

3. Mokilese (10 marks)

Mokilese is spoken by about 500 people on the atoll of Mokil, in the Pacific state of Micronesia.

Each example below contains a number, a noun ('dog', 'pencil', and so on) and one of three different types of 'classifier'. Classifiers are used to classify objects (things, people and so on) according to criteria that the language's speakers consider important (in much the same way that English uses *who* and *what* to distinguish humans from everything else).

doahk jilmen	'three dogs'	doahk pahmen	'four dogs'	doahk limmen	'five dogs'
pinjel jilpas	'three pencils'	pinjel pahpas	'four pencils'	pinjel limpasa	'five pencils'
peipa jilkij	'three pieces of paper'	peipa pahkij	'four pieces of paper'	peipa limkij	'five pieces of paper'
suhkoa jilpas	'three trees'	suhkoa pahpas	'four trees'	suhkoa limpas	'five trees'
woi jilmen	'three turtles'	woi pahmen	'four turtles'	woi limmen	'five turtles'
woal jilmen	'three men'	woal pahmen	'four men'	woal limmen	'five men'
alek jilpas	'three reeds'	alek pahpas	'four reeds'	alek limpasa	'five reeds'
pilawa jilkij	'three slices of bread'	pilawa pahkij	'four slices of bread'	pilawa limkij	'five slices of bread'
aji jilpas	'three chopsticks'	aji pahpas	'four chopsticks'	aji limpasa	'five chopsticks'
wija jilkij	'three blocks of land'	wija pahkij	'four blocks of land'	wija limkij	'five blocks of land'
jeri jilmen	'three children'	jeri pahmen	'four children'	jeri limmen	'five children'

Q3.1. First identify the words or word-parts that mean

- 'three'
- 'four'
- 'five'

Q3.2. List (in any order) the three classifiers, and their meanings (i.e. the way in which they classify objects).

Q3.3. List the order in which the number, the noun, and the classifier appear in each example. Use the abbreviations 'NUMB' for *number*, 'N' for *noun*, and 'CL' for *classifier*. If any of these is always part of the same word as the next one, write '+' after it.

3.1.	a.	b.	c.
3.2.			
3.3.			

1. Mokilese (10 marks, 12 points)

Assigning points:

- 3.1: 1 point each for a, b, and c. (3 points maximum)
- 3.2: 1 point each for correctly identifying each form (3 points), plus
 - -men: 1 point for 'animal' or any alternative that includes people, dogs and turtles - so 'animate being', but not 'mammal' (1 point)
 - -pas, -kij: 2 points; 1 for a partial answer (2 points)
- 3.3: 3 points for correct order; ignore '+'.

3.1.	a. jil-	b. pah-	c. lim-
3.2.	-men	- any of: animals, animate (being) (but not: living)	
	-pas	- any of: long, thin, wood, objects, inanimate, 'plant or object made of a plant'	
	-kij	- any of: flat, 'piece of thing', 'amount of something', 'contains the word <i>of</i> , e.g. 5 blocks of wood', 'processed natural object'	
3.3.	N	NUMB+	CL

Comment

3.1. a. All the phrases that refer to 3 have the component “jil”

b. All the phrases that refer to 4 have the component “pah”.

c. All the phrases that refer to 5 have the component “lim”.

All these components are numbers.

3.2. All the words referring to living animals (dog, man, child, turtle) have the component “men” in them, so this must refer to living animal; all the words referring to flat objects (bread, blocks of land) have “kij”, which must refer to flat inanimate objects. On closer inspection both the bread and land are smaller parcels (slices and blocks respectively) of larger things, so we might also guess that the noun classifier “kij” refers to flat inanimate objects that can be divided into smaller parts; but we have no evidence that that divisibility is crucial. Finally, the remaining words chopsticks, trees and reeds all have the component “pas”, which must refer to objects that are round / cylinder-like in shape (tree-trunks, reeds, and chopsticks all have this basic shape); once again, we might guess that these things must be inanimate, but we have no evidence.

All these components are classifiers.

3.3. Looking at how the phrases are made up in Mokilese, e.g. “doahk jilmen”, we see that the noun “doahk” comes first in the row describing “dogs”, this is followed by the number e.g. “jil” and this is followed by the classifier, e.g. “men”.