

C O N T E N T S

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P R O N U N C I A T I O N

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Pronunciation module consists of this Description and a set of computerised listening exercises: it teaches you all the speech-sounds of Modern Greek. The variety taught is Greek as spoken by ordinary people in southern mainland Greece.

2. INDIVIDUAL SOUNDS

2.1. Consonants

2.1.1. Plosives

p Voiceless bilabial plosive, unaspirated.

Like English *p*, but without the following puff of breath. 'pamɛ *we go*.

b Voiced bilabial plosive.

Like English *b*, but with more buzz. 'bɛɲi *it goes in*.

t Voiceless denti-alveolar plosive, unaspirated.

Like English *t*, but with the tongue pushed against the front teeth and without the following puff of breath. 'tɔɹa *now*.

d Voiced denti-alveolar plosive.

Like English *d*, but with the tongue pushed against the front teeth and with more buzz. 'di nɔmɛ *I get dressed*.

c Voiceless palatal plosive, unaspirated.

Like the *ky* sound in English *cue*, but without the following puff of breath. ci 'ɹia *madam*.

ʃ Voiced palatal plosive.

Like the *gy* sound in English *regular*, but with more buzz. tɔɲ 'ʃiɹiɔ *the gentleman*.

k Voiceless velar plosive, unaspirated.

Like English *k*, but without the following puff of breath. 'kapi *it does*.

g Voiced velar plosive.

Like English *g*, but with more buzz. tɔŋ ga'fɛ *the coffee*.

2.1.2. Affricates

ts Voiceless alveolar affricate.

Like *ts* in English *tsetse* or *tsunami*. tsa'bbi kɔs *Tsambikos (personal name)*.

dz Voiced alveolar affricate.

Like the *dz* sound in English *adds up*. 'dzami *window-glass*.

2.1.3. Nasals

m Voiced bilabial nasal.

Like English *m*. 'mɛɲi *he stays*.

n Voiced denti-alveolar nasal.

Like English *n*, but with the tongue pushed against the front teeth. nɛ *yes*.

ɲ Voiced palatal nasal.

Like the *ny* sound in English *onion*. ba'ɲɔ *swimming*.

ŋ Voiced velar nasal.

Like *ng* in English *long*. ðɛŋ 'gapi *it doesn't do*.

2.1.4. Tap

ɾ Voiced alveolar tap.

Like a very old-fashioned pronunciation of English *r* in *very*, made by tapping the tongue against the ridge behind the teeth. 'biɹa *beer*.

2.1.5. Fricatives

- f Voiceless labio-dental fricative.
Like English *f*. 'filɔs *friend*.
- v Voiced labio-dental fricative.
Like English *v*. 'vafka *boat*.
- θ Voiceless interdental fricative.
Like *th* in English *thick*. 'θɛlɔ *I want*.
- ð Voiced interdental fricative.
Like *th* in English *this*. 'ðiŋi *he gives*.
- s Voiceless alveolar fricative.
Like *ss* in English *hiss*. ε'si *you*.
- z Voiced alveolar fricative.
Like *z* in English *lazy*. 'zumε *we live*.
- ç Voiceless palatal fricative.
Like the *ky* sound in English *cue*, but without the tongue touching the roof of the mouth. 'çɛfɛtɛ *hallo!*
- ʝ Voiced palatal fricative.
Like the *gy* sound in English *regular*, but with more buzz, and without the tongue touching the roof of the mouth. 'jasu *hallo!*
- x Voiceless velar fricative.
Like the *ch* sound in Scottish *loch*. 'xasamε *we have lost*.
- ɣ Voiced velar fricative.
Like the *ch* sound in Scottish *loch*, but with the vocal chords vibrating to give a buzzing sound. ε'ɣɔ *I*.

2.1.6. Approximants

- l Voiced denti-alveolar lateral-approximant.
Like English *l*, but with the tongue pushed against the front teeth. 'lɛmε *we say*.
- ʎ Voiced palatal lateral-approximant.
Like the *ly* sound in English *million*. ðu'ʎa *work*.

2.2. Vowels

- i Close front unrounded vowel.
Like *ee* in English *flee*, but shorter. 'inε *is*.
- ɛ Open-mid front unrounded vowel.
Like *e* in English *dress*. 'ɛla *come!*
- a Open central unrounded vowel.
Like *a* in English *path*, but shorter, and with the tongue further forward. 'kanɔ *I do*.
- ɔ Open-mid back rounded vowel, lowered.
Halfway between English *cot* and *caught*. 'ɔçi *no*.
- u Close back rounded vowel.
Like *oo* in English *moon*, but using an old-fashioned pronunciation with strongly rounded lips and the middle of the tongue pushed down, and shorter. 'supa *I told you*.

3. SOUNDS IN FLUENT SPEECH

3.1. Mouth position

All languages have a characteristic position of the mouth, a way of holding the vocal organs that colours the overall sound. In Greek, the jaw is often retracted, with little vertical movement, but the articulation is nonetheless vigorous. The rounded vowels have strong protrusion of the lips, and this may affect the surrounding consonants.

vowels in French: 'ãθɔɔɔs *person* (the symbol ~ means that the vowel is nasal). This feature is not discussed further in this course.

In some varieties of Greek, final n has survived in a number of grammatical forms, and its presence is revealed by the sandhi changes described above: 'pi numɛn 'uzɔ *we're drinking ouzo* instead of the standard 'pi numɛ 'uzɔ, but 'pi numɛ lɛmɔ'naða *we're drinking lemonade* in both varieties.

4.2. Non-palatal versus palatal consonants

The velar (i.e. non-palatal) consonants k, g, x and χ are followed only by central or back vowels (a, ɔ and u); their palatal equivalents c, ç, ç and j are followed only by the front vowels i and ε. But grammatical changes - for example in the endings of verbs and adjectives - can change a back vowel into a front vowel, and vice versa, in which case the preceding consonant will also change:

VERB	<i>have</i>	<i>depart</i>	ADJECTIVE	<i>bad</i>
I:	'ɛxɔ	'fɛvχɔ	Sing. masc.	ka'kɔs
you:	'ɛçis	'fɛvçis	Sing. fem.	ka'ci
he:	'ɛçi	'fɛvçi	Sing. neut.	ka'kɔ
we:	'ɛxumɛ	'fɛvçumɛ	Plur. masc.	ka'ci
you:	'ɛçɛtɛ	'fɛvçɛtɛ	Plur. fem.	ka'cɛs
they:	'ɛxun	'fɛvçun	Plur. neut.	ka'ka

Many speakers apply the same principle to the denti-alveolar consonants n and l, changing them to their palatal counterparts ɲ and ʎ before the front vowel i (but not before ε):

VERB	<i>have</i>	ADJECTIVE	<i>good</i>
I:	'kanɔ	Sing. masc.	ka'lɔs
you:	'kaɲis	Sing. fem.	ka'li
he:	'kaɲi	Sing. neut.	ka'lɔ
we:	'kanumɛ	Plur. masc.	ka'li
you:	'kanɛtɛ	Plur. fem.	ka'lɛs
they:	'kanun	Plur. neut.	ka'la

4.3. i followed by a vowel

Sometimes a grammatical change means that a vowel is added to a word ending in i. In such cases, the i changes to ç or j according to whether the preceding consonant is voiceless or voiced:

'spiti *house* 'spitça *houses*
 lu'luði *flower* lu'luðja *flowers*

Some words resist this change, for historical reasons.

4.4. s before voiced consonants

If a word ending in s is followed by a word beginning with a voiced consonant, the s voices to z:

- ði'kɔs tu *belonging to him* (t is a voiceless consonant, s unchanged)
- ði'kɔz mu *belonging to me* (m is a voiced consonant, s changes to z)

4.5. Vowel removal

When a word ending in a vowel is followed by a word beginning with a vowel, one of the vowels is removed. Vowels have the 'pecking order' a ɔ u ε i (a is highest), and the vowel that is removed is the one that is lower in the pecking order. Disconcertingly, the stressed vowel can be removed, moving the stress to the surviving vowel:

ta 'ɛθɛla becomes 'taθɛla *I wanted them*
 tɔ 'ɛfɛɛɛ 'tɔfɛɛɛ *he brought it*
 su 'ipa 'supa *I told you*

4.6. Change of stress

The stress in a Greek phrase cannot fall earlier than on the third syllable from the end - i.e. not before the 'dum-di-di' position. If a word that is stressed in the 'dum-di-di' position has an unstressed particle added to it, the stress must change. It moves to the penultimate syllable:

τὸ πο'θιλᾶτὸ *the bike* τὸ ποθῖλα'τὸ μὴ *my bike*
 'tɛljɔsɛ *finish!* tɛljɔ'sɛ τὸ *finish it!*

5. GLOSSARY

Affricate: a plosive followed immediately by a fricative at the same point of articulation, the two sounds coming so close together that they sound like one sound.

Alveolar: the tip of the tongue articulates with the alveolum. See 'Alveolum'.

Alveolum: the bony ridge behind the upper front teeth.

Approximant: the articulators, by shaping the air-stream through the mouth, create a resonance, but not a hiss.

Aspirated: followed by a strong puff of breath, as though blowing out a candle. See 'Unaspirated'.

Back: a vowel where the back part of the tongue is tense.

Bilabial: the upper and lower lips articulate together.

Central: a vowel where the centre of the tongue is tense.

Close: a vowel where the tense part of the tongue is near to the roof of the mouth.

Denti-alveolar: a sound in which the tongue articulates simultaneously with the back of the upper front teeth and the alveolum. See 'Alveolum'.

Fricative: the air-stream through the mouth is made sufficiently narrow to cause hiss, but not completely blocked.

Front: a vowel where the front part of the tongue is tense.

Interdental: the tongue is thrust forward between the front teeth.

Labio-dental: the upper front teeth articulate with the lower lip.

Lateral-approximant: the centre of the tongue touches the roof of the mouth at the specified point; the sides of the tongue are retracted.

Lowered: a vowel where the tense part of the tongue is slightly lower than the specified position.

Nasal: of a consonant, one in which the breath passes through the nose (the articulators block the passage through the mouth). Of a vowel, one in which the breath passes partly through the nose and partly through the mouth. See 'Oral'.

Open: a vowel where the tense part of the tongue is near the floor of the mouth.

Open-mid: a vowel where the tense part of the tongue is lower than halfway between the roof and the floor of the mouth.

Oral: a vowel that is pronounced wholly through the mouth (i.e. no breath passes through the nose). See 'Nasal'.

Palatal: the tongue articulates with the palate, the hard middle part of the roof of the mouth.

Plosive: the air-stream through the mouth is blocked: pressure is built up and released suddenly.

Rounded: a vowel where the lips are rounded (by pulling in the corners of the mouth).

Tap: a consonant where one articulator touches the other briefly while in movement.

Unaspirated: an unaspirated plosive does not have the puff of breath that accompanies most plosives in English. See 'Aspirated'.

Unrounded: a vowel where the lips are spread, not rounded.

Velar: the tongue articulates with the velum. See 'Velum'.

Velum: the soft back part of the roof of the mouth.

Voiced: with a voiced sound, the vocal chords vibrate: the sound can be sung; if you put your hands over your ears, you can hear a buzz; if you touch your larynx lightly, you can feel vibrations. See 'Voiceless'.

Voiceless: with a voiceless sound, the vocal chords do not vibrate: the sound

