From Napaŋ to N'haber:

Is reshaping language, reshaping national identity?

The Case of Cypriot Turkish.

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If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.

- *Nelson Mandela*

Abstract

The importance of language in the perception of ourselves and the world around us is crucial and indubitable. Nevertheless language also seems to have a vital role in the building process of the modern nation-state. This study investigates the role of language in forging and reshaping national identities. In particular, through a qualitative research, I attempted to examine the effect of a language engineering policy on the national identity of the speakers of the linguistic variety which is at the target of that campaign. The participants of the study were Turkish speaking Cypriots, all speakers of a Turkish dialect, spoken in Cyprus, called Gibrislidja; namely Cypriot Turkish. In 2009 it was decided that the dialect would no longer be broadcasted on the television or radio of Northern Cyprus, as it was characterised as "bad" Turkish, and that it was going to be replaced by Standard Turkish, which is perceived as a superior linguistic variety. So, I will be focusing on how the speakers of the dialect perceive this policy and how they think that it will affect the future of their language and culture. Additionally, it will be investigated if the dominant Turkish culture is aiming to absorb, replace, and eventually eliminate the Turkish Cypriot identity through language. Furthermore, it is going to be examined how important linguistic assimilation is for the cultural assimilation of a group, and if the branding and marginalising of a linguistic variety has the same effect on its speakers.

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1. Introduction

1.1 <u>Language and Identity.</u>

"Speak English or Die" sung a band called S.O.D back in 1985 to all the new coming immigrants in the U.S, depicting in a rather simple, yet unseemly, way what many have maintained and even more have refuted; namely that language is inextricably related to identity, and consequently to national identity. Race, religion, political beliefs or even social class have been the most frequent reasons cited for creating national and ethnic identities; the kind of identities that we will be focusing on this research. As Kizilyürek and Gautier-Kizilyürek (2004) point out, these are "the forces of modernity which construct and shape identities". Language however, seems to be, more than often, the field where identity politics and power struggles thrive, as well as the means through which identities are constructed, or even reshaped. This is because, as Schmidt (2008) maintains, "identity is deeply anchored in a society, thus leading to a strong emotional attachment to identity markers like language". Nevertheless, the question that rises is: what reason is there, if there is any, that makes language such a core element of our identity, may that be personal or group identity?

In an attempt to answer that question Joseph (2004) explains that language is highly important for people since it is the only identity marker directly connected to, and used to project themselves, as well as to express, their thoughts. He argues that, "[t]hought and language come into being simultaneously. Language is a physical endowment, a living thing, which shapes the culture and thought of a people, for better and for worse" (p. 47). According to Fishman (2009), language "issues authentically from the body, it is produced by the body and it has a body itself" (p. 442); therefore, it could be said that in contrast to the afore-mentioned identity markers, language is

the only one that is so deeply rooted in the individual's unique personality. What is more, it should be mentioned that language is the one identity marker often used to transcendent or transform other markers such as race, sex, religion, social class or even political beliefs.

1.2 It's All Relative: Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis.

In this way, it could be maintained that the language that we speak is an intimate instrument used to convey our identity and to communicate our thoughts to others; as well as that each person's or people's language differs from the other's because of the uniqueness of each personality and the distinct way peoples live their lives all around the world. In other words, in a group level, that we will be examining here, language is a very crucial element of culture, as well as a means of expressing it. Nevertheless, one could wonder if this relationship between language and thought, or language and culture, works the other way around as well. According to Joseph (2010), "people's choices of languages and ways of speaking do not simply reflect who they are, but make them who they are-or more precisely allow them to make themselves" (p.13). Hence, there could also be the possibility that language is not only used to express our thoughts, but that it is also what shapes our reasoning. So, consequently, people who speak in different languages also think in different ways.

It would be no understatement to say that according to the literature, this argument was the starting point of a heated debate within the circle of Applied Linguistics, with researchers putting forth reasons for and against it. In the words of Tohidian (2008), "[m]any thinkers have urged […] that each language embodies a worldview, with quite different languages embodying quite different views, so that speakers of different languages think about the world in quite different ways". This theory was named linguistic relativity hypothesis (LRH) or Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, and it was proposed by the anthropologist-linguist Edward Sapir, and developed by his student, linguist Benjamin Lee Whorf (Keith, 2007). Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that back in the 19th century, Wilhelm von Humboldt was the first to suggest that

since language is connected to thought, grammatical differences between languages indicate that there are differences in the way the speakers of those languages think (Humboldt, 1963, p. 246). Humboldt influenced many thinkers with his theory, and as Keith (2007) asserts, he "enthused Heymann (aka Hermann), Steinthal […], who in turn inspired William Whitney […]. Whitney was the link to Franz Boas, Boas to Sapir, and Sapir to Whorf".

Thus, Whorf (1956) hypothesised that different morphosyntactic configurations of meaning can influence the way speakers perceive reality (p.239). As Tohidian (2008) explains, there is a "strong" and a "weak" version of this theory. The strong version indicates that "the language that we speak determines the nature of our thoughts, including the types of ideas and concepts we are able to have. It suggests that thoughts that are possible in one language may not be possible in another" (Tohidian, 2008). On the other hand, Tohidian (2008) notes that the weak version says that "language has a more ingenious effect on thought, and only influences what we are likely to perceive or remember about an object. Some have elaborated on Whorf's theory, like Vygotsky who supported that language and thought become interdependent during infancy, while others argued against it, like Chomsky, who believes that language and thought are independent (Tohidian, 2008). Nonetheless, as intriguing as the strong version of the LRH sounds, namely that important differences in language can lead to differences in experience and thought, as Tohidian (2008) observes, up to this point several studies have indicated that different languages only influence "aspects of thought, including spatial thinking, development of concepts and conceptions of time".

However, at this point it should be mentioned that, as it has been previously pointed out, language reflects the culture of its speakers as well as being a part of it (by using the word culture I refer to the sum of traditions and those attitudes and values exclusive to that group of speakers). In this way, it could be maintained that this specific attribute of language is what is

creating the impression that people who speak different languages also perceive reality in a different way, as the language that they speak embodies a different culture, and therefore a different world view. This becomes more obvious on an ethnic level. It might not be yet proven that the language that we speak determines the way we perceive the world; however it is difficult to deny that the culture to which we belong to does. As Keith (2007) correctly claims, "language [is] conceived to have a 'genius' that links it to the culture of its speakers". Consequently, in the same way that in an individual level language expresses our thought and personality, in a collective level it "reflects the culture and mentality of its speakers" (Keith, 2007).

1.3   Sticks and Stones Will Break my Bones but (Foreign) Words Will Destroy Countries: Language and Nation-building.

For this reason, it could be argued that, as LRH also supports, the language that we speak indeed differentiates us, up to a certain degree, from another group of speakers who speak a different language; as our language, being directly connected to our culture, has nurtured us in a world theory exclusive to that culture. Therefore, Joseph (2004) rightly observes that "[l]anguage is a great force of socialization […]. By this is meant […] that significant social intercourse is hardly possible without language, and that the mere fact of a common speech serves as a peculiar potent symbol of the social solidarity of those who speak the language" (p. 54). The crucial role of language in the forging of a common identity is even more evident through Schmidt's (2008) words who asserts that, "[the] main body of academic literature claims a crucial role for language in both the external perception of a [group] by outsiders, as well as in the self-identification of [that group]". Therefore, it could be claimed that the language spoken by a certain group, functions as a symbol of unity, and as a factor that differentiates the members of that group from the outsiders. Let us just bear in mind that nothing makes someone feel more alien to us than the inability to communicate with them in a common language.

Therefore, language and ethnicity, namely the elements associated with the ancestry and culture of a group (Schmidt, 2008), as Fishman (2009) puts it, "have been viewed as naturally linked in almost every age of premodern pan-Mediterranean and European thought" (p. 445). Language is so deeply rooted in the ethnic history of a group that, according to Fishman (2009), "the deity (or deities) necessarily speak(s) to each ethnicity in its own language and could not conceivably do otherwise" (p. 437). Finally, in order to highlight

the crucial relationship between language and ethnicity, Fishman (2009) concludes that they "are seen as the basic building blocks of all human society" (p. 437). Thus, it could be said that the language of an ethnic group is cherished as a valuable asset which is exclusive to that group; as it originates from its very core. It should also be mentioned that language, along with a number of other cultural elements, and the right of expression through them, are a source of pride for an ethnic group and are considered their indubitable "property".

In this way, as O'Reilly (2001) observes, "we must all now have an ethnic identity as an integral and 'primordial' aspect of our sense of individual self and group membership" (p. 2). Nevertheless, especially during the 19th and 20th century with the vast waves of immigration, as well as the great sociopolitical changes across Europe and the United states, national identity emerged as the desired unifying element of every modern nation-state (Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek, 2004). This was due to the fact that countries were comprised less and less by ethnically homogenous populations, so there could be no common ethnic identity to create a coherent state. Therefore, in contrast to ethnic identity that unites people in terms of common language, culture and ancestry, national identity was created to give a collective identity to the people participating in the life of a particular nation (Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek, 2004), no matter their language, culture or origin. However, just like with ethnic identity, of which language is a very important element, as Joseph (2004) argues, "a national language is the primary foundation upon which nationalist ideology is constructed" (p. 94). O'Reilly (2001) further explains that "[a]n ideal of homogeneity emerged, with the equation one language equals one state. Language came to be seen as a significant marker of the boundaries between societies and between states" (p. 9).

Furthermore, as Joseph (2010) observes, language proved to be essential in the process of nation building throughout the past two centuries, due to the following reasons: first, because people who develop distinctive ways of speaking are being marked out from those who use a different language and are perceived as dissimilar to them, or even as having rival interests. Second, there is the belief that nations are real because the people who live in them share a common culture that is "the product of a shared language". Third, the texts of national identity which will aim to unify and inspire, have to be written in the national language in order to create the sense of a common, unique identity. Additionally, as Joseph (2010) notes, "[a]s universal education is adopted throughout the nation, standards of correct language assume a central role. […] However, being a proper citizen and member of the community is inseparable from using 'proper' language". Last, language is continuously used as a prerequisite in screening processes which decide who is going to live, vote or enjoy the benefits of a nation (Joseph, 2010, p. 14). As Suleiman (2008) notes, "language can be constructed as a proxy to express ideas about issues of identity, politics, immigration and access to resources in education and other spheres" (p. 60).

Consequently, it could be maintained that the role of language for modern nations became crucial, as it was not only "a major marker of belonging to a particular […] national group" (Schmidt 2008), but also because it was meant to generate a culture and a common identity. For this reason, different states went through great lengths to establish a national language through legitimation, namely by formally recognising its official status, and through institutionalisation, that is by enforcing its use in all sociocultural, and linguistic domains, may they be formal or informal (May, 2009, p. 530). However, since there was only room for one national identity within the borders of a state, there was room for only one language as well. Language was no longer just an element of culture and one of its means of expression,

but its use was a political statement. Conforming to the national language signified loyalty to the state (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1994, p. 74). Therefore, it is quite obvious, as O'Reilly (2001) correctly argues, that "[t]he instrumental manipulation of language issues goes beyond efforts to shape national identities- it forms part of the struggle for power" (p. 13).

Thus, in many instances speakers deviating from the national language were not viewed kindly neither by the state, nor by the rest of the speakers, as their act was not thought of as a simple matter of linguistic choice, but rather as an explicit demonstration of defiance to the central power. The citizens who were not using the national language were not just perceived as different, as the LRH suggests for speakers of other languages, but as a threat. For instance, as Suleiman (2008) points out, during the civil war in Lebanon in the 1970s and 1980s, the pronunciation of the word "tomato" would decide the faith of the speaker who would be executed in case of pronouncing it the Palestinian way instead of the Lebanese (p. 56). History has plenty of examples of countries which protected and defended their dominant language in the same way they would defend their borders from an invasion, since issues of identity and politics would be articulated through the choice and prevalence of a particular language. For example, as Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson (1994) note, speakers of Kurdish living in Turkey have been punished for using their mother tongue, as it is considered an act of treason to the nation (p. 72).

In this way, it could be said that modern states are usually very protective of their national language. Allowing equal rights to another language within the same state would signify recognising the fact that the speakers of that language would have a share to the normally undivided power of the state. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that this is not always the case. There are countries where the circumstances were such that power and identity struggles allowed the survival of more than one language within a state, like

in Canada for instance, where there is more than one national language, or Afghanistan where there is more than one official language (namely the language used for legislative and governmental purposes). Additionally, there is the case of other countries which were not overtly hostile towards speakers of a different, and very often, rival language. Thus, while in Greece the totalitarian regime of the 1930s was forcing Greek citizens of Slavo-Makedonian decent to drink castor-oil whenever they were speaking a word in Slavo-Makedonian (Suleiman, 2008, p. 63), in other countries, such as the United States, issues of identity politics and power struggles through language were dealt in a less radical, but equally effective manner.

1.4 <u>Killing me Softly: Linguistic Assimilation and Marginalisation of Linguistic</u>

<u>Minorities.</u>

Therefore, it could be maintained that from what has been examined so far, as O'Reilly (2001) rightly observes, there is no room for stateless languages […]. They must be assimilated into the dominant language and culture, or their speakers might make a claim to nationhood in their own right" (p. 9). As we will see further on, in most cases they were indeed assimilated or marginalised in many different ways, with that having various results for their speakers. Primarily though, it should be mentioned that as Mansour (1993) rightly asserts, "[m]any a language policy which is assimilationist on the surface in fact serves to exclude sections of the community and to place them in a situation of permanent exploitation" (p. 102). This is very understandable if we consider the fact that by linguistic assimilation it is most often meant to appropriate from the language and its speakers any power or representation within the state. According to Mansour (1993), the United States for example, have "a long history of discriminatory legislation where, under the pretext of assimilation, language is used as a means of controlling and limiting the number of those to be assimilated" (p. 102). At this point it should be highlighted that the role of language in power struggles and identity politics is so great that, even in a country without an established national language, like the U.S. (Hernández-Chávez, 1994, p. 141), it continues to be a very valuable and effective instrument in managing the internal affairs of the state.

The assimilationist approach to linguistic plurality within a state (even if that meant different regional variations of the same language) was very effective, as it nurtured and fed on the two building myths of the modern nation; namely that "monolingualism is desirable for economic growth, and

that minority rights [, that is rights of unassimilated groups,] are a threat to the nation state" (Phillipson, Rannut, & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1994, p. 4). Nonetheless, as May (2009) correctly notes, since the establishment of national languages was a "deliberate, and deliberative political act", which aimed to protect the welfare of the culturally, linguistically, and politically undivided state, "it follows that so too was the process by which other language varieties were 'minoritized' or 'dialectized' […]. These language varieties were positioned by these newly formed states as languages of lesser political worth and value" (p. 530). The role and importance of national languages was also reinforced by eliminating any function of other "ethnic" or "minority" languages in the formal domains of the state; such as in education (May, 2009, p. 527). For this reason, it was a natural outcome that national languages would be associated with modernity and progress, when, as May (2009) rightly asserts, "their less fortunate counterparts were associated (conveniently) with tradition and obsolescence" (p. 530). This "unequal power distribution within nation-states" disempowered linguistic ethnic minorities and forced them to gradually either "assimilate into the majority language (main culture) by state pressure, or to give up their minority language for socio-economic reasons" (Schmidt, 2008). According to Mugaddam (2006), "attitudes towards ethnic languages have changed negatively" as it is believed that they cannot play any important socioeconomic role in the lives of their speakers.

Thus, the evaluation and distinction of languages, between those which were more "prestigious", or "modern", within the social reality of a nation, and those which were "folkloristic" and "outdated", had started; along, of course, with the evaluation of their speakers. As Herman (2007) argues, one's alignment with a subordinate language variety could result in experiencing discrimination, since identifying with a language other than the national, signified identification with not just a different culture, but a subordinate one.

Those speakers not conforming through assimilation usually met the same fate as their language; they were marginalised, even if they spoke a variation of the national language. Therefore, the speakers of ethnic languages were faced with the dilemma of either abandoning their language for the national one in order to enjoy the full social and political benefits corresponding to it, or be stigmatized because of their language, which did not have any practical application within the state. So, it became clear that, as Phillipson, Rannut, & Skutnabb-Kangas (1994) rightly believe, "[a] threat to an ethnic group's language is a threat to the cultural and linguistic survival of the group" (p. 7).

This project will be specifically focusing on one of these "subordinate" linguistic varieties: the dialect. As Wolfram (2009) notes, the term dialect refers to "any regional, social or ethnic variety of a language. The language differences associated with dialect may occur on any level of language, thus including pronunciation, grammatical, semantic and language use differences" (p. 35). Thus, having established above the invaluable role of language in the process of forging a common national identity in the modern nation state, and the potential disruptive effect of any other linguistic varieties, I will try to investigate the effects of language engineering campaigns on the speakers of a dialect, and on their sense of national identity. More specifically, the focus will be on a dialect of Turkish spoken in Cyprus, named Gibrislidja. It will be examined if in the case of Gibrislidja there is an imposed cultural assimilation to the major Turkish culture through linguistic means. Additionally, through a qualitative study it will be investigated if the speakers of this specific dialect are indeed being marginalised or discriminated against because of their linguistic, and consequently cultural, heritage. Moreover, it is going to be examined if the speakers of this dialect think that their language is a vital part of their cultural identity, and if they feel that their identity is threatened when the status of their language is.

2. Methodology.

2.1 Gibrislidja.

Gibrislidja (Cypriot Turkish) is a dialect of Turkish spoken in Cyprus, which belongs to the Oğuz family (Kabataş, 2007, p. 19). It arrived in Cyprus around the 16th century when the island was conquered by the Ottoman Empire, and eventually became a part of it in 1571 (Saracoğlu, 1992, p. 20). However, Cyprus had always been a multicultural and multilingual island due to the fact that its strategic geographical position attracted numerous peoples. As Imer & Çelebi (2006) note, the island was ruled by the Byzantines (395-1184), the Lusignians (1192-1489), the Venetians (1489-1571), the Ottoman Empire (1571-1878), and the British (1878-1960). So, Arabic, Italian and Greek were some of the languages spoken on the island when Selim II decided in 1572 to increase the Turkish-speaking population in Cyprus either voluntarily or by forced exile (Saracoğlu, 1992, p. 20). According to Saracoğlu (1992), speakers of Turkish moved from various regions of Anatolia to Cyprus, bringing along with them the distinct regional differentiations of their language. As it is noted on the map below, the main areas from which speakers of Turkish, who moved to Cyprus, are said to have originated from are Konya, Yozgat, Antalya, Kirşehir, Çorum, and Uşak (Vanci-Osam, 2006).
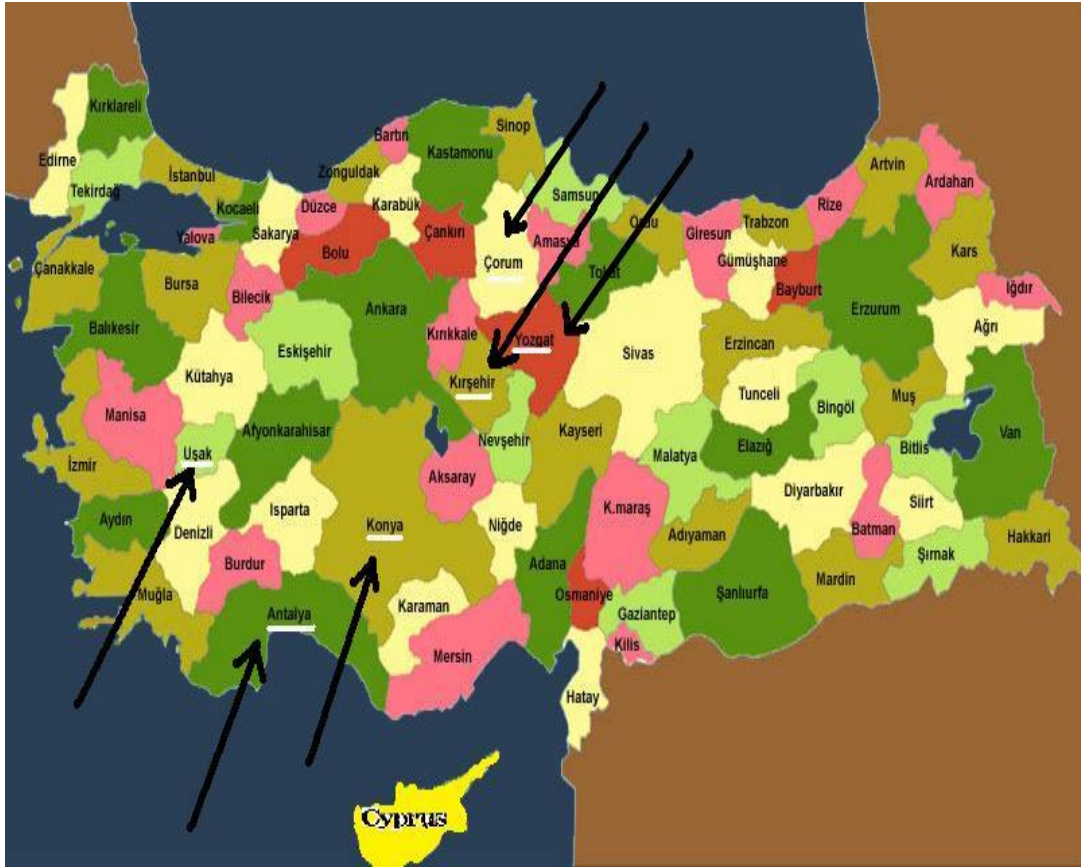
Because of the origin of Turkish speaking Cypriots, Cypriot Turkish (CT) is linked to Anatolian dialects and not to Standard Turkish (ST), that according to Kabataş (2007), people tend to mistakenly relate and compare it to. In fact, Kabataş (2007) stresses that attempts to show similarities or make connections of CT with ST are not scientific and are mainly founded on an emotional basis. He also indicates that if CT should be compared or studied in relation to a language, that should be the old Anatolia Turkish and the dialects that existed before the 13th century (p. 23). In this way, it becomes clear that CT underwent a transformation of its own, as it evolved in a geographical region that went through completely different socio-political changes than that where ST was spoken. As Kabataş (2007) argues, ST evolved completely independently to CT, whose phonetic characteristics were shaped by the

distinct geographical and cultural circumstances in Cyprus, between the 16th century and 1974 (p. 23).

Nevertheless, in order to provide a short picture of the morphological and phonetic characteristics of the dialect, since a detailed analysis would be beyond the scope of this study, Gibrislidja will be compared to ST, regardless Mr. Kabataş's correct indications, as, unfortunately, it is the only linguistic variation CT has been related to in the literature. Therefore, it should be said that in CT there are a series of sound deviations, in consonants and vowels, in relation to ST. For example, as Vanci-Osam (2006) notes, in CT the long vowels of ST are pronounced shorter. In ST the word "holiday" would be pronounced /tātil (ST), while in CT /tatil/. Furthermore, there are some vowel changes, as in the word "beans": fasuly**e** (ST) and fasuly**a** (CT), or as in the following words "sterling", "anyway", and the verb "while coming", where there is an insertion of vowels at the beginning (sterlin (ST) > **i**sterlin (CT)), in the middle (neyse (ST) > ney**i**sa (CT)), or at the end (gelirken (ST) > gelirken**a** (CT)).

Moreover, Vanci-Osam (2006) explains that there are also consonant changes in relation to ST. Just to mention some examples, the consonant /k/ in CT is pronounced /g/, as in the word "Cyprus": **K**ibris (ST) > **G**ibris (CT), or /p/ in CT becomes /b/, as in "leaf": ya**p**rak (ST) > ya**b**rak (CT). Furthermore, just like in the case of vowels, there is also the insertion of a consonant in the beginning of words, as in "courtyard": avlu (ST) > **h**avlu (CT), the middle, as in "there": orada (ST) > ora**ş**da, and in the end, as in the word "now": şimdi (ST) > şimdi**k** (CT). Additionally, it should be mentioned that according to Vanci-Osam (2006), in relation to ST there are lexical and syntactic variations, such as the frequent use of the suffix –dir (meaning: by all means, probably, it is expected that), the use of the suffix -d**I** instead of –m**I**ş when reporting past events "that the speaker has not witnessed himself", or the use of the present tense instead of the present progressive. Last, Vanci-Osam

(2006) notes that some other very characteristic syntactic variations of CT is the formation of yes/no questions, which are formed by rising the intonation at the end of the sentence, or the use of inverted sentences, which are very common in CT, unlike ST.

As Vanci-Osam (2006) correctly points out, "all these deviations from ST are attributed to the Turkish speaking Cypriots' long history of coexistence with Greek speaking Cypriots". As it is observed, "[d]ue to many years of language contact, some words in Cypriot Turkish were borrowed from Cypriot Greek" (Vanci-Osam 2006), English, but also Arabic and Latin (Issa, 2006). Furthermore, it should be noticed that the unique characteristics developed by CT are due to the fact that the dialect "was left without strong influences from Turkey over long periods, thus preserving old characteristics and developing innovative features" (Demir & Johanson, 2006). Nonetheless, at this point it should be mentioned that as Kabataş (2007) points out, there is not just one CT dialect, but several of them that appeared in the different areas of the island, either because of the origin of the speakers, who came from distinct parts of Turkey, or because of the specific area they settled in Cyprus (p. 21). However, because of the socio-political developments on the island after 1974, the majority of Turkish speaking Cypriots gathered on the Northern part of Cyprus, and that had as a result the minimization of the differences between the Cypriot Turkish dialects (Kabataş, 2007, p. 21). Hence, in this research Cypriot Turkish is treated as one dialect which corresponds to every Turkish speaking Cypriot who speaks it, and which endows its speakers with a unique cultural identity.

Just like every other dialect, Gibrislidja did not evolve independently. It was shaped and influenced by the socio-political events that took place in Cyprus and in Turkey. This happened because of the peculiarity that Cypriot Turkish has; its homeland is Cyprus, but its perceived motherland is Turkey. As it has been previously mentioned, Turkish speaking Cypriots were living for

many centuries with Greek speaking Cypriots and the British, who were the colonial rulers, and for this reason the official languages of the government were three, English, Greek and Turkish; while the national were two, Cypriot Greek (Κυπριακή), and Cypriot Turkish (Gibrislidja). It could be argued that Cyprus is one of the best examples of how language is connected to ethnicity and identity politics, since the two official languages of the island reflected the desired cultural bond of the Greek and Turkish speaking Cypriots with their perceived motherlands. By establishing Greek and Turkish as its official languages and therefore by being aligned linguistically and culturally with two different countries Cyprus was making a bold statement about its sense of cultural identity and belonging; it was divided.

This identification, not any longer with Cyprus, but mostly with Greece and Turkey became even more pronounced towards the end of the 1950s (Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek, 2004), for different political reasons. According to Karoulla-Vrikki (2004), during that period "[i]t was a principal issue for both ethnic groups to protect their ethnic mother tongue, which they perceived as an essential pillar of their identity an indispensable precondition to their survival". The Turkish speaking Cypriots initially expressed this closer linguistic identification towards Turkey, by having more teachers and school material from Turkey, while also encouraging the use of ST in schools (Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek, 2004). Eventually, the island was permanently divided in 1974, and ST became the official language of the Northern Cyprus in 1985 (Demir & Johanson, 2006), introducing a new era of linguistic and cultural realities for the Turkish speaking Cypriots. After 1974, Turkish speaking Cypriots were no more Cypriot, but the "children of Turkey" in Cyprus (Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek, 2004). As Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek (2004) put it, "a politics of identity based on an organic concept of the nation" was attempted to be constructed by force. "According to this, the Turkish nation is an organic whole, a 'suprafamily' to which the Turkish

Cypriots belong" (Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek, 2004). These politics of identity were expressed through language policies which, as it will be examined, further support the fact that in the modern nation-state there is no room for "subordinate" linguistic varieties.

2.2 Standard Turkish VS Cypriot Turkish.

Thus, after 1974, Northern Cyprus was considered politically, culturally and linguistically a part of Turkey. As Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek (2004) point out, Turkish speaking Cypriots "in an act of counternationalism [against Greek speaking Cypriots] adopted the Kemalist secular and language reforms", which had as a result ST to be "the official language of education, bureaucracy, and the mass media in Northern Cyprus" (Menteşoğlu, 2009). It could be maintained that this introduction of ST in the lives of Turkish speaking Cypriots happened, and was perceived by the speakers, as a natural consequence of the fact that they were now a part of the Turkish nation. Furthermore, the fact that even more Turkish settlers were arriving in Northern Cyprus made the use of ST even more common (Vanci-Osam, 2006). So, it could be said that there seemed to be a balance in the relationship between CT and ST; with ST having an increasingly important role in the life of the island, while at the same time not threatening the role of CT in the lives of the Turkish speaking Cypriots. Nevertheless, this was not the case. Very soon, through different language engineering policies and under the pretext of forging a national identity, which would strengthen and protect the Turkish speaking Cypriot community against threats from the outside, CT was, and still is, gradually being viewed as an inferior linguistic variety to ST.

In this way, the first language policies that were introduced were aiming to erase every memory of coexistence between Greek and Turkish speaking Cypriots and to strengthen the (Turkish) national feeling of the Turkish speaking Cypriots. For this reason, as Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek (2004) note, new Turkish names were given to villages and towns were Turkish speaking Cypriots lived. Additionally, during the 1950s, with the "Citizen Speak Turkish" campaign that was aiming to alienate the Turkish from the Greek speaking Cypriots, Turkish speaking Cypriots were literally obliged not

to speak or use any Greek words (Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek, 2004) under the threat of a fine. These initial language policies seemed to intend to isolate the Turkish from the Greek speaking Cypriots, however from their nature and their treatment of the speakers it was obvious that the national language (Turkish) had already started to manipulate the dialect. It can be maintained that only the fact that language was the first line of attack against the communal Cypriot identity, only verifies that language was indeed one of the major weapons that the "Motherland" would use to shape the new Turkish Cypriot identity. It also proves how deep the connection between language and identity is considered in the modern nation-state; so deep that the speakers of a forbidden language are actually punished.

It should be pointed out that the above mentioned language policies were successful. They managed to cut the cultural connections of the two ethnic groups through linguistic means, as well as to prepare the ground for the next policies that would aim to further transform the Turkish Cypriot identity. Up to this point, it had been proven that ST would protect the Turkish speaking Cypriots from any outsiders by providing them with a solid national identity, and a powerful "Motherland". It could be claimed that this role that ST was fulfilling implied that CT was inadequate to be the national language of the Turkish speaking Cypriots. So, the subtle message from these language policies, along with the fact that ST is used in all formal circumstances in Northern Cyprus, demoted CT and its value among the speakers; as Lucy (2000) notes, linguistic change effectively indicates a change in outlook. According to Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek (2004), "[t]he Turkish Cypriots themselves started considering their own dialect as inferior and standard Turkish as sounding 'educated' and 'well mannered', in contrast to the dialect, which was often perceived as 'rough' and 'rustic'".

Thus, it can be said that the gradual assimilation of CT by ST had begun. As it has been pointed out previously, the national language had undergone

processes of legitimization and institutionalization which left the dialect, namely CT, at the margins of the new social reality. As Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek (2004) maintain, "the dialect was reserved for the family and informal encounters", and Turkish high culture was introduced to Turkish speaking Cypriots through öz Turkçe, namely "pure Turkish". Therefore, it could be claimed that, since the moment that ST started dominating the Turkish speaking Cypriot society, CT was "deprived of its local elements and reduced to a form of expression and narration of the Turkish nationalism" (Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek, 2004). Furthermore, as Silva-Fuenzalida (1949) asserts, language "registers culture changes with a high degree of fidelity". Therefore, it could be maintained that the fact that the younger generation of Turkish speaking Cypriots have started using linguistic patterns more contingent to ST (Menteşoğlu, 2009), shows that they choose to remove themselves away from the dialect and its culture, and towards the dominant Turkish one.

However, the most pronounced expression of the hierarchical relationship between ST and CT took place very recently through a directive of the Higher Broadcasting Council (HBC) in Northern Cyprus. As Sennitt (2009) asserts, on October 2009, the HBC had actually decided to forbid the use of CT on television and radio. It could be argued that this directive, which has also been the event that inspired this research, is the most valid verification of the fate of every dialect or ethnic language within a nation. From the stage of assimilation, which wanted ST replacing CT in every formal occasion within Northern Cyprus, now the next step was that of complete marginalisation by openly rejecting the dialect. The most interesting fact however, was that this banning was made under the notion that "a proper form" of Turkish should be used in all broadcastings (Sennitt, 2009). As Chaglar (2009) notes, the HBC was at that moment "carrying out an 'inspection' of 15 TV channels and 23 radio stations to make sure what it regards as 'bad Turkish' is no longer

broadcast". Therefore, if the HBC, which is the official governing body that regulates all media on Northern Cyprus, openly characterises ST as "proper" while CT "bad", one cannot help but wonder what that implies for the speakers of each variety. Are those who speak ST correct, while those who speak CT wrong? Most importantly though, it is very intriguing to investigate who defines the standards of correctness, and also who and how applies them.

It could be said that this directive explicitly indicated how "correct" is what the nation-state dictates, while anything else that deviates is simply redundant. In this case it is even more interesting how this directive was not aimed at the media of Turkey, so that it could be assumed that CT is being assimilated by gradually being replaced by ST, but at the media of Northern Cyprus; namely at the very core of the linguistic group. Furthermore, it should be said that this urgency with which ST seeks to replace CT indicates that Turkish speaking Cypriots are not in fact the "children of Turkey" in Cyprus; at least as long as they speak their dialect which differentiates them linguistically, and therefore ethnically, from the mainstream Turkish culture. However, it should be mentioned that speakers of CT did not take kindly to this directive. As Chaglar (2009) points out, it has been characterised as "shameful" by the most popular Turkish speaking Cypriot politicians. Nevertheless, it would be very interesting to investigate how the speakers of the dialect feel about this turn of events as well. Conversations on blogs by speakers of the dialect, and articles by Turkish speaking Cypriot journalists, passionately defend their right to their dialect, which they feel that represents their distinct culture. This very defensive reaction justifies the directive which aimed at CT, as it proves that there is indeed a different culture related to the dialect, which obviously does not have any place within the major Turkish one; even if it is as far away from Turkey as Cyprus.

The first reaction of the Turkish speaking Cypriot representatives indicates how indeed "ethnic identity loss hinges on language loss" (Karoulla-Vrikki, 2004). Nevertheless, it is essential to investigate how this directive was reflected on the speakers of the dialect. In this way it will become possible to examine how the speakers view the relationship between their dialect and ST, and to see how they experience this shrinking of their ethnic identity through language; or even if they believe that such a thing is happening at all. For these purposes, the methodology of qualitative research has been followed, as it was attempted to study the speakers' sense of identity and group membership, as well as their attitudes towards their language and culture before and after 1974, that the presence of ST was more prominent on the island. As it will be explained in detail further on, through the testimonies of the speakers interviewed, I will also try to investigate to what extent the conclusions that have been drawn earlier about the role of language on the shaping of ethnic and national identities are verified in the case of CT.

2.3 <u>Participants.</u>

Thus, as it has been mentioned previously, since one of the aims of this research was to investigate if there is a change in attitude towards CT, and the culture it represents, on the part of the younger generation of Turkish speaking Cypriots, who are raised in an environment where the Turkish national element is more pronounced, some of my participants had to belong to the older generation of Turkish speaking Cypriots. In this way I aimed to see if the younger speakers of CT were more positively predisposed towards ST, and if their sense of cultural identity was heightened in a way that they would be acknowledging an important difference between Turkish Cypriot and Turkish culture. Through the interviews with the speakers of the dialect who were born before 1974, and had lived in a Cyprus were Turkish nationalism ST was not as prominent as after the division of the island, I intended to examine if they perceived any kind of assimilation of CT in ST through the course of these 37 years. Additionally, I tried to see if they thought that the younger speakers of the dialect are gradually loosing their linguistic and cultural heritage, and the implications that they deem that would have for the future of the language and the Turkish Cypriot community.

For this reason, all the interviewees had to be speakers of the dialect as it was described in section 2.1. Furthermore, they had to be natives of Cyprus, in the case of the interviewees born before 1974, and Northern Cyprus, in the case of the younger ones, in order for them to be in position to give accurate impressions about their dialect and its relation with ST on the everyday reality of the island. In this way, their testimonies would be more or less corresponding to the real relationship between CT and ST, as well as their respective cultures, and to the way they experience it on an everyday level in the different aspects of their lives. Moreover, for the purposes of this study, the interviewees had to be of Turkish Cypriot origin so that they would not

only speak CT, but also be part of the Cypriot Turkish culture. Thusly, I had to travel to Cyprus where I interviewed four speakers of the dialect who were kind enough to accept me in their personal space and answer my questions. The interviewees were chosen randomly from the acquaintances of UM, who is a Turkish speaking Cypriot himself and helped me to come in contact with them. The only criterion of choice was that half of them had to be born before 1974, while the others after the permanent division of the island.

Thus, the two interviewees born before 1974, Mr. A. and Mr. B. were both born and raised in Cyprus. Mr. A. was born in 1933 to a Turkish Cypriot family that was speaking Cypriot Greek. He learned CT in school and from social interactions with other Turkish speaking Cypriots. He is a retired teacher and now is working as a journalist in a local paper in Northern Cyprus. Mr. B. is a shop owner in Northern Cyprus. He is 77 years old, and as he described in his interview, he used to work with Greek speaking Cypriots and Armenians before the division of the island and therefore he learned how to speak Cypriot Greek fluently. On the other hand, the two interviewees born after 1974 are as well native speakers of CT and are born and raised in Northern Cyprus. Mr. U. was born in 1984 and is a recent PhD graduate of Molecular Medicine from an English university. He studied for several years in England and currently lives in Cyprus. Last, Mr. Ç. is 26 years old and he is a teacher of Modern Greek in Cyprus. He did his undergraduate studies in Turkey, and he is currently in Greece with a student exchange program. All of the interviewees spent the greatest part of their lives in Cyprus, and according to their interviews, use exclusively CT during all their social interactions in Northern Cyprus; something that renders them perfectly suitable for the research purposes of this project.

2.4 Procedures and Materials.

After composing a list of questions a meeting with the first interviewee was arranged. The interviews took place separately, and the main structure of the questions would remain the same. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that in the case of Mr. A. and Mr. B. the interview had a looser structure, allowing the interviewees to lead the conversation. This was due to the age difference between me, the interviewer, and the interviewees. Since, I wished to avoid coming across as disrespectful, I asked some questions to set the direction of the interview, and let the interviewees speak freely about their dialect and culture, along with everything else they saw fit or relevant. In the case of Mr. U. and Mr. Ç., the questions prepared were almost always followed without any deviations, due to the fact that there was a greater degree of familiarity, and I felt more comfortable asking the number of questions that I had prepared.

In this way, the list of the main questions asked during the interviews would be the following: a) What is your mother tongue?, b) Does it differ from ST?, c) Which linguistic variety do you use while talking to your friends and family?, d) Do you believe you can better express yourself in CT?, e) Are you aware of any Turkish Cypriot words than are no longer used?, f) Do you think that the variety of Turkish that you speak reflects your culture, here on the island?, g) How do you think your dialect is viewed by speakers of ST?, h) Have you ever heard anyone switching deliberately from CT to ST?, i) Have you heard about the banning of CT on television and radio?. The questions aimed to examine if speakers were feeling that their dialect was representing them in a way ST could not. Additionally, it was attempted to investigate if the speakers have ever experienced discrimination because of their linguistic heritage, which is also reflected to their culture, and if they feel ethnically threatened by the linguistic encroachment of ST against CT.

Furthermore, it should be mentioned that out of respect to the time of the interviewees who agreed to cooperate so willingly, the interviews were no more than twenty minutes long, maximum, excluding the time of introductions and explanations. Additionally, it must be noted that the interviews with Mr. A. and B. were conducted in Greek (from the part of the researcher) and Cypriot Greek (from the part of the interviewees); while the interviews with Mr. U. and Mr. Ç. were conducted in English. In this way, we would arrange to meet with the interviewee in their house, where we would be together with Mr. UM., who was there to help with the clarification of any ambiguous points during the interviews, by translating from English to CT and the other way around, as all interviews were not conducted in the mother tongue of the interviewees. After the necessary clarifications about my project we would proceed with the interview during which the interviewees would answer the questions they were being asked. Finally, it should be noted that the interviews were recorded by using a voice recorder (Olympus VN-5200).

2.5 <u>Analysis.</u>

The answers to the various questions differ among the interviewees, however, it should be mentioned that there is one thing in common; all of them acknowledge that they belong to an ethnic group with a distinct language and cultural tradition. To begin with, Mr. U. refers to lexical differences between CT and ST, which as he notes "show the differences in culture". This perceived cultural proximity through language to the Turkish Cypriot ethnic identity is also evident when Mr.U. enthusiastically concurs with the suggestion that he can express himself much better in his dialect, as it reflects his history and roots. He actually states that he wants his interlocutor to be able to realise, by the way he speaks Turkish, that he is from Cyprus and that he belongs to that particular ethnic group. For this reason, he denies the fact that he would ever change the way that he speaks in order to sound more Turkish, or "mainstream", as the way that he speaks is a part of the life on the island where he is living.

Furthermore, Mr. U. makes obvious that he feels that this linguistic and cultural differentiation from ST, which is a result of his identification with his ethnic language, is not appreciated by the speakers belonging to the major linguistic group of ST. He notes that he thinks that his dialect is being thought of as primitive and as a subordinate linguistic variety by most of the speakers of ST. However, it should be pointed out that he accepts the fact that ST should be the language of education in Northern Cyprus, as he believes that the teaching of CT would create problems in the communication of the Turkish speaking Cypriots with the rest of the speakers of Turkish. He believes that there should be a "standard" language, which nevertheless should not asphyxiate his own dialect. Finally, on the topic of the banning of CT on television and radio, Mr. U. asserts that through this policy there is an attempt to change the character of the Turkish Cypriot community by making it more

Turkish. He also thinks that there is a process of making Northern Cyprus culturally more adjacent to Turkey through the use of language, especially as he notes, after the population transfer from Turkey during the last years. He observes that with the increase of Turks in Northern Cyprus, Turkey is trying to alter the character of the island by making it more similar to Turkish standards. Finally, he confesses that this language policy is far from innocent as it is trying to impose a purer Turkish identity on the Turkish speaking Cypriots.

On a similar note, Mr. Ç. asserts that his dialect is so different from ST, that many speakers of ST are occasionally unable to understand him when he speaks. He explains that due to the fact that Turkish speaking Cypriots are frequently exposed to ST through the media and education, they are able to comprehend it; while ST speakers have difficulties in understanding CT because they are not familiar with it. Moreover, he notes that his dialect is very valuable to him as it reflects everything that the Turkish speaking Cypriots experienced. He points out that he learned CT from his family and that through its use he feels that he continues the culture of his people. However, he believes that people have gradually stopped using it and that shows that a different culture is taking the place his ethnic culture used to occupy. Nevertheless, even though he acknowledges the importance of his dialect in the preservation of his ethnic heritage, Mr. Ç. admits that he has switched to ST in the presence of ST speakers. What is more, he confesses that, while he was living in Turkey, some speakers of ST mocked his dialect, which was a fact that led him to use CT only with the people with whom he felt comfortable with, regardless of them being speakers of CT or ST. Additionally he points out that those people close to him, who happened to be speakers of ST, eventually thought that his dialect was very beautiful.

What is more, when Mr. Ç. was asked his opinion about those speakers of CT who consciously switch to ST within the Turkish Cypriot society, admitted

that he thinks they are amusing and unoriginal. He actually notes that if the person speaking ST is not well educated it is very obvious that they are Turkish speaking Cypriots trying to speak ST. Nevertheless, he says that there are Turkish speaking Cypriots who speak ST perfectly well and that creates a problem in their everyday lives in Northern Cyprus, as they have difficulties in understanding the Turkish Cypriots speaking in CT. He believes that this turn towards ST on behalf of some Turkish speaking Cypriots is part of an attempt to be a hundred percent Turkish. He adds that this attitude is encouraged by some Turkish speaking Cypriot MPs who support the embracing of the Turkish national identity through language transformation. Additionally, he maintains that some Turkish speaking Cypriots approve of this language shift towards ST, as they do not feel Cypriot, but they feel Turkish, and therefore they should use proper Turkish. According to Mr. Ç., this national identification with Turkey is also obvious in the fact that many Turkish speaking Cypriots started adopting the new Turkish names of some villages and cities, and not the Cypriot ones; since as he says, they do not believe that there is such a thing as a Turkish Cypriot identity and language. Last, when asked about the banning of CT on television and radio, Mr Ç. stated that he firmly believes that his dialect is an ambassador of his ethnic identity and by replacing it with ST would result in loosing his Turkish Cypriot identity.

On the other hand Mr. B., one of the interviewees born before the division of the island in 1974, points out that there are different CT dialects and not only one. He also asserts that there are indeed phonological and syntactical differences between CT and ST that make it difficult to communicate with speakers of ST. Furthermore, even though he says that ST did not influence CT after the division of 1974, he admits that the younger generation does not use some CT words that the older generation used to. Moreover, for the new generation of Turkish speaking Cypriots that are currently being raised on the island, he indicates that according to his belief they will speak ST if the father

speaks it. He suggests that some of the Turkish speaking Cypriot children will not be taught CT as their parents will be Turkish settlers, and therefore they will not be using the CT dialect.

Finally, Mr. A. points out the phonological and syntactical differences of the dialect by saying that speakers of ST "do tricks when they speak", while Turkish speaking Cypriots "cut it short" and "don't make long sentences". Furthermore, he points out that, even though speakers of ST assert that their language is the most pure, for him it is sounding fabricated. He also maintains that according to his opinion, those Turkish speaking Cypriots speaking ST do so because they want to be Turkish. Additionally, Mr. A. asserts that CT is as good a linguistic variety as ST, by stating that he does not only speak it, but that he is also writing in it. When asked about the reactions of the speakers of ST to his writings in CT, he answered that he is not concerned if they think that he is being correct, from the point that his writings are appealing to his fellow Turkish speaking Cypriots. As far as the directive of the HBC about the CT dialect is concerned, Mr. A. described that journalists and reporters were being urged not to use CT while broadcasting, and this forced some of them to quit their jobs. He concluded that this imposition of ST on the Turkish Cypriot mass media aims to eliminate the ethnic character of the Cypriot community, and to make them "extinct", as he characteristically states. He also believes that the differences between the speakers of the two varieties go beyond the field of language, but he asserts that if a person speaks like someone else, eventually adopts a different identity. Finally, it should be mentioned that in contrast to all the other interviewees, he argues that this linguistic imperialism will not be successful, as according to his belief, the Turkish settlers end up adopting the CT dialect and not the other way around.

3. <u>Discussion.</u>

Even though the sample of speakers interviewed was rather small due to the nature of this project, it could be maintained that their testimonies made a rather strong statement about the importance of the CT dialect in the sense of identity and group membership of its speakers. The fact that all the interviewees were sensitive about their dialect, without being willing to let anyone and anything interfere with it, indicates that there is a direct link between language and culture. As Wierzbicka (1986) notes, even though this link is difficult to be scientifically proven it is definitely there, and that becomes obvious by the incessant connections that the four speakers of the dialect make in their interviews between their dialect and the other aspects of their life and identity. All these differences between ST and CT described by the interviewees indicate differences in attitudes, collective historical experiences, and political outlook reflected through linguistic features (Wierzbicka, 1986).

Furthermore, as Joseph (2004) indicates, "language is a systematic way of constructing realities" (p. 89), and that becomes obvious from the words of Mr. A., who stated that eliminating CT would lead to an extinction of the cultural reality of Northern Cyprus the way it exists now. Moreover, even though Schmidt, U. (2008) supports that "language loss does not automatically imply the loss of ethnic identity", Mr. U., Mr. Ç., and Mr. A. would disagree with him, as they feel that their dialect is what makes them who they are. As Mr. U. notes, ST is used to change the identity of Turkish speaking Cypriot community, which is portrayed and created by their special dialect. Therefore, it could be claimed that if "similarities between speakers' use of a language […] depends fundamentally on their shared social history" (Villena-Ponsoda, 2005), the fact that there are so many differences between ST and CT indicates that there is no shared history between the speakers of

the two linguistic varieties. According to Mr. A. the differences between the two linguistic varieties indicate that there are prominent differences in other aspects of culture as well, something that makes the preservation of the CT dialect even more crucial, as it seems to be the first line of defence against the cultural colonialism of Turkey. As Mr. U. asserts, the aim of the dominant Turkish nationalism is to make the Turkish speaking Cypriots as similar as possible to the mainstream Turkish culture, and language is used as a proxy to camouflage their intentions.

Moreover, since, as Nagel (1994) indicates, that "identity and culture are two of the basic building blocks of ethnicity", this attack on the Turkish Cypriot culture, through the banning of their dialect, is correctly interpreted by the interviewees as an attack against their ethnic identity. Mr. A., Mr. U., as well as Mr. Ç., firmly state that this invasion in the linguistic community's identity through this language policy is aiming to make them more Turkish than Turkish Cypriot; so, it could be said that in this case, "[l]anguage planning is intimately involved with […] identity planning", (Woolard, 1991). Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that language engineering campaigns, like the one announced in Northern Cyprus in 2009, were very common throughout history. As Errington (2003) points out, in 1979 Singapore launched the "Speak Mandarin" campaign, which aimed to force Chinese migrants to abandon their dialects in order to forge a common national identity. In the same way, the banning of the CT dialect is aspiring to gradually eliminate the Turkish Cypriot culture in order for the Turkish speaking Cypriots to smoothly adopt the "grand narrative" of the Turkish nationalism, which relates them to a linguistic and cultural past and future that is connected to Turkey and not Cyprus. In other words the banning aims to exchange the Turkish Cypriot ethnic identity for a Turkish national identity. So, it could be said that while the first language policies of the 1950s were aiming to eradicate a rival language, this of 2009 turned against the same

ethnic group it was supposed to be protecting, as it was aspiring to abort every cultural and linguistic element that connected it to its distinct heritage, and as Mr. Ç. asserts, to render it a hundred percent Turkish.

Furthermore, another interesting feature of this language policy is that it seemed to ruthlessly aim at the most cherished aspect of Turkish Cypriot culture, wishing to quickly eliminate it by banishing it from the ears of the Turkish speaking Cypriots, without even providing a pretext that would make this decision seem to be for the best interest of the Turkish speaking Cypriot community. As Mr. U. points out, the manner with which the decision was taken to ban the dialect revealed the open interference of Turkey into the Turkish Cypriot affairs, and how Turkey did not take into any consideration the cultural and ethnic value of the CT to the Turkish speaking Cypriot community. As Chaglar (2009) asserts, the CT dialect is so popular that a number of advertisements and radio shows have been created in it, which have a great appeal to the speakers of the dialect. Furthermore, Chaglar (2009) notes that CT is "the way of communicating that most ordinary people can relate to" in Northern Cyprus, even though, as it has been mentioned, ST seems to be spreading to most domains of everyday life. According to Mr. Ç., in the case that the CT dialect is lost, all of these cultural elements and culture specific messages communicated through it will be lost with it; killing like that a significant part of the Cypriot Turkish ethnic identity. Furthermore, as Mr A. asserts in his interview, if the dialect is being taken away from the Turkish speaking Cypriots, there would not be anything left to remind them of their ethnic identity, since, as he says, they will become Turks.

Thus, the aggressiveness of the language policy which was released on 2009 is very well perceived by the interviewees, who feel that their dialect is gradually degraded. As Mr. U. describes, he thinks that CT is being treated as an inferior linguistic variety to ST, something that it is openly asserted by the directive of the HBC. According to Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek (2004),

indeed "[m]any Turkish mainlanders consider the Turkish Cypriot dialect as not "proper" but "bad" Turkish"; a view that is projected by the dialect ban. "This results in Turkish Cypriots experiencing a linguistic insecurity that leads to a language 'inferiority complex' towards standard Turkish, regarded as the only legitimate form of the Turkish language" (Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek, 2004). This is the reason why, Mr. A., Mr. U., and Mr. Ç. state in their interviews that there are some Turkish Cypriots who prefer to use ST than their own dialect; as in aligning one's self with a "superior" language, there is the identification with a "superior" identity as well. However, it should be mentioned that all three interviewees disapprove of the submission to ST, linguistically, as well as culturally. As Mr. Ç. and Mr. A put it, individuals who deny their own language and culture are perceived as being fake and dishonest towards their own people and ethnic identity.

Furthermore, as it can be seen through Mr.Ç.'s interview, there is also a branding of the dialect and its speakers by some speakers of ST, who think it is lacking in relation to their national language, since, as Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek (2004) observe, "Turkish high culture […] enjoys high respect and consequently great authority in representing and labelling the Turkish Cypriot dialect". This stigmatization of the dialect has as a result the stigmatization of its speakers as well, who, like Mr.Ç. describes in his interview, sometimes choose to speak in ST in order to be associated with a linguistic variety and a culture which is acceptable by the dominant social group. As Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek (2004) describe, [w]hile speaking standard Turkish [Turkish Cypriot speakers] perform an act of identity that includes themselves as part of the Turkish nation"; an act of identity that is literally forced through the banning of the dialect on the media. This dismissal of CT on the grounds of linguistic and cultural inferiority proves that even "the most harmless expression of the distinctive elements of the Turkish Cypriot identity, as different from the mainland Turkish one", is not tolerated in the identity

politics in Northern Cyprus (Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek, 2004). So, it could be said that it becomes obvious that with the marginalisation of the dialect, the marginalisation of the speakers takes place. If there is no place or function for CT in any aspect of the lives of Cypriot Turks, then there is not any for the CT ethnic and cultural identity either. Therefore, it can be claimed that according to the testimonies of the interviewees, language is indeed used to force the assimilation of Turkish Cypriot culture into the dominant Turkish one.

Additionally, it should be mentioned that another important element that comes across from the interviews as playing a major role in the process of assimilation of the CT culture by the mainstream Turkish one, is the ever increasing presence of Turkish mainlanders in Cyprus. As Mr. U. points out, the banning of the CT dialect was made under the pretence that it would make television and radio programs more pleasant and easy to follow for the speakers of ST in Cyprus who are not familiar with the dialect. Furthermore, even though Mr. A asserts that Turkish mainlanders arriving to Cyprus eventually end up speaking the dialect, Mr. B. indicates how CT is gradually lost as, if the parents are not Turkish Cypriots and speakers of the dialect, the children will most probably be raised speaking ST rather than CT. As Janse (2003) observes, when children "start preferring the dominant language and learn the obsolescing language[,] ([in this case CT)] [,]imperfectly", then that linguistic variety is potentially endangered. While comparing the linguistic situation in Cyprus before and after 1974, Mr. B. concludes that there are already CT words not being used by the younger generation of Cypriot Turks; an indication that, either because of the expansionism of ST in the everyday life of Cyprus, or because of the increasing number of children growing up speaking ST, the CT dialect and ethnic identity is gradually weakened from within. So, it could be said that as Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek (2004) argue, after the de facto division of the island in 1974, the expression of

Turkish nationalism in Cyprus became stronger, and that is obvious through the evolution of CT and the way it is used by its speakers.

Finally, it should be noted that according to Mr. Ç., many Cypriot Turkish children of the younger generation are not familiar with the CT dialect, or the CT names of villages and cities in Cyprus, as due to the origin of their parents, they are raised within a cultural reality which is regulated by ST and the cultural and national connotations related to it. Additionally, as Mr. U. points out, the big numbers of Turkish settlers started having an effect on the language of the ethnic group and on the decisions concerning it. As Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek (2004) maintain, this difference between the linguistic varieties spoken by the Cypriot Turks and the Turkish settlers, as well as the linguistic choices made by the speakers of these two groups, eventually became "a vehicle of differentiation and acquired political connotations". So, as Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek (2004) correctly observe, "the dialect seems to have acquired a stronger symbolic value beyond its pragmatic use, as it is often the case when a variety or language is imposed on others by the exercise of national or colonial power". Turkish settlers or even Turkish national identity might be more at ease if the media in Cyprus transmit in ST, as it would suggest a cultural unanimity. However, as it is obvious from the descriptions of the CT speakers interviewed, and as it is suggested by the press in Northern Cyprus, any attempt to tamper with the CT dialect is perceived as an act of linguistic and cultural conquest. Therefore, as Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek (2004) rightly asserts, "the fact that many Turkish Cypriots did not adopt, voluntarily or not, the official norm of the Turkish language can be considered as a political act of resistance. By insisting on speaking their dialect they draw a symbolic border between themselves and the Turks from the mainland".

Thus, it could be said that by taking into consideration the interviewees' impressions and beliefs about their dialect and its value in the shaping, or

even existence of their ethnic identity, it could be asserted that language seems indeed to be a crucial element in the creation (or destruction) of identities. It could be claimed that since this attack on the CT dialect, as Kizilyürek & Gautier-Kizilyürek (2004) observe, and as it becomes obvious by the words of the interviewees, sparked Turkish Cypriot patriotism, the CT dialect, and therefore the language of every ethnic group in general, is a vehicle and a vital component of their ethnic identity. As Mr. U. points out in his interview, Turkish speaking Cypriots are called to be "camouflaged" through the use of the dominant linguistic variety in order not to pose a threat to the cultural and national unity of the Turkish nation. It can be claimed that this imposed identity transformation through language, also verifies the fact that dialects or any other linguistic variety, different than the national one, seem to be intrusive and disruptive to the cohesiveness of the national group as a whole. So, it should also be mentioned that the case of Cypriot Turkish is very representative of how modern-nation states treat identity-wise deviant groups within them; on the one hand they proclaim and promote a natural and already existing national connection, which on the other hand prove to be inexistent by the very fact that they try to "purge", linguistically and culturally, the same group they claim they share the same identity with.

Moreover, as Mr A., Mr. U. and Mr Ç. assert, this switch of linguistic identity for them clearly implies a switch in cultural identity, which also supports the claim previously made; namely that the first step in the cultural assimilation of an ethnic, or minority group, is its linguistic assimilation. Last, it should be pointed out that language engineering campaigns and language policies, as it has been also seen in the case of Cypriot Turkish presented here, are the best friends of identity transformation schemes. They aim at eliminating or transforming the language of the group in question, which will result in finally changing not only the linguistic, but its cultural and ethnic character as well. As it has been previously examined, the banning of CT on

the media in Northern Cyprus was not just an update of the "outdated" and "bad" linguistic variety, but a clear assault to whatever that dialect represents for its speakers and to whatever it does not for the speakers of ST. Finally, it should be highlighted that even if there is a part of the Turkish speaking Cypriot community which enthusiastically concurs with the directive against CT, since Mr. Ç. notes that there is a number of Turkish speaking Cypriots who prefers ST over CT, that would not make the policy any less menacing towards the exclusive linguistic and cultural heritage of the Turkish Cypriot community.

4. <u>Conclusion.</u>

To conclude, it should be mentioned that language is a major building block of our identity, be that personal, ethnic or national. The close relationship between language and thought had as a result the conversion of language into our first and most important means of representation and expression, and also into a major factor influencing our way of thinking. For this reason, several scientists supported that the influence of language on thought can be to an extent that will actually determine the way that we think; like Whorf did with his LRH in the beginning of the 20th century. These theories implied that people belonging to different linguistic groups would have different understandings of the world, as they would perceive it through distinct languages, which reflected different philosophies. This was the first realisation that language is deeply connected to the culture of its speakers; expressing it, while being a part of it. In this way, language became an invaluable asset for every group that would use it to express and formulate their cultural and ethnic identity.

Nevertheless, after the birth of the modern nation-state, the role of language acquired an additional dimension. Language was no longer just representing and expressing identities, it was also creating brand new ones. So, whenever there was need to unite linguistically, culturally and ethnically diverse populations, language would be the first instrument used to forge a common national identity. For this reason, the use and choice of language within a contemporary nation-state acquired political dimensions and it became a part of the power struggle between the different ethnic groups living in it. Different linguistic varieties within a nation were treated with disapproval and suspicion, as they were implying the existence of culturally distinct groups that could possibly challenge the cohesion of the state by claiming a share of its power. This had as a result the creation of language

engineering policies which would aim to assimilate, or dispose of any linguistic variety deviant from the national one.

One such language engineering campaign is the one introduced in Northern Cyprus in 2009, which demanded that the Cypriot Turkish dialect will be banned from any type of broad casting. This language policy aimed at replacing the dialect with Standard Turkish, which is the widely accepted linguistic variety by Turkey. By conducting a qualitative research on how Turkish speaking Cypriots understood their sense of identity in relation to their dialect, and on how they perceived the banning of their dialect, it was verified that in the case of CT as well, linguistic extinction signified cultural, and consequently ethnic, extinction. The interviewees concurred that their dialect is the most important expression and representation of their distinct group identity. Additionally, according to their testimonies, the speakers of the dialect clearly perceived this language policy as an attempt to assimilate them to the mainstream Turkish culture, and transform their Turkish Cypriot ethnic identity into a Turkish national one. From the interviews it is obvious that an attack against the dialect is equal to an attack against the identity of its speakers; as well as that the marginalisation and branding of the dialect is being reflected to its speakers. Thus, it becomes clear that the first step in the process of national assimilation is linguistic assimilation. Therefore, it can be said that once more it is proved that the crucial role of language in the shaping and transformation of national identities is very evident.

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Appendix

Transcription conventions:
- Elpida is the name of the Interviewer.
- UM. is the name of the person translating from Turkish to English whenever it is necessary.
- (Text in parenthesis consists of explanatory notes).
- [Text in brackets consists of clarifying comments from the researcher].
- *Text in Greek or Turkish is italicized*.

Gender: Male
Age: 26
Nationality: Cypriot
Current Status: PhD student in the school of Molecular Medicine at the University of Nottingham

Elpida: Can you tell me a few things about yourself?
U: My name is U.G, I'm from Cyprus, and I am in the final year of my PhD in Molecular Medicine at the University of Nottingham.
Elpida: You say that you're from Cyprus; you're from the Northern part of Cyprus then?
U: Yes…
Elpida: What language do you speak there?
U: Turkish…
Elpida: So, the Turkish that you speak is it like standard Turkish?
U: No, it's different.
Elpida: In what ways?
U: For example the pronunciation of some letters, and the way we make up the sentences. For example we don't have a too strong /k/ sound, we just say /g/, and also when we speak we don't create long question sentences. We make up a normal sentence and we make it sound like a question.
Elpida: So, do you think, according to what you said, that the Turkish speaking Cypriot community shaped their language in a way that reflected their life on the island?
U: Yes, I think so…
Elpida: The differences in your dialect, in what way do you think reflect your differences as a Cypriot from someone who is from Turkey and speaks standard Turkish?
U: You mean the differences in language reflect the differences in culture?
Elpida: (Nodding).
U: To be honest with your, probably the difference can be seen in the words. Some words are missing in one case and in the other are not, or they have a different meaning, we have that kind of stuff. So, I think the language that we speak also shows the differences in the culture.
Elpida: Do you think you can better express yourself when you speak in your dialect?
U: Yes, exactly! Because I feel it reflects my roots, my history. I want the person in front of me to know that I am from Cyprus.
Elpida: So, do you use it to speak to your family and friends?
U: Yes, yes…
Elpida: So, when you meet someone from Turkey do you speak to him or her in your dialect?

U: Yes, I do…

Elpida: So have you ever spoken Turkish the way they speak it in Turkey (Standard Turkish)?

U: No.

Elpida: Why?

U: Because I feel that that would not be me and that would be meaning that I feel that they are superior, which I believe they're not.

Elpida: How do you think your dialect is viewed by speakers of standard Turkish?

U: What was the word?... You know in the old days, in tribes….

Elpida: Primitive?

U: Primitive, and totally wrong. They even say that we are ruining the Turkish language. So, I believe that they are looking at us as a parasite.

Elpida: How would you feel if your dialect was used for teaching purposes in schools in Cyprus?

U: Well, I believe that there should be a standard, so that everyone would be able to understand. At least in the written language there should be a common way of writing so that people will be able to understand everything; but as far as talking is concerned, I don't have any problem with that.

Elpida: So have you heard about the banning of your dialect on television and radio?

U: Yes…

Elpida: Where did you hear it from?

U: It was on the newspaper that I was reading.

Elpida: And what was it saying?

U: It was saying that the Cypriot Turkish dialect is not allowed any more on TV, and if I remember correctly, it was saying that the reason for that was to help the Turkish people understand what is being said on television.

Elpida: Oh I see, but since the banning was in Cyprus, why did they do it? Since it was not about Turkish television?

U: Well, we are under Turkish occupation and Turkish rule, and there is a huge population transfer, and the reason is to change the character and identity of the island. So, language is taking its part, lets say, and they use language as a way to change the character of the people and the character of the community.

Elpida: So you think that through language they are trying to change the character of the community?

U: Yes…

Elpida: What do you think they are aiming with this?

U: Their aim is to make you more similar to them. It is like camouflage, they know that you are not them, and to eliminate that feeling they want to get rid of everything that it is not part of their culture.

Elpida: So, do you think that your dialect is one of these elements?

U: Yes…

Elpida: So how did you feel about the banning?

U: To be honest, I felt very angry because it looked like the situation in Cyprus is so soft that Turkey can easily change that kind of stuff. Now they are feeling that comfortable that they are saying: "You will speak the way that we want". By accepting this legislation I felt like our people are leaving their Cypriot identity and are accepting to be much more Turkish.

Elpida: I see, ok then, thank you very much.

U: You're welcome.

Gender: Male
Age: 26
Nationality: Cypriot
Current Status: Greek language teacher

Elpida: Ok Ç., can you introduce your self?
Ç: I am Ç.P, I am twenty six years old, I am Cypriot, it does not matter if I am Greek or Turkish speaking, I studied Modern Greek language and literature in Ankara, I worked for the so-called embassy on the North side of the island for two years translating some articles from Greek to Turkish, and now I am a teacher in a public school on the northern part of the island; I am giving Greek lessons to the Turkish speaking Cypriot students, and now I am on holiday!
Elpida: So you spent all your life here then?
Ç: Yes, more or less… I was in Ankara for four years, and the rest here.
Elpida: The Turkish that you speak, is it the same that they speak in Turkey (Standard Turkish)?
Ç: Not at all! I can understand them, but they can't understand me as I can understand them. Even in my village our Turkish is a bit different than the other villages. I can understand the proper Turkish that the Turkish people talk, because on TV we watch Turkish channels. On other Cypriot channels the Turkish is the proper one, but the Turkish that we speak is different than the Turkish that they speak in Turkey.
Elpida: So, do you think that the Turkish that you speak here, the dialect, reflects your culture here on the island?
Ç: Yes, it reflects everything that we lived. It was from our families that we learned it. It continues our culture. Step by step we are loosing it and that really reflects the culture that we use.
Elpida: When you speak to your friends and family, you use the dialect, right?
Ç: Yes, yes…
Elpida: In your everyday life you speak in your dialect then… did you ever need to speak Turkish the way they speak it in Turkey (Standard Turkish)?
Ç: Yes, when I was at the university, with my friends I started speaking in my dialect at first, but they couldn't understand me properly! So I found a solution, since I can speak proper Turkish, when I was speaking to my Turkish friends I was speaking in my own dialect and then I was translating into proper Turkish, and when we came closer they could understand me, so that they could speak the Turkish that they like, and I could speak the Turkish that I like. But at first I used proper Turkish because it needs time to translate the Turkish that I was speaking, and again they were finding something that was not similar to them and they could smile; I don't care about that. You know, to communicate and to talk in the class or with the people that I was not so close I used proper Turkish, and I was very comfortable using it, because the books that we read and the lessons during all our student life were in Turkish. But as far as I could use my dialect I used it with my Cypriot friends and those Turkish friends of mine who were very close to me. They found it very beautiful, they were enjoying my dialect, they liked it, and they wanted to speak like me, so they had some words from me.
Elpida: So, it was viewed positively?
Ç: Yes, yes, but I didn't talk to everyone (in my dialect). My close friends, they liked it very much. They were respecting the way that I speak, actually I was choosing them [the people to whom I spoke in the dialect]. I can see if a person respects me and then I can talk to him in the way I like; and they were respecting me, and they liked it.
Elpida: Here on the island, everyone speaks in the dialect, or are there some people that they want to speak standard Turkish?
Ç: Yes, there are some people, and I find them funny actually! It doesn't seem original to me when they are talking in proper Turkish. Even on radios and TVs, if

they are not so well educated I can understand if they are really Cypriot, or if they are trying to speak Turkish. But there are some people who really want to speak proper Turkish and I respect them; some of them are really doing it.
Elpida: Why do you think they do that?
Ç: Because they are Turkish! We have some… *milletvekili*?
UM: MP…
Ç: Yeah, some MPs that are saying that we are Turkish and we shouldn't use any other [language]. In the north side of the island the villages have many names, the original names, the Turkish names, and some of them (MPs) say: "Don't use the original name", because it is a Greek one, they say: "Use the Turkish one". You know, they pretend to talk proper Turkish, to feel Turkish, and you know, to be a part of Turkey in some way. For example my village's name is "*Μόναργα*" and they made it "*Boğaztepe*". For example, what was *βουλευτής*?
Elpida: MP…
Ç: There was one MP saying that: "My children don't know '*Μόναργα*'", the Greek name, "They just know the Turkish name; '*Boğaztepe*'". You know, everything to be Turkish. I think they are refusing their roots, because they grew up in Cyprus, and they are just refusing it.
Elpida: So, you think that through language, those who speak Turkish the way they speak it in Turkey they try to become…
Ç: Yes, a hundred percent Turkish. I think that as you are Turkish you should speak Turkish. They think that by speaking the dialect you are some kind of Cypriot, and they think that there is no such thing. And so by talking in Turkish, a stronger Turkish feeling will come. They are saying that: "We are leaving in Turkish northern Cyprus and we must not have Greek names in our villages. We are Turkish, we should use Turkish" they are saying. They are not saying: "We are Cypriot, we can use our dialect". They are saying: "We are Turkish, we should use proper Turkish". That's what they teach to their children. Their children couldn't speak in the school comfortably, because everyone uses the dialect and they couldn't even understand the name of the villages, so you know they became strangers in the school; I've heard some stories about them.
Elpida: So, you're speaking the dialect because you feel Cypriot then?
Ç: I am Cypriot, and I use the dialect, but I don't use the Greek dialect of Cyprus because I didn't learn it at the university, but I'd like to use it, because, you know, it is my country and it's our dialect; it reflects a lot of things.
Elpida: Have you heard of the banning of your dialect on television and radio?
Ç: Yes, I've heard about it, and there was a lot of…. *tartışma*?
UM: Debate….
Ç: Debate on it… Yes, I've heard about it…
Elpida: And what did you think of the whole situation?
Ç: That it's bullshit! Every country has a dialect; we don't even make all of our programs in it, we just have a few things to represent our culture. If we cut those too, you know, it is a very bad thing for us. A few things staid to us with our dialect, and I don't think that it's a reasonable thing.
Elpida: It was saying on the newspaper, that they wanted to substitute the dialect with a more proper form of Turkish, what do you think about that?
Ç: Yes, yes! It is the same thing… They want us to be Turkish, so they want our language to be proper Turkish, it's the same thing; not to feel Cypriot, not to think Cypriot, not to hear Cypriot; you know these are the steps for it. I thought that it didn't work because of the debates and because of the people who made the programs and refused it; I don't know exactly, I think it didn't work. I can still see our dialect in some advertisements, in some series… So, I think it didn't work and I am happy about it. But I can see them insisting on it, or have some more bans, they are ready to do it, but we should step against them.
Elpida: Ok, thank you very much!
Ç: You're more than welcome!

Gender: Male
Age: 77
Nationality: Cypriot
Current Status: Shop owner

Elpida: Would you like to tell me some things about yourself? Like where you are from?
B: Where I am from? I am from here (Cyprus). I live here since 1933…
Elpida: And how come your Greek is so good?
B: We worked with the Greeks and the Armenians for many years, and that's how I learnt.
Elpida: So your mother tongue is Turkish?
B: Yes…
Elpida: So, the Turkish you speak is it the same they speak in Turkey?
B: No, no! Not like the way they speak it in Turkey, like the way we speak it in Cyprus. Even the way they speak Turkish in Nicosia is different from the way they speak in Pafos. When someone from Pafos is speaking you immediately realise they are from there. Our language in Nicosia is not the same they speak in Istanbul. This is the case you see…
Elpida: You mentioned previously that you have been here since 1933, did you notice any difference in the way people are speaking on the island? For example the younger generation, does it speak Turkish differently than you used to?
B: No, it's the same…
Elpida: I see there is no difference… So after 1974, the Turkish language did not influence your dialect?
B: No, inside Nicosia, Larnaka, Amohosto the language did not change.
Elpida: I have heard that you used to use some words that you don't any more. For example how did you say glass here?
B: *Kantila?* Yes *kantila*… It is the glass that they use for the wine in the taverns…
Elpida: But now people use the Turkish word *bardak* right? They don't use the Cypriot word.
B: Yes, now the young people don't even know how to ask for a glass!
Elpida: Why do you think the younger generation is using this kind of language?
B: It is because there it has been thirty to thirty five years that we live like this (on the Northern part of the island), and they didn't learn the dialect. You know when the Greek speaking Cypriots and the Turkish speaking Cypriots fought. It will take years for them to make up again!
Elpida: And the way the people speak here, has it changed through the years?
B: No, there is no difference in the way people speak here in Nicosia and in Pafos.
Elpida: I see, I see… And what about your language when people started emigrating from Turkey to Cyprus?
B: Let me tell you about this… If the father is from Turkey, the children will speak Turkish the way they speak it in Turkey, but if the father is from Cyprus, then the will children speak Cypriot Turkish.
Elpida: I see… I see… So, it depends on the family if the children will speak Turkish the way they speak it here in Cyprus?
B: What do you mean?
Elpida: Like you previously said; if the father is Turkish then the children will learn to speak Turkish…
B: Ah yes, yes… the way they speak it in Turkey.
Elpida: And is there a great difference?
B: Yes, yes, there is a difference, not a very big one, but there is some difference.
Elpida: Can you think any example that you can tell me?
B: Like what?

Elpida: Is it more complicated for example? Are there differences in the words you are using?

B: No, it's that when they are trying to explain something to you they have to repeat it many times until you understand each other!

Elpida: I see!

B: Let me tell you this, I have a granddaughter; my daughter is married in Turkey, I talked to my granddaughter today and I asked her what she was saying three times, I couldn't understand what she was saying! I don't have such difficulty understanding my daughter; her husband however (who is Turkish), is difficult for me to understand! It is like you speaking to me Greek the way they speak it in Greece, many things I cannot understand!

Elpida: I see, I see! That would be all, thank you very much for your help

B: No problem at all.

Gender: Male
Age: 74
Nationality: Cypriot
Current Status: Journalist

Elpida: Could you please tell me some things about yourself? How many years you have been leaving here, where were you born…
A: I was born in Agio Theodoro of Tilirka, my mother and my *κύρης* [Cypriot for father], that would be *πατέρας* [father] in Greek, were *Λινοβάμβακοι*; do you know what that is?
Elpida: Were they manufacturing fabrics? [Wrongly assumed from the root of the word, which in Greek means linen and cotton].
A: Since the time that the Ottomans were in Cyprus, up until 1923, they (*Λινοβάμβακοι*) were telling to the Orthodox that they are Christian and to the Muslims that they are Muslim. When they gave Cyprus to the English in 1923, some of them were Orthodox, and some were Muslim, I am one of them.
Elpida: I see…
A: I went to school in my village, then I arrived to Nicosia, and I became a teacher… And then I grew old!
Elpida: And what language were you speaking at home?
A: Greek, the way we speak it in Cyprus…
Elpida: Were you speaking any Turkish at all?
A: No… But there were many Turkish, Italian, Greek and Arabic words in our vocabulary… Our village was *Πύργος*, there they couldn't understand each other, and they found a person who had lived in Greece to translate.
Elpida: I see... And where did you learn how to speak Turkish?
A: At school and from my friends.
Elpida: I see… And you speak Turkish the way they speak it in Turkey or the way they speak it here in Cyprus?
A: No, no, like they speak it the Turkish speaking Cypriots…
Elpida: Is there a big difference?
A: Yes there is a big difference… Like those Greek speaking Cypriots who say that they are Greek and changed the way they speak, trying to be like the Greeks, those (Turkish speaking Cypriots) that studied in Turkey, are trying to speak like the Turks.
Elpida: Why do you think this is happening?
A: Well, they lived in Turkey for five or six years and they learnt it. But they are "fake". You can understand that they are Cypriot. There is a difference in the… *söyleniş?*
UM: Accent.
A: There are some differences in the accent. In school, the books are from Turkey, but for me the way that we speak Turkish here in Cyprus is much nicer. The Turks say that the best Turkish is spoken in Istanbul. *Ş eydir, yapmacı k yahu…*
Umut: Fake.
A: But they are "fake". *Yani uydurma, harfleri ş eyederler, eksildirler* …
UM: It is fabricated; they take or put letters in the words.
Elpida: And some Turkish speaking Cypriots started speaking like that?
A: Some of them… But you can recognise the Turkish speaking Cypriots…
Elpida: So at school they teach you standard Turkish?
A: They read standard Turkish, but the Turks speak differently, they do tricks when they speak, there lies the difference. The… how do you call it… *kelimeler?*
UM: Words.
A: The words are the same.
Elpida: So there is only a difference in pronunciation…
A: [Answering in Turkish]

UM: We cut it short, we don't make long sentences.

A: In a word we can say what we want; what we say in one word they say it in three. For example, in the same way you in Greece say "*μπουρεκάκι*" and here in Cyprus they say "*μπουρέκι*".

Elpida: Yes, yes, I see… And you think that this difference, in the way the Turkish speaking Cypriots speak in relation to the Turks, shows a cultural difference?

A: [Not comprehending].

Elpida: I mean culture-wise, are the Turkish speaking Cypriots different than the Turks and that becomes evident in their language?

A: There is a word that I didn't understand…. *Nedir o*?

[UM explaining the meaning of the word "cultural", and A answers the question in Turkish]

UM: The cultural difference is prominent in many aspects of life; it can't be restricted only to language.

[Making clarifications to UM so that the question can be posed to A in Turkish]

Elpida: So if a Turkish speaking Cypriot is speaking Turkish the way they speak it in Turkey, are they changing their culture along with their language?

A: The people that I know live in Turkey for many years, but when they come to Cyprus, or when I went to Turkey, when you see them you understand they are Cypriot. There are some Cypriots working in Turkey for many years, but they can only work in some places, there are some positions that are not given to them

Elpida: And why is that?

A: I believe that they don't consider us Turkish. Like in the army, there are Cypriot soldiers but they never go high up in rank.

Elpida: You previously mentioned that you speak Turkish the way they speak it here in Cyprus…

A: Yes, that's the way I speak but also the way I write…

Elpida: Ah, so you write like that as well?

A: Yes, that's what I do…

Elpida: And is that considered correct, by the Turkish people for example?

A: Why would I care about that? The only thing that I care about is if the Turkish speaking Cypriots understand me!

Elpida: And do the Turkish speaking Cypriots like this?

A: There are some of them who really like it. Even when we speak on the radio like that they enjoy it.

Elpida: I see, so they like it… I don't know if you have heard about it, it was in October when the newspaper was saying that they wanted to ban the Turkish Cypriot dialect from television and radio shows, and that now people have to speak only in standard Turkish on radio or television.

A: Yes I had heard about it but it didn't happen eventually. Those who work on the Turkish radio talk like that (Standard Turkish), but when a Turkish speaking Cypriot goes there, he speaks Cypriot Turkish. We have some words in Cypriot Turkish that the Turks didn't want us to use while broadcasting, so people quit their jobs. As far as I'm concerned I say whatever comes to my mind!

Elpida: Why do you think they wanted to implement that law in Cyprus?

A: They wanted to make us Turkish. Like on the other side (Greek speaking Cyprus) they want them to speak Greek the way they speak it in Greece, in the same way here Turkey wants us to speak Turkish the way they speak it in Turkey so that we will loose ourselves, we will become extinct.

Elpida: Why did you say that you are going to loose yourselves if you speak standard Turkish, what do you think will change?

A: If you speak like a Turk, if you behave like a Turk, what will you become in the end other than Turkish? But I think that they weren't able to go through with it.

Elpida: Do you know if they managed to pass the law?

A: No they didn't. But they brought some Turks from Turkey, I heard some of them speaking and I thought that they are Cypriot, because they live here for many years.
So, instead of us changing and becoming like them, they changed and became like us!
Elpida: I see! I think that would be all, thank you very much.
A: You're welcome.