Greek dialect use in the mass media in Cyprus

PAVLOS PAVLOU

Abstract

Cameron (1995) underlines the role of the media as one of the three major language policy agents in a given speech community. Their decisive function in the definition of the roles of various competing codes in a speech community becomes particularly important in cases of multilingual or multi-dialectal societies such as Cyprus, where the relationship among the three key players, that is, the Cypriot dialect, Standard Modern Greek and English has not been clearly defined yet. It has been argued that the Cypriot dialect is threatened by both SMG and English and, thus, its structure and status are in the process of transformation, facing the menace of marginalization or relegation to very peripheral and confined domains. This article investigates the presence of the Cypriot dialect in the media in an attempt to assess the role of the media in the ongoing change of the (structure and) status of the dialect.

1. Introduction

A number of researchers have recognized that a linguistic change has been taking place in Cyprus in the last thirty years. The linguistic codes affected by this change are the two varieties of Greek spoken on the island, that is, the Cypriot dialect (CD) and Standard Modern Greek (SMG) and, to a lesser degree, English. Newton (1972); Karyolemou (2000); and Karyolemou and Pavlou (2001) have already described this change as contributing to the formation of a Standard Cypriot Dialect. Its effect is primarily on both the structure and status of CD and to a lesser degree on the structure and the status of the SMG as it is spoken on Cyprus (Arvaniti 2002). The third linguistic code, English, is affected only in terms of its status and not its structure (Davy and Pavlou 2001). In other words, we cannot talk of the emergence of a Cypriot English, which
would be similar to the emergence of Singaporean and Indian English. In this article, I will attempt to investigate the role of the media in this language change process by describing specific cases in which CD occurs in media discourse. More precisely, I will argue that even though the media in Cyprus are not instrumental in the structural linguistic changes currently taking place within the Cypriot speech community, they play a crucial role in the preservation of the current status of the Greek Cypriot dialect and the language attitudes towards it. The subject of attitudes towards CD has recently been the focus of studies by Papapavlou (1998), Pavlou (1999), Panayotou (1999) and Karyolemou (1994, 2001) etc. As with most other studies of CD, they investigate directly or indirectly the status of and the attitudes towards the three linguistic codes used by the members of the Cypriot speech community and point out that the Cypriots have ambivalent feelings towards CD (Panayotou 1996) and that they consider it less prestigious than SMG (Papapavlou 1998; Pavlou 1997). A further point that is worth mentioning is that a reference to CD is a reference to a dialectal continuum (Karyolemou 1999), which encompasses all subdialects and stylistic levels of CD and it is in this perspective that the use of CD in the media will be investigated in this article.

2. Media and dialect

We can define mass media as a means of communication whereby the messages are addressed to large and anonymous audiences (Jucker 1995). According to this definition, what is considered as a mass medium ranges from the most obvious cases like newspaper or the radio to the equally common, yet not immediately identified as mass media street signs, leaflets, paintings, music etc. In this article, the term will be used in its narrow sense to include the major representative of the printed press, that is, newspapers and two major representatives of the electronic press, radio and TV.

Cameron (1995) states that standards are nowadays mainly enforced through the educational system, the mass media and the central bureaucracy and not so much by the army and the navy, as used to be the case in the past. The choice of the languages or language varieties employed by the media will be a reflection of the language attitudes shared by members of the speech community towards these linguistic varieties. Even more crucially, such choices constitute conscious or unconscious efforts to further shape the existing language attitudes. Efforts of this kind reported in the literature include the BBC's campaign to promote the prestigious Received Pronunciation (RP) (Leitner 1983). This language policy started
as a conservative one favoring the RP and focused primarily on word phonology. Today, however, again through the support of the media the status of RP has diminished and regional varieties have gained more acceptance. A further interesting case is reported by Kuo (1984), who discusses the efforts of the Singaporean government to promote Mandarin Chinese at the expense of the local Chinese dialect Hokkien. Television has been one of the basic means employed by the government in two ways: firstly, through the careful choice of programs and the dubbing of imported programs into Mandarin and, secondly, through the explicit presentation and promotion of the governmental language policy on TV. Finally, Bell (1991), in his study of the language of radio news in New Zealand, has revealed that the choice of styles to be employed for news broadcasting is based on the perceived status of the audience. Since broadcasters are the major language presenters, they are able to promote certain styles accordingly.

We can distinguish between a deliberate and a nondeliberate use of a dialect in the media. The deliberate use of a dialect serves specific purposes and appears in both the printed and electronic media. Nondeliberate use of the dialect occurs only in the electronic media in the form of code-switching in programs which are originally designed to be in SMG. This difference is easily explained by the fact that written language can afford more production time than spoken language, whereas spoken language, which predominates in the electronic media, has to be produced on the spot. (The scripted spoken language used in the news is an exception). In the following section we will see how this distinction applies to the case of CD and SMG in the Cypriot media.

3. The use of the dialect in the press

Even a cursory glance at the Greek daily press in Cyprus would immediately lead to the conclusion that the Greek Cypriot dialect is rarely used. In the few cases that it is used it is mostly confined to individual words, phrases and, less frequently, to isolated sentences. Any other linguistic unit beyond the sentence level in CD is rarely encountered in the press. In an attempt to determine the reasons for the virtual absence of CD in the press, a small-scale survey was conducted with the aim of eliciting the views of the journalists as producers of the texts appearing in the press and, therefore, crucial agents in deciding on the language to be used. Nine journalists representing four major daily newspapers in Cyprus took part in the survey. The questions of the survey included the following: whether journalists make use of CD in their writings, the reasons why they do so and how they think the audience reacts to the use of CD.
In general, the survey provided useful information about the issue. The informants admitted that they rarely use CD and sometimes consciously avoid using it. Furthermore, they recognize that CD is rarely employed in the print press. Some of them categorically declared that they do not use it at all and justified this choice by saying that they are not asked to do so. They added that it would be difficult for the readers, who, even though they use CD in their oral interactions, would have difficulties to read it, since it is rarely used in writing and there is no standardized spelling for it.

The majority of the journalists seem to be employing CD for similar reasons. First of all, CD is often used in an effort to convey verbatim someone’s utterances and, at the same time, “give a lighter tone” to the report. If a politician has used the dialect, then it would be artificial to report his/her utterances in SMG, especially in cases when he/she is making a conscious code-switch in CD in order to enhance the communicative power of his/her message. Along the same lines, it was reported that it would be very artificial or even “ridiculous” to use SMG when quoting an elderly villager. Using the dialect in such cases helps the journalist transmit the original tone of the utterances and thus remain loyal to the speaker's intent and meaning.

Moreover, the journalists reported that they use CD in order to stress an idea or make a point, since an utterance in CD clearly stands out in a text otherwise written in SMG. Very often, CD is reportedly used to criticize or comment sarcastically on a person or a situation or to give a humorous tone in the text. Journalists may also sometimes use famous quotations from the literature written in CD, using well-known verses from famous Cypriot poets such as Vasilis Michailides, Dimitris Lipertis, Kostas Montis, etc.

The journalists are aware that they have to shape the text according to the audience they address. Thus they report that they feel they have to produce a text that will be understood by readers of all social strata. In some cases, however, a specific section of the readers is addressed and then a selection among the codes available is necessary. Under these circumstances CD will be selected but never as the code for the entire text but only for selected parts of it.

Finally, journalists believe that the presence of CD in the press triggers a variety of reactions. On the positive side, they believe that the readers approve of this limited use of CD in the press because they feel close to the dialect. Moreover, they understand the reasons for its use and, therefore, appreciate it because of its effectiveness in conveying the message. Such a use often elicits a smile or a smirk. They often enjoy it simply because of its rarity. A rather neutral reaction on the part of the readers, as
reported by one of the journalists, would be a feeling of indifference, since very few readers are "bothered" by the dialect; however, "one should not overdo it."

Quite a few journalists believe that often the readers' initial reaction is a feeling of alienation and view such practice with condescension. Readers are somewhat surprised at the use of the dialect and wonder about the writer's choice. They may also react to such a choice negatively, because it may create confusion since the readers are not used to reading CD. Finally, journalists believe that the readers accurately distinguish between uses such as for stressing a point or for humorous purposes.

In conclusion, we can say that CD is rarely used in the press. In the few cases in which CD is employed it is used quite uniformly by the journalists to serve specific purposes such as to convey verbatim someone's utterances, to stress something, create humor etc. As far as the audience reaction to the use of CD in the press the journalists believe that the readers approve of the limited use of CD in the press. The reasons for this acceptance are that they feel close to it and its use is skillful in the sense that it is applied at appropriate places.

4. The use of the dialect on the radio

The Greek Cypriot dialect is heard over the radio in various contexts. Firstly, it is used in programs intended to be in CD such the *ktpriotiko sketch* (Cypriot sketch, see below). A second use is in programs in which the presenter or one of the characters makes an effort to use CD for a humorous effect. Thirdly, it is found in news reports where taped conversations or statements of politicians, eyewitnesses etc. are broadcast. In these cases, even though the program is planned to be entirely in SMG, CD often surfaces in the form of code-switching.

To take the second case, CD is often heard unexpectedly in programs for which the chosen code is SMG and the speaker uses this, since it is the code reserved for the media. In such programming, listeners, who may call to express an opinion, offer their expertise or volunteer a comment, also attempt to use SMG. They do so because they realize that their utterances are not anymore within the sphere of private conversation but belong to the public sphere and, as such, demand the use of the SMG, which is not the native dialect of most speakers. Of course, there are those who do not wish, for various reasons, to change code.

However, only rarely do speakers manage to reach the SMG target. What they achieve is to accommodate their speech by producing codes that approximate to various degrees the SMG. The degree of accommo-
dation to the code required by the domain of public media depends on the speaker. Some use a variety that is very close to the acrolect (i.e., approximating most to the standard), while others use the varieties that are close to the basilect (i.e., approximating most to the dialect). The fact is that the majority makes an effort not to use the basilect, which often seems to be the native code of the callers. As will be shown in the following, the success of such attempts varies from case to case. Some speakers are able to sustain a quite long turn in the target code, while others are not, taking refuge to code-switching. Code-switching here is to be understood as the constant move from and to various levels of the dialectal continuum.¹ Shifts from one level of the continuum to the other usually occur from a more acrolectal to a less acrolectal level. Radio programs are full of such examples of code-switching which may be considered as unintentional “slips” into CD. As soon as speakers become conscious that they are using CD, they revert immediately into SMG and often “self-correct.” This is the reason why turns in CD are very short, usually of a word or less than a word in length. These are the cases of non-deliberate use of the dialect, occurring because the speaker is unable to sustain discourse in the more acrolectal levels of the continuum.

The following examples from radio phone-ins were all recorded in a day (in October 2001) and occurred in a twenty-minute discussion between a car inspector and members of the audience. The topic of discussion was the role of car tires in car safety. The examples given below represent CD in the sense that they exhibit the most salient features of CD (see Karyolemou and Pavlou 2001). As noted above, Greek Cypriots do not speak SMG even if they think they do so, since they cannot easily adopt the SMG phonology and intonation and are thus easily recogniz-able by other speakers of Greek as Cypriots. In light of this, code-switching in this context should be understood as the shift from a more basilectal (or less standard-like) code to a more acrolectal (or more standard-like) code of CD continuum.

The guest-speaker in example (1) gives his exposé on the issue and uses quite skillfully and at length SMG but at one point reverts momentarily to CD. This happens when he is interrupted by the journalist, who asks him an unexpected question, so he is obliged to make a statement that he has not prepared and that does not constitute an integral part of his exposé.²

(1) θα ipárksi anacínosis ótan mazeftún ulla t’aftociniita
will be announcement when collected all the cars
‘There will be an announcement when collected all the cars are collected.’

In example (2), the code-switching happens when the speaker again makes a comment on his previous utterance.
(2) se pollés periptósis pu θa embléceto se
in many cases which will got involved in
öistiçima
accident
‘In many cases in which he would be involved in an accident’

na to apofíji en pollá simandikó aftó
that it avoid is very important this
‘to avoid it . . . This is very important.’

The second comment in example (2), probably not a part of his planned
exposé, is conceived and executed on the spot, thus leaving no room for
a careful choice of code. Thus, a less standard code of the continuum,
that is, the default code is used. In example (3) we witness a case of self-
correction after a lapse into a more acrolectal level of the continuum.

(3) aftó en do éna pu éfi éci şcési me tin
this is the one that has has relation with the
piesi
pressure
‘This is the one that has to do with the pressure.’

Example (4) is a failed attempt to use SMG. Here the speaker attempts
to use a collocation from katharevousa (a stylistically higher level of
SMG) but has to search and try different but similarly sounding words
until he finds the appropriate one.

(4) prosopiká éxo iôic iôic iôian embiria
personally have speci special personal experience
‘personally I have first-hand experience’

Example (5) constitutes an especially interesting case of code-switching,
because the speaker announces a switch into CD while he is actually
using SMG for a supposed Cypriot saying.

(5) ðen da allázumen ta elastiká stin óran dus
not the change the tyres on time their
‘We don’t change tyres on time.’

to anaválłume léme aftó pu sta cipriaká éci akóma
it postpone say this that in Cypriot has still
líyo psomi
some bread
‘We postpone it we say what we say in Cypriot Greek “It still has
some bread” [there is still life in it].’
Similar instances are found in longer excerpts. In example (6), there is involvement of three different codes including two levels of CD and English. With regard to this, code-switching between the two levels of CD is very frequent and suggests that the speaker is not concerned with achieving a very acrolectal level of CD but uses a mixture of codes. There are instances where acrolectal forms of a feature are used where a more basilectal feature would have been expected, given the overall frequent use of quite salient features of CD. The speaker also considers the use of a specific English term (MOT) quite natural. When the journalist prompts him for an explanation of the term he has used we notice that the most familiar/accessible terms he can think of are again in English.

(6) Speaker:
pije se énan promiðefti elastikón aftós o ánthropos
went to a supplier tyre this the man
ífen éna pʰandzéro
had a panjero
‘He went to a tyre supplier . . . This man had a panjero.’

to lipón tu évalen da lástixa tu léi túta éni
the well him put the tyres him says these are
endáksi o ánthropos
ok the man
‘Well (the supplier) put him the tyres and tells him these are OK.
The man’

se trís mines epanapatrísten sto lonðino píje na
in three month repatriated to London went to
vyáli em ou tʰi
issue M-O-T
‘went back to London . . . He went to get an MOT’

sto télos plírose akóma oktakófes líres óióti
at end paid another 800 pounds because
aftós o círios
this the mister
‘at the end he paid an additional 800 pounds because that guy’

andí na tu váli ta sostá elastiká to lipón
instead that him put the right tyres the well
évalen tu kát
put him some
‘instead of putting him the right tyres, well, he put him some’
evalen tu ta lanthazména liyo pjo plaðca
put him them wrong some more wide
kati téhco lipón
something this well
'he put him the wrong tyres, a bit wider, or something like that, well'

o eksetatis tu em ou thi sto lonino tu leí cirie
the examiner of MOT in London him says sir
piene várta
go put them
'The MOT examiner in London tells him "Mister, go and put the"
sostá elastiká tfe éla na su óko em ou thi tfo
right tyres and come that you give MOT and
ánthropos
the man
'right tyres and come back so that I can give you the MOT" and
the man'
eðanistice akóma oktakófes lires ja éna handzéro
borrowed another 800 pounds for a panjero
'borrowed an additional 800 pounds for a panjero.'

Journalist:
aftó to em ou thi ti Íne cirie váso
This the MOT what is Mr Vasos
'What is this MOT Mr. Vasos?'

Speaker:
Íne to pos to les to a::: aftó pu tóra válli
Is the how it says the ehhh this that now put
'It is ... how do you call it uh uh ... the thing they are now putting'
prospaðún i: o éleñxos ton aftociniton to pos to
try the the control of cars the how it lalis
call
'the car control authorities are trying (to put) how do you call it'
to sertifikeit to pistopitikó
the certificate the certificate
'the certificate ... the certificate'

Journalist: málista
OK
'OK'
It is interesting to note above that the speaker considers that the use of an English term would make the audience understand better what he has been talking about. This use would seem to indicate that the status of English is high in Cyprus especially in certain domains such as technology (see Papapavlou 1991).

Example (7) is a similar case in point, which involves code-switching between all three codes:

(7) Speaker 1:
afa ta rolója prépi na riθmízontе kalibréiʃn these the regulators must be tuned calibration
‘These regulators must be tuned (they need) calibration’
ópos léjete sta angliká ine aftoríomisi ipárçI mja as called in English is auto-tuning there is a mixaní machine
‘as it is called in English — it is auto-tuned ... there is a machine’

Speaker 2:
ópos ípec ce o círios prépi na jini máθima as said and the sir must that be done lesson ce stus and to the
‘As the other sir said a lesson must be learned by the’
lastixaríões singekriména epíjene o ipálililos mu tyre-suppliers specifically was-going the assistant my sto aeródromio to the airport
‘tyre-suppliers. Specifically, my assistant was on his way to the airport’
tis páfu ja na pári aftocíntito to opió ine éna of Pafos so that takes car the which is a leofóriáci tetracíntito mini-bus four-wheel
‘of Pafos in order to get a car which is four-wheel drive minibus’
ópos lême ine fultáim for wil draiv as say is full-time four-wheel drive
ðíliai ine sinexoxmeno tetracíntisis i.e. is full-time four wheel drive
‘as we say it is a full-time four-wheel drive i.e is a full-time four-wheel drive’
xoris vouïticicës ce ótan içe krepári éna lástixo
without auxiliaries and when had exploded a tyre
of driver
‘without auxiliary(gears) and a tyre at the driver’s side had
exploded’
ótan édooken mesa se mja tripa
when fell inside in a hole
‘when it fell in a hole.’

CIO:
aftá pu içe ðilaði aftá pu içe ðzamé pa’sto
these that had i.e. these the had over there on
ráfi as þúme
the shelf let’s say
‘That is, those that he had i.e. those the had over there on the shelf,
let’s say’

Speaker 2:
bravo bravo the eplérosa ciljes pendakósjes lires
bravo bravo and paid 1500 pounds
ðjóti ðento próseksa
because not the noticed
‘Right! Right! And I paid 1500 pounds because I didn’t notice it’
the eýó ótan íroën o ipálilos epieñ to aftpòcinito
and I when came the assistant went the car
enicjástike
was rented
myself when the assistant came (back). The car was rented.
ce se mja vðomáða éfaen ton áksona ðilaði to
and in one week ate the axle i.e. the
ti ðélo na po
what want to say
‘and within a week the rigid axle was destroyed what I want to say’

tji lastixúriðes I íoìi polúun óti exun
and the tyre-suppliers the same sell whatever have
allá
but
‘the tyre-suppliers themselves sell whatever they have’
mbongi tkla na min do ksérun
perhaps and that not it know
‘and perhaps they may even know it.’

In example (7), it is worth noting that the two switches into English are preaced by an explanatory metalinguistic comment (òpos léjete sta aglikà ‘as we say in English’, ópos léme ‘as we say’), indicating thus the distance of the items to follow from the basilectal code.

5. The use of dialect in advertising

Cypriot dialect also appears in Cypriot advertising in the various mass media. Advertisements in CD or containing CD elements mostly occur on the radio rather than the television, whereas it must be noted that commercials in CD can hardly be found in the newspapers. Thus, our discussion of dialect use in advertising will be confined to radio occurrences.

Pavlou (1997) and (2001) studied multilingual and multidialectal advertising discourse on the radio. As stated, this discourse makes use of various linguistic codes, be they different languages or dialects of one language. The codes employed in radio commercials are primarily SMG, CD and a number of foreign languages, mainly English. These studies showed that only a very small proportion of ads employ CD. It is significant that almost all these ads start and/or finish with SMG, thus again recognizing that SMG has the status of the “voice of authority”. With regard to this phenomenon, Cook (1992) points out that “there is in advertisements a reluctance to leave matters open, which results, even in the most heteroglossic advertisements in the assertion of a single monologic and authoritative voice at the end” (Cook 1992: 190). Example (8) is a case in point.

(8) Voice A:

\[ \theta ca \ \text{manna pu ákusa ípes to mistikó su} \]
\[ \text{Aunt} \ \text{what is that heard said the secret your} \]
\[ \text{‘Aunt, what have I heard? Have you revealed your secret?’} \]

\[ \text{tkle úlli epellánasin na fán pu to óikó su} \]
\[ \text{and all got mad to eat from the own your} \]
\[ \text{‘And everybody is eager to have a bite of yours.’} \]

Voice B:

\[ \text{ipa to tf isíxase tkle men i tkéfali mu} \]
\[ \text{said it and was at ease and mine the head my} \]
\[ \text{‘I revealed it and finally got some peace and quiet’} \]
játi en dus eprolávvena úllus me stin avlí
because not them handle all in the yard
mmu
my
‘Because I couldn’t handle them all in my yard’

o krisis évlen ombrós me ýála tu xorkú mas
the Kristis set ahead with milk of village our
‘Kristis has started with milk from our village’

tfe kámni pisurkótiiko xallúmin du papʰú mas
and makes pissourkotiko cheese of grandfather our
‘and produces pissourkotiko [product of Pissouri] our grandfather’s cheese.’

Narrator:
paraðosjakó xorjátiko xálúmi krísti
traditional village cheese Kristi
‘Traditional village cheese by Krisits’

ápó ekató tis ekató eyopróvio ýála
From hundred per cent goat and sheep milk
‘Made from 100% goat and sheep milk’

sta psíjía 0a to vrite me to ónoma tu
In the fridges will it find with the name its
‘In the fridges you will find it with its name’

pisurkótiiko pisurkótiiko afthendiká paraðosjakó
pissourkotiko pissourkotiko authentically traditional
‘Pissourkotiko, Pissourkotiko authentically traditional.’

Example (8) is a characteristic illustration of the framing of CD by the
voice of authority in SMG. Pavlou (1997) and (2001) has also identified
three other discourse characteristics referring to the products that are
more likely to be advertised in CD, the actors participating in the ads and
broadcast time. The products for which CD is used in advertising are
Cypriot traditional food items such as local cheese (halloumi), yogurt,
sausages etc, locally produced light industry products, which are usually
in competition with imported ones, and products related to longstanding
values of the traditional Cypriot society such as dowry items, products
and services relating to home and home construction.3 As explained
above, the majority of the locally produced series in CD are humorous
and thus the actors easily become more popular than actors in more seri-
ous programming. It is also very common to find that these popular ac-
tors appear in a number of similar ads. The use of CD for such commer-
cials may thus be solely due to the selection of a popular actor rather than because of the product advertised, suggesting that all products could be advertised in CD.

Finally, Pavlou (1997) found that the majority of CD commercials of the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CyBC) were broadcast on Sundays, before and after the dialectal “Cypriot sketch”, a radio or TV play which derives its themes from daily Cypriot reality and tradition. The characters of these plays are mostly people who live in the countryside and use basilectal or mesolectal versions of CD. Basilectal varieties are stereotypically spoken by rather elderly people who live in rural areas and have limited education. However, this characterization may no longer be as valid as it was ten years ago, since in the intervening years the number of local and pan-Cyprian radio stations has risen from one state radio (CyBC) to nine (Cyprus Radio and Television Authority).

A number of theories point out that there is a reciprocal relationship between advertising and society. As aptly summarized by Corston-Oliver (1998) “representations of society in advertising have their basis in the social order, but at the same time, the social order is constantly being re-created by reference to model discourses such as advertising” (Corston-Oliver 1998: 156). In light of this statement, the scarcity of CD in TV commercials reflects the low status of the dialect and the dominant wish to eliminate CD from the media or confine it to clearly defined functions such as for the creation of a humorous effect.

6. Use of the dialect in television

As with the radio, CD use in TV is observed in programs intended to be in CD such as various sitcoms. Table 1 suggests that the dialect enjoys increased acceptance on TV but mostly in the form of comedy series programming. This indicates that CD is considered appropriate for mostly humorous purposes and not for more serious programs. The dialect also

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Humorous</th>
<th>Serious</th>
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<tr>
<td>CBC 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBC 2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>ANT-1</td>
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<td>SIGMA</td>
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<td>MEGA</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
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appears in programs in which the presenter or one of the characters makes an effort to use CD for a humorous effect (such as in the “Kostas Kosta stis 8.00” show) or in programs where the viewers may participate either by making a comment, offering some information etc (such as “Pesta sto Mama” or many sports related programs). In such cases, members of the audience may use any level of CD, including a variety of acrolectal ones.

Finally, CD may appear in reports, mostly in the news section, where videotaped impromptu interviews of politicians or eyewitnesses take place. In these cases, even through the program is planned to be entirely in SMG, CD surfaces in the form of code-switching. Here we often see that the speakers are making a conscious effort to use the SMG. However, in many cases they unwittingly fall back on the dialect. The mere fact that the speakers try to accommodate their speech to the demands of the domain of “public speaking” is a sign of recognition on the part of the dialectal speaker of the low status of CD and at the same time a reinforcement of this status.

As mentioned earlier, advertisements in CD are very sporadic on TV. These few commercials exhibit only one of the four characteristics demonstrated in the case of their radio counterparts, that is the actors who participate in them have become popular because they perform in locally produced sitcoms in CD. (An example is the famous characters of “Katina” and “Popi and Angela,” who after their successful appearance in TV programs became sought after as advertising characters).

Another characteristic unique to TV commercials in CD is that CD surfaces through consumers who appear in the ad and are asked to offer their opinion on the product advertised such as new supermarkets or a specific soft drink. However, it must be noted that the levels of CD represented in the TV range from mesolectal to acrolectal and do not include basilectal features. The reason is probably that ad producers avoid selecting basilectal speakers for their commercials, since they want their product to be associated with middle- or upper-classes (the ones with buying power) rather than with lower social classes. According to several attitude studies (e.g., Papapavlou 1998; Pavlou 1999) members of the Cypriot speech community consider speakers of basilectal versions of CD to be less educated than those using acrolectal varieties approximating SMG.

7. Conclusion

This article has attempted to demonstrate the use of CD in the media (press, radio and TV) in order to assess their role as language policy
agents. It has been shown that the use of CD is very limited and serves very specific purposes such as stressing an idea and creating a humorous effect. When someone's utterances are to be rendered verbatim, its use cannot be avoided. On the radio there is abundant use of CD in the form of deliberate and nondeliberate code-switching, as well as in a number of ads where the use of the dialect is thought to appeal to the target audience. Finally, on television the dialect is similarly used as in predominately humorous rather than serious programs.

The result of such uses is that CD is advanced as a code for rendering a light and comical tone and simultaneously is excluded from more serious uses. In this way the relatively lower status of CD in comparison to the SMG is perpetuated and may lead to further loss of social status. Perpetuation of the perceived low status of the Cypriot dialect may lead Greek Cypriots to adapt more standard-like levels of the dialect (having SMG as a target) and to abandon salient features of CD or even CD entirely. In this sense it can be argued that the media may be inducing changes in the linguistic habits of the members of the Greek Cypriot speech community, which can be seen, in some respect, as an imposition of the choices of the ruling elite, since this is effectively controlling the media. This trend carries the danger of further stigmatization of the already stigmatized members of the Greek Cypriot speech community, who, for various reasons, including ideological ones, do no adopt more acrolectal levels of speech.

University of Cyprus

Notes

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1. We must stress here that the number of levels has not yet been determined and the boundaries between them are nebulous. Papapavlou (this issue) proposes six such levels but this hypothesis has to be empirically verified.
2. In the examples discussed, the linguistic elements (morphemes, words, expressions, etc.) in CD are underlined.
3. It is customary for parents in Cyprus to build or buy a house for their children, especially their daughters.

References
