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περίπου σαν τους Έλληνες ‘more like the Greeks’: linguistic cleavages and authenticity in London’s Greek Cypriot diaspora

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Abstract

In this chapter, I explore linguistic differences between London’s Greek Cypriot diaspora and the homeland of Cyprus, foregrounding the emic perspectives of London-born Greek Cypriots. The thematic analysis of interview transcripts reveals deep linguistic and cultural divides between the two groups. London-born Greek Cypriots perceive the Greek spoken in Cyprus as having lost distinctive Cypriot elements, favouring Standard Greek features. This perception is rooted in sociopolitical and cultural factors, including improved economic conditions in Cyprus, Europeanization, and the abandonment of traditional (or ‘villagey’) ways. In contrast, the diaspora is constructed as a stronghold of authentic Cypriot identity, resisting change and modernisation against changes in Cyprus, with participants, however, downplaying their own linguistic and cultural innovations. The chapter, therefore, contributes nuanced insights into the complex dynamics between diasporic communities and their originating homelands, highlighting the impact of sociohistorical conditions on identity transformations.

1. Introduction

In her study of the experiences of London-born Greek Cypriot youths who visited Cyprus for their summer holidays, Aloneftis (1990) documented an interesting paradox: London-born Greek Cypriots and Cyprus-born Greek Cypriots applied the same term of abuse to the other group, *χώρκατοι* ‘bumpkins’. Coming from one of the world’s most influential centres of popular culture, the London group considered the Cyprus group to be backward in terms of music and style. The Cyprus group, in their turn, viewed the London group as uncouth and lacking in modernity. This perspective was based on two interrelated conditions: first, the fact that many Cypriot migrants had rural origins, having migrated to the UK from the villages of Cyprus rather than to one of its cities; second, the assessment that they used a great deal of *χωρικάτικα* ‘villagey’ linguistic features in their speech including features which, according to Aloneftis, were being devalued in Cyprus in the late 1980s–early 1990s. In a more recent ethnographic investigation, Teerling (2014) found that British-born ‘returnees’ believed that Cypriot Greek in the UK was more authentic than in Cyprus in that it had remained unchanged since the 1950s whilst Greek in Cyprus had become more Hellenic over the years.

In this chapter, I take a closer look at the linguistic differences between London’s Greek Cypriot diaspora and the Cyprus homeland from the emic perspectives of London-born Greek Cypriots. The thematic analysis of the transcripts of a set of semi-structured interviews brings to the fore a number of themes that build on and add nuance to Aloneftis’s and Teerling’s earlier findings. In participants’ accounts, there emerges a picture of a deep and unbridgeable linguistic and cultural cleavage between London and Cyprus, one that is underpinned by the notion of departure from received authenticity. I show that London Greek Cypriots perceive the Greek that is spoken in Cyprus as a homogeneous linguistic entity that has lost distinctive

elements of its erstwhile Cypriotness – especially in terms of phonology and lexis – in favour of the acquisition of features associated with the standardised variety of Greece. Participants described this process as resulting from the interplay of a complex set of sociopolitical and cultural dimensions: the improvement of the economic conditions in Cyprus after the 1974 war, the route to and achievement of Europeanisation, the abandonment of ‘villagey’ ways of living, and the concomitant development of a cosmopolitan self-image – all of which they contrasted with the underprivileged origins of the London diaspora and the projection of a humble, authentic, and distinctively Cypriot identity. At the same time, participants downplayed ways in which their own linguistic and cultural practices had changed over time including through the creative mixing of Greek and English linguistic resources. The relationship between diaspora and homeland is, as Cohen puts it, “both complicated and fraught” (2008: 119).

The chapter is structured as follows: in section 2, I outline the theoretical framework of the study, which is couched in current approaches that account for the linguistic practices of multilingual speakers using the notions of repertoires, mobile resources, and translanguaging. In section 3, I briefly provide the sociohistorical background to Greek Cypriot migration to London focusing on the link between migrants’ origins in Cyprus and the linguistic resources that they had at their disposal when they arrived in the UK. I describe the methodology used for the study in section 4, detailing my epistemological trajectory from a heritage linguist to a sociolinguist of multilingualism. I analyse three emergent themes in section 5. Under the overarching theme ‘London and Cyprus growing apart’, I discuss the Hellenisation of Greek in Cyprus (5.1), London’s Cypriotness as authentic Cypriotness (5.2), and how London keeps up with the traditions (5.3). In section 6, I offer some concluding remarks.

2. Language and mobility: repertoires on the move, repertoires in contact

Current sociolinguistic approaches to multilingualism offer new ways of looking at the communicative practices that multilingual speakers engage in. At the heart of these approaches lies a rejection of structuralist ideas that view languages as discrete, homogeneous, and bounded systems that are linked in a one-to-one fashion to equally discrete, homogeneous, and bounded social collectivities, the latter being traditionally referred to as communities, societies, or nation-states (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; Duchêne & Heller, 2012). Rather, the notion of linguistic repertoire, which considers multilingual speakers’ practices in conjunction with their biographies and lived experiences of language (Busch 2012, 2017), has opened up new ways of understanding multilingualism on both an individual and a group level—including among ethnically-defined groups (Benor, 2010). Building on seminal work by Gumperz (1964), who proposed the notion of the verbal repertoire, current scholarship views repertoires as “conventionalized constellations of semiotic resources” (Otsuij & Pennycook, 2010: 248) that speakers draw on in contextually situated interactions to make meaning, construct and project identities, and (re)produce and challenge ideologies. In this framework, language is seen as social practice, speakers are seen as social actors, and boundaries are seen as products of social action (Heller, 2007: 1). One important aspect of this approach is that linguistic (or, rather, communicative) repertoires are taken to encompass the full range of semiotic resources that speakers have at their disposal

and which would be conventionally described as (discrete) languages, dialects, accents, registers, styles, genres, or written modes. Embodied sociolinguistic approaches further include non-verbal semiotic resources such as gestures, gaze, body positioning, and others in speakers' communicative repertoires (Bucholtz & Hall, 2016).

People develop their repertoires over the course of their lives, acquiring and developing resources as they navigate the many and complex spatial, temporal, and social contexts that compose their biographies and lived experiences of the world. As Blackledge and Creese put it, repertoires “bear the traces of past times and present times, lives lived locally and globally” (2010: 224). When these biographies include movement in space and time, people's repertoires move with them. Resources, like people, are therefore mobile and translocal in the sense that they are not tied to particular local groups and spaces (Blommaert, 2010: 46). In processes of, for example, migration or displacement, people deterritorialise sets of resources, dislodging them from their conventional places of origin and introducing them into new spaces and contexts that have their own “language regimes”, that is, their own “sets of rules, orders of discourse, and language ideologies” (Busch, 2017: 343). These conditions favour the creation of trans-semiotic repertoires and the emergence of translanguaging practices, “act[s] of languaging between systems that have been described as separate, and beyond them”, whereby multilingual speakers “select meaning-making features and freely combine them to potentialize meaning-making, cognitive engagement, creativity and criticality” (García & Li Wei, 2017: 42). Unlike other approaches to language mixing such as codeswitching, translanguaging treats the repertoires of multilingual speakers as integrated and inter-connected wholes, as eco-systems of mutual interdependence where speakers' knowledge of language is inextricably linked with their knowledge of human relations, human social interaction, and the history, contexts of usage, and emotional and symbolic values of societally constructed ‘languages’ (ibid.: 31-32).

Moving on to linguistic differences between diasporas and their homelands, it can be theorised that the linguistic repertoires of speakers in the diaspora and in the homeland will be shaped by different intricate webs of social conditions in each setting, gradually leading to varying degrees of linguistic divergence between the two. In many cases, the creation of diaspora entails experiences of social and linguistic minoritisation, which in turn engender processes of language shift and sociocultural and linguistic assimilation to the societal majority—developments that diaspora members actively seek to reverse or stall through various initiatives for the maintenance of their linguistic and cultural heritage (Canagarajah, 2017; Capstick, 2020). These pressures might not be present in the homeland, where other processes often drive diachronic changes in individual and collective linguistic repertoires. Diverging repertoires between diaspora and homeland can therefore become the “terrain for the construction of relations of social difference and social inequality” (Heller, 2007: 2), especially in interactions between diaspora and homeland speakers when language ideologies, perceptions of authenticity, and wider discourses regarding ethnicity and migration come into play. Harrison (2019) has shown how some speakers consider the Ukrainian varieties spoken by people who migrated from Ukraine to the UK after World War II to be more ‘authentic’ and ‘pure’ compared to the varieties spoken by the most recently-

arrived post-Soviet migrants, which are viewed negatively as too Russified. Examining the linguistic practices, ideologies, and identity claims of Italian migrants in Australia, Rubino (2019) has highlighted the ways in which some post-1991 migrants position themselves as ‘real’ and ‘authentic’ Italians compared to earlier migrants, so-called ‘Italians from Australia’, based on differences in the degrees to which Standard Italian, Italian dialects, and English are known, used, and mixed. Both cases echo ideologies of authenticity and linguistic isolationism, whereby specific sets of linguistic resources are valued if they are linked to a specific social and geographic territory, a specific point in time, and are free from ‘external’ influences (Bucholtz, 2003; Woolard, 2016).

3. London’s Greek Cypriot diaspora

London is home to the most sizeable group of people of Cypriot origin outside of Cyprus. Official figures regarding the number of London residents with a Cypriot background are lacking, but estimates place it somewhere within the 120,000–300,000 range (Constantinides, 1990; Harlaftis, 2006; National Federation of Cypriots in the UK), potentially making the British capital the world city with the largest Cypriot population only after the Cypriot capital of Nicosia, whose combined urban areas have a population of a little over 320,000 people. Although migration from Cyprus to London had started in the early 20th century, the foundations of today’s diaspora were laid during the 1930s when a modest number of mainly male migrants settled in and around the city’s West End (Smith & Varnava, 2017). The number of Cypriots in London reached unprecedented levels between 1955 and 1963, when 57,820 people (87% of all Cypriot emigrants) migrated from Cyprus to the UK (Pavlakis, 2002). Migration subsequently decreased steadily until the early 1980s, when it was almost non-existent. The only exception in the post-1964 period were the years immediately following the intercommunal war and the de facto partition of the island to a Greek Cypriot south and a Turkish Cypriot north (Constantinou, 1990). 2,685 people migrated from Cyprus to the UK in 1974–1977, corresponding to only 16% of all Cypriot emigrants during that period (ibid.). All the numbers quoted above generally reflect the ethnic composition of Cyprus: approximately 77% Greek Cypriots, 18% Turkish Cypriots, and 5% others.

During the most intense periods of its history, Cypriot migration to London had specific classed characteristics (Anthias, 1992). The majority of migrants came from rural areas of Cyprus and other parts of Cypriot society that faced economic deprivation and hardship. The rural element is reflected, among others, in the collectivities that Cypriots established in London, many of which are defined by the villages of origin of their members – suffice it to mention, for example, the Anglo-Akanthou Aid Society, the Achna Association, or the Komi Kebir Association (UK) –, leading to some Cypriots in the UK referring jokingly to North London as the United Villages of Cyprus. Equipped mainly with skills in different types of manual labour, many mid-20th-century Cypriot migrants found work in catering, tailoring, dressmaking, shoemaking, or in family-run businesses (restaurants, cafés, grocery shops). Greek Orthodox religion played and continues to play a very important role in the lives of many Greek Cypriots in London, who place(d) significant emphasis on the preservation of Cypriot ways, traditions, and family values. The preservation of these ways, traditions, and values is often seen as a strategy aimed at preventing younger generations of (especially UK-

born) Cypriots from adopting (what are perceived or constructed as) elements of British culture, behaviours, and practices, ultimately staving off assimilation and identity loss.

The linguistic repertoires of Greek Cypriot migrants belonging to the so-called first generation encompassed predominantly Cypriot Greek resources, often linked with the regions of Cyprus in which they originated. Competences in English were generally limited, which is often cited as one of the reasons for the spatial concentration of many Greek Cypriots in specific areas of North London, most notably in parts of Camden and Haringey and later on in Enfield and Barnet. The same can be said about competences in Greek varieties associated with Greece such as Standard Greek, which were available mostly to people who had received at least some years of education in Cyprus (Gardner-Chloros, 1992). In any case, the ideological opposition between Standard Greek and Cypriot Greek, which treats the former as the High variety and the latter as the Low variety *à la* Ferguson's (1959) diglossia, was transplanted from Cyprus to the UK context, where it continued to be (re)produced and transformed through interaction in a broad range of contexts including, most notably, community language education (Karatsareas, 2018, 2020, 2021).

While this social, economic, cultural, and linguistic profile may no longer be dominant, as the life conditions of most Greek Cypriots improved significantly in subsequent decades, it does retain a strong symbolic character within London's – and the UK's more generally – Greek Cypriot diaspora. The image of the Cypriot Greek-speaking migrant who, driven by poverty, moved from a village in Cyprus to the megacity of London, managing to climb the social and economic ladder, build a livelihood, and create a family in a very hostile and 'foreign' environment, is considered by many to be part of their family history that deserves to be acknowledged and celebrated. At the same time, language shift to English and the decreasing use of Greek in contexts in which it once was dominant (Papapavlou & Pavlou, 2001) has led to the revaluing of other resources and practices and activities as constitutive of a Cypriot/Greek Cypriot/Greek ethnic identity. These may include, among others, engaging in specific alimentary and culinary practices, listening to specific genres of music, performing specific types folk dancing, and participating in religious life or in ethnically-defined social networks (Sofroniou, in preparation).

4. The study: aims, participants, and methods for data collection and analysis – or, a research trajectory towards linguistic ethnography

The data analysed in this chapter was collected as part of a research project on linguistic practices among people in London who self-identify as Greek Cypriots and are speakers of both Cypriot Greek and English.¹ The initial motivation of the study was to identify instances of cross-linguistic influence across participants' languages with the aim of offering structural analyses of language contact phenomena in Cypriot Greek within a heritage linguistics framework (Polinsky, 2018). The primary method for data collection was a sociolinguistic

¹ The project was originally funded by the British Academy through a Postdoctoral Fellowship and subsequently by the (then) Department of English, Linguistics, and Cultural Studies of the University of Westminster. Both are hereby dutifully acknowledged.

interview (Becker, 2013), through which I sought to elicit naturalistic samples of London Cypriot Greek speech to the extent that that was achievable given my positionality as a group outsider, a speaker of Standard Greek, and an academic researcher asking questions about people's language. Most of the people who participated in the project were recruited with the help of the headteachers of three Greek complementary schools in North and East London, and were parents who sent their children to the three schools to learn Greek. Some participants were recruited through my social networks, and one participant responded to a call that appeared in *Παροικιακή/Parikiaki*, a weekly Cypriot newspaper that is published in London. The headteachers played an important role during the participant recruitment and data collection stages of the research, acting both as gatekeepers and as brokers who not only vouched for the validity and legitimacy of the research and myself as a researcher but also presented to potential participants the purpose of the research. While motivated by the best of intentions, the headteachers stated that I was interested in 'how we speak here', which put pressure on at least some participants to try to use a spotless form of Greek in the interviews. For a longer discussion on these and other methodological issues around the conduct of these interviews, see Karatsareas (2022). Interviews took place in spaces that were provided by the schools on their premises and, in a few cases, in participants' homes across London. No qualitative differences were observed based on the location of the interviews.

At the initial stages and as the focus of the investigation was on linguistic forms and structures, not much regard was given to the content of participants' responses to my questions – or, rather, prompts. However, in line with Labovian principles, I did enquire about topics that I was aware Greek Cypriots in London liked to talk about in order to ensure copious amounts of good-quality primary linguistic data. These included family history, experiences of growing up in London as a person of Cypriot or Greek Cypriot or Greek heritage, experiences of visiting Cyprus, Cypriot-style weddings in London, and – naturally – being a bilingual speaker of Cypriot Greek and English, the intergenerational transmission of Cypriot Greek to one's children, and participants' thoughts regarding language shift. Very quickly, however, it became evident that the experiences and views that the participants shared in response to my questions/prompts were a much more worthwhile topic of study than the linguistic form in which they were communicated. This led me to recentre my investigation from a variationist (and quantitative) examination of language contact in a heritage language to a critical sociolinguistic (and qualitative) examination of linguistic stigmatisation and minoritisation among speakers of non-standardised linguistic varieties within a multilingual and diasporic context. This process of (re)inventing involved adopting ethnographic research methods, including interviews, participant observations, focus groups, taking field notes, and writing vignettes.

In what follows, I analyse data from a dataset consisting of transcripts of 34 audio-recorded interviews that were conducted between November 2014 and January 2017 by myself and Alexandra Georgiou, who worked as a research associate on the project. 30 interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis, and 4 interviews were between one of the two researchers and two participants at the same time. Interviews were conducted in Greek or in a combination of Greek and English, and had an average duration of 31 minutes (range: 17–59

minutes). Of these, 28 interviews (all 4 group interviews and 24 one-to-one interviews) were selected for transcription, resulting in a dataset consisting of 110,366 words in total (average transcript length: 3942 words, range: 2227–8095 words). The dataset includes transcripts of interviews with 17 women and 15 men, aged between 34 and 60 years (women, average age 42 years) and between 36 and 65 years (men, average age 44 years). With the exception of one male participant, who had been born in Cyprus and moved to London as a young child, all other participants had been born in London to Cyprus-born parents. The transcripts were analysed thematically using the NVivo software. I followed the process detailed in Braun and Clarke (2006), which I adapted for the analysis of language attitudes interview data as part of this project (Karatsareas, 2022). The process involved familiarising myself with the interview data by reading and rereading the transcripts and noting initial ideas. The next step was the generation of the initial codes in terms of systematically identifying interesting features in the transcripts and collating relevant data under specific codes. Codes were subsequently collated into potential themes, which were reviewed, defined, and named.

The following three themes emerged from the analysis in relation to differences between London's Greek Cypriot diaspora and Cyprus:

1. The Hellenisation of Greek as it is spoken in Cyprus, that is, a perception that the Greek varieties of the island were in a process of losing the linguistic characteristics (both features and practices) that made them distinctively Cypriot and replacing them with characteristics associated with the Greek of Greece.
2. The London diaspora as a linguistically conservative Cypriot social space, that is, the notion that Greek Cypriot migrants in London retained those linguistic characteristics that were being abandoned in Cyprus.
3. The London diaspora as a socioculturally conservative Cypriot social space, that is, the concept that, in addition to language, Greek Cypriot migrants in London also preserved traditional customs that were also being abandoned in Cyprus.

The overall picture is one where London's Greek Cypriots are 'truer' and more authentic (Greek) Cypriots than the (Greek) Cypriots who live in Cyprus. Evidence for the prominence of these themes was found in other types of data within the project's broader dataset. For example, in observations I was able to make as part of my participation in a diverse range of community events in London in (Greek) Cypriot and non-(Greek) Cypriot contexts such as national and religious celebrations, cultural events, educational initiatives. The authenticity and general character of Cypriot Greek in London was also widely contested as part of the separate but related Grenglish Project (Karatsareas & Charalambidou, 2020).

5. London and Cyprus growing apart

5.1 The Hellenisation of Greek in Cyprus

One of the themes that emerged prominently in the interviews were the linguistic differences between London's diaspora and the Cyprus homeland as two opposing poles. The diaspora was constructed as a linguistically conservative and therefore authentic space, where a true

and original form of Cypriot Greek was preserved through the faithful intergenerational transmission of the linguistic varieties that participants' ancestors had brought with them from Cyprus when they migrated. The homeland was presented as a linguistically innovative and therefore inauthentic place of origin that had lost many of its distinctive characteristics, including language and other elements of culture and social life that participants valued as powerful symbols of identity. One key observation that participants made was that language in contemporary Cyprus had become and was becoming increasingly Hellenised. For example, and as is shown in more detail below, Christos made the comment that the accent in Cyprus was moving *προς τα Ελληνικά* 'towards the direction of Greek'. In the same vein, Chara found that Greek Cypriots nowadays spoke *περίπου σαν τους Έλληνες* 'more like the Greeks'. Through interactions with Cyprus-based speakers that took place in both Cyprus and London, participants found that linguistic features that were indexically associated with Cypriot Greek had been abandoned or were judged negatively by Cyprus-based speakers, who had adopted and promoted the use of linguistic variants that originated in or were associated with the (standardised) Greek of Greece.

Christos's reflections on this matter in Extract 1 encapsulate this theme in a rather powerful way. Christos was 65 years old at the time of interview. He had been born in Cyprus and came to London with his parents at a very young age. He had lived there all his life and visited relatives in Cyprus frequently. He had observed Greek speech in Cyprus changing over the years and had received negative comments from his relatives about his own speech. An example he brought was his use of words like *μαχαλλάς* 'neighbourhood' (from Turkish *mahalle*). He was told that no one used that word anymore, that it was something people who lived in villages might say, and that he should use *γειτονιά*, the corresponding word that people use in Greece.

Extract 1. Βρίσκω τους σαν το ψέμαν 'To me, they seem as if they're liars'.	
Χρήστος:	Εν <u>τόσον πολλά</u> που άλλαξεν η γλώσσα που έν τους καταλάβω <u>πκιον</u> . <u>Έν τους καταλάβω τζείνους τζι</u> εν μου καταλάβουν <u>τζιαι τζείνοι</u> . <u>Πρώτα πρώτα</u> , οι λέξεις που ξέρω <u>εγιώ</u> έν τις λαλούν <u>πκιον</u> . Δεύτερον, η προφορά τους επήεν <u>προς τα Ελληνικά</u> , έτσι άλλαξεν η γλώσσα τους <u>πολλά</u> . Τζιαι βρίσκω τους <u>σαν το ψέμαν</u> . Γιατί, αφού είσαι Κυπραίος, ίντα να μιλήσεις Ελληνικά; Αφού έχουμεν <u>την γλώσσαν μας</u> , γιατί εν την λαλείς;
Christos:	Their language has changed <u>so much</u> that I do not understand them <u>anymore</u> . <u>I don't understand them, and they don't understand me</u> . <u>First of all</u> , they don't use <u>the words</u> that <u>I</u> know <u>anymore</u> . Second, <u>their accent</u> has moved <u>to the direction of Greek</u> , so their language has changed <u>a lot</u> . To me, they seem <u>as if they're liars</u> . Why speak Greek if you're Cypriot? We have <u>our own language</u> , why don't you speak it?

Presenting himself as a speaker whose language has stayed the same during the course of his life, Christos paints a picture of deep linguistic cleavages between himself as an unchanged

point of reference and the people he interacts with in Cyprus as linguistic innovators that needlessly introduce far-reaching changes in their speech. The degree of these changes is so extreme (τόσον πολλά... πολλά ‘so much... a lot’) as to cause a break in mutual intelligibility between the two (Εν τους καταλάβω τζείνους τζι εν μου καταλάβουν τζιαι τζείνοι ‘I don’t understand them, and they don’t understand me.’), a disconnect where there once used to be a connection (πκιον... πκιον ‘anymore... anymore’). There are two main reasons for this, the most important of which according to Christos (πρώτα πρώτα ‘first of all’) is the falling out of use of words that are part of his repertoire, an echo of the view that languages are primarily defined on the basis of lexical material and a reassertion of his self-positioning as a linguistic point of reference. The other reason is a gradual drift of the speech of Cyprus-based speakers towards a type of accent that approximates Greek (προς τα Ελληνικά ‘towards the direction of Greek’) in displaying phonological features that are distinctively associated with Greece but not Cyprus. The result is something that Christos perceives as a fake image (σαν το ψέμαν ‘like liars’, literally ‘as if it’s a lie’) and a betrayal of Cypriots’ true identity. He does not understand why a fellow Greek Cypriot would adopt someone else’s type of speech, especially when Greek Cypriots have Κυπριακά ‘Cypriot (Greek)’, a language they can call their own (την γλώσσαν μας ‘our language’). It is only at this point that Christos projects a collective identity that is inclusive of both himself as a London Greek Cypriot and his Cyprus-based interactants. Up to that point, his account had been centred around the binary opposition between these two poles (εγώ ‘I’ *versus* τους... τζείνους... τζείνοι ‘their... them... they’).

Christos’s (and others’) perceptions regarding the Hellenisation (or, decypriotisation) of Greek in Cyprus and the conservatism of London Cypriot Greek are not without an evidence base. At the time when the bulk of Cypriot migrants arrived in the UK (mid-1950s to mid-1960s), 18 regionally-defined varieties could be identified in Cyprus, exhibiting significant degrees of phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical variation (Newton 1972). The moderate urbanisation that Cyprus underwent following the independence of the island in 1960; the – at times radical – internal movements and displacements of Greek-speaking Cypriots caused by the intercommunal conflict both before and after the 1974 war; and, the economic boom that Greek-controlled south experienced in the 1980s (see Terkourafi 2005 for a full picture of demographic and social changes) resulted in the levelling of many of the previous intradialectal differences, a recharting of the dialectal landscape of Greek-speaking Cyprus, and the emergence of a Cypriot Greek koiné largely based on the Mesaoria/Nicosia variety. As part of this process, many lexical and grammatical variants, especially less frequent and more regionally specific ones, became obsolete and/or came to be associated with notions of rurality. Conversely, in some cases, variants that were (or were perceived to be) part of or reminiscent of the standardised variety were preferred (Arvaniti, 2006/2010; Tsiplakou et al., 2006). Tsiplakou et al. (2006: 267) mention, for example, the loss of the /θ/~/x/ merger in favour of /θ/ in forms like θέλω ~ χέλω ‘I want’. In previous work (Karatsareas, 2019), I have shown that many of the distinctively Cypriot variants that are on their way out in Cyprus, including the /θ/~/x/ merger, are still common in the speech of London’s Greek Cypriots. At the same time, however, it cannot be argued that Cypriot Greek in London remained unchanged in time, as Christos’s (and others’) comments may imply. As

will be illustrated in the next section, Cypriot Greek continued to develop linguistically in diaspora, albeit with the main source of change being the incorporation of elements drawn from migrants' English resources.

5.2 London's Cypriotness as authentic Cypriotness

In talking about Cypriot Greek as it is spoken in London, participants employed a range of glossonymic labels in addition to (variants of) the most frequently used Κυπριακά 'Cypriot (Greek)'. The most commonly used labels were χωρικά 'villagey', βαρετά 'heavy', σπασμένα 'broken', and Grenglish, a blend of Greek and English. Χωρικά and βαρετά are widely used in Cyprus to refer to rural linguistic varieties and basilectal registers marked by the presence of lexical, phonological, and morphosyntactic features that are not part of the standard(ised) variety and/or of acrolectal registers. The use of such features tends to be stigmatised socially, especially in formal contexts (Papapavlou & Sophocleous, 2009). Σπασμένα is the Greek equivalent of English 'broken' and is a label that is not found in Cyprus. Prima facie, one might expect σπασμένα to refer to the production by London speakers of forms and structures that would be deemed ungrammatical from a (Cyprus Cypriot) Greek point of view; for example, personal constructions like έπρεπες να μείνεις 'you had to stay' in which the modal verb is inflected for second person singular, whereas in (Cyprus Cypriot) Greek it would appear in the third-person form έπρεπε in an impersonal construction (see Karatsareas (2019) for more examples). This is, however, not the case. Σπασμένα refers to distinctively Cypriot features such as the highly indexical [t^h] allophone of the /k/ phoneme that surfaces before the front vowels /e i/, the phonological environment where the standard(ised) variety and acrolectal registers have [c]; for example, [t^he] for /ke/ 'and' rather than [ce] (Karatsareas, 2018). Grenglish refers to linguistic practices of creatively mixing (Cypriot) Greek and English resources to produce forms, structures, and utterances that combine elements from both resource sets and which are not typically found in Cyprus. Karatsareas and Charalambidou (2020) have shown that London speakers apply the Grenglish label to a diverse range of Greek/English mixing types: morphophonologically integrated English loanwords, phonologically adapted loanwords with no morphological integration, English-sounding words that are also found in Cypriot Greek as spoken in Cyprus, Cypriot Greek loanwords integrated into English, and puns and instances of wordplay.

London Cypriot Greek therefore emerges as a resource set that is both conservative and innovative at the same time in symbiotically encompassing indexically or stereotypically Cypriot features – including χωρικά features that are falling out of use in Cyprus – and features and practices that result from the mixing of (Cypriot) Greek and English linguistic resources. The development of this unique linguistic profile has certainly contributed to the growing differences between London's diaspora and the Cyprus homeland. Participants, however, either did not acknowledge the London innovations in interviews or, if they did, they downplayed the potential of the innovations as possible grounds for unintelligibility between diaspora and homeland. Rather, participants generally attributed the disconnect between the two to the urge of the homeland for Hellenisation and, as I will argue later on in the chapter, also modernity. Chara touches upon these themes in Extract 2. Chara's parents

had been born in two villages in the northern part of Cyprus. Her father had migrated to the UK as a young adult, and her mother had left Cyprus when she was only a teenager – both of them because «οικονομικά στην Κύπρο δεν ήταν η ζωή τους καλά» ‘their life in Cyprus was not good economically’. Chara was born in London and was 52 years old when she was interviewed.

Extract 2. Περίτου σαν τους Έλληνες ‘more like the Greeks’.

Πέτρος: Και η γλώσσα πώς είναι στην Κύπρο;

Χαρά: Περίτου σαν τους Έλληνες. Δεν είναι σαν εμάς που σαν Κύπριοι μιλούμεν χωρκάτικα. Πηαίνουμεν στην Κύπρο, κάπως δέν καταλάβω τι λέοσιν. Ήρθεν ο ανιψιός μου και μου ’μίλαν και δέν-ι-ξέρω αυτές τις λέξεις. Η κόρη του που ’μίλαν ’μίλαν Ελληνικά. Λαλώ της «έν σ’ εκατάλαβα, πέ μου πάλε. Άμμα μιλάς σιγά μπορεί που ακούω το sentence, το syntax, ’α καταλάβω τι θέλεις να πεις και μπορώ να σου μιλήσω όι Ελλ... Όπως μιλώ τώρα, Κύπρια».

Πέτρος: Και είπες χωρκάτικα. Τι είναι τα χωρκάτικα;

Χαρά: Well, νομίζω μιλώ εγώνι. Δεν είναι όπως τα Κύπρια που μιλάς, που θκιεβάζεις. Και λαλούμεν και λέξεις που είναι εγγλέξεις, που κάμνουμεν τα κυπραίικα με Greek accent. It helps.

Πέτρος: Όπως;

Χαρά: Αθθυμούμαι που επήα στην Κύπρο που έλεα να πάμεν στην πάγκα, τράπεζα. Και μου ’λέαν «τι είναι αυτή η πάγκα;» και εγώ τους έλεα «πάγκα που βάλλεις τα ριάγ-για, φκάλλεις τα ριάγ-για» και «όυ», ελέαν μου, «τράπεζα». Α νναι, τράπεζα. Δέν ήρθε στο νου μου τράπεζα, την έξερα την λέξην.

Petros: And what is the language like in Cyprus?

Chara: More like the Greeks. They’re not like us who as Cypriots we speak villagey. We go to Cyprus and somehow I don’t understand what they say. My cousin came, he would speak to me, and I didn’t know those words. His daughter spoke Greek every time she spoke. I told her, “I didn’t understand you, say it again. If you speak slowly, I might understand what you want to say if I listen to the sentence and the syntax and I will be able to speak to you but not in Gr... like I’m speaking now, in Cypriot.”

Petros: You said villagey. What is villagey?

Chara: Well, I think the way I speak. It’s not like the Cypriot you speak and read. And we also say English words which we make them Cypriot with a Greek accent. It helps.

Petros: For example?

Chara: I remember when I went to Cyprus I would say to go to the bank, bank. And they would say to me “what is this bank?” and I would say to them “bank, where you put the money, where you take your money out” and they would say “no, bank”. Oh yes, bank. It didn’t occur to me, I knew the word.

In response to my question regarding language in Cyprus, Chara immediately draws a comparison (σαν ‘like’) between the speech of three groups of origin: people from Greece (Ελληνες ‘Greeks’), Greek Cypriots in London (εμάς ‘us’... Κύπριοι ‘Cypriots’), and Greek Cypriots in Cyprus. The third group is not labelled but indexed implicitly through third-person forms of verbs and personal pronouns (δεν είναι... λέοσιν... ’λέαν... τους... ελέαν ‘they are not... they say... they would say... to them... they would say’). Chara reserves the Κύπριοι label only for the London Greek Cypriots, perhaps implying that the Greek Cypriots in Cyprus are not authentic Cypriots anymore or that they are not Cypriot enough whereas the ones in London are fully worthy to be called Κύπριοι. Like Christos, she assesses that the language of Greek Cypriots in Cyprus increasingly resembles that of the Greece (περίτου ‘more’) as a result of which she, too, has experienced difficulties in communication with Cyprus-based members of her family. Chara may be able to understand the Greek of Greece but she herself cannot speak it. Her repertoire includes a type of Greek that she refers to as Κύπρια ‘Cypriot’ – a label that she does not apply to the speech of her family members who speak Ελληνικά ‘Greek’ – and χωρκάτικα. She positions herself as a representative example of a χωρκάτικα speaker and goes on to identify two defining characteristics: she speaks a type of Greek that is only spoken, reproducing the widespread ideology that Cypriot Greek is not and cannot be written (Karatsareas, 2020); and, she uses English words which have been Cypriotised by means of pronouncing them with a Greek accent. This is done to make communication easier for people who might find it challenging not to draw at all on their more developed English resources when they speak in Greek (‘it helps’). In the part of the extract where Chara mentions English words, she inflects the verbs in the first-person plural form (λαλούμεν... κάμνουμεν ‘we say... we do’), thus constructing the Cypriotisation of English words as a translanguaging practice London Greek Cypriots engage in in both an agentive and a collective way: as individual creators of language, on the one hand, with Chara assuming this role for herself, and as a group, to which she belongs, on the other.

The anecdote that Chara recounts to illustrate Grenglish is centred around the word for bank that she has in her repertoire, πάγκα. The form is a loanword with two possible historical origins: either Italian banca or English bank. The former instance of borrowing has been documented in Cypriot Greek as it is spoken in Cyprus (Papangelou, 2001: 833). It is not therefore impossible that Chara’s usage preserves a loanword that entered the language before her parents migrated to the UK, in which case it would belong to the conservative lexical stock of London Cypriot Greek. The possibility that πάγκα is a much more recent innovation that was created in London by migrant speakers’ adding Greek inflectional material to an English-origin stem whose sound shape has been adapted to Cypriot Greek phonology (bank- → pang-) is, however, equally likely. As is a combination of these two possibilities, namely, that the inherited loanword and recent innovation reinforce each other. What is important is that Chara espouses the English-origin version, including πάγκα in the Grenglish lexical stock that Karatsareas and Charalambidou (2020) have documented alongside morphophonologically integrated loanwords like ρόλος ‘bread roll’, κκούκκα ‘cooker’, and πάσον ‘bus’. Karatsareas and Charalambidou have also documented comparable experiences of (feigned) incomprehensibility, whereby Cyprus-based speakers

either do not understand or pretend they do not understand the English-origin words that London speakers use, offering standard(ised) and/or acrolectal alternatives – like *τράπεζα* – as the only legitimate words to be used and thus strengthening the perception that speech in Cyprus has been Hellenised. For Chara, Grenglish words like *πάγκα* are distinctively Cypriot and so are their users.

5.3 London's keeping up with the traditions

In many interviews, the London diaspora was constructed as an authentic and conservative social space, that is, as an authentic and conservative community of people in a broader sense. In addition to an authentic version of language, the diaspora was said to dutifully preserve a range of Cypriot sociocultural practices, which were either abandoned in Cyprus or stigmatised by Cyprus-based people in anachronistic and classed terms. Weddings taking place in London emerged as the quintessential context in that respect. Participants were very keen to detail the rich set of cultural practices they engaged in in weddings as part of which they affirmed their Cypriot identities and strengthened their sense of belonging to an ethn(olinguist)ically defined community. This set is composed by a traditional wedding ceremony taking place in a Greek Orthodox church, followed by a wedding reception where people are served emblematic Cypriot dishes like *κλέφτικο* (lemon-and-herb marinated lamb cooked slowly in a sealed pot) and dance Cypriot folk dances such as the couples' *καρτζιλαμάς* and the solo improvised *ζεϊπέκκικο* to Cypriot folk music, ideally performed live by a duet of Cypriot musicians playing the violin and the lute. These practices are indeed still found in the Cyprus homeland. The bone of contention in participants' narratives was the practice known as *το πλούμισμα του αντρού* 'the decoration of the bride and groom'. This is the part of the wedding celebration when the relatives of the newlyweds pinning banknotes on the newlyweds' wedding outfits, joining banknotes in such a way as to form long tapes of money to the accompaniment of a particular song (Ioannidou 2017; see Image 1). The *πλούμισμα* is rarely practiced in weddings taking place in Cyprus today, if at all, as it is viewed as an old-fashioned and/or rural tradition. In London, however, it remains an essential event of Greek Cypriot weddings and an important rite of passage for many Greek Cypriots, including some of the participants who commented negatively on the fact that Cyprus-based Cypriots look down upon it.



Image 1. Το πλούμισμα by Assia Cultural Association. UNESCO Chair on Digital Cultural Heritage, Cyprus. CC BY-NC-SA. <https://apsida.cut.ac.cy/items/show/48850>

In Extract 3, Skevi and Pambos, a married couple, share some of their views on Cypriot weddings. Skevi was 34 years old at the time of interview, Pambos was 36. Both had been born in London to UK-born parents, as it had been their grandparents who migrated from their Cyprus villages to the UK in the 1940s and 1950s. Skevi and Pambos got married twice. First in their local registry office and then, a year later, in a Greek Orthodox church. It was after the religious wedding that they had the proper celebration of their marriage, where they practiced all the Cypriot traditions including το πλούμισμα.

Extract 3. Κάμνουμεν περίτου effort ‘we make more of an effort’.

- Σκεύη: Κ’ έχουμεν και το έθιμα που κουτσακώννουμεν λεφτά πα στο αντράνι που χορεύει, yeah. Αλλά στην Κύπρον εν διαφορετικά που τα κάμνουν.
- Πάμπος: Νομίζω εδιατηρήσαμεν τα έθιμα της Κύπρου πριν της εισβολή τζι εφέραμεν τα στην Αγγλία. Παραδείγματος χάρη, ο παππούς μου ήρτεν το 1930 τζιαι μερικά, οί μερικά, όλα τα έθιμα που είχασιν στο χωρκόν τους εφέραν τα εδώ στην Αγγλία τζιαι μετά τα πήραμεν εμείς τζιαι μετά εμείς προσπαθούμεν να τα δώσουμεν στα παιδιά μας. Εν πιο απλός ο κόσμος εδώ. Στην Αγγλία εν πκιο απλός. Ποτζί έχουν μιαν φαντασίαν ότι γιατί είμαστιν Ευρωπαίοι πρέπει να συμπεριφερούμαστιν με διαφορετικόν τρόπον. Ξέρεις, μερικοί εν χορεύουν ή στέκουνται σε μιαν αίθουσαν τζιαι παίρνουνσιν φακέλους για τον γάμον τους όλην νύχτα. Εμείς, ξέρεις, εντάξει, υπάρχει ο χορός του γάμου αλλά χορεύει ο κόσμος, διασκεδάζει. Ας πούμεν, εν πιο traditional ο γάμος.
- Σκεύη: Κάχουνταν όπως τους ξένους. Κι εμείς ποδά κάμνουμεν περίτου effort. Μπορεί να ντυχούμεν πιο special. Σαν εμείς οι γενναίτζες να πάμεν στη κομμοτήριο, να

	<u>κάμουμεν τα μαλλιά μας, να φορήσουμε special ρούχα και ποτίζει στην Κύπρον μπορεί να πάσιν σ' έναν γάμον με τα jeans.</u>
Skevi:	<u>We also have the tradition where we pin money on the bride and groom as they dance, yeah. But they do things differently in Cyprus.</u>
Pambos:	<u>I think we preserved the customs of Cyprus (as they were) before the invasion and brought them to England. For example, my grandfather came in 1930 and they brought some, not some, all the customs that they had in their village here in England and then we took them and then we are trying to give them to our children. The people here are simpler. People are simpler in England. Over there they have a kind of arrogance that because we are Europeans we have to behave in a different way. You know, some don't dance or they stand in a hall and spend all night receiving envelopes for their wedding. We, you know, okay, there's the wedding dance but people dance, they have fun. Let's say that the wedding is more traditional.</u>
Skevi:	<u>They sit down like foreigners. Whereas here we make more of an effort. We may dress in a more special way. For example, the women we might go to the hairdresser's, we have our hair done, we wear special outfits and over there in Cyprus they might go to a wedding wearing jeans.</u>

The extract abounds with first-person plural forms: *έχουμεν, κουτσακώννουμεν, εδιατηρήσαμεν, εφέραμεν, πήραμεν, προσπαθούμεν, δώσουμεν, κάμουμεν, ντυχούμεν, πάμεν, κάμουμεν, φορήσουμεν* 'we have, we pin, we preserved, we brought, we took, we are trying, we give, we do, we wear, we get dressed, we go, we do, we wear'. Reinforced by the fact that they are participating in the interview together, Skevi and Pambos count themselves among the members of a community that is brought and kept together by the preservation of the full set of cultural practices that their ancestors brought over from their villages (όι μερικά, όλα τα έθιμα που είχασιν στο χωρκόν τους 'not some, all the customs that they had in their village'). The distancing from these traditions, the embarrassment, and even contempt towards them that they see among people in Cyprus who, for example, turn up at weddings wearing outfits that are inappropriate or not 'special' enough are surprising. They create a sense of foreignness to Skevi and Pambos (όπως τους ξένους 'like foreigners'), who position themselves (and their fellow members of the London diaspora) as the points of reference for the classification of people and their behaviours as own or others. Again, the disconnect is attributed to the Cyprus people. This time, however, we are not told about an urge to be more Greek but more European, a reference to the accession of the Republic of Cyprus to the European Union in 2004. This is the critical event that has engendered the arrogance (μιαν φαντασίαν) towards Cypriot traditions, which are nostalgically linked with the simpler (πκιο απλός) way of life that is maintained in England without change but with significant efforts at publicly displaying to other members of the community one's respect for the shared practices (κάμουμεν περίτου effort 'we make more of an effort').

6. Concluding discussion: us over here and them over there

In this chapter, I have highlighted some types of tension that may be created between diasporas and their originating homelands, especially in cases such as the Cyprus–London one where diasporas have a longer history of presence in the receiving context. The period of separation from the homeland can be substantially lengthy for some diaspora members, while for people born in the diasporic context relations with and perceptions of the homeland can be fragmented and mediated by the representations of others. As the life trajectories of (groups of) people in the diaspora and in the homeland are shaped by different constellations of sociohistorical conditions over time, identities may undergo transformations, new identities may emerge, and individuals’ positionings with respect to fundamental identity yardsticks may change to a degree that is judged to be unacceptably divergent by one or the other member of the diaspora–homeland pair. The participants of this study used powerful and highly indexical linguistic forms to construct London and Cyprus as distinct social spaces. ‘We’ pronouns (εμείς ‘us’) and first-person plural verbs (see Extract 3) were routinely used to refer to London, and ‘they’ forms (τξείνοι ‘they’) and third-person plural verbs (see Extract 2) were used for Cyprus. However, the most notable way of capturing the London–Cyprus opposition is seen in Extract 3 in which Skevi and Pambos employ εμείς ποδά ‘we over here’ for London and ποτξεί στην Κύπρον ‘(they) over there in Cyprus’ for Cyprus. In the years following the 1974 war, the deictic pair ποδά–ποτξεί has been strongly associated with the de facto partition of Cyprus with ποδά being used by Cypriot Greek speakers to refer to the island’s Greek-controlled south and ποτξεί to the Turkish-controlled north as defined by the UN buffer zone, also known as the Green Line. To apply these forms to London and Cyprus suggests a kind of rift that is very difficult to bridge.

In participants’ accounts, the diaspora is a social space where what makes Cyprus and Greek Cypriots authentically Cypriot is preserved. Two key processes create this space: first, the deterritorialisation of – according to participants, full – sets of linguistic and cultural resources and practices from their place of origin to the novel context of the diaspora by participants’ ancestors, who are presented as transnational people on the move (Blommaert, 2010). Second, once resources and practices have been transplanted to the diasporic context, the dutiful and respectful adherence to their authentic form “reflecting visions of a homeland (...) tied to a specific point of time in history, when (...) migrants departed from the homeland” (Koinova, 2018: 1259). This vision is timeless and must remain unchanged, and therefore any departure from it is seen in a negative light as a betrayal of one’s Cypriotness. This holds even when – or, perhaps especially because – the direction of change is towards Greece, as per participants’ perceptions of contemporary linguistic and cultural practices in Cyprus. Greece is at the prestigious centre of Hellenism, the transnational imagined community of Greeks who are bound by a set of shared characteristics (ethnic origin, language, religion, culture, key historical references; Philippou & Klerides, 2010). For participants, what is valuable and valid is the version of Cyprus that they created and maintain in London. Neither the Cyprus homeland or the ethnic centre of Greece, which is promoted by nationalistic ideologies, exert any normative influence on the diaspora. The diasporic space therefore emerges as a stronghold of authenticity against the tide of change, modernity, and modernisation. Against this backdrop, it is interesting that the linguistic and cultural innovations that emerged in the diaspora by changing what was received from the

forefathers and its cross-fertilisation with native (British, English, London) resources and practices do not feature prominently in participants' narratives. They are either presented in a matter-of-fact manner, mentioned in passing, or ignored altogether, which may be interpreted as a tacit recognition that, when the diaspora is viewed critically by the homeland, it is usually the practices of its members that are stigmatised as indicating that London Greek Cypriots are not Greek and/or Cypriot enough.

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