

ANNEX / LANGUAGE

Cretans speak a distinct dialect of modern Greek with a variety of local elements mostly regarding pronunciation and vocabulary. In general, the Cretan dialect carries a rich, distinct vocabulary. For instance, the word *kouzoulos*, namely crazy, is one of the words found only in the Cretan vocabulary. In addition, the Cretan dialect contains remarkable lingual differences. Such variations cannot be strictly isolated by geographical borders. For example, the local dialect of the Mylopotamos region, to which the village of Anogia belongs, shares resemblances with the eastern Cretan lingual idiom. At the same time, because the people of Anogia live rather isolated atop Psiloritis, they believe they have preserved their language and distinctive, “heavy” Cretan dialect.

The Cretan dialect uses the same letters as the Greek language does but involves different sounds. For instance, Cretan speech contains thicker consonants, such as the letter “k”, which in Crete is pronounced as “ch”. In addition, the Cretan accent includes lots of “b”, “d”, and “g” sounds, whereas mainland Greek correspondingly uses the “v”, the “th” (--as in the definite article “the”) and the “y” (--as in the word “yes”) sounds.

Particularly, in the village of Anogia, the retroflex “l” and the use of “tsi” (--instead of the “standard” “tous” and “tis” respectively for the masculine and the feminine accusative plural pronouns and the definitive article) are stereotypically regarded as two of the diagnostic features of Cretan speech. Moreover, the final “n” of the plural genitive is omitted. Oftentimes, when they talk, Cretans develop additional vowels and consonants, or even syllables, so as to achieve euphony.

The Cretan dialect still makes use of several ancient Greek -specifically Dorian-types of words. In fact, scholars attest that the most perfectly organized language medieval and modern Hellenism has heard is the one spoken in Rethymno and its villages, such as the village of Anogia. “Their” language relates more to ancient Greek and the particularly characteristic Dorian pronunciation.

The intonation of the Cretan dialect covers a wide and intense range of timbres and dynamics. This way, when Cretans talk, they have distinct, almost musical endings to questions and expressions of awe or wonder. Sometimes, Cretan words are pronounced together as one word. Other times, one Cretan word may carry even two accents at the same time, or two different accents depending on who is talking, when and why. Lastly, an exception to the Greek grammatical rule that places the accent only in one of the three last syllables of a word is the fact that Cretans may place it even on the fourth before the last syllable.

A) DISCUSSION OF IDEAS / ACTIVITIES

We have created a **Cretan alphabet** inspired by the movie (located in the ANNEX FOLDER). Its words are arranged alphabetically. The educator can classify them by grammar or meaning (creating, for example, verbal sets), to exploit them syntactically (creating, for example, sentences or paragraphs), to locate them in the film, to discuss them, and to integrate them within our daily lives. Certain concepts are complete stories and can therefore be a special lesson. Moreover, this Cretan words and music tradition example can be a way of explaining to our audience the concept of verbal but also non-verbal communication, of dialect or vernacular as well as of Greek history and culture.

► Read the Cretan Alphabet. Then work on the following:

a) Identify certain concepts and create verbal sets.

Example. Μουσική: λαούτο, λύρα, μαντινάδα, χορός, αυτοσχεδιασμός, etc.

b) Isolate certain sentences from the film and/or create yours.

Example: Οι Ξυλούρηδες είναι η πιο γνωστή μουσική οικογένεια της Ελλάδας.

c) Create paragraphs with related to the film stories.

Example: Ο Κρόνος κατάπινε τα παιδιά του από φόβο μη βγει αληθινή η προφητεία που έλεγε πως κάποιο από αυτά θα του πάρει την εξουσία. Με τη σύζυγό του Ρέα είχαν γεννήσει πολλά παιδιά πριν από τον Δία, που όλα, όμως, είχαν καταλήξει στο στομάχι του πατέρα τους. Για να σώσει το νεογέννητο Δία ώστε να μην τον βρει ο Κρόνος και τον φάει, η Ρέα τον τοποθέτησε στο Ιδαίον Άντρο, μία σπηλιά, δηλαδή, που βρίσκεται στον Ψηλορείτη, το ψηλότερο βουνό της Κρήτης. Αρχαίοι κάτοικοι της περιοχής, οι λεγόμενοι Κουρήτες, χόρεψαν τον Ανωγειανό πηδηχτό και έτσι κατάφεραν να καλύψουν το κλάμα του νεογέννητου. Για αυτό και ο Δίας ονομάζεται Κρηταγενής αλλά και οι Ανωγειανοί θεωρούνται απόγονοι των Κουρητών.

d) Locate words in the film and discuss them.

Example: “Μουσική παράδοση” / Ο Γιώργης δεν λέει ποτέ “όχι” όταν τον προσκαλούν να παίξει γιατί θεωρεί καθήκον του να κρατάει ζωντανή την μουσική του τόπου του. Καθήκον του είναι, επίσης, να μεταφέρει τη γνώση του για τη μουσική και το πάθος του για την Κρήτη στα τρία του παιδιά, τον Νίκο, τον Αντώνη και την Απολλωνία. “Αυτή την παράδοση δεν την κουβαλάμε σαν βάρος”, λέει ο Γιώργης, “είναι μέρος της ζωής μας, του ποιοι είμαστε. Σαν το οξυγόνο, τη χρειαζόμαστε για να ζήσουμε”.

e) Find words that carry their own story and talk or write about it.

Example: the “Dakos” story (located in the ANNEX FOLDER)

f) Trace concepts that describe verbal but also non-verbal communication.

Example. Ήχος: ψίθυρος, έκρηξη, ηφαίστειο, οξυγόνο, etc.

g) Locate words of the Cretan dialect.

Example. Αίγα, αμπλά, θωρώ, έρωντας, κουζουλός, ξανοίγω, όρνιθα, etc.

h) With the assistance of your tutor, speak of words that refer to various historical periods of Greek culture.

Examples: όρνιθα από το αρχαίο όρνις
 αρισμαρί από το λατινικό rosmarinus
 μαντινάδα από το ενετικό matinatta, etc.

- Listen carefully to the 8th track (“A Ship at Sea”) of the film’s soundtrack:
<http://afamilyaffairsoundtrack.bandcamp.com/album/a-family-affair>

Respond to the following:

- Can you identify the first names mentioned in the lyrics that refer to Christian Greek Orthodox Saints?
- What does your first name mean and why were you given that name?
- Could you now choose one of those Christian Saints and find out more about her/his life?

Traditionally in Greece, naming procedures are religiously defined. Greeks get their first names by actually being baptized. In fact, “namedays” are often more important celebrations than birthdays.

- Read “What’s in a name” (located in the ANNEX FOLDER), a lecture given at the Durrell Centre, in Corfu, by Apostolos Doxiadis (born in Australia).

Discuss the following:

- How does he define his relationship to Greek and English?
- Which language does he choose to communicate with and why?
- What does “θάλασσα” to a Greek mean?
- How do his views relate to the film?
- What’s in a name?
- What is a nickname?
- What is your first/last name?

Congratulations!

You now possess a great amount of knowledge in terms of the Greek language.

Open the ANNEX FOLDER and...

...test your knowledge via **crosswords**

...create biographies, for example, ‘**Nikos Xylouris**’

...have fun with **Cretan jokes!**