

Examiners' Report

January 2009

GCE O Level

O Level Modern Greek (7615)

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Paper 1

General Comments

A large number of the candidates, who sat the January 2009 examination in Modern Greek, performed very well and provided competent translations, both from English into Greek and vice versa. Question 3 provoked mostly relevant and interesting accounts and there was evidence of good language awareness, both in terms of application of structures and vocabulary, in most essays.

This time too, there was noticeable improvement regarding rubric and wordage restrictions, as the vast majority of candidates adhered to the rubric. The issue regarding application of the rules governing the stress system has continued to mar performance, but not as widely as in previous years. Candidates are reminded that the position of the stress ought to be indicated, where necessary, with the appropriate diacritic. Circles and stars are not acceptable alternatives of the stress mark. Moreover, Greek letters ought to be rendered appropriately and not substituted by their equivalent Latin characters as, for example, “t” and “u” cannot replace the Greek characters “τ “ and “ υ“.

Candidates are also reminded that sloppiness, messy writing and carelessness regarding the presentation of their responses or inability to stay within the prescribed margins of the page, ultimately work to their disadvantage.

Comments on individual questions are as follows:

Questions 1a and 1b

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

Many responses to question 1(a) showed fluent command of vocabulary and idiom, good language awareness and consistently good application of the grammatical system.

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

- «έργα» was often erroneously translated as “films”, even though the preceding phrase, «θεατρικές παραστάσεις», made it clear that the students staged “plays”
- «τραγουδιούνται» posed some difficulty as many students were not familiar with the correct participle “sung” and produced constructs such as “songed” or “singed”.
- Although «παρακολουθούν» is a familiar verb for most candidates, many failed to indicate the appropriate meaning, for this context. Here, it means “attend” and not “watch” (as in “watch television”). The phrase ‘children watch school’ is neither appropriate nor correct.
- The importance of context, when it comes to choosing the correct translation for words which may often be translated in multiple ways, is also evident in the phrase « κι ας την έχουν γνωρίσει». The verb «γνωρίζω» may be translated as “know”, “get to know” or “meet”. Here, as the object of the verb is not a person but a country (Greece), the translation “they met her”, may have some communicative value, but is, essentially, inappropriate.

With regard to question 1(b), the majority of responses were competent translations, with few grammatical inaccuracies and a variety of correctly used structures and vocabulary.

The few patterns relating to incorrect use of vocabulary or structures were with regard to the following:

- «πριν από 7 χρόνια» was literally translated as “before 7 years”, instead of “7 years ago”.
- «ξαναζωντάνεψε το παιδικό της όνειρο, το τραγούδι» occasionally presented candidates with a syntactical challenge as the Greek word order is not as strict as the English one and the subject of the verb often follows the verb. English syntax, however, requires that it precedes the verb, therefore the phrase “came alive her childhood dream” is both awkward and ineffective.
- Conventions of word order were sometimes ignored when it came to the translation of the phrase « την πρωτοάκουσε γνωστός Έλληνας συνθέτης». The message was mis-communicated as it was the composer who heard her and not the composer who was heard, as the translation “heard a composer”, erroneously indicated.

Question 2

Many candidates gained good marks in this section. They produced competent translations, with few grammatical inaccuracies. Despite evidence of occasional errors, the translations usually read well and communicated the sense of the source text correctly. The challenges which confronted a small number of candidates were mainly restricted to a couple of words (PC, web) and did not affect the communicative efficiency of the translations seriously. The Internet is clearly a topic known and dear to many candidates and the familiarity with the theme resulted in very competent responses.

Question 3

Candidates used a wide range of vocabulary and employed complex structures and idiom in order to respond to the question. There was an even distribution of candidate interest amongst the topics, with a slight preference for 3(d) and 3(b), and the noticeable pattern of candidates sticking to the prescribed word limit was welcome.

There were very few lapses into irrelevance and the kind of digression that is evidence of a pre-learnt essay or careless reading of the rubric. This was evident in 1(a) where occasionally a critique of television in general, rather than “reality” shows, was offered. There were a couple of isolated cases of the essay being written in English, which was an unfortunate lack of awareness of what this examination entails.

One observation which ought to be taken seriously by the candidates concerns the presentation of their work. Many candidates presented essays that were hardly legible, the writing not only being hard to read but also marked by smudges and asterisks and words being crossed out over and over again. It would be a courtesy to the examiners on the part of the candidates to take some extra care when writing this exam paper.

Statistics

Paper 1

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Boundary mark	73	58	44	39	32

Note:

Boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

Grade boundaries: these may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.

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