

# Perceptions of difference in the Greek sphere

## The case of Cyprus\*

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Cypriot Greek has been cited as “the last surviving Modern Greek dialect” (Contossopoulos 1969:92, 2000:21), and differences between it and Standard Modern Greek are often seen as seriously disruptive of communication by Mainland and Cypriot Greeks alike. This paper attempts an anatomy of the linguistic ‘difference’ of the Cypriot variety of Greek. By placing this in the wider context of the history of Cypriot Greek, the study and current state of other Modern Greek dialects, and state and national ideology in the two countries, Greece and Cyprus, it is possible to identify both diachronic and synchronic, as well as structural and ideological factors as constitutive of this difference.

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### 1. Introduction: Gauging the difference

A question frequently asked of the linguist who studies the Cypriot variety of Greek is “Why is Cypriot Greek so different?”<sup>1</sup> The sheer phrasing of this question betrays some of its implicit assumptions: ‘different’ being a two-place predicate, the designation of Cypriot Greek as ‘different’ points to the existence of a second term to which Cypriot Greek is being implicitly compared. This second term is, of course, Standard Modern Greek (henceforth SMG), which, nevertheless, being ‘Standard,’ also represents the norm — or, if you prefer, the yardstick — by which divergences are measured. As Matsuda (1991, cited in Lippi Green 1997:59) points out, “[w]hen the parties are in a relationship of domination and subordination, we tend to say that the dominant is normal, and the subordinate is *different* from normal” (emphasis added). Lippi-Green (ibid.) concurs: “The term *standard* itself does much to promote this idea: we speak of one standard and in opposition, non-standard or substandard” (original emphasis; cf. Moschonas 2005:292).<sup>2</sup>

Comments or questions along these lines, as well as reports of communication failures between Cypriot and Mainland Greeks abound in informal discussions between linguists and non-linguists alike.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, such comments are not restricted to lay discourse, but are also found in scholarly publications remarking on the “phonetic peculiarity” and “hard to understand” or “deviant” nature of Cypriot speech (e.g., Contossopoulos 2000:24–25; Ralli 2006:123). In other words, it’s official: Cypriot Greek is different, sometimes to the point of incomprehensibility.

At the same time, one must acknowledge that this incomprehensibility goes only one way (cf. Newton 1972b:19): it is only Cypriot Greek which may fail to be understood by speakers of other varieties of Greek.<sup>4</sup> Speakers of the standard, on the other hand, have no difficulty making themselves understood by Greek Cypriots. Asymmetrical intelligibility between Cypriot and SMG would, at first glance, seem to make this a case of dialect-to-standard relationship (Hudson 1996:36). However, the historical and political context of language use in Cyprus makes this question anything but straightforward to answer.

The formation of the Cypriot dialect is roughly placed between the 7th and 14th centuries CE, slightly pre-dating that of the other Modern Greek dialects, which are collectively traced back to the Hellenistic koiné and associated with the diminishing influence of Constantinople (Tzitzilis 2000; Ralli 2006:123; see also Section 3 below). However, unlike most other Modern Greek dialects, Cypriot remained outside the confines of the modern Greek state when this was established in the 1830s, and during its subsequent expansion to its present borders in 1948. And while Cypriot is not alone in this respect — the Greek varieties of the Pontus, Cappadocia and Southern Italy have, most famously, shared this fate — it is certainly unique in being the first language of the majority of the population in a country other than Greece, as is the case since Cyprus was declared an independent Republic in 1960.<sup>5</sup>

These historical and political circumstances set the scene, I claim, for both Mainland and Cypriot Greeks’ perceptions of Cypriot Greek as ‘different.’ Although this difference is frequently reified and taken for granted, it nevertheless relies on two rather dubious premises. The first is a sweeping generalization about the nature of the two varieties at hand, namely that each is sufficiently homogeneous internally to remain distinct from the other. Only if one takes SMG to be a well-circumscribed variety that does not overlap with Cypriot Greek, and *vice versa*, can one compare the two. However, as any (socio-)linguist would readily concur, internal homogeneity is a myth that capitalizes on “shared *forgetting*,” a notion proposed as central to the social constitution of nationhood at least as much as shared memories (Joseph 2004:114, original emphasis; cf. Moschonas 2005:296). This view, then, overlooks both the variability within each variety — along geographical and social axes for SMG, to which an acrolectal vs. basilectal

axis is added for Cypriot Greek (on which see Katsoyannou et al. 2006) — as well as a great deal of commonalities between them (e.g., overall patterns in morphology and syntax, not to mention a great number of lexical items). In sum, any discussion of the difference between SMG and Cypriot Greek presupposes abstracting away from the facts on the ground by both glossing over internal differences and ignoring external commonalities. And while this abstraction will be frequently called into question in this article — for instance, when discussing the various elements combining in contemporary Cypriot Greek (Section 4), as well as dialectal variability within Greece (Section 5.1) — this same abstraction must also be implicitly assumed — in the same way that the difference is often unquestioningly assumed — if the question of the ‘difference’ of Cypriot Greek is to be posed and made sense of at all.

The second dubious premise on which the question of the difference of Cypriot Greek relies is that everyone shares this view. In other words, once the difference between SMG and Cypriot Greek is reified, it is fixed and remains stable across speakers and encounters. However, as Lippi-Green (1997:72; emphasis added) is quick to remind us,

When we are confronted with a new person we want to talk to or must talk to, we make a quick series of social evaluations based on many external cues, one of them being the person’s language and accent. Those sociolinguistic cues are directly linked to homeland, the race and ethnicity, the social self of the person in front of us. *Based on our personal histories, our own backgrounds and social selves* (which together make up a set of filters through which we hear the people we talk to), we will take a communicative stance. Most of the time, we will agree to carry our share of the [communicative] burden. Sometimes, if we are especially positive about the configuration of social characteristics we see in the person, or if the purposes of communication are especially important to us, we will accept a disproportionate amount of the burden.

Intelligibility, in other words, is a matter of degree and can vary along a number of dimensions including familiarity with the other variety, the type of activity, familiarity with, and disposition toward, one’s interlocutor, as well as familiarity and emotional involvement with the particular topic at hand (cf. Hudson 1996:35–36). And since intelligibility is widely rationalised as the interactional outcome of difference — for, why else would intelligibility be appealed to as a criterion for dialect vs. language status (Voegelin & Harris 1951), if not because it is supposed to tell us something about how different two varieties are? — varying degrees of intelligibility can generate varying judgments about the degree of difference between two varieties across circumstances and speakers. A survey of individual speakers’ perceptions of the difference of Cypriot Greek would therefore be a worthwhile project in its own right, one which is likely to reveal individual and perhaps even

cross-generational variation itself, calling for an explanation. However, the purpose of this article is different. Rather than gauging perceptions of difference at the micro-level, where they are also prone to methodological limitations such as subject accommodation to the interviewer and/or style of the questionnaire, the difference of Cypriot Greek is now dealt with as a macro-level phenomenon. At this level, there is a general consensus among speakers of both varieties — also reflected in linguists' comments cited at the outset — that a non-negligible degree of difference exists between them.

Granting, then, always with these two provisos in mind, that perceptions of difference between SMG and Cypriot Greek are fairly widespread, my aim is to trace the causes of these perceptions. To place linguistic developments on the island in their historical and geographical context, I begin by providing a brief outline of the history of Cyprus (Section 2), and of the emergence of the Cypriot dialect and its position in classifications of Modern Greek dialects (Section 3). I then focus on particular elements that distinguish Cypriot Greek from SMG synchronically at all levels of analysis and discuss their provenance (Section 4). It will emerge that such elements may be traced back to four main sources: ancient Greek, South-Eastern Greek, other languages, and innovations. Relating this finding to both language-specific and language-independent processes, I suggest that structural factors — some more than others — contribute to perceptions of difference between the two varieties by providing linguistic (some may say 'objective') grounds for it. The lion's share, however, in perceptions of the difference of Cypriot Greek must be carried, I argue, by ideological factors. Under this umbrella, I discuss the contribution of language to constructions of national identity in the two countries over the past couple of centuries, which has resulted in whatever structural/'objective' differences existed in the first place being minimised or maximised according to the prevailing ideological and socio-psychological trends each time (Section 5). By deconstructing the perceived difference of Cypriot Greek in this way, my aim is to show that this difference, and perceived differences between linguistic varieties in general, are dynamic, constantly produced and re-produced through linguistic behaviour and its evaluation.

## 2. The historical argument

Historical accounts in works dealing with contemporary topics are typically limited to the immediate or, at most, recent past, since their purpose is to provide background information that helps place the topic in context. However, as Stamatakis (1991:63) has pointed out,

“History,” in the sense of “common history,” is often seen as an element defining ethnic membership; perceptions of a common past are related to the quest for origins/descent. However, in defining elements of ethnic identity, historicization also denotes the practices behind the quest for “primordial” origins. It means that “stereotypes,” “national ideologies” and “prejudices” are created, maintained and changed arbitrarily by processes related to the operation of a “collective” social memory.

Few places can lay claim to a history of colonization as long and colourful as that of Cyprus. It should therefore come as no surprise that history is often brought in as the ultimate arbiter of hotly contested issues such as the Greek character (Ελληνικότητα) of the island by both those who wish to defend it (Hadjiioannou 1990a; Voskos, in press) and those who contest it (Grekos 1980/1982 reported in Stamatakis 1991:86 n. 54). The purpose of this brief overview of Cypriot (pre-)history is to escape the narrow focus on events from WWII onwards, which tend to be better known anyway, and to show that, following the first evidence of human presence on the island, no less than eleven ethnicities settled and ruled it for longer or shorter periods of time. If national claims are thus built, at least in part, on historical arguments, in the case of Cyprus one would be spoilt for choice. Foregrounding the importance of one wave of settlers over another, not to mention forgetting that the ethnicities of bygone eras do not straightforwardly correspond to those of today, can give rise — and indeed has (Stamatakis 1991 and below) — to several different takes on the island’s history and cultural identity.

Recent advances in Cypriot archaeology (Swiny 2001) place human presence on the island as far back as the 10th millennium BCE at the site of Aetokremnos.<sup>6</sup> Human presence continues uninterrupted through 2500 BCE, when the arrival of new populations from Asia Minor marks the beginning of the Bronze Age on Cyprus. Contacts with the Aegean occur as early as 1900 BCE, followed by exchanges with the Levant and Egypt around 1650 BCE. New populations from Mycenaean Greece arrive in 1200 BCE, the period traditionally cited as the beginning of the Hellenization of the island (Voskos, in press). The earliest evidence for the use of the Cypro-syllabic script dates from 1100 BCE during the Cypro-Geometric period, when the first city-kingdoms were also established.

From 850 till 709 BCE Cyprus was under Phoenician rule, with Kition being the most important colony of the Phoenicians on the island. It is in fact to this period that 20th c. proponents of Cypriotism have looked in search of an alternative to “Greek cultural imperialism,” which has led them to counter-propose the existence of a separate “Cypriot nation [that] emerged out of strong Phoenician influences” (Stamatakis 1991:77 and the references therein; see also Section 5 below). Subsequently, Cyprus came under Assyrian rule (709–663 BCE), followed by a century of independence of the Cypriot kingdoms, until in 526 BCE the island

was annexed by the Persians (526–333 BCE). During this period, the influence of Greek culture on the island increased and the Greek alphabet was introduced. During the Hellenistic period that followed (294–30 BCE), Cyprus was part of the Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt and under heightened influence from Egyptian culture, while over the next four centuries the island was under Roman rule (30 BCE–395 CE), first as part of the province of Syria, and subsequently as a separate province.

The Byzantine period on Cyprus begins in 395 CE and continues — punctuated by the Arab raids of 632–902 CE that institute a regime of joint Byzantine-Arab rule which ends with the campaigns of Nikephóros Phokas in 965 CE — until 1191 CE, when the island was conquered by Richard Lionheart. This year marks the beginning of the medieval period in Cyprus, during which the island was first an independent Frankish kingdom, the Lusignan kingdom of Cyprus (1192–1489), and subsequently a Venetian colony (1489–1570/71). It is to this period that the earliest documents in the Cypriot dialect date, and, consequently, where the beginnings of the modern dialect have been sought (Hadjiioannou 1990c; Terkourafi 2005a). During the ensuing three centuries, Cyprus was part of the Ottoman Empire until, in 1878, it came under British administration, being declared a colony of the Crown in 1925.

Following a 4-year struggle for union with Greece (1955–1959), Cyprus was declared an independent Republic on 16 August 1960. Inter-communal strife between the Greek and Turkish communities resulted in the gradual separation of the two populations and the presence of UN troops on the island since 1964, climaxing in the Greek military coup against the first President of the Republic, Makarios, and the invasion of Turkish troops in July and August 1974. Since then, the two communities have been leading practically separate lives,<sup>7</sup> and it is in this divided state that Cyprus became, in April 2004, a member of the European Union, amidst a renewed dynamic calling for the resolution of the now infamous ‘Cyprus problem’ (το Κυπριακό).

### 3. The emergence of Cypriot and its position among Modern Greek dialects

While the formation of Modern Greek dialects is generally placed between the 8th and 15th centuries CE, the formation of the Cypriot dialect in particular has been placed somewhat earlier, between the 7th and 14th centuries CE, with the relevant processes accelerated by the Arab conquests of Palestine and Syria, and the ever increasing isolation of the island from Constantinople (Horrocks 1997:286, 306–7; Sakellarios 1891:β’). The linguistic variety spoken on the island up until that time would have been some version of the Byzantine koiné, possibly closer to an Eastern koiné, claimed as a common substratum to the varieties of Rhodes,

Cyprus, and the Dodecanese (cf. Tsopanakis 1970–71:136, 181; see also below on the South-Eastern group of dialects). Indeed, if Horrocks’s (1997:37) suggestion to view the koiné “as a superordinate variety standing at the pinnacle of a pyramid comprising an array of lower-register varieties, spoken and occasionally written” is correct, it follows that regional differences did not emerge only later as a result of political fragmentation but persisted throughout the period when the koiné was used (cf. Tzitzilis 2000). Some peculiarities, both ancient Greek survivals and innovations, in the language of the 7th c. bishop Leontios of Neapolis — which otherwise aligns itself with medieval and modern Greek — would appear to support this view (Minas 2004:369–395).

An early form of the Cypriot dialect makes its appearance in official documents in the mid-14th century, when, according to a conservative estimate, the Greek translation of the *Assizes*, the laws of the Lusignan kingdom, originally took place (Coureas 2002:19). In addition to being “the first modern dialect to appear in its distinctive modern guise” (Horrocks 1997:284), following the three-century-long Lusignan rule, Cypriot is also the only dialect of Greek that received “direct and extensive influence from French” (Contossopoulos 2000:26). It is indeed likely that contact with ‘Old French’<sup>8</sup> was directly implicated in the formation of the dialect, a hypothesis put forward on historical grounds (Terkourafi 2005a:338ff.), and currently under further investigation (Sitaridou & Terkourafi, forthcoming).<sup>9</sup> More mature and fluent versions of the dialect appear in literary texts of the 15th century, in particular the *Chronicle* of Leontios Machairas (written ca. 1426–32; Pieris & Konnari 2003:26), and its sequel by George Boustronios (written ca. 1497–1501; Kechagioglou 1997:267).

In classifications of Modern Greek dialects, primarily based on phonological data, Cypriot is placed in the South-Eastern group of dialects (Newton 1972a:15ff.; Contossopoulos 2000:21; Trudgill 2003:60; Minas 2004:321; Ralli 2006:122). While all researchers acknowledge this group as a separate, and rather conservative, one, its precise membership is a matter of some debate, with Trudgill restricting this to Cypriot and Dodecanesian varieties, and others expanding its scope to include parts of the Cyclades and the Southern Asia Minor coast. Enhanced intelligibility between Cypriots and speakers of these varieties, and the variety of Rhodes in particular, as well as native speakers’ metalinguistic comments (Terkourafi 2005a:138–139) support this classification.

#### 4. How does ‘different’ come to be? Structural considerations

In this section, I focus on some peculiarities of contemporary Cypriot Greek that set it apart from SMG, and investigate their origins. My aim is not to provide

an exhaustive account of the distinctive features of Cypriot Greek at all levels of analysis,<sup>10</sup> but rather to identify what one may term the ‘sources’ of the difference of Cypriot Greek at the structural level, which are then exploited to various effects by the lens of ideology (Section 5).

The reader may have noticed the shift from ‘Cypriot dialect’ in the preceding section to ‘contemporary Cypriot Greek’ in the present one. This is because ‘Cypriot dialect’ cannot be considered but an umbrella term for varieties of Greek spoken in different parts of the island and during different periods from (at least) the mid-14th c. onwards.<sup>11</sup> While all of these varieties jointly co-constitute the multidimensional space one may call ‘the Cypriot dialect’, it would be wrong to identify the latter with the speech of any single period and place, to the exclusion of all others. That is, the Cypriot dialect itself has evolved since its original attestation in the *Assizes* to this day, and is, accordingly, not the kind of static entity that its designation by a singular term may lead one to believe.

Contemporary perceptions of the difference of Cypriot Greek, on the other hand, which are the topic of this article, concern the speech of particular speakers who are, in turn, locatable in time and place. The term ‘contemporary Cypriot Greek’ is thus an attempt to single out from the multi-dimensional space of the Cypriot dialect an urban, generalised variety actually used in Cyprus today, which is also prompting characterizations of ‘difference’ by contemporary speakers. Scholars attest to the existence of such a variety at least since the early 20th c. (Terkourafi 2005a:338–339), although incumbent processes of koineization have certainly been accelerated by the political and economic developments of the last 40 years (e.g., dislocation of Greek Cypriots previously living in the north of the island, daily exodus to the cities to work). This urban generalised variety, usually designated by the term Cypriot *koiné*, has attracted significant attention in recent years<sup>12</sup> and is being systematically described in a forthcoming grammar (Coutsougera et al., forthcoming). However, circumscribing this variety as against more acrolectal or more basilectal forms is not always straightforward (Katsoyannou et al. 2006:165). For instance, while some of the features discussed below (e.g., loss of the masculine genitive plural; see Section 4.3) may be hardly attested in more formal/acrolectal registers,<sup>13</sup> their spontaneous attestation in less formal/basilectal registers of urban speech fully justifies their inclusion therein.

This foray into the origins of some distinctive features of contemporary Cypriot Greek enables us to trace them back to four main sources. Specifically, it is possible to identify in contemporary Cypriot Greek: a) elements retained from ancient Greek that are unique to Cypriot today (which justifies its designation as ‘conservative’); b) elements that Cypriot shares with other, mostly South-Eastern Greek varieties (some of these elements are simultaneously retained from ancient Greek, justifying the general characterization of this group as ‘conservative’; Ralli

2006:123); c) elements that Cypriot has borrowed from other languages with which it came into contact; and, d) elements unique to Cypriot which do not occur in other varieties of Greek or other languages, and must thus be considered innovations of Cypriot Greek. These four categories are presented below with examples from the levels of phonology, morphology, syntax and lexical semantics.

#### 4.1 Elements of ancient Greek uniquely preserved in Cypriot Greek

Ancient Greek elements uniquely preserved in Cypriot Greek today are mostly confined to specific lexical items, although phonological survivals cannot be excluded (cf. Hadjiioannou 1990a, 1990b:246). For instance, according to Hadjiioannou (1990a:239), in the common personal pronouns /ejon/ ('me') and /esuni/ ('you'), originating in the ancient Arcado-Cypriot dialect, the latter preserves also the ancient pronunciation of Greek *v* as [u], also found in, e.g., Cypriot [muja] for 'fly' (cf. Tsakonian [muza]; *ibid.*).<sup>14</sup> Lexical items from other varieties of ancient Greek, including attic and Hellenistic, that are scarce in other Modern Greek dialects, are also current in contemporary Cypriot Greek. Such items include /vu'ro/ ('run') and /la'lo/ (in the sense of 'say,' a semantic survival), which are also inflected following ancient Greek contracted forms in -έω, including a past tense in -ουv, and /kani/ ('it's enough').

#### 4.2 Elements also found in other Modern Greek dialects

Two of the most widely cited phonological survivals in Cypriot Greek, the retention of ancient Greek geminates, as in /θalas:a/ ('sea') and /a'l:a/ ('but'), and of final /n/, are actually shared with other South-Eastern Greek dialects (Trudgill 2003:57) and are therefore cited under this rubric. More recent developments that Cypriot has in common with South-Eastern Greek varieties include palatalization of velars before a front vowel or glide, as in /tʃe/ ('and'),<sup>15</sup> deletion of voiced fricatives intervocalically, as in /'efia/ ('I left'), /men/ ('not' from negative particle *μηδέν*; Hadjiioannou 1990c:509),<sup>16</sup> and word-initial devoicing of voiced stops, as in /paklavas/ (oriental sweetmeat).

In morphology, elements also found in other Modern Greek dialects include retention of the syllabic augment, as in /e'pira/ ('I took'),<sup>17</sup> and of the 3rd person plural verbal suffixes -ουσιν, -ασιν, as in /'exusin/ ('they have'), /ep'iasin/ ('they went').

Finally, a conservative element in syntax, and one of the most distinctive of contemporary Cypriot Greek, clitic pronoun postposition, is also found in other Modern Greek dialects, including Cappadocian, Pontic, some Cycladic and Dodecanesian varieties, Cretan, Roumeic, and in two areas of Lesbos (Condoravdi & Kiparsky 2002).

### 4.3 Elements due to contact with other languages

As seen from the brief overview of Cypriot history above (Section 2), since its formation the Cypriot dialect has come into contact with an array of languages, to which must be added those of populations who lived on the island without actually ruling it, such as Armenians, Jews, Albanians and Slavs (Terkourafi, in press). Moreover, language contact may have played a direct part in motivating at least some of the structural features of the dialect itself (Section 3). Such a structural feature may be the conflation of the masculine genitive/accusative plural case endings under *-ους* as in /i'piravli tus ros:us/ ('the missiles of the Russians'), which, according to a hypothesis put forward by Papadopoulos (1983:226), may be ultimately related to the influence of Old French. Indeed, Old French preserved for some time, and only in the masculine gender, a plural opposition between nominative and oblique, the latter subsuming the functions of both the genitive and the accusative. Nevertheless, it is likely that even if contact is implicated, this worked *in tandem* with the internal dynamics of the language, in which the genitive plural is generally found to be in retreat in several contexts (Sitaridou & Terkourafi, forthcoming).<sup>18</sup>

The greatest impact of contact with other languages is, nonetheless, to be found in the lexicon (Hadjiioannou 1996; Varella 2006). Although several of these loanwords have not survived to this day, many are still in common use, including /pa't<sup>h</sup>ixa/ ('watermelon', from Arabic *pattikh*) and /xa'l:umi/ (the famous Cypriot cheese, from Arabic *khallum*), /tsa'era/ ('chair', from Old French/Provençal *chaire*) /fu'ntana/ ('tap', from Italian *fontana*), /'pomba/ ('pump', from Venetian *pompa*), /k<sup>h</sup>e'l:e/ ('head', from Turkish: *kelle*) and /'mifi/ ('allegedly, purportedly', from Turkish *miş*), and most recently /ku'ngrin/ ('concrete', from English *concrete*).

### 4.4 Cypriot Greek innovations

Alongside preserving archaisms, participating in wider dialectal developments, and borrowing items, contemporary Cypriot Greek is also characterised by many innovative features. Few of these innovations are, however, without a precedent: most actually result from taking phenomena also found in earlier forms of the language or other dialects, and developing them further. Thus, in phonology, the tenser articulation involved in the production of geminates (4.2 above) has led to the development, in Cypriot Greek, of new geminates (Trudgill 2003:57) and of super-geminates (Armosti 2007), as in /n:e/ ('yes'),<sup>19</sup> as well as of aspirated voiceless stops [p<sup>h</sup>], [t<sup>h</sup>], [k<sup>h</sup>], as in /po't<sup>h</sup>e/ ('never'), all of which occur also word-initially.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, devoicing of voiced stops, which in other dialects occurs only word-initially (Section 4.2), is also found intervocally in Cypriot, as in /ate/ ('c'mon'),

while South-Eastern Greek /e/ prothesis on verbs preceded in the same intonation group by word final -n is realised in Cypriot as /i/ prothesis, as in /eni'ksero/ ('I don't know'). Moreover, /ɣ/ epenthesis in verbs in -εύω, which in other South-Eastern Greek varieties yields forms such as /zi'levyo/ ('I am jealous'), is further subject in Cypriot Greek to manner dissimilation of obstruent+obstruent into fricative+stop and ensuing devoicing of stops, yielding /zi'lefko/. A further phonological rule that may combine with the last one has /j/ after /v/, /δ/, /θ/, /p/, and /f/ realised as [c], leading to forms such as [ka'rca] ('heart').<sup>21</sup> In addition, final -n is not only preserved (Section 4.2) — occasionally also leading to re-analysis of word boundaries, as in /no'ros/ ('whey', from accusative /ton oron/) — but also extended to new environments where it was previously unattested (Menardos 1969:17–18, Hadjiioannou 1990b: 249–250), and where it functions mostly as a marker of neuter gender in nouns, as in /ɣalan/ ('milk'), and of the 3rd person singular in verbs, as in /'ipen/ ('he said'). Nevertheless, the high degree of apocope of syllables and ensuing sandhi phenomena which characterize Cypriot (Newton 1972b:121–123; cf. Contossopoulos 2000:22–24) appear to be innovations of the dialect.

Innovations in morphology may also be traced back to earlier forms of Greek whose development took a unique path on the island. These include the future particle /en:a/ ('will', from medieval Greek θέλω ινα, 'I want to', which also gave SMG θα), the negative particle /'endʒe/ (from ancient Greek δεν+κε), and diminutive suffixes /-u(ð)a/ (from ancient Greek -ού) and /-u(ð)in/ (from Medieval Greek -διον).

Finally, new words and/or meanings may also be traced back to ancient Greek ones, for instance /'ap:aros/ ('horse', from ancient Greek ἵππος), /'lamno/ ('move', from ancient Greek ελαύνω), and /sind'ixan:o/ ('converse', from ancient Greek συντυγγάνω, 'meet'; Hadjiioannou 1996). By contrast, extensive compounding, attested at least since the 19th c. (e.g., /andipi'θarkopses/, 'the evening of the day after tomorrow'; Sakellarios 1891: πβ') to this day (e.g., /sovaromi'lo/, 'to speak seriously'; Panayotou 1996:125), seems to be a genuinely Cypriot innovation.

#### 4.5 Taking stock: How *different* is 'different'?

A striking conclusion to be drawn from the overview of the sources of the difference of Cypriot Greek at the structural level in Sections 4.1–4.4 concerns the number of peculiarities that are shared or further develop commonalities with other Greek varieties. Cypriot Greek is by no means unique in, for instance, retaining geminates and final /n/, developing palatalization and devoicing, and post-posing its clitics, all commonly cited as hallmarks of the 'difference' of Cypriot Greek. So, why is it that these peculiarities have earned Cypriot Greek the designation

of ‘different’, when, qualitatively at least, it shows a considerable degree of overlap with other Modern Greek dialects?

To start with, one should not forget that some of the dialects sharing these features, such as Cappadocian, are equally not spoken within Greece, and are therefore at least as much, if not more, ‘exotic’ to standard ears. Moreover, those dialects sharing these features that *are* spoken within Greece, are attrited today to such a high degree (Christidis 1999:89) that scholars have had to base their classifications on evidence of what these dialects *sounded like* up until the early 1900s (Contosopoulos 2000:2, Trudgill 2003:48). Thus, while Cypriot may have shared several of its distinctive features with other Modern Greek dialects in previous periods, it is by now practically alone in exhibiting these features, which consequently turn up as peculiarities of Cypriot Greek, contributing to its perceived ‘deviance.’ At the same time, unlike other varieties of Greek which are increasingly confined to sympathetic ears and within the home, these peculiarities gain heightened visibility with the penetration of Cypriot Greek in formal contexts and on the internet (Section 5.2).

Some apt examples of how these linguistic developments have impacted perceptions of the difference of Cypriot Greek leading to its retrospective exoticization come from the level of phonology. Nasalization, for instance, is well known to be typical of Cypriot Greek. As Contosopoulos comments, “the addition of several [n] [sounds] and the extended pronunciation of this segment in many cases (double [n], consonant assimilations due to [n]) result in entire phrases being nasalized, which is typical of Cypriot pronunciation” (2000:22; my translation). SMG, on the other hand, was for a long time characterized by stylistically conditioned, stable variation between two variants in this respect: prenasalized voiced stops (<sup>m</sup>b, <sup>n</sup>d, <sup>ŋ</sup>g) as a High (Katharevousa) variant when occurring word-internally, and oral (non-nasalized) voiced stops (b, d, g) as a Low (Dhimotiki) variant. However, the marked decline of the former in favour of the latter in all contexts in SMG over the last 30 years (Arvaniti & Joseph 2000) has left Cypriot alone in exhibiting nasalization in these (and other) contexts, a situation further accentuated by the absence of the latter (non-nasalized) set of sounds from the repertory of Cypriot Greek (Arvaniti, in press). In this case, a sociolinguistically (and, arguably, ideologically; *ibid.*, and Moschonas 2005:267–271) motivated change in SMG has resulted in an increase in the *structural* distance between the two varieties. A similar example is provided by the sounds [ts]/[dz]. In SMG, these sounds are associated with low stylistic levels and mainly occur in dialectal — as opposed to standard — lexical variants and in loanwords from Balkan languages, specifically Turkish, Slavic, or Albanian (Joseph 2003). This regional and social distribution has led to the suggestion that, in SMG, these sounds “are somehow ‘other’, and through their expressivity stand outside the normal purely informational uses of language” (Joseph 2003:231). Their occurrence, then, in Cypriot Greek (not to mention their

‘thicker’ palato-alveolar [tʃ]/[dʒ] counterparts, in turn totally absent from the SMG repertory) would be another source of its exoticism.

Alongside these sociolinguistic reasons specific to Cypriot Greek, general perceptual factors may also be responsible for its perception as ‘different’ on the basis of these peculiarities. Especially promising in this regard is the relatively new field of dialectometry (Nerbonne & Kretzschmar 2006), which seeks to establish measures of varietal distance by quantifying the steps needed to obtain a particular variant in one variety, taking the corresponding variant in another variety as a starting point. Varietal distances thus established are of course necessarily symmetric, and therefore more of an analytical tool than reflections of actual speakers’ perceptions. These distances can nevertheless be subsequently correlated with perceptual measures, i.e. speakers’ *judgments* about dialectal differentiation, allowing us to discover how structural (‘objective’) differences impact speakers’ (‘subjective’) assessments. Undertaking such a study of Norwegian dialects, Gooskens & Herringa (2006) found that pronunciation — consonant substitutions in particular — was the greatest contributor to perceived distance between dialects, over and above the lexicon and prosody. While these results cannot be generalized to other languages without prior study of these languages, which of course presupposes structural descriptions of all the varieties to be compared, dialectometrical studies are nevertheless instructive in that they show that different levels of analysis do not contribute equally to perceived distances between varieties but rather have a weighted impact, which may, moreover, be language-specific.<sup>22</sup> In sum, both language-specific and general factors impact the perceived difference of Cypriot Greek based on the peculiarities surveyed in this section.

## 5. Ideology: The great steamroller

From those language-specific factors impacting the perceived difference of Cypriot Greek, in this section I take up ideological factors, which arguably have the final word in ratifying its (degree of) difference. Since its first appearance as French *idéologie* in the late 18th c. (Moschonas 2005:26–27), the term ‘ideology’ has, of course, been put to various uses, including both specializations and expansions of its meaning. Capturing ideology in a broader sense, Van Dijk (1998:8) defines it as “the basis of the social representations shared by the members of a group.” More recently, in an attempt to do justice to the multi-faceted nature of his subject matter, in lieu of a definition, Moschonas offers the following ten defining features of ideologies at large (2005:77–78; my translation):

1. Ideologies are implicative systems of ideas.
2. Ideologies are socially organised and disseminated.
3. Ideologies occur only in a field of collective contrasts.
4. Ideologies are historical phenomena.
5. Ideologies are stereotypical.
6. Ideologies are defensible.
7. Ideologies are described by constitutive rules.
8. Ideologies are performative.
9. Every ideology is in partial correspondence with reality.
10. Every ideology is in partial non-correspondence with reality.

It is an interesting feature of this list in its own right that it is phrased in the plural, thereby emphasizing not only the multiplicity of possible ideological worlds, but also their transient, if synchronically entrenched, and dynamic nature.

With respect to the ‘difference’ of Cypriot Greek, two types of ideologies are relevant: national ideologies and language ideologies. The two are hardly strangers to each other. Long before Max Weinreich encapsulated the close relationship between political power and language status in his 1945 adage “A language is a dialect with an army and a navy,” Dante proffered the *volgare illustre* as the common denominator of all Italian varieties rid of “what history [had] added to each local dialect as a superfluous deformation,” and hence as an appropriate basis for “pan-national unity” (J. Joseph 2004:101–102). And of course, before that, language had been used as a defining feature of ethnic/national identity by the Greeks, as the opposition between the onomatopoeic ‘barbaros’ and ‘hellên’ attests (LSJ, s.v. *barbaros*).

The link between language and nation is eloquently captured in Moschonas’s concept of a “language as a realm” (2004:190), which he considers the main determinant of Greece’s modern ideology of monolingualism, especially after the official adoption of Dhimotiki in 1976. According to this (*ibid.*; original emphasis),

Each language has an “Interior” and an “Exterior” — *Interior* and *Exterior* being relative terms. For example, the Interior of Greek is Greek *per se* or “pure” Greek. The Exterior of Greek is non-Greek or English or some brand of “mixed Greek.” ... The Interior is thought of as unified and homogeneous ... The relationship between the Interior and the Exterior of a language is a dynamic one because either of them can expand or contract.

The performative consequences of this ideology are several. Most crucially for our purposes, the view of the Interior as unified and homogeneous is best served by the ideology of the standard language, which, as the product of deliberate language planning, is most amenable to correction and regulation (Haugen 1966). Moreover, the dichotomy between a uniform Interior and a competitive Exterior is inherently evaluative, leading to a view of the Interior as something to be nurtured, protected and possibly expanded, against the threats and forays of a hostile Exterior.

Moschonas's analysis leads to some interesting insights concerning how the difference of Cypriot Greek is constituted at the ideological level. On this view, Cypriot Greek constitutes an *Interior within an Exterior*, inasmuch as it represents the spreading of Greek outside the realm of the modern state (Moschonas 2008). This could be termed the position of Cypriot Greek *in Cyprus*, where it is contrasted with the other languages spoken on the island, most notably Turkish, the country's other official language, and English, used today as de facto *lingua franca* by Greek and Turkish Cypriots, recent immigrants and tourists alike. However, taking this line of thought a step further, it is possible to argue that, when spoken *in Greece*, Cypriot Greek constitutes an *Exterior within the Interior*. This is because, this time, Cypriot is contrasted with SMG, with respect to which it is perceived as "deviant" (see Section 1). Therefore Cypriot Greek cannot be part of the unified and homogeneous Interior of Greek identified with "pure" Greek, that is, post-1976, with SMG as opposed to other varieties of Greek. In other words, Cypriot Greek may be said to be simultaneously *Interior and Exterior*, exhibiting an ambivalent, one might even say schizophrenic, positioning with respect to this dichotomy, depending on one's standpoint. In what follows, I survey the main causes that have led to this ambivalent positioning, and offer a critique of some recent suggestions regarding its resolution.

### 5.1 Language as a determinant of (modern) Greek identity

The first modern Greek state was founded in 1827 following a six-year struggle for independence from the Ottoman empire. Over the preceding four centuries, Greeks had been living under Ottoman rule alongside other Balkan people, united with them by the bonds of Orthodox Christianity, which at the same time collectively differentiated them from their Muslim rulers. Within the Greek Orthodox millet (Turkish *rûm milleti*), religion was the primary bond, while several (varieties of) languages were used: Church Greek, Biblical Greek, legal Greek varieties, Turkish for official dealings, to which must be added Slavonic and Arabic varieties used in the corresponding provinces (Drettas 2002:35). To motivate Greeks' struggle for independence and justify their quest for an independent state, a basis other than religion had to be sought able to rally together Us (Greeks) vs. Them (non-Greeks). This alternative basis was found in language. Speaking Greek thus became the hallmark of belonging to the Greek nation, which was consequently geographically identified with the Greek-speaking world. As a result, during the first century of its existence, the Greek state — originally confined to the Peloponnese and the Southern part of Central Greece — was felt to be contained within the nation, justifying constant struggles to expand its territory "so that it may come to encompass the nation" (Tziovas 1994:97).

In the early days of the newly-founded state, attitudes to linguistic variability were rather tolerant and open, inclusivity being dictated more by practical necessity rather than state-decreed ideology. Around the mid-1800's, the language used in the then "Royal Navy" was Arvanitika, which was spoken as a first language by the majority of the sailors, witness the number of Arvanitika words in Theodor Reinhold's *Noctes Pelasgicae* (Elsie 2007). On the academic front, scholars like Codrikas and Katartzis viewed geographical variability as enriching — or at least, not threatening — the Greek language, and acknowledged the value of the dialects, not only as media of effective communication for the dispersion of new ideas, but also as windows into the 'natural character' of the Greek language, calling for their active cultivation and study (Delveroudi 2000). In the same spirit, official organizations such as the Ministry of Education and literary associations and journals encouraged the collection of dialectal material (Tziovas 1994:107; Delveroudi 1999:562), for instance, through yearly competitions coordinated by, among others, the Academy of Athens.<sup>23</sup>

During this period, the dialects also came to the rescue of the Greek language and by extension Greek national identity itself, by providing a tangible link of its continuity with ancient Greek. This had been famously called into question by the Tyrolean scholar Fallmerayer, who castigated Modern Greek for lacking an infinitive with the phrase "a language without infinitive is not much better than a human body without a hand" (Fallmerayer 1845:2.451–2, cited in Joseph 1985:90; my translation). With the absence of an infinitive from Modern Greek put down to influence from neighbouring languages such as Bulgarian and Albanian, Greek scholars were relieved to hear of the putative survival of the infinitive in Pontic. While subsequent research has shed doubt on this interpretation,<sup>24</sup> Greek scholars' willingness to accept it with minimal scrutiny is a good example of the quest for maximal differentiation from their northern neighbours on the basis of language mentioned earlier — a quest which in this case worked out in favour of dialectal variability rather than to its detriment, as it did later.

This period of relative tolerance for linguistic variability, attested also in literature (Kazazis 1976; Tziovas 1994:101, 111), was, nevertheless, short-lived. Developments in the domains of both language as well as national politics led to the brutal and painful reversal of the identification of 'Greek' with 'Greek-speaking', and, ultimately, the re-negotiation of 'Greek-speaking.' In the domain of language, increasing polarization between defenders of Katharevousa, on the one hand, and Dhimotiki, on the other, paradoxically led to contempt for the dialects by both camps alike. For defenders of Katharevousa, the dialects were to be shunned because they are most vulnerable to "contamination" by foreign elements which thus find their way into the language, this "castle of national existence" (Mistriotis 1908, cited in Mackridge 2007). Conversely, insistence on "the uniformity and

homogeneity of their brand of demotic” as an antidote to the divisive effects of Katharevousa and concomitant diglossia, increasingly led defenders of Dhimitiki also to reject not only regional but also stylistic diversity (Mackridge 2007; cf. Delveroudi 1999:566). In short, as Mackridge (2007) concludes, “[t]he supporters of both katharevousa and demotic aimed at linguistic homogenization,” something which is not surprising, given their quest for a *national*, i.e. a standard, language (see above and Moschonas 2005:291ff.; Frangoudaki 2001).

In addition to pressure for homogenization and hostility against the dialects from above, practicalities on the ground provided reasons to move in the same direction from below. The quest for the expansion of the newly-founded state to the north in the late 19th c. was also fought on linguistic grounds, with the state taking the lead in educational efforts promoting the use of Greek in areas of Macedonia from 1860 onwards (Kostopoulos 2008:60). It is telling of how political agendas ratify linguistic differences (and similarities) that in a 1904 report, the secretary of the Greek embassy in Istanbul chose Cypriot alongside Peloponnesian varieties, as those varieties whose Greek character was beyond doubt, to contrast to the local Macedonian dialects, whose Greek character was still a matter of some debate (Tsorbatzoglou 1904, cited in Kostopoulos 2008:61).

Pressures for linguistic homogenization resulting from the expansionist policies of the late 19th and early 20th c. were soon matched by similar pressures resulting from the outcome of the Asia Minor disaster of 1922. In a mere four years, approximately 1.2 million Greeks from the Western coast of Turkey arrived as refugees to metropolitan Greece, then a country of 5 million people (Yerolympos 2003:147). Compulsory population exchanges between Greece and Turkey followed, through which the two countries sought to maximize their internal demographic homogeneity. This aim was largely achieved: “before the arrival of refugees from Asia Minor, the population of the region of [Greek] Macedonia was 42.6% Greek; by 1926, that figure had risen to 88.8%” (Pentzopoulos 1962:134; reported in Voutira 2003:147). The influx of refugees from Asia Minor left an indelible mark on processes of urbanization, town planning, and working-class formation among others, essentially propelling Greece into the (post-)industrial era (Just 1994; Hirschon 1998; Yerolympos 2003; Voutira 2003). More importantly, “now the nation had to be contained within the state” (Tziovas 1994:100).

Under this renewed conception of the state as the nation, achieving homogeneity within its bounds was considered of paramount importance for the survival of the nation, and the role of language in this process was once more pivotal. Thus, while “universal education, access to the mass media, the flight of the young to the cities, and the advent of easy mobility” (Horrocks 1997:301) undoubtedly constitute practical reasons for the abandonment of regional varieties, they were decidedly not alone in bringing about Greece’s current degree of

linguistic homogeneity. Rather, their impact was heightened by an ideology of linguistic homogeneity, which for a long time denied or marginalized social and/or geographical variation in the country (Tsitsipis 1992, 2005). Tziovas identifies the army, education, and the law as the main state agents of this ideology, with the judiciary and the church also playing supporting roles (1994:99–104).<sup>25</sup> Lack of official acknowledgement, or downright denial of the existence of non-Greek-speaking communities within Greece, are symptomatic of this ideology (Trudgill 2003:62 fn.2; Moschonas 2004:184).

This uniformist Discourse (in the sense of Kiesling 2006)<sup>26</sup> is also manifested indirectly in contemporary Greek society through, for instance, attitudes toward immigrants (Karakasidou 2002), which often reflect a distinction between those who speak Greek and those who do not (Voutira 2003: 149–157), the AIDS-epidemic-induced exclusion of foreigners and AIDS patients alike (Tsalicoglou 1995:90–91), high school students' favouring "[t]he natural-organic view of the nation as an ahistorical community sharing a common origin, language, and culture" (Voulgaris 2000:273), and the selection and handling of linguistic news items by the media (Koutsogiannis & Mitsikopoulou 2003; Moschonas 2004:180–189). This same Discourse is at the root of the linguistic anxiety of speakers of regional varieties within Greece, which is negatively manifested by the virtual *absence* of these regional varieties from the internet and from hip-hop language — domains otherwise known to favour regional expression (Androutsopoulos & Scholz 2002:22) — and further fuelled by negative representations of dialects in native speakers' metalinguistic comments and on prime-time TV (e.g., the stigmatization of [o] backing in example 3.3 of Georgakopoulou 2006:88, and of the palatal lateral approximant by the character of Amalia in the popular TV series *Παρά Πέντε*). Finally, this uniformist Discourse also underlies heightened perceptions of the 'difference' between Greek as spoken within Greece and Greek varieties outside the national borders. The more uniform Greek is within Greece and regional peculiarities are glossed over, the less overlap there appears to be between it and 'outside' varieties, leading to the proclamation, as early as 1969, of Cypriot as "the only living Modern Greek dialect" (Contossopoulos 1969:92; repeated in 2000:21). Interestingly, the debate about language has been paralleled in the domain of literature, where the question has been whether Cypriot literature is part of Greek literature or not (cf. Tziovas 1994 and the references therein).<sup>27</sup>

While it is possible that attitudes to linguistic variability in Greece are currently changing (cf. Stamou & Dinas 2007),<sup>28</sup> also in light of recent EU directives regarding linguistic minority rights (Kentro Erevnon Meionotikon Omadon 2001:88–89, 99; Angelidis 2004) and of a renewed interest in the study of Modern Greek dialects by linguists (Ralli 2006:123), it is unlikely that such a change in

attitudes will lessen the perception of Cypriot Greek as ‘different’, as this perception is largely shared by Greek Cypriots themselves.

## 5.2 Language as a determinant of Cypriot identity

The linguistic anxiety of speakers of regional varieties within Greece illustrated in the previous section is also shared by modern-day Cypriots, albeit to different extents.<sup>29</sup> However, this anxiety is not new. Rather, it dates back to the emergence of the dialect itself by the mid-14th century CE, which was almost as quickly followed by its despicability. The following comment by Machairas (§158) is probably the most widely quoted in this respect:

...και πήραν τον τόπον οι Λαζανιάδες και από τότες αρκέψα να μαθάνουν φράγκικα και βαρβαρίσαν τα ρωμαίικα, ως γοιόν και σήμερα, και γράφομεν φράγγικα και ρωμαίικα ότι εις τον κόσμον δεν ηξεύρουν ίντα συντυχάννομεν...

‘until the Lusignans took the land. And (when the Latin period began) men began to learn French, and their Greek became barbarous, just as it is today, when we write both French and Greek, in such a way that no one can say what our language is’ (transl. Dawkins 1932: 142–143)

Machairas is by no means alone in expressing contempt for Cypriot speech, while all along using it in his *Chronicle*. Etienne de Lusignan, a descendant of the Frankish aristocracy born on the island, expressed similar views on the eve of the Ottoman conquest (Zink 1972), while a note in the margin of a manuscript of the *Assizes* comments on the text as written “in dialecto barbara” (Constantinides & Browning 1993:262). While the language wars of the 19th and 20th centuries in Greece had little impact in Cyprus — an outcome which Beaudouin (1884:16) attributes to infrequent contact and isolation due to distance, as well as the scarcity of Greek newspapers on the island at that time — the above metalinguistic comments may be viewed as early antecedents of the subsequent situation of diglossia in Cyprus, which has its own flavour — possibly more genuine — compared with the corresponding situation in Greece (cf. Mackridgē 2007).

Under British rule, Greek Cypriots’ quest for a degree of autonomy and political freedom was largely played out on the civilizing front, with several initiatives including the founding of cultural associations and societies, the organization of public celebrations and athletic meetings, the abandonment of ‘uncivilized’ traditions, and the encouragement of philanthropy, intended to educate the local public and to prove Greek Cypriots’ worthiness of greater freedom to their rulers (Persianis 2008). During that same period, asserting the Greek character of the island and continuity with Greece became an important part of the struggle for Ένωσις (‘union’ with Greece). An excerpt from a newspaper of that time is revealing in

this respect (Σάλπιγξ, 12 August 1889; cited in Persianis 2008). In this, the author compares the different means used by Cretans and Cypriots in their quest to become part of the Greek state. Cretans are said to use “the gun and the sword,” while Cypriots “language and the quill,” means that are “milder, but more legitimate and efficient” (ibid.; my translation). Here, language is mobilized in a twofold role: it should effectuate the linguistic link with Greece, and at the same time, it should assert Greek Cypriots’ high level of cultural achievement. Both of these requirements pointed to Katharevousa, which was also the official language in Greece at that time:<sup>30</sup> it was free from the distinctive features of Cypriot Greek, and at the same time endowed with prestige. As a result, Katharevousa took up the functions of the High variety in Cyprus, while those of the Low were naturally assumed by the Cypriot dialect.

With the resolution of the Language Question in Greece in favour of a more demoticizing variety in 1976, the functions of the High in Cyprus correspondingly shifted to SMG — crucially: as this is received by Greek Cypriots, who, depending on their social networks, may be exposed to it to a greater or lesser extent — while contemporary Cypriot Greek continues steadily to assume the functions of the Low.<sup>31</sup> The prevailing situation of diglossia in Cyprus meant that perceived distance between the varieties used in Greece and in Cyprus concerned the Low variety alone, since the High variety has consistently been — or better, has always had as its target — a variety also used in Greece.

The declaration of an independent Republic in 1960 did little to change this situation, as by that time diglossia had become institutionalized through education and the media, turning Greek Cypriots into expert code-switchers. In the Constitution of the new Republic, two official languages are recognised, Greek and Turkish. Yet, the variety of Greek concerned — Katharevousa? Dhimotiki? Cypriot Greek? — remained unspecified, a point which has caused repeated grievances in the legal, administrative, and educational domains (see Vlachopoulos 2007; Georgiou, forthcoming; Karyolemou 2001, respectively). Declarations of independence are usually accompanied by linguistic processes of standardization and homogenization.<sup>32</sup> However, Cypriot governmental organizations have been somewhat ambivalent on this point. Rather than hastening to assert the new country’s linguistic identity and institute local norms of language use, educational reforms over the past 30 years have consistently followed in the steps of those in Greece (Karyolemou 2001:29). At the same time and in rather opposing spirit, the adoption of Greek in place of English in other domains — most notably the judiciary and the issuing of public documents — has been very slow and ridden with controversy (Karyolemou 2001; Karoulla-Vrikkis 2001, 2006; Vlachopoulos 2007). Given this antinomy in the official policies of the Cypriot state, it is not surprising that language

standardization, which would automatically entail an answer to the ‘language or dialect?’ question, has not been forthcoming from official quarters.

If governmental organizations have been slow to act for the standardization of one or another linguistic variety on the island, events on the ground have, as in the case of Greece, somewhat preceded them, making some scenarios more viable than others. In the case of Cyprus, the relevant developments have been both political and economic. On the political side, the events of the summer of 1974 (Section 2) led to disillusionment with Greece fuelling an ideology of Cypriotism, which, contrary to the ideology of Hellenism, which had supported the claim for union with Greece in previous decades that officially embraced independence “as the final and definitive stage in the constitutional status of Cyprus and also as the only viable policy that could lead to a permanent solution of the ‘Cyprus question’” (Stamatakis 1991:76). This ideology was variously expressed in the public domain, from the pre-eminence awarded the Cypriot flag and Independence day (1st October) to the formation of separate Cypriot teams in athletics and the introduction of separate courses on Cypriot history and literature in schools (*ibid.*). A rather extreme form of this ideology downplayed Hellenocentric elements of Cypriot history foregrounding instead non-Hellenocentric (in particular, Phoenician) ones (Stamatakis 1991:77). On the economic side, according to World Bank data, since 1988 the Republic of Cyprus has been consistently above the threshold of *per capita* gross national income reckoned as the boundary between middle- and high-income economies (Christodoulou 1992: xvii), prompting analysts to speak of the ‘Cyprus miracle’ (*ibid.*).

These political and economic developments have translated into a renewed dynamic in favour of Cypriot Greek. This indeed seems to be the preferred medium for Greek Cypriots across the globe communicating over the internet, witness the existence of several Cypriot chatrooms and blogs on anything from politics and sports, to youth and pop culture, relationships, and recipes, including a dedicated Facebook discussion group named ‘I speak CYPRIOT [sic] and I’m proud of it.’<sup>33</sup> Numerous TV series, both comedy and drama, produced locally, whose number has been rising steadily since the introduction of private TV channels in the early 1990s,<sup>34</sup> as well as the use of Cypriot Greek in hip-hop lyrics,<sup>35</sup> are similarly enhancing its visibility in the public domain — and, consequently, its value in the Cypriot linguistic market. However, the ultimate ratification of this value probably comes from its use in the political arena, typically a bastion of standardizing speech, notably by Cyprus’s recently elected President Dimitris Christofias, who is famous for not shying away from using Cypriot Greek in parliament during his term as an MP since 1991.<sup>36</sup>

These linguistic practices set Cypriot apart from other Modern Greek dialects, and attest to its vitality and enhanced prestige among Cypriots. Yet, this enhanced

prestige does not necessarily translate into a quest for ‘language’ status for Cypriot Greek, but merely for ‘equality in diversity,’ as speakers’ metalinguistic comments would seem to suggest. Thus, public outcry against what was seen as the ‘cleansing’ of Cypriot Greek of its distinctive features during the mid-1990s debate over the official transliteration of place-names (Georgiou, forthcoming) suggests an initial bottom-up dynamic for recognition of the dialect as just that: different from SMG, yet a part of the Greek language at large, to be cherished and preserved as such. This view is illustrated, for instance, in the following comment from a ‘letter to the editor’ (published in the newspaper *Phileleftheros* on 30/08/1995, cited in Georgiou, forthcoming): “[i]n reality [the proposed transliteration] is just a complex that promotes the idea that there cannot be something typically Cypriot, which is at the same time Greek.” More recently, the same view is made explicit in several viewers’ comments following a controversial appearance by a Greek Cypriot female player on a Mainland Greek TV game.<sup>37</sup> The general consensus from these comments presents a more fine-grained picture, according to which Cypriot is a dialect of Greek, yet this neither entails its inferior status with respect to the standard, nor makes it appropriate for use on more formal occasions; indeed “there are different types of Cypriot.”

### 5.3 The debate over Cypriot Standard Greek

In Katsoyannou et al. (2006) and Tsiplakou et al. (2006), the authors distinguish four levels of use in contemporary Cypriot Greek. Ordered from less (basilectal) to more formal (acrolectal), these are: i) *χωρικάτικα* (‘peasantry’), which further ranges from *πολλά* to *τέλεια χωρικάτικα* (‘very’ to ‘totally peasantry’), ii) *σωστά κυπριακά* (‘correct Cypriot’), iii) *ευγενικά κυπριακά* (‘polite Cypriot’), and iv) *καλαμαρίστικα* (‘pen pusher talk’), a level of standardizing speech deemed appropriate for use only with SMG speakers, and otherwise open to criticism if used with in-group members. These levels are said to constitute a dialectal continuum which should be recast more as a stylistic rather than a geographical one — although there is no reason to view the two as mutually exclusive, if one takes into account Trudgill’s (1983:188) pyramid-shaped representation of the inter-relation between regional and social variation.

Focusing on the acrolectal end of this continuum, Arvaniti (2002, in press) has proposed that this is in fact occupied by Cypriot Standard Greek (henceforth CSG), a variant of SMG which has emerged as a local norm following the expansion of Greek into domains that were previously the bastion of English, such as the courts, administration, and banking, or have known significant growth in recent years, such as the media. Arvaniti lists several features of CSG at all levels of analysis, including spelling.<sup>38</sup> However, her main argument for proposing CSG

is a metalinguistic one, specifically Greek Cypriots' systematic lack of awareness regarding divergences between this acrolectal register — akin to what Papadakis (2003:539–540), on the model of BBC English, has termed *κυπριακή του ΡΙΚ* ('RIK Cypriot') — and SMG *per se*. This lack of awareness, which can be put down to erasure, or “the process in which ideology, in simplifying the sociolinguistic field, renders some [...] sociolinguistic phenomena invisible” (Irvine & Gal 2000:38, cited in Arvaniti, in press), is, according to Arvaniti, what “allows the speakers to view the relation between the two varieties as a simple case of ‘standard-with-dialects’ rather than as diglossic” (Arvaniti, in press), a view that also underlies the comments cited in 5.2 above.<sup>39</sup>

While this argument is well constructed and overall a convincing one, it seems to me that the proclamation of this stylistic level into a ‘standard’ may be slightly premature. An important question has to do with the definition of the term ‘standard.’ If ‘standard’ is purely a matter of prestige and functional distribution, referring to what has “implicitly and in practice been established as formal” (Papadakis 2003:540 fn. 6), then, clearly, these structural divergences — with the help of erasure, devoid of stigma — constitute a level of CSG.

However, an important component of standardization, as defined at least since Haugen (1966:929), is “deliberate planning,” that is, explicit regulation. This presupposes that, to become a standard language, a linguistic variety must first be acknowledged as such, so that it may then undergo the processes of selection, codification, elaboration, and acceptance, all of which involve the top-down agency of an official authority, such as a (governmental) organization or influential figure.<sup>40</sup> In other words, it is the selfsame process of erasure that Arvaniti identifies as underlying Greek Cypriots' *lack of awareness* of their acrolect as distinct from SMG that *a priori* excludes the designation of this acrolect as, strictly speaking, a ‘standard.’

In fact, while the Cypriot situation can be said to show elements corresponding to all four stages of standardization, it does not fully realize any of them. For instance, in terms of selection, the Cypriot koiné would seem *de facto* to rally the majority of the population (see Section 4 above and native speakers' comments cited in n. 37), and as such to be a natural candidate for standardization; however, this is a spontaneous, bottom-up development, that does not bear any official acknowledgement or seal of approval. Similarly, in terms of codification, some rudimentary orthographic conventions (e.g., -σι- for the postalveolar fricative, doubling for aspirated voiceless stops) are available, yet these are nowhere explicitly codified. Moreover, if codification is understood as “minimal variation in form” (Haugen 1966:931), a serious problem lies in determining the direction in which to resolve variability inherent in the koiné, i.e. toward more acrolectal or more basilectal variants, which often co-exist therein (Section 4). Nevertheless,

the forthcoming *Grammar of Contemporary Cypriot Greek* (Coutsougera et al., forthcoming) may well be changing that by making available a model that can be referred to for the purposes of correction and regulation. When it comes to elaboration, the spread of Greek into domains such as administration and the media, cited among the reasons for the emergence of CSG in the first place, means that this has again materialized already — but only in part. It remains to be seen whether this process can develop into full-fledged elaboration, taking in scientific discourse (Haugen 1966:931), a development which may well be counteracted by the significant overlap in teaching materials between Greece and Cyprus at all levels of public education. Finally, acceptance, which — to judge by Cypriots' high degree of identification with their mother tongue, as seen in the comments cited in 5.2 above — might seem to be the only process whose requirements are fully met, is again *a priori* excluded for CSG, because, to native speakers, it is no different from SMG as spoken in Greece. To sum up, until the acrolectal register of contemporary Cypriot Greek analysed by Arvaniti is acknowledged as diverging from SMG, it will remain just that, the acrolect at the end of a stylistic continuum, but not a 'standard.'

## 6. Conclusion

Using native speakers' and linguists' metalinguistic comments about Cypriot Greek as 'different' as a starting point, in this paper I have attempted an anatomy of this perceived difference. An overview of some peculiarities of contemporary Cypriot Greek revealed four main sources of difference at the structural level: features inherited directly from ancient Greek; features shared with other South-Eastern Greek varieties, some going back to ancient Greek; borrowed features; and Cypriot Greek innovations. Several of these, however, are shared with other varieties of Greek, prompting us to look to ideological factors for the heightened degree of difference attributed to Cypriot Greek. Therein, the positioning of Cypriot Greek with respect to SMG may be framed as simultaneously an *Interior within an Exterior*, and an *Exterior within an Interior* in Moschonas's (2005) theoretical scheme, producing a clash that may be said to be ideologically constitutive of its perceived difference. In Greece, historical and political reasons over the past couple of centuries have led to a synergy of policies and practices favouring linguistic homogenization that have translated into either the retreat or the denial of linguistic diversity within the country. In Cyprus, political and economic developments have led to a newly-found linguistic confidence translating into increased visibility for, and identification with, Cypriot Greek.

If this process continues, it is perhaps not beyond imagination to suggest that the pendulum in the ‘language vs. dialect’ question for Cypriot Greek may eventually be swinging toward its designation as a language, related to, yet on a par with, SMG, thereby institutionalizing the difference perceived to exist between them. This would make Cypriot Greek a separate language within a ‘family’ of Greek languages, an Ausbau language, in the terminology of Kloss (1967), a suggestion not unheard of in linguistic circles (e.g., Ralli 2006:123). On the other hand, other developments in the two countries — most notably, potentially increasing tolerance of linguistic variability within Greece; the lucrative market involved in teaching Greek as an L2 dictated by the new immigrant realities in Greece and in Cyprus; and the clout afforded Greek as the official language of, not one, but two EU member states, with the enhanced position that this translates into in the opposition between strong and weak languages on the global arena — may also function as factors pulling the pendulum in the opposite direction. A compromise between these two extremes may be reached if Greek can be conceived of as a pluricentric language (Karyolemou 2008), on the model of English, French, German, Spanish, and Chinese. However, this development is contingent on processes of standardization that are not yet fully actualized in Cypriot Greek, while the small size and geographical proximity between the two communities may also be limiting factors in this respect. As has been the case with linguistic developments in the two countries so far — and as is usually the case with linguistic developments overall — the events on the ground may well pre-empt administrative decisions in either direction, linguistic practices remaining the ultimate arbiters of linguistic realities.

In sum, the story of the perceived difference between Cypriot and standard Greek is one to be continued. At the same time, it is worth pointing out that structural and ideological factors contributing to this perceived difference do not operate independently, but reinforce each other: not only do structural factors provide grist for the ideological mill to grind, but also ideological factors motivate individual linguistic choices that can, over time, translate into quantitative shifts in usage affecting the very structure of the linguistic varieties at hand, making them ‘objectively’ more or less alike as a result.<sup>41</sup>

## Notes

\* A shorter version of this paper was presented at the symposium “The Greek language in Cyprus” held on 23–24 May 2008 at the University of Athens. I would like to thank the audience on that occasion, as well as Spyros Moschonas, Panayotis Pappas, Stavroula Tsiplakou, and two anonymous referees for useful comments and bibliographical suggestions. Needless to say...

1. Asked of the author by a native Cypriot Greek speaker on November 30, 2005. Unless another source is cited (internet, press publication etc.), all data mentioned in this article originate in ethnographic interviews with native Cypriot Greek speakers or personal observation by the author on Cyprus from 1997 to date.
2. Recently, Arvaniti (in press) proposed the existence of a Cypriot Standard Greek. I return to this proposal in Section 5.3 below.
3. Such incidents are frequent to the experience of Cypriots visiting Greece and Greeks visiting Cyprus, respectively. To cite but a couple, recounted to me by their protagonists: A Cypriot speaker reported failing to be understood when asking for [joko'lata] ('chocolate') at an Athenian kiosk; the same happened to another Cypriot speaker who asked a taxi-driver in Athens [ju'ta su na me paris?] ('is it convenient for you to give me a ride?'). These examples highlight the two main factors contributing to the perception of dialectal differences, namely phonology and the lexicon (Section 4.5). A no less frequent source of trouble are lexical items which are false friends between the two varieties. For instance, a Cypriot speaker requested to have her sandwich warmed up at an Athens fast-food restaurant by saying [na mu to vrasete?], using the lexeme *vrazo* in its (transitive) Cypriot sense of 'to warm up' rather than its SMG sense of 'boil'.
4. Lack of dedicated studies makes it impossible to comment on the extent of intelligibility between Cypriot Greek and other Modern Greek dialects. However, evidence from observation and native speakers' testimonies (see for instance, example (1) in Terkourafi 2005a: 318–319) preliminarily suggest enhanced intelligibility with speakers of varieties related to Cypriot, such as that of Rhodes (on the position of Cypriot Greek in a classification of Modern Greek dialects see Section 3).
5. Cyprus's statehood is probably the reason why Cypriot is not discussed in a volume dedicated to "the dialect versions of Greek which survive ... outside the territory of the Greek state" (Christidis 1999:89).
6. Subsequent prehistoric sites include Kissonerga Mylouthkia (10,000–9,000 BCE), Parekklisla Shillourokambos (9,000 BCE), Kalavassos Tenta (8,000–7,000 BCE) and Khirokoitia Vouni (7,000 BCE).
7. At least until the lifting of prohibitions on travel across the two communities in September 2003, direct contact between Greek and Turkish Cypriots on Cyprus was limited to the territory of the British bases where some Greek Cypriots work, and to the village of Pyla, the last mixed village on the island, leaving very little margin for processes of accommodation and language contact to take place. That is not to deny that Turkish Cypriots have been present in the Cypriot Greek collective imagination throughout this period; however, this has been mostly in the role of the Other, as is often the case with one's nearest neighbours — but see also Stamatakis (1991:61) on the distinction between Turkish Cypriots and Anatolian settlers.
8. 'Old French' is used as an umbrella term for different varieties that existed during medieval times.
9. Contact between Greek and Old French during the Lusignan period is not a straightforward matter. A major difficulty lies in determining with any certainty the varieties of the two languages that came in contact in a climate of extensive surrounding multilingualism. The Lusignan family originated from Poitou, where the Pointevin, a variety of the Langue d'Oil, was spoken. However, French from different parts of metropolitan France, as well as other European languages —

most notably varieties of Italian — and Arabic mixed in the Holy Lands where the crusaders had spent the best part of a century before arriving in Cyprus. The linguistic situation in the Levantine East has been the focus of recent studies by Minervini (1995, 1996), Aslanov (2002, 2006) and Baglioni (2006a, 2006b), all of whom highlight the extent of language mixing therein. These processes appear to have continued after the arrival of the Lusignans on Cyprus at the invitation of Richard Lionheart to assume power on the island in 1192. The French of Cyprus, thus, has been variously characterised as a) a direct descendant of the French of Acre with a strong NE French component (Aslanov 2002:163–4, 166–7); or b) a koineised variety of French (Minervini 1995:159) bearing no traceable regional origin in France (Baglioni 2006b:24–25).

10. For such a list, see Terkourafi (2005a:311–317).

11. 18 localised Cypriot varieties (Contossopoulos 1969:97ff.), kept apart “by a series of independent phonological, morphological and lexical isoglosses” (Newton 1972b:19), are typically acknowledged, although social and political developments in the 20th c. mean that the differences between them are currently being levelled out (Terkourafi 2005a:325–326; Tsiplakou et al. 2006).

12. An incomplete list of recent studies includes Panayotou 1996, Karyolemu 2000, Terkourafi 2001, Arvaniti 2002, Moschonas 2002, Tsiplakou 2004, Terkourafi 2005a, Katsoyannou et al. 2006, Tsiplakou et al. 2006.

13. Results of a questionnaire study carried out in Cyprus under British Academy grant # RG48312 in June 2007.

14. But see Allen (1987:69) for modern Tsaconian [u] as a redevelopment from earlier [ü].

15. In addition to South-Eastern Greek varieties, palatalization is also found in Cretan, where the relevant sounds are alveolo-palatal, as opposed to the palato-alveolars found in Cyprus (Trudgill 2003:54).

16. According to an alternative view, /men/ preserves the older pronunciation of /η/ as /ē/ (Voskos, in press).

17. This is also obligatory in the Pontus and in Chios (Drachman & Malikouti-Drachman 2001).

18. Another instance of alleged morphological borrowing, the verbal ending -άζω previously attributed to contact with French (from French 2nd person plural -ez) by Menardos (1969 [1896]:165), is actually already found in the 7th c. texts of Leontios of Neapolis (Minas 2004:375), and can thereby be explained on a language-internal basis (see also Dendias 1924).

19. It has been suggested that spontaneous gemination in Cypriot Greek is actually very old, found already in an epigram of the 3rd c. CE (Voskos 1997:397–400). However, as the double representation in this epigram concerns only C [s]], and is also said to be found elsewhere during this period, it is unclear whether it is the same as the modern phenomenon.

20. If Menardos (1969 [1896]:8–9, esp. fn.1) is correct, aspirated voiceless stops are a phonological borrowing from Turkish, in which case this feature should be re-classified under 4.3 above.

21. According to Malikouti-Drachman (2000:295–296), such basilectal forms are currently undergoing attrition under the influence of SMG, yielding intermediate forms such as [karcja].
22. For instance, it is possible that prosody and pronunciation cannot be separated for Greek (thanks to Amalia Arvaniti for pointing out this possibility), while, of course, morphological and syntactic differences are absent from Gooskens and Herringa’s analysis, making it impossible to assess their impact on perceptual distances in relation to the impact of pronunciation and the lexicon.
23. A series of Cypriot Greek glossaries were submitted to these competitions between 1912 and 1925 by Xenophon Farmakides, then a teacher posted to different parts of the island (Farmakides 1983).
24. See Tombaidis (1977; reported in Joseph 1985:89). According to Bortone (p.c.), Tombaidis’s subjects were Greek-identified Pontic speakers, while Turkish-identified Pontic speakers make use of the infinitive to this day.
25. One reviewer notes at this point that the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (ΥΠΕΠΘ) “has been producing language teacher’s guides for at least 20 years in which dialects are presented in a neutral or positive light.” While this is a step in the right direction which should be acknowledged, one should not forget that the processes discussed here predate these policies and were too far advanced by the time these policies were introduced for any large-scale reversal to be possible.
26. Kiesling (2006:262) defines a Discourse as an “interlocking web of practices, ideologies and social structures ... [that] prefigure which practices and interpretations are available and how practices and structures are understood.”
27. A similar debate recently arose in Spain over Catalan literature and whether works written in Spanish by Catalan authors should be considered a part of it (Burgen 2006). More generally, several of the issues discussed in this article are not specific to Cypriot Greek, but constitute *loci* of a linguistic mythology tackled in Bauer & Trudgill 1998 (e.g. the perception of peripheral varieties as ultra-conservative, cf. Myth 9: “In the Appalachians they speak like Shakespeare”; the impression that non-standard varieties have no grammar, reflected in a Cypriot Greek subject’s comment that “I never thought of Cypriot Greek as having a grammar,” cf. Myth 10: “Some languages have no grammar”).
28. Stamou and Dinas’s study illustrates the use of regional speech in Greek TV series to achieve, not only humorous, but also dramatic effects. However, for the moment, such series air exclusively on local, rather than national, channels, suggesting that they are viewed as products mainly fit for local consumption.
29. See, for instance, “Το βοτάνι της ευγλωττίας” (“The herb of eloquence”; retrieved on 10 March 2008 from: [http://sraosha.blogspot.com/2005/10/blog-post\\_06.html](http://sraosha.blogspot.com/2005/10/blog-post_06.html)). On the fluctuating nature of Cypriots’ linguistic insecurity, see below.
30. As formally indicated in article 7 of the Constitutions of 1911 and 1952 (Vlachopoulos 2007:310).
31. On Cyprus’s modern diglossia, see, among others, Papapavlou & Pavlou 1998; Karyolemou 2000; Terkourafi 2001; Arvaniti 2002; Moschonas 2002; and note 39 below.

32. Suffice it to recall here the role of Noah Webster, a “champion of things linguistically US,” and his *American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828), in legitimizing US English as against British English (Preston 2002:148–149); or, more recently, the pronouncement of Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, and, perhaps soon, Montenegrin, as distinct languages after the break-up of Yugoslavia.

33. See <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=7013787203>. For some indicative blogs, see: <http://xenihtikon.blogspot.com/>; <http://www.sxeseis.gr/viewthread.php?tid=12838>; <http://www.hiphop.com.cy/forums/index.php>; <http://www.cy-teens.com/news.php>; <http://www.varkoume.com/>; <http://www.graffiti.com.cy/>; all accessed June 15, 2008).

34. In the 2007–2008 season, these included: on the private channel ‘Sigma’, *Μίλα μου* [Talk to me], *Ζωή ποδήλατο* [Tough life], *Βουράτε Γειτόνοι* [Run neighbours, run], *Οι Αδιάφθοροι* [The untouchables] (2nd season), *Οι Τάκκοι* [The Nitwits] (3rd season), *Στο Χωρόν μας* [At our village]; on the private channel ‘Antenna’ (Cyprus), *Δείξε μου το φίλο σου* [Show me your friend], *Την Πάτησα* [I mucked up]; and on the public RIK channel, *Γενιές της Σιωπής* [Generations of silence].

35. See, for instance, the songs *Μιχαλάκης* [Mikey] and *Κυπριακή Πραγματικότητα* [Cypriot reality] in the 2006 release *Συχνότητες* [Frequencies] by the group *DNA -Δημιουργοί Νέας Αντίληψης* [Creators of a new consciousness].

36. Transcriptions of sessions of the Cypriot Parliament may be downloaded from: <http://www.parliament.cy/parliamentgr/home.htm>

37. [http://cncminustv.blogspot.com/2008/04/put-telecontrol-down\\_09.html](http://cncminustv.blogspot.com/2008/04/put-telecontrol-down_09.html); accessed 15 June 2008. Some indicative excerpts are given below as they occur in the original and in translation:

- (i) “δεν είπαμε ότι δεν είμαστε περήφανοι για τη διάλεκτό μας. φυσικά και είμαστε περήφανοι και συμφωνώ ότι τα κυπριακά είναι πιο ελληνικά από τα ελληνικά. όμως παίζει μεγάλο ρόλο πώς τα μιλάς” [‘we didn’t say that we’re not proud of our dialect. Of course we are proud [of it] and I agree that Cypriot is more Greek than Greek. But it is very important how you speak it’]
- (ii) “Αν θα παρω καποιον τηλεφωνο λογο δουλειας, για πρωτη φορα, δεν θα μιλησω βαρετα κυπριακα χωρις να ξερω με ποιον μιλω. ΔΕΝ καλαμαριζω. Κυπριακα θα μιλησω (τζαι) αλλα δεν θα μιλησω οπως μιλω και στις φιλες μου. Δεν ντρεπομαι για τη γλωσσα μου και οπως ειπα, ολοι κυπριακα μιλαμε. Και οπως ειπε καποιος αλλος, υπαρχουν κυπριακα και κυπριακα.” [if I call someone for work, for the first time, I will not speak ‘thick’ Cypriot without knowing who I’m talking to. I DO NOT standardize. I will speak Cypriot but I won’t speak the way I speak to my friends either. I’m not ashamed of my language and as I said, we all speak Cypriot. And as someone else said, there’s different kinds of Cypriot]
- (iii) “ρε εκαμετε τοσα σχολια τζαι συνεχεια αμπλεπω (ειπαμε,εμεις επιμενουμε κυπριακα) οτι λετε την κυπριακη ΔΙΑΛΕΚΤΟ κυπριακη “γλωσσα”. να σας πω κατι αλλα οι να παθετε shock...ΕΝ υπαρχει κυπριακη γλωσσα. [...] ουλλοι μιλουμε την κυπρικη διαλεκτο αλλα ειδικα στην τηλεοραση και σε Ελλαδικο τηλεπειγνιδι εν μιλουμε οπως μιλουμε με την προγιαγια μας” [you made so many comments I keep seeing [dialectal lexeme; MT] (as said, we insist on Cypriot) that you call the Cypriot DIALECT Cypriot ‘language’. Let me tell you something but don’t be shocked... There is NO Cypriot language [...] we all

...speak the Cypriot dialect but especially on TV and on a mainland TV-game we don't speak the way we speak to our great-grandmother]

See also NOCTOC 2008.

38. It is possible, however, that not all of these are areally restricted to Cyprus. For instance, the regularization of irregular verbs (essentially compounds with *άγω*, 'lead'), cited as a feature of CSG morphology, seems to be ongoing in SMG too, as shown by a cursory search on the Hellenic National Corpus, which revealed an equal split (5:5) between, e.g., the word forms *παραγάγουν* and *παραάξουν* ('that they produce') [<http://hnc.ilsp.gr/>, accessed 15 June 2008]. On the other hand, a feature of CSG orthography said to be "completely opaque to Standard Greek speakers," the use of <X> for the affix [xadži] 'holy man' in family names, is actually also used in Mainland Greece (Dimitris Galanakis, p.c.; cf. the signature of the folk painter Theophilos as *Θεόφιλος Χ' Μιχαήλ*). In fact, both of these features (and possibly others) are also attested in previous phases of Cypriot Greek (for instance, verb forms in -άξω are common in the 7th c. writings of Leontios of Neapolis; Minas 2004:376), such that it would be wrong to associate them with the emergence of CSG under specific recent communicative needs.

39. However, one may doubt the extent to which the two situations — standard-with-dialects and diglossia — are necessarily distinct. Moreover, the extent to which Cyprus should be considered a diglossic community today has been recently called into question by Tsiplakou et al. (2006) and Karyoleμου (2006), who opt to speak of a post-diglossic stylistic continuum.

40. Moschonas (2005:292) lists the following as part of the standardization process: selection of a variety; formulation of a writing system and spelling conventions; compilation of reference works (grammar, dictionary) and manuals for use by schools and public services; setting of publication standards; elaboration of genres and registers. Moreover, he highlights the pivotal role in this process of particular institutions (national Academies, Ministries of Education, Languages Institutes, various permanent or *ad hoc* committees, language societies, and educators).

41. The conventionalization of V forms (Terkourafi 2005b), and the partial re-establishment of masculine genitive plurals in -ων, possibly under the influence of literacy and written models that has resulted in attrition of a Cypriot-specific feature, are only two cases where ideological factors have had the effect of reducing the structural distance between Cypriot and SMG.

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