

Modern Greek, the living representative of the Hellenic branch of Indo-European, is spoken by some nine million speakers in Greece and Cyprus and approximately three million others in the US, Australia, Britain, Canada, and elsewhere. The speaker in this recording is a male in his 20's from Peloponesus.

Greek Consonant Phonemes:

The fortis stops are unaspirated, but the lenis stops are usually voiced. The alveolar fricatives are normally dentalized. The lateral is slightly palatalized, and is highly palatalized before the high front vowel [i]. The

Stress is marked with an acute accent over the syllable nucleus.

fortis	p	t	ts	k	
lenis	b	d	dz	g	
fricatives	f	θ	ʃ	x	h
	v	ð	z	ɣ	
nasals	m	n			
liquids			r	l	
glides				j	

Greek Vowel Phonemes:

The five vowel phonemes of Greek are approximately:

i	u
ε	ο
a	

The vowel [o] is often pronounced as [ɔ].

Greek is usually considered as having no diphthongs, its vowels appearing only in monophthongal pronunciations. This means that sequences of vowels are also sequences of syllables. This is exemplified in many items below.

I. Word Lists

Consonants:

1	[p]	[pɔl'í]	"a lot"
2		[áporɔs]	"poor"

3	[b]	[bɔrɪ]	"maybe"
4		[é̌bɔrɔ̌s]	"merchant"
5	[t]	[tɔra]	"now"
6		[pɔté]	"never"
7	[d]	[domáta]	"tomato"
8		[adí]	"instead of"
9	[k]	[kóma]	"coma; comma"
10		[makári]	"hopefully"
11	[g]	[gavɔ̌s]	"cross-eyed"
12		[mágas]	"cool dude"
13	[f]	[fárɔ̌s]	"lighthouse"
14		[afaʒía]	"aphasia"
15	[v]	[várɔ̌s]	"weight"
16		[θávo]	"I bury (someone)"
17	[θ]	[θíos]	"uncle"
18		[aθó̌s]	"innocent"
19	[ð]	[ðío]	"two"
20		[áðiǒs]	"empty"
21	[ʒ]	[ʒál'i]	"shawl"
22		[θálaʒa]	"sea"
23	[z]	[zál'i]	"dizziness"
24		[mazí]	"together"
25	[x]	[xámo]	"earthly, low"
26		[máçi]	"battle"
27	[ɣ]	[ɣámɔ̌s]	"wedding"
28		[mayazí]	"store"
29	[l]	[líɣa]	"a few"
30		[malá]	"hair"
31	[r]	[ríɣa]	"stripe"
32		[morɔ̌]	"baby"
33	[m]	[miʒí]	"half" (fem.)
34		[síma]	"signal"
35	[n]	[niʒí]	"island"
36		[egóni]	"grandson"
37	[j]	[θapíʒ]	"you will tell"
38		[θapjíʒ]	"you will drink"
39		[θja]	"aunt"
40		[píɔn]	"pus"
41		[pjɔn]	"who"

Vowels:

1	[óxi]	"no"
2	[ierá]	"holy"
3	[aóratɔ̌s]	"invisible"

454	[θéatro]	"theatre"
455	[akúi]	"he listens"
456	[aómatuŝ]	"eyeless"
457	[oréou]	"nice" (masc.)
458	[yatí]	"kitten"
459	[jetí]	"why"
460	[níçisu]	"your nail"
461	[kúniŝa]	"moved"
462	[jinéka]	"women"
463	[peðí]	"child"

Stress contrasts:

Stress in Greek is mobile and distinctive, although minimal pairs which differ only by means of stress are fairly rare. A few are given below.

464	[fáε]	"eat" (imperative)
465	[faí]	"food" (contraction)
466	[θéa]	"view"
467	[θeá]	"goddess"
468	[fíli]	"friends"
469	[filí]	"kiss"
470	[jérou]	"old man"
471	[jeróu]	"strong"

Syllabic vowel sequences:

We saw above that sequences of monophthongal syllabic vowels are not uncommon in Greek. However, these vowels may even be identical, as exemplified below. These are not long vowels, but in fact represent sequences of syllable nuclei. Examples 5 and 6 demonstrate the possibility for sequences of three syllabic vowels, and example 7 is an extremely rare oddity resulting from the three vowels being identical.

631	[zóo]	"animal"
632	[ðiikó]	"I govern"
633	[aθóou]	"innocent"
634	[néεŝ]	"young" (fem.)
635	[neoel'inikóu]	"neohellenic"

Continued on Tape #2

636	[neoanarxikóu]	"neoanarchist"
637	[andiikóu]	"antiviral"

II. Spontaneous Speech

III. Reading Sample

Also recorded is a bit of spontaneous speech, and a reading of a Modern Greek poem

References:

Joseph, Brian D. (1992) "Greek," in *International Encyclopedia of Linguistics*, Oxford: Oxford U. Press.

Joseph, Brian D. and Irene Philippaki-Warbuton (1986) *Modern Greek*, London: Croom Helm.