HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

A history of the languages which were used in antiquity must necessarily include primary texts, although some of them remain undeciphered (for instance Cyprio-Minoan, below 19-01-02. and "Eteo-Cypriot" 19-01-06). These texts are included here in order to give a clear as possible picture of the linguistic situation, in a broader sense.

After the destruction of the Mycenaean palaces in mainland Greece, the settlement in Cyprus of Greeks coming from that area had a major impact on the language used on the island: the thorough and secular implantation of the Greek language, which can be observed primarily through epigraphical texts and ancient literary sources (see below 19-01-04 and 19-01-05 for the ancient period). At the same time, other languages which were used according to the sources on the island are presented here, such as Phoenician (19-01-07) and Latin (19-01-08).

From about the end of the 8th century B.C. the Assyrians ruled over the island until 669 B.C. Some Assyrian official texts in cuneiform were found in and outside Cyprus referring to the tributary Cypriot kings. As we can infer from the rare texts of the period, the language of the sovereign had no discernible impact on Cypriot Greek since the two languages had totally distinct structures and writing systems and perhaps because the period of contact was too short. For the same reasons the language of the succeeding rulers, Egyptians, did not have any influence on the island: for a short period during the 6th century B.C. (around 570/560 B.C.- 545/540 B.C.) Cyprus became subject to Egypt. Despite the geographical proximity and the close commercial relations between the two areas, there was no linguistic residue from Egyptian.

After 545/540 B.C. Cyprus, as a whole or in part, came within the zone of Persian influence for almost two centuries. In spite of the long period of domination, no effect of the Persian language on either the Greek or the Phoenician kingdoms could be discerned.

During the Hellenistic period, many Jews settled in Cyprus. According to the existing documentation they used Greek for written communication. After the Jewish revolt against the Romans in A.D. 115/116, the authorities forbade the settlement of Jews on the island. After some time, it seems that these measures were relaxed, since a 6th century A.D. inscription in Greek recording the restoration of a synagogue was found in Golgoi (see fig. 7). In late antiquity again, it appears that, whatever their spoken language, Jews of the diaspora wrote in Greek, at least about secular matters.

CYPRO-MINOAN INSCRIPTIONS
During the second millennium B.C., a script is attested in Cyprus bearing a number of affinities to the Aegean ones, called Cypro-Minoan. These similarities were enough to lead a number of scientists to the hypothesis that the model for this script came directly or indirectly from Minoan Crete. About 100 Cypro-Minoan texts and ca. 200 pot marks have been discovered, but the script has not been deciphered yet. Despite the paucity of inscriptions, and judging by the variety of the inscribed objects, we may assume that, unlike in the Minoan Crete and Mycenaean kingdoms, the knowledge of writing was quite widespread among the Cypriots residing on the island or abroad, as some Cypro-Minoan texts were found in Ugarit, on the Syrian coast.

About the origin, the classification, the unity and the language(s) spoken by the users of this script, indigenous or newcomers, many theories have been advanced but none has been broadly accepted. Thus, the question of the language(s) represented in the surviving inscriptions in Cyprus between 1600-1100 B.C. still remains unanswered.

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THE CYPRiot SYLLABIC SCRIPT

At the beginning of the 12th century the Mycenaean palaces in mainland Greece, in the Peloponnese and Crete, were destroyed for reasons not yet established. However, archaeological findings indicate that a part of the Greek-speaking population of the Mycenaean centres left their homeland in search of a new destination mainly towards eastern Aegean coasts and Cyprus. These areas were familiar to them because of earlier commercial relations. The evidence that these people finally settled in Cyprus is based on a series of changes witnessed through archaeology during the 12th century and testified in the "Nostoi", the narratives on the foundation of Cypriot towns by the Achaean heroes following their wanderings after the Trojan war.

Even though the script was familiar in the Mycenaean palaces, it seems that it was not brought to Cyprus by these newcomers. They continued to speak their dialect but the script in their new home was not the one used in the Mycenaean palaces, the Linear B. Neither was it identical to the Cypro-Minoan script used by the local population, which was abandoned during the 11th century. The Achaeans who had settled on Cyprus used a linear script of Aegean origin to render their language, the so-called Cypriot syllabary, whose connection with Cypro-Minoan (see supra § 19-01-03) is not absolutely clear. Being a kind of syllabic script, each sign did not represent a sound but a syllable. This script was used by the largest part of the population of Cyprus, both Greek-speaking and "Eteo-Cypriots" (see below 19-01-06.) for nearly 1000 years, until the 2nd/mid-1st century B.C.

This writing system was the only one used to render the ancient Cypriot dialect (see infra 19-01-04), until both the dialect and its writing system died out at the end of the Hellenistic period. It seems that the Cypriots did not adopt the alphabet used in the other Greek dialects since the 8th century B.C., because the syllabary was felt to be a distinguishing feature of Cypriot identity.

The gradual abandonment of the Cypriot syllabary and the adoption of the eastern Ionic alphabet was the consequence of the closer ties between Cyprus and the rest of the Greek-speaking world. The first Cypriot king to do so was Evagoras I of Salamis, who followed a subsequent Greek-oriented policy and was regarded by the Athenian historian Isocrates as a person who could lead a pan-Hellenic campaign against the Persians.

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ANCIENT CYPRIOIT DIALECT

Many inscriptions on stone, metal and coins and some 250 gloses (lexical items) attested mostly in the dictionary of Hesychius, are the principal sources for the knowledge of ancient Cypriot, one of the well documented ancient Greek dialects.

Ancient Cypriot has many features in common with the Arcadian dialect, in use during the 1st millennium B.C. in the central Peloponnese. Both form a distinctive group among ancient Greek dialects, called Achaeans, where also Pamphylian can be added. The close relation with Arcadian is indirectly confirmed by the legends about the Arcadian or, in general, mainly Peloponnesian, origin of the Achaeans settlers in Cyprus. Historical records show that the ancient Cypriot dialect presented considerable variation, especially as regards the isolated variety of Paphos.

As main characteristics of Ancient Cypriot can be cited:

a) in phonology: neutralisation of the opposition /i~/e/ in a nasal environment and of /o~/u/ in final position; deletion of fricatives (especially s; psilosis is another related phenomenon) in inter-vocalic or word final position; assimilation -ti ->-si, cf. κασιγνήτα. (See “Medieval and post-medieval Cypriot Greek”).

b) in morphology: analogical generalisation of final nasal in nouns, pronouns and verbs; gen. sing. in -ω of o-stems; gen. sing. of a-stems masc. -ου(-οο); nomin. sing. eu-stems: ἵππος (cf. ἵππεος in other dialects); 3rd pers. sing. middle -ται (cf. -ται in other dialects); athematic infin. in -(e)ναι: δοκεῖναι; (See “Medieval and post-medieval Cypriot Greek”).

c) in syntax: dative in ablative functions after some prepositions (e.g. αἵν, ἀε) the most prominent feature of Achaean dialects.

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ANCIENT CYPROT DIALECT AND KOINE

From the 4th century B.C. onwards, there are indications that the Cypriot dialect started to give way to Koine, the linguistic variety of Greek based on the Attic dialect. The same phenomenon was witnessed throughout the Greek-speaking world. In Cyprus, the influence of Koine (always associated with the alphabet of Miletus), on the dialect (normally associated with the syllabary) is attested from the 4th century B.C. onwards: Nicocles, the last king of Paphos (ca. 325-309 B.C.) minted coins with his name written according to the Attic consonant declension, provided these coins are not fake. The influence of Koine in all aspects is clearly shown on an important epigraphical corpus from the rural sanctuary at Kafizin, dating from the years 225-218 B.C.

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THE ETEO-CYPROT LANGUAGE

During the first millennium, when Greek was spoken in the largest part of Cyprus, mainly in Amathus, another language was written also with the syllabary. Although apparently the same signary has been used (see supra 19-01-03) the language of these few texts is unknown, since they have not yet been deciphered. This language is called "Eteo-Cypriot", a modern term coined on the Eteo-Cretan used by Homer. As for its origins, it can be assumed that "Eteo-Cypriot" is the development of the language spoken by native Cypriots in the 2nd millennium B.C. But much of this is speculation and we cannot absolutely
exclude other possibilities. However, the kings of Amathus had Greek names, and
distinguished citizens were honoured in bilingual inscriptions in Greek and in this
language. It is unclear whether only part of the population spoke and wrote
"Eteo-Cypriot", or only the Amathusian kings and part of the elite had a Greek
origin.

As was the case with the Greek-speaking inhabitants of the island from the 4th
century B.C. onwards (cf. supra 19-01-05), and prior to the incorporation of
Cyprus in the kingdom of the Ptolemies, the influence of Attic culture is also
apparent in Amathus; inscriptions appear in both languages and both in
alphabetic and syllabic scripts. Texts in "Eteo-Cypriot" cease to appear after the
last years of the 4th century B.C. in all Cyprus, a fact again related (although not
exclusively) to the incorporation of the island into the Ptolemaic kingdom. (See
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THE PHOENICIAN ALPHABET

The second largest language community on the island was probably that of the Phoenicians, who arrived in Cyprus in ca. 1000 B.C. or perhaps later. Their principal settlement was Kition, where a pro-Persian Phoenician royal dynasty had been established during Persian rule; during this period, the Phoenicians expanded their authority to other Cypriot city-states, such as Lapithos, Idalion or Salamis.

Phoenicians wrote their language (of Semitic origin) in their "alphabet", where only consonants were rendered. There are some 250 known Phoenician inscriptions found on the island, most of them from Kition and Idalion.

Judging from a number of bilingual inscriptions (in Phoenician and Koine Greek) the process of hellenization of the Phoenicians in Cyprus started within the 4th century B.C. The last Phoenician texts date from the end of the 4th century, when all of Cyprus became part of the Ptolemaic kingdom. As for "Eteo-Cypriot", the incorporation of all Cypriot city-states gave the coup de grâce to these languages, since they no longer had the role and "protection" of being the "official expression" of the city.

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THE LATIN LANGUAGE

In the year 58 B.C. the Romans occupied the island for a short period and then again from 31 B.C. onwards. Nevertheless, Cyprus, like the rest of the Eastern part of the Roman Empire, remained Greek-speaking.

The settlement of Roman negotiatores in Paphos did not have permanent effects on the dissemination of Latin among the local population. The Latin inscriptions found all over Cyprus were related directly or indirectly to public administration, high-ranking officials and Roman citizens, mainly from the urban population.

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HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

With the totality of the population being Greek speaking, Cyprus espoused Christianity early in the 1st century. Following the break up of the Roman Empire (395 A.D.), the island became part of Byzantium.

Following the period of Arab-Byzantine Wars in Cyprus (649-965 A.D.), Arabic-speaking populations settled on the island, of which the most important is that of the Maronites (see below 19-02-06).

From the 10th century onwards, and after Byzantium had regained control over the island, there was a demographic, economic and cultural recovery, a long period of prosperity, with Greek spoken by the overwhelming majority of the population. In 1184 A.D., after the rebellion of the last Byzantine governor, the usurper Isaac Ducas Comnenus, the Byzantine Empire lost control over the island definitively.

In 1191 A.D. the island was conquered by the king of England, Richard the
Lionheart, a leader of the Third Crusade. He immediately sold the island to the Templars, and then in 1192 to Guy de Lusignan, who inaugurated the Frankish period on the island which was to last for 300 years.

The new king established a feudal system and fostered the Latin Church. The new rulers, mostly French from the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, but also Italians from the major trade-centres - Venetians, Genoese, Pisans and Florentines - settled on the island during the first century of Lusignan rule. The language of the ruling class, especially that of the court, was French. The indigenous population retained its Greek dialectal form spoken for centuries (see "Cypriot Greek"), which gradually gained the status of the most widespread language, even among the ruling class; moreover, this local form of Greek, lacking any standard Greek concurrence, became the normal form of written expression. In the coastal urban centres, various Italian dialects were used in commercial transactions and increasingly in legal documents. Latin (as the language of the Catholic clergy), Armenian and Arabic were spoken and sometimes written. Other languages were also spoken by minorities who settled in Cyprus, such as Ethiopians and other Copts, Georgians, Catalans, Saracens and various Balkan peoples.

During the Lusignan period some members of the nobility, the gentry and the merchant class were able to speak more than one language. This was partly brought about by mixed marriages and commercial relations. Of course, the degree of multi-lingualism and the proficiency in the various languages differed from family to family, from individual to individual and from period to period. However, it is an indisputable fact that the use of French in the court declined gradually, in favour of Greek and Venetian. The increasing influence of Venetian can be attributed to the tighter dependence of the island on Venice.

In 1489 the last queen of the Lusignan dynasty, the Venetian Katerina Cornaro, gave her consent to the abdication of her rights on the throne to the Venetians. The new rulers governed the island for about 100 years until the Turks conquered the island in 1571.
CYPRIOT GREEK

Cypriot is a dialect of modern Greek. It belongs to the south-eastern group and shares many features with the varieties spoken in Ikaria, Rhodes and Karpathos. As is the case with all South-Eastern varieties of modern Greek, from the phonological system, only the consonants underwent many changes during the Byzantine period onwards.

The splitting of Cyprus from the Byzantine Empire and the resulting isolation from the educational and cultural influences of Constantinople was the main reason for the raising of the local dialect to a written language form, and for the gradual receding of Byzantine Greek, mainly in ecclesiastical Orthodox circles.

The first appearance of some of the characteristics of Cypriot such as the neuters in -ων, can be traced back to the ancient period of the dialect (See "Ancient Cypriot"). A lot of them are still present in the majority of Cypriot local varieties or even the urban Koine.

As main characteristics of Cypriot Greek (most of them still in use) can be cited:

a) in phonology: strident palatal series; geminate clusters (either from Ancient Greek or new ones); voicing neutralisation, deletion of fricatives in intervocalic or word initial position (See "Ancient Cypriot")

b) in morphology: analogical generalisation of final nasal in nouns, pronouns and verbs

c) in syntax: post-position of personal pronouns. As expected, a number of loanwords from French (the court language), and later from Venetian and other Italian dialects entered gradually into the Cypriot dialect. The loanwords were not limited to the domains of administration and commerce but also of everyday life. As we can judge from the numerous works of the period, this influence was not only noticeable but also disturbing for some scholars of the time: for instance, Leontios Machairas deplores the Greek Cypriot of his time, which he himself uses. Although he recognizes its various foreign characteristics, he is conscious of the historical situation in which this form was developed. It is true that the effect of the above-mentioned languages was significant in Cypriot Greek vocabulary, less significant in morphology and phonology, negligible (if it existed at all) in syntax.

A number of translations took place, for example laws from French and Italian into the local dialect; meanwhile, the Cypriot dialect was gaining ground at the expense of French from the 13th century onwards, even in public documents. In 1448 King John II and the Emir of Scandelore concluded a peace treaty that was written in Cypriot Greek. The Ottoman occupation severed any contact that Cypriot had with western European languages.
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OLD FRENCH IN CYPRUS

According to a 14th century source, a local French dialect was then spoken in Cyprus, substantially different from the other French varieties of the time. This French dialect, like the rest of the varieties that developed in isolation, far from the metropolis, was very conservative. Apart from official documents (at least those of later years), whose language shows the evident influence of Greek and Italian, there are literary and other texts on the basis of which we can get an idea of the form of this French variety.

For historical and social reasons this language was in decline even before the fall of the Lusignan dynasty. Especially in writing, before Venetian rule, Italian replaced French in texts and became the second language of the island, after Greek.
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VENETIAN AND OTHER ITALIAN DIALECTS

Among the Italian dialects found in Cyprus the most widespread were those of Venice and Genoa, which were spoken predominantly in coastal towns. The Venetians had settled on the island at least since the 12th century, in Byzantine times; their concentration in the port towns indicates the predominantly mercantile character of the colony since the beginning.

The extensive influence of Italian, particularly of the Venetian dialect, on Cypriot Greek, can be attributed to the economic and political influence of the Venetians during French rule and also to the cultural prestige of some Italian universities, especially that of Padua. Abundant loanwords from Venetian have survived in Cypriot Greek. Nevertheless, none of the Italian dialects succeeded in replacing Cypriot Greek among the socially ascending inhabitants of the island till the Ottoman period: the end of Venetian rule brought with it the rapid decline of this language on the island.

Further Reading:


ARMENIAN IN CYPRUS

The first transfer of Armenians to Cyprus was reported in the 6th century A.D., with the first massive settlement in 1136/1137, both during the Byzantine period.

The Lusignan period was a very prosperous one for the expanding and politically important Armenian population in Cyprus.
The decline of the community is obvious during Ottoman rule, although newcomers did not cease to arrive on the island. Many Armenian refugees settled in Cyprus, then under British dominion, after the Armenian genocide committed by the Turks in Asia Minor during 1915-1918, and the defeat of the Greek army by the Turks in Asia Minor in 1922.

Armenian is still one of the minority languages in Cyprus since Armenians, together with Maronites and Latins, are recognized in the Cypriot Constitution as a distinct religious group.

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THE ARABIC OF THE MARONITES

A dialect of Arabic is spoken in Cyprus by the members of the religious minority of Maronite, who are of Syrian origin. Their settlement in Cyprus dates back to the 12th century when the Lusignans invited a lot of Christians residing in the Levant to settle the island.

This language witnessed its greater diffusion during the French and Venetian rule but its spread has been gradually reversed since then. It was not used for writing, therefore it developed in isolation from other Arab dialects; since it was the language of a Christian community, it could draw on no resources from classical Muslim literature. The result of the isolation was the fact that, perhaps before the 19th century, the dialect was subjected to influence from Greek and Turkish Cypriot.

Although the Cypriot Constitution recognizes Maronites as a distinct religious (and consequently linguistic) group (See "Armenian"), the Turkish invasion of 1974 had an impact on Cypriot Arabic, already in decline. Scattered from the last
village in which it was then spoken, especially Kormakitis which is now in the occupied area of the island, it is now dying out with the last refugees who still speak it, as it finds itself out of its traditional environment.

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CYPRUS UNDER OTTOMAN AND BRITISH RULE

In Cyprus, Ottoman rule (1571-1878) succeeded that of the Venetians in 1571 and lasted for 300 years. Immediately after the conquest of the island, the authorities decided to bring both Turkish and Kurdish settlers from mainland Turkey (mostly from the regions of Prussia and Attaleia) in order to ensure the Muslim presence. The measures taken were (from a linguistic point of view) not very effective: the greater part of the Muslim population of Cyprus consisting of a local people who was, mostly violently, converted to Islam, a practice that continued until 1825-1832. This is the reason why 5% of the Muslim population declared Greek as their mother tongue according to the British census in 1881.

The majority of the population of the island continued to speak (and occasionally to write) Cypriot Greek. As expected, after the Ottoman Conquest, a great number of Turkish loanwords were incorporated into all domains of Cypriot Greek vocabulary. Armenian and Arabic were also used. The use of western European languages could not be maintained.

Ottoman rule ended in 1878. According to provisions of the Cyprus Convention secretly concluded in 1878 between Britain and Turkey, Cyprus was ceded to the former. In 1914 the island was annexed by the United Kingdom and in 1925 was formally declared as a Crown Colony. As expected, the language of the new rulers gained ground, especially after 1914 and 1925, and then again after 1931, when, in response to a Cypriot uprising, measures were taken to suppress Greek-speaking education, as a promoter of Greek ethnicity.

After the armed struggle of Greek Cypriots against British rule (1955-1959) and despite the fact that the overwhelming majority fought for Enosis (Union) with Greece, an independent state was established in 1960, "protected" by a Treaty of Guarantee, signed between the United Kingdom, Greece and Turkey.

- Turkish in Cyprus
- English in Cyprus
HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

On the basis of the London and Zurich agreements, the Republic of Cyprus was established in 1960. The Turkish Cypriot insurrection in 1963-1964, which was the beginning of the partition of the island, was sealed by the Turkish invasion of July and August 1974, which seized on the pretext given by the coup d'état against President Makarios. Ever since, Turkish forces have occupied 37% of Cyprus; settlers from Anatolia were gradually introduced into the area, with evident consequences on the linguistic character of this part of the island.

This chapter refers to the major protagonists (Cypriot Greek, Standard Modern Greek, English), which interact in the linguistic situation in modern Cyprus, and to spoken and written varieties of Greek in and outside Cyprus by Cypriots nowadays.

CYPRIOT DIALECT AND STANDARD MODERN GREEK

The Cypriot Greek Dialect is still spoken by almost all the indigenous Christian population of the island including most members of the Armenian and Maronite minorities.

Urbanization, 200,000 refugees (the third of the Greek-speaking population) from the occupied areas after 1974, the University in Nicosia, have been the main factors in the promotion of a Cypriot urban Koine, which maintains its main
phonological and some morphological and lexical characteristics of the Byzantine and medieval periods. Lexical elements from other languages that dominated in the past (Old French, Italian, Turkish etc.) can also be encountered in Cypriot Greek, even though they are in decline.

Standard Modern Greek and Cypriot Greek are in complementary distribution according to distinct domains. Standard Modern Greek is the language of all levels of education, the language of the media and, in general, of written communication. The dialect is used only in a few areas of the written domain, especially in theatre, TV serials, literature, and some forms of advertising etc., whereas it monopolizes everyday interaction among Cypriots. The factors that dictate the selection of one code over the other are based on evaluations made by speakers.

Today, there is an evident influence of Standard Modern Greek even in the oral communication of the educated population, at least among most of those who received their higher education in Greece.

The linguistic situation in Cyprus today is rather complex, since the Greek speakers of the island are, more or less, competent in two varieties of Greek, and because language seems to have acquired a central role in defining the identity of Greek Cypriots.

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CYPRIOIT AND ENGLISH

From a linguistic point of view English has had no impact upon the grammatical structure of Cypriot Greek. The major influence seems to be the presence of many, more or less, morphologically adapted English loan-words, mostly in the spoken language, such as expressions of politeness, economy and vocabulary concerning transactions, transport etc.

Moreover, the influence of English can be detected in the speech of repatriated Cypriots and the members of the urban population who received higher education in the UK and the USA, with frequent code switching from Cypriot Greek to English.

Further Reading:

- PAPAPAVLOU A., Language Contact and Lexical Borrowing in the Greek Cypriot Dialect. Sociolinguistic and Cultural Implications, Athens 1994
- SCIRIHA L., A Question of Identity. Language Use in Cyprus, Nicosia 1996

THE LANGUAGE OF THE DIASPORA

Cypriot-Greek is also alive outside Cyprus among the Cypriot communities of the Diaspora in the UK and the USA, in Australia, Canada and South Africa. The biggest immigrant group can be found in the UK with the majority living in London. The linguistic situation of this speech community is complex since the speakers have three linguistic codes at their disposal: Standard Modern Greek, Cypriot Greek and English. They have therefore created a number of possibilities in terms of language use.

The first generation uses the Cypriot Dialect almost exclusively, with sporadic use of expressions and loans from English. Most of these words have been assimilated, so as to conform to the phonological and morphological rules of Cypriot Greek, of a variety called Greenglish. The dialect spoken by the Anglo-Cypriots is a very conservative one, as was traditionally the case with immigrants, in comparison with the language of the metropolis. This trend has somewhat changed after the new wave of immigration after the Turkish invasion of 1974, tighter contacts with Cyprus through the media, and increased travel. The second generation is more proficient in English and the members of this
group often make use of code switching. The third generation is composed primarily of English speakers. In those few cases when these speakers attempt to use Cypriot Greek, they use fixed expressions from Greenglish and tend to mix stylistic registers. When members belonging to different generations converse, it may be the case that first generation speakers use Cypriot Greek whereas second or third generation speakers use English.

Further Reading:

- CHRISTODOLOU-PIPIS I., Greek outside Greece - III -. Language use by Greek-Cypriots in Britain, Nicosia 1991