

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
in Modern Greek (4MG0) Paper 1

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General Comments

The majority of candidates performed well and provided competent translations, both from English into Greek and vice versa. There was evidence of good knowledge of vocabulary, both in the translation as well as the essay questions and many responses demonstrated good linguistic competence, in terms of fluency and accuracy.

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 u instead of υ, 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.

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. δούλεψα στα ξένα/έξω/εξωτερικό). When this happens, the examiner only marks the first alternative.

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

Comments on individual questions are as follows:

Question 1

Many candidates scored good marks in this section. They produced competent translations, with few grammatical inaccuracies. Despite evidence of 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 (abroad, scenery) and did not affect the communicative efficiency of the translations seriously.

Some linguistic structures which related to the translation of gerunds such as "working" in the sentence "...my first summer working abroad" and the translation of the present perfect continuous in the sentence "...I have been taking classes" proved to be a challenge for some candidates.

In the first instance the present participle «δουλεύοντας» was not the correct choice as the syntax of the source text required a relative clause: που δούλεψα στο εξωτερικό. In the second instance and in the absence of a present perfect continuous tense in Greek, the meaning of the sentence is best conveyed with a Present Tense, «κάνω μαθήματα», rather than a Past Tense «έκανα μαθήματα», as the latter implies that this action is no longer happening. Another common incorrect pattern concerned the translation of “I have been taking classes” as «πήρα/παίρνω τάξεις».

Questions 2a and 2b

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

Responses to 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 part of question 2(b) challenging, especially when it came to the translation of the third paragraph. Errors occurred to the translation of isolated vocabulary as the majority of candidates handled the linguistic structures in a satisfactory way and even when they did not, they were still in control of meaning.

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

Question 2(a): Only three words seemed to pose some difficulty to few candidates. «Άδεια» was sometimes translated as “day off”, even though the context clearly suggested that in this case the word meant “permission”. «Άρθρα» was occasionally translated as “texts” but this did not detract too much from the communicative intent of the passage and was therefore not penalized strictly. This was also the case for «τεύχος» which was translated as “copy” instead of “issue”.

Question 2(b):

A surprisingly large number of candidates failed to transcribe «Λεμέσια» as “Lemessia”. Even though place names are always translated, especially if there is no direct and commonly used equivalent, translation conventions require that Greek proper nouns are transcribed into English.

Common and frequently occurring errors in this question related to the following words:

«Σειρά» was often translated as “row” instead of “series”

«Δήμαρχος» was often translated as “chief/president” instead of Mayor
«Βραβεία» was rendered as “prices” instead of “prizes”
«Διεθνή» was rendered as “national” instead of “international”.

Question 3

Question 3e was by far the most popular. Students wrote compelling essays for their imaginary dilemma, making pertinent comments regarding the value of education but also the difficulty of finding professional security at this age of severe economic crisis. Some candidates were slightly off topic as they failed to read the question carefully and only supported one option (for example, going to university) without expressing their doubts or weighing the options available to them.

The second most popular question, 3d, yielded mostly pertinent and well put together responses, albeit a little lengthy. A small number of students who wished to build suspense about the “joyous event” in their lives, devoted a couple of pages to the days or months leading up to the event itself, which, when revealed, was described in just a couple of lines. This was viewed as digression and irrelevance as a large part of the essay did not seem to address the reason why the event caused joy or what exactly it meant for the candidate.

Question 3c was the third most popular. A good percentage of candidates achieved the desired result this year by using a wide range of vocabulary and complex structures and idiom in order to respond to the question. There was a preference for the obvious values of “love”, “family” “patriotism”, but there were also some misunderstanding when clearly younger candidates wrote about “lifestyle” and how they prefer to spend their time, achieving in this way only a tentative connection to the question.

Fewer candidates responded to questions 1a and 1b. The ones who wrote about “Education” were the most successful as they possessed good knowledge of the topic but also enough personal experience to write convincing and varied accounts of the issue in question. Most candidates who chose question 3a wrote pertinently about the historical period that is most appealing to them and explained with vivid detail a period in history and why it attracts them. Some candidates, however, misunderstood the question and wrote narratives containing irrelevance and digression. These responses failed to target a period in history and contained instead references to a year in the candidate’s life (sometimes even the year before) when the candidate wished to revisit a holiday, a shopping expedition or another personal experience.

Question 3 has traditionally been the strong point of the majority of candidates and this year also an outcome of at least 32 marks out of 40 was achieved by many. Adherence to rubric was largely observed and it was a welcome change to see so many respecting the word limit. Responses to question 3 were generally successful, fluent and to the point with some misunderstanding of questions 3a and 3e.

Grade Boundaries

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