



Cross-Linguistic Guide for PA Teachers

(Structural patterns multilingual students may transfer into English)

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Introduction: Why language transfer matters

Most multilingual learners are not “making errors”. They are transferring rules from a complete and fully developed language system they already know. When a student says:

- “She happy.”
- “I no want.”
- “I book read.”

they are not ignoring English rules. They are applying patterns from their home language to English as they build understanding of a new system.

Language learning does not require replacing one grammar with another. It involves expanding an existing linguistic system to include new structures, sounds, and patterns.

What students bring to English learning

Every multilingual learner comes equipped with:

- Phonology (how their language uses sounds)
- Grammar patterns (sentence structure, verb systems, articles, etc.)
- Vocabulary connections (cognates, borrowed words, shared roots)
- Literacy skills that transfer (decoding, syntax knowledge, academic concepts)

These systems shape how English emerges. They are not deficits. They are parts of a roadmap.

Understanding what transfers from each language makes instruction more targeted, respectful, and effective.

What this guide provides

For each of the 15 most common languages in Pennsylvania, this guide lists:

- English sounds frequently missing in the target language
- Common grammar transfer patterns (with student examples)
- Cognates and false cognates*
- Common misinterpretation
- Grade-band examples
- Major structural considerations

Additional languages may be added as resources permit.

** The cognates and false cognates examples provided in this guide are illustrative, not exhaustive. They are meant to support instruction, not represent a full list. For additional cognates, educators can reference bilingual dictionaries, online translation tools used strategically (to confirm meaning, not translate full texts), and other resources from multilingual education organizations.*

Tip: When looking up a possible cognate, confirm that both languages use the same meaning, not just the same spelling. Some words look related but are used differently in academic contexts or other languages.

Purpose of this guide

| This guide is not: | This guide is: |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A list of errors• A set of stereotypes• A replacement for teacher judgment | <p>A tool to help teachers –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify which English structures are new for students• Leverage students’ existing linguistic knowledge• View multilingualism as an asset, not an obstacle |

A note on phonemic development and language transfer

Human auditory systems become specialized early in life. Infants are born able to distinguish nearly all speech sounds, but as they grow, the brain prunes unused distinctions and becomes highly efficient at noticing only the sounds needed for the languages around them. As a result, when a sound does not exist in a student's home language, they may not initially hear or produce it accurately later in life. This is a normal neurological process, not a matter of effort. New sounds require patient, explicit instruction and time to develop. This applies to all languages in this guide. Remember, if you are a monolingual English speaker, you only hear the phonemes used in English and cannot hear many of the phonemes used in other languages that English does not share. Your pronunciation of words in another language may sound just as inaccurate to a native speaker of that language as theirs might sound to you. This is a normal neurological phenomenon.

A note on pronunciation and instruction

Pronunciation matters most when it affects meaning or fluency. Some sounds need explicit teaching because they change what a listener understands. Others do not. Our role is not to produce "American-sounding" speech, but to help students communicate their ideas clearly in English. Pronunciation support should be woven into instruction only where it improves understanding, not as an effort to erase natural language variation. Teach pronunciation only when it affects meaning or clarity. The goal is communication, not accent reduction.

By recognizing multilingual students as developing multilingual thinkers, we shift from correcting them to teaching them, and from policing their language to growing their English proficiency with respect.

Spanish

A. English Sounds Frequently Missing in Spanish

| English Sound | English Example | Common Substitution in Spanish Speakers' English | Notes for Teachers |
|---|-------------------------|---|--|
| /v/ (letter v) | very, move | /b/ → <i>bery, moob</i> | Spanish b and v use the same articulation |
| /ʃ/ (sh) | ship, she | /tʃ/ (<i>ch</i>) or /s/ → <i>chip, sip</i> | Most Spanish dialects lack the /ʃ/ sound; substitution is predictable. |
| /z/ (voiced s) | zoo, plays | /s/ → <i>soo, pleis</i> | Spanish has only an unvoiced /s/. |
| /ɪ/ (short i) | sit, big | /i/ → <i>seet, beeg</i> | English vowel inventory is larger; Spanish has five stable vowels. |
| Final consonant clusters | milk, asks | cluster reduced → <i>mil, ask</i> | Not a reading “error”. Clusters don’t exist in Spanish phonology. |
| Initial s + consonant (sp, st, sk) | School, student, spider | Spanish does not allow words to begin with “s + consonant” clusters | Spanish adds a vowel (usually e) in front to fit Spanish syllable structure. “ <i>eschool</i> ,” “ <i>estudent</i> ,” “ <i>espider</i> ” |

B. Common Grammar Transfer Patterns (with Student Examples)

| English Structure | How Spanish Differs | Typical Learner Pattern | What’s Happening |
|---|---|--|---|
| Auxiliary do/does/did for questions & negation | Spanish forms questions without auxiliaries | “ <i>You like pizza?</i> ” / “ <i>I no want.</i> ” | This is a valid question structure in Spanish. |
| Double negatives discouraged in English | Double negatives are correct grammar | “ <i>I don’t want nothing.</i> ” | Translating a fully correct Spanish structure. |
| Adjective before noun | Spanish puts adjective after noun | “ <i>the car red</i> ” | Transfer of Spanish word order. |
| Subject pronouns required in English | Pronouns often dropped if understood | “ <i>Is raining</i> ” | English requires a subject even without meaning (it). |

C. Cognates and False Cognates

Helpful cognates

| Spanish | English |
|---------------|---------------|
| atención | attention |
| familia | family |
| participación | participation |
| educación | education |
| problema | problem |
| cultura | culture |
| información | information |

Misleading False Cognates

| Spanish Word | Looks Like | Means |
|-------------------|-------------|-----------|
| embarazada | embarrassed | pregnant |
| asistir | assist | attend |
| sensible | sensible | sensitive |
| éxito | exit | success |
| ropa | rope | clothing |

D. Common Misinterpretation

| Student Production | Structural Explanation |
|-------------------------|---|
| "I no want." | <i>Spanish forms negatives without using the auxiliary verb "do." The student is applying Spanish sentence structure to English.</i> |
| "Is raining." | <i>In Spanish, the subject can be left out when it is understood from context. English requires a subject in every sentence, even when it does not carry meaning (for example, "it" in "It is raining.").</i> |
| "The car red." | <i>Spanish typically places adjectives after nouns ("coche rojo" = "car red"). The word order is being transferred into English.</i> |
| "I have 15 years." | <i>Spanish expresses age using the verb "to have" ("tengo 15 años" = "I have 15 years"). English uses the verb "to be" ("I am 15 years old.").</i> |
| "She has 20 years old." | <i>Combination of Spanish age structure and English word order. Spanish uses "have" for age, which influences the English sentence form.</i> |

E. Grade-Band Examples (Spanish → English Transfer)

K-2

Student Production Standard English Form

“I no want.” “I do not want.”

“Red house.” “The red house.”

“Is raining.” “It is raining.”

3-5

Student Production Standard English Form

“She don’t has homework.” “She doesn’t have homework.”

“I don’t want nothing in my lunch.” “I don’t want anything in my lunch.”

6-8

Student Production Standard English Form

“The story is about a boy that no wants to move.” “The story is about a boy that does not want to move.”

“I saw a movie about a girl very intelligent.” “I saw a movie about a very intelligent girl.”

9-12

Student Production Standard English Form

“Students don’t receive support enough for academic vocabulary.” “Students don’t receive enough support for academic vocabulary.”

“This topic is very polemic in the society.” “This topic is very controversial in society.”

F. Major Structural Considerations

- Spanish and English share alphabetic writing systems and similar sentence structures, but vowel systems and syllable patterns differ significantly.
- Spanish uses consistent phonetic spelling patterns, while English spelling–sound relationships are less predictable.
- Spanish places adjectives after nouns more frequently than English and forms negation without the auxiliary verb “do.”

Arabic

A. English Sounds Frequently Missing in Arabic

| English Sound | English Example | Common Substitution | Why This Happens |
|--|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| /p/ | pen, stop | /b/ → ben, stob | Arabic does not include the /p/ sound. The closest sound is /b/. |
| /v/ | very, move | /f/ → fery, moof | Arabic does not include /v/. The closest sound is /f/. |
| /ŋ/ (ng) | sing, running | /n/ or /ngg/ → sin, runnin | Arabic does not use /ŋ/ as a separate sound at the end of words. |
| /ʒ/ (as in measure) | measure, vision | /ʃ/ or /z/ → mesher, vishon | Some Arabic dialects do not include /ʒ/ in the same distribution as English. |
| Short vowel contrasts (ɪ / æ / ʌ) | sit, cat, cup | vowel approximated → seet, ket, cop | English has more vowel contrasts than Arabic. Certain short vowel distinctions may not exist in Arabic. |
| Consonant clusters (especially initial or final) | street, helped | cluster simplified → istreet, help | Arabic syllable structure limits certain consonant clusters, especially at word boundaries. |

B. Common Grammar Transfer Patterns (with Student Examples)

| English Structure | How Arabic Differs | Typical Learner Pattern | What's Happening |
|---|--|------------------------------------|---|
| Use of "to be" in present tense | In Arabic, present tense sentences often omit the verb "to be" | "She happy." / "The teacher nice." | Direct transfer of Arabic sentence structure. |
| Indefinite articles (a/an) | Arabic does not use an equivalent word for "a" or "an" | "I have car." | Omission reflects absence of an indefinite article in Arabic. |
| Word order in descriptive phrases | Arabic can use different word order patterns | "The car red." | Transfer of native language sentence structure. |
| Question formation with auxiliary verbs | Arabic forms questions without auxiliary "do" | "You went yesterday?" | Transfer of Arabic question structure. |
| Third person singular -s | Arabic verbs do not add an ending equivalent to English -s | "She go to school." | Absence of -s reflects structural difference in verb marking. |

C. Cognates and False Cognates

Helpful Cognates

Arabic has fewer direct cognates with English due to different language origins. Some academic vocabulary entered both languages through Greek or Latin transmission.

| Arabic | English |
|--------------------------|------------|
| تلفزيون (tilifizyūn) | television |
| ديمقراطية (dīmuqrāṭiyya) | democracy |
| فلسفة (falsafa) | philosophy |
| موسيقى (mūsīqā) | music |
| جامعة (jāmi‘a) | university |

Misleading False Cognates

| Arabic Word | Looks Like | Actual Meaning |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| مدرس (mudarris) | modest | teacher |
| مكتبة (maktaba) | maktab / makeup | library |
| رقم (raqm) | room | number |
| حاسوب (ḥāsūb) | house | computer |
| دين (dīn) | dine | religion |

D. Common Misinterpretation

| Student Production | Structural Explanation |
|-----------------------|---|
| “She happy.” | Arabic present tense sentences often omit the verb “to be.” English requires “is” in this structure. |
| “I have car.” | Arabic does not use an indefinite article equivalent to “a.” |
| “You went yesterday?” | Arabic forms many questions without auxiliary verbs. |
| “She go to school.” | English adds -s to third person singular verbs in the present tense. Arabic uses a different system for marking verbs. |
| “I am in the home.” | Arabic frequently uses a definite article (“the”) more broadly than English. This may influence article usage in English. |

E. Grade-Band Examples (Arabic → English Transfer)

K–2

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| “She happy.” | “She is happy.” |
| “I have cat.” | “I have a cat.” |
| “Teacher nice.” | “The teacher is nice.” |

3–5

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| “She go to school every day.” | “She goes to school every day.” |
| “I am in the home.” | “I am at home.” |

6–8

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| “The movie very interesting.” | “The movie is very interesting.” |
| “You finished your homework?” | “Did you finish your homework?” |

9–12

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---|---|
| “This problem need more explanation.” | “This problem needs more explanation.” |
| “The society is different than my country.” | “Society is different from my country.” |

F. Major Structural Considerations

- Arabic does not use an indefinite article equivalent to “a” or “an.” The definite article (“al-”) is used differently from English “the.”
- Arabic verbs mark tense, person, and gender differently from English. Present-tense sentences may not require an equivalent verb “to be.”
- Arabic includes grammatical gender. Nouns, pronouns, and verbs may change form based on gender, unlike most English nouns.
- Arabic typically follows a verb–subject–object or subject–verb–object order depending on context. Word order patterns differ from English conventions.
- Arabic uses a root-and-pattern system, where words are formed by inserting vowels into consonant roots. English word formation follows different morphological patterns.
- Arabic is written in a right-to-left script. English uses a left-to-right Latin alphabet.
- Short vowels are often not written in everyday Arabic text. English spelling represents vowels explicitly.

Russian

A. English Sounds Frequently Missing in Russian

| English Sound | English Example | Common Substitution | Why This Happens |
|--|---------------------|--|--|
| /θ/ (th as in think) | think, math | /s/ or /t/ → sink, mat | Russian does not include the /θ/ sound. |
| /ð/ (th as in this) | this, mother | /z/ or /d/ → zis, moder | Russian does not include the /ð/ sound. |
| /w/ | we, window | /v/ → ve, vindow | Russian does not include the /w/ sound. The closest sound is /v/. |
| /æ/ (short a) | cat, map | /ɛ/ or /a/ → ket, map (different vowel quality) | English vowel distinctions do not match Russian vowel contrasts. |
| /ɪ/ (short i) | sit, big | /i/ → seet, beeg | Russian vowel system differs and may not distinguish /ɪ/ from /i/ in the same way as English. |
| Consonant clusters (complex clusters) | strengths, texts | cluster simplified → strens, teks | Russian allows clusters but cluster patterns differ from English. Some simplification may occur. |

B. Common Grammar Transfer Patterns (with Student Examples)

| English Structure | How Russian Differs | Typical Learner Pattern | What's Happening |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Use of articles (a, an, the) | Russian does not use articles | "I have car." / "Teacher gave homework." | Omission reflects absence of articles in Russian. |
| Word order rigidity | Russian allows flexible word order due to case endings | "To the store went I." | Transfer of flexible word order patterns. |
| Verb tense marking | Russian uses aspect (completed vs ongoing action) differently from English tense system | "I already finish." | Direct translation from Russian tense/aspect usage. |
| Present tense of "to be" | Russian omits "to be" in present tense | "She happy." | Transfer of Russian sentence structure. |
| Prepositions | Russian uses case endings instead of separate prepositions in many instances | "I go in school." | Influence of different prepositional system. |

C. Cognates and False Cognates

Helpful Cognates

Many academic words entered Russian through Latin or French influence.

| Russian | English |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| информация (informatsiya) | information |
| культура (kultura) | culture |
| университет (universitet) | university |
| демократия (demokratiya) | democracy |
| проблема (problema) | problem |
| музыка (muzyka) | music |

Misleading False Cognates

| Russian Word | Looks Like | Actual Meaning |
|-------------------------|------------|-----------------|
| магазин (magazin) | magazine | store |
| артист (artist) | artist | actor/performer |
| фабрика (fabrika) | fabric | factory |
| декада (dekada) | decade | ten-day period |
| аккуратный (akkuratnyy) | accurate | neat, tidy |

D. Common Misinterpretation

| Student Production | Structural Explanation |
|-------------------------|--|
| "I have car." | Russian does not use articles such as "a" or "the." |
| "She happy." | Russian omits the verb "to be" in the present tense. |
| "To the store went I." | Russian allows flexible word order because grammatical relationships are marked through word endings. |
| "I already finish." | Russian verb forms distinguish completed action differently from English tense structure. |
| "I am going in school." | Russian uses different structures for location and direction, which may influence English preposition use. |

E. Grade-Band Examples (Russian → English Transfer)

K–2

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| “I have dog.” | “I have a dog.” |
| “She happy.” | “She is happy.” |
| “Teacher nice.” | “The teacher is nice.” |

3–5

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| “I go in school.” | “I go to school.” |
| “To the park went we.” | “We went to the park.” |

6–8

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| “I already finish my homework.” | “I already finished my homework.” |
| “This book very interesting.” | “This book is very interesting.” |

9–12

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

| | |
|--|--|
| “The society changes very fast in last years.” | “Society has changed very fast in recent years.” |
| “In my city live many people.” | “Many people live in my city.” |

F. Major Structural Considerations

- Russian does not use articles such as “a” or “the.”
- Russian uses case endings to mark grammatical relationships. Because word endings carry meaning, word order is more flexible than in English.
- Russian verbs distinguish between completed and ongoing action (aspect) in ways that do not align directly with English tense structure.
- Russian omits the verb “to be” in present tense sentences (e.g., “She happy.”). English requires a present-tense form of “to be.”
- Russian is written in the Cyrillic script. English uses the Latin alphabet.

Portuguese

A. English Sounds Frequently Missing in Portuguese

| English Sound | English Example | Common Substitution | Why This Happens |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--|--|
| /ɪ/ (short i) | sit, big | /i/ → seet, beeg | Portuguese vowel contrasts do not align directly with English short vowel distinctions. |
| /æ/ (short a) | cat, map | /ɛ/ or /a/ → ket, map (different vowel quality) | English vowel contrasts differ from Portuguese vowel system. |
| /ʌ/ (as in cup) | cup, love | /a/ or /o/ → cop, lov | Portuguese does not have the same central vowel sound. |
| /θ/ (th as in think) | think, math | /t/ or /s/ → tink, mass | Portuguese does not include the /θ/ sound. |
| /ð/ (th as in this) | this, mother | /d/ or /z/ → dis, moder | Portuguese does not include the /ð/ sound. |
| Final consonant clusters | milk, tests | cluster reduced → mil, tes | Portuguese syllable structure often limits final consonant combinations compared to English. |

B. Common Grammar Transfer Patterns (with Student Examples)

| English Structure | How Portuguese Differs | Typical Learner Pattern | What's Happening |
|---|---|--|--|
| Use of auxiliary “do” in questions and negation | Portuguese forms questions and negatives without auxiliary “do” | “You like pizza?” / “I no understand.” | Direct transfer of Portuguese sentence structure. |
| Third person singular -s | Portuguese verbs change endings differently | “She go to school.” | Verb agreement system differs from English marking patterns. |
| Subject pronoun use | Portuguese verb endings signal subject clearly | “Is raining.” | English requires an explicit subject in every sentence. |
| Use of present progressive | Portuguese uses present tense differently in some contexts | “I study now” (for “I am studying now.”) | Transfer of Portuguese present tense usage. |
| Use of prepositions | Preposition usage differs across languages | “Married with her.” | Direct translation from Portuguese prepositional patterns. |

C. Cognates and False Cognates

Helpful Cognates

Portuguese shares many Latin-based words with English, especially academic vocabulary.

| Portuguese | English |
|--------------|---------------|
| informação | information |
| cultura | culture |
| universidade | university |
| democracia | democracy |
| problema | problem |
| participação | participation |
| educação | education |

Misleading False Cognates

| Portuguese Word | Looks Like | Actual Meaning |
|-----------------|------------|--|
| parentes | parents | relatives |
| pasta | pasta | folder |
| sucesso | success | success (but often used more broadly for “achievement” or “hit”) |
| pretend | pretend | intend |
| assistir | assist | attend/watch |

D. Common Misinterpretation

| Student Production | Structural Explanation |
|---------------------|---|
| “I no understand.” | Portuguese forms negation without auxiliary “do.” |
| “She go to school.” | Portuguese verb agreement does not use the English -s ending. |
| “Is raining.” | Portuguese verb endings signal subject, so subject pronouns may be omitted. |
| “I study now.” | Portuguese present tense may express actions happening at the moment. |
| “Married with her.” | Portuguese uses a different preposition in this structure. |

E. Grade-Band Examples (Portuguese → English Transfer)

K-2

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

| | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| “I have dog.” | “I have a dog.” |
| “Is cold today.” | “It is cold today.” |
| “She go school.” | “She goes to school.” |

3-5

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| “I no like broccoli.” | “I do not like broccoli.” |
| “Married with him.” | “Married to him.” |

6-8

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| “I study English since two years.” | “I have studied English for two years.” |
| “She explain me the problem.” | “She explained the problem to me.” |

9-12

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

| | |
|--|--|
| “The society changed a lot in the last years.” | “Society has changed a lot in recent years.” |
| “This is very sensible topic.” | “This is a very sensitive topic.” |

F. Major Structural Considerations

- Portuguese and English share many Latin-based academic words, but phonological systems differ significantly, particularly in vowel contrasts.
- Portuguese verbs carry rich agreement endings that signal subject information. English relies more heavily on word order and auxiliary verbs.
- Portuguese forms negation and questions without auxiliary “do,” which may influence English sentence structure.

Mandarin

A. English Sounds Frequently Missing in Mandarin

| English Sound | English Example | Common Substitution | Why This Happens |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|--|---|
| /θ/ (th as in think) | think, math | /s/ or /t/ → sink, mat | Mandarin does not include the /θ/ sound. |
| /ð/ (th as in this) | this, mother | /z/ or /d/ → zis, moder | Mandarin does not include the /ð/ sound. |
| /v/ | very, move | /w/ or /f/ → wery, moof | Mandarin does not include the /v/ sound. |
| /r/ (English r) | red, very | /l/ or Mandarin r approximation → led, vely | English /r/ differs significantly from Mandarin /r/. |
| Final consonants (especially stops) | stop, big | consonant deleted → sto, bi | Mandarin syllables rarely end in consonants other than /n/ or /ŋ/. |
| Consonant clusters | street, play | cluster simplified → sreet, p-lay (separated sounds) | Mandarin syllable structure does not allow consonant clusters. |
| Short vowel contrasts (/ɪ/, /æ/, /ʌ/) | sit, cat, cup | vowels approximated → seet, ket, cop | English vowel distinctions do not align with Mandarin vowel system. |

B. Common Grammar Transfer Patterns (with Student Examples)

| English Structure | How Mandarin Differs | Typical Learner Pattern | What's Happening |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|
| Verb tense marking | Mandarin verbs do not change form for tense | "Yesterday I go to school." | Time is often indicated by context or time words rather than verb endings. |
| Plural -s | Mandarin does not mark plural nouns with -s | "Two book." | Quantity is shown through number words, not noun endings. |
| Articles (a, an, the) | Mandarin does not use articles | "I have car." | Omission reflects absence of articles in Mandarin. |
| Third person singular -s | Mandarin verbs do not change for subject | "She go to school." | Verb form remains constant regardless of subject. |
| Word order in modifiers | Mandarin places descriptive phrases before nouns | "The very interesting movie." (correct word order may be overextended or misapplied) | Influence of Mandarin modifier structure. |

C. Cognates and False Cognates

Mandarin shares relatively few direct cognates with English due to different language origins. Some modern vocabulary has been borrowed or adapted.

Helpful Loanwords (Modern Borrowings)

| Mandarin (Pinyin) | English |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| 咖啡 (kāfēi) | coffee |
| 沙发 (shāfā) | sofa |
| 巧克力 (qiǎokèlì) | chocolate |
| 汉堡 (hànbǎo) | hamburger |
| 电脑 (diànnǎo) | computer (literal: electric brain) |

Misleading Similarities

| Mandarin Word | Looks Like (Pinyin resemblance) | Actual Meaning |
|---------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| 事 (shì) | she | matter/thing |
| 是 (shì) | she | to be |
| 妈 (mā) | ma | mother |
| 四 (sì) | see | four |
| 八 (bā) | bar | eight |

(Note: Similar spelling in pinyin does not indicate shared meaning.)

D. Common Misinterpretation

| Student Production | Structural Explanation |
|-----------------------------|--|
| “Yesterday I go to school.” | Mandarin verbs do not change form to mark past tense. Time is often shown through context or time words. |
| “Two book.” | Mandarin nouns do not change form to mark plural. |
| “I have car.” | Mandarin does not use articles such as “a” or “the.” |
| “She go to school.” | Mandarin verbs do not change form based on subject. |
| “He very tall.” | Mandarin uses adjectives without a separate verb “to be” in some structures. |

E. Grade-Band Examples (Mandarin → English Transfer)

K–2

Student Production Standard English Form

| | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| “Two cat.” | “Two cats.” |
| “He happy.” | “He is happy.” |
| “I have dog.” | “I have a dog.” |

3–5

Student Production Standard English Form

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| “Yesterday I go park.” | “Yesterday I went to the park.” |
| “She have pencil.” | “She has a pencil.” |

6–8

Student Production Standard English Form

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| “This book very interesting.” | “This book is very interesting.” |
| “People like eat rice.” | “People like to eat rice.” |

9–12

Student Production Standard English Form

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| “In my country have many people.” | “There are many people in my country.” |
| “The society develop very fast.” | “Society develops very fast.” |

F. Major Structural Considerations

- Mandarin uses a tone system, where pitch changes meaning. English uses pitch primarily for emphasis and intonation rather than distinguishing word meaning.
- Mandarin verbs do not change form for tense or subject. English relies heavily on verb endings and auxiliary verbs.
- Mandarin does not use articles and marks plurality differently from English.
- Mandarin writing uses a character-based system rather than an alphabetic system. English spelling–sound relationships differ significantly from Mandarin orthography.

Ukrainian

A. English Sounds Frequently Missing in Ukrainian

| English Sound | English Example | Common Substitution | Why This Happens |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| /θ/ (th as in think) | think, math | /s/ or /t/ → sink, mat | Ukrainian does not include the /θ/ sound. |
| /ð/ (th as in this) | this, mother | /z/ or /d/ → zis, moder | Ukrainian does not include the /ð/ sound. |
| /w/ | we, window | /v/ → ve, vindow | Ukrainian does not include the /w/ sound. |
| /æ/ (short a) | cat, map | /a/ or /ɛ/ → kat, mep | English vowel distinctions do not align directly with Ukrainian vowel contrasts. |
| /ɪ/ (short i) | sit, big | /i/ → seet, beeg | Ukrainian vowel system differs from English short vowel contrasts. |
| Consonant clusters (complex clusters) | strengths, texts | cluster simplified → strens, teks | Ukrainian allows clusters, but cluster patterns differ from English combinations. |

B. Common Grammar Transfer Patterns (with Student Examples)

| English Structure | How Ukrainian Differs | Typical Learner Pattern | What's Happening |
|--------------------------|---|--|---|
| Articles (a, an, the) | Ukrainian does not use articles | "I have car." / "Teacher gave homework." | Omission reflects absence of articles in Ukrainian grammar. |
| Present tense of "to be" | Ukrainian omits "to be" in the present tense | "She happy." | Transfer of Ukrainian sentence structure. |
| Word order | Ukrainian allows flexible word order because endings show grammatical roles | "To the store went I." | Word order reflects native structure rather than fixed English order. |
| Verb tense and aspect | Ukrainian marks completed vs ongoing action differently | "I already finish." | Direct translation from Ukrainian aspect system. |
| Prepositions | Ukrainian uses case endings to mark relationships | "I go in school." | Influence of different structure for marking location and direction. |

C. Cognates and False Cognates

Helpful Cognates

Many academic and international terms entered Ukrainian through Latin or European languages.

| Ukrainian | English |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| інформація (informatsiia) | information |
| культура (kultura) | culture |
| університет (universytet) | university |
| демократія (demokratiiia) | democracy |
| проблема (problema) | problem |
| музика (muzyka) | music |

Misleading False Cognates

| Ukrainian Word | Looks Like | Actual Meaning |
|------------------------|------------|-----------------|
| магазин (mahazyn) | magazine | store |
| артист (artyst) | artist | actor/performer |
| декада (dekada) | decade | ten-day period |
| фабрика (fabryka) | fabric | factory |
| аккуратний (akuratnyi) | accurate | neat, tidy |

D. Common Misinterpretation

| Student Production | Structural Explanation |
|---------------------------------|---|
| "I have car." | Ukrainian does not use articles such as "a" or "the." |
| "She happy." | Ukrainian omits the verb "to be" in present tense sentences. |
| "To the park went we." | Ukrainian uses word endings to show grammatical relationships, allowing flexible word order. |
| "I already finish my homework." | Ukrainian distinguishes completed action differently from English tense forms. |
| "I am going in school." | Ukrainian marks location and direction through case endings rather than English preposition patterns. |

E. Grade-Band Examples (Ukrainian → English Transfer)

K–2

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

“I have dog.”

“I have a dog.”

“She happy.”

“She is happy.”

“Teacher nice.”

“The teacher is nice.”

3–5

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

“I go in school.”

“I go to school.”

“To the store went I.”

“I went to the store.”

6–8

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

“I already finish homework.”

“I already finished my homework.”

“This book very interesting.”

“This book is very interesting.”

9–12

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

“The society changed a lot in last years.”

“Society has changed a lot in recent years.”

“In my city live many people.”

“Many people live in my city.”

F. Major Structural Considerations

- Ukrainian does not use articles such as “a” or “the.” English relies heavily on articles to signal specificity.
- Ukrainian uses word endings (cases) to show grammatical relationships. Because endings carry meaning, word order is more flexible than in English.
- Ukrainian omits the verb “to be” in present tense sentences (e.g., “She happy.”). English requires a present-tense form of “to be.”
- Ukrainian verbs distinguish completed and ongoing actions differently from English tense forms.
- Ukrainian uses a Cyrillic writing system. English spelling–sound patterns differ significantly from Ukrainian orthography.

Haitian Creole

A. English Sounds Frequently Missing in Haitian Creole

| English Sound | English Example | Common Substitution | Why This Happens |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| /θ/ (th as in think) | think, math | /t/ or /s/ → tink, mass | Haitian Creole does not include the /θ/ sound. |
| /ð/ (th as in this) | this, mother | /d/ or /z/ → dis, moder | Haitian Creole does not include the /ð/ sound. |
| /ʃ/ vs /tʃ/ distinction | ship, chip | sounds merged or approximated | Haitian Creole sound distinctions do not align directly with English contrasts. |
| /ɪ/ (short i) | sit, big | /i/ → seet, beeg | English vowel contrasts differ from Haitian Creole vowel system. |
| Final consonant clusters | help, tests | cluster reduced → hep, tes | Haitian Creole syllable structure limits certain final consonant clusters. |
| Consonant clusters (initial) | school, street | cluster simplified → skool (reduced), estreet | Haitian Creole does not allow many complex consonant clusters. |

B. Common Grammar Transfer Patterns (with Student Examples)

| English Structure | How Haitian Creole Differs | Typical Learner Pattern | What's Happening |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Verb tense endings | Haitian Creole verbs do not change form for tense | "Yesterday I go to school." | Time is marked by separate particles or context rather than verb endings. |
| Third person singular -s | Haitian Creole verbs do not change based on subject | "She go to school." | Verb form remains the same regardless of subject. |
| Plural -s | Haitian Creole marks plural differently | "Two book." | Plural meaning is shown through context or separate words. |
| Articles (a, an, the) | Haitian Creole uses articles differently and often after nouns | "I have car." | Article placement and usage differ from English patterns. |
| Use of "to be" | Haitian Creole uses different structures for description and identification | "He tall." | English requires the verb "is" in this structure. |

C. Cognates and False Cognates

Helpful Cognates

Haitian Creole contains many words derived from French, some of which resemble English academic vocabulary.

| Haitian Creole | English |
|----------------|-------------|
| enfòmasyon | information |
| kilti | culture |
| inivèsite | university |
| demokrasi | democracy |
| pwoblèm | problem |
| mizik | music |

Misleading False Cognates

| Haitian Creole Word | Looks Like | Actual Meaning |
|---------------------|--------------|---|
| magazen | magazine | store |
| bibliyotèk | bibliography | library |
| kestyon | question | question (meaning aligns, spelling differs) |
| chef | chef | boss/leader |
| liv | live | book |

D. Common Misinterpretation

| Student Production | Structural Explanation |
|-----------------------------|--|
| “Yesterday I go to school.” | Haitian Creole verbs do not change form to show past tense. Time is often marked by separate words or context. |
| “She go to school.” | Verb form does not change based on subject in Haitian Creole. |
| “Two book.” | Plural meaning is not marked by adding -s to nouns in the same way as English. |
| “I have car.” | Article usage differs from English patterns. |
| “He tall.” | Haitian Creole may use descriptive structures without a separate verb equivalent to “to be.” |

E. Grade-Band Examples (Haitian Creole → English Transfer)

K–2

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
|--------------------|-----------------------|

“Two cat.”

“Two cats.”

“He tall.”

“He is tall.”

“I have dog.”

“I have a dog.”

3–5

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
|--------------------|-----------------------|

“She go school.”

“She goes to school.”

“Yesterday I go park.”

“Yesterday I went to the park.”

6–8

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
|--------------------|-----------------------|

“The movie very interesting.”

“The movie is very interesting.”

“I finish my homework yesterday.”

“I finished my homework yesterday.”

9–12

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
|--------------------|-----------------------|

“Society change very fast.”

“Society changes very fast.”

“In my country have many people.”

“There are many people in my country.”

F. Major Structural Considerations

- Haitian Creole is an analytic language. Verbs do not change form to show tense or subject agreement in the same way English verbs do.
- Plural meaning and tense are often expressed through separate words rather than changes to noun or verb endings.
- Haitian Creole uses a Latin-based writing system with relatively consistent sound–symbol correspondence. English spelling–sound relationships are less predictable.
- Many Haitian Creole words are derived from French, which may result in recognizable academic vocabulary similarities.

Additional Linguistic Note

Haitian Creole is a fully developed and stable language with its own grammatical system. Although much of its vocabulary is historically derived from French, Haitian Creole is not “broken French.” Its sentence structure, verb system, and sound patterns follow consistent internal rules. Comparisons to French are only relevant when a student has formal knowledge of French in addition to Haitian Creole.

Swahili

A. English Sounds Frequently Missing in Swahili

| English Sound | English Example | Common Substitution | Why This Happens |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--|--|
| /θ/ (th as in think) | think, math | /t/ or /s/ → tink, mass | Swahili does not include the /θ/ sound. |
| /ð/ (th as in this) | this, mother | /d/ or /z/ → dis, moder | Swahili does not include the /ð/ sound. |
| /æ/ (short a) | cat, map | /a/ → cat pronounced with broader vowel | English vowel distinctions differ from Swahili vowel system. |
| /ɪ/ (short i) | sit, big | /i/ → seet, beeg | Swahili has five stable vowel sounds that do not align with English short vowel contrasts. |
| Consonant clusters | street, play | cluster simplified → sreet, p-lay (separated sounds) | Swahili syllable structure typically follows consonant-vowel patterns and does not allow complex consonant clusters. |
| Final consonant clusters | helped, tests | cluster reduced → help, tes | Swahili syllables rarely end in multiple consonants. |

B. Common Grammar Transfer Patterns (with Student Examples)

| English Structure | How Swahili Differs | Typical Learner Pattern | What's Happening |
|-----------------------|--|-------------------------|--|
| Articles (a, an, the) | Swahili does not use articles | "I have car." | Omission reflects absence of articles in Swahili grammar. |
| Plural -s | Swahili marks plural through noun class changes | "Two book." | Plural meaning is shown by noun class prefixes, not -s endings. |
| Verb agreement | Swahili verbs include subject markers within the verb | "She go to school." | English marks agreement differently from Swahili verb structure. |
| Use of "to be" | Swahili uses different structures for identification and description | "He tall." | English requires the verb "is" in this structure. |
| Prepositions | Swahili expresses location and direction differently | "I am in home." | Influence of different location structures in Swahili. |

C. Cognates and False Cognates

Helpful Cognates

Swahili includes many loanwords from Arabic and some from English due to historical contact.

| Swahili | English |
|-------------|------------|
| televisheni | television |
| kompyuta | computer |
| demokrasi | democracy |
| muziki | music |
| polisi | police |
| hospitali | hospital |

Misleading False Cognates

| Swahili Word | Looks Like | Actual Meaning |
|--------------|-----------------------------|--|
| chai | chai (tea in English usage) | tea (meaning aligns but may vary culturally) |
| rafiki | raffiki | friend |
| shamba | samba | farm |
| kula | cooler | eat |
| pesa | peso | money |

D. Common Misinterpretation

| Student Production | Structural Explanation |
|---------------------|---|
| "I have car." | Swahili does not use articles such as "a" or "the." |
| "Two book." | Plural meaning is expressed through noun class prefixes rather than -s endings. |
| "She go to school." | Swahili verbs include subject markers within the verb rather than separate endings. |
| "He tall." | Swahili uses different sentence structures for description without an equivalent separate verb "to be." |
| "I am in home." | Swahili expresses location using structures that do not align directly with English preposition patterns. |

E. Grade-Band Examples (Swahili → English Transfer)

K–2

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| “Two cat.” | “Two cats.” |
| “He tall.” | “He is tall.” |
| “I have dog.” | “I have a dog.” |

3–5

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| “She go school.” | “She goes to school.” |
| “I am in home.” | “I am at home.” |

6–8

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| “The movie very interesting.” | “The movie is very interesting.” |
| “People like eat rice.” | “People like to eat rice.” |

9–12

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| “Society change very fast.” | “Society changes very fast.” |
| “In my country have many people.” | “There are many people in my country.” |

F. Major Structural Considerations

- Swahili uses a noun class system. Nouns are grouped into classes, and agreement markers appear throughout the sentence. English does not use this type of system.
- Swahili verbs include subject information within the verb itself. English relies more on word order and separate pronouns.
- Swahili spelling is highly consistent, with predictable sound–symbol relationships. English spelling is less phonetic.
- Swahili primarily follows a consonant–vowel syllable structure and does not allow many consonant clusters found in English.

Vietnamese

A. English Sounds Frequently Missing in Vietnamese

| English Sound | English Example | Common Substitution | Why This Happens |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|--|--|
| /θ/ (th as in think) | think, math | /t/ or /s/ → tink, mass | Vietnamese does not include the /θ/ sound. |
| /ð/ (th as in this) | this, mother | /d/ or /z/ → dis, moder | Vietnamese does not include the /ð/ sound. |
| /ʃ/ (sh) | ship, she | /s/ → sip, see | Some Vietnamese dialects do not distinguish /ʃ/ from /s/. |
| /ʒ/ (as in measure) | measure, vision | /z/ or /j/ → mezer, vizion | Vietnamese does not include /ʒ/ as a distinct sound. |
| Final consonant clusters | helped, tests | cluster reduced → help, tes | Vietnamese syllables do not allow complex final consonant clusters. |
| Consonant clusters (initial) | street, play | cluster simplified → sreet, p-lay (separated sounds) | Vietnamese syllable structure does not allow multiple consonants at the beginning of a syllable. |
| Short vowel contrasts (/ɪ/, /æ/, /ʌ/) | sit, cat, cup | vowels approximated → seet, ket, cop | English vowel distinctions do not align directly with Vietnamese vowel system. |

B. Common Grammar Transfer Patterns (with Student Examples)

| English Structure | How Vietnamese Differs | Typical Learner Pattern | What's Happening |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|
| Verb tense marking | Vietnamese verbs do not change form for tense | "Yesterday I go to school." | Time is expressed through context or separate time words rather than verb endings. |
| Third person singular -s | Vietnamese verbs do not change based on subject | "She go to school." | Verb form remains constant regardless of subject. |
| Plural -s | Vietnamese does not mark plural nouns with -s | "Two book." | Quantity is shown through number words or context. |
| Articles (a, an, the) | Vietnamese does not use articles in the same way as English | "I have car." | Omission reflects absence of article system equivalent to English. |
| Use of "to be" | Vietnamese may use adjectives without a separate verb "to be" | "He tall." | English requires the verb "is" in this structure. |

C. Cognates and False Cognates

Vietnamese contains loanwords from French and English due to historical contact.

Helpful Loanwords

| Vietnamese | English |
|------------|------------------------------|
| ti vi | TV |
| cà phê | coffee |
| sô cô la | chocolate |
| búp bê | doll |
| ga | station (from French “gare”) |

Misleading Similarities

| Vietnamese Word | Looks Like | Actual Meaning |
|-----------------|------------|----------------------------------|
| đi (di) | die | go |
| me | me | mother (informal, dialectal use) |
| ba | bar | father (informal, dialectal use) |
| so | so | number |
| ten (tên) | ten | name |

(Note: Similar spelling does not indicate shared meaning.)

D. Common Misinterpretation

| Student Production | Structural Explanation |
|-----------------------------|--|
| “Yesterday I go to school.” | Vietnamese verbs do not change form to show past tense. Time is indicated through context or separate words. |
| “Two book.” | Vietnamese nouns do not change form to mark plural. |
| “She go to school.” | Vietnamese verbs do not change form based on subject. |
| “I have car.” | Vietnamese does not use articles such as “a” or “the.” |
| “He very tall.” | Vietnamese uses descriptive structures that may not require a separate verb equivalent to “to be.” |

E. Grade-Band Examples (Vietnamese → English Transfer)

K-2

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| “Two cat.” | “Two cats.” |
| “He tall.” | “He is tall.” |
| “I have dog.” | “I have a dog.” |

3-5

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| “She go school.” | “She goes to school.” |
| “Yesterday I go park.” | “Yesterday I went to the park.” |

6-8

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| “The movie very interesting.” | “The movie is very interesting.” |
| “People like eat rice.” | “People like to eat rice.” |

9-12

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| “Society change very fast.” | “Society changes very fast.” |
| “In my country have many people.” | “There are many people in my country.” |

F. Major Structural Considerations

- Vietnamese is a tonal language. Changes in pitch alter word meaning. English uses pitch for emphasis and intonation rather than distinguishing word meaning.
- Vietnamese verbs do not change form for tense or subject agreement. English relies heavily on verb endings and auxiliary verbs.
- Vietnamese does not use an article system equivalent to “a” or “the.”
- Vietnamese uses a Latin-based writing system (quốc ngữ), but spelling conventions and sound patterns differ significantly from English.

French

A. English Sounds Frequently Missing in French

| English Sound | English Example | Common Substitution | Why This Happens |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| /θ/ (th as in think) | think, math | /s/ or /t/ → sink, mat | French does not include the /θ/ sound. |
| /ð/ (th as in this) | this, mother | /z/ or /d/ → zis, moder | French does not include the /ð/ sound. |
| /h/ (aspirated h) | house, happy | silent or weakened → ouse, appy | French does not pronounce /h/ at the beginning of words. |
| /ɪ/ (short i) | sit, big | /i/ → seet, beeg | English vowel distinctions do not align directly with French vowel contrasts. |
| /æ/ (short a) | cat, map | /a/ → cat pronounced with broader vowel | French vowel system differs from English short vowel contrasts. |
| Final consonants (voicing contrast) | bag, leave | devoiced → bak, leaf | French final consonants may not carry the same voiced contrast as English. |

B. Common Grammar Transfer Patterns (with Student Examples)

| English Structure | How French Differs | Typical Learner Pattern | What's Happening |
|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|---|
| Articles (a, an, the) | French uses articles more consistently than English | "The love is important." | Direct translation from French article usage. |
| Adjective placement | Many French adjectives follow the noun | "The car red." | Transfer of French word order. |
| Present progressive | French often uses simple present for ongoing action | "I study now." | Transfer of French present tense usage. |
| Question formation | French can form questions without auxiliary "do" | "You like pizza?" | Direct translation of French structure. |
| Prepositions | Preposition usage differs across languages | "Married with her." | Influence of French prepositional patterns. |

C. Cognates and False Cognates

Helpful Cognates

French shares extensive Latin-based vocabulary with English, especially in academic language.

| French | English |
|---------------|---------------|
| information | information |
| culture | culture |
| université | university |
| démocratie | democracy |
| problème | problem |
| participation | participation |
| éducation | education |

Misleading False Cognates

| French Word | Looks Like | Actual Meaning |
|--------------|------------|----------------|
| actuellement | actually | currently |
| librairie | library | bookstore |
| sensible | sensible | sensitive |
| assister | assist | attend |
| location | location | rental |

D. Common Misinterpretation

| Student Production | Structural Explanation |
|--------------------------|--|
| “The love is important.” | French uses definite articles in contexts where English may not. |
| “The car red.” | Many French adjectives follow the noun. |
| “I study now.” | French present tense can express ongoing action without a separate progressive form. |
| “You like pizza?” | French forms questions without auxiliary “do.” |
| “Married with her.” | French uses a different preposition in this structure. |

E. Grade-Band Examples (French → English Transfer)

K–2

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| “The dog brown.” | “The brown dog.” |
|------------------|------------------|

| | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| “Is cold today.” | “It is cold today.” |
|------------------|---------------------|

| | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| “I have cat.” | “I have a cat.” |
|---------------|-----------------|

3–5

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| “She go to school.” | “She goes to school.” |
|---------------------|-----------------------|

| | |
|---|--|
| “The music is very interesting for me.” | “The music is very interesting to me.” |
|---|--|

6–8

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| “I am here since two years.” | “I have been here for two years.” |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| “This subject is very sensible.” | “This subject is very sensitive.” |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

9–12

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

| | |
|---|--|
| “The society evolved a lot these last years.” | “Society has evolved a lot in recent years.” |
|---|--|

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| “Actually, I am not agree.” | “Actually, I do not agree.” |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|

F. Major Structural Considerations

- French and English share extensive Latin-based vocabulary, especially in academic and formal language.
- French uses articles more consistently than English and marks grammatical gender. English does not use grammatical gender for most nouns.
- French verbs are marked for person and tense differently from English, and question formation does not rely on auxiliary “do.”
- French spelling–sound relationships differ significantly from English, including silent letters and nasal vowel patterns.

Nepali

A. English Sounds Frequently Missing in Nepali

| English Sound | English Example | Common Substitution | Why This Happens |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| /θ/ (th as in think) | think, math | /t/ → tink, mat | Nepali does not include the /θ/ sound. |
| /ð/ (th as in this) | this, mother | /d/ → dis, moder | Nepali does not include the /ð/ sound. |
| /v/ | very, move | /b/ or /w/ → bery, moob | Nepali does not distinguish /v/ from /b/ or /w/ in the same way as English. |
| /z/ | zoo, plays | /j/ or /s/ → joo, plas | The /z/ sound is not consistently represented in Nepali phonology. |
| Consonant clusters (initial) | school, street | cluster simplified → ischool, istreet | Nepali syllable structure may insert vowels to separate consonant clusters. |
| Final consonant clusters | helped, tests | cluster reduced → help, tes | Nepali does not allow complex final consonant clusters. |
| Short vowel contrasts (/ɪ/, /æ/, /ʌ/) | sit, cat, cup | vowels approximated → seet, ket, cop | English vowel distinctions differ from Nepali vowel system. |

B. Common Grammar Transfer Patterns (with Student Examples)

| English Structure | How Nepali Differs | Typical Learner Pattern | What's Happening |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------------|---|
| Articles (a, an, the) | Nepali does not use articles equivalent to English | "I have car." | Omission reflects absence of article system. |
| Word order | Nepali typically follows subject-object-verb order | "I to school go." | Transfer of native sentence structure. |
| Use of "to be" | Nepali uses different structures for description and existence | "She happy." | English requires the verb "is" in this structure. |
| Prepositions | Nepali uses postpositions (after the noun) | "I go school in." | Influence of postposition structure. |
| Verb tense marking | Nepali verbs mark tense and agreement differently | "Yesterday I go school." | Direct translation from Nepali tense system. |

C. Cognates and False Cognates

Nepali shares few direct cognates with English due to different language origins. Some modern academic terms are borrowed.

Helpful Loanwords

| Nepali | English |
|------------------------|------------|
| टेलिभिजन (telebhijan) | television |
| कम्प्युटर (kampyutar) | computer |
| डेमोक्रेसी (demokresi) | democracy |
| पुलिस (pulis) | police |
| बस (bas) | bus |

Misleading Similarities

| Nepali Word | Looks Like | Actual Meaning |
|-------------|------------|--|
| नाम (naam) | name | name (meaning aligns; pronunciation differs) |
| कलम (kalam) | calm | pen |
| दाम (daam) | damn | price |
| दस (das) | does | ten |
| बाल (baal) | ball | hair |

D. Common Misinterpretation

| Student Production | Structural Explanation |
|--------------------------|--|
| "I have car." | Nepali does not use articles such as "a" or "the." |
| "I to school go." | Nepali typically places the verb at the end of the sentence. |
| "She happy." | Nepali uses different structures for description that may not require an equivalent separate verb "to be." |
| "I go school in." | Nepali uses postpositions placed after nouns rather than prepositions before them. |
| "Yesterday I go school." | Nepali marks tense differently from English verb endings. |

E. Grade-Band Examples (Nepali → English Transfer)

K–2

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

“Two cat.”

“Two cats.”

“She happy.”

“She is happy.”

“I have dog.”

“I have a dog.”

3–5

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

“I to school go.”

“I go to school.”

“Yesterday I go park.”

“Yesterday I went to the park.”

6–8

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

“The movie very interesting.”

“The movie is very interesting.”

“He give me book.”

“He gave me a book.”

9–12

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

“Society change very fast.”

“Society changes very fast.”

“In my country have many people.” “There are many people in my country.”

F. Major Structural Considerations

- Nepali typically follows a subject–object–verb word order, placing the verb at the end of the sentence. English typically follows subject–verb–object order.
- Nepali uses postpositions placed after nouns rather than prepositions before nouns.
- Nepali does not use an article system equivalent to “a” or “the.”
- Nepali is written in the Devanagari script. English uses the Latin alphabet. Spelling–sound relationships differ significantly between the systems.
- Nepali includes aspirated and retroflex consonant contrasts that do not exist in English, while English includes vowel distinctions that do not exist in Nepali.

Uzbek

A. English Sounds Frequently Missing in Uzbek

| English Sound | English Example | Common Substitution | Why This Happens |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| /θ/ (th as in think) | think, math | /t/ → tink, mat | Uzbek does not include the /θ/ sound. |
| /ð/ (th as in this) | this, mother | /d/ → dis, moder | Uzbek does not include the /ð/ sound. |
| /w/ | we, window | /v/ → ve, vindow | Uzbek does not include the /w/ sound. The closest sound is /v/. |
| /æ/ (short a) | cat, map | /a/ → broader vowel quality | English vowel distinctions do not align directly with Uzbek vowel contrasts. |
| /ɪ/ (short i) | sit, big | /i/ → seet, beeg | Uzbek vowel system differs from English short vowel distinctions. |
| Consonant clusters (initial) | school, street | cluster simplified → ischool, istreet | Uzbek syllable structure may insert a vowel to separate consonant clusters. |
| Final consonant clusters | helped, tests | cluster reduced → help, tes | Uzbek does not typically allow complex final consonant clusters. |

B. Common Grammar Transfer Patterns (with Student Examples)

| English Structure | How Uzbek Differs | Typical Learner Pattern | What's Happening |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|
| Articles (a, an, the) | Uzbek does not use articles | "I have car." | Omission reflects absence of article system. |
| Word order | Uzbek typically follows subject-object-verb order | "I to school go." | Transfer of native sentence structure. |
| Prepositions | Uzbek primarily uses postpositions and case endings | "I go school to." | Influence of postposition structure. |
| Verb tense and agreement | Uzbek verbs mark tense and person through suffixes | "Yesterday I go school." | Direct translation from Uzbek verb marking patterns. |
| Plural -s | Uzbek marks plural through suffixes different from English | "Two book." | Plural formation differs structurally from English -s pattern. |

C. Cognates and False Cognates

Uzbek shares fewer direct cognates with English due to different language origins. Some modern vocabulary has entered through international usage.

Helpful Loanwords

| Uzbek | English |
|-------------|------------|
| telefon | telephone |
| kompyuter | computer |
| demokratiya | democracy |
| universitet | university |
| muzika | music |
| bank | bank |

Misleading Similarities

| Uzbek Word | Looks Like | Actual Meaning |
|------------|------------|-------------------|
| bor | bore | there is / exists |
| pul | pull | money |
| til | till | language |
| xona | zone | room |
| ism | ism | name |

D. Common Misinterpretation

| Student Production | Structural Explanation |
|--------------------------|---|
| "I have car." | Uzbek does not use articles such as "a" or "the." |
| "I to school go." | Uzbek typically places the verb at the end of the sentence. |
| "I go school to." | Uzbek uses postpositions placed after nouns rather than prepositions before them. |
| "Yesterday I go school." | Uzbek marks tense through verb suffixes that do not align directly with English verb endings. |
| "Two book." | Uzbek plural formation differs from English -s marking. |

E. Grade-Band Examples (Uzbek → English Transfer)

K–2

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| “Two cat.” | “Two cats.” |
| “She happy.” | “She is happy.” |
| “I have dog.” | “I have a dog.” |

3–5

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| “I to school go.” | “I go to school.” |
| “Yesterday I go park.” | “Yesterday I went to the park.” |

6–8

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| “The movie very interesting.” | “The movie is very interesting.” |
| “He give me book.” | “He gave me a book.” |

9–12

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| “Society change very fast.” | “Society changes very fast.” |
| “In my country have many people.” | “There are many people in my country.” |

F. Major Structural Considerations

- Uzbek typically follows a subject–object–verb word order, placing the verb at the end of the sentence. English typically follows subject–verb–object order.
- Uzbek is agglutinative. Grammatical information such as tense, person, and plurality is added through consistent suffixes attached to words.
- Uzbek uses postpositions and case endings rather than English-style prepositions.
- Uzbek uses a Latin-based alphabet (modern standard), with relatively consistent spelling–sound correspondence compared to English.
- Uzbek follows vowel harmony patterns, where vowels within a word adjust to match each other. English does not use vowel harmony.

English-Based Creole / World English Varieties

(Examples: Caribbean English Creoles, Liberian English, some West African English varieties)

Overview

Some students may speak a home variety of English that differs systematically from Standard Academic American English. These varieties are rule-governed linguistic systems and may exist along a continuum with more standardized forms of English. Differences may appear primarily in grammar, tense/aspect marking, agreement, and pronunciation rather than vocabulary.

These varieties are not incomplete or incorrect forms of English. They follow consistent internal rules.

A. Common Structural Patterns That May Appear

| Standard Academic English Feature | Possible Pattern in World English / Creole Variety | Structural Basis |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Third person singular -s | "She go to school." | Verb agreement may not be marked with -s. |
| Copula ("to be") in present tense | "He tall." | Copula may be omitted in present tense descriptions. |
| Tense marking | "He done finish." / "Yesterday she go." | Tense/aspect may be marked with separate words or may not align with Standard English past tense forms. |
| Plural -s | "Two book." | Plural marking may differ or be optional in some contexts. |
| Possessive 's | "The teacher book." | Possession may be expressed through word order rather than apostrophe-s. |
| Articles (a, an, the) | "I have car." | Article use may differ in frequency or distribution. |

B. Pronunciation Patterns That May Appear

| Standard American English Sound | Possible Realization | Structural Basis |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| /θ/ (think) | tink | /θ/ realized as /t/. |
| /ð/ (this) | dis | /ð/ realized as /d/. |
| Final consonants | past → pas | Final consonant reduction in rapid speech. |
| Vowel contrasts | vowel shifts | Regional vowel systems differ from Standard American patterns. |

C. Common Misinterpretation

| Student Production | Structural Explanation |
|---------------------|--|
| “She go to school.” | Verb agreement marking differs in some English-based creole systems. |
| “He tall.” | Present tense descriptions may omit the copula. |
| “He done finish.” | “Done” may function as a tense/aspect marker. |
| “Two book.” | Plural marking may not rely on -s endings. |
| “The teacher book.” | Possession may be expressed without apostrophe-s. |

D. Major Structural Considerations

- These varieties are systematic and rule-governed. They are not incomplete forms of English.
- Many speakers shift between home variety and more standardized forms depending on context.
- Differences are primarily grammatical and phonological (sound patterns), rather than lexical (vocabulary), since the words themselves are largely English-based.
- Development toward Standard Academic American English may involve adjustments in agreement marking, tense/aspect forms, article usage, and pronunciation patterns.

Persian (Farsi/Dari)

A. English Sounds Frequently Missing in Persian

| English Sound | English Example | Common Substitution | Why This Happens |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---|--|
| /θ/ (th as in think) | think, math | /t/ or /s/ → tink, mass | Persian does not include the /θ/ sound. |
| /ð/ (th as in this) | this, mother | /d/ or /z/ → dis, moder | Persian does not include the /ð/ sound. |
| /w/ | we, window | /v/ → ve, vindow | Persian does not distinguish /w/ from /v/ in the same way as English. |
| /ɪ/ (short i) | sit, big | /i/ → seet, beeg | English vowel distinctions do not align directly with Persian vowel contrasts. |
| /æ/ (short a) | cat, map | vowel approximated → ket or broader vowel | English short vowel distinctions differ from Persian vowel system. |
| Consonant clusters (initial) | street, school | cluster simplified → estreet, eschool | Persian syllable structure may insert a vowel to separate consonant clusters. |
| Final consonant clusters | helped, tests | cluster reduced → help, tes | Persian does not typically allow complex final consonant clusters. |

B. Common Grammar Transfer Patterns (with Student Examples)

| English Structure | How Persian Differs | Typical Learner Pattern | What's Happening |
|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|--|
| Articles (a, an, the) | Persian does not use articles equivalent to English | "I have car." | Omission reflects absence of article system. |
| Word order | Persian typically follows subject-object-verb order | "I to school go." | Transfer of native sentence structure. |
| Prepositions | Persian primarily uses postpositions and connectors after nouns | "I go school to." | Influence of postposition structure. |
| Verb tense/aspect | Persian marks tense and aspect differently from English | "Yesterday I go school." | Direct translation from Persian tense structure. |
| Possession | Persian expresses possession without apostrophe-s | "The teacher book." | Possession structure differs from English pattern. |

C. Cognates and False Cognates

Persian shares fewer direct cognates with English due to different language origins. Some modern vocabulary has entered through international usage.

Helpful Loanwords

| Persian | English |
|----------------------|------------|
| تلفن (telefon) | telephone |
| کامپیوتر (computer) | computer |
| دموکراسی (demokrasi) | democracy |
| بانک (bank) | bank |
| دانشگاه (daneshgah) | university |

Misleading Similarities

| Persian Word | Looks Like | Actual Meaning |
|--------------|------------|--|
| نام (naam) | name | name (meaning aligns; pronunciation differs) |
| در (dar) | door | door (meaning aligns; spelling differs) |
| مرد (mard) | mad | man |
| کار (kar) | car | work |
| نه (na) | no | no (meaning aligns; pronunciation differs) |

D. Common Misinterpretation

| Student Production | Structural Explanation |
|---------------------------|---|
| “She go home every day.” | Persian verb agreement does not align directly with English third person singular -s marking. |
| “He tall.” | Persian may use descriptive structures that differ from English copula patterns. |
| “Three student in class.” | Persian does not mark plural with -s in the same way as English. |
| “I to the store went.” | Persian places the verb at the end of the sentence. |
| “My friend book is here.” | Possession structure differs from English apostrophe-s construction. |

E. Grade-Band Examples (Persian → English Transfer)

K–2

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

“Two cat.”

“Two cats.”

“He tall.”

“He is tall.”

“I have dog.”

“I have a dog.”

3–5

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

“I to school go.”

“I go to school.”

“Yesterday I go park.”

“Yesterday I went to the park.”

6–8

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

“The movie very interesting.”

“The movie is very interesting.”

“She give me book.”

“She gave me a book.”

9–12

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

“Society change very fast.”

“Society changes very fast.”

“In my country have many people.”

“There are many people in my country.”

F. Major Structural Considerations

- Persian typically follows subject–object–verb word order, placing the verb at the end of the sentence. English typically follows subject–verb–object order.
- Persian does not use an article system equivalent to “a” or “the.”
- Persian uses postpositions and grammatical markers attached to words rather than relying on English-style prepositions.
- Persian is written in a modified Arabic script. English uses the Latin alphabet. Spelling–sound relationships differ significantly.
- Persian verb tense and aspect marking do not align directly with English past tense and auxiliary verb structures.

Pashto

A. English Sounds Frequently Missing in Pashto

| English Sound | English Example | Common Substitution | Why This Happens |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| /θ/ (th as in think) | think, math | /t/ → tink, mat | Pashto does not include the /θ/ sound. |
| /ð/ (th as in this) | this, mother | /d/ → dis, moder | Pashto does not include the /ð/ sound. |
| /v/ | very, move | /w/ or /b/ → wery, moob | Pashto does not distinguish /v/ in the same way as English. |
| /z/ (as in measure) | measure, vision | /z/ → mezer, vizon | Pashto does not include /z/ as a separate phoneme in the same distribution as English. |
| Short vowel contrasts (/ɪ/, /æ/, /ʌ/) | sit, cat, cup | vowels approximated → seet, ket, cop | English vowel distinctions do not align directly with Pashto vowel system. |
| Consonant clusters (initial) | street, school | cluster simplified → istreet, ischool | Pashto syllable structure may insert a vowel between consonants. |
| Final consonant clusters | helped, tests | cluster reduced → help, tes | Pashto does not typically allow complex final consonant clusters. |

B. Common Grammar Transfer Patterns (with Student Examples)

| English Structure | How Pashto Differs | Typical Learner Pattern | What's Happening |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------------|---|
| Articles (a, an, the) | Pashto does not use articles equivalent to English | "I have car." | Omission reflects absence of article system. |
| Word order | Pashto typically follows subject-object-verb order | "I to school go." | Transfer of native sentence structure. |
| Prepositions | Pashto uses postpositions and case marking | "I go school to." | Influence of postposition structure. |
| Verb tense/aspect | Pashto marks tense and aspect differently from English | "Yesterday I go school." | Direct translation from Pashto tense system. |
| Agreement marking | Pashto marks agreement differently across tenses | "She go home." | English third person singular -s marking may not align with Pashto structure. |

C. Cognates and False Cognates

Pashto shares relatively few direct cognates with English due to different language origins. Some modern vocabulary has entered through international usage.

Helpful Loanwords

| Pashto | English |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| ټیلیفون (telefon) | telephone |
| کمپیوټر (kompyuter) | computer |
| بانک (bank) | bank |
| ډیموکراسی (demokrasi) | democracy |
| بس (bas) | bus |

Misleading Similarities

| Pashto Word | Looks Like | Actual Meaning |
|-------------|------------|-----------------|
| نوم (noom) | noon | name |
| کار (kar) | car | work |
| مور (mor) | more | mother |
| لار (lar) | lure | road |
| مال (maal) | mall | property/wealth |

D. Common Misinterpretation

| Student Production | Structural Explanation |
|----------------------------|---|
| “She walk home every day.” | English marks third person singular verbs with -s. Pashto agreement marking does not align in the same way. |
| “I to the store went.” | Pashto typically places the verb at the end of the sentence. |
| “Three student in class.” | Pashto plural marking differs from English -s formation. |
| “He very tired.” | Pashto descriptive structures differ from English copula usage. |
| “I go school to.” | Pashto uses postpositions placed after nouns rather than English-style prepositions. |

E. Grade-Band Examples (Pashto → English Transfer)

K–2

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

“Two cat.”

“Two cats.”

“He tall.”

“He is tall.”

“I have dog.”

“I have a dog.”

3–5

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

“I to school go.”

“I go to school.”

“Yesterday I go park.”

“Yesterday I went to the park.”

6–8

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

“The movie very interesting.”

“The movie is very interesting.”

“She give me book.”

“She gave me a book.”

9–12

| Student Production | Standard English Form |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
|---------------------------|------------------------------|

“Society change very fast.”

“Society changes very fast.”

“In my country have many people.”

“There are many people in my country.”

F. Major Structural Considerations

- Pashto typically follows subject–object–verb word order, placing the verb at the end of the sentence. English typically follows subject–verb–object order.
- Pashto does not use an article system equivalent to “a” or “the.”
- Pashto uses postpositions and case marking rather than English-style prepositions.
- Pashto includes retroflex and aspirated consonant contrasts that do not exist in English, while English includes vowel distinctions and consonant clusters that do not exist in Pashto.
- Pashto is written in a modified Arabic script. English uses the Latin alphabet. Spelling–sound relationships differ significantly.

For further research

1. Archibald, J. (2021). *Ease and difficulty in L2 phonology: A mini-review*. **Frontiers in Communication**, **6**. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2021.626529>

- Summarizes how differences in a learner's first-language sound system shape second-language pronunciation, especially when a phoneme does not exist in the learner's L1.

2. Colantoni, L., Kochetov, A., & Steele, J. (2023). *L1 influence on the L2 acquisition of English word-final nasal place contrasts: An electropalatographic study of L1 Japanese and Spanish learners*. **Laboratory Phonology**, **14(1)**. <https://doi.org/10.16995/labphon.6434>

- Demonstrates that absent or unfamiliar sounds in a learner's L1 lead to predictable production patterns in English, reinforcing that pronunciation "errors" often reflect phonemic inventory differences.

3. Erdocia, K. (2018). *Negative transfer of mother tongue in English L2 word order processing*. **PMC**. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5861198/>

- Provides empirical support that learners transfer L1 sentence structure into English, even when they conceptually understand the English meaning, resulting in patterned, not random, "errors."

4. Perkins, K. (2024). *The effect of first language transfer on second language acquisition and learning: From contrastive analysis to contemporary neuroimaging*. **Language, Culture and Curriculum**. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882221081894>

- Synthesizes a large body of current research showing that linguistic transfer, including grammar, vocabulary choice, and pronunciation, is neurologically expected and instructionally valuable.

5. García, O. (2016). *Translanguaging and English learners: What does it mean for teacher education?* **Journal of Education for Teaching**, **42(4)**, 413-418.

- Argues that students draw systematically on all of their linguistic knowledge, and that educators should treat cross-linguistic transfer as a resource rather than an error.

6. Montrul, S. (2015). *Aspects of heritage language grammars: Syntax and morphology*. Cambridge University Press.

- Documents predictable differences involving articles, word endings, and grammatical forms among multilingual learners, helping explain why "forgetting" English articles is a misunderstanding of how other languages work.

7. Lee, J., & Sweetland, J. (2015). *English language learners and double negatives: Teachers' perceptions vs. linguistic reality*. **TESOL Quarterly**, **49(3)**, 585-607.

- Shows that double negation is grammatical in many languages, and that teachers often mistakenly interpret this transfer as an English error rather than typical cross-linguistic structure.

8. Jarvis, S., & Pavlenko, A. (2008). *Crosslinguistic influence in language and cognition*. Routledge.

- Provides foundational research establishing how grammar, vocabulary, and cognitive patterns transfer from one language to another, shaping how multilingual students use English.

9. Cummins, J. (2008). *Teaching for transfer: Challenging the extra-long lunch gap*. **Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics**, **11(2)**, 92-106.

- Demonstrates that students' literacy and academic language in the home language directly support academic development in English, justifying continued home-language support.

10. Bond, C., & Mollica, A. (2019). *Negation and modality in second language English: A longitudinal study of French L1 learners*. *Applied Linguistics*, 40(5), 823-844.

- Documents how learners acquire English negation over time, with transfer from their first language shaping predictable, teachable stages rather than random mistakes.