

The interplay of regional and social variation in Cyprus: a diachronic perspective

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This article considers the diachronic applicability of Trudgill's (1983) 'pyramid' model to Cypriot Greek speech. Textual and spoken data from two different historical periods—the medieval period of western domination (1291-1570/71), and modern times—are shown to exhibit structural features typical of koiné varieties, suggesting that the speech of higher and middle urban strata in Cyprus during these periods results from dialect contact and is relatively homogeneous across the island. In conjunction with research on the social conditions prevailing during these two periods (Terkourafi 2003, forthcoming), this evidence supports the view that a koiné variety was formed among the upper strata under Lusignan rule and continued to exist as a supra-local, yet distinctly Cypriot variety spoken in the cities since medieval times, maintaining a vivid relationship with regional varieties spoken in different parts of the island.

Keywords: social dialectology, Cypriot Greek, koiné, mixing, levelling, simplification, reallocation

1. Introduction

A model for the inter-relation of regional and social varieties is proposed by Trudgill in his study of the dialects of the British Isles (1983: 186; figure 1).

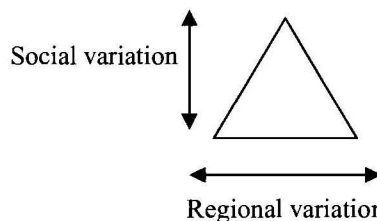


Figure 1: Trudgill's pyramid model (1983: 186)

According to this model, regional variation is greatest among the lower social strata, while regional features subside as one goes up the social hierarchy. Speech is most homogeneous at the top of the social pyramid, the speech of the highest social strata showing virtually no variation across the different

geographical areas. In this model, one regional variety may rise to the top of the social pyramid virtually intact, the language of the higher social strata reflecting in all respects a particular regional variety (this has arguably been the case for Southern British English in the past).

In a related proposal pertaining to Hellenistic Greek, Horrocks explicitly identifies the variety at the top of the social pyramid with a koiné, i.e. a variety abstracting away from particular regional features:

“It is essential, then, to see the Koine not only as the standard written and spoken language of the upper classes [...] but also more abstractly as a superordinate variety standing at the pinnacle of a pyramid comprising an array of lower-register varieties, spoken and occasionally written.” (Horrocks 1997: 37)

Placing at the top of the social pyramid a known koiné variety opens up the possibility that the variety at the top of the pyramid may at once incorporate features from different regional varieties, and be innovative with respect to them, i.e. instantiate features not previously found in any of them.

These proposals provide the starting point for studying the interplay of regional and social variation in Cyprus during two different historical periods, the medieval period of western domination, which includes the periods of Lusignan (1291-1486) and Venetian rule (1486-1570/71), and modern times. The analysis of textual evidence from the earlier period and of contemporary spoken data shows that the speech of middle and higher urban social strata in Cyprus during these two periods is characterised by mixing, levelling, simplification and reallocation, i.e. by structural features that previous research has associated with koiné varieties. Characterisation of the speech of these strata as a koiné is supported by the socio-historical background against which such speech emerged, which was favourable to processes of koineisation (Terkourafi 2004, forthcoming).

Joint consideration of the structural and socio-historical evidence thus suggests that, during the second half of Lusignan rule, contact between the Greek interlanguage¹ of the old Frankish aristocracy and the indigenous Greek of the new local elite gave birth to a medieval koiné that quickly spread throughout the cities and became associated with urban status. With the advent of Ottoman rule (1570/71-1878), this early urban koiné spread to the countryside cross-fertilising with local ways of speaking to give rise to the spectrum of patois varieties constituting the Cypriot dialectal continuum. At the same time, the medieval koiné continued to evolve in the cities, where members of the new local elite lived. Today’s koiné arose out of contact between Standard Greek as received by Cypriots, local patois varieties, and the earlier urban koiné as it has been handed down the mouths of urban populations. This article focuses on the structural evidence for claiming that the speech of

Cypriots at the top of the social pyramid during these two periods is relatively homogeneous, and in particular that it shows evidence of koineisation.

2. Previous research on koinés

Before going on to analyse the Cypriot Greek data, a brief overview of the findings of previous research on koiné varieties is in order. According to a recent definition, as a sociolinguistic term, koiné refers to “[a] stabilised contact variety which results from the mixing and subsequent levelling of features of varieties which are similar enough to be mutually intelligible, such as regional or social dialects. This occurs in the context of increased interaction among speakers of these varieties.” (Siegel 2001: 175).

This definition singles out three features as central to the characterisation of a variety as a koiné. First, the varieties in contact must be mutually intelligible to begin with, i.e. mutual intelligibility constitutes a precondition of koineisation. Second, once they are in contact, the original varieties undergo mixing and levelling. Finally, these structural processes go hand in hand with social processes. In particular, increased interaction among speakers of the original varieties, i.e. interaction not limited to one register or activity but spanning different domains of everyday life, is crucial to koineisation.

Prior mutual intelligibility and increased interaction most clearly distinguish koinés from other contact varieties such as pidgins and creoles. Nevertheless, finer distinctions, such as, e.g., between cases of koineisation and cases of dialect levelling (Kerswill and Williams 1999), are not as straightforward. While a case can be made for describing Cypriot Greek speech in the two periods under study as the outcome of koineisation rather than levelling (Terkourafi, forthcoming), one may nonetheless remain sceptical about the point of forcing subtle theoretical distinctions onto the empirical data. Alternatively, following Thomason’s (1997: 85) “continuum” solution to the problem of borderline cases of creolisation, one may prefer to treat classificatory categories for the outcomes of contact situations as prototypically organised categories allowing some overlap around their edges (cf. Taylor 1995: 187-190).

Whichever direction one follows, distinguishing between the outcomes of different contact situations necessitates joint reference to structural and socio-historical parameters. This is because similar structural processes may well operate in different types of contact situations producing structurally comparable outcomes. In such cases, it is only by appealing to the socio-historical context that different types of contact situations and their outcomes are kept distinct (cf. Thomason 1997:72). The socio-historical parameters shown by previous research to favour koineisation are: i) isolation and small size of the koineising community; ii) weak network ties between community members; iii) the

formation of a common identity; iv) low norm enforcement; and, v) young speakers receiving a rich and variable input (Tuten 2003). Terkourafi (2004, forthcoming) discusses the applicability of these parameters to the social conditions prevailing in Cyprus in medieval and in modern times.

In this article, I focus on the structural processes characterising the speech of koineising communities, and examine the evidence for their diachronic applicability to Cypriot Greek. Four such processes are discussed in the literature (see, e.g., Siegel 1985, 2001: 176-178; Trudgill 1986: 98-126; Tuten 2003: 41-47). *Mixing* concerns the co-existence of variants from different varieties in the emerging koiné during the early stages of contact. Once mixing has occurred, the way is open for the remaining three processes to select those variants out of the original mixture that will survive, or fulfil specific functions, in the new variety. Levelling and simplification cover different aspects of the subsequent variant reduction process. *Levelling* concerns loss or attrition of those variants that are least frequent in the original mixture, which in turn is a function of the demographic composition of the koineising population. Due to this quantitative basis, levelling foregrounds the link between historical process and structural consequence. *Simplification*, on the other hand, operates on a qualitative basis and refers to the reorganisation of grammatical categories toward greater economy and symmetry. Regularisation of grammatical paradigms, loss of inflections and increased transparency in phonological and lexical derivation are typical cases of simplification. From the point of view of their products, levelling and simplification may be defined as reduction of variation between dialects, and reduction of variation within a single dialect, respectively (Hinskens 2001: 201). Finally, *reallocation* concerns not the actual loss of variants, but the redistribution of variant functions, such that in the resulting koiné variants originating in different varieties become specialised to different functions. As a result of reallocation, the new variety combines variants from different varieties in a relationship of complementary distribution according to register, social class, or area.

3. Structural features of the language of the medieval texts

As a first attempt to determine whether the language of medieval Cypriot Greek texts structurally corresponds to a koiné variety, this section analyses examples from administrative and literary texts of that period. Instances of mixing, levelling, and simplification found therein provide initial support for this hypothesis. However, only detailed philological study of the manuscript tradition can confirm it. At the current state of knowledge, a study of this kind is hampered by the lack of diplomatic editions of the majority of surviving texts from this period. These structural indications are thus primarily intended to stimulate research and to provide clear directions for future studies.

The administrative texts from which examples discussed below are taken are the 13th-century translation of the *Assises de la Haute Cour et de la Bourgeoisie*, and the 15th-century *Livre de Remembrances de la Secrète du Royaume de Chypre*.² The first is the code of laws of the Lusignan kingdom, and the second an (incomplete) collection of one year's (1468-1469) royal decisions on financial, legal and administrative matters, which constitutes the only surviving document of its kind from the archives of the medieval Frankish kingdom (Richard 1983: vii-x). Since these administrative texts were written by and addressed to court officials (cf. *ibid.*: x), their language gives us a taste of Greek as it was spoken in the Lusignan court (Constantinides and Browning 1993: 17). In particular, the strong representation of the Provençal element in court circles justifies the high percentage of loanwords from the langue d'oc found in the earlier text (Nicolaou-Konnari 1993: 30).

The literary texts consulted comprise 15th-century originals (the *Chronicle* of Leontios Machairas and its sequel, the *Chronicle* of Georgios Boustronios) as well as 16th-century translations of either foreign or older Greek originals (*Fior de Vertù* and *Love Poems* from Italian originals; *Apostles' Deeds*, from an older Greek original).³ The subject matter of these works, as well as certain linguistic traits have been used to argue for their wider circulation amongst a mixed audience of Franks and Greeks, who in their majority knew only the spoken Cypriot of their time (Nicolaou-Konnari 1993: 51; Kyrris 1993: 191, 205).

Mixing in these texts occurs in three ways. First, one encounters several instances of parallel citation of borrowed and inherited synonyms. In such cases, the French synonym may either be adapted to the Greek inflectional paradigm or remain uninflected, constituting a case of mixing-cum-simplification. The following pairs of synonyms from the *Chronicle* of Machairas exhibit the first possibility: *οι φρέριδες* (from French *frère*) *αδελφοί* "the brothers"; *σιρέντζιν* (from French *surgie*) *εγιατρεύσαν* "they cured"; *Εξήγησις της γλυκείας χώρας Κύπρου, η ποία λέγεται Κρόνικα* (from French *chronique*) *τουτέστιν Χρονικ(όν)* "Recital of the Sweet land of Cyprus which is called a Kronika, that is a Chronicle"; *ο αβοκάτος* (from French *avocat*) *τουτέστιν ο εμπροπέτης ο λεγόμενος φαρπαλιέρος* "the lawyer"; *πολλά τιμημένην και πολλά τεβόνταν* (from French *devoir*) "very honourable". Two pairs of synonyms, the first from *Machairas* and the second from the *Assises* exhibit the second possibility: *βαλέντε* (from French *valoir*) *αντρειωμένος* "brave, worthy"; *αμέριμνος ήγουν κίτες* (from French *quites*) "innocent or acquitted". The accumulation of synonyms in these examples serves comprehension: by citing several variants, the author is apparently hedging his bets, uncertain that his audience in its entirety will be familiar with any single one of them.

A second way in which mixing shows up in these texts concerns the use of French function words interchangeably with the corresponding Greek

ones. Thus, in the *Assises*, one reads *ο πατήρ ου η μήτηρ εκείνου* “his father or his mother” using the French disjunction *ou*, but seven lines later *διά τήν ζωήν του ή διά τον διδάσκαλόν του* “for his life or for his teacher”, using the Greek disjunction *ή*. Mixing also occurs in the phonological rendition of these particles. The French particle *de* is variably rendered as *τε*, *ντέ*, *τετε*, and *δε* when accompanying names of the nobility. For example, in *Machairas*, “de Nores” occurs as *τενορες*, *ντέ νόρες*, and *τενόρες*, while “de Monfort” as *δε μονφόρτε*.

The final way in which mixing is expressed concerns semantic calques. In these, Greek form and French function/meaning are mixed in the literal translation of a French model in Greek. Examples of semantic calques include the interjection *αλλά ναι!* (from French *mais si!*) in the *Assises*, and the expression *γιοφόρια ερίκταν* (from French *lancer/jetter un pont*) and *γλοκεία χώρα Κύπρος* (from French *la douce France*) in *Machairas*.

Levelling in the medieval texts is expressed as the ousting of older Greek forms by contemporary Cypriot ones. Even established church expressions are not immune to this. Thus, Machairas renders the famous church expression *ματαιότης ματαιοτήτων τα πάντα ματαιότης* “vanitas vanitatum omnia vanitas” as *ψέματα των ψεμάτων όλα είναι ψέματα* “lies of lies everything is lies”, and *ουδέν ωφελεί αλλά μάλλον θόρυβος γίνεται* “is no good but rather produces upheaval” as *ουδέν ωφελούν αλλά μάλλον μάλλωμαν γινίσκεται*. Similarly, in the *Apostles’ Deeds* compound forms such as *θεάρεστα* “liked by God”, and *εναρεστησάντων* “that you liked” are analysed to *αρεσπά του Θεού* and *οπού Σου αρέσαν* respectively.

Finally, simplification is noted at the morphological and morpho-syntactic levels. In morphology, the appearance of a new verbal suffix *-ιάζω* from the French 2pl. ending pronounced as [-ez] (Menardos 1969: 165) facilitated the adaptation of French verbs to the Greek inflectional paradigm, promoting regularity in the inflectional paradigm of the verb. For instance, in *στιμιάζει με* from Machairas, French *estimer* is adapted to Greek as *στιμιάζω*. At the morphosyntactic level, the beginning of the retreat of the genitive plural of masculine adjectives and nouns has been attributed by Papadopoulos (1983: 226) to the mistaken rendition of the French genitive as accusative in Greek. According to Papadopoulos, in examples such as the following, from the *Livre des Remembrances*, *s’ils sont parèques des autres* “if they are others’ slaves”, rendered as *ανε παρικι αλούσ* in place of the correct *αν εν’πάροικοι άλλων*, the Cypriot scribe made a random assignment of case to the noun phrase *des autres*, left by the absence of morphological marking of case in French without clues as to its correct case. The retreat of the genitive plural from the inflectional paradigm of masculine adjectives and nouns has led to partial restructuring of the noun paradigm in Cypriot Greek, a process continuing to this day (cf. below).

In sum, the language of the medieval texts shows evidence of mixing, levelling and simplification typical of koinés at the structural level. Since it emerged in a socio-historical context favourable to koineisation (Terkourafi 2004), it meets both structural and socio-historical conditions to be considered a koiné, a conclusion that remains to be validated by in-depth study of diplomatic editions of the surviving manuscripts.

4. The subsequent course of the medieval koiné

Having arisen under western domination, the medieval koiné subsequently followed two routes, both related to the fates of its speakers. First, as a result of the persecution of the Catholic faith by the Ottomans, several Hellenised aristocrats relocated to the countryside, taking their language with them. Thus, the medieval koiné spread to rural areas, coming into contact with local ways of

speaking and giving rise to the spectrum of local patois varieties constituting the Cypriot dialectal continuum. This explains the presence across the entire continuum of features such as the replacement of the genitive plural of male nouns and adjectives by the accusative, an instance of simplification potentially generated under the influence of French, as outlined above.

Linguistically, this possibility is supported in three ways. First, one may note the occurrence of Frankish lexical items exclusively among the peasantry. For instance, Menardos (1969: 167-168) cites use of the western provenance name *Ντζορζής*—which Machairas differentiates from inherited *Γεώργιος* “George”—among peasants, but not among townspeople in the 19th century. Similarly, only four of the “multitude” of the older verbs in -ιάζω, namely *στιμιάζω* “to respect” (from French *estimer*), *κουφερκιάζω* “to comfort” (from French *conforter*), *κουλιάζω* “to sieve” (from French *couler*) and *σπιάζω* “to observe, scrutinise” (from French *épier*), survive into the 19th century, and these “only between farmers” (Menardos 1969: 164). Secondly, not only do the older French loanwords prevail in the countryside, but their referential content bears traces of their noble origin. Thus, “in the villages, for a house to be called τσάμπρα [from French *chambre*; MT] it must have something exceptional” (Menardos 1969: 154). Finally, certain Frankish expressions, such as *à la durée* for continuous horse-riding rendered as *αλατουρέ* “[any activity that is] continuous or repeated frequently”, seem to have survived in the 19th century only in the Mesaoria variety, spoken in the capital Lefkosia, supporting the pivotal role of this variety in processes of koineisation on the island (cf. Terkourafi, forthcoming).

At the same time as it cross-fertilised with local ways of speaking across the island, the medieval koiné continued to be spoken in the cities, and in particular in Lefkosia, where a small Greek elite of merchants and dignitaries connected with the church and the Ottoman administration lived around the Archbishop’s palace south of the river throughout Ottoman rule.

Linguistically, this possibility is supported by reports of a generic city variant (*εν ταις πόλεσιν*) which is often non-existent, or different from the variant used in the countryside (*εν τη υπαίθρῳ*). Farmakides’s (1983 [1912-1925]) reports of several such city variants in his early 20th century *Compilations of words*, fall in two categories. First, the city variant may be closer to the underlying phonological form, and therefore derivationally more transparent than variants used in rural areas, contributing to the overall transparency of urban speech, as this results also from simplification. An example of increased derivational transparency is the variant *η κρνάδα* “cold weather” encountered in the cities in place of the rural *η κρνότη* and the even less transparent *η κρνόκη* encountered in Pafos. The second category of city variants are French and Italian loanwords. In such cases, the city variant either approximates the foreign model more closely than rural variants, as with

πινόλια “pine seeds” from Italian *pinoli*, rendered as *πελόνια* in the north of the Lemesos province, or refers to an object not known in the countryside, as with *καούκκος*, denoting a caramelised almond sweet of French origin. Both types of city variants, those closer to the underlying phonological form and those more faithfully reflecting foreign models, structurally parallel the outcomes of processes such as simplification typically found in *koiné* varieties. Thus, these variants support a continued connection between a variety abstracting away from particular regional features and urban speech.

5. Structural features of contemporary urban speech

Evidence of contemporary urban speech is drawn from a variety of sources. These include recordings of spontaneous exchanges (as described in Terkourafi 1999, 2001), observation (data cited by Malikouti-Drachman 2000, Moschonas 2002, and Tsiplakou 2004), and a comparison of regional and urban variants made on the basis of reports from Newton (1972) and Farmakides (1983 [1912-1925]).

In these data, mixing takes two forms. The first concerns novel form-function combinations mixing Cypriot forms and standard functions. As a result, functions previously fulfilled by momentary switches into the standard code are now fulfilled by Cypriot forms. This increases the symmetry of pragmatic paradigms (the paradigm of diminution, the paradigm of the polite plural), since whereas previously two sets of forms (Cypriot and standard ones) were necessary to fulfil a single set of the functions (e.g. the functions of diminution, including cajoling hedging and demeaning functions), a single set of forms (Cypriot ones) are now sufficient, resulting in simplification.⁴ For example, morpho-phonologically Cypriot diminutives are now used to signal hedging, originally a standard function (Terkourafi 1999). In *λοξούδιν* “sort of diagonal” in example (1), used by a hairdresser to explain a new haircut to a customer, a morphophonologically Cypriot form (adjective *λοξός* + Cypriot diminutive suffix *-ούδιν*) combines with hedging, a predominantly standard function that would have normally required a switch into the standard code (e.g. *λοξούλι*).

- (1) *αυτόν έρχεται όλον κάτω... λοξούδιν δαμέ τζιαι δαμέ πέφτει*
 this come-3sg. all down... diagonal-dim. here and here fall-3sg.
 ‘this comes straight down... sort of diagonal here and here it falls’

By using *λοξούδιν*, the speaker expands the range of functions of the Cypriot form, such that a switch into the standard is no longer required to fulfil the wider set of functions.

Similarly morpho-phonologically Cypriot 2pl. verb-forms can now be used non literally, whereas previously they were used only literally (i.e. to

address several addressees), and non literal use of 2pl verb forms was confined to formal settings where it was realised as momentary ‘borrowing’ of the requisite 2pl. forms from the standard code (Terkourafi 2005). The following are examples of Cypriot forms fulfilling this traditionally standard function, i.e. addressed to a single addressee in formal or work settings: *αλλάσσετε* “you-change-V” (retaining long consonants), *εβάλετε* “you put-V” (retaining syllabic augment), *θα φκάλετε* “you will bring out-V” (exhibiting manner dissimilation of obstruent+obstruent into fricative+stop).

The second form of mixing encountered in contemporary urban speech concerns Cypriot youth neologisms (Moschonas 2002; Tsiplakou 2004). These are either calqued on standard models, as in *έδωκέν μου την* “I went berserk”, *εβάψαμέν την* “we’re in trouble”, which constitute verbatim renditions of standard idioms by Cypriot forms, or are drawn from local patois varieties, as in (2) (Tsiplakou’s 2004, example 30) where a 15-year old girl mixes the patois variant *εγιώνι* with urban speech, much to the dismay of the 49-year old hairdresser reporting the incident:

(2) *Ναι, εν χωρκάτικα που λαλούν, κόρη μου. Έρκεται στο κομμωτήριο ενές μια κορούα, δεκαπέντε χρονώ, δεν ηξέρω ακριβώς, και λαλεί μου «εγιώνι». Ακούεις, Σταυρούλλα μου; «Εγιώνι». «Κόρη μου», λαλώ της, «εσύ είσαι Λευκωσιάτισσα, κόρη μου. Εσύ είσαι χωραΐτισσα. Ίντα τρόπος εν τούτος, να λαλείς ‘εγιώνι’»; «Ούφου!» λαλεί μου, τζιαι φέφκει.*

‘Yes love, it’s village speech they use. Yesterday, a girl came into the salon, fifteen-years old, I don’t know exactly, and she said to me “ejoni” ((=me in ‘village’ Cypriot)). You hear, Stavroula? ‘ejoni’. “Love” I told her, “you’re from Lefkosia love. You are a city girl. What’s this saying ‘ejoni’?” “Ouf!” she said and left.’

In addition to mixing, levelling occurs in phonology and in the lexicon. In both cases, it is forms of the Mesaoria variety, the variety spoken the plain area around, and including, the capital Lefkosia, that are levelled out in favour of numerically dominant forms encountered on the rest of the island. In phonology, the geminate dental stop [tt] of the Mesaoria variety has been replaced by the geminate dental fricative [θθ] of western and southern areas in items such as [pettera] “mother-in-law”, pronounced [peθθera] in urban speech. In this example, levelling combines with simplification, since the Mesaoria form [pettera] is not only a minority form, with [peθθera] used on the rest of island, and [peθera] in standard Greek, but also less transparent with respect to the other two forms, as it involves an extra derivational step from underlying /peθθera/ (Newton 1972: 98-99). Levelling also affects particular lexical items of the Mesaoria variety, which have retreated in favour of lexical items used on

the rest of the island. Thus, a verb *συρκώ* “to be averse to” reported by Farmakides (1983[1912-1925]: 225) to be used in Mesaoria in the early 20th century, has been replaced in urban speech by the much more frequent *ανακασιώ*, used on the rest of island.

Finally, in contemporary urban speech, simplification produces both an increase in derivational transparency, and an increase in symmetry. Phonological innovations such as *omorfca* “beauty” (from inherited *omorca*), *xartca* “papers” (from inherited *xarca*), and *m:atca* “eyes” (from inherited *m:athca*), formed under the influence of the corresponding standard forms (*omorfja*, *xartja*, and *matja* respectively), have the effect of increasing the derivational transparency of the Cypriot forms, whose underlying forms are those of standard Greek (Malikouti-Drachman 2000). The same applies to morphophonological innovations in proper name diminutivisation such as *ʃefkos* “Parascevas-dim”, in place of the inherited *ʃefkas* (Malikouti-Drachman 2000).

An increase in symmetry is achieved through changes in the stored stress properties of clitics and the dropping of the verbal suffix *-te* (Malikouti-Drachman 2000), which have the effect that the trisyllabic rule, from which these items were previously exempt, now applies across the board. Thus, inherited *a'apisen tin* is rendered as *a'api'sen tin* “he loved her”, *tafto'ciniton tu* as *taftocini'ton tu* “his car”, and the suffix *-te* that caused dynamic stress to fall on the fourth syllable from the end of the tone unit is dropped from the end of inflected forms such as *poja'tisamente*, leaving *poja'tisamen* “we painted”, with regular stress on the third syllable in its place. Finally, an increase in symmetry is achieved also at the morphological level, where the obsolescence of the genitive plural and its replacement by the accusative, originally affecting only masculine adjectives and nouns (see 3 above), is now being generalised across the noun paradigm irrespective of gender. In the recorded example, *ο αριθμός τες σωλήνες* “the number of pipes”, the feminine noun *η σωλήνα* occurs in the accusative plural instead of the genitive.

In sum, contemporary spoken urban Cypriot Greek speech shows evidence of mixing, levelling and simplification, that is, it meets the defining criteria of koinés at the structural level. The koineising varieties are local patois varieties (Contossopoulos 1969 reports 18 such varieties), and standard Greek as received by Cypriot Greeks. Inasmuch as the medieval koiné has both interacted with local patois varieties and continued to be spoken in the cities (see section 4 above), it constitutes a third factor indirectly involved in the koineisation process in two distinct ways. In fact, the contribution of standard Greek itself to this process is largely indirect too, hence the qualification “standard Greek as received by Cypriot Greeks”. This qualification is important, if one recalls that koineisation presupposes “increased interaction” between speakers of the varieties in contact (Siegel 2001: 175). Since the proportion of standard speakers living on the island has never been demographically

significant,⁵ standard Greek has contributed to the pool of linguistic variants largely indirectly, that is through the repatriation of Cypriots educated in Greece, and through access to the Greek media. This is an important reason why the resulting supra-local variety is best classified as the outcome of koineisation, and not the result of dialect retreat (as suggested by Malikouti-Drahmann 1996, 2000).⁶

6. Concluding remarks

Previous research on koiné varieties has shown that mixing, levelling, simplification and reallocation constitute structural hallmarks of koineisation. Examples from two different periods of Cypriot Greek, the medieval period of western domination (1291-1570/71) and modern times, were shown to exhibit these features at the structural level. Considered jointly with socio-historical information (Terkourafi, forthcoming), these examples support the view that the speech of urban strata during these two periods abstracts away from particular regional features, converging toward a supra-local koiné variety. Moreover, urban speech during these two periods largely reflects the speech of middle and higher social strata. The Frankish aristocracy was very much urban centred (de Collenberg 1982: 73-4; Arbel 1986: 203; Papadopoulos 1995: 792), retaining a particularly strong association with the capital Lefkosia, seat of the government and of the Latin archbishop. Similarly, in modern times, the decline of agriculture in the decades since WWII and corresponding rise of a services-oriented economy (Christodoulou 1994) have made modern Cyprus a distinctly urban-centred society, centralised—demographically, administratively, and culturally—around the capital (2001 census of the Cyprus Statistical Service; Attalides 1980). Thus, the speech of the middle and higher social strata in two distinct historical periods in Cyprus is characterised by an absence of markedly regional features, confirming the prediction that, the higher one goes up the social hierarchy, regional features subside, and the speech of the higher social strata is homogeneous across geographical areas.

7. Notes

¹ The term (learner) interlanguage covers systems intermediate between the source and target languages formed during the process of second language acquisition (cf. Bussmann 1996: 235-236).

² For texts see: Sathas (1877), Richard (1983).

³ For texts see: Pieris and Konnari (2003), Kehagioglou (1997), Kakoulidi-Panou and Pidonia (1994), Siapkarakas-Pitsillidés (1975 [1952]), and Nikolopoulos (2000), respectively.

⁴ Admittedly, dissociating forms from functions, such that a novel combination conjoining elements from two different varieties is considered a case of mixing, constitutes a rather liberal interpretation of mixing as standardly understood in the koineisation literature. Nevertheless, inasmuch as this process results in increased symmetry, i.e. in simplification, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that what set this process into motion was contact with another variety. This justifies classifying these cases as mixing, since in koineisation mixing is a precondition of simplification.

⁵ Immigration to Cyprus from parts of Greece peaked at different times in the 19th and 20th centuries but in those cases immigrants came from the Ionian islands and Asia Minor respectively, areas of Greece with a strong dialectal background of their own.

⁶ For further arguments why contemporary urban Cypriot Greek speech is best classified as the outcome, of koineisation rather than dialect retreat, dialect levelling, or standardization, see Terkourafi, forthcoming.

8. References

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9. Περίληψη

Η δημιουργία κοινών ποικιλιών έχει συνδεθεί με τις διαδικασίες της ανάμιξης, της εξίσωσης και της απλοποίησης στο δομικό επίπεδο. Ως δείγματα της λειτουργίας αυτών των διαδικασιών στην Κυπριακή συζητούνται παραδείγματα γλωσσικής χρήσης από δύο διαφορετικές ιστορικές περιόδους στην Κύπρο, την περίοδο της Φραγκοκρατίας/Βενετοκρατίας (1291-1570/71) και τη σημερινή. Σε συνδυασμό με το κοινωνικο-ιστορικό πλαίσιο της κάθε περιόδου, υποστηρίζεται ότι ο λόγος των μέσων και ανώτερων κοινωνικών στρωμάτων κατά τις δύο αυτές περιόδους λαμβάνει υπερ-τοπικό χαρακτήρα, γεγονός που συνάδει με τις προβλέψεις του μοντέλου της πυραμίδας (Trudgill 1983) για την περιγραφή του συσχετισμού κοινωνικής και γεωγραφικής ποικιλότητας.