

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Modern Greek (4MG0) Paper 01

Written Paper

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General Comments

The majority of candidates performed very well and provided competent translations, from English into Greek and vice versa. There was evidence of very good knowledge of vocabulary, both in the translation and the essay questions and many responses demonstrated excellent communicative competence, in terms of grammatical knowledge of syntax and morphology, as well as fluency and lexical appropriateness.

Occasionally, mistakes occurred regarding the conventions of orthography and indication of the position of the stress. There were some violations concerning the letters of the Greek alphabet, for example t instead of τ and e instead of ε. Also, abbreviations of the kind encountered in text messages or in web chats are not acceptable unless the particular register of the translation or the essay invites them. Moreover, in English the superscript dot appearing above the letters i and j should not be an asterisk or a circle. Similarly, the position of the stress in Greek should be indicated with the appropriate diacritic not with a dot or a circle.

In relation to translation, both from English into Greek and vice versa, candidates ought to note that they may consider various options regarding choice of word or structure in their drafts, but the final copy should not contain alternatives (e.g. νομικά/νομική/δικηγορικές σπουδές). When this happens, the examiner only marks the first word in a series of alternatives.

In this exam series there was remarkable improvement regarding adherence to the rubrics and the vast majority of candidates observed the word limit.

Comments on individual questions are as follows:

Question 1

The majority of candidates scored good marks in this section. They produced competent translations, with few grammatical inaccuracies and occasional wrong use of vocabulary. Despite evidence of such occasional errors, the translations usually communicated the sense of the source text correctly. The challenges encountered by a small number of candidates were mainly restricted to a couple of words and did not usually affect the communicative efficiency of the translations seriously. The only linguistic structure that seemed to pose a consistent challenge was the syntactic relation of ὅπως with a nominative in the phrase: ὅπως η Λεμεσό; unfortunately most candidates opted for: Ὅπως τη Λεμεσό.

Some challenges regarding choice of vocabulary were a surprise to witness, even among high ability candidates. A large number of candidates translated North East wrongly as Βορειοδυτικά. A small number found that the Greek word for familiar escaped them but managed to find near synonyms that conveyed the meaning,

albeit not always in a succinct or elegant way. Law Studies also posed a problem with many coming up with the term *δικηγορικές σπουδές*, which may have contributed some semantic clarity but did not qualify as good translation.

A good number of able students produced excellent translations of the first paragraph; seemingly the one that seemed to pose some obstacles with the grand majority. These students interpreted the passage and understood that ‘home’ was not meant literally as the home where Eleni lived (*το σπίτι της*), but her homeland (*την πατρίδα της*), especially as it concerned the place where she came from in Cyprus being compared to Sunderland.

A pattern of translating place names (Newcastle= *Νεόκαστρο*, Sunderland= *Ηλιούπολη*) was observed, which added a touch of inauthenticity to the text. Such attempts at translating place names are strongly discouraged, unless these concern well-known names of places, countries and cities (e.g. *Λονδίνο*, *Νέα Υόρκη*, *Αγγλία*). Rather than translating or even leaving them as they are in English, candidates ought to attempt to transliterate these names.

Questions 2a and 2b

Most responses showed evidence of fluency and satisfactory awareness of grammar and syntax.

Translations of question 2(a), in particular, showed fluent command of vocabulary and idioms, good language awareness and consistently good application of the grammatical system. Less able candidates found the second paragraph of question 2(a) challenging, and some consistent patterns of wrong choice of vocabulary emerged in translations of the first paragraph of 2(b). Most of these errors occurred in the translation of isolated vocabulary. It was good to observe a good level of performance in the application of the rules of grammar and syntax, as the majority of candidates handled the linguistic structures in a satisfactory way staying almost always in control of meaning.

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

Question 2a

Κατά τύχη was often mistranslated as “in luck/were lucky” instead of the correct “by chance /happened to find themselves there”.

Γάμους was often mistranslated as “marriage” instead of the correct “wedding”.

Φιλόξενη was often mistranslated as “hostile” instead of the correct “hospitable”

Γαμποί, *νύφες*, *τελετή* also proved to be challenging for many candidates who found roundabout ways to translate the words or left them out altogether.

Question 2b

Many came up with the ingenious but unfortunately nonexistent word “unstandable” instead of the correct “unbearable”.

Issues of collocation occurred when many students chose to “give attention” instead of the correct “pay attention”.

Challenges with word order resulted in a pattern of wrong translations of the last line, “we take them a picture” instead of the correct “we take a picture of them”.

Question 3

Question 3 has traditionally been the strong point of the majority of candidates and this year many candidates achieved good marks. Adherence to rubric was largely observed and it was a welcome change to see so many respecting the word limit and writing well-structured and largely relevant responses, with evidence of ability to describe, explain and expand. Responses to question 3 were generally successful, fluent and to the point with some misunderstanding of question 3b. Some students misunderstood the phrase “family gathering” and wrote about a family holiday or receiving news that concerned family members, with almost no gathering of any kind involved.

Question 3e was by far the most popular. Students wrote compelling essays, offering current arguments for and against the internet, giving a balanced account before they offered their own valid conclusion. Some students disregarded the “either/or” of the question and wrote some rather one dimensional accounts. Occasionally, unnecessarily long introductions were offered, where the candidate explained in detail what the web is.

Question 3(d) was another popular response and yielded mostly pertinent, interesting and well put together responses about what there is to do in the candidate’s city, during a short city break. We read many enjoyable accounts about the delights of Limassol and Nicosia that would have done the mayors of the cities proud. Few candidates did not take enough notice of the time-frame of this city-break (a weekend) and wrote without the necessary economy and precision, offering sightseeing opportunities and restaurant recommendations that would have been more appropriate for a year’s stay.

Very few candidates chose question 3e, which invited a more intellectually driven description and opinion, regarding a favourite writer and a film review. Those who did wrote excellent accounts of books and films showed evidence of superior language skills.

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