

八十四學年度 語言學研究所 組碩士班研究生入學考試

科目 英文 科號 3705 共 4 頁第 1 頁 *請在試卷【答案卷】內作答

I. Reading Comprehension (20%) -- written in Chinese

Read the following passages and write a summary for each passage. Each summary must be written in **no more than 40 Chinese characters**. If any summary contains more than 40 Chinese characters, only **the first 40 Chinese characters** will be graded.

- (A) Tension and anxiety are obstacles to effective learning. The ability to relax is just as important to success in school as the ability to read. Anxiety can cause students to forget chapters that they may have read, to "go blank" at quiz time, or to fail to meet deadlines and to complete assignments on schedule. Anyone can learn to rid himself or herself of tension by resting the body, breathing deeply, and relaxing for three to four minutes before a test. Attention to details such as outlining, note taking, and time scheduling will help free mental energy to work on the tasks of learning. Planning one day ahead on a pocket calendar has done as much to improve the grades of some students as memory or speed-reading courses.
- (B) Learners of a new language often find themselves in ambiguous situations. Ambiguous situations are characterized by complexity, novelty, unexpectedness, or lack of clear-cut solutions. They arise when a person does not understand a sentence, paragraph, or conversation because it contains unfamiliar words or structures. Persons who dislike uncertainty tend to become confused, withdraw from the situation, give up, or avoid further contact with the language. They prefer safe situations in which everything has been rehearsed, drilled, and explained. Such behavior is not constructive because language students must learn to cope with uncertainty.
- (C) One of the most popular fields of study for college students these days is leisure studies. The names of the courses, "Introduction to Sport" or "The Philosophy of Sport," conjure up scenes of college students idly talking of Frisbees and sleeping on the grass. But leisure studies is a deadly serious field: students learn how to run the sports programs of big city park departments, how to manage a ski resort or a vacation hotel. The students learn how to organize a teenage soccer league where little or no interest exists in the sport, how to teach and keep beginners interested, and how to keep track of admissions money. To do all these things, they must take courses in psychology and business management along with those in leisure. As people grow more involved in sports activities, in vacations, and in trips, the job outlook for leisure majors is quite good; but can you imagine trying to explain to your parents that you're spending their tuition money studying leisure?

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(D)

Economic considerations as well as the preference of many women for careers have placed additional pressures on the institution of marriage. Women as well as men are placed in tenuous positions because of the many adjustments they must make if both partners work. In most cases, both husband and wife welcome the financial advantages of being a two-job family. With two salaries, the family is more affluent. Yet the woman who works outside the home will not want to do all the traditional jobs inside the home, too. Sometimes neither spouse knows which tasks are his or her responsibility. The psychological trauma that can accompany the breakdown of roles within the marriage is sometimes more than the fragile bond of love can support. If the bond of love breaks, partners today are free to dissolve the marriage, just as they were free to undertake it.

(E)

It has been said that by understanding what makes a nation laugh, you can define its people. To Americans, laughter is the great leveler, the crystallizer of our iconoclasm. Jack Kennedy's crack about seeing nothing wrong with appointing his brother Robert to the Cabinet "to give him some legal experience as Attorney General before he goes out to practice law" is an example of the acid touch that is common to American humor. The sense of the comic in the United States centers around our own ridiculousness and around the menace suddenly perceived as no longer threatening. As the popular cartoon character Pogo said: "We have met the enemy and he is us." We tend toward a humor that is fast, frank, and irreverent. A Black comedian tells his predominantly white audience, "We finally made it. The first Black man was indicted for income tax evasion. We finally made it . . . into non-violent crime." A more boisterous form of humor is represented by slapstick: a kick in the pants, a pie in the boss's face, the great chase scene where hundreds of people run wildly about, but no one gets caught. Certainly American humor, with its nothing-sacred air and its capacity to hurt and heal, reveals yet another side of the elusive "American character."

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II. Writing (30%) -- written in English

(A) Write an **introductory paragraph** for the following passage that **incorporates the central theme** of this passage.

(introductory paragraph)

English is the almost universal language of science, business and international politics. It might be thought, then, that English will become ever more dominant and will, in effect, become the global language – either the first or second language of every person on the planet. But there's a catch!

There could be nationalistic reactions against English. It might well seem to billions of people on Earth that those for whom English is the native language would have an advantage over those for whom it is a learned language; that the English language heritage in literature and in culture generally would cast all others into the shade.

What is the alternative? Interpreters? Whether interpretation is human or computerised, could we trust it? How incredibly easy it would be to make small errors in interpretation and how costly those might be. Can we have a global language other than English? Which? Surely any language other than English would create even louder objections the world over. There are artificial languages, of course. The best known is Esperanto, invented in 1887. It is a very sensible language – very easy to learn, but it is essentially a distillation of the Romance languages and might therefore rouse non-European hostility. Besides, artificial languages seem to lack vitality. After a century there are only about 100,000 speakers of Esperanto. Other artificial languages are even less successful.

Yet the problem may well take care of itself. As communications around the world improve, and as more and more common folk may want to talk – not just educated businessmen and scientists – 'lingua terra', a 'language of the world', may arise little by little. English will make up a large part of it, yes; but every other language will add vocabulary, idiom, and grammar. It could end as a fearful construction, with rules all its own bearing no too-clear mark of any one national language. All human beings would have to learn it in addition to their own languages, and none would have an advantage over others by the mere accident of place of birth. Lingua terra could end with a vocabulary – a flexibility, a richness surpassing any other, so that it could develop a mighty literature of its own. It might then, by its mere existence, do more to emphasise the familyhood of humanity than a million sermons on the subject could end to end.

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(B) Write a **concluding paragraph** for the following passage that **incorporates the central theme** of this passage.

Some people think that the best time to begin studying a foreign language is in childhood and that the younger you are, the easier it is to learn another language. While it is true that an early start allows people to pursue language study over longer periods of time, there is little evidence that children in language classrooms learn foreign languages any better than adults (people over age 15) in similar classroom situations. In fact, adults have many advantages over children: better memories, more efficient ways of organizing information, longer attention spans, better study habits, and greater ability to handle complex mental tasks. Adults are often better motivated than children; they see learning a foreign language as necessary for their education or career. In addition, adults are particularly sensitive to the correctness of grammar and appropriateness of vocabulary, two factors that receive great attention in most formal language classrooms.

Adults usually want to learn a foreign language in a hurry, unlike children, who can devote many years to language mastery. Also, adults have complex communication needs that extend beyond the mere ability to carry on simple conversations. Adults need to be able to argue, persuade, express concern, object, explain, and present information about complex matters that pertain to their life, interests, work, or education. Because most adults do not like to appear foolish, they often deny themselves opportunities to practice for fear of making mistakes, of not getting their message across, or of appearing ridiculously incompetent. In addition, adults have more trouble than children in making new friends who speak the foreign language.

One example usually given to support the notion of children's superiority as language learners is their ability to pick up an authentic accent. It is usually observed that children of immigrants learn to speak the language of their adopted country without an accent, whereas their parents rarely do. It is also observed that even adults with high need and motivation, such as diplomats, rarely learn a foreign language without retaining some of their native accent. In a sense, the same is true in sports; to learn well the complex coordination of the hundreds of muscles needed to play tennis, swim, or figure skate, a person has to start young. Most champions begin training at an early age. There are examples of strong competitors who entered their sport after childhood, but they are the exception, not the rule. The same is true of adults who acquire native-like accents in a foreign language.

(concluding paragraph)