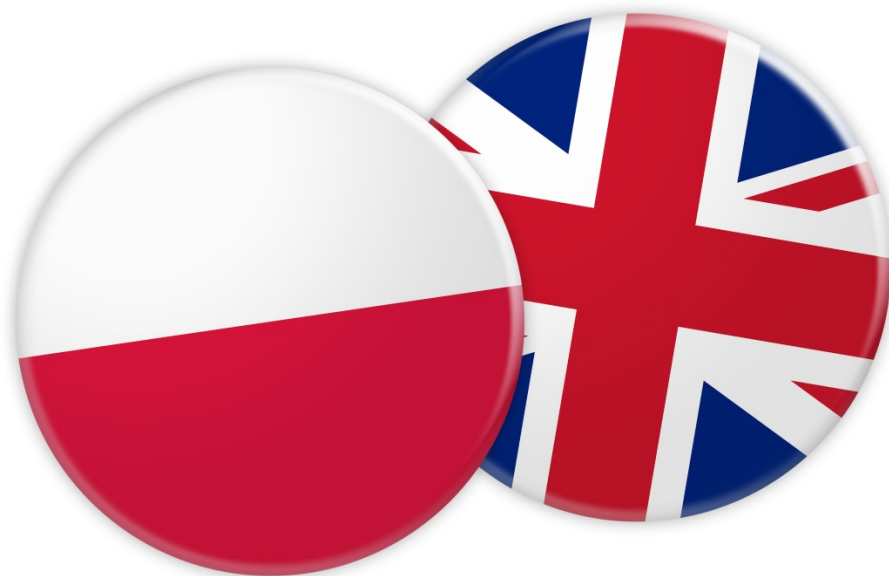




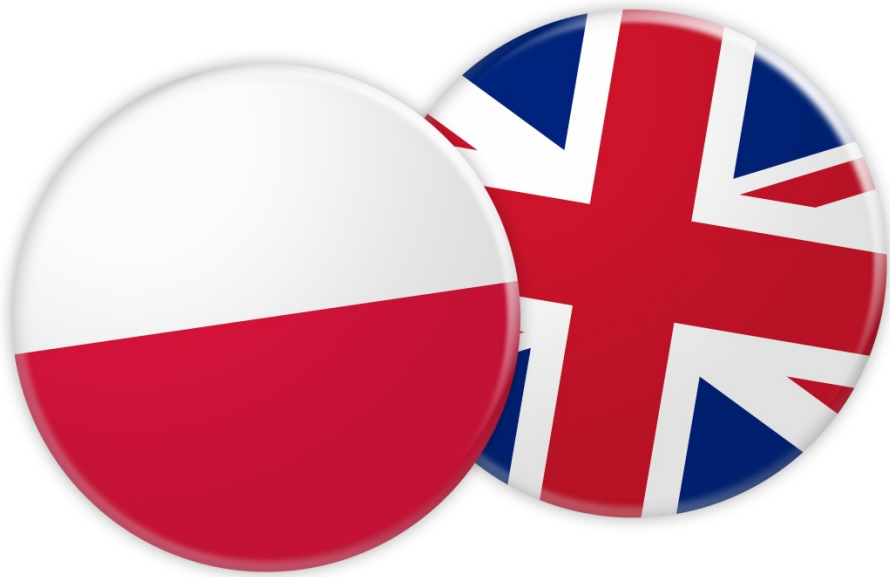
...AND 159 OTHER COMMON  
POLISH-ENGLISH ERRORS



**Matt Purland**

**I have  
twenty  
fingers**

**?!**



PURLANDTRAINING.COM

[info@purlandtraining.com](mailto:info@purlandtraining.com)

<https://www.purlandtraining.com>

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## Introduction

This book contains four tests for learners of English. Each test consists of forty common errors that have been adapted from real errors that Polish students repeatedly make in spoken and written English. Students have to read the error sentence and write the correction beside it. They can then check their answers and read detailed notes about the errors they have made, which will help them to understand why they made them and, more importantly, how to avoid making them in the future. There are also two special lists:

- Nouns that are countable in Polish but uncountable in English (p.11)
- 50 common false friends in Polish and English (p.12)

This book may be useful for the following people:

- English students and teachers in the Polish school system and in language schools
- Polish students who want to improve their English at home in a self-study environment
- Native speakers of English who teach Polish students and wish to understand why they repeatedly make the same errors
- Polish teachers who teach Polish students and also wish to know more about common errors in Polish and English
- Students of English who are native speakers of other Slavic languages, such as Russian, Ukrainian, Czech, and Slovak.
- Anybody of any language who wants to improve their knowledge of English, since many of the errors also occur in other languages

The errors can be divided into thirteen categories – see ‘Summary of the errors’ (p.4) for more information. In order to focus on particular errors, there is only one error per sentence. In reality, of course, students can make multiple errors in each sentence, for example they may fail to use a contraction in a sentence with incorrect word order. Most of the errors occur because students translate from Polish into English, rather than conceptualising and using English as a different language. This is the perfect book for students who are confused by the many differences between the two languages.

This book is not a comprehensive grammar guide to Polish and English, but rather a practical tool for identifying, understanding, and then eliminating 160 common errors that Polish students make in English all the time. Students who use this book will still need to learn things like tenses, conditionals, and vocabulary – including idioms and phrasal verbs – but by eliminating these 160 persistent errors from their speech and writing, they will go a long way toward improving their level of English. Students will also increase their knowledge of English grammar, because the 160 errors cover a wide range of grammar topics: from conditionals and word classes, to question forms and word order. There is also a useful Glossary of Grammar Terms (p.13) and a full index at the back of the book (p.89). Throughout the book I use the phrase ‘the student’ as if the same student has made all of the errors. Of course, in reality, the errors were made by a large number of Polish students.

We need languages to communicate and we can do that without being 100% correct all the time. Students should not be afraid of making mistakes, because this is how we learn. But it is

really not necessary to make the same errors consistently week in week out, month after month, year on year. It is good to learn to be correct! In addition, students should not be afraid to correct themselves when they make an error. This shows that they are aware that they have made an error and they are *in the process* of addressing it, so that it does not happen next time. However, there is nothing wrong with identifying, pinning down, and eliminating common errors. The students' level of communication will be far more effective and their listener(s) will thank them!

It is also useful to remember that many of the errors documented in this book concern minor language points that, once learned, will always be remembered and added to the learner's vocabulary of correct words and phrases – for example, the difference between 'lock' and 'close' (see error #39). In general, we are not dealing with difficult or obscure grammar concepts in this book, but rather a group of common errors, most of which document small differences between English and Polish. As a consequence, it should not be hard to use this book to improve the level of your English.

Thank you to the following native speakers of Polish for their help with translating parts of the Polish text:

Anna Purland  
Justyna Szostek  
Łucyna Boryczko

and, of course, special thanks to all of my wonderful students who made the errors that feature in this book! Their repeated use of these incorrect words and phrases – in every lesson, in fact! – forced me to take positive action, and write this book in an attempt to identify, tie down, and eliminate these errors once and for all!

I hope that you will find this book useful, whether you are a student or teacher of English; whether you are a Polish native speaker or an English native speaker. Please feel free to contact me with your comments and suggestions for future editions.

With best regards

Matt Purland

*Ostróda, Poland – 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017*

## Summary of the errors and what caused them

## Summary of the errors and what caused them

Here are the categories of error in this book, in order of how common they were:

A) <i>In English but not in Polish</i>	28 errors
B) <i>One word in Polish, two words in English</i>	25 errors
C) <i>Errors with tenses</i>	18 errors
D) <i>Direct translation errors</i>	17 errors
E) <i>In Polish but not in English</i>	14 errors
F) <i>Word order</i>	13 errors
G) <i>Wrong word recalled</i>	11 errors
H) <i>Differences in the use of prepositions</i>	9 errors
I) <i>Different concepts in Polish and English</i>	8 errors
J) <i>Traditional grammar errors</i>	6 errors
K) <i>Using a positive form to make a negative sentence</i>	5 errors
L) <i>Countable in Polish, but uncountable in English</i>	3 errors
M) <i>False friends</i>	3 errors
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>160 errors</b>

### A) *In English but not in Polish (28 errors)*

The following features of English grammar that do not occur in Polish caused the most errors:

7 errors:	articles	#11, #70, #91, #130, #138, #146, #156
4 errors:	phrasal verbs	#24, #45, #117, #121
4 errors:	general vocabulary words: 'once' (#102), 'twice' (#78), 'back' (#9), and 'other' (#143)	
3 errors:	question tags	#63, #107, #135
2 errors:	auxiliary verbs	#38, #114
2 errors:	conditionals	#31, #119
1 error:	having to use 'it' in a sentence	#73
1 error:	'used to' for repeated actions in the past that do not happen any more	#126
1 error:	possessive 's'	#19
1 error:	gerunds	#1
1 error:	contractions	#57
1 error:	polite language	#159



B) *One word in Polish, two words in English (25 errors)*

It is worth remembering that English has a much larger vocabulary than Polish. Estimates suggest that there are five times more words in English than in Polish. Here we can see cases where two different words in English mean the same word in Polish. The student has to choose the correct word. They have a 50/50 chance!

One word in Polish	Two words in English	
ból	hurt / pain	#108
całej	whole / all	#12
czuć	smell / feel	#25
dobrze	good / well	#118
dużo	a lot of / much	#46
ja	me / I	#3
jak	as / like	#10
(to) jest	there are / it is	#58
miasto	town / city	#20
mówić	talk / speak	#122
patrzeć / patrzeć na kogoś	look at / watch	#82
powiedzieć / mówić	tell / say	#157
pożyczyć	lend / borrow	#110
praca	job / work	#89
przypomnieć	remember / remind	#139
stać	stand / stay	#69
taki / tak	such / so	#147
uczyć się / uczyć	learn / teach	#92
wiele	many / much	#79
wszystko	anything / everything	#103
wyglądać	look / look like	#52
wysoki	tall / high	#131
zabawne	fun / funny	#29
zamknąć	lock / close	#39
zrobić	do / make	#74

C) *Errors with tenses (18 errors)*

In English there are twelve tenses, while in Polish there are only three: past, present, and future. There are no continuous tenses or perfect tenses in Polish, unlike in English. This gives us nine additional tenses, that do not exist in Polish – six continuous, and three not:

In English:		In Polish:
<i>present simple</i>	<i>present continuous</i>	<i>present</i>
<i>present perfect</i>	<i>present perfect continuous</i>	
<i>past simple</i>	<i>past continuous</i>	<i>past</i>
<i>past perfect</i>	<i>past perfect continuous</i>	
<i>future simple</i>	<i>future continuous</i>	<i>future</i>
<i>future perfect</i>	<i>future perfect continuous</i>	

In addition to this, the four types of conditional sentence in English are constructed differently in Polish. All of these differences are bound to lead to problems for students. The errors in this book show that my students were most often confused by:

present simple	4 errors	#5, #26, #40, #51
present simple vs present continuous	3 errors	#13, #104, #132
future simple	2 errors	#47, #158
present continuous vs present perfect continuous	1 error	#80
present perfect (since <i>or</i> for)	1 error	#83

past simple vs past continuous	1 error	#144
past simple	1 error	#93
past continuous	1 error	#123
modal verbs – inversion	1 error	#59
modal verbs – question form	1 error	#75
imperative form	1 error	#90
future in the past	1 error	#140

D) *Direct translation errors (17 errors)*

Seventeen of the errors were direct translation errors, where the student thinks how they would say something in Polish and translates it into English in their mind before saying it, rather than reaching for the proper English word or phrase to begin with. This can reflect differences in concepts of using language. For example:

In Polish they can say:	...while in English we have to say:	
make a photo	take a photo	#32
I very like...	I really like...	#21
such things	that kind of thing	#53
I think yes	Yes, I think so	#60
at this moment	at the moment	#48
I found a great page	I found a great website	#84
I resigned from my piano lessons	I've quit my piano lessons	#111
I feel nervous!	I feel annoyed	#124
Moment!	Hang on a minute!	#120
Where is my telephone?	Where is my phone?	#151
I'm renovating my flat	I'm redecorating my flat	#160
Rather no	I'd rather not	#14
I don't think so (that)...	I don't think (that)...	#27
...that attends my friend	...that my friend attends	#61
Do you want that I...?	Do you want me to...?	#76
...everything what he thinks	...everything (that) he thinks	#94
...about whom I was talking	...I was talking about	#133

E) *In Polish but not in English (14 errors)*

There are also errors that come from words that are *added* in Polish (especially prepositions), but do not appear in the English translation:

In Polish:	In English:	
all people	everybody	#15
to born	to give birth to	#33
to call <b>to</b> sby	to call sby	#22
to contact <b>with</b> sby	to contact sby	#28
two subjects in a clause, e.g. <b>The teacher he</b> gave...'	one subject in a clause, e.g. <b>The teacher</b> gave...'	#54
go <b>to</b> home	go home	#41
<b>in</b> last weekend	last weekend	#49
leave <b>from</b> work	leave work	#62
let sby <b>to</b> do sth	let sby do sth	#95
play <b>on</b> an instrument	play an instrument	#85
go <b>to my</b> work	go to work	#112
lose <b>my</b> weight	lose weight	#152
I dressed myself	I got dressed	#125
using 'him' or 'her' to refer to a thing	using 'it' to refer to a thing	#134

This is also seen in the fact that reflexive pronouns are more often used in Polish than in English (see error #125). We don't say 'I dressed myself' in English, but 'I got dressed.' Another difference in Polish is when speakers assign male or female pronouns to things, rather than 'it' e.g. 'Where is my book. I can't see her.'

F) *Word order (13 errors)* #16, #23, #34, #42, #50, #55, #86, #88, #96, #113, #127, #136, #153

As you can see by the twelve errors in this category, word order in Polish is much looser than it is in English. In English we tend to follow the SVOPT (subject-verb-object-place-time) word order in clauses and sentences, while Polish speakers can insert phrases into a sentence seemingly (to an English native speaker) at random! Unfortunately, many Polish students feel relaxed about using the same 'looseness' of word order when they speak English – because they are treating English as if it is a mirror image or copy of Polish, rather than as a different language in its own right.

G) *Wrong word recalled (11 errors)*

This category represents errors which occur when students are reaching for a particular word in English, but they end up with an incorrect word, selected because it would be correct in Polish:

Incorrect Polish word (translated):	Correct English word:	
good	well	#17
true	truth	#35
the best	favourite	#2
persons	people	#56
as usually	as usual	#43
organism	body	#71
eat	food	#97
hour	time	#81
workers	employees	#128
cry	shout	#154
come	go	#68

H) *Differences in the use of prepositions (9 errors)*

The concepts of space and position differs in Polish and English. This inevitably leads to errors with prepositions. For example, a Polish person is 'on a party' ('na imprezie') while an English person is 'at a party'. While an English person may be 'at home', a Polish person will be 'in home' ('w domu'). Trying to explain why we don't say we are 'in' home when we are undoubtedly within a 3D environment (our home) can be quite difficult for teachers of Polish students. The fact that there is no one single direct translation for our very common preposition 'at' causes a lot of errors with prepositions. It is necessary for English teachers of Polish students to remind them and help them to practise the point that prepositions are different in the two languages and therefore cannot be translated directly, which is what students try to do by default in many cases. Learning common collocations of **verb + preposition** (including phrasal verbs), **noun + preposition**, and **adjective + preposition** will be the best way to tackle this problem. The errors in this category can be summarised as follows:

The students used...	Error sentence:	
<b>on</b> instead of <b>at</b>	I was <b>on</b> a concert yesterday.	#18
<b>in</b> instead of <b>at</b> (x2)	I was <b>in</b> home last night.	#6
	Jo is <b>in</b> work.	#129
<b>to</b> instead of <b>for</b>	I have a question <b>to</b> you.	#98
<b>on</b> instead of <b>for</b>	She is waiting <b>on</b> him.	#115
in instead of <b>on</b>	I looked <b>in</b> the internet.	#72

<b>on</b> instead of <b>by</b>	We had a nice picnic <b>on</b> the lake.	#77
<b>on</b> instead of <b>with</b>	She was angry <b>on</b> her brother.	#155
no preposition instead of <b>to</b>	He lied me.	#150

I) *Different concepts in Polish and English (8 errors)*

Some of the errors showed differences in the two languages in terms of how native speakers of each language conceptualise the world. The errors in this category showed variances in terms of:

- *going* somewhere (in English) vs. *being* somewhere (in Polish) #36
- using out-of-date pop culture references #7
- addressing individuals using the title Mr, Mrs, and Ms #44
- greeting somebody #64
- telling the time #99
- referring to dates #116
- the capitalisation of common nouns and adjectives in written Polish, but not in English #137
- ...and even the number of fingers on a hand (which inspired the title of this book!) #141

This kind of knowledge may not be taught on a typical English course, which will be preoccupied with grammar and vocabulary, but it is still necessary to address it with students to prevent them from making this kind of error.

J) *Traditional grammar errors (6 errors)*

Having said that, a handful of the errors *were* typical grammar errors that could have been made by any learner of English anywhere in the world. These errors concerned:

- when to use gerund / to + infinitive #37
- mixing up -ed / -ing adjectives #100
- comparative adjectives #87, #149
- modal verbs #142
- reported speech #145

K) *Using a positive form to make a negative sentence (5 errors)*

This type of problem is represented by five errors in this book, but it is really very common to hear a Polish speaker use a positive form in English to make a negative statement. For example, in error #30 an English native speaker might say 'I did not have enough time', while a Polish speaker might rephrase it as: 'I had too little time':

Polish speaker (translated):	English speaker:	
I had too little...	I did not have enough...	#30
I have too low...	I don't have enough...	#65
I have no too much...	I don't have much...	#101
I felt not...	I did not feel...	#105
Always the _____ ...	The _____ never...	#148

This may also be a conceptual difference, as in categories H and I, above.

*L) Countable in Polish, but uncountable in English (3 errors)*

There were a few errors caused by the fact that some very common nouns are famously uncountable in English, but countable in Polish. The three errors in this sample concern the words 'homework' (#8), 'information' (#66), and 'wine' (#106), but there are other examples of this kind of word listed on p.11. Again, this kind of difference between the two languages demonstrates that we cannot simply translate from Polish into English, but we need to learn English as a *different language*.

*M) False friends (3 errors)*

Again, this category represents a small, and maybe almost a negligible number of errors, which would suggest that this kind of error was not a major problem for my students, compared with other important differences between the two languages, as stated above. However, false friends *can* cause real communication problems for students who make a habit of blithely translating from Polish into English, rather than trying to learn a different language. The errors in this sample concern the words 'politics' (#4), 'elegant' (#67), and 'president' (#109), but there are more examples of false friends in English and Polish listed on p.12.

## Nouns that are countable in Polish but uncountable in English

There are a few common nouns that are **countable** in Polish but **uncountable** in English. This can lead to errors in English, with Polish students giving plural forms to words which should be uncountable, e.g. error #8. It is worth remembering that the following words are uncountable in English, with **singular determiners** and **following verbs**:

Uncountable in English:	Polish translation:	We can say:	...but not (Polish-English):
advice	rada	a lot of <b>advice</b> the <b>advice</b> was...	a lot of <b>advices</b> the <b>advices</b> were...
information (#66)	informacja	some <b>information</b> the <b>information</b> is...	many <b>informations</b> the <b>informations</b> are...
news	wiadomość	a lot of <b>news</b> the <b>news</b> was...	a lot of <b>newses</b> the <b>newses</b> were...

bread	chleb	a lot of <b>bread</b> the <b>bread</b> was...	a lot of <b>breads</b> the <b>breads</b> were...
water (liquids, e.g. alcohol)	woda	some <b>water</b> the <b>water</b> is...	many <b>waters</b> the <b>waters</b> are
butter	masło	a lot of <b>butter</b> the <b>butter</b> was...	a lot of <b>butters</b> the <b>butters</b> were
cheese	ser	some <b>cheese</b> the <b>cheese</b> is...	many <b>cheeses</b> the <b>cheeses</b> are

homework (#8)	praca domowa	a lot of <b>homework</b> the <b>homework</b> was...	a lot of <b>homeworks</b> the <b>homeworks</b> were...
research	badanie	some <b>research</b> the <b>research</b> is...	many <b>researches</b> the <b>researches</b> are...
evidence	dowód	a lot of <b>evidence</b> the <b>evidence</b> was...	a lot of <b>evidences</b> the <b>evidences</b> were...

furniture	mebel	a lot of <b>furniture</b> the <b>furniture</b> was...	a lot of <b>furnitures</b> the <b>furnitures</b> were...
equipment	sprzęt	some <b>equipment</b> the <b>equipment</b> is...	many <b>equipments</b> the <b>equipments</b> are...
music	muzyka	a lot of <b>music</b> the <b>music</b> was...	a lot of <b>musics</b> the <b>musics</b> were...

accommodation	nocleg	a lot of <b>accommodation</b> the <b>accommodation</b> was...	a lot of <b>accommodations</b> the <b>accommodations</b> were...
baggage	bagaż	some <b>baggage</b> the <b>baggage</b> is...	many <b>baggages</b> the <b>baggages</b> are...
luggage	walizka	a lot of <b>luggage</b> the <b>luggage</b> was...	a lot of <b>luggages</b> the <b>luggages</b> were...

The following English nouns are sometimes **countable** and sometimes **uncountable**, depending on the context:

	Polish translation:	Example of an uncountable use:	Example of a countable use:
wine (#106)	wino	Would you like some wine?	There are some great wines from Australia.
hair	włos	I need to wash my hair.	Waiter, there are two hairs in my soup!
money	pieniądz	How much money do you earn?	Outstanding monies must be received.
fruit	owoc	I eat a lot of fruit.	This dessert includes summer fruits.
coffee	kawa	My favourite drink is coffee.	Do you want to go for a coffee?
Coke	Coca-Cola	I bought a can of Coke.	Can I order a couple of Cokes, please?
salad	sałatka	She often has salad for lunch.	I have tried lots of different salads.

## 50 common false friends in English and Polish

*There are many false friends in Polish and English. False friends are pairs of words that look and sound similar, but have different meanings. In our list of errors only five of them involved false friends. However, it's still well worth being aware of false friends in Polish and English. Here are some of the most common, that I often hear:*

A) Polish speaker thinks of a word in Polish that they want to say in English:	B) They see or hear an English word which might match, and use it:	C) But in Polish this word means: (B-C translation)	D) While the English word they needed was: (A-D translation)	E) In Polish, this word translates as: (D-E translation)
1. aktualny	actually	faktycznie	current	obecny
2. angina	angina	bóle w klatce piersiowej	throat infection	infekcja gardła
3. apartament	apartment	mieszkanie	suite	apartament
4. audycja	audition	przesłuchanie	radio broadcast	nadawanie
5. brat	brat	bachor	brother	brat
6. buty	boots	buty	shoes	buty
7. dama	dame	oficjalny tytuł	lady	dama
8. data	data	dane	date	data
9. denerwujący	nervous (#124)	przerażony	annoying	denerwujący
10. deska	desk	biurko / ławka (szkolna)	board / plank	deska
11. dramat	drama	jako gatunek literacki	tragedy	tragedia
12. dywan	divan (bed or seat)	łóżko	carpet	dywan
13. ekonomia	economy	gospodarka	economics (subject)	ekonomika
14. ekstra	extra	dodatkowy	great	wspaniały
15. elegancki	elegant (#67)	szykowny	smart	elegancki
16. ewentualny	eventually	ostatecznie	possible	możliwy
17. fabryka	fabric	tkanina	factory	fabryka
18. fantazja	fantasy	fantazja jako fikcja	imagination	wyobraźnia
19. fart	fart	pierdnięcie	luck	szczęście
20. gem	gem	klejnot	game (in tennis)	gem
21. golf	golf	jako sport	sweater	sweter
22. guma	gum	guma do żucia	rubber	guma
23. hazard	hazard	niebezpieczeństwo	gambling	hazard
24. historia	history	historia (przeszłość)	story	opowieść
25. humor	humour	komizm	mood	nastrój
26. karawan	caravan	karawana	hearse	karawan
27. klient sklepu	client	określony klient	customer	klient
28. klozet	closet	szafa ścienna	toilet	toaleta
29. komunikacja	communication	łącność	public transport	komunikacja
30. kontrola	control	jako nadzór	ticket inspection	kontrola biletów
31. lokal	local	lokalny	premises; e.g. bar	lokal
32. magazyn	magazine	czasopismo	warehouse	magazyn
33. no	no	nie	yes	tak
34. parking	parking	rzeczownik odsłowny	car park	parking
35. pasta	pasta	makaron	paste	pasta
36. pensja	pension	emerytura	wages	wynagrodzenie
37. polityk	politics (#4)	polityczny	politician	polityk
38. prezerwatywa	preservative	konserwant	condom	prezerwatywa
39. prezydent	president (#109)	prezydent kraju	mayor	burmistrz
40. projekt	project	przedsięwzięcie	design	projekt
41. propozycja	proposition	wniosek	suggestion / idea	propozycja
42. recepta	receipt	paragon	prescription	recepta
43. relaks	relax	relaksować się	relaxation	relaks
44. renta	rent	wynajem	pension	emerytura
45. rewizja	revision	korekta / powtórka	search	szukanie
46. sałata	salad	sałatka / surówka	lettuce	sałata
47. skrypt	script	scenariusz (filmu)	study text	tekst studyjny
48. sympatyczny	sympathetic	współczujący	nice	miły
49. szef	chief / chef	szef / szef kuchni	boss	szef
50. zrezygnować	resign (from) (#111)	porzucić	stop doing / quit	porzucić

## Glossary of grammar terms

### English:

abstract noun  
adjective  
adverb  
adverb of degree  
adverb of frequency  
adverb of time  
apostrophe  
auxiliary verb  
capital letter  
clause  
collocation  
colloquial speech  
comparative adjective  
complement  
connected speech  
consonant sound  
context  
continuous tense  
contraction  
dash  
defining relative clause  
definite article (the)  
demonstrative  
determiner  
direct language  
ellipsis  
emphasis  
false friend  
finished time  
first conditional  
function word  
future  
future continuous  
future in the past  
future perfect  
future simple  
gerund  
going to  
idiom  
imperative form  
indefinite article (a, an)  
infinitive  
ing form  
intention  
inversion  
irregular plural noun  
letter  
listener  
listening  
meaning  
modal verb  
native language  
native speaker  
negative form  
object  
object pronoun  
order  
oxymoron  
passive voice  
past  
past continuous  
past perfect  
past simple  
past tense  
perfect tenses  
phatic communication (small talk)  
phrasal verb  
phrasal verb – intransitive  
phrasal verb – transitive inseparable  
phrasal verb – transitive separable

### Po polsku:

abstrakcyjny rzeczownik  
przymiotnik  
przysłówek  
przysłówek stopnia  
przysłówek częstotliwości  
przysłówek czasu  
apostrofa  
czasownik pomocniczy  
wielka litera  
człon zdanie  
kolokacja  
język potoczny  
przymiotnik porównawczy  
dopełnienie  
łączenie wyrazów  
dźwięk spółgłoskowy  
kontekst  
czas ciągły  
skrót  
myślnik  
zdanie podrzędne określający  
rodzajnik określony (the)  
zaimki: 'this', 'that', 'these', and 'those'  
określnik  
bezpośredni język  
pominięcie  
nacisk  
'false friend'  
czas przeszły  
pierwszy tryb warunkowy  
forma gramatyczna  
przyszłość  
przyszły ciągły  
przyszłość w przeszłości  
czas przyszły dokonany  
przyszły prosty  
rzeczownik odczasownikowy  
zamierzam  
idiom  
tryb rozkazujący  
rodzajnik nieokreślony (a, an)  
bezokolicznik  
forma 'ing'  
zamiar  
odwrocenie  
nieregularna liczba mnoga rzeczownika  
litera  
słuchacz  
słuchający  
znaczenie  
czasownik modalny  
język ojczysty  
native speaker  
negacja  
dopełnienie (w zdaniu)  
zaimek rzeczowny  
kolejność  
oksymoron (sprzeczne zdanie)  
strona bierna  
przeszłość  
przeszły ciągły  
czas zaprzeczony  
przeszły prosty  
czas przeszły  
czasy perfect  
pogawędka  
czasownik złożone  
czasownik złożone – nieprzechodni  
czasownik złożone – przechodni nierozdzielnie  
czasownik złożone – przechodni rozdzielnie



## Glossary of grammar terms

### English:

phrase  
plural countable noun  
polite language  
positive form  
possessive adjective  
possessive 's'  
preposition  
present  
present continuous  
present perfect  
present perfect continuous  
present simple  
pronoun  
pronunciation  
proper noun  
quantity phrase  
question  
question form  
question tag  
reading  
reflexive pronoun  
register  
regular time  
relative clause  
reported speech  
s form  
second conditional  
sentence  
singular countable noun  
slang  
sound  
sound – voiced consonant  
sound – unvoiced consonant  
sound – vowel  
speaking  
speech  
spoken English  
state verb  
statement  
stressed syllable  
subject  
subject pronoun  
subjunctive mood  
subordinate clause  
suffix  
superlative adjective  
syllable  
tense  
third person  
time  
tone of voice  
translation  
uncountable noun  
unfinished time  
used to  
verb  
verb – intransitive  
verb – main  
verb – transitive  
verb phrase  
wh- question word  
word  
word class  
word order  
writing  
written English  
zero article

### Po polsku:

wyrażenie  
rzeczownik policzalny w liczbie mnogiej  
uprzejmy język  
zdanie twierdzące  
przymiotnik dzierżawczy  
dzierżawczy 's'  
przyimek  
teraźniejszość  
teraźniejszy ciągły  
czas teraźniejszy dokonany  
czas teraźniejszy dokonany ciągły  
teraźniejszy prosty  
zaimek  
wymowa  
nazwa własna  
wyrażenie ilości  
pytanie  
forma pytająca  
krótkie pytanie na końcu stwierdzenia  
czytanie  
zaimek zwrotny  
ton głosu  
czas regularny  
zdanie podrzędne  
mowa zależna  
forma 's'  
drugi tryb warunkowy  
zdanie  
pojedynczy rzeczownik policzalny  
gwara  
dźwięk  
spółgłoska dźwięczna  
spółgłoska bezdźwięczna  
dźwięk samogłoskowy  
mówienie  
przemówienie  
angielski mówiony  
czasownik bez formy ciągłej  
wypowiedź  
zaakcentowana sylaba  
podmiot (w zdaniu)  
zaimek osobowy  
tryb łączący  
zdanie podrzędne  
przyrostek  
stopień najwyższy  
sylaba  
czas  
trzecia osoba  
czas  
ton głosu  
tłumaczenie  
rzeczownik niepoliczalny  
czas niedokończony  
kiedyś *lub* dawniej coś robić  
czasownik  
czasownik – nieprzechodni  
czasownik – główny  
czasownik – przechodni  
wyrażenie czasownikowe  
pytanie z 'wh-'  
słowo  
klasa wyrazów  
szyk wyrazów  
pisanie  
pisane po angielsku  
przedimek zerowy

# Tests 1-4

## Test 1

*There is one error in each sentence below. Write each sentence correctly:*

1. I like learn English. \_\_\_\_\_
2. This is my the best film. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I and my friend went to the meeting. \_\_\_\_\_
4. All politics are liars! \_\_\_\_\_
5. You have right. \_\_\_\_\_
6. I was in home last night. \_\_\_\_\_
7. 'We have to leave now.' 'OK, let it be.' \_\_\_\_\_
8. We had two homeworks. \_\_\_\_\_
9. 'Where's John?' 'He's back to home.' \_\_\_\_\_
10. Her dress is the same like mine. \_\_\_\_\_
11. I bought a bread. \_\_\_\_\_
12. He prepared dinner for all family. \_\_\_\_\_
13. I'm agree. \_\_\_\_\_
14. 'Shall we watch a film?' 'Rather no.' \_\_\_\_\_
15. All people have left. \_\_\_\_\_
16. Probably he went to Germany. \_\_\_\_\_
17. Brenda cooks very good. \_\_\_\_\_
18. I was on a concert yesterday. \_\_\_\_\_
19. We drove to the home of my auntie. \_\_\_\_\_
20. Lubawa is a small city. \_\_\_\_\_
21. I very like England. \_\_\_\_\_
22. Mike called to her last night. \_\_\_\_\_
23. It was for me very interesting. \_\_\_\_\_
24. I have to take care about my daughter. \_\_\_\_\_
25. I can feel gas in the kitchen. \_\_\_\_\_
26. He has twenty years old. \_\_\_\_\_
27. I don't think so I was late. \_\_\_\_\_
28. Please contact with me. \_\_\_\_\_
29. That vacation was really funny. \_\_\_\_\_
30. I had too little time. \_\_\_\_\_
31. If he will call, I will tell him. \_\_\_\_\_
32. He made a photo. \_\_\_\_\_
33. My wife borned my daughter yesterday. \_\_\_\_\_
34. The hotel also was quite nice. \_\_\_\_\_
35. The true is that I don't like him. \_\_\_\_\_
36. I was in Scotland last weekend. \_\_\_\_\_
37. I can't imagine to work there. \_\_\_\_\_
38. What you doing? \_\_\_\_\_
39. Do you close your front door at night? \_\_\_\_\_
40. Is OK for me. \_\_\_\_\_

## Test 2

*There is one error in each sentence below. Write each sentence correctly:*

41. I must go to home. \_\_\_\_\_
42. Did it someone else. \_\_\_\_\_
43. See you tomorrow, as usually. \_\_\_\_\_
44. Good morning, Mrs Lisa. / ...Mr Bob. \_\_\_\_\_
45. Jill laughed her friend at. \_\_\_\_\_
46. I have got much fuel. \_\_\_\_\_
47. We will be learn more. \_\_\_\_\_
48. We're waiting for a bus at this moment. \_\_\_\_\_
49. I went out in last weekend. \_\_\_\_\_
50. We can get it, I think. \_\_\_\_\_
51. She get the bus every day. \_\_\_\_\_
52. We know how it should look like. \_\_\_\_\_
53. I went to the gym. My friend does such things. \_\_\_\_\_
54. The teacher he gave me a good mark. \_\_\_\_\_
55. I feel here safer. \_\_\_\_\_
56. There were four persons in the taxi. \_\_\_\_\_
57. I cannot meet you for a beer tonight. \_\_\_\_\_
58. It is many differences. \_\_\_\_\_
59. I don't know what should I do. \_\_\_\_\_
60. 'Shall we go out?' 'I think yes.' \_\_\_\_\_
61. This is the school that attends my friend. \_\_\_\_\_
62. What time did you leave from work? \_\_\_\_\_
63. They like dancing, doesn't they? \_\_\_\_\_
64. 'How are you?' 'Thanks, fine.' \_\_\_\_\_
65. I have too low money. \_\_\_\_\_
66. I heard a lot of informations. \_\_\_\_\_
67. Tom wore elegant clothes to the interview. \_\_\_\_\_
68. Then I came to the other shop. \_\_\_\_\_
69. He was staying there, by the door. \_\_\_\_\_
70. I got a best mark in my class. \_\_\_\_\_
71. I train because I want to take care of my organism. \_\_\_\_\_
72. I looked in the internet. \_\_\_\_\_
73. 'How was the meeting?' 'Was good.' \_\_\_\_\_
74. I made some shopping. \_\_\_\_\_
75. What could do they? \_\_\_\_\_
76. Do you want that I help you? \_\_\_\_\_
77. We had a nice picnic on the lake. \_\_\_\_\_
78. I asked him two times. \_\_\_\_\_
79. I have much things to do. \_\_\_\_\_
80. I'm living in Warsaw since 2010. \_\_\_\_\_

### Test 3

*There is one error in each sentence below. Write each sentence correctly:*

81. What is the hour? \_\_\_\_\_
82. Can I watch that photo? \_\_\_\_\_
83. I've worked here since five days. \_\_\_\_\_
84. I found a great page on the internet. \_\_\_\_\_
85. My brother plays on the trumpet. \_\_\_\_\_
86. That, I think, was our bus. \_\_\_\_\_
87. My bike is much more bigger than yours. \_\_\_\_\_
88. What does it mean, 'radio'?' \_\_\_\_\_
89. I need to get a new work. \_\_\_\_\_
90. Please wait until your brother will get home. \_\_\_\_\_
91. I train at gym every day. \_\_\_\_\_
92. My little brother is teaching the alphabet. \_\_\_\_\_
93. They didn't came to see me. \_\_\_\_\_
94. He says everything what he thinks. \_\_\_\_\_
95. I let her to borrow my book. \_\_\_\_\_
96. You just can get out! \_\_\_\_\_
97. There was good eat at the party. \_\_\_\_\_
98. I have a question to you. \_\_\_\_\_
99. 'What's the time?' 'It's half to eight.' \_\_\_\_\_
100. I'm not interesting in football. \_\_\_\_\_
101. I have no too much time. \_\_\_\_\_
102. I met them only one time. \_\_\_\_\_
103. People can collect almost everything. \_\_\_\_\_
104. My friend comes to visit this weekend. \_\_\_\_\_
105. I felt not well. \_\_\_\_\_
106. We drank a wine last night. \_\_\_\_\_
107. He will be late, will he? \_\_\_\_\_
108. My arm pain me. \_\_\_\_\_
109. He is the president of our town. \_\_\_\_\_
110. He can't borrow you any money. \_\_\_\_\_
111. I resigned from my piano lessons. \_\_\_\_\_
112. I have been to my work today. \_\_\_\_\_
113. Jane's hat I found. \_\_\_\_\_
114. Have you any money? \_\_\_\_\_
115. She is waiting on him. \_\_\_\_\_
116. She was born in one thousand, nine hundred and ninety-eight year. \_\_\_\_\_
117. Go from here! \_\_\_\_\_
118. I feel well in this city. \_\_\_\_\_
119. If I would have some money, I would buy a car. \_\_\_\_\_
120. Moment! \_\_\_\_\_

## Test 4

*There is one error in each sentence below. Write each sentence correctly:*

121. I listen rock music. \_\_\_\_\_
122. I spoke to my friend for hours yesterday. \_\_\_\_\_
123. I was learning playing guitar. \_\_\_\_\_
124. This test is making me nervous! \_\_\_\_\_
125. I dressed myself and went downstairs. \_\_\_\_\_
126. He used to said that he was good at sport. \_\_\_\_\_
127. Will be the manager at this meeting. \_\_\_\_\_
128. The company needs new workers. \_\_\_\_\_
129. Jo is in work. \_\_\_\_\_
130. Some of people were late today. \_\_\_\_\_
131. My brother is very high. \_\_\_\_\_
132. You don't thinking about it. \_\_\_\_\_
133. This is the friend about whom I was talking. \_\_\_\_\_
134. Where's my book? I can't find her. \_\_\_\_\_
135. This is your book, yes? \_\_\_\_\_
136. I'd like to work, for example, as a secretary. \_\_\_\_\_
137. See you on friday. \_\_\_\_\_
138. We found out how good student she is. \_\_\_\_\_
139. I tried to remind myself what happened. \_\_\_\_\_
140. I was to do some gardening in the afternoon. \_\_\_\_\_
141. I have twenty fingers. \_\_\_\_\_
142. I will must eat something. \_\_\_\_\_
143. We met another people at the party. \_\_\_\_\_
144. I read a book when the phone rang. \_\_\_\_\_
145. He told her that he doesn't want to meet up. \_\_\_\_\_
146. The life is hard. \_\_\_\_\_
147. I had so good time. \_\_\_\_\_
148. Always the taxis don't stop. \_\_\_\_\_
149. My car is better like yours. \_\_\_\_\_
150. He lied me. \_\_\_\_\_
151. Where is my telephone? \_\_\_\_\_
152. I'm trying to lose my weight. \_\_\_\_\_
153. I could not be a pilot, never. \_\_\_\_\_
154. Don't cry at me! \_\_\_\_\_
155. She was angry on her brother. \_\_\_\_\_
156. It is a quite good job. \_\_\_\_\_
157. She said me that we had homework to do. \_\_\_\_\_
158. They will surprised! \_\_\_\_\_
159. Hello. Come in. Sit down. \_\_\_\_\_
160. I'm renovating my flat. \_\_\_\_\_

## Answers to tests 1-4

## Marking guide

Suggested pass mark: 40% and above

Suggested grading: Score (/ 40)

A	Excellent	37 - 40
B	Very Good	33 - 36
C	Good	29 - 32
D	Fair	23 - 28
E	Poor	16 - 22
F	Fail	0 - 15

For percentage marks, see below. To calculate the percentage: [score] x 2.5 = %

Half marks may be given at the teacher's discretion!

No. correct answers:                      Percentage marks:

0		0%
1	F	2.5%
2		5%
3		7.5%
4		10%
5		12.5%
6	15%	
7	17.5%	
8	20%	
9	22.5%	
10	25%	
11	27.5%	
12	30%	
13	32.5%	
14	35%	
15	37.5%	
16		40%
17	E	42.5%
18		45%
19		47.5%
20		50%
21		52.5%
22	55%	
23		57.5%
24	D	60%
25		62.5%
26		65%
27		67.5%
28	70%	
29		72.5%
30	C	75%
31		77.5%
32		80%
33		82.5%
34	B	85%
35		87.5%
36		90%
37		92.5%
38	A	95%
39		97.5%
40		100%

Note for teachers:

When marking the test it is, of course, up to you how strict you are with your students' work. You will need to decide whether to demand the exact word-for-word answers on the following four pages, or whether to allow leeway.

For example, if the student has written the answer to #5:

You're right.

while the stated answer on p.22 is:

You are right.

you may decide that the student's answer is close enough. So, contractions may be allowed – or you may not allow them. You should tell your students what is expected of them before they begin a test.

Similarly, you may allow paraphrasing, or you may not. For example, the answer to #91 is 'I train at the gym every day', but you might allow: 'I train at a gym every day.' The meaning is slightly different (the gym is not specific; perhaps not the same gym every day), but the error (no article) has been corrected.

Another example is the answer to #112: 'I have been to work today', which the student might paraphrase as: 'I have been at work today.' The error ('to my work') has been corrected, but the answer differs from that printed on p.24.

You may allow differences to the printed answers on the following pages if the student has properly corrected the error, used correct English, and it makes sense... Or you may not!

You may also want to devise your own pass mark and grading system.

It depends on you as the teacher, and what you expect from your students. Of course, it also depends on their level and what you all hope to gain from the exercise.



## Answers to Test 1:

*These are the correct sentences:*

1. I like learning English.
2. This is my favourite film.
3. Me and my friend went to the meeting.
4. All politicians are liars!
5. You are right.
6. I was at home last night.
7. 'We have to leave now.' 'OK. No problem.'
8. We had two homework assignments.
9. 'Where's John?' 'He's gone (back) home.'
10. Her dress is the same as mine.
11. I bought some bread.
12. He prepared dinner for the whole family.
13. I agree.
14. 'Shall we watch a film?' 'I'd rather not.'
15. Everybody has left.
16. He probably went to Germany.
17. Brenda cooks very well.
18. I was at a concert yesterday.
19. We drove to my auntie's home.
20. Lubawa is a town.
21. I really like England.
22. Mike called her last night.
23. It was very interesting for me.
24. I have to take care of my daughter.
25. I can smell gas in the kitchen.
26. He is twenty years old.
27. I don't think I was late.
28. Please contact me.
29. That vacation was really fun.
30. I did not have enough time.
31. If he calls, I will tell him.
32. He took a photo.
33. My wife gave birth to my daughter yesterday.
34. The hotel was also quite nice.
35. The truth is that I don't like him.
36. I went to Scotland last weekend.
37. I can't imagine working there.
38. What are you doing?
39. Do you lock your front door at night?
40. It is OK for me.

*Find out more:*

- p.27  
p.27  
p.27  
p.28  
p.28  
p.28  
p.29  
p.29  
p.29  
p.30  
p.30  
p.30  
p.31  
p.31  
p.31  
p.32  
p.32  
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p.35  
p.35  
p.35  
p.36  
p.36  
p.36  
p.37  
p.37  
p.37  
p.38  
p.38  
p.38  
p.39  
p.39  
p.40  
p.40  
p.40

*If you got this wrong, you should revise:*

- to + infinitive vs. gerund  
'favourites' vocabulary  
'I' and 'me'  
'politics' vs. 'politicians'  
'have' vs. 'be'  
prepositions  
cultural references  
countable and uncountable nouns  
use of 'back'  
comparative forms  
articles  
'all' vs. 'whole'  
present simple  
'rather not'  
'all people' vs. 'everybody'  
position of adverbs  
'good' vs. 'well'  
prepositions  
possessive 's'  
'town' vs. 'city'  
'very' vs. 'really'  
prepositions  
word order  
phrasal verbs  
'feel' vs. 'smell'  
'have' vs. 'be'  
use of 'I think so'  
prepositions  
'funny' vs. 'fun'  
negative forms  
first conditional  
'make' vs. 'take'  
'give birth'  
word order  
'true' vs. 'truth'  
'be in' vs. 'go to'  
to + infinitive vs. gerund  
present continuous  
'close' vs. 'lock'  
use of 'it' as a subject

## Answers to Test 2:

*These are the correct sentences:*

41. I must go home.
42. Someone else did it.
43. See you tomorrow, as usual.
44. Good morning, Lisa. / ...Bob.
45. Jill laughed at her friend.
46. I have got a lot of fuel.
47. We will learn more.
48. We're waiting for a bus at the moment.
49. I went out last weekend.
50. I think we can get it.
51. She gets the bus every day.
52. We know how it should look.
53. I went to the gym. My friend does that kind of thing.
54. The teacher gave me a good mark.
55. I feel safer here.
56. There were four people in the taxi.
57. I can't meet you for a beer tonight.
58. There are many differences.
59. I don't know what I should do.
60. 'Shall we go out?' 'Yes, I think so.'
61. This is the school that my friend attends.
62. What time did you leave work?
63. They like dancing, don't they?
64. 'How are you?' 'Fine thanks. And you?'
65. I don't have enough money.
66. I heard a lot of information.
67. Tom wore smart clothes to the interview.
68. Then I went to the other shop.
69. He was standing there, by the door.
70. I got the best mark in my class.
71. I train because I want to take care of my body.
72. I looked on the internet.
73. 'How was the meeting?' 'It was good.'
74. I did some shopping.
75. What could they do?
76. Do you want me to help you?
77. We had a nice picnic by the lake.
78. I asked him twice.
79. I have many things to do.
80. I have been living in Warsaw since 2010.

*Find out more:*

- p.41  
p.41  
p.41  
p.42  
p.42  
p.43  
p.43  
p.43  
p.44  
p.44  
p.45  
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p.52  
p.53  
p.53  
p.54  
p.54  
p.54  
p.55  
p.55  
p.55

*If you got this wrong, you should revise:*

- prepositions  
word order  
'usually' vs. 'usual'  
'Mr', 'Mrs', and 'Ms'  
phrasal verbs  
countable and uncountable nouns  
future simple  
prepositions  
prepositions  
word order  
present simple  
'look like' vs. 'look'  
'such things' vs. 'that kind of thing'  
one subject in a sentence  
word order  
'persons' vs. 'people'  
contractions  
'it is' vs. 'there are'  
inversion  
use of 'I think so'  
defining relative clauses  
prepositions  
question tags  
greetings  
negative forms  
countable and uncountable nouns  
'elegant' vs. 'smart'  
'come' vs. 'go'  
'stay' vs. 'stand'  
articles  
'organism' vs. 'body'  
prepositions  
use of 'it' as a subject  
'make' vs. 'do'  
question forms  
subjunctive mood  
prepositions  
'twice'  
'much' vs. 'many'  
present perfect continuous

## Answers to Test 3:

*These are the correct sentences:*

*Find out more:*

*If you got this wrong, you should revise:*

81. What is the time?	p.56	'hour' vs. 'time'
82. Can I look at that photo?	p.56	'watch' vs. 'look at'
83. I've worked here for five days.	p.57	'since' vs. 'for'
84. I found a great website on the internet.	p.57	'page' vs. 'website'
85. My brother plays the trumpet.	p.57	prepositions
86. I think that was our bus.	p.58	word order
87. My bike is much bigger than yours.	p.58	comparative forms
88. What does 'radio' mean?	p.59	question forms
89. I need to get a new job.	p.59	'work' vs. 'job'
90. Please wait until your brother gets home.	p.59	use of 'until'
91. I train at the gym every day.	p.60	articles
92. My little brother is learning the alphabet.	p.60	'teach' vs. 'learn'
93. They didn't come to see me.	p.60	past simple negative form
94. He says everything (that) he thinks.	p.61	defining relative clauses
95. I let her borrow my book.	p.61	to + infinitive vs. bare infinitive
96. You can just get out!	p.62	position of 'just'
97. There was good food at the party.	p.62	'eat' vs. 'food'
98. I have a question for you.	p.63	prepositions
99. 'What's the time?' 'It's half past seven.'	p.63	telling the time
100. I'm not interested in football.	p.63	-ed and -ing adjectives
101. I don't have much time.	p.64	negative forms
102. I met them only once.	p.64	'once'
103. People can collect almost anything.	p.64	'everything' vs. 'anything'
104. My friend is coming to visit this weekend.	p.65	present continuous
105. I did not feel well.	p.65	negative forms
106. We drank wine last night.	p.65	countable and uncountable nouns
107. He will be late, won't he?	p.66	question tags
108. My arm hurts.	p.66	'pain' vs. 'hurt'
109. He is the mayor of our town.	p.66	'president' vs. 'mayor'
110. He can't lend you any money.	p.67	'borrow' vs. 'lend'
111. I've quit my piano lessons.	p.67	'resign from' vs. 'quit'
112. I have been to work today.	p.68	use of 'my'
113. I found Jane's hat.	p.68	word order
114. Do you have any money?	p.68	present simple
115. She is waiting for him.	p.69	prepositions
116. She was born in nineteen ninety-eight.	p.69	dates
117. Get out!	p.70	phrasal verbs
118. I feel good in this city.	p.70	'well' vs. 'good'
119. If I had some money, I would buy a car.	p.70	second conditional
120. Hang on a minute!	p.71	idioms

## Answers to Test 4:

*These are the correct sentences:*

121. I listen to rock music.
122. I talked to my friend for hours yesterday.
123. I was learning to play the guitar.
124. This test is making me annoyed!
125. I got dressed and went downstairs.
126. He used to say that he was good at sport.
127. The manager will be at this meeting.
128. The company needs new employees.
129. Jo is at work.
130. Some people were late today.
131. My brother is very tall.
132. You aren't thinking about it.
133. This is the friend I was talking about.
134. Where's my book? I can't find it.
135. This is your book, isn't it?
136. I'd like to work as a secretary, for example.
137. See you on Friday.
138. We found out how good a student she is.
139. I tried to remember what happened.
140. I was going to do some gardening in the afternoon.
141. I have eight fingers, two thumbs, and ten toes.
142. I must eat something.
143. We met other people at the party.
144. I was reading a book when the phone rang.
145. He told her that he didn't want to meet up.
146. Life is hard.
147. I had such a good time.
148. The taxis never stop.
149. My car is better than yours.
150. He lied to me.
151. Where is my phone?
152. I'm trying to lose weight.
153. I could never be a pilot.
154. Don't shout at me!
155. She was angry with her brother.
156. It is quite a good job.
157. She told me that we had homework to do.
158. They will be surprised!
159. Hello. Please come in. Would you like to take a seat?
160. I'm redecorating my flat.

*Find out more:*

- p.71
- p.72
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- p.88

*If you got this wrong, you should revise:*

- phrasal verbs
- 'speak' vs. 'talk'
- to + infinitive vs. gerund
- 'nervous' vs. 'annoyed'
- reflexive pronouns
- used to + infinitive
- word order
- 'worker' vs. 'employee'
- prepositions
- use of 'some'
- 'high' vs. 'tall'
- present continuous
- final preposition
- object pronouns
- question tags
- word order
- capitalisation
- articles
- 'remind' vs. 'remember'
- future in the past
- cultural differences
- modal verbs
- 'another' vs. 'other'
- past continuous
- reported speech
- articles
- 'so' vs. 'such'
- negative forms
- comparative forms
- prepositions
- 'telephone' vs. 'phone'
- use of 'my'
- word order
- 'cry' vs. 'shout'
- prepositions
- articles
- 'say' vs. 'tell'
- future simple
- polite language
- 'renovate' vs. 'redecorate'

## Discussion of the errors

#1 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	I like learning English.
Polish:	<i>Lubię uczyć się angielskiego.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I like teach myself English.
Error:	I like learn English.

We use the infinitive form of the verb – the base form – in present simple when the subject is: ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘we’, and ‘they’. It is not possible to put two infinitive verbs together in an English sentence, for example: ‘like learn’. You could put preposition ‘to’ between them (‘I like to learn’), but after ‘like’ it may be more natural to use a gerund – an ing noun, i.e. ‘learning’ ‘I like’ + noun = ‘I like something’. There is no preposition ‘to’ in the Polish translation, so it would be easy to make this error when translating from Polish to English.

#2 *Wrong word recalled*

Correction:	This is my favourite film.
Polish:	<i>To jest mój ulubiony film.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	It is my favourite film.
Error:	This is my the best film.

In Polish it is possible to say both ‘To jest mój ulubiony film’ (‘This is my favourite film’) and ‘To jest mój najlepszy film’ (‘This is my the best film’) and mean the same thing. In English, the sentence ‘This is my the best film’ is incorrect because it falls between two correct sentences: ‘This is my favourite film’ and ‘This is the best film.’ We have to choose either of these sentences, rather than merge them together. The first sentence is probably the best, because it is more subjective; you are saying that this is your opinion, rather than making a definitive statement that something is ‘the best’. It is not possible to do that, because everybody’s taste is different. This error may have been caused by the student not being able to remember the word ‘favourite’.

#3 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	Me and my friend went to the meeting.
Polish:	<i>Ja i mój przyjaciel poszliśmy na spotkanie.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I and my friend went on meeting.
Error:	I and my friend went to the meeting.

In Polish ‘ja’ can mean both ‘I’ and ‘me’, so this is a translation error. In English we can say either ‘Me and my friend’ or ‘My friend and I’ (to be more polite), but not ‘I and my friend’. The subject pronoun ‘I’ cannot be first in the order, if it is with another subject, but there is no such limitation in Polish.

#### #4 *False friends*

Correction:	All politicians are liars!
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Wszyscy politycy są kłamcami.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	All politicians are liars!
Error:	All politics are liars!

In Polish, the word for ‘politician’ is ‘polityk’, which looks and sounds almost the same as the English word ‘politics’. ‘Politics’ is an abstract noun that means the entire topic of government and the people who work in government – ‘politicians’. The student has perhaps learned the word ‘politics’, and assumed that it means the same as their Polish word ‘polityk’. This is a false friend – a word in one language that looks or sounds like a word in another language, but they do not share the same meaning. We need to learn the most common false friends in Polish and English to avoid falling into this kind of trap! (See p.12 for more false friends.) The actual phrase ‘All politics are liars!’ would not make sense in Polish: ‘Wszystkie polityki są kłamcami’, because only people can tell lies.

#### #5 *Errors with tenses*

Correction:	You are right.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Masz rację.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	You have right.
Error:	You have right.

This error has been caused by the student translating directly from Polish into English. In Polish they use the verb ‘have’ to make this statement, while in English we use ‘be’. In Polish the sentence is expressed as a matter of possession: ‘You have right’, while in English the sentence is expressed as a state of being: ‘You are right.’ This error is similar to #26, in which the Polish phrase uses ‘have’ but the English version uses ‘be’. The student should avoid translating directly from Polish into English, but rather treat them as different languages.

#### #6 *Differences in the use of prepositions*

Correction:	I was at home last night.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Byłem w domu zeszłej nocy.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I was in home last night.
Error:	I was in home last night.

This is a direct translation error, with the student choosing the Polish preposition ‘in’ instead of the correct English preposition ‘at’. We think of ‘home’ as a place where we are ‘at’ – where we are *located* – rather than a 3D environment that we exist ‘in’.

#7 *Different concepts in Polish and English*

Correction:	'We have to leave now.' 'OK. No problem.'
Polish:	'Musimy już iść.' 'OK. Nie ma problemu.'
Word for Word Translation:	'We must now go.' 'OK. Not I have problem.'
Error:	'We have to leave now.' 'OK, let it be.'

Clearly the student has picked up the phrase 'Let it be' from popular culture (albeit from nearly fifty years ago) and decided to use it in their everyday speech. By using this phrase the student draws attention to their lack of understanding of popular culture, rather than their knowledge of it, because no English native speaker would use this dated phrase in daily conversation. It is only ever heard in English as part of the famous song of the same name. More natural phrases that the student should learn and use instead might include: 'No problem', 'That's fine', and simply, 'OK'.

#8 *Countable in Polish, but uncountable in English*

Correction:	We had two homework assignments.
Polish:	<i>Zadano nam dwie prace domowe.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Gave us two homeworks.
Error:	We had two homeworks.

In English, the noun 'homework' is uncountable, so it does not have a plural form: 'homeworks' is not possible. However, in Polish it *is* countable and we *could* say 'two homeworks' = 'dwie prace domowe'. The student must be more resourceful and think of the *English way* to say this phrase. There are various possibilities, including: 'We had two pieces of homework', 'We had some homework', and even: 'We had double homework.' The clearest option is probably the correct sentence given above. (See p.11 for more words that are countable in Polish but uncountable in English.)

#9 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	'Where's John?' 'He's gone (back) home.'
Polish:	'Gdzie jest Jan?' 'Wrócił do domu.'
Word for Word Translation:	'Where is John?' 'He went to home.'
Error:	'Where's John?' 'He's back to home.'

In English we use 'go' rather than 'be' to say that somebody has changed location: 'He's gone home' not 'He is home', as in the error. The use of present perfect indicates that the action has happened recently. There are no perfect tenses in Polish, so 'He has gone...' has no equivalent translation. We do not add preposition 'to' before 'home', unlike in Polish. It is hard to know why the Polish student has inserted the adverb 'back' as if it is a past



particle verb in either present perfect or passive voice. It may be that the student has remembered the phrases 'go back' or 'come back' and has simply shortened it, losing the verb in the process.

#10 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	Her dress is the same as mine.
Polish:	<i>Jej sukienka jest taka sama jak moja.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Her dress is same like mine.
Error:	Her dress is the same like mine.

The English phrases – 'the same as' / 'the same like' – have the same translation in Polish: 'taka sama jak'. The student has forgotten which English phrase is correct: 'the same as...' Perhaps they have remembered the phrase 'like mine' – for example: 'Her dress is like mine' – and used it in error with 'the same'. The collocation in English is always: 'the same as' and will never be 'the same like.'

#11 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	I bought some bread.
Polish:	<i>Kupiłem chleb.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I bought bread.
Error:	I bought a bread.

Bread is uncountable in English, so you cannot use an article which means 'one' (a or an). In this sentence, you could use 'some bread' or zero article (bread). If the context is specific, you should use 'the bread'. There aren't any articles in Polish, nor are there uncountable nouns, so the phrase 'Kupiłem chleb' is simpler to make. By saying 'I bought a bread', the student has remembered that there is often an article before a noun, but forgotten that bread is uncountable and that the context is general.

#12 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	He prepared dinner for the whole family.
Polish:	<i>On przygotował obiad dla całej rodziny.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	He prepared dinner for all family.
Error:	He prepared dinner for all family.

The problem is with 'all'. In Polish there is one word for 'all' and 'whole' – 'całej', and no articles, like 'the'. We cannot say 'all family' because the context is specific – 'the family' – so 'all the family' is correct. We have another option too – 'whole'. However, this time article 'the' comes before 'whole' – 'the whole family.' We only use 'all' + noun without 'the' when we are talking about things in general, e.g. 'all kittens are cute', so 'all families' is possible, but in a different context, for example: 'all families are different'.

#13 *Errors with tenses*

Correction:	I agree.
Polish:	<i>Zgadzam się.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I agree.
Error:	I'm agree.

This error may have happened because the student was not aware that 'agree' is a state verb, therefore it does not have a continuous form (with ing form). We cannot say 'I'm agreeing', only 'I agree.' The student settles for an incorrect compromise between present continuous ('I'm agree' – with auxiliary verb 'be') and present simple ('I agree').

#14 *Direct translation errors*

Correction:	'Shall we watch a film?' 'I'd rather not.'
Polish:	<i>'Będziemy oglądać film?' 'Raczej nie.'</i>
Word for Word Translation:	'We will watch film?' 'Rather no.'
Error:	'Shall we watch a film?' 'Rather no.'

The student has simply translated the Polish phrase 'raczej nie' ('rather no / not') into English, without considering the polite verb phrase that precedes it: 'I'd' = 'I would'. The Polish word 'nie' means both 'no' and 'not', so here the student has chosen the wrong option: 'rather no' instead of 'rather not'. A better choice would have been to say 'No' or 'No thanks' to the suggestion, for example: 'Shall we watch a film?' 'No thanks.' The phrase 'raczej nie' also translates into English as 'preferably not', which could be used as a stand-alone answer to the suggestion – without a pronoun – but the student did not translate it that way. It is highly possible that the student has mis-learned the phrase 'rather no' from the Polish 'raczej nie' and does not get corrected for it by native speakers of English, because the meaning is clear, so 'Why bother?'

#15 *In Polish but not in English*

Correction:	Everybody has left.
Polish:	<i>Wszyscy ludzie wyszli.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	All people left.
Error:	All people have left.

In English 'all people' means all people in the whole world. We could use 'all the people' to mean all the specific people at the event, but not 'all people'. The reason is that we have one single word that is a better choice than 'all the people': everybody. Also, when Polish students pronounce 'all people' it can end up sounding very like 'old people', so the resulting phrase, e.g. 'Old people played football after school', can end up sounding nonsensical.

#16 *Word order*

Correction:	He probably went to Germany.
Polish:	<i>Prawdopodobnie wyjechał do Niemiec.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Probably he went to Germany.
Error:	Probably he went to Germany.

This error concerns the position of adverbs in an English sentence. In English, we cannot start a sentence with the adverb ‘probably’, although this is permitted in Polish. In English, ‘probably’ goes before the main verb, as in the correct sentence above, unless that main verb is ‘be’, when it goes after the main verb, e.g. ‘They are probably at the cinema.’

#17 *Wrong word recalled*

Correction:	Brenda cooks very well.
Polish:	<i>Brenda gotuje bardzo dobrze.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Brenda cooks very well.
Error:	Brenda cooks very good.

In English, an adjective describes a noun, while an adverb describes a verb (action). In this sentence the speaker is talking about how Brenda ‘cooks’ (verb), so it is necessary to use an adverb (‘well’). ‘Well’ is the adverb form of the adjective ‘good’. We usually use an adverb to describe an action, for example, we say: ‘Adam walks quickly’, not ‘Adam walks quick.’ There aren’t any nouns in this sentence, so we cannot use ‘good’. If there were, we could, for example: ‘Brenda cooks very *good meals*.’

#18 *Differences in the use of prepositions*

Correction:	I was at a concert yesterday.
Polish:	<i>Byłam wczoraj na koncercie.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I was yesterday on concert.
Error:	I was on a concert yesterday.

In English we usually use the preposition ‘at’ for places: ‘I was at school / at home / at work / at a football match / at a concert...’ etc. We use the preposition ‘on’ to talk about platforms (raised levels), e.g. ‘I was on a bus / on a train / on a plane...’ etc. If you say that you were ‘on’ something, then we think that you mean physically on top of it, and your sentence can sound surreal, e.g. ‘I was on a concert yesterday’ = ‘What? You were sitting on the roof?’ We also use ‘on’ to talk about media platforms, e.g. ‘It was on TV / on the radio / on the internet / on a website...’ and so on. In fact there is not one single equivalent preposition for ‘at’ in Polish. Instead they use different prepositions in different situations. For example, in the phrase ‘at school’, the Polish word used for ‘at’ is ‘w’, which means ‘in’ in English: ‘w szkole’.

#19 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	We drove to my auntie's home.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Pojechaliśmy do domu cioci.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	We drove to home auntie.
Error:	We drove to the home of my auntie.

In this error the student has copied the word order from Polish ('home auntie'), rather than forming a possessive phrase with possessive 's': 'my aunt's home.' We normally use apostrophe 's' – to denote possession between somebody and their belongings: 'John's car', not 'car of John'; 'My sister's cat', not 'cat of my sister', etc. In general, when talking about things that belong to things, we can use the other method with 'of', for example: 'the top of the stairs' (not 'the stairs' top') and 'the word of the day' (not 'the day's word'). The student needs to learn when to use apostrophe 's' to talk about things that belong to people, rather than simply translating from Polish into English.

#20 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	Lubawa is a town.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Lubawa jest miastem.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Lubawa is city [or town].
Error:	Lubawa is a small city.

'Miasto' is the Polish word for both 'town' and 'city'. The student has therefore tried to differentiate between the two by calling Lubawa a 'small city'. Perhaps they did not know the separate English word 'town'. In English a place is usually a 'city' when it has a university and/or a cathedral, and – as a consequence – a large population. While there are, technically, small cities by population in England, such as Wells in Somerset (pop. 10,406), we usually think of cities as big, bustling places, so the phrase 'small city' stands out as an oxymoron – a phrase that contradicts itself.

#21 *Direct translation errors*

Correction:	I really like England.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Bardzo lubię Anglię.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Very I like England.
Error:	I very like England.

In Polish it is a normal collocation to say that 'I very like' something: 'Bardzo lubię.' The student has translated directly from Polish to English without considering differences between the two languages. In English 'very' is an adverb of degree that means 'to a high level'. We can use it before an adverb ('very clearly'); before an adjective ('very good'); and before a quantity phrase ('very much'), but not before a noun, as in this example: 'I

very like England'. In contrast, 'really' is an adverb that *does* collocate with verbs, especially verbs of like and dislike: 'I really like/love/hate this book!'

#22 *In Polish but not in English*

Correction:	Mike called her last night.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Mike zadzwonił do niej zeszłej nocy.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Mike called to her last night.
Error:	Mike called to her last night.

In Polish there is a preposition ('do' = 'to') after the verb 'call' (or 'phone'), while in English there is not. We do not 'call to' somebody, but rather we 'call' them, or 'phone' them. We cannot assume that every element of a Polish sentence can be translated directly into English. This is an example of a sentence where there is a word in Polish ('do' = 'to') which is not there in the English translation.

#23 *Word order*

Correction:	It was very interesting for me.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>To było dla mnie bardzo interesujące.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	It was for me very interesting.
Error:	It was for me very interesting.

Word order in English is fairly strict and often conforms to a pattern with the acronym: SVOPT = subject, verb, object, place, and time, as in this sentence: 'I (S) ate (V) an apple (O) in the garden (P) yesterday (T).' Word order in English follows a logical and fairly predictable sequence, while in Polish a particular pattern of word order is far less important, as long as each chunk of information in the sentence is expressed. In this sentence we see the following: 'It (subject) was (verb) very interesting (complement) for me (adverbial of viewpoint).' In English it is highly unusual to see the adverbial in the middle of the sentence, as in the error sentence. It could occur, perhaps between dashes (or pauses): 'It was – for me – very interesting', but it is non standard. However, in Polish it is permitted, so the error has been caused by the student translating directly from Polish into English, without considering English word order.

#24 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	I have to take care of my daughter.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Muszę opiekować się moją córką.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I must take care my daughter.
Error:	I have to take care about my daughter.

The Polish verb + preposition collocation ‘zajmować się’ translates into English as ‘take care’. The student has used this (incorrect) translation, instead of the phrasal verb ‘take care of’, which would have been correct. There aren’t any phrasal verbs in Polish, so it is no wonder the student did this, rather than researching and learning common phrasal verbs in English.

#25 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	I can smell gas in the kitchen.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Czuję gaz w kuchni.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I smell gas in kitchen.
Error:	I can feel gas in the kitchen.

The Polish verb ‘czuć’ has three different meanings in English: feel, smell, and sniff. In this error the student has used the incorrect English meaning for the context. We cannot ‘feel gas’ because in English ‘feel’ is associated with either *emotion* – ‘I feel good’ – or touching/the touch of a *physical* object – ‘I feel the rain on my face.’ In the correct sentence the context is not connected with emotion, and gas is not physical. We *can* smell it, however, so the student should have chosen the correct word ‘smell’. ‘Sniff’ is incorrect, because it would make the sentence into a display of skill: ‘It is possible for me to sniff gas’, whereas the most likely interpretation of the context is that there is a gas leak in the kitchen, which has been detected by the speaker’s sense of smell.

#26 *Errors with tenses*

Correction:	He is twenty years old.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>On ma dwadzieścia lat</i>
Word for Word Translation:	He has twenty years.
Error:	He has twenty years old.

In Polish it is the convention to use ‘have’ when talking about age, rather than ‘be’. The student has translated from Polish, without considering that English is a different language with different rules. In Polish, the word ‘lat’ derives from ‘summer’ (‘lato’), so when you think of the sentence as meaning ‘He has twenty summers’, the use of ‘have’ rather than ‘be’ makes logical sense. This was used more often in the past, but not so much today. We do not use this charming figurative phrase in English, except perhaps in poetry or lyrics. We also add

the word 'old' after years. This is a standard collocation, but we can also shorten it to: 'He is twenty'. We never say 'He is twenty years.'

#27 *Direct translation errors*

Correction:	I don't think I was late.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Nie sądzę, że się spóźniłem.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I don't think so I was late.
Error:	I don't think so I was late.

In English the idiomatic phrase 'I think so' can only appear at the end of a clause or sentence, not in the middle of one, as in this error. The exchange might go: 'Were you late?' 'No, I don't think so', or 'Yes, I think so.' We would never say: 'No, I don't think so I was late.' In Polish the word 'so' can form a phrase with 'think' and appear anywhere in the sentence, so the student – translating from Polish into English, as usual – makes this error.

#28 *In Polish but not in English*

Correction:	Please contact me.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Proszę skontaktuj się ze mną.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Please contact with me.
Error:	Please contact with me.

It is necessary to add the preposition 'with' after 'contact' in Polish, whereas in English it is not required. The student has simply copied the form – incorrectly – from Polish and made the error.

#29 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	That vacation was really fun.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Te wakacje były naprawdę zabawne.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	That vacation was really funny.
Error:	That vacation was really funny.

The Polish adjective 'zabawne' has two different meanings in English, so the student has misread the context of the sentence and used the wrong word: 'funny'. We think of something 'fun' as being enjoyable and pleasurable. An activity is fun, for example. However, if something is 'funny' it makes us laugh – there is a physical response: laughter. A moment can be funny, for example. While there may have been funny moments during the vacation, it is very unlikely that the speaker was laughing continuously for days during the one- or two- week holiday period.

#30 *Using a positive form to make a negative sentence*

Correction:	I did not have enough time.
Polish:	<i>Miałem niewystarczająco dużo czasu.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I had not enough a lot time.
Error:	I had too little time.

In Polish, word order is far more flexible than in English. It is possible to say this sentence with a positive main verb – ‘I had not enough time’ = ‘Miałem niewystarczająco czasu’ – or a negative main verb: ‘I did not have enough time’ = ‘Nie miałem tyle czasu.’ In English we generally start a sentence that has a negative meaning with the negative form of the main verb: ‘I did not have...’ The student has thought to use the quantifier ‘too little’ correctly with the uncountable noun ‘time’, which is good. However, starting the sentence with ‘I had’ leads us to expect that the outcome will be positive, and the listener may be confused when it turns out to be negative. In Polish this is not an issue and you can say it either way, but in English it is incorrect and makes the speaker sound like a *foreign* speaker of English.

#31 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	If he calls, I will tell him.
Polish:	<i>Jeśli zadzwoni, powiem mu.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	If he calls, I tell him.
Error:	If he will call, I will tell him.

First conditional requires the following structure: ‘if + present simple’ in the first clause, then future simple (‘will + infinitive’) in the second clause. Of course, the order of clauses can be swapped. The student has to remember the fixed structure of each conditional. Here, the student has remembered that ‘will’ is used in first conditional, but not in which clause. Perhaps to be on the safe side, they have used it in both clauses.

#32 *Direct translation errors*

Correction:	He took a photo.
Polish:	<i>Zrobił zdjęcie.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	He made photo.
Error:	He made a photo.

This error is caused by the student translating directly from Polish. In Polish the correct collocation is ‘to make a photo’ (‘zrobić zdjęcie’) while in English we ‘take’ a photo. The student has not learned the correct collocation in English, but has instead relied upon translating from Polish. If you think about it, it is rather odd that we ‘take’ a photo in English. Where do we take it to? To the cinema?! The Polish ‘make’ may actually ‘make’ more



sense here, since in English, ‘make’ is usually connected with creation and production (see also #74). In any case, we must use the correct verb-noun collocation.

#33 *In Polish but not in English*

Correction:	My wife gave birth to my daughter yesterday.
Polish:	<i>Moja żona urodziła moją córkę wczoraj.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	My wife [borned*] my daughter yesterday.
Error:	My wife borned my daughter yesterday.

In Polish there is one verb that means ‘to give birth’: ‘urodzić’. The English construction is more complicated, using ‘give + birth + to’, so a direct translation is not possible. The student, keen as ever on direct translation, assumes that there is an equivalent verb in English (‘to born’) and guesses that it is regular, with an -ed ending for the past tense form (‘borned’). They are wrong!

*\*not an English word*

#34 *Word order*

Correction:	The hotel was also quite nice.
Polish:	<i>Hotel był również całkiem miły.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Hotel was also quite nice.
Error:	The hotel also was quite nice.

In this sentence the focusing adverb ‘also’ should go after the main verb ‘was’. The student may have understood that adverbs like ‘also’ often go before the main verb, but has forgotten the exception, which is verb ‘be’. If the main verb is ‘be’, the adverb usually goes after the main verb: ‘The hotel was also quite nice.’

#35 *Wrong word recalled*

Correction:	The truth is that I don’t like him.
Polish:	<i>Prawda jest taka, że go nie lubię.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Truth is such that him not I like.
Error:	The true is that I don’t like him.

The problem here is that the student has mixed up two similar-sounding English words ‘truth’ and ‘true’. ‘Truth’ is a noun and can be preceded by definite article ‘the’ – as in this sentence – while ‘true’ is an adjective and must go before a noun. We cannot say ‘the true is’, because a *noun* must follow an adjective, not a *verb*, e.g. ‘the true story.’ This is not a conflict with Polish, where ‘prawda’ (truth) is a noun and ‘prawdziwe’ is an adjective, but rather a mix up of the two similar-sounding words. They have exactly the same sounds, apart from

the unvoiced ‘th’ sound at the end of ‘truth’. Since this sound is one of the most difficult sounds in English for Polish students to master, it is no surprise that the student has tried to avoid it by simply omitting it. However, the omission of ‘th’ in truth leads to a vocabulary error, with the student pronouncing a related but different word: ‘true’.

#36 *Different concepts in Polish and English*

Correction:	I went to Scotland last weekend.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Byłem w Szkocji zeszłego weekendu.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I was in Scotland last weekend.
Error:	I was in Scotland last weekend.

In English, the concept of visiting a place is connected with the verb ‘go’. We ‘go’ to places, as in this sentence: ‘I went to Scotland last weekend.’ In Polish, it is normal to use the verb ‘be’ – to ‘be’ in a place, rather than ‘go’ to it. While the sentence ‘I was in Scotland last weekend’ is not grammatically wrong, it feels wrong and is probably not the choice an English native speaker would make to express this idea.

#37 *Traditional grammar errors*

Correction:	I can’t imagine working there.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Nie mogę sobie wyobrazić tam pracować.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Not I can myself imagine there to work.
Error:	I can’t imagine to work there.

There are some verbs in English that must be followed by a gerund rather than to + infinitive. For example: ‘enjoy’ (not ‘I enjoy to go...’), ‘avoid’ (not ‘She avoided to work...’), and ‘mind’ (not ‘I don’t mind to lend you...’) ‘Imagine’ is one of those verbs. We ‘imagine’ *something* – a *thing* – rather than a verb, so we use a gerund, which is an *ing noun* (see #69.) Although it looks the same as the *ing* form of the verb ‘work’, in this sentence ‘working’ is a noun. The Polish student has to learn collocations: which verbs can be followed by to + infinitive, and which have to be followed by a gerund. This is a problem for Polish students, but it’s one that can be fixed by learning lists of verbs on either side: ‘followed by a gerund’ or ‘followed by to + infinitive.’

#38 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	What are you doing?
Polish:	<i>Co robisz?</i>
Word for Word Translation:	What you do?
Error:	What you doing?

There are no auxiliary verbs (helping verbs) in Polish, so it can be hard for students to remember to use them in English. We use them to form tenses, including question forms and negative forms. In this sentence the tense is present continuous. We use 'be' as the auxiliary verb. We build a wh- question like this:

	wh-	+ auxiliary verb	+ subject	+ main verb
e.g.	What	are	you	doing?

In Polish there are no continuous tenses. The student has remembered the ing form ('doing') of the present continuous tense, but forgotten the auxiliary verb. You might argue that the meaning is clear without the auxiliary verb, so why use it? Unfortunately, we have to use them to be correct.

#39 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	Do you lock your front door at night?
Polish:	<i>Czy zamkniesz drzwi wejściowe na noc?</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Do you close door entrance on night?
Error:	Do you close your front door at night?

In Polish the word 'zamknąć' means both 'close' and 'lock', so the student has either failed to learn both different words in English, or not thought to use the more appropriate 'lock'. It is unlikely that a person would just 'close' their front door at night, rather than 'lock' it. Therefore the error sentence does not make sense.

#40 *Errors with tenses*

Correction:	It is OK for me.
Polish:	<i>To jest dla mnie OK.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	It is for me OK.
Error:	Is OK for me.

We usually need a subject before a verb in an English sentence. In this sentence 'it' is the subject of verb 'be': 'It is...'. In Polish we could say 'To jest dla mnie OK', but the word 'to' ('it') is often omitted (see also #73). Literally, 'it' is taken as read. English word order is less flexible than Polish word order, and if we try to do this in English it sounds wrong – 'Is OK for me'. We cannot simply translate directly from Polish to English.

#41 *In Polish but not in English*

Correction:	I must go home.
Polish:	<i>Muszę iść do domu.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I must go to home.
Error:	I must go to home.

This is a direct translation error, with the student adding the preposition ‘to’ before ‘home’, as it is in Polish. In this sentence ‘home’ is being used as an adverb of place rather than a noun, so we cannot use ‘to’ as we would before a noun, e.g. ‘I must go to the library.’ An adverb usually describes a verb – in this case ‘go’.

#42 *Word order*

Correction:	Someone else did it.
Polish:	<i>Zrobił to ktoś inny.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Did it someone different.
Error:	Did it someone else.

The fact that the student produced this error sentence as an example of English is a great example of how different word order is in Polish and English. While in English we generally adhere to the SVOPT word order – subject, verb, object, place, and time – word order in Polish is much looser and, as in this case, can create what looks to an English native speaker like a jumbled up sentence: ‘Did it someone else.’ However, this word order seems perfectly reasonable to a Polish native speaker. In English, the word order should be SVO (subject, verb, object): ‘Someone else (S) did (V) it (O).’ In general, the student should begin an English sentence with a person – either a name (e.g. ‘Emma’) or a pronoun (e.g. ‘She’, ‘I’, or ‘They’, etc.), then continue with the verb phrase, then the object – if there is one (if the verb is transitive there will be an object, if intransitive, such as ‘go’ there will not be) – then place and time at the end.

#43 *Wrong word recalled*

Correction:	See you tomorrow, as usual.
Polish:	<i>Do zobaczenia jutro, jak zwykle.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	See you later tomorrow, as usual.
Error:	See you tomorrow, as usually.

Here the student has mixed up the idiomatic phrase ‘as usual’ with the adverb of frequency ‘usually’. ‘As usual’ (‘jak zwykle’ in Polish) refers to an action that is habitual – for example, meeting somebody – while ‘usually’ means ‘regularly’. As an adverb, ‘usually’ describes a verb. We could say: ‘I usually see you every Monday’, but this sentence requires a time phrase (‘every Monday’), rather than an adverb. ‘See you tomorrow’ is imperative form, which deals with either now or the future. An adverb of frequency, like ‘usually’, ‘often’, or

'sometimes', does not fit, because they are most often used in present simple tense, e.g. 'We usually play tennis on Saturday afternoons.' In any case, the phrase 'as usually' does not exist in English.

#### #44 *Different concepts in Polish and English*

Correction:	Good morning, Lisa. / ...Bob.
Polish:	<i>Dzień dobry, pani Liso. / ...panie Bobie.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Good morning, Mrs Lisa. / ...Mr Bob.
Error:	Good morning, Mrs Lisa. / ...Mr Bob.

In Polish the words 'pani' (for females) and 'pan' (for males) are used to show respect when addressing people who are not family and friends by their first names. In English, this translates into phrases like the above: 'Good morning, Mr Bob!' and 'Hello, Mrs Lisa.' This is unheard of in English, and can sound comical to English ears. It may be that some English native speakers – including some English language teachers – enjoy this unusual respectful and formal mode of address, but it is nevertheless incorrect because it is not used in standard English. We use the titles 'Mr' and 'Mrs' when writing a formal email or letter, for example: 'Dear Mrs Webb...' but not in spoken English. A woman can use 'Ms' if she does not want to specify her marital status, while a girl can use the title 'Miss'.

#### #45 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	Jill laughed at her friend.
Polish:	<i>Jill śmiała się z przyjaciela.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Jill laughed herself from friend.
Error:	Jill laughed her friend at.

Phrasal verbs do not exist in Polish, so it is unsurprising that the student has made an error here. Instead of phrasal verbs they use normal verbs in Polish, e.g. 'laugh at' translates as 'śmiać się', simply 'to laugh'. 'Phrasal verbs are either transitive – they have an object, e.g. 'put up with (something)' – or intransitive: they do not have an object, e.g. 'go out'. However, there is another layer of difficulty that students have to watch out for: transitive verbs (with objects) can be either separable – the object may go before or after the particle (the second word), e.g. 'bring (children) up' – or inseparable: the object *has to* go after the particle, e.g. 'stand by (somebody)', *not* 'stand (somebody) by'. Since intransitive verbs do not have an object, they are neither separable nor inseparable. The situation is further complicated by the fact that many individual phrasal verbs have different meanings, which make them, in different situations, transitive separable, transitive inseparable, or intransitive. For example, 'fight back' can be intransitive (without an object): 'It is time to fight back!' or transitive inseparable: 'I fought back the tears' (*not* 'I fought the tears *back*'). It is no wonder that Polish students love to study phrasal verbs! In this error, the phrasal verb 'laugh at' is transitive inseparable, so the object *must go after the particle*. The student could not use the 'normal' verb 'laugh' instead of the phrasal verb: 'Jill laughed her friend' would be incorrect. Remember that English is a rich language which contains many

ways of expressing the same meaning. When learning lists of phrasal verbs, you should learn not only the spellings and meanings, but also whether they are transitive separable, transitive inseparable, or intransitive – or the form varies depending on the context.

#### #46 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	I have got a lot of fuel.
Polish:	<i>Mam dużo paliwa.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I have much fuel.
Error:	I have got much fuel.

The English phrase ‘a lot of’ and the word ‘much’ are the same word in Polish: ‘dużo’. In English, ‘much’ is used with uncountable nouns, while ‘a lot of’ is used with both countable and uncountable nouns. ‘Fuel’ is an uncountable noun, but we do not use ‘much’ in positive sentences, only in negative sentences and question forms, so the following sentences would have been correct: ‘I haven’t got much fuel’ and ‘Have you got much fuel?’ but not the positive form ‘I have got much fuel.’

#### #47 *Errors with tenses*

Correction:	We will learn more.
Polish:	<i>Będziemy uczyć się więcej.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	We will learn ourselves more.
Error:	We will be learn more.

In English, there must be an infinitive verb after ‘will’, but there cannot be two infinitive verbs together in a sentence, so ‘We will be learn...’ is not possible. It may be that the student is confused about future tenses and has got caught somewhere between future simple – ‘We will learn more’ – and future continuous, which uses ‘be’ + ing form: ‘We will be learning more.’ In any case, it is not necessary to use the infinitive verb ‘be’ in future simple.

#### #48 *Direct translation errors*

Correction:	We’re waiting for a bus at the moment.
Polish:	<i>Czekamy na autobus w tej chwili.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	We wait on bus in this moment.
Error:	We’re waiting for a bus at this moment.

This error is caused by the student translating directly from Polish into English, rather than learning and using correct English phrases. ‘At the moment’ means ‘now’ in English. ‘At *this* moment’ is *not a phrase* in English. This sentence actually provides a nice snapshot of some of the differences between Polish and English: 1)

'We're waiting' becomes 'We wait', because there are no continuous tenses in Polish; 2) and 3) 'for a bus' becomes 'on bus' because the use of prepositions differs and there are no articles in Polish; 4) 'at' becomes 'in', due to the aforementioned preposition differences; 5) 'the moment' becomes 'this moment' due to the absence of articles in Polish. This shows that there really is a lot for the student to remember if they want to speak English correctly. Opting for a mix of Polish and English ('Penglish') – 'We wait on bus in this moment.' – may be easier, and communicate what you want to say effectively, but it won't gain you any certificates.

#### #49 *In Polish but not in English*

Correction:	I went out last weekend.
Polish:	<i>Wyszedłem w ostatni weekend.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I went in last weekend.
Error:	I went out in last weekend.

We do not add a preposition before the phrase 'last weekend' because it is an adverbial of time rather than a noun phrase. In the same way we do not require a preposition ('in') before 'yesterday', 'tomorrow', or 'next year'. However, in Polish it is necessary to add the preposition 'w', which means 'in'. The student has translated directly from Polish to English, without considering the differences that exist with the use of prepositions. In addition, there are no phrasal verbs in Polish, so the English phrasal verb 'went out' is translated as simply 'went'. We need more information in the Polish translation regarding *where* this person went, whereas in English 'I went out' is often a short code for 'I went out for a drink with my friends/partner.'

#### #50 *Word order*

Correction:	I think we can get it.
Polish:	<i>Możemy to dostać, tak myślę.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	We can it get, so I think.
Error:	We can get it, I think.

Word order in Polish is far more flexible than in English. In the Polish version of the sentence the main verb is 'get' – 'We can it *get*, so I think' – while in English it is 'think': 'I *think* we can get it.' Because we want 'think' to be the main verb – the most important action – in the sentence, we put it first. The primary focus is on the subject 'I' and what the person thinks, while 'we can get it' is a secondary consideration. In Polish the phrase 'I think' can be at the beginning or at the end of the sentence – and perhaps even in the middle: 'We can, I think, get it.' The position depends on the emphasis the student wants to give. However, in English, due to word order rules, there is no possibility of such a verb phrase appearing at the end of the sentence.

#51 *Errors with tenses*

Correction:	She gets the bus every day.
Polish:	<i>Ona jeździ autobusem codziennie.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	She gets bus every day.
Error:	She get the bus every day.

We use two different verb forms in present simple: *infinitive* for ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘we’, and ‘they’, and *s form* for ‘he’, ‘she’, and ‘it’ (called third person). S form of the verb is usually just infinitive + ‘s’ – as in this sentence – sometimes infinitive + ‘es’ (e.g. ‘he watches’), and sometimes infinitive minus ‘y’ and + ‘ies’, as in ‘she flies.’ However, it is another thing for students to remember. The student has made present simple easier by using infinitive with each pronoun. It may be that they have made a conscious or unconscious decision to do that, and it has become the norm for them. They may reason that since the meaning is clear, it is good enough. However, ‘She get the bus every day’ is an obvious error and a beginner-level error at that. The student really ought to have *mastered* present simple tense by now.

#52 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	We know how it should look.
Polish:	<i>Wiemy, jak to powinno wyglądać.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	We know how it should look like.
Error:	We know how it should look like.

The Polish verb ‘wyglądać’ means both ‘look’ and ‘look like’ in English, so the student has made a direct translation error by choosing the wrong option. In English we cannot say ‘how does something look like?’ Instead we say ‘*What* does something look like?’ or ‘*How* does it look?’

#53 *Direct translation errors*

Correction:	I went to the gym. My friend does that kind of thing.
Polish:	<i>Poszedłem na siłownię. Mój przyjaciel robi takie rzeczy.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I went on gym. My friend does such things.
Error:	I went to the gym. My friend does such things.

While it is possible to use the phrase ‘such things’ in English, it is rather old fashioned and sounds like something from a 1950s grammar text book. We would always use a different phrase, for example: ‘My friend does things like that’, or ‘My friend does that kind of thing’ – or a different construction, like: ‘My friend goes as well.’ Therefore, using ‘such things’ is sure to mark the speaker out as a non-native speaker of English – with an outdated grammar book. This is not a direct translation error, because the phrase ‘that kind of thing’ is an English idiom, which does not appear in Polish.



#54 *In Polish but not in English*

Correction:	The teacher gave me a good mark.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Nauczyciel dał mi dobrą ocenę.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Teacher gave me good mark.
Error:	The teacher he gave me a good mark.

Polish students often begin an English sentence with a full subject (like ‘The teacher’), then add a corresponding pronoun as well (e.g. ‘he’), giving us two subjects: ‘The teacher he...’ In English there must only be one subject in the sentence, so the speaker has to decide which one to use. Usually the full subject is more descriptive, and therefore preferable, as in this sentence with ‘The teacher’, so the student should use that. In Polish, it is also wrong to use two subjects, so this may be a slang form. However, it is not a form of slang that occurs in English.

#55 *Word order*

Correction:	I feel safer here.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Czuję się bezpieczniej tutaj.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I feel myself safer here.
Error:	I feel here safer.

In this sentence the correct word order in English is: ‘I (subject) feel (verb) safer (complement) here (place).’ Generally, whatever else there is in a sentence, the place and time follow at the end. That’s why it is a surprise to see ‘here’ before the complement in the error sentence.

#56 *Wrong word recalled*

Correction:	There were four people in the taxi.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Były cztery osoby w taksówce.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Were four persons in taxi.
Error:	There were four persons in the taxi.

The usual plural form of ‘person’ is ‘people’, but we can use the word ‘persons’ in formal contexts, e.g. in written instructions – for example: ‘This lift is intended for use by a maximum of 12 persons’ – or in legal text – for example: ‘Several persons were seen near the bank on the night of the fourteenth of March.’ This means that the noun ‘person’ usually has an irregular plural form: not ‘persons’ but ‘people’. Similarly ‘man’ and ‘woman’ also have irregular plural forms: ‘men’ and ‘women’, not ‘mans’ and ‘womans’. Instead of adding the usual letter ‘s’ to make a noun plural, the student had to think of a different word, which complicated the process. In Polish, ‘czworo ludzi’ means ‘four people’, but it is not often used, because it is the masculine form, and the feminine form is easier to use with numbers: ‘cztery osoby’ = ‘four persons’, because there is no need to change

the form of the number from its original form ‘cztery’. In any case, a Polish speaker can use the words ‘people’ and ‘persons’ interchangeably, while in English ‘people’ is usually correct.

#57 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	I can't meet you for a beer tonight.
Polish:	<i>Nie mogę spotkać się dziś wieczorem na piwo.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Not I can meet this evening on beer.
Error:	I cannot meet you for a beer tonight.

There are no auxiliary verbs or contractions in Polish, so the system of using contractions to change the register to informal has to be learned from scratch. While we use full forms such as ‘cannot’ in formal writing – e.g. a formal email – contractions are very popular in spoken English, so in the original sentence it would be far too formal to say ‘I cannot meet’; rather we would say, ‘I *can't* meet’. Using a full form in an informal situation immediately marks the speaker out as a foreign speaker of English, so it is necessary to learn common contractions – such as ‘I’ve’ for ‘I have’, ‘He’s’ for ‘He is’, ‘We’d’ for ‘We would’, etc. – and remember when to use them, i.e. in informal conversation.

#58 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	There are many differences.
Polish:	<i>Jest wiele różnic.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	It is many differences.
Error:	It is many differences.

In English, the Polish sentence ‘Jest wiele różnic’ means either ‘There are many differences’ – which is correct – or ‘It is many differences’, which is not. The reason the latter is not correct is because the subject ‘it’ denotes a singular thing and as such does not agree with the plural phrase ‘many differences’. ‘It’ takes the singular verb form in present simple – ‘is’ – which also does not agree with the plural ‘many differences.’ The student has chosen the wrong option, without considering the disagreement between ‘it’ and ‘many differences’, which makes this a rather noticeable error.

#59 *Errors with tenses*

Correction:	I don't know what I should do.
Polish:	<i>Nie wiem, co mam robić.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I don't know what I have to do.
Error:	I don't know what should I do.

The correct sentence – ‘I don't know what I should do’ – is a statement, while in the error the student uses inversion (swapping the order) of subject (‘I’) and modal verb (‘should’) to create a direct question form: ‘...what should I do?’ This is completely unnecessary, because the sentence is not a question. The speaker is not asking for advice directly, although it could be an indirect question where the speaker requires an answer, without explicitly asking a question. On the other hand, it could be a private statement, with the speaker talking to themselves. More information about the context would be necessary to decide whether it was a kind of question or not.

#60 *Direct translation errors*

Correction:	‘Shall we go out?’ ‘Yes, I think so.’
Polish:	<i>‘Wyjdziemy?’ ‘Myślę, że tak.’</i>
Word for Word Translation:	‘We go out?’ ‘I think that yes.’
Error:	‘Shall we go out?’ ‘I think yes.’

This is a direct translation from Polish into English: ‘Myślę tak.’ = ‘I think yes’. Due to the more flexible word order, in Polish the reverse is also possible: ‘Tak myślę’ = ‘Yes I think.’ In English, the correct phrase is ‘I think so’, which is only possible at the end of a clause or sentence (see also #27). You could also answer this suggestion in a positive way with ‘Why not?’, ‘Yes, let's’, ‘Maybe’, or if you don't want to go out with them: ‘No.’

#61 *Direct translation errors*

Correction:	This is the school that my friend attends.
Polish:	<i>Jest to szkoła, do której uczęszcza mój przyjaciel.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Is it school to which attends my friend.
Error:	This is the school that attends my friend.

This error is caused by the student translating directly from Polish into English, rather than learning how to form relative clauses. The phrase ‘that my friend attends’ is a defining relative clause, directly referring to the word ‘school’. This kind of clause follows the same word order rules as a normal clause: subject + verb + object or complement, so the subject (‘my friend’) goes before the verb (‘attends’). There is no need for inversion, as in the Polish translation.

#62 *In Polish but not in English*

Correction:	What time did you leave work?
Polish:	<i>Kiedy wyszłaś z pracy?</i>
Word for Word Translation:	When you left from work?
Error:	What time did you leave from work?

We do not add a preposition (in this case ‘from’) before ‘work’, because ‘work’ is an adverb. It is the same with other similar adverbs: home, school, church, and so on. However, in Polish it is necessary to add an adverb (‘z’, which means ‘from’) before ‘work’. The student has translated directly from Polish to English, without considering the differences that exist with the use of prepositions.

#63 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	They like dancing, don’t they?
Polish:	<i>Lubią tańczyć, nie?</i>
Word for Word Translation:	They like to dance, no?
Error:	They like dancing, doesn’t they?

We use question tags in spoken English to ask somebody to confirm what we think: ‘They like dancing – is that true?’ ‘Yes, it is.’ If the main clause is positive, the question tag must be negative, and vice versa. Question tags are connected with the auxiliary verb of the tense used, so in present simple for ‘they’ the question tag will use ‘do’ or ‘don’t’ – as in the correct sentence. We cannot match ‘doesn’t’ with ‘they’, but only with third person (‘he’, ‘she’, or ‘it’). In Polish the equivalent forms of question tags are easier, and do not require any thought about the tense or the auxiliary verb: ‘[positive statement], tak?’ (‘yes?’) or the more informal ‘nie’ (‘no?’), or ‘...prawda?’ (‘...truth?’).

#64 *Different concepts in Polish and English*

Correction:	‘How are you?’ ‘Fine thanks. And you?’
Polish:	<i>‘Jak się masz?’ ‘Dobrze, dzięki.’ ‘A ty?’</i>
Word for Word Translation:	‘How you have?’ ‘Fine, thanks. And you?’
Error:	‘How are you?’ ‘Thanks, fine.’

In this error the student has got the word order wrong: ‘Thanks, fine’, should be ‘Fine, thanks.’ In Polish word order is more flexible, so ‘Thank you, fine’ (‘Dziękuję, w porządku’) is correct. In informal exchanges this sometimes gets shortened to just ‘Thanks’ or the more formal ‘Thank you’, so that when we ask how the student is, they simple reply ‘Thanks’ – which sounds odd and is incorrect in English. The most common exchange of greetings in English is the three-line classic:

- A: 'Hi, how are you?'
- B: 'Fine, thanks. And you?'
- A: 'Fine, thanks', or 'Not bad, thanks.'

This is purely a standardised way of saying 'hello' – we are not really interested in the other person's health, but it feels polite to ask. We do not give detailed information about *our* health, it is a purely *phatic communication*. In Polish, this exchange does not exist, which is why it can be confusing for students. If somebody does happen to ask about your health in Polish, it means that they want to hear about it, so you should tell them all the details! This error is made worse by the student forgetting to ask the other person how *they* are, which would be considered rude.

#65 *Using a positive form to make a negative sentence*

- Correction: I don't have enough money.
- Polish: *Mam niewystarczającą ilość pieniędzy.*
- Word for Word Translation: I have not enough quantity money.
- Error: I have too low money.

In Polish it is possible to express a negative idea using a positive verb form: '*I have too low money.*' In English it would be more natural to express a negative idea using a negative verb form, i.e. '*I don't have enough money.*' Also, the sentence '*I have too low money*' is not possible in English. The student should use the negative verb form for present simple with the appropriate auxiliary verb 'do': '*I don't have...*'

#66 *Countable in Polish, but uncountable in English*

- Correction: I heard a lot of information.
- Polish: *Słyszałem wiele informacji.*
- Word for Word Translation: I heard many informations.
- Error: I heard a lot of informations.

'Information' is an uncountable noun in English. We cannot have one, two, three – or more – 'informations'. However, in Polish it is a countable noun, so the student has made an error translating directly from Polish into English. It is hard to see how anybody could get or receive multiple 'informations' so this may be a case of a noun which is countable *in name only*, but in practice is also uncountable in Polish. (See p.11 for more words that are countable in Polish but uncountable in English.)

#67 *False friends*

Correction:	Tom wore smart clothes to the interview.
Polish:	<i>Tom miał na sobie eleganckie ubranie na wywiadzie.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Tom had on himself elegant clothes on interview.
Error:	Tom wore elegant clothes to the interview.

The same Polish word – ‘elegantki’ – means both ‘smart’ and ‘elegant’ in English. However, ‘elegantki’ and ‘elegant’ are false friends – we do not use them interchangeably. In English, a man or a woman would wear ‘smart’ clothes to a job interview, while perhaps only a woman would be able to wear ‘elegant’ clothes – and then not to a job interview, but perhaps to a divine soiree on the Côte d’Azur – in the 1920s, with Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald... The word ‘elegant’ in English is rather old-fashioned and has connotations of style, taste, and sophistication which would not be required of a man attending a job interview in the present-day. The student has become confused by the false friends: ‘elegantki’ (meaning ‘smart’, in English) and ‘elegant’ – an outdated word that does not mean ‘smart’, and applies only to females, not males. (See p.12 for more false friends.)

#68 *Wrong word recalled*

Correction:	Then I went to the other shop.
Polish:	<i>Następnie poszedłem do innego sklepu.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Then I went to other shop.
Error:	Then I came to the other shop.

In English we use ‘come’ with ‘here’ (near to us, which matches the demonstrative ‘this’) and ‘go’ with ‘there’ (far from us, which matches the demonstrative ‘that’). We could say ‘I came to this shop’, if we are standing in the shop now, but not ‘I came to the other shop’. The use of ‘other’ tells us that the shop is in a different place, i.e. not here. This error is caused by choosing the wrong word. It is not a translation error because in Polish the words are different: ‘He went to the shop’ = ‘Poszedł do sklepu’ while ‘He came to the shop’ = ‘Wszedł do sklepu.’

#69 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	He was standing there, by the door.
Polish:	<i>Stał tam, przy drzwiach.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	He stood there by door.
Error:	He was staying there, by the door.

The Polish phrase ‘stał tam’ can mean either ‘he stood’ / ‘he was standing’ or ‘he stayed’ / ‘he was staying’, so the concept of somebody ‘staying’ by the door – i.e. not moving, but stationary – would be perfectly acceptable to the student, who then translates directly from Polish into English and makes an error.

#70 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	I got the best mark in my class.
Polish:	<i>Miałem najlepszy wynik w klasie.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I had best mark in class.
Error:	I got a best mark in my class.

In Polish there are no articles, but in English we need a determiner, e.g. an article, before a singular countable noun. 'Mark' is a singular countable noun, in a phrase with the adjective 'best'. But which article – 'a', 'an', or 'the'? 'Best' is a superlative adjective and we always use 'the' with superlative adjectives – not 'a' or 'an', therefore we say 'the best mark'. In this sentence the student has thought to use an article, but used the wrong one.

#71 *Wrong word recalled*

Correction:	I train because I want to take care of my body.
Polish:	<i>Ćwiczę, bo chcę dbać o mój organizm.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I train because I want take care about my organism.
Error:	I train because I want to take care of my organism.

Here the student uses the word 'organism' instead of the correct word 'body'. In English an 'organism' is any individual life form, but we particularly think of it as being a simple, microscopic life form, for example: 'single-celled organisms.' We do not refer to our bodies as 'organisms', despite the fact that they are! It may be that the student was reaching for a higher-level word than 'body' to describe the complex system that is the human body. However, an English native speaker would never produce the word 'organism' to describe their body. More suitable substitute words for 'my body' might include: 'my system', 'my health', or simply 'myself'.

#72 *Differences in the use of prepositions*

Correction:	I looked on the internet.
Polish:	<i>Szukałem w internecie.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I searched in internet.
Error:	I looked in the internet.

In English we treat 'the internet' as a media platform, like TV and radio. We use preposition 'on' for platforms, while in Polish the preposition 'w' is used, which means 'in'. They also say 'in TV' ('w telewizji') and 'in radio' ('w radiu'). The student has used the wrong preposition, by translating directly from Polish into English and not considering the fact that prepositions often differ hugely between the two languages.

#73 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	'How was the meeting?' 'It was good.'
Polish:	' <i>Jakie było spotkanie.</i> ' ' <i>Było dobre.</i> '
Word for Word Translation:	'How was meeting?' 'Was good.'
Error:	'How was the meeting?' 'Was good.'

In Polish, it is not always necessary to include the pronoun 'it' in a verb phrase with verb 'be'. For example, the phrase 'it is great' in English can be either 'to jest wspaniałe' ('it is great') or 'jest wspaniałe' ('is great') in Polish – without 'it'. Word order is less strict in Polish than in English, so the student has simply translated directly from the commonly used Polish form – without the subject 'it'. In this kind of sentence, 'it' is assumed anyway, so perhaps Polish is being more efficient by doing away with 'it'. Additionally, in spoken English 'it was' usually becomes 'i wz', without the 't' sound, which is hard to pronounce beside another consonant sound (the 'w' of 'was'). The words 'it was' are function words, and it is normal that we reduce them by merging them together when we speak. It is very likely that the student has heard English native speakers saying 'I wz good' rather than 'It was good', and thought maybe it was OK to delete the word 'it', because they did not hear it, due to the missing 't' sound. However, in written English each clause requires a subject.

#74 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	I did some shopping.
Polish:	<i>Zrobiłem zakupy.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I made shopping.
Error:	I made some shopping.

To 'do' or 'make' some shopping is the same in Polish, because the same verb – 'zrobić' – means both 'do' and 'make' – in common with other languages, e.g. French, Spanish, and German. In English there is the difference between 'do' (concerned with action) and 'make' (concerned with creation and production). For example, making some shopping might involve knitting small packets of cereal and tins of soup out of wool, or making a shopping basket out of cardboard and glue. It can therefore be quite confusing to be confronted with the concept of 'making' something that we normally 'do'. The student should learn the most common collocations with 'make' and 'do', including the many idioms, and then remember when to use them.



#75 *Errors with tenses*

Correction:	What could they do?
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Co mogliby zrobić?</i>
Word for Word Translation:	What they could do?
Error:	What could do they?

This error is caused by misunderstanding word order in question forms in English (see also #23). To make a wh-question the word order must be: wh- question word + auxiliary verb + subject + main verb, as here: 'What (WH) could (V) they (S) do? (MV). The exception is when a wh- question word is also the subject of the sentence, when it has to take the main verb, for example: 'Who won the race yesterday?' *not* 'Who did the race win yesterday' and 'What happened last week?' *not* 'What did happen last week?'

#76 *Direct translation errors*

Correction:	Do you want me to help you?
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Czy chcesz żebym Ci pomógł?</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Do you want that I you help?
Error:	Do you want that I help you?

In English, we use the subjunctive mood after particular verbs when discussing suggestions and urgent requirements. The following verbs (and others) are followed by the subjunctive: 'suggest (that)', 'propose (that)', 'recommend (that)', and 'urge (that)'. For example, 'He suggested (that) we discuss (the subjunctive verb is always infinitive form) the new project.' The subjunctive is not normally used after 'want', hence this error. However, 'want' ('chcieć') can be followed by the subjunctive in Polish, making sentences like this possible: 'I want that you me help with car' = 'Chcę, aby pan mi pomógł z samochodem.' In the error sentence the student has gone for a word for word translation from the Polish, in order to make sense of the difficult English question form.

#77 *Differences in the use of prepositions*

Correction:	We had a nice picnic by the lake.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Mieliśmy przyjemny piknik nad jeziorem.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	We had enjoyable picnic on lake.
Error:	We had a nice picnic on the lake.

When an English speaker thinks about the location of the picnic, they use the preposition 'by'. The synonyms 'next to', 'beside', and 'at' would also be correct. In Polish, the preposition used is 'nad', which means 'on'. It also means 'by', but the student has used its more common meaning 'on'. For an English native speaker, the preposition 'on' implies being literally 'on top of' something, so having a picnic 'on' the lake would mean being

somehow *on top of* the surface of the water, whether in a boat or on some kind of platform. If that were the case we still would not say ‘We had a nice picnic on the lake’, but rather ‘...on a boat/platform [which was] on the lake.’

#78 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction: I asked him twice.  
Polish: *Poprosilem go dwa razy.*  
Word for Word Translation: I asked him two times.  
Error: I asked him two times.

The Polish language does not have a single dedicated word for ‘twice’, unlike in English, but instead uses the phrase ‘dwa razy’, which means ‘two times’. The student has translated directly from Polish to English, without learning or remembering to use the English word ‘twice’.

#79 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction: I have many things to do.  
Polish: *Mam wiele rzeczy do zrobienia.*  
Word for Word Translation: I have many things to do.  
Error: I have much things to do.

The English words ‘many’ and ‘much’ have the same translation in Polish: ‘wiele’. However, in English we use ‘much’ only with uncountable nouns in negative and question forms, while ‘many’ is used only with countable nouns in positive, negative, and question forms, so this is a direct translation error.

#80 *Errors with tenses*

Correction: I have been living in Warsaw since 2010.  
Polish: *Mieszkam w Warszawie od 2010 roku.*  
Word for Word Translation: I live in Warsaw from 2010 year.  
Error: I’m living in Warsaw since 2010.

In English we use present perfect continuous for unfinished actions that continue for a period of time, from the past to the present, so it is perfect to express the idea in this sentence. We understand not only that the speaker has been living in Warsaw since 2010, but that they still live there now. Present perfect and present perfect continuous tenses create a bridge of time from the past to the present. Present perfect actions are finished, while present perfect continuous actions are not. In both tenses the time is unfinished. This sentence creates a problem for the Polish student because in Polish there are neither perfect nor continuous tenses. This sentence in Polish translates into present simple: ‘I live...’ The student has thought to use a continuous tense (present continuous),

but the time is incorrect, because present continuous time is now or in the future, while present perfect continuous links 2010 to the present.

#81 *Wrong word recalled*

Correction:	What is the time?
Polish:	<i>Która jest godzina?</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Which is hour?
Error:	What is the hour?

A Polish native speaker asks about ‘the hour’, while an English native speaker asks about ‘the time’ – including the minutes, not just ‘the hour’. If the time was 3.30pm, what would be the literal answer to ‘What is the hour?’ ‘Three’ or ‘Four’? This answer is not precise enough. We need to hear either two numbers together: ‘Three forty’ or an answer with ‘to’: ‘Twenty to four.’ Of course, this is just a difference in language usage, but as the student has translated directly from Polish into English, rather than bothering to learn the correct English construction, communication will suffer, because a native English speaker might be quite confused at first, because they are not expecting to hear this question: ‘What is the hour?’

#82 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	Can I look at that photo?
Polish:	<i>Mogę zobaczyć to zdjęcie?</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I can look this photo?
Error:	Can I watch that photo?

In English we can ‘see’, ‘look at’ (phrasal verb), and ‘watch’. ‘See’ is an involuntary action – if our eyes are open, we cannot help but see whatever is in front of us. ‘Look at’ and ‘watch’, on the other hand, are active verbs – we actively take an interest in what is in front of our eyes. The difference is that we always ‘look at’ something which is *still*, while we ‘watch’ something that is *moving*. So we would look at a photo, for example, but watch a video. In Polish ‘look’ is ‘patrzeć’ and watch is ‘patrzeć na kogoś’ (‘watch somebody’) or ‘patrzeć na coś’ (‘watch something’), as well as ‘oglądać’. Therefore it is no surprise when a student uses ‘patrzeć’ to mean ‘watch’.

#83 *Errors with tenses*

Correction:	I've worked here for five days.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Pracowałam tu przez pięć dni.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I worked here through five days.
Error:	I've worked here since five days.

We use present perfect tense to talk about unfinished time – time that started in the past but that is still going at the moment. The sentence 'I've worked here for five days' informs us that the action ('work') began in the past – five days ago – but continues: this person *still* works there. There are no perfect tenses in Polish, so the translation talks about the past only: 'Pracowałam tu...' ('I worked here...') The error is that the student has mixed up the prepositions 'for' and 'since'. In a perfect sentence we normally use 'for' with numbers (like 'five days') and 'since' with times (like 'yesterday' and 'last week'). Therefore we could say: 'I've worked here since Monday', for example, or 'I've worked here for five days', but not '...since five days.'

#84 *Direct translation errors*

Correction:	I found a great website on the internet.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Znalazłem świetną stronę w internecie.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I found great page in internet.
Error:	I found a great page on the internet.

In Polish, the short name for 'website' is 'strona' ('page' in English), from the full name 'strona internetowa' ('page internet'). In the early days of the internet in the 1990s we used to refer to websites as web *pages*, but now we would usually use the word 'website' or 'site'. The student may have saved time by translating directly from Polish into English, but they haven't considered the effectiveness of their communication, since their listener (or reader) may well not understand the word 'page' to mean 'website'.

#85 *In Polish but not in English*

Correction:	My brother plays the trumpet.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Mój brat gra na trąbce.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	My brother plays on trumpet.
Error:	My brother plays on the trumpet.

In Polish the preposition 'on' is necessary after 'play' and a musical instrument. They 'play on piano', 'play on guitar', and 'play on trumpet', as in this error. However, in English there is no need for a preposition after 'play'. The student has made this error by translating directly from Polish into English, without considering differences between the languages, especially regarding prepositions. We can also drop the definite article 'the' and say: 'My brother plays trumpet.'

#86 *Word order*

Correction:	I think that was our bus.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>To był, myślę, nasz autobus.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	That was, I think, our bus.
Error:	That, I think, was our bus.

The point about this error is that in Polish you can say the sentence either way – ‘I think that was our bus’ (‘*Myślę że to był nasz autobus*’) or ‘That, in my opinion, was our bus’ (‘*To moim zdaniem był nasz autobus*’) – and it will still make sense and be grammatically correct. Due to stricter word order rules in English, we cannot do that. We use the standard SVOPT word order in this sentence: ‘I’ (subject), ‘think’ (verb), ‘that’ (object). ‘I think...’ must be followed by a *thing*, a noun or a noun phrase: ‘I think *that was our bus.*’ It must be nice, in Polish, to be able to put the different pieces of the sentence puzzle in different orders and still be correct. For example, by beginning the sentence with the pronoun ‘That...’ you are going straight to the point of the sentence and giving emphasis to the main actor – the bus: ‘that’ stands for ‘our bus’. Perhaps you are pointing at the bus as it leaves, and you say with emphasis: ‘That, I think, was our bus.’ The equivalent in English would be: ‘That was our bus...’ and then to express our uncertainty we could add a question tag: ‘...wasn’t it?’ or ask a follow-up question: ‘That was our bus. What do you think?’ – which is much less direct.

#87 *Traditional grammar errors*

Correction:	My bike is much bigger than yours.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Mój rower jest o wiele większy niż twój.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	My bike is much bigger than yours.
Error:	My bike is much more bigger than yours.

As you can see, the forms in Polish and English are basically the same, so this is not a translation error. This error occurred because the student misunderstood how to form the comparative adjective ‘bigger’. To make a one-syllable adjective like ‘big’ comparative, we add an -er suffix (and in this case an extra ‘g’) to make: ‘bigger’. This word literally means ‘more big’, but we cannot say ‘more big’, or indeed ‘more bigger.’ With adjectives of two or more syllables (apart from a few exceptions) we use ‘more’ + the adjective. For example: ‘more expensive’, ‘more attractive’, and ‘more unusual.’

#88 *Word order*

Correction:	What does 'radio' mean?
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Co to znaczy 'radio'?</i>
Word for Word Translation:	What it means 'radio'?
Error:	What does it mean, 'radio'?

In Polish it is possible to build the question, then add on the name of the item to be checked at the end: 'What does it mean' + 'radio'? In English we have to follow a fixed word order for most wh- questions: wh- + auxiliary verb + subject + main verb (see also #38). In this sentence it becomes: 'What' (wh- question) + 'does' (auxiliary verb in present simple for third person) + 'radio' (subject) + 'mean' (main verb). The word to be checked – 'radio' – is the subject, so it has to come after the auxiliary verb. The student has translated from Polish into English, without considering wh- question form rules in English.

#89 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	I need to get a new job.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Muszę znaleźć nową pracę.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I must find new work.
Error:	I need to get a new work.

This error is caused by the fact that the Polish word 'praca' means both 'work' and 'job'. In English our 'job' is an occupation: 'teacher', 'doctor', 'shop assistant', and so on, while 'work' is both the place that we go to ('I went to work yesterday') and also what we do – the activity – when we are there: 'When I got to work there was a lot of work to do!' (It is also, of course, a verb – 'to work' – while 'job' is not.) There is not this distinction in Polish, with both words translated the same: 'praca'. The student has made the wrong choice in this sentence. Another factor is that 'job' is countable while 'work' is uncountable, so the phrase 'a new work' is not possible, while 'a new job' is fine.

#90 *Errors with tenses*

Correction:	Please wait until your brother gets home.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Poczekaj zanim twój brat wróci do domu.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Wait until your brother returns to home.
Error:	Please wait until your brother will get home.

The verb tense that follows the preposition 'until' is fixed and depends on the verb tense that precedes it. For example, if you use past simple before 'until' you can use 'past simple' or 'past perfect' afterwards, e.g. 'I worked there *until* it was time to go home.' The correct sentence is in imperative form (it's a polite order, with 'please') and therefore can be followed by either present simple or present perfect: 'Please wait until your

brother gets home’ or ‘Please wait until your brother has got home.’ It cannot be followed by ‘will’. A ‘will-clause’ can only precede ‘until’, not follow it: ‘I will wait until you arrive’, not ‘I wait until you will arrive.’ The student has perhaps translated from the Polish version: ‘...twój brat wróci do domu’, which is in the future: literally, ‘...your brother will get home.’

#91 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	I train at the gym every day.
Polish:	<i>Trenuję na siłowni każdego dnia.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I train at gym each day.
Error:	I train at gym every day.

Because the word ‘gym’ is a singular countable noun, there must be a determiner, e.g. an article, before it in the sentence. We use ‘the’ because the speaker is talking about a place that is well known (specific) to them. There are no articles in Polish, so it is easy and convenient for the student to omit it in English.

#92 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	My little brother is learning the alphabet.
Polish:	<i>Mój młodszy brat uczy się alfabetu.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	My younger brother learns alphabet.
Error:	My little brother is teaching the alphabet.

This error has occurred because the student has got mixed up while translating directly from Polish into English. In Polish the verb ‘uczyć się’ means ‘to learn’ while ‘uczyć’ means ‘to teach’, so it is easy to confuse them. It is also necessary to consider the context of the action – who, what, where, when, etc. – to be able to work out which verb to use. In this sentence it is highly unlikely that a ‘little’ brother (typically around 5 to 8 years old) would be ‘teaching’ the alphabet.

#93 *Errors with tenses*

Correction:	They didn’t come to see me.
Polish:	<i>Oni nie przyszli do mnie.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	They not come to me.
Error:	They didn’t came to see me.

This error is caused by misunderstanding past simple tense and how to make the negative form. In past simple we use past tense (‘came’) for positive sentences, i.e. ‘They *came*...’, but for negative and question forms we use infinitive form: ‘They didn’t *come*...’ This creates an extra thing for students to remember, and it does not feel logical to have to use infinitive – associated as it is with present simple and future simple – when talking about

the past. Unfortunately, it is just another quirk of English grammar for students to learn! Notice too how the Polish translation simplifies the original sentence, making the second verb 'see' unnecessary.

#94 *Direct translation errors*

Correction:	He says everything (that) he thinks.
Polish:	<i>Mówi wszystko, (to) co myśli.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	He speaks everything that what he thinks.
Error:	He says everything what he thinks.

This sentence has a defining relative clause '...that he thinks.' In a defining relative clause 'that' can refer to a person or a thing, e.g. 'This is the guy (that) I met at work' or 'This is the homework (that) we had to do.' We could substitute the word 'which' for 'that', to make the sentence more formal, or omit 'that' completely. It is fine to omit object pronouns (like 'that' and 'which') in defining relative clauses, for example: 'He says everything he thinks.' This sounds much smoother because it is easier to say, without including the difficult to pronounce 'th' consonant sound in 'that'. Ultimately, this is a translation error, because it is not possible to use 'what' instead of 'that', despite it being correct in Polish: '...co myśli' = '...what he thinks.'

#95 *In Polish but not in English*

Correction:	I let her borrow my book.
Polish:	<i>Pozwoliłem jej pożyczyć moją książkę.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I let her borrow book.
Error:	I let her to borrow my book.

The student is confused about whether to translate the Polish infinitive ('pożyczyć') as 'to + infinitive' or bare infinitive (without 'to'). In English, we always use bare infinitive after 'let', so the preposition 'to' is not necessary. 'Pożyczyć' translates into English as 'borrow', not 'to borrow', so this is not a translation error. In English, there are some verbs that must be followed by 'to + infinitive' – for example, 'want + to + infinitive', 'learn + to + infinitive', and 'ask + to + infinitive', as in this sentence: 'I asked her to give me the book.' However, there are certain verbs that must be followed by bare infinitive, for example: 'I *heard* her sing' (not '...to sing'), 'I *saw* him go' (not '...to go'), and 'I *let* her borrow...' as in our example. The student can learn from verb lists which English verbs have to be followed by 'to + infinitive' and which have to be followed by bare infinitive.



#96 *Word order*

Correction:	You can just get out!
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Możesz po prostu wyjść!</i>
Word for Word Translation:	You can just leave!
Error:	You just can get out!

In this sentence, it may be that the student was confused about the position of the adverb ‘just’ due to the presence of two verbs: ‘can’ and ‘get out’. However, ‘can’ is an auxiliary verb and the normal position of ‘just’ is before the main verb – in this sentence the phrasal verb, ‘get out’. The function of ‘just’ is often to emphasise the main verb in spoken English, by creating an extra weak-stressed syllable before the stressed verb, e.g. ‘It was just TERRIBLE!’ = o o o O o o In the correct sentence, above, ‘just’ adds another weak-stressed syllable after the two function words ‘You can’, which helps to provide the run up to the main point of the sentence:

o o o O O  
you can just GET OUT!

Without ‘just’ there would be a shorter run-up which would give less emphasis to the phrasal verb:

o o O O  
you can GET OUT!

Of course, we should not put stress on the word ‘just’! Incidentally, the Polish translation above is rather polite. The standard rude form of this sentiment would be just: ‘Wyjdz!’

#97 *Wrong word recalled*

Correction:	There was good food at the party.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Było dobre jedzenie na imprezie.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	It was good food on party.
Error:	There was good eat at the party.

This is not a translation error, because in Polish ‘food’ is ‘jedzenie’ and ‘to eat’ is ‘jeść’. It appears that the student mixed up word classes as they made this statement. ‘Food’ and ‘eat’ are very closely related, but belong to different word classes – ‘food’ is a noun, while ‘eat’ is a verb. We *can* use the word ‘eats’ as a noun to mean ‘food’ in a very informal (slang) way; it means the same as ‘grub’ and ‘fare’. For example, a restaurant might be named ‘Good Eats’. It is possible that the student has picked up this usage from somewhere and assumed that ‘eats’ can be used to mean ‘food’, or perhaps they simply came up with the wrong unit of language – albeit a related one – while searching quickly for the right word.

#98 *Differences in the use of prepositions*

Correction:	I have a question for you.
Polish:	<i>Mam pytanie do ciebie.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I have question to you.
Error:	I have a question to you.

In this sentence, 'for you' is correct in English, while 'to you' (do ciebie) is correct in Polish. The student has translated directly from Polish, without learning the correct collocation in English, and without considering that the use of prepositions in English and Polish is often different.

#99 *Different concepts in Polish and English*

Correction:	'What's the time?' 'It's half past seven.'
Polish:	<i>'Która godzina?' 'Jest wpół do ósmej.'</i>
Word for Word Translation:	'Which hour?' 'Is half to eight.'
Error:	'What's the time?' 'It's half to eight.'

In English, we say 'It's half past...' the current hour, not 'It's half to...' the next hour, but in Polish this time is conceptualised differently as 'It's half to...' the next hour. You could say that in English we are looking backwards at the hour, while in Polish they are looking forward to the next hour. The student has translated directly from Polish into English, rather than taking the time (!) to learn how to tell the time in English. It is easier to see time as two numbers in English, rather than using 'past' and 'to'; so, 'It's half past seven' would become 'It's seven thirty' – two numbers.

#100 *Traditional grammar errors*

Correction:	I'm not interested in football.
Polish:	<i>Nie interesuję się piłką nożną.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Not I interest myself football.
Error:	I'm not interesting in football.

In English there is a group of common emotion adjectives that have both -ed and -ing endings, for example: bored / boring, surprised / surprising, excited / exciting, and interested / interesting. The rule is that the -ed adjective describes the emotion of a person – 'He was surprised' – and the -ing adjective describes a thing – 'It (e.g. the news) was surprising.' In this error, the student has mixed up the two options. Of course, it may be possible to say that a person was an '-ing' adjective, e.g. 'boring', 'surprising', 'exciting', and so on – but this would be less common.

#101 *Using a positive form to make a negative sentence*

Correction:	I don't have much time.
Polish:	<i>Nie mam zbyt wiele czasu.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	No I have too much time.
Error:	I have no too much time.

Both the correction and the error sentence translate as 'Nie mam zbyt wiele czasu' in Polish. In English we use a negative verb form to express a negative idea: 'I don't have...' rather than the positive form: 'I have...' The student has simply thrown the word 'no' into the sentence to make it negative, which is possible in Polish, but does not work in English. The Polish word 'nie' means both 'no' and 'not', so the error could also have been: 'I have *not* too much time' instead of '...no too much.' In any case, we cannot use the phrase 'too much' in a negative sentence, but we can use it in a positive sentence – 'I have *too much* time' or a question form: 'Do you have *too much* time?'

#102 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	I met them only once.
Polish:	<i>Spotkałem ich tylko raz.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I met them only one time.
Error:	I met them only one time.

The Polish word 'raz' means 'once' while 'jeden raz' literally means 'one time', but is usually shortened to 'raz', keeping the meaning 'one time'. 'Once, twice, three times' in Polish is considered 'One time, two times, three times.' The student has translated directly from Polish into English, without thinking to use the correct English word. In English, we would not choose the phrase 'one time' because a dedicated word exists – 'once'.

#103 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	People can collect almost anything.
Polish:	<i>Ludzie mogą zbierać prawie wszystko.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	People can collect almost everything.
Error:	People can collect almost everything.

There is no difference in Polish between the two sentences: 'People can collect almost anything' and 'People can collect almost everything' – both translate as 'Ludzie mogą zbierać prawie wszystko.' In English the phrases 'almost anything' and 'almost everything' have different meanings. Collecting 'almost anything' means that the *range* of things people can collect is very wide, while collecting 'almost everything' means that people can collect almost *100% of things* within that wide range. The meaning of the correct sentence is that the *kind of things* that people can collect is almost unlimited.

#104 *Errors with tenses*

Correction:	My friend is coming to visit this weekend.
Polish:	<i>Moja przyjaciółka odwiedza mnie w ten weekend.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	My friend visits me in this weekend.
Error:	My friend comes to visit this weekend.

In English we use present continuous to talk about future arrangements, as in this sentence: ‘My friend is coming to visit this weekend.’ There aren’t any continuous tenses in Polish, so the nearest equivalent tense – present simple – has been used. Present simple *may* be used for future events, but usually when they are scheduled, e.g. ‘The flight *leaves* at 2pm tomorrow.’ In the Polish translation, the sentence has been simplified to contain only one main verb: ‘visit’. Using only the most important main verb may be a more efficient use of language. The student has copied the verb form (present simple) from Polish (while keeping both main verbs), without thinking about which tense is correct for future arrangements, i.e. present continuous.

#105 *Using a positive form to make a negative sentence*

Correction:	I did not feel well.
Polish:	<i>Czułem się niedobrze.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I felt myself not well.
Error:	I felt not well.

In Polish, it is fine to use a positive verb construction to make a negative statement: ‘I *felt*...’ while in English we normally use a negative verb construction: ‘I *did not feel*...’ Polish has a more flexible word order than English, and this sentence could also be said using a negative form in Polish: ‘*Nie czułem* się dobrze’ also means ‘I did not feel well.’ ‘I felt not well’ sounds very wrong in English, because we would automatically use a negative verb construction. The student has translated directly from the positive version of this sentence in Polish, without thinking about standard word order in English.

#106 *Countable in Polish, but uncountable in English*

Correction:	We drank wine last night.
Polish:	<i>Piliśmy wino zeszłej nocy.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	We drank wine last night.
Error:	We drank a wine last night.

The noun ‘wine’ is uncountable in English, so we cannot use the indefinite article ‘a’, which means ‘one’. In Polish, ‘wine’ is countable, so this is a direct translation error. We could say ‘a glass of wine’, or ‘a bottle of wine’ – or any suitable container – to make a noun phrase that is countable. We use zero article (no article) with ‘wine’, rather than ‘the’ (the only other article option), because the context is general – it is not a specific kind

of wine. Therefore we would not say: 'We drank *the* wine last night.' (See p.11 for more words that are countable in Polish but uncountable in English.)

#107 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	He will be late, won't he?
Polish:	<i>On się spóźni, nie?</i>
Word for Word Translation:	He himself is late, no?
Error:	He will be late, will he?

The student has tried to use a question tag '...will he?' but they have used the wrong form, because a positive statement requires a negative question tag: 'He will be late, *won't* he?' Conversely, we only use a positive question tag with a negative statement, so this would be correct: 'He won't be late, will he?' The negative form of 'will' is 'will not' (full form) – or the contraction 'won't'. We do not use the full form 'will not' to make question tags – only 'won't'. 'Willn't' is not a contraction for 'will not', as some students believe! There are no question tags in Polish, but simply the more direct words: '...tak?' ('...yes?'), '...nie' ('...no?'), or '...prawda?' ('...truth?'). See also #135.

#108 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	My arm hurts.
Polish:	<i>Boli mnie ramię.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Hurts me arm.
Error:	My arm pain me.

This error shows that the student has learned the noun 'pain' but not the verb 'to hurt'. In Polish 'boli' means 'hurts' but the very similar 'ból' means 'pain' or 'ache', so this is a translation error.

#109 *False friends*

Correction:	He is the mayor of our town.
Polish:	<i>On jest prezydentem naszego miasta.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	He is president our town.
Error:	He is the president of our town.

An English town has a 'mayor' as the leader of the town council, while a Polish town has a 'president' ('prezydent') to fulfil this function. The UK has a *prime minister* as the head of government and a *monarch* as the head of state. We do not have a president, as in various other countries. We associate the role of 'president' with a leader at a very high level, such as 'the President of the United States of America', or the president of a large corporation, which is equivalent to being a CEO. Using this title for a locally elected official seems to be

rather over-the-top by comparison. The words ‘prezydent’ and ‘president’ are false friends and the student has translated directly from Polish into English, without learning the appropriate English word. (See p.12 for more false friends.)

#110 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction: He can't lend you any money.  
Polish: *On nie może pożyczyć ci pieniędzy.*  
Word for Word Translation: He not can borrow you money.  
Error: He can't borrow you any money.

In Polish the verbs ‘to lend’ and ‘to borrow’ are the same: ‘pożyczyć’. The difference is found in the context of each sentence. For example, if the sentence is: ‘I need to \_\_\_\_ money’ they assume that the verb will be ‘borrow’: ‘Muszę pożyczyć pieniądze.’ If the sentence is: ‘I can't \_\_\_\_ you money’, they assume the verb will be ‘lend’: ‘Nie mogę pożyczyć pieniędzy.’ The student has made an error by assuming – via Polish translation – that the English word ‘borrow’ can mean both ‘borrow’ and ‘lend’.

#111 *Direct translation errors*

Correction: I've quit my piano lessons.  
Polish: *Zrezygnowałem z moich lekcji fortepianu.*  
Word for Word Translation: I resigned from my lesson piano.  
Error: I resigned from my piano lessons.

The student has made this error by translating directly from Polish into English. The English words ‘quit’, ‘give up’, and ‘resign from’ all have the same translation in Polish: ‘zrezygnować’, which looks and sounds somewhat like the English word ‘resign’. When we ‘resign’ in English we do something serious, like stepping down from a job or a position of authority, rather than doing something relatively trivial, like deciding not to continue having piano lessons. Therefore ‘resign’ is being used in the wrong context in this sentence, making something fairly unimportant sound rather more dramatic. We can add ‘resign’ in English and ‘zrezygnować’ in Polish to our list of false friends on p.12.

#112 *In Polish but not in English*

Correction:	I have been to work today.
Polish:	<i>Byłem w mojej pracy dzisiaj.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I was in my work today.
Error:	I have been to my work today.

We do not put ‘my’ before ‘work’ in this sentence, because ‘work’ is a *location* – a ‘place of work’ – rather than an *activity* (for example in the sentence ‘I have a lot of work to do’). If you have been to work, we assume that it must have been ‘your’ work, because it is unlikely that you have been to somebody else’s work! However, in Polish the convention is to say ‘my work’, because the speaker is thinking about ‘work’ as an activity rather than as a place. The student has used the Polish convention and made an the error, rather than attempting to learn the difference between the use of the word ‘work’ in each language.

#113 *Word order*

Correction:	I found Jane’s hat.
Polish:	<i>Znalazłem kapelusz Jane.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I found hat Jane.
Error:	Jane’s hat I found.

Word order in English is far stricter than it is in Polish. We tend to use the SVOPT word order most often – subject, verb, object, place, and time. For example: ‘I (subject) found (verb) Jane’s hat (object)...’ and we could continue: ‘in the washing machine (place) last night (time).’ However, in Polish the sentence structure is much looser and a speaker can make a bigger impact by beginning their sentence with the element which is of most immediate interest: in this sentence it is ‘Jane’s hat’. This word order sounds odd to English ears. We cannot say: ‘Book I read’, ‘Office yesterday I went to’, or ‘Television I watched’ in our language. It is positive that the student has been able to form the possessive noun phrase ‘Jane’s hat’, with apostrophe ‘s’, but they have used this element in the wrong position – under the influence of their native language, Polish.

#114 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	Do you have any money?
Polish:	<i>Czy masz jakieś pieniądze?</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Do you have any money?
Error:	Have you any money?

This sentence is a present simple question form. An auxiliary verb (‘do’) is necessary to make the question form:

	auxiliary verb	+ subject	+ main verb	+ object
<i>e.g.</i>	Do	you	have	any money?

‘Have’ is an auxiliary verb in present perfect, not present simple. We need to use ‘do’, ‘does’, and ‘be’ in present simple. ‘Be’ is not the main verb in this sentence, and ‘you’ is not third person (‘he’, ‘she’, ‘it’), so we use ‘do’. The student may have picked up the form of this error from an old out-of-date course book. It may have been more common in the past, and in formal situations, but ‘Have you... + object’ is now incorrect in everyday speech. We could also use the present perfect form: *‘Have you got any money?’*

#### #115 *Differences in the use of prepositions*

Correction:	She is waiting for him.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Ona czeka na niego.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	She waits on him.
Error:	She is waiting on him.

In English the correct verb + preposition collocation is ‘wait for’. It is listed as a phrasal verb (a fixed phrase) in *Oxford Phrasal Verbs Dictionary* by Oxford University Press<sup>1</sup>, although others disagree that it is a phrasal verb. In Polish, however, the collocation is ‘wait on’. We usually use ‘on’ as a preposition of place to talk about platforms (raised levels), e.g. ‘I was on a bus / on a train / on a plane...’ etc, as well as for media platforms, e.g. ‘It was on TV / on the radio / on the internet / on a website...’ etc. (see also #72). The student has translated directly from Polish into English, without thinking about the fact that prepositions are often different between the two languages. Notice too how in Polish the present continuous sentence (‘She is waiting for him’) is reduced to a present simple one (‘She waits on him’), because there are no continuous tenses in Polish.

#### #116 *Different concepts in Polish and English*

Correction:	She was born in nineteen ninety-eight.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Urodziła się w tysiąc dziewięćset dziewięćdziesiątym ósmym roku.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	She borned in one thousand, nine hundred and ninety-eight year.
Error:	She was born in one thousand, nine hundred and ninety-eight year.

In English, we say a year using two numbers, as here: ‘1998’ = ‘nineteen’ (19) + ‘ninety-eight’ (98). In Polish, some people feel it necessary to say the date beginning with the thousands, then the hundreds, then the rest. For example, 2017 in English would be ‘Twenty seventeen’ – two numbers – while in Polish it would be: ‘dwa tysiące siedemnaście’ = ‘two thousand seventeen.’ It takes a lot of syllables to say this, so the English method is quicker! ‘Nineteen ninety-eight’ is five syllables, while ‘tysiąc dziewięćset dziewięćdziesiątym ósmym’ is twelve! Also, we do not need to add the word ‘year’ at the end of the phrase, as they do in Polish: ‘roku’. We

<sup>1</sup> McIntosh, C. (ed.) (2006) *Oxford Phrasal Verbs Dictionary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press



know it is a year, without having to say ‘year’. The student has used the Polish convention for saying the year in English, without taking the time to learn the English method.

#117 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	Get out!
Polish:	<i>Idź stąd!</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Go from here!
Error:	Go from here!

There aren’t any phrasal verbs in Polish, so the phrase ‘Get out!’ does not exist. Instead, Polish people say ‘Idź stąd!’, which translates into English as ‘Go from here!’ or (another meaning) ‘Go hence!’ Instead of learning phrasal verbs, the student has translated directly from Polish into English, finding the unnatural phrase ‘Go from here.’ ‘Go hence!’ is archaic and could be used in a story about medieval knights, for example. It would be far more natural to say: ‘Get out!’, ‘Go away!’, or simply ‘Leave!’ or ‘Go!’

#118 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	I feel good in this city.
Polish:	<i>Czuję się dobrze w tym mieście.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I feel myself well in this city.
Error:	I feel well in this city.

There is no difference in Polish between the phrases: ‘I feel good’ (‘czuję się dobrze’) and ‘I feel well’ (‘czuję się dobrze’), but in English there is a difference between the adjectives ‘good’ and ‘well’. We usually think of ‘well’ as the adverb form of the adjective ‘good’, for example: ‘The play was good’ (adjective) / ‘The actors did well’ (adverb). However, ‘well’ can also be an adjective, meaning ‘not ill’: ‘I do not feel well’ means ‘I feel ill’. Perhaps thinking that there is no difference between the two options – as in the Polish ‘czuję się dobrze’ – the student has chosen incorrectly and used ‘well’ as an adjective in this sentence, instead of ‘good’, which would have been correct.

#119 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	If I had some money, I would buy a car.
Polish:	<i>Gdybym miał pieniądze, kupiłbym samochód.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	If I had money, I would buy car.
Error:	If I would have some money, I would buy a car.

In this error the student has used the wrong structure for second conditional. We cannot use ‘would’ in both clauses, but only in the second clause. Second conditional = past simple (first clause) / ‘would + infinitive’

(second clause), therefore: 'If I had some money, I would buy a car.' The structure for second conditional is fixed and we cannot change it. We use second conditional to talk about hypothetical actions in the present: 'If this red light changed, I could get moving', or the future: 'If the student got 100% in the test tomorrow, they would feel very happy indeed!'

#120 *Direct translation errors*

Correction:	Hang on a minute!
Polish:	<i>Moment!</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Moment!
Error:	Moment!

The word 'moment' is not native to Polish, but has been borrowed from English in recent times. A more natural Polish expression with the same meaning is the word: 'Chwileczkę!', which means 'Wait a (little) minute! / moment!' It appears that the English phrases 'Wait a moment!' and 'One moment, please!' have been reduced by Polish speakers down to the word 'moment', with the same meaning kept. However, this word is never used on its own by English native speakers, who prefer phrases like the ones above, or the more idiomatic phrases: 'Hang on!', 'Hang on a minute (or moment)!', or simply, 'Please wait a moment.'

#121 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	I listen to rock music.
Polish:	<i>Slucham muzyki rockowej.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I listen music rock.
Error:	I listen rock music.

The verb 'listen' is intransitive, which means it does not take an object. We cannot 'listen something'. To add an object, we must include the preposition 'to'. 'Listen to' is listed as a phrasal verb in *Oxford Phrasal Verbs Dictionary* by Oxford University Press<sup>2</sup>, but there is discussion among linguists as to whether it is a phrasal verb or not. In any case, if you are listening to an object – e.g. music, a song, the radio, a podcast – you have to 'listen to', not merely 'listen'.

<sup>2</sup> McIntosh, C. (ed.) (2006) *Oxford Phrasal Verbs Dictionary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

#122 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	I talked to my friend for hours yesterday.
Polish:	<i>Wczoraj rozmawiałem z moim przyjacielem godzinami.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Yesterday I spoke with my friend for hours.
Error:	I spoke to my friend for hours yesterday.

In Polish, the verbs ‘speak’ and ‘talk’ are the same word: ‘mówić’. In English, both verbs are physical actions connected with communicating, but there is a subtle difference between them. We use ‘speak’ in more formal contexts – we may speak about important matters, issues, or situations, and we learn to speak languages, for example – while ‘talk’ is used in more informal contexts – we may talk to our friends and family about school, work, our feelings, problems, plans, and hobbies, and so on. In this error, ‘spoke’ is incorrect, because we normally ‘talk’ or ‘chat’ with our friends. We may make an appointment to speak with the principal of the school or our boss about a serious matter, but ‘talk’ is more appropriate with people close to us. The student has not differentiated between the two verbs.

#123 *Errors with tenses*

Correction:	I was learning to play the guitar.
Polish:	<i>Uczyłam się grać na gitarze.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I learned to play on guitar.
Error:	I was learning playing guitar.

In this error the present continuous form ‘I was learning’ must be followed by ‘to + infinitive’, for example: ‘I was learning to play...’ We never see two ‘ing’ words together, whether two gerunds, two ing form verbs, or a combination of both, as in the error sentence, so ‘learning playing’ is just not a possible collocation in English. We might say: ‘I was learning *and* playing’, but not ‘learning playing.’ In Polish there are no continuous tenses with ‘ing’ and no gerunds (nouns that look like ing form verbs, such as ‘eating’, ‘watching’, and ‘playing’), so the student gets zero guidance about this matter from their first language. They have to remember that they cannot put together two ‘ing form’ words.

#124 *Direct translation errors*

Correction:	This test is making me annoyed!
Polish:	<i>Ten test mnie denerwuje!</i>
Word for Word Translation:	This test me annoys!
Error:	This test is making me nervous!

The verb ‘to annoy’ in Polish is ‘denerwować’. The student has decided that ‘nervous’ in English is like ‘denerwuje’ (‘annoys’) in Polish, but these words are false friends (see p.12 for more examples). The adjective

form, ‘denerwujący’, means ‘annoying’ in English, rather than ‘nervous’, which is ‘przeżony’ in Polish. In English, to be ‘nervous’ means to be ‘slightly afraid’, rather than ‘annoyed’. I might feel ‘nervous’ before going to the dentist’s, for example. However, the test is making this person feel ‘annoyed’ rather than ‘nervous’ – they are not ‘slightly afraid’ of the test. An English native speaker would pick up on this error immediately, but would probably be able to work out what the student meant from the context – and perhaps also by the angry look on their face!

#125 *In Polish but not in English*

Correction:	I got dressed and went downstairs.
Polish:	<i>Ubrałem się i poszedłem na dół.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I dressed myself and went downstairs.
Error:	I dressed myself and went downstairs.

In Polish ‘Ubrałem się’ means both ‘I got dressed’ and ‘I dressed myself’. In English the standard phrase is ‘I got dressed’: we would not say ‘I dressed myself’, except to emphasise that *you* had the ability to do something *by yourself*. A four-year-old child might say this proudly, for example, or somebody who was previously unable to do this, but now can. However, we assume that most people are able to complete this action ‘themselves’ (without help). Reflexive pronouns (‘zaimki zwrotne’) are used more frequently in Polish than in English, so it would feel natural for the student to try to use them freely in English.

#126 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	He used to say that he was good at sport.
Polish:	<i>Mawiał, że był dobry w sporcie.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	He used to say that was good in sports.
Error:	He used to said that he was good at sport.

This is an error with ‘used to’. ‘Used to + infinitive’ means an action that was repeated in the past, but no longer happens in the present. It is always followed by infinitive form, as in the correct sentence. In negative and question forms we use the infinitive ‘use’ not ‘used’, for example: ‘He didn’t use to say...’ and ‘Did he use to say...?’ The Polish word ‘mawiał’ is older usage and more literary than spoken Polish. Today a Polish native speaker might translate ‘He used to say...’ as ‘On kiedyś/dawniej mówił...’ = ‘In the past he said...’ The pronunciation of ‘used to’ and ‘use to’ is exactly the same: ‘Yoo st’. It is impossible for English native speakers to pronounce the ‘d’ sound in ‘used to’, so we simply delete it, which makes the phrase easier to say. This is a technique of connected speech.

#127 *Word order*

Correction:	The manager will be at this meeting.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Będzie kierownik na tym spotkaniu.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Will be manager on this meeting.
Error:	Will be the manager at this meeting.

In Polish, the word order of a sentence is far more flexible than in English. It allows for direct translations such as this: ‘Will be the manager at this meeting.’ It is almost as if, as long as each element of the sentence is present – ‘The manager’ (subject) + ‘will be’ (verb form) + ‘at this meeting’ (place) – it doesn’t matter in what order they come. In English it does matter, and this kind of sentence sounds – or reads – like a jumbled-up sentence in an English class exercise. We generally follow SVOPT word order: subject, verb, object, place, and time, as in the correct sentence, above. The student has translated directly from Polish into English and ended up with a blend of both languages, which fails as communication, because it requires the listener to mentally rearrange the words in their mind (i.e. do the jumbled-up sentence exercise), before they can process them as speech. If you require your listeners to work hard to understand you, you may find that they quickly disappear!

#128 *Wrong word recalled*

Correction:	The company needs new employees.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Firma potrzebuje nowych pracowników.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Company needs new workers.
Error:	The company needs new workers.

The Polish word ‘pracownik’ translates into English as both ‘employee’ and ‘worker’. We rarely use the word ‘worker’ in English, perhaps because we tend to associate it with a person doing a very menial or low-grade job. ‘Worker’ sounds too *communistic* for our taste. We feel that the word ‘employee’ is more dignified and polite than ‘worker’. It comes from the same word group as ‘employer’, ‘employment’, and ‘employ’. The student has chosen the wrong word, or has perhaps not learned the higher-level word ‘employee’ yet. An ‘employee’ means one person – one ‘worker’ – so we can add ‘s’ to make it plural (‘employees’) or we can use the noun ‘staff’ to talk about *many* employees, in both a countable sense – ‘The staff (a group of people) are very excited about their new contracts’ – and in an uncountable sense – ‘The entire teaching staff is pleased to welcome a new member.’

#129 *Differences in the use of prepositions*

Correction:	Jo is at work.
Polish:	<i>Jo jest w pracy.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Jo is in work.
Error:	Jo is in work.

The student has translated directly from Polish into English and ended up with this error. In English, we use ‘at’ with places to describe our location, for example: ‘at work’, ‘at home’, and ‘at the dentist’s’. We use ‘in’ to describe being within a three-dimensional environment, for example: ‘in a car’, ‘in a room’, ‘in a house’, and so on. Prepositions are used differently in English and Polish. In this example, the Polish preposition used is ‘in’, which the student has translated directly. It is simply a difference in the usage of prepositions between the two languages. Polish language sees Jo in terms of her position in space (‘in work’) while English sees her in terms of her location (‘at work’). Note that the following jumbled-up word order is possible in Polish, but not in English: ‘Jest w pracy Jo’ = ‘Is in work Jo.’ We cannot say this, because our listener is more likely to expect to hear the standard *subject-verb-object-place-time (SVOPT)* word order: ‘Jo (S) is (V) at work (P).’

#130 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	Some people were late today.
Polish:	<i>Niektórzy ludzie byli dziś spóźnieni.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Some people were today late.
Error:	Some of people were late today.

The student has got mixed up between two phrases in English: ‘some people’ and ‘some of the people’. Both phrases mean the same thing and they are both correct, so why have two phrases? When we use ‘the’ before a noun it makes it more specific, so ‘some of the people’ refers to specific people, for example: ‘Some of the people in the class were late today.’ ‘Some people in the class...’ means the same thing, but without labelling the people as being specific – the feeling is more general. English is a rich language with a large vocabulary (*over one million words and counting*, according to most estimates!) so it is not a surprise when we can say the same thing in different ways. In contrast, linguists estimate that the Polish language has fewer than two hundred thousand words.

#131 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	My brother is very tall.
Polish:	<i>Mój brat jest bardzo wysoki.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	My brother is very high.
Error:	My brother is very high.

In Polish, the same word ('wysoki') means both 'tall' and 'high'. The student has either not learned the word 'tall', or made the wrong choice – which is more likely. In English, people and things that go up in a vertical line are 'tall', e.g. a tall building, a tree, a chimney, or a tower. We use 'high' to describe things that are wide as well as tall, for example, 'high mountains', 'a high shelf' and 'a high wall.' We do not use 'high' to describe people, except with the idiomatic meaning of 'under the influence of drugs.' That makes this sentence rather unfortunate, because the speaker is admitting – without knowing it! – that their brother is 'high' on drugs. It demonstrates nicely that using one wrong word can change the entire meaning of a sentence!

#132 *Errors with tenses*

Correction:	You aren't thinking about it.
Polish:	<i>Nie myślisz o tym.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Not you think about that.
Error:	You don't thinking about it.

Here the student has mixed up the negative forms of present simple and present continuous. We can say 'You aren't (are not) thinking...' or 'You don't (do not) think...' but not a mash-up of both. We know from the tense of the correct sentence (present continuous) that the time is now, so it is right to use present continuous, rather than present simple, which is usually used to talk about actions in regular time. For that reason, 'don't' (from present simple) is incorrect. The time is now because the sentence does not work in present simple, without a regular time phrase, e.g. 'You don't think about it *very often*.' In Polish there are no continuous tenses, so there is only the equivalent of present simple to work with. The student should remember the distinct times of each tense: present simple for regular time, and present continuous for now and for future arrangements.

#133 *Direct translation errors*

Correction:	This is the friend I was talking about.
Polish:	<i>To przyjaciel, o którym mówiłem.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	It friend about whom I talked.
Error:	This is the friend about whom I was talking.

It is not possible to finish a sentence with a preposition in Polish, so this sentence would sound strange to a Polish native speaker: 'This is the friend I was talking about.' To get around this problem they might change the

word order, making the sentence more complicated, as the student has here: ‘This is the friend about whom I was talking.’ This sentence is not grammatically incorrect, but it is too formal in both spoken and written English. A similar sentence, which is also too formal, is: ‘This is the pen for which I was looking’, which should be changed to: ‘This is the pen (which/that) I was looking for.’ Note that ‘which’ and ‘that’ are optional in defining relative clauses; if you use them the tone of voice is more formal.

#134 *In Polish but not in English*

Correction:	Where’s my book? I can’t find it.
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Gdzie jest moja książka? Nie mogę jej znaleźć.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Where is my book? Not I can her find.
Error:	Where’s my book? I can’t find her.

In Polish, it is possible (but incorrect) to use a masculine object pronoun ‘him’ (‘go’) or a feminine object pronoun ‘her’ (‘jej’) instead of the standard ‘it’ (to). The meaning will remain the same. In Polish, ‘book’ (‘książka’) is a feminine noun, so the student has used the feminine pronoun ‘her’ instead of it – in keeping with the Polish convention. In English, we do not think about an inanimate object as ‘him’ or ‘her’ – and this sentence might even make people laugh, because the speaker has unintentionally given human qualities to a thing – a book. The object pronoun ‘her’ is only used as an object pronoun for a female person (or an animal, such as a pet).

#135 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	This is your book, isn’t it?
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>To jest twoja książka, tak?</i>
Word for Word Translation:	It is your book, yes?
Error:	This is your book, yes?

In this sentence we use a question tag (‘isn’t it?’) as a means of checking information – the owner of the book. There are no question tags in Polish, and it is possible to create the same effect simply by adding the word ‘yes?’ to the end of the sentence, along with rising intonation, so that the listener knows it is a question. In English the use of ‘yes?’, ‘yeah?’, or ‘right?’ is considered rude because it is too direct. English is an indirect language and we like to keep the appearance of politeness – even if we do not mean it. It may be that the student has not discovered question tags yet, or perhaps they know about them but cannot be bothered to use them, favouring instead the much easier and more direct ‘yes?’ – in Polish ‘tak?’ In Polish ‘nie?’ (‘no?’) is an informal version, which is considered rather impolite. A third option exists: ‘prawda?’ (‘truth?’), which tends to be used mainly by older people.



#136 *Word order*

Correction:	I'd like to work as a secretary, for example.
Polish:	<i>Chciałabym pracować na przykład jako sekretarka.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I would like work, for example, as secretary.
Error:	I'd like to work, for example, as a secretary.

Word order in Polish is much more flexible than it is in English. While we have to follow a fairly strict word order, which is often SVOPT – subject, verb, object, place, time – Polish speakers have more freedom to insert clauses – such as ‘for example’ – wherever they like. In English this sentence follows a logical order: ‘I’ (subject), ‘would like to work’ (verb phrase)... and then we need the object – we need to know *what* they would like to work as – ‘...as a secretary.’ We cannot break up the flow by inserting a subordinate clause (in this case ‘for example’) here. ‘For example’ can be placed at the end of the sentence, where less important elements of the sentence usually go. In an English sentence, we usually expect to hear ‘subject, verb, object...’ In the same way, we would not expect to hear or see the *place* located before the object: ‘I would like to work, in England, as a secretary.’

#137 *Different concepts in Polish and English*

Correction:	See you on Friday.
Polish:	<i>Do zobaczenia w piątek.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	See you in friday.
Error:	See you on friday.

Polish follows different rules about capitalisation than English. In English we put a capital letter at the beginning of all *proper nouns* – a group of nouns which includes days of the week, months of the year, languages, names of people, places, companies, and so on. In Polish there is no need to capitalise *days* and *months*, or *adjectives*, including *languages*, such as ‘English’ when it is used as an adjective. For example: ‘english language test’ would be fine in Polish: ‘test języka angielskiego.’ Titles such as *pan* (‘Mr’), *pani* (‘Mrs’ and ‘Ms’), *doktor* (‘Dr’), etc. and their abbreviations are not capitalized, except in polite address. However, some pronouns *are* capitalised in Polish, e.g. ‘you’ in formal writing: ‘Ty’, ‘Wy’, ‘Ciebie’, etc. The student has translated directly from Polish into English and ended up with what would be considered a basic-level language error.

#138 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	We found out how good a student she is.
Polish:	<i>Dowiedzieliśmy się, jak dobrym jest uczniem.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	We found out ourselves how good is student.
Error:	We found out how good student she is.

The unusual phrase ‘how good a student she is’ means ‘how good she is *as a student*’ or ‘what kind of student she is.’ We cannot say ‘How good student’ because the problem of the singular countable noun ‘student’ exists: there must be an article (a, an, or the) or other determiner before this kind of noun in a sentence. Therefore ‘how good student’ is ungrammatical. In Polish there are no articles, which might account for why the student has forgotten the singular countable noun rule in this sentence. Also, in Polish it would be unnatural to finish a sentence with a verb, like ‘is’.

#139 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	I tried to remember what happened.
Polish:	<i>Próbowałem sobie przypomnieć, co się stało.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I tried myself to remind what happened.
Error:	I tried to remind myself what happened.

Although the Polish verb for ‘remember’ is ‘pamiętać’, the phrase ‘I tried to remember...’ translates as ‘Próbowałem sobie przypomnieć’ in Polish, which in the word for word translation becomes ‘I tried myself to remind...’ The student has translated directly from Polish, without thinking about what the English form would be: ‘I tried to remember...’ In English, ‘remember’ is connected with the past, while ‘remind’ is more connected with the future. However, in English we generally do not ‘remind ourselves’ but other people: ‘I reminded her to phone me after work.’ Alternatively we can ask other people to remind us to do something: ‘Please remind me to email Uncle Phil after tea.’ We could perhaps say: ‘I set my alarm to remind me to record my favourite programme’, but this use would be rare. While a thing could ‘remind’ you of the past, for example, ‘This postcard reminds me of our trip to Malta’, it is more common to use ‘remember’ to talk about the past, and ‘remind’ to talk about the future.

#140 *Errors with tenses*

Correction:	I was going to do some gardening in the afternoon.
Polish:	<i>Planowałem pracować w ogrodzie po południu.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I planned to work in garden afternoon.
Error:	I was to do some gardening in the afternoon.

This sentence is an example of ‘future in the past’. We use ‘going to’ after ‘was’ or ‘were’ to show that at an *earlier time* in the past we planned to do something at a *later time*, but still in the past. In this sentence, we don’t know whether the task was accomplished or not, but ‘going to’ in the past is commonly used to talk about failed past intentions: ‘I was going to clean my bike yesterday, but I didn’t have time.’ The student could use the auxiliary verb ‘going to’ or main verbs ‘planning to’, ‘intending to’, or ‘hoping to’, and so on, but not ‘I was to do...’ The reason is that in the correct sentence ‘was’ is an auxiliary verb in past continuous, which we are using to create the ‘future’ in the past, so ‘I was to do’ reads like there is a main verb missing: ‘I was \_\_\_\_ to do...’ In Polish, the forms ‘going to’ and ‘future in the past’ do not exist, so they use ‘planowałem’ to express the same idea. Or, ‘I was going to do’ can be translated as: ‘Miałem zamiar pracować w ogrodzie.’ = I had (the) intention to work in (the) garden.’

#141 *Different concepts in Polish and English*

Correction:	I have eight fingers, two thumbs, and ten toes.
Polish:	<i>Mam dwadzieścia palców.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I have twenty fingers.
Error:	I have twenty fingers.

In Polish, the word ‘finger’ is ‘palec’, and toe is ‘palec u nogi’ (literally, ‘finger at leg’), but both parts of the body have the plural form ‘palce’ in Polish – or ‘fingers’ in English. This can lead to an extraordinary statement from the Polish student: ‘I have twenty fingers!’ In English, we have eight fingers, because on each hand we have four fingers and a ‘thumb’ (‘kciuk’), which is most definitely not a finger. We have ten toes, because on each foot we have five toes. It is possible to argue with a Polish native speaker for some time about how many fingers they have – but the correct answer in English must, of course, be ‘eight’!

#142 *Traditional grammar errors*

Correction:	I must eat something.
Polish:	<i>Ja będę musiała coś zjeść.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I will must something eat.
Error:	I will must eat something.

In this error the student has got mixed up using modal verbs, due to translating directly from Polish into English: ‘Ja będę musiała...’ = ‘I will must...’ This phrase does not exist in English, because it is not possible to put two modal auxiliary verbs together. The student should learn this rule to avoid errors with other modal verbs. For example, we will never see phrases like ‘I will must’, ‘I must can’, or ‘I might should’, and so on. After a modal verb there has to be an infinitive verb, for example: ‘I will *go*’, ‘I must *wait*’, or ‘I might *buy*’, and so on. If we use ‘must’ we are talking about the future anyway, so there is no need to use ‘will’ – in the sentence ‘I must eat something’ the speaker or writer means the timescale ‘very soon’ – ‘must’ makes this an urgent action.

#143 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	We met other people at the party.
Polish:	<i>Spotkaliśmy innych ludzi na imprezie.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	We met other people on party.
Error:	We met another people at the party.

In English, we use the adjective ‘other’ with a plural noun, and the adjective ‘another’ before a singular noun. In this error the student has used ‘another’ with a plural noun, instead of a singular noun: ‘another people’. We can say ‘We met another person (singular)...’ or ‘We met other people (plural)...’ but not ‘We met *another people*...’ There is a case when the word ‘people’ is singular, as in a tribe or race of people, e.g. ‘The Swedish are a pioneering people.’ However, it is very unlikely that you would meet a whole ‘people’ at a party!

#144 *Errors with tenses*

Correction:	I was reading a book when the phone rang.
Polish:	<i>Czytałem książkę, gdy zadzwonił telefon.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I read book when rang telephone.
Error:	I read a book when the phone rang.

In Polish there are no continuous or perfect tenses. This gives us nine additional tenses, that do not exist in Polish – six continuous, and three not:

<i>present continuous</i>	<i>present perfect continuous</i>	<i>present perfect</i>
<i>past continuous</i>	<i>past perfect continuous</i>	<i>past perfect</i>
<i>future continuous</i>	<i>future perfect continuous</i>	<i>future perfect</i>

In English we can use past continuous tense (was/were + ing form) to set the scene and show what was going on before a past simple action happened, using ‘when’ – as in this sentence: ‘I was reading a book *when* the phone rang.’ We can also use past continuous to show two continuous actions happening together, with the conjunction ‘while’ in the middle: ‘I was eating a pizza *while* my sister was texting her friend.’ The student needs to learn to use an appropriate English tense for the time they want to talk about.

#### #145 *Traditional grammar errors*

Correction:	He told her that he didn’t want to meet up.
Polish:	<i>Powiedział jej, że nie chce się spotkać.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	He told her that he doesn’t want to meet up.
Error:	He told her that he doesn’t want to meet up.

Reported speech is when we report what somebody said, as in this sentence. In reported speech tenses go backwards, for example, changing from *present simple* to *past simple*, then from *past simple* to *past perfect*. The speech that this sentence reports is: ‘I don’t want to meet up.’ Because this is in *present simple*, in reported speech it has to be changed to *past simple*, with a different pronoun: ‘he didn’t want to meet up.’ In Polish there is no difference between using present simple or past simple, and the student has gone with that, instead of remembering or learning the rules of reported speech. In everyday (colloquial) spoken English, the error sentence with ‘doesn’t’ is likely to be used by native speakers just as often as the correct version. However, if the student wants to pass a test or an exam they should use the correct form of reported speech.

#### #146 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	Life is hard.
Polish:	<i>Życie jest trudne.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Life is difficult.
Error:	The life is hard.

This error concerns which article to use, and whether to use one at all. The abstract noun ‘life’ is uncountable, so we cannot use ‘a’ or ‘an’ (which mean ‘one’), and in this sentence it is being used in a general context: ‘life’ in general is hard, not one specific ‘life’, so we cannot use ‘the’ – which means something specific. We use zero article – which means no article is required. We could use ‘the life’ if we meant the specific life of a person, for example: ‘The Life of Copernicus.’ It is positive that the student has thought to use an article before a noun, but the error happened because they chose the wrong option.

#147 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction:	I had such a good time.
Polish:	<i>Miałem tak dobry czas.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I had so good time.
Error:	I had so good time.

In English there is a clear distinction between ‘so’ and ‘such’, with ‘so’ being used for emphasis before adjectives – ‘The room was *so* tidy!’ – and ‘such’ being used before nouns (which may also be preceded by adjectives) – ‘It was *such* a nice day at the beach.’ However, in Polish the words ‘tak’ or ‘taki’ mean ‘so’ or ‘such’ respectively, but are so similar that they are often used interchangeably. Therefore it would be easy for the student to make this error, while translating directly from Polish into English. In any case, ‘Miałem tak dobry czas’ is not a very natural sentence in Polish. It would be more natural to say: ‘Spędziłem (tam) dobry czas. = I spent (there) good time.’

#148 *Using a positive form to make a negative sentence*

Correction:	The taxis never stop.
Polish:	<i>Taksówki nigdy się nie zatrzymają.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Taxis never themselves not stop.
Error:	Always the taxis don’t stop.

Here the student is mixed up about how to make a negative sentence with the meaning of ‘always’. The answer is to use the opposite adverb of frequency of ‘always’, which is ‘never’. While we usually need to use negative verb forms to make negative sentences, the word ‘never’ is a negative word and makes the sentence negative, so we do not need to use a negative verb form too. This would create a double negative effect: ‘The taxis never don’t stop’ would in fact have a positive meaning: ‘The taxis stop’ or ‘...always stop.’ There is also the issue of word order here. We put adverbs of frequency before the main verb, except if the main verb is ‘be’, when they follow the main verb, for example, ‘She is never late.’ We cannot begin a sentence with ‘always’ or ‘never’, unless it is an order with imperative form: ‘Always brush your teeth!’ or ‘Never borrow my bike!’ In any case, the phrase ‘Always the taxis don’t stop’ would be wrong in Polish too.

#149 *Traditional grammar errors*

Correction:	My car is better than yours.
Polish:	<i>Mój samochód jest lepszy niż twój.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	My car is better than yours.
Error:	My car is better like yours.

'Better than' is a comparative phrase based on the adjective 'good': 'good', 'better than', 'the best'. In Polish the function word 'niż' means 'than', so it is unclear why the student substitutes 'like'. It may be that this error was caused by the student's less-than-perfect knowledge of the comparative form in English grammar – or perhaps they have heard their friends and colleagues using this form. On the other hand, they may be translating directly from Polish slang, where the phrase 'lepszy jak twój' (literally, 'better like your') can be heard.

#150 *Differences in the use of prepositions*

Correction:	He lied to me.
Polish:	<i>Oklamał mnie.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	He lied me.
Error:	He lied me.

In Polish there is no preposition 'to' after 'lie', while in English we 'lie to' people, rather than 'lie them.' The collocation is: 'subject' + 'lie' + 'to' + 'object pronoun' or 'name', e.g. 'Barbara lied to him.' The student has translated directly from Polish into English, without considering the different use of prepositions between the languages.

#151 *Direct translation errors*

Correction:	Where is my phone?
Polish:	<i>Gdzie jest mój telefon?</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Where is my telephone?
Error:	Where is my telephone?

In English we use either the word 'phone' or 'mobile' to refer to our mobile phones. In Polish the word 'telefon' means both 'phone' and 'mobile'. A Polish person would never use the abbreviation 'fon'. The student has translated directly from Polish into English and ended up with the word 'telephone'. The problem is that in English we think of 'telephone' as being an old-fashioned heavy object that is attached to the wall at home (and probably has a dial), rather than as the thing that we keep in our pockets all day and sleep beside at night. When the student says 'Where is my telephone?' the listener is momentarily confused as to what they want. 'Surely your telephone is at home attached to the wall', they might feel the urge to reply. In fact, these days many people do not have a fixed-line home phone at all, making do with a 'mobile' or 'phone' that does it all.

#152 *In Polish but not in English*

Correction:	I'm trying to lose weight.
Polish:	<i>Staram się zrzucić wagę.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I try myself to throw off weight.
Error:	I'm trying to lose my weight.

In English, 'lose weight' is a collocation which does not include a possessive adjective (e.g. 'my'). In Polish, the verb 'staram się' contains the meaning of the pronoun 'myself' ('się'), which is perhaps why the student has included the incorrect word 'my' in the sentence. It may also be that the student feels the issue of their weight is personal to them, like the 'my' in this sentence: 'I'm trying to improve my English.'

#153 *Word order*

Correction:	I could never be a pilot.
Polish:	<i>Nigdy nie mógłbym być pilotem.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Never not I could be pilot.
Error:	I could not be a pilot, never.

This error highlights the difference in word order between Polish and English. In Polish, it is possible for your thoughts to evolve as you speak, because it allows you to add words and clauses as you speak: 'I could not be a pilot...' (the original thought) plus 'never' (the latest thought). Because of the more restrictive English word order, we have to have the complete thought before we speak: 'I could never be a pilot.' The student is using practises from speaking the Polish language while speaking English, which has resulted in an error.

#154 *Wrong word recalled*

Correction:	Don't shout at me!
Polish:	<i>Nie krzycz na mnie!</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Not you cry on me!
Error:	Don't cry at me!

Here the student has mixed up the verbs 'shout' and 'cry'. In English 'shout' means to say something very loudly, while 'cry' usually means to shed tears. We also have the option to 'cry out', which means to shout a single word, phrase, or sound. In Polish, the two verbs are very similar: 'krzyknąć' means to 'cry out', while 'krzyczeć' means to 'shout'. The student perhaps uses the verbs 'cry', 'cry out', and 'shout' interchangeably in Polish, and has tried to do the same thing here, resulting in an error that makes it very hard to understand the meaning of what they have said.



#155 *Differences in the use of prepositions*

Correction: She was angry with her brother.

Polish: *Była zła na brata.*

Word for Word Translation: She was angry on brother.

Error: She was angry on her brother.

This is a direct translation from Polish into English. An English native speaker would be angry ‘with’ somebody, but a Polish native speaker would be angry ‘on’ them. In English, ‘on’ is the preposition that we use to talk about literal platforms – ‘on the shelf’, ‘on the table’, ‘on the train’, etc. – and media platforms – ‘on the radio’, ‘on TV’, ‘on the internet’, ‘on the news’, and so on. We often use the preposition ‘with’ to talk about feelings towards other people and things – ‘angry with him’, ‘pleased with them’, ‘upset with her’, and so on. The student has translated directly without considering the many differences in the use of prepositions in Polish and English. Notice too the disappearing possessive adjective ‘her’, which is not present in Polish. In Polish, it is not necessary to use possessive adjectives if the meaning is obvious to both the speaker and the listener, so in the sentence ‘She was angry with brother’ it is clear whose brother it is – hers!

#156 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction: It is quite a good job.

Polish: *To jest dość dobra praca.*

Word for Word Translation: It is quite good job.

Error: It is a quite good job.

This sentence means that the job is ‘quite good’, but we cannot say ‘quite good job’ because ‘job’ is a singular countable noun and requires an article, in this case ‘a’, to be a correct phrase: ‘quite a good job’. With plural nouns (‘they are quite nice shoes’) and uncountable nouns (‘it is quite good chocolate’) there is no such problem. The student has become mixed up about where to put the indefinite article ‘a’ – but kudos to them for remembering that there must be one, and not simply saying ‘It is quite good job’ – especially since there are no articles in Polish.

#157 *One word in Polish, two words in English*

Correction: She told me that we had homework to do.

Polish: *Powiedziała mi, że mieliśmy pracę domową do zrobienia.*

Word for Word Translation: She said me that we had homework to do.

Error: She said me that we had homework to do.

Here the student has translated directly from Polish into English, and failed to understand the important difference between the verbs ‘tell’ and ‘say’. ‘Tell’ is a transitive verb, which means it needs an object, for

example, an object pronoun: ‘tell me’, ‘tell him’, ‘tell them’, etc. On the other hand, ‘say’ is an intransitive verb, which means it cannot be followed by an object. We cannot say ‘say me’, but rather just ‘say’: ‘She said that we had homework to do’, not ‘She said me...’ The meaning of each verb is very similar, with ‘tell’ meaning a more confidential form of communication. In Polish, ‘tell’ is ‘powiedzieć’ and ‘say’ is ‘mówić’. In addition, in Polish both verbs are transitive, and ‘say me’ and ‘tell me’ both translate as the same phrase: ‘powiedz mi’.

#### #158 *Errors with tenses*

Correction:	They will be surprised!
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Będą zaskoczeni!</i>
Word for Word Translation:	They will surprised!
Error:	They will surprised!

The phrases ‘They will...’ and ‘They will be...’ have the same Polish translation: ‘Oni będą’ – or simply ‘Będą’. When you want to say ‘It will be...’, ‘There will be...’, or ‘He will be...’, for example, there is no distinction between ‘will’ on its own or ‘will be’, so you could simply say: ‘It will sunny tomorrow’, for example, rather than use ‘be’. This may be a more efficient use of language than in English! The student has translated directly from Polish into English and ended up with an error. There must always be an infinitive verb after a modal verb: ‘They will + *be*’ and then, in this case the complement, the adjective ‘surprised.’

#### #159 *In English but not in Polish*

Correction:	Hello. Please come in. Would you like to take a seat?
<i>Polish:</i>	<i>Cześć. Wejdz. Siadaj.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	Hello. Enter. Sit.
Error:	Hello. Come in. Sit down.

While the polite phrases do exist in Polish – ‘Proszę wejść’ (‘Please come in’) and ‘Chcesz usiąść?’ (‘Would you like to sit down?’) – Polish people are comfortable speaking to one another using the imperative form (giving orders) – in both formal and informal situations. It may be that they use a friendly tone of voice while giving the orders, rather than speaking in an aggressive way. English ears take exception to the ‘bald’ imperative form – we hate receiving orders without the use of polite words and phrases to sweeten the pill. So, ‘come in’ becomes ‘please come in’, and ‘sit down’ becomes ‘do sit down’, ‘please have a seat’, or the idiomatic ‘would you like to take a seat?’ (Of course we are not really inviting somebody to ‘take’, to ‘disappear with the seat!)

This rule stands in all kinds of social situations, but especially when communicating with people whom we do not know. It may be that we do use imperative voice in its basic form – without any polite trimmings – with friends and family and when we are in a bad mood, but we do not like to hear it and so, assuming that others will be angered when we use it with them, we try to avoid using ‘bald’ imperative form.

#160 *Direct translation errors*

Correction:	I'm redecorating my flat.
Polish:	<i>Mam remont mojego mieszkania.</i>
Word for Word Translation:	I have renovation my flat.
Error:	I'm renovating my flat.

The Polish student makes the rather surprising statement that they are 'renovating' their flat, when in fact all they are doing is 'redecorating' it, for example, painting it, putting up wallpaper, hanging some new lights, perhaps refitting the kitchen – but not *renovating* it. The Polish word 'remont' translates as 'renovation', but in English 'renovation' is more like the process of bringing back to life a crumbling old building – not simply coating the walls with a lick of paint, but actually knocking down parts of a building and restoring other parts. The student has taken the English meaning of 'remont' and used it without considering the context of the action and learning the correct word: 'redecorating'.

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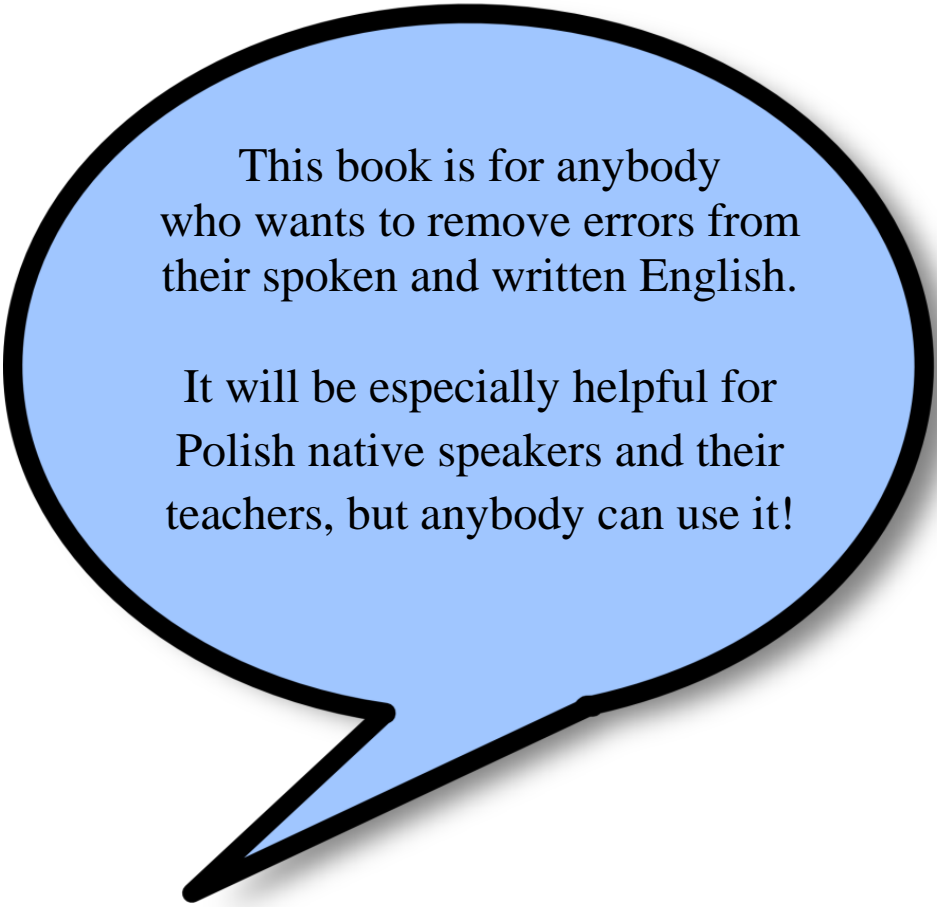
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This book is for anybody who wants to remove errors from their spoken and written English.

It will be especially helpful for Polish native speakers and their teachers, but anybody can use it!

#### About the author:

Matt Purland is an English teacher and writer from Cambridge in the UK. He has worked with Polish students at all levels since 2004. He has been living and working in Poland since 2007. His special interests include pronunciation, writing teaching materials, and error correction. This is his twenty-fifth resource book.