CHAPTER 3 | More about Nouns: Nominative and Accusative Cases

In the previous chapter I introduced case as part of the grammar of nouns and promised (but some promises might sound like threats) to come back to this issue later. “Later” is now, so let’s start!

The Modern Greek case system consists of four cases. All of them are important, but two are crucial for basic communication. Let me then introduce them using an example from Unit 2.1.2:

(1a) Ο Γιάννης μένει με τον Πέτρο.
    “John lives with Peter.”

(1b) Ο Πέτρος μένει με τον Γιάννη.
    “Peter lives with John.”

(1c) Ο Γιάννης και ο Πέτρος μένουν μαζί.
    “John and Peter live together.”

The forms ο Πέτρος / ο Γιάννης are instances of the nominative case. The forms τον Πέτρο / τον Γιάννη are instances of the accusative case. Each case seems to be governed by several regularities:

• In use. The accusative holds a specific syntactic role in those sentences: It is used after a preposition like με (technically I would say it is part of a prepositional phrase). The nominative holds another syntactic role, which will be explained below.

• In form. The forms of the nominative ο Γιάννης / ο Πέτρος seem to differ in exactly the same way from the forms of the accusative τον Γιάννη / τον Πέτρο (check the article and the ending).

There is then a lot to be said about both issues. For practical reasons, I shall first deal with matters of form, to come back later to matters of use.

3.1 Case as Form

The nouns we used before for our “living together” scenario were masculine nouns. And masculine nouns seem to share a similar pattern regarding case. The nominative and the accusative are related to a different form of the article as well as different endings:
Let’s now work with a similar scenario. This time two Greek female students, Ελένη and Κατερίνα, share the same apartment. This situation can again be described by the following sentences:

(3a)  Η Ελένη μένει με την Κατερίνα.
“Helen lives with Catherine.”

(3b)  Η Κατερίνα μένει με την Ελένη.
“Catherine lives with Helen.”

(3c)  Η Ελένη και η Κατερίνα μένουν μαζί.
“Helen and Catherine live together.”

Like masculine nouns, feminine nouns seem to share a similar pattern regarding case. But this time the pattern is different. Nominative and accusative are related to a different form of the article again, but now the endings remain the same:

(4)  η Ελένη / η Κατερίνα (NOMINATIVE)
την Ελένη / την Κατερίνα (ACCUSATIVE)

I believe it is clear by now that nouns follow different patterns according to their gender. It would then be reasonable to start from gender distinctions (see Table 2.1 on page 22) in order to introduce case as form, and this is what most grammars do:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>NOMINITATIVE</th>
<th>ACCUSATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MASCULINE</td>
<td>ο δρόμος</td>
<td>τον δρόμο</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ο άντρας</td>
<td>τον άντρα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ο χάρτης</td>
<td>τον χάρτη</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMININE</td>
<td>η όρα</td>
<td>την όρα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>η ζώνη</td>
<td>την ζώνη</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEUTER</td>
<td>το βιβλίο</td>
<td>το βιβλίο</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>το παιδί</td>
<td>το παιδί</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>το πράγμα</td>
<td>το πράγμα</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: Nominative and Accusative (Singular) for Basic Modern Greek Nouns.
Following dictionaries, I shall consider the nominative to be the “initial” case, which undergoes a number of changes in order to “produce” the accusative. In this respect:

- Masculine nouns undergo two changes: one in the definite article (ο → τον), another one in the ending (the final -ς is removed).
- Feminine nouns undergo only one change, in the definite article (η → την).
- Neuter nouns undergo no change at all.

Gender groups, then, are structured along a scale of complexity regarding case. In this scale masculine nouns represent the top, and neuter nouns represent the bottom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Changes</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masculine Nouns</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine Nouns</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuter Nouns</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>None/Zero</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: Modern Greek Nouns on a Scale of Inflectional Complexity.

Nouns are entered in dictionaries by the nominative, not the accusative, case. So, don’t look for δρόμο, άντρα, χάρτη, but for δρόμος, άντρας, χάρτης. For real entries press here: [http://www.greek-language.gr/greekLang/modern_greek/tools/lexica/triantafyllides/](http://www.greek-language.gr/greekLang/modern_greek/tools/lexica/triantafyllides/).

When speaking, people usually drop the final -ν of the definite article in the accusative before some sounds (so you might hear τον άντρα, την ώρα, but το χάρτη, τη ζώνη), and sometimes this is reflected on writing. In my opinion you already have enough to worry about, so I kept the same form everywhere. Keep in mind, though, that there are books about levels A1-A2 that follow this difference. For details press here: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_Greek_phonology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_Greek_phonology) (see Unit Sandhi).

### 3.2 Case in Use

The nominative and the accusative hold specific syntactic roles within the sentence. In this unit I shall examine these roles introducing five basic syntactic “contexts” as instances of the use of these cases. I know that by the end of the unit you will be exhausted, so there is a short summary there to help you survive and go on.
3.2.1 Subject, Object, and Free Word Order

Let’s see the following sentence:

(5)  Ο Πέτρος αγαπάει την Μαρία.
    “Peter loves Mary.”

Peter is the subject of the verb, the one who loves Mary. Mary is the object of the verb, the one who is loved by Peter. What if Mary loves Peter?

(6)  Η Μαρία αγαπάει τον Πέτρο.
    “Mary loves Peter.”

Mary is now the subject, the one who loves Peter. Peter now is the object, the one who is loved by Mary. I believe it is clear that the nominative holds the role of the subject, and the accusative holds the role of the object.

What about the following sentence? (Think before you read the answer.)

(7)  Τον Πέτρο αγαπάει η Μαρία.

This sentence means again “Mary loves Peter”, and not “Peter loves Mary”. Why? Because η Μαρία is clearly in the nominative, and the nominative is the subject regardless of its position. Equally τον Πέτρο is in the accusative, therefore it is the object no matter where it is. In other words: Syntactic roles like subject and object are clear inside a Modern Greek noun, so position within the sentence becomes irrelevant. Compare now to English: Nouns carry no such information inside them, therefore position is what counts. So if I change the position of the nouns in a sentence like Mary loves Peter, what I will get is a totally different sentence (Peter loves Mary).

Subjects and objects may in fact occupy various positions inside the sentence:

(8a)  Η Μαρία αγαπάει τον Πέτρο.
(8b)  Τον Πέτρο η Μαρία αγαπάει.
(8c)  Η Μαρία τον Πέτρο αγαπάει.
(8d)  Αγαπάει τον Πέτρο η Μαρία.
(8e)  Αγαπάει η Μαρία τον Πέτρο.

All of the above sentences are real. And all of them mean the same (“Mary loves Peter”). What you should keep from this discussion is the following:
• Subject and object may take different positions inside the sentence. These different positions do not affect the basic meaning of the sentence, but they are related to focus and accordingly they combine with different emphatic readings (see Unit 1.7.3 on page 17).
• Examples 8a-e represent free word order in Modern Greek. But free word order in this case has its limits. You can reverse the order S-V-O (Subject-Verb-Object) in Modern Greek and make S-O-V, V-S-O etc. But you cannot reverse the words inside the subject unit itself and put the noun first and the article second.
• Nobody expects you at the moment to master free word order. This will come with time and practice. But at least you must have some sort of free-word-order awareness, in order to understand natives when they do it. For the moment you can use the S-V-O order, or, if you feel adventurous, the V-S-O order, which is very common in Modern Greek.

The terms “subject” and “object” go much beyond the type of sentences we have examined so far. A subject does not need to be the “doer” of an action directed at the object:

(Ia) **Ο Πέτρος κοιμάται.**
    “Peter is sleeping.”

(Ib) **Ο Πέτρος νομίζει ότι κάνω λάθος.**
    “Peter thinks I am wrong.”

(Ic) **Ο Πέτρος είναι γιατρός.**
    “Peter is a doctor.”

3.2.2 Predication
Let’s see the following sentences:

(9a) **Ο Πέτρος θέλει γιατρό.**
    “Peter needs a doctor.”

(9b) **Ο Πέτρος είναι γιατρός.**
    “Peter is a doctor.”

Sentence 9a clearly involves two persons, Peter and the doctor. Peter is the subject and the doctor is the object. Unlike sentence 9a, sentence 9b involves only one person, Peter. What about the doctor? The doctor of 9b is not another person, it’s Peter’s profession. Technically, the word γιατρός of 9b is not an object but a predicate to the subject. It gives extra information about the subject. In this sense doctor works like an adjective, and Modern Greek adjectives must follow the case of the noun they modify (this is the technical term for such relations). This is why we have the nominative (γιατρός) in sentence 9b.
Chapter 3 | More about Nouns: Nominative and Accusative Cases

Note that a predicate may modify not only the subject but also the object. In that case, it will be in the accusative:

(10) Τα παιδιά έκαναν τον Πέτρο ήρωα. (NOM. o ήρωας)
    “The children made Peter a hero.”

3.2.3 Apposition

Let’s start from the following sentences:

(11a) Ο φίλος της, ο Πέτρος, είναι από τον Καναδά.
    “Her boyfriend, Peter, is from Canada.”

(11b) Ξέρεις τον φίλο της, τον Πέτρο;
    “Do you know her boyfriend, Peter?”

Peter of sentences 11a and 11b is not a person other than the boyfriend. Basically it is a piece of extra information about the boyfriend. As the doctor in sentence 9b, Peter here works like an adjective modifying another noun. And, again as the doctor of 9b, it follows the case of the noun it modifies. This is why it may be in the nominative (11a) or the accusative (11b).

Let’s now turn to less obvious cases of apposition and examine content relations. These relations typically involve a container and its content.

(12) Θέλω ένα ποτήρι νερό.
    “I need a glass of water.”

Like English, in Modern Greek the container comes first and content comes second. Unlike English, there is no intermediate word to connect the two terms.

What about case in this structure? Let’s see the following sentences:

(13a) Θέλω ένα ποτήρι χυμό. (NOM. o χυμός)
    “I need a glass of juice.”

(13b) Ένα ποτήρι χυμός κάνει πάντα καλό.
    “A glass of juice always helps.”

Sentences 13a and 13b show that content follows the case of the container. In 13a the noun o χυμός is in the accusative because the container is in the accusative (as the object). In sentence 13b, the content again follows the case of the container (now it’s nominative, because the con-
tainer is in the nominative, as the subject).

Notice that the above pattern in Modern Greek extends from “literal” content relations to abstract appositive relations like the following. The container is now a measure holding a specific quantity of the content:

(IIa) ένα κιλό φέτα
    “a kilo of feta cheese”
(IIb) ένα λίτρο γάλα
    “a liter of milk”

Notice also that the above pattern is the basis for hundreds of everyday phrases like the following:

(IIIa) χυμός πορτοκάλι
    “orange juice”
(IIIb) παγωτό σοκολάτα
    “chocolate ice cream”
(IIIc) ζελέ φράουλα
    “strawberry jelly”

Phrases like these are based on simple reasoning: Like there is coffee in my cup, so there is orange in my juice and chocolate in my ice cream.

3.2.4 Prepositional Phrases

In the previous units, the nominative and the accusative held contrastive (subject vs. object) or complementary roles (as in predication and apposition). From now on, the nominative abandons the picture, leaving the accusative alone. Nouns preceded by a preposition (basically με, σε, για, από) are parts of a prepositional phrase. And as parts of a prepositional phrase, these nouns are always in the accusative case:

(14a) Ο Γιάννης μένει με τον Πέτρο.
    “John lives with Peter.”

(14b) Το βιβλίο είναι για τον Πέτρο.
    “The book is for Peter.”

(14c) Είμαι από την Ιταλία.
    “I am from Italy.”
The use of the accusative in prepositional phrases is really easy to handle and has already been examined (see Unit 2.1.2 on page 25), so there are few things to be said here. Keep in mind that as part of a prepositional phrase, the accusative may be either the (indirect) object of the verb (like in 15a) or an adverbial (like in 15b):

(15a) Δίνω ένα βιβλίο στον Πέτρο.
     “I give a book to Peter.”

(15b) Είμαι στο σχολείο.
     “I am at school.”

3.2.5 Time
The expression of time in Modern Greek often requires not a prepositional phrase or an adverb, but a single accusative:

(16) Φεύγω την Παρασκευή.
     “I am leaving on Friday.”

The single accusative is typical for days, periods of the day, months, seasons, and holidays (for the relevant vocabulary press here: http://quizlet.com/1975167/modern-greek-days-months-seasons-flash-cards/):

(17a) Έρχομαι την Πέμπτη.
     “I am coming on Thursday.”

(17b) Πίνω καφέ το πρωί.
     “I have coffee in the morning.”

(17c) Τα γενέθλιά μου είναι τον Οκτώβριο.
     “My birthday is in October.”

(17d) Τα σχολεία είναι κλειστά το καλοκαίρι.
     “Schools are closed in the summer.”

(17e) Πάντα κάνουμε πάρτι τα Χριστούγεννα.
     “We always have a party at Christmas.”
The only exception is “clock time”, where you need a prepositional phrase instead:

(18) Έχω ραντεβού στις πέντε.
“İ have an appointment at five.”

The single accusative also expresses time seen as quantity or frequency:

(19a) Περιμένω πέντε λεπτά.
“I’ve been waiting for five minutes.”

(19b) Πάω στην Κρήτη κάθε χρόνο.
“İ go to Crete every year.”

Words typically associated with time do not need to be used only as adverbials. They may hold other syntactic roles within the sentence, and consequently they may take another case. Let’s take Τρίτη (“Tuesday”) as an example:

(IVa) Φεύγω την Τρίτη.
(IvAdVERBIAL: SINGLE ACCUSATIVE)
“I am leaving on Tuesday.”

(IVb) Η Τρίτη είναι μετά την Δευτέρα.
(SUBJECT: NOMINATIVE)
“Tuesday comes after Monday.”

(IVc) Σήμερα είναι Τρίτη.
(PREDICATE: NOMINATIVE)
“It’s Tuesday today.”

(IVd) Προτιμώ την Τρίτη.
(OBJECT: ACCUSATIVE)
“I prefer Tuesday.”

Notice that in IVd the noun Τρίτη is in the accusative again, but for different reasons. Now it is the object, not an adverbial.

For similar reasons, two questions like the following have different answers (check your own language):

(Va) A: Τι μέρα είναι σήμερα; B: Τρίτη.
A: “What day is it today?” B: “Tuesday.”

(Vb) A: Πότε / Τι μέρα έχεις τεστ; B: Σήμερα είναι Τρίτη.
A: “When / Which day do you have a test?” B: “Tuesday.”

3.2.6 Synopsis
Case is strongly related to syntax: The nominative and the accusative represent the major complements of the verb, the subject and the object respectively. They are also related to any noun
that modifies the subject and the object, either by predication or by apposition. The accusative is also used inside prepositional phrases, either as the (indirect) object of the verb or as an adverbial. Finally, the single accusative can work as an adverbial, expressing time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOMINATIVE</th>
<th>ACCUSATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Subject</td>
<td>1. Object (single accusative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>2. Object (indirect) / Adverbial (prepositional accusative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>3. Time adverbial (single accusative)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3: A Synopsis of the Use of the Nominative and the Accusative.

3.3 Back to Form: The Plural

The plural in Modern Greek is simply an ordinary plural. Therefore there is nothing to be said about its use. All you need to know concerns its form. The following table will help you with it (the singular in parentheses is here only to help):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(SINGULAR)</th>
<th>PLURAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(NOMINATIVE)</td>
<td>(ACCUSATIVE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASCULINE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ο δρόμος)</td>
<td>(τον δρόμο)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ο άντρας)</td>
<td>(τον άντρα)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ο χάρτης)</td>
<td>(τον χάρτη)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMININE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(η ώρα)</td>
<td>(την ώρα)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(η ζώνη)</td>
<td>(την ζώνη)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEUTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(το βιβλίο)</td>
<td>(το βιβλίο)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(το παιδί)</td>
<td>(το παιδί)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(το πράγμα)</td>
<td>(το πράγμα)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4: Nominative and Accusative (Plural) for Basic Modern Greek Nouns.

A few remarks about the plural now:

- Grammars usually deem the singular, and among all cases the nominative, to be the starting point for the plural. In this respect nouns in the singular must undergo changes in order to become plural. These changes have to do with the definite article and the endings of the nouns:

(20) ο δρόμος → οι δρόμοι  
τον δρόμο → τους δρόμους
Loanwords have an ordinary plural if their ending resembles the endings of Modern Greek nouns. So \( \eta \, \text{πίτσα} \) is inflected like \( \eta \, \text{ώρα} \) (see Table 3.1 on page 36) and the plural is \( \text{oι} \, \text{πίτσες} \). If it doesn’t, the ending remains untouched and the plural is signaled by the article alone: \( \text{το} \, \text{γκαράζ} / \text{τα} \, \text{γκαράζ}, \text{το} \, \text{κομπιούτερ} / \text{τα} \, \text{κομπιούτερ} \). Notice that “euro” in Modern Greek falls into this category (\( \text{το} \, \text{ευρώ} / \text{τα} \, \text{ευρώ} \)).

- Compared to the singular, the boundaries among gender groups in the plural seem to be less fixed. First, the article of masculine nouns in the nominative is now identical to that of feminine ones:

  \[
  \begin{align*}
  \text{o δρόμος} & \quad \text{οι δρόμοι} \\
  \eta \, \text{ώρα} & \quad \text{oι ώρες}
  \end{align*}
  \]

  Second, two subcategories of masculine nouns share the same endings with the feminine nouns.

  \[
  \begin{align*}
  \text{o άντρας} & \quad \text{oι άντρες} \\
  \text{o χάρτης} & \quad \text{oι χάρτες} \\
  \eta \, \text{ώρα} & \quad \text{oι ώρες} \\
  \eta \, \text{ζώνη} & \quad \text{oι ζώνες}
  \end{align*}
  \]

  This sort of “fusion” among gender groups supports the idea that you cannot guess gender based simply on the endings of the words. Instead you must have an a priori piece of information about gender in order to survive in this field.

- The plural is constructed in two ways. First, the ending of the singular may be replaced by a new one.

  \[
  \begin{align*}
  \deltaρόμος & \rightarrow \deltaρόμοι \\
  \ωρα & \rightarrow \ωρες \\
  \betaβλίο & \rightarrow \betaβλία
  \end{align*}
  \]

  Second, the ending of the singular may stay, receiving an additional unit:

  \[
  \begin{align*}
  \text{το} \, \text{παιδί} & \rightarrow \text{τα} \, \text{παιδιά} \\
  \text{το} \, \text{πράγμα} & \rightarrow \text{τα} \, \text{πράγματα}
  \end{align*}
  \]

  This latter change is typical of two subcategories of neuter nouns (those ending in \(-\iota\) and those
Neuter nouns in -μα get longer in the plural, because they get an additional syllable:

(VI) πράγμα → πράγματα  (“thing” → “things”)
διαμέρισμα → διαμερίσματα  (“apartment” → “apartments”)

How to explain the different position of the stress in the second example? I will remind you that the stress in Modern Greek is restricted to one of the last three syllables (check Unit 1.2 on page 6). Διαμέρισμα is OK in this respect, but when the noun gets an additional syllable, things are not OK any longer. The stress will now be on the fourth syllable (a real scandal according to stress standards). This is why the stress moves to what is now the third syllable of the word.

Neuter nouns in -ι get an additional unit, but they do not become longer. Why? Unit 1.6.2 on page 13 is here to explain this paradox (a Greek word again). The [i] sound of the ending is unstressed, either because the stress was on another syllable, or because the additional unit gets its stress. So [i] goes away and the word preserves the same number of syllables:

(VII) παιδί → παιδιά  (“kid” → “kids”)
κορίτσι → κορίτσια  (“girl” → “girls”)

I believe it is time to show how grammar can help with spelling. Let’s take the vowel [i] and its various representations: The letter η is typical of feminine and masculine nouns in the singular (η ζών, ο χάρτης). The letter ι is typical of neuters (το σπίτι). The combination οι is typical of articles and masculine nouns in the plural (οι δρόμοι, οι όρες). The letter υ and the combination ει play no significant role here.

Let’s take the [o] sound now. Apparently it is the letter ο that pulls the strings here, as a typical letter for masculines and neuters in the singular (ο δρόμος, το βιβλίο).

These are the basics you must know about the plural, but they are not enough for everyday communication. I mean you cannot rationalize (“OK, now I want to use the word διαμέρισμα, it’s a neuter and gets an additional syllable, but I also have to move the stress”) and speak at the same time. The best way to go through the plural (and the singular as well) is memorization and practice. This statement sounds contradictory (why then bother to write grammars, or even grammar notes?), but it is not. Rationalization (what most grammars do) helps people insert
some order into chaos so as to get on with the real language. In this respect, grammar is only the first step to communication.

Uncountable nouns (words like water, beer, flour, sugar) behave like ordinary nouns in Modern Greek and are totally acceptable in the plural, under a specific reading:

(VIII) Θα ήθελα δύο νερά.
In the above sentence “two waters” means “two glasses (or bottles) of water”.

Notice that in content relations uncountable nouns always keep the singular, regardless of the number of containers. Countable nouns, on the other hand, are always in the plural:

(IXa) Θα ήθελα ένα ποτήρι νερό.
“I’d like a glass of water.”
(IXb) Θα ήθελα δύο ποτήρια νερό.
“I’d like two glasses of water.”
(IXc) Θα ήθελα ένα κιλό πορτοκάλια.
“I’d like one kilo of oranges.”
(IXd) Θα ήθελα δύο κιλά πορτοκάλια.
“I’d like two kilos of oranges.”

Sometimes languages behave differently regarding number. English nouns referring to money or news have only singular number, but the Modern Greek words are in the plural (τα λεφτά, τα νέα). On the other hand, “trousers” in Modern Greek is not plural but singular (το παντελόνι).

3.4 Modern Greek Nouns in Three Steps

After an exhausting chapter like 3, it is time to summarize what you must know in order to use a Modern Greek noun properly. Let’s take a new noun, to let some fresh air in here. This noun is υπολογιστής.

• First you must know what the noun means. Open the dictionary and you will find out it means “computer”. At this moment (don’t leave it for later) check the gender. It’s a masculine, and you must remember it (ο υπολογιστής).

• Then you must know what different forms υπολογιστής takes according to number and case. Go back to Table 3.1 on page 36 and check masculines. Υπολογιστής looks more like χάρτης because they share the same ending (the position of the stress is irrelevant here). What you have now is an appropriate inflectional model, which you can apply to υπολογιστής (along with lots of similar nouns) and get the following forms: ο υπολογιστής,
The above forms are useless unless combined with syntactic rules which tell you how to use them in communication. At this point you must go back to Unit 3.2 on page 37 and refresh your memory about the use of cases. Remember: You may be a master of case as form, but if you don’t know the rules of use, then you simply cannot say anything bigger than a word.

Keep in mind that knowledge of the theory does not guarantee proper use. You’ll need lots of practice afterwards. People make mistakes in the beginning, but this is part of learning anyway.

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**Craving for Meaning**

From Chapter 2 and on, meaning is leaving the background to come to the foreground (it’s all about communication, after all). It is time then to introduce two basic questions that might help with meaning:

- Suppose you come across a new word (τραπέζι, for example) and want to ask about its meaning. What you must ask is this:
  
  (X) Τι σημαίνει “τραπέζι”?  
  
  “What is the meaning of ‘τραπέζι’”?  

  What you will get as an answer is this:

  (XI) Σημαίνει “table”.  
  
  “It means ‘table’.”

  The same question applies not only to words, but also to larger units, like phrases or sentences.

- Suppose now you are writing an essay in Modern Greek and you need to know the Modern Greek word for “table”. What you must ask now is this:

  (XII) Πώς λέμε “table” στα ελληνικά;  
  
  “How do we say ‘table’ in Modern Greek?”

  Now you get the following answer:

  (XIII) Το λέμε “τραπέζι”.  
  
  “We call it ‘τραπέζι’.”

In the first case you start from the form of a Modern Greek word and get its meaning (represented by its equivalent in English or any language). In the second case you start from meaning (represented by an equivalent word in English or any language) in order to get the form of the Modern Greek word.
The Modern Greek περίπτερο

I believe you all are familiar with those tiny kiosks standing on Greek streets surrounded by various stands and fridges. Each one of them is an all-service shop. Some of them may sell practically everything, from papers, books and cigarettes, to milk, beverages, chocolates, even over-the-counter pain killers. Well, it is not exactly everything (you cannot buy bread, meat or vegetables there), but it is definitely the place to go when you need to buy everyday stuff and you don’t want to visit three stores instead or these stores are closed. Going to the περίπτερο is like a crash course in Modern Greek nouns.

• Don’t forget to use the accusative when asking for something:
  (XIVa) Θα ήθελα έναν χυμό πορτοκάλι. (=“I would like an orange juice.”)
  (XIVb) Έναν χυμό πορτοκάλι, παρακαλώ. (=“An orange juice, please.”)
• If you need more, then it is time to refresh the plural:
  (XV) Δύο χυμούς πορτοκάλι, παρακαλώ.
• Let’s remember that loanwords do not change in the plural, but some of them do:
  (XVIa) Δύο κρουασάν, παρακαλώ.
  (XVIb) Δύο σοκολάτες, παρακαλώ.
• It is now time to pay. But first you need to ask about the price:
  (XVIIa) Πόσο κάνει ο χυμός;
          “How much is the juice?”
  (XVIIb) Πόσο κάνουν οι χυμοί;
          “How much are the juices?”

At this very moment going to the mini market looks far more attractive than before. After all, you just pick what you need, pay and go. But then you miss a vital piece of the Modern Greek culture and a great opportunity for practice. Take it and go!

SUMMARY

Nominative and accusative cases are related to major syntactic roles within the sentence, and therefore are crucial for communication. Chapter 3 examines the various forms a Modern Greek noun may take regarding case. A great deal of the chapter is dedicated to case in use, examining basic syntactic contexts for the nominative and the accusative.

KEY WORDS

case (nominative/accusative), subject, object, free word order, predication, apposition, modify/modifier, prepositional phrase, adverbial
EXERCISES

1. Party time! Who knows whom? Check the picture first. Then read the following sentences and choose Right (Σ) or Wrong (Λ). Ξέρει / δεν ξέρει are “knows” / “doesn’t know”, and αλλά is “but”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Σ</th>
<th>Λ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Η Μαρία ξέρει τον Πέτρο και την Ελένη.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ο Κώστας ξέρει τον Θωμά.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Η Μαρία ξέρει τον Πέτρο, αλλά ο Πέτρος δεν ξέρει την Μαρία.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Η Μαρία δεν ξέρει τον Θωμά.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Η Ελένη δεν ξέρει τον Κώστα, αλλά ξέρει τον Πέτρο, την Μαρία και τον Θωμά.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ο Κώστας ξέρει τον Πέτρο και ο Πέτρος ξέρει τον Κώστα.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Back to the animal world. Read the sentences and choose Right (Σ) or Wrong (Λ).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Σ</th>
<th>Λ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Η ζέβρα είναι από την Αφρική.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Το κοάλα είναι από την Ασία.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ο ελέφαντας είναι από την Αφρική.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Το καγκουρό είναι από την Αυστραλία.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ο ιπποπόταμος είναι από την Αμερική.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ο πιγκουίνος είναι από την Ευρώπη.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the Modern Greek translation of Chapter 3 press here [www.moderngreek.eu](http://www.moderngreek.eu)