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# ***LINGUISTIC PRACTICES IN CYPRUS AND THE EMERGENCE OF CYPRIOT STANDARD GREEK\****

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In Cyprus today systematic changes affecting all levels of linguistic analysis are observed in the use of Standard Greek, giving rise to a distinct linguistic variety which can be called Cypriot Standard Greek. The changes can be attributed to the influence of English and Cypriot Greek (the local linguistic variety), and to the increasing use of the Standard in semi-formal occasions. Equally important is the reluctance to recognize the diglossic situation on the island (in which Standard Greek is the H variety and Cypriot Greek the L), for political and ideological reasons. This in turn means that the attention of the Cypriot speakers is not drawn to the differences between Standard Greek as spoken in Greece and their usage of it; thus the differences become gradually consolidated, while the users remain unaware of them.

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## **1 Introduction**

The past two decades have seen a proliferation of scholarly work on the linguistic situation in Cyprus. This body of work is concerned with several topics, such as the speakers' awareness of the linguistic varieties spoken on the island (e.g., Karyolemou &

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\* This paper is a companion to Arvaniti (this volume b). Although the papers compliment each other, they are written in such a way that each can be read independently of the other; for this reason, some introductory sections (e.g. the historical background) show a degree of overlap. The bulk of the data in this article was gathered in Cyprus from 1996 to 2001, with additional data collected since then using a variety of web resources. Thanks are due first to my students at the University of Cyprus, who often discussed with me their views on and reactions to the linguistics situation. Thanks are also due to Brian Joseph, Astrid Kraehenmann, Yoryia Aggouraki, Georgios Georgiou, Yiannis Ioannou, Marilena Karyolemou, Anna Panayotou, Yannis Papadaskis and Anna Roussou for discussing various aspects of this work with me and providing me with data and sources. Finally, I thank Ad Backus and Kit Woolard for comments on an early version of this paper. This paper will be published (in slightly revised form) in the *Mediterranean Language Review*, vol. 16 (2005/2006).

Pavlou, 2001), the role and extent of borrowing, particularly from English (e.g., Davy, Ioannou & Panayotou, 1996), the relationship between education and language (e.g., Papapavlou, 2004), and most of all language attitudes (among many, Ioannou, 1991; Karoulla-Vrikkis, 1991; Karyolemou, 1994; McEntee-Atalianis & Pouloukas, 2001; Sivas, 2003; Tsiplakou, 2003). One aspect that has not received much attention, however, is the form that Standard Greek<sup>1</sup> takes in Cyprus, where it is the official language (together with Turkish). The reason why this topic is largely neglected is the tacit assumption that the Standard Greek used in Cyprus today is not different from the Standard Greek used in Greece, and therefore it merits no special attention (but see Panayotou, 1999).

Here I present data which show that Standard Greek as used in Cyprus has been increasingly diverging from Standard Greek as spoken in Greece to the point that it is now recognizably different from it. The most salient and common features of this new code, which I call *Cypriot Standard Greek*, are presented here in some detail.

What makes the emergence of Cypriot Standard Greek of some interest is that it happened during a period when increased contact between Cyprus and Greece would have been more likely to lead to convergence rather than divergence between the two standards. It is argued here that one of the reasons why divergence is taking place is that the differences between these two varieties are not recognized by the Cypriot speakers. It is further argued that this lack of recognition is related to the recursive erasure that characterizes the linguistic situation on the island: the differences between Standard Greek and the local variety are seen as minimal, while the speakers often report that they speak Standard Greek fluently and “correctly” (e.g. Tsiplakou, 2003; Papapavlou, 2004); in turn, these attitudes further serve to obliterate (in the mind of the speakers) the differences between Standard Greek as used in Greece and Standard Greek as used in Cyprus and hence to the consolidation of the divergent features.

Before I proceed with the presentation of Cypriot Standard Greek, I provide a brief background to the current situation, since the history of Cyprus, the peculiarities of the Cypriot educational system, and the linguistic situation today directly bear on the emergence of Cypriot Standard Greek. I finally discuss in more detail the reasons for the emergence of this new code.

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<sup>1</sup> The term Standard Greek refers to the variety of Greek (based on Dhimotiki but with a Katharevusa component) that emerged as the standard variety in Greece after the abolition of diglossia in 1976. A discussion of this development is beyond the scope of this paper, but see Frangoudaki (1992, 2002).

## **2 Brief Historical and Linguistic Background**

### **2.1 Historical Background**

Cyprus has been populated by Greeks since the Bronze Age (ca. 1400 B.C.). Turks from Anatolia began settling on the island when Cyprus became part of the Ottoman Empire, in 1571. In 1878, after their defeat in the Russo-Turkish war, the Ottomans handed control of Cyprus to Britain, and half a century later, in 1925, Cyprus became a British colony.

In 1960 Cyprus gained its independence from Britain, after the long anti-colonial struggle of the Greek Cypriot community which had intensified in the late 1950s. Independence did not satisfy either the Greek majority, or the Turkish minority: Greek Cypriots had fought for [enosis]<sup>2</sup> ‘union’ with Greece, while Turkish Cypriots advocated the partition of the island (*taksim*) into a Turkish and a Greek domain that would join Turkey and Greece respectively. Independence was soon followed by interethnic clashes, which in 1974 culminated in a coup by nationalist Greek Cypriots, and the subsequent military invasion of the island by Turkey. The on-going occupation of the northern third of Cyprus (where the majority of the Turkish Cypriots now live) has led to the de facto partition of the island (though the ascension of Cyprus to the European Union in 2004 may lead to a peaceful resolution in the future). Here I deal only with the linguistic situation in the non-occupied areas of the Republic of Cyprus, where the majority of the Greek Cypriots now live (on the linguistic situation in the Turkish Cypriot community, see Georgiou-Scharlipp & Scharlipp, 1998; Demir, 2002; Kurtböke, 2004; Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek, 2004).

### **2.2. Official Codes and Vernaculars in Cyprus**

The official languages of Cyprus are Greek and Turkish,<sup>3</sup> terms that refer to the standards that are also used as official languages in Greece and Turkey respectively. These standards are very different from the Greek and Turkish varieties local to Cyprus (see below). Standard Greek in particular is not spoken as a native language in Cyprus except

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<sup>2</sup> Examples, whether oral or written, are presented in broad phonetic transcription, with stress marked only when necessary. Examples are presented in Greek or Cypriot orthography if they concern spelling conventions.

<sup>3</sup> Today the use of Turkish in the non-occupied areas is nominal. Vestiges of its official status are evident in some official documents, in passports, and in banknotes, but few Greek Cypriots speak it. Although exact numbers are hard to come by, according to Sciriha (1995) only 4% of the population reported they understand Turkish, and only 1.8% that they speak it; in that study all those reporting some knowledge of Turkish were more than thirty years old. According to the 2001 Cyprus census only 0.05% of the population reported that the language they speak best is Turkish.

by Greeks who are either permanent residents (2.5% of the population, according to the 2001 census) or reside in Cyprus for limited periods of time (such as students at the University of Cyprus, teachers, army officers).

In the non-occupied parts of the Republic of Cyprus, the majority of the population now consists of native speakers of Cypriot,<sup>4</sup> a variety traditionally described as a dialect of Greek (Newton 1972a; Kontosopoulos 2001). Cypriot is further divided into *town speech*, and *village Cypriot* or *village speech* (Newton 1972b). Town speech—also known as *urban Cypriot*, and *local Cypriot Koine* (Karyolemou and Pavlou 2001, and Kolitsis 1988, respectively) is taken by the speakers themselves to be ‘*the Cypriot dialect par excellence*’ (Karyolemou and Pavlou 2001:119); it is a variety mostly based on the speech of educated speakers from the capital, Nicosia, and can be seen as the standard of the vernacular (cf. Haeri, 1997, on the comparable status of Cairo Arabic in Egypt). Village speech, on the other hand, is a term used to describe a host of geographically based linguistic varieties (Newton 1972b). Village and town Cypriot form a continuum with village Cypriot as the basilect and town Cypriot as the acrolect (see Davy et al., 1996, Karyolemou & Pavlou, 2001, and Goutsos & Karyolemou, 2004, for similar views).

Although Cypriot is considered a dialect of Greek, Standard Greek and Cypriot are too dissimilar to be mutually intelligible. For example, Papadakis (2000) reports that Greek film distributors felt that a Cypriot film about the Turkish invasion needed subtitles in order to be intelligible to audiences in Greece (and for this reason decided not to distribute it, a point to which I return). Similarly, in Tsiplakou (2003) several Cypriot speakers report that when they were first exposed to television programs from Greece they could not understand what was said, even though they were taught Standard Greek at school. These statements require some qualification, however. First, lack of intelligibility is not mutual: nowadays Cypriots are familiar with Standard Greek through the media, their schooling and increasing contact with Greece, while Greeks remain unfamiliar with Cypriot, so Greek speakers are less likely to understand Cypriots than vice versa. Second, the Cypriot that is unintelligible to Greeks is that spoken among Cypriots themselves, not the variety used when addressing Greeks, which shows traits of accommodation to the Greek addressees (Papapavlou, 1998; McEntee-Atalianis & Pouloukas, 2001; Papadakis, 2003).

In addition to formal differences, Cypriot and Standard Greek belong to largely different *sprechbunds*. For example, Papadakis (2003) shows that Greeks are seen as glib by Cypriots due to their (perceived) eloquence in Standard Greek and ease with repartee. Similarly, the comparative work of Terkourafi on politeness in Cyprus and Greece

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<sup>4</sup> According to the 2001 census, 91.7% of the population responded that the language they speak best is “Greek.” No distinction was made between varieties of Greek, but it is reasonable to assume that most respondents speak Cypriot natively, not Standard Greek.

demonstrates that Greeks and Cypriots do not share politeness strategies, such as the use of diminutives and the T/V distinction, both of which are used extensively in Greece and are considered exaggerated and unfriendly respectively by Cypriot speakers (Terkourafi, 1997; 2001; 2003; 2004).

It is also important to note that although Greek has been an official language of Cyprus since 1960, English is still widely used in many domains. English is employed in administration, banking and health care, and was the exclusive language of the law until 1987 (the translation of law documents into Greek is not complete; for details see Karyolemou, 2001). In addition, English is the medium of education in most private secondary schools (where only a limited number of courses on Greek are offered), and in all tertiary colleges, private and public (with the exception of the nursing school); Standard Greek is the medium of education only in state schools and the (state-funded) University of Cyprus.

### **2.3. The relationship between Cypriot and Standard Greek**

Cypriot and Standard Greek show clear functional differentiation in Cyprus. Standard Greek, which is learnt through formal schooling, is used in all forms of writing (with a few marked exceptions discussed immediately below), and in some forms of oral discourse, such as news broadcasting; Cypriot, which is acquired at home, is used in all face-to-face interactions among Cypriots (*Simerini*, c. 1999; Karyolemou & Pavlou, 2001). Cypriot is also used in the media but almost exclusively for humorous purposes; it is used, for example, in television and radio comedies, in the captions of political cartoons, and in humorous commercials often for local products for which basilectal varieties of Cypriot are preferred (Pavlou, 2004). Even television dramas make limited use of Cypriot, typically employing a refined form of town Cypriot to the amusement of local viewers who find this variety artificial and pretentious, as it borrows heavily from Standard Greek. The only non-humorous written use of Cypriot is in poetry.

The way in which Cypriot is used beyond face-to-face interactions indicates that it is not considered as prestigious as Standard Greek, and indeed this is the evaluation that emerges from ethnographic and sociolinguistic studies (Sciriha, 1995; Papapavlou, 1998; Papadakis, 2003). This difference is most probably also reinforced by the negative attitudes of teachers towards the use of Cypriot at school (Tsiplakou, 2003; Papapavlou, 2004), and by the fact that Cypriot is not standardized or codified in any way. Cypriot does not have a generally accepted orthography and the only complete description of (just the phonological) part of its grammar is Newton (1972b). In addition, many other works that deal with Cypriot define it in a negative fashion, typically as a set of vocabulary items or expressions that do not exist in Standard Greek (e.g. Yiangoullis, 1994, 2002, 2005), thereby unwittingly reinforcing the message that Cypriot is a linguistic variety with limited resources.

The above depict a linguistic situation that bears the hallmarks of Ferguson's (1959) classic diglossia. Indeed Moschonas (1997) and Tsiplakou (2003) do describe it as such. This view, however, is not espoused by all scholars; Davy et al. (1996), Karyolemou & Pavlou (2001) and Goutsos & Karyolemou (2004) argue that the situation is far more complex than a dichotomy would suggest. A full discussion of this issue is beyond the scope of the paper; however, a few comments are necessary as the lack of recognition of the diglossic situation has a bearing on the emergence of the local variety of Standard Greek.

Arguments to the effect that a linguistic situation is too complex to be seen as dichotomous are not new; they have been used to refute Ferguson's description of Arabic diglossia as well (see Haeri, 2000, and references therein). But, as Haeri (2000: 66) points out, following Caton (1991), Ferguson's is "a model of what the community perceives as appropriate usage based on historically and institutionally inculcated norms," not a model of what exact forms a speaker will use in any given situation. In this sense, classic diglossia applies to Cyprus, since functional differentiation may not always be obvious to linguists who pay close attention to form, but it is certainly apparent to the speakers themselves who have a clear sense that certain circumstances call for Cypriot and others for Standard Greek and evaluate speakers according to their skill in using both appropriately. Thus, Cypriots use the term [kalamarizo] 'speak like a person from Greece' ([kalamaras] being a derogatory term for mainland Greeks<sup>5</sup>) to describe the linguistic behavior of Cypriots who try to speak Standard Greek in situations that call for Cypriot, a behavior that is considered pretentious and attracts ridicule. On the other hand, Cypriots are equally ready to deride speakers who use Cypriot in circumstances that call for Standard Greek; such speakers are seen as uncouth, even if they are educated and proficient in another language, such as English, and they are often said "not to know Greek" (for similar remarks in Egypt about speakers who are not proficient in Classical Arabic, see Haeri, 2000).

The fact that Cypriot has a term like [kalamarizo] further implies that for the lay speakers Cypriot and Standard Greek do not form a continuum but are categorically distinct, even though features from urban Cypriot may transfer to Standard Greek and vice versa. This type of interaction was first noted in Ferguson (1959), but as Haeri (1997: 797) points out, in order for the users to perceive linguistic varieties or styles as

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<sup>5</sup> The word [kalamaras] literally means 'person with quill/scribbler'; it is believed that it was first used by Cypriots for Greeks because the latter came to the island in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> c. as teachers. According to some, today's pejorative sense of the word derives from the negative feelings that Cypriots developed towards Greeks after the 1974 Turkish invasion for which many hold the Greeks responsible (Papadakis, 2003).

distinct, these “must somehow continue to bear a mark of distinctness” even if some mixture is involved. Therefore, since the speakers see Cypriot and Standard Greek as distinct, and agree on which circumstances call for each variety, the situation is best seen as diglossic.

### **3 Cypriot Standard Greek**

#### **3.1 Data and Sources**

As already mentioned, an implicit assumption is that the formal variety used in Cyprus is Standard Greek, in other words the code that is also used as the standard in Greece. However, a close look shows that *Standard Greek as used in Cyprus* differs from both acrolectal forms of Cypriot and from *Standard Greek as used in Greece*. These differences pertain to all levels of linguistic structure, and show influences from English and Cypriot. The influence of Cypriot is most evident in phonetics, phonology and morphology, while the influence of English is most evident in the lexicon. These differences are widespread and numerous enough to make Cypriot Standard Greek distinct from Standard Greek as used in Greece.

The data on which this conclusion and the following description of Cypriot Standard Greek are based were collected between 1999 and 2005 and come from a variety of written and oral sources. The data presented here are indicative rather than exhaustive, in that only the more widespread features and limited examples are presented. Most importantly for the view that these features form a new code are the following two traits. First, they were present on repeated occasions in oral and written discourse from unrelated domains. Thus, they cannot be considered simple “mistakes” of different speakers. Evidence that we are not dealing with random mistakes but with deliberate choices also comes from the fact that typically the users are unaware that these features they use are ungrammatical or non-existent in Standard Greek (a point to which I return in section 4). Second, several of these features co-occurred in texts, as illustrated in (1) below. The sentence in (1) contains a word, [etites] ‘applicants’, which does not exist in Standard Greek, and a syntactic construction, [opos] + subjunctive, which is now obsolete; both features are so widespread in Cypriot Standard Greek that I have been unable to find texts using the Standard Greek word for *applicant*, [eton], or the Standard Greek syntactic construction, subjunctive without [opos].

- (1) [i etites ixan zitisi opos to kimeno ton prodiayrafon na ine yrameno stin elinici ylosa] ‘the applicants had requested that the text of the technical specifications be written in the Greek language,’ (*Simerini* newspaper, 19 July 2002)

In all cases, data were collected from situations in which the use of Standard Greek is expected, and the choices in the remainder of the text showed clearly that the user was



aiming for Standard Greek, not Cypriot. This is evident from syntactic and lexical choices, hypercorrections, and from the situation itself. For the oral data, in particular, only domains that require the use of Standard Greek were chosen, such as news broadcasting; spontaneous data including interviews were avoided as in those circumstances code-switching between Cypriot and Standard Greek is the most frequent outcome even when the speakers intend to use exclusively the latter (Pavlou, 2004). Specifically, the data come from the following sources: news bulletins in television and radio; Cypriot newspapers; television and newspaper advertisements, and advertising leaflets; television subtitles; official or semi-official documents, such as memos and minutes of the University of Cyprus, job and tender announcements in the *Official Gazette of the Republic of Cyprus*; government and newspaper websites; telephone directories, and information leaflets of banks and the national air carrier, Cyprus Airways.

### 3.2 Cypriot Standard Greek Phonetics

Phonetically there is a tendency to adapt Standard Greek to the phonetics of Cypriot (a tendency reflected in the spelling as well, as shown in 3.7 below). First, Cypriot lacks the Standard Greek voiced stops, [b], [d], [g], which are replaced in Cypriot Standard Greek either by their voiceless counterparts, or by prenasalized voiced stops (since stops are weakly voiced before nasals in Cypriot; Newton 1972b). Examples include [peticur] ‘pedicure’ (Standard Greek [pe<sup>(n)</sup>dicur]); [turpines] ‘turbines’ (Standard Greek [turbines]); [viteo klap] ‘video club’ (Standard Greek [vi<sup>(n)</sup>deio klab]); [pataria] ‘battery’ (Standard Greek [bataria]). As the Standard Greek forms show, prenasalization occurs in Standard Greek as well; however, prenasalized stops are optional, increasingly rare, and occur only intervocally (Arvaniti, 1999; Arvaniti & Joseph, 2000), while there exist lexical items that are never pronounced with prenasalization (Householder, 1964). In contrast, in Cypriot Standard Greek, prenasalized voiced stops are not restricted in the same way. For example, in a building society advertisement a little girl asks her father how they are going to acquire the house he describes, by saying [me tin eθnici stevastici mbamba] ‘With National Housing daddy?’ It is clear that the little girl was a native speaker of Cypriot who had been instructed to speak Standard Greek, since in Cypriot she would have addressed her father as [papa], while if she were a native speaker of Standard Greek she would have pronounced ‘daddy’ as [baba]. Similar examples include [ngol] ‘goal’ and [mbar] ‘bar’, while [pambu] ‘bamboo’ (Standard Greek [ba<sup>(m)</sup>bu]) and [osama mbin laten] ‘Osama Bin Laden’ (Standard Greek [osama bin la<sup>(n)</sup>den]) exhibit both strategies together.

Finally, Cypriot Standard Greek uses certain phones that are part of the inventory of Cypriot but not of Standard Greek. Thus, Cypriot Standard Greek has postalveolar fricatives, [ʃ] and [ʒ] in loan words and local and foreign names, such as [reportaʒ] ‘report’ (Standard Greek [reportaz]), [ʃut] ‘shoot’ (Standard Greek [sut]), [aʃa] village

name, [buʃ] President Bush. It also has geminate consonants whenever a word is spelt with two identical graphemes, as in [ecc<sup>h</sup>enoθice] ‘was evacuated’ (Standard Greek [ecenoθice] <εκεκνώθηκε>), or [protassi] ‘proposes’ (Standard Greek [protasi] <προτάσσει>).

### 3.3 Cypriot Standard Greek Phonology

In phonology there are both differences in the rules used and in the form of lexical items, with many of the differences reflected in the spelling as well (see section 3.7). First, several lexical items show segmental or suprasegmental differences between Standard Greek and Cypriot Standard Greek; e.g. [nikaraua] ‘Nicaragua’ (Standard Greek [nikaravua]); [trapanaci] ‘drill’ (Standard Greek [tripani]); [ekaton] ‘one hundred’ (Standard Greek [ekato]); [peran] ‘in addition to’ (Standard Greek [pera]); [kombosto] NEUT. ‘stewed fruit’ (Standard Greek [ko<sup>(m)</sup>bosta] FEM.); [ka'rambola] ‘traffic accident involving several cars’ (Standard Greek [kara<sup>(m)</sup>'bola]); [plimira] ‘flooding’ (Standard Greek [pli'mira]).

Second, Cypriot Standard Greek replaces Standard Greek [j]—which does not exist in Cypriot—with [i].<sup>6</sup> This results in an extra syllable, the presence of which can affect the position of stress; e.g. [ya.'i.ða.ros] ‘donkey’ (Standard Greek ['ɣaj.ða.ros']; cf. Cypriot ['ɣarros]); [kar.'ði.a] ‘heart’ (Standard Greek [kar.ðja]; cf. Cypriot [kar'ca]); [sa.va.to.ci.'ri.a.ko] ‘weekend’ (Standard Greek [sa.va.to.'ci.rja.ko]; cf. Cypriot [circa'ci] ‘Sunday’).

Third, Cypriot Standard Greek has fricative + stop clusters in learned words in which Standard Greek has stop + stop clusters (a remnant of Katharevusa). Examples include [iðioxtitis] ‘owner’ (Standard Greek [iðioktitis]), [exprosopi] ‘representatives’ (Standard Greek [ekprosopi]), [ex ton uk anef] ‘a must’ (Standard Greek [ek ton uk anef]). Such pronunciations are often reflected in the spelling: for instance, in a letter addressed to the University of Cyprus a student repeatedly spelled the word ‘accepted’ as <δεχτή> (i.e. [ðexti]), instead of <δεκτή> (i.e. [ðekti]) which is the spelling (and pronunciation) Standard Greek calls for, at least in formal styles.

Finally, in Standard Greek when a word is stressed on the penult (or antepenult) and is followed by a disyllabic (or monosyllabic) enclitic, it acquires a second stress (enclitic stress); e.g. [to ti'lefono] ‘the telephone’ but [to ti'lefo,no mu] ‘my telephone’. Cypriot Standard Greek on the other hand lacks enclitic stress, a feature that is transferred from Cypriot; e.g. [tis ta'ftotitas tu] ‘his identity’ GEN.

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<sup>6</sup> This analysis differs from Newton (1972b) which included [j] in the phonemic inventory of Cypriot. The situation is too complex to describe here; simplifying considerably, in Cypriot, [j] is the palatal allophone of the velar voiced fricative [ʝ] before the front vowels [i] and [e], but not a non-syllabic allophone of [i].

### 3.4. Cypriot Standard Greek Morphology

Morphologically Cypriot Standard Greek shows greater fluctuation in the use of forms inherited from Katharevusa, as well as a more generalized tendency to level paradigms. This tendency exists in Standard Greek too, but it is not observed in formal styles and the speech of educated speakers, while the leveled forms are much more stigmatized in Standard Greek than in Cypriot Standard Greek.

First, in Standard Greek masculine and feminine nouns with stress on the antepenult and ending in the suffix [os] in nominative singular receive antepenultimate stress in the nominative plural too. In Cypriot Standard Greek, such nouns receive penultimate stress in the nominative plural (by analogy to the genitive plural, which has penultimate stress). For example: [ðen iparxun ute ðia'ðromi pleon sto patoma] ‘there aren’t even corridors any more on the floor [i.e. the Cyprus Stock Exchange]’ (Standard Greek [ði'aðromi]); [sto aeroskafos iparxun tesaris ek'soði cinðinu] ‘on the aircraft there are four emergency exits’ (Cyprus Airways safety instructions video), and [kaliptonde oles sas i ek'soði] ‘all your outings are covered’ (Bank of Cyprus credit card advertisement; Standard Greek [eksoði]); [θa xrisimopiiθun tris i'soði os akoluθos] ‘three exits will be used as follows’ (University of Cyprus Student Welfare Office memo; Standard Greek [i'soði]); [exun simbliroθi i fa'celi] ‘the files have been completed’ (Minister of Health; Standard Greek [faceli]); [me nices ksecinisan i andi'pali ton omaðon mas] ‘with victories begun the adversaries of our teams’ (televised sports news; Standard Greek [a<sup>(n)</sup>dipali]).

Second, Cypriot Standard Greek shows unrestricted use of the genitive plural of feminine nouns. In contrast, in Standard Greek these genitives are avoided and largely replaced by [apo] + accusative. If the genitive is used at all, the stress typically moves to the final syllable, while in Cypriot Standard Greek the stress is kept on the syllable it is found in the nominative; e.g. [ton ka'reklon] ‘the chairs GEN.’; [ton pi'sinon] ‘the swimming pools GEN.’; [ton ko'pelon] ‘the girls GEN.’; [set katsa'rolon] ‘set [of] cooking pots GEN.’ All of these genitives would have been expressed periphrastically in Standard Greek, as in [set apo katsa'roles] lit. ‘set of cooking pots ACC.’

Third, some irregular verbs (another Katharevusa remnant) are becoming regularized in Cypriot Standard Greek. For example: [isiksame to neo proion] ‘we introduced the new product’ (information leaflet of Cyprus Airways; Standard Greek [isayayame]); [na tus mazepsume ce na tus prosaksume sti ðiceosini] ‘we [should] round them up and bring them to justice’ (Standard Greek [na tus prosayayume]); [ja na paraksun ta ðiilistiria petreleo] ‘so that the refineries may produce oil’ (Standard Greek [parayayun]).

Finally, in Standard Greek, incipient loans from English either lose their plural marker, or (much more rarely) retain it but it becomes opaque; e.g. [ta kobjuter] ‘the computers’, [ta ceik] ‘the cakes’, but also [to tanks] ‘the tank’ and [to klips] ‘the hairclip’. In contrast, in Cypriot Standard Greek such loans appear with the English plural marker only when plural is required; e.g. the Yellow Pages include headings such as [pet fops] ‘pet shops’

and [viteo klaps] ‘video clubs’, while a supermarket leaflet advertised [slips] ‘underpants’, [ceiks] ‘cakes’, [fails] ‘files’, and [klips] ‘paper clips’.

### 3.5 Cypriot Standard Greek Syntax

There are perhaps fewer differences between Standard Greek and Cypriot Standard Greek when it comes to syntax, but such differences exist nonetheless. One such difference relates to negation: although both Standard Greek and Cypriot have double negation, in Cypriot Standard Greek the verb in constructions with [ute] ‘not even’ is not negated. Thus, in Cypriot Standard Greek we find sentences like the following: [ute ena poðosferiko θavma θα itan arceto na anatrepsi to apotelezma] ‘not even a football miracle would be enough to reverse the result’ (Standard Greek [ðe θa itan arceto]); [ute i pjo nosiri fandasia θα borurse na silavi afto ton polemo] ‘not even the sickest imagination could conceive of this war’ (Standard Greek [ðe θa boruse]); [ute na klapso boro] ‘I can’t even cry’ (reported speech in the news; Standard Greek [ute na klapso ðe boro]).

In addition, in certain constructions, Cypriot Standard Greek uses different cases from Standard Greek. For instance, in Standard Greek [opos] ‘like’ takes complements in nominative, but Cypriot Standard Greek (like Cypriot) has accusative instead; e.g. [aftos o polemos ðen ine opos tus alus polemus] ‘this war is not like the other wars,’ instead of [opos i ali polemi].<sup>7</sup>

Cypriot Standard Greek also uses certain Katharevusa expressions which sound antiquated to Standard Greek speakers and are certainly obsolete. These include [peran] + genitive ‘in addition to’ instead of [pera apo] + accusative; e.g. [peran tu kostus] ‘in addition to the cost,’ instead of Standard Greek [pera apo to kostos]). Another such syntactic device, as mentioned earlier, is the use of the conjunction [opos] instead of a simple subjunctive, as is done in Standard Greek; e.g. [θα sas parakalusa opos mas apostilete tis apopsis sas] ‘I would request that you send us your views’ instead of the Standard Greek [θα sas parakalusa nas mas apostilete tis apopsis sas], or [i vuleftes askiosan opos ðiðaskonde ce stis ðio γloses] ‘the members of Parliament demanded that they [new postgraduate programs at the University of Cyprus] be taught in both languages’, instead of [i vuleftes askiosan na ðiðaskonde ...].

Finally, Cypriot Standard Greek uses the past perfect tense (which does not exist in Cypriot) with a concrete time reference, something that is ungrammatical for most (though not all) speakers of Standard Greek. For instance: [stis (date) exun jini alajes sto proγrama] lit. ‘on (date) changes have been made to the schedule’ (University of Cyprus webpage; Standard Greek [ejinan alajes]); [simera exete eksipiretiθi apo (name)] lit. ‘today you have been served by (name)’ (quotation form given in a shop; Standard Greek

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<sup>7</sup> This construction is altogether unusual in Standard Greek in which the same meaning would be most probably expressed as [aftos o polemos ðen ine san tus alus polemus].

[eksipiretiθikate]); [exo apotaθi sto panepistimio kipru (ton) aprilio] lit. ‘I have addressed the University of Cyprus (in) April’ (Standard Greek [apotaθika] ‘I addressed’).

### 3.6 Cypriot Standard Greek Lexicon

The lexicon is the area in which the greatest number of differences between Cypriot Standard Greek and Standard Greek are observed. First, in Cypriot Standard Greek many everyday Standard Greek words are replaced by Cypriot terms; e.g., [payopiisi] ‘freezing’ (of an issue) (Standard Greek [payoma]); [frutaria] ‘greengrocer’s (Standard Greek (formal) [oporopolio]); [payotaria] ‘ice-cream parlor’ (Standard Greek [payotadziθiko]); [kapira] ‘toast’ (Standard Greek [friyana]); [iθotis] ‘car body repairer’ (Standard Greek [fanardzis]).

In many cases the differences are due to loans from different sources between the two varieties, and literal translations from English. These have several outcomes. First, English loans may replace in Cypriot Standard Greek items that Standard Greek has borrowed from French (Davy et al., 1996); e.g. [fail] ‘file’ is used instead of Standard Greek [dosje] (cf. French *dossier*), [ndzeli] ‘jelly’ instead of Standard Greek [zele] (cf. French *gelé*), and [ham] ‘ham’ instead of Standard Greek [za<sup>(m)</sup>bon] (cf. French *jambon*). English loans may also replace perfectly common Standard Greek words; e.g. Cypriot Standard Greek uses [antenna] ‘antenna’ instead of the Standard Greek term [kerea], [pasta tomatas] ‘tomato paste’ instead of Standard Greek [domatopeltes], [karavani] ‘caravan/trailer’ instead of Standard Greek [troxospito], [eksost] ‘exhaust’ instead of Standard Greek [eksatmisi], and [klip] ‘paper clip’ instead of Standard Greek [sinθetiras]. In addition, the translation of English expressions and words often results in neologisms. Such neologisms include: [θianoitici iθioktisia], a translation of ‘intellectual property’ (Standard Greek [pnevmatici iθioktisia]); [kocinos sinajermos], a literal translation of ‘red alert’, which does not have a Standard Greek equivalent; [θanatici erevna], a rendition of ‘death inquiry’ (the closest term in Standard Greek would be [iatroθikastici eksetasi]). Finally, in some cases, translations from English result in the use of common Standard Greek words in inappropriate contexts or with a new meaning. For example, Cypriot Standard Greek renders ‘honorable’ into [endimos] (lit. ‘honest’) instead of the Standard Greek [aksiotimos], while ‘helpful’ is translated as [voiθitikos], which in Standard Greek means ‘auxiliary’ (the Standard Greek term for *helpful* is [eksipiretikos] and it cannot be used with inanimate nouns).

In addition to influences from English, Cypriot Standard Greek also shows some idiosyncratic vocabulary choices. First, Cypriot Standard Greek often replaces common Standard Greek words with rarer lexical items; examples include [isθoçi] ‘entry’ (e.g. to the University or the Cyprus Stock Exchange), [aneliksi] ‘promotion’, [afipiretisi] ‘retirement’, [tuto] ‘this’, [prosopo] ‘person’. The usual Standard Greek terms are respectively [isayoji], [proayoji], [sindaksi], [afto], and [atomo] or [anθropos] (depending on context). Finally, on occasion, the items used have a different meaning in Standard

Greek; e.g. the Cypriot Standard Greek term [psonisma] ‘shopping’ has connotations of soliciting in Standard Greek, in which the usual term for *shopping* is [psoɹa]. In the same way, [sinðetiras] in Standard Greek means ‘paper clip’ but in Cypriot Standard Greek it replaces [siraptiko] ‘stapler’; [civernitikos] is an adjective in Standard Greek meaning ‘governmental’, but in Cypriot Standard Greek it has taken the meaning of ‘civil servant’ (Standard Greek [ðimosios ipalilos]; [foros] means ‘tax’ in Standard Greek, but in Cypriot Standard Greek is also means ‘tax office’ (Standard Greek [eforia]); [ɣnosiolojikos] means ‘cognitive’ in Standard Greek, but in Cypriot Standard Greek it is used in expressions such as [ɣnosiolojiko epipeðo] ‘level of knowledge’ in which the term [ɣnostikos] is used in Standard Greek (i.e. [ɣnostiko epipeðo]); [ðiastavrono] in Standard Greek means ‘to cross-check’ or ‘to cross’ (e.g. swords), but in Cypriot Standard Greek it means ‘to cross the road’.

### **3.7 Cypriot Standard Greek Orthography**

Written texts in Cypriot Standard Greek exhibit conventions that do not exist in Standard Greek and reflect aspects of Cypriot phonology adopted by Cypriot Standard Greek. Thus, Cypriot Standard Greek systematically omits enclitic stress (see Phonology); e.g. <παράκληση μας είναι...> (Standard Greek <παράκλησή μας είναι...>), <το οίκημα της> (Standard Greek <το οίκημά της>). In addition, <π>, <τ>, <κ> (which represent [p], [t] and [k] respectively) often replace Standard Greek <μπ>, <ντ>, <γκ/γγ> (which represent [b], [d] and [g] respectively) in the transliteration of foreign names and loan words. For example, <τουρπίνα> ‘turbine’ (Standard Greek <τουρμπίνα>); <βίτεο κλαπ> ‘video club’ (Standard Greek <βίντεο κλαμπ>); <Ναμίπια> ‘Namibia’ (Standard Greek <Ναμίμπια>); <ταπέλλα> ‘sign’ (Standard Greek <ταμπέλα>). Cypriot Standard Greek also uses double letters where Cypriot has a geminate consonant, e.g. <πίττα> ‘pie/pitta bread’, <πέννα> ‘pen’, <Μαρόκκο> ‘Morocco’, <Βρεττανία> ‘Britain’, <τουαλέττα> ‘toilet’ instead of Standard Greek <πίτα>, <πένα>, <Μαρόκο>, <Βρετανία>, <τουαλέτα>. Further, Cypriot Standard Greek uses <ι> to reflect the presence of postalveolars (which, as mentioned, are absent from Standard Greek). For example, <Τσιάνι> ‘Chad’ (Standard Greek <Τσαντ>); <τζιούτο> ‘judo’ (Standard Greek <τζούντο>); <πετ σιοπς> ‘pet shops’ (Standard Greek <πετ σοπ>); Σήλα ‘Sheila’ (Standard Greek <Σήλα>).

Finally, Cypriot Standard Greek uses certain conventions that are completely opaque to Standard Greek speakers. One of these is the use of <X"> for the affix [xatʃi] ‘holy man’ found in many surnames; e.g. a surname like [hatʃipetru] can be spelt <X"πέτρου> instead of Standard Greek <Χατζηπέτρου>. The second convention is the acronym <ΑΤΔ>, which is a transliteration of *Ltd* and is of course devoid of meaning in Greek (the equivalent Standard Greek acronym is <ΕΠΕ> for *Εταιρεία Περιορισμένης Ευθύνης*, literally ‘Company [of] Limited Responsibility’).

#### 4 Reasons for the Emergence of Cypriot Standard Greek

The data presented above clearly show that Cypriot Standard Greek is sufficiently different from Standard Greek as used in Greece to be recognized as a distinct linguistic variety. As has been shown, the differences pertain to all levels of linguistic structure and are systematic in the sense that they (co)occur in various unrelated sources.

There are several reasons for the emergence of these features. First, Standard Greek is now spreading to domains in which English was used almost exclusively until a few years ago, such as in the courts, in banking, and in administration. In addition, Standard Greek is now used extensively in the media and in advertising, domains that were very limited in scope until recently. The electronic media in particular were a state monopoly until 1990 (radio) and 1992 (television), and included just three radio programs and two television channels. Today, however, Cyprus has six local and eight island-wide television channels, and 38 local and twelve island-wide radio stations. A similar boom has taken place in the press. In 1985, ten magazines, six dailies and eleven biweekly and monthly newspapers circulated in Cyprus. In 2005, there are eight dailies and 36 other newspapers, three weekly magazines and 51 magazines of less frequent circulation. Of the 92 publications that have appeared since 1985, 36 started circulating after 2000 (source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/mfa.nsf/>; these numbers do not include 27 publications for which the first year of circulation was not available). Finally, advertising and other information leaflets, virtually non-existent fifteen years ago, are now widespread.

These new domains have understandably expanded the repertoire of styles and registers of Standard Greek used in Cyprus. First, the use of Standard Greek in administration requires control of a formal style and of specialized registers, which at least some Cypriot speakers may lack, either because of ineffective schooling in Standard Greek (see below), or because they were educated in English-medium schools and later studied in English-medium colleges or abroad. The difficulties of the speakers are reflected in the results of Greek and English proficiency tests taken in the course of applying for government positions; on one such occasion at least, out of a total of 332 applicants who obtained passing grades to these tests only 13% got better grades in the Greek proficiency test, while the rest got better grades in the English proficiency test (source: *Simerini* newspaper, 13 February 2004). Similar difficulties with Standard Greek are reflected in the results of research undertaken by the University of Athens in collaboration with the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus (source: *Simerini* newspaper, 18 October 2002). This research involved 12<sup>th</sup> grade Cypriot students in Greek-medium schools who took part in a battery of Greek proficiency tests. Although the Cypriot students fared better in some respects than their counterparts in Greece (e.g. they did better in reading comprehension), they had great difficulty with certain aspects of grammar, morphology in general and verb morphology in particular (only 42.4% answered more than half the morphology questions correctly; the percentage was down to 21.1% for verb morphology).

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In addition to problems with the command of Standard Greek that many users may face, the expansion of the uses of Standard Greek in the media has created new stylistic needs. The popular press, advertising, television and radio require a semi-formal style, for which both Cypriot and Standard Greek may not be suitable. Cypriot could appear too informal and uneducated for many programs, and it is largely unacceptable in writing. Even the most informal styles of Standard Greek, on the other hand, would be too formal and unfriendly, and would clearly seem artificial and pretentious if used between Cypriots in a casual phone-in or chat show (see also Pavlou, 2004).

Furthermore, these semi-formal uses of Standard Greek create practical needs of comprehension on the part of the addressees, particularly when everyday situations must be covered. This need for a style that is recognizable as Standard Greek but is still intelligible to the average Cypriot was explicitly mentioned as a concern by translators who prepare subtitles for foreign programs broadcast on Cypriot television (Korda-Savva, 2001). The same need is also evident in various publications in which Cypriot lexical items are inserted into the text in order to ensure comprehension on the part of the public; e.g. in a job announcement in the *Official Gazette of the Republic of Cyprus* the Cypriot term for ‘carpenter’, [pelekanos], was used instead of the Standard Greek [skiluryos]. Similarly a supermarket leaflet advertised [marmelaða xrisomilo] ‘apricot jam’, [kapires] ‘toast’ and [kaltses] ‘socks’, using the Cypriot terms for *apricot* and *toast* but the Standard Greek term for *socks* (Cypriot [klatses]), presumably because the Standard Greek words for *apricot* and *toast* ([verikoko] and [friyapes] respectively) are most likely unknown to the wide Cypriot public, while the Standard Greek and Cypriot forms for *socks* are similar, and thus using Standard Greek in this case would not cause comprehension problems.

However, the opening of new domains to Standard Greek cannot account for all the divergent features presented here. There are two main reasons why this is so. First, this kind of divergence would be more naturally expected to arise from lack of contact between two speech communities. Such lack of contact characterized Greece and Cyprus in the earlier part of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. (Terkourafi, 2003). Yet Cypriot documents from that period are written in impeccable Katharevusa, while fewer features of Cypriot Standard Greek appear in texts written by older journalists. These observations suggest that Cypriot Standard Greek is a relatively new phenomenon; most interestingly, it appears at a time of unprecedented contact between Greece and Cyprus, and greater familiarity of Cypriots with Standard Greek. This greater contact is partly due to the fact that Cypriots travel often to Greece for business, and tourism (as an indication, the number of daily flights between Greece and Cyprus increased from eight to sixteen between 1995 and 2001; see also Papadakis, 2003, for similar remarks). But even those who do not travel to Greece have become more familiar with different styles of Standard Greek through the media: most Greek magazines and newspapers circulate in Cyprus, the Greek Television satellite program NET—which broadcasts mostly news and highbrow programs—is



available, while the other channels broadcast popular Greek programs, such as games, chat shows, sitcoms and soap operas. In such cases of great contact, convergence is expected (on the effectiveness of linguistic contact through the media, rather than face-to-face interaction, see Foulkes & Docherty, 1999). Indeed the influence of Standard Greek on Cypriot has been noted by Karyolemou and Pavlou (2001), who discuss the effects of Standard Greek on the structure and vocabulary of Cypriot, and by Terkourafi (1997, 2001), who discusses the adoption of Standard Greek communicative strategies in Cypriot. Despite this influence of Standard Greek on Cypriot, however, the two varieties remain distinct in the mind of the speakers, as the results of Karyolemou & Pavlou (2001) suggest, while Standard Greek in Cyprus is now more divergent from Standard Greek in Greece than it was half a century ago.

At first glance, the divergence of Cypriot Standard Greek from the Standard Greek of Greece could be attributed to the need of the speakers to index their Cypriot identity when speaking the standard. Indeed, research suggests that the speakers wish to distance themselves from Standard Greek (Karyolemou & Pavlou, 2001), since, as mentioned earlier, the use of Standard Greek particularly in speech is seen as pretentious (Karyolemou & Pavlou, 2001; Papadakis, 2003). However, this need cannot be the whole answer, because most of the features of Cypriot Standard Greek presented earlier (with the exception of some phonological features) are *not* recognized by Cypriot speakers as features of their own distinct code; rather, they are considered by them to be features of Standard Greek proper. This is indeed the most striking characteristic of Cypriot Standard Greek, namely the fact that its users are largely unaware that it exists.<sup>8</sup> This lack of awareness is manifested in multiple ways, throughout the speech community. First, it is seen in the way speakers report their own language usage. In Tsiplakou (2003) many speakers report that they use both Cypriot and Standard Greek equally well, and some even go as far as to say that they speak Standard Greek better than Cypriot. Similarly, in Papapavlou (2004: 97) at least some Cypriot speakers report that in their daily interactions they use either a Cypriot dialect that is “like Standard Greek, with the presence of Cypriot terms but with the conscious avoidance of Cypriot sounds” or a variety that is “like Standard Greek, without the presence of Cypriot terms and with the conscious avoidance of Cypriot sounds.”

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<sup>8</sup> It appears that the usage of Standard Greek in Cyprus may have now begun to attract some attention. In 2002, the Ministry of Education and Culture in collaboration with the Cyprus Radio and Television Authority organized seminars on “The correct use of the Greek language in the electronic mass media,” while in 2004, the Ministry of Education and Culture started offering examinations that lead to certificates of “sufficient knowledge” of Greek for graduates of English-medium high schools (on the assumption that these may be requested by prospective employers). It is unclear, however, whether these measures reflect an understanding of the differences between Cypriot Standard Greek and Standard Greek, or whether they are a response to more general concerns about language use.

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These claims could well reflect what the speakers would like to think about their usage, rather than the reality. However, at least two scholars (Karoulla-Vrikkis, pers.com.; Papadakis, 2003) agree that although Cypriots are aware of their accent, other “fine differences in morphology, syntax and vocabulary [such as those] noted in Arvaniti (2001) [2002] are not evident to the Cypriot speakers of the Greek formal code” (Papadakis, 2003: 540). My own experience at least is in line with these reports: Cypriot speakers are more often than not taken aback if a difference between Standard Greek and Cypriot Standard Greek is pointed out to them.

Another manifestation of the lack of awareness is the presence of hypercorrected forms, first noted by Newton (1983). Such hypercorrections include both generally accepted forms of Cypriot Standard Greek, such as [spanaçi] ‘spinach’ (Standard Greek [spanaci]; cf. Cypriot [spanaʃi]), and innovations of individual speakers, such as <παγιδάκια> [pa.ji.'ða.ca] ‘lamp chops’ seen on a restaurant menu (Standard Greek <παϊδάκια> [pa.i.'ða.ca]), and <τσιμπουράδικο> [tsiburaðiko] ‘place where tsipuro is drunk’ seen on a shop sign (Standard Greek <τσιπουράδικο> [tsipuraðiko]; tsipuro is a Greek alcoholic drink that does not exist in Cyprus except as a recent import from Greece). Such hypercorrections are clearly based on attempts to speak or write Standard Greek: [spanaçi] is based on the fact that often—though not in this case—Cypriot [ʃ] corresponds to Standard Greek [ç]; in [pa.ji.'ða.ca] the hypercorrection relates to the deletion, in Cypriot, of intervocalic voiced fricatives which are retained in Standard Greek (cf. Cypriot [laos] vs. Standard Greek [layos] ‘hare’); finally, in <τσιμπουράδικο>, the writer must have noticed that many words spelt with <π> in Cypriot have <μπ> in Standard Greek (see also sections 3.2 and 3.7 above). The use of hypercorrections clearly shows that the Cypriot speakers are neither nonchalant about their choices, nor do they try to index their Cypriot identity when using Standard Greek by choosing certain forms or constructions; rather, on certain occasions at least, they strive to use Standard Greek, and assume that they are doing so although they are actually adopting features that belong to the Cypriot variety of Standard Greek, not Standard Greek per se.

This lack of recognition of the differences between Cypriot Standard Greek and Standard Greek on the part of the speakers is indirectly replicated in the absence of any discussion of this topic in the Cypriot press where issues of language attitudes and language use are often debated. An extended search of language-related newspaper articles of the past fifteen years yielded only one article (*Simerini*, 3/20/2003) that noted a feature of Cypriot Standard Greek—the use of the masculine forms of titles even when a woman holds the position (e.g. [i yɛnikos ðiefθindis] ‘the director general’ instead of Standard Greek [i yɛnici ðiefθindria])—though the difference in practice between Greece and Cyprus was not pointed out.

One reason behind this lack of awareness could well be the *erasure* of the differences between Standard Greek and Cypriot, “the process in which ideology, in simplifying the sociolinguistic field, renders some [...] sociolinguistic phenomena invisible. Facts that

are inconsistent with the ideological scheme either go unnoticed or get explained away” (Irvine and Gal 2000: 38). Irvine and Gal provide as an example a situation in which dialectal variation is ignored if the prevailing ideology prescribes that a language is homogeneous. Precisely this kind of erasure seems to operate on several levels in the Cypriot speech community (and partly in the Greek speech community too, as shown below). On the one hand, in some circumstances speakers admit that Greek and Cypriot are so different as to be (at least occasionally) unintelligible to speakers of the other variety (e.g. Korda-Savva, 2001; Tsiplakou, 2003; Papadakis, 2003). On the other hand, however, the speakers also claim that Cypriot and Standard Greek are very similar, as when they report that “Greek, Cypriot, it’s the same thing’ (Sivas 2003: 8). This ideologically prescribed notion of similarity is also manifested in comments of Cypriot speakers to the effect that Cypriot does not exist any more, and that all that remains of it is its pronunciation (Tsiplakou, 2003), or as Makridis (*Simerini* c.1999) puts it “its phonetic guise.” The same attitude is manifested in the press: the large number of newspaper articles that address linguistic issues always refer to “Greek” and rarely even mention Cypriot, thereby downplaying the differences between the two and relegating Cypriot to just an accent. The official stance appears to be the same, as the questions of the 2001 census suggest: as mentioned, people were not asked to specify which variety of Greek they “speak best”. The same erasure (albeit in a more sophisticated form) is evident in the website of the “School of Modern Greek” that now operates at the University of Cyprus. In this website it is mentioned that the aim of the courses offered is “to give students competency and basic communication skills in the Greek language;” no clarification is given as to which variety of Greek the students will be taught, the implicit assumption being that they will be taught Standard Greek. In order to understand how unusual this assumption is, one could try to imagine that a similar school in the US or Australia would undertake to teach its students British English! In the case of the University of Cyprus “School of Modern Greek”, however, the local variety is only mentioned in these terms: “all courses comprise study of the Cyprus dialect, which students will encounter in their day-to-day life.” The authors even feel the need to justify this choice to teach elements of Cypriot by adding that their study “aims to identify difficulties foreign speakers *may* [emphasis added] encounter during their daily contact with the Cyprus society” ([http://www.ucy.ac.cy/publications/school/english/course\\_content.htm](http://www.ucy.ac.cy/publications/school/english/course_content.htm)). In some cases, speakers go to even greater lengths to avoid bringing up the differences between Greek and Cypriot; for example, the Greek film distributors mentioned in Papadakis (2000) decided not to distribute the Cypriot film in Greece because they were unwilling to provide subtitles for it, as subtitles in Greece are used for foreign language films and programs; thus using subtitles for the Cypriot film would imply that Cypriot is a foreign language to Greeks.

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The fact that the differences between the two varieties are downplayed to such an extent is part of the linguistic ideology that Christidis (1999) calls *Greek mythologies*, that is the notion that Greek has remained practically unchanged since Homer, and shows minimal geographical differentiation. The origin of this ideology is not hard to find: language is the most important element of ethnic identity in Greece and Cyprus (Trudgill, 2000). Thus, any suggestion that Greeks and Cypriots might speak different languages is tantamount to saying they are ethnically distinct, a point that most do not wish to contemplate. The strength of this ideology is such that many Cypriots took exception to the fact that a 2004 report on educational reform in Cyprus used the term *nation-state* to refer to Cyprus. This term incensed politicians, faculty of the University of Cyprus, teachers and members of the public alike, since it implied that Cyprus is a separate nation from Greece and therefore that Greeks and Cypriots are ethnically distinct (non-speakers of Greek should note that in Greek *nation* and *ethnic identity* are formed from the same root—they are [eθnos] and [eθnikotita] respectively—while *nationality* [iθajenia] is unrelated to both). The same ideology is inculcated, according to male consultants, to Cypriot young men when they do their army service: they are often told that Greece and Cyprus are different states ([krati]) but form one nation ([eθnos]). Cypriot and Cypriot Standard Greek actually have lexical items to show this distinction: the term [elinas] is used to denote all Greeks independently of where they live—that is all people who speak some form of Greek, while the term [elaðitis] is used to denote Greeks from Greece in particular. Thanks to these two terms, there is no contradiction in expressions such as [ta elinopula tis kipru] ‘the Greek children of Cyprus’ which abound in the press and other publications (particularly those of a conservative leaning).

Now the idea that Greek and Cypriot are very similar, allows the speakers to view the relation between the two varieties as a simple case of ‘standard-with-dialects’ rather than as diglossic. In turn, seeing the situation as ‘standard-with-dialects’ means that there is no need to pay special attention to “fine details” (as Papadakis, 2003, puts it), that is to differences in linguistic structure and the lexicon between Standard Greek in Cyprus and Standard Greek in Greece. Equally, there is no need to consider whether language teaching should be effected in a different way in Cyprus than in Greece, since the vast majority of the Cypriot students have to learn at school a variety that is related to their native tongue but quite different from it (on the cognitive difficulties such a situation may impose on learners, see Milroy, 2002). Indeed the articles in the press, and the reactions of educationalists suggest that the differences discussed here are not given much, if any, attention. One can contrast this with the situation in Switzerland where publications do exist that aim at pointing out mistakes Swiss speakers make when using *hoc Deutch* (e.g. Sieber and Sitta 1991). Finally, as a result of erasure the use of these new features becomes consolidated as nobody comments on them and nobody tries to change them. In this way they spread, together with the unshakeable belief that they are features of

Standard Greek, gradually leading to greater divergence between Standard Greek and the emerging variety, Cypriot Standard Greek.

## 5 Conclusion

I have shown that in Cyprus today a new form of Standard Greek—Cypriot Standard Greek—is being gradually created; this form is recognizably different from Standard Greek as spoken in Greece. The origin of this phenomenon can partly be attributed to practical needs and changing circumstances. As shown, however, such needs cannot fully explain the emergence of this new variety. Rather, Cypriot Standard Greek appears to be related also to the reluctance of the community to acknowledge the extent of the differences between Standard Greek and Cypriot, because of the implications that their recognition would carry: according to the dominant ideology, language is the main determiner of ethnicity; thus, admitting that Greek and Cypriot are very different from each other and that Cypriot Standard Greek is not the same as Standard Greek would be tantamount to saying that Greeks and Cypriots are ethnically distinct. This reluctance has gradually led to the emergence of Cypriot Standard Greek, without either the speakers or the commentators being aware that while debating the Cypriot language question Cypriot Standard Greek was happening to them.

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