (2009) entry in the recent *Ethnologue* statistic of 18,000 but derives from my direct contact with Sorbs and local population estimates.

Demographic shifts demonstrate the historical basis for Sorbian concerns about endangerment. In the following table discrepancies between population statistics hint at the intellectual debates in the Sorbian community.

Table 2.1: Situated Statistics of the Sorbian Community

Date or Period	Post-re-unification Sources	Socialist Sources
Beginning of the 19 <sup>th</sup> century		245,000 (Brock 1969: 26)
1815	250,000 (Kunze 1995: 41)	
1843	110,000 (Kunze 2003: 15)	
Mid-19 <sup>th</sup> century		164,000 (Brock 1969: 26)
Late 19 <sup>th</sup> century		150,000 (Schuster-Šewc 1987: 40)
1900	93,000 monolinguals, 140,000 total (Barker 1999b:20)	
1925	71,000 (Mešank 2003: 39)	
1929	160,000 (Elle 2003: 133)	
1933	57,000 (Barker 1999b: 20)	
1937 (before Nazi census)	150,000 –160,000 (Förster 2002: 94)	
1938	111,000	
1939 (Nazi statistics)	28,930 (Förster 2003:95)	
Mid-1950’s	100,000 (Pech 2003: 102)	
1954	81,000 (Barker 1999b: 21 citing Tschernick)	100,000 (Kasper 1987: 8 citing Tschernick 1954)
1987	67,000 total -25,000 speakers (Barker 1999: 21)	50,000-60,000 (Schuster-Šewc1987: 40)
End of the GDR	60,000 (Pech 2003: 102)	
Current population	60,000 total (Elle 2003: 142)	

Another important point about these contradictory statistics is endangerment from a global perspective. With the decline of the nation-state in tandem with the rise of global English, endangered languages are bastions of difference in nation-states that comprise the global system and the rate of language loss creates concerns for language advocates and speakers of endangered languages (Freeland and Patrick 2004; Maurais and Morris 2003). Their worries about language death stem from an awareness that dominant linguistic ideologies and Western intellectual models prioritize communities with a quantifiable number of individuals who produce monolingual and standardized utterances. The one-language-one culture ideological framework of the national paradigm obfuscates the dynamics of speech practices in minority communities. Comparing to the national idealization, the current globalized moment desires monolingual individuals, while promoting a multilingual and multicultural EU (Jaffe 2004; Wright 2000). Yet, endangered language speakers may see institutions as uninterested in their actual struggles to own their language or feel the effects of “benign neglect” (Nettle and Romaine 2000). Attempting to stabilize their position in a nation-state, the globalized world, or modernity, many Sorbs work to preserve their language in all its forms even though this maintenance defies both mono- and multi-lingual idealizations.

In the EU Sorbs exist as a national minority, a regional sub-national community, and a traditional culture. In rephrasing the philosophical conundrum, I am my languages, but they are not my own, (Derrida 1998), I highlight multilingual dilemmas. Thus, the Sorbian community struggles with dominant ideologies, and national narratives. Throughout their history, Sorbs debate their identities and the role of language in their community and national belonging(s). Bases for the disputes that arise include difference in Sorbian opinions concerning

standardization, linguistic unification, economic funding and education. Time and time again in national meta-narratives, Sorbs have worried about these identity markers and language use.

Standardization discourses in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries exemplify a nation-building project, but even at that time the Sorbs debated about what the idealized Sorbian language would be. On one side, tensions about the Sorbian dialects suggest questions of normative monolingual expectations. On the other side, the creation of standard Sorbian recognizes the importance of a standard as a nationalized and now a globalized commodity. In Sorbian texts, conflicts among various positions in the community interanimate one another at critical moments to reveal differing local attitudes taken toward standardization discourses (Bauman and Briggs 2003; Jaffe 1999; Jernudd and Shapiro 1989; Makoni and Pennycook 2007; McDonald 1989; Silverstein 1996), nationalizing projects (Bermel 2007; Brubaker 1996, 2006; Csergo 2007; Errington 1998, Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990; Smith 1998), endangered language preservation (Errington 2003; Nevins 2002), and an emerging globalization discussion (Baynham and DeFina 2005; Besnier 2002, 2006; Blommaert 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2010; Duchêne 2008; McElhinny 2007; Papen 2007).

Believing in a unified Upper and Lower Sorbian orthographic system, Jan Arnošt Smoler, the father of Sorbian nationalism (1816-1884) laid the groundwork for a debate that divides the Sorbian community. He devised reformed spelling and campaigned for the Cyrillic alphabet but later compromised with a Latin alphabet. The acceptance of a Latin script correlated with a new spelling system that created anxieties for the Protestant Sorbian community. The Lower Sorbian community viewed the revisions as a Catholic plot because the new spelling system favored Upper Sorbian spellings. Another component of Smoler's lexical modernizations included

neologisms and borrowings from Czech and Polish, which fed linguistic debates about conservatism and purity. Despite the difficulties of comprehending the spelling revisions and the new script, Smoler's move toward standardization provided a catalyst to national discussions in the linguistically divided Sorbian community.<sup>12</sup>

Although Sorbs now strongly believe that Upper and Lower Sorbian are two separate languages that was not always the case. In the socialist narratives, authors like Maja Ermakowa's (1987) and Konstantin Tromokovič's (1987) discussions of the development of two literary languages (between Upper and Lower Sorbian) only hint at the intense arguments that affect Sorbian attitudes toward standard language ideology between the two communities. Furthermore, socialist and postsocialist narratives mask the differences of opinion within the Upper Sorbian community. As I found in my analysis of *Ferdinand* translations differences of opinion about written and spoken modalities as well as modern and old distinctions are profound (see also Chapter 6). Thus, I argue that the debates over language rooted in the nineteenth century continue today as Sorbs continue to hold different ideas about the "standardized" form of Upper Sorbian language use.

Helmut Jentsch's (1999) postsocialist discussion of the changes in the Sorbian lexicon explores how the Sorbian community responded to these pressures by eliminating German borrowings in the Sorbian lexicon while also trying to reflect religious and dialectal linguistic diversity. In other words, intralingual differences may coincide with a nationalist rationale; i.e. a word is either Sorb or German. In some ways borrowings exemplify a type of language use that a borrowed element belongs to both systems. Thus, embracing linguistic differences has a

historical basis for what I call semi-standardized practices, or the ways that Sorbs call on myriad linguistic distinctions and not just Sorbian-German ones (see Chapters 5 and 6).

Similar to the linguistic dilemmas, cultural distinctiveness also calls into question Sorbian identities. At the current moment the multicultural EU rhetoric reifies folk identities while promoting cosmopolitan selves who may have little need for nation-states (Errington 2003; Friedman 2003). For the Sorbs this EU repositioning of the nation-state entails a devaluation of their national consciousness, either as Sorbian or east German in the new territorial arrangements. Not only did the Sorbs fail to achieve political autonomy, but also the DDR lost its sovereignty through reunification with West Germany. Further complicating the territorial remapping of Germany, the EU transformations coincide with the lessening power of Member-States. In the multidialectal Sorbian community, Sorbs inhabit multiple globalized and localized landscapes. Their dual belongings and estrangements from the German nation-state and the EU factor into notions of Sorbian hybridity. Furthermore, their ideas about language and identities factor into discourses of being survivors of Nazi oppression, rescued socialists, and cosmopolitan Europeans. All of these characterizations are hybridized forms that influence Sorbian fashionings of selves and associated speech practices.

Hybridity coexists with Sorbian acceptance of EU/socialist narratives that see multilingualism and diversity as a potential solution to rivalries between the monolingual Member-States or the satellite states of the Soviet bloc. In the socialist and post-socialist moments the Sorbs live an ideological struggle; they were ethno-national paragons—either Sorbian or East German—and now the Sorbs are post-national commodities who have not yet renounced the previous paradox. While the socialist narratives reveled in the creation of



socialist citizens who still possess a traditional culture and a linguistic heritage, the current EU ideological frameworks now celebrate multiculturalism and linguistic choices not based on national ideals. These romanticized idealizations are more similar than they are different and both are based on ideologies of inequality/diversity. While promoting diversity, both ideologies are flawed in the sense that they ultimately reproduce structures of inequality while attempting to preserve cultural uniqueness of a “folk.” Under this ideological barrage of nationalism and multiculturalism, Sorbian narratives reveal the dynamics of surviving from historical and political perspectives while informing and affecting the current lived politics and linguistic choices.

This brief summary of Sorbian linguistic history holds many clues to contemporary language use and the interdependency of language and emotions. Debates about language suggest that Sorbs have held different ideas about the literary language potential and “standardized” forms. As a corollary, I also propose that Sorbs recognize temporal discourses about language use that involve generational differences as well as recognizable moments of linguistic change associated with differing standard language ideologies. Politically driven modifications of terms used to refer to Sorbs speak to a historical basis of tensions between thinking of Sorbs as monolingual and/or bilingual as well as the identification as Germans or Sorbs independently. In my analysis of linguistic data, three broad themes—identity, temporality, and standard language ideology—frame my arguments. As I consider the ways that Sorbs navigate disparate linguistic resources, I recognize that Sorbs acknowledge monolingualism and embrace linguistic diversity.

## **A Contemporary and Historical Dystopia**

Isn't it sharing of feelings of pleasure and distress which binds a community together—when (in so far as it is feasible) the whole citizen feels more or less the same pleasure or distress at gains or losses (Plato 1998: 176)

They think too much about the past.

—Charlotte, a self-described child of socialism

In talking about her co-workers and peers who also worked in the Sorbian institutions, Charlotte invokes the sociality of happiness and positions herself against others through the use of “they.” In other ways for her happiness involves a Platonic sharing of pleasure and/or distress. Ironically she differentiates herself from Sorbs who work in a Sorbian institutional complex. Her accusation, one of a historical obsession, suggests another perspective—one in which Sorbs must focus on the contemporary problems. Yet, she contradicts herself in her reflexive commentary on herself as a socialist child, a time when she felt happier, because there was more funding to support a richer and more vital Sorbian life.

Her nostalgic identification with socialism speaks to another historical conundrum, “Are things better now for the Sorbs than they were under socialism?” Historical narratives, both from a personal and communal standpoint, bond the Upper Sorbian community together in myriad ways. Ironically, Charlotte also contemplates the past as she apprehends her own contemporary state of well-being, because she implies that she is not happier now and in the moment where she has considered what she has lost—work that she enjoys even though she is employed in a Sorbian institution. Furthermore, temporal shifts coincide with macro-sociological transformations that affect people’s daily lives. Gains and losses are often associated with the materiality of languaged worlds: the loss of Sorbian villages, schools and loved ones, political attempts to attain sovereignty and protection, the broken promises of the

American government, Hitler, the Red Army, Stalin and the European Union to protect the Sorbian nation, the building of *Serbski Dom* during the mid-nineteenth century and its presently oddly separated status, the establishment of Domowina-Verlag during socialism (or, for that matter, the Sorbian National Ensemble and the bilingual theater) and its inability to fulfill its promises for supporting Sorbian language and culture as funding declines.

In the following chapter, I offer a description of the contemporary setting—one that is firmly rooted in the past and connected to Sorbian discourses of identity, temporality, and standard language ideology. More specifically, I set the foundation for understanding the animosities and shared orientations between language workers and ordinary people. In my ethnographic analysis in the following chapter, I continue this contextualization of the Sorbian community that I have begun in Chapters 1 and 2. More specifically, I analyze troubles talk and local experiences with economic discourses to expose the dynamics of diversity as part of the lived politics of indistinction.

#### Key to Font Distinctions

<i>Italicized</i>	Sorb
<u>Underlined</u>	German
SMALL CAPS	Emphasis

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<sup>1</sup> Sorbs may protect traditional culture by wearing the “*narodni drasta* (national costume)” or by using some variant of the standardized literary language.

<sup>2</sup> I will reflect on my monolingual bias in Chapter 4 as it affected my research and on linguistic practices more directly in Chapter 5.

<sup>3</sup> Barker (2000b) argues that the transition from German-speaking Wends used before socialism to German-speaking Sorbs during socialism epitomizes a socialist transformation of identity. The multivalent term “Wend” resonates with changing ideological conditions and views of language/identity in Sorbian discourses. Yet now the terms used to refer to Sorbs have changed again to “bilingual Sorbs” in Upper Lusatia and “Wends” in Lower Lusatia. Possibly the current use of “Wends” for the historically Protestant segment of the Sorbian communities is also a subtle hint at the greater degree of endangerment faced by Sorbs living near Cottbus, an hour from Berlin.

<sup>4</sup> During the socialist period the communist party (KPD) expressed concerns that about 30% of the Domowina members had been members of the Nazi party (Barker 1999b: 31).

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<sup>5</sup> Bei dem Reichstagswahlen stimmten die Lausitz überwiegend national-sozialistischen. Das Verhältnis der Wenden zu den Nationalsozialisten ist positiv. Die Wenden sehen im neuen Deutschland den Anbruch besserer Zeiten (Mešank 2003: 51).

Translation:

From the Parliament's decision, the Lusatians are predominately for National Socialism. The relationship between the Wends and National Socialists is positive. The Wends see in the New Germany a beginning of a better time.

<sup>6</sup> Die rest unmittelbar nach der Machtübernahme im Januar 1933 eingeleitet, zeichnete sich durch einen offenen Terror aus (Kunze 1995: 61)

Translation:

The remaining assumption of power immediately began in 1933, they distinguished themselves through an outspoken terror.

<sup>7</sup> The publications of the Berlin-Dahlem (PuSte) which housed Volkdeutschen Forschungsgemeinschaften (VFG) and the Nord und Ost deutsch Forschungsgemeinschaft (NOFG) include Nazi discussion about ethnic minorities (the Sorbs and the Sudeten Germans). Sievert in a NOFG publication, in April 1937 laid out the Nazi view of the Sorbs.

<sup>8</sup> Taking an increasingly racialized stance toward Sorbian activities, the Nazi government banned or restricted several organizations including the Lusatians' Peasant Union and *Sokoł*, a Sorbian sports organization. The Nazi government banned all Sorbian publications except for the Catholic newspaper and transferred Sorbian teachers and priests to other areas; by 1938, Sorb was no longer taught in the schools (Barker 2000: 19).

<sup>9</sup> Dem nationalsozialistischen Trachten nach Totaler Erfassung der Deutschen der Deutschen, der Nichtdeutschen und besonders der Juden im Reich konnte die Volkszählung vom 16. Juni 1933 nicht entsprechen, weil sie noch weitgehend. Nach Grundsätzen aus der Weimarer Republik durchgeführt wurde. Auch hatte man damals in Partei und Staat zwar eine vage Vorstellung davon, wer „Arier“ und wer „Nichtarier“ sei. Wer aber eigentlich Jude was and wer nicht, war noch in noch größern Umfang anklar Klarheit im Sinne der Nationalsozialisten schufen hier erst so das so genannten Nürnberger Rassengesetz vom 15. September 1935 und insbesondere die Erste Verordnung vom 14. November 1935 zum Reichsbürgergesetz, wo fest-geschrieben wurde, wer der „Rasse“ nach Jude oder jüdischer Mischling war und welcher jüdische Mischling als Jude zu gelten hatte (Förster 2003: 87).

Translation:

The National Socialist attitude for the whole registration for the Germanness of Germans, the non-Germans and especially the Jews in the Third Reich the census on July 16, 1933, could not speak for, because it was still in process. It would be enforced by the laws of the Weimar Republic. Also, in fact, one had in the Party and the state a vague idea that who an "Aryan" and a "non-Aryan" was. Who was truly a Jew and who wasn't; it was clear in the large scale. Clear, in the sense of National Socialism produced the well-known Nuremberg race law on September 15, 1935, and especially the first enforcement of Reich's law on November 15, 1935, when the Jews and the mixed Jews were viewed as Jews.

<sup>10</sup> Anzugeben ist das Volk, dem der einzelne sich innerlich verbunden fühlt und zu dem er sich bekennt, also deutsch oder dänisch, polnisch, englisch u. dgl. Die Volkszugehörigkeit ist nicht mit der Staatsangehörigkeit oder der Muttersprache zu verwechseln und kann davon abweichen. Es soll auch nicht die Stammeszugehörigkeit (wie z.B. bayersich, sächisch, wendisch, schlesisch, masurisch, and friesisch) eingetragen wurden. [Hervorhebung F.F.] Ein Bekenntnis zu zwei Völkern ist nicht möglich. Für Kinder unter 16 Jahren ist die Volkszugehörigkeit des Erziehungsberechtigt bestimmend. (Förster citing Reichministerialblatt 2003: 88).

Translation:

The people are to declare to which ethnicity they feel especially linked and this is to be recognized as the German, Danish, Polish, English, and so forth. The ethnic belonging does not change with the state or with the mother language and it can differ from it. It cannot be registered as a regional (for example Bavarian, Saxon, Wend, Schleisen. A denomination of two ethnicities is not possible. For children under the age of 16, their ethnic belonging is certainly the parents.

<sup>11</sup> Sorben unterschiedlicher Weltanschauung und politischer Orientierung litten in Konzentrationslagern und Gefängnissen. Darunter waren der Lehrer und Heimatsforscher Jan Mešank, der Domowina-Vorsitzende Pawoł Nedo, der Rechtsanwalt Jurij Cyž, der Pfarrer Jan Cyž, und der Kommunist Korla Janak, andere wie die Dienstmagd Marie Meškankec, der Kaplan Alojs Andricki, die Publistin Marja Grólmusec, der Arbeiter Jan Mrózak oder die Bäuerin Hana Pawlikowa bezahlten ihren Widerstand gegen den nationalsozialismus mit dem Leben (Kunze 1995: 64).

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Translation:

The Sorbs of various world views and political orientation were imprisoned in concentration camps and prisons. Under the names were the teacher and Heimat researcher, Jan Mešank, the Domowina director Pawoł Nedo, the Judge Jury Coy, the communist Karla Jana, others like office magistrate Mare Mešank, the chaplain Alojs Andricki, and the publicist Marja Grólmusec, the worker Jan Mrózac, and the farmer Hanna Pawlikowa paid for their opposition to National Socialism with their lives.

<sup>12</sup> See Ermakova (1987) for a discussion of the dialectal division of the Sorbian community.

## CHAPTER THREE

### A Lived Linguistic Politics

Mental moods are contagious and the man who enjoys little will prove a kill-joy to others...I have noticed that the usual pretext for annoying people is solicitude about their welfare (Brinton 1893: 12)

Complaints are linguistic forms of social engagement. Troubles talk, like all talk, is designed for particular recipients, so that the utterance is best seen as actively emergent. Recipients can and do shape complaints by their ongoing engagement in conversation with the troubles teller (Wilce 1998:50)

Not during my pilot ethnographies (2004, 2005), but only after a few weeks during my dissertation fieldwork (2006), did I begin to wonder if I was a “kill-joy” to others because I ironically was enjoying my change in circumstances. Yet in asking Sorbs about their lives, I often was forcing them to face a researcher who was excited to begin her research, happy to be in Lusatia, and definitely not sharing the mental mood of the Sorbian or German communities. Although I did not know it, I was marking myself as an outsider because unbeknownst to me I was acting like an American who had taken to heart the words of the Declaration of Independence—“life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Benjamin Franklin’s words are so woven into my being that I could not imagine circumstances in which “happiness” was understood by Sorbs as threatened and not a basic human right. Only when my emotional outlook shifted to reconsider unhappiness or emotional discontent as I participated in troubles talk—did I begin to understand Sorbian narratives and evaluations of language use.

In responding to my questions, bilingual Sorbs often shared their worries about their families, everyday obligations to complete their daily business, or their inability to escape Sorbian linguistic politics. Yet there were two sides to our interactions. I was beginning to understand that many Sorbs appeared or spoke as though they enjoyed little, talked about their

troubles, and found common spaces to commiserate about their lives. These dynamics represent an embodied self-distancing or politics of indistinction; Sorbs often did not want to be around other Sorbs.

## **Politics of Indistinction**

Such distancing takes two forms in the Sorbian community in ways that exemplify Gregory Bateson's (1935) understanding of "drastic disturbances" to the fabric of cultural contact and social relations. While Bateson (1958 [1936]) recognizes the importance of emotional factors in social milieu, he does not relate emotions to other discourses and leaves them as the psychological fate of *Iatmul*. Rather than considering Sorbs as helpless, I argue that their engagement in troubles talk, distancing, and self-silencing provides a defense, albeit problematic, against continuing threats to their survival as Sorbs.

What is central and enduring about Bateson's insights, from a theoretical perspective, are the roles of affect in both symmetric and complimentary schismogenesis. Deborah Tannen offers an insightful comparison of these dynamics in linguistic practices.

Symmetrical schismogenesis refers to a situation where one person becomes annoyed and another person raises their voice in response. In the end they are both shouting, each reacting to the other by intensifying the same situation: raising voices. In contrast complementary schismogenesis would describe another situation in which the person becomes annoyed and the other lowers her voice in order to communicate that a raised voice is unacceptable (Tannen 2006: 183)

During my pilot ethnography (2004), I identified a form of symmetrical schismogenesis when we, participants in the Summer Course for Sorbian Language and Culture, would greet all passer-bys with a Sorbian "hello." This practice compares to other forms of symmetrical schismogenesis when Sorbs demand Sorbian language use; for example, in Sorbian-only spaces.

In Sorbian social relations such activities often occur and dialogic replies are forms of

metaphorical shouting. From other Sorbian speakers, I learned that talk about the Sorbian community and its troubles also felt overbearing and could become a way of speaking loudly. Feeling frustrated many of these Sorbs would want to “move” to a quieter space—one that is free of being Sorb or speaking the language. When Sorbs refuse to inhabit Sorbian spaces, attend Sorbian activities, stop speaking the language, or otherwise limit their linguistic or cultural engagement with other Sorbs, they enact forms of complementary schismogenesis. By moving away from the Sorbian community, Sorbs engage in this complementary schismogenesis oftentimes after experiencing forms of symmetrical schismogenesis entailed in aggressive discourses about language use or cultural identity.

Another aspect of schismogenesis includes intellectual and local ideas about mobility. Blommaert (2004a) calls for a “sociolinguistics of mobility,” focused on narratives of “getting out of here” in order to achieve upward social mobility in contexts of language shift. While his points are valid, I draw attention to local discourses that are embodied acts of self-silencing or practices that make Sorbs indistinguishable from Germans or ways that Sorbs “get out” of the Sorbian community. In the introduction, I addressed migration and relocation outside of Lusatia, but in this chapter I ask about Sorbs who remain in Lusatia, but feel some degree of self-imposed alienation. For many Sorbs experiences of schismogenesis entail a physical relocation to another part of Europe or away from Lusatia. However, for other Sorbs the process encompasses a change in their activities and linguistic practices that correspond to not speaking the language or distancing themselves from the Sorbian community. Thus, distancing emerges in the emotional discourses through which many Sorbs express resentment and anger



about the daily linguistic politics. Their emotional stances arise not only from an interstitial relationship between German and Sorbian differences but also from Sorbian-Sorbian relations.

My identification of talk about problems as significant compares with Wilce's (1998) interest in troubles talks. In his study of troubles talk in Bangladesh, Wilce considers deictic use of "I," the whispery creak in utterances, and other prosodic markers—indicators of performative aspects of particular genres of talk that impact social relations. He develops an argument that troubles talk "helps fashion the experience of trouble, constituting troubles encounters as variably useful, comforting, and supportive or frustrating and conflictual" (Wilce 1998: 238). Sorbs also experience a similar range of affective "states-of-being" in worrying, complaining, and figuratively shouting about their personal and community troubles. This set of discursive practices in which the person and community are intertwined and conflated motivates Sorbs to pull away from the Sorbian community while allowing Sorbs to become more Sorbian.

Embedded in the mechanics of becoming Sorb there is an objectification of the Sorbian language, a process not always associated with happiness. This dynamic is an intersection of language and emotions exposing multiple historical transformations from individual and community perspectives. The objectification of language entails ideas about the Sorbian language as an endangered object: one that is associated with books or other instantiations of Sorbian utterances, buildings—home or public spaces—where Sorb is spoken. This objectification can also extend to people who can be counted and reified as walking and talking monuments to language use.<sup>1</sup> As a corollary, Sorbs connect their sentiments about language

use to economic discourses, a shibboleth for the current discussions of Sorbian linguistic and cultural endangerment, as well as an influence on Sorbian social relations.

In my arguments I wish to build here on Alexei Yurchak's discussion of the politics of indistinction. While Yurchak uses the performance art of the late Soviet years to reframe a type of alternative politics, he wants to "broaden our understanding of what politics is, what forms it takes, what effects [and affective discourses] it may produce" (Yurchak 2008: 201). For many of these artistic groups, inspiration came from images of death and the absurdity of life. As artists who investigate death, their activities are similar to daily encounters that Sorbs have with ideas of cultural and linguistic death as well as forms of state control from the German state and from the Sorbian community.

Another aspect of the Soviet artists' performances involves language use in learning how to speak incoherently with grunts and long pauses as well as avoiding analysis of their actions. This manipulation of language and avoidance of analysis resonates with many of my obstacles during data collection. For example, I asked many Sorbs about the political meanings of the play "*Złoty Palc* (The Golden Thumb)," a play about finding and saving a magical plant. To me, the magical plant symbolized Sorbian language and culture. Yet, many Sorbs refused to discuss the deeper meaning of the play while some saw a connection exclusively to Sorbian language loss. Even though I discussed the play's message with members of the Sorbian theater community, these professional Sorbs read the meaning of the play differently as protecting the language and culture of the Sorbian community, but they refused to elaborate calling the play a "fairy tale." In contrast, many Sorbs who saw the play adamantly declined to consider the

meaning of the play at all as being about Sorbian survival, but instead reflected on the play as a tale about land reform.

When I asked about the political meaning of the play, a great number of Sorbs (around 40) became frustrated or agreed with any option I presented. I questioned Sorbs not only immediately after the performance, but also during interviews as a topic (October –December 2006). Their differences of opinion speak to a complicated emotional dynamic regarding survival. Through outright denial of linkages to language use, many Sorbs resisted considering the linguistic significance of the play. In contrast, when they did agree with me such agreement was limited and almost perfunctory. Perhaps, Sorbian responses were not as extreme as those of the Soviet artists, but they were equally dramatic. Thus, I adapt Yurchak's insights to reconsider resistance in the Sorbian community to include this form of silence. Furthermore, their evaluations signal another narrative of displacement in which they distanced themselves from Sorbian discussions about linguistic survival.

While Sorbian politics of indistinction involves evasion and avoidance of Sorbian and German gazes and acting bilingual, Sorbs do not necessarily feel a personal emotional lift. In changing their bilingual status either figuratively or linguistically, they appear monolingual. In Sara Ahmed's reading of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, Ahmed astutely recognizes that Clarissa experiences a life journey of disappearance, becoming invisible as people on the street do not see her as "Clarissa" but, rather, as "Mr. Richard Dalloway" (Ahmed 2010: 72-74). Yet, in her growing awareness of her inconspicuousness she is not happier but, rather, conscious of what she has given up for "happiness" (Ahmad 2010: 69). As I contemplate troubles talk in the

Sorbian community, I do so with an understanding that Sorbs are very aware of what they have given up and lost over time as well as what they gained—an intense awareness of other Sorbs.

## Sorbian Troubles Talk

Like Breughel's portrayal of Icarus' fall, Sorbs are often invisible on a global stage, yet that does not mean that they are invisible to other Sorbs. Rather, Sorbs may find themselves under greater scrutiny from other Sorbs. Thus, intense attention from Sorbs may entail talking about the linguistic practices of other Sorbs.

### Examples of Troubles Talk

- Sie sprechen Sorbisch nur da (They [Sorbs who work in the Sorbian institution] speak Sorb only there [referring to a workspace in a Sorbian institution]).
- Sie sprechen auf Sorbisch nicht zu Hause (They do not speak Sorb at home).
- Sie arbeiten nicht (They do not work).
- Sie sind immer bei Kaffee (They are always on a coffee break).

Whether a non-professional Sorb commenting on a Sorb acting as a Sorb in a professional setting uses utterances similar to the ones listed above, those people who made these critiques were linking language use to specific spaces and, at the same time objectifying other Sorbs as hypocritical or otherwise non-acceptable language users. Surprisingly as I came to know Sorbs who worked in various institutions and make being Sorb their professional life, I too recognized their complicated identities as many chose more German lifeways outside of their professions, for example, marrying a German speaker or sending their children to German schools.

This intracommunity surveillance connects notions of Sorbian and German languaged worlds to historical politics and everyday lives. In framing the historical and contemporary dynamics of unhappy discourses, I will make several interventions in this discussion. First, I

highlight Sorbian-Sorbian relations. Second, I offer a foundation for understanding the range of emotional discourses that influence understandings of Sorbian language use. Third, I argue that discourses of unhappiness and an imagining of language as an “unhappy object” or one tied to certain spaces contributes to linguistic politics of indistinction. Fourth and finally, I demonstrate that Sorbian narratives of not wanting to be Sorb coincide with narratives of displacement. In repositioning themselves as Sorbian speakers outside the Sorbian community and often interacting mainly in Budyšin sites, those Sorbs who have become “professional” Sorbs not only reproduce a German/Sorbian hegemony but they mitigate the negative effects of German linguistic prejudice and indifference to Sorbian dilemmas through maintaining a public Sorbian presence.

However, those professionals as noted may choose not to incorporate Sorbianness into their nonprofessional lives. In the Sorbian village communities similar acts of withdrawal also occur. “Non-professional” Sorbs may refuse to visit certain sites of Sorbian language use, take part in Sorbian public events, or go to the places where the Sorbian “professionals” work. Instead these Sorbs speak Sorb only at home or do not “earn” their income from the Sorbian institutions. Ironically, the critiques that I listed earlier expressing concerns about professional Sorbs are paralleled in similar tensions perceived in connection with rural Sorbs. Both professional and non-professionals are criticized for not speaking Sorb or for devoting only aspect of their lives to Sorbian language and culture. Yet, many Sorbs strategically walk this line by rejecting and refusing to take part in some Sorbian interactions both linguistically and socially while trying to sustain language use and cultural values (at work or with their families).

Furthermore, this politics of indistinction brings Sorbs together in several ways. As Sorbs avoid some arenas of Sorbian life or recall historical discourses, they focus on sources of unhappiness. Linguistic practices and dialogues about economic frustrations often constitute the major culprit in Sorbian decisions to not be visible as Sorbian speakers. Sorbian confusion and frustration about their national status also reinforce desires to take part in a politics of indistinction; i.e. if I am German I speak German but, if I am Sorb, then I speak Sorb. By choosing one or the other language, Sorbs are forced to choose one form or another of linguistic silencing. Yet in their linguistic practices code-switching is no panacea. Instead code-switching is a delicate operation because, as I would come to find out, it is characterized by multiple repertoires and not just German or Sorbian ones. In my analysis of semi-standardized practices (Chapter 5) and analysis of Ferdinand translations (Chapter 6), I argue that Sorbs attach many associations to German and Sorbian language use that create conflicting frictions when moments of choice arise. Furthermore, Sorbs reinterpret alternation between languages as another form of subtle balancing and personal tastes. The struggle to find a happy transition pattern is often foiled by concern with linguistic balancing among many Sorbian and German language varieties. To take this one step further, Sorbs may fear that too much of or another set of resources would cause one to fall over.

Kristina, a young woman who wanted to work in the Sorbian institutions and had taken courses in Sorbian linguistics at the University of Leipzig, told me she liked my code-switching between Sorb and English as well as German and Sorb. She elaborated saying that Sorbs do not integrate Sorbian resources into German utterances. Finally, she stated emphatically that Sorbs never mix Sorb and English. Despite her description of code-switching, Kristina's evaluation

demonstrates common ideas about code-switching suggesting that a strict maintenance of German-Sorbian linguistic borders is ideal if the practice is to be done at all. Thus, Sorbs are very strategic when crossing the “muddy waters” of multilingual boundaries (Sankoff 2001: 249). Kristina’s analysis demonstrates that German is a marked language when speaking Sorb. And the opposite is true. My work is meant to fill a gap in research interests by considering variation in a multilingual community in which something beyond code-switching is the rule. In understanding how Sorbs make linguistic choices, it is necessary to consider local ideas about the linguistic economy that impact linguistic variation.

## A Linguistic Economy: Languaged Worlds and Unhappy Objects

Indeed, a politics of indistinction is a twist on Pierre Bourdieu’s (1994) classic discussion of distinction and his notions of a linguistic market (Bourdieu 1977b, 1991).<sup>2</sup> In his seminal treatise, Bourdieu (1984) contemplates how individuals may prefer a piece of music, for example, the *Well-Tempered Klavier*, over another. Their tastes are indicative of class-based distinctions, but Bourdieu fails to acknowledge double preferences. Bourdieu uses the same type of dichotomous reasoning in his consideration of linguistic markets. To invert Bourdieu’s logic, people may like multiple options— some choices that may be indistinguishable vis-à-vis class while preferring other choices that is defined by bourgeois tastes.

This logic also applies to linguistic settings. A linguistic market, like any other imagining of exchange, not only involves reciprocity and structures social relations often in unexpected ways, but also entails personal preferences and feelings about language use, languaged worlds, and linguistic objects. Through relying on such dimensions of speech in social contexts, Sorbs become producers and consumers of linguistic practices with confounding positive and

negative valences. Furthermore, as producers and consumers, Sorbs work, buy, and sell in a market. From my ethnographic data I saw that “‘the market’ confronts people [differently] in diverse contexts and is not experienced as a purely economic phenomenon” (Humphrey and Mandel 2002: 1). Adding to this observation about the market, it might appear in conversations where people exchange words to which they attribute values, in the emotions of people participating in economic transactions and linguistic exchanges, and in policies designed to promote one language over another as an ongoing legacy of structures of inequality (Bauman and Briggs 2003).

## Langued Objects

In unpacking how the Sorbian language becomes an unhappy object, I address proximity, taste as a good feeling or preference in Bourdieu’s logic, and silencing. I use two types of examples. The first exposes Sorbian feelings about the newspaper and the second explores affective comments through a summary of types of troubles talk. My understanding of “unhappy objects” is not a strict interpretation of material culture as a physical object but, rather, as an understanding of how a person or language becomes objectified as a thing that that can be evaluated.

In defining a cultural world, Dorothy Holland and colleagues (1998) emphasize a world of relationships that constitute a “peopled world.” Their notion of a figured world bridges Bourdieu’s insights about fields and individuals’ positions in relation to one another with Lev Vygotsky’s insights about activities. However, the question remains: how do languages become objects and how do people feel about these objects? As Holland and her colleagues theorize Vygotskian logic, they consider material objects and artifacts that “evoke the worlds to which



they were relevant, and position individuals with respect to those worlds” (Holland et.al 1998: 63).

Thus, when Sorbs improvise with their linguistic resources, they also create an intimate terrain in which they learn how to manipulate ideas about language use and Sorbian identity markers. In making comments about other Sorbs’ linguistic tool kits, as Holland and colleagues would frame it, Sorbs locate other Sorbs in multiple languaged worlds. The toolkits they use include evaluations of identity signals, talk of Sorbian troubles, and commodified markers of Sorbian selves—national dress, bumper stickers, print media, especially the Sorbian newspaper, or other paraphernalia associated with the Sorbian community.

When Benedict Anderson (1983) theorized that a newspaper brings a national community together, he was addressing ideas of national camaraderie built through doing the same thing at the same time every day. As Benedict describes a Hegelian mass ceremony:

Yet each communicant [newspaper reader] is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion (Anderson 1983: 35).

In reading or not reading *Serbske Nowiny*, the daily afternoon newspaper, many Sorbs take part in an emotional and embodied interaction with a Sorbian object. Yet, I must point out that Sorbian newspaper readers are usually aware of the identity of Sorbs who may be the subject of an article unlike Anderson’s young man who read about a destitute vagrant. As the following ethnographic example shows, this object often carries unhappy associations. When Sorbs told me that they did not want to buy the newspaper, they emotionally and practically distanced themselves from the Sorbian community. Furthermore, they were refusing to take part in a national activity.

Economically, buying the paper may not be a financial burden, but I knew of many Sorbs who cancelled their subscription or did not buy the newspaper. Their choices implicitly expressed discomfort with Sorbian linguistic politics. Starting in September 2006, I started reading the Sorbian newspaper on a daily basis. At first I found it difficult to understand which motivated my construction of an electronic dictionary, because there was no Sorbian –English dictionary.<sup>3</sup> As I plodded through the newspaper articles, I found it easier to make sense of the text, although my Sorbian competence was not near that of a native speaker. I also used reading the newspaper as a methodological tool. When I asked other Sorbs to help me understand, they reluctantly assisted me. Their reluctance was an early indicator of the mixed emotions about the Sorbian literary language use, and more specifically journalistic writing.<sup>4</sup> Then, in December 2006, I bought a subscription for Jan Buck, the seventy year old father of my fiancée who did not learn German until he was thirteen. Each day he would religiously spread out the newspaper and read it cover to cover and often kept a dictionary close at hand. His practice of reading the newspaper struck me, because I had seen many Sorbs quickly flipping through the newspaper-too fast to read it in my opinion. When I asked other Sorbs why they did not read the newspaper, some said that they wanted to save the money. Other explanations that Sorbs gave me ranged from believing that the content was too negative to not liking the language of the text often saying, “das klingt komisch” (it sounds funny).

For the purpose of my discussion here, I want to emphasize the symbolic and embodied practices associated with reading the newspaper, but I will return to specific linguistic concerns (see Chapters 4, 5, and 6). In changing their proximity to the newspaper ( i.e. not buying or reading it, cancelling a subscription, or looking at it in an almost obligatory way), Sorbs

distanced themselves from Sorbian politics or language use by establishing their chosen proximity to a languaged object. Furthermore, not reading the newspaper coincides with self-silencing. It may be a precursor to giving up the Sorbian language or an indicator of limited everyday Sorbian language use. As a final note, evaluations of not liking the content of the newspaper expose Sorbian tastes and an implicit recognition of problems in the Sorbian community.

In applying John Locke's ideas about the sensation of taste and good feeling, Sara Ahmed advances Pierre Bourdieu's notions of taste. Thus, linguistic resources become reflective of personal tastes in the Sorbian community, many times peppered with repertoires associated with various spaces and types of language use. Consider when Sorbs say,

das klingt komisch (that sounds funny);  
das ist Scheiz[e]sprache (that is shitty language),  
das ist quatsch (that is nonsense);  
*to je katastrofe* (it is a catastrophe);  
or even, es gibt kein Wort für das auf Sorbisch (there is no word for that in Sorb)

I heard such comments in reference to language used in plays or texts, in the Sorbian institutions, and at Sorbian events. These utterances are more obvious forms of troubles talk, that reveal personal tastes about language use. In making a distinction between good and bad taste they recreate a relationship with language as an object. In order to get a bad taste out of the mouth, to borrow from Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), a Sorb often moves to a different place in the linguistic and emotional terrain or moves away from those objects or spaces while positioning other Sorbs in that undesirable space. Of these utterances, I investigate "das klingt komisch (that sounds funny)" at length. This expression is not only a lament about language use, but also captures of the ironies of Sorbian linguistic choices (see Chapter 4).

In examining the following utterances, Sorbs express a desire to distance themselves and a yearning to be free from linguistic and everyday political pressures. Examples of troubles talk include:

1. Ich will im Garten arbeiten (I want to work in the garden).
2. Ich möchte nicht da gehen (I do not want to go there).
3. Ich kann nicht treffen, weil ich Ferien haben werde (I cannot meet [with you], because I go on vacation [soon].)
4. Ich hab[e] zuviel Stress (I am under too much pressure [literally, I have too much stress]).
5. All of the money goes for salaries.
6. Das ist nicht mein Problem (That is not my problem).
7. Sie haben die Sprache augelegt (They have given up the language [literally, They have put the language to one side.])
8. Er [or] sie ist in dem Ferien (He or she is on vacation).

Statements like 3 and 4 are examples of reasons that Sorbs gave me when they did not or could not meet with me. Indirectly statements like 3, 5, and 7 link emotional reactions to economics. To explain further, references to vacation suggest that Sorbs employed in the institutions have the financial means to go on a leisure trip. I also noted that Sorbs spoke of vacations a note of pride or while others denigrated Sorbs who took too many vacations in their opinion. Many of these declarations, that hint at displeasure, also employ deictic references to the speaker—"I" or other Sorbs—"they" as attributes of troubles talk (Wilce 1998). Such utterances constitute a metalinguistic and affective patterning of Sorbian identities. As affective discourses, they accomplish various forms of social work.

As language becomes an object, a Sorb can put it to one side or change his or her proximity to it. This process of giving up the language either at a specific moment (by not reading the newspaper or not going to a Sorbian event) or as a life decision inherently becomes a political act in which Sorbs are no longer distinguishable as Sorbian speakers. Now as I shift to

address the category of language workers, I expose the intersections of economic processes and the people who work expressly with languages. Their emotional states are particularly relevant because I worked extensively with them in translating Munro Leaf's (1936) *The Story of Ferdinand* (see Chapter 6). The following theoretical discussion precedes the stories and the mixed feelings of language workers in the Sorbian community and counterpoises them with the lived experiences of ordinary people.

### Language Workers and Ordinary People

My identification of language workers exposes another nuance to the Sorbian ecology – one of being Sorb and speaking Sorb. Although I argue that both play a significant role in identity politics and linguistic practices, this distinction entails different strands of nationalism (Pujolar 2007). In discussing the Catalan community, “being” corresponds to ethnic nationalism and “speaking” corresponds to civic conceptions through participation in political processes and in civil society (Pujolar 2007). Relating this to the category of language workers, I argue that language professionals are invested in particular types of language use in endangered language communities. Furthermore, certain types of linguistic practices associated with language workers and ordinary people form the basis for linguistic variation through two broadly defined registers, the subject of my dissertation. Like Monica Heller, I realize that the term “language workers” “is likely to remain controversial for some time to come, since it brings out ... profound contradictions in how we see language” (Heller 2005: 6), but it is a useful expression to capture the significant groups of Sorbs who professionalize their language and culture and embrace a civic brand of nationalism by “speaking” Sorb.

At its most basic level, a language worker is a person whose employment depends on their language skills. In the Sorbian linguistic economy language workers differ from ordinary Sorbian people, because language workers support themselves economically through language maintenance tasks. This broad definition can include translators, writers, linguists, and academics as well as office workers, teachers or educators, journalists, and theater/museum/institute employees as Bourdieu describes it:

Through its grammarians, who fix and codify legitimate usage, and its teachers who impose and inculcate it through innumerable acts of correction, the educational system tends in this area as elsewhere to produce the need for its own services and products, i.e. the labor and instruments of correction (Bourdieu 1991: 60-61).

Bourdieu's categories of language workers—grammarians and teachers—recognizes that language workers tend to service a linguistic imagining of correctness. Yet, the grammarians and educators of whom Bourdieu speaks also market their work related linguistic competencies as they promote one linguistic variety.

Another critical component of language workers involves how employees are “caught between standardization and flexibility, horizontal management and quality control, and technical versus authentic understandings of the value of language itself” (Heller 1: 2005). Monica Heller's interest in language workers covers a range of positions and grows out of her insights on linguistic commodification. Thus she argues that language workers are a new category of workers.

Heller points out that in a globalized new economy, “now we sell our intellectual and communicative labour, both as skill and cultural artifact” (Heller 2005: 5). In her theorizing she acknowledges that historical movement of people, goods and ideas but posits that language industry (or a sociolinguistic economy) and language workers emerge as new players. Contra-

Bourdieu, Heller's presupposition is that language workers represent a recent response to skilling of linguistic labor under globalization. This assumes that endangered language communities have not been historically connected to symbolic domination, standardization processes, and notions of authenticity as material capital associated with objects (dictionaries, grammars, and print media) of language, and with national identities displayed in dress or marketing of folk identities in touristic markets.

In challenging this characterization of "new" in reference to language workers, I draw on two arguments. First, like Anthony Giddens (1990) and David Harvey (1989), I consider globalization to involve a profound reorganization of space and time. As a consequence the nature of social life is changing because people have fewer face-to-face interactions. As in the Sorbian community decreasing contact with other Sorbs is not just about the ability to have phone conversations or communicate electronically, it also involves a demographic shift—there are fewer Sorbs. Although this demographic shift has concerned members of this national minority especially with the loss of Sorbs during the socialist period, it also is becoming more critical with recent population statistic of 18,000 Sorbs (see also Chapters 2 and 4).<sup>5</sup>

Another aspect of this argument involves linkages between culture and places. Thus changes in attachments often entail processes of deterritorialization, when speakers do not live in their locations they were born. Yet at the same time many local communities are developing stronger ties to their homelands even if they have moved away. Historically professional and vocational language workers often travel to new locales, interact with foreigners, and often promote one language variety. For that matter, Jan Arnošt Smoler, co-founder of *Maćica Serbska*—the historical predecessor of Domowina exemplifies a language worker. He

repeatedly travelled to Russia to garner Panslavic support and was active in producing dictionaries. I argue that language workers are not novel categories of worker but are a labor category based in nationalizing discourses. I suggest that the Sorbian community has historically recognized language workers like Smoler. However, I also recognize that ideas about language workers in the current globalized moment are different but not necessarily new than their more nationally defined counterparts.

Heller lays out two discourses of language competence and commodification based on notions of authenticity and expertise. Through their co-emergence, differences between expertise and authenticity mutually charge one another with greater value. I appropriate this insight in my discussions of distinctions between authenticity and expertise (see also Chapter 5 and 6). However, I also suggest that Sorbs historically have experienced this tension themselves and yet that the dynamics is constantly changing.

Throughout eastern Europe after the collapse of socialism (1989) language workers experienced obstacles in reproducing a one language-one culture-one nation ideology that resonated with earlier historical struggles to establish national identities. National consciousness took on new contours as national boundaries shifted. For example, Neil Bermel suggests that after the collapse of socialism people who worked on Czech spelling reform developed a sort of linguistic allergic reaction to foreign elements (Bermel 2007: 116). Furthermore, this process of purification signaled a strengthening of national ideals and a desire to take care with the language.

Similarly, in Romania and Slovakia, Zsuzsa Csergo (2007) posits that a renewed interest in national linguistic space provides evidence of unresolved issues of territoriality arguing that



citizens feel multiple attachments to nation-states. In her opinion, this inclusion of English elements in national standards is not about making English a “*lingua franca*,” but rather locally experienced national discourses. Thus, there is evidence that not all language workers in the globalized market feel an obligation to integrate English elements or to use English, a claim made by Heller. Another aspect of language work in Eastern Europe involves mixed attachments to the authoritative and expert language use in the language disputes of the political elites which may not match those of their constituencies (Csérgo 2007: 205-206). Thus differing language attitudes affect language work and resonate not only with debates in the Czech Republic, Romania, and Slovakia but also with different perspectives on language use in the Sorbian community between the ordinary people and language workers. I address these differences in more depth in Chapters 4 and 5.

Yet, many academic discussions of nationalist desires in contexts of changing linguistic standards also fail to offer an ethnographic consideration of labor and affective discourses in global contexts. Thus, I turn to other anthropological investigations of workers in globalized markets to expose the feelings of displacement, confusions and changing guidelines for workers that apply across multiple global contexts. These emotional dynamics can entail worries about being discarded or obsolete, shame at an upset moral order, expressions of anger, frustration at their demotions. These emotional discourses may lead workers to find themselves confused about new policies and expectations (Blum 2000; Fairclough 2006, 2009; Friedman 2007; Gowan 2000; Ries 2002; Rofel 1999; Zabusky 2002).

Jack Friedman asserts that in the new global (dis)order, Jiu Valley miners “sink into themselves” as a “response to the profound injustice in the world” and to the ambivalence of

policy makers and international finance organizations regarding the lack of gainful employment and shared participation in governance (Friedman 2007: 247). This process resonates with Sorbian workers and ordinary people who experience a sinking into the self as they are ousted from decision-making processes and confront their own inability to make a difference in the Sorbian community. Although Friedman relates the trauma in Romania to shame, I propose that the emotional responses of Sorbs exemplify a distancing from other Sorbs and silencing in the Sorbian community. Thus, this political and embodied withdrawal is “sinking away” from the community for both language workers and ordinary people. The process engages figurative discourses of mobility and the politics of indistinction.

Related to a sinking into one self that may also entail depression, anxiety and outrage at work conditions, workers are also trying to survive. This process of adaptation involves personal and collective pasts. As Teresa Gowan describes Sam, Clarence, and Desmond, she asserts that these three homeless men have not always been marginalized and destitute. Through honest labor, or gathering recyclable objects, it is possible to maintain self-respect reflecting value systems learned in more prosperous times (Gowan 2000: 76). Yet their new occupations that entail reframing of the current landscape as honest work also correspond to a withdrawal from American society. The homeless become invisible to many people on the street, who may be unaware of their attempts to maintain self-respect.

Likewise, workers in the Sorbian sociolinguistic economy feel nostalgia for the dispossessed as they recycle linguistic objects, those associated with their own past growing up in the village, or for moments when the language use was more actively used in a wider array of spaces. At the same time Sorbs often desire to withdraw from scenes in which languages or

other cultural practices make them visible. For example, bilingual Sorbs may desire to retreat to the village and use Sorb as they would at home rather than at work or in public. For Sorbs, who work and do not labor in institutions, these dialogues reveal a precarious position in the Sorbian linguistic cultural economy. Heller makes a provocative statement about how language workers experience language as work-related competence “objectified as a skill or rendered invisible as a talent” (Heller 2008: 3). This distinction between a visible skill and a hidden authentic talent hints at the need for recognition of multiple types of language use. Furthermore, the complicated social and linguistic relationships between Sorbian language workers and ordinary people affect language use and identities. In my discussion of internalized monolingualism (See Chapters 5 and 6), I describe a local ideology that provides a way for Sorbs to refer to their authentic language use even if they have acquired new skills.

Ordinary people in the Sorbian community recognize language workers as different from them in various ways and not just through meta-linguistic critiques. By implication, their activities also suggest what ordinary people do to support the language (see also Besnier 2009). My motivation for exploring the concepts of language workers who labor in Budyšin and ordinary people with stronger leanings to Sorbian villages reflects recognition that the Sorbian community may actually be “a house divided.” Thus, in bilingual Lusatia language workers and ordinary people often feel isolation from the other imagined segment of the population. According to the perspective of ordinary people, Sorbian language workers often use Sorb in unacceptable ways as I have discussed in the gossip examples or by interacting mainly with their co-workers or other wage earners in the Sorbian linguistic economy. In

following discussions of the emergence of a methodological strategy in Chapter 4 and in analysis of linguistic data (Chapters 5 and 6), I detail the complexities of ordinary people in bilingual Lusatia. In this chapter, I argue that the stories of language workers merit attention in their struggles to speak Sorb and be Sorbian persons as players who are victims of standard, monolingual, and bilingual ideologies, like ordinary people, albeit with aspects of suffering related specifically to their labor.

Although I focus heavily on the emotional circumstances of language workers in this chapter, getting a feel for ordinary Sorbs requires an understanding of the way that Sorbs are Sorb. From living in the villages of Miltitz and Panschwitz-Kuckau, I came closer to an understanding of challenges of living in a mixed Sorbian-German village. Many Sorbs made a sincere effort to conduct everyday business in Sorb and organize their lives to “be Sorbian.” From going to a store where they could speak Sorb or to going to church services where they could hear a Sorbian liturgy, ordinary Sorbs often feel Sorbian language use is an intimate mode of communication to be used with family and friends. For example, Kristina grumbled about a new boyfriend who sent her a cell phone text in Sorb. She felt that he was trying to ingratiate himself to her by using Sorb. Yet ordinary Sorbs experience multiple threats to their happiness as linguistic agents of mish-mash. Not only do they feel a need to protect a language that they use freely in diverse ways, but also often feel resentful of Germans using Sorb to garner “favors.” Although many ordinary Sorbs reacted favorably to my attempts to speak Sorb to them, just as many of them appeared confused or even aggravated, at least initially, at these attempts.

During my research in a store a *Miřoćicy* (Miltitz [2007]), Angela, the store owner helped in lessening the “cold shoulder” that I hinted at above. She introduced me as the daughter-in-law of Jan Buck who had grown up in the village. As I relayed well wishes to him, I recognized the division in the Sorbian community as Buck poignantly told me to thank one or another of those who said hello but he did not make an effort to contact them directly. Even though Budyšin was only eight kilometers away from the village, Buck’s relocation speaks to another concern of ordinary Sorbs—loss of village Sorbs to Budyšin circles. Furthermore, the customers were surprised as I expressed my research interest in village talk or what they call “mish-mash,” practices that involve mixing of Sorbian and German resources.

Like many ordinary Sorbs, Angela staunchly defended her use of mish-mash and encouraged language use in customers young and old. As a resource for me she also patiently answered my questions about language use in Budyšin where she has experience as well. She also allowed the village men to gather behind the store and drink beers, because the men preferred to be there and socialize. When I asked then why they sat behind the store they said they did not want to go to a Kneipe (bar) where they felt uncomfortable speaking Sorb. To the point of keeping the store open later hours on Fridays, she tried to provide a Sorbian space in the village even though it was a financial struggle. We talked about the fact that she knew many of her customers were waiting on HARTZ IV (unemployment benefits) or other payments from the government. In an area where unemployment was approaching 25%, economic hardship was part of

everyday life. For this reason the beginning of the month was always busier than the end of the month.

In contrast, language workers were in a privileged position and the gossip about their work habits reflected well-founded resentment of economic disparities that puts Sorbs at each other throats. These Sorbian discourses about differences also entail intensification of differences in linguistic practices. To think about the range of unstable positions occupied by language workers and ordinary people some more, I propose that this dichotomous structuring also resonates with the politics of indistinction in which Sorbs become and/or choose to be absent from linguistic and political scenes as well as being readily visible as Sorbian speakers. Finally the relationships between these two broadly defined groups reveals multiple allegiances that I explore in my methodological discussion of urban-rural divide (see Chapter 4) as well as my analysis of Sorbian reactions to borrowings (see chapter 5) and *Ferdinand* translations (see Chapter 6).

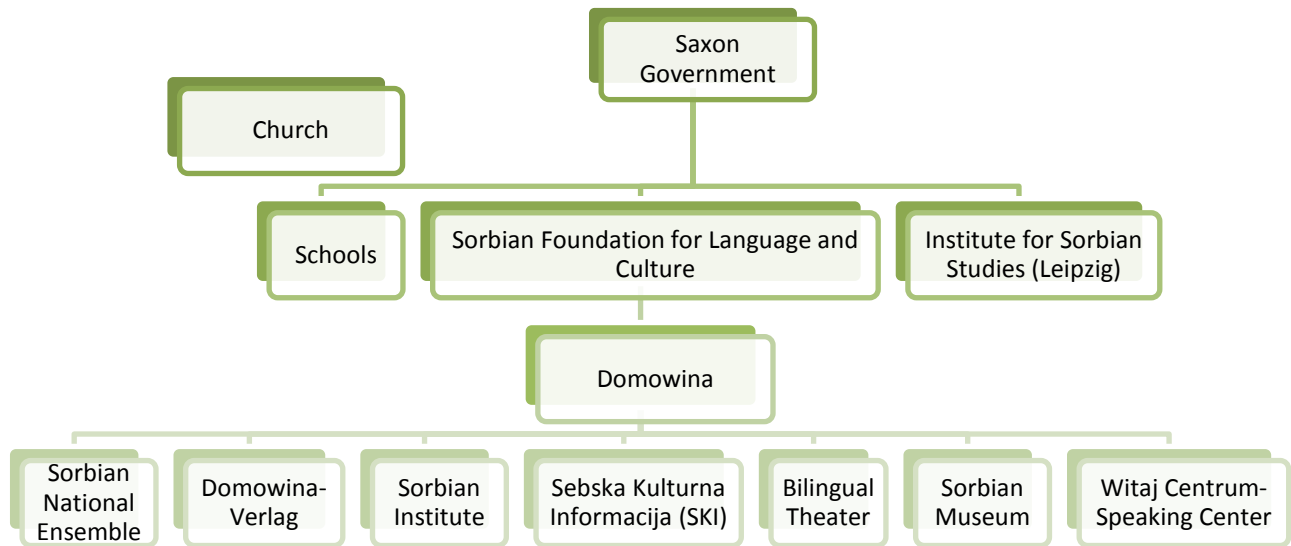
## **Current Sorbian Organization**

To the extent, in other words, to which we combine a scientific engagement with a language and its local linguistic community with a political commitment that drives our desires for practical amelioration of the fate of languages and their speakers, it behooves us to try to understand something of the local cultural process (Silverstein 1998: 423).

By exposing the affective discourses of Sorbian speaking individuals, I now ground my theoretical discussion in lived aspects of Sorbian linguistic economy and workspaces. Sorbian language workers lament myriad aspects of their lives as employees of Sorbian institutions ranging from mundane everyday grievances that speak to insidious aspects of antagonism in the cultural linguistic economy to blatant forms of alienation, politics of indistinction, and talk of the problems. In the following institutional map (See Appendix A), I present an overview of

the following Sorbian institutions and spaces in which the workers I have mentioned are employed: Foundation for the Sorbian People, Domowina schools, Sorbian bilingual theater, Department of Sorbian Linguistics in Leipzig, Church (Bautzen, Crostwitz, Kloister-nunnery).

Figure 3.1: Institutional Map



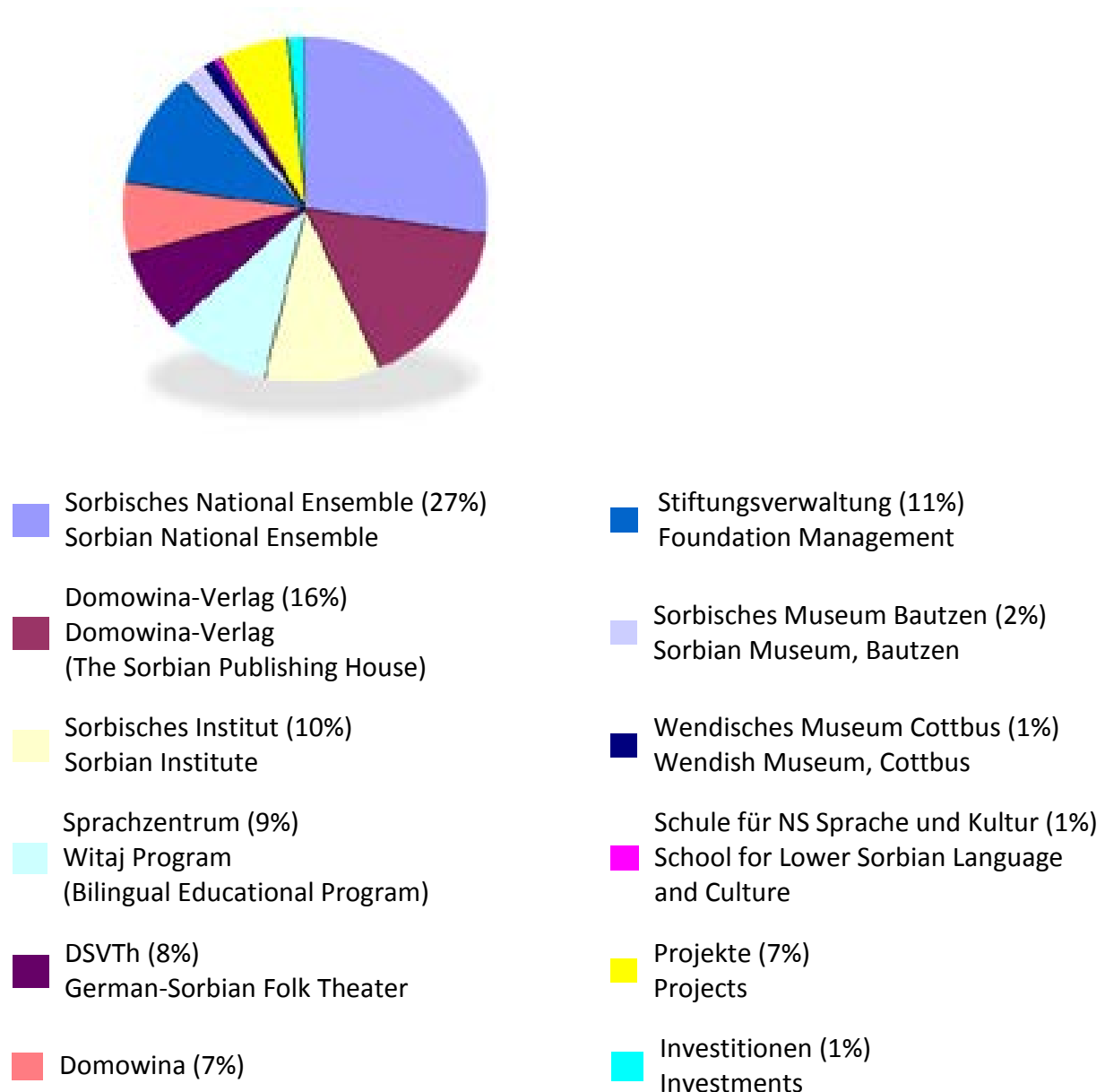
Although my dissertation focuses on the language practices, the economy warrants explanation because it impacts linguistic practices and local ideologies of language while it exposes the contemporary instantiations of anger/fear and the historical foundations for them.

## Power Center: The Foundation for the Sorbian People and Domowina

The central organization is the Foundation for the Sorbian People. The Foundation not only dispenses funds to its many interests, but also represents those Sorbs with power because of their roles in financial decisions, Sorbian events, and even as representatives of Sorbian community both in Germany and abroad. Their control over funding and decisions puts them in a difficult position, because many Sorbs are angered over how funds are used, over the work

done by Sorbs in the cultural linguistic economy, and the Foundation's position in overseeing events. In the following graph (see Appendix B, *Założba za serbski lud* Stiftung für das sorbische Volk [N.d.]) the economic distribution of funds becomes clearer.

Graph 3.1: Distribution of Funds



The Foundation's headquarters are located on the third floor of the *Serbski Dom* (House of Sorbs), but the relative ease of entry to its office belies its inaccessibility. Because neither the



EU nor the Saxon government decides on distribution of the funds, the Foundation represents the primary deciding entity in the Sorbian community. As such it makes executive decisions that few Sorbs have direct access to. After taking its 10% for its operations, the Foundation allocates 90% of the funding to the other institutions under its jurisdiction. In the Sorbian institutional structural hierarchy, Domowina is directly under the Foundation in an organizational chain of command and is also one floor beneath the Foundation in *Serbski Dom*. Restructured after socialism as a cultural organization, the positions of power have not changed significantly since the collapse of socialism (1989). Literally meaning homeland, Domowina still wields a significant amount of control, because Domowina allocates funds to Sorbian institutions and various projects.

Domowina's status enflames anger in the Sorbian community. Many Sorbs labeled the director and persons of import as "fat cats" or called them "promis," a German borrowing that further positions them as superficial celebrities. Their descriptions speak to negative evaluations of Domowina's power characterizing those in formal offices as "lazy" (fat cats) or extremely disinterested and unconcerned with ordinary Sorbs. Although any Sorb can apply for membership, having a voice in decisions is limited to the executives. With Domowina membership currently declining, Sorbian estrangement from the circles of power reflects deeply problematic anger in the Sorbian community. On one hand, many Sorbs informed me that they had cancelled their membership voicing their own displeasure with the current power structures. On the other hand, many Sorbs experience a self-imposed silencing when they distance themselves from the Sorbian institutional structures. Both Domowina's and the Foundation's goals reflect certain ideological echoes of the national consciousness and the one-

nation-one language-one culture paradigm. General critiques of both primary organizations represent metonymic entailments of the institutions and employees as not working and inaccessible.

## Specific Sorbian Institutions

Under the direction from the Foundation and Domowina, Sorbian institutions exemplify various efforts to promote Sorbian language and culture and provide a space for Sorbian language workers. From their stories, I encountered myriad emotional responses ranging from anger and fear as well as defending their own “business” in the Sorbian cultural linguistic economy. As I move through the specific sites where Sorbs and Germans work, I expose the multi-faceted dynamics of unhappiness, economic issues that trouble the community, and their lived politics of indistinction.

### Sorbian National Ensemble

The Sorbian National Ensemble (*Serbski Ludowy Ansambl* (Sorbisches National Ensemble [SNE])) advertised itself as the

den größten professionellen Tourneebetrieben Deutschlands und ist kultureller Botschafter der Oberlausitzer und des sorbischen Volkes (Serbski National Ensembl N.d.)

the biggest professional touring company of Germany and is a cultural messenger of Upper Lusatia and of the Sorbian people [my translation].<sup>6</sup>

Touring in Germany and Europe, this group performs Sorbian folk dances as well as contemporary pieces.<sup>7</sup> Despite their busy schedule of over 200 shows per year, SNE is financially unstable. SNE receives 27% of the operating budget (approximately 2.5 million Euros from the Sorbian Foundation for Language and Culture and it is the largest beneficiary of the Foundation’s financial resources (see Graph 3.1). SNE epitomizes many of the logistical

problems of the Sorbian linguistic cultural economy and more broadly of national minorities. Many Sorbs express disapproval not only of the German director, Wolfgang Röntger, SNE's financial manager, but also of SNE's strategic representation of Sorbian traditional culture through dance and music.

Recent renovation of Röntger's office evinces a deeper debate in the Sorbian linguistic and cultural economy. One Sorbian man informed me that the renovation cost several hundred thousand Euros and his outrage speaks to Sorbian resentment of Germans running Sorbian institutions and benefitting from Sorbian funding. When I asked Sorbs about some of the German executives, they implied that those Germans were only in that position because they married a Sorb of status. The recent renovation of Röntger's office offends many Sorbs, because of the recent cuts to the salaries of SNE's performers. In 2007 SNE performers accepted a 20% pay cut in order to keep SNE financially solvent.

In an interview with Wolfgang Röntger, he positioned his decisions about Sorbian productions by providing financial rationales.<sup>8</sup> He repeatedly stressed that "the market" determined what SNE would actually generate and placed Sorbian culture in the background. With pride Röntger narrated his acquisition of funding from Sparkasse, one of the biggest banks in Germany. He also justified his disinterest in EU funds, because the previous receipt of fund of 5,000 Euros came after a half a year of filling out the application. His explanations rationalized his non-use of EU funds. Yet, his position seemed at odds with his supposed relationship to the Sorbian community, Sorbian funding, and his theater workers. As director of the group that is the largest beneficiary of funds from the Foundation, Röntger begrudgingly fulfills obligations to produce Sorbian theater pieces which according to him should only be performed two or three

times. He prefers to produce pieces that would appeal to broader audiences and generate more sales from tickets. In fact, he referred to the low attendance of the Sorbian productions in contrast to German pieces. His pride in acquiring backing from Sparkasse also stood at odds with SNE receiving the largest percentage of Sorbian Foundation funding.

In contrast to Röntger's pro-market position that justified a pro-German position Jan Buck, my father in law and retired touring manager of SNE, narrated his pro-Sorbian efforts. Buck began his career as a dancer and moved out of the village to the urban center, Bautzen (Budyšin). As he acquired more administrative duties, he managed the company and the dormitory where the guests and other employees of the Sorbian cultural linguistic economy resided. Metaphorically and literally he supervised a Sorbian enclave in Budyšin that now no longer exists. Although this position of power in the Sorbian community had many financial benefits, he exemplified the ambiguities of a retired language worker, who no longer felt productive in the same ways. Although his recommendation was for the Foundation to use the now deserted dormitory where we lived, his proposal fell on deaf ears. Personally, I believe that his invitation for me to live in the dormitory fulfilled his desires to contribute, but also reminded him of his changed stature in the Sorbian community.

As a manager of SNE for twenty years, Buck expressed pride in his ability to promote Sorbian language and culture. He organized tours through which the dance and choral company travelled to Iraq, Indonesia, and Western Europe. He also explained to me that he brought Sorbian consultants to the theater to explain the Sorbian lyrics and traditions. His pride in his professional career also coincided with his anger at current management of SNE. Twice a week, he and his best friend shared beers in the apartment. While they often vehemently shared

their frustrations about less work for the SNE, Röntger, other Sorbian promis (celebrities) who appeared not be doing their jobs, and pay cuts, they also reminisced about SNE before the collapse of socialism. Furthermore, I would attribute a sense of cruel optimism not just to their conversations but also to other Sorbs who harped on the Sorbian troubles. Their emotional critiques index solidarity in the Sorbian community that simultaneously divides Sorbs.

While Buck's and Röntger's stories illustrate very different perspectives on language use, I would like to point out a critical aspect that I have not addressed. They are people affected by the demands of specific historical moments. To some degree Röntger's hands are tied as he adheres to a capitalist logic and the demands of a global market. In contrast Buck was allowed some degree of latitude in hiring other language workers to assist in language and cultural preservation, a strategy denied to Röntger. Without greater incentive from the EU or German governments, Germans who are positioned to make decisions about Sorbian issues will likely continue to apply a more centrist perspective directed to making a profit rather than promoting the Sorbian language.

### Domowina-Verlag and Bookstore

In the offices of Domowina-Verlag and the Sorbian bookstore, I encountered other faces of Sorbian anger and fear. I heard gossip about other Sorbian language workers and bureaucratic difficulties. I listened to narratives of stress and displacement that included talk about their coworkers and I was clearly excluded from conversations that immediately stopped when I entered. Although I was told that I could not work in the publishing house because I was not Sorb, this refusal did not prevent me from being aware of the palpable unhappiness in this space.

Take, for example, Peter who is an extremely visible and active defender of the Sorbian language in his forties.<sup>9</sup> In an interview, he told me of his difficulties in being a language worker. He described the existence of rules that he feared violating. Although Peter did not specifically identify the dictates, he outlined them in broad terms: speaking a certain type of Sorb in contextually appropriate ways and actively participating in Sorbian events. His identification of Sorbian mores, albeit enigmatic, reveals the ways that a language worker's profession invades his or her personal life and their psyche. In fact, he only became aware of these unspoken edicts after breaking them. Staying true to these rules, he contended, contributed to his overall stress.

Frances, another forty-something language worker, also narrated her own tale of recent woes after apologizing to me for her tardiness in scheduling an interview and not being able to translate *Ferdinand*. Her explanation was two-fold—work on a book project and receiving the review of her Sorbian text. For the last six months, she had dedicated herself to finishing the writing and invested a great deal of emotional energy into it. When she handed over her work to the Sorbian reviewers, they completely rewrote the Sorbian text. For the last week before we encountered each another, she experienced an emotional breakdown. While she recognized that the revision of her text resulted in a rendition closer to one particular form of standardized language use or, more particularly, the literary language, it was an infringement on her sense of Sorbian selfhood and her desires to render her own even if a possibly “illegitimate” form of language use.

## *Serbska Kulturna Informacija*

From September 2006 to January 2007, I primarily conducted research in *Serbska Kulturna Informacija* (SKI), a space on the bottom floor of *Serbski Dom* (House of Sorbs). Although I was initially encouraged by tentative agreement that given to me to work there, I became more frustrated when I was relocated into SKI's meeting room. Sara, a woman nearing retirement, led me to the room and shut the door. My moments of interaction were severely limited as was my ability to observe Sorbs conducting institutional business—answering the phone, interacting with SKI visitors, or working with other Sorbian language workers. Despite these obstacles, I gathered critical ethnographic information in my brief daily interactions with Sara. Over time Sara relaxed more around me and began to express her daily job frustrations from either not being reimbursed for travel expenses or experiencing delays in receiving her paycheck to the linguistic practices of her co-workers and her position as manager of this space. Her dilemmas as a language worker also entailed unfilled promises that contributed to her unhappiness with her job. Looking forward to retirement (not because she wanted to stop working), Sara said that she wanted to make a real difference. Reluctantly cognizant that she could not promote the language the ways that she saw fit or just, she planned on taking her skills elsewhere in the Sorbian community after her retirement in her early sixties.

The actual space of SKI also speaks to Sorbian troubles. From limited hours of operation to a newly installed bell that would ring when a person entered the center, access to the services that SKI provides is controlled and restricted. In SKI, a person can gather brochures, purchase Sorbian eggs and DVD's, and look at art installations. These practical manifestations of Sorbian "folk" further connect language use to objects that portray a certain image of the

Sorbs. Sorbs often avoided SKI or *Serbski Dom*, the building in which SKI is located, because it felt depressing to them for many reasons—because it was empty. Thus SKI and *Serbski Dom* represented a misuse of funds or labor to them and was linked primarily to certain Sorbs and types of language use, from hearing Sorbs call the language workers at *Serbski Dom* “fat cats” to crazy. I recognized this as a primary institutional space that evokes multiple sources of displeasure and resonates with unhappy dialogues in the Sorbian community. I became acutely aware of these dynamics that expose a urban-rural divide as I spent more time in Lusatia and, as a result, I began working with a greater variety of Sorbian people (see also Chapter 4).

### Educational Sights (A- Schools, B-schools, and the High School)

The Sorbian educational system teaches “standardized” Sorb, organizes languaged spaces, and manages the ways bilinguals inhabit and experience these spaces. The division between Sorbian-only instructional sites (A-schools) and classrooms where Sorb is taught as a second language (B-Schools) echoes the dynamics of Sorbian/German relations of power. Currently, the five middle schools Bautzen, Räckelwitz, Radibor, Ralbitz-Rosenthal, Schleife, and three elementary schools (Radiboro, Ralbitz, and Croswitz) also constitute village centers for Sorbian language use. These educational spaces provide identifiable Sorbian-only spaces that correspond to historical village dialects that Sorbs still use to identify Sorbian language varieties. Location of the schools also sediments institutionalization of Sorbian culture, because the theater, the ensemble, and other events organized by the Foundation occur in those sites.

Sorbs experience schooling that is funded by the local government (Saxony) as a reflection of their nominal status. Sorbian education persists mainly because of the Saxon law laid down in the Constitution of the Free State of Saxony (May 27, 1992) -Verfassung des



Freistaates Sachsen 27. Mai 1992.<sup>10</sup> Declining enrollment has led to the closure of Sorbian schools. Overall, in Germany, declining birth rates affect state policies, but population contraction affects the Sorbian community acutely. Despite Sorbian concerns and petitions, Sorbs are limited in their choice to send their children to A-schools, because the solution of Saxon policy makers is replacing A-schools with B-schools. In interviews, Sorbs expressed a sense of pride that their older children attended Sorbian schools and regret that their grandchildren would not have the same opportunities.

The Sorbian educational system represents a significant part of the Sorbian cultural linguistic economy, because many Sorbs find employment in it as language workers. Its problematic role stems from its funding from the Saxon government and not the Sorbian institutions. In other words, the German government ultimately controls the educational system. Furthermore, pedagogical and practical problems in the Sorbian educational system expose conflicting messages related to Sorbian and German language use in a German state-run system. Another related issue involves the hiring of German speakers in the Sorbian schools who may not be invested in language maintenance. Although many Sorbs work in the schools, an increasing number of German teachers are entering this languaged world. When I was introduced to a teacher's language training in the House of Sorbs, the group of ten German teachers seemed perplexed and surprised at my interest in attending the classes with them. They asked me why I would want to study Sorb and if I could actually earn money from my profession. Still they admitted that after completion of the Sorbian linguistic training they would indeed earn more.

In the Sorbian-only schools, a monolingual space inverts the relationship between languages, while reproducing an ideology of one language-one culture-one nation. Creation of a monolingual space often comes at an emotional cost. Many Sorbian teachers narrated their deeply felt and mixed emotions about their profession. One fifty year old teacher explained that her diagnosis of a life-threatening illness led to her becoming a teacher because she wanted to make a difference in the Sorbian community. She remembered her childhood and high school difficulties. As a protestant Sorb, whose language use differed significantly from her Catholic peers, she bore the brunt of teasing and unwanted attention. She explained that wanted to feel productive and to help younger Sorbs feel more comfortable “speaking” Sorb.

Another teacher’s conflicted dedication to her profession continues into the current moment, although she actively engages in a politics of indistinction. I first met her at SKI where she taught me to paint Sorbian Easter eggs. Afterwards she invited me to elementary school to observe her classroom. During socialism, she was a teacher in a Sorbian only school, but now taught Sorb as a foreign language and she taught art to a mixed Sorbian/German classroom in which the rowdy students appeared uninterested in learning Sorb. In a telephone conversation, I grasped the emotional repercussions of the schools as a languaged world. This middle-aged woman had repeatedly refused to meet with me outside of the school environment and said that she only wanted to work in her garden. She told me, that outside of school “she did not want to see or speak to another Sorb.” When I met her at the Budyšin middle school, she joked with me that she was “alone in the basement” and I sensed her anger at the physical and professional demotion. During her employment during the socialist moment, she taught in A-school and expressed wistfulness about the time when she enjoyed teaching more than in

current teaching duties. She wanted me to come to her classroom to assist in convincing the students that studying Sorb was important. Although she dreamed of leaving Germany, she was continued to teach. She also felt an obligation to support her niece's studies of Sorb by sending her books and materials. When she gave me educational materials, she explained that that was all she had because she had sent them to her niece. Almost as though she recognized her own losing battle, she still wanted to take part in language maintenance with her family member, students, and me. Even though she said that she did not want to speak Sorb, she still worked in a space that where she had to speak Sorb.

### Sorbian Theater

The bilingual theater differs financially from the other Sorbian institutions, because of relatively secure financial status. Yet, its financial stability fails to challenge economic debates and broader internalization of a linguistic hegemony. The majority of profitable plays and performances are German. The theater is run by a German who theater workers resent and critique for his high salary almost to the point of accusing him of treating Sorbian employees worse than German ones, an accusation that echoes feelings of Sorbian ensemble employees who had to accept pay cuts. While I conducted ethnographic research in the theater (see Chapter 5), I became more aware of the personal internalization of a structural inequality as I learned why Sorbian theater workers resigned/quit/emigrated to other areas or just stopped working for the theater.

Theater workers experience not only linguistic domination from a German perspective but also from a Sorbian one. A story of a Sorbian woman's justified withdrawal from Sorbian circles attests to complicated Sorbian-Sorbian relations. During an interview, Paul, a Sorbian

man, described his personal struggles to deal with the pressures exerted by and on Sorbs. He narrated the exodus of Sorbian language workers from the theater that often resulted from cuts in funding and, in turn, employment opportunities. This thirty year old male described his friend and co-worker, Sabrina, who decided after her dismissal never to attend another theater performance. According to Paul, Sabrina believed that her Sorbianness led to her firing and dismissal of other Sorbs. In her eyes the German run theater failed to protect its Sorbian employees.

Sabrina's story, the last I offer in providing an orientation here, was told to me by a former co-worker, and is one of many through which Sorbs narrate politics of indistinction and displacement. Ironically it captures an embodied aspect of social relations in which silence plays a critical role. Through these specific stories, I have presented a body of ethnographic evidence that proves the paralyzing and troubling aspect of politics of indistinction, awareness of the troubles, and self-silencing. Except for Röntger's interview, that represents a counterexample, these Sorbian narratives are meant to contextualize the linguistic practices of not only Sorbian language workers but also struggles for survival and ordinary suffering in the Sorbian community. This is the ethos that I explore in this dissertation.

## **Grounding Arguments**

At the current moment many Sorbs exemplify canaries in linguistic, political, and emotional coal mines. To take this analogy one step further, in addressing emotions as related to languaged worlds, I consider the emotions of Sorbs who, like canaries, are aware of the dangers not just in the German setting but also the Sorbian contexts. Just like the recognition made by the Sorbian stage worker, the Sorbs have been crying and perhaps to some crying

wolf, or singing in a coal mine for a very long time. Yet, now many of their voices have become silent, perhaps as much of a warning as an articulation of Sorbian concerns that emerge in talk about the troubles.

In this chapter, I argued that each time that a Sorb participates in a politics of indistinction, experiences language as an unhappy object, or expresses a narrative of displacement, he or she warns others of very specific dangerous gases. As in the reference to Whorf's gasoline can that I used to describe language endangerment in Chapter 2, Sorbs experience language endangerment as an interweaving of messages that may not be necessarily accurate or complete. Through a dialogized heteroglossia (see also Bakhtin 1981), Sorbs experience emotional discourses of endangerment and economics. While these dynamics are not new in the Sorbian community as I have summarized from Sorbian history as well as current globalizing dynamics, my attention to the emotional aspects of these discourses is novel. In what follows, I will elaborate on the stories of language workers and ordinary people and their ideas about language use. From feelings of obligation to replication of a form of standardized language use to desires to reproduce alternative varieties, Sorbs feel the precariousness of their position as they maintain bilingual and monolingual sensibilities. The dynamics that I have discussed here—politics of indistinction and silencing—represent the contemporary settings that affect linguistic practices and form the macrosociological foundation for the micro-experiences of language and emotions as social action.

## Key to Font Distinctions

*Italicized*  
Underlined  
SMALL CAPS

Sorb  
German  
Emphasis

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<sup>1</sup> See also Chapter 4 for a discussion of enumeration and size of the Sorbian population.

<sup>2</sup> William Hanks (2005) addresses the relevance of Pierre Bourdieu's body of work with attention to the misrecognition of symbolic capital and power.

<sup>3</sup> During my fieldwork, I created an electronic document based on Sorbian dictionaries that entailed entry of German, Sorbian, and English lexical equivalents (see also Chapter 4).

<sup>4</sup> I use the term "literary language (*Zeitschrift [prawopisny řeč]*)" or correctly written language to refer a register of language use associated with written modalities. The significance of this term figures prominently in Sorbian ideologies of language use in the distinctions that Sorbs make between written and spoken modalities (see Chapters 7, 8, and 9).

<sup>5</sup> From the socialist sources, the Sorbian population appears to stabilize around 100,000 from 1900 (See Barker 1999b; Schuster-Šewc 1987) till 1954 (Kasper 1987). However, Schuster-Šewc shows an unexplained loss. Subsequently, the socialist texts view the growing strength of capitalism as the salient factor causing a significant population decline in the eighteenth-century from around 200,000 to 100,000. The more current decline (1954-1987) in the Sorbian population is attributed to a "gradual non-violent process" of assimilation (Schuster-Šewc 1987: 44). These sources construct a view of the Sorbs who survived the early contraction and stabilized demographically. Schuster-Šewc suggests that continuing language contraction stems from a shift from bilingualism (Sorbian/German) to monolingualism (German), but he argues that socialist policy should curb that downward trend through the support of Sorbian language and culture (Schuster-Šewc 1987: 44). Official DDR statistics used the population of 100,000 Sorbs, but a survey in 1989 came up with a figure around 67,000 Sorbs.

<sup>6</sup> This web page is no longer available after the change in directors.

<sup>7</sup> SNE is no longer touring.

<sup>8</sup> Röntger is no longer in charge of SNE as of 2009.

<sup>9</sup> I have used a pseudonym for this person.

<sup>10</sup> Artikel 6

Die im Land lebeneded Bürger sorbischer Volkzugehörigkeit sind gleichberechtigten Teil des Staatvolkes. Das Land gewährleistet und schützt das Recht auf Bewahrung ihrer Identität sowie auf Pflege und Entwicklung ihrer angestammten Sprache, Kultur und Überlieferung, insbesondere durch Schulen, vorschulische und kulturelle Einrichtung (Elle 2003: 147).

Translation:

Article 6

The residing citizens of Sorbian ethnicity in the province have the same rights as the state ethnicity. The province grants and protects the right of the preservation of their identity through the maintenance and development of their ancestral language, culture, and tradition especially through schools, pre-school, and cultural instruction.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### The Emergence of a Research Strategy

Of course, a certain entry as a living being into a foreign culture, the possibility of seeing the world through its eyes is a necessary part of the process of understanding it, but if this were the only aspect of this understanding, it would be merely duplication and would not entail anything new or enriching (Bakhtin 1986: 7).

My research strategy evolved over time as I, a doctoral candidate and researcher, explored multiple faces of diversity in Sorbian usages.<sup>1</sup> Now looking back on the data that I gathered (June-August 2004, June-August 2005, and September 2006-December 2007), I feel a personal and ethical obligation to discuss the emergence of my anthropological research process. My responsibility arises from a commitment to expose my own changing position in the field with regards to my research and to Sorbian speakers. As I trace the preparatory steps to my methodological strategies, I will use a Bakhtinian perspective to glance sideways to my emotions and those of Sorbian speakers. Hopefully, this dialogic practice will not be self-indulgent, on my part, nor arrogant in describing the emotional contours of Sorbian lives. Through an overview of the methodological process, I intend to reveal my emerging research strategies and offer insights into the rituals and trials of fieldwork.

#### **Introducing an Outside Researcher**

One key component of this emergence entailed constant reflection on my own language attitudes. My initial perspective on language use reflected a tacit monolingual ideology both as a speaker of German, Sorb, and English and as an linguistic anthropologist.<sup>2</sup> Although I possessed a high level of communicative competence in German, my proficiency in Sorbian language use involved a host of issues: English as my first language and linguistic interference from German and English. As a researcher, I imagined distinct monolingual contexts in which

code-switching was either aberrant or unexpected or as Jan-Petter Blom and Peter Gumperz (1972) defined it, either situational or metaphorical. Then, I experienced multilingualism in my everyday practice as I engaged in rapid code-switching or alternation between languages. Finally, I embodied an intralingual linguistic perspective. This embodiment involved blurred distinctions and my awareness of marked erasure of linguistic boundaries.

When I spoke more than one language everyday (Summer 2004) I recognized not just my own but also Sorbian monolingual motivations and local ideologies of language use. Then, actually speaking Sorb and German all mixed together (Summer 2005) exemplified my shift to multilingualism based on multiple monolingual repertoires. Finally, I acquired an intralingual perspective when I was hearing, speaking, and reading different inventories viscerally feeling their overlaps and gaps. During 22 months of research over three years, this process involved

- not always being able to distinguish between imagined bounded codes,
- feelings of isolation during my separation from an English speaking community,
- loss of my own linguistic authority, as my dominant language would fluctuate among German, English, and Sorb, and
- my own desires to create coherent codes relying on one-to-one correlations among Sorbian-German-English resources

As I worked through this process, my understanding of what Sorbs experience daily in bilingual *Łužica* deepened. This process crucial to my linguistic empathy was the gradual understanding of how Sorbs embody the paradox, “I am my language but it is not my own” (Derrida 1998). My increasing awareness of the interactive and poetic facets of language coincided with recognitions about language use. The interplay between intrapersonal and intersubjective linguistic diversity is as much about psychodynamics and ideology as about grammatical structures, morphemes, and phonemes.



My shift in linguistic views mirrored the development of a methodological approach to researching linguistic diversity. Not at first, but rather after I let go of trying to be an “insider,” I was able to construct methodological activities that were comfortable for both informants and me. Repeatedly, I improvised in the field. my mentor Reminiscent of Allaine Cerwonka’s correspondences with Liisa Malkki, I informed my mentor, Dr. Janet Keller, of new narratives that I had unearthed that concerned Sorbian-ness (see also Cerwonka and Malkki 2007: 109). These new narratives brought about “nervous conditions” for me, despite her encouragement. Although my project differed from Cerwonka’s work, I also unsure that my fieldwork fit with linguistic anthropology especially since I was unable to record naturally-occurring conversations or collect data that addressed phonetic differences or ideologies about Sorbian accents (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007: 114-115).

This process culminated in gathering Sorbian translations of the Munro Leaf’s children’s classic *The Story of Ferdinand*. Being an outsider and experiencing this “outsiderness” raised new questions and changed my perspectives as I sought to conduct fine-grained ethnographic research. Quickly realizing that my project involved more than documenting an endangered language, I became deeply aware of the everyday internalized destruction of linguistic authority and sense of self-hood. This tragic dynamic contributed to Sorbian feelings of distancing, indistinction, and silencing (see Chapters 1 and 2). Practices related to these feelings involved a precarious balance between speaking Sorbs and being Sorb.

After a primary orientation (2004), I developed a research problem building on my pilot ethnography in 2005, rejected my pre-field work hypothesis (2006), and implemented a new data collection technique in June 2007. Although I acknowledged the dynamic quality of

Sorbian practices, my focus shifted from a focus on interlingual tensions, i.e. the structures of inequality that arise from viewing German and Sorb as discrete codes, to an emphasis on heteroglossia (Bakhtin 1981). My methodological reorientation acknowledged more explicitly how Sorbs simultaneously erase and erect linguistic boundaries. Through these processes, Sorbs confront a “plurality of relations, not just a cacophony of voices” (Holquist 1990: 89).

My position as an outsider also relates to my interactions with Sorbian informants. Repeatedly Sorbs asked me how long I would be in Germany, suggesting that I could leave behind what is for them an inescapable linguistic politics: constant evaluations of linguistic performances, anxieties about economic and socio-political conditions, and hyperawareness of language (see also Crowley 2006). As an American anthropologist, I would leave Lusatia, and this fact alone made me different from Sorbs who would always have permanent connections to the region and strongly felt obligations to take part in language maintenance.

Bilingual Sorbs resisted working with me in obvious and not so obvious ways. Initially, I saw their “cool distance” as indicative of gate-keeping (Wilce 2009b). When Sorbs told me that I could not gather data in one or another institutional location or record in Sorbian institutions (2006), one rationalization was, “you are not Sorb.” However, my status as an “outsider” changed when I married a man with familial connections to the Sorbian community (June 2007). My immersion in linguistic debates of a mixed Sorbian/German environment profoundly affected my perspective. For example, Sorbs asked me why my husband does not speak Sorb anymore. My awareness of some of the reasons why he desired to distance himself from Sorbs and not interact in Sorb became clearer. From these inquiries, I had a glimmer of internal pressures put on Sorbs to speak the Sorbian language. My new father-in-law narrated his own

struggles as part of a disappearing monolingually-raised generation and his frustrations with the current dynamics. Privy to discussions that reveal how even Sorbs feel outside of their own community, my situation forced me to confront the lived realities of losing a language.

Both my husband and my father-in-law articulated feelings of shame. From these men, who became an important part of my personal life, I gained a subjective insight to shame and frustration felt by many Sorbs. As Jack Friedman points out shame takes on many guises.

The critical function of shame is marked by feelings of profound anger and righteous indignation in response to a perceived world out-of-sorts. This dual nature of shame is, in short, the experience of ambivalence in the face of a moral order in upheaval—a moral order that is changing, but about which there is little consensus or agreement (Friedman 2007: 239).

An image that I did not photograph due to its sensitive nature captures this emotional state of being. My father-in-law would repeatedly stare out a window wearing his house clothes. His attire reflected the changes in life. His pants were stained and a gift from his son. My father-in-law was a man of considerable prestige and means as the manager of Sorbian National Ensemble. Now he was alone and had to come to terms with his circumstances. I asked him one time about his family. He retrieved a black and white photo. In it, his sister stood beside him in traditional Sorbian dress. A man of few words, he said that she had no children and he thought about her often. He, in that simple comment, expressed a sadness that he felt everyday about cultural and linguistic loss.

In a small store in *Miłocińcy* where I was recording naturally-occurring conversations, a Sorbian woman emphatically told me, “to write something pretty.” As an outsider, I could present another picture of Sorbian lives that differed from her wishes as an insider. As an employee in the Sorbian institutions, she implied that she wanted me to emulate an institutional stance that portrays “her” community in a positive light. I heard a slight tone of

anger directed at me as on outsider, which I attributed to her reminding me of her role in the Sorbian institutions. I imagined her thinking how could this woman understand “us.” Behind that edict, I also perceived another type of shame—one that suggested that the state of Sorbian affairs is not pretty or what many Sorbs wish to have portrayed. I had found myself in a scholarly dilemma characterizing “love-based” criterion that

Loving does not mean (a) presenting only positive characteristics of people in our writing; (b) eliding conflict, violence, or debate; or (c) feeling so guilty about our own geopolitical position that we treat those we consult with kid gloves, both in the “field” (i.e. when we are spending time with them) and in our scholarly writing (Domínguez 2000: 366).

What I have to offer may not be pretty, an itemized summary, or artificial fetishism of traditional Sorbian culture, but its subject matter is holistic and honest (see also High 2011). As I consider virtuosity in mixed language usage in Lusatia, I expose the often overlooked victories and daily defeats of language maintenance and linguistic survival.

## **The Genesis of a Research Problem**

My preliminary field research (2004, 2005) deepened my knowledge about everyday Sorbian life. Although the data that I gathered presented a somewhat confusing picture, I recognized a bifurcation in the Sorbian linguistic terrain. A tension between village/private and urban/public Sorbian talk constitutes a diglossic situation (Ferguson 1959). My research strategies grew out of these pilot



*Figure 4.1: Lusatian Map*

*In this map (Slavialand N.d.), nationalizing ideologies and discourses of endangerment emerge in describing the Sorbs as the SMALLEST SLAVONIC NATION and population statistics.*

projects. I framed a research problem to study this split and implemented various methodological tools. My first exposure to the Sorbian community (Summer 2004) was mainly limited to the urban context of the Summer Course of Sorbian Language and Culture (SCSLC) held in *Budyšin* (Bautzen). That summer 45 participants (approximately 50 percent Slavic academics and 40 percent German adults most of whom had familial connections to the Sorbian community) represented a group with professional and personal reasons to learn Sorb. Organizers and instructors privileged a high register and promoted a “standardized” Sorb based on the literary language. My research strategy (Summer 2004) reflected the data available in public Sorbian-only spaces in the urban center. The following summer I focused on conducting research in a Sorbian/German village. By living in a Sorbian household, I gained access to more private modes of interaction. Since I was drawn to tensions in the Sorbian community, I adapted my research strategies first to the public face of Sorbian practices (2004) and then to a private side in the village (2005).

## A Public Face of Sorbian Practices

In the summer of 2004, I arrived in the town of *Budyšin* two weeks before instruction started. Before the Sorbian classes began, I familiarized myself with the town, gathered materials not available in the U.S. (Sorbian history books, instructional materials, and brochures), and informally interviewed Germans and Sorbs. During the three-week course I took classes in the Sorbian high school, worked with a private Sorbian tutor, participated in many field trips, and conducted ethnographic research. Formal instruction (8:00 am- 12:00 pm) constituted the weekday mornings, during which we used the textbook *Wuknjemy Serbsce: Wir Lernen Sorbisch* (We Learn Sorb) (Hrjehorjec 2000). In the Sorbian high school (*Budyšin*),

instructors offered a view of the Sorbian standardized language based on the educational materials. Less formal afternoon activities (e.g. watching films in German on Sorbian history or visiting the Sorbian museum) reinforced the emphasis on institutional contexts and a one-sided view of the Sorbian community. In the late afternoon and evening, I generally studied and prepared for the next day's classes.

The summer provided me an opportunity to pursue two straightforward goals: population size and language acquisition. I explored what I thought was a basic research question; "How many Sorbs are there?" Theoretically, I wanted to approach my research from a perspective that the number of speakers does not determine the vitality of the community but that vitality is a product of diverse venues for language use. I acknowledged the possibility that the official statistic of 60,000 Sorbs might not be accurate for several reasons (see Figure 6.1).<sup>3</sup> First, my pre-fieldwork research addressed discrepancies in population statistics from socialist and post-socialist Sorbian sources. Second, some Sorbs themselves informed me that current number of speakers was incorrect. Third, research and theoretical discussions about native speakers highlight the difficulties of defining a speaker as a category (Blommaert, Collins, and Slembrouck 2005; Doerr 2009; Dorian 1973; Dorian 1977; Kroskrity 2009; Kuter 1989).

At the core of these arguments is a false, but often accepted binary between a native and non-native speaker. Nancy Dorian advanced a new notion of semi-speakers, a theoretical intervention that recognizes that social scientists should work with "non-native speakers." Neriko Doerr acknowledges this binary distinction while proposing that researchers consider the ways "individuals contest and utilize such a binary" (Doerr 2009: 39). Intertwined with what Doerr calls "native-speaker effects" or the fallout of ideological premises on this problematic

ideal, the effects often involve standard language ideology and a Saussurian speaker-listener paradigm. Another aspect of native speaker category entails an implicit assumption that Native speaker has only until recently been associated with the standard language who SPEAKS the standard. Robert Train (2009) argues that this link between a native speaker and a linguistic standard is rooted in death of Latin and ideas about pronunciation.<sup>4</sup> To add to these important discussions, I would like to add another point. While these researchers among others primarily focus on the “native” component of this notion, I assert that the second word in this concept; i.e. “speaker” is equally fraught with ideologies. Building on Train’s argument the standard that hold so much weight with judgments of imperfect or perfect pronunciation is based on written modalities. To fully explore Sorbian language use, I reconsidered my own anxieties about working with speakers and accepted an idea of semi-standardized practices, people who use both spoken and written linguistic varieties (see Chapter 6).

Another complicating factor to asking Sorbs was that Sorbs might interpret this question regarding their numbers as insulting or paternalistic. I also ran the risk that bilingual Sorbs might misinterpret my motivations for asking this question. The rhetoric of fewer speakers can imply language death while exoticizing a language coming down to the “last speaker.”<sup>5</sup> However, when I asked bilingual Sorbs about this, they immediately recited the official record of the number of speakers.<sup>6</sup> Yet, I felt that my informants were not telling me everything or being completely honest. This issue of prevarication or deception represents another source of data as informants respond to questions (Briggs 1986). Eventually, Sorbs started alluding to a “hiding” of the real statistics by Sorbian elites. This disparagement, almost to the point of demonization, became a recurrent narrative.

Asking “how many?” veils the deeper issues of “who benefits?” from such questions and possible distortions (Duchêne and Heller 2007). My pre-arrival question dealing with total population would not be answered, but I realized that this question sparked a host of emotional responses: pride, rote recitation of the statistics, indirect anguish over the number of speakers and opportunities to express oneself in Sorb, political critique and, finally, adept ambiguity. When I developed interviews that directly addressed other research questions (personal network size, education, language use), the formal questions made informants uncomfortable. Their side-stepping of the question also reflects the ambivalence of a changing moral order (Friedman 2007). Although I did not want to “measure” Sorbian vitality in numbers, discussions of population inherently encompass a fear of language death (Walsh 2005). Especially since the post-socialist statistics blame socialist policy for the loss of 60,000 Sorbs (Pech 2003). This discourse of culpability was and continues to be a locus of struggle on which Sorbian bilingual speakers have a perspective, if not one they wish to articulate directly. Finally, discussions of the size resonates with local concerns about being a “little language” and Sorbian worries about being “real” or “pure” speakers (see also Kuter 1989)

My second goal focused on building a foundation in Sorb. I had studied Czech, a closely related member of the Western Slavic language family, at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I hoped that Czech would be an adequate linguistic bridge to learning the Sorbian language at the summer course. However, I quickly realized that Sorb and Czech are very different linguistic codes. In addition, with my beginner competency in a Slavic language, I found it very difficult to make sense of and understand conversations, touristic descriptions of places, lectures, and activities in the Sorbian-only context of the program (SLSC 2004).



Unspoken edicts of speaking only Sorbian frustrated me because I wanted to understand where I was supposed and what time I need to be there and I could not always understand the logistical details. Although these Sorbs who gave us directions were actively promoting sorbian language use, their stance also emerges as acts of linguistic resistance by not using German linked to ideas about linguistic purity. This strict compartmentalization supported my own early bias in seeing Sorbian linguistic choices and practices as an embodiment of “balanced bilingualism” (Lambert 1967) and “diglossia” (Ferguson 1959).

I recognized two diglossic relationships. On one hand, a diglossia exists between Sorb and German. On the other hand, I sensed a diglossia among Sorbian dialectal varieties. The internal Sorbian diglossia suggested use of multiple Sorbian registers. In addition, a strong intellectual community and literature, use of Sorb in Catholic church services, Sorbian institutions, economic exchanges in businesses, and performances in the theater reinforced my hypothesis that Sorbs benefited from a linguistic flexibility and variation. Sorbs spoke and used Sorb, and not always German, in a variety of contexts and ways. German did not have a monopoly on language use. Furthermore, difficulties arose in recognizing the prestige variety, because Sorbs recognized several forms of linguistic prestige and loci of standardization.

Frustrated by my slow progress in developing a higher level of competence, I rationalized that more exposure to spoken Sorb would improve my understanding and also planned to intensify my self-study. I downsized my expectations of my capabilities and hired a tutor to help me outside of instructional settings. I had hoped that reading and discussing Sorbian texts would improve my Sorbian competence and illuminate Sorbian linguistic nuances. With my tutor, I tried to construct a bridge between oral and written modes of expression. Our

activities included spoken conversation and various readings. We read several children's books: a Sorbian rendition of *Winnie the Pooh* (Winij Puw 2000), a translation of a Czech story (*Ptača Bajka* 1987), and newspaper articles from *Serbske Nowiny*. Believing that Sorbs were comfortable with their own print literature, I suggested that we use these texts, not fully cognizant of their hidden rhetoric of standard language ideology.

From the readings and my ethnographic observations, I presumed that Sorbs participated in literacy practices and benefited from a standardized language comparable to my perspective on standardized English. Yet, questions about written texts prompted only minimal responses. I would ask my tutor questions about the texts themselves (Did she like it? Did it feel different than German, how so?). We also used examples of the same text in German and in Sorb, when I could ask her to compare the texts. Considering German and Sorb as separate codes theoretically underpins this activity as a method of inter-lingual comparison, but overlooks intra-lingual diversity. I used code comparisons with other organizers and instructors but, similar to my tutor's response, other Sorbs did not appear comfortable with my questions and often made contrived responses saying, "I like Sorb better because it is my mother language." As a researcher, I needed to understand why mother-tongue identification is relevant and how learning Sorb in monolingual households impacts Sorbian active usages.<sup>7</sup> These initial attempts that applied Woolard's (1989a) strategies of matched-guise, a methodological tool of text comparisons, were largely unsuccessful in generating data that accounted for diversity. Due to this setback, I realized that I would need to devise another technique that would explore the myriad Sorbian language attitudes.

Throughout the summer of 2004, I experienced a personal sense of frustration while gaining access to Sorbian discourses on standardization and language endangerment. First, I believed that Sorbian-only communication of the course organizers prevented non-Sorbian participants or beginners from understanding why a particular field trip was important. The instructors gave historical lectures in the Sorbian language, but as a low-proficiency speaker, I wanted to understand the informative talks. Course organizers also explained basic logistical matters. Although I viewed this directive to create a Sorbian-only environment as an act of linguistic resistance, the institutional context privileged Sorbian performances over German utterances in Sorb. Second, the lack of Sorbian practice time outside the classroom for beginners restricted participants to greetings and brief conversations, because most other Sorbian conversations and lectures were academic in nature or required a high level of competency. Third, I became aware of anxieties concerning Sorbian linguistic practices. For example, instructors stressed learning the dual case, a verbal syntactic arrangement used with two items. While outside class, course organizers expressed concern that people were not using this unique grammatical structure that distinguished Sorb from the neighboring Slavic languages (Czech and Polish). As a linguistic anthropologist, I saw a tension between a standardized grammar and vernacular usage. Fourth, although Sorbs may not have been performing for me all the time, I did sense a degree of performance. I was the outsider for whom Sorbs felt a need to perform their Sorbian identity. For example, I observed Sorbs ritually reading the Sorbian newspaper after the afternoon delivery, but I sensed that they looked more at the pictures than the words. The explicit emphasis on the “standard” Sorbian language represented a locus of struggle. Fifth, I felt a certain institutional bias for a more standardized

variant that occluded everyday talk. These five factors strengthened my resolve to explore every day conversations during my fieldwork.

## A Private Side of Sorbian Life

In the summer of 2005, I returned to Germany. My excitement came from an opportunity to live in a Sorbian-speaking household for seven weeks in *Miłočicy*, a small village 17 km. from *Budyšin*, the urban center for the Sorbs. Kristina, a young Sorbian woman I had met at the previous year's summer course, and her family had opened the door of their home to me.<sup>8</sup> Exposed to a wide variety of Sorbian practices, broader than I observed during the summer course, I could immerse myself more deeply into this Sorbian enclave as I began to piece together information not described in tourist brochures or academic articles. I focused on what I had only sensed the previous summer of 2004—divisions within the Sorbian community that Sorbs did not want to talk about and the private dilemmas that Sorbs faced as minority language speakers who are facing language loss.

“Living on the other side of the fence” in comparison to SCSLC definitely improved my Sorbian competence and gave me a chance to live outside of a monolingual regime where speakers are expected to separate codes and speak only Sorb. In Lusatia I needed to look at two often overlapping categorical divisions—one between German and Sorb and the other between different forms of Sorb. My experience and ethnographic observations during SCLSC reinforced a view of Sorbian linguistic practices based on an internal diglossia—a situation where high Sorbian linguistic varieties (more standardized forms promoted by the institutional contexts) competed with low Sorbian/non-standardized fashions of speaking (notions of informal talk by villagers).

In contrast to the institutional distance I felt in the summer course of 2004, I hoped Kristina and her family (parents: Bruno and Jadwiga, brother Jan and his German girlfriend Ana, and a five-year old sister Mitzi) would become my guides to “real” Sorbian culture. All members of the family spoke Sorb and the youngest, a lively girl, attended Sorbian kindergarten. I spent a great deal of time with Mitzi sometimes reading her a bedtime story.<sup>9</sup> Although I offered to read her Sorbian books, she often requested German books. Even though we played in the garden and she “taught” me Sorbian words, her refusal was an early indicator of the mixed emotions that Sorbs felt about the literary language.

I also became aware of the deeply rooted sense of respect that Sorbs felt about older Sorbian speakers. Occasional visits with “*mači* (grandmother),” who still wore the traditional Sorbian dress, reinforced my own romantic preconceptions of a traditional culture and spoken authenticity. Kristina explained that her grandmother’s Sorb was very Sorbian and endeavored to be a “good” granddaughter by visiting her often (see also Meek 2007). Yet, Kristina often expressed a concern about her familial relationship hinting at generational differences in language use through “being more German,” because Kristina spent so much time away from her home in Lusatia.

During this summer, my most enjoyable activities included talking informally with Sorbs, taking part in the summer festivals, and learning more about the everyday aspects of Kristina’s family and Sorbian lives. I went to Catholic Sorbian church services, participated in summer barbeques, and heard about other traditions associated with Easter and Christmas.

I believed that this family was typical of Sorbian villagers, who spoke Sorb in their household and expressed their Sorbian pride. Often on bike rides or during a barbeque, Bruno

would gossip about his neighbor's Sorbian language use. Mapping out their own village according to linguistic and ethnic boundaries, the father identified his neighbor's lack of Sorbian language use as shameless. By pointing to other Sorbs' German-esque behavior, he reasserted a different sort of shame for himself. He expressed a shame that he felt about other Sorbs who no longer spoke Sorb and a poignant recognition that Sorbian speakers are giving up the language.

This painting of the Sorbian landscape, first by language use, and secondarily, by ethnicity indexes emotional aspects of Sorbian lives. At Kristina's house, family members would ask me who I met and then position my informants in the community. At other events, I observed Sorbs tracing kin and personal networks and linking to villages. On one side, this activity provides a metalinguistic device to unify the Sorbian community. On the other side, it reflects a recognition of community contraction and recent changes since the collapse of socialism. For example, Sorbs would talk about the renaming of streets and closing of business, especially the Sorbian ones. These post-socialist aspects exemplify another intersection of economics and language use.

During the summer, I observed the diglossic division as a bi-partisan construction partially because villagers seemed to keep their distance from the elite Sorbs in *Budyšin*. At this point, my theoretical perspective focused on competing ideologies between the prestige associated with a standardized ideal versus "authentic" talk associated with everyday usages in the village. Seeing the linguistic situation as an "either-or" paradigm highlighted contestation on both sides. In this dynamic, elite Sorbs critiqued villagers' talk as "incorrect" and villagers evaluated elite talk as too formal and inauthentic.

The physical separation between *Budyšin* and *Mihoćicy* amplifies socio-political/linguistic divisions (Kuter 1989). However, during my stay with Kristina and her family, I thought that these divisions correlated with a class division between intellectuals and the working class. I assumed that Sorbs had visceral concerns about the intersection of economic and linguistic vitality at that time. Sorbs who lived in the village complained either about driving to town with high prices for gasoline or about the long and rather expensive bus ride at 3.50 Euros (5 American dollars) one-way. These economic difficulties appeared to contribute to the diglossic rift between village Sorbs and those in the cultural center of *Budyšin*. Even trips to the Czech Republic to buy groceries and cigarettes appeared indirectly to support a Pan-Slavic consciousness. Sorbs were purchasing food stuffs that were not German and labeled in Czech, orthographically indistinguishable from Sorb, such as “*mloko* (milk).” Although Sorbs rationalized their “Czech” shopping trips as opportunities to save money, I was not aware that Sorbian concerns with economics (see Chapter 3) are much more central to life ways and linguistic practices.

While I conducted the majority of my research outside of the institutional contexts in the summer of 2005, I researched Sorbian public practices at summer festivals that I attended with Kristina’s family. Research in these public events furthered my understanding of a linguistic dichotomy emerging at the summer festivals. Data gathered at two separate summer festivals revealed a deeper entrenchment of a diglossia division. In broader terms, the festivals resonated with macrosociological discourses of nationalism and globalization.

The International Festival of Sorbian Language and Culture (Summer 2005 in Crostwitz, Germany) evoked Sorbian nationalism, as Sorbian participants wore the official national

costume that has not changed substantially since the rise of nationalism (1850's).<sup>10</sup> The Sorbian attendees supported this display of ethno-national pride and tradition as they watched the performances of Sorbian folk music and dance. Many of the other participating folk groups are communities associated with a nation-state (Italy, Mexico, Poland, and Thailand). Participation as performers or as audience members in events with nationalist undertones spoke to an ideological paradox, because the Sorbian community is not a nation-state and German policy labels Sorbian speakers as a national minority, but Sorbian intellectuals identify the community as a "people without a state" (Zwahr 2003; Pech und Scholze 2003b).

The village festival (Summer 2005 in Nebelschütz, Germany), in contrast to International Festival of Sorbian Language and Culture was much smaller, organized by local residents, and epitomized Sorbian hybridity (Koven 2004a; Tschernokoshewa and Jurić-Pahor 2005; Tschernokoshewa 2004). Like in their normal daily activities, Sorbs at the village festival relaxed in contemporary European clothing and spoke Sorb and German with each other. In contrast to the International Folklore Festival, Sorbs who attended the village festival were not trying to perform their national or traditional identity in the same obvious ways. These differences between the village and the International festival resonated with different ways of speaking Sorb, either the informal low register associated with informal talk in the village or the high formal register associated with *Budyšin* and a linguistic standard. I began to see this local internal Sorbian diglossia as a significant component of the linguistic economy that values different Sorbian usages.

My understanding of private discourses coincided with a firmer grasp of monolingual regimes. Based on my experiences in the SCSLC, I recognized forms of formal talk characteristic



of a high register that to some degree mandated a local resistance to Sorbian-only contexts. Living with bilingual Sorbs, I realized that the symbolic capital given to German is an integral part of the daily battles—which language to speak with whom. During my stay with Kristina’s family, these linguistic battles about language usage manifested themselves in three primary ways: first, issues relating to dating and marriage; second, a clear preference for certainty regarding Sorbian usage intertwined with resentment about linguistic coercion to use one language or another; and, third, a dialogue about mixing languages.

Dating and marriage often sparked linguistic struggles (Ratajczak 2004). Sorbian societal pressures to marry a Sorb and create a Sorbian household coincide with an implicit awareness that to maintain daily usage a Sorb needs a Sorbian partner. Younger Sorbs expressed their wish to date Sorbs and their frustrations about being unable to find someone Sorb to date. When Sorbian youth do not date Sorbs, it could create frictions at home and in public. For example, Peter, Kristina’s younger brother, had a German girlfriend who refused to speak Sorb. Bruno, Peter’s father, expressed his own feeling of shame, because a quasi-member of the family refused to greet other family members in Sorb. Ana’s rejection of Sorb further created complications for the whole family and their efforts to socialize Mitzi in Sorb. Family members often commented on Peter’s increased German use and blamed his German girlfriend Ana. Without directly commenting on Ana’s use of German during every interaction, her rejection was considered a reaffirmation of the German linguistic hegemony. Kristina and her father discussed their concerns with me about Ana’s refusal to speak Sorb, Peter’s growing German language use, and their linguistic accommodation of the pair. By the end of the summer, she

would occasionally utter Sorbian greetings. Other family members attributed this to my presence and interest in Sorb.

Related to these discourses of dating and marriage, linguistic adjustments to non-fluent Sorbian speakers indicated another locus of struggle. Sorbs relied on clear guidelines to know which language to use: “Here I speak Sorb” or “with so-and-so I speak Sorb” and reflect the contradictions of a politics of indistinction (see also Chapter 3). Mitzi’s confusion, which stemmed from the five-year’s old uncertainty of which language to speak to me, hinted at Sorbian desires for appropriate linguistic accommodation (see also Microcosm 2, Chapter 5). Her older sister explained to me that Mitzi did not know what language to speak to me. She often heard me speaking three languages even though I had tried to keep my interactions with her mainly in Sorb. Sorbs often seemed resentful about mandates to speak only Sorb in institutional contexts, but still relied on mandates to know when to speak Sorb.

This mandate speaks to the overall linguistic situation. In bilingual Lusatia, Sorbs experience a reproductions of monolingual regimes forcing bilingual Sorbs to speak Sorb. This internalized reproductions emerges in Mitzi’s linguistic dilemma and in her father’s monitoring of his neighbor’s talk. Although normally spoken outside of the institutions, German exists as the dominant and more prestigious language. In Sorbian institutions, German is subordinated rather than Sorb. Despite legal provisions that support bilingual signs use of Sorb and in legal proceedings, Sorb is a minority language and no amount of legislation will change the structural inequality.

Not knowing if Sorb should be spoken causes confusion not only for children like Mitzi, but also for adults who seemed to crave clear linguistic rules. Village Sorbs seemed both to seek

and resist guidelines for language use. In interviews, Sorbs who had left the region described situations that created difficulties if they did not remember if someone was Sorb. Having to speak Sorb or even not knowing whether to speak Sorb are contentious facets of the local linguistic scene. At the same time, Sorbs indicated to me that strict compartmentalization (Kroskrity 2000) could feel oppressive and contrasted strongly with active mixing of Sorbian/German resources.

Sorbian desires to establish a predominantly Sorbian or German space contrasted to language mixing that seemed to belong to the village linguistic practices. Bruno, the patriarch of the family I was living with, proudly affirmed on multiple occasions that he and other villagers spoke “*mish-mash*.” His metalinguistic sensitivity reinforced my hypothesis that Sorbs actively and comfortably mixed both languages. This process of mixing was a mechanism that promoted linguistic maintenance and exemplified an awareness of code-switching. His description of use of Sorbian and German resources indicated a more complex dynamic than accommodating non-Sorbian-speaking Germans, like Peter’s girlfriend, or speaking Sorb in Sorbian-only spaces. However, this dynamic was not without its potential problems creating a “we-they” code between villagers and Sorbs in *Budyšin*. His identification of “/mish-mash/” undermined and demonstrated his awareness of the validity of cohesive monolingual imaginary. Yet, he also challenged a notion of a unified linguistic system which is not fraught with diversity.

Not only did Sorbs articulate awareness of a “monoglot standard” (Silverstein 1996) that exists for Sorbian-only and German-only performances, but they also elucidated linguistic variation in several forms. First, in conversations with me, pronunciation became a charged lens for Sorbs to make metalinguistic statements about what is German and what is Sorbian. When I

said the traditional Sorbian toast, Sorbs who were present drew linguistic distinctions between German pronunciation and dialectal differences. After learning this toast, I used it in a variety of settings: at parties after theater performances, with other Sorbs in the village, and with elite Sorbs outside of the institutions in which they worked. Using a systematic approach, I recited the toast, which seemed to relax linguistic defenses and minimized my status as an “outsider.” Learning a traditional toast associated with village fashions of speaking indexed an authenticity unavailable from grammar books or classroom instruction.

Traditional Toast made locking eyes together and toasting glasses

1<sup>st</sup>. person                      *Ja ċi widžu* (I see you)

2<sup>nd</sup> Person                      *Ja ċi slyšu* (I hear you)

1<sup>st</sup> person (optional)        *Ja ċi čopnu* (I kick you)

And then toast and drink.

However, many Sorbs felt I needed to correct my pronunciation. Corrections dovetailed with identity as Sorbs tried to make my pronunciation similar to their village dialect. This was my first experience of “hair-splitting” (Grierson in Makoni and Alastair 2007: 10) attention to a local detail. I felt confident that each corrective measure and acknowledgement of difference reflected an awareness of diversity.

Further clarification of Sorbian linguistic diversity occurred during informal conversations and interviews (Summer 2005). Sorbs repeatedly used the example of “potato” to commentary on local difference. Sorbs associated the different words for potato, “*běrný*” and “*něpl*,” as indexing different villages. This practice used a ubiquitous word and gained importance as Sorbs created a local dialogue. Use of one word or another located a Sorb in a particular village and exemplified dialectal diversity.

Another important aspect of diversity had to do with ideas about older vs. “newer” Sorb. Village Sorbs gave me positive reinforcement when I used the idiom, “*Ja jsem stara žena*,” literally, “I am an old woman.” I used this phrase often at the end of an evening, during strenuous activities, or before going to bed, gauging responses. This phrase figuratively translates as “I am tired,” in contrast to the standardized word “*mučny* (tired).” Ideas tied to language choice reflect issues of Sorbian language authenticity and entail a tension between “older” Sorb vs. present-day equivalents. These two imaginings, “potato” and “tired,” exemplify metalinguistic awareness of local diversity through side-long glances to the village or to notions of older Sorbian resources. As Sorbs glanced sideways in a Bakhtinian fashion, their utterances incorporated other Sorbian voices in their own. However, at this point my research was only attending to serendipitous meta-linguistic commentaries on variants.

As I became increasingly aware of the diversity in pronunciation and lexical choice, I began to formulate a hypothesis for subsequent grant proposals. I theorized that Sorbian linguistic diversity represented a mechanism ensuring language maintenance and linguistic survival. After two summers in Lusatia or “Sorbia” as we (my informants and I) would jokingly refer to the Sorbian heartland, I had gathered considerable evidence of linguistic variation and multivocality. The voices emblemized notions of older/newer Sorb and dialectal variation. While Sorbs often negotiated Sorbian options, a diglossic situation contributed to other combinations of Sorbian and German resources. Cavanaugh (2009) aptly describes these dynamics as “social aesthetics of language.” In her data of Bergmasco/Italian speakers, she exposes the balance between power and prestige with sentimental ties to local place and cultural authenticity (Cavanaugh 2009: 62). Epitomizing syncretic modes of speaking (Hill and

Hill 1986; Makihara 2004; Woolard 1998a, 1998b; Woolard and Genoveses 2007), I planned to explore this rich mechanisms of bilingual and intralingual variation in my thesis.

## Packaging Primary Orientations

My experiences in the summers of 2004 and 2005 had had their intended purpose revealing the subtle and less obvious tensions experienced by minority language speakers in a bilingual community. Returning for my doctoral fieldwork would allow me to explore bilingual Sorbs' linguistic practices more deeply, particularly the tensions I had observed during pilot projects. However, my primary orientations were still just abstract inquiries. Once back in the field (2006), I recognized a need to develop new research strategies that would not depend on providence or a single linguistic situation or site to consider linguistic diversity. I realized from ethnographic interviews what questions not to ask and developed new research questions.

- How do Sorbs code-switch?
- What motivates Sorbs to code-switch beyond factors of accommodation or context?
- How is mother-tongue identification relevant to Sorbian identity?
- Do Sorbs code-switch in uniform ways?
- How is mother-tongue or native-speaker identification relevant to Sorbian identity?
- How do ideological (nationalism and standard language) factors impact linguistic practices?
- How do Sorbs alternate between languages in unexpected ways?
- How is language alternation related to German influences on Sorbian practices?

Despite my awareness of multivocality and different ways of using Sorbian and German resources, I assumed that Sorb is a standardized language that Sorbs in the village resist through their mish-mash and that Sorbs connected to the institutions promote. In addition, I presumed that all Sorbs who spoke Sorb on a daily basis felt a high degree of language loyalty. These seemingly simple orientations indicate many theoretical dimensions of diversity, but my goal was to uncover which ones and how they affected Sorbian linguistic practices.

Based on my pilot ethnographies, I concluded that the Sorbian community, although shrinking demographically, also epitomized linguistic survival because Sorbs continue to speak Sorb every day. I had seen how bilingual Sorbs engaged in a variety of linguistic practices that encompassed code-switching, shifting between languages, and maintaining strict linguistic boundaries between German and Sorb. These diverse usages of Sorb supported a hypothesis that Sorbian ability to switch between German and Sorbian resources facilitated Sorbian linguistic survival. I also recognized the importance of greater political changes. Focusing on four key historical moments (rise of nation-building in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the rise of the Third Reich and WWII, socialism (1949-1989), and the collapse of socialism (post-1989)), my intellectual curiosity was piqued by a continuity. However, my research questions continued to revolve around linguistic issues.

This hypothesis, in most simple terms, proposed that linguistic variation vitalized Sorbian language use. It was intended to contribute to research on endangered languages where the focus is often on the markers of language death; the steps toward language loss including lexical loss, grammatical leveling, mixing of two linguistic codes (Dorian 1989). Another research approach emphasizes the macrosociological processes that may hasten shifting from an indigenous language to a more prestigious dominant language (Dorian 1981; Gal 1979; Heller 1999; Hill and Hill 1986; Jaffe 1999; Makihara and Schieffelin 2007). Although I acknowledged the dynamic quality of Sorbian practices, I had focused on interlingual tensions early on in my research. My emphasis on bivalency and syncretic practices (Hill and Hill 1986; Makihara 2004; Woolard 1998; Woolard and Genoveses 2007) stressed how Sorbs resist structures of inequality marked by discrete codes of German and Sorb. This theoretical

orientation masked my own bias as I had unknowingly romanticized the hegemonic situation and essentialized the Sorbian community. Despite Ladefoged's (1992) warning of paternalism, I still was influenced by certain assumptions. Unbeknownst to me I had set myself a goal that I would be able to find "pure" Sorbs oppressed by German society and who somehow represented a hybrid bilingual community struggling to maintain their own language.

Actually finding language ideologies and revealing the reasons Sorb has survived would be a more difficult task than just looking at bilingual signs in Lusatia, reading the Sorbian newspaper, or asking a Sorb who identifies his or her linguistic/cultural self as a Sorb "how do you feel about German?" I thought with enough time that I would be able to "infiltrate" (Lambert 1967) Sorbian lives, interview informally, and be able to easily record naturally occurring conversations in a wide variety of settings. Using Irvine and Gal's (2009) identification of three semiotic processes, I could recognize erasure, iconicity, and recursivity. At the SCSLC, I perceived erasure occurring in the deprecation of village talk, omission of everyday talk from activities, and ignoring of talk that was not standardized. Likewise, I saw this process of erasure in Summer 2005 but with a reverse momentum. Villagers deprecated standardized Sorb and focused on village talk as authentic and used daily. From these semiotic dynamics, recursivity emerged with a variety of nested facets (kinship, family life, education in Sorb, religious affiliation and practices, employment). As these identifiers are common knowledge for Sorbs, speakers create hierarchies and continua through which they could evaluate language use.

Methodologically I planned to use a combination of tools including interviews, matched-guise activities, and participant observation. In the back of my mind, I also sketched out a goal of translating a children's animated movie into Sorb. This long-term goal would provide a "cool"



resource that Sorbian parents and educators could use to make language acquisition smoother.<sup>11</sup> I had hoped that during the translation process I would improve my own Sorbian linguistic competence and learn from Sorbs what makes Sorb Sorbian. Assuming that I would be able to improve my comprehension of Sorb, I idealized that living in Lusatia would be akin to immersion. I would be constantly surrounded by Sorbian-speaking individuals and be able to take advantage of Sorbian-only events and Sorbian resources. I also enthusiastically assumed that through indirect osmosis I would learn Sorb. Realistically, my expectations required patience and tolerance of culture shock, although I assumed that my high degree of German fluency, previous contact with Sorbs, and familiarity with my field-site would lessen transitional obstacles during my doctoral fieldwork.

## **Enacting New Research Strategies**

As soon as we start looking closely at real people in real places, we see movement. We see languages turning up in unexpected places, and not turning up where we expect them to be (Jaffe 2007: 345).

Like many doctoral candidates, I arrived for my fieldwork (Germany, September 2006) with high hopes. I had what I believed to be a sensible and practical plan to gather data in both the village of *Miłočicy* and in the institutions of *Budyšin*. My multi-sited approach would not focus exclusively on one context but, rather, on a variety of places where Sorbs spoke Sorb, German, and “mish-mash.” Now looking back on my misplaced overconfidence, I realized finding culture in talk and recording data mask the complexities of fieldwork. Interview responses and the general ambiance of linguistic control that I had sensed during my preparatory fieldwork had a much darker side affecting Sorbian practices.

If my doctoral fieldwork had gone as planned, then I would have failed to engage in the personal reflection that allowed me to shed my monolingual bias (Auer 2007a) and to respond to unexpected challenges. Not content with just “deep hanging-out,” or simply laying down a recording device, I incorporated two situated activities to augment my linguistic ethnography. First, lexical data entry and ethnographic inquiry about Sorbian words provided a basis for a trilingual electronic resource. This research technique also increased my Sorbian competence and heightened my awareness of ideological associations. Second, translating *The Story of Ferdinand* (1936) incorporated a wide range of Sorbian voices in a novel heuristic. The multi-faceted data I collected in the fifteen months incorporated multiple spaces and interrelated research tools but each aspect of my research strategy presented me with somewhat startling theoretical implications.

During the first five months of fieldwork (Sept. 2006-Feb. 2007), I lived in *Pančicy-Kuckau*, a small village about 20 km. from *Budyšin*. Because very little Sorb was being spoken every day in public spaces in the village and I was spending more and more time in *Budyšin*, I moved to the urban center (February 2007) to facilitate my fieldwork. On learning of my interest in language, village or non-professional Sorbs directed me to the Sorbian institutions, *Serbski Dom* (House of Sorbs), or intellectuals. In contrast, Sorbs affiliated with these institutions advised me to seek out the village. In each case, by charging me to go elsewhere to connect with Sorbs, the respective groups affirmed their own insularity and distancing from other members of the Sorbian community. My first response was patience and to follow advice and spend time in both locations. As both village and institutional Sorbs directed me to other Sorbs to interview, I encountered multi-faceted anxieties about Sorbian language use and could

only intermittently record conversations or public events (Sept 2006- June 2007). It became apparent that the Sorbian community was a “house divided” and language was a primary and self-consciously monitored dimension of this division (see Gal 2004). The deep rifts the Sorbs now face are the greatest threats to their cultural and linguistic survival. This very real anxiety itself portends the possibility of language death. The danger of losing their language is affecting bilingual Sorbs who would rather escape this bitter reality than confront it directly, especially after their Herculean efforts to preserve and maintain their language over centuries. My goal to study linguistic practices and my presence as a scholar aggravated an already painful situation.

## Doing a Dictionary

Not finding Sorbs speaking Sorb in public spaces and difficulties obtaining permission to record in institutional spaces represented an unexpected aspect of “language not turning up” where I expected. During an initial imposed “hiatus” (Sept. 2006- November 2006), I began to understand that fieldwork would not be simply a task of scheduling interviews or taking pictures. However, I was extremely impatient with myself, because my Sorbian competence seemed to be increasing so slowly. My own vocabulary was limited to the introductory level Sorbian grammar books even after my two pilot ethnographies (Summer 2004, 2005).

As a result, I began typing words from the Sorbian-English dictionary (Stone 2002) into a Word document to create an electronic resource. Preliminary work provided a structured format and fulfilled a technical need, because an English-Sorbian reference did not exist. Resonating with the dilemmas that Sorbs faced with even a single word, I often had difficulties remembering a word. Struggles with orthography (how do you spell a word because that changes where it is listed in the dictionary), and choosing between different lexical possibilities

were common issues.<sup>12</sup> I began typing words in Word partially because the Excel program did not recognize the Sorbian diacritics. After I completed entering Stone's (2002) Sorbian-English dictionary, I transferred the data into an Excel database (December 2006) and started on a Sorbian-German dictionary. Theoretically, I began to wonder if Sorb was a standardized language in the same way as English in the winter of 2006. My dictionary project initially started as a prescriptive exercise that could clarify discrepancies between the three languages, but resulted in a number of challenges.

- Difficulty identifying words that Sorbs actually accepted
- Multiple terms for a concept
- Different translations of words
- Non-existence for certain words
- Different words in the socialist and post-socialist dictionaries

My work on the electronic dictionary soon became a descriptive endeavor as I noticed systematic spelling discrepancies, syntactic variations and ambiguous definitions. As I cross-referenced entries from different dictionaries, I hypothesized that Sorbs accepted multiple meanings.<sup>13</sup> To complement my own study of Sorb, I approached Sorbs asking about the use of specific words recorded in one dictionary or another to have them respond to an item as "not-spoken" or "invented." However, asking Sorbs about specific words entailed an unmanageable data set of 34,000 words and I needed to create a finite lexical base to understand not just literal meanings but also the ideological leanings that Sorbs attached to words. These evaluations furthered my interest "to examine verbal hygiene practices closely exposing their unspoken assumptions to critical scrutiny" (Cameron 1995: 11) After forging past "it sounds funny," I began to modify my pre-fieldwork assumptions and reconsidered standardization as a different type of dynamic.

My realizations about standardization centered on a variation evident from data entry and expectations of standardized norms. Based on rejection of “funny” language use, Sorbs alluded to another ideology of language. I theorized that bilingual Sorbs engage a continuum of semi-standardized practices (see also Chapter 6). However, from the data entry of the digital dictionary resource I could not determine the dynamics of a semi-standardized practice. More importantly, I needed to unpack the decisions that Sorbs make when they navigate their resources in order not to sound “funny” (see Chapters 5 and 6). However, their concerns alluded to another possibility...semi-standardized practices repeatedly sound “funny.” As a researcher, I needed to rethink an imagining of a standard that must sound correct. Rather, I needed to consider the myriad ways that Sorbian utterances are correct. Although I had some directions to explore this paradox, I needed a baseline of comparison.

Despite the difficulties of addressing multiple topics, this chapter’s theoretical journey will challenge a principle of parsimony or a simple relationship between an indexical field and code choices. Developed from the dictionary project and ethnographic observations, my questions about lexical items confront

The paradox of communication...that presupposes a common medium, but one which works ...only by eliciting and reviving singular, and therefore socially marked, experiences. The all purpose word in the dictionary...has no social experience: in practice it is always immersed in situations, to such an extent that [its] core meaning...may pass unnoticed. (Bourdieu in Ilieva 2001: 4)

Applying Pierre Bourdieu’s (1991) “paradox of communication,” I recognize that any two Sorbs do not fully share the situated uses of their languages and seldom share same ideas about their bilingual resources. Like Ilieva, a researcher in second language learning classrooms, I experienced frustration and shock in my field site. When I inquired about the meaning of a word, I encountered many surprisingly ambiguous responses from Sorbian informants.<sup>14</sup> These

feelings were similar to Ilieva's concern that "there was something wrong with either me or my knowledge" (Ilieva 2001: 3) of Sorb and of German. My numerous gaffes included linguistic and cultural misunderstandings. Sometimes I borrowed words, used Sorbian words that I found in dictionaries, and alternated between languages. In turn, my linguistic practice often provoked corrective measures from Sorbs. I ask that you as the reader be willing to imagine such tensions and confusions as I bring attention to language in action, so that the critical aspects of policing do not pass unnoticed.

### Finding *Ferdinand*: An Ethnography cum Translation

To move closer to language use, I began the translation of Munro Leaf's classic children's book, *The Story of Ferdinand* (1936, 2006 [1936]). My choice had strategic and serendipitous motivations. Although I am not a translator, I worked with a number of Sorbs translating this much-loved story, which immediately strikes a chord with Sorbian speakers. Bilingual Sorbs identified with Ferdinand, the heroic bull, who would rather relax in his meadow than fight in an arena. Like Ferdinand, Sorbs want to "smell the flowers" or, more literally, Sorbs just simply want to be able to speak their endangered language without criticism.

Multiple meetings with Sorbian participants transplanted linguistic debates to a neutral territory not only by the actual site of meeting (in the Sorbian café or other restaurants, in the back regions of their work, or in their homes), but also in the actual focus on the story of an endearing Spanish bull. This text also appealed to people because of its attributes. Ferdinand is a type of children's book called an authentic text. In other words, the story put the readers at ease with repetition of phrases and a philosophy, with which Sorbs can empathize. This process involved several meetings lasting 10-20 hours, complemented by review sessions and matched-

guise exercise after the translation was complete. Ten Sorbs chose the option to translate Ferdinand alone. In addition, I conducted a group activity translating *Ferdinand* in the Sorbian High School with a class of thirty seventh graders. I believe that this ethnographic cum translation approach to obtaining access to minority language speakers who are conflicted about working with an anthropologist has the potential to make a significant contribution. The Ferdinand project inherently explores diversity through various dimensions of the participants (age, gender, occupation, and background).

I hoped to move past the prescriptive approach of the dictionary project and scrutinize more closely various dimensions of Sorbian linguistic diversity. Through a fixed text, I could explore the ideological burden (Hill and Hill 1986) of words, unpack the “ideology of standardization” (Milroy and Milroy 1985), and focus on ideology reproduction from real actors who translated *Ferdinand*. From initial translations, I quickly ascertained that Sorbs translated the text in a variety of ways. I would not be able to compile a single standard text based on certain grammatical or lexical norms. Their translations revealed roles “as agents, rather than as automatons caught up ineluctably in an abstract sociolinguistic system” (Milroy 2004: 167). Sorbs created authentic texts based not only on their competence but also with an ear to the different forms of Sorb. For me, the sixty Sorbian translations that I gathered (June -December 2007) quickly became a watershed of data, because I realized its potential as a methodological device to explore dynamics of semi-standardized practices.

When I introduced the translation task to the Sorbs, I emphasized to them that I was not looking for a “perfect” rendition but, rather, a translation from “feeling.” Framing this project as an interpretive activity guided Sorbs to render a version according to their own individual

stances of “good” or “not sounding funny.” My framing of translation reinforced to Sorbian speakers that any way they speak Sorb is acceptable while also engaging metadiscursive perceptions. Struggling with locally defined parameters, Sorbs engaged local rhetorics “at the very center of [the Sorbian] community’s organizing social categories” (Silverstein and Urban 1996). These organizing categories included a myriad of factors (expertise, authenticity, notions of monolingual/bilingual identities and contexts) and vectors (Budyšin-village, older-newer Sorb, and written-spoken uses). These continua of categorization resulted in a wide range of interpretations that foregrounded and backgrounded different categories in unexpected ways.

## **A Grounded Ethnography**

In fully embracing the personal and professional transformations in the field, I continued to gather data in a variety of Sorbian public settings. Michael Burawoy (2000) calls this multi-sited approach “grounded ethnography,” because it focuses on the processes of globalization from below and the multiple and emergent political, economic, and, I would add, linguistic terrains. Thus, the Sorbian metalinguistic commentary of “*To je katastrofa* (It is a catastrophe)” entails ideas about transformations in local dynamics and the ways macrosociological transformations and growing threats to Sorbian survival affect bilingual Sorbs. When Sorbs used this phrase in reference to linguistic politics at these events, their assessments expressed shame in response to low attendance of a premiere or frustrations with organization of the event itself. However, this phrase also allows for a degree of ambiguity through a Bakhtinian loophole. Like bilingual Sorbs and myself as an anthropologist

...we very keenly and subtly hear all those nuances in speech of people surrounding us, and we work ourselves very skillfully with all those colors on the verbal palette. We very sensitively catch the smallest shift in intonation, the slightest interruption of voices in anything of importance to us in another person’s practical everyday discourse. All those verbal sideways



glances reservation, loopholes, hints, thrusts do not slip past our ear, are not foreign to our lips  
(Bakhtin 1984: 201).

Bakhtin's insights capture the dynamics of fieldwork and the ordinary events that characterize Sorbian lives and bilingualism. This ethnographic and linguistic data resonated with Clifford Geertz's (1973) classic riddle of distinguishing between a "wink" and a "twitch." Although I relied heavily on Sorbian distinctions, the *Ferdinand* project illuminated the difference between Sorbian resources and the covert categories (Whorf 1945) that Sorbs experience daily.

The prosaic and public components of fieldwork emerged in a wide range of sites where I worked. In February and March (2007), I attended rehearsals of the Sorbian theater production of "*Njebudže Płačenje*." I also attended *Schadźowanka* (November 2006, 2007), *Ptački Kwas* (February 2007), *Jelco* (January 2007), *Złoty Palc* (November 2006), Bühnenball (October 2006), the high school senior recital (October 2007), and the International Festival for Sorbian Language and Culture (July 2005 and 2007). Talks and readings organized by *Šmolers Kniharnje* complemented my research interest in language attitudes especially perspectives on written practices. I spent time (10-20 hours per month) in *Serbska Kulturna Informacija* (Sorbian Cultural Information office) and *Šmolers Kniharnja*, the Sorbian bookstore, working on data entry in the trilingual dictionary and observing, when possible, Sorbian interactions, although I was not allowed to record in these spaces.

Although I cannot list every single place where I researched, I would like to bring attention to three sites. First, participant-observation and informal interviews (October 2006-March 2007) in the Sorbian High School dormitory and in classrooms provided another context where I could explore language attitudes focusing on high school students. Second, I generally conducted interviews and worked on translations with Sorbs in public spaces. Of these spaces,

*Bjesada*, a café in *Serbski Dom* (see also Chapter 5) represented some of the ironies of Sorbian spaces. Despite its name, which implies elegant ways of talking, there was relatively little Sorb spoken in this space. Third, I gathered ethnographic data and recorded talk in a small store in *Miłoćicy* (May 2007-September 2007). In general, these research opportunities afforded me opportunities to interact with Sorbs, but also reminded me of the problematic dynamics of the Sorbian setting at this moment. Collecting ethnographic data in a variety of public and institutional settings complemented by the *Ferdinand* project, interviews, and the dictionary task illuminated “loci of ideology reproduction” (Blommaert 1999) and delved deeply into the dynamics of variation.

My research strategies and questions perpetually emerged as I improvised in-the-field adjusting to facets of Sorbian diversity that arise from declining face-to-face contact and extreme polarization of the community compounded by linguistic indistinction and silencing (intra-community psychodynamics) and linguistic anxieties (Sorbian-German tensions). The multi-faceted difficulties that I encountered in-the-field serve to remind me of the German/Sorb linguistic inequality and the possible loss of the Sorbian language in the next twenty years. Through the construction of a trilingual dictionary and through gathering translations of *The Story of Ferdinand*, I explored the bilingual and intralingual nuances of the Sorbian landscape. Working with Sorbs one-on-one creating a Sorbian *Ferdinand* allowed me to attend to the situated positions of participants (Blommaert 1999). My *Ferdinand* project captures the dynamics of diversity while taking into account local linguistic ideologies and how they mutually reinforce and compete with one another. I did this not as a Sorb but as an

outsider, working in not one research arena but in several. Thus, my research strategies reveal an ideological terrain that characterizes Sorbian linguistic survival.

#### Key to Font Conventions

Normal Calibri Font	English
<i>Italic Calibri Font</i>	<i>Sorb</i>
<u>Underlined Calibri Text</u>	German (used in English body of text)

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<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, I use do not use the more specific identification of Upper Sorbian to refer to Sorbian language use for three reasons. First, I only worked with Upper Sorbian speakers. Second, Sorbian debates about whether the language varieties are dialects or distinct languages is not the focus of this methodological discussion. In working with Sorbs, they used the self-description, “Ich bin Sorben or *Ja jsem serb* (I am a Sorb),” and did not differentiate between the Upper Sorbian and Lower Sorbian languages.

<sup>2</sup> A monolingual ideology reflects a certain position on language use. More specifically, it entails an implicit view of language as a bounded code that that is purified from other languages and reinforced by a Herderian one language-one culture-one nation rhetoric.

<sup>3</sup> In Ethnologue (Lewis 2009), the Upper Sorbian population is 18,000 based on 1995 statistic. However, all Upper Sorbian speakers that I interviewed during my field work used the earlier 1989 statistic of 60,000 speakers, a strategic choice that added together 40,000 (Upper Sorbian) and 20,000 (Lower Sorbian).

<sup>4</sup> It is ironic that these foundations may contribute to debates about standard English (see also Bex and Watts 1999; Milroy 2004)

<sup>5</sup> Even more to the point as Weseley Leonard (2008) asks, “when is a language dead and when is it merely sleeping?”

<sup>6</sup> See also Hill’s (2002) discussion of enumeration and expert rhetorics.

<sup>7</sup> Lisa Mitchell (2009) explores the emotional sentiments about Indian as a mother-tongue and recognizes it a historical and contemporary narratives of language use and identity.

<sup>8</sup> I use pseudonyms for Kristina and her family.

<sup>9</sup> As I read this little girl stories, I often encountered myself thinking about dynamics of language socialization and wondering how much parent s played a role in language maintenance (see also Heath 1983; Kulick 1992; Schieffelin 1990)

<sup>10</sup> This biannual festival represents a institutionally organized celebration of ethnic diversity and an erection of a Sorbian-only space. Activities include performances of folk dances, an open-air market, and demonstrations of traditional Sorbian art forms.

<sup>11</sup> Recognition of the need to make a traditional language “cooler” or more desirable exists in the Sorbian youth activities but even more explicitly in the brochure *Rěcy moc, to jo cool: Sprachen können, das ist cool* (To know languages, that is cool)” (Barth 2006).

<sup>12</sup> Although I recognized the importance of orthographic choices, my dictionary project only indirectly involved spelling as a theoretical concern (see also Blommaert 2004; Jaffe 1999; Papen 2007; Romaine 2002; Schieffelin and Doucet 1992; Sebba 2007).

<sup>13</sup> Dictionaries and texts that I referenced included mainly socialist and post-socialist sources (Jentsch 1999; Jentsch et.al. 1986; Jentsch and Michalk 1991; Jakubaš 1954; Jentsch and Šěrak 2007; Krawcec 1995; Myłnik 1960; Panig and Pawoł 1966; Paul and Schulz 1999; Pfuhl 1848, 1866; Rehor 2003; Rězak 1920; Šoćina and Wornar 2002; Stankiewicz 1984; Stone 1966, 2002; Strauch 1995; Völkel 1981a, 1981b; Wornar 2007).

<sup>14</sup> Indeed these ambiguous responses indicate the unconscious acceptance of some contradictions in languaged worlds and rejection of other linguistic practices (see Bourdieu 1977a, 1980).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *“To je wšojedne (It Doesn’t Matter)”:* Emotions and Endangerment in Bilingual Lusatia

*Being bilingual is like walking. If you try to stand on one foot, you would just fall over.*  
–Sorbian woman

In bilingual Lusatia, bilingual Sorbs frequently read a Sorbian newspaper with ads that include German text, watch Sorbian television programs with German subtitles, see bilingual signs on their way home, and speak two languages. During these activities, Sorbs encounter a “deep-lying dialogue between languages” (Bakhtin 1981: 365). In this chapter, I draw on evidence from a variety of seemingly disparate sources that reveal embedded dialogues and fluctuations between German and Sorbian resources. These examples will show how bilingual Sorbs engage in semi-standardized practices. I argue that these practices exemplify neither linguistic anomalies nor code-switching. Rather, I suggest that Sorbs navigate their resources through erasing, blurring, and erecting linguistic boundaries. When Sorbs *ERASE* bilingual boundaries, they engage in activities that mix German and Sorbian resources that they recognize as “mish-mash” (see Chapter 4). As a specific type of erased boundaries, Sorbs recognize *BLURRED* boundaries, when utterances belong to both linguistic codes. In contrast, *ERECTING* boundaries entails subtle and pronounced distinctions between Sorbian and German language use. The coexistence of these linguistic processes makes Sorbian linguistic practices a prime site for considering “contradictions in a multi-langued world” (Bakhtin 1981: 275).

Emotional aspects of living with these contradictions encompass affective stances from ambiguity to anger. To begin unpacking how emotions and languages impact one another, I

align my arguments with a theoretical position of “language as social action” (Abu-Lughod 1986; Bauman and Briggs 1990; Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990). From a linguistic perspective, in the Sorbian context, social action encompasses policing of language boundaries. More specifically, Sorbs erect, erase, and blur boundaries between German/Sorbian resources using notions of identity, temporality, and standard language ideology (SLI).<sup>1</sup>

## **Staying Balanced: A Place to Start**

In order to gain a holistic picture of Sorbian linguistic arrangements, I unite Bakhtinian and Bourdieuan approaches. This intellectual marriage offers insights into the contradictions of a multi-linguaged world without decreasing the power of monolingual ideals. Although SLI provides a rationale for prescriptive stances (with multifarious purposes), it can unwittingly promote a range of semi-standardized practices in strategic and surprising ways. By the end of this and the following chapter, several dynamics will emerge

- language mixing occurs in the village and in *Budyšin*<sup>2</sup>
- use of borrowed elements can mark temporality, multiple identities, or various understandings of SLI, and not just Sorbian/German identifications
- laments reinforce use of borrowings/code-crossings and vitalize semi-standardized practices

As Sorbs monitor linguistic borders, they often disturb conventionally accepted and scholarly notions of code-switching as an automated response to morpho-syntactic rules or context that reflects linguistic inequalities, between the dominant German language and politically subordinated Sorbian utterances or between language use in different Sorbian-only contexts.

I unravel these dynamics by reference to three ideological devices—internalized monolingualism, authoritative/expert aspects, and tensions among standards. Through identity discourses, bilingual Sorbs construct and reproduce concepts of internalized monolingualism. This local ideology of first language acquisition speaks to linguistic authority, ideas of vernacular

language use, and an appreciation of a spoken interactive mode. Following my unpacking of internalized monolingualism, I tackle linguistic authority and expertise—ideas that Sorbs understand as interdependent notions of competence. My final thematic undertaking involves paradoxes among standards. This unexpected dynamic reflects local uses of internalized monolingualism and authority/expertise through an urban/rural diglossia and a parallel written-spoken dichotomy via SLI. As Sorbs encounter and consider these devices in symphony with one another, they take part in semi-standardized practices.

Before progressing further, I need to make a slight, but very important digression to state that I find concept of diglossia limiting.<sup>3</sup> Instead, I adopt Michael Herzfeld's "disemia," as a term that reflects tensions between official and vernacular forms. While diglossia addresses oppositional language variation primarily, disemia constitutes a semiotic continuum and focuses more heavily on dialogues between "official self-presentation and collective introspection," an interstitial space of official and collective practices that includes economics , contexts, and social values (Herzfeld 1997: 14).

As the Sorbian community, as a collective, contemplates its many national sensibilities disemia speaks to Bauman's question of "Was eigentlich ist ein Volk? (What is a folk, really?)"

(Bauman in Šatava 2005: 24). A Volk/folk could be:

- an ethnic people that use a dialect. whose social value is threatened;
- a group that performs folk dances, wears a national costume, and speaks a traditional language, which categorizes them as "exotic others";
- a collective of citizens who face an economic crisis, or
- an endangered language speech community

All the possible definitions produce ambiguity, because of the multiple possible answers to any question (see Chapters 1 and 2). Yet, each definition suggests different types of cultural activities with specific linguistic implications.

## **Code-switching and Emotion: Activities of Social Action**

Each utterance is an act serving the direct aim of the speaker of binding hearer to speaker by a tie of some social sentiment or other. Once more language appears to us in this function not as an instrument of reflection but as a mode of action (Malinowski 1994[1923]: 10).

From Malinowski's insight that language represents action and often indicates "violent feelings and passions" (Malinowski 1994[1923]: 6), I move next to anthropological discussions of emotions. This bridge strengthens my arguments, in which I link discourses about language and with emotional dialogues. In this approach, I reconsider the capabilities of language to accomplish certain ends. Rather than approaching language merely as a mode of thought (Bauman and Briggs 1990), I question intellectual discussions of code-switching that often pervert a Sapirian tradition of languaged worlds into a form of linguistic determinism by assuming that a person perceives the world differently in each language. To take this one step further, I contend that bilingual Sorbs experience multiple Sorbian/German worlds, in which social action, linguistic practices, and emotions characterize everyday life.<sup>4</sup>

When Peter Auer (1991) advanced a notion of "code switching as social action," he challenged a strictly grammatical approach to understanding code-switching. Instead, he proposed that code-switching is experienced as "the juxtaposition of two languages perceived and interpreted as locally meaningful to participants (Auer 1999: 310)." Li Wei (2002) elucidates the notion of juxtaposition as necessitating an emic interpretation of the ways bilinguals make sense of interlingual distinctions. Their insights open the door to my argument that emic interpretations inherently involve emotions and boundary policing (see also Auer and Wei 2007). Furthermore, anthropologists theorize that emotions facilitate social activities through code-switching along several lines. I bring up four specific studies that investigate the

intersection of code-switching and emotions: 1) anger and boundary erection as a catalyst for local linguistic ideologies and code-switching (Kulick 1992); 2) code-switching as a diffuser of tensions through ambiguity and blurring (Heller 1988); 3) code-switching as a marker of distance that challenges elite control of subordinated languages magnifying an erected boundary (Jaffe 1999); and 4) humorous utterances (in Catalonia) that erase boundaries and diffuse anger (Woolard 1988, 1998a). Although emotions figure heavily into these arguments, I take issue with these ethnographically rich discussions and the tendency to associate one language with an emotion. Building on the work of these scholars, I argue for a richer and more dynamic set of emotional contours in a multi-/bilingual setting.

As constructionist arguments, Kulick's, Heller's, and Jaffe's rely heavily on static binaries. For example, Kulick's work in Papua New Guinea uses gender to interpret a genre of women's speech called "kros," a form of Taiap talk which Gapuners associate with anger. Kulick argues that Gapuners negatively frame Taiap with an emotion. In a similar fashion, Jaffe hones her argument through a lens of French/Corsican inequality and competing ideologies, which effectuate negative views of Corsican as not standardized. While Jaffe relates Corsican reactions to a linguistic hegemony and purism that often results in "linguistic terrorism" (Hill in Jaffe 1999), she also grounds her arguments in an unchanging and monolithic structural inequality. Jaffe maintains focus on the insecurity felt by Corsican speakers, but not on the multiple ways Corsican speakers navigate their insecurities about their non-standardized resources.

In contrast, Heller addresses the code mixing and linguistic strategies that minimize insecurities. Heller points out that code-switching "accomplishes the ambiguous reality of not



choosing frames of reference” (Heller 1988: 89-90). Through use of both codes in a speech event, Québécois speakers maintain a good relationship with Anglophones and a legitimate Francophone status. By navigating these two groups, bilinguals diffuse insecurities by mixing linguistic codes. Although my arguments resonate most strongly with Heller, she still stresses a Francophone-Anglophone binary.

In contrast, Woolard calls for investigation of bivalency or the simultaneous presence of two languages in an utterance.” In Woolard’s analysis of improvisational comedy in radio broadcasts, she acknowledges the “relaxations of contrasts, a lowering of the guard” (Woolard 1998: 14), when a linguistic construction belongs in two linguistic codes at the same time. Woolard recognizes a need for a theoretical discussion of frequency, combinations, and relationships in bivalent phenomenon, but her emphasis on humor veils the multilateral forms of anger. For example the possibility that these boundary navigations are not funny, “in a good way” to bilingual speakers. In contrast to these scholars’ arguments, I posit that language mixing and emotions rely on each another, but not to the extent of associating a unilateral judgment with one code or another. Finally, I wholeheartedly agree with Woolard’s insights into bivalency, but I remain wary of overlooking the risky encounters that bilingual Sorbs experience in non-humorous situations.

The early work of Nancy Dorian (1981), Jane and Kenneth Hill (1986), and Susan Gal (1979) set the foundation for these scholars by bringing attention to the ideological factors that play a role in linguistic inequalities. Although I see an academic lineage between my work and theirs, I suggest that in interactions between dominant and subordinated languages, other dynamics co-occur. These scholars recognize the stigma (Dorian 1981, Gal 1979), linguistic

terrorism (Hill and Hill 1986), and social-historical factors that fortify ideas of a linguistic border (see Chapter 2) between two languages. My work adds to both early and later work by recognizing the existence of a linguistic border and explicitly focusing on the emotionally-charged dynamics that occur there—often between different varieties of what speakers consider the same language. In particular, Dorian and I share a common interest in the discourses of purism and compromise especially in the study of borrowings or loan words.

As borrowings represent a dynamic of integration of foreign element into another or target language, borrowings are a prime site to consider how bilingual Sorbs police boundaries and the specifics of “simultaneities” (Woolard 1998a). In many Sorbian/German interactions, a question arises. What is a borrowing if the donor language is not clearly recognizable to the speakers or when bilingual speakers sometimes accept a borrowed element (either single word or multiword), but other times reject borrowed elements. Furthermore, speakers may use other evaluations to construct linguistic difference not only interlingual ones. This type of question often requires a closer look at ideological and sociological factors and the emotions that permeate dialogues about borrowings .

Dorian’s (1994) discussion of purism and compromise brings sociological/ideological discourses to the forefront of borrowings in endangered language contexts. She summarizes tensions between keeping a language pure of outside influences and “opening the floodgates to external influences which must inevitably swamp a small language” (Dorian 1994: 490). In contexts of low and high literacy levels, her arguments verify that neither purism nor compromise constitutes a greater threat to continuing use of an endangered language. Although my underlying focus differs from Dorian in that I focus on the dynamics of linguistic

survival and her focus entails the steps toward language death, we have an important point of agreement.

Dorian and I both agree that “purity need not be a requirement for persistence, and compromise need not be a death knell” (Dorian 1994, 492). I adapt her arguments to make a case that both claims to purifying a language or erecting boundaries as well as compromise or erasing/blurring boundaries are necessary for language survival. More to point of my take on linguistic survival, the dialogues and laments related to these phenomena themselves may become durable, but often emotionally charged, stopgaps to language loss in the Sorbian community.

As brought up by Dorian, borrowings are a keen issue in language loss. Furthermore, laments often occur when Sorbs borrow German elements that oftentimes “tag” or mark a “vigorous effort ...to keep them wholly apart” (Haugen 1977a: 98). Sorbs imbue emotions into local meanings, not only by navigating their bilingual resources but also by lamenting. To take Haugen’s insights about communicative norms, laments signal not only the simultaneous presence of two languages, but also a spectrum of linguistic practices and emotional stances.

Jim Wilce (2009a) focuses on the psychological and emotional processes of laments emphasizing the performative aspects of a vocal tradition. Wilce (2009a) describes web-mediated Shia piety, a fetishization of folklore in Eastern Europe, and “co-options” of national consciousness as metalaments. He also clarifies that metalaments encompass claims about a loss of tradition. For Sorbs, loss of tradition includes language use in addition to concerns about Sorbian rituals, folk tradition, national dress, funding, schooling, and church services. Thus, lament is part and parcel of linguistic self-silencing and a politics of indistinction (see Chapter 3)

and social action in collective laments. Furthermore, Wilce claims that “rumors of lament’s [traditional mourning] death may be overexaggerated” (Wilce 2009a: 165). Wilce and I have come to a similar conclusion regarding laments, but I also include troubles talk as another form of mourning. Wilce and I agree on the centrality of loss, grieving, and death in laments, as an emotional discourse and a metacultural practice that varies widely.

While Wilce appreciates laments in the post-socialist contexts, he fails to recognize the centrality of these practices especially in recent post-socialist research. Verdery (1996) asks “what comes next?” a question that harbors the emotional instability that accompanied the redefinition of national borders and the restructuring of economic systems. For many people living in the post-socialist context living after the collapse involves many expressions of grief, remembering the past protests and suffering that often spurred a “call-to arms” during a transitional period. As Svašek (2006) points out, rapid political and economic change coincides with an array of emotions ranging from hope and desire to disillusionment, anger, and mistrust.

In Germany, reunification coincides with localized sentiments of “ostalgie/nostalgia” (Berdahl 1999), which reveals another side to post-socialist desires. Political and institutional support amplifies the structures of inequality an aspect of Sorbian life that I explore in chapter 2. Thus, Sorbs may give greater value to German linguistic practices, but they may also yearn for a Sorbian national identity. These desires may coincide with concerns about a Sorbian national language and laments about the contemporary state of affairs. Similar to transformations in other post-socialist contexts, changes in German national boundaries coincide with new language policies, decreased funding for minority languages, and linguistic standardization (Bermel 2007; Bilaniuk 2005; Csergo 2007). More to the point of a post-socialist

context, laments encompass communicative acts that articulate everyday complaints, speak to nostalgia (Berdahl 1999), provide a sense of phatic communion (Reis 1997), and give voice to everyday suffering or the “little deaths” involved in ordinary suffering of language loss (see also Chapter 3).

Emotions are social action but not simply as a non-verbal complement to speech or even as a tool to unilaterally construe one language as good or another as bad. Through their laments, Sorbs dialogue about the nuances of code mixing that require a different view of language and affect. Their laments give voice to thoughts about an uncertain future, concerns about language loss, and current psychodynamics. When a Sorbian stage hand told me that “the Sorbs have been crying wolf for a thousand years and the language is still not dead,” he succinctly made a (com-)plaint about language loss through ambiguity and anger. In his words, I heard lamenting that Sorbs lament; lamenting that the language is threatened; and lamenting that the Sorbian language is still surviving.

In the Sorbian community, anger is an important aspect of laments about the Sorbian language. Sorbian laments also simultaneously unite and divide the Sorbian community. In her description of anger, Svašek “acknowledge[s] that people are able to hide or exaggerate their feelings and that they [people] can play emotional roles with the intention of creating a certain effect in their intended public” (Svašek 2006: 14). In the Sorbian community, anger speaks to ambiguous expressions of love like that of the stage worker.

Thus love and anger...are two sides of the same sociopolitical coin: love cannot be understood without the backdrop of the specter of anger...love and anger are the very strong markers that tell respectively of the relative successes and failures of social [and linguistic] processes” (Overing and Passes 2000: 3).

By exaggerating their anger, Sorbs also emphasize their love and surprise that Sorbian practices endure. In Chapter 2, I offered narratives of sociopolitical alienation and sentiments of disenchantment that highlight anger, but this discussion explores the linguistic aspects and the ways that Sorbs linguistically police boundaries.

By focusing on coexistent processes of erecting, erasing, and blurring of boundaries, I explore the complex of activities at German-Sorbian boundaries through borrowings, metacommunicative acts, and social relations. Susan Gal writes:

Boundaries are also a matter of time: people...had most interest in distinguishing between old borrowings that had been integrated as standard forms, and new or nonce borrowings that they accessed through their own bilingualism. Linguistically these two kinds of borrowings that they accessed often seem identical, but the first is heard by standard speakers as 'ours' while the second is heard as 'foreign'. Depending on the cultural value of the donor language, the foreign can gain indexical meanings of time, high prestige or other cultural value...Meanwhile other speakers in the same social scene but with different political commitments attempt to police the boundaries of two standards keeping them strictly apart (Gal 2006: 169-170).

Although Gal brings attention to notions of time in the above quotation, my analysis of borrowings also pays heed to spatial discourses (*Budyšin*/the village), German/Sorbian labels, and modalities of use (written-spoken). Furthermore, Sorbian laments simultaneously mark language as "foreign and ours" or "new and old." These judgments mark both German and Sorbian utterances as unacceptable at times. This double-edge critique inherently deals with the ways Sorbs capitalize on shifting and situated forms of value and often fail to keep standards separate.

Central to Gal's arguments is cultural value. In Pierre Bourdieu's (2001) words, value exists in three forms: the embodied state, the objectified state, and the institutionalized state. These distinctions are important, because they distinguish value as personal lived investment, material objects, and academic practices. With regard to linguistic capital, Bourdieu failed to

disentangle these three possible forms in his treatise, *Language and Symbolic Capital* (1991). This oversight inhibits a more nuanced view of capital and presents a more rigid framework regarding the distinctiveness of linguistic codes. Furthermore, a strict interpretation of Bourdieu's arguments (1991) may encourage a conflation of embodied, objectified, and institutionalized capital. My goal is to analytically disentangle embodied, objectified, and institutionalized forms of capital. Bourdieu sees capital more rigidly than I want to present in my arguments. In other words, bilingual Sorbs see different forms of linguistic capital constantly at play with one another; sometimes being conflated, and at other times being actively policed in social interactions and linguistic practices. By revealing this complexity, I also show how linguistic capital fuels conflicting emotions. While some Sorbs may fear language loss, others may feel anger especially when other Sorbs may misconstrue a source of linguistic capital. Yet another possibility for some Sorbs involves the removal ambiguity through assertions that one type of capital has more value than another; or even to equating prestige with a particular Sorbian standard. As I alluded in in the sorbian theater employee's evaluation of language death, I continue unpack these emotional possibilities in an argument between two Sorbian speakers by focusing specifically on code-switching practices (see Microcosm 1).

## Theoretical Links: Rethinking Language

Language is probably not a closed system at all, but a complex congeries of interacting systems, open at both ends... Perhaps a close analysis of these ragged margins of linguistic behavior will yield significant information concerning the nature of language itself (Haugen 1972c: 74).

In this section, I take several steps to reconsider languages. An initial move calls for a rethinking of language and its importance to bilingual speakers. I recognize the problems of bilingualism that expose a "mass of coexistent systems, which are often

mutually inconsistent” (Haugen 1972c: 74).<sup>5</sup> As I probe inconsistencies in linguistic systems, I will examine utterances (in Sorb and German) that are sometimes roughly equivalent and other times wildly different. Moving through a discussion of these distinct discrepancies, I focus on language not as a closed system or a bounded code but, rather, as an open miscellany of linguistic resources including phonetic, morphemic, and syntactic usages. Finally, recognition of coexisting systems allows me to address linguistic variation, litanies, and code-switching in a new light.

### Ambiguity and Anger: Emotional States of Bilingual Praxis

On a summer evening (2005), I invited Timothy and Charlotte for drinks and I hoped that they would enjoy each other’s company, but they quickly got into a heated discussion. Timothy, a “prodigal son” and a thirty-something Canadian who did not grow up in Germany, felt a very strong sense of Sorbian identity, partially because of learning Sorb as a child. To me, he frequently expressed his frustrations over integrating into the Sorbian community. Timothy did not understand that his pro-Sorbian speech practices impeded Sorbian acceptance and even angered some Sorbs. Upon his return to what he felt was his “homeland,” he became very active in political protests for the Sorbian language and promotion of Sorbian events.

Haugen argues that in linguistic revival settings “it may be better to bend than to break (Haugen 1977: 101).” To put it simply, Timothy refused to bend linguistically. Timothy’s enthusiasm emerged in his linguistic choices and his refusal to compromise by using German even in the smallest ways. With the best of intentions, I hoped that Charlotte, a woman in her late 50’s and who calls herself a “child of socialism,” could help shed light on the linguistic ironies of Sorbian life and the bilingual communicative norms that Timothy appeared to be



ignoring. I knew that Charlotte understood that “the communicative norm which grows up in bilingual communities is more elastic and less predictable than that of a monolingual community” (Haugen 1977: 98). With a lifetime of experience in Sorbian politics especially because of her prominent role in the community, Charlotte understood the dynamics of Sorbian social relations and language use.

To shed light on Timothy’s pro-Sorbian stance, I need to return to my first encounters with him. During a walking tour of Budyšin that Timothy conducted for the participants of the Summer School for Sorbian Language and Culture (2004) I became aware of Timothy’s strong political stance. His English sightseeing narrative was one of the few in which English language use occurred during an informal instructional activity. After establishing that the Slavic tribes who migrated to Germany in the fifth century (as part of the Wendish migration) arrived in Lusatia before the German tribes, he framed Slavic ancestors of modern-Sorbs as the “original settlers of the area.” Timothy went on to explain that Sorbs and not Germans built many of the towers and buildings in Budyšin. From his argument that the Slavic ancestors of the Sorbs built these early structures, Timothy rationalized his use of Sorbian names for them when framing the issue for the audience. His strong beliefs about the historical settlement of Lusatia differed starkly from an official history of peace and cooperation. I propose that Timothy’s choice of Sorbian place-names is a real life example of the insidious tensions about borrowings and that he enacted a strong pro-Sorbian puristic stance through his use of Sorbian place-names.<sup>6</sup> In Haugen’s words Timothy made a choice not to bend—a choice that contributed to his sense of alienation or breaking with the Sorbian community and creating a linguistic “straitjacket” (Haugen 1977). His sense of linguistic purism that motivated him not to use German names for

monuments or even the word BAUTZEN (the German name for urban center) exemplifies his unwillingness to make linguistic compromises and a form of extreme linguistic policing that stand in stark contrast to the give and take of borrowings.

I hoped that Charlotte could clarify for Timothy and perhaps even to address the question “why?” bilingual Sorbs speak or do not speak Sorb. Instead, Timothy and Charlotte argued about language use in the Sorbian community, specifically concerning speaking Sorb, code-switching, and language shift. These topics arose from Timothy’s desire to understand the practices and politics in the Sorbian community. Timothy’s confusion resonates with the extensive academic discussions that address language contact phenomena such as code-switching, language alternation, mixing languages, and other weighty nomenclature and corresponding processes.

Timothy, as a speaker of multiple languages (Polish, Czech, Sorb, English, Italian, and Russian), often shifted between languages in his work as translator and as a liaison between the EU and the Sorbian institutions. Further complicating the situation, Timothy refused to speak German even though he lived in bilingual Lusatia and asserted that he asked Sorbs not to speak to him in German. He grew increasingly frustrated that Sorbian speakers would speak to him in German especially after he would say “*njemuže němska* (I cannot do German)” or “*Ja rěčem jenož serbska* (I only speak Sorb).”<sup>7</sup> His refusal to speak German resonated with a Sorbian-only ideology which I experienced in the Summer School of Sorbian Language and Culture. Timothy’s disagreement with Charlotte reveals the difficulties of understanding why a person uses one language and not another. Timothy repeatedly said that he could tell Sorbs not to speak to him in German. To go back to his sightseeing narrative, his use of Sorbian names and not German

ones was a political protest that takes on linguistic tones. His edict speaks to the nuances of dictating language choice. Overall, their argument deals with a bilingual issue, prescriptive discourses, and “wrong-minded” interpretations made by outsiders in their opinion. After Timothy asks what language do you speak, Charlotte answers “*to je všojedne* (it doesn’t matter).”

## Microcosm 1: A Debate over Language Choice

1. Charlotte: To to to je Serb
2. Timothy: To to rečite
3. Charlotte: Ale ale to su wěsta su wěs tajke su na příklad
4. so suwaj naturalnje po krajčduje předstajke abo
5. druhle tebe ale so muže te stać eh serbsky nereči
6. ale na příklad njěmy druhy wusydeš tabelka abo
7. čerte wuklada tak
8. Timothy: haj
9. Charlotte: ale so na příklad demu reč rečiš eh ji přěč je němce  
German
10. Timothy: haj
11. Charlotte: also wir reden deutsch
12. Timothy: haj
13. Charlotte: also wir reden deutsch was nimmt
14. Timothy: yes
15. Charlotte: schódže druhe rečite
16. Timothy: XXX
17. Charlotte: to móžu tu tež droždžiš rečnicy
18. Timothy: XXX
19. Charlotte: to móžu tež ale druhe kraja
20. Timothy: XXX
21. Charlotte: ale

It it it is Sorb  
you speak it (Sorb)  
But but it is certain to them and you know for example you  
naturally operate or you make it known to Sorbs that you do no  
speak German, but you are a Sorb, you do not speak [German]  
but for example we are not comfortable to whiten  
or blacken [things]clearly so  
yes  
but for example there is a language you speak eh you say it is  
  
yes  
and we speak German  
yes  
also we speak German what someone does  
yes  
you speak the other language  
XXX  
you can also challenge speakers with language  
XXX  
but I can create another context  
XXX  
but

22. Timothy: XXX
23. Charlotte: nejepriš ale je prajiš jen so so wjele ludži serbska
24. nerěči su nemska
25. Timothy: hay
26. Charlotte: ale to mne njereči
27. Timothy: njereči mně hay
28. Charlotte: njeni to
29. Timothy: řeči
30. Charlotte: móže mi
31. Timothy: móže mi
32. Charlotte: to je wšojedne TO JE WŠOJEDNA TO JE WŠOJEDNA
33. Timothy: sama například evangelesky
34. Charlotte: to je wšojedne hač evangelsky abo catolisky also
35. to je wšojedne

XXX

you cannot say but <you> say to many Sorbian people

do not speak German

[yes]

but to me you cannot speak it

but you do not speak it/German to me yes

it is not that

speak

one can to me

one can to me

it doesn't matter IT DOESN'T MATTER IT DOESN'T MATTER

also for example the protestants

it doesn't matter if protestant or catholic

it doesn't matter

In their debate, Charlotte becomes increasingly agitated as Timothy challenged the ambiguity associated with code-switching.<sup>8</sup> Repeatedly saying “it doesn’t matter” (Lines 15-16 and 18-19) and raising her tone and pitch, Charlotte infuses anger into her ambiguous response of “it doesn’t matter.” Timothy starts with religious differences to try to explain language shift.<sup>9</sup> Differences between Catholic and Protestant literary languages reflect historical efforts to standardize the literary language. At this moment in time, current demographics show decreasing use of the Protestant Upper Sorbian dialect, almost to the point of complete loss. He then later rationalizes that generational differences that contribute to language loss (not included in *Microcosm 1*). Finally, Timothy suggests that notions of gender affect Sorbian language transmission in detrimental ways. Charlotte reacts vehemently as Timothy tries to understand the contradictions. Like Timothy, I wanted a simple explanation that would clarify the mechanics of code-switching, but I was also shocked and confused by the intensity of their conversation. My initial desires for a causal relationship between language choice and broader ideological discourses resonate with Timothy’s yearning for a pat or superficially plausible answer for language shift.

### Metalinguistic Laments: Other Emotions-in-Action

Although Timothy and Charlotte did not come to a mutual understanding, their feelings reflect the emotional undercurrents that permeate Sorbian realities. Two specific metalinguistic laments or litanies, which I discuss below, expose other forms of ambiguity and anger in the Sorbian community as affective stances. Although laments are a specific genre of song, I broaden laments to include other forms of talk that address anger and other discourses of

language loss (see also Wilce 2009b). Nancy Ries describes the effects of litanies in the following way:

Litanies may also entrench the deep cynicism and despair that separates citizens from political processes. By constantly affirming the profound powerlessness of the self and of the associated collectivity, litanies reinforce a sense of hopelessness and futility and undermine attempts to imagine or invent even small-scale solutions to local problems (Reis 1997: 115).

Like Nancy Ries, I also identify litanies as a genre of speech. When I encountered them in conversations with Sorbs, I challenged them “with my own American speech form of optimism (and perhaps naïve) ‘cheerleading,’ but finding myself vehemently contradicted” (Ries 1997: 115). I heard Sorbs lamenting during interviews and *Ferdinand* translations, at Sorbian premieres of Sorbian plays, in reference to Sorbian texts, and in response to specific inquiries about a lexical item. During these activities bilingual Sorbs often commented, “das klingt komisch (that sounds funny)” and or “das ist entwickelt (that is developed [invented])” in response to particular utterances or written passages that constitute disturbances of linguistic expectations and identity signals.

Bourdieu (1977b) advances the notion, that certain activities “...can sometimes mask identity signals that express contradictory information, signals that ‘point to’ inexplicit knowledge about the situatedness of selves” (Shaw 1994: 86). Identity signals, like commentaries of “entwickelt” or “komisch” also key different sources of capital—embodied, objectified, and institutionalized—that I discussed earlier through Bourdieu’s rationale. These cross-community meta-linguistic commentaries articulate many dimensions of Sorbian identity construction, language attitudes, social relations, and even possibly the very prosaic nature of bilingualism. Moreover, these stances often emerge in the mixing of ambiguity and anger in a single utterance.

Commentaries about others' linguistic practices erect boundaries along linguistic lines. These commentaries also reinforce those boundaries through a reflective process of identity construction. Bakhtin (1990) advances a tripartite rubric that lays out an interactive dialogue among conceptions of selfhood: "I-for-myself," "I-for-others," and "myself-for-others." (see also Morson and Emerson 1990). This Kantian idea of selfhood also resonates with George Herbert Mead's attention to the self not as a discrete entity. Sorbian linguistic practices, I argue, add an "others-for me" category through which Sorbs comment on other Sorbs' linguistic practices. Commentaries of "entwickelt" and "komisch" exemplify double voicing or ventriloquation (Bakhtin 1981).

Judith Irvine's (1996) classic analysis of insult embedded in a public recitation of a poem provides a springboard to consider how individuals attack "Others" or "stalk with stories" (Basso 1996). When Sorbs reject community mores through metalinguistic critiques of other Sorbs, they, in turn, make statements about their own sense of self. Bakhtin's insights on this insight relate to a classic anthropological question. As Catherine Lutz argues,

Within the class of persons, then, how are self and other distinguished? The point at which the self stops and the other begins is neither fixed nor conceptualized as an impermeable wall. It is considered natural that one person's thoughts should influence another's. People are frequently characterized as "following the thoughts/feelings" of others; in doing so, they take on the attitudes, angers, or plans of the other. (Lutz 1988: 88)

Lutz's recognition of a permeable wall between the self and other exposes emotions and negotiations of selfhood. For Sorbs, this wall emerges in litanies that mask anger with ambiguity or that result in anger when ambiguity *DISAPPEARS*.

Preempting further discussion or explanation of "how" something sounds "funny" or "invented," Sorbs offered these pronouncements with a degree of finality. Through a



Bakhtinian loophole, Sorbs recognize finalizable qualities concerning identities and linguistic practices left open by evaluations of “funny” or “invented.”

A loophole is the retention for oneself of the possibility for altering the meaning of the ultimate, the final meaning of one’s own words...The potential other meaning, that is the loophole left open accompanies the word like a shadow (Bakhtin 1984: 234-235)

When Sorbs use the phrase, “it sounds funny,” they leave the possibility open for multiple interpretations. This phrase, by its very nature, is unfinalizable and ambiguous. Their evaluation lacks closure, because Sorbs rarely enunciate the rationale that merits the commentary of “sounding funny” or “being invented.” Sorbian inability to articulate “why” an expression can “sound funny” indexes their tacit understandings of identity, temporality, and SLI (see chapter 6). When Sorbs utter these ambiguous comments, their remarks provoked me to ask “funny how?” and in turn, to consider the field of variations found in Sorbian linguistic practices.

In contrast, the phrase “das ist entwickelt (it is invented)” entails a less muddled dynamic.<sup>10</sup> It exposes a historical phenomenon associated with some semiotic contradictions and also expresses various forms of anger. Historical debates about Sorbian linguistic diversity (Ermakova 1987) divided the Sorbian community and laid a foundation for a urban (*Budyšin*)/rural (village) rift. The linguistic roots of these tensions lie in Sorbian efforts to create a Sorbian literary standard in the mid-nineteenth century. Helmut Jentsch (1999), a Sorbian linguist, addresses several issues of standardization: differences between the Catholic and Protestant literary languages, German loan words, synonyms, and neologisms intended to set the foundation for “modern” Sorb.<sup>11</sup> Sorbian academic discussions, in which Jentsch is a prime participant, link Sorbian national consciousness to these four issues.

These debates also link notions of temporality to standard language ideology.<sup>12</sup>

Cavanaugh's (2004) insights into Bergamasco language use illustrate that these historical projects to "modernize" a language often remain unfinished, because Bergamasco speakers still reject a claim that Italian represents a source of linguistic heritage. Instead, Bergamasco speakers see their mixed speech as "neither quite authentic nor quite modern, neither proudly local nor definitively national" (Irvine 2004: 102). Like the Bergamasco speakers, many Sorbs reject Sorbian attempts to standardize the Sorbian language, because they link legitimacy to the spoken vernacular. Yet their recognition of "mish-mash" exemplifies a contradiction and ambiguity created through diverse standards with regards to language change and mixed language use.

Jentsch's academic discussion does not focus on the responses in the Sorbian community to these historical lexical changes but it does speak to antagonistic exchanges between Sorbian intellectuals and village Sorbs. The metalinguistic commentary of "entwickelt" expresses anger about Sorbian linguistic history, lexicon, and, language use.

#### Microcosm 2: Negotiations of Capital

As a relative by marriage to my father-in-law, my meeting with Maria gave me an opportunity to ask a villager some difficult questions about language use. At her kitchen table, where I had set up my computer and opened the Excel program of my electronic digital dictionary, Maria repeatedly pronounced "das ist entwickelt" in response to my questions about words that I found in Sorbian dictionaries. Coming out as a burst of emotion, her impatient pronouncement explained why she believed that she did not know the previous words. She went on to deplore the Sorbian linguists, who "made up new words or changed the alphabetical order." Her controlled rage ended almost as quickly as it began. Her brief lamentation ended when she called for her eighty year old mother to join us. Now with three of us at the table, Maria would consult with a person, who represented another source of Sorbian knowledge. With her mother acting as a walking dictionary, her laments against engineered language change secured her position as a competent speaker with the right to critique other Sorbs (Field notes April 2007)

When Maria or other Sorbs assessed a lexeme as "entwickelt," they created a mixed message. On one hand, Sorbian linguistic development/invention is intended to improve the

language in changing circumstances. On the other hand, Sorbs suggested this process could equally symbolize inauthenticity, fakeness, unnecessary changes, and systematic removal of linguistic variation. This phrase inherently exposes the historical idiomatic shibboleth of a languaged world (see also Holland. et.al. 1998: 41). Sorbian utterances of “das ist entwickelt (that is invented)” reveal a local parlance about Sorbian language use that refers to historical processes of language change, discourses of modernity, and the tensions in a diglossic situation. Linking notions of linguistic capital to Maria’s invitation, her mother becomes a source of embodied capital, thereby allowing Maria to reduce the value associated with the objectified and the institutionalized capital.

## **Linguistic Troubles with “Funny” and “Invented” Language**

Sorbian discussions about language “sounding funny” and “invented” language reveal a darker side of bilingualism and language politics. As Kathryn Woolard and Nicholas Genoveses have argued,

... members of bilingual communities may not always choose between their contrasting linguistic systems. Instead, they may exploit the overlaps that exist not only for linguistic but also for political purposes... (Woolard and Genoveses 2007: 489)

Metalinguistic commentaries become politico-cultural instruments, which Sorbs readily exploit as forms of troubles talk. Sorbs expressed deep discomfort with the linguistic practices of others in their community. As a reflexive process, Sorbs glance at their own language use, personal life decisions, and the internal politics tearing the Sorbian community apart. In Lutz’s observations of Ifaluk life, she notes that emotional utterances range from warnings of justifiable anger to the prompting of acceptance through fear and the use of open-ended declarations. Likewise, Sorbian use of laments encompass a range of negative emotions by

saying “it sounds funny” or “it is invented,” where justifiable anger speaks to frustration, fear, and resentment of Sorbian linguistic and social politics. Perhaps resentment as a type of anger appear the most difficult to rationalize, especially when they emerge from the frictions between the villagers and Sorbs in *Budyšin*.

As Sorbs expressed resentment, their emotions became part of “my daily listening to people as they described present and past events to each other and made emotional sense of them” (Lutz 1988: 46). From an outsider perspective, Sorbian resentment does not “make sense,” because Sorbs express deep resentment and dislike of other Sorbs rather than direct their hostility to Germans and German prejudice. However, Sorbs often accept the resentment they feel toward other Sorbs, because they provide a sense of linguistic legitimacy, even though these tensions intensify divisions in the Sorbian community. Thus, Maria and other Sorbs assert their forms of language use in legitimate ways, when they critique Sorbian academics.

To belabor the point a bit more, anger as an emotional stance emerges in resentments, which impinge on Sorbian feelings of personal worth. For Sorbs, this dynamic of their own identity construction via loopholes and linguistic critiques of other Sorbs’ language use exemplifies a sociolinguistic existence in which “I am my language but it is not my own” (Derrida 1998). Maria’s pronouncement exemplifies this paradox through a resentment of elite Sorbs. In contrast, Charlotte’s takes umbrage when Timothy misconstrues the reasons that Sorbs speak German to him. Both of them get “emotional because they are negotiating positions within relationships [the broad frameworks that define the Sorbian community] . Without those relationships...there would be nothing to get emotional about” (Milton 2005: 29). These broad frameworks include various permutations of bilingual Sorbs: German-speaking

Sorbs and Sorbian-speaking Germans as well as Maria's recognition of networks between elders as monolingual authority figures and academics as monolingual expert representatives.

Bilingual Sorbs evaluate their and other Sorbs' linguistic ownership. For many Sorbs, their identities are always tenuous and constantly under construction through erection and erasure of borders. Their evaluations of language as "sounding funny," or "invented," in turn, deny this ownership to themselves. Through these emotional stances, bilingual Sorbs inhabit a languaged world in which being bilingual entails strategic views of other Sorbs and constant self-reflection and identity (re)-constructions. In the following chapter, I continue this discussion about Sorbian mish-mash while attending to Sorbian notions of selfhood, local discussions of temporality, and tensions among standards.

#### Key to Font Distinctions and Transcription Conventions

Normal Calibri Font	English
<i>Italic Calibri Font</i>	<i>Sorb</i>
<u>Underlined Calibri Text</u>	German (used in English body of text)
<u><i>Underlined and Italicized</i></u>	German Borrowing or Sorbianized German
<u><u>Double Underlined Calibri</u></u>	German in Sorb
<>	Not spoken
[ ]	Back-translation
{ }	Grammatical elements added for clarity
...	Said quickly
CAPITAL LETTERS	Raised in pitch

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<sup>1</sup> At the theoretical core of correct speech lies an academic ideology (Joseph 1987; Milroy 1999; Milroy and Milroy 1985) that entails several logical conclusions: 1. linguistic options involve only one possible correct option; 2. the correct option represents prestige; and 3. the prestige variety corresponds to written/literary standard. Although many scholars adhere to a strict interpretation of correctness, they often reproduce an Anglophone bias or intellectual stance toward English and its presence as a global force.

<sup>2</sup> From this point on I will use "Budyšin" for the place name of the urban center.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Ferguson (1959) describes diglossia as a sociolinguistic situation where a high form associated with a literary language carries more prestige than the colloquial form and its lower status. As a corollary, this tension carries an association of the higher form representing a urban, educated form of communication restricted to

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formal or written contexts. In most cases, diglossia involves two languages/registers that contrast with one another.

<sup>4</sup> By infusing emotion into my discussion, I align myself with two key intellectual positions. One, a core discrepancy of social science research in the social sciences often eschews emotions. Intellectual desires to maintain objectivity by eliminating emotions from rigorous Western research still haunts academic discourses. Furthermore, I hope to disturb Cartesian dualism or the notion of Homo Academicus as male through my intellectual investigation of language and emotions (See Wilce 2009b).

Two, academic discourse of gender confront and/or reproduce performativity (Butler 1999), gendered dichotomies, oppression of women, and research bias (Rosaldo 1980). Even during my dissertation writing, fellow scholars have asked me to make gendered labels that neatly identify one mode of practices as male and another as female and/or gendered speech. Although I feel some frustration by these stances, I recognize that they are deeply engrained models that still reproduce a binary of men as cultured, cool, and objective and women as emotional, irrational, and natural. Wilce (2009b) asserts that these intellectual practices is part of a larger discourse that genders ethnography not only by “our” inquiries, but also by a “cool distance” that intentionally keeps the line between observation and participation firmly intact. Although I attempt not to dwell on my emotional involvement in the Sorbian community, I saw and felt shadows that still haunt my life today.

<sup>5</sup> Haugen (1972a) identifies the different types of borrowings with attention to phonological and grammatical concerns.

<sup>6</sup> His choice of Sorbian words often was not understandable to Sorbs who were not as comfortable Sorbian-only language use. Furthermore, Timothy’s language use resonates with an extreme version of institutional language use (Collins and Slembrook 2006).

<sup>7</sup> Another irony that Sorbs now accept as natural involves the etymological roots of “*Němska*” which means those who cannot hear.

<sup>8</sup> In their argument Charlotte uses two languages and often her use of the one or the other language are linked to emotions (see also Koven 2004b, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> For the purpose of this discussion, I do not address the complexities of the religious dialectal differences. Suffice to say, this aspect of Sorbian linguistic variation involves historical processes and standardization of the written language (see Chapter 2).

<sup>10</sup> Literally, “entwickelt” means developed, but when Sorbs used this descriptor in interviews that further explained that the specific lexemes under scrutiny were something not known by them and therefore they regarded these morphological units as invented. Many Sorbs also said these term were “gebaut (built),” indicating a quality of construction. For these reasons, I will translate, from this point on, the word “entwickelt” as “invented.”

<sup>11</sup> Jentsch uses the word modern (Jentsch 1999:285).

<sup>12</sup> Kathryn Woolard (2004) also addresses standardizing discourse through a lens of temporality. She shows the different images of a nation that affect language ideologies which destabilize the one nation-one culture-one language paradigm. She also unsettles Benedict Anderson’s (1983) widely accepted model of national consciousness and modernity.

## CHAPTER SIX

### The Intricacies of Bilingual Mish-Mash

Borrowings are a prime site to investigate not only differences between linguistic codes as open systems, but also to distinctions between Sorbian varieties. In this chapter I continue my previous discussion of identity, temporality and standard language ideology. In gathering ethnographic evidence, bilingual Sorbs drew on several local ideologies of language use that grounded my recognition of semi-standardized practices by unraveling three ideological devices—internalized monolingualism, authoritative/expert skill-related competence, and tensions among standards. Through identity discourses, bilingual Sorbs construct and reproduce concepts of internalized monolingualism. This local ideology of first language acquisition speaks to linguistic authority, ideas of vernacular language use, and an appreciation of a spoken interactive mode. Following my unpacking of internalized monolingualism, I tackle linguistic authority and expertise; ideas Sorbs understand as interdependent notions of competence. My final thematic undertaking involves paradoxes among standards. This unexpected dynamic reflects local uses of Sorbian resources reinforced by an urban/rural diglossia and tensions among standards. As Sorbs encounter and consider these devices in symphony with one another, they take part in semi-standardized practices.

#### **Identifications and Internalized Monolingualism**

Languages and their locally recognized variants become emblems (iconically essentialized variants) of their user's position whereby speakers are linguistically classified (Silverstein 1998: 411).

Bilingual Sorbs use multiple Sorbian varieties as they speak, read, write, and hear with more than one language. As Sorbs engage in these activities, it is theoretically difficult to simply

discuss binaries such as monolingual/bilingual and German/Sorbian. Sorbs consider themselves bilingual speakers and express an awareness of their hybridity (Tschernokoshewa 2005; Tschernokoshewa and Jurić-Pahor 2005) evidenced in their descriptions of “having two roots” and speaking “mish-mash” (See Chapter 3). By contrast, many Sorbs describe themselves as pure Sorbs. These multiple categories speak to a keenly described paradox—“die Realität ist jedoch nicht schwarzweiß (the reality is not simply black and white)” (Šatava 2005: 25).

Sorbian speakers reject identifications of an “either-or” paradigm and espouse a “not only-but also” logic that expresses an ironic sense of selfhood. Šatava describes the latter as a third path. This logic challenges assumptions that Sorbs are *EITHER* Sorb *OR* German—and—*EITHER* monolingual *OR* bilingual. Herzfeld likewise critiques the binary logic of identity:

The binarism belongs to the code itself; it does not describe the heterogeneous and shifting social world in which people nevertheless use to establish their own claims to power and distinction. Above all, its very formality makes it capable of conveying the most exquisite irony; literal readings often compound that irony by falling into the trap it sets (Herzfeld 1997: 14-15).

Herzfeld’s warning calls for a more nuanced explanation of power and ambiguity. Bilingual Sorbs feel this ambiguity in their split national loyalties-- to the Sorbian nation, albeit without a state, and to the powerful German nation-state. Sorbian experiences of ambiguity gains greater plausibility though the ideological and historical transformations of the images of the German nation-state as a Nazi totalitarian regime (1933-1945), a Communist-ruled government during socialism (1945-1989), and a Member-State of the supranational European Union (post 1989). These images correspond resonate with historically specific enactments of linguistic-national ideologies: one nation-one language-one culture, native-speaker, and multilingual. Linguistic policies of the Third Reich reflect and intersection of native speaker and one nation-one language-one culture ideologies through a racializing policy of excluding non-German speakers



(Myhill 2003). Although language policy under socialist rule enacted a more inclusive stance, the emphasis on socialist leanings for East German citizens simultaneously denied national and linguistic minorities their rights to self-determination. More specifically, Stalin's nationalities policies recreated a hierarchy in which Russian, but not German, occupied a superior position over all other languages. Now, in the European Union, exclusion of national and linguistic minorities reappears through policies of "benign neglect" (Nettle and Romaine 2000) and greater support for Member-State languages and not the lesser-used languages. Skutnabb-Kangas (1996) links monolingual reductionism, a reinvention of one language-one nation ideology, to EU language policy. Although not always explicitly stated in EU documents and language policy, current concerns reflect economic forces as a rationale for linguistic hegemonies that favor "world" languages. Furthermore, policies that support the "flowering of cultures" (Article 151 now Article 167, see also Creech 2005; Nic Shuibhne 2002; Xabier 2008) only thinly veil an enactment of Herderian romanticism and legitimation of a structural inequality that devalues endangered and minority languages.

## Historical Foundations of Internalized Monolingualism

The different images mentioned above exemplify discourses of linguistic nationalism that serve to reinforce a Sorbian under German hierarchy and a monolingual language ideology. Adding to the emotional engagement with Sorbian selfhood via nationalizing discourses, the concept of "*narod*" permeates Sorbian lives. Similar to its Russian etymological counterpart, *narod* has two definitions: "birth" and "people" or, more accurately, "folk." In the Sorbian community, the intersection of national identifications and linguistic roots takes on an emotional tone through Sorbian concerns with monolingual acquisition.<sup>1</sup> For example Kristina's

admiration her grandmother's speech practices (see Chapter 4) or acceptance of older speaker's knowledge of appropriate language use (see Chapter 5). Relating this nationalizing macro-discourse to micro-linguistic practices exposes a tautly held dynamic between a promotion of a Sorbian monolingual speaker and a German bilingual, who also speaks a national minority language. Barker (2000a, 200b) addresses this dynamic through the shift of labels from Wendish-speaking Germans (during the Third Reich) to German-speaking Sorbs (during socialism), and, I would add to this, to Sorbian-speaking Germans (in the post-socialist moment). These bilingual labels are "simultaneously subversive and supportive" (Wilson and Hastings 2005: 13) of Sorbian—German—mixed language use and demonstrate the potent intersection of linguistic and nationalizing discourses.

Due to the intrinsic contradiction of being both bilingual and monolingual, Sorbs use multiple strategies to contextualize language use through Sorbian/German identities. Semantic associations between birthplace and nationality entail historical labels of making one a German-speaking Sorb or a Sorbian-speaking German (see Chapter 2). These designations resonate with the ironies of Sorbian linguistic ethno-nationalism.<sup>2</sup> The interdependence of national consciousness and language implicates discourses of first language acquisition.

## Linguistic Facets of Internalized Monolingualism

Resolution of coexistent monolingual/bilingual labels emerges in Sorbian internalized monolingualism, a conceptualization of Sorbian first language acquisition. As a folk theory of language, many Sorbs idealize a monolingual self as pure and language as central to Sorbian identity. My theoretical insights into internalized monolingualism resonate with a recognition of distinctly Sorbian-langued worlds.<sup>3</sup> Sorbs enact their sense of internalized monolingualism in

myriad ways. Throughout my fieldwork, Sorbs narrated a range of activities that evidence a monolingual selfhood: speaking Sorb to their pets; teaching Sorb to children ; attending Sorbian church services; critiquing neighbors who no longer speak Sorb at home; sending their children to Sorbian schools; having Sorbian voice mails; and participating in Sorbian-only events. What unites these practices is a link between sociolinguistic acts and monolingual spaces, which “...does not ignore language, but contextualizes it as part of a semiotic continuum” (Herzfeld 1997: 14). Through Sorbian language use in these practices, Sorbs attest to the value of Sorbian identifications through a gamut of embodied linguistic activities.

Sorbian practices reveal negotiations of monolingual and bilingual identities.<sup>4</sup> Sorbs acknowledge linguistic dictates to speak only Sorb in the Sorbian tourist center (SKI) or in the offices of the publishing house. For example, Sarah, a SKI employee, repeatedly vented her frustrations about her co-workers, who spoke too much German or whose Sorb was not right in her opinion.<sup>5</sup> Monica Heller describes this relationship between context and language as parallel monolingualisms, which correspond to monolingual zones in a Québécois school.

Mostly, as we have seen, they keep these languages relatively separate (this is, of course, completely consonant with staff strategies for containing sociolinguistic contradictions of the school, and with the school’s underlying ideology of bilingualism as parallel monolingualisms) (Heller 1999: 151).

Heller also argues that bilingualism entails a positioning of bilingual activities behind the scenes or in the back regions in Budyšin. Although Sorbian contexts compare to parallel monolingualisms, Sorbian contexts involve bilingualism prominently front and center, especially in the village, rather than in the back regions.

Monolingual sites exist in the Sorbian institutions, in Sorbian speaking households associated with the villages, in Sorbian schools, and at Sorbian events (church services, festivals,

and performances). For example, when Sarah carped about her co-workers who speak too much German, she maintained the integrity of what I call a monolingual imaginary. These monolingual imaginaries buttress Sorbian perceptions of an internalized monolingual paradigm with multiple monolingual cores. In the villages, the home represents a monolingual core, but *Budyšin* workplaces index yet another monolingual core. In contrast to Québécois positioning of bilingualism in back regions, Sorbs perceive bilingualism as an externalized phenomenon used outside of the cores or in mixed German-Sorbian contexts.

In the internalized monolingual imaginaries, Sorbs differentiate between bilingual and monolingual sites. “It should be kept in mind that bilingual behavior, like any other human activity is not a neutral and value-free condition but one that is being constantly self- and other-monitored” (Tsitsipis 2007: 281). Sorbs monitor their own as well as other Sorbs’ activities by controlling German linguistic interference. For example, Kristina, the young woman whose family I lived with in the summer of 2004 (see Chapter 4), narrated her difficulties to me when we first met during my fieldwork in 2006. After being away from Lusatia, some everyday encounters created new problems for her.

#### Microcosm 1: Keeping Language Worlds Separate

Kristina explained that remembering if someone is Sorb, which mandates Sorbian language use, often posed difficulties. When she returned to Lusatia for visits, she often found it difficult to remember if a person was Sorb. Kristina knew that she needed to act Sorb and often resorted to strategies that allowed her to speak Sorb appropriately. In a doctor’s office, she waited, not speaking, until the doctor started to talk in Sorb in order to confirm Sorbian language use. Indirectly, she adhered to a secondary linguistic rule, i.e. speaking German to someone you know or habitually interact with in Sorb violates Sorbian mores. Kristina resolved this conundrum through a waiting strategy. Through an act of silence, she structured a relationship by Sorbian codes of behavior and preserved the integrity of a monolingual Sorbian space. (Field notes November 2006)

Kristina's doctor's visit exemplifies recognition of two languages that index two distinct linguistic worlds. Kristina embodied an emotional and linguistic stance through her waiting strategy, which created an ambiguous situation until the doctor spoke to her. Thus, she prevented him from getting angry with her by not speaking German to a Sorbian speaker.

Kristina's strategic silence also resonates with my discussion of political acts of indistinction. In other words, Kristina did not want to be indistinguishable, suggesting that Sorbs are aware of times when they do not act differently from Germans from a linguistic perspective. Applying Bonnie Urcioli's argument about the creation of sharp edges to Kristina's strategic activities, a language world emerged in the doctor's office. "In these ways, border emergence traces the political fault lines that locate social actors' relations in the political ecology" (Urcioli 1995: 536). Kristina, like Sarah, affirms her own monolingual core through a linguistic fault line between German-Sorbian worlds.

In another example at rehearsals for "*Njebudže Plačenje* (I will not pay)," a play produced by the Sorbian-German bilingual theater, I documented the maintenance of another Sorbian monolingual site. More specifically, debates about language use and identity reveal compelling challenges to internalized monolingualism.<sup>6</sup> Throughout rehearsals, conflicts between the Sorbian actors and theater workers, and the German director, who seemed inattentive to Sorbian concerns about linguistic authenticity, reveal the insidious potency of a linguistic hegemony. The German director's attitudes reflect an inescapable truth—Sorb does not hold the same value to Germans as it does to Sorbs. Even at the first rehearsal the director asked, "if Sorb was a 'real' language." His repeated assertions that "language does not matter" aggravated linguistic insecurities felt by the theater workers who produce Sorbian plays. In

contrast to Charlotte's angry declaration that "it does not matter," the director's indifference to language use lacked the emotional investment in such a pronouncement.

Sorbs involved with the production not only made their livelihood by speaking Sorb professionally, but also occupied ambiguous monolingual roles in the Sorbian community. Responsibility for production of a Sorbian-only performance fell to the ten to fourteen Sorbs at rehearsals. These Sorbs generally do not speak Sorb at home, because they have moved away from Lusatia, come from mixed German/Sorbian families, and/or spend considerable time interacting with German-only speakers. The actors and actresses experienced their mixed emotions, anger, and resentment about their opportunities for Sorbian language use. Their narratives evidence a monolingual core in their time at work in the theater. Lisa, a supporting actress in the play, renewed her friendships with the other Sorbian crew but she spoke German to her fellow cast members. Lisa also expressed her anger that lack of Sorbian roles in the theater forced her to move to Berlin for permanent work in German productions. When I asked Paul, a theater worker in his thirties, about Sabrina, Lisa, and the other Sorbian theater workers, he explained some details of the linguistic politics of theater. Although he spoke Sorb with certain individuals like Charlotte, he spoke German to other even though they were Sorbian speakers. When I asked Paul about Lisa and her frustrations with employment, Paul went on to say that many Sorbian theater workers refused to work or even attend theatrical performances. They recognize the challenges in their own task to act as representatives of Sorbian language use. Their desire to uphold a monolingual standard translated for them into acceptance of a bilingual practices restricted Sorbian language use to rehearsals/performances.

Although the Sorbian cast did not directly challenge or criticize the prestigious German director, they coped through indirect strategies of avoidance. Linguistic activities in theater spaces often entailed ambiguity and anger. For example, vocal laments about stress, reluctance to speak Sorb outside of rehearsals, and other more subtle strategies of avoiding the rehearsal hall (taking longer breaks or asking for time off for personal business) contributed to an emotionally charged environment. Absences, tardiness, and general laments about stress reflected mixed emotions that cast members had about their roles as representatives of a Standard Sorb and their competence. Cast members implicitly compared themselves to other Sorbian theater members who had left Lusatia, refused to work in the theater, or avoided attending theater performances.<sup>7</sup> Such comparisons emphasized their resolve not to give into the enormous pressures they faced and their anger that necessitated taking a stand.

Tensions associated with language use emerged in a debate about the term for “Kaiserschnitt (Caesarean).” I witnessed how Sorbs discussed this word during a rehearsal, but ultimately elected to use a German lexeme as the most appropriate option.

#### Microcosm 2: Crossed codes and Language Worlds

Although the German director stated the need for the Sorbian actors not to worry about the German word “Kaiserschnitt” in the dialogue, Sorbs at the rehearsal wanted to find a Sorbian rendition for “caesarean.” I offered to try to find it. On the way to *Serbska Kulturna Informacija* (Sorbian Cultural Information), the Sorbian tourist center, I asked several Sorbs if they knew the word for caesarean. Office workers looked in dictionaries, but could not initially find it, so they asked me to come back later. Then, I asked my fiancée’s father, risking the chance that I could make him uncomfortable if he did not know it. *Nano* (father), who grew up in a monolingual household of *Miłoćicy* (Miltitz), said that in the village they always used “Kaiserschnitt.” I returned to the offices and the secretary showed me the dictionary entry. She also informed me that she had called a professor at the Sorbian Institute for confirmation. I wrote down “*wurěžanje džěsća*” and returned to the rehearsal. After showing the Sorbian translation to the actors, they commented that the translation sounded funny and back-translated the expression as “cut-out child.” I also quickly relayed Nano’s linguistic commentary, which seemed to reinforce their decision to use German. For Sorbian bilinguals, the German word was the correct way to express this concept in Sorb. At first, they tried using the Sorbian translation in rehearsal, but they returned to using the German lexeme, a word obviously standing out in the dialogue as the only German word. (From Field notes February 8, 2007)

My research during rehearsals confirmed the existence of complicated negotiations associated with a monolingual site, Sorbian identities, the German/Sorbian linguistic hegemony, and an ideal for a production of Standard Sorb. Although their choice of “Kaiserschnitt” erased a linguistic boundary, the theater workers felt a need to justify this word’s linguistic correctness. The Sorbian theater workers volunteered that “*wurězanje džěsća*” was an invented term, when I asked “why” it sounded funny. Their rationale depended on the use of “Kaiserschnitt” in spoken modalities, which did not grate on their ears in the wrong way. To them, the Sorbian version sounded “funny” or, more explicitly, “too Sorbian.” Sorbs expressed that the Sorbian equivalent of “caesarean” failed to exemplify the everyday management of bilingual resources, using German terms for items not easily or directly expressed in Sorbian words.

Through a comparison of identity rubrics, surprising contradictions emerge that involve internalized monolingualism and situated erasure of German/Sorbian boundaries. Kristina, Sara, and the theater workers strive to maintain monolingual identities, but also wrestle with their own bilingualism. Kristina’s strategies in Microcosm 1 illustrate how Sorbs make an effort to maintain a Sorbian-German border and a monolingual core, which resonates with Sara’s issues at SKI with her fellow employees, whose German Sara judged as sounding too German. In Microcosm 2, linguistic stress between spoken modalities and a written/literary or standard Sorb affects the German/Sorbian border. These dynamics carry a parallel with Maria’s emotions about “invented language” in Microcosm 2 (see Chapter 5). Tactics of only speaking Sorb during rehearsal or needing to defend language competence position expose a dynamic in which German language use is an externalized phenomenon. As a final point, monolingual activities on stage or with an older family member symbolize a Sorbian core. From these ethnographic



examples of identity dynamics, I offer evidence of the permeability and durability of Sorbian monolingual borders. Tensions at linguistic borders resonate with Lutz's astute observation about the wall between self and the "other." Even more critical to linguistic policing, I bring attention to internalized monolingualism, a powerful conception that underlies everyday routines of Sorbian life and informs senses of selfhood. I will also attend to the role of internalized monolingualism as I discuss tensions among standards and local notions of linguistic authority and expertise.

## **Temporality: An Authoritative and Expert Lens**

Internalized monolingualism also manifests itself in temporalized dimensions of language use. In this section, I discuss how internalized monolingualism emerges in authoritative/expert stances and nostalgic laments. To reiterate, local notions of temporality link monolingual Sorbian language acquisition to childhood. This belief in monolingual period in childhood also entails notions of linguistic purity in a desired absence of German as potential source of linguistic authority. Bilingual Sorbs also associate adulthood and secondary education/employment with expertise, but not necessarily with "correct" Sorb. Discourses of purity and correct language often contradict one another because Sorbs can associate them with different periods of their lives or different forms of capital. As noted by Jillian Cavanaugh, ideas of the past shed light on linguistic attitudes in communities with uncertain futures. "Equating Bergamasco with the past transforms what is for many older Bergamascos an everyday spoken object, open to evaluation and interpretation" (Cavanaugh 2004: 31). In a similar fashion, many Sorbs reckon their monolingual authority by invoking their past and purity from German language socialization. Another way that Sorbs discuss linguistic purity involves

purity in adulthood associated with secondary/college education or work in Sorbian contexts. These notions of Sorbian linguistic purity in adulthood connote ideas of expertise. Thus, veneration of Sorbian language use as pure or correct both speak to a more complicated view of legitimacy and create a Sorbian object that Sorbs can position in their life history or use to inspire a nostalgic lament. In contrast, these same Sorbs may enact an expert stance by critiquing others' Sorbian language use.

## Authoritative and Expert Narratives

Two potential sites for legitimacy—authority and expertise—create a contradiction via discourses of temporality. Thus, authority and expertise as Sorbian notions evidence that the Sorbian linguistic market is not integrated. Woolard (1985) conjectures that integration of the linguistic market occurs with the “autonomous reproduction of the legitimate language over other co-existing varieties” (Woolard 1985: 740). To put it differently, Woolard implies that expertise often triumphs over authority through discourses of prestige, purity, and “correct” language use. Woolard admits that Pierre Bourdieu recognizes relaxing of standards in the linguistic market, but “the rule of the legitimate language is merely suspended, not transgressed” (Woolard 1985: 743). This is a point that I will return to later.

In this section, I take an emic perspective to consider discourses of temporality in relation to authority and expertise rather than to present an argument about the interrelationships among nationhood, modernity, temporality, and language use. In Sorbian personal linguistic narratives, which trace a progression from monolingualism to bilingualism, bilingual Sorbs stress both their authority and their expertise. Acquisition of Sorb as a child through spoken modes of interaction is critical to linguistic ownership, which Sorbs adopt as an

authoritative stance. Likewise, development of adult expertise coexists with ideas of childhood authority. As mentioned in the preceding discussion of identity, the paradox of seeing oneself as monolingual and bilingual creates a linguistic oxymoron. Not only do Sorbs resolve this contradiction by contextualizing their monolingualism and bilingualism, bilingual Sorbs also construct a temporalized view of internalized monolingualism.

Life narratives are a prime site to consider temporal aspects of monolingualism of which “individuals display varying degrees of awareness” (Kroskrity 2000b: 18). Sorbs, who were born before 1949, often referred to the end of their monolingual experiences in their early to mid-teenage years. Sorbs, who grew up during Socialism (1949-1989), describe shifts to bilingualism in their pre-teens. Their children, i.e. Sorbs who were children during the last ten years of the socialist period, still assess their early childhood as monolingual, but their bilingual socialization began when they entered kindergarten. Sorbs under twenty no longer frame their own linguistic history with a monolingual period. Sorbs, born after WW II or during socialism utilize their relationships to Sorbs (born before 1949), who experienced a strong monolingual socialization during childhood and adolescence. Many Sorbs strengthen their own sense of a monolingual self through connections to older speakers. These relationships, often familial in nature, provide a source of linguistic authority through extensive contact with monolingually raised Sorbian speakers—an issue that Kristina’s relationship to her grandmother indexes.<sup>8</sup>

The bilingual aspect of narratives features Sorbian understandings of education. Sorbs draw a parallel between education and development of expertise in standard Sorb. This shift in linguistic proficiency coincides with adult struggles over ownership. Time after time, Sorbs—cross-generationally—described higher education in Sorbian studies as critical to their sense of

linguistic ownership. For example, Michelle, a Sorbian high school teacher, explained to me that she never felt that she owned her language until she went to Leipzig where she studied to be a teacher. For Michelle, her intellectual studies and her physical distance away from the pressures to be Sorb in the village marked a life-changing transition. She saw her change as directly linked, not only to her distance from the daily sociolinguistic politics, but also to her studies of standard Sorb. Michelle elaborated that her understanding of the literary language (or standard Sorb) improved and her comfort level with her own linguistic practices increased. Yet, varying emotions exist; for example, Michelle's feelings contrast strongly with Maria's anger at what the Sorbs in Leipzig "do" to the Sorbian language.

Sorbian narratives—like Michelle's or those temporalized narratives of monolingualism to bilingualism—expose Sorbian desires for two skill sets or discourses of competence; through authority associated with monolingual childhood acquisition or through adult expertise. Repeatedly, I learned how linguistic elements acquired contradictory temporal evaluations of proficiency. Like the Bergamasco of Italy, many Sorbs use Sorbian resources as an "identity card" (Cavanaugh 2004: 29) through various forms of temporalized membership. However, bilingual Sorbs can gain a sense of linguistic legitimacy through the play of authority and expertise that they construct over their lifetimes.

## Nostalgia and Laments: A Double-Faced Emotion

Nostalgia is not an innocent sentiment. Indeed, it is not just a sentiment, for it also exists as a strategy of representation...as a way of redeeming an idealized past that naturalizes contemporary relations of domination (Rofel 1999: 135).

Sorbs view their monolingualism and legitimacy through local forms of linguistic nostalgia.<sup>9</sup> Many post-socialist scholars examine nostalgia as an emotional foil that indexes

ideological yearnings for the past and mourning in the present moment. As pointed out by Berdahl, nostalgia is part of an ongoing tension between remembering and forgetting (Berdahl 1999: 218). These coexistent processes beg the question whether the socialist past was truly better or worse than the present. When I asked Sorbs this question, they unilaterally avoided answering it. They skirted the issue, which suggests that many Sorbs are still unsure, even though they take part in romanticizing and denigrating the past. Thus, nostalgic laments take a variety of forms that simultaneously empower Sorbs as experts and authority figures. Many Sorbian traditions involve linguistic performances that bring together—in ways that resonate with national and personal narratives—remembrances of past performances.

At *Ptački Kwas*, a Sorbian cultural performance loosely based on traditional Sorbian weddings, Sorbian attendees lamented that the 2007 performance was “not as good as it used to be.” I often heard non-attending Sorbs use a similar rationale to justify their refusal to attend such performances. As a form of nostalgia, their comparisons not only invoke the socialist period of institutional support for Sorbian performances, but also evoke idealizations of a linguistic past when monolingually-raised speakers organized these events. Like Elizabeth Nevins and Barbara Meek, I see these comments as “perceptive, incisive critique of real challenges” (Nevins 2004: 270) to nurture their idealizing of Sorbian monolingualism. Furthermore, these litanies reinforce a Sorb’s status as an expert or authority figure because their participation or withdrawal can signal allegiance to a specific Standard.

Use of the Sorbian greeting of “*Witaj*” exemplifies another kind of linguistic element, one that Sorbs utilize to express concerns about linguistic vitality and temporality. When adult Sorbs commented that adolescent Sorbs used this greeting in ways that sounded “funny” by

using it on the street as “hello,” they referenced a discourse of difference between monolingually and bilingually raised Sorbs. Sorbs with monolingual backgrounds index a past and knowledge of correct usage with this formal greeting, which means “welcome.” By indirectly hinting at different temporal indexes of language acquisition and socialization, monolingually raised Sorbs, like the Bergamascos, create a linguistic artifact of “sentimental attachments” (Cavanaugh 2009). Sorbs currently use this greeting in different ways (in passing on the street, upon entry into a business/home, or at the beginning of a public speech). Monolingually raised Sorbs who critique “incorrect” use of “*witaj*” by bilingually raised Sorbs echo other Sorbian concerns about linguistic proficiency. Yet, the use of “*witaj*” by contemporary Sorbian youths, similar to Cavanaugh’s discussion of Bergamasco language use, exemplifies other Sorbian voices of change and speaks to changing authoritative sensibilities.

Not merely a picayune difference of opinion, metalinguistic commentaries articulate concerns about temporality and language use. In many endangered language communities, community, these critiques take on locally relevant contours. Just as Apache speakers critique younger speaker’s ability to listen (Nevins 2004), Sorbian critiques reveal routines that involve notions of time, and, in turn, tensions among standards. On the one hand, critiques qualify rejections of certain identifiable linguistic practices associated with a literary language and, in turn, expertise associated with adult education. On the other hand, Sorbs embrace their linguistic traditions and cultural devices that index authority associated with childhood acquisition. These dialogues exemplify an engrained tension at the heart of Sorbian linguistic diversity and social relations. Through this discussion of temporality, I attend to associations with personal biographies and broader macrosociological shifts as well as their relationship to

linguistic purity/correctness. Sorbs use temporality to evaluate language use when they reject invented words, accept words associated with their monolingual acquisition, or modify older usage. Even though Sorbs currently use their resources in different ways, they create ideological burdens that intertwine SLI with the temporalized language use just discussed.

## **Standard Language Ideology or Tensions among Standards**

For those living in standardized regimes—as we all do now—standards command authority; other linguistic forms seem inadequate (non-language) or simply invisible (Gal 2006: 164).

Before continuing further I must admit my resistance to acknowledging that Sorbs are people “who live in a world created by standard ideology, but who rarely abide fully by its requirements” (Gal 2006: 167). With my acceptance that bilingual Sorbs challenge and embrace an ideology of one STANDARD, I recognize the complex play and tensions among standards. This dynamic evokes and transforms the classic opposition between “possession-of-Standard” and “lack-of-Standard” (Silverstein 1996). Desires for monolingual Sorbian utterances correspond to Silverstein’s notion of “possession” that draws on ideas of a purified Sorbian language use or a standardized variant of the Upper Sorbian dialect based on the literary/written language. In contrast, bilingualism as a *modus operandi* challenges a trajectory oriented only toward displays of a monolingual Standard. Bilingualism, a lived embodiment of “mish-mash,” not only entails a rejection of a specific linguistic variant, but also emerges as a recognized type of linguistic standard. Through the ongoing construction of mish-mash, Sorbs simultaneously erect, blur, and erase borders by navigating their bilingual resources especially visible in their use of borrowings.

## Language Standards: Academic Frameworks

Earlier I spoke of Pierre Bourdieu's notion of a counterlegitimate language. He equates this with a "delinquent culture" or "slang" (Bourdieu 1991: 97). At this point, I would like to problematize this concept by addressing how Sorbs embrace and reject different ways of using Sorbian and German resources. Tensions among language varieties show how many Sorbs value "delinquent/slang" speech practices and a homogenized standardized form based on the literary/written language. Sorbs can make evaluative judgments in several ways. In many situations, Sorbs can embrace variation in Sorbian language use; for example—in "mish-mash" or dialectal differences. In other circumstances, many Sorbs value some utterances as "better" than others. By making these judgments that some utterances are better, Sorbs can assert greater capital and legitimacy for their language use. Although Sorbs who associate themselves with the literary/written language or *Budyšin* often deride the villagers who speak "mish-mash," they also stress their upbringing in the village. Likewise villagers critique *Budyšin* Sorbs, but value their education and knowledge. These exchanges reinforce tensions between standards through of erection of linguistic distinctions.

At the same time, Sorbs erase distinctions between Sorbian STANDARDS in their bilingual practices through intra-lingual distinctions. As Susan Gal has argued,

The 'mixing' of languages that is anathema for standardising ideology is part of the same ideology's imperative of keeping them apart. Paradoxically, the impression of differentiation between languages is not created by isolation and separation between linguistic forms, but rather a consciousness of mixture and interpenetration" (Gal 2006: 170).

The minutiae of everyday interactions reveal a fluidity and ease with which Sorbs constructed utterances without seeming to prioritize German or Sorbian resources. Thus, Sorbs draw on the



linguistic attributes (written/spoken and urban/rural) by which Sorbs simultaneously possess and relinquish Sorbian standards, while contesting German linguistic dominance and many times keeping languages ostensibly apart (see Table 6.1, below).

Bilingual Sorbs readily possess a standard, but often seem to lack one when they allow German interference or speak mish-mash. I argue that continuing linguistic vitality depends on the contradictions that emerge from a discursive competition (Gal 2006). For Sorbs, tensions among Standards exist within a multitude of linguistic spaces: dictionaries, schools, plays performed by the Sorbian National Ensemble or the theater, church services, newspapers, or Sorbian homes. Adding to this striking importance of variations among standards, Sorbian linguistic history exemplifies processes of reevaluation of Standard literary Sorb. In Microcosms 2 and 4, vernacular skills trumped standardized literary resources. Practices that Sorbs associate with a lack of a standard bear similarity to vernacular use. Yet, through my discussion, I will show how Sorbs paradoxically contest and embrace various manifestations of standard and vernacular/non-literary language use.

I encountered tensions among STANDARDS even in the names of public work spaces, I encountered the dynamic among Sorbian standards. For example, I worked quite often in *Bjesada*, a café on the bottom floor of *Serbski Dom* where many of the language workers came to eat. However, the pro-Sorbian ambiance of the café reinforced by mannequins dressed in Sorbian traditional dress and a highly stylized Linden leaf belied another strain within Sorbian social interactions.<sup>10</sup> The only Sorbian server disliked the inanimate mannequins, because it objectified and dehumanized the traditional dress that she emphatically refused to wear to

work. Yet, another aspect of these symbols is the ironic contrast between the mannequins and the non-traditional image of the Linden leaf.

Another example of tensions emerges in the seating arrangements. In their positioning vis-à-vis others, the Sorbian language workers normally sat together at one table, distinctly separated from the German patrons and from other Sorbs. In their seating, I saw a reproduction of internal divisions in the Sorbian community that separated the villagers from those Sorbs affiliated with the institutions, while also separating those who identify themselves as Sorb from those who see themselves as German. Although the bilingual menu suggests Sorbian language use, most interactions relied on German with only one Sorbian-speaking employee and mostly German clientele. Lack of active Sorbian language use further diminished the restaurant's validity as a Sorbian space. These examples echo with a pro-Sorbian stance that results in distancing the actual lived experiences of Sorbian speakers.

In the ways that Sorbs referred to the café, "*Bjesada*," I recognized a political stance taken toward this space. The name of the restaurant is derived from one of the many verbs related to talking and conversing (*powedać, řečeć, rozmotwjeć* and *bjesadować*). "*Bjesada*" is the morpho-syntactic adaptation of the verb "*bjesadować*." I would ask Sorbs about this word, which I did not hear in everyday conversations and, in response, most replied by saying, "das klingt komish (that sounds funny)." Perhaps I was more aware of this peculiarity because when I called to schedule interviews or to translate *Ferdinand* at the café, Sorbs would not use the name of the restaurant but, rather, referred to it as "Serbske café." Even when I introduced the Sorbian name of the restaurant, Sorbs responded to me using the German name "Sorbisches café" or "*Serbske café*." I probed further about the use of "*bjesadować*" or "*Bjesada*," which

Sorbs described as “hochnassig (snobby),” “mehr geschrieben als gesprochen (more written than spoken),” or “mehr elegant.” Their range of responses veiled another inherent evaluation of linguistic and sociocultural delinquency. Sorbs do not consider this space Sorbian, even though the menu, name, and decor promoted a Sorbianness. From investigations like these, I realized that the “ideological burden” (Hill and Hill 1986) of words often influenced linguistic choices.

## Borrowings: A Negotiation of Boundaries

Throughout my observations, I encountered linguistic commentaries that involved linguistic judgments against sounding too German or too Sorbian. A German loan word or a Slavic word like the name of restaurant may sound “odd” (Haugen 1972a: 104) in many Sorbian utterances. Haugen’s interest in borrowing exposes certain theoretical dilemmas in understanding “**how** words have been borrowed rather than of **why** they are borrowed” [emphasis in text] (Haugen 1972c: 70). He suggests a focus on the reasons why a bilingual speaker borrows linguistic elements or encounter structural resistance to borrowings (Haugen 1972a). The roles of these borrowed elements in a bilingual speaker’s habits reflect linguistic pressures to speak tensions among standards that apply to contemporary settings broadly.

Most often for Sorbs, multiple lexical possibilities exist for a single concept; one nativized (adaptation of German element to Sorbian morpho-syntactic and orthographic rules), one German, and a Sorbian element based on Slavic and/or distinct Sorbian roots. In the following table, I offer some examples of tensions among standards that Sorbs navigate in everyday language use.

Table 6.1: A Representative Table of Diverse Standards<sup>11</sup>

Set	Nativized lexeme-German	Slavicized lexeme	English signified (concept)
1.	<u>lóft</u> (Luft)	<i>powetr</i>	air
2.	<u>nowember</u> (November) <sup>12</sup>	<i>nazymnik</i>	November
3.	<u>běrow</u> (Büro)	<i>zarjad</i>	office
4.	<u>telefonować</u> (telefonieren)	<i>zawołać, zwonić</i>	to phone
5.	<u>katastrofa</u> (Katastrophe)	<i>njebožo</i>	catastrophe
6.	<u>problem</u> (Problem)	<i>zmelk</i>	Problem
7.	<u>kwitowanie</u> (Quittung)	<i>zličbowanje</i>	bill
8.	<u>lesować</u> (lesen)	<i>čitać</i>	to read
9.	<u>róža</u> (Rose)	<i>kwětk</i>	flower

These lexical sets exemplify the embedded contradictions inherent in the multilingual context. I encountered these Sorbian lexemes in a variety of ways and asked Sorbs about them.<sup>13</sup> To understand diverse standards in practice with regard to borrowings, two conditions emerge: (1) many Sorbs often disfavor both nativized and Slavicized lexemes in language use, but acknowledge either alternative as acceptable, and (2) Sorbs often acknowledge a Slavicized lexeme is acceptable, but reject it in favor of other expressions in use.

Initially when I asked Sorbs about these distinctions, they evaluated both possibilities as correct but, upon further investigation, other attributes emerged as relevant to bilingual Sorbs. From sets 4, 5, 6, and 7 the Slavicized lexemes connote a more standardized variant that many Sorbs disfavored. For example, when I called Sorbs to make interviews, they responded more favorably to my saying, “I will call you,” when I used “telefonować” rather than “*zwonić*” or “*zawolać*” (see Set 4). In Serbsky café (see previous discussion) the bills were printed with “kwitowanie” (see Set 5) like other Sorbian businesses. When I would ask the Sorbian server for my bill using “*zličbowanje*,” she would gently remind me that “kwitowanie” sounds better. Finally, the expression, “*to je katastrofa*” (see Set 7),<sup>14</sup> features a German borrowing. In their use of these items, many Sorbs can blur linguistic boundaries.

Pronunciation, a component of prosody, also plays a role in these instances. For example, Kristina related arguments that she had with Germans about the word “problem” (see Set 6).<sup>15</sup> In a German pronunciation, stress is on the second syllable, but a Slavic pronunciation involves stress on the first syllable. She often felt anger at Germans who argued that she was mixing German with Sorb, but she would maintain that it was a Sorbian element due to pronunciation. Yet, in contrast to previous examples, pronunciation provides an arena where Sorbs erect boundaries. Her anger speaks to another type of misinterpretation of her use of a Sorbian word that Germans mistake for blurring of linguistic boundaries.

In immediate proximity to one another, the names of months (Slavicized and nativized lexemes) appear together in calendars (see Set 2). However, when I asked Kristina, a teacher in the *Budyšin* high school, why there were two words for one month, she informed me that the Slavicized names of months are “very Sorbian (ganz sorbisch)” words. She explained that they were invented items and not really used by Sorbs, even though everyone [meaning Sorbs] understood word like “*nazymnik* (November).” Her explanation suggests that a possibility of double usage is not a form of crutching or back-channeling, because Sorbs know both terms and choose to use one or the other. In the words for months, Sorbs often challenged the Slavicized elements and preferred nativized ones.

Geography also plays a role in the distinctions between Slavicized/nativized elements. A younger Sorb implied that since his father used “*lóft*” (see Set 1) only at home, that he would not use the nativized element while in *Budyšin* on the high school grounds. As a Sorbian high school student, he distinguished his linguistic practices from his father’s fashions of speaking. He linked use of a German borrowing to the village. Use of the equivalent words for “flower”

(see Set 9) also represents another example of this spatialized distinction. When I asked Sorbs about “*kwětka*,” the majority of Sorbs preferred the Slavicized form, but also recognized “*róža*” as a marker of village practices similar to discussions of “*čitać*” (see Set 8).

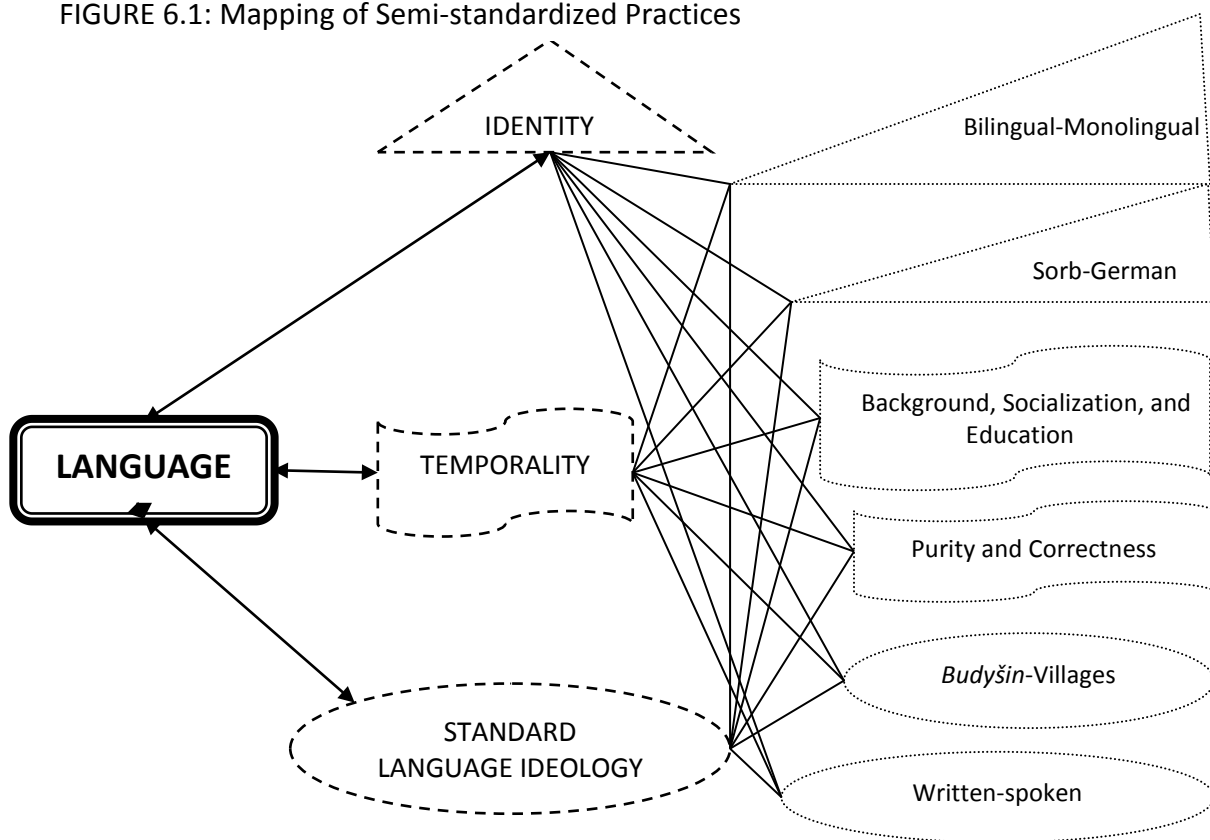
However, my interaction with Sara shows that use of German borrowings also occurs regularly in urban spaces in Bautzen. In set 3 (*běrow*, *Büro*, *zarjad*), place intersects with discourses of appropriate language use. In September 2006, I came into SKI and immediately Sara, the Sorbian office worker, asked for my help putting up a sign.<sup>16</sup> She had made a sign with the word “*běrow*” to put on the doorframe. I then asked her why she was using that term rather than “*zarjad*,” often used on bilingual signs in governmental offices and in Sorbian schools. She explained to me that using “‘*zarjad*’ is more formal and would not be right in SKI.” Her choice of “*běrow*” encourages a double-voicedness of being in two languages in the same utterance. Her erection of the sign is ironic, especially since she had critiqued her co-workers of using of sounding German. Orthographic differences between “*zarjad*” and “*Büro*” affirm two distinct linguistic systems, but the similarities between “*běrow* and *Büro*” obscure distinctions. In contrast to “*air*,” (see Set 1) represents a nativized element not restricted to village use.

Sorbs are aware of the manifold ways they use Sorbian and German resources that often cross codes. In these lexical choices, Sorbs alter boundaries between codes without losing sight of the distinctions. Sorbs recognize that it is not always wrong to use a borrowing in an institutional space or in the village. Compounding these linguistic dynamics, Sorbs shape and reshape their identifications of which code an element belongs to. The range of examples above demonstrates the existence of multiple standards and shifting priorities for use that constitute the multiple creative arenas of Sorbian mish-mash and semi-standardized practices.

## Semi-Standardized Virtuosity: A New Way to Consider Bilingual Practices

In most circumstances, Sorbian speakers are able to fully communicate and understand Sorbian utterances despite the fact that they often code-switch or mix languages. Through the ethnographic examples, I demonstrate how emotions ranging from, and even entwining ambiguity and anger, permeate Sorbian dialogues about borrowings and social relations. In the following map of relationships in Figure 6.1, multivalent interconnections illustrate these contradictions that often spawn emotion.

FIGURE 6.1: Mapping of Semi-standardized Practices



Because of the critical role that SLI plays in all of these interconnections, consider Sorbian practices as semi-standardized. This focus on semi-standardized practices allows me to address the ways may Sorbs police linguistic boundaries in mono/bilingual contexts.

Tensions among standards play a critical role in semi-standardized practices. On one hand, Sorbs stress their connections to monolingual elders, corresponding to spoken vernacular usage and village fashions of speaking. Some Sorbs may reject the Sorbian standard associated with *Budyšin*, by electing not to go to performances in *Budyšin*, cancelling subscriptions to the Sorbian newspaper, and blatant criticism of Domowina, and/or the Sorbian intellectuals. On the other hand, participation in events characteristically associated with literary Sorb or higher education in Sorbian studies provides ways for Sorbs to show their longings for the same written standard that they may otherwise resist.

Geography also adds an emotional dynamic to the tensions among standards through the urban-rural opposition (see also Chapter 4). Sorbs affiliated with the *Budyšin* institutions often stressed their connections to the villages through their upbringing, while accusing Sorbs who live in the villages of speaking mish-mash. In contrast, Sorbs who identify strongly with the villages place importance on displays of a standard, for example, reading the newspaper or attending a Sorbian play in the village, while often critiquing the language used in the newspapers or choosing not to attend the same performance in *Budyšin*. During my dissertation fieldwork, the change of venue for *Schadźowanka* (2007), an annual high school recital, incited numerous Sorbian debates. The previous village site (2006) marks an instantiation of urban-rural border, because the urban standard was brought to the village and performed there. By moving the site of the high school recital to Bautzen, this symbolic space of linguistic interaction between villagers and BAUTZENERS is changed. Although many Sorbs simply commented that it was wrong to move the recital, they expressed a tacit awareness of the urban standard being confined to the Bautzen town limits and perhaps not subject to village



review. During the recital, high school students performed for their parents and teachers while making fun of the everyday bilingual encounters and performing traditional Sorbian dance and choral pieces. This event epitomizes the overlapping Sorbian standards, which Sorbs experience in semi-standardized practices.

The simultaneous embracing and rejection of standards also involves Sorbs' mixed emotions concerning linguistic competence. As many Sorbs expressed a lack of knowledge of certain words, they also possessed a high degree of communicative competency. In *Microcosm 2*, Maria's anger reflects a dilemma about competency. For her, Maria's mother represented a person with more legitimacy. Similar to Maria's position on authority and expertise, the debate about "Kaiserschnitt" evidences tensions among STANDARDS and conflicting notions of competency. Thus examples also provide evidence that competency should be reconsidered from a scholarly perspective.

## Semi-standardized Practices

Nancy Dorian (1977) brings attention to situations of language contraction, where competency does not equate a last isolated "perfect" speaker with a singular Standard. Recognizing a continuum of proficiency Dorian identifies semi-speakers as individuals who are more comfortable in English than Gaelic. My ethnographic data also confirms the validity of Dorian's discussion of Gaelic speakers.<sup>17</sup> Many Sorbs felt discomfort in their own and others' Sorbian proficiency. Through Sorbian evaluations of language use along monolingual indexes, biographies, and Sorbian notions of authority and expertise, existing interlingual diversity emerges as a nuanced continuum of proficiency.<sup>18</sup>

As a non-native researcher, I cannot evaluate Sorbian code-switching or measure competency against an elusive ideal of A STANDARD. And yet, the concept of semi-speakers is problematic, because the term, semi-speakers, implies that they are not quite “ideal” speakers. This line of reasoning implies a negative evaluation about people who may not speak “perfectly.” Rather than judging a speaker as part of a non-ideal category of semi-speaker, I offer a theoretical twist on Dorian’s notions. It is or should be the practices, not the speaker, who are modified as “semi.” I applaud Dorian’s inclusion of semi-speakers in endangered language communities and I hope that my emphasis on semi-standardized practices answers her call for more work that needs to be done (Dorian 1977: 31).

For the purpose of my discussion about semi-standardized practices, I bring attention to similarities between Sorbian and Ukrainian multilingual contexts. In Ukraine political instability impacted language use. Across Eastern Europe after 1989, changing boundaries coincided with linguistic struggles (Bermel 2007; Brubaker 2006; Csergo 2007). In fact, these post-socialist changes opened rifts along ideological stances. Along the lines of Bourdieu’s argument, I contend that “times of crisis lead to more conscious awareness of the construction of such relations” (Bilaniuk 2005: 30).

My arguments about semi-standardized practices resonate with Laada Bialniuk’s analysis of Ukrainian *surzhyks*, mixed languages. As researchers, Bialniuk and I worked in speech communities that experienced periods of instability and political change which intensified the politics of standardization. Likewise, Sorbian linguistic categories that align generational and geographical sociolinguistic differences with types of speakers echo with Ukrainian speaker categories. Although the Sorbs have never become an independent nation-

state, their linguistic narrative also resonates with the Ukrainian one. In both linguistic settings, bilinguals are concerned about nativization and purification.<sup>19</sup> Thus, ideas about correction and purity reflect systematic and emotional interconnections between words, the speakers' identities, and their languaged worlds.

## The End Is Just Another Beginning

In their semiotic navigations, Sorbs experience a "deep-lying dialogue of languages" (Bakhtin 1981: 365) as German/Sorbian resources acquire different symbolic values in different settings. Put another way, Sorbs sometimes prefer German options and, at other times, Sorbs favor Sorbian ones. In their pragmatic acts and communication, Sorbian linguistic choices involve culturally informed interpretations (Lyon 1998: 47). When Sorbs cross codes, as I discussed through use of the German "Kaiserschnitt," or in reference to months of the year, lexemes associated with the German code are valued because the Sorbian equivalents feel "wrong." In other situations, Sorbs move across linguistic boundaries and reject German terms or pejoratively associate German linguistic resources with "other" Sorbs, like in the use of "*lóft* (air)" or "*lesować* (to read)." In these contradictory circumstances, linguistic capital is not a univalent phenomenon that can be associated with one code or the other. Rather, these interpretations rely heavily on emotional dialogues and affective stances.

Sorbian linguistic habits suggest that the Sorbian STANDARDS are not always associated with potential discourse of correct language use nor always marked by the absence of German. Variation in linguistic practices demonstrates Sorbian resolutions of contradictions in ways that simultaneously elevate and reject the ideal of a single Sorbian Standard. These distinctions not only allow people to differentiate German from Sorb, but also motivate individuals' different

assessments of Sorbian fashions of speaking. Various sources of linguistic capital speak to the social and emotional linguistic dynamics. In this, I align myself with Margot Lyon, who stresses that the “truly social-relational perspective on emotions is to see not only how emotion has social consequences but how social relations themselves generate emotions” (Lyon 1998: 55). This perspective reflects what I identify as “language and emotions as social action” and connects code-switching with emotions in very specific ways (see also Koven 2007)

In my discussion, opportune linguistic constructions characterize bilingual mish-mash and an idealized monoglot Standard in ways that both sharpen and blur linguistic edges. In Sorbian metalinguistic litanies and use of borrowings, emotionally charged dynamics illuminate multiple semiotic mediations. These processes expand notions of code-switching to foreground virtuosity in the navigation of linguistic borders and Sorbian talents at staying balanced in their language use through switching from one tongue to another like taking alternate steps in walking. This virtuosity includes language use as authoritative and expert negotiating tensions among standards often using notions of internalized monolingualism. Understanding these emerging erasures, and erections of language borders as well as multiple sites of blurriness requires a study of a cohesive body of Sorbian linguistic compositions or constructions of mish-mash. Echoing Ferdinand de Saussure’s (1983) characterization of language as a symphony, my analysis of *Ferdinand* translations to follow will yield a clearer understanding of concerted (in the sense of requiring effort) semi-standardized practices.

## Key to Font Distinctions

Normal Calibri Font	English
<i>Italic Calibri Font</i>	Sorb
<u>Underlined Calibri Text</u>	German (used in English body of text)
<u><i>Underlined and Italicized</i></u>	German Borrowing or Sorbianized German
<u><u>Double Underlined Calibri</u></u>	German in Sorb

<sup>1</sup> Lisa Mitchell (2009) offers an astute discussion of the intersections of emotions, history, and mother-tongue evaluations in India.

<sup>2</sup> More specifically, Soviet policy reinforced linguistic purity and nationality through the policy of Ethnic and National Minorities. In their opposition to socialist language policy, Sorbs, who spoke out against greater emphasis on German language instruction, were labeled as nationalists, a negative category under socialist logic.

<sup>3</sup> This folk theory appears in inverted descriptions of purity. Many Sorbs described themselves saying, “I am not pure” used by Sorb from mixed Sorbian-German families or by Sorbs who learned Sorb later in their childhood or adulthood.

<sup>4</sup> Ana Maria Zentella (1997) and Bonnie Urcioli (1996) offer insightful ethnographies of these dynamics among Latino populations in the United States.

<sup>5</sup> My husband who had “legt die Sprache ab (lay the language to one side)” caused confusion for other Sorbs. When he came by SKI to visit me he would greet and say goodbye to other Sorbs, these Sorbs often asked why he stopped speaking Sorb and evaluation of his Sorb sounding almost perfect phonetically and not sounding German.

<sup>6</sup> The theater (Deutsches-sorbisches Volkstheater Bautzen (*Němsko-Serbske Ludowe Dźiwadło Budyšin*), independent from the Domowina and the Sorbian Foundation for Language and Culture, generally produces two Sorbian plays per year, the annual *Ptački Kwas* (Bird’s Wedding), children plays, and performances for the puppet theater. Although the theater generates the majority of their revenue from German plays and the immensely popular outdoor Summer theater, the theater’s 500 year history represents a cultural medium designed to increase awareness of the Sorbian community and to be a part of the Sorbian cultural-linguistic economy (see also Chapters 2 and 3).

<sup>7</sup> Lusatia (Lauzitz or *Łužica*) is the name of the territorial homeland of the Sorbs. The etymological Sorbian roots of seem ironic, because *Łužica* comes from “puddle.” The Sorbian community metaphorically compares to a small polity surrounded by the dominant German society.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>9</sup> Metalinguistic commentaries compare current Sorbian practices with those remembered through restorative stances (Boym 2001).

<sup>10</sup> Both images are associated with nationalizing discourses.

<sup>11</sup> Laada Bilaniuk (2005) also offers tables of linguistic variation that show tensions between lexemes via standardization.

<sup>12</sup> I give only one month, however, all months epitomize this oppositional pair.

<sup>13</sup> Often used simultaneously, their oppositional nature of Sorbian lexemes (one Slavicized element and the other a German borrowing) becomes intensified.

<sup>14</sup> This expression is equivalent to an English “it’s a mess/catastrophe” or similar to “it’s horrible.”

<sup>15</sup> Although prosodic or musical aspects German-Sorbian language use illuminate interlingual difference, I do not address this facet of language use more extensively. As a non-native Sorbian language user, I believe this distinction fall outside of my area of competence. Sorbs also did not focus on phonetic different or accents but, rather, word choice and morphosyntactic constructions.

<sup>16</sup> The abbreviation stands for “*Serbska Kulturna Informacija* (Sorbian Cultural Information).” This tourist center, on the bottom floor of *Serbski Dom* (House of Sorbs) in *Budyšin* is supported by Domowina, the umbrella cultural organization that supervises distribution of resources from the Sorbian Foundation for Language and Culture. As an institutional space SKI represents a part of cultural economy that supports Sorbian efforts to maintain the Sorbian

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language, promote traditional Sorbian cultural practices (Sorbian eggs, dress, music, and artistic expressions), and serves as a tourist and community resource for Sorbian events.

<sup>17</sup> The Sorbian situation differs from the Gaelic through different dynamics in idealizing of Sorbian monolingualism.

<sup>18</sup> Monolingual indexes include childhood monolingualism and contact with older Sorbs.

<sup>19</sup> A process by which foreign elements becomes a linguistic resources. In contrast to nativization, purification represents the removal of foreign elements though linguistic engineering. In the Sorbian community, these processes of purification correspond to Slavicized elements.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Variation and Virtuosity from Theoretical Perspectives

The more narrowly we examine actual language, the sharper becomes the conflict within it and our requirement. The conflict becomes intolerable; the requirement is now in danger of becoming empty.—We have got on to slippery ice where there is no friction and so in a certain sense the conditions are ideal, but also, just because of that, we are unable to walk: so we need friction. (Wittgenstein 1958: paragraph 107)

Ludwig Wittgenstein's observation of walking in non-ideal conditions reveals another dynamic in being bilingual, "walking the line," and needing friction. Instead of me examining language as an outsider, I shifted to a collaborative project that offered an examination of intralingual distinctions, what I identify as frictions. My ethnography cum translation of Munro Leaf's (1936) classic children's tale, a story of little bull who would rather smell the flowers than fight other bulls, provided a site where Sorbs constructed a text according to their understandings of language use. In my analysis of Sorbian translations, I expose the dynamics of heteroglossia (Bakhtin 1981) or a "plurality of social [and linguistic] relations, not just a cacophony of different voices" (Holquist 1990: 89). This plurality not only speaks to the contradictions of a multi-linguaged world but also reveals frictional differences among Sorbian resources. To clarify this further, Sorbs created frictions as they alternated between registers, thereby mixing them. These practices exemplify a local enactment of linguistic virtuosity. As I gathered translations, I observed first-hand their understandings of linguistic frictions as they constructed a text. In their life narratives and emotional dialogues, bilingual Sorbs enacted deep-seated desires for friction, and, in turn, came to a place of linguistic satisfaction with the text and the translation process as they created a written instantiation of mish-mash.

Although this chapter comes somewhat late in this dissertation, I wanted to create a theoretical narrative that resonates with my journey in rethinking mish-mash. Thus, I shift my

focus away from tensions in oral bilingual mish-mash that occurs at German/Sorbian borders. In the previous chapter, by looking at details of how Sorbs erase, erect, and blur these borders, I argued that these tensions intersect with bilingual and intralingual differences. To consider these tensions, I focused on intersections among identity, temporality, and standard language ideology in semi-standardized practices. In contrast, I now turn to an investigation of frictions between Sorbian fashions of speaking. I consider how Sorbs perceive, espouse, and react to linguistic differences as they maneuver through *Ferdinand*. After seeing the amount of discrepancy among translations, I reassessed these inconsistencies as catalysts. By recognizing variation as an enactment of linguistic diversity and virtuosity, I can reveal the processes by which Sorbian translators recreated a written form of mish-mash (see Chapters 7 and 8).

Sorbs composed their translations drawing on three multivalent sites of friction—internalized monolingualism, ideas about authoritative/expert stances, and tensions among standards. To review, tensions among standards coincide with protests against a single source of linguistic capital and passionate views of multiple Sorbian standards. Next, internalized monolingualism refers to an ideology of Sorbian first language acquisition in contrast with scholarly learning. In drawing on this local ideology, many Sorbs often intertwine language use with narratives of pride. Related to internalized monolingualism through accounts of language acquisition and education, coexistent stances of authority/expertise allow Sorbs to stay true to local notions of a spoken vernacular and to express allegiance to the literary language. As I delved more deeply into their texts and listened to their evaluations, I began to see the emotionally charged frictions that drew on Sorbian registers through dimensions of language use.



## **Getting Some Friction and Finding Satisfaction**

As I continue in this chapter and the following chapters, I expose the frictions among multiple linguistic activities. I would like to point out that the quantitative results indicate points of tension, but do not reveal the Sorbian rationales behind these issues. The ethnographic component of my ethnography cum translation exposes the emotional aspects of “walking the line” and the ways Sorbs ascribed meaning to their linguistic choices. Throughout the translation process I was “plaguing people [Sorbs] with obtuse questions” (Geertz 1973: 29) Sorbs often responded with metalinguistic explanations that spoke to their yearnings for linguistic satisfaction. To gain analytical traction, I coded Sorbian translations using dimensions of language use associated with the Budyšin and rural registers:

- written - spoken texts,
- urban - village scenes,
- notions of modern - old language use,
- expert - authoritative stances, and
- Sorbian - German referents.

In two analytical components, I will consider the ways that Sorbs mix registers. First, I look at individual translations and oral stories that were offered by Sorbs during the translation process (see Chapter 8). Second, this analysis aids in understanding the general trends in register variation across translations (see Chapter 9). Thus, I investigate the overlaps among frictions, for example, the relationship between modern-old markers and Sorbian-German distinctions. Throughout my discussion, I highlight the ways Sorbian translators found satisfaction in their rendering of a Sorbian text—a creative process closely related to their construction of frictions. Furthermore, documenting this process also provides evidence of the mechanics of virtuosity.

I emphasize happiness and well-being as related to the translation process in these chapters. Furthermore, I speak to the desires of Sorbs through an anthropological position on language as social action and “emotions as discourse” (Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990). Taking seriously the idea of emotions as discourse, I argue that notions of happiness and well-being are critical to understanding Sorbian social relations and their linguistic practices. However, these discourses are not merely a referential commentary to some internal state. Although I interchange happiness and well-being, I recognize the semantic differences between the two terms. In this chapter, I focus on linguistic satisfaction but broader concerns about well-being and happiness also require a preamble. In many ways, my emphasis on linguistic satisfaction differs strongly from a Labovian tradition that directs scholarly attention to linguistic insecurity or Nancy Dorian’s focus on semi-speakers. Furthermore, my current discussion of satisfaction returns to my ethnographic concerns about unhappiness (see Chapters 2 and 3). Without wishing to appear too optimistic, I recognize the complexity of satisfaction as a search for lessening of discomfort in language use and a pursuit of linguistic well-being. Through analysis of Sorbs’ work in translation, I demonstrate a need to listen to speakers rather than only heed scholarly discussions of endangered language use.

Discourses related to notions of happiness and well-being also are a powerful rhetoric used in the endangered language literature. In the mainstream media and even in academic discussions, overt concern for language loss often draws on metaphors of health and ecology (Dalby 2003; Evans 2010; King, et al. 2008; Maffi 2005; May 2004; Mufwene 2002; Nettle and Romaine 2000). While linguists also often use this rationale to spark interest in a global problem, these warnings about the loss of traditional knowledge or threats to global health

portray speakers of endangered languages as victims (see also Wilce 2009b).<sup>1</sup> Even for Sorbs, this narrative of victimization that bilingual Sorbs have bemoaned allegedly at least 1,000 years of endangerment (see Chapter 2) can divert Sorbian attention away from a range of practices that sustain language maintenance and foster linguistic virtuosity. This Sorbian narrative not only comes from reported speech but also from the linguistic histories that Sorbian intellectuals have written as well as their concerns about demographics. Although my return to macro-narrative seems like a “straw man,” I propose that it is critical to understandings of Sorbian and non-Sorbian sentiments about language loss.

Salikoko Mufwene’s (2002) review of *Vanishing Voices* (Nettle and Romaine 2000) attends to how linguists anthropomorphize languages, a rhetoric that shifts focus away from sustainability and may portray speakers as victims of a “wicked problem.” Furthermore, arguments about global biodiversity resonate with Herder’s legacy of a one-language-one culture-one nation argument in an oddly disconnected logic. This Herderian constellation romanticizes unique monolingual groups or Volk while global diversity celebrates multiple unique cultures. In the intertwining of these two ideological discourses, I paradoxically find an Enlightenment notion of linear progression toward a singular Culture. For example, the European motto of “unity in diversity” promotes a very specific European culture made up of acceptable EU citizens. Furthermore, multilingualism, as a defining condition of a plurilingual EU, is an unavoidable state of affair that materializes in the problematic costs associated with translating documents, the hierarchy placed between official and non-official languages of the EU, and the marginalized status of national minorities. As an ideological argument, linguistic

diversity also poses a threat to national unity (Bauman and Briggs 2003; Cameron 2007), yet still represents desired or nostalgic ideal in an increasingly globalized world.

Despite the good intentions of linguists in discussions of language loss, I feel an obligation to reiterate several issues (see Crystal 2000; Harrison 2007, . Treating endangered languages as endangered species often obscures seeing the linguistic well-being of speakers and communities. Like Shaylih Muehlman (2007), I agree that language loss and social inequality are intertwined processes, but “saving languages or rainforests will [not] reverse the social processes that marginalize some groups in the first place” (Muehlman 2007: 31). Another veiled reference in biodiversity arguments entails an essentialization of indigenous identities or reproduction of a national image. In the Sorbian community, I argue that these processes emerge in an imagined prestige in social contexts in which Sorbs associate prestige with an idealized national standard or with images of a traditional Volk who wear the national costume.

Furthermore, biodiversity metaphors can also create rhetorical problems both on the ground and from a national or supranational level. As a global problem—language endangerment—is substituted for specific linguistic issues at hand and local dilemmas, Sorbs feel the effects of globalization that often puts added pressures on their daily changes to sustain linguistic diversity. For example, Sorbs place an emphasis on historical challenges in their efforts to establish a national community in which members do not mix Sorbian and German resources. I add to Monica Heller’s advice for linguistic anthropologists to investigate “whether all kinds of bilingualism are good and bad” (Heller 2008: 512). I interpret Heller’s argument as a call for exploration of myriad grey spaces in which multiple allegiances emerge. I join with her and with Jan Blommaert’s (2004; 2010) and Susan Gal’s (2006) efforts to redirect

intellectual inquiry. Finally, discussions of language endangerment often use emotive language that moralizes a global crisis and loss of diversity while ignoring the speakers and the emotional dialogues in endangered language communities. At the heart of my focus on well-being is my goal to bring the speakers of an endangered language community, their linguistic practices, their pursuits of well-being, and their stories within *The Story of Ferdinand* back into focus.

## **Registers: Literature Review**

A linguistic anthropology founded in this new science will admit the heteroglossic centrifugal forces in speech communities to a central place. It will be able to encompass the diversity that admits struggle between speakers and ways of speaking as well as functional balance between them (Hill 1986: 89).

My analysis of *Ferdinand* translations brings together the narratives told me to during the translation process and enactments of linguistic diversity across and within translations. In this literature review, I weave several threads together to frame my focus on Sorbian translations of *Ferdinand*. First, my approach resonates theoretically with Bakhtin's translanguistics, what Jane Hill addresses above, that will move beyond formal structuralism by addressing the realities of heteroglossic language use. I define Bakhtin's translanguistics as intellectual inquiry that considers myriad forms of variation that encompass play between intralingual and interlingual differences. As a corollary, Sorbs draw on idealized forms of language use to police linguistic practices. As they do so, Sorbs may, with an implicit awareness, recognize that their own and other peoples' practices may sound funny while being acceptable. Second, in reconsidering theoretical discourses of variation, I integrate discussions of language ideologies, notions of purism, discussions of literacy practices, registers, and identity construction. Third, I consider the emotional facets of these arguments. By drawing on these

several threads, I reframe heteroglossia theoretically and explore the emotional and linguistic aspects of register mixing as “alternative ways of saying the same thing” (Silverstein 1998: 411).

## Overview

Several preliminary remarks about registers, endangered language research, and anthropological approaches to intralingual variation will situate my study. Douglas Biber and Edward Finegan (1994) open with the definitional problems of linguistic “register,” by acknowledging the interchangeability of register with other linguistic activities (style, text style, genre, and, I would add, stance). In interdisciplinary literature on register variation, academic discussions often pit one way of speaking against another—a high register against a low one, a contrast based on diglossic distinctions (Ferguson 1959); formal and informal registers (Ochs 1979); associated with particular context (Ferguson 1983); restricted and elaborated codes (Bernstein 1964); and written/spoken registers (Biber 1994; Chafe 1982; Halliday 1989). For Biber and Finegan’s discussion, register refers to “language varieties associated with situational uses” (Biber and Finegan 1994: 4). These discussions often stress the boundedness of register use and typically hierarchically position one register in relation to another.<sup>2</sup>

By framing linguistic diversity as hierarchical, assumptions of monostylism or lack of register variation (Dressler 1988) support a research agenda focused on the steps toward language death (see Dorian 1989).<sup>3</sup> Although William Lamb (2008) sees the anthropological value of register research with a critical eye, he asserts that the lack of empirical data obviates the ways speakers of endangered languages use their resources in novel or unexpected ways. Looking at monostylism, as an ultimate consequence of language shift, also goes hand-in-hand with a research approach that may prevent seeing variation as a vitalizing process in

communities experiencing threats to language maintenance or their community well-being.<sup>4</sup> I take a cue from Lamb arguing that endangered languages are not necessarily lacking in register variation. In contrast to Lamb, my study focuses on speaker's perspectives, multiple frictions embedded in their translations, a theoretical challenge to studying register variation.

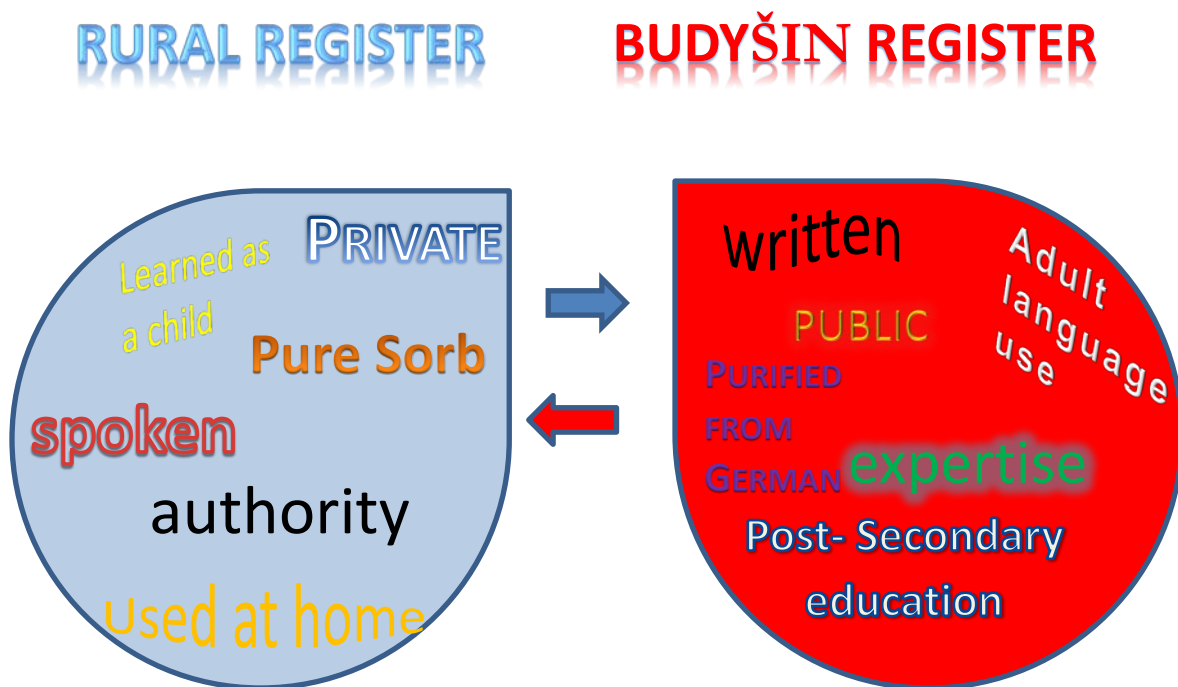
Foundational investigations of register variation involve particular models of study: attention to speech (Labov 1972), audience design (Bell 1984), and register variation (Finegan and Biber 1994). A focus on speech often leads to distinguishing between oral and written registers. In contrast to these studies, I propose that Sorbian speakers exploit not only oral-literary differences but also other social and linguistic dimensions in their language use. Rather than compartmentalizing linguistic features, Sorbian translators alternate among multiple dimensions of register use indexing a range of social variables through language.

Following the Register Variation model, Finegan and Biber (2001) propose in the *Register Axiom* that individuals will use certain linguistic features more frequently, if a linguistic feature is widely distributed across social groups and contexts. Yet, Sorbs often put specific linguistic features of registers into practice for many reasons. Furthermore, I argue that features of linguistic registers are used in ways that fulfill a poetic function (Jakobson 1960) especially in mixing registers. Sorbs express multiple concerns and moments of satisfaction regarding the poetic aspects of linguistic diversity. Their evaluations and affective discourses suggest that variation is not merely ornamental, but intrinsic to language use through register mixing. In this poetic function, mixing registers emerges as a type of "common eloquence" (Maccaulay 2005) that is lived, spoken, and constantly emerging. Furthermore, register mixing

compares to the poetic practices of Bedouin women (Abu-Lughod 1986) and the social aesthetics of Bergamasco speakers (Cavanaugh 2009).<sup>5</sup>

Framed by local ideological agendas, Sorbs participate in and experience dialogues about language that inform two broadly defined registers in the Sorbian community. In a bipartisan dynamic, the Budyšin and village registers interanimate one another, because Sorbs make multiple intra-lingual distinctions often using diglossic differences.

Figure 7.1: Interaction between Registers



According to local rhetoric, Sorbs envision the rural register with several dimensions: (a) a spoken vernacular, learned as a child, and located in the village; (b) a pure medium untouched by standardizing processes while allowing German interference; and (c) a private mode of communication. Simultaneously, Sorbs learn to recognize and respect the Budyšin register associated with this urban space. In this co-discourse, Sorbs value their language as modernized, associated with a written standard, enhanced by post-secondary education,



purified from German through standardization processes (elimination of borrowings), not marked by code-switching, and located in *Budyšin* as a public mode of communication. Ideally, the Budyšin register exemplifies a way of speaking Sorb without German and standardized.

In the Figure 7.1 above, I distinguish the two Sorbian registers and emphasize interactions between them. Dynamic processes of complementarity are the central linguistic focus of my consideration of language use. Through my ethnographic approach, I observed multiple ways that these frameworks mutually reinforce each other often through competing against one another. For example, Sorbs can view some Budyšin utterances as purified from German, because, by contrast, village talk corresponds to “mish-mash” and differs from the Budyšin “purity.” Furthermore, my attention to multiple interconnections between registers reveals a constellation of strategic linguistic evaluations (see Chapters 5 and 6).

I argue that these evaluations of spoken talk indicate a discursive nexus of semi-standardized practices and “real” language practices of bilingual Sorbs. As a corollary, I recognize that notions of linguistic plurality, bilingualism, and emergent social relations undermine characterizations of an “authentic” speaker who speaks ONE language at time using it appropriately. In questioning authenticity, I concur with Mary Bucholtz’s (2003) position on the predominant scholarly emphasis on authenticity that mirrors any theoretical concern to gain a closer approximation of “real” language use. First, she warns against essentializing speakers’ identities. She elaborates by saying these intellectual claims are predicated on authenticity and use of real, and, by implication, spoken speech. While an ideology-free approach may be overly idealistic and unattainable, she calls for “a reflexive sociolinguistics [and I would add linguistic anthropology] that acknowledges and monitors its own

interestedness” (Bucholtz 2003: 404). In response to the dilemmas I faced in gaining access to authentic speech as discussed earlier in Chapter 3, I devised an approach to language use in translation that offered privacy and a space for subjects’ reflection on their linguistic preferences and Sorbian social relations. By uniting participant-observation as a hallmark of linguistic anthropology with a more controlled research situation, I intended to gain a closer approximation of local perceptions of “authentic” language use through the lens of written texts and narratives.

My analytical approach offers a model to approximate the processes involved in “real” language production.<sup>6</sup> Although their discussion foregrounds identity, Bucholtz and Hall (2004) stress agency, the dangers of essentialization, and the improvised quality of everyday practice. I join them to place importance on “how and why identity [and mixing registers] is created through language” (Bucholtz and Hall 2004: 383). To take this one step further, by looking at their translation data and hearing their narratives, I identify a range of mixed emotions that speaks to subjects’ pursuit of linguistic satisfaction.

Mixing registers bears significant similarity to enregisterment as Asif Agha defines it:

...processes whereby diverse behavioral signs (whether linguistic, non-linguistic, or both) are functionally reanalyzed as cultural models of action, as behaviors capable of indexing stereotypic characteristics of incumbents of particular interactional roles, and of relations among them” (Agha 2007: 55)

Enregisterment appears not only in social relations and temporal evaluations but also in their competing ideologies. Sorbian evaluations of the language use of other Sorbs vis-à-vis language ideologies facilitate Sorbs locating other Sorbs in the larger Sorbian community. Their dialogues about differing forms of talk mark alternative ways of being correct that somehow don’t fit with their expectations of mixing registers while allowing for multiple linguistic transgressions. For

example, many Sorbs imagine language use in the village as mixed, but these practices can also lean too heavily toward German language use. This critique contrasts with Sorbian utterances associated with Budyšin that do not integrate enough German language use. More specifically and as presented in Chapters 4 and 5, invented elements derived from Slavic etymologies stand in opposition to morpho-syntactic constructions associated with “older”—not yet subjected to standardization processes and sometimes integrating German. Although this mixed-methods analysis show that Sorbs mixed registers, they expressed bivalent yearnings to purify Sorbian utterances of German and yet to not sound too Sorbian.

If looked at as static dichotomies, register use could exemplify multiple or contesting ideologies or competing valorizations (Gal 1993). While I attended to discussions of unhappiness as well as Sorbian metalinguistic critiques and commentaries, my present focus highlights interanimation as part of heteroglossia. Instead of narrowing my discussion to competition as processes that divide language use into categorical acts, I stress the multiple interconnections involved in mish-mash and mixing registers. In other words, my data forces me to consider register variation as ongoing dynamic construction of heteroglossia through linguistic differences. With this recognition, I demonstrate the ways that Sorbs mix registers using frictions. These frictions between the Budyšin and rural registers are an excellent starting point to discuss registers “in terms of what people are doing” (Woolard 1989a: 359) and experiencing emotionally.

## Emotions, Social Action, and Language Use

As I already described in her description of women’s poetry in Bedouin society, Lila Abu-Lughod (1986) sees the role of emotions and its link to many forms of action. Abu-Lughod

shows how poetry provides a linguistic vehicle for Bedouin woman to “express sentiments contrary to those appropriate to the ideals of honor without jeopardizing the reputation of those who recite it” (Abu-Lughod 1986: 35). To relate this insight to the ways Sorbs mix registers, I see register mixing as part and parcel of their efforts to engage in linguistic activities that creatively remove shame from various types of language use. In turn, by mixing registers via frictions, Sorbs avail themselves of a multivalent linguistic medium that gives them an emotional lift and even may provide a sense of happiness or satisfaction with language use.

Although my work also uses an event-centered examination of language, it resonates with Niko Besnier’s (1995) project. In a context of incipient literacy, Besnier considers Nukulaelae literacy activities as emotional practices.<sup>7</sup> Using letters as a source of data, he shows that for the Nukulaelae use of this modality is cathartic and infused with moral evaluations. In a similar fashion Sorbs achieve linguistic satisfaction by judging diversity as morally sound. Furthermore, practices of mixing registers often become emotionally liberating practice for Sorbs as they make linguistic choices. Another aspect of Sorbian decision-making involves evaluations of other Sorbs and their language practices that can be simultaneously restrictive and heartening. Like Kristina’s father who evaluated in his neighbor’s language use, Sorbs may affirm a sense of monolingualism or acceptable language practices (see Chapter 3). While my project is not about restricted or incipient literacy as “hegemonic structures are imposed and maintained through literacy practices” (Besnier 1995: 20), my study does refer to a setting in which literary practices are well-established, represent a powerful resource, and yet are subject to variation.

Michele Rosaldo's (1980) work with the Ilongot informs my understanding of the emotional discourses that I elicited as social and linguistic action. Rosaldo described Ilongot social life in elegiac terms through efforts to attain orderliness and beauty. Using a metaphor of heart, she elaborated on the need for both knowledge and passion as complementary aspects of life. Ilongots need knowledge to temper their passion, but that is not to say that they do not recognize the need for passion. In point of fact, Rosaldo proposed that Ilongots recognize the beauty of passion in *buayat*, a celebratory song of anger or *ligat*. In acknowledging and embodying both affective discourses, Ilongots achieve a "transcendent satisfaction" through the complementarity of knowledge and passion.

Although Sorbs are not head-hunters, they do experience violence in their daily activities. As speakers of an endangered language, bilingual Sorbs feel the effects of institutionalized aggression against their language and Sorbian critiques that devalue specific forms of language use. Although this ingoing hegemonic state of affairs may not involve literal bloodshed, it does entail an ever-present draining of one's will to continue to speak Sorb or to concern oneself with economic funding, the closing of schools, or even more mundane but ubiquitous issues of prejudice, such as signage in which the Sorbian language place name is located underneath the German—a manifestation of linguistic politics (see Chapters 1 and 2). Comparing this conceptualization of dissatisfaction to Sorbian linguistic practices, bilingual Sorbs experience linguistic well-being or transcendent satisfaction as a form of happiness when they draw on their knowledge and passions in creating a Sorbian text of their own making.

To extend this parallel further, Sorbs feel both knowledge and passion about register use and variation that are simultaneously connected to emotional discourses. In walking the

line, Sorbs balance their knowledge and passion of Sorbian language use. From their linguistic narratives, bilingual Sorbs express multiple viewpoints about register use. Thus, Sorbs may feel that overt use of one register or another is undesirable. In other words, Sorbs express myriad sentiments about order-disorder, older-modern language use, and written-spoken modalities. To borrow from Bourdieu's arguments about symbolic capital, Sorbs enact various forms of control. In their critiques of mish-mash as I have already argued, many Sorbs will defend the Budyšin register and, likewise, these same Sorbs may guard the threatened capital of the rural register (Bourdieu 1977b: 651). These heteroglossic dynamics characterize the ways Sorbs mix registers and engage in a range of practices that offer some degree of satisfaction.

### Anthropological Investigations

Rather than viewing people as either thinking or feeling, we might view people as almost always "emotional" in the sense of being committed to "processing information" or understanding the world in culturally and personally constructed ways. It becomes possible to model people's participation not simply as coolly enacted behavior or as attempts to understand "the truth of the matter," in however a cultural set of terms, but rather as motivated creation (Lutz 1988: 225)

Practices of mixing registers through emerging frictions constitute a motivated, conscious creation of linguistic diversity and virtuosity. Theoretical approaches to linguistic diversity or variation in linguistic anthropology often draw on Bakhtin's understandings of heteroglossia but fail to directly address the emotional aspects of processing information. My primary concern is with emotional discourses and a legacy of Western knowledge perpetuated through Cartesian dualism and Weberian rationality (Terada 2001; Wilce 2009b). Despite the efforts of research on language and emotions to problematize these intellectual underpinnings, their remnants may taint anthropological research. By disavowing or inadvertently focusing on one aspect of emotional discourses, anthropological studies of variation oversimplify heteroglossia or emotionalize linguistic variation in a negative light. After reviewing some of

Bakhtin's concepts, I will apply Bakhtin's arguments to discussions of language variation in the Malinche and Tewa communities studied by Jane and Kenneth Hill (1986) and Paul Kroskrity (2000a).

At the core of Bakhtin's definition of heteroglossia lies a concept of linguistic diversity, an ongoing interanimation of centripetal and centrifugal forces. Whereas centripetal forces include standardization of national languages, linguistic norms and idealized linguistic unity, centrifugal forces upset order, but "are not themselves unified as forces of opposition" (Morson and Caryl 1990: 139). While it might be possible to envision centrifugal forces as "radiating from a unified core" (Morson and Caryl 1990: 140), Bakhtin clarifies that a unitary or literary language is not a given. Even Sorbian views of the literary language engage different ideas about temporality, understandability, and authority/expertise via semi-standardized practices. Rather, a unitary or literary language is a set of prescriptive norms that, as Bakhtin argues, defend a language from heteroglossia (Bakhtin 1981: 270-271). Ironically, these defenses may relate to a range of practices and even multiple conceptualizations of a literary language.

Ferdinand translations show how bilingual Sorbs knit together elements from two registers. Bakhtin might say that bilingual Sorbs render one form of Sorbian language use in the light of another form of language use (Bakhtin 1981: 359). First, each translation is replete with shifts between registers. As tiny adjustments or layers, these linguistic acts of mixing registers characterize a Wittgensteinian observation about familiarity. "One is unable to notice something—because it is always before one's eyes" (Wittgenstein 1958: paragraph 129). Wittgenstein continues, "and this means we fail to be struck by what, when seen, is most

striking and powerful.” Sorbs do not always notice shifts between registers, but their observations, evaluations, and explanations reveal an awareness of frictional language use.

When Sobs mix registers, they often combine two contradictory meanings within “the limits of a single syntactic whole... [or] of a simple sentence...[or] of even one and the same word” (Bakhtin 1981: 305) to create hybrid forms. In turn, hybrid forms exemplify syncretic practices (Spitulnik 1998; Woolard 1998a). From an analytical perspective, contradictions relate to different evaluations of meanings of a linguistic construction as invented or old, written or spoken, expert or authoritative, and related to village talk or urban utterances. As a corollary, hybrid constructions veil their own presence and are often layered thereby making it difficult to obtain an analytical and ethnographic hold on them. Instead of using the centripetal forces or disorderly speech as a focal point to understand heteroglossia and hybridization, I recommend shifting focus to the interactions between centripetal and centrifugal loci as well to macrosociological forces. This interplay is a prime site to consider linguistic virtuosity.

To return to Hill’s translinguistic perspective that exemplifies an emphasis on centrifugal forces, Hill and Hill (1986) set up a theoretical model for anthropological research on syncretic language use. Using an opposition between Spanish and Mexicano language use, they point to Spanish as a dominant language and a centripetal core. Their focus on disorderliness and its link to centrifugal processes via spoken talk exposes unequal power relations that Mexicano speakers exploit by mixing. When people speak Mexicano in Malinche, they invoke purist ideology. For example, speaking Spanish with outsiders transforms linguistic practices into processes of social differentiation. Although their analysis brings attention to inequality,



interlingual tensions, and sharply delineated ethnolinguistic identities, Hill and Hill's focus on disorder may hamper a consideration of friction or obscure a clear view of frictional dynamics.

Hill and Hill also connect disorderly speech to centrifugal process and spoken speech. This connection denies disorganization in centripetal processes, but also privileges naturally-occurring conversation as the site to investigate heteroglossia and syncretic practices. Yet, their linkage may also reproduce the essentialism that Bucholtz critiques. Their example of disorderly mixing in drunken speech reinforces a negative view of emotionally inflected practices. As I learned from Sorbian speakers, feelings about linguistic disorder are complicated and strategically negotiated in metalinguistic dialogues and laments.

Another problematic oversight of Hill and Hill's extensive documentation of language use and their discussion involves the role of a singular centripetal core. From a theoretical perspective, research on syncretic language follows Hill and Hill's lead by focusing on interlingual practices and identifying a dominant "foreign" language as the centripetal core. Hill and Hill imply that Spanish language use is a monolingual core that creates interlingual variation via centripetal and centrifugal forces. Although Malinche exploit Spanish linguistic resources, this binary framework supersedes frictional or intralingual discourses of differences and homogenizes syncretic practices. Furthermore, the logic of Hill and Hill may reinforce a conceptualization of static binaries while positioning mixed language use as opposing purist practices. Without discounting the ground-breaking insights of Hill and Hill's analysis, I would like to expose the interdependency of mixed and "pure" language use.

Paul Kroskrity's (2000a) discussion of Kiva talk explores a dynamic of intralingual frictions and centripetal processes. Kiva, as ceremonial talk, a register, and a genre, gives a

structural referent to all forms of Tewa and language use. Kroskrity sees this dynamic as having several components: strict compartmentalization, regulation by convention, indigenous purism, and indexing of identity. From a Bakhtinian perspective, Kiva speech is the origin of centripetal forces that defines a range of practices in the Tewa community. Although he addresses a range of practices, Kroskrity still focuses on one dominant form of language use. In contrast, my analysis sees two mutually constitutive frameworks instantiated in the rural-Budyšin registers shaping a range of practices. To bridge this approach to linguistic ideologies, I look at how issues of domination emerge dialogically—constantly under deconstruction and construction.

I take translinguistics further by rethinking syncretic language use and the range of identities and practices that occur in a syncretic continuum. In each translation, bilingual Sorbs create different types of friction. While some relied more heavily on the rural register, others employed devices that demonstrate greater reliance on the Budyšin register. Rather than focusing on pigeonholing a speaker as a villager/ruralist or an institutional Sorb/urbanite, I propose that most Sorbs manipulate their resources in ways that show allegiance to both registers and both identities. By expressing their multiple allegiances, Sorbs intertwine emotions with processes of enregisterment. In their individual translations, Sorbs voice multiple loyalties and infidelities to a register, create hybrid arrangements, and take part in metalinguistic dialogues using interlingual orientations.

### Other Studies of Language Variation and Their Perspectives

In the Tewa (Kroskrity 2000a) and Malinche (Hill and Hill 1986) communities, one ideology, that of purism, regulates local perceptions of mixing. A recent turn language variation

research reflects an interest in multiplicity and contention among language ideologies. Elaborating this new conceptualization of hegemony, Susan Gal asks “in the contestation among ideologies, by what process does any ideology become dominant,...if only temporarily or partially” (Gal 1998: 321). Inherently, tensions among standards reveal that a dominant ideology does not always eclipse other ideologies or local theories of language use.

Gal recognizes that the existence of multiple language ideologies “renders the achievement of domination problematic, often fragile” (Gal 1998: 323) for people as they encounter a dominant language ideology. As a corollary, I take Gal’s insights further by implying that this fragility entails antagonistic social relations between Sorbian speakers and not just interactions between Germans and Sorbs or what Niko Besnier (2009) describes as a society-internal hegemony” (Besnier 2009: 22). This fragility, recognized by Gal and indirectly by Besnier, remains an under-researched phenomenon. Gal turns her attention to processes that would strengthen dominant language ideologies, foregoing equally worthy questions about the weakening cracks of a dominant language ideology and of Sorbian-Sorbian dynamics. While this weakening of dominant language ideologies may entail a pejorative assessment, this rhetoric should not lead to celebrating minority language speakers who successfully challenge a dominant language ideology. Instead, I propose that Sorbian speakers may weaken and stabilize heteroglossia as they critique language use and show fealty to more than one register.

By inference, weakening of a dominant language ideology can vitalize the flux in centripetal and centrifugal forces. Perhaps, I would revise fragile with the terms “delicate” and “intricate” to describe the questionable hold of a dominant language ideology over speakers and social interactions. This fragility coincides with friction as “awkward, unstable, and creative

qualities of interconnection across differences” (Tsing 2005: 4). When I envision the delicate achievement of simultaneous strengthening and weakening of Sorbian language ideologies, I do not consider these delicate operations lacking in strength but, rather, like a Geertzian spider web—incredibly delicate, flexible, potent, and unbreakable despite their fine-spun quality.

In Miki Makihara’s (2007) investigation of bilingual Rapa-Nui, speakers experience a simultaneous weakening and strengthening of a dominant purist ideology.<sup>8</sup> In the emergence of new linguistic purist registers used in political speeches, bilingual Rapa Nui speakers view syncretic practices in a more positive light while reflecting differing interests. These purist registers entail a range of linguistic compromises that overlap with modern-old and spoken usages (related to the use of numbers), expertise and authority (in addressing the audience), and Rapa-nui/Spanish distinctions.

With the growth of heritage tourism, Makihara recognizes a shifting of symbolic capital that values “rapu-nuized” syncretic speech and political public registers. I see parallels between rapu-nuized syncretic speech to Sorbian bilingual mish-mash.<sup>9</sup> To draw another comparison, speakers in both contexts may draw on a purist ideology while making distinctions between types of Sorbian or Rapu-nui language use respectively. In differing ways, these types of language use offer a sense of pride and positive view of ethnic identities. Although Makihara does not address the idea of multiple frictions, she acknowledges shifting hierarchies or blurred boundaries (Jaffe 1999). I partially align my discussion with Makihara’s arguments in acknowledging the complexities of registers use. However, I consider shifting values as a type of overlap between centripetal and centrifugal processes, not as hierarchical. My position represents an intervention that also embraces a nuanced understanding of linguistic purism.

## **Considering Emotions and Virtuosity**

Emotional discourses as social action reveal not just hierarchies or entanglements with power, but also a range of practices. From the literature, I am concerned about several theoretical issues that impinge on a sophisticated understanding of emotions as linguistic action and as discourse. First, in these contexts, scholars may tend to universalize emotions. Taking a step back from the specifics of these arguments (Hill and Hill 1986; Kroskrity 2000a, 2000b); these scholars may collapse emotional, linguistic, and political loci of dysphoric states.

Second, in contrast to a focus on a DOMINANT ideology, Gal's arguments suggest a range of possible emotions related to shifting language ideologies. Yet, she still concentrates her scholarly discussion on overt challenges to hegemonic inequalities. To make a metaphoric comparison, this focus on structural inequalities offers a direct and well-traveled route to understanding linguistic practices in public contexts as Goffmanian front regions (see also Gal 2006). With a greater awareness of the range of emotional stances and a shift in theoretical perspective, linguistic anthropology may discover other back regions that speakers travel linguistically using alternative paths or frictions.

Although Makihara exposes pride associated with mixed and pure language use, the range of emotions remains vague, especially in the different loyalties to dimensions of language use. Makihara and I both agree with Woolard's description of language ideologies as "derived from, rooted in, reflective of, or responsive to the experience or interests in a particular social position..." (Woolard 1998b: 6-7) and, I would add, in emotionally inflected discourses of social action that give rise to variation in linguistic practices. Before moving to specific practices in the

translation of *Ferdinand* by Sorbs, I foreground the story and then analyze the stories within *The Story of Ferdinand* as ethnographic evidence of virtuosity and linguistic diversity.

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<sup>1</sup> See also Deborah Cameron (2007) and Lisa Maffi (2005) for other critiques of biodiversity arguments.

<sup>2</sup> Another aspect of hierarchies between registers theoretically relies on symbolic capital. In Chapter 5, I applied a Bakhtinian approach to Bourdieu's ideas about language hierarchy, an approach that informs many discussions of bilingual and endangered language practices. Although antagonistic relations in a linguistic market can contribute to a dynamic of favoring one linguistic variety over another, these relations can also complement one another in their frictions.

<sup>3</sup> In contrast to the anthropological work on register formation, discourses of nostalgia, and identity construction, William Lamb stresses the formal linguistic aspects of registers. Although Lamb recognizes the paucity of speakers with virtuosity in reading and writing, he makes a broad distinction between spoken and written registers. Using narrower parameters, Lamb identifies a range of distinct registers of Scottish Gaelic: 1) conversation; 2) formal prose; 3) traditional narrative; 4) fact-based reportage registers; 5) radio interview; 6) fiction; and 7) popular writing and sports reportage. Using a formal and rigorous coding, he considers morphemic/lexicon and syntactic aspects of language use.

<sup>4</sup> Konstanze Glaser (2007) compares Sorbian and Gaelic language use, an interesting argument that suggests that both communities are experiencing similar dynamics of language use.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Auer (Auer) provides an excellent discussion of diglossic contexts in Europe while addressing the problems of defining a "national" language.

<sup>6</sup> I favor the tactics of intersubjectivity over Susan Gal's and Judith Irvine's (2009) notions of erasure, fractal recursivity, and iconization, because the tactics of intersubjectivity model complicates each dynamic as dialogic (see also Irvine and Gal 1995).

<sup>7</sup> More generally, the literary-spoken distinctions akin to a schizoglossia (Haugen 1972d) constitute a key historicized phenomenon critical to enregisterment.

<sup>8</sup> McEwan-Fujita (2008) describes another situation of the emergence of a Scottish Gaelic register.

<sup>9</sup> See also discussion of Laada Bilaniuk's (2008) discussion of *surzykh* in Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### The Stories within *The Story of Ferdinand*: An Ethnography cum Translation in Bilingual Lusatia

#### **Framing Ferdinand...**

The basic default position of humanity, happiness was not a gift from God or a trick of fate, but a natural endowment attainable in theory by every man, woman, and child...Happiness in the Enlightenment view, was less an ideal of godlike perfection than a self-evident truth, to be pursued and obtained in the here and now (McMahon 2006: 13).

Munro Leaf's classic tale contains an underlying theme of happiness. This story of a small bull who would rather smell the flowers than fight resonates with Sorbian desires to avoid conflict and to be able to speak Sorb without critique. Sorbs achieve happiness in a variety of ways. Some bilingual Sorbs stop speaking the Sorbian language, others become activists and "fight for the language," and many Sorbs try to balance their lives through linguistic and personal choices. The story's message of peace, freedom, and self-determination makes it appealing to readers. Many Sorbian translators described Ferdinand as "ganz sympathisch (very likeable)" and seemed to empathize with the little bull's desires to stay true to his nature.

While defining happiness represents a problematic endeavor partially because of its slipperiness as a subjective, transient, or physical condition, looking at the definition of Merriam-Webster's can be helpful. It is defined as a "state of being happy, healthy, or prosperous," because this definition reveals multiple aspects of the word "happiness." In contrast, James Pawelski and Isaac Prilleltensky (2005) argue that wellness is a broader term signifying "a positive state of affairs, brought about by the simultaneous and balanced satisfaction of personal, relational, and collective needs (Pawelski and Prilleltensky 2005: 193). Yet, these two elaborations on happiness and wellness/well-being fail to address some

anthropological concerns with emotions. Although there are no universal standards for determining the goodness of life, the authors of Gordon Mathews' and Carolina Izquierdo's edited book, *Pursuits of Happiness: Well-Being in Anthropological Perspective* (2009), point out the need to address well-being as an anthropological area of inquiry that decouples not only the feelings, evaluative meanings, and motives, but also well-being from happiness. Thus, my strategic use of these terms often speaks to their specific nuances that resonate with Sara Ahmed's (2010) thorough exploration of "happiness" (see Chapter 2). More specifically, I consider SATISFACTION an appropriate way to describe Sorbian engagements with linguistic happiness and WELL-BEING as a reference to community health and social relations.

### ...As a Story

My awareness of the notions of happiness not only stemmed from Ferdinand's story which concludes with the sentence, "He is very happy," but also from a philosophical concern with understanding linguistic "happiness." In this brief discussion of the story's appeal, I problematize "happiness" as a continuum of evaluations without losing sight of discourses of unhappiness. Here I try to capture what bilingual Sorbs told me about their linguistic satisfaction both in the activities of translating and how satisfaction relates to their lives. Thus, linguistic satisfaction emerges not as a passing state, but as a part of dialogic relations, a catalyst for linguistic activities, an affective stance, and a mode of engagement. I find inspiration in Anna Tsing's observations about friction and collaborative projects. While bilingual Sorbs cooperate with other Sorbs, they often maintain overlapping but sometimes separate agendas. Like Tsing's observation of the nature lovers in the Amazonian forest, Sorbs tell different narratives of language use that are related to linguistic frictions and emotions.



The core moral of the story resonates with Sorbian desires to speak their language without critique, rather than feeling linguistic pressures. No matter what the cause of their stress, I sensed unhappiness as related to a politics of indistinction. Although I encountered difficulties understanding their unhappiness, my empathy and sensitivity to Sorbian unhappiness became more tangible for me in my interactions with my father-in-law (see Chapter 4) and as Sorbs narrated sources of their mixed emotions. Although my elicitation is not exactly the same as William Labov's (1966) Danger of Death format, I recognize that the narratives that Sorbs told me as they created a Ferdinand text, describe a "dangerous" situation that emerges in threats to their personal linguistic well-being as well as their sense of communal linguistic health. My consideration of satisfaction recognizes the impact of local ideologies on linguistic choices that translators made while rendering a text.

### ...As a Methodology

Stories thus carry out a labor of that constantly transforms places into spaces or spaces into places (Certeau 1984: 118)

Each time that I worked with Sorbs to translate the thirty-five pages of text (see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]), I realized that Sorbs temporarily created a context for our work. In this transformed space, Sorbs as translators could safely render a version of the text without critique and, in turn, focus on language as Sorbs engaged with discourses of happiness through their linguistic choices in this recontextualized space. In other words, as I worked with Sorbs in a variety of physical spaces, they worked on a translation in their own "space" creating as much autonomy as possible. This project is not context-dependent in a strict sense but, rather one, where the translation process occurred in the place of their choosing, where each Sorbian translator felt more comfortable.<sup>1</sup> Often influenced by metalinguistic critique, I hoped that

evaluations of language use in the spaces we achieved would feel more liberating than overtly restrictive, as each Sorb could render a translation as they deemed appropriate.

In July 2007, I made my first appointment to begin translations of *The Story of Ferdinand*. My goals centered on establishing a baseline for comparison between interpretations. I informed each Sorb at the beginning that I was looking for a translation from “what feels right” rather than a word-for-word version of the text. This introduction shaped elicitation techniques away from a prescriptive approach to one based on linguistic diversity and embraced multiple ways of correctly interpreting the text. As a language learner, my position as non-native Sorbian speaker allowed me to act as assistant to the translation process.<sup>2</sup> Sorbs created texts drawing not only on their competence, but also on an implicit awareness of different registers. My realization of Sorbian awareness came from their identifying language use as like Sorbs in Budyšin or ruralists, who live in the villages. Sorbs interpreted *Ferdinand* through intra-lingual adjustments not always framed by German/Sorbian interdependency. Thus, Sorbian translations reflect mish-mash and its everyday use.

I was originally inspired by Kathryn Woolard’s (1989a) interpretation of matched-guise. With her work with Catalan speakers, Woolard used a reading of a text that described Euclidian geometry. After hearing this short piece Catalan speakers answered a battery of questions about the person who read the text. Woolard’s goal involved comparing ethnic evaluations with spoken language use. My project differs from Woolard’s use of the matched guise method in several ways. Initially, I wanted to find a text that would not evoke a standard associated with school texts. My emphasis on variation and individual practices in written utterances makes my method different as well. Another benefit of my approach involves not directly confronting

bilingual Sorbs with their feelings about Germans, the transformations involved in the post-socialist/EU context, the daily politics involved in language loss, or linguistic policing. Finally, my project takes into account the intersubjective relationship between the anthropologist and informant and the significance of translation as a cultural/linguistic operation.

I take Ernest Gellner's notion of the anthropologist translator to another methodological level (see also Asad 1986). By recognizing the critical roles of bilingual Sorbs as translators, I also see them as individuals who read their own culture (the culture to which they were born or to which they consider themselves belonging) with me in an ethnographic project. As we, a Sorbian individual and an anthropologist, developed rapport, we also talked about language in frictionally complex ways. Sorbian translators drew on life narratives, personal concerns, and metalinguistic dialogues as they confronted their own linguistic satisfaction and displeasure via local understandings of diversity in language use. While translators maintained a degree of freedom in what they wanted to discuss or even what was a salient issue, they collaborated with me by clearing up my confusions and questions about their linguistic choices.

Use of mixed methods also enriches my analysis as qualitative and quantitative approaches inform each other. In other words, without either component, I would not be able to unpack the nuances of mixing registers. The intersection between anthropology and translation exposes tensions between the target and source cultural and linguistic domains. My ethnography cum translation intensifies this tension. From a strict formal linguistic perspective—and one that may seem to imply that languages are separable—the translation process involves multiple positioning of source and target languages.<sup>3</sup> While starting with source language (German) and the target language (Upper Sorbian), many Sorbian translators

also enacted arrangements in which Sorb was the source language and German the target language. In rearranging these relations, bilingual Sorbs experienced a dialogized heteroglossia (Bakhtin 1981). From an analytic perspective, I also acknowledge cultural rearrangements between a source Sorbian culture and a target German culture and linguistic domains. Finding a happy medium between these multiple choices each Sorb recognizes his or her “traitorous acts” (Rubel and Rossman 2003: 6), but also reframes them as necessary actions according to emotional narratives of language use. These reframings that resonate with everyday life experiences become heroic and often gave Sorbian translators a sense of satisfaction.

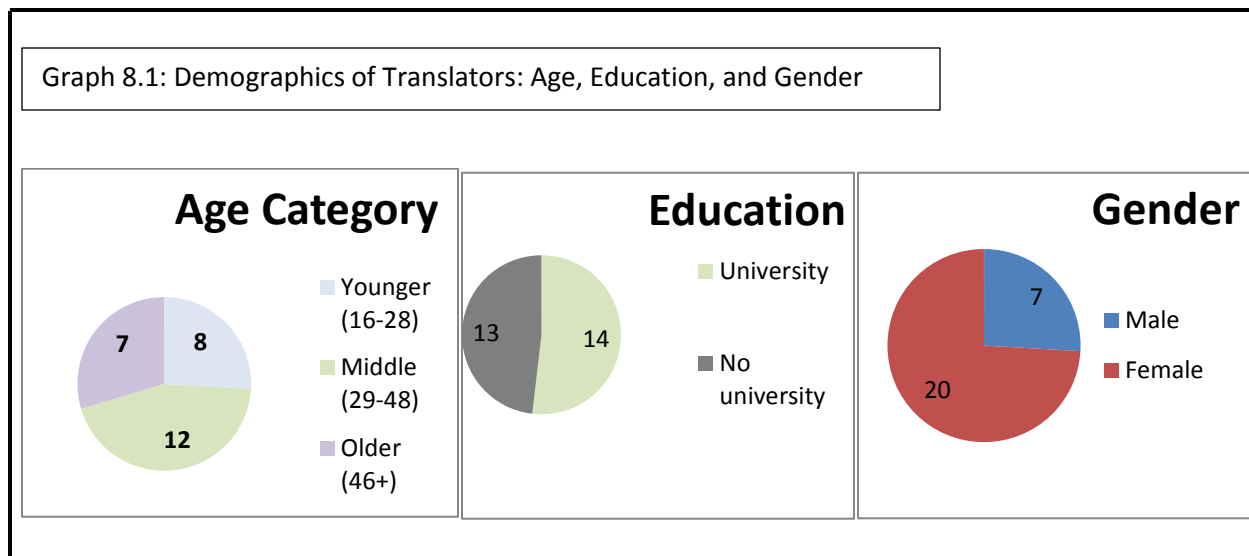
Taking a cue from Paula Rubel and Abraham Rossman, I recognize the power of foreignizing certain elements. Sorbs often experience a double bind—they are traitors from German and Sorbian perspectives. Through mixing registers Sorbs can transform themselves into obscure heroes (Certeau 1984), who remain true to multiple languaged worlds. Traitorous and heroic acts during translation also involved the markers that Sorbs informed me were relevant to their decisions concerning dimensions of language use. My analysis draws on the multiple versions and many narratives that form a composite picture of mixing registers.

## **The Sorbian Translators:** **Life Narratives and Language Use**

But this pushing beyond the limits of one’s habitual usages, this breaking down and reshaping of one’s own language through the process of translation is never an easy business, in part because... it depends on the willingness of the translator’s language to subject itself to this transforming power (Asad 1986: 157).

Talal Asad’s observation of language resonates strongly with Mikhail Bakhtin’s description of “coming to know one’s own language as it is perceived in someone else’s language, coming to know one’s horizon through another’s horizon” (Bakhtin 1981: 365). Each

Sorb experienced processes of linguistic translation, intercultural interpretations, and heteroglossic diversity. Thus, to understand how manifold frictions gain saliency in each translation, an examination of the linguistic topography of people’s lives is indispensable to understanding narratives of language use. It enables is to comprehend the complex nature of a heteroglossic language use, and mixed emotions related to language use and their ideas about personal and linguistic happiness. To summarize the demographic distributions of the twenty-seven Sorbian participants that I have coded to date, the graphs below convey information about education, employment, and a broad categorization of age.



I created age categories based on notions of internalized monolingualism and the historical transformations of the Sorbian community and coded them as younger (16-28 [post-socialist]), middle (29-45 [post-socialist and socialist]) and older (46 + [socialist]). While education entails university education in Sorbian studies, all participants attended Sorbian elementary school and most attended the Sorbian high school. To further clarify some of the demographic distribution across translators, the following graph shows correspondences between educational and age categories. Several points reveal broader shifts in the Sorbian population and resonate with

Sorbian research in generational shifts (see Chapter 2). While Cordula Ratajczakowa's (2009) proposes that the younger generation does not embrace a bilingual identity, she implies that younger Sorbs are less interested in a range of bilingual practices. From interviewing Sorbs who are part of the younger age group I noted that many younger Sorbs do not necessarily want to pursue secondary education in Sorbian studies. I hypothesize that with a decrease in advanced studies, virtuosity in use of written modalities that characterizes semi-standardized practices may be hampered. While these observations are preliminary, ethnographic data seems to support further investigation of these demographic shifts.

While details about Sorbian translators are particularly salient when looking at the statistical analysis, my emphasis is on Sorbian practices and narratives of language use. When Sorbs explained their choices to me or told me stories, they displayed multiple badges of loyalty and disclaimers. These multiple acts hinted at the ways they thought and felt about language use. In this section, I will provide detailed portraits of Sorbian translators. In relaying their stories, I will tack back and forth between their perspectives on linguistic frictions regarding spoken and written, authority and expertise, German and Sorbian, modern and old, and village and urban frictions. As I trace this process, I will also bring attention internalized monolingualism, expert/ authoritative stances, and tensions among standards. Often showing strategic allegiances to both registers, Sorbs drew on emotional as social and linguistic discourses that make their individual translations incarnations of their knowledge and passions.

### Carolyn: A Wishful Ruralist

Working with Carolyn, an older Sorbian woman in her sixties, exposed me to the covalent emotional discourses of knowledge and passion. Although her husband and son speak

Sorb, when we first started working together, Carolyn stressed that she went to Sorbian church services. As she became comfortable with me, she admitted to me with a Mona Lisa smile that she looked forward to our translations session when she could work on her Sorb. I bring up this point about Carolyn's Sorbian usage to point out issues concerning surveys used to determine language usage. In a measurement of language use, Carolyn might have classified her own usage as occasional. Yet, in her role as translator, she herself felt empowered as a Sorb who wanted to use Sorb more and perhaps become even better at using Sorbian resources.

As I pulled out a German translation of the book at our first meeting, Carolyn prepared coffee, while I explained the story line. Carolyn immediately commented that the phrase "to smell the flowers" would be problematic in rendering a Sorbian equivalent. As Carolyn explained it to me, things can smell good or bad to a person. From a grammatical standpoint, a person cannot smell something (transitive verb), rather something smells either good or bad to a person (intransitive verb). Although Carolyn experienced a challenge in interpreting "to smell the flowers," this phrase became a space of articulating passion and knowledge about Sorbian practices as well as making an intercultural translation.

#### Microcosm 1: Differences in Language Worlds

As we sat in the kitchen, Carolyn explained to me that my coffee could smell good (*wonjeć*) to me or it would smell bad (*smerdzić*) to me. She explained that I could not say in Sorb "I smell the coffee." To confirm, I asked her, "How I can say?, 'I smell the coffee.'" She told me that I could say, "*wonje kofej* (The coffee smells good)." As she evaluated the other possible ways to translate "to smell," she continually returned to the issue at hand saying, "In the village, they wouldn't say it like that." She used different expressions, but she evaluated one as the closest to her understanding of language use. During translation and the matched guise component Carolyn expressed a sense of pride in her original construction of "*na wonjace kwětki hladam* (I look at the fragrant flowers)."

By using "*hladać* (to see/look)," Carolyn brought attention to a more subtle difference that she perceived between Sorbian and German Weltanschauungs. Carolyn implied that one "smells"

the flowers in German, but from a Sorbian perspective she imagines using other senses—sight—to describe this sensory experience. In her explanation of “to smell the flowers,” Carolyn also drew on notions of village language use. While Carolyn relies heavily on the rural register, notions of written/spoken modalities and expertise/authority emerged as relevant in her interpretation of “to smell the flowers” and during other translation moments.<sup>4</sup>

Carolyn’s knowledge and passion also emerged during the matched guise component.

As we compared her version with other renditions, she confronted an orthographic problem.<sup>5</sup>

#### Microcosm 2: Knowledge and Passion via Orthography

When she saw the word for “hair” in the compilation of translations, she stopped and questioned me about it. In her version, I had written “*wosach*.” In other Sorbian translations, she saw that “hair” was spelled differently as “*włosach*.” Immediately she asked me if spelling was correct and I said that hair was spelled with an “l” in the dictionary. She stood up quickly saying, “Where is my dictionary?” When she returned with the dictionary she looked at the dictionary entry and said, “Who would spell a word like, with two “/w/” s at the beginning? No can say two “/w/” s at the beginning of a word.” Her discomfort reveals a distinction between phonetic understandings of language use and orthographic ones. Speaking of the Sorbian linguists, she said, “They are stupid. I cannot believe hair is spelled like that, I thought I knew how it was spelled. I have spoken Sorb my whole life.”

Carolyn not only responded passionately when she felt her knowledge was threatened by linguistic engineering, but she questioned the knowledge of other Sorbs affiliated with these processes. At the same time, her frantic scrambling revealed her feeling of loss of linguistic ownership by portraying Sorbian linguists as traitors. Repeatedly throughout translations, Carolyn invoked her upbringing in the village and a temporal sense of legitimacy. Her linguistic narratives—of growing up in the village, wearing Sorbian traditional dress as a child, and referring to her mother as “pure” Sorb—evoke a different moment of Sorbian life and her language use now lost to her. Her reminiscences portrayed a happier time when she spoke Sorb. In a sideways glance, Carolyn hinted at her sense of linguistic purity and authority, albeit connected to her past internalized monolingualism.



Carolyn's issue with the spelling of "hair" also illuminates a situation in which she was less than happy with tensions among standards. Her own orthographic struggle with "ř" was not typical, but I found many Sorbs were nonchalant and others were adamant about orthographic issues (see also Romaine 2002; Schieffelin and Doucet 1992; Sebba 2007). Carolyn's reaction also involves phonetic understandings of Sorbian language use. By implication, Carolyn thinks that standardization entails a muddying of the waters, because Sorbian words do not sound like they are spoken.<sup>6</sup> Yet her rendition of "to smell the flowers" established her as someone who understood the importance of spoken talk. Carolyn experienced friction between authoritative-expert stances via written and spoken channels. In her closest approximation of "to smell the flowers," she created an innovative interpretation that gave her a sense of victory as an authoritative speaker who could balance her knowledge and passion by understanding the rural register. In her feelings about her daily language use, her nostalgic sense of identity, and her victorious interpretation of "to smell the flowers" as "to look at the fragrant flowers" Carolyn reveals her wishes, wistfulness, and a sense of accomplishment in winning a linguistic victory.

### Laura: A Pensive Urbanite

In contrast to Carolyn's obvious unease with processes of language engineering and concerns about written-spoken channels, Laura, a fifty-something woman reacted differently to threats to her knowledge. With advance training in Sorbian studies, and her work as a Sorbian educator, Laura still uses Sorb everyday, albeit professionally. She also uses Sorb at home although it might not be as much as she desires. During our first meeting, Laura would not let me bring out the *Ferdinand* text until she positioned her authority in the community. Although we had met earlier and she tutored me in Sorbian everyday conversation, she started showing

me pictures of her daughter's wedding. With great pride, she told me that her daughter wore traditional dress and the Sorbian service reminded her of how things used to be when Sorbs still celebrated distinctly Sorbian traditions. She went on to describe her daughter's wedding as authentic, because of the presence of a *braška*, a Sorbian moderator at the wedding that I liken to a Shakespearean fool. She reminisced about her father, one of the last performing *braška*.

Then I asked Laura about the *braška's* performance at *Ptački Kwas* (2007), a theatrical rendition of a Sorbian wedding. After a critique of his "too Sorbian" speeches and forgetting of lines, she went on to say "*to je wulka škoda* (it's a big tragedy)." She had been talking to me in German, but at the moment of great emotionality, she used a Sorbian idiom. Laura then switched back to German, explaining that Sorbs can no longer hear as many *braška* perform or take part in Sorbian activities. Like the feeling of nostalgia and code-switching practices in the Malinche community (Hill 1992), Laura strategically used languages to frame threats to the Sorbian community. Furthermore, through a nostalgic portrayal, she established her loyalty to Sorbian cultural practices and took steps to sustain historically authentic language use.

Laura's narrative and sense of tragedy competes with her sense of legitimacy as a school teacher near retirement. Her narratives about her father and her daughter's wedding, resonate with "unhappiness" as "*wulka škoda* (great tragedy)," similar to Carolyn's sense of loss.

#### Microcosm 3: Multiple Allegiances in Translating Cork Tree

As we sat in her garden, we quickly got to the page, "He had a favorite spot out in the pasture under a cork tree (Page 5, see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]). After looking at the German word "Korkeiche (cork tree,)" she paused. Sensing a problem, I retrieved a list of alternatives. A few moments passed and she chose "*skorowc*," even though she said it is a "gebaut Wort (built word)." When I asked her to explain, she pointed to a tree and said that "bark" is "*skoro*" and that "they [the linguists] invented a word." Although I said that many Sorbs used "*dub*," she still elected to use "*skorowc*." When I asked about "*dub*," she commented that more people would use it in the village.

Recognizing both cultural transformations in the Sorbian community and linguistic changes, she affirmed her allegiances to older and modern imaginings of Sorbian language use. Even though she did not know the word for “corktree,” she somewhat reluctantly initially accepted it (page 5, see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]) but later used “*dub*” (Pages 13 and 34, see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]). In her evaluation, she set up a friction between a modern marker and village use that she associated with older types of language use. Her use of both modern and older/village language exemplifies one type of intersentential friction. While she often expressed multiple loyalties to both rural and Budyšin registers, Laura reacted more positively to language engineering than Carolyn. Furthermore, her sensibilities about invented words imply the existence of a deeper friction in the Sorbian ideas about language use. Invented items may not just be about ideas about Sorbian-German differences but also morpho-syntactic constructions and Sorbian notions of “appropriate” inscription of Sorbian phonetic structures (see Carolyn’s interpretation of “hair,” Microcosm 2). For Laura, a sense of peace about the tensions among standards entailed a greater affinity with the Budyšin register complemented by use of village markers.

## Tiffany: A Proud Urbanite

Tiffany, who has worked in the Sorbian publishing house for over twenty years, expressed very different feelings about translation, endangerment, and language use as a fifty year old woman. Even though she uses academic language regularly and takes part in Sorbian events, she has relatively little opportunity for informal interactions in Sorbian conversation. Yet, in my evaluation, she embodies the bilingual identity of her generation exhibiting a wide range of linguistic skills and a high degree of competence in oral and written channels. When

she told me that she liked to play with language, her self-descriptions parallel her focus on positive dialogues about languages and not the negative forces threatening Sorbian language use. When I asked about her experiences with editors, she simply said that “some Sorbs worry too much and you cannot always listen to other people.” She continued to talk about the sources of her linguistic pride: her grandmother, a Sorbian oral storyteller or *bajkarka*, her trips to other European countries, and her Sorbian books. By promoting her books in other European countries, she saw herself increasing awareness of the Sorbian community, culture, and language. I asked her about her grandmother. After telling me that although her grandmother is dead, she told me that she tries to have fun with language like she learned to do from her grandmother. Her quick change of topic from problems in the Sorbian publishing house to her positive linguistic experiences does not reflect a nonchalant or care-free attitude to the local linguistic politics but, rather, her commitment to life satisfaction.

In contrast to many Sorbs, Tiffany seemed to enjoy “playing with language” and making mistakes. I saw similarities between her linguistic practices and my own, because I often mixed German, Sorbian, and English resources in ways I often knew would be “wrong” to some Sorbs, but that others Sorbs and I only found as only sounding “funny” (see Chapter 5).

#### Microcosm 4: Agency as Part of Knowledge and Passion

Tiffany described her perspective on lexical gaps saying, “Wenn es gibt kein Wort, ich muss etwas bauen (When there isn’t a word, I have to build/invent it).” This statement justified her expertise even if something sounded quite odd, but also resonates with her sense of linguistic playfulness. In her translation, her building of words often mixes register and infuses her translation with expertise.

Her use of “*wobnuchować*” exemplifies her agency in building a word.<sup>7</sup> This verb contains two affixes to the verb “*nuchać*”: “*wobnuchować* [to sniff]” is a construction of “*wob* ≈ in” + “*nuch* ≈ sniff” (verb stem) + “*ować* ≈ verbal progressive suffix ending.” While “*nuchać*” signals village

language use, “*wobnuchować*” is “a horse of a different color.” This construction contains frictions between village language use and expertise in a single word through the combination of a village marker in the stem and expertise in the affixes. In matched guise evaluation, Tiffany’s “built” word often provoked smiling, because it sounds like a parody of village mish-mash in the adding of the “-*ować*” suffix, because Sorbs can create a verb from German or Sorbian stems using the suffix “-*ować*.”<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, Tiffany’s selective hearing helps her pursue linguistic satisfaction through innovative frictions via morpho-syntactic distinctions. Although Tiffany shows extreme affiliation toward the urban register, she also alternated to other types of language use. In her translation of “to smell the flowers,” Tiffany alternated between “*wobnuchować*” (Pages 5, 9, and 35, Leaf [1936], see Appendix D) and “*nuchać*” (Pages 7 and 32, see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]). In one word, Tiffany created myriad and layered frictions that involve expertise, village, and side-long glances to Sorbian/German distinctions.

## Mark: A Somewhat Confident Urbanite

Mark, like Carolyn and Laura, told me of his mixed emotions about language use and its basis in his life experiences as a man in his fifties. His father, a Sorbian linguist, instilled in him a deep appreciation for literary language use and spoken colloquial usages. Yet, he seemed aware of the potential dangers. He told me of the critique and ridicule that his father experienced during the revision of Völkel’s dictionary (1981b). Alluding to his father’s and other Sorbian linguists’ challenges to purify the Sorbian lexicon of German borrowings, Mark framed his language use as both embodying these efforts and wanting to avoid linguistic conflicts. His awareness of and need for clearly defined linguistic rules contrast strongly with Tiffany’s

willingness to break them and Carolyn's critique of prescriptive discourses. These dynamics reveal subtle, but powerful aspects of linguistic policing of Sorbian-Sorbian borders (see Chapters 5 and 6).

Mark's activities as a Sorbian translator of *Ferdinand* embodied the linguistic lessons he learned from his father. His father was a source of linguistic legitimacy that complemented his multilingual childhood speaking Polish, Czech, Russian, Sorb, and German and the multilingual background of many older Sorbs who learned multiple Slavic languages. Mark summarized his father's arguments as "mein Vater hat mir immer gesagt...das ist etwas zuschreiben...das ist veraltet... und du musst das so zusprechen (my Father always told me [that] is how to write something... that is old-fashioned...and [that is how] you must say something)." From his father, he gained a respect for different ways of using language that distinguished between temporal notions associated with language and modalities of use. While translating, Mark often hesitated, called people to the lunchroom to ask them about their thoughts, and debated the choices using a stack of dictionaries that we had spread on the table. Mark's decision process profoundly spoke to modern-old connotations and written-spoken distinctions.

#### Microcosm 5: Passion and Knowledge for Oral and Written language Use

Before we started translating, I told Mark about the multiple versions of translating the phrase "to smell the flowers." Mark immediately commented "Es gibt immer zehn Varianten (There are always ten versions)." As we discussed the activity of smelling the flowers, he initially paused and then described "*nuchaše* (sniffed)" as "Umgangssprache (colloquial speech)" that he associated with the village. I responded by explaining that another Sorb [Carolyn] also found Sorbian alternatives unsatisfying and used something like "*hladaše na wonjatych kwětkami* (looked at the [good-] smelling flowers)" Mark immediately said that he had also thought about using Carolyn's phrase and "*srebać* (to inhale/suck up)." Although he initially rejected "*srebać*" as "hart(hard)" he then revised his description as "ausgebaut (improved)." Mark initially decided to use "*srebać* (to inhale [literal translation])" as an alternative expression he did not associate with the village.

However, in translating “to smell,” Mark alternated between “*srebać*” (Pages 5 and 9, see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]) and “*nuchać*” (Page 13, 31, and 34, see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]) showing his recognition of multiple ways of saying the same thing or interpreting to smell the flowers. In describing “*srebać*” as “improved,” Mark associated this word as “modern” and in his father’s words “how someone writes” in contrast to spoken vernacular. In his translation of “to smell,” Mark drew on his life experiences and created friction between village talk and written Sorbian language use that he saw as alternatives, but not necessarily as old/new or better/worse.

In his evaluation, Mark saw “*srebać*” neither as old nor as a better solution but, rather, a standardized variant. His commentary also brings to light the tensions among standards when he admitted the possibility of ten versions. Yet, his desires to avoid linguistic conflict, similar to Ferdinand’s yearnings, resonated with his decision to choose an interpretation that would be accepted without commentary. Ironically, Mark’s metalinguistic dialogue reproduced a critical and reflexive commentary that underlies much everyday usage and speaks to processes of the “I-for-myself.” Finally, I would like to point out that when Mark commented on the existence of ten possible options, he indicated the use of morphemic and syntactic attributes that index the rural of Budyšin register.

## Stephanie: A Determined Ruralist

Stephanie, a young woman in her twenties, also feels multiple allegiances especially in speaking Sorb with her family in the village and in the House of Sorbs with other Sorbs who use a more standardized variant. Working for language revitalization through PAWK, the Sorbian youth organization, she is part of Sorbian efforts for language maintenance and feels a

commitment to colloquial non-standardized Sorbian language use. Yet, Stephanie's experiences with language use differ significantly from Tiffany's or Mark's, partially because of her age. As part of a generation that did not experience standardization under socialism, she escaped some of the historical dynamics and linguistic politics that Mark remembered. During socialism, Sorbian linguists, like Mark's father, sought to purify Sorb of German interference. Stephanie's employment in an organization founded by the Foundation for Sorbian Language and Culture speaks to another sense of her linguistic identity. Despite this double allegiance she did not express much apprehension about sounding too Sorbian like her co-workers or supervisors, or too German like the Sorbian youth.

During her translation, she embraced an ideology of linguistic diversity. Several times during the matched guise component, I asked about several alternative versions. For example, her revision of her original translation "to run around.... like crazy" (Page 19, see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]) exemplifies register mixing in her use of two components: "*wjerćeše z wočemi* (rolling his eyes)," immediately followed by "*jako by był wrótny* (like he was crazy). The first component came from another older Sorb's translation. As soon as she read it, she immediately commented that this idiomatic usage sounded like a construction that an older Sorbian person would use. She also told me that this type of language use would also be something people would use in spoken talk. For her, "rolling the eyes" also indicated Ferdinand's "crazy" behavior" as an embodied activity. In contrast, the second component exemplifies the literary language (Use of the complex past [*by był*], a written marker, and an urban marker, "*wrótny* (turned))."<sup>9</sup> From a linguistic perspective, her choice draws on syntactic differences by using the complex past. By adding the first component, she not only drew on a notion of older Sorbian



language and spoken use, but also created friction between the two registers by using two interpretations of Ferdinand's reaction. Her double translation allowed her to embrace multiple aspects of internalized monolingualism, one temporal and one written and urban.

Stephanie's double translation also occurred in her interpretations of the verb "to live."

Microcosm 6: Living with Modern and Old Versions

During translation, Stephanie included alternatives and shifted between register e.g., "to live." When I asked Stephanie about "*bydlić*," she asserted its literalness and its use by Sorbian youth. I also asked her about "*być żywy*," she pointed out that this version sounded older. Her dual translation sparked her reflexive metalinguistic statement, "I want to do it another way." Her commentary that she actually repeated during the translation process reflects a desire for diversity and, in turn, resonates with her ideas about virtuosity.

Page 2: there was a little bull and his name was Ferdinand (German text uses "*leben* [live]")

Stephanie: *Tam bydliše mały byk, zmjenom Ferdinand.* (see Appendix D, Leaf [1936])

Page 3: All the other bulls he lived with would run and jump and butt their head together.

Stephanie: *Wšitke dalše byki, z kotrymiž běše Ferdinand žiwy, skakachu, spěchachu wokolo a bodžachu so mjez sobu a storkachu so z róhami.* (see Appendix D, Leaf [1936])

Stephanie often wanted to render elements in different ways; she saw this production as type of a legitimacy that draws on ideas of variation and virtuosity. In translating Ferdinand's reaction to the bee sting and in "to live," Stephanie mixed registers. By referring to Sorbian youth and language use of older speakers she also expressed recognition of multiple Sorbian selves. Stephanie embraced one register and identity associated with the literary language, another one as linked to spoken vernacular of the younger generation, and a third one that respects older language use. While Stephanie felt manifold motivations to render elements in different ways, she also legitimized her text by appealing to younger and older Sorbs.

Furthermore, alternative renderings characterize Sorbian linguistic diversity and often emerge as part of her linguistic habits during translations and in her life; for example, Sorbian recognitions of dialectal/ village diversity (see Chapter 4). I suggest that Stephanie's use of diversity entails notions of temporality. Thus, ideas about modern and old utterances transform

a dialectal discourse of difference and may be connected to generational transformations in linguistic practices. A final significant part of translating was a silence on Stephanie's part. She never compared or contrasted German to Sorbian language use or vice versa. Ironically, Stephanie's identification with multiple Sorbian selves does not emerge along distinct German/Sorbian lines but, rather, at Sorbian-Sorbian linguistic borders (see also Chapters 5, 6, and 9).

### Charlotte: A Resolute Urbanite

Despite her assessment that "it doesn't matter" (see Microcosm 1, Chapter 5), Charlotte, an older, single woman who speaks Sorb mainly at work, uses Sorbian and German in sites marked by strong linguistic borders. Although she does not normally speak Sorb to her children, she does use Sorb with them in the theater and with her parents in their home. Even her coworkers recognize whether they speak only Sorb or German with her. These clearly defined linguistic usages resonate with her view of translation. Furthermore, Charlotte took a different position toward temporality and linguistic practices during translation than most other translators, because she constantly invoked German comparisons.

Working in the Bilingual Theater exposes her to the positive and negative reactions of the Sorbian community to Sorbian-only performances. Charlotte explained audience negative reactions, by saying that many Sorbs did not understand their Sorbian utterances during performances. Her understanding of mixed reviews speaks to her broader characterization of Sorbian/German language use. As we looked at the text the first time, she immediately described the German text as terrible or "nicht schön (not pretty)." She created a German stalking horse by evaluating German and Sorbian language use differently. Although she stated,

“Ich bin kein Übersetzer (I am not a translator),” she implied that she was constructing a “prettier” text by diametrically opposing Sorbian/German language use. To accomplish this goal, she relied heavily on written-spoken and modern-old differences rather than overt Sorbian and German distinctions. At the same time, Charlotte often chose certain Sorbian phrasings and words that she would describe as nicer in contrast to the terrible German.

Yet her choices entail other more subtle frictions between older and contemporary language uses that she described as “Wortspiel(word games).” While Charlotte’s sense of play is similar Tiffany’s desires to play with language or build something, Charlotte does not build words to fill a lexical gap but to create an implicit difference between Sorbian and German resources and explicit differences in types of Sorbian language use. Her word games justified her use of older expressions that many Sorbs did not know any more. Her satisfaction with her translation entails a balancing act between knowing that some of her interpretations would not be understood and being passionate about what she thought was more pleasing to her ear.

Microcosm 7: Dialogues of Written and Spoken language use

I asked Charlotte about the word “zbožowny (happy)” and she described this word as “ganz sparsam benutzt (very rarely used).” However, she described her use of “*spokojom*” (Page 10, see below) as “mehr bekannt (more well-known)” and “mehr benutzt (used more).” Charlotte uses both words in her translation creating a frictional cadence and indexing the breadth of Sorb. Her use of pretty examples of rarely used Sorbian lexemes positioned her as an expert while her use of commonly used markers indexed her authority. To take this a step further, Charlotte strategically employed a delayed back-translation technique that would make her text understandable to a range of Sorbian speakers.

Page 10: His mother saw that he was not lonesome, and because she was an understanding mother, she let him sit there and be happy. (see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]).

Charlotte: *Ma dowidžeše zo njebeše samotny, a wón běše spokojom.*

Page 35: He is very happy. (see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]).

Charlotte: *Běše jara zbožowny.*

Charlotte's navigation of linguistic options inherently reflects her role as a public figure by walking the line between types of language use and linguistic identities. In line 10 (see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]), Charlotte uses "*spokojom*," that she linked to spoken talk, by describing it as used more often. I had said that I almost never hear people use the older, more traditional word "*zbožowny*." However, on the last page of *Ferdinand* (He is very happy, see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]), she opted to use the "older" word. In using two equivalent expressions for happiness, she created a friction between the Budyšin and rural registers. This dynamic of using different registers is not only part of the dialogues about diversity, but also an enactment of frictions reflecting a robust language base.

However, her use of words that are "very rarely used" co-occurs with embracing these types of resources. Like Mark and Stephanie, Charlotte associates written-spoken modalities with modern and old evaluations.

Page 8: Sometimes his mother, who was a cow would worry about him. She was afraid he would be lonesome all by himself. (see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]).

Charlotte: *Mać kruwa starosćešě so zo Ferdinand **wosamoćeny** čuje, tak cyły samotny.*

In interpreting aloneness, Charlotte uses expressions that are referentially similar but carry different connotations. For example, she uses "*wosamoćeny*" on pages 8 and 10 (see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]), an item that she also described as older and not used very much. This choice marks written uses and expertise. Yet in this same line she also used "*samotny*," another word for alone that is used more in spoken interactions. In her choice of lexemes for "alone," Charlotte recognized language use that not all Sorbs would understand, but still insisted on using both terms. In this intrasentential morphemic friction, she positioned herself both as expert and authority, a stance that overlapped with written and spoken uses.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, in translating “alone” and “happiness,” Charlotte mixes registers by using both alternatives—one that is used rarely and one that is used often, a practice that reflects her resolve to maintain a balance in her linguistic practices even if they are not understood or used by other Sorbs. Furthermore, Charlotte, unlike Mark, seems more at ease with possible linguistic disputes by using items that may be off-putting to some Sorbs or, alternatively, a form of linguistic diplomacy by appealing to a range of speakers.

## Elizabeth: A Strategic Ruralist

In our first meeting, Elizabeth, a widow in her fifties, compared bilingualism to walking, a metaphoric description that not only applies to interlingual differences and ways of life, but also distinctions between Sorbian fashions of speaking. While she often spoke at Sorbian events, Elizabeth still embraces “mish-mash.” Her acknowledgement of free-will extends to her Sorbian language use in giving her children the ability to speak German and Sorb with her. Elizabeth, like Charlotte and other Sorbs, walks the line between languaged worlds, lifelong linguistic practices that resonate with her experiences of linguistic diversity.

When I asked Elizabeth about several items that entailed Sorbian and German distinctions, she endeavored to make her text “understandable.”

### Microcosm 8: A Bilingual Easing between German and Sorbian Differences

I asked Elizabeth about several decisions that she made regarding “cork tree” and “*banderillos*.” She asserted that “*korokowy dub* (cork tree)” would be grammatically correct, but still understandable unlike “*skorowc*.” She described her version as more Sorbian-sounding even though it combined an adaptation of a German borrowing of “*korkowy* (*Kork* [cork]) + “-owy”≈ adjective ending” and “*dub*.” She went on to assert that “‘*skorowc*,’ made sense if you thought about it.” Then I asked her about reactions to the foreign word “*Banderillos*,” that she did not decline. She responded in German saying “Ich dachte das war mir irgandwie zu schwer. ...die Endung zu hängen....das war verständlicher (I somehow thought that it would be too hard for me ...to attach an ending... it [her use of “*banderillos*”] was more understandable).”

After my asking these questions, Elizabeth related her choices to her difficulties reading the newspaper. She explained that she often had to stop and think about the Sorbian terms. Although she could understand alternative expressions that the Sorbian linguists created, the difficulties that they caused her hindered her immediate understanding of Sorbian texts.

Although Elizabeth's decision seems to suggest a reaction to undesired Sorbian elements, her choices are motivated by morphemic and syntactic attributes. In translating "cork tree" she uses a syntactic construction associated with the village with the use of an adjective and a noun (see Chapter 8). In a similar fashion, Elizabeth's interpretation involves plural morphemes and, more specifically, one that would be too difficult to hang on to the end of a foreign stem.

With less anger, but still a sense of unease comparable to Carolyn's reaction to orthographic difficulties, Elizabeth resisted the literary language and experienced tensions among standards. For example, in her evaluation of "*skorowc* (cork tree)" as sounding more Sorbian, Elizabeth preferred a German borrowing, because she perceived the Slavic version to be not as "understandable." Her concern with understandability contrasts strongly with Charlotte's almost blatant disregard of understandability and greater emphasis on word games. These differing perspectives expose some of the complexity of the translation process and the concerns translators felt during the process of interpretation. Repeatedly, Elizabeth saw Sorbian sounding items (like *banderilojo*) as incomprehensible, invented terms despite their purity. She resisted the literary language or written forms—a distinction that takes greater priority in her thinking than German-Sorbian distinctions.

Another aspect of her critiques of Sorbian terms involves her taking an authoritative stance by choosing to use “*korkowy dub* (cork tree)” partially because the modern equivalent of “*skorowc* (cork tree)” is less Sorbian. In her side comment that attaching an ending is too difficult; she evaluates expert language use as inappropriate or too hard. This evaluation further explains her rationale for not using “*skorowc*.” In her *Ferdinand* translation and these choices, Elizabeth often used German borrowings that resonated with her descriptions of being bilingual and walking, but also revealed her attention to village talk and a rejection of expert usage.

### Josephine: A Conflicted Ruralist

In contrast to Charlotte and Stephanie, Josephine, a mother in her thirties and a Sorbian translator, expressed mixed emotions about language use. She articulated that her dialectal Sorbian language use was problematic at family gatherings. She also felt concerned about her command of “Kindersprache (motherese), that she described as not as her good as her own mother’s language use with her as a child. While she explained that her in-laws often did not understand her Sorb, she invoked another aspect of her language socialization, because she grew up in Crotzwitz, a different village than where her in-laws live. In distinguishing her place of language socialization, she implied that dialectical diversity created problems for her in her family interactions and, in turn, created a feeling of alienation and unhappiness. In contrast to the more positive views of diversity like those held by Stephanie or Tiffany, Josephine experiences diversity as more problematic. These two points speak to imagined weaknesses of her Sorbian language use. Josephine also associates her childhood language acquisition in the village with current negative familial linguistic politics. Yet, her work as a translator

offers another sense of internalized monolingualism as an adult, albeit one that she feels a need to justify. During translation, Josephine often used dictionaries to confirm language use while reasserting her status as an expert. Looking at her sources of internalized monolingualism, the village and her employment, both articulate to her conflicting sentiments and multiple Sorbian selves. Her reliance on dictionaries and, in turn, the literary language also involves a balancing act between her authority via linguistic roots in the village and her expertise as an adult.

In Josephine's interpretation of "women," she navigated linguistic options that related to her village language use and her yearning to be accepted as a Sorbian speaker.

Microcosm 9: Multiple Frictions in an Interlingual Tension

When Josephine came to the description of the Spanish woman at the arena, she used the German borrowing "damy." Although I did not want to challenge her choice, I asked her why she did not use the word "rjanylinkow." At first she was surprised that I knew the word and I said that I was just curious. She affirmed that people in the village used that word, but she thought it was "lächerlich (humorous)." She then went on to say that more Sorbs in the village would use "damy."

For Josephine, German borrowings symbolize village language use. She used multiple German borrowings in her translation, including terms for "flower," "cape," and "cart." However, she also used Sorbian equivalents for "parade" and "flower." While she used German borrowings, she also expressed linguistic unease repeatedly seeking a sense of satisfaction. Josephine's evaluation of humorous also reveals a concern with intelligibility. Her process of walking the line suggests the pitfalls and obstacles that may affect her translation to a greater degree.



## Steve: A Tenacious Ruralist

Like Josephine, Steve feels caught between authority and expertise and took advantage of Sorbian and German frictions. As a younger man around thirty, he often described his personal passion for the Sorbian language including compiling an electronic Sorbian-German dictionary of over 65,000 words and his acquisition of rare Sorbian books. Yet, his work in the House of Sorbs always appeared as a bone of contention. He often said to me, “I have to go to the CRAZY [his emphasis] *Serbski Dom* (House of Sorbs).”<sup>11</sup> Frequently critiquing the other Sorbs who worked there, he portrayed himself as a village Sorb with strong ties to a traditional way of life. Even going to village performances or renovating his house in a Sorbian-speaking village affirmed his allegiances to the village.

In Steve’s translation, he made a powerful choice to use the German borrowing “*róža*” and not “*kwětko*” for flower.

### Microcosm 10: Knowledge and Passion in German/Sorbian Frictions

When Steve and I reviewed his translation, I asked him about his use of “*róž*” and not “*kwětko*.” He immediately said that, “*‘kwětko’ ist zu förmlich..wir würden das niemals zu Hause sagen...und Kinder würden das nicht verstehen* (flower is too formal ...we would never say that at home and children would not understand it [“*kwětko*”). As we looked at the dictionary that I had brought and discovered that “*róža*,” was not in it, Steve immediately explained that he was certain he would find it in the old Rězak (1920) dictionary.

Steve asserts village authority by using “*róžky*” that he judged as an example of older Sorbian language use.<sup>12</sup> Etymologically, in his choice of using “*róž*” for flower, Steve drew parallels between current spoken language and an older use of the literary language. The word “*kwětko*/flower” was introduced into the Sorbian lexicon in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and represents a Slavic standardization that replaced the German borrowing from “*Rose* (rose).”

Although he clarified that “róža” is not really “flower,” but “rose,” he still preferred “róža” in the first three times that flower appears in the text. By asserting that there was an entry for “róža (rose)” in an older dictionary, he also connected his choice with notions of older language use and Sorbian discussions of temporalized language use.<sup>13</sup> However in the fourth instance out of five occurrences of flower in the text (Page 34, see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]), he used the “kwětka” the Slavicized equivalent word for flower. For him, using a word that he associated with village and older usages was better than the Slavicized variant. Using “róža (rose)” gave him a sense of linguistic satisfaction and created a double-voiced friction through modern-old and Sorbian-German distinctions.

## **Ethnography cum Translation: Qualitative Aspects**

The stories that Sorbs told me expose the social and linguistic moorings that impacted my project. Each ethnographic detail illustrates another valence or another layer to the obstacles of translating a text often influenced by cultural politics, affected by personal histories, family dynamics, and encounters with prescriptive discourses. The stories within *The Story of Ferdinand* illustrate the ways bilingual Sorbs conspire against, and cooperate with, German monolingual and multiple Sorbian ideologies. In their navigations, Sorbs also adhered to their own ideas of linguistic diversity while enacting a range of practice that displayed their virtuosity. These ethnographic examples represent part of the background of my ethnography cum translation and set the stage for understanding translatorial linguistic choices. In the following chapter that addresses the quantitative aspects of my analysis and comparisons across Sorbian *Ferdinands*, patterns of variation emerge that speak to contemporary Sorbian language use.

## Key to Font Distinctions

Normal Calibri Font	English
<i>Italic Calibri Font</i>	Sorb
<u>Underlined Calibri Text</u>	German (used in English body of text)
<u><i>Underlined and Italicized</i></u>	German Borrowing or Sorbianized German
<u><u>Double Underlined Calibri</u></u>	German in Sorb

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<sup>1</sup> In the initial set-up of a translation session I suggested several places where we could meet. Given the fact that they had a choice, I assume that they were more comfortable in that space.

<sup>2</sup> In translation sessions, Sorbs used the German text as a base and English if applicable. Although the translation process varied, the majority of the translations involved one-on-one meetings in the place of their choice which ranged from translating in their homes, workplaces, and several cafes. This process involved several meetings lasting 10-20 hours, complimented by review sessions, and a matched-guise component afterwards. Working with over sixty bilingual Sorbs on this intensive task not only yielded distinct interpretations of *Ferdinand* but also provided an intimate context to investigate language use.

<sup>3</sup> It may seem that I am contradicting myself by labeling the target and source languages as discrete entities. In my arguments here I am actually trying to show that the translation process entailed multiple strategic arrangements of target and source languages.

<sup>4</sup> Carolyn's preferred translation also draws on a syntactic distinctions. In using the phrase "*na wonjace kwětko* ≈ preposition + adjective (acc., pl.) + noun (acc., pl.)," she uses a construction associated with the village and not one associated with urban scenes (*wón kwětkow* ≈ noun + noun [gen.]).

<sup>5</sup> Although many Sorbs made spelling errors, another practice struck me as more critical. In writing words that contained a "š", "č", "š" č" I found it virtually impossible to distinguish between an accent mark and a caron, an inverted circumflex ("ˇ"). The differences between these two diacritical marks were not something Sorbs were unsure of, but rather, an efficient way to inscribe a lexeme quickly. Most Sorbs who wrote their own translation used a "ˇ" above the letter and used this with the other possible candidates: "ě", "ž", "ž", "ž", "ž", "ž", "ž", and "ř". Sorbs repeatedly corrected my diacritical mistakes. Their awareness and move to correct these "errors" demonstrates their knowledge and higher level of competency in comparison to me as well as attention to detail and the literary standard as a written medium. I bring attention to this point only to reaffirm that my focus stresses not correction, judgments about competency, or a single standard but the ways that Sorbs worked with multiple standards.

<sup>6</sup> In conversations with Sorbs, we discussed the "uniqueness" of the Sorbian language, by comparing it to Czech and Polish—the two other members of the Western Slavonic language. Sorbs repeatedly pointed out that Czech sounds like how it is spelled. In contrast they asserted that Sorb does not always sound like it is spelled.

<sup>7</sup> Another important "built" word is "*bodźać* (to stick or to stab).

<sup>8</sup> Numerous verbs in *Ferdinand* translations exemplify this kind of appended item: *galopěrować* (to gallop [Sorb]), *radować* (to enjoy [Sorb]), *zwučować* (to stick in [Sorb]), *wojować* (to fight [Sorb]), *karować* (to travel by wagon/cart [Sorb]), *strachować* (to fear [Sorb]), and *mjenować* (to call or to be named [Sorb]). These constructions also draw on syntactic and morphemic attributes of borrowings (see Chapter 8).

<sup>9</sup> To further add depth to my understanding that Stephanie desired to say things differently, she used multiple versions of crazy in her translation with "*wrótny*," a written marker and "*błudny*," a marker of spoken colloquial talk.

<sup>10</sup> This is a morphemic friction because of the use of prefixes ("*wo*" + "*samoćeny*"). Furthermore, in "*samoćeny*" the suffix "*-ćeny*" is added to the stem of "*sam*." The authoritative option for this concept is "*samotny*." Thus, Charlotte's use of "*wosamoćeny*" indexes the Budyšin register two times.

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<sup>11</sup> Frequently saying this to me, I recorded his metalinguistic lament in my field notes. Like in Laura's code-switching with "*wulka škoda* (great tragedy)," Steve emphasized tensions in German/Sorbian languaged worlds by using "*verrückt* (crazy)" and the Sorbian name for the House of Sorbs.

<sup>12</sup> In his use of the diminutive form, Steve also asserted an authoritative stance and indexed "baby talk," a range of practices associated with spoken usage.

<sup>13</sup> Steve pronounced "*róža*" as "*róž*."

## CHAPTER NINE

### Mish-mash across Sorbian *Ferdinands*

From the stories with *The Story of Ferdinand*, I provided ethnographic evidence of Sorbian linguistic decisions and register variation. Their choices suggest the existence of an alternative linguistic market, a space characterized by internalized monolingualism, notions of authority and expertise, and tensions among standards. As Alexandra Jaffe puts it, “[this existence] guarantees that there will be cracks in the effects of domination; the dominant language is not simply accepted as intrinsically superior” (Jaffe 1999: 110). For bilingual Sorbs, the dominant language may be Sorb or German alternatively. In turn, Sorbs often utilized other linguistic evaluations to gain traction on the frictions among intralingual distinctions.<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter, I examine these decisions across *Sorbian Ferdinands* using a mixed-methods analysis. After explaining the coding process, I detail each category: written-spoken, expertise-authority, Sorb-German, idioms, modern-old, and urban-village referents. Then, I use Carolyn’s translation as an example of mixing registers followed by a discussion of the statistical evidence and the deeper frictions in *Ferdinand* translations. As Sorbs manipulated multiple frictions in the translation process, I argue that Sorbs also created written renditions of mish-mash thereby exhibiting shared and individual linguistic virtuosity.

#### **Linguistic Details of Mixing Registers**

...language is not a neutral medium...[and] Expropriating it, forcing it to submit one’s own intentions, is a difficult and complicated process (Bakhtin 1981: 294)

As an overview, I now detail some specifics about coding the translations for analysis. I recognize that translators often drew on certain distinctions and took their evaluations as a starting point. In order to consider variation, I used six dimensional rubrics of register use.

Table 9.1: Coding and Categories

Budyšin Register	coding	Rural Register	coding
written	42-50	spoken	32-40
expertise	51-57	authority	25-31
Sorbian	58-64	German	18-24
Budyšin idiom	65-69	rural idiom	13-17
modern/invented	70-73	old	9-12
urban	74-82	village	0-8

A review of some of my coding decisions exposes the plurality of relations at stake in a dialogized heteroglossia. By way of explanation of coding, I relied on marked categories or what Sorbs told me affected their linguistic choices. Accordingly, I did not code unmarked categories except when I could identify an item as belonging to neither category. Often this coding of neither includes hybrid or mixed constructions as well as marked usage.<sup>2</sup> Finally, I have grouped idioms into a broad category, because these items could involve modern-old, German-Sorbian, and urban-village distinctions.<sup>3</sup>

## Written and Spoken Frictions

My awareness of written and spoken frictions occurred when I asked Angela, the sixty-something storeowner in Miłočicy, about the words that Sorbian translators used for men. I noticed that Sorbs used both “*mužoj*” and “*muži*.” I said that I learned “*mužoj*” at the Summer School for Sorbian Language and Culture (2004), the teacher’s course (Spring 2007), and from school books/instructional materials.<sup>4</sup> I told her, “I recognized the ending “-*oj*” was added to noun “*muž*.” She smiled at me saying, “It is quite simple, when you write it down you use “*mužoj*,” and when people talk in the village, they use “*muži*.”

Another written and spoken distinction involved interpretations of “once upon a time.” I asked many Sorbian translators, why people were using different expressions. *Nano*, my father-

in-law, confirmed that he would imagine a mother telling to her child a bedtime story and using “*jónu*” and definitely not “*hnědy*.” Yet some Sorbs and he, himself, used “*raz*” that I coded as neither because it represents an alternative outside of the clear descriptions of modality of use. With this bit of information added by Nano’s explanation, I could probe further about linguistic distinctions during the translation process. Related to this discourse, I recognize that spoken markers represent village talk or colloquial usages. For example, inclusion of “*ći*” ≈ personal deictic marker indexes spoken talk. Other salient markers include “*jo/jowle*” (here)” and “*haj* (yes).” These types of colloquial insertions also engage the unintended audience.

Written markers can also link expertise with distinctive morpho-syntactic constructions and the literary language. Use of the dual case indicated by the “*-amaj*” added to “*róh* (horn),” in describing the butting of |two| horns displays not only expertise but also the temporalized dimension of language. Amplified by current concerns about decreasing usage of the dual syntactic structures, interpretations of “two horns” indexed Sorbian discussions of “lost” grammar, linguistic trajectories of loss, and discourses of survival. I first learned of the dual usage when Kristina corrected my order for two beers at a village festival (Summer 2005). She informed me that that this construction was falling out of usage in a fashion similar to grammatical leveling (Dorian 1978). Yet during the translation process, Sorbs deliberated at length whether to use the dual case and the number of horns involved in the phrase “butting their horns.” From observing these deliberations, I argue that in many instances non-usage of the dual is not about a matter of knowing or not knowing but, rather, an act of interpretive resistance to a literary form now deemed obscure and not used regularly in spoken talk.

Another indicator of intertwined literary leaning and expertise occurs in the subordinating clause “*doniž njebu wulki a sylny* (until he was big and strong),” a construction similar to negative concord. I argue that their usage reflects identifications with “correct” speech and, in turn, expert skills, but I cannot always attribute specific rationales to their absence. Due to the nature of the translation process and my desire to accept all types of Sorbian renditions without judgment including orthographic discrepancies, I did not inquire why certain Sorbian participants used many particular versions or constructions. Part of my justification arose from my witnessing of the difficulties Sorbs had translating the Ferdinand text and I simply did not want to contribute to feelings of linguistic inadequacy or disfluency.

Table 9.2: Spoken and Written Frictions

Spoken	Written
jónu~once upon a time	něhdy or hnědy~once upon a time
simple past (unmarked not coded)	complex past (być~to be + past participle) marked use coded
imperfect use: sedžeć ~to sit	conditional aspect: sydać~to sit
no negative concord	negative concord( <i>doniž...nje+być~</i> negative prefix + to be)
muže or muži~men	mužojo~men
spoken markers and deictic pronouns	literary markers
wjeselić~to enjoy	zwjelesić ~to enjoy
skočić + horje ~to jump up	poskočić or wuskočić~ to jump up
z měrnóm, měrnje, ćicho, ćíše~quietly	změrom, sćicha, woměrje~quietly
druhy or druhi~other	tamni~other
vocative case for pječo~five	
luby~lovely (village)	lubowany~loving
rozulima~understanding	zrozulima~understanding
samotny or sam ~alone	samoćeny~alone
spokojom~happy	zbožowny (old)~happy

## Authoritative and Expert Frictions

I coded expertise and authority as a binary friction for several reasons.<sup>5</sup> First, an expert stance can index education and/or specialized language use. In contrast, Sorbs embody authority through the village register and active everyday use. Charlotte’s understanding of



“alone” exemplifies this friction between Sorbian fashions of speaking (see Chapter 8). Second, distinctions between expertise and authority encompass a range of linguistic practices that often involve other frictions in very specific ways. Many of these differences involve the manipulation of bound morphemes and the syntactic constructions. This includes making a noun from a verb or declinations of foreign words, for example, “*bodzanje*” from “*bodžać*” or Elizabeth’s assessment of “*banderillos*.” Third and finally, Sorbs took expert-authoritative stances in using appended items, when an item or construction did not clearly belong to other categories. In the interest of brevity, the table below summarizes many of these frictions.

Table 9.3: Authoritative and Expert Frictions

Per Authority	Per Expertise
boj bykow, bykowy boj, wojowanie bykow~bull fight	wubědźowanje bykow ~bull fight
sedžeć, sydać + na ~to sit on	posydać ~to sit down
storkać (village)~to stick	bodžać~to stick
No duel used with horns	Duel used with horns
	gerunds using “-o” and “-je” suffixes
mały byk~small bull	byčk~diminutive of byk
no declination of bandarillos, picadores, and matador	full declination of banderillos, picadores and matador
pastwje or łuce (village marker)	pastwišćo~pasture
druzi~other (colloquial of druhdy)	
srjedź areny~center of the arena	sredžišća areny~center of the arena
sam or samotny (spoken)~alone	wosamoćeny or sam lutki (old)~alone
rjanolinkow (village)~ladies	knježničktami or knježničky (old) ~ladies
błudny~crazy	wrótny (urban)-crazy
zwjeselom~happily [with happiness]	w zbožnosć or wjesoľsću ~happiness
spokojom~happy	zbožowny (old)~happy
pčolka~bee unmarked	čmjela~bee marked
blečk~spot marked	městno~spot (unmarked)

## Modern and Old Frictions

Modern and old distinctions repeatedly came up in the translation process partially because of the temporal significance of semi-standardized practices in Sorbian language use.

Temporal dimensions in coding also involves the overlapping of frictions with other

dimensions—an issue that will become clearer in the quantitative data findings. As discussed earlier in Chapter 8 with “cork tree” (Microcosms 3 and 8), “flower” (Microcosm 10), “to live” (Microcosm 6), and “alone, happy” (Microcosm 7), Sorbian translators draw on notions of temporality that draw on other dialogic processes.

Table 9.4: Modern and Old Frictions

Old	Modern
dub~cork tree (village)	skorowc~cork tree
być žiwy~to live (back-translation-to be living)	bydlić~to live
nuchać/čuć~to smell	srebać~to smell
róż[a]~flower (marked)	kwětka~flower unmarked
sam lutki~alone (see sam~alone (spoken))	samoćeny (expertise) or wosamoćeny (alone)
zbožowny~happy (unmarked) (see also spokojom~happy (authority))	
knježničky~Spanish ladies (urban +expertise)	
Other: zaperliška, lute, nosać, and idioms	

## Village and Urban Frictions

Like authority and expertise, examples from village and urban frictions constitute a broad category. However, in most cases, translators identified an item or construction as belonging to one or the other register. Furthermore, their identification speaks to village and urban scenes of language use. My first awareness of the intra-lingual distinction came from Sorbian challenges to translations of “bull.” Many translators, including Carolyn, weighed the options for “bull:” “byk” (urban), “čelc” (village), “byčk” (per expertise), “wól” (village), and “čekatko” (old), but Carolyn ultimately opted for “čelc.” In an interview with Kristina’s grandmother, I asked her about the word for “Steir.” As a young woman before she married, she worked in a slaughterhouse and on the family farmstead. In both places, the older woman told me that they used “čelc.” Although the words “byk” and “čelc” also carry a distinctive contrast between older and current language use, Sorbs repeatedly affirmed that “čelc”

signaled village practices. Another arena of these frictions occurs in interpretations of Spanish ladies, a point that I will return to later. What is particularly noteworthy about Kristina's story is that, even today, Sorbs may accept an urban or village marker, but still feel a need to legitimate their choices. For example, Laura rejected the village marker of "*dub* (cork tree), but Elizabeth strategically adjusted her interpretation of "cork tree" to make her text understandable.

In the interest of brevity, I would like to review frictions of the phrase, "to smell the flowers." Translators chose between various verbal options for "to smell:" "*nuć, čuć*" (village), "*srebać*" (modern), "*wonjeć*" (village), and other more original expressions like Carolyn's use of "*hladać* (to look)," Tiffany's construction of "*wobnuchowaše*" and Mark's conditional acceptance of "*srebać*."

Table 9.5: Village and Urban Frictions

village	urban
storkać~to jab	zwućać-to stab
rjanolinki~pretty ladies	žonska –unmarked
rěkać~to be called	menować-to be called
piskać~to play an instrument	hrajać-to play
ludžo~people or audience	přihladarjo-audience
wóz or korjeta ~cart	zapřah-cart (expertise)
čelc ~calf	byk-bull
čuć~to experience/smell or nuchać-to sniff	srebać-to inhale (modern)
dub (unmarked)~cork tree	skorowc –cork tree (modern)-old
wokoło lětać~to run around (unmarked)	
druhi~other	
zada~out	
młóčić~to fight	
hanjeć~to chase	
płasc~cape	woběšk-cape (expertise)
namakać~to find	
słod~aroma (literally taste)	wón~aroma (unmarked)
pyšlić ~to adorn (neither)	
wjeselić~to enjoy	radować~to enjoy
luby ~good or positive (adjective) neither	lubowany~good/lovely (written)
łuće or pastwje~pasture	
hordzić~to show off	wuperać ~to show off(neither)

## Sorbian and German Frictions

Finally, I would like to elaborate on Sorbian and German coding decisions. The rubric of German-Sorbian markers includes several components. Differences between Sorbian-German referents often required additional coding in the urban and village category. Other relevant indexes include Slavicized/nativized, and German borrowings, word order, and omission of subject. Lexical Sorbian and German distinctions include various gestalts: words for cape; “*woběšk*” (Sorb-urban), “*plašć*” (Sorb-village) and “*capa*” (German); women: “*žonky*” (Sorb) “*rjanolinkow*” (Sorb-village), “*knježknijčky*” (Sorb-urban) and “*damy*” (German); cart: “*zapřah*” (Sorb-urban), “*wóz*” (Sorb-village), and “*kara*” (German). However, some German borrowings are fully integrated and are not coded as Sorbian and German distinctions, for example, “*arena*” (arena).” Other integrated borrowings are coded in the modern and old category; e.g. “*róż*” (flower),” because they represent temporal shibboleths.<sup>6</sup>

Syntactic Sorbian and German differences involved not only obvious rearrangements of the German text or omission of the subject, but also word order. In simple sentences, Sorbian word order (SOV) is an alternative construction to the unmarked SVO word order of German language use. Kristina and I discussed word order at length during the translation process. While she explained that using the SOV word order sounds more Sorbian, the SVO word order does not necessarily sound more German. In both of these cases, word order and omission of subject, syntactic constructions are marked Sorbian categories, because inclusion of the subject and Sorbian word order SVO is not recognized as distinctly German.

Table 9.6: German and Sorbian Frictions

German	Sorbian
capa~cape	woběšk (urban), plašč (village)~cape
damy~Spanish ladies	žonky, rjanolinky (village); knježknijčky (expertise + urban)~Spanish ladies
kara~cart	zapřah (urban), wóz (village)~cart
SVO (unmarked)	SOV word order (marked)
subject included	omitted subject (marked)
galěperować~to gallop	
arena~arena (unmarked)	
karować~to travel by cart or wagon	

Although I have not explained every linguistic coding, this brief overview emphasizes the role of Sorbs in creating the categories that I have emphasized. Through these interrelated markers, Sorbs drew on dialogues about language use and semi-standardized practices. Thus, Sorbian and German differences are not about an interlingual tension in isolation from other linguistic evaluations, but represent one of many sources of friction. As Sorbs translated *Ferdinand*, they took part in a difficult process that requires expropriation from the “intentions of others” as part of the social life of language (Bakhtin 1981). In their narratives, Sorbs commandeered, explained, and connected their decisions to the social life of language via internalized monolingualism, tensions among standards, and expert/authoritative stances.

## **A Quantitative Starting Point**

From the many voices of Sorbian translators, I gained a stable footing to look at the multiple markers in language use. Many Sorbian translators of *Ferdinand* refer to diversity as a source of their personal linguistic satisfaction. Yet, my understanding of these processes took several steps after coding the translation data. In this section, I will explain the linguistic diversity evidenced in mixing registers through graphs. At this point, I have coded 27 of 60

translations (four translations are incomplete and could not be included in the sample set) that cover a demographic range of generations, education, and employment.<sup>7</sup>

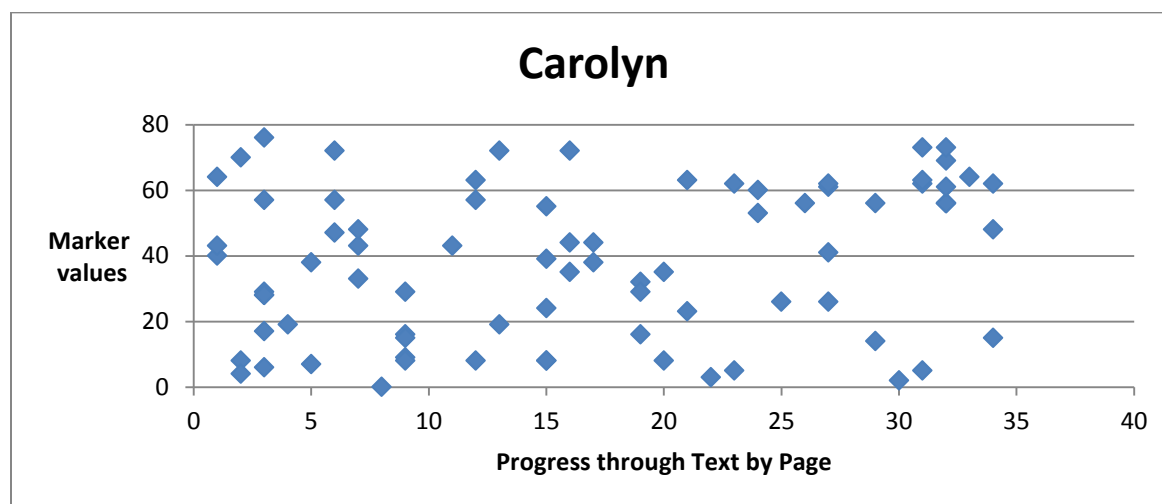
Several reasons play a factor into why I am not presenting the data from all translations. First, this dissertation analyzes linguistic survival strategies of the Sorbs. In so doing I asserting that Sorbs mix registers through semi-standardized practices. The *Ferdinand* translations are examples across age and gender categories of translators. Their interpretations of the text evidence the existence of mish-mash and, more specifically, show the manifold ways that Sorbs conceive and enact mish-mash. Second, thirty translations represent data from a classroom of seventh-grade students. Inclusion of this data would entail a different manuscript here, because I would be comparing the data of the younger Sorbian speakers with the range of ages. Third, as I have previously discussed, I hypothesize that Sorbian speakers younger than 18 are not using Sorbian resources in the same ways as older speakers not are they feeling the same dilemmas concerning language use or selfhood. Fourth, coding the remaining translations would be cross-comparative project and would necessitate gathering more translations.

To review, I coded items using a scale of 0-82 (see Table 9.1). This coding strategy allowed me to distinguish between the registers and to use the variables later in statistical testing. Taking these different variables into account a graph most clearly illustrates the ways that Sorbs mix registers. In *Microcosm 1*, Carolyn's resistance to discourses of purity and standardization resonates with strong allegiance to notions of authenticity, spoken modalities, and language use in the village but does not prevent her from drawing on Budyšin register.

In the following graphs, I offer a visual representation of mixing registers and walking the line between two registers. These graphs present a progression of organization of markers

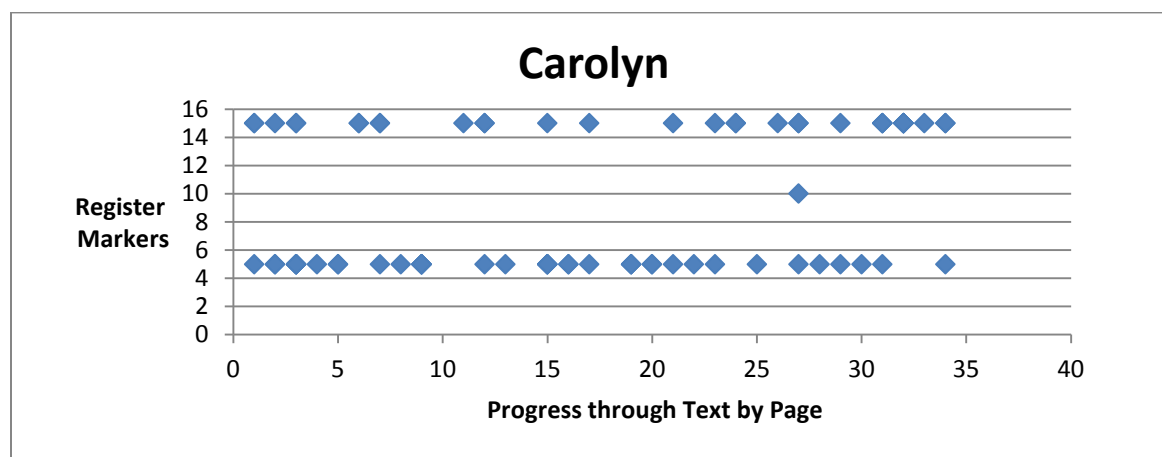
in Carolyn's translation that lead a clear graphic of register variation as alternating between the rural and Budyšin register. First, a detailed graph (markers of the Budyšin register [42-83] and the markers of the rural register [0- 40]) of Carolyn's translation illustrates her individual choices that initially appear disorderly and without a pattern.

Graph 9.1: Ungrouped Markers in Carolyn's *Ferdinand*



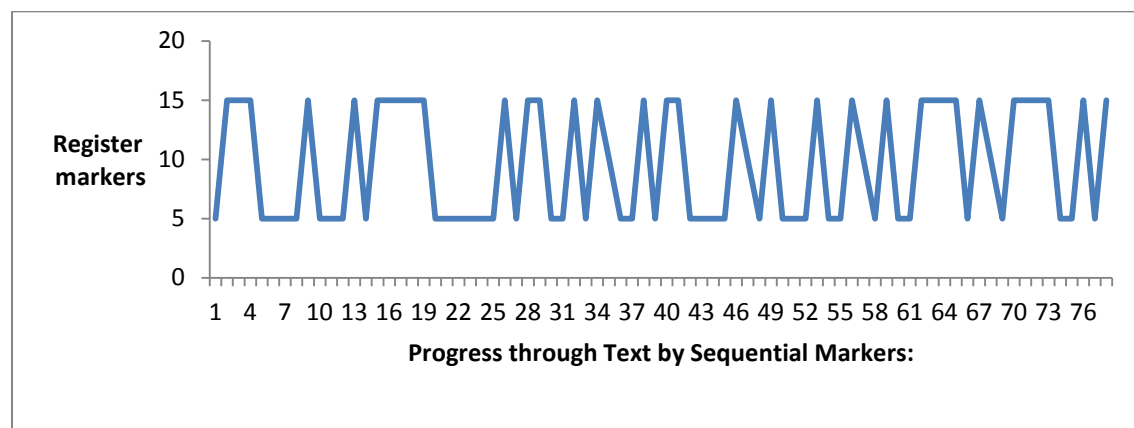
From looking at Carolyn's markers, the high degree of variation shows a range of semi-standardized practices. In order to clarify marker distribution, I grouped markers as 15 (Budyšin register), 5 (rural register), and 10 for items that belong to neither register.

Graph 9.2: Grouped Markers in Carolyn's *Ferdinand*



To take this visual representation one step further, a line that connects markers by their occurrence in the Budyšin (15) or rural (5) registers suggest movement. As Carolyn progresses in the text, she alternates between the Budyšin and rural registers. As a reminder, a coding of neither (10) is an item that does not fall neatly into either type of register use. I would also like to point out that this distribution between registers is typical of all Sorbian *Ferdinands*.

Graph 9.3: Alternation between Grouped Markers in Carolyn's *Ferdinand*

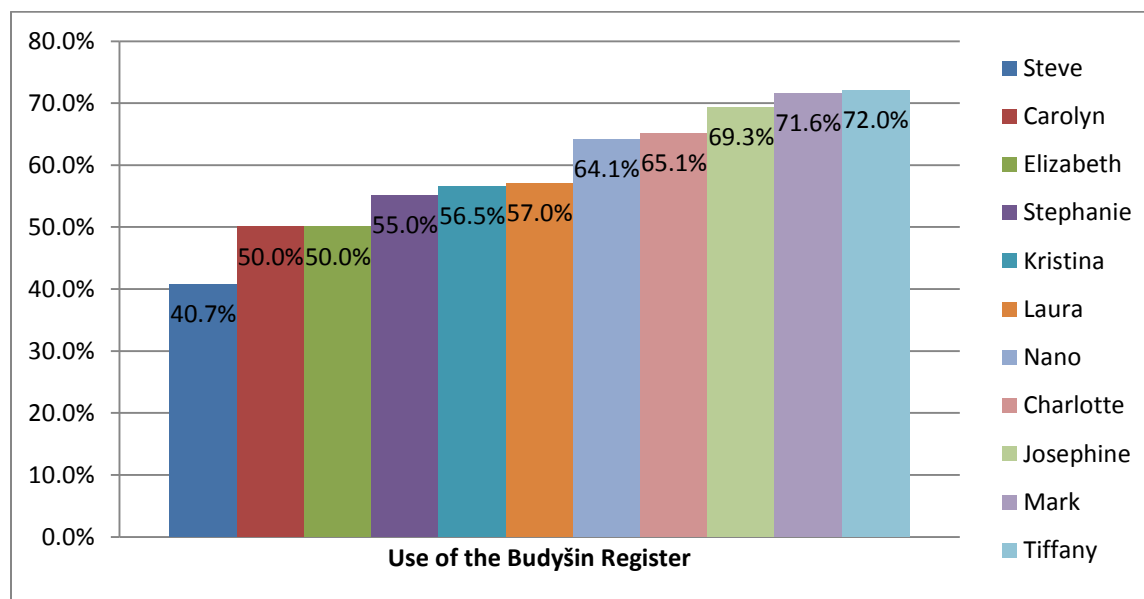


Using Carolyn's *Ferdinand* as an example, I show that register variation is fluid and not a static or exclusive use of one register or the other in graph 9.3.<sup>8</sup> This visual representation also illuminates frictions in that the changes in direction are counted and considered as percentages. In the upcoming statistical results, each counted change in direction allows me to consider percentages and to determine percentages of the use of the Budyšin register.

To add some more detail, Sorbian translators may rely more heavily register on the Budyšin register. In the following graph, I offer data from the nine translators' that I have discussed in more detail (see Chapter 8). With this in mind, bilingual Sorbs use the Budyšin and rural registers differently. In this graph below, I show percentages of Budyšin register makers, not the dimensions. On average Sorbian translators used 111 items that I coded.



Graph 9.4: Percentage Use of the Budyšin Register in 11 out of 27 Sorbian *Ferdinands*



Looking at the range of Budyšin register use, many Sorbs show a comparatively stronger leaning to the Budyšin register (61.2% -81.4%). I assert that this distribution is based on a median value of 61.21 % of Sorbs using Budyšin register markers. For example, Charlotte relies heavily on her notions of internalized monolingualism via her adult monolingual language use at work.

Tiffany, Mark, Charlotte, and Josephine predominantly use the Budyšin register. Other Sorbs, like Steve, Kristina, Laura, Stephanie, Elizabeth, and Carolyn represent Sorbs with strong allegiances to the rural register (40.7%-61.19%). To take this analysis further, I start with a few theoretical remarks, before I turn to the subtle mechanics underpinning register variation.

## A Semiotic Grounding: A Theoretical Caesura

The value of the chess pieces depends on their position upon the chess board, just as in language each term has its value through its contrast with all the other terms...the system is only ever a temporary one. It varies from one position to the next. It is true that the values also depend ultimately upon one invariable set of conventions, the rules of the game, which exist before the beginning of the game and remain in force after each move (Saussure 1983: 88).

In Saussure's description of the chess game, he provides a framework to understanding the principles of semiology and the "endless play of signification." Applying his approach to my

analysis of Ferdinand translation, I take his notion of contrasts as inherent to frictional dynamics. As demonstrated in Carolyn's movement between registers (Graph 9.3), she may not have always premeditated her choice of markers, but she implicitly followed the rules of the game and made continual readjustments that characterize register mixing. Like Mark Gottdiener (1995), my theoretical view utilizes socio-semiotics. He challenges the received orthodoxy of the French postmodern school which includes Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Saunders Pierce as well as Roland Barthes, Algirdas Greimas, Jacques Derrida, and Jean Baudrillard. I borrow primarily from Saussure and Peirce to reconsider systems of signification as dynamic cultural and linguistic codes following Gottdiener's lead.

Using a semiotic approach that builds on a Saussurian foundation demands some explanation. While Saussure's approach appears to use a binary logic, his emphasis involves the contextualized placement of signs with other signs with a multilayer process of meaning-making. Saussure's emphasis on the bifacial unity of the sign and rule bearing structure disavows polysemous connections between meanings. In contrast, Peirce's triadic model (1931) addresses infinite regression, a reinterpretation of the endless play of signification that I argue entails a process of non-hierarchical levels of multiple meanings.

Saussure's and Peirce's arguments about relationships between signs are problematic. On the one hand, Saussure's SIGN, a one-to-one correspondence, requires a transcendental signified, "an origin before the sign, a sign itself that is itself not part of the continuous production of signification" (Yates 1990: 211). Thus, the transcendental signified overpowers parole. In the multiple frictions of Sorbian translations, signs or register markers entail different

significations. Thus, markers are not limited to one contrastive meaning or an original transcendental signified but rather multiple ones.

On the other hand, Peirce's arguments stress ambiguity in his attention to polysemous SIGNIFIERS or, in his terms, REPRESENTEMEN, in a process where the SIGNIFIEDS disappear. Eco (1976) offers a solution that rescues "semiotics from a postmodern black hole through his assertion that meaning at some point unites with the signified" (Spreng 2001: 24). In creating frictions, Sorbian translators acknowledge the multiple meaning of signs and ideologically unite them with different SIGNIFIEDS often using different notions of linguistic dimensions.

In this brief foray into semiotic theory, I strategically emphasize certain arguments and do not do so to begin a postmodern debate or intense discussion of semiotic theory. While semiotics grounds my analysis of register variation, my primary attention is directed at the multivocality of the sign from a Bakhtinian perspective. I now return to the lived and emergent aspects of meaning making, the empirical and statistical findings, and a hermeneutic discussion of frictions and register variation.

## Tracking the Registers: General Trends

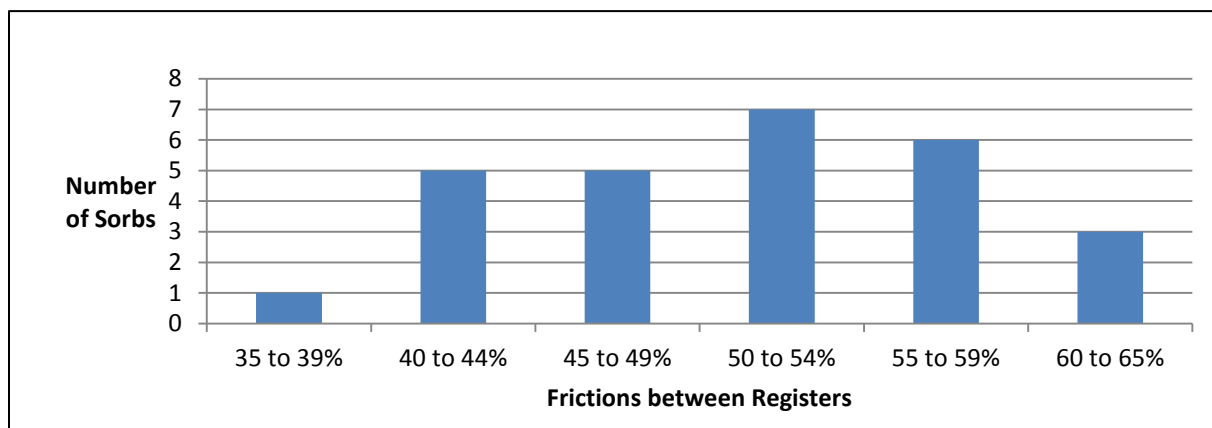
Heteroglossia captures the inherent political and sociohistorical associations of any linguistic forms, i.e. its indexical meanings, or social connotations. These indexical meanings, or historical voices, are not explicit or static, but rather must be interpreted on the basis of a constellation of forms in particular interactional and sociohistorical contexts. Such meanings are thus shifting, subjective, and negotiated (Bailey 2007: 258).

Heteroglossia is often related to social meanings. This seemingly simple assertion reflects a linguistic argument about variation, and in turn, suggests that movement between registers is inherently not static. From my ethnographic analysis, I demonstrated that many Sorbian linguistic decisions are related to social meanings and social action. However, this focus

did not offer some preliminary hypothesis about Sorbian *Ferdinands* across translations. Here, I consider the constellation of forms or intralingual variation. Like Benjamin Bailey, I question the confines of code-switching arguments and register variation research. Thus, I take into account the ways “social actors [or Sorbs] appear to distinguish between forms, rather than the analyst’s a priori claims” (Bailey 2007: 258). My statistical analysis reveals the ways Sorbs combine written-spoken, expert-authoritative, modern-old, urban-village, and Sorbian-German markers.

In the histogram below, Sorbs mix registers with a surprising amount of regularity. To explain this graph, the higher percentage means greater frequency in register shifting; for example, 50% represents an alternation of every other marker. These data are based on 27 coded translations. The statistical tests provide evidence of how much *Ferdinand* translators mixed registers in their text and the mixed character of what Sorbs refer to as mish-mash.

Graph 9.5: Alternation between Registers



A brief summary of other statistical findings shows the relationships between the different linguistic dimensions.<sup>9</sup> In Table 9.7, I provide ranges of alternation between markers and median points. To review, these percentages indicate how many times a Sorbs switches

between the two dimensional categories (50% indicates switching every other marker). The median provides a reference point to understand how much (or heavily Sorbs alternated between the two register markers in a specific category. I identify a series of correlations among these dimensions of register variation in the following points.

Table 9.7 Alternation Range

Dimension Alternation	Lowest	Highest	Median
Written-Spoken	22.7%	80%	52.1%
Sorbian-German	0 %	59%	34.8%
Expertise-Authority	17%	70%	44.7%
Modern-Old	0 %	71%	20 %
Urban-Village	0 %	71%	50%

## Statistical Evidence

### Point 1.

Sorbs who alternate between written and spoken markers at least 52.21% of the time also switch less between Sorb and German. The range of alternations between Sorb and German for these translators is from 0% to 30%. In contrast, translators who alternate less than 52.1% in the written-spoken category have a greater range of alternation(0-59%) between Sorbian and German markers (Two-tailed P-value< 0.001, high significance).<sup>10</sup>

Table 9.8: Alternations between Written/Spoken and Sorb/German Markers

Written and Spoken	Sorb and German
52.23-80%	0-30%
22-52.21%	0-59%

### Point 2.

Another dynamic related to written and spoken alternations is how translators vary between modern/invented and older Sorbian language use. Sorbs who switch more than 52.21% between the written and spoken markers also alternate more between the modern-old markers. The range of alternation is from 0% to 71.4% for this group with higher alternation. In contrast, Sorbs who fluctuated less than 52.21% between written and spoken markers tended to use older markers more often (Two-tailed p-value < .001 high significance).<sup>11</sup>

Table 9.9: Alternations between Written/Spoken and Modern/Old Markers

Written and Spoken	Modern and Old
52.23-80%	0-71.4%
22-52.21%	0-28%

**Point 3.**

Sorbs who alternate between urban and village markers at greater than 52% alternation also switch with higher frequency between Sorb and German. The range of alternation for these translators is from 21% to 59%. In contrast Sorbs who switched less than 52% of the time between urban and village markers, also alternated less frequently between Sorbian and German markers (Two-tailed P-value 0.01, significant).

Table 9.10: Alternations between Urban/Village and Sorbian/German Markers

Urban-Village	Sorb and German
52-80%	21-59%
0-50%	0-45.8%

**Point 4.**

Sorbs who use the Budyšin register more than 64.1% of the time alternate less between Sorbian and German markers. These Sorbian translators with marked allegiance to the Budyšin registers have a range from 15% to 38% alternation between Sorb and German. In contrast, Sorbs who rely more heavily on rural register markers alternate with greater frequency between Sorbian and German markers (Two-tailed P- value <0.05, marginal significance).

Table 9.11: Comparison between Budyšin Register Allegiance and Sorbian/German Alternation

Use of the Budyšin register	Sorbian and German Alternation
64.1-81.4%	0-38.5%
40.1-62.8 %	0-47.6%

**Point 5.**

Register allegiances also correlate with alternations between modern and old markers. Sorbs who utilize the Budyšin register heavily also tend to alternate more between modern and old markers. In contrast Sorbs who use the rural register do not tend to alternate between modern and old markers (Two-tailed P- value <0.05, marginal significance).

Table 9.12: Comparison between Budyšin Register Allegiance and Modern/Old Alternation

Use of the Budyšin register	Modern and Old Alternation
64.1-81.4%	0-71.5%
40.1-62.8 %	0-22 %

**Point 6.**

Female Sorbs show some propensity to alternate more between expert and authoritative stances than men (Two-tailed P- value <0.05, marginal significance). This was the only gendered usage identified in this analysis that had any significance. However, the sample included only 7 male participants. I would add that the role of gender demands more attention.

**Point 7.**

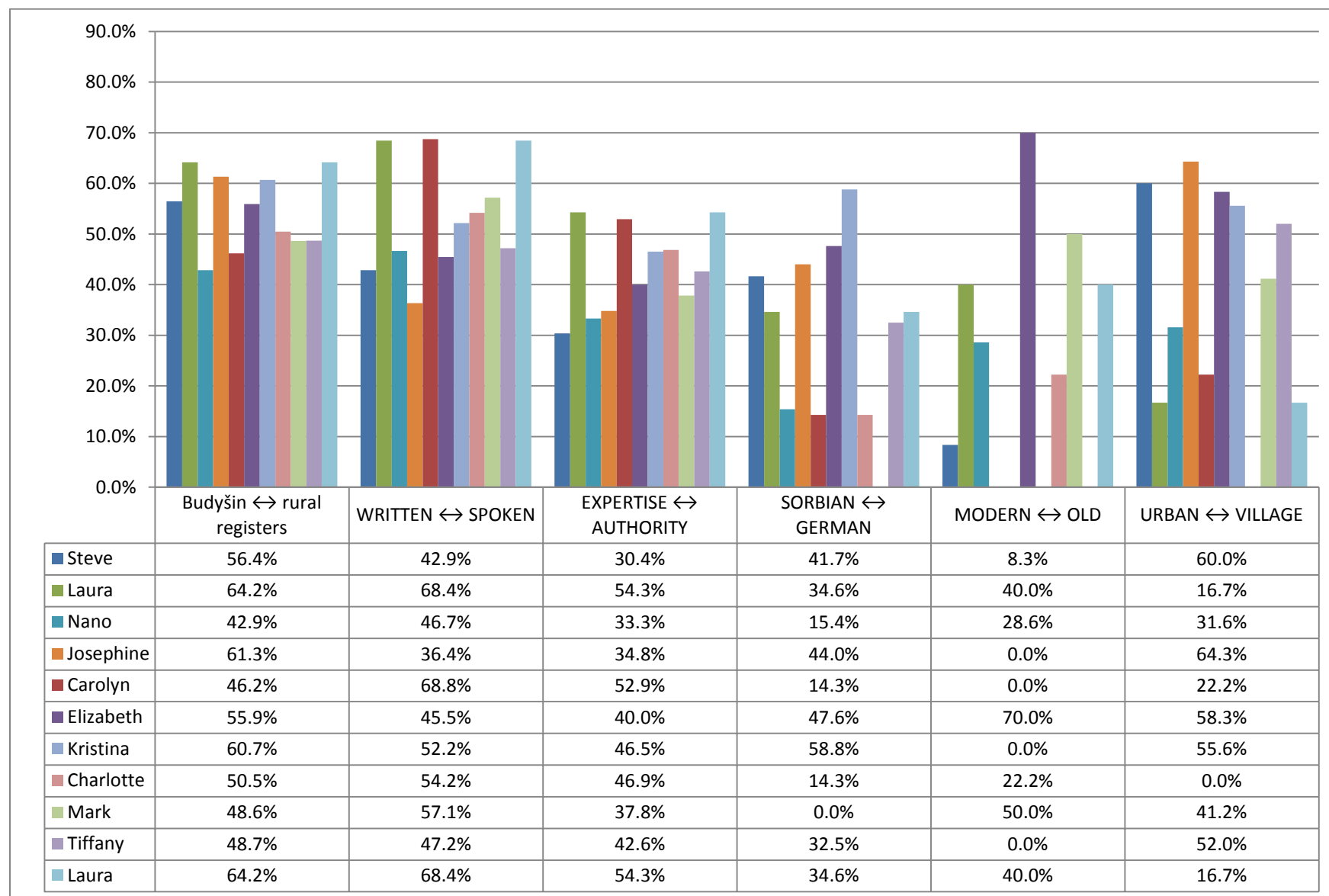
Sorbs who are younger than 28 and members of the middle age category (29-48) tend to employ more German elements than the older Sorbian speakers. This propensity also correlates with greater switching between Sorbian and German markers. (older compared to younger age categories, Two tailed P-value <0.05, marginal significance; older compared to younger and middle age categories, Two tailed P-value <0.05, marginal significance)

**Point 8.**

Members of the older and middle age categories vary less in the use of urban and village markers than Sorbs who belong to the younger age category. In contrast, members of the younger age category tend to vary more in urban-village marker alternation than the Sorbs who are part of the older and middle age categories (Two-tailed P-value 0.01, highly significant).

During the translation process, bilingual Sorbs interpreted local ideologies about language and relayed narratives about language use in bilingual Lusatia. An overarching concern for Sorbian translators was linguistic diversity, but the multiple navigations expose the nuances of frictional practices. Another point at which my statistical analysis illuminates dialogic processes of mixing registers involves the written-spoken and the modern-old dimensions. Age categories also play a role in Sorbian mish-mash (see Points 7 and 8, Statistical Evidence). To graph in more detail, Sorbian translators also vary widely in various frictions. Although Sorbs consistently alternate between registers, I separate this more general analytic in the first column of the following graph. I would like to point out that in the following graph, I have only included the Sorbs whose stories I detailed in this dissertation.

Graph 9.6: Alternations across Sorbian *Ferdinands*: Examples from 11 out of 27 Translations





Graph 9.6 highlights a consideration of the register variation using a range of linguistic attributes and shows the range of practices in which Sorbs engage. To review the process of alternation, a lower percentage indicates less alternation, but a higher percentage value corresponds to greater switching. More specifically, a 100% result would mean that a Sorb alternates every marker and 50% indicates alternation every other marker. My identification of this dynamic is based on ethnographic evidence supported by data associated with 27 translations. Based on the 27 coded translations, I hypothesize that Sorbs utilize register variation via multiple linguistic differences to maintain virtuosity, thereby contributing to linguistic survival. This preliminary hypothesis warrants further research but more specifically how Sorbs mix registers.

Alternation between the Budyšin and rural registers speaks to another more nuanced dynamics of intralingual distinctions. For example, Carolyn, what I identify as a ruralist, tends to alternate more between written-spoken, but less often between urban-village as well as modern-old markers (see Points 1, 2, and 5, Statistical Evidence). Yet, urbanites appear to switch less often between the Sorbian and German markers (see Point 4, Statistical evidence). Other more notable ranges include Sorbian-German frictions with Charlotte's lack of Sorbian and German distinctions to Kristina's (58.8%) and Elizabeth's relatively high alternation between German and Sorbian markers (47.6%). This Sorbian-German friction also exposes demographic differences in language use—older speakers tending to alternate less between interlingual markers; e.g., Charlotte and Nano. Finally, statistical analysis also includes several other hypotheses. First, gender and generational differences do not impact the use of the Budyšin register. Second, educational factors do play a role in register affiliation in that Sorbs

with some university education in Sorbian linguistics do use the Budyšin register more than those Sorbs without specialized Sorbian linguistic training. While these statistical results merit attention, they suggest more “fragile” navigations of Sorbian resources that require further discussion that I will support with ethnographic analysis.

## **Deeper Frictions:**

### **Balancing Acts between Sorbian Selves and Language Use**

Spinning out of their telling though choice of words, degrees of elaboration, attribution of causality and sequentuality, and the foregrounding and backgrounding of emotions, circumstances, behaviors, narrators [and Sorbian translators] build understandings of themselves-in-the-world. In this manner selves evolve in the time frame of a single telling [or translation] as well as in the course of the many tellings that eventually compose a life (Ochs and Capps 1996: 22-23).

Although I use a more cross-comparative approach to Sorbian translations, the importance of “partial selves” (Ochs and Capps 1996) is critical to understanding the deeper frictions. In rendering *Ferdinands*, Sorbian translators reveal multiple allegiances and told narratives that also speak to frictions and processes of “walking the line.” In this section, I use a few prime examples to discuss the ways Sorbs mix registers and create overlapping frictions. First, interpretation of the phrase “to smell the flowers” offers a potent marker of frictions. By looking at the ways Sorbian translators create variation in interpreting “to smell the flowers,” I expose Bakhtin’s (1981) “deep-lying dialogues” between authoritative, village, expert, and modern markers. Second, interpretations of Spanish ladies reveal interplay between Sorbian and German and urban and village markers. In looking at overlaps between these frictions, Sorbs mix registers using multiple dimensions. As Sorbs create frictions and more subtle dynamics through register alternation, they simultaneously reveal another sense of fluctuating selves and the potential to recast their selves.

## Discussion of “Smelling the Flowers”

For many Sorbs, interpretations of “smelling the flowers” expose urban and village distinctions that also intersect with authoritative and expert stances.

Table 9.13: Verbs Associated with “Smelling the Flowers”

Sorbian verb	occurrence	Marker Coding	Register Coding	total percentage
1. <i>nuchać</i> (to sniff)	45	village	Rural	27.7%
2. <i>čuć</i> (to experience)	26	village	Rural	16.05%
3. <i>wonjeć</i> (to smell good)	9	village/neither	Rural-neither	5.56%
4. <i>srěbać</i> (to breathe in)	21	modern	Budyšin	12.9%
5. <i>wjeselić</i> (to enjoy)	31	spoken	Rural	19.3%
6. <i>zwjeselić</i> (to delight)	6	written	Budyšin	3.7%
7. <i>radować</i> (to like)	7	urban	Budyšin	4.32%
8. other	16	neither	Neither	9.88%

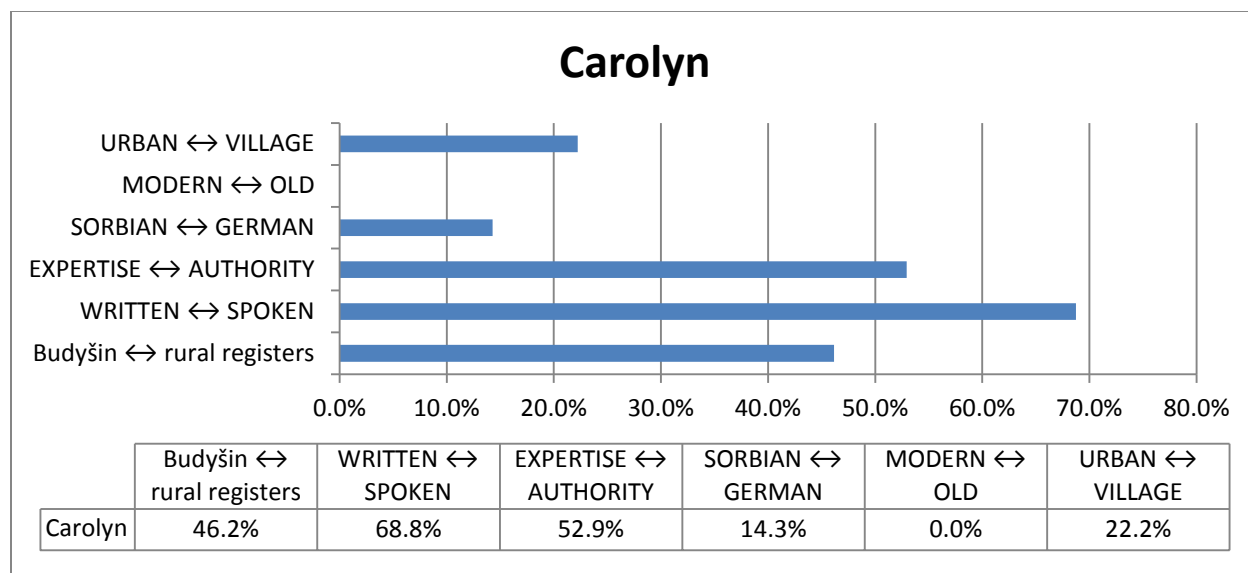
Although the amount of variation is significant, I do not dismiss its relevance because of individual choices. By looking at the individual use of verbs for “smelling the flowers,” Sorbs can position themselves as authorities, experts, villagers, urbanites, and users of the literary language and the spoken language.<sup>12</sup> Repeatedly during interviews, I reminded Sorbs that in the original text, Leaf used the same phrase “to smell the flowers.” Despite their awareness of the original text, Sorbian translators interpreted it in myriad ways. Yet, the high degree of variation itself fails to reveal the ways Sorbs experienced frictions in translating this phrase.

### Carolyn: A Ruralist with Modern and Written Contrasts

Overall, Carolyn’s lexical choices leaned heavily to the rural register (her markers show 50% use of the Budyšin register and 46.2% rural and Budyšin friction). Her evaluation that stresses authenticity in interpreting the phrase “to smell the flowers” addresses a broader dynamic in her creative process. Carolyn’s translation exhibits strong use of the rural register

that involves intersections among written and spoken and modern markers—a strategy that facilitates register mixing.<sup>13</sup>

Graph 9.7: Frictions in Carolyn’s *Ferdinand*



Looking at the data of frictions in the entire text, Carolyn’s translation contains relatively few Sorbian and German frictions (14.3%). Carolyn also switches less between Sorb and German like other Sorbs with strong allegiance to the rural register (see Point 4, Statistical Evidence).

In her translations of “to smell the flowers,” she not only mixes registers intra-/intersententially, but also creates frictions between dimensions. To take this one step further, Carolyn engages frictions between written modalities and village language use.

Table 9.14: Carolyn’s Frictions in “Smelling the Flowers”

Carolyn	Coding by Dimension	Coding by register
Page 5: a nuchaše kwětki	village	Rural
Page 7: zwjeseliše so na wonjatyh kwětkow	written+ village	Budyšin-Rural
Page 9: a na wonjace kwětki hladam	village + neither	Rural +Neither
Page 13: wonješe kwětki	village	Rural
Page 32: srěba wón do so	modern	Budyšin
Page 34: zwjeseli so na wonjatyh kwětkach	written and village	Budyšin + Rural

On page 7 (see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]), Carolyn's use of "*wonjaty ch kwětkow*" → adj/genitive + nominative, genitive, plural (village), and not "*wón kwětkow*" → noun/accusative + noun/genitive (urban) is an intersentential alternations between written and village markers. Overall, in her interpretations of "to smell the flowers," Carolyn alternates between "*zwjeseliše*" (written) and "*srebaše*" (modern), markers of the Budyšin register, and "*nuchaše*," "*wonjaty ch kwětkow*," and "*wonješe*," markers of the rural register.

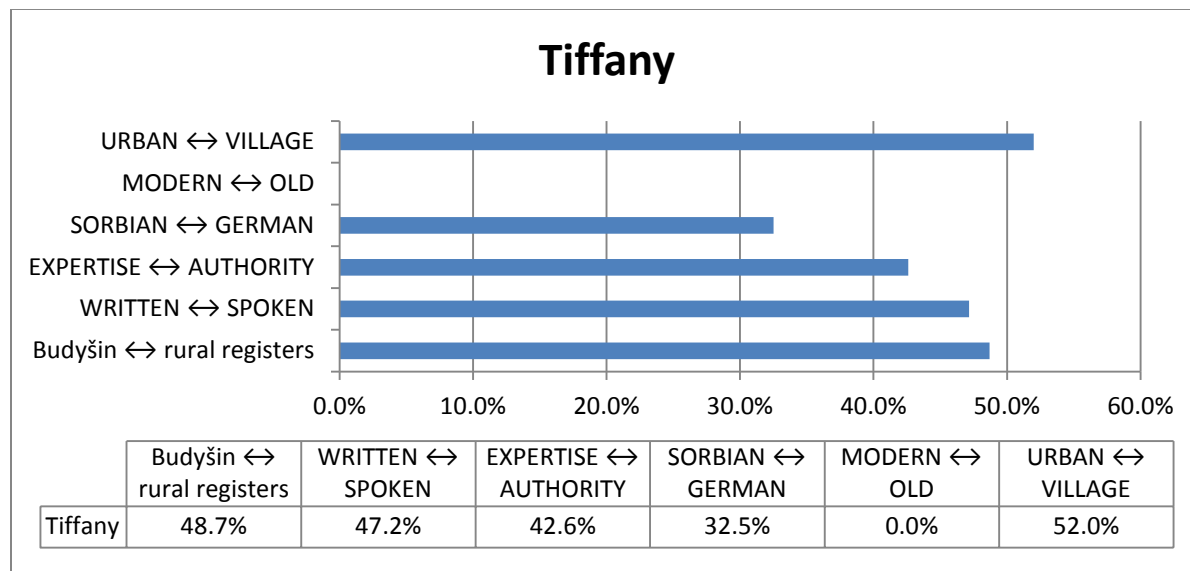
From a broader perspective of Carolyn's *Ferdinand*, overlap between written and spoken alternations (68.4%) and village evaluations (22.2% urban and village alternations) exposes a more subtle aspect of mixing registers. Carolyn's notion of village talk, which she indexes with use of "*wonjaty ch kwětkow*" also contrasts with use of the urban register through written and modern markers. Another aspect of Carolyn's *Ferdinand* involves notions of purity and mish-mash. From the statistical analysis, Carolyn alternated to a low degree between Sorbian and German distinctions (14.3%). For her, written-spoken and urban-village alternations occurred with greater regularity than Sorbian-German frictions (see Points 1, 2, and 3, Statistical Evidence). From analysis of her *Ferdinand* text, evidence of intralingual policing takes precedence over Sorbian and German differences—characterizing a range of semi-standardized practices linked to rural register loyalties.

### Tiffany: An Urbanite with Strong Village Yearnings

In contrast to Carolyn's strong authoritative stance, Tiffany exemplifies a stronger leaning to Budyšin register (72%) with a particularly heavy use of an expert stance (82% of expert markers in the expert-authority dimension). In the graph below, frictions in Tiffany's *Ferdinand* are expressed quantitatively. With a less than 52% alternation in the written and

spoken category, she alternates with less frequency between modern and old markers (see Point 2, Statistical Evidence).

Graph 9.8: Frictions in Tiffany's *Ferdinand*



More specifically, Tiffany's interpretation of the phrase "smell the flowers" exposes frictions between expertise and village language use.

Table 9.15: Tiffany's Frictions in "Smelling the Flowers"

Tiffany	Coding by Dimension	Coding by Register
Page 5: Najradšo měrnje sedžeše a kwětki wobnuchaše.	expertise-neither	neither
Page 7: ... a sćinje štomom nuchaše wón kwětkow	village + urban	Rural + Budyšin
Page 9: a kwětki wobnuchować	expertise-neither	neither
Page 13: a wobnuchaše kwětki.	expertise-neither	neither
Page 32: zo by wón nuchał.	village +written	Rural + Budyšin
Page 35: a wobnuchje woměrje kwětki.	expertise-neither	neither

Her desires to build something became evident in her alternation between "*wob+nuch+ować*"

(page 9) and "*wobnuchać*" (see Pages 5,13, and 34, see Appendix D, Leaf [1936], and

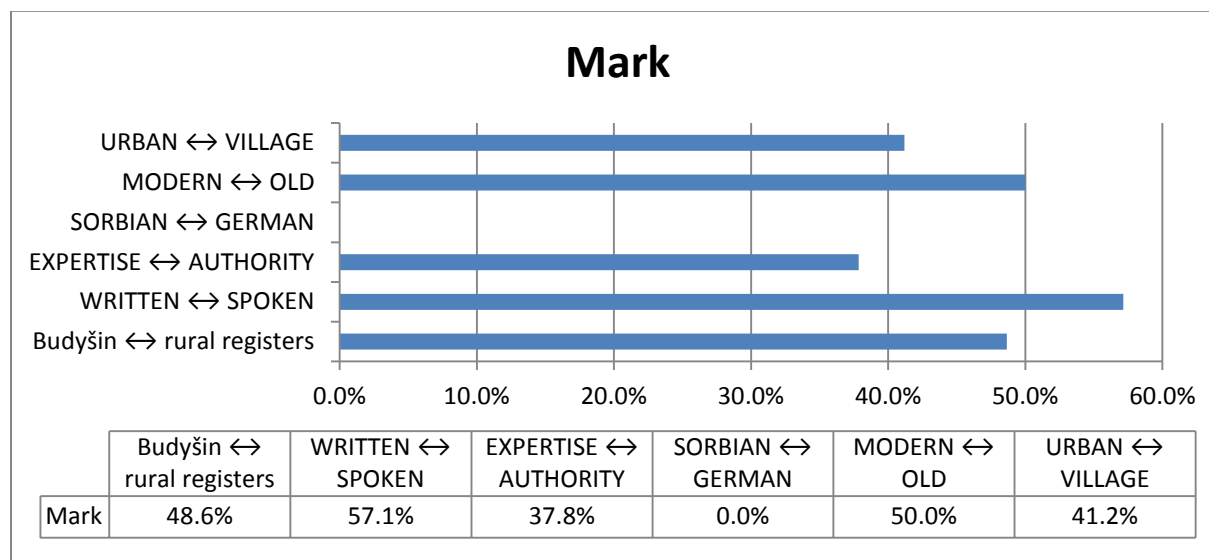
Microcosm 5, Chapter 8). However, during the matched guise exercises, other Sorbs laughed in response to her use of "*wobnuchować*," a word that sounds funny because of two appended

affixes, “*wob-*” and “*-ować.*” Although her constructions struck many Sorbs as humorous, Tiffany’s interpretation brings attention to expert and authoritative frictions and her yearning for a village voice. In Tiffany’s interpretation of “to smell the flowers,” a deeper friction intertwines expertise and village language use.

### Mark: A Ruralist with Modern Inclinations

In contrast to Tiffany, Mark relies heavily on frictions between discourses of older-modern Sorbian resources that affect the other dimensions. Mark differs from Tiffany in that his translation involves overlaps between modern and old distinctions with village markers. Although Mark’s translation contains no Sorbian and German distinctions, he still infuses a strong use of the rural register (71.6%). Furthermore, his relatively high use of written and spoken distinctions (57.14%) reinforces his overall mixing of registers (48.6%). To revisit Mark’s narrative (see *Microcosm 5*, Chapter 8), his sense of language satisfaction comes from blending colloquial speech and the literary language often via a linguistic awareness of temporality.

Graph 9.9: Frictions in Mark’s *Ferdinand*



From looking at friction in Mark's translation, an intersection between modern and old dimensions and written and spoken evaluations characterizes his mixing of registers. As mentioned in Microcosm 5 (see Chapter 8), Mark alternated between village (*nuchać*) and modern (*srebać*) markers in translating "to smell the flowers." With a closer look at his six interpretations, other frictions emerge that interweave modern and village frictions markers with an acknowledgement of expert stance.

Table 9.16: Mark's Frictions in "Smelling the Flowers"

Mark	Coding by Dimension	Coding by Register
Page 5: a wón kwětkow do so srěbaše	urban + modern	Budyšin
Page 7: a wjeseleše nad wonjatymi kwětkami	village	Rural
Page 9: a wón kwětkow do so srěbać	urban + modern	Budyšin
Page 13: a při kwětkach nuchaše	village	Rural
Page 32: a nuchaše při kwětkach	village	Rural
Page 34 : nuchajo woměrje kwětki	village + expertise	Rural + Budyšin

Although Mark uses a modern item with "*srebać*," he creates friction by alternating with colloquial village language use and modern markers. In his final rendition (page 34, see Appendix D), Mark instantiates both registers with the use of expert markers with "*nuchajo* (sniffing)," a gerund using the "-jo" suffix.

Mark creates written-spoken frictions in his interpretations of alone (See also Microcosm 7) and cork tree (See Microcosm 3, Chapter 8). While Mark alternates between words for "alone" with "*sam lutki*" as older and written (Page 8) and "*samotny*" as village (Pages 8 and 10, see Appendix D), he infuses temporal frictions. Mark avails himself of multiple temporalized markers and village use occurs in his interpretations of cork tree "*skorowc*" as modern (Pages 6 and 16, see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]), "*dub*" as village (Page 13, see Appendix D, Leaf[1936]), and "*štom*" (Page 34, see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]), a more general and neutral



word for tree. His varying allegiance to modern and old notions of language use coincides with written and spoken frictions. Mark pays close attention to spoken language use by using the idiomatic expression of “*Mi so jowle lubi* (I like it here” (Page 9, see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]), and the direct pronoun “*ći*” (Page 20, see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]). These frictions in which notions of temporality create refractions through other dimensions of language use exemplify a powerful and deeper dynamics of mixing registers (see Points 1, 2, and 5, Statistical Evidence).

## Spanish Ladies: A Not Necessarily Interlingual Friction

Sorbian notions of “mish-mash” and German-Sorbian distinctions overlap with several kinds of frictional practice (see Statistical Evidence). To understand the German-Sorbian frictions, Sorbian translators rationalized their interpretations of “women” in the text in different ways.

Table 9.17: Interpretations of “Spanish Ladies”

Page 23: ...and all the lovely **ladies** had flowers in their hair.

Page 27: Then came the Matador, the proudest of all—he thought he was very handsome, and bowed to the **ladies**. He had a red cape and a sword and was supposed to stick the bull last of all.

Page 31: But not Ferdinand. when he got to the middle of the ring he saw the flowers in all the lovely **ladies’** hair and he just sat down and smelled.

Sorb	Dimension	Dimensions	Register
<b>damy</b>	German	spoken + village	Rural
<b>žonsky</b>	Sorb	urban	Budyšin
<b>rjanolinki</b>	Sorb	village + authority	Rural
<b>knježničky</b>	Sorb	old + expertise	Budyšin

Sorbs could use a German borrowing, “damy,” or Sorbian equivalent of “*žonsky*, *rjanolinki*, or “*knježničky*.” These equivalent expressions expose a constellation of urban, village, and spoken

evaluations. Yet, not all translators alternated between options for this concept as shown in the table below.

Table 9.18: Frictions in “Spanish Ladies”

	Page 23	Page 27	Page 31	Registers
Carolyn	rjanolinki	žonsky	rjanolinki	Rural-Budyšin-Rural
Josephine	damy	damy	damy	Rural-Rural-Rural
Laura	knježničky	knježnikami	knježničkow	Budyšin-Budyšin-Budyšin
Tiffany	rjanolinkow	rjanolinkami	rjanolinkow	Rural-Rural-Rural
Charlotte	knježničktý	knježničktami	knježničktami	Budyšin-Budyšin-Budyšin
Kristina	rjanolinki	rjanolinkami	rjanolinkow	Rural-Rural-Rural
Elizabeth	damy	damami	damow	Rural-Rural-Rural
Steve	rjany žona + rjanjolinki	knježničkami	rjanolinkow	Neither-Budyšin-Rural
Mark	rjanjolinki	rjanolinkami	rjanolinkow	Rural-Rural-Rural
Stephanie	rjanolinki	žony	rjanolinkow	Rural-Budyšin-Rural

Translators, who did not mix registers in translating “Spanish ladies,” often used other frictions in their text. While Stephanie used Sorbian equivalents, she did alternate between “žonsky” and “rjanolinkow.” Using these two Sorbian version signals a tension between using both urban and village terms for “women.” Charlotte, who used “knježničktami,” explained the differences as including a greater range of women, not just young women who were pretty. Charlotte’s interpretation also indexes her expert tone (65% use of expert markers and 47 % expert-authority friction). However, many Sorbs used the German borrowing “damy.” For example, Josephine described her use of the German borrowing as based on how it is used by people in the village, but Mark described it as an international word. Josephine’s strategic rationale not only provides a justification for use of German, but also speaks to Sorbian and German frictions. In her translation, she switched frequently between urban and village markers (64%) and Sorbian and German dimension (44%). Her justification sheds light on a statistical correlation

between a higher degree of urban and village frictions occurring with a higher degree of Sorbian and German distinctions (see Point 3, Statistical Evidence).

Looking at the “tiny, tiny, alterations” (Tolstoy 1975) in Sorbian translations provides a venue to investigate mixing registers through the interdependent ideological frameworks. Although it appears cluttered, bilingual Sorbs mix registers while relating their language use to village and urban contexts often through linguistic narratives. On one hand, Sorbs regulate the standardizing influences of expert Sorb by infusing spoken authority while not sounding too Sorbian. On the other hand, Sorbs monitor village impurity by displaying their expertise or comfort with modern/invented items that may hamper “sounding too German.” Another dynamic of register interanimation involves myriad instantiations of interplay among modern and old evaluations, urban and village markers, expert and authoritative stances, and written and spoken associations.

Furthermore, frictions among these dimensions—written-spoken, authority-expertise, modern-old, and urban-village—contribute to mixing registers in a complex cacophony of individual agency and collective sensibilities about language use. Although Sorbs reacted differently to tensions among standards, variation in their texts indexes several types of frictional processes. For each participant, this variation also actualizes an emotional negotiation. In Sorbian translations of “cork tree,” Sorbs gained by traction by drawing on modern and old evaluations in tandem with notions of urban and village frictions. Likewise, Steve’s use of “róž (rose)” reveals another form of traction in the urban and village dimension that overlaps with temporal and interlingual distinctions. Yet, notions of urban and village

language use also overlap with Sorbian and German distinctions. Sorbian translations alternated between stances of expertise and authority in their interpretations of Spanish ladies.

By looking at interpretations of “to smell the flowers,” I have identified multiple contours of Sorbian language use that intersect and overlap with one another. From options associated verbal options for “to smell” with village use (*nuchać* and/or *čuć*) to distinctions associated with “modern” resources (*srěbać*), and even, alternative expressions of expertise (*wobnuchować*), bilingual Sorbs mix registers relating variation to their understandings of language use. They use tensions among standards, ideas about internalized monolingualism, and expert/authoritative skill-related competence to enact a range of practices. Stepping back from these individual particularities, Sorbs created texts that tell stories about their lives, endangerment, and their emotional perspectives on linguistic well-being.

### **Ferdinand: A Story of Survival and a Promising Methodology**

The bilingual Sorbs who translated *Ferdinand* expressed multiple allegiances to different types of Sorbian language use and often created deeper frictions. The manifold uses of overlapping frictions hint at linguistic strategies that sustain multiple types of semi-standardized practices by mixing registers and creating frictions. To extend this reasoning, I hypothesize that register variation is not a form of monostylism or a hierarchy between registers but, rather, a complex of emotional discourses and linguistic practices. Furthermore, Audrey Lourde’s insights about poetry bridge the gap between emotions and language.

It is a vital necessity for our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predict our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action. Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought. The farthest horizons of our hopes and fears are cobbled by our fears, carved from the rock experiences of our daily lives. (Lourde 2009: 356)

While Lourde speaks of poetry as not a luxury, but as intrinsic to life, her observation relates to Sorbian linguistic practices, narratives, and mixing registers. The range of practices and creations of frictions in translation provides poetic tools to maintain multiple types of language use, identities, and linguistic virtuosity.

The coexistence of multiple local ideologies emerges in the paradoxes among standards, internalized monolingualism, and coexistent authoritative and expert stances. These analytical understandings of Sorbian linguistic discourses also expose deeper frictions through narratives of Sorbian translators. From their narratives, I have demonstrated the multiple ways that bilingual Sorbs pursued a sense of satisfaction, while also navigating what they saw as threats to community linguistic well-being. Without these stories told during the translation process, I would have not realized the heteroglossic dynamics in the translations and deeper meanings associated with their linguistic choices.

Emotions figure prominently in the variety and juxtaposition of linguistic resources in Sorbian *Ferdinands*. Bilingual Sorbs express manifold emotions about language and their efforts to achieve a sense of linguistic satisfaction. For example, Carolyn and Laura felt threatened by tensions among standards, but these women reacted very differently. In contrast, Josephine, Mark, and Charlotte each reacted differently to notions of temporality often via urban and village and written and spoken distinctions. Finally, Josephine's and Steve's use of Sorbian and German markers exemplify contrasting evaluations of Sorbian and German distinctions. Like the story of the old man and the elephant, each story reveals one part of Sorbian language use but all their stories and linguistic choices should be heard and considered as narratives of linguistic well-being.

The constellation of emotional discourses of linguistic satisfaction lays bare the contradictions of multi-linguaged worlds as well as the dynamics of linguistic survival. Many of the bigger issues at stake in intellectual considerations of linguistic survival require a broader theoretical reorientation. Without foundational studies of tensions between linguistic codes, I would not be able to consider frictions in bilingual practices. My ethnographic cum translation approach offers another heuristic device for getting at “different ways of doing language” (Patrick 2007: 125). By getting at bilingual practices, ethnography cum translation also provides a methodology to understand linguistic diversity from emic perspectives and promises new avenues to be explored in future research projects.

My goal to publish a Sorbian *Ferdinand* is one practical application still unrealized. I will also code the thirty translations that I collected in a Sorbian classroom. Another logical step would be conducting ethnography cum translation in a different endangered language or bilingual setting. Finally, focusing on other bilingual or endangered language speakers and their practices will illuminate the awkward and fragile interconnections across linguistic differences and potentially exciting similarities in register variation or semi-standardized practices

Clifford Geertz admits that, “Cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete... And [he argued] worse than that the more deeply it goes the less complete it is” (Geertz 1973: 29). What this projects offers is more precision in considering register variation and a way to gain some grip on the multiply enacted frictions by paying attention to ethnographic detail and discursive aspects of linguistic well-being. Sorbian stories range from great tragedies to small victories, the legacy of their parents, and the responsibilities that they feel to teach their children and relatives or appeal to younger Sorbs. From Sorbs, their stories, and their

translations, a view of endangered language use as lived, narrated, and practiced by mixing registers becomes clearer. Frictions among Sorbian resources offer bilingual Sorbs a source of traction, even though it may appear awkward or gangly as Sorbs manage to stay balanced. In their translations of *The Story of Ferdinand*, bilingual Sorbs recreated their sense of ordinary language (Certeau 1984) in walking the lines among Sorbian linguistic resources.

### Key to Font Distinctions

Normal Calibri Font	English
<i>Italic Calibri Font</i>	<i>Sorb</i>
<u>Underlined Calibri Text</u>	German (used in English body of text)
<u><i>Underlined and Italicized</i></u>	German Borrowing or Sorbianized German
<u><u>Double Underlined Calibri</u></u>	German in Sorb
<>	Not spoken
~	Translated elements (used in tables)
[ ]	Back-translation
≈	Linguistic morpho-syntactic explanation
SMALL CAPS	Emphasis

<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, I use the double-pointed arrow “↔” to bring attention to frictions as mutually constitutive and characterized by shifting values in the illustrative materials.

<sup>2</sup> These types of items were coded as 41.

<sup>3</sup> I excluded idioms from the Mann-Whitney tests and Spearman-Rho correlations.

<sup>4</sup> To be more specific, the words “mužoj” and “muž” are examples of the plural, animate, nominative case.

<sup>5</sup> Other expertise or authority markers include a variety of grammatical constructions: the dual case, used with horns; diminutives; specific Sorbian appended constructions, e.g.; use of verbal progressive tense with endings of “-o” or use of nouns with the suffix of “-enje.” Another specific example of expertise/authority distinctions occurs with bullfight with “bój bykow” as authority and various interpretations that used appended elements as expertise. Finally, interpretations of “banderillos,” “picadors,” and “matador” coincide with interlingual tensions: either full declination into Sorb as signs of expertise or use of the foreign German word as an index of authority. As a final observation, this group of items composed a significant portion of coded elements (7 occurrences in total) and often items could be coded as neither. For example, many Sorbs partially declined members of the Spanish bullfight retinue. A full declination would be “banderilojo,” (uncapitalized, a single “l”) and formal written ending of “-ojo,” or “pikadorajo” (uncapitalized, substitute “k” for “c” and “-ojo” ending). Sorbs creatively rendered versions that demonstrated knowledge but still resisted a full Sorbian declination as being a stance of extreme expertise; e.g. *picadorajo* (Josephine and Charlotte), *banderilojos*, *pikadorajos* (Laura).

<sup>6</sup> Another similar dynamic occurs with “čelc,” which corresponds with “Kalb.”

<sup>7</sup> The thirty translations that were gathered in a Sorbian classroom would skew the data.

<sup>8</sup> I also graphed all 27 translations and determined that all translators were alternating between registers in a similar fashion

<sup>9</sup> I used the Mann-Whitney test to determine statistical correlations between groups. I would also like to thank Dr. Stephen Leider, my brother-in-law, for his assistance with the statistical analysis.

<sup>10</sup> Only one Sorb did not alternate between Sorbian and German markers.

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<sup>11</sup> Out of group of 16 sorbs who did alternated with less frequency modern and old markers, 10 did not alternate at all.

<sup>12</sup> Only one Sorbian translator used the same verbal element in translating “to smell the flowers.”

<sup>13</sup> Carolyn also uses the same grammatical structure of SVO except in the subordinating clause on page 9 (see Appendix D, Leaf [1936]).



## CHAPTER TEN

### A Personal and Professional Statement

#### **Looking Back:**

#### **Bilingual Sorbs and an Anthropologist “Walking the Line”**

When I arrived in Germany to conduct my fieldwork (2006), I had come to investigate the code-switching practices of Upper Sorbian speakers and to research the everyday mechanics of linguistic survival. Repeatedly throughout my 22 months of fieldwork, I encountered multiple contradictions of living in multi-linguaged worlds, a cacophony of voices, and a range of linguistic practices and expectations that challenged me in unexpected ways. From being told that I could not answer the telephone using a Sorbian greeting to speaking English on the street or speaking German in a Sorbian-only context, I felt the pressures of daily linguistic practices that would be scrutinized, and commented on by Sorbian and German people.<sup>1</sup> I reoriented my focus to consider the complex negotiations of bilingual resources that encompassed more than differences between the Sorbian and German language use.

I remember walking to *Serbski Dom* (House of Sorbs) and thinking about how every interaction, every word seemed charged with political undertones even outside the walls of this building. Although the ways that language affects every day saturated my thoughts, my empathy pales in comparison to a lifetime of “walking the line.” This experience of putting on shoes that did not quite fit exemplifies some of my fieldwork experiences and the intersubjective realities between bilingual Sorbs and me, an ethnographer.

When I first returned from Germany in 2007, I found myself once again facing another change in intellectual footwear. My first response concerned re-acclimating to living in the U.S. after a profound emotional and professional journey. My intention to portray the realities of Sorbian lives adequately seemed overwhelming, because I wanted to communicate the powerful intersection of emotions and endangerment in my dissertation. When my father-in-law died in May 2008, I grieved not only because a family member had died, but also because an older speaker of Sorb who had a story to tell that was similar to ones that many Sorbs had told me. In a visceral way, his death brought home the current pressures facing the Sorbian community as speakers of a language that has very little relevance to people who had never heard of the Sorbs outside of Lusatia. From a broader perspective, I considered my dissertation as engaging everyday people and intellectuals who think of endangered language speakers as emblematic of “traditional” cultures or communities whose members are unwilling to use a dominant global language exclusively.

As I conclude this thesis, I want to address the methodological, theoretical, and personal aspects of my arguments as well as offer insights and hope to Sorbian language users. While some readers of this dissertation may have felt teased by the absence of the ethnographer in my writing at times, I intend these concluding thoughts to satisfy a yearning to know more about the researcher. Without intending to be cruel in an intellectual sense, my near absence has been strategic for several reasons. First, this dissertation is only partially about me. While I acknowledge the intersubjective aspects of ethnographic fieldwork, I feel an obligation to make Sorbs the central characters in this ethnographic story. Second, I acknowledge the shadowy margins that I inhabited as an ethnographer as an outsider and insider (McLean and Liebling

2007). My investigation of what many Sorbs would consider unattractive linguistic practices and a less-than-happy situation also marked me as a researcher not vested in language maintenance in the same way as many Sorbian speakers. Throughout this dissertation, I have also reiterated these intellectual issues to which Alexandre Jaffe (2004), Jim Wilce (2009a), and Salikoko Mufwene (2002) bring attention with their engagement of emotions, language use, and endangerment.

Furthermore, I have attempted to soften or quiet my intellectual voice and worries in describing a situation of “linguicide,” violations of linguistic human rights (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson 2001), and killer languages, because I did not want to frame Sorbs as victims of a “wicked problem,” I echo Jan Blommaert’s pronouncement that ...

Criticizing the linguistic rights paradigm is not a rejection of linguistic rights, nor a denial of the problems motivating the idea. It is what it is: a critique of scholarly practices (Blommaert 2004b: 62).

Despite the mandate to uphold some degree of Jim Wilce’s (2009b) “cool distance” and a justified concern about trivializing the emotional lived aspects of bilingual Sorbs, I acknowledge my passionate commitment to represent Sorbs in telling their stories. Compounded by my wariness about proselytizing Sorbian endangerment, I did and do not want to bemoan an approaching linguistic apocalypse.

Third and, finally, as globalization potentially defines the contemporary moment, I feel a personal concern regarding voyeuristic and often Orientalizing desires to create an exotic “other.” Although scholars like Michael Burawoy and colleagues (2000) question popular and intellectual notions of globalization, they also call for ethnographies that exposes grounded globalizations—that is, ethnography from below (Burawoy et.al. 2000: 341). My dissertation

exemplifies this type of work and broadens the purview of globalization research to recognize speakers of an endangered language in global, national, regional, and transnational contexts. As a scholar interested in endangered languages, I feel a particular concern about the romanticization and/or an ignoring of indigenous people or speakers of threatened languages. With both intellectual eyes wide open, I have aimed to provide a well-rounded portrait of language use that highlights linguistic diversity as related to linguistic/cultural practices of “walking the line.”

## **Translating Happiness: Emotions and Endangerment**

One may contemplate history from the point of view of happiness. But actually history is not the soil of happiness. The periods of happiness are blank pages in it (Hegel 1978 [1830]: 78-79).

This dissertation fills those pages to which George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel refers using ethnographic data and in-depth discussions of local affective discourses. In an increasingly interconnected world, I contribute to intellectual attention to emotions that appears to be gaining ground in interdisciplinary discussions. Yet, as Maruška Svašek and Zlatko Skribiš (2007) point out, “there is a real lack of *specific* [emphasis in original] engagement with emotions in most literature on globalisation” (Svašek and Skribiš 2007: 372). They argue that emotions should be a “central plank” of globalization research and not merely taken for granted as an intellectual accessory or a human reaction to globalizing processes. In their call for more work to be done I completely agree. This dissertation makes an intervention, not just by bringing emotions into my discussion, but also by exploring the linkages among emotions, languages, and nationalizing discourses in an increasingly globalized world through an anthropological gaze.

Over 20 years earlier, Catherine Lutz and Geoffrey White (1986) described a “burgeoning” of interest in emotion theory despite an intellectual bias arising from false dichotomies between materialism and idealism, ethological and evolutionary approaches, psychodynamic versus psychiatric perspectives, ideas of “commonsense naturalism,” and an emphasis on language universals (see also Besnier 1990). According to Lutz and White, much of anthropological research on emotions has explored the role of emotions in a culturally constructed self through discussions of social structure and socialization. Like Lutz and White and noting that emotions had not received rigorous and sufficient attention, Simon Williams and Gillian Bendelow argue that “emotions, like the body to which they are closely tied, have tended to enjoy a rather ‘ethereal’ existence...lurking in the shadows and banished to the margins of sociological thought” (Williams and Bendelow 1998: xv).

From another perspective, Nick Crossley (1998) looks to weakness and strengths of linguistic philosophy to reconsider the intersubjective structuring, in addition to instrumental and communicative actions from Habermasian and phenomenological perspectives. Crossley concludes that “emotional life forms part of the intentional and intersubjective life of human beings and it falls within the parameters of communicative rationality and the normative order of the life world” (Crossley 1998: 36). Crossley critically addresses the philosophical dilemma of constraint and agency and asserts that these concepts become warring theories in much of linguistic research and in discussions of emotions. Unfortunately, much of social science interest in emotions, social life, and language often eschews lived affective realities that characterize interpersonal and intracommunity dynamics.

As I have argued, both constraint and agency play a role in linguistic politics and practices. Yet, a more sophisticated understanding of relationships among emotional discourses, language use, and “culture” remains weak or even absent. It is, in my view, still remains under-theorized and under-researched despite the advancements of many scholars who stand out in trying to fill that intellectual gap (Abu-Lughod 1986; Besnier 1990, 1995; Hill and Hill 1986; Hill 1992; Lutz 1988; Mitchell 2009; Rosaldo 1980; and Wilce 1998, 2009). Yet, I would argue that a critical investigation of linguistic practices as related to emotional discourses merits the type of specific ethnographic focus that my dissertation undertakes. Other researchers, like Aneta Pavlenko (2005, 2006) and Anna Wierzbicka (1999, see also Harkins and Wierzbicka 2001), who investigate cross-comparative mappings of emotional words entailed problems with searching for linguistic universals. Yet, their work still falls within a bailiwick of linguistic determinism in my scholarly opinion.

Rather, as an anthropologist, I argue that, linguistic analysis should, and hopefully will, consider “that ‘emotions’ are central to the production of ethnography and vital to the functioning of social [and linguistic] life in general” (Svašek 2005: 17). More specifically, my work contributes a Geertzian thick description of “happiness,” rather than a supercilious, trivializing, or romantizing discussion of emotional well-being (Mathews and Izquierdo 2009; Thin 2009). In beginning with an ethnographic concern with unhappiness, I further complicate notions of well-being to include dialogues among emotional discourses. My attention to the multifaceted nature of emotional discourses makes my work different from and the discussions that I mentioned previously. To summarize, my analysis explores lived understandings of

emotional discourses, social action, and the range of practices in a situation of asymmetric bilingualism.

In many ways, the dissertation, in its entirety, is a treatise on happiness. Soon after my arrival in Germany (Winter 2006), I faced a personal and professional dilemma in my estimation of a general malaise, feelings of unhappiness, and what I saw as a near manic obsession in pursuing emotional lifts that I saw in German and Sorbian individuals. During my fieldwork, I read Darrin McMahon's (2006) rewriting of history through the lens of happiness, an initial step in integrating happiness into my project. My experiences living with Jan Buck (1934-2008) or *Nano* (father) as I called him, who became my father-in-law and my fiancé, Jens Klingenburg, also fueled my personal interest and intellectual passion to investigate the emotional facets of language use and cultural practices.

By way of revisiting those affective aspects of my personal life, I hope to add another layer here to understanding life in the field for me as a linguistic anthropologist. Twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Nano's best friend came to visit him. The two older gentlemen sat at a small table in our apartment and discussed the "troubles" facing the Sorbian community (see Chapters 2 and 3). Many times Nano, recognizing the limits of age and his decreased stature in the Sorbian community, expressed a sense of frustration with his inability to take part in institutional discussions. Their presence (and even our living situation) resonated with this "shameful" state of Sorbian affairs. We, as a family, were the last occupants of a four story 140 room building that was a dormitory for the Sorbian National Ensemble (SNE) during the Socialist period. Empty, dirty, and run down, this building architecturally symbolized linguistic and cultural loss to me. When Kristina would come to visit, I felt a sense of sadness as we chattered

in Sorb and German, because now those rooms were starkly silent and empty. I even sometimes worked at *Nano's* desk, a piece of furniture that was too large to keep in the apartment and had been moved outside of our living space. Even though I had to avoid being discovered by the property manager or maintenance workers when I was working outside our apartment, because we were not allowed to use the empty spaces, I felt that I was appropriating a space that was often under the surveillance of Germans and Sorbs.

As I wrote my field notes or transposed *Ferdinand* translations, I thought about his work as manager for SNE. With a sense of pride, he would describe his hiring of Sorbian translators and cultural consultants to explain to the German dancers, musicians, and other staff the significance of a piece from a Sorbian perspective. During contract negotiations (trying to sell the building), Nano told me about his earlier efforts to propose to the Sorbian Foundation for Language and Culture that they renovate the dormitory, because it would be more cost effective than renting new work spaces. Now, as I look back, I see myself as having a familial and professional responsibility to give something back to the Sorbian community. Although many Sorbs opened the doors to their offices, workspaces, and homes to me, Nano and Jens truly made me a part of their family even before the marriage (June 4, 2007, in Killearn, Scotland).<sup>2</sup> As his daughter-in-law, I feel a particular obligation to carry on his work in bringing attention to Sorbian language and culture. Living with Nano and Jens served as a constant reminder of the salience of emotions and fueled my intellectual desires to un-complicate the intertwining of language use and emotions.

When I returned to the United States, I set a challenge for my dissertation writing in exposing the range of emotions that often reveal what I colloquially, and with some anger once



described to Dr. Janet Keller as, “Bilingual people [referring to Sorbs in particular] are not always happy.” Encouraged by Dr. Alma Gottlieb and Dr. Janet Keller, I decided to integrate emotions as an intellectual foil into my dissertation (Fall 2009). From this shift in the writing of my dissertation findings, I can speak to several contributions that I make from theoretical and linguistic perspectives even when I continue a conversation with the Sorbian community. With a goal in mind that some might call “lofty,” this dissertation constitutes my endeavor to write a linguistic ethnography through the lens of emotions and, more broadly, happiness.

## Methodological Importance and Possible Improvements

...in fragile, embattled minority indigenous communities, good intentions are not sufficient for good and useful results, and we must be self-reflective and self-critical about the sort of projects we engage in that unwittingly will exacerbate rather than alleviate the problem (Wilkins 2000: 1).

I wouldn't wish the tensions or even the painful blunders away. They belong to the learning process of immersion experiences and are often the engine of discovery, casting cultural and linguistic differences into sharp relief. Some of the special insights of fieldwork may hinge on them (Dorian 2001: 149).

These two thoughts exemplify my perspective on my twenty-two months of fieldwork and the time taken writing my dissertation findings. In tracing the emergence of my research strategies (see Chapter 4), I theoretically rethought Sorbian linguistic practices and methodological analysis, while critically questioning each step that I made in improving my project. Adding to my own dubiousness in my methodological steps, I was repeatedly surprised by, and curious about, mixed language use or the range of practices associated with Sorbian mish-mash. In the field, I often blundered my way through documenting language use by employing techniques adapted to my research context exemplifying a multi-sited and multi-faceted ethnography.

Both my dictionary project and the ethnography cum translation are documentation projects, or a process of refining my data collection, but I have not as of yet addressed research on language documentation. Yet, the significance of my projects (the dictionary and ethnography cum translation) marks my serious efforts to approach hermeneutically everyday language use and document semi-standardized practices. It might seem illogical to wait until this point to explore the tenants of language documentation, but my focus has been and continues to be an investigation of language variation/diversity and not to suggest that *Ferdinand* translations are “STANDARDIZED” Sorbian language use.

Even before a linguist puts down a recording device, documenting a language involves a host of methodological, theoretical, and practical issues. Although my field site differed significantly from Bronislaw Malinowski’s tent or Edward Sapir’s recording studio, I confronted similar complex/problematic linkages between process and product (e.g. matters of consent, speaker’s competency, and fragility of recording, data loss, device used, and mode of language use, such as narrative, conversation, and ritual). Like Nancy Dorian (2001), I am grateful that many Sorbs griped and complained about the “troubles” in Lusatia, narrated their personal dilemmas while letting me see their “pain,” and even refused to let me record. Without these fieldwork catalysts, I would have never discovered *Ferdinand*.

Although the issues are numerous, looking at the linkages noted above provides insights into the complex challenges of documentation. The rubric of “speaker’s competency” entails questions about a person’s resources, the nature of the linguist/informant relationship, an informant’s linguistic background and education, and the actual recording site. Variation in any of these factors may generate different types of data. Each time I wrote my field notes, entered

words into my trilingual electronic resource, conducted interviews, and/or recorded Sorbian practices; I embraced the “trial-by –fire” character of my endeavors. I refined my project and queries by asking the same questions of Sorbian participants so that I could test for discrepancies (Briggs 1986). Aside from the actual language learning and preliminary trips to ascertain the parameters of the community with which I would be working, my preparation built on ethnographic field methods, familiarity with the literature on endangered languages, language planning, and revitalization, and my training in linguistics. Yet, I came to realize that scientific documentation is as much about inspiration as it is about dogged determination. Never forgetting that each project’s parameters need to be aligned with the particular context, such as language use, roles of elders/older speakers with monolingual backgrounds, and education, I recognized the value of my immersion into the local dynamics of a community undergoing language shift. Based on my fieldwork experiences and training, I believe that documentation projects should entail ethnographic inquiry coupled with linguistic foci.

No matter where in the world, another key query of documentation involves the nature of the interaction between the language specialist/researcher and a speaker of that specific language. In broad terms, this relationship may be salvage anthropology, enterprises to standardize a language, or formal exercises in creating a dictionary, lexicon, and/or grammar. Inherently it is also a political relationship because it often entails an intrinsic inequality between the documentarian and the people who use the language being documented. Yet, I hold a firm conviction that ethnography cum translation can lessen some of the problematic aspects of language documentation by utilizing several strategies.

Colette Grinevald (2003) employs prepositional rubrics that can frame a linguist/ language relationship: on, with, about, for, and by. First, documentation on a language connotes an abstracted linguistic system considering the morpho-syntactic relationships between constituent parts. My trilingual electronic dictionary exemplifies this kind of documentation; however, I believe that my analysis of *Ferdinand* translations gives a more detailed picture. Two, thinking of research with a language encourages a cooperative linguist/informant relationship. This type of research, also called “action” or “negotiated” research may empower speakers, because of their participation in documentation. Fully cognizant of the inter-/intracommunity pressures, I developed the *Ferdinand* project to partner with Sorbs in creating texts. To take this one step further, Sorbian translators also felt a sense of empowerment as they rendered a text according to their perspectives. Third, documentation about a language follows two often divergent tracks that can be prescriptive or descriptive in nature. Finally, Grinevald describes research by a linguist as work done by native scholars. Although I see the benefits of “native” research, my experiences in the Sorbian community as an outsider gave me the freedom to ask “who benefits” “what dialect/variety,” and “why” speech practices were so emotionally charged (see also Chapter 4). With these issues in mind, my ethnography cum translation not only takes advantage of multiple perspectives from a range of speakers, but also involves Sorbs directly in evaluating language use particularly in the matched-guise component when Sorbs compared texts and evaluated translations from other Sorbs (see also Chapters 4, 8, and 9).<sup>3</sup> However, I must note that ethnography cum translation is not a matched-guise tool. Based on my experiences, I think that any project either by a solo researcher, a team, or a native speaker should draw on all five

“propositional” frameworks. However, my project primarily speaks to work with a community taking into account their perspectives and language attitudes without failing to attend to fine-grained linguistic details.

In taking heed of Kenneth Hale’s admonition of linguistic anthropology when he called for greater involvement of native speakers, my ethnography cum translation represents “an exchange of competences between linguists and persons interested in the study of their own languages” (Hale 1969: 394). Without intending to skirt the very important questions about “native speakers,” I return to my earlier point about judging speakers. I primarily framed my discussion through Dorian’s identification of semi-speakers. Then, with the goal of making a theoretical intervention, I emphasized that linguists and language researchers should look at practices as semi-standardized and not speakers. At the same time intellectual attention focused on minority languages, bilingual, and/or endangered language speakers often utilizes a “logical circularity” (Joseph 2006: 82-83). As John Earl Joseph explains it:

If we define a linguistic identity according to the way people speak, how can we turn around use that same identity to explain why people speak the way they do? ....linguistic identity is a kind of emblem that people use to interpret whether they will have the same likes and dislikes, can understand and trust each other, or more crassly, how much they can get from the other (Joseph 2006: 82).

With my own revisions in the field and during the analysis of my data, I have followed this thread and presented precise evidence gathered from a range of bilingual Sorbs. Indirectly, Joseph levels a critique at linguistic research that may draw certain conclusions about speakers and their utterances. As I relinquished a simple code-switching paradigm and found myself letting go of my initial assumptions, primary hypothesis, and conclusions—a process that made my research on Sorbian speakers and their practices challenging—this process made me rethink language use in the Sorbian community.

As I thought about semi-standardized practices and linguistic disorder, I returned to Sapir's thoughts about language. When Sapir, the founding father of American linguistic anthropology, told us, the linguists, that "all grammars leak," I believe that we, researchers, empiricists, and ethnographers still benefit from his wisdom. Sapir was not just talking about the messiness of language, but also the people using those languages. In my methodological adaptations, I also became a speaker of three languages with shifting competencies and a research agenda. Likewise, the people we work with also have certain interests oftentimes to promote one language variety over another. In my expert opinion as an anthropologist, language documentation and research have always been and will always be an interpretive testing of hypotheses based on data collection from human beings invested in their speech, but that is not to say that linguistic inquiry or rigorous analytical approach should be abandoned. Instead, my use of mixed methods offers concrete evidence that linguistic, statistical, and ethnographic methods and insights can be integrated in research.

## Specific Methodological Points

My analysis of Sorbian translations of *Ferdinand* reflects on-going adjustments both in the field and in the United States during the coding process and statistical testing. Although my findings fail to offer a clear cut answer as to why Sorbs code-switch or mix registers based on grammatical rules or contextual factors, I find that Sorbs engage in a range of practices in translation, because they offer a sense of "happiness."<sup>4</sup> Their satisfaction with translation also involves more than in arrangements of signifiers. Rather, the process of arranging words reveals the mechanics of meaning-making, an interplay of local and nationalizing/globalizing ideologies, complementarity of knowledge and passion, and feelings of constraint and agency

in creatively constructing frictions reflective of the choices people wish they could make freely more often.

While in Germany, I also started a second project of translating Esphyr Slodobinka's charming story of peddler and a band of thieving monkeys in *Caps for Sale* (1940). Although I only worked with two Sorbian translators, preliminary results indicate that the process of translation progressed much smoother for several reasons. As the researcher, I had a much clearer goal of my methodological strategies. With a greater sense of confidence, I also could attend to more technical issues, such as word choice, and grammatical variation and, in turn, the translators felt much more comfortable with the process. Even with a total of 60 translations (27 currently coded), a larger data pool would allow for more statistical testing. However, now with an established process and plan to code the translations that I gathered in a seventh grade classroom, I also have the potential to compare results. This is research that will continue following this dissertation.

My novel methodology has many applications including, but not limited to, language documentation, education, and literacy. I anticipate publication of a Sorbian "*Ferdinand*" and application of projects similar to *Ferdinand* in Native American communities and at other research sites. Making *Ferdinand* available to the Sorbian community will create a written space where Sorbian speakers of all ages can deepen their appreciation of Sorb. I believe that this ethnography cum translation approach is an excellent methodology for obtaining access to minority language speakers who are conflicted about working with an anthropologist. It also has the potential to make a significant contribution in which language shift is occurring as well as in other sites of linguistic inequality. For example, in reviewing my 2008 conference paper

presented at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting Dr. Anita Puckett strongly stated, in her formal comments, that my ethnography cum translation “warrants replication in other settings, where the ‘bordering of space,’ however ‘space’ is perceived, is emergent, recursive, inchoate, fractal, or more viscerally and dangerously conflicted” (Puckett 2010, personal communication).

Despite the drawbacks and methodological challenges I encountered, ethnography cum translation has merit for many reasons. First, as a project, it is both flexible and portable. Second, it can be used with careful adjustments by researchers with low to high competency in the target language. Third, by gathering translations, ethnography cum translation provides another way to document language use from a range of speakers. Fourth, the ethnographic aspect of the project enriches the researcher’s understanding of language use beyond formal linguistic issues. Fifth, it offers an opportunity for the community to have access to multiple texts. As an anthropologist working with members of an endangered language community, I immediately see the merit of this project as another way to document languages. With an alarming rate of language loss from a global perspective, linguistic and anthropological research will benefit from another heuristic device that incorporates ethnographic observation with attention to linguistic questions.

Although I would describe the Sorbian language as “over-documented,” especially from the rubric “by” the community, construction of a trilingual electronic resource also exemplifies innovation in several ways. It is digital, comparative across three languages and comparative across established dictionaries. My dictionary project represents a valuable documentation tool in two significant ways. First, by employing formal techniques guided by a standard language



ideology, I came to understand the linguistic tensions that are relevant to speakers. Second, my dictionary project acted as a stepping stone to the *“Ferdinand”* project. It also provided an easily used reference tool for me and for participants during collection of translations. I see the *“Ferdinand”* project as valuable not only for anthropological analysis but also for language documentation with a focus on variation. Based on my experiences, I strongly support a multi-faceted language documentation project that takes into account the formal linguistic aspects of linguistic systems and the sociolinguistic context.

## Theoretical Findings and Linguistic Significance

As stated earlier, I believe that a research focus on the mechanics of linguistic survival engages an illuminating set of research questions that concern bilingualism (Heller 2007b). In this moment of increasing language loss and multilingualism, many scholars acknowledge that bilingualism is a linguistic reality and one that researchers may need to retheorize (see Heller 2007a). Although researchers may need to shed their own monolingual bias if they grew up monolingual themselves (Auer 2007a), new perspectives on bilingualism will significantly enrich not only interest in bilingualism and endangered language research. Because of these realizations and my experiences in the field, I follow Monica Heller’s (2007a) advice in rethinking bilingualism. Recognition of bilingualism encourages new approaches to language documentation that take into account practices that include code-switching as well as blurred codes in the tensions and frictions that Sorbs police, manipulate, and experience through emotional discourses. With a new, more comprehensive view of bilingualism, a range of inquiries will explore the “gray areas” (Heller 2008) of linguistic practices, social relations, and

discourses that may serve to vitalize communities under pressure to stop speaking a minority/indigenous language.

More recently, Bonnie McElhinny (2010) recognizes a similar “recent efflorescence [sic]” that incorporates discussions of gender, race, and colonial discussions into research on emotions. In discussing current work on language and emotions, McElhinny details site- and topic-specific engagements of local processes. Despite the growing scope of emotions and language research, I am firmly convinced that this vein of inquiry requires interdisciplinary conversations in a new form of cross-comparative engagement. As an Europeanist and post-socialist scholar, I draw heavily on work done in other contexts to deepen and enrich my understanding of linguistic practices.

While Sara Ahmed (2010) uses feminist critique and popular culture as a reference, she engages a much needed reconsideration of happiness and the cultural politics of emotions in racial and feminist discourses. In other words, as producers of knowledge, we often see interconnections between race, gender, colonial, bilingual/endangered contexts, and national/globalizing processes. This type of work can strengthen humanist endeavors to understand emotions. Reframing happiness and emotions may also entail a reexamination of linguistic prejudice and hegemonic structures of inequality through the lens of emotions and social discourses. Thus, we need a more nuanced approach that acknowledges the ironies of “ugly emotions” (Ngai 2005), the daily experiences of cruel optimism (Berlant 2010), and the affective frictions of multi-linguaged worlds. To take this one step further, I argue here that exposing emotional aspects of Sorbian selves and language use illuminates linguistic specifics

and sheds light on the mechanics of linguistic survival. This is relevant to my line of research, but also pertinent for other scholars to consider in their own research.

More nuanced understandings of the steps toward language death (leveling, convergence, simplification, lexical loss, and monostylism) exemplify a shift in research on endangered languages. However, a potential reification underpins many applications of this research stance. In viewing languages as bounded discrete codes, research may not only reproduce a Herderian one language-one culture-one nation ideology or a prescriptive discourse, but it may also assume language death without considering “why” a linguistic system has survived. Instead, I contribute to discussions of language endangerment by following in the footsteps of research on emotions that destabilize Euroamerican assumptions and emphasize the many roles emotions play in linguistic practices, social relations, and identities in multi-linguaged worlds. Throughout this dissertation, I have criticized underlying static dichotomies and argued for flexibility, dynamic processes, and virtuosity in a range of semi-standardized practices.

By broadening traditional endangered language approaches to include bilingualism, greater dialogues with the media may follow suit. While the importance of bringing attention to “language death” remains critical, public concern about language loss still reflects an orientalist view of the “exotic” others. As I worked through my dissertation findings, I rethought applications of Bourdieu’s and Bakhtin’s philosophies in their usefulness when considering linguistic practices, social relations not just between dominated and dominant but also within dominated, and emotional discourses. Repeatedly, I critique a specific type of view of language use as being primarily about hegemonic discourses of difference and structural inequalities

relating to a Herderian language ideology. In specific ways, I argue against specific aspects of such arguments including a single locus of centripetal and centrifugal forces, plurality of relations, and linguistic capital.

Thus, I challenged a classic view of languages that uses interlingual distinctions, intercultural social relations or power relations between classes, gendered dynamics, or macro-sociological transformations as the primary subject of interest. One thrust of my arguments involves considering intralingual dynamics and frictions as co-constitutive of current practices. Furthermore, I stress the inner workings of a community and individual perspectives in adapting to constantly changing circumstances impacted by local, national, transnational, and globalizing processes.

An overarching theme of my dissertation involves a rethinking of language use of emotions and linguistic differences as forms both vitalizing and paralyzing to bilingual Sorbs. First, I challenge an emphasis on bounded codes and bring attention to the nuances of linguistic policing. As I analyzed the nuances of semi-standardized practices, I document how Sorbs enact a range of practices that draw on their notions of internalized monolingualism, simultaneous displays of authority and expertise, and multiple ideologies. These practices are embodied paths that Sorbs walk in embracing linguistic diversity and tensions among different standards. Even more surprising is a possible indicator of how much Sorbs mix registers. For example, Sorbs appear to alternate every other marker, but seem to steer away from more or less than this degree of alternation. These frictional sites are places of poetic language use through register variation that are often justified and rationalized by metalinguistic laments and narratives of language use.

## Poetics and Register Variation

He, too, has been changed in his turn  
Transformed utterly:  
A Terrible Beauty is Born  
-W.B. Yeats (1997[1916]:54)

William Butler Yeats description of the Easter rising of 1916 is particularly apt in thinking about the “terrible beauty” of Sorbian lives and linguistic practices. In translating *Ferdinand*, Sorbs mixed registers and created frictions among them while transforming their own and other Sorbs linguistic practices. Their choices offer insights about interference, borrowing, declinations, nativization, notions of purity, and discourses of standardization. While German and Sorbian markers play significant roles in the use of resources, other frictions come into a play of signification. In everyday acts, Sorbs create linguistic diversity and I saw and documented these types of deeds in the traitorously heroic acts of Sorbian translators. These processes speak to the poetics of language that Sorbs create even while pointing to the terrible beauty of them as sounding “too Sorbian” or “too German.” As Bourdieu (1999b) points out in “*la petite misère* (ordinary suffering)” often comes about in resistance to unsettling circumstances. Sorbs enact interpretive resistance by using markers of village and urban language use, modern and old referents, written and spoken markers, and authoritative and expert skills. Thus my project of ethnography cum translation exposes the agency of individual speakers in the minutiae of choices in recreating everyday use of mish-mash and mixing registers. As Sorbs use myriad markers of their linguistic repertoires, they combat language loss in strategic enactments of semi-standardized practices.

In mixing registers, bilingual Sorbs walk the line between various types of language use. While Jillian Cavanaugh exposes the social aesthetics of language, especially in poetic

productions of Bergamasco speech, she emphasizes “tense intersections between good Italian and real Bergamasco” (Cavanaugh 2009: 195). In my portrayals of Sorbian speakers and language use, I extend my focus to include the navigations between good and real Sorbian language use. Fraught with power, hierarchy, sentiment, and linguistic nostalgia, Bergamasco language use offers speakers a set of shared orientations. Yet, Cavanaugh fails to offer a more detailed picture of the ways Bergamasco speakers arrange their linguistic resources. In her focus on Italian-Bergamasco tensions, she attends to discourses of linguistic heirlooms and prescriptive discourses. While similar dynamics affect Sorbian speakers, they also have a sense of new-fashioned treasures including sometimes those that they themselves invent.

To gain a more precise analytical understanding of register variation, I initially focused attention away from Sorbian-German tensions. At the same time, I reconsidered my own intellectual biases. In the end, I formulate a picture of the terrible beauty, the processes of language loss and linguistic silencing as well as a politics of indistinction that are contributing to erosion of the Sorbian community both from internal and external pressures. Second, while I emphasize the destructive potential of metalinguistic laments, shame, and the duality of ambiguity and anger, I also recognize the potential of emotional discourses to fortify linguistic virtuosity and contribute to negative evaluations of mish-mash. With significant variation in mixing registers, Sorbian speakers exude pride in their creative abilities while recognizing their poetic treachery. Furthermore, the complex textures of Sorbian frictions often coincide with the ways Sorbs enact multiple social and linguistic aesthetics.

With the recent Ethnologue statistical adjustment of 18,000 speakers (Lewis 2009), the ironic beauty of mish-mash and mixing registers appears to be under greater threat. When I

started my research, the Euromosaic (Nelde and Strubell 1996) report evaluated the Sorbian community as possibly being able to endure the threats to its well-being and acknowledge their potential to revitalize as the Sorbian community. This description compares with a liminal existence, that is becoming increasingly less “in-between,” as Sorbs shift toward a possible linguistic tip, a sudden demographic shift in which speakers suddenly shift to another language (Dorian 1981; Mertz 1989). Possibly, at this moment, invigorating semi-standardized practices requires greater attention to funding issues with regard to school closings, reduced offering of Sorbian performances by the Bilingual Theater, and cut-backs in popular print literature. Perhaps, more village events and programs for older monolingual elders as well as Sorbian children and youth would sustain local dialogues and interactions. Certainly open appreciation of Sorbian language use would influence the current dynamics. Drawing on forms of institutionalized/objectified and embodied capital respectively, Sorbs exploit a range of tensions in order to capitalize on frictions that might be celebrated rather than decried. It is these dynamics that I documented in *Ferdinand* translations and narratives of language use.

### Statistical Findings

In analyzing the statistical data, I provide evidence of the complex textures of Sorbian *Ferdinands* through statistical and ethnographic analysis of myriad frictional dynamics. One of the primary results of the exercises was noting the lack of significance of class or gender in Sorbian practices of mixing registers. In other words, all participants mixed registers in their translations. Another relevant aspect of my analysis relates to generational differences. While some Sorbs point to, “less desirable” utterances of Sorbian youth, for example, these discourses of difference encourage frictional practices and reflect Sorbian interest in language

use. Thus, Sorbian translators often draw on multiple and strategic linguistic evaluations. For example, a linguistic artifact may be associated with village or urban language use.

Statistical findings also answer questions about dynamics of written-spoken modalities, German-Sorbian contrasts, conservative tendencies versus innovation, and contexts of language use. These findings are significant in several ways, because they offer a way to understand the complexities of bilingual practices. I have shown that Sorbs utilize written and spoken frictions in tandem with Sorbian-German, urban-village, and modern-old distinctions. Surprisingly written and spoken markers do not significantly impact expertise and authoritative stances. Another result of statistical testing shows that Sorbs often substitute one type of register alternation for German-Sorbian frictions. For example, as Sorbs alternate more between written and spoken markers, they alternated less between clearly identifiable German and Sorbian items. Yet, a strong correlation between associations of urban and village spaces with German and Sorbian language use. This process also substantiates Sorbian identification of mish-mash as related to linguistic boundaries. Despite this strong link between mish-mash and forms of code-switching, my analysis shows that other factors figure prominently in creating a written mirror of spoken mish-mash.

Written and spoken modalities are key to the variation that I observed. From a broader perspective, the lack of literacy practices in some endangered language community represents a subject of interest (Hill and Hill 1986; Jaffe 1999). In communities with established literacy practices, written communication does not occur in isolation from other discourses. While Niko Besnier (1995) and Lila Abu-Lughod (1986) demonstrate that individuals interpretively resist hegemonic discourses through affective practices, their arguments fail to consider linguistic



specifics and mixed emotions. I believe that more specific enactments of flexibility, subtle arrangements of linguistic markers, and linguistic specifics (or more specifically, borrowings, loan words, code-switching, and morpho-syntactic lexemes) remain under-described in studies of language and emotions.

Difference between my work and that of my predecessors provides a fertile ground to consider language variation and emotions as involving multiple dimensions. I also expose a range of emotions related to language use. For example, Abu-Lughod emphasizes honor and shame and the ways Bedouin women resist silencing. In contrast, I show how Sorbs silence themselves and voice their opinions about language use. While Abu-Lughod addresses several emotions, Besnier refers to emotions and emotionality in vague terms rather than specifying emotional discourses and their specific relation to explicit forms of language use. Yet, Besnier's work, like Abu-Lughod's discussion powerfully shows the importance of emotions in social relations.

While I am inspired by Don Kulick's (1992) masterful analysis of code-switching practices as related to ideological and affective discourses, he does not ask why Taiap has survived. Yet, in his discussion of language shift, he sharply delineates language use presenting it in gendered categories. This approach to analysis reinforces assumptions about language use, namely, that women do not use language like men or vice versa. Although Kulick states that men publically talk about anger, he argues that men differ from women, because the men redefine anger through "cooperative recontextualizing work" (Kulick 1998: 97). Instead, in my analysis, I demonstrate that urbanites can speak like villagers and ruralists can use language like urbanites. Although bilingual Sorbs may recontextualize their language use, they also

acknowledge that many of their linguistic practices “sound funny.” This linguistic possibility of accomplishing multiple kinds of language diversity may occur in the syncretic practices in Malinche, but Hill and Hill theoretically represent language varieties as separate and distinct.

Furthermore, their analysis reflects a kind of emotional determinism with regards to what language is associated what emotion—a characteristic of Kulick’s work that I have discussed, previously. Furthermore, Sorbs are attached to and critical of many standards. Investigations of language use in bilingual and endangered language communities will benefit greatly from analysis of such deeper frictions and attention to multifaceted qualities of emotions as social action. Although my project centers on a community with well-established literacy practices, an oral tradition, and public rhetoric, Sorbs and their practices, I argue, likely represent transformations in many and diverse endangered/bilingual communities.

## **Imagined Futures**

Wabi-sabi 侘寂 -the crack in the tea cup adds to the beauty of drinking tea  
-Elizabeth Spreng

Being told to write something “pretty” by a Sorbian bilingual woman felt counterintuitive to me (see Chapter 4). It also seemed to me to be a mandate about happiness. As I rethought my research strategies and contemplated Sorbian dis-eases concerning threats to personal and collective well-being, I searched for small victories and even embraced the temporality of satisfaction. Even when Sorbs asked me what I thought about “mish-mash,” I often responded with my understanding of “wabi-sabi” and continued by saying that, “no one speaks perfectly and is that not beautiful.” At its most basic level, “wabi-sabi” is another way to consider mish-mash in that alternation between linguistic resources signals recognizable lines of difference in linguistic utterances.

I also envision “wabi-sabi” as another version of Anna Tsing’s “hair in the flour” analogy (Tsing 2005). In relating this to the making of ceremonial cakes, she characterizes a hair in the flour as a balancing act between appeasing and annoying. I would say that Sorbian use of mish mash and mixing registers exemplifies this ironic process of adhering to and challenging linguistic norms and conventions. We, Anna Tsing and I, also recognize the positions of the researcher in relation to informants. Tsing’s ethnographic voice resonates with her goals as a field worker—to disturb a routine and to ruin the legitimacy of power (Tsing 2005: 106). Likewise, my presence in Lusatia also disturbed business as usual in Sorbian institutions and in everyday activities, especially when I met with Sorbs to translate *Ferdinand*.

As an ethnographer my presence sometimes intensified a constant struggle for survival. As many Sorbs feel the effects of linguistic politics, public attention focused on endangered language communities coincides with their worries and their interactions with other Sorbs. Thus, endangerment as a discourse and a languaged world reveals the emotional connections between language use and social relations. With a current population of 18,000 speakers, the concerns that I have alluded to throughout my discussion of Sorbian linguistic practices, the ethos of the Sorbian community, and macrosociological pressures give me considerable pause, while altering my own vision of imagined Sorbian futures.

Two issues that concern demographic shifts dominate my imagining of the Sorbian community during my own lifetime. One, the need for face-to-face contact is critical to semi-standardized practices and also sustains mixing registers. Although Sorbs may find the pressures to speak Sorb both debilitating and infused with a politics of indistinction and sociolinguistic practices of distancing from the Sorbian community, these aspects of policing

also link discourses of survival to emotions. In exemplifying the Platonic notion of binding the community together, the range of emotions experienced in face-to-face interactions strengthens community integrity. Perhaps these very tensions and diversity in language use will contribute to a continuing sense of belonging to the German and Sorbian communities.

In rethinking community unity made up of a diverse range of speakers and practices, the fissures, frictions, and tensions exemplify the lived realities of multilingualism. While many researchers stress economic and macro-political pressures that lead to language shift, I maintain that individuals play a critical role, but are NOT the only players in maintaining linguistic and cultural diversity. With growing concern in Sorbian research on emigration and shifting attitudes in the Sorbian youth culture, I concur that these current transformations further threaten cultural and linguistic survival, but I also believe that they are as symptoms of an underlying issue. I suggest that the root of the problem involves the disappearance of lived spaces where Sorbs are able to disagree, debate, emphasize, talk about life or buy a "*chłeb* (roll)." These activities are the everyday mechanics of adapting to an increasingly international Lusatia. When Kristina returned to Lusatia and then moved to Bautzen, I helped her move her furniture and showed her where she could buy her bread in a Sorbian bakery. Although she lived in Lusatia, she did not realize there was only one bakery where the employees speak Sorb. She told me that having a space where she could purchase her breakfast in Sorb somehow made living in Bautzen better, because she perceived fewer opportunities for everyday conversation in the urban spaces outside of the institutional contexts. In understanding the contemporary dynamics and the importance of personal of face-to-face contact, bilingual Sorbs may be able to reimagine their future.

My other major hope involves generational issues. My interactions with Sorbian speakers who compose the middle and older generations lead me to think of them as bilingual persons who use a wide range of practices. Not always idealistic, these people also emotionally express the cruel optimism that allows for an acknowledgement of the difficulties of being a bilingual speaker of an endangered language while desiring a future (see Chapter 2). For example, Nano, who remembered being told of the linguistic racism during the Third Reich, implied that racist attitudes did not immediately dissipate after the war. Nano knew that many Germans were prejudiced against Sorbs, but he stated with conviction that he knew that he changed people's minds about Sorbian rights during his work as the ensemble's manager. In turn, he was an example of an older Sorb who believed in and continues to be confident in the cultural/linguistic worth of the Sorbian community.

I also imagine a different understanding of the future of research with Sorbian speakers. An initial difficulty in the field for me involved explaining anthropology to Sorbian intellectuals who advised me to study with Sorbian speakers in *Śtěpo*, a small village in the northern part of Upper Lusatia. They described a Sorbian village where the people spoke a distinct dialect and exemplified more traditional Sorbs by staying true to their Sorbian roots. In their understanding, they believed I wanted to study Volkskunde (folklore). Although I tried to explain what interested me, Sorbs seemed to associate anthropology and me with an attachment to their history and connection to non-modern ways of life. Indeed, Elka Tschernokoshewa (2008) recognizes the dilemmas of doing field research in a context characterized by hybridity. As part of broader issues involved in European ethnographic work

and problematic discourses of Volkskunde, my work tries to fill a gap in “comparative science” (Kockel 2008; Nic Craith 2008).

Yet, I recognize Sorbian sentiments about research on the Sorbian community. To repeat Charlotte’s critique, “Sie denken nur an der Vergangenheit (They [Sorbian intellectuals] think only about the past)” (see also Chapter 2). Yet, a desire not to consider the contemporary circumstances or avoid attention to the “unhappy” realities is counter-productive to sustaining cultural and linguistic diversity. Even in a consideration of current threats, a Sorbian research emphasis on mixed family language socialization and hybridity keeps an intellectual focus on German-Sorbian politics, rather than on the equally productive Sorbian-Sorbian social relations and the lived experiences of everyday politics.

A final point of conducting research with a community where members intensely feel the effects of destructive politics and structural inequalities involves intersubjective politics between ethnographers and members of the Sorbian community. At an American conference, I met another researcher who had attended the Summer School for Sorbian Language and Culture. After encountering many linguistic obstacles and methodological ostracism, she decided to conduct her research in Berlin. Describing the Sorbian community, many Germans and Sorbs pointed to the insularity of the Sorbs. While this strategy may ideally protect the Sorbian community from German threats, it has a darker side. Reinforcing a strong sense of Sorbian identity, it adds to the pressures felt by Sorbs to be Sorb, to be “pure,” and to deprecate mish-mash and *Budyšin* language use.

Joseph describes a similar situation in the Catalan community. With recognition of the historical transformations of Catalan politics and language use, Joseph argues that Catalan

speakers became “others” in Spain during the Franco government. While experiencing the greatest forces of oppression, these bilinguals also experienced a period of intense flowering from the 1930 to the 1970’s. However, now in a period of milder oppression, Catalan youth appear to be losing interest in their language. Another dynamic involves speakers of Valencian, another dialect of Catalan. Insightfully, Joseph proposes that “it is ironically, the Catalans who have become the oppressors” (Joseph 2006: 40) in critiquing the youth as well as other Catalan language varieties. I recognize a similar dynamic existing in Lusatia. Acknowledging the significance of Sorbian-Sorbian imbalances, the dynamics and frictions of social life and language worlds may serve as the strongest motivator of Sorbian language use and affiliation (Joseph 2006). During my research, I witnessed a preoccupation with economic funding, productions of standardized nationalized language use, closing of schools, and other perceived threats to Sorbian identity. While these areas merit attention, I imagine that focusing on other strategies and policy measures can sustain linguistic and cultural diversity, to positive ends, as I have previously described.

Thus, a Janus-faced view of Sorbs may emerge in endangered language research, especially in intellectual interest in the power dynamics and language decline. Not only should researchers reconsider their views of bilingual speakers and endangerment, but, I hope, more Sorbs will reflect on their reactions to outsiders and desires to portray a “pretty” image of a traditional culture and exemplifies the “love-based criterion” that Virginia Domínguez advocates (Domínguez 2000). From my historical work in archives and dictionaries, I believe that Sorbian speakers have mixed registers for a significant period of time. Looking at the historical transformations of semi-standardized practices would entail archival work as well as

conducting a statistical analysis of the oral history project or other records of historical language use initiated by the Sorbian Institute in 2007. This would be another productive direction to take in future research.

From the *Ferdinand* data, a clearer picture of Sorbian identities and linguistic practices emerges. First, it seems that most Sorbs experience mixed emotions about their identities; employ a range of semi-standardized practices reflecting multiple emotional discourses; and mix linguistic resources to encompass the complexities of who they are. This mixing transcends German-Sorbian tensions. I find it particularly critical at this moment of linguistic “tip” to devote funding and attention to alternative spaces of public discourses to delve into the variation within a speech community (see Mertz 1989). Furthermore, removing logistical obstacles to creating dialogues may be more important than setting up an EU office or applying for EU funding—a point brought up to me by both Timothy and other Sorbs. In the fall of 2007, I knew of an upcoming EU evaluation team that would assess the vitality of the Sorbian community.

Although I was not asked to participate in this EU project, I imagine a time when an anthropologist would participate as an intermediary and a consultant between EU/German policy makers and Sorbian speakers. Another hope I have is with the generation of older monolingual speakers that often feel isolated. My father-in-law continues to symbolize to me the adversity that older speakers face in their limited contact with other Sorbian speakers. Perhaps, greater person-to-person contact and sustaining the current opportunities for face-to-face interactions are necessary measures to be promoted and funded.



When a beautiful crack in a teacup appears, a call to arms to fix it is less important than appreciating it. I came to understand Sorbian linguistic practices, emotional discourses and local politics this way. The Sorbian community may never become a “perfect,” “pretty,” or even a “happy” national or indigenous community. Furthermore, once the cracks are accepted by speakers and linguists, a reconsideration of happiness may show that it is not so far out of grasp or an unattainable goal. Instead, satisfaction can be understood as lived, imperfect, and one of many goals in walking the line in multi-linguaged worlds.

#### Key to Font Distinctions

Normal Calibri Font	English
<i>Italic Calibri Font</i>	Sorb
<u>Underlined Calibri Text</u>	German (used in English body of text)

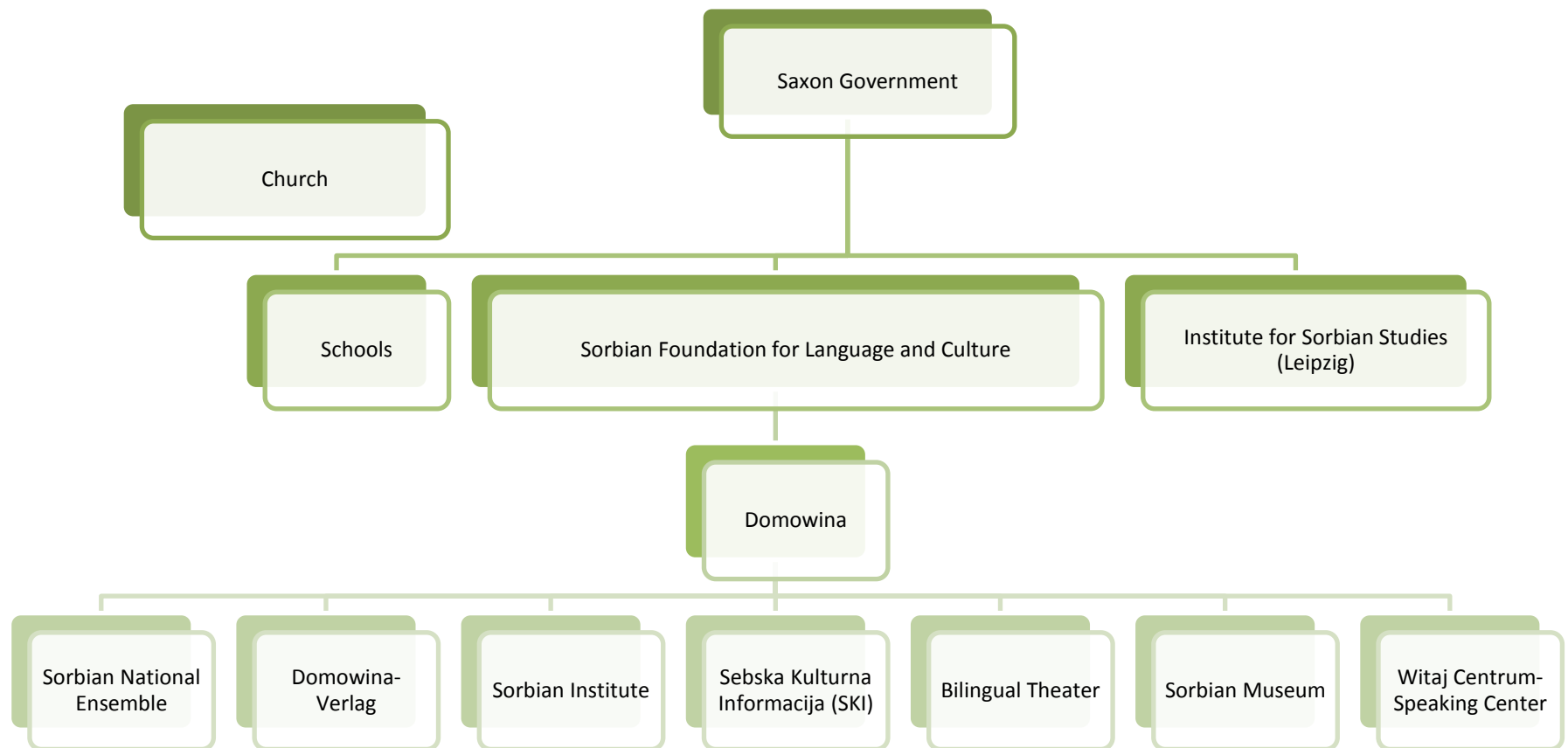
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<sup>1</sup> Gabriele Budach, Sylvie Roy, and Monica Heller (2003) detail the ways speakers strategically use their bilingual resources that frame them as good or bad speakers of a non-dominant language. Adding to this discussion, Deborah Cameron (2005) addresses how activities like answering the phone in a call-center also entail certain styles of language use. I observed similar style shifts as Sorbs used the telephone in work contexts and, themselves, reinforced certain types of linguistic commodification.

<sup>2</sup> On a more personal note, the wedding was a celebration of our mixed heritages that did not necessarily make me a full member of the Sorbian community (See Chapter 4). We got married on the same day, just 227 years later, as my great grandfather (Alexander Dunn) in the home he built for his wife, Mary Mcindoe, and family. Jens wore a traditional kilt and I wore my family tartan. On the night before our wedding, Jens started talking to his father in Sorb. With tears in his eyes, Nano said that he never knew that his son could speak Sorb so beautifully. Although Jens and I as a married couple do not use Sorb as our primary language at home (rather mixing German-English-Sorbian resources), we do exemplify a transnational marriage often privately discussing our relationships to multiple cultural and linguistic communities.

<sup>3</sup> Matched-guise exercises involve a review of texts that are generally read out loud. Then, informants answer questions about the text or speaker. In Woolard’s application of this technique, she also included questions that relate to emotional evaluations of speakers. For example, participants answered questions “¿Te parece simpático? (Does [the person] seem nice)” or “¿Te parece orgullosa? (Does [the person] seem proud?)” (Woolard 1989: 153). In my adaptation, I included more specific questions about the text, e.g. “Does the text seem nice?” With a more open-ended approach, participants in my project often felt the ability to talk about their emotions, life histories, and personal perspectives, when I asked why they liked or disliked a certain interpretation.

<sup>4</sup> Accommodation or clearly defined rules concerning monolingual or bilingual spaces affect Sorbian practices as Sorbs police linguistic boundaries (see Chapters 3, 4, and 5)





## APPENDIX A: Institutional Map


## APPENDIX B: Funding Allocations


Approximately 90% of the Foundation's budget is set aside for the support of Sorbian institutions.




 Sorbisches National Ensemble (27%)  
Sorbian National Ensemble


 Domowina-Verlag (16%)  
Domowina-Verlag  
(The Sorbian Publishing House)


 Sorbisches Institut (10%)  
Sorbian Institute


 Sprachzentrum (9%)  
Witaj Program  
(Bilingual Educational Program)


 DSVTh (8%)  
German-Sorbian Folk Theater


 Domowina (7%)


 Stiftungsverwaltung (11%)  
Foundation Management

 Sorbisches Museum Bautzen (2%)  
Sorbian Museum, Bautzen

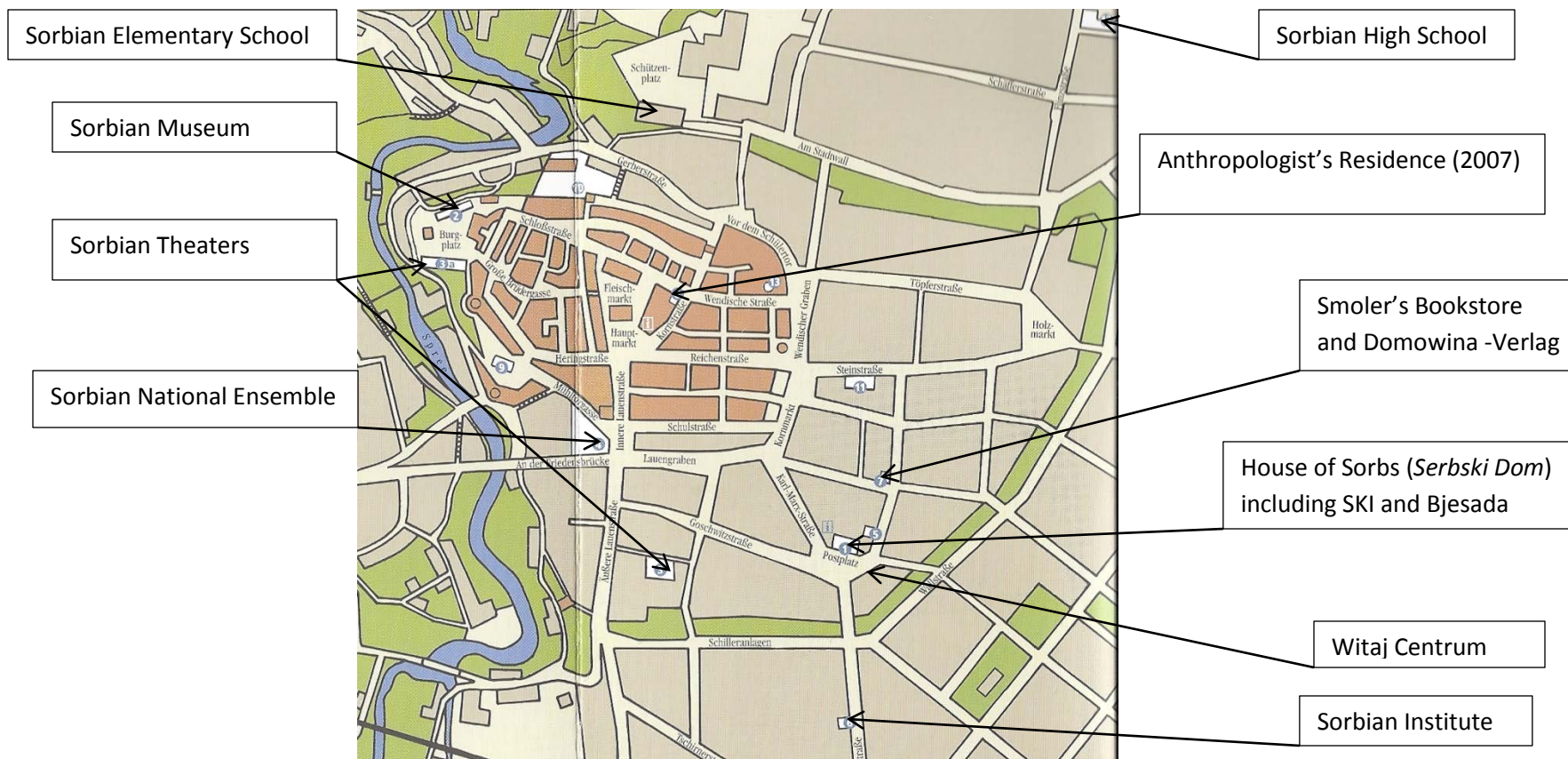
 Wendisches Museum Cottbus (1%)  
Wendish Museum, Cottbus

 Schule für NS Sprache und Kultur (1%)  
School for Lower Sorbian Language  
and Culture

 Projekte (7%)  
Projects

 Investitionen (1%)  
Investments

See Założba za Serbski Lud Stiftung für das sorbische Volk N.d.



APPENDIX C: Map of Sorbian Spaces in Bautzen (*Budyšin*)

## APPENDIX D: *Ferdinand* Text

English

Page 1: Once upon a time in Spain

Page 2: there was a little bull and his name was Ferdinand.

Page 3: All the other bulls he lived with would run and jump and butt their heads together,

Page 4: But not Ferdinand.

Page 5: He liked to sit quietly and smell the flowers.

Page 6: He had a favorite spot out in the pasture under a cork tree.

Page 7: It was his favorite tree and he would sit in its shade all day and smell the flowers.

Page 8: Sometimes his mother, who was a cow, would worry about him. She was afraid he would be lonesome all by himself.

Page 9: “Why don’t you run and play with the other little bulls and skip and butt your head?” she would say. But Ferdinand would shake his head. “I like it better here where I can sit quietly and smell the flowers.”

Page 10: His mother saw that he was not lonesome, and because she was an understanding mother, even though she was a cow, she let him just sit there and be happy.

Page 11: As the years went by Ferdinand grew and grew until he was very big and strong.

Page 12: All the other bulls who had grown up with him in the same pasture would fight each other all day. They would butt each other and stick each other with their horns. what they wanted most of all was to be picked to fight at the bull fights in Madrid.

Page 13: But not Ferdinand—he still liked to sit just quietly under the cork tree and smell the flowers.

Page 14: One day five men came in very funny hats to pick the biggest, fastest, roughest bull to fight in the bull fights in Madrid.

Page 15: All the other bulls ran around snorting and butting, leaping and jumping so that the men would think that they were very very strong and fierce and pick them.

Page 16: Ferdinand knew that they wouldn’t pick him and he didn’t care. So he went to his favorite cork tree to sit down.

Page 17: He didn’t look where he was sitting and instead of sitting on the nice cool grass in the

shade he sat on a bumble bee.

Page 18: Well, if you were a bumble bee and a bull sat on you what would you do? You would sting him. And that is just what this bee did to Ferdinand.

Page 19: Wow! Did it hurt! Ferdinand jumped up with a snort. He ran around puffing and snorting, butting and pawing the ground as if he were crazy.

Page 20: The five men saw him and they all shouted with joy. Here was the largest and fiercest bull of all. Just the one for the bull fights in Madrid!

Page 21: So they took him away for the bull fight day in a cart.

Page 22: What a day it was! Flags were flying, band were playing...

Page 23: ...and all the lovely ladies had flowers in their hair.

Page 24: They had a parade into the bull ring.

Page 25: First came the Banderillos with long sharp pins with ribbons on them to stick in the bull and make him mad.

Page 26: Next came the Picadores who rode skinny horses and they had long spears to stick in the bull and make him even madder.

Page 27: Then came the Matador, the proudest of all—he thought he was very handsome, and bowed to the ladies. He had a red cape and a sword and was supposed to stick the bull last of all.

Page 28: Then came the bull, and you know who that was don't you—FERDINAND.

Page 29: They called him Ferdinand the Fierce and all the Banderillos were afraid of him and the Picadores were afraid of him and the Matador was scared stiff.

Page 30: Ferdinand ran to the middle of the ring and everyone shouted and clapped because they thought he was going to fight fiercely and butt and snort and stick his horns around.

Page 31: But not Ferdinand. When he got to the middle of the ring he saw the flowers in all the lovely ladies' hair and he just sat down and smelled.

Page 32: He wouldn't fight and be fierce. He just sat and smelled. And the Banderillos were mad and the Picadores were madder and the Matador was so mad he cried because he couldn't show off with his cape and sword.

Page 33: So they had to take Ferdinand home.

Page 34: And for all I know he is sitting there still under his favorite cork tree, smelling the flowers just quietly.

Page 35: He is very happy.

#### German

Page 1: Es war einmal in Spanien,

Page 2: da lebte ein kleiner Steir, der heiß Ferdinand

Page 3: Die anderen kleinen Steire auf seiner Weide hopsten and rannten herum, rempelten sich an und übten Hörnerstoßen.

Page 4: Ferdinand aber nicht.

Page 5: Er saß gern still da und roch an den Blumen.

Page 6: Er hatte einen Lieblingsplatz hinten auf der Weide, unter einer Korkeiche.

Page 7: Sie war sein Lieblingsbaum. In ihrem schatten saß er den ganzen Tag und freute sich am Duft der Blumen.

Page 8: Manchmal machte sich seine Mutter, die eine Kuh war, Sorgen um ihn. Sie fürchtete, er könnte sich einsam fühlen, so ganz allein.

Page 9: „Warum läufst du nicht mit den anderen kleinen Steiren herum and spielst Hüpfen und Hörnerstoßen?“, fragte sie dann. Aber Ferdinand schüttelte nur den Kopf. „Ich finde es hier schöner, wo ich einfach dasitzen und die Blument riechen kann.“

Page 10: Seine Mutter sah ein, dass er nich einsam war. Und weil sie zwar eine Kuh, aber trotzdem eine verständnisvolle Mutter war, ließ ihn einfach dasitzen und glücklich sein.

Page 11: die Jahre vergingen, und Ferdinand wuchs und wuchs, bis er sehr groß und stark war.

Page 12: Die andere Stiere, die auf der gleiche weide ausgewachsen waren, kämpften jeden Tag miteinander. Sie rammten die Schädel aneinander und spießten sich gegenseitig mit den Hörnern auf. Alle wollten unbedingt für die Steirkämpfe in Madrid ausgewählt werden.

Page 13: Ferdinand aber nicht. Er saß immer noch am liebsten unter der Korkeiche und roch an den Blumen.

Page 14: Eines Tages erschienen fünf Männermit sehr komischen Hüten, um den größten, schnellsten und bösesten Stier für die Arena von Madrid auszusuchen.

Page 15: Die anderen Steiren galoppierten stampfend und schnaubend herum und sprangen und steißen sich, damit die Männer sie für sehr, sehr stark und wild halten und mitnehmen würden.

Page 16: Ferdinand wusste, dass sie ihn nicht nehmen würden, und war ihm egal. Also ging er zu seiner Lieblingskorkeiche, um sich hinzusetzen.

Page 17: Er sah nicht genau hin, als er sich setzte und statt im schönen, schattigen Gras saß er auf einer Biene.

Page 18: Wemm du eine Beine wärst, und ein steir setzte sich auf dich—was würdest du tun? Du würdest ihn stechen. Und genau das tat die Biene mit Ferdinand.

Page 19: Au! Das tat weh! Ferdinand sprang auf and brüllte. Er stampfte herum, schanubte und schnaufte, senkte den Kopf, stieß mit den Hörnern zu und schärrte wie verrückt mit den Hufen.

Page 20: Die fünf Männer sahen ihn und johlten vor Freude. Hier war er, der größte und wildeste von allen. Der sollte mit zum Stierkampffest nach Madrid!

Page 21: Also setzen sie ihn in einen Pferdekarren und brachten ihn hin.

Page 22: Was für ein Tag! Fahnen wehten, Musik spielte...

Page 23: ...und die schönen Damen trugen Blumen im Haar.

Page 24: Der festliche Einzug in die Arena begann.

Page 25: Zuerst kamen die Banderillos mit langen, spitzen, bändergeschmückten Stäben. Damit würden sie den Stier stechen, um ihn wütend zu machen.

Page 26: Als Nächstes kamen die Picadores auf ihren mageren Pferden. Sie hatten lange Lanzen, mit denen sie den Steir stechen würden, um ihn noch wütender zu machen.

Page 27: Danach kam der Matador, der stolzeste von allen. Er fand sich sehr schön und verneigte sich vor den Damen. Er hatte ein rotes Capa und einen Degen. Er sollte den Steir als Letzer stechen.

Page 28: Dann kam der Steir. Du weißt, wer das war, oder?—Ferdinand.

Page 29: „Ferdinand der Fürchterliche“ hatten sie ihn genannt, und alle Banderillos hatten Angst vor ihm, und die Picadores hatten Angst vor ihm, und dem Matador lief der Angstschweiß von der Stirn.



Page 30: Ferdinand trabte in die arena, und die Zuschauer jubelten und klatschen, weil sie glaubten er werde fürchterlich kämpfen, toben und schnauben, mit gesenktem Kopf losrennen und mit den Hörnern zustoßen.

Page 31: Das tat Ferdinand aber nicht. Als er in der Mitte der arena angekommen war, sah er all die Blumen in den Haaren der schönen Damen, setzte sich still hin und roch. (My revision, „roch,“ replaced the original German text of „sog ihren duft ein.“)

Page 32: Er kämpfte nicht und wurde nicht wild, ganz gleich, was sie mit ihm machten er saß nur da und genoß den Duft. Und die Banderillos wurden wütend, die Picadores wurden noch wütender, und der Matador war so wütend, dass er anfang zu heulen, weil er nicht mit seiner Capa und seinem Degen angeben konnte.

Page 33: So mussten sie Ferdinand wieder nach Hause bringen.

Page 34: Und soweit ich weiß, sitzt er da noch immer, unter seiner Lieblingskorkeiche, und freut sich still am Duft der Blumen.

Page 35: Er ist sehr glücklich.

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