Report on language policy and language education policy in the Republic of Malta and in the Republic of Cyprus

Robert RATCLIFFE

PART I

Report on language policy and language education policy in the Republic of Malta

1.Malta: Geography

Malta is an independent island republic situated in the Mediterranean Sea approximately 80 kilometers due south of Sicily, 360 kilometers due North of Libya, and approximately 270 kilometers East of Tunisia. Its capital, Valetta lies at approximately 35°54´N Lat 14°30´E Long. The republic in fact comprises three islands: Malta, Gozo, and Comino, the last lacking permanent inhabitants. The main island of Malta, with an area of 246 square kilometers, contains the capital Valetta. Gozo has an area of only 98 square

kilometers. Population of all islands was estimated at 404,000 at the last census in 2005 (Sciriha & Vassallo 2006).   The native Maltese are overwhelmingly Roman Catholic by religious affiliation.

2. Malta: History and Language History

Maltese is unique among EU languages in that it is a Semitic, specifically an Arabic-derived, language. Its basic structure derives from a medieval North African dialect of Arabic, with a very large amount of vocabulary taken from other languages, principally Italian, other Romance dialects, and English (Aquilina 1959, Mifsud 1995, Borg & Azzopardi-Alexander 1997). While Maltese is largely intelligible to a speaker of North African Arabic who has some acquaintance with English or a Romance language, for cultural and political reasons it cannot properly be labeled an Arabic dialect. It has its own unique, Roman-based, orthography and literature. While modern Arabic dialects draw on the resources of Classical Arabic in the creation of new words, Maltese has cut itself off from this source and draws instead upon English and Romance. (However, it is interesting to note, that the Catholic religious terminology of Maltese mostly derives from Arabic: *Alla* (God), *randan* (Lent), *quddies* (mass), *qaddis* (saint), *knisja* (church).)

The language directly ancestral to Maltese arrived sometime after the Aghlabids from Tunisia conquered the island from the Byzantines in 870 A.D. In 1090 the island was incorporated into Sicily and Latin Christendom as a result of conquest by Roger the Norman. In 1224 the last Muslims were officially expelled. The mystery of Maltese then is first how Arabic managed to completely displace whatever languages may have been present previously (probably Greek, possibly Latin, possibly but improbably Punic) and second how it managed to survive for 800 years cut off from Islamic civilization on an island largely governed by Italian or Romance-speaking elites.

In 1530 the island was granted by Charles V to the Knights Hospitaliers (the Knights of Malta). The administration of the island by an international religious order directly under the authority of Rome, as opposed to administration from neighboring Sicily, may have helped the survival of Maltese. It also helps to explain why many of the Italian borrowings in Maltese reflect something close to Standard Italian rather than the Sicilian dialect, although a Sicilian stratum is also present (Brincat 2003). The Knights had already adopted Tuscan as their working language while still in Rhodes nearly a century before their

arrival in Malta. It thus became the official language of Malta more than a century before it acquired that status in Sicily (Brincat 1992, Brincat 2003).

The presence of English in Malta dates from 1800, when Malta became an English colony after a brief rule by the French who had displaced the Knights. The English attempted to replace Italian by English as the language of administration. Indirectly this led to the development of Maltese as a national language of literacy and education. In the 1921 constitution the official languages of the colony were English and Italian. In the 1934 constitution Italian was replaced by Maltese as one of two official languages along with English (Sciriha & Vassallo 2006). This language policy continued through independence in 1964 until the present day.

Timeline of Maltese history (Dalli 2006, Frendo 2004)

800-480 B.C.	Phoenician presence
700-600	Greek influence (Sicily)
480-218	Carthaginians (Tunisia)
218B.C.-870	Roman/Byzantine rule (Italy)
870-1090	Aghlabid rule from (Tunisia)
1090-1530	adjunct to Sicily
1090	Roger invades from Sicily but does not occupy
1091-1194	Norman dynasty
1194-1266	Swabian dynasty
1224	final expulsion of Muslims from Sicily and Malta
1226-1283	Angevin dynasty
1283-1412	Aragonese rule
1412-1530	Aragonese and Castilian Rule
1530-1798	Knights of Malta, direct rule from Rome
1799	Bonaparte conquers Malta
1800-1964	British Rule
1964-	independence

3.The Current Language Situation in Malta

The national language is Maltese. The official languages of law and administration

are English and Maltese. Italian is a traditional language of culture in Malta and is widely understood, not surprising given the proximity of Italy. Malta is within reach of Italian radio and television broadcasts. There are no significant linguistic minorities.

A survey conducted by Sciriha and Vassallo in 2001 (reported in Sciriha & Vassallo 2006) of 500 randomly selected individuals from throughout Malta discovered the following patterns of language proficiency: 98.6% of respondents claimed Maltese as their unique first language; 1.2% claimed to have acquired English and Maltese simultaneously. Another 1.2% claimed English as their unique first language. And 0.2% (i.e. a single individual) claimed Italian as a unique first language. Nonetheless, the degree of bi- and tri-lingualism in Malta is quite high. In the Sciriha/Vassallo study 70.8% of respondents claimed to have at least a 'good' command of English, while 62% claimed to have at least a 'good' command of Italian. Other languages in which respondents claimed some proficiency were French (17.2%), German (4.6%), Arabic (3%), and Spanish (1.4%). The low percentage for Arabic is noteworthy given the proximity of the Arabic-speaking countries Tunisia and Libya, and the fact that Maltese itself is ultimately an Arabic-derived language.

Although Maltese is nearly universally known in Malta, it is not necessarily used in all situations. Sciriha & Vassallo (2006) report that 90% of their survey uses Maltese at home, while only 70% use it at work and only 48% read books and newspapers in the language. English thus has a large role in literate language use.

4. Language education policy in Malta

Compulsory education in Malta only started after independence. Both English and Maltese are taught from the first year of elementary school. Students choose a second foreign language from the first year in secondary school. The following languages are taught: French, Italian, German, Russian, Arabic. (Marisa Farrugia, Maltese Government, Division of Education, p.c.)

5. Effect of E U membership on language policy

Malta officially joined the European Union in 2004. In terms of number of speakers Maltese is the smallest of the official EU languages (Sciriha & Vasallo 2006).

The EU goal of "native language plus one" (proficiency in one other EU language besides one's native language) has long been standard policy in Malta. Therefore this aspect

of EU membership required no change in Malta's existing language education policy. EU translation policy, however, was a different matter. The EU requirement that all official EU documents must be translated into all EU languages created a requirement for Maltese translators which had never existed before. Filling this need proved quite difficult at first. Although there are many English-Maltese bilinguals, few have had any specific training or experience as translators, and very few of the early hires for EU translator positions proved up to the task. A program for training translators has now been put in place at Malta University (Manwel Mifsud, p.c.).

The National Language Council: Joining the EU provided an impetus for creating a National Language Council to address issues of standardization, especially in orthography and translation of technical vocabulary. It brings together academic experts with other specialists involved with language issues such as journalists and civil servants. It organizes seminars for discussion of language issues and publishes reports on the results. Its president is Manwel Mifsud, professor at Malta University.

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PART II

Report on language policy and language education policy in the Republic of Cyprus

1.Cyprus: Geography

Cyprus is an Island in the Eastern Mediterranean, approximately 70 kilometers South of Turkey, 120 kilometers West of Syria, and 350 kilometers East of the Greek island of Rhodes. With an area of 9,251 square kilometers it is the third largest island in the Mediterranean after Sardinia and Sicily (Frankoulidou 2003). The capital, Nicosia (Greek Lefkosia, Turkish Lefkoşa) lies in the central part of the island at approximately 35° 10´ N Lat. 33° 22´ E Long.

Since 1974 the island has been partitioned between a Greek-speaking Republic of Cyprus (Kypriaki Dimokratia) in the South, recognized by the international community, and a Turkish-speaking Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti) in the North, recognized only by Turkey. The cease fire line of 1974, the Green Line, is manned by UN troops and runs through the center of the capital Lefkosia. However, since 2003 it has been possible to pass freely between the two parts of the island.

In 2004 the population of the island was 837,300 of whom 651, 100 (77.8 %) belonged to the Greek Cypriot community and spoke Greek, 88,100 (10.5%) belonged to the Turkish Cypriot community and spoke Turkish, and 98,100 (11.7%) were foreigners residing in Cyprus (Frankoulidou 2003). Three small religious-linguistic minorities long resident in Cyprus—Latin-rite Christians, Armenians, and traditionally Arabic-speaking Maronite Christians—are included in the Greek Cypriot community.

2.Cyprus: History and Language History

Documentary and archeological evidence for the history of Cyprus reaches back to remote antiquity. Complete Hellenization is thought to have taken place by the end of the second millennium B.C. with ten Greek city states known to have existed on the island at the time. Cyprus subsequently fell under the sway of the Assyrians, Egyptians, Persians, and Alexander the Great, before being annexed to the Roman empire in 59 B.C. The Arabs established bases and gained partial control of the island starting about 647, being finally driven out by the Byzantines (successors to the Romans) in 965.

English connection with the island also reaches into the remote past. Richard I

("The Lionhearted") of England captured the island from the Byzantines in 1191 during the Third Crusade. From Richard the island passed to Frankish crusader-adventurer Guy de Lusignan whose family ruled the island until 1489, when it passed by natural succession to the Venetians. During this period neither French nor Italian nor Latin Christianity seem to have struck deep roots among the local population, who remained Greek-speaking and Orthodox. However, a community of Arabic-speaking Latin-rite (Maronite) Christians immigrated from the Levant during this period, and their unique form of Arabic, highly influenced by contact with Greek has survived until recently (Borg 1985).

The Ottomans conquered the island from the Venetians in 1571 and nominally ruled it until 1923. However, Great Britain administered the island under treaty with the Ottomans from 1878, annexed the island during World War I, gained sovereignty from the Turks in 1923, and declared the island a crown colony in 1925. After World War II the independence movement in Cyprus was complicated by the fact that the different linguistic communities, Greek and Turkish, favored different visions of the island's post-colonial future. Most Greek Cypriots favored union with Greece, while Turkish Cypriots favored partition. In 1960 Cyprus gained independence, with Great Britain, Greece, and Turkey named as guarantor nations to keep the peace between the communities. Intercommunal violence broke out in 1963 leading to the dispatch of UN troops and the establishment of the Green Line separating the communities. In 1974 the military government in Greece organized a coup to overthrow the Cyprus government and Turkey invaded the northern half of the island to protect the rights of the Turkish minority. A ceasefire was quickly arranged but not before more than a third of each ethnic community had been forced to flee their homes (Library of Congress Country Studies: Cyprus).

Timeline of Cyprus History

1050 B.C.	Complete Hellenization, ten city states.
58 B.C. -1191	part of Roman/Byzantine Empire
1191	Richard the Lionheart- Knights Templar
1192-1489	Lusignan dynasty
1489-1571	Venetian control
1571-1923	Ottoman control
1878-1960	British administration (British crown colony from 1925, annexed 1914)

1960   independence

1974-   partition until present

3. Current Linguistic Situation

   The language situation in Cyprus is complex. The official languages of the Republic of Cyprus are Greek and Turkish. But English is widely known and used. Greek refers here to Standard Modern Greek as defined by the Republic of Greece, not to the distinctive local Cypriot vernacular. Thus we need to reckon with the interplay of four major speech varieties, in addition to the role of linguistic minorities.

   While Turkish is an official language it is very rarely seen or heard in the South. Davy & Pavlou (2000: 212) observe "After 1974, Turkish rapidly disappeared from both official and private use, remaining only in such special applications as the certification of births and deaths, and where explicitly required by the constitution such as on coins, banknotes and postage stamps (Article 3.7)." While English has no official status, it is used in a variety of public functions. English remained the language of laws and the courts until 1996 (Karyolemou 2005). The debate over English vs. Greek as languages of instruction, eventually resolved in favor of Greek, delayed the opening of the University of Cyprus until 1989 (Davy & Pavlou 2000). While most major government reports are now produced in Greek, English remains the majority language of private sector notices and advertisements (Davy & Pavlou 2000).

   The vernacular spoken Greek of Cyprus differs from that spoken in Greece, principally in points of phonology and lexicon (Papapavlou 1994, Yiankoullis 2005, Pavlou & Christodoulou 2005). In the past a diglossic situation existed in Greece itself: The official government language was an archaizing literary variety called *katherevousa* "purified" which differed from the spoken language called *demotiki* "popular" (Ferguson 1959). *Katherevousa* was abandoned in Greece after 1976, leading to greater convergence between written and spoken norms (Karyolemou 2005). But a diglossic situation persists in Cyprus. Sciriha (1996) found, as is typical in such situations, that Standard Modern Greek (Greek of Greece) functioned as the language for formal situations, as in academic instruction, church services and workplace communication with superiors. Cypriot dialectal Greek was the preferred language for inter-familial and peer group communication within an academic or workplace environment. Papapavlou (2005c:74) reports on sociolinguistic research which

has consistently "shown that Greek Cypriots hold more favorable attitudes toward S[tandard] M[odern] G[reek] than their own dialect", and he speculates (Papapavlou 2005b:62) that the reasons for this "are probably linked to most Cypriots' inability to express themselves fully in SMG and, therefore their attitude of 'reverence' and 'respect' toward something that they have never been able to master completely."

In the northern, Turkish, part of the island, Turkish is virtually the only language seen on notices and signs, public and private, although English seems to be fairly widely understood. Karyolemou (2005:28) observes: "The presence on the Cypriot territory of two different languages has not resulted in the establishment of a bilingual society but rather in the development of two distinct linguistic communities." She also notes, however, that bilingualism has traditionally been more common among the Turkish minority.

Traditional language minorities recognized by the Cypriot constitution are Armenian and Arabic (Maronite Christian). These small communities, however, are vastly outnumbered by recent immigrants and temporary workers speaking Russian, Serbo-Croatian, other East European, Philippine and Indian languages. The number of foreign workers in Cyprus was estimated at 41,000 in 1999, while there were nearly two and a half million tourist arrivals in the same year, just under half from the UK (Davy & Pavlou 2000). The common language of intergroup communication for these diverse populations is, of course, English.

4. Language education

Modern Standard Greek is the official language of instruction at all levels of public education. Teachers are allowed to use Cypriot Greek dialect only in the first year of primary school. English is compulsory from the fourth year of primary school. Students choose a second foreign language in the second year of high school. The choices are French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish (Language Education Policy Profile: Cyprus. 2003-5).

5. Effect of EU membership on language policy

Technically the whole island of Cyprus entered the EU on May 1, 2004, although the body of common EU rights and obligations applies only to areas under direct control of the government of the Republic of Cyprus. Because the Republic of Cyprus has chosen to

use Modern Standard Greek as one of its official languages and its language of instruction, the admission of Cyprus did not require the setting up of a new translation bureau in Brussels. Cyprus can piggy back on Greece. Nor did it provide many new opportunities for Cypriots in this area, as very few Cypriots feel competent to compete with mainland Greeks, who have more experience in this area (Papapavlou, p.c.). Ironically, the admission of Cyprus has had the effect of making Turkish an official EU language (since it is an official language of Cyprus). The EU has decided however not to translate EU documents into Turkish at this time. Cyprus was one of the first EU states to provide a language education policy profile.

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