Dyslang

Dyslexia and Additional Academic Language Learning

Module 5

Comparison among languages

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Lifelong Learning Programme

Dyslang Module 5
Comparison among languages

Claudia Cappa, Jill Fernando, Sara Giulivi, 2012.

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Learning outcomes

- Acquire basic knowledge of the main differences between languages and of the main difficulties plurilingual individuals may encounter, due to the differences between the acquired languages and the languages to be acquired.

Useful terminology

Morphology: morphology is that field of linguistics that studies the internal structure of words and the different forms that words can assume by adding affixes or by combining them with other words.

Morpheme: words are made up of morphemes. A morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit of a word. Morphemes can be divided into lexical and grammatical. The first ones have a lexical meaning, e.g. nouns, adjectives and verbs; the second ones (articles, prepositions, endings, etc...) express grammatical functions and their meaning depends, at least partly, on their context. Besides, morphemes can be free or bound. Free morphemes can stand by themselves in a clause (e.g. Today, yesterday, bar, we, you, that, of, then, etc...); while bound morphemes can't stand alone and are always attached to other morphemes (e.g. In Italian the -o ending for male singular substantives, the i- ending for male plural ones and, in English, the -s ending for plurals). Bound morphemes are called affixes. These latter can be subdivided into prefixes, if they are added on the left of the word (e.g. ex-moglie, in-utile), infixes, if they are added in the middle of the word (e.g. parl-ott-are), suffixes, if they are added on the right of the word (e.g. dolce-mente, can-i, scriv-ono).

Phonetics: is the branch of linguistics that describes the physical characteristics of human sounds and languages. In other words, phonetic studies what we do while we speak and while we listen to someone talking.

Phonology: is the branch of linguistics that studies the linguistic function of the sounds, that is their capability to differentiate meanings. Phonology also covers how the sounds of a determined language will combine together and how they can be modified in determined contexts.

Phoneme: it is the smallest distinctive unit in the sound system of a language, that is the smaller unit (representation of speech sound) that can determine a change of meaning in two otherways similar words.

Syntax: it is the branch of linguistics that studies the principles that, in different languages, rule the combination of words in more complex structures

Contents

by Claudia Cappa, Jill Fernando, Sara Giulivi, Novembe, 2012

INTRODUCTION

In the interstices of language lie powerful secrets of the culture.

Adrienne Rich, Of Woman Born

Although Swan and Smith's quotation refers to English, this observation could be applied to learners of any language.

All pupils can be expected to experience some difficulties in certain aspects of learning an additional language. Where difficulties appear to be particularly severe or prolonged, it can be useful to compare pupils' performance in the new language with their oral and literacy skills in their first language. In the case of monolingual children, this should not present significant difficulties as language teachers can talk to their colleagues and look at examples of pupils' work. However, the situation can be quite different for multilingual children where the school may not have much information about pupils' skills in their first language or indeed about the language itself. The purpose of this section is to familiarise teachers with some of the features of a number of first languages spoken by pupils in our schools. This will enable teachers to gain understanding about whether errors made in the additional language are likely to be dyslexic indicators or whether they could be attributed to features of pupils' first language. Perhaps more importantly, it will highlight to teachers the areas of instruction which are likely to require particular attention.

5.1 Languages in the world

There are about 7000 and they have many similarities and differences.
First of all, the number of speakers of each language is extremely variable.
Some languages, like English or Mandarin Chinese, have a total of more than
one billion speakers; others number just a few hundred people, for example
some languages spoken by Australian Aboriginals or American Indians; some
others are spoken by just a few dozen people and are at risk, in a short
while, to disappear forever.
However, the most macroscopic difference lies in the 'sound shapes' of
words carrying the same meaning in the different languages: for example,
the object that we usually use to drink is called "glass" in English, "bicchiere"
in Italian, "verre" in French, etc… This relation between sound and meaning
is completely arbitrary.
Languages also differ in the sound inventories they draw from, in order to
form words and, in particular, in the sounds they use to distinguish different
word meanings: the English language has chosen, among all the possible
linguistic sounds, a consonant like the initial one of the word "that", but the
same sound hasn't been chosen, for instance, by Italian or French. Similarly,
many English words include an aspirated "h" either at the beginning or in
the middle of the word. Italian doesn't have aspirate "h", and that's why
many Italians learning English, when pronouncing words like "head", "hot",
"holiday", "ahead", very often drop this sound.
In this module we will try to provide some examples of the basic typological
differences that can occur among languages and explain the reason why it
can be useful for foreign languages teachers to know – even just partially –
such differences.

Many of the examples provided below concern differences with respect to
English, and to the possible learners' difficulties in learning this language.
However, the principles of those differences can be extended to other
languages.
We will deal with differences in sound inventories, but also with the
different modalities that every language has chosen to convey the meaning
of words through morphological and syntactical structures. Such modalities
are related to what we call "linguistic typology" (see par. 5.2).

5.2 Consonant and vowel systems

Phonemic inventories of different languages can be very diverse, both in terms of number of phonemes and in terms of type of phonemes. British English, for example, has 10 single vowels and 21-24 consonants (numbers may vary in American English and in the different dialects). Italian has 7 vowels and 23 consonants. Bulgarian has 6 vowels and 33 consonants. Japanese has a relatively small phonemic inventory, consisting of 5 vowels and 14 consonants, while Rotokas language – spoken in Papua New Guinea – has an even smaller one with just 5 vowels and 6 consonants. Xhosa language, one of the official languages of South Africa, has a very large phonemic inventory, consisting of 10 vowels and up to 69 consonants… To see: www.phonetics.ucla.edu/course/chapter2/amerenglishvowels.html

When you learn a foreign language, you may have to face some difficulties related to the differences that you may find between its phonemic inventory and that of your mother tongue. First of all, if you are already over the so-called critical period, the phonetic-phonological component of a second language will be one of the most difficult aspects to learn (BOX 5.1).

It is a fact that during the first months of life, when the child naturally and without effort acquires the native language, the brain develops its own neural networks based on the input it receives, that is based on the mother tongue. So shaped neural networks favour the learning of linguistic structures somehow 'similar' to those already acquired, whereas they interfere with those which are not similar, as may be the case with an L2. This means that, when as children we learn our native language, we group together the variety of perceived sounds into a series of categories that we acknowledge as peculiar of our language. These categories form a sort of "filter" through which we perceive the L2 sounds.

Box 5.1 The Critical Period

The "critical period" is generally defined as the temporal window in the life span after which it is no longer possible to acquire a certain linguistic code as a native language (Fabbro, 2004).

Indeed, the existence of a critical period, going from early infancy until puberty, was originally proposed for native language acquisition (Lenneberg, 1967) and then extended also to second language learning (see Krashen et al., 1982). After puberty, the plasticity of the language acquisition mechanisms seems to start decaying. Recent research in the field of language acquisition, however, have led to a less drastic view of the critical period and have shown that the most abrupt decay after puberty concerns especially the acquisition of phonetic abilities. Furthermore, researchers have highlighted the importance of considering the "critical period" not as a single homogeneous window in time, but as a continuum of windows (Goswami, 2004), or as "multiple critical periods" (Knudsen, 2004), during which the cerebral areas dedicated to certain linguistic functions mature and become stable under a neuro-physiological and neuro-anatomic point of view, making neural restructuring progressively more difficult.

The following table, translated from Daloiso (2009) displays the critical periods for language acquisition that have been identified

	CRITICAL PERIODS FOR LANGUAGE ACQUISITION		
	PRIMO PERIODO (0-3 anni)	**SECONDO PERIODO (4-8 anni)**	**TERZO PERIODO (da 9 anni)**
Linguistic characteristics	• Perfect pronunciation • Optimal development of linguistic abilities • Optimal syntactic competence	• Perfect pronunciation • Optimal development of linguistic abilities • Optimal syntactic competence • Possible interferences among languages	• Foreign accent • Difficulties in syntax • Difficulties in acquiring function words • Greater possibilities of fossilisation
Neural correlates	• Maturational factors • Implicit memory	• Maturational factors • Implicit memory • Beginning of lateralisation	• Stable cognitive functions • Complete lateralisation
Cerebral representations	The languages acquired are represented in the same cerebral areas	The languages are partly represented in the same cerebral areas	The languages acquired late are represented in different cerebral areas, that are larger than the mother tongue areas

As the table shows, the acquisition of new linguistic codes becomes more difficult as neural plasticity diminishes with time. The first and second critical periods are crucial for the acquisition of a native competence in one or more languages. These two time windows are therefore the most favorable time when children can develop a plurilingual competence (Daloiso, 2009)

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Box 5.2 Assimilation of new sounds to native sounds

According to some recent research, native phonological categories act as "prototypical sounds" and behave as sorts of "magnets" both for native and non-native sounds: the sounds we get in touch with are "attracted" by the prototypical sounds that, in the acoustic space, are perceived as the closest ones; therefore a non-native sound located too far in the acoustic space from any other prototypical sound, will not be "attracted" by it. (cfr. the "neural commitment" and the "native language magnet effect" concepts in Kuhl, 2004). Especially when the competence in a L2 is still poor, some sounds of this language may turn out to be more difficult than others to distinguish. This difficulty depends on how much they are "attracted" by and "assimilated" to the sounds of the mother tongue.

According to the Perceptual Assimilation Model (PAM) by Best (1994) the modalities of assimilation of the L2 sounds to those of L1 can be various. For example, it is possible that two L2 phonemes are attracted by a single L1 phoneme and both of them are assimilated to it. In this case it will be difficult to perceive them as different from each other. For instance, if the sounds th and t of the English language are perceived by an Italian speaker with little competence in this language, both of them will be assimilated to the t sound and will turn out to be difficult to distinguish. In some cases, two L2 phonemes may be attracted and assimilated to two different L1 phonemes: in this case they will be much easier to distinguish. In other cases, it is possible that one of the two phonemes is assimilated to a L1 phoneme whereas the other one is not assimilated to any native sound. In this case too, the two sounds will be quite easy to distinguish. If the person who is learning a L2 receives a qualitatively and quantitatively appropriate input, he/she will be able to perceive the "articulatory gestures" that are needed to produce a sound (to learn more about "articulatory gestures", (Goldstein, & Fowler, 2003), and will have the possibility to form the peculiar phonological categories of a L2.

5.3 Linguistic typology

Existing languages are classified by linguists according to three main criteria: the "genealogical" grouping, which is based on the "family" relationships among languages; the "areal" grouping, based around the common structural features which are typical of those languages spoken in geographically close areas; and the "typological" classification, based on the internal structure of words and on the modalities of word combinations into sentences. In this unit we will mainly focus on the "typological" criterium, since it plays a more significant role for our purposes.

To learn more about genealogical and areal classifications, see Boxes 5.3 and 5.4.

Box 5.3 Genealogical Classification of Languages

As already hinted at in paragraph 5.3, one of the criteria that the linguists have used in order to try to "sort out" existing languages, is the **genealogical** classification: languages have been grouped into different "linguistic families" according to their derivation from a common original single language. Linguists have been able to trace this through a backwards reconstruction. Various linguistic families, geographically arranged as illustrated in the map below, have been investigated.
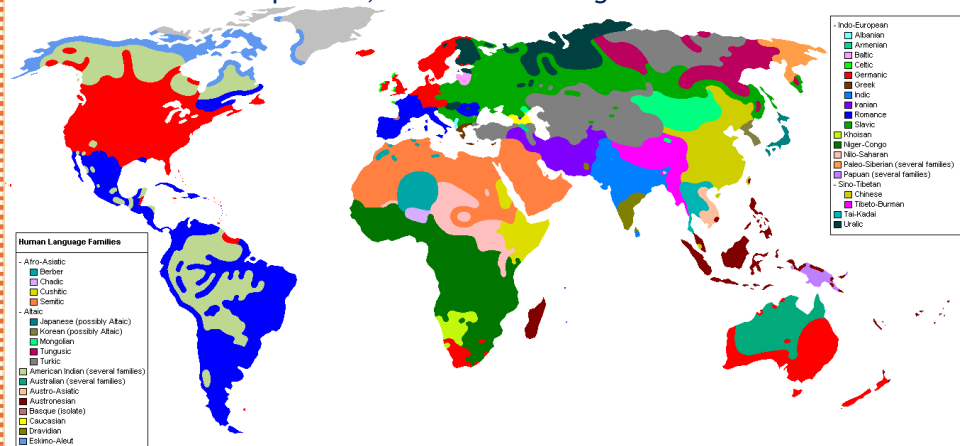
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Primary_Human_Language_Families_Map.png

The family is the largest "genealogical unit" and it can be divided into groups (and subgroups) of languages. Both living and extinct languages can belong to such groups and subgroups. As an example, we quote below the **Indo-european** family with its corresponding groups and subgroups. For space reasons, we will avoid quoting extinct languages. As you can see, both Italian and English - for instance – belong to the Indo-European family, so they are genealogically related (whereas Chinese is not), but belong to different linguistic groups. Finally, as you can see, Turkish is not in the tree. As a matter of fact this language belongs to the Altaic family.

http://srhabay.wikispaces.com/19+INDO-EUROPEAN+LANGUAGE+FAMILY
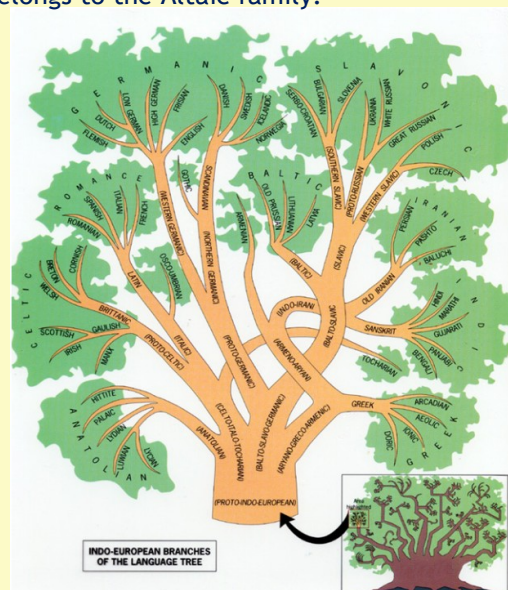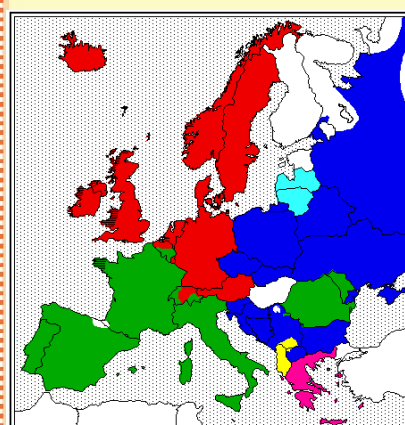
Box 5.4 - Areal Classification of Languages

Languages which don't belong to the same family or to the same linguistic group, can share some similarities of a structural kind that may have been created thanks to the geographical proximity among the languages themselves. Japanese and Chinese, for example, are not derived from the same original language, but have common features which have developed thanks to the contacts they have kept down the centuries. So, at areal level, these two languages fall into the same classification.

Another example could be that of Sinhala and Tamil, two languages spoken in Sri Lanka (although Tamil is also spoken in Tamil Nadu, South India, and elsewhere). They show a lot of similarities in their syntactic systems and share a lot of vocabulary, but belong to two different families: Sinhala is part of the Indo-Aryan family, while Tamil is a Dravidian language.

Acquiring awareness of the typological differences among languages can turn out to be particularly useful for teachers of foreign languages, since it allows them to better understand the way different languages 'work', and so to foresee some of the difficulties that can emerge in language learners.

When two languages have one or more morphological or syntactical features in common, they are said to be typologically correlated, whether or not they are genealogically related. Linguists make a distinction between morphological typology and a syntactical typology.

5.3.1 Morphological typology

Morphological typology classifies languages on the basis of the internal structure of words and identifies 4 primary linguistic categories:

1. **Isolating**: this kind of language has a low morpheme-per-word ratio and expresses the connection among words mainly through their order in the sentence.
2. **Agglutinative**: this kind of language forms words by adding as many affixes as the amount of grammatical connections necessary to express.
3. **Inflecting**: this kind of language uses a single suffix in order to express the grammatical functions.
4. **Incorporating or Polysynthetic**: in this kind of language a sentence can correspond to a single word: this means that it is possible to incorporate all the grammatical connections that an inflecting language would express with a sentence, into a single word.

It is important to keep in mind that "pure" types of languages do not actually exist and that the classification mentioned above doesn't have to be taken rigidly. Some languages can be included in a specific typology for some features, but in a different typology for some other features. English, for instance, can be considered an isolating language, since its morphology is very reduced, however it shows some inflective features as well as typical features of agglutinative and incorporating languages.

To learn more about morphological typology and examine some examples of each of the 4 morphological typologies listed above, see the box 5.5.

Box 5.5 Morphological Typology: exemples

From a morphological point of view it is possible to detect 4 types of languages:

ISOLATING: in isolating languages morphology is nearly nonexistent. This means that nouns can't be distinguished by gender, number or case; verbs aren't inflected, etc...
In order to express connections among words, isolating languages mainly make use of the order of words in addition to some particles. Chinese is an example of an isolating language. English is another example, even if less "extreme". In these languages the order of words tends to be quite rigid, adjectives aren't inflected ("A red rose" vs "Seven red roses"), nouns can't be distinguished by gender, but just by number ("cat" means both male and female cat) and verb forms never change (in English the only exception is the present tense in which, at the third-person singular, you have to add the suffix –s or –es). So English and Chinese, even if not genealogically related, are in fact typologically related since they are both isolating languages.

AGGLUTINATIVE: agglutinative languages form words by adding as many affixes4 as the amount of grammatical connections to be expressed.
Some examples of agglutinative languages are German, Japanese, Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish. In the latter language, for instance, the word "bird" is "kus", while "birds" is "kus-lar" (to the lexical morpheme that means "bird" we add "-lar", that is the plural suffix); likewise "room" is "oda", while "rooms" is "oda-lar" (lexical morpheme + plural suffix); "my rooms" is "oda-lar-im" (lexical morpheme + plural suffix + possessive suffix).

INFLECTING: inflecting languages express the various grammatical functions by means of a single suffix, they further express grammatical functions by changing the stem vowel of words (a vowel that ends a stem and precedes an inflection).
Romance languages and Slavic languages are generally inflective languages. Some examples of the Romance ones are Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese; while some examples of the Slavic ones are Russian, Czech, Bulgarian and Polish.
Italian can be considered an example of inflective language: e.g. in the verb "scriv-ete" (= "you (pl.) write") the suffix –ete contains the information about the present indicative tense, the active form and the second-person plural. Besides, if we consider the first-person present indicative of the verb "faccio" (= "I do"), compared to "feci" (= "I did"), the change of the stem vowel from –a- to –e- shows the shift from the present tense to the past historic.
In the French verb "parl-ons" (= "we talk"), the suffix –ons contains the following information: present indicative, 1st person plural, active form; similarly in the Spanish verb "habl-as" (= "you speak"), the suffix –as means present indicative, second person singular, active form.

INCORPORATING (or polysynthetic): in incorporating or polysynthetic languages it is possible to express with a single word all the connections that in an inflective language are expressed with a clause. Some examples of them are a few African Bantu languages as well as some languages spoken by American Indians. In Inuit language, for instance, the word "angyaghllangyugtuq" means "someone wants to buy a big boat" (angya-ghlla-ng-yug-tuq = boat-AUGMENTATIVE-to buy-VOLITIVE-3 PERS. SINGULAR)

5.3.2 Syntactical typology

Syntactical typology classifies languages according to the reciprocal order in which the constituents of the clause tend to place. It takes 4 aspects into account:

The subject (S) - verb (V) - object (O) order. The possible combinations are six, that is: SVO, SOV, VSO, VOS, OSV and OVS. Among these combinations, the most frequent are SVO; SOV; VSO . VOS is attested in very few languages, OSV in no-one and OVS (it seems) just in one.
The noun-adjective order
The use of prepositions or postpositions
The noun-genitive order

It is important to underline that the observation of diverse languages shows the existence of systematic correlations among the four aspects mentioned above. We know, for example, that if a language is normally characterised by the subject-verb-object order (1), then the adjective usually goes before the noun (2), uses prepositions, not postpositions (3) and the possessive phrase is positioned after the noun (4). To learn more about it and examine some examples, see the Extension material box 6.6.
As already mentioned in paragraph 6.1.2, there is a systematic correlation among these four aspects. In particular, the following correlations can be identified:

1) VSO/Ps/NG/NA
2) SVO/Pr/NG/NA
3) SOV/Po/GN/AN
4) SOV/Po/GN/NA

These "combinations" are of the <<if...then>> kind and so, from a logical point of view, they constitute implications. Linguists call them "universal implications".
It is important to note that not every language falls perfectly into the categories mentioned above. There may be several exceptions.
An awareness of the differences and the correlations among languages at the syntactical typological level, can emerge as very helpful for teachers of foreign languages.
Given the large variety of languages and cultures that more and more often coexist in school, it is impossible for teachers to know in detail the native language of all their pupils. However, proceeding from the information that they will receive from their pupils about their own mother tongue, and on the basis of some basic knowledge of syntactic typology, teachers will be able to acquire a better awareness of the different structural features of that language.

This will be useful in two ways:

on the one hand it will be useful for the teacher to make a comparison between the student's native language and the taught language, and anticipate the possible difficulties he/she may find;
on the other hand it will be useful for the pupil to reflect on the differences between his/her mother tongue and other languages (let's imagine a student of Turkish origin, living in Italy, and studying English); it will also help the pupil to feel more involved during the lesson and to perceive the diversity of their language not as an obstacle, but as an enrichment for themselves and for their classmates.

Box 5.6 Syntactical Typology: examples

1) Subject (S) - verb (V) - object (O) order :
  • **SVO:**
  Italian: La ragazza (S = the girl) ha letto (V=read) il libro (O= the book)
  English: John (S) read (V) the book (O)
  Vietnamese: Tôi sẽ học tiếng Việt (I will study Vietnamese). In this sentence "Tôi" means "I" (S), "sẽ học" means "will study" (V), where "sẽ" is a future marker and "học" means study, "tiếng Việt" means "Vietnamese" (O), where "tiếng" means language and "Việt" means "Vietnamese".

  • **SOV:**
  Turkish: Kiz kitabl okuyor (Kiz =girl, kitabl= book, okuyor = to read (+ 3p. sing. fem. pass.)
  Japanese Hiromi-ga Naoko-ni tegami-o kaita (Hiromi wrote a letter to Naoko, where "Hiromi-ga" =Hiromi-nominative (S), "Naoko-ni" = Naoko-dative, "tegami-o" = letter-accusative (O), and "kaita" = "wrote" (V)
  Sinhala: Mama TV baluwa (I watched TV), where "Mama" = "I" (S), "TV" = "TV" (O), and "baluwa"= "watched" (O)

  • **VSO:**
  Welsh: example here
  Arabian: Qara'at al-bintu al-kitaba (Qara'at = to read (+ 3p. sing. fem. perf.), al-bintu = girl, al-kitaba = book.

2) The noun (N) – adjective (A) order
  In some languages one of the two orders prevails but the other is also possible. Italian, for example normally prefers the NA order ("albero (= tree) verde (=green)"), but AN is also used ("verde albero").
  In languages like English, the AN combination predominates: "black (angel) coffee (n)".
  The same happens in German the AN combination is preferred, as in "eine (= a) freundliche (= friendly) Dame (=Lady)".

3) The use of prepositions rather than postpositions.
  Italian, for example, is a language that makes use of prepositions ("A Roma" = "To Rome"), whereas Japanese uses postpositions ("Yokohama e" = "to Yokoama").

4) The genitive (G)– noun (N) order.
  In Italian the followed order is NG ("Il gatto di Marta" = "Martha's cat"), in English the preferred order is GN ("Martha's cat"), but often also NG ("The owner of the factory"). In Vietnamese the order is usually GN: in the sentence "Martha của mèo" (Martha's cat) would literally translate as as "Martha of whom cat".

5.4 Examples of comparison between languages

The range of possible combinations between L1, L2 and other additional languages that may co-occur in the plurilingual student is extremely wide and impossible to cover. Below, we have taken the example of Turkish and considered its main features in order to highlight possible difficulties that may arise and the most common mistakes that learners are likely to make in English. We have then looked briefly at Turkish in relation to French and suggested potentially problematic areas.

This module also includes an appendix that contains a comparison of English with a number of other first languages spoken by learners attending our schools. Links have also been made to other European languages where possible. Please select the sections which relate to languages spoken by your learners.

5.4.1 Turkish-English

1) Phonetic - phonological aspects:

   a. Turkish is a phonologically transparent orthography with regular letter-sound correspondences

   b. Sound systems. Turkish has 21 consonants and 8 vowels. Since 1928, Turkish has used an adapted version of the Roman script.

   c. Unlike in English (where it is only pronounced before a vowel sound, for example, 'run' or 'story'), /r/ is always pronounced in Turkish. Turkish speakers tend to pronounce the /r/ in English when it is in the final position ('poor') or when it comes before a consonant ('hurt').

   d. In Turkish, the letters 's' and 'z' are always pronounced as /s/ and /z/ respectively. This is not the case in English and can lead to confusion with the pronunciation of genitive endings ('the boy's ball'), third person singular present tense verbs (for example 'lives') and plurals (for example, the word 'trees' which should be pronounced /tr:z/).

   e. Turkish speakers have difficulty pronouncing /æ/ and may often substitute/e/, for example saying 'set' for 'sat'.

f. There may also be confusion between /ɔ:/ ('law') and /oʊ/ ('low').
g. /ð/ ('clothe') and /θ/ ('cloth') do not exist in Turkish and may cause significant difficulty.

2) Morphological aspects:

a. Turkish is an agglutinative language. Affixes are added in sequence to the end of a word. For example, the suffix '-di' is used to express the past tense and the suffix '-mi' is used to ask a question requiring a yes/no answer.
b. b. Verb conjugation. A suffix is added to the root of a verb to indicate tense and person. For example 'I don't understand' is translated as 'anlamiyorum' which is made up of the verb root (anla-), the negative suffix (m(i)), the first person present continuous tense indicator ((i)yor) and the first person marker (-(u)m). The use of the present continuous here shows why Turkish students may incorrectly use the present continuous tense in English.
c. Gender and number in nouns and adjectives.
   Nouns do not have gender but they show number, possession and case. Nouns can be pluralised by adding the suffix '-ler' or '-lar' but the plural is used less frequently than in English.
d. Other relevant aspects…
   There is no separate verb 'to be'.
   There is no definite article and there are differences between indefinite article usage in English and Turkish.

3) Syntactic aspects:

a. Preferred Subject – Verb – Object order
   The usual word order is Subject-Object-Verb (with the finite verb at the end of the sentence). Word order is sometimes altered to change the stress: the word immediately before the verb is stressed.
b. Preferred noun-adjective order
   Adjectives go in front of nouns.
c. Subject must be expressed or can be omitted
   Personal pronouns exist in Turkish but are often omitted.
d. Other relevant aspects…
   • 'He', 'she' and 'it' are represented by one third person pronoun in Turkish.
   • In Turkish, commas are often inserted after the topic of the sentence and learners may also do this in their written English.
   • The equivalent of English prepositions come after the noun.

4) Examples of common errors:

    a.   *My mother teacher.*
    b.   *I am watching television every day.*
    c.   *When I had finished breakfast, came to school.*
    d.   *My brother, is in year 2.*
    e.   *My parents have bought new house.*
    f.   *I live in the Manchester.*
    g.   *I made my homework.*
    h.   *Have you a big garden?*
    i.   *He knows playing tennis.*
    j.   *I went to home after the party.*
    k.   *I saw him two week ago.*

5.4.2 Turkish- French

For a Turkish speaker learning French in the UK, it will be important to consider the length of time the student has been learning English. There are many similarities between English and French, in terms of syntax, vocabulary and grammar so a student who already has a reasonable command of English will be at an advantage when they start learning French.

Unlike the transparent spelling system of Turkish, French has a relatively opaque spelling system. However, unlike English, you can almost always tell how to pronounce a word from its spelling, for example 'eau' is always pronounced in the same way.

Turkish has quite a lot of loan words of French origin: kuaför (coiffeur/ hairdresser), pantolon (pantalon/trousers), kravat (cravate/tie), bisiklet (bicyclette/bicycle), enerji (énergie/energy), karakter (caractère/character), restoran (restaurant), televizyon (télévision/television) and many others. Similarly there are a number of French words that originate from Turkish. These include yaourt (yoghurt), chiche-kebab (shish kebab) and kiosque (kiosk). It will be useful to discuss these and encourage the student to mention any other similar words that they encounter when learning French.

French and Turkish both have an informal and formal word for 'you' so this concept should not pose any difficulties for Turkish speakers.

Turkish speakers, like monolingual English speakers, may be expected to have some difficulties with the gender of nouns in French as these do not exist in Turkish.

Definite articles do not exist in Turkish so may be problematic in French (although less so for learners who have become familiar with the concept in English).

Like English, Turkish adjectives stand before nouns and are not modified according to the number of objects they modify. As a result, Turkish speakers may have some difficulty with the positioning of French adjectives (as some go in front of the noun but most stand after) and with the need for adjectival agreement in terms of number and gender.

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5.4.3 Final remarks

This section has provided an overview of one of the languages spoken as a mother tongue by children in our schools and has indicated the type of errors that teachers might expect from speakers of those languages. However, it should be borne in mind that a child's performance in a third (+) language will also be influenced by factors such as the length of time they have spent learning the main language of the school and the relationship between the second and third languages. A child might have Arabic as their first language but if they have spent several years learning English, they are unlikely to experience the same difficulties with the French or German script that they may have experienced when they first started learning English.
In addition, teachers also need to recognise that each child has their own story and that it is essential to build up as complete a learner profile as possible. This includes finding out about any gaps in schooling as well as the number of languages the child has been exposed to and their degree of fluency. It is important to know when they use each language and who they use it with. Find out whether they are able to read and write in first and subsequent languages and, if so, find out when they read and write and for what purpose. Ensure that you know which languages are used in the family home. It might be the case that a child's first language is Somali but that they have spent several years in Holland and are fluent in Dutch. This will inevitably have an impact on their experience of learning additional European languages. Do not assume that siblings share the same learner profiles as, in some cases, their knowledge of languages may differ considerably.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A - Arabic

Arabic is an official language in over 20 countries including Algeria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia. It also operates as a second major language in a number of additional countries such as Chad, Djibouti and Bangladesh. There are also many more Muslims throughout the world who regardless of nationality have some knowledge of the Arabic language due to their study of the Koran.

The following section highlights some of the features of Arabic which may account for specific difficulties faced by individuals learning English and other west European languages.
In Arabic, the script is written from right to left and the verb is positioned first and followed by the subject of the sentence. However, in colloquial Arabic, the word order is Subject Verb Object.

There is no separate upper and lower case in Arabic so errors in capitalisation can be expected when learners write in European languages. There may be difficulties learning capitalisation rules for English and then contrasting rules in a language such as German where nouns are capitalised.

Arabic speakers sometimes confuse similar letters (p/q and b/d) when learning the Roman alphabet and also experience difficulties learning cursive writing. When reading and writing, Arabic speakers may also mis-sequence letters within words because of right to left eye movements.

The written Arabic script comprises consonants and long vowels. There are three short vowels but these are not written in Arabic script. It is not therefore surprising that learners may frequently omit vowels when writing in European languages.

Arabic uses the conjunction 'wa' (equivalent to 'and') to list a series of items whereas English uses commas and 'and' before the final item. Learners may produce English with the 'and' repeated rather than using commas.

The English present simple and present continuous are represented by one present tense in Arabic. This may cause difficulties for the Arabic speaker learning English ('She is studying now' v 'She studies for three hours every evening') but will not be an issue when learning French or German which do not have a separate present continuous form either.

In Arabic, the object of a verb in a relative clause must be included and this leads to errors in English ('The cottage, which we stayed in it last summer, was by the sea'.) Personal pronouns are often added to verbs in Arabic and this can lead to mistakes in English such as 'My sister she works in a school'.

Abstract nouns are preceded by a definite article in Arabic so unnecessary definite articles may be expected in learners' writing in English. In contrast, there is no indefinite article in Arabic so omissions of indefinite articles in English may be expected.

Relative pronouns do not distinguish between human and non human so learners may find it difficult to decide whether to use 'who' or 'which'.

In Arabic, there is no equivalent of the auxiliary verb 'do' so learners are likely to have initial difficulties with forming interrogatives and negative statements. Errors such as 'He go to the mosque?' are to be expected.

Arabic does not have a verb 'to be' in the present tense. This leads to errors such as 'He going to the football club'.

Because the Arabic spelling system is phonetic, Arabic speakers often pronounce English words phonetically.

Arabic word stress is regular so Arabic speakers struggle with languages such as English where different stress can affect the meaning of a word.

Pronunciation. Some particular vowel confusions occur in English, for example between:

Some particular vowel confusions occur in English, for example between:
/ ɪ/ / sit and /e/ set
/ɒ/ cot and /ɔ:/ caught
/æ/ man and /e/ men
/e/ sell and /eɪ) sale
/ɒ/ cot and /a:/ cart
/ʊ/ full and /u:/ fool

Consonant confusions occur between:

/p/ pit and /b/ bit
/g/ game and /k/ came
/v/ vine and /f/ fine (eg fillage instead of village).
/θ/ think and /s/ sin or /t/ tin
/ ð/ they and /d/ day
/ʒ/ as in leisure and pleasure and /s/, /ʃ/ and /z/

Arabic does not have initial consonant clusters such as pr, pl, gr, gl, thr, spr or spl and also has far fewer consonant clusters than English. Sometimes Arabic speakers will insert a vowel in order to make pronunciation easier.

Difficulties faced by Arabic speakers learning English – feedback from a teaching assistant in a Manchester primary school

1. **Confusion over pronouns, gender and tenses**
    - Him went home (He went home.)
    - Me go to the shop (I went to the shop.)

2. **Difficulties with phonics**
    - i/e confusion
    - b/p confusion
    - o/u confusion
    - ch/sh confusion

3. **Difficulties with writing**
    - Where to start writing on the page
    - Sentences do not flow – pupils keep starting a new line
    - Pupils may miss a line after each sentence
    - Incomplete sentences (because spoken sentences are incomplete)
    - Capital letters appear in the middle of a sentence and full stops are frequently omitted.

A sample of Arabic script

ما هو عسر القراءة؟

ان عسر القراءة قد اصبح الآن مفهومة جيدة، و لكنه يمكن أن يازي محيرا ومربكا لأولئك الذين قد تأثروا به.

ان عسر القراءة يؤثر بشكل رئيسي على تعلم مهارات القراءة والهجاء. ان الأطفال الذين يعانون من عسر القراءة يجدون صعوبة في استخدام الطريقة الصوتية من الكلمات، ومنها يجدون صعوبة في كسر أصوات الكلمات وغالبا ما تجد صعوبة في تذكر العلومات النطوقة، مثل مجموعة من التعليمات.

[Courtesy of The Dyslexia-SPLD Trust]

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Appendix B - Chinese ||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||

Chinese is an official language in China, Taiwan and Singapore and is also widely spoken in Malaysia. There are many Chinese communities throughout the world. There is much debate about whether Mandarin, Cantonese, Wu, Kan and the other Chinese mother tongues are dialect groups or separate languages. Modern standard Chinese is based on Mandarin which is considered the national language. The Chinese dialects/languages share a written language and have many features in common. Consequently, the difficulties they face with English and other west European languages are likely to be similar.

Pronunciation of English is a major area of difficulty for Chinese speakers. Mandarin does not have the contrasting vowel sounds /ɪ/ and /i:/ or / ʊ/ and /u:/ and so learners find it difficult to distinguish between 'ship' and 'sheep' and between 'full' and 'fool'. Similarly, Mandarin has no / æ/ sound and a word such as 'man' may be pronounced as 'men', 'mun' or 'marn'. The sound /v/ which does not exist in Mandarin may be replaced by /w/ (for example 'wet' for 'vet') or by /f/ ('fan' for 'van'). Learners also struggle with voiced consonants and tend, for example, to pronounce /b/ as /p/ ('pill' for 'bill') and /d/ as /t/ ('made' as 'mate'). Like many other languages, Mandarin has no /ð/ and /θ/ and learners may pronounce /ð/ as /z/ ('close' for 'clothes') and /θ/ as /s/ or /t/ ('sin' for 'thin', 'tin' for 'thin').

One of the most common difficulties for Chinese (and Japanese) speakers is distinguishing between /l/ and /r/ and can lead to misunderstanding (for example 'fright' and 'flight'). Final consonant sounds are rare in Mandarin and learners struggle with words such as 'hill' which they may pronounce as 'hee' (dropping the consonant) or as 'hill-er' (adding an extra syllable). Chinese speakers find initial consonant clusters difficult and may add a vowel sound ('sipoon' for 'spoon'). For final consonant clusters, they made omit the last consonant ('dog' for 'dogs') or add an extra syllable ('doggers' for 'dogs').

Chinese languages/dialects use a varying number of tones to distinguish between the meaning of words. They do not use pitch to change the emphasis or to express emotion and tend to struggle with intonation in English.

Chinese does not use verb conjugation to express time. Time can be conveyed through word order, context or, like Vietnamese, by using a time marker such as 'yesterday'. Chinese students find English verb conjugation very difficult and will often make mistakes such as 'He has gone to London last Sunday' or 'I live in England for a long time' (when they mean 'have been living').

There are no definite or indefinite articles in Chinese so errors can be expected in this area in English and other west European languages.

Pronouns are likely to be an area of difficulty as spoken Chinese does not distinguish between gender with the word 'tā' meaning 'he', 'she' and 'it'. A typical error would be 'I've got a sister. He is studying at university'. In Chinese, there is no distinction between 'I' and 'me' or between 'my' and 'mine' so learners may find it difficult to select the correct type of pronoun in English. In addition, learners may omit pronouns as this is permitted in Chinese when the meaning is clear.

Chinese does not generally pluralise its nouns so learners are very likely to omit plural endings in English.

Chinese has a logographic writing system where a picture or single character represents a whole word and can be decoded holistically. It can be difficult for Chinese speakers to get used to alphabetic scripts where they must visually decode words that are spread out over a series of letters. This is likely to have an impact on the speed of reading in the early stages. Where learners have already become familiar with an alphabetic language (for example a Cantonese speaking child in a UK school), they should have less difficulties when faced with an additional language which may have slight variations in terms of alphabet (for example é, ú, ¿ in Spanish, ß and umlaut in German etc) but basically employ the same system. Finally, it should be recognised that a newly arrived learner's writing might appear to suggest motor difficulties when it is really just indicative of a lack of unfamiliarity with the new script.

Research (for example, Holm and Dodd (1996) in Sze (2008)) suggests that students who are literate in a non alphabetic first language are likely to have limited phonological awareness and will perform poorly on tests of non word decoding. This suggests that they will struggle to read new or unfamiliar words. It is likely that they will rely on whole word visual decoding unless they are given explicit instruction in phonological awareness.

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|||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||| # Appendix C - Bulgarian

Bulgarian is a Slavic language, and belongs to the group of Indo European languages. It is spoken in Bulgaria and by ethnic Bulgarians all over the world. There are several big emigrant waves in 20th century in addition to those from previous times. Now the biggest Bulgarian communities live in the USA, Spain, UK, Italy, Russia, Canada, Australia, etc.

Bulgarian has a Cyrillic based alphabet, which causes specific difficulties for children studying English. In Bulgarian alphabet there are 30 letters, 12 of them are the same shape as some Latin letters, but some of them represent different sounds. For example: In Bulgarian the letter "B" is for the sound [v], while in English it is for the sound [b]; in Bulgarian the letter "H" is for the sound [n] while in English it is for the sound [h], etc. In addition there are two letters in Bulgarian letters that looks like two reversed letters from the Latin alphabet (И – N and Я – R). All this is quite confusing for the students. In Bulgaria children start to study English (or other foreign language) from 1st, or latest – from 2nd grade, it means that children have to learn two alphabets together, and to learn to read and write using two different graphic systems.

In Bulgarian nouns are divided into masculine, feminine and neuter. There is one more sub-division of the masculine and feminine nouns into two groups: Personal nouns and Non-personal nouns. All this affects the characteristics of each noun, and depending on that we change the form of the noun in the sentence. The fact that in English there is no such division of the nouns causes some confusion and often learners use personal pronouns (he/she/it) incorrectly. Learners (especially beginners, or those who have difficulties, like dyslexia) could say:
"In the room there is a table. SHE is new." (in Bulgarian "table" is feminine).
Or "I have a child. It is a boy." (in Bulgarian "child" is neuter).

Significant difficulty for a Bulgarian who is learning English comes from the rules when and how to use the articles (a/an or the). In Bulgarian articles are added to nouns or adjectives depending on their role in the sentence. It is a definite article if the nous takes a role of the subject, or indefinite article if it is an object. In the case we have a combination of an adjective + a noun at first we need to make the adjective consistent with the noun in gender and number, and then to add the article to the adjective. The articles are added as an indivisible ending of the noun or the adjective. The form of the article changes Depending on the gender, the number and the conjugation of the noun/adjective. Very specific case is the one when we use a personal pronoun before the noun (or combination of adjective + noun), as in Bulgarian we add the article at the end of the personal pronoun.

A Bulgarian learner may have difficulties when a Bulgarian word could be translated into English with two or even more words. For example, the word "много" could be translated as "many", "much", "lots of", "a lot of", "plenty of" and very often learners use these words incorrectly. The opposite is also true – there are cases when one English word could be translated with more than one word in Bulgarian. For example, "stage" could be translated as „сцена", „етап", „фаза", „скеле", etc. In all these cases the learner should be very aware of the context, so he can choose the correct word.

The same mistake is often made with the usage of pairs of words like "some/ any", which have different grammatical usage in English, but have only one form in Bulgarian. It is especially valid for questions: "Are there some people in the room?"

In terms of tenses, Bulgarian has 9 tenses, divided into three main groups: present, past and future tenses. The system of tenses is quite complicated, but it is completely different from the English one. It causes serious problems to all learners, but especially to those with dyslexia, because of their difficulties with the time management.
For example: A sentence in English that is in Present Perfect could be translated into Bulgarian using different tenses depending on the context.

I have studied English for five years. – Уча английски от пет години. (Present)
I have done my homework. – Написах си домашното. (Past Complete)
I have read this book. – Чел съм тази книга. (Past Indefinite)

The opposite is also true: a sentence in Bulgarian that is in Present Tense could be translated using different tenses in English depending on the context.

Уча английски от пет години.- I have studied English for five years.(Present Perfect)
В момента уча английски.- I am studying English at the moment.(Present Continuous)
Всеки ден уча английски. – I study English every day.(Present Simple)

It is therefore not surprising that learners struggle to select the correct English tense. Especially young pupils (because in Bulgaria children start their English lessons at 2nd grade the latest) are not able to understand the system of English tenses, because they don't have knowledge about this grammar category in Bulgarian at this point. And even if they learn the rules, it is not easy to implement them in their speech or writing.

In Bulgarian each verb has different forms depending on the subject, these forms contain all the information about who is taking the action and when.

e.g.   Аз ходЯ на училище. – I go to school.
         Ти ходИШ на училище. – You go to school.
         Ние ходИМ на училище. – We go to school.

This makes possible the omission of the subject in the sentence, which is not the case in English and often causes mistakes, like "Mary is 12. Goes to school every day."

The sentence structure in English follows strict rules, while in Bulgarian it is much more flexible.

e.g.   In English "She is coming tomorrow morning."

But in Bulgarian you could say: "She is coming tomorrow morning."
         Or: "Tomorrow morning she is coming."
         Or: "Is coming tomorrow morning (she)."
         Or: "Morning tomorrow she is coming."
without changing the meaning.

For this reason learners very often use incorrect structures in English, which make their speech or writing unclear, or even ununderstandable.

Questions in Bulgarian, like in other Slavic languages, are formed by adding an initial question word or by changing the intonation. Negatives are formed by putting „не" (no) in front of the verb. As auxiliary verbs do not exist in Bulgarian, they can be quite challenging in English and lead to mistakes such as "We not want cake" or 'When the film start?' In English it is impossible to have two negative forms in one phrase/sentence, while in Bulgarian it is quite common.
You can't say "Nobody isn't here", or "There aren't no apples on the table", but this is the way it is said in Bulgarian.

One of the most serious problems for all Bulgarians who try to learn English is the spelling. Bulgarian language is completely transparent, with clear rules for pronunciation and spelling, which is not the case with English. This causes problems not only with writing, but with reading as well.

A sample of Bulgarian writing

Що е дислексия?

"Дислексия" е първият и основен термин, използван, за да бъдат назовани най-различни проблеми, свързани с овладяването на учебния процес. Обикновено тя се свързва с проблеми с четенето, писането и математиката, уменията за организация на дейностите, или с това, че бавно и трудно усвояват учебния материал. Но трудностите в училище са само част от проявленията на дислексията. Всеки случай е различен, няма двама души, които да развият абсолютно еднакви форми на дислексия. Това, което е важно да се знае е, че дислексията не е резултат от умствено или неврологично увреждане, нито е причинена от мозъчна малформация. Дислексията е продукт на мисленето и на особения начин, по който някои хора реагират на чувството на объркване.

Appendix D - Indo-Aryan languages of South Asia (with sub-sections on Hindi/Urdu and Bengali)

In Bulgarian each verb has different forms depending on the subject, these forms contain all the information about who is taking the action and when.

The Indo-Aryan languages are a branch of the Indo-European family which has its origins in Sanskrit. They include the national languages Hindi (India), Urdu (Pakistan), Bengali (Bangladesh), Nepali (Nepal), Sinhala (Sri Lanka) and Divehi (The Maldives) as well as some regional languages including Gujarati, Marathi, Kashmiri and Panjabi. Urdu and the other Pakistani languages use variants of the Arabic script whereas the other South Asian languages have their own scripts which are written from left to right.

Pronunciation difficulties occur where the first language has no equivalent or near equivalent sound. For example Sinhala (like German) does not have separate phonemes for the English sounds /w/ and /v/. Whether the word is 'wet' or 'vet', learners tend to produce a phoneme that is close to the English /v/.

Bengali and Gujarat speakers may struggle to distinguish between 'self' and 'shelf' because those languages only have one phoneme in the area of s/ and /ʃ/.

Other areas of difficulty for speakers of many of the Indo-Aryan languages may include:
/e/ 'said' and / æ/ 'sad'
 / ɔ/ 'law', / ɒ / 'lorry' and /a:/'lard' with the latter often being used for all three sounds.
/ ʤ/ 'bridge'
/ ʒ/ 'pleasure'

Because South Asian scripts are generally phonetic, learners are likely to over-rely on the written form. This leads to difficulties when they come across silent letters or past tense regular verbs such as 'cooked' and 'helped' which they may pronounce with a final 'd' sound rather than a 't' sound. Another common error is to pronounce the plural's' as /s/ even in words such as 'toys' and 'brothers' where the plural 's' should be pronounced as /z/.

South Asian languages have less consonant clusters and this is an area that learners can struggle with. Like Portuguese learners, they may put an /i:/ in front of consonant clusters starting with an 's' and say 'istation' or 'istreet'. They may also insert an extra vowel ('salow' for 'slow') or omit the last consonant in a final consonant cluster ('toas' for 'toast'). Similar difficulties can occur in German with initial consonant clusters and, in particular, final consonant clusters at the end of a word ('Arzt', 'zuletzt') where the final consonant may be omitted.

South Asian languages are syllable-timed whereas English is stress-timed and has unpredictable word stress. Related words can be particularly difficult to learn as, for example, in 'PHOtograph', 'phoTOgrapher' and 'photoGRAPHic'.Learners may have less difficulty with languages such as French which have a much more regular system of word stress.

South Asian speakers tend to use full vowels instead of a schwa even when a syllable should be unstressed for example 'Oxford' instead of 'Oxfərd'. They also tend to stress words such as 'and', 'was' and 'than' when they are meant to be weak forms.

South Asian scripts do not distinguish between upper and lower case so this can be an area of difficulty with English. Punctuation may also be difficult as South Asian scripts originally only used a full stop equivalent and other punctuation marks were introduced later but with little consistency. This inconsistent use of punctuation is also a feature of learners' written English.

Hindi and Urdu

The everyday spoken languages of Hindi and Urdu are very similar but academic and technical vocabulary can be different as Urdu has more Persian, Central Asian and Arab influences whereas Hindi has more Sanskrit influences. In terms of grammatical structure, Hindi and Urdu are almost identical and Punjabi has very few differences. The other Indo-Aryan languages listed above have a lot of similarities with Hindi and Urdu and many of the points made below will be applicable to them as well. However, Bengali has quite a lot of differences.

Like English, Hindi and Urdu have simple and progressive forms of past, present and future tenses but their usage does not always correspond to English usage. A common feature of learners' English is the incorrect use of the present continuous in a sentence such as 'I am coming from India' instead of 'I come from India'. In addition, there is no equivalent of the auxiliary verb 'do' and this leads to mistakes with negative statements and interrogatives. Sometimes learners will simply change their intonation when they want to ask a question and may say 'she is married?'

In Hindi and Urdu, nouns have a masculine and feminine form. For example, 'Kelaa' (banana) is a masculine noun whereas 'bher' (sheep) is a feminine noun.
Nouns have single and plural forms. The plural may be formed by adding an ending to the noun or by modifying the final vowel. For example, the masculine noun 'kuttaa' (dog) becomes 'kutte' (dogs) and the feminine noun 'machlee' (fish) becomes 'machliyaan'. However, some masculine nouns have the same form for singular and plural. This could partly explain why learners sometimes omit English plural endings.

As in English, adjectives precede the nouns that they are describing. However, they also have to agree with the relevant noun. For example 'chotaa larkaa' means ' small boy' whereas 'chotee larkee' means ' small girl'. This familiarity with the inflexion of adjectives means that the Hindi/Urdu speaker learning French is at an advantage over the monolingual English speaking child (as long as the teacher makes a link between the two languages).

Verbs have to demonstrate gender and number agreement. The endings 'taa', 'tee' and 'te' represent masculine singular, feminine singular and plural respectively. The sentence 'Main sotee hoon' translates as 'I sleep' (literally meaning 'I sleep am' and used only when the 'I' is female). Again, this knowledge of verb endings may facilitate the learning of an additional language.

Hindi and Urdu do not have definite articles. The word 'ek' (one) can be used to express the indefinite article but it is used much more infrequently that the English 'a(n)'. South Asian

speakers struggle with articles in English and may wrongly omit them or over-compensate and use them too much.

As far as sentence structure is concerned, the standard word order of Hindi and Urdu is Subject- Object-Verb.

Where English uses prepositions, Hindi and Urdu use postpositions where 'by bus' is 'bas se' (bus by) and 'on the table' is 'mez par' (table on). Learners do not have major difficulties with the positioning of prepositions in English but tend to struggle to select the correct preposition.

Examples of errors made by Urdu speakers in Manchester/Oldham

- Now I coming here and I learn here many things.
- wathe is very cold
- Now every house is very good condishen.
- My fast dather born 1979 in OLDHAM hand my son born 1980.
- Then Farwa and my brother and my cousins we where playing blindfold.
- Then went fun fair Then it was finshed fun fair
- I played in the garden football.
- My sister said to dad less go to fun fere.
- Me and my sister went on a rid it was very scere.
- it tast wary nise and i eat barger cheken and cresp
- then my dad dropet me at school
- After a while the man gave us some jeuice to drink, I could tasted the pizza in my mouth.
- I cod see the river and people cnowing and relee happee fasis entrin Kings wood and people sad leving kings wood.
- .

The Urdu script

Urdu uses a Perso-Arabic script which is based on the Arabic script. It is fully cursive and is read from right to left.

ڈسلیکسیا (نقص کلامی) کیا ہے؟

ڈسلیکسیا کے بارے میں میں اپنا کچھ کیفیات سے مجھ اج اک ہے۔لیکن می اہ انا
لوگوں کے لئے ابھی بہت کافی کی پرانی شان کن ہے، جو اس سے متاثر تہوے ہے
ہیں۔
ڈسلیکسیا اک رشتہ پریشان روا ہے جہ کرنے سس کی ہکھن کے می صحال تہ پر وہ اتا
ہے۔ ڈسلیکسیا والے بچوں کے لطفون کی آواز کی ہکھن میں می مشکل پیش ش
آتی ہے۔انا کو

[Courtesy of The Dyslexia-SPLD Trust]

The Hindi script

Hindi uses the Devanagari script which is read from left to right. It is an abugida or syllabic writing system which means that each consonant has an inherent vowel (a schwa) which can be changed to another vowel or muted by using diacritics. Vowels can be written on their own if they are at the beginning of a word or stand alone. The Devanagari script is also used for writing other languages including Nepali and Marathi.

A number of other languages use a syllabic script, for example Bengali, Gurmukhi (Punjabi), Malayalam, Kannada, Sinhala and Tamil.

Bengali

Bengali shares of number of features with other South Asian languages. This section will look briefly at aspects that are known to cause difficulty for Bengali speakers when learning English and can be attributed to the influence of their first language.

Learners frequently omit the third person singular verb ending in the present simple tense. In Bengali, 'they eat rice' is 'tara bhat khai' (they rice eat) and 'she/he eats rice' is 'she (/tʃe/) bhat khai' (she/he rice eat).

Learners often confuse pronouns in English because Bengali does not have gender-based pronouns. As in the previous example, the word 'she'((/tʃe/) means both 'he' and 'she'. Similarly 'him' and 'her' are represented by one word.

In Bengali, the plural is formed either with a plural marker or with an ending on the noun. For example, the word for 'man' is 'manush'. 'Men' can be expressed by 'onek manush' (literally 'many man') or by a plural form 'manushera' or .manushgulo'. It is not possible to use a plural marker with an ending in Bengali. This would explain English mistakes such as 'many visitor'.

Bengali does not have an expression for the impersonal form 'there is/are'. This leads to errors such as 'in Dhaka many university are' (Ariful Islam 2004).

Bengali has Subject Object Verb with adverbs positioned before the verb. This can cause mistakes such as 'I fast swim' or 'I very much football like'. Bengali speakers often stress vowels which should be unstressed, for example saying 'næʃonal (instead of 'næʃnəl') for 'national'.

Unlike in English, the Bengali pronunciation of 'r' does not depend on its position in a word. This leads to words such as 'personal'(/pɜːsənl/) and 'river'(/rivə/) being pronounced as /personal/ and /rivar/ respectively. (Ariful Islam 2004).

A sample of Bengali writing

ডিসলেক্সিয়া কাকে বলে?

ডিসলেক্সিয়ার কথা এখন ভাল ভাবে জানা আছে, কিন্তু যাদের এটা আছে, তাদের কাছে তবুও এটাকে বিফলকারী ও বিভ্রান্তিকর বলে মনে হতে পারে।

পড়ার ও বানান করার দক্ষতা শেখার ওপর প্রধানতঃ ডিসলেক্সিয়ার প্রভাব পড়ে। যেসব বাচ্চাদের ডিসলেক্সিয়া আছে, তাদের পক্ষে শব্দগুলি উচ্চারণ করার জন্য ধ্বনি ব্যবহার করা কঠিন হয়; শব্দের ধ্বনিগুলি ভেঙ্গে বলতে তাদের অসুবিধা হয় এবং অনেক সময়ই, নির্দেশাবলীর মত মৌখিক তথ্য মনে রাখা তাদের পক্ষে কঠিন হয়।

[Courtesy of The Dyslexia-SPLD Trust]

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   # Appendix E - Polish

Polish, like Czech and Slovak, is part of the West Slavic sub-branch of Indo-European languages. It is spoken in Poland and by large numbers of ethnic Poles in Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine. In addition, there are Polish communities in many other countries including the UK, the USA, Canada, Ireland and Brazil.

Polish has a Latin-based alphabet but uses some diacritics such as the 'line' or 'kreska' (for example ć), the 'overdot' or 'kropka' (for example 'ż') and the 'tail' or 'ogonek' (for example 'ą'). The letters 'q', 'v' and 'x' are only used for writing foreign words.
Like German, Polish nouns are divided into masculine, feminine and neuter. The masculine gender is more complicated than German as it is then further sub-divided by personhood (personal or non-personal) and animacy (animate or inanimate). So there are in effect three masculine gender classes: personal masculine, animate (non-personal) masculine and inanimate masculine. This means that, in terms of familiarity with gender classes, the Polish child learning German is actually at an advantage over the monolingual English-speaking child but, for the dyslexic child, it is essential that the teacher explicitly makes the link between the languages.

Polish learners may face difficulties when a Polish word has more than one meaning in English. For example, the word 'sztuka' means both 'art' and 'play'. If the learner has only come across one of the meanings, they may use it incorrectly as in the (real) example quoted by Arabski 'In this art, Hamlet died in the fight'. Other pairs of words that are represented by one word in Polish include 'age/century', 'earth/land and do/make (as with 'faire' and 'machen' in French and German respectively).

Polish learners of English benefit from the fact there are a lot of words that are identical or very similar in English and Polish. However, in some cases, the meaning of the words is different. For example, the Polish word 'parking' actually means 'a car park'. For a useful list of 'false friends', please refer to http://en.blackfreighter.com/wiki/Polish_False_Friends

Other errors may be made when a pair of words have a different grammatical usage in English but only have one form in Polish. These include 'so/such', 'who/which' and 'something/anything' and lead to mistakes such as 'It was not such bad' and 'The film who was interesting...' (Arabski).

In terms of tenses, Polish has 3 tenses, namely the past, the present and the future. The verb form 'Ja poszedłem' encompasses the English simple past ('I went'), present perfect (I have gone') and past perfect ('I had gone'). It is therefore perhaps not surprising that learners struggle to select the correct English tense as in the examples quoted by Arabski:

Some weeks ago I have seen an English film.
I have learned English before I came to Canada.

Questions are formed in Polish by adding an initial question word or by changing the intonation. Negatives are formed by putting 'nie' (no) in front of the verb. As auxiliary verbs do not exist in Polish, they can be quite challenging in English and lead to mistakes such as 'She not does it' or 'Where they live?'

Polish has 7 cases, including the nominative, accusative, genitive and dative which are also found in German. So, once more, as long as this is explicitly pointed out, the Polish child learning German is in a more favourable position than those children who have never experienced a case system.

Polish has a significant number of loan words from various languages including French ('ekran' from 'écran' (screen), 'ekipa' from 'équipe' (team), 'meble' from 'meuble' (furniture), German ('handel' from 'Handel' (trade) and 'dach' from 'Dach' (roof) and Italian ('pomidor' from 'pomodoro' (tomato), 'autostrada' from 'autostrada' (motorway). Lexical borrowings from English include 'babysitter', 'driver', 'sweter' (sweater), 'fair play' and 'bizness' (business). In some cases, there can be confusion over the meaning of a word. For example, 'magazyn' means 'TV programme' in Polish and Arabski cites the example of a student mistakenly using the English word 'magazine':

They can watch some magazines connected with this subject.

Polish learners make errors with singular and plural nouns as they tend to apply Polish rules to English words. Examples include 'porady' (advice) and 'informacje' (information) which are uncountable in English but often used in the plural in Polish. As Polish has grammatical gender, learners also struggle with pronouns and make errors such as:

The orchestra was playing and the king was listening to her. (Arabski).

Because the subject or object of the sentence can be omitted in Polish if the context makes them clear, students may also make omissions in English:

We have a lot of nice shops where can buy food.

Basic word order in Polish is subject-verb-object but words are frequently moved around in a sentence. A sentence such as '"Today, we went to the market to buy fruit" could be re-ordered as '"To buy fruit, today we went to the market" without losing the original meaning and learners may not realize that English does not allow such flexibility. One difficulty concerns the position of adverbs and can lead to sentences such as 'I eat often cakes'.

Polish has consistent stress on the penultimate syllable of a word and Polish learners can find the various stress patterns in English quite confusing. There is a tendency not to recognise weak forms and for words such as 'and', 'a' and 'the' to be pronounced with the same prominence as more important words in a sentence.

Polish does not have any weak vowels. Where native speakers would use a schwa (/ə/), Polish speakers often use a full vowel (for example in the word 'banana'). Like speakers of other West European languages (including French ,Italian, Spanish and Portuguese), Polish speakers experience difficulty distinguishing between /i/ and /ɪ/ , and this leads to confusion between words such as 'ship' and 'sheep'. Other possible pronunciation difficulties include distinguishing between /e/ (men) and /æ/ (man) and between /a:/ (father) and / æ/ (fan). In terms of consonants, Polish speakers may struggle with final letter sounds which tend to be devoiced in Polish (bed/bet, dog/dock) and with /ð/ and / θ/ which do not have equivalents in Polish.

There are no articles in Polish and this can lead to them being overused, used in a random way or being omitted altogether. This difficulty is likely to occur when Polish speakers write in other European languages such as Italian, Spanish and French which all have their own rules relating to the use of definite and indefinite articles.

A sample of Polish writing

Czym jest dysleksja?

Dysleksja jest teraz dobrze rozumiana, ale osobom, których ona dotyczy, może nadal wydawać się zagadkowa i zagmatwana.

Dysleksja wpływa głównie na umiejętności uczenia się czytania i literowania. Dzieciom z dysleksją trudno posługiwać się fonetyką aby wymówić słowa; mają trudności z dzieleniem słów na głoski i często jest im trudniej zapamiętać informacje podawane w sposób ustny, takie jak zestaw instrukcji.

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Appendix F - Portuguese

Portuguese is spoken by over 200 million native speakers and is the official language of Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe. It also has joint official status (with Chinese and Tetum respectively) in Macau and East Timor.

Although Portuguese has some irregularities, it is a relatively transparent language with fairly predictable grapheme-phoneme correspondence.
It is likely that (non dyslexic) Portuguese children will have fairly well developed phonological awareness whereas what appear to be visual processing difficulties might actually be attributable to the fact that they are unaccustomed to writing in a less transparent language such as English.

There are significant differences between European Portuguese and Brazilian Portuguese. European Portuguese has many words of Arabic origin, particularly for food items (for example limáo (lime) from al-laymun, azeite (oil) from al-zayt, laranja (orange) from al-naranj, arroz (rice) from al-aruzz) and place names (Albufeira ('the lake') from al-buhayrah and Aldeia ('the small village') from al-day'ah. In contrast, Brazilian Portuguese has many loan words from Indian languages (especially geographical names, plants and animals) and American English.

Vocabulary differences (Shah,2007)

	Angola and Mozambique	Brazil	Portugual
Bus	machimbombo-	ônibus	autocarro bazar (from Kimbundu 'kubazar' – to break, leave with rush)
Slum	musseque	favela	bairro de lata or ilha
To go away	bazar (from Kimbundu (Bantu language from northern Angola) – kubaza - to break, leave with rush)	Vazar (from Portuguese 'to leak')	bazar (from Kimbundu 'kubazar' – to break, leave with rush)

Portuguese speakers may have difficulties with some of the following areas of pronunciation:

/iː/ and / ɪ/ ('rich' and 'reach', 'hit' and 'heat')
/aː/ and / æ/ ('cart' and 'cat')
/æ/ and /e/ (''man' and 'men')
/ ʊ / and /uː/ ('full' and 'fool')
/ʌ/ and /æ/ ('luck' and 'lack')
/ɔː/ and /ɒ/ ('sport' and 'spot')
/ɪə/ and /eə/ ('hear' and 'hair')
/ ə ʊ/ and / ɔː/ ('bone' and 'born')

Unstressed vowels at the ends of words may be almost inaudible ('sit' for 'city', 'part' for 'party')

/ð/ and /θ/ ('clothe' and 'cloth')
/z/ and /s/ ('rise' and 'rise')
/p/ and /b/ ('pig' and 'big')
/k/ and /g/ ('Kate' and 'gate')

The initial /h/ in words may be omitted ('ear' for 'hear') as there is no equivalent in Portuguese. Learners may insert additional vowels in certain consonant clusters
('closis' for 'clothes', 'estudy' for 'study')

Because Brazilian Portuguese is syllable-timed (unlike European Portuguese and English which are stress-timed), Brazilian Portuguese learners may have difficulty with English intonation patterns and may stress syllables which should be unstressed. For example, they might say 'I saw them yesterday' in response to the question 'when did you see them?'

Portuguese grammar has many similarities with English and other western European languages. Like English, it has a range of past, present and future tenses and uses active and passive forms. It does not have the equivalent of the auxiliary verb 'do' and questions are formed by changing intonation or word order while negatives are formed by placing the word 'não' in front of the verb. Portuguese speakers may therefore have difficulties with direct and indirect questions and negatives in English. They may also make errors with the short responses 'yes I do' and 'no I don't' as these are formed in Portuguese by repeating the verb contained in the question ('Do you like swimming?' 'Yes I like'). As with French (n'est-ce pas?) and German (nicht wahr?), there is only one question tag in Portuguese ('não é verdade? – which literally means 'is it not truth?') and is likely to lead to mistakes such as 'they are leaving after breakfast, isn't it?'

Typical Mistakes

- She had a lot of exit. ('êxito' is a false friend as it means 'success' and not 'exit')
- I pretend to buy a new car. ('pretender' is the Portuguese verb which means 'to intend')
- She is very sensible. (intended to mean 'sensitive' rather than 'sensible'. The Portuguese for 'sensitive' is 'sensível')
- I speak english. (no capitalisation of languages, nationalities, days in Portuguese)
- I have done my homeworks. (homework is pluralised ('trabalhos de casa') in Portuguese)
- I play tennis in my free times. (free time is pluralised ((tempos livres) in Portuguese)
- She likes very much to read. (This follows Portuguese word order ('Gosta muito de ler')
- She has twenty years (Portuguese, like French, uses the verb 'to have' to talk about age 'tem vinte anos')
- Has wonderful beaches in Rio (Portuguese uses the verb 'to have' ('haver' and 'ter') to express 'there is/are'.
- I wonder where is your office. (the verb follows the question word in indirect speech in Portuguese)
- The life is difficult. (definite articles are used in Portuguese for proper nouns, nouns used in a general sense, names of streets, places such as church and school etc)
- She didn't speak why she was shy. (Portuguese has the same word 'porque' for 'why' and 'because'.

[Source: Frankenberg-Garcia and Pina (1997) and Swann and Smith (2001)]

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|||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||| **Appendix G - Somali**

The Somali alphabet (based on the Latin script) became the official script in 1972. The script contains all the letters of the English alphabet apart from 'p', 'v' and 'z'. The consonants 'c', 'q', 'r' and 'x' are likely to cause some difficulties as their pronunciation is very different in Somali. Some Somali consonants can be doubled and are then pronounced with extra force. This means that Somali learners are likely to pronounce words such as 'bigger' and 'middle' with too much force. There is one-to-one correspondence between Somali vowels and letters so learners are likely to struggle with English where letters represent more than one sound and sounds represent more than one letter. Learners will often pronounce vowels the way that they would be pronounced in Somali and typical errors include 'my' for 'may' and 'bow-at' for 'boat'. Somali has single consonants and learners often insert vowel sounds when trying to pronounce English consonant clusters, for example saying 'filim' for 'film' and 'ispeed' for 'speed'.

The basic word order in Somali is subject-object-verb but there is significant flexibility which means that subject-verb-object, object-verb-subject and verb-object-subject are also possible. Learners may tend to put the verb at the end of English sentences or fail to appreciate the lack of flexibility of English word order.

Learners may also have difficulties with adjectives as they follow nouns in Somali. There are some stand-alone adjectives but most adjectives are formed by taking a noun or a verb and adding a particular ending, often 'án' or 'sán'. For example, the word for 'beautiful' is 'quruxsan' which is formed by taking the word for 'beauty' ('qurux') and adding 'sán'.

A sample of Somali writing

Waa maxay disleksiya?
Disleksiya hadda si fiican ayaa loo fahamsanayahay, laakiin wali way jaha wareerin kartaa dadka ay ku dhacdo.
Disleksiya sida badan waxay saamaysaa barashada xirfadaha aqrinta iyo higgaadinta. Caruurta ay hayso Disleksiya waxaa ku adkaado isticmaalka foonikiska si ay erayada usoo saaraan; waxaa ku adag kala googoynta dhawaaqa erayada sida badanna waxaa ku adkaada xasuusashada wax lagu hadlay, sida waxa la faro oo kale.

[Courtesy of The Dyslexia-SPLD Trust]

Box 5.13 Sources

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Appendix H - Tamil

Tamil is an official language in South India, Sri Lanka and Singapore and there are many Tamil communities throughout the world. The difficulties faced by Tamil speakers learning English are generally applicable to speakers of Malayalam, Kannada and Telugu which, like Tamil, are Dravidian languages.

Tamil speakers may struggle with certain aspects of English pronunciation, including consonants such as /z/ and /f/ which do not exist in Tamil. Learners may pronounce 'pool' as 'fool' and 'maze' as 'mace'. Because some consonants are doubled in Tamil, learners may also pronounce some English consonants twice. Words such as 'pin', 'ten' and 'cot' are likely to be pronounced as 'bin', 'den' and 'got' respectively because Tamil and other Dravidian languages do not have aspirated consonants (consonants which are pronounced with a burst of air).

Tamil is an agglutinative language which means that distinct morphemes are added to a root word and each morpheme represents a unit of meaning such as past tense, number or plural. A Tamil word may contain several suffixes which would be represented by completely separate words in English. For example, the suffix 'il' which means 'in' is added to a noun such as 'ka:lay' (morning) to make 'ka:layil' ('in the morning'). The plural suffix is '(k)kal' and is added to singular nouns including a number of nouns such as 'news' and 'advice' which are uncountable in English.

Tamil does not have definite or indefinite articles although the number 'one' can sometimes be used as an indefinite article. Articles are often omitted in English but may also be over-used by some learners.

Tamil learners do not face as many difficulties with English pronouns as some other language speakers as there are separate Tamil words for 'he', 'she' and 'it'.

Learners may produce incorrect sentences such as 'I very enjoyed the show' because there is one word in Tamil which can be used in front of nouns, verbs, adjectives and nouns to express both 'very' and 'very much'.

Some Tamil sentences contain no verb. For example, இது புத்தகம் (idu puttaham) literally translates as 'This book' but the sentence means 'This is a book'. Similarly, the subject of the sentence may be omitted in Tamil so it is likely that Tamil speakers will produce English (or French, German equivalents) sentences such as 'went to park' instead of 'I went to the park'.

Tamil is a syllabic script. The consonant 'k' (and 'g') is represented by க் = k (with the dot over the symbol muting the schwa sound). The table below shows how diacritics can be added to change the vowel which is accompanying the consonant.

ka	க	kaa/kA	கா
ki	கி	kii/kI	கீ
ke	கெ	kE/kae	கே
ko	கொ	kO	கோ
ku	கு	Koo/kuu/kU	கூ

The vowels have their own separate symbols when they occur at the beginning of a syllable. They are represented as follows:

a	அ	Aa/A	ஆ	ai	ஐ
i	இ	Ii/I	ஈ		
u	உ	Uu/U	ஊ		
e	எ	Ae/E	ஏ		
o	ஒ	Oa/O	ஓ	ow/ou/au	ஔ

Box 5.14 Sources

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|||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||| Appendix I - Vietnamese

Vietnamese used to have a Chinese-like script but in the seventeenth century, a Latin-based orthography was introduced by missionaries. The orthography uses diacritics (symbols added to letters or characters to change their meaning, function or pronunciation) to represent additional sounds and the different tones. Nevertheless, the fact that the orthography is Latin-based means that Vietnamese learners are likely to have less difficulty with European orthographies than learners whose orthographies have completely different derivations.

Vietnamese has a large number of Chinese loan words and also a significant number of French loan words. These include 'pho mat' from 'fromage' (cheese), 'ga to' from 'gateau' (cake), 'phim' from 'film' and 'phot' from 'faute' (mistake).

Vietnamese is a tonal language with a word's meaning determined by its tone. For example, the word 'ma' has 6 different meanings depending on the tone:

ma - ghost
má - mother
mà - which
mả - tomb
mã - horse
mạ - rice seedling

Vietnamese is made up of monosyllabic words and compound words which have their own separate syllable and tone. For example, 'bảng' means 'table', 'ghế' means 'chair' and 'bảng ghế' means 'furniture'. Vietnamese speakers generally give full stress to all syllables and can therefore face difficulties when learning foreign words where different syllables may require primary, secondary or no stress.

Vietnamese learners face particular difficulties with pronunciation including the following sounds:

/ ʃ / (pronouncing 'she' as /si:/ (sea) and struggling with 'nation', 'should' ,' shut' etc
/ ʒ/ (pronouncing 'measure' /me ʒə/ as /mezə/
/ ʧ/ (struggling to pronounce / ʧi:p/ (cheap) or /ti: ʧ/ (teach) and other words such as 'cheese', 'chicken', 'question', 'which'
/ ʤ/ (tending to pronounce 'judge' / ʤ ʌ/ ʤ/ as /z ʌ z/ or /z ʌ s/ and struggling with 'job', 'general', 'age', 'village'
/θ/ ('thing') and /ð/ ('then')

Consonant clusters do not exist in Vietnamese so can be difficult, for example /tr/ and /str/.

Final consonants exist in Vietnamese but are never pronounced or heard so learners may often omit the final consonants of words in other languages.

Vietnamese does not use verb inflections to indicate tense. Sometimes a word may be put in front of the verb to indicate tense (for example, đã, to represent the past tense or sẽ to represent the future). 'Tôi đã ăn' means 'I ate' and 'Tôi sẽ ăn' means 'I will eat'. However, these words are often omitted because the tense can be inferred by the use of a time word such as hôm qua (yesterday) or mai (tomorrow). This means that Vietnamese learners may find the tenses in English and other European languages quite complicated.

In Vietnamese, nouns do not show plurality. (For example, 'a dog' is ' một con chó' in Vietnamese – 'một' means 'one', 'con' is a classifier for animals and 'chó' means dog. 'Two dogs' would be 'hai con chó' (literally 'two classifier dog'). So it is not surprising that Vietnamese learners often omit plural endings.

In Vietnamese, adjectives follow nouns. 'A small table' would be 'một bảng nhỏ' ('one table small') so Vietnamese learners may have difficulties with languages in which adjectives precede nouns.

Most Vietnamese pronouns are kinship terms and are used according to the relationship between the speaker and the listener. For example, a girl talking to an older girl would address the older girl as 'chị' which literally means 'older sister'. She would refer to herself as 'em' which means 'younger sister'. Vietnamese does not draw a distinction between first, second and third person (I, me, you, he, she, it) or between number ('I' or 'we'; 'he/she' or 'they') or between pronouns in subject and predicate position ('she' versus 'her') so learners studying languages which do make these distinctions may face some difficulties.

Box 5.15 Sources

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Note

Note

Dyslang

Module 5
COMPARISON AMONG LANGUAGES

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