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ethnolinguistic heterogeneity in Greek complementary schools  
post 2010**

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# The UK's shifting diasporic landscape

## Negotiating ethnolinguistic heterogeneity in Greek complementary schools post 2010

**Abstract:** It is estimated that 65,000 Greek citizens migrated to the UK between 2010 and 2016, a large proportion of whom did so with the prospects of long-term settlement and with a view to provide better socioeconomic and educational opportunities to their children (Pratsinakis 2019). The arrival of this migrant wave was felt across many sections of life both within and beyond the country's pre-existing Greek-speaking communities. In this article, I present findings on how post-2010 migration changed aspects of Greek complementary schools, which were previously run primarily by and for members of the UK's Greek Cypriot community. Drawing on data from a set of semi-structured interviews with teachers, I explore how the sociolinguistic makeup of Greek complementary schools was diversified by the arrival of Greek pupils, parents and qualified teachers, and the critical role language played in the process. Placing my investigation against the historical backdrop of migration from Greece and Cyprus to the UK, I show how teachers portrayed post-2010 migration as a much needed, albeit not always welcome, boost in ethnocultural vitality; how it helped to perpetuate the hierarchisation of standardised and non-standardised varieties of Greek and the stigmatisation of the multilingual and multidialectal repertoires of people with a Greek Cypriot background; and, how it ultimately put a strain on the ties that have historically brought the Greek and Greek Cypriot communities together in the context of the UK diaspora.

**Keywords:** new migration, complementary schools, Greek diaspora, Greek Cypriot diaspora, United Kingdom

# 1 Introduction

Recent years have seen an increased scholarly interest in the renewed settlement of Greek migrants in Western Europe, North America and Australia in the context of the Greek government-debt crisis (Damanakis et al. 2014a). I refer to this mobility as the post-2010 migrants, as, even though the global financial crisis began in 2007/2008, it was in 2010 that the Greek government requested an international bailout and passed the first three austerity packages to counter the crisis. Post-2010 migrants have presented numerous challenges to aspects of the social, economic and cultural life of the Greek(-speaking) communities that were already established in their various migration destinations (Damanakis & Constantinides 2013).

In this article, I focus on the Greek language schools that operate in the diasporas. As one of the pillars of diaspora communities (Li 2018), community schools play an important role in establishing and transforming forms of community life and socialisation. In this regard, researchers have identified some key aspects that may transform the internal diversity of Greek schools and the ways in which emergent transformations may set in motion revisions in the way schools approach Greek language education as well as their policies, guiding principles and overall administration (see the contributions in Aravossitas & Oikonomakou 2020 and Panagiotopoulou et al. 2019). These include the increase in the number of pupils that attend Greek schools; differences in competence in Greek between newly arrived pupils and pupils from older waves of migration; and, the high socioeconomic and educational level of (most but by no means all) post-2010 migrants, including newly arrived qualified teachers who join teaching teams in Greek schools. As Lytra succinctly states, these new realities impel Greek language schools across the world to redefine “their mission, curricula and pedagogy, as well as teacher and learner identities and expectations, language practices and language ideologies” (2019: 246).

In what follows, I present findings from a study exploring how Greek complementary schools in the UK (henceforth GCSs) have been and are being transformed by the arrival of Greek pupils, parents and qualified teachers after 2010. The UK is a notable case-in-point not only due to the size of its Greek-speaking

population but also because this population is made up of two distinct groups of origin: people who originate in present-day Greece and people who originate in Cyprus. Despite being tied by political ideologies that see them as “homogenous members of a great Hellenic ethnos” (Simpson 2014: 29)—a transnational imagined community sharing common ethnic origin, religion, language, culture and key historical references—, the two groups have very distinct migration trajectories. They, however, coexist, both symbolically and physically, in two specific manifestations of diasporic life: they collectively form the flock of the UK’s Greek Orthodox church, which is in turn responsible for running around half of the UK’s GCSs that both groups send their children to. Despite the complexities of this diasporic landscape and the presence of new Greek migrants in the country for nearly ten years, the UK developments have received very limited scholarly attention to date. An exception is Voskou’s (2018) research, which however focuses on the pedagogy of history and heritage, not on the teaching of the Greek language.

This article addresses this gap by exploring internal diversity in the two Greek-speaking communities with a focus on GCSs. It seeks to address the following research questions:

1. How did the arrival of post-2010 migrants contribute to (further) diversifying UK GCSs in demographic, socio-economic, cultural, linguistic and ethnic terms?
2. What challenges and opportunities did post-2010 migration present for UK GCSs in terms of policies and practices of teaching Greek, the organisation and management of schools, teacher–pupil–parent relations, and community cohesion?
3. What are the implications of these developments for Greek language education in the UK, the ways in which community institutions respond to change, and the study of multilingualism and diversity in the UK more generally?

My examination is based on a historical overview of migration from Greece and Cyprus to the UK, a brief presentation of UK GCSs, and the analysis of transcripts of interviews with GCS teachers, who offered their perspectives on ongoing transformations.

## 2 The UK's Greek-speaking communities

### 2.1 The Greek community

The UK has not historically been among the principal destinations of migrants from regions that form present-day Greece. Before 2010, Greek migrants formed three rather disparate groups: a financial elite trading primarily in the shipping industry and banking; university students; and, an increasing number of professionals, mainly academics, doctors and lawyers (Pratsinakis & Kafe & et al. 2020).

The shipowners and bankers have traditionally been a small but prosperous group concentrated in London. They trace their origin to families of wealthy Greek merchants who became attracted to the commercial opportunities Britain offered in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. In London, they were originally based in the financial district of the City. By the late 1870s, they had moved to the area around Lancaster Gate and Bayswater. Since then, affluent parts of West London have been associated with this early wave. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the descendants of the first merchants had become involved in shipping. Between 1940 and 1970, 200 Greek shipping offices opened in London, almost quadrupling the city's Greek population from 1800 people in 1955 to 8000 people in 1973. In 2006, it was estimated that this group numbered between 10,000 and 12,000 people, including people who were employed in shipping-related sectors and their families (Harlaftis 2006).

Educational migration from Greece to the UK started in the early 1960s. The number of Greek students grew steadily until the early 2000s, reaching 22,485 in 2002/2003 (Koniordos 2017). This number fell to 9,920 in 2018/2019 (Higher Education Statistics Agency), following a series of reforms in the Greek university admissions system, which saw more 18-year-olds gain places in Greek universities; the trebling of undergraduate tuition fees for EU students; and, the impact of the crisis. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, two thirds of Greek students pursued undergraduate studies. By 2015/2016, approximately three quarters were postgraduate students (Koniordos 2017: 16). Another change concerns the destinations of leavers of

higher education. Before the crisis, many degree holders returned to Greece or moved elsewhere for work. After the crisis, the number of degree holders who remain in the UK seeking and securing employment in the professional and academic sectors has increased, contributing to the third group of Greek migrants identified by Pratsinakis, Kafe and Serôdio.

This picture changed dramatically after Greece was hit by the crisis. As Pratsinakis et al. (2020: 20) note, “the combined effects of recession, extreme austerity, and their socio-political consequences transformed mobility intentions” for many people in Greece, who were previously amongst the European citizens with the lowest disposition towards long-distance mobility. 498,656 Greek citizens left the country in 2009–2018 (Eurostat) with Germany and the UK taking the lion’s share of this new migration wave. By May 2020, 79,100 Greek citizens had applied for the EU Settlement Scheme (Home Office), which secures some resident rights for EU and EEA citizens in the UK post-Brexit. Post-2010 migrants settled mostly in Greater London and the south-east of England (Pratsinakis & King & et al. 2020). Their mean age was 30.5 years (compared to 24.3 years in 1990–1999); two thirds held university degrees; and, one fourth had postgraduate qualifications (Labrianidis & Pratsinakis 2016). 57% of migrants who were parents migrated together with the whole family and 31% formed their families after migration. 60% of migrants with families responded that the future of their children was the single most important motivation for migration. If one considers only migrants who left Greece with their families, this percentage rises to 73%. 71% of family migrants in London do not intend to return to Greece or say they will do so when they retire (Pratsinakis 2019).

This new cohort includes a non-negligible number of qualified teachers. At the earliest stages of the crisis, the Greek government passed a series of emergency measures that severely deteriorated teachers’ working conditions, resulting in a generalised feeling of anxiety and the fear of redundancy (salary cuts, new appointment freezes, mergers and closures of school units, reductions in the teaching hours in some subjects and abolition of others; Traianou 2013). The arrival of a high number of teachers in the UK is evidenced in the increase in the number of Qualified Teacher Status that were awarded to Greek teachers: from 244 awards in 2012/2013 to 682

awards in 2016/2017 (Teaching Regulation Agency). In 2018/2019, Greece and Spain were the only two countries with 10% or more of the total number of QTS awards made.

## 2.2 The Greek Cypriot community

The UK has traditionally been the most popular destination of migrants from Cyprus owing to links established during the island's colonial past and, following independence, its membership in the Commonwealth; favourable economic conditions in the UK; and, the existence of a small Cypriot community in London formed in the 1930s (Smith & Varnava 2017). Constantinou (1990) divides 20<sup>th</sup>-century Cypriot emigration in five periods, shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Phases of Cypriot emigration (Constantinou 1990).

<b>Period</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Associated events</b>
I – Early beginnings	1900–1954	Droughts of 1902 and 1932–1933
II – Emergency years	1955–1959	Armed clashes between (a) British colonial forces and EOKA, the Greek Cypriot guerrilla organisation that supported the union of Cyprus with Greece, and (b) EOKA and TMT, the Turkish Cypriot paramilitary organisation that favoured the partition of Cyprus between Greece and Turkey
III – Mass exodus	1960–1963	Declaration of Cypriot independence (1960), Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 (UK)
IV – Intercommunal strife	1964–1974	Constitutional crisis of 1963, fresh violence between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, formation of Turkish Cypriot enclaves
V – Invasion and aftermath	1974–1983	1974 war, de facto partition of Cyprus between a Greek-Cypriot-controlled polity in the south and a Turkish-Cypriot-controlled polity in the north

Migration increased markedly in 1955–1959 and peaked in 1960–1963. In this latter period of mass exodus, 37,288 people migrated from Cyprus, 33,028 (or 89%) of whom had the UK as their destination (Pavlakis 2002). From 1955 until 1962, Cyprus was within the top four countries of origin of Commonwealth migrants with the West Indies, India and Pakistan (HC 18 March 1965). By 1964, the UK's Cypriot community had grown to 78,476 people compared to 10,208 people in 1951 (George & Millerson 1967). Large numbers of people left Cyprus after the 1974 war, although this time the UK was not the most popular destination (Australia was). Emigration reached all-time lows in the 1980s. At present, it is estimated that between 150,000 and 300,000 UK residents have a Cypriot background by virtue of either being born in Cyprus or having a Cyprus-born parent, grandparent or other ancestor (National Federation of Cypriots in the United Kingdom). It is generally assumed that these figures reflect the distribution of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus, that is, approximately three quarters Greek Cypriots and one quarter Turkish Cypriots.

Most migrants in the 1940s and 1950s were young, between the ages of 15 and 24, coming from rural areas of Cyprus equipped with low- and medium-skill sets (manual workers, farmers, tailors, shoemakers). Most were men, half of whom married. They tended to arrive in London on their own, planning for their families to join them later. They lodged in inner-city areas with cheap housing and high demand for unskilled labour. Early migrants resided in or near the West End (Soho, Fitzrovia, Camden Town), working mainly in catering. By the 1960s, settlement had become more long term for many. Driven by the lack of affordable housing in Central London, Greek Cypriots started moving northwards into parts of Islington and Haringey, establishing extended family units and broadening their range of occupations. Dressmaking became the primary occupation for most women, while many men worked in catering, tailoring, and shoemaking. Opening family-run businesses such as restaurants, cafés and grocery shops was also common. By the 1990s, living standards and occupational attainment had improved considerably. Greek Cypriots continued their northward climb into Enfield and Barnet, where large numbers are found today especially in Palmers Green and Southgate. Smaller communities are found in other major cities and smaller towns across the UK.



### 3 Greek complementary schools in the UK

The mission of GCSs is, as Archer et al. (2010: 408) aptly put it with reference to Chinese CSs, to “promote, instil, preserve [and] foster” a sense of Greekness among children of the Greek Cypriot and Greek communities with the emphasis being placed on the teaching of the Greek language. GCSs see it as their mission to counter the effects of assimilation to mainstream British culture and to halt and reverse the perceived dehellenisation of British-born generations of Greek Cypriots and Greeks.

Today, there are 64 GCSs, almost half the number of schools in 2005/2006. 25 schools are in London, unevenly distributed between the two sides of the Thames. There are 21 schools north of the river, 14 of which are based in areas of North London with a high concentration of Greek Cypriots. There are 36 schools in the rest of England, two in Scotland and one in Wales. The pupil population has been increasing steadily since 2013/2014 due to the enrolment of children of post-2010 migrants. 2012/2013, saw 5300 enrolments. In 2018/2019, the number had risen to 6071 (Republic of Cyprus, Ministry of Education and Culture).

GCSs form a loose network of largely independent educational units in the sense that each school is responsible for securing its income, which comes primarily from tuition fees and fundraising activities. Schools fall into two types: (a) schools that are affiliated with local Greek Orthodox parishes and whose running is overseen by the UK’s Greek Orthodox church. 11 schools in Greater London and almost all the schools in the rest of the UK belong to this group; and, (b) non-church-affiliated schools. 14 schools, all found in London, fall under this type. In 1990, the governments of Greece and Cyprus agreed to jointly support GCSs of both types through their respective Educational Missions by appointing teachers in secondment and providing textbooks and other teaching materials free of charge. By 2011, Greece had, however, halted new secondments and recalled all teachers who were already posted in UK GCSs due to the crisis. It has not sent any teachers or materials since then, complying with austerity laws concerning Greek language education in Greek diasporas. However, Greek teachers still teach in GCSs. These are recruited locally either by school committees or the Cyprus Educational Mission, which continues to post seconded teachers from Cyprus

and provide material and pedagogical support. The withdrawal of the Greek government from the UK's educational landscape therefore left the Cypriot government as the only national actor still playing an active part in Greek language education, a development that inevitably coincided with the increase in the number of pupils from Greece following the influx of post-2010 migrants.

## 4 Data collection and analysis

The study reported in this article is part of a larger ethnographically-informed investigation of language ideologies and attitudes towards Cypriot Greek in UK GCSs. The investigation is shaped by ethnographic and multilingual principles (Blommaert & Jie 2010; Holmes et al. 2016; Mercer 2010; Watson-Gegeo 1997) within a wider framework of critical sociolinguistics and discourse analysis (Cameron 2001; Heller et al. 2018).

In the early stages of the investigation, between 2017 and 2019, a case-study approach was adopted for data collection. Two schools in north London, Anemomylos and Gefyri (pseudonyms), were selected for ethnographic fieldwork in order to understand how language ideologies are constructed on a local level in the light of broader historical and social contexts (Lytra 2012). The schools were chosen as they were known to have a predominantly Greek Cypriot pupil population. Fieldwork was conducted between January and June 2018 (three months in each school), and a rich data set consisting of the following types of data was collated: audio recordings of in-class interactions; group interviews with pupils and one-to-one interviews with teachers; fieldnotes and vignettes of ethnographic observations both inside and outside classrooms; and, sets of physical artefacts including pupils' samples of work, classroom displays, policy documents, textbooks and other materials. The multiple sets of data were triangulated to mitigate any issues of validity, particularly by cross-verifying the interview data and observational data (Flick 2008).

In this article, I present findings from interviews with 12 teachers. This is a balanced sample of university-educated Greek Cypriot and Greek teachers, who have a range of experience of teaching in GCSs, arrived to the UK before and after 2010, and

are based in and outside London. Participant information is summarised in Table 2. All teacher names and school names are pseudonyms.

**Table 2:** Participant information (at time of interview).

Name	Country of origin	School	Level(s) they have taught	Years of experience	Pre- or post-2010 arrival
Angela	Cyprus	Gefyri, London	Years 2, 5, pre-GCSE, GCSE	4	Post
Anna-Maria	Greece	Paparouna, London	Greek dance	2	Post
Artemis	Cyprus	Gefyri, London	pre-GCSE	3	Post
Aspasia	Greece	Livadi, Midlands	Years 1–6, pre-GCSE, drama	7	Post
Christina	Cyprus	Anemomylos, London	Years 1, 2, 5, GCSE	23	Pre
Eleni	Cyprus	Gefyri, London	Year 6, pre-GCSE	2	Post
Eleonora	Cyprus	Anemomylos, London	GCSE	11	Pre
Elias	Greece	Trata, North of England	GCSE	4	Post
Ioanna	Greece	Paparouna, London	GCSE, C1, C2	9	Post
Liza	Greece	Anemomylos, London	Years 1, 5, 6	4	Post
Martha	Greece	Trata, North of England	GCSE	2	Pre
Panos	Greece	Kambana, London	GCSE	10	Pre

Interviews were conducted in two phases, a first set in June–July 2018 and a second one in February–March 2020. They were semi-structured, guided by an interview protocol aiming at eliciting information from the teachers about changes they had

observed in their respective GCSs as a result of post-2010 migration. These included changes in the overall running of the school, teaching practices, school policies, interactions inside and outside the classroom, and relations between parents and school. In addition, teachers were asked to compare their pre- and post-2010 experiences. Interviews were conducted in Greek and had an average duration of 47 minutes.

All interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the teachers. Recordings were transcribed in Greek and analysed qualitatively on NVivo 12. I employed thematic analysis, adopting Braun & Clarke's (2006) six-step approach to familiarise myself with the data, search for, review, define, and name themes. My analysis was informed by theoretical perspectives from the sociolinguistics of post-multilingualism (Li 2018), which moves away from a view of multilingualism as a plurality of named languages towards an approach that understands it as "a repertoire of styles and linguistic resources, tuned to particular communicative settings and spheres of life, developed over the course of a person's biographical experience" (Rampton 2019: 2; also Blommaert & Backus 2013; Busch 2012; Snell 2013). Central to my understanding of CSs were recent advances in the field of community language education (Blackledge & Creese 2010; Li 2006; Lytra & Martin 2010; Simon 2018), which have shown the multifaceted ways in which CSs become key sites of multilingualism in which ideologies about language, ethnicity and the links between them are reproduced, negotiated and contested in everyday activities, practices and interactions both in and outside classroom settings. These include dominant ideologies and discourses about the differential valorisation and hierarchisation of standardised and non-standardised linguistic varieties, as a recent body of work focusing on diglossic diasporas has cogently shown (Çavuşoğlu 2010, 2019; Gaiser & Matras forthcoming; Karatsareas 2020; Soliman et al. 2016; Walters 2011).

## 5 Findings

### 5.1 Ethnocultural revitalisation

Teachers placed the arrival of post-2010 migrants at a time when the GCSs were in a state of demographic, linguistic and cultural decline, reminiscent of Damanakis et al.'s portrayal of Australia's Greek diaspora in the period 1975–2010: “έλλειψη ανανέωσης... στατικότητα... αυτοτροφοδοτούμενη εσωστρέφεια” ‘lack of renewal, stagnation and self-sustaining inward-lookingness’ (2014b: 31). They reported that until 2010 pupil numbers were decreasing at alarming rates, putting the continued existence of GCSs at risk. Ioanna recalled that “in 2011, the school was on the brink of closure. Everyone was panicked... They cut the number of teachers and hours... They could not cope financially”. Her account captures the challenges that the schools’ financial independence poses and the extent to which financial considerations drive decision-making and pedagogical policy and practice. Angela saw older classes, which prepare pupils to sit formal examinations and therefore require a good level of Greek, as the first ones to show evidence of a shrinking pupil population: “the [numbers of] children keep dwindling because they can’t reach the GCSE level... Good work needs to be done so that the GCSE at least won’t be lost. The A-level is already being lost”. Angela’s fear echoes the 2015 announcement of Edexcel, the examination board that offers the two Modern Greek qualifications, that it would discontinue them from 2017 due to low demand. The decision was halted in 2016 by the intervention of the then Education Secretary of the UK.

Teachers expressed disappointment about the pupils’ low competence in Greek and the extensive, almost exclusive, use of English within pupils’ families – an issue that community scholars have been raising since the early 1990s. They painted a picture of a general lack of engagement with the school on behalf of both the pupils and their parents. Pupils were described as showing little interest in attending GCSs, often voicing their annoyance at their parents’ insistence for them to attend every Saturday

morning. Obtaining the Modern Greek GCSE in order to increase their prospects of securing a place at university was the main motivation for attendance.

Year sixes always say to me “we are forced to come because our parents bring us and because we want to get the GCSE”. But they don’t really make an effort. They are forced.

Liza

The second- maybe even third-generation Cypriots did not understand Greek and did not speak Greek. Whatever we did to prepare for the GCSE was mechanical... They learned stuff only to sit the exams. Then they left the school and did not continue with the language.

Ioanna

Combined with the emphasis on the GCSE and the view that pupils generally abandoned Greek after passing their exams, teachers saw this overall state of affairs as degrading the nature and mission of GCSs as important diaspora institutions aimed at ensuring the preservation of Greek language and culture. It is telling that Ioanna referred to her pre-2010 school using two words: διεκπεραιωτικό [diɛkɛpɛrɛotiɔko] ‘procedural’ and φροντιστήριο [froˈdiɔstirio], which refers to private after-hours schools that prepare pupils to sit university entry and language qualification examinations.

Teachers reported seeing demographic changes around 2013 and 2014. Those concerned both the overall number of pupils enrolling and the proportion of pupils with a Greek and Greek Cypriot background. Some teachers boasted about the increase in pupil numbers and presented the fact that existing school facilities were unable to cope with the new pupil population in a positive light, as evidence of a renewed and thriving school environment. According to Ioanna, Paparouna had 50 pupils in 2011, 35 Greek Cypriots and 15 Greeks. In 2020, the overall number had more than trebled to 160 pupils, 152 of whom were of Greek and 8 of Greek Cypriot background. Elias, Martha and Panos reported similar developments in their schools.

When contemplating how their GCSs changed after the arrival of post-2010 migrants, teachers employed words such as ζωντάνια [zoˈdaɲa] ‘liveliness’, χαρά [xaɹa] ‘joy’, ζήλος [ziɮos] ‘zeal’ and εξωστρέφεια [eksoˈstrefia] ‘outward-

lookingness' to describe what recently-arrived Greek pupils, parents and qualified teachers brought to the schools. Ioanna saw post-2010 pupils as "completely different children, children who want to learn about Greece". Unlike pre-2010 pupils who struggled with Greek, recently arrived pupils spoke Greek "like you and I are speaking now, natively" as Elias put it. Panos's account is particularly illustrative:

The Greek children who came contributed to the school being a little livelier because they speak better Greek. In that group I include Greek children as well as children from Albania and Romania who passed through Greece and lived there for several years. They helped, too, because they speak better Greek. The Greek Cypriot child will hear that Greek and speak a word or two. The Greek child will say "you know, in Greece we had the sun, the sea, we would go on little trips, we would go visit grandad and nan". The local child will then tell his or her own story. So, the two will mix, and this will help in their progress... In celebrations we will ask the child that speaks Greek to recite a poem. Not that we discriminate against the child from Cyprus, but the child from Greece will recite the poem more easily so it will be heard better. The general image of the school will improve, and this of course helps us as more children will come and it will be heard that in that particular school they speak good Greek.

Panos

Post-2010 pupils were therefore seen as raising the overall level of Greek in the school environment, bringing multiple benefits: they provided a resource that pre-2010 pupils could draw on to improve their language skills as well as their knowledge of Greece and Greek culture, creating an atmosphere of "healthy competition"; they gave teachers new "material" of good quality, which they could use in teaching and in putting together celebrations and other events; they bettered the reputation of the school as one that does a good job at teaching Greek, which is important for attracting new pupils and therefore strengthening the school's financial position.

Some teachers talked about the linguistic differences between pre-2010 and post-2010 pupils in terms of their Greek Cypriot and Greek background but did not attribute them to ethnic differences or the perceived sociocultural characteristics of each group:

I feel that Greeks preserve the language more... But you know what? [The Greek Cypriot children] are the third generation. The Greek children are the second generation. Maybe this plays a role as their parents speak Greek. They are newer migrants.

Angela

Angela attributed linguistic disparities to the fact that the pupils of the two communities were on different points along a course of intergenerational language shift, correlating with differences in their and their families' migration trajectory. Recently arrived Greek pupils were expected to have a better level of Greek than Greek Cypriot pupils who were born in the UK and whose parents or even grandparents were the ones who were born in Cyprus and were 'native' speakers of Greek. Martha made the same observation.

Another factor that, according to the teachers' accounts, contributed to a general improvement in the quality of school life was the post-2010 arrival of qualified teachers from Greece. Many teachers were reported to have found work in GCSs equipped with a solid pedagogical background including both postgraduate qualifications and previous teaching experience.

When I first went [to the school], the teachers were just some mothers, some students who did not study education. I would see that children did not start off with good educators and were not happy to come and do something that would be done joyfully and in the right way. But gradually master's students who were teachers started coming from Greece. They followed their husbands and started working at the school, so the level of the teaching was raised. I saw a difference in young children, they were happier. The way they approached the language was different so, as they grew, these children helped to change the mood...

Aspasia

Newly arrived teachers were portrayed as making a significant difference in the way Greek was taught, which in turn made the experience of learning Greek more enjoyable and beneficial for pupils. This was contrasted with the past, when members of the Greek Cypriot community lacking formal training in education would be recruited as teachers, a practice that Kyriakides and Michaelidou-Evripidou had identified as a problem in their 2002 assessment of work of the Cyprus Educational Mission.



## 5.2 Linguistic repertoires

British-born Greek Cypriots are bilingual in English and Greek, and generally dominant in English. The Greek part of their repertoire consists of Cypriot Greek, a non-standardised variety of Greek, and Standard Greek, the standardised variety associated with Greece. The two varieties are hierarchised among the UK's Greek Cypriot community. Standard Greek is seen as the prestigious, proper and correct variety, whereas Cypriot Greek is stigmatised as a rural form of speech that marks speakers as uneducated, unrefined and impolite. Cypriot Greek is, however, the variety that British-born Greek Cypriots acquire naturally at home, is an important index of identity and belonging, and carries covert prestige (Gardner-Chloros 1992; Karatsareas 2018). Standard Greek, in contrast, is learned at GCSs. It is the only official medium of education and, crucially, the linguistic form required for the GCSE and A-Level examinations (Ioannidou et al. 2020).

Post-2010 migrants are also bilingual in English and Greek, but dominant in Greek. While some may speak regional varieties of Greek depending on their origin, they generally present themselves and are perceived by others as legitimate speakers of the 'correct' and 'proper' Greek by virtue of their origin and the fact that they have completed varying levels of education in Greece.

Teachers contrasted the linguistic repertoires of pre-2010 and post-2010 pupils and highlighted differences with respect to their competence in Standard Greek, their confidence in using it, and their attitudes towards learning it. Eleni said her Greek Cypriot pupils found the standardised language "inaccessible", in the sense that "they cannot produce or understand speech in [it] easily". Angela mentioned that hers exhibited "hostility" towards Standard Greek and observed that they experienced feelings of inferiority because they do not speak it well. In her view, they did not feel that Standard Greek was "their own language" and resisted to having to learn it, especially if their teacher was from Greece. Post-2010 Greek pupils, on the other hand, were portrayed as more confident, comfortable, able and keen speakers.

Teachers accounted for the disparities in terms of different family language policies: Greek parents were said to speak Greek to their children at home, whereas Greek Cypriot parents spoke English. In this case, however, the different language

policies were accounted for in terms of the stigmatisation of Cypriot Greek as an “incorrect” variety, including the way it is spoken in the UK diaspora.

The Greeks will speak Greek [to their children]. The Cypriots have an issue with their language, I think... [They] feel that speaking Cypriot [Greek] and not [Standard] Greek makes them inferior. I mean, they feel that we have the superior knowledge of the language, they don't have it and are ashamed to speak.

Ioanna

Some post-2010 migrants, both pupils and parents, projected monolingual and monodialectal ideologies about GCSs in terms of both their mission and the repertoires and practices of teachers and pupils. When the languages and varieties that were used in the schools did not correspond to these expectations, they drew on their perceived linguistic legitimacy to assert authority as speakers of (‘correct’) Greek. This was illustrated by Eleonora and Liza.

There is a girl from Greece in our class who has a bit of an attitude. She will say [to other children] “what are you talking about? That's not how it's said.” “That is indeed a way to say it, darling, you just haven't heard of it before. These children have grown up with this word”... She did not make many friends among the other children because she had this attitude. “I came, I know my Greek, you don't know it all that well, how do you speak like that”. It wasn't just about Cypriot, it was also when [the other children] didn't use [Standard] Greek words correctly...

Eleonora

The mother of a child from Greece rang me yesterday and asked me to deregister the child because it doesn't hear any Greek [at school], teaching is done in English and because she wouldn't like [her child] to have a Cypriot teacher... “I don't want a Cypriot, I want [my child] to hear correct Greek... I want [my child] to have a Greek teacher”... I was shocked. I told her that, even if the teacher is Cypriot, she will teach the correct language to the child. “I don't want [my child] to hear the accent”. Our headteacher is also Cypriot and always speaks to the children at the assembly. [The mother] does not like it. She told me [the headteacher] doesn't speak Greek. “I can hear her, [her Greek] is not good. It's not even Greek to begin with.”

Liza

Eleonora's pupil was dismissive of Cypriot Greek words and mistaken uses of Standard Greek words in the speech of her classmates. Liza's account illustrates how some Greek parents may question the suitability of Greek Cypriots to teach Greek, both explicitly and implicitly. The two accounts suggest that GCSs were constructed as institutional spaces where only Greek and only its standardised variety were viewed as legitimate linguistic resources.

### 5.3 Diasporic ties

Within the ideological framework that underpins their mission and informs their guiding principles, GCSs are positioned as institutions where people of Greek ethnic origin come together to preserve, cultivate and reproduce (an essentialised view of) Greek identity and culture regardless of national political boundaries. This is enshrined in official discourses such as in the curriculum published in 2019 by the Cyprus Educational Mission, which is offered as a recommendation to all UK GCSs. The curriculum makes numerous references to "Cyprus and Greece", constructed as the two nation states in which the notion of Hellenism finds its political fulfilment, as "the children's homelands". It is also borne out in the practice of enrolling both Greek Cypriot and Greek pupils. GCSs are spaces where ties between the UK's Greek and Greek Cypriot diasporas are meant to be forged and reinforced. However, the arrival of the post-2010 migrants seems to have put a strain on these ties and, in certain cases, sever the links of individual community members with GCSs.

Some of the recently arrived Greek parents questioned the links between GCSs and the church, others what they perceived to be the exclusive control of the Cypriot government and the absence of the Greek government. Others challenged the way some GCSs were run, citing issues around transparency in the schools' finances and decision-making processes; the roles of school committees, heads of school and school managers; statutory policies and procedures such as health and safety and safeguarding; and, the working conditions of especially hourly-paid teachers. In some cases, the increased presence of Greek parents and teachers, and the criticism they expressed about the operation of the schools seems to have been perceived by members of the

Greek Cypriot community as threatening to change their traditional character as institutions promoting the culture and the interests of Greek Cypriots, leading to incidents of friction.

In one of our conversations the president of the school committee said that “we built this school and we are doing a favour to the children of Greek neo-immigrants of the crisis by allowing them to take lessons in our school.”

Elias

From time to time I hear things from parents like why we asked more children from Greece to recite poems and not from Cyprus... why we danced more Greek dances and not Cypriot ones, why we talked about Easter τσουρέκι and not φλαούνες.

Panos

Panos mentions two types of Easter pastry: τσουρέκι [tsu□reci], a sweet bread made in Greece, and φλαούνες [fla□unes], Cypriot cheese-filled pastries. In his account, folk dance and traditional cooking become symbolic indexes of cultural differences, whereas issues of legitimate ownership of GCSs are also at play.

Tensions engendered by linguistic and cultural differences also became evident in the classroom. Upon arrival, post-2010 pupils were in many cases placed in age-appropriate year levels, a decision that Elias thought was “catastrophic” as it made the disparity between the different ability groups greater than before. The situation was extremely difficult at the GCSE level, in which recently arrived Greek pupils were in the same class as British-born Greek Cypriot pupils, some of whom had fundamental gaps in their knowledge of Greek including not being able to read the Greek alphabet.

[Some] children have a very low level to be in the GCSE class but you can't keep them in the previous levels because they have to progress, they have to sit the exams... and at the same time they face the child who is more advanced because he or she has just come from Greece. There you have a clash. The children can't cope, they feel uncomfortable, they lose confidence, they become stressed, they have no patience, they want to drop out, the grandparents pressurise them into staying another year... There is panic.

Panos

The children who are better at Greek don't find [the GCS] attractive... When you have such a high level in your class and you go and do simplistic things, there is no interest. [My son] doesn't want to do his homework, he doesn't want to study, he doesn't want to go to school. Every Saturday morning, we have a little fight at home. "Why should I go to Greek school?... I can speak, read and write... I'm bored, the other children can't speak... We don't do anything interesting, the other children don't know anything".

Anna-Maria

Faced with this type of heterogeneity, teachers had to differentiate their material and personalise their teaching, and found themselves under significant pressure as they had to prepare all their pupils to sit the same examination. More importantly, their co-existence in the same year level created feelings of inferiority and resignation among Greek Cypriot pupils, who could not keep up with the linguistic abilities of their Greek classmates, and feelings of frustration and recalcitrance among Greek pupils, who found their learning experiences underwhelming and disengaging. In some cases, dissatisfaction was so intense that pupils from both groups ended up dropping out of school altogether.

## **6 (Re)conceptualising language, community and education**

The teachers' interviews illustrate how, apart from "sites of multilingualism" (Lytra & Martin 2010), CSs can also become sites of tensions and "fields of struggles" in which social agents strategically improvise in their quest to maximize their positions" (Maton 2008: 54). Tensions and struggles may be created by the presence, co-existence and involvement of heterogeneous community actors who may have differing perspectives, identifications, orientations and positionings in terms of transnationalism and diaspora, and may express opposing ideologies around language, community, identity and belonging. By promoting ethnic over national affiliation and by elevating the teaching of language to the status of key objective, CSs often transcend political boundaries and bring together people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, migratory biographies and

linguistic repertoires (Gaiser & Matras Forthcoming; Issa 2005; Ivashinenko 2019; Tereshchenko & Archer 2015). The “fundamental heterogeneity of diaspora” (Scully 2019: 98) therefore becomes one of the key traits of CSs as one of the three diaspora pillars (Li & Zhu 2013).

It is perhaps not surprising that heterogeneity poses a challenge for CSs seeing as their aim is to act as institutional structures and spaces that create the conditions for people with a given ethnic background to learn about, experience and preserve characteristics they are taken to have in common, thus creating and serving community. With language being foregrounded as the fundamental constituent of such a shared essentialised ethnocultural identity, linguistic practices imbued with notions of uniformity, boundedness, purity and correctness are promoted as legitimate forms of language. Speakers who are judged to be able and competent users of the promoted linguistic forms – both pupils and teachers – are categorised as ‘native speakers’ of “the ‘mother tongue’, that mythical finished-state language” (Blommaert & Backus 2011: 22) CSs strive to achieve. They acquire the status of language models, whose productions offer real-life examples of language learning targets and are valorised as symbolic capital (Francis et al. 2009) that CSs can draw on to showcase and advertise the high quality of their work, justify their cost and prove their value for money in a framework of separate bilingualism (Creese & Blackledge 2011).

In the context of GCSs, ‘new’ migration from Greece provided opportunities for some of these processes to be reinforced. However, it also highlighted the extent and nature of heterogeneity within schools; the complexity of languages, language varieties and language practices; and, the ways in which they call into question hegemonic and homogenising assumptions about the associations between language, community, competence and the aim of language learning in diaspora (Block 2006; Blommaert & Backus 2013; Mac Giolla Chríost 2007). Li Wei argues that the social and spatial mobilities that characterise life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century mean that “[n]o single nation or community can claim the sole ownership, authority and responsibility for any particular language, and no individual can claim to know an entire language, rather bits of many different languages” (2018: 68). This post-multilingualism era compels GCSs in the UK to readdress fundamental questions such as what their purpose is as community institutions, which types of speakers and groups of people they set out to serve, who is

a speaker of Greek and who is not, what counts as Greek language competence, and how best to use and build on different Greek competences to achieve their set aims. I would argue with Blackledge and Creese (2013) that this process of reimagining should encompass *all* learners without regard to their linguistic repertoires and perceived competences in the same way that GCSs have welcomed pupils and parents from different ethnic backgrounds, albeit with a view towards an expressed appreciation of Greek culture. It should also incorporate “the acceptance and incorporation into learning environments of linguistic signs and voices which index students’ localities, social histories, circumstances, and identities” (Blackledge & Creese 2013: 140), and move away from the preservation and maintenance of an idealised and received linguistic form towards a mission of linguistic vitality that will foster the continuous and deployment of the full linguistic repertoires of learners in expressing their multilingual and multicultural identities (Matras & Karatsareas 2020).

## 7 Concluding remarks

In this article, I have attempted to provide a first look at a developing situation that involves a much broader range of community actors than the teachers I interviewed and extends at a far larger scale than the schools I collected information about. My account suggests that the arrival of post-2010 migrants, a cohort largely composed of older, well-educated people who spoke ‘correct’ Greek and decided to migrate with the prospects of long settlement, stoked historical tensions and raised issues around legitimacy, ownership and management of GCSs as community institutions fostering the intergenerational transmission of Greek. It reaffirmed deep-rooted notions of linguistic hierarchisation of standardised and non-standardised varieties of Greek and helped to perpetuate the stigmatisation of the multilingual and multidialectal repertoires of people with a Greek Cypriot background, especially people who had been born in the UK and spoke diasporic varieties of Cypriot Greek. GCSs were not prepared to face the challenges that arose as Greek newcomers began to take issue with the linguistic, cultural and pedagogical realities they encountered. It is notable that the curriculum that the Cyprus Educational Mission published in 2019, nine years after the onset of

migration from Greece to the UK, makes no mention of post-2010 migrants or the presence of their children—with all their ethnocultural profiles and linguistic repertoires—in GCSs. The ensuing friction led not only to dropouts, which weaken the overall position of GCSs and endanger their future, but also to the emergence of new Greek language education initiatives led by post-2010 migrants. Some of these follow the model of the existing GCSs while at the same time seeking to avoid perceived shortcomings in their administration and management. Others are more exploratory of new ways of language teaching and learning, including through digital technologies.

It remains to be seen how recent developments will shape the future of Greek migration to and from the UK. The UK's membership of the European Union finally ended on 31 January 2020, only a day after the World Health Organisation declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. The International Monetary Fund has warned that the impact of the pandemic on the world's economy will be the worst since the Great Depression and certainly greater than the Global Financial Crisis of 2007/2008. It will need to be established whether the influx of Greek migrants will continue into the 2020s and whether those who came after 2010 will remain in the UK, as they originally intended to. If they do and especially if more people come, GCSs will have to be able to adapt to the new mobilities and address the needs of the new pupil, parent and teacher population. There is no doubt that they have the potential to do so if they draw on their decades of experience, local and transnational resources, and their social and symbolic capital among the UK's Greek-speaking communities, thus renewing their position as cultural hubs and community pillars in the face of a changing sociolinguistic landscape.

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