

GREEK

COUNTRY: Greece

POST: Athens

Greek is the official language of the present day Hellenic Republic. Like English it belongs to the large Indo-European family of languages.

Modern Greek presents a rather complex linguistic picture. On the one hand this language is the result of a normal linguistic evolution from the older Greek; on the other hand intense nationalistic sentiments during periods of Greek history have preserved intact many elements of the Archaic Greek.

As a result there are two broad types of language used in modern Greece the "popular" or dhimotiki, and the "formal" or katharevusa. The dhimotiki is primarily a spoken language of the people and is used largely by modern writers of poetry and fiction and appears in Greek songs and balads.

Katharevusa is a conscious and artifical return to older Greek and is taught in schools and used for official purposes and in a more or less "pure" form by newspapers.

The standard speech of Greece is a mixture of the above two types and is called "kathomilument" (every day language).

The written language. Besides Government or other public announcements, documents, official correspondence, etc. all public signs in towns and villages are written in katharevusa. For example, the word for grocery store in everyday language is "Bakáliko" but the sign reads "Pandopolion".