Question 1: As easy as 2-3-5
Author: Harold Somers

Study the following expressions in Japanese, then complete the translation of the phrases below. The ŋ symbol represents a velar nasal, like the 'ng' in 'sing'.

ashi gohon	five legs
banana sambon	three bananas
bōru niko	two balls
empitsu nihon	two pencils
kami nimai	two sheets of paper
ishi saŋko	three stones
neko gohiki	five cats
risu nihiki	two squirrels
sara gomai	five plates
uma nitō	two horses
ushi santō	three cows

(a) *disuku* .... three disks

(b) *endomame* .... five peas

(c) *haŋkachi* .... two handkerchiefs

(d) *kaba* .... five rhinos

(e) *kyūri* .... three cucumbers

(f) *morumotto* .... two guinea pigs

(g) *nezumi* .... three mice

(h) *riŋgo* .... five apples

(i) *tsuna* .... two ropes

(j) *zō* .... three elephants

Solution to Question 1: As easy as 2-3-5

(a) *disuku*   sammai   three disks
(b) *endomame*   goko   five peas
(c) *haŋkachi*   nimai   two handkerchiefs
(d) *kaba*   gotō   five rhinos
(e) *kyūri*   sambon   three cucumbers
(f) *morumotto* nihiki   two guinea pigs
(g) *nezumi*   sambiki   three mice
(h) *riŋgo*   goko   five apples
(i) *tsuna*   nihon   two ropes
(j) *zō*   santō   three elephants

Comments

The counting word came after rather than before the noun, and that it consisted of the words *ni* (2), *sam/san/saŋ* (3) and *go* (5). What of the other part of the word? If you rearrange the list so words with the same second part are together, a pattern should emerge:

> *hon/bon*: legs, bananas, pencils
> *ko*: balls, stones
> *mai*: sheets of paper, plates
> *hiki*: cats, squirrels
> *tō*: horses, cows

The second part of the counter word depends on the type of object being counted: long thin things, round things, flat things, small animals, big animals.

There are two other little tricky things going on: the variation in the word for 3 is because the 'n' of *san* matches ('is assimilated') to the following consonant: n+m/b becomes 'm', n+k/g becomes 'ŋ'. And with the word for 'long thin things' *hon*, 'h' becomes 'b' with *san* (*sam*), so that explains why *san+hiki* becomes *sambiki*.

The basic principle of semantic grouping for the counter words should have been rather easy: it is typical of many East Asian languages, where these words are called 'classifiers'.

Actually, English also has classifiers, though not as systematically used as in Japanese: we say *three slices of bread*, rather than *three breads*, *200 head of cattle*, etc. (And by the way, the counter *tō* for big animals also means 'head', so Japanese is just like English!).
The extra difficulty with the assimilation of the letters made the problem a little bit harder, or should we say, interesting.

Q.29 A case of Pali

Author: Babette Verhoeven

Pali is a dead language, like Latin. It was a literary language related to Sanskrit, the ancestor of modern languages spoken in Northern India, such as Hindi; it is also distantly related to English. Pali was first written down around 100 BCE in Sri Lanka by Buddhist monks to preserve the teachings of the Buddha, and is usually written in a special script (which we replace here by our familiar Roman letters, using ā and ī for long vowels and without capital letters or punctuation).

Here are some sentences or phrases in Pali with their English translations:

Pali	**English Translation**
mahāmatto nisīdati	The minister sits down.
mahāmattam upasamkamanti	They visit the minister.
samano tathāgato hoti	The philosopher is enlightened.
samane attham pucchanti	They ask the philosophers the meaning.
upāsako pucchati	The disciple asks.
loko mahāmattassa	the minister's world

Here are a few more items of vocabulary:

rājo 'king', *devo* 'god', *gāmo* 'village'

Translate the following into English: (4 marks)

a. *rājo nisīdati*   _____

b. *rājo gāmassa devo hoti*   _____

Translate the following into Pali: (11 marks)

a. The minister asks the philosophers. _____

b. The philosopher sits down. _____

c. They sit down.   _____

d. The minister asks the kings. _____

e. the disciple's village   _____

f. The meaning of the world is god._____

Q29. A case of Pali Solution

- Structure of problem:

  – 6 sentences in Pali with their translations

  – Notice that some repeated words have different endings

- Challenge:

  – Work out which words correspond

  – and why the endings differ

Sets of similar words e.g. *mahāmatto*, *mahāmattam, mahāmattassa* all mean 'minister' but in different roles. Case endings and verbal agreement.

a. *rājo nisīdati*	The king sits down
b. *rājo gāmassa devo hoti*	The {village's king | king of the village} is (a) god

a. The minister asks the philosophers.	mahāmatto samane pucchati
b. The philosopher sits down.	samano nisīdati
c. They sit down.	nisīdanti
d. The minister asks the kings.	mahāmatto rāje pucchati
e. The disciple's village.	gāmo upāsakassa
f. The meaning of the world is god.	attho lokassa devo hoti

This question is about case endings, typical of Indo-European languages. The nominative or subject case marker is -o, the accusative or object marker is -am, the dative or indirect object plural -e, and the genitive or possessive -asa. In addition, the verb agrees in number with the subject: -ti for singular, -nti for plural. Note also the word order: the verb comes at the end of the sentence, and the genitive follows the noun it applies to. So rājo gāmasa is 'king of the village', not 'village of the king'.
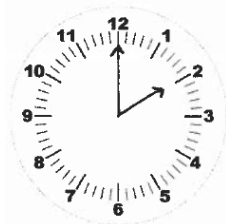
A. Telling the time in Tallinn

Tallinn is the capital of Estonia, where about 1 million people speak Estonian, a non-Indo-European language closely related to Finnish.
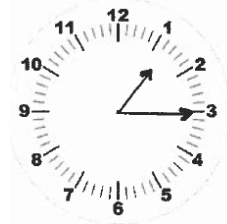
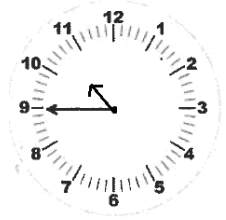The following expressions show how to tell the time in Estonian:
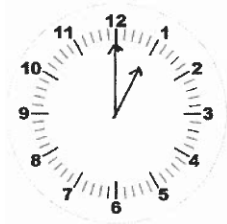
Kell on üks *Kell on kaks* *Veerand kaks*

Pool neli *Kolmveerand üksteist* *Viis minutit üks läbi*

Here are some more numbers in English and Estonian:

6 kuus 7 seitse 8 kaheksa 10 kümme

A1. Translate the following into English words

- (a) *Kakskümmend viis minutit üheksa läbi*
- (b) *Veerand neli*
- (c) *Pool kolm*
- (d) *Kolmveerand kaksteist*
- (e) *Kolmkümmend viis minutit kuus läbi*

A2. Translate the following times into Estonian:

(a) Quarter to nine
(b) Quarter past four
(c) Half past eleven
(d) Five past seven
(e) Half past twelve

SOLUTION

A1.
- (a) Twenty-five past nine
- (b) Quarter past three
- (c) Half (past) two
- (d) Quarter to twelve
- (e) Twenty-five to seven

A2.
- (a) Kolmveerand üheksa
- (b) Veerand viis
- (c) Pool kaksteist
- (d) Viis minutit seitse läbi
- (e) Pool üks

Explanation

"Quarter past" and "half past" are translated as "Quarter of" and "Half of", pointing to the next hour. So *neli* in the fourth example is 4, not 3, which could also be guessed by the fact that *kolmveerand* is "three quarters".

9 in 2a is not given, though *üheksa* appears in 1a, and can be guessed by analogy with *kaheksa* (8) (note the pattern *ü*=1, *ka*=2, if *-heksa* means "from 10").

Similarly, for 2c you need to figure out that 12 is *kaksteist*, which is given in 1d, on the basis that *üksteist* in the fifth example is 11.

The word for 5, needed for 2b, is shown in the sixth example.

Kakskümmend (20) and *kolmkümmend* (30) must be guessed based on the fact that *kaks*=2, *kolm*=3 and *kümme*=10.