



***The Influence of Turkish on Cypriot Greek
Türkçenin Kıbrıs Rumcası Üzerindeki Etkisi***

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Makale Bilgisi/ Article Information

Makale Türü/Article Types: Konferans Bildirisi/ Conference Proceedings

Geliş Tarihi/ Received: 4 Aralık 2023/ 4 December 2023

Kabul Tarihi/ Accepted: 14 Haziran 2024 / 14 June 2024

Yayın Tarihi/ Published: 31 Temmuz 2024 / 31 July 2024

Yayın Sezonu/ Pub Date Season: Temmuz/ July

Atıf/ Cite as: Yıkık, A. (2024). *Türkçenin Kıbrıs Rumcası Üzerindeki Etkisi*. Artuklu Humanities, 16, 103-119. DOI: [10.46628/itbhssj.1400091](https://doi.org/10.46628/itbhssj.1400091)

Yıkık, A. (2024). *The Influence of Turkish on Cypriot Greek*. Artuklu Humanities, 16, 103-119. DOI: [10.46628/itbhssj.1400091](https://doi.org/10.46628/itbhssj.1400091)

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Yayıncı/ Published by: Mardin Artuklu Üniversitesi/ Mardin Artuklu University

Etik Beyan/ Ethical Statement: Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur./ It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited

Bu makale, 17-18 Eylül 2021 tarihlerinde Kıbrıs Lefkoşa’da düzenlenen “Bilinmeyen Türk Dünyası” Uluslararası Konferansı’nda sunulan bildiriden geliştirilmiştir. / This article has been developed from the paper presented at the International Conference “The Unknown Turkic World”, which was held on September 17-18, 2021, in Nicosia, Cyprus (Ahmet Yıkık).

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The Influence of Turkish on Cypriot Greek¹

Abstract

When Cyprus was conquered by the Ottomans in 1571, the majority of the local population were Orthodox Greek Christians. After the conquest, Muslim Turks who migrated from Anatolia also settled on the island. Thus, Greeks and Turks, who constituted the two largest communities of the island's population, lived together under Ottoman rule for nearly three centuries. As part of this, the phenomenon of bilingualism was inevitable. Because of inter-community relations, there were interactions between the Turkish and Greek languages spoken on the island. Both communities borrowed words from each other's languages. In the studies conducted to date, the general opinion is that Turkish has not had much influence on the Greek spoken in Cyprus, since the Greeks outnumber the Turks on the island. However, it cannot be said that sufficient studies have been carried out on this subject. The present study focuses on Turkish loanwords in the island's Greek language. Words of Turkish origin, the new forms they have taken, and the words derived from them have been identified. In the light of the findings, and using a sociolinguistic approach, the influence of Turkish on Cypriot Greek is discussed.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics, Cyprus, bilingualism, Cypriot Greek, Turkish loanwords.

Türkçenin Kıbrıs Rumcası Üzerindeki Etkisi

103

Öz

Kıbrıs, 1571'de Osmanlılar tarafından fethedildiğinde yerli halkın çoğunluğu Ortodoks inancına mensup Hristiyan Rumlardı. Fetihten sonra adaya Anadolu'dan göç eden Müslüman Türkler de yerleşmiştir. Böylece ada nüfusunun en büyük iki topluluğunu oluşturan Rumlar ve Türkler, yaklaşık üç yüzyıl boyunca, Osmanlı idaresinde birlikte yaşamışlardır. Bu süreçte, adada iki dillilik fenomeninin görülmesi kaçınılmazdır. Toplumlar arası ilişkiler nedeniyle adada konuşulan Türkçe ve Rumca arasında etkileşimler oluşmuştur. Her iki halk da diğerinin dilinden ödünç kelimeler almıştır. Bugüne kadar yapılan çalışmalarda, genel kanı, Türklerin adada Rumlardan sayıca az olmaları nedeniyle, Türkçenin Kıbrıs'ta konuşulan Rumcası çok fazla etkilemediği doğrultusundadır. Ancak bu konuda yeterince çalışma yapıldığı söylenemez. Bu çalışmada, ada Rumcasına Türkçeden geçen sözcüklere odaklanılmıştır. Türkçe kökenli sözcükler, bunların aldıkları yeni biçimler ve bunlardan türetilen sözcükler belirlenmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular ışığında, toplumdilbilimsel bir yaklaşımla, Türkçenin, Kıbrıs Rumcası üzerindeki etkisi tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Toplumdilbilim, Kıbrıs, İki dillilik, Kıbrıs Rumcası, Türkçe alıntılar.

¹ The present article has been developed from the paper presented at the International Conference "The Unknown Turkic World", which was held on September 17-18, 2021, in Nicosia, Cyprus.

Introduction

Bilingualism² can be defined as an individual's ability to speak two or more languages. Individuals may know the other language or languages in question at the level of native speakers. In some cases, knowledge may only be to a certain level (Trudgill, 2003, p. 15; Wei, 2000, p. 8). According to Sridhar (1996), the differences in competence in the various languages might range from command of a few lexical items, formulaic expressions such as greetings, and rudimentary conversational skills all the way to excellent command of the grammar and vocabulary and specialized register and styles (p. 50). It should not be ignored that bilingualism also entails a "situation of language contact" (Maher, 2010, as cited in Coulmas, 2018, p. 33); in other words, an "on-going language contact in the same territorial space" (Djité, 2008, as cited in Coulmas, 2018, p. 39). The aim of this paper is not to determine whether Greek Cypriots know Turkish at the level of their mother tongue or whether they can communicate with Turkish speakers. The main target is to reveal the contexts in which they use Turkish loanwords or expressions and their perspectives on the Turkish language – in other words, to determine the status of Turkish in Cypriot Greek. First, I will provide an overview of the major previous studies on Cypriot Greek. After summarizing the previous data in this study, as a Turkish Cypriot residing in Southern Nicosia since 2020 – being bilingual, with mother-tongue Turkish, but fluent in oral and written Greek – I will present some Turkish loanwords and expressions which I have personally identified as currently in use, through both my direct contacts with Greek Cypriots and with Greek Cypriot media. In the concluding section, after evaluating the collected data, I will try to reveal the extent of the effect of Turkish on Cypriot Greek. At the same time, I will discuss the argumentation of the advanced by researchers who believe the influence of Turkish on Cypriot Greek to be very low (Beckingham, 1957, p. 171; Demir, 2018, p. 65; Karyolemou, 2005, p. 29).

In this article, the Greek words are transliterated into the Latin alphabet. Stress is indicated by an acute accent: *á, é, í, ú*. The voiceless postalveolar fricative (e.g., *sh* in English *shy*) is transliterated as *š*; the voiceless postalveolar affricate (e.g., *ch* in English *cherry*) as *č*; and the voiced postalveolar affricate (e.g., *j* in English *jelly*) as *dz*. The abbreviation "CG" stands for "Cypriot Greek [dialect]", "CT" for "Cypriot Turkish [dialect]", and "ST" for "Standard Turkish".

Previous studies and findings

The most extensive work on loanwords in Cypriot Greek has been undertaken by Andreas N. Papapavlou (1994), who in addition to publishing many articles on this subject, dwelled on it in detail in his book titled *Language Contact and Lexical Borrowing in the Greek Cypriot Dialect*. In this book, Papapavlou refers to Cyprus having been ruled by various foreign powers – such as the Lusignans, the Venetians, the Turks, and the British – throughout its history, which contributed many words to the local people's spoken language. The author identifies the following main factors directly affecting the quantity of the borrowed vocabulary: how long the occupiers dominated the island, how they interacted with the local population, the attitude of the Greek Cypriots towards them, interactions between the occupiers and the local population, and the extent to which the occupiers' language systems matched the local language (Papapavlou, 1994, p. 3).

Although Papapavlou (1994, p. 7) correctly notes that some of the Turkish loanwords are not necessarily of Turkic origin (since Ottoman Turkish possessed many words of Arabic and Persian

² Many sociolinguists use the term "bilingualism" to refer to individuals, even if they are trilingual, quadrilingual etc. and reserve the term "multilingualism" for nations or societies, even if only two languages are involved. See Trudgill, 2003, p. 15. In contrast, the word "multilingualism" can refer to either the language use or the competence of an individual or to the language situation in an entire nation or society. However, at the individual level it is generally subsumed under "bilingualism". For more information see Clyne, 1998, p. 301.

origin), for the purposes of this paper all words borrowed into Cypriot Greek from Turkish (colloquial or official) will be considered Turkish loanwords regardless of their etymology.

The phenomenon of lexical borrowing is undoubtedly explained by language contact. Language contact occurs when two or more communities with different mother tongues establish social relations with each other. The communities in question, which had difficulties in getting along for a short period at first, were later influenced by each other, leading to the emergence of bilingualism (Trudgill, 2003, p. 74). In the case of Cyprus, the existence of Turkish-speaking Muslim people and rulers settled on the island after the Ottoman conquest of 1571 paved the way for the emergence of bilingualism among Greek Cypriots, followed by lexical borrowing. Papapavlou (1994) quotes the linguist Uriel Weinreich, according to whom the need to name new objects, people, places, and concepts is among the main reasons for borrowing words from other languages (p. 10). In addition, words are borrowed for reasons such as frequency of word use, phonological confusion, and loss of expressive power of effective words (Weinreich, 1979, pp. 56–59). Based on this belief, Papapavlou (1994) classified words that passed from Turkish to Cypriot Greek under the following seven thematic categories (p. 11):

1. Food and pastries;
2. Fruits and vegetables;
3. Domestic items and utensils;
4. Clothing and dressing;
5. Agricultural items and tools;
6. Trade-related items;
7. Names of trades.

Papapavlou does not consider the lexical influence of Turkish on Cypriot Greek surprising as Turks and Greeks have lived together on the island for over 400 years, during which the Turks ruled the island for the first three centuries. Their language being that of prestige had to be learned by the governed population in order to maintain contact with the administration. In this context, it should be considered natural that Cypriot Greek also features many Turkish loanwords belonging to the administrative field (Papapavlou, 1994, p. 21). Among other semantic fields highlighted by Papapavlou with regard to the density of Turkish loanwords are synonyms related to kinship, religious symbols, lifestyle, and punishment tools. He also states that almost ten percent of some 500 Turkish loanwords he has identified are composed of words expressing swearing and humiliation (pp. 13–14). The presence of the latter may result from negative feelings and thoughts towards the community speaking the other language (Weinreich, 1979, p. 60). However, the existence of Turkish loanwords in a wide variety of fields and in large numbers in Cypriot Greek invalidates the view that they originate from negative feelings and thoughts towards the other society. Below are examples of Turkish loanwords in Cypriot Greek that Papapavlou identified and divided into various categories:

Table 1: *Food and pastries*

Loanwords as pronounced in CG	Meaning in English	Corresponding word in ST
<i>Keymás</i>	chopped meat	<i>kıyma</i>
<i>Pasturmás</i>	salted meat	<i>pastırma</i>
<i>Yiahní</i>	any dish prepared with tomato paste	<i>yahni</i>
<i>Puréki</i>	pastry, pie	<i>börek</i>
<i>Kapamás</i>	a Turkish meat dish	<i>kapama</i>

Reference: (Papapavlou, 1994, p. 65)

Table 2: *Fruits and vegetables*

Loanwords as pronounced in CG	Meaning in English	Corresponding word in ST
<i>kayisí</i>	apricot	<i>kayısı</i>
<i>karpúzi</i>	watermelon	<i>karpuz</i>
<i>pandzari</i>	beet	<i>pancar</i>
<i>fistúki</i>	nuts; pistachio nuts	<i>fistik</i>
<i>torfandá</i>	fresh fruits and vegetables	<i>turfanda</i>

Reference: (Papapavlou, 1994, p. 66)

Table 3: *Domestic items and utensils*

Loanwords as pronounced in CG	Meaning in English	Corresponding word in ST
<i>Kazáni</i>	big container for storing food	<i>kazan</i>
<i>Kilími</i>	floor mat	<i>kilim</i>
<i>Kapáki</i>	lid; cover	<i>kapak</i>
<i>Tendzerés</i>	cooking utensil	<i>tencere</i>
<i>Dzisivés</i>	coffee pot	<i>cezve</i>

Reference: (Papapavlou, 1994, p. 67)

Table 4: Clothing and dressing

Loanwords as pronounced in CG	Meaning in English	Corresponding word in ST
<i>Yieléko</i>	vest	<i>yelek</i>
<i>Kazáka</i>	pyjamas	<i>kazak</i>
<i>fési</i>	fez	<i>fes</i>
<i>Dzépi</i>	pocket	<i>cep</i>
<i>Čaríki</i>	slipper	<i>çarık</i>

Reference: (Papapavlou, 1994, pp. 68–69)

Table 5: Agricultural items and tools

Loanwords as pronounced in CG	Meaning in English	Corresponding word in ST
<i>arabás</i>	vehicle; wheelbarrow	<i>araba</i>
<i>čengélli</i>	hook	<i>çengel</i>
<i>kasmás</i>	pickaxe	<i>kazma</i>
<i>kaplamás</i>	coating	<i>kaplama</i>
<i>kamičí</i>	whip	<i>kamçı</i>

Reference: (Papapavlou, 1994, p. 69)

Table 6: Trade-related items

Loanwords as pronounced in CG	Meaning in English	Corresponding word in ST
<i>pazarlíki</i>	bargaining	<i>pazarlık</i>
<i>veresiyé</i>	buying something on credit; credit	<i>veresiye</i>
<i>eksiki</i>	not the correct size, height, or weight	<i>eksik</i>
<i>kazandí</i>	winning a game	<i>kazandı</i>

<i>alışverişi</i>	give-and-take	<i>alışveriş</i>
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Reference: (Papapavlou, 1994, p. 70)

Table 7: Names of trades

Loanwords as pronounced in CG	Meaning in English	Corresponding word in ST
<i>Kafedzís</i>	coffeeshop owner	<i>kahveci</i>
<i>Poyiadzís</i>	painter	<i>boyacı</i>
<i>Tenekedzís</i>	tinsmith	<i>tenekeci</i>
<i>Kalupdzís</i>	bricklayer	<i>kalıpcı</i>
<i>Kasápis</i>	butcher	<i>kasap</i>

Reference: (Papapavlou, 1994, p. 71)

Table 8: *Euphemistic, pejorative or cacophemistic words:*

Loanwords as pronounced in CG	Meaning in English	Corresponding word in ST
<i>Kerhanés</i>	brothel	<i>kerhane</i>
<i>Oróspa</i>	prostitute	<i>orospu</i>
<i>Pezevéngis</i>	pimp	<i>pezevenk</i>
<i>Púštis</i>	homosexual	<i>puşt</i>
<i>Pičis</i>	bastard	<i>piç</i>

Reference: (Papapavlou, 1994, p. 14)

Table 9: *Loanwords associated with administration:*

Loanwords as pronounced in CG	Meaning in English	Corresponding word in ST
<i>muhdáris</i>	community leader	<i>muhtar</i>
<i>kadís</i>	judge; mediator	<i>kadı</i>
<i>zaǧdíés</i>	police officer	<i>zaptiye</i>
<i>čauśis</i>	police sergeant	<i>çavuş</i>
<i>mársapis</i>	owner	<i>mal sahibi</i>

<i>kočáni</i>	certificate of ownership	<i>koçan</i>
<i>maliés</i>	property tax	<i>maliye</i>
<i>mirási</i>	inheritance of property	<i>miras</i>
<i>vasís</i>	guardian and protector	<i>vasi</i>
<i>aféndis</i>	master, lord, boss	<i>efendi</i>

Reference: (Papapavlou, 1994, p. 21)

Konstantinos Y. Yiangoullis has also conducted detailed research on Turkish loanwords in Cypriot Greek. He published his etymological dictionary titled *Οι Τουρκικές Λέξεις της Κυπριακής Διαλέκτου – Türk Sözləri Kıbrıs'ın Lehçede* [Turkish Words in Cypriot Dialect] in 1998. In this work, he has identified 1,500 Turkish loanwords obtained from both written and oral sources. Yiangoullis expanded and republished this work in 2003. The second edition contains information on the etymology of 2,795 loanwords that have passed from Turkish to Greek. According to Yiangoullis, when the island was under Ottoman rule, these words were used extensively by Greek Cypriots, both in colloquial speech and in written language. However, today many of them have sunk into oblivion. He also emphasises that there are many verbs among the Turkish loanwords and points out that many job titles borrowed from Turkish are still found in Greek Cypriot surnames (Yiangoullis, 2003, pp. I–IV).

Another researcher who made important contributions to the studies on the influence of Turkish on Cypriot Greek is Stavroula Varella. In her book titled *Language Contact and the Lexicon in the History of Cypriot Greek* (2006), she provides detailed information on the words borrowed from the existing Turkish in Cypriot Greek. According to her, Cyprus was completely isolated from European and Western civilisations when it was under Ottoman rule. For this reason, the island has many features unique to Eastern culture. These features, or elements, are observed in daily life in Cyprus, especially in language, habits, traditions, music, architecture, clothing, and food culture. The author agrees that the most frequently used loanwords in Cypriot Greek are borrowed from Turkish. The main reason for this is that Cyprus remained under Ottoman rule for more than 300 years. At that time, relations were established only with the countries around the island, in other words, with Ottoman countries such as Anatolia, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt (Varella, 2006, p. 69). Varella determined that a total of 394 Turkish loanwords (all listed in her work) were used in Cypriot Greek from the sixteenth century to the twentieth century (Varella, 2006, pp. 253–255, 258–263, 267–270). According to Varella, who defined the words borrowed from Turkish in the Ottoman period under the general title of “cultural borrowing”, the following sub-categories can be identified: administrative terms, legal terms, military terms, terms related to the religion of Islam, terms of commerce and finance, cuisine-related terms, fabrics and dressing items, manufacturers and household articles, habits, and pastimes (Varella, 2006, pp. 184–188). Nouns and adjectives form the majority of words borrowed from another language (Trask, 2000, p. 44), and Turkish loanwords classified according to the above-mentioned titles support this thesis (Varella, 2006, pp. 188–189). However, because of the prevalence of bilingualism in Cyprus, especially among writers, there are also many verbs of Turkish origin in texts written in Cypriot Greek. In addition, in contrast to Turkish loanwords in standard Greek, a language phenomenon unique to Cyprus emerged: some verbs borrowed from Turkish continued to be used alongside their Greek equivalents. Furthermore, sometimes two verbs having the same meaning in Turkish were borrowed at the same time, e.g.,

yirtízo ‘to dread’ < *yıldı* ‘dreaded’ and *kourkáro* ‘to be afraid’ < *korkar* ‘afraid’ (Varella, 2006, p. 191). A few verbs have been borrowed from Turkish with the aorist suffix *-(A)r*, e.g., *čapaláro* ‘to struggle’ < *çabala-r* ‘(s/he) struggles’. However, most were adapted from the form with the Turkish simple past tense suffix *-DI*, *zorlatízo* ‘to compel’ < *zorla-di* ‘(s/he) compelled’. Below is the list of verbs passing from Turkish to Cypriot Greek and identified in a range of written sources:

Table 10: Lists of loanwords (verbs) according to their textual source

From the demotic poetry of the Middle Ages and later

Loanwords as pronounced in CG	Meaning in English	Corresponding word in ST
<i>Artirízo</i>	to be left over	<i>artur</i>
<i>alíkotó/alíkotízo</i>	to detain, to stop	<i>alí kodu</i>
<i>Zorlatízo</i>	to force, to violate	<i>zorladı</i>
<i>Duřuntízo</i>	to think of	<i>düřündü</i>
<i>Orseletízo</i>	to harm, to misuse, to beat	<i>örseledi</i>
<i>Peentízo</i>	to like, to appreciate	<i>beğendi</i>
<i>Čapaláro</i>	to struggle	<i>çabalar</i>

Reference: (Varella, 2006, pp. 253–254)

Table 11: From the demotic poetry of the nineteenth century

Loanwords as pronounced in CG	Meaning in English	Corresponding word in ST
<i>vasgečéro</i>	to give up, to abandon	<i>vazgeçer</i>
<i>kazantízo</i>	to win	<i>kazandı</i>
<i>ogratízo</i>	to suffer, to get into trouble	<i>uğradı</i>
<i>pařartízo</i>	to achieve	<i>başardı</i>
<i>pořató</i>	to quit	<i>bořa</i>

Reference: (Varella, 2006, pp. 258–260)

Table 12: From the major poets of the twentieth century

Loanwords as pronounced in CG	Meaning in English	Corresponding word in ST
<i>yirtízo</i>	to be afraid	<i>yıldı</i>
<i>kaurtízo</i>	To roast	<i>kavurdu</i>
<i>kilištízo</i>	to develop, to advance	<i>gelişti</i>
<i>kurkáro</i>	to be afraid	<i>korkar</i>
<i>pairtízo</i>	to faint	<i>bayıldı</i>
<i>šastízo</i>	to bewildered	<i>şaştı</i>

(Varella, 2006, pp. 262–263)

Table 13: From non-literary sources

Loanwords as pronounced in CG	Meaning in English	Corresponding word in ST
<i>Astízo</i>	to urge	<i>az-</i>
<i>Yolláro</i>	to go	<i>yolla-</i>
<i>Kapartízo</i>	to puff out	<i>kabar-</i>
<i>Sikkirtó</i>	to be uneasy	<i>sıkıl-</i>
<i>Dzizáro</i>	to cross out	<i>çiz-</i> [CT <i>cız-</i>]

Reference: (Varella, 2006, pp. 267–270)

As well as the above-mentioned researchers, Turkish researcher Orhan Kabataş, who lives in Northern Cyprus, has conducted research on Turkish loanwords in Cypriot Greek. In his book titled *Kıbrıs Türkçesinin Etimolojik Sözlüğü* [Etymological Dictionary of Cypriot Turkish] (2007), he provides a list of Turkish loanwords in Cypriot Greek, totalling 1,601 (Kabataş, 2007, p. 627–673). Kabataş (2007) emphasises that he gathered this data by scanning the research related to the subject in Southern Cyprus (p. 627). Kabataş's list contains verbal borrowings that had not been mentioned in previous works (see the list below). Through these data we can form an opinion about the spoken Turkish on the island in the past, and its borrowings from Arabic and Persian as well.

Table 14: Verbal borrowings

Loanwords as pronounced in CG	Meaning in English	Corresponding word in ST
<i>avladízo / avladó</i>	to hunt	<i>avla-</i>

<i>pedzerdízo</i>	to manage	<i>becer-</i>
<i>dzannatízo</i>	to revive	<i>canlan-</i>
<i>čekkéro</i>	to pull	<i>çek-</i>
<i>oxatízo</i>	to caress	<i>okşa-</i>
<i>šastízo</i>	to be confused	<i>şaş-</i>
<i>savurtízo</i>	to throw	<i>savur-</i>
<i>yakkışdízo</i>	to suit	<i>yakış-</i>
<i>yaraladízo</i>	to hurt	<i>yarala-</i>

Reference: (Kabataş, 2007, pp. 630, 632, 634, 635, 658, 662, 670)

In addition to the above-mentioned study, Kabataş, together with the Greek Cypriot researcher Iakovos Hatzipieris, conducted a joint study to identify reciprocal borrowings in Cypriot Greek and Cypriot Turkish. They published a book titled *Kıbrıs Türk ve Rum Dialektlerinin Ortak Sözlüğü* [Common Dictionary of the Greek and Turkish Dialects of Cyprus]. In this work published in both Turkish and Greek, the authors identify a total of 3,425 words that Turkish and Greek Cypriots use in common. According to their count results, 1,840 loanwords and 390 derivative words were borrowed from Cypriot Turkish into Cypriot Greek, while 840 loanwords were borrowed into Cypriot Turkish from Cypriot Greek. Of the loanwords in question, those dating from the Ottoman era, especially those related to administration, are no longer used in either dialect. Some loanwords are used seldom today. However, many Turkish loanwords still exist in everyday language (Hatzipieris & Kabataş, 2015, p. 14).

Recently identified loanwords and phrases

Below are some examples of Turkish borrowings that I have witnessed being used in the daily conversations of Greek Cypriots, or in programmes and TV series broadcast on various Greek Cypriot television channels where Cypriot Greek is spoken, as of 2024 when this article was written. Since the aforementioned loanwords and idioms also exist in Cypriot Turkish, the Greek and English meanings of the loanwords are given together with their Cypriot Turkish equivalents.

Table 14: *CT gid da gel > CG kkittákel*³ 'go and come'.

Borrowed word or phrase in CG	<i>Kkittákel – En mporó na kámo kkittákel.</i>
Same word or phrase in CT	<i>Gid da gel – Gid da gel yapamam.</i>
Same word or phrase in ST	<i>Git de gel – Sürekli gidip gelemem.</i>
Meaning in English	I cannot come and go all the time.

³ For more information, see Hatzipieris & Kabataş, 2015, pp. 119–120; Yiangoullis, 2003, p. 28).

Table 15: *ST (ki)zıl kurt > CG zılıkurti*⁴ ‘red worms’

Borrowed word or phrase in CG	<i>Zilikurti na fkális (vgális)!</i>
Same word or phrase in CT	<i>Ziligurti çıkarasıñ</i> (cf. <i>ST çık-ar-a-sın</i>).
Same word or phrase in ST	This phrase does not exist in Standard Turkish.
Meaning in English	Literally ‘I wish you to throw up/vomit worms’, used in daily speech in the meaning ‘Shut up!’ or [in some cases] ‘I want you to do die!’ (?)

As can be seen, the idiom, which first passed from Cypriot Turkish to Greek, has undergone a change in pronunciation by being adapted to the phonological structure of Greek. Later, the same idiom was reborrowed into Cypriot Turkish under its phonologically Hellenised form. Today, neither Greek Cypriots nor Turkish Cypriots can give a definite answer when asked about the exact meaning of this idiom, although they use it very often.

Table 16: *ST yoksa > CG óxa*⁵ ‘or’, ‘otherwise’

Borrowed word in CG	<i>óxa</i>
Same word in CT	<i>yogsa</i>
Same word in ST	<i>yoksa</i>
Meaning in English	or

Use of the conjunction *óxa* in a sentence:

CT	<i>Şindik</i> now	<i>geleceñ</i> you will come	<i>yogsa</i> or	<i>eğleneceñ?</i> you will be late
ST	<i>Şimdi mi</i> now	<i>Geleceksin</i> will you come	<i>yoksa</i> or	<i>gecikecek misin?</i> will you be late
CG	<i>Tóra</i> now	<i>en na érthis</i> you will come	<i>óxa</i> or	<i>na arkisis?</i> you will be late
‘Will you come now or will you be late?’				

⁴ Etymology of the adjective clause *zılıkurti*: *ST kızıl* ‘red’ > *CG kızılı* > *zili* + *ST kurt* ‘worm’ > *CG kurti* = *(ki)zılıkurti* > *CT ziligurti*. For more information see Gökçeođlu, 2010, p. 1060; Hakeri, 2003, p. 323; Hatzipieris & Kabataş, 2015, p. 76; Yianguoullis, 2003, p. 16.

⁵ For more information, see Hatzipieris & Kabataş, 2015, p. 193; Yianguoullis, 2003, p. 48.

Table 17: *ST belki – CT belki(m) > CG pérki(mu)*⁶ ‘hopefully’, ‘I wish’

Borrowed word in CG	<i>pérki(mu)</i>
Same word in CT	<i>belki(m)</i>
Same word in ST	<i>belki</i>
Meaning in English	Literally ‘maybe’ but in Cypriot Turkish also ‘hopefully’. In CG, the latter meaning only.

Use of *pérki(mu)* in a sentence:

CT	<i>Belkim</i> I wish	<i>yağmur yağar.</i> it would rain.
ST	<i>İnşallah</i> I wish	<i>yağmur yağar.</i> it would rain.
ST	<i>Keşke</i> I wish	<i>yağmur yağsa.</i> it would rain.
CG	<i>Pérki(mu)</i> I wish	<i>na vréksi.</i> it would rain.
‘I wish it would rain.’ / ‘Hopefully it rains.’		

Some other sentence structures and phrases

(1) CT *yog* + verb stem + *-AsIn* > CG *ói* + *na* + verb ‘mind!’, ‘don’t do it!’

Use of this negative optative form in a sentence:

CT	<i>Yog</i> No [do not]	<i>onudasın!</i> forget it
ST	<i>Sakın</i> Don’t	<i>unutma!</i> forget
CG	<i>Ói</i> No [do not]	<i>na to xehásis!</i> forget it
‘Don’t you forget it!’		

⁶ For more information see Hatziperis & Kabataş, 2015, p. 210; Yiangoullis, 2003, p. 52.

The above structure exists only in Cypriot Turkish and Cypriot Greek and not encountered in the mainland varieties of Turkish and Greek. Therefore, it is difficult to determine whether it was transferred from Cypriot Turkish to Cypriot Greek or from Cypriot Greek to Cypriot Turkish. However, the island provides strong evidence for the interaction of the two languages spoken.

(2) ST *eksik olsun* – CT *eksig olsun* > CG *exikkossu*⁷

Use of *exikkossu* in a sentence:

CG	<i>Exikkossu na</i> I wish I did	<i>men</i> not	<i>epienna</i> go	<i>sti</i> to	<i>thálasa,</i> sea	<i>ékamne</i> was	<i>pollin</i> very	<i>kriáda.</i> cold
‘I wish I did not go to the sea; it was very cold.’								
CG	<i>Exikkossu na</i> I wish I did	<i>men</i> not	<i>su</i> to you	<i>to</i> that	<i>elálon.</i> tell			
‘I wish I did not tell you that.’								

CT	<i>Eksig olsun</i> I wish I did not have	<i>böyle</i> like this	<i>çocug,</i> a son/ daughter	<i>hiç</i> <i>never</i>	<i>diğnemez</i> (s/he) listens	<i>beni!</i> to me
‘I wish I did not have a child like mine, s/he never listens to me!’						

CT	<i>Eksig olsun</i> I wish I did not have	<i>böyle</i> like this	<i>araba;</i> a car,	<i>habire</i> (it) constantly	<i>bozultur!</i> breaks down.
‘I wish I did not have a car like this, it constantly breaks down.’					

⁷ For more information, see Hatzipieris & Kabataş, 2015, p. 69; Yiangoullis, 2003, p. 13.

In Standard Turkish, the phrase *eksik olsun* means ‘there is no need’ or ‘I wish s/he dies’ (*Türk Dil Kurumu Sözlükleri*, n.d.). However, both in Cypriot Turkish and in Cypriot Greek, this phrase means ‘wish not to have done something’ or ‘wish something/someone did not exist’. It is also used to express dissatisfaction or in some cases a curse.

(3) ST *beş tambura⁸ dört okka⁹* – CT *beş dambura dörd ogga* > CG *peš tampúra dort okká*

The above four-word idiom can be translated from Turkish literally as ‘five melons four okkas’. It exists only in Cypriot Turkish and Cypriot Greek and means ‘s/he does not care at all’.¹⁰ It also means ‘(doing something) without properly planning it out beforehand; thoughtless’ (Gezer, 2020). However, according to Gökçeoğlu (2010, p. 347), Turkish Cypriots use the same idiom in order to say, ‘Everything is alright!’. After speaking with both younger and elder Greek and Turkish Cypriots, I determined that they use this idiom ironically for people who do not think and behave logically as well, which renders Gökçeoğlu’s description dubious.

Concluding remarks

The data collected during previous studies on Turkish loanwords in Cypriot Greek summarised above shows that the view that Turkish in Cypriot Greek is “very limited” as claimed by some researchers is invalid. Based on the data above, the diversity that emerges when classifying the Turkish loanwords that have been transferred into Cypriot Greek shows the following: since the island was conquered by the Ottomans in 1571, the Greek Cypriots felt the need to communicate with the Turks because of their living together or side by side. In this context, Greek Cypriots developed the need to acquire Turkish at various levels. Therefore, as a result of language contact with Turkish rulers/neighbours, bilingualism spread throughout the Greek Cypriot population. This phenomenon is attested via hundreds of Turkish loanwords found in literary works written in Cypriot Greek from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. In addition, as a result of the discoveries made by recording the daily conversations of Greek Cypriots in the 1990s, it has been shown that other Turkish loanwords are still in use, along with the ones found in the written texts. In addition, when we look at the types of loanwords in question, the presence of many verbs among them, as well as nouns and adjectives, indicates the influence of Turkish on Cypriot Greek; in other words, its status is much greater than has been thought. Again, the words and phrases borrowed from Turkish that I have come across in the last four years, both during my direct contacts with the Greek Cypriot people in Southern Nicosia and with the Greek Cypriot media, show that the influence of Turkish over Cypriot Greek persists to the present day. In Cyprus, after the partition of the island in 1974, the Turks have been concentrated in the north and the Greeks in the south, and direct contact between the two communities was greatly reduced until the crossing gates were opened in 2003. However, since the opening of the gates, direct contacts, including language contacts, have regained momentum. Thousands of Turkish and Greek Cypriots cross to the other side of the island every day. The main reason for reciprocal crossings is shopping. Turkish Cypriots also travel to the south of the island to benefit from the public services of the republic of Cyprus. Meanwhile, thousands of Turkish Cypriots benefit from employment opportunities in the south. In addition, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots come together due to close links between political and civil organizations. Many bi-communal cultural events are organised. These are contributing to the development of

⁸ A string instrument found throughout the world, similar to a lute (Sesli Sözlük, 2019); the name given in Cypriot Greek to a kind of melon whose shape resembles the musical instrument tambura (Yiangoullis, 2003, p. 69).

⁹ *Oka*, *okka*, or *oke* (Ottoman Turkish *وقفه*) was an Ottoman unit of measurement of mass, equal to 400 dirhems (Ottoman drams). Its value varied, but it was standardized in the late empire as 1.2829 kilograms (Sesli Sözlük, 2019).

¹⁰ For more information, see Papanisiforou, 2004, p. 78.

friendly contacts between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Thus, Greek Cypriots are once again becoming familiar with Turkish. Furthermore, the Republic of Cyprus organises evening classes in Turkish for adults in public schools. It is also worth mentioning that the Association for Bilingualism in Cyprus was established in 2019 by Turkish and Greek Cypriot volunteers (Yenidüzen, 2019), in addition to other similar associations which aimed at contributing towards the mutual learning of Turkish and Greek. As a result of all these factors, Turkish loanwords and idioms which have sunk into oblivion in Cypriot Greek may be reused or become widespread again. In addition, borrowing of new Turkish words into Greek is not excluded. In short, considering the new conditions arising in 2003, there is much work in this field for linguists who will focus on the post-2000 period and conduct more detailed studies on the influence of Turkish on Cypriot Greek.

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The Influence of Turkish on Cypriot Greek

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