

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

International GCSE Modern Greek
(4MG0) Paper 01

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General Comments

The majority of candidates who sat the JUNE 2013 examination in Modern Greek performed very well and provided competent translations, both from English into Greek and vice versa. Question 3 provoked relevant and interesting accounts and there was evidence of good language awareness, appropriate application of structures and broad range of vocabulary, in most essays. There was a very welcome pattern of adhering to the requirements of the rubric and respecting the required word limit. Well done, to those who respected the rubric!

A small number of candidates failed to adhere to the conventions of orderly and clear presentation and produced essays and translations which were not very legible, contained a mixture of Greek and non Greek characters or neglected to indicate the position of the stress. Some candidates produced multiple versions of a translation, a practice which is not recommended at all. Few essays were lengthier than necessary and were penalized, according to standard practice. Candidates are also reminded to choose only ONE essay question and write their response in GREEK.

Question 1

Many candidates gained good marks in this section. They produced competent translations, with few grammatical and lexical inaccuracies. Despite evidence of occasional errors, translations usually read well and communicated the sense of the source text correctly, managing to make it to the 6-7 assessment bracket and above.

The challenges which confronted most candidates related to the rendering of the words "relative" and "native speaker" as well as the phrases "the greater the differences..., the harder..." and "possibly influenced by...".

One version of a translation of question 1 is as follows:

Πολλοί αναρωτιούνται συχνά ποια γλώσσα είναι η πιο δύσκολη να μάθεις. Δεν υπάρχει εύκολη απάντηση. Λόγω του ότι μαθαίνουμε τη μητρική μας γλώσσα φυσιολογικά, η δυσκολία είναι σχετική/ αποκτά σημασία μόνο όταν μαθαίνεις μια δεύτερη γλώσσα.

Τα πορτογαλέζικα είναι πιο εύκολα για κάποιον που, για παράδειγμα, έχει τα ισπανικά σα μητρική γλώσσα, παρά για κάποιον που η μητρική του γλώσσα είναι τα κινέζικα. Τα πορτογαλέζικα είναι πιο κοντά στα ισπανικά, ενώ τα κινέζικα διαφέρουν πολύ.

Όσο πιο μεγάλες διαφορές υπάρχουν ανάμεσα στη δεύτερη και τη μητρική γλώσσα, τόσο πιο δύσκολο είναι να τη μάθουμε. Πολλοί πιστεύουν πως τα κινέζικα είναι η πιο δύσκολη γλώσσα, επηρεασμένοι κατά πάσα πιθανότητα από τη σκέψη πως πρέπει να μάθουν τους κινέζικους χαρακτήρες. Για όσους μιλούν γιαπωνέζικα όμως, τα οποία ήδη συμπεριλαμβάνουν/ περιέχουν/ χρησιμοποιούν κινέζικους χαρακτήρες, το να μάθουν να γράφουν θα είναι λιγότερο δύσκολο. Για τους Βρετανούς φοιτητές που μαθαίνουν ξένες γλώσσες, τα ουγγαρέζικα μάλλον είναι η πιο δύσκολη γλώσσα.

Questions 2a and 2b

A good number of answers showed evidence of satisfactory awareness of grammar, vocabulary and syntax.

Some responses to questions 2(a) and 2 (b) showed fluent command of vocabulary and idiom, good language awareness and consistently good application of the grammatical system. The majority of candidates found question 2a more accessible in terms of vocabulary.

With regard to syntax, vocabulary and structures, the following items seemed to pose some difficulty.

- 2(a): A surprisingly large number of candidates were challenged by words such as «συχνά», «ξεσπάσματα», «ημερολόγιο», and «αποφεύγετε». Whereas, some managed to convey communication efficiently by using periphrasis or near synonyms (an acceptable practice, depending on the case), the apt word often eluded even some of the more able candidates. Moreover, the word «συμβουλές» was often incorrectly rendered as a countable noun (advices)
- 2(b): Most candidates failed to render the opening sentence correctly and recognize that the Greek Present Tense is often used to indicate notions which, in English, would have been rendered with the Present Perfect or the Present Perfect continuous (i.e. "has been spending" and not "spends"). A noticeable pattern of errors included wrong use or misuse of prepositions in the first and third paragraphs. Prepositions continue to be an aspect of English grammar that students obviously need more practice in.
On the contrary, vocabulary did not seem to pose any issues with the majority of candidates. Isolated errors included inappropriate rendering of the words «ποτίζω» and «ζωάκι».

Possible, acceptable versions of translations of questions 2a and 2b are as follows:

2 (a) Is it good or bad to get angry?

Psychologists claim that, for many, anger is a sickness/disease, a serious problem.

In many countries in the world, people who suffer from frequent outbursts of anger have to/are obliged to go to special classes to learn how to control their anger. There, they learn various ways to calm themselves down, in order to avoid the ugly repercussions/consequences of anger.

So, here are some tips for calming down.

Stop and count to twenty before you open your mouth to say something.

Keep an anger journal, in order to note the situations that provoke you/make you angry, so as to try to avoid them.

When something bothers you, find a solution or do something to feel better.

2 (b) Even though 10 year old Evdokia is growing up in an apartment in the city, she has been spending her school holidays with her grandmother and grandfather in the village, since she was very young.

Her favourite "toy" /game is her grandmother's garden. When she is there, she waters the plants and the vegetables every day and chooses all by herself which tomatoes to cut for the salad.

"Evdokia is a child of the city but since she was young she has loved the outdoors/the countryside and always wanted to play in her neighbourhood park, instead of sitting in front of the TV", her parents tell us.

On the weekends, we leave the city and we go on trips to the sea or to the mountains. Evdokia plays very little in her own room and this makes her different from many children her age.

Evdokia's only complaint is that her parents won't get her a pet. They say that animals belong in nature and not on an apartment balcony.

Question 3

Candidates used a wide range of vocabulary and employed complex structures and idiom in order to respond to the questions. There was an obvious preference for topics (b), (c) and (e), which were also the most successful.

A small number of candidates failed to pay attention to the rubric in question 3(a) and produced historical (and often inaccurate) accounts of the events of the Polytechnic uprising, neglecting to add their own personal reaction to the slogan.

Another case where the question was sometimes misunderstood and mishandled related to 3 (d). Many candidates wrote about professional choices, without the words "university" or "degree" even mentioned. Some wrote a pertinent introduction in which they argued that, given the crisis in the economy, university studies must lead to job security; therefore, they scored marks with regard to pertinence and coherence. Those who completely ignored the question and wrote what they "want to be when [they] grow up" and omitted any references to the parameters and aspects of choosing an academic trajectory failed to gain adequate credit.

Across all questions, few candidates lost marks when they took their time to get to the main topic and wasted precious words in descriptive, pre-learned introductions not entirely relevant to the topic; especially when it came to responses to 3(b), which often contained generic introductions about environmental issues.

There was a noticeable pattern of candidates sticking to the prescribed word limit; this was very welcome.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

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