

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

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

Written Paper

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Publications Code 4MG0_01_1606_ER

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4MG0/01 IGCSE Greek - Examiner's report – July 2016

General Comments

The majority of candidates performed very well and wrote pertinent essays marked by language accuracy, as well as competent translations from English into Greek and vice versa. There was evidence of good knowledge of vocabulary, both in the translation and the essay questions and many responses demonstrated excellent communicative skills, in terms of knowledge of syntax and morphology, as well as fluency and lexical appropriateness.

Frequently, the mistakes which occurred were with regard to the conventions of orthography, including basic ones, such as verb and noun inflections. 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. πρόσφυγες/μετανάστες). 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. This was very much appreciated by all the examiners.

Comments on individual questions are as follows:

Question 1

The majority of candidates performed very well in this section, achieving marks in the region of 14 and higher. They produced competent translations, with few grammatical inaccuracies but occasional wrong use of vocabulary and rather inconsistent spelling. Despite evidence of such occasional errors, the translations usually communicated the sense of the source text correctly. The challenges encountered by a fair number of candidates were mainly restricted to instances of using words erroneously. Even though these did not usually detract from the communicative efficiency of the piece overall, they resulted in awkward Greek and

gave rise to instances of confusion. It was welcome to see so few candidates make mistakes with basic linguistic structures in Greek.

Some errors regarding choice of vocabulary which were, occasionally, a surprise to witness, even among high ability candidates, related to the following:

- *Ο Θωμάς νίκησε ένα διαγωνισμό* instead of the correct *Ο Θωμάς κέρδισε σ' ένα διαγωνισμό*
- *Να μιλάει άφταιστα/ γρήγορα* instead of the correct *να μιλάει άπταιστα*
- *Εξασχίζοντας τα ρωσικά του* instead of the correct *και εξασκεί τα ρωσικά του*
- *Στις άλλες γλώσσες* instead of the correct *στις ξένες γλώσσες*

A small number of candidates was not familiar with the acronym UK and translated it as ΗΠΑ.

Questions 2a and 2b

Many responses showed evidence of fluency and satisfactory awareness of grammar and syntax. The majority of candidates was able to identify and transmit effectively many of the main points of the text and demonstrated ability to recognise and transmit attitudes and points of view with varying degrees of success. Most translations were reasonable versions of the source texts. A good number of higher ability candidates produced largely coherent and accurate versions of the original texts into English and excelled in identifying and transmitting effectively virtually all of the main points of the text.

Question 2(a) proved the more challenging out of the two that require translation into English. A good number of candidates, however, produced translations that ranged from good to excellent, with occasional slips that related to wrong use of vocabulary and some awkwardness in tense construction. Word order in English continued to pose a challenge to many candidates, who tried to unsuccessfully replicate the word order of the Greek text in the English text. The following patterns emerged with regard to wrong lexical choices and unsatisfactory knowledge and application of language:

- Instead of the correct, *we try to teach Greek to all immigrants*, many candidates produced *we try to learn Greek to all immigrants* failing to recognize that the verb "learn" cannot be used in English in the same way as it is used in Greek
- Instead of the correct, *irrespective of age* or *regardless of age* many candidates translated the phrase *ανεξαρτήτως ηλικίας* in a variety of ways, some of which were outright wrong and some awkward: E.g. *despite their age*, *even though the age*, *no matter of the age* etc.

- Instead of the correct, *one of the volunteer teachers explains to our magazine*, many candidates failed to observe the conventions of English syntax and did not keep with the required word order: E.g. *explained to our magazine one of the teachers* etc. Similar challenges with work order were often witnessed in the translation of the sentence, *Στο σχολείο μπορεί να εργαστεί οποιοσδήποτε*. This was often translated as *At the school can come and work anyone*, instead of one of the correct versions, *Anyone can come to work at the school*

A rather sizeable number of candidates failed to produce the correct translation for *εθελοντές, μετανάστες, ανταμοιβή*. One of the most frequent translations of *ανταμοιβή* was *payback*, which in fact changes the semantics of the sentence considerably.

The majority of the candidates performed very well in **Question 2b** with only 20% of the candidates scoring 12 and under. The majority achieved marks above 14 demonstrating their skill at transmitting, in translation, facts, points of view and attitude. The last paragraph in particular was translated almost flawlessly by most candidates in the 14+ range of marks.

Challenges with word order again were mostly encountered in the first paragraph, where a succession of questions required attention to syntax. The translation of the sentence, *Είναι πολύ ωραίο να έχεις διάφορα σχέδια, είναι όμως ακόμα πιο ωραίο όταν τα σχέδια γίνονται πραγματικότητα* revealed some witness with regard to the formation of the comparative degree of adjectives (e.g. *more nice, more better* etc.) A pattern of slips in spelling emerged when many candidates wrote *plants* instead of *plans*. Weaker candidates often translated the expression *με τις ώρες* literally, instead of with an equivalent in English, such as *for hours*.

In general, question 2 (b) was translated very well by the majority of candidates, with almost 40% of the entry scoring marks of 16 and above.

Question 3

Question 3 has traditionally been the strong point of the majority of candidates and this year also an outcome of at least 30 marks out of 40 was achieved by most. Adherence to rubric was largely observed and it was a welcome change to see so many respecting the word limit and writing relevant responses, with evidence of ability to describe, explain and justify, albeit not always with the proper amount of attention to the organization and development of their ideas. Having established that, it must also be noted that there was also consistent and abundant evidence of messy writing, often to the point of illegibility, with smudges, words being crossed out on every other line, lack of paragraphs, basic errors in spelling and very little

regard for the orderly presentation of ideas in writing. The pattern of errors in relation to the spelling of verb endings (including first person present tense verbs, which instead of -ω, often ended in -ο) and the absence of any indication of the position of the stress cost candidates valuable marks.

Question **3(a)** was by far the most popular. Students wrote purposeful essays, describing two or more qualities that define a good friendship. As this was a popular response, the patterns of weakness in spelling and organization were most evident here. A large number of candidates, including higher ability ones, included references to *μια φιλία μεταξύ δύο ανθρώπων* instead of the correct *μια φιλία μεταξύ δύο ανθρώπων*.

3(b) was the question where candidates performed the best. There was a large variety of favorite famous personalities and fair justification of the reasons why these were chosen by the candidate.

3(c) was also a very popular question with candidates producing longer and varied sentences using a wide range of lexis and structures with appropriate use of tense concepts/time referents in order to express their goals for the following year. Occasionally, there were some omissions regarding the way the candidates would go about achieving these goals. One can only hope that the candidates realise their expressed goals to improve their academic performance, do well at school and communicate more openly and respectfully with parents and teachers.

Question 3 (d) was the least popular and there were no noticeable error patterns other than the ones noted in the introduction to question 3. The ideas contained in these essays were very similar to the ones expressed in question 3(c), except in reverse. Most candidates expressed regret for their academic performance and the rifts with family and friends.

Question 3 (e) was the second most popular for the candidates, but was also the one that invited responses with omissions or irrelevance. Many wrote lengthy responses expressing dislike for a job, which they neglected to name or even broadly describe, and launched instead into personal narratives about their "news". Such response did not score very high on the communication and content aspect. The candidates who came very closely to the requirements for fluency, pertinence and purposefulness occasionally omitted to add why they found the experience "interesting", which was one of the requirements of the question.

Grade Boundaries

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