Article

Affordances and Borderscapes: Language Ideologies, Nationalisms, Generations and Geographies of Resistance in Cyprus

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Abstract: In this article, we explore the ways language has been used in Cyprus during different historical periods as a means of a dividing power, with the use of Cypriot dialects as a form of resistance and reunification of the island. We situate these translanguaging themes within a context of affective biopolitics that impacts Cypriot generations in shaping their everyday life through borderscapes and nationalisms. More specifically, we first examine how the official languages of the island (Greek and Turkish) have been used in the dominant public sphere(s) of Cyprus to marginalise Cypriot dialects, which, in turn, have been used as an oral means of communication, but also to impose symbolic signifiers of the biopolitics of borders and nationalisms in dividing communities. Secondly, we explore ways in which Cypriot dialects have been used as forms of linguistic resistance to nationalism, offering an alternative collective identity for generations of both communities, even during periods when nationalism was dominant in both communities. The translanguaging exploration centres on a close discourse analysis of one particular radio programme—the 'Cypriot radio sketch'—that has been very popular among Cypriots since the appearance of radio in Cyprus in 1953. Finally, we analytically and discursively contextualise attempts of revival of the Cypriot dialects by younger generations as communicative forms of resistance to powers of partition, as well as translanguaging pathways to actualise their desire for the reunification of the island. We eclectically draw on a multi-method approach to combine datasets from interviews, media and social media while combining critical discourse analysis to theorise the affordances, borderscapes and affective biopolitics of generational language use within geographies of nationalism and resistance in the borderscapes of a divided Cyprus.

Keywords: Cyprus; language ideologies; translanguaging; nationalism; resistance; affective biopolitics; borderscapes

1. Introduction

The history of Cyprus is full of turbulent periods of ethnic conflict and power struggles initiated by nationalism diffused by several institutional powers within the largest communities of the island, known today as the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities (Ulusoy 2016; Heraclides 2011; Constantinou and Hatay 2010; Constantinou 2007). In this article, we consider language ideologies and translanguaging as one of the forces responsible for developing representations of the language structure and practices that created, through the years, conflicting intergroup identities for the two Cypriot communities. That is why we explore the ways language has been used in Cyprus during different historical periods as a means of a dividing power, with the use of the Cypriot dialect as a form of resistance and reunification of the island. We begin by examining how the official languages of the island (Greek and Turkish) have been imposed on all aspects of the formal social contexts of the two communities in an attempt to marginalise Cypriot dialects, which, in turn, have been used as an oral means of communication, but

also to impose symbolic signifiers of the biopolitics of borders and nationalisms in dividing communities (Makarychev and Yatsyk 2017). Subsequently, we explore translanguaging ways in which Cypriot linguistic variations have been used as forms of linguistic resistance to nationalism, offering an alternative relational identity among the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, even during periods when nationalism was dominant on the island. Finally, we analytically and discursively contextualise attempts at revival of the Cypriot dialect by younger generations as translanguaging communicative forms of resistance to powers of partition, as well as translanguaging pathways to actualise their desire for the re-unification of the island (Christou 2021; Fotiou and Ayiomamitou 2021). We expand on the concept of 'communicative equality' (Bystrytsky 2020), which finds basis in a Habermasian theory of communicative action that has, at its core, mutual understanding. However, even with linguistic interaction, there is a critical place for the politics of misunderstanding and disagreement. The latter, we contend, are components of conflict, inequality and the negation of communication for peace-building purposes.

The article explores the connection between communicative action and translanguaging as a practice in challenging circumstances, aiming to use it as a driver for social justice and a means of psycho-social support in cases of intergenerational trauma (e.g., Ateek forthcoming, 2022; Capstick and Ateek 2021). It argues that enforcing monolingual ideologies reflects majority power processes that contradict social justice principles, which advocate for inclusivity and the flourishing of diverse linguistic repertoires. Translanguaging embraces the holistic integration of multiple semiotic and linguistic resources. This translingual practice enables individuals to navigate various language boundaries, facilitating expansive meaning-making and inclusive knowledge production. Consequently, translanguaging holds significant social justice potential by acting as an intercultural linguistic tool that promotes transformative education and supports participatory approaches. The article is structured in the following way: we begin by situating language ideologies and nationalisms to ground the understanding of linguistic consumption and communicative devices through an ethnocultural lens. This section leads to the one that follows, which we then devote to unpacking how the official languages of Cyprus are enmeshed in how the segregation of communities unfolds in the Cypriot public sphere. The discussion draws on examples from the island's public life—based on news article samples and individuals' experiences as described in personal interviews—that illustrate the way the enforcement of official languages entangles with the bicommunal conflict that led to the island's division. These two sections set the grounding for the empirical section that draws on research datasets—selected scripts of Elli Avraamidou's Cypriot radio sketch broadcast by CyBC in the period 1964–1979—to discuss collective identities, which also extends to a second part on how the revival of languages transforms into a communicative form of resistance through the example of the movement 'Ως Δαμέ'.

Translanguaging, as described by García et al. (2014), embraces the holistic integration of multiple semiotic and linguistic resources. This practice enables individuals to navigate various language boundaries, facilitating expansive meaning-making and inclusive knowledge production. The Cypriot radio sketch, using the Greek Cypriot dialect, encapsulates translanguaging by integrating diverse linguistic elements for communicative and entertaining purposes. The sketches constitute a good example of how translanguaging works in Cyprus, as it emphasises the fluid boundaries between languages rather than strict linguistic categorisation. Cypriot speakers blend Cypriot dialect variations with Standard Greek and Turkish in their everyday multilingual repertoires. The plots of the Cypriot sketch analysed in this article mirror the reality of the diverse linguistic landscape of Cyprus. Consequently, translanguaging holds significant social justice potential by acting as an intercultural linguistic tool that promotes transformative education and supports participatory approaches. The 'Ως Δαμέ' demonstration is another good example of how language in Cyprus is often used as a form of sociopolitical resistance and cultural identity claim. The utilisation of the phrase 'Ως Δαμέ', rooted in the Greek Cypriot linguistic variation, within the protest represents a symbolic act of resistance against imposed linguistic norms

and dominant ideologies. This aligns with Blommaert's (2009) argument that language serves as a vehicle for political expression and cultural identification, fostering solidarity and opposition among demonstrators while emphasising the significance of local linguistic and cultural heritage within the broader sociopolitical context.

Thus, in Cyprus, translanguaging, in many cases, apart from an everyday fluid and linguistic practice, becomes a dynamic process of negotiating identities and confronting linguistic ideologies of dominance. Applying Hall and Schieffelin's (2004) argument in the Cypriot context, employing the Cypriot dialect within translanguaging practices reflects resistance against linguistic hegemony, challenging the privileging of standard languages and affirming the diverse linguistic landscape of Cyprus, which, in many cases, becomes a reinforcement of cultural pride and identity for the Cypriots.

Jaspers (2018) and Jaspers and Madsen (2016), however, criticise the concept of translanguaging as becoming too broad and vague, potentially obscuring important sociolinguistic distinctions. They argue that translanguaging risks being seen as a panacea for all language-related educational and social issues while overlooking the very real political and ideological constraints that shape language practices.

Also, Charalambous et al. (2020), while discussing the use of the term translanguaging in the context of Cyprus, highlight the versatility and context-dependent nature of the term, noting that what counts as 'translanguaging' can vary significantly across different sociolinguistic settings. According to the same authors, in the case of Cyprus, the concept of translanguaging may not fully capture the complex and often politically charged language dynamics, which involve not just fluid language practices but also sharp boundaries and hierarchies between different language varieties.

That is why we attempt a more nuanced understanding of language ideologies and power relations while analysing language practices in Cyprus. This article contributes to the understanding of how language/s can impose symbolic signifiers of the biopolitics of borders and nationalisms within a context of divided communities, while at the same time, linguistic resistance can be harnessed as a translanguaging trope of affective resistance through geographies of generational identity affordances. Thus, this article contributes to a range of literature on the interdisciplinary crossroads of ethnic and migration studies intersecting with language and ethnicity/identity studies, studies on divided societies and nationalism, as well as critical pedagogies and wider social theory. That is, we link the core contribution of this article with the position Giroux (2022) advances, in which translanguaging should also be understood by going beyond pedagogical, methodological or theoretical perspectives to incorporate political and decolonising stances in research and practice.

To be more explicit, we see this article's contribution as elevating the important role that language can play in not solely creating national divisions between groups and communities but also the potentially pivotal role in bringing together different groups across borderscapes and, in turn, creating peaceful relations through shared language. While we acknowledge that our case studies draw primarily from empirical data pools that focus on the Greek Cypriot perspective, we also highlight the importance of a comparative perspective in exploring, in tandem, the Turkish Cypriot case in future studies. This subsequent research shows the need for alternative and grounded language use whereby local dialects and languages have a space or outlet as forms of resistance and solidarity against top-down state-sponsored nationalism.

Grounding Key Literature: Translanguaging Ideologies and Bordering Geographies

This section serves as a distinct literature review section that brings together two core bodies of literature and contributes coherent discussions on how translanguaging is operationalised in this paper, as well as how it is situated within wider academic works. The literature review engages critically with the core concept of 'translanguaging', which we will explain further how it is situated within this article as pedagogy, language practice and language ideology but also as a means of agency. We view the use of the concept within

the 'ideologies' that we present in this article, be those through nationalisms, historical events or affective biopolitics through our data pools, but also the bordering 'geographies' of borderscapes in the divided island of Cyprus. We thus combine affect, space and time as the grounding context to then discuss the agentic potential of translanguaging.

Before we engage critically with those bodies of literature, a journey into how we operationalise the concept of translanguaging is necessary through similar dialogic engagement with key pieces of literature.

Just to be clear, once again, the concept of 'translanguaging' in our research is a versatile and agile concept that links with communicative action and linguistic modes of pedagogy as a driver for social justice and a vehicle for psycho-social support from intergenerational trauma. In its versatility and agility, translanguaging allows for inclusivity and openness so more than one linguistic repertoire can be engaged by users. This very praxis of openness and porosity of translanguaging allows for an embracing of a holistic view of sociocultural communicative interactions by tapping into multiple linguistic resources; hence, individuals and groups are fluidly enabled to become mobile and moving through multiple worlds without being blocked by boundaries in meaning-making and inclusive knowledge production. This is social justice by practice and critical pedagogic practice through intercultural possibilities. Languages thus become possibilities for transformative education and participatory socialisation instead of rigid devices to demarcate identities through the semiotics and signifiers of nationalism.

At the same time, it would be erroneous to deny the relationship between ethnicity and language, as indicated by studies in the literature. However, our focus here is on activating a sense of agency when such multilingual/multimodal repertoires facilitate learning and intercultural inclusion. That is why we refer to path/ways, as translanguaging can be harnessed and appropriated agentically by individuals and groups. This clearly aligns with the position that "Translanguaging embraces the continuous activation of all meaning-making resources during interacting, reading, writing, signing, creating, or thinking. Translanguaging sees people's choices for language use as performance in response to social demands, such as filtering certain communicative features based on politics, nationality, space, or people" (Holcomb et al. 2023).

Moving on now to the literature on translanguaging, one key body of work is that which relates to translanguaging for inclusive education as a decolonising pedagogy (Fang et al. 2022; Steele et al. 2022). This is because translanguaging as a linguistic practice takes a step further from multilingualism in that the process of translanguaging itself challenges, according to Li (2023, p. 203), "raciolinguistic ideologies that view bilingual learners as having separate languages and languaging lives". Such linguistic practices link social justice mindsets through a process of co-learning and transpositioning with racial/ethnic identities in each person's translanguaging sense of being (ibid.). These processes enable participants to break from the prescriptive of roles and immerse into the perspectives of others through the communicative practices of translanguaging and the transmodalities of co-learning with others, which can foster a great sense of possibilities of coexistence and a sense of empathy becoming habitual and interwoven with lived experiences through layers of emplacement, transcending boundaries of historical presets and expanding thinking about lifeworlds. This translanguaging pathway is one of 'heteroglossic hope' (Sembiante and Tian 2023) and, in a sense, a fortified set of pedagogies of hope for social justice.

Another key area of literature is that on borders/borderscapes and the related issue of nationalism. The literature on these key concepts is vast and spans a number of historical periods, geographies, locations, issues and themes. In order to narrow down the topical context to what is relevant to this article, we focus on the contemporary understanding of borders in their conceptual approach. And one of the most helpful approaches is seeing borders as 'meeting points' whereupon, as physical landscapes and specific places, they are conceived as where encounters, interactions, clashes and subsequent reassessment and redefinition of different theories and processes can happen (Mogiani 2023). This approach is a more comprehensive framework that does not look at borders as passive but as active,

with all the complexity of contesting and generating social affectivities and social change. This understanding encapsulates our view of bordering in the context of divided Cyprus.

Yet, there is complexity with borderscapes that often function like institutions in geopolitical and sociocultural terms: either disrupting or controlling, they are shaping processes and power relations outside their physical manifestations and demarcations (Haselsberger 2014). Even more recently, these manifestations have contributed to critical border studies in which more sophisticated concepts and methodologies have evolved that include insights into the spatialities, temporalities and sociologies of borderscapes, for instance, the 'aesthetic turn' gaining prominence (Moze and Spiegel 2022). These insights connect to the visual geographies of power entanglements that involve subversion and contestation of borders, especially in critical migration studies. In the case of the latter, while borders remain features of the politics of the nation state, the multiple and overlapping crises at the border also challenge the state-centric and nationalistic agendas when it comes to policing and securitising tropes, the management of borders and exclusion of freedom of movement, which also questions other basic rights. These issues also trigger conversations about ethics, boundedness and inclusiveness (Laine 2021). We thus need to conceptualise and articulate borders as borderlands/borderscapes that require contextualisation, employing a post/colonial and migratory/historical perspective. Additionally, we should consider the political/cultural factors that significantly influence our understanding of borders within the ordinary and arbitrary facets of lived experience while acknowledging their continuous shaping by power dynamics.

2. Materials and Methods

The article follows a multi-method approach that enables the use of combined datasets from media and social media sources along with qualitative interview data. The media and interview data and analysis constitute part of a PhD research that was conducted by the authors in 2006–2011. The PhD research included studies of different ways of communication—interpersonal[1], through print and broadcast media and through social media—between two communities in Cyprus. In this article, we use data and analyses that derive mainly from interviews conducted in 2009, the broadcast media (details follow) and extracts from Facebook posts to discuss the role of language ideologies in Cyprus. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted with individuals of various ages from both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. The aim was to collect communicative patterns across different historical periods. Data from Facebook spanning different historical periods was also utilised to illustrate how users blend various linguistic varieties in Cyprus across different contexts.

Analytically, for our qualitative study, we draw on critical discourse analysis as an approach for critically describing, interpreting and explaining the ways in which discourses construct, maintain and legitimise social inequalities as regards the enforcement of official languages on the Cypriots of the two communities. This incorporates the exclusion of the Cypriot Greek and Cypriot Turkish linguistic variations from many official aspects of public life. We combine this analysis with other conceptual tools and insights from social language processing while we situate the analysis within geographies of nationalism and resistance, as those emerge in a context of division through affective borderscapes and biopolitics of everyday life.

More specifically, we examine the Cypriot radio sketch, a programme that stood out in the media landscape of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) because of the use of the Cypriot Greek variation instead of the official languages and also because of its alternative discourses despite being broadcast by the island's public broadcaster. This was quite progressive for the time, particularly because a female author was prominently involved. We also consider how gendered discourses influenced the production and reception of these programmes (Charalambides et al. 2008; Maniou and Photiou 2013). The use of the Cypriot Greek linguistic variation instead of Standard Greek allows us to explore the notion of 'communicative equality' (Bystrytsky 2020). This analysis aims to understand how the

alternativeness that appears in the Cypriot radio sketch's use of language and discourse is also a form of resistance to the forces of nationalism that dominated the public life of Cyprus. Even though alternative discourses have always existed in the Cypriot media landscape (Şahin and Karayianni 2020), they have been oppressed by the dominance of the official discourses that usually expressed hegemonic master narratives and established polemical social representations (Avraamidou and Psaltis 2019). Thus, in this article, we follow Gallagher and Prior's (2014) suggestion of using audio media in capturing significant periods for the conflict story as "phonography is particularly useful for highlighting hidden or marginal aspects of places and their inhabitants" (p. 268).

The selection we made for this article of individual sketches for analysis was based on their historical significance[2], i.e., the sketch was broadcast in a period of bicommunal conflict or on a date that was symbolically significant to the Greek Cypriot community—and on whether their title or the names of characters implied reference to bicommunal relations or the Turkish Cypriot community in general (see Table 1 for details).

Table 1. List of selected radio sketches.

Acronym	Broadcast Date	Historical Significance of the Broadcast Date/Period	Title
Sketch 1	1 March 1964	Escalation of bicommunal conflict	Kali Karkia/"Good Heart"
Sketch 2	27 March 1966	Two days after the Greek National Day (25 of March[3]) in the period of bicommunal conflict	Chorkon mou agapimeno/"My beloved village"
Sketch 3	19 November 1978	A few years after 1974, the year of coup d'état and Turkish invasion	Me tin agapin/"With love"
Sketch 4	11 March 1979	A few years after 1974, the year of coup d'état and Turkish invasion	I Kipros mas itan nan paradisos/"Our Cyprus would have been a paradise"

In order for the analysis of the Cypriot radio sketch to make sense, however, one needs to grasp how the official languages have been used as tools for the development of nationalistic discourses in the Cypriot society during the years leading to the island's division in 1974.

3. Language Ideologies and Nationalism in Cyprus

The Cypriot dialect, Kypriaka, is a very significant component for the communication of Cypriot communities since it is the linguistic code—used face-to-face—on which the Cypriots heavily relied for their communication during the 19th century even though print media were introduced in Cyprus as early as 1878. Until the middle of the 20th century, less than half of the population could be considered literate; thus, writing was a form of communication largely confined to power, i.e., the state or the church. The Cypriot dialect has many linguistic variations; however, this article will focus on the Cypriot Greek used mainly by the Greek Cypriot community and on the Cypriot Turkish used almost exclusively by the Turkish Cypriot community. The two variations of the Cypriot dialect, the vocabulary of which is largely common to Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots (Tsiplakou 2006, p. 337), are the ones used by the citizens until today despite the fact that each community also had its own distinct language, i.e., Standard Greek and Standard Turkish, standing in a diglossic relationship with the official language of the island, Greek and Turkish (Hadjioannou et al. 2011).

It should be clarified, however, that the Cypriot dialect cannot be defined as one thing but rather as a translingual practice that always uses a combination of features from Standard Greek and Standard Turkish. As Karyolemou (2006) contends, the Cypriot variations are rather patterns of dialect continua in which the speakers adapt and situate their communicative behaviours according to the interactional dynamics of the social

relationships within the community. Before the 1930s, the British colonial power considered that the Cypriots belonged to two religious communities, Christian and Muslim, rather than ethnic groups (Karayianni 2011, pp. 50–51), and the curricula of the schools were initially based on religious themes. Nationalism from Greece and Turkey, however, had gradually been imported, shaping them accordingly with textbooks and teachers arriving on the island from Greece and Turkey. The print media adopted by the rising middle and upper classes became dominant as part of the wider process of 'modernisation'. The Cypriots were then exposed to new ideas like (a) colonisation, (b) urbanisation and (c) university education. The dominance of the print media and the use of Standard Greek provided a legitimisation for the argument that the Cypriot Christians were Greeks and, as Panayiotou suggests, this also supported the claim that they should be closer to "the colonising West rather than the colonised native Middle Easterns'" (Panayiotou 2006, p. 289). According to Anderson, the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of 'imagined community', which, in its basic morphology, set the stage for the modern nation (Anderson [1983] 1991, p. 46). In Cyprus, print technology has been a tool for creating an 'imagined community' for the Greek Cypriots since, through school books and newspapers, the Greek language was established in their perception as a "tool of virtue" that could define one's social class and connect one with Greece (Sciriha 1995). Bryant refers to an article from the Greek Cypriot newspaper *Kypriakos Filax* (1912) to illustrate how newspapers became tools for the enhancement of national virtue. The newspaper article author asserted:

> that the Ottoman Empire—Turkey as he called it—would have vanished from the face of the earth a long time before if it had not been buttressed by European powers with an interest in its survival (Bryant 2004, p. 142).

In contrast, the oral culture, dominated by the Cypriot dialect, was largely excluded in the print media in order to create a desire for belongingness in the "imagined community" of the modern Greek state. Karyolemou's (1994) research into the Greek Cypriot press highlights that even in the 1990s, authors of serials and letters in newspapers blame the Cypriot dialect for the "linguistic weakness" of the Cypriots and their inability to use the Greek language "properly". Similarly, one of the objectives of the first Turkish Cypriot newspapers in Cyprus, Zaman, was to "make sure that the Turkish language survives on the island of Cyprus" (Azgın 1998, p. 642).

The Cypriots, in a sense, maintained a form of bilingualism (diglossia) since they used the Cypriot dialect in their everyday life, but they had to use the Greek language in any kind of official or status-related communication (Arvaniti 2006; Papapavlou 2007; Papapavlou and Kouridou 2007; Yiakoumetti et al. 2005).

The turbulent years following the 1960 Cyprus' independence led to the physical separation of the two communities and Turkey's military intervention (invasion for the Greek Cypriots and peace operation for the Turkish Cypriots) in 1974, dividing the island in two: the southern part controlled by the RoC administrated by the Greek Cypriots and the northern part of the island controlled by the self-proclaimed in 1983 Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)[4] administrated by the Turkish Cypriot community. This intensified the alienation between the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots and their institutions like educational and media systems in which language ideologies developed. The Greek Cypriot educational system remained closely linked with the one in Greece, having Standard Greek as the main language taught and mirroring both the curricula and their language textbooks until 2011 (Hadjioannou et al. 2011, p. 529). Similarly, the Turkish Cypriot educational system remained strongly connected to the one of Turkey, having Standard Turkish as the main language taught until 2005, when the curricula were reformed (Hadjioannou et al. 2011, p. 541). The reformation in the Turkish Cypriot community acknowledges the Cypriot Turkish as an element of the local Cypriot culture and modern Greek as the language of the neighbouring society (Hadjioannou et al. 2011, p. 543). Although the new Greek Cypriot curricula do not take a stance on assigning the official language status to Standard Greek or Cypriot Greek, it:

focuses on deploying the naturalistic acquisition of Cypriot-Greek as a means of fostering metalinguistic knowledge and sociolinguistic awareness with regard to the two varieties of Greek spoken on the island within a radical genre/critical literacy perspective (Hadjioannou et al. 2011, p. 532).

The use of the official languages Standard Greek and Standard Turkish dominates the press in both communities until today (May 2024), with the varieties of the Cypriot dialect coming to the surface only in cases like adding a humorous commentary within an article or a story, but in these cases, the reader will be signified about the use of spoken language with quotation marks (Hadjioannou et al. 2011, p. 517). In the Turkish Cypriot community, the newspaper *Avrupa* (formerly named *Afrika*)—a newspaper expressing the oppositional discourse—often uses Cypriot Turkish as its written language.

Broadcast media appeared in Cyprus in the 1950s following the path of the print media; in terms of adopting the same dominant discourse, there were certain—but limited—moments in which alternative discourses could be expressed. The most important one was the Cypriot radio sketch (the subsequent empirical section provides a detailed analysis)—a form of theatrical radio play written in the Cypriot dialect—that has been broadcast every Sunday at noon by the Cyprus Broadcast Corporation (CyBC) since the 1950s. The use of Standard Greek dominates until today in RoC's media landscape; however, moments of Cypriot Greek slips into the broadcast programmes, especially in cases of hosting live shows with guests (Hadjioannou et al. 2011, p. 517). An identical situation appears in the Turkish Cypriot community, with Standard Turkish dominating almost exclusively the broadcast media and Cypriot Turkish used only moderately in the context of talk shows hosted mostly by private media.

Such an example was the daily programme BIZ/Εμείς (the Turkish and Greek words for 'Us') aired until 2018. The use of both Cypriot Greek and Cypriot Turkish surfaced in the content of the programme regularly.

Cypriot culture is certainly shaped by how communication unravels as a heuristic device container of the aesthetics, ethics and performativities of feeling, existing, belonging—all components of how identities are negotiated and articulated in the public sphere. Language is, therefore, definitely a critical element in any society, but as Panayiotou points out, language is particularly critical in Cypriot cultural politics since it not only separates Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots into two communities but also causes internal status divisions (Panayiotou 2006, p. 29). For example, many in the Greek Cypriot community consider the Cypriot Greek language a subordinate branch of 'correct' Greek. Interestingly enough, quite the opposite happens in the Turkish Cypriot community, which uses Cypriot Turkish more and more as a sign of distinction of their identity in relation to the Turkish-speaking immigrants, mainly from Turkey, who settled in the northern part of the island[5] (Hadjioannou et al. 2011, p. 538). The Turkish Cypriots' insistence on using Cypriot Turkish is, in a sense, their way of creating a hyper-border between them and the Turkish settlers that can be understood, according to Richardson (2016), like "a fibre-optic cable, connecting instantaneously a specific locale with far broader debates that serve to both deny and reconstitute ideas of national space, belonging and identity" (p. 202).

The dominance of Standard Greek in the Greek Cypriot public sphere of print—in contrast to the dominance of the Cypriot dialect for oral communication between the two communities—significantly affected the Greek Cypriot community. Panayiotou suggests it could be considered the first structural form of censorship in the public sphere (Panayiotou 2006, p. 29). As Karayianni (2011) argues, this censorship operated on two levels. Not only were Turkish Cypriot readers excluded, but a second and different linguistic code—a "national print language" (Anderson [1983] 1991, p. 46)—was imposed on the Greek Cypriots.

Language policy choices have created inclusive or exclusive identities by favouring certain languages over others, impacting power dynamics and social participation. For example, recognising only one official language, i.e., Standard Greek and Standard Turkish, can exclude those not proficient in it from positions of power, leading to tensions between those who are proficient and not proficient speakers (Karyolemou 2003). For example,

during discussions in 1986 about the language of instruction in tertiary education, the leftists and the rightists aligned to support Greek and Turkish as languages of instruction against the centrist party advocating for a Greek-only solution. In 1989, the leftist party supported the inclusion of English as an official language at the University of Cyprus, while other parties did not (ibid.). These alignments highlight how political ideologies influence language policy decisions and reflect broader societal considerations in the context of the Cyprus conflict. They underline that politics have also been fluid in the turbulent history of Cyprus, with political ideologies changing their discourses through the years. Thus, it should be clarified that the analysis that follows refers to particular historical periods within specific political contexts.

In the post-separation years, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots found themselves in a divided society in which the official languages hegemonically conquered every official aspect of their public life, their Cypriot dialect variations being instead both isolated from each other and largely underestimated by official bodies and institutions. This has contributed to developing a new 'borderscape'—established and at the same time continuously traversed by a number of bodies, discourses, practices and relationships (Brambilla 2015, p. 19)—between the two communities, which makes intergroup relations harder even in cases in which there is a willingness in the members of the two groups to develop a relationship. For example, drawing from qualitative empirical data deriving from in-depth interviews with Cypriots of the two communities, which aimed, among others, to understand the role of language on bicommunal relations in Cyprus, Costa, one of the Greek Cypriot interviewees, highlighted the difficulties he faces in such an attempt:

> Some of them [Turkish Cypriot friends] speak Greek very well, Nuretti [Turkish Cypriot friend] for example can also read newspapers and books in Greek, he has one room in his house that is a library with books in English, Greek and Turkish. With some others we speak in English and because my English is not so good there is a problem. Communication needs a language, a common one. Maybe that's why other leftist companions more easily [than himself] participate in this kind of communication and they expand their bicommunal relations on an interpersonal level, because they can communicate better [in English].

Another Greek Cypriot interviewee, Lefteris, not only underlined the need to tolerate and respect the language of the Turkish Cypriot community, but he also offered an interesting explanation in relation to the fact that the behaviour of accepting the language of the other is usually a characteristic of a leftist ideology. He said:

> It is really important to learn to respect each other, to know about each other's religion, to respect each other's symbols, to hear each other's language without 'shivering'. And I'm not a communist or anything [he emphasised this in his tone].

The discursive reference to a (shivering) 'chilling' effect in the extract above is particularly intriguing in correlation with the ideological underpinnings of the Left[6]. In the next section, we now extend this discussion to the empirical discursive realm of how the performativity of collective identities through language unfolded in the public sphere.

The discussion on the Cypriot dialect's potential deployment as a form of resistance should, however, include research that highlights the use of the Cypriot dialect in some contexts. Recent studies have shown, in different contexts, that the Cypriot dialect persists despite attempts to standardise Greek. For example, Sophocleous and Ioannidou (2020) underscore the persistent presence of dialectical features in public education despite efforts to enforce Standard Greek, while Stavrou (2020) also depicts that translanguaging in the Cypriot educational context enables students to expand to actively participate in conversations, construct knowledge effectively and create communicative spaces for personal narratives and additional information sharing. Similarly, research by Pavlou (2004) shows that the dialect is employed in media contexts within the media landscape to convey verbatim utterances, add humour, emphasise points or maintain authenticity, challenging notions of their exclusion from public discourse.

Furthermore, research reveals the integration of dialectical features in written communication. This is particularly evident in digital platforms, such as social media and texting. Themistocleous (2015) demonstrates how written forms often mimic oral discourse, leading to the incorporation of dialectical elements for various communicative purposes. By blending the Cypriot Greek dialect and Standard Greek, users can express different aspects of their identity and play with their online persona, reflecting social structures and linguistic diversity within the Greek Cypriot speech community.

Thus, the use of the Cypriot dialect seems to have a multifaceted role within society and not exclusively one of resistance. However, instances of linguistic resistance indeed exist, but they coexist with broader patterns of language use that reflect the complex interplay between historical heritage and contemporary communicative practices. That is why, in this article, we do not define Cypriot dialect as a unified/fixed linguistic variation but rather as a translingual practice through which the speaker navigates between prominent or less prominent linguistic varieties to develop communicative patterns and identities that adapt or resist to the sociocultural and political contexts.

4. Collective Identities and Oral Languages

4.1. The Cypriot Radio Sketch

In the turbulent period of the bicommunal conflict in 1964, when the press, even the one expressing a leftist discourse, was stating: "Our brave soldiers isolated and hit non-stop the mutineers" (*Haravgi* 29 April 1964). A language suitably dressed, as Billig argues, is used to address the imagined audience:

> [i]n addressing the imagined national audience, they dress it in rhetorical finery and, then, these speakers-as-outfitter hold a mirror so the nation can admire itself addressing (Billig 1995, p. 98).

The Cypriot radio sketch was expressing an alternative discourse in Cypriot Greek, even though the Cypriot Radio Service was considered by the Greek Cypriots as a means of promoting the English propaganda against their desire for enosis [annexation of the island to the Greek state] (Sofokleous 2008, p. 54). The Cypriot radio sketch, using the Cypriot Greek variation—the audience's most familiar linguistic code—with plots that referred to the rural way of life—a characteristic of the Cypriot society of that time, was something with which the Cypriots could identify (Photiou 2010, pp. 3–4).

In Sketch 1, the coexistence of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots in a village is emphasised. The plot is built around the relationship between co-villagers of the two communities that coexist peacefully, sharing everyday cultural things. Their harmonious life is interrupted when the Turkish Cypriot villagers are forcefully taken [Epian tous me to zori (They took them by force)]—from their houses and moved them into enclaves. The author then places the Greek Cypriot protagonists in the position of the heroic characters who risk their lives to protect their co-villagers' herds and properties in cases of natural disasters like floods—until the day the Turkish Cypriots would be able to return to the village. The story ends happily with the return of the Turkish Cypriot protagonists—after a successful escape from the enclave—to the village and with the wedding of the two young Greek Cypriot protagonists, in which the best man and the maid of honour are their Turkish Cypriot friends who returned home. The significance of this frame of reference lies in several aspects that mostly have to do with the language used in the Cypriot radio sketch.

The Cypriot Greek used in the sketch defines the Turkish Cypriots both as victims and as friends—(almost like family); the Greek Cypriot characters several times in the story refer to their relationship with Turkish Cypriots [opos t'aderkia, meaning 'like siblings']. This contrasts with the story communicated by the Greek Cypriot press at the time, in which the Turkish Cypriots were not mentioned or defined (Karayianni 2011, pp. 154–55), and instead, the image of the enemy stays undefined since it is not labelled with the Turkish ethnic identity. When the Greek Cypriot character refers to those who took their Turkish Cypriot co-villagers, away she says: "The cars came and took all of our Turkish co-villagers"; in this discourse, it is like the bad character of the story is not a clearly defined person but takes

the form of an object like 'a car'. It is a character that the author does not want the audience to imagine having a human image with any specific characteristics or ethnicity. This absent use of language to refer to the ones responsible was rather aiming at not becoming clearly political in the sense of giving hints about who to blame for this, an event for which, even until today, there have been different deviating accounts.

Furthermore, Emine, the Turkish Cypriot female protagonist, mentions when she is being asked how the rest of the co-villagers live in the enclaves:

> They [Turkish Cypriot co-villagers] remember their village, their houses, their gardens; they remember what a good time they had with you [the Greek Cypriots] and they are crying day and night. Why? Neighbour, why are our people [the Cypriot Greek phrase i diki mas is used here, meaning probably the Turks] doing all these to us? We [meaning the Turkish Cypriots] want the Christians, we love them, they never did anything bad to us... will [they] force us to hate them [the Christians]?

This last phrase/question of Emine ("will they force us to hate them?") reminds us of what Latif, a 72-year-old male Turkish Cypriot interviewee, told us when we faced the huge flags of Turkey of the so-called TRNC and the newly built minarets in a joined visit to the northern part of Cyprus. He said in fluent Cypriot Greek:

> They [meaning Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot administration] decided to make us Turks. They believe that we don't know who we are, that we aren't Turks enough and they are trying to convince us that this is who we are. They say that we are faithless/seculars so they are building huge minarets and mosques in every village to make us faithful but you'll never see a Turkish-Cypriot in there. So, if a solution doesn't come in the next year it will be more difficult for us.

Latif's comment does support that, at least nowadays, Turkish Cypriots are 'forced' by Turkey and certain Turkish Cypriot elements in Cyprus to adopt nationalistic ideas that oppose their feeling of belonging in Cyprus—instead of Turkey—and it could provide a possible interpretation of the 'enforcement discourse' produced by the sketch but still absent in the dominant discourses.

In Sketch 2, the discourse appears to be closer to the one produced by the news articles of that time. The plot is again built around the ordinary rural life of a Greek Cypriot family, and emphasis is given to the relationship created between the protagonists and their village, the attachment to their homeland. The story reaches its climax when Fytis, one of the family's sons, informs his parents and his older brother of his intention to migrate to Athens in order to avoid his military service. A family discussion is initiated in an attempt to prevent his decision, having as a central point the crucial importance of one's devotion to their homeland. Here are some indicative parts of the discussion:

> Kakoullou (mother): You were saying that you love the land, the sun, every tree, every flower, every green leaf and you were anxiously waiting to finish school in order to settle in your village forever? You used to sit with us and you were dreaming of making your village's land a paradise? [...] Every tree, every plant that you used to say that you love like humans of the earth, because they are similar to us, they are thirsty for life, they are trying hard to grow up and reach high. "Look mum" you used to say to me, "Look at their roots how firmly they are rooted in the soil and how they torture it to expand as deep as they can and to suck life from its gut".

> Panais (father): [...] Are you scared? You deny defending your land my son?

> Fytis: I even give my life for my land father as you know but I don't [want to] get a gun in my hands.

Fytis' mother is using some strong words to describe this attachment to the village and to emphasise the strong feeling of belonging that traditionally existed in the Cypriot

village communities. Although this kind of land metaphor is used in a number of nationalistic/propagandistic discourses in the world as a metonymic stereotype to create an imagination that conveys the representation of the nation (Billig 1995), this 1966 sketch introduces a different kind of nationalism to the one produced by the print media of that period—a more Cypriot-centric one. As Panayiotou (2007, p. 12) argues during that period:

> the imagery of the land of Cyprus was demoted from a mother [as it used to appear in the popular poetry/songs in the Ottoman rule period] to a 'daughter' of other lands (Greece or Turkey) [...] In the imagery of Greek-Cypriot nationalism the goal was 'enosis' [...] Thus, in the imaginary, Cyprus was a land with no self-identifying locals/Cypriots.

In the sketch's discourse, the idea of the village/homeland is one as something very precious, like 'paradise'. This idea of a village as paradise—found or lost—is very common for Cypriots even today. Dikomitis (2004) describes how her Greek Cypriot father, being himself both a refugee from Larnaka of Lapithos—a village in the occupied part of Cyprus—and a migrant in Belgium, always refers to his village as his lost paradise. She mentions:

> In every single sentence I hear his longing to return to his village Larnaka of Lapithos. Whenever we travelled and saw something overwhelmingly beautiful my Larnatsjiotis—father compared it to Larnakas: 'It is breath-takingly beautiful. Just like my village.' He compares a Nepalese rural village, a British field and a French mountain with Larnakas. When it is beautiful, it is 'like Larnakas'. Mia fora kai ena kairo (once upon a time) . . . The traditional start of a Greek fairy-tale. This is how I thought about Larnakas tis Lapithou, as a place from a fairy-tale. I imagined this village as a celestial place as such only exists in fairy-tales (Dikomitis 2004, p. 8).

It is like a paradise lost; thus, the nostalgic feeling that characterises the language used to describe the village explains this degree of idealisation. This language of idealisation used in the sketch could be interpreted as a way to emphasise to the audience what could be lost in the case of serious bicommunal conflict. The sketch ends with the disaster of the family's trees and fields by the Turks of the nearby village, as a villager explains: "The Turks came from the nearby village". That is when Fytis states that he decided not to leave his village and to instead attend his military service:

> And I wanted to leave. . . to abandon my place, my village, our fields, our fortune, our land. Am I such a coward? Such a coward? My beloved village I swear on my life that I will stay with you to defend you even if I have to give the last drop of my blood.

Thus, the idealisation of the Cypriot natural environment draws attention to the need to protect this quality of Cypriot life instead of creating the need of belonging in another 'idealisation' that of the imagined Greek nation.

Referent to the post-1974 sketches, whenever bicommunal relations are part of the story, they are presented in a positive way, even when conflict is mentioned. For example, in Sketch 3, the story is built around the close relationship developed between two Cypriot families—one of each community—that live peacefully next to each other. Avraamidou emphasises this closeness in the first part of the sketch through the description of several joint everyday activities of the families that have become elements of Cypriot consciousness as residues of the traditional way of living that used to exist until 1974. Thus, the author initially uses language that creates a nostalgic feeling in the audience for this ideal life that they used to have in the paradise of peaceful coexistence. Then, Avraamidou refers to the painful issue of the 1974 conflict, that of the "missing persons", but again, in a positive way, which exonerates the Turkish Cypriots from any responsibility on that issue. She places Nazim, the Turkish Cypriot male protagonist, in the position of the 'saviour' who escapes from the Turkish-controlled area to go to his homeland (located in the RoC) to inform his

GC neighbour that he saw her missing son alive and that he helped him when the latter was in need. The 'missing persons issue' is of crucial significance for the Greek Cypriot discourse, which developed after 1974. As Panayiotou explains:

> For the Greek-Cypriots the missing persons were hostages that were alive until the proof of the opposite. [...] For the Greek-Cypriot relatives of the missing persons that meant that they had to carry the weight of being a symbol of the collective memory (Panayiotou 2009, pp. 9–10).

In the sketch's discourse, however, the pain of the Greek Cypriot mother who is missing her son is 'managed' in a slightly different way: it becomes a symbol of bicommunal coexistence and integration since the missing Greek Cypriot son had been saved by a Turkish Cypriot friend. The imagined paradise emerges again in this sketch based on the Cypriot way of living instead of the Cypriot landscape this time. Avraamidou once again uses language that promotes an alternative 'imagination' for the Greek Cypriots, that of Cypriotism. The components that she emphasises in this sketch are the cultural elements that Mavrastas (1998) calls: "sui generis characteristics—of Cypriotism—that differentiate the Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots from the Greeks and the Turks and create a common ground between the two communities of the island" (p. 86).

In Sketch 4, the author is using the story of the two young men, a Greek Cypriot and a Turkish Cypriot soldier (who lives in the house of the first), to communicate to the audience the need to re-enhance the trust and reliance on the other community that existed before the separation. The protagonists appear to see the separation as a temporary situation that is unpleasant, but at the same time, at least for the Greek Cypriot protagonist, the fact that his house is inhabited by Turkish Cypriots seems to be relieving since he considers it protected. Avraamidou places her protagonists in the position of depending on each other's help in order to minimise each other's life's difficulties. Therefore, with the title of the sketch, "Our Cyprus would have been a paradise", the author almost directs the audience to think and behave similarly to the protagonists in order to rediscover the lost paradise of Cyprus.

The language used by Avraamidou's 1970s sketches constructs meaning around the 'missing persons' and the loss of properties issues, overlooking their traumatic aspect and focusing on the mutual aid and friendship that existed between the two communities, even in such complicated circumstances. Avraamidou compares the quality of life in the two communities before and after 1974, and she uses language that idealises the common past by giving different meanings to the definitions of 'we' and 'other'. The love that is mentioned in the title of the fourth sketch analysed refers to the love that existed and needs to be re-enhanced between the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots; thus, *we* is clearly defined as the Cypriots, including both communities, whose peaceful coexistence was interfered with by the other, which is referred to in the sketch as 'i kseni', meaning the foreigners.

Without clearly defining who these foreigners are, she leaves the audience to make their own assumptions of the 'other'. If we place the sketch in its historical context, November 1978, we realise that in the audience's minds, the other is referred to as all the external forces that spread nationalism on the island both in the past and present.

4.2. The Revival of Oral Languages as Communicative Forms of Resistance

In the contemporary hybrid media system era, in which communicative spaces can expand beyond the physical environment, any language rules and borderscapes could potentially vanish. The use of the Cypriot dialect variations, for example, thrives in online spaces (Sophocleous and Themistocleous 2014), opening up possibilities for alternative forms of the public sphere that might have existed in Cyprus before the language borderscapes were established to revive.

Hence, it is not surprising that issues like the use of the Cypriot dialect as the official language of a united Cyprus are raised in the context of social media, even at the very beginning of the popularity of these communication tools in 2008. Such issues cannot be

easily discussed in the dominant public sphere(s) of Cyprus. The extract below comes from a pro-reunification Facebook Group post:

> I think it is important for a united Cyprus if there is a written common language. A historic and unofficial one does exist. But it is considered a dialect and has not been written, preserved and honoured as a dictionary to my knowledge—at least not one accessible to both communities! If there was an available Cypriot dictionary, it will bridge the gap between the two communities. The Cypriot language, which our ancestors used when living together, is the only true identity for Cypriots. [. . .] It is the only thing that is distinctively Cypriot! IT MUST BE WRITTEN (ONE CYPRUS-ONE CYPRIOT POPULATION, 12 February 2008, accessed in March 2009).

The fact that the Cypriot dialect as the potential common linguistic code in a united Cyprus is raised in a Facebook Group post in 2008 is indicative evidence that despite the suppression that Kypriaka (both the Cypriot Greek and Cypriot Turkish variations) has received for many decades, it is still not only thriving as Hadjioannou et al. (2011, p. 550) state but is used as an element of resistance to the island's partition.

It is around this notion of resistance that the political movement 'Ως Δαμέ' (Enough is Enough) was created in 2021 using the Cypriot dialect as its main language, but also as a symbol of resistance to the island's partition, to the way the RoC's government was managing the pandemic, and, to the corruption that was conquering all aspects of Cypriot society. The movement was initiated by the Greek Cypriot community, but an open call for participation was made to the Turkish Cypriot community. Ως Δαμέ's initial mobilisation was a peaceful demonstration in which hundreds of Greek Cypriots participated[7], but it was confronted with profound violence by the RoC's police, of which live videos have reached the public through social media. This led to a massive reaction on the citizens' level and the organisation of another demonstration a week later in which thousands of Greek Cypriots participated.

The movement's persistence in using the Cypriot dialect in their name, on official announcements and on their demonstrations' placards has received criticism by several factors of state. The Minister of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth, Prodromos Prodromou, for example, stated how the movement's name was spelt wrongly, backing his argument to the fact that Ως Δαμέ is ancient Greek and not Cypriot Greek, that is why it should be spelt as Ως Δαμαί:

> as regards the dictating effort, to use an expression from the Cypriot dialect in place of the common Greek, which of course cannot be criticized—with the exception of the misspelling—we should recall that the word "damai", which is found and as "dahamai" (=here, hamai) comes directly from ancient Greek. Highlighting the origins and status of this people [the Greek Cypriots] (Prodromou's statement published in Philenews (2021), 30 March 2021).

So, according to the minister, it is ironic how the attempt of some people to differentiate their identity with the use of the Cypriot dialect leads them directly to where they belong to—their Greek roots (statements in a report in Lyritsas (2021), *DW Greek*, 27 April 2021). The movement responded to this statement with the following post:

> We are moved by the effort of the political head of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth, to teach us the spelling of the Cypriot language, which is completely ignored by the schools of the Republic of Cyprus. Of course, we remember Prodromos Prodromos saying: "the ideological stubbornness of 'returning to the dialect' is [sic] [] [sic] harmful for people and is used as a reason to artificially cut off the Cypriots from Panhellenic (!)". Thank you minister, we won't take it. (posted originally in Greek in the Ως Δαμέ FB Page, 2 April 2021).

Apart from the movement's response, the minister's announcement also triggered the reaction of linguists at the University of Cyprus, who responded with several presentations

in local media. Specifically, Dr Elena Ioannidou, an associate professor in sociolinguistics, stated that the Cypriot dialect had been used by the movement as a language of protest, and it has been deliberately spelt in its simplest form. Dr Spyros Armostis, a lecturer in linguistics, also added that any accusations about misspelling are not valid when one refers to the Cypriot dialect, as it is a language variation that people are not used to seeing written (statements published in a report in *DW Greek*, 27 April 2021).

5. Conclusions

As we highlighted elsewhere in this article, language ideologies are used even today in Cyprus to create borderscapes. That is why the resistance to these forces of partition is often being expressed through the Cyprus dialect's variations as a conscious choice, especially for the younger generations who do not share the common past. The article does make a link with current interventions in translanguaging literature that goes beyond the fluidity between language features and connects to different aspects of identity with how these are negotiated during interactions. These encapsulate the dynamic nature and fluidity of how temporal and sociocultural factors might necessitate a need for change, thus suggesting 'transidentifying' (Richards and Wilson 2019) as such an opportunity to connect opportunities for translanguaging and identity construction.

In conclusion, this article has highlighted how affordances of language use in Cyprus during historical periods of division in the island are means of affective biopolitics through which nationalisms thrive. On the contrary, the performative potential of Cypriot dialects is one of resistance to nationalist divisiveness and instead a communicative tool towards reconciliation/reunification. The symbolic and affective resistance to othering through the commonality of dialects as linguistic resistance offers alternative pathways to embrace collective identities that are Cypriot-centrically means of liberation from nationalisms. Such attempts by younger generations as bicommunal communicative forms of resistance to geographies of borderscapes, partition and nationalistic hegemonies can become an actualisation of affordances of justice. Invoking such instances of solidarity offers a trajectory for an emergent sociocultural and political linguistic assemblage that embraces ethnic selves without othering and situates translanguaging communicative tools as imperative to peace.

Notes

[1] A total number of 24 interviews from members of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities were conducted during the PhD research.

[2] A sketch broadcast a few years after the two most historically significant events of Cyprus that includes characters from both communities or a reference to the events themselves is important, as it communicates a specific discourse about it to the Cypriot radio audience.

[3] The celebration of the Greek Revolution of 1821, when Greeks celebrate the War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire, takes place in Greece, Cyprus and the Greek diaspora on 25 March every year, coinciding with the Feast of the Annunciation. The

day is a public holiday in Greece and Cyprus. Greeks celebrate the 25th of March as a double holiday, that is, in a historical and a religious sense.

4   TRNC is a de facto state recognised only by Turkey. For a detailed discussion refer to Kyris (2020).

5   Turkey and the Turkish administration in Cyprus encouraged citizens from Turkey to settle to the northern part of the island in an attempt to help the economic development of the TC community (Hadjioannou et al. 2011, p. 539).

6   For more on the ideological context refer to Alecou (2014). For an interesting contemporary view refer to: Bedi (2021).

7   Due to the COVID-19 measures at the time Turkish Cypriots were unable to participate, as the crossing points were closed.

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