

THE INFLUENCE OF THE FIRST LANGUAGE ON ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION AMONG UZBEK LEARNERS

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Abstract

This study researches the influence of the Uzbek language which is first language on English pronunciation among Uzbek learners. The research provide with giving common pronunciation errors and analyzing of why it happens. A qualitative approach was used in this research and gets into observation and analysis of 9–11 grade students from a secondary school in the Fergana region in Uzbekistan. The findings reveal that learners occur difficulties in pronouncing certain English sounds, particularly /θ/ and /ð/, as well as separating of long and short vowels. Additionally, the problem which related to stress and intonation were observed. These difficulties are mainly caused by differences between the Uzbek and English phonological systems and limited communicative practice. The study shows the importance of pronunciation teaching and increased speaking activities to reduce L1 interference and improve learners' pronunciation skills.

Keywords: Uzbek learners, first language influence, English pronunciation, phonological system, consonant substitution, vowel mispronunciation, stress and intonation, language learning

Abstract

Ushbu tadqiqot o‘zbek tilining birinchi til (L1) sifatida o‘zbek o‘quvchilarining ingliz tilidagi talaffuziga ta’sirini o‘rganadi. Tadqiqot keng tarqalgan talaffuz xatolarini aniqlash va ularning yuzaga kelish sabablarini tahlil qilishga qaratilgan. Tadqiqotda sifatli yondashuv qo‘llanilib, O‘zbekistonning Farg‘ona viloyatidagi umumta’lim maktabining 9–11-sinf o‘quvchilari kuzatildi va tahlil qilindi. Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatdiki, o‘quvchilar ayrim ingliz tovushlarini, xususan /θ/ va /ð/ ni talaffuz qilishda, shuningdek uzun va qisqa unlilarni farqlashda qiyinchiliklarga duch keladilar. Bundan tashqari, urg‘u va intonatsiya bilan bog‘liq muammolar ham kuzatildi. Ushbu qiyinchiliklar asosan o‘zbek va ingliz tillari fonologik tizimlari o‘rtasidagi farqlar hamda yetarli kommunikativ amaliyotning yetishmasligi bilan izohlanadi. Tadqiqot talaffuzni o‘qitishning muhimligini va L1 interferensiyasini kamaytirish hamda o‘quvchilarning talaffuz ko‘nikmalarini yaxshilash uchun ko‘proq nutqiy faoliyatlarni tashkil etish zarurligini ko‘rsatadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: o‘zbek o‘quvchilari, birinchi til ta’siri, ingliz talaffuzi, fonologik tizim, undosh tovushlar almashinuvi, unli tovush xatolari, urg‘u va intonatsiya, til o‘rganish

Аннотация

Данное исследование рассматривает влияние узбекского языка как родного (L1) на английское произношение узбекских учащихся. Исследование направлено на выявление типичных произносительных ошибок и анализ причин их возникновения. В работе использован качественный метод, включающий наблюдение и анализ учащихся 9–11 классов средней школы Ферганской области, Узбекистан. Результаты показали, что учащиеся испытывают трудности при произношении некоторых английских звуков, в частности /θ/ и /ð/, а также при различении долгих и кратких гласных. Кроме того, были выявлены проблемы, связанные с ударением и интонацией. Эти трудности в основном обусловлены различиями между фонологическими системами узбекского и английского языков, а также недостатком коммуникативной практики. Исследование подчеркивает важность обучения

произношению и увеличения количества устных упражнений для снижения влияния родного языка и улучшения произносительных навыков учащихся.

Ключевые слова: узбекские учащиеся, влияние родного языка, английское произношение, фонологическая система, замена согласных, ошибки гласных, ударение и интонация, изучение языка

INTRODUCTION

The influence of the first language on English pronunciation among Uzbek learners is an important topic in second language learning. I am so interested in this subject because the majority of learners pronounce English sounds like their phonological system of native language. In linguistics some researchers have studied this issue and also there are few books and articles available for research. This topic is either theoretical or practical to study within the academic time period because information about pronunciation among Uzbek learners can be collected from the students of Uzbek school through simple speaking activities and researching studies about topic. The study may provide useful information about common pronunciation problems and some possible solutions. It also shows my language level and includes discussions in language learning or teaching.

METHODS

In this study we choose qualitative research approach, as it aims to research how the Uzbek first language influences English pronunciation. A qualitative method is available because it focuses on learners' experiences, common pronunciation patterns and the reasons behind phonological errors instead of numerical measurement. The aim of this article is to analyze the Uzbek first language impact on English pronunciation among Uzbek learners. We have been in School 28 in Yozyovon District, Fergana Region. 10-15 Uzbek students in 9-11 classes was chosen who had been learning English language. Their English proficiency level is from elementary to intermediate. All students was observed for being candidates to our research, but we selected that students because they were still developing their pronunciation skills in English language. First of all, we paid attention to

speaking tasks which students have read short texts and word lists. Second of all, we checked pronunciation exercises such as pronouncing of difficult sounds like /θ/, /ð/, /w/, /v/. All students speech was focused and also recorded their audios to check more. This research helps us to identify common pronunciation patterns and errors.

RESULTS

We explored and analyzed all collected data which revealed several common pronunciation problems among Uzbek learners:

1. Consonant Sound Substitution: students could not spell regularly, instead they switched /θ/ and /ð/ sounds.

/θ/ → /s/ or /t/ (e.g., think → sink or tink)

/ð/ → /z/ or /d/ (e.g., this → zis or dis)

2. Vowel Mispronunciation: they have the biggest difficulty to distinguish long and short vowels

Example: ship vs sheep pronounced similarly

3. Stress and Intonation Issues; students had a problem to put stress, they were not able to manage which syllable got stress.

Incorrect word stress (e.g., imPORTant instead of IMportant)

Furthermore, they had Flat intonation, I mean monotonous speaking patterns affected by Uzbek speech rhythm

4. Influence of Uzbek Phonological System: Uzbek language does not have some English sounds which learners use sounds from their native language

DISCUSSION

The research shows that first language have a significant affect for pronouncing English pronunciation among Uzbek learners. There are no some English sounds in Uzbek

phonology, therefore learners tend to substitute this English sounds to easier one as their ordinary sounds. As Ch.Ostonova mentioned before in his article, this situation shows a real phonological limitation. Moreover, we can see the similarity of errors between students and teachers, so I.Jo‘rayev believe that the pronunciation problem is arised from teaching method which students is learned how to pronounce these sounds from teachers. Another important factor is the lack of communicative practice. As M.Sakbaeva notes, traditional methods do not provide enough opportunities for speaking and pronunciation improvement. However, the influence of language first is not always negative. It can also help learners understand similarities between languages and build confidence in learning. Uzbek learners face pronunciation challenges due to mixing of language first like common errors include consonant substitution, vowel confusion and incorrect stress. Its main reasons are linguistic differences and teaching methods. I hope that if teachers should focus on problematic English sounds or provide more speaking and listening activities to students, they can decrease the influence of language first on English pronunciation among Uzbek learners.

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