

Georgia IRBY-MASSIE, speaker #1

Mashing the Monsters in Elementary Greek:
Vocabulary, Grammar, and Syntax through Popular Music

This paper will describe a method of inspiring, rewarding, and retaining students of elementary Greek through the translation or adaptation of popular songs into Attic Greek. Engaging students dynamically in language learning and in developing course materials facilitates their study of a challenging subject, and the classroom experience must allow for a healthy dose of ‘fun.’ When students are actively participating, they are more likely to be alert in class, to learn a difficult language with greater ease, and to continue in their language studies, to the benefit of student, instructor, and language program. Consequently, I have found effective a number of lighthearted yet rigorous techniques to encourage student interest and participation.

To reinforce vocabulary and introduce or review points of grammar of syntax in a memorable way, I have adapted and translated a number of popular modern songs into Attic Greek, including Bobby Picket’s “Monster Mash,” through which we reviewed adverbs and accents, and Black Sabbath’s “Iron Man,” through which Greek color words were presented and the present middle participle was introduced. Dire Straits’ “Money for Nothing” enabled a vigorous warm-up for the optative voice. The students, furthermore, were inspired to create their own translations and adaptations, including *Murrhine hustrikha ekhei*. Superimposing this challenging language onto familiar elements from popular culture gives the students a sense of empowerment, ownership, and victory over Attic Greek.

In this presentation, I will share my Attic Greek song lyrics, outline the methods of composition, and discuss further advantages and disadvantages of this technique.

Time requested: 15 minutes;
a handout will accompany this presentation