REPATRIATION ISSUES IN CYPRUS

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Abstract

This paper examines the problems and challenges that Cypriot returnees are expected to deal with upon their return to Cyprus after a sojourn abroad. A brief history of immigration and repatriation from and to Cyprus is presented and the Cypriot immigrants' linguistic repertoire in their host countries is described. The study chiefly focuses on the educational issues returnees face in Cyprus as well as on some linguistic and social aspects of their life. The study shows that returnees' limited competence in Greek poses a major obstacle in their education and is a factor that permeates all domains of their lives as they attempt to adjust and function as productive members of Cypriot society. Finally, the paper proposes ways in which some of the returnees' problems can be alleviated and overcome.

Introduction

Immigration is an international phenomenon, which has affected most nations at a certain point in history. People have immigrated for social, economic, political, religious and other reasons in search of a better life. Large waves of immigration have occurred throughout history as a result of social unrest, wars, religious persecutions and adverse economic circumstances. Although immigrating to a new country is often a rewarding experience, the homeland always remains alive in the immigrants' hearts and minds. Consequently, returning home is often the ultimate wish of these immigrants. When the factors that forced people to emigrate cease to exist in their country of origin, many immigrants opt to return to their homeland. Coming home is not an easy process and it is often accompanied by many problems. Returnees must adjust to a culture unknown to them or re-adjust to a culture and society they left long ago and which, in the meantime, may have changed enormously

Repatriation Issues in Other Countries

Reports on how various nations have dealt with returnees' issues are scarce or often not available in English since they are written in the language of the country in question, i.e. Japanese and Hebrew. Greece and Japan constitute examples of countries that have experienced waves of repatriation and who have had to deal with returnees who faced various socio-cultural, linguistic and primarily educational

issues. Greece has traditionally been a country from which thousands of people emigrated to various developed countries in the world such as the USA, Canada, Australia, South Africa and Germany due to harsh socio-economic conditions. In the last twenty years, these conditions have changed for the better in Greece and, therefore, many of these immigrants have returned to their homeland. Many Greek immigrants from Western Europe and the New World have decided to return as a result of the improved political and socio-economic conditions in Greece. On the other hand, Soviet citizens of Greek origin have settled in Greece after the collapse of the Soviet Union and its concomitant economic hardships. returnees who had great expectations from the Greek state, especially with regard to education (Tressou and Mitakidou, 1997), have faced great financial hardships, prejudice and numerous difficulties while trying to adjust to Greek society. Children of these returnees attend schools in different parts of the country forcing the state to modify educational policies in order to accommodate the needs of these children (Damanakis, 1997). The two major steps undertaken were the creation of Admission Classes and remedial courses in Greek as well the establishment of elementary and secondary schools for returnee children. According to Hadjidaki (2000), these attempts failed because the teaching faculty was not trained to teach Greek as a second/foreign language to bilingual children. Moreover, materials are insufficient and do not correspond to the learning needs of this group. The policy as a whole aims at the assimilation of these students and ignores their cultural and linguistic identity. Hadjidaki (2000) warns that this policy may lead to further marginalisation of these students.

Japan is another nation with a large population of expatriates. As in the case of immigrants of other nationalities, a number of these Japanese immigrants have decided to return to Japan. Their return to Japan has brought with it many problems, especially cultural and linguistic ones. One study investigating these problems focuses on a specific group of returnees who lived abroad over one year and then returned to Japan within three years (Yashiro, 1995). This group includes elementary, senior high-school students, university age students, adult returnees and professionals who lived and worked abroad for Japanese companies. Yashiro focuses on linguistic and cultural issues which returnees face overseas as well as in Japan after their return. She also examines the maintenance of Japanese language and culture as another important issue for Japanese people overseas who eventually decide to return to their home country.

Yashiro points out that if maintenance activities in Japanese are not pursued while overseas, Japanese children will face great difficulties with the language when they return. More specifically, the writing and reading ability of children who do not maintain their Japanese deteriorates very quickly and their speaking ability deteriorates rapidly.

Yashiro states that returnees with Japanese language problems need special instruction in Japanese and are often accepted into special classes after screening. According to Yashiro, "many need to learn to write and to learn when and how they should express themselves appropriately in various situations" (1995, p. 149). In addition, the Ministry of Education in Japan strongly promotes education adapted to individual needs and returnee education is part of that movement.

From the psychological point of view, returnee children only recently have managed to get support and understanding from their teachers and classmates and this attitude of acceptance is very important to returnees who often feel "left out" or think they do not "fit in". Japanese teachers encourage returnees to share their knowledge of foreign languages and cultures while they encourage non-returnee students to accept them. Yashiro also examined parents' attitudes towards foreign language maintenance and found out that 73 per cent of the parents believed that re-adaptation to Japanese culture should go hand-in-hand with foreign language maintenance.

In general, the main goal of Japan's returnee education programme was to help returnees with the acculturation process. Then in the late 1970s, Japanese educators began to regard the returnees as a valuable human resource. Yashiro concludes that returnees help promote multilingualism and multiculturalism in schools and help make Japan a linguistically and culturally diverse society. Finally, Yashiro quotes Sussman who recommends that "sojourners need to have a pre-departure, in-country as well as re-entry training" in order to cope effectively with the cultural and linguistic problems in the host and their home country.

Repatriation Issues in Cyprus

From time to time in the twentieth century, Cyprus too, like many other Mediterranean countries, has witnessed large waves of immigration to various developed countries such as Great Britain, Australia, USA, Canada, and South Africa. Like in the cases of Japan and Greece, in the last twenty years, a lot of Cypriot immigrants have chosen to return home.

The aspiration to return "home" has always remained a strong dream and became a reality after certain positive social, political and economic developments had taken place. A thriving economy, the strengthening of democratic institutions and a decision to resolve national issues through peaceful means were among the main reasons that led to the repatriation of many Cypriots. In Papapavlou and Pavlou's (2001) study focusing on UK Cypriot returnees, the subjects gave reasons for a possible relocation to Cyprus. The major reasons included: a desire to be closer to their relatives (36 per cent), good weather and healthier living (33.2 per

cent), a more enjoyable life-style (29.9 per cent) and living among Cypriots (23 per cent).

The repatriation wave to Cyprus began in the mid-eighties and has continued to the present time. According to the Department of Statistics and Research the data indicates a higher immigration flow since 1989. It is estimated that on average the net immigration gain has been 2000-3000 every year since 1989. In 1992, this figure reached 6000. The main reason for the return of Cypriot immigrants is the prospering Cypriot economy coupled with the economic and political problems in their countries of residence such as the UK, Australia, South Africa, the USA and Canada. Unfortunately, this repatriation has brought on other problems, which force many repatriated Cypriots to leave Cyprus once again. Every year a substantial number of them, 20-30 per cent (Paschalis, 2000) choose to re-emigrate because of their unsuccessful attempt to adjust to Cypriot society, educational problems of repatriated children and unexpected financial hardships. The aim of this study is to investigate why such repatriation attempts often meet with failure by looking at the linguistic issues that Cypriot returnees face upon repatriation. Particular emphasis, however, will be given on the educational problems of repatriated students.

The Cypriot Diaspora

The three principle reasons that forced Cypriots to leave their homeland and emigrate to various countries were adverse socio-economic conditions on the island, promising financial and living opportunities abroad, as well as political developments such as the Turkish invasion of 1974. The desire to maintain strong ties with their Greek cultural heritage led to the creation of large immigrant communities in the host countries (see Table 1).

Table 1 The Cypriot community abroad, 1988 (Paschalis, 2000)

United Kingdom	180.000
Australia and New Zealand	40.000
United States and Canada	30.000
Africa	20.000
Greece and Europe	30.000
Total expatriate community	300.000
Total Cyprus population	675.000

The Greek and Greek Cypriot immigrant communities of the Diaspora have been the focus of many studies. In particular, the Greek-Cypriot community in the UK which is the largest and most compact Cypriot community abroad, has been studied by many researchers. Sociologists, economists, linguists and anthropologists focused on various aspects of the lives of UK Cypriots, especially those who live in

the Greater London area. Some of these include the ethnic and cultural identity of Cypriots in the community (Constantinides, 1977; Anthias, 1990, 1992), linguistic behaviour (Papapavlou and Pavlou, 2001; Gardner-Chloros, 1992 and Anaxagorou, 1984), the educational policies and practices of the community (Ioannides, 1990) and the economic growth of the community (Constantinou, 1990). With regard to immigrant communities in other countries there is not much available information. While some studies make reference to the Cypriot community in Australia (Tamis, 1990), however, this research primarily focused on the entire Greek-speaking community and not only on the Greek-Cypriot immigrants.

The Linguistic Profile of Cypriot Immigrants

Previous studies on returnees to Greece and Japan have shown that these people face primarily linguistic and acculturation problems. Therefore, in order to better understand the language-related problems Cypriot returnees face after repatriation, it is useful to examine the extent to which the Greek language is maintained among Cypriots in the Diaspora. The two major Cypriot immigrant communities abroad, which have been studied extensively from the linguistic point of view, are those of the UK and Australia.

United Kingdom
The linguistic repertoire of UK Cypriots consists of the Cypriot Dialect (CD), Standard Modern Greek (SMG) and English. The speakers' competence in these three linguistic codes depends on what generation they belong to. The term **first generation** refers to Greek-Cypriots who were born in Cyprus and later emigrated. These people are almost exclusively speakers of the CD with very few speakers of other Greek dialects including SMG. The group spoke little or no English when they immigrated to the UK and the various other host countries. The members of this generation kept close ties with each other, maintained traditional Cypriot social values and used their often limited English with native speakers only. Since they lived in self-contained communities, there was little need to interact with English speakers. Such interaction was often confined to using public transportation, shopping outside the community or formal interaction with British authorities (Zarpetea, 1996). This is why first generation Cypriots in the UK speak the Cypriot dialect differently from Cypriot immigrants in other countries. In other countries Cypriot immigrants live in large Greek-speaking communities where numerous other varieties of Greek are spoken. The members of these communities have gradually adopted SMG as their language of communication. Therefore, the Cypriot members of these communities are more likely to speak both SMG and Cypriot Greek.

The term **second generation** refers to those born to Cypriot parents in the UK also known as British Born Cypriots. The members of this group have received

more formal education than their parents. Although second generation immigrants are familiar with both CD and English, the use of English predominates. This is expected and results from formal schooling in the English educational system and the development of social contacts outside the Cypriot community. Moreover, overall competence in SMG is not as good as in CD and varies depending on their contacts with SMG speakers (Karyolemou, 2000).

Children born to British-born Cypriots constitute the **third generation** of the Cypriot community residing in the UK. The speakers of this group are mostly native speakers of English who also have limited command of CD. For this reason, their spoken Greek is characterised by strong interference from English at all linguistic levels. When the situation calls for the use of CD, third generation immigrants use fixed, so-called, Greenglish expressions.

According to Karyolemou (2000), the British educational system has been reluctant to support the teaching of ethnic minority languages. As a result, the responsibility to teach Greek has shifted to the Cypriot community (church and other community institutions) with the help of the Cypriot government. Even though parents acknowledge the importance of maintaining Greek and encourage their children to attend Greek language schools, only 50 per cent of the second and third generation immigrants attend a community school. Consequently, those who do not receive any formal instruction in Greek are not competent in standard Greek even though they can use the CD orally. Papapavlou and Pavlou (2001) found that the subjects in their study consider themselves more competent in CD than in SMG as shown in the following table.

Table 2: Self-rating of proficiency in CD and SMG (Papapavlou and Pavlou, 2001)

Self-rating	Cypriot-Dialect	Standard Modern Greek
Excellent	20.8	15.0
Very good	39.4	8.7
Good	38.7	29.9
Poor	5.1	3.6

Australia
The second largest Greek-Cypriot community in the Diaspora is found in Australia. This community is situated within a larger Greek-speaking community and its speakers have greater contact with SMG than those in the UK. Consequently, Cypriots in Australia are perceptibly more competent in SMG than Cypriots in the UK. According to Tamis (1990) the Greek language spoken in Australia, which is numerically the second strongest mother tongue, shows the highest rate of language maintenance among all other community languages spoken in Australia.

With regard to the linguistic repertoire of the Australian community by generations, there is a similar pattern to that of the UK. Tamis (1990) also states that the Cypriot Dialect is among the few Greek dialects that show a certain vitality.

Educational Issues after Repatriation

The linguistic profile of the returnees remains the same after their repatriation. The degree of linguistic competence they exhibit depends, in general, on what generation they belong to. First generation returnees are fully competent in Cypriot Greek and/or Standard Modern Greek. Second generation returnees are in general unbalanced bilinguals with English being their dominant language. Finally, third generation returnees, who are young children and teenagers, are basically native speakers of various varieties of English with very limited knowledge of CD or SMG. These third generation returnees are the least competent in Greek and many of them have not concluded their schooling in the host countries. It should only be expected that these Cypriots will complete their education in the various institutions of Cyprus. School age returnees may find themselves in a vastly different educational setting in which they are not equipped to function as students mainly due to their limited competence in Greek. Although studies focusing on this issue are few in number, the existing ones provide adequate evidence of the role that limited competence in Greek plays in young returnees' education.

A study on returnee students in nursery, elementary and secondary levels of the educational system in Cyprus was conducted by the Educational Psychological Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture in Cyprus in 1994 (Paschalis, 2000). This study reveals that a significant percentage of school age returnee children had distinct language problems as well as difficulties adapting to school life. One of the most important findings was the high number of returnee students (2556) within the state educational system. It should also be noted that a large number of returnee children attend private English schools since their limited competence in Greek prevents them from attending public schools. The number of returnee students in both public and private schools was so high that the Educational System was not able to cope with the needs of these students.

For the study conducted by the Educational Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture, teachers at all levels of the Educational System in Cyprus were asked to report on the problems of returnee children in the areas of spoken language, written language and adjustment into the Cypriot society. The results show that returnee children have serious problems in all three areas. These findings portray an alarmingly negative picture of how teachers perceive these children. Similar issues regarding returnee children were the focus of another study (Paschalis, 2000). In this study teachers were asked to identify school subjects in which returnee children exhibited poorer or better results when compared to the average

student in the school. Also, teachers were asked to indicate whether returnee children presented more problems of attitude and adjustment than other children and whether they present more positive attributes compared to other children. Greek was identified as the area of greatest difficulty and English was the main subject in which most children performed better. With regard to these children's adjustment into Cypriot society, the findings indicate that there is a problem, but that it is not as acute as had been detected in the study by the Educational Psychological Services. Moreover, teachers started to identify numerous positive attributes on the part of returnee children and recognised that the problems do not stem from the children themselves, but rather from the inability of the State and system to provide facilities for returnees and to cater to their needs. A final conclusion of the study is that the source of these problems may be the absence of a specific migration policy on the part of the state.

Returnees Students in Secondary Education

Another study conducted by Pavlou et al., (2000) identified other major language related problems returnee students face in secondary education. The 107 students who participated in the study were enrolled in six private schools in Nicosia where the medium of instruction was English. Most returnee students of this age attended private schools since their limited competence in Greek prevented them from attending a Greek public school. The data for this study was elicited through questionnaires addressed to the students, their teachers and their parents.

Linguistic Profile
The majority of the 107 secondary students in the study consider themselves more proficient in English than in Greek in all four language skills as revealed in a self-assessment task. Tables 3 and 4 show the students' self-assessment in each skill in both Greek and English. It is clear that the majority of the students consider themselves to be by far more proficient in English in all skills.

Table 3 Secondary Students' self assessment in Greek

	Poor	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Reading	22	44	32	9
Writing	36	50	19	2
Speaking	18	37	28	24
Listening	4	28	38	37

Table 4 Secondary Students' self assessment in English

	Poor	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Reading	-	13	39	55
Writing	1	15	54	38
Speaking	-	5	30	72
Listening	1	10	23	73

A more careful look at tables 3 and 4 reveals that students consider their reading and writing skills in English to be significantly superior to their corresponding skills in Greek. Since reading and writing are considered more academically oriented skills than speaking and listening, the results from the self-assessment clearly support Cummins' distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and may account for possible language related problems in Greek.

Cummins (1980, 1981) made the distinction between BICS and CALP with regard to what exactly constitutes proficiency in a language (both in L1 and L2). Cummins defines CALP as "those aspects of language proficiency, which are closely related to the development of literacy skills in L1 and L2." (1980, p. 175). Along the same lines, Brown (1987, p. 199) considers CALP as "that dimension of proficiency in which the learner manipulates or reflects upon the surface features of language outside the immediate interpersonal context. It is what learners often use in classroom exercises and tests which focus on form." On the other hand, BICS is the communicative capacity that all children acquire in order to be able to function in daily interpersonal exchanges. Later on, Cummins added another dimension to this distinction of CALP and BICS, namely the notion of context-reduced and context-embedded communication. In this new framework that focuses on the context in which language is used, CALP resembles context-reduced and BICS resembles context-embedded communication. A great deal of classroom oriented language is context-reduced, while face-to-face communication with people is context-embedded (Brown, 1987, p. 199).

Students' Views
Students identify problems both in and out of the classroom. In the academic environment of the classroom the biggest problem encountered is comprehension of the subject matter taught (especially understanding difficult concepts). This occurs because the language presented in academic textbooks is more difficult than spoken language and written language lacks the redundancy of spoken language. Moreover, academic reading requires knowledge of precise technical vocabulary and appropriate grammatical structures such as the passive voice and technical writing. This is more evident in subjects such as Religious Instruction, Greek

History and Greek Language and Literature, subjects that are obligatorily included in the curriculum of English private schools and taught in Greek as specified by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Finally, students refer to the difficulty they face in understanding instructions and essay and exam questions. Repatriated students may know the subject (content) very well but feel unable to exhibit their knowledge because of their limited proficiency in Greek. Since success on a test is considered to be the ultimate evidence of someone's knowledge, inability to perform adequately, despite being in command of the subject, leads to great disappointment and frustration on the part of repatriated students. These feelings are manifested in the comments of some students.

> "I cannot express myself very well in the Greek language, therefore my marks are very low even though I know the theory of the subject."

> "I find it difficult understanding test and exam questions. This occasionally brings down grades."

> "I have great difficulty understanding the lesson; therefore, it tends to affect the results in my report."

Students report difficulties in the four language skills and predominantly with reading and writing. Academic reading poses problems for students since it requires a good understanding and application of the various reading techniques such as recognising context clues, finding the main idea, inference and prediction which lead to a more thorough understanding of the text.

Teachers' Views
The teachers' assessment of the situation reinforces the students' perception of the matter. More specifically, teachers notice that students respond negatively to subjects taught in Greek, especially towards grammar courses, and often withdraw into themselves. According to the teachers the main problems students face are comprehension of the content of the subject matter often due to technical vocabulary and the use of advanced language, as well as lack of participation and lack of interest on the part of the students. In addition, teachers indicate that many students encounter moderate to great difficulty in reading, writing and technical vocabulary whereas the areas of listening and speaking are perceived to be less problematic.

Teachers feel the need to address students' language problems by adopting certain practices in their classrooms. Teaching is modified in order to accommodate the needs of bilingual students in many ways. More specifically teachers report that

they use simplified language and vocabulary in the classroom and that they translate scientific vocabulary into the students' dominant language. Some teachers also give handouts and booklets containing information on the subject taught in the students' dominant language. However, most teachers choose not to provide teaching materials in the students' dominant language because it is not always easy to find such material, and because such practices seem to be discouraged by the schools. Out of the classroom, teachers report that they provide individual help during breaks and that they direct students to reference material in the library. In addition, they try to give extra and easier homework to these students and simplify homework directions.

By adopting all these practices teachers hope not only to help their students cope with their academic problems but also aim at making students feel at home by eliminating the 'distance' between the teachers and the students.

Both students and teachers offer suggestions on how to deal with the problems mentioned above. More precisely, students ask for extra hours in Greek and extra tutoring after class and also express the need for more psychological support and understanding on the part of their teachers. The students also expect the language used in class to be simplified by slowing down the pace of the lesson, improving the existing way of explaining vocabulary, using more English in class and tailoring homework to the students' level. It is interesting to note that teachers attempt to make the necessary adjustments to their teaching and introduce the necessary policies to alleviate these problems. The students' suggestions partly reflect current teachers' practices.

Teachers recognise the need to simplify their teaching and provide psychological support to the students. They also see the need for students to speak Greek more frequently and to get extra practice in essay organisation and punctuation and suggest that students take private lessons in Greek to enrich their vocabulary. Out of the classroom teachers encourage students to have more contact with the Greek language by reading more books in Greek, by listening to the radio and watching TV and by studying more. Finally, teachers expect the students to assume more responsibility for their learning and progress. Also, teachers feel it is necessary to raise awareness among their colleagues regarding the needs of these students.

Parents' Views and Recommendations
In order to get a more complete picture of the nature and the magnitude of the problems repatriated students face in secondary private education in Cyprus, the parents' perception and assessment of the situation was also examined. The role of parental involvement in the returnee children's education, ways of dealing with the perceived problems, and the parents' suggestions with regard to these

problems were explored by means of questionnaires and interviews (Pavlou et al., 2000).

Parents believe that most of their children's academic problems are the result of insufficient knowledge of the Greek language in the areas of vocabulary, spelling, grammar, writing, oral and reading comprehension. According to the parents these problems exist for a number of reasons. First, these students had limited exposure to Greek schooling while abroad. Secondly, upon returning to Cyprus, they attend only English schools and they use predominantly English at home. Furthermore, parents regard current teaching approaches of Greek as a foreign language in Cyprus as inadequate. Also, they report that their children reject learning Greek because of the difficulties they encounter when attempting to learn it. Finally, the fact that both Standard Modern Greek and the local variety (Cypriot Dialect) are used simultaneously by the members of the Cypriot speech community interferes with their children's learning of Greek. Parental involvement and assistance with their children's academic problems becomes indispensable due to the limited competence these children have in Greek and their negative feelings towards the language. Moreover, some parents report that schools do not offer enough help to this group of students while, at the same time, setting the same expectations for both repatriated and local students with regard to their language skills in Greek.

Parents also report on the various ways they help their children. Parents most often correct their children's homework, which often involves activities such as paraphrasing and simplifying the language found in textbooks. In addition, parents report that they need to support their children psychologically by making it clear to them that their problems are partially attributable to the limitations of the private school system and not to their low academic abilities. These limitations include a lack of bilingual teachers, lack of financial means to provide extra tutoring and the decision by the Ministry of Education and Culture to make the teaching of Greek, History and Religious Instruction mandatory in all secondary English speaking schools. Finally, parents have presented some suggestions addressed to schools (teachers and administration) and to the state which aimed at improving the situation. The suggestions offered focus on the psychological support that these students may need as well as the methodological approaches that should be applied in schools for a more effective teaching and learning environment. Parents believe that repatriated students need more encouragement, attention and support from their teachers in order to better cope with their problems. Moreover, they believe that the creation of bilingual classes would help boost students' self-esteem and motivation.

The parents' recommendations appear to be valid and cogent with regard to their children's problems. From the educational point of view further measures can

be taken in three categories according to the parties involved: parents, school and state.

In general, there should be more communication between school and parents. This is something that can be concretely achieved if parents become more involved with parent-teacher associations (PTA). These associations can constitute a forum where parents can voice their concerns regarding the linguistic, educational and social problems of their children. A smooth integration of repatriated students into the school system could be achieved through the interaction between the repatriated and local students. Parents can play a crucial role in creating conditions that promote this interaction, and encourage repatriated students to socialise more with local students than with other repatriated and non-Cypriot students, the current case. Since repatriated students seem to exhibit some negativity towards learning Greek, parents feel they should persuade their children that learning Greek will prove to give them advantages in many ways. These include finding a job, better understanding of Cypriot society, and improved communication with the extended family and other Cypriots. Parents can serve as role models for their children by using more Greek at home and with friends and family.

Returnee Students in Tertiary Education

The problems repatriated students face in secondary education continue at the tertiary level. Evidence for this is provided in a study conducted by Pavlou and Christodoulou (2001) which focuses on the prospects repatriated students have in tertiary education in Cyprus. More specifically, the study elicits repatriated students' opinions with regard to the following issues: (a) the likelihood and prospects of attending various tertiary level institutions in Cyprus and abroad, (b) factors that would prevent them from attending specific institutions (with special emphasis on the students' linguistic ability as determining factor), and (c) student views of the quality of education in several tertiary level institutions in Cyprus and abroad.

Linguistic Profile
The linguistic picture that emerges regarding tertiary level students is very similar to the picture obtained for secondary level students. This is expected because subjects in both levels belong to the third generation of returnees. Tables 5 and 6 show that the 37 subjects believe they are much more competent in English than in Greek in all four skills, with the dichotomy between BICS and CALP being confirmed.

Table 5 Tertiary Students' self-assessment of their language skills in Greek

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Poor
Reading	9	9	16	3
Writing	3	4	20	10
Speaking	11	12	12	2
Listening	19	12	5	1

Table 6 Tertiary Students' self-assessment of their language skills in English

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Poor
Reading	27	8	2	
Writing	22	11	4	
Speaking	32	4	1	
Listening	34	3		

In this study, repatriated students' possibilities of pursuing tertiary education in Cyprus and abroad are assessed and the intentions of two groups of students are elicited. The first group consists of graduating secondary education students who are enrolled in schools where the medium of instruction is English. The second group consists of students who are currently enrolled in institutions of tertiary education in Cyprus. Upon graduation from high school, the majority of the students intend to pursue studies at the tertiary level given that they will not be restricted by factors such as financial, language, grades or other personal circumstances.

It is apparent that the overwhelming majority of the subjects intend to study in a university in an English-speaking country. In addition, the second most preferred choice is attending a university in their country where they were born. Knowing that the majority of repatriated students come from the U.K., Australia, South Africa, Canada and the USA and given the fact that English is their dominant language, it is not surprising that these students opted to study in an institution where the medium of instruction is English. Even when for any reason the subjects choose to stay in Cyprus, they still prefer an institution where the medium of instruction is English. These choices are probably the result of various considerations on the part of the students. Such considerations could be the quality of education in a given institution, the cost of attending such institutions, the subjects' ties to a certain country, the language of instruction at this institution (in this case English) and the feeling of being accepted by a particular society.

With regard to students' opinions of the quality of education in various institutions, it seems that education offered by universities in English speaking countries and in the subjects' countries of origin is highly appreciated by the subjects. As for universities in Greece, education offered in these institutions is

considered quite good. Similarly, English medium institutions in Greece are in general considered quite satisfactory. Finally, the quality of education at the University of Cyprus (UCY) is considered to be rather good.

Given the recognised quality of the UCY and the minimal cost of studying there, it is surprising that none of the subjects intended to study there. These facts lead to the conclusion that the subjects' limited command of the Greek language is a major deterrent from studying at the UCY. From the student perspective, repatriated students have no choice but to attend an English speaking institution either in Cyprus or abroad.

It is interesting to note that some subjects state that they would choose to study at UCY if they are not restricted by the factors named above i.e. grades, language, and parents given that education at the UCY is free. Moreover, the students rank the reasons that would prevent them from studying at a university of their choice. Table 7 shows their responses.

Table 7 Reasons according to importance

	1st most important reason	2nd most important reason	3rd most important reason	4th most important reason
Grades	12	5	5	
Parents	1	5	4	2
Financial	17	3	1	
Language		1	2	9
Other	2			

The most frequently cited reasons that would prevent the subjects from studying at a university of their choice are financial constraints and grades. Language is never cited as the first most important reason. Only one subject ranks it as the second most important reason, two as the third most important reason and nine as the fourth most important reason. It seems that language is not a major obstacle to their future educational plans and this is not surprising since 28 of the subjects (Table 1) intend to study in an English speaking country. However, it appears that language is after all the major obstacle in many subjects' decision. The subjects rank financial constraints as the major obstacle to their future plans. Theoretically, this should not have been a consideration since they have the option of studying at the UCY without having to pay tuition. However, this does not seem to be an option at all for most of them. At the same time the subjects consider the quality of education at the UCY to be high. Therefore, we can safely conclude that language is a major obstacle in their educational plans since this excludes them from studying at an admittedly reputable and inexpensive institution.

The subjects explicitly state whether they feel disadvantaged, in any way, as far as their university education prospects are concerned. The majority of the students (30) claim that they do not feel disadvantaged and only six (6) of them feels that they are disadvantaged in that respect. On the contrary, with regard to their future educational plans the students seem to consider themselves to be in an advantageous position over Cypriots who have lived all their life in Cyprus. The major advantage they mention is the fact that they are bilingual with English being their dominant language. Their excellent knowledge of English will make it easier for them to be admitted to a college or university abroad. Twenty-four subjects take this view. Another advantage that students mention is their ability to easily adapt to various environments, i.e. Cyprus and the host country. This is mostly due to their exposure to and wider understanding of other cultures.

Another issue under investigation is the repatriated students' perception of the state's obligations towards them. Even though, in general, returnee students do not think that they are disadvantaged, the majority believe that they should be offered help regarding their university/college education. Only two of them think that they do not need any help and one has no opinion.

Students' Views
The second group in the study consists of students already attending tertiary level institutions (colleges) in Cyprus where the medium of instruction is English. This is because as mentioned earlier in the discussion of the secondary students' assessments of the situation, repatriated students have very few possibilities to attend the UCY. The few positions reserved for repatriated students require excellent academic performance at the secondary level.

The majority of the subjects state that they choose to attend a college in Cyprus where the medium of instruction is English because of the fact that their command of Greek would not allow them to study in an institution where the medium of instruction is Greek. In addition, they express their desire to work, study and be with their families in Cyprus. Finally, social, political and economic instability in their countries of origin is a factor that deters them from studying abroad. A smaller group of students state that they would rather study in an English speaking country. Students in both groups consider education in English speaking countries to be of better quality than the education offered in institutions in Cyprus. Moreover, according to the students a degree from universities in English speaking countries is more appreciated in Cyprus. Also, the subjects regard the education in Greek universities to be of high standard despite the fact that they cannot attend these institutions. Overall, the subjects see greater possibilities of studying in universities in English speaking countries and fewer possibilities in universities in their countries of origin. Possibilities of studying in Greek speaking universities are very limited

because the medium of instruction in these institutions is SMG. In addition to language, the students' choice of institution is determined by financial constraints, academic qualifications, safety and the influential role of parents on their children's decision with financial constraints being the most crucial factor. In summary, repatriated students have fewer choices with regard to tertiary education in comparison with other Cypriot students.

As a result, there is a feeling of discontent among repatriated students since they feel that the educational system is not completely fair towards to them. They believe that the state should tend to their special needs by providing psychological, moral and financial support to them and their families upon and after their repatriation.

Conclusion – Recommendations

It is apparent that school age returnees in Cyprus experience various problems upon repatriation. These young returnees face such problems at all levels of the educational system on Cyprus. In general, the returnees' inability to perform adequately in an academic setting due to their limited competence in Greek, often hinders their smooth transition and acculturation into the school community and consequently into the Cypriot society as a whole. This alienates them from their cultural identity and language and makes them return back to the countries they came from.

With regard to the language related problems repatriated students face, a study by Pavlou et al., (2000) provides the following recommendations: First, there should be a timely detection of the problems through the development and administration of appropriate placement tests and/or the improvement of the existing placement tests. These new testing instruments should cover all four skills and assess the degree to which the students can use BICS and CALP. The results of such tests could determine the nature of courses offered to those students. Second, classes for Greek as a foreign language should be created in which a designated bilingual teacher should assist students with their individual problems during or after class. This would be especially beneficial for courses that are taught entirely in Greek such as History, Religious instruction and Greek language. A third suggestion is that students could be pulled out of mainstream classes, again, especially for the classes taught entirely in Greek. Such a choice would prevent students from feeling uncomfortable or disadvantaged in a classroom with native speakers of Greek. In addition, it is suggested that for those courses taught in Greek, students should have a choice in what language they should be tested. Transitional bilingual schools could be created in Cyprus so that repatriated students would have a chance to prepare as quickly as possible to pursue studies in Greek. Such policies already

exist in countries such as the USA, Canada and Germany. The acculturation process in the new environment is a factor, which could play a significant role in the academic performance of those students. Therefore, it is important that private English schools in Cyprus incorporate extra-curricular activities that would bring together repatriated and local students and help them function better in both their social and academic environment. Finally, the Ministry of Education and Culture could play a major role in the implementation of the above suggestions by training teachers to tend to the needs of this special group of students by developing the appropriate materials and placement tests and promoting a closer co-operation with the individual schools.

In addition, parents through school associations can apply pressure on the state and demand that the state subsidise the education of repatriated students in the same way the education of various religious and ethnic minorities in Cyprus is subsidised. Moreover, parents should demand the Ministry of Education and Culture increase the number of Greek language classes that are currently offered in a few schools as well as improve teaching materials and methods. The Ministry of Education and Culture should also appoint teachers of Greek in the English medium schools where these students' needs could be addressed more thoroughly.

Finally, the state should disseminate information on issues of repatriation before repatriated students decide to return to Cyprus. This kind of enlightenment on educational matters, tax issues, military service and job opportunities can play a vital role in the parents' decision. Finally, Cyprus could consult with countries such as Greece and Israel that have faced similar problems regarding repatriation issues and who seem to have dealt to a certain extent with them successfully.

It is a firm conviction of the authors that Cypriot returnees constitute a valuable human resource for Cyprus because of their linguistic and cultural experiences. Their experiences greatly enrich the schools and community in which they function. In fact, returnees play a decisive role in Cypriot society's effort to operate as a multilingual and culturally diverse nation. Returnees should not be perceived as a problem but rather as an asset that can be positively exploited. The Cypriot state should embrace returnees by assisting them in their acculturation effort through constant and genuine interest in them before and after repatriation.

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