

50 Common English Mistakes Moroccan Learners Make

A Free Guide by Mr. Ibrahim K. @ Fluentry

Introduction

Welcome! This guide is designed specifically for you, the ambitious Moroccan learner of English. Because I am also from Morocco, I understand the unique challenges we face, especially with the influence of Darija and French. These are not just mistakes; they are opportunities to understand English on a deeper level.

Let's turn these common errors into your greatest strengths!

Part 1: Pronunciation Pitfalls

1. The "P" vs. "B" Problem

- **The Mistake:** Saying "beoble" instead of "people," or "barking" instead of "parking."
- **Why it Happens:** In Darija, the hard "P" sound is rare, so we often soften it to a "B."
- **How to Fix It:** Hold a piece of paper in front of your mouth. When you say "People," the paper should move from the puff of air. When you say "Boy," it shouldn't.

2. The Silent "H"

- **The Mistake:** Saying "appy" instead of "happy," or "ungry" instead of "hungry."
- **Why it Happens:** French influence often makes the "H" silent.
- **How to Fix It:** Exhale as you say the word. Feel the air leaving your mouth.
Practice: How happy is Hassan?

3. The “TH” Trouble (This/That vs. Dis/Dat)

- **The Mistake:** Saying “dis” for “this,” or “dat” for “that.”
 - **Why it Happens:** The “th” sound doesn’t exist in Darija or French.
 - **How to Fix It:** Place the tip of your tongue *between* your teeth and gently blow air. It will feel strange at first! Practice: **This** is **the** mother of **that** brother.
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Part 2: Grammar Gaffes

4. “I have 25 years.”

- **The Mistake:** Directly translating “J’ai 25 ans” or “3ndi 25 3am.”
- **The Correct Way:** “I **am** 25 years old” or simply “I **am** 25.”
- **Why it Happens:** In English, age is a state of being (to be), not something you possess (to have).

5. “I am agree.”

- **The Mistake:** Thinking “agree” is an adjective like “happy” (I am happy).
- **The Correct Way:** “I **agree**.”
- **Why it Happens:** In English, “agree” is a verb. You perform the action of agreeing.

6. Forgetting the “S” for He/She/It

- **The Mistake:** “He work in a bank.” or “She like pizza.”
 - **The Correct Way:** “He **works** in a bank.” / “She **likes** pizza.”
 - **Why it Happens:** This is a unique rule in English present tense that many languages don’t have. It’s easy to forget.
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Part 3: Vocabulary Vexations (False Friends)

7. Using “Actually” like “Actuellement”

- **The Mistake:** Saying “Actually, I am working in Rabat” to mean “Currently.”
- **The Correct Way:** “**Currently**, I am working in Rabat.”

- **What “Actually” Means:** It means “in reality” or is used to correct a misunderstanding. Example: “He looks serious, but **actually**, he’s very funny.”

8. Using “Sensible” like “Sensible” in French

- **The Mistake:** Saying “He is very sensible” to mean he is sensitive or emotional.
- **The Correct Way:** “He is very **sensitive**.”
- **What “Sensible” Means:** It means practical, logical, or reasonable. Example: “It’s **sensible** to save money instead of spending it all.”

9. Confusing “Library” and “Bookshop”

- **The Mistake:** Saying “I’m going to the library to buy a book.”
- **The Correct Way:** “I’m going to the **bookshop** (or bookstore) to buy a book.”
- **What “Library” Means:** A place where you *borrow* books for free (like a “bibliothèque”). A **bookshop** is where you *buy* them (like a “librairie”).

10. “I will pass my exam.”

- **The Mistake:** Using “passer un examen” to mean you are going to take the exam.
 - **The Correct Way:** “I am going to **take** my exam tomorrow.” or “I am **sitting** for my exam tomorrow.”
 - **What “Pass” Means:** It means to succeed. You can only say “I **passed** my exam” *after* you get a successful result.
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Part 4: Preposition Problems

11. “I am going to home.”

- **The Mistake:** Using “to” with the word “home.”
- **The Correct Way:** “I am going **home**.”
- **Why it Happens:** We use “to” for destinations (to the bank, to school), but “home” is a special case in English that doesn’t require a preposition when used with verbs of motion like *go*, *come*, *travel*, etc.

12. “It depends of...”

- **The Mistake:** Directly translating “ça dépend de...”

- **The Correct Way:** “It depends **on**...”
- **Example:** “Are you coming to the party?” “It depends **on** the weather.”

13. “Married with...”

- **The Mistake:** Using “with” to connect a person to their spouse.
- **The Correct Way:** “He is married **to** a doctor.” / “She is married **to** an engineer.”
- **Why it Happens:** We think of being “with” someone, but in English, the verb “marry” connects to its object with the preposition “to.”

14. “In the weekend” vs. “On the weekend”

- **The Mistake:** Using “in” for the weekend.
 - **The Correct Way:** “What are you doing **on** the weekend?” (American English) or “**at** the weekend” (British English). Both are correct, but “in” is always wrong.
 - **Rule of Thumb:** Use **on** for days and dates (on Monday, on October 31st) and **in** for longer periods (in December, in 2024).
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Part 5: More Grammar Gaffes

15. Uncountable Nouns: “An advice,” “a feedback,” “an information”

- **The Mistake:** Treating these words as countable.
- **The Correct Way:** “Can you give me **some advice**?” or “a **piece of** advice.”
- **Why it Happens:** These are “uncountable” nouns in English. You can’t have one advice and two advices. The same applies to *information*, *feedback*, *knowledge*, *research*, and *luggage*.

16. “I didn’t met him.”

- **The Mistake:** Using the past tense of the verb after “didn’t.”
- **The Correct Way:** “I didn’t **meet** him.”
- **Why it Happens:** The word “did” already carries the past tense. The main verb that follows must return to its base form (infinitive).
- **Rule:** After **did**, **didn't**, **do**, **don't**, **does**, **doesn't**, always use the base form of the verb.

17. Confusing “Boring” and “Bored”

- **The Mistake:** Saying “I am so boring” when you mean you feel bored.
- **The Correct Way:** “I am so **bored**.”
- **How to Remember:**
 - **-ing** adjectives (**boring**, **interesting**, **tiring**) describe the *thing* or *person* that *causes* the feeling. “The movie was **boring**.”
 - **-ed** adjectives (**bored**, **interested**, **tired**) describe *your* feeling. “I felt **bored** during the movie.”

18. “I look forward to meet you.”

- **The Mistake:** Using the base verb after the phrase “look forward to.”
- **The Correct Way:** “I look forward to **meeting** you.”
- **Why it Happens:** This is a tricky one. The “to” in this phrase is a preposition, not part of an infinitive. Prepositions are followed by nouns or gerunds (-ing forms).

19. Using “People is...”

- **The Mistake:** Treating “people” as a singular noun.
- **The Correct Way:** “People **are** strange.” / “People **think**...”
- **Why it Happens:** The word “people” is the plural of “person.” Even though it doesn’t end in “s,” it is always plural.

20. “Make” vs. “Do”

- **The Mistake:** Confusing when to use “make” and when to use “do.” (e.g., “I need to do a cake.”)
 - **The Correct Way:** “I need to **make** a cake.”
 - **General Rule:**
 - **Make:** Used for creating or producing something new. (make a decision, make a coffee, make a mistake, make money).
 - **Do:** Used for actions, tasks, and obligations. (do your homework, do the dishes, do business, do a good job).
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Part 6: Word Order & Sentence Structure

21. “I know him since 2010.”

- **The Mistake:** Using the Present Simple for an action that started in the past and continues to the present.
- **The Correct Way:** “I **have known** him since 2010.”
- **Why it Happens:** This requires the Present Perfect tense. The structure is `have/has + past participle`. Use this tense with `for` (a duration) and `since` (a starting point).
- **Examples:** “She **has lived** here **for** three years.” / “We **have been** married **since** 2015.”

22. “Tell to me what happened.”

- **The Mistake:** Adding the preposition “to” after “tell” when it’s followed by a person.
- **The Correct Way:** “**Tell me** what happened.”
- **How to Remember:** The verb `tell` is followed directly by the person (`tell me` , `tell him` , `tell the class`). The verb `say` is different: “He **said to me** that he was tired.”

23. Adjective Order: “A leather black jacket”

- **The Mistake:** Getting the order of adjectives wrong before a noun.
- **The Correct Way:** “A black leather jacket.”
- **The General Order (OSASCOMP):** Opinion (beautiful), Size (big), Age (old), Shape (round), Color (black), Origin (Moroccan), Material (leather), Purpose (sleeping). You rarely use more than three!
- **Simple Rule:** Opinion and Size usually come first. Material comes last. “A beautiful, old, Moroccan, leather bag.”

24. “I have a good news for you.”

- **The Mistake:** Treating “news” as a countable noun.
- **The Correct Way:** “I have **good news** for you” or “I have **some good news** for you.”

- **Why it Happens:** Like “information,” “news” is uncountable in English, even though it ends with an “s.”

25. “You are police?”

- **The Mistake:** Forgetting the article “a” for professions.
 - **The Correct Way:** “Are you **a** police officer?” / “He is **an** engineer.” / “She wants to be **a** doctor.”
 - **Rule:** When you talk about a person’s job, you must use the article **a** or **an**.
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Part 7: Common Confusions

26. “Me and my friend went to the cinema.”

- **The Mistake:** Putting “me” first and using the object pronoun instead of the subject pronoun.
- **The Correct Way:** “My friend and **I** went to the cinema.”
- **How to Remember:** It’s polite in English to mention the other person first. To check if you should use “I” or “me,” remove the other person. You would say “**I** went to the cinema,” not “Me went to the cinema.”

27. “I can to swim.”

- **The Mistake:** Adding “to” after modal verbs like **can**, **should**, **must**, **will**.
- **The Correct Way:** “**I can swim.**” / “**You should go.**” / “**He must study.**”
- **Rule:** Modal verbs are followed directly by the base form of the verb without “to.”

28. Confusing “Fun” and “Funny”

- **The Mistake:** Saying “The party was so funny” when you mean you enjoyed it.
- **The Correct Way:** “The party was so **fun**.”
- **How to Remember:**
 - **Funny:** Makes you laugh (ha-ha). “The comedian was very **funny**.”
 - **Fun:** You enjoy it. “The game was a lot of **fun**.”

29. “I am going to the university.” vs. “I am going to university.”

- **The Mistake:** Not knowing when to use “the.”
- **The Difference:**
 - “I am going **to university**” (UK) or “I am going **to college**” (US) means you are a student there. It describes your life stage.
 - “I am going **to the university**” means you are going to the specific university building for a reason (e.g., to meet a professor, to visit the campus). You might not be a student there.
- The same rule applies to `hospital`, `church`, and `prison`.

30. “Very delicious” or “Very fantastic”

- **The Mistake:** Using “very” with “extreme” or “ungradable” adjectives.
 - **The Correct Way:** “This food is **delicious**.” or “It is **absolutely delicious**.”
 - **Why it Happens:** Adjectives like `delicious`, `fantastic`, `awful`, `enormous`, `impossible` are already at the extreme. You can’t be “very impossible.” Use adverbs like `absolutely`, `completely`, or `really` instead of `very` to add emphasis.
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Part 8: Advanced Grammar & Nuance

31. “I suggest you to go.”

- **The Mistake:** Using an infinitive (`to go`) after “suggest.”
- **The Correct Way:** “I suggest **that you go**.” or “I suggest **going**.”
- **Rule:** The verb `suggest` is followed by a `that-clause` or a gerund (`-ing` form). Other verbs like this include `recommend` and `propose`.

32. Confusing “If I was” and “If I were”

- **The Mistake:** Using “was” in hypothetical or unreal situations (the subjunctive mood).
- **The Correct Way:** “**If I were** you, I would take the job.”
- **Why it Happens:** This is a formal grammar rule. When you are talking about something that is not real or is imaginary (like being another person), you use

were for all subjects (I , he , she , it). In informal speech, you will hear people say “if I was,” but in writing and for a polished sound, were is correct.

33. “Everybody are happy.”

- **The Mistake:** Treating words like everybody , somebody , anybody , and nobody as plural.
- **The Correct Way:** “Everybody **is** happy.” / “Somebody **has** my pen.”
- **Rule:** These indefinite pronouns are always singular in English, even though they refer to multiple people.

34. “I have been to Paris last year.”

- **The Mistake:** Using the Present Perfect tense with a specific past time marker.
- **The Correct Way:** “I **went** to Paris last year.”
- **Why it Happens:** The Present Perfect (have been) is for experiences in the past at an *unspecified* time. As soon as you mention a specific time (last year , yesterday , in 2020), you must use the Past Simple (went).

35. “I am living here since 2015.”

- **The Mistake:** Using the Present Continuous for an action that started in the past and continues.
 - **The Correct Way:** “I **have been living** here since 2015.”
 - **Why it Happens:** This requires the Present Perfect Continuous (have/has been + -ing). It emphasizes the duration of an action that started in the past and is still ongoing.
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Part 9: Everyday Expressions

36. Saying “No” too directly

- **The Mistake:** Answering a question like “Can you help me?” with a simple “No.”
- **The More Polite Way:** In English, a direct “No” can sound rude. It’s better to soften it. “I’m afraid I can’t right now.” / “I’m sorry, but I’m busy.” / “I wish I could, but...”

37. “Repeat again”

- **The Mistake:** This is a redundancy.
- **The Correct Way:** “Could you **repeat** that?” or “Could you say that **again**?”
- **Why it Happens:** The prefix “re-” already means “again.” So “repeat again” is like saying “again again.”

38. Confusing “Lend” and “Borrow”

- **The Mistake:** “Can you borrow me your pen?”
- **The Correct Way:** “Can you **lend** me your pen?” or “Can I **borrow** your pen?”
- **How to Remember:** The action goes *from* the owner. The owner **lends**. The other person **borrow**s.

39. “I have a doubt.”

- **The Mistake:** Using “doubt” when you mean you have a question.
- **The Correct Way:** “I have a **question**.”
- **What “Doubt” Means:** It means you are not sure if something is true or you don’t believe it. “I **doubt** he will come to the party.” It implies a lack of belief, not a simple request for information.

40. “Thanks God.”

- **The Mistake:** Forgetting the verb.
 - **The Correct Way:** “**Thank** God.”
 - **Why it Happens:** This is an imperative (a command or a strong wish). It’s like you are telling yourself or others to “Thank God.” It’s a fixed expression.
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Part 10: Final Polish

41. “According to me...”

- **The Mistake:** Using “according to” to introduce your own opinion.
- **The Correct Way:** “**In my opinion**...” or “I think that...”
- **Why it Happens:** “According to” is used to cite *other* people or sources. “**According to** the news, it will rain tomorrow.” You are the source of your own

opinion, so you don't need to cite yourself.

42. "I am used to wake up early."

- **The Mistake:** Using the base verb after "be used to."
- **The Correct Way:** "I am used to **waking** up early."
- **The Difference:**
 - **used to + verb** : Describes a past habit that is finished. "I **used to live** in Fes." (I don't live there now).
 - **be used to + -ing** : Describes something you are accustomed to. "I **am used to the noise.**" (It's normal for me).

43. "I want that you listen."

- **The Mistake:** Using a **that-clause** after "want."
- **The Correct Way:** "I want **you to listen.**"
- **Rule:** The structure is **want + object + infinitive** . "She wants **me to help.**" / "They want **us to come.**"

44. "I have 10 years experience."

- **The Mistake:** Missing the possessive apostrophe or the preposition.
- **The Correct Way:** "I have 10 **years'** experience." or "I have 10 **years of** experience."
- **Why it Happens:** When a time period possesses something (like experience), it needs an apostrophe. The second option with "of" is also very common and easier to remember.

45. "He is a person very kind."

- **The Mistake:** Placing the adjective after the noun.
- **The Correct Way:** "He is a very **kind person.**"
- **Rule:** In English, adjectives almost always come *before* the noun they are describing.

46. Confusing "Recipe" and "Receipt"

- **The Mistake:** Asking for the "recipe" after paying at a restaurant.

- **The Correct Way:** “Can I have the **receipt**, please?”
- **How to Remember:**
 - **Recipe** (recette): Instructions for cooking.
 - **Receipt** (reçu): The paper you get after you pay.

47. “I am going for to see my friend.”

- **The Mistake:** Using “for” to state purpose with a verb.
- **The Correct Way:** “I am going **to see** my friend.”
- **Rule:** To express purpose, use the infinitive with **to**. You can use **for** with a noun (“I am going for a walk”) or with an **-ing** verb to describe the purpose of a *thing* (“This knife is for cutting bread”).

48. “He is success.”

- **The Mistake:** Using the noun “success” as an adjective.
- **The Correct Way:** “He is **successful**.”
- **Word Forms:**
 - Noun: **success** (He achieved great success.)
 - Adjective: **successful** (He is a successful businessman.)
 - Verb: **succeed** (He will succeed.)

49. “All the people are agree.”

- **The Mistake:** Combining two previous mistakes!
- **The Correct Way:** “**All the people agree.**” or “**Everybody agrees.**”
- **Breakdown:** “People” is plural, so it’s “people agree” (no “are”). “Everybody” is singular, so it’s “everybody agrees” (with an “s”).

50. Not using contractions in speech

- **The Mistake:** Speaking like a robot: “I do not know. He is not here. We will not go.”
- **The Natural Way:** “I **don’t** know.” / “He**’s** not here.” / “We **won’t** go.”
- **Why it Matters:** Using contractions (**don't** , **can't** , **it's** , **I'm**) is the #1 way to sound more natural and fluent in spoken English. Not using them can make you

sound formal or even angry.

Conclusion

Congratulations on finishing the guide! Remember, every mistake is a lesson. Keep practicing, stay curious, and don't be afraid to speak. If you're ready to take the next step and get personalized feedback from a teacher who understands your journey, book a lesson with me today.

Mr. Ibrahim K. Fluentry English Coaching