

# International Linguistics Challenge 2025

## Qualification Round

Syafa Haris

### Problem A: Phonetic Transcription

**Question No. 1 - 10:** Listen to each of the audio files linked in 1–10 and transcribe what you hear into IPA notation. Each recording consists of a single word from Language X.

---

Table 1: Transcriptions for Audio 001-010

| AUDIO NO. | IPA       | TRANSLATION |
|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| 001       | /ʃinu/    | to sing     |
| 002       | /nara/    | river       |
| 003       | /plutʃon/ | to carry    |
| 004       | /fintʃ/   | long        |
| 005       | /tile/    | tree        |
| 006       | /gelum/   | cold        |
| 007       | /burak/   | to sleep    |
| 008       | /tʃeso/   | house       |
| 009       | /rabik/   | to break    |
| 010       | /lasau/   | bright      |

## Problem B: Word Boundaries

**Question No. 11 - 13:** Listen to each of the audio files linked in 11–13. Each recording consists of a short sentence in Language X. Transcribe the full sentence and show word boundaries clearly.

---

### Question No. 11

Table 2: Audio 011 Transcription

| ENGLISH    | The long river carries the small cold stone. |       |       |       |       |         |
|------------|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
|            | long   | river | small | cold  | stone | carry   |
| LANGUAGE X | fntf   | nara  | mika  | gelum | tʃon  | plutʃon |

### Question No. 12

Table 3: Audio 012 Transcription

| ENGLISH    | The small bright bird sings. |        |       |       |
|------------|------------------------------|--------|-------|-------|
|            | small                        | bright | bird  | sings |
| LANGUAGE X | mika                         | lasau  | kosap | ʃinu  |

### Question No. 13

Table 4: Audio 013 Transcription

| ENGLISH    | The tall child breaks the tree easily. |       |      |        |        |
|------------|--|-------|------|--------|--------|
|            | tall                                   | child | tree | easily | breaks |
| LANGUAGE X | gopni                                  | mu    | tile | loraik | rabik  |

## Problem C: Word Order & Plural Morphology

### Questions:

- (a) What is the basic word order of subjects, objects and verbs in Language X? Give a short explanation, using examples from the dataset to support your answer.
- 

- By using the examples in Problem B, we can deduce the word-by-word structure for the general translations in Problem C.
- The basic word order of subjects, objects and verbs in Language X is Subject, Object and Verb (SOV).

Table 5: Example 15

| ENGLISH    | The women see the boy. |        |      |
|------------|------------------------|--------|------|
|            | women                  | boy    | see  |
| LANGUAGE X | kanabi                 | telum  | feru |
| COMPONENTS | Subject                | Object | Verb |

Table 6: Example 16

| ENGLISH    | The dog chases the boy. |        |        |
|------------|-------------------------|--------|--------|
|            | dog                     | boy    | chases |
| LANGUAGE X | lomu                    | telum  | huni   |
| COMPONENTS | Subject                 | Object | Verb   |

Table 7: Example 18

| ENGLISH    | The woman studies the stars. |        |         |
|------------|------------------------------|--------|---------|
|            | woman                        | stars  | studies |
| LANGUAGE X | kanab                        | kuran  | baraa   |
| COMPONENTS | Subject                      | Object | Verb    |

- If there is an adjective, the adjective will be placed before the noun it is describing.

Table 8: Example from Problem B

| ENGLISH    | The small stone rolls. |       |       |
|------------|------------------------|-------|-------|
|            | small                  | stone | rolls |
| LANGUAGE X | mika                   | tʃon  | repik |
| COMPONENTS | Adjective + Subject    |       | Verb  |

Table 9: Question 11 in Problem B

| ENGLISH    | The long river carries the small cold stone. |       |                          |       |       |         |
|------------|--|-------|--------------------------|-------|-------|---------|
|            | long   | river | small                    | cold  | stone | carry   |
| LANGUAGE X | fɪntʃ  | nara  | mika                     | gelum | tʃon  | plutʃon |
| COMPONENTS | Adjective + Subject                          |       | Adj. 1 + Adj. 2 + Object |       |       | Verb    |

- (b) How are plural nouns formed in Language X? Give a short explanation, using examples from the dataset to support your answer.
- 

- To form plurals in Language X, we must first see whether the noun is human or otherwise.
- For humans, the letter ‘i’ is added at the end of the noun to form the plural noun

Table 10: Comparison of the first word in Example 14 and 18

| NOUN FORM  | Singular | Plural |
|------------|----------|--------|
| ENGLISH    | woman    | women  |
| LANGUAGE X | kanab    | kanabi |

Table 11: Noun form comparison from Example 16 and 17

| NOUN FORM  | Singular | Plural |
|------------|----------|--------|
| ENGLISH    | boy      | boys   |
| LANGUAGE X | telum    | telumi |

- For non-humans, the letter ‘n’ is added at the the end of the noun to form the plural noun

Table 12: Noun form comparison from Example 19 and 20

| NOUN FORM  | Singular | Plural    |
|------------|----------|-----------|
| ENGLISH    | mountain | mountains |
| LANGUAGE X | pano     | panon     |

Table 13: Noun form comparison from Example 16 and 21

| NOUN FORM  | Singular | Plural |
|------------|----------|--------|
| ENGLISH    | dog      | dogs   |
| LANGUAGE X | lomu     | lomun  |

(c) Translate the sentence below into Language X.

‘The mountains study the women and the dogs.’

---

- From Example 21, we can see that the word ‘and’ can be translated as ‘o’.
- We can also use the existing vocabulary from our dataset to translate the nouns and verb: (see Table 7, Table 10, Table 12 and Table 13).

**Thus, the translation of the sentence in Language X:** panon kanabi o lomun baraa.

Table 14: Sentence Translation

| ENGLISH    | The mountains study the women and the dogs. |        |     |       |       |
|------------|---|--------|-----|-------|-------|
|            | mountains                                   | women  | and | dogs  | study |
| LANGUAGE X | panon                                       | kanabi | o   | lomun | baraa |

## Problem D: Verbal Agreement

### Questions:

- (a) Describe the verbal agreement system in Language X. Use examples from the dataset to support your answer.

- 
- In Language X, the verbal agreement system is between the Object and the Verb.
  - When the Object is plural, the letter ‘a’ is added at the end of the Verb.
  - For example, we can compare example 18 with example 24.
    - Both examples have Subject in singular form, but example 18 has the Object in plural form, while example 24 has the Object in singular form.
    - Consequently, the Verb in example 18 has the letter ‘a’ added to the end of the Verb, while the Verb in example 24 maintains its basic form.

Table 15: Comparison of Example 18 and 24

|                   | <b>Example 18</b>            |                 |                     | <b>Example 24</b>           |                   |             |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| <b>ENGLISH</b>    | The woman studies the stars. |                 |                     | The woman studies the star. |                   |             |
|                   | woman                        | stars           | studies             | woman                       | star              | studies     |
| <b>LANGUAGE X</b> | kanab                        | <i>kuran</i>    | <i>bara<u>a</u></i> | kanab                       | <i>kura</i>       | <i>bara</i> |
| <b>COMPONENTS</b> | Subject                      | Object (Plural) | Verb + a            | Subject                     | Object (Singular) | Verb        |

- Similarly, in Example 16 and Example 25:
  - The Verb maintains its basic form when the Object is singular, but has the letter ‘a’ added at the end when the Object is plural

Table 16: Comparison of Example 16 and 25

|                   | <b>Example 16</b>       |                   |             | <b>Example 25</b>         |                     |                     |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>ENGLISH</b>    | The dog chases the boy. |                   |             | The dog chases the stars. |                     |                     |
|                   | dog                     | boy               | chases      | dog                       | stars               | chases              |
| <b>LANGUAGE X</b> | lomu                    | <i>telum</i>      | <i>huni</i> | lomu                      | <i>kura<u>n</u></i> | <i>huni<u>a</u></i> |
| <b>COMPONENTS</b> | Subject                 | Object (Singular) | Verb        | Subject                   | Object (Plural)     | Verb + a            |

- This system is applicable regardless of the type of Object (human or non-human)

- To reconfirm, we can consider example 14 and example 22, which does not have Objects, but have two different forms of Subject (singular and plural form)
  - We can see that the Verb is in basic form without any adjustment.

Table 17: Comparison of Example 14 and 22

|                   | <b>Example 14</b> |             | <b>Example 22</b>  |             |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
| <b>ENGLISH</b>    | The women dance.  |             | The woman dances.  |             |
|                   | women             | dance       | woman              | dances      |
| <b>LANGUAGE X</b> | kanabi            | <i>felu</i> | kanab              | <i>felu</i> |
| <b>COMPONENTS</b> | Subject (Plural)  | Verb        | Subject (Singular) | Verb        |



(b) Translate the sentence below into Language X. Explain plural noun formation and verbal agreement morphology, if any, in the sentence. Note: You will also need the vocabulary from Problems A and B.

‘The bird sees the river and the trees.’

---

- Plural noun formation:

- Since trees are non-human, we take the basic word for trees and add the letter ‘n’ at the end:

**tile → tilen**

- Verbal agreement morphology:

- Since the Object is plural, the letter ‘a’ is added to the basic form of the Verb:

**nara o tilen + furu → nara o tilen furua**

**Thus, the translation of the sentence in Language X:** kosap nara o tilen furua.

Table 18: Sentence Translation

| ENGLISH    | The bird sees the river and the trees. |       |     |       |       |
|------------|--|-------|-----|-------|-------|
|            | bird                                   | river | and | trees | sees  |
| LANGUAGE X | kosap                                  | nara  | o   | tilen | furua |

## Problem E: Dialectal Variation

### Part (a)

#### Questions:

Describe the agreement system of Dialect II. Identify one similarity and one difference between the agreement systems of Dialect I and II. Use examples from the dataset to support your answer.

- Dialect II shares the same basic system regarding word ordering and forming plural nouns.
- We can see the same previously discussed verbal agreement system at play in Example 27 and Example 29.

Table 19: Comparison of Example 27 and 29

|                   | <b>Example 27</b>      |                   |             | <b>Example 29</b>           |                 |              |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <b>ENGLISH</b>    | The women see the boy. |                   |             | The dog sees the mountains. |                 |              |
|                   | women                  | boy               | see         | dog                         | mountains       | sees         |
| <b>LANGUAGE X</b> | kanabi                 | <i>telum</i>      | <i>feru</i> | lomu                        | <i>panon</i>    | <i>ferua</i> |
| <b>COMPONENTS</b> | Subject                | Object (Singular) | Verb        | Subject                     | Object (Plural) | Verb + a     |

- And while both have the same verbal agreement system at its foundation, Dialect II has some additional verbal agreement system:
  - When no Object is present in the sentence, the Verb changes form according to the Subject
  - The way the Verb is modified is similar to the verbal agreement system used for the Object:
    - \* If the noun is singular, the Verb remains unchanged.
    - \* If the noun is plural, the letter ‘a’ is added to the end of the Verb.

Table 20: Comparison of Example 14 and 26

|                   | <b>Example 14 (Dialect I)</b> |             | <b>Example 26 (Dialect II)</b> |              |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>ENGLISH</b>    | The women dance.              |             | The women see.                 |              |
|                   | women                         | dance       | women                          | see          |
| <b>LANGUAGE X</b> | kanabi                        | <i>felu</i> | kanabi                         | <i>ferua</i> |
| <b>COMPONENTS</b> | Subject (Plural)              | Verb        | Subject (Plural)               | Verb + a     |

- This system is also used if the Subject is non-human.

Table 21: Comparison of Example 19 and 28

|                   | <b>Example 19 (Dialect I)</b> |             | <b>Example 28 (Dialect II)</b> |              |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>ENGLISH</b>    | The mountains dance.          |             | The mountains see.             |              |
|                   | mountains                     | dance       | mountains                      | see          |
| <b>LANGUAGE X</b> | panon                         | <i>felu</i> | panon                          | <i>ferua</i> |
| <b>COMPONENTS</b> | Subject (Plural)              | Verb        | Subject (Plural)               | Verb + a     |

## Part (b)

### Questions:

Based on the agreement rules you have identified for Dialect II in Problem E Part (a), what predictions can you make about the equivalent of (31) in Dialect II?

---

- In Dialect II, (31) will have two forms based on whether the Subject is in singular or plural form:

Table 22: Different forms of (31) in Dialect II

| <b>SUBJECT</b>    | <b>Singular</b> | <b>Plural</b>  |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <b>ENGLISH</b>    | He/she dances.  | They dance.    |
| <b>LANGUAGE X</b> | ʃelu            | ʃel <u>u</u> a |