| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

Cypriot Arabic: Language Contact and Linguistic Deviations from Mainstream Arabic Norms

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| **ABSTRACT**

I was fascinated when I came to know that there is "Arabic" spoken in Cyprus, which aroused several questions in me as to how this language came into existence, how it is spoken now, what changes to its linguistic modules take place due to language contact with other languages, what its status now is, etc. This article, thus, aims to investigate these questions, focusing mainly on how Cypriot Arabic (CyA) deviates from Mainstream Arabic (MA) varieties in all linguistic modules as a result of the language contact with the dominant language, i.e. Cypriot Greek. Specifically, I investigate CyA linguistic modules: phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon and how language contact leads to deviations from Mainstream Arabic norms. Language decay and death are also investigated. Cypriot Arabic is a dialect of Arabic spoken in Cyprus, having evolved as a purely oral (unwritten) variety in isolation from any written or spoken variety of Arabic after the twelfth century. It is spoken by the Maronite Cypriots who have immigrated mostly from Syria and Lebanon to Cyprus and have inhabited Kormakiti(s) village until the Turkish invasion of the northern part of the Island in 1974 (Borg, 1985; *inter alia*). The main contact CyA has is with (Cypriot) Greek. In this paper, I employ the comparative and analytic approaches to linguistic phenomena under study. Findings indicate that CyA is severely endangered and hence should urgently be documented and revitalized. Thus, this research, to the best of my knowledge, is the first to be conducted by a linguist who is a native speaker of Arabic (with a little knowledge of Greek), and here lies its significance. It provides a reliable investigation and contributes to the existing body of literature on this language variety.

1. Introduction

The Arabic language is spoken in the Arab world and specifically in 22 Arab countries. However, the extent of variation documented between the different Arabic[1] varieties deserves a detailed exploration of each grammar separately and comparatively with the rest of the Arabic linguistic world. Moreover, within each dialect, there are numerous other subdialects, which are usually intelligible to each other.

[1] Some of these varieties are Yemeni Arabic, Egyptian Arabic, Syrian Arabic, Lebanese Arabic, Jordanian Arabic, and so on.

All Arabic-speaking countries use Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) in the press, official use, documentation, etc., but MSA could be said to be confined to educated people. MSA is not used in everyday daily life and communication. The relationship between MSA and modern Arabic vernaculars is diglossic in nature, where MSA represents H(igh) and other modern dialects L(ow) varieties (see also Ferguson, 1959).

In addition, there are also two other social situations where Arabic is spoken. The first is where a country or part of a country houses Muslims, due mainly to reading the Holy Qur'an, and the second is when Arabic-speaking people migrate to any country and hence constitute an Arabic-speaking community. The second phenomenon is the scope of this paper. An example of this aspect is Arabic, spoken in Cyprus, which constitutes a minority language. There are also several cases of Arabic being spoken or considered as a minority language. In this regard, we can point out here examples such as Cypriot (Maronite) Arabic or Cypriot Arabic CyA, Afghani Arabic, Anatolian Arabic, Central African Arabic, South America Arabic, etc. (see also Versteegh, 1997; Thomas, 2000). Cypriot Arabic is considered a peripheral variety of Arabic since it is almost completely isolated from Mainstream Arabic (MA) dialects.

Cypriot Arabic could be viewed as the product of "a unique linguistic and cultural synthesis, drawing on Arabic, Aramaic, and Greek" (Borg, 2004, n. p.). CyA speakers speak Cypriot Arabic at home, with families, relatives and friends, and Greek elsewhere in their daily life situations (Borg, 1985, 1997; Owens, 2006). It is historically important since it gives us a clear picture of how peripheral dialects evolved out of several Arabic dialects. In the case of Cypriot Arabic, the language could be considered a hybrid of several dialects such as Syrian, Lebanese, Iraqi, Maltese, as well as Mesopotamia Arabic dialects. But this is not strange since its speakers belong to these places and who have come in real contact only after being in Cyprus, specifically after their immigration to the Island (see also Borg, 1985).

The approximate number of people speaking the CyA language currently is 800-1000 speakers (Spyros Armostis, p.c.), and their ages are above 40-50 years. There are now about 150-200 speakers in Kormakitis village (Gulle, 2016). According to (Gulle, 2016: 40):

> The language is not spoken by Maronites outside of Kormakitis, except for the Kormakitis Maronites who migrated to cities after 1974. It is, thus, not the language of Cypriot Maronites but the language of Cypriot Maronites from Kormakitis. Obviously, the village of Kormakitis is the centre of Kormakiti Arabic and the culture. Inhabitants trace their roots back to Kur in today's Syria, where their ancestors migrated to Cyprus.

This shows that this language is severely endangered; in studies on CyA conducted four decades or so, the approximate number of speakers was 3000-4000, which importantly shows how the number of CyA speakers is in a gradual decrease. As we will see later on, most of the CyA speakers are now living in the Republic of Cyprus as refugees, especially after the Turkish invasion of northern Cyprus in 1974.

According to Borg (1985: 157), CyA "represents a now superstratally modified variety of a dialectal prototype antedating the present areal configuration obtaining among Arabic-speaking sedentaries in this region" (see also Versgeeh, 2006). Versgeeh (2006: 612) points out that this dialect is an isolated language verity of MA spoken today in the Arab World. Synchronically, according to Versgeeh, CyA displays "considerable superstrate influence from Cypriot Greek, can historically be classified as representing the old sedentary dialects of the Fertile Crescent" (ibid).

Borg investigated CyA in Cyprus between 1979 and 1982 under difficult conditions where "the Turkish authorities would not let him travel freely about the island, and Kormakiti itself was declared off-limits. His interviews had to be confined to refugees living in other parts of the island" (Thomas, 2000, n. p.).

The rest of the article is organized as follows. Section 2 discusses how CyA evolves, its contact with Greek, CyA in research work, and its connection with Arabic varieties spoken in the Levant area, namely Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian varieties of Arabic. Section 3 is devoted to CyA phonology. In this section, several phenomena are shed light on, such as the sound inventory, voicing/devoicing, manner assimilation, palatalization, stress, consonant clustering, etc., and the notable deviations from MA. Section 4 tackles the morphology of CyA and the notable deviations from MA. Section 5 discusses CyA syntax in terms of phrase level, sentence level, negation, etc., and how CyA still retains, to a great extent, Arabic syntax, shedding light on some deviations from Mainstream Arabic norms. Section 6 provides a brief sketch of the CyA lexicon and the influence of Greek on this aspect. Section 7 discusses language decay and death CyA is undergoing. Section 8 concludes the paper, calling for revitalizing CyA and the Government of Cyprus' efforts in this regard.

2. How Cypriot Arabic comes into existence

Versteegh (1997: 145) points out that modern spoken dialects of Arabic are divided into five categories, namely Arabian dialects, Mesopotamian dialects, Syrio-Lebanese dialects, Egyptian dialects and Maghrebi dialects. Thomas (2000) adds that although this categorization could be based on political issues, it may provide a useful point of reference. Thus, CyA comes into existence as a result of (Maronite) Christians' immigrations from Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. These immigrations took place between the 8th and 12th centuries (Borg, 1985, 1994, 1997; Thomas, 2000; Hourani, 2007; Karyolemou, 2018; Gulle, 2016). These immigrants settled in the northern part of the Island, specifically in Kormakiti village. However, after the Turkish invasion of the north of the island, most Arabic-speaking Christians left Kormakiti and dispersed throughout the island. They shifted mainly to different parts of the island under the control of the Republic of Cyprus (see, e.g., Karyolemou, 2018; Gulle, 2016).

There are several linguistic characteristics that suggest that CyA's "medieval antecedent displayed an evolutionary stage chronologically close to the language shift from Aramaic to Arabic" as a result of the Maronites' "early settlement on the island in the 7th century". Thus, it may be said that CyA is "the offshoot of a Medieval Arabic vernacular with a Christian communal imprint concomitant with its speakers' Aramaic ethnic origins and *ḏimmi* status, later evolving in a Greek-speaking cultural milieu" (Borg, 2006: 537). In its evolutionary history, there are many dialects of Arabic that CyA can be compared with, such as Syrian Arabic, Lebanese Arabic, Maltese Arabic, and the Arabic dialect spoken in Central Africa, though these varieties of Arabic have been called by Borg (2006: 537) as "more realistically regarded as autonomous languages rather than simply as 'Arabic dialects'". He argues that these dialects have their own "historical, typological, cultural, and sociolinguistic grounds" different from that of any other language, including Arabic vernaculars (ibid).

CyA seems to have survived in complete isolation from other Arabic dialects spoken in the Arab World today. Given this state of isolation, CyA, like other peripheral Arabic dialects such as Maltese, enters into language contact with Indo-European languages, namely Greek. The latter extensively influence CyA in all linguistic modules: phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, and the most "vulnerable" component is phonology.

There are many characteristics that indicate without doubt that CyA is a language in common with Arabic dialects spoken in Syria, Palestine, Anatolia and Mesopotamia, similar *qeltu* dialect type (Borg, 1985). According to Borg (2006: 536), CyA:

> It is a non-literate vernacular that has been spoken natively in Cyprus for probably well over a millennium and continues to be used by a community of about 1,300 Cypriot Maronites, i.e. the former inhabitants of Kormakiti, or Korucam in Turkish, resettled it in the Greek sector of Nicosia, in Larnaca and Limassol, in the aftermath of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974.

In the following section, the language contact that is documented between CyA and Cypriot Greek is reported.

2.1. Cypriot Arabic and language contact

As noted above, CyA survives in complete isolation from the MA dialects, and since it is spoken in European space, it enters into contact with non-Arabic languages. There are several languages spoken in Cyprus, with a varying degree as to which is more spoken than the other. Modern (Standard) Greek coexists with Cypriot Greek; hence Cyprus is called a digloissic community. Greek is the first official language, the language of formal domains and education. According to Tsoutsouki (2009: 194), CyA speakers are "Greek in public and Maronites at home". The Greek influence on CyA is extensive and manifested in all the linguistic spheres. We will deal with these aspects in detail in the next sections when we tackle the phonological, morphological and syntactic systems of this language. Suffice here is to sketch the possible language contact CyA has witnessed with the languages spoken in Cyprus. Cyprus is considered a multilingual country where several languages are spoken in addition to Greek.

Another language spoken in CyA is Turkish. Turkish is considered the second official language and is spoken primarily in the northern territory, in addition to being the official language in the northern part of the island. Interestingly, there seems to be no/limited influence of Turkish on CyA compared to the extensive influence of Greek on CyA. One reason might be that CyA is spoken by Christians and Turkish by Muslims. Another reason might be related to the political conflict between the Turkish-Cypriot people and the Greek-Cypriot people.

English is spoken widely throughout the island districts. English is taught to Cypriot children beginning in primary schools as part of the Cyprus national curriculum. There are also English-medium private schools in Nicosia and Limassol. However, English has no contact with influencing CyA linguistic system (Walter, 2020).

Russian is also spoken in Cyprus, especially in Limassol, where the Russian community is mainly to be found (see also Karpava, 2020). Again, there is no Russian contact influencing CyA. Armenian is also spoken in Cyprus but to a small extent compared to the languages mentioned above. It is worth mentioning here that CyA is more similar to Levantine Arabic, i.e. Arabic dialects spoken in the Levant, such as Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian, than other Arabic dialects like Maltese (cf. Tsiapera, 1969). Tsiapera

contends that CyA is, to a great extent, similar to these dialects (but see Borg, 1985, 1994, for a different view). Borg is of the view that CyA has witnessed significant influence from the Aramaic language. However, we believe that CyA has a linguistic system heavily common with Levantine Arabic varieties.

As noted so far, CyA has been an isolated language variety from Mainstream Arabic varieties; there is no contact between CyA and modern spoken varieties of Arabic. Although there is an Arab community in Cyprus which is represented by Arabic-speaking refugees from several Arab countries, including Egypt, Syria, Iraq, etc., there is very little, if any, contact between these Arabic varieties and CyA. One reason might be that CyA speakers live in different locations all over the country. Another reason could be that CyA is, to some extent, unintelligible, mainly because of the influence of Greek phonology and loan words from the Greek language. According to Borg (1997: 220), CyA has developed "in complete isolation from the normative influences of vernacular and literary Arabic, this erstwhile Arabic vernacular today represents one of the most evolved offshoots of peripheral Arabic described to date."

Thus, it seems that the only language that CyA is in extensive contact with is Greek, be it Standard or Cypriot Greek. Moreover, CyA is not used in any educational, legal, or formal communicative settings.

2.2. Cypriot Arabic in research works

The most extensive research work dedicated to this language vernacular was conducted by Borg, namely (Borg, 1985, 2004, 2006). According to Borg (2006: 536), the first record of CyA "occurs in a 13th-century Arabic work entitled *Kitāb as-simat fi ʔasmaʔ an-nabat* (Treatise on the characteristics of plant names) by Izz ad-Din Abu Ishaq ibn Muhammad ibn Tarxan as-Suwaydi (1204–1292)". As cited in (Borg, 2006: 536), the first mention of CyA was by Beaudouin (1884) in a survey of the language situation in Cyprus. The second mention is by Storrs (1930) who referred to CyA as "a bastard Arabic mixed with Greek".

Some of the first notable studies which drew attention to CyA as a language variety are Newton (1964) and Tsiapera (1969). Newton, for instance, states that the Arabic variety:

> Spoken in Cyprus by the Maronite (Lebanese Catholic) community of Kormakiti... that seem[s] to have migrated to the island in 1191 after the capture of Beirut by Saladin; 2,752 (according to the 1960 census), retain to this day their religion, but only the 1,115 inhabitants of Kormakiti their language. (p.43)

Newton's main purpose in his article is to answer the question: "Is this a mixed language?" His study involves data consisting of 630 words and phrases on which he conducted his analysis. He provides a brief account of CyA and its linguistic system, i.e. phonology, morphology and syntax, and the similarities and differences between CyA and (Cypriot) Greek. He ultimately describes CyA as a language in which words of Arabic "origin retain the full morphological apparatus of Arabic while those of Cypriot-Greek … origin appear exactly as they do in the mouths of monolingual speakers of the Greek dialect" (p. 43). He finds that 38% of the 630 words he collected are of Greek origin, which clearly shows the influence of Greek on CyA.

The second study was conducted by Tsiapera (1969), who strived to provide an account of this language variety. As she describes her study, "[t]he materials upon which this study is based were collected over a period of six months residence in Cyprus. Informants ranged in age from eighteen to eighty-two". Tsiapera's work on CyA was completed in 1969, i.e. before the Turkish invasion of the northern part of the island in 1974. This gives her work the advantage of being able to visit Kormakiti village (and some other areas) and freely meet her informants.

Tsiapera studies CyA and provides a brief sketch of its linguistic system. She tries to compare CyA to (Cypriot) Greek, starting by describing the phonological system of CyA, pinpointing how it works and how much influence it receives from Greek (see Tsiarera, 1969: 14-24). In particular, she describes processes such as palatalization, aspiration, gemination, phonemic and allophonic processes, voicing and devoicing, etc. Stress and syllabification have also been described in this work. In phonetics, she mainly describes the distribution of consonants and vowels, providing a somehow detailed account of the sound distribution and the contexts in which they occur and where they do not (p. 25-30).

Tsiapera then moves to describe the morphophonemic changes arguing that there are two types of morphophonemic changes, namely phonologically conditioned and morphologically conditioned. Focusing on the former, Tsiapera provides four examples of this phonologically conditioned change, viz., regressive assimilation, progressive assimilation, partial assimilation and assimilation by loss. As for a morphologically conditioned change in CyA, she focuses on processes such as verb conjugations in tier formats such as $C_1C_2VC_3VC_4$, $C_1C_2C_3VC_4$, $C_1C_2C_3VC_3C_4$, etc. (for a full list of these tiers, see Tsiapera, 1969: 32-34).

Tsiapera argues that the CyA verb consists of a stem and a pronominal affix. Prefixes, suffixes or infixes "serve to indicate the person, number and gender of the verb form. There are three persons, two numbers and two genders" (ibid). She also describes aspect and tense in CyA, perfective and imperfective forms of verbs. She provides four classes of verbs based on a number of rules of sequences of consonants and vowels in roots, stems and affixes.

Tsiapera also dedicates some space to describe nouns and cases of nouns in CyA, providing classification rules and pointing out the different types of nouns and their inflections for person, number, gender and definiteness. She concludes with a brief sketch of particles in CyA. These particles are "lexical units which are never inflected" (ibid). These particles, as Tsiapera argues, are prepositions, negative and relative particles, and conditional, interrogative and connective conjunctions.

Borg (1985) is a field study conducted by Borg in some parts of and around Nicosia City. His native language is Maltese, and his interest "was initially aroused by a passing remark in (Roth, 1975: fn. 1) to the effect that the inhabitants of Kormakiti claim understand Maltese and the theme of a doctoral dissertation I completed in October 1978" (Borg, 1985: vii). His informants were refugees from Kormakiti who were then residing in the Greek sector of Nicosia. This study is supplied with a large portion of transcribed materials in Latin scripts, translating these materials from CyA into English.

Borg (1985) remains "the most extensive and detailed linguistic description of Cypriot Arabic to date and addresses phonology and morphology principally but also provides specimen folk texts in transcription with English translations" (Borg, 2006: 536).

Roth (2004) is another study that has investigated CyA linguistic system. Roth points out the changes this system has undergone under the influence of Modern Greek language. As for phonology, Roth states that "[l]a stabilité du système phonologique de [(CyA)] est fondée sur sa convergence avec le système de [(Greek)]" (The stability of the phonological system of CyA is based on its convergence with the system of Greek). Regarding morphology, again Roth emphasizes the influence of Greek on CyA morphological system. He mentions borrowing as an example stating that "La majorité des emprunts concernait les formes nominales et les mots outils…[(CyA)] ne créait plus de mots, il empruntait mais n'intégrait pas les emprunts" (The majority of the borrowings concerned nominal forms and tool words… CyA did not create words anymore, it borrowed but it did not integrate these borrowings". As for syntax, Roth states that "[l]a syntaxe représente un secteur de la langue particulièrement perméable aux interférences avec le grec" (The syntax represents a sector of the language which is particularly susceptible to interference with Greek). However, I do not agree with Roth in this aspect since CyA syntax retains and still maintains, to a great extent Arabic syntax, as we will see in this article.[2]

Gulle (2016) studies CyA, shedding light on the fact that this language variety is undergoing language decay and death. According to Gulle (2016), the severally endangered status of CyA is "not only due to its low number of speakers but more importantly because younger Maronites with their roots in Kormakitis do not acquire Kormakiti Arabic naturally any more" (p. 38). Gulle presents evidence of CyA language decay and death, including a lack of any marking for directive and locative and borrowing the verb *ela* 'to come' from Greek. We will elaborate more on this aspect in section 7.

Karyolemou (2018) addresses how the loss of land leads to the loss of the language of the community that lives on that land. She also addresses how "land is perceived in relation to identity and how political and social changes might affect speakers' perception of what they conceive as "their" land" (p. 14). Karyolemou (2019) extends her investigation to explain the current sociolinguistic situation of the Cypriot Maronite community. In this article, she also reports recent efforts to revitalize, document and codify CyA. She points out that there were several Maronite nongovernmental Organizations, such as *Kermia Jtite* and *Xki Fi Sanna*, which were established in 2005 and 2006, respectively. These organizations tried to appeal to the government of Cyprus "to grant official recognition and protection to C[y]A" (p. 2).

2.3. Connection of CyA with Arabic dialects
Moreover, there is some sort of connection between CyA and Syrian, Lebanese and Mesopotamian dialects of Arabic. Borg (1985) provides some similarities CyA has in common with these dialects, such as the phenomenon of "inclination" or *imala* in the medial vowel "a", The "vowel shift" in the medial /*a*/ is a feature CyA shares with the mainland dialects, especially the Jewish and Christian dialects of Baghdad (Borg, 1985: 155-158). However, this is not surprising simply because CyA has evolved from these dialects.

As far as Standard Arabic is concerned, there seems to be no connection between it and CyA in that CyA speakers cannot speak Standard Arabic. Tsiapera (1969: 1) reports that none of the CyA speakers she interviewed could read and write Standard Arabic.

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[2] Note that the English translation provided for the French quotes is mine.

Borg (1994: 42-43) provides three substantial factors contributing to the historical development of CyA and to its estrangement from the contemporary Arabic dialect family:

a) Geographical and cultural isolation from the Arab countries and absence of direct contact with classical and vernacular Arabic; a striking consequence of this *Abstand* is the non-existence of the Arabic form of diglossia in the M[altese] CyA speech communities;

b) A long history of language contact has substantially transformed these vernaculars, rendering them unintelligible to native Arabic speakers;

c) Linguistic acculturation predominantly to one specific foreign language area, yielding a *Sprachbund* relationship with it. (Southern Italian in the case of M, Cypriot Greek in that of CyA)

3. Phonology

In this section, I attempt a descriptive analysis of the CyA phonological system and how CyA has undergone vast and radical changes due to language contact with Greek, which makes it different from Mainstream Arabic, specifically Syrian and Lebanese Arabic. According to Borg (1985, 1997), CyA has the sound inventory in Figure (1) below:

Figure (1): Cypriot Arabic segmental paradigm (Borg, 1985: 11)

As Figure (1) illustrates, CyA has 25 phonemes, 18 of which are consonants and 7 vowels. This inventory is very much similar to the Greek sound inventory system (see also Borg 1997, 2004, 2006). We notice here that CyA sound/phonemic system has undergone substantial changes. First, regarding stops, there are only three stops in CyA, hence the absence of /b, d and g/. There are also 9 fricatives, 2 nasals, 1 lateral, 1 approximant and 1 sim-vowel. If we compare this inventory to the MA sound inventory, which has 37 phonemes, 29 of which are consonant, and 8 vowels (+long vowels), we find that the CyA sound inventory is actually a reduced inventory of the Mainstream Arabic vernaculars. This is actually a direct result of language contact with Greek (see also Borg, 1985, 1994). Compare and contrast Figure (1) with Table (1) below (see also Watson, 2002):

Table (1): MA Consonant inventory

	Labial	Dental	Denti-/alveolar	P.alv./Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Stops	b		t d	ṭ ḍ	k g	Q		ʔ
Affricates				(d)ʒ				
Fricatives	f	θ ð	s z ṣ	ð̣ˤ	š	x ɣ	ħ, ʕ	h
Nasals	m		n					
Approximants			l		j	w		
Trills			r					

In addition, the phonological changes cover several aspects, such as sounds (consonants and vowels), clustering, etc. For example, Table (2) below presents a sample of voicing/devoicing of some CyA consonants (cf. Borg, 1997, 1985; Owens, 2006).

Table (2): Voicing/devoicing of CyA consonants with their MA equivalents

Mainstream Arabic	CyA
b	p
ħ	x
w	f/v
d	t
ṭ	t
ḍ	ð
ṣ	s
q	k
ɣ	ʕ
h	x

Moreover, vowel sounds in CyA have also undergone a change. To give just an example, consider the vowel changes in the MA verb *kataba* 'He wrote', which becomes *kidep*. Consonant changes aside, in this very example, we can observe several vowel changes. The first /a/ becomes /i/, the second *a/* becomes /e/ and the third /a/ deletes completely. CyA has also lost the emphatic consonants, viz., *ṣ, ḍ, ž* and *ṭ* as well as ð̣ˤ (Borg, 1985, 1997).

Another feature is the addition of the /k/ sound before /y/, which has been attributed to the substantial influence of Greek. As noted by Borg (1997: 226), the phonological system of CyA is complex as deriving "simultaneously from its alignment with the Greek sound system". As Borg puts it specifically:

> The intricate character of CyA phonology when contrasted with the transparency of most other colloquial Arabic sound systems. Thus, no mainstream Arabic dialect investigated so far displays a comparable degree of complexity in its phonetic treatment of underlying stop segments. As I noted in Borg (1985: 6), the complexity of CyA phonology derives simultaneously from its alignment with the Greek sound system in the realm of phonotactics and from its obvious lack of isomorphy with Greek in the domain of root structure (CyA and Greek being genetically unrelated languages) (pp. 225-226).

3.1. Manner dissimilation

As a manifestation of the change that emerged in CyA, there is also a change in the manner of dissimilation. According to Borg (1997: 224), manner dissimilation in CyA behaves like that of Cypriot Greek and Standard Greek in general, "biconsonantal stop clusters in CyA are subject to a manner dissimilation constraint (both diachronic and synchronic) replacing the first stop by its corresponding fricative (cf. Greek. /nixta/ < nikta 'night') (Borg, 1997: 224):

CyA   **MA**

/xtilt/   'you (masc.sg.) killed'   ‹= |ktilt| *qtilt*

/fkum/ 'I get up'   ‹= |pkum| *baqu:m*

Borg argues that "[t]he unmarked character of "fricative + stop" CC clusters in CyA occasionally also yields secondary occlusivization of underlying or historical spirants: /xtir/ 'much', MA /kaθi:r/.

3.2. Palatalization and occlusivization of /y/

Another phonological phenomenon that has been noted by Borg is that CyA velar segments /k/ and /x/ undergo automatic palatalization (here indicated by an apostrophe) before the historical and/or underlying front vowels /i/ and /e/ and the palatal glide /y/" (Borg, 1997: 224):

CyA		**MA**
[k'ilp]	'dog'	*kalb*
[k'el]	'he ate'	*ke:l < akal*
[x'irep]	'he left'	*hirib*
[x'ar]	'cucumbers'	*xya:r*
[pk'ut]	'houses'	*byu:t*

There is an interesting phonetic phenomenon in the last example [pk'ut] 'houses', which is *byu:t* in MA, where the "epenthetic velar stop [k] is inserted in clusters consisting of obstruent + palatal glide". This phonetic process is carried over from Greek. Consider also the following examples where the process applies (Borg, 1997: 224).

CyA		**MA**
pkyara	'wells'	*bya:ra*
apkyaδ	'white (masc.sg.)'	*abyaḍ*
θkyep	'clothes'	*θye:b*

Observe now the morphophonemic spirantization of the velar and labial stops before /t/ in the CyA root {k-t-p} (< OA *kataba* 'he wrote') (Borg, 1997: 226):

CyA		
kitep	'he wrote'	<= |kitip|
xtuft	'I wrote'	<=|ktupt|
paxtop| 'I write'	<=|paktop|

All voiced stops change to voiceless; compare the CyA to Classical/Standard Arabic (CA). Thus, like the Greek dialect family, CyA displays the "classic" stop series, /p/, /t/, and /k/; these are voice-indifferent and derive historically in the following fashion (Borg, 1997: 228):

CyA	**CA/MA**
p	< b
t	< t, ṭ, d
k	< k, q

Examples:

CyA		CA/MA
pirek	'it flashed (lightning).'	*baraq*
Tute	'mulberry tree'	*tūta*
Tute	'worm'	*dūda*
tar	'he turned round.'	*daār*
tar	'it flew'	*ṭār*
Kiser	'he broke'	*kasar*
Kitel	'he killed'	*qatal*

Another phonological aspect of CyA is related to the long CA vowel /ā/ (or /a/), which becomes a short /a/, /e/ and /i/ in CyA, as the following examples show. This is, in fact, an example of the *imala* 'shift' occurring in Baghdadi and Aleppo dialects (see also Borg, 2004: 28-35):

Imala	CyA		CA/MA
a ➔ i	*kibš*	'ram'	*kabš*
	š*ims*	'sun'	**š***ams*
ā➔ e	*klep*	'dogs'	*kilāb*
	rex	'going [masc.]'	*rāyiħ*
	pkyeter	'threshing- floors'	*bayādir*
	znepil	'baskets'	*zanābil*
	nes	'People'	*nās*
	žež	'hens'	*dažāž*
ā➔ a	*pan*	'he seemed'	*bān*
	klam	'words'	*kalām*
	xlave	'sweetness'	*ħalāwa*
	mat	'he died'	*māt*

Another notable phonetic phenomenon in CyA is the complete absence of an emphatic series in CyA, the CA/MA velarized consonants having been fused with their plain counterparts:

CyA		CA/MA
pasal	'onions'	*baṣal*
kasel	'laziness'	*kasal*
Katt	'cat'	*qiṭṭ*
Peda	'egg'	*bayḍa*
Iδn	'ear'	*uδn*

In addition, the CyA voiced pharyngeal fricative /ʕ/ is completely foreign to Greek. Although Arabic varieties have both /ɣ/ and /ʕ/, CyA has only /ʕ/, it also seems that /ʕ/ replaces or substitutes /ɣ/, as the following examples demonstrate:

CyA		MA
ʕata	'lid'	*ɣiṭa:ʔ*
ʕatta	'he covered'	*ɣaṭṭa*

In the above examples, /ʕ/ replaces /ɣ/, as can be clearly observed from the Arabic equivalents of the sound /ʕ/. This is also striking since Greek has /ɣ/. /ʕ/ also retains its voiced pharyngeal fricativeness in examples like *ʕadda* 'he bit her'. [3]

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[3] As noted in Borg (1997: 227) it is striking to find "the voiced uvular fricative ɣ" absent in CyA "… given the presence of Greek /ɣ/. This latter factor would seem to suggest that the loss of this segment was a substratally inherited trait antedating linguistic contact with Greek."

Regarding the Arabic /*h*/, it has been almost lost in CyA, becoming /x/ as in *šipex* 'resembling'.[4] Another important aspect is an ellipsis of the semivowel /w/ in the imperfect inflection of the Cypriot Arabic verb *sava*, *pisay* 'to make' < **sawwa*, **bisawwi*: *psay*, *pitsay*, *pisay* 'I make, you make, he makes', etc.

To conclude this section, it is worth noting that there are three paradigmatic shifts in CyA, as noted by Borg (2006: 539). These are:

a)   Reduction in points of articulation along the back of the vocal tract arising from the unconditioned fusion of three Classical Arabic consonant pairs: ʕ and ɣ, ħ and *x*, and *k* and *q* into Cypriot Arabic: ʕ, *x*, and *k* respectively;

b)   fusion of historical emphatics with their plain counterparts;

c)   Absolute neutralization of the historical voicing contrast in stops (via contact with Greek) yielding in Cypriot Arabic a set of three voice indifferent stop segments: /p, t, and k/: /payt/ 'house', /tayn/ 'debt', and /kilp/ 'dog' < Classical Arabic *bayt*, *dayn*, and *kalb,* respectively.

3.3. Stress in CyA

In this section, I provide a brief account of stress in CyA. According to Tsiapera (1969), the stress in CyA is placed on different syllables depending on the word class of the word. In the following examples, the placement of stress changes according to the meaning as in:

maʕík 'deep'
màʕak 'yours' (masc.)

Tsiapera (1969: 16) provides the following rules of stress placement in CyA:

1) all long vowels carry stress

2) the final syllable of words ending in VCC carries stress as in:
raxímt   'I blessed.'

mindàxt 'downstairs'

3) Primary stress on the antepenult is infrequent but unpredictable, as in:

núṣuxar 'noon' (literally: half of a day')

kúzubra 'coriander'

4) primary stress most commonly falls on the penult as in:

yabàtak   'your (masc.) father.'

In words consisting of a verbal nucleus, the stress is placed on the first syllable "even when heavy syllables intervene closer to the final word boundary" as in the following examples (from Borg, 2006: 540):

ʕížipna	'we liked it.'
tàxakilla	'he cheated her.'
šàttimna	'he abused us.'
tlàxitna	'the three of us.'
síttiṭkon	'the six of them.'
xàlluon	'leave them!' (as opposed to *xallùon* 'they left them')

As pointed out by Borg (2006), these stress patterns are "comparable stress assignment rule typifying certain varieties of Neo-Aramaic". In this aspect, Borg cites Jastrow (1997: 353), stating that "collocations of two, rarely three words which are closely bound

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[4] However, /h/ retains its Arabic features in other phonological contexts such *hiyya* 'she' and *huwwa* 'he'.

syntactically can form stress groups … In stress groups, the second word loses its stress, and the main stress of the collocation comes to be on the last syllable of the first word".

Another case of stress in CyA is the stress placed on the determiner phrases with *kull* 'every' where stress is placed on the determiner as in (ibid):

CyA   **MA**
kùyyom 'every day'   *kull yawm*
kùlsaʕa 'every hour' *kull saʕa*

3.4. Gemination and consonant clustering in CyA
As for gemination, CyA retains its Arabic patterning and is sometimes influenced by Greek. Gemination patterns where Greek appears to influence CyA are examined below (from Borg, 1985: 17):[5]
Word-initially ➔ *kkilp*, 'the dog', *ddeʕa* 'to the village.'

Word-medially   ➔ *kiddás* 'mass', *šatta* 'it rained' *kapper* he buried' *mnyeššar* 'abandoned.'

However, there are certain gemination patterns such as the "opposition *tt: dd* as completely foreign to Greek phonology, where only the following simplex: geminate contrasts obtain in the dental and interdental classes" as in the following examples (from Borg, 1997: 235) (see also Newton 1972: 32-35, for more on this aspect in Cypriot Greek):

kiddás 'Mass'

šatta   'it rained.'

kapper   'he buried.'

As for consonant clustering in CyA, we will study it by comparing it to Modern Standard Arabic. MSA (and CL as well) has the following rules of consonant clustering (cf. Watson, 2002, see also Shormani, 2009, for Yemeni Arabic):

1. No initial clustering

2. Word-medial clustering: only up to two consonants can be clustered.

   qidruh 'his pot', *yaktub(u)* 'he is writing'

3. Word-final clustering: only up to two consonants can be clustered

   kalb 'dog', *žamʕ* 'sum.'

However, in CyA, consonant clustering is formed according to the following rules (adopted from Borg, 1985: 93, and Tsiapera, 1969: 26-30)

1. Initial clustering:

        i) two CC   ➔ *klam*   'speech.'

        ii) three CCC   ➔ *pkyeter*   'threshing floors.'

2. Word-medial clustering:

        i) two consonants can be clustered ➔ *xtufto* 'I wrote it', *tišfey* 'hours.'

        ii) three CCC can be clustered ➔ *razzʕe*   'to return.'

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[5] In word-initial position, "the native CyA lexicon generally include a morphemic or lexical boundary and tend to cooccur with certain grammatical processes, e.g., marking for definiteness by means of the article /l/, which in CyA completely assimilates to most initial consonants (Borg, 1997: 233):
ddist   'the dish'
ddayn   'the debt'
ttimm   'the blood'
ttik   'the rooster'

3. Word-final clustering up to three CCC can be clustered ➔ *pifazzʕ 'to frighten.'*

(see also Tsiapera, 1969: 26-30 for more on CyA clustering patterns).

Note that the consonant clusters found in CyA are also to be found in Mainstream Arabic varieties such as Sana'ani Arabic (see Watson, 2002) and Ibbi Arabic (see Shormani, 2019).[6]

4. Syntax
As far as syntax is concerned, CyA retains a somehow Arabic syntax. With most research on CyA focusing on phonology, morphology and lexicon, CyA syntax has been left uninvestigated, with the exception of Newton (1964), who provides a brief descriptive sketch of CyA syntax. He points out some syntactic characteristics of this dialect, including the syntactic behavior of verbs and noun phrases. Newton concludes that there is some sort of Greek influence on CyA syntax as a result of language contact between the two languages.

Thus, in this section, we will attempt a detailed account of CyA syntax. Our data depend heavily on our own observations, eliciting examples from different sources. Due to our knowledge of Arabic syntax, we will point out how and in which aspect CyA maintains Arabic syntax and where the changes occur as a result of the language contact CyA has with Greek. We will limit our discussion on CyA syntax to two levels, viz., phrase level and sentence level.

4.1. Phrase level
At the phrase level, we will mainly focus on noun phrases in CyA and their internal structure. To begin with, let's consider the behaviour of genitive constructions in CyA. Consider (1) below (cf. Roth, 2004: 57, Newton, 1964: 48).

(1) *p-payt   tèl-i*
     the-house GEN-my
     'My house'

(1) is a genitive construction in which the definite article *al-* 'the' may well be said to be assimilated into /p/, the first consonant of the noun *bayt* 'house', which in turn has undergone a devoicing process from /b/ into /p/. (1) gives us a clue about how genitive constructions are formed in CyA. CyA makes use of the genitive marker *tèl* (roughly 'of'), which is different from MA genitive markers such as the Syrian *taʕ,* Palestinian *tabaʕ,* Iraqi *mal,* Egyptian *bitaaʕ,* Yemeni *ħaqq,* Lebanese *taʕ,* etc. (see Qarabesh and Shormani, 2018). Thus, it seems that this genitive marker belongs to CyA *per se*. Moreover, it cannot be traced to Greek because Greek has different genitive markers: *tou, tis, twn.* In addition, CyA also utilizes a special genitive *l-* specially with kinship terms, as shown in (2):

(2) *yapatu l-yorko*
   father   of- George
  'George's father'

In fact, possessive constructions like (2) are actually used in present-day Lebanese and Syrian Arabic, as shown in (3):

(3) *yabtu   l-xalil*
   father   of-Khalil
  'Khalil's father'

So, what could be said here is that CyA seems to retain this particular structure, taking into account that this language variety is evolved from these dialects. Note that this structure does not exist in any other Arabic variety like Egyptian, Gulf, Yemeni, Moroccan, etc. These structures are similar to construct state in Arabic, a structure expressing possessiveness (see, e.g. Shormani, 2016a &b, 2017a).

An example of a syntactic change in CyA, i.e. a deviation from MA syntax, can be observed in (4) (cf. Roth, 2004: 72).

(4) *l-oxt-i   li-xpíre*
    the-sister-my   the-old

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[6] Sana'ani Arabic is a variety of Yemeni Arabic spoken in Sana'a (the capital of Yemen). This variety is studied and investigated by Janet Watson in several works, the most notable of which is the book entitled *A Syntax of San'ani Arabic*. Ibbi Arabic is also a variety of Yemeni Arabic spoken in Ibb governorate.

'My old sister'

In this example, CyA seems to retain the word order of MA. However, there is a deviation from the MA norm here. In MA, there is a complementary distribution between the definite article *(a)l-* 'the' and the genitive pronoun *–i* 'my'. In other words, the definite article and the genitive pronoun cannot co-occur; hence (4) is ungrammatical in MA varieties.

Another syntactic change is with regard to the word order in the noun phrase in CyA. Consider (5) (from Newton, 1964: 47).

(5) a. *li   kpir   pait*
       'the   big   house.'

    b. *l   òxre   žùmaʕ*
       'the next   week

The deviation here lies in the fact that the attributive adjectives *kpir* 'big' in (5a) and *òxre* 'next' in (5b) are used prenominally, which is not the case in MA varieties. This could also be contrasted with Lebanese Arabic noun phrase Lebanese as in (6):

(6) *il   bet   l   kbir*
   the   house   the   big
   'The big house'

This change can be ascribed to Greek influence, as the equivalent phrase in Greek in (7) indicates:

(7) *to   megalo   spiti*
   the   big   house
   'The big house'

However, as we have seen in this section, the deviation from MA syntax and, of course, the Greek influence on CyA is less compared to phonology, for instance.

4.2. Sentence level
At the sentence level, CyA seems to retain MA syntactic properties. Take, for example, the *pro*-drop property, as is clear from (8a) (Borg, 1997: 233) and (8b) (Owens, 2006: 252).

(8) a. *ʕadda*
       he.bit.her
       'He bit her.'

    b. *šift-ik*
       I.saw-you
       'I saw you.'

We can also observe other syntactic phenomena in (8a & b). For example, as is clear in these examples, CyA seems to retain MA clitic incorporation. Clitic incorporation is a syntactic process specific to MA varieties. Thus, in (8a), in addition to *pro* drop, the object clitic *-(h)a* 'her' is cliticized to the verb *ʕadd* 'bit'. In (8b), the clitic *-ik* 'you' is also attached to/incorporated onto the verb *šift* 'saw'.

Another syntactic phenomenon CyA has retained from MA is subject-verb agreement. Consider the following examples:

(9) a. *l filo   teli   za*
    the friend.3.MS of.me   came.3.MS
    'My friend came.'

  b. *l filenaδa   saiti   zet*
    the girlfriend.3FS   of.me   came.3.MF
    'My girlfriend came.'

In (9a), for instance, we observe that the subject *l filo* 'the friend' agrees in all φ-features (person, number and gender) with the verb *za* 'came'. In (9b), we also find that the subject *l filenaδa* 'the girlfriend' agrees with the verb *zet* 'came' in all φ-features. Greek also manifests strict subject-verb agreement, but since both MA and Greek have this agreement, one cannot ascribe this phenomenon in CyA as a result of Greek influence.

In CyA, as in all MA vernaculars, sentential word order can be SVO or VSO, as the examples in (10) illustrate:

(10) a. *peldti   ufa*
          'the.customer   paid
          'The customer has paid.'

    b. *ufa   peldti*
        paid   the.customer
        'The customer has paid.'

    c. *(ana) psalli   l   efimeriδa*
        (I)   read   the   newspaper
        'I am reading the newspaper.'

In (10a), for instance, the word order is SVO. In (10b), it is VSO (cf. Shormani, 2015). In (10c), we find that the use of the first person pronoun *ana* 'I' is optional, as it is the case in all MA vernaculars (and in Greek as well).

4.2.1. Negation in CyA
Sentential negation in CyA takes several forms. These will be briefly discussed in what follows: the first case we will deal with is negation with the negative particle *lā*. Consider (11) (from Roth, 2004: 71).

(11)   *lā   ti-tixku*
        NEG   2-talk.PL
        'Don't talk!'

A notable change in CyA syntax can be observed in sentential negation, as (12) shows (cf. Owens, 2006: 253). [7]

(12)   *šāf-ū-hu-š*
        saw-they-him-NEG
        'They didn't see him.'

In (12), it is clear that, though CyA retains MA other syntactic features, CyA does not make use of the preverbal negative marker *ma*; it only retains the post-verbal negative marker, namely -*š*. However, there are also some negative constructions where the MA negative marker *ma* co-occurs with the negative Greek *me*. Compare and contrast the CyA example in (13a) with the Greek (13b) (taken from Borg, 1985: 149). [8]

(13) a. *ma-pišrap   me   pira   me   mpit*
        NEG-drink.IMPF.1S   NEG   beer   NEG   wine
        'I don't drink either beer or wine.'

    b. *em-pinno   me   piran   me   krasin*
        PROG-drink.PRS.1S   NEG   beer.acc   NEG   wine.acc
        'I don't drink either beer or wine.'

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[7] Note that Newton (1964: 49) points out that the "negative of [CyA] verbs is *ma*, of [Greek] verbs *én*)" but he does not provide examples for this use.

[8] Note that the example in (13) shows that the CyA uses "the native *ma* negation morpheme concurrently with Greek *me...me*. In this case, phonetic similarity may have aided the adoption of *me*" (Walter, 2020: 169). As pointed out by Walter, it is not at all clear "whether all or most of this is simply code-switching and whether it should be termed syntactic rather than lexical influence."

4.2.2. Use of Greek copula είναι 'be.'

Another notable deviation from MA can be noticed in CyA in using or adding the copula είναι 'be' in equational constructions. Adding this Greek copula is only in plural and feminine constructions as in (14b) and (14c), respectively (slightly modified from Newton, 1964: 48):

(14)   a. *li   xmar   kbir*
            the donkey   big
            'The donkey is big.'

        b. *li xmir   eine   kbar*
            the donkey.3PL.M   be.3.PL.M   big
            'The donkeys are big.'

        c. *li   xmara   e   kbire*
            the donkey.F   3.SF   big.F
            'The donkey is big.'

The Greek copula also occurs in constructions involving Greek nouns and adjectives, as shown in the following examples (Newton, 1964: 48):

(15) a. *li   tsaera e   anapaftici*
        the chair   be3.SF   comfortable
        'The chair is comfortable.'

    b. *li   tsaeres aine   anapaftices.*
        the chairs   are   comfortable
        'The chairs are comfortable.'

Borg (1985) also reports similar constructions involving the Greek copula as in (16) (from Borg, 1985: 134):

(16) a. *l-iknise   e   maftux-a*
        def-church   be.3.SF   open.F
        'The church is open.'

    b. *p-pkyara   aine   maʕak*
        def-well.PL   be.3.PL   deep.PL
        'The wells are deep.'

In (16a), CyA seems to develop a copula construction which involves the Greek copula, namely *e* in the singular form corresponding to the third person feminine pronoun 'she' (*hiya* in CyA). In (b), the copula *enne* in is the plural form corresponding to the third-person plural pronoun 'they' (*humma* or *hunna* in CyA). This amounts to the fact that CyA is heavily influenced by Greek in these constructions where the copula είναι is obligatory in present tense (see also Borg, 1985; Walter, 2020).

4.2.3. Modals in CyA

Modals in CyA can be formed with the particle *fi* + enclitic pronoun', which means 'to be able'. For instance, *fini* 'I can". Here, *fini* consists of the modal particle *fi* + the first person enclitic *-ni*. This modal construction can also be found in questions as in (17).

(17) *fik   tsaʕedni?*
    in.you   help.me
    'Can you help me?'

Thus, other modals can be formed, such as *fik* 'you (masc. sing) can', *fikum* 'you (masc.pl) can', *fihum* 'they (masc) can', etc. This modal construction is found in today's Lebanese and Syrian Arabic (see also Borg, 1985, 2006: 540).

The last syntactic aspect that can be tackled here concerns distinguishing the direct object in double object constructions in CyA. Consider the example in (18) (modified from Borg, 2006: 540):

(18) *ràkʕalla   ll-ie*
   he.hit.it   to-her
   'He hit her.' (Lit: 'he gave her a hit')

In (18), CyA "implements direct object marking by means of the proclitic particle *l-*, for instance, before an emphatic pronoun", namely *-i.e.* 'her' (Borg, 2006: 540).

5. Morphology
In this section, we discuss the salient morphological traits of CyA. According to Versteegh et al. (2006: 612), CyA

Shares a number of salient traits with the southeastern branch of the Anatolian *qeltu* dialects, among them, *-n* in the suffixed personal pronoun of the 2nd and 3rd pers. pl. com.; use of copulas derived from independent personal pronouns; use of reflexes of *ħattā*, as a verb modifier marking the future tense; use of genitive exponents derived from * *ḍayl*; and dropping of *h* in personal and demonstrative pronouns.[9]

As is clear in this excerpt, CyA morphological system shares many traits common to Mainstream Arabic vernaculars, from which it has evolved, as we have noted so far. CyA shares some other features such as "the *b(i)-* non-contingency marker in the inflection of the imperfect; retention of reflexes of *ta marbuta* in numerical constructs; reflexes of **hunna*, **-kun*, **-hun*; and a genitive marker harking back to *šayʔat-*" (ibid).

Let us begin with the definite article (*a*)*l* and its assimilated forms/allomorphs and how it occurs depending on the contextual environment. It occurs as *li* before clusters as in (19). (Note that all the examples in (19-21) are taken from Newton (1964: 47):

(19) a. *li   skopò*
     'the   aim'

  b. *li   txin*
    'the flour'

It occurs as *l* before vowels and *p, f, m,* as the following examples demonstrate:

(20) a. *l efimeriδa*
     'the newspaper'

  b. *l pènna*
    'the pen'

  c. *l fillo*
     'the leaf'

  d. *l molivi*
    'the pencil'

However, the definite article *(a)l* undergoes complete assimilation before *t, c, k,* s, š, y, *n* as in (21):

(21) a. *ttimi*
     'the.price'

  b. *ccipru*
    'the.Cyprus'
  c. *ssasos*
     'the.wood'

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[9] "*Qeltu* Arabic is a variety of Mesopotamian Arabic spoken north of the Hamrin Mountains in Iraq, in western Iran, northern Syria, and in southeastern Turkey" (Wikipedia)

Another morphological feature, according to Borg (1985: 158), is that CyA is directly connected with medieval dialects of Arabic, as in the case of the connection to Baghdadi Arabic. Borg argues that CyA manifests a Baghdadi feature "in gender markings on suffixed pronouns, and long and short forms of the number "one", which indicates that perhaps CyA "is a survival of the medieval Arabic dialects spoken in the urban centers of the Near East, especially Baghdad".

Dual number in CyA is still entertained in this variety. Consider the following examples (from Borg (1985: 122)):

δanén	two ears
ʕanén	'two eyes.'
žren	'two legs.'
saʕtáyn	'two hours.'

As for plural number inflection, CyA makes use of the so-called sound plural in both masculine and feminine; the suffixes of which are: *-i:n* and *(-a)t*, respectively, as in *muʕlimi:n* 'teachers (m)' and *muʕlemat* 'teachers (f)'. Moreover, there is, to some extent absence of *jamʕ al-taksir* or Broken Plural from CyA (see Shormani, 2007, see also Borg, 1985). There are 44 rules concerning the formation of Broken Plurals in MSA (see also Shormani, 2007). However, as pointed out by Borg, only five of these rules survive in CyA present state, namely CCaC, CCuC, CCeC, CCeCec and CCeCiC. [10] In these rules, "C" represents the root consonant letter/sound, whereas "a, u, e, i" represents the vowel inserted when forming the plural forms. These rules are exemplified as follows:

Rule	Example	Meaning
CCaC	*knan*	'hencoops'
CCuC	*snut*	'ploughs'
CCeC	*ržel*	'men'
CceCeC	*mnaxel*	'sieves'
CCeCiC	*tvexin*	'mills'

The verb in CyA is inflected for gender, number and person. There are actually two types of inflections on CyA verbs, namely prefixes and suffixes. As for the former, there are certain prefixes indicating *noncontingency, future, habitual or progressive past*. No prefix is noted in imperatives. These are amplified as follows (from Borg,1985: 76, see also Versteegh et al., 2006: 612):

p(i)- (noncontingency marker)
áš pisúr antáxt? 'What is going on down there?'

tta- (future marker)
púkra ttarúx l-imtine 'Tomorrow I will go to the city' (in Borg, 1985: 76, Nicosia)

Ø- (imperative)
kom xók! 'get up!'

kan- habitual or progressive past.'
d-dinye kúlla kantižri oxar áwnke oxar áwna 'Everybody was running about this way and that.'

As for the person in the perfect and imperfect form of the verb, the following chart represents the suffixes used (from Borg, 1985: 77):

Person		Perfect	Imperfect
sg. 1		*-t*	*-Ø-*
	2 m.	*-t*	*-T-*
	f.	*-ti*	*-T-...-i*
	3 m.	*-Ø*	*-Y-*
	f.	*-lt*	*-T-*
pl. 1		*-na*	*-N-*
	2	*-tu*	*-T- ...-u*
	3	*-u*	*-Y-... -u*

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[10] Note also that the personal passive (in Arabic al-majhoul, or "the unknown", cf. e.g. Shormani. 2017b) is absent from CyA, which is not surprising since this form has disappeared in other Mainstream Arabic vernaculars spoken today as well.

We will just exemplify here the first and third person singular in the perfect form. For example, first person singular perfect can be exemplified in ʃalix**t** 'I shut' whose root is ʃalix 'to shut'. Third person singular perfect is ʃiref 'he knew'.

As for the pronominal system, all pronouns belong to CyA, which constitutes a closed group. They are basically the same forms of MA, specifically Lebanese Arabic. Table (3) shows CyA personal pronouns in subject and object (and possessive) forms (from Newton, 1964: 45):

Table (3): CyA personal pronouns

	Subject	**Object (and Possessive)**
sing. 1.	*ana*	-*ni* (-*i* as possessive)
2	*int* (masc.)	-*ak*
	inti (fern.)	-*ik*
3	*o* (rnasc.)	-*u* (-*x* after vowel)
	e (fern.)	-*a* (-*xa* after vowel)
pl. 1	*ndxni*	-*na*
2	*intu*	-*kon*
3	*dllik*	-*on*

The subject pronouns in CyA are compared to those in Mainstream Arabic and Standard Arabic in Table (4) below:

Table (4): CyA subject pronouns in comparison with MA and SA.

CyA	MA	SA
ana	ana	ʔana
int	entah	ʔanta
inti	anti	ʔanti
uo	huua	hua
ie	hia	hia
naxni	iħna	naħnw
intu	Intu/antum	ʔantum.m ʔantunna.f
innen	hum.m hen.f	hum.m hunna.f

Another very important morphological feature of CyA is code-switching. Code switching/mixing in CyA takes place between CyA and Greek. It is very common and involves words of almost all registers, as a direct result of CyA speakers being bilingual in both languages (see also Walter, 2020). Consider the examples in (22) below (adopted from Newton, 1964: 49):

(22) a. *nomizo   pdierf-ak*
   'I think I know you.'

   b. *sapùi   kal   èn esinòδepse   l   pint   sinemà*
      'the young man said he did not accompany   the   girl   the.cinema
      'The boy said that he didn't accompany the girl to the cinema.'

   c. *paxsop   na   enicaso   xamse   kamares*
      intend.impf.1S   SBJV   rent.PRS.1S   five   room.PL
      'I intend to rent five rooms.'

In (22a), for instance, the term *nomizo* 'I think' is from Greek, while *pdierf-ak* 'I know you' is from CyA. In (22b), the terms *sapùi, kal, l pint* and *sinemà* are from CyA while *èn* and *esinòδepse* are from Greek, i.e. the negative element *èn* and the verb *esinòδepse*. This may also be explained in terms of borrowing, where CyA borrows *esinòδepse* from Greek. In (22c), there are three words from Greek, viz. the subjunctive *na*, *enicaso* 'to rent' and *Kamares* 'rooms'. The CyA elements in this example are *paxsop* 'intend' and *xamse* 'five.'

Code-switching also involves verbs, as in *eperàsamen kθir kàes* 'we passed very well,', i.e., 'had a good time'. Here, we notice that the verb *eperàsamen* 'we passed/had' is a Greek element and *kθir kàes* 'very well' is a CyA element in this sentence as can be compared with the entire Greek sentence, viz., *eperàsamen pollà orèa* 'we had a very good time'.

Code-switching also includes grammatical words such as prepositions, as the examples in (23) illustrate:

(23) a. *fi άδi l póli*
       'in this city.'

    b. *prin l pólemo*
      'before the war.'

    c. *párra mil l pápe*
      'outside the door' (cf. Greek: *ekso pu tim borta);*

In (23), again, code-switching or borrowing is clear. In (23a), only one word, i.e. *póli* 'city' from CG, has been used, while other words belong to CyA. In (23b), only the definite article *l* is from CyA; other words are from CG. In (23c), all words used are from CyA, which can be compared to the CG complete phrase *èkso pu tin bórta* 'outside the door'.

The main exception to the morphological non-interaction between CyA and Greek is the use of the Greek diminutive suffix *-ui* (feminine *-ua*) with native CyA words, noted by almost all three major authors on CyA (Walter, 2020). Pavlou (2018) argues that due to the influence of Greek, a structure like (24) has the stem from CyA and the diminutive from Greek.

(24)   *it   -u   -i*
       hand -DIM -NEU.SG
       'little hand'

In this example, Pavlou points out that in the diminutive construction, the (Cypriot) Greek diminutive *-u* is attached to the Arabic stem *it* 'hand'. And the neutral singular suffix is added at the end of the construction *itu-* resulting in *itui* 'a little hand'. According to Pavlou, the diminutive structure in CyA follows Greek inflectional morphology (Pavlou, 2018: 149).

6. Lexicon
A great deal of words in CyA is and can be traced to language contact between CyA and Greek. Greek vocabulary in CyA is due to the fact that "the present tendency towards increased travel and contact, not to mention the ever-increasing role of Greek education, the trend will continue" (Newton, 1964: 51).

The Arabic words in CyA reflect CyA speakers' way of life, as most of them are farmers. Therefore, it is not strange to find "practically all the words occurring for animals, crops and farming operations are [Cy]A" (ibid).

In fact, the CyA lexicon may be thought of as the second aspect after phonology to be greatly influenced by the Greek language. All speakers of CyA are bilinguals in Greek and CyA, and hence the influence of Greek on CyA is thus natural, specifically in terms of vocabulary, either in terms of code-switching or borrowing. Borg (1985, 2004) points out that linguistic acculturation to Greek in CyA is "fairly extensive... and involves the transfer of allophonic rules, function words, and virtually unrestricted borrowing of content words in the context of codeswitching". There is also "a significant degree of calquing on Greek idioms (Borg, 2004: 64). He adds that "the degree of hellenization...tends to be concealed... the inflectional pattern of [CyA] having largely resisted significant intrusion of Greek morphological elements" (ibid. p. 65).
Borg has also pointed out that "[t]he Greek component in the CyA lexicon also comprises older loans inherited from its present Arabic vernacular. The earliest Greek layer can often be teased apart of the same Greek lexemes often filtered via Aramaic" (Borg, 2004: 65). He describes CyA as "Greek in transparent Arabic garb" (ibid, p. 65).

Newton (1964: 51) describes CyA as "an Arabic-Greek dialect" in his paper of the same title. He argues that CyA consists of "Arabic plus a large number of Cypriot [Greek] phrases thrown in whenever [a speaker's] Arabic fails him or the fancy takes him." Tsiapera (1964: 124) points out that "any speaker of [CyA] has a minimum of about thirty percent of Greek lexical items in his speech which are not assimilated into the phonological and morphological system of his native language." She identifies "the semantic fields of government and politics, numerical systems including weights and measures, and adverbial particles as particularly dominated by words of Greek origin" (see also Walter, 2020).

Thus, so far, it is clear how the Greek lexicon influences the CyA lexicon and how much vocabulary Greek provides CyA. However, there is also a somehow Armenian lexicon in CyA. As pointed out by Borg (2006: 541), CyA "lexical Aramaisms relate to farming, household industries, ethnobotany, and general concepts." He provides the following list to exemplify the Armenian lexicon influence on CyA: *xakle* 'field', *sammex* 'to sprout'; *sunt* 'plough'; *moraš* 'threshing sled'; *paytar* 'threshing floor'; *kiten* 'to yoke [oxen]'; *stapl* 'barn, cowshed'; sa*yúr* 'kid'; *saykún* 'brushwood'; *šummár* 'fennel'; *zayrúr* 'hawthorn', *terráš* 'bushes'; *šall* 'to sew'; *šammút* 'spindle'; *kriše* 'preparation for making *plata* cheese'; *tilef* 'it leaked'; *xarkeš* 'he moved'; *šataf* 'he rinsed'; *tallel* 'he thinned out', *šaxxet* 'he begged for alms'; *šaxxat* 'he threw out', etc.

Borg argues that the influence of languages like Greek and Aramaic (and even Maltese) is due to the fact that CyA "lives alone" in "its isolation from mainstream colloquial Arabic [that] renders it a potential repository of Aramaisms rare in spoken Arabic" (Borg, 2006: 541).

Moreover, Newton (1964) provides a list of words relating to kinship, numerals, parts of the body, colours. For example, kinship terms include *umm* 'mother,' *japat* 'father,' *ipn* 'son,' *pint* 'daughter,' *ʕamm* 'uncle,' *xalt* 'aunt,' *oxt* 'brother,' *xait* 'sister' which are of Arabic origin, and words of Greek origin such as *arfotexnos* 'nephew,' *angonui* 'grandchild,' *anepšos* 'cousin'. Numerals in CyA include *èxen* (fern. *exte), xnàin, tlaθe, àrpaʕa, xàmse, sittè, sàbʕa, θmenje, tisʕa, θèka*.[11] Newton also notes that compounds containing 'one' to 'nine', such as *θekapendè* 'fifteen', are all Greek.[12] Ordinals in CyA are also Greek. Arabic color terms include *isvet* 'black,' *àpjaδ* 'white,' *àxmar* 'red', and Greek color terms include *ple* 'blue,' *prasino* 'green,' *citrino* 'yellow,' *kafè* 'brown'.

7. Cypriot Arabic: language decay and Death

As has been alluded to so far, CyA is an extremely endangered language. This language status is caused by several factors, which lead to language decay and death. According to Gulle (2016: 41), language contact has two types: language maintenance and language shift. The scenario is such that "the speakers keep their native language in a language maintenance scenario, whereas they shift to another language in a language shift scenario". Thus, in a language maintenance scenario, CyA speakers use their language at home, speak it among themselves, with their relatives, etc. In the language shift scenario, CyA speakers speak Greek in their everyday life situations, outside the home, in education, etc.

Language shift starts with lexical borrowings, where speakers of CyA start using words and lexical expressions from Greek (see the examples given in section 6). Language shift, as pointed out by Gulle (2016), has an indirect effect which is "language death". Language death simply means that the language has no speakers any more, or there are some speakers who understand the language but they cannot speak it (Crystal, 2002). In the case of CyA, language death occurs in its gradual decay, first in terms of borrowings, coining, calquing, etc., and then by "structure borrowing". Structure borrowing concerns shift from Arabic syntax to Greek syntax, as we have discussed in section 4.

Based on Sasse's (1992) model of language death called the Gaelic-Arvanitika-Model, Gulle (2016: 41-45) summarizes CyA present situation, providing several examples from the language: 1) lack of any marking for directive and locative, very similar to spoken Greek. However, CyA has a locative particle *fi* 'in', which is similar to the same particle in other varieties of Arabic spoken today, such as Yemeni Arabic, Syrian Arabic, Jordanian Arabic, etc. Gulle provides (25) as an example of the occurrence of *fi* in CyA "due to the influence of Levantine Arabic" (Gulle, 2016: 44):

(25) *pšan   ta-llaki   xadap prepi   ta-rrux   barra   fi-l-lixkali*
          for   SUBJ-find wood NEC   SUBJ-go.1PL outside   in-ART-field
          'In order to find wood, we go out to the field(s).'

However, Gulle argues that "in "true" Maronite Arabic locative is not marked" (ibid). It is also true that CyA does not have directive particles, which are found in Spoken Greek. 2) borrowing the Greek imperative form "to come". Though CyA has the verb "to come"

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[11] Note that the word for ten, which is *ʕašra* in Arabic, is completely absent in CyA, and the Greek word for ten, i.e. *θèka* has replaced the Arabic one.

[12] However, according to Borg (1985: 129), all ordinal numbers except *awwil* 'first' and *tēni ~ tāni* 'second' have been borrowed from Turkish.

as *žyy*, but the imperative is borrowed from Greek. Greek imperative for the verb "to come" is *ela* for singular and *elate* for plural. However, this verb has different forms in CyA: the singular *ela* is masculine and *eli* feminine, and *elu* is the plural for both genders. As evidence of language decay, Gulle (2016) provides several factors that cause language decay of CyA, the most impotent of which are: 1) Loss of systematic integration. For instance, the speakers borrowed the lexeme *ksinari* ("axe") from Greek as *kšinar* by integrating it in an Arabic singular pattern and then derived its plural form using the same Arabic pattern, *kšenir*" (p. 45). 2) Loss of subordinative mechanisms, and 3) breakdown of grammatical categories.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, we have provided a descriptive analysis of CyA, pointing out language contact and the salient linguistic deviations CyA has undergone from MA norms. We have found that the most "vulnerable" modules of CyA are phonology and lexicon. In these two components, we noticed that the deviations from MA norms are more than those in morphology and syntax. As pointed out by Walter (2020: 161), CyA speakers are bilingual in both CyA and (Cypriot) Greek. Greek is the dominant language in which they communicate in their daily life situations. They are "currently living in a heavily Greek-dominant urban area. There are currently no fluent native speakers under the age of thirty. Due to these factors, the CyA language was designated as severely endangered by UNESCO in 2002". In this regard, CyA "was recognized as an official language by the Republic of Cyprus in 2008".[13]

CyA in its present state is extremely endangered; CyA speakers' ages are now above the 40s-50s, and it is almost "dying" unless an urgent procedure is followed to revitalize it. There are several projects that aim at language revitalization of CyA, either by the Government of Cyprus or by other nongovernmental institutions and initiatives, as we alluded to so far (see, e.g. https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20190214-sanna-a-language-written-for-the-first-time, CyA is also known as Sanna). In this project reported by BBC, they are making great efforts to invent a writing system for CyA. Most studies we have reviewed warn that CyA is "dying" and needs to be revitalized. Every study calls for an immediate solution or any application of any program, technique or procedure that can enhance this language. There have been several attempts in this regard. For example, in 2008, the Republic of Cyprus asked the European Council to recognize CyA as "a minority language within the meaning of the European Charter of Regional and minority languages" Constantinou (2009: n.p.). In this paper, we also call for an urgent procedure to document, revive and revitalize CyA.

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[13] See here: https://cyprus-mail.com/2016/01/29/preservation-of-the-maronite-arabic-language-moving-forward/. As described in this website, "For the linguists it was a big challenge, but for the Maronite Community it is a huge step, because the language has now been given an alphabet and a grammar and cannot only be maintained, but also be taught to new generations".

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