Cypriot Greek

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Cypriot Greek is the dialect of Modern Greek spoken on the island of Cyprus by approximately 650,000 people and also by the substantial immigrant communities of Cypriots in the UK, North America, Australia, South Africa and elsewhere. Due to lengthy isolation, Cypriot Greek is so distinct from Standard Greek as to be often unintelligible to speakers of the Standard. Greek Cypriot speakers, on the other hand, have considerably less difficulty understanding Greeks, since Standard Greek is the official language of Cyprus, and as such it is the medium of education and the language of the Cypriot media. However, in every day situations Cypriot Greek is the only variety used among Cypriots. Cypriot Greek is not homogeneous but exhibits considerable geographical variation (Newton 1972). The variety described here is that used by educated speakers, particularly the inhabitants of the capital, Nicosia. Although influenced by increasing contact with Standard Greek, Cypriot Greek retains most of its phonological and phonetic characteristics virtually intact. There is no established orthography for Cypriot Greek; however, certain, rather variable, conventions have emerged, based on Greek historical orthography but also including novel combinations of letters in order to represent sounds that do not exist in the Standard (e.g. *σι* for [ʃ]); a version of these conventions has been adopted here for the sample text. The transcription is based on the speech of an educated male speaker from Nicosia in his mid-thirties, who read the text twice at normal speed and in an informal manner; he also assisted in rendering the text from Standard to Cypriot Greek.

Consonants

Cypriot Greek has voiceless plosives and affricates, voiced and voiceless fricatives, nasals, and liquids. All of these consonants, with the exception of voiced fricatives, appear either single or geminate in both word-initial and word-medial positions. All consonants (including voiced fricatives) may also be geminated across word boundaries (see Conventions). There is disagreement in the (limited) literature on Cypriot phonology about whether geminate consonants should be considered as separate phonemes (Charalambopoulos 1982) or as clusters of the same consonant (Newton 1972). For the sake of simplicity, geminates are not presented here as separate phonemes; on the other hand, details on their quality are given, since when consonants are geminated their articulation changes (Arvaniti & Tserdanelis in press).

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	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Velar
Plosive	p		t			k
Fricative		f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	x ɣ
Affricate					tʃ	
Nasal	m		n			
Tap				ɾ		
Lateral approximant				l		

p	piˈɾɐ	*πυρά*	'heat'
t	tɔˈɾɐ	*τωρά*	'now'
k	ˈkɔɾi	*κόρη*	'girl'
f	fɔˈni	*φωνή*	'voice'
θ	θɔˈɾɔ	*θωρώ*	I see'
x	xɔˈnin	*χωνίν*	'funnel'
v	vuˈɾɔ	*βουρώ*	'I run'
ð	ðɐˈmɛ	*δαμαί*	'here'
ɣ	ˈɣɐɾɔs	*γάρος*	'donkey'
s	ˈsuzɐ	*σούζαι*	'swing'
z	zɔɾˈlis	*ζορλής*	'obstinate'
ʃ	ˈʃɐlin	*σιάλιν*	'shawl'
ʒ	ʒɔ	*ζιω*	'I-live'
tʃ	tʃɐˈmɛ	*τζαμαί*	'there'
m	ˈmɐmːɐ	*μάμμα*	'mum'
n	nuˈɾɐ	*νουρά*	'tail'
ɾ	ˈɾɔtsɐ	*ρότσα*	'stone'
l	lɐˈɔs	*λαός*	'hare'

Plosives. In most contexts, Cypriot Greek voiceless plosives are unaspirated and in fast speech they may be pronounced weakly voiced. They become fully voiced if they are preceded by a nasal (which in turn assimilates for place of articulation to the plosive). The geminate plosives have the same place of articulation as their singleton counterparts. However, their closure is one and half times longer than that of the singletons, and they are always heavily aspirated (their VOT is two to three times longer than that of the singletons; Tserdanelis & Arvaniti in press). Geminate plosives are never preceded by nasals (see Conventions).

Fricatives. With the exception of /z/, which is always rather long, voiced fricatives (v ð ɣ) are often pronounced as approximants and they are regularly elided in intervocalic position. The velar voiceless fricative /x/ has a glottal allophone [h] when it is followed

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by the low front vowel [ɐ]. Geminate fricatives are distinguished from singletons by being longer.

Affricates. /tʃ/ is a laminal lenis post-alveolar affricate; in fast speech it is often weakly voiced. Like the stops, it becomes fully voiced when preceded by a nasal. The pattern described here gives rise to a three way distinction: [tʃɐˈmɛ] τζαμέ 'here' *vs.* [ˈn̪dʒɐmin] ντζάμιν 'glass' *vs.* [ˈtʃʰɐin] τσιάϊν 'tea'. The /t/+/s/ sequence is also pronounced as an affricate, and in a manner similar to that of the geminate post-alveolar affricate, in terms of the length of the closure, the glottalization and the manner of closure release.

Nasals. Cypriot Greek has two phonemic nasals, /m/ and /n/. However, since nasals assimilate for place to following stops, palatal and velar nasals are also used (see below). Single nasals are rather short in duration, and shorter than their Standard Greek counterparts (Arvaniti 1999). The geminates are nearly twice as long as the singletons (Arvaniti 1999), though not as long as geminates reported for other languages, such as Italian or Malayalam.

Liquids. /l/ behaves similarly to the nasals under gemination. In other words, as a single consonant it is rather short but it becomes twice as long when geminated. Cypriot Greek has one rhotic, a tap; when geminated, it is pronounced as a long trill (Arvaniti 1999).

The palatal consonants of Cypriot Greek. Simplifying somewhat, the palatal allophones of Cypriot consonants are as follows. As in Standard Greek (see companion illustration), velar consonants have fronted pronunciations when preceding the front vowels /i/ and /ɛ/. Specifically, in Cypriot Greek /k/ becomes [c], /x/ becomes [ç] and /ɣ/ becomes [ʝ] in front of the vowels /ɛ/ and /i/ (k/ preceded by /n/ gives rise to [ɲɟ] in the same circumstances).

As in Standard Greek, [ɲ] and [ʎ] appear as allophones of /n/+/i/ and /l/+/i/ respectively, when /i/ is followed by another vowel *in the same syllable*; e.g. [tiˈɐ.ɲɐ] τιάνια 'frying pans' (cf. [tiˈɐ.nin] τιάνιν 'frying pan'); [fiˈʎɐ] φιλιά 'kisses' (cf. [fiˈlin] φιλίν 'kiss'). As indicated in the transcription, the palatal nasal and lateral are often longer than single nasals and laterals, though not as long as the geminates (Netwon 1972; Charalambopoulos 1982). [ʎ] is not part of the inventory of all speakers; many use [ʝ] instead, so that a word like [ˈiʎːos] ήλιος 'sun' is pronounced [ˈiʝːos] by these speakers.

Finally, Cypriot Greek /s/ and /z/ have palatal allophones [ʃ] and [ʒ] under the same conditions as /n/ and /l/, i.e. when they are followed by /i/ and another vowel in the same

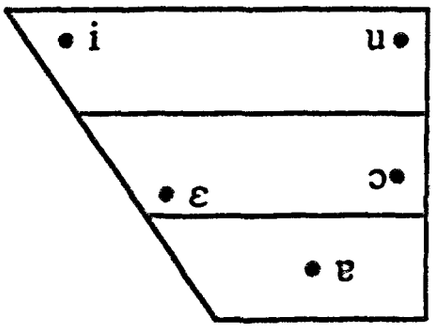
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syllable; e.g. [ni.'ʃɐ] νησιά 'islands' (c.f. [ni.'sin] νησίν 'island'), or [mɐ.hɐ.'ʒɐ] μαχαζιά 'shops' (c.f. [mɐ.hɐ.'zin] μαγαζίν 'shop').

Vowels

Cypriot Greek has a five vowel system similar to that of Standard Greek. The back mid vowel /ɔ/ is more open than the Standard Greek one, while /u/ is somewhat more peripheral. Furthermore, devoicing and elision of high vowels, which are very common in Standard Greek, are much rarer in Cypriot Greek.

i	'pinɐ	πείνα	'hunger'
ɛ	'pɛnːɐ	πέννα	'pen'
ɐ	'pɐnːɐ	πάννα	'nappy'
ɔ	pɔ'ni	πονεί	'it hurts'
u	'kunːɐ	κούννα	'nut'



Cypriot Greek presents a rather rare pattern of alternation for /i/: simplifying considerably, when /i/ is followed by another vowel *in the same syllable* and is not preceded by one of the consonants with palatal allophones, it is pronounced /c/ (or /k/ if preceded by /r/); e.g. ['ri.fcɐ] ρίφκια 'kids' (cf. ['ri.fin] ρίφιν 'kid'), ['psɐ.rkɐ] ψάρκα 'fish' pl. (cf. ['psɐ.rin] ψάριν 'fish'). The vowel /i/ is pronounced [ɲ] when found between /m/ and another vowel that belongs to the same syllable; e.g. [mɲɐ.'lɔ] μυαλό 'brain' (c.f. [mi.'ɐ.li] μιάλη 'big' fem.).

Conventions

Within words, sequences of obstruents must have the same specification for voicing; in terms of manner of articulation the first obstruent must be a fricative and the second a plosive, the only exception being the cluster [pc]; this limitation to the form clusters can take gives rise to alternations in the voicing and manner of articulation of obstruents; e.g. ['vuðin] βούδιν 'calf', but ['vuθcɐ] βούδκια 'calves'; ['mːɐtin] μμάτιν 'eye', but ['mːɐθcɐ] μμάτκια 'eyes'. As mentioned, word final /n/ assimilates for place before a following plosive, while the plosive becomes voiced. This change takes place not only within words, but often across word boundaries between words in the same phrase; e.g. [kɐ'pnizumɛ ^{m}burɐ] καπνίζουμεν πούρα 'we smoke cigars'(/kɐ'pnizumɐn 'purɐ/), [ɛ^{n}grimɐ] εν κρίμα 'it is a pity' (/ɐn 'krimɐ/). Word-final /n/ is elided in front of a geminate or a consonant cluster; e.g. [pɐ sti c^{h}ɛ'lːɛ] πα στην κκελλέ 'on the head' (/pa

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stin kːɛˈlːɛ/), [ɛˈpcɐsɐmɛ ˈfcɔɾɐ] επκιάσαμεν φκιόρα 'we bought flowers' (/ɛˈpiɐsɐmɛn ˈfiɔɾɐ/). In all other cases in which a word-final /n/ is followed by a consonant, it assimilates completely to that consonant, resulting in geminates across word boundaries; e.g. [ɛ ˈθːɛlɔ] εν θέλω 'I don't want to' (/ɛn ˈθɛlɔ/); [ti fːɔˈni sːu] την φωνήν σου 'your voice' (acc.) (/tin fɔˈnin su/). More generally, sequences of identical consonants across word boundaries are pronounced as geminates, except in very fast speech. Word-final /s/ becomes voiced if followed by a voiced consonant in the same phrase.

Stress

Cypriot Greek has dynamic stress. There is only one stress per word, and it can fall on any of the word's last four syllables. Stress on the fourth syllable from the end of a word is rare and normally limited to certain verb forms. Because of this possibility, however, when words with antepenultimate stress are followed by an enclitic in Cypriot Greek, no extra stress is added (as happens in Standard Greek; see companion illustration); e.g. [tɔ pɔˈðilɐtɔ mːu] το ποδήλατον μου 'my bicycle'.

Transcription of recorded passage

ɔ vɔˈɾkɐ tʃɔ ˈiʎˑɔs ɛtsɐˈkɔnuⁿdɐn | ɟɐ ˈpcɔs pu tus ˈθcɔ n ɔ ðinɐˈtɔtʰɛɾɔs |
ˈɔtɐn ɛˈpɛɾɐsɛ ᵐbu ᵐbɾɔˈstɐ tus ˈɛnɐs tɐksiˈθcɔtis pu ɛfɔˈɾusɛ mɲɐ ᶯgɐpʰɐn ‖
ˈɐmɐ tɔ ˈniðɐn | ɔ vɔˈɾkɐ tʃɔ ˈiʎˑɔs ɛsiˈfːɔnisɐn |
ˈtʃinɔs pu tus ˈθcɔ pɔ nːɐ ˈkɐmi tɔ ⁿdɐksiˈθcɔti nːɐ ˈfkɐli ti ᶯgɐpʰɐ ⁿdu |
ɛˈnːɐn ɔ ðinɐˈtɔtʰɛɾɔs ‖
ɔ vɔˈɾkɐs ˈɐɾcɐpsɛ nːɐ fiˈsɐ ðinɐˈtɐ | ɐlːɐ ˈɔsɔ ᵐbcɔ pɔˈlːɐ ɛfiˈsusɐn |
ˈtɔsɔ ᵐbcɔ pɔˈlːɐ | ɛʃːɐpɐˈzɔtɐn mɛ ti ᶯgɐpʰɐ ⁿdu ɔ tɐksiˈθcɔtis |
ˈɔspu ɔ vɔˈɾkɐs ɛkuˈɾɐstin | tʃ ɐpɐˈɾɛtisɛ nːɐ fiˈsɐ ‖
ˈistɛɾɐ ˈiɾtɐn i siˈɾɐ tu ˈiʎˑu | pu ˈɐnɐpsɛ ðinɐˈtɐ |
tʃ ɛˈftis ɔ tɐksiˈθcɔtis ɛˈpiɾɔsɐn | ˈtʃ ɛfkɐlɐn ti ᶯgɐpʰɐ ⁿdu ‖
ˈtʃ ɛtsi ɔ vɔɾˈkɐs ɐpɐɾɐˈɛxtin | ˈɔti ɔ ˈiʎˑɔs ɛ ðːinɐˈtɔtʰɛɾɔs pɔ ˈtʃinɔn ‖

Orthographic version

Ο βορκάς τζ' ο ήλιος ετσακώνουνταν για πκιος που τους δκιο εν ο δυνατόττερος, όταν επέρασεν που μπροστά τους ένας ταξιδκιώτης που εφορούσεν μιαν κάππαν. Άμα τον είδαν, ο βορκάς τζ' ο ήλιος εσυφφώνησαν τζείνος που τους δκιο πον να κάμει τον ταξιδκιώτην να φκάλει την κάππαν του εννάν ο δυνατόττερος. Ο βορκάς άρκεψεν να φυσά δυνατά, αλλά όσον πκιο πολλά εφυσούσεν τόσον πκιο πολλά εσσεπαζόταν με την κάππαν του ο ταξιδκιώτης, ώσπου ο βορκάς εκουράστην τζ' επαρέτησεν να φυσά. Ύστερα ήρτεν η σειρά του ήλιου που άναψε δυνατά, τζ' εφτύς ο ταξιδκιώτης επύρωσεν

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τζ' έφκαλεν την κάππαν του. Τζ' έτσι ο βορκάς επαραέχτην ότι ο ήλιος εν δυνατόττερος πο τζείνον.

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