

EXAM WITH ANSWERS: A Language for All

ABAU Practice Examination (Galiza)

Read the text and the instructions to the questions very carefully. Answer all the questions in English.

The European Union has over 20 official languages which results in an enormous amount of money being spent every day on translations and interpreting. The Swiss economist François Grin was asked to look into this issue and make suggestions. In 2005, he published a report which suggested the use of a “constructed language” – that is an artificial language which has been specially invented for the purpose of making communication easier. By far the best-known constructed language is Esperanto.

Esperanto was invented in 1877 by L. L. Zamenhof, a Polish eye doctor. He was fascinated by the idea of a world without war, and believed that this could happen with the help of an international language. Hoping to promote harmony and peace between countries, Zamenhof’s aim was to make learning Esperanto as easy as possible, so its vocabulary and grammar are straightforward.

Linguists estimate that Esperanto can be learned in 5%-25% of the time required to learn other languages. For example, one study suggested that French school students would need to study English for 1,500 hours, but Esperanto for only 150 hours, to attain the same level of proficiency. It has also been shown that learning Esperanto makes it easier to learn a third language. In one study, a group of students learned Esperanto for one year and then French for three years. At the end of the four years, they were significantly better at French than a control group which had studied French for four years.

Despite all these good reasons for learning Esperanto, there are probably only between one to two thousand native speakers of Esperanto – that is, people who have learned the language as small children from their Esperanto-speaking parents. In contrast, there are about 400 million native English-speakers and perhaps 1.1 billion people speak it as a secondary language. The problem for Esperanto is one of co-ordination – it is an idea which can only really work if a lot of people take it on simultaneously. It is pointless to learn Esperanto unless many other people do as well. Zamenhof himself said that it might take “many centuries” for Esperanto to become a universal language.

Questions

1. **Write a summary of the text in English, including the most important points, using your own words.** (approximately 50 words; 1 point)

Answers will vary.

2. **Indicate whether the following sentences are true or false (T/F) according to the text.** Copy that part (and ONLY that part) of the text which justifies your answer. (1 point; 0.25 each)

a. François Grin was asked to construct an artificial language.

F “The Swiss economist François Grin was asked to look into this issue and make suggestions.” (paragraph 1)

b. Esperanto is the only known constructed language.

F “By far the best-known constructed language is Esperanto.” (paragraph 1)

c. Learning Esperanto makes learning other languages less difficult.

T “It has also been shown that learning Esperanto makes it easier to learn a third language.” (paragraph 3)

d. There are about 1,000 parents who speak Esperanto.

F “... only between one to two thousand native speakers of Esperanto – that is, people who have learned the language as small children from their Esperanto-speaking parents.” (paragraph 4)

3. **Find words and phrases in the text that correspond in meaning to the words and definitions given here.** (1 point; 0.25 each)

a. investigate or examine **look into (paragraph 1)**

b. uncomplicated **straightforward (paragraph 2)**

c. reach a certain level **attain (paragraph 3)**

d. without a purpose **pointless (paragraph 4)**

4. **Pronunciation.** (1 point; 0.25 each)

a. In which of the following words is the ending “s” pronounced /s/?

purpose, easy, reason, thousand

b. Write the word whose underlined letters are pronounced differently from the others.

native, cooperation, aims, **contrast**

c. Write the word in which the underlined letters are pronounced /3:/ as in “third.”

learn, year, four, harmony

d. Find a word in the text that includes the sound /dʒ/ like the “g” in “messageg”.

Possible answer: suggested (paragraph 1)

5. **Complete the second sentence in each pair so that it has the same meaning as the first one. You must use the words or expression in *italics*.** (1.5 points; 0.5 points each)

a. Esperanto is the easiest language to learn.

No other language **is as easy to learn as Esperanto.**

b. Perhaps 1.1 billion people speak it as a secondary language.

It may be **that 1.1 billion people speak it as a secondary language.**

c. It is an idea which can only really work if a lot of people take it on simultaneously.

Unless **people take it on simultaneously, it can't work.**

6. **Aside from language, what other things can make it difficult to understand people from another culture?**
(Approximately 120 words; 3 points)

Answers will vary.