

Multicultural Language Education

Multicultural Language Education:
From Research into Practice

Edited by

Azamat Akbarov

**CAMBRIDGE
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P U B L I S H I N G

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A History of Turkish Cypriot Education from the Ottomans to the Present and an Analysis of Geography Education in Cyprus	1
Adem Özder	
The Origins of Language: From Cultural Transmission to Inductive Biases	18
Alma Jeftić	
Verb Movement in Bosnian: Overt or Covert?.....	26
Amna Brdarević-Čeljo	
Alternative Assessment Tools in ELT	41
F. Ilke Buyukduman	
A Periodization Attempt on the Layers of Turkish Culture in the Balkans	52
Fatih İyiyol	
An Emic Approach on the Perception of “Woman” by Female Minstrels	69
İşıl Altun	
Pre-Service Second Language Teacher Training and Social Engagement ...	82
Izabela Dankić	
Tense and Aspect in English: A Linguistic and Pedagogical Point of View	91
Jasmina Mirtoska	
Reading Therapy: An Evaluation of Literary Books about Puberty on the Axis of Bibliotherapy	102
Kemalettin Deniz	
The Many Faces of <i>be</i>	119
Lidija Perkič	

Traditional vs. Modern Teaching Methods: Advantages and Disadvantages.....	129
Mahira Hadžimehmedagić and Azamat Akbarov	
Language Acquisition, the Imitation Theory and Foreign Language Learning.....	138
Mehmet Demirezen	
From Student Teacher to Newly Qualified Teacher: A Follow-Up Study on EFL Teacher Dilemmas.....	153
Nese Cabaroglu	
Cultural Specificities in Slovenian and Italian Business Letters	176
Nina Lovec	
Pedagogical Benefits of E-Mail.....	186
Senka Majetić	
Cognitive, Affective and Social Strategies Used by L2 Teachers in Bosnian EFL Context	201
Senka Majetić	
Reflection of European Commission CEF Criteria on French Language Curricula in Primary and Secondary Education in Turkey	213
Suna Timur Ağildere, Neşe Tertemiz and Aybike Akkutay	
Thematic Structure in English and Serbian: An Exploratory Study	223
Tatjana Marjanović	
A Study on the Classroom Management Beliefs of Foreign Language Preservice Teachers.....	235
Ülker Akkutay and Neşe (Işık) Tertemiz	
An Investigation of the Attitudes of the Students of Foreign Language Department towards the Environment in Terms of Some Variables	252
Ülkü Eser Ünalı and Abdullah Türker	
The Full Circle in Practice: From Alternative Assessment to Differentiated Instruction	261
Željka Babić	
Contributors.....	271

A HISTORY OF TURKISH CYPRIOT EDUCATION FROM THE OTTOMANS TO THE PRESENT AND AN ANALYSIS OF GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION IN CYPRUS

ADEM ÖZDER*

1. Introduction

Cyprus is an island country in the northeast of the Mediterranean Sea and lies between 34° 33' and 35° 41' north latitude, and 32° 23' and 34° 35' east longitude. Cyprus has 782 km of coasts along the Mediterranean Sea, its longest being the 225 kilometres between Karpas Cape in the east and Paphos Harbor in the west. The narrowest point of the island is the 43 kilometres between Larnaca Bay and the Esen Hill on the east of Girne. Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean with an area of 9,251 km², after the islands of Sicily and Sardinia. Turkey, located to its north, is the country closest to Cyprus. The distance between Cyprus and Turkey is 65 km, whereas with Syria it is 112 km, Lebanon 162 km, Israel 267 km, Egypt 418 km and Greece 965 km. According to geographers, the island of Cyprus, while adjacent to Anatolia, took the shape of an island due to collapses during the Third Geological Period. Leading geographer D. Frey asserted that the “island of Cyprus may be considered as tectonic, as a part of Anatolia in terms of its geological and climatic characteristics” (Gürsoy 197, 41–45). Many geographers have agreed with his assessments. According to the census in 2006, the population of Cyprus was 265,100, comprising 143,843 men and 121,257 women (DPÖ 2007).

The history of Turkish Cyprus education, over more than four hundred years, can be examined in five periods: the Ottoman period (1571–1878), the British colonial period (1878–1960), the Republic of Cyprus (1960–1974), the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus (1975–1983), and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (since 1983) (Cicioğlu 1984, 211).

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The island of Cyprus, with its strategic location in the northern Mediterranean, was conquered by the Ottoman Empire on August 1, 1571. Immediately after the conquest, the Ottoman Empire, following the settlement policy, sent people from different parts of Anatolia with different professions. These people, sent with their families, strengthened the Turkish-Islamic texture while also contributing to the development of agriculture and trade on the island (Alasya 1963, 51–52). Cyprus did not occupy the agenda of the Ottoman Empire from the day it was conquered until the second half of the nineteenth century and was usually observed as a place of exile for certain government officials. After the opening of Suez Canal in 1869 Cyprus became a focus of attention for the Western states, since it was one of the most strategic routes to India; in particular, the British Empire wanted to ensure the security of reaching India through a policy of seizure of Cyprus (Alasya 2002, 380). With the Treaty of Ayastefanos, signed after the 1877–78 War between the Ottomans and the Russians, the Western states assured the holding of the Congress of Berlin and the signing of the Treaty of Berlin. During this process, Britain wanted to maintain Cyprus as a military base; in return, it would safeguard the benefits of the Ottoman Empire and create a defensive alliance against Russia. This request was accepted by the Ottoman government as it was in need of support in the international arena. In accordance with this, the Ottoman sovereignty in Cyprus was to continue, but the administrative and military rule of the island would be temporarily left to Britain (Alasya 2002, 380). When the Ottoman Empire went to war in alliance with Germany in 1914, Britain formally invaded the island. With the Treaty of Lausanne signed in 1924 Cyprus was officially left to Britain. The unrest between the Turkish and the Greek communities continued with Greek attacks, and Britain was not effective in preventing such violence. With the withdrawal of Britain, the Independent Republic of Cyprus was established in 1960 under the guarantor of Britain, Turkey and Greece. When violence increased with Greece's proposed invasion, Turkey used its right to intervene militarily as a guarantor. After the Cyprus Peace Operation in July 20, 1974, two separate governments were formed on the island. On one side the Greeks, on the other the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus, established in 1975 and controlling the northern part of the island. The Turkish Federated State of Cyprus had been renamed the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on July 15, 1983 (Alasya 2002, 383).

1.1 Education History and Applications in Cyprus during the Ottoman Times (1571–1878)

When we examine educational activities in Cyprus during the Ottoman dominated times, it is apparent that they were carried out by foundations, as in other parts of the country, known to have continued until the Tanzimat Period. When the traditional Ottoman educational institutions are considered, we primarily encounter Sibyan schools, the basic educational institutions where children aged between 6 and 12 are educated. In these schools, the aim was to teach children how to read the Quran in accordance with Tecvid rules. It is known that the first educational institution established was the Ayasofya Sibyan School in Nicosia after the Ottomans conquered Cyprus, and was a mazbuta Sibyan school, established and managed by the state foundations, with all expenses paid by them. It has been registered in the records that the six mazbuta Sibyan schools and five mahalle (neighbourhood) Sibyan schools were established during the first thirty-year period after the conquest. When it comes to the nineteenth century, various attempts were made by the Ottoman Empire to gather the educational institutions under one roof and modernize them. As a result, Evkaf-ı Hümayun Nezareti was established in 1826. Next, with the establishment of Maarif-i Umumiye Nezareti in 1857, educational affairs were executed from a single centre. With the Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi, put into force on September 1, 1869, the structure of education was shaped. The state schools were divided into three groups which were established in accordance with this regulation; primary schools comprised Sibyan schools, İptidaiye and Rüştiye schools; secondary schools comprised İdadiye and Sultaniye; higher education institutions comprised Darülfünun and vocational higher schools.

These changes in the Ottoman Empire revealed themselves in Cyprus, and İbtidai schools were established alongside Sibyan schools. İptidaiye schools were directly regarded as state institutions and were affiliated to Maarif-i Umumiye Nezareti. The educational period in İptidaiye schools was defined as three or four years. During this period, the students were taught basic skills such as literacy, arithmetic, religious studies, history, geography and handicrafts.

Rüştiye schools were founded for the graduates of Sibyan and İbtidaiye schools to help them continue their education. The first Rüştiye School in Cyprus opened in 1862 in Nicosia, named Selimiye Rüştiyesi. This school, also known as İlmiye Rüştiyesi, formed the foundation for today's Nicosia Turkish High School. In the Rüştiye schools education lasted for three

years, and lessons such as Turkish, Arabic, Quran studies, religious studies, arithmetic, calligraphy and agriculture were taught.

The higher educational institutions in the Ottoman Empire were known as *medrese*, and all the needs of the students were met by its management. The first *medrese* in Cyprus was established in 1573 named “Büyük Medrese,” and a new *medrese* was founded in 1578 named Küçük Medrese.

Over time, the number of *medrese* under the auspices of mosques and foundations increased. Besides formal education institutions operating in the Ottoman period, various structures that can be considered within the scope of non-formal educational institutions were also available. Dervish lodges, mosques and libraries of educational institutions can be counted among these non-formal educational institutions. Mevlevihane in Nicosia, Cyprus, as well as various mosques and libraries, have provided services for this purpose (Alasya 2002, 215).

1.2 History of Education and applications in Cyprus during the British colonial period (1878–1960)

In 1878, when Cyprus was transferred to Britain, there were 41 primary schools and eight Rüştiye *medrese* on the island. The British rule founded the Directorate of Education for collecting educational institutions, and established separate educational councils for the Turkish and Greek communities. In addition, it set up school commissions in every town to deal with the education of that region. Britain did not behave fairly towards both communities, and this situation caused disadvantageous results for the Turkish community, and only a quarter of the money allocated to the Council of Turkish Education was paid. Covering the costs of the schools was hindered by confiscating the Turkish foundations. In contrast, the Greek foundations were not confiscated and the budget allocated to them was paid in full. Thus, it was comprehensible that there had been attempts to hinder the education of the Turkish society (Alasya 2002, 217). As a reaction to the attitude of the British government, the Ottoman Empire reacted by opening up twelve new schools as a reaction to the three that were closed. In addition, the Ottoman Empire worked to meet all the needs of the Turkish community schools. In response, the Turkish Ministry of Education tried to monitor and implement the decisions taken by the Council of Ottoman Education in various periods.

The Ottoman Empire sent textbooks, materials and teachers, paying their salaries. Thus, the Ottoman educational curriculum was implemented in the Turkish Cypriot Educational system. With the new education law of 1920, implemented by the British, all educational institutions on the island

were connected to a centre, and thus Britain established complete control over them. This situation led to some Turkish schools closing down once again (Alasya 1963, 52).

A year after the introduction of the Latin alphabet in Turkey in 1929, the Turkish Cypriot community started to offer education using the new alphabet. After this period, the education system of the Turkish Republic was followed by the Cypriot Turks. Due to various problems with the Greek and British rules, the latter tried to establish friendly relations with the Turkish community. As a result, some conveniences were provided to the Turkish schools. In the early 1950s eight secondary state-funded schools opened and all their expenses were met by the general budget. Other Turkish schools were also granted the opportunity to change to this status, and almost all agreed to this. Those which did not accept this change tried to survive with assistance from Turkey. A large number of students who graduated from schools in Cyprus chose universities in Turkey for higher education, and the Turkish government tried to help these students by providing scholarships. Apart from this, teachers were continuously sent to the schools in Cyprus by the Turkish governments to contribute to Turkish Cypriot education

1.3 Educational History and Applications in Cyprus during the Republic of Cyprus Period (1960–1974)

With the weakening of British domination on the island, Britain prepared to withdraw gradually. Within the frame of these preparations, in 1959 the British administration transferred the Turkish educational institutions to the Turkish Cypriot community. During this period, besides the schools supervised by the Turkish Republic, the Turkish community had 222 primary schools, 8 secondary schools, 6 high schools and one girl's institution—237 schools in total. Relying on article number 87 of the constitution of the Republic of Cyprus established in 1960, the educational affairs of the communities were left to each individual community. The administration of the Turkish schools was carried out by an executive board on behalf of the Turkish Community Council, whereas the technical affairs were carried out by the Department of Education. The Turkish Community Council initially tried to make the education system convenient to the Turkish education system, starting from primary schools. The Turkish Community Council was successful in formal and non-formal education areas between 1960–1963. During this period, the implementation of planned education started for the first time, and Public Education was

offered by the Women's Courses in villages and Practical Arts Schools (Alasya 1966, 416).

Due to increasing Greek attacks from 1963, the Turkish Cypriot Education system was badly affected. Some of the teachers were killed in these attacks, students were not able to go to school, and 118 primary schools and 5 secondary schools were closed, leading to around 15,000 students suspending their education (Cicioğlu 1964, 219).

1.4 History of Education and Applications in Cyprus during the Period of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus (1975–1983)

Before the Cyprus Peace Operation, the Turkish Community had 223 primary and secondary schools wherein 23,291 students were educated. After the Cyprus Peace Operation, 100 schools were left outside the borders of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus, whereas 152 school buildings remained from the Greeks and were put into service for the Turkish Cypriot Community. In the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus, established on February 13, 1975, the necessity to determine the official national education system of the Turkish Cypriot community occurred. For this purpose, the First Turkish Cypriot Education Council was held between October 20–25, 1975. During the council meeting, issues such as the principals governing the Turkish Cypriot National Education and its general structure, teaching as a profession, school buildings and facilities and training tools and supplies, duties and responsibilities in the field of teaching, and planning of the applications were discussed (Cicioğlu 1964, s. 220). As a result of the council meeting, the aims of the Turkish Cypriot National Education system were divided into two groups, including general and specific purposes. The general structure of the education system comprises two main parts, including formal and non-formal education. According to this, formal education is composed of pre-school education, primary education, secondary education and higher education. The education facilities outside of formal education were gathered under one roof.

Following the council's decisions, the purposes of formal education were put forward, according to which, with the help of pre-school education, it aimed to help children's physical, mental and emotional development and acquisition of good habits, and to train them in basic education and to speak Turkish accurately and well. The basic training aimed to help every Turkish child acquire the necessary basic knowledge, skills, behaviours and habits to be good citizens in accordance with a sense

of national morality, parallel to their interests and abilities in preparing them for life and higher education. The purpose of secondary education was to introduce personal and social problems to the student, finding ways to solve them and raising awareness for contributing to the economic, social and cultural development by providing them with the minimum common general knowledge. There were two higher education institutions in Cyprus during the period until 1983. The first was the Turkish Cypriot Teachers' College, while the other was the High Technology Institute founded in 1979. The First Turkish Cypriot Education Council in 1975 decided that higher education institutions would be opened in Cyprus, by their own means and by cooperating with one or several higher institutions in Turkey (Cicioğlu 1964, 221).

1.5. History of Education and Applications in the period of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in Cyprus (since 1983)

In the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, established on November 15, 1983, education policies have been determined by the requirements of the day, in addition to which the implementation of education policies to modernize the national education system were executed. The Second Turkish Cypriot National Education Council was held in 1991, the third in 1995 and the fourth in 2005. Issues such as how the Turkish Cypriot National education system should progress towards its goals and what should be done were discussed, and various decisions were taken. In the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the education system was shaped under the headings pre-school education, primary education, secondary education, higher education and special education (see Fig. 1.) Pre-school education involves the education of children who are not old enough to start school, and was carried out by the state lasting for one or two years, and expanded by a program to cover all the children at pre-school age in the student population. Primary education includes the education of the students from the age of 6 until completion at 11. The objectives and tasks of primary school are designed in accordance with the general objectives and fundamental principles of Turkish Cypriot National education. Primary School institutions consist of one or two years of kindergarten and five years at primary schools. When the students finish the fifth grade they are given a primary school diploma. Secondary education covers at least six years of education related to primary school. Each student completing primary education has the right to proceed with secondary education and to benefit from the offerings to the extent of their interests and abilities.

The objectives and tasks of secondary school have been designed in accordance with the general objectives and fundamental principles of the Turkish Cypriot national education. Secondary education institutions are composed of 3 years secondary and high schools implementing upper secondary school programs and named depending on the weight of the program they follow, vocational high schools, technical high schools and other high schools. Secondary schools may be established separately or affiliated to a high school. The durations of the secondary schools are determined by the ministry depending on the specifications of the program implemented at school, but may not be less than 6 years. Those who have completed secondary school are granted a secondary school diploma, whereas those who have completed high school are granted a high school diploma in accordance with the type of school they attend. Orientation, in particular, starts at secondary school and gains intensity. To avoid any mistakes and to re-orientate in possible developments, it also continues at high school (Ministry of National Education Youth and Sports, Nicosia, Northern Cyprus, mebnet.net).

From the 1990s, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus started to establish private universities. Owing to these universities, Northern Cyprus became a centre of attraction for international students. Currently, the universities in Northern Cyprus are: the Near East University, the Girne American University, the Eastern Mediterranean University, the European University of Lefke, the Cyprus International University, and the University of Kyrenia. Besides these, the Middle East Technical University and the İstanbul Technical University have Cyprus campuses. Around 25,000 students are studying at these universities, including international students.

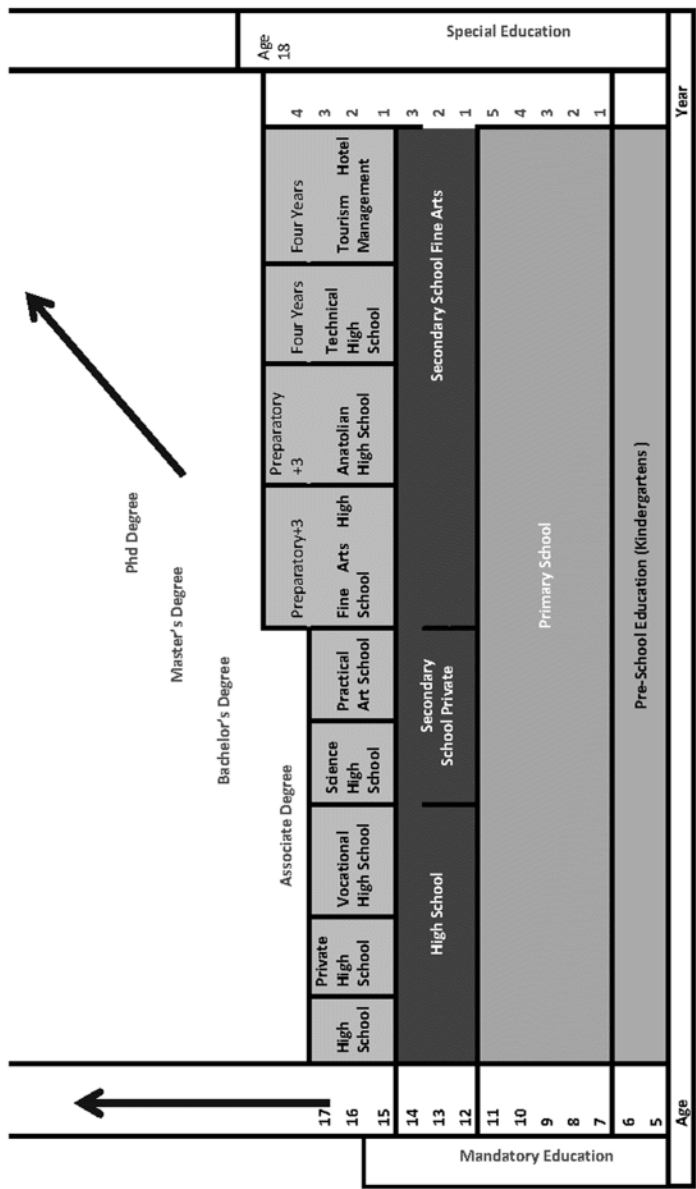


Fig. 1. The structure of the school system in the TRNC (Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports, Nicosia, North Cyprus, Mebnet.net)

2. Geography Education in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

2.1 Importance of Geography Education and the Methods Used

Geography education in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is a matter of utmost importance with regard to Cyprus's strategic, geopolitical, social, cultural and economic future.

Geography provides a strong platform for the young and adults to understand each other, to cooperate to solve common problems and to learn to live and work together (Donert 2008, 107). In achieving this goal, geography is a tool that can be used for life, regarded as a leverage to abolishing the separation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and the Greek Cypriot part of Cyprus for teachers and trainers, and would contribute to the peaceful continuation of the culture of living together. What makes geography so special and what should the geographers' education resources consist of? Geographers see the world from a different perspective and try to find the relations originating from humanity and the environment, investigating their effects to find their meanings. Geography is affiliated with understanding the reasons why different places and regions have significance in human-environment relationship studies (Donert 2008, 107). One of the important purposes of geography is to contribute to the development of citizens who can investigate knowledge and skills related to it and apply them to their lives systematically. "For this reason, geography education should be structured to answer the capability and needs of the students, and at the same time should also be structured to meet the community's, nation's and world's social and workplace requirements" (NAPED 2002).

The main method used to collect quantitative data in the study was the oral interview. This method resulted from the generalizations of the data gathered from oral interviews by those teaching geography, social sciences and citizenship lessons and students from ten primary schools and ten secondary schools. In the oral interviews, teachers and students were asked about their opinions of geography, their approaches and evaluations, teachers' ideas about the geography curriculum, education strategies teachers use in geography lessons, which materials makes up their tools and equipment, what teachers want the students to acquire from geography and their opinions about the textbooks.

2.2. Geography education institutions and their curricula in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

The universities providing geography and geography education are limited to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Department of Geography, opened in the Near East University, which aims to train highly qualified geography teachers who are objective, active, productive and open to innovation, with knowledge about Cyprus, the Turkish world and the geography of the world and who can form relations between humans and the environment and have studied contemporary geography. While one of the purposes of opening a department of geography is to educate geography teachers, particularly for secondary schools in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and Turkey, another is to train specialized staff in the field of CBS to work in various governmental institutions and agencies (neu.edu.tr). Though geography education in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus aims that students perceive the environment in which they live, it also emphasises that students develop their own unique perceptions of the world, and that is why a learning area called “Global Environment: Regions and Countries” has been developed. In today’s world, where communication and transportation facilities have no obstacles, students are informed about events in every corner of the world. Therefore, while gains might be ranked among classes, the subjects they contain might be discussed according to their contents in levels of local, national and world measures. The principal of “from close to far” is sometimes neglected in geography, and examples in global scales and samples from similar and different places and cultures reveal diversity for students to use in their social lives. Geography improves critical thinking, creative thinking, communications and empathy, problem-solving, decision making, using information technologies and efficient use of the language and entrepreneurship. Besides these general skills, it also improves using maps, observation, fieldwork, geographical inquiry, tables, graphs and diagram preparation, interpretation, time perception, and perception of change and continuity (Ministry of Education 2006). In primary schools in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the content of the geography course is in life sciences courses at grades 1 and 3, whereas at grades 4 and 5 it is in social studies courses. Life science courses are given as 40-minute lessons, 5 times in a week. If the teacher cannot finish the subject in 40 minutes they have the right to extend the lesson for another 40 minutes. This practice shows the importance of the social studies course in the curriculum of primary education. The social studies course is given two times a week in 40-minute classes. In primary

school, there is no individual lesson called geography; however, the content of the course is in life sciences and social studies courses. While life sciences books are printed in Turkey, social sciences textbooks are printed in Cyprus. Through primary school, at the end of each semester exams are taken for social studies and life sciences courses. At the first and second grades of secondary school, students study geography in social studies lessons in 40-minute classes. The same period also applies to history lessons. However, students study Citizenship and Kemalism instead of geography at the eighth grade. After the lower classes of secondary school the students go to preparatory class and are given 40-minute geography lessons twice a week. When the students go to high school they choose either social sciences or science as areas. Social science students continue to study geography in 40-minute classes twice a week; however, there is no geography lesson for science students. Students use textbooks printed in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus for the first two years of secondary school. High school geography textbooks are printed in Turkey. Besides this, students learn the geography of Cyprus through the Turkish Cypriot/10B book in their three years at high school. In secondary and high schools four exams are performed annually, provided that they are held in the middle and end of the periods (Philippou, Latif & Hakan n.d., 17–18). Among the topics covered are: the close surroundings of the students (classroom, school, neighbourhood, community, village, town or city) and, since the textbooks come from Turkey, the topics of Turkey and Atatürk are also discussed. In the last two years of primary education, information about the close surroundings of the students and remote places, including Cyprus, are given to students. The subject of Europe is directly discussed in the fourth, sixth and seventh grades. In high school, the geography curriculum concentrates on the geography of the world and Cyprus. In addition to this, from the total number of pages only 25.01% is reserved for general geographic information instead of topographic content. While very little is reserved for Europe (0.88%) and the world (4.92%), 11.23% is reserved for content about Cyprus; this ratio (9.62%) is not too high compared to Turkey. Therefore, the geography curriculum starts with the environment students are familiar with, such as the classroom, school or the neighbourhood, and gradually transitions to more remote places (Ibid., 26).

2.3. The materials used in geography education

In the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the teaching materials used are textbooks first, and then materials including maps, globes,

multimedia tools, and CBS and UA Technologies. Teachers in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus stated that the visual and complementary materials they can use in the classrooms are limited, and that they have limited access to resources. Relying on the oral interviews, though the teachers compensate this lack of material by using CD-ROMs, maps, the internet, and printed media and magazines, the time allocated to preparing these materials makes them feel that they are losing time, and causes them despair. The two important issues emphasized were (1) the importance of providing necessary materials and (2) keeping the existing ones up to date. Particularly, they stressed that the computer needs and internet usage should be fulfilled as soon as possible, because the existing computers in schools do not provide fast access to the internet. They also stated that due to this reason they are not able to use some of the materials. The comments about the resources and materials are usually followed with criticisms about the high numbers of students in the class and the requirement to give geography classes in a special class as a laboratory lesson. As a result of this, there would be no need to move the computers and other materials required for a geography lesson from one class to another, and they might instead meet in a particular place. However, teachers are also aware of the fact that equipment alone cannot make positive progress. As one of the Turkish Cypriot teachers stated: "There is a school with full equipment. But the teachers in the school cannot use this equipment. On the other side, there are teachers who can use this equipment; however they do not have this kind of equipment in their schools." For this reason, the teachers underlined the need to train teachers to use technological and educational tools and equipment in geography education. It has been stated that the teachers need extra materials and resources about difficult topics to teach the students: "The reason why the students have difficulty in understanding the topics is the lack of visual materials." Teachers of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus underlined the importance of field trips and stated that when they want to organize such trips they are faced with great administrative difficulties.

2.4. Course books

In the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus the main objective of the Social Studies 7 (Geography) textbook, designed with a new approach that is far from memorization, is to provide the natural and social geographical subjects in an unconventional method. Thus, the students learn the subjects in geography by thinking, questioning and sometimes adding a little of their selves, or through experience. The fact that the book was designed by

taking the multiple intelligences theory into account has led to students' adoption of the book. Thus, all of the students in geography lessons are individuals who are thinking and questioning. We are fully confident that this book would fulfil its duty as to the formation of the desired human-society model (social studies, geography 7, 2006 book commission). In the discussions we had with private and public school teachers in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the teachers generally expressed their satisfaction about the current state of the curriculum in geography lessons. While there are differences of opinion among teachers of geography, they express that there is satisfactory information about these items in general, such as: the amount of issues, the degree of difficulty, presentation of the topic in a logical structure, structuring of the lessons from easy to hard, presentation of the subjects and easy transition to the next subjects during the lessons, as well as the clear presentation of the objectives in the curriculum, presence of valuable information in the geography curriculum, and the availability of satisfactory information about the geographical places the students live. Looking at the content of the curriculum of geography, there is a dominant belief that there are difficult geographical concepts and new themes and ideas which are quite abstract for the students. This situation underlines that more time is needed to construct these concepts in an active way instead of just "transmitting" or transferring them. Turkish Cypriot teachers agree on the idea that more place should be given to Cyprus instead of Greece and Turkey and the curriculum should be allowing more flexibility in order to give more emphasis to the local geography and students' interests.

Most probably because the curriculum in Greek Cypriot education is older, teachers emphasize the need to evaluate the curriculum immediately, where objectives, content, method and evaluation criteria with developments in geography, contemporary topics in local, European, and International level, problem and anxieties shall also be included (Philippou 2008, 26).

In our discussions with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus geography teachers, we asked for their ideas about the geography textbooks used in schools and the goals they want the students to attain through geography lessons. Generally, their responses were as follows:

- Geography textbooks used in schools in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus comply with the objectives of the curriculum
- The curriculum in geography textbooks has suitable examples and exercises to reinforce the content of the subject
- They contain pictures, tables and graphs to reinforce the understanding of the content and scope of the subject

- They use maps to consolidate the understanding of the subject
- They use language that is helpful to the understanding of the subject
- The textbooks have a positive impact on students' approach to geography lessons
- The geography textbooks develop the geographical skills of the students
- The geography textbooks promote geographical research
- The geography books have scientifically valid content
- The geography books have been written with a civilized approach that is positive regarding geography education and comprehensible for the students
- The textbooks focus on contemporary problems like time and space
- The textbooks consider questions according to scientific criteria
- The textbooks are equipped with up-to-date statistics and data
- The textbooks develop the skills and behaviours of the community
- The textbooks promote usage of complementary materials
- The textbooks provide utilization of atlases while presenting subjects
- The textbooks suggest various methodological approaches and ensure students have an interest in subjects such as the place of school and community to increase quality of life.

The achievements required of students are:

- To ensure the comprehension of physical and human characteristics of the neighbouring countries, such as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Greek Cypriot, Turkey and Greece
- To develop the geographical skills of students and to encourage them in geographical research
- To assure that the students are sensitive to physical, humanistic and social events and political developments
- To ensure that students are knowledgeable about the physical and humanistic features, cultural riches and the geopolitical and geostrategic importance of Cyprus and its neighbours
- To provide the determination of importance of social factors and their effects in the relationship between Cyprus and its neighbours
- To ensure the analysis of political factors' effects in the relationship between Cyprus and its neighbours (Philippou & Önen 2008, 25).

3. Conclusion and Evaluation

Cyprus has witnessed many events from the past to present. Undoubtedly, the most important factor in this fact is the strategic, economic, social, cultural importance and richness of Cyprus. We may consider that there is no better example than Cyprus as a place where different regions, cultures and traditions interact and clash with each other. Similar to the Balkans, education is extremely important in shaping the geocultural texture in this region. In the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus, considered to be one of the most important countries in world geography, the education system and geography curriculum have changed several times over the course of history. Textbooks and education in history lessons and particularly in geography lessons have a great importance. In Cyprus, we observe that the textbooks were criticized until the beginning of the 1950s because of their reliance on the memorization of data. After the 1980s, as facilities developed, the number of tools and equipment increased, constructivist education became more widespread rather than memorization-based education, and an education method became effective where different methods were used to put the student at the centre of learning and orient them to discuss issues and surroundings with their friends. Cyprus provides a wide common ground through the co-habitation of the Turkish people living in the TRNC and the Greek Cypriots living in the southern part of Cyprus, providing a multicultural environment. Therefore, it is important to review geography textbooks to ensure they provide up-to-date scientific information and adopt progressive pedagogical approaches that would support the theory of geographical knowledge as a discipline to help the students discuss rather than just learning about the world, Cyprus and its neighbours. Due to problems with South Cyprus, the country's borders, historical geography, and population characteristics carry geopolitical value. Therefore, these subjects are focused and should be considered very carefully. Since the textbooks taught in the TRNC are prepared in Turkey, the effect and perception of the Turkish national education system is visible. Besides this, the education curriculum and the course contents are ecology-based in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Remarkably, the protection of the environment is considered to be the main objective. The relationship between humanity and the environment has a fair basis in the curriculum. In addition, the atmospheric events and the climatic characters are known and closely monitored in Cyprus, as a centre of tourism. In the field, reflecting the characteristics of the Mediterranean zone, problems related with water are an important issue in the agenda. Therefore, basic information about

elements of hydrography such as groundwater, springs and streams is given, as is the importance of the protection of drinking water resources, and the coasts as the main destinations for tourists are discussed. In this regard, we observe that the characteristics of the coasts are handled in detail, and that the mountains in the north of the country have importance in plateau tourism.

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THE ORIGINS OF LANGUAGE: FROM CULTURAL TRANSMISSION TO INDUCTIVE BIASES

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Introduction

Human languages share a surprising number of properties, ranging from high-level characteristics such as compositional mapping between sound and meaning to relatively low-level syntactic regularities (Hawkins 1988). One explanation for these universal properties is that they reflect constraints on human language learning, with the mechanisms by which we acquire language only allowing us to learn languages with these properties (Chomsky 1965). Due to these mechanisms, certain languages are more learnable than others. Nevertheless, similarities across languages could also be partially the result of descent from a common ancestor (Greenberg 2002).

Analyzing the rate at which languages change can clarify whether similarities across languages are solely the result of cognitive biases or might be partially due to descent from a common ancestor (Rafferty et al. 2014). This chapter will explore how regular linguistic structures can emerge from language evolution by iterated learning, in which one person's linguistic output is used to generate the linguistic input provided to the next person. A model of iterated learning with Bayesian agents is usually applied to show that this process can result in regularization when learners have the appropriate inductive biases. The aim of this chapter is to explore the connection between origin of language and language transmission to determine whether the rate at which languages change can clarify the roots of similarities across languages. These similarities can be result of cognitive biases but might also be partially due to descent from a common ancestor.

Material and Method

This study is designed using a qualitative research approach in which a literature review method has been chosen. The main reason for this method is that the overview of contemporary research should be provided to explore the connection between origins of language, language transmission and inductive biases. Moreover, this study does not attempt to generalize the results but aims to provide solid ground for future research in this area.

Results

Origins of language: from mimicry to natural selection

Much of language origin is unclear, but there are some assumptions that it must have arisen as the brain increased in size and complexity when *Homo sapiens* became differentiated from other species between 2 million and 300,000 years ago (Harley 2001). Also, Broca's area, associated with language, was present in the brains of early hominids two million years ago.

The idea that language evolved from mimicry or imitation has been called the “ding-dong,” “heave-ho” or “bow-wow” theory (Harley 2001). However, such similarities can only be attributed to very few words, and many words take very different forms in different languages. Also, there have been plenty of speculative theories on the origin of language. According to the “bow wow” theory, language began in the imitation of natural sounds; the “heave ho” theory says that it originated in the rhythmic chants of early humans as they collaborated in heavy work; the “sing song” theory says that it came out of courtship, cooing and laughing; the “eureka!” theory says that some clever early human consciously invented it (Harley 2001).

Furthermore, there is much more to language than using words in isolation. What gives human language its power is the ability to combine words by use of a grammar, and it is the evolution of this that is the most contentious issue. Debate on the origin of language is very long, and includes arguments such as: there has not been enough time for something so complex to evolve since the evolution of humans diverged from that of other primates, that grammar cannot exist in any intermediate form (we either have a grammar or we do not have it), and that, as possessing a complex grammar confers no obvious selective advantage, evolution could not have selected for it (Harley 2001). The alternative explanation to

evolution by selection is that language arose as a side effect of the evolution of something else, such as the ability to use more complex manual gestures, or to use tools, or that it arose as a by-product of the increase in overall brain size (Chomsky 1988).

According to Piaget (1923), language developed as a result of the close connection between use of hand gestures and vocal gestures, while Corballis (1992) argued that the evolution of language freed the hands from having to make gestures to communicate. Nevertheless, assumptions that grammar could have arisen from a Darwinian idea of natural selection still exist in the work of Pinker & Bloom, according to whom grammar evolved to communicate existing cognitive representations, and it contributes a lot to the survival of human beings (Pinker & Bloom 1990).

Although the relationship between evolution and language might have been more complex than presented, it is possible that they evolved in a more interactive way. This includes the development of brain and speech apparatus, as well as symbolic processing abilities necessary to preform language. Also, the emergence of consciousness largely depended on the evolution of language. According to Jaynes (1977), consciousness in humans was preceded by a “bicameral mind” based in the two hemispheres of the brain, with a mentality based on verbal hallucinations.

Later on, with the development of writing, the idea of the bicameral mind disappeared; however, the evolution of language is still a speculative topic. Corballis notes that in 1899 the Linguistic Society of Paris famously banned all debate on the origins of language (Corballis 1992). Although controversial, this debate is connected to something more important—the possibility that a common ancestor language (or languages) could still have some influence on similarities across modern languages. Hence, language transmission is analyzed through an iterated learning model.

Language transmission and cultural evolution— the road to inductive biases

Language transmission is a process in which those who are currently learning a language do so based on the utterances of other members of the population (Rafferty et al. 2014). A model that assumes that each generation of people learns language from utterances generated by the previous generation is called an iterated learning model. This model provides an opportunity to understand how constraints on learning influence the process of learning transmission.

Previous research using this model has shown that after a number of generations, the distribution over languages converges to an equilibrium

that reflects the constraints that guide learning (Griffiths & Kalish 2007). While similarities across languages may reflect common ancestry prior to convergence, after convergence the behaviour of learners is independent of the language spoken by the first generation (Rafferty et al. 2014). Pairing the Principles and Parameters iterated learning model with data concerning the estimated amount of time since the origin of human languages, the number of parameters, and the rate of language change, Rafferty, Griffiths & Klein (2014) find that under this model it is possible that a common ancestor language (or languages) could still have some influence on similarities across modern languages.

In order to explore language evolution as well as how language transmission occurs, the iterated language model has been used. According to this model, parents pass their knowledge to children, and the children pass on language to their own children. Even though cultural transmission is seen as a way through which children acquire language, it is still unclear whether it is a language that has been transmitted, or just a sophisticated communication system.

Such processes introduce linguistic variation, with the generalizations produced by each learner changing the prevalence of linguistic forms (Realli & Griffiths 2009). A particular type of change occurs when components of language, with unpredictable or inconsistent variation, lose their unpredictability and become more regular over time. This process of regularization has come to play a prominent role in discussions of the role of innate constraints on language acquisition in linguistics and cognitive science (Pinker 1994).

The regularization of linguistic structures by learners has played a key role in arguments for strong innate constraints on language acquisition, and has important implications for language evolution. However, relating the inductive biases of learners to regularization behaviour in laboratory tasks can be challenging without a formal model. Realli & Griffiths (2009) conducted three experiments demonstrating that simulating the process of language evolution in the laboratory can reveal biases towards regularization that might not otherwise be obvious, allowing weak biases to have strong effects. The results of these experiments suggest that people tend to regularize inconsistent word-meaning mappings, and that even a weak bias towards regularization can allow regular languages to be produced via language evolution by iterated learning (Griffiths & Realli 2011).

Developing models of cultural evolution in which the mechanisms of transmission take into account the inductive biases of agents is essential if we want to understand how the structures of individual minds influence the languages and concepts adopted by societies (Griffiths & Realli 2011).

While children have a tendency to regularize language towards a more deterministic structure, adults do not share the same tendency, and it seems that they produce utterances with the same probabilities as seen in their linguistic input (Griffiths & Realli 2011).

Since most of the things people learn are from other people, the processes and mechanisms of cultural transmission are important for both preventing errors and understanding how, once maintained, knowledge can be changed over time. Biology provides a well-developed account of how information changes through transmission, and it describes phenomena scientists observe in human societies. A difference in learnability means that languages and concepts possessing a particular property are more likely to be accurately transmitted from one generation of learners to the next (Rafferty et al. 2013). Therefore, languages and concepts that are more learnable would become more prevalent and more likely to be accurately transmitted from one generation of learners to another. Transmission and change of knowledge (and language) become salient problems if one considers the more structured knowledge people acquire from one another. This especially applies to language.

Therefore, modelling learning as Bayesian inference provides the tools to predict how cultural transmission can affect forms of knowledge, and how inductive biases can be involved. Bayesian inference provides a way to answer a key question that emerges in describing human learning and memory, indicating how the expectations of an agent combine with the observed data to yield a conclusion (Griffiths & Realli 2011). Laboratory simulations of cultural transmission of different forms of knowledge confirm the prediction that such knowledge will change to take forms that are consistent with human inductive biases (Griffiths & Realli 2011).

The question of how quickly cultural transmission can change the information being transmitted has been explored less extensively. However, it has both practical and theoretical implications since it determines whether it is possible to decrease misunderstandings and whether enough time has passed for languages to have lost the influence of a common ancestor, or how long ago two cultures diverged (Realli & Griffiths 2009).

Discussion

It is important to understand the rate at which languages change, since it can help explain whether similarities across languages may be partially attributable to a common ancestor, and can determine the implications of different assumptions about how languages are acquired and transmitted.

The results of the above-mentioned studies not only imply that many similarities are not due to constraints on learning, but rather the research suggests that if convergence has not occurred, then both a common ancestor and constraints on learning may influence at least some of the properties of modern languages.

However, there are also influences on language change that do not fit into the iterated learning framework that was applied in the research mentioned above. One such influence is the geographic factor (Rafferty et al. 2009). Languages spoken by neighbouring groups are likely to influence one another, just like Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian and Montenegrin languages do.

According to Rafferty et al. (2014), in order to incorporate this factor into iterated learning, one might augment each learner with a location and have multiple descendants from each parent, each of which may migrate to a slightly different location. Learners may then learn both from their parents and from those who are geographically close to them.

Such a model is likely to have different convergence properties than the iterated learning models and would represent a combination of models of language learning and human migration. Social factors include deliberate language changes by social groups to differentiate them from one another (Labov 2001). Even though complex, social factors deserve to be incorporated into new analyses of language evolution.

Conclusion

The results of this analysis can provide an explanation for how models of language evolution can be used to draw conclusions about the origins of similarities across languages. Also, it can pave the way for the investigation of these questions using more realistic models in more natural environments.

After convergence the behaviour of learners is independent of the language spoken by the first generation, but social factors as well as ancestral language still play certain roles within that process. The geographical factor can strongly influence the development of languages in neighbouring countries, since the origin of language depends not only on theories, convergence and the iterated learning model, but also on social interactions.

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