INTERLANGUAGE (ENGLISH-UZBEK, ENGLISH-RUSSIAN) SPECIFICITIES

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Abstract

This article explores the phenomenon of interlanguage with specific focus on the interactions between English and two commonly learned languages in Uzbekistan: Uzbek and Russian. It outlines the distinctive linguistic influences, transfer errors, and pedagogical challenges that emerge during second language acquisition. The paper also offers methodological insights for educators teaching English to Uzbek and Russian-speaking learners.

Key Words: Interlanguage, second language acquisition, English-Uzbek, English-Russian, language transfer, error analysis, contrastive linguistics, phonological interference, grammar differences, teaching methodology

In the field of second language acquisition (SLA), the concept of "interlanguage" plays a crucial role. Coined by Larry Selinker in 1972, interlanguage refers to a transitional linguistic system that language learners create as they progress from their mother tongue to the target language. It is a hybrid, dynamic system influenced by the learner's native language (L1), the target language (L2), and the learner's cognitive strategies.

In Uzbekistan, English is widely taught as a foreign language, and learners commonly speak Uzbek or Russian as their first language. Understanding the specificities of interlanguage between English-Uzbek and English-Russian is essential for effective pedagogical planning and teaching strategies.

Interlanguage is not simply a collection of mistakes or errors. It is an evolving system governed by rules that learners apply consciously or unconsciously. It may contain elements from the mother tongue, overgeneralizations of English rules, or fossilized errors that persist over time.

Selinker identified five central processes that characterize interlanguage development:
- Language transfer
- Transfer of training
- Strategies of second language learning
- Strategies of second language communication
- Overgeneralization of target language linguistic material

These processes help explain why certain error patterns are common among learners with the same L1.

3.1 Linguistic Influences

Uzbek is a Turkic language, with agglutinative grammar, subject-object-verb (SOV) word order, and no grammatical gender. These linguistic features contrast significantly with English, which is an inflected language with subject-verb-object (SVO) word order and a complex system of tenses.

3.2 Common Errors

- Word Order: Uzbek learners often produce sentences like "She to the shop goes" due to SOV structure in Uzbek.

- Tense Usage: English tenses are often overgeneralized or confused, for example, "I am go to school every day."

- Articles: Uzbek has no articles, leading to errors like "I bought book."

- Prepositions: Learners misuse prepositions due to different spatial and temporal conceptualizations in Uzbek and English.

3.3 Phonological Interference

The Uzbek sound system lacks some English phonemes, such as /θ/ and /ð/ ("think," "this"), leading to substitution with /s/, /z/, or /t/. Stress patterns also differ, causing unnatural intonation in spoken English.

4.1 Linguistic Influences

Russian, an Indo-European Slavic language, shares more syntactic and grammatical similarities with English than Uzbek does, but still presents significant differences. Russian has rich morphology, case systems, and lacks articles, which can cause confusion.

4.2 Common Errors

- Articles: Like Uzbek, Russian has no articles, so learners may omit or misuse them ("He is teacher.").

- Verb Tenses: Russian has only three tenses, and aspect is used instead of tense in many cases. English perfect tenses are particularly difficult for Russian learners.

- Word Order Flexibility: Russian's flexible word order causes confusion in English syntax (e.g., "Bought I a car.").

- Negation: Double negatives in Russian can result in errors like "I don't know nothing."

4.3 Phonological Interference

Russian speakers may pronounce "v" as /w/, and struggle with English vowel contrasts (e.g., ship/sheep). Stress in Russian is unpredictable and can affect pronunciation in English.

1 For Uzbek Learners

- Focus on developing awareness of English sentence structure through pattern drills and visual organizers.

- Use contextualized practice for articles and prepositions.

- Implement phonetic training to address difficult sounds like /θ/ and /ð/.

5.2 For Russian Learners

- Teach articles explicitly using contrastive analysis with Russian.

- Practice using English tenses with real-life scenarios.

- Highlight fixed word order in English through syntax exercises.

5.3 General Recommendations

- Employ contrastive analysis to anticipate typical errors.

- Encourage communicative practice to reduce fossilization.

- Use error analysis as a diagnostic tool to tailor instruction.

- Introduce metalinguistic reflection activities to raise learners' self-awareness.

Understanding the specificities of interlanguage is critical for language teachers working in multilingual settings like Uzbekistan. The contrasts between English and Uzbek or Russian shape learners' interlanguage systems, and recognizing these influences enables more effective teaching approaches. Through targeted strategies, educators can help learners progress more accurately and confidently toward English proficiency.

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