Typology I — Midterm exam

Name:
Student ID:
Note:
ullet This exam contains 10 questions, 2 for each of the 5 sessions.
• Each exercise is labeled with its score; the maximum score for the exam is 100.
• Do not use extra sheets, but the empty space on the exam sheets for your answers.
• Please put your name on every sheet!
• Don't write too much, and try to distribute your time well among the questions.
• You have 90 minutes. Good luck!
Language Families
1. Name the two major African language families, and name one language from each. (4)

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2. Which two groups of African languages do not belong to either of these families? Are these groups language families? (6)

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2 Methods of Historical Linguistics

1. Describe the main ideas of the comparative method. (12)

2. Why is the comparative method traditionally deemed necessary for securely establishing common ancestry? (6)

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3 Phonological Typology

1. What are the minimal and maximal sizes of consonant inventories occurring in the world's languages? Speculate why there is a minimal and a maximal size. (8)

2. Name five contrastive features of vowels. (5)

4 Morphological Topology

1. Name two typical properties of isolating languages and two typical properties of synthetic languages. (6)

2. What are the 'three faces' of English in terms of morphological types? Give an English example for each type. (9)

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5 Universals

1. If you know that language X always puts the verb first, which order do you expect for subject and object? How typologically common is the resulting pattern? (4)

2. The literal translation of a typical sentence in language Y into English is "sees the man the animals". Give the most probable word order in Y for the English sentence "I did that a year ago", paying attention to each word and justifying your answer. (10)