**History and Modern Languages (applicants for *ab initio* language only)**

**ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENT specimen paper**

**NB This assessment is for applicants to History and Modern Languages wishing to study a language *ab initio* (from scratch)**

**SECTION A**

**Please read the following passage carefully and answer the questions following it, IN ENGLISH.**

You’re in a far-flung corner of the globe, it’s the early hours of the morning and you’ve just checked into your hotel after an exhausting flight. The prospect of a seven-thirty business breakfast is fulling you with dread, and you’ve a nagging feeling you’ve forgotten to pack your toothbrush. Very little seems right with the world. But then you notice a sign in the corner of the bathroom: ‘Please to bathe inside the tub.’ Despite your tiredness, you can’t help but smile. Yes – you’re lost in translation.

All over the world, from Beijing to Buenos Aires, in hotels and restaurants and taxis and zoos (yes, zoos), these priceless nuggets of verbal dottiness lie in wait, ready to brighten the lives of jaded voyagers who happen to chance upon them. They are the reward points on our Travel loyalty card. They are the treats we earn for enduring mislaid luggage, deep-vein thrombosis and stony-faced stewardesses. Never failing to amuse, they put a spring in our step with nothing more complicated that an off-balance vocabulary and some iffy syntax. It’s English, Jim, but not as we know it.

Sometimes you can tell what was meant: ‘Our wine list leaves you nothing to hope for.’ Sometimes you can’t: ‘Nobody is allowed to sit on both sides of the boat.’ Sometimes you’re not sure if you can tell or not: the Indian hotel, for instance, that warns ‘No spiting on the walls.’ Is that ‘spitting’ or ‘writing’? If the former, why only on the walls? Occasionally you’re left in doubt as to whether the language is wrong or not. A notice in one Shanghai hotel reads: ‘It is forbidden to play the recorder in guest rooms.’ Do they really mean ‘recorder’? If so, *why*? Has there been an epidemic of people playing that instrument? Do the Chinese take particular offence at it, even more than we do? Is that possible?

The beauty of getting lost in translation is that you never know where you’ll end up. Some examples mess with your head: ‘If you wish, you may open the window. Do not open the window.’ Some are inadvertently beautiful: ‘Little grass is smiling slightly, please walk on the pavement.’ Some verge on philosophy: ‘Danger comes soonest when it’s despised.’

However, amused as we are by other nations’ fumblings with our language, we should never forget that their English is infinitely better than our Thai/Polish/Vietnamese. Indeed, sometimes it’s better than our English, whether from the land of Shakespeare or the Land of the Free.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. What are the main points of the author’s argument? Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.

2. How does the writer persuade us of his point of view? Please give examples from the text to support your answer.

***You should spend 30-40 minutes on this section.***

**[32 marks]**

**SECTION B**

The following exercises require you to:

i) translate between English and an invented language, Qazju;

ii) work out some basic aspects of Qazju’s grammar, using the provided English translations to help you.

**Please note the following observations about Qazju:**

**1) like English, Qazju has a fixed word order (e.g. only “I love John” not “John love I” or “John I love”);**

**2) like English, Qazju has singular (“cat”) and plural (“cats”) nouns;**

**3) like English, Qazju differentiates between different ways of expressing the past tense, for example “I ate” and “I have eaten”;**

**4) partly like English, Qazju adds endings to a basic syllable to change its grammar (e.g. “cat” > “cats”, “love” > “loved”)**

**5) however, Qazju is different from English in that it does not have words for “the”, “a” or “an”. There is no way to distinguish between indefinite (e.g. “a cat”) and definite (“the cat”) nouns.**

You will be given a set of sample sentences in Qazju with their English translation. In order to translate between the two languages, you will need to **examine and compare the sample Qazju sentences and their English translation** in order to work out Qazju’s vocabulary and how its words and sentences are put together.

Be very careful when translating that you

i) put the words in the correct order;

ii) choose the appropriate verb tense;

iii) use the correct noun form (i.e. singular or plural).

You may find it helpful to compile a ‘vocabulary list’ for Qazju as you go along (this will not be assessed) – a grid is provided for you at the end of the test paper.

Total marks available for the test: **16** marks***.***

***You should spend 20-30 minutes on this section.***

Sample sentences:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Qazju** | **English** |
| kalama gadzu fadnuk | *the girl cuddled a goat* |
| nedunu fadnuk zedgen | *the goat ate the beetle* |
| felmu kennu qakfuzu | *the waiter has brought a meal* |
| jefuna zedgenen gadzuzu | *the beetles saw the girls* |
| vefama nuzen gidnek | *the bear stole a sandwich* |
| jefna fadnuk kafqukuk | *a goat has seen the children* |

Q1. What is the Qazju for:

1. girl \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**½ mark**)
2. beetles \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**½ mark**)
3. child \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**½ mark**)
4. meals \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**½ mark**)
5. has stolen \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**½ mark**)
6. waiters \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**½ mark**)

Q2. Translate into English:

1. nedunu fadnukuk qakfuzu.

(**3 marks**)

1. kalma kennu nuzen.

(**3 marks**)

Q3. Each item in a sentence has a grammatical role. The following sentences each contain:

* + a subject (the ‘agent’/participant doing the action)
  + a verb
  + an object (the ‘undergoer’/participant who the action is done to)

In the following Qazju sentences, which word corresponds to the subject, the verb, and the object? Give the answer **in Qazju**:

1. In the sentence **kalma gadzu kennu**, which word is the **verb**?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**½ mark**)

1. In the sentence **vefama nuzen gidnek**, which word is the **object**?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**½ mark**)

Q4. Translate into Qazju:

The girls have eaten the sandwich.

(**3 marks**)

Q5. Can you describe/make a generalisation about how Qazju differentiates between the two forms of forming the past tense (e.g. “I ate” and “I have eaten”)?

How does Qazju form the plural of nouns, for example in the Qazju for “girl” and “girls”?

It does not matter if you do not use technical terms in your answer.

**(3 marks)**

**VOCABULARY GRID (\*\*\*NOT ASSESSED\*\*\*)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **QAZJU** | **ENGLISH** | **PART OF SPEECH** (e.g. verb, noun, adjective, preposition, adverb) |
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