

# Language Use and Culture

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# Outline

- Common Grammar Mistakes
- Avoiding Chinglish
- Cultural Baggage
- Idioms
- Improving Your English
- Teaching English in English



# Common Grammar Mistakes

- Errors Made by Chinese Speakers When Speaking English
- Common → made by students **and** teachers alike
- Correct Students When They Make These Mistakes—Also Be Careful Yourself



# Common Grammar Mistakes

- Pronoun Use: “he” vs. “she”

  - Mom is tired, so **he** is sleeping.

- Others...

  - Plural vs. Singular, Third Person Singular Verbs, Tenses, Articles, Prepositions, Time Word Placement, Question Word Order

# Common Grammar Mistakes

- Thanksgiving Story



# Common Grammar Mistakes

## ● Thanksgiving Story (color idioms)

● in the black → to be making money

● in the red → to be losing money



# Common Grammar Mistakes

## ● Breakout Rooms



● escape



● acne/pimples

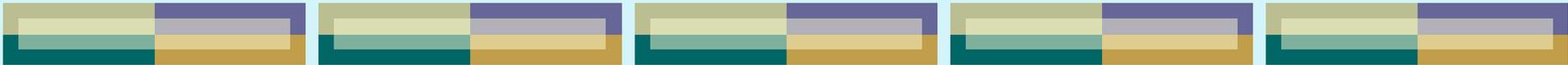


image: pixabay.com





# Avoiding Chinglish

- Chinglish → a mixture of Chinese and English; English used by speakers of Chinese which uses Chinese sentence structures and patterns



# Avoiding Chinglish

How does Chinglish happen?

- Direct Translation from Chinese — resulting in ungrammatical English usage
  - Thank you. No thanks.
  - Give you this book.
  - New Open!



# Avoiding Chinglish

How does Chinglish happen?

- Direct Translation from Chinese — resulting in wordy phrases
  - to run business
  - Welcome you to come again.



# Avoiding Chinglish

How does Chinglish happen?

## ● Incorrect Grammar, Word Order, or Spelling

- Bob run fast. → Bob runs fast.
- Thanks for **your** listening. → Thanks.
- Cheers! Up your bottoms. → Bottoms up.
- Brain has two grils. → Brian has two girls.



# Avoiding Chinglish

How does Chinglish happen?

## ● Dependence on Dictionary or Translation Software

- Please steek gently.
- Bake the Call-Phone
- Protect Environment Saving Bumf



# Avoiding Chinglish

● Do you understand?

Understand! → Yes, I do!

wish/hope

very/really



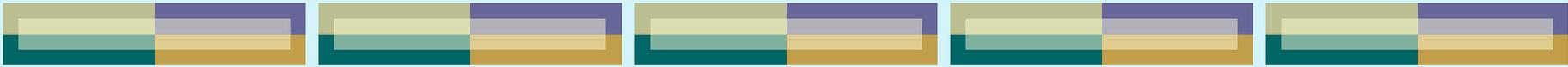
→ Hair Dryer (n.)

→ Dry--Drier--Driest (adj.)

ladder/stairs

→ Yes, I do.

play



# Cultural Baggage

- Applying Experiences and Expectations from Our Own Culture and Language to a Second One
  - Chinese → American
    - Discussing Appearances
    - Discussing Money
    - Interpreting Confidence as Arrogance



# Cultural Baggage

- Applying Experiences and Expectations from Our Own Culture and Language to a Second One
  - American → Chinese
    - Attempts to be casual and friendly may be interpreted as laziness, lack of respect
    - Sarcasm taken literally
    - Interpreting modesty as being weak



# Cultural Baggage

- Measurements: the United States doesn't use the metric system
  - Weight: pounds
  - Distance: yards, miles
  - Height: feet, inches
  - Volume: pints, quarts, gallons
  - Money: cents, nickels, dimes, quarters
  - Temperature: Fahrenheit



# Cultural Baggage

● When Applied to Vocabulary—Different Cultures May Have Different Understandings of the Same Word

- hot dog
- beans
- toast
- pie
- lemon
- cookies
- hamburger
- playing cards
- alphabet



# Cultural Baggage

- Animal Sounds: animals make different sounds in English than they do in Chinese
  - dog: woof, woof
  - pig: oink, oink
  - frog: ribbit, ribbit
  - horse: neigh, neigh
  - turkey: gobble, gobble
  - duck: quack, quack
  - rooster: cock-a'doodle-doo
  - donkey: hee-haw, hee-haw



# Idioms

- Idiom → a phrase with a meaning that cannot be understood simply by understanding the words which make up the phrase
- Some Idioms Are Similar Across Languages
  - Kill two birds with one stone.
  - No pain, no gain.
  - Long time no see.



# Idioms

- Others Are Not, and Will Confuse Those Who Hear Them
- Chinese Idioms in English
  - People Mountain, People Sea
  - Horse Horse, Tiger Tiger



# Idioms

- Others Are Not, and Will Confuse Those Who Hear Them
- English Idioms
  - the road snaked away
  - hit the road
  - all ears
  - raining cats and dogs



# Idioms

- Be Careful: idioms are interesting and fun to know, but some of them may be cliché
- Cliché → a phrase or idea that was once original, but has now been overused
- Cultural Note: The use of idioms in Chinese may be a sign of education, but in English it may be considered tiresome.



# Improving Your English

- Watch TV/Apps
  - News...CNN, BBC
- Watch DVDs/Netflix/Youtubers
  - Turn on English subtitles
- Listen to Radio/Podcasts
  - ICRT, Internet radio
- Read Books
  - Kid's books like “Diary of a Wimpy Kid” (bilingual version), “Amelia Bedelia” (idioms)



# Improving Your English

- Suggestions from participants:
  - Join Facebook groups with other people who are looking to practice English
  - Keep a notebook of new words/phrases for reference
  - Dictionary apps, language learning/practice



# Improving Your English

## ● Think in English

- Whatever you're doing, just think about how to say it in English.

## ● Use Spell-Check to Prevent Simple Mistakes

- Be careful of homophones: principal/principle; here/hear; there/their, drier/dryer, etc.

## ● Use Dictionaries

- Best to use *Advanced Learner's English-English* dictionaries
- Try to reduce use of Chinese-English, English-Chinese dictionaries



# Improving Your English

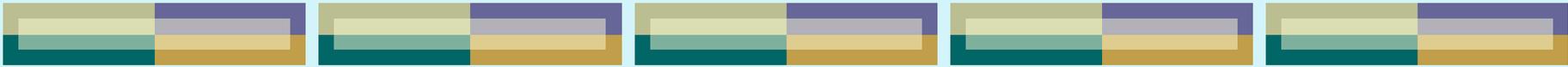
- Advantages of Advanced Learner's Dictionaries
  - Sample Sentences
  - Usage Notes
  - Idioms & Phrasal Verbs
  - Pictures
  - Sound Files
  - Easily Confused Words
  - Word Popularity



# Improving Your English

## Online Dictionaries

- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary
  - <http://oxfordadvancedlearnersdictionary.com>
- Collins Dictionary
  - <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/>
- Merriam-Webster Learner's Dictionary
  - <http://www.learnersdictionary.com>



# Improving Your English

## Online Dictionaries

- Cambridge Learner's Dictionary
  - <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/learner-english/>
- One Look Dictionary Search
  - Searches multiple dictionaries with one search
  - <http://www.onelook.com>



# Teaching English in English

## ● Be a Role Model for the Students

- Use English as much as possible to show students that things can be communicated in English

## ● Use Simple English

- Pay attention to vocabulary, grammar and verb tenses

## ● Use Nonverbal Cues

- Facial expression, actions (TPR), props, demonstrations



# Teaching English in English

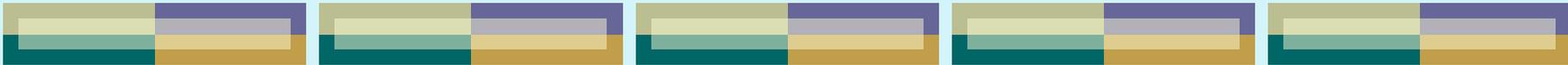
- Be Careful of Talking Over Students' Heads
  - If students are starting to tune out, then move on
- If You Must Resort to Chinese...
  - After class, reflect on what happened, and think about how it could have been explained differently...there's always a solution



# Teaching English in English

- If Students Don't Understand, Rephrase and Simplify

- What is your age?
- → How old are you?
  
- Please repeat what you just said.
- → Say it again.



# Teaching English in English

## ● Asking Questions

- When asking about the material, make sure you know the answer before you ask
- Tailor questions to students' ability level

**Thank you!**

