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Language, (in)security and everyday practice

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Language, (in)security and everyday practice

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This paper explores the relationship between sociolinguistics as the study of everyday communicative practice in changing social conditions on the one hand, and on the other, securitisation, a process that speaks of enemies and major threats to everyday existence. So is sociolinguistics irrelevant to securitisation, or can sociolinguistics point to everyday complexities in securitisation that would otherwise be missed? The discussion is divided into the following sections: (1) Changing ethno-politics in Britain; (2) Securitisation as exceptionalisation, departing from the everyday; (3) Learning the language of the enemy in Cyprus; (4) A sociolinguistic interpretation; (5) 'Everyday international relations': A growing field of interest; (6) Goffman and the study of everyday *interactional* insecurities; (7) Goffman for IR; (8) Summary and prospect. The paper draws on a collaboration established at King's – www.kcl.ac.uk/liep.

In this paper, I want to talk about language and security, focusing on language and discourse in times and places where people are talking about enemies and threats-to-their-very-existence. This is a fairly new theme for me, and as Panayiota Charalambous' 2017 bibliography shows, it hasn't been very widely studied in sociolinguistics. It's a topic that's really too serious to dabble in casually, without some defensible justification, so I'd like to say right at the outset that I'm coming to questions of security and insecurity very much as an ethnographic and interactional sociolinguist. Throughout this paper I'll be working with a view of sociolinguistics that I associate with founding figures like Gumperz, Hymes, Ochs, Heath, Labov, as well as with lots of contemporary research in linguistic ethnography/ linguistic anthropology. So in the definition I'm orienting to, sociolinguistics is **the study of everyday communication in changing social conditions**.

I'll start my presentation with a glimpse of changing ethno-political relations in Britain, and then I'll introduce the notion of securitisation, also reflecting on 'enemy' as a category. In fact, both these notions put the 'everyday' in jeopardy, and if that's the case, is there still a place for sociolinguistics-as-the-study-of-everyday-communication, and if there is, what is it? To pursue these questions, I'll first talk about the work we've been doing on Greek-Cypriots learning Turkish, the language of the enemy; and then I'll broaden the discussion to peace, conflict and security studies, arguing that Goffman's work on interactional insecurity has a lot to contribute to growing interest in 'everyday international relations'.

But let's start with the dynamics of ethnicity in the UK, and the kind of understanding generated in linguistic ethnography.

1. Changing ethno-politics in Britain

Thirty years ago, when I studied everyday communicative practice in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood in the south Midlands of England in the 1980s, race and anti-racism were very high on the national political agenda (Rampton 1995). 'Asian' was a very significant discursive category, referring to people with lots of different religious backgrounds from the Indian sub-continent, and while young people with family links to the Caribbean were generally regarded as deviant problems that needed policing, Asians were much more likely to be seen as victims of linguistic and cultural difference who needed help. You could see the influence of these representations in the media, in public discourse and in educational policy, and they also showed up in my recordings of white, black and Asian adolescents interacting with peers and adults. So when they shifted into a Jamaican accent, the stance they projected tended to be assertive, verbally resourceful, aligned with youth culture and opposed to authority. In contrast, shifts into accented Indian English projected a deferential cultural and linguistic incompetence.

At the same time, it was very clear that when these kids altered their speech like this, they weren't unleashing deep-seated ethno-cultural traits and dispositions - they were manipulating ideological

representations, in lots of different ways – seriously, playfully, with and without conviction. In fact, the key thing was the shared local sensibility that they constructed in all this crossing and stylisation, very much transgressing the lines of ethnic descent essentialised in the multicultural discourses of the time. And this led to the more general politico-methodological point that Roxy Harris and I formulated a bit later (2009). Yes, generalisations about contemporary ethnicity, class, gender etc are really important, both in analysis and politics. But in the process of abstracting and simplifying, it is vital to keep going back to the kinds of everyday practice you can capture in ethnographic recordings. Without that anchoring – without a sense of how in one way or another, people often *do* manage in the generally rather low-key practices of the day-to-day – you’re left vulnerable to the high-octane dramatisations of public and political discourse, panicked and unable to imagine how anyone copes.

Now let’s move forward to the present, where the political discourses about language and ethnicity have substantially changed. There’s an excellent account of these changes in Kamran Khan’s paper on “Citizenship, securitisation and suspicion in UK ESOL policy”, and in it, he shows how “a security agenda has come to dominate legislation and political discourse about citizenship and the testing and teaching of English for speakers of other languages” (2014:2). Following 9/11 and the 2001 riots in the north of England, a discourse has emerged that “sees institutional racism as less significant than the threat of Muslim disorder/terrorism” (Pilkington 2009:3.5, cited in Khan 2014:8). In this discourse, Muslims become a ‘suspect community’; senior British politicians put language proficiency, extremism and terrorism together in a single hierarchy of threats (*ibid* p.2; Khan in Charalambous et al 2015:17); and health services, local authorities, and education from early child care providers to higher education are made partners in the counter-terrorist *Prevent* programme, “so that signs of this effort to alert the public to the threat of terrorism are now unavoidable in everyday life, whether these take the form of classroom surveillance, new measures in airports, or public signage about how to report suspicion” (Khan in Charalambous et al 2015:16).

This doesn’t go unchallenged – the *Prevent* strategy has been widely contested,¹ and Khan & Blackledge show that on the ground, if you look more closely at the actual enactment of for example, citizenship ceremonies, they can be quite good-humoured events. Even so, says Khan, “‘security’ is... now a multi-faceted and omni-pervasive dynamic in contemporary life, meriting much more extensive critical attention than sociolinguists have so far given it” (Khan 2014:11). And one reason for taking a closer look goes back to the point I made a minute ago: sociolinguistic ethnography can help to get the processes you hear about in the political and media arena *into perspective*, quite often cutting the ground away from dominant accounts, pointing in new or different directions.

But there is a complication if we want to talk about the ‘everyday practice’ and ‘everyday social relations’ in the kind of context that Khan is talking about. Like a lot of sociolinguists, I’ve just been using the term ‘everyday communication’ rather loosely, to distinguish between what you hear from elites in government and media and the ways people talk about things ‘on the ground’ during their routine activity at work, at home, in their neighbourhoods. But actually, in the processes of securitisation that Khan refers to, the ‘everyday’ is itself thrown into question, forcing us to ask whether sociolinguistics-as-the-study-of-everyday-communication is still viable in contexts like this. So let’s take a closer look at this ‘securitisation concept’.

2. Securitisation as exceptionalisation, departing from the everyday

In the study of International Relations, the idea of ‘securitisation’ was first developed to describe an institutional process in which influential figures identify threats to the very existence of the state and other bodies, and then they seek to suspend normal political rights and procedures (e.g. Buzan & Wæver 2003). With securitisation, a particular group or issue is said to present such a major risk – such an ‘existential threat’ – that it needs to be moved out of the realm of ordinary politics into the realm of exceptional measures. In other words, the rules, freedoms and entitlements that tend to underpin our sense of ‘the everyday’ are said to be in danger, either from the threat itself or from the measures developed to thwart it.

¹ For example, the trade union for Further Education and Higher Education has stated, “the *Prevent* agenda will force our members to spy on learners, is discriminatory towards Muslims, and legitimises Islamophobia and xenophobia, encouraging racist views to be publicised and normalised in society” (UCU 2015: 4), and over 280 academics signed a letter to *The Independent* arguing against *Prevent*’s “chilling effect on open debate, free speech and political dissent” (10/7/15).

Let's expand on this by thinking a bit more about a closely linked notion – 'enemy', a category that hasn't really been very prominent in sociolinguistics. Yes in sociolinguistics, there's lots of work where conflict and struggle feature very prominently, but for the most part in sociolinguistics, this happens inside nation-states, and it's more about domination and subordination, competition, rivalry or politics than actual war with violence, casualties and fatalities. Likewise, yes, 'the Other' – 'Other-with-a-capital-O' – is a very big figure in sociolinguistic analysis, but on the whole, this stops quite a long way short of 'enemy'. *Identity*'s been a central sociolinguistic theme for the last 30 years, and the contrasting Other is crucial to identity-definition. In fact there's a plurality of Others around us – others identified in terms of taste, style, wealth, age, expertise, gender, area of residence etc – and it's the salience and significance of particular Others gives us our identities as individuals and as members of particular social groups. Even so, there are a number of ways in which the figure of the enemy differs from the usual types of Other that we analyse in sociolinguistics. In liberal democracies, there's cooperation between 'Others' – there's cooperation between people occupying different, even opposite, categories – and some of the cooperation's intimate and long-term. Yes, there may well be some very low-prestige, unpopular Others around, but it is their integration-into-our-society that's the issue. With *enemies* it's different: actual or potential enemies should be kept out, defeated or destroyed. Enemies are usually embedded in substantial social systems of their own, and if they're an imminent threat, then in the societies they're threatening, people are supposed to sink their difference in the interests of united self-defence. Typically, interaction with an enemy is either forbidden or it's associated with well-organised violence, and the moral and legal codes governing interaction between fellow-citizens don't apply. Plus, of course, 'enemy' links into a range of other institutional categories and processes – *types of person* like soldier, casualty, veteran, hero, prisoner, spy, terrorist, traitor, refugee, etc etc; *types of action*: bombing, killing, wounding, torturing; *types of mobility* – invasion, occupation, escape; *types of collective change*: victory, defeat, reconciliation. And so forth...

This is rather a dramatic list. But even though there's not much here to take lightly, we shouldn't let it disorient us. Yes, if we're talking about killing, incarceration and expulsion, the idea of 'the everyday' starts to sound precarious, and right away you instinctively want to relativise it, calling it 'peace-time activity', after that maybe adding 'for documented citizens in liberal democracies'? But let's not forget that the IR scholars who developed the notion of securitisation in the 1990s described securitisation as a 'speech act' – they'd been reading Austin and Searle – and if we think about 'enemy' as an *identity*, then there are obviously very sophisticated frameworks in sociolinguistics for understanding how identities are generated, circulated, claimed, attributed, relinquished, resisted and so forth.

But we need to be careful – the topic is too serious to be treated as an open space for the free play of our disciplinary convictions. So in the next section, I'd like to go back to being empirical, this time focusing on Cyprus where I've been doing some work with Constadina Charalambous and Panayiota Charalambous. If we can start to untangle some of the relationships between enemies, conflict, language and everyday practice in this particular site, maybe we can come up with some theoretical insights that are potentially transportable to settings elsewhere.

3. Learning the language of the enemy in Cyprus

In Cyprus, interethnic conflict between the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities goes back to the beginning of the 20th century, when the island's two main religious groups started to think of themselves as incompatible 'Greeks' and 'Turks'. In 1960, a bi-communal Republic of Cyprus was established, but there was interethnic violence between 1963 and 1967, and around 20,000 Turkish-Cypriots moved into ethnically pure enclaves. In 1974, war broke out, following a *coup d'état* backed by Greece and Turkish military intervention, and there were devastating consequences – dead and missing people, loss of property, and massive dislocation. 196,000 Greek-Cypriots moved south, 34,000 Turkish-Cypriots moved north, and since then, the island has been *de facto* divided, separated by a buffer zone patrolled by military personnel and UN peacekeepers.

So since the *de facto* partition of the island, there hasn't been much violent confrontation. Still, in the Greek-Cypriot part where our research has been based, hostile images of Turks and Turkish-Cypriots have been perpetuated in the media and mainstream education, *but* even though the 'Cyprus problem' is widely regarded as 'intractable', it has also been called a '*comfortable* conflict' (Constantinou & Adamides 2011; Adamides, 2015). Over the decades since the fighting stopped,

people have got used to the after-effects of war, and the inter-communal hostility became somewhat routinized, itself a part of the everyday.

In 2003, however, this situation was disrupted. Cyprus signed the EU Accession Treaty and there was a lot of emphasis on finding a political settlement of the Cyprus Conflict. During the negotiations about this, the Turkish-Cypriot authorities lifted some of the restrictions of movement across the buffer zone in Nicosia, so that people could cross the dividing line for the first time in nearly 30 years. And just after that, the (Greek-) Cypriot government announced that among other things, it was going to set up voluntary language classes for Greek-Cypriots who wanted to learn Turkish, both in secondary schools and adult institutes (it also set up classes for Turkish-speaking adults who wanted to learn Greek). In the educational documents and in interviews with senior ministry officials, all this fitted into a rhetoric of reconciliation, and the new classes were presented as an emblem of government good will. Indeed, if we go back to the literature on international relations, these developments look like 'de-securitisation', like efforts to stop treating people on the other side as enemies, starting to bring them back into ordinary civic and political life, loosening some of the special measures devised to contain an existential threat.

So Constadina, Panayiota and I looked at how these developments were affecting education, and we carried out a couple of linguistic ethnographies which focused on Greek-Cypriot teenagers and adults learning Turkish, in afternoon institutes and secondary schools (see Table 1).

Table 1: The projects and fieldwork that the paper draws on.

Fieldwork dates & project title:	2006-07: LEARNING THE LANGUAGE OF THE 'OTHER'	2012-13: CROSSING LANGUAGES AND BORDERS
SECONDARY SCHOOLS		
Classes observed and n. of participants	1 teacher (Andreas), 3 classes, 52 students	2 teachers (Savvas, Stella) 6 classes, 101 students
Classroom recordings	13.5 hours	51 hours
Classroom observations	32 hours	78 hours
Interviews	21 students, 3 teachers	62 students, 2 teachers
Other	interviews with ministry officials	93 questionnaires
ADULT INSTITUTIONS		
Classes observed and n. of participants	1 teacher (Zina), 1 class, 6 students	2 teachers (Yannis, Stalo), 2 classes, 25 students
Classroom recordings	12 hours	34 hours
Classroom observations	21 hours	68 hours
Interviews	7 students, 1 teacher	15 students, 3 teachers
Other	-----	22 questionnaires

The picture that emerged was mixed, and overall learning the language of the (former) enemy seemed to be a little bit more straightforward for the adults. Even so, it was clear that even though the (Greek-)Cypriot government presented these classes as a gesture of goodwill, this wasn't

accompanied by any immediate change either in public discourse or in the secondary curriculum, and this created a lot of complications for the Greek-Cypriots who were teaching and learning the language.

So in interview, Greek-Cypriot learners of Turkish often told us that they were called ‘traitors’, ‘Turks’ or ‘Turkophiles’ by peers, by friends and occasionally by members of their own family. As a result, they had initially hid their textbooks, avoided mentioning the classes they taught or attended, and developed elaborate justifications in defence. In fact, in more than half of the secondary school interviews, students talked about there being good security reasons for ‘knowing the language of the enemy’. Some referred to war in the future, while others said that they’d be able to detect if they were being insulted in the street and swear back. Indeed, even students who were quite interested in reconciliation said that this security rationale was a very good way of warding off their critics:

Extract 1: That’s a good one

Stathis (male, aged 17) in interview with Sophia (f.; 17 yrs) and Panayiota (female, 30s; ‘Yiota’ in the transcript below) (2012; translated & edited transcript)

Yiota: do you have any reactions from your friends for choosing Turkish?

Stathis: eh they were teasing me a bit but ok

Yiota: what could they say?

Stathis: "are you gona learn Turkish?" and things like that and "our enemies" things like that, I was telling them "it's easy, that's why I chose it"

Yiota ((to Sophia)): what about you? what do you reply?

Fani: when they say things like that {I say} "to know the language of the enemy" and it's over, like they hush and they go like "a::h that's a good one!"

Extract 2 Interview 2_LAR-U-C2

Marina: one day [...] Mrs G. came, a historian ((laughs)) her nation is high up there, let's say, ((laughs)) and she tells me 'why did you choose Turkish?' and she is also my teacher, I was scared, I me::an

Fotis: ((laughs))

Marina: eh I tell her 'Miss, whether we like it or not Turkish-Cypriots are there and we have to learn it too at- and I have an uncle who is in the- a military officer and he tells me, to combat the enemy you have [to know his culture, everything, you have to know everything'

Sotiris: [you have to learn the language of the enemy

Christina: hey what mark did she give you?

Marina: eighteen {out of 20}

Christina: eh that's ok ((laughs))

It's often said in language teaching theory that classes benefit from the introduction of everyday material from the real world of the target language. But as one of the teachers explained, "how am I going to practice dialogues in the classroom between sales-men and buyers, when students aren't supposed to cross to the other side and buy things from the occupied territories" (fieldnotes, 2006). Yes, there certainly were students who were interested in closer links with Turkish Cypriots, especially among adults, but there were also a lot who told us that even though they had chosen to study Turkish, they didn't "want any relations with ((*Turkish-speakers*))", elaborating on this with "I don't like them", "I don't want them", "I wish they were effaced", "may they all die" (at least 13 students, in 10 interviews).

These really are rather extreme statements, and it's hard to make sense of what's going on here, at least initially. Okay, the government's reasons for setting up these classes makes sense, and there's a lot of work on language and intercultural understanding to support them. But with the intense hostility expressed by these students, maybe we really are moving into an exceptional space where everyday norms cease to hold sway, where 'enemy' takes over as a central identity, and where, potentially, the analytic vocabularies developed in conditions of peace and stability cease to function. *Alternatively*, this is precisely the kind of situation where broad-brush characterisations need to be interrogated with linguistic ethnography, and that's obviously the approach that we took in our project. So let's now see whether we can actually make sense of these classes.

4. A sociolinguistic interpretation

To understand these language classes, the first thing we need to do is to complicate the notion of the everyday, and here **the distinction between ideology and practice** becomes really important.

So on the one hand, we've got the ideological representation of specific everyday worlds – representations that come in different shapes at different times and places. In the context of language teaching textbooks and exercises, it's often *stylised textual representations* of the world of the target language speaker that are at issue, and as I've said, a lot of Greek-Cypriots learners of Turkish were seriously alarmed by the idea of routine interaction with Turkish speakers. But at the same time, if we turn from ideology to practice, there's the 'everyday' of the habitual activities that people actually participate in on a daily basis, the situated social practices that they experience at first hand. Of course these are permeated and influenced by ideological representations, but this is an everyday that's lived rather than just represented and it's much more complicated, open and indeterminate than ideology on its own. It's this second everyday that linguistic ethnographers and interactional sociolinguistics try to describe, even though it can be really hard, and if we focus on this, we can start to see that even though teaching and learning the language of the enemy might be different from what we usually see in conditions of peace and stability, it's not incomprehensibly different – it's not a different planet.

So first of all, let's think about **the institutional sites in which secondary students encountered Turkish**, and how this could make a contribution to the acceptability of learning Turkish. In actual fact, Turkish is constitutionally recognised as a national language in Cyprus, but it wasn't given a special position at school and it wasn't compulsory. Instead, it was made available as an option in the foreign language curriculum, and there's a case for saying that *humdrum institutional ordinariness of foreign language learning* was itself significant. Curricular foreign language learning is an unspectacular but long-term and widely-established activity. There's wide-spread international agreement that learning a foreign language is worthwhile; it's supported by professional personnel with subject specific expertise; there are well developed grading educational schemes for measuring progress; and with all the administrative and delivery structures already in place, the government could slot Turkish into the system by adding it as just another language to the list of Foreign Languages options. But once Turkish had appeared in the annual booklet of modern language options, this could then be a first cue for students to talk to their parents about whether or not Turkish could play a part in their future, even if this only reached as far as end-of-year exams. If students did select it, then once or twice a week, they'd find themselves participating in a space where objects and practices linked with Turkish had a routine presence close at hand, and they'd also need to work out how to justify their choice to others. And more than that, small tokens of Turkishness would begin to circulate through the low-key everyday activities of secondary study, travelling back and forwards between school and home in homework bags, figuring in anecdotes of classroom experience, getting mentioned in chat about tests and exams. The issue of Greek-Turkish relations might still be very controversial, but the mundane and familiar routines of school foreign language learning could help to dull some of the emotion it evoked.

Of course, all this presupposes that the classroom experience of learning Turkish wasn't traumatically riven by conflict. Well it wasn't, and that in turn raises the question: how did Greek-Cypriot teachers of Turkish actually cope, on the one hand finding that they now had the chance to teach a language they'd dedicated a lot of their time to, while on the other, facing a lot of potentially very hostile students. We identified three **pedagogic strategies**, which I'll mention only briefly because we've discussed them in detail elsewhere.

In adult classes, teachers did sometimes introduce scenes of everyday activity with Turkish speakers. There was also one very gifted secondary teacher who managed to 'cosmopolitanise' Turkish, repositioning it in a globalised Europe above and beyond the Cyprus problem. But the most common pedagogic strategy was to de-politicize the learning of Turkish by decontextualising the language, disconnecting it from Turkish people, from Turkish culture and all its political and emotional associations. Instead, they presented the language as a neutral lexico-grammatical code, and they avoided any talk about the Turks or Cypriot politics in the classroom. There is of course a long tradition of teaching that treats language as a formal code, but all of these teachers were aware that they were presenting a very narrow view of Turkish, and said that they were doing this deliberately

because of the ideological controversy around Turkish.² Of course that jars with the orthodoxies of communicative language teaching, but as I've said, the idea of 'authentic contexts for learning and using Turkish' was iconoclastic for a lot of these students, and if teachers tried it, they were worried about getting reported and losing their jobs. So rather than seeing the suppression of culture in these classes as a sign of the teachers' hidebound traditionalism, there's a good case for seeing it as acute cultural sensitivity.

These teaching strategies also nudged the **indexical value of Turkish** in different directions, imbuing the language with a range of meanings that allowed students to engage with it in ways that either respected their ideological uncertainty or resonated with their political values. So for different people – and no doubt for the same people at different times – Turkish could be a potential weapon, or it could be a neutral (even mathematical) code. Alternatively but more rarely, it could be a flavour of the cosmopolitan and and/or a feature of local life. The ideological significance of named languages is always malleable; indexical multivalence is very common in language education;³ and it must have been another element that made these classes possible, in spite of students' highly divergent views of the legacy of conflict they'd inherited.

But looking beyond the kind of institutional presence that Turkish had, beyond the teaching strategies that teachers employed, and beyond its varied indexical values of Turkish, what can we say about **the opportunities for learning** that these lessons presented?

As I've already hinted, in the adult classes a lot of people were learning Turkish to facilitate greater interaction with Turkish-speakers, enhancing the contacts that quite a lot of them already had. But for adolescents, the *lessons seemed more like a tentative and precarious prelude* to the kind of commitment that Turkish involved for adults. Rather than crossing the threshold, they were assembling on the porch, prevaricating in the ante-chamber. Turkish was there on the table, but they hadn't necessarily signed up to go any further. Students who abhorred the idea of contact with a Turkish-speaker said that they were only doing it because they needed a language for matriculation and they'd been told that Turkish was easy: for students like this, even a shift from hostility to tolerance could be a step forward. And even with students who were quite positive about the language in interview, the idea of getting closer to Turkish speakers was regularly hedged with phrases like 'so far but no further', only 'up to there', 'up to that point', 'but that's about it', implying 'that's all', 'don't think there is much more than that'.⁴

Extract 3

YIOTA: ((to Fotini))e::rm with your Turkish-Cypriot friends do you meet on

² Andreas (Mr A) was the most striking case, and he generally avoided even mentioning the word 'Turks' in class. He said he always told students that 'the Turkish language is not the Turk, it's a tool', and that 'we are here [only] to talk about the language'. Constadina observed 32 hours of class time and there were two just occasions when he tried to incorporate culture into his teaching. But in the first, he played Turkishness down by playing the Turkish language version of what was originally a Greek song, and in the second, when he talked about religious and cultural practices, he described them as Muslim rather than Turkish (C. Charalambous 2014). Stella adopted the same culturally sanitised, code-centred strategy in four of the five secondary classes she taught. In the lessons we observed, she avoided teaching about Turkish culture, sidestepped any political discussions triggered by her students, and used terms like 'chaos' and 'mayhem' to describe what could happen when the students were 'not ready' and 'not fit' for anything other than 'matters of the language':

Extract: On not provoking the students

Stella (f, 40s), Greek-Cypriot teacher of Turkish in interview with Panayiota (2012 translated & edited transcript)

Stella: I tried once to say that Turkey is beautiful, and Istanbul, and they tried to tell me that I am defending Turkey in class, we have to be very careful about what we say so that students don't go out and say that we are doing propaganda in favour of Turkey and that we say the Turks are good and they do this and that, we have to be very careful and stay in matters of the language

³ In Northern Ireland, for example, O'Reilly describes how the Irish language learning was sustained by potentially conflicting ideologies of (a) resistance, (b) aesthetic heritage and (c) civil rights (1996), and even in England's National Curriculum, ideologically competing rationales – 'personal growth', 'cross-curricular', 'adult needs', 'cultural heritage', 'cultural analysis' – have featured simultaneously in promotion of the national standard language (Cox 1991).

⁴ "ως τζιαμαί", meaning 'up to there', 'up to that point' or 'but that's about it', or "εντάξει, αλλά 'ντα", translatable as 'but okay', suggesting 'that's all', 'there is no more than that' 'don't think there is much more than that'.

this side only o:::r
 Fotini: yes, I don't want to go over there, I told them, I don't care, if they want to come let them come, if they don't "stay over there, I'll never see you again" but I'm not going over there
 Yorgos: ((laughs))
 Fotini: ((laughs)) I don't care
 Elina: what a friendship man!
 Fotini: eh that's enough, let's not overdo it

Extract 4 Interview 8_LAR-R-B4

Marina: the fact that we are friends with some Turkish-Cypriots does not mean that I am supporting the disgraceful things the Turks did to us, we set these apart, I have a very strong opinion on this we distinguish between these things

Extract 5 Interview 8_LAR-R-B4 (talking about a Turkish-Cypriot who they had initially thought was Greek)

Marianna: then he'll tell you he is like Turkish-Cypriot, ok, our opinion hasn't changed, he was a good person but ok
 YIOTA: but ok
 Marianna: ok

Extract 6 Interview 15_NIC-U-B2

Filippos: I don't think it ((learning Turkish)) influenced my views, ok I didn't have this impression that every Turk is bad, I had my views from before, ok we have learned the language better
 YIOTA: Yorgos?
 Yorgos: e ok, we learned the language better as Filippos says
 Filippos: that's about it
 Yorgos: we saw how the language is, eh ok!

Extract 8 Interview 19_NIC-R-C1

Elina: me, I'll go to Istanbul but that's about it, I don't want to (get to know) them or something

As a result, our data is overflowing with cautious, watchful, qualified activity, and, metaphorically, this looks more like 'throat-clearing' than talk itself, more like a long, deep in-breath than an actual speaking turn..

I'm not sure that how well these processes would show up in the conventional metrics of success in a foreign language, which generally only start to notice-&-measure progress when someone starts to speak the language a bit, or takes an interest in the culture. But for sociolinguistic analysis, none of this is problem – in-breaths, asides, and speaking-in-disguise are all central concerns in the sociolinguistic study of social process – and I think that the notion of **language crossing** can be a resource for making sense of these lessons. To explain, let me just recap on three key features of crossing.

First, let's go back to my original definition: 'crossing is the "use of a language or variety that feels anomalously 'other' for the participants in an activity, and it involves movement across quite sharply sensed social or ethnic boundaries, in ways that can raise questions of legitimacy" (Rampton & Charalambous 2010:2). I stress this, because the legitimacy issue that's central to crossing quite often gets lost when crossing's seen as just another post-structuralist term for vernacular multilingualism.

Second, detailed interactional analyses have shown that crossing occurs in moments and activities where the ordinary common-sense world is problematised or partially suspended. So in my 1995 book for example, there was lots of crossing in games, where scholars often say there is an agreed relaxation of the rules and constraints governing routine interaction. And the fact that crossing so often coincided with these *interruptions* to the normal interactional reproduction of social reality

carried an important implication. When youngsters crossed into a language that belonged to an ethnic outgroup, they questioned and destabilised ethnic boundaries, ethnic fixity and ethnic division. But if they were doing it in one of these specially licensed moments, you'd know that they weren't really claiming to be authentic or equal members of the outgroup they were evoking, and you could let them get away with it.

Third, there was actually a lot of variation in the scale of the moments and occasions when the relaxation of everyday norms and expectations made crossing possible: yes, it often happened in games, but it also occurred in more elaborately staged performances with songs or impersonations; it occurred in jocular language teaching routines; and most fleetingly, it occurred in small-scale interpersonal verbal rituals that Goffman describes as moments of heightened interactional uncertainty – meeting new people, at the start of an encounter, close to a breach of etiquette.

Now if we apply these three aspects of crossing to Greek-Cypriots learning Turkish at secondary school, first and most obviously, we can say that engaging with Turkish obviously raised huge questions of legitimacy, and yes we seem to be dealing with crossing in some form or other – you couldn't really capture what was going on in these classes with concepts like 'stylisation' or 'polylingualism'.

But second, if we're looking at the scale and institutionalisation of the processes that nourished crossing, Greek-Cypriots learning Turkish looks a bit different from white people in London or Copenhagen using Jamaican or Turkish. In most of the urban sociolinguistic literature, crossing gets its impetus from the experience of people with different ethnic backgrounds living in the same area, attending the same schools or workplaces. Crossing often challenges the racist discourses that seek to divide them, and it is in popular culture and the mass and social media that crossing finds its most public platforms, promoting the kind of heterodox language mixing that features in everyday recreation 'on the ground' (e.g. Androusoopoulos 2001, 2007). Meanwhile in the urban sociolinguistic studies, educational institutions pursue purist standard language policies, so that crossing seems to be part of vernacular culture. The situation in the Republic of Cyprus was very different. The social divisions at issue in the Turkish language classroom were rooted in war and armed violence, and they were more intense than anything described in literature on multi-ethnic urban areas.⁵ Rather than emerging from everyday co-habitation, crossing in Cyprus got its impetus from the European Union's insistence on a solution to the intractable Cyprus problem, and rather than being exclusively based in non-standard popular culture, Turkish was officially promoted by the state in education, as an established and regular part of the curriculum.

Finally, what about the suspension of everyday reality that's so common in crossing, and that Goffman calls '**keying**'? Goffman identifies several very basic types of keying, and we can line performance art up with his notion of 'make-believe', games fit into his 'contests' category, and interpersonal rituals dovetail with what he says about 'ceremonials' (Rampton & Charalambous 2012:490). But if we turn to the Turkish lessons, we can see a 4th type of keying in operation: what Goffman called '**technical redoing**' (1974:58ff; Rampton & Charalambous 2010:10-11). Technical redoings are activities like exhibitions, rehearsals and pedagogic demonstrations, and they are [i] "performed out of their usual context, [ii] for utilitarian purposes openly different from those of the original performance, [iii] the understanding being that the original outcome of the activity will not occur" (p. 59; numerals added). The effect is to "give the neophyte experience in performing under conditions in which (it is felt) no actual engagement with the world is allowed" (p.59). This fits the language lessons rather well: Turkish was extracted from its socio-cultural context ([i] above); it was promoted as a conveniently easy subject that could help you pass your secondary matriculation exams, not as something you'd use to communicate ([ii]); and thereby, it accommodated students who never wanted to talk to a Turkish speaker ([iii]). Purely 'technical' classroom exercises certainly weren't the only interactional site for safe crossing into Turkish, and there were lots of accounts of Greek-Cypriot adults using Turkish in practices that Goffman would call 'ceremonial' – so we were often told, for example, that Turkish-Cypriots "feel honoured" and it's "a big deal for them" if you use even just a few words when you meet them. Even so, 'technical redoing' seemed to be much the most widely practiced key for Turkish language crossing.

I began this discussion of Greek-Cypriots learning Turkish by asking whether or not the ethnographic sociolinguistics of everyday practice was capable of dealing with situations where notions like enemy are dominant and particular groups are deemed so threatening that they're placed

⁵ The word 'crossing' itself usually referred to the controversial and emotionally fraught travel across the buffer zone separating north and south – it's hard to think of an equivalent in London, for example.

in special measures, beyond the realms of everyday contact. Applied to the dynamics of intense hostility, would sociolinguistic concepts developed in peace and stability prove trivialising and inept, or could they be illuminating, once again pointing to intricacies – and openings – unimagined in the simplifying generalisations you get in politics, policy, the media and research interviews as well.

Overall, I think sociolinguistics comes out quite well. Despite the opposition Greek-Cypriot students faced, we've identified a range of recognisable structures and practices that sustained them in the controversial activities associated with learning the language of the enemy. At the same time, we've identified ways in which the legacy of violent conflict produced styles of teaching and learning that wouldn't really be appreciated in the normative discourses of communicative language teaching, as well as a type of crossing that is rather new for the sociolinguistic literature.

Admittedly, you could argue that all this has been rather an easy test – after all, we've been discussing a rather 'comfortable conflict', where most people were only dealing with representations of the enemy, not meeting them face-to-face. Well that's true, and I'm not suggesting that ethnographic and interactional sociolinguistics are the only kind of linguistics relevant in conflict-troubled situations (see Busch 2016). Still, I'd like to say two things in defence of the approach we've taken. First, the situation in Cyprus might not be really acute, but there are a number of other settings affected by large-scale conflict and fears of existential insecurity where you can see broadly similar language learning dynamics – have a look at Uhlmann's work on Arabic classes for Jewish school students in Israel (2010; 2012), and Karrebaek and Ghandchi's description of mother-tongue Farsi in the divided Iranian refugee community in Copenhagen (2015). Second, International Relations research on security, peace and conflict generally covers the whole range of conflicts, and in IR, there's actually growing interest in the kinds of illumination that ethnographic sociolinguistics can provide.

Let's now turn to this.

5. 'Everyday international relations': A growing field of interest

Historically and for the most part still today, research on International Research focuses on very large-scale processes – the relationships between sovereign states governing particular populations in specific territories. But as I've already mentioned, in the 1990s when researchers talked about securitisation as a process that identified particular groups as existential threats and tried to persuade the public that special measures were needed to deal with them, they used speech act theory from Austin and Searle. Since then, more elaborate and empirical theories of communication have been introduced, so that in Thierry Balzacq's collection on the topic, there are references to Sapir, Goffman, Schegloff, Fairclough, Kress, Wetherell, Mey, Duranti and Goodwin (Balzacq 2011). Arguing against "top down, standardised, technocratic and institutionalised approaches" in work on peace and conflict resolution, Roger Mac Ginty proposes that "everyday peace is dialogic, ... rel[ying] on interaction, social recognition and social responses" (Mac Ginty 2013:549,554). In surveillance studies, Green & Zurawski want to replace the totalising notion of a 'surveillance society' with ethnographic accounts of how "surveillance is negotiated, resisted, learned, not recognised as such" in everyday sites (2015:37). And when Didier Bigo discusses how power should be studied in international political sociology, he cites "sociolinguists when they analyse everyday interactions" as a valuable model (Bigo 2017:31). Emma Mac Cluskey has just produced a 32 page bibliography of recent work on 'everyday (in)security', and overall, there's a commitment here to challenging the sweeping abstractions of mainstream International Relations that's very similar to ethnographic impulse I mentioned at the start of my talk. Admittedly, this interest in how ethnography and sociolinguistics can illuminate 'everyday IR' is still rather programmatic, but there's a lots of scope for dialogue with linguistic ethnographers, and we've lots to learn in return. So where, we can ask, is the security profiling in the sociolinguistics of tourism, and what about all the CCTV cameras in linguistic landscapes?

The analysis of Greek-Cypriots learning Turkish that I presented in the previous section starts to address this complementarity, and researchers in peace & conflict studies have already shown quite a bit of interest in this. But rather than just laying out the methodological apparatus that these IR scholars could build on, I'd like to point to a potentially a deeper affinity between sociolinguistics and studies of security in the work of Erving Goffman.

6. Goffman and the study of everyday interactional insecurities

In the IR work that I've been referring to, a number of terms seem to be recurring again and again – security and insecurity, existential threat, states of exception, surveillance. Well, these concepts are foundational for Goffman as well.

In IR discussions of securitisation, the distinction between normal, everyday socio-political relations and exceptional special measures holds a central place. But just look at Goffman's first two books. The first was his 1959 *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* but the second, just two years later, was *Asylums*, and this focused on total institutions where people are cut off from everyday life, often because they're deemed to be a threat to the community (1961:16). The proximity of these two books is no accident, and throughout Goffman's career, there was constant interest in the tension between the ordinary and exceptional, as well as in the actions and activities that are produced to handle the threats they pose each other. And crucially in the current context, this dynamic relationship works through into the fine details of face-to-face interaction.

So to begin with, *Asylums* focuses on walled institutions set aside to contain threats to the community, and here Goffman looks at "what people do to flesh out their lives" "when existence is cut to the bone" (1961:268). But in his later work, he focuses on the continual threats to the self that individuals have to deal with in interpersonal encounters. "When individuals come into one another's immediate presence", he says, "territories of the self bring to the scene a vast filigree of wires which individuals are uniquely equipped to trip over" (1971:106). Talk itself "is a little social system with its own boundary maintaining tendencies; it is a little patch of commitment and loyalty with its own heroes and villains" (Goffman 1967:113), so that "when a person volunteers a statement or a message, however trivial or commonplace, [they]... place... everyone present in jeopardy" (1967:23). Managing these incessant threats to mutual respect, individuals develop "a defensive orientation toward saving [their] own face, and a protective orientation toward saving the others' face" (1967:14). In the *face-work* that emerges from this dual orientation, people either use strategies of avoidance (e.g. keeping away from certain topics, hedging what they say), or, when delicts occur, they participate in *corrective* processes, challenging the transgression and seeking amends (apologies, explanations etc).

We can see the same shift of scale from the institutional to interaction if we look at forms of control. In *Asylums*, Goffman talks about spaces in the mental hospital where inmates know that their being surveilled (1961:204), but then when he looks at how people configure their bodies to participate in talk together, he brings in bystanders and eavesdroppers as non-ratified participants, using the term 'collusive side-play' for what happens when "two bystanders surreptitiously editorialise on what they are overhearing" (as at the NSA and GCHQ) (1981:134). Of course, people routinely adjust to being observed like this, lowering their voices, using more obscure words, but in his 1970 book, *Strategic Interaction*, Goffman stresses the fact communication involves far more than just the ideas that people consciously articulate – there's also what he calls 'exuded information', information people give off unintentionally, which observers can glean from a distance (the 'metadata', so to speak).

Turning to the efforts people make to evade the restrictive institutional regimes they inhabit, *Asylum* talks about the 'escape worlds' in sports, theatrical productions, games and so forth in which inmates "temporarily blot... out all sense of the environment which, and in which, they must abide" (1961:271). But when Goffman talks about 'keying' in his 1974 *Frame Analysis*, he also shows that the everyday realities governing our lives can also be temporarily suspended within the small-scale practices of face-to-face interaction, as we saw in my discussion of crossing earlier on.

There's more that we could draw into this account of Goffman's deep and enduring preoccupation with (in)security in everyday life – and it's not surprising that Giddens' cites Goffman in his own discussion of 'ontological security' (1984:50).⁶ But let's bring IR and security studies back into the picture, and answer the 'so what?' question by pointing to two ways in which Goffman both expands and thickens the account, even in the most influential studies of the everyday IR.

⁶ There is a lot more that we could draw into this discussion – for example, the techniques of information control, the passing and so forth in *Stigma*, focusing on how *individuals* cope with their failure to match "normative expectations [about] conduct and character" (1963:68).

7. Goffman for IR

First, Goffman emphatically contradicts a worry that you'll lose touch with the political if you turn to securitisation in the everyday. According to Jef Huysmans (2011), one of the leading scholars of everyday IR, political critiques of securitisation have focused on high profile declarations – government ministers speaking about threats to society – and there's a risk that this kind of analysis will no longer be possible as securitisation becomes much more diffuse, permeating the everyday through digital surveillance, routine bureaucratic procedures, CCTV cameras and so forth. Well it's certainly true that with algorithms and digital profiling, lots of security screening goes on without us knowing much about it, but more generally, Goffman shows us that everyday interaction is absolutely teeming with the processes thematised in macro-sopic security studies – threats of exclusion, suspicion, deception, avoidance and preventative action. Huysmans uses the phrase 'little security nothings' to refer to the highly diffuse securitisation practices that he's concerned about, but it's very hard to square that phrase with anything that Goffman describes.⁷ Far from being politically depleted in the way that Huysmans fears, everyday practice isn't the least bit docile, bland or insensitive for Goffman – nor indeed is it particularly wholesome. Commentators sometimes ask why ordinary people don't object to the digital intensification of surveillance, but if we follow Goffman's logic, maybe it's just because we do lots of it ourselves as an integral part of everyday communicative practice, and we've grown up adjusting to it (cf Marwick 2012).

Second, Goffman contradicts the idea that everyday self-preservation strategies only operate among ordinary, 'everyday' people. You can see this, for example, in an otherwise excellent paper on everyday peace building by Roger Mac Ginty. Mac Ginty cites Goffman, refers to avoidance and ritualised politeness, and talks about the transformative potential of transgressive acts (in ways that bring crossing to mind) (2014:557). But he then stresses the difference between bottom up and top down approaches to peace – the difference between the everyday civilities produced by local people directly affected by conflict on the one hand, and the 'expert' peace-building discourse of expatriates, a discourse that's standardised and professionalised though 'best practice' and 'lessons learned' (2014:551). Okay, yes, it's certainly true that locals and expatriates are likely to differ in the 'metapragmatic ideologies – the 'regimes of verbal hygiene' – that they use to think about interaction, and they're also likely to be very different in the communicative resources they can draw on and align with – the genres, the languages, the styles and so forth. It's also quite possible that in the contact between locals and expatriates, these discursive differences themselves get politicised, and that local communicative practices are ignored or dismissed. But the top-down/ bottom-up contrast is too sharply drawn, and you can't conflate a person's communicative sensibilities with the scripts and communication rulebooks provided by their institutional overseers. This is self-evident in Goffman's account of footing, where he describes how rapidly and unpredictably a participant's alignment can change in the "flickering, cross-purposed, messy irresolution of [our] unknowable circumstances" (1981:195). But the shifts in the scale of Goffman's theorisation also tell us that the management of interactional insecurities can't be socially zoned, and that you'll find everyday (in)civilities *everywhere*. Yes, in *Asylums*, Goffman describes survival strategies among the subordinated inmates, but he then extends these frameworks to interaction generally, so we should also expect to find intricate face-work, collusions and keyings populating interaction in the seats of power, as well as – we should add – in the encounters between locals and expatriates that turn out to be quite productive (see Mac Ginty & Richmond 2013:766).

I don't have the expertise to know whether, for example, the variety of practices that Goffman picks out in face-to-face interaction could enrich the discussion of concepts like 'precautionary governance' and 'risk management' in IR.⁸ But under Foucault's influence, quite a lot of IR scholars

⁷ Huysmans suggests, for example, that it's "leaders and politicians" who enact "a sharp distinction between the exceptional and the banal" (2014:5), but actually the distinction is repeatedly at issue in everyday remedial interchanges, where transgressive acts that threaten the encounter-as-a-"little social system" get called out and offenders are expected to make ritual amends with apologies, accounts and so forth.

⁸ I don't think that we can be accused of being reductive interactionists in the conversation between sociolinguistics and IR, wanting to boil everything down to interpersonal encounters, if we are using Goffman as a key reference point. Yes, Goffman says that the interaction order is partially autonomous, but it is still loosely coupled to broader social and institutional processes (1983), and, he says, "whenever we interact with strangers or intimates, we will find that the fingertips of society have reached bluntly into the contact" (1963:70). These 'fingertips' are hugely consequential in their uneven distribution of socially valued resources, and it is worth remembering that Goffman's first ever publication focused on social class (1951).

now reject ‘realist’ ideas about objective factuality of the state, security and borders etc, and instead there is growing interest in how these political concepts are produced in practical activity, involving a plethora of different people, processes, types of knowledge, technologies, actions, arguments etc. So in an account of Foucault’s approach to the state, Jessop says that

“[t]he study of power should begin from below, in the heterogeneous and dispersed micro-physics of power[; it should] explore specific forms of [the exercise of power] in different institutional sites, and consider how, if at all, these were linked to produce broader and more persistent societal configurations [like the state]. One should study power where it is exercised over individuals rather than legitimated at the centre; explore the actual practices of subjugation rather than the intentions that guide attempts at domination; and recognize that power circulates through networks” (Jessop 2007:36)

This is going to increase the relevance of ethnographic sociolinguistics in general, and Goffman in particular. As Rodrigo Borba demonstrates in vivid empirical detail (see also Hacking 2004), Foucault and Goffman are very complementary, and you can see this when Foucault warns against being too quick to identify contemporary power struggles with particular political causes and interests. “In such struggles”, says Foucault, “people criticise instances of power which are the closest to them... They do not look for the ‘chief enemy’, but for the immediate enemy” (1982:211-2). They may well refer to ethnicity, gender or class at a later stage, but in the first instance, these “are struggles which... on the one hand,... assert the right to be different and... [o]n the other,... attack everything which separates the individual, breaks [the] links with others” (1982:212). Translated rather precisely into Goffmanian, these are defensive and protective face-work struggles over the ‘territories of the self’ – struggles over what Brown & Levinson call ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ face (1987:62) – and of course Goffman elaborates on all this in considerable detail. So if you’re a political scientist following Foucault, in Goffman you’re likely to find quite a substantial theoretical and empirical resource.

8. Summary and prospect

I opened this paper with two basic claims: sociolinguistics is the study of everyday communicative practice in changing social conditions, and ethnographic sociolinguistics can play a useful role complicating and challenging the generalisations that you find in public discourse and/or macro-social science. Then I brought in securitisation as a perspective that’s become increasingly influential in British life over the last 10-15 years, turning Muslims into suspects and potential enemies. In fact securitisation politicises the idea of the everyday itself, saying that there’s an existential threat to everyday life and that the right to participate in it should be withdrawn from people identified as enemies. So if it’s recontextualised within securitisation, what are the implications for sociolinguistics-as-the-study-of-the-everyday?

To follow this up, I turned to the case of Greek-Cypriots learning Turkish, the language of the enemy. The *idea* of everyday contact with Turkish speakers was highly controversial ideologically, but the humdrum practice of institutional language learning kept even the most hostile students on board. Language teaching theory can’t really make sense of this, but linguistic ethnography can, and I talked about the effects of the institutional positioning of Turkish, the teachers’ pedagogic strategies and the language’s indexical flexibility. I then turned to the kind of learning activity the Turkish lessons involved, and I returned to the notion of language crossing, suggesting that the Cyprus conflict generated a type of crossing that hasn’t yet been documented in urban sociolinguistics – crossing that’s institutionalised on rather a large scale in formal education, and that overcomes the questions of legitimation by being keyed as ‘technical redoing’. ‘Keying’ and ‘technical redoing’ come from Goffman, and I then went on to propose that as a leading theorist of *interactional* insecurity, Goffman has a lot to offer IR researchers who are becoming increasingly interested in the links between geopolitical conflict and everyday practice.

There’s undoubtedly a lot more work to be done on the relationship between sociolinguistics and (in)securitisation, and it is something we want to pursue in the *Language, (In)security and Everyday Practice* lab that we’ve set up at King’s. But let me finish with a cautionary thought on analytic positioning.

The area of enquiry I've been discussing may grow quite significantly in the next few years, but if it does, we should call it 'sociolinguistics AND security', not 'the sociolinguistics OF security'.⁹ With the latter – with 'the sociolinguistics of security' – there's the possibility of a security-focused sociolinguistics getting separated off from ordinary sociolinguistics, when in fact it's precisely the relationship between the ordinary and the exceptional that we're interested in. We certainly don't want to trivialise the serious and potentially dangerous processes that securitisation speaks of, and it's vital not to insist on the mundane blindly, missing the practices and occasions when the orderly reproduction of the social world gets threatened or breached. But it's equally important not to err in the opposite direction, relinquishing our grasp of the everyday. Let's not forget that in securitisation, the everyday is actually a major stake – if you're on the wrong end of an overzealous securitisation process, you're being told, "sorry, the everyday isn't for you". So it's important not to ratify or accelerate this exclusion by accepting securitisation on its own terms, focusing only on what's been declared 'exceptional'.

There's obviously lots to learn about managing this tricky line between the everyday and the exceptional from researchers in critical peace, conflict and security studies, and on the sociolinguistic side, maybe it is Goffman that provides us with the best starting point. I've tried to hold to a similar line in what I've presented today, but of course we'll have to wait and see.

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⁹ In fact, there is also a lot of terminological argument in critical IR about whether, for example, to speak of 'security' or '(in)security', or '(in)securitisation'. But in this paper, it is the relationship between sociolinguistics and critical security studies that is at issue, and the 'of/and' distinction is more relevant to this.

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