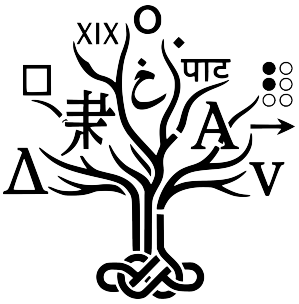
International Linguistics Challenge

Final Round

2025 Edition

Final Round



Problems

The ILC Final Round consists of analytical problems which require logical reasoning about language and its patterns.

You can score a maximum of 0 points in total.

Your Solution

You must provide written answers for all problems. You may submit handwritten or typed solutions.

Instructions

- You have a limited time to complete this exam.
- Read each problem carefully before answering.
- Show your work and reasoning for full credit.
- This is the most challenging round – good luck!

We hope you enjoy tackling the problems. Good luck!

P1. Refer to the IPA consonant chart below.

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k g	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			r					ʀ		
Tap or Flap		ⱱ		ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Which option correctly lists all voiceless velar consonants?

A. k, x

B. k, g, ŋ, x, ɣ, ɰ, ʟ

C. k, ŋ, x, ɰ, ʟ

D. g, ŋ, ɣ, ɰ, ʟ

P10. What is *underlying representation*?

A. The representation of a morpheme stored in the mental lexicon and used as the input for phonological rules.

B. The representation of a sentence stored in the mental grammar and used as the input for syntactic processes.

C. The output of phonological rules which is stored in the mental lexicon for future uses.

D. The output of syntactic rules which is stored in the mental grammar for future uses.

P11. What is *epenthesis*?

A. Epenthesis is a phonological process which inserts a vowel between two consonants.

B. Epenthesis is a syntactic process which adds a pause into a long sentence.

C. Epenthesis is a morphological process which attaches morphemes to one another.

D. Epenthesis is a syntactic process which introduces a supporting element between two nouns.

P12. Here is a phrase:

overactive cats

Which option correctly lists all the morphemes in the phrase above?

A. over, active, overactive, cat, s, cats

B. over, active, cat, s

C. overactive, cat, s

D. overactive, cats

P13. Here is a phrase:

recycling fiends

Wich option correctly lists all the morphemes in the phrase above?

A. re, cycle, ing, recycle, recycling, fiend, s, fiends

B. re, cycle, ing, fiend, s

C. recycle, ing, fiend, s

D. recycling, fiends

P14. Here is a sentence:

Olja getting a gold medal in the national competition was the best surprise of all.

What is the subject of the above sentence?

A. Olja getting a gold medal in the national competition

B. Olja

C. Olja getting a gold medal

D. the best surprise

P15. What is the *bouba-kiki* effect?

A. the tendency for people to associate sounds with shapes

B. the tendency for children to repeat similar syllables when learning new words

C. the tendency for listeners to perceive speech sounds differently depending on the surrounding sounds

D. the tendency for languages to prefer simpler syllable structures over more complex ones

P16. Here is some Arabic data: (* = ungrammatical)

(1) ’akal al-rajul al-tuffahata
‘The man ate the apple.’

(2) *al-rajul ’akal al-tuffahata
‘The man ate the apple.’

(3) shurib al-rajul al-ma’a
‘The man drank the water.’

(4) sakabat al-mar’at al-ma’a
‘The woman poured the water.’

(5) *al-ma’a sakabat al-mar’at
‘The woman poured the water.’

(6) ra’at al-mar’at al-rajul
‘The woman saw the man.’

What is the word order in Arabic?

A. SOV

B. SVO

C. VSO

D. VOS

P17. Here is some Basque data:

(7) Mutilak gizona ikusi du.
boy man seen has
'The boy has seen the man.'

(8) Neskak gizona ikusi du
girl man seen has
'The girl has seen the man.'

(9) Gizonak mutilak ikusi ditu
man boys seen has
'The man has seen the boys.'

(10) Gizonek mutila ikusi dute
men boy seen have
'The men have seen the boys.'

(11) Neskek mutila ikusi dute
girls boy seen have
'The girls have seen the boy.'

(12) Neskek mutilak ikusi dituzte
girls boys seen have
'The girls have seen the boys.'

(13) Neskak gizonak ikusi ditu
girl men seen has
'The girl has seen the men.'

What is the verb agreement pattern in Basque? (Note: Agreement is seen on the auxiliary verb.)

A. Agreement is with the subject only.

B. Agreement is with the object only.

C. Agreement is always with both the subject and object.

D. Agreement is sometimes with the subject only and sometimes with the object only.

P18. Here is some data in Dutch:

zebra	[zebrə]	‘zebra’
morgen	[mɔrɣən]	‘tomorrow’
maag	[maːx]	‘stomach’
dokter	[dɔktər]	‘doctor’
goed	[ɣut]	‘good’
rib	[rɪp]	‘rib’
salad	[saːlaːdə]	‘salad’
boot	[boːt]	‘boat’

Using the IPA chart below, select the option which correctly predicts how the made-up word *pasav* would be pronounced in Dutch.

INSERT IPA CHART

A. [pasav]

B. [pazaf]

C. [pasaf]

D. [bazav]

P19. Here is a list of country names in Japanese:
(. = syllable boundary)

Austria	[o.su.to.ria]
Bahamas	[ba.ha.ma]
Bangladesh	[baŋ.gu.ra.de.ʃu]
Cameroon	[ka.me.run]
Costa Rica	[ko.su.ta.ri.ka]
Hong Kong	[hon.kon]
Mexico	[me.ki.ʃi.ko]
Nepal	[ne.pa.ru]
Sri Lanka	[su.ri raŋ.ka]
Wales	[we.ru.zu]

Here are two statements about Japanese phonology:

(a) Japanese uses vowel insertion to separate all consecutively occurring consonants.

(b) Japanese uses consonant deletion to maintain its required syllable structure.

Which of these statements are true?

A. 1 only

B. 2 only

C. 1 and 2

D. Neither 1 nor 2

P2. Refer to the IPA consonant chart below.

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k g	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			r					ʀ		
Tap or Flap		ⱱ		ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Which option correctly lists all voiceless alveolar consonants?

A. t, s, ɬ

B. t, d, n, r, ɾ, s, z, ɬ, ɮ, ɹ, l

C. t, n, r, ɾ, z, ɬ, ɹ, l

D. d, n, r, ɾ, z, ɮ, ɹ, l

P20. Here is a sentence:

Soo-jin’s animated reading of the story captivated all the children.

What is the subject of the above sentence?

A. Soo-jin’s animated reading of the story

B. Soo-jin

C. all the children

D. Soo-jin’s animated reading

P3. What is the IPA?

A. a set of symbols which uniquely map onto each distinctive sound in the world’s languages

B. a system of symbols used to show the grammatical structure of sentences in different languages

C. a universal collection of written characters which represent the spelling conventions of major world languages

D. a notation method used to transcribe the meanings of words across different linguistic contexts

P4. What is *agreement*?

A. a syntactic phenomenon which requires grammatical features to match across units

B. a semantic process which determines how words combine to create meaning in a sentence

C. a morphological rule which requires words within a phrase to share the same derivational affixes

D. a phonological constraint which forces adjacent sounds in a word to become more similar

P5. Here is some English data.
(* = ungrammatical)

(14) We saw the cows.

(15) *Us saw the cows.

(16) *The cows saw we.

(17) The cows saw us.

Why do English pronouns change their form?

A. Case

B. Agreement

C. Word order

D. Style

P6. What is *phonological alternation*?

A. variation in pronunciation of a sound based on neighboring sounds

B. variation in spelling of a word across different dialects

C. variation in intonation patterns across different sentence types

D. variation in pronunciation of a sound across different languages

P7. What is the IPA symbol for the voiceless bilabial plosive?

A. p

B. b

C. m

D. f

P8. What case do subjects have in Urdu?

A. nominative or ergative

B. nominative

C. ergative

D. nominative or accusative