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## Community language education in Greece and Cyprus: an afterword

In the autumn of 1996 fresh out of graduate school I was introduced to a not-for-profit organisation loosely associated with the Municipality of Athens and supporting families living in some of the most socio-economically deprived neighbourhoods in the city centre at the time. One of the main activities of the organisation was the coordination of a network of volunteer tutors who supported children with their homework after school. I opted to join the group of volunteer tutors in Votanikos tutoring children in the school subjects of Greek and English. In the last decade Votanikos has been transformed into an entertainment stronghold with trendy bars, clubs and eateries and expensive lofts, all easily accessible via the slick new metro station 'Eleonas'. Back in the mid 90s, Votanikos still had a distinct neighbourly feel. It was dotted with small family run shops and *kafeneia* (traditional coffee shops commonly reserved for a male clientele) and boasted a large municipal park with basketball courts and a playground that attracted local mums with young children. Families who had been living locally for generations lived side by side with families new to Athens. What distinguished this neighbourhood was a high concentration of families who had moved there mainly from the cities of Komotini, Ksanthi and adjacent villages in Western Thrace as early as the 1970s. Families spoke a variety of Turkish and officially self-identified as belonging to the 'Greek Muslim' minority of Western Thrace. This is a historical, indigenous minority whose rights are protected by the international peace Treaty of Lausanne (1923).

The tutoring programme was free and open to all families who wished to enrol their children. Yet, it almost exclusively attracted primary and secondary school children from minority and migrant backgrounds with low SES. Families with higher SES opted to send their offspring to *frontistiria* (private fee-paying cam schools and language centres) beyond the neighbourhood. The tutoring programme provided support across school subjects, including English and French, the two foreign languages taught in the local primary and secondary schools at the time. I remember asking one of the organisers whether there was any provision for teaching Turkish or any of the other languages spoken by the children and their families (Bulgarian, Albanian). She had responded that they had offered to organise language classes in other languages but that families were not interested; they were concerned with their children's low attainment and high dropout rates and wanted tutoring classes targeting school subjects only.

Over the next decade I continued to develop and maintain personal and professional ties with the neighbourhood. The question of offering Turkish language classes to children and adults would periodically resurface in my conversations with local institutional actors. When I was conducting fieldwork for my doctorate at the local primary school in 1999, the headteacher toyed with the idea of delivering Turkish language classes after school that would be open to all children. She had approached a newly qualified Turkish language teacher who had studied at the Special Pedagogical Academy of Thessaloniki (a Greek state institution tasked to train Turkish language teachers to teach in minority dual medium Turkish/Greek primary schools in Western Thrace, abolished in 2010) and lived locally.

The young man in question was already informally mediating between the school and local families, providing translation services, and liaising with families that were hard to reach on behalf of the school. He was known to and trusted by the families. The project stalled for months. Off the record, I was told that there were concerns of a backlash by some of the local Christian families. Added to this, the school did not wish to attract attention from proponents of the far-right neo-Nazi organisation Golden Dawn that had started to rear its ugly head in the neighbourhood.

Several years later, another local not-for-profit organisation supporting families initiated Turkish language classes for adults. The classes drew in a small but enthusiastic cohort of adults volunteering at the organisation, but none of the young people living locally and using the organisation's social services. The Turkish language teacher had been brought up and educated in Istanbul as part of the Greek Christian minority. The initiative lasted for about a year. Interest eventually waned and the Turkish language classes fizzled out. When I inquired whether the organisers had considered offering Turkish language classes for children, they reiterated the recurring theme of lack of interest and parental focus on school subjects only.

But what did this reported lack of interest in Turkish language learning mean from the families' perspective? Why were families prioritising English and French tutoring but not Turkish? Why when given the opportunity to join a Turkish language class, young people had not taken it up? I got an inkling of parental perspectives from one of the mothers of my tutees. On that day we were meeting at the child's home instead of the hired premises of the organisation. The family rented a house straight out of a Greek 1950s black and white movie, consisting of two rooms with a kitchen and WC in the courtyard. We used one of the rooms that served as a family room and bedroom. We took our shoes off and sat on the carpet and used pillows to prop up the books and notebooks. The room was very clean, and the mother kindly offered me a cup of Turkish coffee. At the end of our 2-hour session the mother came in and asked me if I could read and explain the side effects of a prescription drug for her. She was very apologetic about her lack of reading abilities in Greek, explaining that she had gone to school for a couple of years only. This prompted me to ask her about her reading abilities in Turkish. She confirmed that she had learned to read a little at school. At that point the mother left the room and returned with a battered Turkish alphabet primer. She proudly clarified that a family friend had brought it from Komotini for her daughter to learn to read Turkish. I asked the child how she was getting along with the alphabet primer and she said it was hard. She explained it was easier to practise by reading the subtitles on Turkish satellite TV. I asked the mother if she would consider sending her daughter to Turkish language classes to support her literacy development. The mother explained that their Turkish was different, they didn't speak 'kibarika' ('polite', standard Turkish). The mother's response complexified what Turkish language learning meant for the family. It foregrounded a rather different perspective from that which I had heard time and again in the neighbourhood, stressing the often neglected yet perennial sociolinguistic question, 'whose Turkish' would be learned/taught?

Vally

In November 2019, the Greek media reported that a Pakistani complementary school in Athens was at risk. The formal request that the school had submitted to the City of Athens in order to use the premises of a primary school in one of the municipality's western districts had been removed from the agenda of the Municipal Council's meeting. The move was spearheaded by the children's officer who was also a councillor with links to Golden Dawn, a far-right and neo-fascist party. The removal of the request had been done without previous warning and in a rather irregular manner, too. The councillor stated verbally that the Embassy of Pakistan in Athens had expressed 'concerns' about the school to the Mayor but submitted no written evidence to support that claim. Despite being caught off-guard, councillors from left-wing and centrist political parties recalled that Golden Dawn had tried to block the establishment of the school in 2017 and vowed to bring down the administrative obstacles that had been raised to the continued operation of the school. Three weeks later and following the resignation of the Golden Dawn councillor, the Municipal Council approved the school's request by majority vote. During the council's meeting, children who attended the school staged a process on the square opposite the City Hall in the centre of Athens. After setting school desks in rows and covering them with textbooks, notebooks, colourful stationery, and oversized backpacks, they sat down like they did in class, waiting for the outcome of the meeting. After the meeting concluded, the Mayor made a public statement confirming the commitment of the municipal authorities to open, democratic, and public schools. He referred to the free provision of school spaces for the running of initiatives that benefit 'our fellow citizens' as 'a very big step' – even though this was by no means a new practice. The Pakistani school (and many other schools for that matter) had been using public school spaces for a number of years and with the support of local school committees and parents' associations.

When this news first broke and as these events unfolded briefly over a matter of twenty or so days, I was overcome by a sense of unease engendered by my ignorance about the existence of the Pakistani school. My guilt did not have to do so much with my scholarly interests and expertise. At the time and still at the time of writing this vignette, I had/have only researched Greek complementary schools in London and had/have not done any work – academic or otherwise – on community language education initiatives in Greece. Yet, I felt that I ought to have known about this particular initiative, because the primary school that housed it was the same primary school that I had attended for three years as a child before moving on to secondary school. The school, which like most Greek schools has a large schoolyard that becomes very noisy during recess, is less than five minutes away from the block of flats where my parents still live. It's also right next to the local metro station, so I go past it regularly every time I am in Athens to visit my family and friends. How was it possible that I had no idea that the Pakistani school was there in my neighbourhood? Why were my family members and my close friends, some of whom live even closer to the school, equally oblivious of the fact that more than 130 children were there every Sunday to learn Urdu, Arabic, and English while their parents learned Greek? People in my social circles knew some of our Pakistani neighbours. But if they/we knew them, why did they/we never know about the vibrant and well-organised group of people that used my old primary school on Sundays?

Petros

Our ethnographic vignettes span a period of two decades and highlight several recurring themes that emerge in the rich and varied accounts of community language education featured in this edited collection as well: the precarity of grass roots language provision (Magos, Gatsi, Androulakis, Simopoulos, and Stergiou), parental and child agency (Chatzidaki and Maligkoudi, Mouti), language ideologies and hierarchies (Gogonas and Maligkoudi; Gkaintartzi, Karpava, Protopapa and Ioannidou), the historical and socio-cultural anchoring of communities in their efforts to sustain their schools (Hovhannisyan and Sougari, Skoumperdi and Kesidou). This edited collection is both significant and timely. As many authors in the volume note, despite the increase over the past thirty years in the number of people who have languages other than Greek in their linguistic repertoires and who want to foster the learning of those languages among their children, our knowledge of community language education in Greece and Cyprus remains limited. This gap in the literature contrasts our knowledge of Greek language education abroad, about which a more substantial body of research is available (see, for instance the collection of papers in Damanakis et al. 2014, Panagiotopoulou et al. 2019, Skourtou et al. 2020).

The chapters in this volume take a contextually sensitive look at language education in the world's two majority Greek-speaking contexts. The volume unites empirical studies that showcase the variety of community language education provision in Greece and Cyprus today: community/complementary schools that operate on weekends or after school hours and offer language and culture classes in a range of languages (e.g., Albanian, Czech, Armenian, Russian), day schools (such as the Italian and Hebrew schools where Italian and Hebrew respectively are one of the languages taught at school), and 'family language schools' conceived within the framework of a UNICEF intervention. The educational structures described in this volume are mainly community-led initiatives with varying degrees of institutional support and recognition from the country of origin and the Greek and Cypriot states. Some chapters sharpen the insights we have gained into how the languages of some of the largest migrant groups in Greece and Cyprus, such as Albanian and Russian respectively, are taught, learned, and experienced (Magos, Chatzidaki and Maligkoudi, Karpava). Other chapters, combined with authors' previous works, bring some communities and their languages, such as Hebrew, Armenian, Bulgarian, to the fore of scholarly inquiry for the first time (Gkaintartzi, Mouti, Protopapa and Ioannidou). Taken together, all chapters offer a new evidence base that describes the diversity of the community language education landscape and can serve as the springboard for further research and can hopefully bring about change in policy and practice. Equally importantly, the volume makes community language education initiatives in Greece and Cyprus visible primarily to scholars but possibly also to practitioners, policymakers, and other actors in this developing social, educational, and linguistic terrain.

In what follows, we give our perspectives on the common threads that run through the chapters of the collection. We review the methods that authors used in their research, touching upon researchers' positionalities and some ethical issues related to undertaking the types of community-based research presented in the volume. We move on to paint the broad policy picture that emerges from contributions, charting a map of community language education in Greece and Cyprus. We then position the studies within the context of current theoretical advancements in conceptualisations of language, culture, and community in relation to language education in contexts of migration, diaspora, and linguistic minoritisation. We include a section devoted to the dimension of the family and the role it plays in the learning of languages on both a formal level (in relation to the running and operation of community language education initiatives) and an informal level (from a family

language policy perspective). We finally turn our gaze towards the future of community language education and research in Greece and Cyprus. Throughout this afterword, we are mindful of the fact that our views are shaped – at least in part – by our respective positionings as scholars who have studied and worked on/with/for/as educators of Greek in Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

### **Methodological continuities**

Research into community language education in contexts outside Greece and Cyprus has benefited greatly from the adoption of critical and ethnographically oriented research methods (Martin-Jones and Martin 2017). The contributions in the volume attest to the appropriateness of ethnography for the qualitative study of a broad range of issues around community languages (their teaching and learning, their use and intergenerational transmission, attitudes and ideologies towards them and other languages in social actors' repertoires). They also demonstrate the success of ethnographic methods in documenting the practices and centring the emic perspectives of the many different actors who become actively involved in these community language education spaces (learners, teachers, learners' parents, managers, institutional representatives, and other stakeholders). Semi-structured, audio-recorded interviews form the backbone of the methodologies that were employed in the different research projects, most of which are case studies of specific community language education initiatives. All the chapters in the volume present and analyse interview data, which were collected mainly face-to-face. In her study of the teaching of Hebrew in the Talmud Torah Hagadol Jewish School in Thessaloniki, Gkaintartzi conducted interviews online, while Karpava led both face-to-face and online interviews in her study of Russian community language schools in Cyprus. Authors conducted interviews with teachers, learners, learners' parents, and school managers, thus capturing the perspectives of many actors within their respective research contexts. The interview data revealed their linguistic practices and views towards the teaching, learning and use of community languages and how they were shaped by diverse biographies and motivations. Casting a broad net in this way allowed for points of tension to be brought to the surface such as when parents insisted on their children attending complementary schools despite children's reluctance or even resistance. Such tensions are described in the case of the Albanian school in Volos by Magos and are reminiscent of findings reported in the literature about other contexts, as well (Andrews 2013, Matras and Karatsareas 2020).

Some authors complemented interview findings with data collected using other methods including in-class observations (Chatzidaki and Maligkoudi on the Albanian school in Thessaloniki, Gogonas and Maligkoudi on the Czech schools, Protopapa and Ioannidou on the Bulgarian school in Cyprus), focus groups (Gkaintartzi on the Hebrew school, Hovhannisyan and Sougari on the Armenian school), open-ended online questionnaires (Mouti on the Italian school), researcher journals (Hovhannisyan and Sougari), and the analysis of different types of textual data including identity texts (Giota, Androulakis, Simopoulos, and Stergiou), language diaries (Gogonas and Maligkoudi), policy documents, and learners' works (Protopapa and Ioannidou). Gkaintartzi and Protopapa and Ioannidou further describe how informal discussions they held with research participants outside of strictly defined data collection sessions helped them to establish rapport with participants and further informed their understanding of their research contexts.

In many cases, including in sites where authors in this volume undertook research, the ways in which complementary schools in particular are organised favour ethnographic

investigations. Schools are often set up thanks to bottom-up, volunteer initiatives of parents and operate under informal or loosely formal terms compared to mainstream schools, which move within stricter and more centralised legal and institutional boundaries. They also draw heavily on tightly-knit social networks to address needs and problems, which sometimes arise all too urgently calling for immediate solutions: finding teaching staff or spaces for classes, getting hold of teaching materials, raising funds, navigating bureaucracies and legal systems. These arrangements may create favourable conditions for researchers to not only access complementary schools for purposes of research but also employ methods that rely on their becoming part of school life over considerable periods of time and the establishment of interpersonal relationships and feelings of trust between researchers and non-researchers in the school setting. It is also common for social actors to have many different roles in the school context: teachers can also be parents of learners; parents can also be school managers; teachers and school managers can also be researchers; learners, teachers, parents, and managers can also be research participants. This is indeed the case with some of the studies included in this volume. For example, the main researcher involved in the study reported by Gatsi, Androulakis, Simopoulos, and Stergiou on the Farsi, Arabic, and Sorani refugee schools has a record of engagement and involvement with the establishment, operation, support, and monitoring of the schools as network facilitator, mentor, and teacher trainer. Current advances regarding the importance of researcher positionality and ethics in language and literacy focused scholarship (see for instance Patiño-Santos 2020 and Copland 2020 respectively) are a very insightful vantage point from which to approach these complexities, unpack the ways in which they shape the ethnographic research process, and incorporate reflective accounts into ethnographic texts.

### **A landscape of complexity, inequality, and partial visibility**

The policy picture that emerges from the presentation of the different community language education initiatives in Greece and Cyprus is one of legal and operational complexity and either partial visibility or complete invisibility in the eyes of the two nation-states. In Greece, some languages are taught within a legal framework that is designed for so-called ‘foreign’ schools, that is, schools that are established by non-Greek citizens or non-Greek legal persons or entities. This is the case of the Italian and Polish schools, which, as described by Mouti and Skoumperdi and Kesidou, are set up under Law 4862/1931. The function of the Jewish school is enshrined in a different set of laws that cover aspects of the lives of Greek citizens who are Jewish (Laws AIF’/1882, 568/1915, 2456/1920, 3379/1955, 3194/2003, 3577/2007, 4071/2012). In both cases, Greek lawmakers regulate and protect the establishment and operation of day schools that teach a full curriculum, which can be the educational curriculum of another state or that of Greece with the ‘foreign’ language as well as Greek being given increased numbers of hours in the weekly schedule. A major difference between the two frameworks, however, is that the law regarding ‘foreign’ day schools does not make any financial provisions on the part of the Greek state. ‘Foreign’ schools are therefore reliant, at least in part, on financial support from the countries of origin of the respective communities, which in turn creates the conditions for the schools to fall under the jurisdiction of the governments of those states. Mouti writes that the Italian School is “basically an Italian State School in another territory and it operates following the Italian Curriculum and the Italian Educational System”. Similarly, the Polish school is financed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Poland. In contrast, the series of laws regarding the Jewish communities stipulates that mainstream school teachers are to be seconded to Jewish schools, with the Greek state covering staff costs.

The law does not cover the establishment and operation of out-of-hours initiatives like complementary schools, which typically run during the weekend or after hours on weekdays, in either Greece or Cyprus. Day schools that teach a full curriculum like the ‘foreign’ schools discussed above may on occasion facilitate the establishment and operation of out-of-hours initiatives by providing existing infrastructure and resources so that complementary schools, for example, operate as part of the day school. One example is the Polish complementary school. As a matter of fact, Skoumperdi and Kesidou report that the day school ceased to operate in recent years, whereas the complementary (or, Saturday) classes are still available, which could be interpreted as a sign of intergenerational language shift within the Polish community. Where no such pre-existing context exists, community language education initiatives are usually set up by migrant associations and/or groups of parents, possibly with some financial support from the countries of origin. Government support, however, tends to be limited and not usually sufficient to cover the full expenditure of the various initiatives. As a consequence, school committees, managers, and other relevant parties have to secure funding from additional sources including by charging tuition fees and organising fundraising activities. Community language schools may therefore find themselves in financially insecure positions and even close if conditions become particularly adverse. The case of the Albanian School of Volos, which was founded by a local union of Albanian university degree holders, may serve as a stark reminder of the precarity of some community language education initiatives (Karatsareas 2021a). The school closed a mere seven years after its establishment owing to the gradual decrease in the number of students. Magos draws a link between the closure and parents’ work commitments, the general decrease in the number of Albanian-speaking families in Volos, and a lack of institutional support from the governments of Albania and Greece, which in turn shows how complex and volatile the set of factors that determine the vitality of grassroots education initiatives can be; Karatsareas’ vignette of the Pakistani complementary school in Athens further attests to the role of external factors in determining the viability of such grassroots initiatives.

In Greece, there is, however, a legal framework for the establishment and operation within mainstream schools of reception classes and out-of-hours support classes for pupils who are not Greek nationals including ‘returnee’ pupils from recognised ethnic Greek minorities in other territories. Ministerial Decree Φ10/20/Γ1/708/1999 states that the language and culture of the countries of origin of pupils may be taught by hourly-paid staff, either qualified educators or people with the relevant linguistic competences. As Gatsi et al. and Magos point out, however, these provisions had no significant impact with very few mainstream schools setting up such classes; see also Lytra’s vignette documenting the difficulties in setting up Turkish after school Turkish language classes in Athens. Li Wei’s assessment that complementary schools in the UK “were set up in response to the failure of the mainstream education system to meet the needs of the ethnic minority children and their communities” (2006, 78) would therefore seem to be apposite for the contexts of Greece and Cyprus, as well. It must, however, be noted that a comparable legal framework does not exist in the UK. Since the adoption of the recommendations of the Swann Report (1985), there is no provision within mainstream schools for the teaching and learning of the languages spoken by pupils other than English. All responsibility for community language education falls on minority ethnic communities. In Switzerland, which is a federal system, community language education is not governed by a unified legal and administrative framework. Each Canton has separate arrangements with different schools and communities. In the Canton de Vaud for instance, schools are self-funded (mainly through school fees) and administered independently. The City of Lausanne provides limited access to classrooms free of charge and affords some visibility to these schools through the registry of the Bureau Lausannois

pour les Immigrés (Lausanne Bureau for Immigrants). Post-pandemic, schools and communities have sought greater recognition by the Canton de Vaud and access to funding, classroom space and support in the form of teacher training and improved links with the mainstream school sector (*24 heures*, 3.11.2021).

In the Republic of Cyprus, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth has produced a series of papers regarding the integration of pupils with migrant backgrounds into the mainstream educational system. Policy papers, a curriculum published in 2020, and a rich set of teaching materials are available on the website of the Ministry as well as that of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (<http://www.moec.gov.cy/dde/diapolitismiki/index.html>; accessed 31 January 2023). The focus of these resources is on the teaching of Greek to non-Greek-speaking pupils, as it is considered that the provision of a bilingual education for every migrant is “an unattainable and unrealistic target” (Policy Paper on the Integration of Pupils with Migrant Background to the Cyprus Educational System, 9). The policy paper, however, does mention the possibility of creating opportunities for utilising and teaching pupils’ languages through a number of ways: within an expanded curriculum in day schools, in institutes of further education, or as language options in adult education.

### **Community language education spaces as ‘sites of multilingualism’**

The empirical studies in this edited collection are grounded in a social practice view of language. Rather than focusing on language as code, this view privileges what social actors do with language for meaning making and identity work and how language use is embedded in broader historical, socio-cultural, political, and economic local and global contexts. Language is, thus, conceptualised “as a set of ideologically defined resources and practices” which are hierarchised and mobilised to construct relations of social difference (Heller 2007, 2). A social practice view of language aligns with a repertoire approach where social actors draw upon “biographically organized complexes of resources” that “follow the rhythms of human lives” (Blommaert and Backus 2011, 9). A repertoire approach takes a holistic understanding of language that emphasizes the interconnections and interrelationships between linguistic resources. In this sense, social actors’ heritage languages such as Russian, Bulgarian, Czech were examined in interaction with Greek, English and other linguistic resources at their disposal, intertwined with the respective cultures, identities, and histories. What emerged across the empirical studies is that community language education spaces are “sites of multilingualism” (Lytra and Martin 2010) where certain constellations of linguistic resources and practices are valorised and leveraged in pedagogic practice, while others are challenged or even rejected.

Language ideologies are central in shaping whose language is to be taught and whose language learning experience is to be valued. Language ideologies link the linguistic with the social. They are regarded as “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests” (Irvine 1989, 255). This means that language ideologies are never ‘natural’, ‘transparent’, or ‘neutral’, but need to be understood and investigated as cultural constructions that ascribe higher social valuation and prestige to certain linguistic resources and practices over others. Standard language ideologies privilege national standard varieties over regional, classed, youth, or spoken varieties (Blackledge and Creese 2010). Standard varieties are frequently evaluated as ‘pure’, ‘clean’, ‘polite’ (see also the mother’s evaluation of standard Turkish as ‘kibarika’ in Lytra’s vignette) (Karatsareas 2018, Lytra 2015). They are afforded enhanced visibility in (community) language education which can lead to the stigmatisation and marginalisation of non-standard varieties and their users in formal teaching and learning contexts (Ioannidou et

al. 2020, Karatsareas 2020, 2021b, Lytra 2012). At the same time, users of non-standard varieties may retain a strong loyalty and pride towards their ways of speaking and an ambivalent stance towards the standard variety. According to student reports in Lytra (2015), when ‘kibarika’ was used for effective communication with relatives from Turkey, it indexed education and good manners. When the same variety was used in interactions with community members in Athens, it was associated with negative identity attributes, with people who ‘show off’. This ambivalent language ideological work mapped the opposition of ‘our language/their language’ onto the local Turkish variety in Athens and the standard. It may also have contributed to the reported lack of interest in formal Turkish language classes discussed in Lytra’s vignette.

All community language education spaces in this edited collection promoted and taught the national standard with different degrees of acceptance or tolerance towards students’ and families’ multilingual repertoires and practices. The section of the Polish school that followed the Polish national curriculum insisted on a Polish-only language policy while the complementary school section took a more flexible approach allowing for the use of Greek during instruction (Skoumperdi and Kesidou). The Jewish (Gkaintartzi) and Italian (Mouti) schools adopted a multilingual and multicultural perspective towards languages and language learning, integrating the use of Greek and other languages (English, French) in the curriculum. The schools’ multilingual language policy sought to accommodate the increasingly heterogeneous composition of the student populations with diverse biographies, migration trajectories and language abilities. For instance, the Italian school attracted both the ‘italici’, that is families with heritage links to Italy through old and new migration and the ‘italofili’, that is families without such links.

Indeed, many empirical studies attest to the rapidly changing nature of the diaspora communities supporting these educational initiatives, drawing attention to their internal diversities, and raising an important question: to what extent can we speak of a single Albanian, Bulgarian, Russian community? A case in point was the complex language ecology of the Armenian school in Thessaloniki discussed in Hovhannisyan and Sougari. Eastern Armenian was the standard language of instruction of the school reflecting the language use of the majority of the students and their families. However, the historical Armenian community that had established and was still administering the school were language users of Western Armenian (the standard Armenian variety based on the Istanbul variety and widely used in the Middle East). The language ecology of the school was further complicated by some students speaking Georgian Armenian. The empirical studies presented interrogate how these internal diversities might be reshaping pedagogic practices, language ideologies, and language policies as well as the mission and curricula of these schools. Drawing on classroom data, Protopapa and Ioannidou cogently illustrated tensions between student-initiated translanguaging and teacher resistance and insistence on language separation pedagogic practices that prioritised Bulgarian only. These tensions point to inherent struggles in the ideology and practice of community language education spaces concerning which language practices are considered appropriate and legitimate, by whom, and who decides (Ganuza and Headman 2018, Lytra 2022).

### **Family language policy in minoritized contexts**

Families are at the very centre of community language education provision worldwide. Family members may spearhead, administer, fundraise, and teach in these schools. They invest considerable energy, time and resources in children’s language learning and literacy development often over many years in order to sustain languages, cultures, and identities in

minoritized contexts. The rapidly developing field of family language policy (FLP) examines family members' explicit and implicit sense making, decisions and practices to support or hinder the use of particular languages and cultures and how these relate to broader dominant language ideological beliefs and language-in-education policies locally, and transnationally (Curdt-Christiansen 2018; also for an overview see Lanza and Lomeu Gomes 2020). King and Lanza (2019) identify a shift in FLP research from a focus on child language outcomes to questions about multilingualism, language learning, agency, identity and imagination among multilingual families in divergent and changing contexts. The study of FLP explores how families' beliefs about languages and language learning take shape and are constrained by societal discourses that ascribe different values to different sets of linguistic resources and exert pressures on family language practices and choices. As Mirvahedi (2020) argues, "language ideologies, practices, and management in a family do not take place in a social vacuum; rather, they interact with the sociopolitical, historical, and economic realities in which families find themselves" (2020, 17).

Several chapters in this edited collection highlight the social embeddedness of family language policies linked to the unequal distribution of languages in contemporary Greece and Cyprus. The aforementioned fragmented policy picture underscores that both nation-states espouse a modernist view of language that constructs (standard) Greek as the quintessential marker of ethno-national identity and promotes a national homogenising discourse that supports Greek monolingualism (Frangoudaki and Dragona 1997). In this respect, Greek language competence is regarded as a prerequisite for successful school and social integration and socio-economic mobility in the respective societies (Archakis 2016). Parents reiterated the importance of Greek and Greek language learning (Hovhannisyanyan and Sougari) and signalled their children's preference for Greek in the family (Chatzidaki and Maligkoudi). Parents went beyond the binary majority-minority languages and referred to English as a global language and English language learning as a conduit for new life and work opportunities, particularly in the aftermath of the Greek government debt crisis in 2009 (Skoumperdi and Kesidou). Further examples of linguistic ordering processes included references to other high status European languages (French, Italian, German) which were regarded as valuable foreign languages and were implicitly distinguished from community languages sometimes perceived as having lower societal status. The way languages were hierarchically organised was encapsulated in Mouti's remark that "in essence there are no English, French, German or Italian complementary schools in Greece". In addition, parental narratives alerted us to emergent lingua francas, such as the case of Russian on the island of Cyprus discussed in Karpava and the role of faith literacies and religious socialisation exemplified in the significance of learning Biblical Hebrew, the liturgical language of Judaism, in the Jewish school in Gkaintartzi's study. These language rankings inevitably influenced parental decisions and discourses concerning children's language and literacy development "as ideologically shaped social practice[s]" (Curdt-Christiansen 2018, 423) to which we now turn.

Parents across several chapters repeatedly and unsurprisingly connected the maintenance of the heritage language with the preservation of ethno-cultural identity and heritage (cf. Blackledge and Creese 2010, Francis, Archer and Mau 2010, Lytra and Martin 2010 to mention a few) and a sense of belonging in Anderson's (1991) terms to an 'imagined community' back home. Sustaining and passing on this connection to the next generation emerged as a key discourse for supporting and participating in different forms of community language education. Parents and teachers in the Albanian school in Chatzidaki and Maligkoudi, for instance, highlighted the importance of Albanian language learning to

consolidate children's Albanian heritage while acknowledging that children were dominant in Greek and Greece was as much their homeland as Albania. Children's self-reports were more nuanced towards their bilingual/bicultural identities, revealing different degrees of affiliation and belonging. Their narratives foregrounded the personal and affective dimensions of identity negotiations, where children may accept but also resist, downplay, or silence their heritage identity affiliation in different discursive environments (cf. Lytra 2011). In so doing, empirical findings extend a robust body of work that views identities as emergent, fluid and discursively constructed (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). Looming large in these identity negotiations were the negative and often racist societal stereotypes towards the Albanian language and its users in Greece perpetuated by traditional and social media (Ndoci 2023). Echoing Karatsareas' vignette on the trials and tribulations of the Pakistani school in Athens, studies exemplified the importance of situating community language education within broader societal debates over democracy, social justice, and the politics of exclusion amplified by discourses of xenophobia, and racism (Archakis 2018, 2022). At the same time, they alerted us to paying closer attention to children as active and agentive meaning-makers in influencing parental language use and shaping family language policies in line with recent scholarship (e.g., Said and Zhu Hua 2019, Smith-Christmas 2022).

Family decision making pointed to the interrelationship between heritage language maintenance and discourses of (good) parenting. In Gogonas and Maligkoudi's study, Czech mothers associated Czech language maintenance with good motherhood, positioning themselves as "custodians of the heritage language" (Gogonas and Maligkoudi 2020). Other chapters foregrounded discourses of parental insecurity. The parents in the Armenian school, for instance, felt they lacked the social and cultural capital to contribute significantly to their children's language and culture learning and relied almost exclusively on the Armenian school to fulfil this role (Hovhannisyan and Sougari; also, Magos for similar discourses of insecurity among Albanian parents in his study). Moreover, language commodification discourses emerged in several studies highlighting the link between language status, and future educational and professional possibilities (cf. Gogonas and Kirsch 2016; Nordstrom 2016). The emphasis on developing high language and literacy abilities in Polish, Italian, Czech, Russian, and Hebrew alongside Greek and coveted foreign languages was linked with families' prospects in Greece, Cyprus and beyond. The circulation of these discourses revealed how families responded to ongoing processes of linguistic and cultural change and how they (re)negotiated and (re)shaped family language policies accordingly, foregrounding the dynamic nature of linguistic repertoires. By placing a high value on multilingualism, parents imagined and constructed desirable educational and professional futures for their children which were linked to aspirations for socio-economic advancement within and across geographical borders.

### **Looking to the future**

Bringing this afterword to a close, we suggest below some directions in which future research into community language education in Greece and Cyprus might move, building on the work that is presented in this volume.

- As we discussed above, interviews are a valuable method for collecting data regarding the views and perspectives of actors involved in community language education. In future, researchers might want to complement interviews with other ethnographically-oriented methods, especially observational and participatory ones, within more expanded and integrated methodological frameworks. Research reported in this

volume (Protopapa and Ioannidou) and elsewhere (for example, Blackledge and Creese 2010) shows that in-class observations are particularly conducive to gaining in-depth insights into teachers' and learners' linguistic and pedagogic practices, the (re)production of language ideologies, the construction of identities, and many other relevant aspects. Added to this, the diversification of ethnographically- oriented approaches may include multi-site ethnography, different forms of online ethnography, greater use of visual and multimodal research methods (see studies in Martin-Jones and Jones 2017) and enhanced opportunities for researcher-practitioner collaborations (Denos et al. 2009).

- Future scholarship might also benefit from research designs that combine qualitative with quantitative methods. Research into community language education both in Greece and Cyprus, and on a broader, global level has to this date made a great deal of progress on the basis of qualitative studies. While these undoubtedly provide extensive sets of rich data, more could be done towards achieving at least some degree of generalisability and charting the landscape of community language education in numerical terms. Such research might, for example, aim to establish the number of community language education initiatives that operate within a particular geographical context (for example, Greece or Cyprus) at a given point in time, types of initiatives, numbers of languages taught, numbers of students who benefit from such initiatives, numbers of teachers etc. A case in point is Maylor et al.'s (2010) study, which estimated the number of complementary schools in England to 3,000 and also provided a quantitative overview of the size of the schools, communities served, languages and other issues. This type of mapping research can subsequently form the basis for more targeted quantitative studies focusing on language and pedagogy, which might for example employ surveys or questionnaires at scales larger than single case studies such as Evans and Gillan-Thomas (2015). Quantitative evidence can also be useful in terms of advocating for change in policy on a local, regional, national, and even international level.
- It would be interesting to explore to what extent and in what ways community language education initiatives in Greece and Cyprus might have been transformed by the use of digital technologies and online learning, which increased in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, in a series of recent publications, White and Young have shown how, in response to the challenges posed by lockdowns, Polish complementary schools in the UK adopted a range of innovative and creative ways to teach Polish online while they also broadened their online activities as civil society organisations and involved parents more directly in children's education (White and Young 2022, Young and White 2022). Drawing on reflective narratives with Greek heritage language teachers in francophone Switzerland, Lytra (under review) documented how the shift to teaching online called for emergency grassroots policymaking to address the lack of support, guidance, and resources both by the Swiss and Greek states. She demonstrated that while online teaching opened new pedagogic spaces for uncovering and recovering a wealth of meaning-making resources and connecting the digital classroom with other learning spaces it did not seem to challenge the school's explicit Greek monolingual language policy even though in practice flexible language practices continued to be implicitly supported. Similar accounts could be collected among the different language education providers in Greece and Cyprus in order to record how teachers, parents, and students experienced online teaching, learning, and communication, the tensions in ideology and practice they negotiated and what they felt were the gains, losses and ways forward. These encounters could take the form of a series of virtual panel

discussions uniting different stakeholders, researchers and policy actors akin to those described in Lytra and Argyri (2021).

- Research into community language education, including the studies in this volume, reveals that distinct initiatives – in the sense that they teach different languages and serve the needs of different communities – often face very similar operational, financial, pedagogical, and other challenges. It is also common for distinct initiatives to operate in a rather isolated and disjointed way, with few or even no points of connection with one another. Associations bringing together initiatives that teach the same language are sometimes formed – one example being the Association of German Saturday Schools UK (Schulze and Siegfried-Brookes 2020) – but these tend to remain within strictly defined (ethno)linguistic boundaries. The National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education in the UK (now part of the Young People’s Foundation Trust) is an organisation that provides support and guidance to community-led initiatives including teacher training and quality assurance encompassing a very broad spectrum of languages, cultures, and other educational needs. It has also acted on several occasions as a representative and advocate for community language education initiatives as a whole on occasions when the sector needed to respond swiftly and efficiently to top-down decisions that would negatively affect provision. For example, in 2015 when the UK government and examination boards proposed to stop offering formal qualifications (GCSEs and A-Levels) in a range of languages including Greek, Japanese, Panjabi, and Portuguese (Bird and Vassie 2016). And in 2020, when the UK government failed to put in place a framework for pupils attending out-of-schools settings like complementary schools to be entered in the GCSE and A-Level examinations in their languages (Davis 2021). Researchers in Greece and Cyprus might consider working with community language education providers towards establishing similar organisations in the two countries where, as has been discussed above, the inadequacy and inconsistency of legal protection contributes to the unfavourable conditions under which schools often strive to achieve their missions. The organisation and administration of ‘Family Language Schools’ described in Gatsi et al. in this volume could provide a blueprint for uniting disparate language education providers, especially those providers who might represent individuals and communities facing precarious conditions or hard to reach.
- Across the chapters, the impact of parents’ socioeconomic status (SES) in supporting or hindering (heritage) language management efforts looms large. Parents’ decisions to invest (or not) in their children's (heritage) language learning cannot be divorced from financial considerations and other material conditions, especially since most of the language education initiatives described in this volume depend to a large extent on parental financial support to survive. While higher parental SES tends to be associated with placing greater value on bilingualism (Smala et al. 2013), the link between parents’ socioeconomic backgrounds and their goals, motivations, and aspirations for maintaining heritage languages has not been adequately examined. Studies in this edited collection provide useful pointers that could be explored further. For instance, in the study on Russian community schools in Cyprus, Karpava identifies parental SES interacting with family language policy, educational aspirations and future residence in determining “access to heritage language education, its quality and quantity”. All parents reported having mid to high SES and a strong desire to sustain Russian. Despite parental desire to continue supporting the operation of the Albanian school in Volos, Magos outlines three key financial reasons that led to the school’s eventual demise “The most important reason was parents’ accumulated fatigue, who found it difficult to take their children to the classes, since most of them worked for

long, exhausting hours. Another reason was many families' repatriation to Albania because of the financial crisis in Greece. Finally, a third reason was the absence of financial support on the part of both the Greek as well as the Albanian states". Future studies could ask: how do families with different socioeconomic backgrounds make sense of multilingualism in family life and how do they make decisions about managing languages and language learning? How do material conditions affect their choices and how might they image their children's linguistic, educational, and socioeconomic futures?

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