

CROSS-LINGUISTIC INFLUENCES BETWEEN UZBEK AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

Abdumurodova Sevinch To'raqulovna

The student of Termez State University

Abstract. This study investigates cross-linguistic influences between two languages, Uzbek and English, in full scope. The article's significance lies in its contribution to facilitating the learning process for both language learners. This research aims to answer two key questions “ What is the use of learning the cross-linguistic differences and influences between those languages ? ” and “ What kind of distinguishable features do they capture at all? ” The study identifies common challenges students encounter in the learning process, especially in grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. A better understanding of these linguistic differences can help enhance teaching strategies and improve language acquisition.

Keywords: cross-linguistic influences, theoretical background, differences, language acquisition, loanwords, code-switching, syntax, grammar, pronunciation.

Introduction

In recent years, English has already started to become an international language, attracting millions of speakers from various countries and cultures, not leaving out Uzbek. However, Uzbek and English are two different languages with completely different roots. Uzbek is included in the Turkish language family, shaped by Central Asian history, and has absorbed influences from Persian, Arabic, and Russian. On the other hand, English has Germanic origins and it has been shaped by the interactions with French, Latin, and other languages. This, in turn, brings about several challenges for both Uzbek and English learners during the learning process. Furthermore, difficulties that are mainly relevant to the transitions of grammatical, phonological, syntactic, and lexical features to a second language, to be learned, are also hindering factors in language acquisition. At the same time, the differences in these features between the two languages can work for the good of the learners to some extent. This article presents a thorough consideration of both sides above.

Theoretical background

Cross-linguistic influence is a term used to define the effect that one language has on the usage or knowledge of another language. Also known as linguistic transfer, the study of cross-linguistic influence in cognitive linguistics has provided a vital gateway to the understanding of how languages interact and function in the multilingual mind. As a great majority of people around the world speak two or more languages, it is of great theoretical and practical interest to understand how two or

multiple languages influence each other, during language learning, processing, and use. These cross-linguistic influences may vary for different components, in terms of their development trajectories, learning rates, levels of attainment, and type of processing involved.

The phenomenon of cross-linguistic influence (CLI) has been a central focus in language contact studies and second language acquisition (SLA) research. Odlin (1989) defines cross-linguistic influence (CLI) as the influence of one language on another, which may occur at various linguistic levels, including phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Scholars such as Selinker (1972) introduced the concept of "interlanguage," emphasizing how learners transfer linguistic elements from their first language (L1) to their second language (L2). This transfer can be either positive, facilitating the learning process, or negative, resulting in errors and interference.

The interaction between Uzbek and English exemplifies cross-linguistic influence in a unique sociolinguistic context. Uzbek, a Turkish language with agglutinative morphology, and English, a Germanic language with an analytic structure, differ significantly in grammatical systems, phonetics, and vocabulary. These differences create both challenges and opportunities for learners navigating between the two languages.

Language contact between Uzbek and English

The process of lexical borrowing is one of the most visible effects of language contact. As English continues to dominate various domains such as technology, business, and education, Uzbek speakers increasingly incorporate English loanwords into their daily communication. Haugen (1950) identifies three stages of lexical borrowing: need, adaptation, and integration, which are evident in modern Uzbek.

English loanwords can serve a role of enrichment to the Uzbek language and here some examples of such words are presented: management (menejment), summit (sammit), congress (congress), symposium (simpozium), parliament (parlament), speaker (spiker), grant (grant), rating (reyting), internet (internet), etc. They assist Uzbek learners of English to acquire language faster because of the similarity in not only meaning but also the pronunciation of the words between the two languages. For example, "summit" (a meeting between heads of government) is "sammit" in Uzbek (as a borrowing). The meaning is the same for both languages, as well as the pronunciation since the letter "u" represents the short "a" sound, which is similar to "a" in Uzbek (the second letter in the word "sammit").

Similarly, there are if not many, some English terms borrowed from Uzbek, and here are examples: kurash ((a type of sport) created other terms like "halal", "chala", "dakki", etc.), pilaf or plov (palov), mastava (mastava), etc. Though these words are not very commonly used in English, there are some specific contexts where they have to

be applied to speech. The same that happened with Uzbek learners of English happens with English learners of Uzbek in this context.

As a further point, code-switching – the alternation between two languages within a conversation – is a common feature in multilingual settings. According to Myers-Scotton's (1993) Markedness Model, speakers choose to code-switch based on social norms and communicative goals. In the Uzbek-English context, code-switching is particularly prevalent in academic and professional environments, where English terminology is frequently used alongside Uzbek.

Differences between Uzbek and English

In second language acquisition (SLA), Lado's (1957) Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis posits that differences between first-language (L1) and second-language (L2) structures can predict areas of difficulty for learners. For Uzbek speakers learning English, challenges include mastering articles, prepositions, and word order, which are absent or function differently in Uzbek. Likewise, English speakers learning Uzbek also face difficulties related to these features thanks to the dissimilarity between the two languages.

Grammar, and pronunciation, are the areas where we should pay attention to identify problematic spaces in the learning process.

Grammatical distinctions

a) Case system

The relation in which a noun stands to some other word, or the change of form (if any) by which this relation is indicated, is called the Case. Unlike Uzbek which has an extensive case system, English has a relatively simpler case system, including The Subjective (Nominative), The Objective (Accusative or Dative), and The Possessive (Genitive). In contrast, the Uzbek language consists of six cases, which are as follows: The Nominative (Bosh kelishik), The Accusative (Tushum kelishik), The Genitive (Qaratqich kelishik), The Dative (Jo'nalish kelishik), The Locative (O'rin-payt kelishigi), The Ablative (Chiqish kelishigi). In Uzbek, cases are applied to all nouns, pronouns, and adjectives; however, in English, they are mainly applied to pronouns. For instance, in Uzbek, kitob (book) is a noun in the nominative case, kitobga (to the book) is also a noun with a suffix, and here the suffix –ga is equal to the preposition “to”, etc. In English, he (subject), him (object), his (possessive). Nouns like “book” do not change based on the case in English. What is more, possession in Uzbek is indicated by the genitive case with the suffix –ning, while in English this function is done in the genitive case by adding 's (apostrophe s) to the noun or using “of” for inanimate nouns (e.g “kitobning muallifi” in Uzbek; “John's book or the book of John” in English).

b) Word order (syntax)

English follows a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) word order.

Example: “She reads a book” (Subject+Verb+Object)

Uzbek typically follows a Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) word order.

Example: “U kitobni o‘qiydi” (Subject+Object+Verb)

c) The use of articles

While English grammar includes indefinite and definite articles “the” and “a” to provide clarity and specificity in communication, Uzbek does not use articles:

English:

I have a book.

The book is on the desk.

Uzbek:

Menda kitob bor.

(without any article before a noun)

d) Pronouns and case marking

A pronoun system is more straightforward in English, for pronouns change form for nominative (subject) and accusative (object) cases, namely “I” is a subject and “me” is an object. In comparison, in Uzbek, pronouns take specific case endings depending on their role in the sentence. For example, “men” (I) in the nominative, “meni” (me) in the accusative, “menga” (to me) in the dative, and so on.

Phonological contrast

a) Vowel System

English has a more complicated vowel system with 12 monophthongs and 8 diphthongs. Example: "bit" [ɪ], "beat" [i:], "buy" [aɪ], and "boy" [ɔɪ].

Uzbek, on the other hand, has fewer vowels and no diphthongs. It generally features 7 vowel sounds, including both short and long vowels. Example: “kitob” (book) vs. “qiz” (girl), using only simple vowels [ɪ, a, u, o, e].

Uzbek speakers may have difficulty distinguishing between English vowels, especially those that do not exist in Uzbek, like the difference between [ɪ] and [i:], or between diphthongs like [aɪ] and [eɪ]. This often leads to vowel reduction or incorrect vowel pronunciation in English.

b) Consonant Clusters

English allows for complex consonant clusters, especially at the beginning or end of words. Example: "strengths" [streŋkθs], "splendid" [splendɪd].

Uzbek phonology, in contrast, is less tolerant of such complex clusters. It generally avoids consonant clusters, especially at the beginning of words, and often breaks them into simpler syllables.

Uzbek speakers may find it challenging to pronounce complex consonant clusters in English, often inserting a vowel between consonants, or omitting some consonants entirely.

c) Intonation and Stress

English has variable stress and uses stress to differentiate word meaning, especially in noun-verb pairs (e.g., “record” as a noun vs. “record” as a verb). The stress pattern is often irregular and can change within different dialects of English. Uzbek, however, has fixed stress. Stress usually falls on the last syllable of a word,

especially in polysyllabic words. Example: "kitob" (book) vs. "yurt" (homeland), where stress tends to stay on the last syllable. Uzbek learners of English often place stress on the wrong syllable, leading to incorrect stress patterns in English words.

Conclusion

This research study was devoted to exploring cross-linguistic influences between Uzbek and English alongside some additional data about primary distinctions and contact between the two languages that significantly contributed to the development of this article. As discussed above, there is a huge difference in not only background but also the grammatical, syntactical, and phonological systems of both languages. This, in turn, brings about several barriers for either learners of languages. However, some specific terms that are used globally and that can be called loanwords in both languages might facilitate language acquisition. By investigating differences and similarities between Uzbek and English, enhanced strategies of mastering the languages can be created and modified for the learners.

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