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**International Relations, sociolinguistics and ‘the everyday’:
A linguistic ethnography of peace-building through language education**

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Abstract

Focusing on the role that language and language education can play in peace-building, this paper examines everyday practice through the lens of linguistic ethnography. It investigates Greek Cypriot teenagers learning Turkish, the language of the (former) enemy, and it asks: how were the Turkish language’s associations with violent conflict handled in the practices and institutional organization of schooling, and how far and in what ways can we say that the Turkish lessons contributed to peace-building? Our findings address the institutional structures and routines of secondary schooling, pedagogic and interactional practices in class, and the links between school and home. The paper concludes with a discussion of what this study might contribute to the notion of ‘de-securitisation’ and to research on ‘hybrid’ and ‘everyday peace’.

1. Introduction

This paper explores links between International Relations (IR) and Peace & Conflict Studies (PCS) on the one hand, and linguistic ethnography and sociolinguistics on the other. In doing so, it focuses on the role of language and language education in peace-building in Cyprus, a country riven by a legacy of war and separation. The paper’s authors are ethnographic sociolinguists who seek to engage with the interest in the ‘everyday’ that is currently emerging in Critical International Relations, Critical Security Studies and Peace & Conflict Studies (see McCluskey 2017 for a bibliography), and the paper’s goals are threefold: to illustrate the perspective on everyday practice provided by linguistic ethnography; to start to address the role that language and language education can play in peace-building; and to reflect on whether and how our findings and methods can contribute to significant concerns in critical IR.

To achieve this, the paper begins with a brief outline of IR’s increasing interest in the everyday (§2). After that, it introduces linguistic ethnography, our own sub-disciplinary approach, providing a sketch of its origins, its guiding assumption, the resources it draws on, and the perspective on the everyday that it offers (§3). This is followed by a methodological summary of how we went about the linguistic ethnography in this case study (§4). The paper then turns to the empirical account of Greek-Cypriots learning Turkish, the language of their (former) enemy, and this covers the affordances of language education as a space for normalizing inter-ethnic relations after conflict, as well as the interactional practices involved (§5 to §7). After that, it suggests that an account of this kind can contribute to the discussion of IR concepts like ‘desecuritisation’ and ‘everyday peace’ (§9). (Our sense of critical IR’s

potentially very significant contribution to applied and sociolinguistics is discussed elsewhere (P. Charalambous et al 2017, C. Charalambous et al 2016, C. Charalambous et al 2015.)

We can begin a sketch of the developments in IR to which linguistic ethnography seems most relevant.

2. The local, vernacular and everyday turns in IR/PCS

In the ‘local’, ‘vernacular’ and ‘everyday’ turns in IR, there seems to be burgeoning interest in widening the angle of vision in studies of (in)security, peace building and transitional justice beyond top-down and state-centred processes (Bigo 2016; Marsden, Ibanez-Riedao & Henig 2016, Gready & Robins 2014; Richmond & McGinty 2013; Leonardsson & Rudd 2015). According to Huysmans, “the question of the everyday is often introduced to draw attention away from elite politics and highly institutionalized security practices, towards sites of routine, individual identity and especially interaction in proximity” (2009: 197). Comparable interest can be found in studies of surveillance (Green & Zurawski 2015:40), diplomacy (Marsden, Ibanez-Tirado & Henig 2016:6-7; Constantinou 2016), and peacebuilding and reconciliation (McGinty & Richmond 2013:764).

Despite differences in their central areas of interest, there are a number of common features in this expansion of horizons beyond political professionals and elites. There is shared interest in the diversity of actors and audiences involved (in terms of culture, class, gender, social role etc), and their different experiences, agendas and possibilities for action. This in turn requires attention to different institutional and life domains (beyond political and diplomatic offices), and the circulation of different representations of security, peace and conflict through different networks. In addition, practices and lived experiences need to be considered, and these include tensions, struggle, resistance and creativity (cf Vaughan Williams 2016 and Bigo 2015, 2016 on insecurity; Marsden, Ibanez-Tirado & Henig 2016 on diplomacy and political mediation; McGinty 2010 and McGinty & Richmond 2013 on peacebuilding). All these need to be placed alongside the policies and political interventions designed and promoted by actors with state and/or institutional authority, and when it comes to a notion like ‘peace’ (a central concern in this paper), this generates a number of terms that attempt to conceptualise the plurality of people, practices, representations, arenas and experiences involved: for example, plural ‘peaces’ (Leonardsson & Rudd 2015), ‘hybrid peace’ (McGinty 2010; McGinty & Richmond 2013), and ‘everyday peace’ (McGinty 2014).

Within this array of interests, there are sure to be arguments and nuances that, as non-specialists in IR, we are not able to report or assess. Even so, it is clear that the orientation emerging here is substantial enough for the ‘everyday’ to serve as a potentially productive bridge between IR and ethnographic sociolinguistics, and it is to the latter that we now turn.

3. Sociolinguistics and linguistic ethnography

In recent years in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics, there has been growing interest in issues of (in)security (eg. Makoni 2016; Khan 2015), peace and conflict (eg. Footit & Kelly (eds) 2012; Liddicoat 2008), asylum (Maryns & Blommaert 2001; Maryns 2006) and surveillance (e.g. Garcia Sanchez 2014; Rampton 2016; Jones 2017) (see P. Charalambous 2017 for a bibliography). This is especially evident in studies of education, addressing, *inter alia*, the impact of growing securitization (eg. Zakharia & Bishop 2013), the positioning of undocumented migrants (e.g. Gallo 2014), and the effect of legacies of conflict (C. Charalambous et al 2018). This work is *linguistic* in *two* ways, often at the same time: first, it

examines the social and political significance of named/different languages as symbols of group affiliation and identity (languageS as ideological ‘objects’); and/or second, it focuses on language as a major element in communicative practice and the ongoing negotiation of social relations that this entails, whether or not people are speaking different languages (language as a communicative ‘medium’). There are huge literatures on both, but our own work owes a particular debt to the linguistic anthropology associated with figures like John Gumperz and Dell Hymes, working mainly but not exclusively in north America.

During the 1960s in the US, Hymes led a call for anthropology to ‘bring it all back home’ to the study of north American communities and institutions, and at the same time, he criticized anthropology and the social sciences for taking communication for granted, treating language simply as a transparent window on the social and cultural processes beyond it (1969). In recent years in the UK and Europe, this interdisciplinary agenda has gathered momentum in ‘linguistic ethnography’, which is guided by two fundamental tenets (Rampton 2007; Rampton et al 2015):

- the contexts for communication should be investigated rather than assumed. Meaning takes shape within specific social relations, interactional histories and institutional regimes, produced and construed by agents with expectations and repertoires that have to be grasped ethnographically;
- analysis of the internal organisation of verbal (and other kinds of semiotic) data is essential to understanding its significance and position in the world. Meaning is far more than just the ‘expression of ideas’, and biography, identifications, stance and nuance are extensively signalled in the linguistic and textual fine-grain.

To understand how the fine-grain of communicative interaction plays in the politics of everyday life, how it contributes to the ratification or refusal of identities, institutions, ideologies etc., linguistic ethnography draws on four sets of resources:

- a) *linguistics & discourse analysis* provide a provisional view of the communicative affordances of the linguistic resources that participants draw on in communication (‘provisional’ because contextual contingencies always affect the meaning of a word or sentence, potentially undermining its conventional significance);
- b) *Goffman* and *conversation analysis* provide frameworks and procedures for investigating situated encounters. More specifically, they help us to see:
 - the ongoing, sequential construction of ‘local architectures of intersubjectivity’ as one speaker follows another in sequences of turns at talk, building up (what looks like) a common line of understanding
 - the rituals and moral accountabilities permeating the use of semiotic forms and strategies, and the ways in which people handle the relationship between the normal and exceptional
 - the shifting spatio-temporal distribution of attention and involvement in situations of physical co-presence – the ways in which people attend to the different people and things around them with different degrees of intensity
- c) *ethnography* provides
 - a sense of the stability, status and socio-symbolic resonance that linguistic forms, rhetorical strategies and semiotic materials have in different social networks beyond the encounter-on-hand
 - an idea of how and where a practice, genre or encounter fits into longer and broader biographies, institutions and histories

- a sense of the personal and cultural experiences, perspectives and ideologies that participants bring to interactions, and take away from them
- d) *other public and academic discourses* provide purpose and relevance for the analysis (which can of course include critical IR and PCS), as well as a broader picture of the environment where the study is sited.

Before putting these resources to work in what follows, it is worth disentangling three different meanings of the term ‘everyday’ within this body of work, clarifying which sense best fits linguistic ethnography. So first, ‘everyday’ is often used to refer to a distinct environment, the ‘vernacular’ or ‘popular’, which is distinguished from the official, standard or elite by the linguistic, cultural and material resources available. Second, ‘everyday’ is often associated with a socio-cognitive orientation to the ‘normal’ in acts, events or people, regarding them as ‘ordinary’ rather than exceptional (special, terrible, amazing etc. etc.), displaying and negotiating this orientation in communicative discourse and interaction. These two meanings shouldn’t be conflated, and as we will show, they can each be an important independent focus for analysis – conduct can be seen as normal as well as special in the realms of the elite, just as acts can be treated as exceptional, not just ordinary, in vernacular domains. Instead, for us, it makes more sense to equate the everyday with a third meaning, ‘lived experience’. This encompasses the other two: lived experience happens to everyone everywhere (inside as well as outside elites), and the effort to preserve a sense of normality and cope with the exceptional is seen as a central feature of lived experience in a great deal of the research on interaction influenced by Goffman or Garfinkel (see [b] above). Lived experience is also often seen as the central concern in ethnography, setting it apart from research that gives overwhelming or exclusive priority to theory and abstraction, and linguistic ethnography can be seen as a specialisation within this, focusing on situated communicative practice, whatever the environment or orientation – elite/vernacular, normal/exceptional – that characterises it.

With this outline of our framework in place, we can now move to an account of the fieldwork in our study.

4. Methods in our case study

Our investigation of the links between Greek Cypriots’ learning Turkish and Cyprus’s troubled past involved two periods of fieldwork, the first in 2006-7, close to the initial introduction of Turkish language classes (henceforth the ‘2006’ study) and the second in 2012-13 (the ‘2012’ research). Fieldwork was undertaken by the 1st and 2nd named authors (who both grew up and live in Cyprus and belong to Greek-speaking families affected by the conflict), and it lasted 5 months in 2006-7 and 9 months in 2012-13. In 2006, data collection involved 53 hours of observation and 25.5 hours of audio-recording in 4 classes (3 secondary and 1 adult, with 58 students and 2 teachers), supplemented by c. 20 interviews with 30 students, 4 teachers and some ministry officials and the collection of related documents (textbooks, curricula and other government texts). In 2012, it involved 146 hours of observation and 84 hours of audio-recording in 6 secondary and 2 adult classes (116 students, 4 teachers), as well as c. 40 interviews with 77 students and 5 teachers, as well as document collection and 93 questionnaires. In both periods, the researchers participated as students of Turkish in one of the adult classes they were observing.

Analysis was guided by the ethnographic assumption that the significance of a form or practice depends on the interaction of a range of different dimensions of socio-cultural organization and process (Hymes 1996), and the resources sketched in §2 (a) to (d) were

treated as ‘sensitising’ frameworks that “suggest directions along which to look” rather than as sets of ‘definitive’ constructs that “provide prescriptions of what to see” (Blumer 1969:148). As we will see, attending Turkish language classes was controversial, especially at secondary school, even though there were 1138 students learning Turkish in 75 classes in the Greek-Cypriot secondary system in 2006, and 873 in 61 in 2012. This contentiousness leads to the two questions that guide our analysis, which will centre on the adolescent learners:¹

- how did the practices and institutional organization of schooling manage the associations of Turkish with violent conflict?
- how far and in what ways can we say that the Turkish lessons contributed to peace-building?

Our answer will draw on other public and academic discourses in its account of government policy ([d] in §3 above; §5 below), ethnography in its description of the symbolic connotations and ideological values linked with Turkish and the effects of its positioning at school and in student networks ([c]; §6), and on Goffman and interaction analysis in the portrait of what happened in class ([b]; §7).

5. Background: The ‘Cyprus Issue’, education and the introduction of Turkish

Since the eruption of bicomunal violence during the 60s and the 1974 war, Cyprus has been *de facto* divided into Turkish-speaking and Greek-speaking (government-controlled) parts, and despite on-going diplomatic negotiations, there is no official settlement to what is called the ‘Cyprus Issue’. Over this period, the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities have engaged in separate nation-building processes, and hostility has been institutionalised. In the Greek-speaking part of the island where our work is based, conflict perpetuating activities can be found in different institutions (Adamides 2013), especially in education where there is ample ethnographic evidence of textual representations and teaching and commemoration practices that instil an emotional and political stance toward the conflict that solidifies the boundaries between ‘us’ and the ‘others’ (Papadakis, 2005; Philippou & Theodorou 2014; Spyrou 2006; Zembylas et al 2013; Zembylas et al 2016). But there hasn’t been recent violence and overall, the political situation has been described as an intractable but ‘comfortable conflict’ (Constantinou & Adamides 2011; Adamides 2015).

Although the Republic of Cyprus was established in 1960 as a bicomunal state, with both Greek and Turkish as official languages, education had been always a mono-communal issue without any official provision for bilingual education. But around 2003, there was intense diplomatic negotiation about entry to the EU and resolution to the Cyprus Issue. As part of this, the Turkish authorities partially lifted the restriction of movement across the buffer zone in Nicosia (after almost 30 years), and the Greek-Cypriot government responded with a package of Measures of Support to Turkish-Cypriots which, along with the offer of passports, access to health care and so forth, included the introduction of classes to teach Greek-Cypriots the Turkish language. These were set up as an optional foreign language in the modern language curriculum at secondary school, and as free afternoon classes in

¹ The peace-building challenge was substantially greater in the adolescent than in the smaller and more self-selected adult classes. Among other things, hostility to Turks and Turkish-Cypriot was very powerful at school, while in the voluntary adult institutes, all the learners gave up their own time to attend, and generally tended to bring a personal commitment to learning Turkish as a contribution to improved relations with Turkish speakers, with whom a number of students already had quite extensive contact.

government adult education institutes.² The introduction of these classes was also accompanied by a rhetoric of reconciliation – according to ministry officials, it aimed to “bring the two communities closer” and “cultivate mutual understanding” (Author 1 & Rampton 2012).

But this wasn’t accompanied by a widespread and unanimous shift in public discourse, and the students who attended these classes told us that had to deal with adverse reactions from peers, teachers and even family members (accusations of ‘traitor’ and so forth). These were more intense in the first years after the classes were introduced, but they were also reported and observed ten years later in 2013:

Extract 1: An interview in 2006 with secondary students³

1 C. Charalambous: have your classmates ever said anything bad to you because
you learn Turkish?
2 Andri: YEAH!
3 Athina: of course!
4 ((they laugh))
5 Andri: YEAH!
6 C. Charalambous: for example what do they [say
7 Andri: [“you are ((Cypriot accent)) Turks”
8 Christalla: ((laughs)) they call us Turks

Extract 2: interview with secondary students in 2013

Myria: ok my parents didn’t say anything [...] but my brother who is a soldier
told me like ‘I am there protecting you from the- like from these people
and you go and learn Turkish?’

A substantial proportion of these secondary students were in favour of better inter-communal relations, distinguishing, for example, between Turks and Turkish-Cypriots, arguing that although the former were menacing trouble-makers who had upset the previously peaceful lives of the island’s inhabitants, the latter were “more towards our side”, “more familiar with us”, “more friendly”. Nevertheless, in the 2012 questionnaire, around 25% of the 93 secondary students indicated that ‘learning the language of the enemy’ as amongst the three most important reasons for taking the Turkish lessons. In interview, learning Turkish was sometimes described as a ‘precaution’ against “being tricked’ or “taken advantage of”, and despite the fact that they were actually learning the Turkish language themselves, students in 10 of the twenty one 2012 interviews said they didn’t like Turkish-speakers and didn’t “want any relations with them”, on occasion even saying “I wish they were effaced” and “may they all die”:

Extract 3: interview with secondary students 2012

Costas: and even if they give us our land back, there are so many people who
died because of them, these are not coming back, they cannot bring back
the missing persons of so many thousands that are still waiting, (...) so
there cannot be friendship between these two peoples, us and them

At first sight, then, the socio-symbolic connotations (‘indexical associations’) of Turkish suggest that it might be a difficult language to teach, and with sharp differences in attitude

² There were actually many more sites in Cyprus where Greek-Cypriots could learn Turkish than those we describe below (these included a Turkish Studies programme at the University of Cyprus, private tuition, and inter-communal centres committed to reconciliation)

³ All transcripts are translated from Greek, unless stated otherwise

like these, it sounds as though the classes might be volatile. But even though the indexical associations of a language are normally rooted in widely circulating ideologies, they are always sensitive to the particular activities, situations and social relations in which people attend to the language (Ochs 1996). In addition, it is vital to address the subtle and complex communicative dynamics in which policy is enacted – relayed, received, adjusted, resisted or neglected – as it circulates discursively in the institutions that it targets (cf Ball et al 2012:2-3). So it is worth giving more detailed consideration to the social and cultural activity that language learning involves – its institutional embedding, its position in the daily round of people’s activity, the interactional genres and routines with which it is conducted. This will generate a clearer sense of language learning’s affordances and limitations in peace building and reconciliation, and help to identify its distinctiveness vis-à-vis other policies and measures for building trust (interventions by international actors, other local peace education projects and so forth).

6. Language provision at school: (i) Institutional structures, their affordances and effects

Turkish language lessons are not the only peace-building endeavour to have been introduced to Greek-Cypriot schools. From 2008 to 2010, the left-leaning AKEL government introduced a national peace education project which invited schools to organise pedagogical activities that emphasised commonalities between the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communities, cultivated solidarity and understanding, and ‘avoided aphorisms and negative stereotypes’ – perspectives that had been hitherto missing from the hegemonic curricular discourse of ‘I don’t forget and I struggle’, a discourse which emphasized Greek-Cypriot victimhood and promoted antagonism through the cultivation of a militant spirit (see Zembylas et al 2016). But this project provoked fierce public reaction, and it was widely seen as “leftist propaganda” (C. Charalambous et al 2013). The uptake and implementation was low, and when the government changed, it was officially abandoned, ‘I don’t forget’ being re-emphasized once again (P. Charalambous et al. 2014).

In contrast, institutional structures for the provision of language teaching allowed material traditionally associated with the other side to be introduced in ways that partially extricated Turkish from the Cyprus issue, and slotted it into the existing routines of schooling. As already noted, Turkish is in fact an official *national* language in the Republic of Cyprus (appearing in stamps, coins, signs, ID cards and so forth), but it was inserted into the list of *foreign* language options available at secondary school, alongside English, French, Spanish, Italian, German and Russian. This downplayed its specifically national significance, recontextualised it in an international frame beyond the local, and also drew on well-regarded international discourses about the value of language learning. In the policy advocated by the EU, for example, citizens should speak their mother tongue plus two other languages, and discourses like this were appropriated in later drafts of the Turkish secondary curriculum (2010), which shifted the emphasis from trust building and community solidarity to European calls for intercultural dialogue and neo-liberal discourses of language as a resource for professional and economic development (see C. Charalambous forthcoming). In addition, a large and relatively well-functioning apparatus for the administration and delivery of language teaching was already in place in schools, and this could be expanded with relative ease to accommodate Greek-Cypriot teachers proficient in Turkish.⁴ As a school subject,

⁴ Although the Turkish Studies department at the University of Cyprus produced its first graduates in 1996, the first teachers to be appointed to Turkish language teaching posts in 2003 were trained at universities in the former Soviet bloc.

progress in Turkish was also ratified through the existing grading system, and this allowed students to select and/or succeed in it for a multiplicity of reasons. Some students opted for Turkish as part of their commitment to reconciliation and a bi-communal future for Cyprus, but many said they chose it because they needed good grades for their matriculation or GPA and Turkish was supposed to be easy (P. Charalambous et al 2017; C. Charalambous et al 2018).

So when the Turkish lessons and the 2008-10 peace initiative are compared, it seems that their incorporation within the existing language teaching structures made learning Turkish more defensible, less out of the ordinary, less exceptional. But this still fell quite a long way short of entirely normalizing the activity. As an optional subject, anyone selecting Turkish had to consider the part that the language should play in their future (even if this only stretched as far as end-of-year exams), and attending Turkish classes meant committing– and being seen to commit – to this for a significant period of time (90 minutes a week for two years). So students of Turkish had to develop justifications for their choice, which they needed argue with their critics and accusers. The substance of their justifications varied, and on occasion, even among students who supported reconciliation, this could involve the tactical adoption of a nationalist stance:

Extract 4: Interview 2013

Gabriela: one day [...] Mrs S. came, a historian ((*laughs*)) her nation is high up there let's say, ((*laughs*)) and she tells me 'why did you choose Turkish?' and she is also my teacher, I was scared, I me::an

Fotis: ((*laughs*))

Gabriela: eh I tell her 'Miss, whether we like it or not Turkish-Cypriots are there and we have to learn it too at- and I have an uncle who is in the- a military officer and he tells me, to combat the enemy you have [to know his culture, everything, you have to know everything'

Petros: [you have to learn the language of the enemy

Christina: hey what mark did she give you?

Gabriela: eighteen ((*out of 20*))

In fact, even though there was very little political discussion in the lessons themselves (as we shall see), and even though the discursive shift among secondary students was subtle rather than spectacular, there is a case for saying that taking the Turkish classes succeeded in *denaturalising* the anti-Turkish nationalist perspective.

In 19 of the 21 interviews in 2012, we asked students whether they thought that “choosing or not choosing Turkish” was influenced by political beliefs. In their answers, nobody focused on the *positive* choice of Turkish as something driven by political considerations, even though they might, for example, have associated it with leftist politics (as often happened with the 2008-10 peace education initiative mentioned above). Instead, students all concentrated on political reasons for *not* opting for Turkish, and in nine of the interviews⁵, they talked about nationalist students, several also referring explicitly to ultra-right Elam party supporters:

Extract 5: Interview 2012

P. Charalambous: ok, now that you mention politics, would you say that one's

⁵ In 2 interviews the students didn't find the question relevant, and in 8 they referred to various ideological reasons.

political beliefs can influence his/her decision to choose or not choose Turkish?
Students: ((*in chorus*)) yes, surely, yes yes
Georgia: me for example, I have friends who are supporters of Elam let's say and they wouldn't choose Turkish for sure, while myself I have a different view on politics, erm yes, I'm more open-minded on some things

Extract 6: Interview 2012

P. Charalambous: erm would you say that one's political positions and ideas can influence his/her decision to choose or not choose Turkish?
Christi: yes! ((*laughs*)) yes! ok, there are some who are let's say very passionate with this, let's say 'they are our enemies', this and that 'I don't want to choose their language, or to go to the occupied areas and if I see them I'll swear at them' something like that, and that's why most people don't choose it

Borrowing from Bourdieu (1977:164-171), we can say that in these responses, nationalism was no longer a seamless part of the educational mainstream, and that Turkophobia had lost its unquestioned authority. Yes, there certainly were strong and numerous expressions of nationalism, but the potentially very heterodox practice of learning Turkish was now part of the ground from which these students all spoke, and as a result, nationalism was downgraded from 'doxic' truth to *orthodoxy*, moving from something on which everyone would of course agree, to becoming a noticeably partisan counter-protestation against the language learning option that these particular students had chosen. So even though it was heavily promoted elsewhere in the Hellenocentric curriculum, nationalist hatred of Turks was no longer taken for granted as a matter of political common-sense among these Turkish language learners.

In addition, the identity of 'pupil' and the practices of schooling weren't confined within the gates of school. They were also regularly carried home and enacted from time to time with parents and siblings. In this way, a lot of students reported conversations about the Turkish language and the Turkish lessons with members of their family – choosing which language to opt for, checking homework, talking about test and exams, relating anecdotes of classroom experiences etc. Turkish certainly wasn't always welcome:

"my mum simply doesn't like it and she told me not to speak it at home but she is ok with me learning it" (Corina; Interview 2012)

"erm ok because they lived through the war and they had a hard time, there's no chance that they'll want to hear the Turkish language at home, ok" (Froso; Interview 2012)

But for others, learning Turkish was an enjoyable activity worth sharing:

Extract 7: Interview 2013

Maria: erm I speak it at home with my parents and I like it
P. Charalambous: what do you mean you speak with your parents?
Maria: eh these things, "hello" "how are you", I like it
P. Charalambous: ah because you said earlier that both your parents learn Turkish right?
Maria: yes, and it's very nice, it's fun, I enjoy it

Extract 8: Interview 2013

Areti: I can- like I talk to my mum, to my mum let's say,
when she tells me something, {I tell her} Turkish words that she can
easily learn like 'good morning' 'how are you' 'what's your name'

Extract 9: Interview 2013

Despo: my brother had it last year and told me [...]
he is a soldier now but he told me, he says 'you should take Turkish,
it's both easy and nice and you will not need this- to:: sit a::nd-
like Italian'

In this way, linguistic forms, objects and activities associated with Turkish were carried outside the predominantly Hellocentric and rather Turkophobic school environment, brought home and recontextualised in domestic relationships that could be rather more receptive, thereby potentially shifting the language's indexical associations.

So although learning Turkish was much more controversial than learning French or Italian, its insertion into the structural fabric of secondary modern language provision made it more stable and more easily justified than the 2008-10 peace education project, and unlike the latter, it also survived the change to a more nationalist government in 2012. Turning to more general questions of interpretation, we can't claim that learning Turkish was part of the everyday if the 'everyday' is interpreted as a vernacular domain counter-posed to the standard or elite, since schooling is itself an official institution managed by state (at least in this study). But we can say that the everyday as 'ordinary' and 'unexceptional' was an important concern in the effortful processes of normalisation we have described, not as a cultural profile that Turkish had actually already achieved as a subject at school, but as a goal both in the institutional enactment of language policy and in the self-justifications of its stakeholders.

In the account so far, we have focused on institutional organisation and the possibilities for engaging with Turkish that this generated, and methodologically we have drawn on ethnography and document analysis (§3.c and §3.d). But we have said very little about what actually happened *inside* Turkish language classroom, and in now turning to this, we will draw more fully on frameworks for the analysis of interactional practice (§3.b), where the normative tension between the ordinary and exceptional can also be seen in play.

7. Language provision at school: (ii) Activity in lessons

On a few occasions in our dataset, Turkish lessons did allow for serious political discussions. The extract below, for example, took place in a small class where there was an explicit political consensus on inter-communal relations and the teacher described the students as 'exceptional' and 'adult-like'. In the extract, one of the students starts a critique of dominant ideologies in state education that the teacher picks up and elaborates:

Extract 10: During a Turkish language lesson in a secondary school in 2013, after watching a documentary about Istanbul.

Gabriela yes, let's say in school they never told me-
 or last year when we learnt about Islam in history
P. Charalambous: what did you learn about Islam
Gabriela: eh ok more about the Koran
 but the references we made to Turkish contemporary history
 or even to today, they only tell us the negative sides.
Renos: yes

Gabriela: they don't tell us - you know... eh::
that {Turkey} is more modern
Petros: yeah! racism
TEACHER: yes because in the cities there are Turks who are more European,
because there are girls like you
with jeans and short tight T-shirts

But this was very rare, and it was much more likely that any positive reference to Turkey, Turks or Turkish Cypriots would provoke protest (see C. Charalambous 2013 for detailed analysis of one such episode). Talking about the other four classes that she taught, the same teacher commented:

Extract 11: On not provoking the students

Stella (f; 40s), Greek-Cypriot teacher of Turkish in interview with P. Charalambous (2012; edited transcript)

Stella: I tried once to say that Turkey is beautiful, and Istanbul,
and they tried to tell me that I am defending Turkey in class,
we have to be very careful about what we say
so that students don't go out
and say that we are doing propaganda in favour of Turkey
and that we say the Turks are good and they do this and that,
we have to be very careful and stay in matters of the language

Analysis of classroom interaction confirmed that for the most part both in 2006 and 2012, teachers were indeed “very careful and stay[ed] in matters of language”. There was a strong tendency to avoid any talk about Turkish people, Turkish-Cypriots or Turkish-speaking culture, and the language was presented in most classrooms as a neutral linguistic system consisting of grammatical rules and maths-like formulae (see C. Charalambous 2012, 2013, 2014, and P. Charalambous et al 2017 for an overview). There is in fact a long line of teaching that treats language as a formal code, enacted in traditional lesson genres that consist of explanations from the teacher, tests, exercises, translations and so forth (rather than project work, interaction with material from the real world of the ‘target culture’, or simulated encounters with target language speakers). But it wasn’t because the teachers were just ‘old-fashioned’ that they taught Turkish in this way. Like Stella, they were aware that they were presenting a very narrow view of Turkish, and they said that they were doing this deliberately because of the ideological controversy around the language.

At this point, the socio-cognitive boundary between the ordinary and the exceptional moves back into focus, although here it is an interactional concern and Goffman’s work becomes directly relevant. One way to make threatening or contentious material safe is by ‘keying’ it, framing it so that everyone involved knows that its use is not to be treated naively or taken ‘straight’ (1974:Ch.3). Goffman identifies several general keys, and these include ‘make believe’, which includes playful mimicry, dramatic scriptings and activity “done with the knowledge that nothing practical will come of the doing” (1974:48-56), and ‘contests’ (games and sports) in which “the rules... supply restrictions of degree and mode of aggression” (1974:56,57; Rampton & C. Charalambous 2012:489-93; Rampton et al 2018:§7). But he also talks about ‘technical redoing’, in which novices are given “the experience in performing under conditions in which (it is felt) no actual engagement with the world is allowed, events having been ‘decoupled’ from their usual embedment in consequentiality” (p.59). Technical redos are activities which are [i] “performed out of their usual context, [ii] for utilitarian purposes openly different from those of the original

performance, [iii] the understanding being that the original outcome of the activity will not occur” (p. 59; numerals added). Goffman cites stage rehearsals, exhibitions and pedagogic demonstrations as examples of technical redoing (1974:58ff) and it also matches the Turkish lessons, in which the language was extracted from its socio-cultural context ([i] above) and turned into something you needed to pass exams rather than communicate with ([ii]), thereby accommodating students who never wanted to talk to a Turkish speaker ([iii]). And just as technical redoing also allows “all sorts of perspectives and... motivational relevances” (p.64), these culturally sterilised lessons could accommodate students who saw Turkish as a potential weapon alongside those who hoped for better inter-ethnic relations in the future.

In fact, students themselves sometimes touched up controversial political issues, though here too they keyed them as non-serious in a way that avoided argument and allowed the normal business of the lesson to continue. For example, Extract 12 involved two close friends in 2012, one who was usually pro-reconciliation (Filippos), and the other who held ultra-nationalist views (Nikos). The teacher was trying to show the class how the names of countries, nationalities and languages are formed in Turkish, and a few minutes earlier, Nikos had been surprised to hear that Istanbul was Constantinople (the city’s name in Greek). Just before the episode in 12, the teacher has noticed that the class is starting to lose concentration. He invites one girl to come and sit at a desk in the front, and then he turns to Nikos and tries to ‘wake him up’ with a ‘hello/good morning’ in Turkish. Nikos responds but fails to carry the exchange through correctly (lines 2-4); the teacher flags up an error (line 5); and Filippos intervenes with a comment in the next turn that attributes the mistake to his friend’s irredentist politics (lines 6-7):

Extract 12: Turkish language lesson 2012 ⁶

1. TEACHER: merhaba ((Hello))
2. Nikos: merhaba ((Hello))
3. TEACHER: nasilsin? ((how are you?))
4. Nikos: nasilsin? ((how are you?))
5. TEACHER: Is that how you answer this question?
6. Filippos: Nikos is thinking of other stuff sir,
7. he is thinking of how to get Constantinople back
8. ((the lesson carries on))

In lines 6 & 7, Filippos’ pushes Nikos’ politics into the spotlight, implying that he is too preoccupied with nationalist issues to participate successfully in class. Juxtaposing a longstanding territorial dispute to a banal classroom greeting routine like this, he produces an abrupt but substantial shift of topic and scale that sounds somewhat anomalous. When this is also contextualised within their well-known friendship and the practical impossibility of actually knowing exactly what Nikos is thinking at just this point, the remark comes across as playful, and the business of the lesson carries on as usual.

In 2006, Dimos and Kyriakos were also good friends with very different views on the Cyprus issue (Dimos was active in the leftist youth organisation EDON), and in Extract 13, politics was also slipped into the class in a humorous key, on this occasion partly outside the main flow of classroom activity. In a lesson that was rather unusual in its inclusion of cultural material, the students were supposed to sing along to a Turkish song,⁷ but one of

⁶ This is taken from P. Charalambous’s fieldnotes, rather than being audio-recorded as in the other extracts

⁷ The cover version of a song that was originally in Greek, as the teacher explained.

them was wearing a radio-microphone which picked up some quieter ‘subordinate communication’ (Goffman 1981:133):⁸

Extract 13: Turkish language lesson, secondary school 2006 (see C. Charalambous 2012).

1. Dimos: ((*talking to the mic*)) we are against Greece and ‘Enosis’⁹
((*Unification*))
2. we are just ‘Cypriots united shall never be defeated’!¹⁰
3. Kyriakos: Cyprus Turkey ‘Enosis’
4. Dimos: ((*laughs*))
((*they join the rest of the class in singing*))

Addressing the researcher through the radio-mic, the boys are playing with political slogans, inserting elements of their own. When Dimos claims that “we are against Greece and ‘Enosis’” (line 1), he can’t actually speak for Kyriakos, but in line 2, the political substance of the claim is subordinated to verbal play in the substitution of ‘Cypriots’ for ‘the people/el pueblo’ in the famous chant “the people united shall never be defeated”. Kyriakos then intensifies the improvisation in line 3, using the comically self-contradictory “Cyprus Turkey Enosis” to articulate a political position that neither of them embrace. In this way, their knowledge and sensitivity to the Cyprus issue penetrates the sanitised neutrality of the classroom, but it is kept to the side of the main activity in class, while the humorous elaboration and exchange of slogans cloaks their own personal stances in comic anomaly (for further discussion and analysis of this episode see C. Charalambous 2012).

At this point, we can summarise our answer to the two questions motivating the analysis.

- a) *How was the controversial potential of Turkish handled in the provision and practice of teaching and learning in Greek-Cypriot secondary schools?* We have described how government policy inserted Turkish in a pre-existing option slot in the foreign language curriculum, where it was sustained and somewhat normalised by the structures and routines of language study, which also sent it into family homes in homework books, learnt phrases and so forth. The lessons put Turkish language materials in front of adolescents with very different political views, but the teachers neutralised the risk of conflagration by focusing on language as a grammatical code, while the students only acknowledged the politics lightly, in non-serious exchanges and asides.
- b) *How far and in what ways can we say that the Turkish lessons contributed to peace-building?* This was only an intra- rather than an inter-group arena, with no Turkish-Cypriots present, but even so, it provided a different way of relating to ‘things Turkish’. In contrast to other school subjects which consolidated the lines between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Zembylas et al 2014, 2016), these lessons provided very little scope for the articulation of traditional discourses of hostility. Instead, participation in these classes can be seen as

⁸ Goffman distinguishes several different lines of communication when people are physically co-present (1981:133). As well as the dominant communication on the main floor of the interaction, there is often subordinate communication, which can be either open/unconcealed, or collusive/surreptitious. This includes ‘byplay’ (communication between subset of ratified participants), ‘cross-play’ (communication between ratified participants and bystanders), and ‘side-play’ (hushed words between bystanders).

⁹ “Cyprus, Greece, Enosis (Unification)” had been for many years the slogan of Greek-Cypriot nationalism, and residual elements of this ideology can be encountered either in extreme Rightist discourses or in the form of nostalgic visions of what could have been an alternative reality.

¹⁰ From the leftist Chilean political anthem “El pueblo unido jamás será vencido”, known in Greek as “λαός ενωμένος ποτέ νικημένος”.

a first step, a first 'lesson' in how to deal with the controversy of the conflict, how to respect other views, how not to overstep the boundaries, how to justify yourself as an individual choosing the Turkish option. Nationalist Turkophobia appeared to have lost its unquestioned authority, and of course just in terms of learning the language itself, the lessons could also bear fruit in the future, with students going on to study Turkish at university, meeting Turkish-speakers, using the language at work etc.

Overall, though, claims for reconciliatory benefits of learning Turkish at secondary school are safer focusing on "the modest goals of coexistence and tolerance" than on "a more expansive concept of peace", as Mac Ginty puts it in his discussion of 'everyday peace' (2014:549). Indeed, 'everyday peace' is one of the concepts within IR that appears to fit the scene we have described, at least in part, and it is to these that we should now turn.

8. Greek-Cypriots studying Turkish: 'De-securitisation' and 'everyday peace'?

How far and in what ways does our case study connect with recent or contemporary work in IR, and what could linguistic ethnography add? Two topics seem relevant, one more obviously linked to the account of policy and institutional organisation in §6 ('de-securitisation'), and the other to the descriptions of interaction in §7 ('everyday peace').

The notion of de-securitization is linked to the theory of securitization, which itself refers to the discursive and institutional processes in which 'existential threats' to the state and other bodies are identified, and groups or issues are moved from the realm of ordinary politics into the realm of exceptional measures, where normal political rights and procedures are suspended (Buzan & Weaver 2003; Emmers 2013). De-securitisation reverses this process, and according to Aradau, it entails a "democratic challenge to the non-democratic politics of securitization [that] has to be inscribed institutionally and needs to create a different relation from the one of enmity, a relation which is not rooted in the exclusionary logic of security" (2004:400). In securitization, "the speed introduced by security does away with the possibility of scrutiny as well as the expression of voice", but in de-securitization "the slowness of procedures ensures the possibility of contestation" (2004:393). Applying this to our case-study, the Turkish language lessons institutionalised the government's reconciliatory expressions of good will in 2003; the lessons brought students with very different political attitudes together over a substantial periods of time and exposed them to Turkish "in a different relation from the one of enmity"; and even though the teachers actually tried very hard to avoid "the possibility of contestation" during lessons, these classes opened a space which provoked argument and deliberation outside, disrupting nationalism's taken-for-granted status as well. So these Turkish language lessons for Greek-Cypriots can be aligned with de-securitisation, and we have invoked it in earlier work as a relatively abstract characterisation of these processes (P. Charalambous et al 2017).

A second connection is to work on 'hybrid peace', which attends to "the engagement of policy makers, peacebuilders, NGOS and donors with local civil society's potential to initiate and sustain a peaceful polity in a range of different but overlapping contextual frames" (Richmond & Tellidis 2016:137). Referring to the EU, the Republic of Cyprus government, local institutional structures and the situated activity of individuals, the span of our case study is loosely compatible with the horizons covered in accounts of hybrid peace (Mac Ginty 2010:391; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013). But within this, Mac Ginty's notion of 'everyday peace' has particular resonance for sociolinguists.

'Everyday peace' refers to:

“the routinized practices used by individuals and collectives as they navigate their way through life in a deeply divided society... It involves coping mechanisms such as the avoidance of contentious subjects in religiously or ethnically mixed company, or a constructive ambiguity whereby people conceal their identity or opinion lest they draw attention to themselves” (2014:549).

These practices also include ‘ritualized politeness’ (avoiding anything that may cause offence), ‘telling’ (discerning ethnic identification and social ordering), and ‘blame deferring’ (shifting blame to outsiders) (2014:556), and they are produced within an alert sensitivity to the possibility of rapid conflict escalation (p.549). So their everyday routinization certainly isn’t ‘doxic’ or taken-for-granted – these are coping mechanisms that “allow a façade of normality to prevail”, and they involve “innovation, creativity and improvisation” (p.555). This is consistent with our account of, for example, grammar-focused Turkish language teaching as ‘technical redoing’ – as a pedagogy that was carefully tuned to the risk of controversy, and that involved much more than just the unthinking reproduction of a traditional teaching style. Like us, Mac Ginty also cites Goffman. But there are two ways in which sociolinguistic research qualifies this account of everyday peace.

First, although Mac Ginty recognizes that these coping practices are “possible at some periods and impossible at others” (p.552), he uses the term ‘fluid’ to characterise them (p.549, 552). Seen from a distance, from the vantage point of state policy analysis for example, these small-scale acts might well look fluid, but fine-grained sociolinguistic analysis shows that they are actually very closely woven into the intricate structuring of social interaction. So in Extract 12, Filippos’ quip about Constantinople is skilfully timed to pre-empt Nikos’ response to the teacher’s question, and its structural positioning as a peripheral insertion of the main business of the lesson means that it can be easily ignored and swiftly passed over. Similarly, in Extract 13, Kyriakos’ “Cyprus Turkey Enosis” (line 3) achieves its comic effect by incorporating and extending the materials presented by his friend a moment before (adding ‘Turkey’ to Dimos’ ‘Enosis’ and ‘Cypr(iots)’ in lines 1 & 2). The bigger point is that there is structuration and an element of conventionality in even the briefest utterance. It is through a plurality of co-occurring structures that we can recognise and differentiate actions as belonging to a particular type, and these structures are the frames within which we produce and construe the unceasing improvisation which is also intrinsic to interaction (Giddens 1976; Bourdieu 1977). Going one step further, the notion of indexicality points to the systematic links between tiny linguistic forms and more general ideological structures (as attested in the story of shibboleth in the Book of Judges (Ch.12.5 & 12.6)), and far from the free and fluid play of agency, this brings relations of power right to the heart of the most instantaneous sense-making.¹¹ In fact, Mac Ginty recognises that the practices associated with everyday peace “rel[y] on opportunities and context, as well as the ability of groups and individuals and groups to exploit these” (p.550), but as sociolinguists, we would call this variation *situated* rather than fluid, in an account that sees agency inextricably tied to a multiplicity of structures, ‘all the way down’.

Second, contrary to the contrast between “bottom up and local agency” and “top-down actors, formal institutions and conflict resolutions ‘professionals’” (Mac Ginty 2014:548), we would question the claim that ‘everyday peace’ practices like these are the exclusive preserve of non-elite people interacting in non-formal environments. In our own study, for example, it certainly wouldn’t be possible to equate avoidance or ‘keying’ practices with informal

¹¹ This is vividly illustrated in, for example, Bourdieu’s account of symbolic violence, in which “ways of looking, sitting, standing, keeping silent or even of speaking (‘reproachful looks’ or ‘tones’, ‘disapproving glances’ and so on) are full of injunctions that are powerful and hard to resist precisely because they are silent and insidious, insistent and insinuating” (1991:51).

domains, since we mainly focused on official settings sponsored by the state (schools and classrooms). Indeed, the dichotomisation of formal and informal itself looks fragile when adolescents can be seen joking with friends in lessons, and there's light-hearted talk at home in Turkish imported from the classroom. It is important, in other words, to disentangle two of the senses of 'everyday' identified in §3: environments and people endowed with high or low ranked material, cultural and linguistic resources on the one hand, and on the other, socio-cognitive orientations to what's deemed normal and exceptional that are negotiated in interaction. So when Mac Ginty distinguishes between

“everyday civilities produced by local people directly affected by conflict on the one hand, and the ‘expert’ peace-building discourse of expatriates, a discourse that’s standardised and professionalised though ‘best practice’ and ‘lessons learned’” (2014:551),

we can agree that locals and expatriates are likely to differ in the linguistic resources they can draw on – the genres, the languages, the styles and so forth. It is also very possible that these differences themselves get politicised, and that local communicative practices are ignored or dismissed. But as Goffman’s *oeuvre* makes clear, virtually everyone produces ‘everyday civilities’ (ritualized politeness, blame deferral etc), and even though peace-building professionals may well be pressured by their overseers to adhere to scripts and rulebooks, the subtleties of communicative interaction always exceed institutional prescriptions, and there is still room for them to produce coping practices creatively adjusted to the communicative exigencies on hand (even though their success can never be guaranteed).

9. Conclusion

Although we have not dwelt on it here, we are convinced that the frameworks now emerging in IR for apprehending the growing significance of insecurity and violent conflict in ordinary life have a great deal to offer the sociolinguistics of everyday communication. But in this paper, we have looked in the other direction, addressing researchers in IR with a linguistic ethnography of Greek-Cypriot secondary school students learning Turkish, the language of the (former) enemy. As well as suggesting some of the ways in which language and language education can play a role in peace-building, we have used this material both as a practical illustration of the kind of account that ethnographic sociolinguistics can generate, and as a platform from which to engage with specific IR topics. We have also differentiated several meanings of ‘everyday’, and tried to demonstrate the significance of these differences empirically. Overall, we have sought, minimally, to declare our own incursions into the domain of IR, and started making our interaction with its concepts accountable to IR experts. Beyond that, of course, it is not for us to judge whether or not the frameworks of linguistic ethnography resonate in the work on everyday International Relations, though of course we hope they do.

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