Introduction

DIONYSIS GOUTSOS and MARILENA KARYOLEMOU

1. Introduction

There could be no more opportune time for attempting an overview of the linguistic situation in Cyprus by focusing on the areas of language practices, contact, and standardization. This is probably the first period in the last thirty years that an ending to the dramatic division of the island is clearly visible. Any significant change in the forceful separation of the two main national communities of Cyprus is bound to mark the beginning of a new era in the status and relations of the languages spoken in the island. In this sense, the articles in this volume capture a (synchronic and diachronic) picture of a situation that is about to change drastically in the years to come.

The study of the languages of Cyprus has suffered from a lack of adequate, up-to-date descriptions. The need for research on several sociolinguistic communities and areas of research is already obvious from the list of contributions to this volume, where some languages and areas of research are under-represented and others not represented at all. It will more clearly emerge in the following discussion of the sociolinguistics of Cyprus. For the Greek Cypriot dialect (henceforth CD) — a dialect for which written evidence goes back as far as the thirteenth century — the most recent overall description dates back to 1972 in Newton's generative grammar of the dialect. In the meantime, most work on CD has involved either reference grammars and dictionaries by nonspecialists or research on attitudes (see Goutsos 2001, this issue). As an exception to this rule, there has been some research on the sociolinguistic situation of Greek Cypriots outside Cyprus, for example, in the migrant communities of London (Anaxagorou 1990; Christodoulou-Pipis 1991; Roussou 1991; Roussou and Papadaki d'Onofrio 1991; Gardner-Chloros 1992; Zarpetea 1995; Constandinides 1997) and Australia (Tamis 1989, 1992). Initial work on the Greek Cypriot community of Montreal has also offered some insight on the language use of first- and second-generation immigrants

0165–2516/04/0168–0001 *Int'l. J. Soc. Lang. 168 (2004), pp. 1–17*

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The aim of this issue is to present recent studies on the sociolinguistic situation of Cyprus that focus on issues such as the relation between the standard and local varieties of the languages spoken on the island, their use in specific domains like education, the media, etc., the status and structure of minority languages, the development of new sociolinguistic norms and the relation between ethnicity and language. Its aspiration is to contribute to the opening up of a discussion on the current sociolinguistic situation of the island through the systematic and empirical study of the issues involved (see also Papapavlou and Pavlou 1998 for an overview of the existing sociolinguistic work).

2. Historical background

Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean Sea with a maximum length of about 225 km from Cape Andreas in the northeast to the western extremity of the island. Its maximum width, from Cape Gata in the south to Cape Kormakiti in the north, is about 97 km. The total area of the country is 9,251 sq km.

The use of languages in Cyprus must be situated against a complex historical background. Since Cyprus became a Greek colony (ca. 1400 B.C.), language contact has to be assumed as the rule rather than an exception. In the ancient era, successive occupations by Phoenicians (ca. 800 B.C.), Egyptians (550 B.C.) and Persians (525 B.C.) make up for a complex linguistic pre-history. In 333 B.C., Alexander the Great wrestled control of Cyprus from Persia and thus initiated a new series of conquests, including Cyprus' annexation to the Roman Empire (58 B.C.) and its becoming part of the Byzantine Empire (395 A.D.). In 1191, Richard I conquered and granted the island to Guy de Lusignan. The Frank occupation was soon to be followed by the Venetian occupation (1489) and the start of a long period of Ottoman occupation in 1571.

The modern history of Cyprus starts in 1878, when, after their defeat in the Russo-Turkish War, the Ottomans handed over control of Cyprus to Britain, but retained sovereignty. When the British administrators assumed office in 1879, they were presented with a petition from the archbishop and the Greek community calling for *enosis* (Greek for 'union'), that is, the political union of Cyprus with the kingdom of Greece. This was the start of a long period of struggle for the Greek majority of the island, which became a Crown Colony in 1925. In 1931, resentment over government measures resulted in serious riots. The British suppressed the riots, abolished the legislative council, and banned all political parties. Shortly after World War II ended in 1945, the *enosis* issue again began to create tension in Cyprus, and in 1946 the British proposed constitutional reforms leading to self-government on Cyprus. A British announcement that the strategic position of Cyprus made it impossible to discuss any change in the political status of the island was followed by a military campaign against the British that was instituted by an underground movement of Greek Cypriots known as the *Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston* 'National Organization of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA). Early in 1955, the Cypriots intensified their military action against the British that led to the 1959 talks held among the various parties involved, including United Kingdom, Turkey and Greece, which were to be the guaranteeing powers in the final settlement. Both the British occupants and the Turkish minority opposed the demand of Greek Cypriots for *enosis* and thus Cyprus was granted independence on 16 August 1960 and admitted to the UN and the Commonwealth of Nations.

In December 1963, Greek and Turkish Cypriots clashed after President Makarios proposed constitutional changes (known as the "thirteen points"), including abolition of the Turkish minority's power to veto laws in the legislature, the institution of common municipalities, the establishment of common institutions, and a common electoral roll. Fighting spread throughout the island, with the Turkish Cypriots demanding partition, while the Greek Cypriots insisted on a unitary state with minority rights safeguarded. After both Greece and Turkey threatened to intervene, the UN appointed a mediator and organized a peacekeeping force to patrol the island. Subsequent UN efforts to bring about a settlement failed and bitterness between Greece and Turkey continued to increase. Renewed tension in the early 1970s culminated, on 15 July 1974, in Makarios being ousted from office and forced into exile by members of the

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Cypriot National Guard, who, supported by the Greek military junta in place in Athens, opposed his reluctance to unite the island with Greece. The military coup was succeeded by the invasion of Turkish forces in the island. By late August, following fighting that left many people homeless, the Turks controlled the northern third of the island. In November 1983, the northern part of the island under Turkish occupation was proclaimed an independent republic and all talks were suspended. However, this was not recognized by the UN or other countries, with the exception of Turkey. The UN-sponsored talks resumed on an intermittent basis in 1988, while 2001 saw the initiation of proximity talks between the Republic of Cyprus and the occupied area, which have led to a series of plans prepared and presented by the UN secretary to the two communities for approval in 2004. While there has not been a final agreement, recent attempts at reunification of the island are hoped to give more concrete results in the future, especially in the frame of the European Union, which Cyprus became a full member of in May 2004.

3. Geodemographic and sociopolitical changes

Data from the 2001 census of population show that the total population of the Cyprus Republic on 1st October 2001 was 689,565: of which 618,455 (89.7%) were Greek Cypriots; 1,341 (0.2%) Armenians; 3,658 (0.5%) Maronites; 279 (0.04%) Cypriots of European origin known as "Latins"; and 361 Turkish Cypriots (0.05); 411 persons (0.1%) did not declare their ethnic/religious group (*Census of Population 2001*); the remainder being foreigners from European and Asian countries. To the question "What language do you speak better?", 632,540 persons (91.7%) answered Greek; 3,793 (0.6%) Arabic; 1,373 (0.2%) Armenian; 340 Turkish; the remaining giving various exogenous languages, e.g., English (16,086 [2.3%]), Russian (13,530 [2%]), Bulgarian (2,585 [0.3%]) etc. Estimates of the Cyprus government (Republic of Cyprus 1997) give, for the population in the occupied areas, a number for Turkish Cypriots that varies from a low 80,000 to a high 89,000 (not including a substantial number of settlers from Turkey [80,000 to 117,000] and 35,000 Turkish soliders). We can thus estimate the population of Greek speakers at more than 71% and the population of Turkish speakers at roughly 22% (including Turkish settlers and soldiers) of the total population of Cyprus.

The dramatic geodemographic changes that followed the 1974 Turkish invasion have had significant consequences for language structure, both at an interlinguistic (interaction of the Greek and Turkish standard and local varieties) and an intralinguistic level (variation between the local varieties and their standard varieties). They also affected the development of sociolinguistic patterns of behavior with important repercussions on the status of the languages involved. For instance, Greek and Turkish are the two official languages, as stated in the 1960 Constitution. However, in practice the division of the island has been followed by a division of linguistic labor, with the result that Greek has been the dominant language in the administration and government of the Republic of Cyprus, while Turkish is exclusively used for similar purposes in the occupied part.

A characteristic case is that of the newly founded University of Cyprus, whose official languages are both Greek and Turkish, although practice has formulated a *de facto* exclusive use of Greek in administration and instruction (Karyolemou 2001a, 2002). At the same time, interethnic conflict and the lack of contacts between members of the two main ethnic groups for almost thirty years have seriously hampered the expansion of bilingualism and/or the development of linguae francae (such as English or the local Cypriot Greek). Estimates about what would have happened on the sociolinguistic level, had the two communities achieved a peaceful coexistence, remain highly hypothetical. The example of Pyla, one of the two villages where Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots continue to live together within the Republic, situated at the southeastern part of the buffer zone lying between the Republic of Cyprus and the occupied area, confirms sociolinguistic trends that prevailed in Cyprus from the beginning of the twentieth century up until 1963 with regard to interethnic communication (Karyolemou 2003).[1] Limited bilingualism with use of the local rather than the standard varieties of Greek and Turkish, emblematic code switching or borrowing, limited adhesion of the majority group to the minority code, younger generations' growing monolingualism are some of these trends. Georgiou-Scharlipp and Scharlipp (1997, 1998) also suggest that the Turkish variety spoken by the Turkish community of Potamia, the other mixed village in the Republic of Cyprus, has surprisingly remained free from influences from the majority language at the lexical level.[2]

The sudden geodemographic changes experienced by both communities (albeit in completely different ways) have also affected intralinguistic variation. The contraction of the living space with the inflation of urban and semi-urban spaces was the most important change for Greek Cypriots (more than 75% of the 194,000 Greek Cypriot refugees were of rural origin but were relocated in the three major urban centers of Nicosia, Limassol and Larnaca, cf., Drevet 1991). The expansion of the living zone of the Turkish Cypriots concentrated in a homogenous area that represents 35.3% of the island's territory, brought about the homogenization of in-group linguistic practices. Increasing contact of the local varieties with

their standard counterparts has prompted a further reduction of dialect variation, although psychological distance from standard values may have increased (see Kizilyürek and Gautier-Kizilyürek this issue).

Psychological factors related to issues of historical memory or oblivion could have played a role in the process of intralinguistic divergence or/and convergence (Karyolemou 2000a on CD). In this respect, there is a significant difference in the way the Greek and Turkish communities perceive their pre-1974 past (see Papadakis 2000). Greek Cypriots conceive this past as related to their "real homes," the places where they and their children have belonged and will always belong, and with an ideal time of life when human values were still guiding the lives of the people. As Papadakis stresses, nostalgia was officially cultivated within the Greek Cypriot community, as it is testified by the slogans *Δεν ξεχνώ* 'I do not forget' and *Αγώνας - Επιστροφή* 'Struggle for return') which became the linguistic expression of an incitation to (a certain kind of) historical memory. For the Turkish Cypriots, on the contrary, the pre-1974 period is seen as associated with persecution and unjustness. They are officially invited to forget their old places and accept their new homes in the north of Cyprus as their real homes. It is possible that these ideologies of historical memory and/or oblivion have some consequences on the linguistic practices of the displaced populations (maintenance or loss of previously local features) and on personal choices as regards the transmission of local features to subsequent generations.

Other developments that have had an impact on sociolinguistic practices concern the influx of immigrant workers (Trimikliniotis 1998). In the Cyprus Republic restrictions on migration had been loosened in the 1990s, allowing for the entry of a steadily increasing number of immigrant workers. Eastern European countries, the Middle East, South Eastern Asia, Northern/Central Europe and the USA are the main sources of migration, which has today reached 13.3% of the active population (figures taken from Trimikliniotis 1998, excluding illegal immigrants). In the Turkish occupied area, on the other hand, migrants come mostly from Turkey (implantation of settlers from Anatolia in areas left by the Greek Cypriots and militaries serving in the occupation forces), whereas immigration from other countries (Pakistan, Iraq, Eastern European countries) is largely illegal and figures are therefore hard to estimate (Pérouse 2000). The poor economic perspectives and the lack of opportunities for work do not make the north of Cyprus a pole of attraction for the deprived. Instability and mobility are, according to Pérouse (2000), the main characteristics of the immigration movement in the occupied area. Furthermore, the linguistic landscape of the Turkish Cypriot community has also been altered by the fact that one third of the initial Turkish

Cypriot population has immigrated and is currently living abroad (Pérouse 1997).

The consequences of endolingual and exolingual migration for language usage and communicative patterns (use of linguae francae, emergence of pidginized forms of a language, dialect convergence or divergence), especially as far as the Turkish Cypriot community is concerned, have not yet been studied. As regards the Greek Cypriot community, questions are often raised about changes in the traditional patterns of social behavior, such as child breeding, and their sociolinguistic impact. More precisely, the employment of English-speaking female house workers (mostly maids, nannies and house aids) from the Philippines and Sri Lanka, who are charged with the care of children, is said to have disastrous consequences on children's linguistic development (loss of fluency in Greek) and the maintenance of current sociolinguistic patterns of behavior (use of Greek at home). Some preliminary work on the issue (Karyolemou 2002) shows, however, a much more complex pattern of immigrants' linguistic preferences and actual usage.

4. The languages of Cyprus

There are two prominent sociolinguistic features of Greek and Turkish in Cyprus. The first is the relation of the local varieties of Greek and Turkish to Standard Greek and Standard Turkish, spoken in mainland Greece and Turkey. Although some researchers have described this relation in terms of diglossia (Sciriha 1995, 1996; Moschonas 1996; Panayotou 1996; see also Gautier-Kizilyürek and Kizilyürek this issue), more recent studies seem to suggest a more complex kind of relation, at least in the case of Standard Modern Greek (SMG) and Cypriot Greek (CG), for which more studies exist. As early as in their childhood, Greek Cypriots clearly perceive the two varieties in diglossic terms (Pavlou 1999), that is, treat them as separate varieties and attach distinct values to each one (Karyolemou 1997; Karyolemou and Pavlou 2001). Yet, in practice there is a continuum of usage (Karyolemou 1997, 2000a) that ranges from various local/localized forms of CD (Papapavlou forthcoming; Pavlou this issue; Papapavlou, this issue) to a regional form of SMG (Panayotou 1999; Arvaniti 2002), in which several features of the dialect are maintained. Whether a persistent perceptual contrast between the standard and the local varieties can qualify as a situation of diglossia, despite the linguistic reality of a continuum, is an issue that has already been discussed by Prudent (1981, 1982) but still remains to be answered.

On the other hand, although very little effort has so far been made to bring empirical evidence for the existence of discrete or continuous

variation (Paolilo 1997, 2000), it seems that we can argue for the emergence of a standard or urban variety of CD that results from a series of processes that have only recently attracted the attention of scholars.[3] The influence of SMG on the creation of a less localized and thus more acceptable variety of CD is quite obvious on several levels and in various domains, including phonology and syllable structure (Drachman and Malikouti-Drachman 1997; Malikouti-Drachman 2000), morphophonology (Newton 1983–84; Malikouti-Drachman 2001) and the formation of hypocoristics of proper names (Drachman et al. 2001).

In the context of language contact, the issue of the factors that influence language use is also important. Pavlou (1997, this issue) points out the influence of the media on language use and shows that, although public speaking is perceived as calling for the use of SMG, unintentional (spontaneous) use of the dialect is much more frequent than expected. On the other hand, the intentional use of the dialect (especially in radio and television) remains stereotypical, that is, limited to a small range of acts of speech and for specific purposes, a fact that reinforces the dialect's low status.

The unintentional use of the dialect also supports Papapavlou's view (this issue) that in bidialectal situations "disturbances" in oral fluency (hesitations, pauses, etc.) may occur in the speech of dialectal speakers. Considering the bidialectal situation in Cyprus and especially the use of CD and SMG in education, Papapavlou suggests that speakers are quite aware of the existence of various dialectal levels and tend to situate themselves at the mesolect of the dialect continuum. Furthermore, they are conscious of problems arising in speech, which they mostly attribute to the perceived distance between their native variety and SMG, which has to be used in most formal occasions. Papapavlou goes on to propose a structural explanation that accounts for these "disturbances" in fluency.

Although several researchers argue for the emergence of an urban variety of CD established through usage (i.e., standardized by usage), Terkourafi finds that the still overall unstandardized character of the CD offers an interesting opportunity for testing Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory on politeness. Terkourafi in her article (this issue, see also 1999) makes the point that the variables of distance, power and ranking do not seem to account for the choices of politeness strategies in CD as predicted by the theory. Instead, it seems that extralinguistic parameters, such as age and gender, are more influential in determining the choice of politeness strategies and should thus be accounted for.

The dual perception of the standard and local varieties of Greek and Turkish is related to the second important sociolinguistic feature of language use in Cyprus; namely the multiple symbolic significance of Greek and Turkish for the identity construction of the respective national communities. In this respect, the languages of Cyprus present a unique sociolinguistic situation in the Mediterranean, contrasting with other islands such as Malta (Vanhove 2001; Slavik 2001), Sicily (Alfonzetti 1998) or Corsica, where identities are defined in extremely local terms in competition with the supralocal (Jaffe 1999: 17). As Karoulla-Vrikki, Kizilyürek and Gautier-Kizilyürek indicate in this issue, in modern times, the relation between language and ethnicity in both communities has always referred to the supralocal in terms of allegiance and competed with the local or the colonial "other." Dispute over language has always been dispute over power and Karoulla-Vrikki brings valuable evidence about the way language has been used in the empowerment or loss of power of the two communities during the colonial era.

Yet, local varieties are not completely subsumed under the standard prestigious varieties they have been increasingly in contact with. On the contrary, as Karyolemou (2001b) and Kizilyürek and Gautier-Kizilyürek (this issue) argue, increasing contact often makes people realize how much they differ from other subgroups belonging to the same ethnicity (Karyolemou 2000b). The two local varieties may thus become vectors of intraethnic differentiation, moving towards each other in a symbolic kind of way. Therefore, while the notion of islandness does not seem central in the description of the sociolinguistic situation of Cyprus, since both main components embrace a main group rather than an island identity (Karyolemou 1998; Omoniyi 2000), it is also undeniable that language boundaries move along with political and social changes.

Equally important in sociolinguistic terms have been phenomena resulting from the contact between the varieties spoken on the island such as lexical borrowing or code switching (Karyolemou 1994; Papapavlou 1988, 1989, 1994, 2001; Goutsos 2001; Karoulla-Vrikki 2001, 2002; see also Korda-Savva 2001 for the influence of English on the subtitling of foreign films). For instance, there has been considerable apprehension about the influence of English on both the structure and the status of the Greek language. English is not only an imported colonial language, the language of the British expatriate community and the military staff of the British sovereign bases, but also a lingua franca for large numbers of foreign residents in Cyprus both from English-speaking countries such as India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, but also from Eastern European countries, where there has been a long-standing Greek-speaking tradition. Considering the forces of globalization and glocalization that are in favor of the English language, McEntee (this issue) supports the view that the penetration of English in Cyprus is real, even though it does not present a

threat to the Greek language as it yields strong ethnolinguistic loyalty among Greek Cypriots. This is also confirmed by other studies (Papapavlou 1997, 2001; Davy and Pavlou 2001; Karyolemou 2001a) where it is stressed that the role of English has been considerably diminished in administration, legislation and public discourse over the past three decades.

The results of language contact and the effects of recent sociopolitical changes have been more seriously felt by some of the island's minorities such as the Maronite or the Armenian communities. The Maronites originate from Syria and Lebanon and have been resident in Cyprus since the twelfth century. The variety of Arabic they speak was only brought to the knowledge of linguists relatively recently (1951), a fact that can partly explain the limited number of studies for this variety (Tsiapera 1969; Roth 1975, 1981, 1986, 2000; Borg 1985). Until 1974, the community was mainly concentrated in four localities on the northeastern Kormakiti peninsula (Ayia Marina, Asomatos, Karpasa, Kormakiti), but the use of the language was maintained only in Kormakiti (see Roth, this issue). Secular contact with the Greek speaking majority and, to a lesser degree, with the Turkish speaking population, has led to progressive loss of the language, a process that was dramatically accelerated after the Turkish invasion. Since then, most Maronites have chosen to move to the south, although they are allowed to move freely between the two areas. Despite the lack of recent large-scale studies on the sociolinguistic situation of the community, Roth (this issue) is in a position to affirm that the language is rapidly declining due to both structural (*facteurs internes*) and sociolinguistic reasons (*facteurs externes*). Its status and structure — *doublement minorée*, 'doubly minorized', according to Roth, both vis-à-vis the majority language (CD) and vis-à-vis its standard counterpart (classical Arabic) — work against its preservation, since the language has already ceased to be actively used by the younger generations. In her study, Roth shows how the various levels of the minority system are reorganized and stabilized at a different pace, thus producing a new variety, unstable at some levels (syntax), where the influence of CD is massive, but quite stable at others (phonology). The process of stabilization depends on what Roth calls the *mise en convergence* of the two systems, following the structural model of the Greek (i.e., CD) variety. Where the convergence is not possible, the final outcome is attrition and loss of the language.

In contrast to what is happening with the Arab community, there is a complete lack of studies on the sociolinguistic situation of the Armenian community and the structural peculiarities of the (western) Armenian variety spoken by its members. There is, however, some, more or less, recent ethnographic and sociological work (Maksoudian 1975 cited in Mavratsas 2000; Pattie 1997; Mavratsas 2000), providing also sociolinguistic information. The reported community concerns include the use of the Armenian language. While Armenian is said to be the mother tongue of all Armenians, it was for many years a language that had to be learned. Under the Ottoman empire, most of the Armenians settled on Cyprus, like those who came to enlarge their ranks in the 1920s, after the genocide, were assimilated to Turkish. To reverse this situation, a conscious effort to teach the language to the new generations was undertaken in the early twentieth century, including those families in which parents had very little knowledge, if any, of the language. This was not an easy process and, whereas learning Armenian was strongly imbued in minds as a result of national awakening "[t]he transition from Turkish to Armenian took place in stages, however strongly held the ideal" (Pattie 1997: 187). It was only by the mid-1940s that Armenian began to be heard in the meetings of the community and Armenian neighborhoods and its use came to be considered natural.

In the older generations of Armenians, literacy in Greek is quite limited. Mavratsas (2000: 201) asserts, for instance, that, despite their high entrepreneurial profile, Armenians have not succeeded in penetrating the state mechanism because of their limited proficiency in SMG. Knowledge of Greek is, nevertheless, progressing, as the majority language is taught in Armenian schools, so that most Armenians are now bilingual in Armenian and Greek. As with the Maronites, Armenians' command of the CD is greater than their mastery of SMG. However, due to the historical conditions of its establishment in Cyprus and its prevalent mobility, the community has been and still remains fundamentally multilingual. Thus, many Armenians master an international language such as English, taught in primary education and being the language of instruction in secondary education, or French. The vernacular use of Turkish, common in the older generations, is nowadays giving way to a rather emblematic use with proverbs, sayings, and curses uttered in Turkish rather than any other language.

The Latins of Cyprus seem to be fully assimilated, from a linguistic point of view, to the Greek Cypriot community. Traces of their Frankish and/or Venetian European origins persist only in their family and first names. Other languages are also visible today on the island as an outcome of the political and economic reversal of the last two decades: for instance, Russian is used in ATMs to facilitate transactions with a growing Russian community established on the island in the past few years, as well as in newspapers printed locally in Russian. Languages such as Finnish or Swedish are also found in several areas, where their presence is dictated for economic reasons relating to the tourist industry.

5. Desiderata of research

The work mentioned above testifies to an increase of sociolinguistic studies on Cyprus in the past few years. One of the most extensively researched issues in relation to the Greek Cypriot community is diglossia. However, as mentioned at the beginning, there has been very little empirical work to determine the exact nature of the relationship between standard Greek and the Cypriot dialect. As a result, many areas of research still remain unexplored (but see Sivas 2002). A current emerging need is the description of the multiple linguistic codes, as well as of the hybrid and intermediate forms of language that are not amenable to an easy binary scheme (cf., Jaffe 1999: 19). Studies on the Turkish Cypriot community, both descriptive and sociolinguistic, are also scarce. Taking into consideration the context of conflict, both the relation of Turkish Cypriot to standard Turkish and to the majority language — standard Greek and its vernacular — should be carefully examined. As suggested here, it should not come as a surprise if the linguistic situation in the two communities presented important — sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic — parallels.

At the same time, there is still much scope in studying contact — or the absence of contact and its linguistic consequences — between Greek and Turkish in the context of Cyprus that seems to fall under the category of "static co-existence" or *coexistence statique* (Quint 2001: 238). In this respect, it would also be interesting to investigate the patterns of linguistic behavior, in cases where people of a given ethnic background are integrated in the opposite community. This is, for instance, the case of the few Greek Cypriots living in enclaves in the occupied part of Cyprus, mostly in the peninsula of Karpassia, and of the Turkish Cypriots, who currently live in the Republic of Cyprus, in the villages of Pyla, Potamia and the urban centers.

At this stage we also need to dramatically improve our knowledge about the situation of the Armenian and Arab communities of Cyprus. We urgently need to know whether the Arab and Armenian varieties are maintained or lost and which factors are susceptible to favor language maintenance or loss. Are there any common features concerning the linguistic practices prevailing in the two communities? Are the two communities evolving similarly towards a transitory bilingualism — involving Greek (standard or dialect) and their vernaculars — due to their minority status or do their different sociolinguistic histories and backgrounds suggest two different sociolinguistic profiles?

As many articles in this issue suggest, both the double diaglossic situation and language contact in the form of opposition evidenced in Cyprus are imbued with symbolic value and significantly relate to issues of history, culture and identity. As suggested in Goutsos (this issue), an unexplored territory concerns precisely the discursive space for the creation of social identities and "the way language as symbolic and political action articulates with language use in its more mundane communicative functions" (Jaffe 1999: 281). This is a most promising area of research, which is expected to help linguistic thought move beyond simplistic correlations of language and identity. In this sense, there is a need for studying the interaction of the issues mentioned above, that is, the continuum of linguistic practices and the symbolic value of language use, in order to counteract the familiar view of language as "a closed, autonomous formal system that has a direct and unproblematic relationship with equally bounded cultural identities" (Jaffe 1999: 272). For this purpose, research that focuses on dimensions like class, gender, degree of cohesion and perception of remoteness (Omoniyi 2000: 7) is more than indispensable in drawing a comprehensive picture of the sociolinguistics of Cyprus.

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Notes

1. Small groups of Turkish Cypriots, as well as many Roms, live in Limassol and Paphos. Some elderly Greek Cypriots remain in the occupied area as well, mostly in the peninsula of Karpassia. The latter are known as *εγκλωβισμένοι* because they live in enclaves and are refused the right to free movement.
2. The terms minority and majority are here used in a numerical sense. Though a minority, the Turkish Cypriots have seen their language been given equal rights with the majority language, in theory at least.
3. An exception must be made for Sivas' work (2002) on the Greek Cypriot community, which seems to confirm the existence of such a continuum.

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