

YOUR NAME:

REGISTRATION #

# (G) Cameroon Pidgin English (1/3) [5 points]

Speakers of mutually unintelligible languages with the need to communicate with each other often create *pidgin languages*. Pidgins are languages developed by speakers of distinct languages which come into contact but share no common linguistic background. Pidgin languages typically consist of linguistic features of the contact languages, and their vocabulary is typically derived from the socially or economically dominant language. Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE for short) is a pidgin language spoken in Cameroon, West Africa. The language has borrowed heavily from English.

There is no standard orthography (spelling conventions) for CPE. The data are presented in one of the ways in which CPE is represented orthographically; notice that o and u represent different vowels. For example,

go	‘go’	do	‘door’
man	‘man’	dai	‘die’ or ‘dead’
basiket	‘basket’	fashon	‘behavior’
haus	‘house’	nes	‘nurse’
bet	‘bed’	sinek	‘snake’
du	‘do’	buk	‘book’
kol	‘cold’	sipun	‘spoon’
siton	‘stone’	kain	‘kind’
shet	‘shirt’	simen	‘cement’

It is typical for speakers in a complex multilingual situation, as is the one which creates pidgin languages, to find creative ways to extend the usefulness of a small borrowed vocabulary. One way to accomplish this goal is by metaphorically extending borrowed words, as in the examples below, which are CPE compound words derived metaphorically from the English word *eye*.

ai <u>kon</u>	‘interior of corn kernel’	bat ai	‘evil eye’
benben ai	‘cross-eyed’	bik ai	‘greedy’
<u>long</u> ai	‘covetous’	<u>trong</u> ai	‘courageous’

In this task, you are presented with CPE vocabulary items derived in a similar fashion from the English words *hand* (CPE *han*), *head* (CPE *het*), *heart* (CPE *hat*), *mouth* (CPE *maut*), *black* (CPE *blak*), and *dry* (CPE *drai*).

Your task is to match the CPE compounds to their likely English translations.

**GI.** CPE compound words derived from the English word *hand*. Choose from the following translations.

CPE compound	Translation
open han	A. one of a pair
tai han	B. generous
wan han	C. mean



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## (G) Cameroon Pidgin English (2/3)

**G2.** CPE compound words derived from the English word *head*. Choose from the following translations.

CPE compound	Translation
bik het	A. stubborn
klin het	B. innocent
tr <u>o</u> ng het	C. intelligent

**G3.** CPE compound words derived from the English word *heart*. Choose from the following translations.

CPE compound	Translation
bat hat	A. kindness/generosity
blak hat	B. calmness
gut hat	C. wickedness
kul hat	D. cleverness/craftiness
k <u>o</u> ni hat	E. hatred

**G4.** CPE compound words derived from the English word *mouth*. Choose from the following translations.

CPE compound	Translation
bik maut	A. ability to persuade/flattery
k <u>o</u> ni maut	B. haughtiness/bragging
swit maut	C. dishonesty

**G5.** CPE compound words derived from English *black*. Choose from the following translations.

CPE compound	Translation
blak ai	A. wickedness
blak bush	B. heart of a forest
blak hat	C. dizziness

**G6.** CPE compound words derived from English *dry*. Choose from the following translations.

CPE compound	Translation
drai ai	A. unsubstantiated statements
drai han	B. thirst
drai nek	C. poverty
drai t <u>o</u> k	D. insomnia



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# (G) Cameroon Pidgin English (3/3)

- G7.** Answer the following questions. Did you notice...
- A.** ... the two different ways to say 'generous' in CPE? Write them below in the CPE orthography.
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- B.** ... that English consonant clusters of borrowed English words are preserved in some contexts but simplified or elaborated in others? What are the most likely CPE words for the following borrowed English words?

stick										
market										
service										
old										
green										

