

INTERLANGUAGE (ENGLISH-UZBEK AND ENGLISH- RUSSIAN) SPECIFICITIES

Abdug‘aniyeva Zebiniso

Teacher: Jalolova Muqaddas

Abstract: *This article explores the concept of interlanguage and its specific manifestations among Uzbek and Russian learners of English. Interlanguage is an evolving linguistic system that learners construct on their path to mastering a second language. The article provides a comparative analysis of the phonological, grammatical, and lexical features of English as used by native speakers of Uzbek and Russian. The study reveals how differences in native language structures shape distinct interlanguage patterns and how this knowledge can inform language teaching practices.*

INTRODUCTION

The process of learning a second language (L2) does not occur in a vacuum; it is heavily influenced by the learner’s first language (L1). As a result, learners develop an intermediate linguistic system known as interlanguage. This system is characterized by features of both L1 and L2, along with unique elements created by the learner. Interlanguage is not static—it changes over time as learners receive more exposure to the target language and refine their usage.

This paper focuses on the interlanguage specificities of two learner groups: Uzbek native speakers and Russian native speakers who are learning English. These two languages belong to different language families—Turkic and Slavic respectively—leading to different patterns of interference, transfer, and developmental errors in the English they produce. Understanding these differences can assist language educators in tailoring their instruction more effectively.

The concept of interlanguage originates from the field of second language acquisition (SLA). First introduced by Larry Selinker in 1972, interlanguage theory proposes that language learners construct their own unique linguistic systems when learning a new language. These systems are influenced by several factors:

Language Transfer: Learners transfer rules or features from their L1 into L2. This can be either positive (facilitating learning) or negative (causing errors).

Overgeneralization: Learners apply a rule too broadly, such as using regular past tense “-ed” for irregular verbs (e.g., goed instead of went).

Simplification: Learners may omit complex structures to make communication easier (e.g., dropping auxiliaries).

Fossilization: Certain incorrect forms may become fixed and resistant to change, even after prolonged exposure to L2.

Interference: Structural differences between L1 and L2 may lead to consistent errors in grammar, pronunciation, or word use.

5-Aprel, 2025-yil

These processes are universal but manifest differently depending on the learner's linguistic background.

Uzbek, a Turkic language, is agglutinative, follows a Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) word order, and lacks certain grammatical categories present in English. As a result, Uzbek learners face specific challenges when learning English:

Phonological Issues: Uzbek does not include certain English sounds such as /θ/ (as in think) or diphthongs (e.g., go, say). Learners often substitute these with more familiar Uzbek sounds, leading to intelligibility issues.

Article Usage: Uzbek lacks a system of articles (a/an/the), so learners often omit them or use them incorrectly. For example, a student might say "I saw car" instead of "I saw a car."

Word Order Interference: Because Uzbek uses SOV order, learners may produce sentences like "He book read" instead of "He reads a book."

Tense and Aspect: Uzbek verb forms do not express tense in the same way English does. Learners may overuse simple present tense or confuse present perfect and past simple tenses. Despite these difficulties, many Uzbek learners compensate with strong rote memorization skills, which can help in acquiring vocabulary and set phrases.

Russian, a Slavic language, shares some features with English, such as a rich system of verb conjugation and case inflection. However, significant differences remain:

Pronunciation Difficulties: Russian lacks certain English phonemes, such as /θ/ and /ð/, often replacing them with /s/ and /z/ (e.g., think becomes sink). Stress placement in multisyllabic words may also be problematic.

Articles: Like Uzbek, Russian has no articles, so learners may omit them or use them randomly.

Verb Aspect and Tense Confusion: Russian verbs focus on aspect (perfective vs. imperfective) rather than tense. This leads to confusion with English continuous and perfect tenses. A common error might be "I am knowing him" instead of "I know him."

Prepositions and Collocations: Russian uses different prepositional structures. For instance, learners may say "married with her" instead of "married to her."

Word Order Flexibility: Russian allows relatively free word order due to its case system. This can result in sentence structures in English that sound unnatural or ambiguous.

Nevertheless, due to its Indo-European roots, Russian shares more cognates and grammatical categories with English than Uzbek, which can sometimes ease the learning process.

When comparing the interlanguage of Uzbek and Russian learners of English, several commonalities and differences emerge. Both groups struggle with article usage and certain pronunciation issues. However, Uzbek learners tend to display more pronounced syntactic interference due to the typological distance between Uzbek and English. Russian learners, while facing different issues, benefit slightly from a closer linguistic proximity to English.

Pronunciation Practice: Provide targeted drills for problematic sounds, such as minimal pairs, listening discrimination, and shadowing techniques.

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Grammar Instruction: Focus on tenses, aspect, and word order, using context-rich examples and real-life communication scenarios.

Metalinguistic Awareness: Encourage learners to reflect on how their native language influences their English, promoting conscious correction and awareness.

Such strategies can accelerate interlanguage development and reduce fossilization of incorrect forms.

CONCLUSION

Interlanguage is a vital concept in second language acquisition that reflects the learner’s transitional stage toward full proficiency. Uzbek and Russian learners of English demonstrate different patterns of interlanguage shaped by their respective linguistic systems. While both groups face common challenges such as article misuse and pronunciation difficulties, their specific interlanguage features are influenced by the structural and typological differences of their L1. Teachers and curriculum developers must take these factors into account to create effective and responsive instructional methods. With tailored support, learners can move from interlanguage toward greater fluency and accuracy in English.

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