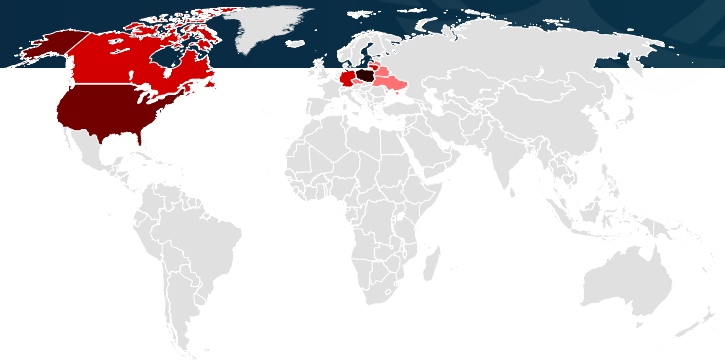


POLISH *at a Glance*

A Comparative Linguistic Analysis for Classroom Teachers

HELPFUL INFORMATION

- ▶ **40 million** people worldwide speak Polish as their first or second language.
- ▶ 97% of Polish citizens speak Polish, making Poland the **most linguistically homogeneous country** in Europe.
- ▶ Polish is a **West Slavic language** and has very little in common with English.



■ Official Language
■ More than 1,000,000 Speakers
■ Between 100,000 and 1,000,000 Speakers
■ Less than 100,000 Speakers

COMPARISONS AND COMMON DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN POLISH AND ENGLISH



PRONUNCIATION

There are 32 letters in the Polish alphabet. The pronunciation of Polish is very different from English, and Polish has vocal sounds that do not exist in English. These sounds include nasal vowels and a subtle gradient of different “sh” sounds. Additionally, Polish also has eight vowel sounds, compared to the 15 vowel sounds in English.



CASES AND POSSESSIVES

Polish has seven grammatical cases, meaning that nouns, adjectives, and pronouns can have seven different endings depending on their role in a sentence. In Polish, a “y” is added to the end of a word to make it possessive.



ARTICLES

In Polish, there are no articles before nouns. Polish omits the article where one would be used in English.



MATH

In Polish, a division sign may be written as a colon (10:2 means 10 / 2). Also, a multiplication sign may look like a decimal point (3 · 2 means 3 x 2). Lastly, a decimal point may be written as a comma (3,2 means 3.2).

EXAMPLES AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

LINGUISTIC ELEMENT	EXAMPLES	TEACHING STRATEGIES
PRONUNCIATION	Polish speakers often replace the 'th' sound with /f/ and /d/. Additionally, in Polish the /r/ is rolled and in English it is smooth. Polish speakers will often silence the /r/ at the end of a syllable, so words like "burn" and "third" are pronounced like "bun" and "thid."	Mispronunciations often cause spelling and reading errors. Explicitly teach these sounds and provide ample opportunities to practice them. Celebrate students' accents as a sign of bravery!
CASES AND POSSESSIVES	The word poet, may be written as "poeta," "poety," "poeta's" or "poecie," depending on the context of the sentence . The "y" in "poety" indicates possession, the equivalent of the English apostrophe "s."	Explicitly teach morphology, pointing out how words change meaning using suffixes and prefixes in English.
ARTICLES	In Polish there are no articles . A speaker might say, "This is large house" in place of the English sentence, "This is a large house."	Create a chart with model sentences and visual supports , that shows when to use "a," "an," and "the."
MATH	10:2 means 10 divided by 2 3 · 2 means 3 x 2 3,2 means 3.2	Display an anchor chart that clarifies math symbols .

PONDER AND DISCUSS

- ▶ What percentage of your students speak Polish?
- ▶ Are there any other Slavic languages spoken by your class?
- ▶ How can you integrate these languages into your classroom?
- ▶ What do you know about these countries? How can you learn more about them as a class?
- ▶ What Polish traditions do your students celebrate? How can you integrate these celebrations into your school year?

Resources:

- Polish as L1, English as L2: the linguistic transfer impact on Second Language Acquisition stemming from the interlingual differences: implications for young learners education (Łockiewicz & Jaskulska, 2017)
- Teachers and Polish children: capturing changes in the linguistic field (Flynn, 2019)