

Top 10 Bangladeshi Spoken English Mistakes 2012-07-23

Here are my top 10 most important differences I detected in English as spoken by Bangladeshi teachers in an English medium school in Bangladesh. In order:

| Bangladeshi English example | Normal English alternative | Explanation |
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1. Missing Articles

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| “He is watching movie.” | “He is watching a movie.” | <i>Although singular nouns without articles are everywhere in Bangladesh – in newspapers, on the radio, TV, billboards etc. they are almost always needed in English.</i> |
| “Write few lines.” | “Write a few lines.” | |
| “Go to toilet.” | “Go to the toilet.” | |
| “Where is book?” | “Where is your book?” | |
| “What is declarative sentence?” | “What is a declarative sentence?” | |

2. Word Order of Questions

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| “Why <u>you are</u> not doing anything?” | “Why are you not doing anything?” | <i>Word order for questions is much more strict in English than in Bangla. Just adding a question word is not sufficient - you must also invert of the subject and verb.</i> |
| “What <u>he is</u> going to do?” | “What is he going to do?” | |
| “Why <u>you coloured</u> it like this?” | “Why did you colour it like this?” | |
| “ <u>Your book is</u> where?” | “ Where is your book? ” | |

3. Overliteral Pronunciation

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| “... Wednesday...” | <u><i>/ˈwɛnzdeɪ/</i></u> | <i>Pronunciation is much more subtle than spelling, and depends on the context.</i> |
| “He is...” /hi/ /ɪz/ | /hɪz/ | |

4. Omission of Words

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| “You didn't bring?” | “Didn't you bring any ?” | <i>While sometimes possible, omission of pronouns or other words understood from the context is much less common in English than in Bangla. Native English speakers may find it confusing.</i> |
| “I gave you?” <i>(Holds up paper)</i> | “Did I give you one of these ?” | |
| “Finish?” | “Have you finished?” | |
| “Finish colouring?” | “Have you finished colouring?” | |

5. Tag Questions

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| “You speak good English, <u>isn't it?</u> ” | “You speak good English, don't you? ” | <i>Unlike Bangla, English has no fixed phrase which can be tagged on the end of a sentence to convert it into a question.</i> |
| “I am doing well, <u>no?</u> ” | “I am doing well, aren't I? ” | |

6. Superfluous Words

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| “...the orange <u>colour</u> book ...” | “...the orange book ...” | <i>It is very unusual in English to include these extra words.</i> |
| “...big size car...” | “...big car...” | |

7. Mixing up He & She

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| “she” | “he” | <i>This may seem like a small point, but it is really not since it is a source of confusion.</i> |
| “his” | “her” | |

8. Mixing up Singular & Plural

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| “No Excuse!” | “No Excuses!” | <i>Plurals are needed to refer to more than one thing.</i> |
| “Use your coloured pencil.” | “Use your coloured pencils.” | |

9. Lack of Imperative

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| “After drawing it, <u>you will paint</u> background.” | “ Paint the background when you've finished drawing it.” | “You will...” sounds like a prediction to native English speakers, which is quite different from an imperative. |
| “ <u>You will do homework</u> tonight.” | “ Do your homework tonight.” | |

10. Adjectives & Plurals

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| “... <u>small small</u> thing...” | “... small things...” | Adjective doubling is rare in English and has a different meaning (emphasis). |
| “... <u>different different</u> colour...” | “... different colours...” | |

Bangladeshi English has other issues such as unusual stress patterns, vocabulary, collocation and idioms (e.g. “Go. Take your book.” → “Go and get your book.”). Whilst important, these are not as easily resolved as the grammatical mistakes listed above.