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## **CODE-SWITCHING ‘IN SITE’ FOR FANTASIZING IDENTITIES: A CASE STUDY OF CONVENTIONAL USES OF LONDON GREEK CYPRIOT**

Alexandra Georgakopoulou and Katerina Finnis

### **Abstract**

Sociolinguistic studies of ‘minority languages’ and bilingualism have increasingly moved away from a singular emphasis on issues of ethnicity that poses direct links between the use of a language and an ethnic or cultural identity towards exploring the construction of identities that are not firmly located in category-bound descriptions. In this paper, we draw on these latest insights to account for processes of identity construction in a bilingual (in Greek Cypriot and English) youth organization group based in North London. Our main data consist of the audio-recorded interactional data from a socialization outing after one of the group’s meeting but we also bring in insights from the group’s ethnographic study and a larger study of the North London Cypriot community that involved interviews and questionnaires. In the close analysis of our main data, we note a conventional association between the ‘London Greek Cypriot’ (henceforth LGC) variety that is switched to from English as the main interactional frame and a set of genres (in the sense of recurrent evolving responses to social practices) that are produced and taken up as humorous discourse: These include narrative jokes, ritual insults, hypothetical scenarios, and metalinguistic instances of mock Cypriot. We will suggest that the use of LGC demonstrates a relationship of ambivalence, a “partly ours partly theirs” status, with the participants carving out a different, third space for themselves that transcends macro-social categories (e.g. the Cypriots, the Greek-Cypriot community). At the same time, we will show how the discursive process of choosing language from a bi- or multi-lingual repertoire does not only create identities in the sense of socially and culturally derived positions but also identities (sic (dis)-identifications) in the sense of desiring and fantasizing personas.

**Keywords:** London Greek-Cypriot (LGC); Code-switching; Site; Genre; Identities; Subjectivity.

### **1. Introduction**

In the last decade or so, boundaries between socially minded linguistic areas which study the role of language use and choice in relation to social identities, have become increasingly blurry. In particular, a fruitful synergy has emerged between sociolinguistics (in its focus on the influence of social variables on language) and interactional or discourse studies (as advocates of fine-grained linguistic analysis for unearthing social meaning-making). Recent approaches to interactional sociolinguistics present themselves as a “new” turn in sociolinguistics and form a marked departure from classic variationist studies of the 60s and 70s (e.g. Labov 1966; Trudgill 1974) in their dynamic conceptualisation of social identities: Such identities become locally occasioned, discursive projects that interrelate with language forms in indirect and mediated ways as opposed to one-to-one correspondences. Emphasis on the constitutive role of language in social identities, coupled with the recognition that identities can be multiple, fleeting, and irreducibly contingent, has precipitated a shift of interest from category-bound research with a demographic basis, to practice-based research. This

means that the focus is not on who people *are*, or who they are perceived to be a priori of language data analysis, but on what or who they *do being* in specific environments of language use for specific purposes. Thus, identities and meanings, instead of being seen as the speaker's properties, are taken to be articulated and constructed 'in talk' where they can be negotiated, contested and re-drafted (Androutsopoulos & Georgakopoulou 2003; Antaki and Widdicombe 1998; Weatherall 2002).

Within such practice-based paradigms, the direction of research in multilingual settings has changed dramatically. Studies focusing on contact situations have moved away from compartmentalized and static notions of "domains" reserved for "language X" and yielding language X maintenance or shift, to the complex ways in which majority and minority languages are code-mixed, brought together or kept apart in local contexts. The idea of domains can thus be radically redefined as nuanced and dynamically defined locales within a framework that theorizes space following latest advances in social geography and cultural studies (Massey 2005). As Scollon & Scollon (2004) put it, space in the sense of *site of engagement* is of paramount importance for the production of discourse: It is a socio-cultural sphere for semiotic activity in real time that is not necessarily homogeneous and uni-dimensional but multi-functional and polycentric (Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouck 2005: 207). Acknowledging the role of space in the area of bi/multi-lingual choice involves the analyst staying alert to the particular purposes that certain interactional zones characteristically accomplish, their relative temporal stability, and the discourse activities and genres conventionally associated with them, in other words, the expectations and norms about what is licensed or prohibited in them (Hill 1999). Within this paradigm, the multilingual competence is seen in the light of situated practice and as the product of particular spatio-temporal and interactional factors. In this respect, it is recognized as potentially fragmented and contingent as opposed to being a static homogeneous possession (Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouck 2005: 207).

It is important then to note that what people can do in terms of language choice within specific sites of engagement is partly habitual (and may well be pre-discursively constrained by "interactional regimes" operating within these sites, *idem*: 208) and partly creative and improvisational. At the same time, what language people actually choose in these sites is no longer linked directly and in a one-dimensional way to their "inherited ethnicity". Instead, as research in various multi-ethnic and multi-lingual settings has shown, processes of language choice can take various forms of more or less strategic and reflected upon mixings of codes, sustained uses or equally fleeting 'crossings' to and 'stylisations' of languages that are not demonstrably the speaker's (Rampton 1995).<sup>1</sup> Such explorations are linked to notions of 'suspension of reality' and also 'third space' (Gutierrez et al 1999). The former term is used to describe a situation whereby activities, social structures and relationships which are conventionally carried out on a daily basis are deferred while unfamiliar transient ones prevail/materialise. In general, the emergence of dynamic locally situated identities and meanings which ensue during this suspension of reality, contribute towards, and are validated by, the creation of a 'third space' (Gumperz and Gumperz-Cook 2005, adapted from Bhabha 1994).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A case in point is Rampton's (2002) analysis of how children can subvert imposed classroom authority outside the context of German classes by means of stylised German.

<sup>2</sup> Gutierrez et al look at how ruptures in class, constituting alternative voices in the form of different languages, registers, humorous side-talks and gestures, can be perceived as creating a third space within which the learning and teaching process is carried out.

Such notions challenge concepts of 'fluency' along with destabilising tangible structures, activities and relationships (Gutierrez 2005).

The above line of inquiry has problematized fast distinctions between "our" and "their" code, and has shown how potentially complicated ethnicity ownership and community membership can be. This is taking the area of language choice to its least explored aspects: The use of language and other semiotic resources, not just in order to (re)create social positions, but also to register processes of subjectivity (e.g. fears, anxieties, desires, fantasies) and (dis)identification. As Rampton (2006: ch 6) aptly points out, even if these processes are still ill-understood and under-represented within sociolinguistics, it is imperative that they are not overlooked or shied away from in the analyses.

With the above as its theoretical orientation, this paper is aimed at working within a practice-based framework, more specifically, what we will call here, a "site-based" framework, that links language choices with what is being done where, in what kind of social space and how that social space both acts as contextualizing for discourse as well as being contextualized by it. This framework will be used to explore the relations between language choice and social identities in the case of a group of London born Greek-Cypriot members of a youth organisation. Even if we have already introduced an ethnic-based label for our participants, our discussion below will show that it is the hybrid processes of re-appropriations and un-claimings and re-claimings of ethnic inheritance positions that best describe the discursive practices of this group, rather than neat categorizations and membership. We will locate these processes in specific genres that are characteristically accomplished in socialization sites of the group and conventionally associated with the use of what we call here "London Greek Cypriot" (LGC) in order to respect the local exigencies of this variety (we also model this term on comparable community-wide formulations such as 'London Greek Radio'). We will argue that these genres that are produced and taken up as humorous tend to suspend reality and introduce legitimate spaces for "little fantasies". In this sense, we will suggest that the use of LGC in them demonstrates a relationship of ambivalence, a "partly ours partly theirs" (Johnstone 1999) status, with the participants carving out a different, third space for themselves that transcends macro-social categories (e.g. the Cypriots, the Greek-Cypriot community). At the same time, we will show how the discursive process of choosing language from a bi- or multi-lingual repertoire does not only create identities in the sense of socially and culturally derived *positions* but also identities (sic (dis)-identifications) in the sense of desiring and fantasizing *personas*.

## 2. Data and methods

Our primary source of data for this paper is the transcription of the recording of a socialization event involving a London-based youth organization of British born Greek-Cypriots. We do however believe that a combination of methodologies allows us to tap into both micro- and macro-aspects of the discursive constructions of identities under study. In this respect, the fine-grained micro-interactional analysis of the audio-recorded data will be supplemented here by insights from ethnographic observations, questionnaires and interviews with focal participants that have yielded their self- and other-categorization, their meta-linguistic commentary on issues of interest and their social evaluations.

More specifically, as we will explain in more detail below, the micro-analysis of the recorded social event has benefited from insights derived by a) the ethnographic study of the youth organization in question, b) and a large scale questionnaire and semi-structured interviews study of the Greek-Cypriot community in North London (Gardner-Chloros et al 2005). Furthermore, as we will argue, the complex relationships and positionings of the participants of this study vis-à-vis the North London Greek-Cypriot community, particularly the generation of their parents and grandparents, should also be seen in the context of the community's socio-historically shaped culture and inhabited ethnic identity within the larger British society.

In the light of the above, we will begin with an overview of this community context before moving to the discussion of the youth organisation from which our audio-recorded data are taken.

### **2.1. *The community***

Cypriot migration to London took place throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with main waves occurring in the 40's, 50's and 70's due to socio-political events in Cyprus relating to the relationships between Cyprus, Britain and Turkey, in particular: The struggle towards independence from British colonial powers<sup>3</sup> (which at times was inextricably linked to union with Greece: 'Enosis'), and the invasion of the Northern part of the island by Turkey, which resulted in the displacement of around 200,000 Greek Cypriots. The first stages of migration to the UK involved employment in restaurants and clothes-making factories. Gradually, as the Greek Cypriots became more financially proficient, they managed to own their own businesses e.g. restaurants. Since then, the community have largely settled in Haringey, North London and have been active in setting up community networks (e.g. church-run community schools for the teaching of Greek, newspapers, London Greek Radio, etc.) for the maintenance of their ethnic identity.

In point of fact, this type of community activity is the one that has mostly attracted the attention of sociolinguistic and identity studies of diasporic Greeks. As such, they have focused on the role of domains (e.g. church, home) in language choice (Christodoulou-Pipis 1991), larger issues of identity and sociological perspectives (Oakley 1979; Papapavlou et al 1999; Charalambous et al 1988; Josephides 1987; Anthias 1992), the inter-generational differences in the degrees of Greek language maintenance or shift, and more recently on code-switching (to and from Greek) for interactional and situational purposes (Gardner-Chloros and Finnis 2003). In terms of language choice and identities, these studies have put forth a strong link between the use of Greek and a sense of cultural identity or belonging. What is still however missing from this kind of research is a nuanced approach to how different social identities (e.g. age, social class, gender, etc.) play out and co-articulate with ethnicity within the context of what has been too statically defined as one homogeneous community (cf. Hadzidaki 1994 in relation to the Greek community in Belgium). Both a singular emphasis on issues of ethnicity and a normative approach to communities have thus tended to miss out on the shifting and complex (mis)alliances on the ground which we will aim at documenting in this study.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Cyprus became an independent state in 1960.

<sup>4</sup> For a critical discussion of sociolinguistic approaches to Greek language (as majority or minority) and 'Greekness', see Georgakopoulou 2004: 45-68.

Furthermore, the above studies have failed to take into account the increasingly changing nature of the community. As Finnis' ethnographic study of the community suggests, increased opportunities for attaining an education in HE and, consequently, employment in domains outside the community (e.g. outside family-run business such as restaurants), is making the community network(s) more loose. Geographically, the community is no longer centred in particular areas (specific areas of North London) but is expanding, with members of the younger generation moving out of their family homes and seeking housing in other areas of London. Finally, differentiated access to new technologies (e.g. the Internet) and political and ideological affiliations around the "Cyprus problem" create dividing lines within a community that is far from unified on issues that have historically served as cohesive and identity-building mechanisms.

It is within this context of a changing community that the ambivalent and hybrid self-positionings of the participants of this study as British born Greek-Cypriots (that in their own words are not to be equated with mainland Greeks, Greek Cypriots or ultimately other members, particularly the older generations of their so called community in London), will be placed. In particular, drawing out this larger interpretative context benefited from Gardner et al's (2005) large-scale questionnaire study. The study focused on the use of, and attitudes towards, the three language varieties available to speakers from the Greek Cypriot community in London: Standard Modern Greek (taught at community schools), Greek Cypriot dialect<sup>5</sup> and English. One hundred and fifty nine questionnaires were returned and statistical tests were carried out to determine correlations between social variables including gender, age, social class, and language use/attitudes. Results from the questionnaire study were supplemented with a consideration of interview data. Overall, fourteen semi-structured interviews lasting between ½ hour and 1½ hours were carried out with participants from all age groups. Findings from the questionnaire study and extracts from the interviews will be brought in below to contextualize our analysis of the socialization event of the youth organisation members.

## **2.2. The youth organization group**

The youth organization was studied as part of Finnis' doctoral research (2009). The stated core aims of the organisation are to bring together the younger generation of the community, to educate them about the political situation in Cyprus, and to contribute to maintaining inherited cultural and ethnic roots and identity. During the monthly meetings of the organisation a range of topics are discussed, such as the organisation of Greek parties in London, encouragement in participation in political marches etc.

In total, eight meetings (approximately 16 hours) were audio-recorded by Finnis as well as an extensive post-meeting socialization event (just under 3 hours). As already

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<sup>5</sup> In terms of language, Greek-Cypriots in Cyprus are seen as speaking a variety of Modern Greek, normally described as a dialect, that has been influenced by the languages of the many conquerors of the island, including Arabic, Turkish and English. In actual practice, sociolinguistic studies have shown that the picture of language use is a highly complex one involving processes of tri-glossia involving 'Katharevousa' (Puristic Greek), Standard Modern Greek, and Greek Cypriot (Pavlou 1992). In the case of the Greek-Cypriot community in London, Standard Modern Greek is taught at Greek Schools, but is not used in everyday interactions; in any event, it is a variety associated with education, and the first migrants to London were not educated (many were illiterate).

suggested, this socialization event forms the main data of this study. The meetings, the participants of which have to be between 18-30 years of age, manifest a hierarchical structure consisting of a president (Menelaos), a vice-president (Lila), a secretary, treasurer, and thirteen members of the committee. Despite the fact that the members have hierarchical positions, the meetings are relatively informal and full of teasing and ritual insults. The participants do not generally socialise outside the context of the meetings and events relating to the youth group in general, and most did not know each other prior to their participation in the organisation. However, despite this, they act as a close-knit group and any new member that comes along is treated, and behaves, as if s/he has been a long-term participant.

The three-hour social event, which we will focus upon below, involved dinner after one of the youth meetings in an Italian restaurant in London. Nine speakers were present at the meeting, five males and four females who have been pseudonymized as: Menelaos (president), Lila (the vice-president) Aphrodite (American Greek Cypriot, member of a youth organisation in the US, came over to meet the members of the British organisation), Vally, Vaggelis, Apostolis, Demetris, Harris and Katerina Finnis as a participant-observer.

### 3. Analysis

#### 3.1. *Talking identities*

As we have suggested, the larger study of the community and the interviews with the focal participants have afforded us with insights into certain terms of ethnic belonging that constitute a point of reference in the social categorization of the participants, both during the interviews and in the interactional data: The older Greek-Cypriot generation in London, Greek-Cypriotness and LGC, 'Britishness', Greece and Standard Greek, and finally other ethnic minorities in London (such as Italians). What is notable is that these markers are employed with no straightforward affiliation or disaffiliation: They are re-appropriated, or constructed ambiguously as shifting markers, in the interactions of the speakers. For example, sometimes the term 'Greek' is used synonymously to the term 'Cypriot', whilst other times it is used to index aspects of mainland Greek or Greece. In other cases, these aspects of mainland Greece are specifically denoted by the label 'mainland Greek'.

Overall it seems to be the case that most of the informants casually use the term 'Greek' to refer to the linguistic variety they speak in (LGC) even if they are conscious of differences between LGC and the more standard form of Greek. In fact, when asked directly, most informants exhibited hesitation, repair and ambivalence around these and other language-based and/or 'ethnic' labels. We can see this in the following two extracts in which the interviewees on one hand distinguish between 'Greek' and 'Greek Cypriot' while on the other hand use these self-designations as well as the characterisations of their 'language' in ambivalent ways that do not always reflect a clear duality or more generally neat distinctions.

(1)

Respondent: Well, not not for mine, not for Greek Cypriots [...] Well, I don't feel a Greek from Greece (.) let's put it that way (.) I feel like a Cypriot (.) a Greek Cypriot

- Interviewer: Ok (.) so would you agree with the phrase 'Greek is part of our cultural heritage'=  
Respondent: =The Greek Language (.) yes - er but not Greek as sort of spoken in Greece, it's obviously (.) it's the - you know (.) it's Cypriot (.) Greek (.) as it's spoken in Cyprus (.) it's slightly different dialect (.) different intonations - different (.) different words (.) so it's (.) it's not (.) in my experience (.) Greek (.) mainland Greek is not in my culture, so I wouldn't say.

(2)

(.) if you're talking with students, who are born in Cyprus or Greece, then you do talk Greek (.) erm - again if you're talking with someone from the older generation, then it's a sign of respect to talk Greek, however badly you might think you talk it, and you do (.) you do (.) but I have to admit that if I'm talking with somebody from Greece, I feel much more self conscious about (.) you know (.) the quality of my Greek, 'cos it's so much more standard (.) and academic (.) em - whereas if I'm talking Greek Cypriot in the Greek Cypriot dialect there's em (.) because of you know (.) the connotations of that being an informal kind of lingo, it's much easier for me to do that without feeling so self conscious, so if I can avoid it (.) to talk like standard Greek amongst Grecians, then I do tend to (.) because of the fact that I feel so self conscious [...]

It is interesting to see in these examples how a proliferation of labels (e.g. Greek Cypriot, Greek from Greece, Cypriot, Greek language, Greek as spoken in Greece, Cypriot, mainland Greece) tends to be drawn upon to describe what the speakers think they are not. Also typical is the repairs and hesitations around these labels that reveal some kind of troubled identities,<sup>6</sup> an inconsistency and discontinuity between what these labels generally mean, what the speakers take them for and how they position themselves with respect to them.

In the light of the above, all these uses of labels can be seen as a sign of a form of 'hybridity' in the participants' positionings. This is not a case of a clearly identifiable and fixed dual (linguistic and cultural) identity (i.e. British – Greek Cypriot) based on one-to-one correspondences between varieties and values. Instead, the existential locus of hybridity emerges as a result of the ways in which the youths self-categorize variously and ambivalently as English, British, Greek, Greek-Cypriot, all of them at the same time, none of them (e.g. just ethnic minorities members). These self-categorizations frequently mobilize metalanguaging and reflexivity on what it is that the participants 'speak' and who they are (and this is not just to be found in the interviews which specifically sought out such self-ascriptions). The participants' meta-comments centre on the 'mixed' nature of their languages and cultures, but without assuming a 'one or the other' conceptualisation. Instead, linguistic and cultural elements of their existence are seen as 'resources', as the speakers can play up or play down their affiliations, depending on spatio-temporal and interactional factors: Where they are and who they are with. Something that the speakers engage in consistently is the mocking of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

In general, it is evident from the interviews and also the recordings of the interactions of the youths, that they perceive a large social and cultural gap between

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<sup>6</sup> Although our approach accepts from the outset that discursive constructions of identities are bound to be multiple, dynamic and irreducibly contingent, we also subscribe to the idea that speakers may have (i.e. discursively construct, exhibit) 'trouble' in 'reconciling certain identity work with other identity claims or positionings given by his or her life circumstances' (Taylor & Littleton 2006: 25).



themselves and the older generation which can cause them at times a degree of frustration, as they feel that their needs and socio-cultural evolution are not acknowledged or understood. As a result, the younger speakers constantly construct the older generations as having ‘peasant’ attributes, thus constructing their own ‘Greek-Cypriot-ness’ as different through both micro and macro strategies of re-appropriation.

In one of the meetings, a male speaker stated of the members of the older generation that

## (3)

S: At the end of the day (.) *erxonde apo xorca*

S: At the end of the day (.) they come from villages

The statement above grants the youths their own independent space. At the macro level, this space is indexed by their different socio-cultural experience: The youths do not originate from villages in Cyprus, but inhabit different spatio-temporal domains. In addition, the particular use of LGC (amongst English discourse) to mediate the comment on the origin of the members of the older generation, can be seen as reflecting a situated dis-identification of the speaker with the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the older community members: A form of ‘linguistic convergence’ (to their language) used to convey ‘psychological divergence’ at the cognitive level (divergence away from the older generation, who speak very little, if any, English) (Giles and Coupland 1991).

On the other hand, however, there are times when the speakers choose to acknowledge an association between their own use of language, and ‘peasantness’. In the recording of one of the meetings, when informed that the researcher present was looking at the ways Greek Cypriots in London use language, one male speaker humorously suggested that the topic should be on how ‘*xorkadila*’ the members of the community speak (including the younger generations): ‘How peasant-like’ they speak (meeting 1)

## (4)

Menelaos: It’s language research .

( ): ( ) us *Cipreus* and how we speak English! inn’it ! How *xorkadila*

( ) us Cypriots and how we speak English! inn’it ! How village-like

The reference is humorous and contains self-ridicule, which indirectly ‘repairs’ this identification, re-appropriating the relationship between peasantness/Greek-Cypriotness and the younger members of the community: The younger members perceive themselves to be different from the older members who come from ‘*xorka*’, even though they themselves do have an identification with this element. While the younger members themselves speak ‘*xorkatika*’, this label does not have the same value in all marketplaces (Bourdieu 1998). The value of the linguistic product is bound to time and space, and is re-appropriated every time. In the example above, the different space created by the participants is also evidenced in the use of the particular London English discourse marker ‘inn’it’. ‘Inn’it’ and ‘*xorkadila*’, both non-standard forms of English and Greek-Cypriot respectively, combine to carve out a third space for the speaker(s): Different from being British and different from being Greek-Cypriot.

In point of fact, while the members of the younger generation position themselves as 'different' to the older generation, they also counter-position with regard to what they see as 'mainstream British life'. There are times when there seems to emerge a distinct differentiation between 'British' and 'Greek'-ness in the interactions of the youths. 'Greek' and 'English' are sometimes in structural opposition, with one being put on 'pause' whilst the other is functioning. The participants are able to physically move away from British domains and retreat to, for example, a Greek restaurant, behave in a 'Greek' way and 'relax'. In this domain, defined by opposition to 'British-ness', the value and position of '*χorkatika*' shifts, giving the speakers the opportunity to construct a literal and non-literal space, a kind of breathing space. This is manifest in the following extract from the recording of a discussion in the home of one of the informants whilst they were engaged in the activity of placing letters into envelopes for them to be sent to the members of the organisation.

## (5)

- Themis: When I'm at work and I'm with loads of English people, then I kind of like play down my Greekness (.) an only have it as //a bit of a
- Menelaos: // yeah (.) I think (.) but I think you have to do that=
- Thanos: = I play - I play it down (.) but then they're still aware that I'm Greek (0.5) basically I mean (.) they ask me every weekend what do you do and I'm like (.) family. Sunday we had a big family meal, and everything's family oriented, everything's very Greek // in terms of
- Menelaos: // You ask them (and they go) pub orientated!
- Thanos: Yeah (.) ((quoting)) I got drunk on Saturday (.) and I went (.) I was hung over yesterday (.) I'm hung over today. But whereas (.) the things I do (.) the life I lead (.) is a lot more (.) it's very obviously different to theirs (.) em twenty three year old guy (.) looking at mortgages and they think I'm mad, do you know what I mean? Because we have different priorities (.) we have different upbringing whatever, and when I'm say with a load of Cypriots then we play up our Greekness, don't we? And we do eventually feel more at ease (.) I mean (.) there's a couple of other Greek guys at my work ( ) one mainly which I've known before, I helped him get a job (.) and we go out for a drink with all the guys (.) and we all have a joke (.) you know (.) the guys at my work, but then after (.) me and my Greek mate we leave and then we go off (.) and we sit down in a restaurant (.) >and we eat and we (eat)< sort of like real food, and we just feel as though we couldn't really feel this comfortable with them=
- Menelaos: =No, that's true.

This seems to be a form of 'reactive ethnicity' (Josephides 1987: 57) which nonetheless does not result in the indexing of a homogenous and independent static identity. Instead it is about accessing a different space, within which situated elements of identity begin to emerge. This point will be taken up again later when we discuss a social event – the dinner – and different identifications occurring within.

In general, the speakers seem to acknowledge a closer bond with other ethnic minorities rather than other British individuals.

## (6)

- Researcher: Would you say that your best friends are more (.) are Greek?=  
 Thanos: =Yea:h (.) yeah

- Petros: Depends who you hang around with really (.) isn't it?  
 Thanos: No (.) actually I'll take that back (.) and say my best friends are people who are also from ethnic minorities (.) as opposed to just Greek.

In conclusion, this section shows how neat categorisations and membership are not used in the self-reports of the subjects (in the interview situations) as a means of self-identification in a straightforward manner. While labels for inherited ethnicity positions are brought to the interaction, identities and meanings that are associated with them are ambi- (and poly-) valent.

### **3.2. Language choice and identities in (inter)-action**

The ambivalence in the participants' use of ethnically based self-identification labels is an important backdrop to our micro-analysis below of a single communicative event, namely some of the youth organization members' social outing in an Italian restaurant after one of their meetings. In particular, it will help us situate the kinds of identity work that are done sequentially and locally with the choice of LGC. What we will focus upon below is the conventional association in the data at hand between LGC and a set of related genres, intimately linked with the socialization site of this language production. This association is notable and resonant in the context of the participants being dominant in English and using English as the routine language in their communication at meetings and in socialization sites. In this respect, LGC mostly appears in the form of fleeting and temporary switches with the exception of jokes, as we will see below.

We employ the term *genre* here in line with practice-based views of language: That is, we see genres as orienting frameworks of conventionalised expectations and routine ways of speaking and (inter)acting in specific settings and for specific purposes (e.g. Bauman 2001; Hanks 1996). The genres in question are keyed as "play" and involve activities that are taken up or oriented to as 'non-serious' and/or as suspensions of ongoing activity ('current reality').<sup>7</sup> In particular the following three discourse practices were identified and analysed:

- a. Jokes, including ethnic jokes, normally in narrative form
- b. Mock Cypriot/Greek/Greenglish
- c. Hypothetical scenarios

All these discourse activities are intimately linked with and legitimated by the particular physical locale (in this case, a restaurant) which is 'already there' (Blommaert et al 2005). It has been shown (e.g. *idem*, Baynham 2003; Georgakopoulou 2003) that physical space is not a static frame in which interactions take place. Instead, it serves as a socio-symbolic *site* that constitutes language choices (e.g. shapes what is 'tellable' and 'hearable', legitimises, enables or constrains particular practices, etc.). In a similar vein, physical space facilitates the invoking, indexing and accessing of certain social and cultural 'worlds' (as opposed to others), that are in tune with the ongoing activities

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<sup>7</sup> In socialization meetings, more than half of the switches to LGC were keyed as humorous (e.g. jokes and/or accompanied by laughter). What is more, the remainder were play-related (i.e. variously cued as non-serious and/or suspensions of ongoing activity/current reality, incl. hypothetical scenarios).

(Blommaert et al 2005: 206). In this case, as we will show, the leisurely atmosphere and conviviality that comes with food and drink consumption and informal interaction around a table, are integrally linked with the participants' seamless shifts into liminal scenarios, involving e.g. holidays in exotic destinations. In addition, the material surroundings shape the salience of humorous talk, specifically the jokes-telling sessions, as a primary activity.

Within these shifts, what interests us is their link with a shift in language as a semiotic resource, in this case, from English into LGC. With this, comes the more or less explicit activity of drawing upon culturally recognisable values, personas, and situations that are mobilized as humorous resources. These resources are thus bestowed with a specific 'order of indexicality' (idem), as elements that contribute to play and humour in leisurely socialization sites, and in talk that is about 'other' scenarios (characters in jokes, the participants in other locations, etc.). Shifts to LGC then are closely linked with the participants' transposing across time and space.

### Jokes

Let us look at how the above works in one of the narrative jokes that were told during the socialization event:

#### (7) *Ston vilo mu*

1 *X(άρης): Mian man:a=2 Κατερίνα:= ne3 X: perni to pedi tis na eksomoloi//θi*

4 *Δ(ημήτρης): what's eksomoloi//θi?*

5 *A(ποστόλης): na eksomoloiθi: (..) to be er (.)// er (.)*

6 *M(ενέλαος): //confession=7 Βαγγέλης: =confession! That's right!*

8 *X: alright and papa (.) papa says to him (..) ti e:kanes je mu? e piraksa mia mitsja.*

9 *Amarti:a (..) je mu. Ston vilo mu! Lali o mitsjis.*

10 *Ti alo ekanes je mu? e, eyamisa mian padremeni. Meγa:lin amartia (.) je mu!*

11 *Ston vilo mu! Lali o mitsjis*

12 *Ti alo ekanes je mu? –E, ish(j)e kafkan ston gafene (.) tsje dolofonisha enan.*

13 *Meγaliteri amartia (.) je mu! Ston vilo mu! Lali o mitsjis.*

14 *Ma je mu (.) lali tu o papas (.) katalavenis oti afti i amartia de sinxorje:te =*

15 *W(aiter): =Coffee sir?*

16 *X: No (.) not for me (..) thank you*

*((They all laugh)) 0.5*

17 *X: erm (.) oh yeah (.) coffee (.) >yeah yeah< (.) coffee plea:se.*

18 *W: What coffee would you like?*

19 *X: Er just an espresso. (0.5) Afti i amartia de sinxorje:te je mu. Ce ti tha kano*

20 *pa:ter? tha pais apu panu ap tin eklishia (.) ce na pidishis kato.Siyura in na peθano (.) pater!*

22 *Ston vilo mu! Lali o papas.*

*((They all laugh))*

22 *M: I've got some funny (jokes). I've got this one (.) I think this is courtesy of Juri.*

23 *Enas evesθitos cipreos lei sti jinekan du (.) re jineka, evareθika na se θoro mestin*

24 *guzina (.) na vasanizese. Klise tin bo:rta!*

*((They all laugh))*

1 *H(arris): A mothe:r=*

2 *Katerina: =yes*

3 *H: takes her child for confess//ion (to confess)*

4 *D(imitris): what's confession?*

5 *A(postolis): To confess (..) to be er (.)// er (.)*

6. M(enelaos): //Confession=  
 7 V(angelis): =confession! That's' right!  
 8 H: alright and the priest (.) the prest says to him (..) What di:d you do my son? Well I bothered a young girl.  
 9 (That's) a si:n (..) my son. I don't care (speak to my genitals)! says the young boy.  
 10 What else did you do my son? Well, I fucked a married woman. That's a bi:g sin (..) my son!  
 11. I don't care (speak to my genitals)! says the young boy.  
 12. What else did you do my son? Well, there was a quarrel at the coffee house (.) an' I murdered someone.  
 13 That's an even bigger sin (.) my son!. I don't care (speak to my genitals)! says the young boy.  
 14. But my son (.) the priest tells him (..) do you understand that this sin cannot be forgi:ven?=  
 15. W(aiter): =Coffee sir?  
 16 X: No (.) not for me (..) thank you  
 ((They all laugh)) 0.5  
 17 X: erm (.) oh yeah (.) coffee (.) >yeah yeah< (.) coffee plea:se.  
 18 W: What coffee would you like?  
 19 X: (Er just an espresso.) (0.5) This sin cannot be forgiven my son. And what am I to do,  
 20 fa:ther? You will climb to the top of the church (..) and you will jump (down). But I will surely die (.) father!  
 21 I don't care (speak to my genitals)! says the priest.  
 ((They all laugh))  
 22 M: I've got some funny (jokes). I've got this one (.) I think this is courtesy of Juri.  
 23 A sensitive Cypriot says to his wife (.) hey wife, I am bored of seeing you in the  
 24. kitchen tormenting yourself. Shut the door!  
 ((They all laugh))

This joke acts as a second story (Sacks 1974; also, Jefferson 1978), one that echoes and elaborates on the frame of jokes involving 'Cypriots' as set by other interlocutors. This explains the absence of any framing device or preface that would ask for the interlocutors' permission, as tends to happen with storytelling activities that temporarily suspend the turn-taking rules and grant the teller with strong floor-holding rights (Sacks 1974). Tellers of jokes in the group are by and large men and, given the floor-holding rights that jokes afford as well as the sustained use of LGC, they seem to provide a gendered performance arena that affords opportunities and calls for display of communicative skill and efficiency (Bauman 1986). Typically then, Harris starts narrating the joke in LGC. Katerina utters 'ne' (yes), indicating participation in the frame while Demetris, who cannot understand a particular LGC word, asks for clarification before being able to participate legitimately as audience (line 4). The other participants explain what '*eksomoloiθi*' means in English, thus temporarily stepping out of the 'joke-narration' frame as well as of its language (LGC).

A second interruption of the frame takes place when two different 'spaces' come to coincide: The 'reality' of the restaurant 'script' (the waiter asking, in English, whether Harris, the narrator would like coffee, line 15) and the narration of a Greek joke in LGC (suspension of reality). Harris immediately switches to English to respond to the waiter when he registers the request (16). This sudden transition explains the repair and hesitations (e.g. 'erm') in line 17 which come to contradict the rejection of coffee (in line 16). A 0.5 sec laughter follows from the participants: It could be that the participants 'see' something in Harris's reaction that we cannot see, as the data are not video-taped: e.g. some kind of embodied hesitation, confusion, difficulty in moving out

of the joke frame and into the interaction with the waiter that calls for a different language. It could also be that the laughter is generated by the interlocutors' own sense of incongruity created from this clash (Greek joke narration and English coffee ordering script). Whichever the case, Harris notably requires a further prompt by the waiter (l. 18) and a third turn to utter a complete order (line 19 'just an espresso') which further attests to the fact that the transaction with the waiter at that point is oriented to as disruptive to the joke frame.

The joke itself draws on the common theme (at least in Greece and Cyprus) of 'confession to the priest' and mobilizes the culturally powerful tripartite scheme (Georgakopoulou 1997: ch 3) as can be seen by the confession of three sins in three separate couplets (sinner confesses – priest reprimands). In this way, it typically builds up to the punchline that flouts expectations as previously set up by the symmetry of the prior three parts: In this case, the priest reprimands but does not absolve and what is more, he does so by re-voicing the swear word previously repeated (three times) by the sinner. This incongruity (swear word uttered by both sinner and priest) is a commonly attested source of humour and in this case it arguably acts as an undermining device: The piousness of the priest is cast in doubt inasmuch as the sinner and the priest end up talking the same language. In this way, the joke mocks certain elements that index cultural givens and stereotypes, a clearly identifiable as 'Cypriot' world (e.g. note the reference to the traditionally male coffee place, '*kafenes*' in line 12), a world that the participants frequently disidentify from.

Following Harris' joke, the floor is taken up by Menelaos (22) for another 'second' type of activity. It is interesting to note here that although what Bauman (2004: 7) would refer to as 'generic framing device' (l. 22) is uttered in English, (possibly for demarcation purposes i.e. signalling that the turn to follow is moving away from the prior text), the joke is still in LGC. Once again, a cultural stereotype is involved, that of the role of the wife as housewife: This stereotype is first seemingly challenged (whereby a – clearly labelled as – 'Cypriot male' expresses discontent at seeing his wife slaving in the kitchen). In fact, the departure from the stereotype is denoted by the qualification 'sensitive' which indexes lack of sensitivity as the norm. The stereotype is however subsequently reinforced (by the same sensitive Cypriot man asking his wife to close the door so that he need not watch her). In similar vein as the preceding joke, this reinforcement constitutes the crux of the joke in that it flouts the expectations set up by the prior text. In both cases, widely circulating discourses about Cypriot men in various capacities are reaffirmed: Priests are far from pious and husbands are far from 'new men'.

During the narration of jokes, trans-local (mainly from Cyprus rather than from the 'local' Cypriot community) cultural elements are constantly reproduced and more or less variably and subtly undermined and challenged in a humorous context. These elements are set aside from ongoing or surrounding activities (carried out in English) partly by being told in LGC. As we will see in more detail below, LGC thus becomes an integral part of performing (be it affiliatively or not, but definitely in a humorous and animated way) aspects of recognisable, intelligible, shared identities.

#### Mock-LGC

Similarly, apart from sharing knowledge of cultural stereotypes as in the narration of Greek-Cypriot jokes, aspects of the group's shared identities were routinely performed through listings and commentary of typically LGC phrases and expressions. There was

a ritual element in those performances: The rest of the discussion was in English, the actual meta-languaging was in English, and LGC was thus singled out and objectified in the process as the talking point. By mocking these mixed phrases, the participants seemed to be legitimising their relationship to the community via knowledge, and use of, these phrases (as they also admit that others mock them when they utter them: *'I said it in Cyprus once (.) an' they took the piss out of me for a whole day'*). However by mocking them themselves, they also distance themselves from the older members of the community who typically use such expressions. In this way, the mockery of these elements presents the same ambivalence and hybridity of positions as the use of ethnic labels, discussed above. Put differently, the knowing allusiveness that LGC conjures up in these cases is partly about ownership (l. 12, 16) and partly about distancing.<sup>8</sup> At the micro-level, blurry boundaries between the comical and parodic aspects at work are indexed by the frequent placement of such LGC phrases in the joke genre: line 7: *'We don't know that one'*, line 13: *'that's the best one'*.

**(8) Mock Cypriot**

- 1 A(postolis): [...] would be perfect for studying the translation (.) from the Greek  
 2 things ( ) (.) like=  
 3 M(enelaos): =*ti shoshinja* (.) stuff like to pason (.) *o taksidjis* (.) *i stamba*=  
 3 M: the sausage stuff (.) like the - the bus pass (.) the taxi-driver (.) the stamp.  
 4 Aph(rodite): You should print a list //off  
 5 K(aterina): //*na χartosume to kitsui*=  
 5 K: //to wallpaper the kitchen=  
 6 M(enelaos): =to wha::t?  
 7 Aph: We don't know that:t one!  
 8 K: To put paper on the kitchen //wall  
 9 Aph: //a: (.) *to kitchui* (.) yeah (..) *ela mes to kitchin*=  
 9 Aph: oh: (.) the kitchen (.) yeah(.) come into the kitchen=  
 10 A:= *grila*=  
 10 A: =grill=  
 11 Aph: =*valto mesti grila djo lepta*:!=  
 11 Aph: =put it under the grill for two minu:tes=  
 12 A: =I said that in Cyprus once (.) an' they took the piss out of me for a whole day ((laughs))  
 [...]  
 16 M: *epjasan ta biluzercja* ((below-zerkia)) (.) that's the best one!  
 16 M: It is below zero ((it is so cold it is below zero)) (.) that's the best one!

Hypothetical scenarios

While conventional use of LGC applies to the telling of the entire joke, in hypothetical scenarios we have cases of momentary shifts into it as opposed to sustained use. These switches facilitate the invocation, or enhancement, of references to liminal or emotive

<sup>8</sup> As we have already suggested Johnstone's study (1999) has convincingly shown that speakers frequently stylise varieties that do not clearly "belong" to the outgroup" (505). In these cases, they can have an ambivalent – partly "theirs", partly "ours"- (and very situated) relationship with the dialect of their community, so that "region and the speech of people from that region are mediated by individuals' rhetorical and self-expressive choices" (515). In similar vein, Georgakopoulou (2005) has also shown how female adolescents in a small town in Greece parodically invoke the local dialect, which in principle is 'their' dialect too, in talk about men and in order to discursively construct masculinities.

states: To leisurely and exotic settings, lavish food and drink consumption, and general physical indulgence.

(9) *karpuzi, halumi ce psomi* (watermelon, hallumi cheese and bread)

- 1 M(enelaos): [...] I never want to work in a bank=  
 2 A(postolis): = D'you know what I'd really want to do?=  
 3 M: I'd love to sit in an island in the Philippines (..) an' just read the Economist and Moby Dick (..) an' have//  
 4 D(imitris): // Not some woman there feeding him // drinks ((laughs))  
 5 A: *Karpuzi* (..) *halumi ce psomi*=  
 5 A: Watermelon, *hallumi* ((type of cheese)) and bread  
 6 M: *eshi kaliteri joi(n)? >fetes fetes< na mu fuskoni to (psomadin)*=  
 6 M: is there a better life(style)? To have my tummy filled slice by slice  
 7 A: *Na* (..) *vle:pis?*  
 7 A: See?

The speakers have been talking about work and the stress involved. Apostolis initiates a shift of topic with a question: 'Do you know what I'd really like to do?' (2), which sets up a hypothetical scenario as attested to by the choice of modality ('I'd'). The others present start building on this theme. Dimitris amplifies the element of indulgence by bringing in the idea of being fed by a female.<sup>9</sup> Apostolis then switches to LGC and the theme/fantasy reaches its climax taking a 'substantial' form incorporating Greek-Cypriot food: *karpuzi, halumi ce psomi* (5). The mode here is performed as we can see in the use of the tripartite scheme (*karpuzi, halumi ce psomi*), the repetition of 'fetes' and the alliteration of 'f' (*fetes, fuskoni*). The use of Greek and the reference to translocal cultural products and images combine to form a new space: One far from the reality of Britain and the restaurant. A second question is then posed (by Menelaos in line 6), but this time it is in LGC: '*eshi kaliteri joi(n)?*' (is there a better life?). This second question thus 'rounds up' the 'potential' present in the first question ('do you know what I'd really like to do?'). A joint practice has shifted the frame from reality, to possibility, to fantasy and indulgence (the latter expressed in LGC). It is interesting to note here the sequential placement of the shift into LGC from English. The hypothetical frame has been set up and it is in its elaboration and culmination that LGC is mobilized. This elaboration brings in a package of 'ethnic' elements that evoke a summer (holiday?) scenario (note the reference to watermelon as the quintessential summer fruit in Cyprus) and a 'life' (*zoi*, l. 6) that the participants symbolically affiliate with and collude in (re)-imagining.

Similarly, in the example below, in the last utterance, the speaker, Menelaos, once again builds on a 'fantasy' and further shapes it in LGC (line 6):

(10) *Ade, pame Xonolulu* (Come on, let's go to Honolulu)

1. M(enelaos): what time is it um (..) in the States?  
 2. A(postolis): well (..) it depends where you are (..) really.

<sup>9</sup> This conjures up images from cultures that the participants in question are familiar with and frequently (re)invoke in their interactions: contemporary popular culture on one hand and ancient Greek and Roman culture on the other hand, particularly as images on ancient Greek amphoras and Roman frescos, whereby high ranking citizens are attended to in their consumption of gastronomic delight, such as wine and grapes.



3. ( ): yyy -eah  
 4. V(agelis): Honolulu (.) yeah .  
 5. A: Honolulu (.) that's where we should go=  
 6. Men: =*Ade (.) pame Xonolulu. Xonolulu!*  
 6 Men: =Come on, let's go to Honolulu. Honolulu!

Both examples 9 and 10 above involve the specific use of LGC to amplify the indulgence in scenarios which have been introduced in English, for example by incorporating pleasurable flavours into the scenarios depicted in exotic locations (example 9), and by reiterating the 'exotic location' in LGC (example 10). In both cases, everyday reality is suspended while fantasy images of super-indulgence in exotic and far-away locations are substantiated through LGC.

**(11)** *O::u (.) emeθisa* (Oh, I'm drunk)

- 1 Aph(rodite): *O::u (.) emeθisa* (..) taking care of the wine! ((laughs)) Oreon krashi (.)  
 1 Aph: O:h (.) I'm drunk (..) taking care of the wine! ((laughs)) Nice wine (.)  
 2 *pol:a oreo*. I'm - I'm NUrning it!  
 2 rea:lly nice. I'm - I'm Nursing it!  
 3 K(aterina): (wha:t?)  
 4. Aph: I'm nursing the wine=  
 5 K: =Go: girl!

In the extract above, once again indulgence and merriment are mediated by LGC. Aphrodite mentions that she is in the process of 'nursing the wine' in English, but appeals to its effect/taste in LGC: '*pola oreo*' (really nice), '*emeθisa*' (I'm drunk).

**(12)** *Katurima* (Pee)

- 1 M(enelaos): Does anyone want some *katurima*? ((pee)) ((laughs))  
 2 Aph(rodite): .You can have it a:ll for yourself=  
 3 A(postolis): = *katurima* (.) *katurima* in //cake  
 4 M(enelaos): // ( )  
 5 A: oh (.) SHUT up!  
 6 Aph: but you like it (.) >don't you?<

Once again, LGC is used to 'distort' or 'suspend' reality: Menelaos jokingly offers the others a bit of 'urine' (which in reality is the water inside a small vase placed on the table). 'Urine', uttered in LGC, forms the basis of a humorous frame that is taken up in 1. 3 and inserted playfully in another consumption realm (from drinking to eating it in a cake). In all these cases, we see LGC being intimately linked with 'an aesthetically marked and heightened mode of communication' (Bauman 1986: 43) that is characterized by an orientation to 'feeling, willing, desiring, fantasizing and playfulness' (Rampton 2006: 118). As we will suggest below, this is an important point for the kinds of identity work that LGC allows for and engenders.

#### 4. Concluding discussion

As we can see from the examples above, informal and socializing situations (in this case, a dinner outing) provide the participants with a site for 'performing' aspects of shared (in this case, ethnically based) identities that are mobilized by a conventionalised use of LGC along with the socio-cultural worlds that this choice indexes. Within these worlds, knowledge of cultural stereotypes enables the speakers to invoke these stereotypes through a knowing allusiveness but also to stand outside of them and re-appropriate them humorously. What starts and is oriented to as 'shared' identities then constitutes a resource which the speakers can draw upon to signal ambivalent positionings (partly ours – partly theirs) and only partial ownership. In other words, shared identities are not about straightforward associations but about more or less strategic and parodic re-inscriptions of oriented to as 'givens'. Taking these re-inscriptions together with the participants' complex and ambivalent ethnicity-based positionings as those have emerged from our larger study, we can assume that rather than straightforward links, i.e. people being 'Greek-Cypriot' or 'British' or both, switches to LGC denoting 'Greek-Cypriot' identity, etc., what we have here is more complex and in a sense creative identity work. In doing so, we would be in tune with research that has stressed the processes of hybridity involved in what was traditionally viewed as bilingual and bicultural communities.

That said, it is worth reminding ourselves of (and staying with) the micro-level that we have seen these strips of discourse activity work in: As parts of talk-in-interaction in local contexts. At that level, it is important to not oversee the rhetorical work and interactional affordances that shifts to LGC are mobilized for: These include generating humorous and light-hearted moments (example 7) in accordance with the overall informal key of the socialization event; occasioning performances (as we saw Menelaos doing in example 9), redressing potentially face-threatening acts (as in the case of *'emeθisa'* in example 11), colluding with and amplifying previous speakers' points (as in example 10, l. 6). We do not wish to underestimate or shy away from such local uses of code-switches as a conversational/discourse resource; certainly these uses are in tune with previous work on code-switching that has documented it as a means for conveying objectification or subjectification, reiteration of points, addressee specification, face management (distance and solidarity), etc (e.g. Gumperz 1982; Wei 1998; Auer 1998).

However, beyond this use of code-switching for single communicative events (i.e. as a device for managing discourse and social relations locally), we also wish to tap into and include in our remit the fact that switches to LGC in our data largely represent habitual and conventionalised language choices, language usages which have become ways of acting and interacting in specific sites. More than performing local sequential and interpersonal functions of the kind that previous literature has stressed, switches to LGC in our data partake in a conventionalised and ritualistic re-animation and re-enactment of certain discourse activities and personas that come with them (e.g. 'male Cypriot'). As we saw, the speakers routinely fantasize about other possible worlds and hypothetical scenarios, discursively construct consumption desire (e.g. indulge in gastronomic delights) and articulate taboo words/worlds through switches to LGC. In this respect, LGC is by no means reducible to a singular and direct index of ethnicity (or ethnic inheritance). Instead, it has come to be associated with a whole economy of subjectivity that has to do with playfulness, suspension of current reality, construction

(and desire) of other worlds and enjoyment. It is also notable that such uses of LGC also occur in leisurely, informal, liminal socialization sites that involve some kind of embodied enjoyment (in this case, consumption of food and drink). We can thus argue that the repetition of LGC over time in such sites and for liminal uses of sorts has led to the creation of a 'social semiotic' (Cameron & Kulick 2003) or 'style', a package of resources that links associatively and habitually speakers, speech styles, talked about parties, social categories, and interactional contexts (Irvine 2001: 77).

Linking language choices with subjectivity processes such as desire, fear, anxiety, and repression, albeit recently acknowledged as a desideratum in sociolinguistic work (e.g. Cameron & Kulick 2003; Eckert 2002; Rampton 2006), remains a largely uncharted territory. Even so, within a less than unified and well shaped frame of reference, certain routine choices in our data are important for the ways in which the discursive interpretation of desire and repression is currently being put on the map (e.g. as in Billig 1999, 2001). First, the conventional uses of LGC that we have looked at in this paper are routinely marked off from surrounding talk and keyed as 'non-serious' and humorous. This non-seriousness is not only manifest at the sequential level but also at the level of topical choices: Ethnic jokes, taboo words, and faraway exotic locations contribute to shared enjoyment on one hand but also to a gap between actual and possible worlds on the other hand. Keying certain strips of discourse activity as humorous and marking them off has often been associated with the discursive workings of repression and desire (Billig 1997; cf. Rampton 2006). In our data, it is worth reminding ourselves of the dis-identifications that our participants frequently construct in the interviews and in their conversations with what they see as peasant and elderly generation aspects of Greek-Cypriotness; also, their identifications with what they see as a relaxed and liminal 'Greek' life-style that they long for in a British context. Taken together with conventionalised LGC in humorous activities about parodied third parties or exotic locations, we can see LGC working to carve out a space of transgression from the 'word of the fathers' (cf. Tsitsipis 2003 drawing on Bakhtin 1981) on the one hand and an 'other' (longed for, desired) space on the other hand. In both cases, what is important is how LGC (conventionally used) becomes a resource and a means for (dis)identifying and imagining oneself in ways that draw upon and reclaim widely available stereotypes.<sup>10</sup>

Similar re-claimings and re-appropriations of 'ethnic' stereotypes (e.g. ethnic jokes, Mock-Asian amongst Asian-Americans), common amongst younger members and/or artists (comedians) from 'ethnic communities' and/or artists (comedians), have been seen as a 'critique from the inside'; a discourse and identity resource that is licensed (and e.g. not seen as racist) by the ideologies of legitimacy that an 'insider's status' affords (see Chun 2004: 263-289). In the case of our data, as we have suggested, the partly ours – partly theirs kinds of positionings afforded by these uses of LGC hold the key to this re-claiming of stereotypes. It does however require an interpretative leap

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<sup>10</sup> Cyprus as an exotic, holiday location where one can relax and be themselves is a major self-defining feature in the community as well as a widely available stereotype in the British society at large. At the same time, widely circulating discourses still see the Cypriot community of London as peasant, inward-looking, with a strong emphasis on family and a male-dominated hierarchical structure. Tellingly, in a recent casting of the popular BBC soap opera of *Eastenders*, the London-Cypriot family, typically restaurant-owners (and food obsessed), were portrayed as too protective and possessive of their eldest son who in their eyes had 'made the mistake' of getting involved with an English woman.

to see those uses as (primarily or exclusively) counter-discourses and as more or less strategic re-appropriations.<sup>11</sup> As research on enacting 'other' voices (e.g. in the form of styling) has shown (see papers in Rampton 1999), where self is located in these cases vis-à-vis 'other' is far from straightforward. In fact, it rather seems to be the case that 'doing' a voice, even if in parodic terms, inevitably involves self taking on some of the meanings that come with this voice. Given that, in our data, we cannot talk about straight affiliations or disaffiliations with the stereotyped personas and worlds that LGC is mobilized for but more about complex and ambivalent positionings, we can see LGC as providing a second voice through which certain elements are habitually mediated, hence shifting authorship. This approach would leave us unsure as to how disidentified the male jokes tellers in our groups (really) are with the enacted voices of the sexist male Cypriots.

On a safer ground though, our bigger point would remain: That in 'ethnic minority' interactions, identities are more often than not complex and ever-shifting acts of conflicting loyalties and affiliations rather than premised on neat dichotomies between 'us' and 'them'. Carving out such complex positions is frequently (and maybe deplorably)<sup>12</sup> based on the use of fixed and "spectacular fragments" (Rampton 1999) from the minority language. Language choice in such cases cannot be reduced to a more or less transparent and authentic sign of ethnic/community membership (cf. Bucholtz 2003); instead, as we have shown here, conventional language uses in site and for certain genres may partake in the construction of an economy of subjectivity that has to do with 'licensing' one language with the articulation of the repressed or the fantasized.

### Transcription Symbols

Overlapping utterances are marked by // and/or [ ]

= connects 'latched' utterances

Intervals in and between utterances are given in small, mostly un-timed, pauses. More specifically:

(.) indicates a pause that is less than 0.5 seconds.

(0.5) indicates a pause of 0.5 seconds.

A colon marks an extension of the sound it follows; a double colon marks a longer extension.

Punctuation marks are used to indicate intonation: a period a stopping fall in tone; a comma continuing intonation; a question mark a rising inflection.

A dash marks an abrupt cut off.

Underlining indicates emphasis.

CAPITALS indicate speech that is louder than the surrounding talk.

> < Indicates delivery at a quicker pace than the surrounding talk

hh hh, heh, he, huh: Indicates laughter

(( )) Indicates editorial comments

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<sup>11</sup> To substantiate this, a larger study of the complex (local and institutional) histories of Cypriot migration and communities in the UK would be needed, which is beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>12</sup> The participants' competence in LGC is limited, something that is systematically deplored by older members and institutional agents within the community. But the participants themselves too often self-report as wishing that they spoke better Greek.

( ) Empty parentheses enclose unidentifiable speech.

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