

Linguistics Competition

All the problems are intended for all contestants. The final score depends on your high school grade and on your score for each problem solved either completely or partially. For the upper three high school grades it is sufficient to solve any two problems completely, and for younger students it is sufficient to solve any one of them.

Problem 1. Consider the Chuvash¹ words given below. They are romanized, and the stress is marked with a ' to the left of the stressed vowel:

av'alläh	antiquity	malašneh'i	future
ašārhan'tullä	sensitive	měskēn'l'en	to grovel
ānsārtr'an	unexpectedly	nušalant'ar	to make suffer
āšān	to warm oneself	p'ēlētlē	cloudy
v'ārläh	seed	p'itērēnčĕk	closed
ēmērlēh	lifelong	sun'aršā	hunter
jüş'ek	sour, bitter	čur'alāh	slavery
kansēr'l'e	to impede	čuhān'an	to get poor
kĕrkunieh'i	autumn		

Question. Determine the stress of the following Chuvash words. Explain your reasoning.

vĕltrentārri	chaffinch
višmine	the day after tomorrow
ilĕrtüllĕ	tempting
jyvārläh	difficulty
mākārālčĕk	convex

Note. *ä* and *ĕ* are vowels which are pronounced shorter than all other Chuvash vowels. *ü* and *y* are special vowels; *š*, *š* and *č* are special consonants of Chuvash.

Problem 2. Given are sentences in Tukang Besi² and their translations into English:

no'ita te ana na guru	The teacher saw the child.
kumanga te bae na iaku	I ate the rice.
nomanga-'e te ana na ika	The fish was eaten by the child.
kusiasia-'e te iaku na guru	The teacher was beaten by me.
norodongo te guru na ana	The child listened to the teacher.
'usiasia-'e te iko'o na ana	The child was beaten by you.

¹Chuvash is one of the languages of Russia. It belongs to the Bulgar group of the Turkic language family. It is spoken by 1.15 million people in Chuvash Republic.

²Tukang Besi language belongs to the Malayo-Polynesian branch of the Austronesian language family. It is spoken by approx. 80 000 people on the islands of Central Indonesia.

Question 1. Translate into English:

nosiasia te guru na ana

Explain your reasoning.

Question 2. Translate into Tukang Besi:

You saw the teacher.

The child was listened to by the teacher.

Explain your reasoning.

Note. *ng* and ' are special consonants of Tukang Besi.

Problem 3. There are many ways of transcribing Chinese words into different writing systems. People studying Chinese generally use pinyin Romanization system, which is officially adopted in China and most widespread worldwide. To render Chinese words in Cyrillic script, the so-called Palladius system is used, which was devised by the Archimandrite Palladius Kafarov (1817–1878). However, it is sometimes difficult to convert the Chinese words written in the Palladius system into pinyin and vice versa, and people often make mistakes doing this.

Below are the Cyrillic renderings of Chinese syllables and their English equivalents which might have been created by a person who has no knowledge of pinyin:

(1) чжэн (chzhen), жоу (zhou), чао (chao), чжа (chzha), сао (sao), чан (chan), жэнь (zheny), шоу (shou), шань (shany), ца (tsa)

However, if one transcribed these sequences using pinyin, they would look as follows (in a changed order):

(2) zha, shan, rou, chang, zheng, ren, chao, shou, sao, ca

Question 1. Determine the correct correspondences between the lists (1) and (2). You do not need to copy Cyrillic letters if you are not familiar with them. Explain your reasoning.

Question 2. If a person unfamiliar with pinyin tried to romanize Russian 'цзань', (s)he would get *tszany*. What corresponds to this syllable in pinyin? Explain your reasoning.