



AILO

All Ireland Linguistics Olympiad
The Problem Solvers' Challenge

National Final 2026

Answer as many of the questions as you can. All questions carry equal weight. Write your answers in the answer-book provided.

Wednesday 4th March 2026. 10.00-12.30.
Dublin City University

HOST INSTITUTIONS



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



PARTNER INSTITUTIONS



Question A. Thaana

Michael Salter

Dhivehi, the official language of the Maldives, an island nation in the Indian Ocean, has been written with its own writing systems for over 2,000 years. Today, it is written using the Thaana script.

Below are 12 words in Dhivehi written in Thaana, with their equivalents in the Latin alphabet given in a different order. Their English translations are also given, but are not relevant to the problem.

Note that in the transliteration, the symbol $\bar{\text{~}}$ over a vowel indicates a long vowel; ḷ and ṣ are specific Dhivehi consonants distinct from l and s .



1	ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣	A	abaduves	<i>always</i>
2	ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣	B	assēriḷaṣ	<i>coast</i>
3	ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣	C	buḷā	<i>cat</i>
4	ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣	D	enmen	<i>everyone</i>
5	ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣	E	fenverun	<i>shower</i>
6	ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣	F	haqqu	<i>right</i>
7	ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣	G	irugeali	<i>sunshine</i>
8	ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣	H	menduru	<i>afternoon</i>
9	ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣	I	namādeve	<i>prayer</i>
10	ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣	J	salāmdinun	<i>greet</i>
11	ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣	K	vārē	<i>rain</i>
12	ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣ḷ̣	L	vikkani	<i>for sale</i>

1. Determine the correct correspondences.

2. Write the following words in the Thaana script:

- (a) **māddā** (*substance*)
- (b) **haḷēllevun** (*shout*)
- (c) **kemikal** (*chemical*)
- (d) **ufāveri** (*merry*)

3. The word ၵမ်ႻႻႻ, meaning *to/for them*, is not written in the expected way in Thaana script.

- (a) How would this word be transliterated using the Latin alphabet?
- (b) How would you expect this word to be written in the Thaana script, based on the words above?

Picture source: <https://coralglass.media/>

Question B. Cavineña

Gangrae Kim

The Cavineña language belongs to the Pano-Takana language family and is spoken by about 600 people in Bolivia.



Below are some Cavineña words and their English translations.

ena	<i>water</i>
nimejunuda	<i>patient (adj.)</i>
etse	<i>teeth</i>
nijukasada	<i>courageous</i>
napajada	<i>having clear water</i>
tsekeda	<i>rough</i>
wiki	<i>with a beak</i>
wipudeda	<i>red-beaked</i>
tsekweruda	<i>sharp-toothed</i>
bitipajada	<i>white-skinned</i>
nimema	<i>thoughtless</i>

1. The following are some more Cavineña words and their English meanings, listed in a jumbled order. Determine the correct correspondences.

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|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 eniju | A <i>strong</i> |
| 2 junuda | B <i>long</i> |
| 3 kasada | C <i>having murky water</i> |
| 4 nasweda | D <i>heart</i> |
| 5 wikaniarida | E <i>big-nosed</i> |

2. Translate the following into English. Note that one of these words has the same meaning as one of the words listed above

- (a) **arida** (b) **bitisweda** (c) **enime** (d) **nimekasada** (e) **wima**

3. Translate into Cavineña.

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|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| (a) <i>having red water</i> | (d) <i>nose</i> |
| (b) <i>sharp-beaked</i> | (e) <i>rough-skinned</i> |
| (c) <i>having teeth</i> | (f) <i>heartless</i> |

Source: Adapted from Korean National Olympiad 2025. Picture: www.ibolivia.org

Question C. Warembori

Babette Verhoeven

Warembori is a language threatened with extinction as it is spoken by only about 600 people. Most Warembori speakers are older adults living in three villages on the north-west coast of the island of New Guinea, in the Papua province of Indonesia.

Below are some phrases and sentences in Warembori with their English translations but in a different order.



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|----|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Butun | A | <i>It is the two snakes.</i> |
| 2 | Emena tire suando. | B | <i>This mother saw your dog.</i> |
| 3 | Mando. | C | <i>The dog fell.</i> |
| 4 | Ondave nata ekuero. | D | <i>Bow</i> |
| 5 | Naini tire amenaro. | E | <i>A mother heard a dog.</i> |
| 6 | Naitiyave bayane menayave. | F | <i>This cassowary bit my dog.</i> |
| 7 | Kuekaindu tu suandave | G | <i>It is a man.</i> |
| 8 | Onkaindu. | H | <i>Elder sister searches for a bow</i> |
| 9 | Nairo nata menaro. | I | <i>My dog saw a cassowary.</i> |
| 10 | Totairo bayane butundo | J | <i>The mothers search for the dogs.</i> |
| 11 | Suani pa'me emenaro. | K | <i>The two chickens and the cassowary</i> |
| 12 | Menadave dapen. | L | <i>The snake heard my chicken.</i> |

Note: A *cassowary* is a large flightless bird, a little smaller than an ostrich. When feeling threatened they are known to attack humans and dogs. *Bow* here refers to the weapon that shoots arrows.

1. Determine the correct correspondences.
2. Here are two new Warembori words:
keva = eye
bin = woman
Translate the following into Warembori.
 - (a) The chicken bit the two women.
 - (b) This eye
 - (c) It is an eye
 - (d) Your elder sister saw my bow.
3. Explain briefly why a Warembori speaker might be surprised if you said **enaikaindu**.

Image source: hermantubor.blogspot.com

Question D. Counting objects in Nuosu

Joakim Colpier

Nuosu or Northern Yi is a Sino-Tibetan language spoken by about 2 million people in southwest China. Below are a number of phrases in Nuosu (in transcription) and their translation into English, but in a scrambled order.

Pronunciation note: Although not relevant to the solution, you may like to know that plosive sets (p, b, bb; t, d, dd; k g, gg; j, q, jj) represented voiceless aspirated, voiceless unaspirated and voiced sounds respectively, so e.g. **p** = [p^h], **b** = [p], **bb** = [b]).



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|----|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | ddox mu nyip qit | A | <i>six feet</i> |
| 2 | bbu shy suo ji | B | <i>nine bamboo poles</i> |
| 3 | bbu shy cyp ji | C | <i>three feet</i> |
| 4 | ma ggu ji | D | <i>ten cherries</i> |
| 5 | sup vo suo bbo | E | <i>three snakes</i> |
| 6 | ie cyp ma | F | <i>one snake</i> |
| 7 | jy xy suo pot | G | <i>one duck</i> |
| 8 | bbu shy cy ji | H | <i>three cats</i> |
| 9 | ddur suo pot | I | <i>seven cherries</i> |
| 10 | hly vo cy bbo | J | <i>ten cats</i> |
| 11 | hlat cyp ggu | K | <i>ten snakes</i> |
| 12 | hly vo shyp bbo | L | <i>three peaches</i> |
| 13 | ax nyie suo ma | M | <i>one pair of trousers</i> |
| 14 | ax nyie cy ma | N | <i>three wings</i> |
| 15 | jy xy fut pot | O | <i>two knives</i> |

1. Determine the correct correspondences.
2. Given that **vi mop** means 'axe', **nbo jjuo** means 'skirt', **hxi** means 'arrow', and **lot** means 'hand', translate the following phrases into Nuosu. If any phrase can be translated in more than one way, give just one possible translation.
 - (a) one peach
 - (b) ten bamboo poles
 - (c) two hands
 - (d) seven axes
 - (e) one skirt
 - (f) nine arrows

Question E. Hixkaryana

Ji Hun Wang

Hixkaryana belongs to the Cariban language family and is spoken by approximately 600 people in the Nhamundá River basin, a tributary of the Amazon River in Brazil. The letter **ĩ** represents a vowel like in the exclamation “ugh”

The following are sentences from Hixkaryana together with their English translations.



toto yotahano kamara	<i>The jaguar just hit the man.</i>
ninikiyako	<i>He went to bed.</i>
woto yonoyako toto	<i>The man ate meat.</i>
oyotahano biryekomo	<i>The boy just hit you.</i>
nomokyako worĩskomo	<i>The woman came.</i>
kanawa yano	<i>He just took the canoe.</i>
onyeye kamara	<i>The jaguar saw you before.</i>
biryekomo yowakryeyako kanawa	<i>The canoe made the boy happy.</i>
hawana mowakryeye	<i>You made the guest happy before.</i>

1. Translate the following into English

- (a) **biryekomo minyeno**
- (b) **toto yonoyako kamara**
- (c) **kanawa maye**
- (d) **nomokye hawana**
- (e) **oyowakryeno woto**

2. Translate the following into Hixkaryana

- (a) *The boy hit the jaguar before.*
- (b) *He just came.*
- (c) *The guest ate meat before.*
- (d) *The canoe just made you happy.*
- (e) *You went to bed before.*

3. Explain Hixkaryana grammar as illustrated by these examples. NB explain the grammar rules you have discovered, not how you discovered them. Try to organize your rules systematically rather than jotting them down randomly.

Source: Adapted from Korean National Olympiad 2025. Picture: indigenabrasileiros.blogspot.com